



# Ensuring the Quality of DE Programs

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# The Questions



- Why do we really do QA?
  - We are told
  - We look good (everybody is doing it)
  - It is expected to be done
  - We save money



# Rationale



There is the need for DE providers to:

- put quality assurance mechanisms in place
- continually monitor QA
- assess what possible impact it may have on the general practices of DE

# QA of DE Programs (The Unit for Distance Education)



- University of Pretoria, DE Policy
- Guided by:
  - ❖ Commonwealth of Learning (COL). 2004. *Planning and Implementing Open and Distance Learning Systems*
  - ❖ Council on Higher Education (CHE). 2004. *Criteria for Institutional Audits, Higher Education Quality Committee*
  - ❖ Council on Higher Education (CHE). 2004. *Criteria for Programme Accreditation, Higher Education Quality Committee*
  - ❖ NADEOSA Quality Criteria (As agreed upon by DE providers in SA) (Welch & Reed, 2005)

## **Instrument for Quality Assurance:**

### **NADEOSA Quality Criteria (2005)**

1. Policy & Planning

2. Learners

3. Program Development

4. Course Design

5. Course Materials

6. Assessment

7. Learner Support

8. Human Resource Strategy

9. Management & Administration

10. Collaborative Relationships

11. Quality Assurance

12. Information & Marketing

13. Results

# Criteria 11: Quality Assurance

- 1 • Alignment of daily activities with mission, goals, principles & policies
- 2 • Alignment of internal & external QA processes
- 3 • Clear cycle of structures & procedures
- 4 • Setting priorities based on benchmarking, monitoring & evaluation
- 5 • Demonstrable processes & ongoing efforts to improve quality
- 6 • Staff development
- 7 • Involvement of staff, students & other clients in QA process
- 8 • Clear routines & staff being familiar with routines related to them

# Quality Assurance at UP



- Quality is a priority
- Its management is seen as an iterative process
- ❖ It is always possible to improve
- QA is part of a philosophy, a managerial, a teaching and an administrative style
- Its policy with regard to DE
- ❖ All DE programs must meet the same quality standards required of CE programs

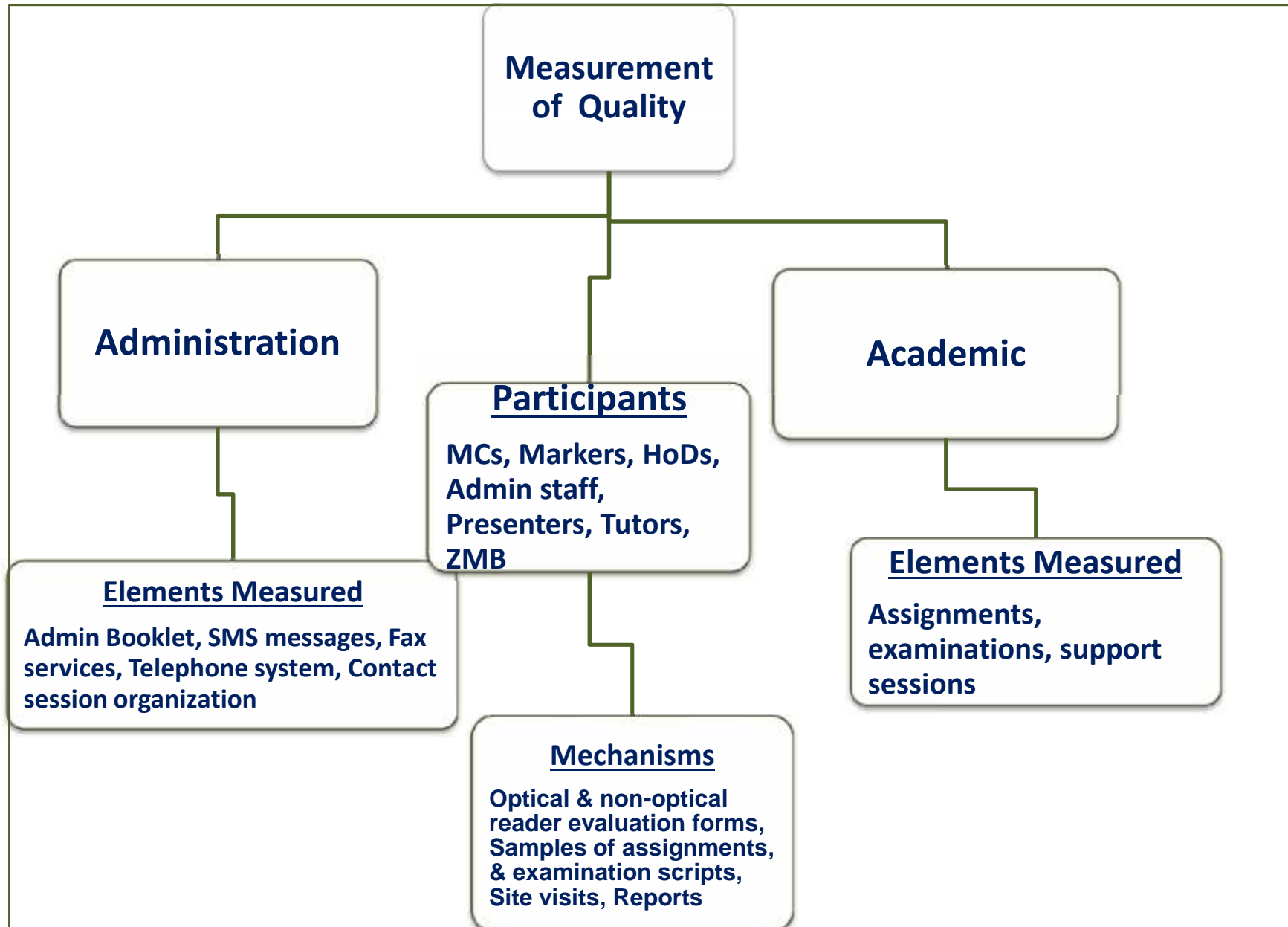


# **Quality Assurance at UPUDE: Structures & Procedures**

# Quality Assurance Structures



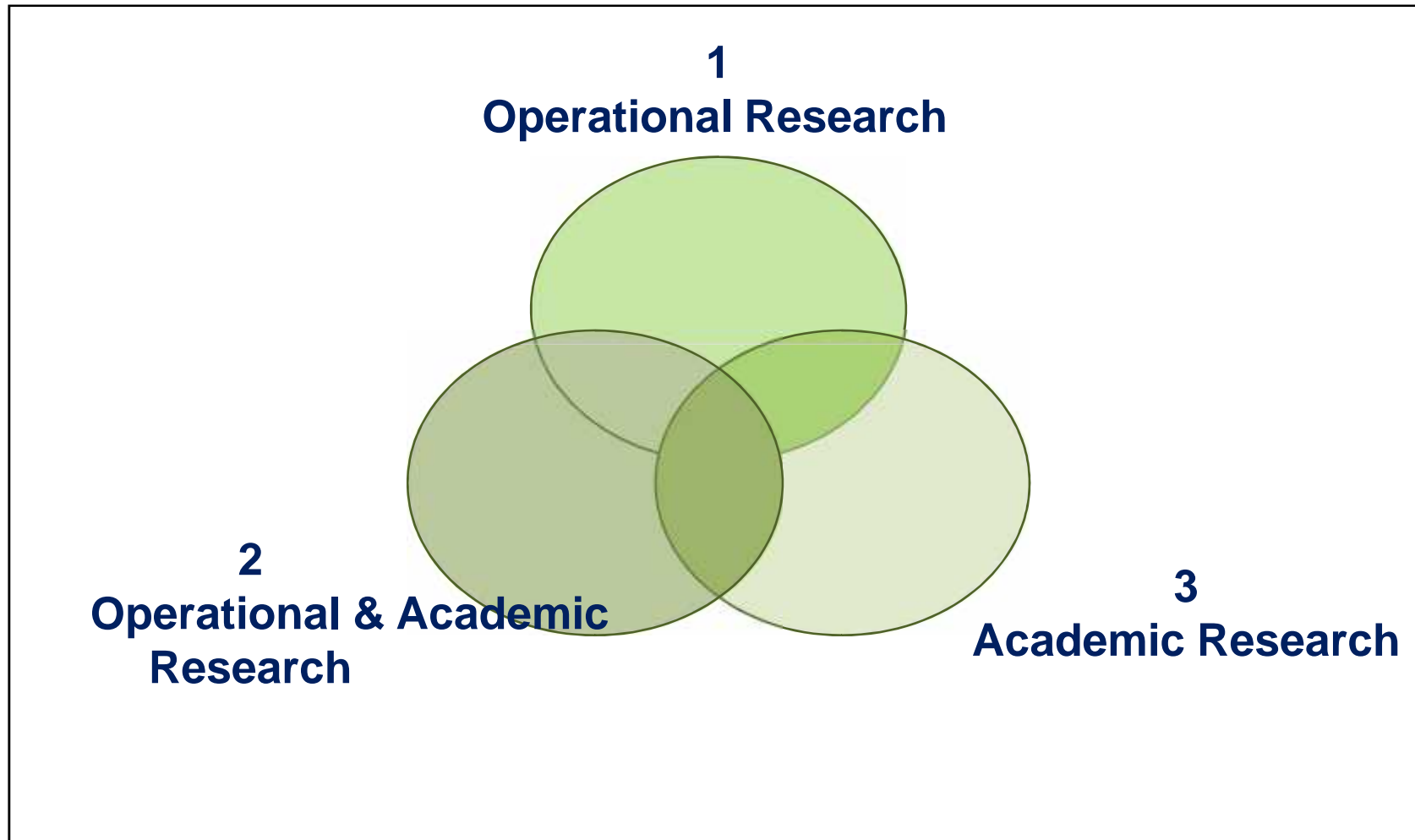
# Quality Assurance Procedures



# Quality Management Matrix

Elements Measured	Participants	Mechanisms
<b>Administration</b>		
1. Admin Booklet	Students, Tutors, ZMB	Optical reader evaluation forms, Site visits by admin staff Reports (written)
2. Admin SMS messages		
3. Fax services		
4. Telephone system		
5. Contact session organization		
<b>Academic</b>		
1. Assignments	MCs, Markers, MCs, HODs	Samples of assignment & examination scripts, Reports (written)
2. Examinations	MCs, Moderators, Markers, , HODs, admin staff	Site visits by admin staff & ZB Reports (written)
3. Support sessions i) Module attended a. Orientation on what is expected of students in the module b. Presenter's/ Tutor's ability c. Tutorial Booklet d. Class size e. Recommendation of contact session to others f. Attendance at support sessions	MCs, Group Leaders, Presenters, Tutors & ZMB	Optical & non-optical reader evaluation forms, Site visits by academic & admin staff Reports (written)

# Research Framework





# Possible impact of TQM

# Attrition Rates: All Programs (2008 - 2012)



Year	Discontinued	% of Enrolments
2008	584	3%
2009	762	4%
2010	430	2%
2011	650	3%
2012	689	4%

# Average Attrition Rates (Contact & DE at UP)

University of Pretoria	
Contact Education (CE)*	Distance Education (DE)*
20%	3.4%
* CE Period: 2001 – 2006 * DE Period: 2006 – 2010	
<b>Sources:</b> Council on Higher Education. 2010. <i>Access and throughput in South African Higher Education: Three case studies</i> . Pretoria: Council on Higher Education. Department of Education (DoE). 2009. <i>Education statistics in South Africa 2007</i> . Pretoria: DoE.	



# Comparison of UP (DE) Rates to Benchmarks for Graduation Rates



<b>Programme (UP)</b>	<b>ACE (EM)</b>	<b>ACE (SNE)</b>	<b>BEd (Hons)</b>
April 02 – March 05	64%	67%	48%
Benchmarks for Graduation Rates*	9%		27%
* Source: Department of Education [DoE] (2001: 23) – under review Department of Education. 2001. <i>National Plan for Higher Education</i> . Pretoria.			

# Conclusion

