



## LEADERSHIP STRATEGY FOR IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA THROUGH QUALITY ASSURANCE MEASURES

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### ABSTRACT

The paper examined leadership strategy for improving teaching and learning in universities in Nigeria through quality assurance measures. Quality assurance is the extent to which the standards and value of educational inputs are reflected in the outputs achieved. It involves establishing attainable standards for instructional delivery and organizing teaching and learning activities in ways that ensure the achievement of educational objectives. In this sense, quality assurance is a systematic process through which service delivery and educational outcomes are evaluated and compared with expected standards. The paper in focus also x-rayed appropriate policy implementation, regular staff training, effective use of technological tools and devices, curriculum alignment, among others that are needed for improving teaching and learning in universities. This stems from the fact that our society expects so much from university education which of course is entrusted with the responsibility to ensure that societal needs reflect in the curriculum of university education. This can be achieved through quality assurance because it has become indispensable measure to drive home societal demands. The paper concluded that application of quality assurance measures as a leadership strategy improves teaching and learning in universities in Nigeria. Thus, the paper suggested that university management should always ensure the appropriate implementation of university policies for onward improvement in teaching and learning in universities in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Quality Assurance, Curriculum Alignment, Training, University Policy Implementation.

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## INTRODUCTION

The 21st century has ushered in unprecedented demands for accountability, transparency, and excellence in higher education globally. Universities, as apex institutions of learning, bear the profound responsibility of producing high-level manpower, generating knowledge through research, and providing community service that drives national development. In Nigeria, university education is perceived as a critical pathway to technological advancement, economic prosperity, and social transformation. However, concerns about declining educational standards, graduate unemployment, and global competitiveness have intensified the focus on quality assurance mechanisms within the university system (Ikediugwu, 2015)

Quality assurance in higher education encompasses the policies, processes, and actions through which academic standards are maintained and enhanced (Puerta-Guardo et al., 2026). It represents a fundamental shift from mere quality control which focuses on inspecting outputs, to a comprehensive approach that embeds quality consciousness throughout institutional culture and practice. The National Universities Commission (NUC), as the regulatory body for Nigerian universities, has established accreditation processes, benchmark minimum academic standards, and quality assurance frameworks designed to ensure that universities deliver education that meets national and international expectations.

Quality assurance is strengthened when stakeholders are actively engaged in quality processes. Students should participate in quality committees, contribute to programme reviews, and provide regular feedback on their learning experiences. Employers should serve on advisory boards, contribute to curriculum development, and provide input on graduate competencies (Onyeonoru & Abiodun, 2023).

Quality assurance in schools require adequate infrastructure: classrooms, laboratories, libraries, ICT facilities, and student accommodation. Many Nigerian universities face significant infrastructural deficits that compromise educational quality. Large class sizes, inadequate laboratory equipment, limited library resources, and unreliable internet connectivity are common complaints. Aluko et al. (2025) recognized significant infrastructural deficits as a barrier to digital transformation in Nigerian higher education. Without reliable electricity, internet connectivity, and computing facilities, efforts to integrate technology into teaching and learning are severely constrained. Infrastructure challenges extend beyond physical facilities to include maintenance. Even where infrastructure exists, inadequate maintenance leads to deterioration and eventual failure. Quality assurance must address not only initial infrastructure provision but also ongoing maintenance and renewal.

Berkat (2026) identified effective multi-stakeholder engagement, involving faculty, students, and staff, as crucial for success in IQA. This engagement should be genuine, not tokenistic, and should influence decision-making. Partnerships with other institutions, both within Nigeria and internationally, can also strengthen quality assurance. Benchmarking against peer institutions, participating in collaborative quality initiatives, and learning from institutions with mature quality systems can accelerate quality improvement. Despite these regulatory mechanisms, Nigerian universities continue to face significant challenges that undermine teaching and learning quality. These include inadequate funding, deteriorating infrastructure, brain drain, outdated curricula, limited integration of technology, and weak governance structures (Ukeje et al. 2024). The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) in the National Policy on Education emphasized that education is an instrument for national development, yet the gap between policy intentions and implementation realities remains substantial.

As Nwabueze (2026) observed, Nigerian universities require radical transformation to improve the quality and effectiveness of education in order to meet the diversified demands for human resources. The application of quality assurance measures as a leadership strategy offers a promising pathway for addressing these challenges. Obunadike and Uzoechina (2015) opined that leadership and institutional, faculty, and departmental levels plays a pivotal role in creating a quality culture, mobilising resources, engaging stakeholders, and driving continuous improvement. When university leaders prioritise quality assurance, they signal that excellence is not negotiable and that every member of the academic community has a responsibility for maintaining standards.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Total Quality Management (TQM) Theory**

Total Quality Management, associated with the work of W. Edwards Deming, Joseph Juran, and Philip Crosby, is a management philosophy that emphasises continuous improvement, customer focus, employee involvement, and process orientation. TQM posits that quality is not achieved through inspection of outputs but through the design of systems and processes that consistently produce quality outcomes.

Applying TQM to university education suggests that teaching and learning quality depends on the systematic design and management of educational processes: curriculum development, instructional design, assessment practices, faculty development, and student support. Quality assurance becomes not an external imposition but an internally driven commitment to continuous improvement.

The Quality Improvement Framework, as discussed by Nwabueze (2026), aligns with TQM principles: Quality improvement is concerned with comparing the quality of what is about to be produced with the quality of what has been produced in the past. Quality improvement is therefore, primarily concerned with self rather than with others. This internal focus is essential for sustainable quality assurance.

TQM also emphasises the importance of data for decision-making. Universities must collect and analyse data on student learning outcomes, graduate employment, stakeholder satisfaction, and other indicators to identify areas for improvement and track progress over time.

### **Institutional Theory**

Institutional Theory, associated with the work of scholars such as Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell, explains how organisations are influenced by their institutional environments, including regulatory frameworks, normative expectations, and cognitive-cultural elements. Organisations adopt certain structures and practices not necessarily because they are efficient but because they confer legitimacy.

In the context of Nigerian universities, Institutional Theory helps explain the influence of regulatory bodies such as the National Universities Commission, professional accreditation bodies, and international rankings on quality assurance practices. Universities adopt quality assurance mechanisms partly in response to coercive pressures (accreditation requirements), normative pressures (professional standards), and mimetic pressures (imitating successful institutions).

However, Institutional Theory also warns of the risk of decoupling, wherein organisations adopt formal structures to satisfy external expectations without changing internal practices. Effective quality assurance requires moving beyond ceremonial compliance to substantive engagement with quality improvement. As Bexheti (2026) noted, institutions are shifting from Quality Control (QC) to Quality Enhancement (QE), suggesting a move from external compliance to internal commitment.

## **CONCEPTUAL REVIEW**

### **Quality Assurance in Higher Education**

Quality assurance is a multidimensional concept that has evolved significantly in higher education discourse. According to Ofem et al. (2024), quality assurance refers to "the extent to which the standards and value of educational inputs are reflected in the outputs achieved. This definition emphasises the relationship between resources invested in education and the outcomes realised, suggesting that quality assurance involves monitoring and enhancing this connection.

Lawani (2025) described quality assurance as a fundamental aspect of higher education, ensuring that academic institutions maintain high standards in teaching, research, and administration. This conceptualisation positions quality assurance as integral to all institutional functions, not merely an add-on or compliance exercise. It encompasses the establishment of standards, the design of processes to meet those standards, and the evaluation of outcomes against predetermined criteria.

Bexheti (2026) distinguished between quality control and quality enhancement, noting that progressive institutions are shifting from compliance-oriented approaches to improvement-focused strategies. Quality control involves checking outputs against standards, while quality enhancement emphasises continuous improvement, stakeholder engagement, and institutional learning. This distinction is crucial for Nigerian universities seeking to move beyond accreditation-focused quality assurance to embedded quality cultures. Berkat (2026) synthesised literature on internal quality assurance (IQA) and stakeholder engagement, finding that IQA is increasingly conceptualised as an autonomous, improvement-focused system that promotes a quality culture through diverse models. This finding has particular relevance for Nigerian universities, suggesting that externally imposed quality requirements must be complemented by internally driven commitment to excellence.

### **Leadership in University Environment**

Leadership in universities differs from leadership in corporate organisations due to the unique characteristics of academic institutions: collegial governance, professional autonomy of faculty, multiple stakeholder expectations, and the complexity of academic work. Effective university leadership requires the ability to influence without hierarchical authority, build consensus around shared goals, and create conditions that enable academic staff to perform at their best.

Nwabueze (2026) highlighted that change can be managed in Nigerian universities through the provision of transformational and informed leadership system in the universities, informed planning and management of resources. Transformational leadership, which involves inspiring and motivating others to transcend self-interest for collective goals, is particularly relevant for quality assurance. Leaders who articulate a compelling vision for quality, model commitment to excellence, and empower others to contribute to quality improvement can create momentum for change. Distributed leadership, wherein leadership responsibilities are shared

among administrators, faculty, and even students, aligns well with quality assurance imperatives. Quality cannot be the responsibility of a single office or individual; it must be embedded in the practices of all who contribute to teaching and learning. University leaders therefore have the responsibility of creating structures and cultures that enable distributed leadership for quality.

### **Teaching and Learning Quality in Universities**

Teaching and learning quality in universities encompasses multiple dimensions: curriculum relevance and rigour, pedagogical effectiveness, assessment practices, learning resources and environments, and student support services. Quality teaching involves not only the transmission of disciplinary knowledge but also the development of critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, communication skills, and lifelong learning dispositions. In the Nigerian context, concerns about teaching and learning quality often centre on large class sizes, inadequate facilities, limited access to current learning resources, and pedagogical approaches that may not sufficiently engage students or develop higher-order thinking skills. Addressing these challenges requires systematic attention to all aspects of the teaching-learning process, informed by quality assurance principles.

Aluko et al. (2025) noted that higher education institutions are critical to national development, providing the skilled human capital necessary for economic growth, governance, and technological innovation. This recognition underscores the importance of teaching and learning quality, as the human capital produced by universities directly impacts Nigeria's developmental prospects (Oginni et al., 2015).

### **Leadership Strategy for Quality Assurance**

A leadership strategy for quality assurance involves intentional, systematic actions by institutional leaders to embed quality throughout university operations. This includes establishing clear quality policies and goals, allocating resources for quality improvement, building capacity for quality assurance among staff, engaging stakeholders in quality processes, and using quality data for decision-making and continuous improvement.

Lawani (2025) argued that effective administration serves as a critical instrument for implementing quality assurance processes, encompassing policy formulation, resource management, curriculum development, and institutional monitoring. This perspective positions leadership not as a distant oversight function but as active engagement with the processes that determine quality. The integration of quality assurance into strategic planning is essential. Universities must articulate quality goals, develop plans for achieving them, allocate resources accordingly, and monitor progress. Without such strategic alignment, quality assurance becomes fragmented and reactive rather than coherent and proactive.

## **VITAL REASONS FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES**

### **Societal Expectations and University Education**

Nigerian society holds high expectations for university education. Parents invest scarce resources in their children's education, expecting that graduates will secure meaningful employment and contribute to family well-being. Employers expect universities to produce graduates with

relevant knowledge, skills, and work attitudes. Government expects universities to generate the high-level manpower needed for national development and to provide research that addresses societal challenges. These multiple expectations create pressure on universities to demonstrate quality. When graduates are unemployed or underemployed, when employers complain about skill deficiencies, when research fails to address national problems, questions are raised about university quality. Quality assurance provides mechanisms for universities to account for their performance and to continuously improve their contribution to societal development.

Olunkwa (2022) emphasised that education assumes a crucial job in the advancement of human capital and is connected with a person's prosperity and open doors for better living. This connection between education and life outcomes underscores the moral imperative for quality assurance. Students who invest time and resources in university education deserve learning experiences that prepare them for successful futures.

### **Global Competitiveness and International Benchmarking**

Globalisation has intensified competition among universities for students, faculty, research funding, and institutional prestige. International rankings, while imperfect, influence perceptions of university quality and attract attention from policymakers, prospective students, and academic partners. Nigerian universities must demonstrate quality not only by national standards but also in comparison with international peers.

Nwabueze (2026) identified benchmarking Nigerian universities with foreign universities as a strategy for managing change and improving quality. Benchmarking involves comparing institutional practices and performance with those of leading universities, identifying gaps, and adopting best practices. This process requires honest self-assessment, willingness to learn from others, and commitment to improvement. International partnerships and collaborations also provide opportunities for quality enhancement. When Nigerian universities engage with international partners in curriculum development, faculty exchange, joint research, and accreditation processes, they gain exposure to global standards and practices that can inform local quality improvement efforts.

### **Graduate Employability and Labour Market Alignment**

The employability of university graduates is a critical indicator of quality. When graduates struggle to find employment matching their qualifications, questions arise about curriculum relevance, skill development, and labour market alignment. Employers increasingly demand not only disciplinary knowledge but also soft skills: communication, teamwork, problem-solving, digital literacy and adaptability.

Curriculum alignment with labour market needs requires ongoing engagement with employers, professional bodies, and industry stakeholders. Quality assurance processes should include mechanisms for soliciting employer feedback, tracking graduate employment outcomes, and using this information for curriculum review and improvement. The integration of technology into teaching and learning is particularly important for graduate employability. As noted in studies of digital transformation in Nigerian higher education, graduates must be equipped with digital competencies relevant to contemporary workplace demands (Okoye et al., 2023).

## **Regulatory Requirements and Accreditation**

The National Universities Commission (NUC) establishes minimum academic standards for university programmes and conducts accreditation exercises to ensure compliance. Accreditation involves peer review of programmes against established criteria, including staff qualifications, curriculum content, facilities, and library resources. While accreditation has contributed to maintaining basic standards, concerns persist about its limitations. Lawani (2025) observed that despite the presence of these quality assurance mechanisms, challenges such as inadequate funding, administrative inefficiencies, corruption, and poor infrastructure hinder their full implementation. This observation suggests that accreditation alone is insufficient; it must be complemented by internal quality assurance processes that drive continuous improvement.

Professional bodies also play significant roles in quality assurance for specific disciplines. Programmes in engineering, medicine, law, accounting, and other professions undergo accreditation by relevant professional bodies, adding another layer of quality oversight.

## **Internal Efficiency and Institutional Effectiveness**

Quality assurance is also concerned with internal efficiency: how well universities utilise resources to achieve educational objectives. Issues such as student attrition, prolonged time-to-degree, high lecturer-student ratios, and inefficient administrative processes all affect quality. Addressing these issues requires systematic attention to institutional effectiveness. Ofem et al. (2024) found that supervision of examinations, capacity training of staff, and provision of funds significantly influence sustainable assessment integrity. When examinations are poorly supervised, when staff lack training in assessment, when funding constraints compromise examination security, assessment integrity suffers. Institutional effectiveness also involves the efficient deployment of academic staff. Heavy teaching loads, limited research time, and inadequate support for professional development can compromise faculty performance and, consequently, teaching quality.

## **KEY QUALITY ASSURANCE MEASURES FOR IMPROVING TEACHING AND LEARNING**

### **Appropriate Policy Implementation**

Policies provide the framework within which quality assurance operates. National policies on education, institutional policies on academic standards, and departmental policies on curriculum delivery all shape teaching and learning quality. However, policy implementation is often the weak link in the quality chain.

Lawani (2025) emphasised the importance of policy formulation, resource management, curriculum development, and institutional monitoring as elements of effective administration for quality assurance. This suggests that policies must be translated into actionable plans, allocated resources, and monitored for implementation fidelity. Effective policy implementation requires leadership commitment at all levels. Vice-chancellors, deans, and heads of department must communicate policy expectations, provide implementation support, and hold units accountable for compliance. It also requires staff awareness and understanding of policies relevant to their

work. Policy implementation for quality assurance should be informed by data. When policies are based on evidence about what works, and when implementation is monitored using relevant indicators, the likelihood of positive impact increases.

### **Regular Staff Training and Development**

Faculty quality is the single most important determinant of teaching and learning quality. Academics require not only disciplinary expertise but also pedagogical skills, assessment competencies, and familiarity with educational technologies. Regular staff training and development are essential for maintaining and enhancing these capabilities. Ofem et al. (2024) found that capacity training of staff significantly influences sustainable assessment integrity. This finding underscores the importance of preparing academics for their assessment responsibilities. Similar training is needed in other aspects of academic work: curriculum design, instructional delivery, student supervision, and research methodology.

Training should extend beyond initial orientation to encompass ongoing professional development throughout academics' careers. This may include workshops on new teaching methods, seminars on emerging research areas, courses on educational technology, and opportunities for collaborative learning with colleagues. Samuel and Danladi (2025) identified inadequate digital literacy among staff as a major impediment to effective technology integration in Nigerian universities. This finding highlights the need for targeted training programmes that build digital competencies among faculty and administrative staff.

### **Effective Use of Technological Tools and Devices**

Technology has transformed teaching and learning in universities worldwide. Learning management systems enable online content delivery, discussion forums, and assessment. Educational software provides interactive learning experiences. Digital libraries expand access to learning resources. Data analytics enable personalised learning and early intervention for struggling students.

However, technology integration in Nigerian universities faces significant challenges. Aluko et al. (2025) identified inadequate digital literacy among staff, weak governance implementation structures, limited readiness for AI adoption and significant infrastructural deficits as barriers to effective digital transformation. Addressing these challenges requires systematic investment in infrastructure, training, and policy frameworks. The potential of technology for quality assurance itself is significant. Digital systems can streamline data collection for quality indicators, enable real-time monitoring of teaching and learning processes, and facilitate stakeholder feedback. The AI-Driven Staff Training Modules and Performance Appraisal (AI-STMsPA) framework proposed by Aluko et al. (2025) offered a model for using technology to strengthen digital competencies and improve governance.

### **Curriculum Alignment with Societal Needs**

Curriculum relevance is fundamental to teaching and learning quality. When curricula reflect outdated knowledge, ignore emerging fields, or fail to address societal needs, students are ill-prepared for their future roles. Curriculum alignment involves ensuring that what is taught corresponds to what students need to learn for successful professional and personal lives.

Curriculum alignment requires ongoing engagement with multiple stakeholders: employers who hire graduates, professional bodies that set industry standards, alumni who can reflect on the relevance of their education, and students who experience the curriculum. Quality assurance processes should include mechanisms for stakeholder input into curriculum review and development. Nwabueze (2026) emphasized the importance of conduction of active learning and participation in active research as elements of quality improvement. These approaches suggest curricula that engage students actively in learning and connect teaching with research, exposing students to the process of knowledge creation.

### **Accreditation and Programme Review**

External accreditation by regulatory bodies and professional organisations provides a baseline for quality assurance. Accreditation processes typically involve self-study, peer review, and site visits, culminating in judgments about programme quality and recommendations for improvement. While accreditation has limitations, it serves important accountability and improvement functions.

Internal programme review complements external accreditation by providing more frequent, formative assessment of programme quality. Departments may conduct annual reviews of student performance, graduate outcomes, and stakeholder feedback, using this information for continuous improvement. Berkat (2026) noted that effective IQA systems are autonomous, improvement-focused system that promotes a quality culture through diverse models. This suggests that internal review processes should be designed not merely to prepare for external accreditation but to genuinely support programme improvement.

### **Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback Mechanisms**

Quality assurance is enhanced when stakeholders are actively engaged in quality processes. Students, as primary beneficiaries of teaching and learning, have valuable perspectives on their educational experiences. Faculty's understand the day-to-day realities of curriculum delivery. Employers can speak to graduate competencies and skill gaps. Alumni can reflect on the long-term value of their education.

Berkat (2026) identified effective multi-stakeholder engagement, involving faculty, students and staff as crucial for success in internal quality assurance. This engagement should go beyond occasional surveys to include ongoing participation in quality committees, programme reviews, and improvement initiatives. Feedback mechanisms must be designed to capture useful information and to ensure that feedback leads to action. When stakeholders provide input but see no response, they become cynical about engagement processes. Closing the feedback loop by communicating how input has been used is essential for maintaining stakeholder trust and participation.

## **LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE QUALITY ASSURANCE**

### **Creating a Vision and Culture of Quality**

University leaders at all levels have responsibility for articulating a vision of quality and for creating organizational cultures that support quality achievement. This involves communicating

that quality is not merely a compliance requirement but a fundamental value that guides all institutional activities. Nwabueze (2026) emphasised the importance of transformational and informed leadership system in the universities for managing change and improving quality. Transformational leaders inspire others to embrace quality as a shared goal, model commitment to excellence, and empower others to contribute to quality improvement.

Creating a quality culture also involves establishing norms and expectations that support quality, is when academic staff understand that teaching excellence is valued, when administrative staff recognise their role in supporting learning, and when students are engaged as partners in quality, a culture of quality can flourish.

### **Resource Allocation for Quality Improvement**

Quality assurance requires resources: for staff training, for technology infrastructure, for learning materials, for quality monitoring systems. Leaders must prioritise quality in resource allocation decisions, ensuring that units have the resources needed to maintain and enhance quality. Ofem et al. (2024) found that provision of funds significantly influences sustainable assessment integrity. This finding underscores the importance of adequate resourcing for quality processes. When examination materials cannot be secured due to funding constraints, when assessment training cannot be offered due to budget limitations, quality suffers.

Resource allocation should be guided by quality priorities. Universities may need to make difficult choices about where to invest limited resources for maximum quality impact. Data on quality indicators can inform these decisions, directing resources to areas of greatest need or greatest potential for improvement.

### **Building Capacity for Quality Assurance**

Effective quality assurance requires personnel with appropriate knowledge and skills. Quality assurance units need staff who understand quality methodologies, data analysis, and academic processes. Academic staff need understanding of quality concepts and their application to teaching and learning. Students and other stakeholders need capacity to participate meaningfully in quality processes.

Capacity building for quality assurance should be systematic and ongoing. This may include training programmes for quality assurance staff, workshops for academic staff on quality concepts, and orientation for students on their role in quality processes. It may also involve learning from other institutions with mature quality assurance systems. Bexheti (2026) identified digital capacity building to be an important area for future development in quality assurance. As quality assurance increasingly involves digital tools for data collection, analysis, and reporting, stakeholders need competencies to use these tools effectively.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Continuous Improvement**

Quality assurance is not a one-time activity but an ongoing process of monitoring, evaluation, and improvement. Leaders must establish systems for collecting and analysing quality data, for using this data to identify improvement areas, and for tracking progress over time. Monitoring should encompass multiple dimensions of quality: input quality (student entry qualifications, faculty credentials, facilities), process quality (teaching methods, assessment practices, student

support), and outcome quality (graduate competencies, employment rates, stakeholder satisfaction). Different indicators provide different perspectives on quality.

Evaluation involves making judgments about quality based on monitoring data and other evidence. This may include internal evaluations by institutional units and external evaluations by accreditors or peers. The purpose of evaluation should be improvement rather than blame. Continuous improvement requires that evaluation findings lead to action. Improvement plans should be developed, implemented, and monitored for effectiveness. Lessons from improvement efforts should be documented and shared to support organisational learning.

### **Promoting Collaboration and Partnerships**

Quality assurance is enhanced through collaboration and partnerships. Within institutions, collaboration across departments and units enables sharing of good practices and coordinated approaches to quality. Among institutions, partnerships enable benchmarking, joint programmes, and shared learning about quality assurance.

Nwabueze (2026) recommended benchmarking Nigerian universities with foreign universities as a strategy for quality improvement. Benchmarking involves systematic comparison with institutions recognised for excellence, identifying gaps, and adopting practices that could enhance quality. Partnerships with industry and employers can also strengthen quality assurance. Employers can provide input on curriculum relevance, offer placements for student internships, participate in programme advisory committees, and contribute to teaching through guest lectures or adjunct appointments.

## **CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING QUALITY ASSURANCE IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES**

### **Funding Constraints**

Inadequate funding is perhaps the most persistent challenge facing Nigerian universities. Government allocations to education have consistently fallen below international benchmarks, and universities struggle to meet basic operational needs from available resources. Quality assurance activities, which require additional investment, are often compromised when funding is insufficient. Ofem et al. (2024) identified funding as a significant factor influencing assessment integrity. When universities cannot afford secure storage for examination materials, when they cannot invest in plagiarism detection software, when they cannot provide adequate training for assessment staff, quality is compromised.

Funding constraints also affect the ability to attract and retain quality faculty. Competitive salaries, research support, and professional development opportunities are essential for building a strong academic workforce, yet many Nigerian universities struggle to provide these due to budget limitations.

### **Human Resource Challenges**

The quality of academic staff is central to teaching and learning quality, yet Nigerian universities face significant human resource challenges. These include insufficient numbers of qualified staff, an aging workforce with impending retirements, brain drain to other countries and sectors, and

limited opportunities for professional development. Staff development is essential for maintaining and enhancing quality, yet many universities lack systematic approaches to faculty development. Training opportunities may be limited, particularly for early-career academics who must need support. Without ongoing development, staff may not keep pace with advances in their disciplines or in pedagogical practice. Lawani (2025) noted that continuous faculty development programs are needed to improve teaching and research quality. Such programmes should address both disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical skills, supporting academics throughout their careers.

### **Governance and Leadership Weaknesses**

Effective quality assurance requires strong governance and leadership at institutional, faculty, and departmental levels. However, governance weaknesses in Nigerian universities have been identified as a constraint on quality improvement. These may include political interference in appointments, instability in leadership positions, limited accountability mechanisms, and corruption. Aluko et al. (2025) identify weak governance implementation structures as a challenge for digital transformation. This observation applies more broadly to quality assurance, which requires consistent policy implementation, transparent decision-making, and accountability for results. Leadership weaknesses may also include limited understanding of quality assurance concepts and practices among institutional leaders. Without knowledgeable leadership, quality assurance efforts may lack direction, resources, and institutional commitment.

### **Resistance to Change**

Quality assurance often requires changes in established practices, which may encounter resistance from those comfortable with existing arrangements. Academic staff may resist new quality requirements as impositions on their autonomy. Administrative staff may resist new procedures as additional work. Students may resist new assessment approaches as unfamiliar.

Nwabueze (2026) acknowledged that change management is complex and that school managers need to understand the change process in order to lead and manage change and improvement efforts effectively. This understanding includes recognition of resistance as a natural response to change and strategies for addressing it constructively. Overcoming resistance requires engagement of stakeholders in quality processes, communication about the rationale for quality assurance, demonstration of benefits from quality improvement, and support for those adapting to new requirements.

## **STRATEGIES FOR STRENGTHENING QUALITY ASSURANCE IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES**

### **Enhancing Policy Implementation and Regulatory Oversight**

Strengthening quality assurance requires enhanced implementation of existing policies and stronger regulatory oversight. The NUC and professional bodies must ensure that accreditation processes are rigorous, consistent and focused on substantive quality rather than mere documentation. Sanctions for non-compliance should be applied consistently to maintain accountability. However, regulatory oversight should also support improvement, not merely

enforce compliance. This may involve providing guidance and resources for quality enhancement, facilitating sharing of good practices among institutions, and recognising institutions that demonstrate excellence. Lawani (2025) recommended that stricter enforcement of accreditation standards as a strategy for improving quality. This recommendation should be balanced with support for institutions working to meet standards, recognising that capacity building may be needed alongside enforcement.

### **Investing in Staff Development and Capacity Building**

Systematic investment in staff development is essential for quality improvement. Universities should establish comprehensive faculty development programmes that address pedagogical skills, assessment competencies, technology integration, and disciplinary updating. These programmes should be accessible to all academic staff and should be evaluated for effectiveness. Ofem et al. (2024) recommended that staff should be trained periodically on how to handle assessment issues. This recommendation applies to other aspects of academic work as well. Training should be ongoing, responsive to emerging needs, and grounded in evidence about effective practice.

Capacity building should extend beyond academic staff to include administrative staff who support teaching and learning processes. Registrars, examination officers, librarians, and ICT staff all play roles in quality assurance and need appropriate knowledge and skills.

### **Leveraging Technology for Quality Enhancement**

Technology offers significant opportunities for enhancing quality assurance. Digital systems can streamline data collection for quality indicators, enable real-time monitoring of teaching and learning processes, facilitate stakeholder feedback, and support evidence-based decision-making. Learning management systems can enhance teaching quality by enabling blended learning, providing analytics on student engagement, and supporting consistent course delivery. Aluko et al. (2025) proposed the AI-Driven Staff Training Modules and Performance Appraisal (AI-STMsPA) framework as a practical model for strengthening digital competencies, improving governance transparency, and enhancing institutional effectiveness. This framework demonstrates how technology can be harnessed for quality improvement. However, technology integration must be accompanied by investment in infrastructure, training, and support. Simply acquiring technology without ensuring that staff can use it effectively and that systems are reliable will not yield quality improvements.

### **Strengthening Internal Quality Assurance Systems**

While external accreditation is important, sustainable quality improvement depends on robust internal quality assurance systems. Universities should develop comprehensive IQA frameworks that encompass all aspects of institutional activity: teaching and learning, research, community service, and administration. These frameworks should be owned by the institution, not merely designed to satisfy external requirements. Berkat (2026) emphasized the importance of IQA systems that are autonomous, improvement-focused and promotes a quality culture through diverse models. This suggests that IQA should be embedded in institutional culture and practice, not treated as a separate compliance function. IQA systems should include regular programme

reviews, student feedback mechanisms, staff performance management, and quality monitoring at departmental and institutional levels. They should be resourced adequately and supported by leadership at all levels.

### **Ensuring Adequate and Sustainable Funding**

Quality assurance requires adequate and sustainable funding. Government must increase allocation to education, and universities must prioritise quality assurance in their budget allocations. Funding should support infrastructure development, staff training, technology acquisition, and quality monitoring systems. Ofem et al. (2024) acclaimed that funds needed to get prepared for examinations should be made available so as not to expose examination materials to the public through institutions' computer vendors. This specific recommendation illustrates the broader principle that quality processes require adequate resourcing. Universities should also explore alternative funding sources for quality improvement, including grants from international partners, contributions from industry partners, and internally generated revenue. Diversified funding can reduce dependence on government allocations and enable more strategic investment in quality.

### **CONCLUSION**

Quality assurance encompasses multiple dimensions: policy implementation, staff training, technology integration, curriculum alignment, accreditation, and stakeholder engagement. These dimensions are interconnected and mutually reinforcing, requiring systematic attention from institutional leaders. Leadership at all levels, from vice-chancellors to heads of department are critical in creating a quality culture, mobilising resources, building capacity and driving continuous improvement. The challenges facing quality assurance in Nigerian universities are substantial: funding constraints, infrastructural deficits, human resource challenges, governance weaknesses, and resistance to change. However, these challenges are not insurmountable. Through strategic investment, policy reform, capacity building, and stakeholder engagement, Nigerian universities can strengthen their quality assurance systems and improve teaching and learning outcomes.

The paper concludes that the application of quality assurance measures as a leadership strategy improves teaching and learning in universities in Nigeria. When leaders prioritize quality, when systems support quality, and when stakeholders engage in quality processes, the conditions for educational excellence are created. The ultimate beneficiaries are students who receive quality education, employers who gain competent graduates and society that benefits from the contributions of well-educated citizens.

### **Suggestions**

Based on the discussion as presented in this paper, the following suggestions are offered:

- University management should ensure the appropriate implementation of university policies for onward improvement in teaching and learning.
- University leaders should create and communicate a compelling vision for quality that inspires commitment throughout the institution.

- Regular staff training and development programmes should be established and sustained, addressing pedagogical skills, assessment competencies, technology integration, and disciplinary measures.
- Investment in technology infrastructure and digital capacity building should be prioritized, enabling effective technology integration in teaching and learning and supporting digital approaches to quality assurance.
- Curriculum alignment with societal needs should be ensured through ongoing stakeholder engagement.
- Internal quality assurance systems should be strengthened to complement external accreditation. These systems should be owned by the institution, focused on improvement, and resourced adequately.

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