UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE
Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences (BMS)

BMS Policy Plan on Quality Assurance of Education

September 2015 - September 2018

In this document the Faculty Board sets out its plans on quality improvement of education within the BSc- and MSc programmes for the coming years. The plan is in line with the UT policy framework for education quality assurance as approved by the Executive Board in December 2014.

Introduction

Building on the quality assurance system as described in the Critical Self-Assessment 2013[1], the Executive Board adopted the UT policy framework on quality assurance of education in December 2014. This UT framework describes the outlook and policy on quality assurance, the integrated organization of quality assurance and the quality and the sharing of management information. UT's quality assurance system identifies four levels (Institution, Faculty, programme, unit of study (course or module), each with its own tasks and responsibilities, improvement processes and tools.
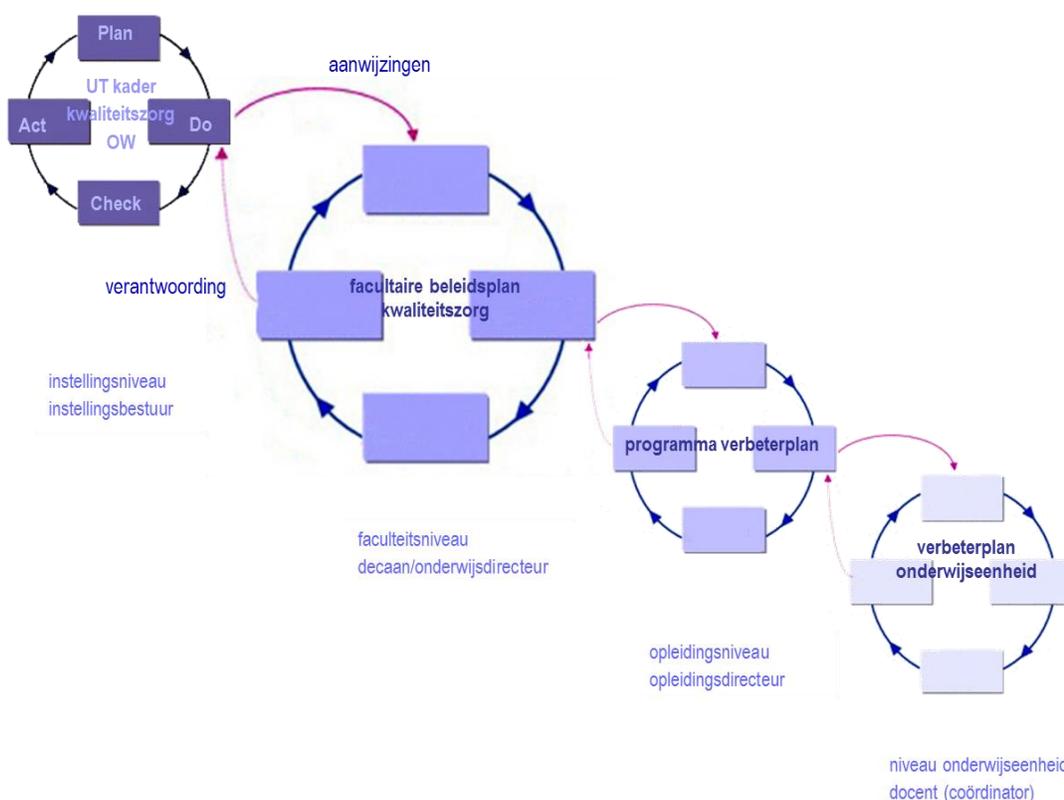

Figure 1: Integrated quality assurance system for UT education, showing related PDCA cycles on different organizational levels.

Translations for figure 1:
- UT kader Kwaliteitszorg OW = UT framework for Quality Assurance
- verantwoording = accountability
- aanwijzingen = instructions
- facultaire Beleidsplan Kwaliteitszorg = faculty Policy Plan on Quality Assurance
- programmaverbeterplan = Programme Improvement Plan

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[1] Critical reflection on institutional quality assurance assessment, September 2013

- verbeterplan onderwijseenheid = improvement plan of unit of study (Course Improvement Plan)
- instellingsniveau, instellingsbestuur = institutional level, institutional administration
- faculteitsniveau, decaan/onderwijsdirecteur = faculty level, Dean/Director Education
- opleidingsniveau, opleidingsdirecteur = programme level, Programme Director
- niveau onderwijseenheid, docent (coödinator) = level of unit of study, teacher (coordinator)

The approved UT framework on quality assurance and the formal merger of the MB and GW Faculties as of 1 January 2015 give cause to record the quality assurance policy of the merged BMS faculty for the coming period in this Policy Plan on Quality Assurance. In the preparations for the merger, the former Faculties of GW and MB have already attuned several quality assurance aspects. The BMS policy plan sets out the aspects, in line with the UT policy framework, the Faculty wants to focus on during the coming period, or which aspects it would like to develop further. The goal is to evaluate the plans on an annual basis, assessing to which extent the policy has been implemented, whether any of its aspects must be brought up to date or whether any adoptions must be made.

Context

The Faculty of BMS holds the view that quality assurance must be aimed at the improvement of (all aspects of) education. The relevant context in which quality assurance takes place is one in which ever less financial means are available for the provision of education. Resources for quality assurance must be proportional to the means available for actual educational activities and their development. This means that priorities must be set, and that efficiency is key in structuring and supporting education quality assurance (within the educational programmes) and any suggestions for improvement that result from it.

The faculty quality assurance system must support the efforts made in continuous improvement of educational programmes and units of study (course or modules) in the best possible way, and must create an open atmosphere to maximize the involvement of staff and students in educational quality. In doing so, it should be avoided that quality assurance requires a disproportionate amount of time from the Programme Management and the teachers. Also, it is crucial to have a sound database for information that is requested by accreditation organizations or other institutions, such as the Higher Education Inspectorate.

Points for attention within BMS Quality Assurance of Education

The BMS Policy Plan on Educational Quality Assurance closely follows the UT framework for quality assurance. For the coming period (Sept 2015 - Sept 2018), the Faculty has defined the following points of attention, which are coherent with activities already taking place within the Faculty. It must be noted here that the implementation of these points of attention should expressly result in a simplification of the work of all those involved.

a) Stimulating a quality culture (UT framework 2.2)

b) Improvement of management information (UT framework 4.1) and supporting processes (UT policy framework 2.9)

c) Development of assessment policy (UT framework 2.7) and development of procedures to attune examination quality assurance by the programmes and safeguarding by the Examination Board

d) Further development of the evaluation policy (UT framework 2.8) and evaluation tools (UT framework 4.2)

e) Encouraging the further professionalization of teachers and assessment of teaching performance (UT framework 2.3)

f) Further development of international orientation (UT framework 1.3.7)

g) Making programme intended learning outcomes (ILO's) more explicit, strengthening the relationship with the professional field (UT framework 1.3.2) and the quality of graduates (UT framework 1.3.8)

Further elaboration on the points for attention[2]

a. *Stimulating a quality culture*

Promoting a quality culture is an important topic in higher education. The subject quality culture is not only listed on the political agenda, but can for instance also be found in accreditation standards. A quality culture is shown in behaviour, attitude, symbols, rituals and organizational patterns. One of the statutory tasks of the Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO), is to stimulate a quality culture within higher education. During a presentation in January 2015, NVAO distinguishes four dimensions to define such a culture. Several exemplary questions have been formulated for each dimension, and a number of key principles have been defined. By confronting ourselves with these questions, we will get a better idea of the quality within our own education.

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                              Organization
                                   !
                I                  !              II
                                   !
External adaptation----------------- quality culture ---------------Internal integration
                                   !
                IV                 !             III
                                   !
                              Individual
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I: To which extent is our organization and its policy oriented to the world outside, and to social challenges?
     Key principles: future-orientedness and innovation, efficiency, project-based work, learning networks, transparency, meaning that relevant information is publicly accessible

II: How well-organized are we? How professional are we? How integrated is our policy?
     Key principles: continuous improvement, plan-do-check-act, efficiency, process control

III: What unites us as a community? Which personal attitudes, competences and talents are crucial for the success of our mission?
     Key principles: ownership and responsibility, critical/self-critical reflection, shared values, transparency in communication.

IV: How intensive is our collaboration with internal and external parties? To which extent is our creativity fed by external stimuli?

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[2] References to relevant documents are indicated in green. In the web version, these are linked to underlying documents online.

Key principles: collaboration, creativity, active involvement of internal and external stakeholders, development of expertise and lifelong learning

The Minister of Education, Culture and Science stated in a letter [3] to Parliament - on the further development of the accreditation system - that it is her ambition to create a stimulating quality culture in higher education. One can clearly recognize the four dimensions defined by the NVAO in the plans she describes. Part of the quality culture of an institution is that students and teachers are able to find and inspire each other. A healthy quality culture fully depends on an open dialogue within the institution on the definition of good education. It is crucial that managers, teachers and students talk to each other about educational quality: which aspects can or must be improved? Part of a quality culture is also that there is room to make and correct mistakes. This also leaves room for educational innovation and responsiveness to creating new opportunities.

Once an institution has its internal quality assurance in place, and once it can and is willing to guarantee the quality and quality improvement of its programmes, it should have the trust of the authorities. Trust in the professional means that accountability and supervision are proportionate, and it gives room for a fruitful relationship between the internal quality culture and external reporting. A reduction of vertical accountability to the authorities must be balanced by stronger internal reporting guidelines (both horizontally and vertically): how are improvement policies implemented?

Planning:

The National Education Council (Onderwijsraad) will present and advisory report on quality assurance and a quality culture in institutions for higher education in the fall of 2015 (working title: Quality as a Performance Driver). This report will bring insights and recommendations on possible improvements in this field. In the course of 2015-2016, it will be evaluated whether the report contains recommendations that can be used to encourage the internal quality culture within the Faculty BMS (in addition to the plans already mentioned in this policy plan).

Relevant (policy) documents:
- NVAO: development of a culture of excellence (January 2015)
- Ministry of Education, Culture and Science: letter accompanying tailored accreditation procedures (June 2015)

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[3] : dated 1 June 2015, concerning "Accreditatie op maat" (tailored accreditation procedures).

b. *Improvement of the quality of management information and supporting processes*

The faculty quality assurance system consists – following the UT system - of several interlinked PDCA cycles per programme and per study unit (module or course). To the Dean of the Faculty (whose task it is to assess whether the quality of programmes meets the standards) it is important that a culture of quality improvement prevails at the Faculty (see also point a) and that he/she can ensure that quality improvement plans not only are drawn up but also are being implemented and monitored (so that the PDCA cycle is closed).

The Faculty BMS will therefore introduce annual Improvement Action points both on course- and programme level.

Points of improvement on course level

The teaching team is in charge of the quality of education in the module or course. In each educational unit a final student survey is conducted in support of quality assurance. The coordinating lecturer receives the results of the survey in a proper report and also an overview of the results of a course as success rate and grade frequencies with copies for the programme management. The lecturer is expected to formulate improvement actions based on the available information and additional information from student panel meetings and teaching team meetings. The lecturer reports to the programme management within a few weeks after the course period, and send a copy to the coordinator Quality Assurance who will communicate the improvement actions to the student community. Note that satisfying results are important to communicate also. The coordinator quality assurance will finally archive results and improvement actions, serving future visitation and inspections.

Points of improvement on programme level

The programme management is in charge of the quality of education in the programme. In support of their Quality Assurance the programme manager receives an annual Factsheet Quality Assurance, offering key information with results (such as success rates, intake figures, drop out) and external opinions from surveys like National Student Survey and National Alumni Survey (former WO-Monitor). The factsheets are prepared in October and are discussed with the Programme manager. The Programme manager and Dean agree about improvement actions for coming year and years. Improvement points are included in a long term perspective in which long term goals provide are stated to achieve continuity in ongoing improvement.

The programme director seeks advice in the programme committee on the intended improvements. The faculty management informs the Board of directors and the coordinator Quality Assurance will archive the improvement plans in our document management system for Quality Assurance,

Planning:

The Programme managements will report their improvement Action point in October (just before scheduling next year's education) and the coordinating lecturers will report improvement actions for their educational units shortly after the quarter of operation. Of course this annual cycle does not rule out timely interventions to improve the quality of education. The annual cycle is meant to ensure that all information on the quality of education is analysed integrally and improvement actions are concluded every year.

At this moment (end of the academic year 2014-2015), a large part of the information available is already saved to programme files. This makes this information directly accessible to, for example, Programme Management. Several programmes (specifically those already preparing a self-assessment for accreditation) are currently testing the use (and especially the structure) of the files. It is expected that the automatic uploads of targets etc. will be operational as from the fall 2015. For several quality aspects, it must yet be defined which information must be recorded and registered (internationalization and achievement of final qualifications (see points g and h)).

Relevant (policy) documents:

- Prestatieafspraken Kwaliteit, Profilering en Ambities UT

c. *Further development and implementation of assessment policy and development of procedures to attune quality assurance of assessment by programme management and safeguarding of academic standards by the Examination Board*

Testing and assessment is becoming an ever more important point of attention in quality assurance. The legislator has tightened the accreditation requirements in this area during the previous period, and has charged the Examination Board explicitly with the task of safe guarding academic standards. The financial means spent on quality assurance of assessment (by the programme management) and safe guarding of academic standards (by the Examination Board) must be in realistic proportion to the budget available. The available means can be used most efficiently if the quality criteria set by the programme and those set by the Examination Board are attuned in the best possible way.

Planning:

A proposed assessment policy for BMS (in line with the UT assessment framework) will soon be made available for the meeting of Programme Directors. Some points for attention:

- assessment plans (ILO-structure, incl. assessment) for all programmes
- attuning quality assurance on assessment by the programme management and safeguarding of academic standards by the Examination Board
- professionalization of teaching staff in assessment (see also point f)

The programmes that face accreditation in due time are already drawing up assessment plans (ILO-structure incl. assessment). Other programmes will benefit from their experiences.

Relevant (policy) documents:
- UT Examination Framework (version Sept 2013)
- BMS Examination Policy (version 2015-2018)
- BMS Procedures for attuning examination quality care and assurance

d. Development of evaluation policy and evaluation tools

The opinion of students on education and their experiences are an important source of information in the improvement of education. Several national surveys are used to gain insight in students' opinions (Keuzegids, Elsevier, NSE, etc.). To collect students' opinions on units of study (course or module), standard questionnaires are distributed (as a rule, each unit of study is evaluated) and panel discussions are organized. In these procedures, it is important that students are not only asked for their opinion on the quality of the education or possible points for improvement, but also and especially that feedback is provided on how the programme and the various courses and modules use the information available to actually improve education. In the fall of 2014, EvaSys was chosen as the evaluation software to be used by the UT. The BMS faculty (and especially the former GW division) has already been working with EvaSys for quite some time. This means that the QST of BMS has a lot of experience in this field. For collecting the opinion of other stakeholders (especially employers), other tools will still have to be selected and developed further.

Planning:

The programme directors have already degreed on the evaluation policy. Several programmes have started (2014-2015) to provide feedback to students on the results of course evaluations of modules and on the improvement measures to be taken by teachers (CIP information). The aim is to implement this same working method for all course and modules in the short term.

How other stakeholders (peers, employers, alumni) can more be involved actively in the improvement of education, will be assessed during the coming period.

Relevant (policy) documents:

-   BMS evaluation policy

e. *Encouraging the further professionalization of teachers and assessment of teaching performances*

In recent years, the focus of the UT's teacher professionalization policy was on the Basic Teaching Qualification. Top priority was that as many teachers as possible were to obtain a Basic Teaching Qualification (also given the performance targets agreed upon with the Minister).

Given the importance of assessment and the growing (political) emphasis on this aspect, the Faculty plans to focus on all of its teaching staff obtaining the Basic Examination Qualification during the coming years, against the background of "continuous professional learning". Teachers can obtain this qualification by taking a training of approximately 25 hours.

In assessing teaching performances, the faculty will follow the developments at UT level.

Planning:

The aim is that a significant part of all teachers will have voluntary obtained the Basic Examination Qualification by the end of 2018. Next to that, a Senior Examination Qualification training will be offered. Teachers can participate in this training also on a voluntary basis.

Relevant (policy) documents:

-   UT policy on Basic Teaching Qualification
-   Appointment of members of the BMS Examination Board who are demonstrably qualified (i.e. Basic and Senior Examination Qualifications)
-   Quality care and assurance of teachers' examination skills

f.   *Enhancement of international orientation*

Internationalization is one of the key priorities in the UT strategy for the coming years (UT Vision 2020). BMS is currently working out the policy document on Internationalization in more detail for the coming period. In order to be able to monitor the implementation of the policy, it is important that to collect data on several aspects. For easy data collection, information must be registered carefully and administrative tools must be designed in such a way that required the data can be made available via a clear annual report. The information must also be useable for the Accreditation organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO), and for international accreditation procedures.

Planning:

During the fall of 2015, exact criteria and target dates will have to be defined in consultation with the programmes on their international ambitions. OSC will urge the central administration to have all data automatically published on the dashboard.

Relevant (policy) documents:
-   UT internationalization policy 2015
-   BMS internationalization policy
-   Framework for assessment of Internationalization (NVAO)

g.   *Making attainment targets more explicit, strengthening the relationship with the professional field and the quality level of graduates*

In order to gain insight in the attainment targets in relation to the professional field and the quality level of graduates, the Faculty as yet intends to use four sources of information:
-   professional field committee/working practice council for each programme
-   WO-monitor (Monitor of University Education, biennial)
-   surveys among alumni, for example during alumni events (e.g. questionnaires at the beginning of the day and a workshop to discuss the results)
-   surveys among external supervisors of final assignments (for this purpose, the former MB survey will be renewed)

Planning:

A further elaboration of the plans will be submitted to a meeting of Programme Directors in the course of 2015-2016.

The role of the Programme Committee (OLC, opleidingscommissie) in quality assurance

The statutory task of the Programme Committee (Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (WHW), art. 9.18) is:

- to give advice on the Education and Examination Regulations
- to assess the implementation of the Education and Examination Regulation annually
- to give advice, both requested and unrequested, on education-related matters within the programme.

In the plans on the further development of the accreditation system (Ministry of Education (OCW), June 2015) it is stated that the assessment by the visiting panel is separated from their recommendations for improvement. They recommendations should not be submitted to the Accreditation organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) directly, but to the programme management and will be discussed by the Programme Committee. Given these tasks, the Programme Committee will be asked to give advice on quality improvement of the programme and the units of study it contains.

Programme level:
The Programme Director asks the Programme Committee for advice on the PIP before it is sent to the Dean. The Programme Committee is asked to give advice on the intended plans and may also take up tasks in monitoring the implementation thereof (guaranteeing that the PDCA cycle is closed) by urging the Programme Director to complete proposed action items.

Study unit level:
The Programme Director assesses the CIP summaries for the programme and, if agreed, submits them for advice to the Programme Committee together with the results of the student questionnaire. The Programme Committee is asked to give advice on the plans, and it can also take up tasks in monitoring the implementation thereof (guaranteeing that the PDCA cycle is closed) by urging the Programme Director to complete proposed action items.

Overview of actions Quality Assurance in Education, Sept 2015 – Sept 2018

When	Who	What
Quarterly	*Quality support team (QST)*	*By the end of the quarter a student opinion survey is conducted for each course unit or module.*
	QST	*Coordinators of teaching teams of modules/ courses receive pdf reports of the student opinion survey, c.c. programme management.*
	QST	*Coordinators of teaching teams of modules/ courses receive success rates and grade frequency reports*
	Coördinator course unit	*Coordinators of teaching teams of modules/ courses formulates in consultation with teaching team based on all available information what improvement actions will be implemented next year and reports to the programme management c.c. coordinator Quality assurance.*
	QST	*The coordinator Quality assurance communicates improvement plans to student community via intranet QA pages and posting in BB organizations per programme.*
	QST	*The coordinator Quality assurance archives the improvement point in Decos course files.*
Annually	***Who***	***What***
Oct /Nov	*QST*	*Programme directors (PD) receive Factsheets Quality Assurance for their programmes*
	ED	*The Educational Director (ED, Dutch: OWD) and PD analyze factsheets and arrive at improvement actions en agree short term and long term improvement actions.*
	PD	*The PD seeks advice by the Programme committee on the improvement actions.*
	ED/dean	*The Educational director and dean communicate the agreed improvement actions with the Board of directors (Dutch: CvB)*
	QST	*The coordinator Quality assurance communicates improvement actions to student community via intranet QA pages and posting in BB organizations per programme.*
	QST	*The coordinator Quality assurance archives the improvement point in Decos programme files.*
When	***Who***	***What***
Fall 2015	*QST*	*Listing of financial consequences of performance agreements*
Fall 2015	*QST*	*Check the practicability of recommendations in the report "kwaliteit als rendement" by the Onderwijsraad for enhancement of the Quality culture in the faculty. If so to communicate it to PD's.*
Fall 2015	*ED*	*Mutual adjustment of procedures on the quality of assessment by programme management en examination board.*
Fall 2015	*QST*	*Generate an overview of the ambitions for internationalization in all programmes, in relation to the implementation of institute's policy.*
Spring 2016	*QST*	*Induce at central level the availability of key information on internationalization in MISUT and are projected in the Dashboard as well as uploaded in programme files in Decos.*
Spring 2016	*ED*	*Manage a proposal for policy on Assessment and Examination in ED -PD meeting.*
Fall 2016	*QST*	*-Prepare a proposal to relate Attainment targets to professional field demands concerning the quality of the diploma (graduates).* *Assess how external stake holders (peers, alumni, employers) will be involved in improvement of education. Bring forward in ED-PD meeting.*
When	***Who***	***What***
July 2018	*PD*	*All programmes have implemented Assessment and Examination Plans and Assessment schemes (supported by educational experts CES)*