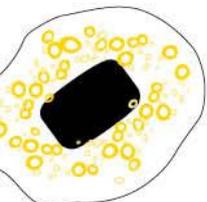


UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.



University of Twente
Attn. Prof.dr. T.A.J. Toonen
Dean Faculty BMS

FACULTY OF BEHAVIOURAL, MANAGEMENT AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

FROM	DATE	PAGE
Dr. Henk van der Kolk	13 March 2017	1 of 3
T +31 53 489 3281	OUR REFERENCE	
h.vanderkolk@utwente.nl	BMS-FC/2017.002	

DEPARTMENT
BMS-Faculty Council

SUBJECT
Advise Quality Assurance of Education

Dear Dean,

On Tuesday February 28 and on March 6 2017 in a meeting with you and Henk Boer, the Faculty Council extensively discussed five documents related to Quality Assurance of Education (QA):

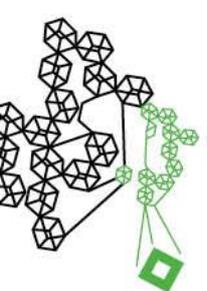
- A cover letter with specific questions for the faculty council about the remaining four documents named 'some topics concerning QA'
- A progress report on the implementation of QA policies for the faculty council (QA 1396)
- A short description of the BMS quality assurance system (jan 2017)
- Proposals for the adjustments to procedures for the SEQ, containing six more specific proposals related to the role of the SEQ in the PDCA cycle (QA 1573)
- A document outlining the role of the faculty council in the PDCA cycle.

The council already discussed policies related to the QA itself and advised you on the matter in both 2015 and 2016. The council also gave explicit consent to the policies related to QA at BMS in 2016. This policy included seven 'areas of attention', one of which was the improvement of the PDCA cycles.

The number of documents related to this topic and the interrelatedness did not simplify the task of the council to give clear advice on the matter at hand. The council thinks that educational quality control is of utmost importance within BMS. However, if staff, students, and program directors have to be involved in this 'culture of quality', the processes related to quality control should also be clear and easy to understand. At the end of this advice, the council gives a few suggestions in this context.

In the cover letter, you asked about **the more general progress report (QA 1396)**, in which all minor and major aspects of the implementation of the QA policies were outlined. The council was promised such a progress report about the seven areas of attention in the context of QA policy, adopted in 2016. This document was informative, but did not include decision points for the council. We thank the dean for the extensive description of activities in the context of QA.

The remaining documents and questions were related to *the organization of the PDCA cycles, the instruments for data collection used in that cycle and the role of the Faculty Council in that cycle.*

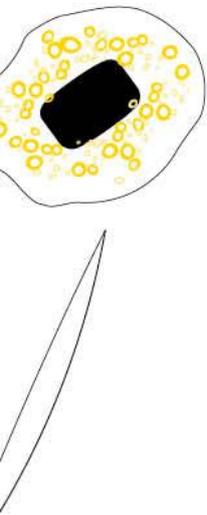


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Your first question in the cover letter was about the summary of the PDCA cycle (in QA 1396/4) (in annex 1 of 1589 a full description is presented). The council does not have recommendations in this context apart from maybe simplifying language and increasing accessibility of the document, although we are not sure there should be both a summary and a full description of the PDCA cycle circulating in the faculty. The entry at the bottom of the summarizing document, however, is confusing. The council is indeed interested in monitoring QA generally, but in addition the council **has a more specific role** in the context of the PDCA cycle (as currently suggested in QA 1589). We would like to see this role outlined in all documents about the PDCA cycle. The **more general role of the council** in monitoring QA should **not** be mentioned in documents about de the PDCA cycle specifically.

An important question is about the **role of the council in the PDCA cycle** (this was the fourth question in the cover letter) This role is outlined in QA 1589\3. The council agrees with this role description of the council in the context of the PDCA cycle. The council likes to monitor the extent to which the PDCA cycles of modules and programs are 'closed'. In addition, however, the council would like to see a short description per program of the main issues. As stated before, we would like to stress that the role of the council should be included in the document(s) outlining the PDCA cycle.



The cover letter also included questions about six proposals in the context of one of the central data collection instruments in the context of the PDCA, the Student Evaluation Questionnaire (SEQ). In 2016 the Faculty Council argued that many questions in the SEQ were not very useful for improving the quality of teaching and asked for a revision. You asked for advice on six proposals in this area. The first proposal seems to be about UT-wide policies and were not addressed by the Faculty Council. The other proposals are about allowing program directors, module coordinators, individual teachers to include some questions in the SEQ. This proposal is supported by the council although the relative size of the space allocated for the various 'stakeholders' is not specified and might easily increase the size of the questionnaire beyond a reasonable size (see also proposal 3). We therefore support proposal 5, to do a small pilot in module 1 and 2, too. We stress the importance of keeping the SEQ within reasonable limits in order to reduce the burden put on students.

A somewhat hidden (in proposal 2) aspect of changes in the SEQ is about including questions about the teaching qualities of individual teachers. The council understands the idea of allowing program directors, module coordinators and individual teachers to include such questions about individual teachers in order to improve the quality of teaching, and in order to allow individual teachers to get evaluations to be used in job application elsewhere. However, the council also has its reservations. Research has shown that student evaluations in general are very poor indicators of actual teacher quality. Moreover, it is known that these types of evaluation, when not conducted properly, can have many unintended and negative effects on organizations. Examples are demotivation among personnel which feel they are evaluated unfairly, jealousy among staff and perverse behavior, intended to perform well on such evaluation (e.g. simplifying exam questions and giving high grades to students in hope that they will return the favor). In order to prevent such effects the council recommends to use such personalized evaluations sparingly and carefully and to focus mainly on the use of open ended questions that can may help to improve teaching, instead of simple 'ratings', which may do more harm than good.

This recommendation of the council is a bit longer than usual, because the council is strongly supporting policies improving the quality of teaching at BMS. By this letter, the council also aims at improving QA more generally at BMS and the PDCA cycles more specifically.

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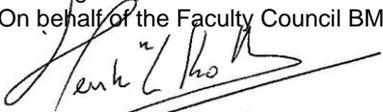
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To summarize the main points of this letter:

- The Faculty Council wants to be informed on a yearly basis about the implementation of the QA policies. This document should include the main priorities in the implementation process.
- the Faculty Council wants to be informed about the 'closing' of the PDCA cycles as suggested in 1589/3 on a yearly basis too. It would therefore like to see the role of the council included in the description of the used PDCA cycles.
- the Faculty Council thinks that the functioning of the PDCA cycles will benefit from having one clear easily accessible document outlining a simple PCDA cycle (in which the role of the council is clearly described).
- the Faculty Council understands the idea of including questions about individual teachers in order to improve the quality of teaching, but wants to stress the unintended potentially negative effects on the academic staff. In order to prevent such effects the council recommends to use personalized evaluations sparingly and carefully and to focus on the use of open ended questions that can may help to improve teaching.

Kind regards,
On behalf of the Faculty Council BMS,



Henk van der Kolk
Chair Faculty Council BMS

