



ISSN: 0975-833X

RESEARCH ARTICLE

ASSESSMENT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AT HIGHER EDUCATION (AN INDONESIAN REPORT)

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 20th September, 2013
Received in revised form
17th October, 2013
Accepted 25th November, 2013
Published online 02nd December, 2013

Key words:

Quality Assurance,
Internal, Assessment,
Standard,
Higher Education

ABSTRACT

Quality assurance is nowadays becoming a central theme in higher education. Like in other developing countries, in Indonesia quality assurance in higher education is one of the main concerns of the government. Since 1994 the Government of Indonesia has established the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (*Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi*: BAN-PT), which has main task and responsibility to evaluate the quality of study programs of state and private universities in Indonesia and to a certain extent, reflects external quality assurance process. This paper presents the information regarding the result of assessment on the implementation of internal quality assurance at higher education in Indonesia. The paper also presents some of the experiences of State University of Gorontalo (*Universitas Negeri Gorontalo-UNG*) in Developing and Implementing of academic quality assurance system. Finally, this paper tries giving recommendations for developing of the quality assurance from organization of the external evaluation towards institutional (internal) systems, in order to build the quality culture in higher education in Indonesia.

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1986 the Government of Indonesia have been initiated some important and fundamental reforms in Higher Education through various programs. The effort of reforming and improving the higher education in Indonesia be continued till 1995, when a new paradigm of university management were introduced through the fourth Long Terms Development of Higher Education – Framework (Directorate General of Higher Education 2008). Quality assurance is one of the important parts of the reforms in Higher Education in Indonesia. In the Indonesian *Higher Education Long Term Strategy 2003-2010* (HELTS 2003–2010) there are three focus of reforms in Indonesia Higher Education: (1) quality as the core to build nations' competitiveness; (2) management of autonomy) and (3) organizational health (Ahza 2008).

One of the outcomes of HELTS 2003-2010 has given consequence to encourage all higher education institution in Indonesia to develop and establish their quality assurance systems. This quality assurance system serves as tool towards maintaining high standards in quality teaching and research activities. Furthermore the system expected as to tool for continuous improvement in all aspects of higher education institution activities. The main purpose of HELTS 2003-2010 is a national strategy of Government of Indonesia in order to achieve better level of higher education in Indonesia. It was stated In Part II Chapter III Point E HELTS 2003 – 2010 that:

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In a healthy organization, a continuous quality improvement should become its primary concern. Quality assurance should be internally driven, institutionalized within each organization's standard procedure, and could also involve external parties. However, since quality is also a concern of all stakeholders, quality improvement should aim at producing outputs and outcomes as part of public accountability.

Based on the HELTS 2003-2010 policy, in 2003 the Directorate of Academic (formerly the Directorate of Academic and Student Development) began to initiate quality assurance activities in all public and private universities. To support the implementation of the quality assurance, the Directorate of Academic published several books and guidelines, including the Guidelines for Internal Quality Assessment of Higher Education and Guidelines for External Quality Assessment of Higher Education and followed by another eleven book 'Good Practices in Higher Education Quality Assurance'. All of these books aim at inspire or motivate the stakeholder to implement the quality assurance in higher education.

According to the guideline, quality assurance in higher education systems comprises of internal and external quality assurance systems. Higher education institution can perform and manage its quality assurance with both internally driven mechanism and externally mechanism organized by The National Accreditation Agency of Higher Education (BAN-PT) or any other institution (Directorate General of Higher Education 2008)..

However, it is important to note that in the past few years the past, the implementation of internal quality assurance in higher education in Indonesia is not fully in practice when compare to the external quality assurance activities (Directorate General of Higher Education 2008).. Based on this condition some essential efforts had been made in order to develop the internal quality assurance systems in higher education institutions. Furthermore, in recent years higher education policy in Indonesia has been initiated to encourage the university to develop appropriate quality assurance arrangements in order to protect or safeguard the standards and also to monitor whether those procedures are effective for internal quality assurance activity. In 2008, The National Accreditation Board for Higher Education has been done a first national assessment on the implementation of internal quality assurance at some of universities in Indonesia.

The evaluation of the implementation of internal quality assurance activities in higher education in Indonesia was carried out in 2008 by the Directorate of Academic. This evaluation was focused more specifically on the existence and completeness of the institutional documents regarding to internal quality assurance activities in each university or academic institution. Based on the results of these assessments, the Directorate of Academic put in the record those universities or academic institutions, that has excellent implementation of the quality assurance.

1. Design of Internal Quality Assurance Assessment

Basically, there are three major intentions behind the assessment of the Implementation of internal quality assurance at higher education in Indonesia. These reasons are as follows:

1. Assessing to what extend the implementation of internal quality assurance in higher education.
2. Presenting a quality profile of every institutes of learning in the university or higher education under the program of internal quality assurance. The intention behind this profile is to expose the strength and weakness of this institution on it quality assurance program. By doing this it will safe as model for the university or higher institution that still lagging behind in the implementation of this concepts.
3. This program also intends to provide feedback, suggestions and recommendations to the universities that have implemented the internal quality assurance. This will have institution to improve, develop and as well to straighten the implementation of internal quality assurance in their institution.

Method of Assessment

Principally, the Assessment on the implementation of internal quality assurance at higher education in Indonesia used the following "standardized" method (Figure 1):

1. Survey method. All data collected through the use of questionnaires (close questionnaire), which contains a series of questions and open questionnaire (open-ended questions).

2. All public and private universities in Indonesia (81 states owned universities and 2600 private colleges/universities) were sent questionnaire asking for the implementation and the activities regarding internal quality assurance.
3. Observation through Site Verification at 127 colleges and universities
4. Assessment of the data and information regarding internal quality assurance activities carried out with two phases

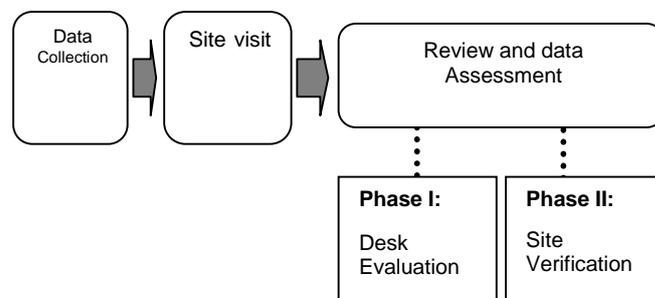


Figure 1. Assessment method

5. Survey method. All data collected through the use of questionnaires (close questionnaire), which contains a series of questions and open questionnaire (open-ended questions).
6. All public and private universities in Indonesia (81 states owned universities and 2600 private colleges/universities) were sent questionnaire asking for the implementation and the activities regarding internal quality assurance.
7. Observation through Site Verification at 127 colleges and universities
8. Assessment of the data and information regarding internal quality assurance activities carried out with two phases

Phase I: Desk Evaluation

This stage aimed to select universities, which have returned the questionnaire whether they are appropriate to join the process of the verification and technical assistance by the team reviewers. Besides the certain assessment criterion, also be considered the criterion to what extend the academic institution has implemented the national education regulation;

Phase II: Site Verification

The purposes of site verification are analyzed and compare between the data and information from universities, which has selected as "university-respondent" of the assessment to condition the universities. The reviewer team will visit this selected universities in order to make verification of all data and information, which has provided by universities in the Phase I.

The schedule of assessment process has been conducted over six month, from February to October 2008 and used the following process:

1. Establishing an assessment team, the teams are divided to some working groups.
2. Distribution of task of each working group
3. Preparation and completion of the assessment instruments (questionnaire).
4. Testing and reviewing the assessment instruments
5. Distributing the assessment instruments and collecting the questionnaire.
6. Formulating the assessment criteria of Desk evaluation
7. Analyzing of 387 returned questionnaire based on Desk evaluation criteria. The result of desk evaluation recommended as follows:
Based on returned questionnaire analysis, it is discovered that six universities have implemented internal quality assurance with good category. As a result, there is no need for site verification and further technical assistance at these institutions. A total of 127 universities are select to conduct site verification and technical assistance.
8. Writing of guidelines for site verification and technical assistance process.
9. Analysis of data from site verification of 127 universities/colleges
10. Making list of universities rank based on score of site verification
11. Nominating of "the 68 top universities", which has implemented the internal quality assurance in good category.

2. Overview of the assessment result

In general the result of the assessment shows that from 384 higher education institution in Indonesia, which used as sample for this assessment (81 states owned universities and 303 private colleges/universities), there were 68 (18%) universities/college have implemented internal quality assurance in good category. The result of assessment indicates that most universities/colleges in Indonesia have not fully implemented internal quality assurance yet. Although internal quality assurance has been initiated since 2003 by Directorate of Academic, but it is interesting to realize that after five years has not been implemented by the most of universities in Indonesia (Directorate General of Higher Education 2008).

There are some concluding remarks can be underlined from the result of the assessment:

1. Information about quality assurance is widely known in almost all universities.
2. Most universities not fully understand yet the role and function of quality assurance for the improvement of quality in higher education.
3. There are other universities in Indonesia whose have no knowledge of Quality Assurance System for Higher Education, which initiated by Directorate of Higher Education
4. Most of universities still focused the internal quality assurance on academic fields only (only focused on aspects of teaching and learning process), whereas Government Regulation Number 19 Year 2005 on National Education Standards provides that the

internal quality assurance include both academic and non academic activities.

5. Most universities are still in its "early stages" of the implementation of internal quality assurance (preparing and composing of internal quality assurance, e.g. policy, manuals and standard of internal quality assurance)
6. Some universities have started implementing internal quality assurance program. They are the stage of trying to complete the policy documents, manuals of implementation and quality standards policy.
7. Some universities are of the opinion that internal quality assurance is the same as ISO certificates. This equation is not appropriate because the frame of idea, objective, and criteria in internal quality assurance is quite different from the ISO. The difference can be notice in the following points:
 - Design and setting of the standard in the internal quality assurance is based on university vision's, while ISO is a tool to measure the mplementation of certain existing standards in higher education;
 - ISO is not aimed at improving the standard, meanwhile internal quality assurance aimed to improve certain standard.
 - ISO can be used as a tool for controlling of the implementation of internal quality, but it does not mean that the ISO is replacement for internal quality assurance.

More ever, concerning the result of this assessment, there are some recommendations should be taken in account in order to improve development of the implementation of internal quality assurance at higher education in Indonesia:

1. Internal quality assurance should be set-up in the form of legal documents. It will bind university/colleges to implement the internal quality assurance.
2. Universities, which have not implemented internal quality assurance, should use the 68 universities as "benchmarking" for their internal quality assurance activities.
3. The 68 universities are expected to provide technical assistance and/or capacity building for universities, which have not implemented the program of internal quality assurance.
4. Directorate of Academic need to conduct more socialization of internal quality assurance through various workshops. The topics of the socialization should be as follows:
 - a. National Policy of Internal Quality Assurance.
 - b. Formulation of Internal Quality Assurance Policy.
 - c. Writing of Manual of Internal Quality Assurance.
 - d. Setting of Internal Quality Assurance Standard.
 - e. Preparation of Internal Quality Assurance documents.
 - f. Strategy of Implementation of Internal Quality Assurance.
 - g. Evaluation and Kaizen Method in Internal Quality Assurance.

3. Internal Quality Assurance at State University of Gorontalo

a. Background

In the future, the existence of higher education will not be merely depending on the government, but mainly be depending on the assessments by stakeholders (students, communities, parents, work place/industries, government, lecturers, supporting staff, and other interested parties) on the quality of its education. For its existence to be assured, higher education inevitably has to organize its quality of higher education. Since stakeholders will always do ongoing assessment, therefore quality assurance should be adjusted to continuous improvement.

Like other universities, the State University of Gorontalo (Universitas Negeri Gorontalo, UNG) has the responsibility to train his student to possess adequate competencies for the challenges of their future work. The reason for this is for every university or higher educational institution to produce graduates that are competence to meet local, regional and global community needs. This can be done by developing quality assurance program to ensure the quality of education as part of responsibilities to community or as a form of accountability to public.

b. Toward to the Quality Assurance

UNG has set up the quality assurance a process to determine and accomplish the standard of institutional quality service, which is done consistently and continuously, to satisfy all stakeholders (students, parents, workforce, government, lecturers, supporting staff and other related parties). In this case, monitoring, evaluation and remedial activities and/or ongoing and systematic quality improvement of various aspects in academic services are undertaken to attain the standards set in vision, mission, and goals of UNG, to all parties (internal, external, manager, relevant institution, professional organisation and users/community). In addition, UNG put the academic quality as a "target" for the achievement of education goals and graduates competencies as determined by vision and mission in strategic plan; or when educational goals have met the academic standards determined. This is based on the concept of quality assurance, that educational services in universities is considered as high quality when higher education is able to determine and achieve its vision and mission & is able to meet stakeholders needs including society needs, industrial needs and professional needs.

Quality assurance process in UNG is undertaken through 2 main activities:

1. External evaluation (Accreditation)
2. Internal evaluation with focussed on Study Program Evaluation based on Self Evaluation/*Evaluasi Program Studi Berbasis Evaluasi Diri* (EPSBED).

Accreditation is facultative and implemented by National Accreditation Board (BAN-PT), aiming at external controlling and auditing the quality of education. EPSBED is compulsory program and done by Directorate General of Higher Education–MONE (Directorate General of Higher Education at the Department of National Education) to evaluate the

extension of operational license of a study program (Directorate General of Higher Education 2003).

Quality assurance is self initiative activity (internally driven) beside the 2 activities mentioned above (see Table 1). UNG is preparing quality assurance system that is aimed at improving the quality of graduates/outputs. Quality assurance process is an independent activity. Therefore, the process is designed, implemented and controlled by UNG itself. Quality assurance is started with commitment from management, lecturers & supporting staff that is transferred into an inherent process in daily activities of higher education unit management. It is expected that the three activities of Higher Education Quality Assurance implemented by UNG will lead to achieve continuous quality improvement.

Table 1. Higher education quality assurance activity

ACTIVITY	GOAL	CHARACTERISTIC	INSTITUTION
Accreditation	External Control & Audit of Higher Education Quality	Facultative	BAN-PT
Self Evaluation-Based Study Program Evaluation (EPSBED)	Extension of operational license	Compulsory	Directorate General of Higher Education
Quality assurance	Internal quality assurance	University self initiative	Relevant University

(Source: Directorate General of Higher Education, 2003)

c. Quality Control Management

Higher education quality assurance in universities can be undertaken through various models of quality control management. One of the quality control management models that can be used is PDCA Model (Plan, Do, Check, Action). PDCA model will result in kaizen/continuous improvement of higher education quality in universities. PDCA is started with standard (SDCA) already determined. The standard will be improved from time to time (Taque 2005)..

After Directorate of Academic initiated quality assurance in higher education in 2003, State University of Gorontalo (UNG) has attempted to develop an Academic Quality Assurance System. In 2004 State University of Gorontalo (UNG) has been established a Quality Assurance Board (QAB) for University (*Badan Penjamin Mutu*) and has developed an Academic Quality Assurance Instrument (AQAI). This AQAI consist of six main points, as follows:

1. Academic Policy

Academic policy in this context means the description of graduates, educational management and program development, shift of paradigm, education program evaluation, quality improvement, efficiency and internal assurance of academic quality.

2. Academic Standard

To have a high academic standard represent the fundamental tool of assuring the quality of teaching learning process. Academic standard provides information on what must and should be known by students and lecturers. It does

describe the rule and regulation for the students/lecturers. This will help at improving the standard set by the university.

3. Academic Regulation

UNG's academic regulation organises the way of implementing academic activity and administration. A complete academic regulation is essential for the implementation of academic program, to keep it in line with what has been planned. Academic regulation is developed to organise institution development (university, faculty, and different department). These activities include, program development (establishment and implementation of study program) and development of resources (lecturers, students, supporting staff, facility and equipment). Research and community service also belong to intra-curricula activity in the Academic Regulation.

4. Manual of Academic Quality

Academic quality manual represents academic quality policy; academic quality assurance system; and academic quality assurance organisation.

5. Manual of Academic Procedure

This manual outlines the ways of implementing academic quality assurance system.

6. Competencies of Graduates

The competency of higher education graduates is a combination of their knowledge, skill, capability and attitudes. These competencies should be built during their course of study in the university. And these competencies are needed to bring development to the society. UNG graduates' competencies are developed according to the goals of education. The acquisition of this competence should be in line with the goals set by national educational policy. This policy include producing graduates who have academic, vocational or professional competencies in various subjects; who have faith in One God; who have morals of "Pancasila" (Indonesia's Five Basic Principles) and good ethics; develop and create "IPTEKS" (Science and technology) in various subjects.

7. Study Program Specification

Study program is a unit of learning plan as academic and/or professional education service manual that is conducted base on a certain curriculum; and it is aimed at helping students to be able to master the knowledge, skills and attitudes in line with curriculum's goals. Study program specification is a brief description of study program communicated to students and relevant parties. Study program specification must be able to show explicitly the results expected from learning process. It must also show the links between program implemented and professional qualification expected to be achieved by students/graduates and its implication to their career path. Study program specification must be exposed to public so that it may help student-applicants in selecting a

study program. Specification of study program is not only benefiting as a means of study program information for the community and accountability of higher education to the community, but also to stimulate lecturers to understand and catch the spirit of education goals and learning outcomes of the program

Besides the Instrument, which used to evaluate quality assurance of academic activities, in practice, quality assurance activity of UNG has been implemented through 6 (six) main principles, comprised of:

- Have the goals been appropriately set?
- Has the standard has been appropriately set?
- The use of map management consists of university goals
- The effectiveness of procedures used for quality assurance.
- The benefits of quality evaluation
- Efficiency of the overall system; quality assurance, quality assessment, quality audit in order to improve the quality or to improve the existing condition

d. The Process of Academic Quality Assurance

Learning process evaluation in UNG is an effort to assess whether the learning activity is being implemented as planned or programmed. This is one of the efforts taken within quality assurance system. Learning process evaluation in UNG is conducted through a hierarchy function from study program, program/faculty to university level. Each level must have representative of each learning service element such as lecturers, students and academic supporting staff.

At study program level, an ad-hoc Semester Coordination Team (SCT) is responsible to inform data/information of the work results during one semester and provide advices to the Academic Coordination Team (ACT) at program level. Furthermore, the ACT (ad hoc) - based on data from SCT - coordinates and leads a self-evaluation process and reports the results to Academic Commission (AC) at Faculty level. The AC (which is fixed and institutionalized) will review the self-evaluation results from all study programs within the faculty and further develop an action plan for improvement. The Academic Commission will develop a report of self-evaluation in more comprehensive analysis. With this mechanism, learning activities are able to be well and continuously monitored. At faculty level, the dean learns/reviews the audit and self-evaluation results, prepares action plan, determines technical policy for academic improvement, and prepares and submits a report on quality assurance as well as action plan to the rector's assistant for academic affairs.

At university level, vice rector for academic affairs will review and understand the audit and self-evaluation report from faculties. He/she will then make basic policies and provide advices for improvement to the dean. Quality assurance Board of Gorontalo State University (Badan Penjamin Mutu PM UNG, 2007), which is fixed and institutionalized, is responsible for the processes and the results of audit and self-evaluation in coordination with all auditors at the university

level. An Academic Auditing Team (AA) at university level will conduct visits or audits the faculties. All activities of academic quality assurance system are implemented under the rector's responsibility (Badan Penjamin Mutu 2007). The figure below shows the formal systematic process of academic quality assurance at State University of Gorontalo.

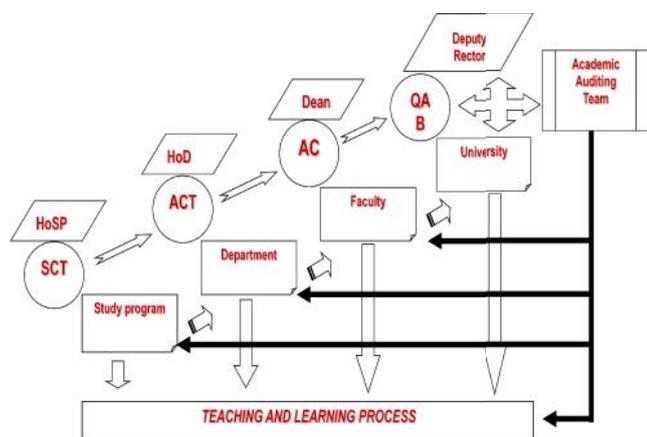


Figure 2. The process of academic quality assurance at UNG

Notes: SCT: Semester Coordination Team
 ACT: Academic Coordination team
 AC: Academic Commission
 QAB: Quality Assurance Board
 HoSP: Head of Study Program
 HoD: Head of Department

Conclusion

Looking at the reason for implementing quality assurance comprehensively in order to assure the quality achievement in UNG, a specific quality assurance policy is essential. Within the UNG itself, commitment to quality has been transformed in its vision and mission. However, it still needs technical structure to accommodate the commitment. Once the UNG is able to develop an effective strategy for quality control, then the Indonesian Directorate General of Higher Education will form the next mechanism of quality audit.

In the future, where globalization impacts are very strong on higher education that global orientation becomes compulsory, achieving a high quality can be attained by getting accreditation from international institution such as Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) and Global Alliance for Transnational Education (GATE). In this context, quality assurance must be truly oriented and focused on clients.

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