

# Strengthening of Department Governance through Implementation of an Internal Quality Assurance System

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**Abstract**—This study aims to analyze and find out about strengthening of department governance through “Implementation of an Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS).” This is important, considering the problems are very complex; starting from student input, learning process, fulfillment of graduation standards, facilities and human resources. This study uses qualitative approach in form of case studies. The data are collected through direct observation, tracking documents and archives, and in-depth interviews. The results of study showed that: strengthening of department governance through implementation of an IQAS is an ongoing process in improving the quality of the education process through the one-year cycle, which consists of the seven stages, namely: standard setting, implementation, monitoring, self-evaluation, internal quality audit, correction formula, and quality improvement for stakeholder satisfaction.

**Keywords**—governance; quality

## I. PRELIMINARY

In Indonesia, human development efforts are carried out through a formal and non-formal education process, organized by various institutions and educational units at the level of primary, secondary and higher education. All of these levels have functions and objectives as set out in the National Education System Law Number 20 of 2003 (Chapter II Article 3) [1], as follows:

*“National Education functions to develop the capabilities and form a dignified character and national civilization in order to educate the nation's life, aiming at the development of potential students to become human beings who believe, and have devotion to God Almighty, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent and become a democratic and responsible citizen.”*

The main pillar in reconstructing human resources (HR) in Indonesia is carried out through an educational process that is in accordance with the National Education Standards (NES). Therefore, education must refer to the NES, as the main means of providing important access for the community in educating the life of the nation and achieving a good, advanced, and just life. In this context, the education not only provides strength and intellectual property, but also makes Indonesian people

have competitiveness, based on intelligent thinking and reasoning, and can provide character and ethical provisions that are commendable [2]. Education must be oriented to developing Indonesia's human potential which implies giving birth to creative, independent and highly working people. Therefore; education must be a vehicle that can provide and provide life skills for every Indonesian human being according to their needs, including those who need special education and special services.

The question is: how to ensure that the quality of education in Indonesia is well-maintained, consistent and sustainable? Then who has the authority to carry out education quality assurance? These questions indicate the need to develop a well-organized and systematic education quality assurance system. On the one hand, the education quality assurance system requires appropriate, objective, relevant, and comprehensive instruments, so that every activity carried out is reliable and accountable. On the other hand, there is a need for special independent and professional institutions to carry out the tasks of education quality assurance.

Higher education quality assurance aims to ensure the quality of the implementation of higher education both in input, process, and output based on legislation, basic values, vision and mission of the college. Quality assurance activities are an embodiment of college accountability and transparency. The obligation of universities to carry out quality assurance in the implementation of education, regulated in legislation, namely: (a) Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. Article 51 paragraph (2) which basically stipulates that the management of higher education units is carried out based on the principles of autonomy, accountability, quality assurance, and transparent evaluation; (b) Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards [3]. Article 91 paragraph (1), paragraph (2), paragraph (3) Regulation No. 19 of 2005 which stipulates that every higher education must carry out the education quality assurance as accountability to stakeholders, with the aim to fulfill the National Education Standards, which are carried out in stages, systematically and planned in a quality assurance program that has a clear target and time frame; (c) Government Regulation No. 17 of 2010 concerning the Management and Implementation of Education. Article 96 paragraph (7)

Regulation No. 17 of 2010 which stipulates that higher education institutions carry out quality assurance programs internally, while external quality assurance is conducted periodically by the National Accreditation Agency of Higher Education (BAN-PT) or independent institutions authorized by the Minister.

The characteristics of the quality assurance system are developing and adopting the minimum standards and the levels of performance on quality that can be assessed. There are two aspects that are interrelated with the standard, namely the impact of higher education services on local communities, and the technical quality standards of the programs offered. The quality of education includes the calculation of student graduation and total levels, the rate of absorption of alumni in employment and wage rates, the level of placement of students in further education, test scores and standards, efficient use of resources, timely reporting and written accountability, and educational accessibility for everyone [4]. Furthermore, quality of education related with the class size and ratio of the lecturers and students, evaluation based on learning, developing students' ability to apply new learning practices, encouragement and facilitation in lifelong learning, professional development opportunities for lecturers, usability learning for students, developing skills and active habits as citizens, developing critical awareness, creating togetherness, and guaranteeing academic freedom for discussion for students and lecturer [5, 6].

Implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) is a systemic activity of higher education quality assurance in higher education institutions (internally driven), to oversee the implementation of higher education by universities in a continuous (continuous improvement). IQAS is an independent activity of the higher education concerned, so that its activities are designed, implemented and controlled by that higher education without government intervention. IQAS is run by higher education institutions internally to realize its vision and mission, and to fulfill the needs of stakeholders through the implementation of the "Tridharma" of The Higher Education. The concept of IQAS, as stated in the Ministry of National Education [7], is that a higher education is qualified if it is able to: establish and realize its vision; describes its vision into a number of derived standards and standards; apply, control; developing a number of standards and standards for derivative items to meet the needs of stakeholders. The Higher Education Quality Assurance Guide further states that the implementation of IQAS in higher education requires a requirement to achieve its objectives [8], namely: commitment, mental attitude, and organization. Matching vision and perception to the academic community, especially lecturers and education staff to always plan all work to support the achievement of goals. Planning for this work is very important as a framework for measuring work success, so that continuous quality improvement can be realized. On the other hand, the success of IQAS implementation also needs to be supported by organizations that are strong with the independence they have to carry out internal quality assurance. The IQAS organization is expected to be able to foster a supportive attitude from all components of the university towards educational quality assurance efforts.

The implementation of the internal quality assurance system must be supported by the availability of data and information about higher education in an accurate, complete and up-to-date manner. The data and information are managed by a database at each university. The results of the implementation of internal quality assurance by each higher education are material in the implementation of external quality assurance or accreditation by "BAN-PT" and other independent institutions recognized by the government.

The principles of internal quality assurance must be in accordance with the higher education law: 1) Autonomy, the developed and implemented autonomously by each university, including at the level of department; 2) Standard, the uses the Higher Education National Standards set by the Minister and standards set by Universities, 3) Accuracy, the uses accurate data and information on data based, 4) Planning and Sustainability, the implemented using five steps of quality assurance, namely the establishment, implementation, evaluation, control and improvement of higher education standards in the form of cycles.

The external monitoring or guarantee includes various quality evaluations carried out by external individuals or institutions for higher education institutions, including accreditation at the institutional level and teaching assessment programs and the quality of research, audits or reviews of standard institutional and monitoring procedures. The essence of accreditation is the appraisal of the feasibility and quality assurance of higher education or department carried out by independent organizations or agencies outside the university (external quality review). In implementing IQAS, the quality of higher education/ department is the totality of conditions and characteristics of inputs, processes, and outputs or services as measured by The Education National Standards that determine and reflect the quality of the higher education/ department.

Nusantara Islamic University has pioneered and developed the concept of the university's internal quality assurance system since 2009. The concept includes the definition of quality assurance, the implementation cycle of quality assurance, organization, documentation systems, and human resources. The IQAS at Nusantara Islamic University is carried out by the Directorate of Quality Assurance (DQA) which is in charge of planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating the overall quality assurance system. The concept and implementation of the University Quality Assurance System at the Nusantara Islamic University has been made and socialized to all leaders, lecturers, students, and education staff at the university, faculty and department levels. The implementation of IQAS cannot be separated from the participation of all academics in supporting internal quality assurance activities to fulfill stakeholder satisfaction. Therefore, this study aims to analyze and find out about strengthening department through the implementation of an internal quality assurance system. Specifically, this study aims to: analyze, find, and describe the implementation of the internal quality assurance system at the level of the department at the Islamic University of Nusantara, through an evaluation process and the utilization of the results of the implementation of the internal quality assurance system in order to continuously strengthen department. The results of this study are expected to be able to enrich the repertoire of knowledge

about the implementation of IQAS to improve the quality of higher education which organized by the communities in Indonesia.

## II. METHOD

This study used a “qualitative approach in form of case studies” [9], the setting of the research was Nusantara Islamic University. The data are collected through direct observation, tracking documents and archives, and in-depth interviews. The validity test of the data was done by using triangulation techniques and triangulation of sources. The data analysis was use “qualitative models that included collecting data, reduction and display of the data and generalization” [10].

## III. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that strengthening of department governance through implementation of an Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) at Nusantara Islamic University, is operationally carried out by the Directorate of Quality Assurance (DQA). The Nusantara Islamic University has drafted the concept and policy of the internal quality assurance system; which includes the definition of a quality assurance system, the implementation cycle of quality assurance, organization, documentation systems, and human resources.

The Directorate of Quality Assurance (DQA) at Nusantara Islamic University was established on June 28, 2009, with Rector's Decree Number: 47-SK / UIN / VI / 2009; domiciled directly under the Rector. DQA's tasks and functions are: 1) Compile and develop various standards and guidelines as a reference for the implementation of education quality assurance, research and community service as well as academic administration; 2) Developing quality standards in the fields of education, research, and community service referring to international standards; 3) Coordinating the implementation of education quality assurance, research and community service activities, as well as academic administration from the university level to the study program; 4) Reviewing and reporting on the results of the implementation of quality assurance in a cycle, for all units and staff; 5) Submitting recommendations to the Rector and other leaders as input for continuous quality improvement. DQA is assisted by faculties of quality assurance namely the Quality Assurance Group (QAG) and the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) at the Department level.

The implementation of IQAS is a necessity, because the quality of education depends not only on the government but also on the assessment of stakeholders. The implementation is an independent activity, so the quality assurance process is planned, implemented, evaluated, controlled and improved without the government's intervention. This refers to the provisions of the Directorate General of Higher Education which states that IQAS in higher education is carried out entirely by universities themselves, without government interference [11].

The IQAS implementation of the department level is an integral part of the higher education quality assurance system,

carried out with the preparation of design which is operationally called the annual IQAS Cycle period. The Cycle consists of seven stages, namely: (1) standard setting, (2) implementation, (2) monitoring, (4) self-evaluation, (5) internal quality audit, (6) correction formulation, and (7) formulation quality improvement. Determination of standards is formulated based on legislation, the results of self-evaluation of ongoing performance, input from stakeholders, the results of tracking studies (tracer studies), and policies on the development of quality assurance Directorate General of Higher Education. The standards set refer to the National Higher Education Standards. The stages of implementing are: socialization of IQAS; study program technical assistance; socialization of the Internal Quality Audits (IQA) and the Department Self-Evaluation Instruments (DSEI), charging DSEI; The implementation of IQA; corrective/ corrective actions; faculty level management review meeting to discuss audit findings and improve the quality of department; university level management review meeting, to discuss findings obtained in department that cannot be completed at the faculty level. Monitoring aims to oversee the implementation carried out based on the plan. Self-Evaluation is a systematic effort to collect and process reliable and valid data (facts and information) so that facts can be concluded that can be used as a basis for management actions to manage the continuity of the institution, such as faculty/ Postgraduate Schools, and department.

The Internal of Quality Audit (IQA) is an independent and objective guarantee and consultation audit of academic operational activities or academic processes. Therefore, the findings are corrective material followed up by management review meetings at the study program level, faculty, and universities. The corrective formulation is the material of IQA, then to review whether there have been corrective actions taken. The results of the correction formula lead to quality improvement through new standards/ planning at the next stage. Nevertheless, actual quality improvement will ultimately be determined by the community as stakeholders; as a result of implementing as a whole.

The implementation of IQAS at the department level at the Nusantara Islamic University is supported by human resources (HR) who have competencies in the field of quality assurance, although the number is still limited. DQA Nusantara Islamic University currently has 21 active and registered IQA auditors. The implementation is also supported by facilities and infrastructure, as well as adequate funding through the budget that has been set.

The quality of the output of the department is measured not only from the fulfillment of each Higher Education Standard, but also from the fulfillment of standard interactions to achieve the goals of higher education. The mechanism of Higher Education of Quality Assurance System is initiated by universities by implementing IQAS through an activity cycle abbreviated as PPEPP: (1) Determination of Higher Education Standards, namely standard setting activities consisting of National Standards and Higher Education Standards set by universities (P); (2) Higher Education Standard Implementation (P), namely standard fulfillment activities consisting of National Standards and Higher Education Standards set by

universities; (3) Evaluation (E) of the implementation of the Higher Education Standards, namely benchmarking activities between outputs of standard compliance activities with standards consisting of Higher Education Standards and National Standards set by universities; (4) Control (P) of the implementation of Higher Education Standards, namely standard cause analysis activities consisting of National Standards and Higher Education Standards that have been set by universities that have not been achieved for corrective action; and (5) Improvement of Higher Education Standards (P), namely standard improvement activities consisting of National Standard and Higher Education Standards to be higher than the standard set.

The obstacles to implementing IQAS due to the lack of leadership commitment are faced by providing workers who are experts in the field of quality assurance. Another obstacle, the lack of the number of auditors owned by Directorate of Quality Assurance, is taken by programming the new auditor training. New auditor training programs and refreshing old auditors are carried out intensively every year. Constraints to Implementation is often trapped into a routine activity faced by refreshing and building enthusiasm both at the leadership level of universities, faculties, and study programs and the auditors themselves. Directorate of Quality Assurance Nusantara Islamic University also organizes programs that are aware of the important position of quality assurance; for example, periodically meet in a forum for refresher activities and improve the quality of auditors. In addition, interactions with activists of higher education internal quality assurance in the IQAS Higher Education and National Accreditation Agency (BAN PT) forums were directed at increasing awareness in order to build a quality culture.

The results of the study show that: DQA of Nusantara Islamic University annually conducts evaluations, by asking for input from auditors, from faculty leaders / graduate schools and audited study programs, and university leaders. The evaluation was carried out in the form of workshops, which discussed inputs and corrections to the implementation of Internal Quality Audit. IQAS Implementation Evaluation in addition to discussing the effectiveness, also evaluates how supporting factors can provide optimal contributions, such as financing factors, human resources, and supporting facilities and infrastructure.

Externally, the results of the IQAS Implementation are utilized related to preparation in the face of external accreditation, in this case the National Accreditation Agency. DQA Nusantara Islamic University has also helped the university in the preparation of the institution's accreditation forms for the National Accreditation Agency of Higher Education (BAN PT). The results of the Implementation were also used for preparation for accreditation.

The implementation of IQAS at Nusantara Islamic University is based on two documents, namely Academic Documents and Quality Documents. Academic documents at the university and faculty level consist of Academic Policy, Academic Standards and Academic Regulations. Academic documents at the department level consist of Department Specifications, Curriculum, Semester Program, and

instructional program. Quality documents consist of a Quality Manual at the university and faculty level, Quality Procedure, and Work Instruction. Quality procedures and work instructions are prepared and implemented in each work unit. In the quality assurance of research and community service, Directorate of Quality Assurance provided assistance to ensure that more and more journals. The design of the quality which is operationally called the IQAS Cycle was developed in line with the management model of the quality control of the Kaizen model.

The implementation of IQAS internally is used to gradually improve the quality of education. The findings in the Implementation are input to improve standards and improve them to become better. The utilization of the results of the implementation besides being used in educational planning, it was also used to foster the spirit of working better.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Strengthening of department governance through the implementation of an internal quality assurance system (IQAS) at Nusantara Islamic University is an ongoing process in improving the quality of the education process through activities of determination, implementation, evaluation, control and improvement, then self-evaluation, internal quality audit, up to benchmarking to determine new standards, called the quality assurance cycle. The organization is carried out by a quality assurance organization named the Directorate of Quality Assurance (DQA), whose task is to plan and implement a complete and comprehensive quality assurance system. The implementation was carried out by drafting the design which was operationally called the IQAS Cycle which was carried out following the one-year period. The cycle consists of seven stages, namely: standard setting, implementation, monitoring, self-evaluation, internal quality audit, correction formula, and quality improvement for stakeholder satisfaction.

The obstacles faced in the implementation of IQAS at Nusantara Islamic University, including at the department level, are: leadership commitment is relatively lacking, the number of auditors is still limited, the activities are often trapped into routine activities. The steps taken in dealing with obstacles are providing expert staff in the field of quality assurance, programming new auditor training and refreshing the old auditor to be carried out intensively, building enthusiasm for both university leaders, faculty and department. Evaluation of the Implementation is conducted every year, by asking for input from auditors, faculty leaders, audited department, and university leaders.

The utilization of the results of the implementation of IQAS at the Nusantara Islamic University internally to improve the quality of education, foster the spirit of working better, raise awareness to build a quality culture. Externally utilized related to preparation in facing accreditation by National Accreditation Agency of Higher Education. The development of the Implementation of the IQAS refers to the quality management system that supports the implementation of the standards of the National Accreditation Agency of Higher Education as a

minimum standard for the management of department, faculty and universities.

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