



CEMCA

QUALITY ASSURANCE TOOLKIT FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL) INSTITUTIONS



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Preface

Globalisation of business and economy has opened new vistas of development for higher education. The aspirations of masses to acquire higher education has resulted in the concurrent growth of distance education. The quality of education in general and distance education in particular has always been a cause of concern. World over there have been many attempts to develop quality assurance tool kits in the past. As they were developed a few years ago they couldn't incorporate the increasing role of ICT in distance education. In recent times the concept of digital learning and blended learning have become more prevalent. With the objective of fostering quality in distance education and to trigger a quality revolution, the present quality assurance tool kit for open and distance learning institutions has been prepared. Such a tool kit is the need of the hour. In order to facilitate the implementation of this tool kit a user manual has also been developed which gives detailed guidelines regarding how to use the quality assurance tool kit.

The book has been divided into mainly three segments. In the chapter one introduction is given which covers overview of quality management and also different models of quality management which are relevant for education sector. In chapter two the details of quality assurance tool kit have been included. This chapter begins with purpose and scope of the toolkit and goes on to discuss objectives and structure of the quality assurance tool. In the end the guidelines for how to use the quality assurance tool kit are given.

The third chapter is focused on the quality assurance tool kit for ODL institution which covers ten aspects of quality assurance which are further subdivided into various performance indicators. Likert scale has been used for seeking responses.

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Education is one of the primary needs of human being. All over the world, greater emphasis is being placed on its spread so that a large section of population can have access to it. The growth in infrastructure and other facilities for formal section of higher education has not been able to keep pace with the persistent growth in global population. Consequently, the concept of Open & Distance Learning (ODL) institution has come to the fore in the past few decades.

It is catering to those sections of population who could not have access to classroom education or have been dropouts from the formal system or working executives. It is a generally accepted fact that the modern distance education with use of technology started in 1969 with the establishment of Open University of UK (OUUK) (Jung et al, 2013). In Asia, Korean Open University started in 1972. In India, the first Open University was started in Andhra Pradesh in the year 1982. A few years later Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was set up in New Delhi in 1985. With the proliferation of IT tools & techniques in the 80's & 90's, the design and delivery of distance education services has been reengineered.

At present a large number of ODL institutions are operating all over the world. They are capable of providing more opportunities for higher education to the large populace. ODL institutions provide a flexible teaching and learning platform for distance learners. Distance education is able to offer continuous learning and also skill development for working population. In other words, the concept of open and distance learning is essentially a Life Long Learning (LLL).

More recently, concept of blended learning has gained popularity in which the teacher blends in his classroom instruction with online technology. Blended learning environment has resulted in better learner performance (Kanwar, 2018). Teachers in blended learning play a key role as they are supposed to possess a blend of subject expertise and basic technological skills (Cleveland-Innes and Wilton 2018).

Overview of Quality and Quality Management




Traditionally, quality of a Distance Education Institution (DEI) is perceived to be inferior to that of in-person formal education system. Quality is highly subjective therefore it is an abstract concept. The quality of service system is difficult to be managed as the customer (learner in this case) expectations are very high. In fact, quality is the key which if managed




properly can sustain the ODL institutions in the long run. Many educational institutions are going for Quality Management System (QMS) certification ISO 9000 which helps them in better documentation of educational activities in that organization. Quality management is that aspect of the overall management function that determines and implements quality policy (Saxena, 1997).

Quality cannot be thrust upon any system; it has to be built into the process. Hence Quality Assurance (QA), which is based on prevention paradigm, is the assurance that a certain level of quality will result from the system. Such an approach prevents inferior quality to be generated by the system.

Table-1 gives definition of quality, its allied terms & distance education by various authors, over the period of many decades.

Table1: Definition of Quality & Allied Terms

Author	Year	Definition
		 Quality
Deming	1939	Good quality means a predictable degree of uniformity and dependability with a quality standard suited to the customer.
Joseph M.Juran	1954	Quality is fitness for use in terms of design, conformance, availability, safety, and field use.
Crosby	1967	Quality is conformance to requirements. The system of quality is prevention. The performance standard is zero defects. The measurement of quality is the price of non-conformance.
Downey	1994	Is meeting, exceeding and delighting customers' needs and expectations with the recognition that these needs and desires will change over time
Jover	2004	"Quality" often signifies excellence; however, it is a word with different perception to different people
Munusamy`	2010	Quality is an attribute of services or products that meet or exceeds the human expectations and satisfaction
ISO 2013 A	2013	The totality of characteristics and services or products that bear on its ability to meet a stated or implied need

Author	Year	Definition
 Quality Assurance		
Mc Connel	1968	Quality Assurance encompasses the processes and procedures that systematically monitor different aspects of a service or facility.
Borahan & Ziarati	2002	Quality Assurance is a set of processes, policies, or actions performed externally by Quality Assurance agencies and accrediting bodies or internally within the institution
J. Barton	2002	Quality Assurance comprises administrative and procedural activities implemented in a quality system so that requirements and goals for a product, service or activity will be fulfilled
Adrian Palmer	2004	Quality Assurance focus on establishing good processes to produce products with the quality already built in, rather than going through an unmonitored production process and trying to “inspect quality” to a product that's already been finished.
 Total Quality Management		
Foster and Whittle	1998	Total Quality Management is a combination of socio-technical process towards doing the right things (externally), everything right (internally), first time and all the time with economic viability considered at each stage of each process.
Atkinson	2002	TQM is a strategic approach to produce the best product and service possible through constant innovation.
Oakland	2014	Total Quality Management (TQM) is an approach to improving the effectiveness and flexibility of business as a whole. It is essentially a way of organising and involving the whole organisation, every department every activity, every single person at every level.
 Distance Education		
Peters	1973	"A method of imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes which is rationalised by the application of division of labour and organisational principles as well as by the extensive use of technical media, specially for the purpose of reproducing high quality teaching materials which makes it possible to instruct great numbers of students at the same time wherever they live. It is an industrialised form of teaching and learning".

Dohmen	1977	Systematically organised form of self-study in which student counselling, the presentation of learning material and securing and supervising of students' success is carried out by a team of teachers, each of whom has responsibilities. It is made possible at a distance by means of media which can cover long distances.
Holmberg	1981	The various forms of study at all levels which are not under continuous, immediate supervision of tutors present with their students in lecture rooms on the same premises, but which, nevertheless, benefit from the planning, guidance and tuition of a tutorial organisation.
COL and ADD	1999a	Distance teaching refers to the role of educational institution in providing education at a distance, whereas distance learning refers to the role of the student in the learning process of education at a distance.
United States Distance Learning Association	1999	Open and Distance Learning (ODL) refers to a system of teaching and learning characterized by separation of teacher and learner in time and/or place; uses multiple media for delivery of instruction; involves two-way communication and occasional face-to-face meeting for tutorials and learner-learner interaction.
Procter	2003	The effective combination of different modes of delivery, models of teaching and styles of learning.
Chew, Jones and Turner	2008	Blended learning involves the combination of two fields of concern: education and educational technology.
Watson and Murin	2014	A formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online learning, with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace; at least in part in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home; and the modalities along each student's learning path within a course or subject are connected to provide an integrated learning experience.
Staker and Horn	2016	Blended learning is 'A formal education program in which a student learns at least in part through online delivery of content and instruction with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace and at least in part at a supervised brick and-mortar location away from home'

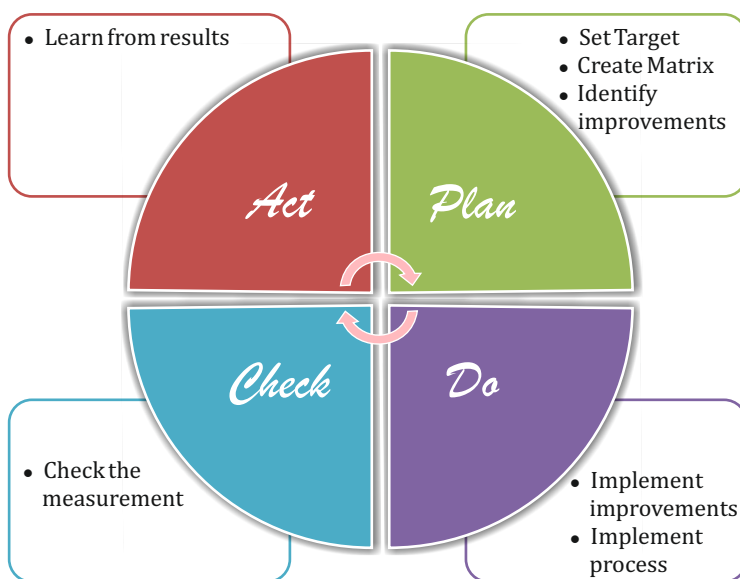
From the above table it can be concluded that the concept of quality is multidimensional in nature and immensely useful for ODL institutions.

Models of Quality Management in Education

Emphasis on quality and its assurance in Education system has been an evolving phenomenon. Two of the most prominent quality models are being presented here. First is the PDCA (Plan Do Check Act) model developed by Deming and Shewart. The second model is given by Paraschivescu which is focused on achieving organizational excellence.

- **PDCA Cycle (Plan, Do, Check, Act)**

William Edwards Deming also known as the father of modern quality control helped in evolution of the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) Cycle. PDCA cycle is systematic and continual quality improvement cycle. Figure-1 illustrates the PDCA cycle.



Source: Campos, 2004

Figure 1: Continuous Quality improvement with PDCA

As it is clear from the above figure that PDCA cycle begins with setting targets and identifying areas which require improvements. The next stage is 'Do' stage where implementation of plans takes place, which is expected to result in improvements. At 'Check' stage the activities are closely monitored and finally the last stage is 'Act' which is also known as the adjustment stage, where the lessons learned from results is brought forward in next cycle.

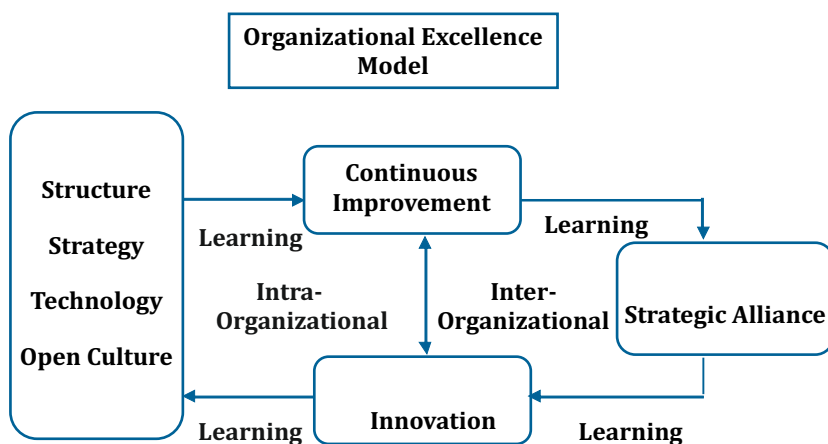
Open and distance learning can benefit both learner and the organization through implementing the **PDCA cycle** as it ensures reliability, extendibility and certainty of delivery of education.

Every process of Open and Distance University from admission, distribution of study material, examination, result declaration, grievances and award of degree should be in stipulated time. Faculties and support staff should understand quality policy and act as per the Quality Assurance plan. Then support staff and faculties are assigned with their respective Quality Assurance area with their performance indicator. Every Process should be evaluated with quality standards targets set at Plan phase for quality control and any Deviation and difficulty must have corrective action for next quality cycle with the aim of continual improvement through PDCA Cycle. Open and distance learning universities can maintain and improve their quality by effective implementation of PDCA.

Organizational Excellence Model



This model is conceptualized by Paraschivescu (2017), an educational system is viewed as akin to a service system in which the Total Quality Management (TQM) approach can be applied. Among various stakeholders the primary one is the learner. The educational system has to understand and satisfy the needs of all its stakeholder's groups through continuous improvements (KAIZEN) and innovation. The figure-2 given below describes the model.



Source: Paraschivescu AO, 2017
 Figure 2: *Organizational Excellence Model*

The above figure highlights the interaction of learning activities both at intra-organizational and inter-organizational levels.

Quality is a highly subjective concept. Quality of a product/ service is determinant of its success. Especially in the field of education, quality is vitally important. There are two paradigms in quality. First is the quality control paradigm which is based on inspection. And second is the quality assurance paradigm which is based on prevention. Quality assurance is the assurance that a certain level of quality will result from the system.

According to Kirkpatrick (2005) there are four approaches to Quality Assurance with particular reference to ODL institutions.

- Self-Study / Self Evaluation
- Peer Review by an Expert Panel
- Use of Statistics and Performance Indicators
- Surveys of Key Stakeholders such as Students Graduate and Employees.

In this Quality Assurance Toolkit, predominantly the 1st approach is used.

Out of the four approaches outlined by Kirkpatrick (2005), this Quality Assurance toolkit primarily uses the first one i.e. self-evaluation in combination with the third one i.e. use of performance indicators. Further, ODL institutions are strongly advised to conduct student satisfaction survey.

Purpose and Scope

Against this backdrop an attempt has been made to design and develop a Quality Assurance tool in the context of the Open Distance Learning (ODL) institutions.

The main purpose is to sensitize the ODL institutions towards “proving & improving” their quality. Such a toolkit is the need of the hour as the ODL Institutions have to improve the quality of their service and delivery. This will enable them to self-evaluate their present status of quality with respect to key performance indicators supported with the evidences. They can also benchmark themselves against the world's best quality ODL institutions to assess the gap in quality. Finally, they can develop a strategic framework and action plan which is quality centered (Saxena, 1997) to bridge this gap.

Objectives of the Quality Assurance Toolkit

Against this backdrop an attempts have been made to develop a quality assurance tool for ODL institutions with the following objectives:

- Facilitating self-evaluation of quality of an ODL institution by key functionaries.
- Acting as a mirror in which to view the realistic picture of quality of ODL institutions.
- Benchmarking against best in the class & region.
- Building institutional capabilities of an ODL institution for developing a sound quality assurance mechanism.

Structure of the Quality Assurance Toolkit

The Quality Assurance Toolkit has been divided into two parts. In part A of the tool kit ten factors of Quality Assurance have been included which cover 94 performance indicators. Each factor need to be supported by the appropriate evidences alongside the claims. Part- B is having a blend of open and close ended items in question form.

Part A- The Part A of a Toolkit has following 10 factors

- 1. Leadership & Governance:** It's a well-known fact that top management support is vital for the success of quality assurance movement in any organization. Quality must become an integral part of the overall strategic framework. Top management develops policies and plans which if implemented in the long run, a visible quality culture emerges. There are 9 performance indicators in this factor having a range of minimum score zero to maximum possible score 27.
- 2. Programme/Course Design:** Programme and courses are the real backbone of open and distance learning system. Their design must be time tested, relevant and capable of meeting learning objectives. Programme/Course Design should not remain static but it should be periodically updated to keep itself appraised of changes in the external environment. There are 8 performance indicators in this factor having a range of minimum score zero to maximum possible score 24.
- 3. Courseware/Material Development:** Greater emphasis must be laid on the quality of courseware/material to be supplied to the learners. In distance learning environment it replaces the teacher. Therefore, teacher must be built into the self-instructional material (SIM). There are 10 performance indicators in this factor having a range of minimum score zero to maximum possible score 30.

4. **Learner Admission & Enrolment:** In order to avoid the Garbage In-Garbage Out (GIGO) situation, emphasis must be given to attract good quality students for this purpose wide publicity must be given about the courses offered. There is sufficient flexibility in admission rules to accommodate different groups of learners. There are 5 performance indicators in this factor having a range of minimum score zero to maximum possible score 15.
5. **Learner Support (Academic and Administrative):** In ODL system, it is essential that morale of the learner should always remain high otherwise dropout rate will increase. There should be a proper learner support system which includes IT tools and techniques support mechanism to motivate them continuously and solve their problems in a speedy manner. There are 13 performance indicators in this factor having a range of minimum score zero to maximum possible score 39.
6. **Evaluation Process:** Examinations are most pious components of education system. Therefore, its quality must be maintained at a high level. Providing feedback to the learners is a good practice which helps them improve their performance in future. There are 10 performance indicators in this factor having a range of minimum score zero to maximum possible score 30.
7. **Infrastructure (Technology Infrastructure included):** The ODL institutions must have state of the art infrastructure which includes recording studios, communication system, study centre support etc. There are 11 performance indicators in this factor having a range of minimum score zero to maximum possible score 33.
8. **Output and Outcome Quality:** It is ironical that ODL institutions tend to ignore the quality of their output. The need of the hour is that they should organize Entrepreneurship programme, alumni meet and provide placement support. There are 5 performance indicators in this factor having a range of minimum score zero to maximum possible score 15.
9. **Human Resources:** Recruitment & selection, training, promotion, skills updating of human resources is important for quality assurance of ODL system. They should be well versed in the use of latest technology. There are 7 performance indicators in this factor having a range of minimum score zero to maximum possible score 21.
10. **Ambience for Research:** An educational institute is as good as its quality of faculty. The organization must provide good ambience and conducive environment for research in the ODL institutions. The faculty members are encouraging to actively take part in research activities. There are 6 performance indicators in this factor having a range of minimum score zero to maximum possible score 18.

Each of these above ten factors contain performance indicators relevant to them. Thus a total of **94** performance indicators have been included in the toolkit which comprehensively cover numerous aspects of quality and its assurance in an ODL institution. Both factors and Performance Indicators (PIs) have been finalized based on thorough review of literature and also discussions with peer group members hailing from both academia and industry.

The institutions are required to use self-evaluative approach (Kirkpatrick, 2005) by using a four point Likert type scale.

To quantify the responses following scale is used:

Always =3 Sometimes=2 Rarely=1 Never=0 NA= Not to be counted

The ODL institutions are advised to exercise caution in giving response to these PIs, as their bias should not creep into responses.

Scoring Strategy:

As all the PIs are in the form of positive statements about quality parameters, it can be construed that higher the score of an ODL institution on this scale better the quality of its service operations, delivery etc.

At the end of each table blank space is provided to facilitate the organization to provide any evidence/ support document with regards to that particular factor.

Interpretation Strategy:

Once the overall score has been obtained the concerned ODL institutions can do two things. One is to find out the best quality institutions in their region and benchmark themselves against it. Secondly they can identify in which factors/areas their score is low.

They can then focus on any two or three (out of total 10) factors of quality where they need to bring about drastic improvements. Subsequently, they can identify those PIs within the selected factors where they scored low marks. After brainstorming such vulnerable aspects of quality at their institutional level, they can develop a strategy to address these 'weak/soft spots' of quality in their institutions. While allocating resources for improving quality these aspects may be considered and more resources can be earmarked.

Part B - The Part B of the Toolkit has following nine open items

This part of the Quality Assurance toolkit has nine questions. While the first eight questions are close ended in nature with elaboration of responses in qualitative

terms, the ninth question is open ended in which the person giving response to this tool kit is asked to give useful suggestions for improving the quality. Most of the questions in this part relate to the organizational structure and role and relevance of quality department in the organizations. An attempt has been made to elicit information as to how much importance is given by top management to quality department and their recommendations about quality improvement.

Worksheet for Reviewer(s)

The reviewers are expected to fill up their overall assessment in both qualitative and quantitative terms. They should honestly evaluate their ODL system against the above discussed factors and performance indicators. The reviewers are expected to judge for themselves as to what evidence and support documents they would like to furnish in respect of each of the factors. The process of giving response to the QA toolkit is a rigorous one. They should mention their observations using their expertise and experience. Also, they should offer some recommendations for quality improvement. Most important outcome of the entire process will be the development of an annual plan which can be further broken down into monthly quality targets.

How to use the Qualitative Assurance Toolkit

Initially, the key functionaries/stakeholders involved in the process of quality improvement of an ODL institution are individually approached to give response to this toolkit. Thereafter, a collective brain storming session/s may be organized to arrive at the consensus so that institutional grade sheet of quality assurance can be prepared. The discussion may also take into account the appropriateness of documents which are to be enclosed as evidence of quality improvement. Finally, the same can be used for bench marking purposes and translating it into action plans for quality assurance. The practical and doable operational quality goals may be established and simple strategies may be devised to achieve the same.

As is clear from the above description of user manual, that quality plays a vital role in improving the image of distance education system. The future belongs to dual mode institutions which are offering education through formal class room approach and also distance learning approach. Even more recently the concept of blended learning has come which is going to remain relevant for a very long time. For evaluation of quality of an ODL institution a tool kit approach is most apt because it shows mirror to the organization in which they can view their quality initiatives and devise a strategic framework for improving the same.

PART A:

Please use the following scale to rate the Quality Parameters of your Institution:

Always =3, Sometimes=2, Rarely=1, Never =0, Not Applicable (NA)

Please tick mark in appropriate options in the box.

LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

Sl.No.	Performance Indicator	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	NA
1	LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE					
1.1	Top Management and Academic Leaders of institution own responsibility for quality assurance and quality improvement.					
1.2	Institutional goals are specifically delineated and are in conformance with vision and mission of organization.					
1.3	Quality issues are integrated with the overall strategic planning of the institution.					
1.4	Quality manual with checklist, trouble-shooting list, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) is developed and properly communicated to internal stakeholders.					
1.5	Adequate resources (Physical and Financial) are made available for Quality Assurance and Improvement.					
1.6	Top management and Academic Leaders communicate on a regular basis with different stakeholders of the institution to get instant feedback on the quality of services.					

Sl.No.	Performance Indicator	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	NA
1.7	There exists a separate Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC)/ Quality Management Department in the institution which monitors the overall quality of operations.					
1.8	Top management promotes quality culture in the institution.					
1.9	E-Governance measures are used to monitor overall performance including quality related issues.					
	Evidence List and Review of support Documents:					

PROGRAMME / COURSE DESIGN

Sl.No.	Performance Indicator	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	NA
2	PROGRAMME / COURSE DESIGN					
2.1	Need identification and assessment exercise has taken place before contemplating to launch any new programme.					
2.2	The programme is capable of meeting the needs of learners to gain knowledge, develop skills and make them better citizens.					
2.3	Programme design is done following a systematic and sequential approach in which views of external stakeholders such as society, industry, alumni and parents are collected and collated.					
2.4	The programme design process is well coordinated within the system with co -option of some external academic and industry experts.					

Sl.No.	Performance Indicator	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	NA
2.5	Programme/Course objectives, outcome, activities and assignments are properly articulated and well aligned with each other.					
2.6	Learning outcomes of programme are well designed and are in conformance with National Skill Qualification Framework of respective country of origin of programme.					
2.7	The programme/ courses are periodically updated to keep pace with dynamically changing environment.					
2.8	There is a sound rationale and justification for offering distance/ blended/eLearning programmes.					
	Evidence List and Review of support Documents					

COURSEWARE / MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT

Sl.No.	Performance Indicator	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	NA
3	COURSEWARE/ MATERIAL DEVELOPMENT					
3.1	The courseware is adequately packaged with right mix of study material (Print, Audio & Video), E-content, Open Education Resources (OER) and MOOCs.					
3.2	Services of outside expert are utilized for Courseware/Material Development.					
3.3	Teaching staff is given training for designing and documenting Self-Instructional Material (SIM), Self-Learning Material (SLM) and econtent.					

Sl.No.	Performance Indicator	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	NA
3.4	Quality of study material is properly reviewed before delivering it to the learner by the content, format and language editor.					
3.5	Anti-Plagiarism test on the material is carried out to avoid giving substandard material to the learner.					
3.6	The development of learning material is based on sound instructional designs and is fully capable of achieving the intended learning outcomes.					
3.7	The Institution has digitized the course material which is available on its website.					
3.8	The detailed material development manual is prepared which is strictly followed by the experts.					
3.9	Open Education Resources (OER) and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) are properly integrated in Courseware/Material Development and learners are encouraged to use the same.					
3.10	Academic programs are implemented only after all materials (print and online) have been developed for the entire duration of the programme.					
	Evidence List and Review of support Documents:					

LEARNER ADMISSION & ENROLMENT

Sl.No.	Performance Indicator	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	NA
4	LEARNER ADMISSION & ENROLMENT					
4.1	Promotional activities are undertaken by the institution to reach the target groups.					
4.2	Information about the programmes offered is provided to the prospective group of learners.					
4.3	Full objectivity and transparency in students' admission which is guided by Quality Policy.					
4.4	The Institution has provision for Online admission/ Lateral Entry/ Vertical mobility/ Flexibility in choice of courses.					
4.5	The Institution reaches out to the diversified learner groups viz. Women/Disabled/Disadvantaged / Minority/Jail inmates.					
	Evidence List and Review of support Documents					

LEARNER SUPPORT

Sl.No.	Performance Indicator	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	NA
5	LEARNER SUPPORT					
5.1	The Institution organises Induction Programme for its new learners.					
5.2	The registration system is efficient and convenient for learners located in different geographic locations.					
5.3	The Institution has provisions for informing, advising & counseling for its dispersed learners.					

Sl.No.	Performance Indicator	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	NA
5.4	Database of learners and their profile has been prepared which is used to provide appropriate support and facilitate his/her progression in the programme.					
5.5	Proper communication takes place with learners regarding academic calendar, time table, exam schedule well in time.					
5.6	Student Hand Book/ Programme Guide is made available to all the enrolled learners.					
5.7	The Institution strictly adheres to their schedule to minimize distress among learners.					
5.8	Learner satisfaction survey is conducted on a regular basis and amendments in the system are made based on unanimous recommendations of learner / students community.					
5.9	Information technology tools and techniques are used to connect with learners (MOODLE/ MOOC platforms) and to offer helpline services to them.					
5.10	Learner tracking system is in place to help the learner complete the course in time and also to reduce dropout rate.					
5.11	Teaching staff provide comprehensive and timely feedback on assignment to student and are available for counseling and problem solving.					
5.12	Study center staff is given proper training to make them more proficient in learner support.					
5.13	Learner support services are improved/increased with increasing numbers of students enrolled.					
	Evidence List and Review of support Documents:					

EVALUATION PROCESS

Sl.No.	Performance Indicator	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	NA
6	EVALUATION PROCESS					
6.1	There is a proper mix of continuous assessment and Term End Exam (TEE) in the evaluation progress with appropriate weightage.					
6.2	A systematic pre examination process is followed for preparation of question papers and evaluation of answer books.					
6.3	The evaluation mechanism is properly developed to test the student knowledge and skills as per the programme/course objective and intended learning outcomes.					
6.4	There is provision for full objectivity and authenticity in the evaluation process.					
6.5	Institution uses anti plagiarism software for project reports, dissertations etc.					
6.6	The evaluation is done in a timely manner and is error free i.e. the result is published within the time frame through website.					
6.7	Moderation of all forms of assessment is done by the institution with the approval of competent authority.					
6.8	Learner is given proper feedback in terms of their internal assignments paper.					
6.9	Model question papers and answers are made available to the learners through institutional website.					
6.10	The evaluation process is regularly updated and latest technological development is integrated with it.					
	Evidence List and Review of support Documents:					

INFRASTRUCTURE (TECHNOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDED)

Sl.No.	Performance Indicator	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	NA
7	INFRASTRUCTURE (TECHNOLOGICAL INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDED)					
7.1	The Institution has adequate and appropriate infrastructure facilities to conduct academics programme through open end distance learning.					
7.2	The Institution has plans to invest in infrastructural facilities to keep pace with the growth in student enrollment.					
7.3	The institution uses appropriate technology for effective institutional functioning like learner support, examination processing and student records.					
7.4	The institution has state of art infrastructure for developing eContents such as recording studios, photography equipment, editing facilities etc. to enable the Learning Management System (LMS) of the Institute.					
7.5	There is a provision of tele-conferencing and video conferencing of distance learners located in the remote areas.					
7.6	There are proper infrastructure facilities for counseling rooms, library etc. at study center and headquarter.					
7.7	Distance education centres have capacity to coordinate and monitor the rolling out of academic programmes.					
7.8	The institution has an effective system for the management and maintenance of equipments.					
7.9	There is an efficient communication system between head office and distance education centres located in different locations.					

Sl.No.	Performance Indicator	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	NA
7.10	The institution has well stocked and virtual library with adequate learning resource to offer access to eJournals and eResources through different repositories.					
7.11	The institution has a system to assess the usability of infrastructure resources/facilities by the learner.					
Evidence List and Review of support Documents:						

OUTPUT/OUTCOME QUALITY

Sl.No.	Performance Indicator	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	NA
8	OUTPUT/OUTCOME QUALITY					
8.1	Quality of Graduates of an open and distance learning (ODL) institution is assessed in terms of accomplishment of expected learning outcomes.					
8.2	Placement support is provided to the learners who are in the final stages of their academic programs.					
8.3	Entrepreneurship development camps/programmes are organized to sensitize those learners who want to establish their start up projects.					
8.4	The graduates of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institution are employable & capable of meeting the expectations of the industry, society and their country.					
8.5	Alumni meet are organized to realize the full potential of alumni support for existing learners and ODL institutions.					
Evidence List and Review of support Documents:						

HUMAN RESOURCE

Sl.No.	Performance Indicator	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	NA
9	HUMAN RESOURCE					
9.1	The recruitment and selection policy procedures ensure that the most qualified, experienced and high caliber academic and support staff members are recruited in an objective and transparent way for an open, flexible and distance mode of delivery.					
9.2	Staff is given training to use the latest technological resources including Learning Management System.					
9.3	The staff members are recruited who are having qualification/ exposure in the field of distance education and are having M.Phil/PhD qualification.					
9.4	The ratio of teaching and non-teaching staff is proper and well maintained so that lopsidedness does not occur.					
9.5	Staff is well motivated. Provision exists for career progression and staff development.					
9.6	The promotion criteria for academic staff are based on a performance appraisal system, and are focused on a wide range of factors, including materials development to enhance independent learning, research that is linked to ODL practice as well as publications and community outreach activities.					
9.7	There is an optimal mix of youth and experience in both teaching and non-teaching staff.					
	Evidence List and Review of support Documents:					

AMBIENCE FOR RESEARCH

Sl.No.	Performance Indicator	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	NA
10	AMBIENCE FOR RESEARCH					
10.1	The institution collaborates with national and international institutions for promoting research and faculty exchange programme.					
10.2	The institution organises seminars/ conferences on contemporary issues like OER, MOOCs, MOODLE etc.					
10.3	Sufficient resources are made available for faculty members to carry out research activities.					
10.4	Faculty members are encouraged to mobilize the resources for research through participation in sponsored research projects.					
10.5	Faculty members are encouraged to publish research papers and books having ISSN and ISBN respectively.					
10.6	Faculty members are encouraged to undertake consultancy projects.					
	Evidence List and Review of support Documents:					

PART - B

Q.1 Is there a separate IQAC/ Quality Management Department in your ODL institution?

Yes

No

If No, then which department looks after quality assurance and its management

Q.2. (a) Whether the quality management team has direct access to the top management?

Yes

No

Q.2. (b) Whether their recommendations are seriously considered and implemented by statutory policy making bodies of your institutions such as academic council, executive council, board of management etc.

Yes

No

Please elaborate if yes

Q.3 Whether quality assurance policies and processes are prepared in the form of quality manuals and circulated to the relevant persons?

Prepared: Yes No

Circulated: Yes No

Q.4 Whether your institution is certified, accredited by external agencies (ISO 9000, NAAC, International Accreditations Agencies)?

Yes No

If yes, please provide details

Q.5 Is there any student helpline/grievance redressal mechanism for helping learner in your institution?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide details

Q.6. Whether the institution has the student's feedback mechanism?

Yes

No

Please elaborate your answer

Q.7. Please mention 3 best practices which are distinct features of your institution. Give details

Q.8. Are you satisfied with the overall quality of your ODL institution and its academic programmes?

Yes

No

Please elaborate your answer

Q.9 What suggestions you would like to offer to the top management for achieving all-round improvement in quality?

WORKSHEET FOR REVIEWER(S):

Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis and Interpretation:

Observations:

Recommendations:

Annual/Month-wise Quality Plan:

Summary

The development of Quality Assurance Toolkit has been a rigorous exercise which went through different stages of scrutiny and critical review.

In chapter one various definitions of Quality, Quality Assurance and TQM have been given. The conclusion of this chapter is that the concept of quality is multidimensional and highly useful for ODL Institutions. In the same chapter two models have been presented. First one is the famous Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) Model developed by W.E. Deming and second is the organizational excellence model by Paraschivescu.

In chapter two the details of Quality Assurance Tool Kit have been given. Objectives of the Tool Kit which are relevant for ODL Institutions have also been delineated. The structure of the Quality Assurance Toolkit has also been presented in this chapter. The part A of the toolkit has ten factors and ninety-four performance indicators which are to be assessed on a five point Likert scale. In part B there are nine open ended questions. Towards the end worksheet for reviewers is given. Finally, the highlight of this chapter is guidelines on how to use the Quality Assurance Tool kit. The third chapter presents the quality assurance tool kit which has been finalized after multiple stages of review and feedback. The review was initially done by expert group committee members at Hyderabad and then by Pilot testing project at Uttarakhand Open University, Haldwani. A useful glossary and references have also been included.

Glossary

Benchmarking



A tool used to improve products, services or management processes by analyzing the best practices of other organizations to determine standards of performance and how to achieve them in order to increase customer satisfaction.

Best Practices



Policies, practices and procedures that have consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means and that are used in benchmarking.

External review



A scrutiny process that examines standards and quality in a university. It is undertaken by people who do not work for the university.

Internal review



Academic self-regulation. Institutions, departments and course/programme teams take responsibility for ongoing or periodic QA, conformance with standards, risk and control assessment, and effective use of resources and methods.

Open and Distance Learning (ODL)



Refers to a system of teaching and learning characterized by separation of teacher and learner in time and/or place; uses multiple media for delivery of instruction; involves two-way communication and occasional face-to-face meeting for tutorials and learner-learner interaction.

Performance Excellence



The term “performance excellence” refers to an integrated approach to organizational performance management that results in delivery of ever-improving value to students and stakeholders, contributing to improved education quality and student learning; and improvement of overall organizational effectiveness and capabilities; and

Performance indicators (PIs) or key performance indicators (KPIs)



A set of measures those institutions, their departments and programmes use to gauge or compare performance in terms of meeting their strategic and operational goals in their particular activities.

Quality Assessment



It is a process of evaluation of performance of an institution or its unit based on certain established criteria.

Quality Assurance (QA)



The maintenance of a desired level of quality in an institution course, program or service, by means of continuous monitoring and assessment at every stage of policy making, processes and practices.

Quality Audit



The systematic examination of quality System, conducted by internal and/or external quality auditors or audit teams.

Quality Management



The means by which institutions, departments, courses, programs and services ensure consistency in processes, outputs and outcomes by means of quality planning, quality control, quality assurance and quality improvement.

Total Quality Management



Is a comprehensive approach for improving competitiveness, effectiveness and flexibility through planning, organizing and understanding each activity and involving each individual at each level.

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