

1. ROLE OF MANAGEMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE APPROACHES

1.1. What is Quality?

Quality as defined by Oxford dictionary is the standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind; the degree of excellence of something. Generally, in TVET quality is associated with various terms and terminologies. Nevertheless, training providers, trainers, TVET institutes administrators, parents, trainees and the industries, in one way or another relate it to meeting customer satisfaction or customer expectations. Quality in TVET institutes is defined most of the time, if not always, by the ability to meet certain desired or defined standards. Thus, people apply various techniques in assessing if these standards are met. The simplest form of measurement of quality perhaps is the marketability and employability of the TVET graduates. Some may look at the entry requirements for a particular programme, competency of trainers, number of programmes the institutes have, the type of facilities available or even the size of the TVET institutes. So, is there actually a specific technique to assess quality?

Quality in TVET institutes is the corner stones that cover the entire business process of running an institute. It can be viewed as those that are directly related to the technicality or the support and administrative part of it. Therefore, some resolved to predefined indicators or package of indicators to measure quality. Indicators are quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that reflect the measurement of what is valued rather than valuing what can be measured.

The ability to identify the “what” that defines quality in TVET institutes will provide the basis identifying the quality indicators. Perhaps, it is worth to look into the complete business process of TVET institutes.

1.2. Quality Assurance Model

Quality assurance is established and manage in TVET Centres with aims to meet customer requirements, needs and expectations and enhancing their satisfaction. It is an integrated set of policies, procedures, rules, approach in TVET criteria, tool and verification instruments (Cedefop, 2011). It defines the mechanism that together as complete unit ensure that quality is provided by a TVET institution.

The term quality model, quality management model and quality management system is sometimes used interchangeably. There are standard models that are being applied in education and training, such as the ISO 9001 and the European Foundation of Quality Management (EFQM). However, depending on the model selected, the development of



the quality management process (quality management plan, quality assurance and quality control) developed may differ from one another.

1.3. Quality Assurance Approach

There are many models that can be applied and approaches to be adopted in managing quality. However, there is no one approach that can be best applied to achieve the desired results. The phrase quality approach clearly gives us the idea that it does not follow any stick and fast rule. Approach is used as a general term which may be defined as an action taken to come near or nearer or a way of dealing with a situation. Thus, quality approach simply means an action taken to come near or nearer to quality or a way of dealing with a quality situation. The approach a TVET institution chose to be applied is very much related to the nature of business (in this case, it is common across the region), leadership and management styles, resources (both physical and people) and customer expectations. Nevertheless, there are two approaches in managing quality that are being used, the quality cycle and the system approach. These approaches are being used strategically in solving quality issues in TVET. These two approaches are being discussed quite extensively in Topic 2 and Topic 3 respectively.

1.4. Quality Assurance Principles

In developing the quality management system at the organisation, some follow standard rules or principles as to guide them on applying the most practical and supportive approach. Two basic principles that can be applied are 1) fit for purpose and 2) right first time. However, there are set of fundamentals or general principles that can be applied to approach quality and set up a quality management system to ensure accountability and improvement of TVET Centres. There are many theoretical model explaining on application of these principles of what quality is and how it can be achieved. Generally, the principles are categorised under the following headings:

- i. Customer focus
Orientation on quality and improvement of product and services in all business processes should be on customer
- ii. Process based
Every process has a beginning and ending. The output at each process defines the input quality of the next process and within each process are the activities controlling the output.
- iii. Integrated system



Business processes in organisation work within an integrated organization system that can be modelled. The European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM), Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA), Input-Process-Output models, are examples of quality management system use by organisations to improve their performance based on established quality management principles.

iv. Strategic and systematic approach

A strategic plan must be aligned with the business direction and overall mission, vision and objectives of the TVET institution. A good strategy takes advantage of the current resources, minimise obstacles address issues objectively and connects all resources.

v. Decision-making based on facts

Decision-making within the organization must only be based on facts and data assessed through various methods and resources, and not subjective decision making. Having a comprehensive baseline data would not only provide support for objective decision making but also minimise error on the decision-making process.



vi. Communication

Business expands effective communication. The ability to interact between parties involved for mutual understanding and communicate expectations is the basis to develop quality. Communications channels should be established to allow measurements on effectiveness, timeliness, compliance and other relevant standards.



vii. Continuous improvement

Continuous improvement activities initiated and implemented to promote effectiveness, efficiency and consistency in delivering quality product and services to the TVET Centres' internal and external stakeholders.



1.5. Institutional Quality Assurance Principles (AQAF)

ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF) aims to enhance the quality of education in ASEAN region. Although the framework is more in the direction of promoting, improving aligning quality assurance in agencies and higher education institutions across the region, this framework is also applicable as a basis to develop quality assurance framework for TVET. The statements shown in Table 1 below are from ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework published by ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (www.share-asean.eu).



Assurance Network (www.share-asean.eu). TVET centres may adopt these guidelines principles to develop an effective mechanism for improvement and effective centre performance.

Table 1 Principles of Institutional Quality Assurance

- 3.1 The institution has a primary responsibility for quality.
- 3.2 Quality assurance promotes the balance between institutional autonomy and public accountability.
- 3.3 Quality assurance is a participatory and cooperative process across all levels incorporating involvement of academic staff, students, and other stakeholders.
- 3.4 A quality culture underpins all institutional activities including teaching, learning, research, services and management.
- 3.5 A structured and functional internal quality assurance system with clearly defined responsibilities is established.
- 3.6 The quality system is promulgated and supported by the top management to ensure effective implementation and sustainability.
- 3.7 Sufficient resources for establishing and maintaining an effective quality system within the institution should be provided.
- 3.8 The institution should have formal mechanisms for approval, periodic review and monitoring of programmes and awards.
- 3.9 Quality is regularly monitored and reviewed for purposes of continuous improvement at all levels.
- 3.10 Relevant and current information about the institution, its programmes, achievements, and quality processes is accessible to public.



1.6. Quality Management in TVET

TVET Centres are required to meet their stakeholders needs and expectations. Though granted with the autonomy to plan, operate, control and direct their resources, there are also legislative requirements such as qualifications, approval and compliance to be adhered to. Thus, TVET Centres as providers for education and training, should identify and strategize their approach to manage the quality of their products and services and at the same time meeting the requirements of the authority.

1.6.1. TVET Quality Management System (QMS)

With reference to the terms and terminologies given in Table 2 below, QMS oversees all activities of planning, implementing, monitoring and measuring performance of all business processes and people and /or parties involved for providing learning and teaching support in TVET Centres. It aligns the institutions purpose and strategic direction, meeting regulatory requirements and consistently meeting customer needs and expectations and enhancing their satisfaction.

QMS can be seen as a collection of business processes focusing on consistently meeting customer requirements and enhancing their satisfaction. It is aligned with an organization's purpose and strategic direction (ISO9001:2015). Its role is to direct and control organization with regards to quality. An example of TVET QMS is as shown in **Error! Reference source not found.** below.

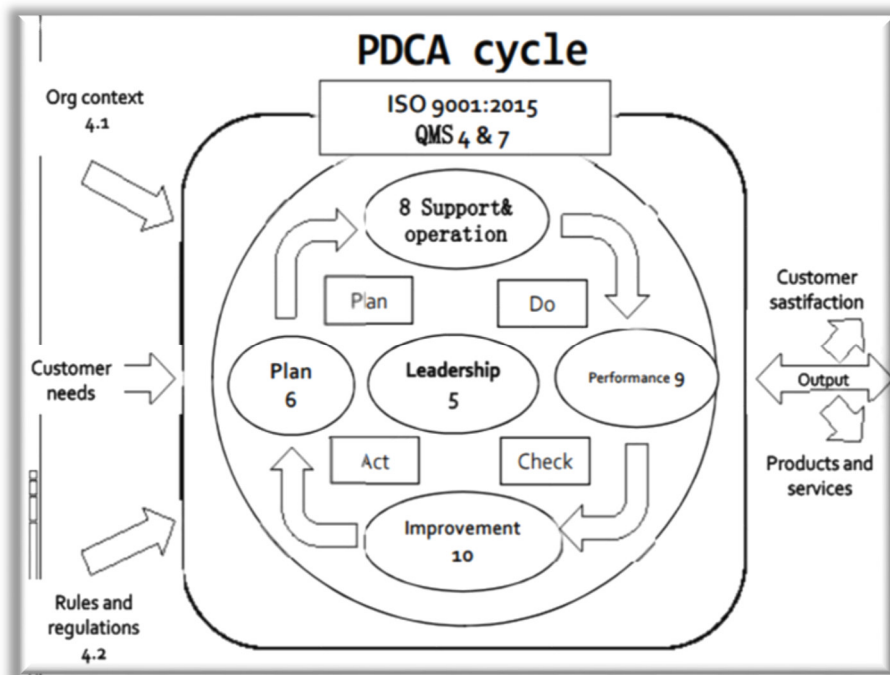


Figure 1 PDCA cycle and Input-Process Output and QMS

The PDCA cycle and Input-Process-Output system approach shown in **Error! Reference source not found.** above is being used as the framework for GMI QMS.

1.6.2. Terms and Terminologies

Some common term and terminologies used in TVET institutes is shown in Table 2 below. These are adapted from various references. Kindly refer Cedefop. 2011. Glossary Quality in education and training. Luxembourg, Publications.pdf for more related quality assurance terms and terminologies.

Table 2 Common Terms and Terminologies

Term/Terminology	Definition
Assessment	Process of gathering information on the achievement of the learning outcomes
Benchmarking	Management tool for comparing performance against an organisation widely regarded as outstanding in one or more areas to improve performance.
Certificate	Evidence of attainment/achievement.
Certification	Process by which a third party gives written assurance that a product, process or service conforms to specified requirements.
Certification body	An organisation that gives written assurance that a product, process or service conforms to specified requirements following assessments against predefined criteria.
Competence	Proven ability to use knowledge, skills and social or methodological abilities in work or learning situations and in professional and personal development
Effectiveness	Extent to which the objectives of a policy or an intervention are achieved, usually without reference to costs.
Evaluation	Process of making valuable judgement and decision based on the assessments performed
Learning outcome	Set of knowledge, skills and/or competences an individual has acquired and/or is able to demonstrate after completion of a learning process, either formal, non-formal or informal.
Qualification	The recognition of complete certification process and meeting a specified level of National standard of achievement.
Quality	Level of performance in a service or a product



Term/Terminology	Definition
Quality Assurance	Set of processes and procedures developed, implement and monitored to meet the specified level of performance and requirements in TVET to ensure accountability and improvement of higher education and vocational education and training.
Quality assurance framework	Set of principles, guidelines and tools developed implemented as an integrated system.
Quality indicator	Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple reliable means to measure achievement, reflect the changes connected to an intervention or to help assess the performance of a development actor.
Quality Management	Maintenance of the desired level of quality in a service or a product is managed by the people with assigned responsibility through established and accepted processes and procedures. Requires comprehensive understanding of the processes and people involved under the provision of education and training. It acts as an internal quality assurance of the TVET provider.
Quality Management System	It oversees all activities of planning, implementing, monitoring and measuring performance of all business processes and people and /or parties involved for providing learning and teaching support in TVET Centres. It aligns the institutions purpose and strategic direction, meeting regulatory requirements and consistently meeting customer needs and expectations and enhancing their satisfaction.
Quality Principles	Set of fundamentals for a system having numerous applications across a wide field. Refer 1.1 (c) quality assurance quality principles below.
Quality Standards	Tools to detail the level of quality to be attained and communicate expectations and facilitate business interactions
Stakeholders	All those who have an interest, whether financial or not, in VET activities, for example, policymakers, citizens/customers, employers/employees, society, public service organisations, etc.
Standard	Statement approved and formalised by a (in education and training) recognised body, which defines the rules to follow in a given context or the results to be achieved.
Trainees	A registered and very important stakeholder in TVET Centres
Trainers/Instructors/Teachers	Those having the qualifications and experience and appointed by the TVET providers to deliver the required competencies related to the TVET qualifications to be offered.



Term/Terminology	Definition
TVET providers	Institutions of higher learning meeting the regulatory requirements for establishment of an institute and offer competency based training
TVET quality	Level of performance in a service or a product which relates to the achievement of outcomes and competencies by training providers which offer competency based training
Feedback	Transmission of findings from the evaluation process to relevant parties. This may involve collection and dissemination of findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons gained from experience.

Table 2 adapted from Cedefop. 2011. Glossary Quality in education and training. Luxembourg, Publications.pdf

1.7. Importance and Benefits of TVET Quality to Stakeholders and TVET Centres

Quality speaks for itself. Quality brings more than customer satisfaction, revenue and profitability. It's about trust and integrity, reflecting the whole nett worth of the institution. TVET quality is not an overnight activity and casting spell or performing magic. It involves high level of commitment, cooperation, collaboration and togetherness. Some of the benefits among others, are reflected in

Table 3 below. You may add more.

Table 3 Benefits of TVET Quality to Stakeholders and TVET Centres

Stakeholders		TVET Centres
Trainees	Industries	
Recognise qualifications	Certified workers	Recognition of certifications and qualifications
Technical, social and methodological competence	No mismatch between industry requirements and trainers	High ranking Increase in enrolment Increase in revenue
Job opportunity	Trusted feeder	High motivation and instructors morale
Selection for career path		Minimize product variations



Stakeholders		TVET Centres
Trainees	Industries	
More qualification choice		Optimize resources

1.8. Quality Assurance Framework in TVET Centres

Framework is a structure intended to serve as a support which interlinked the key or core elements with one another to produce a desired result or achieve a specific objective. Quality assurance framework are set of principles, guidelines and tools developed and implemented as an integrated system. Frameworks can be modified as required by adding or removing new element. Depending on the use of the framework, the quality assurance framework can be designed and developed at the regional level, state level or even at the institutional level. A well-structured quality assurance framework helps the TVET Centres amongst others to achieve its vision and mission statements, adhering to the regulatory requirements, establish mechanism to measure output quality against set indicators to ensure outcomes are met and establish mechanism to communicate.

There are many established quality assurance frameworks that can be used as reference to answer some of the basic information. The following references will be useful to assist you in understanding the requirements to develop or enhance the quality assurance framework for your institute.

Reference:

1. AQAF Asean Quality Assurance Framework
2. EQAVET_Quality_Assurance_Framework_English
3. Fundamentals of a Quality Assurance Framework

