

**PRIVATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGES AND QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS  
IN GHANA**

by

**VICTORIA ADZOA TSEDZAH**

Submitted in accordance with the requirements  
for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

in the subject

**PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

at the

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR EJ VAN DER WESTHUIZEN**

**OCTOBER 2022**

## DECLARATION

Name: VICTORIA ADZOA TSEDZAH

Student number: 50883844

Degree: DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

### **PRIVATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGES AND QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS IN GHANA**

---

I declare that the above thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to Turnitin software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality (confirmed by the Turnitin Team Unisa).

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



OCTOBER 2022

---

SIGNATURE

---

DATE

## **DEDICATION**

This research project is dedicated to my brother; Rev. Fr. Sebastian Eli Tsezah, whose words of encouragement and prayer support has brought me this far. To my lovely children; Selorm and Akorfa, who have always been there for me during challenging times. Thanks for your love and encouragement. May the completion of this thesis serve as a source of inspiration to you to always persevere.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank God for sustaining me throughout this research project.

I would also like to express my profound and sincerest gratitude to the following people who have contributed in diverse ways towards the completion of this thesis.

- A very special gratitude to my supervisor, Professor EJ van der Westhuizen for his professionalism, technical advice, attention to details and constructive criticisms. You have been a life saver. May God bless you.
- My former promoter, Professor Mike van Heerden.
- Dr Bettie Wagner-Ferriera my on-line mentor.
- Professor Sam Tshehla and Jackie Viljoen for their language editing services.
- Dr Salifu. N. Alhassan for his professional language editing of the entire thesis.
- Dr Mac-Anthony Cobblah, for his words of encouragement when there seemed to be no light at the end of the tunnel and I almost gave up. You are really a true brother.
- Ms Juanita Gborglah for assisting with the drawing of figures.
- Mr Kirchuff Atemgble for assisting with data transcription and coding.
- Mr Ernest Ansah, Founder and Executive Chairman, Council of DataLink Institute.
- All the institutions that granted permission for me to collect data from their employees and provided me with relevant documents.
- All participants, who made time out of their busy schedules to grant me interviews.
- Last but not least, to my children and all other family members. Thanks for your support.

## ABSTRACT

The focus of this research was on the mechanisms used by Ghana's two higher education regulatory institutions, and the selected mentoring public sector universities (hereinafter referred to as 'PSU's) to ensure quality standards of education in private university colleges (hereinafter referred to as 'PUC's) in Ghana. Against this background, the aim of this research project was to investigate the existing quality assurance (hereinafter referred to as 'QA') mechanisms used by the National Council for Tertiary Education (hereinafter referred to as 'NCTE'), the National Accreditation Board (hereinafter referred to as the 'NAB') and selected mentoring PSU's in an attempt to demonstrate how these mechanisms could be strengthened to ensure successful application of QA at PUC's in Ghana. The interpretive frameworks of this project are constructivism and pragmatism and the research design was qualitative. Accordingly, the methods that were adopted for data collection included; semi-structured personal interviews, document analysis and a literature review. Data were collected from six PUC's, the two mentoring PSU's to which the sampled PUC's were affiliated at the time of this inquiry, the NCTE, the NAB, as well as the assessors who had ever worked for the NAB within the last five years at the time of data collection. Since the current study is based on qualitative grounded theory research, no definite sample size was determined. As a result, the process of data collection and analysis continued throughout the research process until a point of data saturation was attained. At the time of data saturation, twenty-four participants were sampled and interviewed from the four groups of participants. Results from the four sets of data showed that, despite the existence of the two regulatory institutions with a mandate to ensure quality standards in all higher education institutions in Ghana, and the existence of comprehensive policies, the gaps in the National Accreditation Board Act 744 of 2007 (hereinafter referred to as the 2007 National Accreditation Board Act) and the National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993 (hereinafter referred to as the 1993 National Council for Tertiary Education Act) coupled with inadequate resources affected their effectiveness. There were also shortcomings in the roles played by both the mentoring PSU's and the mentored PUC's in ensuring quality standards in the PUC's. Based on the key themes that emerged from the analysis of the research data and the challenges identified with the existing QA framework, the Culture of Quality (hereinafter referred to as 'CoQ') framework (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.9) and

interventions that could contribute to ensure quality standards in PUC's in Ghana were proposed. The study has also brought to the fore the voice of PUC's with regard to their challenges and their suggestions that could be factored into policy development for effective collaboration with the regulatory institutions for ensuring quality standards in PUC's in Ghana.

## KEY TERMS

- Accreditation
- Affiliation
- Assessment
- Assessors
- Culture of quality
- Enhancement/Improvement
- Ghana
- Higher/Tertiary education
- Institutional isomorphism
- Mentoring
- National Accreditation Board
- National Council for Tertiary Education
- Policy implementation
- Private university colleges
- Public Sector Universities
- Quality assurance mechanisms
- Quality audit

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAU	Association of African Universities
ABET	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology
ASQ-QA	African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
BEACON	Business Excellence Assessment for Continuous Improvement
BQC for PEOs	Business Quality Class for Private Education Organisations
CHEA	Council for Higher Education Accreditation
CIU	Council of Independent Universities
CRICOS	Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students
DAPQA	Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance
DLUC	DataLink University College
ESG	European Standards and Guidelines
ESIB	European Students Information Bureau
EU	European Union
GTEC	Ghana Tertiary Education Council
HAQAA	African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
IPS	Institute of Professional Studies
IUCG	Islamic University College Ghana
IQAU	Internal Quality Assurance Unit
JAMB	Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
KUC	Knutsford University College
MoE	Ministry of Education
MUCG	Methodist University College Ghana
NAB	National Accreditation Board
NAPTEX	National Board for Professional and Technical Education
NCTE	National Council for Tertiary Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OST	Open Systems Theory
PAQAF	Pan African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework



PSU	Public Sector Universities
PUC	Pentecost University College
PUC's	Private University Colleges
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PNDCL	Provisional National Defence Council Law
QA	Quality Assurance
QAA	Quality Assurance Agencies
QAC	Quality Assurance Culture
QC	Quality Culture
CoQ	Culture of Quality
UCC	University of Cape Coast
UCE	University College of Education
UCEW	University College of Education Winneba
UCG	University College of Ghana
UCGC	University College of Gold Coast
UDS	University of Development Studies
UENR	University of Energy and Natural Resources
UEW	University of Education, Winneba
UG	University of Ghana
UHAS	University of Health and Allied Sciences
UK	United Kingdom
UMaT	University of Mines and Technology
UPSA	University of Professional Studies, Accra
URC	University Rationalisation Committee
USA	United States of America
USDE	United States Department for Education
TALIF	Teaching and Learning Innovation Fund
TESQA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standard Agency
WIUC	Wisconsin International University College

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

CODESRIA	Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
UNISA	University of South Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WAEC	West Africa Examinations Council

## LIST OF FIGURES

ITEM	PAGE
Figure 1.1: Map of Ghana	15
Figure 3.2: Conceptual framework	95
Figure 3.3: Quality assurance framework	112
Figure 3.4: Open systems model	115
Figure 3.5: Model of the policy implementation process	121
Figure 3.6: Higher education regulatory framework	128
Figure 6.7: The grounded theory process	258
Figure 6.8: The data analysis procedure	261
Figure 7.9: Culture of Quality model for quality assurance in private university colleges	396

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENT	PAGE NUMBER
DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
KEY TERMS	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	viii
LIST OF ACRONYMS	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
<b>CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE	2
1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTIONS	9
1.3.1 Research problem	9
1.3.2 Research questions	11
1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES	12
1.4.1 Aim	12
1.4.2 Objectives	13
1.5 SCOPE AND DEMARCATION	14
1.5.1 Geographical boundaries	14
1.5.2 Hierarchical dimension	15
1.5.2.1 Ministry of Education	16
1.5.2.2 National Council for Tertiary Education	16
1.5.2.3 National Accreditation Board	16
1.5.2.4 Public Sector Universities	17
1.5.2.5 Private University Colleges	17
1.5.3 Period of study	18
1.6 CONCEPTUALISATION	18
1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, DESIGN AND METHOD	22
1.8 EDITING AND REFERENCING	22

1.8.1 Editing	22
1.8.2 Referencing	22
1.9 EXPOSITION OF CHAPTERS	23
1.10 SUMMARY	25
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>26</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION	26
2.2 NATURE AND CONTEXT OF A LITERATURE REVIEW	27
2.2.1 Aim and objectives	27
2.2.2 Importance	29
2.2.3 Criteria	30
2.2.4 Types of sources	31
2.2.5 Organising of the sources	31
2.2.6 Grounded theory research approach	33
2.3 CONCEPTUALISATION OF QUALITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE	35
2.3.1 Quality	35
2.3.2 Quality assurance	38
2.4 HISTORY AND RATIONALE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE NETWORKS	43
2.5 SYSTEMS FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION	45
2.5.1 Internal quality assurance	45
2.5.1.1 The role of internal quality assurance in the development of a quality culture	49
2.5.2 External quality assurance	52
2.5.2.1 Academic quality audit as an external quality assurance mechanism	56
2.5.2.2 Accreditation as an external quality assurance Mechanism	57
2.5.2.3 Quality monitoring and assessment as an external quality assurance mechanism	63
2.6 PURPOSE AND RATIONALE FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE	64
2.6.1 Accountability	64
2.6.2 Improvement as a purpose of external quality assurance	66

2.6.3 Compliance as a purpose of external quality assurance	67
2.7 INSTITUTIONAL ISOMORPHISM AND QUALITY ASSURANCE	68
2.7.1 Coercive/regulative isomorphism	69
2.7.2 Mimetic/imitative isomorphism	70
2.7.3 Normative isomorphism	71
2.8 ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION	72
2.9 EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON MECHANISMS TO ENSURE QUALITY STANDARDS IN TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS	75
2.10 BEST PRACTICES IN QUALITY ASSURANCE	78
2.11 CHALLENGES FACING IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EFFECTIVE HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM	81
2.12 POLICY AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AS PART OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS	83
2.12.1 Factors that could affect policy implementation	86
2.12.1.1 Communication	86
2.12.1.2 Resources/human capital	87
2.12.1.3 Attitude/disposition of policy implementers	88
2.12.1.4 Effective structures and bureaucracy	88
2.13 CONCLUSION	89
<b>CHAPTER 3: MODELS AND THEORIES THAT RELATE TO MECHANISMS FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE PRACTICES OF SOME SELECTED COUNTRIES</b>	<b>90</b>
3.1 INTRODUCTION	90
3.2 RATIONALE FOR A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES	91
3.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	93
3.3.1 Definition	94
3.3.2 Aim	94
3.3.3 Objectives	96
3.4 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES	97
3.4.1 Definition	97
3.4.2 Aim	99

3.4.3 Objectives	99
3.4.4 Underpinning theoretical perspectives	100
3.5 PHILOSOPHY, MODEL AND PRINCIPLES FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE IN GHANA	102
3.5.1 Philosophy	103
3.5.2 Model	104
3.5.3 Principles	106
3.6 MODELS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS	110
3.6.1 Cao and Li quality assurance framework	111
3.6.1.1 Academic quality	112
3.6.1.2 Administrative quality	113
3.6.1.3 Relationship quality	113
3.6.2 Open systems theory	115
3.6.3 Neo-institutional theory	118
3.6.4 Van Meter and Van Horn model of the policy implementation process	120
3.6.4.1 Policy decision	122
3.6.4.2 Resources	123
3.6.4.3 Inter-organisational communication and enforcement activities	123
3.6.4.4 Characteristics of implementing institutions	124
3.6.4.5 Economic, social, and political conditions	124
3.6.4.6 Disposition of implementers	125
3.6.5 Higher education regulatory framework	127
3.7 HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS IN SOME SELECTED COUNTRIES	130
3.7.1 Higher education quality assurance mechanisms in the developed world	130
3.7.1.1 Higher education quality assurance mechanisms in the United States of America	131
3.7.1.2 Higher education quality assurance mechanisms in the United Kingdom	136
3.7.1.3 Higher education quality assurance mechanisms in Australia	143

3.7.2 Higher education quality assurance mechanisms in Africa	147
3.8 CONCLUSION	151

**CHAPTER 4: LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON PRIVATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGES AND TERTIARY EDUCATION REGULATORY INSTITUTIONS IN GHANA** **153**

4.1 INTRODUCTION	153
4.2 HISTORY OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IN GHANA	154
4.3 REFORMS IN GHANA'S TERTIARY EDUCATION SYSTEM	156
4.4 LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR PRIVATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGES AND TERTIARY EDUCATION REGULATORY INSTITUTIONS IN GHANA	157
4.4.1 The White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991 Ghana	159
4.4.2 The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana of 1992	165
4.4.3 The National Accreditation Board Act 744 of 2007	167
4.4.3.1 Composition of the National Accreditation Board	167
4.4.3.2 Challenges of the National Accreditation Board	168
4.4.4 The National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993	172
4.4.4.1 Composition of National Council for Tertiary Education	173
4.4.4.2 Functions of National Council for Tertiary Education	174
4.4.4.3 Challenges of National Council for Tertiary Education	174
4.4.5 Forms of institutional isomorphic mechanisms used by the National Council for Tertiary Education and the National Accreditation Board for tertiary education quality assurance	178
4.5 ROLE OF LEGISLATION IN QUALITY ASSURANCE	180
4.6 CONCLUSION	182

**CHAPTER 5: MILIEU, SETTING AND CONTEXT OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGES IN GHANA** **184**

5.1 INTRODUCTION	184
5.2 PROFILES OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGES USED IN THIS STUDY	185
5.2.1 Methodist University College Ghana	185
5.2.2 Islamic University College, Ghana	188
5.2.3 Wisconsin International University College	190
5.2.4 Pentecost University College	192



5.2.5 DataLink University College	194
5.2.6 Knutsford University College	195
5.3 THE QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS OF THE MENTORING PUBLIC SECTOR UNIVERSITIES	196
5.3.1 University of Ghana	197
5.3.2 University of Cape Coast	200
5.4 THE QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS OF THE REGULATORY INSTITUTIONS	201
5.4.1 The National Accreditation Board	201
5.4.1.1 The quality assurance department	202
5.4.1.2 The current quality assurance procedure	203
5.4.2 The National Council for Tertiary Education	204
5.5 CONCLUSION	205
<b>CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, DESIGN AND METHOD</b>	<b>206</b>
6.1 INTRODUCTION	206
6.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	207
6.2.1 Research approach	207
6.2.1.1 Exploratory research	208
6.2.1.2 Explanatory research	212
6.2.1.3 Descriptive research	213
6.2.2 Interpretive framework	214
6.2.2.1 Post-positivism	215
6.2.2.2 Pragmatism	218
6.2.3 Philosophical assumptions	219
6.2.3.1 Ontology	220
6.2.3.2 Epistemology	221
6.2.3.3 Axiology	222
6.2.3.4 Methodological	223
6.3 RESEARCH DESIGN	225
6.3.1 Quantitative research design	226
6.3.2 Mixed methods research design	226
6.3.3 Qualitative research design	227
6.3.3.1 Qualitative research approaches	232

6.3.3.1.1 Grounded theory approach	232
6.4 RESEARCH METHODS	236
6.4.1 Research setting and unit of analysis	237
6.4.2 Data collection instruments	238
6.4.2.1 Document analysis	239
6.4.2.2 Literature review	242
6.4.2.3 Semi-structured personal interviews	243
6.4.3 Population and sampling	246
6.4.3.1 Sampling techniques	248
6.4.3.1.1 Purposive sampling	249
6.4.3.1.2 Snowball sampling	250
6.4.3.1.3 Sampling procedure	251
6.4.4 Data collection	253
6.4.4.1 Design and structure of semi-structured interview guide	253
6.4.4.2 Pre-testing of interview guide	255
6.4.4.3 Administration of semi-structured personal interviews	256
6.4.4.4 Data analysis	257
6.4.4.5 Data transcription	261
6.4.4.6 Open coding	262
6.4.4.7 Focused coding	262
6.4.4.8 Theoretical coding	263
6.4.4.9 Framework development	264
6.4.4.10 Storing and destroying of data	265
6.5 TRUSTWORTHINESS	265
6.5.1 Credibility	266
6.5.2 Dependability	267
6.5.3 Conformability	267
6.5.4 Transferability	268
6.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	268
6.7 CONCLUSION	270
<b>CHAPTER 7: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSES, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION</b>	<b>271</b>
7.1 INTRODUCTION	271

7.2 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	272
7.2.1 Data analysis	273
7.2.2 Data interpretation	274
7.3 SECTION 1: CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS	275
7.3.1 Regulatory institutions	276
7.3.2 Private university colleges	276
7.3.3 Mentoring public sector universities	277
7.3.4 Assessors	277
7.4 DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS FROM THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS, DOCUMENT ANALYSIS AND LITERATURE REVIEW	277
7.4.1 GROUP A: PERCEPTIONS, VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPANTS FROM THE REGULATORY INSTITUTIONS	278
7.4.1.1 General assessment of the perceptions and views of participants from the regulatory institutions	305
7.4.2 GROUP B: PERCEPTIONS, VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPANTS FROM THE PRIVATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGES	316
7.4.2.1 General assessment of the perceptions and views of participants from the private university colleges	337
7.4.3 GROUP C: PERCEPTIONS, VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPANTS FROM THE MENTOR PUBLIC SECTOR UNIVERSITIES	348
7.4.3.1 General assessment of the perceptions and views of participants from the mentor public sector universities	360
7.4.4 GROUP D: PERCEPTIONS, VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES OF ASSESSORS	363
7.4.4.1 General assessment of the perceptions and views of assessors	379
7.5 ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS	385
7.5.1 Additional comments from participants from the regulatory institutions	385
7.5.2 Additional comments from participants from the private university colleges	386
7.5.3 Additional comments from participants from the mentor public sector universities	386

7.5.4 Additional comments from assessors	387
7.6 THEMES AND CONCEPTS FROM THE ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEW DATA	389
7.6.1 Mechanisms for quality assurance in private university colleges in Ghana	389
7.6.1.1 Theme 1: Conceptualisation of quality assurance and factors affecting it	389
7.6.1.2 Theme 2: Comparison of and influence of key indicators and accreditation models between international regulatory institutions and tertiary regulatory institutions of Ghana	391
7.6.1.3 Theme 3: Historical and legal framework on the establishment and operation of private university colleges and the tertiary education regulatory institutions	392
7.6.1.4 Theme 4: Analysis of current capacity of tertiary education regulatory institutions and mechanisms for quality assurance and their effectiveness	393
7.7 CULTURE OF QUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE	394
7.8 CONCLUSION	401
<b>CHAPTER 8: REALISATION OF THE STUDY AIM AND OBJECTIVES, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, MAJOR RESEARCH FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH AREAS AND CONCLUSION</b>	<b>403</b>
8.1 INTRODUCTION	403
8.2 REALISATION OF STUDY AIM AND OBJECTIVES	403
8.3 CONCLUSIONS	408
8.3.1 General introduction	408
8.3.2 Literature review	409
8.3.3 Models and theories that relate to mechanisms for tertiary education quality assurance and quality assurance practices of some selected countries	410
8.3.4 Legal framework on private university colleges and tertiary education regulatory institutions in Ghana	412
8.3.5 Context of the study	412
8.3.6 Research methodology, design and method	413

8.3.7 Data presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the results of the semi-structured personal interviews, literature review and document analysis	414
8.3.7.1 Enablers and inhibitors for successful application of quality assurance mechanisms in private university colleges in Ghana	415
8.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	421
8.5 RECOMMENDATIONS	423
8.5.1 Factors that affect quality assurance and international best practices	424
8.5.2 Historical context of the legal framework on the establishment and operations of private university colleges and tertiary education regulatory institutions in Ghana from 1991 to 2019	426
8.5.3 Quality Assurance capacity and mechanisms used by tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana	427
8.5.4 Guidelines and features of mechanisms for quality assurance in private university colleges in Ghana	428
8.5.5 Constraints, problems, failures and successes of the mechanisms for quality assurance in private university colleges in Ghana	430
8.5.6 Development of a culture of quality	432
8.6 EFFECT OF THE RESEARCH	435
8.7 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	436
8.8 CONCLUSION	437
BIBLIOGRAPHY	438
ANNEXURES	477

## CHAPTER 1: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the current mechanisms for assuring quality standards used by the NCTE, the NAB and selected mentoring PSU's in an attempt to demonstrate how these mechanisms could be strengthened to ensure successful application of QA at PUC's in Ghana.

Global trends such as privatisation, commercialisation and expansion of tertiary education have influenced the manner in which tertiary education is provided. This has led to concerns that the quality of education provided could be compromised (Hayward, 2006: 12; Effah, 2011: 379; Alabi, Alabi, Adjei, Dzandu, Utuka, Munkaila, 2018: 1). The stagnation and shrinking of public financing of tertiary education have contributed to the trends of privatisation and commercialisation. Accordingly, effective QA mechanisms are required in order to ensure that the privatisation and commercialisation of education do not negatively affect the quality of tertiary education (Manuh, Gariba & Budu, 2007: 2; Alabi, *et al.*, 2018: 1). Since 1999, Ghana has witnessed a significant influx of PUC's into its tertiary education sector (Effah, 2006: 56; 2011: 375; Alabi *et al.*, 2018: 5). With this influx concerns arose regarding the quality of higher education being offered by the PUC's. Concerns encompass standards, quality of physical facilities, institutional and financial capacity, the calibre of staff as well as the below standards qualification of students admitted (Effah, 2011: 375; Avoke & Avoke, 2014: 39). In order to ensure that the tertiary education provided by these PUC's meet acceptable national and international standards, effective QA mechanisms are required. The White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991 (hereinafter referred to as the '1991 White Paper') [see Annexure 1] indicated the establishment, by Ministry of Education (hereinafter referred to as 'MoE'), of two regulatory institutions for ensuring the effectiveness and quality of tertiary education in Ghana (Republic of Ghana, 1991: 6; Republic of Ghana, 2012: 1). Accordingly, the QA mechanisms relate to the policies and other requirements by the MoE in Ghana and its designated institutions as to the provision and maintenance of quality tertiary education standards (Republic of Ghana, 1991: 6; Republic of Ghana,

2012: 1). The designated institutions are the NCTE and the NAB. Despite the existence of these institutions, there are concerns about the quality of private tertiary education in Ghana (Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 72). For instance, the former Minister of State responsible for Tertiary Education in Ghana, Professor Kwesi Yankah, in a speech at a forum for managers of PUC's, lamented on-going reports revealing that a high number of PUC's admit unqualified students (Kale-Dery, 2018: 38). This assertion calls into question the effectiveness of the regulatory mechanisms in place to ensure quality education standards in Ghana's PUC's.

Against this background, this chapter provides the research framework within which this investigation was done. The background to and rationale for the study are followed by the research problem and questions. In line with the research framework, this introductory chapter is divided into sections dealing with the background, rationale, research problem and research questions. This is followed by a merging of the aim and objectives. Thereafter, a brief overview of the scope and limitations are provided for the study. The chapter also deliberates briefly on the research methodology, design and method. Furthermore, key concepts and terms used in this inquiry are discussed. This is followed by an explanation of how editing and referencing are done. The chapter concludes by providing the study sequence and summary.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE**

Tertiary education sector reforms, aimed at improving accessibility and as a means to ensure quality standards of education for the citizenry, has been a major agenda item in many countries such as the United States of America (hereinafter referred to as 'USA'), the United Kingdom (hereinafter referred to as 'UK'), Australia, China and some African countries like Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa (Materu, 2007: xvi; Poku, Aawaar & Worae, 2013: 20; Swanzy & Potts, 2017: 102). In the UK, for example, institutions of higher education came to be assessed through the introduction of the standard-based and risk-based systems as well as the involvement of students. However, as institutions of higher education matured with time and earned a decent quality track record, less and less baseline regulation and control ensued, with attention and regular visits being rather

directed to new institutions of higher education and their QA practices. This strategy is believed to have led to the organisational learning and the development of the internal QA mechanisms of institutions of higher education in the UK (Brown, Kurzweil & Pritchett, 2017: 25).

In Ghana, one such reform to improve accessibility of tertiary education is the provision for private sector participation in tertiary education (Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 22; Tsevi, 2015: 3). In 1999, when Ghana only had six PSU's, the private sector in Ghana also became involved in the provision of tertiary education (Republic of Ghana, 2006a: 12; Lugg, Morley & Leach, 2007: 18). During this period, there were many secondary school leavers who qualified but could not gain admission to the existing PSU's because of resource limitations in terms of staffing, lecture halls, student residences and library facilities (Effah, 2006: 56; Varghese, 2006: 19; Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 80). Article 25, Section 1(c), of the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana of 1992 (hereinafter referred to as the '1992 Constitution') states that " ... higher education shall be made accessible to all, by every appropriate means, and in particular, by progressively introducing free education" (Republic of Ghana, 282 of 1992: 27). However, the current higher education landscape of Ghana indicates an imbalance between requests for admission to PSU's and vacancies available for applicants who qualify for admission. The government of Ghana has not been able to establish enough new PSU's or to expand the existing ones to meet the requirements for the provision of higher education as stated in the 1992 Constitution (Effah, 2011: 378).

The emergence of PUC's in Africa in general, and particularly in Ghana's tertiary education sector, could therefore be regarded as one of the avenues to address the imbalance observed between requests by students who qualify for admission into tertiary institutions and the limited spaces available at PSU's (Association of African Universities, 2000: 1). Over the past years, since the private sector became part of the national tertiary education providers in Ghana, over eighty-eight accredited PUC's, four private universities and ten PSU's have been established (Republic of Ghana, 2019: 5). Most of these PUC's



have been established by churches, other religious institutions and individuals in Ghana and/or living abroad (Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 48; Boateng, Eghan & Osafo-Adu, 2014: 3).

The emergence of PUC's in Ghana can further be traced back to stipulations in the White Paper on the Reforms to Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991 (Republic of Ghana, 1991: 50; Alabi *et al.*, 2018: 41). In turn, the 1991 White Paper was based on the University Rationalisation Committee's (hereinafter referred to as 'URC') recommendations for the reform of the tertiary education system of Ghana (Girdwood, 1999: 20). One of the four main policy objectives of the 1991 White Paper was to expand the tertiary education system to meet the ever-increasing requests for admission by secondary school leavers who qualify for tertiary education in Ghana (Girdwood, 1999: 22; Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 43; Utuka, 2012: 107). The policy context set in the 1991 White Paper thus allowed for the establishment of PUC's in Ghana. In addition, Article 25, Section 2 of the 1992 Constitution also states that every person (citizen) is allowed to establish and maintain a private school at all levels in accordance with set conditions as provided by law (Republic of Ghana, 282 of 1992: 27). This constitutional provision accordingly supports private sector participation in the provision of tertiary education in Ghana.

Consequently, there is the need for efficient and effective QA mechanisms for higher education institutions, especially if PUC's, are to pursue excellence, achieve success and maintain quality education standards that will ensure long-term existence, relevance and progress in the national and international higher education systems (Effah, 2006: 66; Materu, 2007: 8; Cao & Li, 2014: 65). As Materu (2007: xxv) intimated, QA entails a planned and systematic review process of an institution to determine whether or not acceptable standards of education, scholarship and infrastructure are being met, maintained and enhanced.

As was already indicated in Section 1.1 paragraph 2 above, the two institutions responsible for QA in the tertiary education sector in Ghana are the NCTE and the NAB. Both these institutions operate under the auspices of the MoE. The NAB was established in 1993 by Decree 317 of the Provisional National Defence Council Law (hereinafter

referred to as 'PNDCL'). The PNDCL 317 was replaced by the National Accreditation Board Act 744 of 2007 due to changes and contemporary practices in the area of higher education (Girdwood, 1999: 7; Republic of Ghana 2007: 1; Dattey, Westerheijen & Hofman, 2014: 304; Republic of Ghana, 2014: 5; Dzidonu, 2016: 5). Other QA mechanisms in Ghana include the requirement by the NAB for every PUC to be affiliated to a PSU for at least ten years for purposes of mentoring before such a college could apply for a charter status (Materu, 2007: 30; Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 48; Dattey *et al.*, 2014: 307; Republic of Ghana, 2014: 6).

Unlike PSU's that are established *via* enabling legislation, PUC's by contrast have to apply to the NAB and successfully go through the accreditation process as well as affiliation requirements (Dattey *et al.*, 2014: 308). Accreditation with the NAB of Ghana is a two-stage process. The first stage involves institutional accreditation which involves a visit by a panel of experts to assess the physical facilities, library and finances of the PUC. The second stage is programme accreditation by a panel of experts selected by the NAB to evaluate the curriculum, qualification of academic staff, student-staff ratio, library facilities and the physical facilities of the institution being accredited (Effah, 2011: 378; Republic of Ghana, 2011: 3; Dattey *et al.*, 2017: 213).

The requirements set by the NCTE, the NAB and the mentoring PSU's regarding the establishment and operations of PUC's illustrate the concepts of coercive, normative and mimetic institutional isomorphism. These pressures of coercive, normative and mimetic isomorphism from the NCTE, the NAB and the mentoring PSU's for change and compliance are tantamount to requirements for the legitimisation and competitiveness of PUC's (Hayward, 2006: 4; Dattey *et al.*, 2014: 310). The terms; 'coercive', 'normative' and 'mimetic' isomorphism are conceptualised in Chapter 2, Section 2.7.1 – 2.7.3.

Although the NCTE and the NAB are mandated to ensure quality education standards in both public and private sector universities, this study only focuses on PUC's in Ghana. The main reason for this is that sparse data and information on QA mechanisms appear to have been documented on PUC's in Ghana with regard to quality education standards.

Researchers such as Atuahene and Owusu-Ansah (2013: 1) have acknowledged the good quality of education offered in the PSU's in Ghana. This could be due to the good reputation, internal QA mechanisms and norms that the PSU's have developed over the years as a result of the mentoring they received during their formative years from reputable universities in the UK (Materu, 2007: 30; Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 48; Dattey *et al.*, 2014: 307 – 308). PSU's in Ghana are also internationally recognised for the quality of the programmes offered as well as teaching, research and collaborations with leading institutions such as Harvard, Yale and Princeton Universities in the USA (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013: 1). The level of credibility and standards demonstrated by PSU's is the reason why PUC's are required by the NAB to affiliate to a PSU for at least ten years for the purposes of mentoring before they could apply for a charter status. The affiliation requirement is aimed at preventing the proliferation of freestanding PUC's that lack the ability to offer quality tertiary education (Effah, 2006: 167; Tsevi, 2014: 3).

The emergence of PUC's has changed the nature, strategies, practices and ownership of tertiary education in Ghana. These changes require regulatory institutions to have an adequate level of human capital as well as appropriate and effective mechanisms that facilitate the execution of their QA mandate. QA mechanisms must also help to ensure that PUC's operate within the prescribed national standards while being internationally comparable in their delivery of the important public service, namely education. Globalisation compels tertiary education graduates to compete in the global work environment which is regulated by both national and international standards (Effah, 2006: 66; Materu, 2007: 8).

Although both private and PSU's may have policies and practices designed to assure the quality of education (internal), these higher education institutions also have to operate within a national policy framework (external), as designed by the state, to ensure that academic standards are maintained (Dill, 2007: 1). QA practices may vary within institutions and across nations, yet there is still convergence in the methodology of QA in Ghana. According to Effah (2011: 378) and Boateng, *et al.* (2014: 44), QA practices at the

tertiary institutions in Ghana generally focus on three issues namely, institutional audits, institutional accreditation as well as programme accreditation.

In this study, QA relates to the systems, structures, practices, procedures and roles played by the various regulatory institutions in their quest to achieve, maintain and develop quality education standards at Ghana's PUC's. In other words, the study reviewed the mechanisms put in place to ensure that quality education standards are set, developed and maintained in PUC's in Ghana. Such a review is appropriate and important for the following reasons. Firstly, this study is relevant because the tertiary education landscape in Ghana is witnessing a significant influx of PUC's. Such influx requires a constructive analysis of the practices and procedures of the NCTE, NAB and mentoring PSU's. The mere establishment of the NCTE and the NAB, with a mandate to ensure quality in the tertiary education sector in Ghana, is not enough. A constructive analysis of the QA mechanisms of these regulatory institutions and a review of education QA mechanisms from other world class higher education institutions provide information that could contribute to the development of a suggested framework for planning, implementation and evaluation of education QA by the NCTE, the NAB and the mentoring PSU's alongside the PUC's in Ghana. Thus, in the view of Beerkens, (2018: 272-273) the field of QA has evolved over the years and this requires studies that will provide evidence of the relevance and acceptable QA practices in higher education.

Secondly, for those desiring to establish PUC's in Ghana, and for managers and owners of existing PUC's, this study provides information that could serve as a basis for their orientation and reorientation in regard to acceptable tertiary education standards. When the education quality standards are high in PUC's, people will be more likely to opt for attending PUC's. When more potential students opt for attending PUC's, the resources that would be required to establish more PSU's could then be utilised for other purposes by the state (Effah, 2006: 66; Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 147; Nkuwe, 2008: 73).

Thirdly, this study contributes to the literature on the role of public regulatory institutions in ensuring that services rendered by the private sector to the public are of acceptable

standards. Comparatively speaking, there is paucity of literature on the current regulatory context of private higher education institutions in Africa (Varghese, 2006: 5). Accordingly, this study contributes to the generation of knowledge on public service provision by the private sector and the mechanisms that the state could adopt to ensure quality service delivery to the citizenry.

Fourthly, although literature is increasing on QA mechanisms for tertiary education, the studies that have been carried out on Ghana to date have not specifically examined the QA mechanisms of the NCTE, the NAB and the mentoring PSU's in relation to PUC's in Ghana. By means of a comparative reference to best practices from selected developed countries, this study attempts to provide needed data on the best practices and suggest a framework for education QA in PUC's in Ghana. Earlier studies such as Baryeh (2009: 7), Utuka (2012: 17) and Tsevi (2014: 57 – 60) have been limited in both scope and methodology. Utuka's (2012: 17) work for instance, was limited to only one private and one PSU and the QA institutions in the two countries concerned. Baryeh's (2009: 7) unpublished Master of Philosophy dissertation has the limitation of being based on document analysis and telephone interviews with a few participants because of financial constraints that prevented the researcher from travelling to Ghana to collect pertinent data. None of these studies have specifically focused on a constructive analysis of the practices, strategies and procedures of the NCTE, the NAB and the mentoring PSU's. Therefore, there is a need for this study to constructively analyse and identify possible aspects that need to be adapted and improved among existing practices and procedures of the NCTE, the NAB and the mentoring PSU's. The area of QA frameworks for universities in Ghana is also understudied leading, to a gap in the literature on QA frameworks for Ghana (Ansah, Swanzy, & Nudzor, 2017: 28). Accordingly, from a theoretical perspective, the proposed tertiary education QA framework by the researcher could contribute to mechanisms for the efficient and effective management and development of quality education standards in Ghana's PUC's.

Fifthly, the recommendations from this study, which are based on the analysis of real practices at the institutional and organisational levels, should contribute to the efforts of

the MoE, the NCTE, the NAB, the PUC's and the mentoring PSU's. When implemented, the recommendations could help these institutions to adapt and improve their practices and procedures to ensure, develop and maintain quality education standards within PUC's in Ghana.

Against the background and rationale outlined above, the next section provides the research problem and the questions that guided this research project.

### **1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND QUESTIONS**

The research problem and questions that provided the focus of this study are attended to below.

#### **1.3.1 Research problem**

Globally, university education has been acknowledged as a decisive factor in the development of a nation's human capital, economic growth and transformation. Additionally, it is a major driving force for development and modernisation, thus there is always increasing demand for quality university education (Teferra & Altbach, 2004: 21; Varghese, 2006: 27; Materu, 2007: 7; Dzidonu, 2016: 11; Dziminska, Fijałkowska, & Sułkowski, 2018: 1). The emergence of PUC's in Ghana has therefore been commended by some as a solution to the inability of the PSU's to accommodate all applicants who qualify for admission to a course (Effah, 2006: 66; Varghese, 2006: 30).

For the citizenry to derive the benefits associated with the provision of tertiary education there must be mechanisms in place to ensure that the quality of education delivered meets acceptable national as well as internationally comparable standards. Accordingly, the NCTE and the NAB were created as regulatory institutions under the MoE with the mandate to ensure quality standards in the tertiary education sector of Ghana (Republic of Ghana, 1991: 6; Republic of Ghana 1993: 1; Republic of Ghana, 2007: 1; Alabi *et al.*, 2018: 3). Notwithstanding the existence and the mandate of these two statutory regulatory institutions, media and research reports suggest a lack of satisfaction with quality standards being observed in some of the PUC's in Ghana. The dissatisfaction and

challenges that arise appear to relate to the below-standard qualifications students have when admitted, institutional inability and the inadequate physical facilities in which some of the PUC's operate (Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 58; Avoke & Avoke, 2014: 39; Kale-Dery, 2018: 38). The above challenges have led to some of the PUC's in Ghana being described as 'glorified' secondary schools and as business opportunities for some entrepreneurs. These entrepreneurs appear not to be concerned about the future of the country and the quality of graduates that graduate there but were more concerned about the profits they make (Avoke & Avoke, 2014: 42; Dattey *et al.*, 2017: 215). As indicated by Avoke and Avoke (2014: 39) and Alabi *et al.* (2018: 3), in 2012, based on the directive of the NAB, more than 50% (26) out of the 46 accredited PUCs had to withdraw a number of their students. These were students who had actually enrolled and completed a first semester's academic work but did not qualify for admission. The question that arises in this instance is how and when the regulatory institutions should actually monitor the entry requirements of students to PUC's in Ghana.

Although the perceptions and descriptions of the PUC's as low quality may provide a good knowledge about the state of PUC's in Ghana, this has not been scientifically proven. By means of a scientific study such as this one, an attempt is made that may help to identify the real issues that have led to the challenges experienced in practice by the NCTE, the NAB and the selected mentoring PSU's when implementing policies and procedures related to education QA mechanisms in PUC's in Ghana. The identification of the challenges has led to the formulation of appropriate recommendations that are trusted could contribute to address the gaps identified in this study.

Furthermore, a gap also appears to exist in the literature on QA mechanisms in the PUC's in Ghana. Varghese (2006: 5) acknowledged that literature on PUC's in Africa is sparse. Similarly, Utuka (2011: 141) stated that not much research has been undertaken on the state of QA and the performance of the NAB with regard to tertiary education in Ghana. A survey of the literature from World Bank reports, development project reports, academic journals, dissertations and theses and reports of non-governmental organisations revealed that, besides the academic work of Barveh (2009), Utuka (2012), Tsevi (2014)

and Alabi *et al.*(2018), studies about PUC's in Ghana have primarily been about the following themes: (1) governance structures in private universities (Tetteh & Ofori, 2010: 234 – 248); (2) the emergence of private universities in Ghana (Effah, 2006: 55 – 73); (3) the performance and challenges of private universities in Ghana and Nigeria (Amponsah & Onuoha, 2013: 256 – 263); and (4) barriers to internal QA in Ghanaian private tertiary institutions (Boateng, *et al.*, 2014: 1 – 9). There are also a host of publications by, and on the NCTE and the NAB. Again, previous studies have either focused on the PUC's alone or on the regulatory institutions alone.

Based on the above challenges, this research investigated the following research problem: *What are the existing QA mechanisms used by the NCTE, the NAB and selected PSU's, and how could these mechanisms be strengthened to ensure successful application of QA at PUC's in Ghana?*

### **1.3.2 Research questions**

In the light of the information presented in the background, rationale and research problem parts above, there appears to be concerns about the quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. These concerns could be attributed to the challenges related to the existing QA mechanisms of the NAB, the NCTE and the mentoring PSU's.

The ability to clearly define research questions is important in qualitative research because it helps to determine the focus of a study, the methods employed as well as what is to be studied (Charmaz, 2006: 33). Unlike quantitative studies where hypotheses are used to determine the parameters of a study (Charmaz 2006: 126), in qualitative research, a wide range of issues and perceptions are explored in order to inductively determine the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2007: 21; Willig, 2013: 99). Basically, the strategy for this research project is based on grounded theory approach. According to Creswell (2007: 19) and Willig (2013: 99), in this type of research the initial research questions should be broad and open-ended and not employ constructs derived from existing theories but should be questions that orientate the researcher towards action and process. The broad research questions are aimed to ensure flexibility in the processes of data gathering and



analysis and in line with the constant comparative approach and iterative nature of grounded theory research (Charmaz, 2006: 29).

The focus of this study is on the mechanisms for QA in the PUC's in Ghana. Accordingly, an evaluation of the above research problem (see Section 1.3.1) necessitates a few complementary research questions. Consequently, this study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- What does tertiary education QA entail and what are the factors that affect tertiary education QA?
- What are the differences between the key indicators and accreditation models of world class tertiary education regulatory institutions and the tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana, and how can best practices from the world class regulatory institutions be used to improve the ways in which the three forms of isomorphic pressures are used by the regulatory institutions of Ghana?
- What is the historical context, and the legal framework, on the establishment and operations of PUC's and tertiary education regulatory institutions in Ghana from 1991 to 2019?
- How has the current level of human capital of the regulatory institutions and other factors contributed to the perceived inability of the regulatory institutions and the mentoring PSU's to ensure, develop and maintain quality education standards in PUCs in Ghana?
- What QA framework and interventions could contribute to ensure, develop and maintain quality tertiary education standards in PUCs in Ghana?

#### **1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

The research aim and objectives are explained below.

##### **1.4.1 Aim**

The main aim of this study was to investigate the existing QA mechanisms used by the NCTE, the NAB and selected mentoring PSU's in an attempt to demonstrate how these

mechanisms could be strengthened to ensure successful application of QA at PUC's in Ghana.

#### **1.4.2 Objectives**

In order to address the research problem, research questions and the primary aim, the following objectives of the study were articulated:

**OBJECTIVE 1:** Provide the general background, rationale and research (methodical) framework, which emphasises and accentuates the importance of the study.

**OBJECTIVE 2:** Reflect upon the literature review of tertiary education QA (discourse) and factors that affect it.

**OBJECTIVE 3:** Outline the theoretical perspectives and conceptual framework that relate to tertiary education QA in Ghana and compare key indicators and accreditation models between world class tertiary education regulatory institutions and tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana.

**OBJECTIVE 4:** Provide a historical context of the legal framework on the establishment and operations of PUC's and tertiary education regulatory institutions in Ghana from 1991 to 2019.

**OBJECTIVE 5:** Analyse the effect of the current QA capacity and mechanisms of tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana and the usefulness of the application of these mechanisms at PUC's.

**OBJECTIVE 6:** Outline the research methodology, design and method used to investigate the research problem.

**OBJECTIVE 7:** Analyse, interpret and discuss the research data and develop, as well as, attempt to demonstrate the applicability of an education QA framework/model and interventions that could contribute to ensure, develop and maintain quality tertiary education standards in PUC's in Ghana; and

**OBJECTIVE 8:** Discuss the realisation of the study aim and objectives, summary of the main conclusions of each chapter, limitations of the study, major findings of the empirical study, recommendations and areas for further research.

The scope and demarcation of the study is provided below.

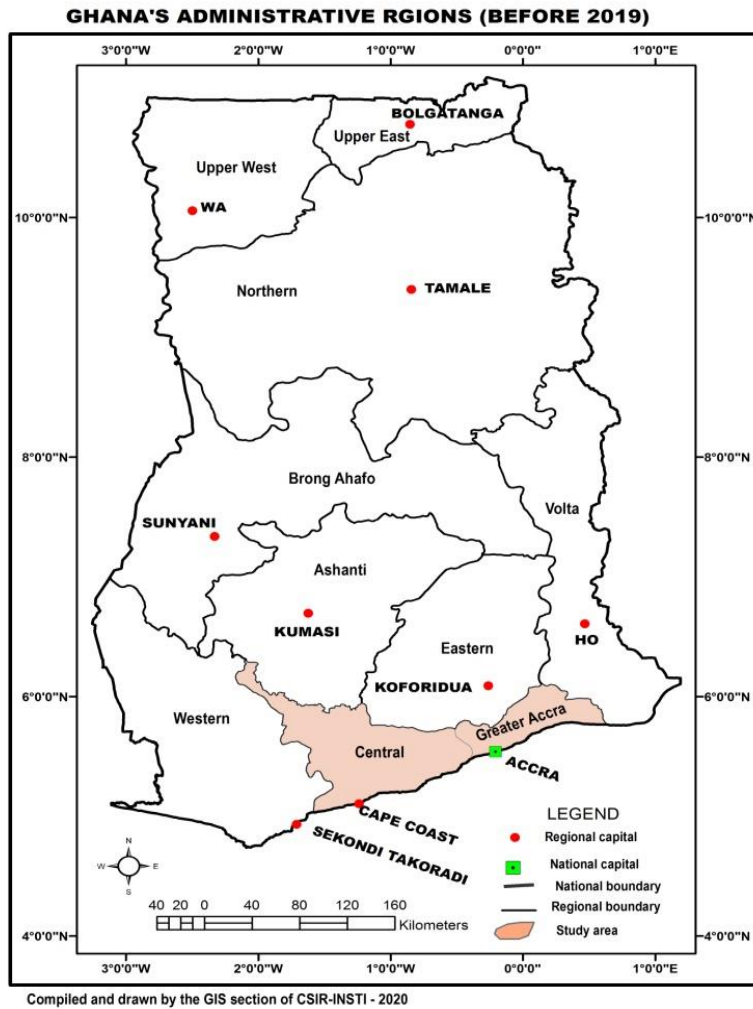
## **1.5 SCOPE AND DEMARCATION**

The focus of this investigation was mainly on the QA mechanisms used by Ghana's NAB, the NCTE, and the selected mentoring PSU's. The key role of these regulatory institutions is to ensure the successful application of mechanisms for ensuring quality education standards in PUC's in Ghana. This study did not consider the effect (outcomes) of the QA mechanisms in the PUC's. Additionally, although the main functions (key performance areas) of a university are, among others, teaching, learning, research and community service, this research project focused mainly on activities and practices related to teaching. Aspects to which the researcher paid attention (to minimise impartiality) are the geographical boundaries, hierarchical dimension and period of study.

### **1.5.1 Geographical boundaries**

As at December 2018, Ghana had ten administrative regions, namely; Greater Accra, Eastern, Central, Western, Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Upper West, Upper East, Northern and Volta as indicated in Figure 1.1 below. Except for one of the selected mentoring PSU's, the University of Cape Coast, which is located in the Central Region of Ghana, all other institutions used for this research are located in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The study therefore did not extend beyond the geographical limits of the Greater Accra and Central Regions of Ghana.

**Figure 1.1: Map of Ghana**



### 1.5.2 Hierarchical dimension

This study was limited to the mechanisms of the institutions under the MoE (namely, National Accreditation Board & National Council for Tertiary Education) that are responsible for ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. Additionally, as part of the requirements of the regulatory institutions, this study also covered the mentoring PSU's; the University of Ghana (hereinafter referred to as 'UG') and the University of Cape Coast (hereinafter referred to as 'UCC'), to which the PUC's were affiliated.

### **1.5.2.1 Ministry of Education**

The MoE has overall responsibility for education at the basic, secondary, technical, vocational and tertiary levels in Ghana, in terms of policy formulation, implementation and evaluation. The responsibilities of the MoE are devolved to various institutions. Of these institutions, the NAB and the NCTE are responsible for tertiary education regulation. Accordingly, the MoE does not play any direct role, but only through the NAB and NCTE, which are all located in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Consequently, no participant was sourced from the MoE but from its designated institutions which are discussed below.

### **1.5.2.2 National Council for Tertiary Education**

The NCTE of Ghana has only one office located in the regional capital city, Accra (see Figure 1). The physical location of the NCTE is on the Trinity College - IPS Road (Lagos Avenue), adjacent to the Chartered Institute of Bankers, East Legon, Accra. The functions of the NCTE with respect to all the tertiary education institutions in Ghana are performed by personnel from this office located in Accra. The NCTE is managed by a nineteen-member council. The council is headed by an Executive Secretary and a Deputy Executive Secretary. Under the Deputy Executive Secretary, there are four units namely; planning, research and policy development, publications and public relations, finance and corporate affairs (Bailey, 2014: 33). The Council has nineteen members comprising people appointed and nominated by various institutions in line with the National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993 (hereinafter referred to as the 1993 National Council for Tertiary Education Act (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.4.1; Annexure 12). In order to gather rich and relevant data as well as achieve the objectives of this research project, the Head of Planning, Research and Policy Development unit was purposively sampled and interviewed.

### **1.5.2.3 National Accreditation Board**

The NAB is responsible for the accreditation and re-accreditation of both public and private sector tertiary institutions and, as such, serves as the QA body at the tertiary education level (Effah, 2003: 57). The physical location of the NAB is also at the Trinity College - IPS Road (Lagos Avenue), adjacent to the Chartered Institute of Bankers, East Legon,

Accra. Thus, both the NCTE and the NAB are located within the same compound but in different buildings in Accra, Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The NAB has fifteen members comprising people appointed and nominated in line with the National Accreditation Board Act 744 of 2007 – hereinafter referred to as the 2007 National Accreditation Board Act (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.3.1; Annexure 10). The Board has different units for its day-to-day administration, one of which is the QA unit. Using the purposive sampling technique, the Head of the QA unit at the NAB was sampled and interviewed. Apart from the participant from the NAB, six other individuals who have at some point been appointed by the NAB to audit and assess PUC's were also sampled and interviewed.

#### **1.5.2.4 Public sector universities**

In Ghana, the affiliation of a PUC to a PSU is one of the requirements of the NAB. Out of the ten PSU's in Ghana two were sampled for this research. The two PSU's sampled were the UG located in Accra in the Greater Accra Region and the UCC located in Cape Coast in the Central Region. The choice of the UG was because it is the university that has the highest number of affiliate PUC's, according to an interview response from head of desk in charge of affiliate university colleges at the UG. The choice of the UCC is because it was the first university in Ghana that established a QA unit (University of Cape Coast Vice Chancellors Annual Report, 2015: 609). From each of these two PSU's, the Head of the Desk in charge of affiliate PUC's was purposively sampled and interviewed.

#### **1.5.2.5 Private university colleges**

For this study, only accredited PUC's that offer degree programmes were included. In this regard, this research covers only the eighty-eight PUC's offering degree programmes as at December 2019 (Republic of Ghana, 2019: 5). From this number, only those PUC's that have been in existence for more than five years were included in the sample for the study because it is believed that they have had sufficient interactions with the NCTE, the NAB and their affiliate PSU's to be able to provide relevant information for this project. Again, private universities that have obtained a Presidential Charter were not considered in this study because it is believed they have met the required quality education standards

set by the NCTE, the NAB, and the mentoring PSU's which enabled them to obtain the Charter Status. When a university college is granted Presidential Charter status, it means such an institution becomes an independent degree awarding university and so will no longer be affiliated to any university for purposes of mentoring and for awarding their degrees (Republic of Ghana, 2007: 5). The participants that were selected from the PUC's were registrars, deans of faculty or heads of department and heads of internal QA units. For purposes of easy accessibility, convenience, time available for the research, and the fact that it is time consuming to conduct interviews, all the PUC's sampled were located in and around Accra in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana.

### **1.5.3 Period of study**

The research project was limited to the period from 2015 – 2019 between which data were collected. No further data were collected after 2019 and as such, the research results reflect practices, procedures, structures and systems on QA that were in place and used by the NAB, the NCTE, the mentoring PSU's and the PUC's during this period.

## **1.6 CONCEPTUALISATION**

Babbie and Mouton (2001: 105) defined conceptualisation as "... the process of clarifying what is meant by the concepts being used in a study." Stated differently and in simpler terms, Babbie and Mouton (2001: 98) indicated that conceptualisation provides meanings of the concepts to be studied. Providing meanings of key concepts used makes it easier for readers to understand concepts and the context within which they are used and thereby avoiding ambiguity. Mouton (1996: 115 – 117) therefore proclaimed that conceptualisation seeks to clarify the meanings of these "highly theoretical and abstract concepts," and renders them "consistent and systematic" as well as "measurable" or "observable."

In the view of Creswell (2007: 18 – 19), in qualitative research there should not be an extensive definition of concepts because the concepts as used and defined by participants provide the real meaning that is of utmost importance. The purpose of defining the concepts used in this study is to ensure that, in a formal research such as this, the

researcher is precise in the use of concepts and also to enable readers to attach correct interpretations to the terms used (Creswell, 2003: 43). The concepts explained below are those that appear repeatedly in the text. Other key concepts used are defined where they appear in the body of the thesis.

This study adopts the UK spelling where, for example, 's' is used instead of 'z' (US spelling) in words such as 'organisation'.

### **Quality assurance in tertiary education**

The term 'QA' is a generic term used to denote a continuous process of all forms of quality monitoring and reviews aimed at assuring stakeholders that the inputs, processes and outcomes meet minimum requirements. Being a generic term, it can be interpreted and applied differently across nations and regions and can cover different situations and practices (Oyewole, 2010: 4). Despite this challenge of a generally applicable definition, some authors have provided some relevant definitions of QA when used to refer to tertiary education institutions.

The term 'QA' when used to refer to tertiary education means a deliberate and methodical procedure through which an institution or its programmes are reviewed and evaluated in order to determine whether set standards for scholarship, education, and infrastructure are developed and maintained (Polit, 2001: 7; Hayward, 2006: 5).

### **Private university college**

A general definition of the term 'private university college' is problematic as there are different forms of private universities depending on ownership, sources of funding and the country requirements. The term 'PUC' is therefore subject to many interpretations and definitions (Kitaev, 1999: 41; Effah, 2006: 55). Despite these factors that create differences in what PUC's are, generally, the term 'PUC' refers to the type of tertiary education offered outside the PSU system. A PUC refers to a non-state tertiary education institution that has not yet gained autonomy and depends on private mechanisms for



finance and control with its own vision and mission (Kitaev, 1999: 41; Amponsah & Onuoha, 2013: 256).

### **Tertiary/higher education**

In this study, the terms 'tertiary education' and 'higher education' are used interchangeably in line with their use by reputable institutions such as the World Bank in many of their reports on education. For example, the 2009 World Bank Report on the "Challenge of Establishing World Class Universities" as well as the 2011 World Bank East Asia and Pacific Regional Report both used the terms 'higher education' and 'tertiary education' interchangeably to refer to any schooling pursued beyond secondary education.

'Tertiary education' refers to the third level of the educational hierarchy after primary and secondary levels of education and is normally pursued in colleges, training institutes, distance learning centres and universities (The World Bank, 1994: ix; Marmolejo, 2016: 7). In Ghana, tertiary education includes the education offered at the Universities, University Colleges, Polytechnics, Colleges of Education and Specialised Institutions (National Accreditation Board 2014: Internet).

### **Accreditation**

Generally, the term 'accreditation' refers to the process of self-study and external review in which an external agency scrutinises the programmes and facilities of higher education institutions for purposes of QA and quality enhancement (Hayward, 2006: 5). In a publication by the NAB on its website under the heading 'Beware, authorisation not accreditation' the NAB explains accreditation of a higher education institution in Ghana as: "... an institution that has been assessed and granted recognition for meeting satisfactory standards in performance, integrity and quality." Such an institution is normally issued with an accreditation certificate (National Accreditation Board 2019: Internet).

## **Culture of quality**

A 'culture of quality' refers to a system of developing a sense of ownership of goals, values and processes of ensuring quality internally. An institution with a 'culture of quality' is one in which there is satisfaction among students, effective communication, active participation of all members, creativity, constant use of internal reviews for improvement and means to ensure that a culture of quality (hereinafter referred to as 'CoQ') is incorporated into the institution's overall strategy (European University Association, 2005: 24). A CoQ also requires open and active commitment to quality at all levels, clarity and consistency of procedures, explicit responsibility of quality control and QA mechanisms for gaining feedback from constituents, commitment to identify and communicate best practices, and prompt managerial action in addressing problems (Bollaert *et al.*, 2007: 16; Yingqiang & Yongjian, 2016: 16).

## **Isomorphism**

Generally, 'isomorphism' refers to the mechanism used to force an organisation which faces the same environmental conditions as another to adopt the latter's processes and structures. Institutional isomorphism then is a situation in which an institution is made to adjust its structures and operations to conform to the requirements of an institution whose standards are regarded as the preferred yardstick. Institutional isomorphism can occur through three means, namely, coercive, normative or mimetic (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983: 149-150).

## **Policy implementation**

'Policy implementation' involves issuing and enforcing of directives, as well as assigning financial and human resources for the consequences of the policy and for the people it affects (Makinde 2005: 63). 'Policy implementation' can also be regarded as the actions taken to bring government decisions into operation in the form of programmes, policies, rules and regulations aimed at improving the wellbeing of the citizenry and to address public problems (DeGroff & Cargo, 2009: 47).

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, DESIGN AND METHOD**

This research project was primarily an exploratory study that adopted the constructivist grounded theory approach to investigate the existing QA mechanisms of the NAB, the NCTE, the UG and the UCC for assuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. Taking into consideration the research problem (see chapter 1, Section 1.3.1) and the aim of this study (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.1), the qualitative research design was deemed as the most appropriate design for this study. The inductive research approach which is normally adopted when qualitative data is collected was used. Accordingly, the methods that were adopted for data collection included; semi-structured personal interviews, document analysis and a literature review. Thus, the researcher was directly involved in the qualitative data collection for this research project. A detailed discussion of the research methodology, design, methods data collection and data analysis is provided in Chapter 6.

## **1.8 EDITING AND REFERENCING**

In this section, the referencing and editing conventions adopted in the research are discussed.

### **1.8.1 Editing**

In order to improve the language, writing style and for technical editing of this research report, a professional language editor was engaged, which helped to assure that the research report meets the standards set by University of South Africa (hereinafter referred to as 'UNISA'). A letter of certification and declaration that this thesis has been professionally edited are attached as Annexure 2. In this project, the UK version of English language was used in the compilation of this manuscript.

### **1.8.2 Referencing**

Several styles of academic referencing exist. One such style is the Harvard Style, which is used in this research report. The choice of the Harvard referencing style is in line with the recommendations of the Department of Public Administration of the University of South Africa. The Harvard reference technique is used in this research because of its

ease of referencing (Bell & Waters, 2014: 8 – 9). In the Harvard referencing style, the quotations and sources used are acknowledged in-text by the surname of the author or the name of the institution or government that authored the document or title of the document, followed by a comma, the date or year of publication, colon and page number(s) from which the quotation is extracted, as in (Effah, 2003: 14).

The bibliography which lists all the sources consulted is arranged alphabetically according to the author's surname, name of institution that authored the document, date of publication, the title of the document, place of publication, and the publisher. This makes the process of referencing simple and guards against overlapping or repetition of authors (Bell & Waters, 2014: 8 – 9).

## **1.9 EXPOSITION OF CHAPTERS**

The thesis consists of eight (8) chapters.

Chapter 1 serves as the basis for the subsequent chapters by providing a general introduction to the research. This introductory chapter elucidates the background and rationale for the research project, statement of the research problem, research questions, aim and objectives of the study based on which the methods of data collection and analysis are briefly discussed. The chapter also provides the scope and limitation of the study plus the definition of key concepts or terminologies used in the research project. Finally, an overview of each of the chapters is provided.

In Chapter 2, literature on the subject matter is reviewed. The chapter presents the different views of scholars on the concept of QA mechanisms, specifically in relation to PUC's. The literature search also focused on best practices and procedures for QA in PUC's around the world and how these mechanisms have influenced the quality of tertiary education provided by the PUC's in Ghana. In the literature search, attention was also paid to the concepts of assessment, audit, accreditation, affiliation, mentoring and institutional isomorphism as strategies for QA.

Chapter 3 provides the theoretical framework for the investigation. That is to say that the models, theories and frameworks that support QA mechanisms for the implementation of policies on quality private tertiary education are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the URC report and the White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991 and other provisions that led to private sector participation in the provision of tertiary education in Ghana. This chapter also examines the legislative instruments that established the NCTE and the NAB, which helped to determine the extent to which the legislative instrument is adequate to ensure that the NAB and the NCTE are able to exercise their mandates to ensure quality education standards in Ghana's PUC's. The chapter also describes the ways in which the three forms of isomorphic pressures (coercive, mimetic and normative) are used by the NCTE, the NAB and the mentoring PSU's to effectively and efficiently contribute to the development and maintenance of quality tertiary education standards in the PUC's in Ghana.

In Chapter 5, data obtained mainly through document analysis and semi-structured interviews are used to provide an overview of PUC's in Ghana, specifically on the ownership structure, governance, entry requirements, staffing, teaching and learning facilities, and sources of funding (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2.1 – 5.2.6). The data obtained also forms the basis for the identification of the challenges and shortcomings associated with the operations of the PUC's that have led to the perceptions and descriptions of PUC's in Ghana as being of low quality. Chapter 5 also provides an overview of the UG and the UCC. Specifically, data were provided on their vision, mission and procedure for institutional affiliation (see Chapter 5.3.1 & 5.3.2. Data obtained in this chapter also contributed to the development of a framework (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.9) aimed at strengthening the existing QA mechanisms of the NCTE, the NAB and the mentoring PSU's.

In Chapter 6, the research methodology design and methods used for the collection, measurement and analysis of data relevant to the problem of the study are discussed.

Because this research project adopted the qualitative approach, the research design and methods helped to explore the existing QA practices in order to identify any shortcomings and challenges associated with their practices.

Chapter 7 presents the findings of this research. Thus, empirical data collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis are analysed, interpreted and discussed in order to address each of the objectives and research questions of this study.

In Chapter 8 of this thesis, a summary of findings for each of the research objectives is presented and conclusions are drawn. Based on the findings and conclusions, recommendations are made for future research regarding QA mechanisms within PUC's. The recommendations and suggestions made are aimed at contributing to the development of a model for QA in PUC's. New insights in the area of Public Administration and Management are also given to broaden the understanding and the role of public institutions in regulating private providers of public services. Other areas in which research could be undertaken include a comparative study of QA mechanisms of PUC's and PSU's.

At the end of the research report, all the references cited in-text as well as appendices are provided.

## **1.10 SUMMARY**

Chapter 1 has provided the conceptual background of the study, namely, the concerns which led to the formulation of the statement of the problem as well as the rationale for the investigation. Based on the stated problem, the research questions and objectives of this inquiry were then indicated. The literature reviewed also helped to indicate current gaps within the research area along with the originality of the present study. The scope of the project has thus been indicated, followed by the overall approach to the study plus the definition of key concepts. This chapter also hinted at the structure of the thesis by briefly indicating the content of each of its eight chapters. Chapter 2 covers the literature review on private tertiary education QA mechanisms.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 1 provided the general framework for this research project. More specifically, it highlighted aspects such as the research problem and questions, aim and objectives, scope and demarcation as well as conceptualisation of key concepts. Additionally, a brief overview of the research methodology, design and methods, structure of the thesis as well as a summary of the issues discussed in the chapter were provided. The objective of this chapter is to complement and supplement the information provided in Chapter 1 through a reflection upon the literature review of tertiary education in the QA discourse and the factors that affect it. Accordingly, this literature review enabled the researcher to appreciate the scholarly perspectives and findings on the mechanisms for QA in tertiary education. In addition, the existing scholarly perspectives served as a context for comprehending and contextualising the various factors that could influence the effectiveness of the mechanisms for QA at the PUC's in Ghana.

In order to provide a coherent analysis of the literature review and to achieve the objective of this chapter, literature was reviewed in the following specific areas:

- History and rationale for the development of quality assurance networks.
- Systems for QA in higher education.
- Purpose and rationale for QA.
- Institutional isomorphism and QA.
- Role of government in QA in higher education.
- Empirical studies on mechanisms to ensure quality standards in tertiary education institutions.
- Best practices in QA.
- Challenges facing implementation of an effective higher education QA system.
- Policy and policy implementation as part of the QA process.

Each of the above areas are discussed and linked to the context of this project. This chapter concludes with a summary. In order to provide a logical understanding of the

purpose of the literature review, the nature and context of a literature review in research is elucidated in the next section.

## **2.2 NATURE AND CONTEXT OF A LITERATURE REVIEW**

Winchester and Salji (2016: 308) have described a literature review as a critical appraisal of the current collective knowledge on a subject. They further indicated that an appraisal of the collective knowledge enables a researcher to have a personal insight regarding the background of a topic, for planning a research project and for placing the results of a research into context. In order to understand the nature and context of a literature review in a research project, this section is organised and discussed under the following sub-headings:

- Aim and objectives
- Importance.
- Criteria.
- Types of sources.
- Organising of the sources.
- Grounded theory research approach

### **2.2.1 Aim and objectives**

The review of literature in this investigation was guided by a particular aim and objectives. The aim provided a broader plan that guided the literature review whereas the objectives were the specific goals achieved in working towards achieving the aim for reviewing literature. More specifically, it was to provide an overview of the scholarly perspectives and findings related to the area of study in order to locate the present research in relation to already conducted work in the field. In addition to the aim for the review of literature, this investigation was guided by the objectives for reviewing literature proposed by researchers such as Boote and Beile (2005: 3), Fox and Bayat (2007: 36), O'Leary (2007: 79) and Creswell (2009: 25). These objectives are as follows, to:

- Place into context, the research topic. The context of this inquiry is shown in the demarcation of this research project (see Chapter 1, Section 1.5).



- Ensure that the current research is not a duplication of previous research. This is demonstrated in the background and rationale of this thesis (see Chapter 1, Section 1.2).
- Identify the research problem and questions which provided the focus for this research project (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3).
- Establish gaps in the extant knowledge and to explore what is yet to be known. Accordingly, it was an initial review of literature for the development of the research plan for this research project which revealed that not much has been documented on the subject matter under investigation (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1).
- Identify key concepts that the researcher focused on throughout the research (see Section 1.6).
- Place each work in the context of its contribution to understanding the research problem being studied (see Chapter 1, Section 1.9) on the exposition of chapters.
- Enhance the researcher's perspective on the subject matter. A review of literature thus aided in the formulation of the questions posed during the semi-structured interviews and for the analysis of all data gathered (see Annexure.9 and Chapter 7).
- Identify the methodological approaches and epistemological assumptions used in past studies; which served as a guide in undertaking this research. This is discussed in Chapter 6 of this thesis where the research plan for conducting this qualitative research project was deliberated on (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.3.4).
- Identify best practices in the area of study. These best practices identified contributed to the development of the suggested framework and interventions for improvement on the mechanisms for QA at the PUC's in Ghana (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.8).

Apart from the aim and objectives for reviewing the literature for a research project, De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2013: 109) have indicated that the following questions should guide the review of literature as well: (1) What have other researchers written about the area of research? (2) Which of the theories put forward by earlier researchers relate to the theme of the current research? (3) What are the recent findings that relate to the

current research project? (4) What are the gaps that have not been addressed by the previous researchers? In addition to the aim and objectives of a literature review, these questions served as a guide in the review of the literature in this thesis.

### **2.2.2 Importance**

According to Mouton (2001: 68) a review of literature is important because it examines the views of other researchers. Similarly, Charmaz (2006: 168) posited that a literature review specifies who carried out earlier researches related to the area of investigation and why and how those projects were carried out. Furthermore, Creswell and Clark (2007: 30) stated that literature is reviewed to provide evidence why the research is relevant and to show the underlying problem addressed in the inquiry. Consequently, research on the mechanisms for QA at the PUC's in Ghana should examine existing literature on this subject matter. Various scholars such as Polit *et al.* (2001: 121), Boote and Beile (2005: 3), O'Leary (2007: 79) and Creswell (2009: 25) also agreed on the importance of a literature review in research projects. Specifically, Winchester and Salji (2016: 308) have outlined the relevance of literature review in a research project as follows:

- Defining and limiting the research.
- Placing the study in historical perspective.
- Avoiding unnecessary duplication.
- Identifying gaps in published research.
- Generating new knowledge.
- Justifying the relevance of the proposed research.
- Evaluating promising research.
- Relating research findings to previous knowledge and suggesting further research.

Accordingly, in a qualitative grounded theory research such as this one, a review of literature enabled the researcher to demonstrate the grasp and skills required in the discussion of the relevant works in the area of the research project. Additionally, the review of literature aided the researcher to establish the connection between earlier works and the current research. The researcher, being a faculty member in one of the PUC's in

Ghana, was privileged to gain first-hand information about the issues of quality and QA. Thus, a review of the relevant literature enhanced the researcher's perspective on the subject matter and therefore the questions posed during the semi-structured interviews and analysis of all data gathered.

### **2.2.3 Criteria**

Various researchers such as Mouton (2001: 90 – 91) and Onwuegbuzie and Frels (2016: 96) have indicated the criteria in determining the important components of a literature review. For example, Mouton (2001: 90 – 91) classified the criteria into the following five indispensable categories, namely; a literature review should be:

- Exhaustive in its handling of the main aspects of the research. This aspect is covered in this chapter (by doing a review of the literature) and in Chapter 3 (by focusing on models and theories that relate to the mechanisms for tertiary education QA and QA practices in some selected countries).
- Fair in its treatment of the various sources that are consulted. This means that the researcher should not approach a research project with a pre-set interpretation. This is dealt with through adherence to the principles of establishing trustworthiness of study results (see Chapter 6, Section 6.5).
- Topical and not dated. This aspect is dealt with in this chapter through a review of relevant literature on the mechanisms for tertiary education QA.
- Not confined to a single type of literature, for example, internet sources. Consequently, this chapter provides literature on the mechanisms for tertiary education QA from a variety of scholarly sources (see Section 2.2.4 below).
- Well organised. The flow of the information is logically organised in this chapter and Chapter 3 to ensure that the reader is able to follow how the issue of tertiary education QA has been studied in various contexts over the years.

In a research project, a good literature review acts as the foundation that enables a researcher to have a clear focus. This can be achieved when a wide range of literature sources are consulted. The types of sources from which literature were gathered are indicated below.

#### **2.2.4 Types of sources**

There are different literature sources, namely; relevant published books, articles from refereed journals, relevant laws and statutes, published and unpublished theses and dissertations, World Bank reports, government publications, institutional annual reports, QA manuals and bulletins, institutional websites, newspaper reports and published and unpublished lectures and interviews. These sources from which literature is gathered can be distinguished as being either primary or secondary (Fox & Bayat, 2007: 36 – 46; Galvan, 2017: 1). In addition to these two categories of sources Winchester and Salji (2016: 12) identified a third category which he referred to as tertiary sources. Each of the categories will be defined here below:

- Primary sources: These are first-hand versions of information which include personal interviews, focus group discussions, questionnaires, field observations and experiments (Galvan, 2017: 1).
- Secondary sources: These are sources that are separated from the actual research area. These include journals, textbooks, newspapers, government publications, World Bank reports and institutional reports (Galvan, 2017: 1).
- Tertiary sources: These include dictionaries, encyclopaedia, bibliography, databases, catalogues and dictionaries (Winchester Salji, 2016: 12).

Any of the above sources that are relevant to a research can provide data and information. However, it is important to critique each source when used through the triangulation technique in order to validate data from the different sources (Perry, 2012: 128). The process of validation contributes to enhance the level of reliability of the findings. Additionally, it is also important to organise the different sources of literature, which is presented in the next section.

#### **2.2.5 Organising of the sources**

The writing process in a literature review requires that the researcher is able to organise and structure findings from all the sources consulted. According to Mouton (2001: 91 – 95), Cronin, Ryan and Coughlan (2008: 6) and De Vos *et al.* (2013: 137 – 140), a

researcher may use a single or a combination of the following schemes to organise a literature review.

- Chronologically or by date of the research: This approach means that the researcher starts with a discussion of the oldest studies until the most recent viewpoints on the topic under review. This approach was adopted in this research project for the in-text referencing.
- By date of publication: This approach is usually used if the order by date of publication represents important events.
- Thematically or by constructs: This means literature is organised around issues or topics rather than the progression of time. Through the analysis of central themes, the researcher could also seek to establish a typology or a classification of key constructs.
- Methodologically: This means the researcher focuses on the different research approaches/methods used. This could be quantitative approaches (surveys), qualitative approaches (case studies) or mixed methods. The approach adopted influences the literature review emphasis. This study adopted the qualitative method to explore the mechanisms for QA at the PUC's in Ghana (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.3).
- School of thought, definition and theory: This means the researcher focuses on the most relevant theories, models or definition of a specific phenomenon (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3).
- Hypothesis: Here the researcher organises the thoughts articulated by the various sources consulted around a main claim that the findings must confirm or disapprove.
- Case study: In instances where the units of analysis are too extensive, the researcher focuses the literature review around instructive examples of the phenomenon under review.

This research project involved a mix of several schemes to organise the literature review, namely, methodology, themes, chronology and school of thought. These varied organising principles were necessary because the researcher found that literature was limited on the mechanisms for QA at PUC's in a developing country such as Ghana. Much of the existing

literature and the models for QA were on the developed countries and therefore lack context-specific directives on QA at PUC's in Ghana. It was therefore important to understand how various scholars have over the years studied the construct empirically in many different countries (see Chapter 2, Section .2.9).

Among the different qualitative research approaches, the grounded theory approach was adopted for this study. In the next section, the different schools of thought on the appropriateness of literature review when the grounded theory research approach is adopted for a study are elucidated.

### **2.2.6 Grounded theory research approach**

This study adopted the grounded theory research approach. According to Charmaz (2006: 165), the discourse on whether or not literature should be reviewed and when literature should be reviewed when undertaking grounded theory research has been a subject of interest, dispute and misunderstanding. Classical grounded theorists such as Glaser and Strauss (1967: 37) and Glaser (1992: 31) posited that the researcher should not review literature in the substantive area at the beginning of the research but rather after data analysis and the writing of the research report. These classical grounded theorists' view is supported by Thornberg and Charmaz (2012: 62), who argued that delaying literature review prevents the preconceived ideas of the researcher from influencing the emergent theory. They further argued that delaying the literature review prevents the researcher from side-tracking and repeating irrelevant anecdotal ideas. Contrary to the classical grounded theorists' view, Strauss and Corbin (1998: 51) and Hussein *et al.* (2017: 1200) suggested that the researcher has to do a literature review at the beginning of the research in order to enable the researcher to formulate research questions, identify the aim of the study and recognise the key concepts related to the theme. Strauss and Corbin (1998: 47) also affirmed the need for a literature review in grounded theory research approach since it assists the analysis of data and for purposes of increasing theoretical sensitivity. Theoretical sensitivity in grounded theory research means that the researcher should move from the descriptive level to the analytical level during data analysis (Charmaz, 2008: 36). Furthermore, Charmaz (2006: 166 – 168) indicated that reviewing the literature

in grounded theory research assists to situate the research within a body of related literature, gives credibility to the research report and strengthens the research arguments as well as sets the stage for the other chapters of the research report. Secondary data obtained through the literature review therefore give a researcher a proper overview of the area being researched. Above all, the need to review the literature, when undertaking research, is a requirement at the University of South Africa (UNISA, 2016: 11). Accordingly, the review of literature before the empirical research aided in achieving the following:

- Identification of the key concepts (see Chapter 1, Section 1.6).
- Formulation of the research problem and questions (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3).
- Outlining the aim of this study (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.1).
- Placing the research in historical perspective (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4).

Regardless of the justification for a review of the literature for research projects, Charmaz (2006: 166) cautions that, in grounded theory research, the literature review should be purposeful and focused. Correspondingly, Hussein *et al.* (2017: 1201) argued that, in a qualitative grounded theory study such as this one, the literature review should be a multistage, nonlinear, iterative and integrative process. In effect, the literature review continues throughout the entire process of data collection, analysis and the writing of the final research report. Charmaz (2006: 166) therefore argued that what is important is for the researcher to indicate preconceptions and for the debate to move away from when literature is reviewed to how and for what purpose the literature review is done. These precautionary measures suggested by Charmaz and Hussein *et al.* (2017:1201) guided this research project on the mechanisms for QA at PUC's in Ghana.

In the light of these observations, it is logical to conclude that it is important to do a suitable and appropriate literature review even when the grounded theory research approach was adopted as is the case in this research project. Accordingly, the above sections have deliberated on the nature and context of a literature review, as well as the justification for the review of the literature, more particularly within the setting of the grounded theory

approach. In the next section, the key concepts used in this research project are identified and clarified in order to avoid ambiguity.

## **2.3 CONCEPTUALISATION OF QUALITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE**

As indicated by Strauss and Corbin (1998: 51) and Hussein *et al.* (2017: 1200) (see Chapter 2, Section 6.6), a review of the literature enables a researcher to identify the key concepts related to a study. Accordingly, two of the key concepts used in this research project are clarified below.

The two concepts 'quality' and 'QA' are much sought after in the tertiary education field and serve as a basic foundation for the successful application of QA mechanisms at PUC's in Ghana. These terms have been a subject of extensive debate in the QA circles of the NCTE and the NAB. Obviously, these terms mean different things to different stakeholders, and this can lead to debates over the legitimacy associated with the QA in tertiary education in Ghana. Although these concepts have been briefly defined in Chapter 1 (see Section 1.6), this section provides further clarification of the two key terms in order to make them clearer and easier to understand in the context in which the concepts are used in this research report. Thus, the different perspectives from earlier researchers of what quality and QA means are reviewed in order to understand and apply the terms appropriately throughout this thesis.

### **2.3.1 Quality**

The concept of 'quality' was originally associated with the manufacturing industry which is profit-centred (Green, 1994:17; Anderson, Johnson & Milligan, 2000: 4; Makel, 2017: 25). However, the debates around quality have been extended to the education sector as well and in this context it is more challenging and complex (Green, 1994: 17; Harman & Meek, 2000: 8; Weir, 2009: 62). When quality is used in the manufacturing industry with reference to its outputs in the form of products, it is not difficult to measure because its outputs are tangible. However, education is a service industry and therefore does not produce tangible items. There even appears to be much confusion about the use of the concept 'quality' in practical terms. The processes and outputs of education are value-



laden. The reason is that different groups of stakeholders in education have different interests and perspectives (Green, 1994: 22). Furthermore, the concept of 'quality' is also nebulous and controversial because of the varied definitions that exist in the literature. As a result of these challenges, some have considered any attempt to have a universally accepted definition of quality as an endless effort (Blackmur, 2004: 105; Lim, 2010: 213; Weir, 2009: 62; 2014: 2).

In order to address these difficulties in finding a definition for quality when used in the higher education context, an array of categorisations and definitions have been offered such as: quality as an exception, quality as perfection, quality as fitness for purpose, quality as value for money, quality as threshold, quality as enhancement, and quality as transformation (Campbell & Rozsnyai, 2002: 21; Vlasceanu *et al.*, 2004: 46 – 47; Simona *et al.*, 2013: 953). Out of these categorisations, the European Students Information Bureau (hereinafter referred to as 'ESIB') [2002: 9 – 10], Materu, (2007: xiv) and Weir (2009: 61) indicated that the most widely accepted criterion out of these categorisations that is adopted when defining quality in higher education is 'fitness for purpose'. Education is of a high quality or of value if it fulfills the customers' needs and conforms to the standards as defined by the relevant academic and professional institutions (Deming, 1986: 5; Vlasceanu *et al.*, 2004: 46; Materu, 2007: xiv). In the context of higher education, students are one of the main groups of customers who must be satisfied with the services offered by the relevant higher education institution.

According to ESIB (2002: 10), although the adoption of this criterion does not completely solve the problem of what quality in higher education means, it moves the discussion forward by narrowing the understanding of quality to the goal, expectations and standards set by the stakeholders of higher education. In effect, education is of a high quality if it meets the stakeholders' standards. Alternatively, some contributors such as Harvey and Knight (1996: 15 – 16), Harman and Meek (2000: iv), Watty (2003: 215) and Vroeijenstijn (2014: 48) have attempted to define quality in relation to the outcomes of higher education. For example, Harman and Meek (2000: iv) defined quality in higher education as a "... judgment about the level of goal achievement and the value and worth of that

achievement. It is a judgment about the degree to which activities or outputs have desirable characteristics, according to some norms or against particular specified criteria or objectives.”

Apart from the challenge when quality management concepts are applied to higher education, there are institutional limitations. The academic culture of educational institutions is also quite strong and resistant to the concept, principles and practices of quality because of the culture of collegiality in higher education institutions (Blackmur, 2004: 105; Manatos, Sarrico & Rosa, 2015: 11). In a collegial culture, there is mutual respect, feeling of belongingness and each faculty members' contribution is valued. This type of culture makes the academic community to have a strong culture that cannot be easily manipulated. Consequently, the principles and practices of quality that are applicable to industry may not be successful in a culture of collegiality. Additionally, the requirements of quality for industry products differ from those of education. Academic quality is related to quality of teaching and learning, research and administrative quality (Massy, 2003: 165; Weir, 2009: 62; Houston, 2007: 63). In order to provide an acceptable definition of the term 'quality', when used in relation to higher education, the ESIB (2002: 9 – 10), Materu, (2007: xiv) and Weir (2009: 61) positions stated earlier in section 2.3.1, paragraph 2 is relevant. Thus, it is imperative to ensure that the criteria that must be met to achieve the expected quality standards are clearly spelt out for those who monitor and assess quality standards. Although education is viewed as a service industry, it differs from other services. What makes it different from other services are factors such as special systems and procedures, unique organisational designs, distinctive organisational cultures as well as management approaches common to the educational sector. Beckford (2002: 23) argued that these factors could hinder the application of the term 'quality' and achievement of quality in education. Despite these arguments of the non-applicability of the quality concept to higher education, Kashy (2012: 44) believed that the basic tools and principles used in QA in industry could be applied to higher education.

Thus, drawing from the aforementioned discourses by scholars and practitioners in the literature reviewed above, it is evident that the term 'quality' can be applied to higher

education when the necessary preconditions for determining the quality of higher education are clearly outlined. Once these measures meet the expectations of the stakeholders, the higher education offered can be judged as fit for purpose and of quality standard. Accordingly, this study is guided by the perspective on quality by the ESIB (2002: 10) and Materu (2007: xiv). These scholars indicated that education is of quality if it fulfils the customers' needs and conforms to the standards as defined by the higher education institution, QA institutions or relevant academic and professional institutions.

### **2.3.2 Quality assurance**

The term 'QA' is a generic term and the meaning differs in dissimilar national and regional contexts (European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2009: 12). As a result, the practices of QA and the roles played by various stakeholders vary across countries (Campbell & Rozsnyai, 2002: 31; Martin & Stella, 2007: 34). Similar to the concept of 'quality', which first emerged in the business sector in the Western world and was applied to the manufacturing sector, is the concept of QA. The term QA was at first used in the manufacturing sector with the aim to ensure that the specifications set for products were met (Ashcroft & Rayner, 2012: 22; Li, 2014: 260).

Barnett (1992: 119) challenged the adoption of the concept QA into higher education because QA involves the implementation of systems, regulations and procedures that serve as a checklist. Accordingly, Barnett (1992: 119) stated that "... such a single-minded check-list approach to safe-guard quality is misguided, ineffective and pernicious ..." and thus inappropriate when used for higher education. Furthermore, Barnett (1992: 119) argued that the checklist approach leads to a variety of window-dressing that cannot be verified during institutional visits which are conducted within a short period of time. In addition, Strydom and Strydom, (2004: 110) suggested that the checklist approach does not create the necessary conditions for the development of a quality culture. In effect, these scholars disputed the appropriateness of the concept of QA in higher education.

Despite the above views, challenging the appropriateness of the term QA in higher education, it is now accepted and used to ensure that acceptable standards in higher

education are developed and maintained. Accordingly, the ESIB (2002: 9) contended that QA has been accepted and used as a means to ensure the delivery of quality standards of education to the citizenry. Furthermore, Singh (2010: 190) stated that, with its commencement in the manufacturing sector, the boundaries of QA have extended to and beyond higher educational institutions to cover the institutions that ensure quality. Singh (2010: 190) referred to the extension of the term QA to cover higher education regulatory institutions as a double mechanism because it involves assuring the quality of the agency responsible for QA. One of the measures aimed to ensure that higher education standards in various countries meet the minimum standards, is the establishment of an international association comprising the QA institutions in the world, known as the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as 'INQAAHE') [Van Damme, 2001: 33; Stensaker, 2003: 152; Woodhouse 2007: 3; Blackmur, 2008: 723]. Based on these developments, Singh and Lange (2007: 201) declared that QA in higher education has expanded geographically, politically and professionally through practices such as the adoption of the set of guidelines and principles by the INQAAHE. The guidelines and principles adopted include the 'Guidelines of Good Practice' for QA agencies in 2005 and the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (hereinafter referred to as 'ESG') by the European Ministers of Education in 2005. The ESG was subsequently revised in 2015. The key goal of the ESG is "... to contribute to the common understanding of quality assurance for learning and teaching across borders and among all stakeholders" (ESG, 2015: 6). Additionally, INQAAHE established the European Quality Assurance Register in 2008. The European Quality Assurance Register is the European Higher Education official register of Quality Assurance Agencies, listing all higher education institutions that significantly comply with the ESG. As such, the ESG is the reference document used for internal and external QA by all institutions and QA agencies (Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2015: 6).

In addition, the researched literature also shows that QA in education involves many different groups. As a result of the many groups involved in educational QA, it is more complex than the practice of QA in the manufacturing sector (Vroeijenstijn, 2014: 44). The

customers of higher education include policy makers, tax payers, employers, managers, students, parents and lecturers and each of these customers may have their own purposes and views about the quality and role of higher education (Ashcroft & Rayner, 2012: 19; Effah, 2014: 10; Al Tobi & Duque, 2015: 41).

The aforementioned discussions show that the term 'QA' has been accepted in the management of higher education despite its complexity due to the many groups involved. Once the term 'QA' has been accepted and used in education, several definitions have been offered. The NAB, which is one of the two institutions responsible for QA in higher education institutions in Ghana, has provided on its website a working definition of QA as: "... the continuous and systematic act of reviewing structures, systems and practices towards the attainment of a desired end" (National Accreditation Board 2019: Internet). From a broader perspective, QA refers to the procedures, processes and systems used by the higher education institutions in their respective countries to safeguard and improve the quality of its education and other activities (Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council, 2008: 27). QA also serves as a means used to assure that the quality and standard of education provision are maintained and developed (Polit, Berk, & Hungler, 2001: 7; European Students Information Bureau, 2002: 7). Taking into consideration the focus of this research project, which is on QA mechanisms, one of the definitions of QA relevant to this research is as follows: "... an all-embracing term covering all the policies, processes and actions through which the quality of higher education is maintained and developed" (Campbell & Rozsnyai, 2002: 33). Similarly, Vlăsceanu *et al.* (2004: 47) explained QA as a comprehensive term that refers to an on-going, continuous process used to evaluate, assess, monitor, guarantee, maintain and improve the quality of higher education systems, institutions or programmes. Thus, the definitions provided in this paragraph encapsulate the mechanisms required to ensure quality standards of education in the higher education institutions of Ghana.

From the above definitions of QA, it is apparent that QA is both a formative and summative activity by the higher education institution itself or by an external agency. As a formative activity, QA refers to a continuous process in which educational institutions are monitored

and evaluated on a continuous basis in order to improve upon the quality of education standards being observed by the institutions. Being a summative activity, QA refers to assessment at the end of the process to determine whether an education institution has complied with set standards. The summative approach is for the purposes of accountability (Kis, 2005:10; Simona, Mariana, & Valentina, 2013: 953). Kis (2005:10) therefore concluded that QA serves as a regulatory mechanism that adopts a formative approach for the purposes of improvement and a summative approach for the purposes of accountability. These requirements of improvement and accountability may be performed as mandated by the state directly or through regulatory institutions to protect stakeholders from low quality higher education providers. In this research, QA is viewed as the systems, policies, structures, practices and procedures in place to ensure that the quality of education offered by the PUC's in Ghana is 'fit for purpose'.

Quality and QA are also indispensable components that help to ensure excellence and success in higher education. As a result of the indispensable role of QA it has acquired a global coercive visibility and gained support from regional and international institutions. These institutions include, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (hereinafter referred to as 'OECD'), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (hereinafter referred to as 'UNESCO'), Association of African Universities (hereinafter referred to as 'AAU'), the World Bank and INQAAHE (Campbell & Rozsnyai, 2002:15; Hendell & Lewis, 2005: 244; Weir, 2009: 61; Cao & Li, 2014: 65). For example UNESCO, through the International Institute for Educational Planning (hereinafter referred to as 'IIEP') has developed programmes towards ensuring quality standards of education in the tertiary education sector and has several publications on QA in higher education. An example of the publications on QA in higher education by UNESCO which was authored by Martin and Stella. (2007) was 'External quality assurance in education: Making choices' (UNESCO, 2007). Similarly, Lewis, Friedman and Schoneboom, (2010: 36) affirmed that realising the importance of QA in higher education, the AAU with assistance from the Ford Foundation, also has programmes for developing QA systems in African Universities. Specifically, the AAU and the World Bank have collaborated towards ensuring quality standards of education in the higher education institutions in

Africa in various areas. Oyewole (2006: 14) identified these areas as: (1) the strengthening of the internal QA units of various higher education institutions; (2) the strengthening of external QA institutions to perform their monitoring and evaluation roles; and (3) the development as well as implementation of a Regional Framework on Recognition of Studies and Certificates from higher education institutions in Africa. The relative importance of quality and QA has also led to its acceptance and focus by governments in the provision of education to the citizenry through the establishment of QA initiatives and institutions as a way to regulate and ensure quality (Martin & Stella, 2007: 35; Lim, 2010: 213).

Sawyer (2004: 214) acknowledged that a significant body of scholarly works on how quality can be ensured and assured in higher education, especially in developed countries such as the USA, Australia, New Zealand and the UK, exist. However, limited research exists on developing countries, including Ghana. The scholarly works on developed countries such as those by Wellman (1998: 1 – 10), European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (2012: 1 – 30), Shah, Nair and Wilson (2012: 475 – 483), Eaton (2015: 1 – 10), Kinser and Lane (2017: 1 – 27) and Brown, Kurzwell, and Pritchett (2017: 1 – 41) indicated the institutions responsible for QA, the methodologies employed, the outcome and the uses of QA results as well as the formation of QA networks.

Quality and QA are two terms that are often used by the QA agencies and networks. Both are two aspects of quality management. While some quality and QA activities are interrelated, the two are defined differently. Typically, the term 'quality' when used to describe higher education refers to set standards of higher education that are fit for purpose whereas QA refers to the systems and practices that must be in place to achieve the set standards. With its emergence from the developed countries, networks have been developed with the aim to ensure there are set standards and systems in place to ensure quality in the provision of tertiary education.

The following section presents a brief overview of the history and rationale for the development of QA networks at the international and national levels.

## **2.4 HISTORY AND RATIONALE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY ASSURANCE NETWORKS**

The realisation of the essential role of QA mechanisms in the provision of tertiary education has been the driving force behind national and international networks for QA. According to Kinser and Lane (2017: 6) the first external QA agencies, called ‘accreditors,’ were founded in the USA by professional institutions such as the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology and Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing. These agencies were independent of government. Woodhouse, (2012: 8) indicated that there was limited governmental involvement at that time as a result of the negative national attitude towards government control. Despite the limited government involvement, Kinser and Lane (2017: 6) indicated that the federal government still developed the relevant policies and provided funding to the higher education institutions. Kinser and Lane (2017: 6) further revealed that the UK was the next country to establish an external QA agency in 1960. Unlike that of the USA, where the external QA agencies were independent of government, that of the UK had governmental involvement. Kinser and Lane (2017: 6) identified the third wave after the establishment of QA agencies by the USA and the UK as the worldwide establishment of external QA agencies by many other countries.

From these different country-specific QA agencies, the INQAAHE was formed in 1991 in Hong Kong by a few agencies (Blackmur, 2008: 723). Currently, about three hundred QA agencies from different countries are members of INQAAHE (International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education Members 2021: Internet). Van Damme (2001: 9) identified the other regional networks that exist to include: Asian Pacific Region (hereinafter referred to as APQN), Latin America and Spain (hereinafter referred to as RIACES), Africa (AfriQAN), the Arab Region (hereinafter referred to as ANQAHE), Europe (hereinafter referred to as ENQA) and Central Europe (hereinafter referred to as CEENQA). Woodhouse (2012: 12) indicated that all these regional networks were formed with the aim of sharing best practices among the national QA agencies. Woodhouse further stressed that the formation of the regional networks is for international recognition of the higher education programmes provided by the relevant countries.



Although the sharing of best practices between members of regional networks may be a laudable approach for improving the QA system of each country, it may be necessary to pay attention to the culture and the academic system of each country (Morse, 2006: 245). Tsevi (2015: 8) therefore argued that the QA programmes adopted from developed countries by developing countries should be "... modified to suit the conditions prevailing in each country by being simple in design, modest in expectations and realistic in requirements." Furthermore, Lim (2001: 81) extended the point made by Tsevi and suggested that QA systems should have simpler quality management systems and simpler internal and external systems. Similarly, in a study carried out by Ansah (2015: 132) on Ghana, the author indicated that, international literature on QA in developed countries abounds and could be helpful in designing context-specific frameworks for higher education institutions in Africa. However, Ansah (2015: 132) cautioned that there is the need to be careful in the adoption of such frameworks as there could be challenges in their implementation. Globalisation and the need for a higher education institution system to be internationally recognised do not mean the adoption of international standards without taking into consideration the local context. Accordingly, Becket and Brookes (2006: 123) submitted that, despite the increase in research on higher education, no specific approach has been identified as the best approach to ensure quality. Consequently, Ansah (2015: 132) argued that, although some QA practices are regarded as among the best examples that could be followed, there could be challenges in the implementation of every QA system if not properly planned. In order to address these challenges, effective planning and commitment to any framework that recognises the context in which the framework will be applied and aimed at enhancing quality, is required.

The brief historical development of QA agencies has been discussed, indicating the rationale behind the formation of such external QA agencies. These networks have facilitated the assurance of quality in their countries and at the international level. However, there is no universally accepted QA framework. Each country must develop a framework that suits its conditions.

An overview of the nature and components of the systems for higher education QA is presented in the next section.

## **2.5 SYSTEMS FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

In order to guarantee QA of higher education, there is the need to make certain that there are systems in place to ensure that acceptable standards of education are observed. The systems in place for QA could be established by an association different from the institution being regulated (external) or by the institution itself (internal) or both (Martin & Stella 2007: 34).

The two systems for QA; internal QA and external QA, are discussed in sub-section 2.5.1 and sub-section 2.5.2 below.

### **2.5.1 Internal quality assurance**

As the name suggests, internal QA means that the higher education institution has internal structures, policies, practices and procedures in place to ensure quality. According to Martin and Stella (2007: 34) and Boateng *et al.* (2014: 1) the role of internal QA systems is to enable institutions to achieve their reasons for existence and to meet the standards of higher education set by the country in which they operate. Such internal QA mechanisms have been described

by Martin and Stella (2007: 35) as an 'intra-institutional' practice to monitor and improve the quality of tertiary education. The term 'intra-institutional' means that the task of internal QA is the responsibility of the relevant tertiary education institution itself. Accordingly, the policies, procedures and structures that would enable institutions to monitor and improve their practices in order to ensure quality tertiary education standards should be in place.

Internal QA further involves self-review. The practice of self-review is a basic component and requirement by the external QA agencies. Apart from being a requirement by the regulatory agencies, it also forms the standard against which the tertiary education institution evaluates itself in terms of the achievement of its mission and goals. The method of self-review varies from country to country. For example, in the UK, manuals

are provided by the QA agencies to institutions to guide them in their self-reviews (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2009: 7). Correspondingly, in Ghana a document titled “The National Accreditation Board, Ghana Roadmap to Accreditation” (see Annexure 3) on its website is provided to PUC’s to guide them through the process. The establishment of an internal QA unit is also a statutory requirement for tertiary education institutions in Ghana (The National Accreditation Board Guidelines for Private Tertiary Institutions offering Degree Programmes 2014: Internet). Actually, it is expected of all tertiary education institutions to establish an internal QA unit within five years from accreditation.

In Ghana, the functions of the internal QA unit as indicated on its website include the following: (1) development of the capacity of staff; (2) being accountable for activities towards institutional and programme accreditation as well as re-accreditation; (3) development and dissemination of quality benchmarks to all staff; and (4) establishment of mechanisms to give and receive feedback from students and staff (National Accreditation Board Guidelines for Private Tertiary Institutions offering Degree Programmes 2014: Internet). Accordingly, internal QA assists to fulfill the accountability role to external stakeholders and serves the institution to enhance its core function and thus facilitates the development of an institution’s quality assurance culture (hereinafter referred to as ‘QAC’) [Shah, 2013: 358]. The internal QA units also serve as a mechanism for self-regulation. Blackmur (2004: 106) and Weir (2009: 69) emphasised that self-regulation as a QA mechanism is a preferred model because it allows for academic freedom, institutional autonomy and also enables universities to demonstrate their credibility in a competitive tertiary education sector. Jackson (1997: 51) has indicated the characteristics of an ‘ideal type’ of self-regulation as follows:

- Resilient internal review system.
- Focus on self-assessment.
- An acceptable level of external peer evaluation.

Jackson (1997: 51) was further of the view that the QA practices of the UK higher education institutions meet the terms of the above characteristics. In addition, Lockett

(2007: 10) argued that in order to have an effective internal QA, academic freedom should be exercised with academic responsibility. Internal QA is also regarded as relevant because it: (1) ensures sustainable improvement; (2) promotes innovation through the avoidance of inflexibility and conservativeness; (3) minimises bureaucracy; and (4) reduces the workload of academic staff (Kis, 2005: 19; Harvey & Stensaker, 2008: 434; Weir, 2009: 66; Makel, 2017: 25). Similarly, Sursock (2011: 9) affirmed that internal QA is preferred to external QA because sustainable development relies on internal engagement. Specifically, internal QA is preferred for the following reasons:

- Internally-driven improvement can be problem-driven, which is easier to address in order to work towards improvement than externally initiated processes.
- External QA is accountability-driven without a clear understanding of the internal needs of the higher education institutions.
- External reviews are expensive because of the diverse institutions involved in higher education regulation.
- External reviews inhibit innovation because of the rigid and conservative evaluation criteria which are not compatible with the broader changes occurring in the higher education sector (Harvey, 2002: 10; Kis, 2005: 14 – 16).

Although there is no single internal QA model that fits all tertiary education institutions, the Inter-University Council of East Africa (2010: 6) suggested that every tertiary education institution's internal QA system should adhere to the steps of the Deming cycle, namely plan, do, check and act. The Deming cycle is a continuous quality improvement model that consists of four systematic steps for improving the processes of an institution. In the Deming's cycle, the first step requires the higher education institution to set goals and identify the processes to be used to achieve the goal (Plan). The second step involves putting into action what has been planned (Do). The third step involves monitoring and evaluating the actions being taken based on the standards set and specifications set at the planning stage (Check). The last step involves taking action to improve upon results achieved and to exceed the standards set (Act) (Isniah, Purba & Debora, 2020: 73). The Plan, Do, Check and Act as a model (Deming steps) for continuous improvement means the higher education institution itself will be able to continuously take corrective action in

order to improve upon its processes and practices as part of its internal higher education QA mechanism.

Jordens and Zekpe (2009: 279) also noted a new approach to QA where evaluation is not done by external auditors but by the university's own teaching team (internally). Such a practice results in a shift from compliance to ownership of the QA process. In light of the above, Harvey and Williams (2010: 81) advocated an open and honest self-criticism that aids improvement rather than compliance with external agency requirements. In order to derive the full benefits of internal QA, internal staff must: (1) accept that there is the need for improvement on their current standard of education; (2) identify what needs to be improved and the processes that can be used for improvement; and (3) be motivated by the benefits of sustainable improvement that could be derived through effective internal QA practices. Thus, without a self-desire to improve, any effort will be for purposes of compliance with external directives, which may not be sustainable.

Based on the results of a research undertaken between 1993 – 2001 on UK higher education institutions in England and Northern Ireland, the Chief Executive of the Quality Assurance Agency (hereinafter referred to as 'QAA') affirmed the benefits of internal QA (Harvey & Newton, 2004: 158). The research findings indicated that a focus on internal QA practices in these institutions facilitated the development of a robust QAC that was consistent with students' expectations. It also led to a high level of commitment from the faculty members. Similarly, results of a study of New Zealand universities by Weir (2009: 69) indicated that academic staff agreed that quality is best ensured when managed by the university itself. These findings affirm the need for emphasis on internal QA. Thus, Brown *et al.* (2017: 4) suggested that the best approach for higher education QA is to have the institution adopt a 'management-based' approach to QA. In a management-based approach the higher education institution determines its quality education goals and plans how to work to achieve those goals. Additionally, Brown *et al.* (2017: 4) suggested that an external regulator's role should only be to act as a 'third party' to check how the higher education institution is working to achieve its own set standards. They therefore recommended that external regulators should adopt an evaluation process that

uses peer institutions that are performing well as a benchmark. This they believed will motivate other less performing institutions to emulate and to improve.

In summary, internal QA implies the higher education institution itself is responsible for ensuring quality standards in its practices. For internal QA to be effective, staff must understand and own the QA process. Once there is ownership of the QA process it could result in sustainable improvement and the development of a better QAC in education.

The next section examines the role of internal QA in the development of a QAC.

#### **2.5.1.1 The role of internal quality assurance in the development of a quality assurance culture**

The European University Association (2005: 10) defined a QAC as "... an organisational culture that intends to enhance quality permanently." Correspondingly, the European University Association (2006: 10) and Sursock (2011: 6) stated that a QAC is characterised by two distinct elements. One is the cultural/psychological element of shared values, beliefs, expectations and commitment towards quality. The other is a structural/managerial element with defined processes that enhance quality with the view to coordinate individual efforts. The cultural/psychological elements and the structural/managerial elements must work hand in hand through effective communication and other participatory activities (such as, peer reviews and focus group discussions). Bronius and Neverauskas (2009: 1073) and Vettori (2012: 1) stated that a QAC is not the same as QA although it is part of the process of QA. Sursock (2011: 50) argued that a QAC can be developed as part of the QA process through the development of effective strategies that have management structures that provide clear goals and responsibilities. These structures and strategies must be built on institutional identities that do not necessarily have to be totally changed. Sursock (2011: 6) further proposed that the development of a QAC must be based on the concept of a shared, owned and nurtured value system of an institution. Consequently, QAC results from the establishment of internally accepted quality monitoring and assessment mechanisms that are complied with in the day-to-day operations of an institution. Thus, the development of a QAC

requires everyone in the institution, not just the quality controllers, to be responsible for ensuring quality (European Students Information Bureau, 2002: 8; Strydom & Strydom, 2004: 111; Vettori, 2012: 1). In this regard, Harvey and Stensaker (2008: 428) suggested that it is not enough to have only formal structures to ensure and guarantee that an educational institution will develop, ensure and maintain quality in its operations. It is equally important to ensure the active involvement of all the stakeholders in the QA process. To affirm Harvey and Stensaker's position, Ehlers (2009: 346) and Vettori (2012: 24) mentioned that stakeholder involvement is essential in order to provide the opportunity to obtain a balance between the views of regulators, academics, administrators and students. In effect, a QAC relies on the context rather than mere procedures to be implemented. When the concept of QAC is understood as a matter of context rather than a set of procedures, it serves as an analytical tool that helps to reflect on an institution's current strategy, practices and principles for building the foundation for future enhancement (Harvey & Stensaker, 2008: 534).

In order to build a QAC, there is also the need to have knowledge about an institution's successes and failures. Furthermore, using the bottom-up approach, all stakeholders should be involved in a discussion of the benefits of a QAC and for the development of a mission statement that serves as the yardstick for quality (European University Association, 2005: 18). Additionally, the development of an effective QAC requires institutional members to understand the institutional principles, the existing culture and environmental conditions (Ehlers, 2009: 346; Vettori, 2012: 2). Doval, Bondrea and Negulescu (2011: 1060) therefore avowed that, although activities such as external reviews and accreditation as well as internal reviews are essential in the development and enhancement of quality education standards, they do not by themselves guarantee the existence of a QAC. A high level of commitment is important as an indication of how people feel about quality and their personal commitment to strive for quality. Thus, in a well-established QAC, everyone in the higher education institution understands and accepts the responsibility to ensure quality standards in every aspect of the higher education system. This can be done through an effective and evolved community in which there is change in values and attitudes of all members of the institution (European

University Association, 2005: 10; Loukkola & Zhang, 2010: 32; Simona *et al.*, 2013: 966; European University Association, 2014: 11).

Although QA in higher education is viewed as having positive effects, Singh (2010: 192) maintained that critics of QA in higher education have viewed QA as an assault on academic freedom and institutional autonomy, as well as a bureaucratisation of academic processes. Could the inherent academic freedom be protected and yet still ensure higher education standards that are nationally acceptable and internationally comparable? In line with collegiality principle - expected by academics - a solution could be to develop a QAC. Institutions that develop a QAC have a shared and owned value system that ensures quality in everything they do instead of external procedures that are externally driven and regarded as bureaucratic.

The development of a QAC also requires monitoring and evaluation. In the view of Stensaker and Harvey (2008: 7) one of the requirements in the development of a QAC is to use it as a tool to measure the QA practices of the higher education institutions. However, the use of standardised QAC tools in the collection and analysis of data should be done with care as a different context may require different approaches. It is also important to ensure that, when data are collected, feedback should not just aim to measure the effectiveness of the system but should indicate the strengths, weaknesses and the extent of efficiency. There is also the need for regular follow-ups which help to address any weaknesses identified and to reinforce good practices (Vettori, 2012: 5). In affirming the relevance of QAC, Sursock (2011: 6) stated that "... it is the most effective and meaningful way that QA mechanisms can ensure and improve quality levels and support a dynamic change in universities."

Despite the several benefits of internal QA especially for the development of a QAC, sometimes there is a need for external regulators in the higher education sector. The external QA processes, practices and principles are discussed here below.



### **2.5.2 External quality assurance**

Apart from internal QA discussed earlier (see Section 2.5.1), Martin and Stella (2007: 34) mentioned that external QA is the other mechanism that could be used to aid the development of quality standards in higher education institutions. Basically, external QA refers to the processes used by an external agency to monitor and determine whether an institution and its programmes, facilities, practices as well as procedures meet the predetermined standards (Martin & Stella, 2007: 34; Sanyal & Martin, 2007: 5; Kinser & Lane, 2017: 9). Consequently, Martin and Stella (2007: 35) described external QA as an 'inter or supra institutional scheme' that assists to ensure that an institution and its programmes meet externally set education standards. As to when external QA mechanisms can be applied, Fielden and Varghese (2009: 92) stated that it can be done before a higher education institution implements its programmes and during its operations.

Factors such as globalisation, massification and privatisation of tertiary education as well as the demands of the world of work for new skills require governments to ensure high quality of tertiary education (Materu, 2007: 8; Weir, 2009: 61; Effah, 2011: 379; Alabi, *et al.*, 2018: 1). Ultimately, the establishment of quality tertiary education institutions will ensure the training of graduates who meet the demands of the world of work (Weir, 2009: 61; Effah, 2011:379; Neema-Abooki & Gitta, 2017: 22). The role of government and its agencies then serve as an external QA mechanism. In this regard, Hendel and Lewis (2005: 239) and Shah (2013: 359) emphasised that, the aim of external QA is to assure society that the education being provided by higher education institutions meets the national and international higher education standards. Additionally, an outcome of external QA, which comes in the form of accreditation, provides national and international recognition and integrity of the higher education system. Thus, external QA legitimises the institution and the certificates obtained by the students who graduate from these institutions (Haakstad, 2001: 78; Hendel & Lewis, 2005: 239; Shah, 2013: 359). Moreover, through the mechanisms put in place by the external QA agencies, external QA can facilitate the improvement of internal practices of the higher education institutions (Beerkens, 2018: 274). The facilitation could be through the use of coercive, normative and mimetic isomorphic mechanisms (see Section 2.7.1 – 2.7.3). The justification for the

need of external QA support to higher education institutions as proposed by Dattey *et al.* (2014: 318) is that, when left on their own, some higher education institutions may be reluctant to ensure quality. Their reluctance to ensure quality standards may be a result of the lack of adequate finances to provide the needed systems or could be due to their profit motives. In support of the need for an external QA system, Billings (2004: 115) argued that external reviewers are also regarded as impartial, credible, transparent and consistent. Consequently, the findings of external reviewers can be relied upon for data and information to governments and the public for purposes of planning and decision making.

Empirical evidence from research results point to the need for external regulatory systems to ensure quality in higher education institutions. In a study of selected universities in New Zealand, the following benefits of external QA as a mechanism were identified: (1) increasing of accountability to stakeholders; (2) assisting to document the requirements of a quality system; (3) expanding of self-review; (4) escalating of legitimacy; and (5) strengthening the possibility to identify gaps that need to be addressed (Weir, 2009: 67). Additionally, Wahlen (2004:139) wrote that in Sweden, external audits led to improvement in the nature of institutional policies and the manner in which institutional activities were carried out. Correspondingly, results of a study by Stensaker, Langfeldt, Harvey and Westerheijden (2011: 472) concluded that in Norway the national external quality agency had a positive impact on higher education institutions by way of improved methods of teaching and learning. Similarly, Shah's (2012: 769) conclusions from a discussion with forty workshop participants as well as an analysis of audit reports confirmed the above views on the importance of external QA. The researcher concluded that external academic quality audits in Australia provided key inputs in improving QA processes in the core areas that required changes and improvement in Australian universities. These findings imply that despite the need to focus more on internal systems for QA, some level of external regulation is required in order to achieve the desired level of quality in higher education institutions.

Regardless of the benefits of external QA, Weir (2009: 66) was of the opinion that external QA has been criticised for the following reasons:

- Increased cost, additional bureaucracy and an affront to the autonomy of the universities.
- The lack of competence of some members of the audit team may lead to inappropriate and unrealistic recommendations.
- Audits which are part of the external QA are also conducted within short periods which do not provide enough time for the audit team to know much about the institution and therefore may only provide a 'snapshot' of the actual situation that exists in the higher education institution.
- Despite the high number of resources spent on the QA process, many QA agencies do not do follow-ups to ensure compliance. Instead, they rely on the belief that the tertiary education institution itself will do the necessary improvements. The lack of ownership and commitment to ensure corrective measures could be because the QA process is externally-driven.

In terms of external QA, the agency theory serves as the context for the explanation of the two problems that occur in an agency relationship between the regulatory agencies and the higher education institutions. In the view of Eisenhardt (1989: 62), the first problem occurs when the agent and the principal have conflicting goals and when the principal is unable to verify whether the agent is behaving appropriately. Eisenhardt (1989: 62) was further of the view that the self-interest of agents sometimes makes them not to act appropriately as agreed. The longer the relationship between the agent and the principal, the better the principal gets to know the agent. Shapiro (2005: 271) argued that the second problem occurs where all agency relationships experience agency costs that arise from a variety of sources. Such costs may arise from the provision of incentives to the monitoring agents who oversee other agents. The application of the agency theory by QA institutions has resulted in transfer of agency transaction costs to institutions. Some of the costs borne by PUC's in Ghana include the cost of accreditation and re-accreditation as well as affiliation fees from the external QA institutions (Republic of Ghana, 2014: 6; Dattey, *et al.*, 2014: 308). Private higher education institutions have shown concern about

transaction costs imposed on them by QA institutions and questioned some of the processes they use to assure quality. Consequently, Darkwa (2017), the former Chairman of the Council of Independent Universities (hereinafter referred to as the 'CIU') of Ghana highlighted the need for a change. The Chairman at the eleventh anniversary celebration of the of the CIU on 24 June 2017, called for a review of the affiliation fees paid by PUC's to the PSU's, since it is a great drain on the PUC's.

In order to address some of the challenges associated with external QA, Weir (2009: 66) and Boateng (2014: 1) proposed that higher education institutions should develop the culture of transparency, receptiveness and resourcefulness towards the development of a QAC. Consequently, academic quality audits and assessments should be managed as opportunities for improvement and development rather than an exercise that is detested by the institutions being assessed. Additionally, the European University Association (2005:14) observed that effective QA depends on the robust internal QA and external accountability that is progressive and has the aim to develop institutions rather than just review them. In this regard, Shah (2013: 359) claimed that, when external reviews adopt an improvement-led approach, it leads to positive results, but a compliance-led approach results in negative outcomes that do not necessarily help the institution to develop a QAC.

Despite the challenges associated with external QA, it still plays an essential role in higher education QA. It is evident that the reviewed literature points to the complementary roles of both external and internal in ensuring quality standards in higher education institutions. What is important is to ensure that all activities focus on developing ownership for the QA process towards the development of a sustainable QAC.

Supplementary to the data and information already presented above, QA further entails three main activities, namely: academic quality audits, accreditation and quality monitoring and assessments/reviews/evaluations (Hendel & Lewis, 2005: 239; Kis, 2005: 5; Beerkens, 2018: 273). These activities are briefly clarified below.

### **2.5.2.1 Academic quality audit as an external quality assurance mechanism**

Martin and Stella (2007: 36) contended that the execution of an academic quality audit is the first step in the external QA process and it is used to assess the quality of a higher education institution's system for QA. Consequently, before the other two external QA activities (accreditation and quality monitoring and assessment) can be undertaken, the external agency has to undertake an academic quality audit in order to provide the information required for accreditation and assessment. All in all, the aim of an academic quality audit is to determine the strength of the system that the higher education institution has in place to manage and assure quality (Martin & Stella, 2007: 36; Woodhouse, 2012: 6; Al Tobi & Duque, 2015: 42).

Woodhouse (2012: 6) revealed that academic quality audit involves a three-part process with three main benefits. Firstly, it serves as a check on the appropriateness of the institution's planned procedures in relation to the stated objectives. Secondly, it serves as a check on the extent to which the activities engaged in by the institution conforms to its laid down plans. Thirdly, the process assists in assessing the effectiveness of the activities outlined to achieve the stated objectives. In relation to the purpose of academic quality audit, Martin and Stella (2007: 36) argued that a "... quality audit does not assess performance, but the quality of the QA mechanisms. Vlasceanu *et al.* (2004: 23) adds to the above process and benefits and describes process as a method used to measure the strengths and weaknesses of the QA mechanism adopted by the relevant higher education institution to monitor and improve its activities. Thus, Martin and Stella (2007: 42) viewed this mechanism as beneficial because the processes involved provide some level of transparency to stakeholders and with an opportunity for external regulation.

Weir (2009) has outlined the steps that should be followed in order to make the audit process effective and acceptable to the auditees. In this author's view, what should be done by the QA agency are firstly, provision of a comprehensive audit manual that could assist in explaining the generic principles of quality, the terminologies and the quality criteria for auditing. Secondly, it is important to focus on the goal of the academic quality audit. Thirdly, the QA agency should ensure that qualified individuals are selected to form

the audit team. Fourthly, the audit team should be provided with all the information they need for the academic quality audit process. Finally, the audit team should be trained to understand and know what the process entails. As part of the audit process, Blackmur (2004: 106) suggested that the regulatory agencies need to review the advertisements of private tertiary institutions. Blackmur further argued that reviewing the advertisements of private tertiary institutions will ensure that inaccurate information is not fed to prospective students who could apply to illegitimate tertiary education institutions. This suggestion by Blackmur could contribute to prevent what occurred in Ghana in 2012, where based on the directive of the NAB, more than 50% (26) out of the 46 accredited PUC's had to withdraw a number of their students who did not qualify for admission (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1). Furthermore, Dill (2000: 188 – 189) argued that, since the length of time at the disposal of audit teams is short, they must ensure that the actions they are engaged in are relevant to the process of QA. Their plans should also provide for follow-up activities needed to ensure and enhance quality education standards.

#### **2.5.2.2 Accreditation as an external quality assurance mechanism**

After doing an academic quality audit, accreditation is the second step to follow in the external higher education QA process. As observed by Martin and Stella (2007: 36) and Martin (2010: 30) accreditation is the most widely used external QA mechanism. In order to understand the role of accreditation in higher education QA, it is important to understand the term 'accreditation'. Harman and Meek (2000: iv) defined accreditation as "... a process of assessment and review which enables a higher education institution to be recognised or certified as meeting appropriate standards." Since then, accreditation has been defined from various perspectives by scholars such as Haakstad (2001: 77), European Students Information Bureau (2002: 8), Vlasceanu (2004: 19), Kis (2005: 5), Martin and Stella (2007: 36), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (2009: 95), Eaton (2009: 1), Woodhouse (2012: 5) as well as Al Tobi and Duque (2015: 42). For example, ESIB (2002: 8) defined accreditation as "... the result of a review of an education programme or institution following certain quality standards agreed on beforehand. It is a kind of recognition that a programme or institution fulfills certain standards." Based on the review of these various scholars' definitions,

accreditation can be viewed in sum as an evaluation process by an external body that results in the determination of whether an institution and its programmes meet the set standards that would qualify it for a particular purpose.

According to Hayward (2006: 10), the processes involved and the functions of accreditation fluctuate, depending on the specific context. Despite these differences, Campbell and Rozsnyai (2002: 31) outlined the following as the general features of accreditation:

- Accreditation provides proof that the predetermined standards regarding a course, programme and institution have been met.
- Accreditation involves benchmarking assessment.
- The judgment for accreditation is based on quality criteria resulting in either a “yes” or “no” response from the accrediting body.
- The focus of accreditation is on accountability.

The above views of Campbell and Rozsnyai (2002: 31) on the general features of accreditation is supported by Martin (2010: 30 – 31). Martin submitted that, once an institution and its programmes satisfy the requirements of an external assessment body, accreditation provides the ‘quality label’ and formal authorisation to the institution to provide the programmes and services to students. Sabri and El-Refae (2006: 52) and Martin and Stella (2007: 36) also proclaimed that accreditation is the only aspect within the QA mechanism that makes a definitive judgment about an institution and its programmes. In this regard, Woodhouse (2012: 5) described the purpose of accreditation as a gatekeeper role played by an external body in order to hold higher education institutions to a minimum standard required by the state.

Apart from the differences in the processes and functions of accreditation, the sources from which accreditation can be granted also differ. According to Harvey (2002: 5), accreditation could be granted by: (1) a government agency that has been given that responsibility; (2) a relevant professional institution; or (3) through self-regulation in collaboration with the national QA agency. Harvey however asserted that self-regulation

is rare in developing countries because of the lack of certainty that higher education institutions in such countries are capable of regulating themselves. This lack of certainty that higher education institutions will ensure quality standards by themselves is also a factor which makes it difficult to rely on only internal QA mechanisms. Therefore, in Ghana, accreditation is granted by the government regulatory institution called the 'National Accreditation Board' (Effah, 2011: 379; Boateng *et al.*, 2014: 44; Dattey *et al.*, 2014: 307).

Martin and Stella (2007: 37) stated that accreditation is a three stage process with specific activities. According to Martin and Stella, the first stage involves a self-evaluation which is normally carried out by the faculty, administrators, or other staff of the institution to be accredited. The output of this stage in the evaluation process is a written report that is based on the criteria provided by the accrediting institution. They added that the second step involves a study visit by a team of peers. This team is put together by the accrediting agency, who review the report provided by the institution being assessed. Apart from a review of the report provided by the institution, the team of peers also visit the institution being accredited. The aim of the visit is to interact with both the academic and administrative staff for validation or otherwise of the self-evaluation report provided at the first stage of the accreditation process. After the visitation and reviews by the team of peers, an assessment report is written, including recommendations to the accrediting organisation. The third and final stage is the examination of the reports in relation to the pre-determined criteria of the accrediting institution. It is this third stage that culminates in a final judgment of a 'yes' or 'no' decision that is communicated to the relevant institutions. This three-stage process is the guideline in Ghana for accreditation of higher education institutions (see Annexure 3, The National Accreditation Board, Ghana Roadmap to Accreditation, Part 1: A, B, C).

In Ghana, accreditation is granted to both public and private higher education institutions by a national awarding agency, namely the NAB (Effah, 2011: 379; Boateng *et al.*, 2014: 44; Dattey *et al.*, 2014: 307). Hendel and Lewis (2005: 243) stressed the need to evaluate the agencies and the accreditation teams as well as their mechanisms. This, they believed



will ensure that the accreditation teams are made up of knowledgeable and recognised scholars and professionals, who are effective. It is in this regard that Hendel and Lewis (2005: 253) and Eaton (2015: 5) acknowledged and recommended practices in countries like Germany and the USA. In these countries, the accreditation agencies are also accredited through a process referred to as 'recognition'.

Effah (2011: 378) was of the view that despite the varied meanings, functions and processes used for accreditation, the two common areas that are focused on during accreditation in most countries, including Ghana, are the institution and its programmes. Harvey (2004: 5) and Al Tobi and Duque (2015: 42) explained institutional accreditation as a process that focuses on the institution's physical facilities, policies, systems, strategies and resources available for teaching, research and community service. In Ghana, institutional accreditation of a PUC also requires a proof of affiliation. When institutional accreditation is granted, it is campus specific and not transferable (Republic of Ghana, 2011: 3; Boateng, *et al.*, 2014: 3). This means that any new campus established by the tertiary education institution must be accredited. As a result of the liberalisation of the higher education sector, institutional accreditation serves as a check on the proliferation of substandard universities and assists to foster uniformity as well as diversity within the higher education sector (Campbell & Rozsnyai, 2002: 61; Hendel & Lewis, 2005: 243; Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 50; Lopez, Rojas, Lopez & Lopez, 2014: 167). Apart from institutional accreditation, the higher education institution's programmes are also accredited, which is referred to as programme accreditation. Hayward (2006: 16) and Al Tobi and Duque (2015: 42) revealed that programme accreditation specifies programmes that an institution is certified to offer. They further stated that in the programme accreditation process, a programme review is done to assess whether the programme's mission and goals are relevant. In addition, they noted that the programme accreditation process also assesses the programme's quality, its faculty members, staff and students as well as the financial and other resources needed to ensure that the programme's goals are achieved. Consequently, Boateng *et al.* (2014: 3) observed that the aim of programme accreditation is to ensure accountability and improvement in the inputs, processes and outcomes of a higher education institution.

The accreditation status of an institution also has implications for both the institution and the students they admit. The implication is that an unaccredited university college could be closed down and the degrees obtained by students from such university colleges will not be recognised (European Students Information Bureau, 2002: 15 – 16; Kis 2005: 5; Hayward 2006: 7 – 8; Woodhouse 2012: 6). Above all, the granting of accreditation is an indication of compliance with legislation (Sabri & El- Refae, 2006: 52; Dattey *et al.*, 2014: 315). Consequently, Haakstad, (2001: 78) observed that official accreditation serves to bring all publicly recognised institutions and their programmes under one umbrella in order to have a protected system for the awarding of certificates and for entry into certain professions and the awarding of certain titles.

Drawing from the discourses by scholars and practitioners, the following were identified as the benefits of accreditation:

- Protection of the public from fraudulent or sub-standard tertiary education providers.
- Improvement of quality of education to bring them to standards comparable to international standards.
- Provision of information to potential students, parents, employers and the general public on the status of the higher education institution.
- Assistance to the institutions themselves with an outside view on their performance in order to prompt them on areas that need improvement.
- Establishment of a mechanism for government regulation of the provision of higher education. For the government, accreditation assists in defining national goals, assures quality higher education, assures a quality labour force, and serves as a means to ensure that those who enter the civil service have certificates from accredited higher education institutions.
- Guarantees employers that the applicant has attended a credible higher education institution with quality programmes and therefore qualifies for the job opening.
- Creation of a means for the control of 'for-profit' institutions whose interest differs from that of the public sector.
- Facilitation of students' mobility, transfer of courses and programmes among universities and colleges and for attracting good students and qualified teaching

staff as well as for the recognition of degrees acquired by students in other countries.

- Provision of students with information about higher education institutions that have been accredited to enable them make a decision about which institution to apply to, or to transfer their course of study to.
- Students invest a lot of time and money when they enroll in higher education institutions and this requires that there are mechanisms that will ensure only legitimate institutions operate (Wellman, 1998: 3; European Students Information Bureau, 2002: 15 – 16; Kis, 2005: 5; Hayward 2006: 7 – 8; Woodhouse, 2012: 6; Kinser & Lane, 2017:3).

Harvey (2004: 7) is of the opinion that despite the importance attached to accreditation, there is the view that accreditation systems have focused more on minimum standards than on maintaining quality. The focus on minimum inputs during accreditation has been described by Girdwood (1999: 41) as the 'threshold model'. In this vein, Girdwood argued that when accreditation focuses on minimum standards, it could make some higher education institutions to work towards meeting only the minimum standards in order to be accredited and to legitimise their existence and operations. Hence, beyond meeting the minimum standards, there should be a concerted effort to make higher education institutions appreciate the significance of high quality standards in order to make them desire and aspire to higher levels.

Despite the fact that the concept of accreditation is widely understood, there appears to be challenges when it is being implemented. Consequently, the ESIB (2002: 21) suggested that, in order to ensure effective implementation of accreditation, all the stakeholders should share the same vision of the goal to be achieved. This means that accreditation should not become the goal but a tool to enhance high standards of education.

### **2.5.2.3 Quality monitoring and assessment as an external quality assurance mechanism**

Apart from academic quality audit and accreditation as approaches to ensure quality in higher education, another approach in the external QA process is quality monitoring and assessment, also known as quality review or evaluation (Martin & Stella, 2007: 35; Martin, 2010: 30). Assessment goes beyond accreditation and it is the actual process of external review that results in making a graded judgment on an institution's quality (Harvey & Newton, 2004: 150; Kis, 2005: 5; Martin & Stella, 2007: 35). Vlasceanu *et al.* (2004: 48) identified the factors to pay attention to in the quality monitoring and assessment process to include the context, the methods, the levels, the mechanisms and academic as well as managerial values. These researchers therefore were of the opinion that the success of a QA system does not depend only on the rigour of application of the QA system but on how the users view and interpret the QA system. Consequently, how quality monitoring and assessment is organised is influenced by the power relations among the stakeholders in the tertiary education sector.

In summary, the sections above have examined the nature and components of higher education QA systems. These are the internal and external QA mechanisms. The reviewed literature indicates that neither external nor internal QA alone is enough to ensure quality tertiary education. A combination of both is desirable. The two aspects of QA (internal and external) are intrinsically linked and go hand-in-hand in order to ensure overall quality of tertiary education. A distinction between internal QA and external QA can be made based on which stakeholder is involved in the QA activity. In internal tertiary QA, the stakeholder involved is the higher education institution itself, but in external QA the institution involved in the activity is an external agency outside of the higher education institution. In order to address the shortcomings of either external or internal QA, the reviewed literature shows that when internal and external processes are complementary, they ensure that any improvement made is sustainable. Against this background, effective QA depends on the robust internal QA and external accountability that have the aim to develop the education standards in the institutions rather than just to review them. Whether the QA system is internal or external or both, in order to be effective, there is a

need for clarity of purpose, legitimacy, a good fit between internal and external purposes, flexibility, adequate follow-up procedures and feedback that are linked to action.

One of the key requirements to ensure the effectiveness of any QA system is clarity of purpose. The next section provides a comprehensive review of the specific purposes and rationale for QA.

## **2.6 PURPOSE AND RATIONALE FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Although QA mechanisms are generally viewed as a means to ensure and assure that the quality of higher education standards are developed and maintained, the QA processes serve specific purposes. Scholars and practitioners such as Harvey and Newton (2004: 151), Kis (2005: 5), Harvey (2007: 3 & 5), Martin and Stella (2007: 42 – 43) and Woodhouse (2012: 5) have identified the specific purposes/rationale for QA to include: accountability, improvement, and control or compliance. The section below provides an analysis of each one of these purposes.

### **2.6.1 Accountability**

Hayward (2006: 5) observed that accountability as a purpose of QA has been a major underlying rationale for the establishment of QA systems in higher education institutions. Furthermore, Hayward (2006: 40) described accountability as one of the most important potential contributions of accreditation. Kis (2005: 10) and Woodhouse (2012: 5) explained accountability in higher education as the means through which a higher education institution gives an account of what it is doing in order to achieve the goals it has set for itself. Stated differently, it refers to how to meet the expectations of those who have the right to demand an account of the institution's performance over a period of time. The demand for accountability in the provision of services in the tertiary education environment can be requested by different stakeholders – the state, students, employers and funders (Harvey & Newton, 2004: 151; Harvey, 2007: 3; Singh, 2010: 190). For the state, the accountability role of external QA is to give an account of the quality of higher education being provided to the public. In addition, Harvey and Newton (2004: 151) and Harvey (2007: 3) proposed that accountability enables stakeholders to compare and

determine the effect of government policies on the regulation and quality of higher education. Wellman (2001: 48) also opined that accountability is necessary to fulfil the expectations between the higher education institution and the society; that is to produce graduates that could help solve industry and societal problems. Another reason for demanding accountability is that it aids the higher education institution to determine whether its activities will contribute to meet the goals it has been established to achieve. Likewise, Shah (2013: 358) indicated that accountability demanded by the regulatory institutions could serve as a means of self-regulation for the higher education institutions. In support of Shah, Kis (2005: 10 – 11) specified that, whenever a higher education institution is assessed, the shortcomings identified and recommendations made to address the shortcomings could serve as the basis for the decisions and actions taken by the higher education institution for improvement. For students, the purpose of accountability is to guarantee that the programmes and educational experiences offered by the tertiary education institution are of acceptable standards. The programmes must also measure up to the continually rising tuition fees being demanded by the private sector providers of higher education. As a result, Kis (2005: 10) claimed that accountability to students plays the 'value for money' role. When accountability implies a public higher education institution being responsible for the services it offers and for the public money it spends, what then happens when used to refer to private sector providers who are not funded by the state? The answer lies in the fact that, apart from state funding, all other requirements for accountability are equally important for the regulation of the private providers of tertiary education. To the employer, the demand for accountability is the expectation employers have that the graduates that the higher education institutions produce would be effective and efficient at work so as to make the institution gain a competitive edge. More specifically, employers also expect graduates from higher education institutions to be able to contribute to solve industry problems. Additionally, to the funders, demand for accountability is to ensure that the students whose education is being funded get value for the funding provided.

Shah (2013: 359) and Cheung (2015: 155) submitted that, when accountability is externally driven, it could lead to a compliance-culture rather than an enhancement or

improvement-culture. They further asserted that externally-driven accountability poses the risk of 'ritualism' and 'tokenism' rather than improvement. Billing (2004: 121) stated that, different countries have adopted different strategies in order to accomplish the purposes of accountability. According to Billing, in the UK, where there is a high level of institutional autonomy, outcomes of the process of QA are published to inform the public on the performance of the higher education institutions. Furthermore, against the background that most countries are adopting market-oriented policies to manage their higher education institutions, there is the need to improve accountability mechanisms and to develop the capacity of regulators and managers. Consequently, Fielden and Varghese (2009: 71) suggested that the provision of higher education should not be left to the quirks of market forces which focus mainly on efficiency and not quality and equity. To achieve this, Kis (2005: 18) proposed that performance indicators which provide statistics about performance are a helpful tool for accountability. In Kis's view, this will help to inform stakeholders and inform policy makers about what is happening in every higher education institution. However, Harvey (2007: 3) claimed that, when performance indicators are used to indicate accountability, it becomes reductionist in nature and does not provide a good basis for comparison. The use of performance indicators makes the processes unduly burdensome, which could make some higher education institutions to manipulate the data requested from them for accountability purposes.

### **2.6.2 Improvement as a purpose of external quality assurance**

Kis (2005: 10) explained improvement as a purpose of external QA as the mechanisms used to enhance future performance rather than a judgment about a past performance. Harvey (2007: 3 – 4) and Martin and Stella (2007: 44) suggested that for purposes of improvement, external QA mechanisms should provide the means to encourage higher education institutions to reflect on their practices with the aim of identifying and improving upon areas in which they lag behind. Harvey and Newton (2004: 152) contended that even though most external QA institutions claim to encourage improvement, it is not their primary focus. Consequently, in the view of Harvey (2007: 4), for purposes of improvement, every action taken by the external QA agencies should be in the interest of the higher education institution and not for control purposes.

While accountability and improvement are both purposes of higher education, Woodhouse (1999: 37) viewed them as complementary because both are the aims of government. On the contrary, Woodhouse also claimed that accountability and improvement could also be viewed as incompatible. The reason being that when these two (accountability and improvement) are combined, it could lead to a situation where the higher education institution may hide the weaknesses from accountability agencies. In support of the incompatibility view, Kis (2005: 14) argued that accountability is more of an external process, whereas improvement is more of an internal activity.

The argument in the reviewed literature is whether external QA should focus on accountability alone or on improvement/enhancement alone or on both. In situations where the purpose of external QA focuses on both, the challenge is how a balance could be achieved between these two purposes of external QA. However, as a result of the proliferation of several PUC's in Ghana and other parts of the world, the argument is to focus on the development of a QAC rather than on accountability and compliance. Accordingly, as institutions develop their internal QA mechanisms towards a higher level, it should move the focus from compliance/accountability to improvement.

### **2.6.3 Compliance or control as a purpose of external quality assurance**

Compliance as a purpose for QA refers to measures put in place to ensure that higher education institutions go by laid-down procedures, practices and policies of government. Harvey (2007: 4) stated that compliance is achieved through the evaluation and monitoring mechanisms of QA agencies. It has also been observed that compliance may be demanded from professional associations or regulatory institutions to ensure that their policies are being adhered to (Harvey & Newton, 2004: 152; Hendel & Lewis, 2005: 239). Thus, compliance could be achieved through coercive isomorphism where, without a higher education institution being compliant with the requirements of the regulatory institutions or government, accreditation for example, will not be granted (Dattey *et al.*, 2014: 316).



The reviewed literature indicates that the three major purposes of QA are: accountability, improvement and compliance or control. Among the three purposes, accountability has been identified as the major reason for the establishment of QA agencies. However, since accountability is externally-driven, in order to ensure sustainable QA for the development of a QAC, emphasis should be laid on improvement as well. Accordingly, external QA agencies should facilitate processes that encourage higher education institutions to reflect on their practices for purposes of improvement. Once there is ownership of the QA processes, the three purposes of QA; accountability, improvement and compliance/control, could be achieved.

Under the external QA mechanisms, various strategies could be used to ensure that higher education institutions meet the required standards. Some researchers have identified these mechanisms referred to as 'institutional isomorphism'. In the next section, the different isomorphic pressures used to achieve the desired change in higher education institutions are discussed.

## **2.7 INSTITUTIONAL ISOMORPHISM AND QUALITY ASSURANCE**

The concept of 'institutional isomorphism' can be traced to the works of DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 147 – 160) in their classical paper: "The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organisational fields." On the contrary, Dey, Milem and Berger (1997: 309) submitted that the concept of 'institutional isomorphism' was first suggested by Riesman (1956: 25) who indicated that universities and colleges were just imitating each other. Riesman's (1956: 25) assertion is based on evidence of the similarity in the content of the catalogues, type of structures, policies and practices of various universities. DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 149) defined isomorphism as a "... constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions." In effect, institutional isomorphism refers to a trend towards conformity as a result of the pressures of the institutional environment and for the purposes of gaining legitimacy as well as for survival.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 150) believed that there are three processes of institutional isomorphism, namely; coercive, mimetic and normative. Dey, Milem and Berger (1997: 310) however used the terms 'regulative' instead of coercive and 'cognitive/imitative' instead of mimetic but then offer the same meanings to the three mechanisms. The following section examines the three mechanisms/processes of institutional isomorphism identified by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and Dey, Milem and Berger (1997).

### **2.7.1 Coercive/regulative isomorphism**

According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 150) and Cai and Yan (2011: 12), coercive/regulative isomorphism results when an institution is dependent on another institution for its legitimacy and when the social surroundings in which the two institutions operate are similar. They further asserted that the sources of coercive isomorphism could be pressures from the institutions on which the focal institution depends or from the larger society. Furthermore, Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 455) indicated that coercive isomorphism means the use of punitive sanctions to compel the dependent institutions to comply with the standards set by the institutions on which they depend. Thus, within the surroundings in which the institutions operate, there exists pressures and forces such as the legal environment, sanctions, government mandates and state funding that are used to coerce the dependent institution to resemble the one on which it depends for its legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983: 150; Levy, 2004: 4; Greenwood *et al.*, 2008: 7; Mizikaci, 2011: 7; Dattey *et al.*, 2014: 310).

Within the context of this study, although the individual universities may have mechanisms designed to internally assure the quality of education they offer, such universities also have to operate within a national policy framework (external). These mechanisms are designed by the state to ensure that academic standards are maintained. Thus, tertiary education institutions operate in a complex legal and political environment which has a variety of rules, laws, monitoring systems and sanctions that they are mandated to observe (Dey, Milem & Berger, 1997: 310; Dill, 2007: 1; Gao, 2010: 204). In Ghana, one of the coercive mechanisms used by the regulatory institutions is the mandatory requirement for every PUC to be affiliated to a PSU for a minimum of ten years before

they could apply for autonomy (Effah, 2006: 67; Annexure 3: The National Accreditation Board, Ghana Roadmap to Accreditation, Part v: 1). This research project explored all the coercive isomorphic mechanisms used to ensure quality standards in the PUC's in Ghana. The findings are presented and discussed in Chapter 7 (Section 7.4).

### **2.7.2 Mimetic/imitative isomorphism**

According to Dattey *et al.* (2014: 310) mimetic/imitative isomorphism occurs when an institution that has demonstrated a high level of credibility and standards becomes a mentor to a new and less experienced institution. This relationship occurs because the mentoring university is perceived as legitimate. DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 204) and Levy (2004: 4) argued that mimetic isomorphism is a form of conformity achieved through imitation. Some institutions imitate others due to uncertainty, lack of a clear course of action or newness on the tertiary education landscape. Dey, Milem and Berger (1997: 310) suggested that in such uncertain and ambiguous higher education environments, mental models help to navigate such environments. The outcome is that the dependent higher education institution mimics the successful older higher education institution. Establishing a PUC in Ghana could be described as stepping into an unknown terrain with several uncertainties. It is such uncertainties that DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 151) identified as a powerful force that encourages mimetic isomorphism. Dattey *et al.* (2014: 310) noted several practices between PUC's and PSU's in Ghana that promote mimetic isomorphism. Firstly, since most of the assessors come from PSU's, their recommendations when accepted and implemented by the PUC's, could be viewed as a form of mimetic isomorphism. Secondly, most PUC's in Ghana were established through the assistance of either retired staff or part-time faculty members from the PSU's (Manuh, *et al.*, 2007: 48). Since such staff from PSU's come with ideas, practices and procedures of the PSU's, it ultimately fosters mimetic isomorphism. Thirdly, the practice whereby PUC's in Ghana are mandated by the NAB to affiliate to PSU's, makes these PUC's to model themselves as a reflection of the PSU's. Effah (2006: 167), Tsevi (2014: 3) and Ansah *et al.*, (2017: 30) proposed that the requirement of affiliation is to ensure quality and prevent the proliferation of freestanding PUC's that lack the ability to offer quality tertiary education. Manuh *et al.*, (2007: 47) claimed that mimetic isomorphism can exist

between public and private sector universities as well as between private universities. Thus, a PUC can imitate the strategies of other successful PUC's. Hence, Dattey *et al.* (2014: 319) concluded that mimetic isomorphism could aid a PUC to gain legitimacy and self-enhancement that could provide strategic competitive advantage because of their affiliation to a reputable university.

### **2.7.3 Normative isomorphism**

Normative isomorphism occurs in situations where there is pressure from professional associations for members to conform to certain standards and methods of their work (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983: 152; Dey, Milem & Berger, 1997: 310; Zerbinati & Liu, 2012: 478; Dattey *et al.*, 2014: 310). Conformity then legitimises the institution whose values and behaviours are congruent with the socially accepted norms of the group within which the institution exists and operates (Vergne, 2011: 485). According to Dattey *et al.* (2014: 310) normative isomorphism arises in order to create homogeneity. Homogeneity is achieved through the creation of norms and standards by the regulatory institutions, professional certification associations and the mentoring public sector institution for the affiliate higher education institutions to follow (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983: 152; Levy, 2004: 4; Mizikaci, 2011: 7 – 8).

Dattey *et al.* (2014: 310) acknowledged that the three forms of isomorphism are not mutually exclusive and that, although each involves a separate process, two or more forms of the isomorphic pressures could operate at the same time and without easy identification of the effect of each. Thus, the isomorphic pressures do not work in isolation to ensure that the institutions conform to predetermined standards, they rather work simultaneously and in an overlapping manner (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983: 150; Dattey *et al.*, 2014: 318). Consequently, Dattey *et al.* (2014: 317) and Tsevi (2014: 22) alluded to the fact that isomorphic mechanisms foster development and enhancement of quality in PUC's. Dattey *et al.* (2014: 318) therefore concluded that PUC's in Ghana, in a bid to be in good standing, experience all three forms of isomorphic pressures. The first is through meeting the requirements of legislation (coercive). The second is through complying with the norms set by the mentoring institutions, the regulatory institutions and professional

associations (normative isomorphism). The third is through imitating the practices of their mentoring institutions (mimetic).

In summary, the reviewed literature indicates that the three isomorphic strategies for external QA could operate in isolation or all could be simultaneously used to ensure quality standards in higher education institutions. Regardless of which isomorphic strategy is adopted, the aim is to ensure that the quality of higher education delivered to the citizenry is of an acceptable standard.

The next section provides literature on the role of government in tertiary education delivery.

## **2.8 ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Bjarnason, Cheng, Fielden, Lemaitre, Levy and Varghese (2009: 7 – 8) contended that, as a result of the ideas of communism, during a greater part of the nineteenth and twentieth century, the provision of tertiary education was regarded as the responsibility of the government. Consequently, private provision of tertiary education was almost non-existent. Furthermore, Levy (2008: 7) and Bjarnason, *et al.* (2009: 8) averred that many developed countries, except Japan, did not have a large system of private higher education. However, there has been a rapid growth worldwide in the private higher education sector as a result of the inability of government alone to provide the higher education needs of the citizenry. Altbach (2004: 32), Levy (2008: 1), Shah and Lewis (2010: 80) and Effah (2011: 378) concluded that in most developing nations, due to demand outstripping supply of public tertiary education and the demand for employable graduates, private universities are likely to grow. Additionally, the change in the conception of higher education as the responsibility of only the state to private sector involvement has also led to the shift in the financing of higher education. There is now a high level of involvement of the private sector in the financing of higher education. Consequently, the lack of adequate finances of many governments led many countries worldwide, who were formerly committed to the public system of higher education, to now develop legislation that has backed the establishment of private higher education

institutions (Hayward, 2006: 11; Shah & Lewis 2010: 80; Maxel, 2017: 24). In Ghana, one such document is the White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991.

As regards private sector involvement, Altbach (2004: 32) and Martin and Stella (2007: 23) asserted that private sector participation in the provision of higher education has benefits for both individuals (staff members employed at these institutions) as well as the broader citizenry (nation). In order to derive these benefits, Darvas, Gao, Shen and Bawany (2017: xvii) suggested that governments do not only have to authorise the establishment of private tertiary education institutions, but rather they have to develop regulations to ensure that quality higher education standards are adhered to by these private providers. Similarly, Kinser and Lane (2017: 3) contended that due to a rise in private sector involvement in the provision of a strategic public service, such as education, the government's role is essential in this regard. When there is a lack of effective practices, procedures and policy implementation mechanisms to regulate the expansion of higher education, especially private sector higher education institutions, it could lead to the erosion of anticipated benefits to be derived from the expansion. Frazer (1994: 102) pointed out how expansion and massification of higher education systems, without effective mechanisms to regulate them, could result in unemployment, underemployment and misemployment that is likely to cause disillusion among graduates and employers. Similarly, Van Damme (2001: 8), as well as Neema-Abooki and Gitta (2017: 1), noted that it is a truism that massification and globalisation pose a threat to the quality of higher education and therefore the recognition and acceptance of QA as a mechanism to address their effects. Thus, within the context of this research project which is on the mechanisms for QA at the PUC's, government's role cannot be over emphasised.

The oversight responsibility of government must be to ensure that the quality of education provided by the private sector is comparable to both national and international standards. Accordingly, Bjarnason *et al.* (2006: 71) proposed that governments should regulate the private sector in the provision of higher education in order not to leave such an important service to the whims of the market forces. They further asserted that, while market forces

are good at ensuring efficiency, their commitment to ensure quality is debatable. There is the need for effective QA mechanisms to address the wide gap between the self-serving interest of entrepreneurs and the reality of meeting tertiary education requirements of a nation. Specifically, Bjarnason *et al.* (2006: 71) identified the role of government in regulating the provision of private higher education to include the following:

- Protecting the consumer through the prevention of low-quality providers from entering the higher education market to take advantage of potential students who are desperate for higher education.
- Collecting and disseminating reliable information on the legitimacy and offerings by private higher education institutions for decision making by members of the public.
- Ensuring that public policy is based on accurate data about the activities of the private sector providers of higher education.
- Monitoring of the finances of the for-profit higher education institutions.

Kinser and Lane (2017: 9) proclaimed that the level of involvement of government in regulating private higher education institutions varies from one country to another. As regards governments' role, Levy (2002: 2) argued that the variations in the control mechanisms for the different countries depend on the country's view of the provider. Levy further noted that the provider could be viewed as either a partner who could help to meet the higher educational requirements of a country or seen as an entrepreneur with profit motives who must be strictly controlled. Thus, the means to regulate the establishment of private sector higher education institutions vary. For example, Bjarnason, *et al.* (2009: 73), claimed that the Egyptian legislation on private universities (Egyptian Law 101/1992 and Presidential Decree 355/1999) has several regulatory mechanisms that have controlled the proliferation of PUC's. Among the requirements of the law are that: (1) there should be no for-profit private universities; (2) there should be no duplication of programmes already being run by public universities whose graduates are not getting employment; (3) the promotion of a faculty member is required to follow the same procedures and requirements of public universities; and (4) the President of the university college must be an Egyptian (Bjarnason, *et al.*, 2009: 73). These requirements of the Egyptian system

need not be transferred to other countries like Ghana. Rather, context-specific requirements can be put in place to regulate and ensure that the right standards are adhered to and the educational needs of the nation are met in the establishment of PUC's. Fielden and Varghese (2009: 75) believed that the stringent measures adopted by the government of Egypt in regulating private higher education provision, prevented the establishment of private universities that the country did not need.

From the above arguments it is clear that in summary, government has a central role to play because private provision of tertiary education has become a major component of the tertiary education structure in almost every country, including Ghana. Despite the important contribution private participation in the provision of higher education offers, government's role is essential in order to ensure that the self-serving interest of entrepreneurs do not result in a compromise in the quality of education provided.

In addition to the role of government in ensuring quality tertiary education indicated in Section 2.8 above, a review of some results of empirical studies are essential. Thus, in section 2.9 below some research findings on the different QA mechanisms that have been adopted in different countries and their outcomes are discussed.

## **2.9 EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON MECHANISMS TO ENSURE QUALITY STANDARDS IN TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

This section presents results of empirical studies from various countries on the outcomes of the systems put in place for higher education QA. Although this research project is on PUC's, the review in this section is not limited to empirical studies on only private sector higher education institutions but encapsulates studies on higher education in general. The aim is to have a general understanding of higher education QA and to be able to identify some specific practices that relate to only private sector higher education institutions. These findings contributed to the development of a framework (see Chapter 7, Section 7.9) proposed at the end of this study for higher education QA at the PUC's within Ghana in particular, and possibly for other countries.



Many empirical studies show that a focus on external QA alone did not necessarily assure quality of higher education (Friend-Pereira, Heerens & Lutz, 2002: 38). For example, Askling (1995: 17) stated that external QA did not directly impact the quality in Swedish universities. However, it contributed to the change in the improvement-oriented approach adopted by the institution responsible for regulating higher education. Askling claimed that this approach motivated the higher education institutions to pay attention to their own strategic management practices as key in meeting the demands that will ensure quality. Later studies by Wahlen (2004: 144) advanced the argument that despite the existence of external audits in Swedish universities, it took a long time to develop an acceptable QA and other improvement measures for higher education institutions. Similar to the shortcomings identified by Wahlen regarding external audits, a study at Sheffield Hallam University by Harvey and Newton (2004: 149) concluded that external monitoring did not improve student learning but only served as a means to ensure standards and for the legitimisation of the higher education institution in the UK. Additionally, Weir (2009: 69), in his research results on New Zealand universities, indicated that the university lecturing staff agreed that quality is best ensured when managed by the university itself. Furthermore, the results of a study of Australian universities by Shah *et al.* (2011: 482) suggested that external audits by themselves did not transform Australian universities. In his study of Malaysian and Singapore private higher education providers, Lim (2010: 215) found out whether the varied QA mechanisms in place have led to improvements in the provision of private higher education or have rather made their operations more complicated and confusing. Based on his findings, Lim (2010: 221) concluded that the QA mechanisms had too many demands that led to the PUC's to use of most of their resources that could have been used for other improvement purposes. Similarly, results of a study by Lopez *et al.* (2014: 176) showed that accreditation, which is an external QA approach, did not necessarily lead to quality in the practices of universities in Chile. Consequently, these researchers called for more emphasis on internal QA than external QA. These research findings identified the challenges that could be encountered when emphasis is placed on only external mechanisms for higher education QA.

Despite the challenges that could be encountered with external QA mechanisms, Massy's (1999: 25) research results showed that external reviews in Sweden and Denmark led to significant improvements in the quality of their procedures, teaching and learning in these higher education institutions. Similarly, Shah *et al.* (2011: 765) avowed that external academic quality audits and the recommendations made by assessors led to accountability, improvement and innovation in the internal QA systems in Australian universities. Utuka (2011: 141 – 142) also confirmed the positive role of external regulatory institutions towards the improvement of the quality of tertiary education in Ghana. Correspondingly, the findings of Tsevi (2015: 5) confirmed Utuka's findings that the QA mechanisms of the regulatory institutions have helped to improve the quality of education standards in the tertiary education institutions in Ghana. A comparative study of PUC's and public universities in Ghana by Dattey *et al.* (2014: 307) also concluded that the isomorphic pressures from the external regulatory institutions accounted for their compliance and implementation of strategies for improvement and not any internal motivating factors. Furthermore, results of another study by Dattey *et al.* (2017: 226) on the effects of various QA mechanisms on the performance of higher education institutions in Ghana showed that external QA contributed to maintain quality education standards in these institutions.

These research results point to the fact that neither internal nor external QA alone is enough to ensure quality standards in higher education institutions. Thus, whereas results of some of these empirical studies indicate positive contributions of external QA, others did not. Accordingly, the two higher education QA approaches - internal and external - should complement each other in order to address the challenges inherent in each of them.

A general review of literature on QA practices discussed in previous sections of this chapter and the empirical research findings discussed in this section provide the background information for identifying best practices for higher education QA. In the following section, best QA practices and strategies required to ensure effective QA and the justification for their preferences are provided.

## **2.10 BEST PRACTICES IN QUALITY ASSURANCE**

QA is not only about the establishment of the criteria against which to evaluate quality or to determine the extent to which the criteria meet those specifications. Rather, it is also about ensuring that there are systems in place to ensure that the education standards set are adhered to. In this regard, researchers and practitioners such as Sawyerr (2002a: 34), Hendel and Lewis (2005: 240), Utuka, (2012: 141) and Cao and Li (2014: 66) proposed that one of the characteristics of best practices in QA is to have QA systems that are thoughtfully designed and aligned to the mission and core values of the higher education institution. Similarly, Lim (1999: 379) outlined some steps to follow in the development of a good QA system as:

- (1) Creation of a mission for the higher education institution.
- (2) Development of a clear statement of the functions to be performed by the higher education institution towards the realisation of the mission statement.
- (3) Institution of a quality management system for the achievement of set quality standards.
- (4) Establishment of an external audit system that assists to evaluate the effectiveness of the quality management system.

Lim (1999: 379) further proposed that all the above steps should be backed by a strong commitment on the part of the management of the higher education institution for quality advancement. Additionally, Hoyle (2001: 61) suggested that, for any QA mechanism to be effective, there is the need for relevant and consistent guidelines that enable those working within the higher education institution to be certain of what is expected of them. The process of QA therefore requires higher education institutions to create records, document plans and specifications, report reviews and create a system for active sharing as well as the dissemination of best practices. Thus, a good QA system requires predetermined or agreed upon standards. In Ghana, these predetermined standards are in a document titled, "The National Accreditation Board, Ghana Roadmap to Accreditation" (see Annexure 3). Additionally, the review must be done by experts who must produce a report at the end that indicates the challenges and make recommendations to address these challenges. Just as Hoyle's asserted above, Lockett (2007: 99) in his analysis of

stakeholder responses to the introduction of external QA, stated that the issue of quality borders on power and values of diverse stakeholders with diverse expectations. Hence, Luckett suggested that the system for QA should not be on 'how to get quality defined formally' only, but should also focus on the stakeholders whose interest are served by the QA system. A means to address this challenge is to accept the diversity created because of the stakeholders and to work towards a compromise between the diverse views. Constant meetings and discussions are also required between all stakeholders in order to set the criteria for assessment before they are implemented. Within the context of this inquiry on PUC's, the stakeholders include the NAB, the NCTE, the mentoring PSU's, the PUC's, students, employers and parents. Once the stakeholders are identified, Luckett (2007: 99) proposed that the QA system should then be designed to provide answers to:

- "Who decides what counts as quality?"
- Who decides what the criteria or measures of quality should be?
- Who owns the quality system?
- For whom is the evaluation done?"

Lim (2010: 214) is of the view that Singapore's QA mechanism has been acknowledged as very effective in differentiating between high quality and low quality private universities. Singapore has a system called the 'Business Quality Class for Private Education Organisations' (hereinafter referred to as 'BQC for PEOs'). The BQC for PEOs has an instrument called Business Excellence Assessment for Continuous Improvement (hereinafter referred to as 'BEACON'). The BEACON instrument has seven dimensions: (1) leadership; (2) information; (3) people; (4) customers; (5) planning; (6) processes; and (7) results. All private higher education institutions in Singapore are assessed based on these dimensions and are required to meet the set criteria (Lim, 2010: 214). It has been noted that the submission of PUC's to this assessment has assisted to differentiate and classify PUC's that have met the standards as higher quality university colleges from their competitors. In this regard, Lim concluded that such a quality label has aided the attraction of better quality students and also a higher number of students. Lim (2010: 214) identified another QA mechanism put in place in Singapore to support international students in case a private university goes insolvent. This requirement is referred to as the 'CaseTrust for

Private Education Organisations'. This is a mandatory scheme under which the PUC's are required to deposit some amount of money into an appointed account or get an insurance cover for all international students. Lim (2010: 214) identified other mechanisms adopted by the PUC's in Singapore and Malaysia to include an audit of their business processes using the ISO 9000 standards and other subject specific requirements of the European systems. Furthermore, Lim noted that in Malaysia, other mechanisms used to ensure quality in private tertiary education is the benchmarking of PUC's at the same level as the public universities. Based on these observations, Lim (2010: 221) suggested the need for guidance rather than a focus on compliance with set standards. In addition, Shah, *et al.* (2011: 482) proposed that a good QA system is one which takes care of the needs of the country and is comparable within the international context. They further noted that the QA system should be flexible such as to allow for differences in terms of internal structures and the mission of the relevant higher education institution. An effective QA system should therefore be viewed in the context of a country's policies, means and resources available for the provision of educational opportunities for the citizenry.

In addition, Kis (2005: 30 – 32) has implied some specific features of an effective QA system as follows:

- Clarity of purpose of the system so that each member of the institution understands the aim and purpose of higher education.
- Mechanisms for ensuring that the higher education institution complies with all the rules and regulations of the QA agencies and therefore granted recognition.
- Effective collaboration between external QA agencies and internal QA practices.
- Suppleness and focus on the higher education institution's internal processes.
- Adequate follow-up procedures and feedback linked to action.
- Constant and continuous monitoring

In summary, this section discussed QA practices that have been helpful in ensuring quality standards in higher education institutions in different countries. The reviewed literature showed that there are no standard mechanisms for QA that will be applicable in every country. This is due to the differences concerning the context within which every country

operates. However, the practices and experiences of other countries outlined above could serve as a useful guide in the development of each country's higher education systems for QA.

In the next section, matters that could affect the effective implementation of higher education QA systems are discussed.

## **2.11 CHALLENGES FACING IMPLEMENTATION OF AN EFFECTIVE HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM**

No matter how thoughtfully a QA system is designed, there could still be challenges, especially at the implementation stage. The challenges that could face the effective implementation of higher education QA systems are varied. Kis (2005: 10) noted that when there are differences in the conception of what QA is between the regulatory institutions and the higher education institutions, it could affect policy implementation. In the view of Kis (2005:10), the conceptions of QA could be viewed as a formative activity, a summative activity or both. Kis further noted that the processes and practices of the regulatory institutions in developing countries are more of a summative rather than a formative activity. On the one hand, the summative approach is more for accountability purposes to the public and to justify policy decisions government has taken. On the other hand, in the formative approach, based on the recommendations of the external assessors, higher education institutions are required to self-regulate their practices and procedures in order to achieve the desired level of improvement required. Consequently, Kis (2005:10) concluded that the different conceptions of these two stakeholders make the implementation of the QA system challenging.

The second challenge in the effective implementation of a QA system is the 'implementation gap'. An implementation gap may arise as a result of incompatibility between the views of the academic staff as implementers of QA policy and what has been designed as acceptable quality higher education standards by the regulatory agencies. Any policy formulated by the regulatory agencies regarding QA must be properly decoded and interpreted by the academic staff as implementers of the policy. As noted by Kis

(2005: 2), academic staff are the 'makers' and 'shapers' in the policy implementation process. Correspondingly, Newton (2001: 154) stated that those who implement policy are the ones who can make a policy succeed or fail because they have the relative discretion at the point of implementation.

Kis (2005: 25) also mentioned a third challenge in a report on the study of higher education institutions in Spain. The report suggested that, when there is a lack of mechanisms to effectively analyse the information gathered during reviews and a lack of properly trained evaluators, it could negatively affect higher education QA policy implementation.

A fourth challenge is the lack of ownership by the higher education institutions of the QA process. When the QA systems are imposed on the academics by the regulatory agencies this is likely to affect the ownership of the system and its outcomes. This may be due to the fact that members of the higher education institution may not understand or share in the QA system imposed on them. According to Barrow (1999: 33) such a practice is likely to lead to compliance instead of quality improvement.

The fifth challenge that could occur is at the institutional level. As noted by Strydom and Strydom (2004: 108), in South Africa, higher education institutions experience challenges such as a lack of management skills and expertise related to QA at all levels. They also identified a lack of clearly formulated objectives and flexible criteria for self-assessment. Additionally, they observed a lack of goals and planning in the various units, as well as the lack of multi-institutional co-operation for effectiveness and efficiency.

The literature in this section shows that the challenges that could affect the effective implementation of QA systems are multi-dimensional. It could be at the internal level or from the external regulatory agencies or both. Thus, without effective planning, organising, implementation and evaluation of each stage of the QA process, the benefits that could be derived from an effective QA system would not be realised.

Effective QA also depends on the understanding of the policies, the nature of policy implementation as well as the factors that affect policy implementation. In the next section, these dimensions are examined.

## **2.12 POLICY AND POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AS PART OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS**

According to Dye (2008: 1) and Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka (2013: 36) a policy refers to the proposed course and programmes of action intended by a government to address a problem confronting the public or to achieve certain goals that are set by the state bureaucracies. A policy can therefore be viewed as those statements or decisions formulated and implemented by the government and its designated institutions with the aim of achieving the desired goals. In this research, policy is used to refer to those guiding statements formulated and implemented by the government and its designated public institutions with the aim of ensuring that quality education standards are adhered to by PUC's in Ghana.

There can be public as well as private policies. Generally, a public policy refers to "... what government chooses to do or not to do" (Dye, 2008: 1). Stated differently, Ajayi (2014: 66) explained public policy as a forecast of goals, values and practices that have a purposive course of action for individuals, groups, institutions and the nation as a whole. Furthermore, Dialoke, Ukah and Maduagwuna (2017: 23) contended that public policy is the policy formulated, implemented and evaluated by governments and implemented by state bureaucracies. On the contrary, private policy refers to a policy formulated and implemented by individuals and private institutions to deal with their issues. The relevance of a public policy lies in the fact that every government's actions need to be driven by specific statements to achieve the desired goals. The assumption is that, once a public policy is adopted by government, success is assured. However, this does not occur in practice because effective policy implementation does not occur automatically. Thus, a policy is relevant only when it is successfully implemented and when it achieves the purpose for which it is formulated.



Policy implementation is preceded by policy formulation or decision making. In the view of Ajayi (2014: 66) policy formulation is based on the inputs from the external and internal environment in the form of demands, requests, pressures and petitions. Once policies are formulated, the next step is to put into effect the policies that have been formulated. DeGroff and Cargo (2009: 49) are of the opinion that policy implementation could be viewed as a process, an output and an outcome. In their view, when policy implementation is viewed as a process, it means a series of decisions that have the aim of putting into effect a prior legislative decision. The process is expected to result in a satisfactory performance by the persons responsible for implementing a legislative decision. Accordingly, policy implementation for purposes of QA in PUC's, means how policies are translated into action for QA in the PUC's in Ghana. Policy implementation as an output means the extent to which the goals of the programme have been achieved. The goal in private higher education QA is to ensure that quality standards of education are provided by the PUC's. Finally, policy implementation as an outcome means a high level of change in the problem being addressed by the legislation or programme. In this regard, DeGroff and Cargo (2009: 49) and Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka (2013: 35) suggested that the national and operational policies should aid in reforming the practices and procedures of the institutions concerned. Thus, the extent to which the quality of education can be assured depends on the extent to which the institutions established by the government, with the mandate to ensure quality education standards in the PUC's in Ghana, execute their mandate. In the light of the current state of QA in the PUC's in Ghana, the outcomes have not been satisfactory (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1). Hence, in order to ensure that quality higher education standards are met by private sector providers, there is the need for relevant policies and effective implementation mechanisms.

Makinde (2005: 631) and Pitts (2007: 1579) believed that several policies in developing countries have failed to achieve the intended purpose due to lack of effective implementation practices. Additionally, Makinde (2005: 63) described policy implementation as a dynamic process. As a result of the dynamic nature of the policy implementation process, Makinde opined that it is not a one-time event intended to transform decisions into workable operational terms. Rather, the policy implementation

process is an on-going process that requires continuous effort and operational flexibility to achieve the changes or state of events required by the policy decisions.

According to Ansah (2015: 2), Ghana has been commended as one of the African countries with strong external QA mechanisms. However as noted in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1, there are still challenges with the quality of education offered by the PUC's in Ghana. Such challenges require the need to identify the discrepancies and the causes of the gaps in order to be able to develop appropriate interventions to address them. In the policy cycle, the discrepancies that could lead to gaps include the lack of understanding of the policy objectives and the expected outcomes by the concerned parties as well as the lack of both human and non-human resources. Apart from the discrepancies, Cheng and Cheung (1995: 16 – 18) noted that, it is important to pay attention to the rights of those affected by the policy process to ensure that their legal rights are protected. Thus, the policy process should also have sufficient legal backing from the laws of the country concerned.

As regards policy implementation, O'Toole (2000: 266) suggested that, in order to implement a policy, there is a need for coordination between actors across the different levels and institutions responsible for policy implementation, in order to ensure success. Additionally, O'Toole (2000: 276) noted that in contemporary policy implementation, an understanding of networked governance is relevant. Such an understanding provides insights that help to identify and recognise the organisational structure and the relationships that influence the policy implementation process. The collaboration between the different institutions is necessary to ensure success in implementation because of the advantage that is gained as a result of synergy (O'Toole, 2000: 266; DeGroff & Cargo, 2009: 51). The network system has the challenge of each agency in the network having its own interest and different characteristics (DeGroff & Cargo, 2009: 51; Weir, 2009: 64). These challenges can be addressed through proper collaboration and coordination of different strategies and interventions. In this investigation, the different stakeholders include the NAB, the NCTE, the mentoring PSU's and the PUC's. The extent of networking

and collaboration between these stakeholders has implications for the success of QA in the PUC's in Ghana.

Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka (2013: 37) have outlined some of the crucial questions that influence policy implementation as:

- How are the institutions implementing the policies?
- How are the people affected by the policy responding?
- What are the levels of resources available to the implementing agencies to be able to effectively implement the policies?
- What is the level of motivation and willingness of the implementing agencies to implement the policies as expected?
- What is the disposition of the implementing agency to implement the policy as intended?
- What are the monitoring and supervision mechanisms in place for ensuring the implementation of the policy?

Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka (2013: 37) believed that when the above questions are addressed, it could help to overcome most of the challenges encountered in the policy implementation process.

### **2.12.1 Factors that could affect policy implementation**

The factors that could affect policy implementation are varied. Makinde (2005: 63), DeGroff and Cargo (2009: 50) and Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka (2013: 38) outlined some specific barriers to effective policy implementation to include: (1) poor communication; (2) inadequate human and material resources; (3) poor attitude of implementers; (4) bureaucracy; ; (5) personal interest and prejudices; (6) undue political influence; (7) corruption; as well as (8) the lack of continuity of government policies. Some of the key factors relevant to this study are elucidated below.

#### **2.12.1.1 Communication**

In the policy implementation process, communication is relevant because it is the means through which the required decisions are transmitted to the implementers of the policy. In

this regard, Makinde (2005: 63) suggested that in order to ensure effective communication, the information transmitted, including the legislative directives, must be clear, consistent and accurate. Thus, effective implementation requires that implementers have adequate information on the implementation process as well as the authority to carry out policies as intended. In relation to higher education QA, Strydom and Strydom (2004: 110) claimed that a weak system of communication between national QA agencies, intermediate institutions and the higher education institutions could cause frustration and uncertainty. Likewise, Lim (2010: 221) stressed the need for effective communication and the need to build trust between the various actors as a way to address challenges that may arise in the course of policy implementation.

#### **2.12.1.2 Resources/human capital**

In policy implementation, adequate human and non-human resources are needed, without which laws cannot be enforced and the needed regulations cannot be developed. Strydom and Strydom (2004: 107) and Makinde (2005: 63 – 64) were of the opinion that when resources for policy implementation are inadequate, it hinders effective policy implementation. In particular, Cheung (2015: 157) emphasised that an acceptable number of adequately trained personnel is needed for both internal and external QA. Cheung further suggested that staff on an external QA team should have skills that match the requirements of the roles they are assigned on the team. Thus, human capital development should be at the heart of every mechanism and strategy in QA. Gyimah-Brempong and Ondiege (2011: 39), in the African Competitiveness Report, noted the low level of development of human capital in Africa, when compared to international standards. They believed that this has hindered the continent from deriving the gains that could be made from the stock of its human capital. Added to the above views, Keeley (2007: 3) posited that, despite the fact that African countries have spent a large proportion of their resources on education, their stock of human capital with tertiary education is low as compared to international standards. In relation to Ghana, an earlier report by Girdwood (1999: 41) revealed that the NAB and the NCTE, which are the institutions responsible for the regulation of the activities of the tertiary education institutions in Ghana, are under-resourced. This lack of resources could negatively affect the QA

strategies aimed to ensure quality education standards especially at the PUC's that need to be mentored and given guidance for the development of a QAC.

#### **2.12.1.3 Attitude/disposition of policy implementers**

The extent to which policy implementers view the policy as affecting their institutional and personal interest influences the implementation process. In most cases, where the policy may have a negative consequence or take away a benefit, implementers will not be favourably disposed towards the policy. Conversely, where the policy has consequential benefits for the implementer, they are more likely to ensure its implementation (Makinde, 2005: 64). Accordingly, the lack of the right attitude towards the implementation of any tertiary education QA policy could affect the process, the outcome and the output of any higher education QA activity.

#### **2.12.1.4 Effective structures and bureaucracy**

According to Makinde (2005: 64), in situations where a policy requires the cooperation of several individuals, there is the need for a good structure. In Makinde's view, a good structure is required in order to be able to coordinate activities, avoid waste of resources and to avoid working at cross purposes. One of the issues taken for granted by decision makers is the belief that once a policy is adopted, it will be implemented and the desired goals achieved. However, implementation gaps could result between the formulation of a tertiary education policy and the actual outcomes of such a policy if the structure excludes academics who could be relied upon to play a pivotal role for effective QA. Any higher education QA process devoid of the involvement of academics by the institution and the external agencies will result in what Harvey and Williams (2010: 84) referred to as the 'beast-like presence requiring to be fed with ritualistic practices by academics seeking to meet accountability requirements'.

The reviewed literature has shown that several factors could affect policy implementation. Consequently, there is the need for proper collaboration and coordination of the different strategies and interventions between the different stakeholders involved in higher education QA.

## **2.13 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided a focused review of literature under the major themes that relate to QA in tertiary education institutions in general and private tertiary education in particular. Since this research adopted the grounded theory approach, the justification for undertaking a focused and scoping literature review was provided. Based on the major themes, the chapter showed that effective higher education QA requires both internal and external mechanisms that help to ensure a good measure of control, accountability and improvement. Whereas internal QA focuses on what the higher education institution itself does to ensure quality, external QA involves stakeholders outside the institution who use either academic quality audit, accreditation or quality monitoring and assessment to ensure quality in the higher education institutions. These external activities are implemented through the use of the different forms of institutional isomorphic change strategies - coercive, normative and mimetic. Despite the need for both internal and external QA mechanisms, the reviewed literature shows a preference for more emphasis on internal QA because it is more sustainable and facilitates the development of a QAC. The reviewed literature also shows that the government has an essential role to play in the delivery of tertiary education in general and private tertiary education in particular. Additionally, the chapter examined empirical studies on higher education QA in order to identify best practices that could be factored into the framework proposed at the end of this study. The challenges that could affect the effective implementation of higher education QA were also discussed. Since QA involves the implementation of policies and also requires legislation that gives the regulatory institutions the authority to act, the factors that could affect these processes were also considered. The revelations from the literature review influenced the focus and emphasis during the semi-structured interviews used for data collection in this research project.

Based on the review and synthesis of literature in this chapter, the next chapter discusses the models, theories and frameworks that relate to QA and QA practices. The QA practices of some selected countries are also discussed.

## **CHAPTER 3: MODELS, CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK, THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND PHILOSOPHY RELATING TO MECHANISMS FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter 2, a focused review of literature on the major themes and issues that relate to tertiary education QA in general and private tertiary education QA in particular, were reflected upon. This chapter complements the literature review on QA provided in Chapter 2. Fox and Bayat (2007: 35) avowed that all research projects should be located within some theoretical framework. Accordingly, the objective of this chapter, as indicated in Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2, is to outline the role of models, a conceptual framework and theoretical perspectives that relate to tertiary education QA in Ghana.

Against the above objective and broader context of this chapter the researcher will first offer the rationale for the inclusion of a conceptual framework and theoretical perspectives. Second, the chapter will provide the definition of the concept of a conceptual framework, the aim and objectives. Third, it will highlight the definition of the construct theoretical perspective, the aim and objectives as well as the underpinning of theoretical perspectives. Fourth, it will specify the philosophy, model and principles of tertiary education QA in Ghana. Fifth, it will elucidate the models and theoretical perspectives that guided this research. Finally, it will deliberate on the QA practices of some selected countries in order to identify good practices that could be recommended and pitfalls that could be avoided. The selected countries were the USA, the UK and Australia. The chapter concludes with a summary of the major issues discussed in this chapter.

The next section offers the rationale for providing a conceptual framework and theoretical perspectives in a research project.

### **3.2 RATIONALE FOR A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**

The justification for providing an appropriate conceptual framework and theoretical perspectives in research cannot be underestimated. Generally, a conceptual framework and theoretical perspectives provide the context and analytical structure for clarifying theoretical debates and ambiguous terms in a field of study (Edwards, 1981: 439; Miller & Redding, 1986: 98; Alballa-Bertrand, 1992: 3; Demrag & Goddard, 1994: 360). Imenda (2014: 185) also described a conceptual framework and theoretical perspectives of a study as the 'soul' of every research since they influence how a research problem is formulated, investigated and the meaning attached to the data gathered. Theoretical perspectives in qualitative research; such as this thesis, provided the overall orienting lens which shaped the positioning of the researcher, the types of questions asked, how data were collected and analysed as well as the recommendations made on the way forward (Creswell 2009: 62). Accordingly, Grant and Osanloo (2014: 12 – 13) and Imenda (2014: 193) advanced that providing an appropriate conceptual framework and a clear theoretical perspective makes available a general approach (methodology) for a scientific inquiry.

Although a conceptual framework and theoretical perspectives are two different constructs both aid in undertaking scholarly inquiry by providing the 'epistemological paradigm' adopted by a researcher in addressing a research problem (Imenda, 2014: 185; Adom, Hussein & Agyem, 2018: 438). Evans (2007: 8) further proposed that providing both a conceptual framework and theoretical perspectives in a scientific inquiry enables readers to appreciate why a researcher chooses a particular topic, the assumptions underlying their investigation, the researcher's views on the different literature in the area of study and how the research approach is conceptually grounded. Thus, when the two constructs are properly aligned together, they provide a basis upon which the researcher is able to explain the need and significance of a study and to conduct a good investigation. In addition, when the two constructs are properly linked, it makes research findings more meaningful and enhances the empiricism and rigor of the investigation.

Despite the complementary roles of the two constructs there are differences as well. On the one hand, a conceptual framework assists in setting the logical orientation and in



establishing the relationship that exists between issues that underlie the thinking, structuring, planning and practices adopted for executing the entire research (Kavunji, 2018: 47 – 48). On the other hand, theoretical perspectives specify the assumptions, tenets, propositions and prediction of relationships between variables of the research phenomenon, aid in substantiating arguments made and the justification for a study (Kavunji, 2018: 47). Other distinctions between a conceptual framework and the theoretical perspectives include the following: (1) Whereas a conceptual framework provides the specific ideas a researcher utilises, theoretical perspectives provide a more general set of ideas within which the scientific inquiry is situated. (2) A conceptual framework is the researcher's own construct that is used to explain the relationship between the main variables used, but theoretical perspectives are other researcher's perspectives as well. (3) A conceptual framework represents a researcher's own proposed model for addressing the research problem while the theoretical perspective is an accepted model that exists in literature. (4) A conceptual framework indicates how the research project will be conducted while the theoretical perspectives present the focal points for undertaking an inquiry into an unknown field. (6) A conceptual framework aims at developing a theory in the field while the theoretical perspectives are used to predict and control the situation within the context of the inquiry (Alabi *et al.*, 2018: 440). Stated differently, Kavunji (2018: 47) described a conceptual framework as the master plan of the research and an outcome of the researcher's own thoughts about a research project whereas theoretical frameworks are other researcher's theoretical perspectives, which are considered relevant for the analysis and interpretation of data. Imenda (2014: 185) therefore averred that the differences between the two constructs are both by definition and as actualised in the research process. Thus, both differ conceptually, methodologically, and in the scope of their application (Imenda, 2014: 194).

In this research, the conceptual framework developed and the theoretical perspectives provided are relevant for the following specific reasons. The two constructs:

- Provided the structure that enabled the researcher to define the study 'philosophically, epistemologically, methodologically and analytically' (Grant & Osanloo, 2014: 13).

- Aided the researcher to identify the main variables and concepts.
- Guided the researcher in determining what to look for in the data gathered and the thought processes for determining how data fits together for addressing the research questions (Adom *et al.*, 2018: 438; Kavunji, 2018: 48).
- Facilitated the search for relevant literature and in the scholarly discussion of research results (Adom *et al.*, 2018: 438).
- Enabled the researcher to consider different theories and to establish points of convergence and disagreement in the current investigation (Adom *et al.*, 2018: 438).
- Assisted in determining the appropriate research approach, analytical tools and procedures followed in the study (Adom *et al.*, 2018: 438).
- Provided the opportunity for the researcher to state the theoretical assumptions underlying the scientific inquiry and to make data analysis more focused (Kavunji, 2018: 48).
- Helped in identifying relevant theoretical ideas that could be relevant to understanding the research problem (Kavunji, 2018: 47).
- Enabled the researcher to add depth to data analysis and discussion, substantiate and make arguments in a more scholarly, analytical and creative manner as well as make relevant recommendations (Kavunji, 2018: 48).

From the above it is evident that researchers need to develop a conceptual framework and provide theoretical perspectives in order to guide their research projects. This will make the research more meaningful and more acceptable, and justify the significance of the work. The sections that follow provide a more detailed discussion of the conceptual framework and the theoretical perspectives that guided this thesis.

### **3.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Against the above background, this section covers a definition, aim and objectives of a conceptual framework. Additionally, the conceptual framework (structure) that was used to investigate the research problem is described. This is followed by a discussion of the relationship that exists between the variables and how the framework relates to this research project.

### **3.3.1 Definition**

The conceptual framework of a study refers to a structure that provides an understanding of a given phenomenon, based on the researcher's analysis of what the research problem involves and what the researcher believes best explains the natural progression of the phenomenon being investigated (Liehr & Smith, 1999: 12; Camp, 2001: 27 – 28; Bordage, 2009: 312). Imenda (2014: 189) and Kivunja (2018: 45) also defined a conceptual framework as the bringing together of related concepts that produce the logical conceptualisation of the entire research for purposes of providing a broader understanding of a research problem. Similarly, Ravitch and Riggan (2017: xv, 10) defined a conceptual framework as the identification of key constructs and the presumed relationships that exist among them and the arguments advanced in support of the presumed relationships.

Developing a conceptual framework is mainly an inductive process, through which relevant concepts drawn from various sources such as theories, related studies or a researcher's worldview are linked together to establish their relationship with each other in order to address a specific problem (Imenda, 2014: 189). Furthermore, Imenda noted that most conceptual frameworks are associated with qualitative research that utilises inductive reasoning; which is the case in this research project.

### **3.3.2 Aim**

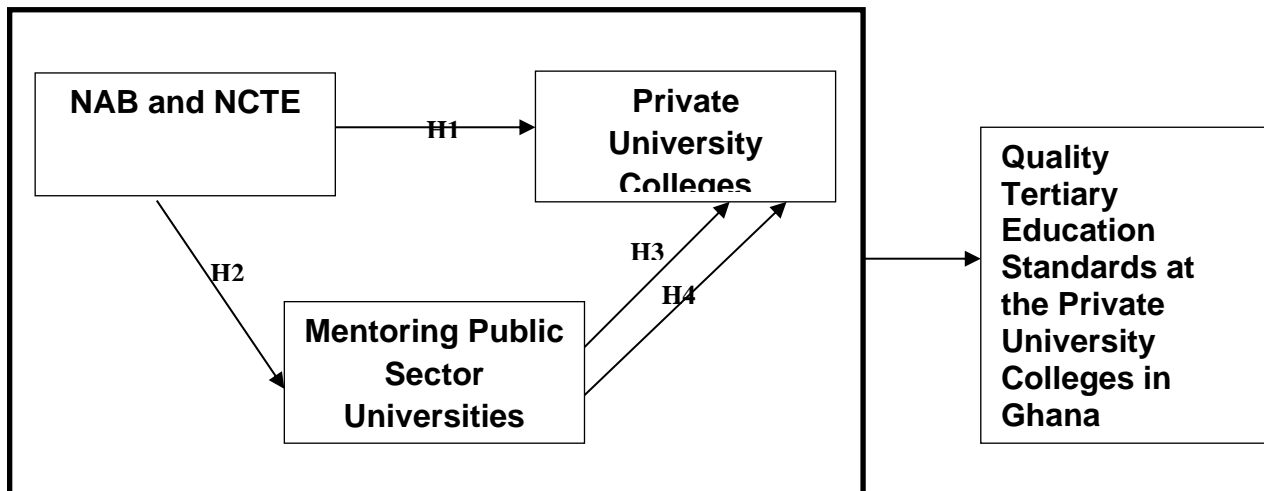
According to Adom *et al.* (2018: 439), the main aim of having a conceptual framework is to provide a diagrammatic representation or a narrative explanation of the relationship that exists between the constructs and variables identified in a research project. Ravitch and Riggan (2012: 7) also opined that a conceptual framework for a research project aims at shaping the design and direction of a research and making the study more meaningful and acceptable to the reader in terms of its importance in a specified field of inquiry.

In any empirical study, a conceptual framework is needed to identify and project the key issues involved in a problem and to aid the understanding of the problem being investigated. Accordingly, Ngulube, Mathipa and Gumbo (2015: 7 – 8) argued that, without a conceptual framework, the research process will not have a clear direction. A conceptual

framework thus reduces the chances of ambiguity in a research report by providing a logical conceptualisation of the entire study.

The QA literature in Chapter 2 and the institutional models, theories and frameworks that are discussed in Section 3.6 of this chapter provided the data and information on which the conceptual framework for this thesis was developed. The process for ensuring quality education standards at the PUC's in Ghana involves three major stakeholders (the NAB, the NCTE & the mentoring PSU's) who play interrelated roles. Accordingly, the conceptual framework indicates the relationship between the major stakeholders in the private tertiary education QA process in Ghana (see Figure 3.2).

**Figure 3.2: Conceptual framework**



**Source: Researcher's own construct, 2020.**

The nature, context and setting of tertiary education QA at the PUC's in Ghana is considered as the product of the relationship between the policymakers and their designated regulatory institutions, the PUC's and the mentoring PSU's to which the PUC's are affiliated. The conceptual framework presupposes that the NCTE and the NAB directly (H1) engage in QA practices at the PUC's or through the mentoring PSU's to which the PUC's are affiliated (H2). The mentoring PSU's in turn ensure that the standards set by the NCTE and the NAB are adhered to (H3). In Ghana, until a PUC obtains a Presidential Charter status, the degrees and the certificates that are awarded to graduates from these

PUC's are from their mentoring PSU's. As a result, the mentoring PSU's also have their tertiary education standards that they use directly to ensure quality standards are adhered to by the PUC's which they mentor (H4). In effect, the conceptual framework logically links the research topic, background and rationale, research problem, research questions, objectives (see Chapter 1, Sections 1.2 – 1.4), and literature review (see Chapter 2), research methodology, design and methods (see Chapter 6), data presentation, analyses, interpretation and discussion (see Chapter 7) and conclusions as well as recommendations (see Chapter 8).

Specifically, the conceptual framework in Figure 3.2 formed the structure that guided the research and demonstrated the role of each of the various stakeholders within the private tertiary education QA system and the linkages between them. This research project, being a grounded theory research, data gathered through semi-structured personal interviews and from documents, were analysed using the abbreviated version of Charmaz's (2006: 11) grounded theory approach (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4.5). Based on the analysis of the data, the themes and concepts that emerged were developed into a framework (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.8). The researcher believed that the framework proposed at the end of this thesis could aid in improving upon the mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana.

### **3.3.3 Objectives**

Researchers and scholars such as Imenda (2014: 193), Ngulube, Mathipa, and Gambo (2015: 7 – 8), Dine, McGaghie and Shea (2015:19) have outlined the objectives of a conceptual framework as to:

- (1) Enable the researcher to clearly identify the variables and theoretical concepts in the research.
- (2) Provide the researcher with the methodology to adopt.
- (3) Guide the researcher in the collection, interpretation and explanation of the data.
- (4) Highlight and prioritise the questions that guide the researcher's critical thinking during the investigation.

- (5) Facilitate the synthesis of views in literature concerning a situation in order to provide the meanings embedded within the literature.
- (6) Offer an integrated approach to addressing the research questions and research problem.
- (7) Assist in constructing the worldview of the researcher in relation to the phenomenon being investigated.
- (8) Emphasise why the research topic is important to investigate.
- (9) Clarify the assumptions underlying the study and to conceptually ground the research approach.

Stated differently and concisely, Mouton (1996: 114 – 117) and Dine, *et al.* (2015: 19) indicated that a conceptual framework helps to:

- Identify the key variables in a research project.
- Establish the relationship between the variables.
- Clarify concepts used in the research project in order to provide the reader with consistent and understandable information.

In summary, a well-articulated conceptual framework reduces the chances of ambiguity. In fact, it provides a reflection of the entire research process from the choice of a topic to the end of the research when conclusions are drawn and recommendations made.

### **3.4 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**

This section presents a definition of the concept ‘theoretical perspectives’. The aim and objectives of providing theoretical perspectives are also discussed. In addition, the theoretical perspectives that underpinned this work are explicated.

#### **3.4.1 Definition**

Kivunji (2018: 47) noted that theoretical perspectives refers to a theory or a set of theories that serve as the guide during a research. Foster (2015: 49) defined a theory as a “... coherent group of general propositions used as principles of explanation for a class of phenomenon”. Stated differently, a theory is a set of interrelated concepts and propositions that are rigorously structured in a manner that presents a systematic point of

view that specifies relationships between variables for purposes of explaining and predicting a phenomenon (Fox & Bayat, 2007: 29).

Several other definitions are indicative of the concept 'theoretical perspectives' and have been offered. For example, Crotty (1998: 3) defined a theoretical perspective as the philosophical position that informs the research methodology. Alternatively, Creswell (2003: 10) defined the construct as the hypothetical stance taken by a researcher for purposes of analysing a phenomenon being studied. In the view of Neuman (2006: 74), the stance taken regarding a phenomenon, then orients and provides focus to the research process as well as aids in locating the investigation within a broader scholarly world. Grant and Osanloo (2014: 15) also defined theoretical perspectives as the set of assumptions about what reality is, which then determines what research questions are asked and the answers that are obtained as the research results. Hence, it is the lens through which a researcher views reality, which could help to either focus or distort what the researcher observes, or enable inclusion or exclusion, of what is viewed as reality. Thus, the assumptions about what reality is are based on theoretical perspectives that then serve as a guide. In order to investigate this reality, it was the theoretical perspectives that supported the researcher's thinking during the inquiry. One of the interpretive frameworks adopted in this thesis is pragmatism (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.2.2) which is not restrictive when it comes to how knowledge is created and as such, accepts the fact that multiple realities exist within a group of people. Furthermore, Creswell (2013: 28) and Leavy (2017: 138) asserted that studies conducted within the pragmatist domain are not committed to any single system of philosophy about reality. Thus, the reality of ensuring quality standards of education varies. In a study such as this, therefore, theoretical perspectives are relevant for reasons such as the following, it: (1) Assisted the researcher to appreciate, plan and choose a thesis topic. (2) Aided the researcher to come up with assumptions on the nature of reality. (3) Facilitated the identification of the concepts, variables and definitions that are applicable to the research topic.

Creswell (2014: 61) suggested that a discourse on a research's theoretical perspective should indicate the central propositions of the theory, how the theory has been applied in

earlier researches and a discussion of how the theory precisely relates to the current study. Thus, theoretical perspectives are further relevant because they provide the means for organising a researcher's thoughts for others to understand. Additionally, Imenda (2014: 189-190) averred that theoretical perspectives provide guidance in: (1) determining the specific research objectives and questions; (2) reviewing of relevant literature; (3) choosing of suitable research methods; and (4) interpreting of research results.

### **3.4.2 Aim**

The basic aim of theoretical perspectives in a thesis is to aid in organising the researcher's thoughts and to make the assumptions underlying the research understandable to others. Based on the reviewed literature, the researcher identified and applied multiple theoretical perspectives as the hypothetical lenses through which data were viewed. A detailed discussion on the selected theoretical perspectives is provided in Section 3.6.

### **3.4.3 Objectives**

The objectives of providing theoretical perspectives of a study are varied. Most of the authors are of the view that the objectives are to:

- Aid in the choice of a research topic, development of research questions, the review of relevant literature, selection of a research design and the plan for the analysis and interpretation of data.
- Assist the researcher to evaluate the theoretical assumption of the study.
- Link the research phenomenon to existing knowledge.
- Aid in the explanation and description of a phenomenon systematically and with rigor. In this manner, it allows the researcher to meet the criteria of a good qualitative research, which includes credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability. Detailed discussions of each of the criterion of a good research are provided in Chapter 6, Section 6.5 of this thesis.
- Assist the researcher to properly appreciate and analyse a research problem within the chosen worldview.
- Have a clear focus throughout the study.



- Enable a researcher to do a rational, logical and methodical interpretation of the given phenomenon being investigated.

At the end of a theoretical review, the researcher is able to provide answers to the why and how questions related to the phenomenon being studied and move from just a simple description of the phenomenon to generalisations about the various aspects of the phenomenon (Mouton, 1996: 11; Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 366; Creswell, 2013: 86; Ngulube *et al.*, 2015: 13; Kivunji, 2018: 46).

According to Creswell (2003: 10 – 11) the philosophical assumptions that a researcher can choose from include pragmatism, post-positivism, feminism and post-modernism. In certain situations, theoretical perspectives can be integrated with the philosophical assumptions such as the ontological, epistemological, axiological and the methodological aspects. A researcher who is aware of this influence can then modify the plan of the study to meet the required standard and purposes (Haight, 2010: 101; Song, Shin & Kim, 2015: 215). This research project adopted the post-positivist and pragmatist paradigms (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.2.1 – 6.2.2.2) to investigate, analyse, describe and explore the mechanisms of QA in the PUC's in Ghana. A detail explanation and justification on this aspect is provided in Chapter 6.

#### **3.4.4 Underpinning theoretical perspectives**

Five theoretical perspectives underpinned this thesis. They are the following: (1) The Cao and Li higher education quality assurance framework. (2) Von Bertalanffy's open system theory. (3) DiMaggio and Powell's neo-institutional theory. (4) Van Meter and Van Horn's policy implementation process. (5) Ellis and Steyn's higher education regulatory framework. In selecting these theoretical perspectives, the researcher assumed that quality; although a nebulous concept exists in the real world and can be identified and ensured by the relevant institutions through effective mechanisms. As noted by Martin and Stella (2007: 35) and Lim (2010: 213), due to the importance of higher education in producing quality labour force for the development of a nation, governments have focused on how to ensure quality through the establishment of regulatory institutions with a

mandate to ensure quality. Effective QA also requires self-regulation. Thus, both the higher education institution itself (internal) and the mandated higher education regulatory institutions (external) can ensure quality in the higher education institutions through effective QA mechanisms. As noted in Chapter 2, Section 2.8, as a result of governments' inability to meet the higher education needs of their citizenry, many private higher education institutions have been established (Shah & Lewis, 2010: 80; Effah, 2011: 378). However, the self-serving interest of entrepreneurs and the reality of meeting tertiary education needs of a nation must be reconciled and regulated through mechanisms that help to ensure quality.

In this research project, QA is regarded as a comprehensive term that refers to an on-going, continuous process used to evaluate, assess, monitor, guarantee, maintain and improve the quality of higher education systems, institutions or programmes. This description suggests that QA is a multi-dimensional concept. This has necessitated the multiple theoretical perspectives employed in this study. Thus, the researcher maintains that, based on the five different theoretical perspectives provided in this thesis, the following are required to ensure quality in higher education institutions:

- (1) A clear understanding of what quality higher education entails. The first theoretical perspective (see Section 3.6.1) highlighted the areas to focus on during higher education QA.
- (2) Appreciation of the influence of the external and internal environment on higher education QA. The second theoretical perspective illuminated the processes involved (see Section 3.6.2).
- (3) Conformity to structures and policies. The third theoretical perspective presupposes that the higher education environment is characterised by policies, structures, professions and programmes to which higher education institutions must conform (see Section 3.6.3).
- (4) Knowledge of multiple stakeholders with different interests. This implies that regulation of higher education involves many stakeholders from different institutions and with different expectations. (see Section 3.6.4).

- (5) Effective QA requires effective legislation. This means that the nature of legislation in place for regulating and ensuring quality in higher education institutions has implications and consequences on higher education QA (see Section 3.6.5).

The processes and practices used to ensure quality higher education standards involves three interrelated institutional isomorphic change mechanisms – coercive, mimetic and normative. Dattey *et al.* (2014: 318) indicated that PUC's in Ghana experience all three forms of isomorphic pressures Thus, the nature and context of higher education QA in the PUC's in Ghana justifies the multiple theoretical perspectives that were relied on in this investigation. From the above, it is evident that, to be able to understand and ensure quality in higher education institutions, a multi-dimensional and coordinated approach is required. This is because QA in higher education involves different stakeholders with varied expectations, rules, regulations, policies and processes.

A rational conclusion from the aforementioned discourse is that a conceptual framework and theoretical perspectives are relevant to the entire research process. The two concepts aid a researcher and the readers to appreciate the logical orientation and assumptions regarding a study, and to provide the lens through which data are viewed.

The philosophy, models and principles regarding tertiary education QA in Ghana is provided in the next section below.

### **3.5 PHILOSOPHY, MODEL AND PRINCIPLES FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE IN GHANA**

This section deliberates on the three aspects related to the understanding and justification of QA in the tertiary education institutions in Ghana. These are the philosophy, model and principles for tertiary education QA. Available literature on QA suggests that there is a strong relationship between philosophy, models and principles regarding the phenomenon of QA in tertiary education institutions.

### **3.5.1 Philosophy**

Basically, QA is viewed as the mechanisms in place for monitoring, evaluation and review of higher education institutions for purposes of assuring all stakeholders that the education being offered meets expected minimum requirements. In this regard, QA fosters transparency if the outcomes are shared and owned by all stakeholders. This considered, QA must have mechanisms that help to achieve its purposes. Thus, in order to guarantee quality standards in the higher education sector, the higher education institution itself (internal) and the institutions responsible for ensuring quality (external) must put in place systems that help to ensure that acceptable standards of education are met (Martin & Stella 2007: 34). The external review should be conducted by independent national institutions who have professional workers with international expertise (Kis, 2005; 13). In Ghana, the NAB is the external institution responsible for QA in the tertiary education sector.

Kis (2005:10) distinguished the philosophy of QA in the business and industrial worlds and that of the public sector. In his view, in the industrial and business sector, the philosophy of QA has been to equip employees with the relevant skills in order to ensure continuous performance. However, within the education sector, QA plays mainly a watchdog role in which controls, professional credentials and internal audits are used to maintain standards and ensure that only legitimate institutions provide higher education. Philosophically, QA in Ghana is about ensuring that higher education institutions have effective systems in place for self-regulation and that the external regulatory institutions ensure that the quality standards are maintained and developed.

In sum, the purposes of QA focus on aspects such as accountability, improvement and control/compliance (see Chapter 2, Section 2.6) (Harvey & Newton, 2004: 151; Kis, 2005: 5; Martin & Stella, 2007: 42-43; Woodhouse, 2012: 5). In order to achieve the purposes of QA in the higher education institutions in Ghana, there must be alignment between the different QA mechanisms. Additionally, the integrative philosophy of QA affirms the view that QA in the higher education institution requires a collective responsibility of all stakeholders.

### 3.5.2 Model

A model provides a simplified theoretical representation of how to do something in practice. In a scientific inquiry such as this one, a model provides a framework for arranging the researcher's thoughts and in ensuring that the research is conducted in a systematic manner.

Strauss and Corbin (1998: 12) affirmed that, in grounded theory investigation, any model that emerges at the end of the research should be based on the key concepts and themes that emerge from the primary data collected. Despite this assertion, Strauss and Corbin (1998: 12) were also of the view that a review of existing literature helps to establish existing frameworks which can inform and drive the initial coding process in qualitative research. Similarly, Charmaz (2008: 402) noted that no researcher begins the coding process as a *tabula rasa* (without any previous knowledge). Consequently, Charmaz (2006: 165) suggested that, for purposes of constant comparative analysis, a review of theoretical perspectives provides relevant information for undertaking comparison and analysis. The comparative analysis helps to indicate which of the earlier theories or perspectives elucidate the emerging theoretical categories and concepts in the current research. Furthermore, Charmaz (2006: 165) asserted that a review of existing theoretical perspectives shows either how the new framework that emerges confirms, extends or challenges earlier research results in the area of study. Accordingly, an analysis of the existing theoretical perspectives (see Section 3.6) in this chapter contributed to establish their relevance to this research project.

Several traditional industry-originated models such as Total Quality Management, ISO 9001 and Business Process Reengineering exist for assuring quality. However, in this thesis, more recent higher education QA and policy implementation models were considered, such as the (1) Cao and Li's higher education quality assurance framework. (2) Von Bertalanffy's open system theory. (3) DiMaggio and Powell's neo-institutional theory. (4) Van Meter and Van Horn's policy implementation process. (5) Ellis and Steyn's higher education regulatory framework.

The preference for these education and policy implementation related frameworks is because, in the view of Csizmadia (2006: 31), there are challenges associated with the industry-originated models when applied in education QA. The criticism against the industry-originated quality management models is that, unlike the manufacturing industry that deals with lifeless raw materials, education QA has to do with human actions that are much more difficult to predict and control. As a result of these challenges, different models have been developed that take into account the characteristics and principles of higher education QA (Sallis, 2005: 18; Kahsay, 2012: 53). Besides the challenges associated with the application of industry-originated models in higher education QA, another challenge emanates from the use of QA and implementation models of developed countries by developing countries. In the view of Lim (1999: 379), the application of industry-originated models from developed countries could pose challenges related to the extent of relevance, appropriateness and the extent of applicability of these models to the needs of developing countries. In addition to the challenges identified by Lim (1999: 379), Sallis (2005: 18) and Kahsay (2012: 53), other challenges identified by Ansah (2015: 1) included limited financial resources and the level of QAC of developing countries. Despite these contextual challenges, the benchmarking of excellent higher education QA mechanisms is relevant. Consequently, Mishra (2007: 32) asserted that benchmarking helps to identify good practices from higher education institutions that are doing well and serve as a tool for motivation to change. Ansah, *et al.*, (2017: 28) also confirmed the relevance of benchmarking. These researchers, however, cautioned that the likelihood of success of practices that are adopted from other countries depends on how well the implementers understand and adopt a pragmatist approach in its implementation. They advanced that implementers must take into consideration the local context of each country and the quality concerns that are to be addressed. The need to develop a context-specific higher education QA framework then justifies a research project such as this. This inquiry aimed to investigate the existing QA mechanisms used by the NCTE, the NAB and selected mentoring PSU's in an attempt to demonstrate how these mechanisms could be strengthened to ensure successful application of QA in the PUC's in Ghana.

Cao and Li (2014: 66) advised that effective QA mechanisms must be developed based on systems that synchronise with the mission and goals of private higher education institutions and the general purposes of education. The same two authors further claimed that an effective QA system must have elements that can generate principles that will give direction that help to address quality issues by and large. The next section discusses the principles underlying tertiary education QA.

### **3.5.3 Principles**

Meggison *et al.* (1886: 15) defined principles as the general belief or proposition that serves as a guide to thoughts, actions and behaviour of a person or group in a given situation. Principles also refer to the guiding philosophies, attitudes or assumptions regarding how an institution should be managed (Pryor, Anderson, Toomps, & Humphrey, 2007: 9). In the context of this study, principles for QA refer to beliefs and statements that serve as a guide and means for monitoring and controlling activities related to the provision of private higher education in order to ensure quality. Principles of QA provide guidance for what must or must not be done in order to ensure quality standards in the higher education sector. In order to ensure quality, effective QA mechanisms are required. In Ghana, the mechanisms for ensuring quality in higher education institutions could be by the institution itself (internal), by another institution different from the higher education institution itself (external) or both (Dattey *et al.*, 2014: 318). The mandate for ensuring quality in the tertiary education institutions in Ghana is by the two regulatory institutions established by the government - NAB and the NCTE. In principle, government has a role to play in ensuring quality standards in the higher education institutions. Aside the NAB and the NCTE, in the case of PUC's which this research focuses on, the university to which they are affiliated also has QA principles that serve as a guide and for regulating their practices.

According to Alabi *et al.* (2018: 7 – 8), the two key principles of the NCTE for achieving the purposes of QA, are the principles of autonomy and freedom. In their view, tertiary education institutions should be held accountable for the use of public funds as well as to ensure that the education they provide is fit for purpose. Fitness for purpose means the

education provided by the higher education institutions must meet the needs of society. In the case of PUC's, although they do not use public funds, the principle of accountability is applicable in order to regulate the self-serving interest of entrepreneurs. Thus, in Ghana there are mechanisms such as accreditation, academic quality audit and quality monitoring and assessment that are used to ensure that the education provided by the higher education institutions fulfill the purposes of higher education which are accountability, improvement and control/compliance.

The second principle of the NCTE for ensuring quality standards of tertiary education is that higher education institutions must be allowed to operate in an environment devoid of interference by political authorities. In principle, the particular higher education institution should be responsible for QA with regard to aspects such as curriculum design, governance, teaching, learning, assessment and infrastructure. This could be achieved through regular self-improvement activities and a sustained commitment to quality for the development of a QAC. However, because most private providers of higher education may focus more on efficiency and profit at the expense of quality, external mechanisms such as accreditation, academic quality audit and assessment are needed to ensure that quality standards are adhered to. Nonetheless, every action of the external regulatory agency must be in the interest of the tertiary education institution. Jackson (1997: 51) has indicated the characteristics of an 'ideal type' of self-regulation as one that has a resilient internal review system, focuses on self-assessment and an acceptable level of external evaluation. In principle, QA should be the responsibility of the higher education institution itself with supporting functions of accreditation, assessment and audit as accountability and control mechanisms from the external QA agencies. In practice, for internal QA to be effective, staff must understand, own and be committed to the QA process. Once there is ownership of the QA process, it could result in sustainable improvement and the development of a QAC in the higher education institution.

In Ghana, one other requirement that could be regarded as a principle for QA in tertiary education institutions is for such institutions to have an internal QA unit that will be responsible for ensuring quality. The extent to which this requirement has been met both



in the establishment of the internal QA unit and in ensuring internal QA practices were explored in this study (see Chapter 7, Section 7.4). It is not enough to establish procedures for ensuring quality but the context within which the procedures are to be implemented are essential. Thus, although formal structures for ensuring quality are important, stakeholder involvement and commitment are equally essential in order to obtain an all-round view on the subject matter of quality and to accept the responsibility to ensure quality standards in every aspect of the higher education system. In principle, a QAC results when institutions have a shared and owned value system that ensures quality in everything they do instead of externally driven procedures that are regarded as bureaucratic.

According to Alabi *et al.* (2018: 122) quality enhancement requires the principles and philosophy of stakeholder focus, process approach, involvement of people, visionary leadership, continual improvement and factual approach to decision making. They alluded that quality does not happen by chance but through systematic planning, preparation and facts. In addition, Skolnik (2010: 1) claimed that in the process of QA, some of the stakeholders' views are not always considered. However, since QA requires making choices among competing conceptions of quality and purposes of quality, it is preferable to use an approach that is responsive to the needs of all stakeholders. In principle, QA should be a collaborative process in which all stakeholders' inputs are considered. Furthermore, for the right decisions to be made reliable data and information are required. In Ghana, the requirement of the NAB and the NCTE for purposes of accreditation, academic quality audit and quality monitoring and assessment should provide the opportunity for the regulatory institutions to interact with the tertiary education institutions. However, the extent to which these mechanisms have provided for effective interaction and collaboration for purposes of ensuring quality were investigated in this research (see Chapter 7, Section 7.4).

The NAB and the NCTE have different documents that are used for guiding and regulating higher education institutions in Ghana for purposes of ensuring quality. These documents are the following: National Accreditation Board, Ghana Roadmap to Accreditation (see

Annexure 3). (2) National Council for Tertiary Education, Norms for Tertiary Education Institutions (see Annexure 4). (3) Standards for Physical Facilities (see Annexure 5). (4) Standards and Guidelines for Tertiary Institutions' Libraries in Ghana (see Annexure 6). (5) National Accreditation Board Affiliation Barometer: Annual Reporting Instrument for the Assessment of Mentoring Institutions by Mentored Institutions (see Annexure 7). (6) National Accreditation Board Affiliation Barometer: Annual Reporting Instrument for the Assessment of Mentored Institutions by Mentoring Institutions (see Annexure 8) that serve as a guide for assuring quality. However, as noted by Daft (2010: 597) preparing and writing down principles of QA may be easy but the extent to which those principles are practiced, monitored and evaluated is often a challenge. The relevance of these documents therefore depends on the extent to which there has been active sharing and dissemination and compliance with the information in them. Accordingly, the extent to which these manuals that served as guidelines and principles for ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana, were also explored in this research.

As part of the higher education QA mechanisms in Ghana, PUC's must affiliate to a university for at least ten years for the purposes of mentoring (Effah, 2006: 67; Annexure 3: National Accreditation Board, Ghana Roadmap to Accreditation, Part v: 1). This involves both programme and institutional affiliation. Through this affiliation, the programmes offered by the PUC's, the examinations conducted by the PUC's, their matriculation and congregation ceremonies must be monitored and reviewed by the mentoring PSU's. Above all, the certificates awarded to students who attend the university colleges are awarded by the mentoring PSU's. In the case of Ghana, all the mentoring universities so far are PSU's. The requirement of mentorship is aimed at helping the university colleges to learn acceptable practices, processes and procedures from the mentoring PSU's. Alabi *et al.* (2018: 80) aver that affiliation has been described as best practice by INQAAHE. Despite this assertion by INQAAHE, some have viewed affiliation as a means of delay and as a drain on the finances of PUC's.

Woodhouse (2012: 5) noted that the setting up of QA agencies for the purpose of external QA in higher education institutions requires what he referred to as 'organising principles' regarding what to do and how to do it. Due consideration must be given to the internal,

national and international context and standards in order to ensure effective QA. When the internal and external QA mechanisms complement each other, it helps to address the shortcomings of either of them and to ensure ownership of the processes and practices required to ensure quality. However, the challenges that could face effective QA are multi-dimensional. Consequently, the management component of planning, organising, implementation and evaluation are essential for both the higher education institution itself and the external regulatory agencies with regard to each of the QA mechanisms they implement.

The principles and criteria for ensuring quality standards of education in the higher education institutions have provided the context within which the researcher investigated and examined the mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. The discussion of the principles and practices also justify the importance of the management principles of planning, organising, leading, monitoring, controlling and evaluation with a focus on developing a QAC in the PUC's in Ghana. The discourse in this section also complements the deliberations in Chapter 2 (see Section 2.5) on the systems for ensuring quality in higher education institutions. It is believed that when such principles and criteria are adhered to, it could create a conducive environment for ensuring quality in the tertiary education institutions in Ghana.

The next section explains each of the models and theoretical frameworks that guided the development of the semi-structured interview guides used for data collection.

### **3.6 MODELS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

In order to achieve the objectives of this analysis the specific models and theoretical frameworks that directed the development of semi-structured personal interview guides for data collection are deliberated on in the paragraphs below. The semi-structured personal interviews were conducted to collect data on the QA practices, processes and procedures of the NAB, the NCTE, the mentoring PSU's and the PUC's in Ghana. The goal for collecting these data was to gain insight for the development of a QA framework that could be adopted for QA in the PUC's in Ghana. As indicated by Alabi *et al.* (2018:

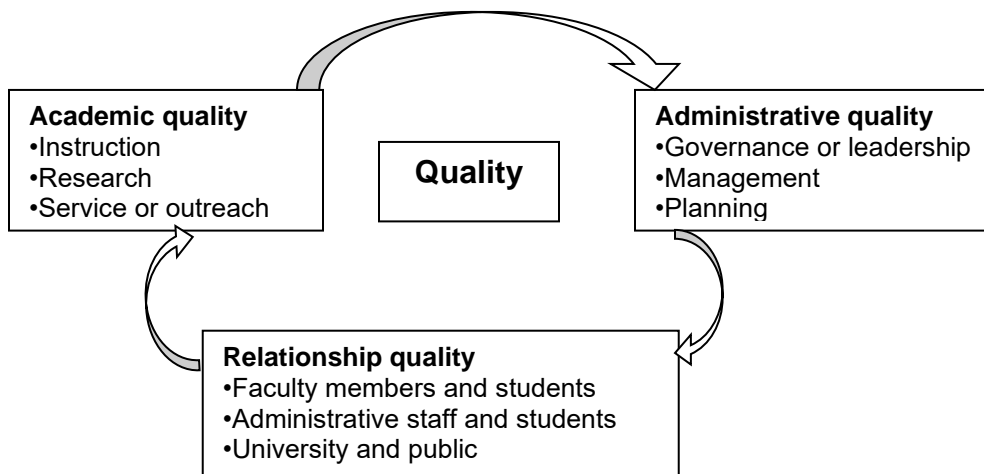
80), currently it appears Ghana does not have a national QA framework. Consequently, the framework proposed at the end of this research (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.8) addresses this gap. As indicated in Section 3.5.1, existing frameworks can inform and drive the initial coding process (Strauss & Corbin, 1998: 12) and provide relevant information for undertaking constant comparative analysis (Charmaz, 2006: 165). On account of the above, the next sections (see Sections 3.6.1 – 3.6.5) discusses how the specific models were applied in gathering data on the mechanisms for ensuring quality in the PUC's in Ghana.

### **3.6.1 Cao and Li quality assurance framework**

Ruben (1995: 8) proposed the three dimensions of higher education quality as academic quality, administrative quality and relationship quality. Ruben further specified that any higher education QA system should ensure quality in these three areas. Cao and Li (2014: 67) further developed these three dimensions of quality proposed by Ruben (1995: 8) into a framework (see Figure 3.3) which they used to analyse quality issues in private universities in China.

In this research project, the Cao and Li's (2014: 67) framework served as a guide in the development of semi-structured interview guides (see Annexure 9) for data collection and analysis. Specifically, the model served as a framework for identifying and analysing the mechanisms adopted by the NAB, the NCTE, the mentoring PSU's and the PUC's to ensure administrative, academic and relationship quality at the PUC's in Ghana. Additionally, the use of this model helped to identify what the tertiary education QA mechanisms of Ghana entail and the factors that affected the quality of education provided by the PUC's. In the end, the use of the Cao and Li's (2014: 67) framework helped to determine the strengths and potential areas that need improvement in order to ensure quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. Figure 3.3 below shows the framework proposed by Cao and Li for analysing quality issues in order to ensure quality standards in private higher education institutions.

**Figure 3.3: Quality assurance framework**



**Source: Cao and Li (2014: 67).**

The three elements of the Cao and Li (2014: 67) framework indicated in Figure 3.3 above are academic quality, administrative quality and relationship quality. Although the three elements of the framework are interdependent and interrelated, each of the elements is discussed separately in order to provide a better understanding of what each element entails and its purpose in the broader education quality context.

### **3.6.1.1 Academic quality**

Academic quality refers to the extent to which teaching, learning, research and scholarship meet the standards of higher education (Massy, 2003: 165; Houston, 2007: 63; Weir, 2009: 62). Stated differently, Ruben (1995: 7) explained that academic quality has to do with discipline and the technical services required to produce the desired quality standards in higher education with regard to teaching, research and community service. Cao and Li (2014: 70) affirmed Ruben's position and stated that academic quality depends on the extent to which there are appropriate and effective teaching, learning, support and assessment opportunities within an education institution to enable students to achieve the reasons for which they enrolled. With regard to the conditions that must exist to ensure academic quality, Middlehurst (2011: 26) recommended the need to: (1) Monitor the implementation of learning, teaching and assessment strategies. (2) Provide appropriate teaching and learning facilities. (3) Provide appropriate rewards for excellent performance

by faculty members and staff. (4) Develop realistic policies on workload balance between research, teaching and community service. (5) Organise regular staff training and development programmes. The achievement of academic quality then requires both internal and external QA because, as stated by Friend-Pereira, *et al.* (2002: 38), neither external nor internal QA alone is enough to ensure quality tertiary education. A combination of both is desirable.

#### **3.6.1.2 Administrative quality**

According to Ruben (2003: 26), administrative quality refers to the management and governance systems put in place by leadership of higher education institutions for purposes of planning, organising, leading and controlling its affairs for the achievement of its vision and mission. As proposed by Cao and Li (2014: 66), an effective QA mechanism must be developed in line with the mission and goals of an institution and have elements that can generate principles that give direction on how to address quality issues. To achieve this, Ruben (1995: 7; 2003: 25) argued that those responsible for the management and governance of higher education institutions must put in place processes, systems, procedures and effective channels for disseminating information and for assigning or delegating responsibilities. Thus, administrative quality depends on what the leadership of the higher education institution is able to do to guarantee the delivery of quality higher education to the citizenry.

#### **3.6.1.3 Relationship quality**

According to Ruben (2007: 40), relationship quality refers to the nature of interpersonal relations between a higher education institution and its primary beneficiaries and constituents such as students, faculty members, administrative staff and the public. Furthermore, Ruben (2007: 25) acknowledged that relationship quality also influences the extent to which there is a cordial and collegial work environment that inspires people within the institution to be committed to the achievement of quality standards. For example, relationship quality could involve issues such as students not meeting faculty members on several occasions during scheduled times, students having unresolved issues

regarding results, staff and faculty members not being responsive to students' and other stakeholders' issues.

Harvey and Green (1993:17) and Harvey and Knight (1996: 11) believed that quality in higher education means the transformation of the learner. In this regard, transformation of the learner depends on the interrelated effect of academic quality, administrative quality and relationship quality. Ruben (2003: 13) outlined conditions that have resulted in effective QA in higher education institutions in developed countries to include:

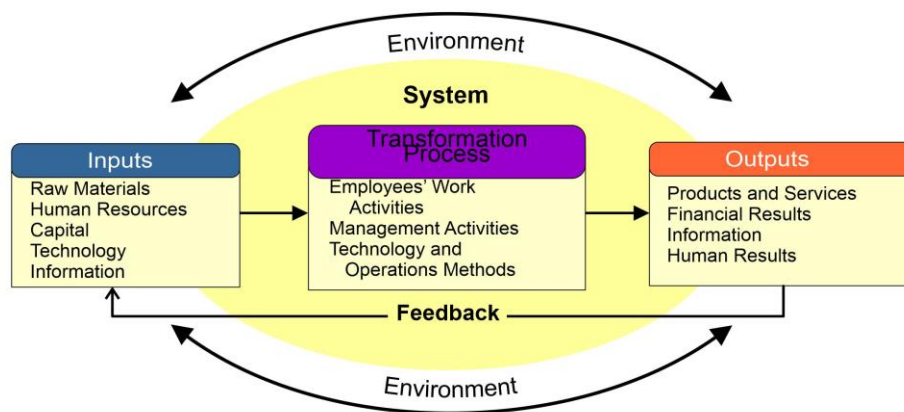
- Qualified and experienced academic staff.
- Full time employment for faculty members in the university.
- Adequate physical and administrative resources.
- Appointment and promotion of staff based on merit.
- Commitment of top management to the quality assurance system.
- Presence of academic freedom.
- Accountability and transparency.
- Relevant policies and structures.

The question then is: what are the mechanisms used by the NAB, the NCTE and the mentoring PSU's to ensure, develop and assure the three dimensions of quality (academic quality, administrative quality and relationship quality) in the PUC's in Ghana? In order to address this question and to achieve the objectives of this research, the Cao and Li (2014) framework guided the development of the interview questions for data collection from the four groups of stakeholders involved in private tertiary education QA in Ghana. In effect, the Cao and Li (2014: 67) framework helped to explore the extent to which the practices, processes and activities of the regulatory and mentoring PSU's have contributed to the development and maintenance of academic quality, administrative quality and relationship quality in the PUC's in Ghana. As stated in Chapter 1 (see Section 1.5) although the main functions (key performance areas) of a university are, among others, teaching, learning, research and community service, this research project focused mainly on activities and practices related to teaching.

### 3.6.2 Open systems theory

Von Bertalanffy (1972: 412) developed the open systems theory (hereinafter referred to as 'OST') as a theory that could be applied across different disciplines. According to Armstrong (2003: 245), the OST was developed in reaction to earlier theories such as the human relations theory by Elton Mayo and his associates and the administrative theory by Henri Fayol. Armstrong (2003: 245) asserted that these earlier theories thought of institutions as closed systems that were influenced only by their internal structures and processes. Contrary to the views of these earlier theorists that viewed institutions as closed systems, Rothwell and Sullivan (2005: 25) argued that the OST provides an understanding of how institutions are impacted, not only by their internal environment, but also by the external environment in which they operate. Thus, the OST portrays institutions as being in constant interaction with the external environment and this influences how they operate. The open systems model presented in Figure 3.4 was subsequently developed based on the OST.

**Figure 3.4: Open systems model**



**Source: Adapted from Rothwell and Sullivan (2005:26).**

The open systems model is a three-stage process of input, transformation and output (Rothwell & Sullivan, 2005: 26; Hayes, 2010: 93; Kinicki & Williams, 2011: 51). According to Cole (1996: 71), institutions should be viewed as open systems that are dependent on



the external environment for inputs, which they transform into outputs that are discharged back into the external environment. The inputs include people, information, raw materials, equipment and money. The second stage, which is the transformation stage, refers to the technical system and the institutional capabilities, which are used to convert the inputs into the final stage of outputs. The outputs refer to the goods, services and information provided to customers (Cole, 1996: 71; Mizikaci, 2006: 48; Hayes, 2010: 93; Kinicki & Williams, 2011: 51). In order for institutions to exist and grow, Hayes (2010: 93) argued that the input-output relationship requires institutions to develop feedback mechanisms for getting information from the users of their outputs. As illustrated in Figure 3.4 above, feedback is the information input obtained from the users of the outputs and services of the institution. Consequently, Rothwell and Sullivan (2005: 26), and Kinicki and Williams (2011: 51) posited that the feedback obtained influences the transformation and inputs stages of the open systems model. Similarly, Hayes (2010: 93) asserted that institutions gather and rely on the feedback from customers about their outputs in regulating their input and transformation decisions.

According to Bastedo (2005: 6), tertiary education institutions are best understood when they are regarded as open systems that are in constant interaction with their internal and external environment . Similarly, Kinicki and Williams (2011: 51) described a university as a system comprising a collection of academic departments, support staff and students that exists within the larger education environment. When universities are treated as open systems, it means their processes and activities are influenced by factors within and outside of the environment of the university. Hence, Kashy (2012: 78) argued that higher education institutions operate in a very complex environment characterised by different constituents. This writer identified the constituents to include regulatory agencies, parents, faculty members, students, staff, employers and university councils who influence the operations of the institutions. One of the likely demands from these constituents could be the need to ensure quality higher education standards. Consequently, the use of the open systems model helped to identify and examine the input, transformation, output and feedback mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education at the PUC's in Ghana. Within the context of this study, the first stage of the open systems model, which is the

input stage, comprises factors such as criteria for the admission of students, the availability of adequate and qualified faculty members, and the availability of financial, information and physical resources. The second stage refers to the processes used in converting the inputs into outputs. The conversion has to do with the activities that assist in the transformation of the learner, programmes and their content, teaching and learning methods, staff development programmes, as well as students' assessment. Mizikaci (2006: 48) referred to the transformation stage as the technical system that is concerned with the flow of work for purposes of transformation of inputs into outputs. The third stage in the model is the output stage. Becket and Brookes (2006: 127) described the outputs of the higher education process as the calibre of students produced for the job market, their employability and their research outputs. In this regard, authors such as Harvey and Knight (1996: 11) believed that quality in higher education means the transformation of the learner into outputs that meet the requirements and needs of the nation.

In this investigation, the PUC's, the NCTE, the NAB and the mentoring PSU's are regarded as sub-systems operating within a larger system of the tertiary education sector. The larger system influences the processes, actions, services and products of each of the sub-systems. Feedback should therefore be sought from the larger system regarding the functioning and outputs from the PUC's. The information obtained from the larger environment could inform the decisions made, policies formulated and actions taken by the NAB, the NCTE, the PUC's and the mentoring PSU's in order to ensure quality higher education. Thus, in order to achieve the overall purpose of private tertiary education, the sub-systems of higher education QA must function well and be well integrated. Effective integration of all the processes helps to avoid duplication of efforts, conflicting roles and contradictory decisions. Additionally, effective integration of all the processes ensures the optimisation of the sub-systems, a high level of interdependence, and systemic practices that are geared towards overall quality private tertiary education. It is in this regard that Newton (2002: 48) reasoned that QA is influenced by the context and situational factors that exist in the internal and external environment in which higher education institutions operate.

In view of the above perspectives, the use of the open systems model enabled the researcher to ask questions during the interviews that helped to determine and examine the linkages between the different institutions as sub-systems, their interconnectedness in the QA process and their individual and collective effects in education QA in the PUC's in Ghana. Apart from the objective of this chapter, the use of the open systems model in designing the interview guide for data gathering and analysis also contributed to the achievement of research objective 5 (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). Research objective 5 sought to analyse the effect of the current QA capacity and mechanisms of tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana and the usefulness of the application of these mechanisms at the PUC's.

### **3.6.3 Neo-institutional theory**

The origin of the neo-institutional theory can be traced to two seminal works in the area of institutional theories. The first was by Meyer and Rowan (1977: 340), who argued that institutions operate in highly regulated environments characterised by policies, professions and programmes that influence them. In order for the institutions to gain legitimacy and be able to survive, the institutions must conform to the structures and institutional context within which they operate (Dziminska, Fijałkowska, & Sułkowski, 2018: 1). The second seminal work: "The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organisational fields", was authored by DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 147 – 160). These researchers analysed the institutional processes through which institutions are made to become isomorphic. In their view, institutional isomorphic change occurs through three mechanisms, namely; mimetic, normative and coercive (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983: 150). The three mechanisms for isomorphic change have been explained in detail in Chapter 2, Section 2.7.

The regulative and normative pressures experienced by institutions with regard to their practices and structures can be explained using the neo-institutional theory (Newton, 2002: 48). Similarly, Oliver (1991: 699) posited that the institutional environment is characterised by rules, regulations and assumptions that are regarded as necessary for guiding the behaviour of institutional members. Oliver (1991: 699) further emphasised that

these rules and regulations are necessary in order to ensure institutional conformity to the environment in which the institutions operate and for purposes of success, as well as survival. Accordingly, DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 150) argued that the institutional environment has a strong impact on the internal structure and behaviour of institutional members.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 150), and Meyer (2008: 792) contended that within the institutional environment, the extent to which institutions adopt the policies, procedures and practices of other institutions, depends on the isomorphic pressures they face in their institutional environment. In this regard, the level of isomorphic change depends on the extent to which rules are enforced and regarded as mandatory for purposes of legitimisation. Accordingly, the institutional theory explains the role of isomorphism as a mechanism through which institutions that face similar conditions are made to adopt the policies, practices and procedures of other institutions. On the contrary, Meyer and Rowan (1977: 341) stated that what institutions actually do, are most of the time loosely coupled with the ways in which they are externally legitimised. In their view, when the norms, assumptions, values and beliefs that make up the culture of an institution are similar to what the institutional environment demands, it is easier for the institution to change and conform. However, when the practices are different from the existing norms, the institutions show inertia and resistance. To ensure success and survival of these institutions, the policies, practices and procedures are enforced through either public opinion, pressures from stakeholders or through by-laws.

Csizmadia (2006: 39) affirmed the appropriateness of the neo-institutional theory as a framework for examining higher education institutions. According to Csizmadia (2006: 39), the neo-institutional theory is useful in determining how institutions respond to the demands of the environment in which they operate. In a doctoral thesis by Csizmadia (2006) on the implementation of quality management in Hungarian higher education institutions, the researcher found that institutional characteristics such as leadership, institutional complexity and decision-making processes created complexities that affected the pace of implementation of quality management. Csizmadia (2006: 175) also found that

the level of commitment of leadership influenced the pace and scope of implementation of quality management in the higher education institutions. Similarly, Ozen and Ozturk (2016: 15) used the institutional theory in their study of Turkish higher education institutions. The results of the research project by Ozen and Ozturk (2016: 15) showed that when there are no strong coercive mechanisms and when the legal framework makes multiple demands, institutions rely on their past experiences to influence their activities, structures and procedures. The studies by Csizmadia (2006: 226) and Ozen and Ozturk (2016: 15), demonstrate how the neo-institutional theory is useful in providing an understanding of the influence of the institutional environment on the quality of higher education institutions.

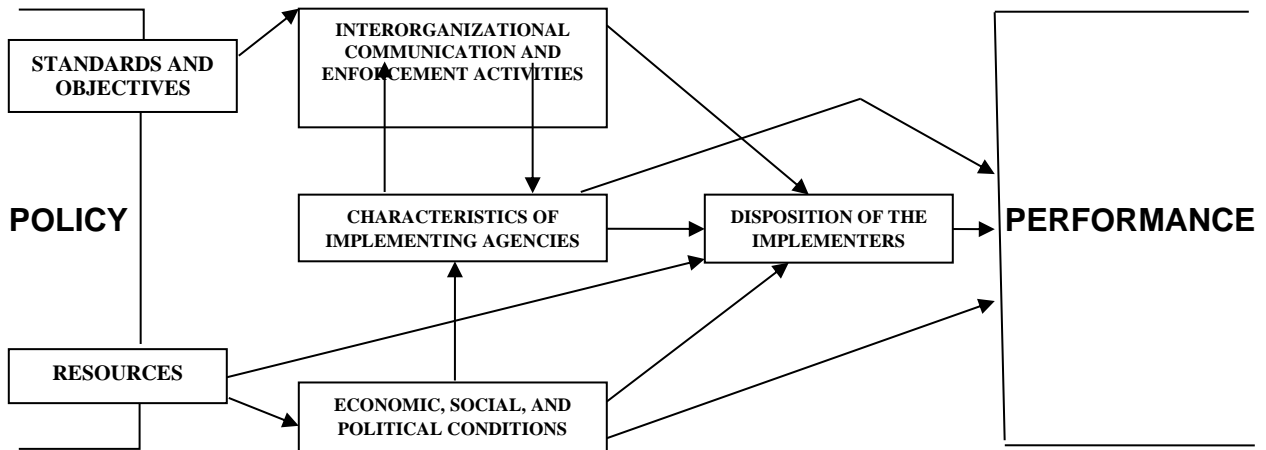
In this thesis, the reviewed literature on neo-institutional theory contributed to the development of the semi-structured interview guides (see Annexure 9) used for data collection. The interview guides were used to investigate how the isomorphic pressures from the NCTE, the NAB and the mentoring PSU's influenced the development and maintenance of quality standards of education at the PUC's in Ghana. The use of the neo-institutional theory as a guide in the collection and analysis of data in this study also contributed to address research objective five (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). Research objective 5 sought to analyse the effect of the current QA capacity and mechanisms of the tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana and the usefulness of the application of these mechanisms in the PUC's. Accordingly, the use of the neo-institutional theory aided in exploring the gaps in the capacity and in the use of the three forms of isomorphic mechanisms by the regulatory agencies and the mentoring PSU's in ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana.

#### **3.6.4 Van Meter and Van Horn model of the policy implementation process**

The model of the policy implementation process was developed by Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 463). This model is one of the top-down implementation models. The model consists of six interrelated variables that are believed to influence performance when a policy is implemented. According to Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 447), the focus of the model is on the analysis of policy implementation that might involve implementers

within a single institution or across and between different institutions as presented in Figure 3.5 here below.

**Figure 3.5: Model of the policy implementation process**



**Sources: Adapted from Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 463).**

As shown in Figure 3.5, Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 446) posited that there are six interlinked variables that influence policy decision implementation and the outcome or performance of the policy, namely:

- Policy standards and objectives
- Resources.
- Inter-organisational communication and enforcement activities.
- Characteristics of implementing agencies.
- Economic, social, and political conditions.
- Disposition of the implementers.

The diagrammatic representation of the Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 463) model in Figure 3.5 indicates that implementation is based on an initial policy decision. The policy decision represents the official statements, intentions and goals to be achieved. Mazmanian and Sabatier (1980: 540), averred that a policy decision specifies the problem to be addressed, the objectives to pursue and structures the implementation process. In this regard, Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 463) asserted that successful policy

implementation depends on the ability of an institution to transform policy decisions into action through the bringing together of employees and materials in a cohesive manner. Additionally, the provision of the requisite institutional conditions that facilitate optimal functioning of each of the six variables for purposes of achieving the desired goals is essential. Each of the variables is discussed below.

#### **3.6.4.1 Policy standards and objectives**

This component of the Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 463) framework suggests the need for policy standards and objectives with clearly stated performance indicators for determining the extent to which set standards and objectives are achieved. Thus, policy standards provide the yardstick against which performance can be assessed. As a result, the policy decisions must have clearly stated objectives and standards that determine the goals to be achieved. Clearly stated policy objectives and standards are prerequisites for both external and internal QA. In this research project, the higher education quality standards set by the tertiary education regulatory institutions become the yardstick against which the performances of the PUC's are assessed. It is in this regard that Schmidt (2017: 247) asserted that the Bologna process aimed at developing higher education in Europe, would not have reached its current resilient level without the ESG. Again, policy standards and objectives also have an indirect effect on the disposition of implementers. The policy standards and objectives determine the extent to which implementers are able to enforce regulations, the sanctions that can be applied for non-compliance and the extent of discretionary powers that implementers have. Whereas there is the need for clear and consistent information given to implementers, such policy decisions must also leave room for flexibility to enable implementers to be able to adapt to contextual issues that crop up during implementation.

The use of the Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) model aided the formulation of interview questions for eliciting data for the determination of whether the policy decisions of the regulatory institutions and the mentoring PSU's had clear objectives and standards for ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana.

#### **3.6.4.2 Resources**

The Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 463) model (see Figure 3.5) also shows that, in order to achieve the set goals, resources (human and non-human) are required. According to Makinde (2005: 64), human and non-human resources are needed to be able to enforce laws that will ensure that services are delivered in the right manner. The critical role of resources in higher education policy implementation was also affirmed by practitioners and researchers such as Cheng and Cheung (1995: 19), Ugwuanyi and Chukwuemeka (2013: 39), Boswell (2015: 573) and Michael (2015: 28). These researchers pointed out that resources are needed to enable the regulatory institutions to monitor and ensure that the actions and activities of institutions conform to policy objectives and standards. Additionally, the extent of the availability of resources affects the disposition of implementers. Realising the importance of resources, the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (2009: 9) stated that:

“... agencies should have adequate proportional resources; both human and financial, to enable them organise and run their external QA processes in an effective and efficient manner with appropriate provision for the development of their processes and procedures.”

Consequently, this model emphasises the importance of resources for the NAB, the NCTE and the mentoring PSU's to be able to effectively implement policies aimed at ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. Based on this framework, questions were asked that enabled the researcher to elicit information on the level of human and non-human resources available to the NAB, the NCTE and the mentoring PSU's, and how the level of resources at their disposal affected their level of performance.

#### **3.6.4.3 Inter-organisational communication and enforcement activities**

Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 474) affirmed that the way in which policy objectives and standards are communicated affects implementation. Effective policy implementation requires the transmission of information from policy decision-makers to implementers in a manner that enables information from the centre to the periphery to be properly decoded. Proper decoding of information is essential for appropriate action to be taken and to avoid



distortion of the policy intent. Consequently, there is the need for the choice of appropriate means of transmitting the information to ensure clarity and consistency in communication. Hence, Makinde (2005: 63) contended that when communication among the different players is ineffective, it leads to misconceptions and confusion amongst implementers. To be able to meet the requirements of the regulatory institutions and the mentoring PSU's, effective communication coupled with appropriate mechanisms to ensure compliance, are required. This component of the framework was relevant in framing interview questions that explored the extent of the effectiveness of communication from the regulatory institutions and the mentoring PSU's to the PUC's in Ghana.

#### **3.6.4.4 Characteristics of implementing institutions**

Chardarasorn (2005: 145) emphasised that successful policy implementation occurs when there is a strong implementation agency that has good decision-making and communication systems, as well as adequate human resources. Similarly, Hill and Hupe (2002: 75) posited that successful policy implementation requires acquiescence with statutes and directives. Furthermore Makinde (2005: 63) argued that, even when communication is perfect, resources are adequate and implementers are positively disposed to the policy decision, implementation will not be successful without efficient bureaucratic structures. Makinde (2005: 64) therefore argued that inefficient bureaucratic structures lead to fragmentation and its attendant problems of poor coordination and the waste of resources. Furthermore, inefficient bureaucratic structures affect change and create confusion in which policies work at cross-purposes. In line with the requirements of this element of the Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 463) model, interview questions were formulated that elicited data on the characteristics of the higher education QA implementation agencies and how these characteristics influenced their mechanisms of QA in the PUC's in Ghana.

#### **3.6.4.5 Economic, social, and political conditions**

Cerna (2013: 17) indicated that it is difficult to identify which factors or conditions facilitate successful policy implementation since a lot depends on the economic, social and political context. As such, Cerna, (2013: 17) argued for attention to be paid to each of these factors

during policy implementation in order to avoid general solutions which could lead to illogical results. With regard to the political context, Hupe (2011: 71) stated that most public policy processes are characterised by political influence. Similarly, Reich (1995: 48) alluded to the fact that politics impacts the formulation and implementation of public policies especially when it involves major changes, and that major changes can only happen when there is political will and when they are handled by competent planners and managers. QA in higher education in a developing country like Ghana can be regarded as a major change. Accordingly, political support is required to make such changes successful. Marmolejo (2016: 7) argued that in order to achieve the purposes of higher education, policies should be grounded in models that are appropriate for the needs of the local economy and society.

#### **3.6.4.6 Disposition of implementers**

Another key factor that can affect policy implementation according to the Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 463) model is the disposition or attitude of the policy implementers. Disposition in policy implementation has to do with how implementers view policy decisions affecting their institutions, as well as their personal interests. According to Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 472), the three elements that determine the implementers' disposition are:

- The implementers' cognition of the policy.
- Their response in terms of acceptance, neutrality or rejection of the policy.
- The intensity of that response.

The extent to which the policy is compatible with the implementer's values, beliefs, interests and associates, affects implementation. Similarly, Warwick (1982: 190) indicated that no matter the good intentions behind a policy proposal, if those responsible for implementing the policies do not have the right attitude, and therefore are unwilling to implement the policies, the expected outcomes would not be achieved. Depending on the extent of acceptance of the policy, there may be some form of resistance. Such resistance requires effective monitoring and evaluation so that measures can be put in place at the right time to manage such resistance and ensure compliance. The implementer's disposition is also influenced by the extent to which the implementer can exercise

discretion when there are complexities. However, as noted by Makinde (2005: 64), effective monitoring mechanisms must be in place in order to ensure that implementer discretion does not lead to a departure from the intended purposes of the policy. For example, in Ghana, assessors are drawn from both the public and private higher education institutions. The extent to which the implementation of any policy will affect either the personal or institutional interest of an assessor may influence the extent to which the assessor will be disposed positively or negatively to such policies. In view of that, Makinde (2005: 64) suggested the need for supervision in order to ensure that personal and institutional interests do not hinder effective policy implementation. In this thesis, the use of the Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 463) framework for policy implementation as a guide, contributed to the development of questions on how the disposition of implementers did affect QA policy implementation in the PUC's in Ghana.

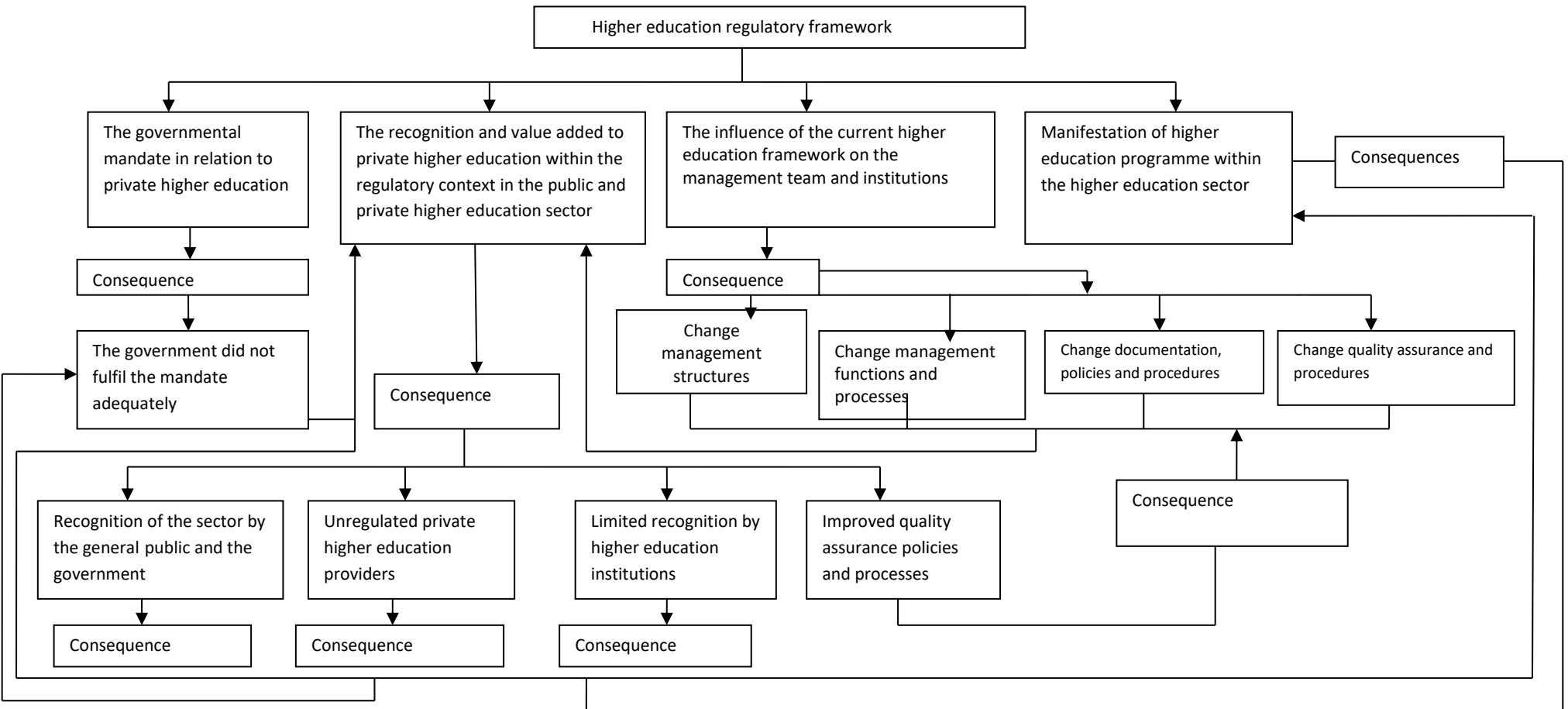
The six variables in the Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 463) model served as a guide in the design of the semi-structured interview guides (see Annexure 9) used for data collection and for the analysis of the data gathered from the NAB, the NCTE, and the mentoring PSU's and the PUC's. Thus, the analysis of data gathered from the institutions studied, helped to determine the extent to which their practices were consistent with the requirements for effective implementation of QA policies in the PUC's in Ghana.

This research project involved an analysis of the QA mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education at the PUC's in Ghana. According to Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 447), the focus of the model is for the analysis of policy implementation that might involve individuals or groups of people within a single institution or across and between different institutions. The different groups of people involved in the implementation of policies for QA in the PUC's in Ghana are the NAB, the NCTE and the mentoring PSU's. Policy implementation in this study therefore occurred both within and across institutional boundaries which provides a justification and appropriateness for the use of the Van Meter and Van Horn (1975: 463) model in this thesis.

### **3.6.5 Higher education regulatory framework**

The last policy implementation model is the higher education regulatory framework which was developed by Ellis and Steyn (2014: 455). The framework was presented in a research paper entitled “Managers’ perceptions of the regulative legislation of private higher education in South Africa.” The model indicates the consequences of legislation and other regulatory mechanisms on private higher education institutions as seen in Figure 3.6 here below.

**Figure 3.6: Higher education regulatory framework**



**Source: Adapted from Ellis and Steyn (2014: 455).**

The Ellis and Steyn higher education regulatory framework (policy implementation model) has been applied in many different investigations before. Hence, the researcher has decided it is of value to apply this framework in this project as well. Based on the Ellis and Steyn (2014: 455) framework, the specific issues explored include:

- The government and the mandate of its regulatory agencies in relation to private higher education QA in the PUC's in Ghana.
- The consequences and change management mechanisms in place for ensuring that the right practices, procedures and processes are followed by the PUC's for the delivery of quality education to the citizenry.

The Ellis and Steyn (2014: 455) framework guided the formulation of interview questions for eliciting information on the mandate and implementation strategies of the institutions responsible for ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. Specifically, the elements of the framework guided the framing of questions on issues regarding the consequences, challenges and limitations in the manner of workings of the NCTE, the NAB and the mentoring PSU's in terms of education QA in the PUC's in Ghana. In addition to data gathered using the semi-structured interviews, the legislative instruments that provide the legal backing for the establishment and operations of the regulatory institutions are examined in Chapter 4.

The conceptual framework (see Chapter 3, Figure 3.2) and the five theoretical perspectives (see Sections 3.6.1 – 3.6.5) together with their aim and objectives (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4) were discussed in the paragraphs above. The discussions highlighted how each of the theoretical perspectives contributed to the process of data collection and for addressing the research problem, research questions as well as for the achievement of the research objectives. Additionally, this inquiry being a grounded theory investigation, a review of existing theoretical perspectives aided in undertaking a constant comparative analysis. The comparative analysis aided in establishing which of the five theoretical perspectives elucidate the theoretical categories and concepts that emerged from the data analysis for the development of the framework (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.8) proposed at the end of this thesis. Based on the discourse in this chapter, it can be argued

that conceptually, theoretically and philosophically, the conceptual framework and the five theoretical perspectives discussed were relevant and appropriate for use as an outline, structure and framework for this thesis.

In addition to the specific theoretical and conceptual frameworks discussed above, it is important to understand the practices, processes and procedures of higher education QA of some selected developed countries. The need for a review of literature on the QA practices of these developed countries is because they have had a long tradition of quality higher education QA mechanisms. Consequently, their QA mechanisms have become points of reference for many developing nations for the development of their higher education systems (Eaton, 2004: 83). In the next section, the QA mechanisms of the selected countries are discussed.

### **3.7 HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS IN SOME SELECTED COUNTRIES**

The higher education sector has witnessed several changes such as massification (Shah, *et al.*, 2011: 476; Ahmed 2016: 77; Alabi, *et al.*, 2018: 1; Effah, 2018: 111), globalisation (Anderson, *et al.*, 2000: 2; Van Damme, 2001: 8; Effah 2018: 96, 110), commercialisation and privatisation (Blackmur, 2004: 113; Holzacker & Yazilitas, 2009: 2; Effah 2011: 379; Alabi, *et al.*, 2018: 1). Both developed and developing countries have responded to these changes in a variety of ways through the development of policies and other mechanisms for QA. This section presents literature on the QA mechanisms of the USA, the UK, Australia and the African continent.

#### **3.7.1 Higher education quality assurance mechanisms in the developed world**

In the following sections (see Section 3.7.1.1 – 3.7.1.3), the higher education QA mechanisms of the developed countries selected for this research project is provided. The countries are the USA, UK and Australia. These countries were chosen for review because, as noted by Eaton (2004: 83), they have a long tradition of QA in higher education. Consequently, their QA mechanisms have become prototypes and guides that

are being adopted by developing countries for ensuring quality standards of education in their respective countries.

### **3.7.1.1 Higher education quality assurance mechanisms in the United States of America**

According to Eaton (2015: 1) and Tamrat (2022: 443), the USA has been involved in accreditation of higher education institutions for over one hundred years and its model of accreditation has been noted as the oldest. Brown *et al.* (2017: 6) also avowed that there are over seven thousand higher education institutions in the USA which are very diverse with regard to ownership and the programmes that they run. Furthermore, Brown *et al.* (2017: 6) indicated that despite this diversity, there are mechanisms in place that have helped to ensure quality in the higher education institutions in the USA.

Although the Constitution of the USA specified that the state governments have the primary authority over education, the responsibility of institutional accreditation has been ceded to non-governmental institutions (Eaton, 2004: 63; Kinser & Lane, 2017: 15). Consequently, in the USA, accreditation is organised by non-governmental institutions, but with mechanisms that provide opportunity for the oversight responsibility of the state (Wellman, 1998: 3; Kinser & Lane, 2017: 15). According to Brown *et al.* (2017: 6), the need for some level of government role stems from the federal financial aid provided to the higher education institutions.

Eaton (2001: 104) claimed that in the USA, QA is equated to accreditation and it is a peer-driven and consultative process. Furthermore, Eaton (2015: 2) observed that the main QA mechanism in the USA is the accreditation of the programmes and the higher education institutions. Thus, the QA mechanism of the USA; in which both the institution and the programmes that they run are accredited, is similar to that of Ghana. Another feature of the USA higher education QA mechanism noted by Eaton (2015: 4) is that accreditation is carried out by independent, non-profit, private institutions. However, before accreditation is granted, the higher education institutions must meet the quality standards set and certified by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (hereinafter referred to



as 'CHEA'). According to Brown *et al.* (2017: 8), higher education institutions in the USA that are unable to meet the set standards, face the problem of losing their accreditation status. Consequently, all higher education institutions work assiduously to maintain their accreditation status. Eaton (2006: 4) also indicated that in the USA, the government does not grant legitimacy to the accrediting institutions, but rather to the higher education institutions and the programmes that they accredit. In this regard, Eaton (2004: 65 – 66) affirmed that, before any higher education institution can be established in the USA, it must be licensed by the state in which it is to be established. This requirement is different from accreditation which is undertaken by non-governmental institutions. These requirements of the USA tertiary education QA sector are different from that of Ghana. Thus, whereas in Ghana a governmental agency is responsible for accreditation of higher education institutions, in the USA, the accreditation of higher education institutions is done by non-governmental agencies.

In the USA, the accreditation system comprises different regional and national accreditors who are in charge of assessing the programmes of the tertiary education institutions (Brown *et al.*, 2017: 7). Additionally, there are programme accreditors for specific disciplines and professions, such as law. Thus, there are four types of accrediting institutions in the USA. The first type is the regional accreditors who accredit public and private, mainly non-profit and degree granting institutions. The second type is the national faith-related accreditors who accredit religious affiliated and doctrinally based institutions that are mainly non-profit. The third is the career-related accreditors who accredit mainly for-profit, career-based, single-purpose institutions that offer both degree and non-degree programmes. The fourth is the programmatic accreditors which accredit specific programmes, professions and freestanding schools in areas such as law, medicine, engineering and the health professions (Eaton, 2001: 2; 2012: 2; 2015: 2; Kinser & Lane, 2017: 3). Brown *et al.* (2017: 71) posited that although non-governmental institutions carry out both the institutional and programme accreditation, there are demarcations in these responsibilities. The distinction in this process is that some institutions are accredited by regional accreditors and others by national accreditors. Similarly, some programmes are accredited by specialised accreditors and others by national accreditors.

According to Eaton (2004: 67; 2011: 7), accrediting institutions go through a process of external review of their institutions by the United States Department for Education (hereinafter referred to as 'USDE') or by CHEA, resulting in what is referred to as 'recognition'. Thus, whereas CHEA recognition confers academic legitimacy on the accrediting institutions, USDE recognition on the other hand is a requirement for tertiary education institutions to be eligible for federal funding (Eaton, 2004: 67 – 68).

Eaton (2015: 6) affirmed that, CHEA has six standards by which it evaluates accrediting institutions on a ten-year cycle basis with two interim reports. The standards are:

- Advanced academic quality of the accrediting institution.
- Proof of the means through which they are able to make sure the accredited institutions are accountable to their stakeholders.
- Evidence of how they encourage self-scrutiny.
- A plan for change and improvement.
- Appropriate and fair procedures for decision-making.
- Evidence that they do a self-scrutiny of their own activities and have enough resources that facilitate their accreditation functions.

Harvey (2004: 8) and Eaton (2004: 66 – 67; 2011: 5) also outlined the following as the stages in the USA accreditation process:

- The first stage involves a self-study in which the institution to be accredited first prepares a report based on the standards set by the accrediting institution.
- The second stage is a performance review which is carried out by the peers in the profession.
- The third stage involves a site visit by the accrediting institution which sends a team that reviews the institution's programmes, resources, policies and infrastructure. External review panels, unlike peer reviews, include non-academic members in addition to peers. The panel may include members from the public who have an interest in higher education.

- The fourth stage is where a report is written by the accrediting institution to grant accreditation for a new programme, or re-accreditation for existing programmes or to deny accreditation to an institution or its programmes.
- The fifth stage involves periodic reviews by accreditation agencies, and this requires the educational institution to provide a self-study report.

Based on the system outlined above, when a higher education institution is found to be lagging behind in any of the goals it has set for itself, there could be a re-visit to the institution by the accreditation team. Consequently, researchers such as Eaton (2011: 12) and Brown *et al.* (2017: 5) recommended that for those programmes that have challenges, there should be more frequent site visits and reviews by the accreditation team, or more reporting should be demanded from the affected tertiary education institutions, or both. Eaton (2015: 4) also suggested that for programmes that have been approved by the accreditation team, the review ranges from cycles of a few years up to ten years.

The relevance and role of accreditation in the USA is that, although it is a voluntary exercise, to be able to access for example, federal funding and students' loans, the higher education institution must be accredited (European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2004: 6; Eaton, 2004: 64). Furthermore, Eaton (2004: 64–65) noted that accreditation in the USA serves other purposes, such as:

- Transfer of courses and programmes to other universities and colleges by students.
- A means for assuring the quality of programmes offered by the higher education institutions.
- Instilling confidence in employers for employing students with genuine qualifications.

On account of the mechanisms in place for QA in the USA, Brown *et al.* (2017: 21) specified that, in order to improve upon their own performance, some of the accreditors such as the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (hereinafter referred to

as 'ABET') have adopted the management-based approach. Similar to ABET, in 2016, the Council of Regional Accreditation Commissions also reviewed their approaches to reflect more of the management-based approach (Brown *et al.*, 2017: 21). The theory of change states that when the management-based approach to QA is adopted, it fosters institutional learning as the primary mechanism for sustained improvement (Brown *et al.*, 2017: 5). Consequently, the management-based approach could be adopted for ensuring sustained quality standards in the tertiary education institutions in Ghana.

Despite the above mechanisms for ensuring that the accreditors have the capacity to carry out their task effectively, Brown *et al.* (2017: 10 – 11) observed that some have described the accreditors as 'box checkers' who only ensure that higher education institutions meet minimum standards. The accreditors have also been criticised on the grounds of not making the tertiary education institutions to aspire to excel. The procedures of accreditation have also been described as time consuming and not leading to improvement in student academic outcomes. The accreditation system of the USA has also been described by Van Damme (2001: 9) as complex, not transparent and burdensome. Additionally, the USA accreditation system has also been criticised for focusing on input factors related to the facilities of the institutions, qualifications of faculty members and not the quality of the graduates from the institutions. These challenges have led to calls for a more transparent system that addresses concerns from the public. However, researchers such as Brown *et al.* (2017: 37) think otherwise and suggested a modification to improve the existing structure and practices. In support of the current system, Brown *et al.* (2017: 37) commended the current management-based approach to higher education QA in the USA, but recommended measures that could help to balance greater rigour and transparency with more flexibility and incentives that would ensure improvement and learning.

The USA model of accreditation may not be suitable for countries that do not have a similar culture, since the USA operates in a culture of a delicate balance of power between the state and private sector. Consequently, for developing countries such as Ghana, any

attempt to model the higher education system for QA based on the USA system must pay attention to the contextual factors in order to ensure success.

### **3.7.1.2 Higher education quality assurance mechanisms in the United Kingdom**

The UK comprises England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Based on the governance arrangements in the UK, the responsibility for higher education has been devolved to the national governments (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2005: 6). Additionally, in the UK, universities and colleges are self-governing and are not owned or run by government. However, all universities and colleges in the UK are funded by government through the higher education funding councils (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2005: 8). Whereas the universities and colleges are responsible for managing their own academic standards and quality, a non-governmental agency is responsible for ensuring that the higher education institutions have internal mechanisms for ensuring quality. This agency is known as the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. The institutions that represent the heads of UK universities and colleges own the QAA. Accordingly, the QAA works on behalf of the various higher education funding councils of England, Scotland, Wales and the department of education Northern Ireland, who pay subscriptions to the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2005: 5, Jackson & Bohrer, 2010: 82). Thus, the source of funding for QAA comes from institutional subscriptions and payments from funding councils, for services such as the conduct of institutional assessment (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2005: 5; Brown, 2013: 427; Lucas, 2014: 217).

According to Kauko (2006: 1), "... QA has become everyday life of academia in Europe". Accordingly, all European countries have specific standards and guidelines for both internal and external QA known as the ESG. The ESG was a result of the Bologna process. According to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2018: 13), the Bologna process refers to the inter-governmental ministerial meetings and agreements reached by European countries on how to ensure comparability in the standards used for determining the quality of higher education qualifications. Accordingly, it is the Bologna

process that led to the legitimisation of QA that had existed in the tertiary education institutions in Europe. The ESG has three parts.

Part 1 of the ESG indicates the seven requirements for internal QA as follows:

- Each institution is required to have a policy and specific procedure that helps to ensure quality and the development of a QAC. The policy, procedure and strategy must be a formal document and must be made public. The ESG for internal QA also requires that the role of students and other stakeholders be clearly stated.
- The higher education institutions are required to have a formal procedure for the approval, monitoring and periodic review of their programmes and awards.
- Assessment of students should be based on some published criteria, regulations and procedures.
- There should be a mechanism that helps to ensure that the faculty members meet the minimum required standards and this information about the faculty members should be made available to external reviewers.
- The tertiary education institutions are required to ensure that the teaching and learning materials are adequate.
- There should be an information system that helps to store, analyse and retrieve data for appropriate decisions regarding the management of programmes and activities of the institutions.
- Institutions should regularly publish accurate and up to date information about their programmes (European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2009: 7).

Part 2 of the ESG is for external QA. The part 2 of the ESG also has specific requirements as indicated here below:

- External QA procedures must take into consideration internal QA processes.

- The objectives of the QA processes must be determined before the processes of QA are developed. The processes must have clearly spelt out procedures that will be followed to achieve the aims and objectives.
- Any formal decision made during external quality review must be based on predetermined and agreed standards.
- All external QA processes must be 'fit for purpose', and thus must enable the achievement of the aims and objectives of the external QA.
- There should be a written report after reviews which should be written in a style and language that is understandable to stakeholders.
- There should be pre-determined procedures for follow-ups on recommendations that are given after reviews, and periodic reviews for programmes and institutions.
- Summary reports that describe and analyse the findings during reviews and assessment should be provided to the institutions (European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2009: 8).

Part 3 of the ESG provides guidelines for external QA agencies as follows:

- The first guideline is on how to ensure the effectiveness of the internal and external QA guidelines provided.
- The second element is that the external agencies must be formally recognised by competent public authorities and their activities should be within the laws of the jurisdiction within which they operate.
- External agencies are required regularly to do institutional and programme assessment.
- The external agencies are required to have adequate human and non-human resources that will ensure effective performance.
- The external QA agencies are required to have a mission statement that clearly states their goals and objectives and this should be available to the public.

- The external QA agencies are required to be highly independent and free from interference from any external body regarding their operations and recommendations.
- There must be pre-defined criteria and processes used by the external QA agencies and this must be made public (European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2009: 9).

The ESG (2015: 6) is based on four (4) principles as follows:

- "... higher education institutions have primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance.
- Quality assurance responds to the diversity of higher education system, institutions, programmes and students.
- Quality assurance supports the development of a quality culture.
- Quality assurance takes into account the needs and expectations of students, all other stakeholders and society."

Based on the ESG, the UK which was a member country, has its specific QA policies and procedures. In the UK, there are two parallel national frameworks for higher education (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2018: 17). The frameworks are:

- The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- The framework for qualifications of higher education institutions in Scotland.

Each of these frameworks provides the reference points for academic standards in the UK. Consequently, these frameworks apply to all tertiary education institutions within their respective jurisdictions (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2018: 11).

In the UK, all higher education institutions could be viewed as private although they receive state funding (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2005: 8); thus, the OECD refers to the UK universities as state-funded private universities. The fact that



tertiary education institutions in the UK depend on government for about 80% of their funding, provides some mechanism for limited control. However, in order to prevent political interference and ensure the autonomy and academic freedom of universities, there is an 'arms-length relationship' between government and higher education institutions in the UK (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2005: 8).

Although the assessment of the tertiary education institutions in the UK is the responsibility of the agency called the QAA, on the one hand, the universities and colleges are responsible for the management of the standards and quality of their operations (internal). On the other hand, the QAA is responsible for making judgments and for ensuring that the universities operate within the set quality tertiary education standards (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2005: 10). According to Jackson and Bohrer (2010: 79), the mission of the QAA is to protect the interest of the public through means that help to ensure quality higher education standards and continuous improvement (external). According to Harvey and Newton (2004: 151), in the UK higher education system, emphasis is on institutional autonomy. This stance has placed the responsibility of ensuring quality standards of education on the higher education institutions themselves (internal). The areas of focus by the internal QA units include admission policies, programme approval and review, internal review, staff appraisal, assessment regulation and mechanisms, staff selection and development (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2005: 11; Jackson & Bohrer, 2010: 77 – 78). The governing councils or governing boards determine the strategic direction of each higher education institution. Without the higher education institution itself ensuring quality, any adverse findings by the QAA tends to affect the reputation of such institutions (Dziminska, M., Fijałkowska, J & Sułkowski, L. 2018: 1). The QAA also requires tertiary education institutions to publish the quality standards of their programmes, external reviewers' reports, results of students' feedback from surveys and internal programme reviews. The QAA is also responsible for conducting institutional audits. During the audit, the QAA checks the internal QA practices of the higher education institution to determine the extent to which it is consistent with the code of practice of the QAA and information the institution has published about its programmes. The judgment of the QAA after the audit, therefore is based on the accuracy

of information provided by the higher education institution about its programmes and processes. Where there are concerns, these are identified and action plans are developed for corrective action by the higher education institution. As part of the QA process, after the audit the QAA publishes its report. The evaluation reports, which are made public, serve as a source of information for the public to determine the reputation of every higher education institution and its competitive position in the higher education market in the UK (Brennan & Williams, 2004: 4780). Similar to the USA accreditation procedure, the QAA undertakes follow-up visits to find out about actions being taken to address areas of weakness. If the result of the follow-up visit is unsatisfactory, a revisit is undertaken again and if the outcome of this revisit is still unsatisfactory, funding by the higher education funding council may be withdrawn.

The guidelines and points of reference provided by the QAA to ensure standards include the qualifications frameworks, subject benchmark, programme specifications and code of practice (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2005: 15). The first element of the academic infrastructure, which is the qualification framework, specifies the attributes of major qualification titles such as bachelor's degree, master's degree or doctorate. The second element, which is the subject benchmark statement, indicates expectations of the standards of degrees in every area of specialisation such as engineering, medicine and law. The third element is the programme specifications, which indicate the information from each university or college about the nature of its programmes. The final element, which is the code of practice, contains guidelines on how to manage academic standards and quality in all higher education institutions in the UK (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2006: 7). These elements of the academic infrastructure are developed through the collaborative effort of the QAA and the education sector (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2005: 7).

In the UK, the review team comprises academics who work in the tertiary education institutions, and sometimes professionals and students. According to the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2018: 4), the involvement of students by the QAA in its review process has been identified as one of its good practices. The QAA also

shares other good practices identified during reviews with higher education providers and stakeholders through their various networks and events. In order to ensure transparency, the QAA publishes the criteria used to select reviewers and the universities use these criteria to nominate reviewers. The opportunity is also given to other applicants who possess the requisite qualifications, experience and knowledge of higher education. Before the reviewers are sent out to assess higher education institutions, they are given training in the specific type of review that they will conduct. On the issue of timing, the review is scheduled six months ahead of the visit to the university. The team normally comprises four to six members. Before the on-site visit, the review team evaluates the self-review provided by the university. During the on-site visit, the team interacts with both staff and students to test the veracity of information provided by the university, as well as seek clarification where necessary. The purpose of these mechanisms is to ensure that the university is complying with the standards of practice it has set for itself (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2005: 14 – 15). The UK QA system also has procedures for complaints by universities or colleges that have challenges with the decisions of the QAA. Before any policy is implemented by the QAA, it is discussed with stakeholders such as universities, colleges, professional statutory and regulatory institutions, as well as the tertiary education institutions, and their views are factored into the final policy for implementation. The QAA also engages an external auditor annually to review its own activities after which action plans are developed to address the challenges identified (QAA, 2005: 19; 2018: 45). Some employers use information provided by the QAA for recruitment and selection of graduates (QAA, 2005: 20). Some of these elements of the UK QA mechanisms are similar to the guidelines indicated in the National Accreditation Board, Ghana Roadmap to Accreditation (see Annexure 3).

With regard to the governance structure, the QAA has a board of directors responsible for the strategic direction of the QAA, and a chief executive who is responsible for the day-to-day running of the QAA. The board comprises fourteen members: four from the institutions that represent the universities and colleges, four from the higher education funding council and six are independent directors with practical experience from industry, or finance, or a professional appointed by the board (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher

Education, 2005: 19). Although Ghana also has a board known as the National Accreditation Board, its membership differs as indicated in the NAB Act of Establishment (see Annexure 10, Section 1[1]).

Brown *et al.* (2017: 24) posited that as a result of the criticisms regarding accountability, efficiency and comparability, the UK, just like Australia, has now introduced more standard-based and risk-based systems, although they are not yet well developed. According to Brown *et al.* (2017: 25), the new system adopts more rigorous mechanisms for assessing and evaluating new higher education institutions. The areas of focus in the review of the newer tertiary education institutions by the QA agencies include their ability to meet the national qualification framework, their financial stability, management, governance, student protection measures, mission, and strategy. During the initial reviews, the areas that need attention are also identified for focus within the four-year probation period. However, those higher education institutions that are already in existence undergo less stringent reviews. This new system encourages the development of the internal QA processes of the tertiary education institutions. Institutions that demonstrate concerted efforts to develop their internal QA mechanisms are not put through rigorous review mechanisms and are allowed to self-accredit their own programmes (Brown *et al.*, 2017: 25).

### **3.7.1.3 Higher education quality assurance mechanisms in Australia**

According to Shah (2012: 762), recent developments in the higher education QA system of Australia has led to some changes. The changes include a shift from a situation in which the academic boards and governing councils set and have the responsibility for QA, to a state where a national system is responsible for QA. The Bradley Review of 2008 led to a review of the higher education sector of Australia. Based on the review, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standard Agency (hereinafter referred to as 'TEQSA') was established as an independent national QA and regulatory agency in 2011. The responsibility of TEQSA is to ensure that all higher education institutions in Australia meet the minimum standards, promote best practices and improve the quality of education

offered by all higher education institutions in Australia (Shah & Lewis, 2010: 87; Thompson-Whiteside, 2012: 27).

The TEQSA has stated on its website the legal framework that governs the tertiary education sector of Australia are as follows:

- Tertiary education quality and standards Act (No. XX of 2011). This Act established TEQSA as the sole agency responsible for regulating higher education in Australia.
- Higher education standard framework (2015) which indicates the minimum standard all higher education providers in Australia must meet before they would be allowed to provide higher education in Australia.
- Education services for overseas students Act 2000. This legal framework applies to institutions that provide higher education courses to those on student visas.
- National code of practice for providers of education and training to overseas students (2018). The code of practice indicates nationally consistent standards and practices that must be observed by all tertiary education institutions. The code has two parts. Part A covers the framework for education services for overseas students'. Part B outlines the obligations for those who offer education and training services to overseas students. These standards aim at protecting international students.
- Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (hereinafter referred to as 'CRICOS'). To register on CRICOS, the higher education institution must provide evidence of compliance with the national code of practice. This register indicates that only CRICOS courses can be offered to international students on student visas studying in Australia (Tertiary Education Quality and Standard Agency 2018/2019 Annual Report 2020: Internet).

Additionally, on its website, TEQSA specified that, the institution adopted a graduated approach in exercising its formal powers as follows:

- The first level involves encouraging voluntary compliance where TEQSA communicates, provides guidance and supports higher education institutions.
- The second level is the informal resolution of any challenges between TEQSA and a higher education institution. TEQSA facilitates the processes that help to ensure compliance in response to concerns identified.
- The third level involves administrative action which is intended to ensure compliance, without which there could be cancellation of the registration as a higher education institution provider.
- Finally, failure to observe administrative action leads to the next level which is a civil and criminal action for a breach of an enforceable undertaking such as providing false information to TEQSA (Tertiary Education Quality and Standard Agency 2018 - 2019 Annual Report 2020: Internet).

The above decisions could be reviewed based on guidelines set out under the Tertiary Education Quality and Standard Agency Act XX of 2011. There are also channels through which TEQSA receives feedback from providers of higher education and other stakeholders. These structures and mechanisms have helped to improve upon the activities of TEQSA (Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, 2018 – 2019 Annual Report, 2019: 2 – 3). The aim of these QA mechanisms is to safeguard students' interests and the reputation concerning the type of higher education offered by tertiary education institutions in Australia.

Shah *et al.* (2011: 478 – 479) observed that the current QA framework of Australia has led to many successes in the Australian higher education system. The successes are:

- High reputation of Australian universities.
- International quality management systems.
- The emergence of quality circles.
- Government monitoring.
- Performance-based funding.

➤ External academic quality audit.

Despite the successes of the Australian higher education QA system, Shah *et al.* (2011: 480) asserted that the current QA framework does not provide for quantifiable results such as a league or ranking tables as exists in the USA and the UK. Shah *et al.* (2011: 480) were of the view that when ranking tables are used, it could enable students to choose the best place to study, employers will know where to find high-quality graduates and industries will know where to invest for research. Another criticism by Shah *et al.* (2011: 480) of the current Australian QA framework is that it focuses on achieving high results (outcomes) instead of the means (inputs) that go into teaching, learning and research. Additionally, the current QA framework of Australia has been criticised for not providing for rewards or penalties for the results of the academic quality audit or institutional assessment of the higher education institutions. Shah *et al.* were of the opinion that such measures are needed to challenge academics and other staff of the tertiary education institutions to ensure and improve the quality of higher education. The Australian framework has also been noted to focus on the development of systems and processes for QA, instead of mechanisms for effective monitoring of standards to ensure compliance. Fielden and Varghese (2009: 82) observed that there are also inconsistencies in the state and territory policies which have led to differences in the registration and accreditation of private providers within the different jurisdictions. As noted by Fielden and Varghese (2009: 82) such inconsistencies between states are similar to what happened in Nigeria. These inconsistencies have resulted in very poor regulation and planning of private higher education in Australia. These inconsistencies have led to calls for the review of accreditation mechanisms for private universities in Australia. Consequently, Shah *et al.* (2011: 482) were of the view that, although there is a commendable higher education QA process in place in Australia, there is still the need to sustain best practices and for continuous improvement. The call for the need to adopt best practices from other parts of the world is to help ensure standard-based QA that is devoid of bureaucracy and promotes academic autonomy. Additionally, Shah and Lewis (2010: 80) advocated that, to make the private higher education provided in Australia nationally and internationally comparable, there is the need for a stronger QA system. According to Shah and Lewis (2010: 80), the

need for a stronger QA system is due to the high growth projections, where the number of private higher education institutions grew from five in the year 2000 to 150 in 2008, and was projected to increase to 30% of Australian higher education enrolment by 2020.

The reviewed literature on the QA mechanisms of the selected countries shows the higher education practices, processes and procedures that worked well and areas where there were challenges. The international lessons and best practices learnt from the reviewed literature contributed to the development of an education QA framework (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.8) and interventions proposed at the end of this study for improving upon the mechanisms for QA in the PUC's in Ghana.

### **3.7.2 Higher education quality assurance mechanisms in Africa**

In addition to the literature on the QA mechanisms of selected countries from the developed nations, an attempt is also made to provide a general overview of the higher education QA efforts in Africa. According to Teferra and Altbach (2004: 22), the availability and quality of higher education in Africa is relatively low when compared to other continents. As a result, Africa is regarded as the least developed in terms of the availability and quality of higher education. However, in recent years, private higher education has become an attractive area for investment as a result of de-regulation of the sector and an increase in the demand for private higher education. Materu (2007: 72) posited that in Africa, despite the proliferation of a number of private tertiary education institutions, out of the fifty-two countries, only a few have QA agencies. The countries that have QA agencies include South Africa, Ghana, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Cote D'Ivoire, Egypt, Liberia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Materu and Righetti (2010: 3) also asserted that QA is a recent phenomenon in sub-Saharan Africa and that only one-third of the African countries have structured national QA agencies, which are also faced with cost and capacity constraints.

According to Hayward (2006: 11), the pressure on tertiary education institutions to have effective QA mechanisms to improve the quality of higher education in Africa was motivated by such changes as the end to the mentoring relationship between universities



in Africa and those in European countries. Hayward (2006: 11) identified other factors, such as:

- The movement of students across borders and the concerns from their home countries about the quality of education they receive in other countries.
- Increased enrolment.
- Reduced expenditure by African governments on higher education.
- Rapid expansion of private universities.
- The concern of a threat that Africa is lagging behind the rest of the world in terms of creating knowledge societies.

As a result of these factors, Materu (2007: 13) asserted that the need for the establishment of QA agencies in Africa was motivated by the recognition of the important role of higher education in the development of the human capital of a nation. Additionally, the rapid rise in the number of private universities in Africa in the 1990's gave further impetus to the need to set up QA agencies to help determine the legitimacy of these higher education institutions (Materu 2007: 17; Kinser & Lane 2017: 9). Despite the essential role of QA in improving the standard of education, Materu (2007: iv) noted that the focus of the few QA agencies in Africa has been to regulate the sector rather than for enhancement and accountability.

Regardless of the general reasons that have influenced the development of QA agencies in Africa, each of the African countries has its specific contextual factors that have influenced the establishment of QA agencies. For example, according to Strydom and Strydom (2004: 101 – 102), it was the UK that advocated the need for South Africa to adopt and conform to international higher education QA practices. Consequently, in South Africa, the national QA agency was established in the 1990's with external support from the UK. The establishment of the South Africa QA system was also influenced by factors such as the global growth in the higher education sector, and the need to distinguish between the functions of auditing and accreditation agencies and their guidelines. Additionally, there was the need for the internal and external QA systems in South Africa to be backed by legislation.

Regardless of the challenges that have confronted higher education QA in Africa, their governments recognise the relevance of QA. Consequently, in Africa, a Pan African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (hereinafter referred to as 'PAQAF') was established (Adamu, 2021: 113). The establishment of PAQAF is a collaboration between the African countries, the European Union (hereinafter referred to as the 'EU') and the AAU (UNESCO, 2010: 7). In Africa, the AAU has been identified as the implementing institution of QA decisions. The African Union has also initiated moves to harmonise the higher education programmes in Africa. The aim is to ensure that the standards of education and performance could be compared against standards that take into account the unique context and barriers to higher education delivery of each African country (Association of African Universities, 2007: 33). According to the European and African Union Commission (2017: 10), it is believed that having a common QA framework that takes into consideration the specific needs of each African country will:

- Ensure some level of uniformity among all member states.
- Promote acceptance, recognition and mobility of students and the workforce across Africa.
- Promote mechanisms for improvement.
- Ensure credibility and transparency in the type of education offered by each member country.
- Ensure collaboration between member countries for the development of teaching and learning resources.

Accordingly, the African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation (2017: 9) stressed the need for funding in order to improve upon the QA environment in the tertiary education institutions and the QA agencies in Africa.

The European Union supported the Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation (hereinafter referred to as 'HAQAA') initiative. This led to the formation of a technical working group from five African regions that was coordinated by the ENQA and the AAU (African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation, 2017: 38). Through the HAQAA initiative, the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality

Assurance in Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as 'ASQ-QA') was also developed (African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation, 2017: 38). According to the European and African Union Commission (2017: 10), the ASQ-QA has a set of guidelines to serve as a unified mechanism for an enhancement-led internal and external QA in higher education institutions in Africa. The ASQ-QA was developed based on existing standards and guidelines in use by the QA agencies and regional QA networks in the various African countries. According to the European and African Union Commission (2017: 38), in order to ensure that the ASQ-QA also meets international standards, it was benchmarked with the standards and guidelines for QA in the European higher education area in ESG 15. The ASQ-QA therefore serves as the minimum standards to be observed in every African country. Apart from these minimum standards, there could be additional standards based on the context and systems of each African country. Two basic principles governed the development of the ASQ-QA. The first principle was that quality and QA are primarily the responsibility of the higher education institution itself. The second principle emphasised the autonomy, identity and integrity of every higher education institution as paramount (European and African Union Commission, 2017: 11). The ASQ-QA has three interrelated and interlinked parts which together formed the basis of the African QA framework. Part A covers issues related to internal QA. The specific areas covered in

Part A include:

- Institutional governance.
- Policies and processes that promote quality higher education teaching and learning environment.
- Research and innovation.
- Collaboration and community engagement (European and African Union Commission, 2017: 13).

Part B covers mechanisms for external QA so as to ensure consistency between internal QA activities of the higher education institutions and the external QA requirements. Part B specifies the following:

- Objectives of external QA.
- Designing mechanisms that are fit for purpose.

- Independence.
- Decisions and reporting.
- periodic review, complaints and appeals (European and African Union Commission, 2017: 27).

Part C covers issues related to internal QA of the activities of the QA agencies that have been outlined in Part B. The specific areas covered in Part C include:

- Policies, processes, and activities of the quality assurance agencies.
- Legal status, vision and mission.
- Financial and human resources.
- Independence.
- standards and processes used by the QAA (European and African Union Commission, 2017: 32).

Accordingly, despite the different contexts and systems of each African country, the ASQ-QA serves as the minimum standard and guideline for ensuring quality standards of higher education in every African country. For this research project, the reviewed literature of the selected countries and Africa has provided useful lessons that were relied upon in the recommendations that were made for improving the mechanisms for QA in the PUC's in Ghana.

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

The objective of this chapter, was to outline the role of models, a conceptual framework and theoretical perspectives that relate to tertiary education QA in Ghana. Consequently, literature was reviewed on the institutional theories and models that relate to tertiary education QA in order to locate this research project within the relevant theoretical perspectives. Multiple theoretical perspectives were relied upon in this thesis since QA in higher education institutions involves many interdependent groups, elements, processes, principles and practices that could be understood from different theoretical perspectives. In particular, this chapter provided the justification, aim and objectives for providing a conceptual framework and theoretical perspective for this study as well as the philosophy,

model and principles of QA. A comprehensive discussion of the specific theoretical perspectives that guided this investigation was also provided. In addition, the chapter reviewed literature on the QA mechanisms of some selected countries, which highlighted the similarities, differences, challenges and good practices of each of these countries. This served as useful information in the development of semi-structured interview guides for data collection and the recommendations made at the end of this research project for addressing the challenges associated with the current mechanisms for QA in the PUC's in Ghana.

In the next chapter, an overview of the legislative instruments that support private sector participation in the provision of tertiary education in Ghana and the establishment of the higher education regulatory institutions (the NCTE & the NAB) is provided. The purpose is to identify and propose measures for addressing any shortcomings in the legislative instruments that will enable the regulatory institutions to effectively deliver their mandate of QA in the PUC's in Ghana. Additionally, the various institutional isomorphic mechanisms used by the regulatory institutions for QA in the PUC's in Ghana, are examined in reference to best practices from some selected countries.

## **CHAPTER 4: HISTORICAL CONTEXT, LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON PRIVATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGES AND TERTIARY EDUCATION REGULATORY INSTITUTIONS IN GHANA**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 3 reviewed the models and theoretical frameworks that relate to tertiary education QA. Insights drawn from that discussion of models and theoretical frameworks then informed the design of the interview questions (see Annexure 9) used to explore the mechanisms for QA in Ghana's PUC's. Also in Chapter 3, a survey of some selected countries' QA mechanisms brought to the fore commendable international best practices within higher education QA. The present chapter's objective, on the other hand, is to provide a historical context for the legal framework related to the establishment and operations of PUC's and tertiary education regulatory institutions in Ghana from 1991 to 2019 (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2).

According to Nwuke (2008: 87), the opportunity of access to tertiary education is the strongest argument that has been made in favour of private sector participation in the provision of tertiary education. Despite this justification, Nwuke (2008: 85) acknowledged that the absence of an effective regulatory mechanism could lead to challenges with the quality of tertiary education provided by the private sector with serious implications for a nation's economic, political and social development. Thus, in keeping with the objective of this chapter stated above, Sections 4.2 and 4.3 elucidate pertinent aspects of the historical context of tertiary education in Ghana. Thereafter, the legal framework (the White Paper on Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991) backing the participation of the private sector in the provision of tertiary education in Ghana gets examined (Section 4.4.1). A discussion of those provisions in the 1992 Constitution that relate to the establishment and operations of tertiary education in Ghana follows (Section 4.4.2). Finally, the legislative instruments for the establishment and operations of Ghana's two tertiary education regulatory institutions – namely, the NAB and the NCTE – are reflected upon in Sections 4.4.3 and 4.4.4. Here, the goal is to uncover any challenges in

the current regulatory framework governing the operation and practices of the NAB and the NCTE that could affect the performance of their role of QA.

The history of the development of tertiary education in Ghana is provided as a prelude to the logic behind the various legal framework governing private tertiary education in Ghana.

## **4.2 HISTORY OF TERTIARY EDUCATION IN GHANA**

University education in Ghana can be traced back to the colonial era when the first PSU, the University College of Gold Coast (hereinafter referred to as the 'UCGC'), was established in 1948. The UCGC was established for the purposes of promoting university education, learning and research. Following Ghana's independence in 1957, the UCGC was renamed University College of Ghana (hereinafter referred to as the 'UCG'). In 1961, the UCG became a fully-fledged university known as the University of Ghana (Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 34; University of Ghana Annual Report, 2012: xiii – xiv). The UG was therefore the first Ghanaian PSU (Effah, 2011: 378).

The second university, then known as the Kumasi College of Technology, was established by the government of Ghana in 1951 with the purpose of training personnel for the economic, technological, educational and social developmental needs of Ghana. The Kumasi College of Technology is now known as Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (hereinafter referred to as the 'KNUST') [Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 35]. The third PSU, the University College of Education (hereinafter referred to as the 'UCE'). The UCE gained full-fledged university status in 1971 and became known as the University of Cape Coast. The UCC was established for the purpose of providing qualified graduate professional teachers needed in secondary schools that were expanding at that time (Lugg *et al.*, 2007: 19; Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 36). The three universities mentioned above, namely, UG, KNUST and UCC were the only PSU's in existence before the 1991 White Paper. After the 1991 reforms however, many more PSU's have been established in Ghana.

Universities that came into existence after the 1991 reforms were aimed at a significant expansion of the tertiary education system in order to meet the demands of school leavers in conjunction with the needs of employers. Accordingly, the University College of Education at Winneba (hereinafter referred to as the 'UCEW') was established in 1992. The UCEW gained full-fledged university status in 2004 and is now known as the University of Education Winneba (hereinafter referred to as the 'UEW'). In 1993, another PSU; the University for Development Studies (hereinafter referred to as the 'UDS') was established in Tamale (Girdwood, 1999: 8; Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 36; Alabi *et al.*, 2018: 36). The UDS started as a multi campus university with campuses in Navrongo and Wa. In 2020, the Navrongo and Wa campuses of UDS were granted full autonomous university statuses and are now the C. K. Tedam University of Technology and Applied Sciences (hereinafter referred to as 'CKT-UTAS'), at Navrongo and S. D. Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies (hereinafter referred to as 'SDD-UBIDS') at Wa.

Additionally, in 2004, the University of Mines and Technology (hereinafter referred to as the 'UMaT') was established in Tarkwa (Iddrisu, Alhassan & Kinder, 2014:8 – 9; Alabi *et al.*, 2018: 36). Ghana's tertiary education sector continues to see exponential growth. The Institute of Professional Studies (hereinafter referred to as the 'IPS'), which was a private institute, was commissioned in 2012 as a PSU and is now the University of Professional Studies at Accra (hereinafter referred to as the 'UPSA') [Alabi *et al.*, 2018: 40]. Other recently established PSU's are the University of Health and Allied Sciences (hereinafter referred to as the 'UHAS') at Ho in the Volta Region and the University of Energy and Natural Resources (hereinafter referred to as the 'UENR') in the Brong-Ahafo Region (Alabi *et al.*, 2018: 40; Republic of Ghana, 2019: 4). Another PSU known as the University of Environment and Sustainable Development was also established at Somanya in the Eastern Region in 2020. Additional to the PSU's, all ten public sector Polytechnics in Ghana have been accredited as Technical Universities.

Reforms within the higher education sector did not only lead to the establishment of more PSU's. They also made provision for the participation of the private sector in the provision



of higher education. The next section looks into the factors and processes that led to private sector participation in the provision of tertiary education in Ghana.

### **4.3 REFORMS IN GHANA'S TERTIARY EDUCATION SYSTEM**

Ghana's education structure was modelled along the British education system, an understandable consequence of colonisation by Britain. Nevertheless, after Ghana gained independence in 1957, different committees were formed to develop strategies aimed at reforming Ghana's education sector so as to meet the needs of the country (Ansah, *et al.*, 2017: 29). The work of the committees culminated in different reports and legislation such as the Education Act 87 of 1961; the Kwabong Report of 1967; Dzobo Committee Report of 1973; the New Structure and Content of Education, 1974; Education Commission Report on Basic and Secondary Education, 1987; Education Reform Programme, 1987; the University Rationalisation Committee, 1987; Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education, 1996; as well as the Education Sector Review of 2001 (Iddrisu, *et al.*, 2014: 2; Alabi, *et al.*, 2018: 35). These reforms have led to significant changes in the structure, geographical distribution, ownership, and access to tertiary education in Ghana. Since the present study's focus is on PUC's in Ghana, this section focuses mainly on those reports and provisions that relate to private sector participation in the provision of tertiary education in Ghana.

A general deterioration has been observed within the public tertiary education sector. Some of the reasons are related to financial constraints, physical infrastructure, low staff recruitment, low morale, and disruption in the academic calendars due to strike actions by university workers in the 1970's and early 1980's (Girdwood, 1999: 4; Effah, 2011: 379). These challenges led to the re-formulation of the tertiary education policy by the PNDC in the late 1980's (Girdwood, 1999: 4). Accordingly, the government of Ghana appointed the URC, which worked between 1986 and 1988 and produced a report that outlined the challenges facing Ghana's tertiary education sector. In response to the identified challenges, the URC report made one hundred and sixty-six recommendations (Girdwood, 1999: 4). One such recommendation was the unification of all tertiary education institutions into a single tertiary education sector and the establishment of

regulatory institutions to co-ordinate and provide policy direction (Girdwood, 1999: 5). Inspired by the URC report, the overall framework of the tertiary education sector was re-drafted and formalised as the White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991 (Girdwood, 1999: 20). The 1991 White Paper provided for private sector participation in the provision of tertiary education in Ghana. The private sector participation in the provision of tertiary education was also given further recognition by the Education Act 778 of 2008 (Republic of Ghana, 2019). The emergence of PUC's in Ghana can therefore be traced back to stipulations occurring in the 1991 White Paper (Alabi *et al.*, 2018: 41).

One of the 1991 White Paper's four main policy objectives was to expand facilities for the tertiary education system to meet the increasing requests for admission by secondary school leavers who qualify for tertiary education in Ghana (Girdwood, 1999: 22; Utuka, 2012: 107). Thus, the liberalisation of the tertiary education system allowed for the establishment of PUC's in Ghana. Additionally, the URC's report also recommended the necessity of measures to improve the quality and relevance of Ghana's tertiary education. In response to this recommendation, the NAB and the NCTE were established in 1993 with the mandate to ensure quality standards within Ghana's tertiary education sector (Girdwood, 1999: 4).

With the advent of private sector participation in the provision of a public good, there arose the need to have a suitable legal and regulatory framework to ensure that tertiary education standards are not compromised. In the next section, the legal framework on PUC's and the tertiary education regulatory institutions are elucidated.

#### **4.4 LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR PRIVATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGES AND TERTIARY EDUCATION REGULATORY INSTITUTIONS IN GHANA**

The establishment of a higher education institution requires a legal framework, which could be a Charter, a private Act of Parliament, a Certificate of Registration, or any other legally prescribed instrument (Mbanze & Coetzee, 2014: 476). An examination of the framework for tertiary education brought to the fore the extent to which the provisions in

the legal framework adequately empower the regulatory institutions to be able to ensure quality standards in the PUC's in Ghana. The requirements for the establishment of a PUC are institutional and programme accreditation by the NAB, as well as affiliation of the university college to a university for purposes of mentoring (Ansah, *et al.*, 2017: 30). These requirements, are important because, according to Shah (2013: 359), they give the consumer and the general public the assurance of the credibility of the tertiary education institution concerned and the certificates it awards.

According to Mbanze and Coetzee (2014: 480), the legislative framework on higher education indicate the legislative and regulative mechanisms used by government to control the operations of private higher education institutions. It also helps to ensure that private higher education institutions' operations conform to set quality standards without which the university college will be regarded as illegitimate. Additionally, the type of higher education legislative framework that a country has, determines whether its higher education system will be operated as a protected one or in a self-regulated market-type environment. Accordingly, the policy stance regarding PUC's provides the framework within which decisions and actions are taken by both the managers of the PUC's and the government.

In Ghana, the policy environment within which higher education institutions operate, is captured in various legal documents. The legal documents examined in this study include the:

- The White Paper on Reforms to the Higher Education System of Ghana of 1991 (Republic of Ghana, 1991).
- The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana of 1992 (Republic of Ghana, 1992).
- The National Accreditation Board Act 744 of 2007 (Republic of Ghana, 2007).
- The National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993 (Republic of Ghana, 2007).

The existence of all these regulatory frameworks does not automatically guarantee quality tertiary education if effective structures and systems are not put in place.

#### **4.4.1 The White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991**

At the World Bank's instigation, the government of Ghana set in motion its education sector reform in 1986. First to emerge as part of the tertiary education system reforms was the URC; it operated between 1986-1988 (Girdwood, 1999: 20). Following the URC's report, the White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991 was tabled by the government of Ghana. The 1991 White Paper gave great impetus to the establishment and recognition of PUC's in Ghana.

Prior to the White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991, the Education Act of 1961 (Act 87 as amended in 1965) had granted the Minister of Education the power to approve the establishment of private tertiary institutions and make regulations for the establishment, management and conduct of the affairs of the institutions (Effah, 2006: 56). However, as noted by Alabi *et al.* (2018: 41), the 1991 White Paper transferred this function away from the Minister of Education to the NAB and the NCTE. Accordingly, the 1991 White Paper clarified and indicated the government's commitment to its policies on the reform of Ghana's tertiary education system (Utuka, 2012: 99).

The request made by the World Bank for the need to reform the tertiary education sector can be traced back to the challenges that affected Ghana's tertiary education sector alongside the overall state of national development during the two decades after Ghana's independence (Girdwood, 1999: viii). A review of the impact of Ghana's tertiary education on society in general, and for national development particularly, pointed to real difficulties. It was noted, for instance, that inadequate resources affected accessibility of as well as the overall standard of education in the tertiary education sector. The tertiary education sector also at the time depended exclusively on government for financing. As a result of the financial challenges that faced the government of Ghana at the time, there were difficulties in the provision of the resources needed by public sector tertiary education institutions. The upshot of all these was that only a limited number of qualified students could be admitted to PSU's (Effah, 2011: 378).

Furthermore, before the education sector reform, the different sectors of education were managed by different ministries or government institutions. This in itself led to inefficiencies coupled with a lack of coordination among the different institutions, with catastrophic effects on the tertiary education sub-sector. All the above-mentioned challenges within the tertiary education sector thus compelled the Ghanaian government to launch far-reaching reforms to its tertiary education system (Republic of Ghana, 1991: 2).

Having identified the various areas that were in urgent need of reform within the tertiary education sector, the 1991 White Paper articulated them as five objectives thus:

- (1) Unification of existing institutions into a coordinated tertiary education system, and the establishment of new institutions and mechanisms to provide system management and control.
- (2) Measures to ensure the system's overall financial sustainability.
- (3) Cost-recovery and cost sharing with both students and the private sector, a norm-based approach to institutional management, and a new block grant funding mechanism.
- (4) Measures to improve the quality and relevance of Ghanaian tertiary education.
- (5) Significant expansion of the tertiary education system as a whole, to meet the demands of school leavers and the needs of employers, and to provide greater opportunity of access to those previously denied it (Girdwood, 1999: 20).

Out of these reform objectives, eleven goals were to be achieved. Among the eleven goals to be achieved through the implementation of the reforms was the improvement of access to higher education. Private sector participation in the provision of tertiary education was seen as one of the key measures in relation to the improvement of access (Republic of Ghana, 1991: 4).

The first policy objective, which was the unification of existing education institutions into a coordinated tertiary education sector along with the establishment of institutions to manage and control the tertiary education sector, led to the establishment of three institutions. The NAB, the NCTE, the National Board for Professional and Technical

Education (hereinafter referred to as the 'NABPTEX') were established with the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (hereinafter referred to as the 'JAMB') outstanding (Girdwood, 1991: 2). According to Nwuke (2008: 86), the establishment of JAMB is essential because it would develop standardised criteria irrespective of the PUC's where an individual sought admission. This would prevent the situation where some PUC's in Ghana could admit students who did not have the requisite entry requirements and would later be directed by the NAB to withdraw such students (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1). Consequently, the JAMB would serve as monitor for admissions processes, in order to ensure that only qualified applicants are admitted into the PUC's.

A committee was set up by the MoE in 1998 whose mandate was to determine the extent to which the implementing institutions had achieved the policy objectives of the 1991 White Paper (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 1). Flowing from its evaluation of the policy objectives, the committee made several recommendations. These recommendations on how to ensure quality standards in the tertiary education sector relate to aspects of the objectives of the 1991 White Paper in ways that must now be explicated.

Under policy objective one, the committee recommended that all tertiary education institutions under the NCTE be properly equipped to enable them offer quality programmes (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 12). Despite this recommendation, there are reports that subsequently still point to challenges with the quality of facilities of some of the PUC's in Ghana (Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 58; Effah 2011: 375; Avoke & Avoke, 2014: 39; Kale-Dery, 2018: 38). The lack of proper facilities in some of the PUC's have led to some of them being described as 'glorified' secondary schools and as business opportunities for entrepreneurs who appear not to be concerned about the future of the country and affected graduates (Avoke & Avoke, 2014: 42; Dattey *et al.*, 2017: 215). How such PUC's still operate in Ghana despite the existence of regulatory institutions mandated to ensure quality education standards in all the tertiary education institutions in Ghana is one of this research project's areas of concern.

The committee also recommended that all new programmes to be run by a university college must be accredited and all examinations be vetted before the tertiary institution is allowed to start the programme (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 15). The vetting and accreditation of new programmes is one of the mechanisms used by the NAB for ensuring quality standards of tertiary education. This is consistent with the fifth objective of this inquiry (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). This objective investigated the QA mechanisms of the NAB and the NCTE, including procedures for accreditation and the vetting of examinations. It is vital to determine the extent to which the requirements for vetting and accreditation raised in the review of the 1991 White Paper have been implemented to ensure quality standards of education among Ghana's PUC's.

Additionally, the committee recommended the provision of both material and human resources to the NCTE and the NAB to enable them perform their functions. Further, it was recommended that adequate remuneration be provided to assessors to motivate them to submit their assessment reports on time (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 34). Both the NAB and NCTE need adequate and competent human resources to facilitate the achievement of their mandate, which entails auditing, assessment and accreditation functions. Similarly, material resources such as money, office equipment, and vehicles are imperatives for the regulatory institutions to ensure quality tertiary education standards in the PUC's in Ghana. The extent to which the NAB and the NCTE have been provided with these needed resources to enable them perform their roles was explored under this research project's fifth objective as well (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2).

Another recommendation of the committee was that, the NCTE should conduct a study to identify the challenges facing existing private universities in order to be able to develop policy measures for the advancement of the private tertiary education sector. Key areas of concern related to the running of programmes that could contribute to national development and the quality of programmes offered at the private sector universities (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 58). In this research project, results of an analysis of institutional documents and the semi-structured personal interviews conducted brought to

the fore whether or not any empirical studies have been conducted for purposes of formulating specific policies on PUC's in Ghana.

In an assessment of the policy framework and the White Paper on the Reforms to Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991, Girdwood (1999: 26) indicated that, the 1991 White Paper is significant because it provided an opportunity to ensure transparency within as well as the democratisation of higher education in Ghana. While happily conceding that the 1991 White Paper was significant because it was a major document that outlined the philosophy and principles of tertiary education in Ghana, Girdwood (1999: 26) pointed out that, in order to achieve the objectives of the 1991 White Paper, there was need for effective communication with all higher education stakeholders to enable them to have a clear understanding of their roles, expectations and performance targets.

Stakeholders in Ghana's tertiary education sector include PSU's, private universities/university colleges, owners and managers of private tertiary education institutions, employers, students and parents. Communication is vital in the policy implementation process because it is the means through which the required decisions are transmitted to policy implementers. In order to avoid confusion, the information transmitted, including the legislative directives, must be clear, consistent, and accurate (Edwards 1980: 111 cited in Makinde, 2005: 63). Exploring whether there are established communication mechanisms between the aforementioned stakeholders regarding expectations and performance targets was one of this study's goals.

Additional to the communication consideration just noted, and despite acknowledging the significant steps and actions taken by the Ghanaian government leading up to the White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991, Girdwood (1999: x) identified a few other challenges confronting the 1991 White Paper.

First, the 1991 White Paper focused on coordination of the tertiary education sector rather than an elaborate discussion of the policy issues themselves; this led to essential policy issues being vaguely defined (Girdwood, 1999: 26). Further, for Girdwood, some of the issues in the 1991 White Paper were controversial, the stance on some essential issues



were deceptive, and the policy agenda were broad and complex. All these challenges may have led to lack of clarity of the policies and therefore affected effective implementation.

Secondly, Girdwood (1999: 26) observed that the obligations outlined in the 1991 White Paper lacked the needed legal backing at that time since the country was under military rule and there were fears that the legislation would become ineffective when a constitutionally elected government eventually took over. Notwithstanding the transition from military to democratic rule since 1993, the NAB and the NCTE still exist as state institutions responsible for ensuring quality standards within Ghana's tertiary education sector.

Third, the 1991 White Paper did not provide for any definition of what academic quality meant at the tertiary education level as well as for the processes whereby to assure said quality. As noted by ESIB (2002: 10), effective QA is predicated on a clear definition of what quality entails. This helps to narrow the understanding of quality to the goal, expectations and standards set by higher education stakeholders. Accordingly, it is imperative to ensure that the criteria that must be met to achieve the expected quality standards are clearly spelt out for those who monitor and assess quality standards.

Fourth, for Girdwood (1999: 50 – 51), while private tertiary education was accepted in principle, there was neither official policy encouraging the establishment of private universities nor any financial incentive in support of the establishment of PUC's in Ghana. It appears, from the reviewed literature that until 2019 there was no specific official policy on PUC's in Ghana. This probably led to a lack of clear decision-making relative to PUC's, and so general decisions could be taken and applied to both public and PUC's although their requirements and circumstances differ. To this end, Girdwood (1999: 51) cited a study conducted in 1995 by the AAU for the MoE in which the AAU recommended the need for a clear government policy on PUC's because of their distinct character and important role in national development.

Other recommendations made by the AAU were the:

- Need to clearly spell out the obligations of the PUC's under the law, plus the rights and protection of students who attend PUC's.
- Establishment of advisory and inspectorate units for the PUC's.
- Requirement for an up-to-date register of approved PUC's in order to help students make informed choices
- Necessity for support in the form of training in financial and administrative services for staff of the PUC's.
- Need for government to provide financial and material assistance and relief from import taxes for PUC's.

The reviewed literature on the recommendations from these different authors and scholars were considered in the questions asked during the semi-structured interviews. In particular, questions were asked concerning how the regulatory institutions were guided by such inputs from their stakeholders in the formulation of policies on private higher education QA in Ghana. The findings from the literature review, document analysis and semi-structured personal interviews are presented in Chapter 8, Section 8.3 of this thesis.

#### **4.4.2 The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana of 1992**

Besides the White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991, there are provisions in the 1992 Constitution which also offer legal backing for the establishment of PUC's in Ghana. Affirming the Republic's sovereignty, Article 1(1) of the 1992 Constitution states that "... the sovereignty of Ghana resides in the people of Ghana in whose name and for whose welfare the powers of government are to be exercised in the manner and within the limits laid down in the Constitution" (Republic of Ghana, 282 of 1992: 1). Article 1(2) further confirms that "... the Constitution shall be the supreme law of Ghana and any other law of Ghana found to be inconsistent with the provision of this Constitution shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void" (Republic of Ghana, 282 of 1992: 1). These clauses show that all laws and institutions in Ghana are subject to the Constitution. It has also been argued that there is no one particular law regulating all higher education institutions and as such all institutions draw their powers and authority from the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana and the individual Acts of Parliament

that established the institutions (Republic of Ghana, 2019: 5). Accordingly, this research project examined those provisions in the 1992 Constitution that relate to the establishment and operations of the PUC's in Ghana.

Private sector participation in the provision of tertiary education in Ghana is legally backed by Article 25(2) of the 1992 Constitution. The latter states that "... every person shall have a right, at his own expense, to establish and maintain a private school at all levels and of such categories and in accordance with such conditions as may be provided by law" (Republic of Ghana, 282 of 1992: 27). Additionally, per Article 25 (1)(c), "... higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular, by progressively introducing free education" (Republic of Ghana, 282 of 1992: 27). The 1992 Constitutional directive accordingly supports private sector participation in the provision of tertiary education in Ghana and mandates that no citizen should be deprived of tertiary education due to lack of access. The government of Ghana is thus obliged to use appropriate means to address the imbalance between the request for admission to tertiary education institutions and the limited vacancies available to Ghanaians. A reasonable way out will be to support the establishment of more PUC's that offer quality education that meets the needs of the country.

With the emergence of many PUC's in Ghana, it could be assumed that the constitutional directive of making tertiary education accessible to all citizens is being adhered to. The challenge however relates to how to ensure that the entrepreneurial character of the private providers does not undermine the spirit of the 1992 Constitutional directives. Accordingly, it is imperative that mechanisms are put in place to ensure that the provision of a public service such as education by the private sector is properly regulated to guarantee quality. Such mechanisms involve the establishment of the two tertiary education regulatory institutions; the NAB and the NCTE. The legal framework governing Ghana's two regulatory institutions form the subject of the next subsections.

#### **4.4.3 The National Accreditation Board Act 744 of 2007**

The NAB is one of two regulatory institutions set up by the government for the purposes of regulation, supervision and accreditation of tertiary education institutions in Ghana (Republic of Ghana, 2007: 1; Dattey, *et al.*, 2014: 304; Republic of Ghana, 2014: 5). The NAB was established in 1993 by the National Accreditation Board Law, 1993 (PNDCL 317), which was subsequently replaced by the National Accreditation Board Act 744 of 2007 (Republic of Ghana, 1991: 6; Republic of Ghana, 1993: 1; Republic of Ghana, 2007: 1).

The NAB is responsible for ensuring quality standards of education within Ghana's tertiary education sector (Girdwood, 1999: 7; Republic of Ghana 2007: 1; Dattey, *et al.*, 2014: 304; Republic of Ghana, 2014: 5). The National Accreditation Board Act 744 of 2007, (see Annexure 10), has specific provisions regarding the:

- Composition of the NAB Board.
- Establishment of committees.
- Functions of the NAB.
- Tenure of members of the Board.
- Meeting times of the Board.
- Composition of the panel for accreditation.
- Requirements for Presidential Charter.

Following is a brief discussion of the various components of the National Accreditation Board Act 744 of 2007, concerning how it could either facilitate or serve as a barrier to higher education QA in general and among PUC's in particular.

##### **4.4.3.1 Composition of National Accreditation Board**

The National Accreditation Board Act 744 of 2007, [see Annexure 10, Section 1(2)] states that the Chairperson of the Board and the other members of the Board shall be nominated by the President of the Republic of Ghana in accordance with Article 70 of the 1992 Constitution (Republic of Ghana, 2007: 1). Article 70(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana of 1992 listed the higher education regulatory institutions as part of the

institutions to which the President in consultation with the Council of State shall appoint constituting members (Republic of Ghana, 282 of 1992: 60). The composition of the Board as specified in the National Accreditation Board Act 744 of 2007, could be regarded as representative of major stakeholders, whose involvement could provide strategic direction for ensuring quality in the tertiary education sector of Ghana. Nonetheless, an interview with a lawyer indicated shortcomings in the Acts of establishment of the NAB and the NCTE that could affect the effectiveness of the two institutions. The shortcomings related to the composition of the NAB and the NCTE, the tenure of office and in the appointment of the members of the accreditation panel (see Chapter 7, Section 7.4.1).

#### **4.4.3.2 Challenges of the National Accreditation Board**

It has been asserted that the capacity of the institutions responsible for higher education QA in Ghana are weak, and the national capacity for QA is inadequate (Alabi *et al.*, 2018: 7). In fact, these researchers described QA in higher education in Ghana as ‘work in progress’. They further stated that, although the role of QA is best performed by the higher education institution itself, apart from the internal QA training initiative by German Academic Exchange Service for a few staff from West Africa, there has not been any formal QA training for higher education institutions in Ghana. Essentially, as the researchers posited, Ghana lacks a QA framework for higher education that clearly outlines quality indicators as well as specifies the steps for quality accountability (Alabi *et al.*, 2018: 8).

Moreover, aside from the challenges highlighted in the White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991 (see Annexure 1), the NAB is unable to exercise its authority due to the nature of the law that established it (Girdwood, 1999: 41). Thus, although the NAB has the mandate to ensure quality education standards within Ghana’s tertiary education sector, it does not have the needed authority to carry out said mandate; this undermines their impact (Bawakyillenuo, Osei-Akoto, Ahiadeke, Bortei-Doku Aryeetey & Agbe., 2013: 28). This assertion by Bawakyillenuo *et al.* (2013: 28) was confirmed in the interview responses from the participant from the NAB. The regulatory institutions’ observed ineffectiveness vis-à-vis maintenance of quality education

standards in Ghana's tertiary education institutions (Bawakyillenuo *et al.*, 2013: i) appears to be symptomatic of the lack of appropriate legislation plus QA mechanisms that ensure quality education standards as well as preventing exploitation of students in some PUC's (Girdwood, 1999: 41).

As a case in point, during an interview with the University World News on 16 March 2018, the former Executive Secretary of the NAB, K. Dattey, made a case for the review of the law that established the NAB, stating that "... give the NAB unfettered powers to close down institutions that are not conforming to regulations, whether public or private." This request appears to suggest that, as they now stand, both the law that set up the institution (*viz.*, the National Accreditation Board Act 744 of 2007), and the related Legislative Instrument (*viz.*, Tertiary Institutions [Establishment and Accreditation] Regulations Legislative Instrument 1984 of 2010, (see Annexure 11), do not empower the NAB to close down any unaccredited tertiary education institution. Dattey further explained that the only action that can be taken by the NAB is to publish in the dailies and on their website information about the revocation of the accreditation of such institutions in accordance with Section 11(b) of NAB Act 744 (see Annexure 10) and Regulation 14(2) of LI 1984 (see Annexure 11).

Bawakyillenuo *et al.* (2013: 28) reported the following interview response from a participant associated with the NCTE.

"... one of our major challenges is our laws. One is the pronouncements of politicians. For instance, Institute of Professional Studies (IPS) Ghana, out of the blue, they developed their law and they are now a university. Now, the Kofi Annan Centre is also trying to become a university. We do not have the power to stop some of these things. When they wanted to start a medical school at the University of Cape Coast, the NCTE said no but they went on because they had government support. So our problem is lack of authority to sanction...we can't sanction the politicians and some other public sector tertiary institutions. Ours is to develop standards for the institutions and then advise the Minister of Education. You can advise the Minister of Education and the advice may or may not be accepted. At times decisions are taken before we are informed. You can't fight government decision."

The interview response buttresses the weaknesses of the legislative instrument that established the tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana which has contributed to their inability to ensure quality standards of education in the tertiary education sector.

Despite the challenges hindering the authority of the regulatory institutions to close unaccredited institutions, Section 21 of the National Accreditation Board Act 744 of 2007 specifies circumstances under which a higher education institution could be closed down:

“... (1) Where the Board is satisfied that:

- (a) the location and operations of an institution are detrimental to the physical or moral welfare of the students who attend it;
  - (b) the institution is operating below the minimum standard acceptable to the Board; or
  - (c) the continued existence of the institution is against the public interest; the Board shall formally notify the institution to rectify the deficiencies within a period not exceeding six months;
- (2) If at the end of the period the rectification has not been effected, the Board shall inform the Minister who shall notify the proprietor to close the institution within a specified time;
- (3) Where the proprietor fails to close down the institution as provided for in subsection 2, the Board shall close down the institution.”

Examples of a revocation and non-renewal of accreditation published on the National Accreditation Board website, relating to some PUC's that did not meet their requirements are as follows:

**a. REVOCATION OF ACCREDITATION (name withheld)**

“... has been revoked with immediate effect in accordance with Section 11(b) of Act 744 and Regulation 14 (2) of LI 1984.

By this Revocation of Accreditation, and until further notice to the contrary issued by the Board, the institution is barred from admitting students or keeping students on campus for purposes of receiving academic instruction.

The general public is therefore cautioned that any person that ignores this order does so at his/her own risk.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY.”

## **b. NON-RENEWAL OF ACCREDITATION (name withheld)**

“ ... The National Accreditation Board has denied re-accreditation for (name withheld) to operate as a Tutorial College after the expiration of the initial accreditation granted to operate as such. The Board's decision is based on the conduct of (name withheld) flagrant disregard to all warnings not to run unaccredited programmes, including Medical Assistantship. The actions of (name withheld) is in contravention of Section 8(3) of the NAB Act 744 of 2007 and Regulation 27 of the Tertiary Institutions (Establishment and Accreditation) Regulations 2010 (LI 1984).

The implication of the revocation is that (name withheld) is to cease all fresh student admissions into the Professional Graduate Diploma in Information Technology Programme as well as any other tertiary level academic/professional programme the institution purports to run.

The general public, especially residents of Accra and its environs are therefore CAUTIONED TO TAKE NOTE OF THE NON-RENEWAL OF ACCREDITATION AND DESIST from responding to advertisement enticing them to enrol in (name withheld) or the programme it purports to run.

Further, any person that does business with this institution does so at his/her own risk.

SIGNED

KWAME DATTEY

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY.” (National Accreditation Board. ‘Beware, authorisation not accreditation’ 2019: Internet).

As a member of the AAU, Ghana also imposes other AAU requirements on higher education institutions. One of the AAU's requirements of member institutions is that before a tertiary education institution is established, the institution must be legally recognised and approved by the appropriate authority empowered by legislation to do so. The relevance of such an authority to regulate the operations of higher education institutions is to avoid situations that could otherwise lead to inconsistencies in the operational styles of the higher education institutions. The constitutional requirements therefore impose obligations on the PUC's to ensure quality education standards as well as the credibility of the programmes they offer (Mbanze & Coetzee, 2014: 479). However, the mere existence of regulation and regulatory institutions is not enough to ensure quality tertiary education. The regulatory institutions must be empowered and backed by the relevant legislation that will ensure their effectiveness.



#### **4.4.4 The National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993**

The NCTE is one of the regulatory institutions that was established based on the White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991 (Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 50). The NCTE was established by the 1993 National Council for Tertiary Education Act (Girdwood 1999: 7; Republic of Ghana, 2014: 2) to serve as a regulatory body with the responsibility to monitor, evaluate and review standards in all Ghana public sector and private tertiary institutions. The body also advises government through the MoE on issues related to tertiary education (Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 50; Republic of Ghana, 2014: 2; Republic of Ghana, 2018: 1).

Unlike the NAB, which has as part of its mandate the responsibility to ensure quality standards in higher education institutions in Ghana through accreditation and re-accreditation, the NCTE is responsible for tertiary education policy formulation. It is however worth noting that the policies formulated by the NCTE are on issues related to QA. For example, National Council for Tertiary Education, Norms for Tertiary Education (see Annexure 4) are aimed at ensuring quality. As a result of this policy formulation role of the NCTE, Bailey (2014: 42) refers to the NCTE's role as the standard setting role. The NCTE therefore serves as a buffer between the MoE and other stakeholders; where the NCTE safeguards academic and institutional autonomy and ensures that the MoE is not burdened with day-to-day queries from higher education institutions (Bailey, 2014: 40). The policy formulation role of the NCTE is outlined in the National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993 (see Annexure 12). However, as a result of the changes that have occurred in the tertiary education sector of Ghana and in line with contemporary practices, a Bill has been submitted to the MoE for a review of the National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993 (Republic of Ghana, 2014: 5).

Subsequently, based on the challenges affecting the operations of the NAB and the NCTE, the two institutions have been merged under the new Education Regulatory Bodies Act 1023 of 2020. The Act which was given Presidential Assent on August 21, 2020, provides for the establishment of the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (hereinafter referred to as the 'GTEC') [Education Regulatory Bodies Act 1023 of 2020, 2021: Internet].

In the following section, the areas in the National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993 that directly influence their function of policy formulation for QA are examined. The major components of the National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993 are the following: (1) Establishment of the NCTE. (2) Functions of the NCTE. (3) Composition of the Council. (4) Allowances of the chairman and members of the Council. (5) Qualifications of members of the Council. (6) Tenure of office of members of the Council. (7) Filling of vacancies. (8) Appointment of committees. (9) Appointment of the Executive Secretary of the Council. (10) Expenses and funding of the Council. (11) Responsibilities of the Council (see Annexure 12).

#### **4.4.4.1 Composition of National Council for Tertiary Education**

In this section, those aspects of the National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993 which relate to the NCTE composition, functions and practices meant to ensure quality standards of higher education in Ghana are discussed. The aim is to provide in practice what the NCTE does within its mandate as the standard setting body.

As stated in Section 3(1) of the National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993, the NCTE Council is composed of the following members:

- “... a chairman, who shall be a person of wide academic and administrative experience;
- b. One person with extensive experience in university work;
- c. Two heads of universities and university colleges in Ghana representing the universities and university colleges on a rotational basis;
- d. A principal of a polytechnic in Ghana representing the polytechnics on a rotational basis;
- e. A representative of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research;
- f. The chairman, National Board of Accreditation (NAB);
- g. The chairman, National Teacher Training Council;
- h. One representative of the Association of Ghana Industries;
- i. One person of considerable experience of administration in Ghana;
- j. A representative of the National Development Planning Commission;
- k. A representative of the Minister of Finance;
- l. A representative of the Minister of Education;
- m. A representative of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences;
- n. A representative of the Minister for Employment and Social Welfare; and
- o. Four other persons at least two of whom shall be women.” (see Annexure 12).

#### **4.4.4.2 Functions of National Council for Tertiary Education**

Section 2(1) of the National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993 gives the functions of the NCTE (see Annexure 12) as the following:

- “... (a) to advise the Minister on the development of institutions of tertiary education in Ghana;
- (b) to enquire into the financial needs of the institutions of tertiary education and advise the Minister accordingly;
- (c) to recommend to the Minister for the purpose of the preparation of annual national education budget;
- (i) block allocations of funds toward running costs; and
- (ii) grants towards capital expenditure of each institution of tertiary education, indicating how the allocations are to be disbursed;
- (d) to recommend national standards and norms, including standards and norms on staff, costs, accommodation and time utilisation for the approval of the Minister and to monitor the implementation of any approved national standards and norms by the institutions;
- (e) to advise governing councils of institutions of tertiary education on suitable measures for generating additional funds for their institutions;
- (f) to advise the institutions of tertiary education on the applications for and acceptance of external assistance in accordance with government policy;
- (g) to advise the Minister generally on rates of remuneration and other conditions of service of staff of the institutions;
- (h) to publish information on tertiary education in Ghana; and
- (i) to perform any other functions relating to tertiary education as are incidental to the functions specified in this Act.”

#### **4.4.4.3 Challenges of National Council for Tertiary Education**

The functions outlined in Section 4.4.4.2 above are advisory in nature, and are meant to empower the Minister of Education to implement decisions that help achieve the goals of tertiary education in Ghana. According to Bailey (2014: 38), unlike in South Africa and Tanzania where the Minister of Education was required by law to take the advice of their National Councils on higher education and to justify why the Minister does not take the advice of the National Council, in Ghana there is no law binding the Minister of Education to the same degree.

The NCTE functions outlined above apply to both public and private sector tertiary education institutions within Ghana. Although, in principle, the functions apply to both public and private higher education institutions, a careful study of the functions shows that

no special attention has been given to the needs of PUC's. For example, since the government of Ghana does not support PUC's financially, Section 2(1)(b) and (c) of the 1993 National Council for Tertiary Education Act is only relevant to the PSU's. Thus Girdwood (1999: 50-51) decries the absence of an official policy on PUC's as such general decisions are taken without consideration of the PUC's unique circumstances.

Furthermore, from where does NCTE source the data on which basis it performs its function of determining the relevance of higher education institutions programmes? (Alabi *et al.*, 2018: 24) There is in Ghana no apparent evidence of a labour market data repository which institutions such as the NCTE could rely on in determining market responsive and strategic academic programmes for the country. Consequently, it could be argued that the NCTE does not have the requisite data for performing its function of determining the relevance of any course to be run by a higher education institution. On what basis then do they decide whether or not to grant approval to applicants?

Another major challenge that has been identified concerning the NCTE is the lack of an appropriate tertiary education policy for Ghana. At a policy dialogue organised by the NCTE and TrustAfrica Senegal in Ghana, 8-9 May 2013, a communiqué was issued which stated that despite the exponential growth in the number of higher education institutions, there obtains a lack of policies to guide their operations and to align these institutions' programmes to the needs of the country. It was therefore noted that this has led to an increase in graduate unemployment alongside graduate unemployability. The communiqué on the exponential growth of higher education institution thus led to what Frazer (1994: 108) referred to as the expansion of higher education systems without effective mechanisms to regulate them. No thoughtful improvement strategy can be developed for improving higher education without a "... normative reference in the form of a national education policy" from which a strategic plan could be developed, argued Alabi *et al.* (2018: 25). In the absence of this policy document, the higher education regulatory institutions operated without a basis for determining its strategic direction. To address this challenge, in May 2019, a policy document titled 'Ghana Tertiary Education Policy' was

published by the MoE. In this policy document, the specific policy statements on private sector participation in tertiary education include:

- “... Government shall provide an enabling environment to attract and sustain private sector provision of tertiary education, including cross-border services.
- Government shall design and implement an incentive scheme to encourage private sector providers to locate in underserved areas and disciplines of national priority, especially in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
- All private tertiary education institutions shall be established and operated in accordance with the laws of Ghana.
- An accredited private tertiary institution shall nominate a peer-mentoring institution which shall be a private or public chartered institution, and enter into partnership with that institution to include backstopping for their students, should the new institution fold up or fail to meet standards for Charter in stipulated time.” (Republic of Ghana, 2019: 29).

With the development of policies regarding private sector participation in the provision of tertiary education as outlined above, one would expect that the challenges associated with a lack of policies on PUC's would be addressed. Also, Girdwood (1999: 58) has attributed the inability of the NCTE to achieve its mandate of policy formulation on tertiary education to a lack of adequate funding and leadership with authority. Sources of funding for the NAB and the NCTE include government and the charges paid by the universities for their supervisory roles (Bailey, 2014: 22). Furthermore, the NCTE also lacks the needed human resources to enable it perform its policy formulation, analysis and implementation roles (Girdwood, 1999: 58). The observation with regard to the under-resourcing of the regulatory institutions was made when there were only few PUC's and three PSU's under the supervision of the NAB and the NCTE (Girdwood, 1999: 41). As at 2019, there were over eighty-eight accredited PUC's, four private universities, ten technical universities and ten PSU's (Republic of Ghana, 2019: 5). The increase in the number of PSU's and PUC's then implies that without a commensurate increase in both

human and material resources to the regulatory institutions, the latter have simply become even more ineffective.

Apart from very limited resources, the NCTE does not seem to command respect from the institutions it is required to supervise, or even from its supervisory body the MoE (Girdwood, 1999: 11; Guerrero, 2014: 3). Although the advisory and regulatory roles are performed by the NCTE and the NAB respectively, the NCTE is the apex body that determines the norms and standards whilst the NAB's role is to ensure that set standards are observed by the tertiary education institutions. According to Alabi *et al.* (2018: 7), apart from the NCTE tertiary education norms, no other documentation exists that provides clear measurable indicators of quality in higher education in Ghana; the result is ineffective performance monitoring. Bailey's (2014: 42) description of the role of the NCTE as the standard setting role is not being realised. For Effah (2006: 66) and Materu (2007: 8), changes such as the proliferation of PUC's that have occurred with Ghana's tertiary education sector require the regulatory institutions to have mechanisms at hand to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation and thus quality standards. As Materu (2007: xxv) intimates, in order to ensure quality higher education standards, there exists the need for a planned and systematic review of institutions to determine whether or not acceptable standards of education, scholarship and infrastructure are being met, maintained and enhanced. It follows then that the lack of measurable indicators for monitoring and evaluation of higher education institutions requires urgent attention. As regards the norms that the NCTE has developed, some researchers have described them as input-based norms because the focus is on issues such as: the entry requirements of students, academic credentials of staff, and infrastructure for purposes of accreditation and QA (Alabi *et al.*, 2018: 17). These researchers are of the view that, the first step towards ensuring quality should be a focus on instructional design standards that will inform curriculum, teaching and learning resources and clear standards for determining and assessing learning outcomes.

It is argued that there should be academic freedom, institutional autonomy and accountability in all higher education institutions. Institutional autonomy and collegiality

with regard to governance of higher education institutions in the developed countries has led to better performance of such higher education institutions (Bailey, 2014: 7). The 'state supervision' model as exists in the USA and the UK affords the state limited influence and control over the internal matters of the higher education institutions. Consequently, higher education institutions need to ensure that they meet agreed upon quality standards (Bailey, 2014: 7). However, in Africa, the 'state control' model rather than the 'state supervision' model is what obtains, and has led to political interference mostly with the aim of promoting political agendas. Bailey (2014: 10) indicated that through public sector reforms, tertiary education institutions referred to as 'agencification' were created which helped to neutralise political interference from governments. However, since in Ghana both the NAB and the NCTE fall under the MoE with a political head, there could be political interference in the management of tertiary education institutions.

#### **4.4.5 Forms of institutional isomorphic mechanisms used by the National Council for Tertiary Education and the National Accreditation Board for tertiary education quality assurance**

The concept of institutional isomorphism and the three mechanisms of institutional isomorphism – coercive, normative and mimetic – were extensively discussed in Chapter 2, Section 2.7. Reviewed literature on the different isomorphic mechanisms used by the NAB and the NCTE aided in the development of semi-structured personal interviews guides (see Annexure 9) used for data collection in this research. The data gathered around the participants' experiences regarding the effectiveness and challenges associated with each of the isomorphic mechanisms used by the NAB and the NCTE are discussed in Chapter 7.

Coercive isomorphism occurs when either a government's legislation, policy or funding becomes a compelling force for institutions that depend on it for legitimacy or resources to comply with their directives (Gao, 2010: 204; Cai & Yan; 2011: 12). According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 150), the pressure to conform may come through the use of force, persuasion or an invitation. Cai and Yan (2011: 12) asserted that coercive isomorphic change may occur more in PSU's than in private universities because of the

funding received by the former from government. On the contrary, however, Dattey *et al.* (2014: 318) averred that PUC's in Ghana contend more with coercive isomorphic pressures than PSU's because of legislation and accreditation requirements. Despite the fact that PUC's do not receive funding from the government, there are other factors that compel them to conform to the demands of government and its designated regulatory institutions. One such coercive mechanism is the tertiary education regulative framework of Ghana. The National Accreditation Board Act 744 of 2007 demands that before any higher education institution could be established, the institution and its programmes must be assessed and accredited by the NAB. This legislative requirement, is a coercive mechanism which when complied with results in an outcome of accreditation (Dattey, *et al.*, 2014: 310). The requirement by the NAB for all PUC's in Ghana to be affiliated to and to be mentored by a PSU for a minimum of ten years before they could apply for a charter status (Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 47; Dattey *et al.*, 2014: 310; Ansah, *et al.*, 2017: 30) is another form of coercive isomorphism. Once a PUC is affiliated to a university, the PUC is required to accept and follow conditions of the mentoring university such as grading system and classification of degrees. Such practices are tantamount to coercive isomorphism.

Mimetic isomorphism on the other hand, occurs in situations where as a result of the newness of an institution or uncertainty in its area of operation, such an institution models itself or imitates the practices of other institutions it believes are more successful and legitimate (Rhoades & Sporns, 2002: 367; Cai & Yan; 2011: 13; Dattey *et al.*, 2014: 310). The requirement of affiliation, which provides PUC's with the opportunity to learn and imitate the practices of PSU's to which they are affiliated is a form of mimetic isomorphism (Tsevi, 2014: 3; Effah, 2006: 167; Ansah *et al.*, 2017: 30). Thus, those PSU's to which the PUC's are affiliated are required to mentor the PUC's to adopt the right practices in the delivery of higher education. According to Dattey *et al.* (2014: 310), during institutional and programme assessment, recommendations are normally made by members of the assessment panel. Such recommendations tend to be based on the experiences of panellists who, more often than not, work at PSU's. In their view, when such recommendations are accepted and implemented, it is a form of mimetic isomorphism. Since most PUC's in Ghana were established through the assistance of retired Professors



and part-time lecturers from PSU's, the programmes and practices of the PUC's tend to be modelled along those of PSU's (Dattey *et al.*, 2014: 308). Additionally, instances where some PUC's model their infrastructure such as lecture halls and libraries to be similar or better than those at PSU's in order to attract more students and faculty members could also be described as mimetic isomorphism.

Normative isomorphism in higher education refers to situations in which an institution's accepted practices become a norm for others to follow. According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 152) normative isomorphism stems from professional bodies who develop norms regarding how members should behave. For example, in Ghana, the accreditation procedure regards the practices of the PSU's as the norm or reference point for the PUC's to observe (Dattey *et al.*, 2014: 318-319). Accordingly, PUC's are required to be affiliated to and be mentored by PSU's. Additionally, PUC's that offer professional courses such as nursing and law are required to comply with the norms of relevant professional associations. For example, for a nursing student to qualify as a professional nurse, in addition to the examinations leading to the award of their degrees, such students must write and pass licensure examinations.

The reviewed literature shows that, the NAB uses all the three mechanisms of isomorphic change. Moreover, in order for the PUC's to gain legitimacy and for the regulatory institutions to ensure quality standards among PUC's, the three forms of isomorphism occur in an overlapping manner.

Having looked into the specific instruments that govern the operations of higher education institutions and regulatory institutions in Ghana, the ensuing section deliberates upon the role of legislation in private higher education QA.

#### **4.5 ROLE OF LEGISLATION IN QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Legislation is relevant to the provision of private higher education because it clarifies the rights and obligations of the private provider. When legislation specifies the minimum standards that must be met by the private provider, it helps not to leave the decision to

the discretion of the reviewers. Legislation therefore provides clear guidelines and procedures for the establishment of private higher education institutions. According to Verbik and Jokivirta (2005: 8) when there is lack of legislation governing the growth of PUC's, the quality of education provided is likely to be compromised. In this regard, it is essential for governments to play a more active role in the development of legislation concerning higher education QA.

Any national system set up to review the quality of educational provision is regarded as the regulatory framework. There are different reasons for the use of a proper regulatory policy framework in order to make certain that private higher education is established in a suitable way. First, the establishment of such a framework is necessary in order to ensure that minimum standards are adhered to in the provision of private higher education and to protect unsuspecting customers who are desperate for higher education. Second, the framework is important since it could aid in making decisions in the choice of private higher education institution. Once the government publishes information about legitimate private higher education institutions such as is done in the USA, UK and South Africa, consumers can then make informed decisions from the list of accredited PUC's. Third, regulation helps to ensure that policies formulated by the government are based on accurate data about private universities. Finally, regulatory mechanisms help to check the for-profit private universities from evading tax (Fielden & Varghese, 2009: 71 – 72).

In addition to the above reasons, the World Bank (2000) as cited in Fielden and Varghese (2009: 72) proclaimed the need for regulations from government on higher education. In their view, because most PUC's are profit-oriented and will most often go for courses that are attractive to the public at the expense of programmes such as the humanities and the basic sciences required for national development, there is the need for regulation. UNESCO (2009: 72) suggested that where public policy favours private universities, there should be a good balance between encouraging the growth of private universities and protecting consumers. In their opinion, if rules are too rigid it could dissuade private providers and where the rules are too relaxed it could lead to an explosion of degree-mills.

According to Verbik and Jokirvita (2005: 6), countries such as South Africa, United Arab Emirates and Cyprus have been noted by the Observatory on the Borderless Higher Education as having good regulatory mechanisms while countries like Nigeria, France and Russia had questionable regulatory mechanisms. Reality though is that governments most of the time do not have all the elements required in a regulatory policy framework in place (Fielden & Varghese, 2009: 75). As such, they tend to adopt the reactive approach in coming up with policy frameworks to address the challenges when they arise; this makes such policies dated and ineffective. Accordingly, Fielden and Varghese (2009: 73) outlined the seven dimensions that every private tertiary education regulative framework should have: (1) legislation; (2) policy statement; (3) procedures for establishing new private universities; (4) a regular and effective external QA system; (5) a consistent and clear policy on the form of support from government; (6) policies on private sector participation in student grants; and (7) a clear statement of the private providers' obligations in respect of information and reporting as well as non-academic monitoring to which it might be subjected. In effect, legislation on tertiary education helps to establish the role of private higher education institutions in the development of a nation as well as what the private higher education institutions are required by law to do or not to do.

#### **4.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided the legal framework within which tertiary education in Ghana is regulated. The chapter specifically discussed the White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991, the Acts of Parliament on the establishment of the National Accreditation Board and the National Council for Tertiary Education, as well as pertinent aspects of the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana of 1992 on private tertiary education in Ghana. An examination of the legal framework and the Acts that established the NAB and the NCTE indicated a lack of power and authority for the regulatory institutions to enforce their decisions in the law courts, as for example when wanting to close down sub-standard PUC's. Thus, the powers of the regulatory institutions were limited to providing information to the public on PUC's that are not accredited using their own websites along with the print and electronic media. Apart from the limitations inherent in the legal framework, the other challenges affecting the effectiveness of the

regulatory institutions in their QA role in Ghana include a lack of resources, leadership, capacity and capability. In Ghana, all the three forms of isomorphic pressures are used by the NAB and the NCTE in an overlapping manner to ensure quality standards of education in the PUC's.

In furtherance of the quest to understand fully the nature and context within which higher education QA is undertaken, the next chapter presents profiles of each of the institutions that participated in this research project.

## **CHAPTER 5: MILIEU, SETTING AND CONTEXT OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGES IN GHANA**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 4 presented the historical context plus the legal framework developed for the establishment and regulation of PUC's in Ghana. The present chapter provides an overview of the PUC's, the mentoring PSU's, as well as the tertiary education regulatory institutions that participated in this research project. These three institutions provide the context within which the mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana are exercised. Accordingly, the objective of this chapter is to provide data that will complement and supplement information obtained from the semi-structured personal interviews discussed in Chapter 7, Section 7.4. All of these data gathered contributed to determine the effect of the current QA capacity and mechanisms of the tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana and the usefulness of the application of these mechanisms in the PUC's.

More specifically, this chapter presents pertinent information concerning the vision, the mission, governance, sources of funding, faculties and programmes, affiliations and partnerships, quality assurance unit, student population and staffing of the institutions that participated in this research. Researchers such as Cao and Li (2014: 66) and Utuka (2012: 141) have emphasised the importance of mission and vision statements as well as values in ensuring best practices in QA. For example, Lim (1999: 379) identified the creation of a mission for the higher education institution as a first step in the development of a good QA system. (see Chapter 2, Section 2.10).

The overview of the institutions that participated in this research contributed to the identification of the input factors that could influence their operations and QA mechanisms. In order to identify the input factors that influence the QA mechanisms and the practicality of the QA mechanisms, information on the institutions that participated in this research is presented in the sections below. The institutions are discussed under three major

groupings, namely, the PUC's (see Section 5.2), the mentoring PSU's (see Section 5.3), and the regulatory institutions (see Section 5.4).

## **5.2 PROFILES OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGES USED IN THIS STUDY**

Since the 1987 URC recommendations for the reforms to the tertiary education system (see Chapter 4, Section 4.3), and the subsequent White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991 (see Annexure 1) there has been an exponential growth in the number of PUC's within Ghana. As at August 2019, Ghana had over eighty-eight accredited PUC's (Republic of Ghana, 2019: 5). Altogether, the PUC's have lower student numbers and are, therefore, relatively smaller when compared to PSU's in Ghana. Despite the low student enrolment levels, PUC's have been acknowledged as having immensely contributed to the provision of vacancies for the high number of applicants who qualify for university education but were otherwise prevented by the limited vacancies that exist within PSU's (Effah, 2006: 66; Varghese, 2006: 30). The profile of each of the six PUC's that participated in this research is provided in the ensuing subsections.

### **5.2.1 Methodist University College Ghana**

The Methodist University College Ghana (hereinafter referred to as 'MUCG') was established by the Methodist Church Ghana. The MUCG was commissioned by the Methodist Church Ghana at its 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference held in Sunyani in 1998. The aim was to augment the government of Ghana's effort in the provision of tertiary education and to address the challenge of limited access. The MUCG was granted accreditation in 2002 (MUCG Principal's Report and Basic Statistics, 14<sup>th</sup> Congregation, 2015 –2016: 7).

MUCG has its main campus on a twelve (12) hectare land at Dansoman, Accra. The MUCG has two other campuses; one in Tema in the Greater Accra Region and the other at Wenchi in the Brong Ahafo Region, all in Ghana (MUCG Principal's Report and Basic Statistics, 14<sup>th</sup> Congregation, 2015 – 2016: 7).

The MUCG's vision is as follows: "To promote and develop academic excellence, spirituality, morality and service within the Ghanaian society" (MUCG Principal's Report and Basic Statistics, 14<sup>th</sup> Congregation, 2015 – 2016: 7). Excellence is one of the criteria for determining the quality of a product or service. Accordingly, since the MUCG's vision indicates a focus on academic excellence, it is expected that the appropriate QA mechanisms are in place to ensure and maintain the quality of tertiary education they provide.

The MUCG has the following mission: "To impart knowledge and skills in disciplines relevant to national development within the context of general global development, and at the same time ensure an all-round development of the student mentally, physically and spiritually on the basis of Christian principles" (MUCG Principal's Report and Basic Statistics, 14<sup>th</sup> Congregation, 2015 –2016: 8). In addition to the literature provided in this chapter, chapter 7 provides additional data gathered through semi-structured interviews on the QA mechanisms used by each of the institutions that participated in this research.

The MUCG is run by the University Council with its operational body being the Academic Board. The Chief Executive of the MUCG is called 'President'. He is assisted by the Vice President who is a Reverend Minister of the Methodist Church Ghana. The MUCG also has a Registrar and a Deputy Registrar (The 14<sup>th</sup> Congregation Programme, 2017: 5).

The MUCG presents day-time, evening and weekend programmes and has five faculties, namely; Business Administration, Social Studies, Arts and General Studies, Applied Sciences, Informatics and Mathematics. Each faculty has departmental heads that report to their respective Deans.

The Wenchi campus of the MUCG hosts and runs a Bachelor of Science Degree programme in General Agriculture and Horticulture and certificate programmes in Horticulture, Agro Processing and Agribusiness and a Diploma in Registered General Nursing. The Tema campus also hosts and runs Bachelor and Master of Business Administration Degrees in Accounting, Finance, Human Resource Management,

Management Studies and Marketing. On the main Dansoman campus, the MUCG runs Bachelor and Master of Business Administration Degrees in Accounting, Finance, Human Resource Management, Management Studies and Marketing. The faculty of Business Administration has five main departments namely; Accounting, Banking and Finance, Human Resource Management and Management Studies and Marketing and Supply Chain Management. The Faculty of Social Studies is made up of the Economics, Psychology and Social Work Departments. The Faculty of Arts and General Studies is made up of four departments, namely; Languages Department, General Studies Department, Religious Studies Department, and the Music and Theatre Arts Department. The Faculty of Informatics and Mathematical Sciences are made up of the Information Technology Department, Mathematics and Statistics Department and the Actuarial Science Department (The 14<sup>th</sup> Congregation Programme, 2017: 6 – 7).

The main sources of funding of the MUCG are tuition fees and annual subvention from the Methodist Development Fund of the Methodist Church Ghana. The MUCG sometimes receives donations in cash or in kind from the Methodist Church, individuals and corporate institutions (The 14<sup>th</sup> Congregation Programme, 2017: 8).

The MUCG is affiliated to the University of Ghana. The MUCG also has some of its programmes such as Procurement and Supply Chain Management affiliated to the University of Cape Coast (MUCG Principal's Report and Basic Statistics, 14<sup>th</sup> Congregation, 2015 – 2016: 7).

The total staff strength of lecturers during the 2015/2016 academic year was 210; made up of 125 full-time and 85 part-time lecturers. The MUCG also has 223 non-teaching staff made up of 33 senior members and 190 senior and junior staff in the different departments/units/sections of the MUCG. In the course of the 2015/2016 academic year, there were 4,422 students made up of 2,082 males and 2,340 females (The 14<sup>th</sup> Congregation Programme, 2017: 8).



The MUCG has a quality assurance unit that is required to maintain quality standards in every aspect of the university college's activities. This includes key performance areas of the university/academia such as teaching and learning, research, community engagement, academic citizenship and academic leadership as well as administrative activities. The QA unit is headed by a Director who is a faculty member and two administrative staff members (Principal's Address, 3<sup>rd</sup> Matriculation of Students admitted in January, 2015: 3).

### **5.2.2 Islamic University College, Ghana**

The Islamic University College Ghana (hereinafter referred to as 'IUCG') is located at East Legon, Ajiringanor in the Greater Accra Region. The IUCG was established in 2000 by a non-governmental institution of the Republic of Iran. It was granted interim accreditation in 2001, and a substantive accreditation in 2002.

The vision of IUCG is as follows: "To become the leading provider of academic excellence and moral uprightness in tertiary education in Ghana" (11th Congregation and 19<sup>th</sup> Matriculation Brochure, 2018: 5). This vision indicates a focus on excellence which is one of the criteria for determining the quality of a product or service. It is important to note, however, that it is not enough to state a vision that focuses on excellence only. If excellence is to be achieved effectively, appropriate QA mechanisms must be in place. Accordingly, the QA mechanisms used by each of the institutions that participated in this investigation were explored using semi-structured personal interviews (see Annexure 9).

The ICUG has the following mission "To provide quality tertiary education to the youth, especially to the less-privileged communities; and to undertake research and disseminate knowledge in pursuit of academic and moral excellence for national development and for improving the quality of life of Ghanaians in particular and all Africans in general" (11th Congregation and 19<sup>th</sup> Matriculation Brochure, 2018: 5). As stated in the mission statement, the IUCG exists in order to provide quality tertiary education to the citizenry. In line with the topic of this thesis, the mechanisms for ensuring quality standards at the IUCG were explored.

IUCG has a governing council. The latter is responsible for working towards the realisation of the mission and vision of the IUCG. Furthermore, the governing council is required to: (1) institutionalise IUCG values; (2) ensure effective and efficient use of funds; and (3) provide an academic environment that facilitates students' learning and success. Additionally, the IUCG has a Management Board whose President has the responsibility to implement the policies and decisions of the IUCG Council. The Management Board's Vice President is in charge of finance and administration, academic affairs and research. In addition to tuition fees, the IUCG receives funding from the Al-Mustafa International University Qom, Iran (IUCG 14<sup>th</sup> Congregation and 19<sup>th</sup> Matriculation Brochure, 2018: 28).

The IUCG offers Degree programmes in Arts and Religious Studies, Business Administration, Arts and Communication Studies. Other programmes include M. Phil. Religious Studies which is affiliated to Al-Mustafa International University, Qom, Iran. (IUCG 14<sup>th</sup> Congregation and 19<sup>th</sup> Matriculation Brochure, 2018: 29).

As a university college, the IUCG is affiliated to the University of Ghana as well as the Al-Mustafa International University (Islamic University College Ghana 14<sup>th</sup> Congregation and 19<sup>th</sup> Matriculation Brochure, 2018: 5). As a result of IUCG affiliation to two different universities, the IUCG is mentored by these two universities.

As at the time of the research, the IUCG had 55 full-time and 10 part-time lecturers, 15 senior staff and 25 junior staff. As stated on the IUCG website, the university college had a total of 1007 students made up of 995 undergraduates and 12 post graduates (Islamic University College Ghana. 2017, about-iucg 2017: Internet).

The IUCG has an internal quality assurance unit (hereinafter referred to as 'IQUA') which was established in 2016. The mandate of the IQUA is to ensure quality teaching and learning outcomes in IUCG through training of faculty and administrative staff. The aim was to ensure improved service that will translate into the training of students who have a competitive edge over other graduates in the job market. The initial functions of the IQUA were to: (1) maintain records of quality and academic standards; (2) establish a quality

culture; (3) develop a quality management system; (4) organise student's assessment of courses and lecturers; (5) ensure compliance of all staff with QA standards; (6) coordinate and monitor all QA actions; and (7) liaise with the NAB, the NCTE and the mentoring universities for QA (14<sup>th</sup> Congregation and 18<sup>th</sup> Matriculation Brochure, 2018: 31-32).

### **5.2.3 Wisconsin International University College**

The Wisconsin International University (hereinafter referred to as 'WIUC') was founded in 1998 by the President of Wisconsin International University in the United States, Dr. John Buck, along with Rev. Dr. Paul K. Fynn of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana. WIUC is a non-faith-based university college (Wisconsin International University College 12<sup>th</sup> Congregation Brochure, 2019: 3).

WIUC is located at North Legon-Accra in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. It has a campus at Feyiase-Kumasi in the Ashanti Region. As part of the requirements of the NAB, the WIUC had its interim accreditation in 2000. Although the WIUC has institutional affiliation with the University of Ghana, because of the different courses offered at the WIUC, it also has some of its programmes affiliated to the University of Cape Coast, the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and University for Development Studies, Tamale (Wisconsin International University College 12<sup>th</sup> Congregation Brochure, 2019: 3).

The WIUC vision is as follows: "To be the first-choice private university in Ghana with highly qualified and motivated staff" (Wisconsin International University College 12<sup>th</sup> Congregation Brochure, 2019: 2). Although no mention is made of any criteria for determining quality in the vision of the WIUC, its focus of being the first-choice private university can only be achieved if they have mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education.

The WIUC has the following mission: "To develop world-class human resources equipped with the appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes to meet national development needs and global challenges through quality teaching, learning, research, knowledge

dissemination and partnership with key stakeholders.” (Wisconsin International University College 12<sup>th</sup> Congregation Brochure, 2019: 2). For the realisation of this mission, there must exist effective mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education. The extent to which effective mechanisms were in place was explored during the semi-structured interviews held with participants from the WIUC.

The WIUC is governed by a Board of Directors composed of members of different backgrounds and whose functions are defined in the WIUC Statutes. The main source of funding of the WIUC is tuition fees (Wisconsin International University College 12<sup>th</sup> Congregation Brochure, 2019: 11).

The WIUC offers programmes at the undergraduate and post graduate levels, as well as professional and certificate courses. The faculties of the WIUC include the Faculty of Law that runs Bachelor of Laws programmes and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences/General Studies. The faculties break down into the Department of Social Sciences, Department of Communication Studies, Department of General Business, Department of Management Studies, Department of Accounting, Finance and Banking, Department of Business Computing, Department of Information Technology and a School of Nursing. The graduate programmes are Master of Business Administration, MSc. Environmental Sustainability and Management, and M.A. Adult Education. The WIUC runs other programmes in partnership with other universities in the USA. For example, the MA Global Leadership in partnership with Azusa Pacific University, CA, USA and the MA International Studies (MAIS) with Concordia University Irvine, CA, USA (Wisconsin International University College 12<sup>th</sup> Congregation Brochure, 2019: 11).

The WIUC runs day-time, evening and weekend programmes as a way of addressing the needs of the different categories of students. Similarly, the WIUC admits two times in a year, in January and August. The first group of applicants is those who have to rewrite their failed papers. The second group of applicants comprises regular students who passed all their papers at the end the senior secondary school academic year and thus

qualified to be admitted into a tertiary institution (Wisconsin International University College 12<sup>th</sup> Congregation Brochure, 2019: 11).

Being an International College, the WIUC attracts students from West Africa, North Africa and East African countries like Nigeria, Cote D'Ivoire, Mali, Togo, Benin, Egypt, Congo DR, Niger, Guinea, Gabon, Burkina Faso, Liberia, Kenya, Sierra Leone and Gambia (Wisconsin International University College 12<sup>th</sup> Congregation Brochure, 2019: 15-16).

The unit responsible for QA at WIUC is called the Quality Assurance and Institutional Affiliation Unit. The unit is responsible to ensure quality standards by both faculty and administrative staff in their service delivery.

#### **5.2.4 Pentecost University College**

The Pentecost University College (hereinafter referred to as the 'PUC') is a faith-based higher education institution founded by the Pentecost Church in 2003. The PUC received final accreditation from the NAB of Ghana in 2004. The PUC is located at Sowutuom in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. It was formerly a Bible College for training Lay Leaders and Ministers of the Pentecost Church. The PUC has three campuses, namely, the main campus located at Sowutuom, the City Campus in Central Accra, and the Agogo Campus (Pentecost University College Annual Report Abridged, 2016: 4).

The PUC's vision is as follows: "To be a distinguished Christian University known for excellence in science and technology education and scholarship" (Pentecost University College Annual Report Abridged, 2016: 4). The vision statement indicates the institution's aspiration to ensure excellence. This can only be achieved if there are effective mechanisms for assuring quality standards. The semi-structured interviews held with the participants from the PUC explored the QA mechanisms they have in place. The resultant findings are discussed in Chapter 7, Section 7.4.

The Pentecost University College's mission statement reads as follows: "We exist to develop work-ready graduates with integrity and the fear of God whilst creating and

disseminating new knowledge” (Pentecost University College Annual Report Abridged, 2016: 4).

The PUC has a Council that serves as the governing board that provides strategic governance while the academic board provides academic governance. The Council comprises membership of people from different backgrounds. The Chairman of the Church of Pentecost serves as the Chancellor of the PUC. The PUC is headed by a Rector who is assisted by other principal officers. The main sources of funding for the PUC are fees paid by students as well as support from the Pentecost Church; the latter being founders and owners of the institution (Pentecost University College Annual Report Abridged, 2016: 4).

The PUC’s three faculties are the Faculty of Theology and Mission, the Faculty of Engineering Science and Computing, and the Faculty of Business Administration. Among the degree programmes offered are BSc. Administration with specialisation in Accounting, Insurance, Banking and Finance, Marketing, BSc. Actuarial Science, Applied Mathematics, Construction Technology and Engineering Management, Information Technology, Insurance with Actuarial Science, Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Nursing, Quantity Surveying and Construction Economics, and B.A. Theology. The PUC also runs professional programmes, such as Certificate in Alternate Dispute Resolution, Certificate in Business Administration, Association of Business Executives Diploma, BCS Approved Centre and Chartered Institute of Marketing. The PUC runs four different sessions: the regular session, evening session, weekend session and modular programme for the School of Theological Education. The weekend school is run on trimester basis. (Pentecost University College Annual Report Abridged, 2016: 3).

The PUC is affiliated to the University of Ghana, Legon. The PUC is negotiating for partnerships with other international colleges that share a similar mission and purpose to carry out joint research, student, staff and faculty exchange programmes. The institutions they intend to work in partnership with include the University of Salford, UK, Association

of Business Executives (ABE) UK, and the London South Bank University (LSBU) (Pentecost University College Annual Report Abridged, 2016: 10-11).

The PUC has 142 full-time staff made up of 76 senior members comprising 29 senior staff and 37 junior staff (Pentecost University College Annual Report Abridged 2016: 5). The total student population of PUC as at September 2017 is 2166 (Pentecost University College Annual Abridged Report 2016: 8). The PUC has students from different countries such as Botswana, Congo, Cote D'Ivoire, Zambia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Gabon, Guinea, Nigeria and Chad.

As one of the requirements of the NAB of Ghana, the PUC has a QA unit. The QA unit of the PUC is known as the IQAU. The IQAU among its quality assurance activities regularly conducts surveys in order to benchmark PUC with other PUC's (Pentecost University College Annual Report Abridged 2016: 9). It is however worthy of note that as at 2020, the PUC had received Presidential Charter to operate as a fully-fledged university.

### **5.2.5 DataLink University College**

The DataLink University College (hereinafter referred to as 'DLUC') is a PUC whose main campus is located in Tema (along the community 10 New Road). Apart from the main campus, the DLUC also has campuses in Ho, Takoradi and Kpando. The university college received accreditation from the NAB to operate as a tertiary institution in 2006 (DataLink Institute Student Handbook, 2014: 5).

On DataLink University College's website, its vision is expressed in the following way: "To be an internationally acclaimed centre of excellence in teaching, learning, research and community leadership." (DataLink University College Vision-Mission-Objectives 2017: Internet). The vision clearly indicates a focus on excellence which is one of the dimensions of quality. However, a vision statement is not a guarantee for quality higher education; there is a need for effective structures, systems, policies that give clear guidelines on implementation and effective monitoring in order to ensure any deviation is corrected. Similarly, on its website, the mission of the DataLink University College is specified as

follows: “To provide holistic, quality, multidisciplinary tertiary education in a multicultural environment.” (DataLink University College, Vision-Mission-Objectives 2017: Internet).

The institution’s main source of funding is tuition fees. DLUC’s two faculties are the Faculty of Business Administration and the Faculty of Computer Science and Information Systems. In addition to these two faculties, the DLUC also provides tuition for students to acquire Ordinary and Advanced Diplomas from external bodies (DataLink Institute Student Handbook, 2014: 31).

The DLUC is affiliated to the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology alongside the University of Northampton, United Kingdom. The total student population as at September 2017 is 1550 students comprising 1020 undergraduates and 320 postgraduates. The DLUC has an internal QA unit responsible for ensuring quality standards in the university college.

#### **5.2.6 Knutsford University College**

The Knutsford University College (hereinafter referred to as ‘KUC’) was established in 2007. The KUC is located at Bamako Road, East Legon, Accra. KUC is a private non-religious institution accredited by the National Accreditation Board of the Republic of Ghana in 2007. (Knutsford 7<sup>th</sup> Congregation and 8<sup>th</sup> Matriculation Handbook, 2017: 10).

The KUC’s vision is as follows: “To become a world-class model institution of scholarly excellence and pragmatic capacity building” (Knutsford 7<sup>th</sup> Congregation and 8<sup>th</sup> Matriculation Handbook, 2017: 11). In addition, the KUC’s has the following mission: “To educate, inspire, and promote research, teaching and learning, and to develop human resources relevant for national and global development” (Knutsford 7<sup>th</sup> Congregation and 8<sup>th</sup> Matriculation Handbook, 2017: 11).

The highest decision-making body is the KUC council of governors that is chaired by the Chancellor. The Knutsford University College council comprises all its major stakeholders which include staff, faculty, students and a representative from the mentoring university;



University of Ghana. Academic governance is provided by the academic board with support from other committees. Funding for running the KUC activities is sourced from the fees paid by students (Knutsford 7th Congregation and 8th Matriculation Handbook, 2017: 14). The KUC is affiliated to the University of Ghana. It has a QA unit that is responsible for ensuring quality standards in its operations (Knutsford 7th Congregation and 8th Matriculation Handbook, 2017: 11).

Alongside a school of Research and Graduate Studies, the KUC has three undergraduate programmes, namely, BSc Business Administration, BSc Information Technology and BSc Computer Science. The institution runs day, evening and week-end programmes in Business Administration in Accounting, Finance, Marketing and General Management options (Knutsford 7<sup>th</sup> Congregation and Matriculation Handbook, 2017: 11). The KUC had a student population of less than five hundred as at 2018 when data were collected. The KUC can therefore be viewed as having very low enrolment figures as is the case in other PUC's in Ghana. Enrolment for the 2017/18 academic year was one hundred and eighty students (Knutsford 7<sup>th</sup> Congregation and Matriculation Handbook, 2017: 15-16). This trend could affect its finances and the quality of faculty members and staff it can employ and by implication the quality of services that they offer.

The foregoing sections have provided a brief overview of the PUC's that participated in this research. One of the requirements of the NAB is for every PUC to be affiliated to a university for at least ten years for purposes of mentoring. In the next section, the profile of the mentoring PSU's is provided in order to indicate the mechanisms they have in place to ensure quality education standards among Ghana's PUC's.

### **5.3 THE QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS OF THE MENTORING PUBLIC SECTOR UNIVERSITIES**

In Ghana, the affiliation of a PUC to a public university is one of the NAB's accreditation requirements. In its document entitled the "National Accreditation Board, Ghana: Roadmap to Accreditation" (Annexure 3), the NAB states that before any private university college applies to the NAB for accreditation, the applicant institution shall first seek and

obtain affiliation to operate under the supervision of a recognised mentoring institution for at least ten years. The mentoring institution shall award its certificates in the period before accreditation is granted (Materu, 2007: 30; Manuh *et al.*, 2007: 48; Dattey *et al.*, 2014: 307; Boateng, *et al.*, 2014: 3; National Accreditation Board, Ghana: Roadmap to Accreditation, 2019: 2). In this section, a brief profile of the two public sector mentoring universities that participated in this research project is provided.

### **5.3.1 University of Ghana**

The UG was established in 1948. It is the first university established in Ghana. It therefore holds a premier status among the majority of students (Effah, 2011: 378; University of Ghana Prospectus 2019: 14). Then known as the University of the Gold Coast, the UG was founded with the aim of providing university education, learning and research (University of Ghana Annual Report, 2012: xiii). The UG has the highest number of affiliated PUC's. As at June 2019, out of the eighty-eight PUC's, twenty-four were affiliated to the UG (Interview with University of Ghana participant, 2019).

The University of Ghana's vision is stated as follows on its website: "To become a world class research-intensive university over the next decade." (University of Ghana about-mission/vision 2017: Internet). The UG's mission stated on its website is: "To create an enabling environment that makes University of Ghana increasingly relevant to national and global development through cutting-edge research as well as high quality teaching and learning." (University of Ghana about-mission/vision 2017: Internet).

The UG runs a collegiate system and has the following Colleges: College of Applied Sciences, College of Education, College of Health Sciences and College of Humanities. Apart from the colleges, the UG has research institutes and centres for learning and research: Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research, Centre for Tropical, Clinical Pharmacology and Therapeutics, Institute for Environmental and Sanitation Studies, Regional Institute for Population Studies, and the Institute for Statistical and Economic Research. The UG runs both graduate and undergraduate programmes. Apart from the

regular programmes, the UG also runs modular and distance education programmes (University of Ghana Handbook and Regulations for students, 2017: 9 – 12).

In working towards the realisation of its vision, the UG has identified three main priority areas for partnership with other international bodies and institutions for purposes of enhancing its research output. The three priority areas are as follows:

- First, partnerships and affiliations with universities in Africa and North America for staff and faculty exchange programmes as well as collaborative research.
- Second, the UG is a member of the International Association of Universities, the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the league of World Universities, and the Association of African Universities.
- Third, on the issue of exchange programmes, the UG has links with the Council for International Educational Exchange based in New York, International Student Exchange Programme, and the Commonwealth Universities Student Exchange Consortium. (University of Ghana Handbook and Regulations for students, 2017: 7).

Apart from Ghanaian students, the UG has international students from over 70 countries and a student population of over 38,831 representing a male to female ratio of about 1.3:1. There are 1,409 international students (University of Ghana Handbook and Regulations for students, 2017: 7).

The composition of the Central Administration of the University of Ghana as outlined on its website comprises the Office of the Vice Chancellor, two offices of the Pro-Vice Chancellors (Academic and Student Affairs and Office of Research, Innovation and Development), Office of the Registrar, the Balme Library, Office of the Dean of Student Affairs, International Programmes Office and the Administrative Directorates (University of Ghana about-overview 2017: Internet). The UG has 1179 senior members engaged in teaching and research and 206 senior administrative and professional staff (University of Ghana Handbook and Regulations for students, 2017: 2 – 4).

The academic QA unit of the UG was established in 2005 but was officially opened in 2007. As specified on the University of Ghana's website, the academic QA unit is responsible for ensuring academic quality in all academic units, programmes and units of both the UG itself and all other institutions affiliated to the UG. The academic QA unit is required to ensure quality standards in the teaching, learning and assessment processes of both the UG and institutions affiliated to the UG as well as report any challenges to management (University of Ghana about institutional-affiliations 2017: Internet).

Institutional affiliation with the University of Ghana is strictly governed by the following process:

- (1) Applicants seeking programme and institutional affiliation are required to submit institutional profile information and programme curriculum information.
- (2) The relevant department of the institution to which the university college is to be affiliated shall conduct an inspection of the physical facilities of the applicant institution.
- (3) A report is then written as to whether or not the affiliate university college meets the requirements for affiliation, and this determines whether or not approval is given for affiliation.
- (4) After approval is given, the examination results are processed by the mentoring institution where academic records of affiliate students are processed and updated onto the Information Technology System by the affiliation unit of the Academic Affairs Directorate.
- (5) Provisional examination broadsheet is sent to the relevant Provost's office;
- (6) The Provost's office schedules Examiners Board meeting for the affiliate institution to approve results.
- (7) The Provost's office forwards results to the Academic Affairs Directorate.
- (8) The Academic Affairs department compiles the list of graduating students for the approval of Academic Board (University of Ghana Special Report, 2016: 7).

### **5.3.2 University of Cape Coast**

Information on the UCC website states that, the university was founded in 1962. The UCC has two campuses; the Old Site and the New Site; both located in Cape Coast. The UCC operates a semester system; first semester from August to December and the second semester from January to May (University of Cape Coast main/about/history 2017: Internet). The UCC has the second highest number of affiliate PUC's in Ghana. As at Jan 2018, the UCC had fifteen PUC's affiliated to it (Interview with University of Cape Coast Participant: 2018).

The vision of the UCC as specified on its website is "To have a University that is strongly positioned with world-wide acclaim" and its mission is: "The University of Cape Coast is the University of Choice." (University of Cape Coast about-vision/mission 2017: Internet).

The UCC has five Colleges: College of Humanities and Legal Studies, College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences, College of Health and Allied Sciences, College of Education Studies, and College of Distance Education. The Colleges are supported by fourteen Faculties/Schools headed by Deans and Provosts (Vice Chancellor's Annual Report to the 48<sup>th</sup> Congregation, 2015: i-iii).

The UCC has memoranda with the following international institutions: Jiangsu University in the People's Republic of China, University of Kassel, Germany, Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana, Columbia, The Solarin University of Education, Nigeria, Trent University, Canada, The College of Charleston, USA, Sciences PO, France, Inter-University Conference for Doctoral Studies, France, The Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway, African Business Centre for Developing Education, Ghana, University of Gerona, Spain, University of Quebec, Canada.

The governing body of the UCC is the Council. The Council has the responsibility for managing the finances and properties of the UCC. The Vice Chancellor and the Pro Vice Chancellor are the administrative heads of the UCC. The Vice Chancellor makes major decisions on behalf of the Council of the UCC.

The UCC has the Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (hereinafter referred to as 'DAPQA'), which in turn is divided into the: (1) Academic planning; and (2) Quality assurance sections. The DAPQA was established in 2001 with the mandate to monitor and facilitate the processes for ensuring academic standards. Its other responsibilities include monitoring implementation of the strategic plan and ensuring quality management of the university. The goal of the DAPQA is to position Total Quality Management at the centre of academic, administrative and planning systems in the University (UCC Vice Chancellor's Annual Report to the 48<sup>th</sup> Congregation, 2015: 609).

Aside from the mentoring institutions, there are the regulatory institutions established by the government of Ghana to ensure quality education standards in the tertiary education sector of Ghana. Profiles of the regulatory institutions are summarised in the next section.

#### **5.4 THE QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS OF THE REGULATORY INSTITUTIONS**

There are two tertiary education regulatory institutions established for purposes of ensuring quality standards in the tertiary education sector in Ghana. The two institutions, which play different but complementary roles in the quest for quality education standards in Ghana, are the NAB and the NCTE.

##### **5.4.1 The National Accreditation Board**

In Chapter 4, Sections 4.4.3 – 4.4.4, the legal framework on the establishment of the higher education regulatory institutions of Ghana was elucidated. Specifically, the composition, functions, and challenges of the NAB and the NCTE were discussed. This section supplements the earlier information provided in Chapter 4.

The NAB was established based on the recommendations of the URC. The URC was set up by the Ghanaian government to review the country's tertiary education system. At the end of the review process, the URC recommended the establishment of two institutions to regulate the tertiary education sectors of Ghana. One of these institutions is the NAB. The NAB's offices are located in Accra, and it does not have any regional or district offices

from which the NAB regulates the activities of the PUC's that are dispersed throughout all of Ghana's sixteen regions. The NAB is responsible for accreditation and re-accreditation of both public and private sector tertiary education institutions in Ghana. The need to accredit PUC's arises in order to minimise the entrepreneurial motive of private providers and simultaneously to protect the public from sub-standard tertiary education. The NAB's sources of funding include government subvention for personal emoluments and administrative cost. Other sources of funding derive from the fees charged for accreditation and the evaluation of certificates.

Programme accreditation is undertaken by a panel of experts constituted by the NAB. According to Dattey *et al.* (2017: 213), the NAB's unpublished manual (2011) states that the areas evaluated include curriculum, qualification, number and experience of academic staffing, library facilities, student-staff ratio, funding as well as physical facilities. The facilities and funding indicators are evaluated by the professionals on the team whilst academic staffing, curriculum and student-staff ratio get assessed by experienced academics, who are usually professors on the team.

As specified on its website, the NAB's vision entails being "A world-class accreditation and quality development institution in tertiary education." Its mission on the other hand, is to "Provide the best basis for establishing, measuring and improving standards in Tertiary Education in Ghana" (The National Accreditation Board about-us 2018: Internet). The NAB has a department responsible for QA and procedures that are followed in working towards the realisation of its mandate of QA. These are discussed in sub-sections 5.4.1.1 and 5.4.1.2 that follows.

#### **5.4.1.1 The quality assurance department**

The QA department of the NAB is headed by a Deputy Executive Secretary who reports directly to the board's Executive Secretary. The role of the QA department as stated on its website is that, the QA department supports the NAB to deliver on its mandate. Specifically, the QA department together with other experts who work for the NAB support the NAB to develop assessment instruments and guidelines and information for staff and

the institutions they regulate. Additionally, the QA department is also responsible for data management, academic audits, institutional audits, monitoring and evaluation, research and documentation, as well as capacity building of staff (National Accreditation Board Quality Assurance Department 2018: Internet).

#### **5.4.1.2 The current quality assurance procedure**

The 2011 document entitled “National Accreditation Board, Ghana: Roadmap to Accreditation” (Annexure 3) outlines the NAB’s QA mechanisms. In other words, the Roadmap to Accreditation outlines steps that everyone must follow to establish a higher education institution and for accreditation and re-accreditation of both its programmes and the institution itself. PUC’s are subjected to further requirements over and above the general requirements for universities.

The National Accreditation Board, Ghana: Roadmap to Accreditation has five parts namely (see Annexure 3):

1. Requirements for accreditation.
2. Requirements for institutional registration.
3. Requirements for institutional re-accreditation.
4. Requirements for programme re-accreditation.
5. Procedure for granting presidential charter.

For purposes of accreditation, the NAB focuses on academic courses, resources and facilities. Indicators include curriculum structure, staffing, student-staff ratio and library facilities. All departments are required to have a minimum of three full-time staff per programme, one of whom should at the very least be at senior lecturer level who will be the head of department (Annexure 4). The NAB also has set standards regarding physical facilities (National Accreditation Board, 2014: 20). A panel of accreditors made up of academics and professionals carry out the assessment and subsequently write a report. The assessment report indicates deficiencies and gives suggestions for addressing the deficiencies before the next cycle of accreditation which is usually between three to five years (Dattey *et al.*, 2017: 218). Because accreditation and re-accreditation is a process,



evaluators are required to indicate whether previous recommendations were implemented or not (Dattey *et al.*, 2017: 214).

#### **5.4.2 The National Council for Tertiary Education**

The National Council for Tertiary Education was established through the National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993. As a supervisory and regulatory body, the NCTE is responsible for formulating policies, monitoring policy implementation, recommending national norms and standards, and advising the Minister of Education on matters that relate to tertiary education. As part of its role, the NCTE is required to publish and disseminate information on tertiary education institutions in Ghana. In line with the information dissemination responsibility, the NCTE has a documentation centre that collects, organises and stores information on tertiary education in Ghana. The information gathered by the NCTE comes from lectures and seminars that have been published as journals, technical report series, books and manuals (Technical Report Series, 1998: xii).

The NCTE is located in Accra and has no offices in the regional or district capitals. Being a policy formulation and monitoring institution, the NCTE activities cover all public universities, other experts who work for the NCTE, PUC's and private universities that are located in all the sixteen regions of Ghana.

The institution's vision is "Leading Tertiary Education to New Heights" (the National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993). Its mission goes as follows: "The NCTE is devoted to providing leadership in the direction, function, role and relevance of tertiary education in Ghana" (National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993).

The norms and standards regarding the operations of tertiary education institutions in Ghana were developed based on the White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991 that was issued in line with the URC's recommendations for the reform of the tertiary education system of Ghana. Drawing on the recommendations, the NCTE developed norms and standards for monitoring and regulating the practices of tertiary education institutions in Ghana (National Council for

Tertiary Education, 2012: 1). Factors such as student-academic staff ratio, academic staff pyramid that indicates the number of professors, associate professors, senior lecturers, and lecturers, staff for administrative services in the teaching departments and technical staff for all support services, and financial norms are all covered under the “National Council for Tertiary Education, Norms for Tertiary Education” (see Annexure 4).

It would appear, then, that the standards and norms that are required to ensure quality education within Ghana’s PUC’s are in place. This research is concerned with establishing the extent to which the mechanisms for implementing, monitoring and ensuring set QA standards are observed.

## **5.5 CONCLUSION**

A review of the profiles of the institutions studied has revealed that most of the PUC’s are owned by churches. This has influenced their governance and management structures. For instance, the PUC’s are headed by either a Reverend Minister or members of the founding churches. Similarly, the PUC’s governing councils are also dominated by members of the churches that have established them.

The PUC’s also run similar courses, with business administration being a programme run by all of the PUC’s that participated in this research project. Each of the PUC’s also has a QA unit. The mentoring PSU’s unlike the PUC’s have different governance structures as well as clearly spelt out affiliation requirements and QA units. The regulatory institutions also have clearly outlined procedures and guidelines on accreditation, norms and standards that should guide the operations of the PUC’s.

Chapter 5 has provided background information on all the institutions that participated in this study. In the next chapter, the methodology, design and methods adopted to carry out this research are presented.

## **CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, DESIGN AND METHOD**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter sketched a profile of the regulatory institutions (the National Accreditation Board and the National Council for Tertiary Education), and the selected mentoring PSU's (University of Ghana and the University of Cape Coast). The profiles of the other institutions provided are those of the selected PUC's (Methodist University College Ghana, Pentecost University College, DataLink University College, Islamic University College, Wisconsin International University College, and Knutsford University College). More particularly, Chapter 5 reported on the vision, mission, governance structure, sources of funding, faculties and programmes, affiliations and collaborations, student population, staffing as well as details regarding their QA units. In addition, the overview of this profile provided the contextual background of the institutions. This enabled the researcher to identify the input factors that could influence their operations and their QA mechanisms.

In Chapter 6, the author changes from the theoretical facets to the methodological aspects by deliberating on the research plan for conducting the qualitative research. The specific objective of this chapter therefore is to outline the research methodology, design and method used to investigate the research problem. This chapter builds on the preceding chapters, which presented the research theme (see Chapter 1), literature review (see Chapter 2) and the theoretical frameworks (see Chapter 3), the historical context and legal framework on the establishment of PUC's and the tertiary education regulatory institutions (see Chapter 4) as well as the milieu, setting and context of PUC's of Ghana (see Chapter 5). The current chapter therefore supplements the previous chapters as it provides further details on the research methodology.

This chapter is presented in five sections. The first section starts with a presentation of the research methodology. In particular, in the first part, the discussion refers to the research approach, interpretive frameworks and the philosophical assumptions. In the second section, the concept of research design and the different research designs –

quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods – are elucidated. In the third section, the researcher explicates the research methods adopted. Specifically, the research setting and unit of analysis, data collection instruments, population and sampling as well as data collection procedures that were used, are explained. The researcher also describes the procedures followed to conduct semi-structured personal interviews, data processing and analysis. Thereafter, in the fourth section, the measures adopted to ensure the trustworthiness of the research findings and the ethical principles that were adhered to for safeguarding the rights of participants are presented. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the measures adopted for the storage and destruction of data when no longer needed. Based on the outline of this chapter, the components that characterise the research methodology are clarified in section 6.2 below.

## **6.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The role of methodology in social science research cannot be underestimated, as it is a stage in the research process that enables the researcher to indicate the research approach (including purpose), the interpretive framework and philosophical assumptions. The term ‘methodology’ in research refers to “... the strategy, a plan of action, process, and design behind the choice and use of a particular research method” (Crotty, 1998: 3). Stated differently, ‘research methodology’ refers to the framework that indicates the different methods, techniques and procedures followed to implement a research design, to regulate research to make it meaningful to others as well as to allow for the research to be assessed, repeated and adapted to other settings (Brynard & Hanekom, 1997: 28; Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 104; Schensul, 2012: 70). Birks and Mills (2015: 4) succinctly define research methodology as the principles and thoughts that inform the design of research. Research methodology is thus a very important component of every research project. The different research methodology practices that were employed in this investigation are considered below.

### **6.2.1 Research approach**

There are three approaches a researcher can follow to do a research project. Obviously, the choice of a specific approach depends on the research problem, the nature of the

research questions, and the methods of data collection. The three research approaches could be classified as follows: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (Neuman, 2006: 33; Bhattacharjee, 2012: 9; Saunders *et al.*, 2016: 139 – 141; Leavy, 2017: 20). De Vos *et al.* (2005: 106) referred to additional approaches, namely correlation, evaluation, and participation action research that could also be used to investigate a phenomenon. Despite the varied approaches indicated by these two groups, this project was guided by the three general approaches, namely exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. According to Blaikie (2007: 7 – 8), all three approaches can be combined in one research project where the research starts as an exploratory investigation followed by a descriptive and finally an explanatory approach. The next section reflects on each one of these approaches to justify its applicability to this research.

#### **6.2.1.1 Exploratory research**

According to Leavy (2017: 20) exploratory research is an approach used for the investigation of a new social phenomenon. The aim of exploratory research is to:

- Provide the necessary information on the topic under review.
- Gain insight into the particular phenomenon.
- Satisfy the inquisitiveness of the researcher.
- Gain a better understanding of the research theme under investigation (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000: 41; Polit *et al.*, 2001: 19; Creswell, 2009: 26; 2013: 61; Babbie, 2010: 92 – 93; Bhattacharjee, 2012: 9; Leavy, 2017: 21).

As exemplified in Chapter 1, at the first stage of the research project, the research problem was identified and justified (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1). At the same time, a number of research questions (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2) were formulated in order to guide the investigation. Following from that, the existing literature was examined (see Chapter 2) in order to determine the possible research gaps. Simultaneously, the researcher consulted potential analytical frameworks in the literature that could be relevant in addressing the research problem and questions. Accordingly, exploratory research is best described as the preliminary or the first stage of a study because its aim is to investigate new experiences, incidents and trends with limited literature (Bhattacharjee, 2012: 9; Leavy,

2017: 20). Usually, the relevant phenomena are new or under-studied (Creswell, 2009: 26). Since an exploratory research is the first and preliminary stage in social sciences research, exploratory studies are flexible, adaptable to change and less structured (Saunders *et al.*, 2007: 134). Despite the fact that exploratory research is important in its own right, Marlow (2005: 334) and Babbie (2013: 90) indicated that exploratory research generates initial ideas about an issue for the development of questions that could form the basis for further extensive research that adopts the descriptive and explanatory approaches. As a result of these characteristics, Khan (2014: 300) indicated that exploratory studies rarely use large sample sizes, and they do not adopt probability sampling techniques and structured questionnaires for data collection. Accordingly, the appropriate methods of gathering data for exploratory studies include interviews, focus group discussion and literature review (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005: 96; Saunders *et al.*, 2007: 133), document analysis (Creswell, 2009: 182) and case study (Saunders *et al.*, 2007: 139). In this research project, semi-structured personal interviews, a document analysis and a literature review were the data-gathering techniques used in line with the requirements of exploratory studies.

The aim of this research was to investigate the existing QA mechanisms adopted by the tertiary education regulatory institutions and the mentoring PSU's for ensuring quality standards of education at the PUC's in Ghana. An attempt was also made to demonstrate how these mechanisms could be strengthened, developed and maintained. The linkage between the three institutions in ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana is illustrated in the conceptual framework for this research project (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3). At the end of the investigation, a framework for addressing the challenges identified is proposed (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.8). Being an exploratory study, the proposed model could be tested subsequently in future research using descriptive and explanatory approaches.

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000: 41) and Neuman (2006: 33) indicated that exploratory research is normally conducted when very little information exists on the problem being investigated. In line with the assertions of Bless and Higson-Smith (2000: 41) and Neuman

(2006: 33), and as indicated in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1, a gap appears to exist in the literature on QA mechanisms in the PUC's in Ghana. Thus, within the Ghanaian context and at the level of the African continent, there appears to be paucity of literature on QA in PUC's (Varghese, 2006: 5; Utuka, 2011: 141). In a survey of the literature from research reports by sources such as Utuka (2011: 141), the World Bank, academic journals and dissertations, all point to the scarcity of literature on QA mechanisms in the PUC's in Africa. Accordingly, this research fills a gap by providing literature that attempts to assist in the understanding of the unknown and un-explored phenomenon of QA in PUC's in Ghana. The few publications that have addressed issues related to QA in Ghana are Utuka (2012) and Tsevi (2014) whose studies appear to be limited in scope and methodology (see Chapter 1, Section 1.2). The literature that related to PUC's and QA focused on the PUC's alone or the regulatory institutions alone. As a result, the studies that have been carried out to date appear not to have covered and examined the QA mechanisms of the NAB, NCTE and the mentoring PSU's in relation to PUC's in Ghana. Since this research project sampled participants from the major stakeholders in the arena of QA in higher education – the NAB, the NCTE, the mentoring PSU's and the PUC's – this research can be deemed to be broader in scope than earlier researches and as such addressed the shortcomings of those studies. Additionally, the broad research questions (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2), and open-ended semi-structured questions (see Annexure 9) provided flexibility, and portrays this investigation as largely exploratory in nature. This approach also enabled the researcher to explore participants' experiences in QA in the PUC's in Ghana in a much broader sense. The data collection methods that were deemed appropriate and used for data collection in this research were semi-structured personal interviews, a document analysis and a literature review. Consequently, the rationale for the use of an exploratory research approach in this project seemed suitable since the research outcomes could add to the limited literature available on QA in the PUC's in Ghana. In addition, this approach could also contribute to gaining new insights about transformative research methodologies and methods in the field.

The reason for the paucity of literature on QA on PUC's in Ghana in particular, and Africa as a whole, is that the concept is a relatively new phenomenon within the Ghanaian and

African context. Whereas countries such as the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Australia have a relatively long history on PUC's and QA mechanisms, that of Africa is a recent development (Teferra & Altbach, 2004: 22). Materu (2007: 72) also noted that out of the 52 African countries, only a few, such as South Africa and Ghana, have QA institutions. Furthermore, a research report by Materu and Righetti (2010: 3) indicated that "... a structured national-level QA process in African higher education is a recent phenomenon with most of them faced with capacity limitations." In addition they noted that, "... only one-third of higher education institutions in sub-Saharan Africa have structured national QA mechanisms." This could affect the availability of literature on the QA mechanisms of higher education institutions in Africa and therefore the appropriateness of the exploratory approach in addressing the shortcomings outlined above.

Despite the fact that the objectives of research could be to explore, explain or describe a phenomenon, the choice of a particular approach is largely informed by the philosophical assumptions of the research project and the research paradigm (Creswell, 2013: 15). The four philosophical assumptions that were relevant to this research are ontological, epistemological, axiological and methodological (see Section 6.2.3). Therefore, the exploratory approach was deemed appropriate for this research because it is supported by the interpretive framework and research design chosen for this research project. The interpretive frameworks of this project are post-positivism (constructivism) (see Section, 6.2.2.1) and pragmatism (see Section 6.2.2.2) and the research design was qualitative (see Section 6.3.3). Accordingly, based on the constructivist school of thought, this research project adopted qualitative and interpretive approaches to explore the existing mechanisms for QA in the PUC's in Ghana. Being social justice research, specifically, this research project explored the processes, practices, systems, structures and ultimately the experiences of participants in relation to mechanisms for QA in the PUC's in Ghana. Overall, and in line with the interpretive framework, the philosophical assumptions and research paradigm, this investigation was largely exploratory.



Furthermore, researchers, such as Bachman and Schutt (2011: 43), pointed out that exploratory research provides the foundation for data and information on social issues, for example public sector service delivery and governance. Since the focus of this research project was on QA mechanisms in higher education, the choice of the exploratory approach perfectly fitted into this area of specialty. The provision of higher education in Ghana used to be a service delivered by only the public sector of Ghana (Lugg, Morley & Leach, 2007: 18; Republic of Ghana, 2006a: 12). Consequently, research results collected in this way could provide foundational information on a key public service, such as higher education, which is now being delivered by the private sector also.

#### **6.2.1.2 Explanatory research**

According to Leavy (2017: 21), the term ‘explanatory research’ refers to research undertaken to establish the cause-and-effect relationship. As such, explanatory research is undertaken when a researcher wants to explain and provide evidence of causal relationships under specific circumstances, establish correlations, and explain why things are the way they are in relation to a phenomenon being studied (Babbie, 2000: 84 – 86; Neuman, 2006: 35; Leavy, 2017: 21). Some authors have also referred to explanatory research as ‘analytical research’ as they see it as a research approach that establishes a causal link between variables in a research problem (Saunders *et al.*, 2007: 356). Stated differently, Leavy (2017: 21) indicated that, in studies that seek to find factors that determine people’s attitudes towards certain issues, the explanatory approach is appropriate in order to establish the causal relationship between factors or to establish the correlation between factors. As such, explanatory research is commonly used for quantitative research to establish correlation, association and the causal relationship between variables (Saunders *et al.*, 2007: 134). Furthermore, Strydom (2013: 155) stated that explanatory research is deductive, and therefore appropriate for quantitative research. Unlike exploratory research, explanatory research is structured.

Explanatory research is also noted for answering ‘why’ questions and aims to provide conclusions on issues about which adequate information is already available (Glicken, 2003: 267). Consequently, based on the focus of this research which appears to have

limited information on PUC's and QA mechanisms, the study was largely exploratory and did not lend itself substantially as explanatory research. Additionally, based on the qualitative data collection instruments used (semi-structured personal interviews and a document analysis) this research project was not conducted as explanatory research.

### **6.2.1.3 Descriptive research**

In instances that require the researcher to describe groups, individuals, events or situations, descriptive research is more appropriate (Leavy, 2017: 20). Descriptive research is therefore considered an extension of explanatory research (Saunders *et al.*, 2007: 134). Descriptive research deals with numerical data that are analysed and presented in forms that show ranges, frequencies and percentages (Collis & Hussey, 2003: 44). Consequently, a descriptive research approach is adopted for quantitative research to generate data that seeks to provide answers to the what, where, how and when questions on a phenomenon being investigated (Bhattacharjee, 2012: 9; Leavy, 2017: 20). However, descriptive research can also be used for qualitative research where a researcher uses, for example, observation for the phenomenon being studied. Although there is debate about whether descriptive research is applicable at quantitative level only, Babbie (2010: 80 – 81) is of the view that both quantitative and qualitative data can be gathered for descriptive purposes.

The common method used to conduct descriptive research is the survey (Neuman, 2006: 36). Additionally, in descriptive research, information already exists, and any research conducted is to generate additional information. Since the current research did not satisfy any of the above-mentioned characteristics of descriptive research, this project did not adopt the descriptive approach and therefore had no descriptive purposes.

In line with the focus of this project; which is largely exploratory because of dearth of existing information on the area of study, this research provides preliminary information on the experiences of participants regarding mechanisms for QA in PUC's in Ghana. This research could therefore be a starting point for future studies that could adopt explanatory and descriptive approaches. Research approaches are typically rooted within

broader interpretive frameworks. In order to specify the interpretive frameworks from which this research was approached these frameworks are elucidated below.

### **6.2.2 Interpretive framework**

Guba (1990: 17) defined interpretive frameworks as a "... set of beliefs that guide social action". According to Creswell (2013: 301), interpretive frameworks in the social sciences are generally categorised as social sciences theories and social justice theories. Social sciences theories, such as leadership theories, shape how the researcher views the problem and interprets data while social justice theories or advocacy and participatory research aim at resolving particular problems or call for a change within the context of a specific issue (Creswell, 2013: 23). The current research project explored the experiences of participants in relation to mechanisms for QA in PUC's in Ghana and a framework (see Chapter 7, Section 7.9) was compiled that could address some of the shortcomings within the existing mechanisms. The research further proposes changes that could contribute to address the problems identified and associated with QA in the PUC's in Ghana. Furthermore, Keane (2014: 2) indicated that any research that adopts the constructivist grounded approach of Charmaz (2006) for the collection and analysis of data – as was the case in this research project – is likely to be viewed as social justice-oriented research. On account of the fact that this research project adopted a constructivist approach and proposed a framework that could bring about a change in the private higher education sector, this investigation can be seen as a social justice-oriented research.

The reviewed literature indicated the different classifications of research paradigms or worldviews that guide social science research. Some researchers make a distinction between two worldviews; others differentiate between three, while some even identify and differentiate between more than three. For example, Leavy (2017: 25) classified the worldviews as post-positivism, interpretive or constructivist, critical, transformative, pragmatic and art-based or aesthetic. To Denzin and Lincoln (2011: 12), the different interpretive frameworks in qualitative research are post-positivism, social constructivism, transformative, postmodern perspective, pragmatism, feminist theories, critical race theory, queer theory, and disability theory. Another writer, Creswell (2009: 6) argued that

one can classify these worldviews of research paradigms as post-positivism, constructivism, advocacy or participatory and pragmatism. As a result of these varied classifications, Creswell (2013: 23) indicated that the lists reflected in frameworks are indeed diverse and continue to increase. The reviewed literature also shows that studies could be conducted using a combination of these different paradigms. The philosophical paradigms of post-positivism and pragmatism were used in this research project, and the researcher indicates in the sections below how they were applied to address the research problem.

#### **6.2.2.1 Post-positivism**

Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 13) indicated that positivism and post-positivism, constructivism-interpretivism, critical and feminist post-structuralism are the four major interpretive paradigms that structure qualitative research. However, the two paradigms that are dominant in social sciences are positivism and post-positivism. According to Creswell (2009: 7), the term 'post-positivism' is used to denote the worldview that emerged after positivism. Bhattacharjee (2012: 20) posited that post-positivism is based on the research philosophy that a scientific study should not be limited to empirical observations and measurements but should include reasonable inferences, including human thoughts and emotions about the phenomenon being studied. Under the umbrella of post-positivism, this research project adopted the constructivist paradigm as its major research strategy. The philosophical paradigm of constructivism is an approach suitable for qualitative research (Creswell, 2009: 8) and, as such suitable, for this investigation, which was largely a qualitative inquiry.

Whereas positivists believe in the strict cause-and-effect relationship in research, seek for an objective truth, and hold the belief of being able to predict what will happen given a set of specific circumstances, post-positivists believe that any cause and effect is a probability that may happen or may not happen (Creswell, 2013: 24). The post-positivist paradigm, when used in qualitative research, encapsulates a field of enquiry in which the researcher is located within the world being researched (Creswell, 2013: 49). In this regard, being an 'insider', the researcher and the participants co-construct knowledge when research is

carried out in a natural setting to develop a theory or framework that is grounded in the available data and information (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018: 738). The methods used in post-positivist inquiries are interviews, field notes and recordings from which the researcher gets a better understanding of the phenomenon being researched (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 3). As such, post-positivists believe that through well-structured, logical and detailed qualitative data collection and analysis procedures, multiple realities could be derived from the different perspectives of participants rather than from a single reality (Creswell, 2013: 24; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018: 53; Charmaz, 2021: 158). Post-positivists therefore challenge the existence of an absolute truth when studying human behaviour (Creswell, 2009: 6).

As indicated above, constructivism falls under the umbrella of post-positivism. Accordingly, constructivism as a research paradigm rejects the view that there is an objective truth that can be discovered but rather says truth is constructed when one engages with the realities of the world (Mills *et al.*, 2006: 26). Truth about the same phenomenon therefore varies from one individual to another based on how every individual constructs meaning of a phenomenon. As a result, in the constructivist paradigm, there could be multiple realities that are socially constructed depending on each participant's meaning of his or her experiences (Morgan & Sklar, 2012: 77; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018: 53). These subjective meanings that participants form are rooted within the social, cultural and historical contexts within which participants live. Consequently, when conducting research within the constructivist paradigm, the researcher does not start with a theory but rather inductively develops a theory that is grounded in the data gathered (Crotty, 1998: 8; Creswell, 2009: 8; 2014: 8). In constructivism, the researcher's own background, culture and experiences also influence the interpretation of data, and this must be acknowledged. Babbie and Mouton (2001: 271) indicated that the 'insider-researcher' also referred to as the 'emic' perspective (Creswell, 2013: 92) is used by qualitative researchers in order to be able to understand and describe the experiences, feelings and behaviours from the perspective of participants and not from that of the researcher. In the current research project, the experiences, beliefs, behaviours and understanding of the participants are provided. The issues addressed relate to the

practices, processes and procedures used by the regulatory institutions and selected mentoring PSU's for QA in the PUC's in Ghana. Thus, from amongst the interpretive frameworks in social sciences, constructivism as one of the paradigms under the umbrella of post-positivism was viewed as the best paradigm for this research project. Therefore, the constructivist approach facilitated the understanding of participants' experiences in relation to the mechanisms for QA in the PUC's in Ghana.

Creswell (2014: 8) made the following assumptions about constructivism:

- In constructivist qualitative research, the questions asked are open-ended so that participants have the opportunity to share their views.
- People make meanings of the world they live in based on their experiences and social perspectives from which the researcher gathers information and interprets it.
- The research process in constructivist qualitative studies is inductive because meaning is drawn based on the data collected.

In line with the assumptions on constructivism by Creswell (2014: 8) in this research project, the researcher used open-ended questions during the semi-structured personal interviews (see Annexure 9). This approach allowed participants to share the meaning of their experiences about the mechanisms used to ensure quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. Accordingly, the findings in this research were co-constructed based on the data generated through the interaction of the researcher and participants. Babbie and Mouton (2001: 282) also noted that the findings of qualitative research are dependent on the context, place, time and participants. Thus, the conclusions drawn are probabilistic and dependent on the contingencies within which the research is carried out. Consequently, in this research project, in order to be able to corroborate the data, multiple research methods (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4) were used, which enabled the researcher to obtain different perspectives on the research problem.

### 6.2.2.2 Pragmatism

According to Saunders *et al.* (2007: 607), pragmatism as a philosophical tradition refers to a perspective that thinks of and deals with problems in a practical way instead of relying on theories and principles. As is stated by Leavy (2017: 26) pragmatists consider theories as relevant only if they contribute to address a specific research problem. Pragmatists are not restrictive when it comes to how knowledge is created, and therefore accept the fact that multiple realities exist within a group of people. The reason is that individuals' realities are based on both subjective and objective information and as such, pragmatists accept the perspective of multiple realities when dealing with people. Pragmatists further argue that researchers should focus on how to answer research questions and what works, rather than on the methods (Saunders *et al.*, 2007: 110; Creswell, 2013: 299). As such, a researcher could adopt multiple methods to collect data for purposes of answering the research questions and in addressing the research problem. Consequently, studies conducted within the pragmatist domain are not committed to any one system of philosophy about reality (Creswell, 2013: 28; Leavy, 2017: 138). As in the case of constructivism, pragmatism allows the 'insider-researcher' to include a discussion of personal views that are relevant to the research. This view is reaffirmed by Creswell (2013: 37) who regards the ontological belief of pragmatists as follows: "... reality is what is useful, what is practical and what works". Its epistemology is that "... reality is known through using many tools of research that reflect both deductive (objective) evidence and inductive (subjective) evidence". The axiological belief is "... values are discussed because of the way that knowledge reflects both the researchers' and the participants' views."

As a qualitative research project that adopted the pragmatist perspective, this study explored and investigated the practices, processes and procedures followed by the regulatory institutions and the mentoring PSU's to ensure quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. Pragmatism is a solution-oriented paradigm, and the practical solutions suggested by the participants during the interview sessions contributed to the development of a framework (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.8) that was proposed at the end of

this research. It is believed this framework could bring about a change in existing mechanisms for QA in the PUC's in Ghana.

Consequently, in addition to constructivism, the paradigmatic philosophy of pragmatism was deemed an appropriate interpretive framework because it contributed to answer research objective 7 of this inquiry. Research objective 7 was to develop and attempt to demonstrate the applicability of an education QA framework and interventions that could contribute to ensure, develop and maintain quality tertiary education standards at PUC's in Ghana (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). The pragmatic paradigm was also deemed appropriate for this investigation because it facilitated the use of multiple methods to gather data that were relevant in answering the research questions and in addressing the research problem. The experiences of the participants – which were expressed as their reality of the phenomenon studied together with the knowledge of the researcher, who is a lecturer at one of the PUC's in Ghana – contributed to an understanding of the phenomenon being studied, interpretation of data collected, and the suggestions for the way forward on how mechanisms for QA in the PUC's could be improved.

Creswell (2013: 15) is of the view that in the social sciences, the way a social phenomenon is viewed and studied is influenced by different philosophical assumptions. The different philosophical assumptions are elucidated under sections 6.2.3.1 – 6.2.3.4.

### **6.2.3 Philosophical assumptions**

As explained by Creswell (2013: 19) the reviewed literature indicates that views about the world have been enunciated by researchers using different names such as paradigms, philosophical assumptions, epistemologies, ontologies, research methodologies and alternative knowledge claims. Generally, however, the four philosophical assumptions in qualitative research are the perspectives of ontology, epistemology, axiology, and methodological practices (Creswell, 2013: 20). These philosophical assumptions are interrelated. Although the philosophical assumption that a research project adopts may not always be stated explicitly, the interpretive framework adopted in a research indicates which philosophical assumption underlies a study and how it is applied (Creswell, 2013:



35). A research philosophy thus forms the philosophical substructure that influences how a research is conducted: from topic selection to dissemination of the knowledge generated (Leavy, 2017: 25). For this research project, the interpretive frameworks adopted were post-positivism (constructivism) and pragmatism (see Chapter 6, Sections 6.2.2.1 & 6.2.2.2). The nature of the problem studied (mechanisms for QA in PUC's in Ghana), and the emergent research questions (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2) influenced how the philosophical assumptions were applied.

All four philosophical assumptions could exist within one interpretive framework as is the case in this research. However, the differences between them are based on the different fields explored and how they are applied. The next section is concerned with a discussion of the philosophical assumptions.

### **6.2.3.1 Ontology**

Ontology is a philosophical belief system about the nature of the social world and its characteristics (Ponterotto, 2005: 126; Creswell, 2013: 20; Leavy, 2017: 25). Ontological assumptions are concerned about what constitutes reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005: 12; Scotland, 2012: 9; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018: 52). A researcher's ontological belief system about the social world influences what he or she could learn about the nature of the social world and how it is learnt (Leavy, 2017: 25). The two ontological positions are the objective or realist and subjective or relativist ontology (Saunders *et al.*, 2007: 108). The realists believe there is an objective truth and it is independent of the context and can be measured objectively (Saunders *et al.*, 2007: 108). Realism is therefore an ontological perspective within a quantitative research design and the positivist research paradigm. Whereas positivists are of the view that there is one objective reality that can be identified, post-positivist interpretivists and qualitative researchers embrace the idea of multiple realities and are thus committed to report the multiple realities from the perspective of the individuals in the form of themes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005: 13; Creswell, 2013: 21). Relativists also believe that reality cannot exist without context and that reality is influenced by people's social interactions and experiences making reality subjective and based on the perception of individuals (Khan, 2014: 300). Relativism is therefore an

ontological perspective within the qualitative constructivists' paradigm. Each ontological position requires the right methodology, design and method in order to report what each participant's reality is.

In qualitative research, such as this project, the researcher adopted the subjective or interpretive approach to the study of a social reality. The subjective stance is based on the assumption that social reality is influenced by the experiences of participants and the context within which the social reality is experienced (Creswell, 2012: 19). The current research project pertained to the mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. Accordingly, the researcher used the qualitative research design. Specifically, semi-structured personal interviews were conducted to investigate the research problem in the social setting and real-life context of participants. This approach allowed for the expression of the multiple realities in line with the relativist ontological position of this research project. As a result of the varied experiences and multiple perceptions of the participants, the researcher was faced with complex and varied realities of participants that had to be analysed, interpreted and presented in a manner that would reflect the realities of all the participants. As argued by Mills *et al.* (2006: 26) the constructivism research paradigm denies the existence of objective reality and this is supported by the ontological position of this thesis. Based on the philosophical orientation for this investigation, knowledge was co-constructed or co-created through the interaction of the researcher and participants. Consequently, the multiple realities of the participants are reported in this thesis in the form of themes (see Chapter 7, Section 7.6). In addition to semi-structured personal interviews, the researcher also analysed relevant documents and reviewed literature to corroborate data gathered through the semi-structured personal interviews. This approach helped to address the research problem in line with the paradigmatic position of constructivism of this research.

### **6.2.3.2 Epistemology**

Epistemology means a study of the nature and scope of knowledge and the relationship between the participant and the researcher (Dawson, 2002: 18; Creswell, 2007: 17). Stated simply, the term 'epistemology' refers to how we know what we know (Crotty, 1998:

8; Creswell, 2009: 21), what constitutes valid knowledge, and the best approach to adopt to obtain and share it (Khan, 2014: 300). Epistemology provides the philosophical grounding in order to determine how and what kind of knowledge is possible, and measures to be taken to ensure that the knowledge provided is adequate and legitimate (Maynard, 1994: 10, cited in Crotty, 1998: 8). The implication is that the researcher must spend time in the field with participants to become an 'insider-researcher' and must rely on quotes from the participants as evidence (Creswell, 2013: 21). Since the term 'ontology' refers to one's view about the nature of reality, a researcher's ontology determines his or her objectivity in the relationship between him or her, and what is to be known; thus, the link between ontology and epistemology. The interpretive framework used by a researcher also influences the form that the different philosophical assumptions take (Creswell, 2013: 35). Any research conducted in the epistemological dimension is for purposes of generating valid knowledge or truth. Thus, the researcher can adopt an objective and/or subjective approach to obtain the knowledge (Bhattacharjee, 2012: 20).

In line with the epistemological position in a qualitative research project such as this one, the researcher used semi-structured personal interviews for data collection. This approach enabled the researcher to establish a close relationship with the participants from the selected mentoring PSU's, the regulatory institutions and the PUC's for the investigation of the research problem. This research project was therefore approached from the interpretivist perspective because the research comprised an exploratory investigation that involved an examination of social constructs. The epistemic imperative aided the researcher to understand the world lived in by the participants and their experiences in relation to the mechanisms used to ensure quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. The primary data gathered about mechanisms for QA in PUC's in Ghana were therefore the result of the interaction between the participants and the researcher.

### **6.2.3.3 Axiology**

Axiology as a philosophical assumption explores the nature, role and place of values, ethics, moral and value judgment in the research process (Ponterotto, 2005: 131;

Mertens, 2012: 22). A researcher could adopt any of the three axiological perspectives: ethical realism, ethical relativism or value neutrality. Ethical realists are of the view that certain issues are considered either true or false, and do not vary as a result of anyone's opinion, preferences, beliefs or characteristics of the individual or society. Consequently, there are right answers in ethical issues, which reflect objectivist ontology. On the contrary, ethical relativists state that there are non-objective ethical facts and that the truth about ethical and moral judgment depends on individual or cultural settings, which reflect subjectivist ontology. Value neutrality, on the other hand, is the middle ground between ethical realism and ethical relativism. It helps keep our emotions in check (Sheehan & Johnson, 2012: 15). Positivists are of the view that values do not play any role in research but, as noted by Ponterotto (2005: 131), in research, values influence even the topic we choose to study. The assertion of the influence of the researcher's values on the research process resonates with post-positivists (constructivists) who believe that because of the close interaction between the researcher and participants such as during interviews, values cannot be isolated from the research process (Saunders *et al.*, 2007: 111). Hence, the researcher should acknowledge and keep in check his or her values and not ignore its influence. Consequently, in a qualitative inquiry such as this research project, which adopted the constructivist interpretive framework for analysing the experiences of participants in relation to the practices, processes and procedures for ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana, are not value-free. Although the researcher used semi-structured personal interviews for data collection, which created a close interaction between the researcher and the participants, adopting the axiological perspective of value neutrality in this research helped to keep the researcher's emotions in check. This research project was therefore aligned towards an axiological perspective of value neutrality, which is a middle ground between ethical realism and ethical relativism.

#### **6.2.3.4 Methodological practices**

The term 'methodological practices' in research refers to the action plan, processes and procedures that inform the methods used by a researcher (Saunders *et al.*, 2007: 602). The methodological practice links the chosen methods to the desired outcomes of a

research (Ponterotto, 2005: 132; Scotland, 2012: 9). This implies that methodological practices indicate the philosophy behind how knowledge is discovered and analysed.

Qualitative researchers do not prefer any methodological practice to another and do not have any specific theory or paradigm that is uniquely its own (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000: 6). Therefore, the methodological practices adopted for this research project were based on the researcher's ontological and epistemological beliefs (see Chapter 6, Sections 6.2.3.2 & 6.2.3.3). According to Creswell (2013: 22), in qualitative research, the procedure for data collection must be inductive, emergent and influenced by the researcher's experience in data gathering. Whereas positivists adopt methods and procedures of inquiry that control the variables in research and consider the researcher's influence as not relevant, constructivists acknowledge the influence of the researcher in the research process. This view of the constructivists is because of the interdependent and close collaboration between the researcher and the participants in the knowledge discovery process. In this research project, the methodological perspective adopted was the grounded theory method, which allowed for inductive methods of collecting and analysing qualitative data to arrive at an outcome that is 'grounded' in the data. Accordingly, data were collected from the participants on their experiences regarding the mechanisms for QA in the PUC's in Ghana. The researcher's work experience as a lecturer at one of the PUC's provided some knowledge about the work of the regulatory institutions and the selected mentoring PSU's, which made it easier for the researcher to select 'information-rich' participants and thus the influence of the researcher in the process of data collection.

The different paradigms that are compatible with the researcher's viewpoint about the nature of reality as explained in Chapter 6, Sections 6.2.1 and 6.2.2 served as the basis for determining the appropriate research design for this investigation. In the next section, the different types of research designs are explained with a focus on and a detailed discussion of the most appropriate design for this research project.

### 6.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is the plan of action, structure and strategy of inquiry of how to conduct research, gather the relevant data needed to answer the research questions, and to achieve the aim and objectives of a study (Mouton. 2001: 55; Babbie & Mouton, 2006: 74; Bhattacharjee, 2012: 23; Creswell, 2013: 49; Van Zyl, 2014: 397). In all research projects, the type of research design chosen is important because it partly influences the method that will be suitable for data collection and analysis. The relevance of a research design is emphasised by Mouton (1996: 33) and Babbie (2001: 91) who explained the research design as a plan and structure that help to determine what, how and why data should be collected. Blumberg, Cooper and Schinder (2008: 195) indicated that the 'plan' of research refers to the whole programme that has been outlined for the research, and they explained the 'structure' of research to mean the framework of the research. In this investigation, the research design was viewed as the plan and strategies used to investigate the existing QA mechanisms in place to ensure quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. The choice of the research design for this project was influenced by the research problem (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1), the aim of the research (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.1) and the research questions (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2). As such, to be able to address the research problem and achieve the aim and objectives, it is important to choose an appropriate research design, which in turn determines the methods of data collection adopted.

In order to choose an appropriate research design, Creswell (2003: 5 – 6) proposed the following three key questions a researcher should take into consideration, namely which:

- Knowledge claims are being made by the researcher?
- Strategies of inquiry will inform the procedures?
- Methods of data analysis will be used?

Creswell's three key questions above were considered in the choice of a research design for this project.

The literature is very clear on the types of research designs that can be used. In this regard, Williams (2007: 65) and Creswell (2009: 11; 2014: 2) are of the view that the three basic research designs are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. The qualitative design was adopted for this research, and is explained in detail in Section 6.3.3 below. However, the other two research designs are also explained first indicating why they were not adopted for this project.

### **6.3.1 Quantitative research design**

The term 'quantitative research design' refers to research designed to collect numerical data in the form of scores or metrics for purposes of assigning numbers or statistics (Brynard & Hanekom, 1997: 29; Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 6). The quantitative research design is widely used in social sciences research for measuring variables, testing theories and examining relationships between variables (Creswell, 2009: 4; Leavy, 2017: 23). In this research project, the quantitative research design was not employed because it did not fit the research problem and the philosophical assumptions.

The experiences and behaviours of participants in relation to QA were best addressed using a qualitative research design. Additionally, being an initial investigation of a phenomenon of QA in PUC's in Ghana, on which there appears to be limited literature, the best approach was exploratory and therefore a quantitative research design would not have been suitable.

### **6.3.2 Mixed methods research design**

A mixed method research design involves the collection and analyses of data using both the qualitative and quantitative approaches (Creswell, 2009: 4; Leavy, 2017: 24). This investigation adopted only the qualitative research design and therefore the mixed method research design was not employed. Although researchers, such as Leavy (2017: 138), indicated that using mixed methods helps to address the limitations associated with the individual research designs, other researchers, such as Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2012), argued that quantitative and qualitative data do not bond into a single data set but remain two separate sets. Consequently, for this study, which explored the experiences of

participants in relation to mechanisms of QA in PUC's in Ghana, the researcher did not view the mixed method as relevant.

### **6.3.3 Qualitative research design**

Creswell (2009: 4; 2013: 32; 2014: 2) outlined a qualitative research design as an approach that helps to explore and understand meanings individuals or groups attribute to social or human problems. For Denzin and Lincoln (2018: 43), qualitative research is a situated activity that involves a set of interpretive, material practices and a naturalistic approach that attempts to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to it in order to transform the world and make it visible. This implies that, in qualitative research, the emphasis is on human experiences and situations that cannot be measured quantitatively, or on the establishment of causal relationships. Furthermore, qualitative research does not involve the testing of hypotheses but is rather a process that involves understanding a social phenomenon based on participants' experiences and point of view in a natural setting using the value-laden nature of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018: 43). Adding to the above, Saunders *et al.* (2007: 108) are of the view that qualitative research is based on the assumption that reality is socially constructed and that there are multiple realities, which are complex in nature. Practices further vary because perspectives are subjective and dependent on an individual's social background. These multiple realities are derived from participants who are purposively selected based on their knowledge base as 'information-rich' participants with experiences of and perspectives on the phenomenon being investigated. In qualitative research that adopts the constructivist grounded theory approach, findings are grounded in empirical data and the methods used for gathering data are reflexive (Charmaz, 2009: 131). The aim of qualitative research that uses for example personal interviews is not to draw generalisations about an entire population but to develop a unique explanation for each situation studied (Saunders *et al.*, 2007: 319). Usually, questions asked in qualitative studies are broad and open-ended, and the researcher listens in order to make meaning of the impression participants have about the world. Thus, instead of starting with a theory – as happens with positivism, in constructivist qualitative research, the researcher listens and gathers data in order to develop a theory inductively (Crotty, 1998: 8; Creswell, 2014: 2). Thus, an inductive



research approach is normally adopted when qualitative data is collected (Saunders *et al.*, 2007: 120). The inductive approach emphasises the need for the researcher to understand the context of the study and to provide a better understanding of the phenomenon being studied. The researcher is also directly involved in qualitative data collection because of the primary data collection processes adopted, namely interviews and focus group discussions (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005: 96). Consequently, the researcher is inseparable from the data (Guba, 1985: 37; Neuman, 2006: 110).

Researchers such as Yin (2011: 8) indicated some specific identifiers of qualitative research in order to distinguish it from other types of research. The identifiers are naturalism, insider-researcher research, process-driven research, inductive research and relativism. Naturalism, as an identifier of qualitative research, means issues, events and phenomena are studied in their natural and unique setting, for example, by talking to participants rather than using surveys as in quantitative designs (Creswell, 2009: 201; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011: 3; Creswell, 2013: 45). Talking to participants in the natural setting allows for an understanding of the context and contingencies that influence their experiences, behaviours, attitudes and opinions. A second identifier of qualitative research that is closely linked to naturalism is the role of the researcher as an 'insider-researcher' (Yin, 2011: 8). An 'insider-researcher' is regarded as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. The researcher gets directly involved with the participants in order to be able to capture all details of the events (Creswell, 2013: 45). In this investigation, the researcher asked questions on which participants shared their experiences in terms of the mechanisms for QA in the PUC's in Ghana. Through this means, the researcher co-constructs meaning and understanding of the events studied through the eyes of the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005: 3). When the researcher is immersed in the process as a result of his or her direct contact with the participants, it enables the participants to feel comfortable to open up and share their experiences. It is in this regard that Charmaz (2006: 18) indicated that interpretive qualitative methods mean getting involved in the research participants' world. However, when a researcher enters the participants' world, he or she must respect participants and their human dignity,

establish rapport with them to gain their trust, understand issues from their perspective and interpret data as their experiences (Heck, 2004: 216; Charmaz, 2006: 19).

Another identifier of qualitative research is that it is 'process-driven (Yin, 2011: 8). As a process-driven design, the emphasis is on how data are gathered. The social world is seen as processes that are dynamic, less structured than quantitative research, iterative, and not based on one theoretical or methodological concept. Therefore, the researcher is required to pay attention to system and situation dynamics (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 10; Williams, 2007: 6; Flick, 2009: 15; Creswell, 2013: 47). The process-driven nature of qualitative research allows the researcher to follow leads that emerge in the course of the research (Charmaz, 2006: 14). Since this research project was based on the constructivist paradigm (see Section 6.2.2.1) targeted at proposing a framework based on qualitative data, the semi-structured personal interview technique was used (see Section 6.4.2.3) as the main and most appropriate data collection instrument. This data collection technique enabled the researcher to be part of the knowledge creation process, which helped to deepen the researcher's understanding of the responses obtained from the interviews and the documents reviewed. The justification for the use of semi-structured interviews in this research was that it allowed for flexibility and modification of interview questions based on the leads that emerged during the interview. It must however be noted that studying issues in a natural setting creates many uncertainties and therefore the need for flexibility, which makes qualitative research iterative (Charmaz, 2006: 14). In the current project, the researcher observed these processes. Additionally, qualitative research involves inductive analysis, as it does not rely on the development and testing of hypotheses but rather builds abstractions, concepts and theories from the data collected (Charmaz, 2006:46). Inductive analysis in qualitative research involves first, condensing the different data gathered into summary format. This is followed by establishing a link between the summary of the raw data and the objectives of the research. Finally, a framework is developed based on the data gathered. In the current research project, the involvement of the researcher with the detail and specificities of the data ensured a creative synthesis and facilitated the discovery and development of themes that were grounded in the data. This understanding of qualitative data analysis agrees with the explanation by Strauss and Corbin (1998: 12)

that "... the researcher begins with an area of study, and allows the theory to emerge from the data." As a result of its inductive nature, a qualitative research does not rely on structured questionnaires but uses open-ended questions and multiple methods, such as interviews, document analysis and focus group discussions for data collection in order to develop concepts, themes and theories that are grounded in the data (Creswell, 2013: 45). Although not all qualitative researchers adopt the inductive analysis approach, in the current inquiry, the inductive data analysis approach was adopted, which enabled the development of the framework proposed at the end of this thesis (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.9).

The last identifier of qualitative research which is relativism focuses on the meaning that participants make of the issues studied and not that of the researcher. In the case of this research project, which was qualitative research, multiple themes were developed from the analysis (see Chapter 7, Section 7.6) to represent the multiple realities and perspectives of participants.

For this research, participants were selected from three major institutions that were involved with QA in the PUC's in Ghana, namely the regulatory institutions (National Accreditation Board & National Council for Tertiary Education), the selected mentoring PSU's, and the PUC's. Merriam (2002: 6) asserted that the researcher is interested in understanding how participants make meaning of a situation or phenomenon being studied. In line with Merriam's assertion, this research project adopted the qualitative interpretive paradigm, which sought participants' experiences and interpretations of QA mechanisms adopted by the institutions and organisations where they worked. Consequently, the researcher adopted empathic neutrality, open-mindedness, responsiveness, sensitivity to and respect for the views of participants without making any judgment. This naturalistic research design strategy allowed events to unfold naturally in a non-manipulative and non-controlling manner throughout this research process.

The qualitative methodology was further appropriate for this research project because information on the practices and procedures of the regulatory institutions involve

processes that are best assessed through qualitative means. The qualitative research design is further concerned with the subjective assessment of experiences, attitudes and behaviours, and research in such a situation is a function of the researcher's insight and impression (Kothari, 2004: 5; Boateng, 2014: 133). Consequently, in order to describe the interactions that affect quality standards of education at PUC's in Ghana, the researcher had to understand and describe the experiences of the participants. Again, such experiences are not objective facts that can be quantified and analysed using statistical methods; therefore, the qualitative approach was adopted. This stance formed the basis of the whole research process in this project.

Additionally, the qualitative design was deemed appropriate for this research project because of the nature of the phenomenon that was studied and the purpose of this research, which was exploratory. In order to address the research problem (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1) appropriately and in line with the purpose of this study, which is exploratory, the qualitative approach enabled the researcher to ask open-ended questions (see Annexure 9), which allowed the participants to express their experiences in their own words rather than closed-ended questions that require choosing from pre-determined options. The open-ended questions associated with qualitative research led to the gathering of 'rich' data and responses that were meaningful and context-specific. During the semi-structured personal interviews, the qualitative design adopted provided the flexibility required for probing the responses provided through follow-up questions.

As indicated earlier (see Section 6.4), in qualitative research, it is not just any data that are gathered but data that are 'rich'. In order to gather such 'rich' data, Charmaz (2006: 18–19) proposed that the researcher should be guided by the following questions:

- “Have I collected enough background data about persons, processes, and settings to have ready recall and to understand and portray the full range of contexts of the study?
- Have I gained detailed descriptions of a range of participants' views and actions?
- Do the data reveal what lies beneath the surface?
- Are the data sufficient to reveal changes over time?
- Have I gained multiple views of participants' range of actions?
- Have I gained data that enable me to develop analytical categories?

- What kind of comparisons can I make between data? How do these comparisons generate and inform my ideas?"

The above questions aided the researcher in determining the adequacy and relevance of the data gathered.

In effect, based on the qualitative research design adopted in this investigation, the researcher was able to gather textual descriptions of participants' experiences, behaviour, opinions, beliefs and emotions on QA, which were required in addressing the research problem and in answering the current research question (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1). To sum up, qualitative research is based on inductive reasoning rather than deductive reasoning (Creswell, 2009: 201), and is reflexive (Silverman, 2000: 8), based on an iterative research process (Yin, 2011: 66), and naturalistic (Yin, 2011: 8).

### **6.3.3.1 Qualitative research approaches**

There are different classifications of qualitative research approaches. Among the different classifications, Creswell (2013: 10 – 11) indicated that five approaches appear consistently among the classification of the different authors, namely case studies, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, and narrative research. These five approaches have been acknowledged to have systematic procedures of inquiry. The current research project used the grounded theory approach explicated below.

#### **6.3.3.1.1 Grounded theory approach**

Charmaz (2006: 2) explained the grounded theory method as a set of inductive methods for collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct theories 'grounded' in the data themselves. Similarly, Engward (2013: 37) explained the grounded theory method as an inductive approach used to discover a theory that is based on data gathered about people's experiences and behaviour within a social context. This implies that grounded theory research involves collecting data from participants with the aim of developing a theory based on the experiences, beliefs, emotions and behaviours of participants but not from literature or for purposes of testing an existing theory. The grounded theory method involves a flexible, comparative and systematic thematic analysis of qualitative data that

are iterative and interactive (Willig, 2008: 44; Charmaz, 2012: 2). Stated differently, Leedy and Ormrod (2005: 140) described data collected using the grounded theory method as field-based, using data collection instruments, such as interviews and focus group discussions although other methods, such as document analysis and observations could also be employed. Charmaz (2006: 11) further stated that the grounded theory approach is like a craft and therefore a researcher may adopt different practices in which he or she may pay attention to one area or the other, but in the end achieve the goal with similar features. Additionally, Astalin (2013: 121) suggested that in grounded theory research, the researcher should not begin the investigation with an existing theory in mind or as a guide. Rather, the focus of grounded theory approach is to generate a substantive theory from data collected based on the experiences of research participants.

The grounded theory approach to research is an area that has had divergent reviews since its introduction by Glaser and Strauss in 1967. The three major authorities associated with grounded theory are Glaser and Strauss (1967), Strauss (1990) and Charmaz (2000, 2006). Although this research did not seek to explore the contrasting views of the different authorities associated with grounded theory, the basic differences between the three main authorities – Glaser and Strauss (1967), Strauss (1990) and Charmaz (2000) – according to Kenny and Fourie (2015: 1270) are in their coding procedures, philosophical framework and methodological directives.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) were the first to conceptualise grounded theory as an antithesis to the quantitative methods that dominated research in the social sciences (Birks & Mills, 2015: 2) and the lack of rigour in the approaches adopted for qualitative methods (Charmaz, 2006: 9). This first version of grounded theory by Glaser and Strauss (1967) was known as the 'Glaserian' or 'classical' grounded theory. The 'classical' view states that, when its methodological procedures are followed, this will lead to the development of theory that is grounded in the research data collected irrespective of the researcher (Glaser & Strauss, 1967: 1). The idea that the theory generated is not influenced by the researcher has however been challenged (Charmaz, 1990: 1169). The second version of grounded theory methodology, known as the 'Straussian' grounded theory, was

developed by Strauss and Corbin (1998) who prescribed specific steps that must be followed in order to establish a theory. The 'Straussian' approach has also been criticised for being prescriptive, rigid and inflexible and therefore does not allow for the inductive development of the theory but rather for a deductive procedure (Willig, 2013: 232; Charmaz, 2021: 155). The third version of the grounded theory methodology was developed by Charmaz (2000; 2006) who sought to address some of the shortcomings of the 'classical' and the 'Straussian' versions of the grounded theory methodology. Charmaz (2000; 2006) indicated that the researcher is actively involved in the construction of the grounded theory and therefore whatever theory is developed in the end is co-constructed or co-created by the researcher and the participants rather than the researcher being only an objective reporter of facts. The constructivist grounded theory approach described by Charmaz (2000; 2006) departs from the versions by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990) versions. Charmaz (2006: 11) indicated the procedure to be followed when adopting the grounded theory approach should include initial or open coding and focused coding and finally a grounded theory should be constructed. These are the variations in the methodological approaches proposed by the three authorities, namely the 'classical', 'Straussian' and 'Charmaz' versions that have led to the confusion and debates about the appropriateness of grounded theory approach to research. However, once a researcher understands the ontological assumption and the methodological position, he or she will have better insight that will enable him or her to determine his or her research approach and be able to justify his or her choices. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 294 – 295), the advantages of grounded theory research include the following it: (1) is a research technique that is socially oriented, (2) enables the researcher to capture real-life data in a social environment, (3) has a high level of flexibility; and (4) has a high face validity.

Among the different grounded theory approaches, Charmaz's (2000, 2006) constructivist grounded theory approach was deemed the most appropriate strategy for this research project because it was compatible with the epistemological paradigm (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.3.2). Additionally, the choice of Charmaz's (2000, 2006) constructivist grounded theory approach was made because this was an exploratory research that

explored the processes, practices and ultimately the experiences of participants that led to development of a framework (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.9) that could contribute to assure quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. The broad research questions (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2) provided the flexibility required by the researcher to explore participants' experiences on QA in the PUC's in Ghana. The constructivist grounded theory approach was further appropriate for this research project because the inquiry approach was followed, which systematically analysed qualitative data that ended in the development of a framework grounded in the data for purposes of addressing the research problem. The inductive approach thus facilitated not just the descriptive account of the phenomenon but also provided meaning to the social interaction between the researcher and the participants. The constructivist grounded theory approach of Charmaz (2000, 2006) was also appropriate because it is less prescriptive and more flexible (Charmaz, 2006: 178) for the inductive exploration of the research problem as compared to Glaser and Strauss's (1967) and Strauss and Corbin's (1990) versions of grounded theory approach.

Additionally, the grounded theory approach adopted in this research project allowed for a qualitative data analysis procedure that provided the researcher with the opportunity to check and refine large amounts of data gathered from participants' interpretation of their experiences. These data were condensed into conceptual frames. The grounded theory method was also regarded as highly significant to this research project because, for a qualitative study such as this one, the grounded theory method provided explicit, systematic and sequential guidelines for conducting the investigation. This was because it offered specific strategies for handling the analytical phases of the inquiry, streamlining and integrating data collected as well as for the conceptual analysis of qualitative data; thus, it legitimised the qualitative research as a scientific inquiry with a strong empirical foundation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967: 1; Willig, 2008: 34).

Researchers such as Engward (2013: 38) and Ebona-Abamonga (2019: 96) posited that the grounded theory approach is appropriate for a study of social issues and areas with limited previous research. As pointed out in the problem statement (see Chapter 1,



Section 1.3.1), there appeared to be limited research on QA mechanisms in the PUC's in Ghana. The grounded theory approach adopted therefore assisted the researcher to make a conceptual contribution to an under-theorised area of QA in PUC's in Ghana.

This research project also found the grounded theory approach appropriate because it resulted in the development of framework that is ecologically valid, context-specific and linked to the data from which the framework for addressing the shortcomings of the existing QA mechanisms emerged. According to Dey (1999: 117), any theory developed through the grounded theory method may not be the final theory as the theory could develop with time. Dey (1999: 117) therefore noted that, it is "... a pause in the never-ending process of generating theory." For this reason, this research project was an exploratory study (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.1.1), which may serve as foundation for further explanatory and descriptive studies in this particular field.

Since one aspect of the aim of this research was to develop a framework that was believed could improve upon the existing mechanisms for QA in the PUC's in Ghana, the grounded theory approach adopted in this investigation was viewed as the most appropriate. The next section deals with the research methods that were used in this research project to examine and collect research data.

#### **6.4 RESEARCH METHODS**

Based on the research problem and the aim and objectives of a research undertaking the researcher is enabled to determine the suitable methodology and research design. Once the research methodology and design are determined, the researcher is required to determine the methods that will be used to gather the relevant data to answer the research questions and to achieve the aim and objectives of the research.

Methods are the instruments used in research for data collection (Lapan, Quartaroli & Riemer, 2012: 4; Schensul, 2012: 70). Schensul (2012: 70) explained methods in qualitative research by establishing the link between research methodology and methods. Schensul indicated that, the framework of a research project is defined by the

methodology, which then determines the techniques used to gather data referred to as 'methods'. In a qualitative research such as this one, there is a link between the methodology and the methods used to gather data. Similarly, Charmaz (2006: 10) explained methods in research as the approaches adopted to get 'rich data'. Charmaz (2006: 10) explained 'rich data' as "... data that are detailed and full ... and reveal participants' views, feelings, intentions and actions as well as the contexts and structures of their lives". Furthermore, Charmaz (2006: 15) sees methods as tools that must be used in a manner that allows the researcher to generate, search and make sense of research data in order to answer the research questions. Consequently, the research problem and the research objectives shape the methods of data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2006: 5; Khan, 2014: 300). Despite the significant role of methods in research, Charmaz (2006: 14) indicated that methods by themselves do not necessarily lead to excellent research results; rather, the way the methods of research are applied is critical in achieving good research results. Regardless of the various perspectives from which methods are explained, each discipline has an inclination towards a certain method and invariably towards the strategies for data collection, analysis and interpretation (Scotland, 2012: 9 – 10; Leavy, 2017: 27).

#### **6.4.1 Research setting and unit of analysis**

Merriam (2009: 76) asserted that, because there are varied sites, events or activities that could be studied in all research, there is a need for the researcher to be explicit on what, when, where and whom to study. Units of analysis could be individuals, groups, institutions, countries or objects from which a researcher wants to draw inferences (Bhattacharjee, 2012: 12). Accordingly, it is important for the researcher to demarcate the scope of the research clearly. Creswell (2013: 104) also posited that, in qualitative research that uses the grounded theory approach, the unit of analysis encapsulates an investigation of a process, an action or an interaction involving many individuals. The current research project involved a study of institutions and their mechanisms for QA. The institutional units of analysis were the following:

- Regulatory institutions (the National Accreditation Board and the National Council for Tertiary Education).

- Selected mentoring PSU's (the University of Ghana and the University of Cape Coast).
- PUC's (Methodist University College Ghana, Pentecost University College, Data Link University College, Islamic University College, Knutsford University College and Wisconsin International University College).

The participants sampled from these institutions formed the subjects of this research. The processes studied were the mechanisms for QA.

#### **6.4.2 Data collection instruments**

The term 'data collection instruments' refers to the methods that a researcher uses to gather data for answering the research questions. In every research project, the area and discipline being studied influence the choice of data collection methods. Additionally, the choice of methods used for data collection is also influenced by the research setting and the unit of analysis (Bhattacharjee, 2012: 24). Consequently, it is important to identify methods of data collection relevant to the Public Administration discipline, which were employed in undertaking this research on PUC's and QA mechanisms.

Mouton (1996: 35) indicated that whereas the epistemological dimension of research addresses aspects of what constitutes knowledge, the methodological dimension on the other hand, focuses on the manner (the 'how') of acquiring knowledge and the means through which the research goal could be achieved. Creswell (2009: 175) also posited that qualitative researchers typically gather data from various sources using multiple methods, such as interviews, a document analysis and observations rather than from a single data source. The researcher then reviews the data from these multiple sources, makes sense of the data, and organises the data into themes that cut across all the data sources. Consequently, in this project, qualitative data collection methods, such as a document analysis, a literature review and semi-structured personal interviews, were adopted to explore the processes, practices and procedures for ensuring quality education standards in the PUC's in Ghana. The use of the multiple methods allowed for triangulation of data, which helped to produce valuable insights and enhanced the validity

of the results from the different sources (Mouton, 1996: 157; Bhattacharjee, 2012: 24; Youngs & Piggot-Irvine, 2012: 187). The different qualitative data collection methods used are explained in sections 6.4.2.1 to 6.4.2.3 below.

#### **6.4.2.1 Document analysis**

The term 'document analysis' refers to a systematic procedure for the analysis of the content of both printed and electronic sources (Neuman, 2006: 44; 2009: 27; Bhattacharjee, 2012: 115). Specifically, documentary sources include films, videos, books, journals, magazines, manuals, minutes, reports, newsletters, press releases, speeches and newspapers (Bell, 1993: 68; Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 375). Document analysis was used as part of the triangulation process to complement and supplement data collected through semi-structured interviews and the review of relevant literature. In this research project, documents were analysed in order to understand the policies, guidelines and procedures, which influenced the mechanisms used to ensure quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. In the view of Heck (2004: 15), "... policy actions both shape and are shaped by the assumptions, values, beliefs and goals of those who develop, implement and are affected by them" Consequently, in this research, which partly dealt with issues related to policies of the regulatory institutions and the mentoring PSU's on mechanisms for QA, it was imperative to review the relevant documents in order to understand the participants' views regarding the formulation, implementation and effects of such policies on QA in the PUC's in Ghana.

The documents that were analysed comprised the following:

- Legislation on the establishment of the NAB and the NCTE.
- The NAB policies and guidelines on QA and accreditation.
- Speeches from persons in authority.
- The White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991.
- Other published documents from the regulatory institutions, the mentoring PSU's, and the PUC's on QA (see Chapter 4, Sections 4.4.1–4.4.5).

Some of the information on the regulatory institutions, the mentoring PSU's and the PUC's was obtained from their websites, their annual reports and their bulletins. In relation to the PUC's, documents – such as their graduation congregation brochures, annual reports of the head of the institution, statutes, QA manuals and bulletins – were analysed to gather data on their ownership structure, governance structure, entry requirements for students, teaching and learning facilities and sources of funding (see Chapter 3, Sections 5.2 – 5.4). Data on the sampled PUC's' ownership structures, governance structures, visions and missions, teaching and learning facilities helped to determine how the mechanisms of the regulatory institutions and the mentoring PSU's influenced the internal QA mechanisms of the PUC's in Ghana. The analysis of documents also enabled the researcher to gain insight into the mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. The document analysis further aided the researcher in the determination of the gaps between current QA practices in the PUC's and the expected tertiary quality education standards as captured in the documents of the regulatory institutions and the mentoring PSU's. The researcher further examined the White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991 and the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana of 1992 (see Chapter 4, Sections 4.4.1 & 4.4.2) to determine the adequacy of these provisions to ensure, develop and maintain quality education standards in the PUC's in Ghana. Thus, texts obtained from the documents and literature review which was analysed was compared with data from semi-structured personal interviews, and this helped to determine the congruence between the different sources of data and to corroborate data gathered from the semi-structured personal interviews (see Chapter 7, Section 7.4).

The merits of using documentary sources are varied. Comparatively, documentary sources could be described as relatively cheaper and easier to obtain than for example; surveys and interviews (Dawson, 2002: 41 – 46; Charmaz, 2006: 37; Creswell 2013: 78 – 79). Documentary sources cannot react to the process of investigation or pose a researcher response effect or reactivity of research participants (Mouton, 1996: 143 – 144; Neuman, 2006: 44). Additionally, document analysis helps a researcher to be aware of the information available on the area being studied. It therefore contributes to provide

answers to research questions to which some of the participants could not provide answers probably due to 'memory decay' or 'recall bias'. In some circumstances, document analysis affords the opportunity to collect data that would have been impossible to collect through empirical research (Bell, 1993: 67).

Despite the merits of documentary sources, there are also challenges. Firstly, locating, reviewing and organising documentary sources take considerable time (Neuman, 2006: 409). The time and effort required to identify and determine the relevant information could therefore be daunting. Secondly, because the documents reviewed were written in different contexts and for other purposes, it may confine the researcher to available records (Bell, 1993: 68; Mouton, 1996: 143; Bhattacharjee, 2012: 116). This argument of data confinement has been challenged by authors, such as Webb and Weick (1979: 652), who argued that such views suggest that data have only a single purpose and, for data to be considered valid and reliable, it should have been personally generated by the researcher, which they considered impractical as, in reality, data have multiple purposes. Thirdly, Babbie and Mouton (2001: 378) argued that documentary sources could be affected by "selective deposit" (biases in terms of what is recorded) and "selective survival" (some records may be lost) errors. Document analysis could therefore face the challenge of validity and reliability and therefore the need to ensure that the right sources are used (Creswell, 2013: 79). To address these challenges, the researcher must validate and ascertain the documents from which data are gathered. It is in this regard that Charmaz (2006: 38) suggested that in qualitative research, text can be used as a supplementary source of data. Fourthly, there could also be the challenge of restriction on the release of some documents, which may limit the researcher's access to all relevant documents (Bhattacharjee, 2012: 2). In this investigation, the researcher for example did not have access to the assessment reports for accreditation and re-accreditation of the PUC's because they were considered confidential documents. Neuman (2006: 45) also argued that due to time constraints, it is impossible for a researcher to analyse every document on the research topic, and this was a possibility in this research project.

#### **6.4.2.2 Literature review**

Chapter 2 presented a detailed review of literature, which always serves as the foundation of all quality researches. In addition, it is important that all research must be linked to previous research (Neuman, 2006: 111; Creswell, 2013: 57 – 60). Although Chapter 2 specifically focused on the review of the literature, literature was used throughout this research project. Apart from a literature review serving as the foundation for reliable research, it serves other purposes as well. Authors, such as Brynard and Hanekom (1997: 30), indicated that a review of literature assists researchers to read on a wide spectrum of issues to determine the truth about the phenomenon being studied. By means of a literature review, the researcher gets to know what is already known by others in the area of study, the gaps that exist, what is yet to be known, and the methodological approaches and epistemological assumptions that have been used in past studies, and thus guides the researcher to do his or her investigation (Boote & Beile, 2005: 3; Creswell, 2009: 25). In research, the literature review provides and describes relevant theories, models and methods related to a particular topic (Pollitt, 2016: 72). A more detailed discussion of the purposes of literature review was provided in Chapter 2, Section 2.2.

In this research project, the review of the literature covered aspects related to mechanisms for higher education QA. The review of the literature also focused on specific concepts that assisted in exploring the mechanisms for higher education QA and, specifically, QA in the PUC's in Ghana. The concepts that guided the review of the literature included the following: 'higher education', 'quality', 'quality assurance', 'accreditation', 'institutional accreditation', 'programme accreditation', 'academic quality audit', 'quality monitoring and assessment', 'private university colleges', 'internal QA', 'external QA', 'culture of quality', affiliation and 'accountability'. Others were: 'improvement', 'compliance', 'control', 'institutional isomorphism', 'coercive isomorphism', 'normative isomorphism', 'mimetic isomorphism' and 'policy implementation'. Models and theories applicable to these concepts were also focused on in Chapter 3, Section 3.2. The specific sources from which data were gathered were:

- Relevant published books.

- The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana of 1992.
- Relevant laws and statutes.
- Published and unpublished theses and dissertations from Unisa library.
- World Bank reports.
- Government publications.
- Articles from journals.
- Institutional websites.
- Newspaper reports.
- Published and unpublished lectures and interviews.

In order to gather the relevant data and to create clarity of focus on the research problem in the course of the literature review, the following questions were asked:

- What does existing literature mirror on the mechanisms of higher education QA?
- In which historical, geographical, social and intellectual context is the current literature located?
- What are the latest research findings in the area of higher education QA?
- What are the gaps in the existing findings on higher education QA?
- What are areas for further studies as suggested by recent findings?
- Which theories, models and approaches exist in literature on the mechanisms of higher education QA?

#### **6.4.2.3 Semi-structured personal interviews**

An interview is a process through which a researcher engages a participant in a conversation by asking questions about an issue that is being researched (DeMarrais, 2004: 55). Interviews further involve a close relationship with the interviewee in order to understand the world lived in by the interviewee and to understand events from the interviewee's perspective (Corbetta, 2003: 264). Stated differently, Dube (2015: 98) stated



that interviews are a two-way conversation through which a researcher obtains research relevant data about the interviewee's beliefs, perceptions, ideas, and disposition towards an issue. Thus, it is a purposeful interaction (Magwa & Magwa; 2015: 71). Normally, interviews are conducted when a researcher cannot directly observe people's behaviour, feelings and their intentions. As a result, Patton (2002: 340 – 341) indicated that interviews enable a researcher to enter into other people's perspectives. Within the interview process, the interviewee and the researcher influence the data collection process. It is in this regard that Holstein and Gubruim (1995: 3 – 4) asserted that an interview should not be "... a pipeline for transmitting information" but rather, the interviewees should be seen as "... constructors of knowledge in collaboration with the interviewer". Creswell (2007: 131) considered interviews as key in grounded theory research projects.

One of the most common types of interviews used in qualitative research is the semi-structured personal interview (Saunders *et al.*, 2007: 312; Alsaawi, 2014: 151). Semi-structured personal interviews were the main means used for data collection in this research project. A semi-structured interview is a method of gathering qualitative data through the use of a set of open-ended questions planned beforehand by the interviewer with the aim of initiating a discussion to explore an area of interest in the research extensively. Semi-structured personal interviews involve face-to-face interaction between the interviewer and the participants where the interviewer asks questions and records the responses of the participants (Bhattacharjee, 2012: 79). Willig (2008: 38) posited that the questions asked during semi-structured personal interviews when using the grounded theory method should be open-ended and not 'yes' or 'no' answers to questions. Open-ended questions allow for follow-up questions that help to provide the required data. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001: 159), in qualitative studies, the open-ended or semi-structured nature of the questions asked creates flexibility, and such questions are more likely to yield the desired information. As a result of the flexible nature of semi structured personal interviews, they can be adapted and combined with other methods of data collection, such as the literature review, document analysis and surveys (Fouche & DeVos, 1998: 128). Additionally, the use of semi-structured personal interviews ensures

a higher response rate when compared to surveys, since data are gathered on the spot (Bell, 1993: 85 & 91).

According to Dawson (2002: 28 – 29), when used in grounded theory research, semi-structured interviews involve the development of an interview schedule that could be updated and revised after each interview in order to capture issues that arise as a result of the previous interview. An important factor to consider when conducting semi-structured personal interviews in the grounded theory research approach is the constant comparative approach (Creswell, 2007: 160). This approach should be adopted to ensure that the ideas that emerge from the initial data influence the subsequent interview questions, which could cause such questions to be different from the original interview schedule (Astalin, 2013: 121). Furthermore, Fusch and Ness (2015: 1409) specified that, in order to achieve data saturation, interview questions should be structured to enable the researcher to ask multiple participants the same questions. To achieve this in the current research project, the semi-structured interview guides were pre-tested (see Chapter 6, Section 6.5.2), which helped to minimise the extent to which interview questions varied widely between the different participants.

It is believed that in Public Administration studies, interviews are more popular because, according to Brynard and Hanekom (1997: 32), interviewing offers the opportunity for researchers to explain questions whenever respondents are not clear about the questions asked. In the current research project, the questions posed during the semi-structured personal interviews were aimed at exploring the practices, processes and procedures used by the NAB, the NCTE and selected mentoring PSU's to ensure quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. Consequently, the measures suggested above were observed to ensure that the data required were gathered.

In order to ensure some level of credibility for the research results, triangulating the data from the document analysis, literature review and semi-structured personal interview results contributed to provide a confluence of evidence (Eisner, 1991: 110). In these processes, the data gathered from the regulatory institutions, the selected mentoring

PSU's, and the PUC's were deemed to have reached data saturation when all the issues in the research questions were addressed, after which no further data were required. The use of the different methods and a wide range of participants enhanced the credibility and authenticity of the data gathered from these three sources.

Based on the data collection methods discussed above, the specific approaches and methods adopted for the selection of participants, methods of analysis and the presentation of results are specified in sections 6.4.3 – 6.4.4 below.

### **6.4.3 Population and sampling**

One of the steps in the data collection process is to establish the population. The term 'population' refers to a defined set of elements that are of interest to a researcher because these elements meet the criteria for consideration as part of a study (Leavy, 2017: 71). Stated differently, a 'population' in research has been described as the set of elements, issues, objects, events, institutional units and individuals from which the researcher intends to collect data because the research problem is related to them (Mouton, 1996: 134; Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000: 84; De Vos *et al.*, 2005: 194). The term 'target population' on the other hand refers to all individuals and units that have the characteristics that the researcher wants to investigate and from which the research sample is selected (Engel & Schutt, 2009: 113; Bhattacharjee, 2012: 66–67). The target population for this project comprised all eighty-eight accredited PUC's in Ghana, the six PSU's to which the sampled PUC's were affiliated at the time of this inquiry, the NCTE, the NAB, as well as the assessors who have ever worked for the NAB within the last five years at the time of data collection.

Once the target population had been determined, the second stage was to determine the sample size. Except for census in which the entire population is studied, because of factors, such as resource constraints and time limitations, it is difficult to study all members of a population and therefore the need for a researcher to select a segment of the population. This segment of the population is referred to as a 'sample', which must have similar characteristics to represent the larger population (Bhattacharjee, 2012: 66). A

sample is a set of elements drawn from a population based on the criteria that have been set for inclusion in a research project (Polit *et al.*, 2001: 234; Johnson & Christensen, 2008: 224). Just like other social science disciplines, in Public Administration, sampling helps to determine the subjects for a research project from the target population. In qualitative research, such as the current project, there are no specific guidelines to determine a sample size (Leavy, 2017: 72). The researcher may therefore not have a predetermined number of respondents to be involved in the research project because the number and background of respondents required may change as the research proceeds. Since there is no pre-determined number of participants in qualitative studies (Leavy, 2017: 72), sampling goes on until data saturation is achieved. As a result, the number of participants sampled is influenced by the adequacy and relevance of data gathered at each of the various stages of the research (Holloway & Wheeler, 2002: 128). Other factors that influence the selection of a sample in qualitative research include the knowledge of the individual about the subject being studied and the extent to which the individual experiences the social process being studied. Unlike quantitative research where the sample size is based on statistical sampling, in qualitative research, sampling is based on theoretical sampling and data saturation (Charmaz, 2006: 100 – 101). The term, 'theoretical sampling' refers to "... seeking pertinent data to develop your emerging theory." (Charmaz, 2006: 66) but does not apply to representation of a given population (Charmaz, 1996: 28). Similarly, Glaser and Strauss (1967: 45) explained theoretical sampling as a process in which the researcher collects, codes and analyses data based on the researcher's ability to determine whether additional data are required and where those data could be obtained in order to construct a theory (Birks & Mills, 2015: 11). In this investigation, theoretical sampling was not undertaken because Willig's (2008: 39) abbreviated version of the grounded theory framework (see Figure 6.7) was used with the focus on gathering 'rich data'. Consequently, the sample size was not determined in advance. Charmaz (2006: 14) and Fusch and Ness (2015: 1410) describe 'rich data' as data that are detailed, focused and full, and 'thick data' in terms of the quantity of data gathered. Data is 'rich' when it is able to bring to the fore research participants' feelings, views and the context within which they live (Charmaz, 2006: 18 – 19). For a qualitative research project such as this, 'rich data' was needed in order to construct a strong

framework that was grounded in the data. Consequently, the choice of participants in this research was determined based on participants who could provide data that had both depth and quality with the aim of achieving data saturation, as explained by Charmaz (2006: 113). Since the focus was on 'rich' and 'thick' data, initial data collection and analysis were done simultaneously in order to identify areas to focus on during subsequent interviews.

Although the reviewed literature agrees that a sample size of at least 30% of a population is sufficient to inspire confidence in data collected (Blaikie, 2002: 34), since the current study is a qualitative research, no definite sample size was determined. As a result, the process of data collection and analysis continued throughout the research process until a point of data saturation was attained (Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006: 60; Creswell, 2013: 2). Consequently, the number of participants sampled was influenced by when data saturation was reached. Despite the fact that there is no pre-determined number of participants in qualitative research, Morse (1994: 225) recommends at least six participants in phenomenological studies, and 35 participants for ethnographic and grounded theory research. On the other hand, Creswell (1998) cited in Guest *et al.* (2006: 61) suggested 5 – 25 participants for phenomenological studies. Creswell (2013: 86) and Creswell and Plano Clark (2018: 234) suggested 20 – 30 participants for grounded theory research. At the time of data saturation, twenty-four participants had been sampled and interviewed for the current research project in line with the guidelines for exploratory studies (see Section 6.2.1.1) and the number recommended by Morse (1994: 225) and Creswell and Plano Clark (2018: 234) when grounded theory research approach is adopted.

#### **6.4.3.1 Sampling techniques**

Jupp (2006: 271) defined sampling as the process of selecting units of analysis from a population. The purpose of a research project and the research questions influence the type of sampling process that is adopted (Khan, 2014: 305). Before a discussion of the specific sampling methods employed in this research, it is necessary to understand the different sampling methods and why some specific sampling techniques were chosen for

this research project. There are two types of sampling methods: probability and non-probability sampling (Merriam 2009: 76). According to Leavy (2017: 211), probability sampling is a strategy in which "... samples are selected in a way that every element in the population has a known and non-zero chance of being selected". Non-probability sampling, on the other hand, involves the researcher to determine and sample individuals with relevant information about the phenomenon being studied to enable the individual to be able to provide information and explain the nuances. Non-probability sampling is a sampling technique that does not give all members of the population an equal chance of selection. Whereas probability sampling is used in studies that are quantitatively oriented, non-probability sampling is used in qualitative studies (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 174; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007: 112). In this research project, purposive and snowball sampling, which are non-probability sampling techniques, were used in selecting participants for this investigation, as recommended by Babbie (2001: 212).

#### **6.4.3.1.1 Purposive sampling**

A non-probability sampling technique, namely purposive sampling, was adopted in this study because it was appropriate to the current project design, which was qualitative. The purposive sampling technique also referred to as 'purposeful sampling' means that the researcher intentionally selects participants who experience the key phenomenon being investigated (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018: 233) Purposive sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher wants to understand, discover and gain insight into a phenomenon and therefore must select a sample from which such information could be obtained (Merriam, 2009: 76; Creswell 2013: 156). According to Creswell (2009: 178), purposeful sampling when used in qualitative research, facilitates in-depth examination of issues from the selected participants. In order to get the best results and achieve the purpose of the research when using purposeful sampling, it is recommended that the researcher selects participants who are knowledgeable about the concept being explored to provide the 'rich' and 'thick' data required in qualitative research (De Vos & Fouche, 1998: 198).

Creswell and Plano Clark (2018: 233) indicated the different types of purposeful sampling to include maximal variation sampling, extreme case sampling, and homogenous sampling. In this research project, maximal variation sampling was used to sample participants from three different institutions used for this inquiry. Maximal variation sampling is a sampling technique in which different individuals with different perspectives on a central phenomenon are chosen (Creswell, 2013: 100). In the current research, the justification for the use of maximal sampling technique was that the participants selected for this research project played different roles and had different experiences with regard to private higher education QA in Ghana. Consequently, they were believed to have different perspectives on the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018: 233). The same authors were of the view that when participants are purposefully chosen because of their different backgrounds, their views about the phenomenon being studied will also be different and therefore could provide reliable qualitative data.

#### **6.4.3.1.2 Snowball sampling**

'Snowball sampling' also known as 'chain sampling' (Miles & Huberman, 1994: 28) was the second non-probability sampling strategy used in this investigation. Merriam (2009: 79) defined snowball sampling as a process through which a researcher identifies participants that meet his or her criteria for selection for interviews on the subject matter being studied and who also know other people to whom they can refer the researcher for interviews. Similarly, Patton (2015, cited in Leavy, 2017: 123) explained snowball sampling as a process through which an identified case or participant leads the researcher to the selection of another participant. Once a participant has been identified, for example for an interview, the researcher could ask that participant to suggest other participants who could serve as other good sources to be interviewed on the phenomenon being researched. Consequently, the first participant recruited in this research project helped to recruit the other participants for the project. Ellis (1994: 172) specified that snowball sampling has the advantage of being able to build sample size quickly and also identify participants who might otherwise have been difficult to locate. The snowball sampling technique was specifically used for the selection of assessors who were appointed by the

regulatory institutions for accreditation and re-accreditation, audits and assessments of the PUC's.

#### **6.4.3.1.3 Sampling procedure**

A multistage sampling technique was adopted in selecting the participants. During the first stage, the universal population which included all those connected to QA in the PUC's in Ghana was identified. In the next stage, the purposive sampling technique was employed in selecting key institutions associated with the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and regulation to ensure quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. Although purposive sampling has been described as subjective (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000: 92; Babbie, 2001: 179), the nature of the research and the people who had relevant information on the subject matter were best identified through purposive sampling. Additionally, the researcher's background, work experience and knowledge about the work of the regulatory institutions were useful and made it easy for the researcher to select 'information-rich' participants. Thus, looking at the major stakeholders, the NCTE and the NAB were the main regulators of tertiary education in Ghana. Again, the purposive sampling technique was used to select six out of the eighty-eight accredited PUC's offering degree programmes as at 2019 and which had been in existence for more than five years after accreditation at the time of this research. It was believed that, since accreditation was for a period of five years after which it may be renewed, the selected institutions had sufficient information on the activities of the two regulatory institutions (National Council for Tertiary Education & National Accreditation Board) and the mentoring PSU's (University of Ghana & University of Cape Coast) to contribute to this research.

For purposes of easy accessibility and convenience, the purposive sampling started with university colleges located in and around Accra in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. In each of the six PUC's, in collaboration with the registrar, three participants who were on schedules that included responsibility and supervision of issues of QA, were sampled. Based on a discussion with the registrar of each PUC, a choice was made between the dean and the head of department and between the registrar and the deputy registrar,



based on who had direct responsibility for handling issues related to accreditation and re-accreditation. Accordingly, maximal variation sampling, which is one of the purposive sampling techniques, was used to sample the registrars or deputy registrars, deans of faculties or heads of department and the heads of the QA units of the selected PUC's for this research. This category of participants was selected because they dealt with the NCTE and the NAB on issues related to institutional audit, assessment and institutional and programme accreditation as well as the mentoring PSU's.

Purposive sampling was also used to sample the head of the desk in charge of PUC's in the selected mentoring PSU's (see Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1 – 5.3.2) to which the sampled PUC's were affiliated. In terms of the regulatory institutions (see Chapter 5, Section 5.4.1 – 5.4.2), the purposive sampling technique was used to sample the head of the QA unit at the NAB and the head of the unit in charge of research at the NCTE. Snowball sampling was also used to select four assessors who worked for the NAB. Based on the snowball sampling approach, after the first assessor was identified, this assessor assisted with the recruitment of other assessors. This approach made it easy to identify the participants, which might otherwise have been difficult and time-consuming. Again, the number of assessors sampled was influenced by the level of data saturation. The assessors were the people who visited the PUC's for either accreditation or re-accreditation and therefore had first-hand information on the practical issues related to the NCTE, the NAB and the PUC's. As a result of the sampling techniques employed in this research – purposive sampling and snowball sampling – the sample size in this investigation was influenced by what the researcher was able to do with the available resources, the extent of data saturation, and the exclusion criteria adopted as far as QA in PUC's in Ghana was concerned.

In line with the aim and objectives of this study (see Chapter 1, Section 1.5), selected participants were the most important source of information-rich experiences regarding the practices and procedures in the higher education QA process; thus, the use of the emic or 'insider-researcher' perspective of enquiry. The semi-structured personal interview guides, which comprised open-ended questions, provided the opportunity for participants

to express their views and to share experiences that helped to gather in-depth and relevant data. The responses from the interviews were then transcribed and analysed for themes (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4.4.5 and Chapter 7, Section 7.6) needed for the development of a framework that could contribute to improve upon the existing QA mechanisms for PUC's in Ghana.

#### **6.4.4 Data collection**

Data were gathered from primary and secondary sources. Kothari (1985: 11) describes primary data as original information gathered for the first time, such as information gathered through interviews, focus group discussions and observations. The term 'secondary data' refers to data that have been gathered previously and which can be obtained through literature studies, for example, journal articles, books, brochures and manuals. In an attempt to address the research questions and to achieve the objectives of this investigation, data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, a document analysis and a literature review (see Section 6.4.2). As this research is considered an emerging area, the data collected through semi-structured personal interviews were mainly primary in nature and supplemented with document analysis and the literature review.

The three key elements employed to provide an understanding of the tools and methods of data collection were design and structure, pre-testing, and administration. These three elements are discussed below indicating how they were applied in this investigation.

##### **6.4.4.1 Design and structure of the semi-structured interview guide**

At the data collection stage, the first and most important things that were considered in the design and structure of the interview guide were the research problem (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1), and the aim and objectives (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4) of the project. The questions were therefore designed and structured in a manner that ensured that the participants understood them as far as possible and were also comfortable in providing the responses required to achieve the aim and objectives of the investigation. The questions were also flexibly structured and allowed for follow-up questions that enabled

the participants to share their experiences on the phenomenon of QA in the PUC's in Ghana. The interview guides (see Annexure 9) were further designed and structured in such a way so that it facilitated the collection of the required data more easily and simultaneously contributed to answer the research questions and research outcomes. The research outcomes will be handled in Chapter 7. The above activities were done in line with the requirements of exploratory research as specified by Bless and Higson-Smith (2000: 107) who indicate that semi-structured interviews are appropriate for exploring the experiences of the participants when the questions are structured in a way that takes participants and the phenomenon being studied into consideration.

In this project, four different categories of participants were interviewed, namely the regulatory institutions, the PUC's, the mentoring PSU's, and the assessors. The semi-structured personal interviews were conducted in English. For all interview guides, the questions for each group were structured under each of the objectives of the research project. Under each there was a general question and follow-up questions (see Annexure 9). This approach contributed to ensure the logical flow of the research as shown in the outcome of the study (see Chapter 7, Section 7.4). The reason for having four different sets of interview guides (see Annexure 9) was that each of the groups played different roles in the process of ensuring quality standards in the PUC's in Ghana and therefore had questions that related to their roles. This structure helped to link Chapters 1, 6 and 7 of this research project. Chapter 1 indicated the objectives of the research, which formed the basis on which the interview guides were designed. Chapter 6 provides the methodology, design and methods that were adopted for conducting the research, and Chapter 7 reflects the analysis and presentation of the research results. Apart from questions that were designed based on the objectives of the research project, provision was also made for participants to offer suggestions on what could be done to improve upon the existing mechanisms for QA in the PUC's in Ghana. These suggestions also contributed to the development of the framework proposed at the end of this research project (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.9).

#### **6.4.4.2 Pre-testing the interview guide**

The need to pre-test all data collection instruments, such as interview guides and questionnaires before full-scale distribution, is of utmost importance (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 368). Research instruments are pre-tested in order to establish whether participants would understand the questions asked and be able to answer the questions to provide the information required to address the research problem in order for the researcher to achieve the aim and the objectives of the research. Pre-testing of research instruments in qualitative research also ensures that the questions are designed and structured in a manner that will ensure the data required are gathered. It also contributes to ensure reliability and validity of the research method. Additionally, Collins (2003: 231) indicated that all data collection instruments must be pre-tested to find out how long it will take to administer, to check for clarity of questions, and to identify those questions that are irrelevant and to delete them. Similarly, Fox and Bayat (2011: 102) emphasise the need to pre-test interview guides to ensure the effectiveness of the methodology and research design adopted. In this research, where the major question did not produce the adequate responses, follow-up questions were asked, which helped to elicit the relevant responses. The interview guides were not pre-tested on the research participants but rather on people who had similar characteristics as the research participants to reduce error, called the 'pilot group' (Creswell, 2013: 165). The four interview guides were therefore pre-tested on other members of staff in similar positions as those participants selected for the research from all the institutions used for this research project. After the pre-testing, no major changes were made to the interview guides for the four categories of participants. The researcher also consulted some retired staff from the NAB, the NCTE, the public universities and the PUC's who had knowledge on higher education QA to examine the interview guides. Their comments were viewed as relevant and the interview guides were revised accordingly. The retired staff for example suggested questions that dealt with challenges with the existing Acts of establishment of the NAB and the NCTE which did not empower them to exercise their mandate of QA.

#### **6.4.4.3 Administration of semi-structured personal interviews**

This section presents a discussion of the period during which participants were interviewed in order to gather relevant data.

In order to obtain the informed consent from the participants and the institutions studied, the researcher explained the purpose of the investigation, the benefits, the methods to be employed during the inquiry, the reasons why they were being selected, and the measures for ensuring anonymity and confidentiality as well as their rights as participants. After the explanation, the researcher obtained permission from the institutions to interview their staff and to obtain data from their documents (see Annexure 13). After permission had been obtained from the institutions and the participants had been identified, a copy of the interview guide (Annexure 9) and a sample consent form (see Annexure 14) were given to each of the participants. The aim was to allow participants to study the interview guide and to prepare responses or seek clarifications where necessary. The contact numbers of the participants were also obtained for follow-up calls to determine a day and time that were convenient to each participant interviewed. Informed consent forms were signed by each participant (see Annexure 15) involved in the research, which helped to confirm their willingness to participate in this project. Based on the consent of the participants, data were obtained through audiotapes and field notes. The use of audiotapes secured the full attention of the researcher through eye contact with the participants, while note taking was done to remind the researcher of earlier questions and aspects to which the researcher had to return in terms of follow-up questions (Charmaz, 2006: 32).

The duration of the interview with each participant varied from 50 to 70 minutes. In most of the PUC's, all three participants in each PUC were interviewed on the same day. This was possible because the researcher used the registrar of each of the PUC's as the focal person who helped to ensure that all the selected participants were available on the day agreed on for the interview. Depending upon the convenience of each participant, the semi-structured interviews were conducted on different days. However, for the participants from the selected mentoring PSU's, only one participant was interviewed per day because of the distance between the institutions. The participants from the NAB and

the NCTE were also interviewed on different days. In order to be able to make modifications to the interview guides where necessary, a participant from each of the four groups of participants was interviewed first. All the semi-structured interviews were conducted by the researcher. Throughout the interviews with the participants, the researcher ensured a good relationship with the participants, and this helped to gain the trust of the participants and made them feel comfortable to provide the responses required for achieving the aim and objectives of this research project.

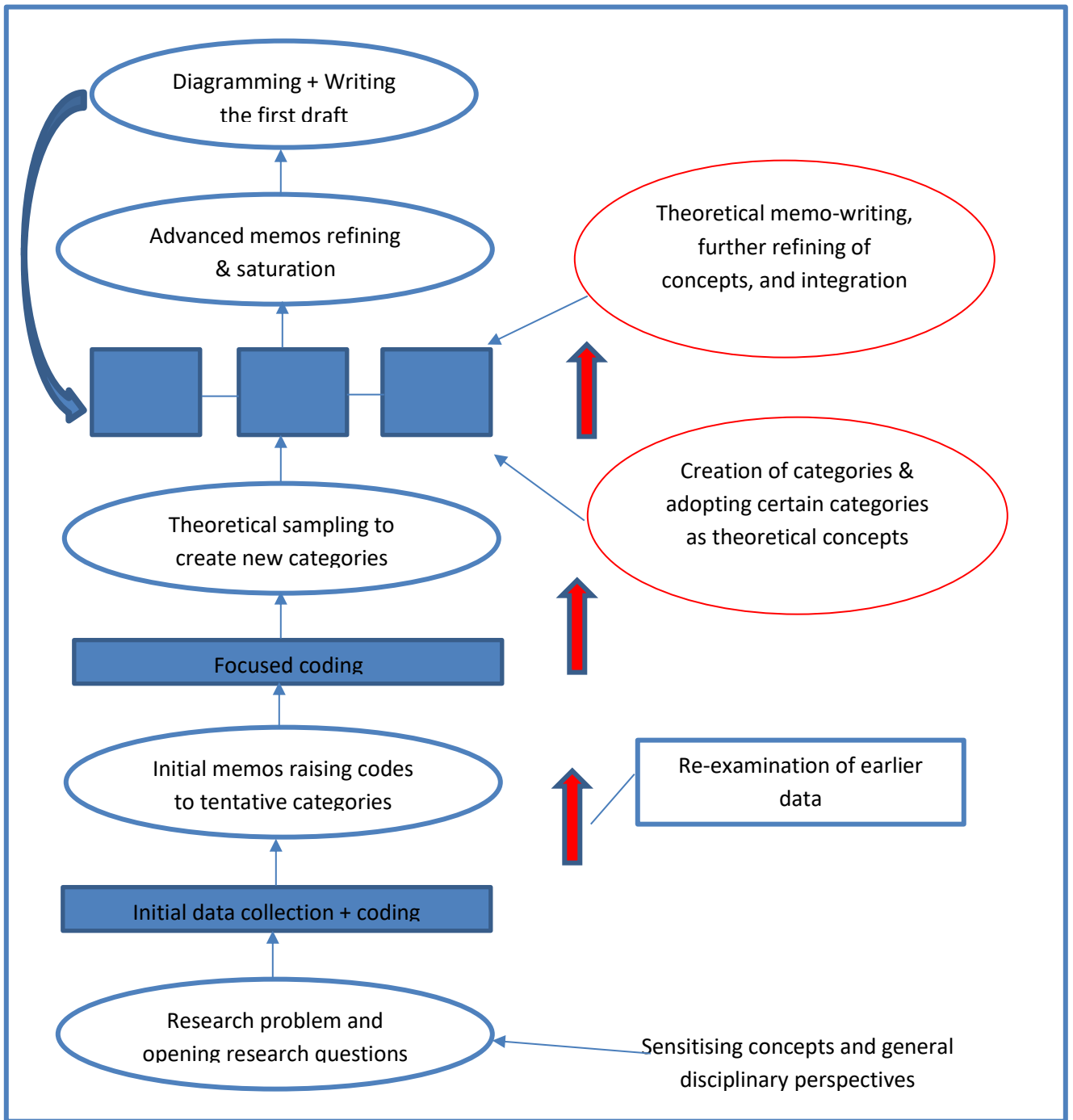
#### **6.4.4.4 Data analysis**

After the collection of the data was done, the researcher did a systematic and detailed analysis of the data. It is however important to note that, consistent with the constructivist grounded theory approach adopted, and as suggested by Corbin and Strauss (1990: 6), data analysis commenced from the time of the first interview and continued throughout the data collection process.

There are a number of qualitative data analysis techniques, such as described by Schuttz (2012: 21), Miles *et al.* (2013: 10), Willig (2013: 130) and the constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz 2006: 11). Consistent with Willig's (2013) suggestion, the abbreviated version of Charmaz's (2006: 11) grounded theory approach to data analysis was employed.

The stages of the abbreviated version of Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory approach adopted for this investigation are presented in Figure 6.7 below.

Figure 6.7: The grounded theory process



Source: Adapted from Charmaz (2006: 11).

Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory approach could be adopted in its full version or the abbreviated version. The full version starts with open coding through to identification of categories, negative cases and opposites in order to establish dense, detailed and differentiated categories with the focus on achieving theoretical saturation (Charmaz, 2006: 114) On the other hand, it could be applied in its abbreviated version as suggested by Willig (2008: 36). The full version of Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory approach required the researcher to collect initial data, which were explored through open coding for the development of categories and the establishment of linkages between the categories. Based on these initial categories, the researcher returns to the field to collect additional data through theoretical sampling. During theoretical sampling, the emerging theory is checked against any new data being gathered to find out whether the new data confirms or challenges the emerging theory (Charmaz, 2006: 96; Willig, 2008: 37). Theoretical sampling is also done to achieve data saturation of existing categories against the openness and flexibility adopted at the beginning of data collection (Birks & Mills, 2015: 11). The purpose of theoretical sampling in the full version of Charmaz's (2006) grounded theory approach is to ensure that the gaps in terms of sources of data and participants from whom such data could be collected, are identified in order to collect the needed data for theory development (Charmaz, 2006: 103). Thus, in the full version of the constructivist grounded theory approach, the researcher is also able to triangulate by using different data sources and methods of data collection (Willig, 2008: 39).

The abbreviated version on the other hand involves working with the original data only (Willig, 2008: 39). This means that, in the current research, the original data from interview transcripts and other documents were analysed based on the principles of the grounded theory approach, namely coding and comparative analysis. Similarly, the other basic grounded theory essentials and principles – theoretical sensitivity, theoretical saturation and negative case analysis – were applied to the original text that was analysed and the researcher did not go back to the field to collect additional data. Thus, in the abbreviated version as is the case in this research project, there is no room for challenging the emerging theory based on new data that has been gathered (Willig, 2008: 39). This implies



that the full version involves theoretical sampling while the abbreviated version does not (Willig, 2008: 39). In line with the requirements when the abbreviated version is used, in this research project, all the other principles of grounded theory approach were applied. Charmaz (2006: 9) regards grounded theory methods "... as a set of principles and practices and not a prescription or packages". These principles and practices guided the data analysis process throughout this research project.

According to Willig (2008: 39), when time and other resource constraints limit the use of the full version of the grounded theory approach, the abbreviated version could be adopted. Accordingly, the principal rationale for the selection of the abbreviated version of grounded theory approach for this investigation was because of the limited duration of this project, which did not permit the full operationalisation of the original full version of the grounded theory method. In line with the justification of Willig's (2008: 39) recommendation for the use of the abbreviated version, this study adopted this latter version.

Willig (2008: 39) further suggested that, when the abbreviated version of grounded theory approach is adopted, data should be coded line by line. Willig believed that line-by-line coding ensures the analysis is grounded in the data and also ensures depth of analysis to compensate for the lack of breadth from the additional data that would have been collected at the stage of theoretical sampling. Similarly, Charmaz (2012: 5) advocated for line-by-line coding in the early stages of the research, especially in terms of interview data to enable the researcher to engage actively with the data and as a heuristic device.

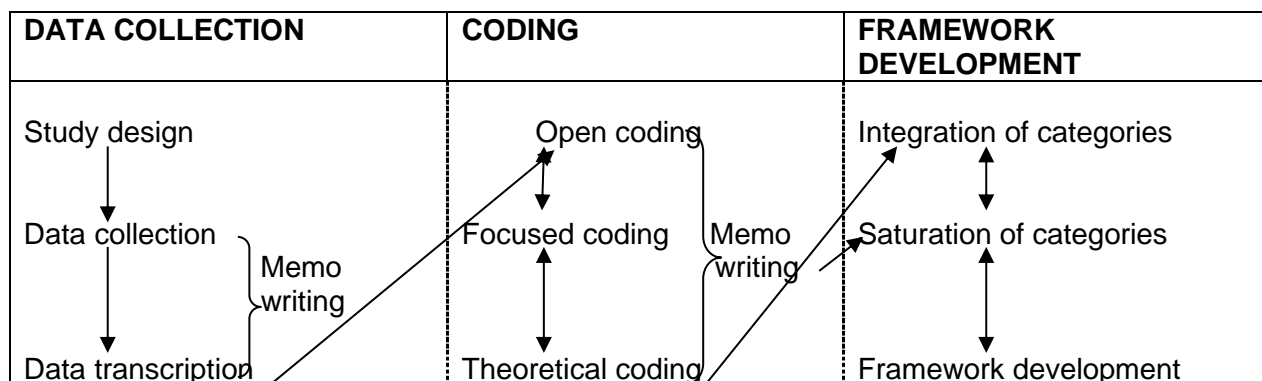
The abbreviated version of Charmaz's (2006) constructivist grounded theory approach in Figure 6.7 shows that the development of a research problem and research questions is fundamental to the entire grounded theory research process. In the current investigation, the research questions (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1) served as a guide to the development of interview guides for data collection. Once the first interview is conducted, initial coding alongside writing of memos starts and continues throughout the data

collection and analysis (Corbin & Strauss, 1990: 10). The data collection and analysis are also focused on ensuring data saturation.

For purposes of doing a partial comparative case analysis, in line with Willig's (2013: 213) abbreviated version of grounded theory method, the researcher transcribed the first interviews from each of the four categories of interviews manually and line by line, which helped to identify and make modifications to the interview questions as well as to collect the additional data that were required.

The data analysis procedure followed for the development of categories is presented in Figure 6.8 below.

**Figure 6.8: The data analysis procedure**



**Source: Researcher's own construct.**

#### 6.4.4.5 Data transcription

Based on the data collection procedure discussed earlier (see Section 6.5.3), data collected through semi-structured interviews were transcribed – in some cases, verbatim, and in others, 'near' verbatim depending on the nature of sentences constructed by the interviewee. Data were transcribed by listening to the recorded interviews sentence by sentence. Data transcription and coding were done by both the researcher and a professional transcriber. A sample of transcribed semi-structured manual line-by-line coded interview and themes are attached (see Annexure 16). Apart from the transcribed

interviews, field notes and memos were taken during data collection as additional sources, which were referred to during the analysis.

#### **6.4.4.6 Open coding**

The term 'coding in qualitative research' refers to the process in which a word or a short phrase that summarises or captures the meaning of a portion of language based or visual data is assigned to a portion of the data (Saldana, 2013: 3). Coding helps to organise similar data into categories. During the coding process for this project, some of the codes were taken directly from the responses of the participants during the interview and placed in quotation marks referred to as 'in vivo' codes (Charmaz, 2006: 36, 2021: 168; Corbin & Strauss, 2008: 82). Two stages were followed in the coding process: first-cycle and the second-cycle coding. The line-by-line coding of data helped to capture all data and ensured that the framework that would emerge was grounded in the data and would compensate for not doing theoretical sampling. Since the aim of coding in grounded theory research is to develop new theory or a new framework, category labels were derived from data instead of from existing theoretical formulations (Willig, 2013: 215). At the basic level of analysis, both descriptive and analytic processes of categorisation were employed when close similarity and differentiation were observed between and among concepts in the data gathered (Charmaz & Henwood, 2008: 241). An initial comparison was made among the data gathered, which informed the creation of codes for trends observed in the data. This implied that categorisation was done both at lower and higher levels of abstraction (Chamaz, 2006: 46; Willig, 2013: 214).

#### **6.4.4.7 Focused coding**

In this research project, the second major stage in the coding process was focused coding, which was the next step after line-by-line coding. Focused coding helped to integrate lower-level codes into higher-level codes. At this second stage of the coding process, the coded data were categorised based on thematic or conceptual similarities. During focused coding, the most significant or frequent initial codes were used to sort, synthesise, integrate and organise the large amount of data gathered, (Charmaz, 2006: 57-58). Glaser (1978) cited in Charmaz (2006: 57) described the codes used in focused coding as "...

more directed, selective, and conceptual than the word-by-word and line-by-line coding. Thus, in the current research, focused coding was done by revisiting the initial codes in order to identify those codes that made the most analytical sense.

#### **6.4.4.8 Theoretical coding**

Theoretical coding was the stage at which the central core categories that related to the theme of the research were identified. As indicated earlier (see Section 6.4.4.4), the researcher could not afford to collect additional data to broaden and refine the analysis; hence, the principles of theoretical sensitivity, theoretical saturation and negative case analysis could only be implemented minimally within the transcribed texts that were analysed. This is an acknowledged limitation of the data analysis process of the original grounded theory approach but, according to Willig (2013: 213), this is acceptable within the abbreviated version.

Although the researcher adopted Willig's (2008) abbreviated version of the constructivist grounded theory approach, the basic principles of grounded theory, namely theoretical sensitivity, theoretical saturation, and negative case analysis, were adhered to in terms of the initial data that were transcribed and no additional data were gathered (Willig, 2013: 213). Theoretical sensitivity was achieved by moving from the descriptive level to the analytical level (Charmaz, 2008: 36). Theoretical saturation was not carried out in full because of time limitations. The term 'negative case analysis' refers to the identification of instances that do not fit into the emerging theory and ensures that the researcher develops the emerging theory based on the data (Charmaz, 2008: 36). In this investigation, this was achieved by the researcher focusing on the aim and objectives (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4) of the study. Accordingly, once the categories and their linkages to other categories had been identified, the researcher was able to identify negative cases.

From the codes, categories were developed, and from the categories, concepts and themes were developed. Concepts are "... more general, higher level, and more abstract constructs" (Richards & Morse, 2007: 157). As a result, the researcher was able to

establish an inter-relationship between the themes and concepts, which led to the development of the CoQ framework (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.8).

#### **6.4.4.9 Framework development**

The data that were analysed in this research were collected through semi-structured interviews, document analysis and a review of literature. The strategy adopted during the analysis helped to condense the raw data into themes and to establish the relationship between the data collected and the objectives of the research for the development of a framework that could contribute to ensure the quality standard of education in the PUC's in Ghana.

The major themes and concepts identified upon which the CoQ framework (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.9) was developed, are as follows:

- Low capacity of the NAB.
- Turf protection between the NAB and the NCTE.
- Centralisation of the NAB and the NCTE.
- Low level of collaboration leading to contradictions and duplication of functions.
- Low level of ownership of QA processes by the PUC's.
- Lack of regular workshops/training for the PUC's and assessors.
- Interference by owners of PUC's in governance.
- Ineffective mentoring.
- Lack of qualified and adequate staff in the PUC's
- Profit motive of owners.
- Lack of specific policies on PUC's.
- High number of PUC's affiliated to some PSU's.
- Ineffective internal QA mechanisms.
- High affiliation charges.
- Financial challenges of PUC's.
- Lack of compliance with government policies on the location and programmes run by PUC's.
- Lack of tracer studies by PUC's.

- Lack of research on PUC's by regulatory institutions to form basis of decision making and policy formulation.
- A lack of resources for the NAB.

A detailed discussion of the data analysis and an interpretation data gathered are presented in Chapter 7.

#### **6.4.4.10 Storing and destroying of data**

Hard copies of the research data will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked filing cabinet in the researcher's office for future research or academic purposes. An electronic version of the research data will be stored on a password-protected computer.

It is undertaken that after five years from the date of publication of this research report, the research data will be destroyed if it will no longer be of functional value. Hard copies of the research report and accumulated data will be shredded and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer by using a relevant software programme. The external universal serial bus (USB) disc will also be physically destroyed. Confirmation in writing stating that the records will be destroyed, when and how they will be destroyed, will also be kept. In the next section, the measures adopted to ensure the trustworthiness of this project are discussed.

### **6.5 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Shenton (2004: 63) indicated four general criteria of trustworthiness in qualitative research, namely credibility, dependability, conformability and transferability. These four criteria are used in qualitative research because of the difficulty in applying the conventional standards of internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity (Isaac & Michael 1995: 221; Bhattacharjee, 2012: 112). Each of the criteria of trustworthiness is discussed as follows:

### **6.5.1 Credibility**

The purpose of qualitative research is to describe or to understand the constructs being investigated from the participants' perspectives. The participants are therefore in a better position than any other person to judge the credibility of the research findings. Charmaz (2006: 182) indicated that the credibility of research is achieved when the research "achieves intimate familiarity with the research setting or topic". In the current investigation, the researcher was guided by the following criteria to ensure credibility: triangulation and researcher reflexivity.

Triangulation involves using multiple sources of data, multiple methods for data gathering, and multiple informants (Schurink & Auriacombe 2010: 441; Youngs & Piggot-Irvine 2012: 187 – 188). In this research project, triangulation was achieved by collecting data from multiple sources, namely the NAB, NCTE, PUC's, UG, UCC and assessors. Data were also gathered using multiple data collection methods, namely semi-structured personal interviews, document analysis and a literature review.

Another criterion for ensuring credibility is researcher reflexivity. Willig (2013: 55) indicated that reflexivity in research requires an awareness of the fact that the researcher is not a neutral person in the research process because he or she is part of the research process. Willig (2013: 55) identified two types of reflexivity: personal reflexivity and epistemological reflexivity. Personal reflexivity means the researcher has to reflect on and be aware of the fact that his or her status, values, beliefs, interest might influence the research process. Epistemological reflexivity, on the other hand, means asking questions about how the research question has been defined and how it limits what can be found, how the design of the research project and the method of analysis were developed, and establishing how the research question could have been investigated differently (Willig, 2013: 55). Thus, epistemological reflexivity helped the researcher to think about these assumptions about knowledge that had been developed in the course of the research and the implications of these assumptions on the research and its findings. With regard to personal reflexivity, the researcher's background in organisational development assisted her in adopting an open-minded approach to the whole research process, and helped her to focus on

developing a framework that sought solutions to address the research gap from data that were gathered from participants from the institutions studied. This orientation agrees with the grounded theory approach, which requires the development of theory to be grounded in the data rather than being considered from the researcher's perspective (Charmaz, 2006: 2). However, because the researcher was not a *tabula rasa* in the research process, it is acknowledged that the framework proposed at the end of the research was co-constructed based on the experiences of the participants and of the researcher.

### **6.5.2 Dependability**

The term 'dependability' refers to the extent to which the research findings and the conclusions drawn will be consistent when similar participants are used within a similar contextual setting (Krefting 1991: 216). Dependability was ensured through methodology triangulation, an audit trail and the supervisor review. In this research project, the researcher used data and methods of triangulation discussed under section 6.5.1 above to enhance the integrity of the data (Babbie & Mouton 2001: 278; Bhattacharjee 2012: 112). Additionally, dependability of findings was ensured by an exact and extensive discussion of the methodology (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2), the research design (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3), and the research methods (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4) of the research project.

### **6.5.3 Conformability**

According to Isaac and Michael (1995: 223), the term 'confirmability' refers to a comprehensive examination of the research from the start to the end by evaluating the audit trail of the data and other records for purposes of determining the scientific adequacy of the research. In effect, confirmability is about the extent to which other researchers can confirm the findings and the accuracy of the methods of data collection and analysis independently. In the current research project, confirmability was also achieved through a comprehensive and logical presentation and discussion of the research process, the findings and conclusions.



#### **6.5.4 Transferability**

The term ‘transferability’ refers to the extent to which research results can be transferred to other similar situations (Krefting 1991: 220). In order to ensure that results of the current research can be transferred to other contexts, the researcher clearly stated the research context, core assumptions of the project, self as an instrument as well as clear documentation of the methodology, sampling techniques and sample used (Patton, 2002: 546; Gasson, 2004: 93 – 98; Thomas, 2006: 243). In this investigation, these requirements were clearly stated (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4). Although not all the PUC’s in Ghana were involved in this research, data gathered from the sampled PUC’s formed the basis for the conclusions drawn regarding the mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC’s in Ghana.

The trustworthiness of this research report was further boosted by complying with the ethical requirements of research, which are discussed in the following section.

#### **6.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The term ‘ethical issues’ or ‘ethical considerations’ in research refers to the processes by which a researcher collects data from respondents without infringing on their rights as well as by using appropriate methods for data gathering, analysis, accurate reporting and the use of research results (University of South Africa policy on research ethics, 2007: 9 – 17). Ethical issues do not pertain to data collection and analysis only but are also relevant in terms of the actual writing and dissemination of the research results (Creswell, 2003: 76). As a result, the researcher was sensitive to the ethical principles related to the topic, the methodology, the methods of doing the research and the final research results published.

The participants involved in this research project were from the NCTE, the NAB, the selected PUC’s and the mentoring PSU’s. Other participants were the assessors who worked for the NAB at the time of this research. The main sources of data were from semi-structured personal interviews, document analysis and the literature review. These sources were from people and confidential documents of the institutions involved in the

project that required the need to ensure confidentiality of all the information gathered. The qualitative dimension of the research project also required sensitivity with regard to ethical principles of informed consent, confidentiality, privacy and anonymity. The researcher was guided by the UNISA policy on research ethics (2007: 9 – 17). The amended ethics clearance was approved by the Department of Public Administration and Management on 2 August 2022 (see Annexure 17). The ethical measures and considerations that guided this research were respect for and protection of participants rights, informed and non-coerced consent, justice, fairness, objectivity, integrity, transparency, accountability and non-exploitation (University of South Africa, 2007: 9 – 17).

In order to obtain the informed consent from the participants and the institutions the researcher explained the purpose of the investigation, the benefits, the methods to be employed during the study, the reasons why the participants had been selected, and the measures for ensuring anonymity and confidentiality as well as their rights as participants. After the explanation, the researcher obtained permission (see Annexure 13) from the institutions to interview their staff and to obtain data from their documents. Informed consent forms were signed by the individual participants (see Annexure 15) involved in the research, which helped to confirm their willingness to participate in this research project. The issues of confidentiality and anonymity were also ensured by not disclosing the names of the persons, the various universities and the organisations that participated in the research by using codes, especially for the responses provided (see Annexure 18). Thus, although the profiles of the institutions that participated in the study were provided in Chapter 5, their responses were all put together for the analysis in order to ensure anonymity. To ensure that participants understood questions asked and were comfortable, a sample of the interview schedule was sent to each participant beforehand. Other ethical research requirements that guided this investigation were avoiding plagiarism through appropriate citing of authors, avoiding falsification of data, and making use of accurate reporting of data collection methods and results.

For the reason that the research was intended – among other things – to help improve upon the QA practices and procedures of the NCTE, the NAB, the mentoring PSU's and

the PUC's in Ghana, the researcher ensured that the methods of data collection and methodology adopted throughout the investigation were adequate to ensure the credibility and authenticity of the research results.

Finally, to ensure accurate representation of the data, digital audio recordings of the interview and field notes were carefully reviewed several times in order to guarantee accuracy in transcription. This is evident in the use of direct quotes and excerpts from the interview transcripts. Other documents used were analysed with an open mind to avoid misinterpretation and misrepresentation or being influenced by preconceived ideas of the researcher. To avoid plagiarism, the researcher ensured that appropriate quotation and referencing were done to give credit to works of other researchers used in this research.

## **6.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided the methodology, research design and methods adopted in this investigation. Specifically, the chapter discussed the research approach, the interpretive framework, philosophical assumptions and research design which applied in this research project. The researcher also discussed the practical and procedural issues related to data collection and analysis. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, document analysis and a literature review. Since this research adopted the qualitative approach, the measures taken to ensure the trustworthiness and authenticity of this project were also discussed.

The next chapter presents an analysis and interpretation of data gathered through the semi-structured interviews and from documents.

## **CHAPTER 7: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSES, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION**

### **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

In chapter 6, the research methodology, design and methods used to investigate the research problem were discussed. Thus, the previous chapter moved the process of the study from the theoretical stage to the methodological stage by providing the research plan for conducting the field of inquiry. This chapter builds on the preceding chapters (see Chapters 1 – 6) which laid the foundation for the presentation, analyses, interpretation and discussion of data in this chapter. Thus, this chapter provides the responses gathered by following the research plan (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.3.4) to achieve the aim and objectives of this research project (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4). As indicated in Chapter 6, Section 6.4.3, four groups of participants were involved in this study. For purposes of clarity and in order to have a logical presentation, the semi-structured personal interviews guides (see Annexures 9) were designed in line with each of the objectives of this thesis (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). Accordingly, the presentation, analyses, interpretation and discussion of the data gathered were also undertaken in line with each of the research objectives for each of the four groups of participants (see Chapter 7, Sections 7.4.1 – 7.4.4). For each group of participants, first, their perceptions, views and experiences are presented followed by a general assessment of their perceptions and views as well as additional comments they provided (see Chapter 7, Sections 7.4.1 – 7.4.4). Furthermore, a culture of quality framework (see Figure 7.9) and interventions are proposed that could contribute to ensure, develop and maintain quality tertiary education standards in PUC's in Ghana. Thus, the number of groups of participants involved in this study and the structure adopted for the presentation, analyses, interpretation and discussion of data in this chapter, accounts for the lengthy nature of this chapter.

The specific objective of this chapter is to present, analyse, discuss the research data and develop as well as attempt to demonstrate the applicability of an education QA framework/model and interventions that could contribute to ensure, develop and maintain quality tertiary education standards in the PUC's in Ghana (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2

– objective 7). Accordingly, this chapter contributes to the achievement of the aim of this inquiry (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.1) by analysing and discussing all the data that were gathered in an attempt to demonstrate how the QA mechanisms could be strengthened to ensure successful application of QA in the PUC's in Ghana.

The current research project is on the experiences of the participants in relation to the mechanisms for QA in the PUC's in Ghana. These mechanisms could be internal or external or both. In this investigation, three data collection instruments were used, namely; semi-structured personal interviews, document analysis and literature review. The first set of primary data were gathered through twenty-four semi-structured personal interviews that were conducted with participants from the NAB, the NCTE, the mentoring PSU's, assessors and the PUC's in Ghana. The semi-structured personal interviews were complemented with secondary data sourced through a review of literature and analyses of documents from the various institutions that participated in this inquiry. The literature review and document analysis were used to corroborate data collected through semi-structured personal interviews.

The data analysis, interpretation and research results based on data gathered are presented below. Each set of data is presented and discussed in line with the objectives of the research project (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2 – objective 7).

## **7.2 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

According to In and Lee (2017: 267) because data collected during research is usually in the raw format, this makes it difficult to understand. Consequently, there is the need to present, analyse and interpret the data in order to make it meaningful. Specifically, in any research project that data are gathered through interviews, Ladikos and Kruger (2006: 161), asserted that it is essential to analyse transcribed interviews to enable a researcher to identify common themes from the experiences of the participants. Before the discussion of the processes followed in the analysis and interpretation of data, the two concepts; data analysis and interpretation are operationalised.

### **7.2.1 Data analysis**

According to Mouton (2001: 108), data analysis involves the breakdown of research data into themes, patterns and trends in order to understand the various elements of the data and their relationship for purposes of providing answers to research questions. In line with the constructivist grounded theory (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.3.1.1) and the methodological approach (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.3.4) adopted for this investigation, the main source of primary data was the semi-structured personal interviews. Participants were interviewed about their experiences in relation to the mechanisms for QA in the PUC's in Ghana. For studies that gather data through semi-structured personal interviews, the data collected must be transcribed in order to identify common themes so as to give meaning to participants' experiences (Ladikos & Kruger, 2006: 161; Creswell, 2013: 180). Similarly, Creswell (2013: 179) indicated that data analysis in qualitative research is an interconnected process that involves; organising the data, preliminary read-through of the database for familiarisation, coding and organising themes, presenting the data and forming an interpretation of them. Creswell (2013: 180) identified the core elements of qualitative data analysis as coding, combining the codes into broader categories or themes, and displaying and making comparisons as illustrated in Chapter 6, Figure 6.8.

In addition to the data gathered through semi-structured personal interviews, relevant data from institutional documents analysis and literature review were also presented and analysed in order to achieve each of the research objectives of this thesis. The reason for the use of semi-structured personal interviews as the main source of primary data for this qualitative research was that, Charmaz (2006: 39) has indicated that "... textual analysis is without context, or worse, out of context." Consequently, in order to place text into context, the researcher can start with providing a description of the times, actors and issues through the use of multiple methods such as interviewing key participants and the use of several types of documents.

Consistent with Willig's (2013) suggestion for the use of the abbreviated version of the grounded theory approach when time is a limitation the abbreviated version was used. The abbreviated version excludes theoretical sampling in the process of data analysis.

Theoretical sampling means returning to the field to gather new data that is used to check the emerging theory/framework to find out whether the new data confirms or challenges the emerging theory/framework. Since this study adopted the abbreviated version of the grounded theory approach, no additional data were collected after the initial data analysis for purposes of confirming or challenging the emerging theory/framework. A detailed discussion of the data analysis procedure followed in this study was provided in Chapter 6, Section 6.4.3 and illustrated in Figure 6.8.

Data for this study were gathered from four groups of participants. The first set of participants was from the regulatory institutions (the National Accreditation Board & the National Council for Tertiary Education). The second set was from the PUC's (Methodist University College Ghana, Pentecost University College, Wisconsin International University College, DataLink University College, Knutsford University College & Islamic University College); all in Ghana. The third set was from the mentoring PSU's (University of Ghana & University of Cape Coast). The final set of data was from the assessors appointed by the NAB to assess the PUC's. Accordingly, based on the conceptual framework developed for this study (see Chapter 6, Figure 6.5), the participants were clustered into four groups and labeled as indicated in Annexure 18 for easy identification and analysis. Thus, data collected through semi-structured personal interviews from each of the four groups were transcribed and coded as explained in Chapter 6, Sections 6.4.4.5 - 6.4.4.8. Data transcription and coding were done by both the researcher and a professional transcriber. The coding helped to segregate, re-group and merge data into a format that helped to provide explanation and meaning to the data that were gathered. In Section 7.2.2 that follows, the processes followed to interpret the data gathered are explained.

### **7.2.2 Data interpretation**

Data interpretation aims at attaching meaning to the data that were analysed in order to state its significance, implications for the study as well as to draw informed conclusions. Data interpretation helps to identify what is important in the data, why it is important and what could be learned from what has been analysed. In this research, the interpretation

of data was important as it helped the researcher to understand the experiences of the participants with regard to the mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. The interpretation of the data that were analysed in this study enabled the researcher to indicate the implications of the various practices, procedures and processes involved in assuring quality standards in the PUC's in Ghana. Furthermore, the interpretation of the data aided in drawing conclusions and for suggesting measures that could be adopted to address the challenges identified. Based on the data analysis and interpretation, the researcher developed and demonstrated the applicability of an education QA framework/model (see Figure 7.9) and interventions (see Chapter 7, Section 7.6) that could contribute to ensure, develop and maintain quality tertiary education standards in PUC's in Ghana. The actual academic writing and framework development followed after the data analysis and interpretation.

Objective 1 and 2 of this research project were achieved mainly through a review of literature and document analysis whilst objectives 3, 4 and 5 were achieved mainly through semi-structured interviews (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). During the data collection, based on each research objective, an open-ended question was asked first before other follow-up questions. It is important to mention that in this research, all the ethical considerations regarding the conduct of research were observed (see Chapter 6, Section 6.6).

The following section presents an analysis and interpretation of data gathered to achieve each of the objectives of this research project. Before the analysis and interpretation of data related to each research objective, the first section below provides a brief background of participants.

### **7.3 SECTION 1: CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS**

A brief background of each group of participants is provided in order to indicate why the information they have provided is relevant to this project. The gender, position and number of years participants occupied their current positions were recorded to provide a descriptive analysis of the participants. With regard to gender, out of the twenty-four



participants, three were females and twenty-one were males. This suggests the male dominance in the Ghanaian higher education sector. Apart from the four assessors who were sampled using the snowball sampling technique, the other twenty participants were sampled using purposive sampling technique. Although purposive sampling was used for sampling participants, the gender representation in this inquiry was influenced by participants who occupied positions within each of the institutions that dealt with issues related to institutional audit, assessment and institutional and programme accreditation as well as affiliation (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4.2.1.3) and not as a result of the sampling technique adopted. No data were collected on the age of participants since the participants were not willing to disclose their ages and questioned the relevance of their age to the responses required. The other characteristics of the participants are discussed in sections 7.3.1 – 7.3.4 under each of the institutions that participated in this study as follows:

### **7.3.1 Regulatory institutions**

Two participants were interviewed from the regulatory institutions. One of the participants was the Deputy Executive Secretary responsible for Quality Assurance, Administration, Accreditation, and Certificate Evaluation at the NAB. The second participant was the Head of Policy and Research at the NCTE. Both had worked with each of the regulatory institutions for more than ten. Based on their years of experience and positions they occupied, it is trusted that they had a good knowledge about policies and the mechanisms used to ensure quality standards in the PUC's in Ghana. Accordingly, it is believed that, the data that they shared with the researcher was 'rich' and relevant. Both participants were males.

### **7.3.2 Private university colleges**

From the six PUC's that were sampled for this research project, sixteen people participated in the individual interviews that were conducted. The positions held by these sixteen respondents included Vice President, Registrar, Deputy Registrar, Dean, Head of Department and Director of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit. None of the participants had held this position for less than five years, implying that they had a good knowledge of

their roles and for that matter shared experiences relevant to this investigation. Out of the sixteen participants from the PUC's, only two were females and the other fourteen participants were males. This suggests an unequal representation in terms of gender in PUC's in Ghana with regard to those who occupied positions that dealt with issues of QA..

### **7.3.3 Mentoring public sector universities**

All the PUC's sampled for this study were affiliated to either the UG or the UCC or both. In Ghana, based on the programme that is to be affiliated, a PUC can be affiliated to more than one PSU. As a result, in line with the inclusion criteria, one participant each was interviewed from each of the mentoring PSU's. One of the two participants interviewed from the mentoring institutions was a Deputy Registrar and the other was an Assistant Registrar. Both had worked for eleven and five years respectively in their capacities as head of the unit in charge of the PUC's that were affiliated to their universities. It is believed that the number of years they have served in these capacities enabled them to provide responses that were relevant to this study. Out of the two participants, one was a male and the other was a female which in terms of gender representation could be described as balanced.

### **7.3.4 Assessors**

Four assessors were also interviewed. Assessors refer to individuals who are appointed by the NAB to assess the PUC's for purposes of accreditation and re-accreditation. On the average, each of the assessors worked for the NAB for not less than nine years. This group of participants provided relevant information on what existed in practice at the PUC's in Ghana with regard to the quality standards being observed. With regard to gender of participants, all the assessors were males. The snowball sampling technique was used for sampling participants in this group.

## **7.4 DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS FROM THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS, DOCUMENT ANALYSIS AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

Although this study is a qualitative grounded theory research, out of the eight research objectives, objective 1 (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2) which provided the research

framework of this inquiry was addressed without any interview data. Objectives 2 and 3 (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2) were addressed mainly through a literature review in Chapters 2 and 3 and it was supplemented with data obtained from the semi-structured interviews. Objectives 4 and 5 (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2) were achieved through semi-structured personal interviews. In addition to the semi-structured personal interviews, institutional documents were analysed and literature reviewed in Chapters 4 and 5. Thus, text obtained from the documents and literature review were analysed and integrated with data from semi-structured personal interviews. This helped to determine the congruence between the different sources of data and to corroborate data gathered from the semi-structured personal interviews. Objective 6 (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2) was addressed in chapter 6 where the research methodology, design and method used to investigate the research problem were explained. Objective 7 is addressed in this chapter; which is on the presentation, analysis and discussion of data (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2 – objective 7). The final chapter; Chapter 8 presents the summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations.

Based on the information provided on the background characteristics of the participants, (see Chapter 7, Sections 7.3.1 – 7.3.4), in the next section, data relevant to achieve each of the research objectives is presented and discussed. For most of the data obtained from the semi-structured personal interviews, participants 'telling terms' are used.

In line with the philosophical paradigm (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.2.1) of this inquiry, after the research results are presented, a general assessment of the perceptions of the participants are presented under the major concepts/themes that emerged from the data that were analysed (see Chapter 7, Sections 7.4.1.1, 7.4.2.1, 7.4.3.1 and 7.4.4.1).

#### **7.4.1 GROUP A: PERCEPTIONS, VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPANTS FROM THE REGULATORY INSTITUTIONS**

This section provides responses from the two participants from the regulatory institutions. The semi-structured interview guides (see Annexure 9) used for data collection in this research project were designed based on each of the research objectives (see Chapter

1, Section 1.4.2). Accordingly, the presentation, analyses, interpretation and discussion of the data gathered were also undertaken in this section (see Section 7.4.1) in line with each of the research objectives (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). First, the perceptions, views and experiences of the participants from the regulatory institutions are presented under each of the research objectives. Second, a general assessment of the perceptions and views as well as additional comments from the participants was also provided.

**OBJECTIVE 1: Provide the general background, rationale and research (methodical) framework, which emphasises and accentuates the importance of the study**

Data obtained through a review of the literature and document analysis helped to provide the general background, rationale, research problem and research questions. Thus, this research was necessitated based on information obtained through the initial literature review and document analysis. The initial document analysis and literature review showed that there were challenges with the existing mechanisms for QA in the PUC's in Ghana. Consequently, the quality of education provided by most of the PUC's was below standard (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1). This inquiry was primarily an exploratory study that adopted the constructivist grounded theory approach (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.3.1.1) to investigate the existing QA mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. Specifically, this investigation adopted the qualitative research design that used semi-structured personal interviews, document analysis and a literature review for gathering data. However, as indicated in Chapter 7, Section 7.4, no interview data were gathered to address objective 1.

**OBJECTIVE 2: Reflect upon the literature review of tertiary education quality assurance (discourse) and factors that affect it**

**Interviewer:** In the reviewed literature, the NAB defines QA as "... the continuous and systematic act of reviewing structures, systems and practices towards the attainment of a desired end." In your opinion, do PUC's in Ghana demonstrate an understanding of QA

that is consistent with the NAB's definition and what are the indicators of their understanding of higher education QA?

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** I think the concept of QA is understood. Generally, most of the people who are managing the PUC's came from the PSU's so they understand what QA is. Again, before a PUC is accredited, the processes that they pass through expose them to the field of QA. The PUC's are even required to have an internal QA unit, a QA policy and a strategic plan for achieving the set quality standards. So even if you are a layman coming to manage a PUC in Ghana, these processes will let you understand what is required of you in assuring quality. However, there is a difference between understanding QA and ensuring quality. The challenge has been with the implementation and not their understanding.

Although I will say to a large extent they understand what QA entails, obviously there are constraints such as infrastructure and inadequate funding, but that does not mean that they do not know what to do or what is required of them. Sometimes, it is not the lack of understanding but rather it is the motive behind why they established the university college that has rather influenced their practices. Beyond their motive for establishing the PUC some also are constrained by the lack of resources. Within the constraints, they try to comply with the measures we put in place to ensure quality.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** As a follow-up to the awareness of members about what counts as quality private tertiary education, how will you argue that the level of education and training provided by the regulatory institutions, the mentoring PSU's and the PUC's themselves to the members of the university college community facilitated their understanding of higher education QA?

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** I think we as the regulatory institution, we have not done much in terms of workshops and seminars on matters of QA. To some extent, as a regulatory institution managing a high number of PUC's, some of which were established by people with no background in higher education means we should develop the capacity

of the PUC's in QA. At the initial stages when a few PUC's were established, we used to organise biennial workshops for them on the policies, processes and how to ensure quality standards but now, it is no longer regular like in the past.

Apart from workshops, when we develop new policies on QA, we inform the PUC's through formal letters indicating the objectives and guidelines they must follow. Although we do not do have regular workshops and training sessions, when necessary we invite the PUC's and discuss any new issue of concern.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** The reviewed literature identified the factors that affect tertiary education QA to include the factors listed below. In what ways has any of the factors below or any other factor affected the quality of education offered by the PUC's in Ghana?

- Differences in the conception of what QA is (formative or summative) between the regulatory institutions and the higher education institutions.
- Incompatibility between the views of the academic staff as implementers of QA policy and what has been designed as acceptable quality higher education standards by the regulatory institutions.
- Lack of mechanisms to effectively analyse the information gathered during reviews and a lack of properly trained evaluators.
- Lack of ownership by the higher education institutions of the QA process.
- Lack of management skills and expertise related to QA at all levels.

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** As indicated in the earlier response, PUC's understand that QA is a continuous process of improving upon whatever they do in the delivery of higher education. As such, the issue is neither with the differences in the understanding of the concept by the regulatory institutions and the PUC's nor the incompatibility between the views of the academic staff as implementers of QA policy and what has been designed as acceptable quality higher education standards by the regulatory institutions. Rather, sometimes some of the PUC's have other reasons such as profit motive or resource constraints which makes them to not comply with the laid down higher education norms and standards. Our inability to regularly educate managers and

members of the PUC community could contribute to their unacceptable QA practices. However, the requirements and processes that PUC's have been through before being granted accreditation should make them to meet the minimum standards expected of them. As the policy implementation institution, we have human resource challenges. Accordingly, there could be delays in the processing of information gathered during reviews. However, we have been using assessors who are selected based on their competencies to carry out reviews and their reports have been helpful in our decision making and in ensuring that quality standards are observed at the various PUC's. As for lack of ownership by the higher education institutions of the QA process and the lack of management skills and expertise related to QA at all levels, it is for these reasons that PUC's are required to have an internal QA unit. The aim is to develop a strong internal QA unit which will be responsible for ensuring quality in the day-to-day activities of the PUC's. We believe this approach could lead to the ownership of QA by all members of the PUC's and reduce our level of supervision and regulation. Apart from the above factors some of the owners and managers of these PUC's look at it as a business and they want to make profit. For example, a university is supposed to have deadlines for registration and there are good reasons; such as providing the school with the student population for planning purposes but they do not do this. Some PUC's also allow students to register a week to examinations or even during the examinations in order to collect their fees even if the students did not attend lectures. The NCTE also has developed norms and standards to guide PUC's. There are norms and standards for student-teacher ratio, norms for staffing etc. So we have a certain kind of structure for them to follow. Although the PUC's are aware of these norms and standards, some do not comply.

Not everybody who enters into tertiary education provision has the knowledge, capacity and experience to manage a university. In Ghana, the establishment of higher education is a field people with no knowledge about higher education can enter. Nowadays people are establishing PUC's without having a clear purpose. Even if they are advised by professionals, they refuse to take it. In some PUC's, they start running programmes even when they have not been granted accreditation, contrary to what is expected. Some owners and managers of the PUC's are also not able to hire qualified lecturers, especially

full professors or associate professors with long years of experience, because they cannot afford them – so they employ them at the minimum salary levels.

**Interviewer (Follow-up):** Are you able to share some of the negative effects of these factors on the quality of education in the PUC's?

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** Oh yes. The unacceptable practices of some of the owners and managers of PUC's have led to the perception by some members of the public about PUC's as being of low quality and as a money making venture for some business men. As a result of this perception, some PUC's do not attract highly qualified students and lecturers. Some are just passing through the university colleges without acquiring any quality education. However, had it not been for PUC's, a lot of people who qualified for university education would not have been able to access higher education. Most of the PUC's have also focused on business administration courses and not science related courses because the science related courses require infrastructure that are capital intensive. In effect, the graduates that are produced may not possess qualifications needed by industry for development and innovation. Although a lot of people are attending universities, the nature of the courses they offer do not provide them with skills to engage in manufacturing and industrialisation which should be the focus of higher education in Ghana.

**OBJECTIVE 3: Outline the theoretical perspectives and conceptual framework that relate to tertiary education quality assurance in Ghana and compare key indicators and accreditation models between world class tertiary education regulatory institutions and tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana**

**Interviewer:** Is the NAB/NCTE a member of any international network or association of similar types and in what ways has the accreditation models of these international tertiary education regulatory institutions influenced your model of QA in the PUC's in Ghana?

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** We belong to African Quality Assurance Network, Association of African Universities and International Network of Quality Assurance



Agencies in Higher Education. Our membership of such institutions afforded us the opportunity to attend conferences across the globe; and in most of these conferences; there were workshops on issues related to QA. Some of our staff also benefitted from scholarships to pursue further studies in areas related to QA; especially in the University of Melbourne in Australia. Our membership has also offered the board the opportunity to have access to the database of these institutions where issues on QA were discussed.

What exists is not necessarily membership but rather collaborations. Some of our staff have been sponsored to do courses in England. We also sent people to participate in programmes organised by the Council of Higher Education in South Africa, and we have worked with the national universities coalition in Nigeria. Apart from these collaborations, we also learnt from the practices of these institutions. Some of them shared data on higher education with us and it has informed our policy decisions not only in QA but in other areas.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** As a follow-up to the question on the influence of international QA practices, is your model of QA designed based on any of the known models of QA of developed nations such as the USA, UK, and Australia and which specific aspects of these three countries QA models have you adopted and how have these practices been effective in assuring quality education standards in the PUCs in Ghana?

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** Yes, our model of QA has been influenced by that of other countries, but not from the USA. USA has a different model that it uses even though some of the items of QA remain the same across the world. So unlike the USA where the external regulatory institutions are independent of government, in our model, we are a government institution which is similar to that of the UK. We also have adapted more from the European model for both institutional and programme accreditation. As part of the accreditation process we provide the PUC's with a document titled "National Accreditation Board, Ghana: Roadmap to Accreditation" which is similar to what is done during self-review in the UK where the higher education institutions are provided with manuals to follow.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** What is your view on the practice of publishing the outcomes of your review of higher education institutions as done in the UK to inform the public on the performance of higher education institutions as well as the ranking of higher education institutions as done in the USA and the UK?

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** That should be possible in the future since we want to encourage those who are doing well to continue and to enable them attract students who will receive quality education whilst we continue to monitor and guide those PUC's which are not doing well to improve. By this means, those PUC's that are not able to cope will naturally fold up.

Apart from publishing the outcomes of our reviews, ranking of the PUC's is the next important step we should take. It can contribute to improve upon the quality of education provided by the PUC's. I believe when we take such a decision, a credible system would be put in place for the assessment and ranking of the PUC's. It should also include the PSU's.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** I am aware that the NAB uses quality audits and assessment, programme and institutional accreditation, as well as affiliation to regulate the practices of the PUC's. Based on your experiences, do you think these mechanisms have been effective in ensuring quality education standards in the PUC's in Ghana?

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** By and large, these mechanisms have worked well in getting the institutions to make adequate or minimum provisions to run their programmes. In fact, in some instances even the standards in some of the PUC's are quite high. The fact that some are competing favourably with the PSU's shows that the mechanisms are effective. One major policy is the requirement of affiliation of PUC to a degree awarding institution. You know by our law PUC's cannot award their own degrees for a minimum of ten years. The aim of this policy is for them to be attached to a long standing university that has the expertise and experiences to help them. There are also policies on the physical facilities and staff recruitment. We also look at the quality of the

academic programme being run. We look at whether you have the physical facilities and finance to run the programme. It is only when these standards are met that an institution and its programmes would be accredited. Thus the requirement of affiliation, quality audits and assessments and accreditation are very relevant. The challenge has been with some aspects of the implementation that are affected by other factors and not the policy itself.

As I mentioned earlier, some of those who establish PUC's think that it is a money-making venture. We do not expect the PUC's to be modeled along the lines of the mentor universities. There should be room for innovation, and there should be room for uniqueness. For instance, KNUST should be different from UG and UCC. As a university grows, it builds a certain culture that is unique to it based on its vision and mission. The essence of affiliation is only for mentoring and therefore the mentoring institutions should not impose their culture on the PUC's. The only thing is that the standards should remain the same to ensure the quality.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** The existing tertiary education QA framework of Ghana shows that it is a collaborative effort between the NAB, the NCTE and the university to which the PUC's are affiliated. What are your experiences and views on the functioning and effectiveness of this framework?

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** Yes, we collaborate and this is how we have operated for some time now. However, there are a few challenges that have affected the level of effectiveness and efficiency of this arrangement. I think some of the activities between the mentoring institutions and the NAB must be done together. For example, programme review has been a major challenge. What exists currently is that, the PUC's submit their programmes for review and approval to the mentoring university first. After the approval the same documents are submitted to the NAB. In some instances, after the mentoring university has approved the programme, the team that is put together by the NAB which may comprise members from other universities sometimes disagree on what has been approved by the mentoring university. The fact is, the public universities are autonomous and so every university develops its own programme content and structure

which may not be acceptable by another university. So, I believe that if there will be a joint programme review team, made up of representatives from the mentoring university and the accreditation board to collectively review the programme document, it will minimise the contradictions and disagreements.

Sometimes the inability or the shirking of responsibility of the mentoring institution to do their work has affected the quality of some of the PUC's. Since we do not possess all the expertise at the NAB the framers of the law thought it wise that there should be affiliation and mentoring by a long standing university. As a result, we expect the mentoring institutions to assist in this respect and report to us where there are challenges. The PUC's pay programme affiliation fees to the mentoring universities, and programme accreditation fees to the NAB. However, if a joint review team is used; one fee could be charged and then shared among the two institutions which will also reduce the financial burden of the PUC's.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** I am aware of the NCTE being the policy formulation body and the NAB being the implementers. Based on your experiences, describe the level of collaboration between the NAB and NCTE with regard to QA and the means through which you give and receive feedback from each other on issues related to QA in PUC's?

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** We collaborate in several areas. For example, in my department, we collect data and we share with them. We also consult them whenever we need any information from them. Sometimes committees are set up that involve both of us. Since they are a policy formulation agency and we implement, we necessarily share information on the outcomes of our QA activities and the areas where there are challenges.

One of the means is that our executive secretary serves on their council, so he is privy to whatever happens at the NCTE. The second means is sometimes we formally write to request for such information and we sometimes conduct formal interviews. For example, during one of the occasions that we had to advise the Minister of Education, we went there to interview their Executive Secretary. They also serve on our committees, so there is

transfer of information through these personalities and processes. Now we are developing some new policies on higher education, and it involves both of us. However, there is a perception that the NCTE is trying to superintend over the whole system. As a result, sometimes some actors at the NAB are not happy. Let me say that, there is about 60% collaboration and about 40% 'turf' protection.

**OBJECTIVE 4: Provide a historical context of the legal framework on the establishment and operations of PUC's and tertiary education regulatory institutions in Ghana from 1991 to 2019**

**Interviewer:** The literature has identified some recommendations of the committee set up in 1998 to determine the extent to which the policy objectives of the White Paper on the Reforms in the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991 has been achieved. Do you think these recommendations are relevant and to what extent have these recommendations been implemented? I would like us to look at the recommendations that relate to QA.

Recommendation 1 was: "... the need to ensure that each tertiary education institution under the NCTE should be properly equipped in order to achieve quality education standards for the programmes that they offer." (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 12).

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** I would not say equipping the PUC's has been completely addressed because it is a process. What I know is that, before a programme is introduced in a public university, the institution has to apply through NCTE where it will justify whether there is a substantial need for that programme to be introduced and the facilities that are going to be used and how it will be funded. As for the PUC's they are assessed by the NAB. We have what we call institutional and programme accreditation. So before a PUC is given approval to run a programme, the NAB assesses their human and non-human resources. Most of the PUC's have challenges with the facilities but we continue to encourage them to improve upon it every time.

We are aware that not all PUC's in Ghana were properly equipped. What could be described as a properly equipped tertiary education institution could vary depending on the number of students that have enrolled. For example, the number of lecture halls that a PUC had when the institution was first established may no longer be adequate when its student population increases. That is where there has been challenges with most of the PUC's. While some have excess capacity because of reduced student numbers, others do not have the requisite facilities to deliver quality education. Some of them have financial challenges because they do not attract adequate student numbers to be able to provide both the human and non-human resources needed.

Recommendation 2: "... all new programmes to be run by a university college must be accredited and all examinations vetted before the tertiary institution is allowed to start the programme." (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 15).

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** In the application process, the PUC's are required to state their justification for mounting a programme and what the benefits are to the country. We use programme and institutional accreditation to ensure this. There are a few recalcitrant ones that advertise and run programmes when they have not received their letters of accreditation. As for the vetting of examinations, these are done by the mentoring universities. Mentoring institutions are supposed to keep a close eye on the PUC's for example; in the conduct of examinations etc., which they do not do well. We can also not be there always so it becomes a problem. If the PUC's are seen as part of the institution they are affiliated to, the mentoring institutions must be able to measure their performance against that of their institutions by ensuring that the standard of their curriculum and examinations are the same.

Recommendation 3 states "... the need to provide both material and human resources, to enable the NCTE and the NAB to perform their functions, as well as adequate remuneration to assessors to enable them submit their assessment reports on time." (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 34).

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** I cannot say we have adequate human and non-human resources. There is also a problem with the quality of staff. The delays in responding to our clients are to a large extent a result of the unavailability of human resources. We have only one office located in Accra but we have to accredit institutions located at different parts of the country. The source of funding for our institution is purely government. Government has urged us to operate on cost recovery basis so we let the universities pay for services we offer them. It is not the full cost though but they pay significant portion of it. The ultimate goal is to progressively get them to pay the full cost of our services. For now, government is the main source of funding in addition to the service fees we get from the universities. But, if you ask me, I will say the money is not the main issue, it is the same everywhere. To a very large extent the remuneration to assessors is inadequate because funding is sometimes a challenge and so remuneration to the assessors is not encouraging. Even though they are paid somehow it is not comparable to their counterparts in other countries. This could create challenges and compromise on standards. However, we make them sign a document to indicate that, there is no conflict of interest and also a declaration that they do not have anything to do with the institution they are to assess and that they will do their work with integrity. Well, we are all human beings, so you cannot be sure. But whenever we have the suspicion that standards are being compromised by an assessor, we delete such an assessor's name from our database and we do not use such an assessor again. I believe the rates paid to our assessors have affected the work of some of them and so some of them do not submit their assessment reports on time. Sometimes, you may need an assessment report in two weeks but it could take more than three months before an assessor submits his or her report. There have also been challenges regarding the agreement on time schedules among assessors. You need at least three panel members to go for a programme assessment, and so when two agree on a time schedule and the other member is not free then we have to reschedule and it may happen several times. We also sometimes do not get the right expertise within the country.

Whereas the participant from one of the regulatory institutions' indicated they had challenges with both material and human resources the participant from the other indicated the contrary as follows:

I think we have the resources to take on anything that we want to do. In instances that we do not have the resources, we sometimes ask for extra budget allocation through the Ghana Education Trust Fund. When we think we do not have the capacity to take on any assignment, we engage additional hands from outside. In some instances we have used external consultants to do some of our work.

Recommendation 4 of the committee was that, " ... the NCTE should conduct a study to identify the challenges facing existing private universities in order to be able to develop policy measures for the advancement of the private tertiary education sector. Key areas of concern related to the running of programmes that could contribute to national development and the quality of programmes offered at the private sector universities." (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 58).

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** I do not remember any empirical studies conducted by us for the development of PUC's. We have had a workshop for PUC's about ten years ago. What we do annually in my department is to collect the data on their staff, and students' entry qualifications. Sometime ago when we were developing a policy, we invited some of the PUC's to share their views. But as for a study that focused on private universities that has not been done. Nonetheless this study could be necessary. We have not developed any policies that are peculiar to PUC's alone. If you talk about norms and standards, that applies to all higher education institution in Ghana.

**Interviewer (Follow-up):** As part of the reforms to the tertiary education system, one of the institutions to be established was the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board who would develop standardised criteria irrespective of the private university where an individual seeks admission as well as monitor the admissions processes, in order to ensure that only qualified applicants are admitted into the PUC's. In the absence of the



establishment of this institution, how has the NAB/NCTE monitored and regulated student admissions into the PUC's?

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** I will say this has been a gap in our performance. For now what we do in terms of entry requirements is that, within the first two years of accreditation, NAB goes round to do institutional audits and then within a four-year interval, we go back to the PUC to do another audit. The institutional audits are to check admissions, staffing levels, programmes that are running and whether recommendations that were made at the time of accreditation have been implemented. In order to prevent PUC's from admitting unqualified students, I think the mentoring universities have to support us by playing their role. As a policy, at least there must be one representative from the mentoring institution on the admission board to ensure that the right admission criteria and procedures are followed. We had an unpleasant situation where some PUC's admitted unqualified students and so we had to ask them to withdraw such students. The students took the matter to court and we lost the case and the students had to be reinstated. This emphasises the importance of the role of the mentoring institutions in the admission process.

We have set the norms and standards regarding the entry requirements of students into higher education institutions. So in collaboration with the NAB, we ensure that what occurred in 2012 when the NAB directed some PUC's to withdraw unqualified students does not occur again.

**Interviewer (Follow-up):** While private university education was accepted in principle based on various laws that back their establishment, there was neither an official policy that encouraged the establishment of private universities nor any financial incentive in support of the establishment of PUC's in Ghana. How has the lack of specific policies on PUC's and financial support from government affected the quality of education provided by PUC's in Ghana?

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** Although the NCTE is the policy formulation institution, the issue of specific policies on the PUC's to address their specific needs has not been formulated. This has been discussed at several forums. I agree it is long overdue. On the issue of financial support, although there is no policy that indicates that PUC's should be supported financially by the government, the government in the past supported some PUC's that were in good standing with a 53-seater bus each. It is not enough since the salaries of the staff is the biggest financial burden of the PUC's. Although the government pays the salaries of workers and provides infrastructure in the PSU's, it does not do same for PUC's. Currently, even the PSU's are using internally generated funds to meet their infrastructural demands in order to meet the increasing number of students they enroll.

Although PUC's have been in Ghana for some time, I agree there are no policies that relate to only PUC's except the policy on affiliation. It has been one of the issues we have been discussing and very soon we will have policies on PUC's. But once they are higher education institutions, all the other policies on higher education apply to them. I agree we need specific policies that address their specific needs.

**Interviewer (Follow-up):** What is your opinion on the existing legislation that established the NAB/NCTE and to what extent has the provisions in the current 2007 National Accreditation Board Act 744 and the 1993 National Council for Tertiary Education Act enabled the NAB and NCTE to effectively achieve their mandate? What could be done in order to address the challenges inherent in the 2007 National Accreditation Board Act and the 1993 National Council for Tertiary Education?

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** There are challenges with the existing legislation. For example, the final closure of a non-complaint PUC can only be done by the Minister of Education. The NAB does not have prosecutorial powers like some other institutions have to physically close PUC's that do not meet the required standards. We have made proposals for an amendment to make the NAB an authority; to be known as the National

Accreditation Authority that should be given the powers to prosecute PUC's that do not comply with the set regulations and procedures. This is yet to be done.

There are limitations in the law. If you look at the law that established the NCTE, we can only advise the Minister of Education. We can also not close down a school; we can only inform the Minister of Education. NCTE should have the power to enforce its regulations. There should be amendments so that the NCTE should be able to direct where it wants a new PUC's to be located. This is because if Accra is choked, we should be able to tell an applicant where a new PUC's can be established.

Furthermore, as a result of the fact that the issues raised by the participants from the regulatory institutions in relation to the existing legislation on the establishment of the NAB and the NCTE were legal matters, the views of a lawyer was sought. The lawyer's view was sought on the gaps in the 2007 National Accreditation Board Act and the 1993 National Council for Tertiary Education Act and what could be done to address the gaps.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** What are the gaps in the 2007 National Accreditation Board Act and the 1993 National Council for Tertiary Education Act that could affect their effectiveness in ensuring quality standards in the higher education institutions in Ghana? The lawyer indicated the following as gaps that must be addressed in order to make the NAB effective.

- The composition of the board must first be looked at. For instance, since NAB's mandate is mostly for accrediting tertiary educational institutions, the representation from the West African Examinations Council (hereinafter referred to as 'WAEC') ought to be looked at again since WAEC, the examinations board's mandate relates only to basic and senior high schools. Instead, a representative of the Ghana Education Service could be nominated.
- Similarly, the representation from the association of professional bodies should be replaced with a representation from relevant regulatory institutions. For instance, a member of the General Legal Counsel, the Ghana Medical and Dental Council, the Nursing and Midwifery Council, etc. This representation will avail the technical

expertise of the respective regulatory institutions and would also bring about a complementarity in the work of the NAB. This would further address the problem where professional institutions are accredited at the blind side of the respective professional regulatory institutions. This usually leads to human resource capacity issues following the grant of accreditation thereby affecting quality of training.

- The representatives from the public universities must be named. This means that the 2007 National Accreditation Board Act must state the person's expertise to include a post graduate degree in curriculum development or a related field.
- Where the size of the board is an issue, the representation from private tertiary institutions can be taken off.
- With respect to the functions of the board, section 2 (2) (a) provides for the board to determine the programmes and requirements for institutions to be accredited. An effective discharge of this mandate requires the board to possess the relevant expertise in the programme area of the applicant institution. This gap could be addressed by naming an ad hoc technical committee to be composed of technical persons of the area to which the application relates.
- In section 2 (2) (e), of the 2007 National Accreditation Board Act, since the board is constituted by the President, the residual function should be at his instance but not the Minister's.
- Section 3(1) of the 2007 National Accreditation Board Act appears to suggest that the tenure of office of the Board members is coterminous with the validity period of accreditation. This could be a loop-hole which unsuspecting persons can use to exploit the Board to secure an accreditation however short as to terminate with the tenure of the Board. The tenure of the Board could therefore be reduced to two years to avoid such scenarios arising.
- The tone of Section 8(2) which states that accreditation exercise would be carried out at least every five years lacks certainty as to whether the exercise stated relates to inspection of facilities or re-accreditation (that is an accreditation being valid for 5 years). Clarity is necessary. It would be appropriate to conduct at least one visit to institutions that have a two or three-year qualifications, and at least one visit every two years for institutions offering qualifications that take longer to complete.

These visits, which would solely be for purposes of inspection, could even be narrowed to programmes. Thus, in a university with a four-year cycle but also running other programmes which are of three-year cycles, the inspection for the three-year programme could be similar to that of the four-year cycle programmes.

- The National Accreditation Board Act 744 of 2007, states that the Board has the responsibility to appoint an accreditation panel that shall consist of the chairperson and other persons not exceeding eight. Panel members are appointed taking into consideration their professional, academic, industrial or commercial competence. The panel may include members of the NAB. In order to ensure effectiveness and efficiency, the appointment of a panel, which ought to be a technical one, should be demanded in more exacting phraseology than the current “the board may appoint...” of Section 9(1). It must be definite that the Board appoints a panel, which must be a technical panel.
- In furtherance of Article 38(1), (2) and (3) of the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana of 1992, the granting of accreditation must aim at making education and its facilities available to all citizens. If this Constitutional directive is obliged with, it would help promote access to all levels of education to all Ghanaians in every part of the country. Such provisions in the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana of 1992 mean that the regulatory institutions could refuse to grant accreditation to an applicant institution on the basis that similar facilities exist within the applicant’s locality whilst other parts of the country lack such facilities. However, the reviewed literature and the institutional documents analysed appear not to indicate any such control mechanism in the establishment of PUC’s in Ghana.

The lawyer indicated the following as gaps that must be addressed in order to make the NCTE effective.

- Regarding the composition of the board, it was unclear what “wide academic and administrative experience” means as provided in section 3 (1) (a) of the National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993 (see Annexure 12). Consequently, this must be clearly stated in order to avoid ambiguity.

- It was unclear what “extensive experience in university work” in 3(1) (b) of the National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993 (see Annexure 12) means and therefore suggested the need for specificity of what is required.
- The representation of two heads of universities and university colleges 3(1) (c) (see Annexure 12) creates a conflict-of-interest situation since the board advises the minister about educational institutions including the universities of which the university representative’s institution is part. Section 3(1) (d) also applies (see Annexure 12).
- Additionally, Section 3(1) (i) of National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993 (see Annexure 12) which talks about a representative with “considerable experience” is subjective. The phrase “considerable experience” must be defined.
- The composition of the board gives discretion to the Minister of Education to appoint representatives from their respective ministries. This situation and the fact that such representatives are not named could deprive the board of the technical expertise it needs to carry out its mandate effectively.

**OBJECTIVE 5: Analyse the effect of the current QA capacity and mechanisms of tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana and the usefulness of the application of these mechanisms at PUC’s**

**Interviewer (follow-up):** Based on your experiences, does the NAB/NCTE have the capacity to achieve its mandate of QA in the PUC’s in Ghana? Justify your responses.

**Regulatory institutions’ responses:** We do not have the required capacity and capability to effectively carry out our tasks. I say so for several reasons. First, we have only one office located in Greater Accra that regulates all higher education institutions in Ghana. During the development of our latest strategic plan, the need to open zonal offices in the northern and southern part of the country was discussed, but this has not yet been implemented. We also do not have enough vehicles. In addition, our e-application system is not effective, so we still deal with a lot of paper work. As a result, institutions are still submitting hardcopies and storage is becoming a challenge. We do not have adequate

human resources and this has sometimes led to delays in our response to our customers' applications and requests. When you visit our offices, you can see that the desks of our staff have huge piles of applications. The applications for accreditation keep coming every day and these have to be evaluated and reports written but because human resource is a challenge, we are unable to work within the expected deadlines. The quality of the human resource is also a challenge. It is not that we do not have the staff but they lack the expertise. As you can see, there are a lot of young staff around but they are not trained in the kind of expertise we need. We need to develop their capacity. The budget we are given is not enough, so we are unable to train and develop the capacity of our staff. Sometimes the NAB encounters challenges in getting the right expertise from within the country. For instance, if we want to go and assess engineering programmes at KNUST, almost all graduates of engineering programmes attended KNUST so what do you do? In such circumstances, we had to rely on other experts from outside the country. We have brought experts from UK, Nigeria and South Africa to help and this also contributes to delays in the services we offer.

On the contrary the participant from the NCTE intimated as follows:

For our day-to-day functioning, we have the capacity. As indicated earlier regarding adequacy of human resources, in situations that we do not have the capacity to perform our functions we use external consultants.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** In your opinion, how has each of the following mechanisms of QA influenced the quality of education provided by the PUC's in Ghana? (i) affiliation; (ii) academic quality audit; (iii) quality monitoring and institutional review (iv) institutional and programme accreditation. Are there additional mechanisms that you think could be adopted to ensure quality in the PUC's in Ghana?

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** Except for affiliation which applies to only PUC's, all the other interventions apply to all higher education institutions in Ghana. Before I continue, let me add that we have as part of our QA interventions directed all higher

education institutions to have an internal QA unit that will ensure quality in the day-to-day activities of their institutions. The NAB has three departments that collaborate for purposes of QA. The departments are the QA department, the accreditation department and the research monitoring and evaluation department. The QA department is responsible for the development of all instruments for QA as well as policies and protocols for pre-accreditation and post accreditation activities.

**(i) Affiliation:** This is a requirement for only PUC's. The aim is to get PUC's to be affiliated to an autonomous university in Ghana or outside Ghana for the purposes of mentoring, supervision and award of its certificates until a PUC obtains a Presidential Charter Status. Affiliation is part of our requirements as indicated in our document called the "National Accreditation Board, Ghana: Roadmap to Accreditation." This is an aspect of the pre-accreditation stage. Actually the processes we take the PUC's through is quite detailed and any PUC that is willing to learn should be able to know what the acceptable practices are and be able to disseminate it to members of their institutions. I will encourage you to get this document and assess it yourself in order to see how detailed it is in terms of procedure and requirements for guiding tertiary education institutions to deliver quality education. We also rely on reports from the mentoring institutions on their assessment of the relevance of the programmes and the facilities required for running their programmes. When the result of the assessment is positive, the mentoring university issues an affiliation certificate to the PUC which they submit to the NAB based on which we move to the other stages in the accreditation process towards institutional and programme accreditation. Since the NAB is a regulatory institution, we do not teach programmes and do not have the capacity to assess programmes, and so affiliations as a mechanism is relevant in assessing the programmes run by the PUC's. Once affiliation is granted, the mentoring university still has supervisory responsibility to ensure quality standards are observed in the university colleges affiliated to it.

**(ii) Academic quality audits:** Academic quality audit is for assessing the adequacy and effectiveness of a higher education institution's mechanisms for ensuring compliance with the minimum QA standards for accreditation. Thus, before an academic audit the higher education institution does self-assessment and produces a report that is reviewed by a



team of assessors as part of the quality audit process. Academic quality audit is the stage at which we assess the quality of the system the higher education institution has established for QA and whether it conforms to our norms and standards. Thus, quality audit is done to fulfil the fitness for purpose role of the higher education institutions mechanisms for QA. Academic quality audit provides data for decisions of whether or not to accredit or re-accredit a PUC. The PUC is required to provide documents such as files of students enrolled for a programme, marked scripts and marking schemes, examination results, transcript of students and students' handbook, governance and administration etc. We also check to ascertain who the principal and key officers are. As stated earlier, it is a very comprehensive process and I am sure when you get a sample of the format for academic audit reporting, you can see all the details that we look for before an institution is granted accreditation or re-accreditation. It must be noted that audit is done for first time applicants who want to establish a PUC as well as PUC's that have already been accredited and are seeking re-accreditation. As part of the process, we have developed manuals that spell out each of the requirements that must be met and these manuals are given to the PUC's to guide them in their preparations for accreditation and re-accreditation. Quality audit is important in QA because it provides an opportunity to assess the appropriateness of the internal QA system in place. Once the PUC meets the minimum standard we approve and expect that the PUC's will improve as time goes on.

**(iii) Quality monitoring and assessment:** The role of assessment in our QA process is to examine the programme content and what is required in terms of practices, structures, resources and processes for delivering quality education by a PUC. As a result, an assessment measures the programmes and practices of a PUC in order to grade it using the evaluation criteria that we provide to the assessors. As such, the assessment gives an indication of whether a PUC meets our set standards or where gaps are identified, recommendations are made for improvement. I therefore view assessment as relevant to both the PUC and also to the regulatory institutions. The outcome of quality assessment provides information to PUC's on gaps that must be addressed in order to meet our quality standards. It also encourages them to maintain and improve upon the quality standards they have achieved. To us as regulators, the result of the assessment enables us to check

the PUC's in terms of their level of compliance, a means of controlling what PUC's do and to suggest what they must do to improve upon their practices. So quality monitoring and assessment report contributes to the judgment we make during accreditation on whether an institution and its programmes meet our standards for us to give approval for that PUC to operate and run the programmes it has submitted.

**iv) Institutional and programme accreditation:** The two aspects of the QA process are a very essential components for ensuring that only PUC's that meet the required standards are allowed to offer higher education. Had it not been for this mechanism that gives a judgment as to whether a PUC qualifies to operate we would have had almost every corner of Ghana having a PUC. This is the last stage which results in granting or not granting accreditation. So we use the various levels of accreditation to let the PUC's to understand the QA requirements. The pre-accreditation stage is where we do the initial inspections to find out whether the site is suitable, whether they have a certain minimum level of facilities and staffing. At the accreditation stage, we ensure that everything is in place – staff, physical facilities, library and everything are in place. Then at the post accreditation stage, we have audits and visitations to ensure that recommendations are implemented.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** Based on your experiences, what is your opinion on the requirement of ten years minimum period of affiliation for PUC's in Ghana?

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** The issue of duration is debatable. Not everybody who ventures into tertiary education provision has the expertise and the experience to manage a higher education institution. Some of the people who establish PUC's think that, it is a money-making venture and therefore they just come in and do whatever they like. Affiliation and mentoring are important. For a typical 4yr programme, by the 5<sup>th</sup> year, a PUC would have the first batch of students who would have completed their national service and would likely be employed. The regulatory institutions, the mentoring PSU's and the PUC could therefore be able to gather feedback to determine whether they are doing well. So, between 5-6 years should be adequate because, industry would have

employed their graduates for them to be able to get feedback from them. The PUC's have also taught the students throughout the four years and so within that period they would have assessed the students. Again within this period, the external regulatory institution would have assessed the institution and provided them with a review report. Based on all these information, if a PUC feels they are ready for autonomy they can apply. But the challenge is that some of the PUC's have been in existence for more than ten years but have not been complying with the basic requirements for ensuring quality. So, if we look at just years, we will not be doing ourselves any good as a nation. Years are important but we can have a minimum of five years. After five years, if a PUC has complied with the basic quality standards, they could be granted autonomy.

I think affiliation is relevant to a point, because you can get a business person establishing a PUC and so the requirement of affiliation is to provide an opportunity for those without the requisite knowledge in higher education to learn the basic principles of tertiary education. This should be imbibed in everyone but not for an extended period of ten years because of finances involved such as the payment of affiliation fees. A minimum of ten years of affiliation I think it is too much. By the fifth year, if a PUC has a good staff development policy, a number of senior lecturers and associate professors who will be knowledgeable in the management of higher education would be available. If the institution is also able to meet the other requirements then they can become autonomous.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** It has been argued that state-directed QA ensures more of compliance and accountability than improvement/enhancement that facilitates the development of a culture of quality. Based on your experiences, what is your view on what your mechanisms have focused on in the QA process in the PUC's in Ghana?

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** I must say that compliance is an aspect of QA, but QA primarily is the responsibility of the institution itself. We should be able to get to the point where the PUC's will not be looking over their shoulders to find out whether the regulatory institutions are coming or not before they do the right thing. QA is expected to be an everyday thing in all the universities. We only play a facilitative role. However, as it

is almost always the case, where there are some recalcitrant institutions, then the laws must be enforced. For example, there was a time when a PUC had listed some unqualified students to be graduated. Immediately we were informed, we quickly organised a group that went to check and over fifty students who did not qualify to graduate were identified and we stopped them from being graduated. Aside this, we use sanctions like an institution's accreditation being revoked, suspended, or withdrawn, or the institution is prohibited from admitting new students until the requirements are satisfied. We also rely on the mentoring regime which is for improvement/enhancement. I will say based on what I mentioned earlier about factors that affect QA in PUC's in Ghana, we need to focus on ensuring compliance and through that achieve the needed improvement in the practices of the PUC's. I will therefore say that all the three purposes of QA are achieved through the mechanisms we have in place.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** There appears to be a high level of interest of Ghanaians in the quality of education being offered in the PUC's. What are the main means through which you solicit the views of Ghanaians to improve the quality of education provided by the PUC's in Ghana?

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** I must admit, the NAB has not gone out directly to conduct any public survey on public perceptions and expectation for QA in tertiary education institutions in Ghana but we have had complaints mainly from student bodies, the press and some individuals. Some of these complaints have triggered full scale investigations concerning issues such as programme change without due notice to students and qualifications of lecturers. A lecturer had ever complained about another lecturer that he believed did not have a PhD that he indicated he had. We then followed up with an investigation and it was true that the lecturer in question did not hold a PhD as he claimed. Sometimes, we get to know about unaccredited programmes from the press when the PUC's advertise for admission of students onto such programmes.

We do not have formal machinery for engaging stakeholders but we talk about these issues at conferences and meetings. We have held about two of such meetings recently.

We cannot invite everybody to the meeting but we invite people in the higher education sector.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** Which interest groups if any, and to what extent has the NAB/NCTE been guided by its stakeholder's views in the formulation and implementation of QA policies and practices in the PUC's in Ghana?

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** The first group is the PUC's themselves. They are our immediate clients in this exercise. Then we have the professional bodies like the Nurses and Midwifery Council, Mental and Dental Council, the Judicial Council, the Institute of Engineers. Then we have other allied institutions under the Ministry of Education. So these are all players within the sector. Certainly we also have something to do with parliament because of the laws we operate with. So when we develop new policies based on the inputs from our stakeholders and depending upon the urgency of the issue to be addressed by the new policy, it takes immediate effect. However, under normal circumstances it would be at the beginning of an academic year. For instance, if there are changes in policy regarding admissions, it is normally communicated before the beginning of the new academic year so that new students will be enrolled based on that policy. However, if pertinent issues arise during academic audits which are common to many PUC's, then we would address them immediately. There was a time when we realised from our audit reports that some PUC's did not have adequate finances to continue to operate. We had to take an immediate decision and wrote to the institutions to ensure that the existing students were transferred to other PUC's of their choice. Based on this experience the board instituted a policy of financial guarantee which requires that before a PUC is given accreditation, they must have a certain minimum level of finances in their account. When this policy was instituted, all PUC's were given a timeline to provide a proof of the availability of such funds in their bank accounts.

Our sources of information for the formulation of policies include the PUC's, employers, the media, students and the Association of Ghana Industries which serves on our council. I would even say the general public since we are open to any relevant information that

can help us improve upon the mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education in our universities. These groups give us feedback on our performance and also make inputs for decision making. Although students are not part of our council, sometimes they provide us with information on issues such as programme change or increase in school fees by the PUC's without prior notice. We have also implemented recommendations made by stakeholders such as the AAU on the need to ensure the rights and protection of students who attend PUC's, establish advisory and inspectorate units for the PUC's, have an up-to-date register of approved PUC's in order to help students make informed choices and the necessity for support in the form of training in financial and administrative services for staff of the PUC's.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** Although the establishment of PUC's in Ghana can be assumed to be adhering to the constitutional directive of making tertiary education accessible to all citizens, how has the NAB/NCTE ensured that the entrepreneurial character of private providers does not undermine this purpose?

**Regulatory institutions' responses:** We do not have such meetings on our annual calendar that every year we will meet the PUC's. As I said earlier, two major issues concern us; first is admission of qualified applicants and second is recruitment of qualified lecturers. These are the most important issues that bother us. There are some of the PUC's who do not have the student numbers to enable them get the funding required to run as a tertiary education provider. So I believe some of the PUC's should be merged and some should even fold up. I say so because; in Accra alone, there are too many PUC's.

#### **7.4.1.1 General assessment of the perceptions and experiences of participants from the regulatory institutions**

As indicated in Chapter 7, Section 7.4.1, Objective 1 was achieved mainly through a review of the literature and document analysis which enabled the researcher to provide the general background, rationale, research problem and research questions. Thus, this

research was necessitated based on information obtained through the initial literature review and document analysis (see Chapter 1, Sections 1.2 - 1.3).

The first set of data from the regulatory institutions provides responses to complement the reviewed literature in Chapter 2 for addressing research Objective 2, which is to reflect upon the literature review of tertiary education QA (discourse) and factors that affect it (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). In understanding Objective 2 of this research, the reviewed literature in Chapter 2 significantly addressed the different views of scholars on the concept of QA mechanisms. The literature review also identified best practices and procedures for QA from selected developed countries. The literature review also paid attention to the concepts of accreditation, affiliation, mentoring and institutional isomorphism as strategies for QA in higher education.

Of all the four groups of participants, the regulatory institutions were one of the best groups of people to assess the understanding of PUC's of what QA entails and the factors that affect QA in the PUC's. This is due to the fact that they assess and make the final decision of whether a PUC meets the set standards. In order to address the research problem (Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1) and in line with research objective 2 (Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2) a general assessment of the perceptions and experiences of the participants from the regulatory institutions is provided in this section.

#### **Group A: Sub theme 1: Understanding of quality assurance**

Responses from the participants from the regulatory institutions showed that PUC's had a fair understanding of QA as a continuous and systematic process of ensuring quality in all the inputs and transformation processes required to ensure quality standards. In particular, the participants mentioned that because most of the heads of PUC's were once faculty members of PSU's they knew what quality tertiary education entails and as such ensured that all the quality standards were observed. In addition, participants believed that the processes that PUC's go through in order to be granted accreditation and re-accreditation were comprehensive enough to facilitate their understanding of what QA entails. With regard to the activities that could have been undertaken by the regulatory

institutions to facilitate a good understanding and implementation practices that will ensure quality standards in the PUC's, whilst one of the regulatory institutions focused on the development of policies, the other participants agreed that they could do more in terms of regular workshops to enhance the understanding of PUC's on what QA entails. This suggests a gap in terms of implementation strategies of the regulatory institutions for facilitating the understanding of PUC's of what QA entails. Thus, whilst policies exist for ensuring quality; the processes for ensuring quality were ineffective. An *In vivo* response from one of the participants from the regulatory institutions in relation to the understanding of QA by the PUC's is as follows:

*“... I think the concept of QA is understood. ... Generally, most of the people who are managing the PUC's system came from the PSU's so they understand what QA is. Again, before a PUC is accredited, the processes that they pass through expose them to the field of QA. The PUC's are even required to have an internal QA unit, a QA policy and a strategic plan for achieving the set quality standards. So even if you are a layman coming to manage a higher education institution, these processes will let you understand what is required of you in assuring quality in the institutions.”*

#### **Group A: Sub theme 2: Inhibitors to effective quality assurance**

When a follow-up question was asked as to the factors that affect QA in PUC's, several factors were mentioned such as the profit motive of owners and managers of the PUC's, lack of material and human resources, lack of financial capacity of PUC's to recruit qualified academic and administrative staff. While acknowledging the fact that as regulators, there was a gap in their analyses and use of information from review reports, participants did not believe that what they understood as quality higher education and the practices required for ensuring quality differed from the understanding of QA by staff of the PUC's. Rather, the participants believed that it was a lack of ownership of practices that would ensure quality that has contributed to the below quality standards that exist in the PUC's.

Another *In vivo* response from the participants from the regulatory institutions in relation to the factors that affect QA in the PUC's is as follows:

*“... not everybody who enters into tertiary education provision has the knowledge, capacity and experience to manage a university. Some of the owners think that it is a profit making venture and therefore they just come in and do whatever they like.”*



These assertions confirm and agree with the reviewed literature that led to the formulation of the problem statement (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1). The responses from the participants also confirm the reviewed literature (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5.2), where Dattey *et al.* (2014: 318) indicated that, when left on their own, some higher education institutions may be reluctant to ensure quality, as a result of the lack of adequate finances to provide the needed systems, or due to their profit motives. Additionally, the profile of the PUC's that participated in this study indicated that they were all not-for-profit institutions (see Chapter 5, Sections 5.2.1 – 5.2.6). Despite this, it was evident from the interview responses and the reviewed literature that, all the PUC's operated as if they were for-profit institutions. When asked about the effects of the current unacceptable QA practices in some of the PUC's, the participants indicated that it has led to negative perception by some members of the public about some PUC's. Some members of the public perceive PUC's as low quality institutions, not attractive to high quality students and lecturers, as a money making venture, and producing students who are just passing through the university colleges without acquiring any quality education. Other perceptions include mass production of students in the humanities at the expense of science related courses required for innovation and development of the country.

### **Group A: Sub theme 3: Membership of international associations and influences**

The third objective is to outline the theoretical perspectives and conceptual framework that relate to tertiary education QA in Ghana and compare key indicators and accreditation models between world class tertiary education regulatory institutions and tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). In Chapter 3, Section 3.2, the theoretical frameworks that relate to tertiary education QA and the conceptual framework (see Chapter 3, Figure 3.5) were discussed. In addition, the key indicators and accreditation models were compared between world class tertiary education regulatory institutions and tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana (see Chapter 3, Sections 3.7.1.1 – 3.7.1.3). The semi-structured personal interviews reveal that, the regulatory institutions belonged to international QA associations such as African Quality Assurance Network, INQAAHE and the AAU and also had collaborations with international institutions. The responses indicated that membership of the

international associations provided learning opportunities related to QA. It can be argued that, because of the dynamic nature of the environment in which higher education institutions operate, knowledge sharing through such collaborations is essential. One of the participants asserted as follows:

*“... we belong to African Quality Assurance Network, International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education. It afforded us the opportunity to attend conferences across the globe and in most of these conferences; there were workshops on topics related to QA. Also, some of our staff benefited from scholarships to pursue further studies in QA. Our membership has also offered us the opportunity to have access to the websites of these organisations where issues on QA are discussed.”*

As a follow-up, participants were asked whether their model of QA was designed based on any of the known models of QA of developed nations such as the USA, UK, and Australia and which specific aspects of these three countries QA models has been adopted and how these practices have been effective in ensuring quality education standards in the PUCs in Ghana. The responses from the participants indicate that, their model of QA had a lot more in common with the UK but not so much of the USA. From the reviewed literature (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4), in the USA model of QA, the external regulatory institutions were independent of government. In line with international best practices, the participants indicated their willingness to adopt practices like ranking of PUC's since it would provide information to applicants and employers in making informed decisions, motivate PUC's that are doing well and be a wake-up call to less performing PUC's. The response from one of the participants on the influence of international models of QA is as follows:

*“... yes, our model of QA has been influenced by that of other countries, but not from the USA. USA has a different model that it uses even though some of the items of quality assurance remain the same across the world. So unlike the USA where the external regulatory institutions are independent of government, we are a government institution.”*

#### **Group A: Sub theme 4: Effectiveness of existing quality assurance mechanisms**

A further investigation into the effectiveness of the existing mechanism for ensuring quality standards in the PUC's was undertaken. This aspect was considered as relevant to addressing the research problem which indicates that, notwithstanding the existence and the mandate of the two statutory regulatory institutions, media and research reports suggest a lack of satisfaction with quality standards being observed in some of the PUC's

in Ghana (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1). Interestingly, participants from the regulatory institutions believed that, to a large extent the mechanisms have worked to ensure that at least the minimum standards were adhered to by the PUC's. The participants indicated that affiliation in particular was a relevant mechanism since it provided a good opportunity for PUC's to learn from more experienced and established universities. Despite this assertion of the significance of affiliation, the responses from the PUC's point to a lack of satisfaction with the requirement of affiliation and the role played by the mentoring universities (see Chapter 7, Section 7.4.2). Additionally, although the participants noted that the policy that requires higher education institutions to be regulated through academic quality audit, quality monitoring and assessment and accreditation are international practices and were to a large extent effective, the participants from the PUC's expressed concerns in terms of the delays in the processing of the programme documents they submitted for accreditation. This concern by the PUC's was also affirmed by the participants from the regulatory institutions when they articulated that, they had implementation challenges. Perhaps an acknowledgement by one of the participants from the regulatory institutions is worthwhile since it shows that they were aware of the challenges with the existing QA mechanisms. What is required is for immediate steps to be taken to address these challenges. The participants from the regulatory institutions also acknowledged the gap in the performance of the mentoring universities and articulated it as follows:

*“... sometimes the inability or the shirking of responsibility of the mentoring universities to do their work has affected the quality of education in some of the PUC's. Since we do not possess all the expertise at the NAB that is why the framers of the law thought it wise that, there should be affiliation and mentoring by an autonomous university so they will assist in monitoring the quality of practices in the PUC's. As a result, we expect the mentoring universities to assist in this respect and report to us where there are challenges.”*

#### **Group A: Sub theme 5: Lack of collaboration due to 'turf' protection**

In responding to the question on what their views were with regard to the existing tertiary education QA framework of Ghana which shows that it is a collaborative effort between the NAB, the NCTE and the university to which the PUC's were affiliated, very interesting responses were provided. The issues identified had to do with duplication of functions and contradictions in the demands from the institutions in the QA process. In order to address

this challenge of duplication and contradictions, the participant suggested a modification that will allow for a joint team from the mentoring institutions and the regulatory institutions in undertaking a review and assessment of the PUC's instead of it being done separately. Even between the two regulatory institutions, the responses suggested a challenge of a lack of collaboration. As indicated in Chapter 5, Section 5.4, one of the regulatory institutions was responsible for policy formulation and the other was responsible for policy implementation. This challenge could be addressed if the NAB and the NCTE are merged in order for the policy formulation and implementation to be a seamless process. In expressing this challenge, one of the participants indicated as follows:

*"... although we are supposed to work together, sometimes some actors at the NAB are not happy. This has affected the effectiveness of our level of collaboration. For now, let me say that there is about 60% collaboration and about 40% turf protection."*

#### **Group A: Sub theme 6: Lack of implementation of previous recommendations**

The fourth objective is meant to provide a historical context of the legal framework on the establishment and operations of PUC's and tertiary education regulatory institutions in Ghana from 1991 to 2019 (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). In chapter 4, an attempt was made to provide the historical context and legal framework on the establishment of PUC's and the higher education regulatory institutions in Ghana.

In order to address research objective 4, recommendations of the committee set up in 1998 to determine the extent to which the policy objectives of the 1991 White Paper has been achieved were considered. Despite the fact that the committee made several recommendations, five of the recommendations that relate to PUC's were the focus of the semi structured interviews with participants from the regulatory institutions (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.1). Accordingly, participants were asked whether or not these recommendations were implemented.

The responses to the questions on each of the five recommendations are assessed here. The responses to the question on the extent to which the recommendation of ensuring that all tertiary education institutions were well equipped to offer quality education did not confirm the perceptions expressed in the media and other reports about the lack of

adequate infrastructure in most PUC's. Although the participants from the regulatory institutions were aware of the lack of adequate resource in some of the PUC's, they were of the view that, equipping the higher education institutions was a process. This process could lead to an improvement in the facilities or a lack of it. In order to address the lack of adequate facilities, the participants were of the view that, although the PUC's were not owned by the government of Ghana, the PUC's should be supported by government since they were providing a public service. The participants also suggested that once a PUC's accreditation status has not been revoked, it was a confirmation that they had the minimum facilities required to offer quality education. In relation to the second recommendation, the response was that, the mentoring universities vetted the examination questions and marked examination scripts of PUC's whilst programme and institutional accreditation were the mechanisms for ensuring that the minimum standards were met. In relation to the third recommendation which was to provide both material and human resources to enable the NCTE and the NAB to perform their functions and also for adequate remuneration to be paid to assessors to enable them submit their assessment reports on time, the responses differed between the two regulatory institutions. Whereas the policy formulation institution – NCTE – indicated that they had adequate human and non-human resources, the implementing institution –NAB – stated that they did not have adequate human and non-human resources. This response confirms the reviewed literature where an earlier report by Girdwood (1999: 41) revealed that the NAB and the NCTE, which are the institutions responsible for the regulation of the activities of the tertiary education institutions in Ghana, are under-resourced (see Chapter 2, Section 2.12.1.2). Also, the participants admitted that, as a result of inadequate funding, the assessors' remuneration was comparatively low and this led to a lack of commitment to submit assessment reports on time. The responses to the question on the need for the regulatory institutions to conduct a study to identify the challenges facing existing PUC's in order to be able to develop policy measures for the advancement of the private tertiary education was negative. Unfortunately and surprisingly, the regulatory institutions have not conducted any empirical studies on PUC's and so have not formulated any specific policies on PUC's. The reviewed literature (see Chapter 4, Section.4.4.1) shows that the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board which would have developed standardised

criteria irrespective of the PUC where an individual sought admission as well as monitor the admissions processes, in order to ensure that only qualified applicants were admitted into the PUC's has not been established. Participants were therefore asked how the NAB/NCTE monitored and regulated student admissions into the PUC's. The participants indicated that they have a standard entry requirement for all higher education institutions in Ghana. They also mentioned that, the mentoring institutions were required to have a representative on the admissions board of the PUC's to ensure the standards and norms were adhered to. Additionally, through institutional quality audit and assessment students' entry grades were checked by the assessors.

Apart from the responses on the recommendations, participants' views were sought on the 2007 National Accreditation Board Act and the 1993 National Council for Tertiary Education Act that gave legal backing to the establishment of the two regulatory institutions.

#### **Group A: Sub theme 7: Gaps in the Acts of establishment of the regulatory institutions**

One of the responses from a participant from the regulatory institutions on the need for the law that established the two regulatory institutions to be reviewed is as follows:

*"... there is a challenge. If you look at the law that established the NAB and the NCTE, we can only advise the Minister of Education. We can also not close down a school; we can only inform. The NAB and the NCTE should have the power to enforce its regulations. There should be amendment to the laws so we would be able to direct where a new PUC could be established. This is because Accra is choked with several PUC's and many more have applied to establish new PUC's in Accra. Again, on quality issues, to ensure compliance by PUC's that persistently ignored the set quality standards, the NAB and NCTE should have the authority to close down and prosecute the owners of such PUC's."*

The reasons advanced for the need for a review of the legislation was to enable the regulatory institutions to be able to physically shut down low quality PUC's and prosecute their owners and managers. The participants from the regulatory institutions viewed the current legislation as a limitation to their effective functioning. The current law limited the regulatory institutions to not granting accreditation or a revocation of accreditation status of the PUC's that did not comply and the publication of such decisions through the different

mediums of communication to the public. This response from the participants corroborated the reviewed literature in Chapter 4, Section 4.4.3.4 on the challenges of the NAB and in Chapter 4, Section 4.4.4.3 on the challenges of the NCTE. Thus, although the NAB has the mandate to ensure quality education standards within Ghana's tertiary education sector, it did not have the needed authority to carry out the said mandate. In addition, a lawyer's view was sought on the gaps in the current legislation that established the NAB and the NCTE. The lawyer also suggested the need for a review of the law with regard to the composition and background of people appointed to serve on the board.

### **Group A: Sub theme 8: Lack of capacity of the National Accreditation Board**

The fifth objective was to analyse the effect of the current QA capacity and mechanisms of tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana and the usefulness of the application of these mechanisms at PUC's (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). With specific reference to the capacity of the NAB to perform its role of QA, the responses indicated that, the NAB did not have adequate capability and capacity to ensure quality standards in the PUC's in Ghana. In the reviewed literature, Alabi *et al.* (2018: 7) asserted that the capacity of the institutions responsible for higher education QA in Ghana are weak, and the national capacity for QA is inadequate (see Chapter 2, Section 4.4.3.4). The response from the participants from the regulatory institutions confirmed the position of Alabi *et al.* (2018: 7) on the low capacity of the regulatory institutions. On the contrary, the participant from the policy formulation institution; which is the NCTE, indicated that they had adequate capacity to execute their mandate. With regard to the lack of capacity, the participant from the policy implementation institution; the NAB intimated as follows:

*"... our greatest concern is the staff. It is not that we do not have staff but they lack the expertise required. As you can see, there are a lot of young staff around but they are not trained in the kind of expertise we need. We need to develop their capacity to be efficient. ... The money is not enough but that is not the major problem. The major problem is the need to strengthen our staff capacity."*

### **Group A: Sub theme 9: Institutional isomorphic mechanisms for quality assurance**

In relation to the mechanism of the tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana and the usefulness of the application of these mechanisms at PUC, the focus was to find out the extent to which these externally driven mechanisms have been effective in ensuring

quality education standards in the PUC's in Ghana. The mechanisms used in practice could be classified under the coercive, mimetic or normative mechanisms for institutional isomorphic change. Affiliation which is one of the mechanisms for QA in the PUC's in Ghana could be classified as a coercive as well as a mimetic mechanism for QA. From the perspective of the participants from the regulatory institutions, mimetic isomorphism is one of the underlying philosophies behind the QA framework for regulating PUC's in Ghana. The policy of affiliation is to ensure that tertiary education was not treated as a purely business venture and also to ensure that the PUC's are well prepared to undertake the provision of tertiary education. In understanding the factors that have contributed to the ineffectiveness of affiliation, the respondents pointed to the high number of PUC's that were affiliated to a few PSU's that were preferred by most of the PUC's.

The interview responses, the reviewed literature and document analysis, showed that, several practices between PUC's and PSU's in Ghana promote mimetic isomorphism. Apart from the influence of the mentoring universities, the assessors who most times were from the PSU's also fostered mimetic isomorphism through the recommendations made during assessments. The responses gathered from the participants suggested a mixed perception about the effectiveness of the mimetic isomorphic change required from the process of affiliation due to the inability of the mentoring institutions to perform their roles. Thus, while affiliation was considered relevant, the participants from the regulatory institutions were of the view that, it has not been effective. The responses to the question on the ten years minimum period of affiliation was described as relative because each PUC has a different context and factors that influenced their commitment to ensure quality standards in their operations. One of the responses from the participants was expressed as follows:

*"... the issue of duration is debatable. Not everybody who ventures into tertiary education provision has the expertise and the experience to manage a higher education institution. ... some of the people who establish PUC's think that it is a money-making venture and therefore they just come in and do whatever they like."*

From the responses, it is evident that the mechanisms used by the regulatory institutions – affiliation, quality audit and assessment and accreditation - foster all the three forms of isomorphic change. In reference to their effectiveness in ensuring quality, participants



were of the opinion that although they were relevant mechanisms, there were challenges with their implementation resulting in their effectiveness. In emphasising the significance of the QA mechanisms, a participant responded as follows:

*“... frankly the requirements of the regulatory institutions have helped to sanitise the system. These processes are even performed in the PSU’s. ... although the process of affiliation and accreditation takes some time, had it not been so, we would have had every village in Ghana having a private university college.”*

In a follow-up question on the means through which the regulatory institutions solicited the views of Ghanaians to improve the quality of education offered by the PUC’s, the responses indicated that there was no formal machinery for engaging stakeholders in order to gather data on the performance of PUC’s. However, participants indicated that they were guided by inputs from the PUC’s themselves and all other stakeholders. Although the regulatory institutions indicated that they do annual reviews of their activities, they were of the view that an assessment of their functions by an external person or institution would be more objective and preferable.

#### **7.4.2 GROUP B: PERCEPTIONS, VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPANTS FROM THE PRIVATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGES**

In this section, responses from participants from the PUC’s are presented. The responses are centred on each of the research objectives (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2) that also directed the semi-structured interview guides (see Annexure 9) used for this inquiry. Consequently, the presentation, analyses, interpretation and discussion of the data that were gathered from the PUC’s are also presented in line with each of the research objectives (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2).

##### **OBJECTIVE 1: Provide the general background, rationale and research (methodical) framework, which emphasises and accentuates the importance of the study**

As indicated in Chapter 1, Section 7.4.1, research Objective 1 was not addressed through semi-structured personal interviews. Seventeen individuals from the PUC’s contributed to the second set of data collected through the semi-structured personal interviews. Although there are over eighty-eight PUC’s in Ghana and therefore this number of participants could

be deemed as inadequate for drawing conclusions, due to the research approach adopted and the purpose of this research which is exploratory, this number could be deemed sufficient as it provides a foundation information for further studies.

**OBJECTIVE 2: Reflect upon the literature review of tertiary education quality assurance (discourse) and factors that affect it**

**Interviewer:** In the reviewed literature, the NAB defines quality assurance as “... the continuous and systematic act of reviewing structures, systems and practices towards the attainment of a desired end.” In your opinion, to what extent do members of this university college understand what tertiary education QA entails and the factors that affect higher education QA? Justify your response.

**Private university colleges’ responses:** I think members understand. There are structures such as academic board, faculty board that discuss and take decisions on activities that should be undertaken, assign responsibilities to members and form committees for the purpose of ensuring quality. All lecturers are members of the faculty board and at the academic board level, there are representatives from all the different constituents within the university college community. The academic board is the highest decision making body in the institution. As such, all decisions made where representatives of all the members of the university are present are therefore disseminated through the structures and people have to comply. This kind of structure and process, and the fact that people comply and carry out their task as expected shows that members understand what to do to ensure quality. The type of structure and procedure we have in place ensures that information on issues related to QA are disseminated on a continuous basis. Activities in the university are governed by rules, policies and guidelines. For examples, with the faculty members, there are policies governing when and where to meet students for lectures, examinations, research and publication, staff-student relationship, policies on admissions as well as policies on recruitment and selection. Once they are complying with these laid down requirements, it means they understand what QA entails. The creation of an internal QA unit and policies on QA are requirements from the NAB. This is known to the staff of the university college. Mostly the concept is understood by faculty members

and senior members, and to a reasonable extent by senior and junior staff. When new staff are recruited, during the orientation programme, the QA director takes them through the relevant portions of the QA documents that apply to their work. Every semester, we carry out a survey on lecturers' performance. The outcomes of these surveys are given to each dean of the faculty who then discusses the aspects of the report that are related to each lecturer and the corrective actions that must be taken. Those who are doing well are encouraged and are sometimes asked to support those who had challenges in their performance. The two regulatory institutions and our mentors have provided us with the norms and standards that should govern whatever we do. Based on these norms and standards we have developed specific policies on every aspect of the university college's operations. Our university prides itself with the formulation of good policies that drive most of the academic work that we do here. So once you are employed you are given a copy of our policy document for you to know the guidelines within which you carry out your work as a member of staff. Periodically we interact with the administrative staff and lecturers to see how best they understand and are working within the policies of the university college. All these processes have helped us so far to meet the requirements of the NAB and our mentoring institutions.

To some extent I will say the members understand what quality means but some also do not understand. I have noticed that most of our university college lecturers do not understand certain policies and requirements of the regulatory institutions. Let me talk about the faculty members first before the administrative staff. For example, if a faculty member does not understand the purpose of affiliation; such a person will not submit his or her examination questions on time to be sent to the external examiner for vetting. The lack of understanding and relevance of the policies on QA is a result of lack of education and orientation by this university college, the NAB, the NCTE and the mentoring university. There are challenges with how some faculty members lecture, prepare their marking schemes, course outlines and how they relate to students. Another issue concerning the faculty members is the selling of hand-outs to students. My observation is that when you give hand-outs to students they do not use the library to do further research. With reference to the administrators, their lack of understanding shows in the services they

render to students. Students have complained about how a simple request for services like issuing of academic transcript or letter of attestation takes a very long time. I have been here long enough to know that, many of the members; whether students, administrative staff or lecturers, not everybody understands the need to ensure quality. But gradually and over time, through discussions and seminars, many people are beginning to understand that without quality in the delivery of our services, we cannot attract students, so they are all beginning to comply with the laid down rules and regulations. With respect to the lecturers and administrative staff we draw their attention to the fact that whatever we are doing here, we are in a competition with other universities; both public and private, as well as internationally.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** As a follow-up to the awareness of members about what counts as quality private tertiary education, how will you argue that the level of education and training provided by the regulatory institutions, the mentoring PSU's and the PUC itself to members of this university college has facilitated your understanding of higher education quality assurance? How do you ensure that issues related to quality are disseminated, understood and complied with by members of the university college?

**Private university colleges' responses** With regard to training offered by the NAB and our mentoring institutions, no regular training has been organised for us. Although our programmes are affiliated to two PSU's, it is only one that interacts with us regularly. The one to which a few of our programmes are affiliated does well with regard to educating us on how to develop new programmes, course outlines and marking of examinations but the other that a lot more of our programmes are affiliated to does not care. I do not want to mention names but that mentoring institution is only taking our money but not playing its role. We are a young university college and so I expect more in terms of training on what we should do in order to offer quality education to our students. Recently, they organised a general training programme for all PUC's that they mentor. We were made aware that, the teaching methods and the type of examination questions we set should involve synthesis, comprehension and application rather than only recall. I think in this regard they have done all. But in terms of coming to follow up whether the university

college is implementing what has been agreed upon, they do not do. I am of the view that, if the regulatory institutions frequently educate and monitor what we do, things would have been better. As a result of the internal challenges and the gap in the role of the mentoring universities, the national regulatory institution must play their role by monitoring and evaluating what the mentoring universities and the PUC's do. We do not hear much from the regulatory institutions except when we submit new programmes for accreditation. Simply put, I believe this has contributed to the lack of proper understanding of practices that will ensure quality standards in the PUC's in Ghana. I however admit that, in the absence of more frequent training programmes by the regulatory institutions and our mentoring universities, our university college itself in a bid to achieve its reason for existence should do more to educate members on issues of quality. On the few occasions that the university college organised workshops for members of the university college, some of the lecturers did not attend. Occasionally we apply sanctions which could be financial. These sanctions apply to both teaching and non-teaching staff. We sometimes do job rotation as a way of ensuring quality. However, internally, I do not think we are doing well especially for newly appointed staff and faculty members. Sometimes, newly appointed staff are not given orientation. As such, it takes a long time for new faculty members to understand and do what is expected of them. The difference I have noticed is that when the university college first started, there were regular workshops but that is not the case now.

Every policy document spells out the dissemination process so it is with QA. Any information or policy decision when taken at every committee level has representatives who are required to disseminate it. One of our important meetings is the academic board; where we have representatives of all the units within the university college. Apart from the members of the boards and committees, the deans and heads of the various units are required to disseminate information on such matters. We also send memos, and sometimes hold durbars and convocation meetings on issues related to quality especially if they are directives from the regulatory institutions or our mentoring universities. We sometimes use the various staff associations to disseminate the information. Generally however, the internal QA unit is required to ensure compliance by members of the

university college. Considering the wide range of issues and areas in the university college, I will say the internal QA unit lacks the capacity to do so.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** The reviewed literature shows that the quality of higher education could be assured through internal or external mechanisms or both. What are your internal mechanisms for ensuring quality and how effective have these mechanisms been in ensuring quality in this university college?

**Private university colleges' responses:** We have an internal QA directorate which is a requirement by the NAB. The unit comprises the Director, who is a faculty member and the head of the unit, a Senior Assistant registrar who assists the director, and an administrative assistant. The internal QA unit is responsible for ensuring quality standards are observed in every aspect of this university college's practices. The directorate is like the hub of relationships, so in terms of communication, completion of documentation on accreditation, and attending meetings with mentoring universities, it is the responsibility of the QA unit to coordinate this. The registrar works with the director of the QA unit. Every official document from the university college passes through the registrar's secretariat for assessment and approval. So despite the fact that programmes are developed by the departments and approved by the faculties, the registrar ensures they meet the required standards before they are submitted to the NAB. The internal QA unit is very relevant to the workings of the university. They enforce the rules and policies on QA. A lapse on the part of the QA unit is that our focus has largely been on the faculty members rather than the administrators, maybe because the unit is an academic QA unit. As part of our QA process, students assess lecturers every semester. In addition to the internal QA directorate, we also have the academic planning and QA committee that is responsible for assessing and approving programmes developed by the faculties before they are submitted to the academic board for consideration and approval. As an institution, we have rules and regulations, policies and procedures to follow regarding every activity that goes on in the university college. The university college also has a disciplinary committee that handles issues that are referred to them. As a result of the nature of our role, we are

in the process of establishing a monitoring and evaluation group made up of selected members of the university college.

The work of the QA unit is aimed at ensuring that we meet the norms and standards set by the NAB, the NCTE and our mentor universities. The university college also has its mission and vision statements. We are guided by all these requirements in our internal QA decisions and actions. The role of the unit is quite broad and I would admit that we do not have all the human and non-human resources required but we are managing with what we have and look forward to an improvement to enable us do more. We collaborate with all the other units within the university college in the performance of our functions.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** The reviewed literature identified the factors listed below among those that affect tertiary education QA. In what ways has any of the factors below or any other factor affected the quality of education offered by the PUC's in Ghana?

- Differences in the conception of what QA is (formative or summative) between the regulatory institutions and the higher education institutions.
- Incompatibility between the views of the academic staff as implementers of QA policy and what has been designed as acceptable quality higher education standards by the regulatory institutions.
- Lack of mechanisms to effectively analyse the information gathered during reviews and a lack of properly trained evaluators.
- Lack of ownership by the higher education institutions of the QA process.
- Lack of management skills and expertise related to QA at all levels.

**Private university colleges' responses:** On the issue of the differences in the conception of what QA is, I do not think our understanding of what QA is, is different from that of the regulatory institutions. In any case, we are supposed to comply with the standards and norms as well as the requirements from our mentoring institution and the regulatory institutions. All these processes have helped us to know the higher education quality standards they expect us to observe. Whatever we do that may be contrary to their

expectation is not as a result of our different understanding of QA. Rather, I think that factors such as inadequate human and non-human resources have contributed to the gaps in the university college's quality standards. I also think the assessors who come to assess us are qualified but the challenge is when they want us to follow what they do in their various universities. There should be room for innovation because we are a PUC and we must design our programmes in a way that will attract students. I agree not everybody within this university college is fully committed to ensure quality. That is why we have mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating them and for corrective action to be taken. Despite the gaps in our training efforts and in the dissemination of information on issues related to quality from the regulatory institutions and our mentoring universities, that has not created any differences in what the views of the academic staff are and what has been designed as acceptable quality higher education standards by the regulatory institutions. On the issue of lack of ownership by the higher education institutions of the QA process, I think the processes and practices we have in place are aimed at ensuring that every member accepts and ensures quality in everything they do. Of course as a human institution, there could be challenges; that is why we have a system for monitoring and evaluation so that those that go contrary to the acceptable quality standards could be corrected. At the management level, I believe everyone is competent. We have experienced professors who have provided good leadership in every aspect of this university college's activities.

One of the factors that have affected QA is that, sometimes because of financial challenges, and the lack of appreciation by some owners and managers of the university college about the benefits of training, they do not make provision for training in the budget. I will add that there are other factors that have somehow affected our effort to reach the maximum level of quality we aim at achieving. I believe the faculty members are being overworked. Their teaching workloads are too high as compared to that of lecturers in the PSU's. As a result, the quality of their services could be compromised. Other factors include inadequate finances of the university college. As a result of inadequate finances, management will prefer to pay workers' salaries rather than to spend on training programmes. Again, because we do not have the financial strength, we are unable to offer



comparable remuneration in order to attract and employ the number of professors and other categories of staff required by our regulators. Our sources of income are the tuition fees and support from the church that established the university college. I must admit that, these are some of the inputs that will enable us deliver quality education and so if they are lacking, definitely there will be challenges but we have been doing our best to ensure the minimum level required by our mentoring university and regulatory institutions are met in order to prevent the revocation of our accreditation status or de-affiliation. Our student numbers are also reducing due to the increasing number of PUC's as well as the stiff competition we are facing from the PSU's. The PSU's are expanding their facilities and are now admitting more students as 'fee paying students' which they previously would not have done. Even when the PSU's admit 'fee-paying' students, their tuition fees are still lower than our fees, so unless a student is interested in a programme that we offer, which he was not offered in the public sector university, he will not accept admission into a PUC.

**Interviewer (Follow-up):** In what ways do you think the PUC's governance and ownership structure has affected (positive and negative) QA practices of the PUC's?

**Private university colleges' responses:** In most of the PUC's, particularly in those that are individually owned, some of the owners want to be the Chairman of Council or President of the institution. Some of the owners also interfere in the day-to-day affairs of the institution. So the governance structure in the PUC's is more restrictive than in PSU's. At times it is like a mother and a child sort of relationship where the child must take instructions from the mother. As a result, it does not allow for divergent views. For our governance structure, we have the owners of the university college, followed by the governing council. Fortunately, the NAB does not want to see a governance structure that is dominated by owners who are not qualified although behind the scene they influence the decisions that are taken. On the positive side, the church that established us has on many occasions supported us financially by giving us grants and loans without interest. This has been helpful but sometimes embarrassing because the owners complain about the number of years we have been in existence and expect us to be financially independent after ten years of existence. They also accuse us of financial

mismanagement, lack of appropriate strategies for attracting the requisite number of students. Our owners have complained about our level of remuneration and were of the view that it was too high. I think they do not recognise that we are in competition with other tertiary education institutions and for us to be able to attract qualified faculty members and administrative staff; our remuneration should be within a range that is attractive.

In this university college, those who established the university college have a lot of influence in the appointment to top management positions and sometimes even lower level positions. The president of this university college has always been appointed by the executive council of the church and the persons appointed have most of the time been church members. When it comes to appointment to key positions, we are interested in appointing someone who fears God, someone who can articulate the beliefs of the Bible so as to train students as scholars who fear God.

**Interviewer (Follow-up):** Are you able to share some of the negative effects of these factors on the quality of education in the PUC's?

**Private university colleges' responses:** Oh yes, standards are falling. What I know as university in terms of lecturers approach to teaching and learning by students is not what I am seeing. I am afraid for the future because of the type of graduates we are producing. Many people are enrolling in universities not to learn but just to acquire certificates. This situation must be addressed by the higher education regulatory institutions. Everything is deteriorating as a result of what some owners and managers are doing as well as the attitude of some students to learning.

Some people are establishing university colleges without requisite resources. They have inadequate infrastructure and lack other inputs to offer quality education. Although people say that had it not been for the establishment of PUC's a lot of qualified people would have been in the house, my question is whether the aim is just to make people to enrol in universities or to acquire knowledge that will make them productive. I think we can do more in order to make PUC's more attractive and relevant.

**OBJECTIVE 3: Outline the theoretical perspectives and conceptual framework that relate to tertiary education quality assurance in Ghana and compare key indicators and accreditation models between world class tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana.**

**Interviewer:** Is your institution a member of any international and national network or association of similar types or collaborations with other institutions and in what ways have the QA practices of these associations influenced the QA practices of this university college?

**Private university colleges' responses:** Yes, we belong to a few national and international associations. In Ghana, we are part of CIU, AAU and other international institutions who sponsor us. We also have collaboration with universities outside Ghana with which we run some programmes. Then we have various departments within the university that are part of some other associations in USA, Europe, China, Iran, Mali and Senegal such as the Al-Mustafa International University and Jiangsu University of Science and Technology. With reference to the collaboration that we have with the university in the USA, it is for short courses. We have had exchange programmes and these interactions have helped to improve upon our standards. As part of the collaboration we have with Senegal University, we do exchange programmes and workshops for staff and students. As a result of these collaborations, we are also monitored by our partners to make sure that our practices and the education we offer meet their set quality standards.

Basically, the CIU was established to help private universities and university colleges to have a say on issues that affect them. With the CIU, there are two types of groups; one is for the principals or directors of PUC's and the other is made up of the registrars and the finance officers. Despite the fact that much has not been achieved by the CIU, I think it is good to have such an association that focuses on issues that affect only the PUC's. Recently, the CIU sent a memo to NCTE and the Minister of Education to complain about the inadequate level of mentorship being offered by the universities we are affiliated to despite the high affiliation fees we pay. Based on my assessment of the meetings I

attended, I will say it has been beneficial because at the meetings we discussed issues that are pertinent to our institutions. Although the CIU has been helpful, as the only association of PUC's, we expect more from them. The association needs to exert a little pressure on the government so that we can get our share of the national cake in terms of funding and infrastructural support to PUC's. The AUU which is an international association with its headquarters in Ghana disseminates a lot of information on QA on their website and have also organised a few workshops for all tertiary education institutions in Ghana.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** As a follow-up question, what is your view on the practice of publishing the outcomes of the review of your university college as done in the UK to inform the public on the performance of each PUC as well as ranking of universities as done in the USA and the UK?

**Private university colleges' responses:** Ranking us will be an innovation in the right direction. In Ghana, apart from the senior high schools that are classified as grade, A, B and C schools, I do not know about the ranking of universities in Ghana. I know of international associations that rank all higher education institutions. Unfortunately, I know of only one PUC in Ghana that comparatively did better than some of the PSU's in Ghana. As a result of the challenges faced by the PUC's, as a start, I will suggest that only the PUC's in Ghana should be ranked. If the assessment is done by a credible institution, it can motivate PUC's that are performing well to continue to excel and for others who may not be performing well to strive to work harder. Why I think the ranking will also contribute to ensure quality is that, if your university is low on the ranking table, you may not attract the right number of students and this can affect your finances, so it is a good idea.

It should be easy for the regulatory institutions to do this. Based on the assessment that they do, if it is objectively done, it could be used for ranking the PUC's. It will also compel some of the owners and managers of PUC's to provide the required resources and also invest in the training of their staff. Competition is good. It makes people not to relax so I will support ranking tables to be introduced as part of the assessment process of PUC's.

The outcomes will also be beneficial to those who would want empirical data based on which to make decisions regarding enrolling in a particular university or for employment purposes.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** In your view, should the regulatory institutions and the mentoring universities practices for assuring quality in the PUC's be influenced by practice from other parts of the world especially the developed nations such as the USA, the UK and Australia?

**Private university colleges' responses:** Why not, but it must take into consideration our level of development, our needs, and the resources we have. Remember the developed nations also started from somewhere before getting to where they are now so it must be a gradual process.

As a nation we do not live in a vacuum so I expect Ghana to look at best practices from other countries and adapt to suit our context. I believe some of the staff of the NAB, the NCTE and the members of the mentoring universities have had international exposure in terms of QA. International best practices should be adapted to suit our context. Once they understand the Ghanaian context, they should be able to know which QA mechanisms will be relevant and applicable to our context.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** The existing tertiary education QA framework of Ghana shows that it is a collaborative effort between the NAB, the NCTE and the university to which the PUC's are affiliated. What are your views on the functioning and effectiveness of this framework?

**Private university colleges' responses:** When you say collaborative effort, that is not what I see happening. If they collaborate, there should not be instances where there are contradictions in what they ask us to do. Sometimes what the mentoring university asks us to do is different from what the NAB wants; so it has always been a challenge. As for the different mentoring institutions we are affiliated to, even when there are differences in

their demands I understand because they are different autonomous institutions who have their standards. For example, the grading scheme for UCC is 40% for continuous assessment and 60% for examinations whereas that of the UG is 30% for continuous assessment and 70% for examinations.

Collaboration requires that they discuss and agree on principles and guidelines that they will follow in regulating and mentoring the PUC's, but based on what exists currently, I do not see it as collaboration but rather every institution is doing what it thinks is right and what suits them.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** One of the requirements of the NAB is for every tertiary education institution to have an internal QA unit. How do you gather feedback from the different constituents of the university college on the internal QA mechanisms and how effective has the unit been?

**Private university colleges' responses:** We get feedback from alumni, students and heads of department and deans of faculty. We administer lecturer's assessment questionnaire to students at the end of every semester. For the administrative staff, they are assessed by the heads of their units. After the QA directorate has analysed the questionnaires administered to students for the assessment of lecturers, we present our report to the various deans and also copy the President of the university college. In situations where the assessment report shows that a lecturer's performance is below standards, they fight back. Some staff regard the activities of the internal QA unit as a form of interference in their work. This attitude created internal opposition and therefore non-compliance with some of the directives from our unit. Occasionally, we organised training and development programmes for all the employees. However, some of the faculty members as well as the administrative staff did not attend these training programmes. We also have suggestion boxes for both staff and students as a means of getting feedback. Some of the feedback we received from the members of the university college related to a lack of frequent training and development programmes as well as a lack of dissemination of information from the regulatory institutions and the mentoring universities. Some also complained that, the unit was only concerned about the

enforcement of rules and regulations rather than focusing on education, training and development programmes. We also have other stakeholders as part of our governing council, committees and boards. We wish employers could write to us about the performance of our past students but we may have to do tracer studies so as to know where our students are and gather such information.

**OBJECTIVE 4: Provide a historical context of the legal framework on the establishment and operations of PUC's and tertiary education regulatory institutions in Ghana from 1991 to 2019**

**Interviewer:** The reviewed literature has identified some recommendations of the committee set up in 1998 to determine the extent to which the policy objectives of the 1991 White Paper has been achieved. Recommendation 1 was: "... the need to ensure that each tertiary education institution under the NCTE should be properly equipped in order to achieve quality education standards for the programmes that they offer" (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 12). To what extent has government supported this institution through funding, infrastructure or any other form of support?

**Private university colleges' responses:** As a PUC, we have not received any form of financial support from the government. Our sources of income are the students' tuition fees and the support from the owners and churches that established the university college. The investment in infrastructure for higher education is quite high if you have to meet all the quality standards. I do not think that, all the PUC's have been able to meet the standards set by the regulatory institutions.

Recommendation 2: "... All new programmes to be run by a university college must be accredited and all examinations vetted before the tertiary institution is allowed to start the programme" (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 15).

**Private university colleges' responses:** The vetting of our examinations is done by the mentoring universities. We pay for all these and it is a drain on us. Before we start any

new programme, we submit it to both the mentoring institution and to the NAB for accreditation. As indicated earlier, there are challenges with both the mentoring university and the regulatory institutions.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** Recommendation 4 of the committee was that, "... the NCTE should conduct a study to identify the challenges facing existing private universities in order to be able to develop policy measures for the advancement of the private tertiary education sector. Key areas of concern related to the running of programmes that could contribute to national development and the quality of programmes offered at the private sector universities (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 58). Has your institution participated in any research conducted by the regulatory institutions or the mentoring institutions to identify your challenges and how it could be addressed?

**Private university colleges' responses:** No, I am not aware and I have not participated in any official research conducted by the NAB, the NCTE or our mentoring universities. PUC's have peculiar needs so if the study can be conducted; it can provide very useful data for addressing our needs. As for the programmes that are run by the PUC's, they are all similar and mostly business administration courses. Very few PUC's offer science-related programmes. The situation could be attributed to the high finances required for running the science-related programmes. If the government can support PUC's, I believe it could contribute to address some of these problems.

**Interviewer (Follow-up):** As part of the reforms to the tertiary education system, one of the institutions to be established was the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board who would develop standardised criteria irrespective of the private university where an individual sought admission as well as monitor the admissions processes, in order to ensure that only qualified applicants are admitted into the PUC's. In the absence of the establishment of this institution, how have you ensured that only qualified applicants are admitted into this university college?



**Private university colleges' responses:** We have the admissions board. This board is made up of all heads of department and the deans of the faculty. We also have representatives from the mentoring universities who sometimes attend our selection meetings. Everyone is provided with the admission criteria and so at this meeting the applicant's grades are read out based on which the board agrees on who qualifies for the various programmes.

Most often, the problem is not with the senior high school applicants but the other categories like the matured applicants and the other professional qualifications. Most of the time, the issue has been the level to which they should be admitted. So far, because of what happened in 2012 where the NAB directed some students to be withdrawn because they did not qualify, we are very careful when admitting students.

**Interviewer (Follow-up):** While private university education was accepted in principle based on various legislation that back their establishment, there was neither an official policy that encouraged the establishment of private universities nor any financial incentive in support of the establishment of PUC's in Ghana. How has the lack of specific policies on PUC's and financial support from government affected the quality of education provided by PUC's in Ghana?

**Private university colleges' responses:** I agree there is no official policy that specifically addresses the needs of PUC's and I think this has also contributed to some of the challenges we face. If there were specific policies, the government could have been offering some form of support to us. I however acknowledge that even the PSU's also face infrastructural challenges. But, my point is for some support to us because we are also helping to solve a national problem by offering admission to qualified applicants who would otherwise not be able to access university education.

We are private so we know the government will not bear our full cost but we expect government to provide us with some support as happens in the case of PSU's. Government is not being fair to the PUC's. If the government cannot expand facilities in

the PSU's for people to get admission, then it should support PUC's because when the people complete their studies in the PUC's they will serve Ghana.

**OBJECTIVE 5: Analyse the effect of the current QA capacity and mechanisms of tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana and the usefulness of the application of these mechanisms at PUC's**

**Interviewer:** In your view, does the NAB/NCTE have the capacity to achieve its mandate of QA in the PUC's in Ghana? Justify your responses.

**Private university colleges' responses:** In terms of the capacity of the NAB, although I do not work there, the delays we experience when we submit our documents for re-accreditation and accreditation suggests to me that they do not have the capacity to carry out their task. We pay for this service and so I wonder why such delays occur.

We have not been dealing with the NCTE except for information they sometimes request from us. Our challenge with the NAB is delays. The policy is that six months to the expiration of a programme we should apply for re-accreditation, but sometimes when we submit our documents it takes too long and that is quite frustrating. There are over eighty PUC's in Ghana and I think the NAB is overwhelmed with the demands from them.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** I am aware that the NAB uses affiliation, quality audit and assessment as well as programme and institutional accreditation in regulating the practices of the PUC's. Based on your experiences, what is your assessment of each of these mechanisms in ensuring quality education standards in the PUC's in Ghana?

**Private university colleges' responses:** On the issue of affiliation, first it is out of place, because some of the chartered universities do worse things. They are interested in taking our money rather than mentoring us. The ten years' minimum period of mentorship is too long. The focus should be on whether a PUC is adhering to the set standards rather than the number of years. While some PUC's may require even more than ten years, others

may have the capacity and capability and therefore require less than ten years. There are also inconsistencies in the requirements from the different institutions that we are affiliated to and from the regulatory institutions. For instance, for those who apply as mature applicants, we have been asked to use the minimum age of twenty-seven years as the entry requirement, while some of the PSU's use twenty-five years as the minimum entry requirement. Although a representative from our mentoring university attends our meetings such as the academic board, appointment and promotions board, moderate questions and examinations, these alone do not necessarily assure quality. Sometimes even between the various universities that we are affiliated to, there are conflicting positions on what we do. A major issue is the lack of coordination between the various institutions, which has resulted in the contradictions in their demands. What they have been doing in my view cannot be described as mentoring. I do not expect the PUC's to be modeled to become like their mentoring universities. There should be room for innovation and uniqueness. What I expect is that the standards should remain the same to ensure the quality of graduates. To me, there is no need for affiliation if the NAB and the NCTE have the qualified staff to perform their functions.

On the duration of affiliation, personally, I think the ten years is even small. The fact that a university should not just be known locally means that, there is the need for a period within which they will be nurtured to grow so that people will get to know them. For instance, when you mention (name withheld) outside Ghana, how many people know of it. So, if you want that international recognition, it is always good to align yourself with a state university that is known outside Ghana. So, a period of 10 years or more would make such budding university colleges to grow so that people will know them. A case in point is a few PUC's that hurriedly got their autonomy are now struggling to attract students especially from outside Ghana.

With regard to programme and institutional accreditation, quality audit and assessment, they are national requirements aimed at ensuring quality standards. My challenge however is with how they perform this function especially the delays we encounter in the processing of documents we submit for accreditation and re-accreditation. I suggest the

two institutions – the NAB and the NCTE - should be merged. If the two are merged, they will be more effective and efficient and there may be no need for affiliation. Even if we still have to be affiliated to a university to mentor us, I think activities like the audit and assessment should be done together by the mentoring universities and the regulatory institutions. The regulatory institutions do not also interact with us regularly. I expect them to frequently organise workshops for all PUC's and sometimes for individual university colleges to discuss issues not only on QA but the general higher education delivery and improvement.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** What are your views on the background, composition, capacity and capability of the assessment teams that come to accredit or re-accredit the programmes that you run?

**Private university colleges' responses:** As for the assessors, there is no problem with their competency. They are professionals within the area they come and assess. They make comments that have been very helpful. Most of the assessors are professors and PhD holders who are very experienced in higher education. Others are qualified specialists from industries who are very knowledgeable in the area they come to review. I find their work to be good in the sense that it is a kind of reminder and check on those who would want to do what they wish, which could lower standards. Their activities keep us on their toes.

Sometimes, some of the assessors are from PUC's and as such, are our competitors. As a result, sometimes you may see some level of high handedness in their comments. However, because there are other team members, such challenges are addressed. Once an assessor is appointed based on his competency and there are guidelines that they follow, I believe there will be no problem.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** Although the establishment of PUC's in Ghana can be assumed to be adhering to the constitutional directive of making tertiary education accessible to all

citizens, how has your university college ensured that the entrepreneurial character of private providers does not undermine this purpose?

**Private university colleges' responses:** I will say both the internal QA mechanisms as well as the external QA mechanisms have helped to check this. Although the internal mechanisms could be compromised if a manager or the owner of the institution focuses on profit, the external mechanisms are there to check such practices. However, there have been instances that point to not only profit motive but rather challenges like low student enrolment figures leading to financial challenges that could make us not to comply with the standards. For example, the NCTE norms and standards require us to have a certain ratio of staff-to-student population and a certain number of professors, associate professors and lecturers with terminal degrees. I must admit that most of us do not meet these quality standards.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** In all, what is your assessment of the strategies that the regulatory institutions and the mentoring universities use to compel you serve as standards and norms that regulate your practices and to help you learn from other universities that have excelled.

**Private university college's responses:** We are aware of the requirement of affiliation, without which the regulatory institution will not grant accreditation. As a result we are compelled to be affiliated to a university that will mentor us until we are granted a Presidential Charter status. We are also required to submit our questions and marking schemes to our mentoring universities to be reviewed and approved before we can administer them to our students. A lot of the things we do are mandatory without which our accreditation and affiliation status could be revoked. The regulatory institutions also provide us with documents on the norms and standards that we should observe. I must admit that, we have not been able to meet some of them, for example, the student-staff-ratio, and the academic staff requirements. Although we are affiliated to a PSU that is required to mentor us, I do not think that has been effective. As I indicated earlier about our affiliate university, I think they are only interested in taking our money. There is a lot

more they have to do in terms of what has been outlined in the document on affiliation. The document provides for each party in the affiliation relationship to assess each other but I admit because there are some shortcomings on our part, we are conservative in our assessment of our mentoring institution.

#### **7.4.2.1 General assessment of the perceptions and views of participants from the private university colleges**

The second set of data was from the PUC's. This section contributes data towards achieving the aim of this research which was to investigate the existing QA mechanisms used by the NCTE, the NAB and selected mentoring PSU's in an attempt to demonstrate how these mechanisms could be strengthened to ensure successful application of QA at PUC's in Ghana (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.1). Whilst the first set of data was on the experiences of participants from the regulatory institutions, this second set of data is on the experiences of PUC's; who are being regulated. Accordingly, the data in this section provides information that reflects how those being regulated view the existing QA mechanisms with reference to the practices of the NAB, the NCTE and the mentoring universities. This summary is organised in line with each of the research objectives that determined the questions asked during the semi-structured personal interviews. A summarised version of the perceptions and experiences of the participants from the PUC's are presented under the key themes as follows:

Objective 1 was not addressed through semi-structured interviews but through a review of literature that led to the research problem (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1).

In understanding the second research objective, namely; to reflect upon the literature review of tertiary education QA (discourse) and factors that affect it (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2), the literature review in Chapter 2, meaningfully addressed the different views of scholars on QA mechanisms. The other responses are summarised under the key themes that emerged from the analysis of data gathered from the PUC's.

### **Group B: Sub theme 1: Understanding of quality assurance**

The semi structured interviews on Objective 2 explored participants' views on whether members of their university colleges understood what QA entails and the factors that affect QA. When participants from the PUC's were asked their views on members' understanding of what QA entails, there were contrary responses from the participants. While some participants responded in the affirmative other participants believed that the actions and attitude towards work by some staff members and complaints received from students about some staff members showed that they did not understand what QA entails. Participants who indicated that members of the PUC understood QA, attributed it to the structures, rules and regulations as well as practices the university college has instituted. They believed these mechanisms have facilitated members of the university college's understanding of higher education QA. The data gathered from participants from the PUC's suggest that, the university college's policies on QA activities were more directed at the faculty members than at the administrative staff.

The group of participants who did not believe members of their university colleges understood QA and its relevance were quick to add that their university colleges have instituted programmes aimed at helping such people to accept and own the QA processes and practices. For those who believed members of the university college understood what QA entails, one of the *In vivo* responses is as follows:

*'... I think members understand QA. There are structures such as academic board, faculty board that discuss and take decisions on actions that should be taken, assign responsibilities to members and form committees for the purpose of ensuring quality. All lecturers are members of a faculty and at the academic board level, there are representatives from all the faculties. We also have an internal quality assurance unit.'*

One of the *In vivo* responses from the participants who believed members did not understand the QA mechanisms is as follows:

*"... to be honest with you, on the basis of whether members of the university understand the procedures and mechanisms of quality assurance, I will rate it at 50%. We are a new university though we have been in existence for 10 years, and we are still building our structures, the mechanisms and the procedures that can ensure quality standards. We are improving daily ... so we are not there yet."*

## **Group B: Sub theme 2: Level of education and training on quality assurance**

When participants were asked whether the level of education and training provided by the regulatory institutions, the mentoring universities and the PUC's to the members of their university college were adequate to facilitate their understanding of higher education QA, the responses were adverse. Participants were unhappy with the mentoring universities' roles. In their view, mentoring is part of the affiliation requirements, and they pay what they considered as high affiliation fees. Participants did not also believe that the regulatory institutions also did enough in terms of workshops that could have facilitated their understanding of what higher education QA entails. The responses confirm the assertion by Alabi *et al.* (2018: 7) in the reviewed literature that, although the role of QA is best performed by the higher education institution itself, apart from the internal QA training initiative by German Academic Exchange Service for a few staff from West Africa, there has not been any formal QA training for higher education institutions in Ghana (see Chapter 2, Section 4.4.3.4).

In this regard, one of the participants asserted as follows:

*"... the mentoring institutions should live up to their role as mentors but not as a venture for making money. They should rather organise training programmes for us to understand what they expect us to do with regard to quality. They are only interested in taking huge sums of money from us. The same applies to the regulatory institutions, they are quick to reprimand us but fail to play their part. How many times can they mention that they have organised workshops for us on issues related to quality assurance?"*

The participants were therefore unanimous in their response that the external regulatory institutions and the mentoring universities were not doing enough to ensure quality standards in the PUC's. This view confirms the responses in the first set of data from the regulatory institutions who admitted that, there were gaps in their role of QA due to high number of PUC's under their supervision and the fact that they operated a centralised system of administration with only one office in Accra. Participants' views were also sought on how often the regulatory institutions and the mentoring institutions interacted with the PUC's to help them develop and maintain quality standards. There were divergent views on the regularity of stakeholder interactions. Some participants suggested that, no regular meetings were organised for stakeholder interaction. It can therefore be argued that the lack of regular interactions is one of the factors that have contributed to the low quality



standards of education being observed in some of the PUC's in Ghana. In effect, apart from the scheduled meetings for the accreditation and re-accreditation of programmes, the NAB and the NCTE did not visit or invite the PUC's for workshops or training programmes on QA. With regard to the mentoring PSU's, the participants believed that, the mentoring institutions were overwhelmed with the number of PUC's affiliated to them. This view by the PUC's confirms the assertion in the NCTE Annual Report (2014: 7) that stated that "... the growing number of PUC's affiliated to PSU's is becoming a challenge."

Although some of the participants mentioned that during the early years of the establishment of PUC's, both the mentoring universities and the regulatory institutions visited them regularly to discuss issues of QA, this was no longer the case. Above all, the participants from the PUC's accepted that, as an institution they should have regular workshops and seminars that would facilitate the level of understanding of members of what QA entails. Although the setting up of an internal QA unit was a requirement from the regulatory institutions to ensure quality in the day-to-day activities of the university colleges, the participants acknowledged that the QA units did not have the capacity and resources to achieve this mandate. This assertion requires a critical look at the importance management of the university colleges attached to their internal QA units. As indicated in the reviewed literature, (see Chapter 2, Section 2.5.1.1) in order to develop a culture of quality, there must be ownership of the QA practices by members of the higher education institution. All in all, the three institutions did not adequately play their role of educating members on what QA entails.

### **Group B: Sub theme 3: Factors that affect quality assurance**

In addressing the aspect of objective 2 which was on the factors that could affect QA, a wide range of issues that could be attributed to the PUC's themselves, the regulatory institutions as well as the mentoring universities were mentioned. The responses were similar to some of the responses provided by the regulatory institutions. The following is how one of the participants outlined the factors that affect QA in PUC's:

*"... all these factors you have mentioned are not the real issues. Our challenges are mainly financial. We are unable to recruit the required number of full professors, associate professors and people with terminal degrees because we cannot pay them. Our remuneration is lower than*

*the PSU's. Sometimes because of a lack of finances there could be delays in the provision of some of the non-human resources as well. You can also have a business person to establish a university who may have no background in higher education, so if the person is only interested in making profit, it could affect quality standards. In some instances, the owners interfered in who gets appointed to certain positions and sometimes in the day-to-day running of the institution."*

The participants from the PUC's believed that, their inability to meet all the required quality standards was not due to the differences in their understanding of QA between the PUC's and the regulatory institutions, but because of the challenges mentioned above. The participants also believed that, faculty members as implementers of QA understand what the regulatory institutions, the mentoring universities as well as the internal requirements for QA are. On the issue of the level of competence of their staff, the participants responded in the affirmative but were of the view that as a human institution there could be challenges and as such there are mechanisms for monitoring and for taking corrective action. Other factors mentioned by participants that affect quality included high teaching load of faculty members, low level of remuneration when compared with PSU's, low levels of student enrolment due to competition from PSU's, profit motive of some owners, interference by owners of the university college and ineffective regulatory systems.

Aside the fact that, the entrepreneurial motive of some of the owners affected the remuneration they offered, the participants also mentioned low enrolment figures as an emerging issue in most PUC's in Ghana. Thus, unlike in the USA and the UK where government provided financial support to PUC's, (see Chapter 3, Section 3.7.1 – 3.7.3), in Ghana PUC's did not receive any form of financial support from the government. Their sources of income are the students' tuition fees and the support from the owners and churches that established them. Consequently, the dwindling enrolment figures of PUC's could lead to a compromise on the inputs. Data obtained from the institutional documents indicated that, comparatively, the fees charged by PUC's were higher than that of the PSU's. Except in special circumstances such as a preference for a particular programme which is being offered by only a PUC, most people in Ghana preferred to attend PSU's. With the level of expansion of the facilities as well as a comparatively lower level of fees charged by the PSU's, this would affect the number of qualified people available to apply to the PUC's. Consequently, the PUC's are likely to continue to experience this challenge

until they are able to adopt practices, develop and run programmes that distinguish them as institutions that offer quality education.

#### **Group B: Sub theme 4: Influence of owners of the private university colleges**

Most of the PUC's that participated in this research project were established by churches, religious institutions and individuals in Ghana and abroad (see Chapter 5, Sections 5.2.1 – 5.2.6). The participants indicated that the owners interfered in the governance and management of the PUC's. A participant from one of the PUC's established by a church in expressing the need for the church to appoint the head of the institutions and other key positions, indicated as follows:

*“... when it comes to the appointment to key positions, we are interested in appointing someone who fears God, someone who can articulate the beliefs of the Bible so as to train students as scholars who fear God.”*

The responses from the participants also indicated differences between the regulatory institutions policies on the composition of the governing council (see Annexure 12) and what existed in the PUC's in Ghana. The Tertiary Institutions [Establishment and Accreditation] Regulations Legislative Instrument 1984 of 2010, Section 2 (2) (b) (ii) indicated that the governing council must comprise “... members from stakeholders with adequate knowledge of tertiary education management practices in Ghana.” However, the participants indicated that there was a high level of interference by the owners of the PUC's who did not have the knowledge required as stated in Tertiary Institutions [Establishment and Accreditation] Regulations Legislative Instrument 1984 of 2010, Section 2 (2) (b) (ii). It can therefore be argued that the interference of owners in the governance and management of PUC's is a factor that affected the quality of education provided by some of the PUC's in Ghana. On the positive side, participants mentioned that the owners have supported them financially with grants and loans without interest.

#### **Group B: Sub theme 5: Influence of membership of international associations**

Participants were asked about their membership of international and national networks or association of similar types and how the QA practices of these institutions influenced their QA practices. All the participants mentioned that they were members of both national and

internal associations. The national association mentioned by all of the participants was the CIU. The international association was the AAU, whilst some of the PUC's also had collaborations with other universities in the USA, Europe China, Iran, Mali and Senegal. This was articulated by one of the participants as follows:

*"... yes, the university belongs to the Council of Independent Universities, Association of African Universities, and then we also have a linkage with our sponsor in Iran; Al Mustapha International University."*

The participants viewed the membership and collaborations with the national and international institutions as quite beneficial. The benefits included the exchange programmes for their students and staff for short courses and international exposure.

### **Group B: Sub theme 6: Need for financial and infrastructural support from government**

Some of the participants asserted that, the CIU is not as effective as they expected. Despite this, they believed that, it is the only association that focuses on issues that affect only the PUC's. The participants argued that, the association needs to exert more pressure on the government so that the PUC's can also be supported financially and with some infrastructural projects. In this regard one of the participants enunciated as follows:

*"... private university colleges face several challenges in Ghana. If the government cannot expand facilities in the public universities for people to get admission, then it should support private university colleges because when the people complete the private university colleges, they work in the country and if the private university colleges were not there to train the workforce, there will be shortage of manpower. ...I suggest private university colleges should be supported by government to pay salaries because the private university colleges are solving societal problems."*

### **Group B: Sub theme 7: Ranking and publication of assessment reports**

As a follow-up, participants' views were sought on international practice such as publishing of outcomes of assessment of each university college as done in the UK to inform the public on the performance of each PUC as well as the ranking of universities as done in the USA and the UK?

Participants were unanimous about the adoption of such international best practices such as publishing of review reports and the ranking of PUC's since they were of the view that, it could challenge and motivate PUC's to excel. The participants however cautioned that,

the adoption of such practices should take into consideration the Ghanaian context. In this regard, one participant indicated as follows:

*“... why not, but it must take into consideration our level of development, our needs, and the resources we have. Remember the developed nations also started from somewhere before getting to where they are now so it must be a gradual process.”*

Participants emphasised that, they were willing to comply with other international standards that could contribute to ensure quality. However, as indicated in the reviewed literature (see Chapter 2, Section 2.10), QA should not only focus on establishing standards but also ensure that there are systems in place to guarantee that the education standards set are adhered to. The responses from the participants from the six institutions studied point to a lack of compliance by some of the PUC's with the existing mechanisms for QA. It is therefore believed that although the international mechanisms for ensuring quality standards such as the publishing of review reports and the ranking of PUC's could be additional methods that could contribute to ensure quality standards in PUC's in Ghana, the focus should not just be on setting standards but also on ensuring that the set standards are adhered to.

### **Group B: Sub theme 8: Level of collaboration between the three institutions that ensure quality in PUC's**

The conceptual framework (see Chapter 3 Figure 3.5) that was developed based on data obtained from the reviewed literature suggests that QA is a collaborative effort between the regulatory institutions, the mentoring universities and the PUC's. The researcher therefore sought the views of participants on what existed in practice. Despite the benefits that could be derived from the conceptual framework which shows that the relationship between the three institutions involved in PUC's QA is a collaborative effort, it was the contrary. One participant alluded as follows:

*“... sometimes even between the various mentor universities that we are affiliated to, there are conflicting positions on what we should do. Sometimes it can create problem, and it affects us.”*

In practice therefore, the relationship between the regulatory institutions, the mentoring universities and the PUC's was not a collaborative relationship, and this has led to inconsistencies in the requirements and demands from each of them. Such

inconsistencies according to the participants made them uncertain of what was expected of them. As a result of the contradiction experienced by the PUC's from the regulatory institutions and the mentoring PSU's, it is believed that, the framework proposed (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.9) could contribute to address the shortcomings in the existing framework and for purposes of ensuring, developing and maintaining quality standards in the PUC's in Ghana.

### **Group B: Sub theme 9: Implementation of recommendations from review of 1991 White Paper**

The fourth objective explored the historical context of the legal framework on the establishment and operations of PUC's and tertiary education regulatory institutions in Ghana from 1991 to 2019. Within the period, a committee was set up in 1998 to determine the extent to which the policy objectives of the 1991 White Paper were achieved. The responses from the participants suggested that none of the recommendations aimed at addressing the challenges facing PUC's and for ensuring quality standards were addressed. The responses from the participants from the PUC's matched the responses from the regulatory institutions on the lack of implementation of the recommendations of the committee that reviewed the White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991.

### **Group B: Sub theme 10: Effect of current capacity of the regulatory institutions**

With regard to the fifth objective, an attempt was made to analyse the effect of the current QA capacity and mechanisms of tertiary education regulatory institutions and the usefulness of the application of these mechanisms at PUC's (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). The participants expressed challenges with respect to delays in the accreditation and re-accreditation of programmes they submitted to the regulatory institutions and to the mentoring universities for affiliation. On this basis, they believed that the current QA capacity of the regulatory institutions were inadequate to enable them carry out their task of QA. One of the participants observed as follows:

*“... the NAB and the NCTE need to decentralise and increase their workforce to be able to deal with the increasing number of PUC's. I think the NAB is overwhelmed with the demands from all the PUC's. The NAB and NCTE need to be re-organised so that they can process the programmes*

*we submit for accreditation and re-accreditation faster. Some of our programmes have been with the NAB for more than two years. I wish affiliation would be abolished. If it is abolished, then delays in processing the documents we submit for affiliation and the frustrations we go through will be eliminated. There are too many PUC's affiliated to these two universities – UG and UCC.”*

The challenges expressed by the participants from the PUC's with regard to the capacity of the regulatory institutions and the mentoring universities were concurred to by the responses from the regulatory institutions.

### **Group B: Sub theme 12: Ineffective mechanisms for quality assurance**

Participants' views were also sought on the mechanism used by the regulatory institutions and the mentoring universities – affiliation, programme and institutional accreditation, quality assessment, quality audits – to ensure quality standards in the PUC's. Participants were unanimous about inadequate mentoring they had from the universities they were affiliated to. The mentoring universities were criticised for not playing their role and accused of being interested in taking money from the PUC's. These expressions are observed where one participant indicated:

*“... to be honest with you, I don't think the mentor institutions have done their work as mentors. We pay much for affiliation, so what I expect as a QA manager is that, regularly, the mentor institution should come around and provide guidance on QA procedure and processes. ... They are only interested in taking our money rather than mentoring us. If I should rate them, I will give them 40/100.”*

The above response has unearthed some of the views on the assessment by the PUC's on the performance of their mentoring universities and the need to review their role and the mechanisms in place to ensure that each party in the mentoring relationship plays its role.

### **Group B: Sub theme 13: Duration of affiliation**

A follow-up question to participants on their views about the ten years minimum period of affiliation received varied opinions. Whilst some of the participants regarded the ten years minimum period of affiliation as too long and that the focus should be on the level of adherence to the quality standards, others had a different opinion. Those who differed on the view that the ten years minimum period was too long were of the view that while some PUC's may require even more than ten years, others may have the capacity and capability

and therefore require less than ten years. The participants that were of the view that the ten years period of affiliation was too short intimated that, their assessment of their university colleges showed that they require more than ten years. One of the participants that did not feel the ten years minimum period was too long articulated it as follows:

*“... personally, I think the 10 years is even small. The fact is a university should not just be known locally; this means that, there is the need for a period within which they will be natured to grow so that people will get to know them. For instance, when you mention (name withheld) outside Ghana, how many people know it. So, if you want that international recognition, it is always good to align yourself with a state university that is known outside Ghana. So, a period of 10 years or more would make such budding university colleges to grow so that people will know them. A few PUC’s ~~that~~ hurriedly got their autonomy and are now struggling to attract students especially from outside Ghana.”*

### **Group B: Sub theme 14: Relevance of regulatory systems**

In addressing research objective 5, participants assessed the strategies that the regulatory institutions and the mentoring universities used to compel them to ensure quality (coercive), serve as standards and norms that regulate their practices (normative) and means to learn from other universities that have excelled (mimetic).

The coercive mechanisms mentioned by participants included affiliation which participants viewed as not fit for purpose. The participants mentioned that, all the requirements from the mentoring universities and the regulatory institutions are mandatory without which their accreditation and affiliation status could be revoked. As a result, the mimetic and normative isomorphic pressures cannot be detached from the coercive mechanisms.

The participants also decried situations in which some mentoring universities did not allow for innovation in programme content and want the PUC’s to model themselves along what they do. Despite such challenges, participants acknowledged and accepted that practices such as quality audit and assessment, programme and institutional accreditation are national requirements aimed at ensuring quality standards. A response in support of the regulatory regime was expressed as follows:

*“... these requirements of the NAB and the NCTE are relevant. There are some of our members; lecturers and staff who do not want to go by the set quality standards. The fact that they know the regulatory institutions and mentoring institutions will check whether we are complying with what they have asked us to do to at least put the whole university college on its toes.”*



### **Group B: Sub theme 15: Need to merge NAB and NCTE**

In understanding what contributed to delays, the issue of capacity was mentioned and suggestions for the NAB and the NCTE to be merged in order to improve upon their capacity. The participants suggested a joint programme review team, made up of representatives from the universities they are affiliated to, members of the accreditation board, and the assessors appointed by the NAB. They were of the view that with a joint review team, it will minimise the contradictions and also eliminate the delays that are associated with the current structure and procedure followed. Participants expressed positive views about the capacity and capability of members of the assessment teams that were appointed by the NAB.

### **7.4.3 GROUP C: PERCEPTIONS, VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES OF PARTICIPANTS FROM THE MENTOR PUBLIC SECTOR UNIVERSITIES**

An official from each of the two mentoring universities participated in the semi-structured personal interviews. Each of the participants was the head of the affiliation unit in each of the two PSU's. Although two participants may not be adequate for drawing conclusions, because interviews which was the main data collection method was time consuming, this number was considered as adequate for an exploratory research such as this. The semi-structured interview with this group of participants was considered as an important source of empirical data because the PUC's that participated in this study were affiliated to these two PSU's. Affiliation is a requirement in the higher education regulatory regime for PUC's in Ghana. Additionally, participants were the officials that dealt with all matters from the PUC's that were affiliated to each of the universities.

### **OBJECTIVE 1: Provide the general background, rationale and research (methodical) framework, which emphasises and accentuates the importance of the study**

As indicated in Chapter 7, Section 7.4.1 under Objective 1, no semi-structured personal interviews were conducted for addressing Objective 1. The researcher decided to rather make use of a literature review and document analysis to address this Objective 1 (see Chapter 1).

**OBJECTIVE 2: Reflect upon the literature review of tertiary education quality assurance (discourse) and factors that affect it**

**Interviewer:** In the reviewed literature, the NAB defines QA as "... the continuous and systematic act of reviewing structures, systems and practices towards the attainment of a desired end." In your opinion, do PUC's demonstrate an understanding of QA as reflected in the NAB's definition and what are the indicators of their understanding of higher education QA?

**Mentor universities' responses:** Yes and No. Tertiary education is basically provision of service to the public for purposes of developing human capital needed for national development. However, some of the PUC's see it as a business and so they want to make profit. As such, they want the rules and regulations to be relaxed so they can compromise on the standards and make profit. I will therefore say that it is not because they do not understand what tertiary education QA entails but rather, a lack of investment in what is required to deliver quality tertiary education since their focus is to make profit.

There are some aspects in which they meet the definition but in most of their practices, they fall short of what QA means. Every university depends on student numbers to survive so when an institution's student population goes down it comes with financial implications. As a result, some of the PUC's may ignore some of the requirements for delivering quality higher education.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** As a follow-up to the awareness of members about what counts as quality private tertiary education, how will you argue that the level of education and training provided by the mentor universities to the members of the university college community have facilitated their understanding of higher education quality assurance?

**Mentor universities' responses:** As a mentor institution, we work with them on regular basis throughout the affiliation relationship. We do not wait till the end of the year before we review the QA practices of the PUC's. Every semester we interact with them to ensure that they are on the right path. As the administrative unit, what we do is to develop

proposals on improving the relationship and make sure we work within the affiliation requirements. The university awards its certificate to the students in the affiliate PUC's so it behoves on us to make the PUC's understand what they are required to do. We do this through consultative meetings, workshops and seminars and explain to them the rationale behind every activity we ask them to undertake. This year for example, we did capacity building for teaching staff on how to develop their course outlines, set questions, develop marking schemes and the various approaches to teaching. Sometimes we allow them to come to our university to witness what we do. For us, affiliation is like a partnership. We have a capacity building directorate that undertakes these activities. Before we agree for a PUC to be affiliated to us, we give the PUC our policy document on QA to read after which we meet and discuss what they must do. It is only after the PUC agrees that they can comply with our requirements that we sign the affiliation contract and issue them with the certificate of affiliation.

In a contrary response, the participant from the second PSU indicated as follows:

We have not been able to hold regular meetings with the affiliate PUC's and this may have contributed to some of the lapses in their QA practices. The various colleges, schools and departments at the end of every semester review their examination questions and marked scripts and write reports that point out their shortfalls and make recommendations for addressing the challenges identified. However, I must admit that we have to do more in terms of having regular workshops that will offer the opportunity for facilitating their understanding of what must be done to ensure quality standards in everything they do.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** The literature identified the factors that affect tertiary education QA including the factors listed below.

- Differences in the conception of what QA is (formative or summative) between the regulatory institutions and the higher education institutions.
- Incompatibility between the views of the academic staff as implementers of QA policy and what has been designed as acceptable quality higher education standards by the regulatory institutions.

- Lack of mechanisms to effectively analyse the information gathered during reviews and a lack of properly trained evaluators.
- Lack of ownership by the higher education institutions of the QA process.
- Lack of management skills and expertise related to QA at all levels.

In what ways has any of the factors above or any other factor affected the quality of education offered by the PUC's in Ghana?

**Mentor universities' responses:** While we believe that QA should be a part of the day-to-day activities of all higher education institutions, I think some of the PUC's pay attention to the things we inspect like the course outlines, marking schemes but not their daily practices. As I indicated earlier, the QA policies and requirements are understood by the PUC's but they just refuse to comply. We have a unit for QA and so the office responsible for affiliate PUC's collaborates with them to gather and review relevant data on the PUC's. This has enabled us to know how each of the PUC's is performing. Refusing to comply in my view is not because they do not understand. There is the need for the PUC's to accept that quality is important if they are to be competitive and so if you talk about lack of ownership I agree that some of the PUC's behave as if they do the right things just to satisfy our demands and not because they are practices they believe in. In addition to the above, there are issues such as the lack of compliance by PUC's with deadlines. For example, although a university must have deadlines for registration some PUC's do not go by their deadlines and allow students to register even during the examinations week.

I think the main challenge with most of the PUC's is about governance issues. Some of the institutions particularly when they are owned by individuals face the challenge of interference in how the institution is managed. Some of them want to be appointed as the chancellors or vice chancellors of the institution. They also meddle in the day-to-day affairs of the institution. Secondly, the low level of funding is another factor that affects some of the PUC's. As a result of lack of adequate funding, the salary levels of staff in some of the PUC's are very low. Due to the low salary levels, some individuals teach in several PUC's and so they do not have enough time to focus on their work in any of the PUC's in which they teach. There have been occasions where we had to draw the attention of PUC's to

advise such lecturers against such practices. We have had reports where a lecturer set same examination questions for the three different PUC's where he taught. Coincidentally, the person who moderated the questions for one PUC was the same who moderated the question paper for the other PUC's. The person was therefore able to recall that the same questions were submitted to him from other PUC's.

**Interviewer (Follow-up):** Are you able to share some of the negative effects of these factors on the quality of education in the PUC's?

**Mentor universities' responses:** There are several negative consequences. For example, low salary levels in PUC's has made some staff to take on more than one full time job in different institutions which affects the level of commitment and performance by such faculty members. Lack of resources has led to inadequate inputs for teaching and learning and inability to attract and retain qualified staff and students.

As a university, we play various roles in mentoring the PUC's; such as review of examination questions and marked scripts, review of new programmes, vetting of entry grades of those who apply to enrol in the PUC's, review results of students for the award of degrees and membership of their boards and committees. All these activities are undertaken by our lecturers who also have their responsibilities as university lecturers. As such, when PUC's refuse to comply with the set standards and schedules, it leads to delays. One of the major problems we have with some PUC's is that, they do not key in their results into our system on time. The reason for asking them to key in their students results into our system at the end of every semester is to check and ensure the integrity of the results on a continuous basis. However, 95% of the PUC's affiliated to us do not submit their results on time. For a four year degree programme, some of the PUC's wait until after three years before they submit all the results of those in the final year. At that time, what is the guarantee that the grades have not been tampered with. When such situations arise we inform the institution in good time not to set a date for graduation until we have gone through all the results. We discussed and agreed on this policy with the PUC's about three years ago. As usual, they failed to comply and so calculating and

classifying students for awards has been a big issue. Although we may be held accountable for some of the delays they experience, majority of the causes of the delays are due the lack of compliance with set standards by the PUC's that are affiliated to our university.

**OBJECTIVE 3: Outline the theoretical perspectives and conceptual framework that relate to tertiary education QA in Ghana and compare key indicators and accreditation models between world class tertiary education regulatory institutions and tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana**

**Interviewer:** Is this university a member of any international network or association of similar types and is your model of QA based on any of the known models of QA of developed nations such as the USA, UK, and Australia? Which specific aspects of these three countries QA models have you adopted and how has these practices been effective in assuring quality education standards in the PUCs in Ghana that are affiliated to your institution?

**Mentor universities responses:** Yes, we are a member of international associations. I cannot be specific that our model of QA is based on any specific international model. What I know is that based on our seventy years' experience as a university, we take note of international best practices and adopt practices that will ensure quality. We look at the peculiar nature of our situation and design what is applicable. However, because the areas we focus on during affiliation have already been determined by the NAB, we just go by these requirements.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** I am aware that NAB uses affiliation, quality audits and assessment, programme and institutional accreditation in regulating the practices of PUC's. Based on your experiences as a mentoring institution, do you think these mechanisms have been effective in ensuring quality education standards in the PUCs in Ghana?

**Mentor universities' responses:** By the structure of the NAB, if any PUC applies to them for accreditation of their institution and programme, the first thing they do is that they refer the PUC to us. They are given a document called 'letter of authorisation'. This document requires the PUC to get a university to mentor them. When this document is brought to us, it is what we rely on to go through the processes for affiliation. The process requires us to review and approve the curriculum of the PUC. Thus, the curriculum that is sent to NAB would have to be approved by us first before it can be sent to the NAB for programme accreditation. We visit the PUC and ensure that they meet all the requirements of the mentoring institution before we give the PUC a certificate of affiliation. I will say all the mechanisms are relevant and have contributed to ensure quality especially for PUC's that need to go through such processes to learn.

I feel it is necessary to have these mechanisms because it applies to both private and public higher education institutions. Apart from affiliation that does not apply to us, these mechanisms are necessary and provide an opportunity for an external institution which is the NAB to look at our programmes and the facilities in place for delivering the programmes.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** The existing tertiary education QA framework of Ghana shows that it is a collaborative effort between the NAB, the NCTE and the university to which the PUCs are affiliated. What are your experiences and views on the functioning and effectiveness of this framework?

**Mentor universities' responses:** The NCTE and the NAB are regulatory institutions so each has its role. Since there are differences in the practices of each of the PSU's, if you are affiliated to more than one, you would have to be mindful of the requirements of each of the different universities you are affiliated to. The NAB and the NCTE set the national minimum standards and we set our requirements within those limits. This university's admission requirement never contradicts NAB's requirements. It builds on it. In Ghana with aggregate 36 you can enter any higher education institution but this university limits itself to 24 but PUCs can go up to 36.

I think some of the activities between the mentoring institution and the NAB must be done together. For example, programme review has been a major challenge where there have been disagreements between what we recommend and what the NAB recommends. The universities that have a Presidential Charter are autonomous and so we have our standards and reputation to protect but within the nationally approved standards. For example, in this university, our MPhil programmes are for two years, where first year is for taught course and second year is for writing of thesis. You may find another university with a different schedule. These are issues we should be able to resolve between the different institutions in order not to create uncertainties for the PUC's.

**OBJECTIVE 4: Provide a historical context of the legal framework on the establishment and operations of PUC's and tertiary education regulatory institutions in Ghana from 1991 to 2019**

**Interviewer:** The reviewed literature has identified some recommendations of the committee set up in 1998 to determine the extent to which the policy objectives of the 1991 White Paper has been achieved. Do you think these recommendations are relevant?

**Mentor universities' responses:** Although we do not formulate policies but only play the role of a mentor, I believe the first recommendation which relates to the need for all higher education institutions to be properly equipped is key since without resources, no institution can offer quality services. We do not just agree for a PUC to be affiliated to us, but we ensure that they have the necessary resources to operate. On the issue of the vetting of programmes and examinations, it is one of the core areas we focus on. We moderate the examination questions and marked examination papers of the PUC's that are affiliated to us. The recommendation on the need to adequately equip the NAB and the NCTE is very pertinent. Without resources they cannot regulate and ensure that the education we offer meets acceptable standards. I must however add that every government institution is faced with resource limitations and this might be the case with the NAB. Such a recommendation is in the right direction. We have some of our staff who are part of the assessment teams appointed by the NAB and they have always complained about the



low level of remuneration paid them as assessors. No effective decision can be made without reliable data, so the regulatory institutions must always conduct research and in this case on PUC's so as to be able to address their peculiar issues.

**Interviewer (Follow-up):** As part of the reforms to the tertiary education system, one of the institutions to be established was the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board who would develop standardised criteria irrespective of the private university where an individual sought admission as well as monitor the admissions processes, in order to ensure that only qualified applicants are admitted into the PUC's. In the absence of the establishment of this institution, how do you as a mentor university check to ensure that only qualified applicants are admitted into the PUC's?

**Mentor universities' responses:** Yes, in terms of admission as I told you earlier we are trying to link our data management system to that of the WAEC to ensure that we will be certain the students that are admitted into the PUC's meet the entry requirements. We do not want to depend on the PUC's to upload the results of the applicants but we want to get it directly from WAEC. To further strengthen our QA system, this university is considering the appointment of coordinators for all the PUC's that are affiliated to us. It is going to be a tedious task because the PUC's affiliated to this university are many and with several departments. At the beginning of this year, we appointed coordinators for two of the PUC's affiliated to us. The coordinators are to be part of the day-to-day activities that take place in the PUC's. We do not want to wait to appoint a visitation team before we get to know what is happening in the PUC's or before the PUC's also do the right thing. The coordinator is supposed to be like a quasi-employee who will take part in all meetings that we are supposed to have representation at, and possibly be assigned one or two courses to teach.

**OBJECTIVE 5: Analyse the effect of the current QA capacity and mechanisms of tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana and the usefulness of the application of these mechanisms at PUC's**

**Interviewer (Follow-up):** What is your opinion on the existing requirement of affiliation which is part of the QA mechanisms and to what extent has the mechanism contributed to ensure quality standards in the PUC's in Ghana?

**Mentor universities' responses:** The bible says, teach the child the way he should go and when he grows he will not depart from it. These are younger institutions that sometimes have the resources but do not have the experience the chartered PSU's have. Some of the owners are also purely business men and that sometimes creates conflict. As such, affiliation helps the PUC's to learn from us so that with time they will also have the capacity and capability to do the right things and become autonomous. The requirement of affiliation helps to ensure that the standards observed in the PUC's are comparable to the standards in our university. For example, it is only when a PUC complies with laid down standards in terms of programme content that we approve for such a programme to be affiliated to us. As part of the affiliation agreement we review all academic programmes of the PUC's, we review all the details of all students admitted every academic year, serve on their appointments and promotions committee, serve on their admissions board, and approve the list of students admitted. As part of ensuring quality standards in their examination, we do pre-examination moderation and post examination moderation and have a coordinator to monitor the actual conduct of examinations. With regard to pre-moderation and post-moderation of examination questions, we have a form that indicates all the areas that will be reviewed which we provide to the PUC's before the date of review. Based on all these, I believe we have an elaborate system in place and any PUC that complies with these requirements over the period of affiliation should be able to learn, become autonomous and be able to deliver quality higher education.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** Based on your experiences, what is your opinion on the ten years minimum period of affiliation for PUC's in Ghana?

**Mentor universities' responses:** It is neither too long nor too short. What is important is the facilities they have, their observance of the QA rules and the policies. The ten- year

period is for mentoring to enable them gain experience. So if they gain the experience and they do not have the resources, it is meaningless. So the number of years is not the important issue but what they have and what they are able to do within the ten years.

For me it is about the display of compliance. For a 4-year programme, by the 5<sup>th</sup> year, the first batch of graduates would have completed their national service. The PUC if they have a good student tracer system should be able to get feedback on the performance of their students. As such, I think between 5 – 6 years should be enough for affiliation. The challenge is that some of the PUC's have been there for more than 10yrs but are not following the basic guidelines to ensure quality. If we look at just years we will not be doing ourselves any good as a nation. Years are important but the most important thing is about compliance with set and agreed upon standards.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** Does this university have the necessary resources both human and non-human to carry out QA activities in all the PUC's that are affiliated to it?

**Mentor universities' responses:** Yes and no. In terms of capability, we are capable because we have the knowledge base. However, in terms of capacity, we are constrained. Currently, we have twenty-three (23) PUC's affiliated to this university and they run several programmes which could be over 100 programmes. Recently, after evaluating ourselves, we realised that the mechanisms we have put in place were not very effective. We have therefore decided that as a result of the high number of PUC's that are affiliated to this university we will not take on any additional PUC until we have the capacity to do so.

As a result of what affiliation involves, there is a lot of pressure on us. The university lecturers have helped us a lot, but it puts a lot of pressure on them. Combining teaching with moving around all the PUC's that are affiliated to us all over the country is big challenge. Sometimes the failure of some of the PUC's to comply with agreed upon schedules has affected our work leading to delays. For the reason that we do not have so many vehicles, we are unable to move several teams at the same time, so it takes a long period to coordinate and complete our visits to all the PUC's affiliated to us.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** It has been argued that state-directed QA ensures more of compliance and accountability than improvement/enhancement which facilitates the development of a culture of quality. Based on your experiences, what is your view on what your mechanisms have focused on in the QA process in the PUC's in Ghana?

**Mentor universities' responses:** When PUC's begin with compliance, over a period it helps to inculcate that culture of improvement. For most of the PUC's, within the first year, they do not even understand why they should do what we ask them to do. To some of them, they are only interested in getting a high number of students. You therefore have to let them comply with the set standards and overtime as you explain to them how such below standard practices could affect them in the future, then they begin to appreciate and adopt the right practices. You need to help them appreciate the fact that they are developing people for the world of work and so the mentor does not need to come around before they do what is right. For the PUC's that have spent more than six years with us but still have to be compelled to do the right thing, we do not see them as PUC's that are willing to learn and develop and be ready for a Presidential Charter status.

I believe we need both compliance and improvement. Not all the PUC's are ready to do the right thing. If a mentoring university insists on the right standards to be observed, that does not limit the PUC to just compliance. Such practices just serve as a check to ensure the right things are done. As such, external regulation does not only ensure compliance but it also helps towards improvement.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** There appears to be a high interest of Ghanaians in the quality of education being offered in the PUC's in Ghana. As a mentor, what are the main means through which you get feedback so as to improve upon what you do to ensure quality standards in the PUC's in Ghana?

**Mentor universities' responses:** The NAB has been very instrumental in helping us to get feedback. We also get feedback from members of the committees that go round the PUC's that are affiliated to us. Some of the lecturers who review their examination questions and scripts also give us feedback.

Anytime we visit the PUC's we talk to students, staff and sometimes management. During moderation, there is what we call the exit meeting where we share what we have observed in terms of their strengths, shortfalls, challenges of students and staff. We also listen to them regarding their challenges to inform us on what needs to be modified.

#### **7.4.3.1 General assessment of the perceptions and experiences of participants from the mentor public sector universities**

This third set of data from the participants from the mentor PSU's provides responses regarding the mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. The extent to which PUC's understood QA and the extent to which the QA mechanisms have been effective in ensuring the delivery of quality education to the citizenry are observed.

#### **Group C: Sub theme 1: Understanding of quality assurance**

Generally, the responses from the semi-structured personal interviews on whether the members of the PUC's understanding of QA were consistent with the definition of QA by the NAB were mixed. Participants asserted that most of the practices of the PUC's did not reflect an understanding of QA as a continuous process. They were of the view that it was only a few of their practices that conformed to the quality standards set by the regulatory institutions. In their view, the entrepreneurial motive was the focus of most of the PUC's in Ghana. The scepticism is shown in the following response:

*"... yes and no. Tertiary education is basically provision of service to the public for purposes of developing a nation's human capital needed for national development. However, some of the private university colleges see it as a business and so they want to make profit."*

The responses suggest that even the PUC's that understood what quality tertiary education means, were not committed to ensure quality due to their profit motives and inadequate funding.

#### **Group C: Sub theme 2: Factors that affect quality assurance**

Contrary to the assertion by some PUC's that the mentoring universities did not regularly organise workshops to educate them on QA practices, one of the participants from the

mentoring PSU's was of the view that they had regular consultative meetings or training programmes for the affiliate PUC's. The other factors identified included non-compliance to set standards and lack of human and non-human resources. In expressing the view on the factors that affect the quality of education offered by the PUC's, one of the participants asserted as follows:

*"... ninety five percent of the PUCs affiliated to us do not submit their results on time. For a four year degree programme some of the PUCs delay until after three years before they submit all the results. This could lead to a compromise of the integrity of the results. Some of the PUC's also do not have the required human and non-human resources to offer quality higher education. In some cases, the owners interfered in the management of the PUC's."*

### **Group C: Sub theme 3: Influence of international practices**

The mentoring universities did not adopt any particular international model for QA but made sure they conformed to international best practices. As indicated earlier, the NAB has a document that states what the affiliate institution is required to do. The responses from the mentoring PSU's indicated that they operated within these requirements and within the standards they have set for QA in their respective universities in providing mentorship to the PUC's.

### **Group C: Sub theme 4: Mechanisms for quality assurance**

The responses from the participants from the mentoring universities was that the mechanisms of affiliation, quality audit and assessment as well as accreditation were relevant requirements for ensuring quality standards in all higher education institutions in Ghana. The participants suggested that although there are three different institutions involved in QA in the PUC's, there is the need for collaboration between them in order to avoid duplication and delays. This response is similar to the responses from the PUC's and the regulatory institutions. With regard to the relevance of the existing mechanisms for QA, one of the participants asserted as follows:

*"... I feel it is necessary to have these mechanisms because it applies to both private and public higher education institutions. So that we all 'sit up' to have a third eye which is the NAB to look at all the things we do."*

### **Group C: Sub theme 5: Recommendations on the review of the White Paper on Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991**

In relation to objective 4, participants agreed that all the recommendations made by the committee that reviewed the White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991 were pertinent and should be implemented. In order to ensure that the students that are admitted into the PUC's are qualified, the mentoring institutions intend to link their data management system to that of the WAEC so that they can check and confirm that only qualified applicants are admitted.

### **Group C: Sub theme 6: Relevance of affiliation and duration**

In addressing objective 5, participants from the mentoring universities believed that affiliation was a significant requirement for ensuring quality standards in the PUC's in Ghana. Their views were that, affiliation provides the opportunity for such new university colleges to learn. With regard to the duration of affiliation, both participants believed that duration should not be the focus in determining the readiness of a PUC to become autonomous but rather, the extent to which the PUC is able to meet all the requirements.

In this regard one of the participants indicated as follows:

*"... the Bible says, teach the child the way he should go and when he grows he will not depart from it. These are younger institutions that sometimes have the resources but do not have the experience the chartered universities have so they need to be mentored."*

### **Group C: Sub theme 7: Capacity of mentoring universities**

Apart from the two main regulatory institutions, the mentoring PSU's' role is part of the QA mechanisms of the NAB. Accordingly, the mentoring PSUs' roles were assessed with regard to their capacity and how it influenced their effectiveness. The participants from the mentoring PSU's acknowledged that, they were overwhelmed with the high number of PUC's affiliated to them and therefore were to a large extent not effective in their role of QA. In expressing the effect of the lack of capacity and its effect on their role as mentors, one of the participants indicated as follows:

*"... we have the capability but our capacity is being overstretched because this university has twenty-three PUC's affiliated to it and with over one hundred programmes so this is a challenge. Although we have the capability, the capacity to take on additional PUC's is a challenge."*

The challenge with regard to capacity issues is due to the fact that, the QA activities are mostly undertaken by lecturers who also have regular teaching loads in the universities in

which they are full time lecturers. As indicated in the National Council for Tertiary Education Annual Report (2014: 7), “ ... the growing number of PUC’s affiliated to PSU’s which they are required to mentor is becoming a challenge.” Notwithstanding the complaints by the mentoring PSU’s about the PUC’s, the responses from the participants from the PUC’s also indicated a lack of satisfaction with the adequacy of mentoring they received. It can therefore be concluded that, the high number of PUC’s affiliated to the PSU’s and the lack of compliance with the agreed schedules by the PUC’s affected the effectiveness of mentoring. The next section focuses on the responses from the assessors.

#### **7.4.4 GROUP D: PERCEPTIONS, VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES OF ASSESSORS**

This section provides responses from the four assessors who participated in this research. The perceptions, views and experiences of assessors that were gathered through the semi-structured interviews are presented to address each of the research objectives (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). In addition, a general assessment of the perceptions, views and experiences as well as additional comments from the assessors are also provided as follows:

##### **OBJECTIVE 1: Provide the general background, rationale and research (methodical) framework, which emphasises and accentuates the importance of the study**

Objective 1 was achieved through a review of literature that provided the framework for this study (see Chapter 1). Four assessors participated in this research. While four participants may not be sufficient to draw conclusions on the role of assessors in the mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education in PUC’s in Ghana, this research being an exploratory study, it serves as a starting point that could provide a foundation for further research that could adopt the descriptive and explanatory research approaches.



## **OBJECTIVE 2: Reflect upon the literature review of tertiary education quality assurance (discourse) and factors that affect it**

**Interviewer:** The NAB defines quality assurance as "... the continuous and systematic act of reviewing structures, systems and practices towards the attainment of a desired end." In your opinion, to what extent do members of PUC's in Ghana understand what tertiary education quality assurance entails and the factors that could affect higher education quality assurance? Justify your response.

**Assessors' responses:** No, in my view they do not understand. I must say almost all the PUC's I have visited have issues. Ranging from the way the curriculum is designed to how the content is delivered and the resources they have leaves much to be desired. Usually, they want to run their programmes using minimal resources and so they do little in terms of ensuring quality standards. In terms of the awareness of what QA is, you can observe that the PUC's see quality as something that you want to impose on them. They think that assessors are there to find fault and to fail them. Some of the PUC's also have financial challenges and so they are not able to do what they must do to assure quality education standards. Even though we are here to support the institutions to improve, there are some of the institutions even after you visit them and make suggestions, when you go back later you do not see any improvement. In one of my assessments, we met a faculty member who was not qualified and did not even understand what he was teaching. We also visited a computer laboratory, which had computers that did not have the software that they were required to use to teach the students. I will therefore say the expectation what QA is, is different from what exists in the PUC's in Ghana. It is a paradox. On the one hand, because students pay fees, they expect the best from the university college. On the other hand, because the students feel they are paying fees, some are not disciplined and do not attend lectures. For instance, if you apply the strict rule on non-attendance of lectures for 21 days, most of the students in PUC's do not qualify to write examinations. However, in most of the PUC's because they want to collect their tuition fees, they are caught between the devil and the deep blue sea of whether or not to allow students who did not

attend lectures to write the examinations. In most instances, the rules are relaxed to accommodate such students.

On the contrary, one of the assessors asserted as follows:

Yes, quite a number of institutions I assessed are doing well and trying to improve upon what they do while there are a few who are not doing well. In my view, even those who are not doing well are taking steps to ensure that they improve. I do not want to believe that there is any institution that does not want to improve. That calls into question the role of the mentoring institutions that are required to help the PUC's to develop but they do not do it. For the reason that, there are quite a number of PUC's that are affiliated to some PSU's, the mentoring PSU's are not able to properly mentor the PUC's and ensure that they do the right thing.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** How often, and what form of training/orientation was organised by the NAB for you as an assessor and what is your assessment of the kind and adequacy of the level of education/ training provided by the regulatory institutions to facilitated your work as an assessor?

**Assessors' responses:** I was not invited for any training/orientation but I learnt on the job. I learnt from the members of the team. I think the NAB must organise intensive training and provide the necessary orientation for people they appoint as assessors. In my case, I realised that I made a few mistakes because of the lack of training. My understanding of the whole concept of assessment was wrong because I went with the notion that I should make the decision about whether the institution should be given accreditation or not, and whether a programme should be approved or not. So, I was very harsh. Later on, I got to know that as an assessor, I am supposed to help the institutions to improve so I changed. I think every assessor on first appointment should be given appropriate orientation and training to avoid some of the errors that occurred in my case. Apart from that, training for new assessors should be organised every year to ensure every assessor is abreast with the guidelines for assessment. This will help build consensus on what should be done so assessors do not end up controverting themselves when they visit the institutions. For

now, most of the training is on the job. Assessors are selected based on their background and with the notion that once you have been an administrator, a head of department or a dean of a faculty, you will know what to do.

I will say yes and no to the fact that the lack of training has affected my work as an assessor. My response is due to some of the challenges that occurred when I went and assessed some of the PUC's. There have been occasions where different suggestions were offered by the different assessors who assessed the same PUC. For the reason that all the members of the team might have attended different universities, our expectations were different. This sometimes created inconsistencies in the recommendations made to the PUC's. I experienced a situation where the team leader was too harsh and his demeanour was to show that he was a tough guy and will not listen to any of our suggestions. In order not to undermine the team leader's authority, I went back privately to the institution and suggested what they had to do in order to address the challenges identified. I believe these challenges arise because the NAB has not created a platform where all assessors will regularly interact and share some of these experiences with them. The only opportunity we had was to talk to the NAB staff on the team, but these are not the decision makers so all that we suggest may not be implemented. I feel NAB should constitute an annual conference for assessors so we can meet the decision makers to share our thoughts.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** Apart from the lack of training what other challenges did you encounter in your role as an assessor?

**Assessors' responses:** The challenges covered a wide range of issues. First, the supervision by the mentoring PSU's is a key area that is missing. After an assessment, it takes more than three years before another team of assessors will do another assessment. This creates a gap as to who monitors what is happening in the PUC's. Recognising such a gap is one of the reasons why PUC's are required to be affiliated to universities that are autonomous. However, from my observation and the interactions with the PUC's, the mentoring PSU's hardly visit the PUC's. Apart from not visiting, the PUC's

did not also organise workshops for their own staff on the acceptable practices for ensuring quality standards in whatever they did. My question is why do the mentoring PSU's not invite the PUC's to the workshops they organise for their own staff to ensure that the standards to be adhered to are the same? I think that NAB should insist on regular supervision by the mentoring PSU's. They should organise workshops, interact with the PUC's more often. Some of the lecturers in the PUC's are also experienced lecturers. Why I see this as a challenge is because if the mentoring PSU's were providing mentorship as required, some of the shortcomings we observed in the practices of the PUC's would have been addressed.

There are also challenges with inputs provided by the NAB for our work as assessors. For example, the quality of the documents we are given to use in assessing the PUC's have been photocopied several times and as such they have become very faint and so you can hardly read. On certain occasions, the documents were mixed up and so a document meant for accreditation contained information on re-accreditation or affiliation.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** The reviewed literature identified the factors that affect tertiary education QA to include the factor listed below. In what ways has any of the factors below or any other factors affected the quality of education offered by the PUC's in Ghana?

- Differences in the conception of what QA is (formative or summative) between the regulatory institutions and the higher education institutions.
- Incompatibility between the views of the academic staff as implementers of QA policy and what has been designed as acceptable quality higher education standards by the regulatory institutions.
- Lack of mechanisms to effectively analyse the information gathered during reviews and a lack of properly trained evaluators.
- Lack of ownership by the higher education institutions of the QA process.
- Lack of management skills and expertise related to QA at all levels.

**Assessors' responses:** In my view, the last two factors that is the lack of ownership by the higher education institutions of the QA process and the lack of management skills and expertise related to QA at all levels are the factors that are affecting the quality of education in the PUC's. Maybe because some of the members of the PUC's do not understand what tertiary education entails there will be no ownership of what must be done to ensure quality. The lack of ownership of the QA process makes ensuring quality a difficult task since such people resisted any effort to ensure quality in the PUC. Even for those who understand what QA entails, because of their focus on cutting cost, they refuse to observe or comply with the laid down standards. Again, what I observed in most of the PUC's was that the head of the QA unit did not have any background in QA. Ideally, if such people were given adequate training they would have been able to apply such knowledge to ensure the right practices, processes and procedures are followed; which is not the case.

**Interviewer (Follow-up):** In what ways do you think the PUC's governance and ownership structure has affected (positive and negative) QA practices of the PUC's?

**Assessors' responses:** On record, all PUC's have a governance structure that met NAB standards. However, what existed in practice could be different. All the Presidents/Rectors of the PUC's were either full professors or associate professors. The challenge was with the deans of the faculties and the heads of department who did not have the requisite qualifications. In most instances they were designated as acting heads and not the substantive heads. Most of the PUC's had financial challenges and were therefore not able to employ full or associate professors to occupy such positions. However, what was noticeable was that, for all the PUC's that were established by churches, the membership of their governing councils were dominated by church members. On the negative aspect, some of the people we interacted with complained about interference from those who established the university colleges. The lack of finances ultimately affects quality in every aspect of the university colleges' operations.

**OBJECTIVE 3: Outline the theoretical perspectives and conceptual framework that relate to tertiary education quality assurance in Ghana and compare key indicators and accreditation models between world class tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana**

**Interviewer:** What is your view on the practice of publishing the outcomes of the review of university colleges as done in the UK to inform the public on the performance of each PUC as well as ranking them as done in the USA and the UK?

**Assessors' responses:** Publishing of the review reports as well as ranking of the PUC's will be a welcome idea and an improvement on the existing mechanisms. Publishing the review report will provide the opportunity for those PUC's that are not doing well to learn from others. There should be no confidentiality about such an issue that affects the development of a nation's human capital. Why should this be possible in UK but not in Ghana if our aim is to adopt best practices that will enable us improve upon the existing standards? Unless we improve upon the existing standards, we will continue to experience the poor quality of education being offered by most of the PUC's. As for the ranking of PUC's, it is long overdue. It should not just be the PUC's but all universities should be ranked. I know a PUC that could even perform better than some PSU's when both PSU's and PUC's are ranked together. The results of the ranking table could also be used in determining how much funding a university gets.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** In your view, should the regulatory institutions and the mentor universities practices for assuring quality in the PUC's be influenced by practice from other parts of the world especially the developed nations such as the USA, the UK and Australia?

**Assessors' responses:** Of course yes? There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Once we do a proper assessment of our environment and know what is applicable and what is not, we should be able to select the good practices that will suit our context. As I indicated earlier, practices like the publication of review reports and the ranking of higher education institutions are very good international practices we should adopt.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** The existing tertiary education QA framework of Ghana shows that it is a collaborative effort between the NAB, the NCTE and the university to which the PUC's are affiliated. What are your views and experiences on the functioning and effectiveness of this framework?

**Assessors' responses:** What I rather see is that we complement each other's work. We do not collaborate. I say so because as assessors we do not engage the mentoring PSU's during our assessment. We deal with the NAB which provides us with the guidelines for assessment. We do not also deal with the NCTE. It is the NAB that engages us to do the assessment and once we are done with the assessment and submit our report to the NAB that ends our work.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** One of the requirements of the NAB is for every tertiary education institution to have an internal QA unit. How do you gather feedback from the different constituents of the university college on the internal QA mechanisms and what is your assessment of the internal QA unit?

**Assessors' responses:** The institutions themselves are required to have feedback mechanisms such as student assessment. Sometimes we randomly call some students to ask questions concerning the QA practices in their universities, but most often they are afraid to speak to us. The students have a lot to discuss or tell the university so they must make sure they create avenues to gather data on how the students think about their services. The students are also the greatest marketers for the PUC's, so they must create this opportunity to hear from them. I suggest students assessment information should also be looked at by the NAB. Another challenge is that when we tell the institutions we visit that we need some students to talk to, we cannot be sure whether such students have been coached but what we do is that we make sure that we probe so if a student has been coached you will be able to tell and you find ways of getting information on the real state of affairs in the PUC.

Internal QA requires that the institution itself is able to ensure quality standards in its practices starting from the entry grades of students admitted, teaching and learning, examinations, infrastructure etc. However, what existed in most of the PUC's showed that these practices are not ensured by the internal QA units. As a requirement from the regulatory institutions, all higher education institutions including PUC's must have an internal QA directorate. Although all the PUC's we visited had shown documents indicating that they have internal QA units, their practices did not suggest there is a unit that ensures that quality standards are observed, monitored, evaluated and corrective action taken where necessary. My review of the questions and examination papers do not indicate evidence that the questions have for example been peer reviewed or been reviewed by external assessors from the mentoring institutions. There should be evidence of lecturer's peer reviewing each other's examinations papers. In some of the PUC's, course outlines did not correspond with course descriptions. There were also instances where no evidence existed on students' assessment of lecturers. Some of the PUC's also lacked adequate infrastructure required for effective teaching and learning. I think there is more that needs to be done in order to develop the capacity of the PUC's to own and ensure quality in everything they do.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** There appears to be a high interest of Ghanaians in the assurance of quality education standards in the PUC's in Ghana. What other mechanisms do you propose in order to improve upon the existing QA structures, policies, procedures, systems and legislation for quality assurance in PUC's in Ghana?

**Assessors' responses:** Once you commercialise education in Africa; not in other parts of the world, do not expect quality. People see the establishment of PUC's as a money-making venture. I had to resign from a semi-PUC because of the standards that were being observed. You were not allowed to fail students because that will affect their source of income. I was also told when student numbers are low, they will not be able to pay me. I was not comfortable so I resigned. PUC's do not have the numbers so they are not able to pay salaries. I suggest PUC's should be supported by government at least to pay



salaries because the PUC's are solving a societal problem. The PUC's can then use the fees they collect for infrastructural development.

I suggest PUC's should be seen as campuses by their mentoring institutions. Mentoring institutions are supposed to keep a close eye on the PUC's which they do not do. If PUC's are seen as part of the mentoring institutions, to be able to ensure the same standards, then they should run the same curriculum, write the same examinations as the institution they are affiliated to. In that case, I can agree that the quality of graduates is same as those from the PSU's. Although it is the minimum standards that are used in granting accreditation for the establishment of a PUC, that does not mean if hundred individuals apply for institutional and programme accreditation and they all meet those minimum standards they should be accredited as PUC's. In Ghana, we cannot just be accrediting institutions without looking at the national needs. This is an area that the NAB should be concerned about. Whoever establishes a PUC should ensure that salaries are not dependent on school fees. For those PUC's that were set up by churches, they must set up endowment funds so that salaries are not dependent on school fees. School fees should only be an additional source of income.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** There is the perception that PUC's in Ghana do not offer quality education, but are rather interested in making money. What is your opinion about such a perception?

**Assessors' responses:** That is absolutely true. I think it is a realistic perception but it is the nature of the system. Unless government takes over some of the needs of the PUC's like training of staff and provision of infrastructure, PUC's will continue to be of low standards. In as much as some PUC's are doing well, there are some that do not need to exist because of the lack of infrastructure among others.

Some of the PUC's are set up not necessarily for money. Most of them were set up by the churches just like they set up the secondary schools in the olden days. So it is more of a social responsibility. Some of the PUC's are doing well. All PUC's are affiliated to PSU's

so whatever they do must be a reflection of the quality of education in the institution they are affiliated to. Some of the mentoring institutions do not visit the PUC's to help them learn and improve upon their practices.

**OBJECTIVE 4: Provide a historical context of the legal framework on the establishment and operations of PUC's and tertiary education regulatory institutions in Ghana from 1991 to 2019**

**Interviewer (Follow-up):** As part of the reforms to the tertiary education system, one of the institutions to be established was the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board who would develop standardised criteria irrespective of the private university where an individual sought admission as well as monitor the admissions processes, in order to ensure that only qualified applicants are admitted into the PUC's. In the absence of the establishment of this institution, how do you as assessors check to ensure that only qualified applicants are admitted into the PUC's?

**Assessors' responses:** This is a very important aspect we pay attention to. Normally we ask for the students' files and check at random. If we find out that the institution is going against the set standards then we become more critical in our assessment. If there are lapses we draw the institutions' attention. For re-accreditation, we sample from the students files to check and confirm whether the approved entry requirements are being observed. We also ask for the list of first year students and their qualifications and sometimes you may find out that some of them do not have any qualifications against their names. In such cases, we request the university college to provide us with the qualifications of all students. If they are unable to do so, we make a note and inform the NAB.

**OBJECTIVE 5: Analyse the effect of the current QA capacity and mechanisms of tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana and the usefulness of the application of these mechanisms at PUC's**

**Interviewer (follow-up):** What is your general assessment of PUC's response to assessments? Any specific examples or cases to illustrate this?

**Assessors' responses:** They see us as policemen or people who have come to look out for faults. They do not see us as people who are interested in helping them to improve. They also see assessment as an imposition. Since they are only interested in getting accreditation, when we go there they are eager to do what we want them to do just to satisfy us. I just came from Kenya to do an assessment of a PUC and it proved further my conviction about the importance of external moderation/assessment. Some lecturers want to do the wrong things but with the presence and comments of an external assessor, the authorities are able to use the feedback from the external assessors to check their staff to ensure they do the right thing.

Generally, they do not challenge whatever we ask them to do. Whether they will go ahead and implement our recommendations is another matter but they respect our views. Sometimes, individual recalcitrant lecturers may react negatively to findings against them. Some view assessors as both people who demand accountability and people who are interested in seeing them improve. Again, some of the PUC's are of the view that some of the panel members are unreasonable. For example, in one institution, as chairman of the panel, I had to postpone the exercise and ask the institution to go back and redo their documents because it was full of errors. The programme we were to review had contents of different courses; probably due to 'cut and paste'.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** As an assessor, do you make suggestions to the NAB for purposes of improving upon the existing QA mechanisms and how has this contributed to improve upon the quality assurance mechanisms of the NAB?

**Assessors' responses:** Yes, we do. However, we do not meet the decision makers like the executive secretary and other top officials. We only talk to the NAB representatives on the panel. The NAB should hold workshops for all assessors to meet and dialogue in order to share our experiences and how we could improve on the existing QA

mechanisms. Normally it is the chairman of the assessment team who gives comment on what we found during our visits and our assessment of each PUC. The NAB also informs us about the comments from the PUC's. The idea is that when we go out as assessor we are not there to impose a programme we are familiar with on the PUC's. although the panel members may come from different universities. There have been instances where there were different views from panel members regarding the content of a programme. In addition, since it is not the same team that visits a PUC always, this created a situation of inconsistencies in the recommendations from the different assessment teams. As a result, and as a matter of policy, the NAB always informed the panel members not to impose their individual institutional standards on the PUC's but be guided by the general guidelines of the NAB that we were given.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** Based on your experiences, in your view does the NAB/NCTE have the capacity to achieve its mandate of QA in the PUC's in Ghana? Justify your response.

**Assessors' responses:** Yes and no. They have the staff that carry out their day-to-day activities but because they do not have the capacity to go round to assess the PUC's, that is why they hire professionals like us depending on the programmes and courses that need to be reviewed. Definitely, NAB cannot employ us as on full time basis since assessment is not an everyday activity so depending on which university's programme is due for accreditation or re-accreditation we are invited.

Normally as an assessor, you are to represent NAB so we have to be subject matter specialists, and know what the NAB standards are. The objective is to work with the PUC's and to assess their programmes in a rational manner and not to use the standards of the universities in which we teach.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** After an assessment of an institution, does the policy of the NAB permit you to immediately give feedback to the institution you have assessed about what

your findings are? If no feedback is given immediately, what are the opportunities available to the institutions to confirm or disconfirm your findings?

**Assessors' responses:** Yes, normally, we give feedback on the spot because assessment is more or less like a dialogue. Assessment involves several processes and procedures. First, we inform them that we are there to help them to improve upon what they do so they should relax and be honest with us. We start by asking the aim of the course, the objectives, the content and what they do to achieve those objectives and see whether they meet the set national standards. We also go round to inspect their facilities and also check their documents and interact with them. Sometimes by the time you finish going through all these activities there may not be much to talk about again. At the end of the assessment, we compile our report and recommendations and submit them to the NAB. It is the NAB that writes back to the PUC's our observations and the corrective actions they have to take.

The feedback is given by the chairman of the committee and it is not feedback on the assessment but rather expectation of when the institution will hear from the NAB. The feedback given could be a general summary of what the team saw. Depending on the style of the chairman of the committee, the PUC could be given an idea of the programme overview and not an assurance of whether the accreditation results are positive or negative. Normally, when the PUC gets the report, they are bound by what the report says in terms of deficiencies. In the report, the weaknesses are itemised, and if the PUC disagrees with the weaknesses identified, they can indicate the particular areas they disagree with but not the substantive issues indicated as NAB standards. If the committee makes suggestions for improvement which are not substantive NAB standards this could be disregarded by the PUC. During the assessment process, if the PUC has any questions, they are allowed to seek clarification but once we finish with the assessment, each panel member fills a form and these are submitted to the NAB directly. It is the NAB that writes to the PUC. The PUC's are given the opportunity to confirm or disconfirm our findings based on the report that comes from the NAB. However, no one member is answerable to any PUC because it is the NAB that engaged the panel, not the university

college. In some instances, senior management-principal, rector, registrar- were present during the assessment and the exit meetings.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** What are the specific areas you are required by the NAB to focus on during assessment and what are the means through which you assess each of the areas?

**Assessors' responses:** We look at the institution and its administration; in terms of curriculum standards, admission standards, staffing, programme goals and objectives, calibre and number of staff, examination, teaching, course outline, QA and ethics policies. The first time (accreditation) is more thorough than re-accreditation. We have accreditation standards that guide us. There are certain minimum standards required for any tertiary education institution to begin to operate. NAB makes this very clear and there are many documents that we are provided with. If you are not satisfied with any of the areas, there is a comment column where you indicate your concerns and your recommendations. The member of the NAB staff on the panel does not contribute to the assessment procedure. He only represents the NAB and provides us with what we need.

Let us understand one thing. There is a difference between assessing an institution to gain accreditation and assessing an institution in terms of programmes once they have been granted accreditation because they cannot run any programme if they are not accredited. So we have the assessment for establishing a PUC. So once a PUC has been established, after every three years, their programmes have to be assessed. There are three major areas; facilities, staffing, programmes. I do not know whether you recall that about a year ago NAB announced that a PUC is hiring a floor or two of a storey building as the infrastructure to establish a PUC. As assessors, when we observe such things we do not approve but insist that they must have a campus of their own. For example, if you are mounting a theatre programme, and you do not have a drama-studio, an auditorium, lights, equipment, a library; which are part of the infrastructural facilities, you cannot be accredited to run such a programme. Secondly, we look at your staffing, the quality of the staff, their qualification, experience, background and so on. Third, are the academic

programmes being run, the course outlines, and the course descriptions, In line with mentoring universities' policies, samples of questions set in the examinations, and marking schemes are assessed. Copies are actually demanded and examined. The aim is to look at these areas to find out whether they are fit for purpose.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** Do you refer to recommendations from previous assessment of the institution when you are undertaking another assessment?

**Assessors' responses:** Yes. The NAB sends us a summary of deficiencies identified earlier and the suggested remedies. We look at the deficiencies to check whether they have been addressed. We have to make sure the deficiencies have been addressed. Looking at the previous assessment report is important because when you contradict your previous recommendations, the institutions sometimes challenge you that you made a previous recommendation that are contrary to what you are now demanding. But if they are suggestions, they have the option not to implement it. At any given time, you are required to assess the quality of the state of affairs at your time of visit. You are not to be influenced by what some other people have recommended. It is more dangerous to be prejudiced than to be open-minded. I think that the idea of each panel being independent, objective, truthful and sincere at any given time is more important.

**Interviewer (follow-up):** What do you do if an institution has not implemented the recommendations from the previous assessment?

**Assessors' responses:** In instances that the PUC's disagreed with suggestions and were able to justify why they did not implement what was suggested, you may not have to insist. For example, movement of courses to different levels or adding of courses are matters that require flexibility. When a PUC is able to justify why they think otherwise, you can allow them to go by their position. The important thing is they have to show a justification for why they are still doing it the same way. If whatever the PUC is doing is outside the standards set by the accreditation board, the chairman of the visitation team has to approve it otherwise the institution has to comply. There is an institution that never

seemed to correct any issue that any panel had raised and NAB had a problem with them. It is for the NAB to take action. So before accreditation is granted the NAB looks at the previous recommendations to make sure the PUC has complied with the previous recommendation before accreditation is granted.

#### **7.4.4.1 General assessment of the perceptions and views of assessors**

The fourth and final set of data offers a general assessment of the assessors concerning the mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. Specifically, the responses presented indicates the assessors views regarding the extent to which PUC's understood QA, the factors that affect QA in PUC's in Ghana, the factors that affect their role as assessors and the extent to which the QA mechanisms have been effective in ensuring the delivery of quality education to the citizenry are observed.

#### **Group D: Sub theme 1: Understanding of quality assurance**

While some of the assessors were of the view that PUC's did not understand what quality tertiary education entails, others felt they understood it. One of the expressions from a participant who was of the view that PUC did not understand QA is as follows:

*"... I must say almost all the PUC's I have visited have issues with quality; ranging from the way the curriculum is designed to how the content is delivered. The PUCs are more interested in making money."*

Similar to the responses from the other earlier three groups of participants, the reasons advanced in support of their view that members of the PUC's did not understand what QA entails was the fact that, their practices did not reflect that they understood what QA entails. The participants were of the view that, PUC's were interested in making money and therefore did not adopt practices that conformed to the quality standards set by the regulatory institutions. Additionally, the assessors observed that even when recommendations for improvement were made, some of the PUC's ignored them. While some PUC's welcomed and accepted the views of assessors, others viewed assessors as individuals interested in finding faults in order to fail them. Such a perception could lead to members of the PUC doing what will be inspected rather than what is expected which



cannot promote openness and willingness to learn for the development of a culture of quality.

On the contrary, those who were of the view that members of the PUC's understood QA but were not ensuring quality in their practices attributed it to constraints such as a lack of proper mentoring from the affiliate universities and financial challenges resulting from low student enrolment. To this group of assessors, they did not believe there could be anyone who has the means but will deliberately ignore quality standards.

### **Group D: Sub theme 2: Factors that affect quality assurance**

With regard to the factors that affect quality standards of education in PUC's, the assessors indicated that the lack of ownership and the lack of management skills and expertise related to QA at all levels affected the quality of education standards in the PUC's. In their view, whatever QA standards and norms that are established, once the PUC's did not own and believe that they are requirements for ensuring quality but see them as being imposed on them by an outsider, they will not be committed to ensure quality. Similarly, the assessors were of the view that, a lack of the requisite QA knowledge by people in charge of QA such as the directors of the internal QA unit affected QA in PUC's in Ghana. The other factors mentioned were a focus on cost cutting at the expense of investing in resources required to deliver quality education in the PUC's. In addition, the participants mentioned that it was a common practice where one lecturer taught in more than one PUC on full time basis. The low level of salaries in some PUC's which made some faculty members of the PUC's to teach in more than one PUC invariably led to a high workload of faculty members which affected the quality of services provided by such faculty members. In this regard one participant asserted as follows:

*"... the salary levels of the staff of some of the PUC's are so low, so some lecturers teach in more than one PUC. During our visits, we found out that some of these lecturers used the same set of questions for all the institutions in which they taught. So you wonder whether they are doing any quality work. There have been few occasions where we had cause to counsel some of these persons."*

According to the participants, the records of the PUC's indicated governance structures that were consistent with the norms of the NCTE. However, the governing councils of the

each of the PUC's established by churches were dominated by members of the church. The participants observed that, in some of the PUC's, the owners interfered in the management of the PUC's due to the financial support they provided to them. In addition, the deans of the faculty and heads of department were all in acting capacity because they were not professors.

As earlier indicated by the first three groups of participants (see Section 7.4.1 – 7.4.3) the assessors were also of the view that introducing other mechanisms such as the ranking of PUC's and publishing the assessment reports as done in the UK and the USA should be encouraged since these are international best practices for ensuring transparency and competitiveness.

The participants mentioned that apart from their interaction with the various administrative heads, they also gathered data from students, lecturers and institutional documents in order to corroborate whatever information was provided. Although every PUC had records which indicated that they had internal QA units, the units were not effective due to resource and capacity constraints. On the issues of additional mechanisms that could be used to improve upon the mechanisms of QA in PUC's in Ghana, the assessor indicated that the existing mechanisms are comprehensive but the challenge has to do with the commercialisation of higher education. This was expressed as follows by one of the participants.

*“... once you commercialise education in Africa ... do not expect quality. People see the PUC's as money making ventures. I had to resign from a PUC because of the standards that were being observed. You were not allowed to fail students. I was told when student numbers are low, I cannot be paid and because of that there are a lot of compromises.”*

#### **Group D: Sub theme 3: Factors that affect the work of the assessors**

The responses from some of the assessors indicated that no orientation was organised for them before their first assignment. Consequently, they made errors but learnt on the job. Since assessors are the NAB's representatives who do the assessment in the PUC's, there is the need to develop their capacities to enable them deliver quality services that will ensure quality education standards in the PUC's.

The responses from the participants about the mechanisms in place for ensuring that they were well equipped to carry out their task were negative. One of the participants expressed his concerns follows:

*“... no training or orientation was given but I learnt on the job. I learnt from the members of the team. There is the need for orientation for people before they go out as assessors. In my case, I realised that I made a few mistakes because of the lack of training. My understanding of the whole concept of accreditation was wrong because I went with the notion that I should go out and make the decision about whether the institution should be given accreditation or not or whether a programme should be approved or not. So, I was very harsh. But later on, I got to know that as an assessor, I am supposed to help the institutions to improve so I changed.”*

As a result of the lack of orientation some of the assessors had a wrong perception of what quality assessment was about. In the absence of the right knowledge, the assessors indicated that, they relied on what pertained in their various institutions as the yardstick to assess the PUC's. For the fact that, a team is normally made up of individuals from different universities or institutions, regular orientation is needed to ensure knowledge sharing and building of consensus for effective team work. The earlier responses from the regulatory institutions confirmed the views of the assessors about the lack of regular and scheduled training which has contributed to gaps in the practices of the PUC's as well as in the knowledge of the assessors. In the reviewed literature, Middlehurst (2011: 26) indicated that in order to ensure academic quality, there is the need to organise regular training and development programmes for staff (see Chapter 3, Section 3.6.1.1).

#### **Group D: Sub theme 4: Lack of adequate mentoring**

Apart from the lack of orientation, the assessors expressed concern about a lack of adequate mentoring by the universities that the PUC's were affiliated to. They were of the opinion that since assessment is after more than three years, they expect the mentoring universities to provide the guidance required to ensure quality standards were observed in the PUC's. The participants also complained that, the print of the documents they were provided with were faint and difficult to read. This could be attributed to the responses from the NAB about a lack of adequate resources for undertaking their tasks. One of the assessors expressed his concern about a lack of effective mentoring as follows:

*“... mentor institutions are supposed to keep a close eye on the PUC's but they do not do it. Assessors cannot always be in the PUC's that is why the PUC's were required to be affiliated to autonomous universities.”*

#### **Group D: Sub theme 5: Need for feedback section with top management**

Apart from the complaint by the assessors regarding a lack of training for them, the assessors also indicated that they did not have the opportunity to meet the top management of the NAB to share their experiences after their visits to the PUC's. The participants were of the view that it would have provided them the opportunity to make suggestions for addressing the challenges encountered. In their view, the NAB officials they interacted with after their assessment were not the key decision makers. Accordingly, they believed that this affected the extent to which key decisions that could bring about the desired changes were not implemented. One of the participants expressed his concerns as follows:

*“... these challenges arise because NAB does not organise meetings for us, as assessors to interact with them. The only opportunity we have is to talk to the NAB staff on the team, but these are not the decision makers so all that we suggest are not implemented. I feel NAB should constitute an annual conference of assessors so we can meet the decision makers to share our thoughts.”*

#### **Group D: Sub theme 6: Perception of private university colleges as low quality**

Participants supported the existing perception that some PUC's offered low quality education. They were of the view that a lot of the higher education standards have been compromised as a result of the ineffective mentoring regime. Thus, the lack of compliance by most of the PUC's confirms the perceptions and descriptions of some of the PUC's in Ghana as low quality.

#### **Group D: Sub theme 7: Relevance of the role of assessors**

The responses indicated mixed reactions and perceptions about the role and relevance of assessors by members of the PUC's. While some viewed assessors as a team that visited them to make suggestions for improving upon what they do, others viewed assessors as people interested in finding faults in order to prevent their programmes from being accredited.

The participants also pointed out contradictions in recommendations made by the different teams of assessors that visited the PUC's. This was due to the fact that panel members normally comprised individuals from different universities who may have different

expectations based on what pertained in the universities in which they taught. As a result of these past experiences, the participants indicated that they were always informed to avoid using what pertained in their individual universities as the standard but rather to go by the NAB guidelines. One participant expressed his views as follows:

*“... the objective is to work with PUC’s and to assess their programmes in a rational manner and not to use the standards of where we come from. Sometimes we go out and some of our team members can be problematic. They want the PUC’s to do what they do in their universities. NAB standards are also sometimes misinterpreted by some of the assessors which gets the PUC’s confused. Different people go there to indicate different standards. Sometimes, some of the assessors create the impression as if they are trying to clone the PUC’s to represent the public universities instead of allowing for diversity and creativity.”*

#### **Group D: Sub theme 8: Capacity of the regulatory institutions**

On the issue of whether the NAB had the capacity to undertake its mandate of QA, participants were of the view that the current structure in which assessors are appointed by the NAB is because assessment of higher education institutions is not an everyday activity. As such, NAB cannot appoint assessors as part of their permanent staff. Thus, the NAB may have the capacity for its day-to-day activities but not for the assessment of the higher education institutions.

#### **Group D: Sub theme 9: Areas assessed**

The participants indicated that the areas they focused on during assessment included; the curriculum, admissions, staffing, programme goals and objectives, calibre and number of staff, examinations, teaching, QA and ethics policies and course outlines. They also mentioned that, they referred to previous assessment reports provided by the NAB to determine the extent to which PUC’s had implemented the recommendations of the previous assessments. In instances where the PUC did not address major issues identified in previous recommendations, they notified the NAB. The responses from the assessors indicated that after their assessment, they always interacted with the group appointed by the PUC where they provided a general summary of their assessment. However, the formal report was sent to the PUC’s by the NAB.

## **7.5 ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM PARTICIPANTS**

The last question asked during the semi-structured personal interviews required participants to provide additional information regarding the research topic that may not have been addressed in the questions asked. The additional comments provided by the four groups of participants suggest the interest the participants had in offering possible solutions aimed at addressing challenges in the existing mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. The additional comments are presented in line with the order in which perception and views of participants from the four groups were presented.

### **7.5.1 Additional comments from participants from the regulatory institutions**

This section captures responses to the semi-structured interviews when participants from the regulatory institutions were asked to suggest measures that could improve upon the existing mechanisms for QA in the PUC's in Ghana. The key issues highlighted are as follows:

- The need to do more research and generate additional publications. More specifically, it was indicated that the regulatory institutions should focus more on the quality of graduates from the PUC's. In addition, it was highlighted that the emphasis should be on the assessment of the general activities of PSU's as well who serve as mentors to the PUC's. Adding to this, it was underlined that the regulatory institutions should do more stakeholder consultations, discussions and meetings.
- The requirement for peer review among the PUC's was identified. In particular, the participants suggested the establishment of a peer review system between the PUC's to enable them identify their challenges and successes.
- The necessity of CIU to be more proactive. Specifically, the participants suggested the need for PUC's to collaborate to push the agenda to be recognised as providing an essential public service and therefore should be supported financially by the government.

- The participants suggested that it was essential for the NAB to set up a committee of experts who will be responsible for certification of PUC's.

### **7.5.2 Additional comments from participants from the private university colleges**

In this section, responses relating to additional comments from participants from the PUC's on any other issues related to the topic are captured. The additional comments centered on the following:

- Permit graduated approach to staffing requirements by the NAB/NCTE: The participants from the PUC's proposed that they do not have the resources that the PSU's have and as such requirements such as staff-student-ratio and the percentage of professors, associate professors and those with terminal degrees should be a gradual process.
- Necessity for tracer studies: Although this is a requirement, it has not been enforced. The participants suggested the need for tracer studies in order to have reliable data on the employability of graduates from each PUC and their performance. This will be useful in the review and design of new programmes. It was also suggested that results from tracer studies will provide reliable feedback on the performance of graduates from the PUC's.
- Need for novelty in programmes and content: It was observed that PUC's mostly offered business administration programmes and not the sciences. Participants acknowledged that, one major thing they have failed to do was to be unique in terms of the programmes they offered. It was suggested that, the government should come up with a policy so that the new PUC that will be established will offer courses in the sciences and technology and such PUC's should be supported by the government.

### **7.5.3 Additional comments from the participants from the mentor public sector universities**

This section of the responses to the semi-structured personal interviews provides evidence of additional comments from the participants from the mentoring PSU's. The

additional comments from participants were on other issues related to the topic of this research. The comments centered on the following:

- The requirement for the regulatory institutions to regulate the number of PUC's and their location: In order to avoid the challenge of low student numbers in some PUC's, the participants pointed out the need for government to regulate the location of new PUC's.
- The necessity for education of PUC's on the role of mentors: The participants from the mentoring PSU's proposed the need for more awareness for PUC's to understand the role of the mentorship as a means of helping them to adopt best practices that will facilitate the development of a quality culture.
- The obligation for PUC's to ensure high standards in order to attract qualified applicants: The participants believed that with the increasing number of applicants that qualify for university education, when PUC's ensure quality standards, they will attract the right number of qualified students to enable them grow.
- A ban on the establishment of new PUC's: The participants suggested that the current tertiary education landscape of Ghana and the financial challenges facing both public and PUCs, provides good justification for placing a ban on the establishment of new PUC's. They argued that, as a country there are enough public and private higher education institutions to absorb the number of qualified applicants. The current scramble among PUC's to get student numbers is affecting quality. The participants suggested a holistic approach where there could be mergers based on culture, mission, and vision in order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the PUC's.

#### **7.5.4 Additional comments from assessors**

This section of the semi-structured personal interviews considers evidence of the additional comments from assessors

- The requirement for the NAB to develop guidelines on behaviour: The participants argued that, they are required to go by the guidelines given to them by the NAB. However, they were not given guidelines for behaviour or attitude of assessors.



Consequently, the participants suggested that, the NAB should provide guidelines on the behaviour of assessors just as they have for programme and institutional accreditation.

- The necessity for the regulatory institutions to set benchmarks: It was highlighted by the participants that, no benchmarks existed so every PUC did whatever they deemed fit. Accordingly, they proposed that, in terms of programme content/curriculum, there should be benchmarking so if an institution wants to run a programme, they should not go below the set benchmark but could only improve on it.
- The necessity for government to support PUC's: According to the assessors, because the PSU's cannot admit all qualified applicants, the government should support PUC's who admit the backlog.
- More engagement between the internal QA unit and management: The assessors were of the view that there is the need for more engagement between the internal QA unit and management of PUC's. They suggested that, the QA unit must be a high powered committee headed by the director of QA to make sure that on a regular basis every aspect of the PUC's activities are checked.
- Institutionalise peer-review system: There should also be evidence of lecturers peer reviewing each other's examinations papers.
- It was essential for the NAB questionnaire to distinguish mandatory issues from general issues: Participants argued that, if there are any serious issues the institution has to address before accreditation is granted that should be separated and made mandatory. They indicated that the current questionnaire in which all issues were lumped up under one question was not appropriate.

The transcribed data obtained from the participants were analysed and grouped under the thematic areas, sub-themes and categories and aligned with the research objectives in Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2. In the part below is a concise summary of the key themes and concepts that emerged from the analysis of the interview data.

## **7.6 THEMES AND CONCEPTS FROM THE ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEW DATA**

The strategy adopted during the analysis helped to condense the raw data into themes and to establish the relationship between the data collected and the objectives of the research (see Section 6.4.4.4 and Figure 6.8). The key themes, and concepts that emerged from the analysis of the interview data are organised under four key thematic areas as follows:

- Mechanisms for quality assurance in PUC's in Ghana.
- Comparison of and influence of key indicators and accreditation models between international regulatory institutions and tertiary regulatory institutions of Ghana.
- Historical and legal framework on the establishment and operation of PUC's and tertiary education regulatory institutions.
- Analysis of current capacity of tertiary education regulatory institutions and mechanism of QA and their effectiveness.

The four key thematic areas were derived based on responses to the general and follow-up questions asked (see Annexure 9). In the sub-sections that follow (see Section 7.6.1.1 – 7.6.1.4), the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis are outlined.

### **7.6.1 Mechanisms for quality assurance in private university colleges in Ghana**

The themes and sub-themes derived from the analysis of responses in this section are focused on research Objective 2 of this project (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2) Participants were asked whether private university colleges understand what QA entails and the factors that could affect higher education QA (see Annexure 9, Objective 2).

#### **7.6.1.1 Theme 1: Conceptualisation of quality assurance and factors affecting it**

**Sub theme 1:** Fair understanding by most PUC's

##### **Categories**

Simplistic view when implementing QA.

Do not focus on QA in their practices.

**Sub theme 2:** Internal inhibitors to effectiveness of QA

## **Categories**

- Financial: profit motive.
- Management practices: lack of regular training/training.
- Lack of resources.
- Governance: interference by owners.
- Lack of adherence to set standards.
- Low salary levels in PUC's.
- Commercialisation of education
- Lack of ownership of the QA process.
- Mindset of students.
- Low enrolment figures.
- High workload of faculty members.
- Ineffective internal QA mechanisms.
- Contradictory demands.

## **Sub-theme 3: Stakeholder involvement**

### **Categories**

- PUC's.
- Nurses and midwifery council.
- Dental council.
- Judicial council.
- Institute of engineers.
- MoE.
- Media.
- Employers.

## **Sub-theme 4: Negative effects of constraints**

### **Categories**

- Perception of PUC's as low quality.
- Do not attract qualified faculty members and students.
- Graduates lack job relevant skills and drive for innovation.
- Delays in services provided by regulatory institutions.

### **7.6.1.2 Theme 2:** Comparison of and influence of key indicators and accreditation models between international regulatory institutions and tertiary regulatory institutions of Ghana

In this section, the question asked focused on whether the NAB, the NCTE and the PUC's are members of any international network or association of similar types and in what ways the accreditation models of these international tertiary education regulatory institutions influenced their model of QA (see Annexure 9). The responses elicited are aimed at achieving research Objective 3 (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). The sub-themes and categories from the analysis are as follows:

#### **Sub-theme 1:** International influence

##### **Categories**

- NAB model similar to UK model.
- Member of African quality assurance network, INQAAHE and AAU.
- Membership of international associations beneficial.

#### **Sub-theme 2:** Level of collaboration between institutions involved in quality assurance in private university colleges

##### **Categories**

- Turf protection between NAB and NCTE.
- Contradictions in requirements from the three QA institutions.
- Delays leading to inefficiency.
- High cost of affiliation and accreditation to PUC's.
- Mentoring not effective and so does not support the NAB's work.
- Centralisation of NAB and NCTE affected their effectiveness.

### **7.6.1.3 Theme 3: Historical and legal framework on the establishment and operation of private university colleges and tertiary education regulatory institutions**

The themes provided below were derived from responses to questions that elicited information on the historical context of the legal framework on the establishment and operations of PUC's and tertiary education regulatory institutions in Ghana from 1991 to 2019 (see Annexure 9). This responses contributed to address research Objective 4 (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). The sub-themes and categories that emerged from the analysis of the responses from the participants are presented below.

#### **Sub-theme 1: Gaps in legal framework**

##### **Categories**

- NAB/NCTE Acts of establishment inadequate to enable them achieve mandate.
- NCTE role only advisory to the Minister of Education.
- Gaps in composition of the board.
- Lack of specificity about the background of members appointed to the board.
- Need to appoint people with background in QA to the board.
- Need to have an adhoc committee of experts on QA.
- NAB lacks human resources with technical skills in QA.
- NAB does not have enough vehicles to travel to all the PUC's Ghana.
- Low remuneration to assessors has made them not to be committed.

#### **Sub-theme 2: Level of implementation of recommendations of the committee's review of the White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991**

##### **Categories**

- Recommendation 1: Most tertiary education institutions still not well equipped.
- Recommendation 2: Being done through affiliation and accreditation mechanisms but not effective to ensure quality in PUC's in Ghana.
- Recommendation 3: NCTE has adequate resources but NAB which is the policy implementation agency does not have adequate resources.

- Recommendation 4: The regulatory institutions have not conducted any empirical studies to identify challenges facing PUC's contrary to what was as recommended.
- Recommendation 5: JAMB not established leading to inconsistencies in admissions grades to the different PUC's.

#### **7.6.1.4 Theme 4: Analysis of current capacity of tertiary education regulatory institutions and mechanisms for quality assurance and their effectiveness**

In order to address research Objective 5, (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2), participants provided responses on the effect of the current QA capacity and mechanisms of tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana and the usefulness of the application of these mechanisms at PUC's (see Annexure 9). The sub-themes that were derived from the analysis of the responses from the participants are provided as follows

##### **Sub-theme 1: Inadequate capacity**

###### **Categories:**

- Lack of capacity.
- Centralised location affects effectiveness.
- Ineffective e-application system.
- Work overload due to high number of PUC's.

##### **Sub-theme 2: Institutional and programme accreditation**

###### **Categories**

- Comprehensive enough.
- Use external professional assessors.
- -3-stage process of accreditation.
- 1<sup>st</sup>-pre-accreditation.
- 2<sup>nd</sup>-accreditation.
- 3<sup>rd</sup>- post accreditation.

##### **Sub-theme 3: Institutional and programme affiliation**

###### **Categories**

- Affiliation delays.
- High affiliation charges.
- Ineffective/inadequate mentorship.
- Too many affiliated PUC's.
- Lack of regular workshops.

## **7.7 CULTURE OF QUALITY FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE**

In addition to the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the research data as stated in objective 7 (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2), objective 7 also seeks to demonstrate the applicability of an education QA framework/model and interventions that could contribute to ensure, develop and maintain quality tertiary education standards in PUC's in Ghana. In this regard, a framework is proposed (see Figure 7.9) and discussed to indicate how it could contribute to address the shortcomings of the existing mechanisms for QA in PUC's in Ghana.

**Objective 7: Analysis, interpretation and discussion of research data (and development) as well as an attempt to demonstrate the applicability of an education quality assurance framework/model and interventions that could contribute to ensure, develop and maintain quality tertiary education standards at PUC's in Ghana**

The objective of this chapter apart from the presentation, analyses, interpretation and discussion of the research data (see Chapter 7, Sections 7.4 – 7.5), is to attempt to demonstrate the applicability of an education QA framework/model and interventions that could contribute to ensure, develop and maintain quality tertiary education standards at the PUC's in Ghana (see Chapter 7, Sections 7.4 – 7.5, objective 7).

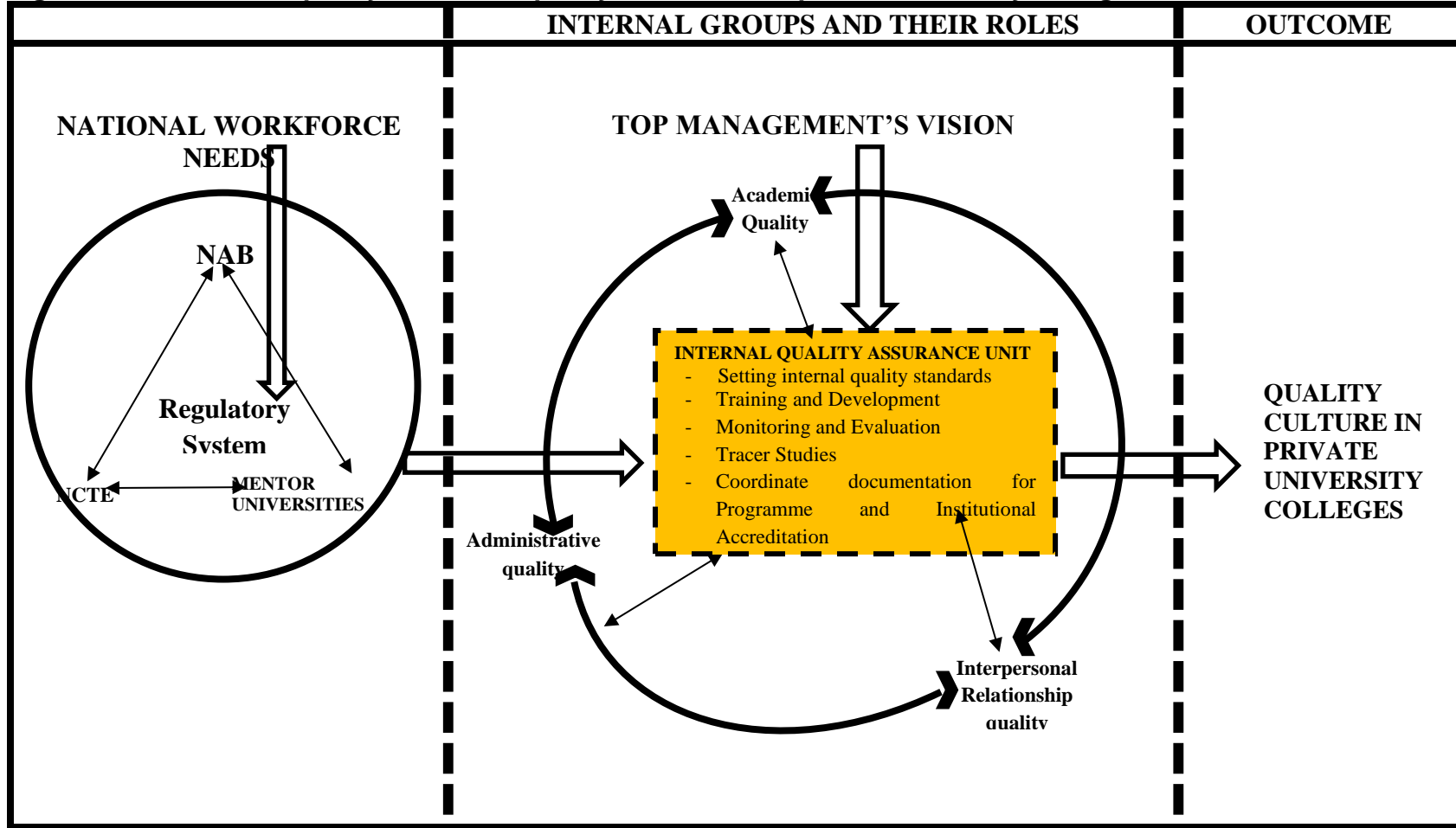
Glaser (1967: 3) indicated that the purpose of generating a grounded theory is to have a theory that is appropriate for its supposed usage. It is in this regard that Charmaz (2006: 12) posited that in the development of grounded theory, the researcher should focus on the analysis so as to develop an original theory that is based on the data. Accordingly, the

responses provided by participants, the literature review and document analysis formed the basis for the framework that has been proposed in Figure 7.9. Specifically, the challenges and suggestions mentioned by the participants were key to the development of the framework in Figure 7.9.

Based on the challenges identified in the themes/concepts that emerged from the analysis, a framework (see Figure 7.9) below is proposed in an attempt to demonstrate how the challenges that were identified with the current QA framework for regulating PUC's could be addressed. Alabi *et al.* (2018: 4) asserted that despite the directive from the NAB for every higher education institution to set up an internal QA unit, the concept of QA and the parameter that determines whether quality has been assured was not clearly outlined by the NAB. Data that were gathered in this study showed that there are three major groups that influence QA in the PUC's in Ghana as shown in the conceptual framework (see Chapter 3, Figure 3.5).



Figure 7.9: Culture of quality model for quality assurance in private university colleges



Source: Researcher's construct

The suggested framework; Figure 7.9, has three columns. The first column suggests that, the NAB, the NCTE, and the mentoring PSU's; although are separate institutions, should collaborate to have some inter-alignment and operate as an entity concerning the issue of QA in the PUC's in Ghana. As an entity, their regulatory role should be derived from the nation's human capital needs for its socio-economic development. Accordingly, the establishment of any new PUC's, their programmes and where they will be located should be approved based on the needs of the nation. When the activities of the three stakeholders in the QA process of the PUC's are coordinated in this manner, it is believed it will eliminate the problem of ineffective collaboration between the NAB and the NCTE. Furthermore, it will address the inconsistencies in the requirements and demands of the regulatory institutions and mentoring PSU's as well as eliminate the duplication of functions between the NAB, the NCTE and the mentoring PSU's. When the three units also collaborate, it will also lead to efficiency. Efficiency will be achieved because unlike the existing QA framework where the three units charged the PUC's separately for their services, the collaboration will eliminate the duplication thereby reduce the cost borne by the PUC's.

Another issue is that, relevance checks by NCTE are limited to PSU's and do not cover PUC's, leaving them to determine by themselves what is relevant. Furthermore, there is inherent duplication of relevance checks of academic programmes done by the NAB. Although the NAB does not set out to check relevance, the accreditation process builds within itself relevance checks through the criterion for stating, the philosophy of academic programmes during programme accreditation for both public and PUC's. Consequently, relevance checks of academic programmes are duplicated, and the NAB seems to provide better value than the NCTE in this respect. It might be prudent, therefore, to have the NAB add relevance checks to its mandate to remove duplication and also enhance effectiveness, as it captures both public and private higher education institutions. However, if the recommendation for the merger of the NAB and the NCTE are implemented, the issue of duplication of functions and who is better will be avoided.

In effect, when the NCTE relinquishes the function of relevance checks to the NAB, it will have more time to focus on pertinent strategic functions like collating labour market

information on demand and supply of skills and qualifications needed on the labour market. NCTE will have to develop a labour market data repository to facilitate the planning of market responsive, strategic and relevant academic programmes in Ghana. Quality of higher education will have to be cascaded from the national level to the institutional level, a task that requires collaboration among key public organisations, such as the National Development Planning Commission, NCTE, MoE and the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations.

Again, at the institutional level, to make programmes more relevant, there will be need for Professional Advisory Boards and collaboration with the Association of Ghana Industries and Ghana Employers Association, among others, to validate the curriculum and instructional designs.

A lack of training and frequent interaction between the regulatory institutions and the PUC's were some of the challenges indicated by the participants from the PUC's. Consolidating the separate activities of the three institutions will provide a holistic approach to identify any challenges as well as develop solutions to address the challenges. This consolidated unit will be expected to organise workshops for consensus building among the different stakeholders, disseminate information on practices that will ensure quality education standards in the PUCs, and organise training for members of the PUC's. The heads of all the units within the NAB and the NCTE should also make it part of their calendar to always be part of the debriefing sections of assessors to be able to have first-hand information on the challenges being faced in practice in the PUC's. This suggestion is borne out of the fact that the current system seems to isolate the decision makers within the regulatory institutions from the assessors who have information on issues affecting quality of education being offered by the PUC's. This suggestion is also supported by the reviewed literature which shows that training is an important component of the QA system of the UK, the USA and Australia. The interview responses from some of the assessors indicated that they did not receive any form of training before they were appointed as members of a panel that went to the PUC's for assessment. Apart from assessment, audit, accreditation and re-accreditation functions of the regulatory

institutions, it is suggested that, there should be the ranking and publication of the assessment reports on both PSU's and PUC's by the regulatory institutions. Such best practices as exists in developed jurisdictions like the USA and the UK will provide relevant information to the public for decision making.

Column 2 represents the internal QA structure and functions. Doval, Bondrea and Negulescu (2011: 1060) indicated that although external QA mechanisms play an important role in the development of quality education standards, they do not necessarily lead to the development of a culture of quality. Accordingly, this framework proposed lays emphasis on the internal mechanisms. It is proposed that top management should be in charge of policy formulation. For effective change management for organisation development, top management support is critical. This is due to the fact that, it is top management's commitment to the focus and process of change that provides the drive for others to follow. Additionally, the resources needed for such a change are controlled by the top management. In most of the PUC's that participated in this study, either the Vice Presidents/Vice Rector/Vice Principal was in charge of academic affairs. Consequently, the Vice Presidents/Vice Rector/Vice Principal should have supervisory role over the functions of the internal QA unit. The internal QA unit should be a directorate with the Director who should be an equivalent of an academic Dean. There should also be two Deputy Directors; one responsible for administrative and relationship QA and the other in charge of academic QA. The Director and Deputy Directors should have an administrative staff to assist with administrative and clerical works. For the internal QA unit of PUC's, two sources of inputs should influence their functions. First is the national needs as outlined by the collaborative unit comprising the NAB, the NCTE and the mentoring PSU's, and second, the mission of the PUC. These two inputs should then influence the PUC's QA role. Generally, however, the PUC's should outline their internal QA practices through intra-alignment that should include; setting of internal quality standards, training and development of staff of the PUC, monitoring and evaluation of the internal QA activities for purposes of gathering diagnostic data on the strength and weaknesses of the system, conduct tracer studies, coordinate documentation for programme and institutional accreditation, quality audits and assessment. The internal

QA unit should generate output reports for both internal improvement and for external accountability and recommendations for decision making. It is believed that with the proposed structure and functions of the internal QA unit, it will lead to quality education outcomes (Column 3) in the PUC's.

The third column which is the outcome; is expected to be quality education standards, that are the result of an understanding of and adoption of organisational practices that will promote a CoQ. According to EUA (2005: 18) and Vettori (2012: 2), the development of a CoQ requires members of the institution to have knowledge about institutional successes and failures, institutional principles, involvement of all stakeholders in a bottom-up approach for a debate on the importance of a CoQ, so as to be able to build a mission statement to serve as the yardstick for determining quality standards. Lim (1999: 379) outlined the steps for the development of best practices in QA for effective education QA as follows. Firstly, there is the need for the establishment of a mission for the higher education institution. Secondly, a clear statement of the functions to be performed by the higher education institution towards the realisation of the mission statement must be developed. Thirdly, there is the need for a quality management system in order to achieve the set quality standards. The final stage is an external audit system that helps to evaluate the effectiveness of the quality management system. All these steps should be backed by a strong commitment on the part of management of the higher education for quality advancement. Effective strategies are those that have management structures that provide clear goals and responsibilities (Sursock, 2011: 50) and built on institutional identities that do not necessarily have to be totally changed (Ehlers 2009: 346; Vettori 2012: 4). Accordingly, it is believed that if the aforementioned steps and practices are adopted, it could lead to quality standards in the PUC's in Ghana.

The reviewed literature indicated the similarities concerning the factors influencing higher education QA. The reviewed literature shows the complementary role of internal and external QA in order to ensure both accountability and enhancement in the PUC's. Despite the complementary role, this framework proposes more focus on internal QA because it is more sustainable. To achieve this sustenance, there is the need for more

emphasis on developing the internal structures so as to make them responsive, supportive, less bureaucratic and forward looking, rather than a control mechanism.

## **7.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented, analysed and interpreted data that were gathered on the mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education at PUC's in Ghana. Data were gathered through semi-structured personal interviews, literature review and document analysis. The analysis and interpretation of data were done in line with the objectives of this research project (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). Objective 1 was addressed through a review of literature that helped to provide the framework for this research (see Chapter 1). Next, the four sets of data obtained through semi-structured personal interviews with participants from the regulatory institutions, the PUC's, the mentoring PSU's and assessors were presented. Thereafter, summaries that highlighted the key issues from the perceptions and views of participants from the four groups were offered. Results from the four sets of data showed that, despite the existence of the two regulatory institutions with a mandate to ensure quality standards in all higher education institutions in Ghana, there were challenges with the quality of education provided by some of the PUC's. The challenges were mainly with the implementation of existing mechanisms. Thus, despite the existence of comprehensive policies, poor implementation by all the four stakeholders affected the assurance of quality standards in the PUC's in Ghana. Additionally, the responses suggest a lack of satisfaction with the mentorship offered by the PSU's to which the PUC's were affiliated. Several other factors which affected the quality of education provided by the PUC's were also identified. The factors included the entrepreneurial motive of some of the persons who established the PUC's, lack of ownership of QA practices by the PUC's, high number of PUC's affiliated to a few PSU's, a lack of capacity of the NAB and a gap in the legislation that established the regulatory institutions. Other factors included inadequate human and non-human resources in some of the PUC's, low salary levels that did not attract and retain qualified faculty members and too many PUC's leading to low student enrolments. Additional comments were also provided by the four groups of participants aimed at addressing some of the challenges identified. Finally, in order to address an aspect of the objective of this chapter (see

Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2 – objective 7), an attempt was made to demonstrate the applicability of an education QA framework/model and interventions that could contribute to ensure, develop and maintain quality tertiary education standards in the PUC's in Ghana. Accordingly, based on the key themes that emerged from the analysis of the research data and the challenges identified with the existing QA framework, the CoQ framework (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.9) was developed.

The next chapter provides the synopsis of all the chapters of this research project.

## **CHAPTER 8: REALISATION OF THE STUDY AIM AND OBJECTIVES, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, MAJOR RESEARCH FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH AREAS AND CONCLUSION**

### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

This research explored the existing mechanisms for assuring quality education standards in the PUC's in Ghana and attempted to demonstrate how these mechanisms could be strengthened, developed and maintained. In the previous chapter (Chapter 7), the results obtained from the analysis and interpretation of data which contributed to address each of the research objectives, were presented (see Chapter 7, Section 7.4.1 – 7.4.4).

Consequently, this chapter is intended to indicate whether the research problem (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1) has been addressed in line with the stated objectives raised in Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2. In addition to the discussion of the realisation of the study aim and objectives, the chapter also provides a summary of the main conclusions of each chapter (see Chapter 8, Section 8.3), limitations of the study (see Chapter 8, Section 8.4), recommendations and areas for further research (see Chapter 8, Section 8.5). Accordingly, this chapter links up all the chapters (Chapters 1 – 7) by providing a summary of the entire thesis.

### **8.2 REALISATION OF STUDY AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

A reflection on the research objectives is relevant in order to establish whether the study objectives were achieved or not. The research objectives derived from the research problem (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2) were thereafter developed into the research questions (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2). The research problem was the following:

*What are the existing QA mechanisms used by the NCTE, the NAB and selected PSU's and how could these mechanisms be strengthened to ensure successful application of QA at PUC's in Ghana?*

Thus, the aim of this research project was to investigate the existing QA mechanisms used by the NCTE, the NAB and selected mentoring PSU's in an attempt to demonstrate



how these mechanisms could be strengthened to ensure successful application of QA at PUC's in Ghana. In addition to the primary aim, each of the objectives of this thesis is considered below to indicate how it was achieved.

- OBJECTIVE 1: *Provide the general background, rationale and research (methodical) framework, which emphasises and accentuates the importance of the study.* Objective 1 was achieved by providing the general introduction to the research in Chapter 1, which served as the research framework within which this project was done. The general introduction to this investigation is divided into sections dealing with the background, rationale, research problem and questions. This was followed by the aim and objectives of the thesis. Thereafter, a brief overview of the scope and limitations of the research were provided. In addition, the chapter reflected briefly on the research methodology, design and method. Furthermore, the key concepts and terms used in this thesis were highlighted, followed by an explanation of how editing and referencing were done. Finally, the structure of the thesis as well as a summary of the issues discussed in Chapter 1 was provided.
  
- OBJECTIVE 2: *Reflect upon the literature review of tertiary education QA (discourse) and factors that affect it.* This objective was realised through a focused review of literature in Chapter 2 on the major themes that relate to tertiary education QA and the factors that affect it. Specifically, the chapter presented the different views of scholars on the concepts of quality and QA mechanisms, history and rationale for the development of QA networks as well as the systems for QA in higher education. Furthermore, the purpose and rationale for QA, the institutional isomorphic mechanism used in higher education QA as well as the role of government in higher education QA were deliberated upon. In order to trace how QA mechanisms have influenced the provision of higher education, empirical studies on QA mechanisms and best practices in higher education QA as well as challenges facing the implementation of an effective higher education QA systems were provided.

- **OBJECTIVE 3:** *Outline the theoretical perspectives and conceptual framework that relate to tertiary education QA in Ghana and compare key indicators and accreditation models between world class tertiary education regulatory institutions and tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana.* This objective was addressed in Chapter 3 and complements literature provided in Chapter 2. Specifically, Objective 3 was achieved through a discussion of the rationale, aim and objectives for providing a conceptual framework and theoretical perspective for this research as well as the philosophy, model and principles of tertiary education QA in Ghana (see Chapter 3, Sections 3.3 – 3.5). These were done within the broader context of higher education and QA in particular. A comprehensive discussion of the specific theoretical perspectives that guided this investigation was also provided (see Chapter 3, Sections 3.6.1 – 3.6.5). The QA mechanisms of some selected countries were also reviewed (see Chapter 3, Sections 3.7.1.1 – 3.7.1.3). This helped to identify good practices that could be adopted to improve the different forms of isomorphic pressures used by the regulatory institutions to ensure quality education standards in the PUC's in Ghana.
  
- **OBJECTIVE 4:** *Provide a historical context of the legal framework on the establishment and operations of PUC's and tertiary education regulatory institutions in Ghana from 1991 to 2019.* In an attempt to realise the motivation for Chapter 4, attention was focused on providing a historical overview of higher education in Ghana (see Chapter 2, Sections 4.2 – 4.3) and the legal framework within which tertiary education in Ghana is regulated. The legal framework on tertiary education in Ghana that were examined were the White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991 (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.1), the National Accreditation Board Act 744 of 2007 (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.3), the National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993 (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.4), as well as pertinent aspects of the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana of 1992 on private tertiary education in Ghana (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2).

- **OBJECTIVE 5:** *Analyse the effect of the current QA capacity and mechanisms of tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana and the usefulness of the application of these mechanisms at PUC's.* This objective was partially addressed in Chapter 4. Thus, this objective is an extension of Chapter 4 which provided the legal framework on the establishment of the higher education regulatory institutions. Accordingly, in Chapter 5, an overview of the PUC's (see Chapter 5, Sections 5.2.1 – 5.2.6), the mentoring PSU's (see Chapter 5, Sections 5.3.1 – 5.3.2), as well as the tertiary education regulatory institutions that participated in this research project (see Chapter 5, Sections 5.4.1 – 5.4.2) were provided. This approach helped to establish the milieu within which the mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana are exercised.
  
- **OBJECTIVE 6:** *Outline the research methodology, design and method used to investigate the research problem.* This objective is intended to provide a detailed outline within which the study was conducted. Accordingly, in Chapter 6, a comprehensive discussion of the research design (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.3) and methods used for the collection, measurement and analysis (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4) of data relevant to the problem of the research were undertaken. Chapter 6 was organised under five sections and provided a detailed account of how the qualitative approach was adopted to explore the existing QA practices in PUC's in Ghana. In the first section, the research methodology that specified the research approach, interpretive frameworks and the philosophical assumptions were provided. In the second section, the concept of research design and the different research designs – quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods – were elucidated. In the third section, the research methods adopted were explicated. Thereafter, in the fourth section, the measures adopted to ensure the trustworthiness of the research findings and the ethical principles that were adhered to for safeguarding the rights of respondents were presented. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the measures adopted for the storage and destruction of data when no longer needed.

- **OBJECTIVE 7:** *Analyse, interpret and discuss the research data and develop as well as attempt to demonstrate the applicability of an education QA framework/model and interventions that could contribute to ensure, develop and maintain quality tertiary education standards in PUC's in Ghana.* This chapter builds on the preceding chapters (see Chapters 1 – 6) which laid the foundation for the presentation, analyses, interpretation and discussion of data in this chapter. Data were gathered from three major sources namely; semi-structured personal interviews, document analysis and literature review. This objective was therefore partially achieved in Chapters 2, 4 and 5. In Chapter 2, a focused review of literature was undertaken that provided an understanding of quality, QA mechanisms and best practices in QA. Chapter 4 provided the legal framework within which tertiary education is regulated in Ghana. The milieu within which the mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana were provided in Chapter 5. Objective 7 was however fully realised in Chapter 7 where primary data collected through semi-structured personal interviews with participants were analysed. The semi-structured personal interviews were conducted with four groups of participants. The analyses and interpretation of the data gathered showed that, despite the existence of the two regulatory institutions with a mandate to ensure quality standards in all higher education institutions in Ghana, there were challenges with the quality of education provided by some of the PUC's in Ghana. Additionally, the responses suggest a lack of satisfaction with the mentorship offered by the PSU's to which the PUC's were affiliated as well as inherent challenges with the practices of some of the PUC's in Ghana (see Chapter 7, Section 7.4 – 7.5). Based on the semi-structured interview responses, document analysis, and the reviewed literature on QA mechanisms of the selected developed countries and international best practices learnt, a CoQ framework and interventions were proposed (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.8). It is believed that the suggested framework and interventions could contribute to ensure, develop and maintain quality tertiary education standards in the PUC's in Ghana.

- **OBJECTIVE 8:** *Discuss the realisation of the study aim and objectives, conclusions, limitations, major research findings, recommendations and further research areas and conclusion.* On the basis of data collected, analysed, interpreted and the general discussions throughout this research, in Chapter 8, a reflective approach was adopted to understand the extent to which the investigation has addressed the research problem (see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1), and achieved the objectives of this project (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2). In chapter 1, Section 1.5 some of the limitations of the inquiry were provided. This chapter provides a further and detailed discussion of the limitations of the thesis (see Section 8.4 below). The limitations identified however do not suggest that the research is incomplete but rather indicates how external factors affected the conduct of this investigation. As such, the limitations indicated should be considered in understanding the holistic context of the investigation. Additionally, recommendations and suggestions on areas for further research are provided in an attempt to provide possible areas that have emerged for research.

Consequently, it can be concluded that the research problem was addressed and the aim and objectives of the research project were achieved. A synopsis of the main conclusions of each chapter is provided below to indicate how each chapter addresses its applicable objective of the inquiry.

## **8.3 CONCLUSIONS**

In this section, concluding remarks are provided. In order to bolster the discussions on the realisation of the study objectives (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4.2), Sections 8.3.1 – 8.3.7 below provide conclusions drawn to elucidate how each of the chapters of this thesis relates to the achievement of the specific objectives of this project.

### **8.3.1 General introduction**

The introductory chapter was developed from the research proposal that was approved by the Departmental Higher Degrees Committee. In Chapter 1 of this investigation, the

methodological approach to this inquiry on the mechanisms of QA in PUC's in Ghana was outlined. The methodological approach specified the background of the study leading to the rationale for, and the statement of the problem, research questions and objectives. It also indicated the scope, key terminologies, research design and the methodology, editing and referencing convention as well as the structure of the thesis (see Chapter 1, Section 1.1 – 1.9). The discussion under each of the elements of the methodological approach provided the framework for investigating the research problem, namely: *What are the existing QA mechanisms used by the NCTE, the NAB and selected public sector mentor universities and how can these mechanisms be strengthened to ensure successful application of QA at PUC's in Ghana?*

### **8.3.2 Literature review**

Chapter 2 provided a review of related literature under the major themes that relate to QA in tertiary education institutions in general and private tertiary education in particular. Some grounded theorists such as the Glaserian (1967) and Straussian (1978) were of the view that literature should not be reviewed in the substantive area at the beginning of the research. Notwithstanding their views, in this research that adopted the grounded theory approach, literature was reviewed. The justification for the review of literature at the beginning of this inquiry is that, it assisted in: (1) The formulation of research questions, identification of the aim of the investigation and the key concepts related to the theme. (2) The analysis of data and for purposes of increasing theoretical sensitivity. (3) Locating the research within the structure of related literature. (4) Providing credibility to the research report and for strengthening the research arguments. (5) Setting the stage for the other chapters of the research report.

Based on the major themes, the reviewed literature indicates that effective higher education QA requires both internal and external mechanisms for purposes of ensuring improvement, accountability and compliance. The external QA mechanisms include accreditation, quality assessment and quality audit. Despite the need for both internal and external QA mechanisms, the reviewed literature shows a preference for more emphasis on internal QA because it is more sustainable and facilitates the development of a CoQ.

The literature is in agreement that in order to assure quality tertiary education, the policies and practices of the stakeholders should cover at least the following three dimensions, namely: (1) academic quality; (2) administrative quality; and (3) interpersonal relationship quality. The chapter also examined empirical studies on higher education QA which brought to the fore best practices in higher education QA. The factors that could affect effective implementation of policies on QA in the higher education sector were identified as: (1) bureaucracy; (2) inadequate human and material resources; (3) poor communication; (4) poor attitude of implementers; (5) personal interest and prejudices; (6) undue political influence; (7) corruption; as well as (8) the lack of continuity of government policies. The reviewed literature also indicates that the government has a role to play by way of enacting legislation in order to ensure that the profit motive of entrepreneurs does not lead to a compromise on the quality of higher education offered by the private sector.

### **8.3.3 Models and theories that relate to mechanisms for tertiary education quality assurance and quality assurance practices of some selected countries**

In order to locate this research project within the relevant models and theoretical perspectives, Chapter 3 highlighted the role of models, a conceptual framework and theoretical perspectives that relate to tertiary education QA. The definition, aim and objectives of the constructs of conceptual framework (see Chapter 3, Section 3.3) and theoretical perspectives (see Chapter 3, Section 3.4) were provided. Additionally, the philosophy, model and principles of tertiary education QA in Ghana as well as the underpinning theoretical perspectives (see Chapter 3, Section 3.5 – 3.6) were clarified. Finally, the QA practices of some selected developed countries such as the USA, the UK and Australia (see Chapter 3, Section 3.7.1.1 – 3.7.1.3) were explored in order to identify good practices that could be recommended and drawbacks that could be avoided. Some of the good practices of these countries are that, in the USA and the UK, higher education institutions are ranked. The purposes of ranking are to provide students with information on the performance of the higher education institutions that could enable students to make informed decisions on the best higher education institution in which to study.

Additionally, ranking of higher education institutions provides employers with information on where to find high-quality graduates and for industries to know where to invest for research. Another good practice of the UK, the USA and Australia QA system is that, before assessors are sent out for evaluation, they are given training in the specific type of review they will conduct. Furthermore, in the USA and the UK, QA institutions are decentralised and not directly funded by government. This allows for effectiveness and independence of the QA institutions. Also, in the USA and UK, there is the involvement of other stakeholders like employers and students in the assessment process of higher education institutions. A key feature of the QA system of the UK is the focus on encouraging higher education institutions that perform well to be taken through less stringent and less frequent QA processes. Such an approach when adopted in Ghana could free the higher education regulatory institutions to focus on policy issues and reduce the workload of the regulatory institutions which are already overburdened because of the high number of PUC's and their low capacity. The Australia QA framework has provision for what is known as the 'Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000' for students in Australia on student visas as well as the 'National Code of Practice for providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018'. These mechanisms are aimed at protecting international students. These provisions for international students are very relevant. The provisions serve as support system and guarantee for overseas students about the quality standards of the education they receive and assurance of protection in the event that the university is closed down for non-performance.

Although there are international commonalities in the QA models of the different countries, a comparative literature review shows that there is no universally applicable QA model but that, the QA model adopted by a country is influenced by contextual factors. A brief overview of higher education QA in Africa countries including South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Egypt and Nigeria was also provided (see Chapter 3, Section 3.7.2).



### **8.3.4 Legal framework on private university colleges and tertiary education regulatory institutions in Ghana**

In Ghana, legal framework exists within which tertiary education institutions are regulated. The legal framework include the White Paper on the Reforms of the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991, the National Accreditation Board Act 744 of 2007, the National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993, and the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana of 1992. The review suggests that although a legal framework exists, there are challenges such as a lack of human and non-human resources, a lack of capacity and capability that need to be addressed in order to make the regulatory institutions effective in their role of tertiary education QA. Other challenges include the regulatory institutions' lack of power and authority to enforce their decisions in the law courts, as for example when wanting to close down sub-standard PUC's. In Ghana, all the three forms of isomorphic pressures – coercive, normative and mimetic – are used by the NAB, the NCTE and the mentoring PSU's in an overlapping manner to ensure quality standards of education in the PUC's.

### **8.3.5 Context of the study**

Out of the six PUC's studied, four (4) were owned by religious institutions and the other two by individual entrepreneurs. Accordingly the composition of the governance and management structures of the four PUC's owned by religious institutions were dominated by the members of the religious institutions that established them. On the contrary, the public universities' governance structure differed with appointment to management positions in the public universities being more competitive. All the PUC's run similar courses with business administration programmes being run by all the PUC's that participated in this research. Also, all the PUC's had an internal QA unit as required by the regulatory institutions. However, the level of effectiveness of each of the internal QA units differed with most having challenges related to both human and non-human resources. The regulatory institutions also had clearly outlined procedures and guidelines on accreditation, as well as norms and standards to be observed in the operations of all PUC's. Despite the existence of set higher education norms and standards, they were not

adhered to by most of the PUC's which led to the below standard of education offered by most of the PUC's in Ghana.

### **8.3.6 Research methodology, design and method**

The research instruments employed in this project and how the instruments were applied in order to gather the relevant data required to achieve the aim and objectives are discussed below. Additionally, the measures required to ensure the trustworthiness and ethical considerations are also elucidated

The choice of research instruments by the researcher contributed to the thesis being completed more successfully. The research instruments employed include the following:

- An appropriate research design and methodological framework that indicate the plan and strategies used to explore the mechanisms for QA in the PUC's in Ghana.
- Three key elements were chosen to provide a better application of the methods.
- A proper methodological framework was selected. This ensured that the epistemology provided the correct philosophical grounding.
- A well thought out theoretical perspective was followed that provided the relevant philosophical stance behind the methodology.
- The methodological perspective of grounded theory was elected. The grounded theory approach contributed to the development of a framework (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.8) which is based on the data that were gathered, and which is believed could address the perceived challenges identified with the existing higher education QA framework.
- Population and sampling were done based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria indicated in Chapter 6, Section 6.4.3 that enabled the researcher to collect data from information-rich participants.
- Semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to interact with the participants to understand their experiences regarding QA in PUC's in Ghana.
- Document analysis and literature review were also undertaken to complement data collected through semi-structured personal interviews.

### **8.3.7 Data presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the results of the semi-structured personal interviews, literature review and document analysis**

In Chapter 7, data that were gathered were presented, analysed and discussed. The data that were gathered through semi-structured personal interviews, a literature review and different documents, were analysed and interpreted to provide empirical evidence with regard to the experiences of participants, their perceptions and their views on the mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education in PUC's in Ghana. Four sets of data were gathered. These were from the regulatory institutions, the PUC's, the mentoring PSU's and assessors.

The qualitative methodology was adopted for this research which helped to explore, understand and describe the meanings participants attached to their experiences with regard to the mechanisms for QA in PUC's in Ghana. Specifically, the constructivist grounded theory approach was adopted to explore the processes, practices and ultimately the experiences of participants that led to development of a framework (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.8) that could contribute to assure quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. The qualitative data analysis procedure followed provided the researcher with the opportunity to check and refine large amounts of data gathered from participants' interpretation of their experiences. Results from the analysis of the four sets of data agree to a large extent about the ineffectiveness of the existing mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana. Thus, despite the existence of the two regulatory institutions with a mandate to ensure quality standards in all higher education institutions in Ghana, there were challenges with the quality of education provided by some of the PUC's. The challenges of the regulatory institutions relate to a gap in the legislation that established these institutions as well as inadequate human and non-human resources. In addition, results of the analysis of data gathered suggest a lack of satisfaction with the mentorship offered by the PSU's to their affiliate PUC's. There were also inherent challenges with regard to the practices in most of the PUC's which affected the quality of education they provided. Other challenges identified include the high number of PUC's affiliated to a few PSU's which affected the quality and effectiveness of the mentorship provided. Based on the challenges identified, an attempt

was made to demonstrate the applicability of an education QA framework/model and interventions that could contribute to ensure, develop and maintain quality tertiary education standards in the PUC's (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.9).

Based on the general conclusions and remarks above on the analysis and interpretation of the data that were gathered, the key findings in terms of the factors that inhibited and facilitated the effectiveness of the mechanisms of QA in PUC's in Ghana are presented below.

#### **8.3.7.1 Enablers and inhibitors for successful application of quality assurance mechanisms in private university colleges in Ghana**

Based on the coding and analysis of the transcribed data, the enablers and inhibitors to the successful application of QA mechanisms in the PUC's in Ghana by each of the four groups of participants are outlined below. Despite the fact that the enablers to the successful application for QA are few, these are worth noting so as strengthen them while addressing the inhibitors.

Thus, in Ghana, there are good practices that are comparable to that of the developed countries such as the USA, the UK and Australia. Some of the good practices include: detailed policies, guidelines and procedures on QA (see Annexures 4). The reviewed literature, document analysis and results of the analysis of the semi-structured personal interviews show that in principle, the regulatory institutions have a comprehensive mechanism for ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's. These include provisions in documents such as: (1) National Accreditation Board, Ghana: Roadmap to Accreditation (see Annexure 3). (2) National Council for Tertiary Education: Norms for Tertiary Education (see Annexure 4). (3) National Accreditation Board Affiliation Barometer: Annual Reporting Instrument for the Assessment of Mentoring Institutions by Mentored Institutions (see Annexure 7). (4) National Accreditation Board Affiliation Barometer: Annual Reporting Instrument for the Assessment of Mentored Institutions by Mentoring Institutions (see Annexure 8). Despite the existence of these comprehensive

mechanisms, there are problems with the implementation and evaluation processes for ensuring that quality standards are ensured, developed and maintained in the PUC's.

With regard to the inhibitors to the effective application of QA mechanism in PUC's in Ghana, several challenges were identified. Some of the key inhibitors as observed from the data that were analysed are organised under each of the four groups of participants as follows:

The inhibitors to the effectiveness of QA mechanisms observed with the role of the regulatory institutions from the data that were collected and analysed include:

- Centralisation of regulatory institutions which has affected their effectiveness. The regulatory institutions - NAB and the NCTE - have offices in Accra only from which they regulate the activities of all tertiary education institutions located throughout the country.
- The regulatory institutions are also funded by government. This raises questions about the independence of the QA institutions and the influence by government in the regulation of higher education institutions.
- Among the two regulatory institutions, the NAB which is the policy implementing institution lacks both human and non-human resources and this has contributed to the NAB's inability to achieve its mandate. Specifically, the lack of resources has led to delays in the processing of applications submitted by the PUC's to the NAB for accreditation and re-accreditation.
- The lack of resources has also contributed to the lack of effective monitoring and evaluation based on which training needs of each PUC could be identified and the necessary mechanisms put in place to address them.
- Absence of regular training for assessors before they were sent out for evaluation affected the performance of some of the assessors. Thus, as a result of lack of training, some of the assessors deviated from their role as facilitators for the improvement of QA practices in the PUCs and behaved like 'policemen' sent to

'arrest' staff of the PUCs that did not meet higher education standards set by the regulatory institutions.

- To the extent that the participants from the regulatory institutions have indicated that no specific efforts have been made to implement the recommendations of the committee that reviewed the White Paper on the reforms to the tertiary education system of Ghana of 1991, it can be concluded that these are contributory factors to the perception of an ineffective regulatory system. In relation to PUC's, a specific recommendation was made by the committee for the NCTE to conduct a study to identify the challenges facing PUC's in order to develop policies for the development of private tertiary education; this has not been carried out. A lack of targeted policies for the development of PUC's in Ghana could lead to the adoption of QA mechanisms that do not address the specific needs of the PUC's.
- Most PUC's are located in and around the capital city of Accra and most of them also run less capital intensive courses such as Business Administration, Arts, and Information Communication Technology courses instead of Science based programmes. Most of the programmes run by the PUC's do not appear to address the manpower needs of Ghana. This indicates that the programmes run by the PUC's, and location of the PUC's do not conform to the national policies for addressing national needs.
- The rate at which PUC's are emerging in Ghana is not consistent with the capacity of the regulatory institutions and the mentoring universities. The regulatory institutions are located in Accra whereas PUC's exist in all the regions of Ghana. The lack of offices in all the regions of Ghana could be a reason for the regulatory institutions not being able to deal timeously with issues of the PUC's, provide the needed training and effective monitoring of the activities of the PUC's in Ghana.
- The regulatory institutions have focused on purposes of accountability and control rather than supporting the PUC's for quality improvement.
- Contradictions in the demands made by the regulatory institutions and the mentoring PSU's with regard to programme structure and content. This was due to the fact that these two groups assessed the PUC's independently and made

separate demands on the PUC's. This has led to some of the PUC's to be uncertain about what is expected of them.

- Focus on minimum of ten years of affiliation rather than the performance and ability of a PUC to meet the set higher education standards.
- A lack of guidelines on behaviour of assessors as a basis for determining whether what an assessor did was right or wrong which led to some of the assessors acting in a manner that was not conducive to the enhancement of quality standards in the PUC's.
- A lack of mandate to ensure compliance. The NAB does not have prosecutorial powers to physically close PUC's that do not meet the required standards.
- A lack of collaboration between that NAB and the NCTE due to 'turf' protection between them.
- As a result of an ineffective e-application system, the regulatory institutions still dealt with a lot of paper work when processing the accreditation and re-accreditation documents submitted by the PUC's.
- Non-existence of strategies such as ranking of PUC's that would provide information to applicants and employers in making informed decisions, motivate PUC's that are doing well and be a wake-up call to less performing PUC's.

With regard to the PUC's, the observed inhibitors to the effectiveness of their QA mechanisms include:

- Absence of a deliberate, structured and clearly defined means through which the PUC's and the regulatory institutions informed and educated members of the PUC's on practices that will ensure quality education standards.
- Most of the PUC's lacked adequate funding which affected their ability to attract and retain faculty members with terminal degrees and Professors as well as provide adequate infrastructural facilities.
- Although the higher education regulatory institutions in Ghana have policy directives that have made obligatory demands on PUC's to establish internal QA units, these units have not been structured and empowered in a manner that could

drive the development and ownership of practices that will ensure the development of a CoQ. This has resulted in a gap between policy and practice.

- The delays in the accreditation or re-accreditation of programmes submitted to the NAB by the PUC's sometimes led to some PUC's running programmes that have either not been accredited or their accreditation status had expired.
- Absence of targeted policies for the development of PUC's in Ghana has led to the adoption of QA mechanisms that do not address the specific needs of PUCs.
- Both the mentored and the mentoring institutions do not comply with the requirements stated in the affiliation barometer (see Annexure 7 & 8) and so both parties were dissatisfied with the services offered by each other.
- Mimetic isomorphism is militating against the creativity and innovativeness of PUC's. The regulatory institutions and mentoring PSU's have also disregarded the differences in the mission and vision of the PUC's and therefore the drive toward uniformity instead of the innovation and creativity desired by the PUC's in the design of their programmes.
- Interference by some of the owners of the PUC's in appointment to positions and in the general management of some PUC's.
- Absence of regular training workshops by the regulatory institutions and mentoring PSU's to enable the PUC's to acquire the relevant knowledge and skills they require for ensuring quality standards in their respective PUC's.
- A lack of understanding and ownership of the QA practices and processes by the PUC's which affected the development of a CoQ.
- A focus on profit by some of the owners of the PUC's instead of quality. In such circumstances, unqualified students were admitted and unqualified staff were appointed.
- Unregulated and increasing number of PUC's has resulted in low student enrolment figures in some of the PUC's. This affected their finances resulting in the inability of PUC's to attract and retain qualified faculty members.
- High affiliation fees demanded by the mentoring PSU's is a drain on the finances of the PUC's in Ghana.
- A lack of clear policy on the role and support of government to PUC's.



The inhibitors observed with regard to the QA mechanisms of the mentoring PSU's include:

- The low capacity of the mentoring PSU's coupled with the increasing number of PUC's that were affiliated to the PSU's. This affected the quality of mentoring provided to the PUC's.
- Both the mentored and the mentoring institutions do not comply with the requirements stated in the affiliation barometer (see Annexure 7 & 8)
- Faculty members of the mentoring universities were overwhelmed because QA activities are mostly undertaken by lecturers who also have their regular teaching loads in the universities in which they are full time lecturers.
- Considering the findings that the mentoring universities do not regularly visit and interact with the PUC's, there is a vacuum between the last and the next visit of the assessors/reviewers to the PUC's.
- The activities of the regulatory and the mentoring institutions have focused on purposes of accountability and control rather than supporting the PUC's for quality improvement.
- Due to the fact that the regulatory institutions and the mentoring PSU's assess the PUC's independently, this led to contradictions in the demands made by them with regard to programme structure and content. This also led to some of the PUC's being uncertain about what is expected of them.

The inhibitors to the effectiveness of the role of the assessors in ensuring quality standards in the PUC's include:

- Inadequate remuneration which affected the level of commitment by the assessors to deliver assessment reports on time.
- A lack of regular orientation and training by the regulatory institutions for some of the assessors affected their understanding that they should be agents for improvement.
- Absence of regular feedback section between assessors and top management of the regulatory institutions affected changes and improvements that were required in order to ensure and develop effective QA mechanisms in the PUC's. Such

feedback sessions were required so that top management could factor the challenges observed by the assessors into future national policies and decisions on QA.

Based on the conclusions drawn and the enablers and inhibitors identified with the existing mechanisms for ensuring quality standards of education in the PUC's in Ghana, recommendations for addressing the challenges identified and for institutionalising the good practices are provided in Section 8.5 below. In the next section below, the limitations encountered during the research are explicated.

#### **8.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The researcher encountered some limitations with the project as well. The acknowledgement of the limitations is essential in order to identify the errors associated with the research and to place the research findings in context.

Although limitations address the potential weaknesses of an inquiry, writing about it actually strengthens the findings. In addition, drawing attention to the limitations discloses that the researcher took into account the effect of the research flaws meticulously and has a profound understanding of the research topic. Acknowledgement of the limitations is also essential for the identification of areas for further research. For the reason that this study adopted the constructivist approach, acknowledgement of the limitations is useful for the identification of other research designs that could be adopted for similar studies to address the limitations.

The study was limited to only PUC's within the Greater Accra Region and may therefore not represent the experiences of the PUC's that operate outside the region. To the extent that the PUC's covered by this study are closer to the regulatory institutions and to their mentoring PSU's and yet still did not receive the necessary attention, inclusion of PUC's that are outside the region could provide a wider and better view of the challenges encountered by PUC's in Ghana.

As a result of the purposive sampling technique adopted for sampling in this research project and being a grounded theory research, the generalisability of the research results is limited. Additionally, the people that were interviewed were selected and approved by the institutions based on who was assigned the responsibility of QA and in line with the selection criteria that was indicated by the researcher. The selection of the participants from the PUC's could therefore be subjective and could influence the responses provided. Since the eligibility criteria covered different roles, the interview questions had to cover a wide range of issues in order to be able to capture the different roles played by each of the participants.

Another limitation was that students and employers from industry and commerce were also not included in the research because the investigation was on mechanisms such as policy and practice and not specific issues of teaching and learning outcomes. The involvement of students could have provided information on the quality of teaching, facilities and quality of relationships. The involvement of employers could also provide information on the relevance of programmes run by the PUC's and the quality of students that graduate from the PUC's.

The focus of this study was on the mechanisms used by the tertiary education regulatory institutions (NAB & NCTE) in Ghana and the mentoring PSU's to assure quality education standards in the PUC's. The researcher did not assess the effect (outcomes) of the QA mechanisms in the PUC's. Additionally, although the three main functions of a university are teaching, research and community service, this inquiry focused mainly on activities and practices related to teaching. The focus of the investigation was on PUC's and not chartered universities; whether public or private. The inclusion of the PSU's could also provide information that could have been compared to identify the differences in their experiences with regard to the role of the regulatory institutions.

The inclusion criteria (see Chapter 6, Section 6.4.3) show that three participants were required to participate from each of the PUC's. However, in one of the PUCs, only one participant was interviewed because of the failure of the other two participants approved

by the PUC to honour the request after several follow-ups. In order to comply with the research ethics that governed this research, the researcher only dealt with the participants that consented to grant the interview. The failure of the other two participants to honour the request does not affect the research results since the researcher exceeded the minimum number of twenty-three participants required for grounded theory research.

The researcher is of the opinion that the limitations identified did not affect the outcome of this investigation but has rather demonstrated how research can still be conducted even within such constraints.

## **8.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The previous section provided the conclusions and limitations of the research findings. In this section, recommendations are made to indicate how the challenges associated with the existing mechanisms for assuring quality standards in the PUC's in Ghana could be addressed. Specifically, the research findings show that the existing mechanisms for assuring quality standards of education in the PUC's have been ineffective and as such the quality of education offered by some of the PUC's in Ghana are perceived to be below standard. Thus, despite the existence of two higher education regulatory institutions established by the government of Ghana as well as the requirement of affiliation of PUC's to autonomous PSU's, there are challenges with the quality standards being observed in most PUC's in Ghana. Of the two regulatory institutions, the NCTE is responsible for policy formulation while the NAB is the policy implementing institution for ensuring quality standards in the PUC's in Ghana. However, the research findings indicate a lack of proper collaboration between the NAB and the NCTE due to the fact that each of them claims supremacy over the other. At the time of analysing the data, the researcher came to the conclusion that a merger of the two institutions would be a solution to the turf war and the lack of coordination between the two. It is however heartwarming to note that as at November 2020, the two institutions have been merged and now known as the GTEC. It is believed that the merger of the two institutions will strengthen their capacity for QA as well as ensure seamless operations to ensure that quality standards are developed and maintained in PUC's in Ghana. Based on these general statements regarding the

ineffectiveness of the existing QA mechanisms, the following specific recommendations are made in order to ensure that the mechanisms for ensuring quality standards in PUC's are enhanced. The specific recommendations are as follows:

#### **8.5.1 Factors that affect quality assurance and international best practices**

In the following sections, specific recommendations for addressing the factors that affect quality assurance and the adoption of international best practices are presented.

##### **Involve key stakeholders in assessment**

In order to improve upon the mechanisms for ensuring quality standards in PUC's in Ghana, the methods of assessment must incorporate best practices such as the involvement of other stakeholders like employers and students as happens in the USA and the UK. The involvement of these groups of stakeholders will ensure an all-round perspective on the inputs, transformation processes and the outputs from the PUC's.

##### **Involve students in external quality assurance**

As done in the UK, in order to challenge the PUC's to excel and provide quality education to its students, there should be student involvement in external QA. Students' forum should be introduced to provide the opportunity for students to interact with the regulatory institutions and mentoring institutions in order to share their experiences that could be relied upon to improve the mechanisms for QA by both the PUC's and the regulatory institutions.

##### **Rank private university colleges**

To improve the competitiveness of PUC's in Ghana and maintain high-quality education standards, it is recommended that they be ranked, following UK higher education institutions' best practices. This would motivate a culture of improvement, where PUCs continually examine their practices and seek to improve. PUC's that rank in the higher quartile for two consecutive times could have longer periods before the next review, reducing the workload for regulatory institutions. Institutions that consistently fall below standards should receive more attention to improve their practices. Such an approach

when adopted could free the NAB from being overburdened because of the high number of PUC's in Ghana and the fact that there is only one higher education regulatory institution responsible for the whole country. There should be a paradigm shift in the role of the regulatory institutions to focus more on research that will enable them to rank PUC's.

### **Establish mechanisms to protect international students**

To provide support and assurance for the high number of international students enrolled in PUC's in Ghana, it is recommended that, a system similar to Australia's QA framework should be adopted. Australia QA framework has provisions known as the 'Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000' for students in Australia on student visas as well as the 'National Code of Practice for providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018' aimed at protecting international students. This provision for international students serves as a support system and guarantee for overseas students about the quality standards of the education they receive and assurance of protection in the event that the university is closed down for non-performance. Singapore's CaseTrust for Private Education Organisations is also relevant, as it requires PUC's to deposit money into an appointed account or get insurance coverage for all international students to provide protection in case of insolvency.

### **Institute mechanisms to differentiate high quality private university colleges from low quality private university colleges**

Singapore's QA mechanism has been acknowledged as very effective in differentiating between high quality and low-quality private universities. Singapore has a system called the 'BQC for PEOs'. The BQC for PEOs has an instrument called 'BEACON'. The BEACON instrument has seven dimensions: (1) leadership; (2) information; (3) people; (4) customers; (5) planning; (6) processes; and (7) results. All private higher education institutions in Singapore are assessed based on these dimensions and are required to meet the set criteria. It has been noted that the submission of PUC's to this assessment has assisted to differentiate and classify PUC's that have met the standards as high quality university colleges. When such an approach is adopted in Ghana, it will give a

quality label to PUC's that are observing high quality standards which could aid them to attract better quality students and a higher number of students.

### **Strengthen linkages between higher education regulatory institutions and international quality assurance institutions**

To compare standards and adopt good practices, regulatory institutions should strengthen their links with international QA institutions. Quality improvement international best practices such as graduate tracer studies should be conducted by the regulatory institutions to enable them determine the performance of students from each PUC.

### **Strengthen collaboration between higher education regulatory institutions and mentor public sector universities**

Although mentoring PSU's have their own standards that allow for uniqueness, there should be collaboration between the NAB, NCTE, and mentoring PSU's in determining the standards set for PUC's. The suggested model in Chapter 7, Figure 7.9 requires that the three institutions work together to address contradictions in the existing QA framework. The regulatory institutions should ensure relevance, functionality, and education that is internationally comparable. Therefore, the regulatory institutions should focus on setting national standards, programmatic benchmarks, and mechanisms to ensure that PUC's programmes meet the workforce needs of the country.

## **8.5.2 Historical context of the legal framework on the establishment and operations of private university colleges and tertiary education regulatory institutions in Ghana from 1991 to 2019**

Recommendations for improving the legal framework on the establishment and operations of PUC's and tertiary education regulatory institutions in Ghana from 1991 to 2019 are discussed below.

### **Form joint admissions and matriculation board**

Although each PSU in Ghana has its own admission criteria, it is suggested that a joint admissions and matriculation board be established, as recommended by previous

researchers like Nwuke (2008: 86). This would ensure that standardised criteria are used for admission, regardless of the PSU an applicant is applying to. This could help prevent a situation like what occurred in 2012 (refer to Chapter 1, Section 1.3.1) when the NAB directed over 50% (26 out of 46) of the accredited PUC's to withdraw some of their students because they did not meet the required qualifications.

### **Provide for electronic submission of programme documents by private university colleges**

Another observation made was that some PUC's in Ghana offer unaccredited programmes or programmes whose accreditation status had expired. This was attributed to the misplacement of documents submitted by the PUC's to the NAB, which resulted in delays in processing such programme documents. To address these challenges, it is recommended that the NAB should institute electronic submission of documents and recruit and train more reviewers to improve their response rate.

### **8.5.3 Quality assurance capacity and mechanisms used by tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana**

Recommendations for developing the quality assurance capacity and mechanisms used by tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana are indicated below.

#### **Do relevance checks of new programmes before accreditation**

It is also recommended that there should be a focus on relevance checks for programmes. Although the NAB requires higher education institutions to state the philosophy of every programme as part of its requirement (see Annexure 3), this may not be effective if not well monitored. By instituting and monitoring relevance checks, it will help address the challenge where most PUC's in Ghana are concentrating on business administration programmes instead of science and technology related courses. To perform this function effectively, regulatory institutions must collaborate with entities such as the Association of Ghana Industries, Civil Service Commission, and Labour Department to gather information on the qualifications and skills required by the job market. This will enable objective evaluation of the programmes submitted by PUC's for accreditation.



### **Incorporate information communication technology into the processes of the regulatory institutions**

There is a need for the NAB, NCTE, and mentoring PSU's to adopt more efficient methods to reduce costs. The regulatory institutions should implement automation of their services to improve efficiency and effectiveness in their service delivery. Specifically, they should allow for online submission of accreditation and re-accreditation documents. This will address the PUC's complaint that the regulatory institutions sometimes misplace their submitted documents. Incorporating Information Communication Technology into the regulatory institutions' processes will also help address the issue of poor-quality printed documents provided to assessors for their reviews.

### **Monitor and review the role of mentoring institutions**

The regulatory institutions should establish mechanisms for monitoring the mentoring PSU's as well as the PUC's to ensure that each complies with the requirements stated in the affiliation barometer (see Annexure 7 & 8). By doing so, it will address the dissatisfaction expressed by both the mentor and mentee with regard to the services offered and received by each of them.

### **Decentralise higher education regulatory institutions**

Additionally, in order to be efficient, the regulatory institutions must decentralise by creating regional offices for faster decision making and regulation. The capacity and capability of the NAB needs to be strengthened in terms of both human and non-human resources to enable the NAB to achieve its mandate.

### **8.5.4 Guidelines and features of mechanisms for quality assurance in private university colleges in Ghana**

In order to address the challenges associated with the guidelines and features of mechanisms for quality assurance in PUC's in Ghana, the following specific recommendations are made.

### **Develop mechanisms that specifically address the needs of private university colleges**

Since the context and requirements of the PUC's differ, the regulatory institutions must have clearly defined and published criteria that specifically address the needs of PUC's.

### **Organise regular training for private university colleges**

The regulatory and mentoring institutions should organise more regular training and workshops for PUC's to build their capacity and enhance their understanding and relevance of quality tertiary education in national development. For instance, members should be sponsored to attend local and international conferences and workshops on quality assurance, particularly for staff and faculty members of the QA directorate.

### **Organise comprehensive orientation programmes for assessors**

The NAB should organise comprehensive orientation programmes for assessors before they are assigned to visit PUC's for assessments. This will address the challenges expressed by some assessors concerning their lack of knowledge of what was expected of them and help them understand that their approach should focus on enhancing QA practices in PUC's rather than identifying and penalising them for wrong practices. Although guidelines cannot cover every aspect of behaviour, a more detailed description of acceptable and unacceptable behaviours should be provided to assessors to address the behavioural challenges observed from the research results.

### **Comply with national policy on the location and programmes run by private university colleges**

It is recommended that the regulatory institutions should ensure that the national policy on the location and programmes run by PUC's are observed. The concentration of PUC's within and around Accra the capital city of Ghana was identified as a challenge which affected accessibility by other citizens living outside Accra. It has also led to a high level of competition among the PUC's for students, which has resulted in some PUC's admitting unqualified applicants contrary to the policies of the NAB.

### **Focus on quality standards observed in private universities rather than years of affiliation for obtaining charter status**

The NAB should not only focus on years of affiliation but rather on what the PUC is able to do that qualifies them for obtaining a Presidential Charter. When the focus is not on the number of years, more PUC's will be motivated to ensure quality standards throughout their practices rather than waiting to ensure quality standards when they apply for autonomy.

### **Grant higher education regulatory institutions prosecutorial powers**

The NAB should be granted enforcement powers to physically close PUC's that do not meet the required standards. This will ensure that PUC's will observe all the required quality education standards to prevent their institutions from being closed and owners prosecuted. Although the preference is to allow for institutions to act on their own, in order to protect the citizenry and to ensure that only quality higher education institutions operate, the provision for civil or criminal proceedings could be allowed as a last resort to make recalcitrant higher education institutions comply.

In addition, the responses from the lawyer that was interviewed (see Chapter 7, Sections 7.4.1) shows that there are gaps in Act 744 of 2007 that established the NAB and Act 454 of 1993 that established the NCTE. Accordingly, the lawyer recommended what could be done to address the gaps.

### **8.5.5 Constraints, problems, failures and successes of the mechanisms for quality assurance in private university colleges in Ghana**

Recommendations for addressing the constraints, problems and failures of the mechanisms for quality assurance in private university colleges in Ghana are provided below.

#### **Have a ceiling for the number of private university colleges affiliated to a university**

Some PSU's were found to have too many PUC's affiliated to them. This has affected the effectiveness of such mentoring universities in ensuring that quality standards are

followed. The regulatory institutions should develop a policy on the maximum number of PUC's and programmes that can be affiliated to a university taking into consideration the capacity and the capability of the mentoring PSU.

### **Private university colleges should financially support and mentor faculty members to obtain terminal degrees**

The PUC's should also mentor and sponsor their faculty members to publish and obtain terminal degrees and to become Professors in order to minimise the over reliance on retired Professors from the PSU's. Retired Professors will normally be able to spend only five years when engaged by a PUC since they would have attained seventy years after their post-retirement contract from the PSU's.

### **Association of private university colleges should organise regular workshops for its members**

The association of PUC's should organise regular workshops for their members in order to discuss best practices that will make their institutions preferred over PSU's. Thus, PUC's should put in more effort to improve upon the quality of education they offer so as to correct the perception by employers that they produce low quality graduates.

### **Private university colleges should organise regular training for administrative staff**

The current QA mechanisms of the regulatory institutions have focused on academic quality. In view of the fact that quality tertiary education also entails interpersonal relationship, the administrative staff that are the first point of call for students' services should be regularly oriented on acceptable attitude and behaviours that will contribute to ensure quality education standards in the PUC's in Ghana. Administrative staff provide the means that coordinate all the important parts of the university. As such, a total systems approach should be adopted instead of a focus on only academic quality.

### **Regulate dominance of owners of private university colleges in governance**

The NAB also needs to have mechanisms that contribute to ensure the freedom of academic boards that are responsible for ensuring thorough and rigorous academic

processes, especially in situations where a PUC is either owned by an individual entrepreneur or a church. The mechanisms should aim at ensuring that governing councils are not dominated by family or church members.

### **8.5.6 Development of a culture of quality**

In the sections below, recommendations for developing a CoQ in PUC's are presented.

#### **Focus more on internal quality assurance**

In order to manage the changes that are suggested in this research project, it is important to follow the change management principles. This can be achieved when the emphasis in higher education QA moves from external QA to more internal QA for the development, maintenance and sustenance of the desired practices. Consequently, all responsibilities and accountabilities should be clearly defined. Effective monitoring and feedback mechanisms should be developed for all levels within the system.

#### **Adopt holistic a strategy to get 'buy-in' from all members of the university college**

The development of a CoQ should also not focus on a single strategy but should be a holistic strategy that addresses all the systems within the PUC's. Thus, all the different constituents within the university must be properly engaged and educated on issues of QA in order to ensure buy-in. Leadership must be seen to be committed to ensure quality through the provision of resources, development and the implementation of the appropriate policies and implementation strategies that are linked to the strategic plan of the PUC's. Such strategic plans of the PUC's should not only focus on growth and profit but also on quality.

#### **Undertake regular self-assessment**

It is recommended that there should be self-assessment of the quality standards being observed by the PUC's which is independent of that carried out by the regulatory institutions. This will enable the PUC's to identify their strengths and weaknesses and take corrective action before the visit of external assessors. Thus, more regular self-assessment will ensure that an institution has a more sustainable QA system. What the

regulatory institutions can do is to offer support in the form of organising workshops for the internal QA units to equip them with how to conduct the internal audit.

### **Academic, administrative and relationship quality should be grounded in academic values**

There should also be institutional democracy, so as to provide the opportunity to listen to concerns and suggestions from all stakeholders. In particular, all the three areas of higher education - academic, administrative and relationship - quality should be grounded in academic values. This must be reviewed regularly in order to know the costs and benefits.

### **Responsibility for quality assurance should be under top management**

The responsibility for QA should be under the top executive in order to influence its strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation. The team for QA should ensure quality in every aspect of the PUC's operations. Consequently, top management of the PUC must be willing to commit resources to build the capacity of its staff. In order to have a strong internal QA unit, it is recommended that the internal QA unit should be directly under the office of the Head of the PUC (President/ Rector/ Principal) so that whatever is done by the internal QA unit will be in line with the vision and mission of the PUC. Top management support is also relevant because it will ensure the provision of resources needed to facilitate the work of the internal QA unit.

In addition to the specific recommendations made above in Section 8.5, that were based on the interviews responses for addressing the challenges identified with regard to each research objective, other general recommendations from semi-structured interviews, the literature review and document analyses are advanced below.

- Peer review among the PUC's was identified as key to enable PUC's to identify their challenges and successes. As such, the core management, deans and all academics should regard this as key in ensuring quality standards in PUC's in Ghana. In addition, international peers could also be engaged to address the challenge of familiarity.

- There is the need for CIU to be more proactive and for PUC's to collaborate to push the agenda to be recognised as providing an essential public service and therefore should be supported financially by the government.
- As part of the regulatory function, the NAB should set up a committee of experts who will be responsible for certification of PUC's.
- As a result of the low enrolment and financial challenges facing some PUC's, it is recommended that the regulatory institutions should adopt a graduated approach to staffing requirements in the PUC's. Thus, a PUC could be allowed to start operation without necessarily meeting requirements such as staff-student-ratio and the percentage of professors, associate professors and those with terminal degrees and gradually improve within a stipulated period.
- It was observed that PUC's mostly offered business administration programmes and not the sciences needed for national development. In order to address this challenge and to encourage novelty, the government should come up with a policy so that any new PUC that will be established will offer courses in the sciences and technology. Such PUC's should be supported by the government.
- Government should enact policies to ban the establishment of new PUC's. It is believed that the current tertiary education landscape of Ghana and the financial challenges facing both public and PUCs, provide good justification for placing a ban on the establishment of new PUC's. Additionally, as a country there is enough public and private higher education institutions to absorb the number of qualified applicants. The current scramble among PUC's to get student numbers is affecting quality.
- It is necessary for the regulatory institutions to set benchmarks. In terms of programme content/curriculum, there should be benchmarking, so that if a PUC wants to run a programme, the PUC should not go below the set benchmark but could only improve on it.
- The NAB questionnaire should distinguish mandatory issues from general issues, so that if there are any serious issues a PUC has to address before accreditation is granted that should be separated and made mandatory.

- The feedback section between the PUC's and the assessors should be well organised to ensure suggestions for improvement are properly discussed and agreed upon in order to build trust between the PUC's and the assessors.

## **8.6 EFFECT OF THE RESEARCH**

This research project provides a framework and recommendations that when adopted could contribute to develop and maintain quality education standards in PUC's in Ghana. The study has also brought to the fore the voice of PUC's with regard to their challenges and their suggestions that could be factored into policy development for effective collaboration with the regulatory institutions. When done, this could ensure the development of a CoQ that will lessen the burden of monitoring and evaluation activities of the regulatory institutions. This study addresses the dearth of literature on PUC's, the regulatory institutions and mentoring PSU's.

Earlier studies such as by Baryeh (2009), Tsevi (2012), Utuka (2014) were limited in scope. Consequently, there appears to be no comprehensive study that has been carried out on PUC's that specifically focused on a constructive analysis of the practices, strategies, and procedures of the NCTE, the NAB and the PSU's for the development of a framework and other interventions that could contribute to address the challenges and shortcomings in the operational styles of the regulatory institutions. This research project addresses this gap.

In line with the views of Cummings and Worley (2001: 142) and Kumawu and Kraus (2007: 21), the practices and procedures of institutions should, over time, equip and facilitate the ability of members of organisations to take control of their processes and justify their reasons for existence. Similarly, Materu (2007: xx) indicates that the responsibility to ensure quality at the tertiary education level should be a major task of the tertiary institutions themselves. This requires capacity building and human capital development of the tertiary education institutions. In support of the assertions of the above authorities, the exploratory approach adopted in this study has aided in identifying and



emphasising practices that should be instituted to enable PUC's to take control of their processes for QA and for the development of a CoQ.

## **8.7 AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

As noted earlier (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.1.1) exploratory studies is the first stage in the sequence of any research. Accordingly, this study being an exploratory study, further studies could be conducted in the same area using descriptive and explanatory research approaches. In this way quantitative methods could be used to test the model that has been proposed in this study (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.8). In addition, the literature also suggests that the theory that emerges at the end of a grounded theory research is inconclusive and dependent on the context within which the research was conducted. Consequently, the framework could be tested within different contexts as a way of developing and improving upon the framework.

Although the research project has explored the major QA mechanisms in PUC's in Ghana, it has also exposed other areas that need further research. Based on the findings and limitations of this study, the following areas for further research are suggested.

Further research could be done using a larger sample size and to test the CoQ framework (see Chapter 7, Figure 7.8) that has been proposed in this research. The sample size could be expanded to include tracer studies on students who have completed the various PUC's. The impact of the ownership and governance structure on the QA practices in PUC's could also be explored.

The literature agrees that private tertiary education will continue to grow as a result of the inability of government to expand facilities that could accommodate all qualified applicants. Accordingly, further research is needed to explore the extent to which commercialisation of higher education in Ghana could affect the quality of the education provided.

At the PUC's level, research needs to be conducted to determine the effectiveness of Council of Independent Universities in developing and disseminating policies and practices that could ensure quality education standards provided by the PUC's.

## **8.8 CONCLUSION**

An assessment of the mechanisms for QA in PUC's has shown that there are two regulatory institutions that are mandated to ensure quality standards in the PUC's in Ghana. The two regulatory institutions have well documented norms, standards and procedures aimed at ensuring quality, and that quality standards are developed and maintained in the PUC's in Ghana. However, as a result of gaps in the law that established the regulatory institutions, they are unable to enforce their decisions through closing down institutions that do not meet set standards and prosecuting their owners. Apart from the gap in the law, there was a lack of administrative capacity and logistical challenges which affected the performance of the regulatory institutions. In addition to the roles played by the regulatory institutions through practices such as quality audit and assessment, PUC's are also required to affiliate to a longstanding university for purposes of mentoring. On the one hand, participants from the PUC's as well as assessors indicated a lack of satisfaction with the quality of mentoring provided by some of the PSU's. Key among the factors that contributed to ineffective mentoring was the high number of PUC's affiliated to the mentoring institutions for which they did not have the capacity. On the other hand, the mentoring universities were also of the view that due to the failure of the PUC's to adhere to the guidelines and deadlines provided to them, it affected the quality standards in most of these PUC's. Thus, the reasons for these shortcomings could be due to the inability of the regulatory institutions, the mentoring PSU's and the PUC's to play their respective roles in ensuring quality standards.

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that despite the existence of mechanisms for ensuring quality standards in the PUC's in Ghana, there are challenges with the quality of education provided by most of them. The challenges identified were not primarily a result of a lack of QA mechanisms but rather the lack of effective implementation of the existing QA mechanisms.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adamu, AY. 2021. Harmonisation of higher education Africa: 20 years after the Bologna Process. In *Tuning Journal for Higher Education*, 9(1): 103 – 126. New realities, new challenges, future proofing. Ed. Gobbi, M. [<http://dx.doi.org/10.18543/tjhe>] (Accessed 20 January 2022).
- Adom, D, Adu-Agyem, J & Hussein, EK. 2018. Theoretical and conceptual framework: Mandatory ingredients of a quality research. *International Journal of Scientific Research*, 7(1): 438 – 441.
- Ahmed, JU. 2016. Massification to Marketisation of Higher Education: Private University Education in Bangladesh. *Higher Education for the Future*, 3(1): 76-92.
- Alabi, J, Alabi, G, Adjei, R, Dzandu, P, Utuka G & Munkaila, A. 2018. *Quality assurance in Ghanaian higher education institutions. Opportunities and constraints*. Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) Working Paper Series.
- Alsaawi, A. 2014. A critical review of qualitative interviews. *European Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, 3(4): 149 – 156. [<http://www.ejbss.com/recent.aspx>] (Accessed 15 November 2019).
- Altbach, PG. 2004. Globalisation and the universities: Myths and realities in an unequal world. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 10(1): 3 – 25.
- Al Tobi, AS & Duque, S. 2015. Approaches to quality assurance and accreditation in higher education: A comparison between the Sultanate of Oman and the Philippines. *Perspectives of Innovations, Economics and Business*, 15(1): 41 – 48. [<http://dx.doi.org/10.15208/pieb.2015.03>] (Accessed 9 July 2019).
- Ajayi, A. 2014. An assessment of policy implementation and decision making in Nigerian public service. *International Journal of Research*, 1(10): 65 – 84.
- Amponsah, EB & Onuoha, LN. 2013. The performance and challenges of private universities in Ghana and Nigeria. *International Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, 4(5): 266 – 263.

- Anderson, D, Johnson, R & Milligan, B. 2000. *Quality assurance and accreditation in Australian higher education: An assessment of Australian and international practice*. Canberra, Australia: AusInfo.
- Ansah, F. 2015. A strategic quality assurance framework in an African higher education context. *Quality in Higher Education*, 1470 – 1081.  
[<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13538322.2015.1084720>] (Accessed 20 June 2016).
- Ansah, A, Swanzy, P & Nudzor, HP. 2017. Balancing the focus of Quality Assurance Frameworks of Higher Education Institutions in Africa: A Ghanaian Context. Published by INTECH In *Global Voices in Higher Education*. 27 – 43.  
[<http://www.intechopen.com/books/global>] (Accessed 6 March 2018).
- Armstrong, M. 2003. *A handbook of human resource management practice*. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. London: Kogan Page Limited.
- Ashcroft, K & Rayner, P. 2012. The purposes of quality assurance in Ethiopian higher education: Journey, adaptation and integration. *International Journal of Business Anthropology*, 3(2): 19 – 25.
- Askling, B. 1997. Quality monitoring as an institutional enterprise. *Quality in Higher Education*, 3(1): 17 – 26.
- Astalin, PR. 2013. Qualitative research design: A conceptual framework. *International Journal of Sciences and Interdisciplinary Research*, 2(1): 19 – 25.
- Atuahene, F & Owusu-Ansah, A. 2013. A descriptive assessment of higher education access, participation, equity, and disparity in Ghana. Sage Open.  
[<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2158244013497725>] (Accessed 24 October 2015).
- Avoke, MQ & Avoke, MK. 2014. 'Private colleges in Ghana: The saga surrounding NAB continues'. Daily Graphic. Ghana. (Accessed 24 February 2014).
- Babbie, E. 2000. *The practice of social research*. Belmont: Wadsworth.
- Babbie, E. 2001. *The practice of social research*. Wadsworth: Thomson Learning.
- Babbie, E. 2010. *The practice of social research*. Wadsworth: Cengage Learning.
- Babbie, E & Mouton, J. 2001. *The practice of social research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

- Babbie, E & Mouton, J. 2006. *The practice of social research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Bachman, R & Schutt, RK. 2011. *The practice of research in criminology and criminal justice*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. London: Sage.
- Bailey, H. 2014. The Roles and Functions of Higher Education Councils and Commissions in Africa: A synthesis of eight case study reports. Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET). Cape Town: South Africa.  
[[https://www.academia.edu/15363210/The\\_role\\_and\\_functions\\_of\\_higher\\_education\\_councils\\_and\\_commissions\\_in\\_Africa\\_A\\_case\\_study\\_of\\_the\\_Ghana\\_National\\_Council\\_for\\_Tertiary\\_Education](https://www.academia.edu/15363210/The_role_and_functions_of_higher_education_councils_and_commissions_in_Africa_A_case_study_of_the_Ghana_National_Council_for_Tertiary_Education)] (Accessed 12 April 2015).
- Barnett, R. 1992. *Improving higher education: Total quality care*, Buckingham: SRHE & OU.
- Baryeh, JOB. 2009. *Higher education quality assurance: How NAB is coping with the balance between improvement and accountability*. Master of Philosophy thesis, Institute of Educational Research. Faculty of Education. University of Oslo.  
[<http://www.duo.no/bitstream/handle/10852/.../DEDICATIONS.pdf>?] (Accessed 12 February 2014).
- Bastedo, MN. 2005. Sociological frameworks for higher education policy research. In PJ. Gumpert. (ed.). *The sociology of higher education: Contributions and their contexts*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.  
[[www.dphu.org/uploads/attachments/books/books\\_4948\\_0.pdf](http://www.dphu.org/uploads/attachments/books/books_4948_0.pdf)] (Accessed 7 December 2016).
- Bawakyillenuo, S, Osei-Akoto, I, Ahiadeke, C, Bortei-Doku Aryeetey, E & Agbe, K. 2013. Tertiary Education and Industrial Development in Ghana. Working Paper. Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, University of Ghana: Legon.
- Beckford, J. 2002. *Quality*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Routledge.
- Becket, N & Brookes, M. 2006. Evaluating quality management in university departments. *Assurance in Education*, 14(2): 123 – 142.  
[<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/09684880610662015>] (Accessed 16 March 2017).

- Beerens, M. 2018. Evidence-based policy and higher education quality assurance: Progress, pitfalls and promise. *European Journal of Higher Education*, 8(3): 272 – 287.
- Bell, J. 1993. *Doing your research project: A guide for first-time researchers in education and social science*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Bell, J & Waters, S. 2014. *Doing your research project*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Bertalanffy, LV. 1972. General systems theory. *Academy of Management Journal*, 15(4): 407 – 426.
- Bollaert, L, Brus, S, Curvale, B, Harvey, L, Helle, E, Jensen, HT, Komljenovic, J, Orphanides, A & Sursock, A. 2007. Embedding quality culture in higher education. A selection of papers from the European forum for quality assurance. Brussels, Belgium: European University Association (EUA).
- Boswell, M. 2015. Giving effect to quality audit recommendations: A case study from an organisational culture perspective. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 37(5): 572 – 585.  
[\[http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2015.1079393\]](http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2015.1079393) (Accessed 12 March 2020).
- Bhattacharjee, A. 2012. *Social science research: Principles, methods, and practices*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Florida: University of South Florida.
- Billings, D. 2004. International comparisons and trends in external quality assurance of higher education: Commonality or diversity. *Higher Education*, 47: 113 – 137.
- Birks, M & Mills, J. 2015. *Grounded theory: A practical guide*. London: Sage.
- Bjarnason, S, Cheng, KM, Fielden, J, Lemaitre, MJ, Levy, D & Varghese, NV. 2009. A New Dynamic: Private Higher Education, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Paris, World Conference on Higher Education. [\[https://www.scribd.com/document/36460869/A-New-Dynamic-Private-Higher-Education-2009\]](https://www.scribd.com/document/36460869/A-New-Dynamic-Private-Higher-Education-2009) (Accessed 23 July 2018).
- Blackmur, D. 2004. Issues in higher education quality assurance. *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 63(2): 105 – 116.

- Blackmur, D. 2008. A critical analysis of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) guidelines of good practice for higher education quality assurance agencies. *Higher Education*, 56: 723 – 734.
- Blaikie, N. 2002. *Designing social research*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Blaikie, N. 2007. *Approaches to social enquiry: Advancing knowledge*. London: Polity Press.
- Bless, C & Higson-Smith, C. 2000. *Fundamentals of social research methods: An African perspective*. Cape Town: Juta.
- Blumberg, BF, Cooper, DR & Schindler, PS. 2008. *Business research methods*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Boateng, JK. 2014. Barriers to internal quality assurance in Ghanaian private tertiary institution. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(2): 1 – 9.
- Boateng, JK. 2014. Quality assurance and internationalisation in a private university college. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 5(3): 122 – 131.
- Boateng, JK, Eghan, A & Osafo-Adu, MO. 2014. Quality assurance and employability of graduates in a Ghanaian university. *Journal of Education and e-Learning Research*, 2(3): 43 – 51. [<http://asianonlinejournals.com/index.php/JEELR>] (Accessed 25 June 2017).
- Boote, DN & Beile, P. 2005. Scholars prefer researchers: On the centrality of the dissertation literature review in research preparation. *Educational Researcher*, 34(6): 3 – 15.
- Brennan, J & Williams, R. 2004. 'Accreditation and Related Regulatory Matters in the United Kingdom'. In Schwarz, S & Westerheijden (eds.) *Accreditation and Evaluation in the European Higher Education Area*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 465 – 490.
- Brown, R. 2013. Mutuality meets the market: Analyzing changes in the control of quality assurance in United Kingdom higher education 1992-2012. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 67(4): 420 – 437.
- Brown, J, Kurzweil, M & Pritchett, W. 2017. *Quality Assurance in US Higher Education: The current landscape and principles for reforms*. New York: Ithaka. [<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>] (Accessed 12 May 2018).

- Brynard, PA & Hanekom, SX. 1997. *Introduction to Research in Public Administration and Related Academic Disciplines*. Pretoria: J. L. van Schaik Publishers.[<https://www.bookdepository.com/Introduction-Research-Public-Administration-Related-Academic-Disciplines-P-Brynard/9780627022883>] (Accessed 12 July 2016).
- Cai, Y & Yan, F. 2011. Organisational diversity in Chinese private higher education. WP No. 17. PROPHE Working Paper Series. New York: Program for Research on Private Higher Education. [<http://www.albany.edu/~prophe>] (Accessed 7 July 2016).
- Campbell, C & Rozsnyai, C. 2002. Quality Assurance and the Development of Course Programmes. Barrows, LC. (ed.) United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
- Camp, WG. 2001. Formulating and evaluating theoretical frameworks for career and technical education research. *Journal of Vocational Research*, 26(1): 27 – 39.
- Cao, Y & Li, X. 2014. Quality and quality assurance in Chinese private higher education: A multi- dimensional analysis and proposed framework. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 22(1): 65 – 87.
- Cerna, L. 2013. The nature of policy change and implementation: A review of different political approaches. Paris, France: Organisation for Economic Corporation and Development (OECD). [<https://www.oecd.org/education/cei/>] (Accessed 25 January 2018).
- Charmaz, K. 1990. Discovering chronic illness: using grounded theory, *Social Science and Medicine*, 30(11): 1161 – 1172.
- Charmaz, K. 2006. *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Charmaz, K. 2008. Constructionism and the grounded theory. In JA. Holstein & JF. Gubrium (eds.) *Handbook of Constructionist Research*. New York: The Guilford Press, 397 – 412.
- Charmaz, K. 2012. The power and potential of grounded theory. *Medical Sociology*. Online. 6(3): 2 – 15.



- Charmaz, K. 2021. The genesis, grounds, and growth of constructivist grounded theory. In JM. Morse, BJ. Bowers, K. Charmaz, AE. Clarke, J. Corbin, CJ. Porr & PN. Stern. (eds). *Developing grounded theory: The second generation revisited*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Routledge.
- Charmaz, K & Henwood, K. 2008. Grounded theory In C. Willig & W. Stainton Rogers (eds.). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research in psychology*. London: Sage.
- Chardarasorn, V. 2005. *An integrated theory of public policy implementation*. Bangkok: TURA.
- Cheng, YN & Cheung, WM. 1995. A framework for the analysis of educational policies. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 9(6): 10 – 21.  
[\[http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/pdf/10.1108/0951349513510147538\]](http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/pdf/10.1108/0951349513510147538)  
 (Accessed 20 October 2014).
- Cheung, JCM. 2015. Professionalism, profession and quality assurance practitioners in external quality assurance agencies in higher education. *Quality in Higher Education*, 21(2): 151 – 170.
- Cole, GA. 1996. *Management theory and practice*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Continuum.
- Collins, D. 2003. Pretesting survey instruments: an overview of cognitive methods. *Quality of Life Research*, 12(3): 229 – 238.
- Collis, J & Hussey, R. 2003. *Business research: A practical guide for undergraduate and postgraduate students*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Basingstoke: Macmillan Business.
- Corbetta, P. 2003. *Social research: Theory and techniques*. London: Sage.
- Corbin, J & Strauss, A. 1990. Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*, 13(1): 3 – 21.
- Corbin, J & Strauss, A. 2008. *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, JW. 2007. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among the five approaches*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, JW. 2009. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Creswell, JW. 2012. *Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Pearson.
- Creswell, JW. 2013. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, JW. 2014. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, JW & Plano Clark, VL. 2007. *Designing and conducting mixed method research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, JW & Plano Clark, VL. 2018. *Designing and conducting mixed method research*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cronin, P, Ryan, F & Coughlan, M. 2008. Undertaking a literature review: A step-by-step approach. *British Journal of Nursing*, 17(1): 38 – 43.
- Crotty, M. 1998. *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. London: Sage.
- Csizmadia, TG. 2006. Quality management in Hungarian higher education: organisational responses to governmental policies. PhD Thesis. CHEPS/UT. Netherlands.
- Daft, RL. 2010. *Organisation theory and design*. 10<sup>th</sup> ed. USA: South-Western Cengage Learning.
- Darvas, P, Gao, S, Shen, Y & Bawany, B. 2017. Sharing higher education's promise beyond the few in Sub-Saharan Africa. Directions in development. Human Development. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/World Bank Group. Washington, DC: World Bank.  
[<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/862691509089826066/pdf/120693-PUB-PUBLIC-PUBDATE-10-25-17.pdf>] (Accessed 15 February 2020).
- Datthey, K, Westerheijen, DF & Hofman, WHA. 2014. Impact of accreditation on public and private universities: A comparative study. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 20(4): 307 – 319.  
[<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13583883.2014.959037>] (Accessed 20 June 2015).

- Datthey, K, Westerheijen, DF & Hofman, WHA. 2017. Impact of accreditation on improvement of operational inputs after two cycles of assessments in some Ghanaian universities. *Quality in Higher Education*, 23(3): 213 – 229.  
[<https://doi.org/10.1080/13538322.2017.1407398>](Accessed 20 February 2015).
- Dawson, C. 2002. *Practical research methods: A user friendly guide to mastering research techniques and projects*. Oxford, United Kingdom: How to books Ltd.
- DeGross, A & Cargo, M. 2009. Policy implementation: Implications for evaluation. In JM. Ottoson & P. Hawe (eds.), *Knowledge utilization, diffusion, implementation, transfer, and translation: Implications for evaluation*. New Directions for Evaluation. New Jersey: Jossey Bass. 124: 47 – 60.  
[<https://doi.org/10.1002/ev.313>]. (Accessed on 18 November 2019).
- DeMarrais, K. 2004. Elegant communication: Sharing qualitative research with communities, colleagues, and critics. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(2): 281 – 297.
- Deming, WE. 1986. *Out of the crisis*. Cambridge, MA: Center for Advanced Engineering Study, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Denzin, NK & Lincoln, YS. 2000. *The sage handbook of qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Denzin, NK & Lincoln, YS. 2005. *Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research*. In NK. Denzin & YS. Lincoln (eds.). *The sage handbook of qualitative research, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Denzin, NK & Lincoln, YS. 2011. *The sage handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Denzin, NK & Lincoln, YS. 2018. *A sage handbook of qualitative research*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Los Angeles: Sage.
- De Vos, AS & Fouché, CB. 1998. *General introduction to research design, data collection methods and data analysis*. In AS. De Vos (ed.) *Research at the grassroots: A primer for the caring profession*. Pretoria: JL van Schaik Publishers.
- De Vos, AS, Strydom, AH, Fouche, CB & Delport, CSL. 2013. *Research at grass roots for social sciences and human services professions*. 5th ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

- Dey, I. 1999. *Grounding grounded theory: Guidelines for qualitative inquiry*. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Dey, EL, Milem, JF & Berger, JB. 1997. Changing patterns of publication productivity: Accumulative advantage or institutional isomorphism? *Sociology of Education*, 70(4): 308 – 323.
- Dialoke, I., Ukah, F & Maduagwuna, IV. 2017. Policy formulation and implementation in Nigeria: The bane of underdevelopment. *International Journal of Capacity Building in Education and Management*, 3(2): 22 – 27.
- Dill, DD. 2007. *Quality assurance in higher education: Practices and issues*. The Third International Encyclopaedia for Education. Editors-in-chief. Barry McGraw, Eva Baker and Penelope Peterson, Elsevier Publications.
- DiMaggio, PJ & Powell, WW.1983. “The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and rationality in organisational fields”. *American Sociological Review*, 48: 147 – 160.
- Dine, CJ, McGaghie, WC, Bordage, G & Shea, JA. 2015. Chapter 6: Problem statement, conceptual framework and research question. In SJ. Durning & JD. Carline (eds.). *Review criteria for research manuscripts*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Washington DC: Association of American Medical Colleges.
- Doval, E, Bondrea, E, Negulescu, OH. 2011. A model of university quality culture system: filling in the gaps. *Journal of US-China Public Administration*, 8(9): 1058 – 1066.
- Dube, F. 2015. Exploring teacher education initiatives in preparing trainee teachers for handling gifted learners as a way of ensuring education for all learners in Zimbabwean primary schools. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of South Africa. [<https://uir.unisa.ac.za/handle/10500/506/discover>] (Accessed 15 September 2021).
- Dye, T. (2008). *Understanding public policy*. 12<sup>th</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Dzidonu, CD. 2016. Private Sector Participation in Tertiary Education in Ghana-Policy and Strategic Options for Ghana. Paper presented at the National Summit on Tertiary Education: November 2 – 4. Organised by the National Council for

- Tertiary Education, Ministry of Education & TrustAfrica, Senegal. Ghana: National Council for Tertiary Education.
- Dziminska, M, Fijałkowska, J & Sułkowski, L. 2018. Trust-Based Quality Culture Conceptual Model for Higher Education Institutions. *Sustainability*, 10(8): 2599. [[www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability](http://www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability)] (Accessed 19 December 2019).
- Easterby-Smith, M, Thorpe, R & Jackson, PR. 2012. *Management research*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Eaton, JS. 2001. Regional accreditation reform: Who it served? *Change in Quality and Recognition in Higher Education*, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Oxfordshire: Taylor & Francis.
- Eaton, J. 2004. Accreditation and Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education: The United States. In *Quality and Recognition in Higher Education: The Cross-border Challenge*. Paris. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Publishing. [<https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264015104-6-en>]. (Accessed 16 August 2017).
- Eaton, JS. 2006. An overview of United States (US) Accreditation. Washington DC: Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).
- Eaton, JS. 2011. United States (US) Accreditation: Meeting the challenges of Accountability and student achievement. *Evaluation in Higher Education*, 5(1): 1 – 20.
- Eaton, JS. 2015. An overview of United States (US) Accreditation. Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). Washington, DC: Council for Higher Education Accreditation. [<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED569225.pdf>] (Accessed 6 August 2016).
- Ebona-Abamonga, E. 2019. Grounded theory approach: Its steps and procedures in a scientific study. *IOER International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 1(1): 96 – 105.
- Edwards, FR. 1981. The regulation of future markets: A conceptual framework. *The Journal of Future Markets*, 1(supplement): 417 – 439.
- Effah, P. 2003. 'Ghana'. In D. Teferra & PG. Altbach (eds.) *African higher education: An international reference handbook*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

- Effah, P. 2006. Private higher education in Ghana. In NV. Varghese (ed.) *Growth and Expansion in Private Higher Education in Africa*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO): International Institute for Education Planning IIEP: 55 – 73. Paris: UNESCO, International Institute for Educational Planning.
- [<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1877042812054663>] (Accessed 20 November 2015).
- Effah, P. 2011. A Ghanaian response to the study on ‘Widening participation in higher education in Ghana and Tanzania: Developing an equity scorecard’. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 6(4): 374 – 382.
- [<http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/rcie.2011.6.4.374>] (Accessed 23 November 2016).
- Effah, P. 2014. Academic leadership in Tertiary Education Institutions. Ghana *Journal of Higher Education*, 1: 1 –19. National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE), Accra.
- Effah, P. 2018. Rethinking higher education in Ghana: Reflections of a professional administrator. Codesria Working Paper Series. Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA). Dakar: Senegal.
- [<http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/dsp01qr46r360j>] (Accessed 15 October 2019).
- Ehlers, UD. 2009. Understanding quality culture. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 17(4): 343 – 363.
- Eisenhardt, KM. 1989. Agency theory: An assessment and review. *The Academy of Management Review*, 14(1): 57 – 74.
- Eisner, EW. 1991. *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and enhancement of educational practice*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Ellis, L. 1994. *Research methods in the social sciences*. Madison: C Brown Communications. Ohio: Brown & Benchmark Publication.
- Ellis, ME & Steyn, GM. 2014. Managers’ perceptions of regulatory legislation of private higher education in South Africa. *International Journal of Education Science*, 6(3), 445 – 458. [[www.krepublishers.com/.../Journals...3...6-3...Steyns.../](http://www.krepublishers.com/.../Journals...3...6-3...Steyns.../)] (Accessed 4 January 2017).

- Engel, RJ & Schutt, RK. 2009. *The practice of research in social work*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Engward, H. 2013. Understanding grounded theory. *Nursing Standard*, 28(7): 37 – 41.
- European and African Union Commission, 2017. Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA). Stakeholder Consultation Workshop for the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ASG-QA). Barcelona: HAQAA Initiative. [https://haqaa.aau.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/ASG\_QA\_October-2017] (Accessed 14 January 2019).
- European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). 2004. Accreditation Models in Higher Education Experiences and Perspectives. European Network for Quality Assurance Workshop Reports 3. DP. Nauta, PL. Omar, A. Schade, & DP. Scheele (eds.). Helsinki: European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. Helsinki: European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. [http://www.enqa.eu/pub\_review.lasso]. (Accessed 4 July 2017).
- European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). 2009. Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Helsinki: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. [http://ecahe.eu/w/index.php/Standards\_and\_Guidelines\_for\_Quality\_Assurance\_in\_the\_European\_Higher\_Education\_Area#Source] (Accessed 4 July 2017).
- European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). 2012. Accreditation models in higher education. Experiences and perspectives. ENQA Workshop Report 3. PD. Nauta, PL. Omar, A. Schade, & JP. Scheele, (eds) Helsinki: ENQA.
- European Students Information Bureau (ESIB). 2002. European student handbook on quality assurance in higher education. Brussels: Belgium. The national unions of students of Europe.

- European University Association (EUA). 2005. Developing an internal quality culture in European universities. Report on the quality culture project. 2002 – 2003. Brussels: Belgium. European University Association. [http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/QC1\_full.1111487662479.pdf] (Accessed 23 October 2015).
- European University Association (EUA). 2006. Quality culture in European universities: a bottom-up approach. Report on the three rounds of the quality culture project. 2002 – 2006. Brussels: EUA.
- Fielden, J & Varghese, NV. 2009. Regulatory issues in private higher education. Paper prepared for WCHE, 5 – 8 July, 2009. Paris: UNESCO.
- Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council. 2008. Audits of quality assurance systems of Finnish higher education institutions: audit manual for 2008 – 2011.
- Flick, U. 2009. *An introduction to qualitative research*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Sage Publications.
- Foster, ST. 2015. *Quality management and techniques*. Edinburg Gate: Pearson Education.
- Fox, W & Bayat, MS. 2007. *A guide to managing research*. Cape Town: Juta.
- Fox, W & Bayat, MS. 2011. *A guide to managing research*. Lansdowne: Juta.
- Frazer, M. 1994. Quality in higher education: An international perspective. In D. Green (ed.) *What is Quality in Higher Education?* 107-117. Buckingham: SHRE and Open University Press.
- Friend-Pereira, JC, Heerens, N & Lutz, K. 2002. *European student handbook on quality assurance in higher education*. The National Union of Students of Europe. Brussels: Belgium. The national unions of students of Europe.
- Fusch, PI & Ness, LR. 2015. Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(9): 1408 – 1416.
- Galvan, JL. 2017. *Writing literature reviews. A guide for students in the social and behavioral science*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Routledge.
- Gao, Y. 2010. Mimetic isomorphism, market competition, perceived benefit and bribery of firms in transitional China. *Australian Journal of Management*, 35(2): 203 – 222. [http://aum.sagepub.com] (Accessed 3 June 2017).



- Gasson, S. 2004. Rigor in grounded theory research: An interpretive perspective on generating theory from qualitative field studies. In M. Whitman & A. Woszczyński (eds.) *The handbook of information systems research*. Hershey: Ideal Group. 79 – 102.
- Girdwood, A. 1999. Tertiary education policy in Ghana: An assessment: 1988 – 1998. Report for the World Bank. Washington, DC: World Bank.  
[https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/34ff/a8bcf191381a3d983931f42a7b4714dbb86b.pdf?\\_ga=2.27967871.294380701.1586953439-862338063.1586784486](https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/34ff/a8bcf191381a3d983931f42a7b4714dbb86b.pdf?_ga=2.27967871.294380701.1586953439-862338063.1586784486)  
 (Accessed 24 May 2015).
- Glaser, BG. 1992. *Emergence vs. Forcing: Basics of grounded theory analysis*. Mill Valley CA: The Sociology Press.
- Glaser, BG. 2002. Conceptualisation: On theory and theorizing in using grounded theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1(2): 23 – 38.  
[\[https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/160940690200100203\]](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/160940690200100203)  
 (Accessed 4 January 2017).
- Glaser, BG & Strauss, A. 1967. *Discovery of grounded theory*. Chicago, IL: Aldine.
- Glicken, MD. 2003. *Social research: A simple guide*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Grant, C & Osanlo, A. 2014. Understanding, selecting and integrating a theoretical framework in dissertation research: Creating the blue-print for 'House'. *Administrative Issues Journal: Connecting Education, Practice and Research*, 12 – 22.
- Green, D. 1994. What is quality in higher education? Concepts, policy and practice  
 In D. Green (ed.) *What is quality in higher education?* 3 – 20. Buckingham: SHRE and Open University Press, 3 – 20.
- Greenwood, R, Oliver, C, Sahlin, K & Sunddaby, R. 2008. Introduction. In R. Greenwood, C, Oliver, K, Sahlin & R, Sunddaby (eds.). *The sage handbook of organisational institutionalism*, 1 – 46. London: Sage.
- Guba, EG. 1990. The alternative paradigm dialogue. In EG. Guba (ed.) *The paradigm dialogue*, 17 – 30. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Guerrero, C. 2014. Higher education case studies, Ghana. The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited.

- [[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a089ac40f0b652dd000354/61296-Ghana\\_Higher\\_education\\_case\\_studies.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a089ac40f0b652dd000354/61296-Ghana_Higher_education_case_studies.pdf)] (Accessed 23 February 2017).
- Guest, G, Bunce, A & Johnson, L. 2006. How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 18(1): 59 – 82.
- Gyimah-Brempong, K & Ondiege, P. 2011. Reforming higher education: Access, equity, and financing in Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa and Tunisia. In African Competitiveness Report. 2011 The World Economic Forum. Geneva.  
[<https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/document/africa-competitiveness-report-2011-23591>] (Accessed 13 June 2014).
- Haakstad, J. 2001. Accreditation: The new quality assurance formula? Some reflections as Norway is about to reform its quality assurance systems. *Quality in Higher Education*, 7(1): 77 – 62.
- Haight, WL. 2010. The multiple roles of applied social science research in evidence-informed practice. *Special Issue of Integrative Reviews*, 55(2): 101 – 103.
- Harman, G & Meek, VL. (2000). Repositioning quality assurance and accreditation in Australian higher education. Canberra: DETYA.
- Harvey, L. 2002. The end of quality. *Quality in higher education*, 8(1): 5 – 22.
- Harvey, L. 2006. Impact of quality assurance: overview of a discussion between representatives of external quality assurance agencies. *Quality in Higher Education*, 12(3): 287 – 290.
- Harvey, L. 2007. 'The Epistemology of Quality'. *Perspectives in Education*, 25(3): 1 – 13.
- Harvey, L & Green, D. 1993. Defining Quality. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 18(1): 9 – 34.
- Harvey, L & Knight, PT. 1996. *Transforming higher education*. The Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press. London: England.
- Harvey, L & Newton, J. 2004. Transforming quality evaluation. *Quality in Higher Education*, 10(2): 149 – 165. [<https://doi.org/10.1089/1353832042000230635>] (Accessed 17 June 2019).
- Harvey, L & Stensaker, B. 2008. Quality culture: Understandings, boundaries and linkages. *European Journal of Education*, 43(4): 427 – 441.

- Harvey, L & Williams, J. 2010. Fifteen years of quality in higher education (Part Two). *Quality in Higher Education*, 16(2): 3 – 36.
- Hayes, J. 2010. *The theory and practice of change management*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Jordan Hill, Oxford. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hayward, FM. 2006. Quality assurance and accreditation of higher education in Africa. Paper presented at the conference on higher education reform in Francophone Africa: Understanding the keys of success. 13 – 15 June. Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso: World Bank, Africa Region.  
[\[http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1137083592502/QA\\_accreditation\\_HE\\_Africa.pdf\]](http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1137083592502/QA_accreditation_HE_Africa.pdf)  
 (Accessed 20 October 2015).
- Heck, RH. 2004. *Studying educational and social policy: Theoretical concepts and research methods*. New York: Routledge.
- Hendell, D & Lewis DR. 2005. Quality assurance of higher education in transition countries: Accreditation, accountability and assessment. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 11: 239 – 258.
- Holloway, I & Wheeler, S. 2002. *Qualitative research in nursing*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Holstein, JA & Gubruim, JF. 1995. *The active interview*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Holzhaecker, D & Yazilitas, D. 2009. Privatisation in higher education; Cross-country analysis of trends, policies, problems and solutions. Institute for Higher Education Policy. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy.  
[\[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261870737\\_...\]](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/261870737_...) (Accessed 6 August, 2021).
- Hoyle, D. 2001. *ISO 9000 Quality systems handbook*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. New Delhi: Butterworth-Heinemann Publications.
- Houston, D. 2007. TQM and higher education: A critical systems perspective on fitness for purpose. *Quality in Higher Education*, 13(1): 3 – 17.
- Hill, M & Hupe, P. 2002. *Implementing public policy: Governance in theory and in practice*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

- Hussein, MT, Kennedy, A & Oliver, B. 2017. Grounded theory and the conundrum of literature review: Framework for novice researchers. *The Qualitative Report*, 22(4): 1198 – 1210. [<https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol22/iss4/16>] (Accessed 20 December 2018).
- Iddrisu, S, Eliasu, A & Kinders, T. 2014. Educational Reforms and the role of Polytechnic Education in Socio-economic Development of Ghana. *Africa Development and Resources Research Institute Journal*, Ghana. 11(11): 29 – 52. [<http://www.journals.adrri.org/>] (Accessed 12 September 2017).
- Imenda, S. 2014. Is there a conceptual difference between theoretical and conceptual frameworks? *Journal of Social Sciences*, 38(2): 185 – 195.
- Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA). 2010. A roadmap to quality: Handbook for quality assurance in higher education, 1, Guidelines for self-assessment at program level. Kampala, Uganda. Inter-University Council for East Africa. [<https://www.iucea.org>] (Accessed 12 October 2016).
- Isaac, S & Michael, WB. 1995. *Handbook in research and evaluation for education and the behavioural sciences*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Los Angeles: University of Southern California.
- Isniah, S. Purba, H & Debora, F. 2020. Plan, Do, Check Action (PDCA) method: A literature review and research issues, *Jurnal Sistem dan Manajemen Industri*, 4(1): 72 – 81. [<http://e-jurnal.lpprmunsera.org/index.php/JSMI>] (Accessed 15 January 2021).
- Jackson, N. 1997. Internal academic quality audit in UK higher education: Part 1 Implications for a national quality assurance framework. *Quality Assurance in Higher Education*, 5(1): 45 – 46.
- Jackson, S & Bohrer, J. 2010. Quality assurance in higher education: Recent developments in the United Kingdom. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 5(1): 77 – 87. [<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.2304/rcie.2010.5.1.77>] (Accessed 13 August 2021).
- Jordens, JZ & Zekpe, N. 2009. A network approach to curriculum quality assessment. *Quality in Higher Education*, 15(3): 279 – 289.

- Johnson, B & Christensen, L. 2008. *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Kale-Dery, S. 2018. Weed out unqualified students or face consequences - Ministry warns University Colleges, *Daily Graphic, Ghana* [27 January 2018].
- Kahsay, MN. 2012. Quality assurance in Ethiopian higher education: Critical issues and practical implications. University of Twente. Thesis published by CHEPS/UT, P.O. Box 217, NL. 7500 AE Enschede, the Netherlands. [<https://research.utwente.nl/publications/quality-and-...>] (Accessed 3 May 2016).
- Kauko, J. 2006. The institutionalisation of quality in European higher education. Budapest. The European Political Science Network (epsNet). [<http://www.espNet.net/2006/pps/kauko.pdf>] (Accessed 12 April 2018).
- Keane, E. 2014. Considering the practical implementation of constructivist grounded theory in a study of widening participation in Irish higher education. *International Journal of Social Research methodology*. 415 – 439. [<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2014.923622>] (Accessed 12 April 2017).
- Keeley, B. 2007. Human Capital: How what you know shapes your life. Paris, France. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). [<https://www.oecd.org/insights/humancapitalhowwhatyouknowshapesyourlife.htm>] (Accessed 17 January 2014).
- Kenny, M & Fourie, R. 2015. Contrasting classical, straussian, and constructivist grounded theory: Methodological and philosophical conflicts. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(8): 1270 – 1289.
- Khan, SN. 2014. Qualitative research method – phenomenology. *Asian Social Science Journal*, 10(21): 298 – 310.
- Kinicki, A & Williams, B. 2011. *Management a practical introduction*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Kinser, K & Lane JE. 2017. An overview of authorisation and quality assurance of higher education. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Background paper prepared for the 2017/18 Global education monitoring report. ED/GEMR/MRT/2017/P1/3/RV. France. United

- Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Right to Education Initiative (UK).
- Kis, V. 2005. Quality assurance in tertiary education: Current practices in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries and a literature review on potential effects. Paris, France. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). [<http://www.oecd.org/education/skills-beyond-school/38006910.pdf>] (Accessed 4 May 2018).
- Kitaev, J. 1999. Private education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Are-examination of theories and concepts related to its development and finance. Paris, France. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO): International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP).
- Kivunja, C. 2018. Distinguishing between theory, theoretical framework and conceptual framework: A systematic review of lessons from the field. *Internal Journal of Higher Education*, 7(6): 44 – 53.
- Kothari, CR. 1985. *Research methodology*. New Delhi: Wiley Eastern.
- Kothari, CR. 2004. *Research methodology, methods and techniques*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New Dehli: International Publishers.
- Krefting, L. 1991. Rigor in qualitative research: The assessment of trustworthiness. *American Journal of Occupational Theory*, 55(3): 214 – 221.
- Kumawu, N & Kraus, W. 2007. *Global organisation development: A model for Africa and the world*. Accra: Organisation Capacity Improvement Consultants (OCIC) Ghana Ltd.
- Ladikos, A & Kruger, JFE. 2006. Experience of crime in a commercial production area: utilising the empirical-phenomological method. *Acta Criminologica*, 19(3): 156 – 179.
- Lapan, SD., Quartaroli, MT & Riemer, FJ. 2012. *Qualitative research: An introduction to methods and designs*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Leavy, P. 2017. *Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, Art-based, and community-based participatory research approaches*. New York: The Guilford Press.

- Leedy, PD & Ormrod, JE. 2001. *Practical research planning and design: 7<sup>th</sup> ed.* New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc.
- Leedy, PD & Ormrod, JE. 2005. *Practical research: Planning and design.* 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Liehr, P & Smith, MJ. 1999. Middle range theory: Spinning research and practice to create knowledge for the millennium. *Advances in Nursing Science*, 21(4): 81 – 91.
- Levy, DC. 2002. Commercial private higher education: South Africa as a stark example. *Perspectives in Education*, 20(4): 29 – 40.
- Levy, DC. 2004. The new institutionalism: Mismatches with private higher education global growth. WP No. 3. PROPHE Working Paper Series. New York: The Program for Research on Private Higher Education  
[\[www.albany.edu/dept/.../prophe/.../paper/PROPHE03.../PROPHEWP...\]](http://www.albany.edu/dept/.../prophe/.../paper/PROPHE03.../PROPHEWP...)  
 (Accessed on: 25 October 2015).
- Levy, D. 2008. Indian private higher education in comparative perspective. WP No. 13. PROPHE Working Paper Series. Programme for research on private higher education. New York: Program for Research on Private Higher Education.  
[\[http://www.albany.edu/~prophe\]](http://www.albany.edu/~prophe) (Accessed 24 June 2016).
- Lewis, GS, Friedman, JS & Schoneboom, J. 2010. Accomplishments of the partnership for higher education in Africa, 2000-2010. Report on a decade of collaborative Foundation Investment. Partnership for higher education in Africa. New York: Partnership for Higher Education in Africa  
[\[https://books.google.com.gh/books/about/Accomplishments\\_of\\_the\\_Partnership\\_for\\_H.html?id=RdfzTgEACAAJ&redir\\_esc=y\]](https://books.google.com.gh/books/about/Accomplishments_of_the_Partnership_for_H.html?id=RdfzTgEACAAJ&redir_esc=y) (Accessed 20 September 2017).
- Li, W. 2014. Quality assurance in higher education in China: Control, accountability and freedom. *Policy and Society*, 33(3): 253 – 262.
- Lim, D. 1999. Quality assurance in higher education in developing countries. *Assessment and Evaluation of Higher Education*, 24(4): 379 – 390.
- Lim, FCB. 2010. Do too many rights make a wrong? A qualitative study of the experiences of a sample of Malaysian and Singapore private higher

- education providers in transnational quality assurance. *Quality in Higher Education*, 16(3): 211 – 222.
- Lincoln, YS, Lynham, SA & Guba, EG. 2011. Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences revisited. In NK. Denzin & YS. Lincoln (eds.). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lopez, AA, Rojas, MJ, Lopez, BA & Lopez, DC. 2014. Chilean universities and institutional quality assurance processes. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 23(2): 166 –183.
- Loukkola, T & Zhang, T. 2010. Examining quality culture: Part 1- Quality assurance processes in higher education institutions. Brussels, Belgium: European University Association (EUA).
- Lucas, L. 2014. Academic resistance to quality assurance processes in higher education in the UK. *Policy and Society*, 33, 215 – 224.
- Luckett, K. 2007. The introduction of external quality assurance in South Africa higher education: An analysis of stakeholder response. *Quality in Higher Education*, 13(2): 97-116. [<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/44838290>] (Accessed 25 July 2015).
- Lugg, R, Morley, L & Leach, F. 2007. Widening participation in higher education in Ghana and Tanzania: Developing an Equity Scorecard Working Paper 3: A profile of participation in Higher Education in Ghana and Tanzania. Boston: International Higher Education. [[www.sussex.ac.uk/education/cheer/wphegt](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/education/cheer/wphegt)] (Accessed 18 June 2014).
- Magwa, S & Magwa, W. 2015. *A guide to conducting research: A student handbook*. Singapore: Strategic Book Publishing.
- Makinde, T. 2005. Problems of policy implementation in developing nations: The Nigerian experience. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 11(1): 63 – 69.
- Manatos, M, Sarrico, CS & Rosa, MJ. 2015. CHER 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference. The integration of quality Management in Higher Education: The policies of the Portuguese Universities. Track 2. England: Routledge [[www.cher2015.org/files/Maria\\_Manatos%20et%20al\\_Cer%2015.doc](http://www.cher2015.org/files/Maria_Manatos%20et%20al_Cer%2015.doc)] (Accessed 2 September 2016).



- Manuh, T, Gariba, S & Budu, J. 2007. *Change and transformation in Ghana's publicly funded universities: A study of experiences, lessons and opportunities, partnership for higher education in Africa*. Accra, Ghana: James, Currey/Woeli Publishing Services.
- Marlow, CR. 2005. *Research methods for generalist social work*. New York: Thomson Brooks/Cole.
- Marmolejo, F. 2016. What matters most for tertiary education systems: A framework paper. Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER). The World Bank Working Paper series, 11. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.
- Martin, M & Stella, A. 2007. External quality assurance in education: Making choices. Paris, France. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO): International institute for Educational Planning (IIEP).  
[\[https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED499628.pdf\]](https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED499628.pdf) (Accessed 7 October 2015).
- Martin, M. 2010. Equity and quality assurance: can they come together? An introduction to the problematic in Equity and quality assurance: a marriage of two minds. M. Martin (ed.). Paris, France. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO): International institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). [\[https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000187184\]](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000187184) (Accessed 25 October 2016).
- Massy, WF. 2003. *Honouring the trust: Quality and cost containment in higher education*. Bolton: Anker Publishing.
- Materu, P. 2007. Higher education quality assurance in Sub-Saharan Africa: Status, challenges, and promising practices. The World Bank Working Paper 124. Washington, DC: Africa Region Human Development Department.
- Materu, P & Righetti, P. 2010. Quality assurance in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 5(1): 3 – 17.  
[\[http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/rcie.2010.5.1.3\]](http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/rcie.2010.5.1.3) (Accessed 21 April 2014).
- Maxel, OJM. 2017. Internal quality assurance in public and private universities in Africa: Dynamics, challenges and strategies. *European Journal of Economic and Financial Research*, 2(1): 21 – 44.

- Mbanze, CV & Coetzee, SA. 2014. The legal framework for establishing private universities in Swaziland. *Africa Education Review*, 11(3): 475 – 490.
- Megginson, LC, Mosley, DC & Pietri, Jr. PH. 1998. *Management: Concepts and applications*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Harper & Row Publishers.
- Merriam, SB. 2002. *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, SB. 2009. *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley.
- Mertens, DM. 2012. Ethics in qualitative research in education and the social sciences In SD. Lapan, MT. Quataroli & FJ. Riener (eds.). *Qualitative research: An introduction to methods and designs*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Meyer, JW & Rowan, B. 1977. Institutionalised organisations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83(2): 340 – 363.
- Meyer, JW. 2008. Reflections on Institutional Theories of Organisations. In *The Sage handbook of organisational institutionalism*. London: SAGE Publications.  
[\[http://www.thomaslawrence.files.wordpress.com/.../\]](http://www.thomaslawrence.files.wordpress.com/.../) (Accessed 3 February 2017).
- Michael, SO. 2015. Comparative analysis of ranking and accreditation: Exploring a set of universal principles for higher education quality assurance. European Integration-realities and perspectives. Proceedings, Quality in Education quality assurance internationalisation and management of higher education in a globalised society. Galati: Danubius University Press.
- Middlehurst, R. 2011. *Academic standards, quality, and the student experience: Resources for UK higher education institutions*. London, UK: Leadership Foundation for Higher Education and the Committee of Chairs.
- Miles, MB & Huberman, MA. 1994. *An expanded sourcebook. Qualitative data analysis*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, London: Sage.
- Miles, MB, Huberman, AM & Saldana, J. 2013. *Qualitative data analysis: A method sourcebook*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Mills, J, Bonner, A & Francis, K. 2006. The Development of Constructivist Grounded theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1): 25 – 35.

- Mishra, S. 2007. *Quality assurance in higher education: An introduction*. Bangalore, India: National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC).
- Mizikaci, F. 2006. A systems approach to program evaluation model for quality in higher education. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), CEPES, Bucharest, Romania. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 14(1): 37 – 53.
- Mizikaci, F. 2011. Isomorphic and diverse features of Turkish private higher education. PROPHE Working Paper Series No. 18. Albany, State University of New York. [<http://www.albany.edu/~prophe>] (Accessed 12 August 2016).
- Morgan, B & Sklar, RH. 2012. Sampling and research paradigms, In JG. Maree, (Kobus) (ed). *Complete your thesis or dissertation successfully: Practical guidelines*. Cape Town: Juta.
- Morse, JM. 1994. Designing funded qualitative research. In NK. Denzin & YS. Lincoln (eds.). *Handbook of qualitative research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Morse, JA. 2006. The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) guidelines of good practice for external quality assurance agencies: Assessment and next steps. *Quality in Higher Education*, 12(3): 243 – 252.
- Mouton, J. 1996. *Understanding social research*. Pretoria: J.L. Van Schaik Publishers.
- Mouton, J. 2001. *How to succeed in your Master's and Doctoral Studies: A South African guide and resource book*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.
- Neema-Abooki, P & Gitta, E. 2017. Scope of quality assurance in higher education programmes and projects. *PM World Journal*, 4(3): 1 – 22. [[www.peworldjournal.net](http://www.peworldjournal.net)] (Accessed 10 July 2019).
- Neuman, WL. 2006. *Social Research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Pearson Education.
- Ngulube, P, Mathipa, ER & Gumbo, MT. 2015. Theoretical and conceptual in the social sciences In ER. Mathipa & MT. Gumbo (eds.). *Addressing research challenges: Making headway in developing researchers*. Noordwyk: Mosala-MASEDI Publishers & Booksellers, 43 – 66.

- Nwuke, K. 2008. The private provision of higher education in Ethiopia: Growth, challenges, and prospects. *Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa*. (CODESRIA) JHEA/RESA, 6(1): 71 – 94.
- O’Leary, Z. 2007. *The essential guide to doing research*. London: Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Oliver, C. 1991. Strategic responses to institutional processes. *The Academy of Management Review*, 16(1): 145 – 179.
- O’Toole, L.J. Jr. 2000. Research on public policy implementation: Assessment and prospects. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 10(2): 263 – 288.
- Oyewole, O. 2010. The African quality rating mechanisms: The process, prospects and risks. Keynote address by Oyewole at the Fourth International Conference on quality assurance in Higher education in Africa and Capacity Building (Training). Workshop (ICQAHE-2010). Bamako, October; 8 – 9. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, African Union. [atlfgu.auf.org/.../KEYNOTE\_Oye\_AQRM\_Process-Prospect\_and\_Risks\_2...] (Accessed 23 October 2015).
- Ozen, S & Ozturk, D. 2016. Institutional logics and political networks: A theoretical framework for academic staffing in newly-funded academic departments in Turkey. *Journal of Management and Organisation Studies*, 1(1): 5 – 46. [<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312589778>] (Accessed 4 January 2017).
- Patton, MQ. 2002. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Patton, MQ. 2015. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Perry, JC. 2012. Conducting mixed method research. In JG. Maree, (Kobus) (ed.). *Complete your thesis or dissertation successfully: Practical guidelines*. Cape Town: Juta & Company Limited.
- Pitts, DW. 2007. Implementation of diversity management programmes in public organisations: Lessons from policy implementation research. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 30: 1573 – 1590.

- Poku, JA, Aawaar, GM & Worae, TA. 2013. Education sector reforms in Ghana: A review. *Global Research Journal of Education*, 3(2): 20 – 31.
- Polit, DF, Berk, CT & Hungler, BP. 2001. *Essentials of nursing research: Methods, appraisal and utilisation*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.
- Pollitt, C. 2016. *Advanced introduction to public management and administration*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Ponterotto, JG. 2005. Qualitative research in counselling psychology: A primer on research paradigms and philosophy of science. *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 52(2): 126 – 136.
- Pryor, MG. Anderson, D, Toomps, LA & Humphrey, JH. 2007. Strategic implementation as a core competency. *Journal of Management Research*, 7(1): 1 – 17.
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) UK. 2005. Quality Assurance in United Kingdom Higher Education: A Guide for International Readers. Gloucester: Quality Assurance Agency.
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) UK. 2006. Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education. Gloucester: Quality Assurance Agency.
- Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) UK. 2018. The Quality Assurance. Self-Assessment Report for Review by ENQA. Gloucester: Quality Assurance Agency. [<http://www.qaa.ac.uk>] (Accessed 16 May 2020).
- Ravitch, SM & Riggan, M. 2017. *Reason and rigor: How conceptual frameworks guide research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Sage.
- Richards, L & Morse, J. 2007. *Users guide to qualitative methods*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Riesman, D. 1956. *The Academic procession: Constraints and variety in American higher education*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Rhoades, G & Sporns, B. 2002. Quality assurance in Europe and the U.S: professional and political economic framing of higher education policy. *Higher Education*, 43(3): 355 – 390. [<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3447522>] (Accessed 23 November 2018).

- Ruben, BD. 1995. The quality approach in higher education: Context and concepts for change. In BD. Ruben (ed.). *Quality in Higher Education*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
- Ruben, BD. 2003. Excellence in Higher Education, 2003-2004: A Baldrige-Based Guide to Organisational Assessment, Improvement, and Leadership Facilitators Guide. Washington, DC: National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO).
- Ruben, BD. 2007. *Excellence in higher education guide: an integrated approach to assessment, planning, and improvement in colleges and universities*. Washington, DC: National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO).
- Rothwell, WJ & Sullivan, R. 2005. Organisation Development In W. J. Rothwell & R. Sullivan (eds). *Practicing organisation development: A guide to consultants*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 9 – 39. San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons Inc.
- Sabri, HA & El-Refae, GA. 2006. Accreditation in higher business education in the private sector: The case of Jordan. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 6(1): 47 – 73.
- Sallis, E. 2005. *Total quality management in education*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. UK: Kogan Page Limited.
- Saldana, J. 2013. *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Saunders, M. Lewis, P & Thornhill, A. 2007. *Research methods for business students*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- Saunders, M. Lewis, P & Thornhill, A. 2016. *Research methods for business students*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education Limited.
- Sawyer, A. 2004. African universities and the challenge of research capacity development. *JHEA/RESA*, 2(1): 211 – 240.
- Sanyal, B & Martin, M. 2007. Quality assurance and the role of accreditation: An overview. In Higher Education in the World. *Accrediting for quality assurance: What is at Stake?* 3 – 17. New York: Global University Network for Innovation.

- Schensul, JJ. 2012. Methodology, methods, and tools in qualitative research, In SD. Lapan, M.T. Quartaroli & F.J. Reimer (eds.). *Qualitative Research: An introduction to methods and designs*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Schmidt, EK. 2017. Quality assurance policies and practices in Scandinavian higher education systems: Convergence or different paths? *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 39(3): 247 – 265.  
[<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1360080X.2017.1298194>] (Accessed 21 April 2019).
- Schurink, E & Auriacombe, CJ. 2010. Theory development: Enhancing the quality of the case study as research strategy in qualitative research. *Journal of Public Administration*, 45(3): 435 – 455.
- Schuttz, RK. 2012. *Investigating the social world. The process and practice research*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Scotland, J. 2012. Exploring the philosophical underpinnings of research: Relating ontology and epistemology to the methodology and methods of the scientific, interpretive and critical research paradigms. *English Language Teaching*, 5(9): 9 – 16.
- Shah, M. 2012. Ten years of external audit in Australia: evaluating its effectiveness and success. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 37(6): 761 – 772.
- Shah, M. 2013. The Australian higher education quality assurance framework. *Perspectives: Policy and Practice in Higher Education*, 17(3): 96 – 106.
- Shah, M. 2013. The effectiveness of external quality audits. *Quality in Higher Education*, 19(3): 358 – 375. [<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13538322.2013.852300>] (Accessed 12 November 2014).
- Shah, M & Lewis, I. 2010. Private Higher Education in Australia: Growth, Quality and Standards. *Journal of Institutional Research South East Asia*, 8(2): 80 – 95.
- Shah, M, Nair, S & Wilson, M. 2011. Quality assurance in Australian higher education: Historical and future development. *Asian Pacific Education Review*, 12(3): 475 – 483.  
[<https://www.proquest.com/docview/1736327939/fulltextPDF/D13B1A539F00459BPQ/1?accountid=14648>] (Accessed 15 October 2019).
- Shapiro, PS. 2005. Agency Theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 31: 263 – 284.

- Sheehan, MD & Johnson, RB. 2012. Philosophical and methodological beliefs of instructional design faculty and professionals. *Education Technology Research Development*, 60: 131 – 153.
- Shenton, AK. 2004. Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in research projects. *Education for Information* 22: 63 – 75.
- Silverman, D. 2000. *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook*. London: Sage.
- Simona, P, Mariana, CL & Valentina, IR. 2013. Quality assurance vs Quality culture into the higher education services sector. Points of convergence to performance. “Ovidus” *University Annals, Economics Science Series* xiii (1).
- Singh, M & Lange, L. 2007. Exploring the surfaces and depths of quality assurance. *Perspectives in Education*, 25(3): 197 – 206.
- Singh, M. 2010. Quality assurance in higher education: Which past to build on, what futures to contemplate? *Quality in Higher Education*, 16(2): 189 – 194. [<https://doi.org/10.1080/13538322.2010.485735>] (Accessed 23 July 2016).
- Skolnik, ML. 2010. Quality assurance in higher education as a political process. *Higher Education Management and Policy*, 22(1). Paris, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).
- Song, HJ, Shin, MK & Kim, CJ. 2015. Identification and interpretation: A framework of naturalistic epistemology perceived by pre-service science teachers. *Asian Social Science Journal*, 11(18): 215 – 232.
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). 2015. Brussels, Belgium. [[https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG\\_2015.pdf](https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf)] (Accessed 29 October 2019).
- Stensaker, B. 2003. Trance, Transparency and transformation: The impact of external quality monitoring on higher education. *Quality in Higher Education*, 9(2): 151 – 159. [<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13538320308158>] (Accessed 3 June 2019).
- Stensaker, B, Langfeldt, L, Harvey, L, Huisman, J & Westerheijden, D. 2011. An in-depth study on the impact of external quality assurance, *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 36(4): 465 – 478.



- Strauss, A & Corbin, J. 1998. *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedure for developing grounded theory*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Strydom, H. 2013 “An Evaluation of The Purposes of Research in Social Work”, *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk*, 49(2). doi: 10.15270/49-2-58. South Africa: Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk. [<http://dx.doi.org/10.15270/49-2-58>] (Accessed 3 July 2017).
- Strydom, AH & Strydom, JF. 2004. Establishing quality assurance in the South African context. *Quality in Higher Education*, 10(2): 101 – 113.
- Suggest, D. 2011. The implementation challenge: Strategy is only as good as its implementation. *State Services Authority Occasional Paper* (15).
- Sursock, A. 2011. Examining the quality culture<sup>11</sup>: Processes and tools participation, ownership and bureaucracy. Brussels: EUA.
- Swanzy, P & Potts, A. 2017. Quality assurance strategies in higher education: The case of Ghanaian Polytechnics. *Education Research and Perspectives: An International Journal*, 44: 100 – 127.
- Tamrat, W. 2022. The nuts and bolts of quality assurance in Ethiopia higher education: Practices, pitfalls. and prospects. *Journal of Education Policy*, 37(3): 443 – 460. [<https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2020.1852604>] (Accessed 13 January 2022).
- Teferra, D & Altbach, PG. 2004. African higher education: Challenges for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. *Higher Education*, 47(1): 21 – 50.
- Tetteh, EN & Ofori, EL. 2010. An exploratory and comparative assessment of the governance arrangements of universities in Ghana. *The Journal of Business in Society*, 10(3): 234 – 248. [<http://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/pdf/10/1108/14720701011051884>] (Accessed 20 October 2014).
- Thomas, DR. 2006. A general inductive approach for analysis. *American Journal of Evaluation*, 27(2): 237 – 246.
- Thompson-Whiteside, S. 2012. Setting standards in Australian higher education? *Journal of Institutional Research*, 17(1): 27 – 38.

- Thornberg, R & Charmaz, K. 2012. 'Grounded Theory' In SD. Lapan, MT. Quartaroli, & FJ. Riemer (eds.). *Qualitative research: An introduction to methods and designs*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Tsevi, L. 2014. Private higher education quality assurance. *International Higher Education*, 75: 22 – 24.
- Tsevi, L. 2015. Quality Assurance in Private Higher Education: The Case of Ghana. Doctor of Philosophy [PhD] Dissertation, University of Albany, State University of New York. ProQuest LLC.  
[\[https://media.proquest.com/media/pq/classic/doc/3827875431/fmt/ai/rep/NPD F?\\_s=J90K0qjCCCBqkYwlr7wgB0esB8%3D\]](https://media.proquest.com/media/pq/classic/doc/3827875431/fmt/ai/rep/NPD F?_s=J90K0qjCCCBqkYwlr7wgB0esB8%3D) (Accessed 23 May 2016).
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). 2009. World Conference on Higher Education: A New Dynamics of Higher Education and Research for Societal Change and Development. UNESCO, Paris, 5-8 July. [\[https://ukznextendedlearning.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/unesco-2009.pdf\]](https://ukznextendedlearning.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/unesco-2009.pdf) (Accessed 12 March 2016).
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). 2010. Equity and quality assurance: A marriage of two minds. M. Martin (ed.). International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP). Paris: UNESCO.  
[\[http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001871/187184e.pdf\]](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001871/187184e.pdf) (Accessed 12 May 2016).
- Ugwuanyi, BI & Chukwuemeka, EO. 2013. The obstacles to effective policy implementation by the public bureaucracy in developing nations: The case of Nigeria. *Singapore Journal of Economics and Management Studies*, 1(8): 59 – 68.
- Utuka, G. 2011. Demonstrating quality: Evaluation of institutional and programme accreditation in Ghana. *International Journal of Vocational and Technical Education*, 3(8): 135 – 142.
- Utuka, G. 2012. Quality assurance in higher education: Comprehensive analysis of the provisions and practices in Ghana and New Zealand. PhD Thesis, Victoria University of Wellington.  
[\[http://researcharchive.vuw.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10063/2024/thesis.pdf?sequence=2\]](http://researcharchive.vuw.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10063/2024/thesis.pdf?sequence=2) (Accessed 2 June 2014).

- Van Damme, D. 2001. Higher Education in the Age of Globalisation. The Need for a New Recognition, Quality Assurance Accreditation. Introductory paper for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Expert Meeting, Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).
- Van Meter, DS, & Van Horn, CE. 1975. The policy implementation process: A conceptual framework. *Administration and Society*, 6(4): 445 – 488.
- Van Zyl, LE. 2014. *Research methodology for the economic and management sciences*. NJ: Pearson Education International.
- Varghese, NV. 2006. Executive summary In NV. Varghese (ed.). *New trends in higher education: Growth and expansion of private higher education in Africa* UNESCO: International Institute for Education Planning, 18 – 23.  
[\[https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000150255\]](https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000150255) (Accessed 15 February 2017).
- Von Bertalanffy, L. 1972. *General system theory: Foundations, development, applications*. New York: George Braziller.
- Verbik, L & Jokivirta, L 2005. National Regulatory Frameworks for Transnational Higher Education: Models and Trends, Part 1. The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education. Boston, International Higher Education.
- Vergne, JP. 2011. Towards a new measure of organisational legitimacy: Method, validation and illustration. *Organisational Research Methods*, 14(3): 484-502.
- Vettori, O. 2012. Examining quality culture. Part 111: From self-reflection to enhancement. Brussels, Belgium: EUA Publications.
- Vlasceanu, L, Grunberg, G & Parlea, D. 2004. Quality assurance and accreditation: A glossary of basic terms and definitions. Papers on Higher Education. UNESCO. Publications.
- Vroeijenstijn, T. 2014. Assuring quality in tertiary educational institutions in Ghana. *Journal of Higher Education*. National Council for Tertiary Education, 1: 41 – 106.
- Wahlen, S. 2004. Does national quality monitoring make a difference? *Quality in Higher Education*, 10(2): 139 – 147.

- Warwick, DP. 1982. *Bitter pills: Population policies and their implementation in eight developing countries*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Watty, K. 2003. When will academics learn about quality? *Quality Higher Education*, 9(3): 213 – 221.
- Webb, E & Weick, KE.1979. Unobtrusive measures in organisational theory: A reminder. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24(4): 650 – 659.
- Weir, A. 2009. Assuring quality in higher education: The New Zealand experience. *Journal of Institutional Research*, 14(2): 60 – 72.
- Wellman, JV. 1998. Recognition of Accreditation Organisations: A Comparison of Policy and Practice of Voluntary Accreditation and the United States Department of Education. An Advisory White Paper for the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. Washington, DC., Council for Higher Education Accreditation.[[https://www.chea.org/sites/default/files/other-content/RecognitionWellman\\_Jan1998.pdf](https://www.chea.org/sites/default/files/other-content/RecognitionWellman_Jan1998.pdf)] (Accessed 21 June 2016).
- Williams, C. 2007. Research Methods. *Journal of Business and Economic Research*, 5(3): 65 – 72.
- Willig, C. 2008. Grounded theory. In C. Willig (ed.). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology: Adventures in theory and methods*. Maidenhead: Open University Press, McGraw-Hill Education, 34 – 51.
- Willig, C. 2013. *Introducing qualitative research in psychology*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Winchester, CL & Salji, M. 2016. Writing a literature review. *Journal of Clinical Urology*, 9(5): 308 – 312.
- Woodhouse, D. 1999. Quality and Quality Assurance, Quality and Internationalisation in Higher Education. Paris. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). OECD-IMHE.
- Woodhouse, D. 2007. International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQA/AHE) Guidelines of Good Practice. Ontario, The Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board. [<https://www.inqahe.org/guidelines-good-practice>] (Accessed 18 September 2015).

- Woodhouse, D. 2012. *A short history of quality*. Commission for Academic Accreditation Quality Series, 2. United Arab Emirates.  
[<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/11498672/a-short-history-of-quality-david-woodhouse-caa>] (Accessed 15 October 2020)
- Yin, RK. 2011. *Qualitative research from start to finish*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Yingqiang, Z & Yongjian, S. 2016. Quality assurance in higher education: Reflection, criticism, and change. *Chinese Education and Society*, 49: 7 – 19.  
[<https://doi.org/10.1080/10611932.2016.1192382>]. (Accessed 1 October 2021).
- Youngs, H & Piggot-Irvine, E. 2012. The application of a multiphase triangulation approach to mixed methods: The research of an aspiring school principal development programme. *Journal of Mixed Method Research*, 6(3): 184 – 198.
- Zerbinati, VSS & Liu, G. 2012. Which iron cage? Endo-and exoisomorphism in corporate venture capital programmes. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(2): 477 – 505.
- The World Bank. 1994. *Development in Practice. Higher Education: The Lessons of Experience*. Washington, D.C: The World Bank.  
[<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/303461468328502540/Higher-education-the-lessons-of-experience>] (Accessed 12 March 2017).

### **Legislation (Acts/Regulations/White Paper) and government documents**

- Republic of Ghana. 1991. *White paper on the reforms to the tertiary education system*. Government Proposals for the Restructuring and Re-organisation of Tertiary Education and Tertiary Institutions. Presented by the Ministry of Education by the Command of the Provisional National Defence Council, Accra: Ghana. Command No. 001/97. W.P. No. 3/91.
- Republic of Ghana. 1992. Constitution of the Fourth Republic of Ghana, 1996. (Provisional National Defence Council Law (PNDCL) 282).  
[<http://elibrary.js.gov.gh> › ACTS & LAW › CONSTITUT...] (Accessed 3 October 2016).

- Republic of Ghana. 1998. Evaluation of the Policy Objectives of the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System. The National Council for Tertiary Education Technical Report Series No. 2. Accra: Government Printer.
- Republic of Ghana. National Accreditation Board Act. Act 744 of 2007. [http://www.nab.gov.gh/ [http://nab.gov.gh/establishing\\_law](http://nab.gov.gh/establishing_law)]. (Accessed 12 May 2015).
- Republic of Ghana. National Council for Tertiary Education Act. Act 454 of 1993. Accra: Government Printer.
- Republic of Ghana. 2012. National Council for Tertiary Education. Norms for Tertiary Education (Universities) [www.ncte.gov.gh/about-us] (Accessed 12 May 2015).
- Republic of Ghana. 2018. National Council for Tertiary Education. Statistical report on tertiary education for 2016/2017 academic year. [https://ncte.edu.gh/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Statistical-Report-2016- 2017. pdf] (Accessed 17 December 2020).
- Republic of Ghana. 2019. National Accreditation Board. 'Beware, authorisation not accreditation' [<http://www.nab.gov.gh/news1/507-beware-authorization-is-not-accreditation>] (Accessed 13 April 2020).
- Republic of Ghana. 2019. Ministry of Education Tertiary Education Policy. Accra: Government Printer.
- Republic of Ghana. 2020. National Accreditation Board (NAB) Tertiary Education Statistics Digest. Accra: Government Printer. [[http://nab.gov.gh/qa\\_guidelines?name=LIST+OF+ACCREDITED+PRIVATE+UNIVERSITY+COLLEGES+IN+GHANA#](http://nab.gov.gh/qa_guidelines?name=LIST+OF+ACCREDITED+PRIVATE+UNIVERSITY+COLLEGES+IN+GHANA#)] (Accessed 15 January 2021).
- Republic of Ghana. 2020. National Accreditation Board (NAB). Annual Statistics Report. 2018/19. [[http://nab.gov.gh/qa\\_guidelines?name=LIST+OF+ACCREDITED+PRIVATE+UNIVERSITY+COLLEGES+IN+GHANA#](http://nab.gov.gh/qa_guidelines?name=LIST+OF+ACCREDITED+PRIVATE+UNIVERSITY+COLLEGES+IN+GHANA#)] (Accessed 22 January 2021).
- Wellman, JV. 1998. Recognition of Accreditation Organisations: A Comparison of Policy and Practice of Voluntary Accreditation and the United States Department of Education. An Advisory White Paper for the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

## **Management guides/Directives**

- Association of African Universities (AAU). 2015. Accelerating Human Development in Africa Through Higher Education. Annual Report of 2014/2015.
- Australian Government. 2019. Tertiary Education and Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) 2018-2019 Annual Report.  
[<https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/teqsa-annual-report-2018-19>] (Accessed 17 March 2020).
- DataLink Institute. 2014. Student Handbook.
- DataLink University College. 2015. Vision-Mission-Objectives.  
[<http://www.datalink.edu.gh/index.php/pages/2015-09-30-09-03-40/vision-mission-objectives>] (Accessed 11 October 2017).
- Islamic University College Ghana. 2017. about-iucg, [<http://www.iug.edu.gh/about-iucg/iucg-governance/university-council>] (Accessed 18 September 2017).
- Islamic University College Ghana. 2017. about-iucgacademic/undergraduate-programmes, [<http://www.iug.edu.gh/academics/undergraduate-programmes>] (Accessed 18 September 2017).
- Islamic University College Ghana. 2018. 11th Congregation and 19<sup>th</sup> Matriculation Brochure.
- Knutsford University College. 2017. 2017<sup>th</sup> Congregation and 8<sup>th</sup> Matriculation Handbook.
- Methodist University College Ghana. 2011. Methodist University College Catalogue 2011.
- Methodist University College Ghana. 2015. Principal's Address. 3<sup>rd</sup> Matriculation of Students admitted in January.
- Methodist University College Ghana. 2016. Principal's Report and Basic Statistics, 14<sup>th</sup> Congregation, 2015-2016 Programme.
- Methodist University College Ghana. 2017. The 14<sup>th</sup> Congregation Programme.
- National Accreditation Board. 2014. Establishment of National Accreditation Board, [<http://nab.gov.gh/web3/about-us/q-and-a-about-nab>] (Accessed 17 September 2014).
- National Accreditation Board (NAB). 2018. About-us.  
[[http://nab.gov.gh/acts\\_vision\\_and\\_mission](http://nab.gov.gh/acts_vision_and_mission)] (Accessed 30 December 2019).

National Accreditation Board Quality Assurance Department. 2018.  
[[http://nab.gov.gh/quality\\_assurance](http://nab.gov.gh/quality_assurance)] (Accessed 30 December 2019).

Pentecost University College. 2016. Annual Report.

Pentecost University College. 2019. Student Handbook.  
[<https://pentvars.edu.gh/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Student-HandBOOK>]  
(Accessed 27 July 2020).

Republic of Ghana. 2012. National Council for Tertiary Education Annual Report.  
[<http://ncte.edu.gh/category/publications/planning-reports/2016-2017-academic-year-summaries/>] (Accessed 25 March 2017).

Republic of Ghana. 2014. National Council for Tertiary Education Annual Report.  
[<http://ncte.edu.gh/category/publications/planning-reports/2016-2017-academic-year-summaries/>] (Accessed 25 March 2017).

Republic of Ghana. 2013. National Accreditation Board.  
[<http://www.nab.gov.gh/2014-08-21-11-46-34>] (Accessed 17 August 2019).

Republic of Ghana. 2014. National Accreditation Board (NAB). Guidelines for Private Tertiary Institutions offering Degree Programmes.  
[<http://nab.gov.gh/web3/about-us/classificatio-of-accredited-institutions>]  
(Accessed 17 August 2014).

Republic of Ghana. 2011 National Council for Tertiary Education Annual Report.  
[<http://ncte.edu.gh/category/publications/planning-reports/2016-2017-academic-year-summaries/>] (Accessed 25 March 2017).

Republic of Ghana. 2020, National Accreditation Board. 'Beware, authorisation not accreditation' [<http://www.nab.gov.gh/news1/507-beware-authorization-is-not-accreditation>] (Accessed 13 April 2020).

Republic of Ghana. 2019. The National Accreditation Board (NAB) Ghana. Roadmap to Accreditation.

University of South Africa (UNISA). 2016. Policy on research ethics.  
[[https://www.unisa.ac.za/static/corporate\\_web/Content/Colleges/CAES/Research/docs/Unisa\\_Ethics\\_Policy.pdf](https://www.unisa.ac.za/static/corporate_web/Content/Colleges/CAES/Research/docs/Unisa_Ethics_Policy.pdf)] (Accessed 1 December 2019).



University of Cape Coast (UCC). 2015. Vice-Chancellor's Annual Report to the 48<sup>th</sup> Congregation. Documentation and Information Section, University of Cape Coast.

University of Cape Coast (UCC). 2016. about-history  
[<https://www.ucc.edu.gh/main/about/history>] (Accessed 17 November 2017).

University of Cape Coast (UCC). 2017. about-vision/mission  
[[https://www.ucc.edu.gh › main › about › vision-mission-a...](https://www.ucc.edu.gh/main/about/vision-mission-a...)] (Accessed 17 November 2017).

University of Ghana (UG). 2012. Vice Chancellor's Annual Report.

University of Ghana (UG). 2016. Special Report.

University of Ghana (UG). 2017. Handbook and Regulations for students.

University of Ghana (UG). 2017. about-mission/vision.  
[[https://www.ug.edu.gh/about/mission\\_vision](https://www.ug.edu.gh/about/mission_vision)] (Accessed 2 November 2017).

University of Ghana (UG). 2017. about institutional-affiliations.  
[<https://www.ug.edu.gh/about/institutional-affiliations>] (Accessed 2 November 2017).

University of Ghana (UG). 2017. about/enrolment-and-graduation-statistics  
[<https://www.ug.edu.gh/about/enrolment-and-graduation-statistics>] (Accessed 2 November 2017).

University of Ghana (UG). 2017. about-overview. [<http://www.ug.ed.gh/about-overview>]  
(Accessed 2 November 2017).

University of Ghana (UG). 2019. Prospectus.

Wisconsin International University College, Ghana. 2019. 12<sup>th</sup> Congregation Brochure.

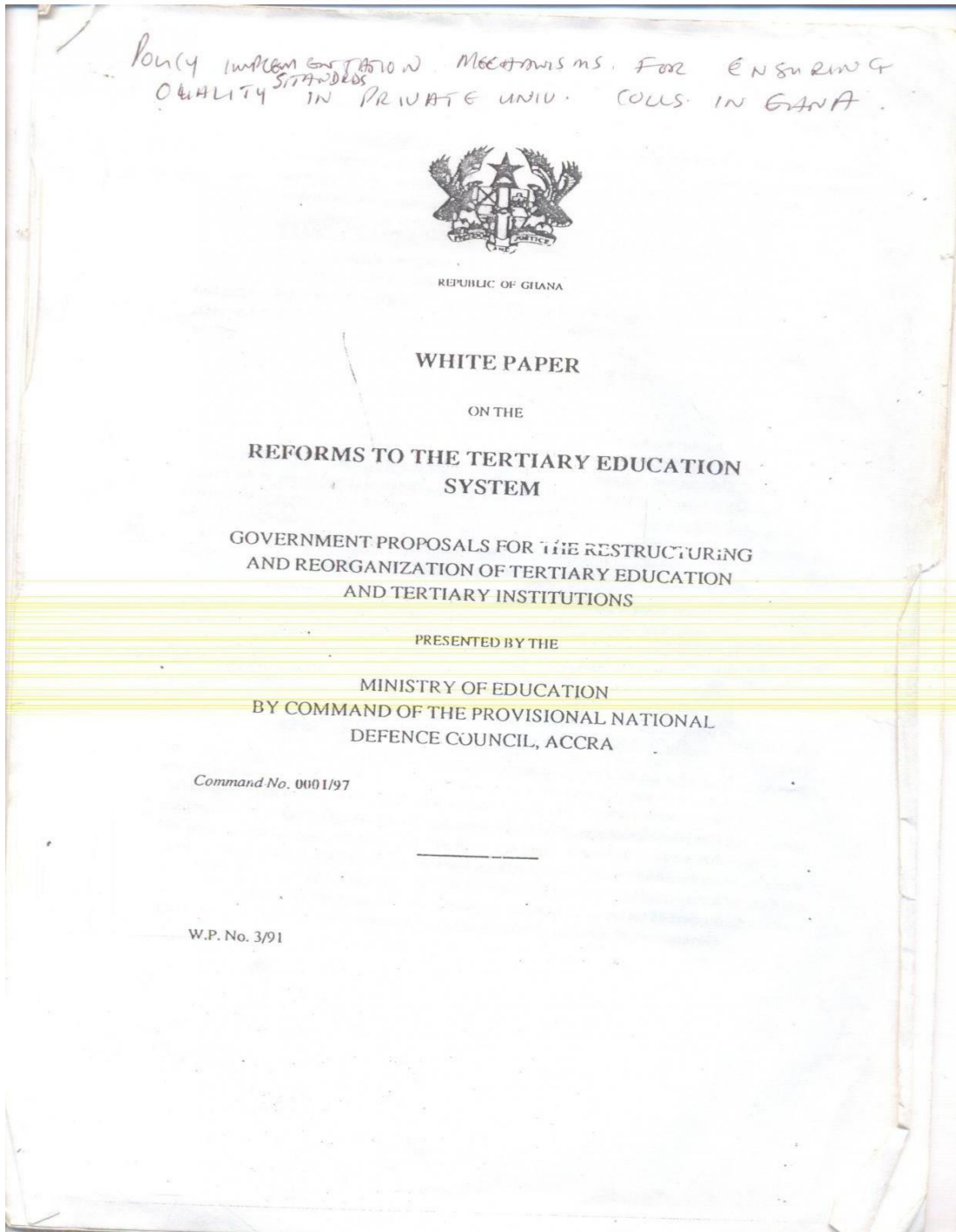
### **Speeches by persons in authority**

Darkwa, OK. 2017. The former Chairman of the Council of Independent Universities, Ghana at the Eleventh Anniversary Celebration of the Council of Independent Universities on 24 June 2017.

Dathey, K. 2018. The former Executive Secretary of the National Accreditation Board. University World News. 16 March 2018. Review of the law that established the National Accreditation Board.

**ANNEXURE 1**

**White Paper on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education System of Ghana of 1991**



## REFORMS TO THE TERTIARY EDUCATION SYSTEM

### Background

During the more than two decades of tertiary education, Ghana's system has had a reputation for providing good quality graduates. During the same period, however, reviews of the impact of the universities on society and the national development process, have urged a re-appraisal of course content and orientation as well as a revision of the very models of institutional organisation in order to avoid growing disjuncture between university education and the national development process.

Furthermore, being totally dependent on Government, the tertiary system has been adversely affected by the national economic crisis leading to falling standards, lack of equipment and essential teaching materials, low morale among staff, and stagnation. During the same period, a growing rigidity of individual sub-systems in the tertiary sub-sector and a lack of flexibility in course structure and admission policies causing overlaps between programmes, and further reducing access has been observed. The overall questions of financing of tertiary education has also been the subject of much discussion as has the affordability of free tertiary education for all who were admitted.

It has been a cardinal principle of Government not to sacrifice equity in the provision of education. This is all the more imperative since there has been a rapid and far reaching deterioration in the provision of the basic foundations of education for the vast majority in the formal system and the demonstrably urgent need for the application of the rudiments of literacy and basic technology to simple economic activity to provide the required impetus to productivity if economic recovery is to be sustained. Thus care is being taken to ensure that a properly rationalised relationship exists between the allocation of resources to the tertiary sub-sector and other sub-sectors of education.

After an exhaustive re-appraisal of the problems facing the higher education sub-sector and its future evolution within the context of national development, the Government launched the tertiary component of the education reform programme. This White Paper sets out Government policy on tertiary education and the objectives that are to be achieved. Between 1988 and 1993 a revamping, recapitalization and expansion of facilities at the tertiary level are to take place. This is however to be accompanied by a firm programme of unit cost reduction and waste elimination. In support of the above and to ensure sustainability a system of cost sharing between the Government, community, parents, students and educational institutions is being set up.

### The case for change

In the wake of Ghana's economic misfortunes during the first two and half decades following independence, the P.N.D.C. has fundamentally reorientated the development strategy of the nation, having introduced major policy reforms and measures to restructure the public administration system aimed at restoring economic, health and social balance as well as achieving sustainable growth and development. The overall, long-term development goals of the Government are to reduce poverty, improve the living standards and quality of life of the people of Ghana by a substantial and sustained increase in national wealth. Education is conceived by the Government as an essential component of development strategy to achieve these national goals, with the particular contribution of tertiary education being the training or retraining of upper, middle-level and high-level manpower to steer and manage economic and social development.

Formerly, the three major sub-sectors of education operated autonomously, being managed by three or more ministries or agencies. Similarly, as lack of co-ordination and integrated planning and development also occurred within the tertiary subsector. Currently, tertiary education is not managed as a unified system, with a central administration, but as a diversified system with different management arrangements. Responsibility for the universities now resides with the Higher Education Division of the Ministry of Education. A number of post-secondary institutions such as the polytechnics and teacher training colleges which qualify as tertiary institutions operate under the Ghana Education Service of the M.O.E. rather than under the Higher Education Division of the same Ministry. Furthermore, there are a large number of other tertiary level institutions which are not even under the aegis of the M.O.E. but are operated by such ministries as Agriculture, Health and Information.

The spread of tertiary institutions over many ministries has resulted in gross inefficiency in the development of the country's human resources. There is lack of uniformity in training and certification and in most cases, under-utilisation of available resources and facilities. This is because in many situations training is restricted to employees of the ministries concerned. Furthermore no long-term strategy and planning for the development of any of these institutions exist, neither is there any co-ordinated monitoring of their performance to ensure that they are effectively meeting the long-term national needs for upper-middle and high-level manpower development.

The running costs of tertiary education in Ghana, especially those of the universities are unacceptably high. In part this is due to the small size of enrolments. Total enrolment of the three universities is less than nine thousand and each of the polytechnics and teacher training institutions has less than 3,000 full and part-time students. Such small institutions can hardly enjoy the known economies of scale which exists in the provision of tertiary education.

Unit costs are also inflated by the failure to make maximum use of the very expensive teaching and research personnel and physical facilities. Generally, teaching takes place for only 26 weeks in the year; and sandwich courses or full time vacation training programmes are not conducted. Furthermore, facility utilisation during term-time is estimated at only 50 percent on average.

There exist three significant sources of increasing demand for trained or retrained manpower: the educational reform programme; the new district administration system and the concomitant decentralization of planning; and the Economic Recovery Programme. In view of these sources of manpower demand, a substantial expansion of the higher education sub-sector will be required to ensure an adequate supply of trained manpower to run the country and economy outside the education sector; provide leadership in the education sector; and to conduct scientific and other research to find solutions to the problems arising from the drive for accelerated development as well as adapting foreign technology for our use. In this respect the urgent need to cater for retraining of working people must be specifically addressed.

In view of the need for technological development in the country, the present preponderance of arts students in the universities and other tertiary institutions is inappropriate. However, many of the factors responsible for low science enrolments at the tertiary level are beyond the control of tertiary institutions and can only be remedied in the long term. Nonetheless, it is still possible for tertiary institutions to help redress the imbalance in the short term, for example, by offering remedial instruction to borderline candidates prior to their being granted full admission to tertiary-level study, or by offering remedial modules as part of the regular programme.

Similar imbalances exist with regard to female tertiary enrolments again for reasons largely beyond the control of the institutions. Appropriate measures should however be designed to eliminate bottlenecks that do exist within the tertiary system and alleviate the disparity in the sex ratio.

The fact that virtually all tertiary education is public in ownership and operational control has meant that all the expenses of tertiary education, including the living costs of students, which are not properly an educational expense, have been met from the public purse. Tertiary Institutions have therefore been subject to the general squeeze of government expenditure, which has accompanied the decline in public revenue.

Public expenditure is not and will in the future not be adequate to finance the vast expansion of the tertiary sub-sector of education, which is needed to underpin Ghana's bid for a take-off into self-sustained and self-reliant economic growth. Further, because only financing from the public purse is involved, in a situation where resources are extremely scarce and are not even adequate to meet current expenses, it has not been possible to set aside the large sums of the money which are needed for capital development and training.

Generally, then administration within the higher education sub-sector is beset with a number of weaknesses. In the universities, there appears to be inadequate co-ordination between units dealing with physical, academic manpower and fiscal matters where planning is concerned. The management of statistics and information is also inadequate among institutions of higher learning with regard to efficient use of resources. These weaknesses compound other problems and weaken administrative systems by generating cynicism and low morale among both academic and non academic staff.

#### Proposals for change

In light of the many problems arising from the diffusion of administrative supervision and control of the universities and other tertiary institutions, Government has decided that all institutions of higher learning should be brought under the general supervision, co-ordination and direction of the Ministry of Education.

In order to ensure smooth operations and management within the tertiary sub-sector, a clear distinction will be drawn between, on the one hand, functions that will be vested in the Ministry of Education, viz, policy formulation and monitoring, and on the other, responsibilities that will be handled by the tertiary institutions themselves, namely, policy implementation.

Education, viz, policy formulation and monitoring, and on the other, responsibilities that will be handled by the tertiary institutions themselves, namely, policy implementation.

Besides the reorganization of the overall administration of tertiary education, the Government proposes, among other things, to create new institutional structures; upgrade existing institutions; expand enrolment; reform and upgrade course structures; improve efficiency; mobilise more resources through changes in the patterns of financing; ensure greater productivity through modification of work loads, time and space utilisation practices; and alter the hitherto privileged pattern of access.

#### The Goals to be Achieved in the Process of Change

The following represent medium term goals for tertiary education (to be achieved progressively over time,) for which qualified objectives, implementation programmes and action plans will be prepared to:

- (1) establish an integrated and co-ordinated tertiary education system comprising all post secondary pre-service training institutions under the general supervision, direction and control of the Ministry of Education;
- (2) ensure that tertiary education is coordinated with all other sub-sectors of the education system and overall national development and education policies and priorities;

- (3) make tertiary education more cost-effective and able to provide quality education for increasing numbers of students through increased efficiency in the utilisation of space, resources and personnel.
- (4) increasing funding for tertiary education by increasing the capacity of teaching institutions for income generation and encouraging greater financial support from the private sector;
- (5) provide for greater access to tertiary education for qualified people and significantly increase the proportion of women students;
- (6) restructure enrolment and output of tertiary institutions to achieve an appropriate balance in the provision of skills in science, technology, social sciences, humanities and the arts in relation to national needs;
- (7) achieve a better balance between the supply of higher level and technician level personnel;
- (8) introduce programmes and courses for advanced technician training in appropriate tertiary institutions;
- (9) introduce programmes and courses geared to the essential training needs of working people for national development;
- (10) ensure an overall balance between the supply of trained personnel from the tertiary institutions and labour market demand; and
- (11) improve the internal administration of all tertiary teaching institutions.

#### **Implementation**

#### *CO-ORDINATION OF THE TERTIARY EDUCATION SYSTEM*

##### *Supervision by the Ministry of Education*

In order to ensure co-ordination of the tertiary education system and the expeditious implementation of government policies, all institutions of higher learning are brought forthwith under the general supervision and direction of the Ministry of Education. The distinction is made, however, between the policy formulation and monitoring functions of the Ministry of Education and responsibility for policy implementation by the tertiary institutions. In this regard the academic autonomy of the tertiary institutions is recognized.

##### *Education Commission*

An education Commission with a broad based membership has been established for purposes, inter alia, of advising the Ministry of Education on all matters related to tertiary education and to assist in the formulation of policies on the totality of the national education system. The Education Commission will be available to tertiary teaching institutions for consultation and advice and may make representations to government through the Ministry of Education on education issues as it sees fit. In

addition to its advisory and consultation functions, the Education Commission is seen as a vehicle whereby a continuous dialogue will be maintained between government, the tertiary institutions and the general public, including the private sector.

#### *Admissions, Accreditation and Professional Examinations*

In furtherance of better management of tertiary education, it is intended that the processes for admissions, accreditation and professional and technical examinations shall be streamlined and improved. There are a number of alternative ways in which this can be achieved. Improvements are required to be made in a short space of time and to this end the Ministry of Education will examine the establishment of the following bodies

- (a) Joint Admission and Matriculation Board;
- (b) Board of Accreditation;
- (c) Board for Professional and Technical Examinations; and
- (d) National Teaching Council;

The establishment of the above or other similar agencies will be subject to approval by the Provisional National Defence Council.

#### *Restructuring the System*

##### *Effectiveness and improved quality of Education*

The purpose of restructuring the system is to improve cost effectiveness, upgrade the quality of teaching and to increase output, particularly in technician level training institutions. It is essential that output from the tertiary institutions is aligned with effective manpower demand in both public and private sectors.

In the interests of cost effectiveness and improved quality of education through the sharing of facilities and better management, the following reorganization has been planned

- (a) the Advanced Teacher Training College, National Academy of Music, the Specialist Training College, the School of Ghana Languages and the College of Special Education, shall constitute a single, integrated complex based at Winneba. This complex is to be granted university status when an effective integration of teaching facilities and services and appropriate quality of output is achieved;
- (b) the Advanced Technical Training College and the Mampong Agricultural Training College are to become University Colleges under the aegis of the University of Science and Technology (U.S.T.). Following the strengthening and alignment of programmes, courses and academic and administrative procedures with sister institutions they will become part of the complex described above;
- (c) the School of Mines at Kumasi will be transferred to Tarkwa and form an integral part of the school already established there. When this operation is



complete the Institute of Mining and Mineral Engineering comprising School of Mines, Tarkwa and the School of Mines at Kumasi will become a University College of U.S.T. located at Tarkwa;

- (d) provision is to be made for institutions, not previously referred to above, such as Teacher Training Colleges, Agricultural Training Colleges in each region to be amalgamated or unified in such a way as to improve cost effectiveness by the sharing of teaching facilities, infrastructure and equipment. This arrangement shall be on a regional basis;
- (e) the School of Bilingual Secretaryship of the Ghana Institute of Languages shall be transferred to the Accra Polytechnic;
- (f) the School of Languages shall be transferred to the Institute of Adult Education as part of its Accra Workers College; and
- (g) the School of Translators in the Ghana Institute of Languages will be transferred to the University of Ghana.

#### *University in the North*

University facilities will be expanded with a view to further increasing access to tertiary education and to introduce new action-oriented degree programmes in areas of development priority including agriculture and industry. For this purpose and in the interest of spatial equity, a university in the North of Ghana will be established.

#### *Women Students*

In the interest of equity and the greater mobilization of human resources the imbalance in tertiary institutions between women and men students must be redressed through deliberate policies in the areas of admission; allocation of residential and other facilities as well as guidance and counselling. However, the present situation will be effectively ameliorated with significant increases in the admission and output of female students to primary and secondary education.

#### *Postgraduate Studies*

In order to ensure an adequate and reliable supply of trained manpower to provide leadership in all economic and social sectors, the universities will be required to allocate at least ten percent of their total enrolments to post graduate studies and programmes in areas of national priority.

#### *Funding and Financing*

The system for the funding and financing of tertiary education will also be restructured. It is intended to develop a system of cost sharing between government, the student population and the private sector. This will be achieved in the following ways —

#### *Government Contribution:*

- (a) provision of recurrent subventions, equipment and capital grants;

- (b) provision of specified grants for students and teaching staff;
- (c) provision of scholarships on the basis of merit and in accordance with government's development priorities including the improved management of the public administration system, decentralization and the planning reforms;
- (d) assistance to students to obtain loans to defray maintenance and other expenses; and
- (e) retention of free tuition.

*Student Population:*

Gradual assumption of the responsibility for the payment of full costs of lodging and incidental expenses.

*Private Sector*

Communities, commerce and industry will be encouraged to provide for students sponsorship, work study arrangements, endowments of tertiary institutions, including the endowment of professorial chairs for priority teaching areas and bequests for teaching infrastructure such as libraries, workshops and laboratories.

Active consideration will be given to ways in which a more and more equitable system of cost sharing may be devised.

## UPGRADING OF TERTIARY EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AND COURSES

*Polytechnics and Middle Level Manpower Training*

In addition to significant increases in the output of institutions offering technician level programmes and courses it is proposed that these programmes should be upgraded. Polytechnics have a distinctive and important role to play in middle level manpower development which is particularly critical for the effective implementation of decentralization policies and planning reforms. Particular attention will be given to the areas of applied science and technology, industrial arts, commerce, secretarial and accounting practice, fine arts, social services and communications practice. Programmes and courses are to be offered at the higher middle level of technician training leading to the award of higher diplomas equivalent to first degree level but not departing from syllabi dedicated to practical technician training. The provision of such programmes will complete the cycle of technical education and provide a capacity for higher level technician training and practical research, which currently does not exist.

This upgrading is similarly applicable to the Institute of Professional Studies, the Ghana Institute of Journalism and other professional training institutions of a technical nature.

In furtherance of the policy of upgrading, appropriate linkages are to be developed between Polytechnics and post-basic, as well as secondary level programmes, on the one hand, and other tertiary level programmes, on the other.

#### *Reform of Academic Structures and Programmes*

All tertiary education institutions are required to:

- (a) periodically review all programmes and courses with a view to upgrading and the ensurance of continued relevance to national needs;
- (b) introduce new programmes and courses in relation to national development priorities, as required;
- (c) rationalize existing programmes and courses within the institution as a whole as required; and
- (d) make provision for practical training by attachment of students to industry or by their working within appropriate income generating activities of the tertiary institution as required.

It is recognized that additional programmes can be constructed from existing courses in most tertiary institutions with minimal increases in staff requirements. There is the need for a modular system of course offerings and a computerized time table of courses and lecture room allocations.

### INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION OF TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

It is intended that the Head of State or his nominated representative shall be Chancellor of each university in Ghana.

#### *University Councils*

The composition of University Councils has been revised to provide for wider representation in consonance with government's policy of democratization.

The composition of all University Councils will be:-

- (a) four government nominees (one to be Chairperson and at least one a woman);
- (b) one representative of the Education Commission;
- (c) two representatives of convocation (one each for professorial and non-professional status);
- (d) one representative of Teachers Education Workers Union;
- (e) one representative of the Committee for the Defence of the Revolution;
- (f) one representative of the Alumni Association of the University;
- (g) Vice-Chancellor; and
- (h) two representatives of the Student's Representative Council (one representative each for Undergraduates and Post-graduates). The Pro-Vice Chancellor

and a representative of the Ministry of Education shall be in attendance. The Registrar shall act as Secretary.

- (i) one representative of the Conference of Heads of Assisted Secondary Schools - CHASS
- (j) one representative of University Teachers' Association of Ghana - UTAG

In pursuance of better management, greater cost-effectiveness upgrading and expansion of programmes and courses, each tertiary institution is required to establish a corporate planning unit comprising senior members of proven ability in innovative and forward thinking. The unit should be the point of co-ordination for all institutional and academic planning for the tertiary institution as a whole and should provide an active link with the over all educational planning process. To be effective, the unit will require a full time staff. The Ministry of Education shall provide the guidelines for the establishment of the unit. Each Institution in consultation with the Ministry of Education will adopt these for implementation.

#### *Business Management Advisers*

In order to increase the capacity for income generation each university or university college will appoint a Business Management Adviser, who will maintain an overview of the business activities of income-generating project and work offices. The purpose of this is to facilitate advice on opportunities for consultancies, investments and other income-generating work, business management, cost effectiveness and productivity. The person appointed should have a firm and practical grasp of business and management and should have an effective secretariat with a strong bias towards accounting.

#### *Administrative, Financial and Staffing, Norms*

Tertiary institutions are required to conform to administrative, financial and staffing norms which will be laid down from time to time by the Ministry of Education. These norms will represent quantified objectives and are to assist planning units in their function of ensuring efficiency of operations at a cost government can afford.

#### *Semester Calendar and Modular Course Structure*

Tertiary institutions will adopt the two semester calendar and a modular course structure. This will facilitate the integration of the whole tertiary system, provide for the needs of working people and offer opportunities for increasing programmes on offer at a minimum cost. Time tables and lecture room allocations will be computerized.

#### *Non Residential Students*

It is government policy that expansion of the intake to all tertiary education institutions as required, should be facilitated by their progressively becoming mainly non-residential. Increased intake necessitates the completion of on-going projects, rehabilitation of the current stock of buildings as required and the provision of equip-

ment. Provision will be made for the foregoing on the basis of national priorities for the provision of tertiary education, and costs calculated.

#### *Municipal Services*

The high level of staffing of municipal services represents a drain upon funds which could better be spent for academic work. Expenditure on municipal services is to be reduced to a ratio of total expenditure to be determined from time to time by the Ministry of Education.

#### *Financial Orders and Procedures.*

In order to rationalize accounting and finance, monitoring procedures, the provision of annual estimates and procedures for fund allocations, the Ministry of Education will provide for financial management to which all tertiary institutions will adhere.

## COSTS AND SAVINGS

Estimates of savings, transitional costs and the proportion of the national budget required to sustain the administration and maintenance of tertiary education, long-term, will be calculated at the stage of preparation of implementation strategies and action plans. This stage cannot be fully completed without a national education policy covering tertiary, school and non-formal education which will be prepared as soon as possible.

Medium and long-term unit costs will be reduced by greater cost effectiveness in the more efficient utilization of space, resources and personnel and an increase in the capacity for income generation by all tertiary institutions. Provision of endowments and sponsorship by the private sector and the transfer of the cost of boarding to the student population will also provide for substantial savings. Effort will be made to gain additional savings during the medium term. These savings must be set against the upgrading of institutions particularly with reference to technical level training, substantial increases in intake to the latter, the progressive growth of universities and the provision of higher medium-level technician level training. The net increase in total recurrent and capital costs for the tertiary sub-sector shall be met by increased revenue derived from improvements to the economy and savings referred to above.

#### **Preparation of Implementation Programmes and Action Plans**

The Ministry of Education shall:

- (a) within the current national development goal setting exercise, prepare a draft comprehensive, perspective plan for all education, for which the N.D.P.C. shall provide manpower estimates. As part of the national perspective plan, manpower estimates will be available by July 1991;

- (b) expeditiously provide a comprehensive and time phased outline implementation programme covering the totality of reforms for the tertiary education system for the advice and direction of tertiary institutions;
- (c) prepare quantified objectives, implementation programmes and action plans for the phased development of the University in the North;
- (d) prepare quantified objectives, implementation programmes and action plans for amalgamation or rationalization of institutions such as Teacher Training Colleges, Agricultural Training Colleges and Nursing Training Colleges, on a regional basis;
- (e) expand the capacity of its sectoral planning unit to enable it to undertake the foregoing tasks as a continuous activity, including monitoring and evaluation;
- (f) provide facilities and training to facilitate the installation of computerized time tabling and classroom allocations;
- (g) examine the establishment of Boards for admission and matriculation, accreditation and professional and technical examinations and a National Teachers Council;
- (h) inform universities of the appointment of a Chancellor to each and the membership of the reconstituted University Councils;
- (i) work out criteria for the provision of admissions and scholarships on the basis of government's development priorities in consultation with the National Development Planning Committee;
- (j) establish and disseminate administrative, financial and staffing norms for the advice and direction of tertiary institutions;
- (k) carry out consultations with the private sector to encourage the provision of student sponsorship, endowments and bequests; and
- (l) provide equitable conditions of service for staff of tertiary institutions of comparable status; calculate the cost implications of the foregoing for consideration by the P.N.D.C.

The Universities at Legon, Kumasi and Cape Coast shall:

- (a) prepare quantified objectives, implementation programmes and action plans covering their particular responsibilities regarding the integration, amalgamation and transfer of courses and of tertiary institutions together with academic, financial and administrative procedures; and
- (b) arrange for appointment of a suitably qualified and experienced Business Management Adviser.

All Tertiary Education Institutions shall:

- (a) prepare quantified objectives, implementation programmes and action plans covering their responsibilities in relation to the reforms. Institutions which

are to be integrated, amalgamated or transferred shall do so in consultation with their parent institution;

- (b) establish planning units to enable them to undertake the foregoing tasks and to provide a forward planning facility for academic and institutional development, monitoring and evaluation, as a continuous process;
  - (c) adopt a two semester calendar and a modular course structure with provision of a computerized system of course timetabling and lecture room allocation;
  - (d) co-ordinate intake in relation to projected demand for manpower as determined by government, from time to time;
  - (e) conform to administrative, financial and staffing norms laid down by the Ministry of Education from time to time;
  - (f) plan for the progressive increase in non-residential students including provision for on-campus study, rest rooms and recreational facilities;
  - (g) reduce recurrent costs on municipal services to a ratio of total expenditure to be laid down by the Ministry of Education, from time to time;
  - (h) conform to procedures for accounting, finance and funding to be laid down by the Ministry of Education;
  - (i) prepare implementation programmes and action plans for the rehabilitation of buildings, provision of new buildings and equipment, completion of ongoing projects for the advice of the Ministry of Education; and
  - (j) adopt measures to progressively improve the ratio of female to male students.
- Polytechnics and Analogous Institutions shall:
- (a) significantly increase intake to programmes and courses for middle management technician level training; and
  - (b) provide programmes and courses for higher technician level training.

Commencement of the implementation of these policies and proposals shall proceed forthwith. By command of the Provisional National Defence Council.

1990 - 08 - 06

**ANNEXURE 2**

**LETTER OF CERTIFICATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING OF ENTIRE THESIS BY  
SALIFU N. ALHASSAN (PhD)**

**SCHOLARLY EDITING AND PROOFREADING SERVICES**

Tel: +233244201511  
Email: scholarlyeditingservices@gmail.com  
Website: <https://scholaredit.com>



P. O. Box GP 13169  
Accra  
Ghana

Our Ref: .....

Your Ref: .....

Date: 7 May, 2022

To whom it may concern

**LANGUAGE EDITING OF THESIS**

The PhD thesis titled "Private University Colleges and Quality Assurance Mechanisms in Ghana" by Victoria Adzisa Tsedzui, University of South Africa (UNISA), student Number 50883844, has been edited by the Scholarly Editing and Proofreading Services, Ghana.

The exercise was completed on May 7, 2022.

  
.....  
Salifu N. Alhassan (PhD)  
Editor



Jackie Viljoen  
Language Editor and Translator  
16 Bergzicht Gardens  
Fijnbos Close  
STRAND 7140

Accredited member of the South African Translators' Institute No 1000017

Member of the Professional Editors' Group (PEG)

☎ 082 783 0263

Postal address: 16 Bergzicht Gardens, Fijnbos Close, STRAND 7140 South Africa

---

#### DECLARATION

I hereby certify that Chapters 3 and 6 of the dissertation for the PhD degree in Public Administration by **VICTORIA ADZOA TSEDZAH** were properly language edited but without viewing the final version.

Title of dissertation:

**PRIVATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGES AND QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS IN GHANA**

The editor did not write or rewrite any part of the chapters on behalf of the client, including passages that may have been plagiarised. The academic content is the sole responsibility of the client as author of the work. The editor could not and did not test definitively for plagiarism, nor is there any explicit or implicit guarantee that the content that was edited contained no material used without consent. The editor accepts no responsibility for non-acceptance of the chapters by the examiners.



JACKIE VILJOEN  
Strand  
South Africa  
02 August 2022

## **ANNEXURE 3**

### **THE NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD, GHANA ROADMAP TO ACCREDITATION**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

A person/organisation applying to establish a tertiary institution shall be required to follow the procedures set out in this document to facilitate the process of accreditation and the operation of the institution.

The applicant institution shall first seek and obtain affiliation to operate under the supervision of a recognized mentoring institution which shall award its certificates before accreditation is granted.

#### **Part I: REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION**

##### **(A) AUTHORIZATION**

1. A letter of application to the National Accreditation Board (NAB).
2. Response from NAB, including definition of the various categories of tertiary educational institutions, within two weeks of receipt of application.
3. Choice of name of institution based on 2 above shall be in consultation with NAB.
4. Registration of the institution at the Registrar General's Department;
5. Purchase, completion and submission of Authorization Questionnaire (National Accreditation Board/Information A.1).
6. Payment of an appropriate fee.
7. Institutional visit by the relevant NAB Committee where facilities are in place at the institution, within 30 days after receipt of payment.
8. Decision by NAB.
9. Communication of decision within 30 days of Institutional Visit.
10. Application for review of decision, if any, within 30 days of communication.

11. Communication of Board's decision on the review application within 14 days after the next immediate Accreditation Committee meeting acting on behalf of the Board.
12. Where necessary, appeal within 30 days to the Minister responsible for Education as specified in the LI.

## **(B) INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION**

1. Proof of affiliation to be provided before further processing for accreditation.
2. Purchase, completion and submission of Institutional Accreditation Questionnaire (NAB/INFO A.2)
3. Payment of an appropriate fee.
4. Institutional visit by the relevant NAB Committee within 30 days after receipt of an application the Board considers complete.
5. Visit by NAB Experts on physical facilities, library and finance within 30 days after the Committee's visit.
6. Communication of NAB's decision within 90 days of the Committee's visit and proof of affiliation (**See NAB Guidelines for Affiliation**).
7. Application for review if any, within 30 days of communication.
8. Communication of Board decision on review application within 14 days after the next immediate Board meeting.
9. Where necessary, appeal within 30 days to the Minister responsible for Education as specified in the LI.

## **(C) PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION**

1. Purchase, completion and submission of relevant NAB Questionnaire on Programme Accreditation (NAB/INFO A.3).
2. Payment of an appropriate fee.
3. Composition of Programme Accreditation Panel by the Board and assessment of programme(s) offered/to be offered within 60 days on receipt of an application the Board considers complete including payment of an application fee.
4. Submission of Panel Assessment Reports to NAB within 14 days of Panel visit.

5. Submission of Panel report(s) to the institution for comments within 14 days upon receipt of report(s).
6. Response to Panel report(s) by the institution to NAB.
7. Reaction of Panel chairperson to the comments on the report by the institution within 30 days on receipt of institution's comments.
8. Recommendation of Accreditation Committee to the Board at its next immediate meeting upon receipt of Panel chairperson's reaction to institution's comments.
9. Decision by Board on the recommendation of the Accreditation Committee at the next immediate Board meeting.
10. Communication of decision within 14 days after Board decision.
11. Application for review, if any, within 30 days of communication of Board decision.
12. Review and communication of decision within 90 days on receipt of application for review.
13. Where necessary, appeal within 30 days to the Minister responsible for Education as specified in the LI.

## **Part II: REQUIREMENTS FOR INSTITUTIONAL REGISTRATION**

An agent of a recognized foreign tertiary educational institution that facilitates access to tertiary education qualifications from the parent institution shall be Registered (and not accredited) when the scope and mode of its operations have been satisfactorily ascertained by the NAB. An institution shall qualify for registration if the source of instruction for the programme of study is outside the shores of Ghana or outside the confines of the premises of the institution.

1. Purchase, completion and submission of NAB Institutional Registration Questionnaire (NAB/INFO A.4).
2. Payment of an appropriate fee.
3. Institutional visit by the relevant NAB Committee within 30 days after receipt of an application the Board considers complete for Registration.
4. Recommendation by the Committee to the Accreditation Committee within 30 days of visit.
5. Decision by the Accreditation Committee at its next immediate meeting.

6. Communication of decision within 14 days after decision.
7. Application for review if any, within 30 days of communication.
8. Review and communication of review decision within 30 days on receipt of application for review.
9. Where necessary, appeal within 30 days to the Minister responsible for Education as specified in the LI.

### **Part III: REQUIREMENTS FOR INSTITUTIONAL RE-ACCREDITATION**

1. Purchase, completion and submission of Institutional Re-Accreditation Questionnaire (NAB/INFO A.5) 6-months to the expiry of the last institutional accreditation certificate.
2. Provide additional support documents as may be required by NAB including a separate write-up on developments since the last institutional accreditation visit.
3. Payment of an appropriate fee.
4. Institutional visit by the relevant NAB committee within 30 days after the receipt of an application the Board considers complete.
5. Visit by NAB Experts on physical facilities, library and finance within 30 days after the committee's visit.
6. Communication of NAB's decision within 90 days of the committee's visit.
7. Application for review if any, within 30 days of communication.
8. Communication of Board decision on review application within 14 days after the next immediate Board meeting.
9. Where necessary, appeal within 30 days to the Minister responsible for Education as specified in the LI.

### **Part IV: REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRAMME RE-ACCREDITATION**

1. Purchase, completion and submission of NAB Questionnaire for Programme Accreditation (NAB/ INFO/A.6) six (6) months prior to the expiry of the last programme accreditation certificate issued to the programme by NAB.
2. Payment of an appropriate fee.

3. Composition of Programme Accreditation Panel to assess the programme within 60 days on receipt of complete application and full payment of the appropriate fee.
4. Submission of Panel Assessment Report(s) to NAB within 14 days of Panel visit.
5. Submission of Panel report(s) to the institution for comments within 14 days on receipt of report(s).
6. Comments on Panel report(s) from the institution to NAB.
7. Reaction of Panel chairperson to the comments on the report by the institution within 30 days on receipt of institution's comments.
8. Recommendation of the Accreditation Committee to the Board at its next immediate meeting upon receipt of the Panel chairperson's reaction to the institution's comments.
9. Decision by Board on the recommendation of the Accreditation Committee at the next immediate Board meeting.
10. Communication of decision within 14 days of Board decision.
11. Application for review, if any, within 30 days of communication of Board decision.
12. Review and communication of review decision within 90 days on receipt of application for review.
13. Where necessary, appeal within 30 days to Minister responsible for Education as specified in the LI.

**Part V:       PROCEDURE FOR GRANTING PRESIDENTIAL CHARTER**

1. The applicant institution shall have operated under the supervision of a mentoring institution for a minimum period of ten (10) years.
2. The accredited institution shall submit an application to NAB with a copy to the mentoring institution using the appropriate NAB questionnaire.
3. The applicant institution shall request the mentoring institution to submit a comprehensive appraisal directly to NAB.
4. A joint Committee of the Board, made up of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) and the Accreditation Committee (AC), shall undertake a preliminary evaluation of the application based on the following:

- a. Special reports on Governance and Management;
  - b. Comprehensive Audit Report;
  - c. Annual Reports; and
  - d. A comprehensive appraisal report from the mentoring institution.
5. Following the review of the above reports, the Joint Committee of the Board shall assess the application within 180 days and make recommendations to the Board based on the following:
  - a. The length of period of operation under mentorship not less than ten (10) years;
  - b. The governance structure of the institution;
  - c. The quality of teaching, research, the academic staff and work of the applicant;
  - d. The financial, material and teaching facilities and resources at the disposal of the institution; and
  - e. Other factors the Board may consider appropriate.
6. NAB shall make appropriate recommendations to the President of the Republic of Ghana through the Minister responsible for Education for the grant of a Charter or otherwise immediately after the Board meeting.
7. Decision by the President.
8. Presentation (Charter Certificate – when granted).”

**ANNEXURE 4**

**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR  
TERTIARY EDUCATION**

**NORMS FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION  
(UNIVERSITIES)**



© NCTE, 2012

National Council for Tertiary Education  
P. O. Box MB 28 Accra, Ghana

Tel: 0302-918793-5  
Email: [info@ncte.edu.gh](mailto:info@ncte.edu.gh)  
Website: [www.ncte.edu.gh](http://www.ncte.edu.gh)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	502
Enrolments.....	502
Student: Academic Staff Ratio .....	503
Personnel .....	503
Financial Norms .....	505
Student Accommodation .....	508

## **INTRODUCTION**

In 1987, the Government of Ghana constituted a University Rationalisation Committee (URC), as part of its education reforms, to undertake a comprehensive review of postsecondary education and to make recommendations for reform. Following the submission of the URC Report, the Government issued a White Paper in 1991 outlining its objectives on the Reforms to the Tertiary Education system. Thus, in line with the recommendations of the URC, the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) developed norms to be used as policy benchmarks for monitoring the performance of tertiary education institutions as well as instruments for determining the resource requirements of tertiary education institutions.

The norms are also meant to assist higher education institutions in planning and ensuring efficiency of their operations.

The Council after careful observation of the current developments in the tertiary education sector has reviewed the norms to bring them in line with realities in the tertiary education sector.

The norms cover the following areas:

- Enrolments
- Student: Academic Staff Ratio (STR)
- Personnel
- Financial Norms
- Student Accommodation

## **ENROLMENTS**

### (a) New Entrants

- Male: Female Participation = 50:50
- Science: Social Sciences and Humanities = 60:40

### (b) Total Enrolment

- Target for Gross Enrolment Ratio for the Sector = 25%.
- Male: Female Participation = 50:50
- Science: Social Sciences and Humanities = 60:40
- Postgraduate enrolment = 25% of total enrolment.
- Quota of international students = 10%
- Quota of fee-paying students = 5%
- Quota for students from disadvantaged secondary schools = 5%

### (c) Growth Rates in Enrolments for Established Public

Universities

- Humanities/Business = 4%
- Science and Technology = 6%
- Postgraduates = 25%

**STUDENT: ACADEMIC STAFF RATIO (STR)**

<i>SUBJECT CATEGORIES</i>	<i>STR</i>
Social Sciences and Humanities	27:1
Business Administration	27:1
Science	18:1
Applied Science, Technology and Health Science	18:1
Engineering	18:1
Pharmacy	15:1
Medicine	12:1

**1. PERSONNEL**

(a) Academic Staff Pyramid

<i>Category</i>	<i>Norm (%)</i>
Professor	10
Associate Professor	15
Senior Lecturer	35
Lecturer	40

(b) Recommended Number of Staff for Administrative Services in the Teaching Departments

<i>Position/Grade</i>	<i>Recommended Number of Staff</i>

Administrative Assistant	1
*Accounting Assistant	1
Clerks	1
*Driver	1
Messenger/Cleaner	2

\*Driver and Accounting Assistant should be provided for where necessary.

- (c) Recommended Number of Staff for Administrative Services in the Teaching Departments for Colleges

<i>Position/Grade</i>	<i>Recommended Number of Staff</i>
Provost	1
Deputy Registrar	1
Assistant Registrar	1
Deputy Finance Officer	1
Accountant	1
Assistant Librarian	1
Administrative Assistant	2
Accounting Assistant	2
Junior Technical	4
Junior Non-Technical	2

- (d) Recommended Number of Staff for Administrative Services in the Teaching Departments for Faculties/Institutes/Schools

<i>Position/Grade</i>	<i>Recommended Number of Staff</i>
-----------------------	------------------------------------

Dean	1
Senior Assistant Registrar/ Assistant Registrar	1
Accountant	1
Assistant Librarian	1
Administrative Assistant	1
Accounting Assistant	1
Junior Technical	2
Junior Non-Technical	2

(e) Number of Senior Technical/Junior Technical Staff Recommended for Teaching Departments

<i>Category</i>	<i>Science Based Department</i>	<i>Humanities/ Business Based Department</i>
Senior Technical	1:5	1:10
Junior Technical	2:5	2:5

- *Senior Technical Staff:* These are technicians from the grades of Technician to Chief Administrative Assistants
- *Junior Technical Staff:* These comprise typists, drivers, workshop assistants or assistant technicians etc. required by the departments
- *Junior Non-Technical Staff:* These include labourers, messengers and cleaners

### **FINANCIAL NORMS**

NCTE has established the standard cost per student using the performance indicators (norms) and prevailing approved rates of costs for the purpose of determining:

- The realistic level of funding required by the institution for their work;
- The level of revenue that an institution must raise in order to maintain and improve quality. The level of revenue must include Government grant, fees charged to students and internally generated income;
- The adequacy or otherwise of financial, material and physical facilities. This will give an indication of the quality of service provided by the institutions; and
- Efficiency in the use of financial resources.

(a) Determining Cost per Student

The following variables are considered in the determination of cost per student:

- The approved rate of remuneration of all categories of staff;
- The standard cost of goods and services required in the training of a student;

**Cost of Goods & Services**

<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Percentage (%) of Staff Cost (Universities)</i>
Pure Science	35
Humanities	20
Applied Science & Technology	40
Engineering	50
Medicine	40
Pharmacy	40

- Student Teacher Ratios (STRs);
- The staff mix per department;
- Approved percentage of total cost that should be used for the replacement and repairs of facilities; and
- The percentage of total cost of a department attributable to direct academic work and indirect overheads (The approved replacement and repairs of facilities cost of 10% should be maintained);

- In respect of postgraduate courses weighting placed on them in relation to undergraduates determines the cost per postgraduate student. Currently, the rate is 1.5.

(a) Norms for Resource Allocation

The current norms identify seven (7) cost activities or cost centres for which allocation from the revenue basket should be made. The rationale behind this is to monitor the allocation of resources to ensure that critical needs or areas in the operations of tertiary institutions are given adequate attention.

These seven cost centres are:

I. Academic Expenditure

- i. These are salaries and allowances of both the academic staff and the non-teaching staff in the academic departments in the various faculties.
- ii. Goods and services used for instructional purposes: These are periodicals, printing materials including live biological specimens, teaching aids, office furniture and equipment, consumables, working materials, stores, local transport and travelling, cleaning materials, student projects, and field trips, photocopy and computer time related to individual faculty activities.

II. Library Expenditure

- i. Salaries and allowances of professional library staff, supporting administrative, technical, secretarial, clerical and manual staff
- ii. Goods and services: Books, special collections and journals, periodical newspapers, binding materials, photocopying materials, printing and stationery, local travel, office furniture and equipment

III. General Education Expenditure

Staff development including study leave, sabbaticals, cost of examinations, expenditures related to academic ceremonies, activities of the academic board and its committees, university-wide computer activities in data processing and programming, university official publications, relationship with other institutions (link arrangement), travel costs and allowances of external examiners.

IV. Central Administration Expenditure

- i. Salaries and allowances of all staff not located in the academic departments/units of direct teaching, teaching support and “Organised Research”.



- ii. Goods and Services: Goods and services for the Offices of the Vice-Chancellor and Registrar, Finance Officer, Departments/ Offices, printing and stationery, cleaning materials, office furniture and equipment, local transport and travel, books and periodicals, etc.
- V. Municipal Services Expenditure Cost operations, maintenance, repair and minor modification of plants, buildings and grounds, electricity and water.
- VI. Staff and Students Facilities and Expenditure
- i. Salaries and allowances of all staff in the Halls of Residence and Security
  - ii. Goods and Services: Cleaning materials, toiletries for Halls of Residence, replacement of linen and mattresses, books, periodicals, printing and stationery for the Hall Administration, furniture and fittings, repair of staff houses, Health Services and staff welfare
- VII. Miscellaneous Expenditure: Sundry charges, legal and bank charges, packages, insurance, telephone and postages

<i>Cost Centre</i>	<i>Norm (%)</i>
1. Direct Academic Cost (Departmental Cost)	50
2. General Educational Expenditure	10
3. Library	5
4. Central Administration	8
5. Staff/Student Facilities	10
6. Municipal Services	15
7. Miscellaneous	2
Total	100

### **STUDENT ACCOMMODATION**

Sleeping space in halls of residence should not be allocated to more than four (4) students in a room, and the measurement of a room should be at least 3600 mm × 5400 mm.



**ANNEXURE 5**  
**STANDARD FOR PHYSICAL FACILITIES**  
**PART 1 – PRELIMINARY**

These Standards may be cited as the Physical Facilities Standards.

**Introduction:**

In order to achieve the desired objectives of teaching/learning and ultimately adding to the Body of Knowledge, it is imperative that teaching/learning activities take place in purpose-designed or purposely-modified structures for education. These standards capture both best practice and the minimum standards needed for tertiary institutions. The standards should be read in conjunction with the National Building Regulations 1996 LI1630, the Ghana National Fire Service Act 537 of 1997 – Fire Regulations LI 1724 and the Disability Act 715 of 2006

**Definitions**

1. In these Standards, unless the context otherwise requires –

“tertiary institution” includes, University, Polytechnic and all other institutions regulated by the NAB

“a recognised water laboratory” means a laboratory registered with or belonging to the Ministry of Health or Ministry of Works and Housing, or any other public institution, person or organisation duly authorised by the Government to undertake water analysis;

“adequate” means sufficient in relation to any set guidelines or requirements;

“adequate water supply” means water in such quantities as would permit maintenance of a reasonable level of personal and environmental hygiene;

“Auditorium” means a large room where students/public may sit and listen to a lecture or watch a performance or event with clear sight lines.

“Building Code” means Building codes issued by Ministries of Works and Housing and Local Government;

“Classroom” means a room accommodating several students (between 30 to 100) for the purposes of instruction;

“Departmental areas” means offices occupied by teaching, administrative and secretarial staff of a teaching department of a tertiary institution;

“Full time student equivalent” (FTSE) means the number of hours of teaching required by one student to fulfil the requirements of the course in an academic year;

“Lecture Room” means a room for teaching/learning accommodating more than 100 seated students with a facility for writing/taking down notes.

“Master plan” means a programme of a tertiary institution showing the order of development of physical and academic aspects for a given period of time;

“Physical facilities” means any structure fixed or movable or of whatever kind and any part thereof used or intended to be used for teaching, lecturing or instructing or as a dwelling house or for recreational and all ancillary facilities thereto including drainage works, services installations and road works;

“Reader station” means space occupied by a student in a library;

“Relevant local authority” means a city council, metropolitan assembly, municipal council or such local authority under whose jurisdiction a tertiary institution is situated;

“Research” means an investigative study of any physical, biological or social phenomenon through a systematic approach;

“Research area” means a facility where research is carried out;

“Residential tertiary institution” means a tertiary institution in which ten or more students are boarded.

“Safe water supply” means a supply of water free from any contamination;

“Seminar room” refers to a room for interacting/teaching small groups of up to 30 students

“Sewage” means spent water emanating from toilets;

“Student” means a person enrolled to pursue a degree, diploma or certificate course;

“Site works” means a place where construction activities are carried out;

“Surface water” means any ground water, subsoil water, storm water or rain water which discharges on the ground surface;

“Utility services” means any service that is connected to any building or living space through pipe or wire network for helping to convey fluids, energy and messages, in and out of any building or living space;

“Waste water” means any water after it has been fouled by a variety of uses and which constitutes a combination of liquid and water carried wastes, emanating from residences, toilets, kitchens, laundries, laboratories and workshops.

2. These Standards shall apply to-
  - a) all buildings or part of buildings purposely designed and constructed for tertiary institution use;
  - b) any alterations and extensions of tertiary institution buildings or parts of the buildings;
  - c) all buildings undergoing material change of use into tertiary institution buildings; and
  - d) all related utility services installations, and site works for a tertiary institution.
  - e) All institutions regulated by the National Accreditation board
3. These Standards are prescribed in respect of the following factors –
  - a) Ministry of Health –
    - (i) application of by-laws, the National Building Regulations LI 1630 and the Ministry of Health Act;
    - (ii) materials used in the buildings;
    - (iii) building lighting, ventilation and sound proofing;
    - (iv) building hygiene and sanitation;
    - (v) water supply and waste disposal.
  - b) Public safety
    - (i) structural soundness and stability;
    - (ii) fire safety – fire resistance, fire protection and safety precaution, fire fighting and fire escape.
  - c) Physical facilities –
    - (i) building facilities including classrooms and lecture theatres, staff offices, research areas, seminar rooms, laboratories, workshops studios, clinics, libraries, students’ residences, staff residences, communal and social

services areas such as worship, kitchen, dining, common rooms, recreational facilities.

- (ii) utility and other services including water supply, power, telephone, external drainage and waste water services, access roads, parking and appropriate landscaping;
  - (iii) land including requirements and location ownership and tenure.
  - (iv) Environmental Impact Assessment (including Traffic Impact Assessment).
- d) Spatial requirements
- (i) the minimum size and floor areas for various buildings;
  - (ii) the minimum unit numbers of various types of buildings;
  - (iii) the locational relationship of various facilities.

## **PART II – MINIMUM STANDARDS**

4. Every tertiary institution shall provide the following physical facilities to accommodate its activities –
  - (a) Classrooms, lecture rooms, seminar rooms
  - (b) auditorium or lecture theatre
  - (c) Academic and non-academic offices;
  - (d) library /information resource centre (including E Learning Facilities)/access to sources of information;
  - (e) the information access facility may include a knowledge exchange/socialization area
  - (f) student areas for knowledge exchange/socialization with recreation facilities;
  - (g) office for Students' Representative Council
  - (h) outdoor recreation facilities in form of games or sports facilities;
  - (i) proper drainage system, proper sanitation and water supply;
  - (j) Infirmary/sick bay.
  - (k) Adequate Parking space for staff and students
5. Every residential tertiary institution, shall, in addition to the facilities to be provided under paragraph (4) provide the following physical facilities which meet the minimum national safety standards–
  - (a) Provision should be made for cafeteria services, kitchen and dining facilities for student accommodation, including adequate laundry and storage facilities.
  - (b) Adequate parking space for students.
  - (c) students' common room
6. Every building used or intended to be used as part of the tertiary institution physical facility shall comply with the requirements of the National Building Regulations LI 1631 of 1996 and provisions of the Ministry of Health Act, in particular –
  - (a) The area for the buildings must be approved by the appropriate authorities
  - (b) the minimum requirements for health and safety of the public to which the premises of every tertiary institution shall conform, shall be in line with those prescribed by the National Building Regulations LI 1630 of 1996 or any amendments thereof, the Ministry of Health Act and the requirements prescribed in the Schedule;
  - (c) any building designed and constructed for use as tertiary institution building or any building altered so as to be used as a tertiary institution building or any

building which has undergone material change of use into tertiary institution building must be approved by the relevant local authority;

- (d) all buildings and other physical facilities used by a tertiary institution should show evidence of approval by the appropriate authorities and in addition show evidence of the ff–
- (i) drawings of the proposed building(s);
  - (ii) building permit for development of new structures;
  - (iii) structural integrity test confirming compliance to minimum required structural strength;
  - (iv) alterations or extensions if any for existing buildings; or
  - (v) proposed change of use if any; and
  - (vi) a certificate of occupation for the newly constructed or altered buildings.

### **PART III – PUBLIC SAFETY**

7. Every tertiary institution shall operate in physical facilities that are safe for the public and in particular –
- (a) all buildings and other physical facilities used by a tertiary institution to accommodate tertiary institution activities shall be functional and serving the purpose for which it is designated;
  - (b) the buildings shall be kept in a good state of repair and maintenance and shall be free from structural failures, (for example deflection, spalling, cracking or dilapidation of building material fabric and components).
  - (c) The ambience must be congenial to academic activities i.e adjoining properties and activities must be complementary to academic activities and must not be the source of noise or other activities that will disturb and make it difficult for teaching and learning to take place.
8. Every tertiary institution which erects or causes to be erected a building or any other structure intended to accommodate tertiary institution activities shall employ, for the purposes of architectural design, a registered architect and for the purposes of structural design, thereof, a registered structural engineer, and shall retain the services of such architect or structural engineer for the purpose of supervising the erection of such building and in particular –



- (a) on completion of construction of such building the architect or structural engineer shall provide a certificate that the work or works have been carried out in accordance with the design and that it complies in all respects with the provisions of the National Building Regulations and the appropriate code of practice;
  - (b) all drawings in respect of the structural framework of steel buildings, reinforced concrete buildings or structural timber buildings and calculations connected therewith, shall be signed by the registered structural engineer responsible for their design;
9. The standards specified in paragraph 8 shall apply to all categories of buildings designated for tertiary education purposes/institutions –
- 10.
- 1) All buildings and other physical facilities used by a tertiary institution to accommodate tertiary institution activities shall provide adequate fire safety equipment certified by the GNFS.
  - 2) All buildings and other physical facilities shall conform to the requirements of the National Building Regulations, the Ministry of Health Act and other standard practices with regard to fire resistance, means of fire escape, access from fire escape and firefighting equipment.
  - 3) All means of fire escape shall be properly designated with appropriate signs and symbols, maintained and kept free from any obstruction.
  - 4) All institutions shall carry out at least once a year, an induction of all staff and students on what to do in case of a fire or earthquake. This shall be carried out and certified by the GNFS.
  - 5) The guidelines specified in the National Building Regulations LI 1630 of 1996 shall apply.
11. Fire detection and prevention
- a. In every building used by a tertiary institution as a classroom, lecture theatre, seminar room, auditorium, laboratory, library, dormitory or residential hall, there shall be provided adequate firefighting equipment such as hose reels, portable fire extinguishers, fire buckets, dry risers, wet risers, fire hydrants, sprinklers, and water storage tanks.

- b. Where a tertiary institution is located outside the area covered by Government or local authority fire station, the institution concerned shall seek the assistance/advice of the GNFS.
- c. Every tertiary institution shall be provided with a dedicated water supply system for firefighting; and the water supply needs for emergency firefighting purposes shall be drawn through the main water supply distribution system via a series of underground hydrants located at regular intervals throughout the site of the tertiary institution.

**PART IV – ACADEMIC BUILDING FACILITIES**

The classroom is said to be the heart of the academic environment. The classroom design and layout are key in assisting the teacher/lecturer/instructor to attain the objectives of imparting knowledge or the techniques of acquiring knowledge to the student. The guiding principles are to:

- Allow everyone to be seen and heard
- Take advantage of new technology for teaching and learning
- Support the dynamic presentation of information
- Design for mentoring and apprenticeship
- Design for comfort within the class room

12. Every tertiary institution shall provide classrooms which are adequate in number and shall be of adequate size; and in establishing the adequacy of classrooms, the minimum floor area per student specified in Table 1 shall be provided.

Table 1: Minimum Classroom Floor Area per Student

<u>No. of Students</u>	<u>Space in square metres with desk and chair</u>	<u>Space in square metres with chairs only</u>
0-29	2.25	1.9
30-39	1.9	1.4
40-59	1.7	1.3
60-69	1.7	1.2
100-149	1.7	1.0
150-299	1.5	0.9
300- 500	1.4	0.9
Above 500	1.35	0.9

13. The tertiary institution shall have enough classrooms for every course, provided that there shall be a minimum of three classrooms to each four year course of study.

14. Doors must open out to the corridor but must be located so that they do not block corridor traffic. A recessed entrance may suffice.
15. Doors should have a narrow vision panel that can allow visibility into the room without the need to disrupt the class.
16. A minimum of two doors is required for a class room. There must be at least one door to the rear of the classroom so as to minimize interruptions by students entering the classroom late or leaving early. Another door must be near the front to facilitate accessibility for the physically challenged.
17. Classroom Proportions: All seats must be located within a 90-degree viewing angle from the center of the projection screen. That is, within 45-degree horizontal angles from the perpendicular to the center of screens. Classrooms should be narrow enough to permit all seats to be within the 90-degree viewing angle from the front wall, but no narrower. Rooms that are too narrow and deep make it hard for students and instructors to interact.
18. The distance from the front wall to the first row of seats should be 1-2 times the height of the projection screen. Typical screen height in a flat-floor classroom is 2.5 m, so the first row of seats must be minimum 2.5m from the front wall; 2.6m to 2.9m is preferred.
19. Where a multimedia lectern is used it must be placed to one side of the front teaching wall, leaving students an unobstructed view of the writing surface and projection screen. Teaching and learning equipment should be installed either in the lectern or in a rack near the lectern.
20. Every room used as a classroom shall be of sound construction and shall be provided with windows the effective area of which shall not be less than 20 per cent of the floor area of the room and 75 per cent of the window area shall be openable to the external air.
21. No room used as classroom shall have a height of less than 2.60 metres from floor to ceiling, or where there is no ceiling, to the wall plate.
22. All walls must extend to the floor above or to the roof construction, and not stop at ceiling.
23. Walls between classrooms will have a Sound Transmission Class (STC) rating of at least 50. Walls separating classrooms from common spaces or restrooms must have an STC of at least 53. Walls separating classrooms from mechanical spaces or other areas with high noise levels must have at least an STC of 60. The floors slab and walls must be isolated in order to prevent the transmission of vibrations.

24. Ambient noise level should not exceed 35 decibels when measured with the A-scale of a sound level meter.
25. Voice amplification is required for rooms seating 100 and/or which is larger than 170 square metres.
26. Every room used as a classroom shall be provided with adequate, well illuminated writing surface (of between 300 to 500 lux) at each seat and a place to set books, papers and or other equipment.
27. All classrooms may normally have no less than two separately controlled lighting areas – seating area and instructional area. The ability to dim both areas shall be provided as standard. When the classroom is dimmed for projection, some lighting will be required at the presentation area. Special lighting on the equipment rack or technology controls may be needed.
28. In auditoria seating over 100, a separate light for a sign language interpreter will need to be placed adjacent to the front of the room.
29. Every tertiary institution shall be provided with adequate room to accommodate academic and non-academic staff offices and seminar rooms and in determining the adequacy of departmental areas, the following factors shall be taken into consideration: -
- (a) the total usable space provided for use as departmental areas shall be not less than those specified in the following Table 2-

Table 2- Minimum Departments' Useable Areas per Student

<u>Course</u>	<u>*Usable space in square metres per Student</u>
Arts and Humanities based courses .. ..	3.0
Biological and Physical Sciences based courses ..	9.0
Human and Veterinary Medicine and related courses	15.0
Engineering, Surveying and related courses..	10.0

Architecture, Planning, Building Technology, Design and related courses	..	10.0
Social Science based courses	..	3.0

\*The usable space per student is calculated by dividing the total area of the department by the number of students in the department.

The minimum sitting area per student shall not be less than 0.83m<sup>2</sup>

(b) the departmental offices shall comprise of the following minimum number of offices

- (i) one departmental office
- (ii) one head of department office
- (iii) one secretary's office
- (iv) one general office for a staff secretaries
- (v) one office for every member of academic staff

(c) academic and non-academic member of staff offices shall have the following minimum floor areas –

- (i) head of department and professor; 18 square metres,
- (ii) academic staff: 9square metres
- (iii) non-academic staff: 6 square metres

30.A tertiary institution shall provide adequate central administration offices to accommodate the head administrator and support staff of the tertiary institution and each constituent college; and in assessing the adequacy of administration offices the following factors shall be taken into account –

- (a) the total office space provided for use by administrative staff shall not be less than 0.55 square metre of usable office space for every full-time student equivalent enrolled, provided the minimum total office space provided for the tertiary institution's central administrative is 50 square metres;
- (b) no room used as an administrative office shall be less than six (6) square metres in area;
- (c) the administrative offices shall be conveniently accessible with visible and adequate directional signs.

#### **The Library (Access to sources of information)**

Two major types of libraries: electronic and the physical. Standards will be defined for each by the Library Expert.

If the classroom is said to be the heart of higher education, then the library is its soul. Libraries like classrooms, must also reflect the dynamic nature of tertiary education. Though students use Kindles, I Pads, Tablets and other media that allow them instant access to information, the library still holds an attraction because it is:

- a convenient spot between classes
- where to collaborate on group work
- close to many resources
- a safe, non-distracting place to study
- the place for computing software, copying, printing, scanning
- a great atmosphere

Contemporary libraries must:

- Provide students access to electronic libraries
- Support social learning
- Support the librarian's evolving role
- Optimize the performance of informal spaces
- Plan for adjacencies
- Provide for individual comfort, concentration, and security
- Provide spaces that improve awareness of, and access to the library's resources,

31. Every tertiary institution shall provide a well-planned, secure and sufficient space to house the library's collections, provide adequate workspace for staff and conducive study space in numbers and variety to meet the needs of users; especially the emerging specialty space such as tutoring rooms, writing centres, group study rooms.

- (a) The library shall conform to the requirements of the National Building Regulations;
- (b) The library shall be flexible in layout, allocated floor space and technical infrastructure to allow reasonable adaptation to rapid change.
- (c) The library shall be designed to offer 24 hours access to specific areas such as computer laboratory, open reserve collection, photocopying and study facilities
- (d) The library shall produce a written disaster plan for fire and flood control.
- (e) The library shall have sufficient doorways to encourage rapid exit in case of fire or other emergencies.
- (f) The building shall have adequate natural lighting and ventilation.

- (g) The library shall be friendly and comfortable to users who are physically challenged;
- (h) The library shall provide space for the use of patron's personal equipment
- (i) The library shall provide internet facilities for the use of students;
- (j) The library shall provide scanning and printing facilities for students;
- (k) From a functional point of view the minimum ceiling heights of various user space in the library shall conform to the specifications contained in the following Table 3-

**Table 3 – Minimum Ceiling Heights**

Functional Area	Floor Area	Minimum Ceiling Heights
Reading area	Less than 10 square metres	2.3 metres
Reading Area	Greater than 10 square metres	2.7 metres
Stack Area		2.3 metres

- (l) Minimum space requirements of a tertiary library

**Minimum space requirements of a tertiary library**

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	SPACE IN SQUARE METRES PER PERSON
Reader work space/carrels		3.0
1 Computer work stations in smaller Institutions		4.0
2 Computer work stations in larger Institutions		3.25
Space for seat in an instruction room		3.0
Space for seat in conference room		3.0
Space for seat in lecture in lecture hall		1.0
Library staff work area	To contain technical services	12.50 in smaller institution or 10.00 in larger institution
Multimedia carrels		4.0

Photocopier	Provision for ventilation, storage counter, space for book trolley and bins	6.0
Shelving space	For every 100 volumes to be housed in regular shelving. Therefore space for stock of 2000 is divided by 100 to arrive at 20 square metres.	1.0

### Minimum dimensions of reading tables

Description	Dimension
Table to sit one person	90cm x 60cm
Table to sit two persons	90cm x 120cm
Table to sit four persons	180cm x 120cm
Table to sit six persons	250cm x 120cm

### Auditorium/Large Lecture Theatre/Assembly Hall

Lecture halls are places of social and personal interaction, where learning takes place and where creative thinking is encouraged. A successful layout for an auditorium must achieve the best possible combination of architectural elements and teaching facilities so that both teaching and learning is maximized. The facility shall be designed such that audio visual aids can be used to enhance teaching.

32. A tertiary institution may provide a building facility for public lectures or general assembly which shall be in form of an auditorium, a large lecture theatre or an assembly hall conforming to the following specifications-

Table 4 – Minimum Space per seat in Auditorium, Lecture Theatre and Assembly Hall

<u>No. of Seats</u>	<u>Assignable space per seat in square metres</u>
60-100 .. .. .	0.9
101-150 .. .. .	0.8
151-300 .. .. .	0.7
301-500 .. .. .	0.6
Above 500	0.5



- (a) the assembly hall or auditorium shall conform to the requirements of the National Building Regulations LI 1630
- (b) The hall shall be designed so as to provide clear view of the stage.
- (c) In an existing building with a flat floor, flat screens/monitors shall be so placed to afford the audience a clear view.
- (d) As far as possible columns shall be placed so as not to obstruct sight lines
- (e) Where tablets have been provided at least 10% of them shall be left-handed,
- (f) Doors shall open outwards so as to permit quick evacuation from the auditorium,
- (g) A sufficient number of doors shall be provided for a maximum clearance time of 5 minutes for quick and efficient change over between lectures with at least one door at or near rear of lecture theatre for the entry of late comers;
- (h) The front row of seats shall be at the same level as the adjacent entry doors for disabled persons' access
- (i) Wheel chair spaces are to be located towards the middle of the front row rather than the side
- (j) Allow at least 1 wheel chair space for every 100 seats

## **PART V – TEACHING LABORATORIES, HOSPITALS, WORKSHOPS AND STUDIOS**

33. A tertiary institution with the intention to run or running practical-related programmes shall, in addition to providing classrooms and lecture theatres provide adequate laboratory/workshop facilities.
34. In assessing the adequacy of laboratory facilities, the following shall be taken into account-
- (a) the provision of adequate laboratory facilities in close proximity to classroom or other teaching facilities;
  - (b) the provision of room for instructional workstations and each workstation per student conforming, where possible to the specifications contained in the following Table 5-

Table 5- Laboratory Assignable Space per student

<u>Laboratory Specialty</u>	<u>Assignable space per Student in square metres</u>
Agriculture Science Laboratory	2.80-3.70
Building Science Laboratory	3.70-4.60
Biological Health and Veterinary Science Laboratory	2.70-4.60
Business Management Laboratory	1.90-2.80
Communication Laboratory	2.40-3.70
Education Laboratory	2.40-4.60
Engineering Laboratory (excluding mechanical)	3.70-6.50
Engineering Laboratory (Mechanical)	6.50-9.30
Fine Art, Architecture Design Studio	2.80-4.60
Home Economics Laboratory	2.80-4.60
Computing laboratory	2.80-3.70

- (c) the provision of storage and preparatory rooms and a laboratory office;
- (d) proper location in relation to other facilities such that the laboratory is easily accessible;
- (e) the provision of the following service facilities-
  - i. adequate windows which open to outside air in order to provide proper ventilation,
  - ii. fume cupboards and fume hoods in the preparation and storage rooms,
  - iii. standard table top electrical service outlets for the instructor's table and for each pair of students' workstations,
  - iv. adequate lighting free of flare from exterior sunlight,
  - v. surface treatment of floors, walls and ceiling to reduce noise,
  - vi. a sink with hot and cold water service installation for the instructor's table and for each pair of students workstation.
  - vii. gas for the instructor's table and for each pair of students' workstation,
- (f) the provision of the built-in furniture and equipment –
  - i. at least one instructor's table measuring 2000 x 300 x 760 mm high,
  - ii. at least one student table of minimum size 1500 x 560 x 760mm, high for each pair of students workstation with adequate bench or stools or chairs,

- iii. chalkboard or blackboard, wall mounted, a white board/projection screen
  - iv. at least one corrosion resistant sink and eye-wash facility.
35. A tertiary institution offering medical courses shall have the necessary basic pre-clinical sciences together with the laboratory requirements specified in paragraph 24 to 25 plus any specialized provisions for anatomy and pathology; and the tertiary institution shall also have or secure access to a teaching hospital easily accessible to students and equipped with the usual outpatient and inpatient facilities covering all specializations in medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology, paediatrics, community health, as well as support facilities such as X-ray, radiotherapy, anaesthetics and pathology, accessible to medical students;

Provided that where the hospital is not the property of the relevant tertiary institution, adequate legal and administration arrangements shall be made in respect of such access.

37. The hospital shall have the necessary resources (human, physical, technical and financial) to meet professional and academic requirements.
38. The design of the teaching hospital shall conform to the requirements of the Ministry of Health in providing relevant health services; and in addition, the hospital buildings shall conform to the requirements of the National Building Regulations.
39. A tertiary institution offering Fine Arts shall have a studio for drawing from life, general drawing, basic design painting, ceramic and film room; and it shall also have graphic photography print making studio, life painting, composition/still life studios, textile design and weaving, and sculpture studios and the tertiary institution shall also have –
- a) a ceramic glazing and testing laboratory, glass design and technology, silver smiting and jewellery and museology laboratory;
  - b) workshop space for modelling casting and woodcarving;
  - c) space for sculpture, garden, outdoor wood burning kilns and such other facilities as may be specified by the Commission;
  - d) studio spaces and drafting room with adequate lighting;
  - e) photogrammetric laboratory;

- f) remote sensing laboratory;
  - g) computing laboratory;
  - h) hydrographic laboratory workshop;
  - i) cartographic workshop;
  - j) photographic laboratory or workshop.
40. A tertiary institution offering Urban and Regional Planning shall have adequate studio space for every year of study and the tertiary institution shall also have a model making workshop.
41. A tertiary institution offering Building or Building Technology shall have studio space for every year of study and the tertiary institution shall also have: -
- (a) for every year of study, workshops for carpentry and joinery, mechanical works and welding, masonry and concrete works and electrical wiring and building services;
  - (b) laboratory space for each course of study for materials sciences, structures and services;
  - (c) spaces for demonstration units in various building construction techniques.
42. The facilities specified in paragraphs 29 and 31 may be shared between years of study and between courses or they may be assigned on the basis of faculties.
43. A tertiary institution offering Architecture shall have design studios for each class with adequate individual workshop space at the rate of 1.5 square metres per work station and the tertiary institution shall also have-
- (a) a modeling workshop with equipment enough for at least two class years;
  - (b) an architectural science laboratory with sufficient equipment;
  - (c) a photographic laboratory;
  - (d) one material testing workshop;
  - (e) one wood working workshop;

(f) space within the overall premises of the department for external activities such as those required for workshops fabrication and for erection of building components and for testing their exposure to weather activities.

44. A tertiary institution offering Home Economics shall have laboratories consisting of the following user areas: -

- a. food analysis to the extent of 5 square metres per student workstation.
- b. food storage and preparation to the extent of 1.5 square metres per student workstation;
- c. sewing and crafts to the extent of 4 square metres per student workstation;
- d. sewing and craft storage and dressing to the extent of one square metre per student workstation;
- e. child development with its own storage room, office, open play, cleaning up and observation rooms.

45. Every food laboratory shall be provided with installations adequate for instructions in food preparation, cooking and services using a variety of cooking energy sources; electricity, gas and wood. Home care laboratories shall also be equipped with laundry and ironing facilities;

46. A tertiary institution offering Agriculture shall, in addition to the laboratory specifications specified in paragraph 34; have at least ten hectares of land set aside as a tertiary institution farm over and above that stipulated for an ordinary tertiary institution.

## **PART VI – CATERING AND ACCOMMODATION**

47. A residential tertiary institution shall provide adequate, eating facilities that meet the standards of the regulatory bodies as defined by the Ghana Tourist Board and the Ministry of Health and its agencies.

48. Where students have to do their own cooking, facilities for self-catering must be provided

49. In assessing the adequacy of these facilities the following factors may serve as a guide

- a. the provision of the following functional areas: -
  - i. food preparation of not less than 0.50 square metre per student
  - ii. dish washing and serving areas, of not less than 0.50 square metre per student;
  - iii. kitchen storage of not less than 0.50 square metre per student;
  - iv. kitchen staff and services area of not less than 0.50 square metre per student
  - v. a dining hall of not less than 1.25 square metre of floor area per student;
  - vi. left over food and refuse transfer area which should not allow contamination of fresh food, cooked or uncooked food,
- b. the provision of adequate facilities for cleaning utensils, and of suitable and sufficient washing and sanitary facilities in form of lavatories, shower rooms, changing and cloakrooms for kitchen staff;

50. Every tertiary institution shall provide common rooms with adequate recreational facilities for staff and students.

51. Every residential tertiary institution shall provide adequately lighted and ventilated student accommodation facilities and in particular-

- a. no open rooms used as student accommodation shall accommodate more than four students;
- b. the total floor area of the rooms shall not be less than the following per student
  - i. single rooms, 8.00 square metres;
  - ii. double student room or cubicle, 7.00 square metres;
  - iii. three or four student room 6.00 square metres;
- c. every living room in the hall shall be located so as to get maximum benefit of outside light and air;

- d. every room or hall which does not have air conditioning shall be provided with vents in the walls in such a manner as to provide permanent ventilation;
- e. sufficient doorways shall be provided in every student hall to ensure rapid exit to ease of fire or other emergencies;
- f. adequate wardrobe space shall be provided for hanging clothes. The minimum clear depth is 600mm and width should not be less than 600mm per student;
- g. at least three number 13 amps socket shall be provided per student in each room;

## **PART VII – UTILITY SERVICES**

52. Every tertiary institution shall have adequate water supply installed in accordance with applicable requirements of the National Building Regulations, the Ghana Water Company and the National Standards Board.

53. In assessing the adequacy of the water supply for the tertiary institution the following shall also be taken into account:

- a. the extent to which the quality of the water provided conforms to the requirements of the National Drinking Water Standards set out in the latest edition of the Water Supply Design Manual issued by the Ghana Water Company;
- b. the availability of water storage facility in each building for domestic purposes taken from the main supply to the buildings or a water storage tank in each building with sufficient capacity to meet not less than seventy-two hours demand for the building's users or a minimum water demand of 150 litres per day per person;
- c. the availability of a central water storage facility from the main water supply to the tertiary institution or of a storage facility with sufficient capacity to meet not less than three days demand from the tertiary institution community or a minimum water demand of 150 litres per day per person;

- d. the availability of extra additional storage facility under sub-paragraph(b) in every tertiary institution where animals are kept;
  - e. the provision and maintenance of an adequate water storage facility for firefighting purposes at the rate of 10 litres per second continuous flow for two hours.
54. Every tertiary institution shall provide appropriate and adequate waste water and sewage management system as certified by the appropriate regulatory body.
55. In assessing the adequacy of the waste water system, the following shall be taken into account-
- a. the availability of a satisfactory drainage system for water;
  - b. the availability of an adequate means of sewage and waste water disposal by means either or the relevant local authority main sewer or of septic tanks, conservancy tanks of stabilization ponds or cesspool constructed to specifications contained in the National Building Regulations;
  - c. in the absence of adequate means of sewage and waste disposal the extent to which the quality of effluent of natural water bodies conform to the National Standards for Effluent Discharge of Natural Streams;
  - d. evidence of approval by the relevant local authority or Ministry of Works or the Ministry of Health for all disposal systems other than those connected to a local authority's sewage system.
56. Every tertiary institution shall provide, keep clean and maintain adequate and suitable sanitary conveniences, which conform in all respects to the requirements of the Building Code, for the students and all persons working in the tertiary institution and where students or other persons of both sexes are accommodated or are expected to be accommodated the conveniences shall afford proper separate facilities for persons of each sex.
57. In a non-residential tertiary institution, the following well-lit and ventilated closets, urinals, wash hand basins and drinking water fountains shall be provided:



FEMALE STUDENTS			MALE STUDENTS			
No of Girls	No of WCs	No of Wash hand basins	No of Boys	No of WCs	No of Urinals	No of Wash hand basins
1-10	2	1	1-10	1	1	1
11-20	2	2	11-20	1	2	2
21-25	2	2	21-25	2	2	2
26-50	3	2	26-50	2	2	2
51-75	4	3	51-75	3	3	3
76-100	5	3	76-100	3	3	3
101-125	6	3	101-125	4	3	3
126-150	6	4	126-150	4	3	4
151-175	7	4	151-175	4	4	4
176-200	7	4	176-200	4	4	4
201-225	8	5	201-225	5	4	5
226-250	8	5	226-250	5	4	5

FEMALE STUDENTS			MALE STUDENTS			
No of Girls	No of WCs	No of Wash hand basins	No of Boys	No of WCs	No of Urinals	No of Wash hand basins
251-275	9	5	251-275	5	5	5
276-300	9	6	276-300	5	5	6
301-325	10	6	301-325	6	5	6
326-350	10	6	326-350	6	5	6
351-375	11	7	351-375	6	6	7
376-400	11	7	376-400	6	6	7
401-425	12	7	401-425	7	6	7
426-450	12	8	426-450	7	6	8
451-475	12	8	451-475	7	7	8
476-500	13	8	476-500	7	7	8
501-525	14	9	501-525	8	7	9
526-550	14	9	526-550	8	7	9

FEMALE STUDENTS			MALE STUDENTS			
No of Girls	No of WCs	No of Wash hand basins	No of Boys	No of WCs	No of Urinals	No of Wash hand basins
551-575	15	9	551-575	8	8	9
576-600	15	10	576-600	8	8	10
Above 600	Add 1 WC for every 35 students	Add 1 Wash hand basin for every 60 students	Above 600	Add 1 WC for every 75 students	Add 1 Urinal for every 75 students	Add 1 Wash hand basin for every 60 students

58. In a hostel for a tertiary institution, the following well lighted and ventilated closets, urinals, wash hand basins, and bathrooms shall be provided-

- a. one water closet for every 8 students;
- b. one wash hand basin per every 8 students;
- c. one bath or shower per every 8 students;

**PART VIII – LAND REQUIREMENTS**

59. Every tertiary institution shall produce evidence of legal occupancy of at least 5 years with a provision for renewal.

60. Where the institution owns the land it shall show evidence of owning land on freehold terms, or for a leasehold term of not less than 30 years; and the land shall, in addition –

- a. be free from all encumbrances other than those of a statutory nature;

- b. be vested in a trusteeship of the tertiary institution, which shall own such land as non-profit making body and in perpetual succession.
61. All tertiary institution buildings and facilities thereon shall conform to the minimum space and compound requirements stipulated in these Standards, the National Building Regulations, the Ministry of Health Act or any other legislation relating to the safeguarding of public safety and educational standards.
62. Land at the main campus and at all the other non-contiguous parcels shall be used for tertiary institution purposes, and for such other uses as are necessary for supporting tertiary institution activities; and the use shall, in addition, conform to master plan (s) prepared in accordance with these Standards and all applicable laws and designed in such a way that all building facilities and proposed developments are functionally related and compatible.
63. The master plan(s) shall, in addition to any other details required by law, include and indicate-
- a. the location of the existing and proposed tertiary institution buildings;
  - b. the layout of all roads and pathways serving all buildings which shall be such that the health and safety of the occupants and users of the tertiary institution is not endangered;
  - c. the layout of all waste and soil drain pipes, sewers, culverts, septic tanks, storm water drains, and run-off catchment drains so laid that the health and safety of all occupants and users of the tertiary institution is not endangered;
  - d. the location of all areas to be used by all other activities related to the tertiary institution such as sports fields, tertiary institution farms, forests, arboreta and sewage treatment;
  - e. the layout of all utility service lines which shall be laid in a safe manner.
64. The minimum total area set aside for open space shall conform to the regulations in force. The space allocated for parking of cars expected to park on the campus shall conform to the recommendations of the Traffic Impact Assessment Report as accepted and approved by the Department of Urban Roads and the Environmental Protection Agency. This area shall not incorporate land set aside for sporting facilities.
65. A tertiary institution shall have access to at least one standard recreational facility.”

## **ANNEXURE 6**

### **STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS' LIBRARIES IN GHANA**

#### INTRODUCTION

This is not a comprehensive review of trends and concepts affecting all aspects of academic library provision and service. It is a selection of some issues that might affect the nature and content of the document “Standards and Guidelines for Tertiary Institutions’ Libraries in Ghana” and the instruments for assessing them for purposes of accreditation.

The academic library is a combination of people, collections, services, physical space and more recently information and communication technologies (ICT).

The purpose of the academic library is to help transform information into knowledge. It supports intellectual access through finding aids, direct mediation by information professionals and teaching of bibliographic instruction or information literacy that demonstrates the value of the scholarly process. Academic libraries have the responsibility of appraisal and preservation of important collections.

The operating environment of academic libraries is dynamic and is changing fast. The learning environment is built around the notion of connectivity to other learning environments, to a global conversation and to the world’s knowledge resources.

The execution of the functions of the library is undergoing dramatic changes as a result of the application of information and communication technologies in information work. These technologies are changing some of the underlying assumptions of information work.

The World Wide Web continue to be an important communication medium that supports learning. Networking capacity, within and between organisations as well as individuals is growing, and is able to handle all types of media, including data, text, voice and images. Printed materials continue to be important, but digital delivery of full text is increasing and there are a variety of electronic products targeted at students. There is a tremendous growth in student numbers in tertiary institutions with the resultant shift from teaching to learning. The library staff now have increasing role in helping students and research staff develop their information handling skills.

Information work has increasingly become electronic based, networked and collaborative. Resource sharing and networking are now the dominant concepts. The concept of library service limited to the resources of a single library has changed by extending service beyond the walls of a library.

## **Strategic Planning**

Academic institutions recognize that their libraries represent significant information resources that should be nurtured to create vibrant environment for learning, teaching and research. The management of these resources now constitutes a comparative difference among academic institutions worldwide.

Tertiary institutions have therefore developed clear strategies to meet the information needs of their students and staff. This approach is necessary in view of the tremendous changes that have occurred in operating environment of libraries, scholarship and transmission of knowledge in the last four decades.

As a tool strategic planning allows the library to align its services with that of its parent organization and the needs of stakeholders. Strategic planning assists the library in demonstrating how it contributes to the success of the parent institution.

## **Challenges**

The library service in an academic institution faces a number of challenges. Some of these challenges are institution based, others are fall outs from the broader accountability movements in higher education of which the library is a part.

The nature and activities of an academic library may be determined by institutional factors such as:

- Innovative teaching methods;
- Use of education/instruction technology;
- Distance education programmes;
- Collaboration and integration of learning outfits within institutions;
- Administrative changes in institutions, (e. g. recent adoption of collegiate system in Ghanaian universities).

In addition, institutional policies and guidelines will also determine the direction of the library. Examples are:

- Quality assurance policy;
- Research direction and policy;
- Teaching and learning policy; and
- ICT infrastructure policy.

Some non- institution specific but general challenges are:

- Unsustainable skyrocketing cost and diminishing budgets. The library can compete competently for limited funds when it demonstrates excellence and value in its output to those sharing the funds and to fellow competitors.

- Meanwhile, the value of the library is being questioned because the uniqueness associated with it has diminished over the years.
- Libraries are competing to meet users' demands and attention. The challenge is to provide immediate, seamless access to resources and information as the new competitors.
- Libraries are challenged by fear of obsolescence resulting from rapid technological changes that present viable alternatives of access to patrons' information needs.

Libraries therefore have no option but to adopt the prevailing technology and function fully on the digital platform to take advantage of its speed, versatility and connectivity.

### **The Digital Platform**

Basically, the digital library consists of eight elements. These are:

- Automated or Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC). OPAC is the electronic form of the card catalogue available on the Web;
- Electronic Collections, consisting of:
  - ❖ Databases (indexing, abstracting tools, full text documents),
  - ❖ Electronic journals,
  - ❖ Digital documents (e-books, AV materials, datasets, others),
- Electronic Document Delivery (ability to send documents to users at their locations);
- Electronic Reference Service;
- User Training on Electronic Services;
- Internet Services;
- Library Website
- Electronic Management of Procedures and Activities.

A library that describes itself digital should be able to carry out and/or provide the above tasks. The absence of Internet connectivity could be an obstacle in implementation of digital platform.

### **Administration and Leadership**

As a result of the changes in the library environment, the traditional library organisational structures do not necessarily fit the work that needs to be carried out. The old style administration of Technical Services Department, (classification, cataloguing, preservation), Reference Service and Reader Service Department workflow and staffing pattern cannot entirely support the requirements of the present integrative and collaborative age.

Academic libraries think of integrated organisational design and development. Librarians should be proactive and work at building supportive relationship for their libraries. In this regard libraries are expected to:

- Partner with other campus units and academic departments to create and deliver institution wide information services;
- Develop new relationships with knowledge seekers to understand and meet their changing needs;
- Consult experts in other fields for guidance in design of facilities and services;

An academic library is required to collaborate within and beyond its institution and is therefore expected to:

- Collaborate with faculty to integrate library resources into curriculum
- Collaborate with scholars to provide access to their data sets, project notes, papers, etc;
- Collaborate with information technology experts to develop online tutorials and user-friendly interfaces to local digital collections;
- Collaborate with librarians of other institutions to improve open-source software, share resources, purchase materials and preserve library collections.

The extent to which a librarian would be successful in pursuing and adopting new developments will depend on the teaching, learning, research and other policy directions of the parent institution.

## **Library Services**

Academic libraries have undergone significant structure and role changes in order to meet new service demands. The academic library that fully supports research is distinguished by the scope and quality of its services in the same way that it has distinguished itself by the breadth and depth of its collections.

One sees two emerging trends in the nature of service delivery. There is more emphasis on personalised delivery of service rather than the one approach fits all in most libraries. Additionally, one finds joined up service culture including participation of academic support units in the work of the library.

## **Distinctive Service**

Some well- established academic libraries are noted for the distinctive service they offer in addition to their normal services. The establishment of these services require vision,



strategic planning and professional expertise. They vary from institution to institution and may take various forms. Grasping opportunities to mount such services depend on being at the right place at the right time, through:

- Participating as active member of institutional committees;
- Developing a good understanding of institutional strategies and what the library can do to support them;
- Using sector knowledge to look for opportunities to be useful;
- Promoting new library services across the institution.

An example of such a service could be a unit in the library to take care of Scholarly Communication and Intellectual Property Affairs. Scholarly communication defines the very existence of a university and new ways for engagement in this area would interest all in the academic community. This office could look after the following:

- Establish digital repository service; and canvas for the content;
- Provide guidance and user education on copyright issues;
- Advise on publication of journals, monographs and/or conference proceedings;
- Promote open access concept and activities.

## **Staff**

Libraries have become multimedia centres of information resources. It is trailing a new service culture of integration and collaboration with other units of the university. These special approaches require special staff to manage them. Many staff positions require a mix of teaching skills, additional discipline expertise and technology skills.

Additionally, the increased emphasis on the diversity of users requires that the library makes similar efforts in hiring. The academic library must therefore deploy and retraining existing staff and hire new ones when necessary. Individual librarians need to make conscious efforts to acquire the requisite new skills.

New job titles are being created to reflect new responsibilities. Examples are Web Librarian, Rights Management Coordinator, Hybrid Librarian, Informationalist, Clinical Librarian, Blended Librarian and Embedded Librarian.

## **Future**

The traditional library organisational structures do not necessary fit the work needs of the digital library. The future of the academic library does not depend on processes or on technology, but on ability to build new supportive relationships for libraries. Building these

relationships require that academic libraries think proactively, creatively, plan and develop good understanding of institutional strategies to enable the library support these strategies.

In the interim, the academic library will continue to pay attention to demonstrating its value to the academic community through blending and embedding itself into the university's core function of teaching, learning and research.

## THE STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

The National Accreditation Board has responsibility for assessing a wide range of institutional libraries towards accreditation of these institutions. The libraries may be grouped under colleges of education libraries, nursing college libraries, polytechnic libraries, university college libraries, chartered university libraries and a number of distance education institution libraries. These libraries have learning resources ranging from a little over 1000 volumes to over 400,000 volumes of the Balme Library, of the University of Ghana.

The libraries are manned by staff at the non-graduate diploma in librarianship level to holders of doctorate degrees in information science. They offer a rudimentary service of lending books and directional help to sophisticated internet-based services. A higher proportion of these libraries are manually operated; others are blazing the path of automation while a few may be described as digitized libraries featuring most of the characteristics of these types of libraries.

A high proportion of these libraries remains to be fully integrated into the missions and objectives of their parent institutions and is performing below accepted standards. The question that arises is the type of standard to use in assessing all these institutions with wide range of varied characteristics.

Library standards may be either prescriptive or non-prescriptive. The non-prescriptive standard allows library greater latitude on how best to meet results based on individual circumstance. The prescriptive standard, on the other hand, encourages a base level of output across all the libraries being assessed.

A library that implements prescriptive standard can assure itself, its stakeholders, the parent institution and NAB that its policies, systems and processes are functioning at acceptable levels.

This draft document is authoritative in form and content. It contains concise and measurable parameters. It will stimulate growth and development in a greater number of

libraries. The document is to be known as “**Standards and Guidelines for Tertiary Institutions’ Library Facilities and Services in Ghana**”.

## **Content**

The document contains eleven (11) themes under which are listed specific activities (guidelines) for implementation. The themes are:

- i. Planning and Strategy
- ii. Organization and management
- iii. Information resources
- iv. Human resources
- v. Financial plan/Budget
- vi. ICT
- vii. Physical facilities
- viii. Information services
- ix. Information literacy
- x. Organization of knowledge
- xi. Equipment

## **Thrust of Document**

A library should have a mission with goals and priorities that are responsive and integrated with those of the parent institution.

A library should advocate and establish processes and procedures that ensure efficient administration in running all activities.

A library should provide a broad range of services and promote these services to all users.

A library should make available a range of current technologies for accessing resources and providing services.

A library should recruit adequate and quality staff to provide appropriate services to all users.

A library should assist its patrons develop into lifelong learners.

A library provides adequate physical environment that enables efficient service delivery and facilitates learning.

These thrusts determine the content of the new document.

## 1. PLANNING AND STRATEGY – Vision& Mission

Academic institutions recognize that their libraries represent significant information resources that should be nurtured to create vibrant environment for learning, teaching and research. The quality, nature, and extent of the library’s collection, of its staff and services provided, its buildings are all important factors. Management of these resources constitutes a comparative difference among academic institutions. Tertiary institutions therefore develop clear strategies to meet the information needs of their students and staff. Strategic planning assists the library in demonstrating how it contributes to the success of the institution.

No.	GUIDELINES
1.1	The Library must have clearly articulated vision and mission statements
1.2	The library’s mission and vision statements should be compatible and consistent with those of the parent institution
1.3	The vision and mission statements should be reviewed periodically and revised as necessary
1.4	The mission statement should be translated into a strategic plan with key goals, and measurable objectives that are set within clear time frames
1.5	The Librarian should actively participate in the planning process of the parent institution.

## 2.0 ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

Performance of an academic library is largely determined by the outlook of the parent institution on the functions, services and staff of the library. Clearly outlined relationships and responsibilities between the library and the parent institution promote effectiveness and efficiency.

No	GUIDELINES
2.1	The role of the library shall be clearly stated in the institution’s instrument of incorporation
2.2	The Head of the Library and his/her functions shall be captured in the instrument of incorporation of the institution
2.3	The Head of the Library shall report to the Principal Officer in charge of academic affairs or his equivalent in other institutions
2.4	The Library shall be a department in its own right in the administrative structure of the institution
2.5	The institution shall establish a Library Advisory Committee/Board that shall be responsible to the Academic Board or its equivalent on all matters relating to policy and development of the library
2.6	The Committee/Board shall provide guidance in the running of the library showing leadership role in establishing the direction and priorities of the library
2.7	The Committee/Board shall assist the Librarian to draw up a financial plan over a period and approve yearly budget

2.8	The Committee shall promote library activities through advocacy to ensure that matters affecting the library receive high profile in academic discussions
2.9	The library shall establish policies and procedures that document all aspects of the library's operations in consultation with library users, staff and administrators of the institution
2.10	The policies and procedures should be communicated to the library users and relevant stakeholders and readily available for consultation
2.11	Policy, practice and management decisions should be based on the best available evidence
2.12	The library shall produce an organization chart that reflects the position, lines of communication and relationships for effective operation.
2.13	The library shall collect regularly information and data required for evaluation, planning, benchmarking and management.

### 3.0 INFORMATION RESOURCES

A tertiary institution library shall provide and maintain quality information resource, and/or pathways to resources that support teaching, learning, research and community service for all users. The resources shall reflect the current and emerging priorities of the institution.

No.	GUIDELINES
3.1	The library shall develop and maintain a collection management policy that guides selection and acquisition of resources, provision of access to resources and withdrawal of resources.
3.2	The policy shall be developed in consultation with appropriate institutional committee(s) and shall become an official document for running the library.
3.3	The process of developing a collection management policy shall be open and collaborative involving active consultation between the library and academic staff.
3.4	The policy shall be published to make it available within and outside the institution.
3.5	The information management policy shall be reviewed and updated regularly.
3.6	The information resources shall adequately take care of users with special needs (e.g. the blind).
3.7	The library shall maintain a reserve collection to give direct support to the curriculum
3.8	The library shall provide adequate reference works in the form of indexes, abstracting tools and directories in variety of forms to ensure effective access to information sources.

3.9	The library shall establish and sustain institutional repository.
3.10	The library shall maintain the currency and relevance of collections through judicious weeding of the collection
3.11	The library shall digitize resources produced within the parent institution as well as promote digitization of other relevant material
3.12	In order to ensure authenticity and integrity of content when created, the library shall actively preserve information in all formats for future generations.

#### 4.0 HUMAN RESOURCES

There is an increasing challenge for libraries to recruit and retain qualified staff. Staff positions require a mix of teaching skills, additional discipline expertise and technology skills. Increasing emphasis on diversity of users requires that the library makes similar efforts at hiring qualified and motivated staff in sufficient numbers and diverse expertise to provide appropriate service to all users.

No	GUIDELINES
4.1	The institution shall appoint a qualified professional as Head of the Library and so designate him/her.
4.2	Librarians should move towards academic status and be on the same terms and conditions of service as teaching staff.
4.3	There shall be written job description for all staff. Job descriptions are to be renewed periodically.
4.4	The library shall develop computer training competency criteria for all levels of staff and provide appropriate training.
4.5	The library shall provide training opportunities and resources to enhance the capabilities of staff to ensure that services are delivered at the appropriate levels.
4.6	The library shall be adequately represented on the Academic Board, College Boards and other boards and committees of the institution.

#### 5.0 FINANCIAL PLAN/BUDGET

Tertiary institutions are required by the National Council for Tertiary Institutions (NCTE) to allocate at least ten percent (10%) of total institutional operation budget for running of the library. A new library requires adequate funds to cover acquisition of resources and equipment.

No	GUIDELINES
5.1	A tertiary institution's library shall in consultation with appropriate body(ies) develop a financial plan and maintain an annual budget.
5.2	The budget shall be linked to and support achievement of library's strategic plan.
5.3	The budget shall take into consideration the increasing volume, size, range and sophistication of digital resources and services
5.4	Proposals for new courses and programmes shall be accomplished by financial provision sufficient to ensure acquisition of basic library resources.
5.5	The library shall explore avenues for cost sharing of resources with other libraries and develop collaborative services. (e.g. in the areas of Business Studies and Religious Studies among private university colleges.)
5.6	The library may explore and initiate income generation and fund raising activities.

## 6.0 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES

Information work has increasingly become electronic based networked and collaborative. Tertiary institutions' libraries should therefore embrace existing and emerging information and communication technologies as integral feature of their services and exploit the potential of this technology to achieve their mission.

No	GUIDELINES
6.1	A tertiary institution shall develop and implement information technology strategy for the library as a component of the institution's strategy
6.2	All tertiary libraries shall operate on a digital library platform. The elements of this platform are: OPAC electronic collection, electronic document delivery, electronic reference service, user training on electronic services, Internet services, library website and management software)
6.3	A library Management software shall be installed to support the management and operation of library procedures and functions
6.4	The library shall provide Internet connections that have sufficient speed and performance, and bandwidth to access high bandwidth communication technologies appropriate to library services (e.g. video streaming, webcasting)
6.5	The library shall draw up policies/guidelines that clearly state position on issues such as workstation usage, training being offered and user responsibilities.
6.6	The library shall review computer competences of staff and provide training when necessary.
6.7	The library shall offer training on all new hardware and software introduced into the service

6.8	The library shall establish easily navigable webpages which help user to explore the full range of services available.
-----	--

## 7.0 PHYSICAL FACILITIES

A tertiary institution shall provide a well-planned, secure and sufficient space to house the library's collections, provide adequate workspace for staff and conducive study space in numbers and variety to meet the needs of users; especially the emerging specialty space such as tutoring rooms, writing centres, group study rooms.

No.	GUIDELINES
7.1	The university shall provide a well-planned, secure and sufficient space to house the library collection, adequate workspace for staff and conducive study space in numbers and variety to meet the needs of users
7.2	New library buildings shall be designed to offer 24 hours access to specific areas such as computer laboratory, open reserve collection, photocopying and study facilities
7.3	The library building shall be flexible in layout, allocated floor space and technical infrastructure to allow reasonable adaption to rapid change
7.4	The building shall provide flexible learning space equipped with network access capability to support group and collaborative learning
7.5	The library shall be comfortable and friendly to users who are physically challenged
7.6	The library shall provide space for the use of patron's personal equipment
7.7	The building shall have adequate natural lighting and ventilation
7.8	The building shall have sufficient doorways to encourage rapid exit in case of fire or other emergency
7.9	The library shall produce written disaster plan for fire and flood control.
7.10	The head of the library and staff shall participate in planning and design of new library plan or planning changes to an existing one



## 8.0 INFORMATION SERVICES PROVISION

One of the main functions of an academic library is to provide access to a broad range of information resources and services. The library must promote its services and resources to all users. It should also engage itself in on-going assessment of needs of users and plan to provide appropriate resources and technology to satisfy identified needs. Retrieval and dissemination on information is crucial to a library's mission.

<b>No</b>	<b>GUIDELINES</b>
8.1	The library shall operate opening hours that are adequate to meet users' needs and consistent with reasonable demands
8.2	The library shall provide a range of services that promote retrieval and dissemination of information.
8.3	Information resources and dissemination services shall be regularly monitored and evaluated for relevance, quality, and appropriateness to ensure that they meet user needs.
8.4	The library shall introduce modified and/or new services in response to user requirements
8.5	The library shall participate in consortia and networks to obtain access to information and services that it cannot provide on its own
8.4	Adequate provision shall be made to ensure that information resources are physically accessible to users with disabilities
8.7	The library shall establish and maintain a vibrant webpage/portal that provides fast and easy access to all electronic databases and other resources.
8.8	The library shall build and maintain an up-to-date and comprehensive reference collection

## 9.0 INFORMATION LITERACY

A tertiary institution library shall provide learning opportunities and resources that assist users to develop efficient and effective skill in finding, assessing, evaluating and organizing information and becoming independent and lifelong learners.

<b>No</b>	<b>GUIDELINES</b>
9.1	The library shall initiate and information literacy policy for the institution.
9.2	The library shall promote information literacy as an integral part of the curriculum.
9.3	The library shall provide and support faculty in integrating information literacy skills into teaching
9.4	The library shall provide instruction in information skills to users on group or individual basis
9.5	The library shall evaluate user education and training programmes for effectiveness.

## 10.0 ORGANISATION OF RESOURCES

Information resources of a tertiary institution library shall be organised for efficient and multiple concurrent access through a central catalogue constructed using international standards and conventions.

<b>No.</b>	<b>GUIDELINES</b>
10.1	All resources of the library shall be organised using appropriate internationally accepted classification scheme
10.2	The institution library shall maintain an efficient and comprehensive catalogue of all resources constructed according to internationally recognised standards and conventions
10.3	The library shall operate an efficient acquisition process that ensures a satisfactory turn- around times.

10.4	The library shall operate an effective management of print and electronic serials that ensures prompt provision of serial resources.
------	--

## 11.0 EQUIPMENT

No	GUIDELINE
11.1	The library shall provide at least one photocopier and a printer in the library building for the patrons of the service
11.2	The library may possess a scanner or have access to scanner in the institution
11.3	The library shall have a projector or have access to the equipment in the institution.

### Appendix 1: **Minimum space requirements of a tertiary library**

ITEM	DESCRIPTION	SPACE IN SQUARE METRES PER PERSON
Reader work space/carrels		3.0
1 Computer work stations in smaller Institutions		4.0
2 Computer work stations in larger Institutions		3.25
Space for seat in an instruction room		3.0
Space for seat in conference room		3.0
Space for seat in lecture in lecture hall		1.0
Library staff work area	To contain technical services	12.50 in smaller institution OR 10.00 in larger institution
Multimedia carrels		4.0

Photocopier	Provision for ventilation, storage counter, space for book trolley and bins	6.0
Shelving space	For every 100 volumes to be housed in regular shelving. Therefore space for stock of 2000 is divided by 100 to arrive at 20 square metres.	1.0

### Minimum dimensions of reading tables

Description	Dimension
Table to sit one person	90cm x 60cm
Table to sit two persons	90cm x 120cm
Table to sit four persons	180cm x 120cm
Table to sit six persons	250cm x 120cm

### References

The following documents were very useful in preparing this document

1. Commission for University Education (Kenya)  
Standards and Guidelines for University Library Services and Facilities. 2014
2. Australian Library and Information Association, Health Libraries Australia.  
Guidelines for Australian Health Libraries.4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2008.
3. Campbell, JD.Changing a cultural icon: the academic library as a virtual destination
- 4 .Educause Review, 2006; 40(1): 16, alternate pages to page 30
5. Corral, S. Educating academic librarians as a blended professional: a review and case study  
  
Library Management, 2010; 31(8/9): 567 - 593
6. Rogers, Sally. Assessing trends to cultivate new thinking in academic libraries.  
  
Library Management, 2007; 28(6/7): 366 - 378

## **ANNEXURE 7**

### **THE NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD**

#### **AFFILIATION BAROMETER:**

#### **ANNUAL REPORTING INSTRUMENT FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF MENTORING INSTITUTIONS BY MENTORED INSTITUTIONS**

(NB: THIS REPORT IS CONFIDENTIAL)

#### **PREAMBLE**

It is important for institutions in affiliation to conduct performance appraisals on each other regularly, at least, once a year to satisfy themselves of the degree of compliance to the affiliation agreement by each party and make appropriate demands on each other towards quality assurance in the operations of the Mentored Institution.

The National Accreditation Board, as a major stakeholder, is interested in the outcome of such appraisal exercises to inform itself of the degree of engagement of the partner institutions and provide guidance, where necessary, to improve the relationship so established between the two.

This assessment tool (i.e. Affiliation Barometer) is designed for the exclusive use of the Mentored Institution for conducting a comprehensive yearly appraisal on the Mentoring Institution.

Please complete separate questionnaire for each Mentoring Institution your institution is affiliated to.

Complete all the sections below:

#### **SECTION A:**

#### **PARTICULARS OF MENTORED INSTITUTION**

1. Name of mentored institution:
2. Details of contact person:
  - i. Name:

- ii. Highest qualification
- iii. Area of specialization
- iv. Rank
- v. Depart/Faculty:
- vi. Tel. no:
- vii. E-mail:

## **SECTION B**

### ASSESSMENT OF MENTORING INSTITUTION FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 20---/20--

Please provide responses to following questions:

1. Name of Mentoring Institution:.....
2. State the period of the affiliation as captured in the Affiliation Agreement: from.....to.....
3. How long have you been in affiliation?
4. What supervision programmes did the Mentoring Institution implement in your institution in the year under review?
5. Comment on the performance of the Mentoring Institution with regard to the following:
  - i. Admissions requirements and the process of admissions.

Conduct and regulation of examinations.

- ii. Engagement of External Examiners for your institution.
- iii. Programme content.
- iv. Interaction with key officers of your institution.
- v. Vetting of qualifications of academic staff.
- vi. Service on Boards and Committees.

6. Please provide answers to the following questions **separately** for each programme supervised by the Mentoring Institution under an Affiliation Agreement between the two institutions:

- i. Title of the programme:
- ii. Details of the coordinator assigned to the programme by the Mentoring Institution with regard to:
  - a. Name:
  - b. Highest qualification:
  - c. Area of specialization:
  - d. Rank:
- iii. Total number of students on the programme in the year under review:
- iv. Details of teaching staff on the programme in the year under review in the Table below:

<b>Name of staff</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Full Time</b>	<b>Part Time</b>	<b>Highest qualification /Year obtained and Place</b>	<b>Area of specialization</b>	<b>Rank</b>	<b>Courses taught</b>

Provide any other observations and recommendations for the enhancement of academic quality with reference to the Affiliation.

## **ANNEXURE 8**

### **THE NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD**

#### **AFFILIATION BAROMETER: ANNUAL REPORTING INSTRUMENT FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF MENTORED INSTITUTIONS BY MENTORING INSTITUTIONS**

(NB: THIS REPORT IS CONFIDENTIAL)

#### PREAMBLE

It is important for Mentoring Institutions to conduct performance appraisals on their Mentored Institutions regularly, at least, once a year to acquaint themselves with the challenges the Mentored Institutions face and to assess the level of support needed for improvement.

Such appraisal exercises are also necessary for ensuring compliance with the terms of the Affiliation by the Mentored Institutions and for guaranteeing that graduates from the Mentored Institutions merit the certificate of their Mentoring Institutions.

It is also important for the National Accreditation Board to inform itself of the degree of engagement of partner institutions in affiliation towards quality assurance in the Mentored Institutions.

This assessment tool (i.e. the Affiliation Barometer) is designed for a comprehensive yearly appraisal of the Mentored Institution by the Mentoring Institution for the purposes stated above.

Please complete separate questionnaire for each Mentored Institution affiliated to your institution.

Please complete all the sections below:



**SECTION A:**

PARTICULARS OF MENTORING INSTITUTION

3. Name of mentoring institution:
4. Details of contact person responsible for Affiliation matters:
  - viii. Name:
  - ix. Highest qualification:
  - x. Area of specialization:
  - xi. Rank:
  - xii. Department/Faculty:
  - xiii. Tel. no:
  - xiv. E-mail:

**SECTION B:**

ASSESSMENT OF THE MENTORED INSTITUTION FOR THE  
ACADEMIC YEAR 20---/20---

Please provide responses to the following questions:

7. Name of Mentored Institution:.....
8. State the period of the affiliation as captured in the Affiliation Agreement: from.....to.....
9. How long have you been in affiliation?
10. State the provisions for support to the Mentored Institution as captured in the Affiliation Agreement.
11. State the Programme designed for supervising the mentored institution in the academic year under review as regard the following:

Vetting of admissions requirements.

- i. The admission process.
- ii. Conduct and regulation of examinations.
- iii. Final determination of results.
- iv. Approval of External Examiners.
- v. Programme content.
- vi. Interaction with key officers of the mentored institution.
- vii. Vetting of qualifications of academic staff.
- viii. Service on Boards and Committees of the Mentored Institution.
- ix. Establishment of an Internal Quality Assurance Unit.
- x. A process towards autonomy.

12. Discuss the performance of the mentored institution against the designed programme under 5 above with regard to cooperation, responsiveness, outputs and efficiency.

### **SECTION C:**

#### **PROGRAMMES ASSESSMENT**

*Please complete this section separately for each programme under your mentorship in the Mentored Institution under reference.*

1. Title of Programme:
2. Provide details of the Contact Person in your institution assigned to the programme in the Mentored Institution:
  - i. Name:
  - ii. Highest qualification:
  - iii. Area of specialization:
  - iv. Rank:
  - v. Depart/Faculty:
  - vi. Tel. no

vii. E-mail:

3. Provide the information in the Table below for the programme in your institution:

Name of staff	Sex	Full Time	Part Time	Highest qualification /Year obtained and Place	Area of specialization	Rank	Courses taught

4. How many other institutions are you mentoring in this programme area?
4. What is the total number of students on the programme in your own institution?
5. Comment, in respect of the Mentored Institution, on the adequacy of equipment and consumables in the:
  - i. Laboratories.
  - ii. Workshops.
6. Comment on the Student Load for each of the programmes under your mentorship compared to yours.
7. Comment on the Teaching Load of lecturers on the programme in the Mentored Institution.

## **SECTION D**

### **OTHER OBSERVATIONS**

Provide any other observations and recommendations for the enhancement of academic quality of the Mentored Institution including administration of the department/faculty under your mentorship and general administration of the institution as they affected quality of teaching and learning in the academic year under review.

## ANNEXURE 9

### GROUP A: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE REGULATORY INSTITUTIONS

**GENERAL INTRODUCTION:** Briefly introduce yourself, including your position/role and length of service in this institution.

**Gender:**

**OBJECTIVE 1:** Provide the general background, rationale and research (methodical) framework, which emphasises and accentuates the importance of the study

#### NO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**OBJECTIVE 2:** Reflect upon the literature review of tertiary education quality assurance (discourse) and factors that affect it

**GENERAL QUESTION:** Do the private university colleges understand what quality assurance entails and the factors that could affect higher education quality assurance?

**2.1** In the reviewed literature, the NAB defines QA as "... the continuous and systematic act of reviewing structures, systems and practices towards the attainment of a desired end." In your opinion, do PUC's in Ghana demonstrate an understanding of QA that is consistent with the NAB's definition and what are the indicators of their understanding of higher education QA?

**2.2** As a follow-up to the awareness of members about what counts as quality private tertiary education, how will you argue that the level of education and training provided by the regulatory institutions, the mentoring PSU's and the PUC's themselves to the

members of the university college community facilitated their understanding of higher education QA?

**2.3** The reviewed literature identified the factors that affect tertiary education QA to include the factors listed below. In what ways has any of the factors below or any other factor affected the quality of education offered by the PUC's in Ghana?

- differences in the conception of what QA is (formative or summative) between the regulatory institutions and the higher education institutions.
- incompatibility between the views of the academic staff as implementers of QA policy and what has been designed as acceptable quality higher education standards by the regulatory institutions.
- lack of mechanisms to effectively analyse the information gathered during reviews and a lack of properly trained evaluators.
- lack of ownership by the higher education institutions of the QA process.
- lack of management skills and expertise related to QA at all levels.

**2.4** Are you able to share some of the negative effects of these factors on the quality of education in the PUC's?

**OBJECTIVE 3: Outline the theoretical perspectives and conceptual framework that relate to tertiary education quality assurance in Ghana and compare key indicators and accreditation models between world class tertiary education regulatory institutions and tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana?**

**GENERAL QUESTION:** Is the NAB/NCTE a member of any international network or association of similar types and in what ways have the accreditation models of these international tertiary education regulatory institutions influenced your model of QA in the PUC's in Ghana?

3.1 Is the NAB/NCTE a member of any international network or association of similar types and in what ways has the accreditation models of these international tertiary education regulatory institutions influenced your model of QA in the PUC's in Ghana?

3.2 As a follow-up to the question on the influence of international QA practices, is your model of QA designed based on any of the known models of QA of developed nations such as the USA, UK, and Australia and which specific aspects of these three countries QA models have you adopted and how have these practices been effective in assuring quality education standards in the PUCs in Ghana?

3.3 What is your view on the practice of publishing the outcomes of your review of higher education institutions as done in the UK to inform the public on the performance of higher education institutions as well as the ranking of higher education institutions as done in the USA and the UK?

3.4 I am aware that the NAB uses quality audits and assessment, programme and institutional accreditation, as well as affiliation to regulate the practices of the PUC's. Based on your experiences, do you think these mechanisms have been effective in ensuring quality education standards in the PUCs in Ghana?

3.5 The existing tertiary education QA framework of Ghana shows that it is a collaborative effort between the NAB, the NCTE and the university to which the PUC's are affiliated. What are your experiences and views on the functioning and effectiveness of this framework?

3.6 I am aware of the NCTE being the policy formulation body and the NAB being the implementers. Based on your experiences, describe the level of collaboration between the NAB and NCTE with regard to QA and the means through which you give and receive feedback from each other on issues related to QA in PUC's?

**OBJECTIVE 4: Provide a historical context of the legal framework on the establishment and operations of PUC's and tertiary education regulatory institutions in Ghana from 1991 to 2019.**

**GENERAL QUESTION:** The reviewed literature has identified some recommendations of the committee set up in 1998 to determine the extent to which the policy objectives of the 1991 White Paper on the reforms in the tertiary education system of Ghana has been achieved. Do you think these recommendations are relevant and to what extent have these recommendations been implemented? I would like us to look at the recommendations that relate to QA.

4.1 The literature has identified some recommendations of the committee set up in 1998 to determine the extent to which the policy objectives of the 1991 White Paper on the reforms in the tertiary education system of Ghana has been achieved. Do you think these recommendations are relevant and to what extent have these recommendations been implemented? I would like us to look at the recommendations that relate to QA.

Recommendation 1 was: "... the need to ensure that each tertiary education institution under the NCTE should be properly equipped in order to achieve quality education standards for the programmes that they offer." (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 12).

Recommendation 2: "... all new programmes to be run by a university college must be accredited and all examinations vetted before the tertiary institution is allowed to start the programme." (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 15).

Recommendation 3 states "... the need to provide both material and human resources, to enable the NCTE and the NAB to perform their functions, as well as adequate remuneration to assessors to enable them submit their assessment reports on time." (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 34).



Recommendation 4 of the committee was that, " ... the NCTE should conduct a study to identify the challenges facing existing private universities in order to be able to develop policy measures for the advancement of the private tertiary education sector. Key areas of concern related to the running of programmes that could contribute to national development and the quality of programmes offered at the private sector universities." (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 58).

4.2 As part of the reforms to the tertiary education system, one of the institutions to be established was the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board who would develop standardised criteria irrespective of the private university where an individual seeks admission as well as monitor the admissions processes, in order to ensure that only qualified applicants are admitted into the PUC's. In the absence of the establishment of this institution, how has the NAB/NCTE monitored and regulated student admissions into the PUC's?

4.3 While private university education was accepted in principle based on various laws that back their establishment, there was neither an official policy that encouraged the establishment of private universities nor any financial incentive in support of the establishment of PUC's in Ghana. How has the lack of specific policies on PUC's and financial support from government affected the quality of education provided by PUC's in Ghana?

4.4 What is your opinion on the existing legislation that established the NAB/NCTE and to what extent has the provisions in the current National Accreditation Board Act 744 of 2007 and the National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993 enabled the NAB/NCTE to effectively achieve their mandate? What could be done in order to address the challenges inherent in the National Accreditation Board Act 744 of 2007 and the National Council for Tertiary Education Act 454 of 1993?

4.5 What are the gaps in the NAB Act 744 of 2007 and the NCTE Act 454 of 1993 that could affect their effectiveness in ensuring quality standards in the higher education institutions in Ghana?

**OBJECTIVE 5: Analyse the effect of the current QA capacity and mechanisms of tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana and the usefulness of the application of these mechanisms at PUC's.**

**GENERAL QUESTION:** Based on your experiences, does the NAB/NCTE have the capacity to achieve its mandate of QA in the PUC's in Ghana? Justify your responses.

**5.1** Based on your experiences, does the NAB/NCTE have the capacity to achieve its mandate of QA in the PUC's in Ghana? Justify your responses.

**5.2** In your opinion, how has each of the following mechanisms of QA influenced the quality of education provided by the PUC's in Ghana? (i) affiliation; (ii) academic quality audit; (iii) quality monitoring and institutional review (iv) institutional and programme accreditation. Are there additional mechanisms that you think could be adopted to ensure quality in the PUC's in Ghana?

**5.3** Based on your experiences, what is your opinion on the requirement of ten years minimum period of affiliation for PUC's in Ghana?

**5.4** It has been argued that state-directed QA ensures more of compliance and accountability than improvement/enhancement that facilitates the development of a culture of quality. Based on your experiences, what is your view on what your mechanisms have focused on in the QA process in the PUC's in Ghana?

**5.5** There appears to be a high level of interest of Ghanaians in the quality of education being offered in the PUC's. What are the main means through which you solicit the views of Ghanaians to improve the quality of education provided by the PUC's in Ghana?

5.6 Which interest groups if any, and to what extent has the NAB/NCTE been guided by its stakeholder's views in the formulation and implementation of QA policies and practices in the PUC's in Ghana?

5.7 Although the establishment of PUC's in Ghana can be assumed to be adhering to the constitutional directive of making tertiary education accessible to all citizens, how has the NAB/NCTE ensured that the entrepreneurial character of private providers does not undermine this purpose?

5.8 5.7 Are there any other issues related to this topic you would like to share with me?

## **GROUP B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARTICIPANTS FROM THE PRIVATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGES**

**GENERAL INTRODUCTION:** Briefly introduce yourself, including your position/role and length of service in this university college.

**Gender:**

**OBJECTIVE 1: Provide the general background, rationale and research (methodical) framework, which emphasises and accentuates the importance of the study**

NO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**OBJECTIVE 2: Reflect upon the literature review of tertiary education quality assurance (discourse) and factors that affect it**

**GENERAL QUESTION:** Do the private university colleges understand what quality assurance entails and the factors that could affect higher education quality assurance?

2.1 In the reviewed literature, the NAB defines quality assurance as "... the continuous and systematic act of reviewing structures, systems and practices towards the attainment of a desired end." In your opinion, to what extent do members of this university college understand what tertiary education QA entails and the factors that affect higher education QA? Justify your response.

2.2 As a follow-up to the awareness of members about what counts as quality private tertiary education, how will you argue that the level of education and training provided by the regulatory institutions, the mentoring PSU's and the PUC itself to members of this university college has facilitated your understanding of higher education quality

assurance? How do you ensure that issues related to quality are disseminated, understood and complied with by members of the university college?

2.3 The reviewed literature shows that the quality of higher education could be assured through internal or external mechanisms or both. What are your internal mechanisms for ensuring quality and how effective have these mechanisms been in ensuring quality in this university college?

2.4 The reviewed literature identified the factors listed below among those that affect tertiary education QA. In what ways has any of the factors below or any other factor affected the quality of education offered by the PUC's in Ghana?

- Differences in the conception of what QA is (formative or summative) between the regulatory institutions and the higher education institutions.
- Incompatibility between the views of the academic staff as implementers of QA policy and what has been designed as acceptable quality higher education standards by the regulatory institutions.
- Lack of mechanisms to effectively analyse the information gathered during reviews and a lack of properly trained evaluators.
- Lack of ownership by the higher education institutions of the QA process.
- Lack of management skills and expertise related to QA at all levels.

2.5 In what ways do you think the PUC's governance and ownership structure has affected (positive and negative) QA practices of the PUC's?

2.6 Are you able to share some of the negative effects of these factors on the quality of education in the PUC's?

**OBJECTIVE 3: Outline the theoretical perspectives and conceptual framework that relate to tertiary education quality assurance in Ghana and compare key indicators and accreditation models between world class tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana.**

**GENERAL QUESTION:** Is your institution a member of any international and national network or association of similar types or collaborations with other institutions and in what ways have the QA practices of these associations influenced the QA practices of this university college?

3.1: Is your institution a member of any international and national network or association of similar types or collaborations with other institutions and in what ways have the QA practices of these associations influenced the QA practices of this university college?

3.2 As a follow-up question, what is your view on the practice of publishing the outcomes of the review of your university college as done in the UK to inform the public on the performance of each PUC as well as ranking of universities as done in the USA and the UK?

3.4 In your view, should the regulatory institutions and the mentor universities practices for assuring quality in the PUC's be influenced by practice from other parts of the world especially the developed nations such as the USA, the UK and Australia?

3.5 The existing tertiary education QA framework of Ghana shows that it is a collaborative effort between the NAB, the NCTE and the university to which the PUC's are affiliated. What are your views on the functioning and effectiveness of this framework?

3.6 One of the requirements of the NAB is for every tertiary education institution to have an internal QA unit. How do you gather feedback from the different constituents of the university college on the internal QA mechanisms and how effective has the unit been?

**OBJECTIVE 4: Provide a historical context of the legal framework on the establishment and operations of PUC's and tertiary education regulatory institutions in Ghana from 1991 to 2019.**

**GENERAL QUESTION:** The reviewed literature has identified some recommendations of the committee set up in 1998 to determine the extent to which the policy objectives of the 1991 White Paper on the reforms in the tertiary education system of Ghana has been achieved. Do you think these recommendations are relevant and to what extent have these recommendations been implemented? I would like us to look at the recommendations that relate to QA.

Recommendation 1 was: "... the need to ensure that each tertiary education institution under the NCTE should be properly equipped in order to achieve quality education standards for the programmes that they offer." (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 12).

Recommendation 2: "... all new programmes to be run by a university college must be accredited and all examinations vetted before the tertiary institution is allowed to start the programme." (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 15).

Recommendation 3 states "... the need to provide both material and human resources to enable the NCTE and the NAB to perform their functions as well as adequate remuneration to assessors to enable them submit their assessment reports on time." (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 34).

Recommendation 4 of the committee was that, "... the NCTE should conduct a study to identify the challenges facing existing private universities in order to be able to develop policy measures for the advancement of the private tertiary education sector. Key areas of concern related to the running of programmes that could contribute to national development and the quality of programmes offered at the private sector universities." (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 58).

4.1 The reviewed literature has identified some recommendations of the committee set up in 1998 to determine the extent to which the policy objectives of the 1991 White Paper of Ghana on the reforms to the tertiary education system of Ghana has been achieved. Recommendation 1 was: "... the need to ensure that each tertiary education institution under the NCTE should be properly equipped in order to achieve quality education

standards for the programmes that they offer” (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 12). To what extent has government supported this institution through funding, infrastructure or any other form of support?

4.2 As part of the reforms to the tertiary education system, one of the institutions to be established was the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board who would develop standardised criteria irrespective of the private university where an individual sought admission as well as monitor the admissions processes, in order to ensure that only qualified applicants are admitted into the PUC’s. In the absence of the establishment of this institution, how have you ensured that only qualified applicants are admitted into this university college?

4.3 While private university education was accepted in principle based on various legislation that back their establishment, there was neither an official policy that encouraged the establishment of private universities nor any financial incentive in support of the establishment of PUC’s in Ghana. How has the lack of specific policies on PUC’s and financial support from government affected the quality of education provided by PUC’s in Ghana?

**OBJECTIVE 5: Analyse the effect of the current QA capacity and mechanisms of tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana and the usefulness of the application of these mechanisms at PUC’s.**

**GENERAL QUESTION:** In your view, does the NAB/NCTE have the capacity to achieve its mandate of QA in the PUC’s in Ghana? Justify your responses

5.1 I am aware that the NAB uses affiliation, quality audit and assessment as well as programme and institutional accreditation in regulating the practices of the PUC’s. Based on your experiences, what is your assessment of each of these mechanisms in ensuring quality education standards in the PUC’s in Ghana?



5.1 In your view, does the NAB/NCTE have the capacity to achieve its mandate of QA in the PUC's in Ghana? Justify your responses.

5.2 I am aware that the NAB uses affiliation, quality audit and assessment as well as programme and institutional accreditation in regulating the practices of the PUC's. Based on your experiences, what is your assessment of each of these mechanisms in ensuring quality education standards in the PUC's in Ghana?

5.3 What are your views on the background, composition, capacity and capability of the assessment teams that come to accredit or re-accredit the programmes that you run?

**5.4** Although the establishment of PUC's in Ghana can be assumed to be adhering to the constitutional directive of making tertiary education accessible to all citizens, how has your university college ensured that the entrepreneurial character of private providers does not undermine this purpose?

5.6 In all, what is your assessment of the strategies that the regulatory institutions and the mentor universities used to compel you serve as standards and norms that regulate your practices and to help you learn from other universities that have excelled.

## **GROUP C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARTICIPANTS FROM THE MENTORING PUBLIC SECTOR UNIVERSITIES**

**GENERAL INTRODUCTION:** Briefly introduce yourself, including your position/role and length of service in this university.

**Gender:**

**OBJECTIVE 1: Provide the general background, rationale and research (methodical) framework, which emphasises and accentuates the importance of the study**

NO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**OBJECTIVE 2: Reflect upon the literature review of tertiary education quality assurance (discourse) and factors that affect it**

**GENERAL QUESTION:** Do the private university colleges understand what quality assurance entails and the factors that could affect higher education quality assurance?

2.1 In the reviewed literature, the NAB defines QA as "... the continuous and systematic act of reviewing structures, systems and practices towards the attainment of a desired end." In your opinion, do PUC's demonstrate an understanding of QA as reflected in the NAB's definition and what are the indicators of their understanding of higher education QA?

2.2 As a follow-up to the awareness of members about what counts as quality private tertiary education, how will you argue that the level of education and training provided by the mentor universities to the members of the university college community have facilitated their understanding of higher education quality assurance?

2.3 The reviewed literature identified the factors listed below among those that affect tertiary education QA. In what ways has any of the factors below or any other factor affected the quality of education offered by the PUC's in Ghana?

- Differences in the conception of what QA is (formative or summative) between the regulatory institutions and the higher education institutions.
- Incompatibility between the views of the academic staff as implementers of QA policy and what has been designed as acceptable quality higher education standards by the regulatory institutions.
- Lack of mechanisms to effectively analyse the information gathered during reviews and a lack of properly trained evaluators.
- Lack of ownership by the higher education institutions of the QA process.
- Lack of management skills and expertise related to QA at all levels.

2.4 Are you able to share some of the negative effects of these factors on the quality of education in the PUC's?

**OBJECTIVE 3: Outline the theoretical perspectives and conceptual framework that relate to tertiary education QA in Ghana and compare key indicators and accreditation models between world class tertiary education regulatory institutions and tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana?**

**GENERAL QUESTION:** Is this university a member of any international network or association of similar types and is your model of QA designed based on any of the known models of QA of developed nations such as the USA, UK, and Australia? Which specific aspects of these three countries QA models have you adopted and how have these practices been effective in assuring quality education standards in the PUCs in Ghana that are affiliated to your institution?

3.1 I am aware that NAB uses affiliation, quality audits and assessment, programme and institutional accreditation in regulating the practices of PUC's. Based on your experiences as a mentor institution, do you think these mechanisms have been effective in ensuring quality education standards in the PUCs in Ghana?

3.2 The existing tertiary education QA framework of Ghana shows that it is a collaborative effort between the NAB, the NCTE and the university to which the PUCs are affiliated. What are your experiences and views on the functioning and effectiveness of this framework?

**OBJECTIVE 4: Provide a historical context of the legal framework on the establishment and operations of PUC's and tertiary education regulatory institutions in Ghana from 1991 to 2019.**

**GENERAL QUESTION:** The reviewed literature has identified some recommendations of the committee set up in 1998 to determine the extent to which the policy objectives of the 1991 White Paper on the reforms in the tertiary education system of Ghana has been achieved. Do you think these recommendations are relevant and to what extent have these recommendations been implemented? I would like us to look at the recommendations that relate to QA.

Recommendation 1 was: "... the need to ensure that each tertiary education institution under the NCTE should be properly equipped in order to achieve quality education standards for the programmes that they offer." (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 12).

Recommendation 2: "... all new programmes to be run by a university college must be accredited and all examinations vetted before the tertiary institution is allowed to start the programme." (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 15).

Recommendation 3 states "... the need to provide both material and human resources to enable the NCTE and the NAB to perform their functions as well as adequate

remuneration to assessors to enable them submit their assessment reports on time.” (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 34).

Recommendation 4 of the committee was that, ” ... the NCTE should conduct a study to identify the challenges facing existing private universities in order to be able to develop policy measures for the advancement of the private tertiary education sector. Key areas of concern related to the running of programmes that could contribute to national development and the quality of programmes offered at the private sector universities.” (Republic of Ghana, 1998: 58).

4.1 As part of the reforms to the tertiary education system, one of the institutions to be established was the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board who would develop standardised criteria irrespective of the private university where an individual sought admission as well as monitor the admissions processes, in order to ensure that only qualified applicants are admitted into the PUC’s. In the absence of the establishment of this institution, how do you as a mentor university check to ensure that only qualified applicants are admitted into the PUC’s?

**OBJECTIVE 5: Analyse the effect of the current QA capacity and mechanisms of tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana and the usefulness of the application of these mechanisms at PUC’s**

5.1 What is your opinion on the existing requirement of affiliation which is part of the QA mechanisms and to what extent has the mechanism contributed to ensure quality standards in the PUC’s in Ghana?

5.2 Based on your experiences, what is your opinion on the ten years minimum period of affiliation for PUC’s in Ghana?

5.3 Does this university have the necessary resources both human and non-human to carry out QA activities in all the PUC's that are affiliated to it?

5.4 It has been argued that state-directed QA ensures more of compliance and accountability than improvement/enhancement which facilitates the development of a culture of quality. Based on your experiences, what is your view on what your mechanisms have focused on in the QA process in the PUC's in Ghana?

5.5 There appears to be a high interest of Ghanaians in the quality of education being offered in the PUC's in Ghana. As a mentor, what are the main means through which you get feedback so as to improve upon what you do to ensure quality standards in the PUC's in Ghana?

5.6 Are there any other issues related to this topic you would like to share with me?

## **GROUP D: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ASSESSORS**

**GENERAL INTRODUCTION:** Briefly introduce yourself.

**Interviewer:** How long have you worked as an assessor for the NAB?

**Gender:**

**OBJECTIVE 1: Provide the general background, rationale and research (methodical) framework, which emphasises and accentuates the importance of the study**

NO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**OBJECTIVE 2: Reflect upon the literature review of tertiary education quality assurance (discourse) and factors that affect it**

**GENERAL QUESTION:** Do the private university colleges understand what quality assurance entails and the factors that could affect higher education quality assurance?

2.1 The NAB defines quality assurance as "... the continuous and systematic act of reviewing structures, systems and practices towards the attainment of a desired end." In your opinion, to what extent do members of PUC's in Ghana understand what tertiary education quality assurance entails and the factors that could affect higher education quality assurance? Justify your response.

2.2 How often, and what form of training/orientation was organised by the NAB for you as an assessor and what is your assessment of the kind and adequacy of the level of education/ training provided by the regulatory institutions to facilitated your work as an assessor?

2.3 Apart from the lack of training what other challenges did you encounter in your role as an assessor?

2.4 The reviewed literature identified the factors that affect tertiary education QA to include the factor listed below. In what ways has any of the factors below or any other factors affected the quality of education offered by the PUC's in Ghana?

- Differences in the conception of what QA is (formative or summative) between the regulatory institutions and the higher education institutions.
- Incompatibility between the views of the academic staff as implementers of QA policy and what has been designed as acceptable quality higher education standards by the regulatory institutions.
- Lack of mechanisms to effectively analyse the information gathered during reviews and a lack of properly trained evaluators.
- Lack of ownership by the higher education institutions of the QA process;
- Lack of management skills and expertise related to QA at all levels.

2.5 In what ways do you think the PUC's governance and ownership structure has affected (positive and negative) QA practices of the PUC's?

**OBJECTIVE 3: Outline the theoretical perspectives and conceptual framework that relate to tertiary education quality assurance in Ghana and compare key indicators and accreditation models between world class tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana**

**GENERAL QUESTION:** What is your view on the practice of publishing the outcomes of the review of university colleges as done in the UK to inform the public on the performance of each PUC's as well as ranking them as done in the USA and the UK?



3.1 What is your view on the practice of publishing the outcomes of the review of university colleges as done in the UK to inform the public on the performance of each PUC as well as ranking them as done in the USA and the UK?

3.2 In your view, should the regulatory institutions and the mentor universities practices for assuring quality in the PUC's be influenced by practice from other parts of the world especially the developed nations such as the USA, the UK and Australia?

3.3 The existing tertiary education QA framework of Ghana shows that it is a collaborative effort between the NAB, the NCTE and the university to which the PUC's are affiliated. What are your views and experiences on the functioning and effectiveness of this framework?

3.4 One of the requirements of the NAB is for every tertiary education institution to have an internal QA unit. How do you gather feedback from the different constituents of the university college on the internal QA mechanisms and what is your assessment of the internal QA unit?

3.5 There appears to be a high interest of Ghanaians in the assurance of quality education standards in the PUC's in Ghana. What other mechanisms do you propose in order to improve upon the existing QA structures, policies, procedures, systems and legislation for quality assurance in PUC's in Ghana?

3.6 There is the perception that PUC's in Ghana do not offer quality education, but are rather interested in making money. What is your opinion about such a perception?

**OBJECTIVE 4: Provide a historical context of the legal framework on the establishment and operations of PUC's and tertiary education regulatory institutions in Ghana from 1991 to 2019**

4.1 As part of the reforms to the tertiary education system, one of the institutions to be established was the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board who would develop standardised criteria irrespective of the private university where an individual sought admission as well as monitor the admissions processes, in order to ensure that only qualified applicants are admitted into the PUC's. In the absence of the establishment of this institution, how do you as assessors check to ensure that only qualified applicants are admitted into the PUC's?

**OBJECTIVE 5: Analyse the effect of the current QA capacity and mechanisms of tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana and the usefulness of the application of these mechanisms at PUC's**

**GENERAL QUESTION:** What is your general assessment of PUC's response to assessments? Any specific examples or cases to illustrate this?

5.1 As an assessor, do you make suggestions to the NAB for purposes of improving upon the existing QA mechanisms and how has this contributed to improve upon the quality assurance mechanisms of the NAB?

5.2 Based on your experiences, in your view does the NAB/NCTE have the capacity to achieve its mandate of QA in the PUC's in Ghana? Justify your response.

5.3 After an assessment of an institution, does the policy of the NAB permit you to immediately give feedback to the institution you have assessed about what your findings are? If no feedback is given immediately, what are the opportunities available to the institutions to confirm or disconfirm your findings?

5.4 What are the specific areas you are required by the NAB to focus on during assessment and what are the means through which you assess each of the areas?

5.5 Do you refer to recommendations from previous assessment of the institution when you are undertaking another assessment?

5.6 What do you do if an institution has not implemented the recommendations from the previous assessment?

## ANNEXURE 10

### NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD ACT 744 OF 2007

#### NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD ACT 744

#### ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

##### *Section*

##### The Board

1. Establishment of the National Accreditation Board
2. Functions of the Board
3. Tenure of office of members
4. Meetings of the Board
5. Disclosure of interest
6. Establishment of committees
7. Allowances

##### Accreditation

8. Accreditation exercise
9. Appointment of panel
10. Board to issue certificate
11. Variation or revocation of accreditation
12. Grant of Charter
13. Foreign registration

##### Administration

14. Executive Secretary
15. Functions of the Executive Secretary
16. Appointment of other staff

##### *Finance and miscellaneous matters*

17. Funds of the Board
18. Accounts and audit
19. Annual report and other reports
20. Obtaining information
21. Closure of institution
22. Cost recovery
23. Sanction for operating an unaccredited institution or programme

24. Offences and penalties
25. Regulations
26. Interpretation
27. Repeal and saving

**Act 744**



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

**THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOURTH**

**ACT**

**OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF GHANA  
ENTITLED**

**NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD ACT, 2007**

AN ACT to establish the National Accreditation Board and to provide for related purposes.

DATE OF ASSENT: *20th August, 2007.*

ENACTED BY the President and Parliament:

*The Board*

Establishment of the National Accreditation Board

**1.** (1) There is established by this Act a body known as the National Accreditation Board consisting of

- (a) a chairperson,
- (b) two representatives of the public universities each not below the rank of a senior lecturer,
- (c) one representative nominated by each of the following bodies:

- (i) the accredited private universities not below the rank of senior lecturer,
- (ii) other accredited private tertiary institutions,
- (iii) the association of heads of public polytechnics,
- (iv) the National Council for Tertiary Education,
- (v) the Public Services Commission,
- (vi) the association of professional bodies,
- (vii) the National Board for Professional and Technician Examinations,
- (viii) The West African Examinations Council,
- (ix) The Attorney-General's Department not below the rank of Principal State Attorney,

(d) the Executive Secretary, and

(e) two other persons nominated by the Minister, one of whom is a woman.

(2) The chairperson and the other members of the Board shall be appointed by the President in accordance with article 70 of the Constitution.

#### *Functions of the Board*

**2.** (1) The Board is responsible for the accreditation of both public and private institutions as regards the contents and standards of their programmes.

(2) Without limiting subsection (1), the Board shall

(a) determine the programmes and requirements for the proper operation of an institution and the maintenance of acceptable levels of academic or professional standards in the institution in consultation with that institution;

(b) determine the equivalences of diplomas, certificates and other qualifications awarded by institutions in the country or elsewhere;

(c) publish as it considers appropriate the list of accredited public and private institutions and programmes at the beginning of each calendar year;

(d) advise the President on the grant of a Charter to a private tertiary institution;  
and

(e) perform any other functions determined by the Minister.

#### *Tenure of office of members*

**3.** (1) A member of the Board other than the Executive Secretary shall hold office for a period not exceeding three years and is eligible for re-appointment.

(2) Where a member of the Board, resigns, dies, is removed from office or is for a sufficient reason unable to act as a member, the Minister shall notify the

President of the vacancy and the President shall, acting on the advice of the nominating body and in accordance with article 70, appoint another person to hold office for the unexpired portion of the member's term of office.

- (3) A member of the Board other than the Executive Secretary may at any time resign from office in writing addressed to the President through the Minister.
- (4) A member of the Board who is absent from three consecutive meetings of the Board without sufficient cause ceases to be a member of the Board.
- (5) The President
  - (a) may, and
  - (b) shall at the request of a nominating body, by letter addressed to a member revoke the appointment of that member.

#### *Meetings of the Board*

4. (1) The Board shall meet at least once every three months for the despatch of business at the times and in the places determined by the chairperson.
  - (2) The Chairperson, at the request in writing of not less than one-third of the membership of the Board, shall within fourteen days convene an extraordinary meeting of the Board at the place and time determined by the chairperson and in the absence of the chairperson, the Executive Secretary shall convene the meeting.
  - (3) The quorum at a meeting of the Board is eight members of the Board or a greater number determined by the Board in respect of an important matter.
  - (4) The chairperson shall preside at meetings of the Board and in the absence of the chairperson, a member of the Board elected by the members present from among their number shall preside.
  - (5) Matters before the Board shall be decided by a majority of the members present and voting and in the event of an equality of votes, the person presiding shall have a casting vote.
  - (6) The Board may co-opt a person to attend a Board meeting but that person shall not vote on a matter for decision at the meeting.
  - (7) The proceedings of the Board shall not be invalidated by reason of a vacancy among the members or a defect in the appointment or qualification of a member. (8) Subject to this section, the Board may determine the procedure for its meetings.

#### *Disclosure of interest*

5. (1) A member of the Board who has an interest in a matter for consideration by the Board shall disclose in writing the nature of that interest and is disqualified from participating in the deliberations of the Board in respect of that matter. (2) A member who contravenes subsection (1) ceases to be a member.

### *Establishment of committees*

**6.** (1) The Board may establish committees consisting of members of the Board or non-members or both to perform a function the Board may determine except that a committee composed entirely of non-members may only advise the Board. (2) A committee of the Board may be chaired by a non-member of the Board.

### *Allowances*

**7.** Members of the Board and members of a committee of the Board shall be paid allowances approved by the Minister in consultation with the Minister responsible for Finance.

## *Accreditation*

### *Accreditation exercise*

**8.** (1) An accreditation exercise may be initiated by the Board or an institution itself and shall be in relation to the institution or its programme or to both.

- (2) Despite subsection (1), the Board shall carry out an accreditation exercise in respect of each institution at least once every five years.
- (3) An institution shall not operate or run a programme without accreditation.

### **Appointment of panel**

**9.** (1) The Board may appoint a panel to conduct an accreditation exercise.

- (2) The panel which shall consist of a chairperson and other persons not exceeding eight shall be constituted by the Board having regard to their professional, academic, industrial or commercial competence.

(3) The panel may include members of the Board.

### **Board to issue certificate**

**10.** The Board shall issue a certificate in respect of accreditation granted to an institution or given for a programme.

### **Variation or Revocation of Accreditation**

**11.** The Board may

- (a) vary a certificate of accreditation where the Board is of the opinion, that the variation:



- (i) is necessary having regard to the national education policy,
  - (ii) may assist the institution concerned to carry out its function in a more efficient manner, or
- (b) revoke a certificate of accreditation, where the Board is of the opinion that:
- (i) the institution concerned is not carrying out its functions in a proper manner,
  - (ii) the institution is in breach of its certificate of accreditation, or
  - (iii) the revocation is necessary having regard to the national education policy.

#### Grant of Charter

**12.** The President may grant a Charter to a private tertiary institution to enable the institution issue certificates, diplomas or degrees.

#### Foreign Registration

**13.** A foreign tertiary institution that seeks to operate in Ghana shall apply to the Board to be registered.

### *Administration*

#### Executive Secretary

**14.** (1) The President shall, appoint the Executive Secretary of the Board in accordance with article 195 of the Constitution.

- (2) The Executive Secretary shall hold office on the terms and conditions specified in the letter of appointment.
- (3) The Executive Secretary is the secretary to the Board.

#### Functions of the Executive Secretary

**15.** (1) The Executive Secretary is responsible for the day to day administration of the affairs of the Board and is answerable to the Board in the performance of functions under this Act.

- (2) The Executive Secretary shall perform other functions determined by the Board.
- (3) The Executive Secretary may delegate a function to an officer of the secretariat of the Board but shall not be relieved from the ultimate responsibility for the performance of the delegated function.

#### Appointment of other staff

**16.** (1) The President shall in accordance with article 195 of the Constitution, appoint other staff of the Board that are necessary for the proper and effective performance of its functions.

(2) Other public officers may be transferred or seconded to the Board or may otherwise give assistance to it.

(3) The Board may engage the services of advisers and consultants on the recommendation of the Executive Secretary.

#### *Finance and miscellaneous matters*

#### Funds of the Board

**17.** (1) The funds of the Board include

(a) moneys approved by Parliament,

(b) grants received from the Government,

(c) fees charged by the Board in the performance of its functions,

(d) return an investments by the Board, and (e) donations or gifts.

(2) The Board may invest moneys that are not required for immediate use.

#### Accounts and audit

**18.** (1) The Board shall keep books of account and proper records in relation to them in the form approved by the Auditor-General.

(2) The Board shall submit the accounts of the Board to the Auditor-General for audit within three months after the end of the financial year.

(3) The Auditor-General shall, not later than three months after the receipt of the accounts, audit the accounts.

(4) The Internal Audit Agency Act, 2003 (Act 658) shall apply to this Act.

(5) The financial year of the Board is the same as the financial year of the Government.

#### Annual report and other reports

**19.** (1) The Board shall within one month after the receipt of the audit report, submit an annual report to the Minister covering the activities and the operations of the Board for the year to which the report relates.

(2) The annual report shall include the report of the Auditor-General.

(3) The Minister shall, within one month after the receipt of the annual report, submit the report to Parliament with a statement that the Minister considers necessary.

(4) The Board shall also submit to the Minister any other reports which the Minister may require in writing.

### Obtaining information

**20.** (1) The Board may, for the proper and efficient performance of its functions, authorise the Executive Secretary, an employee of the Board or any other person to request information from an institution and the institution shall comply with the request.

(2) The Executive Secretary, an employee or any other person authorised by the Board shall have access to the relevant records, books or facilities of the institution requested to provide the information.

### Closure of institution

**21.** (1) Where the Board is satisfied that

- (a) the location and operations of an institution are detrimental to the physical or moral welfare of the students who attend it,
- (b) the institution is operating below the minimum standard acceptable to the Board, or
- (c) the continued existence of the institution is against the public interest, the Board shall formally notify the institution to rectify the deficiencies within a period not exceeding six months.

(2) If at the end of the period the rectification has not been effected, the Board shall inform the Minister who shall notify the proprietor to close the institution within a specified time.

(3) Where the proprietor fails to close down the institution as provided for in subsection (2), the Board shall close down the institution.

### Cost recovery

**22.** Where the Board incurs any expenditure as a result of failure of an institution to comply with a direction given by the Board to the institution, the Board shall take the action it considers appropriate for the recovery of the expenditure.

Sanction for operating an unaccredited institution or programme **23.** Where

- (a) the accreditation of an institution is not renewed, or
- (b) the accreditation or a programme is not renewed

and the institution continues to operate or run the programme the Board may recommend the appropriate action or sanction which may include withdrawal of public funds, student loans or the transfer of students to another institution.

### Offences and penalties

**24.** A person who

- (a) operates an unaccredited institution,

- (b) runs an unaccredited programme,
- (c) advertises an unaccredited institution or an unaccredited programme,
- (d) fails to register a foreign institution,
- (e) refuses to comply with a request for information made by or on behalf of the Board,
- (f) denies access to relevant records, books or facilities to a person authorised by the Board to obtain the information,
- (g) obstructs a person authorised by the Board to obtain information, or
- (h) provides information which that person knows is false or does not have a reason to believe to be true

commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of not more than three hundred penalty units or to a term of imprisonment of not more than two years or to both.

#### Regulations

**25.** The Minister may on the recommendations of the Board, make Regulations, by legislative instrument, for

- (a) the types of accreditation to be granted to an institution;
- (b) the procedure for the conduct of an accreditation exercise;
- (c) procedure for registration;
- (d) the fees to be charged for services rendered by or on behalf of the Board; and
- (e) any other matter necessary for the effective implementation of the provisions of this Act.

#### Interpretation

**26.** In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,

“accreditation” means the status accorded a tertiary institution or programme that satisfies the relevant standards determined by the Board;

“Board” means the National Accreditation Board established under section 1;

“Executive Secretary” means the Executive Secretary appointed under section 14;

“function” includes powers and duties;

“institution” means tertiary educational institution;

“Minister” means Minister responsible for Education;

“Moral welfare” means wellbeing concerned with the goodness and badness of human character, the distinction between right and wrong within accepted standards of human behaviour;

“public funds” means money from the Consolidated Fund, the Contingency Fund and other funds under the authority of an Act of Parliament;

“operating” includes advertising programmes and enrolling students;

“public university” means a university sponsored from public funds; and “tertiary institution” includes a university, university college, post-secondary diploma awarding institution, professional body awarding certificates or diplomas or professional training institution.

#### Repeal and saving

**27.** (1) The National Accreditation Board Law, 1993 (P.N.D.C.L. 317) is hereby repealed.

(2) Despite the repeal of P.N.D.C.L. 317, the Regulations, notices, orders, directions, appointments or any other act lawfully made or done under the repealed enactment and in force immediately before the commencement of this Act shall be considered to have been made or done under this Act and shall continue to have effect until reviewed, cancelled or terminated.

Date of *Gazette* notification: 24th August, 2007

## ANNEXURE 11

### TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS ESTABLISHMENT AND ACCREDITATION REGULATION 2010, LI 1984

#### ARRANGEMENT OF REGULATIONS

##### *Regulation*

##### *Establishment of a tertiary institution*

1. Establishment of a tertiary institution
2. Application
3. Applicants
4. Assessment of application by the Board
5. Inspection of premises and evaluation
6. Authorization
7. Refusal, suspension or revocation of authorization

##### *Accreditation*

8. Accreditation
9. Appointment of accreditation panel
10. Consideration by the Board of report of an accreditation panel
11. Grant of accreditation
12. Renewal or suspension of accreditation
13. Proof of affiliation for award of certificates
14. Certificate of accreditation and variation or revocation of certificate

##### *Rights and obligations of accreditation institutions*

15. Obligation to maintain standards and comply with laws
16. Evaluation of performance and supervision
17. Rights of an accredited institution
18. Rights and obligations of a mentoring institution
19. President's Charter and award of degrees
20. Application for a charter

##### *Foreign registration*

21. Foreign registration
22. Assessment of an application by the Board
23. Inspection of premises, evaluation and grant of registration
- Refusal of application and suspension or revocation of registration

### *Miscellaneous provisions*

1. Institutional standards
2. Application of Regulations to both public and private institutions
3. Offences
4. Appeals
5. Publication
6. Interpretation

### **SCHEDULE**

IN exercise of the power conferred on the Minister responsible for Education by Section 25 of the National Accreditation Board Act, 2007 (Act 744) and on the recommendations of the Board, these Regulations are made this 17<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2010.

#### *Establishment of a tertiary institution*

#### **Establishment of a tertiary institution**

1. (1) A person may subject to the provisions of these Regulations establish a tertiary institution.
- (2) A person who intends to establish a tertiary institution shall apply to the National Accreditation Board.

#### **Application**

2. (1) The application shall
  - a. Be as in Form 1 of the Schedule; and
  - b. Be accompanied with the prescribed fee.
- (2) The applicant shall provide particulars relevant to the application including
  - a. the proposed name of the institution which shall be a name acceptable to the National Accreditation Board and duly registered at the Registrar-General's Department
  - b. the form and structures of governance of the academic and administrative affairs of the institution, with provision among others for a Governing Council with
    - i. the majority of the members resident in Ghana, and
    - ii. members from stakeholders with adequate knowledge of tertiary education management practices in Ghana,
  - c. Draft statutes embodying the rules and regulations by which the institution is to be governed to ensure democratic practices,
  - d. An outline of the academic programmes intended to be conducted at the institution.

The resources available or to be procured including finances, staff, library services and equipment appropriate to and adequate for the proposed academic programmes to be conducted at the institution.

- e. A proposed programme for the maintenance of the resources of the institution on a long-term basis, including the financial resources available to the institution and the origins of those resources,
- f. A timetable indicating a programme of action for the first three years, directed at the realization of the aims and objectives of the institution to be established,
- g. Steps that the institution intends to take to comply with standards formulated by the Board,
- h. Evidence that until it obtains its Charter, a tertiary institution is willing to affiliate the new institution to award its certificates to the products of the applicant's institutions;
- i. In the case of professional programmes, evidence that the statutory oversight or regulatory body will register the products for practice, and
- j. Any other information requested by the Board.

### **Applicants**

3. An application to establish a tertiary institution may be submitted to the Board by
  - a. a person who as an individual intends to be or is a sponsor of a tertiary institution;
  - b. a corporate body, that has as one of its objects the provision of tertiary education; or
  - c. the governing body of a post-secondary institution.

### **Assessment of application by the Board**

4. (1) On receipt of an application, the Board shall assess the application and may in writing request the applicant to provide additional information, particulars or documents within the period specified in the request.

(2) Where an applicant fails to comply with the request for additional information, within the specified time or an extended period, the application shall be considered withdrawn and may only be processed on the payment of a new application fee.

(3) An application that lapses may be re-submitted.

- (4) The Board shall consider among others the following in assessing an application:
  - a. the need for the establishment of the institution in the area of study concerned;
  - b. the course of study or programmes proposed by the applicant ;
  - c. the ability of the applicant to provide the requisite teaching and learning facilities for the type of programmes to which the application relates;
  - d. the financial resources available to achieve the objects of the application;
  - e. the criteria for selection of personnel and method of management proposed by the applicant for the management of the institution; and



- f. the suitability of the premises and the environment of the proposed institution, particularly in respect of health, congenial location and safety standards.

### **Inspection of premises and evaluation**

- 5. (1) The Board shall within twenty-one days after receipt of an application constitute an inspection team composed of persons that the Board may determine to assess the suitability of the premises for an institution under regulation 4 (4) (f).
- (2) The team shall within twenty-one days after its constitution,
  - a. conduct an inspection of the premises or environment;
  - b. conduct an inspection of the facilities available for the proposed institution, and take into account factors that it considers necessary to evaluate the application; and
  - c. make an evaluation of the application.
- (3) The team shall, within fourteen days after the inspection and evaluation submit a written report to the Board.
- (4) The applicant shall pay the fee determined by the Board for the inspection and the evaluation of the application.

### **Authorisation**

- 6. (1) the Board may issue to an applicant a Certificate of Authorization as in Form 2 of the Schedule, where the Board is of the opinion that  
The information in the application is accurate and the applicant satisfies the standards set by the Board for the establishment of a tertiary institution of the kind proposed to be set up;
  - a. the resources declared are available or likely to be available;
  - b. the applicant is following a realistic plan to achieve the aims for which the institution is to be established;
  - c. the institution, when established, is likely to attain and maintain high academic standards and discipline; and
  - d. the establishment of the institution conforms with the national policies on tertiary education and manpower needs of the country.
- (2) The Certificate of Authorisation entitles the applicant to take the following steps in respect of the institution:
  - a. set up a governing body for the institution;
  - b. commence or continue with the mobilization of financial resources needed;
  - c. commence or continue the development of physical facilities; and
  - d. commence or continue assembling academic facilities;
- (3) The Certificate of Authorisation does not allow the applicant to advertise for or admit students.
- (4) The Certificate of Authorisation does not guarantee an automatic grant of any other applications.

- (5) The Board shall publish in the *Gazette* the name and particulars of an institution issued with a Certificate of Authorisation.
- (6) A Certificate of Authorisation is valid for a period not exceeding three years.
- (7) A Certificate of Authorisation is not transferable.

### **Refusal, suspension or revocation of authorisation**

7. (1) The Board may refuse to issue a Certificate of Authorisation where the Board realizes that the applicant is not likely to procure the academic, physical and other resources necessary for the establishment of the institution to which the application relates.

(2) The Board may suspend or revoke a Certificate of Authorisation if:

- a. the holder of the Certificate of Authorisation fails to obtain a final approval and accreditation within three years after the grant of the Certificate of Authorisation or fails within the three years to make progress that is considered substantial by the Board towards the establishment of the institution;

the holder notifies the Board of its intention not to proceed with the establishment of the institution; or

- b. in the opinion of the Board, fundamental changes have occurred and had those changes been in existence at the time of the consideration of the application, the authorisation would not have been granted.

(3) A Certificate of Authorisation shall not be suspended or revoked unless the institution has been given at least six months' notice to rectify the situation in issue and the institution has failed to do so.

(4) The Board, shall on suspension of a Certificate of Authorisation indicate the steps which the holder must take before the authorization may be restored.

(5) The Board shall not consider a subsequent application by the same person, or in respect of the same or substantially similar proposal within two years after the refusal of an application or revocation of a Certificate of Authorisation unless good cause is shown by the applicant.

(6) The Board shall publish in the *Gazette* a notice of suspension or revocation of a Certificate of Authorization.

### **Accreditation**

8. (1) A holder of a valid Certificate of Authorisation may within three years from the date of the grant of the Certificate of Authorisation apply to the Board for accreditation unless the Board otherwise decides.

(2) An application for accreditation shall be accompanied with

- a. A draft of the statutes of the institution containing
  - i. The name and location of the institution
  - ii. Objectives for which the institution has been established;
  - iii. The membership of the governing body of the institution, a majority of whom shall be resident in the country and where they are not citizens evidence of valid resident permits;

iv. The mode in which rules may be made for the better functioning and governance of the institution;  
Proof of affiliation to a recognized mentoring institution within or outside the country; or

- v. Proof of affiliation to a recognized examination body within or outside the country;
- b. A list of academic and senior administrative staff employed or expected to be employed by the institution and their qualifications, and curriculum vitae, and at least for the first year of the institution 's operations and for each programme, the personal particulars of each Head of Department and two other academic staff who are to be employed full time;
  - c. The anticipated number of students to be enrolled in each programme of the institution;
  - d. A statement of the size and quality of the library, and equipment developed for each programme offered or to be offered at the institution;
  - e. A development plan for the running of the institution which embodies
    - i. A financial projection for running and maintenance of the institution, and
    - ii. A physical development plan for the institution,
  - f. A statement of the financial resources that are available for the exclusive use of the institution, and which is certified by a person qualified to practise as an accountant and which indicates the origins of the resources; and
  - g. Any other information that the Board may require.

### **Appointment of accreditation panel**

9. (1) The Board shall appoint an accreditation panel in accordance with section 9 of the National Accreditation Board Act, 2007 (Act 744) for the purpose of considering an application for accreditation.

(2) The panel shall be appointed within thirty days after receipt of an application which the Board considers complete for the purposes of the accreditation of the institution.

(3) A panel shall examine and assess whether the applicant has

- a. Adequate physical and academic facilities required to commence and continue academic work, and  
Assembled adequate human resources and other resources required for effective academic work, and enquire into and ascertain the veracity or otherwise of the particulars submitted in the application and further make other investigations that are relevant to the application as it considers necessary.

(4) The panel shall submit its report to the Board within thirty days after the date of its appointment.

### **Consideration by the Board of report of an accreditation panel**

1. (1) The Board shall consider the report of an accreditation panel, make its comments and indicate any revision or amendment required to the application within sixty days.

(2) The Board may refer the report of the panel to the applicant for its comments.

(3) Any comments made or directives issued under sub regulation (1) shall specify whether or not the institution has complied with standards set by the Board for the institution.

### **Grant of accreditation**

2. (1) the Board shall grant accreditation to the institution within thirty days, after consideration of the report and the comments of the applicant, if it is satisfied that
- a. The statutes or regulations of the institution as submitted or amended provides a sound basis for the academic and administrative functions of the institution;
  - b. The institution has effectively organised adequate human, physical, financial and other resources for an educational programme comparable to that of similar institutions authorised to operate in the country; and
  - c. The institution has complied with the relevant standards specified by the Board.
- (2) The Board shall not accept an application for accreditation if the applicant has on three previous occasions submitted an application which does not differ in form or material from previous applications.
- (3) The period of accreditation shall be as specified in the certificate of accreditation.

### **Renewal or suspension of accreditation**

- (1) The institution may apply for the renewal of the institution or programme accreditation and the application shall be made six months before the expiry of the stated period of accreditation,
- (2) The Board shall suspend the accreditation where there is breach of the conditions of the institutional or programme accreditation.

### **Proof of affiliation for award of certificates**

10. (1) The Board shall satisfy itself that the applicant has a firm commitment or proof of affiliation with a recognized institution or examination body responsible for the award of its certificates.
- (2) The Board shall satisfy itself that the applicant is affiliated to a recognized institution or examination body which shall award its certificate where affiliation was not concluded before the first accreditation was granted.

### **Certificate of accreditation and variation or revocation of certificate**

11. (1) The Board shall issue to an institution a Certificate of Institutional Accreditation as in Form 3 of the Schedule and a Certificate of Programme Accreditation as in Form 4 of the Schedule, on the grant of accreditation to the institution.
- (2) The Board may
- a. vary a certificate of accreditation to conform with national education policy;
  - or
  - b. revoke a certificate of accreditation

- i. where the Board is of the opinion that the institution concerned is not carrying out its functions in a manner or is in breach of its certificate of accreditation, or any provision of the Act; or
- ii. The revocation is in line with national education policy and the Constitution.

(3) The variation or revocation of a certificate of accreditation shall be communicated in writing to the institution concerned.

(2) (4) the Board shall as soon as practicable after the revocation of a certificate of accreditation cause a notice of the revocation to be published in the Gazette and the institution concerned shall cease to be a tertiary institution at the expiry of one year after the date of the publication of the revocation notice, except that the revocation of the certificate shall not affect the validity of degrees previously granted by the institution

### *Rights and obligations of accreditation institutions*

#### **Obligation to maintain standards and comply with laws**

- 12.** Each accredited institution shall ensure that
- a. Standards determined under these Regulations in respect of that institution are maintained;
  - b. Lawful instructions issued by the Board or any other authority empowered to do so under the Act or any other enactment are complied with;
  - c. New programmes or instructions are not undertaken under these Regulations without the prior consent of the Board;
  - d. The institution respects the terms of the accreditation; and
  - e. The institution does not change any of the information on which the accreditation decision was based without prior approval of the Board.

#### **Evaluation of performance and supervision**

- 13.** (1) An institution authorized to operate under these Regulations shall prepare and submit to the Board,
- a. An annual report in the prescribed format of its activities for each academic year within three months after the end of the academic year; and
  - b. After each five-year period, a detailed evaluation by the institution of steps taken towards the achievement of its aims and objectives.
- (2) An institution that fails to comply with sub regulation (1) shall have its accreditation suspended.

#### **Rights of an accredited institution**

- 14.** (1) Subject to these Regulations, an accredited institution shall have full autonomy in the management of its affairs and programmes in accordance with its own statutes.

(2) An accredited institution may

- a. employ staff,
- b. determine what may be taught and how it may be taught,
- c. operate as a tutorial institution, and

determine which students of the institution have attained the required standard of proficiency and qualify to be awarded certificates, diplomas or degrees in consultation with the mentoring institution.

### **Rights and obligations of a mentoring institution**

1. Each mentoring institution shall ensure that

- a. It has a faculty or department that offers the programme for which affiliation is being sought;
- b. A co-ordinator not below the rank of a senior lecturer is appointed to maintain an active linkage with the mentor institution;
- c. The appointment of an experienced external examiner or moderator for the programme is done in consultation with the mentored institution;
- d. An annual report or appraisal of the mentored institution's activities for each academic year is prepared;
- e. After each four-year period, a detailed evaluation of steps of the achievement of the aims and objectives of the mentored institution is submitted to the Board;
- f. The graduands of the mentored institutions merit the certificates awarded to them; and
- g. The records of students of the mentored institution are kept in electronic form.

President's charter and award of degrees

2. (1) An accredited institution shall not issue certificates or award its own degrees, diplomas or honorary degree without a Charter granted to it for that purpose by the President.

(2) An accredited institution shall operate under the supervision of a recognized institution which shall award its certificates for the accredited institution under its supervision until the grant of a Charter to the accredited institution.

(3) The Board shall suspend or revoke an accreditation where an institution contravenes sub regulation (1).

### **Application for charter**

3. (1) An accredited institution without a Charter may apply to the Board for recommendation for the grant of a Charter.

(2) The Board shall for the purpose of the recommendation, consider

the length of period which shall not be less than ten years within which the applicant has successfully operated under the supervision of a mentoring institution.

- a. the governance structure of the accredited institution;
- b. the quality of teaching, research, the academic staff and work of the applicant;
- c. the financial, material and teaching facilities and resources at the disposal of or owned by the applicant; and
- d. other factors that the Board determines to be appropriate.

(3) The Board shall make its recommendation to the President through the Minister for the grant of a Charter or otherwise as the Board considers appropriate.

(4) The grant of a Charter shall be as in Form 5 of the Schedule and shall be published in the *Gazette* by the Board.

(5) The grant of a Charter to an institution shall signify

- a. full autonomy for the institution,
- b. end of affiliation, and
- c. a right to award degrees, diplomas, certificates including honorary degrees, diplomas or certificates.

(6) A Charter may be suspended or revoked by the President on the recommendation of the Board.

(7) The grant of a Charter does not relieve an institution of the obligation to operate only in facilities approved by the Board or to run only accredited programmes or courses.

### *Foreign registration*

#### **Foreign registration**

15.(1) An institution qualifies for foreign registration where the source of instruction for the programme of study is outside this country.

(2) The application shall

be accompanied with the prescribed fee; and

- a. contain particulars relevant to the application including

- i. contact details of the representative of the parent institution in Ghana;
- ii. certificates of registration from the Registrar-General's Department;
- iii. particulars of the parent institution;
- iv. evidence of the accreditation status of the parent institution in the home country;
- v. contractual agreement between the local representative and the parent institution;
- vi. outline of academic programmes intended to be conducted at the institution;
- vii. resources available or to be procured including financial resources, physical facilities and equipment for proposed academic programmes;
- viii. documents detailing operations of the institution in Ghana including management of the institution;
- ix. steps that are to be taken to comply with quality assurance demands by the Board, and
- x. any other information requested by the Board.

(3) An application for registration shall be made to the Board and may be submitted by

- a. a person who is a sponsor of the institution to be registered or who intends to be a sponsor of the institution to be registered;
- b. a corporate body having one of its objects as facilitation of access to tertiary education; or
- c. the governing body of a post-secondary institution

### **Assessment of an application by the Board**

**16.**(1) On receipt of an application, the Board shall assess the application and may in writing require the applicant to provide additional information within the period specified in the request.

(2) Where an applicant fails to comply with the request for additional information, within the specified time or an extended period, the application shall be considered withdrawn and may only be processed on the payment of a new application fee.

(3) The Board shall consider the following in assessing an application;

- a. the ability of the applicant to provide the requisite facilities for the type of programme to which the application relates;
- b. the suitability of the premises and the environment of the proposed institution;



- c. the method of operation of the institution;
- d. value for money and security issues; and
- e. how the institution is to be managed.

### **Inspection of premises, evaluation and grant of registration**

17.(1) The Board shall within fourteen days after receipt of an application for foreign registration which the Board considers complete for the purposes of foreign registration, constitute an inspection team composed of persons determined by the Board to assess the suitability of the premises for that institution.

(2) The team shall within sixteen days after its constitution conduct an inspection of

- a. the premises, if any, or of the environment of the proposed institution;
- b. the facilities available for the proposed institution; and
- c. make an evaluation of the application.

(3) The team shall, within fourteen days after the inspection and evaluation, submit a written report to the Board.

(4) The cost of inspection and the evaluation of the application shall be borne by the applicant.

(5) Where the Board is satisfied that the information in the application is accurate and satisfies the Board's requirements, the Board shall issue a Certificate of Foreign Registration as in Form 6 of the Schedule to the institution.

### **Refusal of application and suspension or revocation of registration**

18.(1) The Board may refuse an application for foreign registration where the Board realises that the applicant is not likely to procure the academic, physical and other resources necessary for the establishment of the institution to which the application relates.

(2) the Board may suspend or revoke a registration if;

- a. The holder of the registration is unable to establish and operate the institution within three years after the grant of the registration;
- b. The holder of a registration which has expired fails to renew the registration;
- c. The holder notifies the Board of its intention not to proceed with the establishment of the institution; or

d. In the opinion of the Board, fundamental changes have occurred and had these changes been in existence at the time of the consideration of the application by the Board, the application would not have been granted.

(3) The Board shall not suspend or revoke a registration unless the institution has been given at least six months' notice to rectify the situation and the institution has failed to do so.

(4) The Board shall, on suspension of a registration indicate the steps which the holder must take before the application is restored.

(5) The Board shall not consider a subsequent application by the same applicant, or in respect of the same or substantially similar proposal within two years after the refusal or revocation of the registration unless good cause is shown by the applicant.

(6) the Board shall publish in the Gazette a notice of suspension or revocation of a registration.

### *Miscellaneous provisions*

#### **Institutional standards**

19.(1) The Board shall prepare and publish in the Gazette standards to govern the performance, operation and general conduct of institutions authorised to operate under these Regulations.

(2) Without limiting the scope of subregulation (1), institutional standards shall, in particular, indicate for each category or kind of institution,

- a. the minimum entry requirements for admission to any certificate, diploma or degree programme being or to be offered by the institution;
- b. the minimum number and duration of programmes at the certificate, diploma or degree levels that ought to be offered;
- c. the acceptable student-staff ratio for effective teaching and learning;
- d. the standards of proficiency assessed in terms of content and contact hours which students are expected to attain in respect of a certificate, diploma or degree levels;
- e. the level of academic training required of teaching staff of the institution at the certificate, diploma or degree programme;
- f. detailed specifications on space requirements and relevant services for each class and for the absolute number of students expected to be enrolled in, or activity to be carried out in the institution;

the basic ethical standards that should regulate the conduct of members of the institution;

- g. a development plan for the running of the institution which embodies
  - i. financial projections for running and maintenance of the institution;
  - ii. a physical development plan for the institution; and
  - iii. a strategic plan for the institution;
- h. a statement of the financial resources, including their origins, for the exclusive use of the institution, certified by a person qualified to practice as an accountant; and

- i. an inventory of the physical facilities including land owned by and available for the exclusive use of the institution.

### **Application of regulations to both public and private institutions**

**20.** These Regulations apply to both public and private institutions, including foreign institutions operating off-shore campuses or distance learning centres in Ghana.

### **Offences**

**21. (1)** a person shall not

- a. Advertise or continue to advertise or in any manner hold itself out to the public as a tertiary institution;
- b. Admit or continue to admit students or conduct courses or programmes of instruction leading to an award of certificates, diplomas or degrees;
- c. Continue to operate as a tertiary institution where the institution's accreditation or registration has been suspended, revoked or elapsed;
- d. Advertise or continue to advertise or run a programme in an unauthorized building; or
- e. Otherwise embark on or continue with any activity preparatory to the establishment of facilities for tertiary education after the commencement of these Regulations unless the person or that institution complies with these Regulations.

(2) a person or institution that contravenes a provision of these Regulations commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding two hundred and fifty penalty units or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding one year or to both.

### **Appeals**

**22.** A person aggrieved by a decision of the Board taken under these Regulations may

- a. Apply to the Board for a review of the decision of the Board within thirty days after the date of being informed of that decision in the first instance, and
- b. Appeal to the Ministers subsequently, who may give orders or instructions that the Minister considers appropriate.

### **Publication**

**23. (1)** The Board shall on

- a. Receipt of an application;
- b. Grant of an authorization;
- c. Grant of an accreditation;
- d. Grant of a Charter by the President; or
- e. The registration of a foreign institution

publish in the Gazette and any newspaper or national publication that it may determine, notice of the application, authorization, accreditation, grant of a Charter or registration.

(2) The Board shall publish

- a. Board decisions of public interest on specific institutions; and
- b. Issues affecting quality assurance in tertiary education

### **Interpretation**

**24.** In these Regulations, unless the context otherwise requires “Board” means the National Accreditation Board established under section 1 of the National Accreditation Board Act, 2007 (Act 744);

“Charter” means an assent by the President for a tertiary institution to award its own degrees, diplomas and certificates;

“foreign registration” means a process for granting recognition to Ghanaians to access tertiary academic or professional qualifications from institutions outside Ghana;

“mentoring institution” means an accredited degree-awarding institution with a charter that supervises an institution without a charter and awards its certificates, diplomas and degrees for the institution under its supervision;

“private institution” means any tertiary institution established and maintained with funds other than public funds;

“public funds” means money from the Consolidated Fund, the Contingency Fund and other funds established by an Act of Parliament;

“public institution” means a tertiary institution established and maintained or assisted out of public funds; and

“standards” means acceptable norms, practices and quality of resources available in an institution.

SCHEDULE

Form 1

**NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD  
APPLICATION FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF A TERTIARY INSTITUTION**

(Regulation 2 (1) (a))

NB: *If any space is insufficient for the information required, please provide additional information on a separate sheet and where documents are needed, certified copies are to be attached.*

1. (a) Name of proposed institution:  
.....

(b) Physical location (Street Name, House No., nearest popular building):

(c) Postal address, Telephone or Fax No., email address:  
.....

2. (a) Name of proposed proprietor:  
.....

Highest qualification (if any):

(b) Residence/Physical location (Street Name, House No., nearest popular building):

.....  
District:

.....  
Region:

(c) Postal Address  
.....

3. (a) Name of Proposed Principal/Head/President  
(B) Residence/Physical Location (Street Name, House No., nearest popular building):  
.....

Town: .....

District: .....

Region: .....

(c) Postal Address Telephone/Fax No., Email Address:

.....  
.....  
(d) Qualification and experience:  
.....

4. Historical background  
.....

5. Mission and vision of institution  
.....  
.....

6. Curriculum and terminal qualifications  
:.....

6.1 State titles of courses/programmes:  
.....  
.....

*1.1 Follow the format below. List courses/programmes, the duration taken for each (in number of academic years or semesters or weeks or other as applicable) and qualification obtained on a successful completion:*

TITLE OF PROGRAMME	DURATION	TERMINAL QUALIFICATION

2. Legal status (state legal instrument where applicable) and sponsorship (Government/Private (specify owner)).  
.....  
.....

3. Facilities

3.1 Land

Specify sites (locations), land area and the purpose for each site.

.....  
.....

6.2 Academic facilities

- i. Lecture/classrooms, staff office, staff common rooms (state number and sitting capacity for each office/staff common room)

.....  
.....

- ii. Library:

State seating capacity and number of books, number of journals and number of different titles

.....  
.....

- iii. Laboratories including computer laboratories and workshop (*state numbers and purpose for each*)

.....  
.....

- iv. Others (*Please specify*)

.....  
.....  
.....

7. Water sources (*State source of drinking water*)

.....  
.....

8. Electricity ( *State source of supply, e.g. Generator, National Grid ECG, VRA*)

.....  
.....

9. Telephone/fax/e-mail/internet connectivity (*state which facilities are available and specify numbers or addresses as necessary*)

.....  
10. Structural organization of institution (Provide an Organizational Chart)  
.....  
.....

11. Staff and staff development

- i. State separately approved establishment for teaching staff and non-teaching staff. State also number of staff-at-post; in each category differentiate between full-time and part-time staff:

.....  
.....  
.....

12. Provide a list of teaching staff and qualifications, where obtained and with dates, programme being taught. (Separate full-time from part-time).

.....  
.....

- i. Subjects or programmes available

.....  
.....

- ii. Provide a list of non-teaching staff (i.e. academic support staff like laboratory technicians) by qualification, state where obtained with dates and area of operations.

.....  
.....

- iii. State particulars of employing authority

.....  
.....  
.....

- iv. State the staff development plan of the institution

.....  
.....

1. Entry requirements

State entry requirements for each (or group of) programme(s) courses.

.....

2. Enrolment statistics



State total enrolment (put No. of females in brackets) and provide breakdown as per format below

Title of Programme/ Course	Total for all Levels	Levels (Eg. HND, 1 <sup>st</sup> Degree, Etc.)			

3. Students' matters (state guidance and counseling, games facilities and Co-curricula activities)

.....  
 .....

12. Health, safety and environmental sanitation (*state arrangements that have been made for each of the above*)

.....  
 .....

13. Teaching-Learning process (state instructional methods)

.....  
 .....

14. State mode of examination and certification

.....  
 .....

15. Finances and fees charged

- a. State source(s) of income

.....  
 .....

- b. Levels of fees charged (in cedis) per programme by levels for Ghanaians and expatriates (non-Ghanaians)

Title of programme and level	Ghanaians	Expatriates

1. Declaration

I ..... the proprietor of the proposed institution hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the information given on this form and attached is correct.

*Date*

*Signature of proprietor/applicants”*

FORM 2

REPUBLIC OF GHANA

**NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD**

(Ministry of Education)

**CERTIFICATION OF AUTHORISATION**

*(Regulation 6 (1))*

In response to the application dated .....authorisation is hereby given to

Name and Address of Applicant:

.....  
.....

Fax No.:

.....

Tel. No.:

.....

E-mail:

.....

to commence preparations for the establishment of a new Tertiary Institution to be known as

.....

2. Under the authorisation ..... (Name of applicant)

- i. may commence or continue the assembly of academic resources (including finances, staff, library services, building and equipment) appropriate to and adequate for the proposed academic programme to be conducted at the institution,
- ii. may commence or continue the development of physical facilities in accordance with the norms specified in the “National Accreditation Board” Standards for Physical for Tertiary Institutions”,
- iii. will come up with a time table indicating steps expected to be taken in the next three years towards the realisation of the aims and objectives for which the institution is to be established, and
- iv. shall neither advertise for nor admit students.

3. This authorisation is valid for three years with effect from the ..... day of

.....

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
*National Accreditation Board*

FORM 3

REPUBLIC OF GHANA

**NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD**  
(Ministry of Education)

**CERTIFICATE OF INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION**  
(Regulation 14(1))

This is to certify that the Tertiary Institution known as

.....

and situated at

.....

has been given accreditation and registered in terms of regulation 14(1) of the Tertiary Institutions (Establishment and Accreditation) Regulations, 2011 (L.I. 1984) for a period of ..... years with effect from ..... to .....

CHAIRPERSON  
*National Accreditation Board*

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
*National Accreditation Board*

*Certificate Number* ..... *Seal:* .....

*This certificate remains the property of the National Accreditation Board (Ministry of Education) and must be surrendered on demand*

FORM 4

REPUBLIC OF GHANA

**NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD**

(Ministry of Education)

**CERTIFICATE OF PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION**

*(Regulation 14(1))*

This is to certify that the Tertiary Institution known as

.....

and situated at

.....

has on the.....day of..... in the year .....  
been given accreditation and registered in terms of regulation 14(1) of the Tertiary  
Institutions (Establishment and Accreditation) Regulations, 2011 (L.I. 1984) to run the  
following programme(s).

Title of Programme

Level

Subject

Examination Authority.....

for a period of accreditation as shall be determined by the Board with effect from

..... to .....

CHAIRPERSON  
*National Accreditation Board*

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
*National Accreditation Board*

*Certificate Number* .....*Seal:* .....

*This certificate remains the property of the National Accreditation Board (Ministry of Education) and must be surrendered on demand.*

FORM 5

REPUBLIC OF GHANA

**NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD**

(Ministry of Education)

**CHARTER**

*(Regulation 20(4))*

This is to certify that the Tertiary Institution known as

.....

and situated at

.....

has on the .....day of ..... in the year .....  
been given accreditation and registered in terms of regulation 20(4) of the Tertiary  
Institutions (Establishment and Accreditation) Regulations, 2011 (L.I. 1984) to award its  
own certificates, diplomas and degrees for its programmes that have been accredited by  
the National Accreditation Board.

**H.E. The President of the  
Minister of Education  
Republic of Ghana**

*Certificate Number* .....*Seal:* .....

*This certificate remains the property of the National Accreditation Board (Ministry of  
Education) and must be surrendered on demand.*

FORM 6

REPUBLIC OF GHANA

**NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BOARD**

(Ministry of Education)

**CERTIFICATE OF FOREIGN REGISTRATION**

*(Regulation 23(5))*

This is to certify that the Tertiary Institution known as

.....

and situated at

.....

has on the .....day of ..... in the year .....  
been registered in terms of regulation 23(5) of the Tertiary Institutions (Establishment and  
Accreditation) Regulations, 2011 (L.I. 1984).

CHAIRPERSON  
*National Accreditation Board*

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
*National Accreditation Board*

*Certificate Number* .....*Seal:* .....

*This certificate remains the property of the National Accreditation Board (Ministry of  
Education) and must be surrendered on demand.*

MR. ALEX TETTEY-ENYO (M.P)

Minister of Education

Date of Gazette notification: 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2010  
Entry into force: 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2011.

Date of Gazette notification: 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2010  
Entry into force: 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2011

**ANNEXURE 12**  
**THE FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY-FOURTH**  
**ACT**  
**OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA**  
**ENTITLED**  
**THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION**  
**ACT, 1993**

ACT 454

An act to establish a National Council for Tertiary Education to oversee the proper administration of institutions designated as institutions of tertiary education in Ghana; to provide for the composition of the Council and provide for related matters.

DATE OF ASSENT: 6<sup>th</sup> July, 1993

BE IT ENACTED BY PARLIAMENT as follows:

Establishment of the National Council for Tertiary Education

1. There is established by this Act a body to be known as the National Council for Tertiary Education in this Act referred to as “the Council”.

Functions of the Council

2. (1) The functions of the Council are:

a) to advise the Minister on the development of institutions of tertiary education in Ghana;

b) to enquire into the financial needs of the institutions of tertiary education and advise the Minister according;



- c) to recommend to the Minister for the purposes of the preparation of the annual national education budget :
  - i. block allocations of funds towards running costs; and
  - ii. grants towards capital expenditure of each institution of tertiary education, indicating how the allocations are to be disbursed;
- d) to recommend national standards and norms, including standards and norms on staff, costs, accommodation and time utilization, for the approval of the Minister and to monitor the implementation of any approved national standards and norms by the institutions;
- e) to advise the institutions of tertiary education on the applications for and acceptance of external assistance in accordance with government policy;
- f) to advise the Minister generally on rates of remuneration and other conditions of service of staff of the institutions;
- g) to publish any other functions provided in this Act; and such other functions relating to tertiary education as are incidental to the functions specified in this Act.

(2) The Council shall, in advising the Minister under this Act take into account the total national resources, needs and development programmes, especially those of the entire education sector.

#### Composition of Council

3. (1) The Council shall consist of :
- a) a Chairman, who shall be a person of wide academic and administrative experience;
  - b) one person with extensive experience in university work;
  - c) two heads of universities and university colleges in Ghana representing the universities and university colleges on a rotational basis;
  - d) a principal of a Polytechnic in Ghana representing the polytechnics on a rotational basis;
  - e) a representative of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research;
  - f) Chairman, National Board of Accreditation;
  - g) Chairman, National Teacher Training Council;

- h) one representative of the Association of Ghana Industries;
- i) one person with considerable experience of school administration in Ghana;
- j) a representative of the National Development Planning Commission;
- k) a representative of the Minister for Finance;
- l) a representative of the Minister for Education;
- m) a representative of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences;
- n) a representative of the Minister for Employment and Social Welfare; and
- o) four other persons at least two of whom shall be women.

(2) The Chairman and members of the Council shall be appointed by the President acting in consultation with the Council of State

(3) The Chairman shall hold office for four years and is eligible for re-appointment.

#### Allowances of Chairman and other members of Council

4. The salaries and allowances payable and the facilities and privileges available to the Chairman and the other members of the Council shall be determined by the President in accordance with article 71 (1) (d) of the Constitution.

#### Qualifications of members of Council

5. (1) No person is qualified to be a member of the Council who :

a) has been adjudged or otherwise declared:

i. Bankrupt under any law in force in Ghana and has not been discharged, or

ii. To be of unsound mind or is detained as criminal lunatic under any law in force in Ghana; or

b) has been convicted:

i. For high crime under the Constitution or for treason or for an offence involving the security of the State, fraud, dishonesty or moral turpitude; or

ii. For any other offence punishable by death or by a sentence of not less than ten years; or

- c) has been found by the report of a commission or a committee of inquiry to be incompetent to hold public office or is a person in respect of whom a commission or committee of inquiry has found that while being a public officer, he acquired assets unlawfully or defrauded the state or misused or abused his office or wilfully acted in a manner prejudicial to the interest of the State, and the findings have not been set aside on appeal or judicial review; or
- d) is under sentence of death or other sentence of imprisonment imposed on him by a court; or
- e) is otherwise disqualified by a law for the being in force.

(2) Members of the Council shall be persons of high moral character and integrity and the President shall in appointing a member have regard to the expertise and experience of the person and his ability to contribute to the work of the Council.

(3) Without prejudice to subsections (1) and (2) of this section a member of the Council shall cease to be a member if, in the case of a person possessed of professional qualification he is disqualified from practising his profession in Ghana by an order of any competent authority made in respect of him personally or he ceases to be a member otherwise than at his own request.

### **Tenure of office of members of Council**

6. (1) A member of the Council, other than the Chairman or an ex-officio member, shall serve for a term of three years, but is eligible for re-appointment.

(2) No member of the Council other than an ex-officio member shall serve for more than two terms in succession.

(3) A member of the Council other than one appointed as an ex-officio member may at any time by notice in writing to the President resign his office.

(4) A member who is absent from four consecutive meetings of the Council without sufficient reason shall cease to be a member.

(5) No member shall hold office under more than one provision under section 3 (1) of this Act and where at any time a member becomes the holder of two offices on the Council, he shall notify one of the institutions for which he represents for another person to be nominated for appointment in his stead.

### **Filling of vacancies**

7. (1) Where the Chairman of the Council dies, resigns, is removed from office or is absent from Ghana for a continuous period exceeding three months or is by reason of illness unable to perform the functions of his office, the members of the Council shall

elect one of their members to act as Chairman until such time as the Chairman is able to perform the functions of his office or until a new Chairman is appointed.

(2) Where a person is elected as Chairman or appointed as a member to fill a vacancy he shall hold office for the remainder of the term of the previous Chairman or member and shall, subject to the provisions of this Act, be eligible for re-appointment, re-election or re-nomination.

## **Meetings**

8. (1) The Council shall meet for the dispatch of business at a times and places as the Chairman may decide but shall meet at least once every three months.

(2) The Chairman shall, at the request in writing of not less than six members of the Council, call an extraordinary meeting of the Council at such time and place as he may determine.

(3) The Chairman shall preside at every meeting of the Council and in his absence the members present shall elect one of their number to preside.

(4) The quorum at a meeting of the Council shall be eight.

(5) All questions proposed at a meeting of the Council shall be decided by a majority of the votes of the members present and voting and where the votes are equal the Chairman or the person presiding shall have a casting vote.

(6) The Council may at any time co-opt any person to act as an adviser at its meeting but the person shall not be entitled to vote on any matter for decision by the Council.

(7) No act or proceeding of the Council shall be invalidated by a vacancy among its members or a defect in the appointment of a member.

(8) Subject to this section, the Council shall regulate the procedure for its meetings.

## **Council to appoint committees**

9. (1) The Council may appoint committees consisting of members or non-members or both to exercise or advise the Council on any of its functions under this Act except that a committee consisting entirely of non-members may only advise the Council.

(2) The members of a committee appointed under subsection (1) may be paid such allowances as may be determined by the Minister in consultation with the Minister responsible for Finance.

(3) No head of an institution to which this Act applies shall be a member of a committee which is appointed to consider and make recommendations on the allocations for recurrent or capital grant to any institution of tertiary education.

10. (1) There shall be appointed by the President acting in accordance with the advice of the Council given in consultation with the Council. Public Services Commission such officers as the Council may require for the effective discharge of its functions under this Act.

### **Executive Secretary**

11. (1) The President, acting in accordance with the advice of the Council given in consultation with the Public Services Commission, shall appoint an officer to be designated as the Executive Secretary to the Council.

(2) The President may, subject to such conditions as he may think fit, delegate his function under subsection (1) by direction in writing to the Council or to a member of the Council or to any public officer.

(3) The Executive Secretary shall be the head of the Secretariat of the Council and shall, under the general supervision and direction of the Council, be responsible for the day-to-day management and administration of the affairs of the Council.

(4) The Executive Secretary shall:

- a) be the Secretary to the Council and shall attend all meetings of the Council; and
- b) in consultation with the Chairman arrange the business and cause to be recorded and kept minutes of all meetings of the Council.

### **Expenses and funding of Council**

12. Parliament shall provide the Council with such funds as it may require for the implementation of its functions; the Council may also receive monies from any other source approved by the Minister responsible for Finance.

### **Accounts**

13. (1) The Council shall keep proper books of accounts and proper records in relation to the accounts and shall prepare at the end of each financial year within a period of three months after the end of the financial year, a statement of its accounts in such form as the Auditor-General may direct.

(2) The books and accounts of the Council shall each year be audited by the Auditor-General or an auditor approved by him and a report on the audit shall be submitted to the Council.

## **Submission of audited accounts of institutions to the Council**

14. (1) Every institution to which this Act applies shall within two months of the receipt of its audited accounts submit a copy of the report with its comments on it to the Council.

(2) The Council shall within two months after receipt of an audited account under subsection (1) of this section submit the report with its comments on it to the Minister.

## **Annual report**

15. (1) The Minister shall submit to Parliament within six months after the end of each financial year a report on the activities and operations of the Council during the preceding year.

(2) The annual report of the Council shall include:

a) a copy of the audited accounts of the Council together with the Auditor-General's report on it; and

b) such other information as Parliament may request.

(3) A copy of the annual report shall be submitted to the President and the Minister for Information.

## **Responsibility for Council**

16. The Minister for Education shall have ministerial responsibility for the Council.

## **Regulations**

17. The Minister may on the advice of the Council by legislative instrument, make regulations for the proper implementation of the provisions of this Act.

## **Interpretation**

18. In this Act unless the context otherwise requires:

“institution” means an institution of tertiary education;

“institution of tertiary education” means:

a) University or university college;

b) Polytechnic;

- c) Other diploma awarding institutions; and
- d) Post secondary school institutions;

“Minister” means the Minister responsible for Education.

## ANNEXURE 13

### APPROVAL LETTERS FROM INSTITUTIONS

P. O. Box CO 2481, Tema, Ghana.  
Tel: 0303-30 70 80  
0303-31 00 89  
0303-91 01 41  
Website: www.datalinkuniversity.com  
www.datalink.edu.gh  
Email: info@datalink.edu.gh



Accredited by  
National Accreditation Board  
and Affiliated to KNUST

---

**DATA LINK INSTITUTE**

---

1<sup>st</sup> June, 2016

VICTORIA ADZOA TSEDZAH  
METHODIST UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, GHANA  
P. O. BIX DC640  
DANSONMAN – ACCRA

Dear Madam,

**RE: REQUEST FOR ORGANIZATIONAL PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH  
AT DATA LINK INSTITUTE**

We refer to your request on the above subject and wish to inform you that permission has been granted for you to organize your research at Data Link institute.

Please do contact the Registrar on any further assistance that might be needed.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. I. Adu-Okoree".

Rev. B. I. Adu-Okoree

(Registrar)

CAMPUS: COMMUNITY 10 NEW ROAD, TEMA



IN THE NAME OF THE MOST HIGH

**ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
GHANA**



11<sup>th</sup> May, 2016

Date:.....

GA/01

Our Ref:.....

Your Ref:.....

Website: [www.iug.edu.gh](http://www.iug.edu.gh)

Ms. Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah (Doctoral Candidate)  
Methodist University College Ghana  
P. O. Box DC 940  
Dansoman-Accra.

Dear Madam,

**RE: REQUEST FOR ORGANISATIONAL PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH  
AT THE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY COLLEGE (IUC)**

I write to confirm the Islamic University College Ghana's acceptance to participate in your doctoral research titled: "Private University Colleges and Quality Assurance Mechanisms in Ghana".

We are hopeful that you will be guided by the ethical considerations outlined in your letter.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Awudu Moro



Director of Administration.

Cc: Director, Academic Administration  
Head, IQAU

P. O. Box CT 3221, Accra - Ghana. Tel: 0302-824064 / 0302-824069 Fax: 0302-824075



## Knutsford University College

19<sup>th</sup> February, 2016

Ms. Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah  
Methodist University College  
P.O. Box DC 940  
Dansoman - Accra

Dear Madam,

### RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT KNUTSFORD UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

We refer to your letter on the above mentioned subject, dated 4<sup>th</sup> February, 2016 and wish to inform you that approval has been granted for you to use Knutsford University for a study entitled "Private University Colleges and Quality Assurance Mechanisms in Ghana".

By a copy of this letter, the departments concerned are being informed to provide you with the necessary information.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Dugbenoo'.

E. Dugbenoo

Registrar

Cc: Provost, KUC  
Deputy Registrar  
Dean, Business School  
Heads of Departments  
Head, Quality Assurance

### Knutsford University College

(Behind Menavic Hotel), No. 10 Barako Road  
East - Legon, Accra - Ghana  
P. O. Box AN 19480  
Tel.: 233-(002) 544 022, (002) 521 611  
Mob.: 233-(24) 4372 072, (28) 9604 253  
Fax: 233-(002) 544 022  
e-mail: registrar@knutsford.edu.gh  
admission@knutsford.edu.gh  
info@knutsford.edu.gh  
www.knutsford.edu.gh

Researching and Developing Scholarly Professional Leaders



## METHODIST UNIVERSITY COLLEGE GHANA

P. O. BOX DC 940, DANSOMAN - ACCRA

E-mail Address: [info@mucg.edu.gh](mailto:info@mucg.edu.gh) Website: [www.mucg.edu.gh](http://www.mucg.edu.gh)

Tel +233 302 314542 / 312980 / +233 307 021268 / +233 557 674758 Facsimile: +233 0302 312989

MUCG/PSM/24

February 10, 2016

**Ms. Victoria Tsedzah**  
**Faculty of Business Admin**  
**MUCG**  
**Dansoman - Accra**

Dear Ms Tsedzah,

**RE: PERMISSION TO USE MUCG FOR A RESEARCH WORK**

We write to inform you that you have been granted permission to use MUCG for your research work.

We wish you the best in your research.

Yours faithfully,

**P B Yarquah**  
**(REGISTRAR)**



# PENTECOST UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

Accredited by the National Accreditation Board

P. O. BOX 68 178, NANBENSA, ACCRA-GHANA. Tel: +233 30 470970 Fax: +233 30 470943 Email: info@pentecost.edu.gh Website: www.pentecost.edu.gh

PUC/HR/LO-008/05/16

16<sup>th</sup> May, 2016

## CHANCELLOR

Agostie Dr. Opatu Oryinah  
Chairman, COP

## MEMBERS OF PUC COUNCIL

Dr. Michael Agyekum Adibi  
Chief Executive Officer,  
NAMA Group of Companies  
Chairman

Rev. Dr. Peter Otiene Kyai  
Rector, PUC

Agostie Alexander Nana Yaw  
Kumi-Larbi,  
General Secretary, COP

Agostie Emmanuel Gyasi-Addie  
International Relations Director,  
COP

Mrs. Rebecca Del Massari  
Lecturer, School of Business,  
University of Cape Coast

Prof. Stephen Ousu Kwakye  
Associate Professor,  
University of Ghana

H. L. Mrs. Elizabeth Ankanah  
Legal Representative

Rev. Prof. J. Asaremah-Gyado  
Vice President,  
Yendi Theological Seminary,  
Accra

Dr. Samuel Adu Tetteh  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Sibson Pharmacy, Accra

Dr. Mrs. Aralia Sefa-Dedeh  
Senior Lecturer, Medical School,  
University of Ghana

Prof. Erach Hensborg Pitsopong  
Head, Department of Clinical  
Microbiology,  
School of Medical Sciences,  
KNUST

Mr. Gibson Annon-Antah  
Secretary, Registrar, PUC

**MR. P. B. Y. ARQUAH**  
**THE REGISTRAR**  
**METHODIST UNIVERSITY COLLEGE GHANA**  
**DANSOMAN-ACCRA**

Dear Sir,

### RE: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION- VICTORIA ADZOA TSEDZAH (MS)

With reference to your letter dated April 5, 2016, on the above subject, I write to inform you that approval has been granted for Ms. Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah to use Pentecost University College as part of her sample.

According to your correspondence, Ms. Tsedzah is a lecturer of Methodist University College and she is undertaking a research into *Private University Colleges and Quality Assurance Mechanism in Ghana* towards her PhD thesis at University of South Africa.

Be assured that Ms Tsedzah will be accorded the necessary assistance.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

**FAUSTINA AKOTSEN ENNINFUL (MRS.)**  
**AG. HRM**

CC: Ag Registrar, PUC  
Ms. Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah, Researcher, MUC

# UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

## DIRECTORATE OF ACADEMIC PLANNING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE (DAPQA)

Telephone: 042-32487  
E-mail: [dapqa@yaho.com](mailto:dapqa@yaho.com)  
[dapqa@ucc.edu.gh](mailto:dapqa@ucc.edu.gh)  
Our Ref: DAPQA/70<sup>A</sup>/Vol.2/39  
Your Ref:



UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE  
CAPE COAST, GHANA

30<sup>th</sup> April, 2018

Methodist University College Ghana  
P. O. Box DC 940  
Dansoman – Accra

**Atten:** Ms. Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah

Dear Sir/ Madam,

### RE: REQUEST FOR ORGANIZATIONAL PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT UCC

Reference to your letter on the above, dated, 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2016.

Permission has been granted for your interview at the Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (DAPQA), UCC. We would be pleased if you contact the number below for the date and time of visit.

Naomi Davis– **0545330963**.

A soft copy has been emailed to [victsedzah@yahoo.com](mailto:victsedzah@yahoo.com)

We look forward to meeting you.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. V. Mensah'.

**PROF. J. V. MENSAH  
(DIRECTOR)**

cc: The Director, DRIC



**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**  
**OFFICE OF RESEARCH INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT (ORID)**

P. O. Box LG 571, Legon, Accra-Ghana

My Ref. No. UGORID/PVC-018/04-16

April 22, 2016

Ms. Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah  
Faculty of Business Administration  
Methodist University College Ghana  
P. O. Box DC 940  
Dansoman, Accra

Dear Ms. Tsedzah,

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

I acknowledge receipt of your letter to the Registrar of the University of Ghana dated April 6, 2016 requesting for permission to include the University of Ghana in a study for your PhD work on *"Private university college and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana"*.

In principle, we have no objection to your request, however, based on the University of Ghana's regulations, permission to conduct a study should be granted by an appropriate Ethics Committee. We therefore require evidence of ethical clearance to enable us to grant you permission to include the University of Ghana in your study.

Alternatively, you may apply to the University of Ghana's Ethics Committee for the Humanities (ECH) for ethical consideration. Information on the ethical clearance processes for the ECH can be found at the following link: <http://issr.edu.gh/index.php/the-ethics-committee-for-humanities>.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any other information.

Yours sincerely,

Professor John Gyapong  
Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research, Innovation and Development)

cc: Registrar, UG  
Registrar, MUCG



# Wisconsin

International University College, Ghana

**REGISTRAR'S OFFICE**  
Tel: 233-302-501449

P.O. Box LG 751  
Legon, Accra - Ghana  
Tel: (233-302) 501449, (233-544) 853383  
Fax: (233-302) 501491  
E-mail: info@winc-ghana.edu.gh  
Website: www.winc-ghana.edu.gh

9<sup>th</sup> May, 2016

**Ms. Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah**  
**Methodist University College Ghana**  
**P. O. Box DC 940**  
**Dansoman**  
**Accra**

Dear Madam,

### **APPROVAL FOR RESEARCH**

I refer to your letter of January 8, 2016 asking for permission to conduct research in our University College on the topic, 'Private University Colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana'.

I am pleased to tell you that your request has been approved. You are however to note that the approval is subject to the condition that, the data you gather is used for academic purposes only and not for publication without our permission.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

**Frank K. Yeboah**  
**Registrar**

Cc: Ag. Vice Chancellor  
Head, QA

**ANNEXURE 14**

**SAMPLE CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH TITLE:**

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, ..... (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

---

**Participant's name and surname**

---

**Date**

---

**Signature**

*Ms Margaret Moatshe*

---

**Researcher's name and surname**

---

**Date**

---

**Signature**



ANNEXURE 15

INDIVIDUAL SIGNED CONSENT FORMS


CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH


RESEARCH TITLE:

Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana

I, Bernice O. Anokye (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

Ms. BERNICE O. ANOKYE      6/6/2019        
Participant's name and surname      Date      Signature

Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah      6/6/2019        
Researcher's name and surname      Date      Signature


**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**


**RESEARCH TITLE:**

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, JAMAL-DEEN ABDULAH..... (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

<u>JAMAL-DEEN ABDULAH</u>	<u>1st FEB. 2019</u>	
<b>Participant's name and surname</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>

<u>Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah</u>	<u>1/02/19</u>	
<b>Researcher's name and surname</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH TITLE:**

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, FERDINAND KATSRIKU (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

Ferdinand Katsriku

29/1/19



**Participant's name and surname**

**Date**

**Signature**

Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah

29/1/19



**Researcher's name and surname**

**Date**

**Signature**

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH TITLE:**

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, Prof. Martin Okyere Ounnon (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

Prof. Martin O. Ounnon

**Participant's name and surname**

18-01-19

**Date**

M O Ounnon

**Signature**

Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah

**Researcher's name and surname**

18/01/19

**Date**

Adzoa

**Signature**

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH TITLE:**

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, CLEMENT HAMMAH..... (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

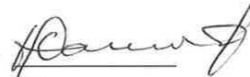
- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

DR. CLEMENT HAMMAH

**Participant's name and surname**

14/01/19

**Date**



**Signature**

Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah

**Researcher's name and surname**

14/01/19

**Date**



**Signature**

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH TITLE:**

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, Kobena GYAPPA ERBYNN (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

<u>KOBENA GYAPPA ERBYNN/PHD(1968)</u>	<u>24/AUG/2018</u>	<u>Kobena Gyappa</u>
<b>Participant's name and surname</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>

<u>Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah</u>	<u>24/8/18</u>	<u>V Adzoa</u>
<b>Researcher's name and surname</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH TITLE:**

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, Justice K. G. A Boateng (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

Justice Boateng

Participant's name and  
surname

23/08/18

Date

[Signature]

Signature

Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah

Researcher's name and  
surname

23/8/18

Date

[Signature]

Signature

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH TITLE:**

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, Patrick Jesse Ebovoh (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

Patrick Jesse Ebovoh      15/8/18        
Participant's name and surname      Date      Signature

Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsezah      15/8/18        
Researcher's name and surname      Date      Signature



**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH TITLE:**

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, Benjamin Aboase (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

Benjamin Aboase  
Participant's name and surname

15/8/18  
Date

[Signature]  
Signature

Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah  
Researcher's name and surname

15/8/18  
Date

[Signature]  
Signature

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH TITLE:**

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, F.K. Dzintse..... (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

F.K. Dzintse  
Participant's name and surname

15-08-18  
Date

[Signature]  
Signature

Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah  
Researcher's name and surname

15/8/18  
Date

[Signature]  
Signature


**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**


**RESEARCH TITLE:**

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, EKOW ESSILFIE-QUAYE (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

<u>EKOW ESSILFIE-QUAYE</u>	<u>16/7/2018</u>	<u></u>
<b>Participant's name and surname</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>

<u>Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah</u>	<u>16/7/18</u>	<u></u>
<b>Researcher's name and surname</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH TITLE:**

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, Dr. E. Newman (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

Dr. E. Newman      4/07/18      [Signature]  
Participant's name and      Date      Signature  
surname

Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah      4/07/18      [Signature]  
Researcher's name and      Date      Signature  
surname


**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH TITLE:**

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, Foster Kobina Amoani..... (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

<u>Foster Kobina Amoani</u>	<u>25-06-18</u>	
<b>Participant's name and surname</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>

<u>Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah</u>	<u>26/06/18</u>	
<b>Researcher's name and surname</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH TITLE:**

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, Dr. Joshua Ofori-Amangye (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

Dr. Joshua Ofori-Amangye 25/06/18

**Participant's name and surname**

**Date**



**Signature**

Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah

**Researcher's name and surname**

**Date**

25/06/18



**Signature**

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH TITLE:**

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, Richard Adjei..... (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

Richard Adjei  
**Participant's name and surname**

07/06/2018  
**Date**

[Signature]  
**Signature**

Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah  
**Researcher's name and surname**

7<sup>TH</sup> JUNE, 2018  
**Date**

[Signature]  
**Signature**


**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**


**RESEARCH TITLE:**

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, A. N. MENSAH..... (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

<u>A. N. MENSAH</u>	<u>12/06/2018</u>	<u></u>
Participant's name and surname	Date	Signature

<u>Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah</u>	<u>12/06/2018</u>	<u></u>
Researcher's name and surname	Date	Signature



**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH TITLE:**

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, Dr Paul A. Ogyire (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

Dr Paul A. Ogyire      23/06/18      Paul Ogyire  
Participant's name and surname      Date      Signature

Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah      23/06/18      VAD  
Researcher's name and surname      Date      Signature

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH TITLE:**


**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, John J.M. Marley (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

John J.M. Marley  
**Participant's name and surname**

12/6/18  
**Date**

  
**Signature**

Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah  
**Researcher's name and surname**

12<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2018  
**Date**

  
**Signature**

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH

RESEARCH TITLE:

Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana

I, Prof. Anthony K. Ahiawadzi (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

Prof. Anthony K. Ahiawadzi

Participant's name and surname

21-06-2018

Date

[Signature]

Signature

Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah

Researcher's name and surname

21/06/18

Date

[Signature]

Signature

## CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH

### RESEARCH TITLE:

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, Fred Odum - Kinsidu..... (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

Fred Odum - Kinsidu

**Participant's name and surname**

21/06/2018

**Date**



**Signature**

Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsezah

**Researcher's name and surname**

21/06/18

**Date**



**Signature**

ICU

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH TITLE:**

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, Kwabena Apraku Amankwaah (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

Kwabena Apraku Amankwaah

June 21, 2018

Kwabena Apraku Amankwaah

**Participant's name and surname**

**Date**

**Signature**

Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah

21/06/18

Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah

**Researcher's name and surname**

**Date**

**Signature**


**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH TITLE:**

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, Josephus K. Kufofobe (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

Josephus Kwadro Kufofobe 01/08/2018   
Participant's name and surname                      Date                      Signature

Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah 01/08/18   
Researcher's name and surname                      Date                      Signature

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH TITLE:**

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, Jacquelyn Kelbourne..... (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

Jacquelyn Kelbourne  
Participant's name and  
surname

1/08/18  
Date

Clifford  
Signature

Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah  
Researcher's name and  
surname

1/8/18  
Date

VT  
Signature

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH**

**RESEARCH TITLE:**

**Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana**

I, MABEL KOMASI..... (participant name & surname), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

- I have read and understood the study as explained in the participant information sheet.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.
- I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a dissertation.
- I agree to complete the questionnaire and/or to be interviewed.

MABEL KOMASI

**Participant's name and surname**

17-07-2018

**Date**



**Signature**

Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah

**Researcher's name and surname**

17/07/18

**Date**



**Signature**



## ANNEXURE 16

### Sample Manual Coding of an Assessor's Transcript

#### APPENDIX 14

#### Sample Manual Coding of an Assessor's Transcript

##### Background Information

**1. Briefly introduce yourself.**

My name is (name withheld). I joined UG in 2012. I am a Senior Lecturer at the Computer Science dept. Before joining UG I worked with some universities in the UK.

**2. How long have you worked for the NAB as an assessor?** *Enough experience*

From 2013 to date (6yrs)

**3. Gender:**

**4. Age:**

**5. Interviewer: Did you apply to become as an assessor for the NAB? If yes, what were the requirements? If you did not apply, how did you become an assessor for the NAB?**

**Assessor's response:** Yes, I applied. A colleague of mine told me about the existence of the NAB and that they lack expertise and that I could apply which I did. The next thing I heard was I was asked to go on an assignment in one of the institutions. But to date I don't know if they have any proper procedure for appointing but in my case I only applied and I was appointed. No orientation or training was organised before I was sent to the field. But I feel the NAB should have scrutinised the background of people they appoint because their mandate has to do with quality assurance issues. These days that people are having all sorts of dubious degrees, the NAB will have to establish proper mechanisms to check the background of everyone they appoint as an assessor.

*Applied and was appointed*  
*No orienta  
of training*  
*NAB should  
check  
background  
of assessors*

**OBJECTIVE 1: Provide the general background, rationale and research (methodical) framework, which emphasises and accentuates the importance of the study**



## NO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### **OBJECTIVE 2: Reflect upon the literature review of tertiary education quality assurance (discourse) and factors that affect it**

**GENERAL QUESTION:** Do the private university colleges understand what quality assurance, entails and the factors that could affect higher education quality assurance?

**2.1 Interviewer:** The NAB defines quality assurance as "... the continuous and systematic act of reviewing structures, systems and practices towards the attainment of a desired end." In your opinion, to what extent do members of PUC's in Ghana understand what tertiary education quality assurance entails and the factors that could affect higher education quality assurance? Justify your response.

**Assessor's response:** I must say almost all the PUC's I have visited have issues with quality; ranging from the way the curriculum is designed to how the content is delivered. *PUC's have issues with quality*  
The PUCs are more interested in making money. But, some of institutions are also trying to improve upon what they do. I don't want to believe that there is any institution that does not want to improve. That calls into question the role of the mentoring institutions that are required to help the private university colleges to grow but they don't do it. Because there is quite a number of PUC's that are affiliated to the (name withheld), sometimes they are not able to do their work well to ensure the PUC's are doing the right thing. But generally, the some PUC's are making efforts to improve upon their performance. *Focus on money*  
*Mentor not playing their role*  
*Too many PUC's affiliated to one univ.*

I just came from Kenya to do an assessment for a PU and it proves further my conviction about external moderation/assessment. Some lecturers want to do the wrong thing but with the presence and comments of an external assessor, the authorities are able to use these feedbacks from the external assessors to check their staff to ensure they do the right thing. *External assessment imp.*

**2.2 Interviewer:** How often, and what form of training/orientation was organised by the NAB for you as an assessor and what is your assessment of the kind and adequacy of the level of education/training provided by the regulatory institutions to facilitated your work as an assessor?

**Assessor's response:** No training was organised but I think this should be done on *Not train* first appointment and every 2-3yrs. This will help build consensus on what should be done so the assessors don't end up creating contradictions in what they do when they visit the institutions. Because no training or orientation was given, I learnt on the job. *No oriente led to mistake and lack of understanding of role* I learnt from the members of the team. In my case, I realised that I made a few mistakes because of the lack of training. My understanding of the whole concept of accreditation was wrong because I went with the notion that I should go out and make the decision about whether the institution should be given accreditation or not or whether a programme should be approved or not. So, I was very harsh. But later on, I got to know that as an assessor, I am supposed to help the institutions to improve so I changed

**2.3 Interviewer:** Apart from the lack of training what other challenges did you encounter in your role as an assessor?

**Assessor's response:** The way the NAB goes about appointment of assessors is a *poor appointment practices* challenge. Secondly, sometimes the quality of the documents on guidelines and other information has been photocopied several times and as such some are very faint and not clear and so you can hardly read. Sometimes, documents are mixed-up where you *non-readable documents* can be given accreditation and re-accreditation or affiliation documents together. My *mixed-up documents* challenge is also with the background of some of the assessors. I wonder if some are qualified and what sort of due diligence NAB did before appointing such people as assessors. Some are senior lecturers or PhD holders but their level of knowledge is *NAB should probe qualifications before appointing assessors* questionable. Some of them also throw their weight about when they go for assessment. NAB needs to probe further the qualifications and quality of some of the assessors

You sometimes notice that when you go for assessment, some are liberal on certain issues maybe because they know or have a special relation with someone there. So <sup>raises due to relationship</sup> you may sense some level of prejudice or bias where sometimes there are wide gaps in the grading of some of the assessors. So there should be clarity on what qualifies as a grade 1, 2 or 3

We are normally three people on the team and there have been occasions that we had to debate some issues that we don't agree on such as a team member wanting an institution to do things as it is done in his university. <sup>not metric in concept</sup>

The supervision by the mentoring university is a key area that is missing. After an assessment, it takes more than three years before another team of assessors will do another assessment. This creates a gap as to who monitors what is happening in the PUC's. However, from my observation and the interactions with the PUC's, the mentoring universities hardly visit the PUC's. Apart from not visiting, the PUC's did not also organise workshops for their own staff on the acceptable practices for ensuring quality standards in whatever they did. I think that NAB should insist on regular supervision by the mentoring universities. They should organise workshops, interact with the PUC's more often. <sup>poor mentoring</sup> <sup>no regular training for PUC</sup>

**2.4 Interviewer:** The reviewed literature identified the factors that affect tertiary education QA to include the factor listed below. In what ways has any of the factors below or any other factors affected the quality of education offered by the PUC's in Ghana?

- Differences in the conception of what QA is (formative or summative) between the regulatory institutions and the higher education institutions.
- Incompatibility between the views of the academic staff as implementers of QA policy and what has been designed as acceptable quality higher education standards by the regulatory institutions.
- Lack of mechanisms to effectively analyse the information gathered during reviews and a lack of properly trained evaluators.

- Lack of ownership by the higher education institutions of the QA process;
- Lack of management skills and expertise related to QA at all levels.

**Assessor's response:** In my view, the last two factors that is the lack of ownership by the higher education institutions of the QA process and the lack of management skills and expertise related to QA at all levels are the factors that are affecting the quality of education in the PUC's. Maybe because some of the members of the PUC's do not understand what tertiary education entails there will be no ownership of what must be done to ensure quality. The lack of ownership of the QA process makes ensuring quality a difficult task since such people resisted any effort to ensure quality in the PUC. Even for those who understand what QA entails, because of their focus on cutting cost, they refuse to observe or comply with the laid down standards. Again, what I observed in most of the PUC's was that the head of the QA unit did not have any background in QA. Ideally, if such people were given adequate training they would have been able to apply such knowledge to ensure the right practices, processes and procedures are followed; which is not the case.

*Handwritten notes:*  
 - Lack of ownership of QA and mgmt skills  
 - Focus on profit  
 - Lack of QA knowledge of head of unit

**2.5 Interviewer:** In what ways do you think the PUC's governance and ownership structure has affected (positive and negative) QA practices of the PUC's?

**Assessor's response:** Most of the PUC's had financial challenges and were therefore not able to employ full or associate professors to occupy management positions. However, what was noticeable was that, for all the PUC's that were established by churches, the membership of their governing councils were dominated by church members. The churches also supported the PUC's financially. On the negative aspect, some of the people we interacted with complained about interference from those who established the university colleges.

*Handwritten notes:*  
 - Financial challenges led to unqualified staff employed  
 - interference by owners in governance

**OBJECTIVE 3: Outline the theoretical perspectives and conceptual framework that relate to tertiary education quality assurance in Ghana and compare key**

**indicators and accreditation models between world class tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana**

**3.2 Interviewer:** In your view, should the regulatory institutions and the mentor universities practices for assuring quality in the PUC's be influenced by practice from other parts of the world especially the developed nations such as the USA, the UK and Australia?

**Assessor's response:** Of course yes? There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Once we do a proper assessment of our environment and know what is applicable and what is not, we should be able to select the good practices that will suit our context. As indicated earlier, practices like the publication of review reports and the ranking of higher education institutions are very good international practices that should be adopted.

*adopt inter national best practices  
+ ranking of publications of review reports*

**3.3 Interviewer:** The existing tertiary education QA framework of Ghana shows that it is a collaborative effort between the NAB, the NCTE and the university to which the PUC's are affiliated. What are your views and experiences on the functioning and effectiveness of this framework?

**Assessor's response:** What I rather see is that we complement each other's work. We do not collaborate. I say so because as assessors we do not engage the mentoring universities during our assessment. We deal with the NAB which provides us with the guidelines for assessment. We do not also deal with the NCTE. It is the NAB that engages us to do the assessment and once we are done with the assessment and submit our report to the NAB that ends our work.

*do not collaborate but complement NAB's effort*

**3.4 Interviewer:** One of the requirements of the NAB is for every tertiary education institution to have an internal QA unit. How do you gather feedback from the different constituents of the university college on the internal QA mechanisms and what is your assessment of the internal QA unit?

**Assessor's response:** The institutions themselves are required to have feedback mechanisms such as student assessment. Sometimes we speak to the students but <sup>gather data from students</sup> sometimes they are afraid to speak, so we make sure the staff are not around when we speak to the students. The students have a lot to discuss/tell the university so they must make sure they create avenues to gather data from them on what is happening. The students are also the greatest marketers for the institution so they must create this opportunity to hear from the students. I suggest students assessment information should also be looked at by the NAB. Another challenge is that when we tell the institutions we visit that we need some students to talk to, we cannot be sure whether <sup>Assure students of confidentiality</sup> such students have been coached but what we do is that we make sure that we probe so if a student has been coached you will be able to tell and you find ways of getting the real state of affairs through re-assuring the students of the confidentiality of any information they provide.

**3.5 Interviewer:** There appears to be a high interest of Ghanaians in the assurance of quality education standards in the PUC's in Ghana. What other mechanisms do you propose in order to improve upon the existing QA structures, policies, procedures, systems and legislation for quality assurance in PUC's in Ghana?

**Assessor's response:** I suggest the PUC's affiliated to each of the public universities <sup>PUC's shd be regarded by mentor instns as their campus</sup> should be seen as campus by their mentor institutions. As mentor institutions we are supposed to keep a close eye on the PUC on issues like examinations etc. which we do not do. You can also not be there always, it becomes difficult. If the PU's are seen as part of the institution they are affiliated to, to be able to measure performance as equal to the institution they are affiliated to, then they should run the same curriculum, write the same examinations as the institution they are affiliated to then I can agree that the quality of students are same as those from the public universities.



**3.6 Interviewer:** There is the perception that PUC's in Ghana do not offer quality education, but are rather interested in making money. What is your opinion about such a perception?

**Assessor's response:** I don't think it is so for all of them. Some of the PUC's are doing well. All the private university colleges are affiliated to a public universities so whatever they do must be a reflection of the quality of education at the institution they are affiliated to but this is not the case. Some of the mentoring institutions do not visit the institutions to help them improve upon their quality of education standards

*Some claim well*  
*Poor mentoring*

**OBJECTIVE 4: Provide a historical context of the legal frameworks on the establishment and operations of PUC's and tertiary education regulatory institutions in Ghana from 1991 to 2019**

**4.1 Interviewer:** As part of the reforms to the tertiary education system, one of the institutions to be established was the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board who would develop standardised criteria irrespective of the private university where an individual sought admission as well as monitor the admissions processes, in order to ensure that only qualified applicants are admitted into the PUC's. In the absence of the establishment of this institution, how do you as assessors check to ensure that only qualified applicants are admitted into the PUC's?

**Assessor's responses:** This is a very important aspect we pay attention to. Normally we ask for the students' files and check at random. If we find out that the institution is going against the set standards then we become more critical in our assessment. If there are lapses we draw the institutions' attention. For re-accreditation, we sample from the students files to check and confirm whether the approved entry requirements are being observed. We also ask for the list of first year students and their qualifications and sometimes you may find out that some of them do not have any qualifications against their names. In such cases, we request the university college to provide us with the qualifications of all students. If they are unable to do so, we make a note and inform the NAB.

*rely on students files*  
*important to NAB any lapses*

**OBJECTIVE 5: Analyse the effect of the current QA capacity and mechanisms of tertiary education regulatory institutions of Ghana and the usefulness of the application of these mechanisms at PUC's**

**5.1: Interviewer:** What is your general assessment of PUC's response to assessments? Any specific examples or cases to illustrate this?

**Assessor's response:** I think they are panicky about it which shouldn't be the case because they feel that once assessors come they are there to find faults and close the institution but that should not be the case. They also see assessment as an imposition. They should see the assessment as a support mechanism which they must support so they can grow. But I will like to commend my team members that anytime we visited any institution, we made it clear to them that we are there to help them improve upon what they were doing and not to witch hunt them so they should relax.

*Assessors o  
fault finders  
Imposition*

**5.2 Interviewer:** As an assessor, do you make suggestions to the NAB for purposes of improving upon the existing QA mechanisms and how has this contributed to improve upon the quality assurance mechanisms of the NAB?

**Assessor's response:** We always have a representative of NAB on the team so we make these suggestions to the person. We do not interact with top management so it has affected the extent to which our decisions are taken on board.

*suggestion to  
NAB rep  
but not  
top mgt*

**5.3 Interviewer:** Based on your experiences, in your view does the NAB/NCTE have the capacity to achieve its mandate of QA in the PUC's in Ghana? Justify your response.

**Assessor's response:** Yes and no. They have the staff that carry out their day-to-day activities but because they do not have the capacity to go round to assess the PUC's, that is why they hire professionals like us depending on the programmes and courses

*Capacity for  
day-to-day  
but not  
assessment*

that need to be reviewed. Definitely, NAB cannot employ us as on full time basis since assessment is not an everyday activity so depending on which university's programme is due for accreditation or re-accreditation we are invited.

**5.3 Interviewer:** After an assessment of an institution, does the policy of the NAB permit you to immediately give feedback to the institution you have assessed about what your findings are? If no feedback is given immediately, what are the opportunities available to the institutions to confirm or disconfirm your findings?

**Assessor's response:** Yes, we do. It is normal practice. We don't leave them in suspense. For every challenge identified, we make suggestions for addressing the challenge identified. In some instances senior management; principal, rector, registrar, are present at this meeting so anything we say that they are not clear about is explained. We give feedback to make them aware of what will be contained in the final report from the NAB, because the reports are based on hard facts we gather. Issues like course outline, qualification of lecturers are addressed so they can prepare to respond or address the challenges identified before they even receive the formal report.

*Give feedback to top mgmt of PUC's*

**5.4 Interviewer:** What are the specific areas you are required by the NAB to focus on during assessment and what are the means through which you assess each of the areas?

**Assessor's response:** There are a number of guidelines on each of the areas- curriculum, good balance between core and electives, staff with requisite qualifications, facilities, library, health and safety, examination and moderation processes - given to us and we use this in assessing them. The aim is to look at these areas to find out whether they are fit for purpose.

*All aspects of univs operations*

I think the areas covered are sufficient and comprehensive but they must ensure that the mechanisms for ensuring quality education standards in the current areas are well implemented.

*comprehensive mechanisms*

**5.5 Interviewer:** Do you refer to recommendations from previous assessment of the institution when you are undertaking another assessment?

**Assessor's response:** Those recommendations are not always given to us, but it should have been given to us so that we don't contradict past comments which can make the private university colleges confused. *Past recommendations required*

**5.6 Interviewer:** What do you do if an institution has not implemented the recommendations from the previous assessment?

**Assessor's response:** It is for the NAB to take action. So before accreditation is granted they should look at the previous recommendations to make sure the PUC has complied before accreditation is granted. I also have issues with some of the NAB guidelines. They have questions such as: Are there any serious issues the institution has to address before accreditation is granted? All issues are lumped up under this question which I feel is not appropriate. *NAB specify mandatory issues* There are issues that are not mandatory so there must be clarity and distinction between issues that are mandatory and those that can be overlooked so that not every minor issue becomes a stumbling block to an institution being granted accreditation

**5.7 Interviewer:** Are there any other issues related to the topic you would like to share with me?

**Assessor's response:** When you moderate questions or examination papers as an external assessor, you don't see evidence of peer review. There should be evidence of lecturer's peer reviewing each other's examination papers. *Need for peer review* I don't also see any evidence that when a student fails an examination, that paper is second marked. Also those who are in the upper range, middle or lower level should be sampled and marked by the external examiners to ensure quality.

## ANNEXURE 17

# ETHICS CLEARANCE FORM FROM DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT



### UNISA COLLEGE OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

31 May 2018 (Date of issue)

02 August 2022 (Date of amendment)

Ref #: PAM\_2018\_013

Name#: Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah

Staff # 50883844

Dear Ms Victoria Adzoa Tsedzah

**Decision: Ethics Approval Extended to 30 June 2024**

#### Working title of research:

**“Private university colleges and quality assurance mechanisms in Ghana”**

#### Qualification: PhD

Thank you for the application requesting **amendments** to the original research ethics certificate issued by the PAM Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research, on 30 May 2018. The approval of the requested amendment is granted/extended for the study for the period 02 August 2022 until 30 June 2024.

*The **low risk application** was reviewed by the College Research Ethics Review Committee (CRERC) in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics using the expedited method.*

*The proposed research may now continue with the proviso that:*

- 1. The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.*
- 2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the CRERC. An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal,*



University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392, UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

*especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.*

3. *The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.*

Kind regards,



---

**Dr Vaola Sambo**  
Chairperson, CRERC  
E-mail: [Esambovt@unisa.ac.za](mailto:Esambovt@unisa.ac.za)  
Tel: 012 429 4355



University of South Africa  
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

**ANNEXURE 18**

**GROUP OF PARTICIPANTS AND CODES USED**

<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>CATEGORIES</b>	<b>CODES</b>	<b>NUMBER INTERVIEWED</b>
Group A.	REGULATORY INSTITUTIONS	R1	2
	a. National Accreditation Board (NAB)		
	b. National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE)	R2	
	c. Lawyer		1
Group B.	Private University Colleges	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6	2
Group C.	Mentoring Public Sector Universities	M1, M2	15
Group D	Assessors	A1, A2, A3, A4	4
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>24</b>