

## UTLO's response to the recommendations in QPA's Evaluation of College Academic Monitoring & Support (AMS) and UTLO' Status Report on AMS

#	Source	Recommendation	RESPONSE
1	AMS report 2012 - Recommendation 1	The Senate <b>approved criteria</b> are not interpreted consistently by the Colleges and <b>need to be revised</b> .	Supported. Revised criteria for reporting purposes are being developed in conjunction with the T&L strategy group. Revised criteria have been submitted to Senate in 2014 for approval.
2	AMS report 2012 - Recommendation 2	As enrolments increase " <b>At-risk</b> " <b>students should be tracked and analysed in greater depth as a cohort</b> .	UTLO has commissioned a data-analytics specialist from the USA to conduct workshops/provide training on data access, analysis and interpretation to enable Colleges to conduct cohort analyses.
3	AMS report 2012 - Recommendation 3	Deeper <b>analysis of first-year attrition</b> is required.	South African Surveys of Student Engagement (SASSE) will also commence in 2015, hosted by QPA.
4	AMS report 2012 - Recommendation 4	Further consideration needs to be given to the <b>performance of male students</b> .	Performance of male students may be attributed to their help-seeking behaviour; where males are less likely than females to seek support. UTLO will commission a university-wide study in 2015 to interrogate the performance and support-seeking behaviour of male students, to be conducted by an inter-College Research Team.
5	AMS report 2012 - Recommendation 5	Greater attention needs to be paid to academic monitoring and support activities in 3- year degrees. <b>Further analysis of the success of 4-year degrees needs to be undertaken to inform improvements in regulation-time completion in the 3- year degrees</b> .	The AMS colloquium will include a track on models of differentiated support systems for 3 and 4-year degrees.
6	AMS Evaluation - Recommendation 1	The panel recommends that the University <b>enforce a minimum generic standard that all Colleges ought to adhere to in respect to implementation and reporting on AMS programmes</b> . This might involve broadening the senate reporting criteria to include the gathering outcome-related data which would include student participation and progress as reflected by movement from one status to another. This collection of data ought to be viewed as process through which colleges can evaluate their AMS programmes rather than being seen as a compliance checklist.	The current criteria for reporting on AMS are being revised (see #1 above). With regards to minimum generic activities for implementation; it is proposed that all Colleges must offer the following 3 kinds of support to students: - <b>Intra-curricular support</b> : e.g. supplementary tutorials for at-risk students - <b>Extra-curricular support</b> : e.g. time-management and study skills workshops, psycho-social support activities etc. - <b>Academic literacies support</b> (numeracy and reading/writing literacies): e.g. scientific writing
7	AMS Evaluation - Recommendation 2	The panel recommends that the University ensure that <b>Colleges fully comply with Policy in terms of making AMS activities compulsory to underperforming students</b> . This could be enforced by making sure that there is a common understanding that Policy prescripts are not optional but need to be complied with.	There is no ambiguity about the compulsory nature of AMS activities for at-risk students (as mandated in the AMS policy). In November 2014, UTLO will host a workshop session at the planned AMS colloquium to ensure that there is a common understanding of the AMS policy at UKZN. Deans will be invited to attend.

8	AMS Evaluation - Recommendation 3	The panel recommends that the University engage Colleges in <b>exploring alternative funding models for their AMS programmes as the current funding regime is viewed by the panel as inadequate and unsustainable</b> . The uncertainty regarding the continuation of the DHET Teaching Development Grant that is currently utilised to fund most of AMS activities is just one indication that there might be threats to the viability of AMS in certain Colleges.	Currently the TDG is guaranteed to fund existing AMS programmes (proposed in the TDG214/16 cycle) until March 2016. There is a DHET expectation that: - that the University will absorb the costs, related to student support components of AMS, progressively post 2016. - funding for continued staff development initiatives (unrelated to teaching or teaching development) should be externally sourced.
9	AMS Evaluation - Recommendation 4	The panel recommends that the University <b>attend to staffing of AMS programmes as this seems to be a perennial problem for AMS at UKZN</b> . There seems not to be sufficient stability and continuity in staffing; the 2011 Review raised the same concern. In addition, there is also a need to attend to role clarification particularly between ADOs, counsellors and mentors.	A task team (consisting of College and AMS staff representatives) to examine the roles and responsibilities of AMS staff will develop a report and propose a framework for academic development at UKZN. This report will be submitted to Senate in November 2014 via the T&L strategy group.
10	AMS Evaluation - Recommendation 5	The panel recommends that the University <b>institute appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure that students who are deemed underperforming or 'at risk' all receive supportive services in order to determine and address the cause of their poor performance</b> . The panel is concerned that there are gaps in the monitoring and evaluation practices or procedures in place and that there is inconsistency in practices and implementation of policy, especially across the College.	<b>Monitoring:</b> It is proposed that a group consisting of; Deans (T&L), Academic leaders (T&L), Manager (Professional/Student Services) and ADOS, meet regularly (a least twice a semester) to discuss and monitor the progress of at-risk students. In addition, UKZN is in the process of trialling an automated system which provides real-time advice for both students and staff by identifying pathways to success in module choices. The SCALE UP programme (Scholarship for Advancement and Learning Upgrade Project) and enables staff and students to take full responsibility for student progression and success. It is currently being piloted in the School of Engineering. <b>Evaluation:</b> It is proposed that an external evaluation of AMS be conducted every 3 years.
11	AMS Evaluation - Recommendation 6	The panel recommends that the University <b>create formal platforms to share experience and good practice in the implementation of AMS programmes, research data and best practices amongst Colleges</b> .	An AMS Colloquium was first conducted in 2013 and will be an annual event to be co-hosted by UTLO and the Colleges in rotation.