

A Study of Quality Assurance in Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand

By

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand. Two research questions were explored: 1) how does quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes operate? 2) how can the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes be enhanced? In order to answer the research questions, questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data from five Rajabhat Institutes. The questionnaire was used to collect data from ninety-one members of teaching staff. Four interview schedules were also used to collect data from Quality Assurance Committee members, administrators of Rajabhat Institutes, administrators in the ministries, students and employers of graduates from Rajabhat Institutes. Documents from Rajabhat Institutes and government reports were also used to support data from both questionnaire and interviews. The research fieldwork was carried out in Thailand during July-November 2001.

The findings of the study revealed that Rajabhat Institutes operated quality assurance based on a quality framework established by the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council (ORIC). They defined their quality assurance as composed of three components: quality control, quality audit and quality assessment. Four Quality Assurance Committees were set up to respond to quality assurance. Three strategies were used in order to operate quality assurance: self-study, audit, and peer review. The findings of the study also showed that Rajabhat Institutes had experienced some difficulties in trying to implement quality assurance. Various obstacles to quality assurance occurred. They had not completed all processes of quality assurance because an external quality assessment had not been completed. It was yet to be carried out by a public organisation established by the government.

The experiences in Rajabhat Institutes show both the benefits and costs of quality assurance. In order to resolve difficulties in implementing quality assurance, the study suggests a management strategy for implementing the model of quality assurance for Rajabhat Institutes. These need to be applied

flexibly not just for Rajabhat Institutes but also other higher education institutions that aim to implement quality assurance.

The findings also showed that there were several ways to enhance the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes, for instance, increasing the awareness and importance of quality assurance, increasing knowledge and understanding on quality assurance, and using an appropriate system of quality assurance.

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Abbreviations

AAU	Academic Audit Unit
AIT	Asian Institute of Technology
ANS	American National Standards
ASQC	American Society for Quality Control
AUQC	Australian University Quality Agency
BE 5750	British Standard
BMA	Bangkok Metropolitan Administration
CHEA	Council for Higher Education Accreditation
CHED	Commission on Higher Education
CNE	Comite' National d' Evaluation

Abbreviations

CNAA	Council for National Academic Awards
CUP	Committee of University Principals
CVCP	Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals
EC-C	European Community-Commission
ISO*	International Organization for Standardization
LAN	Lembaga Akreditasi
ORIC	Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council
ONEC	Office of National Education Commission
OESE	Office of Educational Standards and Evaluation
RI	Rajabhat Institute
RI	Rajabhat Institutes
RIT	Rajamangala Institute of Technology
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MUA	Ministry of University Affairs
MOE	Ministry of Education
NAHE	National Agency for Higher Education
NESDB	National Economic and Social Development Board
NIDA	National Institute of Department Administration
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
NZVCC	New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee
PCFC	Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
SEAMEO	South East Asian Ministers of Education Organization
TQM	Total Quality Management
UFC	University Funding Council
UK	The United Kingdom
US	The United States of America

*Because ISO had different abbreviations in different languages: IOS (International Organisation for Standardization) in English; OIN (Organisation Internationale de normalisation) in French, it was decided to use a word derived from Greek 'isos' which means 'equal'. Therefore, whatever the countries, whatever the languages, the short form of the Organisation's name is always 'ISO' (ISO, 2004).

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Declaration

I, Chawewan Boonkoun, hereby certify that I am the author of this work except in places where references are made to others. The work has never been submitted to any institutions for any award.

Signed

C. Boonkoun

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Chapter One

Background to the Study

This chapter introduces the general background to the study. It presents general ideas about the quality assurance requirements in higher education institutions in Thailand. The chapter also describes the research purposes, a definition of relevant key terms and the conceptual framework of the study. The chapter begins with an introduction which mainly focuses on the need for quality assurance in higher education, particularly in higher education institutions in Thailand.

1.1 Introduction

Over the past decade, quality assurance has clearly become a key issue for higher education in many countries throughout the world (see for instance, Harman, 1998; SEAMEO, 1998; Kump, 1997; ORIC, 1996; Frazer, 1992). In Thailand, the concept of quality assurance, derived from the business and industrial sector, was first applied to higher education institutions during the mid 1990s. The reasons for the necessity of quality assurance in higher education in Thailand can be explained as follows. First, during the past few years, there has been a growing demand in Thai society for a new radical reform in education in both the public and private sectors in order to improve the quality and standard of educational provision (ONEC, 1998). In addition, there was a lack of systems to ensure the quality of education in the country. Thus, improving the quality of educational provision seems to be the main reason for quality assurance in higher education in Thailand. Second, there is a concern about the 'standard' of education within different types of the institutions. There is a question about the standard of educational provision between universities and colleges or institutes as well as a question from communities about the quality of educational provision within higher education institutions. This may be similar to the case in the UK when the number of universities was increased (Goodland, 1995; Berdahl, *et al.*, 1991). Third, the public has expressed about the quality of graduates from different higher education institutions. The question from employers 'Which

universities did you finish your study at?' was frequently found for graduates who went for their job interviews in Thailand. This seems similar to the concept that 'all products must satisfy customers' in the business sector, where quality assurance has existed. Therefore, to insure standards of education, quality assurance has become a requirement for all higher education institutions whether they are able to ensure that their roles are recognised by the concerned stakeholders or not. Fourth, there is a difference in the budget which the government provides for different higher education institutions. More money was allocated to universities rather than other higher education institutions such as Rajabhat Institutes. This has led to the question, 'Does it mean that the institutions that received a bigger amount of budget have to provide a better quality of graduates?' (Nebres, 1998, p.2) Nebres also indicated that 'society begins to ask whether quality and quality investment should mean investing a huge amount of money into (sic) graduates who can compete with the best in the world or whether it should mean investing the same amount of money to (sic) graduates who are lower in quality. This (sic) has been a push for universities and colleges in many countries to educate more students at high standards for the same or less money'. Fifth, being challenged with the rapid changes in the world of advanced technologies as stated in the Eighth National Education Development Plan (1997-2001), education in Thailand is required to play a more proactive and developmental role to cope with the globalization movements. Accordingly, the Eighth National Education Development Plan has been formulated with concepts and processes, objectives, policies and major programmes for education development (ONEC, 1998). One of the objectives in the Eighth National Development Plans is to improve the quality of education and its relevance to the needs of individuals, communities and the nation. Quality assurance is needed for educational provision within the country.

The Ministry of University Affairs (MUA) and the Ministry of Education (MOE) are the two main ministries that are in charge of the provision of higher education in Thailand. MUA is responsible for the educational provision of public and private universities whereas MOE is responsible for the

educational provision of Rajabhat Institutes (former teaching colleges) and the Rajamangala Institute of Technology (RIT).

The provision of education in the MUA aims to promote learners' knowledge and skills in various disciplines, and to improve their progress and excellence, whereas the provision of education in the MOE aims to serve the needs of the rural community. In 1996, quality assurance was announced as a new policy for all higher education institutions. Both ministries have been responsible for the implementation of quality assurance in higher education institutions. In the same year, Handbooks of Quality Assurance were established for all higher education institutions in order to develop a quality assurance model for maintaining institutional academic standards, and to encourage higher education institutions to develop their own quality assurance mechanisms and systems suitable for their own purposes and conditions. (MUA, 1996; ORIC, 1996).

1.2 The reasons for the study

There are several reasons for carrying out a study of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The reasons are explained as follows:

First, the primary motivation for this study emerged when I was employed by the Ministry of Education at the time when quality assurance was a new issue for higher education in Thailand. I was aware of a lack of understanding of the topic and therefore one aim of this study was to provide increased knowledge in this area.

Second, quality assurance became a new policy for higher education. The Thai government announced quality assurance as an important policy for higher education of the country. According to the 1999 National Education Act, the setting of standards and a system of quality assurance are required in the educational system of the country (ONEC, 2001). Therefore, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of University Affairs attempt to encourage all higher education institutions under their administration to implement quality assurance by establishing the guidelines of quality

assurance in the handbook of quality assurance for higher education institutions. The Handbook of Quality Assurance for Universities was established by the Ministry of University Affairs, whereas the Handbook of Quality Assurance for Rajabhat Institutes was established by the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council, The Ministry of Education.

Attempts to implement quality assurance in higher education successfully are not only found in Thailand but also in other countries. The report from SEAMEO (Southeast Asian Ministries of Education Organisation) (1998) revealed that quality assurance is a key issue for higher education for the Asian and Pacific countries. The governments in these countries have attempted to implement quality assurance but little progress appears to have been made. Here is an example from a conference on quality assurance in higher education which was held in Bangkok, Thailand:

Many years back, I had a very nice dream. In that dream, I saw us having a system being equipped in our Asia (sic) and the Pacific region to determine the quality of our higher education. Waking up to the reality only made me accept the fact that it was still impossible as then very few countries had taken up the issue of 'quality assurance' seriously. The tune that came in my ears was a song 'The Impossible Dream'

[Sirichana, 1998, p. 15]

Third, in my opinion, quality assurance is new. This opinion may be different from that of Bitzer and Malkerbe who indicated that 'quality assurance is no novelty in university education' (Bitzer & Malherbe, 1995). However, Thai higher education is unlike some countries in which quality assurance has existed. In Thailand, there was no evidence to show that quality assurance issues have been widely debated in higher education institutions. While many countries have already had accreditation or quality assessment systems for the programmes provided within higher education institutions, in Thailand, there is no system to ensure the educational provision. Thus, to understand and implement quality assurance successfully seems challenging for higher education institutions of the country.

Fourth, my responsibility in the Rajabhat Institute was related to quality assurance when I was a member of the Quality Assurance Committee in the

Faculty of Education. At that time, I found that it was difficult for staff to understand and accept quality assurance.

Fifth, there is a lack of studies of quality assurance in higher education institutions in Thailand, particularly in Rajabhat Institutes. A review of the literature showed that there was only one study and a report on quality assurance in higher education in Thailand. The study was published in 1994, before quality assurance had been implemented in higher education institutions. This study focused on institutions under the administration of the Ministry of University Affairs. Documents on quality assurance in higher education institutions from the United States, UK, Japan, Australia, Germany and Thailand were analysed (Sirichana, 1994). The findings from this study revealed a description of the history and general background of quality assurance from different countries. However, it did not highlight quality assurance in terms of its implementation in higher education institutions. The other was a report on quality assurance which was published in 1997 by the Office of the National Education Commission (ONEC, 1997). This reported the general background of quality assurance in higher education institutions in different countries, particular in the UK and US.

All the reasons above developed my interest in the study of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand in order to pursue knowledge in this area and to develop quality assurance for higher education in my country.

At present, quality assurance is being implemented in all Rajabhat Institutes. The ways to carry out quality assurance depend on the mechanism developed in each institute. The guidelines of quality assurance established by the Office of Rajabhat Institutes did not include all the procedures of this implementation. This leads the questions about how Rajabhat Institutes manage the operation of quality assurance.

1.3 Purpose of the study and the research questions

The purpose of the current study is systematically to explore, describe and discuss how quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes operates. In order to

carry out a study of the problem, the following questions were developed. The main research questions are:

1. How does quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand operate?
2. How can the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes be enhanced?

The answers to these two research questions are derived from the perception of people in different groups.

In order to answer the first research question, the following four subsidiary questions are posed.

- 1.1 What system of quality assurance is used in Rajabhat Institutes?
- 1.2 Who is responsible for quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes?
- 1.3 How is quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes carried out?
- 1.4 Does quality assurance make an impact on Rajabhat Institutes, and if so how?

Similarly, four subsidiary questions are posed in order to answer the second research question.

- 2.1 What are the obstacles to quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes?
- 2.2 How do Rajabhat Institutes attempt to overcome those obstacles?
- 2.3 Who are responsible for overcoming those obstacles?
- 2.4 How should quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes be enhanced?
- 2.5 Who should be responsible for quality assurance enhancement in Rajabhat Institutes?

1.4 Definitions of key terms

Relevant key terms related to quality assurance in higher education are defined by many organisations: for example, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA, 1997; QAA, 1999b), the American National Standard (ANS, 1994), the Ministry of University Affairs, Thailand (MUA, 1996), The Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council (ORIC, 1996). In this study, relevant key terms of the study are given as follows:

- 1.4.1 'Higher education' means the provision of education after secondary level.
- 1.4.2 'Higher education institution' refers to a university, college, or institution that provides education after secondary level.
- 1.4.3 'Quality assurance' means the means through which an institution confirms that the conditions are in place for students to achieve the standard set by the institutions or other governing, or awarding body (QAA, 1997).
- 1.4.4 'Operation of quality assurance' means all activities taken during the process of carrying out quality assurance.
- 1.4.5 'Quality enhancement' means all action taken throughout the institutions to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of activities and processes in order to provide added benefit to both the organisation and its customers.
- 1.4.6 'Obstacles to quality assurance' means the difficulties occurs during the period when quality assurance has been implemented in higher education institutions.

1.5 Theoretical framework

In terms of a theoretical framework, this study focuses on quality assurance systems in higher education institutions. The literature shows that in the early 1990s, there were three systems of quality assurance for higher education institutions to choose from. These systems were BS 5750, Total Quality Management, and a system of the college's own devising (Sally and Hingley 1991, p. 4). There was wide debate on these three systems during the 1990s (see for instance, Sally & Hingley, 1991; Doherty, 1994; Tribus, 1994; Stott, 1994, McRobert, 1994). Later, the British Standard System (BS 5750) was developed to ISO 9000 (Moreland and Clark, 1998).

Among these three systems, research findings on quality assurance in higher education showed that Total Quality Management (TQM) has been implemented in higher education institutions in some countries, for instance, in Malaysia, the UK, and the USA (Kanji, Tambi, and Wallace, 1999). Amnri and Razman (1996 cited in Kanji, Tambi, and Wallace, 1999, p.357) also stated that the Malaysian government was implementing Total Quality Management (TQM) in all government Ministries and departments via policies set up by its Public Service Department. The Netherlands is another example where TQM has been applied to higher education institutions (Westerheijden, 1999). Similarly, ISO was also implemented in higher education institutions. This was found in Moreland and Clark's case study on ISO in educational organisations in the UK.

The literature also shows that there were other systems of quality assurance that have been implemented in higher education institutions. These systems were also developed in business and industrial sectors. They were: Baldrige Award, Deming Prize. Izadi, Kashef & Stadt (1996 cited in Nebres, 1998, p. 2) stated that:

When one speaks of quality assurance in institutions, the overall framework is that of Total Quality Management (TQM). A survey of the literature on quality assurance in higher education shows three Quality Systems from the corporate world that are being discussed as most applicable to higher education as it seeks to implement some aspects of TQM. These are Baldrige Award, the Deming Prize, and ISO 9000 Registration.

Further study on quality assurance in higher education revealed that an institutional system of quality assurance was detailed in Nilsson and Walhen (2000). This system was used in the Swedish higher education institutions. The strength of such a system was that it allows higher education institutions to create and develop their own quality assurance systems.

The theoretical framework on quality assurance systems in this study, is therefore based on different systems of quality assurance that have been found from previous studies on quality assurance in higher education and from a literature review.

There is the possibility that different systems of quality assurance developed in business and industrial sectors may be implemented in Rajabhat Institutes. At the same time, the Handbook of Quality Assurance for Rajabhat Institutes revealed that the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council encourages all Rajabhat Institutes to develop their own quality assurance systems. This may lead to the possibility of the existence of an Institutional system which has already been found in the Swedish higher education institutions.

The literature also shows that different systems of quality assurance that have been implemented in higher education institutions in many countries have some common elements. These common elements may be seen as common elements of the national system of quality assurance. (see for instance, Kumpt, 1997; Westerheijden *et al.*, 1994 cited in Kump, 1997, p. 59; Vroeijenstijn, 1995; Van Vught and Westerheijden, 1993). These elements were developed on the basis of foreign experiences and they were introduced in Kump's study on 'Introduction of systematic quality assurance in Slovenian higher education'. The system of national quality assurance has drawn on elements that are common in other national systems, for instance, Britain, Denmark, France, and the Netherlands (Van Vught and Westerheijden, 1993; Vroeijenstijn, 1995). These elements are composed of: the setting up of a meta-level coordinating body, self-evaluation within institutions, external peer review, publication of reports, and an indirect link to funding. These common elements form a basis for setting out a general international model that will in the future provide comparative quality

assurance of higher education systems and recognition of academic qualifications gained throughout Europe (EC-C 1993, Brennan and Van Vught 1993 cited in Kump 1997, p. 59; Vroeijwnstijn 1995).

This study is also interested in the UK model of quality assurance, which is composed of three components. The reason for choosing the UK quality assurance model can be explained as follows:

First, the UK is the pioneer country that has had experience in quality assurance for many years. The literature shows that the concept of quality audit has been developed in the UK since 1990 when the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals established a small Academic Audit Unit aiming to audit quality assurance processes within universities.

Second, the UK model of quality assurance has been used in many countries, for instance, in European, Asian countries or in South Africa.

Third, because the 'terms' for quality assurance used in Thailand and Rajabhat Institutes are, for instance, quality control, quality audit, and quality assessment. These terms are similar to those used in the UK rather than the US. This seems to show that the concept of quality assurance in Thailand has been developed based on the UK model while the American model of quality assurance uses the term 'regulation' or 'accreditation', instead. The literature shows that:

Accreditation term is most frequently used in the United States. Accreditation can apply either to institutions or to programmes (subject or professional areas).

[Frazer, 1994, p. 106]

Chernay describes the purposes of accreditation as follows:

Accreditation assures the educational community, the general public, and other agencies or organisations that an institution or programme (a) has clearly defined and educationally appropriate objectives, (b) maintains conditions under which their achievement can reasonably be expected, (c) is in fact accomplishing them substantially, and (d) can be expected to continue to do so.

[Chernay, 1990, cited in Frazer 1994, p.106]

It seems that 'accreditation' is the term that has also been used in the UK. However, it has been used with a particular purpose, as Frazer (1994) stated:

Description of the accreditation system in the United States seen through British eyes has been published. In some countries, accreditation would imply that at least a threshold standard was intended and being achieved. For example, in the UK professional bodies accredit courses of study (programmes), meaning that graduates will be granted professional recognition. ... The Council for National Academic Awards (CNNA) in the UK and the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation use accreditation to mean that subject to certain safeguard and to regular review, an institution is self-validating.

Fourth, the quality assurance system in Rajabhat Institutes established by the ORIC is composed of three components. They are quality control, quality audit and quality assessment. These three components are similar to quality assurance system defined by the Quality Assurance Agency in the UK. The quality assurance system composed of these three components is also used in the universities in Thailand (QAA, 1999a; QAA, 1999b; MUA, 1996; ORIC, 1996). The meanings of these components are as follows:

- 1) 'Quality Control' means the mechanism within institutions for maintaining and enhancing the quality of their teaching.
- 2) 'Quality Audit' means external scrutiny aimed at providing guarantees.
- 3) 'Quality Assessment' means external views, and judgements about the quality of teaching and learning in institutions.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

The outcomes of the study present the operation of quality assurance and the ways to enhance quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The study also includes some relevant issues raised during the discussion of the findings, for instance, cost and benefits of quality assurance, and what we can learn from a case in Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand. The thesis is divided into nine chapters as follows:

Chapter One: Background to the study

Chapter One begins with a brief introduction and the reasons for a study of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand. This is followed by research purposes, research questions, definitions of key terms, and the conceptual framework of the study.

Chapter Two: Review of the literature on quality assurance in higher education

Chapter Two explores the involvement and the development of quality assurance in higher education in different countries. The chapter begins with questions about quality and quality assurance in higher education, with the development of quality assurance in some developed and developing countries in the second part. The third part focuses on quality assurance systems in higher education and the obstacles to quality in higher education in different countries.

Chapter Three: Quality assurance in higher education in Thailand

Chapter Three presents related issues on quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes and other higher education institutions in Thailand. It covers the development of the educational system of the country, declaration of quality assurance policy in higher education institutions in Thailand, and also in Rajabhat Institutes, the establishment of an independent organisation responsible for quality assurance in higher education institutions in Thailand. The chapter also includes links between previous studies on quality assurance with this study.

Chapter Four: Research methodology

This chapter explains the research design of the study. It describes the triangulation technique which is used for the study. The chapter also includes research methods, samples of the study, research instruments,

research fieldwork that has been done in Thailand, research ethics, and data analysis.

Chapter Five- Chapter Seven: Research findings

These three chapters present the findings of the study. The findings of the study in each chapter were drawn from interview and questionnaire data, and document analysis. Chapter Five deals with the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. Three main areas are presented in order to answer the first research question on the systems of quality assurance that have been used in Rajabhat Institutes, people who are responsible for quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes, and the ways that Rajabhat Institutes have carried out three components of quality assurance.

Chapter Six presents the impact of quality assurance during the period that Rajabhat Institutes have been implementing quality assurance. The impact is considered as the impact on Rajabhat Institutes themselves, the impact on the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes, the impact on staff, the impact on teaching and learning processes, and the impact on students and the employers of graduates from Rajabhat Institutes.

Chapter Seven describes the obstacles to quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes, the ways to overcome those obstacles, and quality assurance enhancement within Rajabhat Institutes. The chapter also includes the people who should be responsible for overcoming and enhancing quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

Chapter Eight: Costs and benefits of quality assurance, and what we can learn from the case of Thailand.

This chapter focuses on discussion of the research findings related to the previous findings and theoretical framework of the study. Relevant issues particularly the model of quality assurance in higher education institutions, the cost and benefits of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes, and what we can learn from the case of Thailand are discussed. The chapter ends with

suggestions on the implementation of quality assurance in higher education institutions.

Chapter Nine: Conclusion

Chapter Nine summarises the main findings of the study, the strengths and weaknesses of the study, implications of the study, possibilities for further studies, and provides a conclusion to the study.

1.7 Summary

In this chapter, a general background to the study has been provided. The chapter also included both personal and professional motivations for the study, the purposes of the study, definitions of relevant key terms as well as the conceptual framework of the study.

The next chapter presents the general background of quality assurance in higher education. It focuses on the development of quality assurance in higher education in both developed and developing countries, quality assurance systems, the obstacles to quality assurance in higher education institutions from the previous studies, and the links between the previous studies on quality assurance in higher education and this study.

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature on Quality Assurance in Higher Education

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and discuss the general background of quality assurance from the literature. This includes the involvement in quality assurance of higher education, the development of quality assurance from different countries, quality assurance systems in higher education institutions, methodologies for quality assurance, managing strategies for quality assurance and obstacles to quality assurance in higher education. The chapter is divided into six parts. The first part addresses relevant questions about quality and quality assurance in higher education. The second part reviews the development of quality assurance in higher education in both developed and developing countries. The third part focuses on quality assurance systems in higher education and the research findings on quality assurance in higher education. The fourth part presents methodologies for quality assurance. The fifth part focuses on managing strategies for quality assurance in higher education and the last part explains the links between previous studies on quality assurance in higher education and this study.

2.1 Relevant questions about quality assurance in higher education

The debate on the meaning of quality and quality assurance, the reasons why quality and quality assurance have been adopted to higher education, as well as when they were adopted in higher education have mainly been found from the literature. Hence, this part of the chapter addresses the relevant questions of 'what', 'when', and 'why' and aims to describe quality and quality assurance in higher education. Discussion on these relevant questions is also included in this part of the chapter.

2.1.1 What is quality in higher education?

'What do we mean by quality in higher education?' It is not easy to find the answer to this question because literature showed that the meaning of quality was varied. The meaning of quality in the 1970s was as Pirsig (1976, cited in Doherty 1994, p. 231) stated:

Quality ... you know what it is, yet, you don't know what it is...
But some things are better than others, that is, they have
more quality... If no one knows what it is, then for all practical
purposes it doesn't exist at all. But for all practical purposes,
it really does exist.

There was not any international meaning of quality in higher education. Frazer (1994, p. 105) explained that:

There is no international agreement concerning the meaning
of quality in higher education, it is not surprising that there
is confusion about the terms used to describe various
activities aimed at the maintaining and enhancing quality.

According to the two quotations above, quality seems to be a philological concept and it is difficult to find a meaning of quality in higher education. However, an attempt to define quality in higher education was made. Many definitions of quality were given by different people, for instance, 'conformance to requirements' (Crosby, 1979), 'fitness for use', as judged by the user (Juran, 1982), 'fitness for purpose' (Ball, 1985), 'a thought revolution in management' (Ishikawa, 1985). Similarly, Goh (1996, p. 188) indicated that 'quality is a term that can be defined and interpreted in many ways'. It is not easy to provide a single definition of quality, particularly when the concept of quality assurance has been discussed in different areas, for instance, the definition of quality in the business sector may be defined as 'full customer satisfaction' or 'fitness for purpose' or 'a thought revolution in management'. Goh also indicated that many quality management professionals had used the concept of 'customer satisfaction' to judge the goods and services generated by an organization.

It is noticeable that the meaning of quality originated from the business and industrial sectors. As a result, the meaning of quality defined by many authors related to key terms used in those areas, such as 'customer satisfaction, management'. Peter and Coote (cited in Green 1994, p. 13) also

defined quality based on business and industrial sectors. They stated that the traditional concept of quality was associated with the notion of providing a product or service that was distinctive and special, and which conferred status on the owner or user. Extremely high standards of production, delivery and presentation were set, which could only be achieved at great expense or with the use of scarce resources.

Harvey and Green (1993, p. 10) indicated that quality was related to two things. First, quality was relative to the user of the term and the circumstances in which it was invoked. It meant different things to different people. Second, it was the benchmark relativism of quality. In some views, quality is seen in term of absolutes. There is the uncompromising, self evident, absolute of quality.

Later, Harvey (1994, p. 3) stated that quality can be viewed in terms of:

- 1) the exceptional (high standards);
- 2) consistency (zero defects, getting things right first time);
- 3) fitness for purposes (meeting stated needs or requirements);
- 4) value for money;
- 5) transformation (enhancing or empowering the participant).

Harvey also pointed out that the government gives priority to value for money while expecting standards to be maintained.

Doherty (1994, p.231-132) indicated that 'quality itself had some contradictions, for instance, quality can be considered as both a strategic and an operational concept. It is about people and systems. It has to be defined both by the institutions and its customers, and it can not stand still, a high quality today may be poor quality tomorrow'.

The American Society for Quality Control defined quality as 'conformance to requirements' and 'degree of excellence' (ASQC, 1994, p. vii).

Billing (1996, p. 205) indicated that the University of Westminster defined quality as having the following meanings:

- 1) quality is about anything that can be improved;
- 2) quality affects everyone in the university equally;
- 3) quality works when individual staff and students feel empowered to fulfil their responsibilities;
- 4) quality is about teamwork;
- 5) quality can start anywhere and never ends.

More answers to the question 'What is quality in higher education?' were found from the literature as follows.

Green (1994) considered aspects or dimensions of higher education which had a general mission related to two activities. They were: 1) producing graduates to meet the human resources needs of organisations in the business, industrial and service sectors (including public services); 2) pushing forward the frontiers of knowledge via research. Quality in this case, therefore, was concerned with the production of graduates, teaching and research in higher education. Green also defined quality as 'effectiveness in achieving institutional goals'. As Green explained, 'a high quality institution was one that clearly stated its mission or purposes and was efficient and effective in meeting the goals that it had set itself' (p. 9).

Tofte (1995, p. 470) defined quality in education based on Deming's, Juran's and Ishikawa's concept of quality as being determined by the customer. The goal of educational systems is to provide students with the relevant competence and learning situations that they need for bringing meaning to their lives, and to create a better society. Quality in education in this dimension, therefore means: 1) providing teaching and challenging educational situations fit for all students' needs, interests and expectations; 2) working for continuous improvement in all processes to make students satisfied; and 3) working to maintain and/or add value to life.

Nebres (1998, p. 2) stated that in a new situation, with a large number of universities and colleges, the meaning of quality involved in cost and efficiency became more important. The country and society began to ask whether universities and colleges produced quality graduates or not.

Doherty (1994) also pointed out that colleges themselves had defined quality in different ways. Doherty reviewed more than fifty schemes from individual colleges and Local Education Authority (LEA), and there was a range of different definitions of quality as follows: 1) 'delight the customer'; 2) 'the elimination of errors and the prevention of waste'; 3) 'It includes the complete service provided by the institution and its staff. It also refers to the teaching and learning experience that must be at the centre of our professional relationship with our students'; 4) 'fitness for purpose'; 5) 'improving the teaching and learning of our students'; 6) 'excellence, customer focus, flexibility, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, conformance to standard'; 7) 'the ability to satisfy the stated, or implied, needs of our students and their sponsors'; 8) 'conformance to specification'; 9) 'improved client satisfaction'; 10) 'ensuring the accessibility, effectiveness and validity of our programmes'; 11) 'quality is everyone's business'.

Gaster (1997, p. 41) stated that:

It is not easy to come up with a definition that suits all circumstances and is at the same time capable of being put into practice by everyone, from top to bottom of an organisation. In recently, the definition of quality has to be negotiated.

This was similar to Brennan's view, which considered that quality in higher education is a multi-dimension concept and any attempt to legislate a single definition seems bound to end in failure (Brennan, 1997, p. 9).

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA, 2001) defines quality in higher education as the effectiveness of the standards and the effectiveness of teaching and learning as follows:

There are two dimensions to the quality of higher education. The first is the effectiveness of the standards set by institutions. The second is the effectiveness of teaching and learning support in providing opportunities for students to achieve those standards.

There are some observations about the definitions of quality assurance from the literature review as follow:

First, although a debate on quality has taken place worldwide (see for instance, Craft 1992; Neave, 1994; Ferderikes *et al.* 1994, de Ruder 1994

cited in Goodland, 1995, p. 8), it seems to be clear that definitions of quality in the early years of the 1980-1990s was varied and reflected a different perspective on the individual and society. It is difficult to find a single definition of quality. In addition, quality can mean 'different things to different people' as Harvey and Green (1993, p. 10) stated. A definition of quality seems easier if it relates to something.

Second, the definition of quality as 'fitness for purpose' was found frequently (see for instance: Ball, 1985; Green 1993; Goodland, 1995; Goh, 1996; Gaster, 1999). In my opinion, the strength of this meaning is that it is more flexible for all purposes. The weakness is that it is too broad and more philosophical than practical.

In my opinion, quality seems more appropriate for these given meanings:

1. Quality means 'fitness for purpose'. This meaning of quality was defined by Ball (1985). Green (1994) indicated that this definition was adopted by most analysts and policy makers in higher education, and became significant in higher education. Mcdowell and Sambell (1999) explained that quality defined in this way would 'allow institutions to define their purpose in their mission and objectives, so quality was demonstrated by achieving this'. In addition, using the definition of quality as this concept can be related to two tasks. The first task is for higher education institutions to set objectives that embody what is expected and required by students and customers. The second task is for the institutions to ensure that they attain their objectives. This definition is also similar to the definition of quality given by Juran (1982) as 'fitness for use', as judged by the user (Mcdowell & Sambell, 1999, p. 107)

2. Quality means 'conformance to a specification or standard' and 'effectiveness in achieving institutional goals', as Green (1994) defined it.

3. Quality 'is about people and systems. It has to be defined both by the institutions and its customers' (Doherty, 1994, p. 131-132).

The meanings of quality as Green and Doherty defined it seem to be suitable for use in higher education institutions. It is clear that the meaning of quality as Doherty stated it in 1994 is now being used widely in higher education institutions.

4. Quality is related to two dimensions: 'the effectiveness of standards set by the institutions' and 'the effectiveness of teaching and learning support in providing opportunities for students to achieve those standards'. This definition of quality was given by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA, 2001).

The meaning of quality given by QAA in 2001 as 'the effectiveness of standards set by the institutions, and the effectiveness of teaching and learning support in providing opportunities for students to achieve those standards' is similar to the meaning of quality that has been used in higher education institutions in my country as well as in Rajabhat Institutes. This is supported by Brown (1997, p. 13), who indicated that the meaning of quality in higher education should be mainly based on 'the quality of teaching and learning'. Thus, this definition of quality seems to be suitable for the question 'What is quality in higher education?' in this century.

Fourth, there is the development of the definition of quality in higher education. It is noticeable that the recent meanings of quality in higher education, for instance, one given by the QAA (2001, p. 1) seems more practical than those given during the 1970s-1990s.

2.1.2 Why is higher education involved in quality?

Frazer (1994, p. 101-102) indicated that the concern for quality in higher education came from several quarters:

- 1) Government, which in most countries is the paymaster.
- 2) Citizens, who pay tax to the government.
- 3) Employers of graduates.
- 4) Students and their parents.
- 5) Teachers, professors and managers in universities.

The literature shows that there are a few reasons for the involvement in quality of higher education (see for instance, Frazer, 1994; Green 1994; QAA: 2000. These reasons are as follows. First, there was a public concern for standards. There was an increasing number of students. At this point, Green indicated that the rapid expansion of student numbers was one of the reasons for the concern about quality in higher education. Similarly, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA, 2001) indicated that in most countries, universities find themselves subject to increased numbers of students. QAA (2001, p. 1-2) also stated that:

...Academic standards are not a private matter, and universities are called upon to demonstrate that standard. A substantial proportion of the population is now touched by higher education, as students, parents, employers, and teachers. The transition from elite to exclusive, to mass and inclusive provision has transformed relationship with the society that it serves. There are new stakeholders with expectations to be met and information needs to be satisfied.

Second, there was a concern about 'value for money'. Frazer explained that the government and taxpayers, including employers, were concerned about rising costs and the priority given to higher education institutions. QAA also indicated that governments in many countries find themselves unable to support financially a mass participation system at the rate per student that was affordable in a smaller, elite system.

The third, the reason was effectiveness and accountability to society. Frazer pointed out that the expansion of higher education in many countries had not brought the prosperity some promised it would. Universities needed to be open and explain to society at large what they were about and how well they were doing. Frazer (1994:102) stated that:

There are well-known examples of developing countries that undertook massive expansion of higher education only to discover that there were many unemployed, underemployed, or misemployed graduates who were disillusioned and often a focus for discontent. In other countries, employers complain about the inability of graduates to contribute to their enterprise. Horror stories circulate of innumerate and illiterate graduates with high expectations but minds filled with knowledge that cannot be used.

In addition, the involvement in quality in higher education is probably based on relevant contexts of the country. Frazer also pointed out that it depended on the culture and history of each country and its state of economic development.

2.1.3 When is higher education concerned with quality?

The UK higher education has been involved with quality issues since early in the 1980s. There were a number of significant initiatives, for instance, notably the National Quality Campaign, the establishment of the British Quality Association in 1981, and the Government White Paper published in 1982.

Green (1994, p. vii) indicated that UK higher education had been concerned with quality since the mid 1980s. At that period, public interest and involvement in quality and standards had been intensified by increasing attention given by successive British governments to reforming higher education.

According to Frazer (1992, p. 9) higher education has been concerned with quality for a decade. Quality became a key issue in higher education in the early 1990s. He stated:

The 1990s may become known as 'the decade of quality' in industry, in commerce, in government circles and now in higher education. The word 'quality' is on everyone's lips.

Doherty (1994, p. 3) stated that 'there is nothing unusual about educationists having a concern for quality. This has been going on for a long time'. He continued his statement with this explanation for a case in the UK:

Since the White Paper, Education and Training for the Twenty-first Century of 1991, there has been a massive burgeoning of interest in what some cynics these days refer to as the 'quality business'. We now have a plethora of custodians of quality, all of whom are at least to some extent legitimated by the Education Reform Act of 1988, the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 as well as the White Paper with this concern for quality and accountability.

According to the quotations above, it seems to be clear that the UK has been concerned about quality for a decade. Similarly, the literature shows that many countries experienced a growing concern for quality in higher education from the late 1980s to the early 1990s. For instance, in New Zealand the government began to put in place structures to enhance the cohesiveness of higher education in the late 1980s by establishing the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) (Woodhouse, 1998). In Sweden, the Higher Education Reform Act was established to confirm the quality of teaching and research in 1993 (Nilsson & Walhen, 2000). In the United States of America, the concept of quality was launched in higher education and the quality models were implemented in US higher education institutions in the mid-1980s (Kanji, Tambi and Wallace, 1999). By contrast, if we consider the involvement of quality in higher education in some developing countries, for instance, China, Philippines, and Thailand (see for instance, Songhua, 1998; Suleiman 1998; Wongsothorn; 1998), there seems to be no evidence to indicate that quality was adopted in higher education in the 1980s as was the case in the UK, US, New Zealand or other developed countries. In the Philippines the concept of quality was very popular in the business and industry sector in the early 1980s and the idea of applying quality assurance mechanisms in education began in the early 1990s (Padua, 1998) whereas the concept of quality assurance evolved in higher education in Thailand in the mid-1990s.

2.1.4 What is quality assurance?

The Oxford Dictionary (Crowther, 1998) explains the meaning of 'quality', for instance: 1) the standard of something when compared to other things like it, or how good or bad something is; 2) a high standard or level; 3) a special or distinguishing feature. The meanings of 'assurance' are: 1) confident belief in one's own abilities and powers; 2) as a statement expressing certainty about something.

Webster's New World Dictionary, the American Dictionary (Neufeldt and Guralnik, 1994) defines the meaning of quality and assurance similar to the Oxford Dictionary but with slightly broader meanings. Quality in Webster's

means: 1) any of the features that make something what it is; 2) the degree of excellent which a thing processes; 3) excellence, superiority. The meanings of assurance are: 1) the act of assuring; 2) the state of being assured, sureness, confidence, certainty; 3) something said or done to inspire confidence, as promise, positive statement; 4) belief in one's own abilities, self-confidence.

Piper (1993) defined quality assurance as mechanism and procedures adopted to assure a given quality or the continued improvement of quality.

Frazer (1994) states that there is no international agreement concerning the meaning of quality assurance in higher education, therefore it is not surprising that there is confusion about the term used to describe various activities aimed at maintaining and enhancing quality. However, there was an attempt to define the most frequently used terms in an international conference on quality assurance. These key terms are summarised as follow (Frazer, 1992, p. 10).

Quality assurance has four components. These are:

1. Everyone in the enterprise has a responsibility for maintaining the quality of the product or service.
2. Everyone in the enterprise has a responsibility for enhancing the quality of the product or service.
3. Everyone in the enterprise understand, uses and feels ownership of the systems that are in place for maintaining and enhancing quality; and
4. Management regularly checks that validity and reliability of the systems for checking quality.

Doherty (1994, p. 11) defined quality assurance as a system based on 'feedforward', i.e. a means of ensuring that errors, as far as possible, are designed out.

Tovey (1994, p. 11) stated that 'quality assurance, then, is all about putting in place a framework which is designed to maximise the chances of achieving particular goals as a matter of course'.

'Quality assurance is about ensuring that there are mechanisms, procedures, and processes in place to ensure that the desired quality, however, defined and measured, is delivered' (Harvey and Green, 1993, p. 19).

From the quotations mentioned earlier, quality assurance could be defined as a system or process that assures and maintains the quality of service and products provide by companies, organisations or institutions.

2.1.5 What is quality assurance in higher education?

Ellis (1993) indicated that quality assurance derived from the industrial sector. It was about ensuring that standards were specified and met consistently for a product and service.

Frazer (1992, p. 11) stated that if the word 'university' replaced the word 'enterprise' throughout the paragraph of the meaning of quality in higher education, then 'a university which takes quality assurance seriously emerges as a self-critical community of students, teachers, support and staff and senior managers each contributing to and striving for continued improvement'.

Doherty (1994) indicated that in education quality assurance examined the aims, content, resourcing levels and projected outcomes of modules, programmes and courses.

Harman (1998, p. 346) stated that quality assurance was a new term that has come into the higher education vocabulary over the past decade. Harman explained:

quality assurance refers to 'systematic management and assessment procedures' adopted to ensure achievement of specified or improved quality, and to enable stakeholders to have confidence in the management of quality and the outcomes achieved.

In Hong Kong higher education, quality assurance is discussed in terms of the effectiveness of institutional processes (Imrie, 1998).

Anderson, *et al.*, (2000, p. viii) defines quality assurance as, 'the means by which an institution is able to confirm that the standards (of teaching and learning) set by the institution itself or other awarding body, are being maintained and enhanced'.

The American National Standard (ANS) defined quality assurance as all the planned and systematic activities implemented within the quality system and demonstrated as needed, to provide adequate confidence that an entity will fulfill requirements for quality (ANS, 1994)

The Ministry of University Affairs, Thailand gave the definition of quality assurance as 'an assessment and monitoring of the educational quality and standards of the institutions from outside. Such assessment and monitoring are to be carried out by the Office of National Education Standards or by a person from external agencies certified by the office. Such measures ensure the quality desired and further development of educational quality and standards of these institutions' (MUA, 1998).

At present, the definition of quality assurance in higher education given by the Quality Assurance Agency of Higher Education (QAA) is being used in higher education institutions in the UK. QAA (1997) defines quality assurance as:

The means through which an institution confirms that the conditions are in place for students to achieve the standard set by the institutions or other awarding body.

According to the meanings of quality assurance in higher education given by different people mentioned earlier, quality assurance in higher education seems to be involved in these key terms: 1) quality, standards, achievement; 2) service, products, outcomes; 3) universities, institutions; 4) improvement; 5) a system, management and assessment procedure. The relevant key terms stated in the meaning of quality assurance in higher education should be made clear before the implementation of quality assurance in universities or other higher education institutions because quality assurance is involved with different groups of people, for instance, students, staff, and managers in higher education institutions, and stakeholders. In order to implement quality assurance successfully, a good understanding on quality assurance is necessary for all members of higher education institutions.

2.1.6 Why is quality assurance adopted by higher education?

There are several explanations trying to explain why higher education needs quality assurance, and why quality assurance has been adopted by higher education as follows:

Frazer (1992, p. 16-17) explained that 'accountability' was a key reason which then related to many groups of people. This was because higher education (from whole universities to individual staff) was accountable to at least three different groups: to society; to clients and to the subjects which clients of higher education referred to the students and employers; to professions and colleagues. Later, Frazer (1994) stated that 'the drive for quality assurance in higher education came from several quarters: government, which in most countries was the paymaster; citizens, who pay tax to government; employers of graduates; students and their parents; and teachers, professors and managers in universities'.

Kump (1997, p. 55) explained the reason for quality assurance in Slovene higher education:

For Slovene higher education to be well prepared to compete and cooperate with higher education all over Europe and other parts of the worlds, it must prove its quality at the international level.

Neave (1997 cited in Harman, 1998, p. 347) indicated that 'the quality movement had been driven from the impact of increased international competitiveness, the need for increased mobility of professional labour, demand for greater accountability by public institutions that flew from the emergence of the evaluative state'.

Harman (1998) indicated that the move towards quality assurance arose from a variety of factors, particularly community and government being concerned about academic standards and the levels of achievement of graduates at a time of major expansion in student numbers associated with decreasing government funding support per student unit.

Nebres (1998) gave a few reasons for the involvement of higher education in quality assurance on the Central Congress on Higher Education in the Philippines, such as the demand for national and international competitiveness, the value of excellence, and the globalization and the mobility of the workforce.

It is noticeable that the reasons for the need of quality assurance in higher education are similar to the reasons for the involvement of quality in higher given in the previous part. This can be explained by the concept of quality assurance being generally derived from the concept of 'quality'.

In summary, the reasons why quality assurance has been adopted by higher education, in my opinion, can be categorised into two different levels. They are national and international levels. The reasons at a national level focus on the circumstances and context of each country, for instance: 1) the expansion of higher education institutions; 2) the cost of higher education; 3) the community and government concern about the academic standards of students; 4) the limitation of government budget for higher education institutions; 5) the competition of the standards of higher education institutions themselves; and 6) the competition for educational provision in institutions at national level. The reason at the international level is the competition in educational provision that focuses on the quality of graduates as demand from the international community rises. These reasons were found from the studies in quality assurance in many countries, including the case in Thailand which has already been explained in Chapter One.

2.1.7 When is quality assurance adopted in higher education?

Quality assurance has become a key issue in higher education institutions in many countries since the late 1980s. Evidence has been found from the previous studies both in developed and developing countries. This is presented in the development of quality assurance in higher education in the next part.

2.2 Development of quality assurance in higher education

This part of the chapter presents and discusses the development of quality assurance, particularly the establishment of quality assurance policy and the responsible organisations in higher education in both developed and developing countries. This aims to find out the similarities and differences of the development. The way to categorise the countries as two types, developed and developing countries, is based on the criteria set out by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2001) which considered all countries under the income, human resources, and level of economic diversification. According to these criteria, developed countries refer to the USA, Canada, Western Europe, Northern Europe, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, etc. Latin America including Mexico, Africa, and most of the Asian countries including China are considered as developing countries. This section of the chapter begins with the development of quality assurance in developed countries, following with the development of quality assurance in developing countries.

2.2.1 Development of quality assurance in developed countries

The development of quality assurance in some developed countries, for instance, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States of America is presented in this part. The reasons for choosing these countries can be explained as the following reasons. First, there is an attempt to represent the countries from each part of the world, for instance, from Europe, Australia and America. Second, there is a limitation of 'time' of the study in that I could not include too many or all countries. Third, the literature review on quality assurance in higher education was from these countries.

The United Kingdom is one of the 'pioneering countries' in Western Europe with more than a decade of experience in quality assurance. Higher education institutions in UK have been involved with quality since 1960 when the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) was established to guarantee quality and standards in the new polytechnic sector. During 1984-1986 a

quality assurance system was introduced into universities through the publication of the Reynolds Report and new academic standards. In 1990, the CVCP Academic Unit was established to audit the quality assurance processes of universities. Two years later, the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) was established to contribute to the maintenance and improvement of quality, at all levels, in higher education institutions in the UK. In 1997, the Quality Assurance Agency was established as an independent body funded by subscriptions from universities and colleges of higher education, to provide an integrated quality assurance service for higher education institutions throughout the UK. The development of quality assurance in the UK is presented in Table 2.1

Table 2.1 The development of quality assurance in UK higher education
(Green, 1994, p.4)

Year	Establishment	Purposes
1964	CNAA established	To guarantee quality and standards in the new polytechnic sector
1984-6	Publication of the Reynolds Report and new academic standards	Introduction of formal quality assurance systems in the universities
1985	Lindop Report on academic validation in the public sector	Responsibility for quality assurance progressively transferred from the CNAA to individual institutions under licence
1987	DES White Paper: <i>Higher Education: Meeting the Challenge</i>	Proposal to expand HE. Polytechnics and colleges to be freed from Local Authority control

Table 2.1 The development of quality assurance in UK higher education
(Green, 1994, p.4)

Year	Establishment	Purposes
1988	Education Reform Act	Polytechnics and Colleges incorporated. Two new funding councils were established UFC for the universities, PCFC for Polytechnics and colleges ...
1990	CVCP Academic Audit Unit established	To audit the quality assurance processes of the universities
1991	DES: <i>Higher Education: A New Framework</i>	Pledge to expand to be undertaken by abolishing the binary line. Polytechnics to be designated as universities. Audit and assessment of quality were essential
1992	Further and Higher Education Act	Binary line abolished. PCFC and UFC replaced by separate Funding Councils for England, Scotland and Wales. ... CNAA abolished
1992	HEQC established	Owned by the universities, it takes over the Audit responsibilities of the AAU, and the Access and Quality Enhancement roles of the CNAA

Gordon (1999) also indicated that since the early 1990s, the British institutions have been exposed to two main forms of external scrutiny of the quality of educational provision, namely quality audits of quality assurance

procedures and practices, and quality assessment of academic programmes. Quality audits are carried out by small teams of peers from an external agency. The body initially was the Academic Audit Unit of the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals. Subsequently, it became part of the work of the Higher Education Quality Council, at a point in time broadly coincident with the ending of the binary divide in British higher education. In 1997, the responsibilities passed to a new body, the Quality Assurance Agency. The responsibilities of QAA are to safeguard the public interest with sound standards of higher education qualifications, and to encourage continuous improvement in the management of the quality of higher education (Brown, 1997; Brown, 2000; QAA, 2004).

In Northern Europe, Sweden has developed a model of higher education since the late 1980s. During that period, the underlying assumption of Swedish higher education was that educational provision should have the same conditions, content and quality regardless of where it was offered. Since then state supervision has gradually given way to institutional autonomy and growing self-regulation and pluralism. In 1993, Higher Education Reform was developed by providing for decentralisation of the organisation of studies, appointments, and internal allocation of resources. A new, largely performance-based system of funding universities was introduced based on achievements as well as on student numbers, in order to encourage intensified development of teaching, research and administrative processes. Each higher education institution was accountable for the quality of its own activities and for its own development. In the same year, the National Agency for Higher Education was established to audit and assess all universities and colleges along three parallel lines: 1) national assessment of subjects and study programmes; 2) accreditation of certain programmes and degrees at all institutions and accreditation of colleges applying for university status; and 3) quality audit, which looked at institutions' own systems of assuring the quality of their operations (Nilsson & Walhen, 2000).

In New Zealand, the government has begun to put in place structures to enhance the cohesiveness of higher education (post-compulsory education) since the 1980s. Although the reform of tertiary education and training had

given higher education institutions greater autonomy, the requirements for financial reporting and accountability for the use of the state funding had also been strengthened. Every state higher education institution was required to produce a charter, setting out the institution's mission (purpose), values (philosophy), broad goals and operational objectives, submitted to the Ministry of Education (Brennan, *et al.*, 1997). In the late 1980s, the government set up the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA). At the same time as the NZQA was created, the New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee (NZVCC) was constituted as a legal entity with the jurisdiction to approve university degree qualification and to accredit university institutions to offer the qualifications (Woodhouse, 1998).

In the Australian higher education system, and a concern with quality assurance has been growing up over the last decade (Baldwin 1997). The Australian Government's policy directions with regard to quality assurance were initiated by the release of 'Higher Education: Quality and Diversity in the 1990s'. The Australian government had more concern about the efficient higher education systems and competition between universities within a quasi-free market public system. The Higher Education Council approached quality assurance for higher education, and the system of higher education quality audit was operated in all higher education institutions during the period of 1993-1995 (James, 1998). In March 2000, the Australian University Quality Agency (AUQC) was established as an independent agency responsible for promotion, audit and report on quality assurance in Australian higher education.

In the United States of America, the system of higher education is the largest and most diverse in the world. While the US has had a diverse system of mass higher education for many decades, these new economic and social realities drew new attention to its quality assurance practices by both state and federal policy makers. At the state level growing concerns about the quality of college graduates entering the work force first led, in the 1980s, to policies on student assessment designed to improve the quality of undergraduate education. In 1992, the new Higher Education was

established as well as the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) (Dill, 1997).

The development of quality assurance in developed countries, particularly the pioneer countries in Europe such as the UK has been developed for a decade. Sweden, is one of another European countries in which quality assurance has existed for nearly ten years. If we considered the development of quality assurance in these two countries in terms of time and the establishment of responsible organisation or committees, it is found that the UK has many more years of experience in quality assurance than Sweden. The evidence dates from the establishment of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) Academic Unit in the UK in 1990, and the establishment of the National Agency for Higher Education (NAHE) in Sweden early in the 1990s. However, it is noticed that in the UK, the Reynolds Report and new academic standards were published in order to introduce a formal quality assurance system in the country during 1984-1986, about four years before the establishment of the CVCP Academic Unit. Similar developments also took place in New Zealand, the US in the 1990s, with the establishment of the NZQA in New Zealand, and the CHEA in the US.

2.2.2 Development of quality assurance in developing countries

Quality assurance and quality enhancement have been a major focus of attention for the government in most parts of the world (El-Khawas, 1998). In developing countries, for instance, China, Malaysia, Vietnam, Philippines, and South Africa, there is evidence that quality assurance has been developed in higher education in these countries as follows:

In Malaysia, quality assurance was very widespread in higher education institutions in the late 1980s after the country had seen a significant increase in university enrollment. The demand for enrollment into university put tremendous pressure on the government and led the government in the last few years towards the establishment of private universities and more private higher educational institutions. At that time, there were no criteria and standards on the quality of education provided in place and this was an

issue of major concern. Thus, an early attempt to reform private higher education was made by the Educational Planning Committee of the Higher Education Department. A workshop was held in August 1994 to discuss the creation of a mechanism of change, i.e. the National Accreditation Board. Quality Assurance Bodies from the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and Australia were invited to participate in this workshop to contribute towards the establishment of an appropriate system for Malaysia. Following this, the decision to adopt New Zealand's quality assurance model (NZQA) was presented to the Cabinet. The cabinet after some deliberation approved the creation of Lembaga Akreditasi Negara (LAN) i.e. the National Accreditation Board and this then led to legislation on its formation, structure, functions and powers, that was approved by Parliament in September 1996, and LAN was established in July 1997 (Suleiman, 1998).

In China, higher education has been faced with a rapid increase in the number of higher education institutions (500 institutions in 1980s to 2,000 institutions in the 1990s). In order to give assurance of the basic quality of higher education, while the quantity of higher education was increasing rapidly, a series of measures had been adopted by the Chinese government and higher learning institutions. However, Chinese higher education has put the emphasis on quality assurance in the 21st century, in contrast to developed countries with nearly two decades of the involvement of quality assurance in developed countries. As a result, the development of quality assurance in China still seems to be in the early stages compared to other countries (Songhua, 1998).

In the Philippines, the concept of quality assurance in higher education was begun in the early 1990s after quality assurance, quality control, first became very popular in business and the industry sector in the 1980s. Before then, voluntary accreditation and government recognition of higher education programmes were the only means of ensuring quality and these measures, obviously, were insufficient to respond to the demand for quality at the local and international levels. It was precisely because of the observation that higher education products in the country are gradually deteriorating that the Higher Education Act of 1994 was passed establishing the Commission on

Higher Education (CHED) as a separate and independent agency from the Department of Education, Culture and Sports. The Commission on CHED was appointed with the primary objective of raising the quality of the Philippines higher education through a system of grants and incentives that placed a premium on quality. A system called 'Quality Assurance System (QAS)' needed to be put in place nationwide. The establishment of a strong QAS in the Philippines was not an easy task considering the unique features of higher education, for instance: the majority of universities in the Philippines were private universities; the various types of higher education institutions in the country had not been properly rationalised; and the insufficient number of experts in the various higher education disciplines poses, perhaps the greatest barrier to enhance quality in the Philippines context (Padua, 1998).

In Vietnam higher education was facing a period of transition from central planning to a market economy, which was accompanied with changes in higher education administration in general and quality assurance in particular. The Ministry of Education and Training (MOE) was the main body responsible for the higher education system, which included policy making and supervision. However, higher education in Vietnam was still in difficulties for instance: 1) it had not yet been able to meet the increasing demand for highly qualified labour by socio-economic development of the country; 2) the quality and efficiency of higher education was still slow. Most of the university graduates were not equipped to match/adapt themselves to the rapid changes in industry and technology; 3) teaching staff were not sufficient in both quantity and quality; and 4) there was no official organisation responsible for accreditation and quality assurance in higher education (Duc, 1998). It is noticeable that quality assurance in Vietnam is still in a stage of preparation. The study of criteria for accreditation and the establishment of a Quality Accreditation Council under the administration of the Ministry of Education and Training are still in the process of being established.

In South Africa, quality assurance was launched in the 1990s, during the same period as in Asian countries. It became evident that although South African universities were responsible under their own statutes for their

academic standards, the establishment of a structure became a necessity in order to provide the Committee of University Principals (CUP) and universities themselves with assurance that their responsibilities for academic standards were effectively and efficiently carried out at the institutional level.

If we consider the development of quality assurance in both developed and developing countries in terms of period, responsible organisations, and the progress of development, a few different points can be found as follows:

First, quality assurance was developed in developed countries in the 1980s until early in the 1990s. This is a few years before the development of quality assurance started in developing countries.

Second, in terms of the organisations responsible for quality assurance, it is found that most developed countries established the agencies responsible for quality assurance in higher education in the 1990s. In the UK, Sweden, and Australia, national agencies have already existed. By contrast, there was no national agency responsible for quality assurance in developing countries during the 1990s. The responsibility for quality assurance is, therefore, in the hands of National Committee as is the case in Malaysia, Philippines, and South Africa. Recently, the Thai Government has established an agency responsible for quality assurance within the country. Among these developing countries, Vietnam and China are in the early stages of the development of quality assurance in higher education institutions. The responsible organisations and committees from the countries mentioned above are in Table 2.2

Table 2.2 The establishment of organisations and committees responsible for quality assurance

Name of the Country	Organisations or Agency/Committee Responsible for Quality Assurance	Year of Establishment
Developed Countries		
UK	CVCP Academic Unit	1990
Sweden	National Agency for Higher Education (NAHE)	1993
New Zealand	New Zealand Qualification Authority (NZQA)	the late 1980s
Australia	AUCC	1992
USA	CHEA	1992
Developing Countries		
Philippines	Commission on Higher Education (CHED)	1994
South Africa	Committee of University Principals (CUP)	1994
Malaysia	National Accreditation Board	1999
Thailand	Office of Educational Standards and Evaluation (OESE)	2000

Third, the progress of quality assurance development in developed countries is in much further advanced compared to developing countries. In addition, the literature revealed that in a few developing countries, quality assurance is still in process of being established, for instance, in Vietnam and China. In addition, if we consider the development of quality assurance in some South-East Asian countries, it is found that Malaysia and the Philippines have made more progress on quality assurance compared to Thailand.

Fourth, it is clear that higher education institutions in developing countries have followed developed countries in adopting quality assurance to improve

the quality of educational provision. At this point, Lim (1999, p. 379) noted that:

While many conditions required for the successful implementation of quality assurance programmes are not present in most universities in developing countries...however, the quality assurance programmes must be modified to suit by being simple in design, modest in expectations, and realistic in requirement'.

The quotation above seems to show some limitations of quality assurance in developing countries. This can be seen as a difference in terms of implementing policy between developed and developing countries.

2.3 Quality assurance systems

This part of the chapter presents and discusses quality assurance systems in higher education and research findings on quality assurance in higher education from previous studies and a review from the literature.

Quality assurance systems in higher education can be considered as two different types, based on their development in higher education institutions. The first type of system was used and developed in business and industrial sectors. These systems are the Baldrige Award, Deming Prize and ISO 9000. Lzadi, Kashef and Stadt (1996) stated that these three systems have been developed based on the framework of Total Quality Management (TQM).

The Balridge Award, Deming Prize and ISO 9000 are quality systems which industrial, business sectors, and higher education institutions have been used for quality assurance purposes. ISO 9000 is a system that based largely on traditional quality control theory whereas the Deming Prize emphasises theory and statistical practice to a greater degree than does the ISO 9000, and the Baldrige Award is more results oriented and deals with method, development, and outcomes.

The differences between these systems are as summarised in Table 2.3 (Lzadi, Kashef and Stadt, 1996, p. 3).

Table 2.3 Main focus of three quality assurance systems

Systems	Main Focus	Important Issues for Higher Education
1. Balridge Award	Customer satisfaction	Customer satisfaction and retention (students, employee, parents, alumni, taxpayers)
2. Deming Prize	Statistical methods	Enrollment patterns, student progress, faculty performance, drop-out rates, recruitment activities
3. ISO 9000	Documentation	Curriculum analysis, programme requirements, facilities analysis)

Izadi, Kashef and Stadt (1996) also indicated that the Baldrige Award, Deming Prizes, and ISO 9000 focus on different aspects. The Baldrige Award focuses on customer satisfaction and retention issues. For higher education, this would focus on students, faculty, employees, parents, alumni, taxpayers, and government. For students, this would mean measures of student satisfaction, student retention and student recruitment. For alumni and government, this would mean measures of alumni and government satisfaction and support. The Deming Prize focuses on statistical method issues, institutional research and assessment, for example, enrolment patterns, student progress, faculty performance, drop-out rates, recruitment activities and success while ISO 9000 focuses on documentation issues, including accreditation and evaluation (curriculum analysis, programme requirements, facilities analysis).

The International Organization for Standard (ISO) created the ISO 9000 series of standards in 1987. The objective of ISO is to promote development of standards worldwide to improve operating efficiency and productivity and reduce costs. A company that has achieved ISO 9000 registration can attest that it had a documented quality system that is fully deployed and consistently followed. With a documented quality system, all the knowledge of how and why work is performed will be part of the system. The registration

lasts for three years, subject to audits every six months to confirm continued maintenance and operation of the quality system

The second type of quality assurance is the systems mainly used in higher education institutions. They are presented in the research findings on quality assurance systems below.

In the early 1990s, there were three systems of quality assurance for higher education institutions to choose from. These systems were the British Standard System (BS 5750), Total Quality Management (TQM), and a system of the college's own devising (Sallis and Hingley, 1991). There was wide debate on these three systems during the 1990s (see for instance, Sallis & Hingley, 1991; Doherty, 1994; Tribus, 1994; Stott, 1994; McRobert, 1994). Later, the British Standard system (BS 5750) was developed to ISO 9000 (Moreland and Clark, 1998).

Research findings revealed that TQM and ISO 9000 are being used as quality assurance systems in higher education institutions in many countries. The other system found was an 'Institutional system'. This system has been used, for instance, in Swedish higher education institutions.

The systems of quality assurance found from the previous studies may or may not be used in higher education institutions in Thailand. This is one of the main points that will be investigated in my study. Understanding the systems of quality assurance is useful for my own study particularly in the attempt to propose a model of quality assurance in higher education institutions in Thailand, specifically for Rajabhat Institutes.

2.3.1 Total Quality management (TQM)

The TQM quality assurance system is based on the concept of Total Quality Management, which has been used in the business sector. TQM is a management process that was applied successfully in industries in the USA in the 1980s. By using this process, many firms, such as Texas Instruments, Xerox, IBM and Motorola, were able to improve their business position by

overcoming threats from global competition and other changes in the business environment (Lozier & Teeter, 1996 cited in Kanji, Tambi, and Wallace 1999, p. 358). Izadi, Kashef and Stadt (1996) indicated that other quality systems have been developed under the framework of TQM and have been used for quality assurance in the business sector.

TQM had made its way into higher education institutions in many developed countries. For instance, in the USA, higher education institutions have been influenced due to the success of many large corporations. They were influenced by the critical state of education in the 1980s in terms of student grades, funding, and complaints from employers and parents. Many institutions began to implement it in the early 1990s and have been successful. In UK higher education, the progress of TQM is rather slow, with examples represented by only a few universities. However, these universities have benefited from a TQM process similar to their counterparts in the USA, such as improved student performance, better services, reduced costs and customer satisfaction (Kanji & Tambi, 1999)

The first application of TQM in USA higher education was at Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC). As a result of TQM, FVTC has become more efficient in areas such as placement of graduates, employer satisfaction with contracted training programmes, acceptance of college credits at receiving institutions and improvement in its learning environment. Later, many institutions began to implement TQM (Narasimhan 1997, Seymour 1992, cited in Kanji & Tambi, 1999, p. 130). In US higher education, there are 160 universities that are involved in applying quality improvement principles, and approximately fifty percent of universities have implemented TQM in their institutions. For instance, Virginia Commonwealth University, Oregon State University, Pennsylvania State University, University of Pennsylvania and Kansas State University (Cowles & Gilbreath 1993, Lozier & Teeter, 1996 cited in Kanji, Tambi and Wallace, 1999, p. 362). Billing (1996) indicated that TQM has been implemented in UK universities. However, there is a smaller number of higher education institutions which have applied TQM in the UK. Doherty (1994) indicated that TQM has been implemented in South Bank

University, University of Central England, University of Ulster and Wolverhampton University.

TQM: Principles and core concept

'TQM, or continuous quality improvement, is a comprehensive of living and working in organisations; it emphasises continuous improvements. Its fundamental purposes are to improve quality, increase productivity, and reduce cost' (Chaffee & Sherr, 1992 cited in Sims (1995). In higher education, TQM has five elements. (Chaffee & Sherr 1992, Miller 1991, Harris & Baggett 1992, Kovel-Jarobe 1993 cited in Sims, 1995, p. 9). First, it is focused on an identified process or system that can be described and linked to other process and to institutional goals. Second, It is designed to identify, understand, and meet customer needs. Third, it relies on data to define needs, describe problems, and arrive at solutions. Fourth, it involves those who make decisions about improvements and is sponsored by an appropriate manager or decision maker. Fifth, It respects individuals and their contributions whether they are customers, team members, administrators, or colleagues.

Spanbauer (1995) stated that 'TQM in education is a management philosophy which puts systems and processes in the place to meet and exceed the expectations of customers. It is a relentless quest for continuous improvement through documentation and the use of tools in a problem-solving atmosphere that team action and good leadership practices'.

Research findings on TQM

Research findings from two studies on the implementation of TQM in higher education institutions have been presented.

The first study was a comparative study of quality practices in higher education institutions in the US and Malaysia. Kanji, Tambi and Wallace (1999) conducted exploratory research in 1997. Data from Malaysian institutions were collected via a mail questionnaire in December 1997, and in

the US in February 1998. A year later, Kanji and Tambi conducted this study in the UK (Total quality management in UK higher education institutions). The surveys were carried out in August and September 1998. The questionnaires were sent to fifty-one UK higher education institutions.

Research findings showed that Total Quality Management (TQM) had been implemented in higher education institutions in Malaysia and the United States. The findings also revealed general information about the implementation of TQM in higher education institutions in both countries. For instance, the proportion of institutions implementing TQM in the United States was larger than Malaysia. Most old and new institutions in both countries had adopted TQM, within the previous ten years. Many small to medium-sized institutions were able to implement TQM for the whole institutions, due to the fact that it was convenient for them to cover the entire organisations.

The findings from the study in UK higher education institutions revealed that there were only four institutions (from fifty-one institutions) which implemented TQM. These were one college, two old universities, and one new university. The largest proportion of institutions (72.5 per cent) defined quality as 'fitness for purpose' and 25.5 per cent defined quality as 'meeting customers' expectations'.

The findings from both studies also indicated that the role of leadership was the most important factor to promote TQM in institutions. TQM was introduced by leadership in about 77.40 per cent of US institutions and 75.9 per cent of Malaysian institutions. In the UK, TQM was introduced by leadership in only 53.8 per cent of the institutions. The rest was introduced by Quality Directors and individuals or groups (Kanji & Tambi, 1999).

2.3.2 ISO 9000

ISO 9000 series is a set of standards, which requires periodic review and revision (see for instance, Lundquist, 1997; Hoyle, 1994; Kanji, 1998). International Organization for Standardization (ISO, 2004) states that 'ISO is

concerned with 'quality management'. This means what the organization does to enhance customer satisfaction by meeting customer applicable regulatory requirements and continually to improve its performance'. Lundquist (1997) indicates that standards for quality systems have been used during the last four decades in different countries such as the US and the UK. In 1987 the ISO 9000 series was issued, and was to a great extent by the British BS 5750. One of the important aspects of the ISO 9000 series is its structure, which gives a consistent set of procedures, elements and requirements that can be applied universally. It also provides a basis for designing, evaluating, implementing, specifying and certifying a quality assurance system (Kanji, 1998:73). In education, the focus of ISO 9000 is documentation. This includes clear written information about working procedures within institutions (Izadi, Kashef and Stadt, 1996).

Research findings on ISO 9000

Moreland and Clark (1998) conducted a case study on ISO 9000 in educational organisations. Three education institutions in the UK were studied. The findings revealed that there were some benefits of ISO 9000 as follows: 1) it made people more aware of the work; 2) it established more realistic goal setting; 3) it helped to identify areas for improvement; 4) it clearly defined roles and responsibilities which helped to settle new staff into their jobs and provided continuity during staff changes. The findings also revealed some impact of ISO for instance: staff working patterns were effective; some staff had found themselves having to do much extra work. The study also indicated that there were recognised social costs to developing the ISO 9000 in the case study.

2.3.3 Institutional system

According to Sallis and Hingley (1991), a system of the college's own devising is another choice for quality assurance system. This system of quality assurance seems to offer flexibility to higher education institutions to carry out their quality assurance because it allows higher education institutions to create their own mechanism and systems of quality assurance. The literature

shows that Sweden is one example of using an institutional system because Swedish higher education institutions have developed their own quality assurance systems.

Research findings on institutional system

Nilsson and Walhen (2000) carried out a study on institutional response to the Swedish model of quality assurance. The study aimed to present an evaluation of the Swedish model of quality assurance in higher education, in light of the response of institutions. Nilsson and Walhen analysed data from twenty-seven audit reports carried out by the National Agency for Higher Education, and nineteen follow-up interviews. They indicated that Swedish government instructions regarding institutional strategies included a regulation that all higher education institutions should have a programme for quality assurance and enhancement, and that they should present an annual report on results achieved. The findings from Nilsson and Wahlen study revealed that Swedish higher education was building systems of quality assurance and enhancement. Some systems were still at the early stage at some institutions and more advanced at others. However, further steps still needed to be taken at practically all universities and colleges. This is probably due to the fact that they had difficulties in describing the measures and particularly the result of systematic quality enhancement. The building up of systems of quality assurance and enhancement was seen to be easier to do in smaller, more homogeneous organisations, where it was possible for everybody to have an overview of activities. On the other hand, a large, multi-faculty institutions might develop professionalism in this field by setting aside resources for quality processes that others could not afford.

The findings of the Nilsson and Walhen study also showed that two-thirds of the twenty-seven institutions contained in the study had developed their quality enhancement programmes, aimed at the institutions at whole. Another few institutions were in the process of preparing a team for quality assurance enhancement. Others had programmes at faculty or department level. Only one or two institutions lacked programmes altogether. At the time of the follow-up, about a year after the audit, there was only one institution

out of the nineteen visits that had still not prepared a programme. The findings also indicated that the Swedish university and universities colleges were adopting the norm established by the government in 1993, that all institutions should have programmes for quality enhancement. However, this process was not completed at the time of the audits.

In short, research findings from the previous studies revealed that Total Quality Management had existed in higher education institutions in the United States and Malaysia, with a slightly a larger number in the United States. This is probably because of the idea of quality assurance and also TQM was launched in the USA before Malaysia. TQM also existed in the UK higher education institutions, but not in a large number of institutions. ISO is another system. The research findings revealed that it was used in higher education institutions and showed some benefits; it was helpful particularly in terms of establishing staff in their jobs and effective working patterns. On the other hand, Nilsson and Walhen's study revealed that the institutional system was being used in the Swedish higher education institutions. Institutional system seems to be an alternative for higher education institutions to create their own quality assurance systems suitable for their own missions and conditions.

The Swedish model of quality assurance can be considered as a 'binary system', which means one system was established by the government and the other was created by the institution. The Swedish model can be divided into two levels: national and institutional levels. The government and the National Agency for Higher Education are responsible for quality assurance, aimed at forming a relatively unified system of quality assurance at the national level. The institutional level was the responsibility of each higher education institution, aimed to develop its own quality assurance system, particularly a programme for quality enhancement. This point leads to the questions 'Are these two levels of quality assurance suitable for other countries?' and 'Will higher education institutions in another countries be able to create their own quality assurance systems?'

Thune (1994 cited in Harman 1998, p. 350) explained that 'at the national level, the most common pattern was for responsibility to lie with a specialised unit or agency set up by the government. For example, in Denmark, the Danish Parliament in 1991 set up the Evaluation Centre as a government agency with the mandate to initiate evaluation processes, developed appropriate methods for assessing academic programmes, inspired and guided institutions in quality and evaluations, and compile information on national and institutional experiences. Harman pointed out that a similar arrangement operated in a large number of other countries including France, Finland, Korea, and Thailand' (Harman, 1998 p. 350). At this point I agree with Harman that the most common pattern was for responsibility to lie with a specialised agency or unit established by the government. However, the case in Thailand was slightly different due to the fact that the arrangement at the national level was set up by the Thai government in 1996 and the government themselves (two ministries) are responsible for this arrangement. There was no agency responsible for quality assurance in Thailand at that period. However, the Thai government established a responsible agency in November 2000.

On the other hand, in a small number of countries, the responsibility for aspects of quality assurance at the national level was under the control of an agency set up by higher education institutions themselves. Examples were found in the Netherlands, Italy and New Zealand (Harman, 1998). By contrast, in most countries responsibility for quality assurance was under the agency set up by the government. For instance, in the United Kingdom, the audit for quality assurance processes, at an initial period, was with the Academic Audit Unit (AAU), a body set up by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals. Later, the AAU was absorbed into the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) which also took over some of the functions of the Council of National Academic Awards (CNAA). The HEQC was a company limited by guarantee and funded by subscriptions from individual universities and colleges of higher education. More recently responsibility for the audit of quality assurance has moved to a new body, the Quality Assurance Agency whereas quality assurance assessment has been conducted under the aegis of the three regional funding councils for higher

education in the United Kingdom (for England, Scotland, and Wales) (Gordon, 1999).

2.4 Methodology for quality assurance

Gordon (1999) studied the managing of quality assurance in higher education, a Scottish example, and found that the British institutions have been exposed to the main forms of external scrutiny of the quality of education provision. They are: 1) quality audit of quality assurance procedures and practices; 2) quality assessment of academic programmes. These two forms of scrutiny use these methodologies:

- 1) self- assessment;
- 2) scrutiny of evidence and materials;
- 3) meeting with staff and students;
- 4) publication of a report on the audit or assessment.

Apart from Gordon's study, further studies on quality assurance in higher education institutions also showed that three methodologies had been used for quality assurance in higher education institutions. They were: self-evaluation, peer review, and reporting. These methodologies were found from previous studies, for instance, 1) Nilsson and Walhen (2000) on institutional response to the Swedish model of quality assurance; 2) Bitzer and Malherbe (1995) internal quality assurance in university teaching: a case in South Africa; 3) Sharp, Munn and Peterson (1999) on quality assessment in higher education: the Scottish experience; and 4) Billing and Thomas (2000) on the international transferability of quality assessment systems for higher education: the Turkish experience. It is noticeable that these methodologies were similar to methodologies mentioned earlier in Gordon's study. Brief findings related to methodologies for quality assurance from four the studies are presented as follows:

Nilsson and Walhen's study revealed that self-evaluation, peer review, and reporting were used in Swedish higher education institutions. Bitzer and Malherbe's study also indicated that self-evaluation should be used in South Africa higher institutions. Similarity, Sharp, Mann and Paterson's study

indicated that self-evaluation was used in Scottish higher education institutions. Billing and Thomas's study also revealed that the transferability of quality assessment in Turkey was focused on self-evaluation at different levels. Peer review was also another methodology included in Billing and Thomas' study.

The findings from the studies revealed three methodologies: self-evaluation, peer review, and reporting. Harman (1998, p. 353) stated that 'methodologies employed in various quality assurance reviews and assessments vary considerably. Most depended on one or a combination of a limited number of key methodologies'. However, Harman pointed out that there were four most important methodologies: 1) self evaluation; 2) peer review by a panel of experts, usually involving at least some external members; 3) the use of relevant statistical information and performance indicators; and 4) surveys of key groups such as students, graduates and employers.

2.4.1 Self-evaluation

Donaldson (1994 cited in Harman 1998, p. 353) indicated that over many years, self-studies or self- evaluation had proved both effective and cost efficient. Donaldson explained that the self-study idea was first developed in the United State with institutional and course accreditation, but over the previous decade or so it had become an important feature of many quality assurance systems. For example, in Scotland where a programme of assessment of disciplinary areas was carried out by the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council, individual university departments first carried out a self-study. Similarly, Harman also indicated that self-studies had many positive features. He explained that (Harman, 1998, p.353):

Self-studies have many positive features. They are cost effective, since the main work is done internally, often a few additional resources being necessary. They usually achieve a high degree of ownership since key staff are involved and such involvement increases the chances of substantial improvement being achieved. The overall process of review or assessment is made less threatening when emphasis is placed on self-evaluation.

The findings from previous studies revealed that higher education in many countries carried out self-evaluation or self-assessment, for instance, in Sweden, South Africa, and Turkey (Nilsson and Walhen, 2000; Bitzer and Maherbe, 1995; Billing and Thomas 2000). The literature also showed that self-assessment and peer review were used in higher education institution in many countries such as Germany, UK, and the Netherlands (Vroeijenstijn, 1995; Brennan, *et al.*, 1992).

2.4.2 Peer review

Peer review by outside experts was found to be 'a well-established academic process, particular in the research area'. Harman (1998, p. 353-354) stated that 'the combination of self-study with external peer review provides a strong incentive for staff to take the activity more seriously. Peer review generally involved a visit by a group of well-regarded academics in the particular field, but recent practice, especially for review of programmes or disciplines, had been to add other experts to panels, such as persons from industry or business, practising professionals, or elected public officials'.

2.4.3. External reporting

External reporting was another necessary methodology for quality assurance in order not only to meet accountability requirements but also to ensure that staff took self-study seriously. However, a related critical question was 'to whom should external reports go', and 'how widely and publicly should such reports be distributed' (Harman, 1998).

Van Vught (1994 cited in Harman 1998, p. 354) indicated that most evaluations combined self-study with the use of statistical information and/or performance indicators, and the results of surveys of students, graduates and employers. In some cases, a national programme of reviews was accompanied by the use of national statistical collections and published performance indicators. In the case of France, for example, the Comite National d' Evaluation (CNE) quality assessment disciplinary reviews began with self-evaluation reports produced by the institutions being reviewed and

statistical reports produced by the CNE. In Finland (Liuhanen, 1997 cited in Harman, 1998, p. 354), an extensive national wide university data base was established in the late 1980s, containing key statistics about university performance by institutions and disciplines.

2.5 Management strategies for quality assurance

Research findings from Nilsson and Walhen (2000) as well as the study on internal quality assurance in university teaching: a case in South Africa (Bitzer & Malherbe, 1995) indicated two models of management strategies for quality assurance in higher education: top-down or bottom-up. The studies also indicated that the role of leadership and professionalism were important factors for quality assurance management. This is similar to the findings from both of Kanji's studies, which also indicated that the role of leadership was the most important factor to promote quality systems within the institutions.

2.5.1 Top-down and bottom-up models

Research findings from Nilsson and Walhen's study as well as Bitzer and Malherbe's study indicated that it was possible to implement 'top down' and 'bottom-up' models in higher education institutions. The finding from Nilsson and Walhen's study is presented first.

The emphasis on a management strategy for quality assurance in Swedish higher education institutions, from the audit reports was also considered in Nilsson and Wehlen's study. Nilsson and Walhen indicated that a top-down model of quality assurance and enhancement at institutional level was undoubtedly effective, and led to measurable results. They also added that a top-down model had been ascertained in other environments, for example, American higher education institutions, which, however, operated under different conditions. Thus, in term of quality management, a top-down model was more suitable for Swedish higher education as they stated:

In Sweden, audit is conducted on the basis of the special conditions prevailing at each institution. Decentralisation implies that each institution can establish its own goals for quality enhancement, but the establishment of these goals also implies the strengthening of the Rector's role as manager of the organisation. This involves more stringent top-down management at the individual institution.

[Nilsson and Wahlen, 2000, p. 10]

The main findings from the reports also indicated that the central management function of each institution, and especially the role of the rector were focused. The central management was expected to take responsibility for the establishment of a common quality policy, to see that the policy reached out into organisations, and reacted if measures were not taken. The study revealed that the first cycle of the audit, focused on how central institutional management had adopted this philosophy. In the second cycle of the audit, the National Agency had announced its intent to examine more closely how the management intentions were implied at the department level (Nilsson and Wahlen, 2000).

The agency's audit reports often implicitly or explicitly recommended a top-down perspective at the institutional level. Asking (1999 cited in Nilsson & Wahlen, 2000, p. 10) stated:

The quality enhancement programme was expected to be defined at the central level, and to be implemented in the organisation at faculty levels. The first audit cycle had adopted to the institutions. At the same time the guidelines for the second cycle emphasis that institutions themselves would be encouraged to propose aspects of quality assurance that they were particular interested in their own perspectives.

Research findings from Bitzer and Malherbe's study indicated that implementation of quality promotion should be neither a 'top-down' nor 'bottom-up' model but it should be an interactive process representing a combination of the two.

In short, the findings from the previous study revealed that higher education institutions had to be responsible for the operation of quality assurance in the institutions, which needed effective management models. The debate on these two models. For example, Nilsson and Wahlen indicated that the top-

down model had been used widely and it seemed appropriate for Swedish higher education institutions. Similarly, Browns (1997) pointed out that the 'top-down' model 'is surely appropriate given that present external quality assurance arrangements in higher education stem from government initiative and continue to require government support'. The National Agency for Higher education in Sweden also recommended a top-down model to be implemented in higher education institutions. Harvey suggested that a bottom-up model may be more suitable for higher education (Harvey, 1997 cited in Nilsson and Wahlen, 2000).

2.5.2 Leadership and professionalism

Nilsson and Wahlen's study, and also Kanji, Tambi and Wallace's study revealed that leadership was an important factor in promoting quality assurance in higher education institutions. The findings from Nilsson and Wahlen's study indicated that the ideal of strong leadership was the overall picture provided by the reports. Several of the examples of best practice suggested that professionalisation of management functions regarding quality enhancement was desirable. In some cases the rector him/herself could be the person in charge of this area, on the basis of his or her expertise. In another case, it was pointed out that quality issues were pursued successfully with the help of a professional staff. One of the most positive reports stated that the university had 'a professionally developed and professionally implemented quality programme'.

Similarly, the findings from both of Kanji's studies also indicated that the role of leadership was the most important factor in promoting a quality system (TQM) within the institutions in Malaysia, the United States, and the UK. The findings from questionnaires revealed that TQM was introduced by the leadership in about 74 per cent of the US higher education institutions, 75.9 per cent in Malaysian higher education institutions, and 53.8 per cent in UK institutions (Kanji, Tambi and Wallace, 1999; Kanji & Tambi, 1999).

The methodology and strategy for quality assurance found from the previous studies may or may not be used in higher institutions in Thailand.

2.6 Obstacles to quality assurance

Four studies found some obstacles to quality assurance. They were: 1) Kanji, Tambi and Wallace's study (1999) on a comparative study of quality practices in higher education in the US and Malaysia; 2) Kanji and Tambi's study (1999) on Total Quality Management in UK higher education institutions; 3) Nilsson and Wahlen's study (2000) on institutional response to the Swedish model of quality assurance; and 4) Moreland and Clark's study (1998) on quality and ISO 9000 in educational organisation. The findings on the obstacles to quality assurance from the previous studies are as follows.

1) Kanji, Tambi, and Wallace's study

The findings from Kanji, Tambi, and Wallace's study revealed some obstacles to quality assurance in higher education. First, a lack of customer awareness among staff was a general drawback for many institutions. Twenty-seven point eight per cent of institutions in the US indicated that they had full customer awareness by all their employees (11.1 per cent in Malaysian institutions). Second, there was also a lack of quality culture existing among organisational members in various institutions, which could be developed by engaging quality experts for training and education. It had been found that quality culture has not yet been widely adopted in most American higher educational institutions whereas in Malaysian institutions this was embedded in their everyday organisation activities. It was therefore necessary to develop quality culture in American institutions where leadership could play a more important role (Kanji, Tambi, and Wallace, 1999).

2) Nilsson and Walhen's study

The findings from Nilsson and Walhen's study (2000) also indicated that one-half of the rectors and central management needed to improve their way of managing systematic quality enhancement activities. Most often criticism was levelled at a lack of transparency, the goals were not known in the organisations, or the importance of quality enhancement work had not been sufficiently clarified. The audit teams' criticism of the management culture of

the institutions was even more comprehensive. A majority of institutions were said to have shortcomings in the distribution of responsibilities between different levels of the organisation, and shortcomings in communication, co-operation and implementation. In only six of the twenty-seven institutions were management functions regarded as wholly acceptable. The central management had given high priority to quality enhancement activities and had succeeded in obtaining acceptance for developing the overall goals of quality assurance and quality enhancement.

3) Kanji and Tambi's study

The other study of Kanji and Tambi which collected data from UK higher education institutions revealed some obstacles to quality assurance as follows. First, a lack of customer awareness among staff was a general drawback for many institutions. Only 5.9 per cent of institutions indicated that they had full customer awareness by all their employees. Second, there was a lack of quality culture and other quality activities for transforming organisational culture among old universities, which showed their resistance towards current trends in the quality improvement process for organisational development. Moreover, the concept of quality culture was not understood among organisational members in various institutions which could be developed by engaging quality experts for training and education. None of the institutions had a high level of expertise to develop quality improvement processes. The finding indicated that only 14.7 per cent of institutions actively worked with quality consultant, while 25.5 per cent consulted them only occasionally (Kanji & Tambi, 1999).

4) Moreland and Clark's study

Moreland and Clark (1998) revealed some obstacles to quality assurance in the study that some staff found themselves having a great deal of work.

The obstacles to quality assurance within higher education institutions which were found from the previous can be summarised as follows:

1. A lack of transparency, the goals were not known in the organisations, or the importance of quality assurance and enhancement work had not been sufficiently clarified (Nilsson and Walhen, 2000).
2. Shortcoming in the distribution of responsibilities between different levels of the organisation (Nilsson and Walhen, 2000)
3. Shortcomings in communication, co-operation and implementation of quality assurance (Nilsson and Walhen, 2000).
4. Some staff found themselves having too much work to do (Moreland and Clark, 1998).
5. A lack of customer awareness among staff was a general drawback for many higher education institutions (Kanji, Tambi and Wallace, 1999; Kanji & Tambi, 1999).
6. There was a lack of quality culture and other quality activities for transforming organisational culture among old universities, which showed their resistance towards current trends in the quality improvement process for organisational development. Moreover, the concept of quality culture was not understood among organisational members (Kanji, Tambi and Wallace, 1999; Kanji & Tambi, 1999).

Obstacles to quality assurance is one of my own interests in this study. The findings from these four previous studies are sufficient to be considered in my own study. The obstacles found may be different, or may be similar to the case in my country that I am going to investigate.

2.7 Summary

The general background of quality assurance and the development of quality assurance both in developed and developing countries have already been presented in this chapter. Some observations have been made in the chapter. First, there are the differences in the progress of quality assurance in developed and developing countries. Second, in term of quality assurance systems in higher education institutions, the literature shows that recently three systems of quality assurance have been used in higher institutions in many countries. These systems are TQM, ISO 9000 and an Institutional system. Third, three methodologies: self evaluation, peer review, and

reporting were indicated as having been used for quality assurance in higher education institutions. Fourth, the literature also shows that two models of managing strategies are used for quality assurance in higher education institutions. They are top-down and bottom-up models. In addition, leadership and professionalism seem to be the important factors to promote quality assurances. Fifth, as far as the obstacles to quality assurance in higher education institution are concerned, the findings from previous studies show various obstacles to quality assurance, for instance, a lack of transparency quality assurance within the institution, shortcomings in communication, shortcomings in responsibility distribution, too much workload for staff, a lack of customer awareness among staff, and a lack of quality culture and quality activities for transforming organisational culture. The findings from the previous studies are useful in terms of building up a framework of the study on quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand.

The next chapter presents the general background of quality assurance in higher education in Thailand and also in Rajabhat Institutes.

Chapter Three

Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Thailand

This chapter aims to explain the background of quality assurance in higher education in Thailand. This includes a declaration of the quality assurance policy for higher education in Thailand as well as the establishment of a responsible organisation for quality assurance in the country. The chapter is divided into five parts. The first part describes the general background to the education system in Thailand. The second part focuses on higher education institutions. The third part presents a declaration of quality assurance policy in higher education. The fifth part deals with the establishment of responsible organisation for quality assurance in the country. The last part explains the links between previous studies on quality assurance in higher education and this study.

Before presenting quality assurance in higher education in Thailand, it may be useful to briefing review the structure of the education system of the country as well as the general background against which it has been developed.

3.1 General background of the educational system in Thailand

This section presents the development of educational systems in the country as well as the structure of the educational system.

3.1.1 Development of educational system

Educational development in Thailand has been ongoing for some eight hundred years. It can be divided into four periods. These are: traditional education, the foundations of formal education, modernised education for national development, and the new era of national education (ONEC, 1998).

During the period 1220-1868, Traditional Education was characteristically informal education. Education was provided only in the King's Palace and the

temples. The opportunity for education was offered to the princes, princesses, children from nobles' families and the boys who came to study with the monks. Girls were taught about ordinary household activities, especially cooking and how to help their parents who worked at home.

The second period of educational development was in the nineteenth century, from 1868-1932. The threat of western imperialism and the pressure of political movements made the Thai people think carefully about modernisation and reform. The fifth King of the Ratanakosin era, who encouraged educational reform, established the first school in the King's Palace. In 1884, the first public school was established in Bangkok. Schools became widespread in all parts of Thailand. In 1898, the first National Education Plan was written and applied to all schools. There was compulsory education, a five-year programme for all children. In this period, the first educational system had begun although it was not an efficient system.

The third period of educational development (1932-1997) was a Modernised Education for National Development. The National Education Plans were reformed; for example, the period of compulsory education was changed from five years to six years. Moreover, the government attempted to improve the educational system after the post-war period by reorganisation of the government administrative system. New educational units, such as the Office of National Education Commission were established (ONEC, 1998). The first National Education Development Plan was established in 1960. Subsequently, six National Education Plans were developed and used in the educational system of the country.

The last period is called 'New Era of National Education'. It covers the period from 1997 until now. The problems inherent in a developing country, especially the economic crisis, the weaknesses of some important organisation structures, and the fact that standards of education for all levels were not uniform, led the Thai government to do their tasks carefully. Social reform needed to take place and educational reform was one of the most important factors in this change.

The educational system according to the Eighth National Plan (1997-2001) covers education in both life-long learning and a school-based system. Life-long learning is self-learning from various sources of knowledge. School-based education is provided by educational institutions at four levels: pre-school education (a two-year programme), primary or compulsory education (a six-year programme), secondary education (a six-year programme), and higher education. Most Bachelors' degree are of four years. Masters' degree is a two-year programme and doctoral degree is a four-year programme.

The objectives of these four levels are different. The main objectives of pre-school education are focused on children's readiness for schooling physical, personality, and social developments. In primary education, the objectives are concerned with the skills of learning and helping children live in their own social environment. In secondary education, the main objectives are to identify pupils' needs and interests in both general academic and vocational areas, and to acquire the basis either for proceeding to higher education or for working and pursuing a career. In higher education, the main objectives are to promote learners' special knowledge and skills in various disciplines, and to strive for academic progress and excellence, especially in research and the development of knowledge and technology.

This is a summary of the development of the educational system in Thailand. It is of note that education in Thailand has developed from traditional education offered in the King's Palace and temples to the new era of Thailand's national education. Moreover, the Thai government is very concerned with the educational process and system. All efforts have been put into offering a better opportunity in education for all people and through this to developing the country.

3.1.2 Structure of educational system

This part of the chapter presents the structure of the education system in Thailand. This includes both the former education system and current education system of the country.

1) Former educational system

The former education system refers to the structure of the education system in Thailand before the declaration of the 1999 National Education Act.

The educational system according to the '1992 National Scheme of Education' covers both education in the school-related system and from a life-long learning process. Education in the school-related system is provided by educational institutions, characterised by a class/grading system, and the use of curriculum specified for the level and type of education. The school-related system is divided into four levels (ONEC, 1998) as follows.

Pre-school education

Pre-school education is in the form of childcare and readiness development of the physical, psychological, mental, emotional, and social aspects of children between 3-5 years of age. It can be organised in the form of day care centre.

Primary education

Primary education is compulsory for children between 6 and-11 years old. The education in this level requires six years of study.

Secondary education

Secondary education is divided into two parts: lower secondary education and upper secondary education. Each part requires 3 years of study. Lower secondary education aims to: 1) enable children around 12-14 years old to identify their needs and interests and to be aware of their aptitude both in general and vocational education; and 2) develop their ability for work and occupational practices relevant to their age. Upper secondary education aims to enable learners who are around 15-17 years old to acquire the basis either for proceeding to higher education or for working and pursuing a career suitable for their aptitude.

Higher education

Higher education in Thailand is divided into three levels: lower than bachelor's degree level, bachelor degree level, and graduate level. Lower than bachelor's degree level aims to promote learners' knowledge and vocational skills. Bachelor's degree level aims to promote learners' higher level of knowledge and skill in various disciplines. Graduate level aims to promote learners' specialised knowledge and skills; to strive for academic progress and excellence especially in studies, research and the development of knowledge and technology (ONEC, 1998).

The organisation of education in a school-related system can be of various types depending on characteristics and needs of target groups as follows: 1) 'teacher education' aims to develop prospective as well as practicing teachers to acquire morality, ability, and skill in teaching and motivating learners to learn; 2) 'vocational education' aims to enable learners to develop vocational knowledge and useful skills for working both as entrepreneurs and as paid workers. Vocational education in the formal school system is a development of occupational knowledge and skills relevant to each level of education from primary to higher levels. Vocational education in the non-formal system is short-course training in specific occupations for those needing to upgrade their knowledge and skills; 3) 'special vocational education' aims to enable learners to learn and develop specific vocational skills and expertise such as dancing, music and sport. This type of education may be provided in special institutes or incorporated in general curricula; 4) 'vocational education for specific purpose' provides knowledge and skills in accordance with specific needs of certain agencies, or characteristic and needs of specific groups; 5) 'special education' aims to enable the handicapped to undertake learning suitable for their conditions and capabilities. Special education can be provided in special institutes or in general educational institutions from pre-school to higher education level; and 6) 'education for ecclesiastical personnel and spiritual leaders' aims to enable monks, novices and spiritual leaders to assume leadership in wisdom, spiritual and moral development (ONEC, 1998).

There are three main ministries responsible for the provision of educational services in Thailand. First, the Ministry of Education (MOE), which covers a wide range of work dealing with educational, religious, and cultural affairs. It is composed of fourteen departments/officers responsible for educational policies and plans as well as provision and monitoring of the educational service. Second, the Ministry of University Affairs (MUA), the major role of which is to supervise and coordinate public and private higher education institutions with the exception of some of specialised professional training which falls under the jurisdictions of other ministries. It is also responsible for formulating educational policy within the framework of the national education development plan. Other tasks include standardization of curricula, personnel management, and recommendation of budget allocations. Third, the Ministry of Interior (MOI) the department of Local Administration under the MOI is entrusted with the tasks of administering and managing primary education in the municipality of each province through the Bureau of Local Education Administration. In Bangkok Metropolitan Areas, the management of local education is under the responsibility of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA). Some departments of the MOI are also responsible for the management of education in specialised fields (ONEC, 1999a).

An education system of a country that is divided into four levels under the administration of three different ministries and has different types of special education for specific groups seems to be a big system. This may lead Thai education to some difficulty in terms of implementing a new policy in the same direction, with the same standards and at the time, for instance quality assurance policy. As a result, the Thai Government has considered a new administration system for higher education in the country which administers under the same ministry as in 2002. This is presented of the fourth part of this chapter.

2) Current educational system

At present, the legal framework of education in Thailand is based on the 1997 Constitution and the 1999 National Education Act. The new Constitution

promulgated in October 1997 contained several provisions relating to education, religion, and culture. The 1999 National Education Act was promulgated in August 1999 to serve as the fundamental law for the administration and provision of education and training.

The new National Education Act is composed of nine chapters. Chapter one stated the objectives and principles of this new Education Act:

Education provision is based on three principles: 1) lifelong education for all; 2) participation by all segments of society; and 3) continuous development of the bodies of knowledge and the learning process. The principles in organising the system, structure, and process of education are: 1) unity in policy and diversity in implementation; 2) decentralisation of authority; 3) setting of standards and a system of quality assurance; 4) raising the professional standards of teachers, faculty staff, and educational personnel; 5) mobilisation of resources; and 5) partnership with all sectors of society

[ONEC, 2001, p. 8-9]

Ministries, bureaus, public enterprise, and other public agencies are authorised to provide specialised education based on national education policy and standards as well as ministerial regulations (ONCE, 2001:10) According to the new National Education Act, education in the country is provided in three types: formal, non-formal, and informal education.

Formal education is provided for twelve years before higher education covering six-years of primary education, three-years of lower secondary education, and three-years of upper secondary education. It also includes early childhood or pre-primary education. Formal education is divided into two levels: basic education and higher education, with nine years compulsory education as the details below (ONCE, 2001) shows.

Basic education

Basic education is provided by the following institutions. First, early childhood development institutions, for instance, childcare centres, child development centres, pre-school child development centres of religious institutions, initial care centres for disabled children or those with special

needs or other early childhood development centres. Second, schools such as public schools, private schools, and those under the jurisdiction of Buddhist or other religious institutions. Third, learning centres, for instance, those organised by non-formal education agencies, individual, families, communities, community organisations, professional bodies, religious institutions, enterprises, hospitals, medical institutions, and other social institutions.

Higher education

Higher education is provided in universities, institutes, colleges, and other types of institutions. It is divided into two levels: lower-than-degree (or diploma) level and degree level.

Lower-than-degree or Diploma level

Higher education at this level is mainly offered by colleges and institutes under the Ministry of Education (MOE), for instance, in Rajabhat Institutes, Rajamongala Institutes of Technology, public and private colleges as well as colleges of physical education, dramatic arts and the fine arts. The majority of courses offered are related to vocational and teacher education which requires two years of study.

Degree level

The majority of teaching and learning at degree level is provided by the MUA and MOE. The study programmes require two years of study for students who have completed diploma courses, and four to six years of study for those finishing upper secondary education or equivalent courses. The first professional qualification is a bachelor's degree obtained after four years of study. In the fields of architecture, painting, sculpture, graphic arts, and pharmacy, five years of study are required for a bachelor's degree. The fields of medicine, dentistry, and veterinary science require six years of study.

It is noticeable that there are significant changes from the former educational system to current system. These changes can be summarised as follows. First, the formal education system was reduced from four levels (pre-school education, primary education, secondary education, and higher education) to two levels (basic education and higher education). Second, compulsory education is expanded to nine years of learning. Third, there is increasing public concern about educational provision. Fourth, there is an attempt to limit the authority of central government. Finally, there is concern mainly about quality assurance in educational provision of the country. However, in my opinion, the more institutions that allow provision of education, the more questions about the quality and standard of learners in different institutions may be raised.

3.2 Higher education institutions

This part of the chapter presents three major types of higher education institutions in Thailand: universities, Rajabhat Institutes and Rajamangala Institute of Technology. The reasons for choosing to present these three institutions is because they were the three main higher education institutions of the country, and they established quality assurance in their institutions during the same period.

Major higher education institutions in Thailand include vocational colleges, Rajamangala Institute of Technology (RIT), Rajabhat Institutes (RIs) or former Teachers' Colleges, and universities (ONEC, 1998). During the fieldwork of this study the Ministry of University Affairs was responsible for the management of education in both public and private universities whereas the Ministry of Education (MOE) was responsible for the management of education in Rajabhat Institutes, and Rajamangala Institute of Technology. Others ministries provided education in specialised fields for specific purposes, both in formal and non-formal systems.

3.2.1 Universities

The university in Thailand was founded in the early 1900s when Chulalongkorn University, the first university, was established by the Royal Decree in 1917 (Chulalongkorn, 1999). It incorporated the existing schools of medicine, engineering, art and science, law and political science. In 1943, Mahidol, Kasetsart, and Silpakorn Universities were established in Bangkok. Mahidol was known as the medical science university, Kasetsart was the agricultural science university and Silapakorn was the fine art university. Between 1960 and 1970, the university system expanded. At this period, three universities were established in different parts of the country: Chiangmai University in the North, Khon Kaen University in the Northeast and Prince of Songkhla in the South of Thailand. Chiangmai and Khon Kaen were established in 1964, and Prince of Songkhla was established in 1967. Apart from the establishment of regional universities, another important development was the founding in 1967 of the National Institute of Department Administration (NIDA) as a graduate institute specialising in administrative and national development. Also the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), an international graduate school, offering science and engineering to students from Asian and other countries was established in the same year (AIT, 2000). During this period Bangkok University, and Assumption University, the premier private universities were founded in 1962 and 1967 respectively.

In the early 1970s, King Mongkut Institute of Technology was created. After that, Srinakharinwirot University, known as the educational university was founded in 1974. This period also witnessed the expansion of private universities and institutions. Most public and private universities were established in Bangkok and in provincial centres throughout the country. Between 1970 and 1980, two open universities, Ramkhamhang and Sukhothai Thammathirat were established in 1971 and 1979 respectively, to respond to the growing public demand for access to higher education. In 1990, six universities, Burapha, Nareasuan, Mahasarakham, Thaksin, Ubon Rachatani, and Suranaree University of Technology were established in Chonburi, Mahasarakham, Songkhla, Ubon Rachatani, and Nahkon Rachsima province respectively (MUA, 1999).

The other significant innovation in higher education, the first public university operated independently of government bureaucracy, known as Suranaree University of Technology, was founded in 1990. It became the model for other public universities seeking to be autonomous. After that, Wilailuk University was established in 1992, as the second university in this type of administration.

At present, universities in Thailand are divided into two types: public and private universities. There are twenty-five public universities and institutions, and forty-three private universities and colleges in Thailand. Two universities, Ramkhamhang and Sukhothai Thammathirat are considered as the open universities (without entrance examination requirements). Most of the universities in Thailand now have their own administrative structure and budget system for self-governance. Each public university has its own Act empowering the 'University Council' to function as the governing body. The Rector or the President runs the university according to the policy laid down by the University Council. An innovative type of university administration has been introduced as a government-supervised public university. Such a university has its own administrative structure and budget system for self-governance. The administration of a vocational college, RIT, and each RI, is similar to that of public universities (ONEC, 1998).

3.2.2 Rajabhat Institutes

Formerly a Teacher Training College, the Rajabhat Institute was founded in the reign of King Rama IV, more than one hundred years ago. The first teacher training school in Thailand was established in Bangkok in 1892 for the purpose of training elementary and secondary school teachers. After that, teacher training schools were established both in the metropolitan and provincial areas. In 1928 there were twenty-five teacher training schools in operation offering programmes leading to a primary teaching certificate and a secondary teaching certificate. In 1954, a Teacher Education Department was established under the administration of the Ministry of Education to reorganise the teacher education system and train qualified teachers for elementary and secondary schools throughout the country.

During the early years, teacher colleges offered two programmes. First, a two-year programme leading to the Lower Certificate in Education, for those who had finished junior high school. The purpose of this programme was mainly to prepare them to become elementary school teachers. Second, a two-year training course leading to a High Certificate in Education, for those who had finished senior high school, designed to prepare them to teach in secondary schools. As a result of the expansion of compulsory education, the high rate of population growth, and the need to improve the quality of secondary school teachers, from 1975 the teachers' colleges began to offer a four-year programme leading to a bachelor's degree in education. In the same year, the Teacher Colleges' Act established teachers' colleges as institutions of education with the purpose of providing academic knowledge and training teachers to bachelor's degree level. Teacher colleges were also required to conduct research, to promote the quality and status of teaching and administrative personnel, to maintain and conserve culture national identity, and to provide academic services to the community. In 1984, the Teacher's College Act of 1975 was revised. As a result, the Teacher Education Department, with thirty-six teachers' colleges, diversified its curriculum to train personnel in three fields: education, science and the arts.

In February 1992, the centenary of teacher education in Thailand, King Bhumibol Adulayadej established the name 'Rajabhat Institutes' for the Teachers' Colleges.

Each Rajabhat Institute is under the administration of the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council (ORIC, 1999a). In 1995, the Rajabhat Institutes Act brought change to all Rajabhat Institutes. The aim of this change is to promote Rajabhat Institutes to full university status. At present, all Rajabhat Institutes have six functions, as follows:

1. Provision of educational programmes at all degree levels.
2. Conducting research for rural development.
3. Preservation and promotion of arts and culture.
4. Promotion of the academic and professional status of teachers and educational personnel.

5. Use and creation of advanced technology to enhance instruction and improve academic efficiency.
6. Provision of academic services to the community

Rajabhat Institutes offer their programmes in various fields of study at Bachelor and Master Degree levels. During the fieldwork of this study there were thirty-six Rajabhat Institutes, six of which are in Bangkok and thirty are located throughout the country. At present, there are forty-one Rajabhat Institutes, of which five new institutes are located in the North-East of Thailand.

3.2.3 Rajamangala Institute of Technology

Rajamangala Institute of Technology (RIT) is an educational and research institute and a department attached to the Ministry of Education. It was first established under the name 'Institute of Technology and Vocational Education' in 1975 by a combination of different vocational colleges, some of which were over 75 years old. It was later given the name 'Rajamangala Institute of Technology' granted by his Majesty the king. Its administration is under the responsibility of the President with assistance from the Vice President, Assistant to the President, Deans and Directors. It is governed by the RIT Council chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education. RIT's commitments are as follows (RIT, 2004):

- 1) To promote vocational teachers at Bachelor's degree level;
- 2) To manage vocational education at Vocational Certificate, Diploma, and Bachelor's level;
- 3) To produce research to develop vocational education and to offer academic service to the public;
- 4) To conserve the national arts, culture, and environment.

With its uniqueness of being a multidisciplinary institute with forty campuses and sixteen faculties, including twenty-nine research and academic service units scattered around the country, it plays a key role in the development of the national manpower and life quality of the communities. Its Intranet-Internet IT systems and large scale of overseas collaboration, have increased

its capability in offering academic and research services of high quality (RIT, 2004).

3.3 Declaration of quality assurance policy

This part of the chapter explains the declaration of quality assurance policy in higher education institutions in Thailand during the period of two National Education Acts: the 1992 National Education Act, and the new National Education Act 1999 were used.

3.3.1 Quality assurance for all higher education institutions

In Thailand, quality assurance in education has been emphasised not only in higher education but also in all levels of educational provision since the end of the seventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (1992-1996). In the eighth National Economic and Social Plan (1997-2001), quality in education was one of the important targets of this plan as it aimed to (NESDB, 1996, p. 30):

Improve the quality of education at all levels; extend basic education from six to nine years to all school-aged children; provide continuous training for all school teachers; and work towards the further extension of basic education to 12 years.

In order to meet this target, the Ministry of University Affairs and also the Ministry of Education played significant roles in the implementation of a quality assurance policy in higher education institutions. Quality assurance policy for universities was declared by the Ministry of University Affairs on 8 August 1996 whereas quality assurance for Rajabhat Institutes was declared by the Ministry of Education on 23 September 1996. A manual of quality assurance for universities was issued. The main aims of this policy were as follows (MUA, 1996):

1. To promote the development of the quality assurance system as an instrument for maintaining institutional academic standards.
2. To encourage higher education institutions to develop their own internal quality assurance mechanisms and systems suitable to their own purpose and conditions.

3. To establish the guiding principles and procedures for implementation of quality assurance. Higher education institutions may adapt them to their own conditions.
4. To encourage each institution to establish its own quality audit mechanism at both the institutional and faculty level.
5. To support and encourage, both in public and private agencies, institutions to include academic and professional associations to participate in quality assurance activities.
6. To facilitate the dissemination of information on quality assurance widely and publicly for public acknowledgement and understanding.

The policy and guidelines on quality assurance issued by the MUA were implemented by all public universities. The principles and guidelines of quality assurance were disseminated to university staff. The quality assurance system initiated by the MUA was expected to be fully implemented by the year 2000 (ONEC, 1999b).

At the same time, the Ministry of Education launched an initiative through the Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development and other departments to improve the quality of education. Three processes of educational quality assurance were involved: 1) education quality control; 2) inspection, intervention, and review of educational quality; and 3) quality assessment for accreditation of educational institutions. The activities to be taken from 1998-2002 at all levels of education were as follows (ONEC, 1999a, p. 112).

1. Development of quality assurance processes:
 - 1.1 To develop the quality assurance system of the MOE;
 - 1.2 To develop the operation of quality assurance in educational institutions;
 - 1.3 To prepare guidelines for quality assurance of educational institutions;
 - 1.4 To disseminate the concepts and operational guidelines to the key curriculum persons and pilot schools.

2. Development of quality levels of learners in accordance with the learning context.
3. Development of the systems for inspection, review and report of educational quality.
4. Development of an evaluation system for the accreditation of educational institutions.

The MOE policy on quality assurance was implemented by the departments concerned. Most of the internal evaluation was conducted by the educational institutions by using a process of input development towards educational standards. In primary education only supervision processes were totally used. However, in higher education institutions, other methods and strategies had been used, for instance, the Department of Vocational Education and Rajamongala Institute of Technology were planning to introduce ISO to the quality control and audit processes within their institutions.

After the declaration of a policy on quality assurance had been made in 1996, both the Ministry of University Affairs and the Ministry of Education began to develop guidelines on mechanisms and procedures for implementation in higher education institutions under their own administration. The important decisions related to this were: 1) academic audit would be used as an important mechanism for quality; 2) academic audit would be implemented at both institutional and faculty levels; and 3) higher education institutions would be responsible for internal audit while the Ministry of University Affairs and the Ministry of Education would be responsible for an external audit.

3.3.2 Quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes

Quality assurance became a new policy for all Rajabhat Institutes in 1996 when the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council (ORIC) announced its quality assurance policy. The ORIC attempted to introduce quality assurance to all Rajabhat Institutes by establishing a Handbook of Quality Assurance of Rajabhat Institutes. In this handbook, four main aspects were introduced. They were: 1) definition of quality assurance for Rajabhat Institutes; 2) the

structure of Quality Assurance Committees and their responsibilities; 3) standards and criteria of thirteen quality factors; and 4) thirteen quality factors. The thirteen quality factors can be seen as a quality framework for Rajabhat Institutes. These factors were composed of: 1) Philosophy, mission, goal and objectives of the institutes; 2) curriculum; 3) teachers; 4) students; 5) educational provision; 6) student affairs; 7) facilities; 8) administration and management; 9) budget; 10) staff; 11) environment; 12) research; and 13) follow-up process.

The ORIC also established criteria and indicators of the thirteen factors as a guideline for Rajabhat Institutes. Later, the administration system of higher education in the country was changed. All higher education institutions were under the administration of the same ministry. As a result, in 2001 the thirteen quality factors were changed to nine factors, similar to the quality factors used in universities.

3.4 Establishment of the Office of Educational Standards and Evaluation

According to the 1999 National Education Act, (ONEC, 2001, p. 12):

Quality assurance systems will be established in educational institutions as part of educational administration. The Office of Education Standards and Evaluation will be established as a public organisation responsible for external quality evaluation at least once every five years.

As a result, a public organisation was first established on 3 November 2000, under the name 'Office of Education Standards and Evaluation'. The organisation was composed of eleven people from the Ministry of Education, experts from universities and higher educational institutions, and experts from different careers. The objectives of this organisation were the development of the criteria and methods of external evaluation, and the assessment of the outcome of educational provision in order to evaluate the quality of educational institutions, taking into account the aims, principles and direction for provision of each level of education as stipulated in the National Education Act. The functions of the organisation are (OESE, 2000, p. 2-3):

1. To develop the external evaluation systems, set the framework, direction and method for efficient external evaluation in line with the quality assurance system of the educational institutions and the agencies to which such institutions are attached;
2. To develop the standards and criteria for external evaluation;
3. To certify external evaluators;
4. To supervise and set the standards for external evaluation conducted by external evaluators as well as to issue certification of standards, provided that in case of necessity or for the benefit of study and research for development of the external evaluation system, the office may carry out an external evaluation itself;
5. To develop and train external evaluators; prepare training course curricula and encourage private, professional or academic bodies to participate in the efficient training of external evaluators; and
6. To submit annual reports on the evaluation of educational quality and standards to the Council of Ministries, Minister of Education, Religion and Culture, and the Budget Bureau for consideration in formulating educational policy and allocating budget for education, as well as to disseminate the reports to the agencies concerned and the public.

Recently, the Thai government has changed the administration for higher education in Thailand. The two main ministries, the Ministry of University Affairs and the Ministry of Education have been abolished. All higher education institutions in Thailand are under the administration of a new ministry, the Ministry of Education Region and Culture.

In brief, quality assurance is a new policy for higher education in Thailand. Since this policy was announced in 1996, all higher education institutions are responsible for quality assurance implementation. Institutional responsibilities focus on internal quality assurance while the external quality assurance is the responsibility of the ministries in Bangkok. During this investigation, the whole process of quality assurance in higher education in Thailand has not been completed. At present the Office of Education

Standards and Evaluation, an independent organisation is responsible for external quality assessment in education at all levels.

The development of quality assurance in Thailand is in the early stages, compared with some developing countries such as Malaysia and the Philippines, where quality assurance has been implemented for a few years. Compared with some developed countries such as the UK, Thailand is a long way behind. British standards of education are among the highest in the world (Kanji & Tambi, 1999). The UK has a tradition of excellence stretching back six hundred years. The British government has formed several bodies responsible for some aspects of quality, e.g. quality assessment, quality assurance and audit. These include the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP), Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI), Council for National Academic Award (CNAA), Higher Education Funding Council (HEFC) and the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC). At present, the responsibility for quality assurance is carried out by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), which replaced HEQC in 1997. By contrast, during the last hundred years of the history of higher education in Thailand, there has not been any system to ensure the quality and standard of education at all levels, until quality assurance was launched in higher education institutions in 1996. The development of quality assurance in higher education in Thailand is as shown in Table 3.1

Table 3.1 Development of quality assurance in higher education in Thailand

Date/Year	Declaration/Establishment
8 August 1996	Quality assurance policy for universities
23 September 1996	Quality assurance policy for Rajabhat Institutes
1997	Guidelines for quality assurance in RIT
November 1997	Policy for the promotion of educational Standards and Quality assurance was approved by the Council of Ministries
November 1997	The Office of National Education Standards (temporary Internal unit under ONEC, Office of National Education Commission)
1998	Promotion of internal and external evaluation in institutions
August 1999	The National Plan of Education 1999 (quality assurance was first stated in National Plan of Education)
3 November 2000	Office of National Standard and Evaluation (OESE), responsible organisation

3.5 Links between previous studies and this study

Links between previous studies presented in Chapter Two and my study in terms of the similarities and differences are considered as the following aspects.

3.5.1 Quality assurance systems

Research findings revealed that three systems of quality assurance have been used in higher education institutions in different parts of the world. Quality assurance systems in higher education institutions is one of my own interests in this study. The difference is the previous study focused on the implementation of one particular system in higher education institutions whereas this study looks for all systems that are being used in Rajabhat Institutes. The three quality assurance systems from the previous research findings mentioned earlier in Chapter Two (see page 42) may or may not be used in higher education in Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand.

In general, it is likely that quality assurance systems identified in previous studies have been developed in Rajabhat institutes. This is because the guidelines of quality assurance policy for Rajabhat Institutes state that this policy aims to 'encourage all higher education institutions to develop their own quality assurance mechanisms suitable for their own purposes and mission' (ORIC, 1996).

Considering more specifically, it may be more possible to apply the institutional system as in the case in Swedish higher education because this system is established by the government and the principles for the institutional audits are laid down by the National Agency for Higher Education. In addition, Swedish higher education institutions are encouraged to build up their own quality assurance systems. This is similar to the statement in the quality assurance policy for Rajabhat Institutes which stated that all institutions are encouraged to create their own quality assurance systems.

The Swedish model of quality assurance may be considered as a 'binary system', which means one system is established by the government and the other is created by the institutions. On the other hand, the Swedish model can be divided into two levels: national and institutional levels. The government and the National Agency for Higher Education are responsible for quality assurance, and aim to form a relatively unified system of quality

assurance at a national level. The institutional level is the responsibility of each higher education institution. This model is similar to the model presented by Harman (1998). Harman also divided the models of quality assurance in higher education into two levels: national and institutional levels. The strength of Harman's model is that there are alternative patterns for managing quality assurance at both levels. These alternative options will lead higher education institutions to develop their own models of quality assurance suitable for the institutional contexts. For instance, at the national level, the government will be able to set up: (a) a unit or sector within a government agency; (b) a separate quality assurance agency established by the government; (c) a separate quality assurance agency established by government but with considerable independence; (d) an agency established by a group or association of higher education institutions; or (e) an agency established jointly by government and higher education institutions. Similarly, at the institutional level, higher education institutions will be able to manage quality assurance either by senior university, academic board, academic committee, specialist committee or a board set up by the governing body.

A model of quality assurance as two systems may be suitable for higher education institutions in developed countries where the idea of quality assurance has existed for a few years, and higher education institutions have the capability to create their own quality assurance systems. In addition, there is a National Agency responsible for quality assurance, and it is able to support higher education institutions. However, in some developing countries which have already been mentioned in Chapter Two, there is still a lack of readiness, and a lack of the agency or necessary organisation responsible for quality assurance. These limitations lead to the question whether quality assurance as 'two systems' will be suitable for other countries or not. Cizas (1997) considered that the capabilities of a smaller country are more limited. A smaller country does not need and is unable to fulfil some of the procedures which are quite common and reasonable for larger and more powerful countries.

3.5.2 Obstacles to quality assurance

The study on the obstacles to quality assurance from previous studies is similar to this study which attempts to look for the obstacles to quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The obstacles to quality assurance, which were found from the previous studies, for instance, a lack of transparency, shortcomings in the distribution of responsibilities between different levels of the organisations, shortcomings in communication, cooperation and a lack of customer awareness among staff as already mentioned in Chapter Two are useful to draw attention to the obstacles to quality assurance of this study. The obstacles found in the previous studies may be different, or may be similar to the case in Rajabhat Institutes, in Thailand.

3.5.3 Methodologies for quality assurance

Research findings in Chapter Two revealed three methodologies that had been used for quality assurance. They were: self-evaluation, peer review and external reporting. Although the research questions of this study do not include methodology for quality assurance, there will be discussion if there is enough evidence from the study on this aspect.

3.5.4 Management strategies for quality assurance

Research findings from previous studies revealed management strategies for quality assurance, for instance, top-down and bottom-up models but these are not included in this study. However, discussion related to this aspect will be offered if there is evidence from the research findings to support.

3.5.5 Quality assurance procedures

It is noticeable that previous studies did not report all procedures of the operation of quality assurance in higher education institutions but the operation of quality assurance is mainly focused on this study.

3.5.6 Research methodologies

Most of the previous studies carried out survey research using different kinds of research methods for data collection. Nilsson and Walhen's study (2000) as well as Billing and Thomas's study (2000) conducted survey research. The difference is Billing and Thomas's study used questionnaires for data collection whereas Nilsson and Walhen's study used documents and interviews. Kanji, Tambi and Wallace (1999) also conducted survey research using questionnaires gathering data from higher education institutions from two countries. Sharp, Munn, and Paterson's study (1997) was again carried out by survey research using the questionnaire method for data collection. The questionnaires were designed to collect data from two different groups of people, assessors and assessees. Another study carried out by Kanji was the implementation of TQM in higher education institutions. In this study survey research was conducted and questionnaires were used for data collection. On the other hand, case study was carried out in Bitzer and Malherbe (1995), as well as Moreland and Clark's study (1998).

Survey research and case study as used in the previous studies have been considered to use in the study of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes for the reason that the previous studies and this study are both focused on quality assurance in higher education. Data in this study is from different sources and from different groups of people. There is a greater possibility of conducting survey research in this study because survey research seems more appropriate for descriptive explanation purposes, and attempts to gather data from a large number of people in a limited time. Using different methods for data collection is also considered to use in this study in order to enhance the validity and reliability of the study.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has presented various aspects related to the education system, background of higher education as well as quality assurance in higher education in Thailand. It is noticeable that the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council established a quality framework which is composed of thirteen

factors as the guidelines for all Rajabhat Institutes in 1996. Later, this quality framework was changed to nine factors similar to the universities' quality framework. Each Rajabhat Institute was responsible for its internal quality assurance while the Office of Educational Standard and Evaluation was responsible for external quality assurance.

The chapter also included the links between previous studies on quality assurance in higher education and this study. These links included: 1) quality assurance system; 2) obstacles to quality assurance; 3) methodology for quality assurance; 4) management strategies for quality assurance; 5) quality assurance procedures; and 6) research methodology used in this study compared to previous studies.

The next chapter presents the research methodology of the study

Chapter Four

Research Methodology

This study aims to explore the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand. It addresses two main research questions: 1) How does quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes operate? and 2) How can the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes be enhanced? This chapter seeks to explain how the investigation has been carried out. It explains the choices of research methods and the motivation for using the chosen methodology. The chapter also gives a description of a sample of the study, the research fieldwork in Thailand, research ethics, the processes of data analysis, and an explanation of the validity and reliability of the study.

Considering the two research questions, it is clear that different sources of data are required for the investigation. The first research question obviously shows that the sources of data are Rajabhat Institutes, which refer to staff, administrators, students, and people (staff or administrators) who are responsible for quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The second research question requires two main different sources of data: 1) Rajabhat Institutes themselves, which include staff, students, administrators, and people who are responsible for quality assurance; 2) people outside Rajabhat Institutes who are responsible for quality assurance, or have been involved in quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. These sources of data, therefore, refer to people in the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council, the Ministry of Education, and the Office of National Education Commission, who are in charge of the quality assurance policy in Rajabhat Institutes and employers of graduates from Rajabhat Institutes.

The answers to these research questions are derived from perceptions of these different groups of people who are involved in quality assurance in higher education in Rajabhat Institutes.

The next stage of the study is considered research methodology. Figueroa (1981, p. 21) indicated that:

Methodology of the study refers to the research design, that is, to the overall logic, the general strategies, or the basic plan of the approaches, and to the methods used to obtain, process and analyse the information, including the methods of selecting the subjects or phenomena to be studied.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, p. 20) also indicated that:

Methodology refers to the ways in which general scientific statements or procedures of disciplines or perspectives are acted out in research situations... a methodology is a broad yet complex array of ideas, concepts, frameworks and theories which surround the use of various methods of techniques employed to generate data.

According to the definitions of research methodology mentioned earlier, it is clear that research methodology is involved with several stages of the study, including the determination of conceptual framework, research design, research strategies, methods for data collection, ethics and negotiation, and data analysis. Various stages of research methodology are presented in this chapter.

This chapter consists of four parts. The first part explains the design of the study. The second part gives a description of the research fieldwork in Thailand. The third part of the chapter describes data analysis. Validity and reliability of the study are explained in the fourth part of the chapter.

4.1 Research design

Research design in this chapter is focused on the explanation and justifying the choice of research strategies. It is divided into several sections including some background information about Rajabhat Institutes, research strategies, research methods, samples of the study, research instruments, and research timelines.

4.1.1 General conceptual framework

At the early stage of this study, three research questions relevant to quality assurance in higher education in Thailand were drawn up and developed. These questions were: 1) How does quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes

in Thailand operate? 2) How can the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes be enhanced? 3) What models of quality assurance should be proposed for Rajabhat Institutes?

The first and second research questions are in the same area of investigation. It is possible to investigate these two research questions at the same time, using the same research strategies, whereas the third research question is different. It also probably needs a different research strategy to investigate, and needs more time to complete the investigation. Lewis and Munn (1988, p. 7) stated:

It is important, then, before we embark on an inquiry that we are clear about precisely what it is we are interested in investigating. A *research question* is one which makes explicit the precise area of an investigation; it identifies, within the area of general concern, the specific aspect(s) which is or are of particular interest. Research questions are the vital first step in any research.

Andrews (2003, p.3) pointed out:

...that is not sufficient just to pose questions: they have to be answered – or at least, answerable. ... a research question must have the potential for being answered in the project to be taken.

I was aware of drawing my research questions. Thus, they were written and developed by using simple forms and words. I also tried to make clear that my research questions were answerable and it covered the area of my interest.

In order to maintain my interest in the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes, the limit of time of the investigation, and to use the same research methodology for the investigation, the three research questions were drawn up. Eventually, two main research questions were posed as follows:

- 1) How does quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand operate? and
- 2) How can the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes be enhanced?

These two research questions can be answered by people's perceptions of quality assurance. These perceptions are derived from people's knowledge, opinion and their own experiences in quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

Quality assurance in higher education is concerned with different groups of people as Frazer (1992, p. 101-102) stated:

The drive for quality assurance in higher education came from several quarters: governments, which in most countries was the tax payers; citizens, who pay tax to government; employers of graduates; students and their parents; and teachers, professors and managers in universities.

Therefore, different groups of people are considered for data collection for this study. These people refer to students, staff, administrators, and employers. It is noticeable that there are no managers in Thai universities. In this case, the 'administrators' in higher education institutions were considered to be included for the study instead. In addition, the hierarchical administration system of higher education in Thailand encouraged me to include the administrators in relevant ministries in this study. Their experience and responsibility for quality assurance in higher education, particularly in Rajabhat Institutes, are assumed to be significant data for this study.

4.1.2 Choices of research strategies

There are three relevant factors which I have taken into consideration for the choices of research strategies of the study. First, the context of Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand. Second, the research strategies from the previous studies on quality assurance in higher education from the literature review (see Chapter Three). Third, general knowledge of social research and research in education.

1) Context of Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand

Formerly Teaching Colleges, the Rajabhat Institutes were founded in 1982. They offer their programmes in various fields of study at Bachelor and Master degree levels. (Recently, some Rajabhat Institutes have offered programmes at

doctoral level). During the investigation, there were thirty-six Rajabhat Institutes, of which six are in Bangkok and thirty are located throughout the country. (Later the number of Rajabha Institutes was increased to forty-one institutes.)

Rajabhat Institutes are divided into eight groups located in different parts of Thailand. There are two groups of Rajabhat Institutes in the North; two groups in the North-East; two groups in the centre of the country; one group in the South; and one group in Bangkok, the capital of Thailand. Groups, names, and location of thirty-six Rajabhat Institutes were as shown below as Table 4.1 (ORIC, 1999a).

Table 4.1 Groups and location of Rajbahat Institutes

Group of RI	Part of Thailand	Name of RI	Province
1. Lanna	North	1.1 RI Chiang Rai	Chiang Rai
		1.2 RI Chiang Mai	Chiang Mai
		1.3 RI Lampang	Lampang
		1.4 RI Uttaradit	Uttaradit
2. Puttachinnarajh North		2.1 RI Kampong Phet	Kampong Phet
		2.2 RI Nakhon Sawan	Nakhon Sawan
		2.3 RI Pibulsongkram	Pibulsongkram
		2.4 RI Phetchabun	Phetchabun
3. Issan Nuea	North-East	3.1 RI Maha Sarakham	Maha Sarakham
		3.2 RI Loei	Loei
		3.3 RI Sakon Nakhon	Sakon Nakhon
		3.4 RI Udon Thani	Udon Thani
4. Issan Tai	North-East	4.1 RI Nakhon Rachasima Nakhon	Rachasima
		4.2 RI Buri Ram	Buri Ram
		4.3 RI Surin	Surin
		4.4 RI Ubon Rachatani	Ubon Rachatani

Table 4.1 Groups of Rajabhat Institutes

Group of RI	Part of Thailand	Name of RI	Province
5. Sri Ayutthaya Central		5.1 RI Rajanagarindra	Chachoengsao
		5.2 RI Thepsatri	Lopburi
		5.3 RI Phranakhon Si Ayutthaya	Phanakhon Sri Ayuthaya
		5.4 RI Rambhaibarni	Chanthaburi
6. Tawarawade Central		6.1 RI Kanchanaburi	Kanchanaburi
		6.2 RI Nakhon Pathom	Nakhon Pathom
		6.3 RI Muban Chom Bung	Ratchaburi
		6.4 RI Phetchaburi	Phetchaburi
7. Taksin	South	7.1 RI Nakhon Si Thammarat	Nakhon Si Thammarat
		7.2 RI Phuket	Phuket
		7.3 RI Yala	Yala
		7.4 RI Songkhla	Songkhla
		7.5 RI Surat Thani	Surat Thani
8. Ratanakosin Central		8.1 RI Chandrakasem	Bangkok
		8.2 RI Dhonburi	Bangkok
		8.3 RI Bansomdejchaopraya	Bangkok
		8.4 RI Phranakhon	Bangkok
		8.5 RI Suan Dusit	Bangkok
		8.6 RI SuanSunandha	Bangkok

Documents from the Office of Rajabhat Institutes (ORIC, 1999a) shows that all Rajabhat Institutes have six functions (see page 71-72). These functions lead each Rajabhat Institute to have its own roles and responsibilities similar to other Rajabhat Institutes.

In terms of the number of students and staff, it was found that the number of full-time students in all Rajabhat Institutes in 1999, before the fieldwork started, was 178,013, and there were 218,604 part-time students. In 2002, the numbers of full-time students in Rajabhat Institutes were 221,451 with 274,734 part-time students. The numbers of staff in thirty-six Rajabhat were 7,411 in 2002 (ORIC, 1999c; ORIC 2002).

2) Research strategies on quality assurance in higher education from the previous studies

I was also interested in the differences and similarities of the research strategies which had been used on quality assurance in higher education used by the previous studies compared to this study.

According to previous studies on quality assurance in higher education, for instance, Nilsson and Walhen (2000); Munasinghe and Jayawardena (1999); Kanji, Tambi and Wallace (1999); Kanji and Tambi (1999); Sharp, Munn and Peterson (1997); Billing and Thomas (2000) a survey was used in their studies. There are studies on quality assurance which were based on case study data. This is found, for instance, in Bitzer and Malherbe's study (1995) as well as Moreland and Clark's study (1998). It is noticeable that a survey was used in most of the studies on quality assurance in higher education.

Having considered the research strategies on quality assurance in higher education from the previous studies, it was found that two strategies had been carried out. They were survey research and case study. These two types of research are appropriate for use in this study because both provide excellent sources of explanation of the issues under investigation.

3) General knowledge of the social research

As Denscombe (1999, p. 3) stated 'the social research is faced with a variety of options and alternatives and has to make strategic decision about which to choose. Each choice brings with it advantages and disadvantage'. At this point, I was aware of the decision for the choice of research strategies.

Generally, this study aims to explore the operation of quality assurance and the way to enhance the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. As mentioned earlier two types of research, a survey or case study could answer the research questions because they are both suitable for providing explanations. However, this study needs to collect data from a large number of people from different institutions in order to generalize the findings of the study to all Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand. Survey research, therefore, seems more appropriate than case study. Survey research itself is excellent for descriptive explanation, and exploratory purposes. It has wide and inclusive coverage at a specific point in time. It is also excellent for collecting original data. It is an attractive research method for academics and practitioners, and also for a large number of people who are known to be representative of a wide population. See for instance, Brenner (1985), Bryman (1988), Bell (1999), Denscombe (1999), Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), Rubin and Babbie (2000), Brewerton and Millward (2001), Holliday (2002).

4.1.3 Triangulation

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p. 112) stated that 'triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of the same aspects of human behaviour'. Denscombe (1999, p. 84) indicated that 'using multi-methods produces different kinds of data on the same topic, the obvious benefit is that it will involve more data, being likely to improve the quality of research'. In addition, the multi-methods approach allows findings to be corroborated or questioned by comparing the data produced by different methods. Sarantakos (1998, p. 168) pointed out that 'it is becoming increasingly popular for a combination of methods to be employed'.

In order to produce different kinds of data on the same issues, a triangulation technique was used in the study. Cohen and Manion (1989, P. 269) stated, 'In its use of multiple methods, triangulation may utilise either normative or interpretative techniques, or it may draw on methods from both approaches and use them in combination. Triangular techniques in the social sciences attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one standpoint and, in so

doing, by making use of both quantitative and qualitative data'. Similarly, Bryman (1988) explained the term 'triangulation' : 'by and large researchers have taken more than one method of investigation and hence more than one type of data'. Blaikie and Burgess also stated that 'triangulation is employed for a number of reasons. Using triangulation is thought to allow the researcher to: 1) obtain a variety of information on the same issues; 2) to use the strengths of each method to overcome the deficiencies of the other; 3) to achieve a higher degree of validity and reliability; and 4) to overcome the deficiencies of single-method studies' (Blaikie 1988, Burgess 1984 cited in Sarantakos 1988, p. 169). The strength of this technique would enhance the validity and reliability of the study, and also improve the quality of the research.

Triangulation can be categorised into several types. Different authors have categorised triangulation in different ways, for instance, time triangulation, space triangulation, combined levels of triangulation, theoretical triangulation, investigator triangulation, and methodological triangulation (Cohen and Manion, 1989; Cohen Manion, and Morrison, 2000). Balhaves and Caputi (2000) indicated that there are four types of triangulation: data triangulation; investigator triangulation; theory triangulation; and methodological triangulation.

Nature of triangulation

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000, p. 112), Cohen and Manion (1989, p. 277) indicated that 'triangular techniques are suitable in variety aspects. Firstly, it is suitable when a more holistic view of educational outcomes is sought, for example, in a study of school effectiveness. Secondly, it has special relevant where a complex phenomenon requires elucidation. Thirdly, it is also suitable where controversial aspects of education need to be evaluated more fully. Fourthly, it is useful when an established approach yields a limited and frequently distorted picture. Fifthly, triangulation can be a useful technique where a researcher is engaged in case study. Finally, triangulation is a powerful way of demonstrating concurrent validity, particularly in qualitative research'.

4.1.4 Research methods

This study utilizes methodological triangulation as it uses different methods with the same subjects. Three different methods, questionnaire, interview and document, were used in this study.

1) Questionnaire

A questionnaire was designed to collect data from teaching staff in Rajabhat Institutes in order to answer the two main research questions on the operation of quality assurance and the ways to enhance quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. It was used because the numbers of teaching staff in Rajabhat Institute were large. In addition, the study aims to collect opinions and people's views on quality assurance. Thus, a questionnaire seemed more appropriate for this purpose, as Denscombe (1999, p. 88) stated:

Questionnaires are appropriate to collect both facts and opinion, and are sorted to studies: with large numbers of respondents in many locations; when the social climate is open enough to allow full and honest answers; when there is need for standardized data from identical questions without requiring personal, face-to-face interaction; and when the respondents can be expected to be able to read and understand the questions.

The strengths of using questionnaires are, for instance, that questionnaires are less expensive than other methods, they can be completed at the respondent's convenience, the use of a questionnaire promises a wider coverage, researchers can approach respondents more easily than other methods (Sarantakos, 1998).

2) Interviews

In order to answer the two main research questions of the study, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from Quality Assurance Committees, the administrators, representatives of students in Rajabhat Institutes, and employers in the provinces where Rajabhat Institute are located. Interviews were also used to collect data from the administrators in the Ministry of Education, the Office of the Rajabhat Institute Council, the Office of National Education Commission, and the Bureau of Higher

Education Standards, who were responsible for quality assurance in higher education.

The Interview lent itself to being used alongside other methods of data collection as a way of supplementing data, and adding detail and depth. Bell (1999, p. 135) indicated that 'a major advantage of the interview is its adaptability. A skilful interviewer can follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings, which the questionnaire can never do'. Similarly, Denscombe (1999, p. 113, 136) indicated that 'interview is flexible in terms of the order in which the topics are considered, and more significantly, to let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher. It is a good method for producing data based on the informants' priorities, opinions and ideas. Informants have the opportunity to expand their ideas, explain their views and identify what they regard as crucial factors'.

3) Documentary analysis

In this study, documents about quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes were used to support the data from questionnaires and interviews. These documents produced qualitative data for the study. Bell (1999, p. 106) stated that 'documents would be used to supplement information obtained by other methods, as for instance when the reliability of evidence gathered from interviews or questionnaires is checked'. Similarly, Johnson (1984, p. 23) pointed out that: 'the lack of access to research subjects may be frustrating, but documentary analysis of files and records can prove to be an extremely valuable source of data'.

Sources of documents in this study were: 1) reports and handbooks published by the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council; 2) reports and handbooks from Rajabhat Institutes; and 3) the reports from relevant government offices. The strength of using different types of documents is as Harber (1997, p. 113-114) indicates:

Use of different forms of documentation has had a particular Prominent role in the research because it has a number of advantages, given the constraints of the contexts in which the work was carried out... documents are convenient to use; are often free and or available at only a small cost; can be collected during a shorter space of time than interviews.

4.1.5 Population and samples of the study

The population in this study was thirty-six Rajabhat Institutes. These thirty-six Rajabhat Institutes were divided into eight groups located in five different parts of the country. Each group consisted of four to six Rajabhat Institutes in which all of them which were similar in terms of geographical location, the functions of educational provision, and governing structure. Therefore, stratified random sampling was designed to select one Rajabhat Institute from each part of Thailand, for example, one Rajabhat Institute from the North, North-East, Central, the South of Thailand, and one institute from Bangkok. Each Rajabhat Institute in the same group has an equal chance of being selected. This provided samples of five Rajabhat Institutes from the total population of thirty-six institutes.

Using sample in this study aims to generalise the research findings on the operation of quality assurance procedures, and the way to enhance quality assurance in all Rajabhat Institutes. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000, p. 92) also explained the main reason why samples are used:

Factors such as expense, time and accessibility frequently prevent researchers from gaining information from the whole population. Therefore, they often need to be able to obtain data from a small group or subset of the total population in such a way that the knowledge gained is representative of the total population under the study.

Similarly, as Gorard (2001, p. 10) stated: 'the purpose of sampling is to use a relatively small number of cases to find out about much a larger number'. In addition, Gorard (2001, p.10) indicated that: 'the main reason that samples are used is to save time and money for the researcher'. There are more advantages to using sampling as Vaus (2001, p. 60) pointed out: 'this procedure is much cheaper, faster and easier than surveying all members'.

The reason for using stratified random sampling was that each group of Rajabhat Institutes had similar characteristics. As Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000, p. 101) stated, 'stratified sampling involves dividing the population into homogeneous groups, each group containing subjects with similar characteristics'.

The samples of the study were five Rajabhat Institutes, located in different parts of the country. Information about the five Rajabhat Institutes is in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Rajabhat Instsitures: Group, Location and Code

Group of Rajabhat Institutes	Part of Thailand	Code
1. Tawarawade	Central	RI1
2. Ratanakosin	Central	RI2
3. Puttachinnarajh	North	RI3
4. Issan Nuea	North-East	RI4
5. Taksin	South	RI5

As mentioned earlier quality assurance in higher education is involved with different groups of people. They were called 'stakeholders' or 'customers' of higher education institutions and were generally referred to as students, staff, administrators of the institutions, and employers of graduates. In addition, in order to explain the operation of quality assurance, and the way to enhance quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes, different sources of data from different groups of these people were designed for the study. The main sources of research data fell into two groups as follows:

(a) Samples from Rajabhat Institutes

Samples of the study in each Rajabhat Institute were composed of five different groups as follows:

1) Quality Assurance Committee.

The Quality Assurance Committee consists of representatives of all faculties in Rajabhat Institute. There were approximately eleven to fifteen people on the Quality Assurance Committee in each Rajabhat Institute. Twenty percent of Quality Assurance Committee Members in each institute (four to five people) were interviewed. The reasons for selecting this group of people can be explained as follows. First, Quality Assurance Committees were composed of representatives who are responsible for quality assurance from each faculty. It could, therefore, be assumed that these people had more experience and knowledge on quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes, and would be able to produce useful data for the study. Second, as has already been mentioned in Chapter One (see page 3), quality assurance is a new policy for Rajabhat Institutes, and there was a lack of knowledge and understanding on quality assurance among staff. The Quality Assurance Committee was a group of people who were working on this policy, and they were supposed to know more about quality assurance compared to teaching staff in Rajabhat Institutes.

2) Administrators

Administrators of Rajabhat Institutes were called 'Presidents of Rajabhat Institutes'. They were normally in charge of the administration within the institution. They were also responsible for carrying out all policies announced by the government. Therefore, when quality assurance was implemented, the Presidents of Rajabhat Institutes were the first group of people in higher education institutions who were in charge. In this case, administrators were assumed to have more knowledge and experience in quality assurance and would be able to provide some useful data for the study. In this study, administrator refers to the President of Rajabhat Institutes, or Academic-Vice President, or Assistant of the President, who were responsible for quality assurance. Two administrators in each Rajabhat Institute were interviewed.

3) Teaching staff

'Teaching staff' refers to the lecturers in Rajabhat Institutes. These people were selected by random from different faculties within Rajabhat Institute. Collecting data from staff in different faculties aimed to provide the whole picture of quality assurance within the institute. In this study, approximately twenty people from each Rajabhat Institute were surveyed by questionnaire.

4) Student representatives

Three to five student representatives from the first to fourth year in each Rajabhat Institutes were chosen for interview. These students were also selected at random from different faculties.

5) Employers

'Employers' refers to people in different careers who recently employed graduates from Rajabhat Institutes. Three employers of graduates from Rajabhat Institutes were selected for interview. These employers were living in the province where the Rajabhat Institute was located.

The samples and sample size in each Rajabhat Institute were designed as in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Designed samples and sample size in each Rajabhat Institute

Samples	Samples Size
1. Administrators	2
2. Quality Assurance Committee	5
3. Teaching staff	20
4. Representatives of students	5
5. Employers	3
Total number	35

(b) Administrators in the ministries

Apart from different groups of people in Rajabhat Institutes who were identified for data collection in this study, it is necessary to collect data from policy makers or people who make decisions on quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. Therefore, the administrators in two relevant ministries were identified for the interviews: First, the administrators in the Office of Rajabhat Institutes, the Ministry of Education; Second, the administrators in the Office of National Education, the Ministry of the Prime Minister. The samples in this group were selected by purposive sampling in order to produce the most valuable data for the study. The numbers of administrators in this group were as shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Designed samples in two ministries

Office	Number of people
1) Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council (ORIC)	1
2) The Office of National Education Commission (ONEC)	1
Total number	2

4.1.6 Research instruments

In order to answer the research questions: 1) How does quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand operate? and 2) How can the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes be enhanced? Three different research methods, questionnaires, interviews and documents were designed for data collection. The research instruments consisted of a questionnaire for teaching staff, and five interview schedules for different groups of people as follows:

- 1) Questionnaire for teaching staff
- 2) Interview schedule for administrators in Rajabhat Institutes
- 3) Interview schedule for the Quality Assurance Committee
- 4) Interview schedule for employers

- 5) Interview schedule for representative students
- 6) Interview schedule for administrators in ministries

The details of developing and piloting the research instruments are explained as follows:

Questionnaire for teaching staff

The 'Quality Assurance Questionnaire for Teaching Staff' aimed to explore the operation of quality assurance, and the way to enhance quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. It was designed to collect data from teaching staff in five Rajabhat Institutes.

Balnaves and Caputi (2001, p. 423) indicated that 'surveys have their own problem: the difficult problems of instruments'. Therefore, during the stages of writing and developing the questionnaires, I was aware of any difficulties which might have caused problems as the questionnaires were used. Several important steps were taken to ensure that the final questionnaire would be suitable for capturing the data required for the study, and would not cause any problems to the respondents:

- 1) Set up the purposes of the questionnaire

The purposes of this questionnaire aimed to explore the perceptions of teaching staff in five Rajabhat Institutes on two main aspects: 1) the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes, and 2) the way to enhance quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

- 2) Identify the key and relevant issues

At this stage, key issues relevant to the operation of quality assurance, and the way to enhance quality assurance were considered, and categorised into different aspects. In terms of 'operation', three relevant aspects were considered. They were: 1) the quality assurance system being used; 2) the

impact of quality assurance; and 3) the obstacles to quality assurance. 'The way to enhance quality assurance' was considered as a single aspect.

3) Select question types

According to the two main research questions, two types of information, fact and opinion, were designed to be collected by questionnaire. This information was derived from perceptions of people. Two types of questions: open-ended questions and close-ended question were designed for use in this questionnaire. Most of the questions asking about personal and institutional information (five of the six questions) were closed questions. Most questions asking about fact were closed questions whereas the questions asking about opinion were open-ended questions. In some questions, both close-ended and open-ended questions were used.

Using both types of questions seemed not to be a problem due to the fact that the respondents were lecturers in higher education institutions. They were assumed to be able to answer both types of question used in the questionnaire.

4) Determine the length of questionnaire

The length of questionnaire for the four main aspects on quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes was considered. The questionnaire was also required to include personal information from the respondents. In my opinion, the questionnaire should not be longer than thirty questions. The approximate length of twenty to twenty-five questions was considered. Five possible parts were designed as follows:

Part one: Personal and Institutional Information. This part consisted of five questions asking about staff personal information including: 1) gender; 2) name of Rajabhat Institute; 3) faculty; 4) years of services in Rajabhat Institutes; and 5) highest qualifications of respondent. The reason for asking the information in this part was to describe the general background of the respondents of the study.

Part two: Quality assurance system being used. This part consisted of five questions asking about the quality assurance system being used. Two questions asked about systems of quality assurance being used. Four questions asked about the procedures for carrying out three components of quality assurance. These were quality control, quality audit, and quality assessment.

Part three: Impact of quality assurance. This part consisted of six questions focusing respectively on the impact of quality assurance on: 1) Rajabhat Institutes; 2) administrators of Rajabhat Institutes; 3) staff; 4) students; 5) teaching and learning processes; and 6) employers of graduates from Rajabhat Institutes.

Part four: Obstacles to quality assurance. This part consisted of five questions. The first question asked about the difficulties of carrying out quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The second question asked about the way Rajabhat Institutes overcome those difficulties. The third question asked about people who are responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The fourth question asked about the obstacles to quality assurance that the Rajabhat Institute has overcome successfully. The fifth question asked about the obstacles to quality assurance that the Rajabhat Institute could not overcome.

Part five: Enhancement of quality assurance. This part consisted of four questions. The first question asked about the success of quality assurance in the Rajabhat Institute. The second question asked about the way to improve quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The third question asked about people who should be involved. The fourth and last question was for further comments and opinion on quality assurance in Rajabhat Institute. The length of the questionnaire was twenty-six questions.

5) Write the questionnaire

There were some factors which I was aware of at the stage of writing questionnaire, for instance, as Denscombe (1999, p. 98-100) stated: 'avoid the use of leading questions; avoid asking the same question twice; make sure that the wording is completely unambiguous; avoid vague questions; avoid words or phrases which might cause offense; and keep the questions as short and straightforward as possible'. The order of questions was also considered and put in the right sequence following by the main aspects of quality assurance, mentioned earlier. An introduction to the questionnaire was also written, on the cover page. Gorard (2001, p. 89) reminds us that 'the introduction should be brief and easy to follow'. Therefore, a brief introduction was included on the cover page of the questionnaire. It consisted of: the purpose of the questionnaire; the confidentiality of the respondents, and return address and deadline.

6) Check wording of each question

After all the questions were written, the process of checking the wording of each question was done by reading through the questionnaire again myself. The wording was also improved at the stage of piloting the questionnaire.

7) Piloting and improving the questionnaire.

At the early stage of developing the questionnaire, it was written in English and developed following advice from my supervisor. After that, it was translated into Thai in order to collect data in Thailand, for which Thai was obviously more appropriate and preferable for communication between myself and the samples of the study. The translation was done by myself and improved by a friend who was a member of staff in one of the Rajabhat Institutes and had experience in translating these two languages. This person was doing a doctoral degree in England. Finally, the questionnaire was tried out with staff (twenty people), who were not the samples of the study in Rajabhat Institutes. Five questions (questions number 6, 7, 17, 21, 22) were improved after trying them out by rephrasing the sentences, making it easier

for the respondents to understand the question. The final questionnaire consisted of twenty-five questions over five pages, and it took twenty-five to thirty minutes to answer. Each questionnaire had a cover page explaining the purpose of the questionnaire, confidentiality of the respondents, and returns address and date which had been arranged at each Rajabhat Institute. Thanks from myself to the respondents for their cooperation was also included on the last page of the questionnaire.

The steps mentioned above were to ensure that the questionnaire: 1) was clear in its purpose; 2) was clear on what needed to be included or covered in order to meet the purposes; 3) was exhaustive in its coverage of the elements of inclusion; 4) asked the most appropriate kinds of questions; 5) elicited the most appropriate kinds of data to answer the research questions and sub-questions; and 6) asked for empirical data (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000). The final version of the questionnaire was composed of five parts as follows:

Part one: personal and Institutional Information. This part consisted of five questions asking about staff personal information.

Part two: quality assurance systems being used. This part consisted of five questions asking about the quality assurance systems being used.

Part three: impact of quality assurance. This part consisted of six questions.

Part four: obstacles to quality assurance. This part consisted of five questions.

Part five: enhancement of quality assurance. This consisted of four questions.

The questions in the questionnaire are shown in Appendix 1.

Interviews

The interview schedules were also designed to find out about the operation of quality assurance, and the way to enhance quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. Using interview will encourage the interviewees to give full answer, to provide more depth when probing questions are asked (Richie and Lewis 2003). In this study, the questions in each interview schedule were based on

the four main aspects as the questionnaire: 1) quality assurance systems being used; 2) the impact of quality assurance; 3) the obstacles to quality assurance; and 4) the enhancement of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. Several important steps were taken, similar to the steps in developing questionnaire, to ensure that the final interview schedule would be suitable for capturing the data required for the study. These steps were: 1) set up the purposes of interview; 2) identify the key and relevant issues; 3) determine the length of interview; 4) write the questions, 5) check the wording of each question; and 6) pilot and improve the questions.

Piloting interview schedules

The interview schedules were written in English and translated into Thai. This translation was done by myself and improved by my two colleagues who had experience both in translating and quality assurance. The interview schedules were also tried out with staff, students, employers, and the administrators who were not samples of the study in one Rajabhat Institute. Interview schedules were developed and the numbers of questions for students and employers were reduced due to the fact that students and employers could not answer all the questions, particularly questions about the systems of quality assurance being used, responsible people, and the obstacles to quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. These questions were too difficult for them to answer because they lacked knowledge and experience on quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. As a result, the questions in the interview schedules for employers and students were reduced. The interview schedules for employers were composed of three aspects: 1) their perception on quality assurance; 2) the impact of quality assurance; and 3) the way to enhance quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. Interview schedules for students consisted of two aspects: 1) their perception of quality assurance; 2) the impact of quality assurance. The final interview schedules for employers and students consisted of seven questions whereas the questions for the Quality Assurance Committee and the administrators in the ministries consisted of fourteen questions. One more question asking about the support from the government was added in the interview schedules for the administrators in Rajabhat Institutes. Thus, there

were fourteen questions in the interview schedules for the administrators in Rajabhat Institutes. The questions in the interview schedules are shown in the Appendix 1.

4.1.7 Research timeline

The study was designed as shown in the schedule:

Phase of Research	Writing/Reporting	Time in Total	(months)
1. Proposal development	Draft of proposal	February-July 2000	(6)
2. Literature review	Thesis outline	August 2000-January 2001	(6)
3. Preparing for data Collection	Data collection plan	February-March 2001	(2)
4. Developing research instruments	Questionnaire, Interview schedules	April-June 2001	(3)
5. Piloting research instruments	Questionnaire, Interviews	July 2001	(1)
6. Data collection	Data	August-December 2001	(5)
6.1 Data collection	Documentary data	August, December 2001	(2)
6.2 Data collection in RIs	Data	September-November 2001	(3)
7 Transcribing	Interview scripts	January-February 2002	(2)
8. Data analysis	Preliminary findings	March-December 2002	(10)
8.1 Questionnaire	Preliminary findings	March-April 2002	(2)

Phase of Research	Writing/Reporting	Time in Total	(months)
8.2 Interviews from QA Committees	Preliminary findings	May-June 2002	[2]
8.3 Interviews from students	Preliminary findings	July 2002	[1]
8.4 Interviews from employers	Preliminary findings	August 2002	(1)
8.5 Interviews from administrators of RIs	Preliminary findings	September 2002	[1]
8.6 Interviews from administrators in Bangkok	Preliminary findings	October 2002	[1]
8.7 Documentary data	Preliminary findings	November-December 2002	(2)
9. Analysis of data from different sources	Findings	January-April 2003	(4)
10. Writing up	Thesis	May 2003-August 2004	(15)*
11. Corrections before submitting	Thesis	September 2004	(1)
12. Submit thesis	Thesis	October 2004	(1)

* During November 2003-February 2004 the research was not carried out because I was away for family reasons.

4.2 Research fieldwork

This section explains negotiating access and ethics to research fieldwork, the processes of data collection in Thailand using two different kinds of research method, and document analysis approaches.

4.2.1 Negotiating access

There were two types of organisation to access for the study: government offices, and the private sector. The majority of the organisations were government offices. They were: 1) five Rajabhat Institutes; 2) the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council; 3) the Ministry of Education, and 4) the Office of Education Standards and Evaluation. The private sectors referred to companies where the employers were interviewed.

The process of negotiating access for the fieldwork in government institutions was initiated through eight letters from my supervisor. The aim of the letter was to introduce myself and to assure the respondents that confidentiality would be observed in the study, and that no people or organisations would be identified in the thesis, in any reports or in any presentations resulting from the study. Five letters were sent to the Presidents of Rajabhat Institutes. Three letters were also sent to 1) the Secretary General, the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council, 2) the Secretary General, the Office of National Education and Commission, and 3) the Director of Bureau of Higher Education Standards, the Office of Rajabhat Institutes. The letters were sent from York on 17 July 2001, a day before I left to do my fieldwork in Thailand. The response letters from five Rajabhat Institutes were sent to the Head of the Department (my supervisor), and also sent to me at my address in Thailand in July 2001, for the permission to carry out research fieldwork in each institution, with all support for the study. An electronic message (email) from the President of one Rajabhat Institute was also replied to my supervisor. Following the permission to carry out the study in Rajabhat Institutes, letters explaining the processes of data collection and data schedules were sent to five Rajabhat Institutes on 24 August 2001. The letters were written in Thai

and were sent out when I was in Thailand. Before arriving at each Rajabhat Institute, a phone call was made to inform the institute about the fieldwork.

The process of negotiating access for the fieldwork in the private sector was also initiated through letters from my supervisor. These letters were to assure people that confidentiality would be observed in the study, and that no people or organisations would be identified in the thesis or in any reports or in any presentations resulting from the study. Eight letters were sent to employers in each province during my fieldwork in Rajabhat Institutes. Phone calls were also made to inform employers before the day of the interviews. Measor (1984, p. 56-57) stated that:

Access is the first major issue involved in interviewing. There is an initial problem, which is real enough, of finding informants and getting them to agree to be interviewed and give up their time; especially if they are a busy Head of Department ... The second problem is the process of building relationships with people you want to interview.

At this point, I was aware of the access process for the fieldwork. However, it seemed that no difficulties were found in the process of negotiating access. This was probably because I worked as member of staff in Rajabhat Institutes, and had a few years of experience in working in the Office of Rajabhat Institutes. Therefore, it was not too difficult for me to ask for their cooperation and access for data collection. It may have been more difficult to negotiate access if I had been 'an outsider' who did not work for Rajabhat Institutes. In addition, I made myself clear by explaining to them that I was a researcher and the information I received from them would be kept confidential.

During the interviews with students, it was noticeable that most of the students did not respond much on quality assurance within their institutes. This was probably because they did not have sufficient knowledge on quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. In addition, in Thai culture, students would prefer to listen rather than speak, especially with somebody whom they do not know very well.

4.2.2 Research ethics

Bell (1999, p. 39) points out that 'research ethics is about being clear about the nature of the agreement you have entered into with your research subjects or contracts'. In this study, research ethics were of primary concern during the period of the fieldwork. As already mentioned 'confidentiality would be observed in the study, and names of people or organisations would not be identified in the thesis or in any reports or in any presentations resulting from the study'. This promise was also given to the respondents before they completed the questionnaires. Before starting the interviews, I also introduced myself to the interviewees, and assured them that their responses would be kept in strict confidence and would be used for academic purposes only. During the interview process, I was aware that I played a proper role. As Richie and Lewis (2003) put it, the researcher is 'a facilitator to enable the interviewee to talk about their thoughts, feelings, views and experiences'.

4.2.3 Data collection

A triangulation technique was designed to collect data in each Rajabhat Institute. Three different kinds of research methods: questionnaires, interviews and documents, were used during the fieldwork. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000, p. 113), 'the weakness of each of these methods can be strengthened by using a combined approach to a given problem'. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data from: Quality Assurance Committees, administrators, staff, students in five Rajabhat Institutes; employers; and administrators in the Ministries in Bangkok. Documents were also collected during the fieldwork. Data collection in each institute took one to two weeks, including weekends. The details of research fieldwork were as follows:

Day 1: The first day of research fieldwork in each Rajabhat Institute involved discussion and planning for data collection by questionnaire and interviews, with my colleagues. The appointments for interviewing Quality Assurance

Committee members and administrators in the Rajabhat Institute were also made by my colleagues.

Day 2: Documentary data was collected on the second day of the fieldwork. Then, questionnaires were sent to staff in different faculties on the same day.

Day 3-4: Interviews with the Quality Assurance Committee were carried out.

Day 5: Interviews with the administrators were carried out.

Day 6-7: Weekend

Day 8-10: Interviews with students and employers were carried out. Students were interviewed in Rajabhat Institutes. The interviews with employers were carried out in companies, or in different institutions outside Rajabhat Institutes.

Day 9-10: Documents continued to be collect for data on Rajabhat Institutes before the end of the research fieldwork.

1) Using documents

Government publications were used to support the data from interviews and questionnaire in this study in order to explain the operation of quality assurance and the ways to enhance quality assurance procedures in Rajabhat Institutes. It produced qualitative data rather than quantitative data for the study. The type of documentary data for this study was government publications from three different sources. First, handbooks and reports from five Rajabhat Institutes. Second, handbook, guidelines, and reports from the Office of Rajabahat Institutes Council. Third, the reports from relevant government offices: the Bureau of Higher Education Standards, Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council, the Ministry of Education, and the Office of the National Education Commission. As Harber (1997, p. 114) pointed out:

Documents must be used carefully and with sensitivity to the possible bias and mistakes of both writer and the researcher... documents also have a major limitation in that they describe what is said rather than what is done.

I was aware of the limitations of using documentary data. In this study, there were the government documents on quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes and other higher education institutions in Thailand. These documents were from three different sources: 1) Rajabhat Institutes; 2) the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Councils, Ministry of Education; and 3) the Office of National Education, the Ministry of the Prime Minister. From these documents, it was noticed that the reports were written by a group of researchers rather than one single person. This may produce less bias than an individual researcher or a writer. In addition, the advantage of using triangulation techniques, collecting data by questionnaires and interviews, was intended to resolve the limitations mentioned above. If documents report 'what is said rather than what is done', it will be rechecked by the data from questionnaires and interviews.

Documents were first used when I visited the administrator in the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council. Then, they were used in five Rajabhat Institutes at the early stage of carrying out my fieldwork in each institute. Using documents at the early stage of my fieldwork, I aimed to understand the general background of quality assurance and its implementation in each Rajabhat Institute before interviews and questionnaire were used. Denscombe (1999, p. 169) pointed out that 'vast amounts of information are held in documents... Documents generally provide a source of data which is permanent'. In this study, it was found that documents from the five Rajabhat Institutes and also from the two ministries were easy to access and collect because they have already been published. The reports from the five Rajabhat Institutes were called 'Self-Assessment Reports' which comprised two main elements, introduction and quality assurance. The introduction in the report included the following information: 1) history and background of each Rajabhat Institute; 2) philosophy and mission of the Rajabhat Institute; 3) the aims of the Rajabhat Institute; 4) policy; 5) budget; 6) staff; 7) curriculum; 8) organisation chart. The quality assurance section was composed of: 1) relevant quality factors; 2) indicators and criteria; 3) reports

on quality assurance. The report from one Rajabhat Institute included the strengths and weaknesses of the study in its report.

The office of Rajabhat Institutes Council also published a 'Rajabhat Institutes Quality Assurance Report 1, and 2'. The content of these reports consisted of: 1) introduction which included background to the study, research purposes, definitions of key terms, and research conceptual framework; 2) literature review on quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes; 3) research methodology; and the findings from the study.

2) Questionnaires

A questionnaire was used to collect data on the operation of quality assurance and the way to enhance quality assurance from teaching staff in five Rajabhat Institutes. The aim of the questionnaire was explained in the introduction of the questionnaire as well as the assurance that the answers would be kept confidential. Each questionnaire was sealed and sent to teaching staff in each Rajabhat Institute at the same time that I was doing my fieldwork in the institute. The questionnaires were collected by a member of staff in the Educational Quality Assurance Office in the institute. Some of them were returned to the Educational Quality Assurance Office. The questionnaires from four Rajabhat Institutes were collected while I was doing my fieldwork in those Rajabhat Institutes. The questionnaires from the last institute were collected by myself and some of them were sent to me by my colleague.

In the research fieldwork, one hundred questionnaires were sent out and ninety-one questionnaires were returned (91% response rate). The majority of the respondents were male as it is shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Frequencies and percentage of sex of the questionnaire respondents (n=91)

Sex	Frequencies	Percentage
1. Male	54	59
2. Female	37	41
Total	91	100

The respondents were from different faculties. Twenty-seven percent were from the Faculty of Humanities and Sciences, twenty-two percent were from the Faculty of Education, twenty percent were from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, sixteen percent were from other faculties, and fifteen percent were from the Faculty of Management and Sciences as shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Frequencies and percentage of faculties of the questionnaire respondents (n=91)

Faculty	Frequencies	Percentage
1. Education	20	22
2. Sciences and Technology	18	20
3. Humanities and Social Sciences	24	27
4. Management Sciences	14	15
5. Other	15	16
5.1 Graduate Schools office	1	1
5.2 Agriculture Technology	5	5
5.3 Industrial Technology	7	8
5.4 Arts	2	2
Total	91	100

As far as working experience of respondents is concerned, it was found that the majority of respondents (45%) had more than twenty years' experience in working for Rajabhat Institutes. The details are given as in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Frequencies and percentage of year of service in Rajabhat Institutes of the questionnaire respondents (n=91)

Year of Service in RI	Frequencies	Percentage
1. Less than 5 years	21	23
2. 5-10 years	18	20
3. 11-15 years	3	3
4. 16-20 years	8	9
5. More than 20 years	41	45
Total	91	100

As regards the highest qualification, it was found that the majority of the respondents (83%) had completed their Masters Degree, followed by a Bachelor Degree (13%), and Doctoral Degree (4%) respectively. The percentages of the highest qualification of the respondents are as in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Frequencies and percentage of the highest qualification of the questionnaire respondents (n=91)

Highest Qualification	Frequencies	Percentage
1. Bachelor	12	13
2. Master	75	83
3. Doctorate	4	4
3. Other	0	0
4. Total	91	100

3) Interviews

The purpose of using interviews in this study was to gather data on similar aspects as in the questionnaire. It was used to collect data from five different groups of people as follows: 1) Quality Assurance Committee; 2)

administrators of Rajabhat Institutes; 3) representative students; 4) employers; and 5) administrators in ministries. Using an interview method of data collection is 'time consuming' (Bell, 1999, p. 135). Therefore, it was difficult to interview a large number of people during this study. The numbers of interviewees from different groups of people were as shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Numbers of interviewees

Groups of People	Numbers of People (n)
1. Quality Assurance Committee members	20
2. Administrators of Rajabhat Institutes	8
3. Representative students	17
4. Employers	8
5. Administrators in ministries	2
Total	55

There were two types of organisations to access for the interviews: government offices, and the private sector. The government offices in this study refers to: five Rajabhat Institutes; the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council, the Bureau of Higher Education Standards, the Ministry of Education, and the Office of Education Standards and Evaluation.

One-to-one interviews were used and the information was recorded on a tape recorder. Interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members took thirty to forty minutes whereas the interviews with the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes and the administrators in Bangkok took forty-five to sixty minutes to complete. This happens because the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes as well as the administrators in the ministries had more information to explain and answer.

The process of data collection in Thailand was undertaken during July-November 2001, as the schedule below shows:

- 23-27 July - Meeting with the Secretary General, the Office of Rajabhat Institutes to explain and discuss the study in Rajabhat Institutes
- Collected documentary data from the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Councils
 - Interviewed the administrator of Bureau of Higher Education Standards, Office of Rajabhat Institutes Councils
- 3-17 August Fieldwork in the first Rajabhat Institute (RI1)
- 18-20 August Improved data collection procedures
- 21-31 August Fieldwork in RI2
- 3-15 September Fieldwork in RI3
- 18-29 September Fieldwork in RI4
- 1-15 November Fieldwork RI5
- 19-23 November Interviewed the administrator in ONEC
- 27-30 November Interviewed the administrator in ORIC

The responses from each group of interviews were as follows:

a) Quality Assurance Committee

The first interview schedule was used for Quality Assurance Committee members of five Rajabhat Institutes. The interview schedule was made up of fourteen questions asking about the quality assurance systems, the impact of quality assurance, the obstacles to quality assurance, and how quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes could be enhanced. Each interview took thirty to sixty minutes. The interviewees consisted of twenty people who were

members of Quality Assurance Committees in the five Rajabhat Institutes. The majority of interviewees, thirteen people, were female, and seven people were male. The interviewees had different positions in terms of their responsibilities in Rajabhat Institutes. Ten people were deans of faculty, three people were vice presidents, another three people were directors of offices, two people were deputy deans of faculty, one person was a member of teaching staff, and another person was the chief of the office in the Rajabhat Institute, as shown in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 Frequencies and percentage of positions of Quality Assurance Committee of five Rajabhat Institutes (n=20)

Positions in Rajabhat Institutes	Frequencies	Percentage
1. Dean of faculty	10	50
2. Vice President	3	15
3. Director	3	15
4. Deputy Dean of Faculty	2	10
5. Teaching staff	1	5
6. Chief	1	5
Total	20	100

A number of interviewees in this group (Quality Assurance Committee members) were as shown in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11 Numbers of Quality Assurance Committee in five Rajabhat Institutes

Rajabhat Institutes (RI)	Number of interviewees (n)
1. RI1	5
2. RI2	3
3. RI3	3
4. RI4	5
5. RI5	4
Total	20

Table 4.11 shows that the number of Quality Assurance Committee members that was interviewed in each institute ranged from three to five people.

b) Administrators of five Rajabhat Institutes

The second interview schedule was designed to interview the administrators of five Rajabhat Institutes. The interview schedule was made up of fifteen questions asking about the quality assurance systems, the impact of quality assurance, the obstacles to quality assurance, and the ways to enhance quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. Each interview with administrators of Rajabhat Institutes took forty-five to sixty minutes, longer than the interviews for the Quality Assurance Committee because the administrators had more information to convey. The interviewees in this group consisted of eight administrators: four of them were the Presidents of Rajabhat Institutes, and the rest were Vice Presidents of Rajabhat Institutes who were in charge of quality assurance policy. There was one Rajabhat Institute (RI3) where the interview with the administrators could not take place because the President of the institute and the Vice-President who was in charge of quality assurance were away when the research field work was carried out in the institute.

c) Administrators in the relevant ministries

Relevant ministries in this study refer to two ministries: the Ministry of Education and the Office of the Prime Minister. There were two main offices under these two ministries which were responsible for quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The first office was the Office of National Education Commission, the Office of the Prime Minister. Quality assurance policy and its functions in higher education institutions throughout the country were established by the Office of National Education Commission. The second office was the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council, the Ministry of Education. This office was responsible for quality assurance in all Rajabhat Institutes.

The third interview schedule was used to collect data from two people from these two ministries. One person was a representative of the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council, the Ministry of Education. The other person was a representative from the Office of the Prime Minister. The interview schedule for the administrator in the ministries consisted of twelve questions. Each interview took sixty minutes to be completed.

d) Students

Interviews were also used to collect data from seventeen students in five Rajabhat Institutes. Students were from different programmes and different year of study. The interview schedule for students consisted of five questions. Each interview took fifteen to twenty minutes to complete because students could not explain much about quality assurance in their institutes.

e) Employers

The interviews with employers were carried out both inside and outside Rajabhat Institutes. The interviewees in this groups consisted of eight people from different occupations, for instance, three people were working in private companies, two people had their own business, one person was the Director of a Secondary School. Another two people worked in government offices. The

interview schedule was composed of seven questions. The interview with employers took twenty to forty minutes.

4.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis was used to analyse data from questionnaires and interviews. Data analysis was based on research questions aiming to find out the operation of quality assurance and the ways to enhance quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. According to the types of research data, data analysis was categorised into two groups: 1) quantitative data analysis and 2) qualitative data analysis. Both two groups of data were analysed as explained below.

4.3.1 Quantitative data

Quantitative data was used for analysis of data from closed questions from questionnaires. Three main stages for analysing questionnaires' data were used as Munn and Drever (1999) recommended. The first stage was data preparation. At this stage, all questionnaires were checked and organised. The second stage was the data description. A blank questionnaire was used to categorise, tally frequencies and calculate percentages. The third stage was interpretation of the results. At this stage, the frequencies and percentages of questions in the questionnaire were presented as a set of data in tables.

4.3.2 Qualitative data

Transcribing and analysing were involved in the process of qualitative data analysis. This process was designed to identify themes and relationships of data based on the questions in the interview schedules. During the transcribing process, the information from the tape-recorder was transcribed word for word in order to ensure that all the data from the interviews was included. This text was written in Thai. After transcribing process, interview transcripts were categorised and analysed in Thai, based on the themes of the research questions. They were then translated into English. Transcribing

and analysing in Thai at the first stage aims to limit the error that may occur during the translation processes.

An analysis of qualitative data can be considered as two different groups. Richie and Lewis (2003, p. 202) state that 'while some analytical approaches, for example, discourse analysis, conversation analysis, and some forms of narrative analysis focus primarily on languages, the construction and structure of talk, text and interaction, others, such as content analysis, grounded theory and policy analysis are mainly concerned with capturing and interpreting common sense, substantive meaning in the data'. In accordance with Richie and Lewis, the analysis of qualitative data of this study focused on the substantive meaning of the data as well as capturing and interpreting common sense. A common procedure in the analysis is the identification of key themes or categories.

Content analysis was used for analysing documentary data, and open-ended questions from questionnaires. Texts from the government publications were analysed by breaking the texts down into smaller component units. They were put into relevant categories, and analysed based on the issues relevant to the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. Then, the content of the text was presented.

4.4 Reliability and validity of the study

Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2000, p. 105) stated that 'validity is an important key to effective research. ... More recently validity has taken many forms. For example, in qualitative data validity might be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants' approaches, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher. In quantitative data validity might be improved through careful sampling, appropriate instrumentation and appropriate statistical treatment of the data'. Balnaves and Caputi (2001, p. 89-90) stated that:

External validity is the extent to which your sample is genuinely representative of the population from which you have drawn it ...
Good sampling achieves representativeness.

Bell (1999, p. 213) also indicated that 'there are many ways in which checks on the validity of the findings can be undertaken. One of these ways is the findings have been 'triangulated' with alternative sources as a way of bolstering confidence in their validity'.

In accordance with the meaning of reliability and validity mentioned above, it is noticeable that validity and reliability were involved in all the processes of research methodology. Following various stages of research methodology using triangulation in this study aimed to increase the reliability and validity of this study.

In the stage of developing research instruments, content validity was mainly focused upon. This attempted to demonstrate that the questionnaire and interview schedules covered the domain and relevant issues they purported to cover. Therefore, grids of main issues based on the research questions and a list of questions in the questionnaire and interview schedules were designed to ensure that all elements of the main issues were covered in the research instruments, as Cohen, Manion, Morrison, (2000) stated: 'validity of research instruments are based on the view that it is essentially a demonstration that a particular instrument in fact measures what it purports to measure'.

Moreover, in reporting the outcomes of the analysis and the findings of this study, three key considerations were borne in mind. One was that the data presented retained its integrity, which was facilitated by the manner of data. Each data segment contained a source identification code for cross-checking and reference to the original source where necessary. Direct quotations from interviews and documents were also extensively used. Second, the findings of the study were reported in context, with description to allow a reader to understand what has been learned in a way that is anchored. Third, the structure of the presentation utilised headings and titles developed through and during the process of analysis. This helped to preserve the integrity of the data, as well as creating a clear link between data analysis and presentation of the research findings.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has explained the methodology of the study. Description of various stages, for instance, research design, research methods, triangulation, population and samples of the study, research instruments, research timeline, negotiating access, research ethics, the research fieldwork which was already done, and data analysis processes have been presented. In this study, triangulation was used in order to produce more reliability and validity for the study. Three different methods, questionnaire, interviews, and documents, were used to collect data from five Rajabhat Institutes. Questionnaires which consisted of twenty-five questions were used to collect data from ninety-one members of the teaching staff in five institutes. Interviews were also used to collect data from different groups of people. They were: 1) Twenty Quality Assurance Committee members from five institutes; 2) Eight administrators from five institutes; 3) Two administrators in the ministries in Bangkok; Seventeen students in five institutes; and 4) Eight employers of graduates from Rajabhat Institutes. The research fieldwork was carried out in Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand during August-December 2001. The chapter has also explained the processes of data analysis for both quantitative and qualitative data.

The next chapter is the first part of the findings of the study. It presents the findings on the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

Chapter Five

The Operation of Quality Assurance in Rajabhat Institutes

This is the first of three chapters that describe the research findings of the study. In this study, two main research questions are posed. First, how does quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes operate? Second, how can the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes be enhanced? The findings presented in this chapter aim to answer three subsidiary questions of the first main research question, which focuses on the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The first subsidiary question is 'what system of quality assurance is used in Rajabhat Institutes?' The second subsidiary question is 'who is responsible for quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes?' and the third subsidiary question is 'how is quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes carried out?'

The findings of the study were drawn from people's views on quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. Sources of data were: 1) questionnaire completed by teaching staff; 2) the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members; 3) interviews with the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes; 4) interviews with the administrators in the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of the Prime Minister; and 5) documents from government reports. In this study, documents were used to support questionnaire and interview data. Duffy (1998, p. 106) stated that 'document analysis is useful to supplement information obtained by other methods, for instance, when reliability of the evidence gathered from interviews and questionnaires is checked'.

The findings presented in this chapter explain the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. They are divided into three parts. The first part describes quality assurance systems in Rajabhat Institutes. Relevant findings from the study (for instance, evidence showed that Rajabhat had experienced some difficulties in trying to implement quality assurance) are also presented and discussed in this part. The second part deals with people who are responsible for quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The

structure of Quality Assurance Committees and their responsibilities are presented in this section. The third part of the chapter focuses on the three components of quality assurance that have been carried out in Rajabhat Institutes. The progress of implementing quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes is also presented in this part.

5.1 Quality Assurance Systems

The findings of the study revealed that there were some difficulties in identifying the systems of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes

Documents from the Handbook of Quality Assurance for Rajabhat Institutes showed that the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council (ORIC) established quality assurance as its new policy in 1996. The aims of this policy were to: 1) develop a quality assurance system in Rajabhat Institutes; 2) establish a quality assurance mechanism; 3) implement quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes; 4) co operate with community and organisations on quality assurance; and 5) publish and report the outcomes of quality assurance to the public (ORIC, 1996). In order to implement this new policy in all Rajabhat Institutes, the ORIC introduced quality assurance to thirty-six Rajabhat Institutes through the guidelines published in the Handbook of Quality Assurance. This was supported by the report on Quality Assurance and Accreditation published by the Office of National Education Commission (ONEC), which stated that:

ORIC Quality Assurance Committee has established the Handbook of Quality Assurance as the guidelines for all Rajabhat Institutes in order to develop their quality assurance system and its mechanism.

[ONEC, 1998, p. 30]

If we consider what was in this handbook, four topics were recognised. They were: 1) definition of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes; 2) the structure of Quality Assurance Committees within Rajabhat Institutes; 3) thirteen quality factors and 4) standards and criteria of the thirteen factors (ORIC, 1996). The handbook of Quality Assurance for Rajbhat Institute was sent to the thirty-six Rajabhat Institutes throughout the country. A copy of the handbook was made by Rajabhat Institutes and given to each member of

staff in the institutes. Therefore, it could be stated that the Handbook of Quality Assurance was the most important source of information on quality assurance at this early stage of introducing quality assurance to Rajabhat Institutes.

Meetings and seminars on quality assurance were also arranged for members of Rajabhat Institutes. The findings from interviews with the Quality Assurance Committee members revealed that meetings were set up for members of Rajabhat Institutes, as Quality Assurance Committee members said:

We have followed the guideline published by the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council. We have set up meetings on quality assurance for our staff. We published factors and criteria. We set up internal auditors, and quality assurance committees.

[QA Committee members, 5103]

The first important step is the understanding of quality assurance on the part of all members. We set up the meetings for them. We have to encourage them to understand quality assurance.

[QA Committee members, 4409]

We set up the meetings and also invited experts on quality assurance to be our guest speaker in order to build up the knowledge on quality assurance for our staff.

[QA Committee members, 1409]

At the same time ORIC had established quality factors as a framework of quality assurance for all Rajabhat Institutes. These factors were composed of: 1) philosophy, mission, goal and objective of the institutions; 2) curriculum; 3) teachers; 4) students; 5) educational provision; 6) students affairs; 7) facilities, teaching and learning resources; 8) administration and management; 9) budget; 10) staff; 11) environment; 12) research; and 13) follow-up process and reporting. Definitions of quality assurance were also established in this handbook. The last part of the handbook contained the details of criteria, indicators and evidence that Rajabhat Institutes have to provide for each quality factor (ORIC, 1996). Documents from Rajabhat Institutes showed that these factors were used in all Rajabhat Institutes at

the early stage of carrying out quality assurance, for instance, as shown in the Handbook of Quality Assurance in one Rajabhat Institute (RI I, 1997).

Another arrangement for Rajabhat Institutes before implementing quality assurance which appeared in the Handbook of Quality Assurance was to propose Quality Assurance Committees and their responsibilities for Rajabhat Institutes (ORIC, 1996).

Although an attempt was made in order to implement quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes as already mentioned it seemed that Rajabhat Institutes experienced some difficulties in trying to implement quality assurance at the early stage of carrying out this policy.

Evidence was found, for instance, when members of Rajabhat Institutes were asked about the system of quality assurance in their institutes. The findings showed that some staff appeared not to know their quality assurance systems. Data from questionnaires and interviews showed that some of the respondents could not indicate the systems of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. Moreover, they reported the systems of quality assurance in their institutes in different ways. The findings from questionnaires completed by teaching staff (as in Table 5.1) revealed that fifty-eight per cent of teaching staff identified quality assurance systems in their institutes whereas forty-two per cent of teaching staff could not identify their quality assurance systems.

Table 5.1 Respondents' characterization of quality assurance systems in Rajabhat Institutes from questionnaires (n=91)

Quality Assurance Systems	Frequencies					Total (f)	Percentage (%)
	RI1	RI2	RI3	RI4	RI5		
1. Identified systems	9	16	8	7	13	53	58
2. Could not identify systems	11	4	3	13	7	38	42
Total	20	20	11	20	20	91	100

Table 5.1 also shows that the majority of teaching staff in two institutes (RI1, RI4) could not identify the quality assurance systems. There is a larger

number of teaching staff who could not identify the systems in RI4 than RI1. Among the three institutes where staff could identify the systems of quality assurance, it was found that the biggest number of staff was in RI2. Although fifty-eight per cent of teaching staff was able to identify quality assurance systems in their institutes, there was a big percentage of those who were unable to identify the systems of quality assurance. This seems to show some difficulties in identifying quality assurance systems within Rajabhat Institutes.

The findings of the study also revealed that teaching staff, the Quality Assurance Committee members and the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes described their quality assurance system in different ways.

The questionnaire respondents who identified the systems of quality assurance (fifty-three people) had different views of the quality assurance system in their institutes. The majority of the respondents (59%) indicated that it was TQM, but the rest of them considered that it was ISO (17%), ORIC (13%), Deming Prize (9%), and the University system (2%) as shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 Respondents' characterisation of quality assurance systems in Rajabhat Institutes from questionnaires (n=53)

Quality Assurance Systems	Frequencies					Total (f)	Percentage (%)
	RI1 n=9	RI2 n=16	RI3 n=8	RI4 n=7	RI5 n=13		
1. TQM	4	11	3	2	11	31	59
2. ISO 9000	3	1	4	1	0	9	17
3. Demming Prize	1	2	0	1	1	5	9
3. ORIC	1	1	1	3	1	7	13
4. University	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Total	9	16	8	7	13	53	100

If we consider data in the same institutes, it was found that teaching staff in the same institute reported quality assurance in their institute in different ways. For instance, four members of the teaching staff in RI1 indicated that the quality assurance system in their institute was similar to TQM while three people believed that it was ISO, and one person thought that it was Deming and another ORIC system. Table 5.2 also shows that at least three systems of quality assurance were identified by teaching staff in the same institute, for instance, staff in RI3 and RI5 indicated three systems whereas staff in RI1 and RI4 indicated four systems of quality assurance. TQM was indicated by the majority of teaching staff in two institutes (RI2, and RI5).

If we consider the findings from interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members it was found that the majority of the interviewees (twelve out of twenty people) suggested that the systems of quality assurance in their institutes were similar to the ORIC system. Five people indicated that their quality assurance systems were similar to TQM and three people did not indicate the systems of quality assurance in their institutes. The findings also showed that not all Quality Assurance Committee members from the same institute reported the same information. For instance, three people from one institute (RI1) stated that quality assurance in their institute was similar to the ORIC system but the rest of the interviewees in the same institute said that it was TQM. There was only one institute (RI5) where the Quality Assurance Committee members (four people) reported the same information. It is noticeable that the numbers of quality assurance systems described by this group of people was less than those found in the questionnaires. The data from the interviews with the Quality Assurance Committee members is shown in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Quality assurance systems reported by Quality Assurance Committee in five Rajabhat Institutes

Rajabhat Institutes (RI)	Quality Assurance System ORIC	TQM	Not identified the systems	Total (n)
1. RI1	3	2	0	5
2. RI2	2	1	0	3
3. RI3	2	0	1	3
4. RI4	1	2	2	5
5. RI5	4	0	0	4
Total	12	5	3	20

Similarly, the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes who indicated quality assurance systems (seven out of eight people) had different views on the systems of quality assurance in their institutes. The majority of the administrators (five out of seven people) considered that quality assurance systems in their institutes were similar to the ORIC system whereas one administrator indicated that it was TQM and another administrator indicated that it was ISO 9000 as shown in Table 5.4. The data also shows that three systems of quality assurance were indicated by the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes and the administrators in the ministries. These systems were ORIC, ISO, and TQM.

The findings from the interviews with the administrators in the ministries in Bangkok showed that only ORIC system was indicated that being used in Rajabhat Institutes, as shown in Table 5.4

Table 5.4 Quality assurance systems indicated by the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes and the administrators in Bangkok

Group of People	TQM	ISO 9000	ORIC	Total (n)
1. Administrators in 5RIs	1	1	5	7
2. Administrators in Bangkok	0	0	2	2
Total	1	1	7	9

It was found that the information on systems of quality assurance reported by the Quality Assurance Committee members, the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes as well as the administrators in the ministries was more consistent than one reported by teaching staff. This can probably be explained by the fact that these groups of people were responsible for quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes or other higher education institutions. Thus, they might have more experience and understanding of quality assurance. They might have more chance to share information than teaching staff, for instance, in their committee meetings.

The difficulty in identifying quality assurance systems and the differences on quality assurance systems reported by different groups of people could be explained by one or more of the following:

First, quality assurance was an alien concept. The members of Rajabhat Institutes were not familiar with it. This may have confused the respondents who found it is difficult to identify the systems of quality assurance in their institutes. This was supported by the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members:

Staff are not familiar with the concept of quality assurance. Some of them lack understanding on quality assurance and they are unable to initiate quality assurance.

[QA Committee members, 4405]

We have never carried out this work and have never known this system before. It really takes time to understand quality assurance.

[QA Committee members, 1508]

Second, quality assurance had not been introduced clearly to all members of Rajabhat Institutes. The evidence for this is, for instance, the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members, who stated:

We do not exactly know about the system. We have only been told to carry it out and know who should be responsible for quality assurance.

[QA Committee members, 1301]

I have heard from the President of my institute that it is TQM. However, the institute has not informed us clearly or explained it to all of us.

[QA Committee members, 1401]

At this point, it might be useful to look at the ways in which quality assurance had been introduced to Rajabhat Institutes. Document analysis and data from interviews showed that the strategy to introduce quality assurance to Rajabhat Institutes can be considered as consisting of two steps which aimed to build up knowledge and understanding on quality assurance. The first step was similar to all higher education institutions in the country. It was to introduce quality assurance through the issues in the Handbook of Quality Assurance. The Handbook of Quality Assurance for Rajabhat Institutes was published by the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council in 1996. Four main topics were introduced in this handbook as already mentioned. This handbook, however, did not contain information on how to carry out quality assurance. It did not make clear on the systems of quality assurance that should be used. The second step was to introduce quality assurance through a meeting or seminars. Although an attempt was made to encourage all members of Rajabhat Institutes to understand quality assurance, it seems that there was a difficulty at this stage, as the interview data shows:

We tried to build up knowledge and understanding on quality assurance to all members and try to explain to them that quality assurance is useful for the institute. It takes a long time for this stage because staff do not understand quality assurance and they do not know how to carry it out.

[QA Committee members, 5103]

We are encouraged to understand quality assurance. We feel that it is not easy to build up understanding on this policy in all staff.

[QA Committee members, 2205]

An attempt to build up knowledge and understanding on quality assurance was also made by sending members of staff to attend a seminar on quality assurance outside Rajabhat Institutes as the evidence from interviews with a Quality Assurance Committee member showed:

We always support our staff to attend a seminar on quality assurance outside the institute because we need them to understand quality assurance and why we have to carry it out.

[QA Committee members, 2309]

Documents from Self-Study Reports published by Rajabhat Institutes also revealed that Rajabhat Institutes had meetings on quality assurance many

times. One Rajabhat Institute, for example, had nine meetings on quality assurance within the institute, as it stated:

We sent our staff to attend meetings and seminars on quality assurance more than 15 times. The number of staff who have already attended the meetings and seminars on quality assurance are 70-100 people....We arranged 9 meetings on quality assurance within our institute.

[RIA, 2001, p. 4]

During the period when quality assurance was introduced to members of Rajabhat Institutes, I was a member of the Quality Assurance Committee in my faculty. I can draw on my own experience when I had the opportunity to attend a few meetings on quality assurance both inside and outside my institute. The experts were from both private and public sectors. One of them was from abroad. I found that the information provided for the meetings focused only on the definitions and background of quality assurance. None of them provided sufficient information of how quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes should be carried out.

Third, there were changes in quality factors. If we consider the thirteen factors established by ORIC in 1996 (see page 128), it is found that some factors were very similar to others. For instance, teacher and staff (factor numbers 3 and 10); facilities and environments (factor numbers 7 and 11). Discussion on the thirteen factors took place widely in Rajabhat Institutes. The point that people made was Rajabhat Institutes should carry out quality assurance based on the same quality framework but some quality factors should be reduced or changed to different names, or some of them could be divided into two factors. As a result, some Rajabhat Institutes had reconsidered the quality factors and reduced or increased the thirteen factors to make them suitable for their own institutes. The Rajabhat Institutes Quality Assurance Report (ORIC, 2001a) revealed that Rajabhat Institutes had different numbers of quality factors. For instance, one institute in the North had twelve quality factors while another institute in the North had fourteen quality factors. However, the number of quality factors in the five Rajabhat Institutes in this study during the early stage of carrying out quality assurance (1996-1999) was thirteen, as published in the Handbook of Quality Assurance by ORIC.

Fourth, there was no responsible organisation for quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes and other higher education institutions of the country. An independent responsible organisation was established by the Thai government in November 2000, four years after quality assurance had been established in higher education institutions in Thailand.

Fifth, there was another change in quality assurance in higher education in Thailand which took place in 1999 when a new National Education Act was announced. According to the New Education Act in 1999, educational administration for all higher education institutions was to be under a single ministry. This new administration system was begun in 2001. This led to other changes in the quality assurance system for Rajabhat Institutes as follows:

1. The thirteen relevant factors of quality assurance were again reconsidered and reduced to nine factors similar to those which had been used in all universities. The findings from interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members showed that their institutes had been using nine quality factors, as one Quality Assurance Committee member stated:

We have followed the Handbook of Quality Assurance published by the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council and we have focused on the thirteen factors. Later, these factors have been changed to nine factors the same as the university factors.

[QA Committee members, 5301]

The interviews with the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes also revealed that Rajabhat Institutes had followed nine factors since a new National Education Act was announced as one administrator indicated:

ORIC established thirteen quality factors as our quality framework. I remembered that it took a long time to discuss these factors before we used them. Then, the administration system of the higher education was changed. This leads to a change in our quality factors. Now we have to follow nine quality factors similar to the factors that have been used in universities.

[Administrators, RI 101]

This was supported by documents from Rajabhat Institutes which revealed that in 2001 they carried out quality assurance based on nine factors (RI1, 2001:13; RI5, 2001, p. 21). For example:

In order to carry out quality assurance at higher education level, Rjabhat Institute...has considered the quality framework, which is composed of 9 factors as follows:

- Factor 1. Philosophy, vision, mission, and objectives and plans
- Factor 2. Teaching and learning
- Factor 3. Students development
- Factor 4. Research
- Factor 5. Academic service to communities
- Factor 6. Preservation and promotion of arts and culture
- Factor 7. Administration and management
- Factor 8. Budget
- Factor 9. Quality assurance

(RI5, 2001, p. 21).

2. According to the new Education Act, quality assessment in Rajabhat Institutes would be the responsibility of an independent external organisation. This organisation was established in November 2000, as 'the Office of Educational Standards and Evaluation'. The functions of this organisation consisted of: 1) the development of the external evaluation system, establishment of framework, direction and method for efficient external evaluation; 2) the development of standards and criteria for external evaluation; 3) certification of external evaluation; 4) supervision and establishment of a standard for external evaluation conducted by external evaluators; 5) development and training of external evaluators; and 6) reporting the evaluation of educational quality and standard to the government (OESE, 2000).

Sixth, the handbook of quality assurance itself allows each Rajabhat Institute to carry out quality assurance based on the system suitable for the institute's own mission (as it stated below). This may have led to the confusion on the systems of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

Each Rajabhat Institute develops its own quality assurance system based on the systems of quality assurance, for instance, ISO, TQM, and Malcolm Balridge Award, which was suitable for each institute's mission.

[ORIC, 1999b, p. 8]

Although it was stated in the Handbook of Quality Assurance for Rajabhat Institutes that each Rajabhat Institute was able to use different quality assurance systems, this handbook did not provide any information about these systems of quality assurance and how to use these systems in Rajabhat Institutes.

Seventh, at the early stage of carrying out quality assurance various concept of quality assurance were introduced to Rajabhat Institutes. This may have led the members of Rajabhat Institutes to the view that their institutes had carried out different systems of quality assurance. The systems of quality assurance that had been introduced to Rajabhat Institutes were as follows:

1. Total Quality Management (TQM)

TQM is a management concept that focuses on satisfying customer expectations by continuing to improve operations, management processes, and products (Berry, 1991). TQM was first introduced to Rajabhat Institutes in 1996. The Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council (ORIC) sent a group of administrators and staff to attend a training course on TQM in the USA. After their return, a few meetings on TQM were set up for staff in order to apply this system to Rajabhat Institutes.

2. ISO 9000

ISO 9000 was adopted by many Thai higher education institutions, for instance, university, Rajamongala Institutes, and Rajabhat Institutes during the period when quality assurance was proposed as a policy. In Rajabhat Institutes, prior to implementation, experts from the industrial sectors were invited to explain the concept of ISO and train staff on how to carry out ISO 9000 in Rajabhat Institutes. At the same time the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council sent their staff to attend a seminar on quality assurance, as one administrator of Rajabhat Institutes stated (Administrators RI 101):

The concept of ISO 9000 has been involved in Rajabhat Institutes for a while, probably 9-10 years. We have meetings on ISO 9000 very often. We also have an advisor from the business sector. When the concept of ISO 9000 was being adopted in Rajabhat Institutes, ORIC sent our staff for a training course on quality assurance abroad.

Administrators from the Office of National Education Commission (ONEC) indicated that ISO 9000 had been used in other higher education institutions in Thailand such as universities and Rajamongala Institutes. He said:

Some universities have developed their quality assurance system based on ISO 9000. For instance, in ...University which in my opinion is a complete system and the best among all universities in Thailand. Rajamongala Institutes is another example that has implemented ISO 9000 and made a lot of progress on quality assurance.

[Bkk Administrator, 01]

The findings from interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members showed that one faculty in one Rajabhat Institute was audited by external auditors and awarded the ISO 9000 certificate, as this member said:

I have carried out ISO 9000 and it is successful because our faculty has been awarded the ISO certificate. ISO 9000 has made clear in the quality manual, quality procedure, and work instruction that it is very practical.

[QA Committee member, 3301]

Not many Rajabhat Institutes have carried out ISO 9000. The findings of the study revealed that only one faculty of Rajabhat Institute had carried out ISO 9000 and awarded the ISO certificate. In addition, there seems to be some limitation of ISO 9000 as these quotations testify:

'... ISO 9000 was developed for industry and business and does not adapt entirely comfortably to university activities and culture. Education and training are very different from a manufacturing process. It is seen as heavily focused on systems and procedures, rather than on qualitative and academic judgements...'

And

'...ISO 9000 tells companies what to do, but not how to do it. The registration lasts for three years, subject to audits every six months for confirmation, continued maintenance and operation of quality system'.

[Lzadi, Kashef, Stadt, 1996, p. 5]

Moreover, Rajabhat Institutes had experienced some limitations of carrying ISO 9000, for example, the cost of auditing which was very high. Further detail from the interview with the administrator of Rajabhat Institute was:

... After that, the ORIC reconsidered our quality assurance systems and decided that the system of quality assurance should not be based on ISO 9000 because Rajabhat Institutes have different factors compared to the ISO standards. However, if some Rajabhat Institutes prefer to use ISO 9000, they can do so. In my point of view, ISO 9000 is a good system but the problem is its cost is too high.

[Administrator RI, 101]

The quotations above seem to show some limitations to ISO 9000 in higher education institutions. Rajabhat Institutes had experienced these limitations, such as the cost and timing of ISO. ISO auditing takes place every six months. This means that Rajabhat Institutes have to spend more time on quality assurance and probably less on teaching and learning

3. Deming Prize

Deming Prize was introduced to Rajabhat Institutes at the early stage when quality assurance was implemented. Documents from Self-Study Reports in one Rajabhat Institute revealed that their institutes used the Deming Prize system in their quality assurance but in a specific way. It stated that:

...The institute published Self-Study Report (SSR) in 1999. Self-Assessment Report (SAR) was also published in 2000 which showed the strengths and weaknesses of quality assurance within the institute. The information from SAR was useful for the institute to improve the action plan and the administration system, which was based on the PDCA cycle of Deming.

[RI P 2001, p. 3]

This is also supported by a Quality Assurance Committee member, who said:

We have carried out quality assurance based on the system established by the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council. Deming itself was used in the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunity, and Threats) analysis.

[QA Committee members, 1101]

4. ORIC system

Documents from ORIC and Rajabhat Institute reports showed that at the early stage of carrying out quality assurance (1996-1999), Rajabhat Institutes followed the guidelines published in the Handbook of Quality Assurance for Rajabhat Institutes. Considering the Handbooks of Quality Assurance in five Rajabhat Institutes in this study, it was found that they contained the same information as shown in the Handbook of Quality Assurance published by ORIC in 1996. This can be explained by one or more of the following reasons. First, the traditional administration system in higher education institutions in Thailand is a strongly 'top-down' model. This means that all policies drawn up by the government are directly implemented in higher education institutions. The quality assurance policy was no exception. Second, at the early stage of carrying out this new policy, there was a limited knowledge and understanding of quality assurance among staff and administrators of Rajabhat Institutes. It seemed that Rajabhat Institutes would rather 'follow' the guideline than 'create' their own ways to carry out quality assurance. In other words, following the guidelines of quality assurance seemed to be an easy way for Rajabhat Institutes to implement this policy. There was no evidence to indicate that Rajabhat Institutes had carried out quality assurance in different ways. The Handbook of Quality Assurance, therefore, seemed to be a 'bible' for Rajabhat Institutes to implement this policy.

According to the Handbook of Quality Assurance for Rajabhat Institutes, Rajabhat Institutes were free to create their own systems. They could operate quality assurance in their own way without following ORIC's guidelines, as was stated in the aims of quality assurance guidelines that:

To promote the development of the quality assurance model which is composed of quality control, quality audit, and quality assessment as an instrument for maintaining institutional academic standard, to encourage higher education institutions to develop their own quality assurance mechanism suitable for their own purposes and missions.

[ORIC, 1996, p. 7-10]

Self-Study Reports published by Rajabhat Institutes showed that at the early stage of carrying out quality assurance, Rajabhat Institutes had followed the

guidelines published by ORIC. They also used the thirteen quality factors. This is supported by the findings from interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members, which revealed that the majority of Quality Assurance Committee members (twelve out of twenty people) reported that quality assurance system in their institutes was similar to the ORIC system, established by the Office of the Rajabhat Institutes Council. For example:

We agree to start quality assurance that is the same as the Rajabhat Institutes Quality Assurance System which consists of thirteen factors published by the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council.

[QA Committee members, 5301]

The findings from interviews with the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes also showed that their institutes had carried out quality assurance following the system established by the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council. This was indicated by five out of eight administrators, as one person stated:

We follow the systems established by the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council, ORIC system

[Administrator, RI 502]

According to the evidence from the questionnaires, interviews with different groups of people, and also documents, it seems to be clear that various systems of quality assurance had been introduced to Rajabhat Institutes at the early stage of implementing quality assurance. These systems were TQM, ISO 9000, Deming Prize, and ORIC systems. Although the Malcolm Baldrige Award is allowed to be used in Rajabhat Institutes, no evidence from the findings showed that this system had been implemented. It is noticeable that among these systems of quality assurance, the ORIC system was indicated by the majority of interviewees as being used in Rajabhat Institutes. In addition, it seemed that the systems of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes were still developing. The changes of quality systems, and quality factors are examples of this. This was supported by the interview with the administrator in Bangkok, who indicated that Rajabhat Institutes were developing their quality assurance systems, as he said:

I understand that each Rajabhat Institutes has been developing its own quality assurance system.

[Bkk. Administrator, 01]

The quality assurance systems found in this study were the systems that had been developed in the business and industrial sectors. This was similar to the previous studies on quality assurance in higher education institutions which revealed that these systems had been used. In addition, evidence from this study showed that the Office of Rajabhat Institutes encouraged all Rajabhat Institutes to develop or create their own mechanism and systems of quality assurance suitable for the institutes. This was similar to the case in the Swedish higher education where the institutional system existed. The similarity of the condition is that government proposed the quality assurance framework and allowed higher education institutions to develop their own systems.

5.2 People who were responsible for quality assurance

This part of the chapter describes the structure of Quality Assurance Committees and their responsibilities for quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

The findings of the study showed that four Quality Assurance Committees were responsible for quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes

Documents from the Handbook of Quality Assurance for Rajabhat Institutes showed that the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council (ORIC) had proposed the Quality Assurance Committees and their responsibilities for all Rajabhat Institutes as follows:

1. Rajabhat Institute Quality Assurance Committee (Steering Committee)

The structure of this Quality Assurance Committee and its responsibilities were stated in the Handbook of Quality Assurance for Rajabhat Institutes:

Rajabhat Institute Quality Assurance Committee (Steering

Committee) was composed of:

1. The President of Rajabhat Institute
2. Vice-President of Rajabhat Institute (1 or more than 1 person)
3. Dean of Faculties
4. Experts within Rajabhat Institute and outside Rajabhat Institute

Responsibilities of this committee

1. Establish quality assurance policy within Rajabhat Institute
2. Determine standards within Rajabhat Institute
3. Consider quality assurance of Rajabhat Institute and prepare for external assessment

[ORIC, 1996, p. 11]

2. Quality Assurance Committee (at institute level)

This committee consisted of Academic Vice-President or Quality Assurance Vice-President, Deans of faculties or faculties' representatives, and general members. Normally, there were ten to fifteen people on this committee. The responsibilities of this committee as stated in the Handbook of Quality Assurance were: 1) it was responsible for quality assurance system and its mechanisms within Rajabhat Institutes; 2) it determined quality audit guidelines; and 3) it considered and commented on quality assurance within the institute (ORIC, 1996, p. 11). Documents and data from interviews showed that this committee was also in charge of quality control, quality audit, and was responsible for quality assurance reports within the institute. This group of people seemed to be the 'working group' for quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. They had attended a few meetings and training courses on quality assurance because they were directly responsible for quality assurance within the institute. As a result, they seemed to have more experience of quality assurance compared to other groups of committees and staff in Rajabhat Institutes.

3. Quality Assurance Committee (at faculty, or programme level)

This committee was composed of a small number of people (about five to seven people). They were the representatives from faculty who were expected to coordinate quality assurance in each faculty. This committee was responsible for quality control and quality audit within their faculties, or programmes coordination with the Quality Assurance Committee at institute level, and follow-up of the progress of quality assurance in their faculties.

4. Quality Audit Committee

The Quality Audit Committee was composed of experts both from inside and outside the institute. Normally the members of this committee were people with experience and expertise in research and evaluation. The responsibilities of this committee as stated in the Handbook of Quality Assurance were: 1) quality audit; and 2) quality report within the institute. The structure of Quality Assurance Committees in Rajabhat Institutes can be considered as three different levels. They were: 1) institute; 2) faculty and; 3) programme level, as shown in Figure 5.1

Figure 5.1 Quality Assurance Committee in Rajabhat Institute

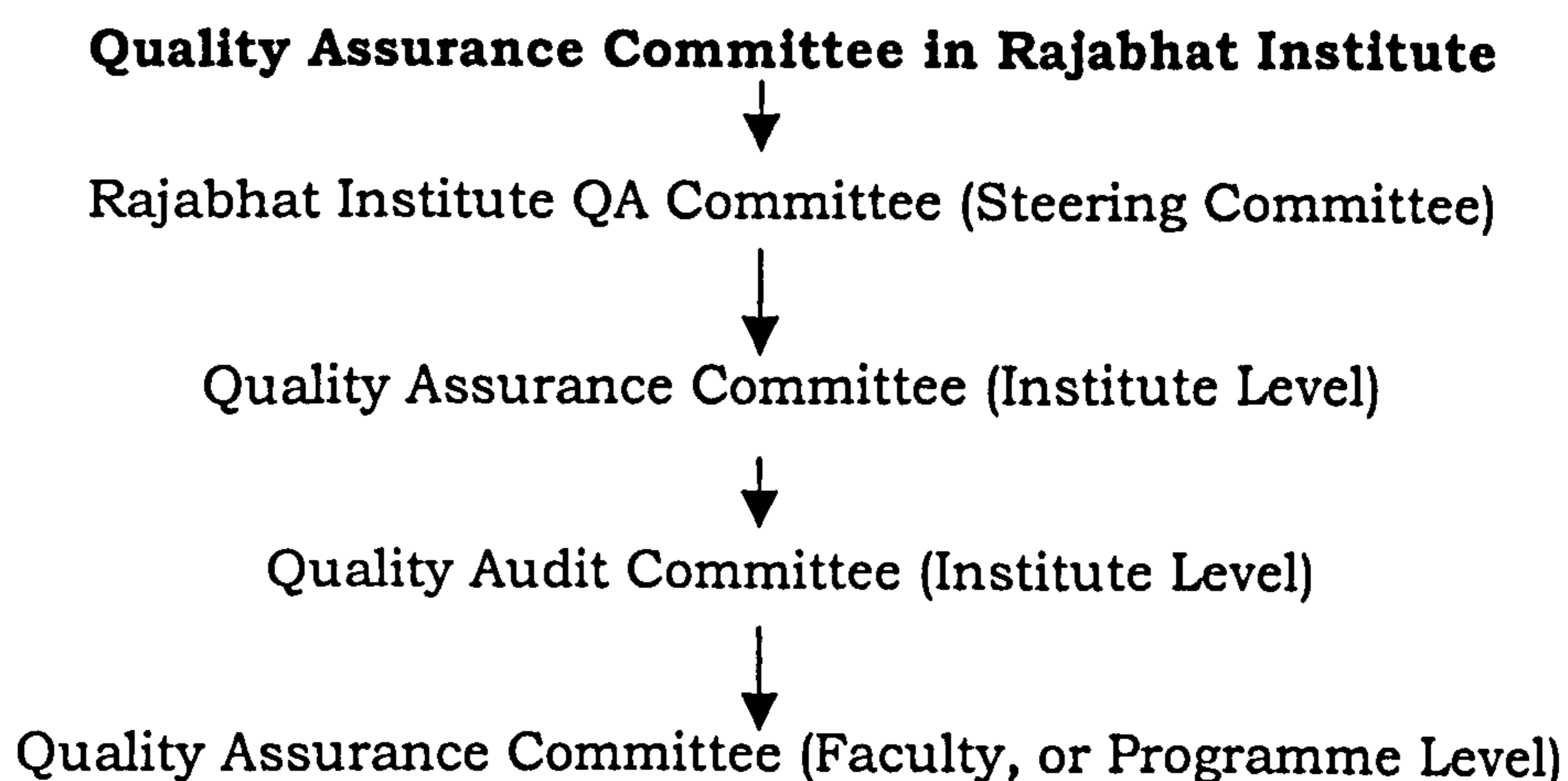


Figure 5.1 shows that there were four committees who were charged with quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The way Rajabhat Institutes proposed their Quality Assurance Committees, which consisted of four committees at three different levels seemed to be sufficient for carrying out quality assurance within the institute. However, this depends on the time that each committee would be able to work on quality assurance. If the Quality Assurance Committee members had too great a workload of teaching or administration it would probably be difficult for them to spend their time on quality assurance. In addition, the findings on the obstacles to quality assurance within Rajabhat Institutes which are presented in Chapter 7 revealed that members of Rajabhat Institutes had too much work to do. They did not have time to work on quality assurance. If we consider, for example, the Quality Assurance Committee members who were interviewed for this

study it was found that they work in different positions in their institutes (as shown in Table 4.10, page 119). The majority of the Quality Assurance Committee (fifty per cent) were deans of faculty. Fifteen percent work as the Vice President of the institute, etc. Only five per cent of this committee was teaching staff. This seemed to show that the majority of Quality Assurance Committee members already had different work to do apart from teaching and quality assurance. Thus, they might not have much time to work on quality assurance.

The finding on responsible people on quality assurance found in Rajabhat Institutes was similar to the case in the UK. Harvey (1994, p. 1) reported that quality assurance was monitored internally by institutions at various levels and externally by a number of bodies. Harvey also detailed that in the UK, five types of external quality monitoring operating in British universities. They were:

- 1) Teaching quality assessment;
- 2) Research assessment exercise;
- 3) Academic audit;
- 4) Professional accreditation;
- 5) External examiners.

Harvey also indicated that teaching quality assessment is delegated to the Quality Assessment Committee (QAC). Each QAC undertakes its task in slightly different ways, but essentially they use self-assessment and peer review. Compares these types of external quality monitoring to the case in Rajabhat Institutes, it was found that only two of them, teaching quality assessment, academic audit, had been carried out. This is probably because quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes was in the early stages. In addition, as is stated in the Handbook of Quality Assurance for Rajabhat Institutes quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes focused on the quality of graduates, administration and management systems within the institutes (ORIC, 1996). External examiners, professional accreditation and research assessment will be further steps for Rajabhat Institutes to carry out.

5.3 Three components of quality assurance

This part of the chapter explains how three components of quality assurance have been carried out in Rajabhat Institutes. It also presents the progress of the implementation of quality assurance within Rajabhat Institutes.

The findings of the study revealed that Rajabhat Institutes had not completed the three components of quality assurance. They were carrying out quality audit and preparing Self-Assessment Reports.

Documents from the Handbook of Quality Assurance for Rajabhat Institutes showed that Rajabhat Institutes established their quality assurance system based on three components. These components were quality control, quality audit and quality assessment (ORIC, 1996). Document analysis from the Handbook of Quality Assurance, The Quality Assurance Report established by the Office of Rajabhat Institutes, Self-Study and Self-Assessment from five Rajabhat Institutes also showed that the processes of carrying out these components of quality assurance involved various tasks. Quality control involved various different tasks. They were: 1) the announcement and introduction of a quality assurance policy in each Rajabhat Institutes; 2) the establishment of relevant factors and criteria; 3) the establishment of quality assurance mechanisms; 4) the establishment of the Quality Assurance Committees at three different levels; and 5) carrying out self-study and publishing self-study report. Quality audit involved three main tasks. They were: 1) inter quality audit; 2) external quality audit; and 3) reporting. Internal quality audit was carried out by a small group of auditors from different faculties of different institutes. This process was carried out in order to practise and encourage members of the institute to be ready before the external audit takes place.

The findings from questionnaires revealed that the majority of teaching staff in five Rajabhat Institutes (f=60) believed that the institutes were carrying out quality audit. The rest of them indicated that their institutes were working on quality control (f=27). The findings from the questionnaires were as in Table 5.5

Table 5.5 Frequencies of the component of quality assurance which were being carried out in Rajabhat Institutes reported by teaching staff

Components of Quality Assurance	RI1 n=20	RI2 n=20	RI3 n=11	RI4 n=20	RI5 n=20	Total (f)
1. Quality audit	17	13	6	12	12	60
2. Quality control	3	7	5	7	5	27
Total	20	20	11	19	17	87

Table 5.5 also shows that teaching staff in the same institute indicated that their institutes were carrying out two components of quality assurance. It is noticeable that the majority of teaching staff in five institutes indicated that they were working on quality audit whereas the rest of them indicated that they were carrying out quality control.

Similarly, the findings from interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members revealed that the majority of this committee (seventeen people) indicated that their institutes were carrying out quality audit. Only three people considered that their institutes were carrying out quality control as shown in Table 5.6. Further detail given was that Rajabhat Institutes were preparing their reports ready for internal and external audit from the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council (ORIC), and an external evaluation by the Office of Education Standards and Evaluation (OESE). A document from the Rajabhat Institute Quality Assurance Report (ORIC, 1999a) showed that the first external audit was carried out by a team of experts from the ORIC. The second internal quality audit by the ORIC was due to start at the end of the year 2001. The first external evaluation by OESE would start in the year 2002. For example:

We are auditing ourselves. We tried to audit ourselves once in May 2001 and it was found out that we were not successful because some offices in the institute had not launched quality assurance yet. Thus, we tried to audit only one factor first. Later on, we will try to audit all relevant factors.

[QA Committee member, 1502]

We are doing a Self-Assessment Report (SAR) in order to evaluate our institute. We follow standards and criteria from nine factors. We are going to evaluate the quality of the educational provision in our institute and a rating scale will be used. At present, we already provide the documents, and have also set up the evaluation committees at the institute level, faculty, and programme level.

[QA Committee member, 1102]

We are working on a Self-Assessment Report. Last year we did a Self-Study Report (SSR).

[QA Committee member, 4402]

The findings on three components of quality assurance from the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members were as in the Table below:

Table 5.6 Frequencies of components of quality assurance which were being carried out in five Rajabhat Institutes reported by the Quality Assurance Committee members

Component of Quality Assurance	RI1 n=5	RI2 n=3	RI3 n=3	RI4 n=5	RI5 n=4	Total (f)
1. Quality Control	1	0	0	2	0	3
2. Quality Audit	4	3	3	3	4	17

Table 5.6 also showed that Quality Assurance Committee members in three institutes (RI2, RI3 and RI5) agreed that their institutes were carrying out quality audit whereas Quality Assurance Committee members in two institutes (RI1 and RI4) did not agree. The difference in the information reported by Quality Assurance Committee members in the same institute might be explained by one of the following reasons. First, some members might not know the progress of quality assurance in their institutes. Second, the structure of Quality Assurance Committee in Rajabhat Institute showed that each faculty had its own Quality Assurance Committee at faculty level responsible for quality assurance within its faculty. Thus, there was the possibility that each faculty was making different progress on quality assurance. Some faculties might have made more progress on carrying out

quality assurance than others. In connection with this, one member of the Quality Assurance Committee stated that the progress in carrying out quality assurance in his institute was at an early stage. He said:

We are preparing documents. In practice, we have not made much progress on quality assurance. However, we will try to carry it out after we finish the stage of preparing all the documents.

[QA Committee member, 1402]

The responses to how the three components of quality assurance had been carried out and the progress of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes from interviews with the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes (seven people) revealed that they all agreed that their institutes were working on quality audit, as one administrator said:

We carried out the first internal audit in June 2000. Then we were audited by the auditors from the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council, who attempted to find out if we had already completed all the indicators or not. The next stage will be quality assessment.

[Administrator RI, 102]

Documents revealed that Rajabhat Institutes had already carried out quality control and quality audit because they had published their own handbooks of quality assurance, set up quality assurance committees, published their factors and criteria, and set up meetings on quality assurance. In the quality audit processes the institutes had set up their own internal auditors, provided training courses for auditors, audited within the institutes, and published the reports. Typical responses from the members of the Quality Assurance Committee members were as follows:

We have already done all steps of quality control and quality audit. We have published a handbook of quality assurance for the institute. We have set up quality assurance meetings. We have published our factors and criteria. We sent our staff for training courses, and we have started the internal audit in our institute.

[QA Committee member, 4203]

We have followed the guideline from the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council. We have set up the meetings for our staff. We published our factors and criteria, our strategic plans. We set up internal auditors, and quality assurance committees.

[QA Committee member, 5103]

The quotations from the interviews with Quality Assurance members (4203, 5103) could imply that there are some differences in the progress of quality assurance within Rajabhat Institutes. This seemed to show that although quality control and quality audit had been implemented not all had been completed. Progress on quality assurance depended on the readiness in each faculty and institute. This was supported by documents from Rajabhat Institutes Quality Assurance Report published by the ORIC which revealed that thirty-six Rajabhat Institutes had made different progress on quality assurance in their institutes. For example:

...36 Rajabhat Institutes have established either their own vision or mission. These visions and missions have been introduced to members of staff in 30 Rajabhat Institutes, 19 Rajabhat Institutes have introduced them to their students... 20 Rajabhat Institutes have the information on self-study, 13 Rajabhat Institutes have set up the people who are responsible for self-study, and 11 Rajabhat Institutes have established the guidelines for self-study.

[ORIC, 1999b, p. 47-48]

The latest Rajabhat Institutes Quality Assurance Report, which was established by the Office of Rajabhat Institutes in 2001 also showed that Rajabhat Institutes had made different progress on their quality assurance, as it stated in the report that:

...31 Rajabhat Institutes have already carried out self-study. 27 Rajabhat Institutes have provided the evidence to show that they have carried out self-study.

[ORIC, 2001, p. 20]

Quality assessment, the third component of quality assurance had not been completed yet because it needed to be assessed by the Office of Education Standard and Evaluation (OESE), a new organisation which had been established by the government in November 2000. Quality assessment was due to be carried out by the OESE in 2002.

According to the evidence found from the study, it seems to be clear that Rajabhat Institutes have been working on the quality audit process. They made different progress on quality assurance and had not fully implemented all the components of quality assurance. During the period when quality

assurance was being implemented in Rajabhat Institutes, the findings revealed that the institutes were involved in different strategies, for instance, self-study, self-assessment, quality audit, and reporting. The findings also showed that Rajabhat Institutes had experienced some difficulties in trying to implement quality assurance at the early stage of carrying out this policy, especially a difficulty in identifying quality assurance systems in Rajabhat Institutes. In addition, members of Rajabhat Institutes described the systems of quality assurance in their institute in different ways. At this point, it could be stated that communication on quality assurance within Rajabhat Institutes seems not to work well although a policy of quality assurance has been implemented in Rajabhat Institutes since 1996. This was similar to the finding from a previous study on quality assurance, which found that shortcomings in communication was one of the difficulties in carrying out quality assurance in higher education institutions (Nilsson and Wallhen, 2000).

There were some differences in quality assurance systems in higher education institutions between this study and the previous studies. The findings from the previous studies revealed that higher education institutions in different countries implemented only one system of quality assurance in their institutions, for instance, TQM was implemented in the US, UK, and Malaysian higher education institutions; ISO was applied in UK higher education institutions, an institutional system was found in the Swedish higher education institutions (see for instance, Kanji, Tambi, and Wallace, 1999; Kanji and Tambi, 1999; Nilsson and Walhen, 2000). However, the finding on quality assurance systems in Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand showed that people reported different information on the systems of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. Various systems of quality assurance were indicated that they were used in Rajabhat Institutes. There was not enough evidence from the study to conclude what particular system was used in each Rajabhat Institute. Only one faculty in one Rajabhat Institute could stated that it had implemented ISO 9000 because it had awarded the ISO certificate. In addition, the findings in this study seemed to show that quality assurance systems in Rajabhat Institutes were unstable compared to the systems in those countries that have more experience in carrying out quality assurance.

Some of them have carried out quality assurance for a decade. By contrast, Rajabhat Institutes had experience in carrying quality assurance for four years when this study took place and had not completed all the processes of implementing quality assurance.

There were some differences in the audit processes between this study and the case in the UK. Evidence from Rajabhat Institutes Quality Assurance Report (ORIC 2001a) showed that Rajabhat Institutes carried out both internal and external quality audit whereas quality audit in the UK is the responsibility of the Quality Assurance Agency.

The findings from the study also showed that various methodologies had been used for quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes such as self-study, self-assessment, audit, meeting with students, and reporting. These methodologies were similar to the methodologies found from previous studies, for instance, Gordon's study (1999), which found that: 1) self-assessment (or self-study, self-evaluation); 2) scrutiny of evidence and materials (audit processes); 3) meeting with students; and 4) publication of the report had all been applied in British higher education institutions. These methodologies were also similar to common elements of the national system of quality assurance in higher education institutions (Kump, 1997; Van Vught and Westerhijden 1993; Westerhijden *et al.*, 1994 cited in Kump, 1997).

5.4 Summary

This chapter has explained the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. Four key observations have been made in this chapter. First, it could be stated that at the early stage of carrying out quality assurance Rajabhat Institutes experienced some difficulties in trying to implement this new policy. Several reasons presented in this chapter attempt to explain the causes of these difficulties. Second, at the early stage of carrying out quality assurance, various systems of quality assurance were indicated as having been introduced to Rajabhat Institutes. It could probably be stated that two types of quality assurance systems had been introduced to Rajabhat Institutes. The first type was an original system developed for the business

and industrial sector, which in this study was referred to as TQM, ISO 9000, and Deming Prize. The other system was that developed by the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council (ORIC system) which could be considered as an institutional system because it had been developed to suit higher education institutions' own functions. The institutional systems appeared to be the system that reduced some limitations in carrying out quality assurance based on the original systems. It also reduced the differences between the business and education context. However, there was not enough evidence from the study to indicate which particular system of quality assurance had been used in each Rajabhat Institute. Third, Rajabhat Institutes had not fully implemented the three components of quality assurance. They had been working on quality audit processes. They had not completed quality assessment process because it needed to be done by OESE, an external independent organisation which had been recently established by the Thai government. Fourth, the methodologies used for quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes were similar to methodologies for quality assurance in higher education found from previous studies. These methodologies were self-study: (or self-assessment, self-evaluation; audit or scrutiny; and external reporting. These methodologies were seen as common elements of a national system of quality assurance in higher education institutions that are found in many countries, particularly in European countries. The chapter has also presented the structure of each Quality Assurance Committee that was responsible for quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

The next chapter examines the impacts of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes.

Chapter Six

Impacts of Quality Assurance

The findings presented in this chapter aim to answer the fourth subsidiary question of the first main research question of the study. This subsidiary question was 'Does quality assurance make an impact on Rajabhat Institutes, and if so how?' The answers to this subsidiary question were derived from perceptions of people from different groups. These people were involved in quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The findings presented in this chapter were drawn from seven different sources: 1) questionnaires completed by teaching staff in five Rajabhat Institutes; 2) the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members in five Rajabhat Institute; 3) interviews with the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes; 4) interviews with the administrators in the ministries in Bangkok; 5) interviews with students in five Rajabhat Institutes; 6) interviews with employers of graduates from Rajabhat Institutes; and 7) document analysis from government reports.

The chapter is divided into six parts. In each part, data from questionnaires and interviews are presented followed by discussion. The first part explains the impact of the quality assurance in place in Rajabhat Institutes. The second part deals with the impact of quality assurance on the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes. The third part presents the impact of quality assurance on staff. The fourth part explains the impact of quality assurance on teaching and learning process. The fifth part presents the impact of quality assurance on students, and the last part presents the impact of quality assurance on the employers of graduates from Rajabhat Institutes.

The findings of the study showed that different groups of people indicated that there were several impacts of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes, teaching and learning process, administrators of Rajabhat Institutes, teaching staff, students, and the employers of graduates from Rajabhat Institutes.

6.1 Impact of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes

Before the presentation of the findings, I would like to note that the questionnaire responses on the impacts of quality assurance did not have a high response rate. I was aware of the data interpretation. Although the response was not from a majority of questionnaire respondents, there are a few points I would like to raise. First, not all respondents answered the questions on the impact of quality assurance. However, these responses were from staff in different institutes. This seems to show that there was general agreement on these issues. Secondly, the findings from interviews also indicated similar impacts of quality assurance to those found from the questionnaire. Third, documents were also used in order to support the data from the questionnaires and interviews. Fourth, the questions on the impacts of quality assurance allowed the respondents to give more than one answer. Thus, the number of respondents for each question is different, as indicated by 'n' in each Table.

The findings from questionnaires revealed that teaching staff indicated various impacts of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes, for instance, quality assurance would help Rajabhat institutes work more systematically and responsibly (f=17), the quality of the institutes should increase (f=13), project evaluation and task analysis would be used more (f=5), and there was the establishment of the Quality Assurance Committee (f=2). However, some responses seemed to indicate negative impacts, for instance, Rajabhat Institutes spent more money (f=4), and they had a greater workload (f=3). It was also noticeable that only three members of the teaching staff in RI3 responded to this question although there were twenty questionnaire respondents in this institute. This could be explained in one or more of the following ways. First, teaching staff in this institute could not identify the impact of quality assurance in their institutes. Second, quality assurance was probably in the early stages. It had not been completely implemented. This had led to some difficulties to identify the impact of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes. The impact of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes indicated by teaching staff was as shown in Table 6.1

Table 6.1 Frequencies of the impacts of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes from questionnaires completed by teaching staff
(Total n, from 5 RIs=32)

Impact of Quality Assurance	RI1 n=10	RI2 n=8	RI3 n=5	RI4 n=3	RI5 n=6	Total (f)
1. Rajabhat Institutes worked more systematically and responsibly	6	4	3	1	3	17
2. Quality of the institutes should increase	3	4	3	0	3	13
3. Project evaluation and task analysis were used more	2	1	0	2	0	5
4. More money was spent	2	2	0	0	0	4
5. Institute had more work to do, particularly in the publishing of documents	0	0	0	0	3	3
6. Quality Assurance Office and Quality Assurance Committees were established	2	0	0	0	0	2

Table 6.1 also shows that teaching staff in the same institute indicated the impacts of quality assurance on their institute in different ways. For instance, six members of the teaching staff in RI1 indicated that quality assurance made the institutes work more systematically and responsibly while the rest of the teaching staff considered that quality assurance increased the quality of the institutes, made the institutes use project and task analysis more, and more money was spent. The Table also shows that teaching staff in RI1 indicated five impacts of quality assurance while teaching staff in RI2 indicated four impacts of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes. Teaching staff in RI5 indicated three impacts of quality assurance whereas teaching staff in RI3 and RI4 indicated two impacts of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes. It is noticeable that teaching staff in the same institute indicated at least two impacts of quality assurance on their institute.

Similarly, data from interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members revealed that the interviewees who responded to the question on the impact of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes (fifteen people) indicated several impacts of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes. The findings from Quality Assurance Committee members were as follows:

The majority of Quality Assurance Committee members who indicated the impact of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes (eight out of fifteen people) stated that quality assurance had an impact on the working system within Rajabhat Institutes. It helped the institutes improve their working systems. For instance, the institutes were able to develop their own systems and plans, they would be able to develop teaching and learning processes, were able to develop the quality and standard of outputs from the institutes, as in these examples:

Quality assurance makes everyone in the institute realise that the ways they work are unsystematic and they need to be improved. Therefore, members of Rajabhat Institutes have to develop their plans and working systems.

[QA Committee member, 2204]

Working systems in Rajabhat Institutes have improved since we carried out quality assurance. Educational provision is getting better, and we have to work more carefully.

[QA Committee member, 4504]

Four (out of fifteen) members of the Quality Assurance Committee responded that quality assurance made Rajabhat Institutes have more work to do, for instance, they had to produce all relevant documents and information. They stated that:

At the beginning, everyone has to work hard. We have to reorganise our systems, for instance, the document system. We have to produce all relevant documents and information because quality assurance needs all the evidence while we always do our work without producing the evidence. That is our traditional working style. Sometimes we discuss and then do it. We have not written it down.

[QA Committee member, 1204]

Currently, the institute provides all documents. In the past, we did not collect all the evidence we had. From now on, we have to do it.

[QA Committee member, 3104]

The quotations seemed to show the causes of increased workload in Rajabhat Institutes. There seem to be two causes of increased workload. First, quality assurance made members of Rajabhat Institutes provide more documents on quality assurance. This seemed to be a new responsibility for members of Rajabhat Institutes. Second, there was a limitation with the traditional way of working, which did not deal with evidence. This led to members of Rajabhat Institutes having to spend more time on providing the evidence of their work.

One Quality Assurance Committee member commented that the institute had made more progress in following up all projects after quality assurance had been carried out, as he said:

Quality assurance impacts on institute but it is in a positive way. Since quality assurance has been launched, the institute has made more progress in following up all projects.

[QA Committee member, 1404]

Another member of the Quality Assurance Committee indicated that Rajabhat Institutes did not have a large budget to support all relevant tasks of quality assurance. For instance, they had arranged several meetings on quality assurance for members of the institutes which obviously needed the money, as he said:

We realise that we have to implement this policy. The problem is we have not enough money to support it. We have to provide documents. We have to arrange the meetings which obviously need the budget.

[QA Committee member, 2204]

A further member of the Quality Assurance Committee responded that quality assurance would help the institute develop its own quality, as he said:

The impact was positive because quality assurance will help the institute develop its own quality and standard, particularly the outputs of the institute.

[QA Committee member, 5104]

The findings on the impact of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes from interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members were as in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 Frequencies of the impacts of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes reported by Quality Assurance Committee members (Total n=15)

Impact of quality assurance	RI1 n=5	RI2 n=3	RI3 n=1	RI4 n=4	RI5 n=2	Total (f)
1. Improve working systems within the institutes	2	1	1	3	1	8
2. Increasing workload of the institutes	2	1	0	1	0	4
3. More progress in following-up process	1	0	0	0	0	1
4. Not enough money to support quality assurance	0	1	0	0	0	1
5. Quality and standard of the institute are increased	0	0	0	0	1	1

Table 6.2 shows that five impacts of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes were indicated by Quality Assurance Committee members in five Rajabhat Institutes. The data also shows that Quality Assurance Committee members in the same institute describe the impacts of quality assurance in their institutes in different ways, for instance, Quality Assurance Committee members in RI1 indicated that quality assurance made the institute improve working systems, increase workload, and made more progress in following-up process. It also shows that staff in this institute had different views on the impact of quality assurance on their institute. Similarly, Quality Assurance Committee members in RI2 indicated that quality assurance made the institute improve working systems, increase workload of the institute, and there was not enough money to support quality assurance in their institute. It also shows that staff in RI2 had different views on the impact of quality assurance on their institute. The differences on the impacts of quality assurance among different institutes could be explained by the fact that the conditions and progress of quality assurance in each institute (as already

explained in Chapter Five) were different. This may have led to the different responses from the members of each Rajabhat Institute.

The findings from the interviews with the administrators (seven out of eight people) of Rajabhat Institutes showed three impacts of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes. First, four administrators indicated that quality assurance changed working systems and administration systems of the institutes, as shown in their responses below:

We cannot work as we used to do. The traditional way of working needed to be changed. Quality assurance gives us the opportunity to do this.

[Administrator RI 102]

Importantly, the administration system within the institute needed to be improved as well as the working system which is directly involved with planning. We have to be aware of this change. The problem is when we look at our system as a whole, it is found that the system is problematic, planning is problematic because we have never taken it seriously. Regarding the New National Education Act, we have to implement this policy. Everyone has to accept this. Actually, quality assurance is something that we should have done earlier because we lack an audit and scrutiny system. Thus, when we start changing the system some people may not be happy with it.

[Administrator RI 502]

Second, three administrators indicated that quality assurance was important for Rajabhat Institutes. It helped the institutes conduct their outputs that would be satisfied by the customers. One administrator stated:

Quality assurance is important for all Rajabhat Institutes. It makes the institutes have more awareness in conducting their outputs. The institutes have to be aware of customer satisfaction.

[Administrator RI 501]

We always explain to all members of our institute that we are now implementing quality assurance. Therefore, all work that we do we have to deal with it systematically. At the same time we have to be aware of customer satisfaction, that it should come first.

[Administrator RI 101]

Third, one administrator indicated that quality assurance helped Rajabhat Institutes develop all their work both in quantity and quality, he said:

In my point of view our work is in progress and has very
Much improved both in quantity and quality since we have
carried out quality assurance.

[Administrator 201]

The impacts of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes indicated by the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes were summarised as shown in Table 6.3

Table 6.3 Frequencies of the impacts of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes indicated by the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes
(Total n=7)

Impact of quality assurance	RI1 n=1	RI2 n=2	RI3 n=0	RI4 n=2	RI5 n=2	Total (f)
1. Changing working systems of the institutes	0	1	0	1	1	4
2. Helping Rajabhat Institutes produce better quality outputs	1	0	0	1	1	3
3. Helping Rajabhat Institutes develop their work	0	1	0	0	0	1

The findings on the impact of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes from both questionnaires and interviews with different groups of people can be summarised in the following areas:

1) Working systems

This area of impact was indicated by the majority of the questionnaire respondents, Quality Assurance Committee members and the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes. Documents from the Handbook of Quality Assurance for Rajabhat Institutes showed that the institutes had to establish a mechanism of quality assurance. They also had to provide all relevant

documents and evidence in order to confirm that the institutes had already reached the minimum requirements as stated in the handbook. For instance, as far as the curriculum factor is concerned, Rajabhat Institutes had to establish their criteria and standards as it was stated:

Criteria:

establish philosophy and clear aims of their curricula that are corresponded to the mission of the institute.

Standard:

- a) statements show philosophy and aims of the curricula;
- b) aims of curricula that include cognitive domain, skill, and characteristics of students. Evidence: curricula, course-syllabus, handbook for staff, handbook for students.

[ORIC, 1996, p. 38]

Data from questionnaires showed that project evaluation and task analysis were used more (in Table 6.1). This seemed to support the notion that working systems in Rajabhat Institutes were changed.

It seems to be clear that Rajabhat Institutes had to provide all evidence to show that they followed the process of carrying out quality assurance. This includes all relevant tasks that the institutes had never experienced before, for, instance, self-study, audit, and report. In connection with this, the data from interviews showed that in the traditional way of working, members of Rajabhat Institutes did not provide evidence. Since quality assurance had been launched, they had to provide evidence and documents. This is one of the examples that could imply that Rajabhat Institutes had been improving their working systems. In addition, the establishment of Quality Assurance Committees in Rajabhat Institutes in order to be responsible for quality assurance seemed to be one of the strengths of working systems within the institutes.

2) Greater Workload

Since quality assurance had been implemented, Rajabhat Institutes had to arrange a few meetings for teaching staff and administrators of Rajabhat Institutes. They had to set up Quality Assurance Committee at different levels. They had to carry out self-study, self-assessment and publish the

reports. They had to perform an audit within each faculty, etc. All of these relevant tasks that Rajabhat Institutes had to deal with seemed clearly to imply that they had more work to do.

3) Increased spending

Evidence from documents and interviews mentioned earlier showed that Rajabhat Institutes had to produce relevant documents and had to set up a few meetings on quality assurance for members of the institutes. They also sent members of staff to attend a seminar on quality assurance inside and outside the institutes and abroad (see Chapter Five, page 134). In this case, there is no doubt that more money had been spent for this purpose.

4) Improving quality

This impact was indicated by questionnaire respondents, Quality Assurance Committee members and the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes. However, there was not enough evidence from the study to conclude that the quality of Rajabhat Institutes or the quality of the outputs of the institutes had increased during the period when this study was carried out. In addition, it was probably too soon to form such a conclusion because quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes had not been fully implemented. However, it seemed to be accepted that the quality of the institute, and the quality of the outputs of the institutes, would increase if all members of the institutes had already improved their work and completed all the processes of quality assurance.

6.2 Impact of quality assurance on the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes

The responses on the impact of quality assurance on the administrators of Rajabhat Institute from questionnaire completed by teaching staff in five institutes revealed various impacts. These impacts were indicated by thirty-four teaching staff. The majority of questionnaire respondents who commented on the impact of quality assurance on the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes reported that the administrators had to be more

responsible and pay more attention to administering the institutes (f=22). The administrators had to manage the institutes accountably (f=12). They were required to demonstrate more vision, knowledge and understanding on quality assurance, and needed to be a leader on quality assurance (f=7), The administrators were able to develop the institutes easily (f=6) etc. The responses on the impacts of quality assurance on the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes were that the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes had to be more responsible, pay more attention to administering the institutes, and had to manage the institute accountably. This seems to show both: 1) expectations from staff on the administrators particularly in terms of leadership; 2) the capacities of the administrators in administering quality assurance within their institutes. The responses from questionnaires are as shown in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4 Frequencies of the impacts of quality assurance on the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes from questionnaires completed by teaching staff (Total n=34)

Impact of Quality Assurance	RI1 n=10	RI2 n=5	RI3 n=4	RI4 n=7	RI5 n=8	Total (f)
1. Administrators had to be more responsible and pay more attention to administering the institutes to ensure quality	10	1	2	5	4	22
2. Administrators had to administer the institutes accountably	4	1	1	4	2	12
3. Administrators had to have more vision, knowledge, understanding and had to be a leader on quality assurance	1	1	1	2	2	7
4. Administrators were able to develop the institutes easily	2	1	2	0	1	6
5. Administrators had a greater workload	0	0	0	2	2	4
6. Administrators had to be more careful in decision making on educational provision to improve the standard of education	2	0	0	1	1	4
7. Administrators had to encourage all staff to pay more attention to quality assurance and to realise that quality assurance was important	0	0	0	2	2	4
8. Administrators would have more cooperation with their staff to carry out quality assurance	1	1	1	0	0	3

Table 6.4 also shows that teaching staff in the same institute indicated the impacts of quality assurance on the administrators of Rajabhat Institute in different ways. For instance, the majority of teaching staff in RI1 indicated that the administrators had to be more responsible whereas the rest of the teaching staff suggested different impacts. This seemed to show that staff in the same institute had different views on the impact of quality assurance on their administrators. In addition, data from the table seems to show that there were greater impacts of quality assurance on the administrators in RI5 than RI1, RI2, RI3 and RI4 because the numbers of the impacts of quality assurance on the administrators indicated by teaching staff in RI5 was

bigger. Teaching staff in RI5 indicated seven impacts of quality assurance whereas teaching staff in RI1 and RI4 indicated six impacts of quality assurance, teaching staff in RI3 indicated five impacts of quality assurance, and teaching staff in RI2 indicated four impacts of quality assurance on the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes. It is noticeable at least four impacts of quality assurance were indicated by teaching staff in the same institute (RI2).

If we look at the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members, it was found that thirteen (out of twenty) members of the committee responded to the question on the impact of quality assurance on the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes. Among these thirteen members, seven people indicated that quality assurance impacted on the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes in a positive way. It made the administrators work systematically and become aware of the standards and quality of the institute, as two administrators stated:

In general, quality assurance makes a positive impact on the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes. It encourages the administrators to follow the plan of the institutes.

[QA Committee member, 1504]

The administrators of Rajabhat Institutes work more carefully and systematically, for example, they develop the system for documents within the institute. They are more aware of standards and criteria for quality factors.

[QA Committee member, 3104]

Four Quality Assurance Committee members commented that some administrators had not paid much attention to quality assurance although they knew that quality assurance was very useful for the institute. They were not strong leaders for quality assurance, as in these examples:

Quality assurance is useful for the institute and will help the institute improve the quality of educational provision. However, some administrators do not pay as much attention to it as they should.

[QA Committee member, 2204]

The administrators have to be interested in quality assurance and be aware that quality assurance is important and useful for the institute. However, it seems to me that the administrator of the institute is not a strong leader for quality assurance. The faculties are more responsible for quality assurance than the institute.

[QA Committee member, 5204]

Two Quality Assurance Committee members replied that quality assurance made the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes have more work to do. One member stated:

It is not a greater impact but it made the administrators have more work to do. We have to provide more information. We have to plan and develop relevant systems in order to improve our work.

[QA Committee member, 1104]

The findings from the interviews with the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes themselves revealed that all administrators (eight people) agreed that quality assurance helped them to improve working systems within Rajabhat Institutes. One administrator added his view that:

Quality assurance seems to be a good instrument for the administrators to improve the institute. It was very much easier for the administrator to encourage staff to complete their work and explain to them that their work needs to be completed because of quality assurance.

[Administrator RI, 101]

Clearly, quality assurance is a good instrument for the administrators. If we carry out quality assurance, it can help us to develop the systems within the institutes.

[Administrator RI, 502]

The findings from questionnaire and interviews with different groups of people seemed to show that the most important impacts of quality assurance on the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes were 'improved working systems' because this impact of quality assurance was indicated by the majority of different groups of people. Another impact, for instance, the role of leadership was also identified by different groups of people. Another interesting point is the findings from the administrators which stated that quality assurance was 'a good instrument for administrators'. This was similar to some authors' opinion that 'new quality assurance procedures were an instrument for the new managerialism in higher education institutions' (Westerheijden, 1999; Trow 1994, McNay 1997, Westerheijden, 1997 cited in Westerheijden, 1999, p. 245)

It was noticeable that there was a difference between the impact of quality assurance on the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes reported by the administrators themselves and reported by teaching staff. Teaching staff indicated that quality assurance made the administrators have more work to do while the administrators themselves did not feel that quality assurance increased their workload. In addition, there seemed to be expectations from staff that their administrators needed to be strong leaders and more responsible for quality assurance.

6.3 Impact of quality assurance on staff

The responses to the impact of quality assurance on staff in Rajabhat Institutes from questionnaires revealed that teaching staff in the five Rajabhat Institutes indicated various impacts of quality assurance on staff. These responses were from thirty-eight members of teaching staff. The majority of those who responded to the question on the impact of quality assurance believed that quality assurance made staff have to work systematically (f=20). They had to pay more attention to improving their work (f=19). They had more motivation to improve themselves (f=16). The quality of staff would improve, they were more aware and cooperative in developing the institutes, and their workload had increased (f=6), etc. The findings on the impact of quality assurance on staff are as in Table 6.5

Table 6.5 Frequencies of the impacts of quality assurance on staff from the questionnaires completed by teaching staff in five Rajabhat Institutes (Total n=38)

Impact of Quality Assurance	RI1 n=10	RI2 n=9	RI3 n=5	RI4 n=7	RI5 n=7	Total (f)
1. Staff had to work systematically	4	6	2	5	3	20
2. Staff paid more attention to improving their work	10	0	3	3	3	19
3. Staff had more motivation to improve themselves	6	6	0	4	0	16
4. The quality of staff would improve	1	1	0	0	4	6
5. Staff were more aware and cooperative in developing institute	2	0	1	2	1	6
6. Workload for staff had increased (more work, more meetings)	1	2	0	0	3	6
7. Some staff felt worried and not confident doing their work	0	1	3	0	0	4
8. Staff had to prepare for quality assessment	1	0	0	2	0	3
9. Staff had to learn and be trained in order to understand quality assurance	0	1	0	1	0	2
10. Time for teaching preparation decreased	1	0	0	0	0	1

Table 6.5 also showed that teaching staff in the same institutes indicated different impacts of quality assurance, for instance, ten members of the teaching staff in RI1 indicated that quality assurance made staff pay more attention to improving their work while the rest of the staff stated that quality assurance made staff have more motivation to improve themselves (f=6), they have to work systematically (f=4), they are more aware and cooperative in improving the institutes (f=2), etc. Table 6.5 also shows that the biggest numbers of impacts of quality assurance were indicated by teaching staff in RI1 (eight impacts) whereas the smallest number of impacts of quality assurance on staff was from staff in RI3 (four impacts). These responses seemed to show that staff had different views on the impact of quality assurance in their Rajabhat Institutes. The reasons for the differences on the impacts of quality assurance reported by staff in the different institutes could be that each institute had different conditions during the process of implementing quality assurance in their institutes. They had also made different progress on quality assurance as already mentioned in Chapter Five.

The findings from the interview with Quality Assurance Committee members showed that eighteen (out of twenty) members indicated five impacts of quality assurance on staff as shown in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6 Frequencies of the impacts of quality assurance on staff from the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members in five Rajabhat Institutes (Total n=18)

Impact of Quality Assurance	RI1 n=5	RI2 n=4	RI3 n=2	RI4 n=5	RI5 n=2	Total (f)
1. Staff had more work to do	3	2	2	0	1	8
2. Staff had more attention and motivation in doing their work	0	1	0	2	0	3
3. More cooperation from staff	1	1	0	1	0	3
4. Staff had more worry about their work	1	0	0	0	1	2
5. Little impact on staff	0	0	0	2	0	2

Table 6.6 shows that eight Quality Assurance Committee members indicated that quality assurance made staff have more work to do. They also had more attention and more motivation in doing their work (f=3). They were more cooperative in carrying out quality assurance (f=3) and they were more worried about their work (f=2). It was noticeable that two members of the Quality Assurance Committee indicated that quality assurance made little impact on staff because quality assurance in their institute was in the early stages of implementation. This seemed to show that the progress of carrying out quality assurance in each institute was different as already mentioned in Chapter Five (see page 151).

The findings from the interviews with the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes showed that six (out of eight) administrators indicated the impacts of quality assurance on staff. Four people indicated that staff had to accept and learn more about quality assurance. One administrator felt that staff had

more work to do and another administrator believed that staff had to be more responsible and cooperate in doing their work.

The findings on the impact of quality assurance on staff from both questionnaires and interviews with different groups of people can be considered in terms of the following issues.

1) Staff had to work systematically

The finding from questionnaires revealed that staff in Rajabhat Institutes had to work systematically in order to respond to the system of quality assurance in their institute. They had to plan and work more carefully. This was supported by evidence from documents. The Handbook of Quality Assurance for Rajabhat Institutes, Rajabhat Institutes Quality Assurance Reports from the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council and Self-Study Reports from five Rajabhat Institutes showed that staff in Rajabhat Institutes had followed the standard and criteria stated in the Handbook of Quality Assurance. The statements of the Handbook of Quality Assurance for Rajabhat Institutes described all members of staff's work, which included teaching and doing research. In teaching, staff had to produce their course-syllabuses and use more teaching materials in their classes. Student-centred and technology also had also to be applied more in their teaching. They had to evaluate and assess students systematically. At the end of their courses, they had to be assessed by colleagues and students. They also had to be audited by Quality Auditors. If staff had to produce all their work as stated in the Handbook of Quality Assurance, and had to be audited and assessed, it would probably involve the need to plan for their work. They needed to be well prepared and organised. Otherwise, they would be unable to complete their work. As a result, they would not be able to reach the standard and criteria established in the Handbook of Quality Assurance. They would also fail in the audit and assessment processes. It can therefore, be concluded that staff had to work systematically.

2) Staff paid more attention to improving their work

The findings from both questionnaires and interviews showed that staff paid more attention to their work. This could be explained by the fact that in the audit process, staff had to be scrutinized by internal and external auditors. This encouraged staff in Rajabhat Institutes to pay more attention to their work. Otherwise, they would fail the audit process, and would be reported to the Dean of Faculty and the President of Rajabhat Institutes. In addition, staff had to be assessed by their colleagues on the work they had done, and by students on their teaching. This could also be the reason why they paid more attention to their work in order to avoid weakness and failure. The findings also revealed that staff who agreed that quality assurance was useful paid more attention to their work, as one of the Quality Assurance Committee members stated:

Staff pay more attention to their work particularly some who agree that quality assurance is useful for the institute. They also agree with that and they are able to do their work progressively.

[QA Committee member, 4305]

Quality assurance is useful for the institute. Since it has been carried out, staff pay more attention to their work. They seem to have more motivation in their work. They are able to improve the quality of their teaching, for example, they produce course-syllabuses before teaching.

[QA Committee member, 2305]

The Quality Assurance Committee also indicated that quality assurance encouraged staff to pay more attention to their work, as one member said:

Staff feel that quality assurance made them work harder, and have an increased workload. However, quality assurance made everyone pay more attention, more motivation for their work in order to reach the minimum standard.

[QA Committee member, 1505]

The reason why staff had to pay more attention on their work was probably for the same reason mentioned earlier, that during the process of quality audit they had to be scrutinized seriously by both internal and external auditors. If they failed in the audit process, they would be reported to the administrators of the institutes.

Teaching staff also indicated that since quality assurance had been introduced in Rajabhat Institutes, they had more motivation for improving themselves. This was commented upon by sixteen people from the questionnaires. If we consider the reasons why staff felt that they had more motivation, it might be explained as follows. Firstly, it was made clear in the Handbook of Quality Assurance that staff had to do their work based on the standard and criteria stated in the Handbook of Quality Assurance for Rajabhat Institutes. Missing only one of those standards and criteria meant that some improvement needed to be made. Therefore, self-study was used so that members of staff were able to examine themselves in terms of whether they had completed their work or not. With this strategy, staff might be encouraged to finish their work and it might lead them to feel that they had more motivation.

3) Staff had a greater workload

Six respondents to the questionnaires also indicated that workload for staff had increased. Similarly, the majority of Quality Assurance Committee members stated that quality assurance made staff have a greater workload. This included meetings and training courses on quality assurance. The findings from questionnaires and the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee member was similar to the findings from the interviews with the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes, which revealed that staff had more work to do since quality assurance had been carried out. Here are the responses from Quality Assurance Committee members:

All staff have had an increased workload since we carried out Quality assurance in Rajabhat Institute. They have to provide relevant documents and information.

[QA Committee member, 3105]

Since we have launched quality assurance, some staff are against it because they feel that their workloads have increased, for example, they have to prepare a course-syllabus.

[QA Committee member, 1105]

Some staff felt that their workload had increased. Quality assurance makes them work hard. They have to follow the standards and criteria stated in the Handbook of Quality Assurance.

[QA Committee member, 1505]

It may be argued that the teaching hours of staff have not increased. It was noticeable that most of the teaching tasks, for instance, teaching preparation, providing course-syllabuses, teaching assessment and evaluation were staff's routine work. Without quality assurance, staff still had to do this work because it was their responsibility. In connection with this, one Quality Assurance Committee member had the view that although staff felt that their workload had increased, this was not because of quality assurance. As he explained:

Since quality assurance has been carried out in our institute, staff feel that they have more work to do. Actually, they have high teaching hours. They are now providing relevant documents which they had never done before.

[QA Committee member, 1105]

In terms of staff's routine work, it seems that their workload had not increased except for staff who had not completed their work, they needed to finish it before the audit process. If they had never prepared a course-syllabus, they had to do so. It was possible that staff in this group felt that their workload had increased. It was also possible that this prejudiced them against quality assurance, as the implementation of quality assurance meant that they needed to provide evidence that their work was complete. In contrast, staff who were already completing their routine work and providing evidence that they had done so would not experience an increased workload. In addition, with the public concern about the quality and standard of higher education, members of staff in Rajabhat Institutes should accept the fact that they have to be more responsible and accountable for their work.

Apart from the routine work, it is interesting to find out about new work which staff had to do because of quality assurance. The findings showed that relevant new tasks which staff had to do or spend their time on since quality assurance had been introduced were as follows:

a) Attending meetings on quality assurance

Documents showed that the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council and Rajabhat Institutes had set up a few meetings on quality assurance for staff. In some institutes, the meetings were set up at institute level while some of

them arranged the meetings for staff at the institute and faculty levels. Sometimes staff attended a seminar on quality assurance outside the institute. This means staff had to spend their time at meetings instead of doing their routine work.

b) Building up knowledge and understanding of quality assurance

The findings from interviews revealed that staff had to build up their knowledge and understanding of quality assurance. As it was a new policy for Rajabhat Institutes, therefore, members of Rajabhat Institutes needed to understand quality assurance before it was implemented. One Quality Assurance Committee member stated:

We are encouraged to understand quality assurance. We feel that it is not easy to build up the understanding of quality assurance with all staff.

[QA Committee member, 2205]

Moreover, it seemed to be time consuming to understand quality assurance, as one person stated:

We have never carried out this work and have never known its system before. It really takes time to understand and get going.

[QA Committee member, 1508]

c) Providing all relevant documents

The statement in the Handbook of Quality Assurance was clear that staff had to provide evidence of their work. Since quality assurance was launched, staff have had to provide relevant documents to show that they had done their work. Course-syllabus was one example. It may be argued that all staff should have course-syllabuses for their courses before they teach students. However, before quality assurance was carried out, there was no evidence to show that all staff had prepared a course-syllabus before teaching a course.

It seemed to be clear that there were some work which staff had to do in order to respond to the process of carrying out quality assurance. This can be

concluded that staff had more work to do after quality assurance was implemented in Rajabhat Institutes.

4) Staff had more cooperation

The findings from both questionnaires and interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members as well as the interview with the administrator of Rajabhat Institutes showed that staff had to cooperate more in doing their work. Further detail given by one Quality Assurance Committee member was that when quality assurance was launched in Rajabhat Institutes, staff did not cooperate. Later, they were more cooperative, as this Quality Assurance Committee member stated:

There was little cooperation from staff at the beginning of carrying out quality assurance. Later on, everyone realised that it was useful for the institute. Therefore, they had more cooperation.

[QA Committee member, 1405]

In terms of cooperation from staff, it was made clear in Chapter Two that quality assurance was involved with everyone in the organisation. Carrying out quality assurance needed cooperation from everyone within the organisation. Rajabhat Institute was no exception. Thus, there was no doubt that quality assurance needed cooperation from all members of the institute, including teaching staff.

5) Staff had more worry about their work

The findings from questionnaires revealed that quality assurance made staff worry and not feel confident in doing their work. This was also found from the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members. The findings from interviews revealed that quality assurance made staff more worried about their work. Here are some of the responses from the interviewees:

Staff feel that quality assurance makes them work harder, and have an increased workload... they must be able to reach the minimum standard on their work.

[QA Committee member, 1505]

And:

Quality assurance makes staff feel that they have been audited very seriously in teaching and learning. They have to work carefully in order to pass the audit processes.

[QA Committee member, 5305]

It seems to be clear that during the period when quality assurance was implemented in Rajabhat Institutes, staff had to provide relevant documents ready for the audit. This means they have more work to finish, apart from their teaching. Documents also showed that Rajabhat Institutes had been carrying out quality audit. At this stage, it focused on staff, and all their work. All these circumstances may put pressure on staff and lead them to feel worried, and not feel confident in doing their work, particularly in the audit process. Failure in this process meant that their work was lower than the minimum standard, and this would have a lot of impact on staff, for example their promotion. Someone who failed would not have a good representation, and may have less opportunity for promotion. In addition, staff had to spend more time improving their work in order to reach the minimum standard.

6) Staff had less time to prepare their teaching

If staff had to spend their time working on quality assurance, especially providing documents, attending the meetings on quality assurance, it was possible that they had less time to prepare their teaching. It was also possible that some staff might be in charge of quality assurance. They were probably a member of Quality Assurance Committee at programme, faculty, or institute level. If this assumption was true, there was no doubt that staff would not have much time for their teaching preparation.

6.4 Impact of quality assurance on students

The findings from questionnaires revealed several impacts of quality assurance on students as shown in Table 6.7. These impacts were identified by forty-five members of teaching staff. The highest frequency of the impact was the quality of students would be improved (f=25). Following this,

students would earn some benefits from teaching and learning process (f=23). Students had to pay more attention to their studies, (f=15), they would be more accepted by employers (f=11), they were assessed more by their teachers (f=6). Teaching staff also considered that it was probably too early to recognise the benefits of quality assurance on student because quality assurance had not been completely implemented. In the long term, the impact of quality assurance on students would be positive. The findings on the impacts of quality assurance on students are as shown in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7 Frequencies of the impacts of Quality Assurance on students from questionnaires completed by teaching staff in five Rajabhat Institutes (Total n=45)

Impact of Quality Assurance	RI1 n=10	RI2 n=8	RI3 n=5	RI4 n=11	RI5 n=11	Total (f)
1. Quality of students would be improved if quality assurance was carried out successfully	6	4	2	3	10	25
2. Students would earn benefits from educational provision, from teaching and learning process	8	5	3	5	2	23
3. Students had to pay more attention to their studies	4	2	2	4	3	15
4. Students would be more accepted by employers	4	3	1	3	0	11
5. Students were assessed more by their teachers and institutes	0	2	1	2	1	6
6. In the long term, the impact of quality assurance on students would be positive	3	2	0	3	1	9

Table 6.7 also shows that the majority of teaching staff in four Rajabhat Institutes (RI1, RI2, RI3, RI4) indicated that students would earn benefits from quality assurance and the majority of teaching staff in RI5 indicated that quality of students would be improved. This seems to show the differences in staff's perceptions on the impacts of quality assurance on students. If we consider the consistency of the responses within the same institute, it was found that teaching staff in the same institute described the impacts of quality assurance on students in different ways. For instance, the majority of teaching staff in RI1 believed that students would earn benefits from quality assurance while the rest of them felt that the quality of students would improve, students had to pay more attention to their study, they would be more accepted by employers. Teaching staff in RI2 and RI4 indicated six impacts of quality assurance on students whereas teaching staff in RI1, RI3 and RI5 indicated five impacts of quality assurance.

Similarly, the findings from interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members showed various impacts of quality assurance on students as follows:

- 1) Students were more involved and benefited from teaching and learning processes.

This impact was indicated by five Quality Assurance Committee members as one person stated:

Quality assurance is very useful for students because they would be more involved in teaching and learning. They were told more about their learning, what they need to do in order to be successful in their courses. They would also be told about these benefits. If teaching staff do not follow their course-syllabus or if they used their time inappropriately, students are able to question the quality of their teaching and could give feedback about their teaching at the end of their course.

[QA Committee member, 1406]

2. Students were able to give feedback about teaching

Quality Assurance Committee members also pointed out that students would be able to give feedback about teaching. This would help staff to improve their teaching, as one person said:

The impact of quality assurance on students is positive because at present Rajabhat Institutes encourage students to give feedback to their teachers after the end of each semester by filling in the questionnaire which is provided by the Academic Committee. The result of doing this will help staff to improve their teaching.

[QA Committee member, 2306]

3. Students were more satisfied with teaching and learning process

One member of a Quality Assurance Committee responded that students would be more satisfied with teaching and learning since quality assurance had been carried out in Rajabhat Institutes. As he said:

I think students are more satisfied in their teaching and learning, after quality assurance has been carried out in our institute. They might not realise that they are more satisfied with it.

[QA Committee member, 1206]

Two Quality Assurance Committee members indicated that the promotion of quality assurance to students was not widespread. Students did not have enough knowledge of quality assurance in their institute. As one person said:

Students know that our institute is carrying out quality assurance but they do not understand much about it. And also, it is difficult to make them really understand about quality assurance.

[QA Committee member, 1206]

Another person added:

We promote quality assurance to staff and administrators. However, we have not promoted it to all students yet.

[QA Committee member, 4206]

This was similar to the findings from students' interviews, in which most of the students indicated that they did not understand quality assurance.

However, they had been told that Rajabhat Institutes had been carrying out quality assurance which they believed was useful for Rajabhat Institutes and students.

The respondents on the impacts of quality assurance on students from the interviews with the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes, in which six administrators responded to this question, revealed that the administrators were all agreed that quality assurance was useful for students. Students were more involved in teaching and learning processes. They earned more benefits from teaching and learning. They were more involved in a better teaching and learning process, and they were able to give feedback on teaching to their teachers.

The findings from interviews with students showed that seventeen students were agreed that quality assurance was useful for the students. It impacted on students in a positive way, for instance, they were involved more in their teaching and learning. They had more tasks to do during their course. They had more opportunities to learn and practise more such as in their English and computer courses. Students also considered that graduates from Rajabhat Institutes would have more quality and more accepted by employers. Here are examples of their responses.

I know that the institute is carrying out quality assurance. In my opinion it is very useful for students because it will help us improve our quality. Then we will be more accepted by employers.

[Student, RI1 01]

I think quality assurance is useful. I believe that the quality of student will improve. Teaching and learning processes are improved. We are more involved in teaching and learning processes. We can learn and practise more in both computer and English.

[Student, RI1 04]

Quality assurance is very useful for students because it make us have more practice to do, for example, portfolios which we are happy to do. We are happy with our study here. Teaching and learning processes are changed and they are getting better.

[Student, RI5 01]

The findings from questionnaires completed by teaching staff and interviews with different groups of people, including students themselves, revealed a few impacts of quality assurance on students. The impacts of quality assurance for students seem to be positive impacts. The most important impacts suggested by the majority of interviewees were, for instance, students would earn more benefit from teaching and learning processes, they were more satisfied with their learning within the institutes, and they would be more accepted by employers. Tribus (1994) indicated that quality in education is what makes learning a pleasure and joy. Although there is no evidence to show the basis of these views, it could be assumed that the impact of quality assurance on students is involved in the quality of educational provision and this is in positive way because these views were indicated by different groups of people from different institutes.

6.5 Impact of quality assurance on teaching and learning processes

The responses from the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members showed that ten (out of twenty) people reported the impacts of quality assurance on teaching and learning processes in Rajabhat Institutes. The main impacts of quality assurance on teaching and learning processes identified by the Quality Assurance Committee member was teaching and learning processes had improved, as shown below.

Eight people considered that the teaching and learning processes in Rajabhat Institutes had improved since quality assurance had been launched. For instance, staff had to improve their teaching by producing a course-syllabus, and using more teaching materials and technology. They pay more attention to students, and are more concerned with academic work. As these Quality Assurance Committee members said:

The teaching and learning process in our institute has changed
And improved after quality assurance was launched. Staff have
had to prepare and produce their course syllabus, and have
improved their teaching.

[QA Committee member, 1206]

Since quality assurance was launched in our institute, our academic system is improved. Staff are more concerned with academic work. As a result, the teaching and learning process under the administration of academic system has improved as well.

[QA Committee member, 3306]

Another committee member added:

In our faculty, we are very concerned about our academic work in order to improve our teaching and learning quality.

[QA Committee member, 5206]

Two people responded that teachers paid more attention to their students, and students would be encouraged to give feedback to teaching staff in order to improve teaching and learning processes. As he said:

In our institute, we encourage our students to evaluate their teachers every semester in order to improve our teaching. Moreover, we allow students to send an email to the President of our institute if they have any comments on teaching and learning processes.

[QA Committee member, 3106]

The findings on the impacts of quality assurance on the teaching and learning process from the interview with Quality Assurance Committee members in five Rajabhat Institutes are summarised in Table 6.8.

Table 6.8 Frequencies of the impact of quality assurance on teaching and learning process reported by Quality Assurance Committee members in five Rajabhat Institutes (Total n=8)

Impact of Quality Assurance	RI1 n=4	RI2 n=1	RI3 n=2	RI4 n=1	RI5 n=2	Total (f)
1. Teaching and learning processes in Rajabhat Institutes were improved	3	1	1	1	2	8
2. Feedback from students was used	0	0	1	0	0	1
3. Teachers paid more attention to their students	1	0	0	0	0	1

Similarly, the findings from questionnaires completed by teaching staff in the five Rajabhat Institutes revealed a few impacts of quality assurance on teaching and learning processes. The most important impact was that teaching and learning processes were developed (f=41). New technology and teaching methods were used (f=17), the quality of teaching and learning increased (f=5), and teaching and learning was easier to examine (f=4). The findings from questionnaires are as shown in Table 6.9.

Table 6.9 Frequencies of the impacts of quality assurance on teaching and learning process from questionnaires completed by teaching staff (Total n=43)

Impact of Quality Assurance	RI1 n=14	RI2 n=10	RI3 n=4	RI4 n=7	RI5 n=8	Total (f)
1. Teaching and learning processes were improved	14	10	2	7	8	41
2. New technology and teaching methods were used more	7	0	1	7	2	17
3. The quality of teaching and learning increased	2	2	1	0	0	5
4. Teaching and learning was easier to examine	1	1	0	0	2	4

Table 6.9 shows that the majority of teaching staff in four institutes (RI1, RI2, RI4, and RI5) indicated that quality assurance makes teaching and learning processes in their institutes improve. It also shows that teaching staff in the same institute had different views on the impacts of quality assurance on the teaching and learning process in their institute. For instance, the majority of teaching staff in RI1 indicated that teaching and learning processes had improved while the rest of teaching staff in RI1 identified different impacts of quality assurance such as new technology and teaching methods being used more, the quality of teaching and learning having increased, and teaching and learning being easier to examine.

The findings from interviews with the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes showed that six (out of eight) administrators indicated an impact of quality assurance on teaching and learning processes. Six administrators agreed that quality assurance made an impact on teaching and learning processes within the institutes. It helped the institute improve the teaching and learning process. Students had more opportunities to improve their learning. One administrator stated that:

The main target of quality assurance are our students and improving quality both in our students and the teaching and learning process provided for students. Obviously, we can not deny this impact of quality assurance. Students and teachers both have to accept this change. In my opinion all the activities we have provided are useful for students. They will earn more benefits from their learning.

[Administrator RI 502]

The findings on the impact of quality assurance on teaching and learning processes from both questionnaire and interviews with different groups of people seemed to show that teaching and learning processes within Rajabhat Institute had developed and improved since quality assurance had been implemented.

6.6 Impact of quality assurance on employers

The findings from questionnaires showed a few impacts of quality assurance on employers. The most important impact was that employers would believe in the quality of the products from Rajabhat Institutes. Secondly, the products from Rajabhat Institutes would be in more demand. Third, the opportunity to select the employees was increased. Fourth, there would be more competition in the job market. Fifth, employers might have to increase the wages. The impacts of quality assurance from the questionnaires completed by teaching staff in the five Rajabhat Institutes are summarised in Table 6.10

Table 6.10 Frequencies of the impacts of quality assurance on employers from questionnaires completed by teaching staff (Total n=31)

Impact of Quality Assurance	RI1 n=7	RI2 n=9	RI3 n=5	RI4 n=5	RI5 n=5	Total (f)
1. Employers would believe that the quality of graduates from Rajabhat Institutes was improved	6	8	5	4	4	27
2. Graduates from Rajabhat Institute would be in more demand	6	5	1	2	5	19
3. The opportunity for employers to select their employees was increased	3	1	0	2	1	7
4. There was more competition in job market	0	0	0	2	0	2
5. The employers had to increase wages	0	0	0	1	0	1

Table 6.10 shows that the highest frequency of the impact of quality assurance on employers was that quality assurance would make employers believe in the quality of graduates from Rajabhat Institutes (f=27). This was indicated by the majority of teaching staff in five institutes. Table 6.10 also shows that teaching staff in the same institute describe the impacts of quality assurance on employers in different ways. For instance, teaching staff in RI2 felt that quality assurance would make employers believe in the quality of graduates from Rajabhat Institutes, graduates from Rajabhat Institutes would be more in demand, and the opportunity for the employers to select employees was increased.

The findings from interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members in five Rajabhat Institutes showed two impacts of quality assurance on the employers as follows:

The majority of respondents (twelve people) responded that the employers would benefit from quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes because the graduates from Rajabhat Institutes would be qualified and meet the employer requirements. The employers would be able to employ more qualified graduates from Rajabhat Institutes. Also, employers would be able to give feedback about graduates from Rajabhat Institutes. Here are examples from interviews:

Employers would have benefited from us because we produced more quality of graduates for them. This means our graduates would meet their requirements and make them more satisfied with the products from Rajabhat Institutes.

[QA Committee member, 1407]

Of course, employers will benefit from us because they will be able to employ employees as they require for their jobs.

[QA Committee member, 2307]

Employers would be able to give feedback about the graduates from Rajabhat Institutes when they employ our graduates. They also would be able to comment and give their opinion on our graduates. They could let us know the quality of our graduates and let us know what knowledge and skills they need us to teach and train our students before they graduate from our institute.

[QA Committee member, 4107]

Eight Quality Assurance Committee members reported that employers had little perception of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. They did not understand quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The responses also revealed that there was a limitation in the information about quality assurance for employers. As two members explained:

We carry out quality assurance within our institute. Although we try to promote quality assurance to the public and customers, they do not understand it.

[QA Committee member, 1107]

Employers may have heard about quality assurance in our institute from the pamphlet, or our webpage which does not have enough information. The information on quality assurance provided for employers is still limited. We have never made them understand it clearly. If we ask them about quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes, I strongly believe that they will have no idea about it. They will not understand quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

[QA Committee member, 1207]

The findings on the impacts of quality assurance on employers from the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members in five Rajabhat Institutes are summarised in Table 6.11

Table 6.11 Frequencies of the impacts of quality assurance on employers reported by Quality Assurance Committee members in five Rajabhat Institutes (total n=12)

Impact of Quality Assurance	RI1 n=3	RI2 n=3	RI3 n=2	RI4 n=4	RI5 n=3	Total (f)
1. Employers will have benefit from quality assurance	2	2	2	4	2	12
2. Little impact because employers did not know much about quality assurance	3	1	1	1	1	8

The findings from interviews with students showed that students indicated that employers would earn benefits from quality assurance because the quality of graduates from Rajabhat Institutes would be improved. As a result, employers would have a better quality of graduates working for them. The students also indicated that employers might have to pay a higher wage for their employees.

The finding from the interviews with employers showed that employers believe that quality of graduates from Rajabhat Institutes would be improved because quality assurance had criteria and standards to control the quality of educational provision. Therefore, employers would earn benefits from quality assurance from Rajabhat Institutes.

Evidence from questionnaires and interviews seemed to show that employers would have benefit from quality assurance if Rajabhat Institutes had improved the quality of their students. In addition, graduates from Rajabhat Institutes would be more in demanded in job markets.

The findings from both interviews with different groups of people and questionnaires seem to show various impacts of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes, members of Rajabhat Institutes particularly on members of staff. This seems to support Brennan's point of view (Brennan, 1997:8) that 'when so much is changing, the impact of a single change becomes almost impossible to discern. Impact can be upon the structure and policies of whole institutions, on their organisational form and administrative procedures, on the incentive and constraints which are placed on the whole of academic staff'.

6.7 Summary

This chapter has explained the impact of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes itself, the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes, staff, teaching and learning processes and students of Rajabhat Institutes during the period of quality assurance had been carried out in Rajabhat Institutes. The findings revealed that different groups of people identified various impacts of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes, and the members of Rajabhat Institutes as well as the employers of graduates of Rajabhat Institutes. The impacts of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes were, for instance, improves working systems within the institutes, increase the workload of staff, increase spending, and improve the quality of teaching and learning processes. The impact of quality assurance on the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes, for instance, is that administrators had to be more responsible for the institutes, they had to administer the institutes accountably, they had to be more aware of the standards and quality of the institutes. The impacts of quality assurance on staff were, for instance, staff had to work systematically, staff paid more attention to improving their work, staff had more to do, staff had to cooperate more, staff worried more about their work, staff had less time to prepare their teaching. Impacts of quality assurance on students were, for example, students were more involved in teaching and learning processes, they would benefit from teaching and learning processes, they were able to give feedback on teaching to their teachers, and they were more satisfied with teaching and learning processes in the institutes. The impacts of quality assurance on teaching and learning processes were teaching and learning

processes in Rajabhat Institutes had improved since quality assurance had been implemented, feedback from students were used, and teachers paid more attention to their students. Impacts of quality assurance on employers of graduates from Rajabhat Institutes were, for instance, in the long term employers would benefit from quality assurance if quality and standards of educational provision in Rajabhat Institutes improved.

The next chapter presents the obstacles to quality assurance and the ways to enhance quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

Chapter Seven

Obstacles to Quality Assurance And Quality Assurance Enhancement

The findings presented in this chapter aim to answer the second main research question of the study: how can the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes be enhanced? The answers to this research question were derived from perceptions of people from different groups. Sources of data were: 1) questionnaires completed by teaching staff in five Rajabhat Institutes; 2) the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members; 3) the interviews with the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes; and 4) the interviews with the administrators in the ministries.

The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part presents three aspects: 1) obstacles to quality assurance; 2) the ways Rajabhat Institutes have overcome the obstacles to quality assurance; and 3) people who were responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. These three aspects are illustrated through examples drawn from the interviews and questionnaires. The second part presents the ways to enhance the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. It consists of two main aspects: the ways to enhance the operation of quality assurance and the people who should be involved in enhancing the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. These aspects are also illustrated through examples drawn from questionnaires and interviews with different groups of people. The third part of the chapter presents comments and opinions of the teaching staff on quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

7.1 Obstacles to quality assurance

The obstacles to quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes were considered as any difficulties that occurred during the period when quality assurance was implemented in Rajabaht Institutes.

7.1.1 Difficulties in carrying out quality assurance

The findings of the study revealed that various difficulties occurred during the period when quality assurance was implemented in Rajabhat Institutes.

The evidence was found, for instance, when teaching staff in five Rajabhat Institutes were asked about the difficulties in carrying out quality assurance in their institutes. They indicated various difficulties that occurred during the period when quality assurance was implemented in their institutes. The significant difficulties in carrying out quality assurance found in the five Rajabhat Institutes were, for instance, a lack of cooperation from staff, a lack of knowledge and understanding on quality assurance, a lack of appropriate systems/models, a lack of intention to quality assurance from the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes, and an unclear vision and mission statement on quality assurance. The findings from the questionnaires were as shown in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Frequencies of the difficulties in carrying out quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes from questionnaires completed by teaching staff
(This question allows the respondents answer more than one answer)

Difficulties in Carrying out Quality Assurance	RI1 n=20	RI2 n=20	RI3 n=11	RI4 n=20	RI5 n=20	Total (f)
1. Lack of cooperation from staff	10	10	8	17	15	60
2. Lack of knowledge and understanding	10	6	7	17	17	57
3. Lack of appropriate system/model	9	10	8	15	11	53
4. Lack of intention to quality assurance from administrators	3	5	2	13	18	41
5. Unclear vision and mission statement	2	8	2	12	8	32
6. Lack of intention of quality assurance from staff	4	1	0	0	1	6
7. Lack of promotion of quality assurance	0	1	0	0	1	2

Table 7.1 also shows that teaching staff in the same institute indicated various difficulties in carrying out quality assurance in their institutes. For instance, the majority of teaching staff in RI1 indicated that there was a lack

of cooperation from staff and a lack of knowledge and understanding on quality assurance while the rest of the teaching staff in RI1 identified different difficulties, such as a lack of an appropriate system/model, a lack of intention to quality assurance from the administrators, unclear vision and mission statement, a lack of intention to quality assurance from members of staff and a lack of promotion of quality assurance.

Data in Table 7.1 seems to show that Rajabhat Institutes experienced some difficulties in trying to implement quality assurance. The data also shows that in none of the Rajabhat Institutes did the respondents indicate only one single difficulty.

Similarly, data from interviews revealed various difficulties in carrying out quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

The findings from the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members in the five Rajabhat Institute revealed various difficulties in carrying out quality assurance as follows:

1) A lack of knowledge and understanding on quality assurance

Lack of knowledge and understanding on quality assurance was commented on the majority of Quality Assurance Committee members in the five Rajabhat Institutes (fifteen out of twenty people). Typical responses from the members of Quality Assurance Committees were for examples:

We have never carried out this work. It really takes time to understand and start it.

[QA Committee member, 1508]

People who were responsible for quality assurance lacked knowledge of quality assurance. They do not even know how to commence. Whilst, the leader does not understand quality assurance very well and he is unable to initiate it.

[QA Committee member, 4208]

2) A lack of an appropriate system

Eight Quality Assurance Committee members responded that Rajabhat Institutes lacked an appropriate system and working procedure. As one member said:

There is a shortcoming in working procedure of quality assurance for the institute. The administrators do not make it clear for us. It seems that we just keep to the routine work and wait for an audit.

[QA Committee member, 5108]

3) Lack of readiness

Seven members of Quality Assurance Committees responded that their institutes were not ready to carry out quality assurance because they had never worked at this system. In addition, the institutes were short of money, staff, and teaching and learning facilities. For example:

The main problem is our readiness. We have never worked with this system before.

[QA Committee member, 1508]

Another member added:

Being short of staff, budget allocation, and learning facilities is the main problem in carrying out quality assurance in our institute.

[QA Committee member, 5408]

4) Workload of staff was too high

Five Quality Assurance Committee members responded that the workload of staff was too high to carry out quality assurance. As one member stated:

We have attended a seminar on quality assurance and we know that quality assurance is important for the institute. However, we still have a high work load and are unable to finish all our work. If we have assistants, it will be better.

[QA Committee member, 3208]

5) A lack of cooperation from staff

Five Quality Assurance Committee members responded that there was a lack of cooperation from staff. For example one said:

The problem is how to encourage people to be more cooperative in carrying out quality assurance because now we are unable to compel anybody.

[QA Committee member, 5108]

The lack of cooperation from staff might be explained by the fact that staff had a negative perception and attitude to quality assurance as one Quality Assurance Committee member stated:

Some staff in different departments in our institute have a negative attitude on quality assurance. They do not accept quality assurance. You can imagine if there are thirty departments in our institute and two of them do not accept this task. How can we carry it out successfully? We all need to do it together.

[QA Committee member, 1308]

6) Criteria and standards of quality assurance were unstable

Two members of Quality Assurance Committees indicated that the criteria and standard of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes were unstable. One member said:

We have a problem in determining our criteria, standards, and instruments for quality assurance. They are unstable at the moment.

[QA Committee member, 1408]

Another member added:

I am not sure what our standards and criteria are. As you know, these standards and criteria are still unstable. They might be changed again.

[QA Committee member, 1208]

7) Lack of strong leadership

One Quality Assurance Committee member responded that the administrator should have a clear vision and mission on quality assurance. He stated:

The visions and mission on quality assurance from the administrator of the institute should be clear before we have carried it out.

[QA Committee member, 2308]

A summary of the responses from interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members in the five Rajabhat Institutes is in Table 7.2

Table 7.2 Frequencies of the difficulties in carrying out quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes reported by Quality Assurance Committee members in five Rajabhat Institutes (Total n=20)

Difficulties in Carrying out Quality Assurance	RI1 n=5	RI2 n=3	RI3 n=3	RI4 n=5	RI5 n=4	Total (f)
1. Lack of knowledge and understanding on quality assurance	3	5	2	3	2	15
2. Lack of an appropriate system	1	2	2	1	2	8
3. Not ready to carry out quality assurance	2	1	2	2	0	7
4. Workload of staff was too high	0	0	2	2	1	5
5. Lack of cooperation from staff	2	1	0	1	1	5
6. Criteria and standard of quality assurance were unstable	2	0	0	0	0	2
7. Lack of strong leadership	0	1	0	0	0	1

Table 7.2 also shows that Quality Assurance Committee members in the same institute indicated various difficulties in carrying out quality assurance. This was similar to the findings from questionnaires (as shown in Table 7.1) which were that teaching staff in the same institute reported varied difficulties during the process of implementation of quality assurance.

The findings from the interviews with the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes showed that seven (out of eight) administrators of Rajabhat Institutes indicated two difficulties during the period when quality assurance was carried out in Rajbhat Institutes. First, six administrators felt that there

was a lack of understanding of quality assurance among members of the institute's staff, and the administrators. The process of building up understanding of quality assurance was not totally successful. Typical views were:

I think the only main problem is staff do not try to understand quality assurance. They do not try to understand that we have to implement it. Then, they try not to pay much attention to it.

[Administrator of RI 101]

The main problem was the understanding from administrators of the institute. If they did not understand quality assurance clearly, it would be difficult to work it out.

[Administrator of RI 502]

Administrators also pointed out that quality assurance was a new feature for Rajabhat Institutes. They had never worked with this system and they found that it was not easy to implement, as one administrator stated:

Quality assurance is a new issue and we have never worked with this system. I try to make our members understand that quality assurance is useful for the institute. Once they have carried it out, they will get used to. In addition, quality assurance does not increase their work. By contrast, it help them to do their work easily and systematically.

[Administrator of RI 102]

Second, one administrator urged that Rajabhat Institutes needed a larger budget to support this task.

According to the evidence from the questionnaires completed by teaching staff as well as the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members and the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes, it is clear that various difficulties occurred during the period when quality assurance was implemented in Rajabhat Institutes. These difficulties can be summarised as follows:

- 1) A lack of cooperation from staff;
- 2) A lack of knowledge and understanding on quality assurance;
- 3) A lack of an appropriate system or model of quality assurance;
- 4) A lack of working procedures;
- 5) A lack of readiness in Rajabhat Institutes;

- 6) A lack of intention from the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes;
- 7) A lack of clear vision and mission on quality assurance;
- 8) Workload of staff was too high;
- 9) A lack of intention to quality assurance from staff;
- 10) Criteria and standards of quality assurance were unstable;
- 11) A lack of strong leadership on quality assurance;
- 12) A lack of budget to support quality assurance.

Among the difficulties listed above, lack of knowledge and understanding on quality assurance, lack cooperation from staff, and lack of appropriate system are the most significant difficulties in carrying out quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes because they were indicated by the majority of questionnaire' respondents and interviewees.

There are some similarities in the findings on the difficulties in carrying out quality assurance in higher education institutions from this study and previous studies as outlined below:

First, lack of knowledge and understanding on quality assurance among members of Rajabhat Institutes seemed to be the most significant difficulty in carrying out quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand. This difficulty was indicated by the majority of the interviewees both from Quality Assurance Committee members and the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes. The reason behind this difficulty was the poor communication on quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. This is in the line with the finding of Nilsson and Walhen (2000), who investigated the quality assurance strategy in the Swedish higher education institutions, and found that shortcomings in communication on quality assurance was one of the obstacles to quality assurance. In addition, the findings from Nilsson and Walhen's study showed that there was a lack of transparency, the goals were not known in the organisations, the importance of quality assurance and enhancement work had not been sufficiently clarified.

Second, a lack of cooperation from staff was another important difficulty that was found in this study. This difficulty was also found in Nilsson and Walhen's study.

Third, one finding from this study was that staff workloads were one of the obstacles to carrying out quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. Although there was no evidence from the study to support the claim that teaching hours of staff had increased, there was more work for staff to do during the process of implementing quality assurance. This was explained and discussed in Chapter Six (see page 163-164). Increasing workload was also found in Moreland and Clark's study which concluded that some staff found themselves having to do much more work (Moreland and Clark, 1998).

Fourth, the findings from this study showed that leadership is one of the important factors that affected quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. Strong leadership was required in the process of implementing quality assurance. This was also a finding of Kanji, Tambi, and Wallace's (1999) comparative study of quality assurance in higher education in the USA and Malaysia.

7.1.2 The ways to overcome the obstacles to quality assurance

The ways in which Rajabhat Institutes overcome the obstacles to quality assurance as reported in questionnaires and interviews are presented in the following sections.

Respondents indicated that various different measures were used to overcome such obstacles.

The questionnaires from forty members of teaching staff revealed various alternative ways that Rajabhat Institutes had overcome the obstacles to quality assurance in their institutes. For instance, they set up or provided meetings on quality assurance for staff, encouraged staff to carry out quality assurance, sent staff to attend training courses on quality assurance, and increased the promotion of quality assurance. The ways of overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance are given in Table 7.3

Table 7.3 Frequencies of the ways of overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes from questionnaires
(Total n=40)

Ways to Overcome the Obstacles to Quality Assurance	RI1 n=12	RI2 n=3	RI3 n=8	RI4 n=10	RI5 n=7	Total (f)
1. Set up meetings or provided training courses on quality assurance for staff	11	1	7	10	5	34
2. Encouraged staff to carry out quality assurance	3	2	0	0	3	8
3. Sent staff to attend training courses on quality assurance	1	0	1	0	0	2
4. Increased promotion of quality assurance to all staff	0	1	0	1	0	2

Table 7.3 also shows that teaching staff in the same institute indicated different ways in which the Rajabhat Institutes overcame the obstacle to quality assurance. For instance, the majority of teaching staff in RI1 who responded to the question on the ways to overcome the obstacles to quality assurance indicated that their institute had set up meetings or provided training course on quality assurance for staff where the rest of the teaching staff in RI1 indicated that their institute encouraged all officers and staff to carry out quality assurance, and sent staff to attend training courses. Similarly, the majority of teaching staff in RI3, RI4 and RI5 who responded to this question indicated that their institute set up meetings or provided training courses on quality assurance while the rest of them indicated that their institute sent staff to attend training courses on quality assurance and encouraged staff to carry out quality assurance. Teaching staff in RI1 and RI2 indicated that their institute used three different ways to overcome the obstacles to quality assurance while teaching staff in RI3, RI4 and RI5 indicated that two different ways were used in their institutes in order to overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance.

The findings from the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members showed that the members of these committees indicated that their institutes had overcome the obstacles to quality assurance by setting up meetings on quality assurance for members of Rajabhat Institutes.

a) Setting up meetings

Set up meetings on quality assurance was commented on six Quality Assurance Committee members. Here are some of their responses:

We tried to build up an understanding on quality assurance to all members and try to explain to them that quality assurance is useful for the institute. It takes a long time for this stage.

[QA Committee member, 1309]

We set up the meetings and also invited the experts on quality assurance to be our guest speaker in order to build up the knowledge on quality assurance for our staff.

[QA Committee member, 1409]

Another member added that:

The first important stage is the understanding on quality assurance from all members. We set up the meetings for them. We have encouraged them to understand quality assurance and accept that quality assurance is useful for our institute and we have to launch it.

[QA Committee member, 4409]

b) Sent staff to attend seminars

One member of a Quality Assurance committee reported that Rajabhat Institutes sent staff to attend seminars on quality assurance, as he said:

We always support our staff to attend the seminar on quality assurance outside the institute because we need them to understand why we have to carry out this work.

[QA Committee member, 2309]

c) Supported a larger budget

Three Quality Assurance Committee members responded that their institutes provided a larger budget in order to overcome the obstacles to quality assurance. As one member said:

We tried to overcome the obstacles to quality assurance in all faculties of the institute. For example, we supported a larger budget for quality assurance in all faculties.

[QA Committee member, 2209]

d) Reorganised teaching time table

One member of a Quality Assurance Committee indicated that his institute had solved the problem about staff teaching load by a reorganized teaching time table, as he stated:

Teaching load is one of our main problems. To sort it out, we combine a few groups of students together and teach them at the same time instead of teaching each group at a different time.

[QA Committee member, 1109]

The findings from the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes revealed that the institutes had overcome the difficulties in carrying out quality assurance by building up understanding on quality assurance through seminars and meetings on quality assurance as well as following-up the task.

According to the responses from the questionnaires and interviews, it is clear that Rajabhat Institutes adopted various measures to overcome the obstacle to quality assurance in their institutes. These measures were, for instance: 1) setting up meetings and training courses on quality assurance were arranged for members of Rajabhat Institutes; 2) sending staff to attend meetings or training courses on quality assurance outside the institute; 3) Rajabhat Institutes encouraged offices and staff to carry out quality assurance; 4) increased promotion on quality assurance to staff; and 5) provided a larger budget for quality assurance.

7.1.3 People who were responsible for overcoming the obstacle to quality assurance

The findings of the study showed that different groups of people were indicated that they were responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

The findings from questionnaires completed by teaching staff in five Rajabhat Institutes showed that the majority of teaching staff thought that the administrators of Rajabhat Institute at all levels were responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance in their institutes (f=35). They also indicated that all members of Rajabhat Institutes were responsible for quality assurance (f=13), the Educational Quality Assurance Office was responsible (f=8), and Quality Assurance Committees at all levels were responsible for quality assurance (f=7). The findings on people who were responsible for overcoming quality assurance from questionnaires from forty-six members of teaching staff are given in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4 Frequencies of people who were responsible for overcoming obstacles to quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes reported by teaching staff (Total n=46)

People Who Were Responsible For Quality Assurance	RI1 n=11	RI2 n=9	RI3 n=8	RI4 n=8	RI5 n=10	Total (f)
1. Administrators of Rajabhat Institute at all levels	0	9	8	8	10	35
2. All members of Rajabhat Institute	7	2	2	2	0	13
3. Educational Quality Assurance Office	7	0	0	0	1	8
4. Quality Assurance Committees at all levels	4	2	0	0	1	7

Table 7.4 shows that teaching staff in each Rajabhat Institute had different views on the people who were considered responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance. The majority of teaching staff in RI1 indicated that all members of Rajabhat Institutes as well as the Educational Quality Assurance Office were responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance. The majority of teaching staff in four institutes (RI2, RI3, RI4 and RI5) responded that the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes at all levels were responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance in their institutes.

Similarly, the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members revealed that twelve (out of twenty) members of this committee responded to this question. The findings revealed that the committee members had different views on the people considered to be responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. For instance, six members of these committees believed that the Educational Quality Assurance Office was responsible while five members indicated that the Presidents of the institutes and the Educational Quality Assurance Office were responsible, and one member indicated that the Presidents of the institutes and the Educational Quality Assurance Office were responsible. The findings from the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members are summarised in Table 7.5.

Table 7.5 Frequencies and percentage of people who were responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance from the interview with Quality Assurance Committee members. (Total n=12)

People Who Overcome the Obstacles to Quality Assurance	RI1 n=3	RI2 n=2	RI3 n=3	RI4 n=4	RI5 n=2	Total (f)
1. The Educational Quality Assurance Office	1	1	3	0	1	6
2. The President of the institute and the Educational Quality Assurance Office	1	1	0	2	1	5
3. The President of the institute, Vice president, and Deans of faculties	1	0	0	0	0	1

Table 7.5 seems to show that each Rajabhat Institute had different views on the people who were responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance within the institutes, for instance, Quality Assurance Committee members in RI1 indicated that the Educational Quality Assurance Office, the Presidents of the institute, and the administrators at different levels (the President, Vice President of the institute, and deans of faculties) were responsible while Quality Assurance Committee members in RI2 indicated that the Educational Assurance Office as well as the President of the institute and Educational Quality Assurance Office were in charge of overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance.

The responses from the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes revealed that all administrators (eight people) agreed that the Presidents of the institutes were directly responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance within their institutes. Other administrators, for instance, the Vice President, Deans of faculties were also seen as responsible for overcoming the obstacle for quality assurance in the offices under their administration. The administrators in the ministries (two people) also indicated that the top

administrators of the institutes (the President of Rajabhat Institutes) should be responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance.

According to the evidence from the questionnaires completed by teaching staff, the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members and the interviews with the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes, it appears that the majority of respondents from different groups believed that the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes at all levels (the President, Vice-Presidents of the institutes, deans of faculties), and the Educational Quality Assurance Office were responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. In addition, the findings from the administrators themselves showed that they all agreed that the administrators were responsible.

The reasons for this finding could be probably explained by the fact that the administration system within Rajabhat Institutes was a top-down model. Thus, the responsibility for overcoming the obstacles to the implementation of any policies in the institutes was normally that of the administrators at all levels rather than Quality Assurance Committee members or general members such as teaching staff. Teaching staff as well as Quality Assurance Committee were more involved in the process of carrying out quality assurance rather than overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance. Although there was an Educational Quality Assurance Office in Rajabhat Institutes supposed to be responsible for quality assurance, they did not have autonomy within the institutes. Administrators were at the apex of decision making and management within the institute. However, if the administrators were not strong leaders for quality assurance, there was possibility that different groups of people such as the Quality Assurance Committee members or members of staff in Educational Quality Assurance Office might be in charge of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. Documents from Self -Study Reports published by Rajabhat Institutes also showed that Rajabhat Institutes had established offices responsible for quality assurance named 'the Educational Quality Assurance Office'. In addition, documents from the Handbook of Quality Assurance for Rajabhat Institutes showed that Rajabhat Institutes had set up Quality Assurance Committees at different

levels. These committees were responsible for quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes (ORIC, 1996).

7.2 Quality assurance enhancement

This part presents the findings from questionnaires and interviews on the ways to enhance the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. Two main aspects are presented in this part. First, the ways Rajabhat Institutes could enhance the operation of quality assurance. Second, people who should be involved in enhancing the operation of quality assurance.

7.2.1 The ways to enhance the operation of quality assurance

The findings from the questionnaires completed by teaching staff in the five Rajabhat Institutes revealed that increasing the awareness and importance of quality assurance among all staff was seen as the most important way to enhance the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes (f=22). Other suggestions were, for instance, increasing understanding of quality assurance of all staff (f=14), choosing the appropriate system of quality assurance (f=11), developing a quality assurance system (f=10). The findings from the questionnaires from thirty members of the teaching staff in five Rajabhat Institutes are given in Table 7.6

Table 7.6 Frequencies of the ways to enhance the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes from questionnaires completed by teaching staff (Total n=30)

The Ways to Enhance the Operation of Quality Assurance	RI1 n=7	RI2 n=4	RI3 n=5	RI4 n=7	RI5 n=7	Total (f)
1. Raise awareness and importance of quality assurance to all staff	6	0	2	7	7	22
2. Increase understanding on quality assurance to all staff	1	2	0	5	6	14
3. Use an appropriate system and make it clear before it is carried out	3	2	3	3	0	11
4. Develop quality assurance system continuously	2	4	1	2	1	10
5. Publish relevant manuals and guidelines for quality assurance	2	1	0	2	2	7
6. Encourage all units in the institute to implement quality assurance	0	1	0	4	2	7
7. Evaluation should be used to improve the tasks	0	0	0	4	1	5
8. Administrators have to be leader of quality assurance	1	0	0	0	3	4
9. Decrease number of new students	0	2	0	0	1	3

Data in Table 7.6 shows that raising awareness and importance of quality assurance to all staff seems to be the most important way to enhance the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes because it was selected by the majority teaching staff (who responded to this question) in three institutes (RI1, RI4, and RI5). It is noticeable that the majority of teaching staff in RI2 who responded to this question indicated that developed quality assurance system continuously was the way to enhance the operation of quality assurance whereas the majority of teaching staff in RI3 who responded to this question indicated that using an appropriate system and making it clear before use was the way to enhance the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

Table 7.6 also shows that teaching staff in the same institute indicated various ways in order to enhance the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. For instance, the majority of teaching staff in RI1 who

responded to this question indicated that their institute should raise awareness and the importance of quality assurance among staff whereas the rest of them indicated that their institute should use an appropriate system of quality assurance, the institute should develop its quality assurance system, publish relevant manuals and guidelines for quality assurance, increase understanding on quality assurance, and the administrators of the institute should lead quality assurance.

The findings from questionnaires seem to show that 1) raising awareness and importance of quality assurance; 2) using an appropriate system and make it clear before use; 3) developing quality assurance system continuously were important ways to enhance the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes as they were indicated by the majority of respondents in each institute. Increasing understanding on quality assurance was also one of the important ways to enhance the operation of quality assurance because it was also selected by many respondents.

Similarly, the findings from the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members revealed several ways to enhance the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

1) Build up more knowledge and understanding on quality assurance

The majority of Quality Assurance Committee members (thirteen out of twenty people) felt that Rajabhat Institutes should build up more knowledge and understanding on quality assurance among staff and administrators. This process has to focus on everybody in the institutes because quality assurance is involved with everyone and needs cooperation from all units. As these member stated:

We have to build up knowledge and understanding on quality assurance to all members, not only staff but also everybody in the institute. They have to understand that quality assurance needs cooperation and willingness from everybody.

[QA Committee member, 4412]

We have to focus on everybody in the institute because quality assurance needs cooperation from all units. All members of the institute should understand. This is a very important stage, and it is not easy to be achieved. However, if we can make it, quality assurance in our institute will be carried out successfully.

[QA Committee member, 1212]

2) A need for an appropriate system

Four Quality Assurance Committee members suggested that Rajabhat Institutes needed an appropriate system in order to carry out quality assurance. They also have to overcome the obstacles to quality assurance. Therefore, the institutes should solve the policy problem and have a clear vision, plans and working procedures. As one member stated:

The institute needs an appropriate system for implementing quality assurance in all faculties. It also needs a clear plan and working procedure.

[QA Committee member, 4109]

3) Having positive perception on quality assurance

One Quality Assurance Committee member responded that perceptions on quality assurance from staff need to be changed from negative to positive so that the institute would be able to carry out quality assurance successfully. As he stated:

First of all, quality assurance must be accepted and understood clearly by all members. They have to accept that it is an important task for the institute and they have to be willing to carry it out.

[QA Committee member, 4409]

4) A need for qualified administrators

One Quality Assurance Committee member responded that qualified administrators are required in order to carry out quality assurance successfully. He stated:

We could not avoid the criticism of the ability of the administrators in Rajabhat Institute. They need to understand quality assurance very well and should be able to choose or create an appropriate strategy to carry out quality assurance successfully.

[QA Committee member, 4209]

5. Improving administration systems

One Quality Assurance Committee member indicated that the institutes should reengineer their administration systems and governing structure.

They should also have better time management. As one member stated:

It will take a long time to carry out quality assurance successfully because of the limitation of our traditional administration. In my view, we have to improve the administration systems of our institute. They should have a better time management.

[QA Committee member, 3312]

The responses from the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members in the five Rajabhat Institutes are summarised in Table 7.7.

Table 7.7 Frequencies of the ways to enhance the operation of quality assurance in Rjabhat Institutes from the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members (Total n=16)

The Ways to Enhance the Operation of Quality Assurance	RI1 n=4	RI2 n=3	RI3 n=3	RI4 n=5	RI5 n=2	Total (f)
1. Build up the knowledge and understanding on quality assurance to staff and administrators	3	3	3	3	1	13
2. Establish an appropriate quality assurance system in Rajabhat Institute	1	0	1	2	0	4
3. Perception on quality assurance of all members needs to be more positive	0	0	0	1	0	1
4. The administrators need to be well qualified	0	0	0	1	0	1
5. Improve administration system and time management	0	0	1	0	0	1

The findings from the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members showed that the interviewees in each institute considered the ways to enhance the operation of quality assurance in their institute in different ways. This was similar to the findings from the questionnaires which revealed that teaching staff from each institute indicated different ways of enhancing the operation of quality assurance. This happened probably because each Rajabhat Institute had different experiences and different difficulties in carrying quality assurance.

The findings from the interviews with the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes on the ways to enhance the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes revealed that six (out of eight) administrators indicated to ways to enhance the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. First, five administrators indicated that the administration systems within the institutes need to be improved. Here are examples of the explanations:

We need to work together, both administrators and staff. We need to talk and find out the ways to resolve our problems. Once, decisions or plans have been made, we have to get the work done. The people who are in charge have to make a move.

[Administrator RI 101]

And

We discussed about our programmes, and came up with the idea that we should have programmes that are suitable for the job market. Then, we set up committees to work on this. Until now, they have not done anything.

[Administrator RI 101]

Second, one administrator responded that the institutes needed more money to support all relevant task during the process of implementing quality assurance, as he explained:

Our institute have to provide lots of documents and also have to set up meetings on quality assurance. We have to train people for quality audit. We spent more money on this. I think we need more money to support all relevant task because we still have to get more work done during the audit and assessment processes. If we do not have the money for each faculty, it' is hard to encourage them to work on quality assurance.

[Administrator RI 402]

According to the evidence from the questionnaires and interviews, it could be stated that there were several ways to enhance the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The most significant suggestions indicated by teaching staff and the interviewees were, for instance, increasing the awareness and importance of quality assurance, increasing knowledge and understanding on quality assurance, using an appropriate system of quality assurance. The suggestions to enhance the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes found in this study could be considered as two categories as follows:

First, it is involved in quality assurance management. The ways to enhance quality assurance in this category were composed of: 1) using appropriate system of quality assurance [The institute also needed to make it clear about the system before use. Good communication was required]; 2) providing relevant manuals and guidelines for quality assurance implementation [These manuals and guidelines should have sufficient information on how to carry out quality assurance]; 3) encouraging all units in the institute to implement quality assurance because successful quality assurance needed cooperation from all members of organization; 4) using evaluation strategy to improve the tasks; 5) a strong leadership was required; 6) administration system of the institute needed to be improved. This included a better time management; 7) more money was needed.

Second, it focuses on quality assurance itself, for instance: 1) contributed awareness and importance of quality assurance to all staff; 2) increased knowledge and understanding on quality assurance; 3) contributed positive perception of quality assurance. The members of Rajabhat Institutes should accept that quality assurance is useful and important for the institute and they should be willing to carry it out.

There are some similarities of the suggested ways to enhance quality assurance between previous studies and this study, for instance, Kanji, Tambi, and Wallace's study (1999) mentioned earlier, which found that leadership could play a more important role. This study has found that Rajabhat Institutes required strong leadership in order to implement quality

assurance successfully. Moreover, a few characteristics of a leader (from the respondents' expectation) were found in this study such as being well qualified, well understanding of quality assurance, having a clear vision and mission on quality assurance, and being able to choose an appropriate system or create a system of quality assurance for the institute.

7.2.2 People who should be involved

The findings of the study revealed that different groups of people were identified as being essential to be involved in enhancing the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

The findings from the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members on people who should be involved in enhancing the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes fell into three different groups:

First, nine Quality Assurance Committee members agreed that all members of a Rajabhat Institute should be involved. One member said:

If we need to develop something, cooperation from everyone in the organisation is needed. We have to develop it together. In higher education institutions, it is impossible to command and let everyone follow that command. It will not happen.

[QA Committee member, 1213]

Second, six Quality Assurance Committee members responded that administrators of Rajabhat Institutes, the Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Deans of faculties, should be involved, as two members stated:

The President of our institute should be responsible. Other important administrators who should be involved are, for example, the Vice-Presidents and the Quality Assurance Committee members. The reason is, these people are in charge of improving quality assurance and quality of teaching and learning processes in our institute.

[QA Committee member, 4113]

And:

A good understanding on quality assurance from all administrators is required before it is carried out. Administrators in this case do not mean only the President of Rajabhat Institute but also includes the Vice Presidents, and Deans of faculties.

[QA Committee member, 4413]

Third, one Quality Assurance Committee member considered that the Quality Assurance Committees should be involved. He stated:

The Quality Assurance Committee members should be involved in enhancing quality assurance because there are different committees in our institute in charge of quality assurance.

[QA Committee member, 2413]

The findings on people who should be involved in enhancing the operation of quality assurance from the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members in five Rajabhat Institutes are summarised in Table 7.8.

Table 7.8 Frequencies and percentage of people who should be involved in enhancing the operation of quality assurance from the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members (Total n=16)

People Who Should be Involved	RI1 n=4	RI2 n=3	RI3 n=3	RI4 n=5	RI5 n=1	Total (f)	%
1. All members of Rajabhat Institute	4	0	2	2	1	9	56
2. Administrators of Rajabhat Institute: the Presidents, Vice-President, Deans of Faculties)	0	3	1	2	0	6	38
3. Quality Assurance Committees	0	0	0	1	0	1	6
Total	4	3	3	5	1	16	100

Table 7.8 shows that the majority of Quality Assurance Committee members indicated that all members of Rajabhat Institutes should be involved in enhancing the operation of quality assurance (56%), followed with the administrators of the institutes should be involved (38%), and Quality Assurance Committees should be involved (6%). Similarly, the findings from questionnaires completed by teaching staff in five Rajabhat Institutes revealed that the majority of the respondents (62%) indicated that all members of the institutes should be involved in enhancing the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The findings from questionnaires completed by teaching staff (seventy - seven people) were as shown in Table 7.9.

Table 7.9 Frequencies and percentage of people who should be involved in enhancing the operation of quality assurance from questionnaires completed by teaching staff (Total n=77)

People who should be involved	RI1 n=20	RI2 n=17	RI3 n=11	RI4 n=13	RI5 n=16	Total (f)	%
1. All members of Rajabhat Institute	14	9	5	10	10	48	62
2. Administrators (President, Vice-Presidents, Deans)	5	5	6	3	6	25	33
3. Quality Assurance Committee and Academic Committee	1	3	0	0	0	4	5
Total	20	17	11	13	16	77	100

Table 7.9 also shows that teaching staff in the same institutes have different views on people who should be involved in enhancing the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. For instance, the majority of teaching staff in RI1 indicated that all members of Rajabhat Institutes should be involved and the rest of them indicated that administrators of the institutes, Quality Assurance Committee and Academic Committee should be involved. It is noticeable that the majority of teaching staff in four institutes (RI1, RI2, RI4, and RI5) agreed that all members of Rajabhat Institutes should be involved in enhancing the operation of quality assurance but the majority of teaching staff in one institute (RI3) did not agree.

Table 7.8 and Table 7.9 showed that the majority of interviewees and questionnaire's respondents believed that all members of Rajabhat Institutes should be involved in enhancing the operation of quality assurance in Rajahat Institutes. By contrast, the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes (six out eight people) and the two administrators in the ministries felt that the administrators of the institutes should be directly involved in enhancing the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. Furthermore, one administrator of a Rajabhat Institute suggested that Rajabhat institutes needed a consultant on quality assurance.

There are some differences in the findings of the people who should be involved in enhancing the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes and the findings on people who were responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes presented in the previous part of this chapter (see page 204-208). The findings on people who were responsible for overcoming the obstacle to quality assurance seem to show that the administrators were in charge. An explanation for this has already been offered in previous part of the chapter (see page 207-208). However, the findings on people who should be involved in enhancing the operation of quality assurance showed that all members of Rajabhat Institutes as well as the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes should be involved. This seems to show that the process of enhancing quality assurance involved not only the administrator but also members of the institute. It seems to clear that successful quality assurance needs cooperation from all members of the organisation. In practice, the administrators should be responsible for quality assurance management while members of staff should cooperate in terms of carrying it out.

7.3 Comments and opinions on quality assurance

This part presents general comments and opinions on quality assurance from the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members and the questionnaires completed by teaching staff. A few comments were made as follows:

First, Quality assurance was useful but it was not easy for Rajabhat Institutes to implement.

Two Quality Assurance Committee members considered that quality assurance was seen useful for Rajabhat Institutes. However, it seems not to be easy for Rajabhat Institutes to implement quality assurance because some difficulties occurred during the period when it was implemented. For instance, there was a lack of readiness to carrying out quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes, Rajabhat Institutes did not prepare well for its implementation, and quality factors were unstable. Here are the responses:

The concept of carrying out quality assurance in higher education is useful. However, there are obstacles in carrying out quality assurance because we are in a hurry to launch it. We should be well prepared before we carry it out.

[QA Committee member, 4113]

If the nine factors are changed again, it will stop the progress of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. This is an external factor which impacts on quality assurance in higher education institutions.

[QA Committee member, 1314]

Changing administrators of the institutes was also another comment on quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes indicated by the Quality Assurance Committee members. This is because the fact that the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes (President, Vice-Presidents, Deans of Faculties, and Programmes leaders) are changed every four years. This may have led to a lack of continuity in implementing quality assurance. Here is the response from one member of a Quality Assurance Committee.

The limitation in carrying out quality assurance in Rajabht Institutes is the changing of the administrators in the institute. Every time when the administrators in the institute are changed, policies within the institutes are also changed by the new administrators.

[QA Committee member, 2214]

The quotations above seem to show some limitations within Rajabhat Institutes both in terms of carrying out quality assurance and administration system. Some of them had a very short period of their administration. This led to slow progress in carrying out quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

Second, there was a need for a positive attitude, acceptance, and cooperation from all members of the institutes.

Two Quality Assurance Committee members felt that a positive attitude, an acceptance, and cooperation on quality assurance from all members of Rajahat Institutes were strongly required. As one person said:

In order to carry out quality assurance in Rajabht Institutes successfully, a positive attitude on quality assurance, an acceptance of quality assurance, and the cooperation on quality assurance from all members of the institute are required. If anyone in the institute feels unhappy with it, he should try to avoid that feeling, try to be more cooperative, and carry out this work for the institute.

[QA Committee member, 1514]

Third, there was a need for an understanding of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes from a new public organisation responsible for quality assurance.

One Quality Assurance Committee member pointed out that the public organisation which had recently been established by the government and would be responsible for quality assessment should understand the concept of quality assurance and the responsibilities of Rajabhat Institutes. He said:

The other important point is the public organisation which is already established and will be in charge of quality assessment. I hope that this organisation would be able to understand both of concept of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes and the responsibilities of Rajabhat Institutes before they have access to our institutes for quality assessment.

[QA Committee member, 2314]

The findings from the questionnaires completed by teaching staff in five Rajabhat Institutes also provided a few points of comment and opinions on quality assurance. For instance, the institute should contribute understanding on quality assurance to all staff, quality assurance should be carried out intentionally and continuously, the institutes should encourage cooperation from members of the institutes, they should be increased awareness of quality assurance among staff. Comments and opinion on quality assurance from the questionnaires are in Table 7.10.

Table 7.10 Frequencies of comments and opinion on quality assurance from questionnaires completed by teaching staff (Total n=18)

Comments and Opinion on Quality Assurance	RI1 n=3	RI2 n=2	RI3 n=2	RI4 n=6	RI5 n=5	Total (f)
1. Contribute understanding to all staff	1	0	1	4	3	9
2. Quality assurance should be carried out intentionally and continuously	0	1	1	4	2	8
3. Encourage cooperation and awareness among staff	2	1	0	1	2	6
4. Contribute more understanding to all staff, students and students' parents	0	0	0	6	0	6
5. People who are responsible for quality assurance should be committed to their work	1	1	0	1	2	5
6. Choose the appropriate system of quality assurance before carrying it out	0	0	2	0	2	4
7. Rajabhat Institutes should publish quality assurance reports	1	0	0	1	0	2
8. Public and institute should be a partnership in educational provision	1	0	0	1	0	2

Table 7.10 shows that various comments were indicated by teaching staff in the five Rajabhat Institutes. It also shows that teaching staff in each institute had different opinions on quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. For instance, teaching staff in RI3 commented that Rajabhat Institutes should contribute understanding on quality assurance to all staff, quality assurance should be carried out intentionally and continuously, and Rajabhat Institutes should choose the appropriate system of quality assurance before carrying it out.

The majority of comment and opinions on quality assurance were similar to the ways to enhance the operation of quality assurance presented earlier in this chapter (see page 208-215). However, there were four comments shown in Table 7.11 that were not indicated in the ways to enhance the operation of quality assurance in the previous part of this chapter. They were: 1) quality assurance should be carried out intentionally and continuously; 2) people

who were responsible for quality assurance should be committed to their work; 3) Rajabhat Institutes should establish quality reports; and 4) the public and Rajabhat Institutes should be a partnership on educational provision. These comments seem practical and could be considered as ways of enhancing the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

7.4 Summary

This chapter has explained the obstacles to quality assurance and ways to overcome the obstacles to quality assurance and enhance the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes as seen by the respondents in the study. A few key observations have been made in this chapter. First, various difficulties were indicated that as having occurred during the period when quality assurance was implemented in Rajabhat Institutes. The significant difficulties were, for instance, members of the institutes lacked knowledge and understanding on quality assurance, they lacked cooperation from members of the institutes, there was a lack of an appropriate system or model of quality assurance, a lack of working procedures, and a lack of readiness in Rajabhat Institutes. Second, the difficulties in carrying out quality assurance found in this study were similar to the previous studies which found shortcomings in communication on quality assurance, a lack of cooperation from staff, staff had too much work, and a lack of strong leadership for quality assurance were the obstacles to quality assurance in higher education institutions. Third, in order to overcome the obstacles to quality assurance, Rajabhat Institutes had used different approaches, for instance, they held more meetings and training courses for quality assurance, sent staff to attend training courses, encouraged offices and staff to carry out quality assurance, and increased the budget. Fourth, there were several suggested ways to enhance the operation of quality assurance in Rajahat Institutes. The ways to enhance the operation of quality assurance found in this study could be considered as falling into two categories. The first category is quality assurance management, for instance, using appropriate systems of quality assurance, providing relevant manuals and guidelines for quality assurance implementation, encouraging all units in the institute to implement quality assurance, using an evaluation strategy to

improve the tasks, having a strong leadership, and improving the administration system of the institute. The second category focuses on quality assurance itself, for instance, the contribution of awareness and importance of quality assurance to all staff, increasing knowledge and understanding on quality assurance, and having a positive perception of quality assurance. Fifth, this chapter has also presented the comments and opinion on quality assurance from questionnaires and interviews. These comments, such as carrying out quality assurance intentionally, having people who are responsible for quality assurance and committed to their work, publishing quality assurance reports, and establishing a partnership on educational provision between public and Rajabhat Institutes, are useful for the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

The next chapter discusses experiences learned from a case in Rajabhat Institutes.

Chapter Eight

Learning From The Experiences

This chapter discusses the findings of this study based on my data analysis and synthesis of the literature on quality assurance in higher education. The chapter consists of three parts. The first and second parts focus on benefits and costs of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The third part discusses what we can learn from experiences in trying to implement quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand. It addresses the reasons for unsuccessful experiences, some awareness points that higher education should consider before they commence quality assurance. The last part presents a proposed management strategy for a model of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

8.1 Benefits of quality assurance

The benefits of quality assurance in this study emerge from the findings presented in Chapter Six. The findings in Chapter Six showed that respondents felt that there were several impacts of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes, administrators of Rajabhat Institutes, teaching staff, students, teaching and learning processes, and employers. Some impacts seem to be positive, and some are negative. Positive impacts of quality assurance are considered as benefits of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

As Frazer (1992) states, quality assurance in higher education involves all members of higher education institutions. Therefore, the benefits of quality assurance presented here cover different groups of people in Rajabhat Institutes.

The benefits of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes can be considered as falling into different categories. The first category recognises benefits of quality assurance in two different stages.

First, benefits occurred during the period when quality assurance was being implemented in Rajabhat Institutes. This stage involves in the ways in which members of the institutes attempt to improve themselves and their work. The benefits at this stage were, for instance, teaching and learning processes were developed; staff paid more attention and cooperated more on their work; students paid more attention to their studies; and the administrators of the institutes were able to develop their institutes easily because quality assurance seemed to be an instrument for encouraging members of staff to work. These can be seen as positive changes in Rajabhat Institutes.

Second, the benefits occurred after quality assurance had been completely implemented, and students graduated from the institutes. Although Rajabhat Institutes had not completed all the processes of quality assurance, particularly quality assessment, the findings of the study showed that respondents believed that in the future, there would be some benefits for students, institutes, and employers. The benefits at this stage are, for instance, the quality of students and the institute would be improved. Employers would believe in the quality of graduates and would recruit greater numbers of graduates from Rajabhat Institutes.

The other category considers the benefits of quality assurance as different aspects. They are: 1) improving quality; 2) changing working systems; 3) accountability; and 4) changing working culture. These benefits are presented and discussed below.

8.1.1 Improving quality

Improving quality, particularly in teaching and learning processes seems to be one of the most significant benefits since quality assurance has been carried out in Rajabhat Institutes. This was indicated by the majority of respondents from both questionnaires and interviews. The evidence is as following. First, the responses from questionnaires in which the respondents indicated that teaching and learning processes were improved, new technology and teaching methods were used more (see Table 6.9, page 185).

Second, the findings from the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members which showed that teaching and learning processes had improved. For instance, feedback from students was used, and staff paid more attention to their students. These were indicated by the Quality Assurance Committee members (see Table 6.8, page 184). Third, the findings from questionnaires showed that students had to pay more attention to their studies. By doing so they would earn benefit from teaching and learning experiences (see Table 6.7 page 179). Fourth, the findings from interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members which showed that students were more involved and benefited from teaching and learning processes. It also showed that students were more satisfied with their teaching and learning processes since quality assurance had been implemented (see Chapter Six, page 180-181). Fifth, the findings from the interviews with students themselves, which showed that students had more tasks to do during their courses, they had more opportunities to learn and practise (see Chapter Six, page 181-182). Finally, the findings from the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes, which the administrators viewed that quality assurance was useful for students. Students would gain more benefits from teaching and learning, for instance, they knew more about their courses, they were more involved in a better teaching and learning process, and they were able to give feedback to their teachers (see Chapter Six, page 182).

The evidence from the findings from different groups of people seems to be that Rajabhat Institutes have been involved in improving the quality of teaching and learning since quality assurance has been implemented in the institutes.

Apart from improving the quality of teaching and learning processes, improving staff quality was another important benefit found in this study. The findings showed that staff had to work systematically in order to meet the minimum standards established in the Handbook of Quality Assurance. They were also scrutinised seriously. These seem to show that staff need to raise their performance in order to be qualified and be able to keep their job. In addition, the new trend in the administration system for higher education of the country is for staff to be assessed more often and their employment

reviewed. In the past, there was no system to assure the quality of staff and standard of their teaching. They only had examinations or interviews before they started their careers.

Evidence to show that staff were improving the quality of their work was found as follows. First, the findings from questionnaires revealed that staff had to pay more attention to their work, and they had more motivation to improve themselves (see Table 6.5 page 170). Second, the findings from the interviews with Quality Assurance Committee members revealed that staff had more attention and motivation in doing their work (see Table 6.6 page 171). Third, the findings from the interviews with the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes showed that staff had to be more responsible in doing their work (see Chapter Six, page 171-172).

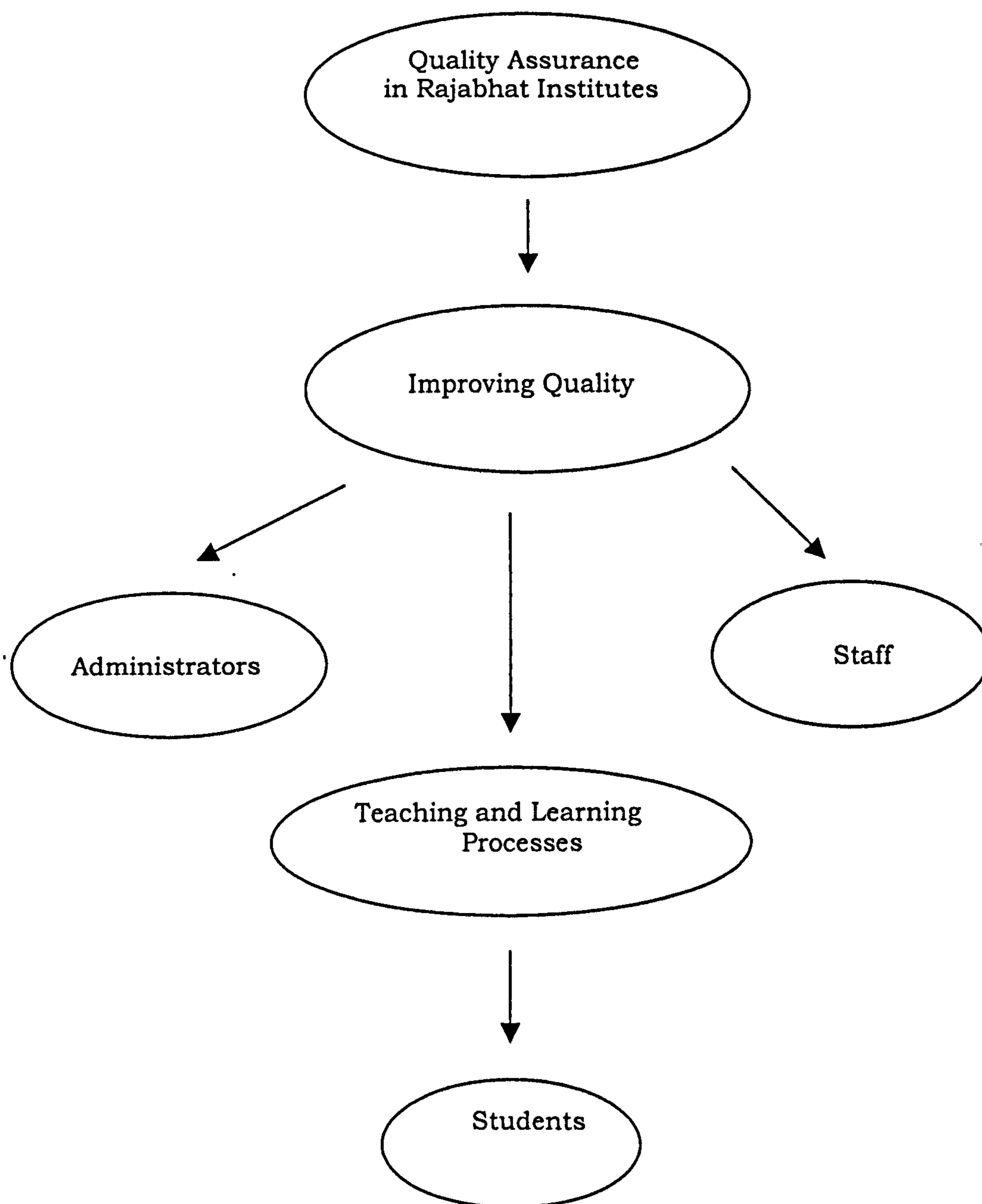
Another group of people who could be considered as involved in improving their quality were the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes (President, Vice-president of Rajabhat, and Deans of faculties). This could be explained by the fact that they had to be more responsible. They were expected to be leaders of quality assurance. Regarding these responsibilities, it could be assumed that the administrators had to improve their quality. The evidence is found, for example, in the questionnaires which indicated that the majority of respondents considered that the administrators had to be more responsible and pay more attention to administering the institute. They had to manage the institutes accountably. They were required to demonstrate more vision, knowledge and understanding on quality assurance and they needed to be the leader of quality assurance (see Table 6.4, page 166). Quality Assurance Committee members also claimed that the administrators worked more carefully and systematically (see Chapter Six, page 167).

The findings of the study also showed that the respondents felt that the quality of students would improve after quality assurance had been fully implemented. 'Quality improvement of the products or services provided within organisations' is a basis of quality assurance. In higher education institutions, products refer to students or graduates of the institutions. Thus, it could be concluded that the quality of students or graduates of Rajabhat

Institutes should be improved if quality assurance has been completely implemented.

According to the evidence mentioned above, it is clear that improving quality is one of the benefits of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The functions of improving quality among different groups of people in Rajabhat Institutes are as shown in Figure 8.1

Figure 8.1 Improving quality within Rajabhat Institutes



8.1.2 Changing working system

The findings in Chapter Six showed that working systems in Rajabhat Institutes were seen as systematic since quality assurance had been implemented. This is because the institutes had to base their work on specific criteria and standards of quality assurance. The findings also showed that evaluation and task analysis were used more. In addition, Rajabhat Institutes established a responsible office for quality assurance called 'Quality Assurance Office' within the institutes (see Table 6.1 page 157).

A statement in the Handbook of Quality Assurance for Rajabhat Institutes declares that one purpose of the innovation is:

.... To encourage higher education institutions to develop their own quality assurance mechanism suitable for their own purposes and missions.

[ORIC, 1996, p. 7-10]

Furthermore it is expected that:

Each institute develop its own quality assurance based on the systems of quality assurance, for instance, ISO, TQM, and Malcolm Balridge Award, which is suitable for each institute's mission.

[ORIC, 1999b, p. 8]

The quotations above show that each Rajabhat Institute was encouraged to develop their own mechanism for quality assurance. The institute was also allowed to work on a particular system of quality assurance, for instance, quality systems such as TQM, ISO, or Malcolm Balridge Award. Each system had its own specification and main focus areas (see Chapter Two, page 41). Carrying out quality assurance based on these systems, Rajbhat Institutes needed to work systematically. It seems clear that working system within Rajabhat Institutes had changed.

8.1.3 Accountability

The theory underpinning of quality assurance is that 'accountability' must be addressed. In the past, higher education institutions seemed closed to

scrutiny. Frazer (1994) stated that higher education institutions had been seen as 'a secret garden'. Higher education institutions in Thailand were no exception. Before the implementation of quality assurance, Thai society did not know much about educational provision within higher education institutions, particularly how the institutions maintain and enhance their quality and standards. In my opinion, Thai culture gave too much respect and credit to lecturers in higher education institutions. As a result, they did not raise questions about the institutions although they may have been in doubt about the quality and standard of their educational provision. This situation prevailed in the country for almost a hundred years, after the first university in Thailand was established in 1917. Green (1994) indicated that institutions should be more responsive to the needs of their customers and accountable to the taxpayer.

The findings of the study showed that during the period when quality assurance was implemented, Rajabhat Institutes had carried out self-study, audit, and also published reports. The information on quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes would be reported to the public. In view of these processes, it seems to be that accountability had been brought about in Rajabhat Institutes. Following these processes will have led to greater public accountability.

8.1.4 Changing working culture

'Accountability' is one example of changing working culture in Rajabhat Institutes because quality assurance leads Rajabhat Institutes to be more open to the public. Rajabhat Institutes were more involved with people outside the institutes, for instance, experts on quality assurance, auditors, peer reviews, and employers.

A need for strong leaderships is an other example of changing working culture in Rajabhat Institutes. The study found that the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes had to be more responsible and pay more attention to administering the institutes. They had to have more vision and knowledge of quality assurance. They had to be leaders of quality assurance (see Table 6.4,

page 166). This seems to show great expectations of the administrators from members of the institutes. Leaders in this decade, therefore, have to be more responsible and take more action in order to implement quality assurance successfully as well as in order to raise the standard and quality of the institutes in a national and international competition.

Cooperation among members of Rajabhat Institutes is another example of how the working culture within Rajabhat Institutes has been changed. This is because quality assurance involves everyone in the institute. In order to implement this policy successfully, cooperation and acceptance from all units within the institute are required. It may be argued that staff always had to cooperate in doing all work within the institute. However, quality assurance is different. The basic concept of quality assurance is that it can be seen as 'continuous improvement'. Thus, staff had to complete all the process of quality assurance in the first cycle, and continue the second cycle.

In the light of the evidence that has already been presented, it seems to be the case that improving quality of teaching and learning processes, improving the quality of the administrators, staff, and students, changing working systems, accountability, and changing working culture were the benefits of quality assurance for Rajabhat Institutes. The next section presents the negative impacts of quality assurance which can be considered as costs of quality assurance for Rajabhat Institutes.

8.2 Costs of quality assurance

The costs of quality assurance presented in this part of the chapter emerge from the difficulties in trying to implement quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes, negative impacts of quality assurance, and obstacles to quality assurance which were presented in Chapter Five, Chapter Six, and Chapter Seven. They can be considered as four aspects, as follows.

8.2.1 Negative attitudes

The findings of the study revealed that quality assurance had different impacts on people. Some impacts were considered as positive, but some were considered negative. There is no doubt that quality assurance made a large impact on staff within Rajabhat Institutes. The negative attitudes among members of staff appeared to be the most important cost of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The findings showed that:

- 1) Quality assurance was an alien concept;
- 2) It was not easy to understand;
- 3) It was not easy to commence;
- 4) Staff were audited seriously;
- 5) Staff had more work to do;
- 6) Staff felt too much pressure in doing their work;
- 7) Quality assurance revealed the weakness of staff individually;
- 8) It reported to the public

It appears that staff might have negative attitudes on quality assurance within their institutes because it had a greater impacts on them in different ways: their work, emotion, and representation.

8.2.2 Long term task

Rajabhat Institutes have implemented quality assurance since 1996-1997. This study was carried out in 2001. However, the findings of the study showed that the three components of quality assurance had not been completed. The third component, quality assessment, has yet to be carried out by the public organistaion which has recently established by the government. As a result, quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes might take nearly ten years to complete whereas quality assurance in outhur countries takes six years.

8.2.3 Financial cost

The finding of the study showed that a few meetings and seminars had been arranged for members of Rajabhat Institutes. They also sent some members for training courses outside the institutes. At the same time, during the period when each institute implemented quality assurance, they had to provide more information and documents. They had to prepare for the audit process and peer review. A budget allocation was required to support and sustain their activities.

8.3 What we can learn from the Thai experiences

This section explains and discusses three aspects of the quality assurance experience of Rajabhat Institutes. It begins with the evidence showing that quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes was unsuccessful, followed by the reasons for this. Finally, it presents what we can learn from the unsuccessful experience.

8.3.1 Unsuccessful quality assurance

Although Rajabhat Institutes had been working on quality assurance for more than five years (when the fieldwork was carried out in 2001), they had not completed all the processes. The progress of quality assurance in each institute was different. In addition, the findings of the study (in Chapter Five and Chapter Seven) showed that various difficulties occurred during the period when quality assurance was implemented. This seems to show that quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes was unsuccessful. Although different measures were used in order to overcome the obstacles to quality assurance, for instance, meetings and training courses on quality assurance, establishing a quality framework, setting up responsible committees and an office, and providing a larger budget, the obstacles were not completely overcome. Similarly, when teaching staff were asked about the obstacles to quality assurance that their institutes had overcome successfully, their responses seem to show that not all obstacles had been overcome. The findings from questionnaires showed that 52% of the respondents indicated

that Rajabhat Institutes had overcome the obstacle to quality assurance successfully while 48% of the respondents considered that Rajabhat Institutes failed to overcome the obstacles to quality assurance. The responses from questionnaires completed by teaching staff in the five Rajabhat Institutes are as shown in Table 8.1 and Table 8.2.

Table 8.1 Frequencies and percentage of the result of overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes reported by teaching staff (Total n=60)

Obstacles to Quality Assurance	RI1 n=16	RI2 n=7	RI3 n=9	RI4 n=15	RI5 n=13	f	%
1. Had overcome successfully	10	3	6	6	6	31	52
2. Failed to overcome	6	4	3	9	7	29	48
Total	16	7	9	15	13	60	100

Table 8.1 shows that the majority of respondents in two institutes (RI1, RI3) agreed that their institutes had overcome the obstacles to quality assurance successfully whereas teaching staff in three institutes did not agree. The majority of the respondents in three institutes (RI2, RI4, and RI5) indicated that their institutes failed to overcome the obstacles to quality assurance.

A further question on the obstacles to quality assurance that Rajbhat Institutes had overcome successfully was also used in this study. The responses from questionnaires completed by teaching staff in the five Rajabhat Institutes are as given in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2 Frequencies of the obstacles to quality assurance that Rajbhat Institutes had overcome successfully reported by teaching staff (Total n=31)

Obstacles that Rajabhat Institutes had overcome successfully	RI1 n=10	RI2 n=3	RI3 n=6	RI4 n=6	RI5 n=6	Total (f)
1. Establish quality indicators	6	3	4	2	2	17
2. Carry out internal quality audit	1	0	1	1	1	4
3. Publish Self-Study Report	1	0	0	1	2	4
4. Improve quality of their teaching	1	0	1	1	0	3
5. Prepare files and documents for auditing	1	0	0	1	1	3

Table 8.2 shows that teaching staff in four institutes (RI1, RI3, RI4, and RI5) reported various obstacles to quality assurance that their institutes had overcome successfully while teaching staff in RI2 indicated only one obstacle. This seems to show that teaching staff in four institutes had different views of the success of overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance in their institutes.

Table 8.2 also shows that five obstacles to quality assurance were indicated as being overcome successfully. Among these five obstacles, it is noticeable that the majority of teaching staff in three institutes (RI1, RI2 and RI3) felt that establishing quality indicators had been overcome successfully. The rest of the obstacles, for instance, carrying out a quality audit was indicated by staff from four institutes as having been overcome successfully while improving quality of teaching, publishing a Self-Study Report, and preparing documents were indicated by teaching staff from three institutes as not having been overcome successfully.

The responses from the teaching staff in the five institutes are varied. This could be explained by the fact that each institute had different conditions in trying to implement quality assurance, for instance, starting points, and different difficulties (as already presented in Chapter Five and Chapter

Seven). Moreover, different measures were indicated as having been used in order to overcome those obstacles to quality assurance (see Chapter Seven, page 200-203). This might lead to different responses to the questions on the obstacles to quality assurance that their institutes had overcome successfully.

A similar question on the obstacle to quality assurance that the institutes failed to overcome was also used in this study. The responses to this question are as shown in Table 8.3.

Table 8.3 Frequencies of the obstacles to quality assurance that Rajbhat Institutes failed to overcome reported by teaching staff in five Rajbhat Institutes (Total n=29)

Obstacles that Rajabhat Institutes Failed to Overcome	RI1 n=6	RI2 n=4	RI3 n=3	RI4 n=9	RI5 n=7	Total (f)
1. Establish appropriate quality assurance system or model	3	2	3	7	5	20
2. Cooperate from all members of the institutes	3	2	0	2	2	9
Total	6	4	3	9	7	29

Table 8.3 shows that there were two obstacles to quality assurance which teaching staff in the five Rajabhat Institutes indicated that their institutes could not overcome. It should be noted that these obstacles were similar to the obstacles to quality assurance presented in Chapter Seven.

The reasons for lack of success in overcoming these obstacles to quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes could be one or more of the following. First, the findings on the obstacles to quality assurance as already presented in Chapter Seven (see Table 7.1, page 193) revealed that a lack of an appropriate system or model of quality assurance was one of the most significant obstacles to quality assurance in Rajbhat Institutes. The ways in

which each Rajabhat Institute had implemented their quality assurance were that they followed the guidelines established in the handbook of quality assurance, and each used its own mechanism. The limitations were, for instance, the Handbook of Quality Assurance did not provide enough information on how to implement quality assurance. There was not enough information on the model of quality that ORCI proposed. There was no information on how the system of quality assurance would work in Rajabhat Institutes. Finally, there was no pilot study before the implementation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. All these limitations might lead teaching staff to consider that their institutes did not establish an appropriate system or model of quality assurance, and failed to overcome this obstacle to quality assurance.

Second, a lack of cooperation was another obstacle to quality assurance which teaching staff considered that their institutes failed to overcome. The findings on the obstacles to quality assurance presented in Chapter Seven revealed that a lack of cooperation from staff was the most significant difficulty in carrying out quality assurance indicated by teaching staff in five Rajabhat institutes. The reasons for being unable to overcoming this obstacle could probably be explained by the fact that staff had a negative attitude to quality assurance because they held the view that quality assurance increased their workload, and they were audited seriously. This seems to show that the process of introducing quality assurance to members of Rajabhat Institutes, particularly building up awareness and understanding on quality assurance was unsuccessful.

Finally, because three components of quality assurance had not been completely implemented in Rajabhat Institutes, there was a possibility that the difficulties in trying to implement quality assurance were being resolved.

Another questionnaire question asked about the success of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The responses from teaching staff in the five Rajabhat Institute are as summarised in Table 8.4.

Table 8.4 Frequencies of the success of quality assurance reported by teaching staff in five Rajabhat Institutes (Total n=44)

Success of Quality Assurance	RI1 n=11	RI2 n=12	RI3 n=4	RI4 n=8	RI5 n=9	Total (f)	Percentage (%)
1. 50% successful	6	7	3	2	6	24	55
2. Poor (20-30% successful)	3	3	1	4	0	11	25
3. Still in the process of implementation	1	1	0	0	1	3	7
4. Not successful	1	1	0	2	2	6	13
Total	11	12	4	8	9	44	100

The data in Table 8.4 shows that the majority of the questionnaire respondents (55%) indicated that quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes was considered to be approximately fifty per cent successful while the rest of the respondents replied that it was poor (25%), not successful (13%) or still in the process of implementation (7%). The findings also revealed that teaching staff in the same institute had different views on the success of quality assurance. For instance, the majority of teaching staff in RI1 indicated that quality assurance in their institute was 50% successful whereas the rest of the respondents felt that it was 20-30% successful, still in the process of implementation, and not successful. The reasons for the differences of responses from staff in the same institute could be explained by the fact that each person has a different standard and perception of success when it comes to quality assurance.

8.3.2 The reasons for unsuccessful quality assurance

The lack of success in trying to implement quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes could be explained by one or more of the following reasons.

The first main reason for 'unsuccessful' or 'low success' in trying to implement quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes is probably because Rajabhat Institutes are not ready to carry out quality assurance. Evidence

from the study showed that various difficulties occurred during the period when quality assurance was being implemented in Rajabhat Institutes. Although there was an attempt to resolve these difficulties, not all of them were successful. Second, it was presumably too soon for some members of the teaching staff to assess the success of quality assurance in their institutes because Rajabhat Institutes had not completed three components of quality assurance.

It could be stated that Rajabhat Institutes were in a hurry to implement this policy. At this point, it might be useful to look at relevant elements in order to explain why Rajabhat Institutes were not ready to launch quality assurance.

The first element was the lack of any pilot study. This element was considered because quality assurance was an alien concept and Rajabhat Institutes had no experience with it. In such circumstances, it would have been desirable to do a pilot study in some institutes before the implementation of this policy. Many countries, particularly the European countries that have long experience in quality assurance, moved towards implementation via a pilot study. This was found, for instance, in the UK, Netherlands and Sweden (Segers and Dochy, 1996; El-Khawas, 1998; Westerheijden, 1999).

Second, Rajabhat Institutes were not ready in terms of building up awareness and understanding on quality assurance among members of the institutes. This led to other difficulties, for instance, negative attitudes towards quality assurance. The findings revealed that staff felt that quality assurance increased workload. They also felt too much pressure in doing their work. As a result, not all of them were willing to carry out quality assurance. This was one of the main obstacles to quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. Thus, developing understanding and encouraging a positive attitude to quality assurance among members of the institutes are required before quality assurance can be implemented successfully.

Third, there was a lack of experts in this area. It is clear that the concept of quality assurance had been developed in the industrial and business sectors. Later, the concept of quality assurance was adopted in higher education institutions in many countries in different parts of the world. Debates on quality assurance were held widely, particularly in the European countries such as the UK, Sweden, and the Netherlands. An attempt to develop systems and models of quality assurance was also made. There is no doubt that there were experts in this area in those countries who were able to give some advice to higher education institutions. This situation was not found in Thailand. Consequently, there seems to be a need for professionalism in Rajabhat Institutes. The findings from previous studies on quality assurance in higher education institutions showed that quality issues were pursued successfully with the help of a professional staff. A report on the study in Sweden stated that universities had a professionally developed and professionally implemented quality programme (Nilsson and Walhen, 2000).

Fourth, a lack of knowledge on quality assurance was also one of the main reasons for unsuccessful implementing of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The evidence from interviews showed that the process of building up knowledge on quality assurance took a long time and it was not easy for members of Rajabhat Institutes to understand quality assurance. In addition, there was a difficulty in identifying the systems of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. This seems to show that Rajabhat Institutes did not provide enough information on their quality assurance system. The institutes did not make clear the model of quality assurance. The information provided in the Handbook of Quality Assurance for Rajabhat Institutes only indicated that 'the model of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes was composed of three components'. There was no information about how the ORIC developed this model. Was it the European or American model? There was no answer to this question in the handbook or any in guidelines for quality assurance.

Fifth, there was a lack of an appropriate management system for quality assurance. The findings from interviews showed that members of the institutes did not know how to commence quality assurance. Other evidence that shows there was a lack of an appropriate management system was the

findings which revealed that Rajabhat Institutes had not completed all processes of carrying out quality assurance although the policy had been introduced in 1996. It could be stated that the progress of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes was slow. Moreover, the findings showed that there were differences in the progress of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. Members of the Quality Assurance Committee from one institute indicated that quality assurance in their institutes was still at an early stage. This seems to show that although the ORIC had encouraged each institute to establish its own mechanism and systems for quality assurance, this was not successful.

Finally, there was some confusion about the quality framework because it was unstable. Thirteen quality factors were used at the beginning of the implementation of quality assurance. Later, they changed to nine factors without any reasonable explanations. The explanation found was because of the change of administration system of higher education in the country. All higher education institutions would be administered under the same ministry, the Ministry of Education Region and Culture. Therefore, all higher education institutions should have the same quality framework for their quality assurance. New quality factors were composed of nine factors. These factors were developed by a professor in one university. After the idea of using nine quality factors was accepted by Rajabhat Institutes as well as other higher education institutions, the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council (ORIC) had a few arrangements in order to establish indicators based on the nine factors. Documents on the Criteria of Quality Assessment for Rajabhat Institutes (ORIC, 2001b) showed that the ORIC set up three meetings in order to consider the quality assessment framework and its criteria. A fourth meeting followed, which focused on the debates on the criteria for quality assessment. Finally, ORIC established forty-nine indicators as a guideline for internal quality assessment in Rajabhat Institutes. The change of quality framework led to the question of its stability. Some members of the institutes viewed that the quality framework in Rajabhat Institutes might change again. If that happened, it would impact on the progress of carrying out quality assurance.

It is noticeable that the difficulties in trying to implement quality assurance found in this study had existed both at the beginning of the implementation and through all processes of quality assurance. These findings would be useful for other higher education institutions that aim to implement quality assurance. These difficulties can be seen as disadvantages of implementing quality assurance in higher education institutions.

By contrast, the findings of the study revealed that one faculty had carried out ISO 9000 and had been awarded the ISO Certificate. At this point, it may be useful to reflect on why this faculty had achieved success. Relevant elements are considered, for instance, timing of the launch quality assurance, leaders, and quality factors. No difference in these elements is apparent. Quality assurance was launched in Rajabhat Institutes at the same time, early of 1997. Similarly, the quality Assurance Report (ORIC, 2001a) showed that the institutes used thirteen factors established by the ORIC as their quality framework. Leaders at institute level were the same people. Thus, it could be assumed that the most important element that led to the success of quality assurance in this faculty seems to be the 'managing system' that was used. At this point, it may be useful to look at basic concept of ISO system. Fisher (1994) stated that 'ISO is based largely on traditional quality control theory'. Kanji (1998) indicated that 'ISO is a set of standards, which requires periodic reviews and revision'. Lzadi, Kashef, and Stadt (1996, p. 5) added that in education, the focus of ISO was documentation, clearly written procedures of all work processes affecting quality within institutions. From these concept particularly the requirement for clear procedures of work processes, it seems easier for Rajabhat Institutes to achieve the ISO standard because Rajabhat Institutes had been working on their standards as well as preparing relevant documents. This corresponded to the requirements of the ISO system. In addition, following working procedures as was stated in the ISO manual seemed to make it easier for this faculty to implement quality assurance. In these circumstances, it would probably be more advantage for Rajabhat Institutes to use a particular system such as ISO and be able to achieve its standard.

There are some points that might be useful to raise before the implementation of quality assurance in other higher education institutions. First, the institutions should make clear the model of quality assurance that will be used. Second, they should have a system for managing quality assurance. There are some alternatives at this stage. An institute can possibly use a quality system or management system such as ISO, TQM or develop its own system. If a new system is decided on, a pilot study should be carried out. Third, the quality assurance model and managing system must be introduced to all members of the institutes. At this stage, a good communication strategy is required as well as knowledge and understanding on quality assurance, awareness of quality assurance, and cooperation from members of the institutes. Fourth, leadership and responsible people for quality assurance are required. Fifth, experts in the area should be consulted for advice and guidance during the process of quality assurance is being implemented. More details of these observations will be offered in the next part of this chapter.

8.4 Quality assurance model in Rajabhat Institutes

This section explains and discusses the model of quality assurance found in this study compared to other models of quality assurance in higher education. It also includes a proposed management strategy for quality assurance model in Rajabhat Institutes.

8.4.1 Development of quality assurance model in Rajabhat Institutes

The model of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes was established by the ORIC in 1996. This model defines quality assurance as having three components. They are: quality control, quality audit and quality assessment. It should be noted that that there is evidence of the development of quality assurance in the European countries where quality assurance originated. There is also evidence of the development of quality assurance in some developing countries such as South Africa, which as stated in Kump's study, is based on a European model from Britain, Denmark, France and the Netherlands (Kump, 1997). By contrast, there is no evidence in any reports or

any guidelines or handbooks of quality assurance in higher education institutions in Thailand showing that their quality assurance model was based on a particular system or model. This could be one of the problems that led to the obstacles to quality assurance in higher education in Thailand including Rajabhat Institutes because members of the institutes did not even know the original model of their quality assurance. If the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council (ORIC) or Rajabhat Institutes made clear that quality assurance in the institute was, for instance, based on the UK model or any country's model, it would be easier for members of the institutes to find out more information about the model being used. This seems to show the difference in academic culture in Thailand compared to other countries, where Thai culture sometime is not aware of or does refer to the origin.

The findings in this study confirm that Rajabhat Institutes worked to implement quality assurance based on the three components mentioned earlier. The literature also shows that the European model of quality assurance had three components. They are quality control, quality audit and quality assessment. Although there was no evidence from the government reports to show that Rajabhat Institutes' quality assurance model was based on any particular model, it is clear that quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes was similar to the European model. In other words, it should be stated that Rajabhat Institutes developed quality assurance based on the European model. The reasons for this claim can be explained as follows:

First, the literature showed that these three components had been defined in the White Paper (Department of Education, 1991 cited in Tovey, 1994):

Quality control is deemed to consist of the procedures used by the institutions themselves in pursuit of quality provision. It is therefore, the responsibility which stays with the university. Quality audit ... centres on the external review of such procedures: an attempt to consider their potential effectiveness. Quality assessment for which the responsibility lies at the level of funding council, is more judgemental review of teaching and provision in the universities.

[Tovey, 1994, p. 80]

The quotation above shows that three components of quality assurance had been well defined in the UK before quality assurance was introduced to higher education institutions in Thailand.

Second, the European model of quality assurance had some similar elements to the elements of quality assurance found in Rajabhat Institutes (see Van Vught & Westerheijden, 1993; Vroeijenstijn, 1995). Van Vught and Westerheijden indicated that there were five common elements. The first element was 'the managing agent' of the quality management system. The second element was 'the mechanism of self-evaluation (or self-study, self-assessment). Mechanism of peer review and especially one or more 'site visit' by external experts was the third element. Fourth, was 'the reporting' of the results of the experience. Finally, there was 'the relationship between the outcomes of quality review systems and the (government) decisions about the funding of higher education activities'. These common elements were used in the models of quality assurance in four countries (UK, the Netherlands, France, and Denmark). Four of them were similar to the elements stated by Van Vught and Westerheijden mentioned earlier. The findings of this study also showed that these common elements existed in quality assurance model in Rajabhat Institutes.

Third, definitions of terms use for quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes were similar to the definitions of quality assurance used in the UK system of higher education quality assurance. For example, the three components of quality assurance in the British context were defined as follows (Van Vught & Westerheijden, 1993).

Quality control: mechanism within institutions for maintaining and enhancing the quality of their provision. Quality audit: external scrutiny aimed at providing guarantees that institutions have suitable quality control mechanism in place. Quality assessment: external peer review of, and judgement about the quality of teaching and learning in institutions.

Considering the meanings of these components defined by the British organization itself (QAA, 1997), the meanings of these key terms are similar to the key terms use in Rajabhat Institutes. However, in practice, Rajabhat Institutes did not follow the meaning as it had already stated in the

handbook of quality assurance, for instance, quality audit in Rajabhat Institutes was composed of both internal and external scrutiny.

The evidence provided above seems to show that the model of quality assurance used in Rajabhat Institutes was similar to the quality assurance model which was developed and used in European countries. This model has three components and has been used in many countries.

Although the findings of the study showed that the quality assurance model in Rajabhat Institutes consists of three components as used in many countries, it seems not to work well. The findings revealed that many obstacles occurred during its implementation. Thus, the study suggests a management strategy in order to improve quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes, which are probably applicable to other higher education institutions which have similar difficulties in trying to implement quality assurance.

8.4.2 Quality assurance model and its management strategy

The proposed management strategy of quality assurance for Rajabhat Institutes presented in this section is therefore based on the international model of quality assurance which has three components. The proposed strategy for the operation of quality assurance presented here aims to resolve some obstacles when quality assurance is implemented in higher education institutions and aim to increase the success of operating quality assurance.

The proposed management strategy of quality assurance for Rajabhat Institutes is as shown in Figure 8.2.

Figure 8.2 The proposed management strategy for quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes and other higher education institutions

Quality assurance model and its management strategy

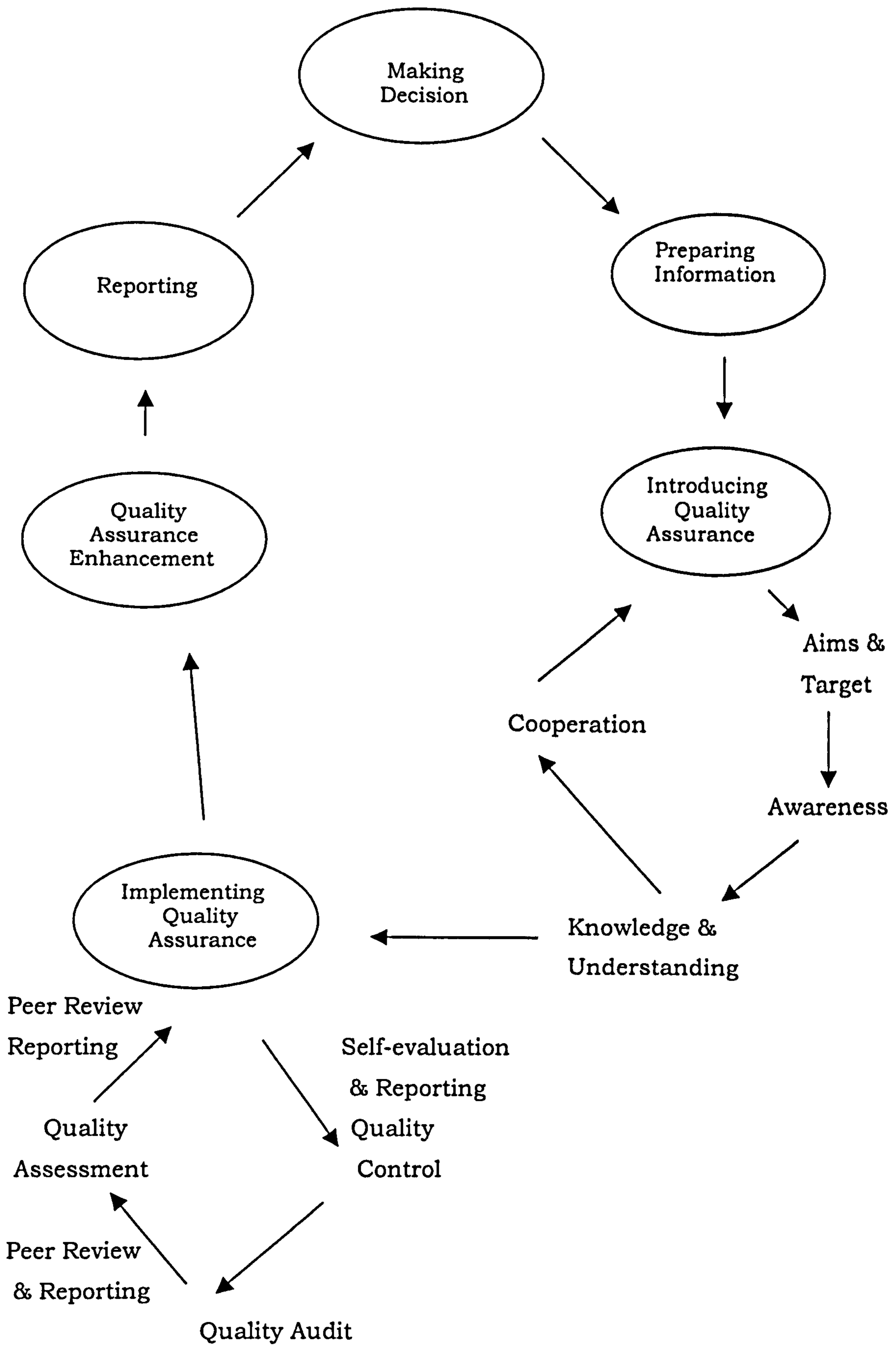


Figure 8.2 shows a proposed management strategy of quality assurance model which consists of six stages. Each stage is derived from the ways to enhance quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes as well as the ways to overcome obstacles to quality assurance that emerged from the study. It is noticeable that the management strategy proposed here consists of six stages. They are: decision making, preparing information, introducing quality assurance, implementing quality assurance, quality assurance enhancement and reporting. In the stage of implementing quality assurance, three strategies: self-evaluation, peer review, and reporting, are used. The detail of operating each stage is presented as follows:

Stage one: Making a decision

Making decision is the first important stage of a management strategy for the quality assurance model. The reason for placing this stage at the beginning of the cycle of quality assurance is because the findings of the study revealed that Rajabhat Institutes had experienced various difficulties in trying to implement quality assurance. The findings also revealed that it took a long time to introduce quality assurance to members of the institutes; however, this process did not work well. Therefore, making decisions is a strategy to be used in order to reduce the difficulties and improve the progress of quality assurance. Brainstorming among experts, employers, administrators, and representative of members of the institutes might be used at this stage. Decisions on a number of elements needs to be made as follows.

First, a decision on a managing system should be taken. This is because the experience from Rajabhat Institutes showed that the institutes did not make clear the systems of quality assurance. At this stage, the institute needs to decide on the system that will be used in order to maintain the quality and standard of its provision. Two alternatives are: 1) using recognised quality systems which have already been developed such as ISO, Balridge Award or Total Quality Management (TQM). The advantages and disadvantages of each type of the system has already been presented briefly in Chapter Two; 2) developing its own system. Literature showed that higher education institutions in some countries such as Sweden have been interested in

developing their own mechanism and systems of quality assurance. The advantage of institutional model of quality assurance is, as Sallis and Hingley (1991) report that it seems more flexible for higher education institutions.

Second, a decision on its quality framework is recommended at the early stage of implementation. The experience from Rajabhat Institutes shows that quality framework was unstable. The ORIC had first established thirteen quality factors and these were changed to nine factors. Changing the quality framework seems to be a weakness of implementing quality assurance because it may cause a slow progress of quality assurance. It may cause negative attitudes to quality assurance among members of staff because they have to review their work based on a new quality framework. In order to resolve this obstacle, the study suggests that the institutes should make clear their quality framework before it has been implemented.

Third, there is a need for a decision on responsible people, a unit within the institute, and organisation. The institute should 'put the right people on the right job'. They are required to have good knowledge and understanding of quality assurance, and be willing to be responsible for quality assurance. In addition, a responsible organisation or agency that will be in charge of quality assurance should be established at the early stage or before quality assurance has been implemented in higher education institutions in order to cooperate with members of institutions and support higher education institutions.

The experiences from Rajabhat Institutes showed that each institute had set up Quality Assurance Committees at different levels. It had also established an office for quality assurance. The findings also showed that some institutes had a Vice-President responsible for quality assurance. These are all possible ways of setting up responsible people and a unit within the institute for quality assurance.

In terms of responsible organisation, the experiences from Rajabhat Institutes also showed that the establishment of a responsible organisation (OESE) came too late to deal with quality assurance in higher education in

Rajabhat Institutes as well as other higher education institutions of the country. This leads to an impact of further step of quality assurance (quality assessment) in Thailand, which it will take a few years to complete.

Young and Cooke (2002) suggest that four specific stages must be achieved in decision making. They are: 1) issues must be recognised; 2) it must then be made visible; 3) it must get access to the relevant decision-making arena; and 4) it must succeed at the implementation stage. This seems to derive from a management change, which states:

... In order for academics to accept and implement changes, they must trust and 'own' the process in which problems are defined and solutions are designed.

[Van Vught & Westerheijden, 1993, p. 22]

Stage two: Preparing information

The findings of my study showed that the Handbook of Quality Assurance did not contain enough information on how to carry out quality assurance within the institutes. Thus, the first information that the institute needs to prepare, is a handbook, guidelines, or working manual for quality assurance which should include how to implement quality assurance. Second, there is a need for information on the system of quality assurance, its development, and advantages and disadvantages of the system. Confusion on the system of quality assurance needs to be resolved. Third, it should include aims and the targets of quality assurance within the institutes. A whole cycle of an institute's plan and schedules for quality assurance should be prepared.

Stage three: Introducing Quality Assurance

Introducing quality assurance to members of the institutes is a crucial stage because it may lead to a negative or positive attitude to quality assurance. The institute should avoid the messages 'quality assurance gives staff more work to do, and staff have been under greater pressure to do their work'. Introducing quality assurance should include four elements (as shown in Figure 8.2): aims and targets of quality assurance, awareness of quality assurance among members of the institute, knowledge and understanding of

quality assurance, and cooperation among staff. There may be a need for professional training at this stage. After the stage of introducing quality assurance, a follow-up process is suggested. This is in order to be assured that this stage is successful. After quality assurance has been introduced, members of the institute should be able to answer questions on: 1) the managing system(s) that will be used both in the institute and their faculties; 2) responsible committees and their responsibilities; 3) roles of staff in quality assurance, what they have to do, and when they have to complete their tasks, who can help them resolve problems if there are some difficulties; and 4) their willingness to carrying out quality assurance. The answers to these questions will indicate success and failure of introducing quality assurance. If this stage fails, other strategies need to be used before the implementation of quality assurance.

Stage four: Implementing quality assurance

Implementing quality assurance is another crucial stage because it will put policy into practice. During this stage, three components of quality assurance based on the international model of quality assurance will be implemented as in the following details.

1) Quality control

The meaning of quality control in this proposed model is 'the mechanism within the institute for maintaining and enhancing the quality of its provision'. In order to achieve this meaning of quality control, the institute needs to base its provision on indicators as stated in the quality framework.

As has already been mentioned in Chapter Three, the responsibilities of Rajabhat Institutes consist of six functions (see page 71-72). Therefore, the ORIC established a framework of quality assurance which included all of these responsibilities. This framework was composed of nine factors and forty-five indicators. At this stage, self-evaluation (or self-study, self-assessment) will be used. Self-evaluation seems to be an international strategy at this stage because it has been used widely in higher education

institutions in many countries. Donaldson (1994, cited in Harman, 1999, p. 353) stated that self-evaluation has many positive features.

During the process of quality control, all members of the institute should report their work so that it relates to all elements of the quality framework. The administrators (at institute, faculty, and programme levels) as well as quality assurance committees have to take their responsibilities in order to ensure the quality of educational provision. The administrators should have sound knowledge of quality assurance and how to operate quality assurance within the institute.

There are two suggestions for implementing quality assurance at this stage. First, the administrators of the institutes at three different levels (institute, faculty, and programme) should have a good knowledge and understanding of quality assurance and how to operate quality assurance within the institute, faculty and programme. Second, administrators at institute level (President, Vice-President) and Quality Assurance Committee members at institute level should take responsibility for advising members of the institute on any difficulties that occur while implementing quality assurance.

2) Quality audit

The international meaning of quality audit is 'scrutiny aimed at providing guarantees that institutions have suitable quality control mechanisms in place'. The strategy for quality assurance to be used at this stage is 'peer review'. Peer review in the audit process aims to scrutinise the mechanism of quality assurance. Therefore, the institute is required to provide information on how it maintains and enhances the quality of its provision.

Quality audit in the proposed model should be: 1) the responsibility of an independent organisation in order to avoid any bias during audit process. A site visit should take at least three days in order to gain rich information from the institute, administrators, staff, and students.

3) Quality assessment

Quality assessment focuses on the judgement about the quality of teaching and learning within the institute. The case found in Rajabhat Institutes showed that this process is the responsibility of the Office of Education Standards and Evaluation (OESE), which was established by the government in November 2000. The main responsibilities of OESE are, to establish external evaluation systems, develop standards and criteria for external evaluation, evaluation, and reporting (further detail see page 77). When this study was carried out, quality assessment by OESE had not been launched in Rajabhat Institutes. However, documents published by OESE (2000) showed that OESE had developed standards and criteria for quality assessment and would complete the assessment in higher education institutions including Rajabhat Institutes in 2005. Although the process of quality assessment had not been completed, there is the possibility that OESE will publish standards and criteria as a guideline for quality assessment for all higher education institutions.

Quality assessment by external organisation will be the last stage of quality assurance in higher education institutions. Thus, the study suggests that the institutes should prepare for the assessment process by improving the standard of their teaching and learning, and providing reports ready for assessment process. In addition, foreigners' experiences appear to show that 'research' is one of the main focuses of quality assessment, for instance, in the UK. The quality framework of the UK higher education institutions includes both the quality of teaching and quality of the research conducts by members of staff. This will be the next task of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes that should be included. The idea of using experts in specific fields of research is also recommended, though the country lacks experts in many fields of study.

Stage five: Enhancement of quality assurance

The proposed management strategy of quality assurance model separates the stage of quality assurance enhancement from quality assurance. The idea is

that after three components have been completed, an institute will be able to analyse its strengths and weaknesses. The findings of my study showed that only one Rajabhat Institute had included strengths and weaknesses in their institute's Self-Assessment Reports. All obstacles to quality assurance within the institution should be considered and the measures to overcome them should be decided. The ways to enhance quality assurance should be considered and used after the stage of implementing quality assurance, or as soon as the institute is able to deal with it. The ways to enhance quality assurance should be included in the reports published by the institute. This can be seen as 'continuous improvement' within the institute. It can also be seen as a trend of quality assurance in the next cycle.

Stage six: Reporting

Reporting can be separated into two different types based on the people responsible. The first type is the responsibility of the institute to publish the reports, for instance, self-study or self-assessment reports. Self-study reports are the tasks that members of the institutes 'have carried out or have not carried out' while self-assessment reports further detail how well those tasks have been carried out. The second type of reporting is the responsibility of the government body or independent organisation. After external assessment, the report should be published and made available to the public.

The literature shows that the cycle of quality assurance might take five to six years to complete (see for instance Westerheijden, 1999; Segers and Dochy, 1996). However, the case in Rajabhat Institutes took longer because of various limitations that occurred as already presented.

Finch (1994, p. 63-73) stated that 'an organisation wishing to improve its level of quality performance significantly generally passes through five stages of development. They are awareness, measurement methods, process focus, alignment of objectives, and customer orientation'. It is noticeable that the proposed management strategies for quality assurance presented in Figure 8.2 has included the five stages as Finch indicated. For instance, the decision making process in the proposed model has already included

objectives and customer orientation. Awareness also exists in the process of introducing quality assurance. Quality control and quality audit are clearly concerned with process focus. Finally, measurement methods have been used during the three components of quality assurance, and before the publishing of reports.

The six stages of the model of quality assurance as shown in Figure 8.2 should be used at the first cycle of implementation quality assurance. In the second stage, some aspects should be included at the stage of decision making, for instance, strengths and weakness from the first cycle of quality assurance, trends of quality assurance (including obstacles and the ways to overcome the obstacles to quality assurance). This aims to enhance quality assurance within the institutes.

8.5 Summary

The chapter has explained and discussed the benefits and costs of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. A proposed management strategy for quality assurance model has been presented in this chapter. Four main observations have been made in the chapter. First, although the findings of the study showed that Rajabhat Institutes had experienced some difficulties in trying to implemented quality assurance, some benefits appear to have occurred, for instance, improving quality within the institutes, changing working systems, accountability, and changing working culture. Second, by contrast, this study revealed the costs of quality assurance for Rajabhat Institutes, for instance, negative attitudes among members of the institutes, it was a long term task, it cost more money. Third, further findings found in this study seem to show that the operation of quality assurance in Rajabaht Institutes was not successful. Some reasons for unsuccessful quality assurance were found, for instance, a lack of pilot study before the implementation of quality assurance, Rajabhat Institutes seemed not to be ready to implement this policy, a lack of experts in this area, a lack of knowledge on quality assurance, a lack of appropriate managing system, and there was some confusion on the quality framework. Fourth, a proposed model of quality assurance for Rajabhat Institutes has presented. It is

composed of six elements: making decisions, preparing information, introducing quality assurance, implementing quality assurance, quality assurance enhancement and report. Three strategies are used in this model. They are self-evaluation, peer review, and reporting.

It is hoped that the proposed management strategies will be able applicable to other higher education institutions that have similar circumstances as Rajabhat Institutes, or intend to implement quality assurance in their institutions.

The next chapter summarises the main findings of the study and make suggestions for further studies on quality assurance.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

The conclusion chapter is divided into five parts. The first part summarises the main findings of this study. The second part highlights the strengths and weaknesses of the study. The third part focuses on the implication of the study. The fourth part presents some suggestions for further study on quality assurance. The last part of this chapter provides the conclusions of the study on the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand.

This study aimed to explore the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand. The study focused on two main research questions, 1) How does quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes operate? 2) How can the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes be enhanced? Four relevant aspects are involved in the first research question. They are: quality assurance systems, people who are responsible for quality assurance, the ways quality assurance has been carried out, and the impact of quality assurance on Rajabhat Institutes. The second research question involved five relevant aspects. They are: the obstacles to quality assurance, the ways to overcome the obstacles to quality assurance, people who are responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance, the ways quality assurance should be enhanced, and the people who should be responsible for quality assurance enhancement.

In order to answer the research questions, a questionnaire and interviews were used to collect data from five Rajabhat Institutes. The questionnaire, which consists of twenty-five questions, was used to collect data from ninety-one teaching staff. Four interview schedules were used to collect data from Quality Assurance Committee members, students, employers of graduates from Rajabhat Institutes, the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes, and the administrators in the ministries in Bangkok. Documents from Rajabhat Institutes and government reports were also used to support data from questionnaire and interviews. The research fieldwork was carried out in Thailand during July-November 2001.

9.1 Main findings of the study

The first research question sought to explain the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The main findings are summarised as follows.

9.1.1. Rajabhat Institutes operated quality assurance based on the guideline established by the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council (ORIC) in 1996. This guideline introduced four main aspects: 1) definition of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes, 2) structure of quality assurance committees in Rajabhat Institutes, 3) thirteen quality factors, and 4) standards and criteria for the thirteen quality factors. They also framed their quality assurance on three processes termed 'three components of quality assurance'. These components were: 1) quality control; 2) quality audit; and 3) quality assessment.

Several relevant tasks were carried out in Rajabhat Institutes during the quality control and quality audit processes. For instance, an announcement and introduction of a quality assurance policy within Rajabhat Institutes, the determination of relevant factors and criteria suitable for the institutes, setting up Quality Assurance Committees and a responsible office, carrying out self-study and publishing a self-study report, and carrying out internal and external audit. For the quality assessment process, Rajabhat Institutes had to carry out self-assessment at programme level and publish self-assessment reports. The findings of the study showed that there were differences in the progress of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. The majority of Rajabhat Institutes were working on quality audit. Some of them had published self-assessment reports but few of them were at the stage of quality control.

The findings also showed that Rajabhat Institutes had not completed all the processes of quality assurance. External quality assessment, the third component of quality assurance, was the responsibility of the Office of Educational Standards and Evaluation (OESE) recently established by the government. This process had not been completed when this study was carried out. The first external assessment was due to commence in 2002.

Now external assessment by the OESE has been carried out in Rajabhat Institutes and other higher institutions in the country.

There are some differences in the responsibilities of the national agency for quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes and previous studies. In this study, the Office of Rajabaht Institutes was responsible for external quality audit and the OESE (national agency) was responsible for external quality assessment. For the universities, the Ministries of University Affairs was responsible for external quality audit and the OESE was in charge of external quality assessment. By contrast, Nilsson and Walhen's study (2000) showed that the National Agency for Higher Education in Sweden was responsible for both quality audit and quality assessment whereas in the case of Rajabhat Institutes, the Office of Rajabaht Institutes was responsible for external quality audit and the OESE (national agency) was responsible for external quality assessment.

Harman (1998) indicated that in a small number of countries, the responsibility for the aspects of national level or external quality assurance was under the control of an agency set up by higher education institutions themselves, for instance, in the Netherlands, Italy and New Zealand. By contrast, in most countries, including the UK the responsibility of quality assurance at national level was under an independent agency.

In terms of the reports on quality assurance, Seger and Dochy (1996) indicated that most self-study reports present data in a descriptive way without a critical analysis. Kell (1991, cited in Seger and Dochy 1996, p. 126) stated that this was also the case with the accreditation system in the US from which in almost eighty percent of the accreditation documentation, a critical self-analysis was missing. This was also the case in Rajabhat Institutes, where documents showed that self-study reports were written in a descriptive way and did not include a critical analysis.

9.1.2 The findings on the systems of quality assurance that had been used in Rajabhat Institutes showed that different groups of people (teaching staff, Quality Assurance Committee members, administrators of Rajabhat

Institutes, and administrators in the ministries in Bangkok) had different views on the systems of quality assurance. The majority of teaching staff who completed the questionnaires indicated that it was TQM while the majority of Quality Assurance Committee members, administrators of Rajabhat Institutes, and administrators in the ministries claimed that it was the ORIC system.

Evidence from the study revealed that many systems of quality assurance had been introduced to Rajabhat Institutes since 1996 particularly, TQM and ISO 9000. After quality assurance had become policy for all higher education institutions in Thailand, the Office of Rajabhat Institutes Council established quality assurance guidelines in the Handbook of Quality Assurance for Rajabhat Institutes. Four main topics were introduced in the handbook of quality assurance. They were: definition of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes, the structure of Quality Assurance Committees within Rajabhat Institutes, thirteen quality factors, and standards and criteria for the thirteen factors (ORIC, 1996). However, there was no information on quality assurance systems in this handbook.

Regarding the aims of quality assurance policy for Rajabhat Institutes established in this handbook, Rajabhat Institutes had to develop their quality assurance systems as well as establish their quality assurance mechanism (ORIC, 1996). This implied that they were able to monitor their quality assurance based on different systems. Documents from the Rajabhat Institutes Quality Assurance Report Phase 1 also showed that Rajabhat Institutes developed their quality assurance systems based on ISO, TQM, and Malcom Balridge Award (ORIC, 1999a). This may have led to the finding from the study that there were some difficulties in identifying the systems of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. There is not enough evidence to identify a single system as having been used in Rajabhat Institutes. Many systems, for instance, TQM, ISO, and ORIC system were indicated as having been introduced and carried out in Rajabhat Institutes. In addition, some members of staff appeared not to know the systems of quality assurance in their institutes.

There are some differences in the findings of the systems of quality assurance in higher education institutions in this study and previous studies. The findings from previous studies showed that higher education institutions in different countries, for instance, the US, and the UK and Sweden (see for instance, Moreland and Clark, 1998; Kanji, Tambi and Wallace, 1999; Kanji, and Tambi, 1999; Nilsson and Walhen, 2000) applied only one system of quality assurance in their institutions. In the UK, a single system of quality assurance has been introduced since HEQC was responsible for quality audit and enhancement (later it is the responsibility of QAA). The system consists of four features: regular and systematic internal reviews, external reviews of institutions' educational effectiveness, reporting the results from internal review and external evaluations, and coordination with professional and other external accrediting bodies (HEQC, 1997). By contrast, Rajabhat Institutes appear to have adopted many systems. This seems to show that the systems of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes were still unstable at the time of this study and it may have led to some confusion on the systems of quality assurance among the members of Rajabhat Institutes.

9.1.3 Four Quality Assurance Committees were responsible for quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. These committees were set up at three different levels: institute, faculty, and programme levels. There were two committees at institute level, and one committee at faculty and programme levels. Each committee had its own responsibilities for quality assurance.

9.1.4 Different groups of people indicated that quality assurance had an impact on Rajabhat Institutes in several ways as follows:

1) Impact on Rajabhat Institutes.

The most significant findings from teaching staff, Quality Assurance Committee members and the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes showed that quality assurance made four significant impacts on Rajabhat Institutes. Firstly, it impacted on working systems within Rajabhat Institutes. This impact was indicated by the majority of the teaching staff, Quality Assurance Committee members and the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes. Secondly,

it created a greater workload. This was indicated by teaching staff and Quality Assurance Committee members. Thirdly, it increased spending. This impact was indicated by teaching staff and Quality Assurance Committee members. Fourthly, it helped Rajabhat Institutes improve teaching and learning. This impact was indicated by teaching staff, Quality Assurance Committee members, and the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes.

2) Impact on the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes

The findings showed that different groups of people had different views on the impact of quality assurance on the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes. The findings from the majority of teaching staff revealed that the administrators had to be more responsible and give more attention to administering the institutes. Similarly, teaching staff indicated that the administrators had to administer the institutes accountably. They were required to demonstrate more vision, knowledge and understanding on quality assurance. They needed to be the leaders of quality assurance.

The majority of Quality Assurance Committee members argued that quality assurance made the administrators work more systematically and become more aware of the standards and quality of the institutes while all administrators agreed that quality assurance helped them to improve working systems within the institutes.

The finding on the impact of quality assurance on the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes seems to reflect the role of leadership in quality assurance. It is clear that the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes, particularly, the Presidents of Rajabhat Institutes are leaders of this new policy. As a result, they were expected by the members of the institutes to play their role efficiently.

3) Impact on staff

The findings from the majority of teaching staff, Quality Assurance Committee members and the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes revealed

that quality assurance encouraged staff to work systematically. They had more work to do and had to pay more attention to improving their work. They had more motivation to improve their work. They had more cooperation in carrying out quality assurance. At the same time, they were more worried about their work because they were audited by both internal and external auditors.

4) Impact on students

The majority of teaching staff, Quality Assurance Committee members and the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes believed that students were more involved in teaching and learning and that they would gain more benefit from the teaching and learning process. They considered that the quality of students would improve if quality assurance was carried out successfully. They also indicated that in the long term, the impact of quality assurance on students would be positive. Similarly, the majority of students indicated that quality assurance was useful for them, and it had a positive impact on their studies. For instance, they were more involved in teaching and learning. They had more opportunity to learn and practise on English and computer courses. Students also indicated that graduates from Rajabhat Institutes would be of a better quality and more accepted by employers.

5) Impact on teaching and learning process

The findings from the majority of teaching staff, Quality Assurance Committee members, and the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes showed that the teaching and learning process in Rajabhat Institutes had been improved since quality assurance had been implemented.

6) Impact on employers

The most significant findings from teaching staff was that quality assurance would make employers believe in the quality of graduates from Rajabhat Institutes. Graduates from Rajabhat Institutes would be more in demand. The majority of Quality Assurance Committee members indicated that

employers would benefit from quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes because the graduates from Rajabhat Institutes would be qualified and meet the employers' requirements. Similarly, the majority of students indicated that employers would benefit from quality assurance because the quality of graduates from Rajabhat Institutes would be improved. This corresponded to the findings from employers themselves because the majority of employers indicated that they would benefit from quality assurance if Rajabhat Institutes were able to improve the quality of their students. In addition, graduates from Rajabhat Institutes would be sought after in the job market.

The second research question aimed to explain how the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes could be enhanced. The main findings from the study were as follows.

9.1.5 Different groups of people: teaching staff, Quality Assurance Committee members, and the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes indicated that various difficulties had occurred during the period when quality assurance was implemented in Rajabhat Institutes. These difficulties are as follows.

- 1) A lack of knowledge and understanding on quality assurance;
- 2) A lack of appropriate system of quality assurance;
- 3) A lack of cooperation from staff;
- 4) A lack of readiness for quality assurance within Rajabhat Institutes;
- 5) A lack of attention to quality assurance from the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes;
- 6) A lack of clear vision and mission on quality assurance;
- 7) Workload of staff was too high;
- 8) A lack of attention on quality assurance from staff;
- 9) Unstable criteria and standard of quality assurance;
- 10) A lack of strong leadership on quality assurance;
- 11) A lack of finance to support quality assurance.

Among these difficulties, the most significant difficulties indicated by teaching staff were a lack of knowledge and understanding on quality

assurance, a lack of cooperation from staff, and a lack of appropriate quality assurance systems. The most significant difficulties indicated by Quality Assurance Committee members were a lack of knowledge and understanding on quality assurance, a lack of an appropriate system, and a lack of readiness. Similarly, the most significant difficulty indicated by the majority of the administrators of Rajbhat Institutes was a lack of understanding of quality assurance among members of the institutes. Therefore, it could be stated that lack of knowledge and understanding of quality assurance among members of the institutes was the most significant difficulty with quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes because it was indicated by the majority of three different groups of people. A lack of appropriate systems, and a lack of cooperation by staff were also significant difficulties because they were identified by many respondents from different groups: teaching staff, Quality Assurance Committee, and the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes.

There were some similarities and differences in the findings on the difficulties in carrying out quality assurance from this study and previous studies. This study and previous studies revealed some obstacles to quality assurance in higher education institutions, for instance, a lack of transparency about quality assurance, a lack of knowledge and understanding on quality assurance, poor communication on quality assurance within the institutions, increasing workload (see for instance, Nilsson and Walhen, 2000; Moreland and Clark, 1998; Kanji, Tambi, and Wallace, 1999; Kanji and Tambi, 1999). In Billing and Thomas's (2000) pilot study, it was pointed out that higher education institutions need resources to establish and operate an internal quality assurance system. However, this study revealed various obstacles to quality assurance. Those obstacles have not been noted in previous studies that have been located. These obstacles were, for example, a lack of an appropriate system of quality assurance, a lack of readiness for quality assurance, a lack of attention from members of the institutes, a lack of clear vision and mission, criteria and standards of quality assurance were unstable, a lack of strong leaders, and a lack of budget to support quality assurance.

9.1.6 Different groups of people indicated that various measures were used to overcome the obstacles to quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. Teaching staff indicated that Rajabhat Institutes set up meetings or provided training courses on quality assurance for staff. Rajabhat Institutes encouraged all staff to carry out quality assurance. They sent their staff to attend training courses on quality assurance and promoted quality assurance to all staff. They supported the budget for quality assurance. Quality Assurance Committee members indicated that their institutes set up meetings and training courses on quality assurance for members of the institutes. The institutes sent staff to attend seminars or training courses on quality assurance and attempted to resolve staff's teaching load. Similarly, the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes indicated that they set up meetings on quality assurance for members of the institutes.

The evidence from the study showed that Rajabhat Institutes used a variety of measures in order to try to overcome the obstacles to quality assurance within their institutes. Among these measures, meetings and training courses on quality assurance for members of the institutes were the most significant measures taken within the institutes because they were indicated by the majority of different groups of people.

9.1.7 The administrators of Rajabhat Institute, Educational Quality Assurance Office, and Quality Assurance Committee members at all levels were indicated as responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

The majority of teaching staff considered that the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes at all levels (the President, Vice-President, Directors, Deans of faculties, Programme leaders) were responsible for overcoming quality assurance. The majority of Quality Assurance Committee members indicated that the Educational Quality Assurance Office was responsible while the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes were all agreed that the Presidents of Rajabhat Institutes were responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance.

Although teaching staff, Quality Assurance Committee members and the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes had different views on the people who were responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance, it is noticeable that the people who were in charge of quality assurance can be considered as two different groups. The first group was the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes which includes the President, Vice-President, Directors, Deans, and Programme leaders. The second group was the responsible people or organisation for quality assurance within Rajabhat Institutes. This group refers to the Educational Quality Assurance Office, and Quality Assurance Committee members at all levels.

9.1.8 Teaching staff, Quality Assurance Committee members and the administrator of Rajabhat Institutes indicated various alternatives to enhance the operation of quality assurance within Rajabhat Institutes. The most important suggestions were raising the awareness and importance of quality assurance among members of staff as well as increasing the understanding of quality assurance among staff. These suggestions were made by the majority of teaching staff and Quality Assurance Committee members. Other suggestions that were indicated by different groups of people were, for instance, choosing an appropriate system of quality assurance, and improving administration systems.

9.1.9 All members of Rajabhat Institutes as well as the administrators were seen as being essential to be involved in enhancing the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes.

The majority of teaching staff and Quality Assurance Committee members felt that all members should be involved in enhancing the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. By contrast, the majority of the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes and the administrators from the ministries indicated that the administrators of Rajabhat Institutes should be directly involved.

There are some similarities in the suggested ways to enhance quality assurance between previous studies and this study, for instance, Kanji,

Tambi and Wallace's study (1999) found that leadership could play a more important role. This study also found that Rajabhat Institutes required strong leadership in order to implement quality assurance successfully. In addition, a few positive characteristics of a leader (from staff's expectation) was suggested in this study such as the need to be well qualified and having a good understanding of quality assurance, having a clear vision and mission on quality assurance, and being able to choose an appropriate system or create a system of quality assurance for the institute. This is supported by Barnett (1992, p. 79-80) who stated that 'Institutional managers can play an important role in identifying elements constituting the institution's quality assurance systems, in making them explicit, in establishing frameworks for maintaining quality, in sharpening the responsibilities towards quality of different postholders, and raising awareness across the institution that quality matters'.

In short, this investigation aimed to answer two main research questions on how quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes operates, and how the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes could be enhanced. On the basis of the research data and the findings presented earlier, it seems that the study has provided sufficient information to answer the research questions of the study.

9.2 Strengths and weaknesses of the study

This section on strengths and weaknesses of the study focuses on the research methodology and data from the study.

9.2.1 Strengths of the study

Four different features can be seen as strengths of the study. Firstly, the use of different research methods to collect data gives a strength to the study. In this study, a questionnaire was used to collect data from teaching staff in five Rajabhat Institutes and interviews were used to collect data from different groups of people: Quality Assurance Committee members, administrators of Rajabhat Institutes, students, employers, and the administrators in the

ministries. Documents were used to support data from questionnaires and interviews. Using different methods to collect data allows the researcher to obtain a variety of information on the same issues. It can also use the strengths of each method to overcome the deficiencies of the other; and it is likely to achieve a higher degree of validity and reliability for the study (Blaikie, 1998; Burgess, 1984 cited in Sarantakos 1988).

Secondly, the data that has been collected is primary. The advantage of preliminary data is that it is more reliable than data from secondary sources.

Thirdly, the research design of the study produced both qualitative and quantitative data. This can be considered as one of the strengths of the methodology used in this study because both qualitative and quantitative research have their own strengths. A quantitative method is suitable for measuring objective facts. It focuses on variables and reliability. It can collect many cases or subjects (Crosswell 1994, Denzin and Lincoln 1994, Guba and Lincoln 1994, Mostyn 1985 cited in Neuman, 1997, p. 14). By contrast, the qualitative method constructs social reality, using thematic analysis and the researcher is more involved during the fieldwork. In this study, questionnaires were used to collect facts and opinions on quality assurance from a large number of the members of the teaching staff in five Rajabhat Institutes. The questionnaires used in this study mainly produced quantitative data. Similarly, interviews were used to collect opinions from different groups of people on quality assurance and they produced qualitative data.

Finally, as has already been mentioned in Chapter One (see page 2) there was a lack of study of quality assurance in higher education institutions in Thailand, particularly in Rajabhat Institutes. Therefore, the outcomes of this study which produce original findings and useful knowledge on quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes can be considered as one of the strengths of this study.

9.2.2 Weakness of the study

One aspect that may be seen as a weakness of the study is that when the study was carried out the implementation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes seemed to be at an early stage because they had not completed all the processes of quality assurance when this study commenced. This may lead to the following effects. Firstly, there was not enough evidence from the study to explain how quality assessment had been carried out in Rajabhat Institutes. Secondly, there was not a mature system of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. Thirdly, the impact of quality assurance had not completely worked through the system.

9.3 Implications of the study

The findings of the study show that Rajabhat Institutes had experienced some difficulties in trying to implement quality assurance. There was a difficulty in identifying the systems of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. In addition, some members of the institutes appeared not to know the systems of quality assurance in their institutes. This could imply that communication on quality assurance as well as the process of introducing quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes did not work well. It could be stated that there were some weaknesses at the stage of introducing quality assurance to members of Rajabhat Institutes. In practice, there is a necessity for clear information on quality assurance, particularly the basic concept of each quality assurance system at the early stage of introducing quality assurance to members of Rajabhat Institutes. The findings of the study showed that Rajabhat Institutes introduced their quality assurance through the guidelines in the handbook of quality assurance as well as through seminars and meetings on quality assurance. Therefore, the guidelines of quality assurance should provide clear information on these relevant aspects below in order to overcome the difficulties during the process of introducing quality assurance.

- 1) Basic concept of quality assurance in higher education, including definition of relevant operational key terms;
- 2) The systems of quality assurance in higher education;

- 3) Strengths and weaknesses of each quality assurance system;
- 4) Framework of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes;
- 5) Responsibilities of members of Rajabhat Institutes on quality assurance; and
- 6) How to carry out each quality assurance system in higher education institutions.

The information on these relevant aspects can be published separately in the handbook of quality assurance and the manual of quality assurance for Rajabhat Institutes. Strengths and weaknesses of each quality assurance system will be useful for Rajabhat Institutes to choose the most appropriate systems. In addition, a follow-up process should be used after the stage of introducing quality assurance so that they can resolve the problem if some of the members could not understand or could not carry out quality assurance.

The finding showed that the quality framework in Rajabhat Institutes was unstable. It was changed from thirteen to nine factors. In addition, there was no national organisation responsible for quality assurance. This can be seen as one of the weaknesses of decision making and administration systems at national level. The study suggests that the government should make clear their quality framework before its implementation in higher education institutions.

During the process of carrying out quality assurance, the study suggests that Rajabhat Institutes should make clear the responsibilities of members of the institutes regarding quality assurance. Members of the institutes need to have an awareness of quality assurance. There is a need for sufficient knowledge and understanding on quality assurance as well as cooperation on quality assurance. After the three components of quality assurance have been completed, Rajabhat Institutes should report their strengths and weaknesses in their report. This information will be useful for quality assurance enhancement.

The ways to enhance quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes found in this study (see page 208-215) can be considered in two categories. Firstly, it

involves quality assurance management. The suggestions to enhance quality assurance in this category compose of: 1) using of appropriate system; 2) good communication and having clear information on quality assurance; 3) strong leadership; and 4) managing strategies during its implementation. Secondly, it involves perceptions of people and attitudes towards quality assurance. There are necessities for: 1) positive perception and attitude of quality assurance; 2) awareness and importance of quality assurance among members of the institutes; 3) knowledge and understanding of quality assurance; and 4) cooperation from members of the institutes. Some of the elements summarised in these two categories were also found from previous studies, for instance, a need for strong leadership, communication and cooperation on quality assurance (see for instance, Nilsson and Walhen 2000; Kanji and Tambi, 1999).

9.4 Conclusion of the study

Conclusions of the study can be summarised as follows.

9.4.1 Rajabhat Institutes operated their quality assurance based on an international model of quality assurance which is composed of three components. Although this model has been used widely and effectively in many countries particularly in Europe, the case of Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand is slightly different because many obstacles occurred through all the processes of carrying out quality assurance.

9.4.2 Three methodologies were used for quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. They were: self-study, peer review, and reporting. These methodologies were also found from previous studies (see for instance Nilsson and Walhen, 2000; Bitzer and Maherbe, 1995; Sharp, Munn and Peterson, 1997; Billing and Thomas, 2000). Literature showed that these methodologies can be seen as common elements of international models of quality assurance used in European countries, for instance, the UK, Netherlands, France, and Denmark (Van Vught and Westerheijden 1993; Jourdeany, 1996).

9.4.3 Various difficulties in trying to implement quality assurance can be seen as a lesson for the government in trying to implement a new policy, particularly a policy from abroad which has been developed in different cultures and the Thai people are not familiar with. In addition, quality assurance involves different groups of people. It was not easy for Rajabhat Institutes and other higher education institutions in the country to achieve its implementation. Trying to implement quality assurance in higher education institutions involves the management of change within organisation which it should be learned and accepted by members of organisation. Moreland and Clark (1998, p. 319) state that 'staff have had to make senses of new context and find means of coping with the impact of the change'. Barnett (1992, p. 79) states that:

Good management is certainly important for the effective conduct of institutions of higher education, and the quality of their activities is also important.

Kanji, Tambi and Wallace (1999) also indicated that in order to move institutions towards their goals, the institutions were confronted with many barriers that were difficult to overcome. However, many barriers originated from the institutions' members themselves by way of resistance of change, lack of commitment and fear of failure. If quality assurance could be nurtured into the senses of all people in the institutions, then organisational members would engage in cooperation and commitment. In addition, as Thornhill states,

The implementation of strategic change is likely to be problematic. This is especially likely to be the case in situations where this type of change involves people, and in which personal relationship and emotional responses are predominant... Change seen as threatening is also likely to meet resistance and this will require careful implementation.

[Thornhill, *et al.*, 2000. p. 14)

From the quotation above, it seems to be clear that in order to implement quality assurance successfully, the institute has to be aware of the managing of change within the institution because it involves people, and its implementation seems problematic. It needs to be implemented carefully. To achieve its implementation, it depends on relevant factors within the institutes, for instance, institutes' culture, the political context and an

appropriate management approach. Burnes (1996) explained that the culture refers to the beliefs, values, and norms of the organisation.

9.4.4 The way Rajabhat Institutes implemented quality assurance can be seen as a top-down model because the policy was led by the government, and implemented by the institution. Thronhill indicated that top down, and bottom up approaches are the methods used to implement change (Thronhill, *et al.*, 2000). However, top-down approach is typically initiated and led from the top and has often been inspired by writers. (see for instance, Beer *et al.* 1990, Hendry 1995 cited in Thornhill, *et al.*, 2000).

9.4.5 Although Rajabhat Institutes experienced some difficulties in trying to implement quality assurance, they had some benefits such as improving working systems, improving teaching and learning processes, and changing working culture within the institutes.

9.4.6 Quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes had not been fully implemented. Quality assessment by the national agency had not been initiated when this study was carried out. At the first cycle of carrying out quality assurance, Rajabhat Institutes mainly focused on 'quality of students, administration, and management system' within organisations which means the institutes focused on the quality of teaching as well as their management systems. However, Rajabhat Institutes had not included quality of research. In the UK, the model of quality assessment assesses the quality of teaching and research separately. Conducting research is also one of the responsibilities of Rajabhat Institutes and also other higher education institutions of the country. However, there was no evidence from this study to show that this issue has been considered in Rajabhat Institutes and in other higher education institutions. This is probably because quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes focused on the quality of teaching rather than the quality of research as it stated in the Handbook of Quality Assurance that 'at the early stage of implementing quality assurance, Rajabhat Institutes should focus on the quality of students, and the institute's administration and management' (ORIC, 1996, p. 4). Quality of research could be a further step of quality assurance for higher education institutions and Rajabhat

Institutes. However, at that time, it may have led to another problem of quality assurance in Thailand because the country still lacks experts in many fields of research. In order to assess the quality of research, there is the possibility of cooperation with professionals from European countries particularly the UK who have many years of experience in assessing the quality of research in higher education institutions.

9.4.7 The study attempts to propose a management strategy of quality assurance model for Rajabhat Institutes. This strategy develops from experiences learned from the case in Rajabhat Institutes as well as the synthesis of literature on models of quality assurance in higher education institutions and management strategies within organisations. The difference between the model and its implementation developed in this study and the model from the literature is that the model developed from this study has included six stages of management strategies for quality assurance. For instance, decision making and preparing information before the process of introducing quality assurance whereas the internal model of quality assurance from literature review did not include these strategies. The model also includes some important aspects such as aims and targets, awareness, knowledge and understanding of quality assurance, and cooperation from members of the institutes in the process of introducing quality assurance to members of Rajabhat Institutes.

9.5 Suggestions for further study

There are some interesting points from the study that could be suggested for further studies in this area. Firstly, this study was carried out when quality assurance was in the early stages of development. Rajabhat Institutes had not completed the whole cycle of quality assurance. Thus, it may be useful to carry out a study on quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes after quality assessment has been completed in order to explain the operation of quality assurance as a whole, particularly the process of quality assessment. There is also the possibility to find out the success of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes, and a comparative study on quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes and other higher education institutes within the country, or other

countries. This will be able to provide useful information for the government and policy makers in terms of trying to implement a new policy. The findings from the study will also build up further knowledge and understanding on quality assurance in higher education institutions.

Secondly, the findings of this study showed that there was some confusion on the systems of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes. However, there was not enough evidence from the study to conclude what systems of quality assurance were in use in each Rajabhat Institute. There was not enough evidence from the study to point out the strengths and weakness of each quality assurance system. In addition, the study revealed that one faculty in a Rajabhat Institute had been awarded the ISO 9000 certificate. This seems to show that the faculty had completed its quality assurance successfully. At this point, some questions are raised, for instance, why had only one faculty been successful in carrying out quality assurance? Is it because of ISO 9000? Does this mean that ISO 9000 is the best system? What factors contributed to this success?

Thirdly, quality assessment by an external organisation will be another crucial stage of improving quality within higher education institutions in Thailand because Rajabhat Institutes and other higher education institutions have never experienced in it. Thus, it may be useful to seek interaction between external organisations and higher education institutions, and the political issues during quality assessment process. There may be a necessity for professionalism. Williams (1997) has raised the issues about the knowledge and understanding, and willingness to understand different contexts of assessors. Similarly, many authors have raised issues about the impact of quality assessment particularly during the evaluation process (see for instance, Brennan, *et al.*, 1992; Trow, 1994 cited in Brennan, *et al.*, 1997, p. 3-6; Brennan, 1997; Brennan, *et al.*, 1997; Massaro, 1997; Shah, 1997; Thune, 1997; Westerheijden, 1999; Brennan and Shah, 2000; Newton, 2000). The case in developing countries is probably different from developed countries. For example, in Thailand, there was a case reported in the newspapers in August 2004 on which that some problems occurred during the process of quality assessment. It was reported that a group of peer

reviewers did not play a proper role and tried to ask for money from the owner of one institute (Thairath, 2004). From my own experience, I have also received similar information from a friend whose family who a private school. Here peer reviewers did not play a proper role when they visited the school. Thus, there is the possibility that some obstacles may occur during the process of quality assessment, particularly so Thailand or in some developing countries in which corruption problems exist.

Fourthly, one of the most important concepts of quality assurance is 'customer satisfaction'. The literature shows that customers can refer to many groups of people. However, customer mentioned here refer to the employers of graduates from Rajabhat Institutes. After quality assurance in Rajabhat Institute has been completed, it may be useful to study employers' satisfaction.

9.6 Summary

This chapter has summarised the main findings of the study. It also highlights strengths and weaknesses of the study, implications of the study, some suggestions for further studies on quality assurance, and conclusion of the study.

It has already been mentioned in Chapter One that there is a lack of study on quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes and other higher education institutions of the country, thus, this study has produced original findings on the operation of quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes in Thailand.

The main findings of the study show that Rajabhat Institutes experienced some difficulties in trying to implement quality assurance. Although several measures had been taken to overcome the obstacles to quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes, those obstacles had not been completely overcome. The findings of the study also showed that quality assurance had several impacts on Rajabhat Institutes, administrators of the institutes, staff, students, teaching and learning processes, and employers of graduates from Rajabhat Institutes. In addition, quality assurance appears to have both costs and

benefits for Rajabhat Institutes. It has financial costs. It is a long term task, and it may cause negative attitudes among members of the institutes. However, it helps Rajabhat Institutes increase the quality of their teaching and learning processes. It also helps the institutes improve their working systems and working culture.

On the basis of the research findings, a model of quality assurance and its management strategy has been proposed. This model has been developed from both literature review and the experiences from this study. The most important feature of this model is that it includes a management strategy for implementing quality assurance, for instance, decision making and preparing information before the process of introducing quality assurance. The model also includes some important aspects such as aims and targets, awareness of quality assurance, knowledge and understanding on quality assurance, and cooperation from members of the institutes in the process of introducing quality assurance to members of Rajabhat Institutes.

The experiences learned from this study may be useful for higher education institutions in Thailand and other countries in trying to implement quality assurance in their institutions. It is also useful for the government in terms of trying to implement a new policy particularly when it involves many people and they are not familiar with the concept of the policy. The findings from this study seem to be significant in showing that Rajabhat Institutes had implemented quality assurance with a lack of awareness of the management of change within the organisation. It is hope that the findings of the study may be able to help higher education institutions to implement their quality assurance efficiently and successfully.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Research Instruments

1. Quality Assurance Questionnaire for Teaching Staff

Explanation: The aim of this questionnaire is to find out about quality assurance systems only within your institute. The questionnaire is divided into 5 parts as follows:

Part One: Personal and Institutional Information. This consists of 5 questions

Part Two: This is about the quality assurance system being used. This consists of 5 questions

Part Three: Asks you about the impact of quality assurance. This consists of 6 questions

Part Four: Asks you about obstacles to quality assurance. This consists of 5 questions

Part Five: Asks how quality assurance could be improved. This consists of 4 questions

Please answer all of these questions. The answers will be confidential and will be used for academic purpose only.

Quality Assurance Questionnaire for Teaching Staff

Part one: Personal and Institutional Information

Please provide the following information about yourself and your institute by checking the appropriate boxes or filling in the blanks.

1. Sex

Male

Female

2. Name of Rajabhat Institute

3. Your Faculty

Education

Sciences and Technology

Humanities and Social Sciences

Management Sciences

Other (please specify)

4. Year of service in Rajabhat Institute

Less than 5 years

5-10 years

11-15 years

16-20 year

More than 20 years

5. Your highest qualification

Bachelor

Master

Doctorate

Other (please specify)

Part Two: The System of Quality Assurance Exists in Rajabhat Institute

Please check the appropriate boxes or answer the following questions.

6. Which of the following is most similar to quality assurance system in your institute?

- Baldrige Award
- Deming Prize
- ISO 9000
- TQM
- Other (please specify)
- Don't know

7. Has your institute carried out any of the following procedures? (more than one answer is possible)

- Quality control (if ticked, go on to question 9)
- Quality audit (if ticked, go on to question 10)
- Quality assessment (if ticked, go on to question 11)

8. How is a quality control carried out in your institute?

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9. How is a quality audit carried out in your institute?

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10. How is a quality assessment carried out in your institute?

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Part Three: The Impact of Quality Assurance

Please check the appropriate boxes or answer the following questions

11. How does quality assurance impact on your institute?

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12. How does quality assurance impact on the administrators of your institute?

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13. How does quality assurance impact on teaching staff in your institute?

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14. How does quality assurance impact on students in your institute?

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15. How does quality assurance impact on teaching and learning process?

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16. How does quality assurance impact on employers?

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Part Four: The Obstacles to Quality Assurance

Please check the following boxes or answer the questions

17. What difficulties has your institute had in carrying out quality assurance? (more than one answer is possible)

- Unclear vision and mission statement
- Lack of knowledge and understanding
- Lack of appropriate system/model
- Lack of cooperation from staff
- Lack of intention from administrators
- Lack of quality resources
- Other (please specify)

18. How does your institute overcome obstacles to quality assurance?

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19. Who are responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance in your institute?

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20. Which obstacle to quality assurance that your institute has overcome successfully?

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21. Which obstacle to quality assurance that your institute do not or couldn't overcome?

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Part Five: The Improvement of Quality Assurance

Please answer the following questions.

22. How successful is quality assurance in your institute? (please explain why?)

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23. How could quality assurance in your institutes be improved?

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24. Who should be involved?

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25. Any further comments and opinion, please use the space below

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Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Chaweewan Boonkoun

2. Interviews for Quality Assurance Committee

Quality Assurance Interview Schedule for Member of the Quality Assurance Committee

The aim of this interview is to find out about quality assurance systems only within your institute. The interview is divided into 4 parts:

Part One: Asks you about the quality assurance system being used. This consists of 3 questions

Part Two: Asks you about the impact of quality assurance. This consists of 4 questions

Part Three: Asks you about obstacles to quality assurance. This consists of 3 questions

Part Four: Asks how quality assurance could be improved. This consists of 4 questions

Questions:

1. Which quality assurance system is similar to the one in your institute?
2. Which component of quality assurance has your institute already carried out?
3. How is a quality control, quality audit, and quality assessment carried out in your institute?
4. How does quality assurance impact on your institute and the administrators in your institute?
5. How does quality assurance impact on teaching staff in your institute?
6. How does quality assurance impact on students, and teaching and learning process in your institute?
7. How does quality assurance impact on employers?
8. What are the difficulties in carrying out quality assurance in your institute?
9. How does your institute overcome obstacles to quality assurance?
10. Who are responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance in your institute?
11. How successful is quality assurance in your institute?
12. How could quality assurance in your institutes be improved?
13. Who should be involved?
14. Any further comments and opinion?

3. Interviews for Administrators

Quality Assurance Interview Schedule for Administrators in Rajabhat Institutes

The aim of this interview is to find out about quality assurance systems only within your institute. The interview is divided into 4 parts:

Part One: Asks you about the quality assurance system being used. This consists of 3 questions

Part Two: Asks you about the impact of quality assurance. This consists of 4 questions

Part Three: Asks you about obstacles to quality assurance. This consists of 3 questions

Part Four: Asks how quality assurance could be improved. This consists of 4 questions

Questions:

1. Which quality assurance system is similar to quality assurance system in your institute?
2. Which component of quality assurance has your institute already carried out?
3. How is a quality control, quality audit, and quality assessment carried out in your institute?
4. How does quality assurance impact on your institute, and the administrators in your institute?
5. How does quality assurance impact on teaching staff in your institute?
6. How does quality assurance impact on students, and teaching and learning process?
7. How does quality assurance impact on employers?
8. What are the difficulties in carrying out quality assurance in your institute?
9. How does your institute overcome obstacles to quality assurance?
10. Who are responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance in your institute?
11. How successful is quality assurance in your institute?
12. How could quality assurance in your Institutes be improved?
13. Who should be involved?
14. Any further comments and opinion?

4. Interviews for Administrators in the Ministries

Quality Assurance Interview Schedule for Administrators in the Ministries

The aim of this interview is to find out about quality assurance systems in higher education institutions. The interview is divided into 4 parts:

Part One: Asks you about the quality assurance system being used. This consists of 1 questions

Part Two: Asks you about the impact of quality assurance. This consists of 4 questions

Part Three: Asks you about obstacles to quality assurance. This consists of 3 questions

Part Four: Asks how quality assurance could be improved. This consists of 4 questions

Questions:

1. Which quality assurance system is similar to quality assurance system in Rajabhat Institutes and other higher educational institutions in Thailand?
2. How does quality assurance impact on administrators, and higher education institutions?
3. How does quality assurance impact on teaching staff in higher education institution?
4. How does quality assurance impact on students, teaching and learning process in higher educational institutions?
5. How does quality assurance impact on employers?
6. What are the difficulties in carrying out quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes and other higher educational institutions?
7. How do higher educational institutions overcome obstacles to quality assurance?
8. Who are responsible for overcoming the obstacles to quality assurance in higher education institutions?
9. How successful is quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes and other higher educational institutions in Thailand?
10. How could quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes and other higher educational institutions be improved?
11. Who should be involved?
12. Any further comments and opinion?

5. Interviews for Students

Quality Assurance Interview Schedule for Students

The aim of this interview is to find out about quality assurance systems only within your institute. The interview is divided into 2 parts:

Part One: Asks you about perception of quality assurance. This consists of 1 questions

Part Two: Asks you about the impact of quality assurance. This consists of 4 Questions

Questions:

1. Have you ever known that your institute is carrying out quality assurance?

If yes, ask question 2-5

If no, end of the interview.

2. How does quality assurance impact on your institute, staff, teaching and learning, and yourself?

3. How does quality assurance impact on yourself?

4. How does quality assurance impact on employers?

5. Any further comments and opinion?

6. Interviews for Employers

Quality Assurance Interview Schedule for Employers

The aim of this interview is to find out about quality assurance systems only within Rajabhat Institute...(name of Rajabhat Institute)

The interview is divided into 3 parts:

Part One: Asks you about the perception on quality assurance. This consists of 1 questions

Part Two: Asks you about the impact of quality assurance. This consists of 2 questions

Part Three: Asks how quality assurance could be improved. This consists of 4 questions

Questions:

1. Have you ever heard about quality assurance in Rajabhat Institute.....?
If yes, ask question 2-7
If no, end the interview
2. How does quality assurance impact on Rajabhat Institute..... (administrators, staff, students, teaching and learning process)?
3. How does quality assurance impact on employers of Rajabhat Institutes ?
4. How successful is quality assurance in Rajabhat Institute
5. How could quality assurance in Rajabhat Institutes be improved?
6. Who should be involved?
7. Any further comments and opinion?

Appendix 2
Research Instruments (Thai Version)

1. แบบสอบถามอาจารย์สถาบันราชภัฏ เรื่อง การประกันคุณภาพการศึกษา

คำชี้แจง

แบบสอบถามฉบับนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสอบถามอาจารย์เกี่ยวกับการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาภายในสถาบันราชภัฏ โดยแบ่งออกเป็น 5 ตอนดังนี้

ตอนที่ 1 สถานภาพของผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม ประกอบด้วยคำถามจำนวน 5 ข้อ

ตอนที่ 2 ระบบประกันคุณภาพของสถาบันราชภัฏที่ดำเนินการอยู่ในปัจจุบัน ประกอบด้วยคำถามจำนวน 5 ข้อ

ตอนที่ 3 ผลกระทบจากการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาภายในสถาบันราชภัฏ ประกอบด้วยคำถามจำนวน 6 ข้อ

ตอนที่ 4 ปัญหาและอุปสรรคของการดำเนินการประกันคุณภาพภายในสถาบันราชภัฏ ประกอบด้วยคำถามจำนวน 5 ข้อ

ตอนที่ 5 การพัฒนาการประกันคุณภาพภายในสถาบันราชภัฏ ประกอบด้วยคำถามจำนวน 4 ข้อ

โปรดตอบคำถามทุกข้อตามความเป็นจริง

คำตอบของท่านจะนำไปใช้เพื่อประโยชน์ในเชิงวิชาการเท่านั้น และจะไม่นำมาเปิดเผยเป็นรายบุคคล

ตอนที่ 1 สถานภาพของผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม

โปรดเขียนเครื่องหมาย / หรือเขียนข้อความลงในช่องว่างที่กำหนดให้ตามสภาพจริงของท่าน

1. เพศ

ชาย

หญิง

2. ชื่อสถาบันราชภัฏที่สังกัด

3. คณะวิชาที่สังกัด

ครุศาสตร์

วิทยาศาสตร์และเทคโนโลยี

มนุษยศาสตร์และสังคมศาสตร์

วิทยาการจัดการ

อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ)

4. ระยะเวลาที่ปฏิบัติราชการในสถาบันราชภัฏ

ต่ำกว่า 5 ปี

5-10 ปี

11-15 ปี

16-20 ปี

มากกว่า 20 ปี

5. จุดจบการศึกษาสูงสุด

ปริญญาตรี

ปริญญาโท

ปริญญาเอก

อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ)

ตอนที่ 2 ระบบประกันคุณภาพของสถาบันราชภัฏที่ดำเนินการอยู่ในปัจจุบัน

โปรดเขียนเครื่องหมาย / ลงในช่องว่างที่เหมาะสม หรือตอบคำถามต่อไปนี้

6. ระบบประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาในสถาบันราชภัฏของท่านมีความสอดคล้องกับระบบใดมากที่สุด?

Baldrige Award

Deming Prize

ISO 9000

TQM

อื่นๆ (โปรดระบุ)

ไม่ทราบ

7. สถาบันราชภัฏของท่านได้ดำเนินการในเรื่องใดต่อไปนี้ ? (ตอบได้มากกว่า 1 ข้อ)

การควบคุมคุณภาพ (quality control) (ทำต่อในข้อ 9)

การตรวจสอบคุณภาพ (quality audit) (ข้ามไปตอบข้อ 10)

การประเมินคุณภาพ (quality assessment) (ข้ามไปตอบข้อ 11)

8. สถาบันของท่านมีการดำเนินการในเรื่องการควบคุมคุณภาพ (quality control) อย่างไร?

.....

9. สถาบันของท่านมีการดำเนินการในเรื่องการตรวจสอบคุณภาพ (quality audit) อย่างไร?

.....

10. สถาบันของท่านมีการดำเนินการในเรื่องการประเมินคุณภาพ (quality assessment) อย่างไร?

.....

ตอนที่ 3 ผลกระทบจากการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาภายในสถาบันราชภัฏ

โปรดแสดงความคิดเห็นของท่าน

11. การประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาส่งผลกระทบต่อสถาบันราชภัฏของท่านอย่างไร?

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12. ท่านคิดว่าการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาส่งผลกระทบต่อผู้บริหารของสถาบันของท่านอย่างไร?

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13. การประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาส่งผลกระทบต่ออาจารย์และบุคลากรของสถาบันอย่างไร?

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14. การประกันคุณภาพการศึกษามีผลกระทบต่อนักศึกษาของสถาบันอย่างไร?

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15. การประกันคุณภาพการศึกษามีผลกระทบต่อกระบวนการเรียนการสอนภายในสถาบันของท่านอย่างไร?

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16. การประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาส่งผลกระทบต่อผู้จ้างงานอย่างไรบ้าง?

.....

ตอนที่ 4 ปัญหาและอุปสรรคของการดำเนินการประกันคุณภาพภายในสถาบันราชภัฏ

โปรดเขียนเครื่องหมาย / ลงในช่องว่างที่เหมาะสม หรือตอบคำถามต่อไปนี้

17. สถาบันของท่านประสบปัญหาใดต่อไปนี้จากการดำเนินการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษา? (ตอบได้มากกว่า 1 ข้อ)

- ขาดวิสัยทัศน์และพันธกิจที่ชัดเจน
- บุคลากรขาดความรู้ความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับการประกันคุณภาพ
- ขาดรูปแบบ/ ระบบการประกันคุณภาพที่มีประสิทธิภาพ
- ขาดความร่วมมือระหว่างบุคลากรของสถาบัน
- ผู้บริหารไม่ให้ความสำคัญกับงานประกันคุณภาพเท่าที่ควร
- ขาดแคลนทรัพยากรที่เอื้อต่อการประกันคุณภาพ
- อื่นๆ (ถ้ามี โปรดระบุ)

18. สถาบันของท่านแก้ปัญหาที่เกิดจากการดำเนินงานประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาอย่างไร?

.....

19. ใครเป็นผู้รับผิดชอบการแก้ปัญหาที่เกิดจากการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาของสถาบันของท่าน?

.....

20. การแก้ปัญหาเกี่ยวกับการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาในเรื่องใดบ้างที่สถาบันของท่านได้ดำเนินการแล้วหรือได้ดำเนินการจนประสบผลสำเร็จ?

.....

21. การแก้ปัญหาเกี่ยวกับการประกันคุณภาพในเรื่องใดบ้างที่สถาบันของท่านยังมีได้ดำเนินการหรือไม่สามารถดำเนินการแก้ปัญหาได้?

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**ตอนที่ 5 การพัฒนาการประกันคุณภาพภายในสถาบันราชภัฏ
โปรดตอบคำถามต่อไปนี้**

22. ท่านคิดว่าสถาบันของท่านประสบผลสำเร็จเพียงใดในเรื่องการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษา?
(โปรดระบุเหตุผลประกอบ)

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.....

23. ควรพัฒนาการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาในสถาบันของท่านอย่างไร?

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.....

24. เพื่อให้งานประกันคุณภาพเป็นไปอย่างมีประสิทธิภาพ ท่านคิดว่าใครบ้างควรเป็นผู้รับผิดชอบการพัฒนา
งานประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาภายในสถาบันราชภัฏของท่าน?

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.....
.....

25. ความคิดเห็นหรือข้อเสนอแนะอื่นๆ (ถ้ามี โปรดระบุ)

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.....

ขอบคุณที่ให้ความร่วมมือ
ฉวีวรรณ บุญคุ้ม

2. แบบสอบถามกรรมการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาของสถาบันราชภัฏ

แบบสัมภาษณ์นี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาระบบประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาจากกรรมการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาภายในสถาบันราชภัฏ โดยแบ่งคำถามในการสัมภาษณ์ออกเป็น 4 ตอนดังนี้

ตอนที่ 1 สัมภาษณ์เกี่ยวกับระบบประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาที่สถาบันดำเนินการอยู่ในปัจจุบัน รวม 3 คำถาม

ตอนที่ 2 สัมภาษณ์เกี่ยวกับผลกระทบจากการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาในปัจจุบัน รวม 4 คำถาม

ตอนที่ 3 สัมภาษณ์เกี่ยวกับปัญหาและอุปสรรคจากการดำเนินงานประกันคุณภาพการศึกษา รวม 3 คำถาม

ตอนที่ 4 สัมภาษณ์เกี่ยวกับการพัฒนาการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาของสถาบัน รวม 4 คำถาม

คำถาม

1. ปัจจุบันสถาบันราชภัฏของท่านดำเนินการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาตามระบบใด?
2. สถาบันราชภัฏของท่านได้ดำเนินการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาไปถึงขั้นตอนใด?
3. สถาบันราชภัฏของท่านดำเนินการควบคุมคุณภาพ ตรวจสอบ และประเมินคุณภาพอย่างไร?
4. การประกันคุณภาพส่งผลกระทบต่อสถาบันราชภัฏ และผู้บริหารของสถาบัน?
5. การประกันคุณภาพส่งผลกระทบต่ออาจารย์ผู้สอนและบุคลากรของสถาบัน?
6. การประกันคุณภาพส่งผลกระทบต่อนักศึกษา และกระบวนการเรียนการสอนของสถาบัน?
7. การประกันคุณภาพส่งผลกระทบต่อผู้จ้างงาน?
8. การประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาของสถาบันประสบปัญหาและอุปสรรคในเรื่องใดบ้าง?
9. สถาบันของท่านมีวิธีการในการแก้ไขปัญหาและอุปสรรคเกี่ยวกับการดำเนินงานประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาอย่างไร?
10. ใครเป็นผู้รับผิดชอบการแก้ปัญหาดังกล่าว?
11. ท่านคิดว่าสถาบันราชภัฏของท่านประสบผลสำเร็จเพียงใดในเรื่องการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษา?
12. ท่านคิดว่าสถาบันของท่านจะพัฒนาการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาได้อย่างไร?
13. ใครควรมีส่วนเกี่ยวข้องในการพัฒนาดังกล่าว?
14. ความคิดเห็นและข้อเสนอแนะอื่นๆ

3. แบบสัมภาษณ์ถามผู้บริหารของสถาบันราชภัฏ

แบบสัมภาษณ์นี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาระบบประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาจากผู้บริหารของสถาบันราชภัฏ โดยแบ่งคำถามในการสัมภาษณ์ออกเป็น 4 ตอนดังนี้

ตอนที่ 1 สัมภาษณ์เกี่ยวกับระบบประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาที่สถาบันดำเนินการอยู่ในปัจจุบัน รวม 3 คำถาม

ตอนที่ 2 สัมภาษณ์เกี่ยวกับผลกระทบจากการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาในปัจจุบัน รวม 4 คำถาม

ตอนที่ 3 สัมภาษณ์เกี่ยวกับปัญหาและอุปสรรคจากการดำเนินงานประกันคุณภาพการศึกษา รวม 3 คำถาม

ตอนที่ 4 สัมภาษณ์เกี่ยวกับการพัฒนาการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาของสถาบัน รวม 4 คำถาม

คำถาม

1. ปัจจุบันสถาบันราชภัฏของท่านดำเนินการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาตามระบบใด?
2. สถาบันราชภัฏของท่านได้ดำเนินการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาไปถึงขั้นตอนนี้?
3. สถาบันราชภัฏของท่านดำเนินการควบคุม ตรวจสอบ และประเมินคุณภาพอย่างไร?
4. การประกันคุณภาพส่งผลกระทบต่อสถาบันราชภัฏ และผู้บริหารของสถาบัน?
5. การประกันคุณภาพส่งผลกระทบต่ออาจารย์ผู้สอนและบุคลากรของสถาบัน?
6. การประกันคุณภาพส่งผลกระทบต่อนักศึกษาของสถาบัน และกระบวนการเรียนการสอนของสถาบัน?
7. การประกันคุณภาพส่งผลกระทบต่อผู้จ้างงาน?
8. การประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาของสถาบันประสบปัญหาและอุปสรรคในเรื่องใดบ้าง?
9. สถาบันของท่านมีวิธีการในการแก้ไขปัญหาและอุปสรรคเกี่ยวกับการดำเนินงานประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาอย่างไร?
10. ใครเป็นผู้รับผิดชอบการแก้ปัญหาดังกล่าว?
11. ท่านคิดว่าสถาบันราชภัฏของท่านประสบผลสำเร็จเพียงใดในเรื่องการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษา?
12. ท่านคิดว่าสถาบันของท่านจะพัฒนาการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาได้อย่างไร?
13. ใครควรมีส่วนเกี่ยวข้องในการพัฒนาดังกล่าว?
14. ความคิดเห็นและข้อเสนอแนะอื่นๆ

4. แบบสอบถามผู้บริหารของกระทรวงศึกษาธิการ (และหน่วยงานที่เกี่ยวข้อง) เกี่ยวกับการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษา

แบบสัมภาษณ์นี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาระบบประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาของสถาบันราชภัฏ และสถาบันอุดมศึกษาอื่นโดยภาพรวม สำหรับคำถามในการสัมภาษณ์ออกเป็น 4 ตอนดังนี้

ตอนที่ 1 สัมภาษณ์เกี่ยวกับระบบประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาที่สถาบันอุดมศึกษาดำเนินการอยู่ในปัจจุบัน รวม 1
คำถาม

ตอนที่ 2 สัมภาษณ์เกี่ยวกับผลกระทบจากการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาในปัจจุบัน รวม 4 คำถาม

ตอนที่ 3 สัมภาษณ์เกี่ยวกับปัญหาและอุปสรรคจากการดำเนินงานประกันคุณภาพการศึกษา รวม 3 คำถาม

ตอนที่ 4 สัมภาษณ์เกี่ยวกับการพัฒนาการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาของสถาบันอุดมศึกษา รวม 4 คำถาม

คำถาม

1. ปัจจุบันสถาบันราชภัฏและสถาบันอุดมศึกษาส่วนใหญ่ดำเนินการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาตามระบบใด?
2. การประกันคุณภาพส่งผลกระทบต่อสถาบันอุดมศึกษาและผู้บริหารของสถาบัน?
3. การประกันคุณภาพส่งผลกระทบต่ออาจารย์ผู้สอนและบุคลากรของสถาบัน?
4. การประกันคุณภาพส่งผลกระทบต่อนักศึกษาและกระบวนการเรียนการสอนของสถาบัน?
5. การประกันคุณภาพส่งผลกระทบต่อผู้จ้างงาน?
6. การประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาในสถาบันอุดมศึกษาประสบปัญหาและอุปสรรคในเรื่องใดบ้าง?
7. สถาบันราชภัฏและสถาบันอุดมศึกษามีวิธีการในการแก้ไขปัญหาและอุปสรรคเกี่ยวกับการดำเนินงานประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาอย่างไร?
8. ใครเป็นผู้รับผิดชอบการแก้ปัญหาดังกล่าว?
9. ท่านคิดว่าสถาบันราชภัฏและสถาบันอุดมศึกษาประสบผลสำเร็จเพียงใดในเรื่องการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษา?
10. ท่านคิดว่าสถาบันราชภัฏและสถาบันอุดมศึกษาจะพัฒนาการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาได้อย่างไร?
11. ใครควรมีส่วนเกี่ยวข้องในการพัฒนาดังกล่าว?
12. ความคิดเห็นและข้อเสนอแนะอื่นๆ

5. แบบสอบถามนักศึกษาเกี่ยวกับการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษา

แบบสัมภาษณ์นี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาระบบประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาของสถาบันราชภัฏที่นักศึกษากำลังศึกษาอยู่ โดยแบ่งคำถามในกาสัมภาษณ์ออกเป็น 2 ตอนดังนี้

ตอนที่ 1 สัมภาษณ์เกี่ยวกับการรับรู้ในเรื่องการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษา มีคำถาม 1 คำถาม

ตอนที่ 2 สัมภาษณ์เกี่ยวกับผลกระทบจากการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาในปัจจุบัน รวม 4 คำถาม

คำถาม

1. นักศึกษาทราบหรือไม่ว่าสถาบันราชภัฏมีนโยบายในเรื่องการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษา?
ถ้าทราบ ถามคำถามข้อ 2-5
ถ้าไม่ทราบ จบการสัมภาษณ์
2. นักศึกษาคิดว่าการประกันคุณภาพส่งผลกระทบต่อสถาบัน, อาจารย์ผู้สอน, และกระบวนการเรียนการสอนของสถาบัน?
3. นักศึกษาคิดว่าการประกันคุณภาพส่งผลกระทบต่อตัวนักศึกษา?
4. นักศึกษาคิดว่าการประกันคุณภาพส่งผลกระทบต่อผู้จ้างงาน?
5. ความคิดเห็นและข้อเสนอแนะอื่นๆ

6. แบบสอบถามผู้จ้างงานเกี่ยวกับการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษา

แบบสัมภาษณ์นี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาระบบประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาของสถาบันราชภัฏ.....
โดยแบ่งคำถามในการสัมภาษณ์ออกเป็น 3 ตอนดังนี้

- ตอนที่ 1 สัมภาษณ์เกี่ยวกับการรับรู้ในเรื่องการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาของสถาบันราชภัฏ รวม 1 คำถาม
ตอนที่ 2 สัมภาษณ์เกี่ยวกับผลกระทบจากการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาในปัจจุบัน รวม 2 คำถาม
ตอนที่ 3 สัมภาษณ์เกี่ยวกับการพัฒนาการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาของสถาบัน รวม 4 คำถาม

คำถาม

1. ท่านพอจะทราบหรือไม่ว่าปัจจุบันมีการดำเนินการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาในสถาบันราชภัฏ.....?
ถ้าทราบ ถามคำถามข้อ 2-7
ถ้าไม่ทราบ จบการสัมภาษณ์
2. การประกันคุณภาพส่งผลกระทบต่อสถาบันราชภัฏ..... (ผู้บริหารของสถาบัน, อาจารย์, นักศึกษา, กระบวนการเรียนการสอน)?
3. การประกันคุณภาพส่งผลกระทบต่อผู้จ้างงาน?
4. ท่านคิดว่าสถาบันราชภัฏ.....ประสบผลสำเร็จเพียงใดในเรื่องการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษา?
5. ท่านคิดว่าสถาบัน.....จะพัฒนาการประกันคุณภาพการศึกษาได้อย่างไร?
6. ใครควรมีส่วนเกี่ยวข้องในการพัฒนาดังกล่าว?
7. ความคิดเห็นและข้อเสนอแนะอื่นๆ

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