

Introduction

As the time for accreditation draws near, the College, through the initiative of the QAFU with the support from the College administration, tries to make the necessary preparations in order to ensure that all activities and processes conform to the specified standards. This preparation entails making the College community become aware of all relevant concepts related to quality assurance, at the same time, instilling within the college stakeholders the enthusiasm, motivation and commitment to create and nurture a culture of quality in the College. In this regard, the QAFU had planned for a series of activities, starting with this QA Workshop, to keep everyone and everything moving towards the realization of these plans.

Overview and Rationale

It is important for the College community to become aware of the activities and processes needed to conform to the quality standards specified in the Quality Audit Manual. More importantly, NCT staff should know the existence of quality manuals and should also be encouraged to use them and refer to them in the conduct of their everyday work. The first QA workshop for this academic year envisions to introduce to the NCT community these basic concepts and ideas. It also plans to inform the whole College community of the steps and corresponding activities needed to be done in the College in preparation for the forthcoming accreditation. Lastly, through this workshop, the College administration hopes that the first step towards the creation of a quality culture in the College will be made, and correspondingly, through the cooperation of everyone, it will be sustained.

In planning for this workshop, the College administration selected topics that they feel should be first to be imparted to all the staff. On this light, two topics readily came into focus: (1) the Quality Audit Manual, and (2) the ADRI Model. Inasmuch as good documentation is a basic and inherent part of maintaining quality, it was decided to be included in the presentation of the QAM. Moreover, as the College is now in the process of developing a more comprehensive appraisal and evaluation scheme for teachers, the administration also decided that this topic will be included in the workshop. To get a wider perspective, it was also agreed upon that at least one (1) external expert be included as a resource person for the event.

After meticulous deliberations, the steering committee composed of the College Dean, Dr. Ahmed Al-Ghassani, the AD for Academics, Dr. Bader Ahmed, and the Head of QAFU, Dr. Rolando Lontok, finally decided on the resource persons for the workshop. These are as follows:

1. Dr. Rolando Lontok will talk about the proposed staff appraisal scheme;
2. Mrs. Anna Edgar will share her experiences in appraising English Language staff;
3. Mr. P. Saravanan will do a presentation on the use of QAM and good documentation practices; and
4. Dr. Bader Ahmed will explain the ADRI Model.

After the speakers were decided, the final programme of the activity was developed and disseminated to the College community and other colleges of technology.

Summary of the QA Workshop Presentation

A. Proposed Staff Appraisal Scheme for NCT (Dr. Rolando Lontok, QAFU Head, NCT)

Dr. Rolando conducted a presentation on the proposed staff appraisal scheme for Nizwa College of Technology. He discussed why appraisals and evaluations are conducted and what are the most common criteria used for teacher evaluations. Also, he talked about the different stages being undergone by teachers starting from being new in the field towards becoming an expert in his area. Likewise, Dr. Rolando shed light on the top problems encountered by teachers and what support they need to be successful in their careers.

Dr. Rolando narrated this background so as to lay out the foundation on how the teachers should be appraised. He said that it is important to have a complete appraisal of the teacher, and correspondingly good evaluation of him/her. This entails analyzing all possible data sources which include student reports, peer reviews of teacher materials, student achievement data, systematic observation of peers, and administrator report.

In his proposal, Dr. Rolando divided the teacher functions into eight major ones: (1) management of instructional time, (2) management of student behavior, (3) instructional presentation, (4) instructional monitoring, (5) instructional feedback, (6) facilitating instruction, (7) communicating within the educational environment, and (8) performing non-instructional duties.

He said that there should be an appraisal and evaluation plan which will include documentations from the data sources mentioned, emphasizing on the eight identified functions, student outcomes, and standard course of study. He further stated that the documentation should include the teacher's individual growth plan (anchored on the college and departmental improvement plan) and some other standardized instruments that include the formative assessment, the teacher survey/student evaluation, student growth indicator, peer observation form(s), teacher self-evaluation questionnaire, and some other relevant rubrics.

Lastly, he proposed a plan on how to implement the appraisal and evaluation process, comprising of four stages: the formative evaluation planning, the initial review, mid-year review, and final verification.

B. Experiences in Appraising ELC Staff (Mrs. Anna Edgar, Professional Development Specialist, Ministry of Manpower)

Mrs. Anna shared her experiences in appraising English Language staff. She said that the By-laws require for appraisals to be conducted for new staff within the first three months of appointment. She also emphasized that the appraisal in ELC is different from the post-foundation courses, in such a way that the evaluation is based on the use of the language more than the content.

Mrs. Anna also discussed some points regarding the importance of appraisal. She said that in the case of the ELC, the common procedure in appraising staff include the following steps: (1) set the date with the lecturer, (2) the lecturer submits the lesson plan, (3) the appraiser observes the lesson, (4) the appraiser gives feedback and discuss the action plan, (5) a date is set for a future observation if there is a need, and (6) an overall performance review is made.

Mrs. Anna also shared some of her views regarding classroom observation. She said that for effective teaching and learning, the observation should give focus on activities, content, interaction, classroom management, pre- and post-lesson activities.

C. Use of QAM and Good Documentation Policies (Mr. Saravanan, QAFU Member, NCT)

Mr. Saravanan started his presentation by discussing the general HEI Quality Assurance framework, taking into consideration the different stages the College should undergo towards being accredited by the OAC. He then proceeded into discussing the major documents involved in the accreditation process, giving emphasis on the Quality Assurance Manual, Quality Audit Portfolio, Quality Audit Report, and the Appeals Manual.

After his general presentation on the quality assurance framework and the documents involved, Mr. Saravanan's presentation focused on the QAM. He started by explaining to the audience the contents of the quality audit manual. He said that there are five (5) components of the QAM, and these include an overview of the quality audit, the self study portfolio, the external review, the method of analysis, and the appendices. He said that the audit visit is a chance for the audit panel to test the accuracy and completeness of the portfolio.

The second part of Mr. Saravanan's speech is about documentation. He said that there are three types of documents – policies, procedural manuals, and guidelines. He then proceeded on discussing the elements of a good type of each of these documents, and highlighted the importance of controlling these documents by using versions. Mr. Saravanan also talked about how to properly disseminate documents.

After the presentation of Mr. Saravanan, he conducted a short workshop, wherein a set of questions related to the QAM and documentation is distributed to the audience for them to reflect and discuss the issues that might exist in it. After a short time elapsed, the audience, through the moderation of Mr. Saravanan, discussed their answers to some of these questions.

D. The ADRI Model (Dr. Bader Ahmed, AD Academics, NCT)

Dr. Bader talked about the ADRI Model in his presentation. He started by discussing first the meaning of ADRI – Approach, Deployment, Results, Improvement, and why it is important to use in quality assurance. He emphasized that ADRI is not a planning tool; rather it is a method for analyzing a total QA system.

After the general discussion on the ADRI model, Dr. Bader proceeded on discussing each of the stages of the model. He said that Approach pertains to what is proposed to be achieved. He gave an example regarding course delivery. This means, he said that in terms of Approach, course delivery tackles things such as goals, objectives, outcomes, delivery plans, and other related matters. Deployment, meanwhile, Dr. Bader said, is the implementation or the process. In terms of course delivery, it has something to do with lectures, discussions, laboratory works, and other related activities. He said that Deployment is best tested through interviews and through tapping into people's "lived" experiences.

In terms of the given example on course delivery, Dr. Bader stated that the Results indicators may include student performance, class participations, results of assignments, mid- and final exam marks, and the like. He said that every goal must have a reported result, and every result should link back to a goal. He further said that results can be both quantitative and qualitative.

The Improvement dimension, Dr. Bader intimated, looks at what a staff knows about himself in order to get better and better. In this case, he said that as the cycle continues, goals should be set higher and higher and correspondingly processes should get more efficient and effective over time.

After the presentation, Dr. Bader conducted a workshop in which distributed a set of situations to each table, and each particular group should select of the scenarios given and develop the ADRI model by analyzing the

scenario. After the workshop, several groups presented their work/discussion to the body.

After all the presentations were completed, Dr. Bader and Dr. Ahmed, the College Dean, provided the body with some generalizations and conclusions. Some relevant questions were asked which were answered in detail by the College Dean.

Workshop Participants

The first QA Workshop for this academic year was participated by a large number of people. This is due in large part, to the fact that a memorandum was circulated on the said event in order for the College staff to become aware of the workshop. Even though the activity was held on a Thursday, still about one hundred and ninety (190) lecturers, admin and technical support staff, and administrators attended the event. It should be noted that fourteen (14) of these participants were from other Colleges.

The table below summarizes the breakdown of the workshop participants:

Table 1. Workshop Participants

Department	Total
Participants from Other Colleges	14
Educational Technologies Centre	10
Information Technology Department	37
Business Studies Department	24
Engineering Department	49
English Language Centre	42
Administrative Staff	14

Feedback Analysis

Two (2) feedback forms were distributed during the seminar-workshop. The following sections describe the summary of data culled from these instruments as well as the analysis of the data obtained.

A. Staff Appraisal Process Evaluation

This instrument tried to get the perception of the workshop participants with regards to the staff appraisal/evaluation process presented in the workshop. Moreover, it also tried to get information on the topic presentation itself as well as the resource persons on the topic.

The instrument has two parts: (1) perception of the participants on the topic and the presentation, and (2) background of the respondents.

I. Summary of Respondents' Data

From a total of 190 participants in the workshop, 80 participated in this feedback collection activity. Out of the 80 respondents, **94%** is from NCT, while the remaining **6%** is from other Colleges.

From the 94% (75 out of 80) respondents coming from NCT, 35% or 26 respondents are from IT, 28% or 21 respondents are from ELC, 24% or 18 respondents come from Engineering, and 13% or 10 respondents are from Business Studies department.

In terms of job functions, 3 or 3% are administrators, 62 or 78% are lecturers, and 15 or 19% are support staff (technicians and admin staff).

With respect to the years of professional experience, the respondents are grouped into two, those with experience 10 years and below, and those having 11 years of experience and above. The first group (0-10 years) comprised 46% (37) of the respondents while the second group (11+years) comprised 54% (43) of the respondents.

II. Perceptions of the Respondents on the Staff Appraisal Presented

The following is the summary of the responses with regards to their perception of the topics presented regarding the Staff Appraisal:

Table 2. Respondents' Perceptions on Staff Appraisal Presentation

Seq	Question Item	Mean
1	In my opinion, the way the process is being developed conforms to the requirements of the OAC/OQN.	1.975
2	The workshop enabled me to become more aware of the development of the Staff Appraisal instrument in the College.	2.134
3	I will recommend this workshop to be conducted in my institution/department.	1.896
4	Through this workshop, there is better evaluation of the process towards developing the staff appraisal in the College.	2.288
5	The speaker(s) enlightened me on the topic of staff appraisal.	2.250
6	The materials/topics were presented in an organized manner.	2.298
7	The speaker(s) was/were knowledgeable on the topic.	2.096
8	I would be interested in attending a follow-up, more advanced workshop and evaluation on this same subject.	1.916
	COMPOSITE MEAN	2.107

***Legend: 1-Strongly Agree 2-Agree 3-Neutral 4-Disagree 5-Strongly Disagree*

As can be seen from the table, the means obtained for each question ranges from 1.896 to 2.298. This means that generally, the respondents agreed to the points raised by the questions presented.

The highest mean obtained is 2.298 in Question No. 6 – The materials/topics were presented in an organized manner. This means that the respondents and/or participants, although generally agree on the organization of topics, were not able to fully grasp the flow of the presentation of the different topics, and hence they want clearer presentation and/or organization. A further reason for this might be that they feel that the seminar accommodated too many topics, and they want only one or two topics to be considered during a particular seminar-workshop. Question No. 4 – Through this workshop, there is better evaluation of the process towards developing the staff appraisal of the College –

got a mean of 2.288, which is the second highest. This that based on the perception of the participants, more explanation and discussion of the process regarding the development of the staff appraisal of the College is needed for full appreciation and understanding of the scheme.

The lowest mean obtained, meanwhile, is in Question No.3 – I will recommend this workshop to be conducted in my institution/department. This question got a mean of 1.896, which although still in the range of 2 (Agree), is nevertheless the lowest among the means obtained. This means that the respondents feel that this workshop is useful and important, and as such, a similar workshop needs to be conducted in a small group, which is basically in their respective departments. The low mean obtained by Question No. 8 – I would be interested in attending a follow-up, more advanced workshop and evaluation on this same subject (1.916), reinforces this idea.

As it is, and as had been said in the opening paragraph of this section, all the means obtained are in the vicinity of Option 2 (Agree), and a closer look of the values of the means obtained will show that the deviations from the composite mean are not very far. This means that the responses tend to cluster in the Agree option or choice, and that it can be said that the respondents generally have the same opinion on each of the questions presented.

B. Workshop Evaluation

The second feedback instrument collected data regarding the general perception of the participants on the conduct of the workshop. This is done to gauge how the workshop went, insofar as speakers, presentations, and technical issues (venue, audio, etc) are concerned. This instrument is divided into three sections: (1) background of the respondents, (2) perception on the speaker and the topic, and (3) technical components. In addition, a section on the future workshop needs is included for the respondents to suggest or recommend future workshop topics that they feel could help them further develop their crafts.

I. Summary of Respondents' Data

A total of seventy-six respondents participated in this data collection activity. Out of the 76 respondents who participated, 3 or 3% are administrators, 61 or 80% are lecturers, and 12 or 16% are technical staff.

In terms of years of professional experience, 30 or 39% has experience 10 years and below, while the remaining 46 or 61% has experience 11 years and above.

From the total of 76 respondents, 25 or 33% came from Engineering, 25 or 33% are from ELC, and IT and Business Studies have 13 or 17% each.

II. Perception on the Speakers and the Presentations

The following table shows the means of the responses of the respondents regarding their perceptions of the workshop:

Table 3. Perceptions of the Respondents on the Speakers and Topics of the Workshop

Seq	Question Item	Mean
1	The content was as I expected it to be	2.080
2	The workshop was applicable to my job/function	1.875
3	I will recommend this workshop to others	1.868
4	The program was well-paced within the allotted time	1.889
5	The speaker(s) was a good communicator	2.277
6	The materials/topics were presented in an organized manner	1.972
7	The speaker(s) was/were knowledgeable on the topic	2.085
8	I would be interested in attending a follow-up, more advanced workshop on this same subject.	1.958
	COMPOSITE MEAN	2.005

***Legend: 1-Strongly Agree 2-Agree 3-Neutral 4-Disagree 5-Strongly Disagree*

As shown in the table, the means are generally in the vicinity of 2 – Agree. The data further shows that the deviations from the composite mean (2.005) are small, which tend to show that the responses of the participants are clustered and thus, all of them are in sync with one another.

From the range of means obtained, the table shows that the highest mean is from Question 5 – The speaker(s) was a good communicator (2.277). Although this mean still falls in the second option Agree, being the highest mean from the

lot, it means that the respondents want more from the speakers of the workshop. This may probably mean they want the speaker(s) to expound more on the topics presented, or it may be that they were not able to fully grasp what the speaker(s) said during his/her presentation. As the instrument did not collect data for each individual speaker, it is hard to determine at this point whether the perception of the respondents is true for all speakers or only for some.

On the other hand, Question No. 3 – I will recommend this workshop to others, and Question No. 2 – The workshop was applicable to my job/function got the two highest means, which are 1.868 and 1.875 respectively. This means that the respondents are one in saying that the workshop was important and useful for them. This is further given proof by the fact that Questions 4, 6 and 8 got high means also, which are 1.889, 1.972, and 1.958 respectively.

With regards to the length of the workshop and the depth of the discussion, 59% (40 respondents) said that the workshop was just the right length in terms of number of hours spent on the activity, and 64% (42 respondents) said that the workshop served as an introductory seminar-workshop on the topics discussed. The following table summarizes this information:

Table 4. Respondents' Feedback on Workshop Length and Depth of Discussion

Item	Too Short	Right Length	Too Long	Total
Given the topics, this workshop is:	19 (28%)	40 (59%)	9 (13%)	68 (100%)
	Introductory	Intermediate	Advanced	Total
This workshop is:	42 (62%)	21 (31%)	5 (7%)	68 (100%)

III. Perception on Technical Components

With respect to the technical components (e.g. visuals, acoustics, venue, handouts), the following table shows the perceptions of the respondents:

Table 5. Respondents' Perceptions on Technical Components

Item / Component	Mean
Visuals	2.358
Acoustics/Audio	3.464
Meeting Space/Venue	2.917
Handouts	2.739
The Programme Overall	2.620
Composite Mean	2.820

***Legend: 1-Excellent 2-Very Good 3-Good 4-Fair 5-Poor*

It is clearly seen from the table that almost all of the items/components had high means except for the visuals. In rounding off the values, only the visuals component will fall on the second option, 2 – Very Good. All the others will fall on the third option 3 – Good. Although the third option is described as Good, still the data shows that based on the perception of the respondents, there is a need to improve the audio, the venue and the distribution of handouts. This means that in terms of these components, the workshop was found lacking and thereby, plans on improving them should be considered in the succeeding workshops.

Through this information, several issues arose: (1) there should really be a multi-function hall in the College that can accommodate large number of participants; (2) handouts and workshop materials need to be prepared early and enough for all the participants; (3) good, functional audio system should really be put in place so that good acoustic is always ensured when activities like this is held.

Recommendations

Having presented the analysis of the data collected from the two (2) feedback instruments, the following points are recommended:

- In terms of participants, more people from other Colleges should be encouraged to participate in succeeding seminar-workshops related to QA to further get opinions and benchmark on the processes being done in the College;
- Follow-up seminar-workshops (department-wise) should be planned and conducted to continue giving the staff more knowledge and information,

- and at the same time encourage them to give inputs in the Staff Appraisal scheme being developed for them, and also in other QA topics and processes as well;
- More speakers should be encouraged to participate, especially experts from outside of the College to give more insights to different QA processes and help the college staff to learn more about quality assurance;
 - If possible, plan for an adequately-sized hall to cater to a large audience if the need arises, at the same time equip the said hall with excellent video and audio systems;
 - Provide adequate time and preparation in the development of handouts and other workout materials so as to ensure that everybody will be given his/her own copy.

Conclusions

The author believes that the College is on the right track in its initiative in conducting seminar-workshop such as this one. This will pave the way for a series of more effective and worthwhile small group activities and/or workshops which will help much in the preparation of the College to be ready in the accreditation activities in the near future.

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