

MARKET DEMAND ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

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Background

Given the current global economic environment, higher education institutions are becoming increasingly more cautious in the use of scarce resources particularly where they are choosing to allocate funding to the support the introduction of new programmes. While the process of curriculum enhancement is critical to sustaining quality and relevance in programming and in responding to the demands of the market place, this must however be done in accordance with principles that address need and viability.

By memo dated 15th October 2014, the University Registrar issued a directive on behalf of the Board of Undergraduate Studies that programme proposals needed to be guided by market research as a pre-requisite for approval.

This paper will seek to recommend some guidelines that identifies the areas of market research which programme developers may wish to consider in their justification of the need of their programmes

The following represents a recommended template for capturing market research to establish market demand for a proposed programme.

PROGRAMME DETAILS

Programme title

Faculty

Programme type

Mode of delivery

Proposed start date

EVIDENCE/ASSESSMENT OF MARKET DEMAND

RELEVANCE AND MARKET SIZE

The environment :- Outline of the current and future relevance of the programme, identifying its relevance to contributing to current and future expertise /skills required within the socio-economic context

Data sources

- *Identified priorities of a national developmental framework*
- *Feedback from Employer surveys on identified gaps /areas of need of specialist skills and placement opportunities*
- *Expert advice from Industry Advisory Groups, Alumni, Professional bodies etc.*

Target Group – Identification of sources of potential applicants (egs. Cape /A level students, mature continuing learners, employer based markets, regional, international

Data sources

- Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) statistics of examination performance by students in subject areas
- Campus IT Services (CITS)/ COPIR for data on student applications, offers and acceptances
- Information compiled by Recruitment and Admissions Offices on recruitment efforts, eg. School visits and Recruitment Fairs

Target input and output- Projected annual intake and graduate output to justify viability of the programme

- Estimated annual new admissions with projected growth increases

Competitor/ Comparator programmes /Institutions

Identify where there might be similar programmes being delivered by other higher education institutions (nationally, regionally, online programmes) which may be seen as competitors and highlight the distinctiveness of the programme that will attract students against what is already available.

Data Sources

- Review of public information which is available from institutional websites

The Prospective Student

Understanding the views of the target market and identifying a specific demand

Data sources

- Surveys of potential applicants
- Focus group feedback
- Feedback from recruitment exercises

Industry /sector Perspective

Demonstration of a specific demand from the relevant sector /industry for the proposed programmes

Data Sources

- Consultations with sector related experts , industry groups

Strategic Alignment

- Identification of Programme alignment to Institutional priorities /vision as identified in university and how it is reflective of supporting curriculum enhancement
- Identification of how the programme may support the national developmental framework for creating human resource expertise strategic /developmental plans
- Details where the programme may offer possibilities of potential progression to feeder institutions, advanced learning or professional upgrade and research opportunities

Data Sources

- University Strategic Plans
- National developmental Framework. Plans

Prepared by COPIR

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