

Research Application Summary

**On Regional University integration: Same degree, different Universities**

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**Abstract**

An International Standardisation procedure for degrees at Universities is proposed. Known and agreed standards for all Certificates, Diplomas, Bachelors, Master and PhD qualifications will guide future education in Universities and institutions of learning. The emergence of Universities and variation in performance of graduates from different Universities has called for minimum standards from employers and other stakeholders for all graduates. Universities are now partly known to produce theoretical graduates not matching the expectations of employers. Functionality of Universities based on agreed standards will build trust in Universities and promote regional cooperation and mobility. Curriculum development has been initiated and controlled within departments and regulated by Higher Education Bodies, in future curricula will be co-developed and regulated regionally. Adoption of uniform standards will provide a unified Education system which is accepted regionally. Competence based education across Universities has been proposed among Universities. Producing competent and skilled graduates ready to create jobs and accepted for employment is feasible. Increased trust in University Education System by the employers and allowing graduates to receive regionally accepted transcripts and certificates is promoted. Possibility for moving across Universities, training, co-supervision and sharing resources will develop many Universities. Professional integration and partnerships across Universities and countries are encouraged.

Key words: Competence, degrees, education, integration, interuniversity, standardization

**Résumé**

Une procédure internationale de standardisation pour les diplômes universitaires est proposée. Des normes connues et convenues pour tous les certificats, diplômes, licences, masters et doctorats guideront la formation future dans les universités et établissements d'enseignement. L'émergence des universités et la variation des performances des diplômés de différentes universités ont appelé à des normes minimales de la part des employeurs et d'autres parties prenantes pour tous les diplômés. Les universités produisent en partie des diplômés théoriques qui ne correspondent pas aux attentes des employeurs. La fonctionnalité des universités basée sur des normes convenues renforcera la confiance dans les universités et favorisera la coopération et la mobilité régionales. L'élaboration des programmes a été initiée et contrôlée au sein des départements et réglementée par les organismes d'enseignement supérieur ; à l'avenir les programmes seront co-développés et réglementés au niveau régional. L'adoption de normes uniformes fournira un système éducatif unifié qui sera accepté au niveau régional. Une formation basée sur les compétences dans les universités a été proposée. Il est

possible de produire des diplômés compétents et qualifiés prêts à créer des emplois et être acceptés à l'emploi. La confiance accrue des employeurs dans le système d'enseignement universitaire et la possibilité pour les diplômés de détenir des relevés de notes et des certificats acceptés au niveau régional sont encouragées. La possibilité de se déplacer entre les universités, la formation, la co-supervision et le partage des ressources développeront de nombreuses universités. L'intégration professionnelle et les partenariats entre les universités et pays sont encouragés.

Mots clés: Compétence, diplômes, formation, intégration, inter-universités, normalisation

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## Introduction

Universities for long have worked as independent institutions producing graduates for a common pool. The independent behavior of Universities have caused problems of unemployment, limited university impact, low ranking levels, duplication and over splitting of programmes. Employees sometimes are at crossroads on which caliber of graduate to employ and from which University. Stocking laboratories for research is expensive which is a key component in training at Universities. Equipping laboratories in strategically located Universities as centers for training and research has potential for strengthening research and collaboration. Resource sharing and reduction in unit cost of training will be possible. The convergence towards a common end necessitates Universities to adopt an agreed process to produce a standard graduate. According to ISO, a standard is a document established by consensus and approved by a recognized body that provides for common and repeated use of rules, aimed at achieving the optimum degree of order in a given context (ISO, 2014). Quality of degrees across Universities within professions is necessary. Quality in the context of education is defined as "fitness for purpose" (NCHE, 2014). Advancements in technology has enhanced the process through ODL platforms (Semradova, 2011). Crossing from several Universities will be feasible. ISO has already found its way in Universities and interuniversity integrations are already existing (Poulava and Simonova, 2015). The article relies on competence based education which considers and trains learners based on knowledge, skills and attitudes. The strength of education system depends on relevant curriculum development and quality training process. The application of e-learning transcends gender disparities (Cuadrado-García *et al.*, 2010), an opportunity for future learning across Universities.

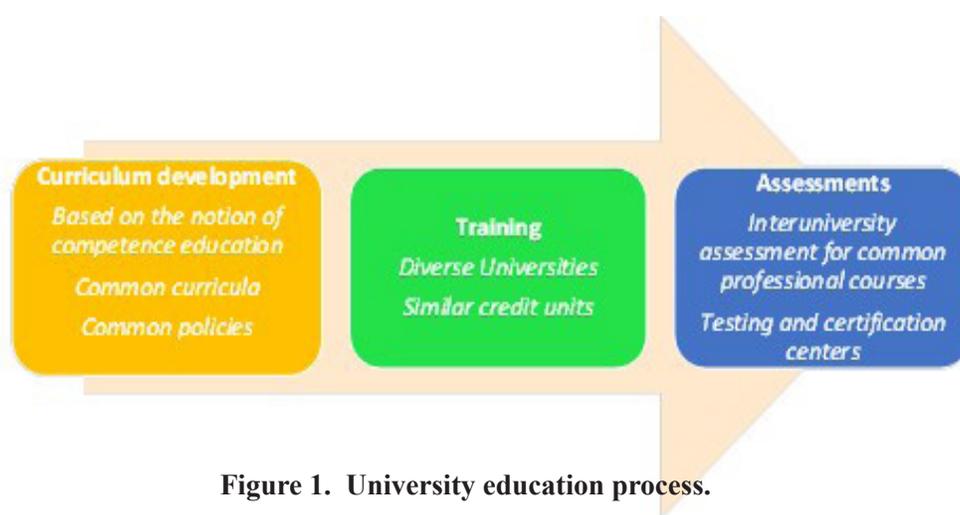
## Approach

The article proposes a unified regional education system. The idea complements Regional integrations. We envisage transboundary skill transfer and the standardization process which solves the problem of unemployment. Credibility of Universities will increase, with shifts in many University rankings. University education has been guided by degree curricula, starting from common curricula across Universities sets degrees on the same course across universities and countries.

**Policy perspective.** Specific policies guides the process of interuniversity integration. Policies on curriculum development and minimum graduation load, credit transfer, policy on assessments and certification are among the policies that supports the process of interuniversity education.

**Table 1. Parameters for Interuniversity integration**

Parameter	Descriptors
University admission dates and opening of academic years	Dates, University calendars
Harmonized Curriculum	Course units
Common profession courses within the curriculum	Unified curriculum
Related assessments	Assessments
Unified grading systems	Degree classes
Online Distance Learning Platforms	ODL
Interuniversity Examinations for Professional courses	Common professional courses
Development of testing centers and bodies	Testing centers
Credit transfer policy for Undergraduate and graduate programmes	Credit transfer
Agreed graduation loads	Graduation load

**Figure 1. University education process.****Discussion**

Transboundary variation in Education systems for pre-university levels with varying assessments where equivalents are not well established, objectives of Private and Government Universities, profits versus public service, unclear linkages between Vocational Colleges and Universities preventing transitions into Universities will challenge the process of integration. These issues need harmonization. The struggle for Universities to be on the top of the list of excellent Universities is a challenge to integration forgetting that we are serving common clients and stakeholders. Though a University reserves the right to be autonomous, it should be agreed that we provide graduates for a common field. Unifying our university Education system will reduce the levels of unemployment where graduates for long have been labelled as unskilled.

**Conclusion**

We forecast an increased level of integration among universities. Already the process of integration has started with policies on credit transfers, collaborative training and research and connected projects. Unified education will boost University rankings, increase impact, produce innovative and employee graduates and reduce the cost of training students at post graduate training.

### **Acknowledgement**

This paper is a contribution to the 6th African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference held in October 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya.

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