

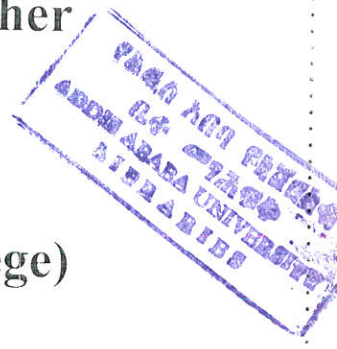
Addis Ababa  
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# Quality Assurance system in Private Higher Education Institutions

## (The Case of St. Mary's University College)

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QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM IN PRIVATE  
HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (PHEIS)  
(THE CASE OF ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE)

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## Acronyms

↓ CRQA	Center for research and quality assurance
↓ SMUC	Saint Mary's University College
↓ QANU	Quality assurances Netherlands University
↓ CHE	Council on Higher education
↓ PHEIs	Private higher education institutions
↓ MBA	Masters of Business Administration
↓ HESO	Higher Education System Overhaul
↓ HEI	higher education institutions
↓ QRAA	Quality and Relevance Assurance Agency
↓ ESDP	Education Sector Development Program

## **Abstract**

Until recently there were few public higher education institutions in Ethiopia. With in a very short period of time, several public as well as private universities have emerged. This unplanned expansion of higher education is potentially dangerous for the quality of education. Previous researches with regard to the quality of higher education in Ethiopia stresses that the quality of higher education has been on declining in general, and a robust system of quality assurance has been lacking. Issues of quality and relevance of higher education need not be viewed in isolation from its expansion.

This particular study is, so designed, as to identify whether appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities are provided for students in Saint Mary's University College and check how well the issue of quality assurance system is addressed by it. Data collected through primary data collection techniques concerning the issue of quality assurance system of the University College have thoroughly been analyzed to yield a reliable conclusion on the subject of the study.

Promising trends concerning the quality assurance system of St. Mary's University College are high level of instructors' awareness of the mission, vision, direction and the existence of quality assurance endeavor, and high enthusiasm. Given the above facts, one may not hesitate to confirm that there is good prospect of quality assurance in the university college under consideration. However, there still are several shortcomings with regard to scarcity of highly qualified academic staff, high level of academic staff turnover, large class management, students' level of access to computer, and academic staff turnover.

# Chapter one



## 1. Introduction

### *1.1. Background of the Institution (institutional Setting)*

Saint Mary's University College is one of the private higher education institutions (PHEIs) emerged as a result of the new education policy developed in Ethiopia concerning privatization of higher education. It is an accredited private higher education to offer training at diploma, degree, and masters in various fields of studies. It is an outgrowth of St. Mary's Language school, which was established in 1991 in Addis Ababa. The university college was established in 1998 under St. Mary's general Education Development PLC with its head office in Awassa and a branch in Addis Ababa. It commenced its training in the same year with 33 students in Awassa and 37 students in Addis Ababa studying in three departments (Accounting, Marketing, and Law).

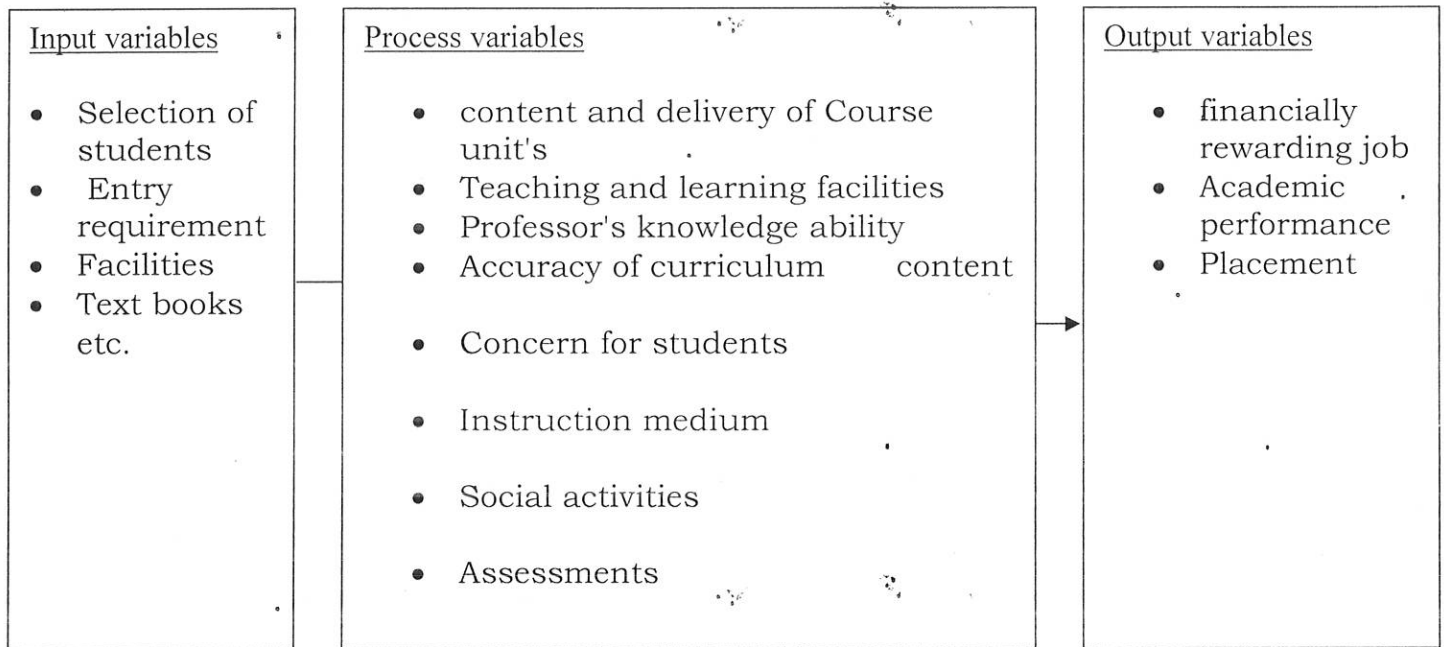
In the last quarter of 1998, the University College admitted more than 300 students in Addis Ababa (Lideta Campus) and shifted its head office from Awassa to Addis Ababa (Lideta campus). In 1999, the department of secretarial science and office management was added. In September 2000, the department of computer science was opened and the degree program in Law was initiated for

the first time. In preparation for the September 2002 registration, new staff members were employed and a new building near the wabe Shebelle Hotel, was rented.

In 2003, in addition to Law, degree program in marketing, management, and Accounting were introduced. After a year, a degree program in computer science was initiated. In the same year Natural science stream, which offers diploma level training under the teacher education was opened. In July 2006, the University College initiated a masters program in various fields of studies in collaboration with Indira Gandhi National Open University. At this moment, St. Mary's university college is hosting hundreds of workers and thousands of students in its different campuses in Addis Ababa. The university college has established center for research and quality assurance (CRQA) answerable to the office of the president and accomplishes the following objectives.

- Promotes, conducts and coordinates research and publications
- Support the conduct of research by acquiring and making available to scholars published and unpublished materials;
- Contributes to the improvements of the teaching process at the university college;
- Undertakes quality assurance services for the university college... etc

Figure 1; The Input --Out put framework of quality classification in Higher Education system



*Adopted from proceedings of 3<sup>rd</sup> National conference on private higher education institution.*

The above conceptual framework helps us to view quality of higher education in the University College from the three-system components point of view. Under this particular study, the researcher will try to assess the status of educational governance, staff profile, teaching learning facilities and the nature of the system in delivering a quality graduates who can play their part in mitigating the Ethiopian life long poverty, through creation of new jobs, and actively participating in the already created job opportunities. The above conceptual framework is based on the notion that one harvests what he/she has sown. The better quality of input one uses the greater quality expectation one makes otherwise if the system fed by garbage would only yield garbage at the end of the day.

## ***1. 2. Background of the study***

Education, being one of the most important components of human development index (HDI), is considered an important means of bringing about development of a country. Education in general and higher education in particular is the scarcest service in Ethiopia. The present state of backwardness could apparently be explained by the lack of it, (Abebe H/Gabriel, 2004). According to Abebe, (2004), the quality of higher education in Ethiopia has been on the declining in general. It could be explained in terms of inputs, processes, outputs, the external environment etc. He added a robust system of quality assurance has been lacking. Issues of quality and relevance of higher education should not be viewed in isolation from its expansion. Quality of education is one of the most important indicators of the success of education in accelerating development.

In Ethiopia, since the new education policy development various public and private higher education institutions have emerged backed by an overwhelming demand of the people for higher education from time to time. This unplanned expansion of higher education is potentially dangerous for the quality of education.

The setting up of quality higher education is the responsibility of all the stakeholders, but it all rests on the strengths of the quality assurance system of the private higher education institution under consideration. Although private higher education institutions are “private” in terms of ownership, their output is for “public consumption”. The study has something to add to the higher education quality improvement and enhancement endeavor in both public and

private higher education institutions. This particular study is so designed as to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the existing quality assurance system in Saint Mary's University College, (SMUC).

### ***1.3. Justification of the study (statement of the problem)***

Quality assurance is about making sure that appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities are provided for students in an institution that they join for further study, (Quality assurance agency for higher education, QAAHE, 2004).

In many countries such as UK, Netherlands, quality assurances Netherlands University (QANU, 2004) and South Africa, council on Higher education (CHE, 2004) the quality assurance process involves different stages;

- Internal audit conducted by the institution itself
- External audit undertaken by an independent non- partisan quality assurance agency

Such quality audits are designed to provide an assessment of an institution's system of accountability, internal review mechanisms and effectiveness with an external body confirming that the institution's quality assurance process complies with accepted standards.

This particular study is so designed as to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the existing quality assurance system in Saint Mary's University College, (SMUC).

According to MOE, 1994, the new education policy document regards poor quality of education in terms of inadequate facilities, insufficient training of teachers,

shortage of books and other teaching materials. The researcher in the course of the study would like to check the status of the aforementioned factors in SMUC, and their effect on the effectiveness of the existing quality assurance system.

An effective quality assurance system should have a feedback system over and above a well thought-out teaching-learning process. Given a highly qualified teachers, adequate facilities and teaching materials, if there is no conducive teaching- learning process in which those resources are optimally mixed, there would be no way to efficiently utilize the resources to produce quality and skilled human power to meet the needs of the country. Hence, the very theme of this study would be the assessment of SMUC's quality assurance system from the above system perspective.

#### ***1.4. Objectives of the study***

The study attempts to investigate factors surrounding and how it affects the quality of higher education, in one of the private higher education institutions (PHEIs) in Ethiopia (Saint Mary's University College).

Under the umbrella of this general objective, the study would address the following;

- Asses level of instructors' awareness about St. Mary's University College's vision, mission, direction and quality assurance system
- Asses the adequacy of the available class room from the existing number of students points of view
- Asses the adequacy of the existing computer facility from the existing number of students points of view

- Asses the number of instructors, their competences, their teaching and other work load, and how it affects the teaching learning processes
- Asses the rate of staff turnover and its relation with the existing school governance practices
- Asses the adequacy of the necessary resource that instructors need for accomplishment of their duties and implication on education quality
- Asses St. Mary's University College towards addressing extra-curricular issues
- Comments on what has to be maintained (strengths) and what has to be corrected (weaknesses) in light of the external environment

### ***1.5. Significances of the study***

The study has something to add to the higher education quality improvement and enhancement endeavor in both public and private higher education institutions (PHEIs). The study by assessing what has so far been done, what was supposed to be done, and what has to be really done, would try to indicate the right track to the assurance of appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities in the institution. The primary purpose of the study is for fulfillment of the requirement of the masters of degree in Business Administration (MBA). Over and above its above benefits; the study may help tomorrow's researchers on quality assurance system in higher education institutions.

### ***1.6. Delimitations (scope) of the study***

Due to the interdependent and complex nature of the topic, the researcher would like to focus on the quality assurance system of one of the many private higher education institutions in the country, i.e. Saint Mary's University College. By doing so, the researcher would be able to deeply assess all the important aspects of the existing quality assurance system of the university college. Hence, the justification for the study to focus on only one PHEI is the researcher's need to make a thorough analysis of the quality assurance system within the limited time and resources he has. However, the study has many areas to touch to understand the different aspects of the quality assurance system.

### ***1.7. Limitations of the study***

In an imperfect world, few attempts by humankind come to be perfect. That is why most researchers unanimously agree that researchers are always surrounded by multitudes of limitations. Therefore, to minimize the impacts of those limitations it would be fair to frankly disclose some of the tangible problems that the researcher might face in the course of the study, which might otherwise let the findings, go in a worst direction. The most obvious limitations to most researchers in general and to beginners in particular is lack of access to the necessary data. This particular study could not escape from the aforementioned realities as well. However, the researcher is at the same time an instructor in the university college the severity of the limitations can to some extent be mitigated.

### ***1.8. Research Methodology***

In the course of the study, both primary and secondary data were utilized. The necessary primary data are gathered from a sample of students and instructors of St. Mary's University College. To collect the necessary data from these two parties, self-administered questionnaire is employed. The university college has 147 permanent instructors and about 7000 students in four faculties teaching and learning respectively. Out of the total student - population 60 students were randomly selected, to fill out the questionnaire. Out of 147 permanent staff, 30 of them has been approached again with questionnaire. Documentary analysis has also been made in an attempt to find out standards against which the findings are compared so as to reach at conclusion. Data collected through questionnaire have been processed and analyzed using descriptive analysis, such as frequency, and percentage. The researcher is an instructor in the same university college; hence, personal observation of several facts about the subject of quality assurance has also been made.

### **1.9. Structure of the study is organized**

This particular study is organized in to five chapters. The first chapter deals with an introductory part. The second chapter is about review of related literature. In Chapter, three discussion and results are presented. The final section is conclusion and recommendation.

## **Chapter Two**

### ***2. Review of Related Literature***

#### ***2.1. Definition of Quality***

Understanding the quality attributes embraced by customers is proved crucial for some one contemplating improvement or enhancement of the quality of higher education. In education, we deal with different groups of stakeholders. Universities view students as their primary stakeholders who receive the educational services, parents as stakeholder who pays for their children education, companies as stakeholders who hire the graduates, faculty members as customers who teach the students. Following this complex nature of the concept of the quality of education, a perception of all the aforementioned stakeholders vary from one stakeholder to another and also varies for a stakeholder over time. That is why the importance of addressing the perception of all the stakeholders is proved crucial.

According to Green D. 1993, “quality is associated with the notion of providing a service that is distinctive, special and which confers status to the users. He also claims that it is not possible to talk about quality as a unitary concept; it must rather be defined in terms of qualities.

As cited in Laila E., Wergin (2005), claims that quality once was defined in terms of in put and resources – what the institution has and in terms of processes and out comes.

On the other hand, Ewell,(1988) argue that “Institutions achieve excellence in so far as they produce demonstrable change along educational outcomes consistent with (1) institutional objectives, (2) student education goals, and (3) the expressed needs of the society and particular consistencies within the society. The educational outcomes are knowledge outcomes, skill outcomes, attitudes/value outcomes, relationship wit society.”

Chaffe and Shere, (1992) says that quality could also be seen from another angle, that is, “Quality is proving both external and internal beneficiaries with what they need, whether that be an effective learning experience, clear directions for action, or a complete accurate form.”

Bergquist, (1995), in his attempt to explain what quality in general and quality education in particular mean has made the following statement.

“Quality exists in college or university to the extent that adequate and appropriate resources are being directed successfully towards the accomplishment of mission related institutional outcomes, and that programs in the college make a significant and positive related differences in the lives of

people affiliated with the college or university and are created, conducted and modified in a manner that is consistent with the mission of the institution.”

In reality quality remains the key focus and continues to be assessed in a number of different ways by different stake holders. Traditionally external stakeholders have been associated with quality assurance procedures. Quality assurance refers to the planned and systematic actions deemed as necessary procedures adequate confidence that a product or service will satisfy given requirements for quality's (Borahan and Ziarati, 2002;914) The particular mechanisms for assurance are usually imposed by external bodies, such as university management and most commonly include accreditation, external examiners and audits (McKaY and Kember, 1999)

## ***2.2. Facts about Quality Assurance System in higher Education Institutions in Ethiopia***

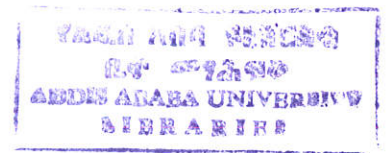
According to quality assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAAHE, 2004), Quality assurance is about making sure that appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities are provided for students in an institution that they join for further study.

Judged by the number of higher education providers in the private sector and by the size of their enrolments, one could note that private higher education is one of the fastest growing sectors in the country. Such a growth in enrollment of private higher education provision is a logical outcome of a traditional education system that has a serious structural deficiency, which has created a backlog of

hundreds of thousands of potentially able and willing learners; i.e., the demand for higher education was far exceeding its supply. This growth has also brought about a new and important development in terms of changing people's attitude towards higher education - i.e., it has demonstrated that people should and could take responsibility for their own (and their children) education. Although private higher education institutions are 'private', their product is for 'public consumption'. Private higher education institutions are thus playing a big role of social responsibility. (Abebe H/Gabriel, 2004)

In 2002/3 those Private HEIs accredited (officially recognized or were licensed) by the Ministry of Education accounted for 35,402 students or 24% of student enrolments (Saint 2004). As cited in Abebe (2004) Dr. Teshome, speaking on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2004 at the Higher Education System Overhaul (HESO) Consultative meeting at the Ministry of Education, predicted that in 3 to 5 years time private HEIs would account for between 40 and 50% of Higher Education (HE) student enrolments. This expansion of market share would be happening at the same time as total student numbers within the combined private and public sectors are set to double. If the projected expansion came to pass, the combined effect of the projected growth in total student numbers and the increase in the private sector's share would be a quadrupling of the enrolments of students in private HEIs over the next five years. What was then 3 to 5 years is now today.

Ethiopian higher education institutions generally rely on the individual action, competence and ethics of each instructor to ensure the quality of their programs and teaching. Expansion of higher education in Ethiopia has already exacerbated the problem of a lack of quality assurance systems. The present arrangements cannot be valid in a mass system, where there must be more checks and balances built in and less reliance on individual effort and knowledge. (Kate and Philip, 2004, p.25)



The Higher Education Institutions may wish to consider the purposes that underlie monitoring and evaluation information. South Africa's Council on Higher Education (2004) identifies three purposes or motivations for monitoring (using qualitative and quantitative data) and evaluation: to shed light on national policy goals and identify and explain success, deviation and failure; to create data that may be utilized by stakeholders and HEIs to improve their performance, and to discern trends over time and so inform HEI and national policy and strategy. Thus, monitoring information including quality information has utility for Government, its agencies, HEIs and other stakeholders.

The Higher Education Proclamation set up the Quality and Relevance Assurance Agency (QRAA). This body will accredit private institution; review the performance of both public and private higher education institutions and safeguard comparable standards of quality for degree programs in both public and private higher education. As yet it has made no progress towards thinking

through how it might go about quality and relevance assessment and how it might modify its accreditation process. There exists, therefore, a window of opportunity for the private higher education institutions to use their association to discuss, develop within their own institutions and bring forward to the QRAA new methods of quality assurance and appropriate criteria for assessing quality and relevance. Such proactive thinking could enable the best of the private HEIs to create a market advantage over the public sector and to differentiate themselves from less worthy private HEIs. (Kate Ashcroft & Philip Rayner, 2004)

### ***2.3. The Quality Assessment and Improvement Process***

“If the administrative and the academic process can be in alignment with the mission, then the learning environment will be enhanced in ways that more effectively prepares students for the challenges of life.” (Hull 1992, p. 238)

Answering the following questions, while examining St. Mary’s College’s Mission statement and vision, will assist in defining Quality suitable to St. Mary’s College.

- What does St. Mary’s College do?
- For whom does St. Mary’s College do it?
- Why does St. Mary’s College do it?
- How does St. Mary’s College do it?
- Why does St. Mary’s College exist?
- What services and academic programs does St. Mary’s College provide?

- What outcome does St. Mary's College create?
- How do you and your department's mission fit and contribute to the overall mission of St. Mary's College?
- What goals and values guide you and your department activities?
- How would you and your departments ideally like to be seen?
- To what extent do you, the faculty, your department, and staff share a common understanding of St. Mary's University College mission, vision, and goals?

### **2.3.1. Mission statements of St. Mary's University College**

"To provide educational programs, that can lead to Diplomas and Degrees in various fields. The college strives to serve the disciplines and professions represented among its academic programs as well as public and private sector. It further seeks to demonstrate, through all, its programs and activities, its appreciation of human diversity and maintain an atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect."

### **2.3.2. Vision statements of St. Mary's University College**

" To be a leading institution of higher learning and research in providing comprehensive quality instruction, material production, research and professional consultancy in a nurturing environment."

## ***2.4. Incentives for Quality Assurance Process***

### **2.4.1. Providing Stakeholders with Quality Information**

A particular problem facing the private sector is reassuring stakeholders that private HEIs offer a quality education and that it is equivalent to, or exceeds, what is offered by the public HEIs. These stakeholders include, most obviously;

- the fee-paying public (not only the students themselves but also in many cases their families who share in the financial sacrifices necessary for a son or daughter/brother or sister to go to college).
- Employers and both private and state-run organizations such as regional educational boards and other local authority organizations that might be potential employers of graduates from private institutions as well as the Government and donors who might promote and offer incentives to the private sector.

Unless otherwise the public knows which private institution is offering the right quality of education, they might be in trouble to make their best choice. We need to remember that the growth in higher education as a whole demanded by the Ministry of Education, as recognized in the Education Sector Development Program II (ESDP II) (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 2002) cannot be met solely through the expansion of the public sector, 'Non-Government organizations and the private sector have also a great role to play in the

provision of education at all levels of education' (ESDP-II 2002: 35). It is, therefore, in the interest of the country, its growth and development that private HEIs are able to reassure their clients and able to recruit students.

In determining how to reassure stakeholders, it may be useful for private HEIs and the Association of Private Higher Education Institutions to consider a range of questions: What do we currently know about the state of provision in private HEIs? (We know that some have been 'approved' or accredited by the Ministry of Education, but does the public know what the criteria are for this approval and how rigorous it is or what it covers). The quality of many of the private HEIs may be good but how can the public find out which ones? Who should tell the public: will they believe the institutions themselves?

As cited in Kate and Philip (2004), in the UK, the more prestigious private schools have their own quality audit systems and central provision of quality and other objective information about each of the schools within their association.) How can potential students and their supporters identify those private institutions that offer 'value for money'? How do students choose between public and private institutions? (Is it merely a case of those who cannot get into public institutions opt then for private, suggesting that private is seen as second-best, somehow inferior?)

There are various positive aspects that the private sector can promote, for example, students can choose the subject and to a large extent, the location where they study. Does the private sector, for example, offer 'value-added' services in terms of greater individual support perhaps through smaller class-sizes or more one-to-one tutorials? Are the private institutions better resourced in terms of their libraries or Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities? The provision of objective and comparable data about such matters will greatly assist private HEIs to make their case. They can of course, through their Association, collect and disseminate such data themselves, but this does not allow comparison (hopefully favorable) with the public sector. To achieve this, the private sector should encourage the QRAA to make the collection of such data one of the ways that it assesses quality. Many of these questions cannot easily be answered. If the institutions themselves cannot answer them, how does the public make its decisions? Currently, there is little check to ensure minimum standards of processes and output: accreditation presently focuses almost entirely on inputs. This is reinforced through the provisions of the HE Proclamation (Articles 62 and 66). Private sector HEIs need to find ways of providing all stakeholders with clear information about courses and qualifications to match their needs. They may need to be much more explicit about what skills, qualities and knowledge will be developed; how practical experience of the workplace will be integrated; how student feedback will be used to improve the quality of instruction, and facilities; and how students will

be monitored and supported during their studies and, at the end, how they will be provided with assistance in applying for jobs and meeting employers.

Information on quality and standards of learning and teaching will need to be made available by each higher learning institution so that potential customers can make informed decisions about what individual HEIs offer. Such information may include progression and qualification rates, the results of employer and student surveys, external examiners' reports and so on. Quality assurance is also required to ensure value for money and best value in terms of the financial investment made by students and their families. A couple of good proxies for this are the employment rates of graduates in each subject and the graduation rates of students with different intake scores. The protection of diversity must be a key issue within any quality system that emerges. In the Ethiopian context, the World Bank (2003) has recommended that diversity of funding (public and private provision) and mission (research, graduate and undergraduate) and scale (small and large) of HEIs should be encouraged. One of the strengths of the private sector HEIs is the specialization of many colleges (nursing, computing, technology, etc.) that helps provide a clear focus and vision for their activities. Private HEIs, therefore, need to develop their own quality assurance mechanisms, not only in order to guarantee quality service to their stakeholders, but also to identify and publish their individual distinctions and strengths. This may be done by establishing and publicizing clear aims, objectives, goals and targets for their institution and for each program. Quality assurance development at institutional level will need to take into account the

differential missions of institutions and their relationship with the labor market. Institutions should consider developing a 'Student Charter' specifying the services they will receive, for example, in terms of tutor contact time, access to resources, speed of return of marked work, employment advice and study skills support and training.

#### **2.4.2. Quality Systems to Encourage Government Investment in Private HEIs**

The Government is increasingly concerned to secure particular outcomes. It has realized that providing resources (inputs) specified activities (processes) may not necessarily lead to desirable change and development (outcomes). It is our experience that, quality assurance in Ethiopia currently focuses very much on the quality of certain inputs (curriculum design, staff qualification and so on). Some HEIs assess to a lesser extent the quality of processes (e.g. instruction and curriculum coverage), but few have a systematic approach for assuring themselves of the quality and standards of outcomes (e.g. comparable grading systems, assessment of the employability of graduates and so on). We suggest that the quality and standards of academic outcomes is the most important feature of higher education institutions and so this gap is a crucial flaw in any argument that the private sector may wish to bring forward, that the Government should invest in the sector. It is no longer enough to argue that, if Government wishes to achieve a quality system, it must invest for or in it. As an example, it would be more convincing to argue that, 75% of employers are happy

with private HEI graduates, but many say they wish to see more IT competence. The private sector could then argue that with tax relief on or soft loans for technological products, the sector would aim to improve the employer satisfaction ratings by at least 10%. It would be more convincing still, if such 'perks' were requested only for HEIs that had been objectively assessed by the QRAA as reaching a quality threshold. This argument implies that the private sector must be proactive in developing quality and relevant data and systems based on outcomes. It is also the case that other Government organizations and donors may be more inclined to provide (financial) incentives to the private sector if it is proved to be offering a quality product.

### **2.4.3. Influencing the Direction of the Quality relevance and assurance agency (QRAA)**

The QRAA is expected to create transparency in the education system to ensure independent quality assessment and to allow international comparison between degree programs. How the QRAA will function is yet unclear, however, it is likely to act either as an inspection or as an auditing body.

The second model (audit) provides institutions with more autonomy to follow their individual mission and to define quality processes for themselves according to their circumstances (if these assure certain outcomes). It is more likely to lead to quality enhancement. For these reasons, it seems to us that audit is likely to be preferred by the institutions over an inspection model. However, audit

depends upon higher education institutions developing their own robust systems. It also requires them to have addressed in academic policy matters of relevance, and to have systems of monitoring how these policies are implemented, not only in narrow academic terms, but also in broader societal terms: for instance, in relation to the challenge of HIV/AIDS and its reflection in curricula and teaching and learning methods.

The QRAA will eventually become fully functional although it may take some years before its systems are fully operational and in a position to provide public reassurance regarding the quality of education provided in Ethiopia's public and private HEIs. This provides private HEIs with the opportunity to devise a transparent, equitable and efficient accreditation system and subject assessment process and criteria.

Below, are suggested, some methods and models that the private sector might wish to explore to achieve the goals of providing quality information to students and their families; providing evidence to the Government that they should invest in private HEIs; and influencing the criteria and processes that the QRAA will use to assess quality and relevance; as well as raising the profile and esteem of the private higher education sector amongst stakeholders.

#### **2.4.4. Methods of Quality Assessment**

The development of quality assurance mechanisms requires institutional systems and oversight of its implementation. It requires HEIs to develop policies, plans and the means to operationalize them. Some approaches are listed below;

##### ***a. Benchmarking***

Benchmarking involves measuring aspects of performance or criteria so that comparisons can be made with other institutions, minimum standards set and improvements identified. Jackson and Lind (2002) indicate that measurements may be qualitative or quantitative; collaboratively or independently generated; internally or externally generated; focused on the whole or parts of an organization; or related to inputs, outputs or processes, (Jackson 2001).

In the UK, the Higher Education Funding Council has created sophisticated benchmark data of institutional performance in areas such as student access, retention and employability that take into account the subject mix within the institution, its geographical location and so on. Nevertheless, Yorke (2001) found other parameters to influence performance so that benchmarks must be carefully interpreted. In addition, benchmarks must be based on good quality and sufficient data that do not appear to be available in Ethiopia as yet. Nevertheless, benchmarking may prove useful in the HEI's internal consideration of quality issues.

### ***b. Performance Indicators***

Performance indicators (PIs) may include the numbers of students recruited, placement and so on. They tend to be simple and numerical in order that comparisons between HEIs can be made. Drennan (2001) suggests that performance indicators should be focused on outcomes. They need to be considered in context, since they are greatly simplified version of the full 'quality picture' within the HEI. The problem in the Ethiopian context is that they need reliable data to operate appropriately, although this data may be simpler than that required for benchmarking. If PIs are to be credible, they need to be seen to be objectively produced or else the public will quickly learn to distrust or dismiss them. The QRAA may be a potential source of amassing and publicizing sector-wide PIs but again this will probably not happen for some time. The Educational Statistics Annual Abstract produced by the Ministry of Education has some of this information but is largely incomprehensible even to the most informed. One source of semi-objective PIs and of appropriate interpretation of the Ministry's statistics might be the Association of Private Higher Education Institutions that could produce its own, more reader-friendly, annual report and review.

### ***c. Quality Audit***

Brown (2001) advocates audit as the answer to quality assessment of all higher education processes. It is a method that involves an HEI setting up its own system for assuring itself of the quality, standards and relevance of its programs. These can then be tested by 'audit trials' to determine their

robustness. For instance, if an institution claims that it has developed systems for ensuring that, all new instructors receive pedagogic training (an input measure); for ensuring that curriculum described in the course outline approved by the Senate is covered (a process measure); and for ensuring that its students reach comparable standards to other HEIs external examiners are employed (an outcome measure), the auditing team may ask to look at committee papers and so on to determine how thoroughly these systems have been monitored and what action the HEI takes where there is a problem revealed by its monitoring.

The private HEIs (perhaps through their Association) may wish to discuss with the QRAA what sort of quality assurance systems and processes that they would expect to find. They might wish to suggest some other models. In the period that the QRAA is being setup, the Association of Private Higher Education Institutions might agree that HEI staff visit each other's institutions to look at quality assurance systems, as they presently exist, and even to do mini mock-audits, so that when subject assessment, for example, becomes a reality, they have shared and developed good practice.

#### ***d. External Assessment***

Private HEIs in Ethiopia might wish to develop a variety of external involvement within their internal quality processes. One way of doing this is through peer visiting and mock audits of quality systems. Another form of external assessment is the external examination system, where examiners from other institutions assess a range of marked work and write a report that, amongst

other criteria, assures the HEI that the standards students achieve are comparable with those of other institutions; tutors within the HEI mark consistently according to clear criteria; and the written feedback tutors give students on their work is sufficiently detailed and concrete to enable students to learn from their strengths and mistakes. If they do not already have one, the private HEIs might also introduce a system of external membership on programme review and validation panels. Thus, when a course is designed and when it is reviewed, employers and academics from other institutions might sit on the course design panel and when the program goes to the appropriate committee for final approval other external members may be invited for the event. It is common practice elsewhere in the world for there to be external membership on institutional and departmental committees. For instance, one of the authors was an external member on several Oxford University Department of Educational Studies committees. In this capacity, she was able to provide the committee with insights and experiences gained from other contexts and bring the learning she gained of Oxford University processes back to her own institution. In this way, both institutions learned new and better ways of doing things, and so quality was improved.

Another external assessment process is subject review. Such reviews generally involve a team of external academics entering the subject department and assessing its provision against a range of criteria such as the learning resources available, the quality of curriculum design, the standards evidenced in students'

assessed work and so on. Various researchers, such as Knight and Trowler (2000) suggest that external assessment can result in an erosion of trust within HEIs as the institution becomes more 'managerial' and paperwork and other bureaucracy increases (in order to 'prove' the learning and teaching matches the quality criteria) without commensurate educational benefits. On the other hand, where such assessments have been introduced, there has been a steady improvement in the resulting scores and in measures such as student retention and graduation.

They have suggested that private HEIs may need to develop a system of institutional audit to support accreditation and subject review to ensure quality and relevance. If so, it is recommended that such systems are based on peer review against institutional and departmental objectives and outcome, rather than 'inspection' against an externally imposed standard. Thernouth (2002) suggests a number of principles that might be applied to any external assessment process that emerges for enterprise activity in higher education.

These principles include:

- Institutional diversity should be valued;
- The assessment process should encourage HEIs to play to their strengths;  
and
- Criteria should be developed for identifying good practice.

We would add the protection of institutional autonomy and academic freedom to this list.

### ***e. Subject Review***

The World Bank (2004) offers a possible template for program reviews. Such a template might be usefully used as a basis for quality assessment and audit, which is summarized below:

The World Bank suggests academic program review provides an opportunity for an institution to review an academic unit's mission and goals and evaluate the quality of its academic programs, faculty, staff, and students. This in turn will enable it to determine priorities, for example, in relation to changes to the curriculum, investments in resources or the development of systems.

Academic review generally starts from a self-assessment by the subject team of its strengths, weaknesses and areas it feels it should develop. The review is generally, conducted with the participation of other academics with knowledge of the subject from outside the institution. These academics read self-evaluation documents, meet students and staff, and may observe classes, other processes and facilities.

According to the World Bank, the focus for the review may include:

- Curriculum quality: goals, their standards and how they are set;
- Staffing, facilities and resources: student/staff ratios, laboratory space, libraries, etc
- Qualifications of student intake;
- Qualifications of staff ;
- Achievement levels and standards of graduates;

- Employment rates of graduates and employer feedback of their quality;
- Progression and qualification rates of students (including disadvantaged students);
- Quality review procedures;
- Peer and students evaluation of teaching quality;
- Research output & Services provided to the HEI, region, country and other bodies.



There are a number of aspects that are relevant to the Ethiopian context that appear to be missing from this list: for instance, there is no specific mention of the relevance of the curriculum or research in relation to the HIV/AIDS challenge. Neither does it look at consultancy and knowledge transfer as areas with which HEI quality systems should be concerned. The issue of relevance is largely missing. There is focus on curriculum, but not on teaching and learning processes, skill development and so on. There also is greater emphasis on the importance of external quality assessment mode, which is proved to be impractical in most of the developed nations. What seems better here is to just give the responsibility quality assurance to those who are close to the issue. That is those who can make difference in the assurance of the quality of education, instructors in this case.

Quality audit in HEIs could be done at two levels; institutional and program. The basis for the institutional and program level audit is the self-evaluation reports or internal quality audit reports institutions submit to the agency having undertaken continuous assessment to assure quality provision.

## ***Chapter Three***

### **3. Analysis and Presentation of findings**

#### **3.1. Quality assurance system of St. Mary's University College, from instructors' points of view**

Sixty students from both regular and extension and thirty instructors from four faculties were approached for collection of the necessary data on the status of the education quality assurance system of St. Mary's university college. Out of sixty questionnaires distributed to the sample students, only five were left uncollected. From thirty questionnaires distributed to instructors, two were not returned. As it was mentioned in an introductory part, limitation like the above one may bring about non sampling error, however, thanks to respondents, almost all questionnaires were returned and the threat from this aspect was mitigated.

The following are the findings of the questionnaire survey made on the prospect of the existing quality assurance system of St. Mary's University College in the course of the study.

##### ***3.1.1. Staff profile of the St. Mary's university college***

Staff profile is one of the elements in input to the education quality assurance endeavor, among other things like curriculum design, facilities, text and reference books.

As noted in Table 1 below, the academic status of most of the instructor respondents (71.43 %) are MBA/MA/MSc holders. However, the university college does not have even an instructor with PhD. About 25 % of the instructors are BA/BSc holders. One instructor respondent (3.57 %) with academic status diploma is there. The QRAA requires that a given higher education institution offering diploma, degree, masters in various fields of study maintain 30% (PhD), 50% ( masters), and 20% (bachelor) in its academic staff profile. Even though, this fact varies for institutions based on the program they run, the existing scenario at St. Mary's University College is somewhat odd. The university college has adequate number of academic staff with master qualification. However, it is difficult to believe that an institution offering first and second degree in various fields of studies does not have even an instructor with academic qualification of PhD from the number of PhD holders an institution like the one under consideration should maintain point of view.

Majority (57.14%) of the instructors in the university college have teaching experience between two to five years. About 42.86% of the instructors have teaching experience of one to two years. There are no instructors with teaching experience of less than one year and more than five years in St. Mary's University College.

Table 1 staff profile of the institution

Item	Response Category	Response Frequency	% age
Academic status	Diploma	1	3.57
	BA/BSc	7	25
	MBA/MA/MSc	20	71.43
	PhD	0	0
Total		28	100
Respondents' teaching experience in the university college	1& less than 1 year	0	0
	1 to 2 years	12	42.86
	2 to 5 years	16	57.14
	More than 5 years	0	0
Total		28	100

Source survey questionnaire June 2007

### **3.1.2. Instructors' opinion on whether they know if quality assurance system is there in St. Mary's University College or not;**

Awareness creation among stakeholders about the theme of quality assurance should be a prerequisite for any action towards quality assurance system that is why this issue was emphasized in the course of this study.

The following table depicts that 89.29% of the respondents argue that they know that St. Mary's University College has quality assurance system; where as 10.71% of the respondents are claiming that they know nothing about it. This implies that majority of the instructor respondents have good level of awareness of the university college's quality assurance system.

Table 2 instructors' knowledge of St. Mary's university college quality assurance system

Item	Response	Frequency	% age
Do you know that St. Mary's university college has QAS?	Yes	25	89.29
	No	3	10.71
Total		28	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

**3.1.3. For those respondents who attested that they know that the university college has CRQA the following question is presented as follows;**

Asked about the opportunity for participation in the quality assurance system, 84% of the instructor respondents argue that there is window of opportunity to do so; where as few of them i.e. (16%) claim that they have not ever been given such a chance by the University College.

Table 3 Opportunity for instructors to play their part in the Quality Assurance process of the University College

Item	Response	Frequency	% age
Is there any window of opportunity for you to play your part in the QA process of the university college?	Yes	21	84
	No	4	16
Total		25	100

Source survey questionnaire June 2007

**3.1.4. Instructors' opinion of the university college's level of effort in encouraging their engagement in the process of higher learning quality assurance;**

Looking at the following table, one can observe that 21.44%, 28.57%, 35.71%, 10.71% and 3.5% of the respondents claim that St. Mary's University College's level of effort towards encouraging instructors' engagement in the process of education quality assurance as very high, high, moderately high, low and very low respectively, which implies the skewness of the respondents' response towards high level of effort.

Table 4 The rate the university college's effort in encouraging instructor's participation in the process of quality assurance system

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Very High	6	21.44
2	High	8	28.57
3	Moderate	10	35.71
4	Low	3	10.71
5	Very Low	1	3.57
Total		28	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

**3.1.5. The degree of instructors' interest to play their part in the university college's attempt to ensure quality of higher education;**

Instructors' interest, ability, and willingness to play their part in the quality assurance process are crucial for the attempt to meet its target.

Asked about the degree of interest they have to engage in the education quality assurance instructors tried to rate the degree of their interest as presented in the following table.

Accordingly, 10.71%, 71.43%, and 17.86% of the instructor respondents claim that they are very much interested, much interested, not that much interested to engage in the education quality assurance endeavor respectively. None of the instructor respondent has claimed that he/she has not interested at all.

Table 5. What is the degree of your interest to engage in the assurance of quality of higher education with the university college you are working with?

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Very much	3	10.71
2	Much	20	71.43
3	Not that much	5	17.86
4	Not interested at all	0	0
Total		28	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

### 3.1.6. Instructors' weekly teaching load

Concerning this issue there is an average weekly teaching load that an instructor has bear set by the Ministry of education; that is 12 hours for pure academicians, and less than that depending on the situation of the instructor under consideration.

Asked about their weekly teaching load 14.29%, 50% and 3.571% of the teacher respondents in St. Mary's university college reported that their teaching load is less than or equals to twelve hours, between twelve and twenty hours and above twenty hours respectively. The study revealed that large majority of instructors

reporting teaching load of more than their capacity, threatening instructors' effectiveness in teaching as well as research activities.

Table 6 Instructors' weekly teaching load

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Less than or equal to 12 hours	4	14.29
2	12 to 20 hours	14	50
3	Above 20 hours	10	35.71
Total		28	100

Source survey questionnaire June 2007

### **3.1.7. Instructors' opinion about the appropriateness of their current teaching load;**

The following table displays that 64.29% of the instructor respondent's claim that their current teaching load is appropriate; where as 35.71% of instructors respondents claim that their current teaching load is not appropriate.

Table 7 The appropriateness of instructors' teaching load

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Yes	18	64.29
2	No	10	35.71
Total		28	100

Source survey questionnaire June, 2007

### **3.1.8. The instructors' opinion about the trend of the efforts by the university college towards assurance of the quality of higher education;**

Asked about the trend of the university college's effort towards ensuring quality education 64.29%, 35.71% of the instructor respondents claim that there is an increasing trend of efforts by the university college, and is at a steady state

respectively. No respondent claimed that there is a decreasing effort. Majority of the respondents witnessed that the university college is more and more efforts towards education quality assurance.

Table 8 The trend of the efforts by the university college towards assurance of the quality of higher education

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Increasing	18	64.29
2	At a steady state	10	35.71
3	Decreasing	0	0
Total		28	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

### **3.1.9. The degree of instructors' awareness about the university college's vision, mission and direction;**

The following table displays the instructor respondents' reaction to whether they are aware about the university college's vision, mission and direction. Accordingly, 17.86% 64.29%, 17.86% of instructor respondents have got very high, high and low level of awareness about the university college's vision, mission and direction. There is no respondent who rated very low on this factor.

Table 9 The degree of instructors' awareness of the university college's vision, mission and direction

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Very high	5	17.86
2	High	18	64.29
3	Low	5	17.86
4	Very low	0	0
Total		28	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

**3.1.10. Instructors' opinion about the degree of academic staff turnover in the university college;**

In the following table is how the instructor respondents rate academic staff turnover in St. Mary's University College.

Accordingly, 7.1%, 25%, 25 %, 42.86% of instructor respondents argue that academic staff turnover is very high, high, moderately high, and low respectively. There is no respondent who rated very low on this factor.

Table 10. The rate of academic staff turnover in St. Mary's University College

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Very high	12	42.86
2	High	7	25
3	Moderate	7	25
4	Low	2	1.74
5	Very low	0	0
Total		28	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

**3.1.11. Instructors' view of the root cause of "very high" or "high" academic staff turnover**

The following table presents that 44.44% and 11.11 % of the instructor respondents claim that inadequate incentive and poor working condition respectively are the underlying causes for very high or high rate of academic staff turnover in St. Mary's University College. About 44.44 % of the instructor respondents claim that in adequate incentive, poor working condition, poor leadership, and job insecurity all together are said to be the causes for very high and high rate academic staff turnover.

Table 11. The reason behind “very high” or “high” academic staff turnover

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Inadequate incentive		44.44
2	Poor working condition		11.11
3	Poor leadership		0
4	Job insecurity		0
5	All of the above		44.44
Total			100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007



**3.1.12. Instructors’ degree of satisfaction with the resources they use and issues they deal with to execute the teaching activity, is presented in table 12;**

Table 12 below presents that 39.2 % of instructor respondents are dissatisfied with the adequacy of office, while 14.29 %, 21.43 % and 25% of instructor respondents are very satisfied, satisfied and moderately satisfied with the adequacy of office in the university college. There is no respondent claiming that he/she is very much dissatisfied with the adequacy of office for that matter.

The same Table 12, below, presents that 7.14%, 17.86%, 46.43% and 28.57% of the respondents (instructor) claim that they are very much satisfied, satisfied, moderately satisfied and dissatisfied with the adequacy of office equipment. In fact, there is no respondent who reported that he/she is very much dissatisfied with the issue. In this regard, a significant proportion of the respondents are dissatisfied.

In the same table, 10.71 %, 32.14 %, 25% and 32.14% of instructor respondents reported they are very satisfied, moderately satisfied and dissatisfied with the internet services of the university college respectively.

Concerning class size, 14.29% of the instructor respondents are very much satisfied where as 25%, 28.57% and 32.14% of instructor respondents claim that they are satisfied, moderately and dissatisfied respectively.

Compensation is one of the factors determine instructors performance with respect to compensation 28.57%, 21.43% and 14.29% of instructor respondents reported that they are satisfied moderately satisfied, dissatisfied and very dissatisfied with the compensation for their performance by St. Mary's university college, respectively.

Except few respondents, that is, 14.29 %, of the instructor respondents, who claim very high level of satisfaction with the freedom to take action (autonomy), 28.27% 25%, 25% and 7014% of the instructor respondents are reporting normal level of satisfaction, moderate level of satisfaction dissatisfaction, very high level of dissatisfaction with respect to the issue respectively.

Students' competence as presented in the following table has said to generate high level of satisfaction, normal level of satisfaction, moderate level of satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and high level of dissatisfaction among 10.71%, 25%, 28.27 %, 17.86% and 17.86 % of instructor respondents respectively.

Library and bookstore services are also part of the factors with which 25 , 25%, 28.57 %, 7.14% ad 14.29% of instructor respondents are very satisfied, satisfied moderately satisfied, dissatisfied and very much dissatisfied respectively.

With respect to training and development opportunity in the university college 3.57% are very satisfied 32.14% are satisfied, 60.71% are moderately satisfied, and 35.7% of the respondents (instructors) are dissatisfied. For that matter there is no instructor respondent who reported high level of dissatisfaction with this regard.

Concerning transparency of the actions taken by the management 3.57% 46.43%, 32.14% and 17.86% of the instructor respondents claim that they are very satisfied, satisfied, moderately satisfied, and dissatisfied respectively. There is no response that implies high level of dissatisfaction in this regard.

Asked about the level of their satisfaction with the services of program offices 50% of the instructor respondents reported that they are satisfied with the program offices services. The rest of the respondents 42.86% and 7.14% of instructor respondent's claim that they are moderately satisfied and dissatisfied with the program office services respectively with respect of this issue the balance tilt towards satisfaction.

Center for research and quality assurance is meant to facilitate quality assurance and research activities in the university college. Looking at the above table one can observe the level of instructors satisfaction with respect to the CRQAS support as follows, 42.86% (12), 46.43% (13) 7.14% (1), and 3.57% of respondents claim that they are satisfied, moderately satisfied, dissatisfied, and very dissatisfied with the support of CRQA respectively.

Table 12 Instructors' degree of satisfaction with the major resources they need to execute the teaching activity;

Item	Instructors' degree of satisfaction with the items in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> column											
	Very satisfied		Satisfied		Moderately satisfied		Dissatisfied		Very dissatisfied		Total	
	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age
Office availability	4	14.29	6	21.43	7	25	11	39.29	0	0	28	100
Adequacy of office equipment	2	7.14	5	17.86	13	46.43	8	28.57	0	0	28	100
Internet service	3	10.71	9	32.14	7	25	9	32.14	0	0	28	100
Class size	4	14.29	7	25	8	28.57	9	32.14	0	0	28	100
Compensation	0	0	8	28.57	10	35.71	6	21.43	4	14.29	28	100
Autonomy (freedom to take action)	4	14.29	8	28.57	7	25	7	25	2	7.14	28	100
Students' competence	3	10.71	7	25	8	28.57	5	17.86	5	17.86	28	100
Library and book store service	7	25	7	25	8	28.57	2	7.14	4	14.29	28	100
Training & development opportunity	1	3.57	9	32.14	17	60.71	1	3.57	0	0	28	100
Transparency of management actions	1	3.57	13	46.43	9	32.14	5	17.86	0	0	28	100
Program offices	0	0	14	50	12	42.86	2	7.14	0	0	28	100
CRQA services support	0	0	12	42.86	13	46.43	2	7.14	1	3.57	28	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

### ***3.1.13. The impact of some factors from respondents' view points, with specific reference to St. Mary's University College;***

The resources we utilize to deliver services or produce products are limited in supply. The limited in nature of these resources in most cases negatively impact up on the operation. Contrary to this where there is adequate supply of such resources the impact is expected to be positive provided that it is efficiently utilized. Not all resources have relations ship with ones own operation; there are cases where the presence or absence of a certain resource does not have neither negative nor positive effect on operation. The following table based on the above concept tries to examine the impacts that various resources availability have level have on the performance of instructors in particular and the quality of education in general with specific reference to St. Mary's university college.

It can be observed, from table 13 that, an overwhelming majority of the respondents (85%) believe office availability contributes positively to the quality of education. However, the researcher found it intriguing that about 15% of the respondents believe the availability of offices has an adverse effect on the quality of education. More or less the same sort of statistics was observed for adequacy of office equipment.

Compared to the previous two factors, a greater proportion of the people covered by the study emphasize access to the internet has a positive impact on the teaching learning process. 32.14%, 50% and 7.14% of the respondents have

claimed it has extremely positive, positive and moderately positive impact on the variable of interest, respectively. Yet, the rest 10.71% responded that internet facility contributes negatively to the quality of education.

About class size, 17.86%, 53.57% and 7.14% of the respondents view the impact of class size on the quality of education as extremely positive, positive and moderately positive, respectively. However, a substantial percentage of the respondents (21.43%), view class size as having an adverse impact on quality education.

The percentage of respondents who assert compensation has a positive bearing on the quality of education was found to be approximately 75%. Albeit, it absorbed the interest of the researcher to find 21.43% and 3.57% of the sampled individuals, respectively, think compensation as having a negative and extremely negative impact on quality education.

Looking in to the same table, 25, 42.86, and 3.57 percent of the respondents also believed that freedom to take action (autonomy) has an extremely positive and moderately positive impact on the quality of education rendered by the university college; while 25 and 3.57 percent of the same respondents regard autonomy has an adverse consequence on the quality. The research has also pointed out that the competence of students has similar impact on the question of interest.

Library and bookstore services were another focus of the research. From the data obtained through the questionnaire, it was witnessed that 32.14%, 39.29%, 14.29% and 14.29% of the people claimed these services have extremely positive, positive, moderately positive and negative impact on the quality of education, respectively. In addition, no individual reported that these services have extremely negative impact on quality. With regard to training and development opportunity, 35.71%, 42.86% and 21.43% of the individuals stressed that it has extremely positive, positive and negative implication for the quality of education; whereas no individual has given a “moderately positive” or “extremely negative” response categories.

The other points of attention for the research were program offices, staff lounge, participation in decisions and discussion forums. The responses obtained for all these variables are skewed towards positive response i.e. the respondents believe these facilities improve the quality of education.

Table 13 The impact of the following factors on the quality of education with specific reference to St. Mary's university college

Item	The impact of the following factors on the quality of education with specific reference to St. Mary's university college											
	Extremely positive		Positive		Moderately positive		Negative		Extremely negative		Total	
	Fre q.	%age	Fre q.	%age	Freq	%age	Fre q.	%age	Freq	%age	Fre q.	%age
Office availability	8	28.57	12	42.86	4	14.29	4	14.29	0	0	28	100
Adequacy of office equipment	7	25	12	42.86	4	14.29	5	17.86	0	0	28	100
Internet service	9	32.14	14	50	2	7.14	3	10.71	0	0	28	100
Class size	5	17.86	15	53.57	2	7.14	6	21.43	0	0	28	100
Compensation	6	21.43	11	39.29	4	14.29	6	21.43	1	3.57	28	100
freedom to take action	7	25	12	42.86	1	3.57	7	25	1	3.57	28	100
Students' competence	8	28.57	9	32.14	2		8	28.57	1	3.57	28	100
Library and book store service	9	32.14	11	39.29	4	14.29	4	14.29	0	0	28	100
Training & development opportunity	10	35.71	12	42.86	0	0	6	21.43	0	0	28	100
Transparency of management actions	5	17.86	17	60.71	1	3.57	5	17.86	0	0	28	100
Program offices	4	14.29	16	57.14	2		5	17.86	1	3.57	28	100
Staff Lounge	3	10.71	14	50	6	21.43	4	14.29	1	3.57	28	100
Participation in decisions	5	17.86	14	50	3	10.71	6	21.43	0	0	28	100
Discussion forum	3	10.71	16	57.14	3	10.71	6	21.43	0	0	28	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

## 3.2. Quality assurance system of St. Mary's University College, from students' points of view

### 3.2.1. Students' access to computer resources

Asked about the degree of access they have to computer resource 9.09%, 27.27%, 36.36%, 21.82% and 5.46% of the student respondent's claim that they have very high, high, moderately high, low and very low degree of access to computer utilization respectively. There is a minimum requirement on the

number of pcs the university colleges have to maintain per group of student, so as to ensure that students get access to pcs to upgrade their knowledge through crating link to in the colleges

Table 14. The rate students' access to computer

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Very high	5	9.09
2	High	15	27.27
3	Moderate	20	36.36
4	Low	12	21.82
5	Very low	3	5.46
Total		55	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

### ***3.2.2. Students' opinion about the possible causes of 'low' or very low access to computer utilization;***

Among those student respondents who argued that they have 'very low' or 'low' access to computer resources 46.67 %, 20 % 13.33 %, and 20 % of them attribute it to the limitations in the number of PCs, lack of connections to the necessary resources, frequent break downs , poor utilization management respectively.

Limitations in the number of pcs is the highly cited reason behind low or very low degree of access to computer resources students have even though lack of connections to the necessary resources and poor utilization management are also there, breakdowns are also what rescue the degree of access students need to have as a students.

Table 15. Cause (s) of students' "very low" / "low degree" of access to computer

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Limitations in the number of pcs	7	46.67
2	Unavailability of connections to the necessary resources	3	20.00
3	Due to frequent break down	2	13.33
4	Poor utilization management	3	20.00
Total		15	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

### **3.2.3. Students' opinion about the adequacy of the existing class room at the institution they are learning in now;**

The adequacy of classroom has direct bearing on the learning teaching process. Where there is no enough classroom large number of students are obliged to learn in a classroom resulting in unmanageable class size. The student respondents' opinion concerning the adequacy of the existing classroom is such that 27.27, 56.36, 14.55, 1.82 percent of the respondents confirm that the existing classroom is more than enough, enough, moderately enough, and not enough respectively. This implies that there is more or less no scarcity of classrooms.

Table 16. The adequacy of the existing classroom at the institution

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	More than enough	15	27.27
2	Enough	31	56.36
3	Moderately enough	8	14.55
4	Not enough	1	1.82
Total		55	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

**3.2.4. Students' feeling about the class size (the number of students learning in a class at a time)**

In an attempt to examine students feeling about the current class size they are learning in 7.271, 14,551, 74, 55% and 3.54% of the student respondents claim that the class size they are currently in is, very large, large, medium and small respectively

*Table 17 Students' feeling about the class size they are currently in*

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Very large	4	7.27
2	Large	8	14.55
3	medium	41	74.55
4	Small	2	3.64
5	Very small	0	0
Total		55	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

**3.2.5. Respondents' (students') feeling of the impact of the existing class size**

Be it large or small a given class size may have some positive or negative impact or otherwise no impact on the learning teaching process. Table 19 below, displays the students respondents' view of the impact of the current class size they are learning in. accordingly 27.27%, 41.82% and 30.91% of the students respondents claim that the class size positively, no impact, and negatively affect the learning teaching process. Large proportion of students argues that it is of no impact at all.

*Table 18. The impact of the existing class size on the learning teaching process*

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Positively	15	27.27
2	No impact	23	41.82
3	Negatively	17	30.91
Total		55	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

### **3.2.6. Students' view of their instructors' competence**

Asked about their instructor's competence 12.73%, 52.73%, 29.09% and 5.4% of the student respondents argue that their instructors are highly competent, competent, moderately competent and less competent respectively. A large majority of students share the idea that their instructors are competent. Provided that other things are in a good condition the university college's instructor's competency can make the university college's dream quality education true.

*Table 19. The rate of instructors' competence*

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Highly competent	7	12.73
2	Competent	29	52.73
3	Moderately competent	16	29.09
4	Less competent	3	5.45
Total		55	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

### **3.2.7. Students' view of their instructors' punctuality**

Punctuality is becoming one of the burning issues at both public and private higher educations. The reason may be many; it is a common phenomenon that 15 minuets at the beginning and end of class expire (gone out of use). To the

extreme absenteeism is commonly observed. With this regard, however 16.36%, 49.09% and 34.55% of the student respondents of St. Mary's' university college claim that their instructors are highly punctual, Punctual, and moderately punctual respectively. Contrary to what most colleges and universities claim St. Mary's University College's status with this respect can be taken as strength.

Table 20 The rate of instructors' punctuality

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Highly punctual	9	16.36
2	Punctual	27	49.09
3	Moderately punctual	19	34.55
4	Not punctual	0	0
Total		55	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

### ***3.2.8. Students' view of the university college's level of effort towards providing them with quality education***

Asked about their perception of the university college's effort towards providing quality education, 16.36%, 50.91%, 18.18%, 10.91% and 3.64% of student respondents claim that the university college's level of effort is very high, high, moderate, low and very low, respectively. This implies that the majority of respondents are content with the colleges endeavor in ensuring quality and standard education.

Table 21. The rate St. Mary's University College's effort towards providing students with quality education

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Very high	9	16.36
2	High	28	50.91
3	Moderate	10	18.18
4	Low	6	10.91
5	Very low	2	3.64
Total		55	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

### ***3.2.9. Students' view of the degree of access they have to the necessary text and reference books***

Asked about their view of the degree of access they have to the necessary text and reference books , 30.91 % , 18.18 % , 34.55 % , 9.09 % and 7.27 % of student respondents claim that they have very high, high, moderately high, low and very low degree of access to the necessary text and reference books, respectively. This implies that the majority of respondents have on average good degree of access to the necessary text and reference books.

Table 22. The level of access students have to the necessary text and reference books

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Very high	17	30.91
2	High	10	18.18
3	Moderate	19	34.55
4	Low	5	9.09
5	Very low	4	7.27
Total		55	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

### **3.2.10. Students' view of the speed at which their claim gets response**

Asked about their view of the speed with which their claim gets response from the concerned body , 18.18 %, 29.09 %, 27.27 %, 18.18 % and 7.27 % of student respondents confirm that they get their claims resolved at a very fast, fast, moderately fast, slow and very slow speed respectively. This implies that the majority of student respondents are happy about the speed with which they get their problems resolved.

Table 23. The speed at which Students' claims get resolved

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Very fast	10	18.18
2	Fast	16	29.09
3	Moderate fast	15	27.27
4	Slow	10	18.18
5	Very slow	4	7.27
Total		55	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

### **3.2.11. Students' view of the importance of two way communication in promoting the delivery of quality services, education in this case**

Asked about their view of the university college's effort towards providing quality education, 47.27 %, and 45.46 %, of student respondents claim that two-way communication would contribute the quality assurance endeavor to a greater extent, and to some extent respectively. Few respondents, that is, 15 out 55 students argue that two communications does not contribute the quality assurance endeavor at all. This implies that the majority of respondents believe in the importance of two-way communication in ensuring quality and a standardized education for all.

*Table 24. Students' belief about the importance of two ways communication between clients and services delivers in promoting quality assurance endeavor*

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	To greater extent	10	47.27
2	To some	16	45.46
3	Does no contribute at all	15	7.27
Total		55	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

### **3.2.12. Students' view of St. Mary's' University College's effort towards ensuring two way communications**

Looking at the following table, one can observe that St. Mary's university college is very good, good, moderately good, satisfactorily good and poor at encouraging two-way communications between the management and students of the university college, based on the responses of 14.55 %, 50 %, 16.36 %, 10.91 %, and 7.27 % respectively. This particular scenario entails that there is promising climate that would ensure students the right to be heard by the management of the university college.

**Table 25.** *The rate St. Mary's University College's effort towards ensuring two way communications*

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Very good	8	14.55
2	Good	28	50.91
3	Medium	9	16.36
4	Satisfactory	6	10.91
5	Poor	4	7.27
Total		55	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

**3.2.13. Students' reaction to the speed of return of their marked works is presented as follows;**

In an attempt to explore the speed of return of student's marked work the researcher has come up with 10.91%, 58.18 %, 29.09% and 2 % of the student respondents claiming very fast, fast, moderately fast, and very slow return of their marked work respectively. There is no respondent claiming low speed of return of the marked work for that matter. The finding in general implies that more than three-fourth of the respondents attest that they get their marked works with in appropriate period of time.

Table 26. The speed of return of marked works at the universities college

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Very fast	6	10.91
2	Fast	32	58.18
3	Moderately fast	16	29.09
4	Slow	0	0
5	Very slow	1	2
Total		55	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

**3.2.14. Students' reaction to whether the university college gives them an employment advise or not;**

Concerning the university college's attempt top expose students to employment opportunities, the study has tried to see the students' reaction as presented in the following table. Accordingly 58.19 % of the respondents witness that they taken employment advise where as 41.81 % of student respondents claim that

have got such assistance in their attempt to find job in general and good job in particular.

**Table 27 Whether the university college's gives Students an employment advise or not**

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Yes	32	58.19
2	No	23	41.81
Total		55	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

**3.2.15. Students' reaction to whether they are invited for discussions about extra-curricular issues like the impact of HIV/AIDS has on the objectives of education in general and teaching- learning process in particular**

This day, the issue of HIV/AIDS is becoming the emphasis of the every institution due to the fact that, the disease is universal. St. Mary's university college is one those institutions that needs to address this burning issue. Beyond window dressing institution, especially universities, colleges and other institutions shouldering tens of thousands students on a fire age need to do something concrete. Having this in mind the following table presents students' opinion on far the university college has gone in making this true.

Accordingly, 70.91 % of the student respondents confirm that they have been given chances to discuss such issues, where as 29.09 % of the student respondents claim they did not get such a chance. This implies that the

university college beyond window dressing has gone far in addressing the issue of *HIV/AIDS* in its extra curricular activities.

*Table 28 Whether students are invited by the university college for discussions on extra-curricular issues or not*

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Yes	39	70.91
2	No	16	29.09
Total		55	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

**3.2.16. For those respondents who argued that they have been invited for discussions such as the above one, the following question is posed;**

Given the opportunity, asked about the frequency of the invitation 15.39 %, 51.28% and 28.21 % of the student respondents witnessed that they are invited very often, often, and some times respectively. The rest of the student respondents (5.13 %) claim that they are rarely invited to the forum. This also entails that students are let to discuss extra curricular issues more or less frequently.

*Table 29 the frequency of students involvement in discussions about extra-curricular issues*

S.No.	Response	Frequency	%age
1	Very often	6	15.39
2	Often	20	51.28
3	Some times	11	28.21
4	Rarely	2	5.13
Total		39	100

Source; survey questionnaire June, 2007

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4. Conclusion and Recommendation**

#### **4.1. Conclusion**

In the course of the study, almost all the issues that have relationship with education quality assurance process in any ways were thoroughly examined. Among those major issues that can best describe the prospect of quality assurance system, the issue of staff profile, instructor's awareness of the university college's vision, mission, direction and their level of interest to work with the university college in its attempt to bring about quality education, the impact of the instructors' work load on teaching-learning process, the rate of academic staff turnover, the status of the hygiene factors and its impact on the quality assurance endeavor; were highly emphasized.

Over and above the aforementioned issues, the study also tried to examine the prospect of quality assurance system at St. Mary's university college from students' perspective. To address the issue of quality assurance system at the university college from students' perspective, the following issues were emphasized one after the other.

- Students' access to computer resources and the reason behind low or very low rate of access to computer by students if any;

- The adequacy of classroom and how it affects the class size, there by the learning- teaching process
- The competence and punctuality of the instructors;
- The efforts being made by St, Mary's university college to ensure that students are provided with quality education
- Students' access to the necessary text and reference books
- The speeds at which student's problems get resolved
- Students' view of the importance of two-way communication in promoting quality assurance attempt and the degree of the university college's effort towards making it true;
- Students' reaction to the speed of return of their marked works is also emphasized;
- Last not least is the University College's effort in addressing extra curricular issues are examined from students' perspective

The study has uncovered that the existing quality assurance system has both promising as well as disappointing aspects. To trace findings one by one:

- The staff profile in general is not that much promising. St. Mary's university college is one of the major private higher education institutions in Ethiopia, offering first and second degree in several fields of study without even an instructor with PhD.

- Even though, instructors may have several years of teaching experience else where, there is no instructor with teaching experience of more than 5 years in St. Mary's university college. This may have a special implication from academic staff turnover point of view.
- Concerning instructors' awareness about St. Mary's quality assurance system, there is a promising trend in that majority of instructors has good knowledge of it. On top of this most instructors' attest that the university college facilitates grounds for them to contribute to the quality assurance endeavor. Given the opportunity, almost all instructors are highly enthusiastic to take part in the quality assurance process. Given these good knowledge, attractive condition, and high enthusiasm, one may not hesitate to confirm that there is good prospect of quality assurance in the university college.
- Except for few instructors who claim that, their weekly teaching load is twenty and above most instructors reported a weekly teaching load of twenty hours and less than twenty hours. Given the above facts, the actual instructors' teaching load may not deter them from effectively and efficiently accomplishing their duties.
- The trend of the university college's effort towards improvement of the quality education is said to be increasing as most instructor respondents

argue, except few instructor respondents claiming there is no progress with this respect.

- Except few instructor respondents, most instructor respondents have high level of awareness of the university college's vision, mission, and direction (objective). This implies that it is not difficult to mobilize them towards accomplishment of the desired level of success, one of which is quality education.
- Instructor's opinions on the rate of staff turnover in St. Mary's university college revealed that there is high level of academic staff turnover. In fact employee turnover beyond its cost implication have some relationship with delivery of quality services. The greater the level of employee turnover the greater will be the socialization cost, need for creation of awareness, and the need additional training which in turn negatively affect the quality assurance endeavor. The finding of the study revealed that in adequate incentive is the prominent factor (cause) for academic staff turnover, followed by poor working condition, leader ship conditions and job insecurity.
- A study of instructors' degree of satisfaction with the level of availability/adequacy of various resources in St. Mary's University College indicates moderate level of satisfaction. As a matter of fact the level of instructors' satisfaction has a direct bearing on the success of quality

assurance endeavor, hence moderate level of satisfaction with this respect implies moderately effective quality assurance attempt of the university college.

- The study also uncovered that the impact of the actually existing level of resources on the quality of education is moderately positive.
- Significant proportion of student respondents reported low level of access to computer resources due to limitations in the number of personal computers and lack of connection to the necessary resources.
- Even though there is no scarcity of classroom, there exists a constraining effect of large class adversely affecting the learning teaching process.
- The degree of access students have to the necessary text and reference books and the promptness of response to their claim are more or less at its satisfactory level and said to have positive impact on the quality of education in the university college under consideration.
- Competence and punctuality of instructors are among the strengths the university college has to achieve its quality assurance target.

## 4.2 Recommendation

The following are suggestions and recommendations following the findings of this particular study.

- Since the university college is contemplating teaching at postgraduate level, there should be great attention to be given to the staff profile. The university college should hire academic staff members with PhD, and several years of teaching experience, if it has to offer second degree in various fields of studies, and maintain the quality of education it is opting for.
- The other thing that the university college has to address is reduction of the rate of academic staff turn over. Through introduction of attractive incentive, leadership and working condition, the university college should work towards either avoiding or reducing the problem of academic staff turn over for betterment of the quality of education.
- The effort the University College at this moment is exerting is very good, and it is what is to be kept up, so as to bring about quality education.
- Instructors' satisfaction with the adequacy of various resources might in any ways, affect their commitment to wards achievement of quality

education. Hence, the University College, over and above what it has done so far should work towards ensuring instructors' satisfaction with the adequacy of the necessary resource. So that instructors' can play their part in an endeavor for quality assurance.

- We are in an information society. Given this fact, students' access to computer utilization is essential. However, in the course of the study, the researcher has managed to find out that the level of students' access to computer resources is low; due to several reasons mentioned in the above section. The university college should make adequate number of PCs available, with due regard to its maintenance and connection to several resources, such as internet.
- Classroom is one of the facilities universities use for delivery of educational services. In St. Mary's University College, there is no scarcity of classrooms, but the problem of large class management is apparent. This scenario indicates that, there is inefficient utilization of the existing classrooms, than inadequacy of the same. Therefore, to avoid the negative impact that large class might present, the university college has to arrange for efficient utilization of the existing classrooms.

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# Appendices

MBA- Program  
Faculty of Business and Economics  
School of Graduate study  
Addis Ababa University

Dear Respondent (Student)

Thanking you in advance for your cooperation in filling out this questionnaire, I would like to stress the importance of the objective and honest information you contribute to the accomplishment of the mission of this particular study.

The study “The Prospect of Quality Assurance System at Private Higher Education Institutions, the case of St. Mary’s University College” is purely meant for fulfillment of Masters of Business Administration (MBA) project. In filling this questionnaire I assure you that whatsoever information you give will be kept confidential.

- General Direction
  - No need of writing your name
  - Write “√” sign for questions with boxes, and short answers for questions with dashes



How do you rate your satisfaction with the following issues in St. Mary's University college?

Indicate the degree of your satisfaction with respect to the following parameters by putting "√" in the appropriate cells in front of the items and under the measures of satisfaction

No	Item	Very satisfied (5)	Satisfied (4)	Moderately satisfied (3)	Dissatisfied (2)	Very dissatisfied (1)
1	Office availability					
2	Adequacy of office equipment					
3	Internet services					
4	Class Size					
5	Compensation					
6	Autonomy ( freedom to take action)					
7	Students' competence					
8	Library and book store services					
9	Training & development opportunity					
10	Transparency of management actions					
11	Program offices					
12	CRQA services					

15. What do you think about the impact that the following situations have with respect to St. Mary's University College's teaching and learning process?

Item	Extremely positive (5)	Positive (4)	No impact (3)	Negative (2)	Extremely negative (1)
Office availability					
Adequacy of office equipment					
Internet services					
Class Size					
Compensation					
Freedom to take action					
Students' competence					
Library and book store services					
Training & development opportunity					
Transparency of management actions					
Program offices					
Staff Lounge					
Participation in decisions					
Discussion forum					

16. If you have some points to add \_\_\_\_\_



1. Department

- Accounting       Marketing       Management  
 Information Technology       Law       SSOM

2. How do you rate your access to computers (Pcs)

- Very high     high     medium     low     very low

3. If your answer to question #2 is "low" or "very low", which of the following is said to be the cause?

- Limited in number of PCs       frequent break downs   
Lack necessary software       No schedule for efficient utilization

4. How do you rate the availability of classrooms at your college?

- More than Enough     Enough     Moderate     Not enough

5. How do you rate the class size (number of students leaning in one class at a time) in your college?

- Very large     Large     moderate     Small     very Small

7. How does it affect the learning - teaching activities?

- Negatively       No impact       positively

8. How do you rate the competence of your instructors?

- Highly competent     competent  
 Moderately competent     less competent

9. How do you rate the punctuality of your instructors?

- Highly punctual     punctual     moderately punctual     not punctual

10. How do you view the efforts of your University College towards ensuring quality of educations?

Very high  high  medium  low  very low

11. How do you rate your access to the necessary text and reference books?

Very high  Light  Moderate  Low  very low

12. How do you rate the speed at which your claim gets response?

Very fast  fast  modulate  slow  very slower

13. How do you understand quality specially service quality? i.e., for you what criteria are acceptable to say that a given service is quality or not?

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14. How much do you think would two way communications between clients and service deliverers contribute to the success of service quality assurance?

To a greater extent  to some extent  does not contribute at all

15. From the above response point of view how do you rate SMUC's effort towards ensuring two-way communications?

Very good  good  mediuum  satisfactory  poor

16. How do you rate the speed of return of marked works at your university college?

Very fast  Fast  moderately fast  slow  very slow

17. Does the university college give you employment advises?

Yes  No

18. Are there any form of forum that invites students to discuss about the impact of HIV/AIDS on the objectives of education in general and the teaching –learning process in particular?

Yes  No

19. If your response to the above question is yes how often is it?

Very often  Often  some times  Rarely

20. Would you please suggest on the quality assurance of St. Mary's University College?

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**Thank you!**

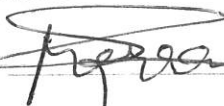
Declaration

I, Merga Mekuria, declare that this work entitled "**Quality Assurance System in Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIS): The case of St. Mary's university college**", is my own effort and study and that all sources of materials used for the study have been duly acknowledged. I have produced it independently except for the guidance and suggestion of the research advisor.

This study has not been submitted for any degree in this University or any other University. It is offered for the partial fulfillment of the degree of MA in Business Administration [MBA].

Merga Mekuria

Signature



Date

13, August, 2007

## **Letter of approval**

This is to approve that Merga Mekuria has completed a research project entitled "Quality assurance system in private higher educational institutions (A case of St. Mary's University College)" under my supervision and follow up. I approve that this work is appropriate to be submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree of masters of Business Administration.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ signature \_\_\_\_\_