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Arab Open University
Saudi Arabia Branch

*Supplementary material for
The academic staff in the Arab Open University
Customized for Saudi Arabia branch
For distribution to all tutors and staff tutors*

A briefer on the

Work of the QA Committee

Prologue

A large amount of data is collected at the branch level from student surveys. This document gives examples of local action taken as a result of this activity to improve the student learning experience and / or local facilities.

The formation of the quality assurance committee (assigned by the AOU's University Council) and the establishment of a separate Quality Assurance Unit as part of the institutional quality system have been discussed and documented in a number of university wide documents. The refore, we will avoid lengthy details here and will only summarize few points relevant to the above aspects.

Introduction

The Arab Open University applies a comprehensive program of quality assurance, which manifests its commitment to quality education. The assessment program is an ongoing process of reviewing performance and achievement of goals across the range of functions. Assessment information regarding the achievement of goals incorporated into existing decision points within the AOU to serve as the basis for the strengthening of its institutional program and performance.

The quality assurance assessment program is a commitment to evaluate institutional effectiveness throughout the tutoring and learning process and the environment, which supports it. All aspects of institutional performance receive the ir share of assessment with particular attention directed to the assessment of student learning and academic achievement.

Components of Quality at the AOU

The main components of the educational process at the AOU accounts for the following components, where the standards for each component is set and ways of monitoring the ir status are devised:

1. Students: admissions, learning experience, progress, assessment, achievement, and employability.
2. Programs.
3. Quality of tutoring and delivery.
4. Staff development.
5. Support services: libraries and student counseling.
6. Administrative services such as registration and personnel functions.
7. Physical resources: computer laboratories, classrooms, etc.
8. Academic management and quality control.
9. Records whose collection and maintenance are vital to the effectiveness of the institution's functions.

The Standards

The AOU maintains the concept of consistency and fairness as a focal point to the operation of a good QA system. The following list itemizes the constituents of those standards. Every constituent is subjected to periodic monitoring and evaluation by the faculty or department in charge.

- Student Quality Standards
 - Student Recruitment
 - Admissions
 - Learning Performance
 - Student Services
- Academic Program
 - Objectives, Management, and Outcome
 - Course Contents
 - Delivery and Learning Support
- Staff
 - Staff Recruitment
 - Tutor Responsibility
 - Review and Development
 - Research
- Learning Centers Resources
- Academic Governance
- External Examiners
 - Principles of Appointment and Performance
 - Responsibilities of the External Examiner at the AOU
 - Criteria for the appointment of External Examiners

Performance Indicators

The complexity of the quality assurance task is evident, where numerous components of the educational system at the AOU are interacting. In view of this complexity of the situation, the AOU pursue its functions along two separate, yet interrelated paths:

- Setting independent standards for every component of the educational system at the AOU.
- Developing a comprehensive performance indicators scheme, which deliver direct measures of performance quality at the AOU.

Mechanisms for Information Acquisition

In Saudi Arabia branch as well as in a number of other branches of the AOU, information acquisition is achieved through online questionnaires. There are 4 types data information acquisition instruments used AOU wide, the se are student views, tutor views, facilities evaluation, and job satisfaction. We will only discuss the student views, the subject of this document.

Student views

Information from student feedback on courses are available to all members of the Faculty. Information from student feedback on the quality of tutoring of individual members of staff are available to the member of staff and the Faculty Dean. Student questionnaires address the following quality aspects, which are of direct concern to students and are thus included in the questionnaires:

- a) Evaluation of tutoring:
 - evaluation of tutoring performance
 - evaluation of the contribution to course design
 - tutoring in laboratories
 - one-to-one help given to students
- b) Course Content
- c) Tutoring materials
- d) Facilities and resources
- e) Student support mechanisms

The frequency of student reviews is as follows:

- a) At the beginning of the course for discovering motives, intentions expectations, entry skills and abilities, modifying the course to meet student needs, and communicating subject expectations. Early in the course is best for improving approaches to learning, detecting organizational problems, and enhancing morale and class cohesion.
- b) The end of the course is suitable for future curriculum design, public relations and evaluation of delivery and reaction to content.

Appendix1 depicts the online questionnaire, which seeks students' views. It is worth mentioning that this questionnaire is subjected to continuous revision and improvement. The questionnaire is prepared both in English and Arabic in order to ensure maximum comprehension by the students which would reflect on the credibility of the views.

How the results of Student Views are compiled

The results of student views are compiled in forms suitable to be used by decision makers. Below are the general guidelines on how the se forms are processed:

- For part-time tutors, student views are sought from all groups.
- For full-time tutors, student views are sought from only three groups chosen randomly.
- Staff tutors will collect all student views questionnaires for the courses the y are responsible for.

Required Reports

A number of reports equal to the number of tutors. Each report reflects on the tutor performance and offers the collective results of item I on all questionnaires concerned with the tutor.

Branch	Tutor Name	Course	No. of responding Students		
Characteristics			% of answers		
			A	B	C
Delivered well-organized tutorials.					
Competent in the subject					
Used effective instructional methods and techniques					
Taught with enthusiasm.					
Answered questions effectively.					
Available on office hours					
Assignment marking is informative					
The tutor kept me informed about my progress in the course					
Treated students fairly and impartially.					
Overall, the tutor is an effective teacher					

One report for each course summarizing results of item II (Facilities) of all questionnaires acquired for that course:

Branch	Program	No. of responding Students		
Characteristics		% of answers		
		A	B	C
Quality of Classroom facilities.				
Quality of Laboratory facilities and equipment.				
The OVERALL quality of the learning resources				

One report for each course summarizing results of item III (course/program evaluation) of all questionnaires acquired for that course:

Branch	Course	No. of responding Students		
Characteristics		% of answers		
		A	B	C
The topics identified in the outline were covered.				
The assigned textbooks/readings were helpful.				

