QUALITY AUDIT IN ACADEMIC MATRICULATION LEARNING FOR THE DOCTORAL PROGRAM OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AT UNIVERSITAS TERBUKA

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Abstract

It is not uncommon for academic matriculation learning to be overlooked in learning quality audits. This is a consequence of the nature of learning in zero semester and non-credit courses, despite the mandatory requirement to pass in order to continue in the subsequent semester. The three core areas are: Utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for Learning, Advanced Academic Reading and Writing Skills, and Strengthening Scientific Research are foundational materials that are vital and advantageous for students. The question, therefore, is how the quality assurance of these three topics can be ensured. This paper employs observational techniques based on the analysis of assignments and interviews conducted with key informants, drawing upon the theoretical framework established by Ossiannilsson, Williams, Camilleri and Brown (2015) to address the central inquiry. In the view of Ossiannilsson, Williams, Camilleri and Brown (2015), quality assurance is an effective method of improving quality when the following characteristics are present in a quality assurance system: multifaceted, dynamic, mainstreamed, representative and multifunctional. The results of the study indicate that the learning process employs equivalent quality measures, taking into account strategies, policies, processes, and outputs that are holistically conceived, in order to fulfill the multifaceted nature of the endeavor. Furthermore, the matriculation learning offers flexibility, making it a dynamic resource. It would be advisable to implement improvements in the mainstreamed nature of the real-world application of skills taught in the subsequent learning process, with the objective of ensuring good collaboration and assurance. In terms of representativeness, this matriculation strives to strike a balance between maintaining quality and meeting the demands of stakeholders. The multifunctional nature is evident in the material that fosters a culture of quality within the institution through the expected learning outcomes. This research underscores the significance of coordination with study program stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of this academic matriculation learning in enhancing students' academic work culture.

Keywords: Matriculation, academic, matriculation topics, collaboration, and academic work culture.

1 INTRODUCTION

The Doctoral Program of Public Administration and Management Science at Universitas Terbuka are the first mandates from the Ministry of Education and Culture for distance learning doctoral programs in Indonesia. This research focuses on Doctoral Program of Public Administration

Program in Universitas Terbuka because 70% of its students work in the government sector and 30% in the public sector. The academic requirement for prospective students is a minimum of a Master's degree in social sciences or another field with work experience in government or the public sector. The input of students in the Doctoral Program of Public Administration is multidisciplinary. The necessity of a matriculation program is often associated with study programs, which tend to have less than optimal academic performance (Ahmady, et al.,2019). This matriculation program not only covers academic aspects but also involves the development of students' knowledge about distance learning and the use of digital technology to support students' success. It means that the matriculation program aims to accelerate students' adaptation to the online learning environment, which requires students to be self-reliant.

Distance learning has become increasingly relevant after the Covid-19 pandemic and the digital revolution. The main challenge is ensuring the quality of learning aligns with the achievements of the study program and graduates. Multidisciplinary prospective students need to be prepared with perceptions, basic skills, and public administration knowledge equivalent to conventional programs. Therefore, a matriculation program is necessary as an academic bridge to address the knowledge and skill gaps between previous education and the academic requirements of the distance learning program.

The matriculation program consists of two types: academic matriculation and scientific matriculation. Academic matriculation is mandatory for all prospective students and must be passed to proceed to the next semester. The focus is on preparing prospective students in distance learning to become learner resilient, which is important for facing challenges such as unstable technology access and limited direct interaction. Learning resilience is crucial for prospective students in distance learning to endure, adapt, and remain motivated in facing challenges such as unstable technology access, limited direct interaction, and good time management. Students must independently overcome obstacles, maintain motivation, and focus on learning objectives despite facing more difficulties than in conventional education. Scientific matriculation is not mandatory for all prospective students, only for those who meet certain criteria such as being a graduate of a master's program in public administration within the last 5 years and passing the scientific substance test. Prospective students who do not meet the requirements must take two scientific reinforcement matriculation courses: Administration Theory and Public Policy Analysis. If they do not pass, prospective students can retake the course in the next semester.

Universitas Terbuka has a strategic role as the organizer of distance learning in creating quality education through quality audits in academic matriculation learning. The quality of academic matriculation learning directly impacts students' success in adapting to academic demands in completing their doctoral studies. Therefore, a quality audit of academic matriculation learning is necessary to ensure that the matriculation learning standards are well implemented and achieve the desired learning outcomes. Quality audits are certainly built on quality standards based on institutional policies..

Jung & Latchem's (2012), examines quality assurance models and policies, emphasizes the importance of accreditation, and provides global insights through national case studies. Masoumi & Lindström (2012) present a framework that emphasizes interaction, technology, and learning support as keys to the success of e-learning and provides tools for assessing the quality of institutions. Kawachi (2014) focuses on the quality of open educational resources (OER) with the TIPS (Teaching, Interaction, Preparation, and Support) framework to maintain the overall quality of OER. The three articles provide practical guidance on implementing quality standards in different digital learning contexts, but none of the three articles addresses the context of technical education or provides an explanation of online learning.

Bates (2022) highlights inconsistencies in the implementation of quality standards, such as those set forth by Quality Matters, during the pandemic. He suggests the implementation of different standards for synchronous and asynchronous learning, with an emphasis on pedagogical quality. Darojat and Li (2022) address the issue of quality assurance in mega universities serving large numbers of students through distance and digital learning. Darojat and Li (2022) highlight the challenges of maintaining academic standards while ensuring flexibility and accessibility. Although this research provides a solid theoretical foundation, further research is needed to develop concrete strategies.

A quality audit of distance learning for academic matriculation programs at the doctoral level remains a nascent area of inquiry. Currently, research in this domain is largely concentrated on technical aspects, such as the efficacy of online learning systems and technology management. The identified research gaps highlight the necessity for further investigation into the incorporation of quality audits within the context of matriculation programs, particularly within the domain of distance education doctoral programs. The Doctoral Program of Public Administration in Universitas Terbuka is conducted in zero semester, non-credit, and encompasses three principal

areas of study: The programme covers three core areas: ICT Utilization for Learning, Advanced Academic Reading and Writing, and Strengthening Scientific Research. This study aims to address the existing research gap regarding the implementation of quality audit in matriculation learning within the Doctoral Program of Public Administration in the Universitas Terbuka. Additionally, it seeks to investigate a novel approach that integrates academic quality evaluation with comprehensive higher education audit standards. It is anticipated that this approach will integrate internal and external quality audits, thereby facilitating the advancement of distance learning education management.

In order to address the aforementioned issues, a comprehensive literature review has been conducted, drawing upon a range of sources pertaining to quality assurance in distance education. Darojat and Belawati (2017) address the challenges inherent in maintaining academic quality at the Universitas Terbuka. Darojat and Belawati (2017) underscore the significance of internal and external quality assurance mechanisms to guarantee academic efficacy for a substantial number of students. In their 2023 article, Belawati and Zuhairi investigate the implementation of quality assurance standards in blended and online learning systems, offering practical strategies for maintaining academic integrity and quality in distance education. Belawati and Zuhairi (2023) underscore the significance of integrating technological tools and fostering collaboration between educational institutions to enhance the efficacy and dependability of online learning.

Ossiannilsson et al. (2015) describe an exhaustive approach to distance learning quality audit comprising five characteristics: multifaceted, dynamic, mainstreamed, representative, and multifunctional. The term "multifaceted" denotes that the quality audit encompasses four key areas: academic content, technology usage, student-tutor interaction, and administrative support. This comprehensive approach allows for a multifaceted evaluation of the quality of distance learning. The term "dynamic" signifies that the assessment of educational quality is conducted in a manner that is continuously evolving, in accordance with the latest advancements. The term "mainstreamed" denotes that quality audits are integrated into the fabric of educational management, rather than being regarded as an ancillary concern. The notion of "representative" signifies that audits encompass a diverse array of stakeholders, thereby facilitating a comprehensive understanding of educational quality. The term "multifunctional" underscores the fact that audits are instrumental in enhancing learning quality, administrative efficiency, and providing feedback for strategic decision-making. Collectively, these five characteristics provide

a comprehensive overview of quality assurance in the quality audit of the Doctoral Program of Public Administration matriculation.

2 METHODOLOGY

This study examined the quality audit process in the Doctoral Program of Public Administration of Universitas Terbuka (UT) academic matriculation program. The objective was to examine the methods employed to guarantee the quality of learning, as well as to identify the contributing and impeding factors associated with quality auditing. Data were collected through three primary methods: (1) in-depth interviews were conducted with tutors, students, administrative staff, and program managers to gain insight into the audit process and challenges encountered; (2) observation of matriculation classes was undertaken to examine learning methods, technological utilization, and interactions between students and lecturers; (3) documents related to quality audits, curriculum, and matriculation implementation guidelines were analyzed to obtain pertinent information regarding audit standards and the assessment of the audit process. The data were analyzed using a thematic method based on the five characteristics of distance learning quality audits, as outlined by Ossiannilsson et al. (2015). These characteristics are multifaceted, dynamic, mainstreamed, representative, and multifunctional. The three principal topics subjected to analysis were the utilisation of information and communication technology (ICT) for learning purposes, the undertaking of advanced academic reading and writing, and the reinforcement of scientific research.

3 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

The results of the research conducted will be discussed in relation to the quality assurance issues of the academic matriculation program implemented by Doctoral Program of Public Administration in Universitas Terbuka, based on the properties identified in the quality audit of distance learning. These properties are as follows: (1) multifaceted, (2) dynamic, (3) mainstreamed, (4) representative, and (5) multifunctional (Ossiannilsson et al., 2015).

3.1.1 Multifaceted

The academic content of the academic strengthening matriculation program is evident in the syllabus developed, tutoring materials and their completeness, tutorial preparation, learning process, evaluation and follow-up. The basic academic strengthening matriculation syllabus specifies that tutorials are conducted both asynchronously and synchronously. The asynchronous

component of the program is comprised of ten online tutorial sessions, which are outlined in the following manner: The syllabus comprises an introduction, ten tutorial sessions, and supplementary materials for each session. Synchronous learning assistance is provided in the form of webinar tutorials, with two tutorials dedicated to each topic of the academic matriculation program.

Table 1. Learning Outcomes and Learning Materials for Strengthening the Academic Basis of the Doctoral Program.

No	Learning Outcomes	Learning Materials
	Participants are able to elucidate the nature of the academic foundation strengthening matriculation program.	– Program Overview – Introduction to E-learning, including the syllabus, assessment, and graduation requirements
1	Participants may: 1. Utilize Microsoft Word, Canva and Microsoft PowerPoint for academic endeavors; 2. Define the role of an active digital citizen; 3. Differentiate among various copyright licenses; 4. Locate sources of information and produce quality written material; 5. Interpret the outcomes of plagiarism checks and implement necessary corrections.	The use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in Learning 1. Create scientific papers and dissertations in accordance with established templates utilizing Microsoft Word (outlining, automatic table of contents generation, list of figures and tables, among other features), repeating headers on tables, and Microsoft Office Academy-provided resources for the creation of presentation materials using Canva/PowerPoint. o Customizing the interface and functions o Creating a template o Working with a document o Editing and sharing a document o Alternative text editors o Resources 2. Netiquette 3. Copyright Work License 4. (Digital) Literature Search 5. A demonstration of anti-plagiarism software, including Turnitin, PlagScan, and Plagiarism Checker X. Interpretation and correction of Turnitin results will also be provided.
2	Participants may: 1. Gain an understanding of academic ethics and plagiarism; 2. Develop effective reading skills and the ability to synthesize	Advanced Academic Reading and Writing Academic Integrity (Ethics, Plagiarism) 1. Effective reading strategies 2. Recording Reading 3. Identifying originality 4. Synthesis of the reading material

No	Learning Outcomes	Learning Materials
	reputable journal articles (in Indonesian and English); 3. Learn to identify the characteristics of scientific articles; 4. Write a simple scientific article.	5. The challenge of initiating the scientific writing process 6. Identifying the primary concepts and 7. Describing the originality and significance of scientific articles 8. The structure of scientific writing 9. In response to reader suggestions (from reviewers, promoters, or lecturers), the following should be considered: 10. *Gaya Selingkung* and utilization of the Universitas Terbuka reference style (APA)
3	Participants will be able to demonstrate the following competencies: 1. Utilize SPSS for data analysis, including the examination of quantitative data and the implementation of applied econometric techniques; 2. Employ NVivo for qualitative research; 3. Adhere to the principles of ethical research and publication; 4. Utilize a reference management application to create a bibliography	Strengthening Scientific Research 1. Processing and interpreting quantitative data o Types of data o Demonstration of the use of data analysis software: SPSS. 2. Applied Econometrics o Time series o Panel data 3. Qualitative data processing and interpretation o Demonstration of software usage. o Data analysis: Nvivo. 4. Use of reference tools 5. Research and Publication Ethics
4	Participants are able to 1. utilize ICT in learning; 2. apply the skills of reading and writing scientific papers; 3. utilize tools for research activities.	Wrap up material

Sources: Academic Matriculation Syllabus 2024.

Prior to the commencement of learning, the study program ensures that the tutor master class is updated with the latest materials by incorporating new information and resources. Study programs identify tutors for each topic and facilitate the equalization of perceptions by inviting relevant stakeholders, including tutors, Tendik, study programs, learning assistance centers, and graduate school leaders. A week prior to the tutorial, an effort is made to achieve a state of perception equalization with the students, which includes the utilization of online learning simulations. The planning process culminates with the issuance of assignment letters to tutors.

The academic matriculation learning process is linked to a system of digital learning materials that can be accessed by students at any time and from any location with internet access. The academic matriculation program learning system, comprising ten tutorial sessions, is illustrated in Figure 1.

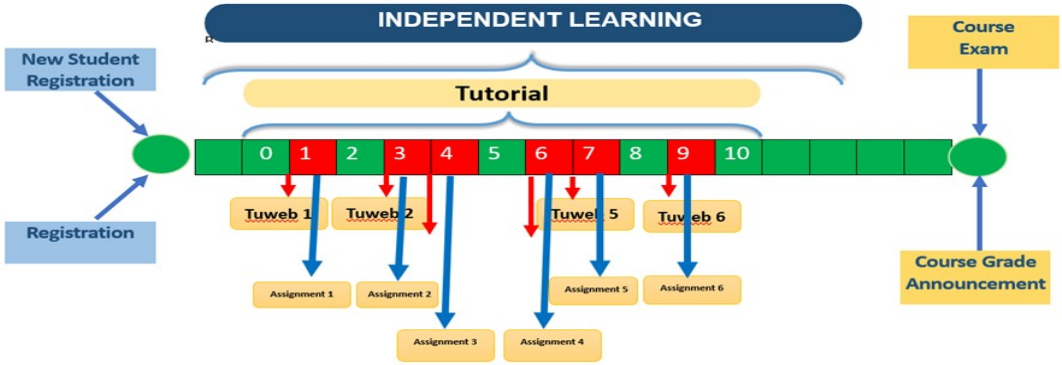

Figure 1. Learning process of academic matriculation program

Over the course of the 10 tutorial sessions, students engaged with tutors in real time in online tutorials and at a later time in 6 webinar tutorials, in which the asynchronous format was utilized. Administrative assistance is required with regard to the rate at which tutors reply to discussions and provide feedback on assignments, with the aim of enabling students to enhance their discussions and/or assignments. Moreover, administrative support provided by educational personnel via social media (e.g., WA's group) for scheduling discussions and collecting assignments from students, as well as for assessing assignments to tutors, is highly beneficial. Such support is instrumental in enhancing the efficacy of the learning process and in motivating students to achieve their full potential.

3.1.2 Dynamic

The ever-changing nature of the learning process is illustrated through updates from master classes, tutor perceptions, discussion forums, and tutor evaluations, which together comprise the pedagogical landscape. These activities encompass material enhancement, information and communication technology (ICT) advancement, artificial intelligence (AI) integration into the learning process, academic ethics discourse, and tutor assessment at the conclusion of the webinar session. It is crucial for tutors to evaluate academic matriculation tasks and learning outcomes. Universitas Terbuka provides support for academic enhancements, including critical thinking, data analysis, and the communication of ideas. In light of the advent of AI, Universitas Terbuka offers digital literacy resources, including reference managers, reference source searches,

literature review software, and data processors, with a particular emphasis on the ethical utilization of AI. Student adaptation services are facilitated by Puslata UT with digital libraries that subscribe to Scopus and Science Direct, although trials are needed in various UT regions. The coordination between UT internal units is instrumental in ensuring the success of academic matriculation learning.

3.1.3 Mainstreamed

The Universitas Terbuka tutorial process adheres to the standard operating procedures established by the Universitas Terbuka Quality Assurance Center. The process is integrated into the overarching education management system, which is recorded in the learning management system (LMS). At present, Universitas Terbuka employs a tutorial platform, accessible at elearning.ut.ac.id, which has been developed from Moodle and integrated with DSI and the Universitas Terbuka testing center as a comprehensive unit. This platform is recorded in the Universitas Terbuka system. Consequently, all discussions, assignments, and tutorial activities (tuton and tuweb) are recorded as Universitas Terbuka's documents and linked to the evaluation process.

The integration of the learning process of this academic matriculation program can be described as a quality audit, as follows:

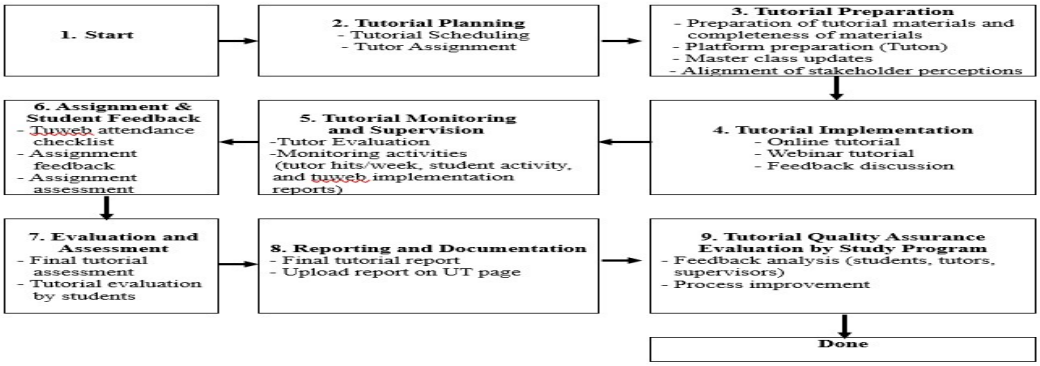

Figure 2. Integration of the learning process of the academic matriculation program.

3.1.4 Representative

The evaluation of the tutorial process carried out by students, tutors, and monitoring by the study program shows that the evaluation involves various stakeholders so that a complete picture of the quality of the academic matriculation program tutorial is clearly drawn. The final grade of the academic matriculation tutorial is calculated automatically by the application based on the

attendance score for each session (week) and the assignment score per topic ≥ 70. The composition of the final academic matriculation grade = 30% attendance + 70% average assignment score. 30% is calculated based on student attendance for each session. 70% is calculated from the average score per topic ≥ 70. Should the assignment score fall below 70, students will be afforded one opportunity to enhance their performance. At the conclusion of Session 10, students who have not attained the minimum passing score of 70 are granted a two-week period to enhance their assignments.

3.1.5 Multifunctional

Monitoring and evaluation by stakeholders (students, tutors, monitors) are used by the study program to compile and analyze the evaluation of the academic matriculation program. This evaluation is useful for improving the next semester's tutorial, both in terms of substance, technical, and administration, as well as increasing administrative efficiency for decision making related to program quality assurance. Each tutorial topic is 4 hours long and is usually taught by two tutors, so there is a need for specific evaluation for each tutor. Currently, learning evaluation is carried out manually through Google Form by the Doctoral Program of Public Administration, and evaluation by monitors has not been systemized with sipantau.ut.ac.id, so it is still done manually by the Study Program.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 Multifaceted

The matriculation programme at Universitas Terbuka is subject to a rigorous quality assessment process, which encompasses a range of factors, including the academic content, pedagogical approaches, administrative support, and technological integration. Each of these components is interconnected as a result of the academic quality audit follow-up, and they all contribute to the creation of an integrated and successful learning experience. (Ossiannilsson et al., 2015). To illustrate, a diversified and comprehensive academic curriculum encompasses the development of academic competencies, digital literacy, and scientific research. The designed syllabus provides an in-depth coverage of these elements through a combination of information technology (IT)-based materials, advanced academic skills, and research, demonstrating a comprehensive approach that evaluates the entire learning ecosystem.

3.2.2 Dynamic

The Doctoral Program of Public Administration study plan includes both synchronous (via six webinars) and asynchronous (based on 10 online tutorials) learning techniques. This methodology demonstrates flexibility in delivery modalities to meet the needs of students from different regional universities. The dynamic nature of online tutorials and webinar tutorials is consistent with the dynamic nature of quality audits, where the learning process can adapt to changing student situations and allows for continuous evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching methods. (Osiannilsson et al., 2015).

3.2.3 Mainstreamed

The entire process, from improving materials and recruiting tutors to aligning student and tutor perceptions, exemplifies Universitas Terbuka's methodological efforts to promote academic excellence. The involvement of many stakeholders, including tutors, educational staff, programmes and learning support centres, underlines the need for representative quality audits. Learning quality is measured not only by academic outcomes, but also by the involvement and support of the whole academic environment. (Ossiannilsson et al. 2015).

3.2.4 Representative

An evaluation of the academic matriculation program entails the assessment of the tutorial quality provided by students, tutors and program study supervision. This method ensures that assessments are representative and comprehensive, thereby guaranteeing that learning is effective. The final assessment is comprised of two components: attendance at webinars and online tutorials (30%) and evaluation of assignments (70%). Plagiarism tests with a similarity threshold of less than 20% maintain the originality of student work and allow for revision of assignments in the event that the threshold is exceeded. This reflects the institution's flexibility. The establishment of a minimum passing score of 70 per topic serves to indicate a clear quality standard. The provision of the opportunity to redo assignments for those who have not reached the minimum score serves to improve academic performance without excessive pressure. This approach encourages meaningful learning, focuses on the learning process, and facilitates the gradual and in-depth development of students' abilities (Ossiannilsson et al., 2015).

3.2.5 Multifunctional

The evaluation facilitates improvements in the substantive, technical, and administrative aspects, thereby enhancing the programme's efficiency and effectiveness. Nevertheless, there remain

deficiencies in the optimal evaluation system for Tuweb tutors. As each Tuweb topic is conducted by two tutors, it is necessary to implement a more structured evaluation process for each tutor in order to guarantee the quality of teaching. The utilisation of manual evaluations via Google Form and the absence of integration with systems such as Sipantau.ut.ac.id illustrate that there is scope for enhancement through digitisation and automation. This is consistent with the perspective put forth by Ossiannilsson et al. (2015) regarding the significance of technology in facilitating more structured and real-time evaluations, thereby enhancing the quality and more effective decision-making in the quality assurance of academic matriculation programs. The implementation of more sophisticated multifunctional evaluations will facilitate the continuous enhancement of the quality of study programmes on a sustainable basis.

4 CONCLUSION

The Doctoral Program of Public Administration approach to academic matriculation is consistent with the multifaceted quality audit principles set forth by Ossiannilsson et al. (2015). The program encompasses a range of elements, including academic content, technological support, active student-tutor interaction, and comprehensive administrative assistance. The flexibility of the tutorial is demonstrated by the fact that it can be accessed without time and space constraints. It is essential to enhance the mainstreamed element to guarantee effective internal and external collaboration and the application of skills by students in accordance with the established learning outcomes. Representative elements strike a balance between quality and stakeholder demands, while multifunctional elements foster a culture of quality within the institution through the establishment of expected learning outcomes. It is recommended that there be coordination with stakeholders to improve students' academic work culture in a sustainable manner. This should reinforce the five characteristics of distance learning quality audit from Ossiannilsson et al. (2015), with an emphasis on the use of technology and strong internet access.

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