Paper Proposal: Theme 4 National Qualifications Framework and their links to QA (including involvement of stakeholders)

Paper Title: Triangularization of Qualifications Framework, Planning and Quality Assurance

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Paper Abstract

An NQF (National Qualifications Framework) is based on a set of learning domains which specifies the "competencies sets" a student or a graduate should be capable of when s/he completes a course or graduates. These learning domains which are important to the students' performance assessment should be part of the planning of the course curriculum, pedagogy and assessment that should holistically be part of the bigger quality assurance. In practice, issues of NQF being "papers based" and additional work not evidential of quality assurance persists as their linkages to the Quality Management are weak or non-existent. As such, this paper aims to show the relationships of the NQF, planning and quality management dimensions and inter-linkages through an online NQF that relates to a set of university indices of students' performance assessment, teaching and their satisfaction. Educators can recognize that NQF, planning and quality management when managed holistically will support continuous quality improvements.

Paper outline

1. Introduction

This paper uses two qualification frameworks from Saudi Arabia and Thailand as illustrations of how the NQF and planning and quality management can be holistically inter-linked through a set of university indices. These indices evaluate the students learning outcomes as specified in the learning domains of the NQF and also inform on the planning and quality management of the program. Technically, there is minimal variant across the two QF under study as the NQF of Saudi Arabia (NCAAA, 2009) has 1) knowledge 2) cognitive skills 3) interpersonal skills and responsibility, 4) communication, information technology and numerical skills, and 5) psychomotor skills, whilst the TQF (Thailand Qualification Framework) (OHEC, 2010) has 5 main domains of 1) Morals and Ethics 2) Knowledge 3) Cognitive Skills 4) Interpersonal Skills and Responsibilities and 5) Numerical Analysis, Communication and Information Technology Skills plus 1 Psychomotor skills.

Since the NQF and TQF are similar in that they have templates, the discussion here is based on the more specific TQF which has: TQF 2 (Program Specification) that includes the domains specifications, curriculum mapping, student evaluation criteria, faculty development and program quality management, TQF 3 (Course Specifications), TQF 5 (Course Report) and TQF

7 (Program Report). It should be noted that TQF 7 is an aggregation of TQF 5, which is based on TQF 3 all of which meets the TQF 2 specifications. The key issue is that all faculty are "drowned" in the time consuming and tedious "papers documentation" that needs to be prepared, documented and reported every semester for each course taught, all of which leads to the overall program performance. Faculties in both countries face similar issues in the NQF/TQF.

To minimize the time consumed and great efforts in papers documentation and preparation, it is proposed that an online TQF be set up with the main aim of minimizing the manual inputs. A lot of the basic data (once defined) can be extracted from one form to another automatically as they follow a sequential and serial process of TQF 2 ➔ TQF 3 ➔ TQF 5 ➔ TQF 7 all of which leads to the determination of the course performance, program performance and ultimately the school performance. These performances are assessed through the main university indices and survey instruments (Figure 1), as the key SSI of the students, the SCEI and TCEI are evaluated for each course for each term and are reported in TQF 5 for each course and aggregated in TQF 7.

Figure 1: 10 sets of University Indices and Survey Instruments

2. QMIPS (Quality Management, Information and Management Systems) Model

The Strategic Performance Management System (Teay, 2012) that underscores the QMIPS (Quality Management, Information and Management Systems) Model (Figure 2) is composed of 3 main systems of the IMS (Information Management System), QMS (Quality Management System) that defines the Standards and Criteria and PMS (Planning Management System) that defines the Strategic Plan and the OYPB (One Year Plan and Budget). They are interdependent and interlinked to ensure and assure that quality management is evidence – based informed by the IMS according to the PMS planning dimensions.

The above 10 university indices in compliance with the online TQF, surveyed through a generic set of survey instruments, are a combination of both online (SSI students, graduates, Job

Placement, SCEI and TCEI, and Faculty and Staff Satisfaction and Engagements) and manual (SSI employment, alumni and parents) surveys. These represent the core KPI (Key Performance Indicators) that are evaluated as part of the quality management based on the quality Criteria and the accomplishment of the strategic goals as defined in the Strategic Plan.

Figure 2: Interlinkages of the QMIPS (Quality Management, Information and Management Systems)

The inter-linkages of the TQF Indices, Quality Management and Planning are shown in Figure 3. In the AU Strategic Plan (2008 – 2022), there are 6 strategic themes with 31 strategic goals. The strategic themes are:

Theme 1: Creating and Strengthening Quality Learning and Teaching
Theme 2: Managing Quality Academic and Research Achievement
Theme 3: Developing Stakeholders-University Engagement
Theme 4: Developing and Managing Resources
Theme 5: Improving Core and Support Processes
Theme 6: Valuing People and Creating a High-Performing Organization

As discussed earlier, the university indices (TQF) were established and incorporated in the IMS as part of the university's KPI to assess the accomplishment and achievements of the Strategic Plan's (2008 – 2022) 6 themes. The 3 main key indices of SSI students and SCEI and TCEI (based on TQF) directly affects the key stakeholder which is the students' performance. The SCEI deals with the 5 main learning domains of the TQF and the TCEI looks at the more general aspects (Teaching & Learning, Moral & Ethics of instructor, Course Assessment, Feedback &

Development, Class Management, Course evaluation) and the SSI covers the general satisfaction of aspects that are not covered in the SCEI and TCEI (quality of teaching and learning, student's engagement and involvement and quality curriculum, infrastructures, support services, arts and culture and overall perception of image), all of which drills down to the course level of each student. This can also provide the longitudinal study of a single student or a cohort for Institutional Research for the duration of the whole program of study. All of these informs on quality assurance of the TQF 2, 5 and 7.

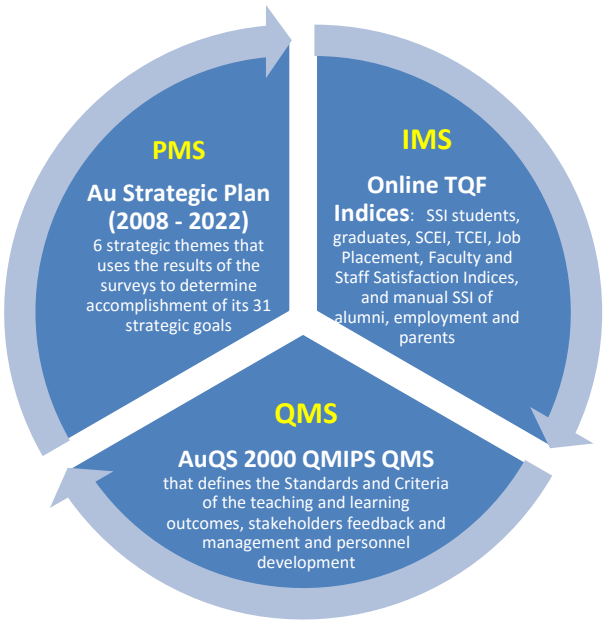

Figure 3: Interlinkages of the Indices of TQF with the QMS and the Strategic goals of the Strategic Plan

The Indices are assessed under the AuQS 2000 QMIPS QMS (Teay, 2012) framework and Criteria on Teaching and Learning, Faculty and Staff Development, Stakeholders feedback and engagement, using the international MBNQA Results evaluation approach of LeTCI (Levels, Trends, Comparisons and Integration). The outcomes of the results are reported in the PMR (Performance Management Report) of the PMS to the University Council to ensure that the planned strategic goals under the PMS have been assessed for accomplishment and achievements under the rigourous QMS as informed by the IMS.

In conclusion, the use of the IMS online surveys of SSI students, graduates, job placement (all of which are governed by the TQF at course and program levels, faculty and staff satsifaction and engagement (internal stakeholders) and the manual surveys of SSI employment market, parents and alumni (external stakeholders) are key inputs that links directly to the quality management. When statiscally evaluated under the IMS using the Standards and Criteria requirements of the QMS, the performance outcomes are reported in the PMR under the PMS. These show that the the IMS – QMS – PMS linkages of QMIPS model is a transparent, rigorous but robust model

that can be used to ensure that the TQF can be integrated into the quality management and strategic performance management system of the university.

Reference

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