David Tvildiani Medical University

Important Characteristics and Important Principles of Development of Quality Assurance of David Tvildiani Medical University

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Introduction

The university, in the form of its management and academic community, for the purposes of Quality Assurance of internal system development expects from the Service of Quality Assurance (QA):

- ✓ Be context-sensitive and relevant to the University strategic priorities
- ✓ to be intended to improve quality, not only on assurance
- ✓ To promote the quality of culture in the university

"History" The QA (Quality Assurance) internal service in DTMU (David Tvildiani Medical University) was created as "demand" from the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement and is based on quality control and development understanding at individual level; It (Quality) gradually became part of future development planning processes at the university; which has improved the organization and management of the university, its systematic upgrading (organization and management) is becoming established.

Implementation and development of the QA (Quality Assurance) in the university was carried out by the approach that included and includes a formal, informal aspect of the balance; And the aim of which is to promote cultural readiness towards quality, and not its "substitution" by newly created structure.

Internal Institutional Concept: DTMU is a relatively young university, created in a period of independence (after the collapse of the Soviet Union) of the country (1991); It was originally founded as a different / alternate program provider institute from the existing medical programs in the country. The relatively small size of University gives a good (easy) communication between the QA and other parts of the university. It was largely operated at the faculty level and was supported by its main "target" faculty program development. At present the University also focuses on the university development as a whole.

Significant changes are made in the last period of external evaluation system in Georgia; And the structure (National Center for Education Accreditation and now National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement) is itself undergoing considerable changes, therefore, consequently, the external quality assessment of the universities are changing (as well as in the broader international context), which should be considered by the internal quality internal assessment structures, including the DTMU relevant service.

Quality Assurance Structure in DTMU

The size of the University, oriented only on the medical field, structure created in centralized form (university level) gives the opportunity to use the strengths that characterize this kind of (centralized) structure; For example, the unified approach to quality assessment is easy to connect with the overall institutional strategy;
In addition, focusing on the need for faculty ("decentralized") facilitates communication with the university staff, protects the risk of duplication of duties in the university and different approaches. Accordingly, the service has external and internal university responsibilities.

Its responsibility for external evaluation is the relationship with the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. It also cares about the University image at international and national level.

At the internal university level it is responsible for monitoring the implementation of quality assurance and strategic plans. Facilitates the involvement of teachers and students, other personnel and external partners in the discussions on quality assurance in order to improve the quality and do not need additional channels to communicate with them.

Its functions shall include:

- ✓ Faculty and other units of the university's expertise and facilitation
- ✓ Coordination of the activities of the QA across the University
- ✓ Reviewing of the external requirements, such as the instructions of the External Quality Assessment Agency, to interpret and adapt to the university context
- ✓ Monitoring the quality of activities of the services and gathering information, for example, for the strategic management purposes
- ✓ Manage administrative tasks related to quality assurance, such as student surveys or preparation of documents requested by the External Quality Assessment Agency.

Relationship of Quality Assurance Service (Relationship Rules / Framework) with other bodies of the University and members of the University Community

The official structures and bodies of the University provide the form of cooperation with the QA work in the process of implementation; In addition, to "speed up" the introduction of the quality of the culture, all participants should feel not only liability for quality, but that they can contribute to "this". Accordingly, the service should be aware that it cannot (and it is not even justified) function isolated; And that the significance of the work carried out by the QA will have a much stronger influence and benefits, if it will not only act through official structures, but directly with the academic community.
Consequently, the structure creates an evaluation group for the purpose of annual planning, monitoring and evaluating of self-assessment with the academic staff and students' mandatory

involvement. The experience of the QA Service (including this rule) has shown that the involvement of academic community members in the quality assurance team brings additional benefits to improving learning and teaching processes. Furthermore, development in this direction requires further steps in particular, more dialogue with the staff to develop their individual role in quality development, readiness to work on his/her own the job quality. One of the possibilities can be the annual study course for university staff and students in quality assurance (e.g., 1 ECTS volume); Its objectives will be to prepare the members of the academic community in basic principles of the quality management system of the University, explaining and reviewing the ways in which they, as members and / or members of the group, can assist and contribute to the improvement of university processes. This will facilitate the understanding that the QA is the entire responsibility of the University and not only of the Head of the Service. Then the university may organize other trainings and workshops that will create a good communication platform for sharing good practices between the staff of the different disciplines.

Also, students' involvement should not be limited to the delivery of the feedback and information. They should be involved in the QA (or such involvement should be extended and / or strengthened):
 (i) By providing feedback (for example: surveys) (ii)
 preparation of self-assessment reports and
(iii) with involvement in management of the institute (membership in decision-making committees). Only in this case the university can be sure that students are involved (they have the opportunity to be involved) in the QA. In this case students will be participants in the process (the development of the QA) as equal partners and therefore will be considered and will be responsible for the quality of their education.

From the frame / rule-to-action in QA relationship: Processes and Tools Proceeding from the university's educational mission the programs and their delivery is one of the most important targets for quality assessment and development; Correspondingly, Determining the aspects of teaching and learning quality programs (guarantees to standards) that require attention, monitoring and evaluation are the main target of DTMU quality assessment.

Also, the important place in Quality Assurance takes place the information needed for strategic planning, specific actions for identification of problems and communication with academic community; Plan-Implementation / Evaluation / inspection/ Development / Improvement - for assurance of continuous development of Quality Assessment Processes based on Work Cycle.

Evaluation of Programs*
The curriculum development is a key element of persuasion in the system of knowledge and consciousness. Important steps in this direction are as follows:
1. Define the goals of the program and learning outcomes; To specify what a student should learn and what to achieve
2. Determining content, selecting important (large) topics and defining the program's structure
3. Selection and Development of Teaching methods and technique
4. Selection of literature and other educational materials

5. How (in what way) students will be evaluated in order to assess the learning outcomes

*MEC (The Medical Education Center), along with other assistance, serves to develop the staff in every aspect of teaching / learning process: Program Design and Planning, Determining Objectives, Learning Methods, Assessment Methods, and Learning Outcomes, the further development of the training (after this training) should be facilitated by the pedagogic process with equal observation (see pedagogical workload document). The teacher's staff observes each other for discussion purpose how learning objectives are a thought (per-observational session), how they are used in class (in observation process) and how it is perceived by teachers and students (pro-observational session).

Formal and informal ways should be found to be used for implementation of teaching culture; In particular, with formal, mainly formal (requested by the pedagogical document, etc.) mechanisms; providing of ToT training and creation of a platform for dialogue (cultural approach) also helps the university's strategic goals, including facilitating lifelong learning in the university.

Program evaluation aspects:

- Employer Requirements;
- Learning expected Outcomes;
- Program description:
- Content of the program curriculum;
- Organization of the program;
- Teaching / Learning Strategy, Didactic Concept;
- Student evaluation system;
- academic staff degree;
- Quality of support staff;
- Promotion and consulting of students;
- Infrastructure and environment;
- Students assessment (Student opinion survey);
- Curriculum design and evaluation;
- State development activities;
- Graduates achievements.

Institutional data and indicators

The university has a database system and information that is constantly updated / filled and contains a "long" list of data: For example, student progress (transfer from semester to semester) indicator, teacher / student ratio, number of alumni, etc. It is also known that their (most part of these indicators) capabilities are quite limited, and for other purposes, is often "added" to collection

information;

This necessitates to differentiate between the indicators by the following signs; Indicators used: (i) for legitimization (reports on activities), (ii) for evaluation (for monitoring the results), (iii) for discussion/review (Interactive use of data) and (iv) for decision making (for data usage process changes).

The other, also important, approach is to use indicators for internal or external purposes, as this may have an impact on the type of indicators. For internal usage purposes, the data collected based on evidence should provide information on strategic development; How effective it is in accordance with its goals and objectives; Often this is done by key performance indicators.

Internal institutional significance indicators used for monitoring and development purposes may also be important for the external evaluation of the university; On the one hand, for the quality assessment agency official (formal) reporting, and at the same time as a whole for general public information purposes [ESG Standard 1.8. Appendix 1.

In all cases it is necessary to have a good internal system of data, and intended to provide interesting information for various audiences; it should always be considered when developing the indicators: What is needed / wished by Rector office for leadership/ management? What is needed for the faculty to know? and according to this what indicators are needed.

Gathering of feedback

Gathering of feedback is a key component for continuous development and is designed to measure a number of standards (1.3.; 1.7 and 1.9. Appendix 1); It is important to remember that gathering feedback is required by different mechanisms and questionnaires are only one method.

The self-assessment results help us to get valuable information about the perception of the people concerned and combining them with other data helps us to understand the overall picture of the institution.

In learning and teaching issues, feedback is gathered by everyone who has the influence on the process including of students, teachers and administrations. In our experience, "the hardest gathering" is information from the teachers; At the same time necessary; Such questionnaire covers issues ranging from the daily working environment, promoting, and etc. Including the mission of the university and the goals of the faculty; any good material about the responsibilities, the positions of the staff to "hear their opinion"; and encourages staff involvement in the process of QA.

Feedback is more frequently used to create and maintain contact with external assessors (alumni and employer). e.g. Graduates can receive feedback in the improvement of the training program; As they may be potential assessors of their training program on career achievements. maintaining the connections with the former students' through the creation of university's meetings, joint work and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) capacity-building capabilities.

In such case their contribution increases, e.g. Growing answers to graduate surveys.

Employers' (potential) invitation to faculty events including career days. at the student conferences, including formal and informal opportunities for joint work and feedback. Inviting of employers to participate in lectures and seminars and discuss real situations; this creates their participation in the training program and preconditions for offering / choosing vacant positions to students of graduating courses.

Surveys are held in a defined time, herein, the regular dialogue between the student and the teacher is important; Also important is the peer-dialogue; The new "pedagogical workload" document will promote the introduction of this culture (will be stimulating); With proper implementation it will contribute to the development of the quality assurance.

Important issues related to questionnaires

Questionnaires are used almost everywhere, in particular to get feedback from students; It is also important to take into account the importance of using them in order to be convinced of the value of the information received. (i) The first step is to review what kind of questionnaire and questions are relevant to the goal; The questions are very different from the assessment of individual courses that can be used to evaluate the study program or the whole university. (ii) further (when preparing a questionnaire) it is necessary to understand how the survey results are used: We will need comparisons with previous or parallel surveys and the type of delivery (paper or electronic). In this context it is important to determine who will have access to the results and what format. e.g. It is important for teachers motivation the results in a timely manner in order to improve their teaching skills based on the information received. (iii) When using questionnaires it is useful to involve interested people already in the design phase of the research, namely those who fill them and who will use these results. This helps to not waste time on a study that is unreasonable, for example, because the respondent cannot understand questions or because the issues are not intended for institutional importance.

(iv) Questionnaire structure and questions should be developed based on the type of feedback that the institute is trying to gather. Quantitative feedback is useful for large target groups to receive statistical information, monitor and redress and "find" the issues that need further attention. In addition, it is not effective to use long list of multi-alternate questions in small groups of students. On the other hand, we will send open questions to the large group of "great information" that will be very difficult to analyze; In the same small groups, it is possible to focus on the problems and sometimes the possibility of solving that never had been before discussed.

(v) Moreover, anyone who provides feedback needs to realize that self-evaluation forms are an important part of the process; For example, students should not only be asked to evaluate teachers and their teaching methods, but it is also necessary to motivate them for their own approaches to contribute to the learning process, which is also important for their personal development. Consequently, when students are "involved" in elaboration process to prepare the design of the

survey, they become a kind of "ambassadors" in the student community; And it has/must have a significant impact on the number and quality of answers.

(vi) Formulation of questions is very important: Good questionnaire contains questions that are:

- ✓ Unequivocal, the kind that is understood / perceived only flatly;
- ✓ Take into account the clear answers (so that answers can only have one interpretation);
- ✓ Unsuccessful, for not responding to the respondent to a specific response;
- ✓ Be relevant when the questionnaire contains only the questions that are specific to the topic of the survey; And
- ✓ simultaneously concerns one issue, because if a question contains several issues, the respondent responds to one of them

Survey in Focus groups

Survey in Focus groups helps other methodologies for feedback gathering with the possibility of verification and further concentration on issues. However, focus groups are structured and managed, but here is the place of expression and the possibility of meeting the relevant information in a short time; As well as analysis of results and reviewing complex issues.

The need to introduce such a culture in the university: Semi-structured interviews with students, teachers and administration staff; It aims at promoting more frequent informal discussions on the quality of learning and teaching, which increases the reliability of feedback supplied to readiness/ acceptance and demonstrates institutional consent on quality raising. This should now become the driving system of the QA (which is the certifying the accuracy of the objectives) and the development of quality culture in the university.

Focus group composition, questions size, types, issues of organizing discussion see in Appendix 2)

Internal discussions

All feedback and data collected is usually a source of internal quality assurance: Internal discussions. This includes everything from individual programs (see also 1.9. Annex 1) including the entire institution and provides the possibility of a comprehensive and critical self-esteem. For efficiency, internal discussions should be reasonably (in accordance with the institution) planned in terms of time, focus and sequence and should be reflected in further actions (activities). Good communication with all these aspects helps us to be convinced of its significance and contribute to the development of quality culture.

Internal discussions can be a formalized approach to the procedures and reports set out in the QA in the strategic planning cycle of the university or its part. They may also be planned to match, or be a part of the assessment, which is done by the QA agency for the purpose of external evaluation. Discussions can be completely internal or may include part of external elements. For example, in internal discussions, by some regular cycles will be invited external experts to provide feedback. In all cases internal discussions, informal and dialogue-based approaches, internal and external discussions are important for quality improvement.

* In Quality assessment group, of any formation, minimum two academic staff member and minimum one student is required to be involved in any form.

*Together with quantitative data and qualitative information received from the staff and students, the report of the Quality Assessment Group includes /should include a complete SWOT analysis of the faculty on learning and teaching. Conclusions should be discussed at the level of faculty and institutional governance. Moreover, assessment reports are a direct source for the elaborating of the University Development Action Plan and also an important part of the external accreditation process.

How can we use all the information gathered?

An important contribution to the development of the QA system and quality culture is to recognize that data collection, feedback during internal and external evaluations will be followed by the results; From this point of view, well-organized internal discussions usually expect a number of ideas on how to solve the problems identified. Here are two important moments:

(i) It should be remembered that the dynamics of the process have influence on it and the more people feel the responsibility of the quality, the awareness of its role in it is more likely that they will be responsible for their liability and become the initiators of the ways to improve them.

(ii) The transparency of the management of the QA internal system is important for effective and efficient process. Which implies all the above described: Distribution of responsibilities for different participants in the system is clear and understandable who is responsible for what matters; Consistent procedures should be integrated into all planned activities of the QA and communication between the involved persons should exist from the very early stages; And it is also important that the QA internal system, its consequences must be linked (source) to the decision-making structures and processes at the university.

Strategic management and continuous development in DTMU should be based on the analysis of data obtained from evaluation and feedback. When further actions (activities) are identified and planned, it is taken into account that they are well defined and agreed; Is a reasonable schedule for implementation; A specific person is selected for the responsibility; And implementation and influence measurement indicators are selected in advance. This is a transparent approach to consistent activities and they are well integrated into the strategic and management process of the university.

Appendix 1. - Quality Assurance internal standards and guidelines ESG

1.1. Quality assurance policy
1.2. Development and Approval of the Programs
1.3. Student Center Study, Teaching and Evaluation
1.4. Student enrollment, progress, recognition and certification

1.5. Composition of teachers

1.6. Learning resources and student support activities

1.7. Information management

1.8. informing of the public

1.9. The program constant monitoring and periodic assessment

1.10. Quality periodical external evaluation

Appendix 2 - Focus group composition, question size, types, and issues of organizing discussion

Focus group composition:
- ✓ Facilitator: To ask questions, to manage and stimulate the discussion. It is important that the facilitator knows the issue, but be able to stay impartial and do not express his/her own points of view, which may influence the participants' viewpoints.
- ✓ Notes recorder: The records should not be made about the facilitator and observing the process in the focus group discussions. To entrust "this" to the special person will make the records more precise and requires more time, since the recordings need "transcript" before analysis.
- ✓ Participants: There should be a representative sample (of the group) whose views are taught. While selection the participants should be taken into account the following aspects:
  - ➢ Homogeneity vs. Variation: Selection of participants that belong to the same category (e.g. students, administrative staff etc.), But we must also be convinced that there are some differences in the group as well.
  - ➢ Status: It is important not to "mix" influence or status of different levels within the focus group. e.g. In a high level management group should not be a young staff; And also students should not be in the same group in which are the teachers, if this leads to the "suppression" of young and beginner people in terms of expressing their own opinion.
  - ➢ number: In ideal case, in the focus group are 5-10 participants, so that it is possible to be able to listen to different points of view and to have a chance to manage a discussion and give a chance to everyone to talk.

The focus group usually lasts 60-90 minutes. It is realistic to focus 5 to 8 main questions (which can be covered during this time). Questions should be short, focused, unambiguous and open. The focus group is given the opportunity to review the information and the answers in detail, which cannot be done through questionnaires. Therefore, good preparation of questions is very important.

In addition to data analysis, new issues may arise at the focus group meeting. Comparison of interpretations (comparing) may be useful before writing a data summary report. The results and relevant decisions should then be shared with the focus group participants in order to show the importance of their contribution.