

INTRODUCTION OF A QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN AN ITALIAN UNIVERSITY (ABSTRACT)

**by Andrea Chiarini – Contract Professor,
Engineering Department, University of Parma**

INTRODUCTION

For the introduction of the quality management system, in the university sector, probably, in the initial phase it is possible to utilize the requirements of the model ISO 9001. The certification according to the standard ISO 9000, in fact, originally in 1987 with the introduction of the first edition of these standards, which resulted in the harmony of the principal standards in that period of the quality assurance.

The company that initially holds the ISO 9000 certification belongs to the automotive, chemical, aerospace sectors, etc., for example the company that was obliged from the principal clients.

The fundamental concept of the system, in fact, concerns the principle of quality assurance, for example, guarantee to the clients the respect of the contractual requirements. This is fundamental also in the University sector, where the clients are the community (Students, parents and companies).

The present document gives guide lines, for the appointment, of the project that the Engineering Department of the University of Modena (Italy) is interested in.

THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

The project of the quality assurance system realization is based on the documentation and application of the organizational processes, considered critical from ISO 9001, for the guarantee of the quality level of education.

The following reports, in short, the fundamental processes that the University of Modena would like to apply.

PROCESS OF STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR QUALITY

Throughout this process the goals of short (1 year) and medium (3-5 years) related to the quality are defined, goals such as:

- Level of satisfaction of the students regarding the educational organizational teachings. Accessibility to equipment and laboratories etc..
- Level of satisfaction of faculty and staff.
- Percentage of employment for University or High School graduates, within a specific time period, with and without a coherent profile.
- Integration with both the industrial environment and the society.
- Relations with other Universities, faculty, etc..
- Improvement in the structure.
- Introduction of new courses and services.
- Etc..

The goals will be most measurable with a periodic evaluation of their achievement, benchmark and improvement actions.

This process is the responsibility of the President.

DEFINITION PROCESS OF THE ORGANIZATION

Again the President defines an organization chart, and the job descriptions related to the tasks and responsibilities for quality.

Fundamentally, the appointment of the *direction representative* (Quality Manager) will have the delegation for managing the system and the links between presidency,

council of departments and faculty council. The direction representative can coincide with the position of Dean (Direction), a professor, or with a responsible staff member.

MANAGEMENT PROCESS OF THE SYSTEM DOCUMENTATION

The documents for the management of the quality system are the classic ISO 9001: i.e. Manual of Quality, produce/process, operative instruction etc... Please note that even if the term “documentation” has been used, the process can be entirely managed electronically (i.e. Intranet).

MANAGEMENT PROCESS OF THE TRAINING CONTRACT

The faculty introduces in advance, to the students, curriculum, schedules for single courses, the professors, the possibility to use University equipments and laboratory facilities. The students may evaluate the formative offer, compare this offer with the offers of other facilities or Universities and then make their selection.

DESIGN PROCESS OF THE TRAINING PATHS

In this process, criteria of designing training paths of degree or diploma Courses are defined, by underlining:

- Analysis of the needs of the work market and of the students.
- Planning of the project activities.
- Definition of the schedules.
- Verification and re-examine of the results of the projects (schedules, calendars, etc.)
- Definite approval of the projects.
- Modification of courses already in session.

REALIZATION PROCESS OF THE TRAINING SERVICE

It is necessary to define the methods of management of the course in terms of:

- Planning of classes, equipment and laboratories.
- Compilation of eventual registers.
- Safety
- Management of the documentation.
- Maintenance of the equipment.
- Etc..

CONTROL PROCESS OF TRAINING SERVICE

It is probably the most delicate process of the quality system. At the end of the academic year, of the entire course degree, it is necessary in fact to distribute a course evaluation to the students, in order to review the overall satisfaction on the single lessons and course organization. Everything without creating discussion about the principle of free teaching.

MANAGEMENT PROCESS OF INEFFICIENCIES

As a result of complaints to the Presidency, negative course evaluations, repetitive various inefficiencies etc., it is necessary to define who takes action and how to handle the problem. The inefficiencies must be the object of statistics and periodical stratifications. The information results can be notified either internally or externally to the Faculty.

AUDIT PROCESS

Periodically, the direction representative nominates a team of evaluators (internal or external) who assess the application of the documented processes and the accomplishment of the goals of the policy. The results are then brought to the attention of the President, and in any case, from the point of view of the continuous improvement, are discussed with the students interviewed. The auditing must be conducted in an independent manner.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROCESS OF THE FACULTY AND STAFF

It is necessary to define how the educational needs of the faculty and staff (attend external seminars, internal comparison meetings, join with co-workers with more expertise for staff, etc.), in the spirit of increasing the competences at any level.

CONCLUSIONS

This project should bring the Faculty of Engineering advantages such as:

- Improvement of internal organization.
- The increase of satisfaction of the external and the internal client.
- The increase of image towards the outside
- Definition of a repeatable model in the remaining Italian Universities.

KEY WORDS

Assessment, Training, Faculty of Engineering, Quality Management, Processes, Quality System, University