INTRODUCTION

NUC Act CAP N81 Law of the Federation of Nigeria and Education (National Minimum Standard and Establishment of Institution) Act CAP E3 Law of the Federation of Nigeria 2004, empowers the National Universities Commission to lay down minimum standards for the Universities in the Federation and to accredit their degrees and other academic awards after obtaining prior approval through the Honourable Minister of Education from the President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces; provided that the accreditation of degree and other academic awards shall be in accordance with such guidelines as may be laid down and approved by the Commission from time to time.

In its bid to comply with the provisions of the Act, the National Universities Commission through the use of experts from the universities developed the Minimum Academic Standards (MAS) in respect of 13 disciplines taught in Nigerian Universities in 1989. The disciplines include: Administration, Agriculture, Arts, Education, Engineering and Technology, Environmental Sciences, Law, Medicine and Dentistry, Management Sciences, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Sciences, Social Sciences and Veterinary Medicine. Later on Minimum Academic Standards were developed for additional programmes.

The development of the Minimum Academic Standards and their subsequent approval provide the basis for the accreditation of all degree programmes taught in Nigerian universities as they serve as reference documents for the accreditation of programmes in the Nigerian University System. In 2004, the Commission employing the services of professors in Nigerian universities embarked on the review of the MAS documents. The exercise culminated in the Benchmarks Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) for the disciplines in the Nigerian University System.

The development of the Minimum Academic Standards led to the production of the following instruments of accreditation:

i. Manual for accreditation procedures for academic programmes in Nigerian universities;
ii. Self-Study form (NUC/SSF)
iii. Programme Evaluation Form (NUC/PEF)
iv. Accreditation Panel Report Form (NUC/APRF)
v. Accreditation Re-visitation Form (NUC/ARVF)

This publication is the Manual of Accreditation Procedures for Academic Programmes in Nigerian Universities and enclosed within are the Forms required for the Exercise.

It is important to urge the Universities to study the Manual and the relevant Benchmarks Minimum Academic Standard documents to get themselves adequately prepared for the Accreditation Panels. It is my hope that this Manual and the BMAS would contribute immensely to upgrading and maintaining the quality of University education in Nigeria. To do this, all hands must be on deck and the National Universities Commission expects no less from all academic staff as well as University administrators.

Professor Julius A. Okojie  
Executive Secretary  
October, 2012
1.0 LEGAL BASIS FOR ACCREDITATION

"lay down minimum standards for all universities in the Federation and to accredit their degrees and other academic awards after obtaining prior approval therefore through the Minister from the President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces; provided that the accreditation of degrees and other academic awards shall be in accordance with such guidelines as may be laid down and approved by the Commission from time to time”.

2.0 DEFINITION OF ACCREDITATION
Programme accreditation by the National Universities Commission (hereafter referred to as the Commission) means a system of evaluating academic programmes in Nigerian universities as having met the provisions of the minimum academic standards document.

3.0 OBJECTIVES OF ACCREDITATION
The objectives of accreditation of academic programmes in Nigerian Universities are to:
(a) ensure that the provisions of the Benchmarks Minimum Academic Standard documents are attained, maintained and enhanced;

(b) assure employers and other members of the community that Nigerian graduates of all academic programmes have attained an acceptable level of competency in their areas of specialization; and

(c) certify to the international community that the programmes offered in Nigerian universities are of high standards and their graduates are adequate for employment and further studies nationally and internationally.

4.0 THE ACCREDITATION EXERCISE

(a) COVERAGE OF ACCREDITATION EXERCISE
The accreditation exercise shall cover all undergraduate degree programmes being taught in all Nigerian universities.

(b) EXISTING ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES
All existing undergraduate degree programmes in all Nigerian universities shall come under the National Universities Commission Accreditation Exercise.

(c) NEW UNIVERSITIES
The Commission shall advise the Government on the desirability or otherwise of the establishment of new universities after due and thorough consideration of the proposal. The initial accreditation exercise for new universities and new academic
programmes shall commence **three academic sessions** after approval for their establishment has been granted.

(d) **NEW ACADEMIC UNITS/ FACULTIES/ COLLEGES/ SCHOOLS/ DEPARTMENTS/PROGRAMMES**
The Commission shall consider and approve new academic units, departments and programmes after all the laid down guidelines have been complied with bearing in mind national interest and manpower needs.

(e) **STATUS OF ACCREDITATION**
The status of accreditation of an academic programme are as follows:

(i) **FULL ACCREDITATION**
This shall be granted to any degree or academic programme that has satisfied the provision of the Benchmarks Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS). Full Accreditation shall be granted for a period of five (5) years with a mid-term appraisal after three years. After the five years, there shall be a re-accreditation visit.

(ii) **INTERIM ACCREDITATION**
This shall be granted to any degree or academic programme that has minor deficiencies that must be rectified within a stipulated period. Interim Accreditation shall be granted for a period of not more than two years after which the programme would be automatically due for re-visitation.

(iii) **DENIED ACCREDITATION**
Denied Accreditation shall apply to any degree or academic programme which has failed to satisfy the approved Benchmarks Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS). Request for re-visitation for the purpose of Accreditation shall come from the University concerned.

5.0 **IMPLICATIONS OF ACCREDITATION STATUS**
(a) When an Academic Programme has **Denied Accreditation status**, the Commission shall inform the Vice-Chancellor of the University concerned in writing, stating the reasons for denying the programme Accreditation and the steps to be taken to bring the programme up to the Benchmarks Minimum Academic Standards required for Full Accreditation status.

(b) When this decision is communicated to the University, it shall cease to admit students into such a programme with effect from the next admission exercise.

(c) The Commission shall also inform the general public and such relevant bodies as the Joint Admissions and matriculation Board (JAMB), National Youth Service Corps (NYSC), Civil Service Commission, Nigerian Employers Consultative Association (NECA), relevant professional regulatory bodies, National Directorate of
Employment (NDE), and the various Federal and State Scholarship Boards about the Denied Accreditation status of the programme.

(d) Programmes granted Interim Accreditation which fail to rectify the identified deficiencies within the stipulated maximum period of two years shall automatically convert to the status of Denied Accreditation at the end of the period.

(e) During the period of Interim Accreditation, universities may continue to admit students into the programme(s) affected.

(f) Any student that graduates within 2 years after the programme has been granted Interim or Denied Accreditation, should not be denied recognition of his/her certificate.

6.0 APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF ACCREDITATION PANEL

(a) THE AD-HOC ACCREDITATION PANEL
The Commission shall appoint on the recommendation of the Accreditation Committee, an Ad-Hoc Accreditation Panel for each degree programme or discipline or sub-discipline being taught in the Nigerian Universities.

(b) COMPOSITION OF THE AD-HOC ACCREDITATION PANEL
The membership of each Panel shall consist of a Chairman and other persons from the academics, professional associations, regulatory boards or councils, industry and Employers Association of the programme discipline or sub-discipline area to be accredited. In addition, each Panel shall be serviced by a staff of the National Universities Commission Secretariat.

(c) MEMBERS OF THE AD-HOC ACCREDITATION PANEL
The Chairman and the academic members of the Panel shall be experienced Professor of repute in the programme, discipline or sub-discipline area.

(d) BRIEFING OF MEMBERS OF THE AD-HOC ACCREDITATION PANEL
All Chairmen of the Ad-Hoc Accreditation Panels shall be at a briefing-session on the objectives and process of Accreditation of Academic Programmes. The briefing session shall be for one day at a venue to be decided by the National Universities Commission.

(e) BRIEFING OF THE NUC STAFF REPRESENTATIVES
All NUC staff representatives shall be at a briefing session on the objectives and process of Accreditation of Academic programmes.

(f) ACTIVITIES OF THE ACCREDITATION PANEL

(i) The objectives of the Panel’s Visit to the University are:
To determine if the particular programme, discipline or sub-discipline to be accredited in the University has in all respect met the approved Benchmarks Minimum Academic Standards and to confirm or otherwise the statements of
the fact supplied by the University in the completed Self-Study Form (NUC/SSF).

(ii) The Panel shall hold such discussions with officials of the University that would enable each member of the Panel complete the Programme Evaluation Form (NUC/PEF).

(iii) The Panel shall prepare a Statement of Facts Report for discussion with relevant officials of the University on the last day of the visit during the End-of-Visit Interview. The Form should contain the following aspects of the Final Report:

• The philosophy and objectives of the University and how these are being achieved;
• The philosophy and objectives of the programme and if they were being achieved;
• The observations of the individuals or Panel members on each item of the accreditation criteria contained in the Self-Study Form and Programme Evaluation Form;
• The strengths and weaknesses of the Programme/Sub-discipline/Discipline.

(iv) The Statement of Facts Report shall be signed by the members of the Panel and endorsed by the Head of Department/Dean of the Faculty and the Vice-Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor may comment in writing in the space provided in the form for that purpose.

(v) The Panel shall submit an Accreditation Panel Report Form NUC/APRF) to reach the Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission not later than 14 days after the visit.

(vi) The Executive Secretary shall present the Statement of Facts Report and the Accreditation Panel Report Form (NUC/APRF) to the Accreditation Committee which then makes a recommendation on the Accreditation Status of that programme, discipline or sub-discipline to the Commission for approval.

7.0 CONDUCT OF THE ACCREDITATION EXERCISE

(a) NOTIFICATION OF UNIVERSITIES FOR ACCREDITATION

(i) The Commission shall give at least three (3) months notice to the concerned University of an Accreditation visit to the programme, discipline or sub-discipline;

(ii) The Commission shall send at the time of the notice, a Self-Study Form for completion by the University.

(iii) The University shall complete and return within two (2) months twelve copies of the Self-Study Form in respect of each programme, discipline or sub-discipline to be accredited.

(iv) On receipt of the completed Form, the Commission shall constitute an Ad-Hoc Accreditation Panel in accordance with paragraph 6(b) of this Manual and
the date so fixed shall be communicated to the University concerned and to all members of the Panel.

(v) A copy of the completed Self-Study Form (NUC/SSF) and a Programme Evaluation Form (NUC/PEF) shall be given to each member of the Panel on arrival at the institution in which the accreditation exercise is to be carried out.

8.0 CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITING A DEGREE PROGRAMME

(a) PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME TO BE ACCREDITED

There shall be evidence that the Programme to be accredited has clearly defined philosophy and objectives. Panel members will judge the quality of the programme in terms of the effort being made by the University to achieve the stated philosophy and objectives of the programme. The minimum expectation will be compliance with provisions of the NUC approved Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) for the programme.

(b) CURRICULUM

The curriculum of the programme to be accredited should be adequate to prepare practitioners at an appropriate level in the particular field. It should include adequate theoretical knowledge and skills to fulfill the requirements for specific job objectives, and to equip the graduates with adequate communication skills (written and oral) and a sound knowledge of the social, political and economic environment in which the graduate shall live, work and make useful contributions as a citizen.

The Panel will require evidence that the curriculum of the programme to be accredited meets the above requirements. The minimum expectation will be compliance with those provisions of the NUC Benchmarks Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS). In addition, Panel members will ascertain that the general environment in the University indicates that the curriculum requirements are indeed being met. The university will be required to defend such compliance before the Accrediting Panel members with documentary evidence of individual course content, textbooks, students' work, lecture notes and descriptive materials and annual external examiners' reports of final examinations for three years preceding the visit.

(c) TEACHING STAFF, QUANTITY AND QUALITY

Adequacy of the teaching staff in numbers, competence and standard of instruction in all subject areas of the programme will be taken into consideration. The adequacy of the teaching staff determines the adequacy of the programme as the instructional goal and objectives are achieved only to the level of competence and vision of the teaching staff.

The overall competence of the teaching staff may be judged by such factors as:
(i) The level of academic and/or professional training;
(ii) Their cognate teaching experience and professional work;
(iii) The diversity of their background;
(iv) The extent to which they further their own education in relevant programmes that are offered in the College/ School/ Faculty/ Department;
(v) The degree of their participation in professional associations/societies;

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(vi) The existence of a staff development programme for the improvement of the teaching force and curriculum;

(vii) Good working conditions to attract and retain staff of high quality, for example, living accommodation, etc;

(viii) A reasonable teaching load in hours per week, which should not be less than the stipulations in the Benchmarks Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) or unduly heavy.

(d) STUDENT ADMISSION, RETENTION AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The University should have policies on admission, retention, withdrawals, expulsion and graduation of students clearly spelt out in its annual Calendar or Students’ handbook. There shall be evidence that these policies are properly explained and widely publicized for the information of all students either seeking admission or already enrolled in the University. For admission into any of the degree programmes, the minimum qualification expected shall be in line with existing National Policy on Admission to Nigerian Universities. For graduation, candidates should have fulfilled the minimum requirements for the award of a degree which include a satisfactory completion of a minimum practical, core/compulsory and elective courses stipulated in the BMAS.

(c) STANDARDS OF DEGREE EXAMINATION

The University should have rules and regulations governing degree examinations and awards. These rules and regulations should be carefully explained to students on enrolment and widely publicised.

The standard of examinations leading to the award of a degree shall be appropriate for the level of the programme and for adequate coverage of the syllabus.

The sources of information to Panel members, on this matter, will include: degree final examination past question papers, home work problems, coursework, projects and external examiners/moderators’ reports for the three years preceding the visit. Also to be made available to members is a report on students’ supervised industrial experience schemes or teaching practice where applicable.

(f) FINANCIAL SUPPORT

There should be adequate financial support to the University and the department where the programme to be accredited is offered as a measure of the management’s dedication to the philosophy and objectives of the programme, as predictors of continuing quality in education and evidence of programme stability.

(g) PHYSICAL FACILITIES

There shall be adequate physical facilities, classrooms, laboratories, studios, workshops and tools, instruments, machines, equipment, and provisions for updating the physical facilities and for expendable supplies to give students proper learning experiences essential to achieving the educational philosophy and objectives of the programme.
The Accreditation Panel will require evidence that adequate physical facilities exist and that they are being used to educate the students in various aspects of skills or in the techniques of applied design, construction, operation and production processes in technology based programmes, respectively.

(h) ADMINISTRATION OF THE DEPARTMENT
The effect on productivity of sound administrative policy and effective leadership cannot be over-emphasized. A capable staff can be more effective if he performs his function in an atmosphere of good relationship with the administration. Administrators should perform their leadership roles with mutual concern for policies that affect teaching and at the same time support staff and students of the department. The role of the administrator in the department includes selection and supervision of students; teaching and coordination of the activities of other staff members, the operation of the facilities for staff and students, conduct of examinations and interpretation of the department to members of the profession and to the public. There should be evidence to Panel members that, in performing these functions, the administrator seeks advise from the teaching staff, staff committees and other staff where necessary.

(i) EMPLOYERS' RATING OF GRADUATES
As evidence of meeting the philosophy and objectives of the programme, the Accreditation Panel will require a displayed employers’ satisfaction that graduates of the programme are performing well at their various levels of employment. The evidence should be the result of a survey of the graduates’ employers to ascertain that there is rating of satisfactory performance of the graduates in their chosen fields. Where a University has not graduated any student from the programme to be accredited, employers’ rating of the student’s course practical work/projects in the programme may be assessed by Panel members in lieu of employers’ rating of graduates.

9.0 REQUEST FOR RE-VISITATION

(a) A PROGRAMME DENIED ACCREDITATION
A programme which is denied accreditation on first visitation shall be subjected to a full accreditation visitation whenever the University concerned considers the programme ready for accreditation. The request for re-visititation shall come from the University concerned. The University will thereafter be requested to complete and return the Self-Study Form (NUC/SSF) preparatory to the re-visititation.

(b) A PROGRAMME GRANTED INTERIM ACCREDITATION
A University which wishes a programme already granted Interim Accreditation to be re-visited within the stipulated period shall inform the Commission in writing. Upon receipt of such a request, the Commission shall send the Accreditation Re-visititation Form (NUC/ARVF) to the University for completion. The University shall complete and return eight (8) copies of the Form to the Commission, which shall then send, wherever possible, at least two members of the original ad-hoc Panel and servicing staff of the NUC Secretariat to Re-Visit the programme. The purpose of the Re-Visititation exercise is to ascertain if the minor deficiencies identified in an
earlier visitation had been remedied to enhance the quality of the programme. For the Accreditation re-visititation Form, see Appendix G.

APPENDIX A

NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES COMMISSION
GUIDELINES ON THE FORMAT OF THE REPORT
OF THE ACCREDITATION PANEL

Each member of the Panel will be responsible for preparing an initial draft report for the programme or part of the programme which he/she is concerned with. This will then be used to prepare the selection(s) of a Statement of Facts Report (NUC/APRF) concerning his/her areas of responsibility. The Statement of Facts Report shall be signed by the Vice-Chancellor and all the Panel members. The Panel shall then submit the Statement of Facts Report to the Executive Secretary of the National Universities Commission through the NUC Representative before departure from the host University. The report shall following the headings listed in the Criteria for Accrediting a Programme, thus:

- The philosophy and objectives of the University;
- The philosophy and objectives of the programme to be accredited;
- The control and administration of the University; Finance;
- Adequacy of teaching staff in quality and quantity;
- The students’ selection, admission, retention, probation, expulsion and graduation;
- The programme of study:
  (a) The curriculum of the programme to be accredited;
  (b) Examination, projects, coursework, external moderation, etc.
- The physical facilities, teaching, library, etc.;
- Employers’ rating of graduates of programmes to be accredited.
- Summary of general observations.
APPENDIX B

NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES COMMISSION
A SUMMARY OF THE UNIVERSITIES’ RESPONSIBILITIES
BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE ACCREDITATION VISIT

BEFORE THE VISIT
The University shall receive and complete Self-Study Forms (Form NUC/SSF) and return same to
the Executive Secretary, National Universities Commission, P.M.B. 237 Garki GPO, ABUJA,
Nigeria. The university shall confirm suitability of the scheduled dates of accreditation visits.

DURING THE VISIT
Panel members must be allowed:
(a) Access to the various teaching and other support facilities, e.g. library, laboratories,
workshops, classes in session, etc.;
(b) To interview staff, academic and administrative and students of the
Faculty/Department where the programme to be accredited is offered.

The University shall render any assistance the Panel members may require to facilitate their work
during the period. The End-of-Visit Interview should be attended by the Vice-Chancellor, the Dean
of Faculty, the relevant Head of Department where the programme to be accredited is offered and
key teaching staff who have responsibility for various aspects of the programme, sub-discipline or
discipline.

AFTER THE VISIT
The Commission shall inform the University of the Accreditation status granted to the programme
and it will be the responsibility of the University to address the issues raised therein.
APPENDIX C

NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES COMMISSION
THE NUC REPRESENTATIVE ON THE AD-HOC ACCREDITATION PANEL

As it is necessary for the Accreditation Panel's report to be consistent, the NUC will assign a representative (a staff) to each programme accreditation panel. The representative shall be present at Accreditation Committee meetings when the report is evaluated. The responsibility of the NUC representative on the Accreditation Panel is:

- To arrange for accommodation, feeding and transport of Panel members;
- To assist the Chairman or any other member of the Panel in their enquiries to facilitate the Panel's functions;
- To provide guidance to the Panel in relation to the Commission's priorities during the visit;
- To serve as an information source on the interpretation of the Commission's accreditation criteria and policies;
- To be responsible for the analysis of the Accreditation Panel Report Form (NUC/APRF) at the end of the accreditation exercise;
- To ensure that Panel members' claims are properly settled;
- To see that the report is adequately completed and submitted on time to the Executive Secretary, NUC within twenty-four hours of the staff's return to the NUC Secretariat.