Good Practices in Quality Assurance

Name of the Institution: Mauritius Institute of Education

The Mauritius Institute of Education has, over the years, set up structures and put in place procedures in a bid to improve the quality of the work produced in relation to the three axes of its mandate, namely teacher education, curriculum development and research. Below are the measures that have been identified as examples of good practice by the last Quality Audit held in 2013.

1.

Title of good practice   Setting up of the Research Unit and the MIE's commitment to build its research profile
Purposes served by or objectives of the good practice   To harmonise institutional research efforts
The context   At the outset, a Research Policy has been developed. This offers strategic directions to Academic Staff undertaking research projects. Within this perspective, a Project Proposal Template (PPT) had been conceptualised and has now been revised to encapsulate an implementation component. The PPT ensures that research standards are achieved with respect to quality, scope and significance. In line with good practices in the conduct of research, an Academic Staff Integrity Policy on Plagiarism has also been developed.
Description of the good practice   Since its inception, the Research Unit, headed by a Professor, has mobilised resources and has undertaken and promoted a wide range of research projects in the field of education, for example, under-achievement of students in mathematics at lower secondary level, project-based learning, use of technology in teaching and learning, teacher professional development, violence and indiscipline in primary schools, transitions from secondary to tertiary and teacher training, etc.   To facilitate Staff engagement in research, the Research Unit has now the possibility to offer Staff the support of Research Assistants and the NVivo software to carry out qualitative data analysis.   Some future orientations of the Research Unit relate to the development of a policy on research ethics and, subsequently, the setting up of a Research Ethics Committee; the organisation of the research week which includes an item on Rector-Teacher-Student voice; collaborative endeavours on research with local universities; capacity building for writing and

the publication of articles in international peer-reviewed journals/books and hosting of an international conference.

Evidence of success/evaluation and impact

Since 2015 to date, 10 research projects, amounting to about 2 million rupees, have been undertaken. A bi-annual call for research proposals has been established and this is a clear indication of the commitment of the MIE to research activities. In addition, to link theory with practice, Staff, with the support of the Research Unit, are engaged in evidence-based empirical research. The outcomes of the research study will appear in an educational monograph. In addition, research articles and chapters in books have been published at international level.
The MIE Journal (peer-reviewed) has now taken a global dimension with the appointment of an international Editor-in-Chief. For this current issue, in a promising start, submissions from the U.K, Portugal and Mauritius have been received.

Key features ensuring success

A Research Strategic Plan, in line with the MIE Strategic Plan was conceptualised. It outlines the pathway to inculcate a culture of collaborative research among Academic Staff. Regular capacity- building seminars and workshops are organised during research week in collaboration with external resource persons.

2.

Title of good practice

Building academic ambiance by providing academic arenas and encouraging staff to pursue higher degrees

Purposes served by or objectives of the good practice

To build capacity of staff by developing expertise in specific domains as a means to meet future challenges

The context

The MIE had to identity priority areas in which it would encourage staff to pursue higher degrees.

Description of the good practice

The MIE has always encouraged its staff to pursue their studies and keep abreast with latest developments in the field of education. As a means to facilitate the endeavours of staff, the institution has established partnerships with many international universities. The two major links are with the University of Brighton, UK and the University of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa.

At present, the profile of the academic staff at the institution is as follows:

Highest Qualification	Number of staff
Ph. D / Ed. D	29
M. Phil	2
Master	69
Bachelor	2

In line with Government policy to develop the Special Education sector, the MIE has led the way by first developing expertise in this area. As such, the institution has offered a Post Graduate Diploma in Inclusive and Special Education, which was mounted and run by experts from India and Germany.

The academic ambience is created and sustained through other types of capacity building activities. Consequently in-house seminars have become a regular feature of academic life at the institute. A post-graduate conference is also organised yearly, in collaboration with the University of Brighton. Other seminars and conferences are also organised and have served to provide staff with platforms to present their research work and to engage with that of colleagues in a most collegial atmosphere.

Evidence of success/evaluation and impact

31 academic members of the institution are currently enrolled on a doctorate programme.

So far, 20 academic staff have successfully completed the Post Graduate Diploma in Inclusive and Special Education course.

Partnerships with international institutions also give rise to capacity building opportunities for staff members. Indeed, a growing number of academic staff are involved in servicing modules on the MA in Education, offered jointly with University of Brighton. Staff are also gradually taking the lead in dissertation supervision for this programme. As for the doctoral programmes, some of the MIE staff are currently acting as joint supervisors, while others are shadowing their colleagues so that they can gradually further develop their supervisory skills.

Key features ensuring success

In order to support the above initiative, the MIE is offering a Ph. D. and an Ed. D. in collaboration with the two partner universities aforementioned. The staff are provided with

financial support through the institution's Staff Development Policy scheme to further assist them as they embrace with continuous professional development.

3.

Title of good practice

Strengthening Quality Assurance through appointments and introduction of institution-wide mechanisms toassess quality of teaching

Purposes served by or objectives of the good practice

The purpose of the Quality Assurance Division is to ensure and maintain the quality of the services offered by the institution, with particular focus on the quality of teaching.

The context

The core team of the Quality AssuranceDivision has been consolidated, with the nomination of a second Assistant Quality Assurance Coordinator. This initiative was meant to empower the team in a bid to ensure the quality of a wider range of services offered by the institution.

Description of the good practice

A Quality Assurance Steering Committee has been set up comprising the following:
- Director (Chairperson)
- All Heads of School and Centres
- Head, Research Unit
- Head, Curriculum and Textbook Development
- Quality Assurance Coordinator
- Head, Higher Education Cell
- Registrar
- Deputy Registrar

The Quality Assurance Division is committed to ascertain the quality of teaching across the institution. This consists of data collection, analysis and feedback through the Student Feedback Questionnaires on modules taught during each semester and the Lecturer Feedback Questionnaire to obtain views of Lecturers on the modules for which SFQs were administered.
- The Student Feedback Questionnaires are analysed and a report is sent to the tutor concerned, the Head of School and the Director.
- The tutor is expected to analyse the report and submit his/her feedback through the Head of School to the Quality Assurance Division regarding the corrective measures to be taken.
- Reports are then sent to the appropriate person (Programme Coordinator, Registrar, Librarian etc.) for appropriate actions.
- Focus Group Discussions are also carried out to collect information from the students.

Reports are then submitted to the Programme Coordinator and Directorate for appropriate actions.
- Programme Evaluation: A team dedicated to conduct the evaluation of Teacher Education Programmes has been set up. The evaluations of programmes are being conducted in a systematic and rigorous way, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Reports are used for the review of the programmes.
- An Employer Feedback Questionnaire has also been designed to obtain feedback from the Employers concerning the performance of teachers who have already completed courses at the MIE. This will help us to find out to what extent changes are happening at the level of the school and in the classroom. A first pilot testing has already been conducted in Rodrigues. Data is expected shortly.
- QAD intends to extend its mission of ascertaining quality in other areas, including Administration, Curriculum Development and Educational Research. Appropriate tools have been developed for that purpose and have been submitted for approval at the Steering Committee level.
QAD also envisages to provide feedback to the students to ensure 'closing the loop'.

Evidence of success/evaluation and impact

With a more systematic mechanism in place, two programmes have already been evaluated, namely Bachelor in Education(PT and FT) and Teacher's Diploma Secondary(PT and FT). The findings and recommendations of these evaluation reports will be ploughed back in the review of the programmes, which have already been initiated.

Key features ensuring success

Resources have been allocated for the recruitment of staff to further empower the Quality Assurance Division. A System Analyst has been hired to assist in the development and monitoring of the online SFQ.

4.

Title of good practice

Enabling development of academic staff through funding of engagement in recognised scholarly activities

Purposes served by or objectives of the good practice

To ensure continuous professional development as a means to equip staff to meet the requirements of the mandate of the institution, namely teacher education, curriculum development and educational research

The context

The eligibility criteria and the amount of funding for various scholarly endeavours have had to be updated in view of the changing profile of staff, especially over the last couple of years, and also in a bid to meet the emerging needs of the institution and of the nation.

Description of the good practice

The MIE has a strong Staff Development Policy whereby staff (academic and non-academic) are supported to pursue further studies in their relevant fields and/or to present papers in national and international conferences. Staff are encouraged to share their experiences with other colleagues in regular In-house Seminars for capacity building purposes.

Evidence of success/evaluation and impact

Staff Development 2015 – 2016

	Academic		Non-academic	
	2015	**2016**	**2015**	**2016**
No. of Staff benefitted from Staff Development – Short Courses/Conferences/Seminars/Ph.D.	**21**	**27**	**10**	**23**

5.

Title of good practice

Striving for excellence and innovation in curriculum development projects undertaken for the parent Ministry

Purposes served by or objectives of the good practice

To assist government policy in curricular reforms by engaging in (i) curriculum shaping, (ii) curriculum writing, and (iii) preparation for implementation.

The context

In order to coordinate nation-wide curriculum projects, a Curriculum Unit, headed by a Professor, has been set up at the MIE. It is deemed to facilitate the work of the different panels working towards the development of curricular materials for Grades 1 to 9. This Unit is also responsible for the training of different stakeholders regarding the new NCF and the curriculum materials.

Description of the good practice

The MIE has assisted the Ministry of Education to materialise the nine-year schooling project. The institution has developed the National Curriculum Framework for the Nine-Year Continuous Basic Education, both for Grades 1-6 and Grades 7-9. It has also worked out the Teaching and Learning Syllabus for the different subject areas.

Since curriculum development is now a core function of MIE, besides teacher education, there is a strong need for this role to be embedded in its organisational structure. The MIE is therefore currently formalising a new model with clearly defined functions and processes for curriculum development in line with what already exists for teacher education.

Evidence of success/evaluation and impact

The curricular documents and textbooks produced as well as the different capacity-building workshops organised for teachers account for the work successfully completed.

So far, the NCF NYCBS, NCF Grades 1-6, NCF Grades 7-9, the Teaching & Learning Syllabus for each subject area (mainstream and extended programme), as well as textbooks from Grades 1 to 7 have been produced.

Key features ensuring success

Different teams have been set up to ensure various levels of gate-keeping that would guarantee that a high quality work is produced. Some of the teams are:
- The curriculum materials writing panels
- Internal validation team
- Internal validation team
- The editing and vetting team

It important to note that the various teams comprised practicing teachers as well as inspectors.

The MIE also ensured that a number of consultative meetings were held with different stakeholders to gather their views and to validate the materials produced.

Further information

Contact person's details:

Name	Dr Hemant Bessoondyal
Position	Associate Professor, Quality Assurance Coordinator
Work Phone	401 6555 (Ext. 510)
Email	h.bessoondyal@mieonline.org