

Assuring Quality in E-learning

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ABSTRACT

Recently, the acceptance of teaching & learning through electronic media has been common amongst students and teachers all over the world. With the rapid expansion of e-learning especially in higher education during the past years, public demand for quality, policymakers and educators recognize that Quality Assurance (QA) is a key issue that needs to be addressed not only within individual institutions, programs or courses but also jointly in national, regional and global contexts. The existing e-learning system can be further enhanced with new technologies to enhance the experience of learning online.

KEYWORDS: e-learning, quality assurance

Introduction

With the expansion of e-learning during the past years, there has been growing public demand for quality and accountability of e-learning, especially in higher education context. Several scholars and practitioners agree that e-learning quality should be judged by the standards of face-to-face education while factoring in some distinctive features of e-learning such as extended virtual spaces for teaching and learning, flexible operations and interactive course delivery.

JISC (2009) suggests that e-learning should really stand for 'enhanced learning' and that it can take the following forms:

- Connectivity to information and to others
- 24/7 access to learning resources
- Greater choice over the time, place and pace of study

- Alternative modes of study: distance, blended work-based, partially or wholly campus-based
- Knowledge-sharing and co-authoring across multiple locations
- Opportunities for reflection and planning in personal learning spaces
- Rapid feedback on formative assessments
- More active learning by means of interactive technologies and multimedia resources
- Participation in communities of knowledge, inquiry, and learning
- Learning by discovery in virtual worlds
- Development of skills for living and working in a digital age.



With the rapid growth of e-learning in higher education, policymakers and educators recognize that Quality Assurance (QA) is a key issue that needs to be addressed not only within individual institutions, programs or courses but also jointly in national, regional and global contexts.

Approaches to quality assurance in e-learning

1. Quality as conforming to standards set for conventional education
2. Quality as fitness for purpose
3. Quality as meeting customers’ needs
4. Quality as continuous improvement
5. Quality as compliance with international standards & requirements.

The QA Criteria for e-learning content evaluation include 20 criteria across 9 domains:

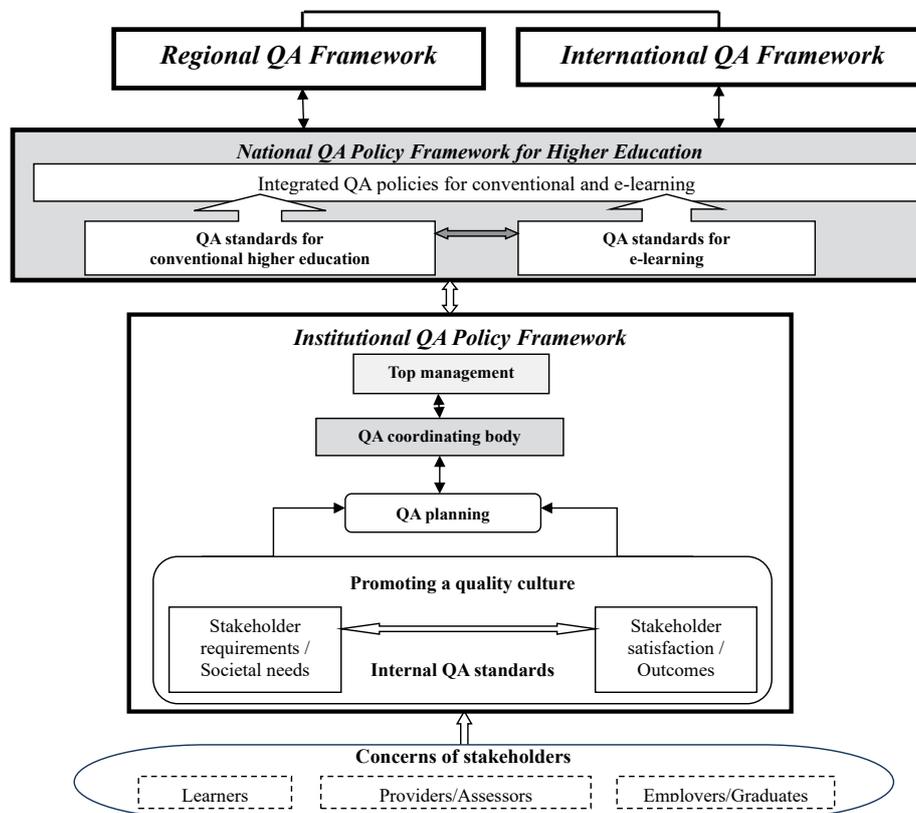
1. Needs analysis

- Analysis of the learning environment

2. Instructional design

- Learning objectives
 - Differentiated instruction
 - Learning materials
 - Screen layout
 - User interface
- 3. Learning content**
- Selection of learning content
 - Organization of learning content
 - Difficulty level of learning content
 - Amount of learning content
- 4. Teaching-Learning strategy**
- Selection of teaching-learning strategy
 - Self-directed learning strategy
 - Motivational strategy

Figure 1: QA policy framework for e-learning at both national and institutional levels



5. Interaction

- Interaction between learners and learning content

6. Support system

- Learning supports

7. Assessment

- Selection of assessment content
- Selection of assessment method
- Application of assessment tools

8. Ethical standards

- Ethical standards

9. Copyright

- Copyright

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