Enhancing Capacity Building in Educational Sciences in Nigerian Universities: How Higher Education Managers Can Help

Oyaziwo Aluede

Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Nigeria

Abstract: The issue of capacity building in Nigerian universities has been a burning one for some time, especially with regards to quality teaching, research, and service delivery. It has become an issue of grave concern because apart from the quality of graduates being turned out from these universities, which are being speculated to be discriminated against in the international labor market, and also by many foreign universities for those seeking higher degrees, majority of these universities are not making any impact in the socio-economic and political development of a country like Nigeria that is yearning for development. Even though learning/teaching, and research take place in these universities, the qualities are not assured. Hence, this study reviews those issues that affect quality assurance in Nigerian universities and proffers recommendations to higher education managers on how to tackle the problems of capacity building in the Faculties of Education and by extension all Faculties in Nigerian universities.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria no doubt, is the most populous and perhaps the richest country in the black continent of Africa, especially as it is the world’s sixth largest exporter of petroleum, a feat that no other African country equals (Ekenenah, 2004; United Nations Development Programme, 2003). That may explain the existence of over 85 universities (Federal government, state government and private owned), in the country, which is unparalleled in the African continent given that some smaller and poorer African countries may only boast of one or two universities.

In spite of the vast human and material resources available to Nigeria, the Nigerian government’s investment in education is abysmally very low when compared with UNESCO’s mandate to all governments of developing nation to invest as much as 26% of their annual budget on education sub-sector. Table I below, gives a portrait of Nigerian government’s budgetary allocation to the education sub-sector since 1994.

No doubt, the data in the above table obviously confirms the claim that the budgetary allocation for education is very low and also on a decline. However, this relatively low investment resulting from low percentage of the nation’s budgetary allocation to the education sector must not be taken as an excuse for the deterioration in scholarship in Nigerian universities, which is widely acknowledged (Erinosho, 2006).

For instance the December global ranking of the best 200 universities in the world revealed that no African university was included in the rating. The indices used in assessing universities included teaching strength and research, international reputation, teacher/student ratio, research impact, which is calculated by measuring citations in bolometric indices per faculty member (a measure of articles published in international journals by lecturers of the universities) (Ikharehon, 2007) In addition, using similar criteria listed above, in a recently conducted survey regarding the rating of the best universities in Africa, out of the one hundred universities ranked in Africa, the first Nigerian university to emerge in the list came a distant 44th.
Table I: Federal Government of Nigeria Budgetary Allocation to Education Sector from 1994—2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Budget</th>
<th>Federal Government Allocation to Education</th>
<th>Allocation to Education as % of the total Budget</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>110.5</td>
<td>8.66</td>
<td>7.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>98.2</td>
<td>12.73</td>
<td>12.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>124.2</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>12.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>11.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>10.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>11.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>677.5</td>
<td>50.67</td>
<td>8.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>894.2</td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>6.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>765.1</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>1.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Even though, a study conducted by the Association of African Universities (AAU) a few years ago, concluded that the situation in many universities in Nigeria has been dismal since the adoption of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), as scholarly research declined to about 35% since the mid 1960s, largely because of poor funding, this does not explain the reason why a large number of scholars in Nigerian universities have resorted to running business centers, working as pastors in churches, keeping poultry, etc (Erinosho, 2006), at the expense of their professional responsibilities-teaching, research/publication and community service.

In this discourse, I hope to do a critical appraisal of our activities as researchers, scholars and teacher educators, which we are “heavily” paid to do in our higher institutions of learning in Nigeria by our respective employers. In doing so, I hope to evaluate our activities against the background of meaningful research and teaching, which are necessary tools for development. In this regard, I wish to provide a conceptual meaning of higher education from the Nigerian perspective, define capacity building in the context of this paper, examine issues that affect capacity building in Nigerian universities, and finally provide some intervention strategies that managers of higher education in Nigeria may adopt to assure high reputation of Nigerian universities through quality research and publications.

**Conceptualizing University Education in the Nigerian Context**

The aims of establishing higher institutions of learning in Nigeria have been elaborately spelt out in the national policy on education by the Federal Government of Nigeria (2004) to include:

1. The acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper value orientation for the survival of the individual and the society;
2. The development of the intellectual capacities of individuals to understand and appreciate their environments;
3. The acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills, which will enable individuals to develop into useful members of the community; and
4. The acquisition of an objective view of the local and external environment.

These goals were to be pursued through: teaching, research, dissemination of existing and new information (put simply, publications), the pursuit of service to the community, and being a store house of knowledge.

University education being a main component of higher education, was to develop the whole of man physically, mentally, morally and technologically, so as to be able to function effectively in any environment he/she may find himself/herself, in order to become more productive, self fulfilling and attain self-actualization (Aluede, Uadia, Aluede, & Igbinekwea, 2002; Tawari, 1986). Therefore, the importance of higher education as means and part of the
development process of any society can hardly be contested; as the purpose of higher education the world over includes liberation of the individual from restraints and limitations of ignorance and dependency (Aluede, Aluede & Ufuah, 2004; Kassam, 1988).

**Capacity Building in Nigerian Universities**

In the context of this paper, capacity building in Nigerian universities shall be referred to as the overall process of training, and whereby the quality of the products is highly assured. In this regard, every graduate of any Nigerian universities would have been successfully empowered through quality teaching, learning and experiences, to take control over his/her own life and the overall environment. Such empowerment would necessarily help any individual to think more clearly, and also be able to examine the possible alternative causes of actions or realities. This would expectedly create an understanding that all change, if possible, and the knowledge of alternatives, no doubt, would certainly lead to the desired change. Thus, drawing from the words of Kassam (1988), the graduate of any Nigerian university would be:

1. one who is considerably playing his/her full roles in the economic development of the country.
2. one who participates fully and meaningfully in the social, civil, political and cultural activities of the community.
3. one who lives a self-fulfilling and optimal life style.
4. one who is highly resistant to any form of oppression, exploitation and corruption.
5. one who achieves his/her personal liberation and thus attain self actualizing goals
6. one who is empowered to address his/her present pressing problems. In Nigeria, these problems include, combating poverty, raising productivity level, minimizing incidents of electoral malpractices, corruption and cultism (Aluede, et al, 2004).

**Issues in Capacity Building in Nigerian Universities**

In Faculties of Education in Nigerian universities, how correct will it be to assert that quality in terms of teaching, learning, research, publication, and community service is assured? The answer to this question can only be provided after a critical appraisal of the following issues that are widely acknowledged to be affecting capacity building in Nigerian universities:

1. **Mass Production of leaflets in the name of Books.**
   
   Our Faculties of Education in Nigerian universities are littered with all sorts of books, which I can refer to as economic books (these are self- published books mainly written and printed by academic staff and directly and compulsorily sold to their students, essentially to enhance their financial base) rather than academic texts (books written by lecturers, published by reputable publishers, which are essentially written to contribute and advance knowledge). This category of books is usually sold by the publishers, while authors receive royalties). In Nigerian universities, there are Graduate Assistants (these are usually holders of a superior class of Bachelor’s degree, and potential lecturers after a long period of long training). This category of academics was not expected to teach any course in the university. At best, they were to organize tutorials for junior undergraduate students. But what you find these days is that this category of staff jostles for all sorts of courses and even to the extent of taking final year undergraduate courses. More disturbing is the fact that these young inexperienced and half-baked academics even quote themselves in their publications that have not seen the light of the day (Erinosho, 2006). Erinosho (2006) further maintained that in other words, modesty has been thrown to the winds. The impression that is created is that no other person has worked in the area than this young and inexperienced lecturer that is writing the article/book. But a close look at these materials indicate that these young and inexperienced scholars, who have the penchant of quoting themselves, do not even have any iota of knowledge in the field they claim to enjoy superior knowledge, and have had to rely mainly on old references. These books are openly sold to students either directly or through class coordinators in form of a clandestine affair. Buyers are usually rewarded with higher grades. Those students who fail to buy them are usually penalized and scored low grades, even if they are the very brightest students in the class (Okecha, 2007).

2. **Proliferation of Academic Journals**
   
   Apart from our colleagues in the habit of launching their own journals because they can not get published in journals of good standing within and outside Nigeria, almost all Faculties of Education or each of their academic departments in Nigerian universities now publish journals. The most worrisome trend these days is the fact that many young and inexperienced academics now establish their ‘personal’ journals and give them all sorts of titles, such as
multidisciplinary journal of education. In these journals all sorts of papers are accommodated. They even go to the extent of accommodating papers in core natural and life sciences, environmental designs and even in law. It may not even be surprising to find that the Editor-in-Chiefs of a number of these journals are very young and inexperienced academics who are in the ranks of Lecturer I (commonly known in North American hemisphere as Assistant Professor) or even below. These lecturers on their own part may not have published a single paper in a refereed journal. In these academic journals, the papers are never reviewed. Even if the author made initial typographical errors during submission of manuscript, they are never corrected by the Editors, rather printed in the same manner the errors appeared in the initial submissions. These inexperienced scholars usually include several of their own articles and those of their friends within or in other universities. Sometimes they charge so much to get these articles printed. In most cases, these journals are usually in their maiden editions. Most of the time, these journals do not carry International Standard Serial Numbers (ISSN) and they are also not indexed. The sole aim of establishing such journals is to have outlets to publish papers to meet with the promotion requirements to the next grade at all cost. In all cases, a good number of these journals cease publication when the editor and his/her friends have become Professors “by force” (Erinsho, 2006; Okecha, 2007).

3. Craze for International Publication
In most Nigerian universities today, it is now a mandatory condition for academic staff to have certain number of foreign publication if they must be promoted to the ranks of Associate Professor or Professor. Some universities insist on an average of two (2). Others insist on an average of five (5) foreign publications (journal articles, edited conference proceedings or published books/ book chapters). In an attempt to attain this feat, many of our colleagues have now endorsed or sponsored international publications themselves. Some go to the extent of writing books in Nigeria and go to printers in nearby countries like Ghana, Cameroon and even Niger Republic to print them and claim that they have made the required international components in their publications. Some others organize so called international Conference in their living rooms; get the papers published in neighboring countries and claim they are international publications. In other cases, some of these academic staff publish books locally but claim publishing houses in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom that may be non-existent. Whereas, in terms of quality of production, they are not better than those printed by our Nigerian one-man printer that often buy their “masa-masa” printing materials at the overhead Bridge Market in Onitsha (a bridge notorious for the sale of fake products).

A very dangerous trend these days is that some academic staff now launch new journals and call them international periodicals. They put all sorts of persons in the Editorial Board and even create a section which they call international advisory board. In addition, they go to neighboring countries to look for all sorts of printers who have ISSN and are willing to collaborate with them in the project. A careful look at any issue of these journals would show that almost all the articles are from Nigerian authors. One may not also be surprised to find that all the papers are reviewed locally by the editor in his/her department/faculty.

Following the recent decision of Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) that academics in their own interest, must obtain Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), in their chosen disciplines not later than the year 2009 (Okecha, n.d), there has been an increase in the number of applications particularly from academic staff to pursue doctorate programmes within or outside their universities, where they currently teach. Many have suddenly left their fields, to less strenuous areas, all in their desire to meet with NUC directives. One unanswered puzzle remains. That is, if Ph.D. degree is a necessary qualification to teach in the university. Believe me, there are a number of Ph.D carrying academics that are themselves embarrassment to the academic world. Many of these academics lack the language and are unable to engage in any academic discussion.

5. Indigenization/Localization of Admission Policy
In most Faculties of Education in Nigerian universities, hardly can you find international students. If they exist the percentage is less that 0.2% and these students may come from West African countries like Ghana, Sierra Leone and Liberia or at best Asian countries like Pakistan, India and Lebanon largely because the parents of these students are employed in several Nigerian companies. Hardly can you find any applications made directly to Nigerian universities by potential students outside the category of students listed above. With the new policy of the NUC on admissions, (carrying capacity), most state universities mainly admit students on local government basis, with less than 5% of the total admission granted to students from other states of the country. This no doubt has localized the admissions into our universities
6. Problem of In-breeding.
According to Erinosho (2006), unlike in the past when academics in Nigerian universities were drawn from various parts of the world, and when most of the staff obtained their first degrees in Nigeria and thereafter pursued their graduate programs abroad, the reverse is the case today. In most universities in Nigeria today, you are likely to find cases where academic staff received entire nursery, primary, secondary and even university education in the same campus. This category staff upon completion of their degree programmes proceeds for the compulsory National Youth Service Corps Scheme (NYSC). On completion of the NYSC scheme, enroll and complete their Masters and doctorate degree programme and begin their academic positions in the same university. Many of these academic staff are now professors and are assuming mentoring roles / positions in their own rights. But the only outside experience they have is during the National Service scheme. These scholars, no doubt, are rather local.

7. Problem of Staff-Studentship Status
This is closely related to in-breeding. It refers to situations where academic staff pursues higher degrees where they currently lecture. In all known cases, the pursuit of such degrees ends up being politicized. Many of the dissertations submitted by this category of students for higher degrees may never go for a good Bachelor’s degree thesis. In terms of quality of work, and scholarship, with regards to contribution to knowledge, nothing significant can be gained from such theses as little energy and even time is usually put into the programme. One may not even be too surprised at this because you can hardly know when these candidates are studying for their higher degrees, because most of the time, they are in their offices or in the classrooms teaching, and in other cases in the universities’ relaxation spots for leisure activities. Because of the enormous responsibilities they are assigned to by their immediate superiors or those they decide to assign to themselves, you can hardly find this category of students make consultation in their universities’ libraries or other libraries around them.

8. Confirmation/Tenureship of Appointment
In most Faculties of Education in Nigerian universities, it is customary that once you are employed, after two years of employment, your appointments are confirmed. It only requires a good recommendation of the Head of Department and the Dean of the Faculty to get this achieved. Even if you are a bad teacher and very weak researcher, all you need to do is to maintain a good working relationship with the Head of Department and the Dean of the Faculty, then your confirmation of appointment is guaranteed. As at today, there is hardly any case whereby a staff has been denied confirmation/tenureship of appointment after two years of continuous employment in the university. Perhaps, if there is any case, it may largely be that the academic staff desiring confirmation of appointment/tenureship has fallen out of favor from his/her superiors. This policy in Nigerian universities no doubt, runs counter to especially those of United States of America and Canada and many others where confirmation of appointments (tenureship) is not automatic, but rather, a very tough process that also requires an objective evaluation, in terms of research and teaching.

9. Poor Recruitment Policy:
In Nigeria, in very rare cases do you find academic staff recruitment through a competitive interview system, as most of the vacancies are usually not advertised. Most of the appointments are made through the temporary appointment process (a process whereby an unsolicited application is made to the university and the applicant is given employment without any selection/interview process). In most cases, after a period of three months or thereabout, the staff is made to face formalization interview. What this means is that the process of appointment does not normally provide an opportunity for our Faculties of Education to attract the best brains, which would have been selected on the basis of competitive interview process.

10. The Craze to Conduct Quantitative Studies
There is a growing trend in Faculties of Education in Nigerian Universities whereby students are compelled to conduct quantitatively based studies. Most times, you find our colleagues in the fields of History of Education, Comparative Education, Sociology of Education and even Language Education also encouraging their students to do quantitative studies in their graduate degree dissertations. In many cases, because of the background of many of these students or their teachers, many of these quantitatively based dissertations lack direction, given the inability to properly conceptualize the appropriate statistics to be adopted for the analyses of data. To be specific, you are likely to find a student whose data are nominal or ordinal based apply a parametric test. In addition, statistics like t-test, ANOVA and Chi-Square are most commonly abused. Many of us do not understand the basic assumptions of
parametric and non-parametric tests, yet we often go ahead to apply them in our studies. This, no doubt often leads to wrong findings and wrong conclusions.

11. Poor Graduate Supervision
In most universities, it is almost a tradition for all Lecturers I and above to supervise doctoral dissertations. Most of the time, in assigning students to our colleagues for supervision, we are attracted by their rank and qualification rather than their mental capacity to do so efficiently. It may not be surprising to find that some of our colleagues have been on the same rank for years and have the least interest for scholarship. Students put under their supervision often spend years pursuing their programmes because of lack of direction, while in other cases; many get frustrated out of the programme because of lack of thorough supervision.

How Policy Makers can help in Enhancing Capacity Building
In order to bring Faculties of Education in Nigeria to enviable heights, where our degrees will be given great recognition in the international labor markets, there is the great need for policy makers, especially the NUC and university managers to consider the following alternatives:

1. The Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC), which is the sole agency vested with the responsibility of accrediting programmes in Nigerian universities, and university managers should take a further bold step to ban self-published books, which has earlier been referred to in this work as economic texts, just the way the sales of printed lecture notes by course lecturers (commonly called handouts) have been banned. Academic textbooks must be left in the hands of accomplished scholars. In that wise, universities should also not recognize self-published textbooks no matter the form, for promotion. In that wise, only articles published in refereed journals should be recognized for promotion. Let it be said that the accomplishments of any academic are hinged on his/her published papers in refereed journals. More importantly is the fact that only academic journals should be recognized for the purpose of promotion.

However, if books are to be recognized for promotion, they must be those published by reputable publishing houses in Nigeria and abroad. In that case, our policy makers must endeavor to compile for distribution a list of all reputable publishing houses in the field of education in and outside Nigeria. By so doing, our colleagues who engage in the habit of writing all sorts of books, especially for monetary gains and hope to earn promotion through them would begin to appreciate the need to drop such idea.

2. Nigerian Universities Commission must commence the process of serializing academic journals in educational sciences. I mean identify and compile the reputable and peer reviewed refereed journals within and outside Nigeria for distribution to all Faculties of Education in Nigerian universities. The Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) should also mandate Governing Councils of the respective Nigerian universities to ensure that only articles published in such journals can be used for promotion. If this is done, it will bring an end to these “masa-masa” (low quality publication) journals being floated by our colleagues just for the purpose of getting the minimum number of publications that would earn the promotion to the next grade, or getting to the professorial rank, rather than making contributions to the frontiers of scholarship.

3. There is a great need for Faculties of Education in Nigerian universities to borrow a leaf from the University of Benin, which has further defined the type of international papers that may be accepted for promotion by their academic staff. In that university, though it has been a subject of disagreement between the Academic Staff Union of Universities of the University of Benin chapter and the University Management, any candidate aspiring to the peak is required to publish certain percentage of his/her articles in indexed international journals. In that wise some foreign publications, which some of our colleagues brandish gleefully on campus, which as a matter of fact emanate from fraud or sharp practices will be a thing of the past (Okecha, 2007). Added to this, is the fact that all fraudulent acts being perpetuated by our colleagues such as going to countries like Cameroun, Ghana, Niger republic to print their books and brand them as foreign publications or claiming publisher’s addresses in USA and Europe will have been overcome. In addition, policy makers should further be emphatic about the meaning of international journals. It should be made emphatically clear that an international journal is not that type of journal where the editorial office, and all the assessment of articles are done in Nigeria and the only thing done outside the country is the printing by a “road side” printer in a nearby country largely because she has an ISSN assigned to her by the country’s granting body.
4. The NUC should instruct universities managers that henceforth, all vacant academic posts in the Faculties of Education in Nigerian universities must be filled only through competitive process, first by having all the positions advertised in national newspapers; and also in several international advertising agencies such as Chronicle of Higher Education, Association of Commonwealth Universities’ Newsletter, Association of African Universities Newsletter and a host of others. By so doing, we definitely will have applications from foreign scholars that could compete with our local scholars. In addition, the vacant positions should be filled through competitive interview process so as to guarantee the fact that our Universities attractive the best brains among their peers. Furthermore, the process of recruiting academic staff through unsolicited application process does not provide a basis for attracting quality staff and therefore must be stopped forthwith.

5. Higher education managers should no longer allow the current practice whereby confirmation of appointment is automatic after two years of continuous employment in the university; which is usually at the whims and caprices of both the Head of Department and/or Dean of the Faculty. Rather academic staff should be made to undergo pre-confirmation of appointment evaluation in their first year of employment before facing the actual confirmation of appointment process, which can be organized in the second year. In each case, every staff desiring confirmation should be made to meet certain conditions including publication of papers in refereed journals and also receiving good grade from students’ evaluation of their teaching.

6. It is on record that some tertiary institutions, often include in their approved criteria for promotion, such condition as conference presentations and conference attendance. It should be made emphatically clear that presenting a paper at a conference is not the same as having the paper accepted or published in a conference proceeding. It is possible to have see an academic staff do a good abstract, which is accepted for presentation prior to the conference, but ends up preparing all sorts of paper for presentation at the conference, believing after all even if the paper is finally rejected, he/she would have earned the mandatory 2-5 points on it (points usually allocated to authors for their conference presentations or for having their abstracts accepted). In this regard, managers of our universities should further revisit this provision by directing all Faculties of Education that only published papers in conference proceedings must be accepted for promotion.

7. There must be a policy statement on the part of Universities Managers in Nigeria that must discourage inbreeding/staff-studentship status. That is to say, when a student obtains his/her degrees in a single university, it should be made mandatory that such a candidate should seek employment and university teaching experience for at least 5 years outside the university, preferably in another university before seeking employment in his/her alma mater. This policy has been found successful in some North American Universities. In addition, Nigerian Universities should ban their staff from seeking higher degrees in the Universities they currently lecture. As experience has shown that the candidacy of this category of students has often be politicized, due largely to lack of proper supervision of their graduate dissertations by their dissertation advisors, because in an attempt to be thorough and insist on standards, sentiments are often raised, to the extent that their dissertations may never go for a bachelor degree long essay.

8. There is no denying the fact that not all senior academic staff, even with Ph.D can supervise graduate students. As evidence abound that a number of Ph.D carrying academics to say the least are symbols of embarrassment to the intellectual community. In other cases, many of them who even obtained Ph.D from world-class Universities do not have a single paper in a refereed journal even after many years of lecturing. No doubt this category of staff is unable to conduct research and by implication supervise quality dissertation. Let me make it clear here and now that the business of publication is a divine calling and is not dependent on Ph.D.

9. These days, every academic staff wants to conduct quantitative studies, even though he/she lacks the competence to do so believing that applying very robust statistics will increase the possibilities of having the manuscript or dissertation accepted. It should be made clear here that the quality of a paper is not dependent on the robustness of the statistics employed in the study, rather in the proper articulation of the desire of the study and its ability o significantly contribute to knowledge. In the past, most educational
studies were qualitative. When the wind of quantitative research blew all over the Faculties of Education, we began to emphasize quantitative research as if it is the best means of reporting research. Today in the United States, the Mixed Method Approach (a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data) is beginning to gain grounds in their Universities and I have found it particularly rewarding to encourage my students to adopt this emerging model. It is in this regard that universities managers should counsel their academic staff to conduct research based on their competence.

10. There is a great need for higher education managers to provide an opportunity for all academic staff in Nigerian universities to undergo retraining exercises in contemporary research methods, especially manuscript writing and reporting. Many of the ideas we know about educational research were those we learnt while in school, which have become outdated. Most educational sciences scholars are often quick to refer to American Psychological Association (APA) writing manual and direct students to comply with the style. Through institutional-organized workshops on contemporary research writing and reporting, academic staff of Nigerian universities will become more abreast with the current practices and expectations in the field of educational sciences. It is our hope that this will in no doubt create an impact on the nature of manuscripts that we write in Nigeria; it will also improve our supervision of dissertations especially at the graduate level.

REFERENCES

What is a Capacity-building Project? Capacity-building Projects are transnational cooperation projects based on multilateral partnerships, primarily between higher education institutions (HEIs) from Programme and eligible Partner Countries financed through the above-mentioned instruments. They can also involve non-academic partners to strengthen the links with society and business and to reinforce the systemic impact of the projects. Listed below are the formal criteria that a higher education Capacity-building project must respect in order to be eligible for an Erasmus+ grant: Eligibility criteria. Eligible Partner Countries. How to apply? The application must be introduced in compliance with the modalities described in Part C of this Guide. Discover the top universities in Nigeria along with alternative options to earn your degree, such as online institutions and studying abroad. Some of the biggest challenges that plague Nigerian institutions for higher education are: Infrastructure: Only 30% of the population has access to classrooms, labs and workshops. Poor Quality Universities in Nigeria. Despite the challenges, Nigeria has a long list of both public and private institutions. Public universities cost an average of $125-$500 per year, whereas private institutions are estimated to be $2,700. Here are some of the best universities in Nigeria that are accredited, offer Bachelor’s or Master’s degrees and are traditionally on-campus options. 1. University of Lagos – Lagos.