DESIGNING A QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR A CAMBODIAN UNIVERSITY

By

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Thesis Certification

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

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Abstract

Quality assurance has been a legislative requirement in Cambodian universities since 2003, yet it is still a relatively new concept. A formal quality-management framework at a systemic level does not yet exist and little attention has been paid to this in the higher education sector. This has led Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to make ad hoc decisions in dealing with quality issues. Despite some institutions having appointed dedicated quality assurance officers, there is little evidence of a quality management culture in Cambodian universities. For these reasons, the creation of a formal quality management system is imperative in order to ensure that universities conduct their operations effectively and can operate in a global higher education context.

The study has documented and analysed the issues, structures and processes of quality management in higher education in England, Australia and Thailand. This analysis has been applied to the Cambodian context in order to develop a relevant quality management framework for a particular Cambodian university (City University). This framework may also serve as a model for other higher education institutions in Cambodia.

The study included an analysis of the extensive literature related to the quality management systems currently employed in universities in England, Australia and Thailand. Senior managers, academics and staff in three Thai universities and in higher education institutions in Cambodia were surveyed and interviewed. This dual approach allowed the examination of the benefits and disadvantages of applying the features of externally established quality management systems to the Cambodian context.

Higher education institutions, in particular public universities, face many constraints and challenges in Cambodia, including scarcity of resources, poor governance, lack of autonomy, no culture of quality, poor human resource development and the like. These constraints prevent a standard Western-style system from being introduced into Cambodia in the short term. Nonetheless, it is imperative that Higher Education Institutions establish a formal and non-punitive quality management system. Introduction of a quality management system in two phases is recommended.

The first phase of the quality management system consists of simple, basic and general elements of quality with a view to establishing a quality culture in every academic's mindset, and permeating the ideals of a quality management programme throughout the entire

university population. When a culture of quality management is well embedded, the next phase could be implemented. This second phase introduces broader and higher level elements of quality, such as benchmarking, student attributes and a national qualifications' framework, closely linking internal quality management systems and external regulatory requirements to ensure consistency in the quality of graduates across the higher education sector, as well as attaining national, regional and international recognition.

The quality management model proposed will be an important contributor to reshaping and improving quality practices in higher education, as well as informing future key planners and higher education policy makers about quality management in Cambodia.

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Abbreviations

AACSB	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
ACC	Accreditation Committee of Cambodia
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework
AUN-QA	ASEAN University Network Quality Assurance
AUQA	Australian Universities Quality Agency
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
AUSSE	Australian Survey of Student Engagement
AUTC	Australian Universities Teaching Committee
CEQ	Course Experience Questionnaire
CHE	Commission on Higher Education
CQAHE	Committee for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
CU	City University (pseudonym for the University studied in Cambodia)
DEET	Department of Employment, Education and Training
DEEWR	Department for Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
DEST	Department of Education, Science and Training
DETYA	Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs
EQA	External Quality Assurance
EQUIS	European Quality Improvement System
EU	European Union
GDS	Graduate Destination Survey
HE	Higher Education
HECS	Higher Education Contribution Scheme
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
ILT	Institute for Learning and Teaching
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
MCEETYA	Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs
MoEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport
MUA	Ministry of University Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation

NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ONESQA	Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment
PAI	Public Administration Institution
PDCA	Plan-Do-Check-Act
PREQ	Postgraduate Research Experience Questionnaire
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
RAE	Research Assessment Exercises
RGC	Royal Government of Cambodia
SNCE	Supreme National Council of Education
SRA	Self-Assessment Report
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
TQM	Total Quality Management
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Ogranisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
USAID	the United States Agencies for International Development
WB	World Bank