Quality Assurance tools

Romeela Mohee
Education Specialist: Higher Education

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Overview

• Institutional QA
  • Quality management systems
  • QA policy
  • QA audit- Self assessment report
  • COLRIM
• TQF

• Learning outcomes
  • Define QA mechanisms and tools in Higher education systems
  • Differentiate between QA tools at institution level
Quality Management System (ISO9001)
A QA system includes defined standards of achievement, documented procedures for all identified processes, established ways of responding to issues and clear accountability of outcomes (ISO9000)
The first step of a robust Quality Assurance program is planning. Planning involves thinking through the entire life-cycle of a Quality Assurance program, Effective Plan-ing requires detailed consideration of the major elements of Quality Assurance, including:

1. QA Policy,
2. Overall Institutional Infrastructure,
3. Training,
4. Implementation,
5. QA Audits and
6. QA Feedback Incorporation. In this step, organizations will need to build the tools, resources, trainings and protocols necessary to implement QA.
• Effective **Do-ing** requires QA structures, tools and policies to be in place and to be ready to be used.

• **Do-ing** means actually using the protocols and practices developed in the QA planning stage. Thus, Do-ing may require a shift in work habits and procedures and necessitates training for instructors, course designers and administrators.
Check

- Institution-wide Quality Assurance checks, where the effectiveness of an institutions overarching QA processes are evaluated, should also be performed at regular intervals.

- Internal and external quality audits

- External evaluators generally perform institutional QA checks.
• Thus, responses to evaluations, or action plans, should be incorporated into course, program and institutional planning. In this way, Act is a precursor to Plan in the Quality Assurance cycle.

• Act-ing is where institutions best demonstrate their commitment to quality. By showing stakeholders they are willing to use feedback in order to achieve or surpass their stated standards of quality, organizations display self-awareness and leadership in providing quality programming.
Elements of QA policy

• All activities that promote quality assurance should be documented in a university’s quality assurance policy.

• A comprehensive policy allows a university to articulate in a single document its values, goals and objectives in the area of quality assurance as well as the activities that enable it to meet these goals and objectives.

• It helps to ensure that there is a common terminology to support quality assurance, and that activities related to quality assurance are carried out consistently across programs, services, or units over time.

• It facilitates communication and dialogue, and ultimately ensures an effective process.
QA policy

• Institution policy in quality that defines the institution goal and standard and that reflects the values and principles of its mission statement

• Develop an operational plan that describe the processes that will monitor quality and performance indicators and assigns responsibility for implementation
  • Op plan –identifies analyses and maps critical functions. Describe steps in all procedures, standards of performance (turnaround time for student assignments....)

• It should describe the various review processes (academic and non-academic) and other related quality assurance activities, and include the lines of accountability and responsibility as well as timelines for key steps of each process.

QA policy (Open University of Mauritius)

• The QA policy provides for transparent and more explicit quality assurance measures to promote effectiveness in the implementation of quality standards and criteria by;
  • Establishing key QA management structures, including a quality assurance unit and corresponding committees to monitor and review quality assurance practices
  • Developing a quality assurance manual and procedures
  • Developing formal mechanisms or policy for development, approval, monitoring and review of programmes, courses and awards
  • Designing and implementing a comprehensive learner support system, which ensures that tutorial, counselling, pastoral and academic support required by learners are considered in programme and course design, development and production of distance learning products and services
  • Ensuring institutional compliance with national and international quality standards

QA manual/handbook

• A QA manual/handbook will contain
  • Glossary of key terms
  • procedures for implementing, modifying, and terminating a study programme, using flowcharts and written descriptions;
  • tools for internal quality assurance and their application in study programmes, departments, and faculties.
  • Glossary of key terms
  • Main QA tools used at the institution
Self Assessment

• A Self-Assessment Report (SAR) is a formal tool used by institutions to assess the quality of a program, from the perspective of its’ instructors.

• Self-Assessments give instructors the opportunity to provide their institutions with thoughtful, structured feedback about the strengths and weakness of program or course.

• These reports are not intended to be disciplinary tools; instead, they are tools intended to support instructors, and institution as a whole, in their development as providers of quality education.

• SARs are most effective when they include not only strengths and weaknesses, but also actionable suggestions about what is needed to improve. They should be filled out honestly, critically and at regular intervals.
Internal institutional audit

• Common QA procedures in an audit are
  • Self study/self evaluation
  • Peer review by an expert panel
  • Use of statistical indicators and performance indicators; completion rates, overall grades
  • Surveys of key stakeholders such as students, graduate, employers, faculty
  • UNISA trial audit (2007)
    • 29 Commendations and 5 recommendations

Reference: http://oasis.col.org/handle/11599/211
COL tools
COL tools

• QA audit in Ghana and UNISA
• COLRIM
• QA toolkit for
• TIPS framework for OER
• Transnational Qualifications framework (TQF)
COL RIM – Commonwealth of Learning review and Improvement model

• Combines internal and external quality assurance in a low-cost ‘do-it-yourself’ approach which does not require a panel of external experts

• Develops systemic thinking and organizational learning

• Offers credibility without high-stakes consequences for poor performance

• Focuses on improvement and includes capacity building and developmental support

Reference: oasis.col.org/handle/11599/602
COL/RIM

• COL/RIM certificate awarded to 10 institutions
  • Bangladesh Open University
  • Wawasan Open University, Malaysia
  • Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKSHOU), India
  • NIHSS Seychelles
  • The University of Jaffna in Sri Lanka
  • Fatima Jinnah Women’s University Pakistan
  • Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) Pakistan
  • National University of Lesotho
  • University of Mauritius
COLRIM process

• “Quality is an emergent property of an institution’s own systematic review and improvement of its own performance”
• Communication
  • Needs orientation
  • Capacity-building
  • Quality management
  • Engagement
  • Innovation & Creativity
Self Review (COLRIM)

• How effectively does the institution communicate with its stakeholders?
• How well does the institution provide the outcomes that its stakeholders need and value?
• How effectively does the institution engage with local and international communities?
• How effective are the institution’s innovative and creative responses to a changing environment?
• How effectively does the institution develop the capacity of its people to provide valued outcomes for stakeholders?
• How well does the institution monitor and improve its performance?
## COL Resources on Quality

### COL QA Toolkits/Guides

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Publication Date</th>
<th>Handle</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Quality Assurance Toolkit: Distance Education Institutions and Programmes</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td><a href="http://hdl.handle.net/11599/105">http://hdl.handle.net/11599/105</a></td>
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<td>2 The Commonwealth of Learning Review and Improvement Model for Higher Education Institutions</td>
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<td>3 External Review Toolkit for ODL and eLearning Courses</td>
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<td>4 Guidelines for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of MOOCs</td>
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<td><a href="http://hdl.handle.net/11599/2362">http://hdl.handle.net/11599/2362</a></td>
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<td>5 Quality Assurance Guidelines for Open Educational Resources: TIPS Framework</td>
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<td>1 Open and Distance Learning Quality Assurance in Commonwealth Universities: A Report and Recommendations for QA and Accreditation Agencies and Higher Education Institutions</td>
<td>2016-02</td>
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<td>2 Adapting Quality Assurance to Innovative Programmes (PCF8)</td>
<td>2016-11</td>
<td><a href="http://hdl.handle.net/11599/2638">http://hdl.handle.net/11599/2638</a></td>
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Transnational Quality framework (TQF)

Courtsey: Dr Mairette Newman, Education Specialist, VUSSC, COL
What is the Transnational Qualifications Framework (TQF)?

A reference system
that links or connects national qualifications systems and frameworks from different small states

A mapping instrument
that allows courses and qualifications to be compared

A translation tool
for classifying qualifications according to a set of criteria for different levels of learning outcomes

Reference: Transnational qualification framework for the Virtual University for small states of the commonwealth. 2015. oasis.col.org/handle/11599/501

A manual with guidelines for registering and using the TQF has been developed and is available on the COL Oasis site.

Transnational Qualifications Framework 2015
Watch a 3 minute video:

What is the TQF and how does it work?
Transnational Qualifications Framework

NOTE:
• TQF does not replace existing qualifications frameworks
• TQF is non-regulatory
• TQF is voluntary
## Transnational Qualifications Framework

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<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Qualifications Titles</th>
<th>Minimum Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>360</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Masters Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma; Bachelor’s Degree with Honours</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree; Graduate Certificate and Diploma; Advanced/ Higher Diploma</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Associate Degree/ Foundation Degree</td>
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<td>Diploma</td>
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<td>Advanced Certificate</td>
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<td>Certificate I</td>
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TQF Registration Process

A course can apply for TQF registration if

• It is offered by an institution approved and recognised by the government
• It has been approved within the institution
• It has been approved by the national qualifications authority
• It has been approved by the regional qualifications authority
Benefits of the TQF

• Promotes mobility of courses, qualifications and learners among the 31 small states
• Facilitates comparison of qualifications among the 31 small states
• Supports credit transfer and articulation across the 31 small states
• Increases transparency
• Promotes common quality assurance mechanisms

Overall, TQF encourages and improves labour mobility; educational portability and international recognition of small states’ qualifications
Qualifications Registered on TQF

• Master in Educational Leadership
• Bachelor in Business Entrepreneurship (Honours)
• Bachelor in Business and Entrepreneurship
• Bachelor in Environmental Science
• Diploma in Sustainable Agriculture for Small States
• Certificate in Tour Guiding
Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC)

A collaborative network or conduit  NOT a traditional institution

• Encourages and supports the development of open learning and distance education knowledge, resources and technologies

• Strengthens the capacity of national institutions in small states

• Helps small states collaborate