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# Development of the Quality Assurance Framework for Wesleyan University Philippines: A Response towards the New Landscape of the Philippine Education

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## Abstract

The Quality Assurance of Wesleyan University- Philippines responded to the dynamic change brought by the transitioning context of the new educational landscape. This is a significant turn to maintain academic excellence and academic integrity despite the many challenges brought by the complex and volatile world. As a response, an Institutional Quality Assurance Framework (IQAF) was created. The underpinning of this framework is anchored on the several policies and guidelines of the Philippine's Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and other pertinent documents related to academics and management system. A systematic review was used.

After a through analysis, an IQA Framework CAPE, *Commitment* in the responsibility of the Quality Assurance Office, *Accountability* to the University in delivering outcomes-based learning, *Progress* and Improvement in all University services and *Excellence* in all endeavors for the improvement of the Quality Management System was created. The IQA framework aims to provide a clearer direction for the university's vertical and horizontal typologies, accreditation, and internationalization.

## 1. Introduction

The Philippine educational landscape has changed dramatically. This is because of the 4th industrial revolution driven society and the integration of measures to universalize the context of education for the learners of today. According Jurgens (2022) [7], there are three vital parameters needed to respond to this change. These are collaboration and communication to equip people to meet the challenges and the demand of education/work, having a new mindset of continual development and lifelong learning and acquisition of skills needed for rapid technological development that will make a significant shift towards sustainability. In a wider perspective, educational institutions should be abreast on these changes by having a sound quality assurance framework that will safeguard the dissemination of education among students. The outcome should be relevant and adaptive so that lifelong learning can be attained.

On the other hand, the Philippine's Commission on Higher Education (CHED) commitment in transformative education creates measures by crafting policies and guidelines for academic institutions and supports accreditations that will make them at par with international academic institutions worldwide. One of the most significant blueprints that CHED crafted is the CMO 46, series of 2012, Policy Standard to Enhance Quality Assurance (QA) in Philippine Higher Education through an Outcomes-Based and Typology-Based Quality Assurance in which the objective is to foster a culture of quality that aligns both vertical and horizontal typologies leading to the contribution to nation building. However, because of the predicament brought by the fast change of education system, transition of pre-pandemic to the new normal setting and other needs of the university, the researcher crafted an Institutional Quality Assurance (IQA) framework specifically unique to its needs. This will serve as a basis for the implementation of quality instruction, relevant research that will contribute to the fountain of knowledge and responsive extension services and standards to maintain quality management system. The IQA framework aims to make Wesleyan University- Philippines at par with other universities worldwide in terms of the achievement of academic excellence and integrity.

## 2. Methodology

A systematic review of relevant documents such as the CHED Memorandum Order no. 46, series of 2012, Philippine Qualification Framework (PQF) and other pertinent documents were reviewed and analyzed as the foundation of the creation of the IQA framework.

## The Institutional Quality Assurance Framework



**Fig 1:** Quality Assurance Framework: CAPE

The University's Quality Assurance Framework is guided by the acronym CAPE:

*Commitment* in the responsibility of the Quality Assurance Office.

*Accountability* to the University in delivering outcomes-based learning.

*Progress and Improvement* in all University services.

*Excellence* in all endeavors for the improvement of the Quality Management System.

Wesleyan University-Philippines defines its Quality Assurance Framework as its responsiveness to the dynamic changes in education system, ensuring formulation of substantive compliance as evidence in the delivery of quality across all programs. The five objectives of this framework serve as the underpinning principles that are aligned with the University's vision-mission, goals, and core values.

## Commitment

The University is committed to developing competent human resources, and providing public services through competitive, relevant, and holistic education founded on Wesleyan principles. In fulfilling this commitment, the Quality Assurance Office monitors procedures and processes, ensures achievement of high standards through best practice, makes judgments in relation to standards of performance, and designs continuous improvement initiatives related to new trends and the identification of areas for further development. To achieve this principle, the QA Office:

1. Collaborates with the Deans, Academic Support Units, and Quality Assurance Coordinators in maintaining and elevating the accreditation status of all programs by providing substantial evidence aligned with the trends today.
2. Maintains camaraderie with the Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines (FAAP) such as ACSCU-ACI, PACUCOA, PAASCU and other agencies both local and international.
3. Benchmarks with other quality assurance best practices and aspire for International Accreditation Status such as ISO 21001:2018 and QS Star Ranking; and
4. Maintains ISO 9001:2015 certification; and
5. Coordinates with the University's academic and auxiliary departments for the improvement of Quality Management System.

## Accountability

To produce graduates with high level of academic and communication skills and well- developed critical thinking and decision-making skills, the Quality Assurance ensures that all personnel involved in the delivery, monitoring, and evaluation of outcomes-based education are adept and accountable to the following responsibilities. The QA Office:

1. Pursues the enhancement of methodologies in delivering outcomes-based education to meet the demands of 4th industrial revolution driven society, in coordination with the Office of Instruction;
2. Warrants integrity that the paradigm and framework of delivering instruction will result to lifelong learning;
3. Promotes trustworthiness in the performance of duties and responsibilities;
4. Advocates high level of spirituality among all personnel and stakeholders; and 5. Perform activities that meet the Vision-Mission statements of the University.

## Progress and Improvement

The Quality Assurance Office meticulously safeguards the accreditation status of the University's academic programs and helps Colleges to have their unaccredited programs accredited. Programs with existing accreditation level are encouraged to formulate substantial evidence based on the Self-Survey Instrument in the attainment of its highest accredited status level. The QA Office:

1. Assists in the preparation of important documents needed for in-person and virtual accreditation from planning until communication of the results;
2. Supports aspiring program's tasks in the preparation and submission of essential documents such as Board certification, research output and publications, and sustainable extension programs. These are all vital evidence to institutional qualifications for COE or COD;
3. Conducts a thorough review and organization of all digitized and hard copies of data submitted by each program, and integrates vital information as needed to meet the requirements for the prescribed accreditation tool; and
4. Assists in the organization of a strong faculty and staff development program specifically for quality and accreditation.

In addition, the QA Office proactively seeks to improve our policies, processes, and procedures so that our academic services are continuously up to speed with international standards.

**Excellence**
Excellence in Quality Assurance means achievement in the highest quality of the University's Management Operation System. Quality improvement and enhancement will guarantee highest quality of teaching-learning, curricula, research productivity, and academic and non-academic operations. The QA Office, and to continuously improve the QMS:
1. Aids in determining both internal and external issues in an organizational context that are aligned to its strategic direction and purpose;
2. Assists both academic and auxiliary offices in formulating the risks and opportunities based on the needs and expectations of students and parents, employees, community, other HEIs, suppliers, and partners and funding institutions;
3. Regulates documented information aligned with the business process and ensure that these are adequately protected from loss of confidentiality, improper use and dishonesty;
4. Warrants the communication of the University Quality Policy;
5. Assist in the review of our products and services in achieving a high level of customer satisfaction; and
6. Spearheads the ISO's Internal Audit and Management Review for continuing improvement.

**3. Definition of Quality**
Quality in higher education can be defined as the degree to which an institution's programs, services, and activities meet or exceed the expectations and needs of students and other stakeholders. It involves a combination of factors, including academic rigor, effective teaching, research output, student satisfaction, and successful outcomes for graduates. Harvey and Green (1993) [5] identify five categories or ways of thinking about quality, which are:
a. *Exception*, which refers to distinctiveness and embodiment of excellence, and passing a minimum set of standards.
b. *Perfection*, which refers to having no defects, and getting things right the first time. The focus is on the process as opposed to inputs and outputs.
c. *Fitness for purpose*, which relates quality to a purpose, defined by the institution. Typically, this is related to the mission and vision statements of the educational institution.
d. *Value for money*, which focuses on efficiency and effectiveness, or measuring outputs against inputs.
e. *Transformation*, which refers to measurable qualitative changes. Education is about doing something to the student as opposed to something for the consumer. This includes concepts of enhancing and empowering, so that there is democratization of the process, not just outcomes.

**4. Dimensions of Quality**
For Wesleyan University-Philippines, some of the key dimensions of quality that we pursue as an institution are as follows:

**4.1 Academic Excellence**
This involves maintaining high standards of intellectual rigor, ensuring that courses and programs are relevant and challenging, and providing students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in their chosen fields. It is about the quality of teaching, research, and scholarship that we provide to our students. Key components of academic excellence include:
a. *Faculty expertise:* Institutions with academic excellence have highly qualified and experienced faculty members who are experts in their respective fields. They have a passion for teaching and research and are committed to helping students achieve their full potential.
b. *Curriculum design:* Academic excellence involves designing a curriculum that is both challenging and relevant to the needs of students and the wider community. This involves incorporating innovative and interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning.
c. *Assessment and evaluation:* We aim to have robust assessment and evaluation mechanisms in place to ensure that students are meeting high standards of academic achievement and that programs are continuously improving.
d. *Research and scholarship:* Research output is a key indicator of academic excellence. High-quality research is essential for maintaining and improving academic standards and contributing to the advancement of knowledge.
e. *Student engagement:* We seek to engage our students through a range of activities, including mentorship, extracurricular programs, and community service, to foster a sense of intellectual curiosity and lifelong learning.

**4.2 Effective Teaching and Learning**
Effective teaching involves using a range of instructional methods and strategies to engage and motivate students, promote critical thinking and problem-solving skills, and facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and understanding. This also includes providing students with opportunities to engage in active and collaborative learning, using innovative and effective teaching methods, and providing feedback and support to help students succeed. First, effective teaching involves engaging students in active and collaborative learning activities that promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective communication skills. Second, it involves the use of technology to enhance the learning experience, including online learning platforms, multimedia resources, and other digital tools. Third, there must be feedback and support systems to students to help them improve their learning outcomes and achieve their academic goals. Fourth, because students have different learning styles and needs, providing personalized learning experiences that cater to their individual needs is significant. Finally, effective teaching involves using a range of assessment and evaluation methods to measure student progress and provide feedback to students and instructors to improve the learning experience.

## 4.3 Research and Scholarship

Research and scholarship are key components of higher education, as they contribute to the advancement of knowledge and understanding in a wide range of disciplines. These are conducted by faculty members and students, and are funded by the university, research organizations, or government agencies. Overall, research is a critical component of our university life, as it ensures that we are at the forefront of knowledge creation and innovation, and contribute to the development of new ideas and solutions to complex challenges facing society. First, we aim for *originality*. Our research and creative work contribute to existing knowledge or generate new ideas and insights. Second, we aim for *rigor*. Research and scholarship in higher education must be conducted using rigorous methodologies and standards of evidence and must be subject to peer review to ensure that it meets high standards of quality. Third, we aim for *collaboration*. Research and scholarship in higher education often involve collaboration between multiple researchers or research teams and may involve interdisciplinary collaboration across different fields of study. Fourth, we aim for wide *dissemination*. Research and scholarship in higher education are disseminated through scholarly publications, conferences, and other forms of communication, and are designed to contribute to the wider body of knowledge in the field. Finally, we aim for high *impact*. Research and scholarship in higher education are designed to have a positive impact on society, whether through advancing scientific knowledge, informing public policy, or addressing important social and environmental issues.

## 4.4 Student Outcomes

Student outcomes in higher education refer to the knowledge, skills, and competencies that students acquire through their educational experiences. These outcomes can be measured through a range of assessments and evaluations, including course grades, standardized tests, and surveys of student learning and engagement. Quality in higher education can also be measured by the success of graduates in the workforce, their ability to pursue further education, and their contributions to society. Key student outcomes in higher education include: (a) the level of academic achievement that students attain, such as their grade point average, course completion rates, and scores on standardized tests, (b) the extent to which students are prepared for success in their chosen careers, including their knowledge and skills in their field of study, their ability to work effectively with others, and their readiness to adapt to changing job market conditions, (c) the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are essential for success in both academic and professional settings, (d) the development of effective communication and collaboration skills, which are essential for working with others in both academic and professional settings, and (e) the development of social and civic engagement skills, such as community service, leadership, and cultural competence, which are essential for promoting social justice and equity in society.

## 4.5 Extension Services

Extension service in higher education refers to the outreach programs and services provided by the university to extend our resources, expertise, and knowledge beyond the boundaries of the campus and into the wider community. These programs and services are designed to address the needs and interests of local and regional communities, and may focus on a wide range of topics, including agriculture, health, education, and economic development. Effective extension service programs and services help the university build stronger relationships with many communities, enhance our reputation and visibility, and ensure that our resources and expertise are being used to address important local and regional challenges. Key components include (a) active engagement with local and regional communities, including community needs assessments, community-based research, and ongoing communication and collaboration, (b) providing education and training programs to individuals and groups in the community, including workshops, seminars, and online courses, (c) providing technical assistance to individuals and organizations in the community, such as assistance with business development, financial planning, and marketing, (d) conducting applied research in collaboration with community partners, in order to identify solutions to local and regional challenges, (e) ongoing evaluation of program outcomes and impact, in order to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the community and achieving their intended goals.

## 4.6 Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement in higher education refers to the process of involving individuals and groups who have an interest in or are affected by the activities of the university. This can include students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, local community members, government officials, and industry partners. This involves (a) regular and transparent communication between the university and its stakeholders, including opportunities for feedback and input, (b) collaboration between the university and its stakeholders to identify shared goals and work together to achieve them, and (c) holding the university accountable for its actions and outcomes, and providing opportunities for stakeholders to hold the university accountable as well. Effective stakeholder engagement in the university must be inclusive and equitable, ensuring that all stakeholders have an opportunity to participate and that their voices are heard. Finally, the focus must be on achieving meaningful and positive impact, whether through improving the student experience, advancing research and scholarship, or contributing to the wider community.

## 5. Organizational Structure and Department Personnel

The Quality Assurance Office is a functional unit of the University directly under the Office of the President (OOTP). Just like in any university in the country, it is headed by a director/officer who supervises all the activities of the Office. Under the Director are two QA Deputies who takes charge of the two major units of the office namely: *Quality Management System* and *Accreditation*. Quality Assurance Coordinators and Unit's Document Custodians work closely with the Quality Assurance Office ensuring that the five principles of the crafted framework are effectively and efficiently implemented.
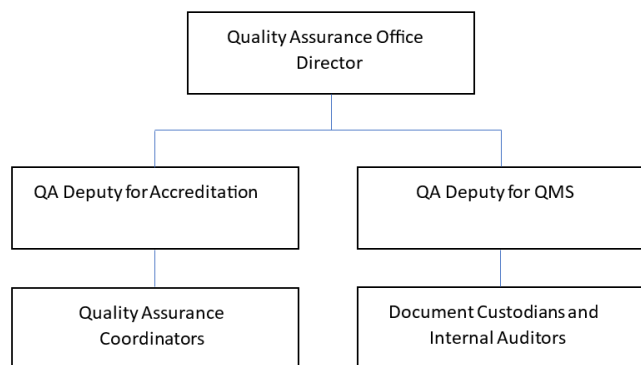
**Fig 2**

## 5.1 Duties and Functions of Quality Assurance Personnel

A. Quality Assurance Director shall:

1. Oversee the quality management initiatives of the University through varied assessment procedures, and ensure that these are properly understood, carried out, and evaluated;
2. Advocate and support the University's innovations for productivity capabilities and improvement;
3. Prepare the work and financial plan of the Office and submit the same to the University President for approval, in coordination with the deans and their quality assurance coordinators, document custodians, and internal auditors;
4. Manage the University quality review processes and accreditation visits either program or institutional evaluation and other accreditation bodies;
5. Facilitate/liaise/coordinate with external accrediting bodies/agencies the survey visits to assess programs of the University and the whole institution in case of institutional accreditation;
6. Facilitate the University's participation in quality assurance and accreditation activities;
7. Ensure compliance with national and international standards and national legislations in basic and higher education (i.e. vertical and horizontal typology, ASEAN Integration, OBE, ISO, ISA, etc.);
8. Share and disseminate good practices in quality assurance and accreditation schemes throughout the University;
9. Manage/facilitate the conduct of training and seminar workshops pertinent to effective conduct of quality assurance and accreditation activities in the University;
10. Ensure proper management and judicious utilization of all information deposited in the Office as part of quality management and accreditation schemes;
11. Prepare and submit accomplishment reports to the University President in relation with the activities of the office;
12. Represent the University and attend meetings pertinent to accreditation and quality assurance activities; and
13. Perform other duties and responsibilities as may be assigned to him by the University President.

B. The Quality Assurance Deputy for Accreditation shall:

1. Oversee the operation in the preparation to post accreditation processes;
2. Prepare the work and financial plan of the accreditation for approval of the Office Director;
3. Together with the quality assurance coordinators,

facilitate the submission of documents and other information needed for accreditation activities;
4. Manage all data (hard copy and digitized) and other resources pertinent to accreditation activities for judicious utilization and safekeeping;
5. Spearhead the digitization of documents in the Virtual Exhibit Room (VER) for blended/hybrid accreditation;
6. Assist in mock accreditation visits in close coordination with the local accreditation activities for judicious utilization and safekeeping;
7. Supervise the efficient management of any accreditation activity-program or institutional audits, in close coordination with the different accreditation task forces and other working committees to ensure the success of each undertaking;
8. Submit reports to the QA Office Director; and
9. Perform other tasks that may be assigned by the QA Office Director.

C. The Quality Assurance Deputy for QMS shall:

1. Oversee the operation of the Quality Management System;
2. Prepare the work and financial plan of the unit for approval of the QA Director;
3. Oversee the implementation of the records management in their respective department;
4. Ensure the proper labeling of files following retention periods, proper labeling of filing equipment and segregation of active from inactive files and disposal of obsolete records in the department;
5. Coordinate closely with the institution staff in all matters concerning records management;
6. Ensure that documents are approved prior to use;
7. Ensure that the relevant versions of applicable documents are available at points of use;
8. Ensure that changes and current revision status of documents are identified;
9. Submit reports to the QA Office Director; and
10. Perform other tasks as deemed appropriate by the Office Director.

D. The Quality Assurance Coordinators shall:

1. Facilitate the conduct of quality assurance program planning with the involvement of the college/department stakeholders;
2. Handle all the related programs to quality assurance based on its college/department standards;
3. Cooperate in the planning and implementation of University related-quality assurance program and policies as directed by the University President through the Quality Assurance Director;
4. Make periodic reports in the progress and status of college/departmental quality assurance program and submits to respective heads, copy furnishes the Quality Assurance Office;
5. Attend regular/special meeting of quality assurance program coordinators for the evaluation of project/program/activity thus formulates basic program strategies to improve the implementation; and provide regular feedback to respective heads about progress and status of college/department quality assurance program to solicit support and in assessing the effectiveness of its program.

## 6. Responsible Departments

To ensure that Quality Assurance is continuously pursued at the University, there are departments or office that are mandated to fulfill specific responsibilities. With each doing their part, we have confidence that our services at the University are performed with the highest standards.

| External QA Priorities | Reponsible Department/Office | Responsibilities |
|---|---|---|
| Accreditation | Office of Quality Assurance; Colleges | The OQA (1) initiates conversations with accrediting bodies for the accreditation of our programs, and (2) assists the Colleges in compiling reports and exhibits. |
| Quality Audits | Office of Quality Assurance; Colleges | The OQA oversees the bi-annual audits performed to maintain our University's ISO 9001:2015 Certification. |
| Rankings and Ratings | Office of Quality Assurance; Office of the Vice President for Planning and Development | The OQA oversees the University's applications to QS Star Ranking. |
| Student and Stakeholder Feedback | Office of Quality Assurance; Office of the Alumni Association | The OQA conducts an annual student satisfaction survey. The OAA conducts surveys among alumni. |
| Benchmarking | Office of the President; Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs; Office of International Linkages | The OOTP, OVPAA, and OIL plan benchmarking activities to local and international institutions. |
| Internal QA Priorities | | |
| MVSG | Office of the President | The OOTP is responsible in revising the Mission and Vision Statements of the University, which requires the approval of the Board of Trustees. |
| Program Evaluation | University Curriculum Committee; Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs | The University Curriculum Committee evaluates all curricula of programs offered at the University, especially for new programs and curricular revisions. |
| Quality of Instruction | Office of Instruction | The OI (1) evaluates all syllabi and Canvas usage and (2) organizes trainings for faculty and students related to instruction. |
| Educational Resources | Library | The Library is responsible in purchasing educational resources, subscribing to online databases, and organizing seminars related to using educational resources. |
| Faculty and Staff Development | Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs; Training and Development Committee | The VPAA, who is also the Training and Development Officer of the University, organizes at least three trainings per year: HEADS, HEARTS, and HANDS. |
| Research and Extension | University Research and Extension Council | The UREC plans and implements programs designed to capacitate researches and increase research productivity at the University. |
| Student Support Services | Office of Student Affairs | Under the OSA are guidance and placement, student discipline, scholarships applications, sports and recreation, and other student services. |

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