Sub-theme: Quality Assurance Across ODL Programmes

An Assessment of the Industrial Attachment Course undertaken through the ODL Mode: A case of the B.Sc. Honours in Physical Education and Sport Programme in the Zimbabwe Open University.

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Abstract

The study sought to assess the effectiveness of the instruments used to ensure quality during the Industrial Attachment (IA) period, in the Physical Education and Sport (PES) Programme of the Zimbabwe Open University. Data collection in this qualitative research study was through document analysis and semi-structured interviews. Criterion purposive sampling identified thirteen from a population of fifty-two students registered for the IA course in 2012. Involvement in IA allows the attachés to put theory into practice. A combination of theoretical knowledge and practical skills provided by IA will produce a competent individual who will become productive in industry (Mafe, 2010). IA also provides an opportunity to establish links with the PES industry for both technical and administrative development (English and Koeppen, 1993). It brings awareness to the university knowledge gaps and the necessary improvement desired for quality training (Bukaliya, 2012). To improve, Bukaliya (2012) emphasises the need for universities to increase visits and revisit their regulations. The instruments were found to be informative, user friendly and effective in determining the quality of the programme. Reports from the cooperating partners and the attachés indicate a need to improve on issues including the extension of the attachment period, provision of resources by the university, improvement of competency and confidence of the student as he/she is admitted into the attachment programme. The study recommends consideration of human resource issues in the programme to enable adequate preparation and supervision of students on attachment. It also recommends the introduction of an attachment fee which will cater for needs of those involved.

Key words: Industrial Attachment, attaché, Physical Education and Sport

Introduction

This study sought to verify the quality of the Industrial Attachment (IA) undertaken by students in the programme of Bachelor of Science Honours in Physical Education and Sport at the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU). The verification was through the assessment of the documents used in the programme. IA, which can also be referred to as internship, is a programme which students in tertiary institutions take up in order to fulfill a course requirement. It is a programme where a student learns outside of the college or university confines while under the guidance of a mentor. Generally, a course which requires IA is considered more credible in the industry than that same course not having the same prerequisite. Opportunity for IA is normally provided by the industry for
which the student may be training. For instance, students training to become accountants get attached in accounting firms while those training to become teachers, take up such posts in educational institutions in the form of Teaching Practice (TP). It follows therefore that students training in Physical Education and Sport (PES) take up similar posts in the industry of PES, which may be educational institutions or sport organisations. The industries which take up students for attachment may be considered their employers or cooperating partners of the student’s college or university. The duration of the IA and the stage in the student’s programme at which he/she is expected to go for the attachment may vary with institutions, faculty or the department. Some institutions send their students out during the first year, second year or even in the last year which may be the third or fourth year. Depending on the stipulations of the mother institution, the IA period may last a matter of hours, weeks, months or even a whole year. Bukaliya (2012) notes that in the ZOU, students in the Faculty of Arts and Education are on attachment for longer that those in the Faculty of Social Sciences who undertake the programme right at the end of their course. The IA programme can be either student driven or institution driven. For instance, in Zimbabwe, Teachers’ Colleges take a very active role in identifying and posting their students for TP and students will go where they are posted and not where they choose to go. Generally, in Polytechnic Colleges and Universities, the institution paves the way by signing memoranda of agreement with firms and after which it then becomes the student’s business to find a place in any of these companies.

A variety of factors may contribute to either the success or failure of the IA programme. These may range from the level of the student upon entry into the programme, the duration of the programme, the type of the company a student is attached to or the assistance the student gets while undertaking the programme. It is in light of these and other factors that this study sought to assess the quality of the IA programme undertaken by ZOU students studying for the BSc. Honours in PES which commenced in 2010.

**Background**

Since its first intake in 2001, the Department of PES has had IA as a requirement for students to complete the degree. The IA programme seems to be driven more by the student than by the Department in the sense that apart from marking the student’s assignment and examination, it tends to take a back seat. For a long time, the Department has banked on the Internship Module for guidance in the programme. The student’s report and file which chronicles events taking place during the attachment period, serves as proof that a student has undertaken the course. Responses in examinations seem to bring to the fore two possible situations. One situation seems to raise suspicion as to whether the student has really undertaken the programme and another situation seems to show evidence of involvement by the student. It is difficult to mark the student down as there is no real tangible evidence to show that the student has really not been involved in the IA. It would also be unethical to mark the student down on purely speculative basis. So, the student gets benefit of the doubt.

Another issue is that, based on information received from graduates, it is observed that upon graduation, they find it difficult to penetrate the industry especially on the sporting side of the programme. It is not clear whether the reason is that they have not undertaken IA or not. On the other hand, those whose background is Physical Education as they join the degree programme and who remain in the same field upon graduation, will even get promotion. However, it is also not clear whether the promotion is based on improved competency due to the attainment of
the higher qualification or simply because they have attained that higher qualification. English and Koeppen (1993) report on an empirical examination done by Siegel and Rigby (1988) on the relationship between participation in student internship programmes and subsequent professional performance. They report that performance is measured in two ways: (1) annual performance evaluations by supervisors; and (2) advancement rates as indicated by the number of months it takes an individual to be promoted from one level to the next. It is established in the examination that both evaluations and advancement rates are significantly better for the interns. However, be that as it may, feedback from the students themselves as well as other stakeholders such as part-time tutors and those from National Sport Associations (NSA) implied that ZOU graduates were not adequately prepared for the field of work. The reasons highlighted were the short duration of the attachment period and that the University’s involvement in the IA programme seemed minimal.

The ZOU requires the student to do two sessions of the IA, attachment one, in the first year and attachment two, in the second year. Although technically the attachment periods last for one semester per period, in actual fact, it was measured by the number of hours stipulated for Internship One and Internship Two in the module which is not less than thirty hours per period. The IA was then improved from just the few hours per semester to three whole semesters. Rather than bring it on in the first year as Internship One, coded PES106, and later in the second year as Internship Two, coded PES205, IA was moved to begin in the last semester of the second year to continue in the first semester of the third year. The two semesters form a whole year of IA which Hoffman (2004) also recommends. In addition, the first semester of the last year (fourth year) was added, PES404, making the IA period one and a half years long. Students will then be assessed on their involvement for one and a half years rather than on the few hours previously stipulated before the year 2010. The Department generated documents to go with this change. The purpose of these documents is to ensure quality in the attachment programme. The documents are listed as follows:

- an introductory letter which the student uses in securing a place for attachment,
- a form which the cooperating partner uses to monitor and evaluate the attaché and which is sent back to the University at the end of the attachment period,
- the University Regulations,
- memorandum on regulations guiding Industrial Attachment to Regional Programme Coordinators (RPCs),
- the report and chronicle of events written by the student and submitted in the form of a file
- the course module; and
- the agreement for cooperation signed between ZOU and some of its stakeholders.

It is these documents that the study seeks to assess in order to ascertain their effectiveness in ensuring quality in the attachment programme.

By its very nature, Open and Distance Learning (ODL) presents challenges to programmes like IA. The attaché has to balance the requirements of his/her fulltime employment, family and the attachment. Also advised by similar programmes carried out by the University of Zimbabwe (UZ), which at eight years, is still facing teething problems (Matamande, Nyikahadzoi, Taderera and Mandimika, 2013), this study is keen to make a scientific assessment of the IA.

**Purpose**

The purpose of the study is to analyse the documents used in the IA programme with the aim of assessing their impact on the quality of the programme as it is undertaken by students in the programme of Bachelor of Sci-
ence Honours in Physical Education and Sport at the ZOU.

Statement of the Problem

The concern in this study is to establish quality assurance levels pertaining to the documents used to guide the IA programme in the BSc (Honours) PES at the ZOU.

Research Questions

• In carrying out this study, the researchers are guided by the following research questions;
• How do the documents being used to guide the IA programme in the ZOU ensure quality?
• How are the generated documents for the IA understood by the cooperating partners?

Limitations

There are two limitations to the study. The first is the fact that the researchers are the generators of the documents under scrutiny. The second one is that one of the researchers also happens to be one of the RPCs whose students were on attachment and who was also a participant in the interviews. However, the researchers’ professional side takes more precedence over anything else as it is hoped that information gained will assist in improving the programme.

Review of Related Literature

Different sources of literature agree that an opportunity for IA presents the attaché with advantages he/she may not ordinarily access if he/she does not undertake the programme. Agreeing with Chowdry and Sudha (1995) who assert that students are trained according to the requirements and standards of the industry, Mupfumira and Mutsambi (2012) affirm that considering the non-availability of specialised machinery and equipment in educational institutions it is a good idea for students to go on IA. Many National Sport Associations which enjoy support from their International Federations (IF) have appropriate equipment and facilities which attachés can benefit from and it is important that Universities identify which these organisations are before they can accept them for student attachment. Upon graduation, students find it easier to work with equipment that they have practised with during training (IA) than that which they meet for the first time as they start working. This training is essential as it ensures proper handling technique of equipment and machinery and helps to avoid unnecessary injury. Such earlier practice assists to build on the individual’s self-esteem and confidence. The IA programme is meant to create an environment similar to the one which the student will find in his/her working life. ZOU, through this IA programme is trying to make sure that its students are exposed to real work experiences before they complete their degree programme. Mafe (2010) and English and Koeppen (1993) agree with this initiative by advocating that IA exposes students to the environment in which they will eventually work. Apart from appropriate equipment, the sports organisations where students are attached should have mentors who have higher academic qualifications and experience than the attachés who are attached to them, to avoid a situation where mentors learn from the attachés. This will increase the attachés confidence in the organisation and the university will also be assured of a highly trained product.

Wertsch and Terwell (1999) highlight the fact that meaningful learning takes place in meaningful contexts which they refer to as ‘communities of practice’. While it is all very well to learn theory or the basics during tutorials as is the case at ZOU, this study agrees with Nkwane (1983) and Frantz (1997) that the practice of a technology is essentially an art and as such it can be learnt in the context of its practice on the job. Without this prac-
tice, a student who may obtain high scores in the theoretical examination and maybe even get the book prize at graduation may perform dismally when employed as he/she may not have had the requisite work experience. According to Matamande, Nyikahadzoi, Taderera and Mandimika (2013), IA has increasingly become an important element of training as employers continue to demand for fully trained personnel. IA is also capable of developing in the attaché appropriate communication skills (Ling and Fern, 2002). It is with these ideas in mind that ZOU has signed agreements of partnership with some reputable organizations of the PES sector so as to ensure that students are assured of the required total training. Schneider (2010) and Barbeau & Stull (1990) also agree that there are aspects of every profession that cannot be learned in the classroom, but must be learned where the profession is practiced. It is the responsibility of the industry to ensure proper training for the future employee.

For the IA to be meaningful and credible, attachés should be supervised during their attachment to ensure that meaningful learning takes place. From the literature available it has been noted that various institutions have devised different methods of supervising their students on attachment. The University of Zimbabwe uses the employer to supervise the attachés and the employer is required to produce a summary view of the students’ performance. The lecturers also assess the students and the students are expected to produce a final report (Matamande et al, 2013).

Methodology

The study was of a qualitative nature and two techniques for data generation were used. The first was document analysis through which the university instruments used in the programme were analysed. The documents which were developed in 2010 were as follows:

A. memorandum on guidelines for IA to RPCs,
B. the course module,
C. the agreement for cooperation signed between ZOU and NSAs and other sport organisations,
D. the student introduction letter,
E. the monitoring and evaluation form,
F. the University Regulations, and
G. the student report and file

Document analysis involves scrutinising relevant documents, written or printed matter, verbal or in pictorial forms (Neuman, 2000). The second technique was the semi-structured interview which involved the ten RPCs and the attachés. The interview has several advantages which include among others, the provision of first hand information by the participants, and an opportunity to follow-up and probe further (Smith, 1995) on responses. In carrying out the interview, the researchers equally divided the Regional Centres between them, making sure that the co-researcher who also happens to be an RPC was interviewed by the other to ensure objectivity. The key interview questions focused on how the respondents viewed the document(s) relevant to their own category, with regard to quality issues in the IA programme. Students were asked how the course module and the introduction letter assisted in facilitating a smooth transition into IA. The RPCs were asked about how they viewed the course module, the memorandum on regulations guiding IA, and the University Regulations as they guide the IA programme.

The criterion purposive sampling technique was employed to come up with a sample of thirteen (25%) from the whole population of fifty-two students who were registered for the IA programme in the year 2012, the ten RPCs, two of whom are not subject specialists (baby-sitting the PES programme) and six mentors representing cooperating partners. The RPCs represented the following ten ZOU Regional Centres:
• Bulawayo Region,
• Harare Region,
• Manicaland Region,
• Mashonaland Central Region,
• Mashonaland East Region,
• Mashonaland West Region,
• Masvingo Region,
• Matebeleland South Region,
• Matebeleland North Region, and
• Midlands Region.

The six mentors came from the following cooperating partners:
• Zimbabwe Olympic Committee (ZOC) – Harare Region.
• Zimbabwe Rugby Union (ZRU) – Manicaland Region.
• Zimbabwe Handball Association – Mashonaland East Region.
• Mbare Academy – Harare Region.
• Midwest Rhinos – Kwekwe Sports Club - Midlands Region.
• Midlands State University: Student Affairs Sports and Recreation - Midlands Region.
• Manicaland Netball Association.
• SOS Hermann Gmeiner – Harare Region.

This sampling technique was appropriate as it ensured that only an information rich group was used as participants. Although some regions did not have students registered in the IA programme of 2012, the sampling technique still allowed all the ten regions of the country to be involved through the participation of RPCs as shown above. A narrative analysis of data was through a review of the evaluations made by mentors, reports and chronicle of events compiled and submitted by attachés as well as information collected through interviews with both attachés and RPCs.

Findings and Discussion

A review of information collected through the analysis of the guideline on IA for RPCs for the ten ZOU Regional Centres. The following are the highlights of the IA guidelines:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Memorandum on Guidelines for IA to RPCs</th>
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<tr>
<td>(1) In any one period of IA, effort should be made to ensure that students are not crowded in the same organisation.</td>
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<td>(2) Students should market the university through acceptable conduct.</td>
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<td>(3) There is the possibility of cooperating partners learning from the attachés.</td>
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<td>(4) RPCs should maintain a register indicating who and where students are attached.</td>
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<td>(5) Effort should be made to ensure that students are placed only in organisations of good repute where experts are available.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(6) RPCs should identify ideal places for student attachment before even the commencement of the IA period.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(7) To ensure authenticity and quality check, monitoring and evaluation documents from the cooperating partners, should be sent to the University signed and stamped and in a sealed envelope.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(8) The assessment for the course shall be through an end of semester examination, the student’s file showing a chronicle of events of the IA programme and the student’s report giving an overview of his/her experience and suggestions.</td>
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</table>
With respect to the guidelines above, a number of observations were made. With reference to guideline (1) above, which discourages crowding of attachés in one organisation, it was observed that while in many regions, students were evenly distributed among different organisations, in one region most of the students (80%) were attached in the same organisation. It is understood as expressed in the memorandum that the reason for such a scenario may be the scarcity of a variety of organisations to go to, but the same document also highlights the disadvantage of such a situation. For instance while other regions may be getting experience from different organisations, such as the National Sport Associations, academies, clubs and tertiary institutions offering a diversity of sporting disciplines, the affected region may suffer from limited exposure and therefore limited experience. This expression of limited experience and exposure should only be understood in this study to mean lack of an assortment of experience in other areas and nothing more. Although according to many researchers, for example, Cannon and Arnold (1998) and Matamande et al. (2013), IA may pave the way for permanent employment upon graduation, the practice of allowing many students to do their IA in the same organisation at the same time, may limit such chances for the attaché as the organisation may be able to take only so many at any one time. However, on the other hand, this situation may actually work to the advantage of the organisation which may have a big pool of trained volunteers as sport in Zimbabwe and indeed elsewhere, relies on volunteer workers. In as far as guideline (1) is concerned, the memorandum is considered effective as it discourages crowding of attachés in one organisation at any one IA period.

With reference to guideline (2) above, which says ‘Students should market the University through acceptable conduct’, it is noted through comments in the Monitoring and Evaluation Form from cooperating partners that attachés were able to market the University and the BSc (Honours) in PHES programme as they portrayed themselves as good representatives of the institution. According to English and Koeppen, (1993) and Matamande et al, (2013), IA programmes are a marketing forum for various universities. Matamande et al, (2013) encourage students to be well behaved as this helps to create a good reputation for their university, otherwise, misbehaviour by students may be a reason for an organisation to deny attachment opportunity for other students (www.regentghan.net/ student%20placement/ industrial%20Attachment).

Remarks also indicated that as a result of their ability to explain the benefits of the BSc programme to the development of fellow coaches and others, attachés made strides to get other coaches to join the BSc Honours programme. Organisations were impressed by the fact that attachés were visibly operating at degree level as they were able to implement what they had learnt in the lecture room and worked to the expectation of the industry. In agreement, Mihail (2006) points out that IA programmes are perceived as a valuable way to acquire broad competencies where the practical knowledge obtained supports and complements the theoretical studies learned in the classrooms. It was noted that attachés had a good approach to work as they consulted and strived to learn new skills and demonstrated a high level of mastery of skills. It is reported that students displayed a high level of commitment, interest and dedication as revealed by mentors’ comments in the Monitoring and Evaluation Forms.

However, in some cases, comments from some cooperating partners failed to give adequate information about what they meant by some of their statements. For instance, in response to Section D of the Monitoring and Evaluation form which asked for Effective marketability of ZOU by student, some
organisations would write, “student was very marketable” or “executed well” or “highly marketable”. These comments were an indication that the RPCs had done a good job of emphasising to the students the importance of marketing the University. However, the researchers observed that without qualifying their statements, it was not clear what the organisations meant. This problem could have emanated from the fact that the document itself (Monitoring and Evaluation form), was in the first place not clear as it did not state specifically what the organisation was supposed to identify in the attaché to consider him/her marketable. It failed to lead the co-operating partners adequately and this may cause misunderstandings between the organisations and the University (Matamande et al., 2013). This therefore points to the fact that there is no congruence between the memorandum (Guidelines for IA) and some parts of the monitoring form, in particular Section D.

Guideline (3) in the memorandum refers to the possibility of cooperating partners learning from the attachés. While literature clearly indicates that there are chances that organisations may learn from attachés (Mupfumira and Mutsambi, 2012), in this research, there is no evidence in the documents in question where it shows that this happened. On the other hand, Hoffman (2004) in Mupfumira and Mutsambi (2012) puts across the fact that just by the mere fact that the attaché is on IA, industrialists are able to influence change and become knowledgeable about current educational thought. They also have a chance to improve their operations and not be satisfied with the existing status quo. An assessment of the University documents reveals that they are silent on that issue. No provision in the documents has been given to the organisations to point out what they might have learnt from attachés. Further to that, the attachés have not been given an opportunity in the documents to indicate what they could also have learnt from the organisations in spite of the fact that Chowdry and Sudha (1995); Shariff and Muhamad (2010) clearly point out that industry trains students according to its requirements and standards which means that they are trained to meet the requirement of the employer when on IA. The omission of such provisions obviously compromises on quality. It is therefore apparent that there is a need to redress the current situation from both sides.

Guideline (4) in the memorandum encourages RPCs to maintain a register indicating who and where students are attached. This is a system which can help in ensuring that there is no crowding of attachés in one organisation at any one time. As mentioned above, it was eminent through the Monitoring and Evaluation Form that in one region, most of the students (80%) were attached in the same organisation. Mafe (2010) also agrees with the register system for those on IA to ensure an accurate record so as to avoid unilateral change of place without approval by the institution. It also helps to curb against reports suspected as fake which were mentioned earlier, from students purporting that they have been on IA while they have not been. Apparently, fake reports and crowding of attachés (Bukaliya, 2012) can compromise on quality.

Guideline (5) in the memorandum advises that effort should be made to ensure that students are placed only in organisations of good repute where experts are available. Organisations of good repute guarantee that attachés can benefit in a number of ways. The accessibility of experts gives assurance that attachés are mentored effectively, thus avoid a situation where reports show that qualified staff to supervise the interns has been in short supply (Tackett, Wolf and Law, 2001). According to Bukaliya (2012) universities should be responsible to ensure that programmes are offering meaningful learning experiences for their students. Since they are the experts, they should find enough confidence to remove the fear by some mentors that their jobs might be at risk of being taken by attachés
that may prove to be very good. According to Bukaliya (2012), 47% of respondents in his study claimed that attachés were at times resented and isolated by full time staff because of being perceived as more knowledgeable than the said staff. An assessment of the students’ reports indicated no mention of benefits accrued as a result of working with experts and of being attached in a reputable organisation. Nevertheless it is expected that by handling them with respect, experts among other things, induce confidence in the attachés.

Guideline (6) in the memorandum accentuates that RPCs should identify ideal places for student attachment before even the commencement of the IA period. This exercise gives a head-start to the RPC as he/she advises prospective attachés of where to hunt. This practice has the advantage that prospective attachés do not waste time wondering about in search of places for IA in organisations that may not be approved of by the University. In a study by Bukaliya (2012) where potential benefits and challenges of IA were investigated, one student indicated that he had spent most of the semester looking for a teaching post to enable him to do his teaching practice (IA). Respondents in the same study felt that the University was leaving the burden to students to look for their own organisations for IA. Further to that twenty eight percent (28%) of the respondents suggested that the institution should accredit and recommend suitable companies for internship. The exercise by the institution, of identifying potential organisations for placement prior to the commencement of IA also helps attachés to approach in the first instance only those organisations which are approved by the University to ensure that they do not lose on valuable training time. Accordingly, Mafe (2010) emphasises that it is imperative to encourage students to seek relevant and up-to-standard places for attachment early and to discourage them from trying to change their initial places of attachment after the commencement of IA in order to make the training intervention effective and beneficial to the student. Once this happens, the chance of a student being disqualified by the University for having been attached in a lowly regarded organisation is out of the question. The reasons for the scarcity of approved organisations may range from the economic challenges being faced by industries worldwide, forcing students to grab anything that comes their way (Matamande, 2013) to the refusal of some employers to take up students for IA (Mafe, 2010). Literature notes that when students do not get enough guidance in this respect, they spend a lot of time hopelessly hunting and in some instances; some students may realise that they have already run out of time before they get attached (Bukaliya, 2012).

Guideline (7) in the memorandum emphasizes the need to ensure authenticity and to quality check the monitoring and evaluation documents from the cooperating partners by insisting that they are sent to the University signed and stamped and in a sealed envelope. By so doing, chances of suspecting that attachés might temper with them are minimized. Sixteen percent (16%) of those interviewed by Bukaliya (2012) were of the view that documentation submitted to the department upon completion of the internship programme was prone to being tampered with by the students. Apart from giving information on the conduct of the student while he/she was on IA, the Monitoring and Evaluations Form could be a reliable indication that a student was truly on attachment, so the information should be protected as much as possible. However, if this information is not so protected and any other person outside of the designated representative of the cooperating partner has access to it, its reliability can be doubtful, hence compromise on quality. The availability of this information therefore ensures quality in the IA programme.

Guideline (8) in the memorandum stipulates that the assessment for the course shall be through an end of semester examination, the student’s file showing a chronicle of events
of the IA programme and the student’s report giving an overview of his/her experience. It is imperative that students know how they will be assessed at the end of the programme so that they can work towards fulfilling the requirements. The assessment criteria also give weight to the IA programme over a course which might not be a core course, but an option. As a course carrying credit points, it is also important that the criteria for assessment are in congruence with the University Regulations which also indicate that the same criteria must be satisfied. At other universities such as the University of Zimbabwe (UZ), the assessment comprises the employer overall summary view of the student’s performance, followed by an assessment by the lecturer and a final report from the students (Matamande et al, 2013). The difference noted between the ZOU and UZ is that while the ZOU Monitoring and Evaluation Form carries information from the cooperating partner, it is not an assessment tool as the case is with employer overall summary view of the student’s performance for the UZ. At the ZOU, there is no lecturer who makes an assessment of the student in the same manner as the UZ. While the common factor between the two institutions is the student’s final report, the ZOU has another criterion in the form of the student’s file carrying a chronicle of events which happened during the IA. Both the student’s report and the file are marked as coursework assignments 1 and 2. In addition, the ZOU requires that an end of semester examination be taken. In another institution, the Regent Industrial Placement Experience (RIPE) for Undergraduate Student (Ghana) www.regentghan.net/student%20placement/industrial%20Attachment, the key components for assessment are an evaluation of the IA experience and the student’s report. In ZOU the Monitoring and Evaluation Form is completed by the co-operating partner and submitted to the University while in RIPE there is an evaluation form for the student and another for the employer. This student’s report is different from the one in the ZOU in that it is marked by the mentor while in the ZOU it is marked by the University. While similarities and differences have been noted among the three institutions cited in this study, the conclusion is that quality issues concerning assessment of IA are satisfactory in the ZOU.

### Analysis of Document B

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Document</th>
<th>Content Relating to Quality Issues</th>
<th>Shortcomings to Quality Issues</th>
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<tr>
<td>The course module,</td>
<td>Caters for four IA sessions.</td>
<td>It assumes that all stakeholders including cooperation partners at host centres are in possession of the module. Biased towards the education system more and seems to ignore the sporting side.</td>
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<td>Provides the following:</td>
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<td>Seven aims of IA</td>
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<td>Nine objectives of IA</td>
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<td>Attachment procedures</td>
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<td>Guidelines for student attachés</td>
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<td>Guidelines for University Supervisors</td>
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<td>Expectations of the Student attachés</td>
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<td>The IA sequence</td>
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<td>Guide to IA evaluation</td>
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<td>Criteria for assessment of the IA student</td>
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<td>Teaching methods</td>
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<td>Important hints on the teaching of Minor and major game skills</td>
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<td>Guidelines for lesson design</td>
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<td>Guidelines for action planning</td>
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Discussion

Some observations were made as regards the IA module being used by RPCs and attachés. First and foremost, it should be noted that this is not a module but a handbook for Internship. The handbook outlines quite a number of issues to be addressed by the RPCs, attachés and cooperating partners. Mafe (2010) states that guidelines must be put in place to ensure the smooth implementation of the student’s industrial work – experience scheme. To this effect, the ZOU handbook on IA outlines the aims and objectives of the IA. The handbook also outlines the guidelines for the student attachés, cooperating partners, hosting schools and universities. These guidelines are meant to give each stakeholder ways of effectively implementing the IA programme. The deficiency of this handbook lies in the fact that it gives more attention to attachés that are operating in schools than those in other sport organisations. It focuses on teaching methods, hints on teaching minor and major game skills, teaching disabled children and lesson design. In reference to quality issues, the guidelines in the handbook lack detail of how exactly the student attaché and the cooperating partner should operate.

Discussion

The agreement for cooperation signed between ZOU and NSAs and other sport organisations plays a pivotal role in the training of student attachés as it manifests the benefits the cooperating partners stand to accrue by training the students as well as provide guidance while training them. This assertion is confirmed by Mafe (2010) who stipulates that the adherence to the guidelines of the IA by every stakeholder ensures the successful implementation of the scheme and the attainment of the objectives and goals of the IA. Waryzack (1999) in Matamande

Analysis of Document C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Document</th>
<th>Content Relating to Quality Issues</th>
<th>Shortcomings to Quality Issues</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The agreement for cooperation signed between ZOU and NSAs and other sport organisations,</td>
<td>Written on University letterhead States clearly to whom it is addressed. Gives background of student attachés to the organisation. Highlight work expectations of students after graduation. States the purpose of IA. Stipulates the university’s expectations from the cooperating partner who will be involved in IA programme. States anticipated benefits of IA to the cooperating partners. Description of the collaboration anticipated between ZOU and the cooperating partner. Tear – off slip to show agreement to the proposed collaboration to be signed and returned to the University by cooperating partner. Stakeholder’s signature and position in the organisation to show authenticity of the agreement.</td>
<td>Document does not have a section where the individual signing on behalf of the organisation shows his/her qualifications both professional and academic.</td>
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</table>
et al. (2013) is of the same opinion that if employers have prior knowledge of the student’s expectations of their organisations, they are better placed to assist the students for successful entry into the industry. Some of the tenets of this agreement are the highlights on the purposes of the IA, the University’s expectations from the cooperating partners and anticipated benefits of IA to the cooperating partners. It should be noted that it is not only the attaché who benefits from the IA but also the cooperating partner as stipulated by English and Koeppen (1993) who affirm that an obvious benefit to the employer firm is the opportunity to obtain qualified students to serve as employees during heavy workload periods. This agreement for cooperation between ZOU and NSAs shows in all respects that the document meets the quality expected of the documents in the programme.

Discussion

Some observations were made in connection with the student introduction letter. It was noted that the letter has all the necessary details of the student seeking for an IA place which in a way makes it easier for the cooperating partner to identify the student. For purposes of authenticity, the letter bears the university letter head, university stamp, signatures of the National Programme Leader for PES and the Dean of Faculty of Science and Technology. However, some of the shortcomings are that the letter does not indicate at what level of IA the student looking for a place for attachment is. The letter is generic and not addressed to any specific sport organisations. It is envisaged that if the letters were specifically addressed to a particular sport organisation then the letters would carry more weight and the organisations would readily accept the students.

Analysis of Document D

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Document</th>
<th>Content Relating to Quality Issues</th>
<th>Shortcomings to Quality Issues</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The student introduction letter</td>
<td>Is on university letter head Introduces student name and Personal Identification Number (PIN) States the university, faculty and programme Spells out the purpose of the letter Footnote indicates which Intakes are covered by the current IA programme. Signed by National Programme Leader for Physical Education and Sport. Recommended, signed and dated by the Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology.</td>
<td>The letter does not indicate what academic year the student is. Not dated by Programme Leader Not signed by the Department Chairperson</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Analysis of Document E

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Document</th>
<th>Content Relating to Quality Issues</th>
<th>Shortcomings to Quality Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The monitoring and evaluation form,</td>
<td>On letter head showing faculty, department and programme&lt;br&gt;Provides space to fill in the date when form was completed.</td>
<td>The form does not show the qualifications of the individual who has completed the monitoring and evaluation form.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Section A**<br>Student information<br>• Name of student<br>• Student intake<br>• IA commencing date<br>• IA ending date

**Section B**<br>Details of the organisation providing IA<br>• Name of organisation<br>• Organisation specialities<br>• Student mentor level in the organisation

**Section C**<br>IA requirements<br>Professionalism<br>• Student turnout<br>• Punctuality<br>• Commitment<br>• Level of interest<br>• Communication skills<br>• Duties assigned

**Section D**<br>Effective marketability of university by student<br>Effective marketability of BSc (Honours) PES programme by student<br>Student's strong points<br>Suggestions for improvement

Provides space to sign and write the designation of the member in the organisation
Discussion

The monitoring and evaluation form that is completed by stakeholders is not part of the assessment used by the university but this helps in monitoring students during IA and is also used to confirm that the student was actually on attachment. The monitoring and evaluation form also guides the stakeholders on the areas they can train students in. This ensures uniformity and quality in training students. As alluded to by Mafe (2010) quality management involves the setting up of standards for a process and monitoring performance or outcomes to see if the set standards are met or not. The monitoring and evaluation form is divided into four sections, A to D. Section A deals with student information pertaining to the name of the student, his/her Personal Identity Number (PIN) and date for commencing and ending IA at the organisation. Section B is on details of the organisation providing IA. Information on the organisation’s specialties is supplied here. This information is very critical to the university as it will use it to advise future students who may want to get attached to such an organisation for IA.

Section C deals with the IA requirements for the attaché. The organisation is expected to give details on the performance of the attaché and duties assigned that period. In the last section, the organisation is expected to give information pertaining to how the student was able to market the ZOU and the B.Sc. (Honours) PES programme during his/her attachment. However, the form does not stipulate the indicators for marketing the University that would assist the organisation when completing the form. As mentioned earlier, Matamande et al. (2013) support the idea of IA. The idea of marketing the university is highlighted by Matamande et al. (2013) who state that the more the students do well the more they market their respective universities and therefore, ultimately the more reputable their universities become. The information supplied by organisations will assist the PES department to see generally how students are performing while on attachment. The UZ and other institutions use the employer’s overall summary view of the student’s performance as part of their assessment (Matamande et al. 2013). The items included in this monitoring and evaluation form seem to ensure quality in the programme. However the credibility of the document is jeopardised as it does not show the academic and professional qualifications of the person who will have signed it. This will assist the PES department to assess if students are being attached to people who have higher qualifications than them. The IA regulations stipulate that the attachés need to learn under someone else who can give them more guidance and knowledge beyond their own.

Analysis of Document F

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Document</th>
<th>Content Relating to Quality Issues</th>
<th>Shortcomings to Quality Issues</th>
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</table>
| The University Regulations | • States the course intended for IA.  
• Guides students where to undertake IA  
Assessment criteria  
• File  
• A report  
• Written examination at the end of each IA semester. | Non identified |
Discussion

The University Regulations clearly stipulate what courses the students should undertake in order to fulfill the requirements of the BSc Honours programme. These are PES219, PES312 and PES404. In the University, assessment is based on coursework assignments and written examinations. The assessment criteria for IA require the submission of an attachment file, an attachment report as well as a written examination. The file and report which are the coursework for each semester are worth 20% while the written examination is worth 80%. The file and report which the attaché submits to the university is to confirm that he/she has been on attachment.

Analysis of Document G

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University Document</th>
<th>Content Relating to Quality Issues</th>
<th>Shortcomings to Quality Issues</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The student report and file</td>
<td><strong>The report:</strong> Introduction of the report citing preparations of the IA programme. Activities carried out by interns during the IA period. Summary of strengths of the IA programme highlighted in the report:</td>
<td>There is no agreed format of the report and file. Each student comes up with his/her own way of compiling a file.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interns learnt to manage big groups of athletes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• They learnt to work as a team</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The IA broadened the attaché’s horizon in terms of the needs and requirement of a coach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• They learnt about inclusion of athletes in sports programmes</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Learnt leadership roles</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Learnt to respect subordinates</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The programme prepared the interns to be experts in their areas of specialisation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The IA programme gave the attaché a chance to incorporate and emphasise what the intern had learnt into real world experience</td>
<td></td>
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Challenges

• Attachés were confronted by negative attitudes from the community and staff they worked with
• They faced disrespect from some athletes during training
• They faced lack of training resources
• They faced financial problems to travel to the centre
• They lacked knowledge on the expectations and requirement of the IA programme
• Some attachés were excluded from outreach programmes organised by cooperating partners

Recommendations:

• ZOU regional centres should mount tutorials to prepare students for IA
Discussion

The students’ files and reports were analysed to establish whether they contained valuable information. Having analysed both the file and the report, it was found out that the students presented the reports and file in different formats, suggesting that the PES department has no agreed format in compiling the two documents, hence there is no uniformity. However, the reports indicate that the students were benefiting from the IA. From their reports, the students mentioned some of the strengths of the programme as being able to work as a team, among many other benefits. The challenges that students mentioned in their reports include disrespect from some athletes, lack of training resources and lack of knowledge on the expectations and requirement of the IA programme. Among the recommendations were that the university lecturers should make regular visits to their areas of attachment and that the university should mount awareness programmes to conscientise the cooperating partners. To this end, the students suggested that they should be made to pay IA fees that will be used to assist in the IA programme.

From the interviews with the students it was noted that they faced negative attitude from the community and staff they worked with. Eight (62%) of the students interviewed echoed the same sentiments that lecturers needed to visit the students. During the interview the students suggested that the RPCs should conduct tutorials to prepare them for IA. Mafe (2010) also agrees that tertiary institutions should organise orientation programmes for students to prepare them for industrial training.
Ten RPCs were interviewed on their views as regards the memorandum on guidance to regulate IA. The ten (100%) RPCs all agreed that the document was very clear on how to guide students on where to get attached during IA which should not be their places of work. The ten RPCs also agreed that the memorandum reminds them to keep a record of who has gone on attachment and where. However, eight of the ten (80%) felt that the document should have included the idea of following up of students on IA which they think adds value to the programme and creates good relationship with the co-operating partners allowing the University to be taken seriously by the organisations (Matamande et al., 2013). The RPC’s response on the module on IA was that the module was out dated and no longer serves its purpose. The information in the module can be confused to cater only for students who are teachers by profession if one of the aims of the module is not accurately interpreted. It states that the internship blocks are designed for the purpose of serving the schools and community in pursuing the benefits and values of Physical Education and Sport. The community is not only served by teachers, but also by coaches, officials, administrators and others.

The attaché’s response on the introductory letter was that, the letter served its purpose as they did not face any challenges when they took it to the co-operating partners in search for places of attachment. In response to the usefulness of the module the attaché felt that the module did not help them much as it focused more on schools rather than on various sport organisations where they find themselves attached. Those who were interviewed pointed out that due to the observed limitations of the module there is need for the RPCs to conduct tutorials that would guide students to have a smooth transition into the IA programme. It was revealed by both groups, RPCs and students that not much is happening in terms of tutorials for IA. Fifty percent of the RPCs said they conducted tutorials for IA while the other fifty percent assumed that the orientation attachés got at the organisation sufficed.

Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to verify the quality of the IA undertaken by students in the programme of the Bachelor of Science Honours in Physical Education and Sport at the ZOU. This was done through the analysis of documents used in the programme to ascertain their effectiveness in ensuring quality. Information was also collected through interviewing attachés, PRCs and students. Findings from this study indicate that the guideline on IA for RPCs was effective as it provided adequate guidance to them. Co-operating partners expressed satisfaction with the calibre of attachés that they said portrayed themselves as good representatives of the institution and had good approach to work as they consulted and strived to learn new skills while demonstrating a high level of mastery of skills.

With regard to the agreement of cooperation that is signed between the ZOU, NSA and other sport organisations, it was found that the document clearly gives the background information of the student interns. The document highlights the university’s expectations from the cooperating partners. However, it was noted that the document does not have a section where the individual signing on behalf of the organisation enters his/her academic and professional qualifications. Another document that was also analysed is the student introduction letter. On quality issues, it was noted that this document is not dated by the National Programme Leader for Physical Education and Sport.

The monitoring and evaluation form used by the cooperating partner has all the necessary details of the student attaché and provides for details of the organisation. However, it was noted that the document itself
Monitoring and Evaluation form, failed to explicitly show the role of the cooperating partner in some cases, such as, how to determine a student’s ability to market the University. It was noted that all the thirteen monitoring and evaluation forms sent to the university by the cooperating partners were signed and dated to show authenticity. The comments from the completed evaluation forms by cooperating partners suggest that the student interns should improve on their general fitness as they are involved in activities to do with Physical Education and Sport. It was observed that this evaluation form is not part of the assessment used by the university but only helps in monitoring students during IA period. The information got from the cooperating partner is credible as it is submitted to the University signed and in a sealed envelop. It was observed that the introduction letter is rather generic and does not address any specific organisation directly. It is also silent on the level of the prospective attaché.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made basing on the findings of this report:

- Human resource issues should be addressed to ensure that there are PES specialists coordinating the programme in all the Regions
- A new module on IA that would properly guide both the PRCs and the students on IA should be written to replace the IA handbook currently in use as a matter of urgency
- All the Regions should organise tutorials to ensure that students are adequately guided and prepared before going on the IA programme
- The department of Physical Education and Sport should devise a format to be used by students to compile their IA report and file so as to ensure uniformity
- The student’s report should highlight benefits accrued by the attaché as a result of working with experts and while on IA in general
- The monitoring and evaluation form should allow the cooperating partners to indicate what they have learnt/benefited from the attaché
- The monitoring and evaluation form should be reviewed so as to include what the attaché is expected to do in order to market the university and the B.Sc. Honours Physical Education and Sport programme
- The University should charge students IA fees that can be used for the operations of the IA programme
- The introductory letter should address the organisation by name so that the University is taken seriously by the organisation, as well as to avoid being generic
- The introductory letter should also include the level at which the attaché is entering the programme to enable appropriate placement by the organisation
References


Regent Industrial Placement Experience (RIPE) for Undergraduate Students. w w w . r e g e n t g h a n . n e t / / s t u d e n t % 2 0 p l a c e m e n t / i n d u s t r i a l % 2 0 a d d e n e e b u l l i t i o n. Accessed 13.11.2013.


