PROGRAM: ADVANCED THEORY: CURRICULUM AND EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

SUBJECT: EDUCATION POLICY ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

CODE: M Ed (CURC208)

DATE: SUMMER EXAMINATION
NOVEMBER 2015

DURATION: Exam-Equivalent

WEIGHT: 50 : 50

TOTAL MARKS:

EXAMINER: Prof Michael Cross and Prof Shireen Motala Sanso Number 7

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NUMBER OF PAGES:

INSTRUCTIONS: Students must hand in the papers on the exam day to Prof Shireen Motala.

REQUIREMENTS:
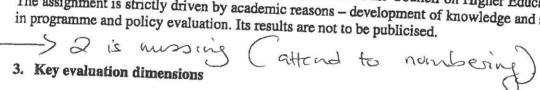
INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES:

PLEASE ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS.

Exam Equivalent Assignment

Assessment of Quality Assurance Systems of Teacher Education Programs in South Africa

1. Aim of the Assignment

The aim of the assignment is to assess the quality of teacher education programmes and the quality assurance (QA) systems underpinning these programmes in South Africa. It should be ~~look~~ at the regulations governing teacher education, how these are interpreted and ~~translated~~ into teacher education programmes by individual institutions as well as the role played by national and institutional agencies with the mandate to oversee and ensure high standards in teacher education. The assignment should also look at internal regulations and other mechanisms for ensuring quality. In both cases, the assignment will include an assessment of the [the] extent to which the regulations are implemented and the quality of the training upheld. An important frame of reference can be obtained from the national reviews of teacher education undertaken by the Higher Education Quality Committee of the Council on Higher Education. The assignment is strictly driven by academic reasons – development of knowledge and skills in programme and policy evaluation. Its results are not to be publicised.

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3. Key evaluation dimensions

The role of the HEQC, professional bodies and the departments offering teacher education programmes as guardians of quality

The questions to be addressed range from the appropriateness and relevance of their teacher education strategies, i.e. the extent to which these are fit for their purpose and respond to the specific South African contextual challenges in teacher education; their effectiveness in delivering these programmes, i.e. the extent to which they are able to achieve their objectives (whether they do the job); and their efficiency i.e. the competence and economy with which the systems work (whether they do the job with minimal costs).

National, Institutional and departmental context

The programme complies with the national policies and regulations regarding the provision of teacher education qualifications, and responds to the requirements proposed by relevant stakeholders.

Quality of programme design, strategy and coordination
Measuring the quality of programme design requires paying particular attention to its purpose, goals or objectives, expected learning outcomes and the mode of delivery, including the strategy and forms of coordination.

Student recruitment, selection and admission
Several aspects require attention. Recruitment strategies (e.g. Internet, recruitment documentation, publicity, etc.) play a central role in informing potential students accurately and sufficiently. Admission of students very often has to comply with national policy. The selection of students has to be in line with the programme's academic requirements, and the number of students selected shouldn't compromise the programme's intended learning outcomes and the capacity of the academic unit to offer good learning experience.

Quality of staff
Suitable qualifications, sufficient relevant experience and teaching competence, assessment competence, and research profiles of the academic staff responsible for the programme should be adequate for the nature and level of the programme. Depending on the complexities, programme providers should provide opportunities for academic staff to enhance their competences and to support their professional growth and development.

Quality of teaching and learning
The evaluation will look at the types of learning activities (e.g. lectures, tutorials, group activities, project activities) involved in the programme and the relationship between the teaching methods, mode of delivery and the achievement of the learners of the stated outcomes of the programme.

Quality of research
Research plays an important role in postgraduate training, and the contribution of both staff and students to learning through their research production represents an important measure of programme quality.

Quality of research supervision
Dissertation works successfully when: (i) suitably qualified staff support students' independent work by offering guidance on all aspects of the research process and on keeping to an achievable time schedule for their projects; (ii) supervisors are accessible and offer timeous feedback on student work; and (iv) supervisors support and encourage their students through to completion.

Quality of student assessment
Formative and summative assessments are important tools in student learning and development. The evaluation will look at both rules and procedures governing student assessment as well as the principle of transparency in how these are being implemented.

Quality of infrastructure and library resources

Infrastructure and library resources (suitable and sufficient venues, IT infrastructure and library resources for students and staff in the programme) are essential components of an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning.

Student retention and throughput

The evaluation will ascertain whether student retention and throughput rates in the programme are monitored, and remedial measures are taken, where necessary.

Quality of programme review

An important measure to ensure quality provision is regular programme reviews in the form of surveys, impact studies, student evaluations or other related activities. The evaluation will assess whether any efforts have been undertaken in this regard and improvements or adjustments made as a result of these processes.

International comparability

The fourth set of questions of the evaluation will look into international influences and comparability issues, i.e. how the QA systems compare with emerging International teacher education practices.

4. Methodology

You will carry out the assignment by an initial document review. This will entail scrutinising existing laws and regulations, policies/strategies, guiding documents including curriculum, statistics. It will also entail selected interviews with key stakeholders such as administrative staff, lecturers/supervisors, and students at relevant institutions.

5. Time Frame

A Report and a policy brief should be submitted by 10 October 2015. No extension will be granted.

Note: STUDENTS WILLL BE ALLOWED TO CHOOSE ALTERNATIVE TOPICS FOR THIS PAPER IN CONSULTATION WITH THE COURSE PRESENTER