

Quality Assurance Theoretical Framework

The primary commitment of every educational institution is to “quality” or “excellence.”

Quality embraces all functions and activities, such as, quality of teaching, training and research; quality of learning (quality of students); or quality of governance and management, to mention just a few (Craft, 1994, 156).

Quality relates to institutional mission. An institution is said to be of quality if it achieves its mission and meets the expectations of its stakeholders. This involves a judgment both on the pertinence of the mission and on whether it is fulfilled or not. It stresses the quality of the educative product as measured by the acquired knowledge of the graduates, their ease in finding work, or their social performance. There is less interest in the process (teaching) than in the results (learning).

If quality is the meeting of requirements, then quality can only be measured if these requirements are known and defined. By defining requirements, the standards to be achieved are set (New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 1992, 7).

Therefore, the institution must concentrate on two aspects, namely, (i) develop indicators of quality and (ii) develop their own quality measures. This leads to the development of the AuQS 2000 and by June 1, 2003, it has evolved into a more robust and generic model that can be used across board all academic units at the department, faculty and university level, and also as a comparative indicators across academic units.

2.1 AuQS 2000

In an effort to achieve quality outcomes, a quality system model should be selected from what have been in use or design a new model to be implemented so that what best fits the institution is employed.

2.2 What is AuQS 2000?

AuQS 2000 is a code invented to name the quality system model designed for implementation at Assumption University. Au stands for the name of the institution, Assumption University. QS is the acronym of Quality System. and 2000 is the year in which this code of quality system model was invented.

The logo of this quality model was designed by A. Arwin Intrungsi from Faculty of Communication Arts. It is to exhibit the quality of a unit that reaches the standard set by the institution.

2.2.1 Quality Assurance: refers to the determination of standards, appropriate methods and quality requirements by an expert body, accompanied by a process of inspection and evaluation that examines the extent to which practice meets these standards. (Harry Costin, p.630)

2.2.2 Definition of Terms in Quality Assurance

1. Quality Assurance (QA): is the process whereby customers, producers or any other interested parties are satisfied that standards will be consistently met.
2. Quality Control (QC): is a process whereby conformity with standards is checked and steps are taken if conformity is not achieved.
3. Quality Audit (Qau): the quality management system may be checked to see if it actually exists and works; this is quality audit.
4. Quality Assessment (Qas): the products or services may be checked externally to see if standards are being met; this is quality assessment.
5. Accountability: means that institutions must be open to external scrutiny and that the outcomes of that scrutiny should be published.
6. Quality System (QS): Organizational structure, procedures, processes, and resources needed to implement quality management.

If Quality Assurance is a function of Quality control, Quality Audit, and Quality Assessment, then to put it in the form of a mathematical equation:

$$QA = f(QC + Qau + Qas)$$

2.2.3 Concept of Quality in Higher Education

An institution is said to be of quality if ...

- (i) it achieves its mission, and
- (ii) it meets the expectation of its stakeholders.

It stresses the quality of **the educative product** as measured by ...

- * the acquired knowledge of the graduates
- * their ease in finding work, or
- * their social performance

- The interest is more on the results (learning) than on the process (teaching).
- There are attempts to assess **the added value** of higher education, and there are links with efforts to implement total quality in university management.

2.2.4 The Ministry of University Affairs & Quality Assurance

The MUA is responsible for ...

- (i) broad policies relating to higher education
- (ii) university regulations
- (iii) setting curriculum standards
- (iv) overseeing university personnel and administration
- (v) approving accreditation and curriculum development
- (vi) acting as a link between universities and government

2.3 Quality Assurance Guiding Principles

Some of the basic principles and general objectives used as guiding principles for the QA units are as follows:

1. Our major aim and objective is to improve quality in all aspects of University operation and life whenever and wherever possible.
2. To assure the quality of the students' total educational experience both in academics and in areas of moral and physical growth.
3. The focus of a QA system must be on process and not on people. The desired result is reached more efficiently when activities and its resources are managed as a process.
4. Involve all people at all levels. All staff are responsible for quality.
5. Take into consideration the views and opinions of the students and, when possible, actively involve them in the QA process.
6. Commit ourselves to the principle of external peer involvement, a mutually beneficial relationship will improve our ability to create value for our students and society.
7. The QA process must use a system approach to management. Through the use of a system approach, synergistic opportunities arise that can improve the university's efficiency and effectiveness.
8. Don't make more work. Good QA does not require increased costs as every person should be more efficient and productive. The total cost to the University should actually decrease.
9. Societal-Student-Focused University. Universities serve society by producing students of quality to meet the needs of their society. A QA system of value will help to meet and hopefully exceed the expectations of both the students and the global community at large.

2.4 Quality Policy

We are committed to Academic excellence by producing competent, knowledgeable and ethical graduates as envisioned by Assumption University through the following mechanisms:

- A set of quality students who are guided and mentored with the benchmarked knowledge and skills as defined by the stakeholders to succeed in local and international organizations, through,
- A set of quality instruction by competent and knowledgeable academics who are well versed in teaching and learning supported by research in the state-of-art areas of expertise, and,
- A set of quality and innovative curriculum that creates the state-of-art in knowledge and skills as benchmarked by the stakeholders, supported university wide with:
- A set of quality infrastructures and support services to create a conducive and effective teaching, learning and research environment.

2.5 Quality Benchmark of the graduates

As Assumption University envisions its graduates to be:

- healthy and open-minded persons, characterized by personal integrity, an independent mind, and creative thinking,

- professionally competent, willing to exercise responsible leadership for economic progress in a just society,
- able to communicate effectively with people from other nations and to participate in globalization process.

The benchmark of the envisioned graduate will be based on

- a set of knowledge as benchmarked by the stakeholders,
- a set of skills as benchmarked by the stakeholders,
- a set of competencies as benchmarked by the stakeholders,
- a set of capabilities as benchmarked by the stakeholders, and
- a set of ethical and moral standards as benchmarked by the stakeholders,

that enhances the envisioned graduates with the following qualities:

1. *Personal qualities*

- Good physical and mental health
- Have thorough academic and professional knowledge and interdisciplinary integration of knowledge
- Be steeped in culture and aware of traditional values and virtues.
- Capable of critical and creative thinking and be broad-minded.
- Have courage to think and conviction to act and make decisions.
- Have excellent interpersonal relations.

2. *On ethical and moral aspects*

- Diligent and industrious
- Honest and upright
- Free from perverse inclinations and unsavory addictions.
- Selfless and dedicated.
- Free from extravagance.
- Always be reasonable and conscious of social obligations.
- Self disciplined and motivated.
- Possess a sense of devotion and sacrifice.
- Possess a high degree of endurance and tolerance.

3. *Social aspects*

- Having social (public) spirit
- Engendering political and social consciousness, rendering services to society and the country. Creating harmony in the nation.
- Developing awareness and competence in adapting to social changes but still upholding and appreciating Thai values.
- Understanding one's role and function, living harmoniously and happily as befits law abiding and ethical citizens.

4. *Management*

- Knowing social norms in managing one's life as a responsible member of society
- Preparing to be good leaders while remaining as good followers.
- Able to work as a team.
- Listening to other's opinions, extensively collecting information and exchanging it with others.

5. *Internationalism*

- Having good grasp of the significance and values of natural resources and environment.
- Having broad knowledge concerning world issues, globalization and internationalization processes.
- Ability to make good use of modern technology

2.6 Quality Benchmark of Excellence

2.6.1 AU STANDARDS OF EXCELLENCE

AU “Standards of Excellence” consists of the three main criteria:

- 1) the depth and breadth of subject contents
- 2) quality question papers
- 3) scholarly works by the students and the instructors who are intellectuals.

Students

1. Discipline
2. Regularity of Class Attendance
3. Active Class Participation
4. Completion of Assignments
5. Rigorous Study Habits
6. Quizzes
7. Language Proficiency (English and Others)
8. Mid-term Examination
9. Final Examination
10. Refined Social Mannerism
11. Dressing Code

Faculty

- 1) Teach all classes in English.
- 2) Prepare course outlines, lesson plans.
- 3) State class objectives, contents, activities, evaluation methods clearly.
- 4) Be sure that subjects taught cover both breadth and width.
- 5) Demand rigorous studying discipline from the students.
- 6) Teach professionally.
 - Good Preparation.
 - Interesting methods of instruction.
 - Usage of experts and other resources.
 - Good Communication skills.
 - Empathy toward students.
- 7) Start the class on time.
- 8) Evaluate students thoroughly and fairly.
- 9) Be involved in students’ academic development.
- 10) Be responsible for all the duties involved in college duties.
 - supervision of examination
 - interviewing students.
 - offering good advice
 - attending meetings and seminars, etc.

2.6.2 Quality Faculty as INTELLECTUALS

- ❑ Intellectuals who are conscientious and compassionate should be the pillars of a society or leaders of a community.
- ❑ Intellectuals who are possessors of true knowledge, arbiters of truth and falsehood, adjudicators of what is right and wrong, what is fair, equitable and just.
- ❑ Intellectuals who are honest and dedicated will avoid idle talk, malicious fabrications, maledictions and machinations, abstain from unjust causes and unholy alliances.
- ❑ Intellectuals who will make fair observations, correct analyses and pass judgement on the motivations and the hidden agenda of people belonging to obnoxious factions, groups, associations and parties.
- ❑ Intellectuals who cultivate only the best of intentions, are armed with high principles and noble ideals and will not stoop to the tactics and strategies of political expediency and the cheap captraps of rabble-rousers and power-hungry individuals.
- ❑ Intellectuals who know that politicians and their henchmen are planning and plotting all the time to extend their influence and ensure their hold on power and privileges indefinitely.
- ❑ Intellectuals who are fully aware that power corrupts and that absolute power corrupts absolutely.
- ❑ Intellectuals who are familiar with what a brilliant wit suggested-that politicians and diapers share a common feature which requires them to be changed regularly.
- ❑ Intellectuals who act as the conscience of a society, pointing out the evils, the pitfalls and the calamities that lie ahead.
- ❑ Intellectuals who must make the clarion call when there is a lot of injustice and oppression and when our values are being corroded by a breakdown of morality and ethics.

2.7 Conclusion on Quality

1. There are many definitions of quality. But there is general agreement that quality is present when specified requirements are met.
2. If quality is the meeting of requirements, then quality can only be measured if these requirements are known and defined.
3. By defining requirements, the standards to be achieved are set.
The institution must concentrate on two aspects, namely,
 - (i) develop indicators of quality, and
 - (ii) develop their own quality measures.
4. Principles of Total Quality Management
 - Customer Focus
 - Participation and Teamwork
 - Continuous Improvement and Learning