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PROGRAMME & ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS

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Quality Assurance in Open and Distance Education: Experience from Universitas Terbuka

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Abstract

Purpose: This article discusses quality assurance in the teaching process with open and distance methods that are offered by Universitas Terbuka.

Approach: This article is the result of a study with a qualitative approach conducted at Universitas Terbuka. Primary data is obtained from the results of interviews with several heads of study programs, heads of UT branches in the region area, auditors of quality management, and observations in the field. Secondary data includes UT policy documents, related research, and other literature studies.

Findings: The conclusion of this study were: 1). UT develops quality through the development of distance learning management standards implemented in 39 UT branches (Distance Learning Program Unit / Unit Program Belajar Jarak Jauh/UPBJJ) with reference to ISO 9001: 2015 standards; and the development of the academic management standards of the Study Program with reference to the Higher Education National Standards set by the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education. 2). The application of quality assurance opens opportunities for continuous improvement, which drives innovation in distance education, according to the needs of the community.

Implications of this study are: 1). UT needs to further examine the effectiveness of quality assurance in teaching innovation and the implementation of open and distance education; 2). UT needs to conduct a comparative study on the implementation of quality assurance and continuous improvement of face-to-face universities in Indonesia and other countries that apply open and distance education

Keywords: quality assurance, open and distance education, innovation, universitas terbuka

The number of UT students in 2018 is 292,554 students, spread into 4 faculties and 1 postgraduate. The largest number of students comes from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education / FKIP, which is 181,565 students / 62.06%. The number of students of Faculty of Law, Social and Political Sciences / FHISIP are 64,282 students (21.97%), students of Faculty of Economics / FE are 40.208 students (13.74%), and students of Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences / FMIPA are 4499 students /1.54% and graduate students as many as 2000 students / 0.068%. Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of UT students per Faculty.

Students per Faculty
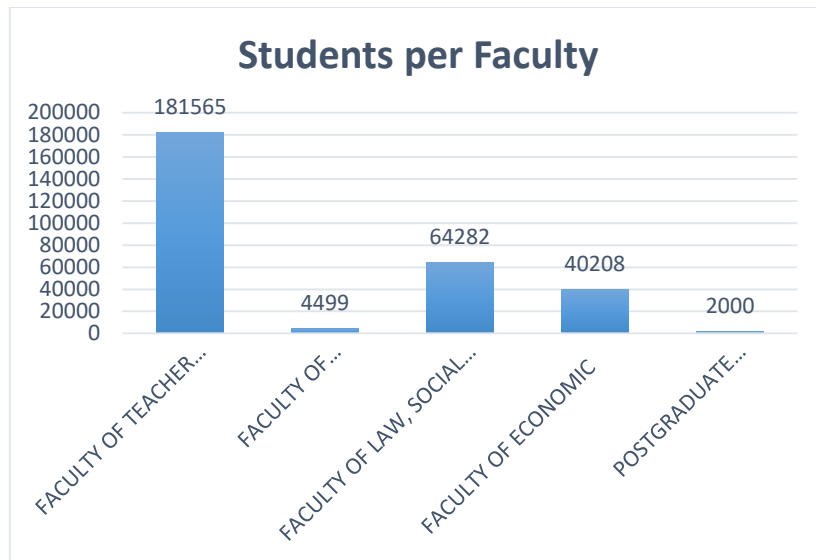
Source: UT Dalam Angka, 2018.

Figure 1 : UT Students Distribution by Faculty

Based on data, the number of virtual learning classroom is at least 5,811 classes, with a minimum distribution of 3,631 classes for Faculty Of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP), at least 1,285 Law, Social and Politics Science (FHISIP) classes, at least 804 Faculty Of Economics (FE) classes, at least 90 Faculty Of Mathematics and Natural Science (FMIPA) classes, and at least 40 for Postgraduate Program classes. The minimum amount is taken with the assumption that students take one course. Whereas every student can take more than one subject, two courses, three, four, even more than seven courses / semester. As an illustration for the undergraduate of State Administration Study Program in the semester of 2018.1 recorded 614 Online Tutorial class outside TAP class (Final Project) and Scientific Article Writing. The number of lecturers in accordance with the field of science of State Administration are 36 lecturers. Recruitment of tutors from other universities is a solution to implement online learning, following the prerequisites set by the Study Program. Standard tutorial material is a necessity applied in online learning. The implementation of ISO 9001: 2015 in academic management of distance education reinforces the quality assurance of the UT learning process (Aisyah, 2018).

Based on geographical location, UT students are spread out in 39 Unit Pelayanan Belajar Jarak Jauh/ Distance Learning Services Unit - Universitas Terbuka (UPBJJ-UT) and 1 overseas student service unit. Table 1 illustrates the distribution of students based on geographical location in 2018.

Table 1: Student Distribution by Geographical Location / UPBJJ-UT

No	UPBJJ UT	Ammount of Students	%	No	UPBJJ UT	Ammount of Students	%
1	Banda Aceh	5367	1.83	21	Banjarmasin	5595	1.91
2	Medan	11720	4.01	22	Samarinda	9228	3.15
3	Batam	6629	2.27	23	Tarakan	3585	1.23
4	Padang	7581	2.59	24	Surabaya	12560	4.29
5	Pangkal Pinang	6980	2.39	25	Malang	11387	3.89
6	Pekan Baru	10664	3.65	26	Jember	9212	3.15
7	Jambi	5451	1.86	27	Denpasar	5065	1.73
8	Palembang	14159	4.84	28	Mataram	3057	1.04
9	Bengkulu	7292	2.49	29	Kupang	13843	4.73
10	Bandar Lampung	14278	4.88	30	Makassar	7390	2.53
11	Jakarta	17707	6.05	31	Majene	4307	1.47
12	Serang	7871	2.69	32	Palu	3185	1.09
13	Bogor	9709	3.3	33	Kendari	4787	1.64
14	Bandung	8382	2.87	34	Manado	2342	0.8
15	Purwokerto	10641	3.64	35	Gorontalo	1802	0.62
16	Semarang	11195	3.83	36	Ambon	2392	0.82
17	Surakarta	6328	2.16	37	Jayapura	3648	1.25
18	Yogyakarta	7688	2.63	38	Ternate	1608	0.55
19	Pontianak	10102	3.45	39	Sorong	1564	0.53
20	Palangka Raya	5120	1.75	40	Luar Negeri	1133	0.39

Source: UT Dalam Angka 2018.

Table 1 informs the highest number of UT students in Jakarta (6.05%), Bandar Lampung (4.88%), Palembang (4.84%), Kupang (4.73%), Surabaya (4.29), and Medan (4.01%). New student selection applies to postgraduate students, while there is no selection of students for diploma programs and Bachelor Programs. The learning process prioritizes independent learning. However, UT provides learning assistance services through tutorials (face to face and online), webinars, practical / practical guidance, thesis proposal writing guidance, thesis writing and scientific work. Based on the data, the number of virtual learning classroom is at least 5,811 classes, with a minimum distribution of 3,631 classes for Faculty Of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP), at least 1,285 Law, Social and Politics Science (FHISIP) classes, at least 804 Faculty Of Economics (FE) classes, at least 90 Faculty Of Mathematics and Natural Science (FMIPA) classes, and at least 40 for Postgraduate Program classes. The minimum amount is taken with the assumption that students take one course. Whereas every student can take more than one subject, two courses, three, four, even more than seven courses / semester. As an illustration for the undergraduate of State Administration Study Program in the semester of 2018.1 recorded 614 Online Tutorial class outside TAP class (Final Project) and Scientific Article Writing. The number of lecturers in accordance with the field of science of State Administration are 36 lecturers. Recruitment of tutors from other universities is a solution to implement online learning, following the prerequisites set by the Study Program.

The number of face-to-face tutorial classes depends on student requests. As an illustration for UPBJJ UT Jember, in the semester of 2019.1 there were 1,326 tutorial classes spread over 36 locations, with a total of 518 tutors. The data above informs that UT requires large human resources to conduct learning assistance services, while UT has limited lecturers and teaching staff. UT uses ways to collaborate with academics according to the needs of the class (face to face and online).

The tutorial process is only one example of UT's business processes, which must be controlled by UT, in addition to other business processes, such as registration, examinations, distribution of teaching materials, provision of infrastructure and so forth. The quality of inputs, processes, outputs and impacts must be guaranteed by higher education providers. Quality assurance is about consistently meeting product specification or getting things right first time, every time. (Salis, 2002:17). The concept of quality can be meaningful as a procedural concept of quality or as transformational quality. Quality assurance is a procedural concept of quality if quality is understood as "demonstrated by a producer having a system, known as a quality assurance system, that supports the consistent production of the good or services to a particular standard or specification. The key to quality are proving, approving, and reporting. Transformational quality is achieved not through adhering to system and procedures, but through the exercise of leadership. It is leadership that establishes a vision that translate into customer service and builds the structures and organizational culture that empower staff to deliver a quality service. The key is improving. Transformational quality blends the aspirations of customer with the empowerment staff. In education setting the transformational culture is a function of staff motivation and academic leadership in asetting that is student centered.

The problem is how UT controls the learning process and other business processes so that it will produce continuous improvements that foster innovation in open and distance education. This article aims to analyze quality assurance in UT's business process, as a college with an open and distance education model in Indonesia.

METHODS

This article is the result of a research with a qualitative approach. Data includes primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from interviews with selected informants, namely the Quality Assurance Center office, Open University (Pusmintas UT), Study Program Head, 3 auditors, and 3 UT UPBJJ heads. Primary data is taken by snowball sampling technique. Data were analyzed using the principle of a qualitative approach, namely by verifying data and classifying it according to the research theme. Based on data interpretation and analysis conclusions can be made.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Educational institutions are pursuing quality improvement for a number of important reasons. Some are linked with professional responsibility, while others result from the competition inherent in educational marketplaces or from the need to demonstrate accountability (Salis, 2002:3). Quality assurance is needed because of

moral, professional, competitive, and accountability to the public. Goetsch and Stanley B Davis (2000: 50) define quality as "a dynamic state associated with products, services, people, process, and environments that meets or exceeds expectations. Hasham (2018: 348-373) states the notion of quality as *"whatever the customer wants it to be the customer's needs, wants and expectations must be identified. The goal, hence, will be to satisfy the customer by following an effective and efficient strategy.*

In the world of education, a quality culture must be built and improved. The quality of higher education must be supported by policies and procedures (Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 2009). In Indonesia, the legal basis for quality assurance is regulated in Law Number 12 of 2012 concerning Higher Education. The definition of the quality of higher education is the degree of conformity between the implementation of higher education and the Higher Education Standard which consists of the National Standards of Higher Education and Higher Education Standards set by Higher Education (Permenristekdikti No. 62 of 2016). The aim of regulating quality assurance by the Indonesian Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education is to improve the quality of higher education in a planned and sustainable manner, so as to grow a quality culture. UT as one of the universities in Indonesia is subject to government regulations. This is reflected in the establishment of the UT Education Quality Assurance Center (Pusmintas) formed in 2005.

In line with developments in higher education management, the demands of the community (national and international), and the government on the quality of teaching and its supporting components, UT has carried out updates on quality assurance guidelines and procedures. The UT quality assurance system guide was first launched in 2002 and updated in 2012

UT pioneered a quality assurance policy since 2003, long before it was regulated by the government. Internal quality assurance developed by Kemenristekdikti is the result of experience in quality assurance applied at several universities in Indonesia, such as Gajah Mada University (UGM), which was developed by the Kantor Jaminan Mutu/Quality Assurance Office (KJM) which is directly under the UGM rector. KJM UGM defines higher education quality assurance as a process of establishing and fulfilling higher education management standards consistently and continuously, so that stakeholders gain satisfaction (http://kjm.ugm.ac.id/language/id/program-pendidikan-2/). Furthermore, the steps of quality assurance in higher education are explained, as follows:

- Universities choose and set their own standards of higher education for each education unit.
- The selection and stipulation of standards is carried out in a number of aspects called quality points.
- Standards are needed as a basic reference in order to realize the vision and carry out its mission. The basic reference is based on minimum criteria from various aspects related to the implementation of higher education

Pioneering quality assurance education in UT refers to quality assurance prepared by the Asian Association Open University (AAOU). In its development, UT established the use of ISO 9001: 2015 as a standard used for UT education management. At present

the procedure is developed as much as it covers Manajemen Pembelajaran Jarak Jauh/ the Distance Learning Management Procedure (MPJJ) and Academic Management (MA). The MPJJ standard is implemented to see the level of conformity of the Distance learning process carried out by 39 UPBJJ in Indonesia and distance learning support units, such as the distribution of teaching materials, tutorials, examinations, and so on. The Academic Management quality standard aims to see the conformity of academic development with the national standards of higher education.

Developments in quality assurance in the field of higher education encourage UT to carry out continuous improvements that drive innovation in distance education. However, based on the quality assurance theory in the field of education, the design of education quality assurance must be supported by all stakeholders.

Based on the data, the support of UT leaders is not in line with expectations. This can be seen from UT's internal audit data in 2018. The conclusion of the internal audit illustrates that UPBJJ UT's top management commitment is not optimal. Of the 366 internal audit findings, there were 148 cases (40%) nonconformity with the UT UPBJJ management criteria. (Pusmintas, 2019). The large number of nonconformity in the managerial UPBJJUT indicate that leadership commitment is still lacking in upholding quality assurance.

Furthermore, quality assurance must also be supported by professional and standardized instructors. Based on the data, the control process in face-to-face tutorials is still far from expectations. Nonconformities in the face-to-face tutorial process with the standards and procedures used were as many as 98 out of 366 of incompatibility with procedures (27%). (Pusmintas, 2019). Or in other words, the tutorial process is still not fully in accordance with the standards set by UT. Based on information, there are several factors that do not match the face-to-face tutorial process due to the lack of concern of UT tutors (external parties) in complying with tutorial standards and the weak control of UT on the tutorial process. A case in point in the process of face-to-face tutorials is that giving tutors' grades is not in accordance with their actual activities, students who do not take the tutorial are given a score, and so on.

Another finding of nonconformity is in the process of organizing student final examinations. Generally UT's final semester exams are conducted at the school locations in the area. This is because UT does not have the facilities and infrastructure to carry out the Semester Final Examination with a large number of students. UT requires thousands of exam rooms per semester. As per the standard, the exam room contains 20 students / classes. Therefore, UT requires government and private facilities and infrastructure to carry out the final semester examinations. The data shows that there were 40 nonconformity in the examination process in 366 cases (11%). The main reason for the nonconformity of the examination process with the standard exam is the lack of control over the commitment of the examiners in carrying out their duties, so that there are frequent violations of the examination rules. Based on the data above, the commitment to the second level of the Salis hierarchy (2002), namely the commitment of the teaching team, staff and supporters of learning and examinations, can be said that the second level commitment is still unsatisfactory for stakeholders.

The continuity of quality assurance in UT's business processes is influenced by two standards, namely the National Standard for Education (SNPT) set by the government and the management of distance learning that refers to the ISO 9001: 2015 Standard. SNPT is applied to see the suitability of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education,

there are three functions of higher education, namely education, research and publication, and community service. Fulfillment of SNPT indicates an accreditation rating that affects the continuity of study programs at UT. SNPT covers 8 minimum standards of education and teaching, 8 minimum standards of research and publications, and 8 minimum standards on aspects of community service. The application of SN PT is intended as the moral responsibility of the university manager, encourages professionalism, increases competitiveness, and manifests the accountability of universities to the community.

CONCLUSSION

Quality assurance in the world of education must be implemented seriously, through strong commitment from management and all UT staff as part of moral responsibility, professionalism, competitiveness, and accountability to the public. The conclusion of this study were: 1). UT develops quality management standards implemented in 39 UT branches (Distance Learning Program Remote Learning Program / UPBJJ) with reference to ISO 9001: 2015 standards; and the development of the academic management standards of the study set by the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education. 2). The application of quality assurance opens opportunities for continuous improvement, which drives innovation in distance education, according to the needs of the community. This study found a model of Quality Assurance in Open and Distance Education.

UT's quality assurance position is still limited to compliance with requirements, but has not led to the transformation of the quality culture. This is reinforced by the achievement of PS accreditation which is still B on average, and has not exceeded the SN PT.

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