

### What can be the most important positive effects subsequent to the implementation of total quality in education?

1. The control and development of the administrative system in all higher education institutions, in view of the clarity of roles and the precise delimitation of liability.
2. Upgrading the level of students in all aspects, whether physical, mental, social, psychological, or spiritual.
3. Increasing the efficiency and skills of the administrators and members of the academic staff, as well as of all those working at the educational institutions, and so as to raise the level of their performance.
4. Increasing trust and cooperation among educational institutions and the community.
5. Providing an atmosphere of understanding, cooperation, and sound human relations among all people working at an educational institution, whatever is its size or kind?
6. Increasing awareness and the sense of belonging to the institution on the part of both students and the local community.
7. To rely on concerted efforts and mutual help among all administrators and workers

### Sur College of Applied Sciences, Quality Assurance Department

As per Oxford Dictionary, quality means 'high degree of', or value. Similarly, for ODA (an American organization specializing in training and helping institutions adopt 'quality assurance' in their ways of operation), quality assurance means 'accomplishing the right jobs in the right times'

#### Defining Quality Assurance in Higher Education:

Quality assurance is usually defined as "a comprehensive and continued attempt at improvement relating to all areas of the teaching process. Among other things, quality assurance is also a management process that achieves both the students and job markets' objectives. In other words, it comprises all of the teaching institution's functions and activities, not only for all that concerns the production of 'know how', but also to get it into the marketplace. This second articulation of the management process cannot but enlist further trust and appreciation on the part of the students, as well as it helps prop up the position of the teaching institution both locally and worldwide

Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives. (*William A. Foster*)



Quality Assurance Department

Sur College of Applied Sciences

the requirements of quality assurance system were simply found as being too high.

### **The new system of accreditation**

Further to ample studies and consultations with the institutions involved, there eventually developed a new two-stage system of accreditation, starting with auditing quality, and then an evaluation process based on a set of standards. In view of this development, there was the formation of an Omani Quality Network, an independent and non-profit body, comprising all higher education institutions operating in the Sultanate, as well as the Ministry of Higher Education and the Accreditation Council, henceforth, as per the royal decree 54/2010, to be called Oman Academic OAAA, (OAAA). In accordance with the new system of accreditation, above mentioned, it became mandatory for any higher education institute to get a permit for continuing its operation. Only the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) is to grant these permits, except for some other particular government ministries that are under its supervision.

The process of accreditation of higher education institutes, on the part of Oman Academic OAAA, comprises two stages:

improving standards, as well as through a proper review of the national framework for scientific degrees. Subsequently, in 2006, the Board hired a world renowned consultant to assess the progress that had been so far done in this field of accreditation. Moreover, from 2001 through 2004, the Board, benefiting as it were from world expertise, has developed a set of specifically higher education standards, as well as special procedures for both institutional and academic programs accreditation. All of these standards were gathered together in a single booklet that also comprised preliminary copies of the national framework for scientific degrees in the Sultanate and the national system of institutional rating. The booklet was entitled "Requirements for Oman's System of Quality Assurance in Higher Education" (ROSQA). Then, all HEIs were called upon to apply for accreditation on the basis of the said requirements document. It has to be said, however, that by then most of the higher education institutes proved to be unprepared for the accreditation process. Then, what happened in 2006 was that the accreditation board had undertaken a complete review of the said ROSQA, along with related legislation and concomitant decisions, and

within an educational institution, and so as to foster team work.

8. The implementation of the system of total quality does further local community's respect and appreciation of the institution, as well as it does entice its recognition worldwide

### **What can be said about the implementation of QA at HEIs in Oman (beginning and subsequent stages)?**

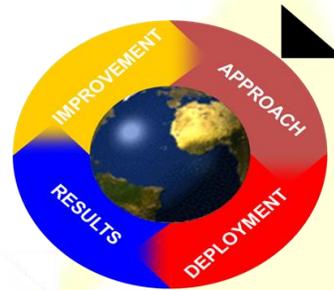
The Higher education sector in Oman comprises both government and private educational institutions. The latter run local as well as foreign teaching programs that were set up in accordance with some specific QA standards. Moreover, the system of quality management within the sector of higher education is assuredly making important strides to cope with the whole matter. The starting point goes back to 2001, when His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said – may God protect him, issued a royal decree (No 74/2001) creating the Accreditation Board. Among the main tasks of this Board was the accreditation of higher education institutes along with their academic programs, which was to be done through a set of standards, data, reviews, and different other processes for enhancing quality and

all that is mentioned in it. It has also to be written in a simple and easily understandable language. The quality audit process comprises three procedural stages:

### 1. Pre-audit visit procedure

The OAAA is responsible for forming an external audit team that would examine the HEI's self audit report, using the Development, Results, and Improvements' Approach (ADRI). (This is an evaluative approach aiming for a long run, sustainable quality assurance that can be done through a progression of four main stages: Approach, Execution, Results, and Improvements). As soon as the arrangement for the formation of an external audit team is done, the OAAA informs the HEI about the proposed dates for the audit team's visit, which is usually preceded by a preliminary visit. The HEI is also informed about the names of the external audit team prior to the arrival of the latter. Prior to the visit proper, the OAAA sends a representative to visit the HEI in order to make the final arrangements about all the visit's schedule, the venue where the proceedings of the visit are going to take place, etc. It is only when everything is finally

### 9. General services and Facilities



### Audit Report

The audit report is an analytical self study carried out by a higher education institute in order to single out its strengths in view of further enhancing them, as well as to put the fingers on the weaknesses, and see how to reduce them, if not to eradicate them all together. Moreover, the report covers all of the institute's activities, makes clear its vision and mission, and mentions the institute's precise characteristics. Besides, the report also gives a scant view of the quality control systems for each of the institute's activities, as well as it clearly assesses the degree of efficiency of the said systems. Furthermore, the report also singles out the points of strength and the good practices, and pinpoints the areas that need more attention and improvements. It is of great importance that the report includes proper data and documented justifications of

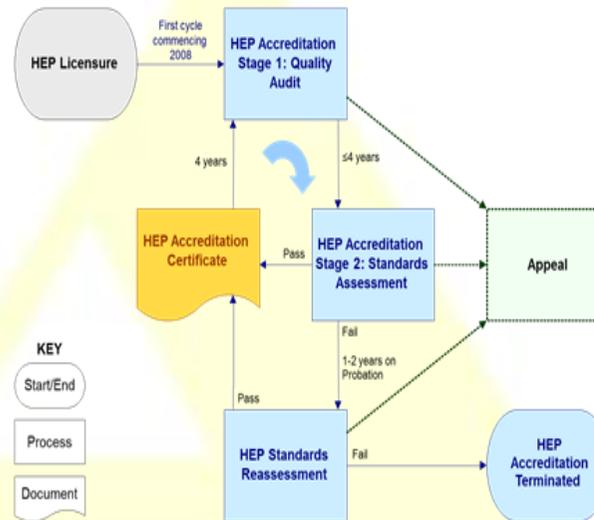
### Stage 1 – Quality Audit

At this stage, higher education institutes undergo an evaluation process to assess the degree of efficiency as to a particular HEI's quality systems and plans put forward for the express purpose of achieving its vision and mission, as well as its available means and capacities that help with its desired continued improvements ambitions. In other words, the real focus here is on the strategic plan in general, and the ways of its implementation. Besides, the auditing process is to be carried out through the self-audit report that each HEI has to submit, and that will be the end result of an institute's self study of all of its **activities including nine main areas:**

1. Governance and management.
2. Student learning by course work programs
3. Student researches
4. Staff's scientific research
5. Industry and Community Engagement
6. Academic support services
7. Students support services
8. Staff support services

will then be evaluated in terms of the extent to which they prove capable of meeting the national and world standards requirements. Moreover, the extent to which a HEI is fully committed to the recommendations as per the Audit Panel's report will also be duly verified at this second stage. The comprehensive national quality management system in higher education comprises a good number of distinct and overlapping frameworks and processes. These assuredly converge into a continued effort to spread the culture of quality among all those belonging to the sector of Higher Education, and through them all of the community. This quality management system steadily continues to develop and progress, at the same time as it undergoes both renewal and evolution. This is, by all means, congruent with the rapid developments that are taking place in the Sultanate of Oman. The same can be said about the fast-paced developments in Higher education worldwide.

## HEI Quality Assurance Framework



### 3. Post-audit visit procedure

Once the audit visit comes to a close, the Audit Panel would then write down a report containing all the positive and negative indicators that they had occasion to perceive. In addition, they will write their recommendations and suggestions aimed at further enhancing the strengths, and getting rid of the weaknesses. Their report will be made public and can be accessed at their electronic website. This standards' evaluation stage comes only four years after the quality audit stage, and the HEIs

agreed upon that the external audit team's schedule is officially sent to the HEI.

### 2. Audit – visit procedure

The essential aim behind the visit is to be quite clear about how things are going on at the HEI, and also to dig up a little bit deeper and ensure the accuracy of all that was stated in the self-audit file. The external visit is carried out by a professional panel, and consists essentially in conducting face-to-face interviews with all of the college's admin., Dean, Vice-Deans, and Heads of Academic Departments, as well as members of academic staff, students, and employees. The aim of these interviews is, once more, to compare the views and experiences of a range of interviewees with what was stated in the self-audit file. All that can be said during the personal interviews sessions will be kept confidential, in the sense that the views expressed will be only for the Audit Panel, and can never be reported in a manner that identifies who said it.