

Quality Assurance Strategy

3.1 Strategies to Achieve QA

To achieve quality assurance, the following strategies can be employed:

- (i) Each faculty or department must try to develop itself towards self-study that reflects quality-oriented culture.
- (ii) The University must try to develop different mechanisms, both internal and external (auditors, public reports, external peer reviews, etc.), to enhance quality.
- (iii) The quality system model employed should be acceptable nationally as well as internationally.
- (iv) Basic structure must be developed and technologies should be employed in the management of information system to facilitate the process.
- (v) Develop QA capabilities of all levels of the University's personnel
- (vi) Support QA system by top administrators
- (vii) Create internal quality audit and assessment, and issue AuQS 2000 certificate to the unit that can attain the satisfied level.
- (viii) Benchmark QA practice with institutions within and outside Thailand.

3.2 Concentration of issues on Quality

There are a number of factors affecting quality of graduates. Certain factors influence the quality of graduates more than other factors. At Assumption University, in academic area, the emphases will be placed on the following aspects without neglecting other issues:

1. Quality of teaching, training and research
 - These reside in the quality of its staff and its programmers and resources.
 2. Quality of learning
 - Quality of students
 3. Quality of governance and management
 - Quality cannot be assured without a mechanism of evaluation, quality control and assessment.
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1. Quality of Faculty Members:
 - * Eminence of faculty members and researchers
 - 1.1 It should start with, and actively involve, the academic and research faculty.
 - 1.2 Clearer policies and practices are needed for faculty development.
 - * Initial and in-service training
 - * Pedagogical training
 - * More rigorous mechanisms for assessment of, and selection for, university teaching.
 - 1.3 Accountability and evaluation
 - * Through self-evaluation, peer-evaluation, and external evaluation.

2. Quality of Students
 - Students are the great asset of a society.
 - Number Vs quality
3. Quality of Governance and Management
 - Academic autonomy
 - Academic freedom
 - Community of free inquiry, and the stimulating climate
 - Institutional autonomy implies increased responsibility in matters of systematic...
 - (i) self-evaluation of teaching and research
 - (ii) concern for cost-effectiveness and efficiency in all activities
 - (iii) having mechanisms to remove mediocrity and to guarantee quality of teaching-learning, research and service to secure resources from public and private sectors

3.3 Suggested Guidelines

1. Standard operating procedures: Procedures should be laid down specifying quality plan and defining implementation strategy. They indicate compliance with AuQS 2000 standard, demonstrate the process flow, and ensure there are no holes in the system. Procedures are process-oriented and cover:

- The task which answers the **what**
- The responsibility which specifies the **who**
- The frequency which says **when** to do
- The department/unit which identifies **where**

Procedures are usually written at the functional department/unit level and describe how each unit will implement relevant part of the quality system.

2. Mechanisms: They can be divided into four levels:
 - To determine task system – concerning how to organize the task and supervise it later;
 - placing the mechanisms for regulating the task;
 - evaluating the quality of task system, the quality of supervision, and then,
 - applying the results of evaluation to develop academic quality within institutions.
3. Indicators of Quality: For a task performance to be of quality, there must be clear measurable evidence to prove that the situation is changing or has undergone a change for the better.
4. Standard for Quality: This is to indicate the level of minimum satisfaction of the situation or performance.

5. **Assessment Criteria:** The standard established to measure and interpret performance.
6. **Quality Improvement:** The quality is something subjective. The bar of quality can be shifted up continuously. Thus quality cannot remain the same as time passes by.

3.4 Documentation

The four levels of documentation are:

Level 1: Quality manual

This is the fundamental document and provides a concise summary of the quality management policy and quality system along with the objectives and organizational structure of the institution.

Level 2: Procedures manual

It describes the system, functions, structure and responsibilities in each department.

Level 3: Work instructions

Specifications and detailed methods for performing work activities should be made clear to all (step-by step directions specific to the task).

Level 4: Database/Quality Records

There should be a database containing all other reference documents (e.g. forms, standards, drawings, reference information, etc.). The quality records are ongoing, objective evidences of the system evolving from the processes. The standard does not specify exactly which records must be kept; that is for the department or faculty to define. The standard directs how to store, identify, maintain, and retrieve quality records. The retention period of records must also be specified.

The quality system should define and cover all facets of operation of an organization, from identifying and meeting the needs and requirements of customers, design, planning, teaching-learning processes, supporting services, together with all relevant activities carried out within these functions. It deals with organization, responsibilities, procedures and processes. A quality system is simply good management practice.

3.5 Steps in Achieving the Quality Assurance System

- Create an awareness of the importance of QA in all members
- Make a self-survey to know the existing situation
- Set clear goals for the qualities of the graduates. Consider the main factors and secondary factors that contribute to qualities.
- At the same time, point out indicators and standards of qualities that affect the quality of the graduates

eg.: Curriculum Facilities
 Students Library
 Lecturers Environment
 Mechanisms, Measurement and Evaluation of Quality

- Create mechanisms of quality control of those factors
- Set and announce clear rules and regulations for the operation
- Build up acceptance
- Try out the system
- Do auditing
- Internal and External Audit from Accrediting Agency
- Benchmarking
- Quality Assessment and Improvement

3.6 Quality Model Employed

There are quite a number of quality models used in different countries. Each country designs its own model and names it differently.

AuQS 2000 is also the quality model arbitrarily named, modeled and designed to fit the University and its context. It consists of five major components: Context, Input, Process, Output, and Impact.

1. Context

The University has been founded and operated within these contexts:

- Vision, Mission, Strategies, Plans
- Administrative Atmosphere
- Environment

2. Input

Input is what the University has invested

- Faculty & Staff
- Students
- Administrators
- Finance & Budgeting
- Facilities
- Buildings
- Land
- Surroundings within the University

3. Process

Interactions and things happening in the University

- Administrative Process
- Teaching & Learning Process
- QA Process
- Research Process
- Finance & Budgeting Process
- Academic Services Process
- Art & Culture Promotion Process

4. Output

- Quantity & Quality of the Graduates
- Quantity & Quality of Researches
- Quantity & Quality of Academic Services
- Quantity & Quality of Arts & Culture Promotion

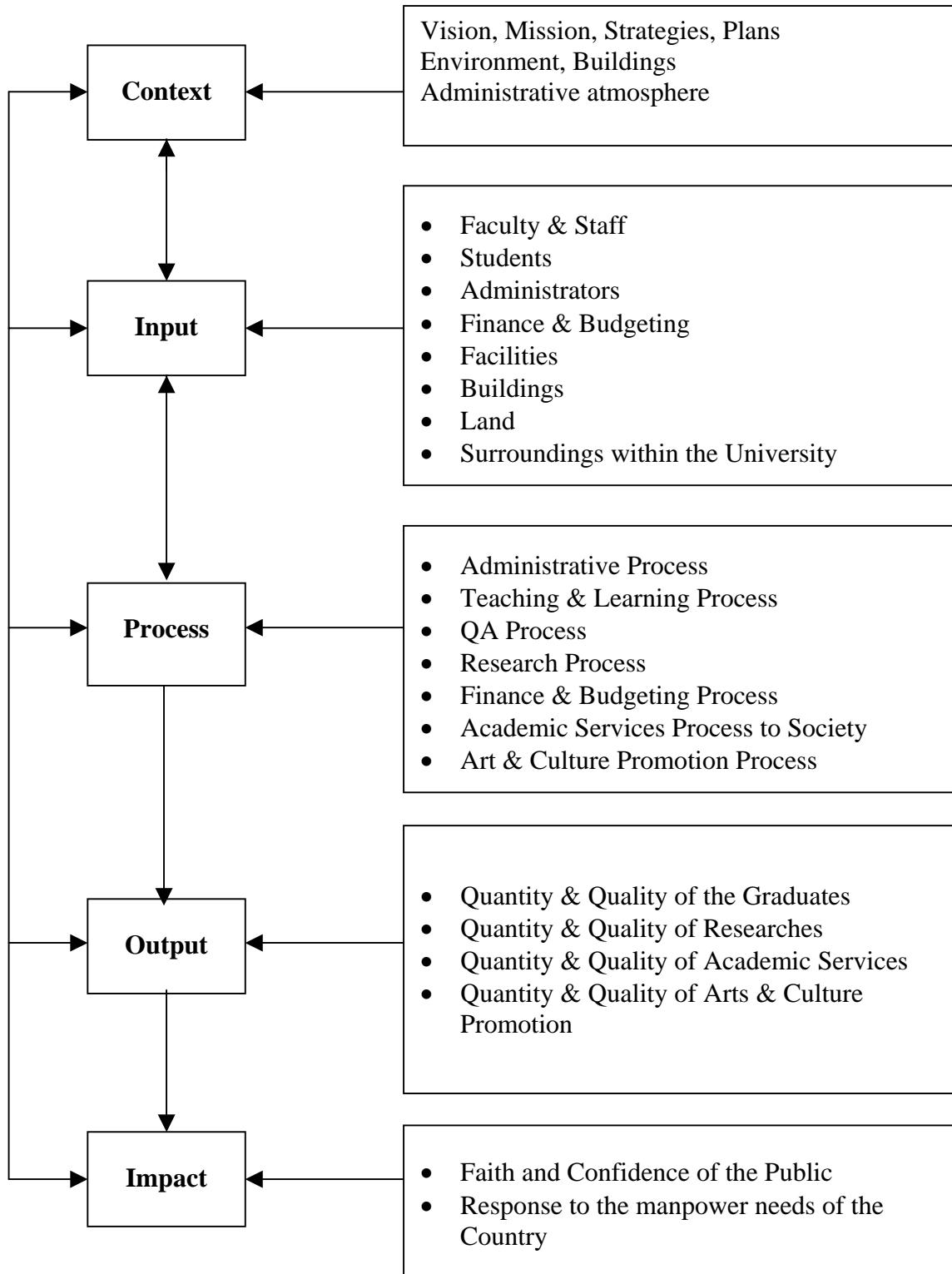
5. Impact

- Faith and Confidence of the Public

- Response to the manpower needs of the Country

The system is shown below.

Figure 1: Context, Input, Process, Output, Impact System



3.7 Factors affecting educational quality

After reviewing various factors operating in the University, the following nine factors are found to be significantly affecting educational quality. They are:

- 3 1. Vision/Mission, and Plans
- 3 2. Teaching - Learning
- 3 3. Student Activities*
- 3 4. Research
5. Social Services*
6. Promotion of Thai Art and Culture*
- 3 7. Administration and Management
8. Finance and Budgeting*
- 3 9. Systems and Mechanisms of Quality Assurance

3 = Emphasis

* = Partially done by the Faculty

Of the nine factors, five are considered to be directly involved in each Faculty. They are:

- Vision / Mission, Plans, and Strategies
- Teaching – Learning
- Research
- Administration and Management
- Systems and Mechanisms of Quality Assurance

Another four (Student Activities, Social Services, Promotion of Thai Art and Culture, and Finance and Budgeting) are partially in each Faculty. Special departments or units have been set up to manage these activities.

3.8 Integration of the Systems

There are various systems operating in the institution. They must be well integrated. Otherwise, it becomes burdensome to faculty members who have to do the teaching job as their main function.

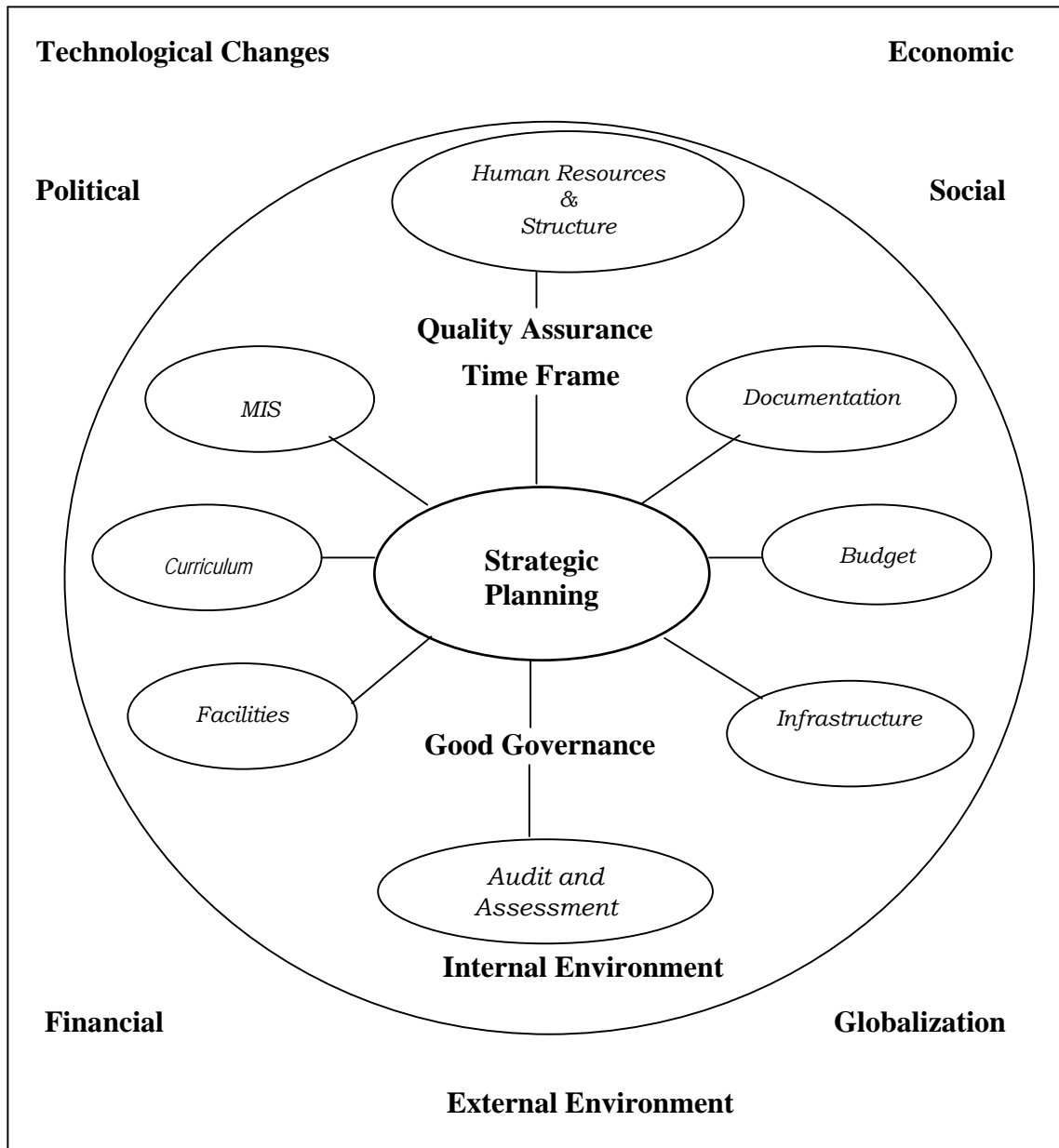
The **Deming Cycle (PDCA)** of planning, implementing, supervising, and improving can be applied here. Annual plan must be achieved in full and it has to be done yearly. Meanwhile five-year plan is also needed to set the short-range goal of the Faculty though things keep on changing rather rapidly. This five-year plan should be adjusted yearly, too. Planning should be done in the context of university resources. There must be a fit between the environment within and outside the University.

Quality Assurance and Good Governance are the soul or spirit of the personnel operating in the systems.

At the end of each year, each department or each Faculty must look back and see what had been achieved and how much left undone. This is done through Self Assessment Report. The set goals and achievements should be compared and causes

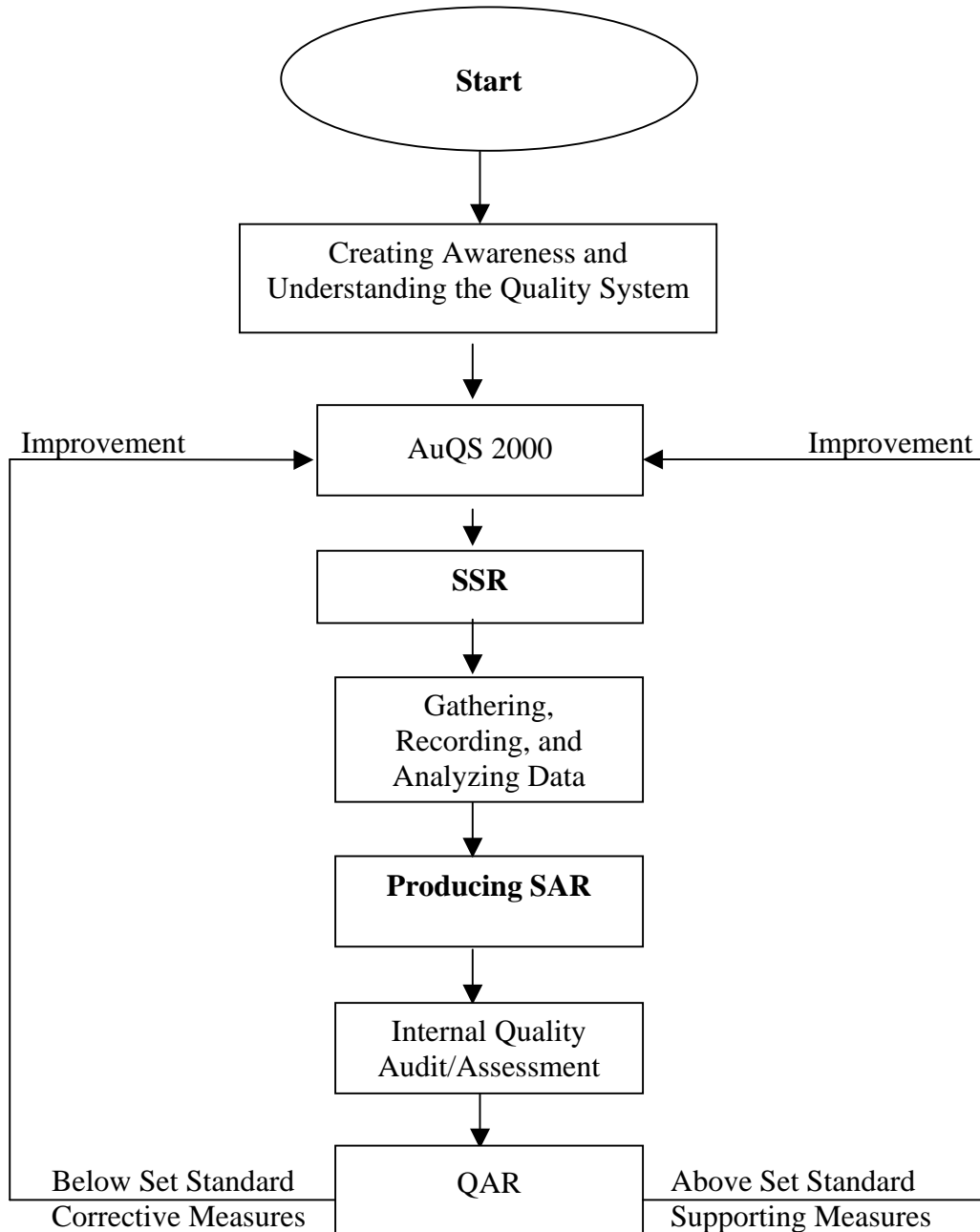
for under-performance must be identified for correction and improvement (See Figure 2 and Flowchart of Quality System).

Figure 2: Integration of Systems



- Systems :**
1. Annual Plan
 2. Five-Year Plan
 3. Annual Report
 4. Quality Assurance (QA)
 5. Good Governance

**Figure 3. Flowchart of AuQS 2000
Quality System, Assumption University**



***N.B.:** The auditing process should enable the department or faculty to identify defects and to seek measures for improvement.*

3.9 Stages of Quality Development

In the process of developing quality assurance in different units of the University, and since efforts and participation of every member are needed, patience must be the virtue of the administrators. Moreover, as the practice of quality assurance is something new to everyone, different stages of QA implementation must be designed to fit the culture, namely:

- Stage 1: Creating an Awareness, Urgency, and Understanding of Quality System and Quality Assurance.
- Stage 2: Developing Quality System Model and trying to acclimatize to QA culture
- Stage 3: Existence of Quality System in every unit
- Stage 4: Moving ahead on the Road to Excellence
- Stage 5: Competition both inside and outside the University
- Stage 6: Feedback and Revision of AuQS 2000

3.10 Quality Assurance Master Plan 2003 – 2007

To achieve the above quality movement and ideals of Assumption University towards Education Excellence, a 5-year master plan has been drafted to monitor and implement the AuQS 2000 (2nd Edition, 2003) over the next 5 years.

Basically there are 3 main manuals involved, and they are:

1. AuQS 2000 Quality Assurance Manual (2nd Edition, 2003),
2. AuQS 2000 Quality Assurance Score book (2nd Edition, 2003),
3. AuQS 2000 Audit and Assessment Manual (2nd Edition, 2003).

all of which outline the main models and philosophy to achieve the quality standards as envisioned in Assumption University.