

# Quality Assurance in Higher Education: A Case Study of Dagon University

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<sup>6</sup> Paper In-charges of 2015-2016

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**Abstract**— Quality Assurance in higher education has become more and more important as the knowledge based job opportunities and the high competition to get the good job. To study Quality Assurance system in higher education, Dagon University is selected as the study area as it is the one of the largest Arts and Sciences Universities in Myanmar. It has an area of 6.4 sq.km and 59772 students have studied in 2018. The aim of the paper is to observe why QA system needs to be implemented in Universities. The objective of the paper is to examine the performance of Dagon University teachers for Quality Assurance. The university follows the 3rd version of the AUN-QA model for programme level encompasses 11 criteria. Among 11 criteria, 6 criteria have been implementing.

**Keywords**— Quality Assurance, Dagon University, performance, AUN-QA model, implementation

## I. INTRODUCTION

Dagon University (DU), a government university under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Education, was established in 1993 and it has now a capacity for sixty thousand students. It is situated in Dagon Myothit (East) Township, a new township in Yangon. It has 12 Arts departments and 8 Science departments. The University offers Bachelor's, Master's degree programs and HRD program for computer studies and GIS studies. In addition, Dagon University has signed more than 30 MoU/ MoA with international universities and institutions.

To implement QA system in Dagon University a meeting including a Rector and 2 representatives from every department begins to be held in December 2016. They meet and discuss every Thursday. To be more effective for QA system a working group is organized in March 2017. It has 9 members under the guidance of the Rector. In 2018, the Rector has transferred to another university. Hence, QA operation is implemented by a Pro-Rector moved from other university.

### A. Aim

The aim of the paper is to present the analysis of organisational reforms in Dagon University based on AUN-QA model.

### B. Objective

The objective of the paper is to examine the activities of Dagon University teachers for Quality Assurance.

## II. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Secondary such as map and facts about Dagon University has got from the Dagon University website. The 3rd version of the AUN-QA model is adopted to implement QA system in

the university. Primary data are collected by interview and questionnaire.

Data are interpreted by qualitative method.

### A. Third Version of AUN-QA Model

AUN-QA Model is based to study the implementation of QA system in Dagon University. The model encompasses 11 criteria for programme level: **expected learning outcomes, programme specification, programme structure and content, teaching and learning approach, student assessment, academic staff quality**, support staff quality, **student quality and support, facilities and infrastructure**, quality enhancement and output.

The AUN has objectives of (1) promoting cooperation and solidarity among professionals, academicians, scientists and scholars in the region, (2) developing academic and professional human resources in the region, (3) promoting information dissemination among ASEAN academic community and (4) enhancing awareness of regional identity and sense of ASEAN among members.

### B. 11 Criteria of AUN-QA Model

#### *Expected Learning Outcomes*

It takes into account and reflects the vision and mission of the institution.

#### *Programme Specification*

The institution is recommended to publish and communicate course specifications

#### *Programme Structure and Content*

The curriculum, teaching and learning methods and student assessment are constructively aligned to achieve Expected Learning Outcomes.

#### *Teaching and Learning Approach*

What and how students should be taught and by what methods

#### *Student Assessment*

It needs to take students' feedback to measure the achievement of all the Expected Learning Outcomes of the Programme and its courses. New student admission and continuous assessment during the course of study

#### *Academic Staff Quality*

Teachers need to do research and to give training for particular subjects in Department

#### *Support Staff Quality*

Appropriate training and development activities are implemented to fulfill service.

#### *Student Quality and Support*

An adequate monitor system for student progress is needed and to take feedback to students

### *Facilities and Infrastructure*

Equipment, materials and information technology are sufficient. It includes environmental, health and safety standards, and learning resources

### *Quality Enhancement*

Curriculum is developed with inputs and feedback from academic staff, students, alumni and stakeholders. Curriculum design is periodically reviewed and evaluated.

### *Output*

It is measured by the quality of the graduates (employability). Research activities carried out by students are established and benchmarked. They should meet the needs of the stakeholders.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

“What is important in knowledge is not quantity, but quality. It is important to know what is significant, what is less so, and what trivial (Leo Tolstoy) is”. As the statement of Leo Tolstoy, quality is more important than quantity in every sector of a university. Hence, it needs to study how QA system is implemented in the university and why it is needed.

### *A. Why QA system needs to be implemented in Universities*

To catch up with international standards and developments it needs to set up a committee for QA to design a qualification framework. National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Committee (NAQAC) which will be the national EQA body, is probably responsible for the whole Higher Education system and to set up the standards and procedures. EQA system of NAQAC focuses on the institutional level.

Regarding to IQA, a few universities in Myanmar such as Myanmar Maritime University (MMU) is ISO certified. For the last ten years, MMU, one of the first universities in Myanmar tried to engage in Quality Assurance system. Consequences of ISO certification, the university can give its graduated students good career opportunities such as joining international companies.

### *B. To support Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Myanmar*

It is necessary to set up EQA as a key priority and assessor capacity. Currently there are no assessor resources that NAQAC can rely on.

Support to set up IQA, we need to follow AUN-QA and to conduct national workshop.

Cascade trainings such as different trainings and workshops on QA knowledge multiplication in the country, and training the trainer activities, need to be done.

Concerning funding for QA, currently increased funding for QA is available to universities.

For University management and autonomy, it is transforming from a top-down system with uniformity to a decentralized management system.

Another important fact is staff rotation as a challenge.

Location in remote areas makes difficult to introduce QA and enhance quality.

Losing jobs for Myanmar's students is a reason why quality and QA must not be aligned in the region. For this, teaching competencies that have the greatest impact on student achievement may require the need for capacity building so that teachers can create effective learning environment.

### *C. QA System Implementation of the Program Level in Dagon University*

For “QA System Implementation of the Program Level of Each and Every Department of Dagon University” Group discussions were held on every Thursday in Feb, March and June 2017 under the guidance of the Rector. The team discussed to record every activity such as teaching as well as doing research and guardianship services for students i.e. whatever activities in the departments and then to collect the documents of performances in the respective departments. Writing course description for subjects is also discussed.



Plate1: Working Group including Five Departments  
Source: Photo taken in 2017

QA Working Sub-Group of Geography Department includes 1 Professor (Head), 1 Associate Professor and 3 lecturers to implement QA system in DU. It was organized on 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2017. The team wrote course description of all subjects delivered by geography department - from first year to master level and then took students' feedback from honours students by 7 criteria and from first year students by structured questionnaire.

### *D. Implementation the 11 Criteria in Dagon University*

#### *1. Expected Learning Outcomes*

(No. 1 Criteria of AUN-QA model)

Writing for first year and second year course description and expected learning outcomes including all major and minor modules was carried out and broadcast in Dagon University Website.

Preparation the text guide is based on the course description and learning outcomes. For example for the practical course of first year geography student;

*Module No. Geog. 1102*

*Module Name - Mapwork and Basic Techniques I*

*Course Description*

This module consists of measurements of **Angle and Direction of a location**, and determination of a location. It will help then to understand the direction of four cardinal points and its subdivision. It aims to realize the bearings and azimuths according to the magnetic and grid declination. Students will be able to extend the knowledge of determination of a location with the calculation and drawing of **scale and plan map**. Moreover, students, studying **Statistical Representation** by Graphs and Maps, will be able to study the various methods and graphs for illustrating statistical data and figures easily. Especially, in the study of Economic geography it is very helpful to illustrate diagrammatically actual data or figures for the production of a particular commodity. The module will focus on the contrast between **semi-log graph and Arithmetic graph**. Thus, students will be able to know **methods of illustrating 'Distribution' Graphically**.

*Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs)*

*Specific Learning Outcomes (SLOs)*

At the end of the semester, the learner will be able to

- describe measurements of Angle and Direction of a location
- delineate the definition of scale, type of scales and conversion of scale
- illustrate diagrammatically statistical data and figures for the production of a particular commodity in the study of Economic Geography
- describe the contrast between semi-log and arithmetic graph
- identify the methods for representing the quantitative data
- explain the relative merits of “Distribution” methods

*Generic Learning Outcomes (GLOs)*

At the end of the semester, the learner will be able to

- apply bearings and azimuths in measuring of the location of places
- discuss determination of a location
- construct the plan maps according to the measurements of scale diagram and compass directions
- practise the different methods of cycle for illustrating statistical data and figures such as Unit Dot Method, Shading Method, Method of Squares or Circles and Semi-log Graph
- contrast Geographical Representation Methods

*2. Program Specification*

(No. 2 criteria of AUN-QA model)

To publish and communicate course specifications, the lessons are broadcast on [www.dagonuniversity.edu.mm](http://www.dagonuniversity.edu.mm)

*3. Programme Structure and Content*

(No. 3 criteria of AUN-QA model)

The curriculum, teaching and learning methods and student assessment are constructively aligned to achieve expected learning outcomes.

*4. Teaching and Learning Approach*

(No. 4 Criteria of AUN-QA model)



Plate2: Presentation the Research Paper

To link the theories in literature and practical situations in real world, the effective ways of teaching and learning approaches are carried out in Geography Department. To support the teaching, national and international researches are submitted and collaborated.

*5. Student Assessment*

(No. 5 Criteria of AUN- QA Model)

Table 1: Asking questions for Students' feedback

		Extremely Important to Not Important				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	The teacher explains important concepts/ideas in ways that I can understand					
2	The teacher stimulates my interest in the subject					
3	The teacher demonstrates enthusiasm in teaching the unit					
4	Appropriate teaching techniques are used by the teacher to enhance my learning.					
5	The teacher is helpful if I encounter difficulties with the lecture / unit					
6	The teacher is available for consultation (e.g. email, online, face-to-face or telephone)					

7	I receive feedback in time to help me improve					
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The results from the questionnaire are very good. It is needed to analyse why it is very good. For that, one of the possible answers is the culture. Another important thing is that the way the teachers were taught has little basis in empirical evidence. They, in turn, use the one-way method; the direction of the information is from the instructor to the student. This method is known as teacher-centred activity. Mostly teachers have not applied the two-way method; information is exchanged in both ways.

*6. Academic Staff Quality*

(No. 6 Criteria of AUN-QA Model)



Plate 3: Discussion the subject by the instructor and co-instructors, May 2017



Plate 4: 5th Higher Education Leadership Program (HELP-V): Nurturing Whole Students in Myanmar Universities” sponsored by the United Board jointly hosted by Dagon University and Bago University at Dagon University on 20-22 June 2018.



Plate 5: Dissemination of TIDE Project Training, 2019

*7. Support Staff Quality*

(No. 7 Criteria of AUN-QA Model)

Some staff are sent to attend abroad training and learning in local training such as “Tide training 2018” and “International Credit Mobility with the University of Granada Spain Scholarship, 2018”.

*8. Student Quality and Support*

(No. 8 Criteria of AUN-QA Model)



Plate 6: Showing the limited number of students for class control - round about 60 students



Plate 7: Reading seminar of Honours students  
Note: Discussion subject is Research Methodologies in Geography and Field Training



Plate 8: Field work for Fourth year students in Taungyi Inlay in May, 2017



Plate 9: Group Discussion before and after conducting the field work



Plate 10: After field training, students and teachers discuss the term paper



Plate 11: Ph D Candidates and Jayde Roberts, Professor from U.S every Wednesday morning at the department for their dissertations

HRD courses such as Diploma in GIS and RS, and Diploma in Computer Studies and are opened in Dagon University. GIS is very effective tool for doing research by applying its techniques, finding out the answer and showing visualization the results by mapping.

#### 9. Facilities and Infrastructure (No. 9 Criteria of AUN-QA Model)



Plate 12: Green Environment in Geography Department

#### 10. Quality enhancement (No. 10 Criteria of AUN-QA Model)

For this criterion, academic exchange programme, which illustrates cooperation between the DU and other universities are implemented such as training for 2 trainers from Dagon University to attend “Whole Person Education Academy (WPEA)” in Manila, Philippine in 2017 with the support of United Board which collaborates with Dagon University.



Plate 13: Discussion about Self-Renewing School, Education Management and Experience Sharing of WPEA, 2018

#### 11. Output (No. 11 Criteria of AUN-QA Model)

Students still need to fulfil the requirements of the stakeholders.



Plate 14: New Members of IQA Unit in Dagon University, 2019

### IV. CONCLUSION

QA system implementation was carried out in Dagon University in 2017 and taken responsibility by the former rector. A former Associate Professor took a leading role to guide the working group of QA. The group carried out writing course descriptions and learning outcomes, and held a meeting for discussion one time in a week.

As the organization having responsibility to check course descriptions and learning outcomes written by the members of QA working group has limited time, each department took responsibility and submitted to the University.

In the early time of the year 2018, the rector and Associate Professor who took responsibilities for QA implementation in Dagon University got promotion and transferred to other universities.

The transfer of admin and teaching staff that any international universities do not have makes the delay and stop the implementation.

Members in working and sub-working groups have also changed with the new and old ones. In the groups, it is necessary to involve those who have high energetic, high qualified teaching and admin staff and sufficient knowledge for respective subjects.

Doing research is the main stay of the university. It can promote the teaching quality and consequently, can transfer the knowledge effectively to the students. Like the dimensions of AUN-QA Model for programme level focusing on quality of educational activities, quality of input and quality of process can produce quality of output.

12.07 % of the teaching staff in Department of Geography in Dagon University has conducted the research. There are

seven teachers published one research paper. Three teachers two papers, two teachers three papers and five teachers published above 10 research papers. Doing research makes creative expression and knowledge. It is like a motto of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk “A good teacher is like a candle – it consumes itself to light the way for others”.

The major sources of the problems are that salaries of teaching and admin staff are too low, over 80 % of teachers do not conduct the research work, not write the research papers and not doing the paper presentation. However, it should be like a motto of Abby Lee Miller – “I’m a good teacher and am great at observation and picking out what’s wrong and fixing it”.

Another important source is that curriculums are modified by BOS, an umbrella group, which includes retired teachers and professors (Head) from all universities. This is the centralized system. The outcomes of the graduate student are insufficient knowledge for joining jobs. They are not ready to do good job. The officials need to consider the mentioned above weak points.

The further research concerning Quality Assurance is “QA System Implementation in Myanmar Universities”. The aim of the paper will be to explore how to tackle the gap between teaching in Higher Education and the needs of the career.

#### Abbreviations

DU	Dagon University
QA	Quality Assurance
AUN	ASEAN University Network
AUN-QA	ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance

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