

Primer on the Quality Assurance, Monitoring, and Evaluation of Higher Education Institutions

Introduction

The strategic approach to quality assurance is based on developing the capacity of higher education institutions to design and deliver high quality programs that meet the needs of the Philippines, and which achieve standards comparable to those of universities in other countries with which the Philippines competes in global markets.

At the global and regional levels, countries need to demonstrate that their education systems match world class standards. Jobs can be moved readily from one country to another, and multi-national employers do not hesitate to relocate jobs to their maximum advantage. There will be many factors influencing relocation, including cost, access to markets, and the regulatory environment. However, one factor is undoubtedly the availability of a workforce with appropriate skills. Increasingly, the skills that are sought are those provided by higher education.

One measure of the international standing of national higher education systems and of individual universities is the ability of their students to secure employment, or to progress to postgraduate study in other countries. This international mobility is of particular importance to a country for which remittances from citizens working overseas make an important contribution to the economy. Increasingly, another measure of international standing is the willingness of multinational employers to take advantage of the skills of a workforce as a whole, by locating their operations in the country concerned. Meeting international standards is no longer an option or an aspiration, it has become a necessity. The achievement of the few is no longer a sufficient indicator of international standing; it is the achievement of the many that matters as well.

Governments are concerned with attracting employment to their countries, thus governments need to be able to demonstrate that they can offer a workforce with appropriate skills. Evaluation processes need to be able to demonstrate that higher education institutions are producing students with relevant competences. Benchmarking learning outcomes against world standards becomes vital.

At the national level, countries have high expectations of their higher education institutions. Universities have a vital role to play in meeting the developmental needs of the country, and the challenge of global competition. At the same time, policies of equity and social inclusion demand a widening of participation in the opportunities offered by higher education. Growing awareness of the importance of higher education means that its achievements are no longer taken for granted and left unquestioned.

The national importance of higher education goes beyond the ability to compete in global markets, important though that is. The national role of higher education institutions includes:

- The maintenance, development and critical appraisal of cultural values.
- Providing the skills and expertise to support the economic and development needs of the Philippines.
- Developing individuals to be self-reliant and entrepreneurial.
- Preparing individuals to play an active role in civil society.
- Providing the Philippines, through research and otherwise, with a pool of knowledge and expertise that will contribute to all aspects of social and economic development.

Objectives

As part of its mandate, CHED monitors and evaluates all higher education institutions. This will be a qualitative evaluation of the effectiveness of the arrangements made by each institution to manage the quality and standards of its own programs. It will consider also related matters of governance, management, student support, and resource allocation.

Monitoring and evaluation of whole institutions is necessary for two purposes. First, CHED needs to make judgments about the effectiveness of institutions in their entirety. It is institutions that manage programs of study, and manage the other activities that higher education delivers for the benefit of the community, such as research, knowledge transfer, and community involvement. As noted above, governments have proper expectations that universities will promote policies of equity and social inclusion, and that they will play their part in the economic development of the country. In doing this, institutions are more than the sum of their programs.

Second, CHED needs to monitor and evaluate the development of those institutional systems that ensure the quality and standards of programs. Systematic monitoring of these will generate pressure for improvement. In turn, improvements in institutional systems of academic management will increase the likelihood of both CHED and individual accrediting bodies being able to place a greater reliance on those systems in future.

CHED has four objectives in monitoring and evaluating the performance of higher education institutions:

1. The outcomes, which are achieved by students who follow programs of study, should meet internationally recognized standards and should be relevant to employment. Institutions should have sufficiently robust procedures for approving programs, to ensure that appropriate standards are achieved by students, and that the programs are responsive to changing needs.
2. Institutions of higher education should perform effectively, i.e., they are committed to continuous improvement, they make efficient use of the resources that are available to them, and they take effective steps to increase the likelihood of their students achieving the learning outcomes required to graduate.
3. Institutions should be effective in addressing policy issues. In general, institutions should focus on those matters that are relevant to their distinctive missions, so that the Philippines has a healthy plurality of types of higher education institutions. In addition, all institutions should address effectively the need to improve equity in and access to higher education, so that higher education serves all sections of our society.
4. The monitoring and evaluation system will assist in the provision of information about higher education in the Philippines. Information is needed:
 - To demonstrate the standards of achievement of our students to those, within the country and internationally, who recognize qualifications for the purposes of admission to advanced study, professional careers, and employment.
 - To assist those with responsibility for policy towards and planning of higher education in the Philippines.
 - To inform customer choice—by students and their families considering higher education programs, and by employers who recruit graduates.

Monitoring and Evaluation and Accreditation

The role of CHED is different from but complementary to the program accreditation carried out by the accrediting bodies, which will continue. Program accreditation is concerned with the outcomes of individual programs. It is a necessary part of quality assurance because it compares like programs across different institutions. On the other hand, evaluation of institutional systems is concerned with the overall strategic and operational management by an institution of its academic affairs. By the very nature of institutional systems, they have to be evaluated in consideration of the context and the culture of the institution itself.

Under the present system, higher education institutions are generally treated as the sum of their programs. While there will have been some assessment of some institution-wide resources (such as learning resources, physical plant, and student counseling services), there is no standard assessment of the effectiveness of overall institutional systems for managing academic affairs. Good programs are taken as a proxy for effective overall systems. In some cases the proxy may be valid, but in other cases it may not. Direct evaluation of institutional systems and management would provide a more reliable basis for judgments about the degree of autonomy that an institution should be granted.

Program accreditation remains important, because of the current state of development of higher education in the Philippines; performance at program level provides a part of the evidence needed to evaluate institutional systems, and program accreditation will be needed.

On the other hand, because of its mandate, monitoring and evaluation of entire institutions is a direct responsibility of CHED, acting mainly through its regional offices. CHED already undertakes monitoring and evaluation of institutions for the purposes of its main regulatory responsibilities, and in connection with the administration of grants and subsidies to private institutions.

Outcomes-based Evaluation

The overall approach to monitoring and evaluation is developmental. CHED will work with institutions to assist them in strengthening their management of academic and administrative processes so that they are better able to achieve their educational objectives. Where there are serious weaknesses, or failures to comply with conditions attached to permits or recognitions, CHED will expect remedial action to be taken, and will use its powers in relation to such shortcomings as appropriate. Review teams will approach their engagements with institutions in a spirit of cooperation, and with the intention of supporting development and strengthening academic management.

CHED is adopting an outcomes-based approach to evaluation because of its potential greatly to increase both the effectiveness of the quality assurance system, and the quality and efficiency of higher education generally. Particularly in professional fields, there is a need to demonstrate the achievement of outcomes that match international norms.

Mature evaluation systems are based upon outcomes and, in particular, the learning outcomes that are intended for students to achieve. Inputs and processes remain to be of vital importance, as they shape the learning experience that is made available to students. Peer judgments of processes remain valid. However, for those outside higher education institutions, and in particular employers, it is the abilities of students that matter. They are concerned with what students are able to do in their first employment.

There are two main approaches to outcomes-based evaluation. The first approach is that of a direct assessment of educational outcomes, with evaluation being of the individual programs that lead to those outcomes. This can provide a basis for program accreditation. The second approach is that of an audit of the quality systems of an institution, to determine whether these are sufficiently robust and effective to ensure that all programs are well designed and deliver appropriate outcomes. Such an audit will not normally make direct judgments on academic programs, but it will consider program-level evidence to the extent necessary to establish that institutional systems are functioning properly. This can provide a basis for institutional accreditation.

A move to outcomes-based evaluation from an evaluation system based more on inputs represents a shift from the quantitative to the qualitative. The process is more searching, because the account must be reflective, and provide a justification of why things are done, and why they are done in the way that has been chosen. Effectiveness of process has to be demonstrated, in relation to intended outcomes. Factual data is still required, but to support a case that a department is performing effectively, rather than as an end in itself. The approach is less prescriptive, for example a department must decide whether a particular set of data is relevant to a demonstration of effectiveness, rather than providing it simply because it has been required.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The monitoring and evaluation framework (Annex 1) has five key result areas within which judgments are made about the performance of institutions:

- Governance and Management
- Quality of Teaching and Research
- Support for Students
- Relations with the Community
- Management of Resources

Within each key results area there is a number of indicators. Some of these are core indicators that apply to all institutions. The other indicators apply to institutions to the extent that is appropriate in relation to the mission and stage of development of the institution. There are twelve indicators, eight of which are core indicators.

Types of Institutions

There are four categories of institution (Annex 2):

- Mature institutions undertaking both teaching and research: CATEGORY A (r)
- Mature teaching institutions: CATEGORY A (t)
- Developing institutions: CATEGORY B
- Other institutions: CATEGORY C

Prior to the first round of visits, *institutions are not yet placed in categories*. Instead, an institution can indicate for which category it wishes to be considered; the scoring from the visit will be used to determine if such a category is appropriate and will allocate institutions to these categories. These categories carry corresponding benefits to the institution.

Allocation to the A and B categories will depend solely on evaluation using the criteria set out in this document. It will not depend on current accreditation status, not least because program accreditation is voluntary, and some institutions have chosen not to submit to it. Also, a criterion for accreditation is achievement in research, and it would be entirely acceptable for an institution to be allocated to the A (t) category on the strength of its teaching alone. Nevertheless, institutions may find it helpful to have some indication of the types of achievement against current indicators that could

suggest that an application for evaluation for the A and B categories might be appropriate. The achievements listed in Annex 2 are not prescribed requirements. It is for each institution to consider whether its performance against the criteria in this document would merit seeking allocation to a particular category.

Frequency and Scheduling of Reviews

An evaluation of the effectiveness of an institution in achieving its objectives is a major event. For an institution to gain full benefit from the exercise it will need to take time to prepare. The writing of a self-evaluation document is an opportunity for the institution to reflect on its own performance. The frequency of monitoring and evaluation visits, and the notice given of them, has regard to these factors.

Institutions will be visited every five years. However, reviewers may recommend an earlier visit if there are matters of concern to be addressed. This may be either a full further visit, or a follow-up concerned only with the matters giving rise to concern. In the case of institutions in the A categories, a period of six years before the next visit may be recommended, if institutional systems are found to be particularly robust and effective.

Each CHEDRO will draw up a schedule of visits for a year ahead, as a part of its operational planning cycle. The schedule will be drawn up such that each institution to be visited has a minimum of four months notice of the date by which it will have to submit a self-evaluation document, and a minimum of six months notice of the intended date of the visit.

The approach to scheduling visits in Category C is slightly different, and is set out in Annex F of the QuAME Operations Handbook.

Pre-Visit Arrangements

Notice to Institutions

As soon as the schedule of visits for the forthcoming year has been drawn up, the CHEDRO should notify institutions due to be visited of the dates on which it is intended that visits should take place, and the deadline for submission to the CHEDRO of the self-evaluation document. A minimum of four months notice should be given of the date by which the self-evaluation document is to be submitted to the CHEDRO. To ensure that the self-evaluation document remains current at the time of the visit, there should be no more than three months between the deadline for submission of the self-evaluation document and the date of commencement of the visit.

Self-Evaluation Document

The HEI may ask the CHEDRO for assistance in planning the SED. The CHEDRO should follow up with the HEI two months after the notice. The HEI should submit two copies of the SED to the CHEDRO *within four months after the notice*. On receipt of the self-evaluation document, there will be an initial assessment of it by the CHEDRO to determine whether it provides an adequate basis for the review visit. If the document falls significantly short of meeting the criteria set out in Annex 3, or if the statistical data is incomplete, the institution will be asked to revise the document and to re-submit 10 final copies.

The institution should be notified of the need for revision *within three weeks* of the date of receipt of the self-evaluation document, and the institution should be allowed further *four weeks from the date of notification* to make amendments and to re-submit. If, after revision, the self-evaluation document remains inadequate, the visit will still proceed as planned, but the institution should be aware that an

inadequate document will make it less likely that the review team will be able to reach favorable conclusions on the performance of the institution.

Copies of the self-evaluation document must be supplied by the CHEDRO to all members of the review team *at least one month before the commencement of the visit*. After consultation with the members of the review team, the team leader may request the institution to make further information available. Any such request should be made *at least two weeks in advance of the date of the visit*, and should specify whether the team would wish to receive the information in advance of the visit, or whether it is acceptable for the information to be provided during the course of the visit.

Visit of the Review Team

The Conduct of the Visit

Reviews will be conducted in a spirit of dialogue and cooperation between the institution and the review team; a confrontational approach from either side would be wholly inappropriate.

Depending on the size and complexity of the institution, two or three days will be allocated for the visit. Exceptionally, a longer visit may be needed for very large or complex institutions.

Making Judgments

The review team will make judgments against each of the criteria, using the following scale:

- 4: *The criterion is fully met, and elements of it are achieved at a level of excellence that provides a model for others.***
- 3: *The criterion is met, with most elements demonstrating good practice.***
- 2: *The criterion is met in most respects, but improvement is needed to overcome weaknesses in some elements.***
- 1: *The criterion is met in some respects, but much improvement is needed to overcome weaknesses.***
- 0: *The criterion is not met.***

Judgments are intended to assist institutions in identifying areas of strength and weakness, and to provide information about their general performance. However, where there are serious weaknesses in performance, the judgments will be used also to determine whether an institution should be subject to a requirement to produce an action plan to address weaknesses, and an early re-visit by CHED (usually within 12 months) to check on progress.

An action plan and an early re-visit will be required in two circumstances. First, if a score of 0 (the criterion is not met) is given in respect of any criterion, an action plan will be required in respect of the criterion or criteria concerned. Second, if scores of 1 or 2 (improvement needed) are made with respect to any two or more of the criteria that relate to the core business of providing good quality programs, taught by suitably qualified staff, to students selected in accordance with national priorities, then an action plan will be required in respect of those criteria. The six criteria are:

- Setting and achieving program standards:
 1. Program Approval
 2. Program Monitoring and Review
 3. Action to Strengthen Programs
- Support for students:
 1. Recruitment, Admission and Academic Support
 2. Student Scholarship

- Management of Resources:
 1. Faculty Profile

Note that, aside from scores, no recommendations are given by the review team. This emphasizes the idea that the HEI is given a hand in looking for solutions within their particular context.

Post-Visit Arrangements

After the Visit

The team of assessors should meet at the end of the visit, before leaving the site, to discuss the scores for the different criteria being considered for the institution. Ideally, the final report should be written before leaving the site. However, because this may be difficult for particular locations, the team leader should submit the report to the CHEDRO *within 48 hours of the conclusion of the visit*.

The report should discuss briefly for each criterion the strengths and weaknesses of the institution, and should refer to the evidence that the team took into account in reaching its judgment in respect of the criterion. The report should conclude with a short summary, which may include commendations for matters in respect of which the institution is performing well, or has made significant progress since the last review.

To ensure a consistency of treatment of all institutions visited, the report will be reviewed within the CHEDRO for consistency of approach and style, by a person not involved in the visit. Any adjustments to the text should be agreed with the team leader *within two weeks* of the submission of the report. The report should then be submitted to the TWG for final review. The report should be sent to the institution *no later than six weeks* from the conclusion of the visit, for comments on matters of factual accuracy only. The institution is entitled to ask for any errors of fact to be corrected, but no alteration will be made to the judgments reached, unless a factual inaccuracy had a material effect on a judgment. The response of the institution on matters of factual accuracy should be made *within two weeks* of receiving the report.

Publication of Reports

The full narrative report will be provided only to the Office of the President of the institution and to CHED. This limited circulation is intended to encourage frankness of commentary in the narrative parts of the report. However, should an institution quote or publish selectively from a report, CHED reserves its right to publish the entire narrative report, so as to present a balanced picture.

A summary report will be published by CHED, on its website. This will give the name of the institution, the date of the visit, the category assigned to the institution, and the best practices of the institution. Periodically, CHED will publish thematic reports on good practice in relation to particular criteria. These will draw on the narrative reports, but will not identify individual institutions.

Complaints and Appeals

Should an institution have any complaint about the way in which a visit is being conducted, the team leader will endeavor to resolve the matter in a speedy and courteous manner. If an institution remains dissatisfied, the matter may be referred to the CHEDRO director. Formal appeals will be entertained normally only on grounds of procedural irregularity or abuse of process. Appeals should be made to the CHEDRO director. If the CHEDRO director finds that there was irregularity or abuse, he or she will then consider if that irregularity or abuse had a material effect on the judgments made. If there was no material effect on the judgments, they will stand. If there was a material effect, the judgments will be set aside, and a re-visit ordered. In the event

that the CHEDRO director was a member of the review team, a CHEDRO director from another region will consider the appeal.

As with all matters dealt with by CHEDROs, appeals against their decisions lie to the Commission *en banc*.

The Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

PERFORMANCE MEASURES – GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

A. Core Indicator: Governance

Criterion: The institution's governance arrangements demonstrate probity, strategic vision, accountability, awareness and management of risk, and effective monitoring of performance.

B. Core Indicator: Management

Criterion: The institution's management, financial control, and quality assurance arrangements are sufficient to manage existing operations and to respond to development and change.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES – QUALITY OF TEACHING AND RESEARCH

A. Core Indicator: Setting and Achieving Program Standards

Criterion 1: Program Approval

The institution sets the objectives and learning outcomes of its programs at appropriate levels, and has effective mechanisms to ensure that its programs achieve those objectives and enable students to achieve the intended outcomes.

Criterion 2: Program Monitoring and Review

The institution has effective arrangements for monitoring the effectiveness of its programs.

Criterion 3: Action to Strengthen Programs

The institution takes effective action to address weakness, build on strengths, and to enhance performance by the dissemination of good practice.

B. Indicator: Research Capability

Criterion: The institution has a research community of faculty, postgraduate students and postdoctoral research workers that fosters and supports creative research and other advanced scholarly activity.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES – SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

A. Core Indicator: Equity and Access

Criterion 1: Recruitment, Admission, and Academic Support

The institution is effective in recruiting, admitting, supporting, and graduating students, including those from indigenous groups, the handicapped, low level income classes, foreign students, and other special groups.

Criterion 2: Student Scholarships

The institution operates effective arrangements to direct scholarships and study grants on merit to support the most able students on programs that develop

competences needed to support the Filipino economy and to enable the country to compete in global labor markets.

B. Core Indicator: Student Services

Criterion: The institution has programs for student services, to support the non-academic needs of the students.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES – RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY

A. Core Indicator: Relevance of Programs

Criterion: The institution offers programs that take into consideration the social, cultural, economic, and developmental needs of the country at local, regional, and national levels, as well as the need for the country to compete effectively in global markets.

B. Indicator: Networking and Linkages

Criterion: The institution is valued as a partner by other higher education institutions; professional, government, and non-government organizations; and industry, within the Philippines and internationally.

C. Indicator: Extension Programs

Criterion: The institution is valued by its local community as a provider of extension programs that are responsive to the needs of the community for people empowerment and self-reliance.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES – MANAGEMENT OF RESOURCES

A. Core Indicator: Faculty Profile

Criterion: The institution has an adequate number of faculty with the appropriate expertise and competence to teach the courses offered by the institution.

B. Core Indicator: Use of Information and Communications Technology and Learning Resources

Criterion: The institution makes effective use of information and communications technology to support student learning and to manage its academic affairs.

C. Indicator: Resource Generation

Criterion: The institution has a viable, sustainable and appropriate resource generation strategy to support its development plans.

Types of Institutions

Category A (r). These are institutions that undertake the full range of higher education functions, including research. There are likely to be only a small number of such institutions, given the need for advanced research effort to be concentrated in academic communities having a critical mass of active researchers. Such an institution will normally be evaluated against *all of the indicators* in the framework.

To be placed in Category A (r) an institution would have to achieve scores of at least 3 in nine of all the indicators, including the Research Capability indicator, and no scores less than 2.

Category A (t). These are institutions that have teaching as their core business. They will not normally undertake research, although faculty will keep up to date with developments in their discipline through their personal study and scholarship. They may undertake other forms of advanced scholarship, the results of which will often merit publication in refereed journals, in fields such as professional practice and higher education pedagogy. They may undertake such activities as extension and networking, and they may house centers of excellence or development.

Such institutions will normally be evaluated against *all indicators except for Research Capability*, which are relevant to their additional activities. It will be for CHED to determine, in discussion with the institution, which additional indicators will apply.

To be placed in Category A (t) an institution would have to achieve scores of at least 3 in eight of the eleven indicators against which it was assessed, including Setting and Achieving Program Standards indicator and Faculty Profile indicator, with no scores less than 2.

Category B. This category contains institutions that are in a stage of development, and which have the potential to be placed in one of the A categories at a future date. Usually, they will undertake only those activities covered by the core indicators. As they mature, they are likely to add activities covered by some of the other indicators; as they reach that stage, they may qualify for one of the A categories. While in Category B, they will normally be evaluated against the *core indicators only*.

To be placed in Category B, following an initial application, an institution must achieve scores of at least 3 in four of the indicators against which it is assessed, with no scores less than 2. To remain in the developmental category, an institution must achieve, at the next following monitoring and evaluation visit, an increase in the number of scores of at least 3, with no scores less than 2. It should also be able to show a year on year improvement in the average pass rate in licensure examinations. After two successful evaluations in the B category, an institution should normally apply, at the next monitoring and evaluation visit, for inclusion in the appropriate A category.

Category C. This category contains all other institutions.

Self-Evaluation Document

In this self-evaluation document, the institution is asked to reflect, in a constructively self-critical manner, on its performance against the criteria in the CHED monitoring and evaluation framework. It is an opportunity for the institution to reflect on what it is doing, why it is doing it, and why it does it in the way that it does. It is also an opportunity to judge for itself the extent to which it is succeeding in its vision, mission, and objectives.

By discussing strengths, weaknesses, and ways by which weaknesses are being (or will be) addressed, this document can be a means of promoting continuous improvement within the institution. A complete and well-organized document will make the task of reviewers easier and, thus, place a minimum burden on the institution when the visit is made. Otherwise, more inquiries will be made and more proofs will be required by the reviewers.

In order for this document to be truly helpful to the institution, as well as to the reviewers, it should:

- Be *reflective and evaluative*, rather than merely descriptive
- Be *structured to address the criteria of the CHED monitoring and evaluation framework*
- Draw upon *robust internal review procedures* of the institution
- Indicate where *supporting evidence* may be found (e.g. within specified institutional documents)
- Provide purely factual information in *annexes*, rather than in the main text

It is suggested that the document begin with a brief statement of the *mission of the institution* in order to give context to the document as a whole, followed by a discussion of institutional performance against each criterion in the CHED monitoring and evaluation framework. The statements regarding each of the criteria should be supported by a list of evidences. These evidences should be made available to the reviewers.

Data that will be useful to the reviewers (and, thus, must be appended) are those about student recruitment, progression, and performance:

- Student enrolment figures
- Cohort survival rates
- Graduation rates
- Performance in licensure examinations
- Employment rates

Aggregate data for the whole institution should be presented for:

- All students
- Students enrolled on priority courses
- Disadvantaged students
- Foreign students

Data broken down by program should be available to reviewers on request.

The accompanying SED Guide will give a clearer idea of the points that the HEI needs to reflect upon.