



UBT COLLEGE

**Thematic Analytical Report on Teaching
Quality at UBT**

September 2024

1. Introduction

This thematic analytical report evaluates the quality of teaching at UBT, based on findings collected from 533 academic staff members and 334 students through focus groups, qualitative interviews, and staff discussions. The report aims to identify key areas of strength and improvement in teaching quality, adhering to the Quality Manual guidelines. The focus is on teaching practices, student participation, faculty engagement, and the overall academic environment.

2. Methodology

The data was collected via:

- **Focus groups:** Organized with both staff and students to gather insights into specific teaching-related issues.
- **Qualitative interviews:** Conducted with selected academic staff and students to explore individual perspectives on teaching quality.
- **Staff discussions:** Focused on challenges in teaching, research responsibilities, and professional development.

3. Key Themes and Findings

3.1. Teaching Process and Faculty Engagement

In the area of **Teaching Process and Faculty Engagement**, several strengths and challenges were identified through the analysis. A significant strength lies in the strong engagement demonstrated by the faculty in a range of academic activities beyond their regular teaching responsibilities. Many faculty members actively participate in various UBT events, contribute to accreditation committees, and take part in key decision-making structures. This reflects their commitment to the institution and the academic community. Furthermore, staff have shown proactivity in offering additional consultation hours to students outside of their scheduled class times. This extra effort in supporting students beyond regular teaching hours enhances the academic experience, providing students with more opportunities for personalized guidance and support.

Despite these strengths, there are notable challenges that need to be addressed. One of the key issues is the inconsistent adherence to lecture content and assessment rules as outlined in the accredited syllabi. Ensuring that faculty strictly follow the content and guidelines laid out in the syllabi is crucial for maintaining a consistent and fair academic environment. When faculty diverge from the prescribed content or assessment criteria, it can create disparities in the learning experience for students across different courses or even within the same course.

To tackle these challenges, specific action points have been suggested. Firstly, it is essential to increase faculty compliance with the syllabi and ensure that assessment guidelines are applied consistently across all courses. This may require regular monitoring and guidance from program coordinators to ensure that faculty members are fully aligned with the accredited course content. Additionally, there is a need to ensure better alignment between lecturers and teaching assistants,

especially in courses where there are multiple instructors involved. Clear communication and collaboration between teaching staff are crucial to maintaining coherence in course delivery and assessment practices.

Several recommendations have been put forward to further enhance faculty engagement in the teaching process. One key recommendation is to strengthen faculty mentoring efforts, particularly in relation to thesis supervision. High-quality supervision is vital for ensuring that students receive the necessary guidance during their thesis work, and enhancing this aspect of faculty engagement will contribute to maintaining high academic standards. Additionally, faculty members should be encouraged to take a more active role in the organization and supervision of exams. This increased involvement will help ensure that exams are conducted in a smooth and fair manner, with consistent oversight of the assessment process.

Another important recommendation is to improve faculty involvement in providing timely feedback to students, particularly through the SMIS (Student Management Information System). Prompt and constructive feedback is essential for student learning, and ensuring that faculty meet feedback deadlines will enhance the overall student experience.

Finally, promoting faculty participation in international projects, with a focus on research-related initiatives, is recommended. Such participation not only enhances the professional development of faculty members but also contributes to the institution's international profile. Engaging in international collaborations allows faculty to bring new insights and knowledge to their teaching, which benefits students and strengthens UBT's academic standing.

3.2. Student Attendance and Participation

In the area of **Student Attendance and Participation**, several challenges were highlighted that impact the effectiveness of the learning environment at UBT. A major concern is the inconsistency in student attendance, particularly in large lecture classes. This issue not only affects the students' ability to keep up with the course material but also undermines the overall quality of classroom interactions. Attendance tends to be especially problematic during practical sessions, where hands-on engagement is essential for understanding complex concepts. Larger class sizes in these sessions make it difficult for students to participate fully, further exacerbating attendance and engagement issues.

To address these challenges, specific actions have been proposed. One of the key measures is to implement stricter monitoring and support strategies to boost student attendance. This could include regular attendance tracking and follow-up actions for students who frequently miss classes. Additionally, there is a need to optimize the size of student groups during practical sessions. By splitting larger groups into smaller, more manageable sections, faculty can ensure that each student receives adequate attention and opportunities for active participation. This will not only enhance student engagement but also improve the overall learning outcomes in these sessions.

Furthermore, recommendations have been made to strengthen the teaching process through better collaboration between faculty members and teaching assistants. It is important that the teaching assistants work closely with the faculty to ensure that teaching processes are harmonized across

different sections of a course. This coordination will help maintain consistency in content delivery, assignments, and assessments, regardless of which section a student is in. A more unified approach across different sections will contribute to a more organized and effective learning environment, which could, in turn, help improve attendance.

Another significant recommendation is to eliminate evening lectures scheduled after 7:00 PM. These late classes present challenges for students who rely on public transportation or who commute long distances, leading to safety concerns and contributing to absenteeism. By rescheduling these lectures to earlier times, UBT can better accommodate the needs of commuting students and improve overall attendance rates. This change will also help create a more conducive learning environment by ensuring that students are more alert and engaged during class sessions.

3.3. Student Feedback and Interaction

In the area of **Student Feedback and Interaction**, several challenges have been identified that directly impact the quality of student engagement and overall satisfaction. One of the key issues is the lack of interactivity in certain courses. Both students and faculty have noted that some teaching methods are not sufficiently engaging, leading to a passive learning environment where students may struggle to stay motivated or actively participate. This lack of engagement can hinder students' understanding of the course material and reduce their overall academic experience.

Another challenge is the delay in communication between faculty and students, particularly regarding email responses. Some faculty members have been slow in responding to student inquiries, which creates frustration and affects the students' ability to clarify doubts or seek guidance in a timely manner. This issue, coupled with delays in providing feedback on assignments and publishing results, diminishes the overall effectiveness of the learning process and negatively impacts student satisfaction.

To address these challenges, specific action points have been proposed. First, it is recommended that faculty members focus on increasing the level of interactivity in their teaching. This can be achieved by incorporating more student-centered activities, such as group discussions, case studies, or problem-solving sessions, which encourage active participation and critical thinking. By fostering a more dynamic classroom environment, students will feel more engaged and motivated to contribute to discussions, which can improve their understanding of the material.

In addition to enhancing classroom interaction, faculty should also aim to improve the timeliness of their communication with students. Prompt responses to student emails are essential for maintaining a positive learning experience, particularly when students are seeking clarification on course material or assignments. Ensuring that faculty are responsive and approachable will help build stronger relationships between students and instructors, fostering a more supportive academic environment.

Moreover, it is critical that professors provide feedback on assignments and exams within the expected time frame. Prompt feedback allows students to reflect on their performance and make necessary improvements for future assessments. Delays in feedback or the publication of results can cause uncertainty and hinder students' academic progress. Therefore, faculty members must

prioritize timely communication and feedback to enhance the overall student experience and support their learning journey effectively.

3.4. Research Involvement and Student Participation in Projects

In the area of **Research Involvement and Student Participation**, the analysis highlights several strengths and challenges that are crucial for fostering a robust academic and research culture at UBT. One of the clear strengths is the active engagement of faculty members in research, particularly in their involvement in international research projects. This level of participation not only enhances the global profile of UBT but also allows faculty to remain at the forefront of developments in their respective fields. By being involved in international collaborations, faculty members bring valuable knowledge, methodologies, and perspectives into the classroom, enriching the learning experience for students.

However, despite the strong research engagement from faculty, there is a notable challenge in terms of student participation in research activities. The involvement of students in faculty-led research projects and academic conferences remains relatively low. This gap means that students are missing out on valuable opportunities to gain hands-on research experience, which is essential for their academic development and future career prospects. Furthermore, limited participation in conferences and publications reduces the visibility of student achievements and the overall research output from the student body at UBT.

To address these challenges, specific action points have been identified. First, there is a need to encourage greater involvement of students in faculty-led research projects. Faculty members can create more opportunities for students to contribute to ongoing research, whether as research assistants, collaborators, or through independent studies under faculty supervision. By engaging students in meaningful research work, they will gain valuable skills in data collection, analysis, critical thinking, and academic writing, all of which are crucial for their academic and professional growth.

In addition to increasing student involvement in research, it is also essential to develop initiatives that encourage student participation in academic conferences and publications. UBT can establish support programs, such as research grants or travel funding, to enable students to present their research at conferences both locally and internationally. Workshops on academic writing and publishing can be offered to guide students through the process of preparing their work for submission to academic journals or conference proceedings. By providing these opportunities and resources, UBT can significantly enhance the research participation of its students, while also raising the profile of the institution through increased student publications and conference presentations.

In summary, while faculty members are highly engaged in research, a concerted effort is needed to ensure that students are equally involved in these activities. By fostering a more inclusive research environment and providing platforms for students to showcase their work, UBT can further strengthen its academic community and support the research ambitions of its student body.

3.5. Professional Development and Workload Management

In the area of **Professional Development and Workload Management**, the thematic analysis identifies some significant challenges that impact both the effectiveness of faculty performance and their overall well-being. One of the critical issues highlighted is that several faculty members have yet to complete their individual professional development plans. These plans are essential tools for guiding faculty growth and ensuring that they continue to develop in areas aligned with both personal career goals and institutional needs. Furthermore, these plans serve as a vital component of performance evaluations, allowing deans and academic leadership to assess each faculty member's progress and contributions to the institution.

Without these completed development plans, it becomes difficult to monitor and support the professional growth of faculty members effectively. This gap also affects the ability of UBT to ensure that faculty development aligns with the college's strategic objectives, particularly in areas like research output, teaching quality, and community engagement.

Another challenge identified is the imbalance in the workload for certain staff members, particularly those who are working overtime or beyond their standard teaching load (referred to as **mbinorma**). This excessive workload not only risks diminishing the quality of teaching and research but also contributes to faculty burnout. When faculty members are overburdened with teaching hours, administrative tasks, or additional responsibilities, it becomes increasingly difficult for them to maintain the high standards expected in their teaching and research activities. This imbalance also reduces the time they can dedicate to professional development, research, and mentoring students.

To address these challenges, several action points have been proposed. First, all faculty members should be required to complete their individual professional development plans. These plans must then be actively utilized by deans and academic supervisors during performance evaluations to ensure that faculty are progressing in their career development and contributing to UBT's academic goals. The completion and regular updating of these plans will help faculty focus on continuous improvement, while also ensuring that institutional resources are directed toward the right areas for growth and support.

Second, there is a need to harmonize workloads, especially for faculty members who are working overtime. This will involve a thorough assessment of current workload distribution by the HR department and academic leadership. The goal is to create a more balanced system where faculty workloads are fair and sustainable, ensuring that no faculty member is consistently overburdened. A more even distribution of teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities will not only improve the quality of work across the board but also prevent burnout, allowing faculty members to maintain their engagement with students and research.

By addressing these challenges and implementing the proposed action points, UBT can better support its faculty in their professional growth while ensuring that workloads remain manageable. This will lead to a more effective and motivated teaching staff, which in turn will enhance the quality of education and research at the institution.

3.6. Infrastructure and Support for Research

In the area of **Infrastructure and Support for Research**, the thematic analysis highlights key challenges related to the adequacy of laboratory facilities, particularly in disciplines such as computer science, where technological advancements and increasing curriculum demands are outpacing current resources. The existing laboratories in these areas require significant upgrades to align with the expectations of modern education and industry standards. As technology evolves rapidly, it is essential that UBT's infrastructure keeps pace to ensure students receive the hands-on experience they need to succeed in their fields.

Without adequate laboratory resources, both faculty and students face limitations in fully engaging with the curriculum, especially in practical and research-based tasks. The lack of updated equipment and software can hinder students' learning outcomes and reduce the quality of faculty-led research in key areas. These challenges are particularly pressing in technology-driven disciplines, where access to state-of-the-art resources is critical for producing competitive graduates and innovative research.

To address these challenges, it is essential that UBT prioritize the upgrading of laboratory facilities. Key areas, particularly those involving computer science and other rapidly evolving technological disciplines, should be the primary focus of these upgrades. Investing in updated hardware, software, and other necessary tools will ensure that students are well-prepared for the demands of their future careers, and faculty will be better equipped to conduct cutting-edge research.

In addition to improving infrastructure, there is a need to increase support for research activities across the institution. By offering more opportunities for faculty to engage in research, UBT can foster a more dynamic academic environment. This includes providing institutional support through research grants, access to advanced resources, and platforms for collaboration with both local and international partners. Supporting faculty in their research endeavors will not only raise the institution's academic profile but will also directly benefit students by integrating new knowledge and innovations into the curriculum.

3.7. Student Transportation and Timetable Management

In the area of **Student Transportation and Timetable Management**, a critical challenge identified is the issue of overcrowded student buses and poorly coordinated transport schedules. These issues have been consistently cited as significant concerns by students, particularly those who rely on the provided transportation services to commute to and from UBT. Overcrowding not only causes discomfort but also poses safety concerns, especially for students traveling long distances. Additionally, uncoordinated schedules can result in delays, further compounding the inconvenience for students who have to navigate tight academic timetables.

Given the importance of reliable and efficient transportation for student attendance and overall well-being, immediate action is needed to address these challenges. One of the key actions proposed is for the UBT administration to work closely with transportation providers to optimize the bus schedules. This would involve conducting a comprehensive review of current student usage

patterns and identifying peak travel times to ensure that the buses are available when needed the most. By coordinating with transportation providers, the administration can adjust the timing and frequency of buses to better match student demand, thereby reducing overcrowding and minimizing delays.

Moreover, adding additional buses during peak hours could significantly alleviate the overcrowding issue, ensuring that students can travel comfortably without the stress of competing for space on overcrowded buses. This optimization of transportation services will not only enhance the student experience but also contribute to better attendance and punctuality, as students will be able to rely on a more efficient and comfortable commute.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

This thematic analysis of the teaching quality at UBT highlights several areas requiring attention and improvement, focusing on the ongoing need to enhance faculty engagement, student participation, interactivity in teaching, infrastructure upgrades, and increased research involvement. The recommendations presented are both immediate and long-term, aimed at creating a more cohesive, interactive, and supportive academic environment for both students and faculty.

4.1. Key Recommendations

- **Enhancing Faculty Engagement in Teaching and Mentoring**
The role of faculty extends beyond classroom instruction to active engagement in student mentoring and professional development. It is crucial that faculty members adhere strictly to the content and assessment criteria set forth in the accredited syllabi, ensuring a consistent academic experience for all students. Additionally, improving faculty involvement in mentoring, particularly during thesis supervision, will elevate the quality of academic guidance provided to students.
- **Improving Student Attendance and Participation**
Addressing low student attendance, particularly in larger lecture groups, is a priority. Implementing systems to monitor attendance and engagement will be critical in ensuring that students are actively participating in their courses. Practical classes, in particular, should be reorganized to reduce group sizes, allowing for more direct interaction between students and instructors, thus fostering a more personalized learning experience.
- **Increasing Interactivity in the Classroom**
Teaching methods need to evolve to become more interactive and student-centered, incorporating activities such as group work, discussions, and problem-solving sessions. This shift will help keep students engaged and allow for a more dynamic exchange of ideas.

Timely feedback on assignments and exams is another key area where improvement is needed to ensure students receive the support they need throughout their academic journey.

- **Addressing Infrastructure Needs**
The analysis underscores the importance of upgrading UBT's facilities, particularly in technology-driven programs like computer science. Ensuring that students have access to the latest laboratory equipment and software is essential for providing a cutting-edge educational experience that aligns with current industry standards.
- **Supporting Staff and Student Involvement in Research Projects**
While faculty members are actively engaged in research, it is imperative to increase student involvement in research activities. Providing opportunities for students to work on faculty-led projects and participate in academic conferences will foster a deeper academic connection and contribute to the overall research output of the institution.

Next Steps

- **Continued Monitoring and Collaboration:**
The Central Quality Assurance Office will maintain oversight of the implementation of these recommendations, working closely with individual faculties, program directors, and administrative departments to ensure that improvements are being made in a timely and effective manner. Regular feedback loops will be established to evaluate progress and ensure that faculty and students are informed and engaged throughout the process.
- **Annual Review of Progress:**
In line with the guidelines established by UBT's Quality Manual, the Central Quality Assurance Office will conduct an annual review of this thematic report. This review will assess the progress made in each of the key areas outlined, and adjustments will be made to the plan as necessary to accommodate new challenges or emerging priorities.

4.2. Acknowledgments

We extend our sincere thanks to all academic staff and students who participated in the focus groups, discussions, and interviews that formed the basis of this analysis. Their insights and experiences have been invaluable in identifying areas for improvement and shaping the recommendations presented in this report. The Central Quality Assurance Office remains committed to fostering a culture of continuous improvement, where feedback is actively sought and acted upon to enhance the overall quality of education at UBT.

This collaborative effort between the Central Quality Assurance Office, faculty, and students is key to ensuring that UBT continues to deliver a high-quality academic experience that supports both teaching excellence and student success.

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Quality Office of College UBT