

The Role of Quality Enhancement Cell in Higher Learning Institution of Arab World

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Abstract- The quality enhancement in higher learning institution is very important for all levels. The standard of quality of higher learning institutions has significantly affected by the low quality of intake, teaching staff and physical facilities, and lack of quality control. The main objective of this paper is to present status of quality education in the higher learning institutions of Arab State Universities which is quite questionable in the global context in terms of knowledge, facilities and the systems. The data collected from fifteen (15) higher learning institutions of Arab State Universities by conducting an interview and structured Questionnaire. The respondents were given the choice of being interviewed or self-administer the questionnaires to provide the data. This paper pointed out the wisdom of quality assurance move in Arab State higher learning education system when many of the conditions necessary for its success are not present. In this paper, we propose Quality Enhancement Cell as a focal point for quality learning in almost all the faculties of higher learning institutions in All Arab state universities. The study has been used to put forward some recommendations regarding the improvement in quality education for Arab State Universities.

Keywords- QEC, QAC, HLI

I. INTRODUCTION

The current status of Quality in higher learning institutions of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is quite questionable in a global context and in terms knowledge being imparted in these institutions. Some of the Saudi Universities are not capable of meeting the international standards of higher education. The crucial gap in quality of higher education calls for a focused approach to assure and enhance the standards of quality in the sector. Quality enhancement in higher education is a rising challenge in the global context as well.

The aim of international compatibility and competitiveness cannot be achieved significantly without enhancing quality of higher learning on sustainable basis which in turn needs a mechanism of Quality Enhancement.

The Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) will develop a process of quality assurance through Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) to be set up in the universities as a focal point. This QEC will serve as the king pin to achieve the objective of quality learning. The detailed guidelines to develop this Quality Enhancement Cells will be developed by the Quality Assurance Committee and will be approved

by the President after recommendation of the committee. In brief this QEC will be quality assurance unit developed at a university program. This cell is required to develop and implement the measures of quality assurance with promises of quality enhancement to meet the international standards of higher education. This QEC will be operated by universities for execution of the Quality enhancement policies designed by the Quality Assurance Committee with uniformity of pace and standards. The funds will be provided by universities to facilitate the functioning of this cell as an important component of quality assurance programmes.

This QEC will be regulated, guided and monitored by the Quality Assurance Committee that will be developed at universities to assure the improvements in the quality of all higher education levels at the same standards within the universities. The QAC will perform major functions with Capacity Building for improving standards of Quality in higher education. This committee will also account for the major rising issue of quality versus quantity raised by all intellectual forums of the universities. The committee will analyze the present state of Quality enhancement and assurance in higher education and will develop a sustainable mechanism of Quality Assurance in the form of Quality Enhancement Cell and capacity building programme required to meet the global challenges of developing a knowledge economy. The Committee will design and develop activities and mechanisms for capacity building in the focused area of Quality of knowledge being imparted by universities and higher learning institutions.

The quality assurance and enhancement in public and private sector is very important for a university, institute, college, and school at all levels i.e. students, teaching staff, facilities and the systems. The low quality of intake, teaching staff and physical facilities, and lack of quality control has significantly affected the standard of 'quality' of higher education in public as well as in the private sector. The main goal of this study is to present status of quality in the higher learning institutions of Arab State Universities which is quite questionable in the global context in terms of knowledge, facilities and the systems.

The aim of this paper is to identify the bottlenecks and problems involved in planning and

implementation of a project. For this purpose, data were collected from project directors, HEC personnel's and consultants. Data were collected from 15 Arab State Universities and institutions of higher learning institution in Pakistan using questionnaires, designed for this study. As an alternative, the choice was given to respondents to provide data through interviews

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents a background study, while section 3 outlines the methodologies of data collection and presents results of our data analysis in section 4. This is followed by the output and recommendation along with conclusion in section 5,6 and 7 respectively.

II. RELATED WORK

The Quality Assurance procedures can introduce and expose organizational fissures and cracks in the quotation life of higher education institutions. Quality assessment demands consensus and continuity in relation to organizational goals and properties [3]. The higher education systems worldwide is undergoing manifold changes such as a significant increase in private provision. It consists of cross border higher education, where institutions, programmes, students and/or staff cross national borders. Cross-border higher education offers both opportunities and challenges for education systems, their respective communities and countries at large. It focused on institutional and programme mobility, which pose the greatest challenges to national authorities. [5].

The UNDP report 2002 pointed that the landscape of higher education in the Arab world has changed significantly, largely in an attempt to accommodate the high number of new entrants into the system. Governments have diversified the programs available for higher learning intuitions, ranging from university graduate and undergraduate programs to technical and professional degrees granted by polytechnic institutes, community colleges, and even on-line programs. There has also been a related expansion in the quantity and types of institutions and a shift away from a near exclusive emphasis on public institutions. While wide differences exist between countries across the region—in particular in demographic pressures and resource availability—most have experienced rapid growth in nongovernmental/private

institutions, foreign universities with local campuses, virtual universities, and partnerships between local and foreign universities in the last decade [9]

The private sector higher education is also increasing day by day which has affected excellence in quality standards. The objective of international compatibility and competitiveness cannot be achieved significantly without enhancing quality of higher learning on sustainable basis which in turn needs a mechanism of Quality Enhancement Cell monitored by the Quality Assurance Committee. This committee will also account for the major rising issue of quality versus quantity raised by all intellectual forums of universities. The committee will analyze the present status of Quality Assurance in higher education at all Arab State [2].

III. METHODOLOGY

Data were collected using structured questionnaires from fifteen (15) higher learning institution in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which was designed for this study. To provide the data, respondents were given a choice of being interviewed or self-administer the questionnaires, and send them back to the researchers. This paper examines some outputs and recommendations.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

A regional Overview Report Summery of key indicators based on detailed internal & external reviews of computer Sciences programmes as a pilot programme of the project in a group of fifteen (15) Arab State Universities are mentioned below in the table [1]:

S.No		U-1	U-2	U-3	U-4	U-5	U-6	U-7	U-8	U-9	U-10	U-11	U-12	U-13	U-14	U-15	
1	Academic Standard	A/S	A/S	A/S	A/S	A/S	A/S	A/S	A/S	A/S	A/S	A/S	A/S	A/S	UN	A/S	Un=1 A/S=14 A/C=0
2	Teaching & Learning	S	G	S	S	G	S	S	S	S	G	G	G	S	S	G	U=0 S=9 G=6
3	Student progression	S	S	S	S	U	U	S	S	S	G	G	G	S	S	S	U=2 S=10 G=3
4	Learning resource	U	S	U	U	S	S	U	S	S	G	G	S	U	S	S	U=5 S=8 G=2
5	QEA	U	U	U	U	S	U	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	U=5 S=10 G=0
Indi- cator	Other selected aspects																
1	Sufficiency of academic staff	U	S	U	U	U	U	U	U	U	S	S	S	U	S	G	U=9 S=5 G=1
2	Aca.standard & rank structure of existing staff	G	G	G	G	U	U	G	U	G	G	G	G	S	U	G	U=4 S=1 G=10
3	Maths component of curriculum	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	G	G	S	S	U=0 S=13,G=2
4	MFT core areas that are covered to 70% or more	0	1	1,2,5	1,2	1	1,2	1,2,3,5	1	1,2,3,4,5	1,2,3	1,2,3	1,2	1,2,3,4,5	1,2	2	Area(numb er)=1(14), 2 (11),3(5),4(2),5(3)
5	Total % coverage of MFT curriculum	47	37	78	63	56	74	73	55	82	81	80	84	90	66	59	Average=7 1%
6	Role & organization of graduation project	G	G	G	G	G	G	S	G	S	S	S	G	G	G	G	U=0,S=4,G =11
7	Number & academic quality of books & journal	U	U	S	U	U	U	U	U	U	G	G	U	U	U	S	U=11,S=2, G=2
8	Library organization	S	U	U	U	S	S	U	S	G	G	G	U	U	G	G	U=6,S=4,G =5
9	Faculties & arrangement for internal access use & use	U	U	U	U	S	U	U	G	S	S	S	G	G	S	G	U=6,S=5,G =4
10	Number & Organizations of PCs	U	U	U	U	G	S	U	U	G	G	G	S	U	G	G	U=7,S=2,G =6
11	Students competence in technical English	S	S	U	U	S	U	S	U	G	G	G	S	G	S	G	U=4,S=6,G =5

Note: Abbreviation for Academic standards only, UN: Unapproved, A/S: Approved / Satisfactory, A/C: Approved with condition
For Quality Assurance and Enhancement only, U: Unsatisfactory, S: Satisfactory

*MFT Curriculum Core Area(1) Programming Fundamentals (2) Software Systems
(3) Computer Organization and Architecture (4)Theory & Computational
Mathematics (5) Special Topics

U-1: University of Sciences & Technology Houari Boumediene (USTHB)- Algeria
U-2.: University Mohammed V (Agdal) – Morocco
U-3: Helwan University –Egypt
U-4. Sana's University -Yemen
U-5: Damascus University –Seria
U-6: The Lebanese University – Lebanon
U-7: Sudan University of Sciences & Technology – Sudan
U-8: Palestine Polytechnic University – Palestine
U-9: Bahrain University-Bahrain
U10: The University of Jordan – Jordan
U-11: Zarka Private University – Jordan
U-12: The Islamic University-Gaza – Palestine
U-13: Ajman University of Sciences & Technology – UAE
U-14: The University of Sciences & Technology-Sana'a – Yemen
U-15: Al-Akhawayn University in Ifrane – Morocco

V. PROJECTED OUTPUT

In view of the above data analysis, Quality Assurance Committee and Quality Enhancement Cell proposed the following outputs and recommendations after implementation. The details are as follows [8].

A. Direct Benefits

- Overall improvement in quality of higher education on sustainable basis in the universities.
- To establish a Quality Assurance Committee at All Arab Universities for designing and monitoring of a phased programme of quality learning with uniformity of higher learning standards.
- To build the capacity of higher education faculty wise to meet the rising global challenges and improved levels of international compatibility and competitiveness of our graduates through a systematic capacity building training programme.
- To develop a cadre of Master Trainers for Quality Assurance in higher education through foreign training of professionals of Quality Assurance Committee during phases of the programme .
- Uniformity of policies and standards with practices of effective and efficient Quality Assurance mechanism at Faculty /College / Departmental level.
- Mainstreaming the concept of Quality Assurance in cross cutting areas of higher learning required for creating an enabling learning and research environment at Faculty / Departmental level.

B. Indirect Benefits

- Significant contribution in the development of other sectors of economy connected with higher learning such as industries, agriculture and services.
- Developing a culture of excellence in the higher education sector
- Mainstreaming a cadre of social elites for the socioeconomic development of the Arab State countries
- Efforts being made in the project for skill development

C. Capacity building

An equally important function of the Quality Assurance Committee will be the capacity building of all professional members of QEC for improvement in standards of Quality Assurance in higher education. The process of capacity building will be divided into major activities as awareness campaigns and training component whenever and wherever required.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

The study has been used to put forward some recommendations regarding the improvement in quality education for Arab State Universities. These recommendations include:

A. Output-I

The Quality Assurance Committee will arrange the foreign training of Director of Quality Assurance Committee and at least one of its professionals to serve as master trainers to train the all professional staff of Quality Enhancement Cell.

B. Output- II

Minimum two training workshops will be conducted by the Quality Assurance Committee to train the professionals working at QEC for modern theories and practices of quality assurance in higher education. The knowledge of master trainers will be updated by attending international seminars and conferences on a regular basis and the knowledge acquired will be transferred to the staff of all faculties of QEC through these training workshops.

C. Output-III

At least one awareness seminar/ conference per year will be conducted at All Arab State Universities by Quality Assurance Committee to get feedback from QEC and awareness of all stakeholders in order to get their feedback on the programme of quality assurance.

D. Other socio-economic advantages / disadvantages which are likely to accrue as a result of the establishment of QEC. The quality of knowledge being imparted in higher education of the universities will be significantly improved with the help of the Quality Assurance Committee. The enhancement in the international compatibility of the higher education sector of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and human resources development with a learned core of social elites to serve as leaders for transforming into a knowledge economy.

VII. CONCLUSION

It has been observed from the above discussion that the quality of education especially in Arab State countries cannot be improved without the establishing of the Quality Assurance Committee and Quality Enhancement Cell. The policies made by the Cell must be implemented, checked through the committees and an annual report must be submitted to the Quality Enhancement Cell by the Quality Assurance Committee of the institution. The committee also pinpoints the drawbacks where they felt in the system. For this, they also suggest some improvements in the light of these drawbacks.

If any higher learning institution particularly in kingdom of Saudi Arabia considered following recommendation in the set up of the educational policy and execution in any institution, they will get maximum benefits from QEC more effectively and efficiently.

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