# The Research and Development of an Internal Quality Assurance System for the Faculty of Education, Burapha University

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**Abstract**

This study aimed 1) to develop a new Internal Quality Assurance System for the Faculty of Education Burapha University, and 2) to try out the system to see its effectiveness. This study was designed in 3 phases. The first phase was the analysis of the Faculty's Internal Quality Assurance System. The population for the data collection in this first phase was 30 people. They were a group of Faculty management people, a group of Faculty committee, a group of Faculty senior consulting people and a group of senior expert teachers. In the second phase, which very much focused on the development of an Internal Quality Assurance System, the researchers used the focus group technique to collect data. The people who participated and shared their viewpoints in this phase were 10 Faculty management people, 17 Faculty committee, and 12 Faculty senior consulting people (six of whom were people from outside and the other six were people working inside the Faculty of Education). In addition, while 17 Faculty senior consulting people were asked to evaluate the proposed system, the researchers asked around 10 Faculty senior consulting people to become internal auditors. The last phase intended to implement the developed system and evaluate it. This study found that the developed Internal Quality Assurance System of Faculty of Education consisted of 4 main activities and 3 mechanisms. This system was designed to have 2 Internal Quality Assurance teams. The first team was called "the management team", which was comprised of Faculty management people, all heads of departments and Internal Quality Assurance committee. The second team was called "the operational team", which included lecturers, the faculty staff members, Internal Quality Assurance committee, most of whom were lecturers and faculty staff members passing the Internal Quality Assurance training program, all heads of departments and all heads of study programs in the Faculty of Education. The main arranged activities by the Faculty of Education, were 1) the Internal Curriculum Quality Assurance activity and 2) the Internal Faculty Quality Assurance activity. Both activities were planned to ensure the readiness of all study programs and the Faculty when being evaluated by quality assurance teams from outside. These were approved and run by 2 teams. While team A included 10 people from the Faculty management team and Faculty senior consulting people, team B took account of 17 members of the Faculty committee. It was shown in this study that on average, the suitability of this Internal Quality Assurance System was significantly found in both the high and the highest level.

Keywords: research and development, Internal Quality Assurance

**Background of the Study**
Since 2014, it has been announced that the focus of the Internal Quality Assurance for all higher educational institutes would be changed and the 3 main quality assurance levels which were examined include 1) the curriculum level, 2) the faculty level, 3) the institute/university level. As the Faculty of Education, Burapha University has been known as one of the leading faculties offering high quality education courses and continuously improving internal quality assurance to meet national quality standards, ensuring the high quality assurance of all offered programs and the Faculty's internal quality has always been one of their main priorities. To make the best decisions in managing National education quality and remaining one of the best quality leading faculties, the School of Education, Burapha University has realized the importance of having in place effective internal quality assurance systems which allowed all faculty members to take part collaboratively and permitted the Faculty management teams to make use of feedback and useful suggestions sent by our stakeholders.

The researchers, therefore, decided to conduct one research and development project to draw up a potential internal quality assurance system for the Faculty of Education as well as evaluate its effectiveness so that some remarkable findings could be utilized to help to improve the internal quality assurance system which leads the Faculty to remaining a high-quality-standard faculty.

**Research Objectives:**
    **This study aimed**
      1) to develop an Internal Quality Assurance System for the Faculty of Education Burapha University and
      2) to test out the developed internal quality assurance System.

**Research frameworks and procedures**
    This study was divided into 3 phases.
    **Phase 1:** The analysis of the Quality Assurance system used by the Faculty of Education. In this phase, the data was collected from 30 people who were management people and faculty committee.
    **Phase 2:** The Development of an Internal Quality Assurance System. The key informants in this phase included
- 30 people from both Faculty management people and Faculty committee.
- 2 Groups of Faculty senior consulting people (six of whom were people from outside and the other six were people working inside the Faculty) were asked to participate in focus groups
- 17 Faculty senior consulting people were asked to evaluate the draft of the system
- 10 faculty senior consulting people were asked to become internal auditors.

    **Phase 3:** Implementation of the Internal Educational Quality Assurance System and the evaluation of the system.

**Research Findings:**
It was found in this study that the Internal Educational Quality Assurance system of the Faculty of Education was generally found suitable at the highest level. When considering each item, 14 items were found suitable at the highest level (Mdn between 4.21 and 4.69), 1 item, which was the mechanic system item involving the work by educational quality assurance committee from each department was graded suitable at a high level (Mdn = 4.20) and the activities taking place for Educational Quality Assurance Evaluation was rated the highest (Mdn = 4.69).

This Internal Educational Quality Assurance system model was approved by two teams of experts. The first team was the faculty management people who approved the proposed system in their meeting on March 10, 2015. The second team was Faculty committee also agreed on the system on March 12, 2015.

**Systems and Mechanics for the Internal Quality Assurance of the Faculty of Education**
To support and ensure the effectiveness of running all Education programs and management of the Faculty, the Internal Quality Assurance of the Faculty of Education has set up the following mechanics and activities.
1.      Assessment of Educational Quality Assurance System of the Faculty of Education.
The faculty has assigned a team to become the Faculty Quality Assurance committee.These include experts and knowledgeable teachers from each study program offered by the Faculty of Education. They play the following vital roles:
1) Discuss and initiate educational quality assurance policies of the Faculty of Education
 2) Draw up procedures, steps and guidelines concerning the Faculty's educational quality assurance for faculty members to follow
 3) Scrutinize and assess internal educational quality assurance of all study programs offered by the Faculty of Education
 4) Improve and suggest the Faculty's Educational Quality Assurance Systems.
5) Continuously evaluate the effectiveness of Educational Quality Assurance Systems of the Faculty.
Basically, this team would try their best to run the Internal Educational Quality Assurance of the Faculty of Education thoroughly, guarantee the system's correctness and ensure its continuous improvement, keeping it up to date as well as checking to make sure that they strictly fell under the umbrella of both Burapha University Education Quality Assurance plans and the one suggested by the Office of the Higher Education Commission.

**2. Educational Quality Assurance systems of the Faculty of Education, Burapha University**
To operate this Educational Quality Assurance System, the Faculty of Education,
Burapha University set up subcommittee teams whose roles were monitoring and scrutinizing the quality of the Educational Quality Assurance. These same groups were later asked to evaluate the educational quality. Each team comprised 3 experts and the number of teams was based on the number of educational programs the Faculty offered. All 3 experts in each team were selected according to the following criteria.

The first member must be an expert in the field in which each program offered.

The second member must be an expert in educational evaluation and measurement or an auditor, passing the Educational Quality Assurance Auditor Training course arranged by the Faculty of Education.

The third member must be an expert in curriculum and teaching or Educational Administration or somebody who used to work in one of the faculty management teams.

All the subcommittees would seriously play the following major roles in checking and evaluating the quality of all Educational programs offered by the Faculty of Education. Their working process consisted of

  1) Studying the Self-Assessment Report submitted by the heads of program

All programs must submit their Self-Assessment Report to the subcommittee to study 2 weeks before the evaluation date so that the report could be thoroughly read beforehand.

2) Meeting to design a quality evaluation plan for the subcommittee.

In week 2, the evaluation team (subcommittees) read and evaluated the quality of the submitted Self-Assessment Report. The evaluation was done by comparing between evidence based results and a quality standard indicator. The team prepared and wrote questions, feedback and suggestions to give to the heads of program for their better improvement and preparation.

3) Visiting the site to evaluate the educational quality assurance of the program To evaluate the program, the evaluating team made at least a full day visit to meet and discuss with committees of the evaluated program. The schedules for program evaluation were presented in the appendix. The data collection or evaluation guideline which served as an evaluation manual was developed only for the use of the faculty internal educational quality auditor.

4) Giving feedback to the programs

To provide some useful suggestions and ways to improve the quality of the program to the program committee, not only did the evaluation team provide the program committee with oral comments and feedback in a friendly way, but the committee also gave another written report presenting the results of this evaluation.

5) Reporting results of program quality evaluation.

The subcommittee evaluating the quality of the program wrote a report presenting the results of each program evaluation and submitted it to the Educational Quality Assurance committee of the Faculty of Education for their further consideration.

## 3.  Department Internal Quality Assurance System

At the level of Department Internal Quality Assurance, to ensure the ongoing quality assurance of all programs under each department, the Faculty of Education set up team members to monitor and improve the quality of each program. The team members consisted of the Program management people, Head of the program, and supporting people and all of whom exercised the following mechanics:

Set up the quality assurance policy of their program;

Plan and analyze an effective working process to ensure the high quality assurance of their program;

Evaluate the quality of their offered educational program by comparing the evaluated result to the set of standard criteria set by Burapha University and the one set by the Office of the Higher Education Commission.

Undertaking the Internal Education Quality of their offered programs at least once a year, every year. Also integrating the following 5 effective management principles

which were PDCA, Quality Control, Quality Audit, Quality Assessment and Quality improvement into their evaluation practices.

**1) Integrating PDCA Cycle concept as the procedure for ensuring the Educational Quality of the Faculty of Education, Burapha University.**

To drive and monitor the work to ensure the highest Educational Quality standard in all study programs, the Faculty of Education followed the PDCA cycle concept which started from planning, doing, checking and acting.

**Quality Assurance Dimension in the Faculty of Education**

The faculty emphasized certain management principles called Quality Control, Quality Audit, Quality Assessment, and Quality Improvement in all operational procedures as the way to ensure that all working dimensions could meet the standard set by the Office of Higher Education Commission, all Educational Policies of Burapha University and Quality Assurance in Education according to the 1999 Education Act.The benefits of having an Internal Educational Assurance System for the Faculty of Education

1) The system allowed the Faculty of Education to show high Educational quality leading to confidence in the Faculty quality.
2) The system helped the faculty to collect certain information which was necessary for quality improvement and the development of the Faculty as a whole as well as the Faculty's teaching quality.
3) The system allowed faculty members to work collaboratively in producing Self-Assessment Reports for their courses.
4) The system raised the awareness of faculty members to the necessity of helping improve everybody's work and ensuring high educational standards to the level accepted by society.
5) The system allowed the Faculty to realize certain strengths and weaknesses as well as creating the necessary information for its future external assessment within the 2015 academic year.

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