

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

**ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AT
ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY: THE CASE OF SELECTED
PROGRAMS IN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND
BEHAVIORAL STUDIES**

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NOVEMBER, 2010

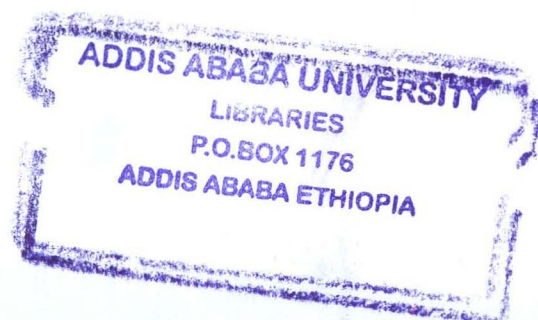
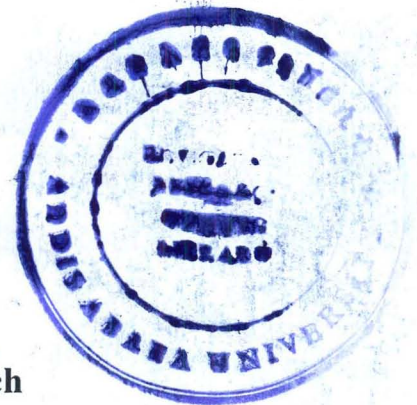
ADDIS ABABA

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THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF
ARTS IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
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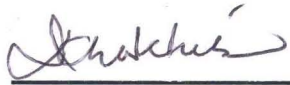




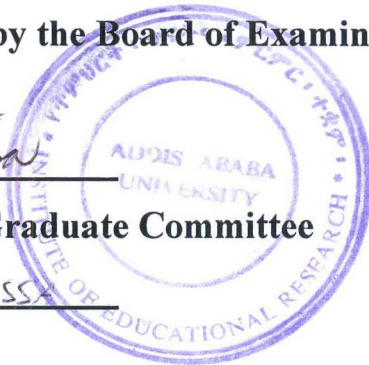
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Acronyms

AAU	Addis Ababa University
ASCRC	Academic Standards and Curriculum Review Committee.
BE	Business Education.
CEBS	College of Education and Behavioral Studies
C&I	Curriculum and Instruction.
CoE	College of Education.
CTPDS	Curriculum and Teachers Professional Development Studies
DGC	Department Graduate Committee.
EDPM	Educational Planning and Management
EL	Educational Leadership
ELM	Educational Leadership and Management.
EPP	Educational Policy and Planning.
ETP	Education and Training Policy
ETQAA	Education, Training and Quality Assurance Agency
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding for England
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Council
HERQA	Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency
HESC	Higher Education Strategy Center.
HLIs	Higher Learning Institutions.
HRD	Human Resource Development.
MM	Marketing Management
QA	Quality Agency
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
QE	Quality Enhancement
RPO	Research and Publications Office
SEDs	Self-Evaluation Documents
VM	Vocational Management

The purpose of this study was to assess the quality of education in selected graduate programs at the College of Education and Behavioral Studies (CEBS), AAU. The sample programs were selected on the basis of purposive and availability sampling techniques. The study examined the perceptions of academic community about quality of education, curriculum design and development practices, academic staff profile, students profile and the state of non-human resources as the key issues in assessing the quality of programs. For this purpose, one of the Mixed Methods Design, Concurrent Triangulation was used. Both qualitative and quantitative data were simultaneously collected using Interview, FGD with graduate students, Questionnaires and document review. Data obtained from interviews, FGD, and open-ended questionnaires were analyzed qualitatively, while close-ended questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively using frequency and percentages. The results of the analysis showed that the sampled graduate programs at the CEBS have fairly qualified academic staff while the number and composition is found to be inadequate. There were poor provision of teaching-learning resources such as recent books and journals in the library system. Its location and the physical facilities were found to be inadequate to sit and study for longer hours. ICT applications including the Internet services to both instructors and students were rated as very poor. Regarding the classrooms, both instructors and students have expressed their felt need that there is shortage, mismanagement, and lack of facilities such as chairs, light, plugs and related equipments. Hence, it was found that research activities both by instructors and graduate students were inadequate. Graduate students have also complained of the inconvenience they face due to lack of accommodation services which they should have been provided by the University and its impact on their academic performance. Therefore, it can be concluded that such shortcomings would badly affect the quality of graduate programs. Hence, it is recommended that the CEBS/AAU should invest on resources in the way of improving the existing adverse situations encountered in the teaching- learning processes of the graduate programs.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Quality in higher education is taken for granted as one of the natural and inherent characteristics of the academic community almost in every society. The public had shared similar expectations about the quality of education in colleges and universities as well.

Ruben (1995), in this regard, states that there is certainly nothing new about a concern for quality in higher education. As he emphasizes, by one definition or another, colleges and universities have always held the pursuit of excellence as the primary goal. Moreover, by most accounts they have been relatively successful over the years. For instance, higher education in the United States is generally regarded as the international standard of excellence or a benchmark. According to this author, the policies and practices that led to this distinction continue in place today at most institutions.

As stated in FDRE 's Education and Training Policy document, some of the most burning issues in the Ethiopian education system in general and the higher education institutions in particular are: relevance, accessibility, quality, equity, mode of delivery, inadequate facilities, insufficiently trained teachers, and shortages of books and other educational resources (TGE,1994). These issues seem inextricably related to one another in that they all compete for resources needed either to address them one -by- one or in their integration.

In order to address these issues, the Ethiopian Government has been engaged in reforms in the education system of the country at all levels. Such reforms include the provision of

regulatory frame works such as the New Education Policy (ETP) (TGE, 1994) and Higher Education Proclamations N0. 351/2003 and N0.650/2009. As a result, the Higher Education Strategy Center (HESC) and Education, Training and Quality Assurance Agency (ETQAA) were established and through which the Institutional Quality Audit and the External Quality Assurance mechanisms are laid down (FDRE, 2003). Hence, ETQAA among others has the following power and duties:

1. Ensure that higher education and trainings offered at any institution is up to standard, relevant and has quality;
2. Evaluate the institutions at least once every five years with view to ensuring whether such institutions are up to standards and competent, and submit its findings to the Ministry;
3. Supervise the standards and competence of the institution;
4. Give information to the public about the current situation and Status of the institutions periodically;
5. Gather and disseminate information about the standards and programs of study offered by foreign higher education institutions as well as about their general status;
6. Evaluate the relevance and quality of the institutions and their programs as well as qualification for accreditation on receiving service charges are some to mention (FDRE, 2003).

In addition, Academic Development and Resource Center (ADRC) have been established to support faculties, colleges, and departments to ensure quality with the objectives to:

- a. promote quality education in their respective universities through supporting quality assessment and research on academic programs, and providing advisory services;
- b. conduct staff development to promote professional and research skills of the academic staff, and
- c. provide services pertaining to the improvement of quality and relevance in higher education (HERQA, 2005), cited in (Firdissa,2007).

The Addis Ababa University, in its endeavor to keep pace with the ever changing scenarios indicated above, has adopted University–Level Strategic Plan (2000-2004 E.C.), in which it identified areas of strong and weak performance in terms of teaching , research, student demand and quality, and staff as well as the emerging problems and opportunities. The major strategic issues identified in this document of strategic plan are: Governance and administration; Infrastructure and Resources; Programs of Study and educational Support Services; Staff; Students; Addressing National Priority Agenda; and Public Engagement and International Collaboration (AAU, 2008).

The development of Graduate Studies within Addis Ababa University was intended to providing the country with dedicated and relevant high-level human resource and in order to lay the foundation for self-reliant and progressive citizens. Programs in selected area such as Agriculture, Language Studies, Medicine, Science, and Social Science were inaugurated in October 1978. (AAU, 1980).

However, in the mean time, there have been evidences that Graduate Programs at the University started under very difficult circumstances. Some of which was a shortage of senior staff assigned only to graduate programs in some faculties, thus undergraduate students did not have the opportunity to be taught by experienced staff, indicating that it was important arrangements be made for senior staff members to participate in undergraduate teaching. On the other hand, there were similar evidences indicating that staff members below the rank of assistant professor practice teaching graduate courses at Master's level. As budget was not allocated for graduate programs, resources purchased for undergraduate teaching was shared by graduate programs. This, at the time, shows that the graduate programs themselves had faced problem of resource-due to lack of resources for research (Programme Review Committee, 1999).

1.2. Statement of the problem

Declining and stagnating quality of education has become an important issue in countries all over the world and the developing ones in particular. The rapidly expanding enrolments, the over stretched education systems, severely limited resources, and the desired reforms regarding the mode of delivery (teaching-learning methods), among other things, are combined factors that challenge improving education (Barrow and Leu, 2006).

The concept and function of education is very much familiar to all ancient and modern societies. It is as old as the human beings themselves and exists as long as the society exists. Despite the fact that, there have been several problems including the varying perceptions of the concept quality in relation to education as indicated above that may affect the role and the functions of education. Hence, the issue of quality in education has

been a widely felt problem right from the KG up to the university levels of the Ethiopian education system. Oyewole (2008:40) explains the situation as:

African governments were forced to give priorities to investments in basic education than for higher education in Africa resulted in a very drastic decline in the quality of higher education. As a result challenges faced by HEIs in Africa are: Funding problems; leadership corruptions; academic confusion as the unpaid staff seek other means of survival, political unrest and repressions within the institutions; diminishing human resource for research- academic fights, Brain- Drain; HIV-AIDS epidemic; out-dated infrastructures; poor research culture and environment; frequent closures of campuses and unstable academic calendars.

Graduate education, as generally believed, represents mastery of an academic discipline. As distinct from undergraduate education, graduate education provides advanced knowledge in a field of study characterized by training. Quality programs require institutional support: sufficient resources, supporting facilities and equipments like laboratories, computers, library resources and supplies which may directly affect the quality of the learning environment.

In this connection, Yalokwu (2001); Lakew and Mekonen(1978), all cited in Amare (1998), have identified the problems of quality education as: paucity of well trained and committed teachers, low level of teacher participation in educational practices, inadequate participation of the stakeholders in curriculum, poor quality of graduates across all levels, low motivation and low morale,etc that contributed to the problems of education quality in general. Not only these, there are also problems such as subject relevance, language proficiency, qualified teachers, teaching methods, teacher work discipline, shortage of books and teaching materials, faculty work load, and massive

expansions. Ensuring quality of education in graduate study programs depends on the strengths of educational resources on the ground more than anything else.

The issue of low quality of education which is the concern of this research has recently been the hot agenda in Ethiopia to addressing it nation wide with special focus on the general education.

However, it does not seem that similar attention is given about quality of education in HEIs in general and graduate study programs in particular. On the other hand, higher level studies like that of graduate programs require good governance and leadership, relevant programs, adequate number of professionally committed and competent faculty members. Students' competence and willingness to learn and access to adequate learning resources are also needed.

The concern about quality of education in general has become a burning issue at national level in Ethiopia. Recently, the problem of quality in education is also one of the big challenges in HEIs. There are already some observable evidences regarding problem of quality of education in colleges and universities.

As a matter of fact, there have been several provisions of regulatory frame works mentioned in the background by the government. And a number of conferences and workshops accompanied with long media coverage on the issue of quality education are taking place. However, many stakeholders have been heard complaining that quality of education is low and declining even at the level of graduate programs which must be checked by researched evidences on the ground. Thus, the study has the following objectives:

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to assess the key issues that may affect the quality of education in graduate programs at the College of Education and Behavioral Studies, Addis Ababa University. The specific objectives of the study are, therefore, to:

1. Explore the perceptions of the academic community about the quality of graduate programs in the College of Education;
2. Examine the profile and quality of the teaching staff in graduate programs at the College;
3. Assess the profile and quality of the students in graduate programs at the College;
4. Investigate modes of delivery (approaches) being practiced in teaching-learning processes of graduate programs at the College;
5. Assess the state of teaching-learning resources and services that academic staff and graduate students get to their studies and research.

In order to achieve these objectives, the investigator has formulated the Basic Research Question: **What are the key issues that contribute to the strength or weakness of quality of graduate programs?** The specific research questions include:

1. How does the academic community perceive/view the level of quality of graduate Programs at CEBS?
2. What is the profile of the teaching staff in the graduate programs of the College?
3. How competent are students in the graduate programs in their profiles and participations in teaching-learning processes?

4. What modes of delivery (approaches) are being practiced in the Teaching- learning processes of the Graduate programs?
5. What assessment mechanisms are practiced in evaluating the students regarding their courses
6. How adequate are educational resources and Services for teaching-learning, and research activities?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study therefore, is significant in that: (1) there is little or no research done on quality of education at graduate programs level, particularly by students to my knowledge. So, to some extent, it may fill this gap in addressing key issues of quality indicators in HEIs in general and that of graduate programs at the CEBS in particular. (2) The findings may modestly contribute in giving some insight for further research initiatives on the area.

(3) Moreover, the study provides better understanding about the strengths and the weaknesses in relation to the key issues and foreword some suggestions in the way of improving the quality of programs.

1.5 Scope of the Study

Due to resource constraints and the manageability to the researcher, the study is delimited to assess only major issues that may affect the quality of education in selected graduate programs at the College of Education.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

With regard to this study, there are limitations. Some staff members did not participate in the study due to lack of willingness. They might have provided valuable information. Also, the intended focus group discussion with the instructors did not take place, because it was very difficult to bring together more than one person at a time.

The other limitation was the complex nature of the topic and lack of literature and research on our context.

1.7. Definitions of Terms.

Academic Community: refers to the teaching staff, students, and relevant members of management in CEBS/AAU.

Assessment: the process whereby one attempts to measure the quality and quality of learning and teaching using various assessment techniques (Taneja, 1989).

Perceptions: refers to the beliefs and/or opinion of academic community in the way of their awareness/understanding about the quality of education in graduate programs at CEBS.

Program: a group of educational activities including courses or curriculum that has common objectives or that, together, achieves a single goal (Singh, 2007).

Resources: refers to availability and provision of non-human teaching and learning resources such as library materials, ICT, classrooms and other related facilities for the graduate programs.

This paper comprises five chapters and a section for discussions. The first chapter deals with the introduction of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, delimitation and limitations of the study.

The second chapter presents a review of related literature and the third chapter deals with design, methods and procedures used for data collection.

The fourth chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of the data gathered and followed by a section for discussions. The fifth chapter contains summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. The Concept of Education, Quality, Criteria, Standards, and Indicators

(QCSD).

The way different people define the term education may create some sort of difficulties in understanding it. Bassey (1999) advises that it is important for every researcher to be clear about what she or he means by education. According to this author, for example, some see it as acquiring useful knowledge and skills in order to achieve a high quality of life. Education is perceived as an indispensable tool in human life of all modern societies. It is also a fact that education is one of the most important inventions that distinguishes the very nature of human kinds from that of other beings.

Education provided at all levels would be expected to meet future skilled human resource requirements necessary in both public and private sectors. It is believed that the educated human resources through its institutional mechanism are the determining forces in economic and social development of a nation. Such institutional mechanisms can be the formal or non- formal educational systems for developing human skills and knowledge (Psacharopoulos, 1990). In this connection, Harbison emphasizes that:

Human resources... constitute the ultimate basis for wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production; human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organizations, and carry forward national development. Clearly, a country which is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of its people and to utilize them effectively in the national economy will be unable to develop anything else (Harbison, 1973 cited in Todaro, 1989:330).

On definitions of the concepts quality and standards, (Harvey and Green, 1993 in Ashcroft 1995), say that quality may be viewed as a bench mark, an absolute life truth that allows no compromise. They are of the opinion that quality may be taken as a relative matter, linked to the extent that processes result in desired outcomes. Several studies by various researchers of education have indicated that the pursuit of education quality is a key theme of education reforms in many countries and regions including developed and developing. However, as many scholars agree, there is a poor understanding about the concept. This is due to the complicated nature of education quality and lack of related frameworks and indicators for monitoring it. In most cases, it is difficult for people to know how well their education system is and how the quality of education services provided can be ensured and enhanced at the site level and system level (Cheng, 2005).

The statement by Furlong and Oacea (2005), as cited in Firdissa (2007), indicates that defining quality at the level of HEIs is a challenging task because quality is determined by a wider set of criteria which reflects the broadening social composition of the review system.

Bassey has adapted and set out what he calls it a framework definition: "Education is first, the experience and nurture of personal and social development towards worthwhile living; second, the acquisition, development, transmission, conservation, discovery and renewal of worthwhile culture" (Bassey, 1999:39).

The author claims his definition to be a framework account because, the key concepts contained in it: experience, acquisition, and development are linked to the activities of

learners; where as nurture, development and transmission are linked to activities of teachers. In addition, the term conservation linked to the activities of scholars and librarians, while discovery, development, and renewal are linked to the activities of artists, scientists, engineers, politicians and researchers.

No matter how good education is being defined, but the question is how good the educational systems are at all levels to fit it. Pre-requisite for developing quality of education are internal organizations, resource allocations, policy formulation and implementation. However, evidences indicate that such supportive educational environment was not in good shape on the ground.

For example Tekeste Negash (1990), on the conditions of Ethiopian educational system pointed out that:

- Ethiopian educational policy has always been developed behind closed doors-carried out without the participation of the social focuses concerned, namely, teachers and parents;
- The problems of the Ethiopian education sector are drastic expansion beyond the country's resources (financial and otherwise) and the irrelevance of the curriculum to the conditions of the country;
- There were poor classroom conditions with critical shortage of textbooks, references, blackboards with not much pupil participation;
- Poor working conditions such as teachers salaries, large class size, unmotivated students due to unbright future after completion of school;

- Overcrowding of classes due to shortage of extra classrooms arising from uncontrolled expansion and the number of subjects that students are expected to learn.
- The state of research seems to suffer from lack of imagination;
- The quality of education in terms of relevance to the cultural, historical and economic needs of the country was not given sufficient consideration.

Hence according to Tekeste, the crisis of education exemplified by the decline in the quality of education is well-known reality among teachers and parents who participated in the study. This is attributed to uncontrolled expansion of the sector in relation to available material resources and job opportunities.

There are important lessons that can be drawn from the situations outlined above in any research attempts on problems regarding quality of higher education system in general and that of graduate programs in particular. Whatever crises exist at the lower educational levels, for obvious reasons, can have direct reflections on the performance of higher education systems including the problem of quality in graduate study programs.

The literature on quality in higher education has dealt with three approaches in the way of defining the concept:

- Reputational approach – as the meaning of the term indicates is, mostly determined by peer review as the basic instrument of judgment;
- Outcomes (students) approach – it depends on outcomes indicators like number of students pass examination, attrition rates, the number of publications etc.;

- Total quality approach – encourages wider involvement of construction. Continuous improvement, organizational learning and the needs of the customer also characterize it. This approach, although used mainly in industry, is increasingly accepted as a model for higher education (Dill, 1992; Maassen, 1995, in Cloete, 1998).

The approaches described above are further elaborated and classified into three categories:

- Quality as exceptional – Regards quality as excellence often refers to high standards attained only in limited conditions with exceptional students and staff as perceived in elitist higher education systems and institutions;
- Quality as efficient production – based on practices in industry that disconnects quality from absolute standards and makes it relative to specifications;
- Quality as transformation – enhances the abilities of students regardless of their initial level and regards “adding value” as the key objective (Cloete, 1998).

Criteria, standards and accreditation in the context of education quality assessment are highly related and interconnected concepts in HEIs. The Oxford English Reference Dictionary (1996:338, 1410), defines criteria as “a principle or standard that a thing is judged by – means of judgment”. The concept standards also defined by this same source as: “an object or quality or measure surviving as a basis or example or principle to which others conform or should conform or by which accuracy or quality of others is judged (by present-day standards). The degree of excellence etc, required for a particular purpose.”

Criteria and standards can mostly be developed by accrediting organizations. In most cases, the two terms are used interchangeably. They are very important tools used by accrediting organizations to ensure quality, accountability, and improvement in universities that are accredited by them. The aim of providing a standard, in simple terms is to be used as a means by which educational institutions can be judged on the quality of educational service, educational standards, and ethical business practices they provide.

Standards may also be defined in terms of quality indicators and measures taken to check on outcomes. In another words, it is a predetermined processes of monitoring in a context of quality control. Aschroft (1995) has indicated that the nature of quality and standards, as they apply to teaching and learning are complex. Certain standards for instance, generally, required of an institution or universities in order to become accredited and to promote high-quality education are identified to be:

- Institution's mission/vision;
- Educational practices;
- Administration/governance;
- Faculty/Staff;
- Financial stability;
- Policies and student services.

This is to suggest that institutions meeting the standards set for each of these areas are granted accreditation. Accreditation itself is described as a process through which a university maintains and improves its standards and practices (Belford University, 2009; Kim, Mekenna, and Ketefian (2009).

Indicators of institutional performance, as briefly outlined for classifying universities and affiliated institutions (Dia, 1998:184):

- institution's reputation: when the classification is done;
- quality of institutional resources (lecturers, students, and facilities);
- nature and scope of curricula;
- performance in terms of skill development;
- the appropriateness of certified skills in relation to the requirements of the profession endorsed by the given certificate; i.e. relevance of certificates awarded;
- value of the knowledge produced and assessed in terms of its originality or novelty;
- lifelong education, community development and expertise: its impact on the socio-cultural environment through university extension activities.

Mosha (1998) indicates that quality of programs is one of the most critical academic environment. It is expected of such programs to be adequately responsive to contemporary market demands, overall satisfaction by students and employers. However, Mosha further argues that, many universities in Africa are still offering traditional programs that were designed two or three decades ago.

Whereas McGhee (2003) on managing quality in approval, monitoring and review of academic programs has first, indicated the process as the core of Quality Assurance (QA) in higher education: the standards of programs of study, which in turn reflect the defining authority of HEIs including the right to award degrees. Validation and review of programs of study reflects several different types of decisions and these decisions need to

acknowledge the differences in programs in the context of common standards. Therefore, institutions are concerned to ensure that their programs are of a high standard and that there are adequate resources to support them.

According to McGhee (2003), there are arrangements and key principles explored for validation of programs:

- (1) Externality – an assumption that the course team must draw on sources of expertise and commentary from outside the immediate circle of those developing the programs. In addition, that, the validating institution, the awarding body, must incorporate external views on the appropriateness of the validation. On the importance of externality and market research, McGhee further underlined that there is no substitute for an enthusiastic industry representative for academic programs which seek to provide graduates with skills relevant to a particular market sector that can spell out business and employer's needs. Thus, such intelligence on programs and the industry is highly believed to enhance the vocational relevance of the curriculum and the overall employability of graduates and as such will make the program not only more coherent, but also more credible with both potential students and potential placement companies.
- (2) Documentation – appropriate documentation is considered as one of the key aspects of the whole exercise of program approval. There are many types of core documents. The most common ones are: (a) Definitive course document; (b) Student handbook, (c) Business plan; and (d) Development document. Definitive course document lays down the program structure including program

specification, details of constituent modules, entrance requirements, etc. Business plan documentation, as the name indicates, is about business plans for new programs developed by course teams to demonstrate the sustainability of the program regarding the staffing requires, the number of likely students and, where appropriate, the fee they are likely to be expected to pay.

Ball and Halwachi (1987) as objective and usually quantitative measures of achievement have defined performance indicators. Loder et al. (1989) identifies four sorts of institutional performance indicators: (1) Input measures; (2) market performance; (3) process measures; and (4) output measures. The author further elaborates that process measures include progress rates student choices of electives, student appraisal of staff, peer appraisal of courses, variety, effectiveness, suitability of teaching methods and opportunities for learning, amount and relationship of research and scholarship to teaching and learning and effectiveness of validation and review.

2.2. Quality Assessment in Graduate Programs

The issue of quality assessment in graduate study programs mainly involves some key elements. These may include the perceptions of the concepts education, quality, criteria, standards, and indicators (QCSI); the governance of universities and its clarity of purpose. Moreover, it requires supportive learning environment consisting of program and institutional resources; academic practices (core knowledge, course content, immersion, critical dialog, application, mentoring); faculty; research activities; service to the community; student services; international perspectives and accreditation (SIUE, 2009; Dia, 1998; Hansen, 2009; Academic Standards Committee, 2009).

2.3. The Governance, Mission and Visions of Universities

The governance, leadership, and administration of universities have a great role in formulating relevant policies regarding HEIs. It is obvious that the governing body of the university has responsibility for determining the institutional mission, key staff appointments, the strategic plan and the budget (Ashcroft, 1995).

Universities have some sort of mission, vision, goals and objectives as guiding principles in their endeavor to build and develop higher educational institutions. Shabani (1998) mentions that the mission for the development of such institutions have been making a great contribution towards national development, especially through the training of human resources required to manage the civil services, the private sector and the development of the educational systems.

In reference to UNESCO's Policy paper on "Change and Development in Higher Education", the same author mentioned above, further emphasized that the mission and vision statements of universities generally serve as criteria to analyze the relevance, the role and its place in society, relationships with the world of work as well as the state and public sources of funding and its interaction with other levels and forms of education.

Dia (1998) perceives quality of education in relation with the mission and vision as a guide towards the relevance of higher education, its role and place in society as regards trainings and research, its relationships with the world of work and services to community.

Missions and visions of universities may vary from country-to-country and culture – to – culture depending on the values attached to the particular nation or a specific organization. Some higher education institutions in general, and universities in particular as their primary mission: train young professionals and future leaders through teaching programs, throw light and create knowledge through research activities. Again they provide community services through outreach programs (Mohamedbhai, 1998).

Jaroslav Pelikan's account on the mission and the role of universities regarding the world peace says: "it is nevertheless difficult to imagine a substitute for the university as the primary staging area for peace through international understanding – if the university did not exist, it would be necessary to invent it" (Pelikan, 1992: 16). The emphasis made by this author has implications that a modern society is unthinkable without the university while at the same time, claims that the university is in a state of crisis and is in danger of losing credibility.

Nevertheless, the root causes of the crisis to be known as larger issues of the century even to the crisis of education to which the universities at large ought to bring about solutions as per their mission are: 'The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse' who "were given power to kill (1) with sword and (2) with famine and (3) with pestilence and (4) by wild beasts of the earth". In fact, "ignorance" is a fifth into the outline of just these four Horsemen in the Apocalypse (Pelikan, 1992:16).

In order to find ways of coping with such challenges represented by each of the Four Horsemen including 'ignorance', the book argues that universities as their primary mission need to work towards:

the advancement of knowledge through research; the transmission of knowledge through teaching; the preservation of knowledge in scholarly collections; and the diffusion of knowledge through publishing are the four legs of the university table, no one of which can stand for very long unless all are strong. It would follow that in the future even more than in the past they will all have to be represented in strength as components of any program of peace through international education: exchange of scholars and scientists in Libraries and laboratories, and exchange of students and teachers, and exchange and translation of books and journals (Pelikan, 1992: 17).

The success of higher education in general and that of graduate programs in particular highly depends on its mission statement. Relevant curricula, quality and internationalization which determine its local, national and global standing and functioning are guided by the mission statement of universities. Dia (1998) further argues that, relevance and quality of higher education should be perceived in terms of its role and peace in society and its mission as regards training, research and the relevant services. The relevance in higher education in the view of this author should also be seen in terms of its linkage with the world of work, its relationship with the state and sources of funding as well as its interactions with other level and forms of education.

Addis Ababa University, like similar colleges and universities elsewhere in other African countries, America, Asia or Europe, has educational mission and vision under different regimes who ruled modern Ethiopia. The mission of this university, beginning from the Emperor' era:

- As the citadel of higher learning, research and knowledge committed to the realization of the general and specific objectives towards the development of mature and conscious citizens who will be able to make significant contributions, to the well-being, the advancement and the development of their country and their fellow citizens. More specifically, the university's functions are:

- To improve knowledge by teaching;
- To advance knowledge through research;
- To study, preserve and develop the Ethiopian cultural heritage;
- To identify itself with the community by serving in all ways considered appropriate and best handled by the university;
- To satisfy the development needs of Ethiopia (AAU, 2007).

Likewise, the college of Education has the overall mission and vision emanating from its mother institute (AAU), to undertake teaching, research, and community services geared to development of the educational sector and related fields. More specifically, the mission of the college is to:

- Prepare high-caliber, committed, confident and socially responsible educators, educational policy analysts, planners, managers/leaders, and human resource developers, trainers and teachers;
- Support implementation of the university wide reform in educational management, pedagogy and curriculum through capacity building endeavors;
- Undertake educational research to generate new and innovative approaches; and enhance the dissemination of outputs through nationally and internationally recognized journals and related publications;
- Forge and promote partnerships locally and internationally so as to enhance the development of networks in the area of education and educational research;
- Prove to be a center of excellence in education by improving quality of its diverse programs in the graduate and undergraduate levels; and

- Provide consultancy services for educational institutions, the public and policy makers (CEBS, 2009: 4-5).

2.4. Clarity of Purpose and Quality in Graduate Programs

The clarity of purpose is a sub-element within the mission statement of universities and their relevant constituencies. That is to say, a high-quality graduate program is centered on the common understanding among faculty and students of the purpose and goals of the program. Such unity of purpose develops a sense of collective ownership of and commitment to the program. Because of such mutual understanding, the values and customs of the program and effective professional relationships can be developed among the faculty and students towards a quality education (SIUE, 2009). Here, it also makes sense to make note of the very definition of quality as “fitness for purpose” (Aschroft, 1995: 14). Peter Williams’ expression on the importance of the clarity of purposes in the process of developing quality of education in higher education institutions points out that quality assurance is a journey not a destination. It needs to undertake clear purposes in mind, and methods and instruments chosen must be for those purposes (Williams, 2009).

2.5. Supportive Learning Environment.

The teaching- learning processes, more than any thing else, require a conducive situation that enables the work of teachers and students efficient and smooth enough. That may include a well developed curriculum, organizational strengths of the educational institutions, availability of resources and services, active participation of all the concerned in management.

2.5.1. Study programs:

It is understandable that high-quality programs provide a supportive learning environment. Such programs nurture an ethic of co-operation and substantially enrich the learning experience for faculty and students. A supportive learning environment means that faculty has shared expectations for intellectual rigor in which students are encouraged to challenge the limits of their knowledge (SIUE, 2009).

2.5.2. Institutional resources:

Quality programs obviously require institutional support. Sufficient institutional resources, supporting facilities and equipment, e.g. laboratories, computers, library resources and the like directly affect the quality of the learning environment. It is quite clear that institutional support is also critical in establishing and setting the expectation for high academic standards, including those of accreditation. Here it is relevant to make mention of some accrediting institutional bodies like Education Training and Quality Assurance Agency (ETQAA). The mandates of this agency (ETQAA) are, Quality Assurance and Audit to enhance quality of education in Ethiopian Higher Learning Institutions through pre-accreditation and accreditation procedures including the Graduate Programs (HERQA, 2007). Above all, the issue of institutional resource is often basic to the quality of a program that needs to be carefully assessed including the availability of staff expertise, the likely income from fees and other sources, management, running and capital costs, and overheads and opportunity costs (Aschroft, 1995).

2.6. Academic Practices

Generally, there are several academic activities practiced in college and universities. Some of the most commonly practiced in pursuit of quality education mainly in programs at the level of graduate studies include: core knowledge, course content, immersion, critical dialog, application, mentoring and product. These are shortly described below.

- **Core knowledge:** the idea of core knowledge here, as related to the graduate study programs, provides the theoretical understandings and the research practices and methodologies of the discipline. A solid core, the foundation for advanced knowledge in the discipline, supports the entire learning experience for students. A core helps define in the understanding of the knowledge, skills, and practices the faculty expect the students to learn. A core of knowledge helps insure that the program in a coherent learning experience rather than a simple collection of courses.
- **Course content:** practically, courses should lead to specialized knowledge in the discipline. Students can learn the skills, tools, and methods of the discipline through courses. The courses ought to teach students how new knowledge is created, how existing knowledge is applied. Not only these, courses develop students' oral and written communication skills. Aschroft (1995) discusses that the course content often seems the least problematic area of course design. Staff expertise and available resources, together with the tradition as of the subject area and requirements of validates, potential students and employers provide the framework for decisions.

- **Immersion:** This is to indicate that the entire curriculum should be designed to involve students of graduate study programs in intense learning experiences. This means that graduate education requires that students become deeply engaged in the discipline. Part-time as well as the full-time students need to be immersed in the learning experiences that engender creativity, dedication, cooperation and collegiality.
- **Critical dialog:** This is to suggest that graduate education is characterized by a dialectical approach to learning that emphasizes the necessity of collegial and collaborative confrontation about ideas, methods, and skills. So that, the curriculum should be centered on encouraging students to critically engage the faculty and each other in dialog about the knowledge they are learning, applying and creating.
- **Application:** knowledge for the sake of knowledge is not the only goal of education particularly that of higher education. It is expected of education in the graduate programs to provide students with an opportunity to apply the knowledge they have earned. Such application can be in the form of internships, practice, papers, fieldwork, and assistantships which can promote and foster effective learning experiences for students.
- **Mentoring:** mentoring of students helps teach students the ethics and conventions of the discipline. It helps immerse the students in the field of study and helps ensure that individual learning needs are addressed. Individualization of

instruction also provides the guidance needed for students to learn how to acquire, create, and apply knowledge independently.

- **Product:** Students must have a culminating experience in which they are required to integrate the knowledge and skills they have been taught. A final product, in the form of a thesis, project, recital, exhibit, exam, or internship, allows the student to apply the theory, skills, and methods of the discipline (SIUE, 2009).

2.7. Faculty/ Staff Quality

Related literature on the issues of quality in education indicates that a high-quality graduate program must have a faculty/staff that are actively engaged in research. The faculty must be active learners themselves in order to be effective in the instruction of the students (SIUE, 2009). In a sense, the aforementioned statements seem to send a meaningful message alerting the teachers that every teacher must first be a student.

Ayalew (2002) has made it a point that the competence of teachers is one of, perhaps, the main factor that may determine the quality of education. He further elaborated that the competence and teaching experiences and the research results as the criteria and/or indicating attributes of the quality in teaching.

The same author argues further that the criteria he has mentioned above are only the necessary conditions but are not sufficient to bring about the quality of education. Rather it is expected of teachers with such competence need to engage their entire knowledge, full-time and energy in teaching and research, he said. To make this a reality, he

suggested that there must be adequate situations like attractive salary, accommodations, reasonable work loads, creating a conducive research environment, academic and professional development schemes, democratic and good governance with full academic freedom.

Hogan (1981) in HERQA (2007) argues that there is a direct relationship between educational quality and the quality of the graduate faculty supposed to be one of the most important inputs in the process. This suggests that the qualification of faculty teaching at graduate level is one of the primary sources of success for graduate programs. The required qualification and competence as pointed out in this document are PhD and above and/or Associate Professor or higher or still Assistant Professor with a limited years of experience. It is further argued that the number of faculty members in a given discipline affects the type of training provided too.

Similar account regarding the role of teachers on the quality of teaching and learning in HEIs in Ethiopia indicates that the way teachers comprehend generation of knowledge, their awareness of social values, knowledge of subject matter and the appropriate delivery methods have vital role in determining quality of teaching and learning on the part of the learners (Daniel, 2004).

As the graduate studies are the advanced level of HE, the state of quality in teaching-learning process of higher education may hold true in the case of the graduate programs as well. In this connection, Aschcroft (2004) suggests that it would be wise for Ethiopian HEIs to prepare for accountability for quality, relevance and standard as a way out of the

vicious, which in fact affects all sectors of education system from the bottom-up and top-down of the ladder.

2.8. Research Activities in Graduate Programs

Conducting research be it educational or otherwise, is claimed to be one of the three primary functions of any university. Faculties and students of graduate programs are necessarily found themselves at the center of research activities in one way or another. Hence, it is expected of the graduate programs to be engaged in applied and basic research and share as one of common characteristics that help define a quality program. Dia (1998) has described university research areas as:

- Basic research which leads to the definition of methodological concepts that foster progress for the development of knowledge;
- Research and development, which highlights the importance of adaptations in the field;
- Targeted research, finalized and underscored by socio-economic objectives;
- Applied research aimed at finding solutions for contingent problems of limited scope; and
- Research adopted to special circumstances.

Strategic research, which consists in organizing research, for the achievement of far-reaching objectives, and is accorded special importance because of the economic upheavals. The role of research in academic life is underlined by Mroapachu (1995) cited in Mosha (1998) it is research that makes academics earn their professional mark and are

judged for career advancement. Without research, teaching is like cultivating a land until it ceases to be productive because no fertilizer is applied.

The writer further argues that research is the major component that marks universities from other institutions in nourishing, advancing, and refining knowledge and skills imparted and sought for by students in the teaching and learning process. It is also acknowledged that research is instrumental in the pursuit of truth and providing clear basis for action.

Ashcroft (1995) discussing on the role of research and its relationship to the quality of educational provision within colleges and universities has indicated that first, it is used as a performance indicator for funding purposes and second, staff qualification in the assessment of quality. According to the author, these have its own contribution to the quality of teaching and ensure that the teacher is up to date and well informed.

According to Ashcroft, universities particularly with graduate programs have a responsibility to establish facilities for research or appropriate infrastructures like library and information technology systems. It is a fact that quality of education depends on the quality of research. Again this suggests that the library or study center being central to the work of lecturers and that of students may affect the quality of research itself.

Quality of research in the universities can be judged by the level of support for graduate research students. Such supports include guidelines on the support of graduate students and these are communicated to students and supervisors.

As shortly summarized by Ashcroft (1995:211), research and scholarship are central to further and higher education and the quality of teaching. The author went on further elaborating that research is a systematic, public activity, with originality of findings or interpretation. It includes:

- The creation of new ideas;
- Artistic creation and design, where these lead to new insights;
- Reinterpretation of existing knowledge or ideas which can be related to new products, materials and processes;
- Conceptual papers for publication;
- Supervision and output of research students; and
- External funding for research.

In line with this, Addis Ababa University has instituted a number of research establishments with the functions and objectives to:

- Initiate, coordinate, and direct interdisciplinary research based on the guidelines for research provided by the office of the VPRDSGS, then VPGSR;
- Offering interdisciplinary courses leading to degrees diplomas or certificates;
- Publish journals and other research findings;
- Establish resource centers in their area of specialization;
- Encourage, promote and coordinate the dissemination of research findings through channels such as workshops, lectures and ICT;
- Encourage and assist scholars to engage in research by providing financial assistance or otherwise (AAU, 2007: 229).

In connection to this, Endashew has noted that the contribution of the Graduate Study Programs of Addis Ababa University to research output: the MSc/MA thesis or dissertation outputs, among others, have promoted the research interest of different academic units. Such undertakings by the respective staff and through graduate studies have maintained institutional connection as he said. Such institutional undertakings are expected to bring about solutions to the recurrent shortage of food, mal-nutrition, health and education that affect millions of Ethiopians. However, these institutions so far, could not meet their goals to increase agricultural production, improve health and education whether for subsistence living or for market economy, or both, the author emphasized

As one can easily grasp from the views of this scholar, research venture in higher learning institutions could not live up-to-the expectations to discharge shared responsibility for improving the living standards of Ethiopians. The implications of such failurity in the present research institutions necessitate institution of new and innovative academic programs, according to the author. This entails social, science and technology in which the universities have to define their research as a pursuit of integrated, interdisciplinary venture that considers physical, biological, socio-economic and cultural factors (Endashew, 2001).

2.9. Quality of Services to the Community

Providing an outreach services to the respective community by any given university is one of the performance indicators regarding the quality expected from the graduates. Related studies indicate that universities financed by public ought to resolve the problems of the society. Such services can manifest themselves in terms of level of participation in

providing quality advisory services to the institution, nation and the community rather than merely in terms of action to enhance quality of teaching learning and research (Mosha, 1998). Coate in a book chapter has expressed the strategy of services to community: “without students to teach, research to conduct, or services to provide, there is no business for colleges and universities.” “Without value, there is no reason for customers to choose out an institution over an increasingly large number of similar institutions” (Coate, 1995:130). This expression suggests that educational programs of colleges and universities must work towards quality services for their customers.

2.10. The role of Information on Quality and Standards in Higher Education

There are reports indicating that information which HEIs need to produce, assess, and in some case publish in order to demonstrate auditors, the public and themselves that they have clear and robust information based on which to manage quality issues in education.

The expectations on the availability of information about quality and standards of Higher Education, generally assure three main functions:

1. to ensure that universities are able to discharge their responsibilities to monitor and assure programs delivered in their names;
2. to provide information to both external and internal stakeholders such as students and employees;
3. to enable institutional audits to draw up reliable information about universities operations (McGhee, 2003:43)

Information produced in any HEIs, in its very nature is supposed to be a corporate resource shared between and among the external and internal academic community as

such as its own internal QA procedures, thus reducing unnecessary duplication of activities, functions and/or programs. The significance of such information as distinguished by (QAA and HEFCE (2002), cited in (McGhee, 2003: 44) are:

- Information which should be available in all HEIs to enable academic quality and standards to be monitored, such as information on student progression and completion;
- Information for publication to enable students and employers to make informed judgments about the HEIs provision, such as summaries of external examiners' report;
- Information on the HEIs internal procedures for assuring academic quality and standards which is very wide, but some of which is categorized and broken down as follows: approval monitoring and review data such as program specifications, internal reports of major program reviews; student satisfaction data including views on guidance, the library IT support, quality of teaching and pastoral support etc.

The implication is that the effectiveness of such management information for quality purposes need to be assessed by auditors as part of institutional and the availability, relevance, timeliness and consistency of this information is reviewed periodically, and that the information needs of academic managers are clearly defined and served by central information services.

Ashcroft (1995) similarly noted that changes in teaching and learning methods and the growth in the availability of information is likely to mean that the institutions' central learning resource facility (libraries) will come more important to the quality of its work.

Information is one of the core values of the quality approach necessarily utilized in HEIs. According to Ruben (1995), sources of information for colleges and universities are external constituencies, peer competitor, and benchmark institutions; vendors; and high schools, junior colleges, and other student sending units. Internal information sources include administration, faculty and staffs and self-studies of academic, support, and operational units and processes. This also includes accreditation reviews, external reviews, and strategic planning activities also serve as sources of useful information on internal performance.

Thus, in Ruben's view, the basic concept underlying this value is that organizational well-being, and a service orientation, is possible only with effective systems for information acquisition, analysis, and use. This is to say that identifying, studying, and comparing ones own activities to those of "benchmark" organizations. This may represent a standard of excellence, and a focal point for performance comparison and improvement. In this connection, it would be important to draw a lesson from similar universities abroad like that of Rutgers (U.S.A.) as a good practice and/or benchmark on how to keep academic records and get access to information for making decisions on academic issues by all the concerned.

These events clearly reveal that there are service gaps – gaps between the performances of the institutions on the one hand, and the needs and expectations of those from who services are being provided.

CHAPTER THREE: DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.1 Design of the Study.

With the intention of getting the general picture of the existing practice, challenges and prospects of education quality in the programs of the Graduate Studies at the CEBS of AAU, mixed method design was employed. The purpose of using this design is that the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone. Among the major types of mixed methods design, the 'Concurrent Triangulation' has been employed that focuses on collecting, analyzing, and mixing both qualitative and quantitative data in a single study.

This design involves concurrent/simultaneous, but separate collection and analysis of the two types of data in which one type of data is used to compare results or to validate, confirm, or corroborate with other types of data. Hence, in this study, qualitative data was analyzed and then cross validated by quantitative results about aspects of the program quality assessment gathered by the survey questionnaires. The results of data analysis from the two methods were merged during discussion /interpretation phase of the study by bringing the separate results together.

3.2 Research Setting

The College of Education and Behavioral Studies is selected as a relevant site to conduct research on the problem under study because it is found to be one of the oldest, well established and relevant units of AAU. In addition, the researcher has first hand

information about the prevalence of the problem with better access to information that is indispensable to the success of the study. The researcher has considered this as an opportunity to easily secure professional support of experts in the university as well.

The present College of Education and Behavioral Studies was founded in 1952. It opened major area courses in the Arts Faculty. In 1963 it was promoted to the level of Faculty of education and started training educators in various fields namely: “Elementary education, Secondary Education, Psychology, Library Science, and Technical Teacher Education. Currently, the College has re-engineered all its strategies and programs towards mainly the postgraduate programs and research which is now a number one priority of the Government and that of the University (CoE, 2009).

3.3 Participants and Sampling Techniques

In the College of Education, there were a total of 22 instructors who were qualified to teach at graduate programs and 807 graduate students enrolled in the 2009/10 academic year. Of these, 22 (100%) instructors and 176 (20%) all students in graduate programs of the three selected departments (BE, CTPDS, EDPM) were taken by using the Purposive and Availability Sampling Techniques to administer questionnaire survey respectively.

The same sampling techniques were employed for selecting the concerned members of the university management, instructors, and experts for interview. The study has also involved FGD with six students who represented the three departments under study. The Students were selected purposively on the basis of their willingness and the anticipated contribution of relevant information.

3.4 Data Gathering Instruments.

In order to be able to collect the necessary information from the sources of this study, the following instruments of data collection were used.

Interview Schedule

Semi-structured interview guides were developed to gather information from key informants of the College and the concerned members of the university management. Focus of the interview questions was on the status and major issues concerning the quality of education in graduate programs of the College per se.

Focus-Group Discussion Schedule

Focus-group discussion guides were developed so as to obtain additional and relevant information about the issues regarding quality of education. Data related to perceptions of quality in graduate study programs were also solicited by using FGDS with students of the graduate studies who represent the respective sampled programs.

Questionnaire

Two types of questionnaires (close-ended and open-ended) were designed and administered for two target groups that are students and the instructors in the graduate programs. The Close-ended questions were prepared in the form of Likert Scale. The focus of the questionnaires was on the status and major issues concerning the quality of education in the graduate programs at the College of Education. Most items of the questionnaires were developed by the investigator based on relevant literature. Some of

the items were taken from relevant studies (Ayalew et al, 2009), and adapted in a way to fit to this study.

A Pilot Test of the Questionnaire

In order to check the reliability of the survey questions, a pilot test was made. The questionnaire was distributed to 23 students in the class of “Measurement and Statistics” in College of Education (Institute of Psychology and Behavioral Science) to obtain comments on the questions provided. Twenty-two questionnaires out of twenty three were returned. No comments regarding clarity and relevance of questions were made.

When the investigator went through the returned questionnaires that administered in this pilot-test, all respondents have properly completed the questions. In addition, ahead of data collection, experts who have been engaged in research activities in education quality issues and experts having language background were consulted concerning the data gathering tools. These experts have provided important comments and corrections were made accordingly.

Review of Documents

Review of relevant literature was made in order to build on international and local practices about developing the quality of education in HEIs in general and the graduate study programs in particular. Furthermore, Self-Evaluation Document (SED) of AAU and HERQA’S documents including Institutional Quality Audit Report were the focus of the documentary analysis. Moreover, official documents such as Senate Legislation and Five Year Strategic Plan of AAU were examined to supplement data from the interviews and the focus-group discussions.

3.5. Procedures of Data Collection

Data from interviews and FGDs were gathered with informed consent of participants. Each of the participants was personally contacted and discussions were made on the purpose of the study in order to make sure that the participants would be willingly involved in the study. They were told that the information obtained would be kept confidential and any mention of participants' identity would not be made in any case. The questionnaire for students was distributed in the classrooms by the researcher. And the questionnaire for instructors was distributed in their respective offices.

3.6. Methods of Data Analysis and Interpretation

Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis and interpretation were employed. Qualitative data gathered through interview, FGD, document review and open-ended questions of the questionnaires were qualitatively analyzed and discussed by categorizing them to the major themes and basic research questions of the study. Finally both qualitative and quantitative data were combined and discussed in the discussions section.

Data obtained from close-ended questions of the questionnaires were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics particularly frequencies, and percentages were used to determine the extent to which various aspects of quality assessed by the tools of data collection. And the five-point scale was merged into three point scale for convenience in analyzing the data.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This Chapter deals with data presentation, analysis and interpretation. In the first part, descriptions are made about the general features of the participants in terms of their department, sex, qualifications, academic ranks, and work experience. Second, the main part of data presentation, analysis and interpretations on the basis of research questions is made.

4.1. Characteristics of the Participants

Five interviews were conducted with key informants of the selected Departments in the College of Education and an Official in charge of Research Affairs of AAU. Key informant interviewees were from Psychology (1), EDPM (1), CTPDS (2), Biology Education (RPO) (1). All the interviewees have PhD except that of EDPM who has MA with academic rank of Associate Professor. Concerning their experience, it varies from 12-31 years. Focus Group Discussion with student representatives was held on 08/07/2010. Six representatives were participated in FGD, 1 from Business Education, 2 from CTPDS and 3 from EDPM. All participants were male from 1st Year (4) and 2nd Year (2) students.

Table 1: Instructor respondents' Profile.

MA			PHD			TOT
BE	CTPDS	EPDM	BE	CTPDS	EPDM	
1	1	3	3	6	3	17

Table 1 show that there are three academic staff members with PhD qualifications and one faculty member with an MA and academic rank of Associate Professor in the Department of Business Education. In the Curriculum for Teachers' Professional Development Studies (CTPDS) department, there are six academic staff members with the qualification of PhD, all with an academic rank of Assistant Professor. There is one lecturer with MA qualification and PhD candidate. In the Department of Educational Planning and Management (EDPM) there are three faculty members with the qualification of PhD. Again, there are three instructors with MA qualifications. One of these has an academic rank of Assistant Professor while the other two are Lecturers. There are 12 (71%) faculty members with PhD qualifications, while there are 2 (12%) with an MA and an academic rank of associate Professors. Also there is 1 (6%) MA holder with an academic rank of Assistant Professor. Again there are 3 (18%) lecturers with an MA qualification. **All these participants were male.**

Table 2: Students' Questionnaire Distribution and Rate of return

Departments	Distributed	Returned	%
BE	38	35	92
CTPDS	28	24	86
EDPM	110	99	90
Total	176	158	90

As indicated in Table 2, 176 copies of questionnaire were dispatched to students in eight different programs in three selected departments from the College of Education and 158 (90%) have returned. The highest rate of return is from the participants of EDPM

Department, which also has the largest class-size. The Departments with the lowest class-size are Business Education and CTPDS respectively.

4.2. Perceptions of Academic Community on the Quality of Graduate Programs.

In this study, issues considered to be relevant in assessing the quality of programs are: the perceptions of academic community on quality of education; the curriculum of study programs; profile of the faculty/academic staff; the profile of students; mode of delivery; students assessment mechanisms and the availability of resources. As a point of departure, this study has been concerned with the mission and vision statements and the objectives of the CoE and that of its mother institution (AAU). These over all mission statements are supposed to be consistent with that of the mother institute, AAU.

The specific mission statement of the College contains some core values that guide the activities of the college are: center of excellence; professionalism; transparency; integrity; respect for stakeholders; teamwork and cooperation; inclusiveness; multiculturalism; diversity; gender equity; and environmental concern (CoE, 2009:6).

Then, both instructors and student participants in the interview and the FGD were asked about such mission statements in the way of getting confirmation and their awareness. Almost all participants in the interview with the exceptions of some students indicated their knowledge about the mission statements and the values. Nevertheless, they were not sure whether other constituencies had similar awareness for the mission statement per se. Participants were also asked if CoE has been performing and accomplishing its mission stated above, the response was a cautious yes; but not a resounding yes.

understanding of the concept of quality of education during the interviews and focus group discussions. Instructors and students were asked to define and discuss their perceptions of quality of education. In their responses, the three aspects of quality (input, process, and output) were reflected. One of the informants, for example, has raised relevant questions in the way of defining quality in higher education:

What are the graduates of the College of Education, let us say, in psychology, geography, mathematics, or in any other discipline able to do? Are they able to perform these and that task with competence? Do they have language proficiency (skills) for academic communications while they give lectures and/or teaching in the classrooms at lower levels? Are they professionals in their manners and have good relationship with others? What is expected of them by their employers?

(I-1, 27, 04, 2010)

In view of this participant, quality in higher education would be better defined by finding positive answers to the questions he has raised. The implication is that the quality of graduates in any program could be measured by what he or she is able to perform. Practically, this can be seen in terms of preparing a lesson plan, delivering the course materials adequately, treating and evaluating students fairly in a manner that could be evaluated as excellent or very good, as he further underlined. In consistence to what is noted of quality above, one of the respondents during the interview has explained that:

Quality in higher education is a very illusive term. It means different things to different people. There are various literatures as you know that quality is fitness for purpose, is what satisfies me the best in that the output of any educational system should be fit to the purposes of the program. With this definition in mind, when I look back to what goes on in the college, there are various pros and cons to be ensured of quality as I said earlier.

(I - 2, 01, 05, 2010)

Interviewees in charge of the departments who are considered key informants have strongly argued in the way they perceive quality in higher education. Most of them perceive quality as a very broad, and sometimes difficult to have a very common definition. They pointed out that there are people who define quality from the perspectives of input only, and others in terms of output and the outcomes as well. Again others focus only on the process: teaching-learning aspect. Nevertheless, they really share that quality is a very comprehensive concept that need integration of input, process, and the output aspects.

In this connection, the chairperson in one of the departments under study has underlined his view as follows:

We have to see quality in terms of the achievements of our trainees in terms of the knowledge, in terms of attitudinal changes, in terms of their overall development and the impacts on their respective community, which is very important. So, my suggestion is that, we have to see quality from the perspectives of both internal and external efficiency.

(I-3, 06, 05, 2010)

Another participant in different department was asked on his perception of quality in higher education. He has indicated that quality in education is very much associated with the mission, vision and objectives of the HEIs. If such institutions, according to him, are able to fulfill their objectives properly, and as a result, quality can be self-evident. In the way he perceives quality, as such, suggested upgrading instructors through professional development, making resources available, and improving the classroom situation including seats, white and blackboards, reference materials etc in order to provide quality education.

Students during the FGD held with them were asked how they perceive quality in higher education. Their responses again indicate its complex nature that involves the competence of instructors, student-centered and active learning approaches (mode of delivery and the interactions of both students and teachers) in teaching-learning processes. The issues of resources including libraries, ICT, teaching materials, textbooks, classrooms etc. were pointed out as central emphasis for quality of teaching and learning.

In this regard, one of the discussants said:

I do not have one specific definition for the term 'quality' in higher education. But, I can suggest some points by which many authorities in the area perceive it. These are: quality in HE is a multi-dimensional concept embracing all its functions and activities – teaching and academic programs research and scholarship, staffing, students, buildings and facilities in it, equipments, services to the community and the academic environment.

(FGD, 08, 07, 2010)

The survey results of the instructors' and students' questionnaires in relation to their perceptions about quality in HE is indicated in Tables 3 and 4 respectively.

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage of Instructors' Perceptions of Quality in CEBS

Items/Variables	Responses					
	*DA		*DK		*AG	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
CoE is committed to ensure quality of education in the graduate programs	4	25	1	6.2	11	68.8
There are shared values among the academic community in promoting quality of the graduate programs.	6	37.5	2	12.5	8	50
There have been scheduled/periodic meetings, conference and sessions to discuss about the quality of graduate programs being offered in the college.	10	62.5	2	12.5	4	25

*DA=Disagree; *DK=Do Not Know; *AG=Agree

Table 3 shows the instructors' responses about their perceptions of the concept quality in the College of Education. As indicated in the table, 11(68.8%) have responded that CoE is committed to ensure quality of education in the graduate programs, while 8(50%) have answered there are shared values among the academic community in promoting quality of graduate programs. On the other hand, 10(62.5%) have responded that there have not been scheduled meetings and conferences to discuss about the quality of graduate programs being offered in the college.

Table 4: Frequency and Percentage of Students' Perceptions on Quality

Items/Variables	Responses					
	*DA		*DK		*AG	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
There is a habit/tradition of information provision on the development of quality education in the graduate programs.	57	37.8	34	22.5	60	39.7
The quality of education in the graduate programs is declining	73	46.5	27	17.2	57	36.3
If you think that quality of education is declining, it is due to the massive expansions competing for the scarce resources.	4	7	2	3.5	51	89.5

DA=Disagree; DK=Do Not Know; *AG=Agree

Items stated in Table 4 above are considered as some of the conditions that may indicate the extent of students' perceptions about quality in HE and/or in their graduate programs. Students were solicited to reflect their views on provision of information and orientations regarding the development of quality education in the graduate programs so as to raise their awareness. Out of 151 students who have responded to the questionnaires,

60(39.7%) of them have indicated that there have been provisions of information pertaining quality issues. To the contrary, 57(37.8%) of the respondents do not agree about such provisions.

When students were asked whether quality of education in graduate programs is in a declining state or not, 73(46.5%) of the respondents have expressed that quality is not declining, when 57(36.3%) have responded quality is declining. Among those who feel quality is declining, 51(89.5%) have indicated competition for the scarce resources due to massive expansions could be one of the possible causes for the declining quality. On the other hand, 4(7%) of the respondents do not agree expansions to be the cause for declining of quality either.

4.3. Program Quality Assessment

Responses on the mission and vision statements including the definitions and perceptions on quality of education by the participants and the reviewed literature, presented in the previous sections are some of the preconditions considered in assessing program quality.

Similarly, the provision of policy packages and/or system for quality assurance (control, audit, and assessment) mechanisms are required conditions in developing program quality. This also includes strategies, methods and procedures, manuals and guidelines in order to assess/monitor program quality.

4.3.1. Policies and Procedures

When interviewees were asked if such institutional regulatory (policies and procedures) exist clearly about assessing quality of programs and being practiced in the CoE, one of

the informants stated: "... there are quality assurance mechanisms developed by the MoE, although its implementation at the College level, in my view, seems very young".

He went on underlining further:

Regarding quality assessment mechanisms, I know no strategies, no certain procedures that are being used, except the traditional ones: student examination on every course, requirements to produce term papers, writing thesis and defend before they graduate as a cut of point for every level of performances. But, other forms of quality assurances as far as I know, are unknown in the College.

(I-2, 01, 05, 2010)

There is a similar response by another participant. He pointed out that, there are some strategies, procedures and methods like guide books, texts for some courses, etc to check and control quality at least, at program level. This respondent, however, has underlined: "but, to my knowledge, total college level guidelines, or manuals or some guide books and quality policy does not exist", he said.

(I-1, 27, 04, 2010)

As far as quality policies and strategies are concerned, the chairperson in one of the departments under study indicated that the department has had its own objectives and guideline, set on how to recruit and assess students for its programs. He further argued that the mission, vision and the objectives of the department are used as overall indicators of quality of programs. But, he was not certain that, how well graduate students and other partners including newly employed instructors were knowledgeable of the strategies and guidelines. The responses during the interviews and FGD also have indicated that there are no responsible bodies/offices formally established for quality assessment at the department, or college's level.

(I-3, 06, 05, 2010)

In connection to education quality policy guidelines and procedures, student participants in focus group discussions were of the opinion that, quality policies either do not exist in a well articulated manner or if at all exist; it is not being implemented properly. One of the discussants described the situation as follows:

Concerning the quality assurance policy/system, I know that HERQA as an agency about the quality in HEIs has formulated a common quality assurance system. However, I doubt whether AAU/CoE has been applying the system for the purpose of quality assessment...I think last year I was asked to provide information by the office of Vice President for Graduate Studies of AAU, on the quality of post graduate programs. Thus, it is evident that AAU has conducted a tracer study on the quality of various programs that it offers at various levels. But I have not seen any progress/improvement after that study has been conducted.

(FGD, 08, 07, 2010)

4.3.2. Curriculum Design and development Procedures

When participants were asked what procedures and processes are adhered to, in designing and developing the curriculum for the graduate programs, the responses were that they mostly train the experts for the MoE, and work closely with the Ministry to develop a program designed based on the need assessment by going down even to Woreda level. In addition, the informants have pointed out what usually happens: some people from the departments or the MoE may take initiations based on the need assessment and decided they should have a program.

4.3.3. Revision of Programs

Informants were also asked whether the College exercises periodical revision for the relevance of the programs with aims and intended learning outcomes. The responses

indicate that programs have been revised so many times to fit the purpose and meet need assessment. Earlier, for example, the college used to offer one graduate program called Master's in Educational Administration, which later on changed to Educational Planning and Management.

(I-2, 01, 05, 2010)

As most of the participants in the interview agree, program revisions are done periodically, with the exception of one informant who raised a question: "do we need all programs be reviewed. Again, as such responses indicate, there are different views regarding time requirements for revising a given program. As the interviewees indicate that experts say three or ten years needed to review and check the curriculum and do something about it; while others suggest updating some programs at the average of five to seven years.

(I-1, 27, 04, 2010)

In this connection, informants have underlined that programs vary in terms of their duration – in terms of life span. For instance, EDPM, CTPDS, and Psychology are some of the graduate programs mentioned to have lived for more than nearly three decades or at least more than 25 years. Hence, it is believed to be well established and have acquired experience and relatively staffed with better faculty members.

While on the other hand, this informant mentioned that there are programs, which he did not want to mention, even may be do not fit directly to the mission of the department as he said.. He underlined his concern as "some programs are redundant, being offered in

other colleges and their resources are scarce. I do not think that the programs being offered are to the required level in this case”.

(I-2, 01, 05, 2010)

4.3.4. Program Strengths and Weaknesses

Instructors and students under survey were asked to point out the strengths and weaknesses of the programs being offered in the CoE. Responses for open-ended survey questions in terms of program strengths are summarized in Table 5:

Table 5: Program Strengths as Perceived by the Instructors and Students.

	Responses	Instruct	%	Stud.	%
Strength	Brand name; Well planned, organized and structured	2	18.2		
	The program is efficient (short duration)			4	13.8
	Student centered approach			5	17.2
	Many institutions are staffed.	3	27.3	1	3.4
	Serious thesis supervision.	2	18.2	1	3.4
	The programs are need-based.	1	9.1	1	3.4
	Clear rules and regulations.	1	9.1		
	Diversified programs.	2	18.2	7	24.1
	Well prepared modules			1	3.4
	New modular approach			7	24.1
	Good teaching learning process			2	6.9
Weakness	Lack of transparency/No proper guidelines.	2	33.3	29	28.2
	There is no strength at all; No integrity.	1	16.6	1	1
	Commitment is shown to quantity, rather than quality.	1	16.6	2	1.9
	Lack of proper specialization.	1	16.6		
	Lack of communication among units with concern of graduate programs.	1	16.7	7	6.8
	Lack of modules.			31	30.1
	AAU/CoE is the pioneer for the merits but also for demerits.			1	1
	Lack of efficiency			1	1
	Lack of effective arrangement of schedule			23	22.3
	Program lacks linkage with the environment/industry			2	1.9
	Lack of linkage with international colleges			1	1
	Lack of course revision/update			5	4.8

Table 5 indicates the summary of responses of instructors and students regarding open ended questions on strengths and weaknesses of graduate programs. With regard to program strengths, seven among eleven instructors have indicated that the program has strengths in staffing institutions (3), diversification of fields (2) and better institutional

organization (2). Similarly, twenty three out of twenty nine students have indicated that the program has strengths in diversification of fields (7), new modular approach (7), and student centered approach (5) and its efficiency or short duration (4).

Regarding the weaknesses of the programs, two instructors out of six have responded that there is lack of transparency/no proper guidelines. On the other hand, students have also indicated the weaknesses encountered in their respective programs/departments. Eighty three students out of one hundred and three have pointed out that there is lack of transparency/no proper guidelines (29), lack of modules (31), and lack of effective arrangement of schedule (23).

4.3.5. Survey of Instructors' Responses for Close-ended Questions on

Program quality

Table 6: Frequency and Percentage of Instructors Responses on Program Quality

Items/variables	Responses					
	*DA		*DK		*AG	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
The quality of education in the graduate programs is declining	5	29.4	4	23.5	8	47.1
The massive expansion competing for the scarce resources has resulted in declining quality of education in graduate programs as well.	5	29.4	5	29.4	7	41.2
All programs have course descriptions with clear aims, objectives and expected learning outcomes	-	-	4	23.5	13	76.5
There are clearly defined performance indicators/benchmarks against which the qualities of graduate programs are assessed.	8	53.3	3	20	4	26.7
Program/course assessments/review has regularly been conducted by the college/department to keep the quality of graduate programs.	8	47.1	4	23.5	5	29.4
There are timely and appropriate responses to students comments on the programs	7	43.8	5	31.2	4	25
Surveys regarding employer satisfaction on the relevance of the programs have been conducted by the college/department	7	43.8	7	43.8	2	12.4
The program being offered is believed to be good enough in preparing the graduates for later professional career.	3	17.6	2	11.8	12	70.6

DA=Disagree; DK=Do Not Know; *AG=Agree

The items stated in Table 6 are generally intended to seek instructors' views on the situation of education quality in the programs being offered in their respective departments. As presented in the table, 8(47.1%) of the respondents have indicated that quality of education is declining; and 7(41.2%) of them have attributed this to massive expansions versus scarcity of resources as one of the causes for the situation. Program clarity and course objectives are rated positively, that 13(76.5%) of the respondents have agreed that there are provisions for course descriptions with clear aims, objectives and expected learning outcomes. On the other hand, 8(53.3%) of the respondents have expressed their concerns that the programs lack a clearly defined performance indicators. Moreover, not conducting regular review against which the quality of programs is assessed.

Similarly, 7(43.8%) of the respondents have indicated the program having the low rate on matters related to addressing feedback from students and conducting employers satisfaction surveys. Overall, 12(70.6%) of the participants believe that the programs being offered are good enough despite the drawbacks just indicated.

on Program quality

Table 7: Frequency and Percentage of Students' Responses on Program Quality

Items/Variables	Responses					
	*DA		*DK		*AG	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
All courses in your programs have course descriptions with clear aims, objectives and expected learning outcomes	20	12.7	12	7.6	126	79.7
The program you are attending promotes scholastic enquiry and critical thinking	23	14.6	15	9.6	119	75.8
There is appropriate balance between theory and practice in the courses offered in the study programs.	62	41.3	17	11.3	71	47.4
There has been a practice of gathering opinions and feedback from students in curriculum design/review by the college/department.	86	54.8	42	26.8	29	18.4
The students have been involved on periodic evaluation of courses and programs offered in the CoE/department.	86	55.5	29	18.7	40	25.8
The program you are in is good enough in preparing you for later professional career.	25	16.6	12	7.9	114	75.5
Overall, I perceive that the program I am attending is of high quality	49	31.6	19	12.3	87	56.1

*DA=Disagree; *DK=Do Not Know; *AG=Agree

As presented in Table 7, students' view about the quality of education in their respective programs is reflected. Great majority of the respondents, 126(78%) have acknowledged that course descriptions and objectives have been provided to all courses in their

programs. The responses are consistent to that of the instructors' responses for the same question. On the other hand, 119(76%) respondents have indicated that the nature of the courses in their programs have strengths in developing scholastic enquiry and critical thinking.

Concerning the balance between theory and practice of course contents in the programs, 71(47.3%) have positively responded. While, 62(41.3%) have rated differently, which suggests that programs are dominantly theoretical.

Respondents have also indicated, 86(55%) that there has not been a practice of asking for a feedback and gathering opinions from students in curriculum design/review by the college/department. In similar manner, 86(56%) respondents have indicated that students have not been involved in evaluation of courses and programs offered in the CoE/departments as such.

The majority of participants 114(76%) have responded that they believe the programs are good enough in preparing them for later professional career, while 87(56.2%) respondents have showed the programs to be of high quality, despite a reasonable number of students, over 49(32%) have indicated that they disagree on program quality per se.

4.4. The Profile of Academic Staff in Graduate Programs

During the interviews and focus group discussions with the officials/senior faculty members and students of the College, issues related to academic staff profiles in terms of their qualifications, the number, and engagement in research activities had been discussed. In view of these participants in most cases, the qualification of the teaching

staff some how, is found to be adequate. However, when it comes to numbers, the informants have indicated that there is problem.

4.4.1. The Number and Qualification of Academic Staff

The informant in one of the departments under study, made a comparison between the number of instructors and the students. For instance, in the Department of EDPM, there are four streams or programs with at least 32 courses or modules now. The number of students in each of four streams is a minimum of 30 or at a time of modular about 20 or more. Besides, as he noted there is thesis advisement. Moreover, considerable number of teaching staff is involved in the administrative assignments. In short this informant has put the situation as follows:

As a result, there is a high pressure of work load in terms of teaching and student assignment, and rendering advisement for such a number of students is proved to be very-very difficult...In fact we have survived so far through the use of part timers-people who work out of the university. We also borrow some staff members from other departments. In short, the qualification of the teaching staff is adequate, but the number is too little.

(I-2, 01, 05, 2010)

An informant in a different department regarding qualifications argues in a different way. In his view, qualification in terms of subject wise meaning PhD in Geography, PhD or Masters in Psychology, etc can be taken as high and no problem with that as such he said. But he has expressed his concern regarding pedagogy wise methodology of teaching-how skilled they are to deal with what is called student-centered instructions. He puts that he has reservations. Again, the number of instructors, according to him, is not a problem, because as he noted, there is a problem of staff composition. When the teaching staff

distribution is seen by areas or specialties, in some areas there are not well trained people. So, as he said, one has to look at in that way.

(I-1, 27, 04, 2010)

An informant and chairperson in one of the departments have responded that there are sufficient instructors to run the programs including staff members who are doing for their terminal degrees. So, staff members are qualified to run graduate programs they have. However, he disclosed that actually there is problem in running PhD programs that they do not have highly qualified professors in some areas for example, running some courses by some invited professors from other institutions or universities.

(I-3, 06, 05, 2010)

4.4.2. Engagements in Research Activities and Incentives

The issue of the engagement in the academic research activities as related the teaching personnel was raised during the interview. The response is that, there is low level of research output. Hence, it cannot be claimed that the College/Department has strength in that aspect, he said. He pointed out that, there is only one associate professor as an evidence. From the assistant professors' most of them are PhD holders and they got their ranks only when they came with their PhDs from where ever they did it. Very high teaching load, engagement in administrative jobs, and a tendency to conducting consultancy work for financial incentives rather than pure academic research are the causes indicated for the problem. As he underlined, "conducting research on top of that will be very difficult... the engagement in research, I think is that you can take it as Achilles heel of the department, the weakness of the department".

(I-2, 01, 05, 2010)

With regard to research activities, responses are similar from the other departments too. The following account by one of the informants can easily indicate the state of research issue in one of the departments:

Engagement in research activities really, in truly speaking, most of the teachers give much emphasis to their teaching activities. And we do not have research fund at the department level. Actually, there are provisions at the college level. So, those who are interested to undertake a research can write a proposal and request fund from the College or from the University. What we do is, simply facilitate.

(I-3, 06, 05, 2010)

Yet, some of the respondents attribute the problem of disengagement in research activities to heavy teaching work loads. But some other participants do not merely share it as a single case. Summarized response of a participant indicates that there is really little engagement in research activity since instructors give due attention to teaching workload, while one other participant argues raising questions: “how much teachers are committed to work, to teach, to supervise and advise students to do research?” He went on asking further, for example, “do all instructors attend classes, do they spend all the time allocated for course purposes?” He has provided answers for some of his questions indicating that some cut classes, looking for chances such as doing consultancy works or teaching in private colleges, etc. So according to this informant, it is not entirely the issue of workload; it is the issue of commitment and lack of incentives on the other hand.

(I-1, 27, 04, 2010)

As the responses indicate, the situations concerning commitments vary from department to department, while in case of incentives, the conditions are similar across the university. The response from one of the senior faculty member elaborates:

With regard to incentives, one of the big things about this department is that the staff is highly committed and they give priority for their work. When it comes to incentives, it is the same as every other staff member in the University. The University is not that much good enough in giving incentives. Even incentives from the University in terms of overload and extension is facing problem this days. In fact, the staff could have gone to the court to demand the College or the University pays them.

(I-2, 01, 05, 2010)

4.4.3. Collegiality Between and Among the Academic Community

Participants were asked about the collegiality and relationships between and among the academic community within the departments in the College. As expressed by one of the respondents, collegiality is a very serious issue. As he emphasized, it is important if people share resource (books, materials), knowledge and also their experiences. For example, discussion, dialogs, debates must exist between and among colleges, faculties, institutions, Teachers' Association, or some societies or organizations about working conditions, staff discipline, or about the new discoveries, or about academic freedom. Unfortunately, as he underlined, such culture of debate and dialog and resource sharing is not well established in the College and the University at large.

(I-1, 27, 04, 2010)

Fortunate enough, an informant in a different department, praised his department as one of the luckiest. He underlined that in his department there are a highly professed and united staff members, in that they help each other, respect each other. As he put, it is a tight, very tight and united, internally united group. This is contrary to what he heard of all sorts of problems among the staff in many departments within the College as well as out side of the College, according to him.

4.4.4. Discipline and Academic Ethics

The same informant again in terms of discipline and academic ethics has remarked the profile of teaching staff in his department and commented how it looks like in other units as: “We are hearing number of disciplinary problems in other departments like missing classes, problems with the grading and sexual harassments and the like. We do not know such practice here. Every body be it young or the older, are highly disciplined and follow the ethics of the profession”.

(I-2, 01, 05, 2010)

4.4.5. Students View on Academic Staff Profile

Students during the focus group discussion were also asked to express their views on the profile of academic staff involved in the graduate programs. Since the situations vary from program to program, some similarities and differences were reflected in their responses. In the view of some participants, staff qualifications are rated to be adequate. However, others have reflected the situation as follows:

Generally speaking, except few departments, lack of adequate staff in terms of qualifications; composition, quantity and experience are the main challenges for providing quality training in CoE. The staff profile in most departments including that of mine (a participant) shows the problem of under qualification. Even those who are in charge to teach are not competent and committed in offering courses. Most of them are not punctual and are not willing to hear from their students. As such they do not give due emphasis to the course they teach. They are always busy doing on their own business either in or out of the campus.

(FGD, 08, 07, 2010)

4.4.6. The Participants' View on the Strengths and weaknesses on

Academic staff

Both instructors and students were asked to respond for an open-ended survey questions on **strengths** and **weaknesses** observed in the programs. The responses are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8: Instructors' and Students' View of Strengths and Weaknesses on

Academic Staff profile

	Responses	Inst	%	Stud	%
Strength	Availability of senior academicians/faculty	1	14.3	3	8.3
	Punctuality of some teachers			3	8.3
	Competent lecturers			3	8.3
	Supported by committed staff members	1	14.3	2	5.6
	Instructors willing to assist the students	2	28.6	13	36.1
	Qualified staff	3	42.8	11	30.6
	Employ different teaching methods			1	2.8
Weaknesses	No supervision over the instructors			4	6.7
	Some instructors have no professional commitment and accountability.	2	20	9	15
	Some instructors not well prepared			10	16.7
	Highly subjective grading			9	15
	No timely feedback of exam results			12	20
	Lack of adequate number and composition of instructors	3	30	4	6.7
	Academically incompetent(incapable) instructors(foreigners)			5	8.3
	Lack of cooperation between and among the academic community			4	6.7
	Long classes (3 to 4 hours)(expatriates)			2	3.3
	Some instructors are not innovative			1	1.7
	There is no strength at all /No integrity	1	10		
	Instructors assignment to course and advisement seems biased	1	10		
	Part-time and overload payments are always delayed	3	30		

Concerning strengths of academic staff, five instructors out of seven have indicated that there are qualified instructors and willing to assist the students. On the other hand, twenty four students out of 36 have showed that instructors are willing to assist students (13) and are qualified as well (11) respectively. With regard to weaknesses, five instructors out of ten have pointed out that there is lack of adequate number and composition (3), and some instructors have no professional commitments and responsibility (2). Again, forty students out of sixty have indicated that no timely feedback of exam results (12), some instructors were not well prepared (10), and some instructors have no professional commitments and accountability (9), and highly subjective grading (9).

4.4.7. Survey Results on Academic Staff from Instructors

Table 9: Frequency and Percentage of Instructors' Perceptions on the Profiles of Academic Staff

Items/Variables	Responses					
	*DA		*DK		*AG	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
The college of Education has adequate number of academic staff with (a minimum rank of assistant professor or above) for the graduate programs.	4	23.5	3	17.7	10	58.8
Faculty members in the College of Education are widely engaged in research activities to improve the quality of education in the graduate programs.	9	52.9	5	29.4	3	17.7
The staff members are motivated salary-wise to enhance the quality of graduate programs.	10	62.5	2	12.5	4	25
Staff members are motivated with other incentives such as timely extra-load payments.	13	81.3	1	6.2	2	12.5
There are institutional systems to provide continuing Professional Development Program for junior staff.	10	58.8	-	0	7	41.2
There is adequate professional recognition that the staff enjoys and put them into commitment to enhance the quality of their courses.	8	50	4	25.0	4	25.0

*DA=Disagree; *DK=Do Not Know; *AG=Agree

As the survey results in Table 9 shows, majority of respondents, 10 (58.8%) have agreed that the College of Education has adequate number of academic staff with minimum rank of Assistant Professor. Whereas, 4 (23.5%) respondents suggest that the number of academic staff and their rank is inadequate for the programs they run.

Consistent to what has been disclosed in the interview sections, 9 (52.9%) respondents have indicated that the teaching staff in the college of Education are not widely engaged in research activities. In similar manner, 10 (62.5%) have expressed their views that salaries are not motivating, and 13 (81.3%) have indicated that there have not been timely extra-load payments either.

With regard to provision of continuing professional Development Program (PDP), particularly for the junior staff, 10 (58.8%) have disclosed that such provisions have not been adequate enough; while, 8 (50%) have responded there have not been adequate professional recognitions for the staff who may have better performances in teaching-learning processes and research activities.

4.4.8. Survey Results on Academic Staff Profiles from Graduate Students

Table 10: Frequency and Percentage of Students' Responses on Academic Staff

Profiles.

Items/Variables	Responses					
	*DA		*DK		*AG	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Your instructors are competent to teach their courses.	30	19.4	14	9	111	71.6
You are provided with the right learning, resources by your instructors as related to the courses offered.	64	41.6	16	10.4	74	48
Most of your instructors in the graduate programs have prepared course/teaching materials.	64	41.6	16	10.4	74	48
The course materials prepared by the instructors have the required quality and standards	72	46.8	25	16.2	57	37

*DA=Disagree; *DK=Do Not Know; *AG=Agree

As presented in Table 10, the majority of students 111(71.6%) have indicated that the faculty members who offer them courses are competent enough to teach. Where as, 30(19.4%) have disagreed. 64(41.6%) respondents have pointed out that their instructors have neither provided them with the right learning resources nor prepared course/teaching materials as related to the courses being offered in the graduate programs.

On the other hand, 74(48%) of the respondents have recognized the provisions of both learning resources and other course materials by their instructors. In addition, 72(46.8%) have responded that course materials, if at all prepared, have not the required quality and standards. But, in the contrary, 57(37%) have responded in favor of the course materials having the required quality and standards.

4.5. Students' Profile in Graduate Programs

This section addresses issues directly related to students, like the role of students as partners in quality assurance systems; their admission criteria; their participation in teaching, learning processes; involvement in research activities; collaborative and team work spirits; discipline, commitment to learn and academic ethics; students assessment mechanisms; academic supports and services to students etc.

4.5.1. Students Role on Quality of Graduate Programs

In an interview conducted with officers in the CoE, questions were raised on the role of students and what is expected of them. One of these respondents explained that a lot is expected from students. In his view, students should be involved in providing feedback; they should evaluate teachers/instructors; discuss with academic staff, administration, and among themselves, and they should be delegated and represented in various committees like Academic Commission and the Senate. But, as he further noted, students were not providing much feedback, probably, they may not feel comfortable or confident to discuss serious academic issues because of language barriers or weak backgrounds, as he said.

(I- 1, 27, 04, 2010)

4.5.2. Admissions of Students

In the view of a different participant, students are necessarily at the center of the issue, when people talk of quality. Whatever others do, according to him, ultimately the task rests on the shoulders of the students. When the issue of admission of students into the graduate programs was raised, he has underlined that one mechanism of ensuring quality is the type of students one admits. On the practices of admission processes, this respondent has explained the following:

There are university admission criteria. For very many years, we used to administer entrance examination. In the past two years however, the MoE has claimed that it will recruit the graduate students because it says, university graduate programs should cater for staff members who are to teach in newly opened universities in the regions. So, simply sends the list of students to be admitted. And that I think has very much diluted the quality of the students through out the university at large, not only to our college/department. At this point, it is the MoE which does the recruitment and we administered entrance exam only in the vacant places which the Ministry does not fully utilized.

(I-2, 01, 05, 2010)

Responses regarding the admission processes, by the chairperson of a different department are just similar to what is indicated above. In that, students' selection until 2007, he noted, was done based on the set criteria that considers their precious academic performance, entrance examination, and the like. However, since 2009, as he said, usually students are sent by the MoE to AAU graduate programs offices and be admitted. Our role is just to accept them, as he underlined it.

On the other hand, he acknowledges that he feels it is important to get feedback from the students about each course, on how the course is handled or really useful for their future

career including the whole teaching learning activities of each course. But, the College/Department did not do much in trying to involve students in assessing of the programs, as he said.

(I-3, 06, 05, 2010)

Responses by other participants still, are some how similar to what is said above regarding the selection and admissions of students into the graduate programs. Except, according to this next participant, the university's (AAU) Office of Graduate Studies recently have given the criteria, so that each regional university has a responsibility to select, candidates who may fulfill the criteria given CoE/AAU.

Moreover, according to this informant, the regional universities send the number of students to the MoE, and the MoE endorses and sends the list of students to the office of Graduate Studies and, the same list be sent to the respective academic units (Colleges/departments) for their consent on it. Thus, it is up to the office of the Graduate Studies to admit them, he said.

(I-4, 08, 05, 2010)

In an attempt to incorporate the students view in the graduate programs, the issue of selection and admissions were discussed as well, among the students who have participated in focus group discussions. Students who participated in the discussions have shared different views as such. In a view of some participants, students should take part in the process/practice of quality improvement. For this to happen, as they argued, there should be entrance examinations for students to attend a program of their interest.

The implication is that the introduction of selection criteria to accept only competent students upon admission and this should be done by the College of Education, AAU.

While some other participants argued that the selection should not be made only by academic performances (GPA). It should rather consider the other desirable attributes in a candidate such as active community participations, good behaviors with discipline and ethics. Therefore, in their view, they would for example prefer a candidate who has a GPA of 2.5 with such attributes to a candidate who has 3.0 without those desired attributes.

This group have also further emphasized that the selection of the candidates be better done through the MoE. Their rationale for saying this, as they pointed out is that, the previous selection practices by the University (AAU) were not fairly done and the distribution of the opportunities was not properly done. They end up their argument by posing a question: "are the students selected by the MoE not performing successfully?" Although their opinion of unfairness in the previous selection practices, as they say, need evidences, the question they posed on the performance sounds reasonable and yet looks some researchers to carry on further study on it.

The other aspect of students' quality is discipline and their willingness to learn. In this regard, participants from different departments have generally responded in favor of their students in graduate programs. One of the respondents remarked that the department does not have disciplinary problems from the graduate students. He further noted that graduate students are relatively matured people who came from the world of work. They are responsible and know why they are here, he said. The discipline and commitment of

students to learn and their academic ethics assessed by one of the key informant from the different department presented as follows:

Students in the department seem to perform well. They are disciplined and committed to learn and their academic ethics is very good except may be in the writing of papers and thesis... the disease of plagiarism, copying from books, Internet, etc... it is a university wide problem and that it seems from time-to-time is in the worst of our students too. Otherwise, in their personal characteristics, they are respectful for their instructors, commitment in their study, the meeting of the deadlines and the like; I will rate them as excellent.

(I-2, 01, 05, 2010)

4.5.3. Students' Participation in Research Activities

Discussions were also deliberated with students regarding their participation in research activities, academic ethics and language proficiency problems. Students participated in the focus group discussions have made it clear that participation in research activities by the graduate students is not satisfactory or even non-existing. Lack of fund and commitment from staff and students were pointed out as the causes for such disengagement.

In case of Master Thesis as part of students' research exercise, in students' view, is not properly practiced either. Students have also acknowledged that there is widely observed problem of plagiarism. As they underline, most of the students rely on the copy and paste from the Internet and copying direct from other MA Thesis this days. One of the main reason for the problem of plagiarism in MA Thesis writing, according to these students is, the value given to writing quality thesis production seem very low. Lack of adequate

books and reference materials in the university libraries is also indicated as one of the reasons why students engaged themselves in copy and paste practices.

Students have also suggested that thesis works done in all the regional universities including AAU, should exchange the records of such works and keep documented as one mechanism and means of controlling the problem of copy and paste. Similar remarks were made by one of a senior officer in charge of research affairs regarding the problem of plagiarism in MA Thesis as follows:

ከተማሪዎቻችን የማይጠበቅ ነገር፤ በዛሬ ዘመን ቴክኖሎጂ ለጥሩ ነገር እንደሚሆን ሁሉ ለመጥፎ ነገር የሚጠቀሙበት ተማሪዎች አሉ። የሌላ ሰው ተሰሰ ኮፒ ያደርጋሉ። በሌላ የኒቨርሲቲ ዲፎንድ ይሆናል። በመቀሌ የተሠራና ዲፎንድ የሆነ ፕሮጀክት እንደገና ጂ.ማ ሄዶ እንደ አዲስ ይቀርባል። ስለዚህ ከዚህ፤ ከዚህ ተማሪዎች የፀዱ መሆን አለባቸው። በዩኒቨርሲቲዎችም በኩል ደገሞ ተማሪዎቹ እንደዚህ ኮፒ እንዳይደራረጉ የእርስ በርስ ግንኙነት መኖር አለበት። ኢንፎርሜሽን መለዋወጥ አለባቸው።

Now a days technology is used for good and bad things. It is not expected of our students to directly copy thesis of others from the Internet and/or from the paper format itself. Thesis that is defended in one university would also be defended in other universities. HEIs should work in collaboration to solve this problem.

(I-5, 11, 05, 2010)

Extending his remarks further, this informant has suggested that whatever academic research projects being conducted in Addis Ababa University must be communicated with the regional universities at Haramya, Hawassa, Jimma, Gondar... etc and vice-versa. In his opinion, such exchange of research information can first of all discourage and minimize the hidden theft and academic plagiarisms.

4.5.4. The Mode of Delivery (Teaching- Learning Methods)

With regard to mode of delivery, members of line management, instructors, and students were asked to respond on the teaching-learning processes in practice within the programs they involved. Accordingly, respondents have indicated that their methods of delivery vary from instructor to instructor. As explained by one interviewee, he uses at least three ways: (1) give lectures for some part of the module; (2) give certain part to students themselves to summarize it and present to the class, and (3) arrange term paper either in group or individually depending on their numbers. Classroom discussion, as he said, is highly encouraged although students just tend to keep quite mainly because of their language problem. Then as he remarked, they have been trying to make it student centered as much as possible.

Another participant remarked that unfortunately many people including him tend to stick towards the traditional lecture method. But, the trend these days at least in principle and because of the guidelines, there are three methods: (1) participatory type of lecture; (2) group presentation type in class; and (3) students independent paper. Moreover, as he further noted, collaborative works by the students themselves, and some field visits are being made unlike the established practices that only dominantly depend on lecture by instructors – just talk and chalk type of methods.

Again, the responses from a different department show that some teachers may use individual or group task depending on the numbers of the students and the class-size. That means, when the class size is small (15 or below), teachers usually give individual work. But when the size of class is large enough (above 15), usually group tasks are preferred, as he underlined.

Students who involved in a focus group discussion have different perspectives vis-à-vis the mode of delivery as practiced by their respective instructors. Some, of them were refrained from responding to, while the rest of them were bold enough to say that: “the teaching-learning processes have been as they were before”. That means, they have seen no effort being made by their instructors to change the system as a whole. According to these respondents, many of the instructors are applying teacher-centered approach while offering courses. More specifically, in their view, as teachers focus on lecture methods, students primarily depend on lecture notes and independent learning is not encouraged.

4.5.5. Students’ Assessment Mechanisms

Students’ assessment mechanisms from the point of view of the instructors and the students were investigated. When the instructors were asked about their assessment practices, it is indicated that they use a range of different methods including individual tasks, group tasks, and series of paper presentations, classroom discussions, tests and examinations. For instance, the assessment practices in one of the departments, as an informant pointed out are variety of evaluation mechanisms such as classroom participations, presentations, term paper, a mid semester test and final examination.

As regard to MA Thesis assessment practices, the responses are generally similar across the departments under survey. One of the department heads briefly explained that: the College of Education usually has an examination board consisting of one external, one internal and the project advisor. Then, as he said, the thesis is assessed using the guidelines set by the college/AAU to be used by all the departments. Then, decisions on evaluation result of the thesis is given by the examination board, the department accepts the decision of the board.

On the selection of the examination board members, as he noted, the DGC decides who should be involved, and who should be the member of the exam board for each candidate. Nevertheless, he has underlined that: “as far as quality of thesis is concerned, really this requires a detailed study. We do not have very strong database, sometimes I feel that we lack some mechanisms of really following students whether their research work is the original or not”.

(I-3, 06, 05, 2010)

Students during the focus group discussion have also shared their views with regard to the assessment methods usually employed by their respective instructors. Some of this participants in the focus group discussion have disclosed that an assessment mechanisms in the past (2008 and 2009) were done only depending on two or three assignments and then final examination. In their opinion, that was not adequate, but this year, as they said, the modular courses have provided them with better practices than the previous programs although not yet well organized either. Therefore, as they further underlined, students should not be evaluated only through final examinations. Final examinations should not be counted more than 30 or 40 percent.

All the same, some participants within this discussion group have strongly expressed their views as:

The assessment mechanisms that our instructors have been using were traditional in nature. They tend to use the summative assessment only for grading purpose. Other than test and final exam, other measures of evaluation were rarely practiced. Just in order to supplement such summative assessment methods, they sometimes use project work, term papers and the like.

(FGD, 08, 07, 2010)

Table 11: Instructors' and Students' perceived Strengths and Weaknesses on Students' Profile.

	Responses	Instr.	%	Stud.	%
Strength	Experienced Students	1			
	Less number of students			2	33.3
	Students are prepared and committed to learn			3	50
	Smooth relationship among each other			1	6
Weakness	Poorly prepared students enrolled to the program	3	33.3		
	Large no. of student population	4	44.4		
	Low commitment on the part of students and teachers	1	11.1		
	Candidates joining graduate programs with no related field of study.	1	11.1		
	Admission of weak students with political background and work experience			2	22.2
	None qualified students joined the college			1	11.1
	Student admission is not based on academic performance			3	33.3
	Lack of smooth interaction with instructors and students			2	22.2
	Plagiarism is widely practiced			1	11.1

The responses for an open-ended survey questions regarding the profile of students in graduate programs in terms of their strengths and weaknesses as pointed out by instructors and the students themselves are presented in Table 11. Only one instructor has

positively responded regarding the strengths indicating that students admitted in his department were experienced ones. Five out of six students have indicated that students are prepared and committed to learn (3), and have less number of students (2) which in their view is considered as strength in maintaining quality of education in the respective programs. Concerning the weaknesses in the students' profile, seven out of nine instructors have indicated that there was large number of student population that had been admitted to the programs (4), and poorly prepared students enrolled to the programs (3). On the other hand, seven students out of nine have pointed out that mostly, students' admission was not based on academic performance (3), admission of weak students with political background and work experience (2) and also there were lack of smooth interaction with instructors and students (2).

Table 12: Frequency and Percentage of Instructors Response on the Quality of Teaching-Learning Process.

Items/Variables	Responses					
	*DA		*DK		*AG	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
The teaching-learning processes in the graduate programs are based on student-centered approaches.	4	25	3	18.7	9	56.3
The modes of delivery that you employ encourage students to learn independently through active participation.	2	11.8	1	5.9	14	82.3
The students of graduate programs in the college/department are communicated/informed on the requirements of assessing their performances.	2	11.8	1	5.9	14	82.3
Appropriate methods of students' assessment are employed.	3	18.7	2	12.5	11	68.8
Students theses are objectively evaluated and graded	1	5.9	6	35.3	10	58.8

DA=Disagree; DK=Do Not Know; *AG=Agree

Instructors were asked about the conditions of teaching-learning processes in the graduate programs. As indicated in Table 12, 9 (56.3%) of the respondents have pointed out that there are student-centered approaches. Similarly, 14 (82.3%) have responded that the mode of delivery in practice encourage students to learn independently through active participation.

Again, respondents were asked whether the students in graduate programs have been communicated/informed on the requirements and procedures in assessing their performances, 14 (82.3%) have indicated that the students have been aware of such procedures and requirements. And 11 (68%) of them have responded indicating that appropriate methods of students assessment have been employed.

When instructors were asked whether or not students' theses are objectively evaluated and graded, 10 (59%) have responded that they objectively evaluate and grade the thesis written by the graduate students.

Table 13: Frequency and Percentage of Students' Responses on the Quality of Students' Profile

Items/Variables	Responses					
	*DA		*DK		*AG	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
There are clearly defined admission criteria for students' enrolment into the graduate programs	47	30.3	40	25.8	68	43.9
Teaching learning processes in the graduate programs are based on the student centered approaches	24	15.5	7	4.5	124	80
The methods/mode of delivery that instructors employ encourages students to learn independently through active participation.	21	13.5	9	5.8	125	80.7
You are encouraged to develop your own scholarly ideas and projects	28	18.1	9	5.8	118	76.1
The students' assessment practices and criteria for course grading in the program/department were communicated to the students.	81	52.3	27	17.4	47	30.3
Various students' assessment methods appropriate to graduate program level have been practiced in the college.	45	29.4	21	13.7	87	56.9
Students are awarded grades according to their performances.	36	23.5	70	45.8	47	30.7
Some students try to influence their instructors in grading.	43	28.3	74	48.7	35	23
The CoE has formal procedures to deal with any complaints and appeals made by students in the graduate programs.	52	33.5	65	42	38	24.5

DA=Disagree; DK=Do Not Know; *AG=Agree

When students were asked whether they know there are clear admission criteria for enrollment into the graduate programs, 68(44%) of them have indicated that there are known admission criteria for graduate programs. Students were also asked if teaching-learning processes in the graduate programs are student centered in approach, 124(80%) of them have agreed that there are student-centered approaches in practice. Furthermore, 125(81%) have indicated that there are various teaching methods used by their instructors and encouraging them learn independently through active participation.

Similarly, 118(76.2%) have pointed out that they are encouraged to develop scholarly ideas and projects. When asked whether students are aware of the assessment mechanisms and criteria for course grading in their programs/departments, 81(52.2%) have indicated that they were not communicated about such assessment practices, while 47(30.3%) have agreed that they know about the practice. At the same time, 70(46%) have pointed out that they do not know whether they are awarded grades according to their performances or not. In connection to their performance evaluation, students were also asked whether there are some students attempting to influence their instructors, 74(49%) of them have responded that they do not know about such attempts, while 35(23%) have indicated that there are such attempts by some students.

Students were also asked if they know of procedures in the CoE to address some complaints and appeals regarding such academic matters, again 65(42%) have indicated that they do not know whether such provisions exist or not.

4.6. Quality of Teaching and Learning Resources and Services

Learning and teaching resources are consisting of libraries and laboratories, educational facilities (manuals, textbooks, journals, reference materials, information and communication technology aids: CD-ROM, Video-Cassette, Satellite dish, other facilities and equipments etc. These learning and teaching resources and services are one of the most indispensable tools in developing quality in research and education at all levels and graduate programs in particular. HEIs are therefore, mandated to provide a well-organized and developed learning resources as one of their major duties and responsibility.

4.6.1. Library Resources and services

Students as well as a line management members and instructors were asked on the situation of the balance between these resources, expansions and diversification of graduate programs in CoE. One of these participants has responded as "... but, if you look into the availability of books, scientific journals, libraries and laboratories, I think all these show many deficiencies". As he said, although there is library in this university, it does not contain recent books and journals.

4.6.2. ICT Applications

In case of ICT services, according to this informant, even if some PCs are available now, the Internet service is very poor, it is very slow and sometimes very difficult to access. On top of that, he has acknowledged expansion and diversification of graduate programs to be good, but with further remarks as:

But, you can not do it like a creation's story, there you know God said let there be light and there were light. Here you can not do it by saying let there be expanded and diversified graduate programs just because you said that it will be. We have to maintain a balance between the wish and what you can provide in terms of resources, the availability both in terms of quantity as well as quality.

(I-2, 01, 05, 2010)

The situation in different departments is similar regarding educational facilities. According to the informant from one of the departments, library services, some how are not bad. However, the problem is getting sufficient and updated resources relevant to research activities like recent international journals and recently published books.

He went on further comparing the large number of students his department admits to an MA, PhD, and Higher Diploma Programs which is increasing each year and yet, resources are not adequate and sufficient, as he said. For example, in this regard, he has underlined that the department has sufficient academic staff to-run the MA programs, but does not have resources that could be used by these instructors. Indicating similar problem with regard to ICT services, he raised a question: "how can one use Internet even without having the office?"

(I-3, 06, 05, 2010)

Another participant has also indicated that expansion could have an impact on resources, because it requires highly qualified instructors and competent management, as he said. On the other hand, he has pointed out that people sometimes do not use resource properly. According to him, people must ask themselves that if they are using the resources at hand properly. Since the country is very poor, resources at hand must be utilized properly and economically, as he underlined.

In this connection, he pointed out a case in which the university (AAU) subscribed for the journals and reference materials in order to provide the opportunities for accessing them online via its website. The point is then; one could have retrieved these for which the university has paid. Yet, not certain that the students have awareness of that service about which the instructors should have noticed them, as he remarked. In the mean while, this respondent has indicated that there is lack of adequate computers and ICT services.

(I-4, 08, 05, 2010)

Students during the focus group discussion were asked to express their views on the state of the learning resources. They have indicated that there is lack of materials specially books, references relevant to the programs/courses. Also books in the reading lists, prepared by the instructors, are not available in the libraries and in-book shops out of the campus either, as they said. They have also pointed out that Internet services are not adequate enough, and the PCs in the computer rooms are not efficient, that services are not satisfactory at all. Moreover, one participant in the focus group discussion has summarized the situation saying: "Frankly speaking, AAU has limited resource capacity in relation to the programs provided. This can be reflected through such conditions as:" limited and outdated reading materials; very limited Internet services; shortage of computer laboratories; absence of comfortable classrooms with the necessary facilities; lack of well-trained and qualified technical personnel even to serve the clients in the library, and computer rooms.

(FGD, 08, 07, 2010)

4.6.3. Information Flow

Information is the most indispensable corporate resource required to run any business including HEIs. Quality of education in colleges and universities is highly dependent on the availability, relevance, accuracy, consistency, timeliness and overall flow and provision of information.

Both academic staff members and students were asked whether there is the flow of information between and among the departments within the college and out of it, one of the respondents have indicated that the flow of such information from top down and bottom up is not very promising. Because, there is no strong Management Information System (MIS), as he said. As a result, the departments are asked for the same data every week. So according to this respondent, flow of information is not consistent and stable, changing frequently that leads to a sort of confusion rather.

Students were also asked the same question regarding information flow, and their responses show that they have not been informed about what is going on in the university and in the departments either. Students have further noted that they were not even informed about the courses and the new modular approach, its mission and objectives, for instance.

4.6.4. Classrooms and Related Facilities

Classroom and other physical facilities are considered as important issues in providing quality of education. The responsible department heads and other authorities were asked whether the classrooms are adequately available and conducive for teaching-learning activities. Responses from the department heads indicate that the classroom situation is

very problematic, in that sometimes they do not know whether the classrooms are really well utilized. One classroom for example, is utilized for eight hours in a day. Yet some classes are under utilized and they do not have classes to use, as he said. He has further noted that sometimes they (Administration) assign a class for 2 to 3 instructors in the same classroom, there are overlapping and on the other hand, there is underutilization. So, in his view, classes are not properly being utilized.

Another participant have also responded that classrooms are crowded, some classes do not have chairs, so students are seen drugging chairs from one class to another. The University for Example, is renting some apartments for running classes as he said.

Again, a response from one of a senior member in a different department regarding classroom situations as follows:

Classroom is in a very critical situation nowadays. One classroom could be assigned to two to three instructors at the same time. That is very problematic. Regarding students-class ratio and student- teacher ratio, well some times few students scheduled in a very large hall like you take G18, G19 and G20 which are vast enough. They are meant for more than 100 students, but you see sometimes a class with 2 or 15 students. It is like the saying in Amharic, 'Doro Baggan'. Well, student- teacher ratio, it varies from department to department. In our department, more than 30 students are registered; I think it is very high.

I-2, 01, 05, 2010

Students who participated in a focus group discussion have also expressed similar concern with regard to classroom conditions. Some of their responses generally include that there is lack of comfortable classes with the necessary facilities. They have outrageously expressed their feelings that even they do not know when registrations can exactly take place and where classes are arranged ahead of time. To the extent, they went on to praise the good practice of Kotobe Teachers College to be taken as a bench mark

by Addis Ababa University in which case students there, are made equipped with the necessary information as to what to do, when and where to go. It is well organized, as they have underlined it.

In addition, in an open-ended survey questions, both students and instructors were asked to identify the strengths and weaknesses generally encountered in their graduate programs with regard to the learning resources. Both have perceived the inadequacy of learning resources as described: shortage of books and journals; lack of proper infrastructural facility; lack of photocopy and printing services; lack of book-loan services for the graduate students; lack of up-to-date equipments; lack of adequate budget/fund for research; and shortage of classrooms with adequate light and plugs etc.

Table 14: Instructors' and Students' Views on the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Learning Resources.

	Responses	Inst	%	Stud	%
Strength	Good Library services	2	50	28	84.8
	ICT provision	1	25	5	15.2
	Sufficient infrastructure	1	25		
Weakness	In adequate library service (shortage of books and journals)	4	25	57	47.5
	Poor ICT service	1	1.6	43	35.8
	In adequate classroom facilities	6	37.5	18	15
	No accommodations			2	1.7
	Budget shortage	2	12.5		
	Lack of equipment and teaching materials	3	18.3		

Table 14 indicates responses from instructors and students about open-ended questions on availability and adequacy of teaching and learning resources. Two instructors have showed that there were good Library services. Where as thirteen instructors out of sixteen have indicated that there were inadequate classroom facilities (6), inadequate library services/ shortage of books and journals (4), inadequate library service (shortage of books and journals) and lack of equipment and teaching materials (3).

Similarly, twenty eight students out of thirty three have indicated that there were good library services and ICT provisions (5). On the other hand, one hundred and eighteen students out of one hundred and twenty have pointed out that there has been inadequate library services/shortage of books and journals (57), poor ICT services (43) and inadequate classroom facilities (18).

Table 15: Frequency and Percentage of Instructors Response on Availability and Adequacy of Learning Resources

Items/Variables	Responses					
	*DA		*DK		*AG	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
There were precautions taken in limiting the intake of students to ensure that the facilities and the staff are not over extended and the quality of the program endangered.	5	33.3	3	20.0	7	46.7
The College has adequate research facilities to support the program.	11	64.7	1	5.9	5	29.4
There are regular subscriptions and access to international academic journals appropriate to the programs.	12	70.6	3	17.6	2	11.8
There is an easy access to Internet services	9	52.9	1	5.9	7	41.2
Sufficient research fund is made available for faculty members in the college.	11	73.3	2	13.3	2	13.4

DA=Disagree; DK=Do Not Know; *AG=Agree

As indicated in Table 15, instructors in the survey were asked whether they agree that there were precautions taken in limiting the intake of students align with the availability of resources, 7 (47%) have agreed that such precautions were made, while 5 (33.3%) have indicated that they do not agree with. On the other hand, 3 (20%) of the respondents have indicated that they do not know whether such precautions have been taken or not.

Respondents were asked whether the College has adequate research facilities to support the program, 11 (65%) have indicated that such facilities are not adequate, while 5(29.4%) have shown that they agree about the adequacy of facilities to support research activities.

When respondents were asked if there are regular subscriptions and access to academic journals, 12 (71%) have indicated that no subscriptions have been made for such international academic journals and have no access to them, which is just consistent with the responses in the previous interview sections.

Majority of the respondents 9 (53%) have responded that there has not been an easy access to Internet services, while 7 (41.2%) have positive responses regarding access to Internet services. Again, 11(73.3%) have indicated that the research fund is not sufficiently available in the College.

Table 16: Frequency and Percentage of Students' Response on Availability and

Adequacy of Learning Resources.

Items/variables	Responses					
	*DA		*DK		*AG	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
The CoE has adequate facilities with learning resources such as library stock of relevant research materials to support the programs.	73	46.8	12	7.7	71	45.5
Students in the graduate study programs have adequate access to ICT services.	110	71.4	14	9.1	30	19.5
The opening hours of the graduate libraries are adequate enough.	18	11.7	13	8.4	123	79.9
The environment where these libraries are located and working spaces including the seats are suitable enough.	46	29.5	10	6.4	100	64.1
Other support facilities in the libraries such as photocopy machines and printing services are adequately provided.	118	75.6	17	10.9	21	13.5
Employees of the library at the CoE are willing to help you and give you prompt services when every needed.	29	18.6	21	13.5	106	67.9

DA=Disagree; DK=Do Not Know; *AG=Agree

As indicated in Table 16, students were asked whether the College has adequate learning resources, 73(47%) have shown negative responses, while 71(46%) of the respondents have positive responses about the adequacy of library resources. On the other hand, 12(8) have indicated they do not know about it. Graduate students were also asked if access to ICT services were adequate, 110 (71.4%) have indicated that access to such services is not adequate enough, while 30(19.4%) have rated positively.

When students were asked whether the library opening hours are adequate, 123 (80) have indicated that the library hours are adequate enough, while 18(12%) have shown that the library opening hours are not adequate. The respondents 100 (64.1%) have also indicated that working spaces and the seats in the library are suitable. But, some students 46(30%) have negative responses about the suitability of the library environment.

Students were also asked whether they are provided with photocopy services, 118 (76%) have shown that they have not been provided with such services, while 21(14%) have positive responses.

Student participants were also asked whether employees of the library at CoE are willing to help them, 106 (68%) have shown a positive response, which is in favor of the employees effort to help them, while 29(19%) have negative responses towards the employees willingness to help the students.

Students in the College of Education graduate programs under study have also expressed their disappointment with other aspect of their life while in AAU. In their view, graduate students are forced to face all the hardships due to lack of accommodations, medical services and other recreational facilities. Since students waste much of their time in search of lodging, food and other related services outside of the university campuses, the overall environment is not convenient for their study, as they noted. They have emphasized that this situation has been highly affecting their university life including academic performances.

the University management is that, provisions for such services should be considered in the future, as they underlined it.

4.7. Discussions.

4.7.1. Perceptions about Quality of Graduate programs

A perception of quality is a process of defining and understanding what quality is by all the concerned stakeholders. Logically, it could be taken as a point of departure in the process of maintaining and assessing the quality of education in HEIs. As such, relevant questions may be raised by all possible partners: what is quality? What does quality look like in the context of HE as one may find himself?

In summarizing the findings from the analysis of the responses regarding the perceptions of academic community about quality of programs who have involved in this study, it would be first, important highlighting that there is no consensus within the participants. Variations also exist among the instructors in the way they perceive quality in education. In fact, there are some views shared in their perceptions about quality of education as one can observe from the responses.

For instance, the interviewees responded that quality in higher education can be attained by accomplishing the mission and the objectives of the institution. But, the mission and objectives of institutions usually are general statements that can not easily indicate the mechanisms by which it could be achieved. And yet, only input factors such as qualified

and competent instructors and course materials are identified as most important by the participants in the interview and focus group discussions.

So, understanding the way in which academic communities primarily the instructors, students, and the line management perceive quality of education is very important. Because, they are the main front line actors in identifying problems and implement policies and reforms with regard to quality of teaching and quality of learning in the way of intervention to improve this process.

Rayner and Tesfaye (2005:16), in this respect, have suggested that: “it is unrealistic to expect all the stakeholders in HE to agree and share a common definition of ‘quality’ except in its very broadest sense”. Likewise, different constituencies have defined it differently. For some, quality is an efficient production, one with ‘zero’ defects as may be in an industry environments. Others may view it as fitness for purpose, which is relative to ‘specifications’ rather than an absolute standards or ‘quality excellence’ which refers to high standards. For some, quality is value for money in terms of achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness. Again, on the other hand, quality is defined as working towards ‘customer delight’ and transformation in terms of student qualification (Cloete, 1998).

These definitions clearly show that people perceive quality of education differently. HEIs are then expected to understand the needs and the quality attributes embraced by the customers in order to improve services. Owlia and Asginwal (1996), cited in Abera and Maru (2005), indicated that it is necessary to find out the characteristics of quality in order to measure and improve it.

4.7.2. Program Quality

Program quality, more than anything else, depends on the designing and development of curriculum. Reasonably, the desirability of the syllabus and the course to be offered, in turn, depend on the relevance of the curriculum. On the other hand, appropriate quality policies and procedures are felt necessary in the process.

As one can clearly understand from the responses of the participants in this study, it does not seem such institutional regulatory are in place and/or being put into practice adequately, if at all they exist at the program levels. In fact, there are general institutional mission and vision statements written in the Senate Legislation and in the College of Education pamphlets mentioned in the previous sections in this regard.

HESO (2004), in this connection, states that targeted policy and strategy for 'quality' in the context of the institutions are the necessary pre-conditions in quality assurance. In addition, HERQA (2008); and HESO (2004), indicate that some responsible body or committee; appropriate planning in terms of financial, material and human resources; the involvement of stakeholders; organizational structure and governance; the availability of highly qualified staff with competent professional and technical staff are deemed necessary pre-conditions for quality assurance in HEIs.

With respect to curriculum designing and development, as indicated by the informants, there have been well established processes and procedures being practiced by the College of Education. Normally, according to the recent institutional quality audit reports about AAU, by HERQA, there are about seven steps regarding program relevance and curriculum. In short, Departments normally initiate the design of a new program, then

first approved at the departmental level. It goes on passing several steps until it reaches the Academic Standards and Curriculum Review Committee (ASCRC) and then referred to the Executive committee of the University (HERQA, 2009).

The responses made by the participants of this study are some how consistent to these steps and procedures. However, there are remarks made by the same report that the university or in this case, the CoE should make the aims and objectives of the curricula explicit to students before they join a certain department. In this report, it is also suggested that CoE/AAU needs to seek the participation of stakeholders in curriculum design and development.

4.7.3. Academic Staff Profiles

The issue of academic staff in pursuing education quality is one of the most important and key component in a teaching-learning process. Hence, the responsibility in quality of instruction rests on the shoulders of academic staff. The issue by its nature is complex and multi-dimensional comprising of the appropriate qualifications; adequacy in number; competence to carryout instruction and research activities; commitment and ability to withstand the reasonable pressure of the workload; collegiality, discipline and academic ethics; tendency of seeking incentives and motivations.

Regarding significance and teachers status, Sodhi (1998) argues that the teacher is the simple factor in the process of improving the quality of education and the standards. Sodhi further underlines that a teacher must have to be given better recognition both in social and the economic terms. To quote his words: "In order to improve the quality of education and the standards, the simple factor is the teacher, who will have to be

augmented both in terms of social status and the economics. The higher salary would give him both” (Sodhi, 1998: 217).

In this regard, reference could be made to what is mentioned in: “An American Imperative: Higher Expectations for Higher Education”, as quoted by Ruben (1995:2), and what it describes as a “wake-up call”:-

A disturbing and dangerous mismatch exists between what American society needs of higher education and what it is receiving... The American imperative for the 21st century is that society must hold higher education to much higher expectations or risk national decline... Education is in trouble, and with it, our nation's hopes for the future. (1993, 1). As to what should be done? The report continues: our wake-up call places a heavy burden on the shoulders of the men and women in higher education. It will require rethinking the assumptions of the education enterprise and reinventing many of its ways of doing business. Educators, particularly faculty members, must demonstrate that they have noted the warning signs, understand the potential for institutional and national decline, and are ready to act. Solution for the problem... will require vigorous, creative, and persistent leadership on campus, in the community, in state capitals, and in Washington. (1993, 23).

Although the context about which this “wake-up call” is made is entirely different in terms of socio-economics and cultural sense, it is believed that lessons can be drawn into the conditions in our HEIs. However, the conditions in which the teaching staff finds itself would make difficult to discharge its responsibilities properly due to inadequate numbers in some of the programs. As disclosed in the responses of participants in this study, it is not only the number of instructors, but there is also a problem of composition-diversity of qualifications.

The findings indicate that, teaching workloads due to disproportionate intake of students as one of the problems for disengagement of academic staff in the research activities. In this regard, HERQA's Institutional Quality Audit report for pre-accreditation of graduate

programs states: "a graduate program should have to be able to demonstrate that staff who will contribute to the program are research active; have recent research publications in areas appropriate to the program; and it has sources of research funds and that adequate funds are available to support the approved research projects of students on the program". (HERQA, 2007:4). However, the reality on the ground does not show this being happen when seen in the perspectives of the respondents.

On the other hand results suggest that there are lack of adequate incentives and motivation from the angle of the governance, while commitment and professional dedications are partially lacking on the side of teaching personnel. Lack of collegiality between and among individual, professional groups, programs and institutions have been reported as some obstacles for the smooth relations in sharing resources and knowledge in the form of material, academic discourses and the like. Such concepts of collegiality must be considered as an important factor in judging quality in higher education as a whole. Ashcroft's account can easily be related to this concept as: "...personal transferable skills and dispositions which are claimed to be employers include communication skills, problem-solving, leadership, teamwork, negotiation and persuasion, decision-making, creating opportunities, risk-taking, flexibility and being pro-active..." (Ashcroft, 1995: 40).

The responses from the students' survey mostly suggested that their instructors are competent to teach the courses. However, in the meantime, they have indicated that there are shortcomings when it comes to the provision of learning resources and preparation of course materials which can highly affect quality in teaching-learning processes.

4.7.4. Students Profile

Students are focal points of quality approach in Higher Education. There are high expectations from students in colleges and universities. One of such expectations from students who would be admitted to post graduate programs is that they should be able to show high academic performances. The students academic background before they are admitted into colleges and universities is crucial in their academic life while in college and future successes.

Interviews made with the department heads indicate that the expected quality of education in graduate programs would be highly dependent on the profile of students admitted to graduate programs. Hence, this is to suggest that higher educational institutions must put strong selection criteria for admission of students into their graduate programs. The question here is who and how should the recruitment be done?

The key issue here, as McGhee strongly argues, is not only about what criteria universities should use in selecting candidates but rather that whatever criteria and selection processes universities adopt, those processes are fair, documented, and available to applicants and implemented by staff who know what they are doing. This is to say crucially that they are able to reassure those who inquire about admissions with robust evidence that this is so. The underlying rationale here as generally noted in the relevant literature is that:

- The public should have faith in the recruitment systems,
- Universities should see recruitment and admission as the beginning of the extended relationship with the applicant as a student;

- While the universities have right to-exercise judgments about a candidate's achievement and potential, such judgments need to be systematic (McGhee, 2003: 211).

This places a heavy emphasis on the duties and responsibilities of colleges and universities in dealing with the issue of recruitment and admissions, not to be left to anybody else. It is clear that the points indicted above suggest higher education institutions need to have rules and regulations, admission policies, the setting of criteria against which applicants will be considered. In this context, one of the precepts underline: "Institutions should ensure that selection policies and procedures are transparent and are followed fairly, courteously, consistently and expeditiously; that information concerning applicants remains confidential between designated parties, and that decisions are made by those equipped to make the required judgments (McGhee, 2003: 214).

Similarly, students in colleges and universities are not only responsible for the management of quality and standards, but also they need to have provisions for their right enabling them to take part in decision making at institutional and program level. This may usually include the right for students to be represented on institutional committees and elect representatives (Ashcroft, 1995). The report of Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC, 1994a), as cited in Ashcroft (1995:61), argues that "... the quality of students' learning experience is fundamentally influenced by the quality of the guidance and counseling available to them during, and on completion of their course of study".

Ashcroft, on her account of students right, extended further to explain that colleges and universities need to recognize that students have a clear right to reliable, impartial and timely information about courses, qualifications, facilities and entry requirements and procedures. Such rights, according to Ashcroft, include the right for the student to see teaching rooms and facilities (Ashcroft, 1995).

Thus, one can easily understand and learn lessons from these principles that quality of education highly depends on the provision of right for students. The rights to receive guidance and counseling, access to information and full participation in the whole process of teaching-learning environment. However, the situations in the context of CoE seem highly inconsistent or conflicting to the situation just noted above from the practices in other countries.

In addition, students should not be considered just as only passive recipients in the instructional process. Colleges and universities can reciprocally benefit from their students who may come with some skills and background experiences. Brent D. Ruben remarks that: "there is no question that much can be learned about the teaching and learning process from students themselves, if we ask the right questions, and listen carefully to the responses" (Ruben, 1995: 189).

Discipline of students and their willingness to learn may count for one of the test as quality indicator in teaching-learning processes. Although data from the interview indicated that students who have been admitted to graduate programs have no disciplinary problems as such. However, the responses from both instructors and the students themselves who participated in the focus group discussion have disclosed that

there is a problem of academic ethics as related to the Master's Thesis projects. The exercise of MA Thesis writing is believed to be the formal starting point for graduate students to practicing and be engaged in the actual research career in the future. Yet, what is peculiar of all students admitted into graduate programs is really be well versed in research activities and writing skills independently.

Ashcroft (1995), in this connection, has emphasized that the role of research within higher education as a performance indicator and staff qualification in the assessment of quality. In that, it can contribute to the quality of teaching within an institution, even if only by ensuring that the lecturer is up to date and well informed as she underlined. Hence, in her (Ashcroft) perspective, research and scholarship are part of the job of further and higher education, and without this function society would stagnate.

Again, with regard to the role of research Cyert (1995) argues that, it is not surprising that research activities have not radically changed in universities despite the concern in society over the competitiveness of the economy.... Clearly, it needs normative studies of this type so that it can feed the results of such studies to students through the educational process and change the way in which students are being educated, as he emphasized.

So much so that, about the significance of research for quality of education and scholarship. Ironically, the state of research activities in the graduate programs under study is not encouraging. Because, the responses of the participants who involved both in a qualitative investigations and quantitative survey have revealed that the engagement of the staff in research activities has been weak and discouraging.

In the same manner, it is apparent that the participation of students in research activities is nearly non-existent either, except in the case of term paper and attempts to write an MA Thesis. Even in the case of an MA Thesis, the findings both from the instructors and that of the students themselves have disclosed that there has been the problem of robust plagiarism like copy and paste from the Internet and/or directly copy from thesis of others done else where in the previous years. Controversial enough, when the instructors were asked whether writing an MA Thesis is a requirement or not for all students in graduate programs of the CoE, all the respondents 17(100) have agreed that it is mandatory. Similarly, 10(59) have responded that the thesis is being evaluated and graded objectively which is inconsistent to what is on the ground. The question here is then, what is the use of making an MA Thesis a requirement if students are not engaged in producing their own original work independently instead of copy and paste?"

Modes of delivery and students assessment mechanisms are other points that need to be discussed in this series concerning the quality of students. The responses from the interviewees and the instructors' survey have some how, indicated that, there are attempts to use different methods of delivery in the teaching-learning processes particularly since the new modular approaches introduced. Findings from the instructors' survey 14(82.3), in table 12 can be taken as an evidence in this regard.

Nevertheless, the responses of many student participants about the teaching methods being employed by their respective instructors do not seem consistent to what most of their instructors have expressed. Students have divided perspectives, that some of them were indifferent, may be they are sympathetic enough not to say against their instructors.

Where as, some participants in focus group discussion were of the opinion that the instructors still focus on traditional lecture methods.

In the expectations of the student group who have rated negatively, I think their responses suggest that their instructors have not fully using a wide range of pedagogic approaches such as dialogue/discussion, panel discussion, debate, course forum, brainstorming (evaluation and instant use of ideas gathered on a subject by the teacher in the presence of a facilitator) (Dia, 1995). Ayalew et al (2009), have also identified: project work, book review, reading assignments, class discussion, seminar and class presentation and lecture as some of teaching methods to be employed by the instructors in colleges and universities. These authors, in this regard, have remarked that the type of instructional methods employed by instructors may encourage students to learn actively and independently or can make them to be passive recipients.

Students' assessment mechanisms, in my view, are as diversified as using different mode of delivery indicated above. They are also as good as employing variety of teaching methods. Ayalew, et al (2009) underlined that "teaching-learning without some form of assessment is incomplete. Teachers use assessments to ensure whether their students and instructional processes are on the right track or not."

This suggests that the academic performance or achievements of the students should be assessed through various assessment methods on the continuous basis in the same manner that mode of delivery is employed. In other words, once applying a multiple mode of delivery has become an established tradition of instruction in graduate programs, and

then the use of various assessment practices automatically should go in parallel with those methods of delivery.

4.7.5. Teaching and Learning Resources

Learning and teaching resources contain information in several formats. Libraries and their collections are the main and basic sources of information useful for research and course study. For information to be useful, libraries should collect, organize, and make it available to the users. Information can be contained in different packages such as a book, newspaper, magazine, journals, a video or audio-tape, for example people tend to think of the packages as the information.

Information is supposed to be one of the resources organizations acquire to accomplish desired goals. That information could be found in one of four forms: data, text, image, or sound. Most organizations use all four forms and a library or information center serving the organization should be ready and able to handle all forms of information. Nowadays, more and more new technologies are drawing these four forms closer together into integrated information resources in which the primary purpose of libraries and information centers is to assist in the transfer of information and development of knowledge (Evans, (1987). When the state of the learning resources examined against these backgrounds and as the findings of this study suggest, the quality of academic support services at CoE for students in graduate programs and the teachers as such are not satisfactory.

Sturges (1989) describes the problem of the learning resources common to African countries as...the library is supposed to be the heart of the university, but the reality

behind the doors of the library building tends to be much less impressive, that college and university libraries usually suffer even greater deprivation, many existing in name only. Some of the graduate students at the CoE have similarly expressed the situation of their library holdings.

Libraries in advanced countries are generally believed to define the role of university itself as centers of scholarship. Write (1995) argues that the advancement of knowledge through research and the expansion of knowledge through teaching are inseparable in the definition of the university, all to depend on the strength of the libraries. Pelikan (1992) underlines that; the true university these days is a collection of books. This draws attention to the special place of books-the collecting of books and the producing of books in the very definition of university itself.

Quality of teaching-learning depends not only on the rich collections of learning resources alone. It requires adequate services from competent technical personnel such as trained librarians and information specialists as the major force in helping end users interact with the library. There is a felt need, as a matter of fact, that graduate students who have participated in this study complained that there is lack of well trained and qualified personnel to serve them in the library and computer rooms. An emphasis by professionals, in this connection, indicates that special librarianship is a process of giving users what they need, and what they need is not necessarily what they want or what they ask for (White, 1995). This is suggest that users most of the time may need the assistance of information and subject experts who can interface between the users need and the nature of library resources available.

Libraries are also expected to provide photocopy and printing facilities and services to graduate students who have expressed ^{badly} felt need in order to be efficient in their academic endeavor. Such services are found badly lacking in CoE in which case students are forced to go outside of the campus in search of the services that heavily costs them both in terms of money and waste of time, that according to them is not affordable.

Classroom situations and other physical facilities are equally important resources that may affect the quality of teaching-learning processes. The state of such facilities at the CoE, as well articulated by the participants is found to be discouraging. First of all, as the findings indicate, there is a shortage of classrooms and if at all available, they are not well equipped with the necessary facilities. These include chairs, black and white board not in good conditions, lack of plugs and ample lights etc. With regard to this, it has been my observation, and I am sure that of others, that graduate students during their MA thesis defense were facing problem to use LCD for their presentation due to lack of proper sockets in the classrooms assigned for.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Summary of the Major Findings

The purpose of this study was to assess the quality of education in selected graduate programs at the College of Education, AAU. For this purpose, one of the variants of mixed methods design, concurrent Triangulation was used. Both qualitative and quantitative data were simultaneously collected and analyzed.

Interview, FGD, questionnaires and document review were employed to collect data from instructors, officials and students in the graduate programs. Semi-structured interviews were held with five officials and senior faculty members selected as key informants. Survey questionnaires were distributed to two groups of participants where 22 and 176 of them were instructors and students respectively. 175 participants appropriately filled and returned the questionnaires.

Data from interview, FGD, open-ended questionnaires were analyzed qualitatively based on the main themes of the study. In order to reflect the views of informants directly, quotations were used whenever necessary.

Quantitative data from the survey questions were also summarized and presented in tables using frequencies and percentages. Finally, both qualitative and quantitative data were discussed at the end of Chapter Four under the major themes.

5.1.1. Characteristics of the Respondents.

Results obtained from background information of the respondents have revealed that there is one professor and two Associate Professors with MA qualifications. Most of the rest of teaching staff involved in the graduate programs have PhD qualifications. However, there are three instructors with MA qualifications and with the rank of lecturer. The work experience of some of them ranges from 12 to 31 years.

5.1.2. Perceptions of Academic Community on the Quality of graduate Programs.

- a. More than half of academic staff respondents (58.8%) indicate that they have awareness of the mission and vision statements of the college as its core values that guide the activities of academic community. Yet, they (participants) were not certain whether or not all the constituencies (Junior staff and students) have such awareness;
- b. Regarding the mechanisms by which quality can be achieved, the findings have disclosed that there are various aspects of quality perceptions in graduate education/programs. Some informants, particularly senior academic staff members perceived quality of programs attaching with quality of students, with strong academic backgrounds strictly selected upon admission;
- c. Some participants have argued that quality of education/program can be measured when students upon completion of their studies are able to perform in terms of their subjects/discipline they learned, their language proficiency (skills) while

- they give lectures and/or teaching in the classroom they are assigned, their professional manners and relationship with others (their employers for example);
- d. Still some of the interviewees perceived quality in higher education as a very broad, and sometimes difficult to have a very common definition. In their view, quality is comprehensive concept that needs integration of input, process, and the output aspects rather than defining only from the perspectives of input, or in terms of output and the outcomes;
 - e. Students during the FGD, for example, have expressed the way they perceive quality in HE as a multi-dimensional concept embracing all its functions and activities. That is teaching and academic programs, research and scholarship, staffing, students profile, the buildings and facilities in it, equipments and services to the community.

5.1.3. Assessment of Curriculum Design and Development for Graduate Programs.

- a. The findings have revealed that there are traditionally established institutional policies, procedures, rules and regulations regarding program design and development in CoE but with no emphasis on quality in black and white. Nevertheless, it is also indicated that there are quality assurance mechanisms developed by the MoE although its implementation at the college level seems very weak;
- b. On the other hand, still there are some academic staff members who have indicated that they do not know about the existence of such policies on quality of education in graduate programs at college level; Similarly, in relation to this,

participants have indicated that there is not responsible body or office formally established for quality assessment at the department or college level;

- c. Concerning the curriculum design and development, officials in the relevant departments have indicated that there have been the practice of involving various committee composed of professional from different stakeholders. This include MoE, MoH, some experts from international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF etc; that later on, be approved by the Department Graduate committee (DGC) and the Academic Standards and Curriculum Review Committee (ASCRC);

Moreover, the report based on the findings of this study has disclosed that the College, particularly in some of its programs (EDPM) exercises periodical revision for the relevance of the program. Yet, there are some staff members with different views who argue whether or not all programs need to be revised, duration in terms of program life span for revising (three to ten years, five to seven years);

- d. As yet, there are many instructors 8(47.1) and students 86(55) have not agreed about the existence of program revisions and feedback on curriculum design and development, particularly students complained not participating.

5.1.4. The Profile of Academic Staff in Graduate Programs.

- a. As indicated in the background information above (5.1.1), the qualification of academic staff in graduate programs, some how, is found to be adequate, except there are few instructors who have not yet secured their terminal degrees. The composition (sex and subject diversification) and the number of academic staff as

the responses from the participants indicate, is believed to be inadequate. Again, the participants have showed reservations about the skills regarding pedagogy wise (teaching methodology like student-centered instructions);

- b. Admittedly, from the findings, it can be learnt that engagement in research activities both by teaching staff and graduate students as such, have been weak and discouraging due to range of reasons indicated in the previous chapter. Findings based on the responses from both the instructors and students have disclose that there are range of problems related to pressure of work loads, lack of adequate incentives, motivation and commitments. According to the respondents, lack of adequate incentives seems to be a university-wide problem.

It is also indicated that there are some disciplinary problems such as missing classes, grading bias and sexual harassments and the like in some departments within the CoE.

Despite of the fact, it is learnt that there are instructors who are self-motivated and have professional commitments, as underlined by the participants;

- c. Findings show that there are problems with regard to collegiality and relationships between and among the academic community. This refers to such culture of healthy debate and dialog about working conditions, staff discipline, new discoveries or about academic freedom, experience and resource sharing and is not well established in the College and the University at large, as underlined by the participants. Fortunate enough, some informants have expressed that there are slightly different situations in some departments. In which case, there are highly

professed and united staff members who help and respect each other and their students too.

5.1.5. Students' Profile in Graduate Programs.

- a. The findings have indicated that the students have great role in quality assurance process and are in the center of the issue. In view of the participants, students should be involved in providing feedback, evaluate teachers/instructors, discuss with academic staff, administration and among themselves;
- b. Participants have pointed out that ensuring quality of education depends on the type of students one admits into the programs. In which case, the departments or the College is not given the responsibility to recruit potential candidates; rather it is the MoE which does the recruitment.
- c. Concerning students' discipline and commitment to learn, instructors have indicated that students are committed in their study, except they have problem of copying from books and Internet, what the informants call "the disease of plagiarism".

Once again, the findings indicated that students' participation in research activities is not promising either. In case of MA Thesis, as part of research exercise has a widely observed problem of plagiarism and it is even admitted by the students themselves who participated in this study;

- d. Findings have indicated that mode of delivery and students' assessment mechanisms vary from instructor to instructor depending on the number of students and classroom conditions. Some of the varieties used as pointed out by

instructors are: giving participatory type of lecture, group presentation in class, and students' independent paper.

In case of students' assessment mechanisms, instructors have indicated that they use range of evaluation methods including individual tasks, group tasks, paper presentations, classroom discussions, test and examinations. However, students not fully agreed on these and complained that instructors still tend to use only tests and final examinations.

5.1.6. Quality of Teaching and Learning Resources and Services

- a. The informants who have participated in this study have acknowledged that, more or less, there are library services. However, in the mean time, they have disclosed that the libraries do not contain recent books and journals relevant to the program/courses;
- b. Findings based on the responses from the participants and that of investigator's own observation reveal that ICT provisions are very poor. Internet service for example, has been very slow, poor and sometimes very difficult to access;
- c. Photocopy and printing services, which are important for students in graduate programs are not provided at all; as pointed out by student participants;
- d. With regard to information flow from top-down and bottom-up, responses from the instructors and the students have indicated that flow of information is not consistent, unstable, and leads to a sort of confusion. In that not dependable, as underlined by the informants;
- e. As responses from both participants indicate that classroom and other facilities are not adequately available and not conducive to teaching-learning activities. In

their observation, classrooms usually are crowded. Some classes do not have chairs and there is lack of proper management.

- f. Finally, student participants have expressed their grievances due to lack of provisions for accommodations, medical services and other recreational facilities within the university campus. Graduate students, as they explained, waste much of their time in search of lodging, food and other related services outside of the University campus which overall is not convenient for their study.

5.2. Conclusions

Education has become a key factor in economic and social advancement and also to modernization. One of the purposes of higher education is, then, to produce competent and responsible citizens who can contribute to the development of the country. To meet this purpose, HEIs in Ethiopia need to provide quality education particularly at graduate study levels.

Therefore, it is necessary to assess the level of consensus between and among the constituencies in terms of what does quality education actually mean and the status of these institutions mandated to maintain quality of the programs offered.

Several relevant literature surveyed indicate that the concept of quality in Higher Education system is perceived in different ways by different stakeholders such as parents, students, faculty, government, employer, management, donors and the society at large. Similarly, in the context of this study, findings show that the member of management body, instructors and students under study have perceived quality of education in graduate programs in their own ways.

It is also found out that there are differences in understanding about the existence and adequacy of the regulatory tools such as the mission and vision statements, policies, procedures, rules and regulations within the University or the College which are supposed to guide the whole activities of academic community at large.

Hence, the findings of the study have revealed that there are no clear internal policy provisions on education quality as such within the College. Such policies are deemed necessary to improve quality services to customers and enforce the institution understand the needs which otherwise, may seriously affect the quality of teaching and learning processes.

Curriculum design and development is one of the key factors concerning quality of the programs offered mainly the content and relevance. In this regard, findings indicate that the college has established tradition of using procedures, rules and regulations to follow and involves various committees. But it is found that it does not involve the active participation of teaching personnel and students both in curriculum design and revision phases. Therefore, there is lack of adequate participation, communication, and periodic orientations for all the concerned including students about the program objectives, graduate profile, course content/components, and the methods of program delivery which are important components of curriculum issues.

With regard to the profile of academic staff, much is expected of educators, particularly faculty members in their instructional mission, do a great deal of research, and outreach community services etc. in the way of promoting the quality of education in HEIs. It is a matter of fact that staff development is the most expensive resource at college and

university level. Teaching and learning are complex human processes that depend upon the quality of the interaction between the teacher and learner which in turn depends on well-prepared and well-trained professors. However, realities on the ground do not seem in favor of these ideals.

In this connection, academic staff profile with regard to qualifications is found to be fairly adequate. Nevertheless, from the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the composition and the number of academic staff for the graduate programs at the College is highly inadequate. Hence, the situation is inconsistent to what is indicated in the Institutional Quality Audit document (HERQA, 2007), that requires at least 75% of the program staff have permanent appointments and; a staff to student ratio of 1:10 on the program.

Moreover, the findings as related to teaching personnel, also have disclosed that there are serious problems such as inadequate research fund, pressure of work loads, lack of adequate incentives, motivation, commitments, and collegial relationships between and among the academic community and even beyond that to external constituencies. It is therefore not rational to expect engagements of academic staff in such scenario to conduct research, properly discharge its instructional mission and enhance quality of education so to say and that is it.

With regard to students' profile in graduate programs under study, instructors' view was investigated and the findings show that students as learners have great role in giving feedback in every aspects of academic activities indicated above in summary section. However, it is revealed that students are not adequately participating due to language

problems and may be low academic backgrounds at the entry level as presumed by their instructors. Methods of teaching and students' assessment practices still tend towards the traditional lecture oriented and therefore not yet fully participatory and learner-centered as claimed to be.

Students' participation in research activities is found to be little or none. It is also widely believed by the participants of this study and other people in academic circles that mostly, graduate students nowadays, including CoE have widely been engaged in the act of plagiarism while writing their MA Thesis. Hence, in all these, the profile of students' performance towards ensuring quality assurance is found to be low.

Learning resources namely, library facilities with recent books and academic journals, ICT applications, provision of photocopy and printing services, classroom facilities and adequate offices for staff members are perceived as indispensable in teaching-learning processes particularly in HEIs. Responses from the participants in this study regarding the scarcity and inadequacy of such learning resources in CoE are unequivocal.

Moreover, the physical facilities and locations of the existing libraries are not conducive to study for longer hours. This is due to their location, inadequate internal spaces, uncomfortable seats, and inadequate light system. Last, but not least, graduate students have expressed their felt needs about lack of provisions for accommodations and medical services within the campuses, which equally is affecting their study while staying at the university as they said.

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn in this study, the following recommendations are forwarded.

1. Difference in conceptualizing and perceptions towards the concept quality in education by academic community seems natural and must be encouraged towards advancement of knowledge and scholarship. However, at the same time, there must be a unity of purpose within the academic community and the institution in which one is committed to serve.

In order to have unity of purpose, HEIs such as AAU/CEBS have to ensure the missions and policies they issue are being observed through means of regular induction and communication by the administration particularly among the new staff and students. In addition, the College is required to put clear and feasible internal policy packages that target quality of education in place for the graduate programs.

2. As indicated in the conclusion, there is a need for the CEBS/departments to involve instructors and students to incorporate their views in the process of curriculum design, development and review for graduate programs.
3. Design, approval, monitoring and review of programs need to be adequately established body for quality assessment and makes a periodic review regarding curriculum content, management of course delivery and the standards of programs

within the College. It is also necessary to set the institutional performance indicators both at departmental and program levels.

4. Regarding the problem of number and composition of academic staff, efforts must be made both at the College and departmental level to identify the exact and projected needs and work out plan that urges the higher management bodies to act accordingly. Such needs may consider for new recruitments to fill the gaps that may require diversified specializations and/or implement Professional Development Programs for existing instructors. This may include refresher trainings, seminars, experience sharing and workshops to provide instructors with an opportunity of developing and acquiring knowledge and skills required to work with students while offering the course.
5. Research without adequate fund is difficult to imagine. Conversely, research has important role as performance indicator for funding purposes and staff qualification in the assessment of quality. Again, research and scholarship are viewed as important and valuable part of the job of higher education that help to determine priorities and the direction of education itself. Based on such roles of research, the College of Education as a responsible body should create the conditions under which research can flourish. This may include establishing an appropriate infrastructure and superstructure revitalizing and setting up systems for establishing a research culture. Hence, integration of teaching-learning and research that all teaching staff should be regularly engaged in promoting research activity as an individual and/or a team effort is needed. Reciprocally, it may require recognitions, adequate incentives, minimum teaching loads, individual professional devotion and academic freedom as well.

6. Regarding the students' profile, as indicated in this study of the previous chapter, selection and admission was handled by MoE. This may have some implications on the profile of students and their academic performance. On the other hand, it is believed that strict admission criteria, participatory teaching-learning approach, and students' assessment practices are key area of quality assurance. Hence, it is recommended that:

- a. Selection and admissions of students into graduate programs should basically be done by the HEIs and need to consider the staff-student ratio and other learning resources;
- b. Variety of student-centered teaching and clear assessment methods and criteria related to the learning objectives need to be in place by the University in general and the College in particular. This includes timely and formative feedback on students work;
- c. High level of support for graduate students is needed in their research activity. That includes guidelines, procedures, and qualified supervisors with high professional commitments;
- d. Students need access to a grievance and appeal system that is independent, and perhaps external to the institution. This may include the right to complain if the quality of program of study is inadequate towards ensuring the students become part of the quality assurance system.

7. With regard to learning resources, as indicated in this study, the teaching-learning process is mostly affected by lack of adequate educational resources in CEBS. Thus,

there is a need for adequacy, relevance, and timeliness of the library resources and services. And that includes other reading materials and/or modules prepared by the respective instructors.

Moreover, the University/the College need to invest on information resources and services to address the information needs of students and instructors particularly in relation to support for courses and research. Such information comes through different media – print and non-print using ICT applications. In addition, there is also a need for adequate provision of photocopy and printing services, located within the libraries where the graduate students frequently do their studies.

There is pressing need for improving classroom facilities (plugs, light, seats, etc) in order to run effective and efficient classes and presentation by graduate students. Graduate students have indicated that lack of provision for non-teaching facilities like accommodations and medical services equally affect their academic performances. Hence, it needs to be considered by the university governance.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview Guides

Interview Guide for Officials (RPO; College Deans and Dep't Heads) and Other Key Informants

The purpose of this interview is to collect data to assess the quality of education in the graduate programs at the College of Education.

Code No. _____

Respondent type (name) _____

Date _____

Time _____

Place _____

Department _____

Current position-----

Positions previously held other than teaching (university administration, type/year)

I. Work Experience

1. Year of work experience in Higher Education _____ Years.

2. Courses you taught/are teaching at graduate programs (if any)

a. Maximum class size _____

b. Minimum class size _____

3. Participation outside the university (community service) in relation to the graduate Programs. In what capacity?

4. Research carried out (solo and co-authorship) related to the programs (if any)

a. Books (No) _____

b. Articles (Journal/proceedings, etc) _____

c. Book chapters

d. Research reports (consultancy/advocacy)

e. Teaching materials (published/unpublished)

f. others _____

II. Specific interview items

1. Obviously the College of Education/AAU has certain mission and vision statements (teaching; research; and community services).

Have these include provisions regarding quality of education in graduate programs?

-are all the key partners (students, teachers, etc) familiar with these mission statements and share for these common values of the College/AAU at large?

2. Do you think that the College is accomplishing its three missions in the way of responding to the needs of institution and the nation at large?

3. Would you tell me what quality means in higher education?

- To what extent do you think your conception/definition of quality is considered in the quality assurance practice of the institution?

4. How does your institution demonstrate that it is providing quality education in the graduate programs? What strategies, methods and procedures are in place to assess/monitor quality in the college/departments?

-is there quality assessment/assurance policy/system, manuals/guidelines,

Clearly defined quality indicators for education quality of the graduate programs; are all the key partners (staff and students) well communicated about the policy? How- through manuals, orientations, etc.?

- is there a self-assessment mechanism and;
- are there responsible bodies/offices for quality assessment.

5. What procedures and processes are followed in designing and developing of the curriculum for the graduate programs?

- To what extent does the college allow employers and community, to involve in institutional planning in the design of programs/ curricula)?

-What services and standards do you think an employer client expect from your College in terms of the graduate programs?

-Does the college periodically review relevance of program aims and intended learning Outcomes?

6. What do you say about the profile of the teaching staff in the graduate programs in your Department?

- Regarding their qualifications; (subject and pedagogic)
- Adequacy of their number;
- their engagement in research activities;
- The pressure of the workload;
- Incentives, motivation, and about their commitment.

7. What do you think is expected of students as part of quality assurance system?

- The role of the students as the key component;
- Their discipline and commitment to learn;
- Their strong academic backgrounds;
- A collaborative and team work sprits etc.

8. What mode of delivery is mostly employed by classroom instructors who offer?

Courses for students in graduate programs?

9. Would you agree that the observed low standards/quality in education at the level of

Graduate studies is due in part to inadequate preparations at lower Levels

(Undergraduate, Secondary, and Primary...)?

10. Do you think the expansions and diversification of graduate programs match with the

resources available to maintain quality of education at the level of the graduate programs?

- The availability and adequacy of competent human resources?

- The availability and adequacy of the non-human resources and services that the students in the graduate programs get in relation to their studies and research activities that includes?

- Library facilities and its physical environment;

-The provision of ICT services;

- Other reference materials and text books;

- The availability, relevance, timeliness, accuracy, consistency and over all flow and provisions of the university's Management Information System (MIS) to all the concerned including the students in the graduate programs;

- The class rooms situation; student-class ratio; student-teacher ratio.

11. Which do you think is the right and appropriate strategy in developing a sustainable quality of education at all levels including the graduate studies? On which quality improvement measures do you think the graduate program should focus? Prioritize and put it in the rank order from 1 to 6:

- investing in developing a well structured and organized management

- Invest on the employment of well trained professors

- Introduction of rigorous selection criteria to accept only competent students upon admission
 - Investing heavily on non-human educational resources (libraries, and ICT)
 - Invest on physical facilities (attractive buildings, well furnished classrooms, recreation centers)
 - Invest on change of attitude and academic culture
12. Have you heard of appreciations and/or complaints about CoE graduates? Please elaborate on what they said.
13. Any additional comments will be appreciated.

Appendix 2: Focus- Group Discussion Guide for Graduate Students

The following questions are points for Focus – Group Discussion to be held with the students in graduate programs at CoE/AAU on the practice, challenges and prospects in developing quality of education in the graduate programs.

1. How do you understand/perceive quality in higher education?
2. What strategies, methods and procedures are in place that you know to monitor or regulate quality of Programs in CoE/Department (AAU)?
 - a. Availability of quality assurance (insurance policy/system, manuals/guidelines, quality assessment tools or clearly defined quality indicators in the College of education;
 - b. Availability of self assessment mechanism and responsible bodies for quality assessment and thereby to ensure quality in the College/Department/AAU
3. How do you judge on the conditions of the academic staff in a program you have been attending in your respective departments in the College of Education?
 - In terms of their qualifications;
 - In terms of their number and composition (diversity);
 - In terms of their competence and commitments to carry on their career
 - Punctuality and willingness to consult their students;
 - Provision of teaching materials for the courses they offer.
4. How do you evaluate the practice of continuous improvement of the teaching learning process based on the results obtained from internal quality assessment?
 - What teaching learning approaches are dominantly being practiced (student-centered? or teacher- centered?
5. What do you think is expected of students as partners in the quality assurance system?
 - Their admission criteria (academic performance upon admissions);

- Performance on their courses;
 - Participation in research activities;
 - Their language proficiency;
 - Their over all active participation on academic matters;
 - Their academic ethics; etc.
6. How do you view the students' assessment mechanisms/practices by the instructors of your programs at the CoE?
 7. Do you think the expansions and diversification of graduate programs match with the resources available to maintain the quality of education?
 8. It has been a widely accepted fact by all the concerned bodies including the Government of the Country that the quality/standards of education are found to be declining at the lower levels (Undergraduate, Secondary and the Primary
 - What do you think of the impacts this may have on the academic standards of graduate programs?
 - What do think are the causes and the remedies you point out?
 9. As several literatures on the issue of quality at higher education reveals, there is a trend that several colleges and universities in many parts of the World are integrating quality concepts, practices and tools into the curriculum; and many other colleges are applying quality to the administration of the institutions.
 - How do you reflect on this? And would you subscribe for such considerations into graduate programs as such?
 10. The University authorities (AAU) say that, the university is re-structured recently to providing quality education and has been issued a widely advertised slogan: "AAU@ Change", which has been posted on the main gates of all its campuses. How do you reflect on that?

11. What were your expectations and perceptions for post-graduate study programs at the College of Education, before and after joining it?
12. Have you heard of appreciations and/or complaints about CoE graduates? Please elaborate on what they said.
13. What do you think are the major challenges and opportunities of quality development practices in your respective programs/department at the CoE?
14. Any additional comments will be appreciated.

Appendix 3: Questionnaire to be filled by Instructors

This questionnaire is designed to collect data about assessing the quality of education in the graduate programs at the College of Education, Addis Ababa University. Your cooperation in providing the necessary information is *highly appreciated*. As this is only for academic research purpose, your response will be kept confidential and anonymous.

Sincerely,

Part I: Background Information

Direction I: Please, provide appropriate information for the following items by using a tick-mark “✓” in the box and by filling in the space provided.

1. Sex: Female Male

2. Age: _____

3. College _____

4. Department: _____

5. Qualification: B.A./BSc MA/MSc/Med Ph.D

6. Academic Rank: Lecturer Assistant Professor Associate Professor
 Professor

7. For how long have you been teaching (working) in the College of Education?
_____ Years

8. Positions held other than teaching _____
8.1-----
8.2-----

9. For how long have you served in these positions 8.1 _____ Years
8.2 _____ Years?

Direction II: The following items are related to your perceptions regarding the quality of education in the graduate Programs at the College of Education. Please mark “✓” on the nearest responses of your choice for questions 1–5 and fill in the blanks provided below when necessary.

1. Are there policy frameworks or manuals about quality of education for Graduate Study Programs in the College of Education?

Yes No don't know

2. If your response to question no.1 is yes, please indicate/list down such policy Frame works/Manuals/Guidelines you have in your department/Faculty

3. Is there a body/office or committee/s responsible for quality of graduate Program in the College of Education?

Yes No don't know

4. If your response to question no. 3 is yes, name the office/body that is responsible for quality of education.

5. What are the roles and functions of this office/body?

Direction III: The following items (6-35) are designed to collect data regarding the issues of quality of education in the graduate programs at the College of Education. Please show the extent to which you believe that the condition describes the state of quality education **among the rating scales** provided below by circling any of the numbers from 1 to 5. The rating scales are:

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD); 2 = Disagree (DA); 3 = Don't Know (DK); 4 = Agree (AG); and 5 = Strongly Agree (SA).

Statements	Rating Scales				
	SD	DA	DK	AG	SA
The College is committed to ensure quality of education in the graduate programs.	1	2	3	4	5
There have been shared values among the academic community in promoting quality of the graduate programs at the College.	1	2	3	4	5
There have been scheduled/periodic meetings, conferences and sessions to discuss about the quality of graduate programs being offered in the College.	1	2	3	4	5
The quality of education in the graduate programs is declining.	1	2	3	4	5
The massive expansion competing for the scarce resources has resulted in declining quality of education in graduate programs as well.	1	2	3	4	5
All programs have course descriptions with clear aims, objectives and expected learning outcomes	1	2	3	4	5
There are clearly defined performance indicators/benchmarks against which the qualities of graduate program(s) are assessed.	1	2	3	4	5
Program/Course assessments/reviews have regularly been conducted by the college/department to keep the quality of graduate programs.	1	2	3	4	5
There are timely and appropriate responses to students' comments on the programs	1	2	3	4	5
Surveys regarding employer satisfaction on the relevance of the programs have been conducted by the college/department	1	2	3	4	5

The program being offered is believed to be good enough in preparing the graduates for later professional career.	1	2	3	4	5
The College of Education has adequate number of academic staff with (a minimum rank of assistant professor or above) for the graduate programs.	1	2	3	4	5
Faculty members in College of Education are widely engaged in research activities to improve the quality of education in the graduate programs	1	2	3	4	5
The staff members are motivated salary-wise to enhance the quality of graduate programs.	1	2	3	4	5
Staff members are motivated with other incentives such as timely extra-load payment.	1	2	3	4	5
There are institutional systems to provide Continuing Professional Development Program for junior staff.	1	2	3	4	5
There is adequate professional recognition that the staff enjoys and put them into commitment to enhance the quality of their courses.	1	2	3	4	5
The teaching-learning processes in the graduate programs are based on student-centered approaches.	1	2	3	4	5
The modes of delivery that you employ encourage students to learn independently through active participation.	1	2	3	4	5
The students of graduate programs in the College/department are communicated/informed on the requirements of assessing their performances.	1	2	3	4	5
Appropriate methods of students' assessment are employed.	1	2	3	4	5
Students in the graduate programs of the College are required to carryout a Master's thesis.	1	2	3	4	5
Students' theses are objectively evaluated and graded.	1	2	3	4	5
Some students try to influence their instructors in grading.	1	2	3	4	5
There were precautions taken in limiting the intake of students to ensure that the facilities and the staff are not over extended	1	2	3	4	5

and the quality of the program endangered					
The college has adequate research facilities to support the programs.	1	2	3	4	5
There are regular subscriptions and access to international academic journals appropriate to the programs	1	2	3	4	5
There is an easy access to Internet services.	1	2	3	4	5
Sufficient research fund is made available for faculty members in the College.	1	2	3	4	5

Direction IV: Considering all aspects of the graduate programs in the College in general and at your department in particular, please describe some specific actions you think the School of Graduate Studies should consider in its continuing efforts to improve the program(s), by responding to the following questions (36-38).

35. List major strengths of Graduate Studies at AAU/CoE. Please list them in order of importance.

36. List major weaknesses of Graduate Studies of AAU/CoE. Please list them in order of severity with the most severe at the top.

37. What are your suggestions for improving the quality of Graduate programs at AAU/CoE?

Appendix 4: Questionnaire to be filled by Students

This questionnaire is designed to collect data about assessing the quality of education in the graduate programs at the College of Education, Addis Ababa University. Your cooperation in providing the necessary information is *highly appreciated*. As this is only for academic research purpose, your response will be kept confidential and anonymous.

Sincerely.

Part I: Background Information

Direction I: Please, mark “✓” against your choices and fill the blank when appropriate.

1. College _____
2. Department _____
3. Sex: Female Male
4. Age _____
5. Year of Study 1st 2nd
6. Major area of Study _____
7. Your cumulative G.P.A upon enrollment (BA/BSc)-----

Part II: Rating Items

Direction II. The following items/statements are related to the issues of quality of education in the graduate study programs at the College of Education. Please rate each item by circling **1 for Strongly Disagree (SD); 2 for Disagree (DA); 3 for Don't Know (DK); 4 for Agree (AG) ; 5 for Strongly Agree (SA).**

Statements	Ratings				
	SD	DA	DK	AG	SA
There is a habit/tradition of information provision on the development of quality education in the graduate programs.	1	2	3	4	5
The quality of education in the graduate programs is declining.	1	2	3	4	5
If you think that the quality of education is declining, it is partly due to the massive expansions competing for the scarce resources.	1	2	3	4	5
All courses in your programs have course descriptions with clear aims, objectives and expected learning outcomes.	1	2	3	4	5
The program you are attending promotes scholastic enquiry and critical thinking	1	2	3	4	5
There is appropriate balance between theory and practice in the courses offered in the study programs.	1	2	3	4	5
There has been a practice of gathering opinions and feedback from students in curriculum design/review by the college/department.	1	2	3	4	5
The students have been involved on periodic evaluation of courses and programs offered in the COE/department.	1	2	3	4	5
The program you are in is good enough in preparing you for later professional career.	1	2	3	4	5

Overall, I perceive that the program I am attending is of high quality.	1	2	3	4	5
Your instructors are competent to teach their courses.	1	2	3	4	5
You are provided with the right learning resources by your instructors as related to the courses offered.	1	2	3	4	5
Most of your instructors in the graduate programs have prepared course/teaching materials.	1	2	3	4	5
The course materials prepared by the instructors have the required quality and standards.	1	2	3	4	5
There are clearly defined admission criteria for students' enrolment into the graduate programs.	1	2	3	4	5
Teaching-learning processes in the graduate program are based on the student-centered approaches.	1	2	3	4	5
The methods/mode of delivery that instructors employ encourages students to learn independently through active participation.	1	2	3	4	5
You are encouraged to develop your own scholarly ideas and projects.	1	2	3	4	5
Employees of the Library at the CoE are willing to help you and give you prompt services whenever needed.	1	2	3	4	5
The students' assessment practices and criteria for course grading in the program/department were communicated to the students.	1	2	3	4	5
Various students' assessment methods appropriate to graduate program level have been practiced in the college.	1	2	3	4	5
Students are awarded grades according to their performances.	1	2	3	4	5
The CoE has formal procedures to deal with any complaints and appeals made by students in the graduate programs.	1	2	3	4	5
The College has adequate facilities with learning resources	1	2	3	4	5

such as library stock of relevant research materials to support the programs.					
Students in the graduate study programs have adequate access to ICT resources.	1	2	3	4	5
The opening hours of the graduate libraries are adequate enough.	1	2	3	4	5
The environment where these libraries are located and working spaces including the seats are suitable enough.	1	2	3	4	5
Other support facilities in the libraries such as photocopy machines and printing services are adequately provided.	1	2	3	4	5

Part III: Open-ended Items

Direction III. Considering all aspects of your graduate program in the College of Education at AAU, please describe some specific actions you think the School of Graduate Studies should consider in its continuing efforts to improve the programs, by responding to the following questions (33-35).

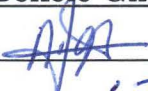
33. List major strengths of graduate studies at AAU/CoE. Please list them in order of importance.

34. List major weaknesses of Graduate Studies of AAU/CoE. Please list them in order of severity with the most severe at the top.


35. What are your suggestions for improving the quality of Graduate programs at AAU/CoE?

Declaration

I here by declare that this thesis is my original work and that all sources of information used for the thesis have been acknowledged.

Name: Bekele Gikamo
Signature: 
Date: 17/NOV, 10

This thesis has been submitted with my approval as a university advisor.

Name: Firdissa Jebessa
Signature: 
Date: 17-NOV-10

