

The Role of Assessment in Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Dr. Mohammad S. Al-Homoud

Associate Professor
Dean, Scientific Research
King Fahd University of Petroleum & Minerals
Dhahran 31261, Saudi Arabia
alhomoud@kfupm.edu.sa

ABSTRACT

Academic assessment is a process that is concerned with the continuous collection and analysis of information for the purpose of improvement of academic programs. The aim of assessment is to understand how educational programs are working and to determine whether they are contributing to student growth and development. It focuses on programs rather than on individual students. It provides information on whether the curriculum as a whole provides students with the knowledge, skills and values that graduates should possess in accordance with its mission and set goals and learning objectives.

Assessment of program inputs and processes establish the potential of the program. However, they do not necessarily guarantee the intended outcomes unless proven through measurement. The new trends in accreditation require programs to have self-assessment in practice. Industry push and competitive job markets have also contributed to the need for continuous program quality improvement that focus on students learning and preparation for professional practice after graduation.

The objective of this paper is to present the role of program self-assessment in the quality assurance in higher education. It presents an overview of the process of outcome-based program assessment and highlights the expected obstacles and the main factors for success.