Embedding Quality Assurance in Online Courses at African Universities

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Outline

☑ **Project Background**

☑ **Quality Assurance Processes**

☑ **Successes and Challenges**

☑ **Outcomes**

☑ **Reflection and Discussion**

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PHEA ETI
Project Background

Vision is "to support interventions in universities to make **increasingly effective use of educational technology to address some of the underlying educational challenges** facing the higher educational sector in Africa"

Specific objective relevant for this presentation:

- Build academic capacity in quality online course design and delivery through use of a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for mounting over 140 online / blended courses

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7 participating sub-Saharan Africa HEIs

26 sub-projects
11 involving
online /blended courses
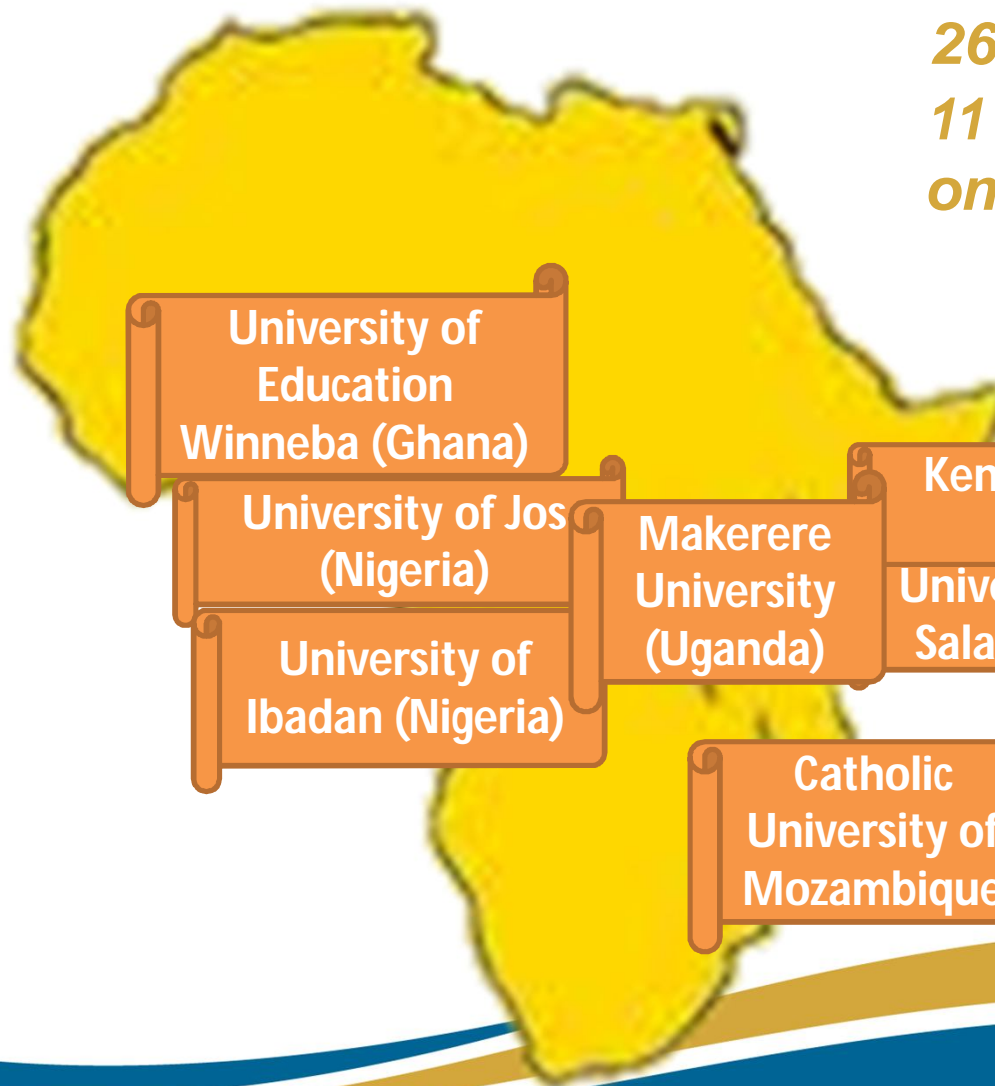
University of Education Winneba (Ghana)

University of Jos (Nigeria)

University of Ibadan (Nigeria)

Makerere University (Uganda)

Kenyatta University (Kenya)

University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania)

Catholic University of Mozambique

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Motivation

- Universities have defined policies and procedures to ensure the quality of traditional courses...

- However, when academics start to convert existing courses for online delivery, quality assurance is often an afterthought

- To ensure high quality output, a thorough quality improvement process was initiated
    1. Online/Blended Course Quality Improvement Process ⭐
    2. Institutional Quality Assurance Systems and Processes

# Quality Assurance and Capacity Building Process for Course Development
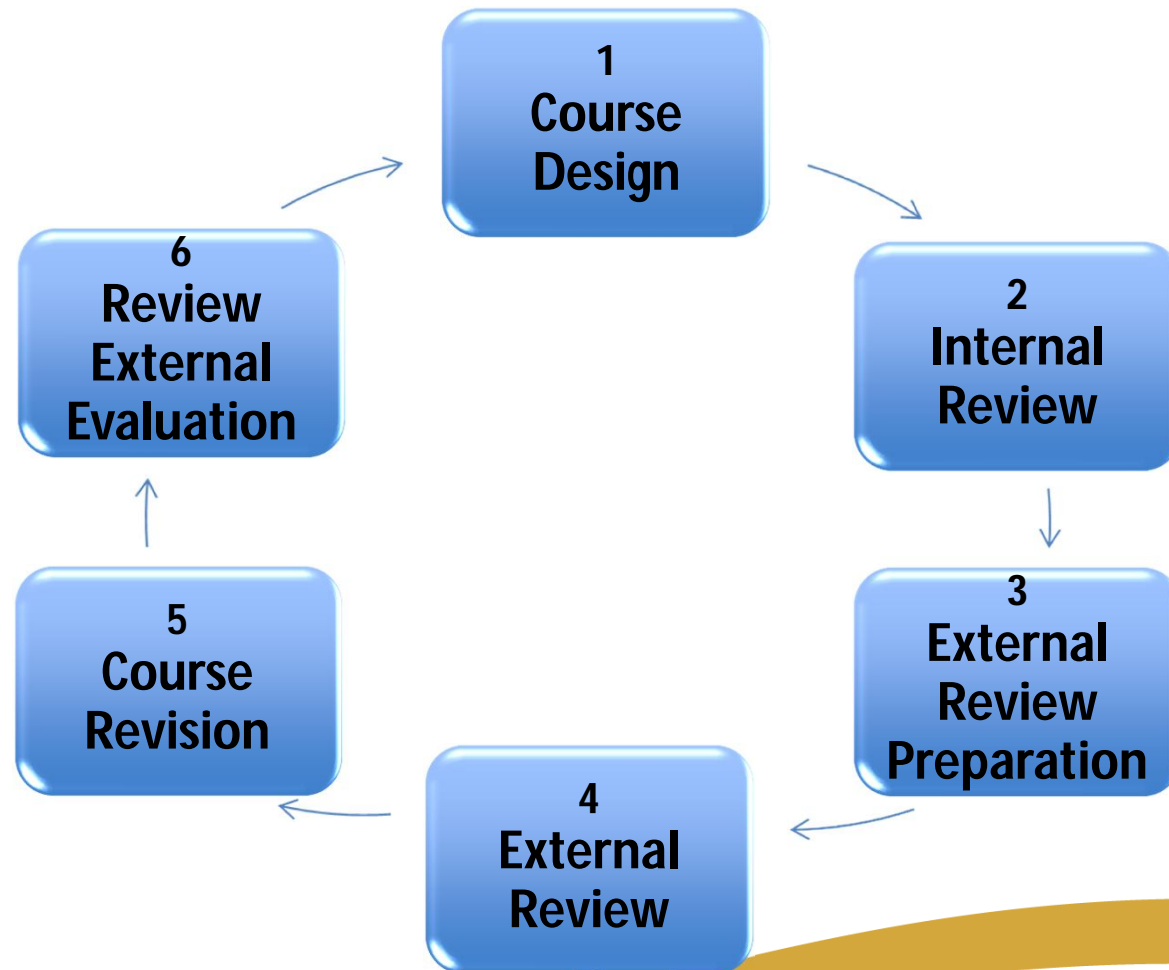
Step 1: Course Design & Development

- Academics identified courses for online/blended design
- Participated in capacity building workshops
  - Effective online course design and development
  - VLE functionality (Moodle)
  - Facilitated by external project support team
- Developed their courses between workshops

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Step 2: Internal Peer Review

- Undertook peer review of course development progress within project groups

- Revised courses taking initial peer review into account

- Where relevant, make use of subject matter experts for content review

- Received continued support from internal institutional team

Step 3: External Review Preparation
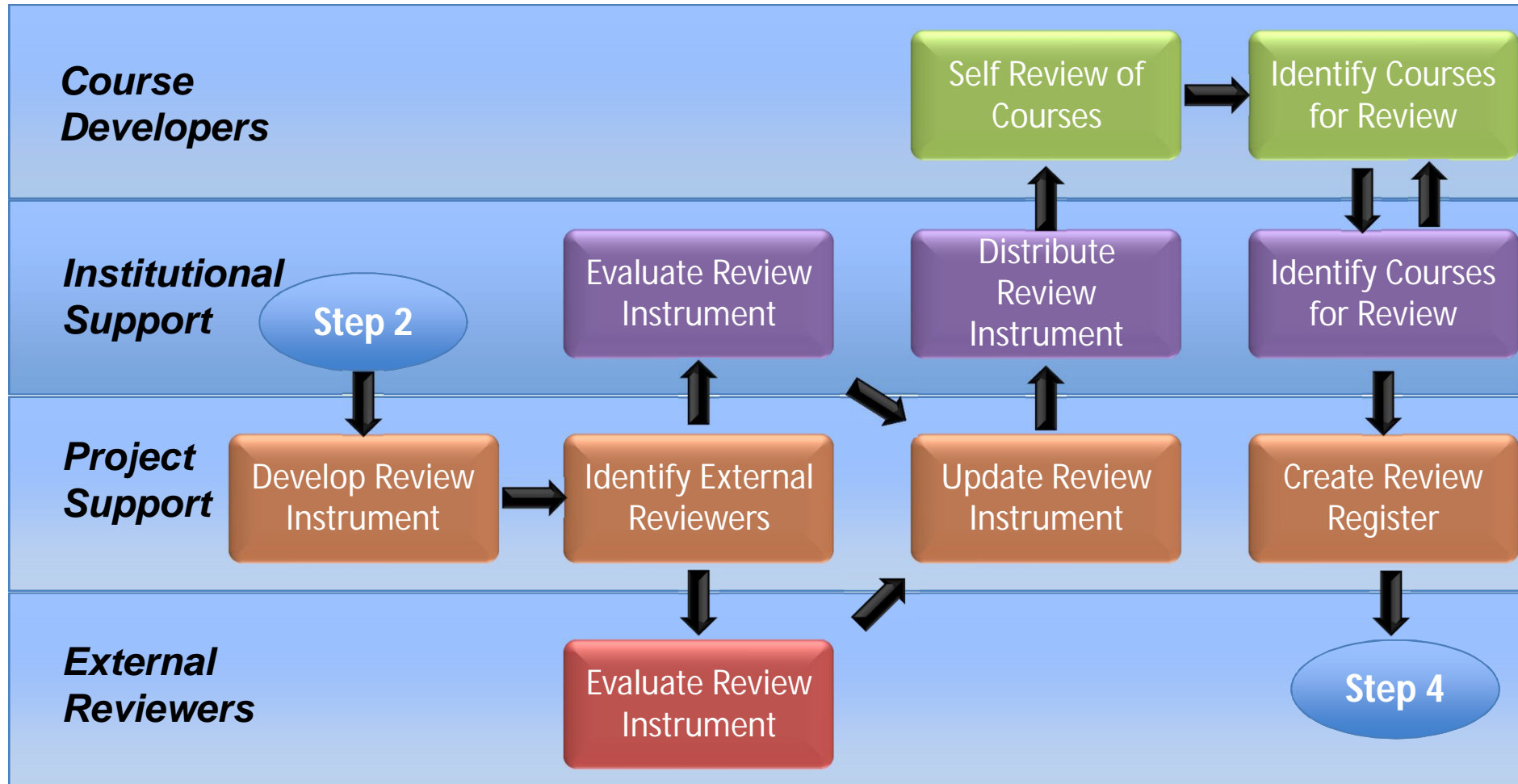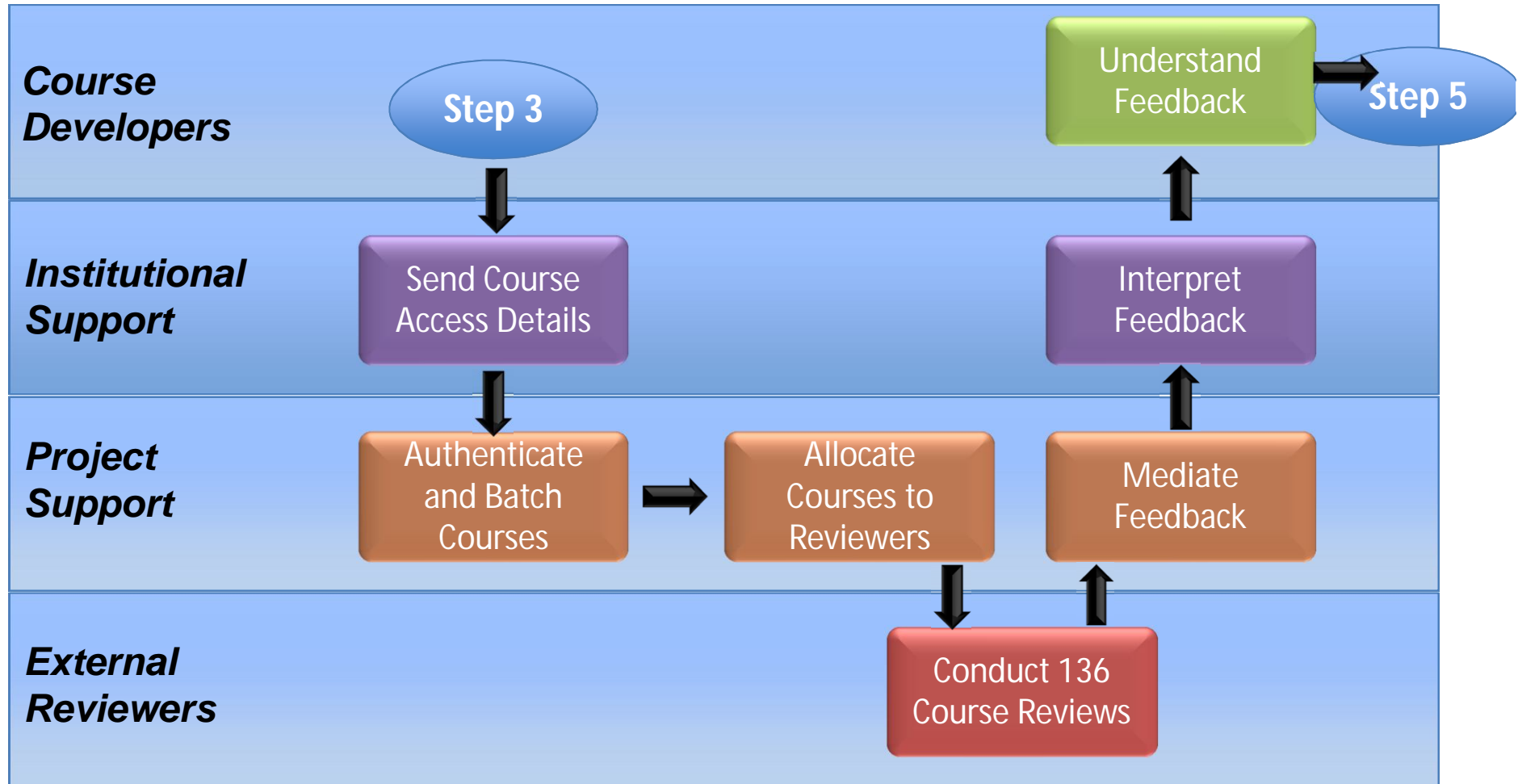
External Review Instrument Sample

28 criteria in 4 areas: Course Design, Activities, Assessment, Technology

C	Technology: The technology used in teaching and learning is appropriate, up to date and readily accessible to students and staff. The type of technology used is guided by the pedagogical approach of the provider.					
	Criterion Elements	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**Comments**
25	Wherever possible, a range of technologies like forums, chats, wikis and blogs etc are used to support learning and these technologies are appropriate for the pedagogical approach chosen	☐	☐	☐	☐	
26	There are suitable multimedia objects (like illustrations, video clips, PowerPoint slides, animations and simulations) to facilitate understanding of the content	☐	☐	☐	☐	
27	There is seamless integration of the different multimedia elements in the course.	☐	☐	☐	☐	
28	Internal and external hyperlinks are provided and they are always active	☐	☐	☐	☐	

Review instrument informed by:

– Quality Matters (QM) Rubric Standards https://www.qualitymatters.org/rubric

– Essential Quality standards (EQS) http://www.ecampusalberta.ca

– OCEP http://www.montereyinstitute.org/ocep/

– OPEN ECB Check http://ecbcheck.efquel.org/

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Step 4: External Review

Course Developers

Step 3

Understand Feedback → Step 5

Institutional Support

Send Course Access Details

Interpret Feedback

Project Support

Authenticate and Batch Courses → Allocate Courses to Reviewers

Mediate Feedback

External Reviewers

Conduct 136 Course Reviews
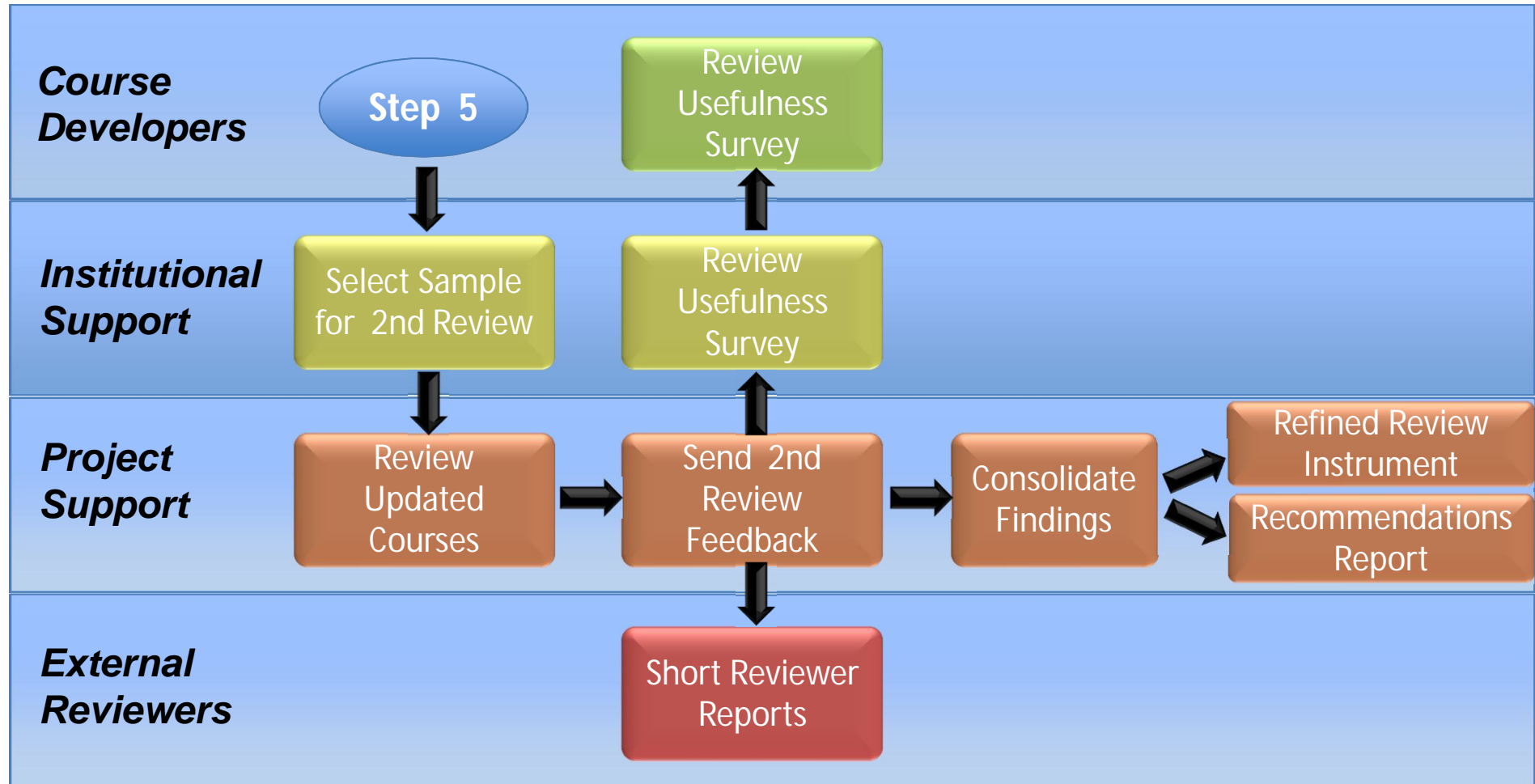
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Step 5: Course Revision

Step 6: Review Validation

Successes Experienced

Course Developers (30 responses)	Reviewers (8 responses)
• 94% thought the categories used in the review made sense • 83% thought that external review process helped to improve the quality of their online courses • Some comments that the reviews validated their approach taken	• Basic elements are present – a good start for 1st time developers • Design with the affordances of the medium in mind • Online teaching approach emphasised • Good use of visual aids • Online activities provided for • Course front matter clearly indicated

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Challenges Experienced

Course Developers (30 responses)	Reviewers (8 responses)
• 39% did NOT see the review criteria PRIOR to submitting their courses for external review • 33% did not have the criteria sufficiently explained by the internal support team • Some reports of the review feedback not being passed on to the developers • Insufficient time to address the feedback	• Some plagiarism & broken links • Lack of uniformity • Learners need help with finding their way • Insufficient student engagement provided for (including lack of evaluation) • Insufficient reflective pauses & time indicators • Finish as strongly as you began

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Outcomes

Institutional

Project

Reflection

- How do you ensure quality in your own courses and materials?

- How can you develop or enhance quality assurance processes at your institution?

Thank You

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