ENHANCING QUALITY OF MODULES

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OUM has been operating since 2001. Over the last seven years or so, we have grown from just four programmes to 61. From just 753, our learner population has increased to more than 80,000 today. Our tutor pool, which began with just a handful of tutors, now has almost 9,000. As I look back at these figures and what we have achieved as an educational institution, I feel honoured to have been a part of the journey.

That said, I believe now is the time for some retrospection. Now is the time for us to change what needs changing and make the necessary improvements to our operations. It is with this in mind that I would like to discuss the topic of modules and what needs to be done to make them, and ultimately OUM, better.

With 61 programmes currently on offer, the number of courses has grown to almost 400, with one module for each course. Modules are commissioned to and written by academics and professionals from various backgrounds and institutions throughout the country.

They are then returned to OUM to be moderated, edited and enhanced before finally going into print. This is not an easy task, particularly for a young institution like OUM.

Every step of the way requires some form of monitoring; experience has taught us that it is easy to overlook details that might yield severe consequences. With such a large number of modules that must be produced every cycle, the room for improvement is always ample.

Based on the feedback we have received from both learners and tutors, there is a certain percentage of modules which are of questionable quality in terms of content, language, accuracy, currency and et cetera. Now that we are in our eighth year, I believe that it is high time for OUM to properly address these issues. We need the modules to be up to date, relevant and error-free. After all, modules are the cornerstone of the teaching and learning process at OUM.

Working adults, who make up the majority of OUM learners, rely greatly on modules when they study on their own and at their own pace. After excellent tutors and a conducive learning environment, modules are the third component which make the most impact on learners.

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We have made it a point to put in place specific strategies that are designed to improve and enhance the modules. Using the feedback we receive as a backbone, these strategies include:

1. Leveraging on lead tutors and experienced tutors to provide their expertise in module writing and moderation. We will also seek input from tutors regarding errors and other concerns regarding content. As such, we will implement a mechanism (via a designated e-mail or website) whereby tutors can submit their opinions and make suggestions regarding module quality. A selected team will look into the feedback and implement the suggestions where appropriate.

2. Setting up a proper editorial unit with adequate manpower to edit and proofread all modules to ensure that they are grammatically sound and error-free.

With the current number of modules, I would like to reiterate that this is a gradual process. We will be giving careful attention to each and every module and hope to make this a continuous and steady exercise. Throughout the entire process, we appreciate and encourage the involvement of our tutors.

I hope all OUM academic staff and tutors will acknowledge that the quality of our modules is a reflection of the quality of OUM as a whole. Surely we will want to produce the very best modules in order to reflect the very best within ourselves and what we do. Quality education must begin here and I hope with your support, this is not something that is out of reach for OUM. **TCX**