

**RESEARCH AND QUALITY CONTROL
CONSULTANCY**

October 2001

**Alicia Fentiman
International Research Foundation for Open Learning
Cambridge**

BOCODOL - Bath Partnership

Contents

1. Introduction	page	1
2. Overview of Activities		1
3. Timetable of Activities		2
4. Objectives and Outcomes		4

Appendices

1. BOCODOL Research and Quality Control Strategy	5-14
2. Modified job description for the post of the RQCO	15-16
3. Roles and Responsibilities of Other Staff at BOCODOL	17
4. Action Plans and Activity Schedule	18-21
5. Research Exercise	22-29
6. Training Needs	30-31
7. Research Quality and Control Feedback	32-33
8. Terms of Reference	34-37

Abbreviations

BGCSE	Botswana General Certificate of Secondary Education
BOCODOL	Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning
CDO	Course Development Officer
CDD	Course Development Department
CSC	Community Study Centre
CSCSO	Community Study Centre Support Officer
DNFE	Department Non Formal Education
GALTO	Guidance, Accreditation, Liaison and Training Officer
HoD	Head of Department
HRD	Human Resource Development
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IMM	Information and Materials Manager
IMS	Information Management System
IRFOL	International Research Foundation for Open Learning
JAB	Junior Achievement Botswana
LS	Learner Support
MC	Management Committee
MoE	Ministry of Education
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
PMEC	Project Monitoring and Evaluation Committee
PRMO	Public Relations and Marketing Officer
RM	Regional Manager
RQCO	Research and Quality Control Officer
TA	Technical Advisor
WFHB	Women's Finance House Botswana

1. Introduction

This consultancy was held at the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL) from 24 September to 12 October. Its purpose was to assist BOCODOL to establish appropriate and effective research and quality control functions. It was timed to support the newly appointed Research and Quality Control Officer (RQCO) and to develop BOCODOL's own policy on research and quality control and to establish roles, responsibilities, and procedures necessary to implement such a policy. Terms of reference are included in Appendix 8.

2. Overview of Activities

As the timetable of activities shows (on the following page), the consultant and the RQCO spent most of the time together working on a variety of topics – the development of the policy for research and quality control, the organisation of a workshop, and an action plan of activities. In addition, we discussed and developed the research methods to be used for pre-testing a new vocational course material for Business Skills for Small Businesses and engaged in practical research exercises.

During the first week, the consultant and the RQCO met with the Heads of Departments and senior staff individually to gather information about the status of current research, to identify areas for new research and to find out what the expectations of the staff were in relation to the RQCO's roles and responsibilities. A visit was also made to the Gaborone Regional Manager to discuss areas of research and to see how a regional office operated.

Basically, the first week was fact-finding to discover what research has been done and to find out how it was organised and carried out. This enabled us to work on the draft policy. Meetings were also held with potential collaborators such as the Department for Non-Formal Education and the Women's Finance House Botswana. Preparations were made to undertake a research activity for the vocational course on Small Business Skills for women entrepreneurs and the preparations for a workshop for the following week were made.

The second week was varied and involved a workshop, a field trip with the Regional Office, a draft policy document, and preparations for the research exercise. It began with a workshop attended by the consultant, RQCO, HODs, the technical advisor and other senior staff. A positive outcome of the workshop was the sharing of ideas and experiences. Very useful suggestions were made and the participants provided important inputs for adding to our policy. The aim was to provide an "inclusive" atmosphere. Important issues arose from the meeting such as research and data ownership, roles and responsibilities of the RQCO and the importance of designing an evaluation framework for research. A visit to Lethakeng with the Regional Manager of Gaborone, the CSCSO- Gaborone, and RQCO enabled the consultant to see a potential study centre and to speak with potential learners.

The third week entailed a practical research exercise which enabled the RQCO, CDO(voc) and the consultant to develop tools/instruments for pre-testing the first

draft of the first module of the Skills for Small Businesses. The Women's Finance House of Botswana helped to identify a number of potential clients. Unfortunately, the pre-testing of the materials was postponed until the following week(after the consultant departed). However, a field visit to Muchodi and Modipane with one of the WFHB field officers enabled us to meet and interview women in small businesses who have been identified as potential clients for the new course. We arranged a series of research activities which entailed distributing questionnaires to potential learners, focus group discussions and interviews with randomly selected individuals in Gaborone. A feedback session on the policy document for Research and Quality Control enabled the consultant to incorporate the views from the workshop and to distribute the revised version. The Directorate was debriefed about the consultancy.

3. Timetable of Activities Undertaken

Date	Activity	People Involved
Monday 24 September	Courtesy call Tour of BOCODOL HQ and introductions Planning Activities Arranging Meetings with HQ HoDs Plan a Practical Exercise Meeting with DNFE, Anna Maruatoua	Acting Director, BOCODOL BOCODOL staff RQCO and TA HQ HoDs CDO(vocational) Research DNFE
Tuesday 25 September	Meetings with HoDs Visit to Gaborone Regional Centre	HoDs Regional Manager & staff
Wednesday 26 September	Visit to Women's Finance House Botswana, Mrs Yodit Kassage Molosi Policy Development	RQCO, CDO(voc), Director of WFHB RQCO
Thursday 27 September	Policy Development Meeting with TA -	RQCO RQCO, TA
Friday 28 September	Policy Development Preparations for Workshop	RQCO
Tuesday 2 October	Finalise Workshop	RQCO, TA
Wednesday 3 October	Meeting with Director Workshop Preparations for Exercise	Director Senior Staff RQCO, CDO-vocational
Thursday 4 October	Completion of Policy Document Practical Research Exercise(devising tools/instruments for the pre-	RQCO RQCO, CDO-vocational

	testing of materials Action Plans and ToR	
Friday 5 October	Visit to Lethakeng, Potential Study Centre	RM and CSCSO Gaborone, RQCO
Monday 8 October	Practical research exercise (Develop tools for pre-testing the Skills for Small Businesses) Interviews with potential clients in Gaborone Analysis of Data	CDO(Vocational), RQCO
Tuesday 9 October	Practical Research Exercise Field Visit to Mochudi and Modipane Analysis of Data	CDO-Vocational, RQCO, Field Officer(WFHB)
Wednesday 10 October	Practical Research Exercise Analysis and Report Summary Draft proposal for funding potential clients	CDO-Vocational, RQCO
Thursday 11	Winding up Consultancy Preparation for debriefing Feedback Meeting with Senior Staff Debriefing Directorate	RQCO RQCO, TA Senior Staff, TA, RQCO Director and Deputy Director TA, RQCO
Friday 12 October	Editing Research Depart 3:15 pm on Flight SA1766	

4. Objectives and Outcomes

Objective	Outcome
To develop and agree a policy for BOCODOL which sets out the rationale, aims, scope and functions of research and quality control and the chief methods to be used	A document setting out an agreed Research and Quality Control Policy. (See Appendix 1)
To review the current job description for the RQCO and agree modifications where appropriate	Revised terms of reference for RQCO (See Appendix 2)
To determine the roles and responsibilities of other staff at BOCODOL in relation to research and quality control activities	A document outlining the roles and responsibilities of other staff at BOCODOL in relation to RQC activities (See Appendix 3)
To develop an action plan for the implementation of the research and quality control policy which sets out required tasks, people responsible, and a time frame	An Action Plan for the Implementation of the policy (See Appendix 4). A more detailed plan will have to be devised by the RQCO, Director, Deputy Director, HoDs, and senior staff.
To review RQCO's research skills and assist in developing and practicing a variety of research skills in conjunction with other staff in the context of BOCODOL's research and quality control policy	A practical field session was undertaken to review the research skills of the CDO and RQCO. A report of the exercise and the findings are outlined (See Appendix 5).
To assist the RQCO in the first stages of implementing the RQC policy	Preparations are under-day.
To identify training needs for RQCO and other staff and suggest suitable courses for staff development	Specific training needs were identified and documented. (See Appendix 6).

Appendix 1:

A Policy for Research and Quality Control in BOCODOL

1. Introduction

The purpose of the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL) research and quality control policy is to provide a clear outline of the role of research within the college. The main aims are to examine BOCODOL's current research activities, to ensure quality control measures are put in place, to provide guidelines for future research activities, and to define roles and responsibilities.

2. The Objectives of Research at BOCODOL

Research is a vital component in achieving the college's aim, "to provide high quality learning accessible to out-of-school young people and adults nationwide using the methods of distance and open learning"¹. Information and data about its learners and their performance are central to its success. Research plays many roles in BOCODOL. It provides data on the needs of its learners, informs about market possibilities (i.e. expansion of courses and potential clients), examines the quality of its materials and support services, and provides feedback on the effectiveness of policies, programmes and practices.

In the Business Plan (Version 7, October 2000) it was stated that BOCODOL had "weak evaluation and research capacity" and "an inadequate information system". This remark highlights three crucial components necessary for a quality distance education system:

- Research
- Data Management
- Evaluation

Up until now, research in BOCODOL has been undertaken within the institution without a Research and Quality Control Officer. An evaluation framework was developed to help the college monitor the effectiveness of its activities. It is essential to review this framework and to examine the role of research within BOCODOL and to establish a strategic plan for undertaking research and ensuring quality assurance is put in place.

3. Rationale for Research in Distance Education

Research is an integral component for BOCODOL. Research is necessary to:

To Learn about BOCODOL's learners

¹ See BOCODOL Strategic Plan, July 1998, p.2.

- To see whether BOCODOL is meeting the learners' needs and aspirations
- To assess BOCODOL's performance
- To answer specific questions as they arise

Research, therefore, plays two major roles at BOCODOL at two different levels

1. Generally, it provides the routine monitoring of activities and performance in which *all* BOCODOL departments are continuously involved, plus regular information gathering on enrolment levels, learner performance, materials distribution, learner and tutorial support.
2. Specifically, it examines certain aspects of research which could include learner studies or pre-testing for a new course, monitoring a new learner support system, undertaking a major learner/tutor study or looking at the effectiveness of radio.

Both areas are essential research activities in distance education. The first is basic information gathering which is conducted routinely by departments; the second area is more specific and requires more planning and coordination. Research affects all staff and all the departments. Research is needed to provide a base of evidence to make informed decisions and to improve our understanding of the processes. Results of one research project will have impact on other departments. The development of linkages within the various departments can provide a greater understanding of how distance education works and can demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses in the system. Through research these weaknesses can be strengthened. There are many themes in research and they include:

- Programme Planning and Curriculum Design
- Development of Learning Materials (Print and Non-Print)
- Teaching and Learning Processes
- Learner Support Services and Delivery Systems
- Student Evaluation
- Economics of Distance Education
- Media in Distance Education
- Management of the System
- Application of New Technologies
- Research Methodologies in Distance Education
- Quality Assurance
- Staff Training and Development

4. Review of Current Research at BOCODOL

A number of departments have undertaken research activities at BOCODOL before the appointment of the RQCO. The information and data collected are central to BOCODOL's effectiveness and ultimately assist in its expansion. The table below illustrates some of the research activities, the department responsible, the current status of the work and the outstanding work that needs to be done.

Table showing current research activities and their status by departments			
Research activity	Department	Status	Outstanding
Baseline Survey: Learner's profile	Learner support	The information is currently being entered in the IMS	Data entry, data analysis, report and presentation of major findings.
Learners and tutor survey	Learner support	Questionnaires are still being collected from the respondents.	Data entry, data analysis, report, and presentation of major findings.
Unit Evaluation by learners	Course development	Questionnaires are still being collected from the respondents.	Data entry, data analysis, report and presentation of major findings.
Monitoring and evaluation	Learner support	The evaluation is still going on	

The table shows that a significant amount of work has already been accomplished and that the new research strategy can build upon these outcomes; this work enables us to examine the present state of research and to ask four very important questions:

- ▶ What are the strengths/weaknesses in the process now?
- ▶ What action can be taken to improve the situation?
- ▶ What have we learned from this?
- ▶ What recommendations can be made for the future?

Current Weaknesses in Research and Quality Control

There are several areas in which there is scope for improvement. These include:

1. Lack of coordination within research process: Tasks and Responsibilities are not being allocated and many projects have certain areas outstanding.
2. Deadlines are not being met and no-one is assuming responsibility to take control or manage the research.
3. Incomplete data – forms are incomplete and are being returned to the region. A check has not been in place to review the forms before returning to the main office
4. Problems with data entry - The IMS system is constantly breaking down and the data entry clerks do not have manuals for reference or explanation. Data entry clerks are busy and temporary staff may be needed to help with data entry of other projects.

5. Quality of learning materials. Problems relate mostly to content issues as identified mostly by tutors as well as learners. Lack of cooperation exists between LSD and CDD in terms of quality and materials maintenance (Roman, 2001).

6. Inadequate evaluation of performance appraisal of each department. The evaluation framework recommends annual analysis by the RQCO in each department, but this has not been carried out because of the late appointment of a RQCO.

5. Research and Quality Control Strategies

Up until now, clearly defined roles and responsibilities within BOCODOL for research and quality control have not been established. The Evaluation and Monitoring Framework provides a start, but it is not clearly stated who should initiate the notion of quality assurance and be accountable for its effectiveness. As BOCODOL continues to develop and expand it is essential to have a strategic management and continuous monitoring process set up to ensure institutional excellence.

A structure needs to be established to coordinate all research activities and create a partnership between all HoDs and senior staff in monitoring and evaluating projects.² In many of the consultant's reports it has been assumed that the new RQCO officer is responsible (see Fee, 2001; Roman, 2001). However, quality assurance for BOCODOL cannot be the sole responsibility of one individual; quality assurance is to be shared throughout the institution. The Management Committee and the Projects Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (PMEC) will also play a significant role in quality control. Quality control results from continuous monitoring and evaluation through the undertaking of action research to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of BOCODOL.

The following recommendations provide a starting point for identifying main areas in research and quality control within BOCODOL. These do not include detailed activities within each department.

5.1 Ownership and Accountability

1. Identify who should initiate the process of quality assurance and who should be accountable for its effectiveness.

The RQCO should facilitate the process of quality assurance; however, the individual departments should also examine their own functions and evaluate their work, identify strengths and weaknesses, analyse them systematically and come up with strategic plans to address their problems. This way they own the strategic plans and are directly involved in the process. The more general aspects of research such as information gathering is the responsibility of the HoDs (with the assistance and guidance of the

² A Monitoring and Evaluation framework has been established(v4-2000) for BOCODOL and more specifically, a Monitoring and Evaluation of learner support exercises (no.7-2001)

RQCO) whereas the more specific research topics should be initiated and devised by the RQCO in collaboration with the HoDs.

It is recommended that the RQCO carry out annual analysis of the various departments as outlined in the Evaluation Framework. This may need to be revised/reviewed because of the delay in the appointment of a RQCO.

2. Continuous Assessment of Research

Role of Management Committee
Research Quality and Control Officer
Project Monitoring and Evaluation Committee

It is recommended that evaluation and monitoring be organised in such a way as to encourage cooperation rather than competition. Each department should be supporting and complementary to each other. There are linkages between the various committees MC, PMEC and the RQCO.

5.2 Indicators of Quality (Performance Indicators)

1. Establish the measures to be used to monitor progress
 - enrolment rates
 - gender ratios
 - courses
 - drop out rates
 - examination results
 - learner's comments
 - tutor's comments

2. Examine the expected and actual outputs at various stages within the research

Continuous Assessment within the departments
Examination of Results
Regular Dissemination of Results

6. Research within BOCODOL

6.1 Establishment of Good Communication and Dialogue

The RQCO needs to be informed of all current and future research in BOCODOL, and he also needs to inform others about research. The RQCO should be consulted for help or assistance in trying to identify ways and means to complete outstanding work. All new research should be discussed with the RQCO to ensure quality control measures are put in place from the beginning.

Guidelines were established for the Research Process which outline the major steps of research and identifies a work plan which includes who is responsible for the various stages, and a timetable for completion. Information about the status of research and results of work must be disseminated to all members of staff.

The RQCO can also facilitate information between departments.

6.2 A Structured Time Frame and Allocation of Roles and Responsibilities of various tasks within research

Roles and responsibilities within research are numerous and varied and require many different skills and expertise. This confirms the need for the RQCO to coordinate and oversee all research. The role and responsibility of the RQCO will vary depending on the type of research and skills needed. Since most of the research within BOCODOL will be within a department, a good rapport between the RQCO and HoD needs to be established. As outlined above in Section 5, there are basically two types of research; the information gathering conducted routinely by departments and secondly, more specific types of research. The RQCO should be informed of all research activities conducted at BOCODOL; his direct involvement will vary depending on the nature of the research and the research experience and skills of the proposed researcher. He can assist with the various aspects of the research and to suggest individuals for certain tasks and responsibilities.

1. Guidelines for Current Research (ie research which has already begun)

- Examine current status of research
- HoD and RQCO to discuss the status of the project
- Identify the Stage of the Research with the research framework
- Plan the “outstanding tasks”
- Allocate roles and responsibilities for each task
- Establish deadlines for each task
- Continually Assess the progress
- Identify any problems

2. Guidelines for New Research

The research process should entail a strategic framework identifying the various stages within the research. All new research at BOCODOL should be discussed and

planned in collaboration with the Research and Quality Control Officer. This will ensure the RQCO is informed of all research and that quality standards are established from the outset. Roles and Responsibilities for each stage should be discussed and a timetable put in place. This will enable the RQCO to keep up-to-date with the progress and to assist with any problems or queries during the research. The following table illustrates the various activities. (The “who” and “deadline” columns are to be filled in by the RQCO and the HoD or Senior staff member)

The Research Process: Activities	Who?	Deadline
Selecting a Research Area: Aims and Objectives	RQCO; HoD; DD	
What tools/instruments will be used? What are the best methods?	RQCO; HoD	
Devise the Tools	RQCO and HoD	
Pre-test the tools		
Collection of Data		
Checking Data		
Data Cleaning/Coding		
Data Entry	Technician	
Data Analysis		
Interpretation		
Report Writing/Summary		
Dissemination of Data		
Self evaluation- What did I learn from this research?		
What would I do differently?		

A record of the research would be on the Database, and a monthly review of all research would enable the RQCO to keep track of the various activities.

6.3 Staff Development

1. Assessment of the Quality of research skills

Many staff members are involved in the process of research. It is recommended that staff under-go training workshops to improve their research skills, which in turn will improve the quality of research. The results will not only benefit the institution but also the individual.

- Training in Research Methods
- Statistical analysis
- Writing and Reporting Key Issues
- Summary
- Dissemination through workshops and conferences

Publications

Staff can be trained in-house with the RQCO and the HRD. If specialised skills are needed, outside training may also be necessary.

6.4 Prioritise Research Issues.

The RQCO will coordinate all research activities and represent and report on behalf of the HoDs to the Management Committee. The Management Committee or a separate steering group should examine all research proposals and *prioritise* the needs of the college.

6.5 Data Management.

A database (such as Access) should be used to keep records of all research in BOCODOL. The database would allow the RQCO and HoDs to see what skills are needed at a particular stage in the process and aid in planning what skills/tasks are necessary at a particular time. This needs to be systematically reviewed. This will ensure that continuous assessment on research is being undertaken. It will also assist the RQCO to keep up-to-date with progress and help to identify any problems or delays by constantly monitoring activities.

6. 6 The Role of Future Research in BOCODOL

All departments throughout BOCODOL should be engaged in research. The RQCO and Consultant met with all HoDs to identify future areas of research. The table illustrates the following topics.

Table showing future research projects		
Research activity	Department	Research Area
Tutor Evaluation of materials	Course development	Assessing tutors perception of the quality of materials
Pre-testing of Vocational courses	Course development	Devising new course for small businesses
Radio Survey	Media ITC and course development	Is the radio an effective means of learning?
Cost sharing	Course Development, Marketing Office, Admin & Finance	Learner's ability and willingness to pay
Market research	Market Officer, Course development	Exploring potential clients for the college.
KAP	Learner support	Assessing people knowledge and attitude towards distance education
HIV/Aids Awareness	Course Development, Learner Support	Incorporating HIV/aids awareness into the curriculum and training tutors etc. in

6.7 Research and the Expansion of BOCODOL

In BOCODOL's strategic plan (1998) two of the goals are to: "promote opportunities for young people and adults to further their initial education to high stages in order to raise the general level of education of the people" and "provide opportunities for adults to acquire work related skills that will improve their productivity and standard of living and promote economic growth".

This statement supports the need for research to identify new growth areas and to increase BOCODOL's market share of adult and out-of-school youth. Research into potential learners provides data for the development of new courses and expansion to a wider audience.

Previous consultancy reports prepared by Peer Consultants³ identified several potential learners and a variety of new courses which could be offered such as Business Skills for Small Scale Entrepreneurs, Professional English for Police Officers and Secondary Education for Primary Teachers.

Once BOCODOL decides to offer a new course, further research is required to pre-test new course material and to pilot the course. The BOCODOL Research and Quality Control Policy must establish guidelines to examine the steps involved in designing a new course and implementing and monitoring a new course before it is offered on a large scale.

This includes:

1. Identify Potential Learners: this should be done with the RQCO, PRMO and external market research agencies (such as Peer Consultants)
2. Establish the type of course to be offered. (For example, the structure of the course, the length of the course, and method of instruction)
3. Development of course material for the target audience (CCD)
4. Instruction to the learners (LSD). What kind of tutorials will there be? By whom? Training?
5. Pre-testing of the Materials (RQCO, CCD). Pre-testing of course material is essential before the course is offered because it is necessary to make sure the material can be understood by the target audience and relevant to the needs of the learners. Feedback by potential learners can be incorporated in revising the material BEFORE it is offered.

³ The following reports by Peer Consultants identify the scope for future learners and potential courses: *Technical Consultancy 7 Market Research, November 1999*, the *Report on the Market Assessment Study February 2000*, the *Technical Consultancy 11, Market Research II, June-August, 2000* and *Market Surveys and Implementation Strategies for BOCODOL Programmes-Business Skills for Small Scale Entrepreneurs, September 2000*.

6. Piloting the New Course the first time it is run with a limited number of learners and to monitor and evaluate the course before it goes to scale (RQCO, CCD, LSD)
7. Publicity of the new course (PRMO)

6.8 Research and Collaboration

In the BOCODOL Strategic Plan (July 1998), one of the goals of the college is the “development of a culture of collaboration and partnership.”

As BOCODOL grows and the courses and clientele expand, BOCODOL can create partnerships with other non-government organisations. Initial discussions with organisations such as the Women’s Finance House Botswana, and JAB (Junior Achievement Board) illustrate the possibility of future collaboration. It is recommended that a Memorandum of Understanding be drawn up between BOCODOL and the collaborator. This can define the expectations, roles and responsibilities of each partner.

6.9 Monitoring the RQCO

The RQCO plays a central role in the monitoring and evaluation of the various HoDs in BOCODOL. However, a mechanism should be put in place to monitor and evaluate the performance of the RQCO. In the Organogram for BOCODOL the RQCO is part of the Support Unit and is directly responsible to the Director. It is suggested that the Director and the Deputy Director plan a regular meeting with the RQCO to monitor the RQCO’s activities and regularly review his performance.

Appendix 2:

Modified Job Description for the post of Research, Innovation and Quality Control Advisor *change to* Research and Quality Control Officer

Purpose of Post

To ensure that the college is fully informed about market possibilities, the needs of its learners and the quality of its materials and support services by providing informed advice to the Directorate on all matters concerning the carrying out of research, the identification of new market opportunities and the introduction and application of total quality management.

Principle Tasks

To be responsible to the Director of the College for:

1. Providing background information and advice concerning the following types of research:
 - ◆ Market research to identify new programmes, clientele, partner institution and other opportunities for the college
 - ◆ Research into learners for particular programmes to provide information about their number, distribution, aspirations, learning needs, existing levels of information, access to media, and studying constraints. **This will be in collaboration with other relevant departments such as: learner support, course development, IMM, and media and ICT**
 - ◆ Systematic development of testing of materials and services through pre-testing and piloting of courses prior to launching on a large scale, to ensure that they are appropriate to the intended learners and will achieve their learning objectives in collaboration with the appropriate department. **This will be in collaboration with other relevant departments.**
 - ◆ Monitoring and periodic evaluation of course materials, delivery methods and learner support, as a basis for deciding on the future life of the courses and determining the need to for any updating or revision. **This will be in collaboration with the P MEC and HoDs.**
 - ◆ Evaluation of all college activities against stated objectives and operational plans as a means of assessing BOCODOLs performance and maintaining quality. **Evaluation should be a shared responsibility and not the sole responsibility of the RQCO. External evaluation may also be necessary.**

◆Research as required to evaluate, throw light on and/or provide solutions to particular problems or issues arising in pursuance of the College's objectives (eg reducing learner drop-out, supporting remote learners, testing new ICT applications). **This needs to be done in collaboration with the HoDs of the relevant departments.**

◆Additional research, as required, into more general issues of distance and open learning to ensure the college stays at the forefront of developments within this field. To explore what is available on the internet and to develop a research or reference library to make the work accessible to others. Explore other institutions working on distance and open learning such as the Centre for Continuing Education at the University of Botswana.

2. Assisting relevant staff (especially in the materials development and learner support departments and regional centres) in the planning, implementation, and analysis of such research in ensuring that the results are adequately reported, disseminated and applied.

3. Assisting in training of relevant full-time (and where necessary, part-time staff in activities. **This should be done in collaboration with the Human Resource Development.**

4. Preparing regular progress reports for the Directorate on all research and quality control activities.

Unspecified Duties

In addition to the above tasks, the post-holder will undertake such other duties as the Director of the College might reasonably require.

Appendix 3: Roles and Responsibilities of other staff at BOCODOL

1. The workshop illustrated that a lot of research had been done before the placement of a RQCO, and that the HoDs and senior staff were uncertain about the roles and responsibilities of the RQCO. The HoDs and senior staff need to consult with the RQCO and ask for assistance. They should not assume that the RQCO is responsible without asking him.
2. The HoDs and senior staff need to inform the RQCO of all current research and proposed research that they wish to carry out research in their own departments. The RQCO is an experienced researcher, and he should be consulted in all research activities. If assistance is required then the RQCO is available to help and advise. He could also help with the logistics of the research framework and help to devise a plan of action outlining roles and responsibilities.
3. BOCODOL staff should familiarise themselves with other research being conducted even if it is not in their own department. Think about the work you are doing and the implications it may have on other departments.
4. The staff should adhere to an agreed set of quality standards. It is the *responsibility of all* not just for the RQCO.
5. Document activities and the processes it forms useful information for the college but others involved in distance education
6. Keep track of their projects and inform the RQCO of any problems and difficulties encountered. A clear outline of who is doing what throughout the stages of research should be clearly identified. Others involved in various stages of research should be informed. (ie, computing assistance, data entry, statistical analysis) and approached well-ahead before the work is expected of them.
7. Share information and experiences with others through the internet, workshops and conferences, and publications.
8. Form a research committee or incorporate research in progress into an existing committee, such as the P MEC.

Appendix 4: Action Plans and Activity Schedules

There are several activities which the Research and Quality Control Officer is required to work on within BOCODOL. These are divided into current/short term activities and longer term activities. One of the difficulties in trying to plan the activities for the RQCO is the dependency he has on other staff members. Cooperation and communication between all departments and the RQCO are essential to ensure that the allocation of tasks and responsibilities within research activities are met.

Action 1: Coordinate All Research Activities

Review all Current Research and Identify what needs to be completed
Assign Roles and Responsibilities to the various tasks
Project Deadlines
Progress Chart
Record into a database to show what is outstanding and what needs to be done.

Action 2: Prioritise

Aim to get the bulk of outstanding work done before the beginning of the new academic year. Enrolment will begin in January 2002, and it is imperative to try to get the data from 2001 entered and analysed beforehand. The Baseline Data on the current learners at BOCODOL need to be analysed and interpreted. Many of these outstanding issues are identified in the *Learner Support Monitoring and Evaluation Action Plan*.

- **Baseline Data:** the information about current learners at BOCODOL. The number of learners, age, gender, location, courses, drop-outs etc
(Problems identified by Martsie Roman: "enrolment forms are not completed to satisfaction, which means that the process is delayed because the lacking information has to be requested. As stated above, the cause of this problem lies in insufficient briefing of CSC supervisors. As a result, insufficient data entered, the materials distribution crisis could not be detected and solved through IMS. The collection of data needs to be coordinated by HoDLS and RMs.)

It is recommended that the RQCO continue with the task of analysing enrolment statistics and drop-out/retention rates) The proposed deadline of June has slipped, but it is foreseen that the HoD and the RQCO will agree on a realistic completion date for the information.)

- Baseline Data: the information about past learners and their performance and distance education operating methods and their effectiveness and problems *before* BOCODOL became operational. This is important to see if and how BOCODOL's performance has improved. (Forms are incomplete?)

- Analysis of the results of the learner and tutor needs survey.

The learner survey project still requires a lot of help. The questionnaires with the data are still coming in and the data need to be entered, analysed, interpreted, and the results reported to the management committee.

-Course Unit Feedback

Questionnaires for course feedback are included in all BGCSE units dispatched to learners. A small number of completed questionnaires should be available and the RQCO should start working on them.

URGENT ATTENTION: October – December, 2001

Activity	Outstanding	Responsibility	Deadline
Baseline Data on Current BOCODOL Learners	Incomplete data, problems with IMS Data analysis Interpretation Presentation	HoD-LS, IMM, RMs (Gaborone and Kang) LTRC, RQCO	December (Before new enrolment)
Baseline Survey on Learners and their performance and distance education methods <u>before</u> BOCODOL became fully operational	Incomplete Data, problems with IMS, Data analysis, Interpretation Presentation	HoD-LS, IMM, RQCO Suggestion: To hire a consultant to undertake this work	December
Learner and Tutor Needs Survey	Completed questionnaires, data entered, analysis, interpretation Presentation	HoD-LS; Data Entry clerks, RQCO	December (Before new enrolment)
Course Unit Feedback	Questionnaires need to be received and analysed and disseminate information to the CDD	RQCO with HOD-LS and HoD, data entry clerks, CDD	Ongoing -
Annual Reports	Information on all Departments at BOCODOL	Heads of Departments and RQCO, PRMO	March/April
Examination results of the number who	Who? In examinations	GALTO	Ongoing -

wrote final exams under BOCODOL starting 1999-2000 Pass rates, exam results, age, sex	research and testing, Any Numbers?		
--	------------------------------------	--	--

OTHER RESEARCH: January – June, 2002

Activity	Outstanding	Responsibility	Deadline
Pre-test Courses for Small Scale Businesses Pilot Course	Completion of the nine topics. Translation into Setswana.	RQCO; CDO-voc, HoD- CCD; PRMO	January April
Pre-test course, English for Police Officers Pilot Course	Completion of Course material, training of tutors,	RQCO; CDO-vocational; HoD- CCD; PRMO	January –March April
New Enrolment (2002) Data in Garborone and Kang Regions	Registration forms of new enrolment, data need to be entered into IMS, as the forms come in.	RM- Garborone and Kang; CSCSO, IMM, LTRC, RQCO	January-April
Enrolment Data in the other three regions: Maun, Francistown and Palapye	Registration forms for the new enrolment data need to be entered into IMS as the forms come in	RM –Maun, Francistown, and Palapye, CSCSO, IMM, LTRC RQCO	January – (depends on target numbers)
External Evaluation		DFID	August?

The following work needs to be incorporated into a yearly Action Plan:

- Continuation of Monitoring and evaluation – the process is ongoing and long term for consistency and quality control. .

- Annual Analysis

Improved learner performance (learner progress, attendance at study centres, retention, pass rates). Annual analysis by RQCO

Meeting set quality standards: successful passage of materials through QC process with minimal reworking. Feedback from QC processes and officers involved. Analysis by RQCO on an annual basis.

Increase and maintain learner participation in BOCODOL courses
 Improving learner performance (learner progress, attendance at study centres, retention, pass rates) Study centre attendance figures, assignment and exam results, degree of learner satisfaction and decrease in number of learner complaints.

Baseline data

Technological innovations

Skills and Knowledge for future development

Potential Demand for new programmes and target audiences

Quarterly Reports on the Progress of Research: RQCO

Yearly Action Plan: January - December 2002 (Detailed description of activities needs to be agreed upon by the Director, RQCO and HoDs.)

Months	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
January					
February					
March					
April					
May					
June					
July					
August					
September					
October					
November					
December					

To Repeat for January – December 2003

Months	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
January					
February					
March					
April					
May					
June					
July					
August					
September					
October					
November					
December					

Appendix 5: Research Exercise

Skills for Small Scale Business Men and Women

A market assessment survey⁴ was undertaken by Peer Consultants to identify new growth areas and to identify ways of increasing BOCODOL's market share in terms of delivery of educational services to adults and out-of-school youth. One course that was selected for immediate attention was Business Skills for Small Scale Entrepreneurs.

The consultant, the RQCO and the CDO for vocational skills worked closely together for three days to discuss the new course on Skills for Small Scale Business Men and Women.

The original aims of the exercise were twofold. Firstly, to pre-test the written material designed by CCD-vocational for the new course on Skills for Small Scale Business Men and Women in collaboration with the Women's Finance House Botswana. Secondly, for the consultant to assess the research skills of the RQCO and CDO-vocational; this would include designing research questions, tools/methods for data collection, collecting data, analysing data, writing a short report and disseminating the results to colleagues.

Initial preparations included a meeting with the Women's Finance House Botswana to discuss potential clients and to plan field sessions. In addition, the consultant, RQCO and the CDO-vocational worked together to discuss the methodology, tools and instruments for the exercise. A series of research tools were devised – semi-structured interviews, case-studies, questionnaires (coded and open-ended) and focus group discussions. Below is a brief summary of our research activities and the findings.

8th October

1. Semi-structured interviews with potential clients around Gaborone.

We selected a sample of 11 individuals in Gaborone in a variety of small scale businesses. We tried to get a good cross-section of the population, and interviewed men and women within a wide age span, 21-60 years.

Profession	age	sex	Education	Preferred language	Have you ever heard of BOCODOL?	Interested In doing a course?	Cassette Player?	Have received Loan?
Welder	33	M	Form 2	English	No	Yes	Yes	No
Barber	31	M	Form 2	English	No	Yes	Yes	No
Seamstress	45	F	Standard 6	Setswana	No	Yes	Yes	No
Vegetable seller (Zezuru)	30	F	None	Setswana	No	Yes	Yes	No
Cobbler	58	M	None	Setswana	No	Yes	Yes	No

⁴ See *Market Surveys and Implementation Strategies for BOCODOL Programmes: Business Skills for Small Scale Entrepreneurs*, Peer Consultants, September 2000.

(disabled)								
Telephone Kiosk	21	M	Form 3	English/ Setswana	No	Yes	Yes	No
Artisan/sculptor (From Zim)	25	M	Standard 7	English	No	Yes	Yes	Yes, NDB
Tyre Repair Accountant	31	M	Prof. Certificate	English/ Setswana	No	Yes	Yes	Yes, NDB
Food Seller	44	F	Standard 4	Setswana	No	Yes	Yes	No
Food Seller	58	F	None	Setswana	No	Yes	Yes	No
Sweet Seller	22	F	Standard 4	Setswana	No	Yes	Yes	No

This exercise was useful because it enabled us to interview prospective clients by going to them and interviewing them in an informal (but with specific questions) way to find out about their businesses and their needs. We interviewed 11 randomly selected individuals, and we were fortunate that all of them complied with our request to be interviewed. The sample consisted of 11 people; 6 males and 5 females, within an age range of 21 – 60 yrs. The majority had some form of schooling (78%) – our sample included some of the more marginalised groups such as the disabled cobbler and the Zezuru (Shona) woman.

Main Findings

- All were interested in the Skills for Small Businesses and thought the course could be useful to them.
- The two main reasons for wanting to undertake the course were for self-improvement and for expanding their businesses.
- Many are working in temporary accommodation such as in front of a relative's house, at the roundabout on Koklin Road or in front of shops.
- Most would like their own premises, and many were worried that they would be evicted soon.
- None had heard of BOCODOL. (The PRMO must try to publicise BOCODOL)
- Two of the businesses had received loans from NDP – the artisan selling sculpture and artwork and the tyre repair person; 2 had applied but without success.
- All would like better management skills
- All had a cassette player
- All were willing to pay.

Only three of the respondents had professional business skills – the accountant, barber, and seamstress had professional qualifications in their jobs, but they indicated that they would like better management skills for their businesses.

One surprising finding was that the Zezuru woman was interested in doing the course. Although she has not attended school, she said her children could help her. This helped to dismiss the view that Zezuru children do not go to school! (It should also be noted that Zezuru is a derogatory word and should be replaced with Shona.) She was selling spinach and chomalia; she said her main business was selling duvet covers and bathtubs from J'Burg, but that she did not have the capital to continue in those businesses.

This exercise showed that there is potential for BOCODOL to offer courses at this level. Most expressed a desire to enrol in the new course, but a publicity campaign will be needed. In addition the course should be translated into Setswana. The standard of education is Standard 7, this may have to be revised. Further research on potential clients such as men, diverse ethnic groups, and the disabled is required.

This type of research was informative, low-cost and fairly simple to conduct. It might be of use to do this on a larger scale.

9th October

Field Trip with WFHB

We went on a field trip to Muchodi and Modipane with a field officer from WFHB.. We met and interviewed 5 business women (i.e. women who have received loans from WFHB) to ask them about their businesses and to find out whether or not they would be willing to undertake a course in Business Skills. The table below highlights the findings.

Profession	Age	Education	Preferred language	Interest in course?	Ever hear of BOCODOL ?	Received other loan?	Cassette Player?
Seamstress Ice Blocks	56	Form 2	Setswana	Yes	Yes	FAP	Yes
Seamstress	50	Standard 4	Setswana	Yes	No	FAP	Yes
Tuck Shop Owner	53	Form 2	Setswana	Yes	No	No	Yes
Tuck Shop Owner	38	Standard 7	Setswana	Yes	No	No	Yes
Hawker	58	Standard 5	Setswana	Yes	No	No	Yes

The table shows that all women would be willing to undertake a course to improve their business skills. All had some level of education, and all indicated that they would like the materials to be translated into Setswana. All had a cassette player so an audio tape would be an ideal medium for them.

10th October

We had planned to meet with field officers and potential clients to pre-test the first module, *Starting Your Business and Keeping it Going*. Due to circumstance beyond our control, we were unable to meet with the potential clients and to receive their feedback. As a result, we were unable to pre-test the module.

We designed a series of tools such as questionnaires and focus group discussions. The pre-testing had been re-arranged for the following week (after the consultant had left). It is not known whether this has been carried out or not.

Although we were not able to pre-test the material, we were able to meet with potential learners. We were alerted to some problems which could arise. The First Module is written in English (standard 7) and limits the sample. Once it is translated into Setswana it is essential to pre-test that version. The design of the material and the standard of the course might not be focused at the right level for the potential learners. Feedback from the potential learners is imperative before the course is piloted.

Research Questions and Tools

Skills for Small Scale Business: Questionnaire

1. Name: _____
2. Age : ____ (enter years)
3. Location : _____
4. Number of years of education: _____ (enter number)
5. Marital status: ____ (1=single, 2=married, 3=divorced, 4=widowed, 5=other)
6. No. of children: _____ (enter number)
7. What type of business do you have? _____
8. Approximately how many hours/day do you work? _____
9. Do you work weekends? _____ (1=yes, 2=no)
10. Do you have a radio cassette player? _____ (1=yes; 2=no)
11. Have you received any training in running a business? _____ (1=yes; 2=no)
12. Do you feel the need to undergo any training? _____ (1=yes; 2=no)
13. In what areas do you need training? _____
14. Have you read the booklet? _____ (yes=1; 2=no) If No go to 23
15. How much of the booklet have you read? _____ (1=all; 2=half; 3=a section; 4=other)
16. Were your expectations met when you read the title, *Starting and Keeping the Business Going*? _____ (1= yes; 2=no)
17. Did you understand the contents? _____ (1=yes; 2=no) If Yes go to 19
18. If not, why? _____
19. Did you find it useful? _____ (1=yes; 2=no) If Yes go to 21
20. Why? _____
21. Did you find the activities relevant to your work? _____ (yes=1; no=2) If Yes go to 23
22. If No, why not _____
23. Which topics would you like to do? _____

24. Would you like to do a full course of nine modules? 1=yes; 2=no

25. How much would you be willing to pay for this module? _____

26. Have you heard of BOCODOL before this exercise? ____ (1=yes; 2=no)

Focus Group Discussion with Field Officers and Potential Clients

1. Have you read the booklet?

2. Did you understand what you read? Was it clearly written?

What was most helpful?

Least helpful?

Any difficulties?

Relevance of the material?

3. Do you think it necessary to translate this into Setswana?

4. Is this useful for your clients?

5. Would your clients take this course?

6. Comment on other topics?

7. Which ones are most useful? 1-9?
(list the nine topics)

Semi-structured interview with people in small businesses
Monday 8th October

Use notebook to take notes of the type of business, the person, age etc...
3rd Study on Other Small Business

1. How is business?
2. How did you start?
3. Have you ever received a loan? (either personal or bank)
4. How could you improve your business? (knowledge, money, premises etc..)
5. Have you ever heard of BOCODOL?
6. Would you be interested in doing a course by distance education?
7. If no, why not?
8. If you were offered a course in small business to enhance your skills would you consider enrolling?
9. Here is a list of nine topics - Does any of them interest you?
10. How much would you be willing to pay?

Topics: Skills for Small Scale Business Men and Women

1. Starting and Keeping the Business Going

Part 1: What does it mean to be a business man or woman?

Part 2: What are the different forms of business?

2. Making the Business Idea Real

Part 1: Developing the Business Idea

Part 2: How Feasible is your Business idea?

3. Financing your Business

Part 1: How much money do I need to start the business?

Part 2: What types of finance are available?

4. Marketing the Small Business

Part 1: The Marketing Plan

Part 2: Market Research

5. Pricing the Product/Service

Part 1: Product Planning

Part 2: Price and Policy

6. Keeping Business Records

Part 1: Basic Financial Records

Part 2: Stock Control

7. Selling and the Customer

Part 1: Different Types of Customer

Part 2: Persuading the Customer

8. Finding and Motivating Staff

Part 1: Planning Staff Requirements

Part 2: Caring for your staff

9. Communication in Business

Part 1: The Nature of Communication

Part 2: The Means of Communication in your business

Appendix 6: Training Needs

Research and Quality Control Officer

The RQCO has a solid background in social science research and has experience in practical field research. He has worked on many research projects and has used a variety of skills, both quantitative and qualitative. The tools he used were primarily questionnaires (coded and un-coded) and focus group discussions. He is well qualified and suitable for the position.

The RQCO will require a training session of how to use and access the IMS-1 database.⁵ He will need to know how the system operates and how to use the database. He should be able to extract the relevant information such as number of learners, gender breakdown (number of females/males), age, location, courses, and so forth. The data are essential for the RQCO, and he should have regular up-to-date statistics available, perhaps monthly reports from the IMM.

The RQCO will benefit from improvement in computing skills. He will need to use a database to manage the various research projects. Microsoft Office which includes Access and Excel would be ideal for this purpose. It is user friendly and compatible. He should also do a short-course in SPSS either in-house (with the ICT technician) or within Gaborone. He has experience with analyzing data sets, but he may need technical assistance with large data sets.

A short course on distance education would be very useful for the RQCO because this field is relatively new to him. A course, such as *Distance Education for Development*, organised by the International Extension College and the Institute of Education, University of London would provide a good opportunity for the RQCO. The course is 4 weeks, and he could use this time to improve his knowledge of distance education, to access the vast resources of the Institute's library, to meet and network with other distance educators (those attending the course and the various researchers in the United Kingdom), and spend time reading literature and developing a research library.

The RQCO will also benefit from keeping up-to-date with recent literature, and he should consider attending workshops and seminars to present papers. This would enhance his written and verbal skills. The RQCO should also consider publishing papers for BOCODOL and for his own career development.

Other Staff Members

A basic training course in Research Methods would be very useful. Most staff members are involved in "research" and a workshop to discuss the research framework and to illustrate the variety of data collection methods, data analysis, interpretation of data and writing reports. This would ensure that the quality of the

⁵ This was also suggested for the PRMO in the Marketing Consultancy Report (2001, p.26). Perhaps, the RQCO and the PRMO could do this together? A basic introduction to IMS-1 might also be of interest to other BOCODOL staff.

research is of a sufficient standard. The RQCO could conduct this course. The various HoDs and senior staff should also consider publishing their work.

Appendix 7: Research and Quality Control Feedback

The table below outlines some of the main areas where significant changes need to take place with regard to research and quality control within BOCODOL.

Before	Future Development
No Research and Quality Control Officer	Research and Quality Control Officer (RQCO) post filled in the Support Unit within the Directorate.
Research Activities were established before the RQCO was in place. These include the baseline data, learner support, and tutor survey.	Research Activities to be coordinated by the RQCO and the responsibilities to be shared with the various departments.
No coordination/Facilitation	The RQCO to coordinate the activities and to facilitate between departments.
Delays in the Processing of Research Material Incomplete data forms, lack of data entry technicians, analysis of results, interpretation and written reports.	Prioritise the outstanding issues and devise solutions to overcome the various problems.
Assumptions/Expectations that the RQCO would be responsible for all outstanding work, often without consulting or informing the RQCO.	RQCO to be consulted by the various departments and outline where they need help and assistance.
No Time Structure put into place	Clear timetable/Plan of Action. Short term and long term activities need to be established.
No Regular Progress Reports	Incorporate “research” into the agenda for regular meetings. For example - (PMEC) or Management?
Lack of Research Training/Staff Development	Identify research training needs of staff and provide training needs for RQCO and other staff

	Encourage continuous personal and professional development amongst staff.
Insufficient Management System and Lack of Monitoring of activities	Establish a database of all current research activities and keep regular monitoring of research in progress
Lack of Quality Control in Research Activities	Develop rules and procedures for quality management throughout the college.
Insufficient/Incomplete data	Check forms in the Region before returning to HQ.
No guidelines for new/future research	Guidelines in place of all new research. The RQCO should be consulted about all new research.
Implementing the Evaluation Framework	Review the evaluation framework and update the procedures and put quality control measures in place.
Lack of Research Partners	Establish partnerships with others in Distance Education – Research organisations, ngo's, and other government organizations.
Lack of Innovative Research	Explore New Themes and Issues in Distance Education

Appendix 8: Terms of Reference

Research and Quality Control Consultancy 23rd September – 12 October 2001

Purpose

To assist Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL) to establish appropriate and effective research and quality control functions.

Timing

The consultancy is expected to take place in September and last for a period of three weeks.

Rationale

BOCODOL has now completed its transition from a Division of Distance Education in the Ministry of Education's Department of Non-Formal Education to a fully parastatal College. Manned initially by core staff from DNFE, the nascent College inherited the original courses, previously enrolled learners and operating methods of the parent Division. From this beginning, BOCODOL was charged with increasing the range of courses offered and the number and types of learners reached and making major improvements to the quality and effectiveness of distance education materials and learner support.

Considerable progress has been made in this direction. BOCODOL has recently launched a new senior secondary programme using improved, interactive materials (print and integrated audio programmes) and is now piloting a decentralised learner support system based on Community Study Centres. In the meantime, BOCODOL has developed its own organisational structure and management policy, and has recruited new staff to a total of some thirty professionals.

Although research and quality control functions have been envisaged since the early planning stage, it is only now that the College has acquired a suitably qualified person with the brief to develop, help implement and oversee these aspects of BOCODOL's work. Other developments have helped to pave the way for this, including the following:

An evaluation framework has been developed to help the College to monitor the effectiveness of its activities;

A second framework has been designed specifically to monitor and help evaluate the piloting of the course materials and new learner support system that were introduced in April

A computer-based Information Management System has been introduced at HQ and in the pilot regions to facilitate the storing and processing of information on learners, support staff and course materials;

A series of market assessment studies has been carried out to identify new course topics and types of learners;

A survey of learners' needs and characteristics has been commenced.

Until now, however, there have been no systematic attempts to assess the College's performance, to gather baseline data, to conduct formative research, to pre-test course materials or to introduce quality control measures.

A post of Research and Quality Control Officer (RQCO) has been established in a special Support Unit in BOCODOL's Directorate. The post will carry an advisory function on all matters concerning research and quality control, together with responsibility for overseeing research activities in the College. Rather than providing RQCO with a team of research assistants, BOCODOL expects the incumbent to work collaboratively with staff in all departments to design research work, gather information and interpret result. This is important, as it will help to ensure that all relevant staff participate fully in research activities and will feel able to own the results and accept and respond to the implications.

It is anticipated that research and quality control will include performance appraisal of all College activities, market research, the gathering of information about existing and new learners, developmental testing of draft distance teaching media and materials, other research to provide information as required by Management. RQCO will be expected to employ a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Objectives

The overall aim of the consultancy is to help BOCODOL develop its own policy on research and quality control and to establish roles, responsibilities and procedures necessary to implement such a policy. The objectives are therefore:

1. to develop an agree a policy for BOCODOL which sets out the rationale, aims scope and functions of research and quality control and the chief methods to be used;
2. to review the current job description for the RQCO and agree modifications where appropriate;
3. to determine the roles and responsibilities of other staff at BOCODOL in relation to research and quality control policy which sets out required tasks, people responsible and a time frame;
4. to develop an action plan for the implementation of the research and quality control policy which sets out required tasks, people responsible and a time frame;
5. to review RQCO's research skills and assist in developing and practising the following skills in conjunction with other staff and in the context of BOCODOL's research and quality control policy:

managing a research exercise
planning a simple data gathering exercise
sampling
developing data gathering instruments
gathering data through interviews
recording and tabulating data
analysing results (with the use of appropriate computer software -?SPSS)
using qualitative as well as quantitative research techniques
interpreting results
writing and presenting results and implications to Management and prime users;

6. to assist RQCO in the first stages of implementing the research and quality control policy;
7. to identify training needs for RQCO and other staff and suggest suitable courses for staff development.

Methods

The consultant will work with the BOCODOL Director and Deputy Director, the RQCO, the Technical Advisor and other staff where appropriate to develop and agree research and quality control policy and to produce an action plan. Much of the time will be spent on practical work and in close consultation with RQCO.

Initial briefing materials include the following documents:

BOCODOL Strategic Plan (July 1998)
Report on the Market Assessment Study (Feb. 2000)
BOCODOL Business Plan (version 7) (October 2000)
Introduction to BOCODOL (Nov 2000)
Organisational structure and staffing details
Learner Support Consultancy Parts 3 to 6 (June 2001)

Planned Outcomes

1. A document setting out an agreed research and quality control policy;
2. An action plan for the implementation for the policy;
3. Revised Terms of Reference for the RQCO;
4. RQCO has the required skills and confidence to implement the research and quality control policy
5. Other BOCODOL staff are willing and able to work with RQCO as team members
6. Training needs for RQCO and other staff identified.

Consultant

Dr Alicia Fentiman is a Research Fellow at the International Research Foundation for Open Learning in Cambridge, UK where she specialises in research related to distance and open learning. She has excellent research skills – in both qualitative and quantitative techniques and extensive experience in training researchers in Africa and Asia. She also has extensive education –related field research experience in Ghana and Nigeria. She has at different times, worked for UNICEF, the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge.