



CLASSIFICATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ZAMBIA

Higher Education Act No 4 of 2013

Statutory Instrument No. 25 of 2016

Introduction

One of the key functions of the Higher Education Authority outlined in the Higher Education Act No. 4 of 2013 is to coordinate the development of higher education in Zambia. This entails facilitating the establishment of a well-organised system of higher education that is responsive to the human resource, economic and development needs of the country. Among the tools that have been adopted by the Authority to achieve this function is the development of a classification system for Higher Education Institutions.

The classification system, which is provided for in Statutory Instrument No. 25 of 2016, allows the Authority to group Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) into classes based on their capabilities in research and innovation, teaching and learning. The goal of the classification system is to provide a basis for guiding learners and the public on the level of education that can be offered by an HEI based on its human resources, physical resources and research capacity and not to rank the higher education institutions. In this regard, this classification system should not be used as a ranking tool. This classification system is also a quality assurance tool that instils confidence in the public on the ability of an HEI to offer any type of education falling within the classification in which the institution has been registered.

Objectives of classification;

1. To provide a platform for categorising HEIs based on their capabilities in teaching, learning, research and innovation
2. To provide information to the public and prospective students on the level of education that an HEI can offer
3. To promote continuous quality improvement in service delivery among HEIs.

Classification system

The HEA classification system will comprise four tiers

CATEGORY	TIER DESCRIPTION	Tier entitlements
<p>Tier 1 ZQF 10 Institutions</p>	<p>An HEI in this category is a research intensive HEI with a well-recognised research culture and with capacity to offer research degrees such as PhD, MPhil and Master's by research.</p> <p>It is expected that such an HEI would have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ adequate qualified academic staff able to teach, undertake and supervise research up to PhD level. ➤ staff with PhD and senior academics (senior lecturer to professor) with research and peer reviewed publication records ➤ adequate physical infrastructure and facilities to support research, teaching and learning up to doctoral level 	<p>An Institution in this tier can offer learning programmes up to doctorate level (from ZQF 5 to 10) and can establish graduate schools to achieve this purpose.</p>
<p>Tier 2 ZQF9 Institutions</p>	<p>An HEI in this category is active in research and has capacity to offer postgraduate education up to master's level.</p> <p>It is expected that such an HEI would have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ adequate qualified staff able to teach and undertake research and supervise postgraduate students up to Master's degree level. ➤ staff with PhD with traceable research and publication records 	<p>An Institution in this tier category can offer learning programmes up to a Master's degree level (from ZQF 5 to 9)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ adequate infrastructure and facilities to support research, teaching and learning up to Master's degree level. 	
Tier 3 ZQF 8 Institutions	<p>An HEI in this category has qualified staff and adequate facilities to offer taught programmes at bachelor's, honours, graduate certificate, graduate diploma and undertakes research for these levels.</p> <p>It is expected that such an HEI would have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ adequate qualified staff able to teach up to graduate diploma level ➤ adequate infrastructure to support teaching and learning up to graduate diploma level. 	<p>An institution in this category can offer programmes up to graduate diploma (from ZQF 5 to 8)</p>
Tier 4 ZQF 7 Institutions	<p>An HEI in this category has qualified staff and adequate facilities to offer undergraduate degrees and diplomas</p> <p>It is expected that such an HEI would have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ adequate qualified staff able to teach up to bachelor's level ➤ adequate infrastructure to support teaching and learning up to bachelor's level 	<p>An institution in this category can offer programmes up to bachelor's degree level (from ZQF 5 to 7)</p>

STANDARDS/CRITERIA USED AS A BASIS FOR CLASSIFICATION

In order to classify HEIs, the Authority relies on a set of criteria that comprises core-requirements and accompanying quality standards that HEIs must meet. These requirements are provided for in Statutory No. 25 of 2016.

Core Requirement	Quality Standard	Performance Indicator	Means of Verification
Research	Proven Research Capability and Track Record	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A functional research policy • Established Research Directorate/Bureau or Unit • Number of Research projects (completed /running) by the Institution • Number of External Research grants/ fellowships won by institution • Amount of revenue generated from research • Number and type of international research collaborations • Staff publication output ratio • No of Patents • Functioning journals (local journal with qualified editorial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research policy document clearly outlining research agenda • Organogram • Actual establishment of the Bureau • CVs of Bureau Staff • Institutional Annual research report • Research Project documents • Grant award letters/Grants agreement • MOUs/Research agreements • List of books/chapters published by staff • Patent certificates • List of functioning journals • Sample of journals

		<p>board and published regularly).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer reviewed journal publications (excluding publications in predatory journals) Peer reviewed journal publications in high impact journal (impact factor > 0.5) Book publications Academia-Industry interface schemes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of peer reviewed journal articles & copies of first page (Publications in predatory journals excluded) List of publication in journals with impact factor List of book publications and cover pages MOUs with industry
Staffing	Proven Adequate and sufficiently qualified academic staff able to support teaching, learning and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staffing levels showing ranks Number of academic staff able to undertake and supervise research at graduate level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff registers accompanied with CVs and certificates List of staff with PhD qualifications from recognized institutions, accompanied by their CVs List of senior academic staff (senior research fellows, senior lecturers and professors) qualifications from recognized institutions accompanied by their CVs

Physical Infrastructure	Physical facilities in sufficient quantities and quality to ensure learning, teaching and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of adequate physical infrastructure for learning teaching and research • Available infrastructure and space for; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) teaching and learning b) Laboratory/practical work c) Library services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual physical facilities
Technological infrastructure	Facilities/platforms for electronic information services Information and communication for teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of internet connectivity • Availability of electronic resources • Availability of ICT rooms • Availability of ICT infrastructure for teaching and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual connectivity • Subscription to scholarly platforms/databases such as Scopus, web of science/web of knowledge etc. • Actual rooms on site • Actual facilities on site
Financial resources	Financial resources to support teaching learning and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of funds allocated to teaching and learning clearly outlined • Availability of research funds to support operations • Percentage of budget allocated to research • Availability of Research grant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual budget/expenditure reports • Letters of disbursement • Budget documents • Research Support Scheme documents

		scheme established by institution	
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Procedure for Classification

a) HEIs registered before 2020

For HEIs registered before 2020 the higher education authority shall conduct audits for classification using the set criteria. An institution shall be notified in advance of the date when the audit shall be conducted. Before the said date, an institution shall be required to conduct a self-audit using the set classification criteria.

The Director General Shall constitute a team to conduct the audit and make recommendations to the HEA Board.

b) New applications for registration/ applications for re-classification

An HEI will apply for classification to the Authority using the prescribed form (form X). The HEI will indicate on the application form the class it is applying for.

The application, together with the accompanying documentation, shall be submitted to the Director General of the Authority. The HEI will be required to pay an assessment fee.

The Director General Shall constitute a team to conduct the assessment based on the set criteria (the assessment will include a site visit to the HEI for verification of information contained in the application).

Based on the Assessment, the Director General shall make recommendations to the HEA board.

Conditions of Classification

An HEI's classification shall be for five years, after which the Higher Education Institution's tier shall be reviewed to determine whether the HEI should remain in the same tier or be moved into a different tier. The movement maybe downward or upward.

An HEI in one tier is illegible to apply for the next tier whenever an institution deems itself ready. This implies that an HEI does not have to wait for the five-year review if it deems itself ready to apply for the next tier.

Grounds under which an HEI's tier can be reviewed before the five-year period

An HEI's Tier can be reviewed before the five-year period on the following grounds:

- (i) Where an HEI applies for re-classification
- (ii) Where an institutional audit or learning programme, audit shows that an HEI lacks capacity to offer learning programmes within its tier.