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Improving Quality of Accreditation in the Education Sector of Pakistan

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by

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Introduction

The accrediting a program is intended to promote excellence and continuous improvement of the education process. The education process consists of students, program of studies, faculty, physical resources, its interaction with other institutions, and employees, alumni members etc. Continuous improvement consists of faculty development, together with research and other scholarly activities, in order to underpin the delivery of curriculum.

In this paper a model for quality improvement is presented. The principals and processes followed by a typical university for ensuring quality standards are stated. The state of accrediting programs in some disciplines as being practiced in Pakistan is outlined. A general quality criteria for education process is presented.
Quality Improvement Model

A diagrammatic presentation of the quality improvement model is given in figure-1.

![Diagram of Quality Improvement Model]

**DYNAMIC MODEL FOR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**

Desired attribute of each of the component of this model are described in the following:
Mission

- Mission statement published and reviewed periodically
- Mission development
  - Based on regular reviews
  - Involvement of different constituencies
  - Creative development
  - Conversion of mission to strategic plan
- Core values
- Visionary and challenging
- Conversion – Allocation of Resources

Strategic objectives

- Clarity
- Linking to mission

Management Process

- Clarity of planning process
- Importance of quality improvement
- General ownership of plan
- Tracking progress of individual projects
- Steps initiated to ensure strategic objectives achievement

Students

- Clarity of ideas the qualities to be developed
- Criteria for selection
- Course preparation
- Progression
- Career placement and support

Targets

- Target profile for graduating students in term of values, knowledge, skill and behavior that program seeks to develop
• Selection procedure

Criteria for Selection
• Match between strategic objectives and the actual intake
• Success in meeting institutional objectives
• Selection procedure to be rigorous and appropriate
• # selected as a percentage of total applicants

Course Preparation

Progression

Career placement and support

Program Quality
• Program Design
• Program Content
• Program Delivery
• Student Assessment
• Program Evaluation

Personal Development
• Support and counseling services
• Personal Effectiveness
• Direct applications of skills

Research & Development
• Research Activities
• Innovation

Contribution to Community
• External Relations
• Extra Curricular Activities
Services to Education

Faculty
- Size and composition
- Faculty policy and management
- Faculty development

Resources
- Financial management
- Premises and equipment
- Library facilities
- Computing facilities
- General support

Principals for Accreditation
Following are the three important principals to be followed for accrediting a program.
- The quality of programs and the overall students learning must be improved
- It is institution’s responsibility for the quality education provision
- Judgments about quality are always to be made by groups of academic and professional peers with appropriate expertise and interest

Processes
Process involved include the following:
- Approval of new programs
- Annual monitoring of existing programs by the institution
- Periodic reviews by basic administrative units
- Student feed back
- Faculty feed back
- Employer feed back

Accreditation Process in Pakistan
Accreditation process is carried out by Regulatory Bodies like Pakistan Engineering Council etc. Most of the members are elected who are already registered
members of the council. The teams appointed to conduct accreditation process are not necessarily composed of academicians and professionals with appropriate expertise and interest. Initiating of new and innovating program is not adequately evaluated.

Importance of quality improvement of education process, sometimes, is not very clear to the institution.

Institutions by definition are ‘autonomous’ and a balance between autonomy and accountability is non-existent.

**Suggested General Quality Criteria**

- Major quality institution be regarded by market place (students, employees and competitors).
- The institution should have a clearly articulated sense of mission understood and shared throughout institution and recognized by employers
- The institution should have an effective and integrated organization for the management of its activities and a significant control over its destiny.
- Institution must have a defined and coherent strategy reflecting its resources and constraints.
- Institution must be able to demonstrate financial viability.
- Institution must recruit, develop and manage its faculty in accordance with strategic objectives and must have sufficient core faculty.
- Institution must recruit and select high quality students and be able to demonstrate the quality of placement of its graduates.
- Institution must provide professional student services.
- Institution must have a coherent program design, staffing, administration and evaluation incorporating, employer, student and rigorous assessment processes for monitoring student progress.
- Institution should have a clearly defined research and publication policy, encouraging faculty to develop distinctive areas of expertise.

**Conclusion**

An effort has been made to present a dynamic model for quality improvement. Outlines of the components of this model has been stated, accreditation principals and processes have been briefly outlined. Some comments regarding accreditation process as practiced in Pakistan are stated. General quality criterion has been suggested.

Note: Author can be contacted if further clarification or additional information on the subject is needed.
About the Author

Prof. Dr. A. Raouf has over forty (40) years’ academic experience to his credit. During this period he was actively engaged in undergraduate and graduate teaching, supervising graduate students and industrial consulting work. Out of this period for more than two decades he was at University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada and was Head of Industrial Engineering Department for seven years. During this period he supervised 28 graduate students. He was Rector Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering Sciences and Technology from 1994-2000 before that he was at King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia as Professor Systems Engineering Department for ten years. Currently he is an Adjunct Professor at King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals. Based on his professional achievements and professional standing he was appointed as

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He is member of the Editorial Boards of the following Journals

• International Journal of Operation and Production Management
• International Journal of Quality and Reliability Management
• Kybernetics: The International Journal of Systems and Cybernetics
• International Journal of Health Care and Quality Assurance
• International Journal of Plant Engineering and Management
• International Journal of Industrial Engineering (Applications and Practices)
• International Journal of Supply Chain Management
• Islamic Studies, The International Islamic Research Institute, International Islamic University, Islamabad.
• Proceedings of Pakistan Academy of Sciences.

He has to his credit the following books:


SIGNIFICANT ASSIGNMENTS

• Fellow Member of Pakistan Academy of Sciences, Islamabad.
• Member of the Executive Committee of the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), Government of Pakistan (1994-2001).
• Member of the Vice Chancellors Committee of Engineering Universities / Institutions constituted by the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), Government of Pakistan (1994-2001).
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