

# The Internal Quality Assurance System

## *An Implementation*

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study is to get an image of how is internal quality assurance system (IQAS) implemented in the level of postgraduate study program. This research used the case study method by a means of interview, observation, and documentation. The research subjects were the head, the secretary, lecturers and students. The results show that the internal quality assurance system contributed positively to the improvement of graduates' quality. It was evidenced by teaching, research, and community services implementation standardized through the establishment of quality assurance institution, but still limited to focus on the academic field. The constraints faced are (1) leadership commitment to quality instruments is relatively less, (2) the number of auditors is still limited, and (3) internal quality assurance system activities are often stuck in routine activities. Implementation evaluation on internal quality assurance system is conducted annually by requesting input from auditors, postgraduate, and university leaders.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Indonesian education system is leading to the quality improvement of the nation to shape quality, existence, and integration of human beings in the middle of international competition. Quality education system must have strong principles, clear paradigm, and in line with society development. It should be used as a tool to educate the nation, achieve a decent life, have the ability to think, reason and morals, develop the potential, create originate, independent, strong-work ethics human beings, and provide nation's life provision. To realize the education quality of higher education institution, it requires planning, implementation, control and development of its standards consistently and continuously, so that the related parties will gain satisfaction over the performance and the graduates. The research result of Fikti (2011) shows that to improve the reputation of higher education institution, the basic values should be based on their vision and increase the internal and external customer satisfaction. Kurnia (2011) is in line that efforts to guarantee the education quality should be started from the need awareness for quality assurance in improving agency capabilities.

The obligation of universities to carry out quality assurance, regulated in: (a) Law No. 20 year 2003 about National Education Standards (NES). Article 51 Paragraph (2) basically regulates the unit management of university conducted based on the principles of autonomy, accountability, quality assurance, and transparent evaluation; (B) government regulation in lieu of law No.19 year 2005 on NES. Article 91 paragraph (1), paragraph (2), paragraph (3) of Government Regulation No.19 year 2005 regulates that in order to fulfill NES, every university shall perform quality assurance of education as a form of accountability to stakeholders, be established gradually, systematically, and planned in a quality assurance program which has clear targets and timeframes; (C) Ministry Regulation No.17 year 2010 on education management and implementation. Article 96 paragraph (7) of Government Regulation No.17 year 2010 which stipulates that a university has to conduct Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) program.

To implement the internal quality assurance program, it is necessary to establish the standards required by a university in order to improve the quality of sustainability, i.e. the standard at the level of higher education, faculty, and study program. The

study of Sutomo (2012) shows that university standards include vision, mission, academic policy, academic standard, academic regulation, and academic quality manual. Academic standards, academic rules, and academic quality manuals are categorized as faculty level standards. Whereas standards of study program cover graduate competency standards, study program specifications, procedure manuals, and work instructions and supporting documents.

8,139 study programs in both state and private universities have not been accredited yet, for the quality performance of universities and few that have IQAS refers to the Directorate General of Higher Education and External Quality Assurance System (EQAS) as regulated in BAN-PT (Kompas 2013). The private universities conditions are rather apprehensive, because among 3,200, they are only 200 running IQAS. (BAN-PT 2013). The quality assurance institution is responsible for determining the lecturer's quality. Syamsul, the member of BAN-PT, said that if universities carry out internal quality assurance and self-evaluation, this will simplify the accreditation process, but internal quality assurance is not optimal yet (Kompas 2013). Around 30-40% of accreditation forms submitted by universities to BAN-PT are not eligible. Universities should ensure the institution and graduates quality (Kompas 2012). This cannot be separated from the duties and functions of lecturers as agents of change. However, many lecturers have not been certified, for not completing master degree.

The influence of new concepts in education, among others: (1) Privatization; (2) Efficiency, Effectiveness, productivity and accountability; (3) Orientation to consumers; (4) focusing on learning rather than teaching; (5) Education is dynamic; (6) Education must be relevant to the needs of the community, the state and the world; (7) Education responsibilities should be shared by educators and the public; (8) Empowerment in education is an absolute requirement. The tempts of education concept quality include: (1) the origin of the quality concept; (2) quality assurance; Total Quality Management, strategic management, should be applied in education; (3) the use of quality concept in education; (4) the use of quality concept in education-process and experience themselves. The problem closely related to the improvement of the higher education quality is the system of university management.

From the implementation aspect of national education policy, many study programs have not applied NES standards, and have not been accredited yet. Many private universities own no IQAS".

(Directorate General of Teachers and Education Personnel, Ministry of Education and Culture 2013). Researchers observe the phenomenon in the private university inputs, such as vision, mission, goals, and objectives are not supported by the standard documents. The less developed curriculum of study program. Teaching-learning activity has not been oriented to University Based-Competence Curriculum. Moreover, the lecturer's qualification are not standardized.

Based on the mentioned description and conditions above, the problem formulated in this research is *"How is Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) implemented in a postgraduate study program?"*

## 2 METHOD

In this study, researchers used a qualitative approach by a means of using case study method. Data required by the researchers related to the problems studied are the head and secretary, lecturer and member staffs of the study program as the research subjects. Meanwhile the data collection techniques use interview guides, documentation study guides, and observation guidelines. The steps taken by the researchers in this study, are as follows: (1) preparation consists of: (a) proposal preparation, (b) research team meeting, (c) research location determination, (d) survey and preliminary study, (e) research permit completion, (f) research subjects determination; (2) Implementation consists of: (a) instrument preparation, (b) instrument validation, (c) instrument improvement, (d) data collection; (3) the final activities are: processing, data analyzing and reporting.

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Research Results

The results of documentation, observation and interview with the head of graduate program shows that IQAS planning process is based on the Statute and Strategic Planning. Whereas, the IQAS in the context of academic and non-academic quality begins with setting goal, formulating the current state, identifying support and barriers, developing the activities from graduate competency standards, content standards, process standards, educators and staffs standards, facilities and infrastructure standards, and financing standards. The standard-

making mechanism refers to Government Regulation No. 19 year 2005. The higher education standards established by the university comprise research standards, community service standards, information system standards, domestic and foreign cooperation. The planning process gives priority to policy formulation about IQAS, academic quality context from Government Regulation No. 19 year 2005 on NES, and the manual book of university quality assurance published by the Directorate General of Higher Education.

The results of documentation, observation and interview with the head of study program demonstrate that the IQAS implementation is conducted through internalizing quality culture, running the IQAS policy. These actions are integrated into the organizational structure of postgraduate Program, and coordinated by a separate unit. Later, the university runs the eight standards according to the Government Regulation No.19 year 2005, develops eight research standards, as well as eight community service standards. The method of measuring results is determined by quality assurance institution based on academic and quality documents. IQAS's work program is socialized to stakeholders, and its implementation is coordinated with the quality assurance unit in the level of postgraduate and study program. The level of study program has two categories, they are academic and management field.

The results of documentation and interview with the head of postgraduate program exhibit that IQAS implementation monitoring is a systematic effort to ensure its process implemented followed to the plan. The results are in line with the target; graduate quality assurance unit as the implementer, the steps of planning and team preparation, monitoring and document evaluation, as well as field visits, suggesting improvement, and reporting to the head of quality assurance unit. The scope examines the quality assurance organization existence at the level of study program is in accordance with the quality manual, the study program targets, and the Standard of Procedures (SOP) implementation.

The result of documentation, observation and interview with the head of graduate program indicates IQAS checking center in the level of study program are: (a) The Appointment Decree for person in charge as quality assurance system implementer; (B) the coordinator, secretary and quality control group members; (C) the formulation and ratification of policies and study program standards; (D) preparation of academic quality targets and SOP of IQAS implementation at study program level; (E) conformity of quality target and SOP of IQAS

implementation at study program level; (F) The Appointment Decree of the faculty monitoring team; (G) preparation of self-evaluation and follow-up planning for standard quality improvement and reporting to quality assurance unit; H) constraints to implement quality standard of study program. (I) ways of overcoming obstacles; (J) checking every quality standard that has not been implemented and its planning.

The results of documentation, observation and interview with the head present that in the implementation of the IQAS internal audit and evaluation, quality assurance system unit is coordinated with the quality assurance unit at the postgraduate program. They examined the academic and non-academic quality through independent checking and verification toward the academic process implementation. The objective is to check the appropriateness of academic quality improvement component with the standards, the quality achievement process results, and to report to the audit, as well as to assist universities, faculties, departments and study programs in preparing external examinations.

The results of documentation, observation, and interview also indicate that the report of IQAS implementation begin with the quality assurance unit in the study program that held an internal meeting discussing the performance instrument results, filling out the reporting format from the unit, and submitting it to the Rector. The reporting formats have been decided at the unit meeting, are as follows: IQAS at the study program level, quality assurance organization, academic and Quality documents, quality standard, IQAS Strategic Plan, and internal quality assurance implementation.

Last but not least, the compiled results prove that the barriers to IQAS implementation are related to administrative, organizational, and psychological. Supporting capacity of IQAS implementation is in form of the vivid direction of quality development program, the implementation of both academic centralization and decentralization system, and utilization of information and technology system.

### 3.2 Discussion

Planning in IQAS implementation becomes a strong foundation, as stated by Silalahi (2011) that the function of planning is to determine goals, to set strategies for achieving the goals, and to develop a plan to integrate as well as coordinate the activities. The IQAS conducted by postgraduate program at its core is vision, mission, objectives and strategy as the

main references. They transform as juridical and strategic foundation in every development of quality standard planning, because the quality assurance unit is obliged to refer to the statute. As stated in Article 62, the unit conducts the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, research, community service activities, in order to improve the quality and accountability of the university to the public at large.

The work basis of IQAS implementation is the guidelines that have been prepared after passing through formulation involving internal stakeholders in the planning process. The implementation of all IQAS programs is based on the context of continuous and sustainable quality development by adopting a Kaizen model which enforces the Plan-Do-Check-Action model preceded through benchmarking over university, faculty, departments and study programs level. By applying this benchmarking, the quality assurance implementation is determined by the cycle of quality assurance activities starting from standard setting, monitoring implementation, self-evaluation, internal audit, correction formulation, quality improvement, and standard setting.

The university's quality assurance cycle begins by setting the standards to be achieved. This standard is also done with the optimum effort to see the progress of the standards implementation and to ensure that these implementation objectives are in accordance with the plan and need to be monitored. Self-evaluation also needs to be done in order to know the carried-out advantages and disadvantages, most importantly to see the strengths and weaknesses of institutions relating to the efforts of achieving standards. The next step is an internal quality audit to see compliance with predetermined standards. The results obtained from the stages of monitoring, self-evaluation, and internal audit and supplemented by input from all stakeholders are utilized for consideration in improving the quality.

Implementing the standard with the aim of improving the quality should be based on the quality policy. Tampubolon (2001: 27) suggests that quality policy is a basic policy in the university management, learning systems and processes, graduates, the development of quality management system, and requirements of customers and stakeholders.

Monitoring of IQAS implementation is essential, as clarified by Koontz, Donnell, and Wehrich in Sukmadinata (2003), "controlling is the measurement and correction of the performance of activities of subordinates in order to make sure that all levels of objectives and the plans devised to attain them are being accomplished".

The previous definition provides assertion that there are two kinds of control activities, namely: assessment and improvement. Things that are assessed and improved are not only the targets, but

the activities plans and execution. Usman (2006) argues that "control is the process of monitoring, assessment, and reporting of plans for setting goals achievement to corrective action as further refinement". This statement supports the importance of IQAS implementation monitoring in the graduate program through the process of planning preparation and IQAS cycle implementation's schedule, the planning determination and IQAS cycle implementation's schedule, the delivery of IQAS planning and cycle implementation's schedule to the head of study program, secretary, and lecturers, the appointment of responsible person who is in charge to the monitoring through the Director's decision as the formal basis to execute monitoring tasks. The concerned aspects in monitoring are the compatibility between the Lesson Plan per semester, syllabus, teaching and learning process, teaching and learning results, and other instruments as the learning proses endorsers.

IQAS internal audit and evaluation implementation as such accountability process to the public through observation, assessment and investigation using audit and evaluation instruments is compiled over full-fledged standard. Natawidjaya (2007) claims university audit covers observation, examination, and assessments including performance with respect to inputs, processes, and outputs. The results are used to develop policies and make decisions in the context of improving the performance quality, and circumstances as well as sustainable educational tools. The audit is a basic effort in the context of high quality management education.

To achieve the vision, mission and objectives of study program, it is established by designing and implementing the quality assurance strategies referred to The Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of National Education. The quality assurance is coordinated by the Rector through quality assurance unit. The strategies of assurance quality system used cover: (1) developing the quality assurance system and its implementation tools; (2) establishing and (or) enhancing the leadership commitment and all basic units to carry out the quality assurance in every activity held in line with the system and its implementation model; (3) setting objectives or quality standards for each quality period; (4) designing the organization and working mechanism of quality assurance system, as well as implementing it consistently; And (5) identifying the activity unit for each quality item at each stage in the academic process, and specifying the activities of which the quality is guaranteed.

The quality audit in both graduate program and work unit for any period held by the Internal Supervision Agency. This agency is responsible for the quality audit implementation focused on the audit



of quality assurance system implementation and achievement standard level, or units in the surroundings. In conducting this audit, IQAS institution coordinates and cooperates with quality assurance unit.

In term of implementing this audit, the checking format consists of (1) annual inspection schedule, (2) investigation schedule, (3) observation sheet, (4) conformity inspection statements, (5) the recapitulation of internal investigation, (6) corrective action, (7) measures, (8) the document of revision details, (9) customer satisfaction questionnaire, (10) SOP of monitoring and evaluation implementation, (11) the evaluation of quality target achievement level, and (12) summary of internal quality inspection.

The report of IQAS implementation in study program held by IQAS through an internal meeting to discuss the search results information via the accreditation forms of evaluation instruments. It is attended by the head and the secretary of IQAS, appointed lecturers. It is also set in the meeting agenda, to follow up the results of extracting information about the performance of study program when conducting IQAS. The head of IQAS formulates reporting format to be submitted to the Rector through quality assurance system afterwards. The report are in form of IQAS effectiveness, organization, documents and internal academic quality, the program study strategic planning implementation, the urgency socialization quality, quality issues identification, IQAS document preparation, and quality standards preparation. When the report is completed, later revision is made.

The encountered obstacles are, among others (1) administrative constraints, as the leaders, lecturers and administrative staffs are not accustomed to work based on standard, limited time, limited availability of human resources who have IQAS competence and understood the difference between IQAS and AMAI, ISO 9000, internal audit process is less timely and the whole results are not followed up. (2) the organizational constraints over lecturers and administrative staffs due to lack of understanding on IQAS, limited funding sources, supple work program planning, and uncompleted SOP. (3) psychological constraints due to the acceptance of IQAS from lecturers and administrative staffs is also minor, uncontinuously and unsustainably IQAS implementation, as well as the minor of IQAS communication, socialization, and quality culture, the less toughness of IQAS executor and developer. Meanwhile the carrying capacity of IQAS implementation are: the clarity of sustainable quality improvement program direction and its stages is stipulated in its vision, mission, objectives, strategies and its planning. Implementing harmonization of

administrative centralization and operation system, as well as academic decentralization is fully supported by information and technology system utilization to accelerate effective, efficient, productive and accountable services.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of IQAS in the study program gives positive contribution to the improvement of the graduate's quality, as evidenced from the teaching, research, and community service implementation. It is standardized through the establishment of quality assurance unit. However, it is still very focused on the academic field, while the non-academic field is still lacking. Whereas constraints faced in the institution are the lack of leadership commitment to quality instruments, the auditor's number, and IQAS activities which are often stuck into routine activities. The steps taken to face obstacles among others, providing experts in the field of quality assurance, program auditor training, giving incentives, motivating all study program components about the importance of quality. The evaluation of IQAS implementation is conducted annually by requesting input from auditors, postgraduate and study program leaders, as well as the Rector of university.

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