TOWARDS ULTIMATE ENHANCEMENT OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF IQA STAKEHOLDERS IN BAHRAIN

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Some thoughts to start with …

• Who are our stakeholders?
• Why should they be involved?
• How important is their involvement?
• How involved are they?
• How can we enhance such an involvement?
Who are we?

What do we do?

University of Bahrain IQA System
Academic Programs within UoB

UOB’S IQA SYSTEMS

Local, regional and global EQA systems.
Another link?

- Produce graduates suitable for universities
- Produce graduates suitable for the workplace
- Receive supplies that suit its demands

School

University

Workplace
IQA STRUCTURE?
Levels of IQA System

- COURSE LEVEL
- PROGRAM LEVEL
- DEPARTMENT LEVEL
- COLLEGE LEVEL
- UNIVERSITY LEVEL
Involvement of Stakeholders in the QAAC’s Program Quality Framework
UoB’s IQA has its own:

Program Quality Assurance and Enhancement Policy

Quality Manual
Who are our stakeholders?

- Students
- Alumni
- Employers
- Faculty
THE STUDY
The study

Partially investigate the existing and anticipated involvement of stakeholders in the IQA systems

in order to bring the involvement closer and bridge possible gaps between stakeholders and IQA systems
METHODS
FINDINGS
EFFICIENCY OF UOB’S IQA SYSTEM?

Excellent  Cohesive  Standardized
Integrated
Clear policies and procedures  Strong
Gatekeepers
effective in involving stakeholders
“stakeholders project full confidence and appreciations for the efforts exerted into the development of the academic program quality delivery”

“colleges have systemized links with the employers and alumni, using clear processes”
Effect of Stakeholders Satisfaction Surveys on the six areas related to Teaching and Learning

1. **improved learning conditions**
   - Very high: 7.3%
   - High: 17.1%
   - Moderate: 24.4%
   - Low: 26.8%
   - No effect at all: 7.3%
   - *Not intended: 4.9%
   - Don’t know: 12.2%

2. **improving student assessment system**
   - Very high: 7%
   - High: 11.6%
   - Moderate: 27.9%
   - Low: 23.3%
   - No effect at all: 11.6%
   - *Not intended: 7%
   - Don’t know: 11.6%

3. **improving teaching performance**
   - Very high: 4.7%
   - High: 14%
   - Moderate: 32.6%
   - Low: 20.9%
   - No effect at all: 11.6%
   - *Not intended: 4.7%
   - Don’t know: 11.6%

4. **improving Content coverage of study programs**
   - Very high: 9.3%
   - High: 18.6%
   - Moderate: 27.9%
   - Low: 18.6%
   - No effect at all: 9.3%
   - *Not intended: 4.7%
   - Don’t know: 11.6%

5. **improving Content Coverage of courses**
   - Very high: 7%
   - High: 11.6%
   - Moderate: 37.2%
   - Low: 20.9%
   - No effect at all: 7%
   - *Not intended: 4.7%
   - Don’t know: 11.6%

6. **improving Overall coherence of study programs**
   - Very high: 16.3%
   - High: 9.3%
   - Moderate: 32.6%
   - Low: 20.9%
   - No effect at all: 4.7%
   - *Not intended: 4.7%
   - Don’t know: 11.6%
Effect of Involvement of Stakeholders on Study Program Revisions on the six areas related to Teaching and Learning

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Area</th>
<th>Very High</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>No effect at all</th>
<th>*Not intended</th>
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<td>Improving content coverage of study programs</td>
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<td>Improving content coverage of courses</td>
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<td>13.6</td>
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Legend:
- Very high
- High
- Moderate
- Low
- No effect at all
- *Not intended
- Don’t know
The involvement of stakeholders in study program revisions improves:

- the overall coherence of the study programs (95.5%),
- course content coverage (95.5%),
- study program content coverage (95.5%),
- the teaching performance (86.4%),
- the learning conditions (86.4%),
- and student assessment system (79.5%).
“How much weight does stakeholders’ satisfaction have and is taken into consideration as a key factor in the review process?”

RONNY HEINTZE (AQAS)
How important stakeholders’ involvement is to the development of programs?

VERY IMPORTANT = 88.6%
How important stakeholders’ involvement is perceived?

“How important stakeholders’ involvement is perceived?”

“The employer’s input is very important for the delivery of the program” and that there are tools related to employability, such as the PACs, surveys including alumni, employer and senior exit survey and employers’ membership in the college councils that significantly help colleges understand employers’ requirements and viewpoints which are considered in the College’s strategic plan and while designing course/program outlines and their graduate attributes”

A College Dean’s Interview
All focus groups:

Interactions and meetings with the stakeholders in the Program Advisory Committee (PAC) were highly effective in developing the programs and aligning them with marketplace needs:

- IT College: a data mining course in the Information System (IS) program
- CHS: mock real life in the program based on meetings with the Ministry of Health (MoH)
- ARTS: Media Authority Affairs suggested adding specific courses within the Media program
- Business: analysis of alumni and employer surveys resulted in numerous improvement actions in the Marketing program
Challenges
Challenges?

- Enhanced active participation?
- Provision of transparency?
- Sustained and constructive 2-sided feedback?
- Visibility of measures?
- Establishing solid data information system?
- Grievance policies/appeals?
Visibility of measures

Stakeholders’ selection criteria

Random or systemized?

What profile?
Legitimacy & Reliability

Inexperienced in academia?

Impulsive/radical introverted/Sensitive?

Biased/have negative attitudes towards institution or QA systems?

Input received from stakeholders could be invalidated, unreliable, misguided or misleading

fragmented, incoherent and/or subjective judgements?

No independent national research bodies to guarantee objectivity
Lack of time (employers, faculty)

Lack of incentives/rewards (all)

Increased workload & burdensome tasks (faculty)

Culture of Resisting QA:
Workshop 1 by Heintze: “EQA systems do not have the inside-knowledge to appreciate how things are internally done”
“They did not understand us!”

Writing SERs!
Is diversity always a good thing?

Diversity of the discipline

Diversified employing agencies

Diversified personnel database

E.g.
College of Engineering Vs.
College of Arts
Recommendations
• Provide training for stakeholders on the objectives, legislations, procedures, individual roles and ethics of the QA process
• Set criteria for stakeholders’ selection (profile)
• Establish independent research bodies
• Provide incentives and rewards
• Capacity building:
  Reconfigure the roles of academic staff, students, alumni and employers:
  • inducing hybrid mechanisms of both top-down and bottom-up decision-making in QA agencies (shift in power)
  • taking part in site visits as a member of the expert panel
Higher level of involvement in IQA systems?

Multiple roles

Veto power in committees/SERs/reviews

A KEY RECOMMENDATION

Two-sided Constructive Feedback before, during and after a program/institutional review
In short,
What we need is a chain of change in

- Attitudes
- Knowledge
- Skills
Thank you