Reviewer's report

Title: Accreditation in a Sub Saharan Medical School an Approach to Education at Makerere University: a case study

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Reviewer: Charles Mkony

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Accreditation in a Sub Saharan Medical School an Approach to Education at Makerere University: a case study
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A. Discretionary Revisions

Introduction

The majority of the second paragraph belongs to “Methods”, strictly speaking. One may wish to relocate such statements in “Methods” and replace them in “Introduction” with more general statements on accreditation.

“Examples rather than the entire list of standards defined is cited in here.” It is probably desirable to display the entire list to convey a faithful impression of what was undertaken rather than picking a sample as examples.

Methods and materials

Paragraph 1. In the list of councils should the last one be “Allied Professions” rather than “Allied Professional”?

Paragraph 2. “The process costs were kept low by way of running several half days, a strategy preferred to full days by stakeholders”.

Paragraph 4. It is advisable to mention the number of weekly workshops. Presumably the experienced collaborators facilitated the first two workshops while Makerere senior academic staff did the last two—this may be a detail worth stating.

Results

Engagement of Partners

Last statement: “Instrumental in the sense that the choice of stakeholders who engaged this process was informed by the knowledge of the partnership pentagram”. This statement cannot stand as an independent sentence. It needs a subject at the beginning.
Paragraph 2. “Examples of objectives that enhance partnerships include the following are depicted in Table 1”:

Discussion

Methods and Techniques
“The WFME template was found to be comprehensive in content, however, there were challenges getting consensus for every aspect. This was overcome by using participatory planning techniques. Where everyone’s idea, voice was heard and considered”. The last statement is a fragment, not an independent sentence.

“Paulo Freire’s concretisation movement, which emphasizes awareness raising and empowerment12. Experiential learning associated with Orlando Fals Borda of Colombia which emphasizes multi-dimensional thinking (cognitive), feeling (affective) and acting (psychomotor) 1.” Alternatively these statements as they stand would be acceptable if they were bulleted.

“Visualization techniques originating from the Quick born Team of Germany associated with Eberhard Schrelle and his colleagues who designed training in which decision makers and those solutions together, resulting in common action15.” Any way you look at it the statement needs to be recast.

“Visualization in Participatory programs which was developed in the early 1990s....” Alternatively these statements could stand as they are if they were bulleted.

Stakeholders’ representation & engagement
“The challenge of generating interest and allocating time for this activity in light of other activities competing for time and resources was tackled by, a sustained campaign of dissemination of information about a forthcoming meeting and its rationale.”

Implementation
“The perception of that defining standards would generate extra work for faculty became apparent., The concerns being more work with no matching compensation for time and effort. The response to this challenge was in the promise of making standards, relate to work routine and having the activities embedded in the institutional culture”.
Conclusion
Defining standards is not an end in itself. They must be used in a system of accreditation...

B. Minor Essential Revisions

The Title
The title apparently has three segments, but only two are depicted in its current form, separated by a colon. Some form of punctuation is required between “school” and “an”. Since there is already a colon in the title perhaps a hyphen would be the solution. The title could therefore be “Accreditation in a Sub-Saharan Medical School - an Approach to Education at Makerere University: a case study

Introduction
Paragraph 1: The last sentence in the paragraph needs a change of punctuation and editing thus: Makerere University College of Health Sciences, a 90 year old institution, until recently had not explicitly defined minimum standards as an approach to training health care providers.

Paragraph 2: In the section which reads “In response, the College of Health Sciences at Makerere University embarked on a major curriculum renewal process. Teaching and learning methods moving from traditional, teacher-centred education to one that is fundamentally student-centred” the second sentence is not really a sentence. You have a choice of substituting a comma for the full stop that separates the two statements or recasting the second as “Teaching and learning methods moved from traditional, teacher-centred education to one that is fundamentally student-centred”.

Methods and Materials
Paragraph 2. “As well as having sent relevant materials prior to the meetings” stands as a fragment. It can be remedied thus: “Relevant materials were sent to participants prior to the meeting”.

Paragraph 3. Recast the first sentence as follows: “The participatory Question Based Facilitation grows directly out of the need to improve the planning process in situations, which are entrenched or stagnated, highly competitive or conflictual”.

Paragraph 5. If there was an external facilitator for each group, make this explicit.

Line 5: …participatory Approaches including...

Results
Paragraph 2. … The context of Ugandan here refers to what the needs of the country are, the mission of the college and the unique challenges of constrained human
rResource, educational materials and finances.

Discussion

Context

“For the College of Health Sciences at Makerere to undertake the process of defining its own standards is in one way filling the void that is yet to be filled by the national system. In another way it is stimulating and contributing to the full development of such a system”.

“Whereas for more than seven decades the College of Health Sciences at Makerere was the sole trainer for degree health workers in Uganda, the last decade has seen the addition of over four # other institutions”. Please give the actual number or other institutions. It can’t be difficult to do this!

Major Compulsory Revisions

None

Recommendations

1. As stated in the article medical schools in the East African region have hitherto not embarked on defining standards and self evaluation as quality improvement measures. This article is therefore a welcome initiative by the Makerere group.

2. The study sets the stage and provides a challenge to other schools in the region to embark on measures to define standards for their institutions based on recognised global standards.

3. The Makerere case study is well written in general, but a number of suggestions have been made which the authors may consider for improvement of the presentation.

4. While the paper talks of “discussion, refinements of, and consensus on the WFME standards”, reading of the examples provided in Table 1 shows what seems to be almost a verbatim quotation of the corresponding WFME standards with some distortion of the orderliness with which the WFME ones are done. Perhaps the authors can provide a fairer representation of the work the group did than what is conveyed by Table1.

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests