

Quality Assurance

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Status Report of National University of Singapore Libraries

(1) Library quality service

Services provided by the academic library contribute towards meeting the university's objectives in teaching, learning and research. Vision of NUS Libraries is "To be a premier knowledge hub that promotes the University's global knowledge enterprise vision", and our mission is "To deliver just-in-time information with passion and a smile".

(2) Standards

NUS was required by the Ministry of Education to implement a framework for institutional level quality assurance – QAFU (Quality Assurance Framework for the Universities).

Under the NUS framework for Excellence, NUS Libraries submitted an internal QA processes to support Teaching Goals. Below are examples of library QA processes in 3 main areas: (1) Availability and accessibility (2) Service, and (3) Resource utilization rate. Some of the performance measures were adapted from ISO 11620 : 1998.

<i>Performance indicator</i>	<i>Performance measure</i>	Definition
Availability and accessibility		
Collection	Percentage of required titles in the collection	The percentage of titles, required by at least one user, that is already owned by the Library
	Median time of re-shelving books	The median time lapsed between the time books are returned from the loan counter to the time books are available
Automated system	Automated system availability	The percentage of time that the system is available and working to a specified standard of performance, as compared to the scheduled hours of availability in a specified period of time.
Service		
Document delivery	Median time of delivery of articles (not in library collection) received electronically	The median number of days between the date the request is made and the date it is delivered electronically to the user
Acquisitions	Median time of acquisition of books that are commercially available	The median number of days between the date the request is received and the date the book arrives
Cataloguing and physical processing	Median time of processing an urgently required book	Median number of days between the day the book is received and when it is available on the shelves

	<i>Performance measure</i>	Definition
Resource utilization rate		
Facilities	Seat occupancy rate	The percentage of seats in use at time of survey
Electronic resources	Number of logins per year to the Digital Library homepage	Total number of hits as recorded by the logfile of our web server.
	Number of logins per year to the Library Instruction Online (LION)	Total number of hits as recorded by the logfile of our web server.

(3) Measure performance

In order to achieve its mission and vision, NUS Libraries develop long term strategic goals based on Balanced Scorecard as guiding principles and focused on 4 perspectives :

Innovative initiatives (*Learning & growth*)

Timely & Quality Services (*Internal Processes*)

Positive customer experience (*Customer*)

Resources to facilitate teaching, research & learning (*Stakeholders*)

There are Key Performance Indicators (KPI) set for each objective of the strategic plan to measure the effectiveness of the Libraries in accomplishing its goals.

Below are some examples in Strategic Plan 2004 :

1. Innovative initiatives

Goal	Staff development
KPI	Achieve 40 hours of training per staff per year for 90% of staff

2. Timely & Quality services

Goal	Acquire info assets
KPI	Median time of acquisition of books from overseas that are commercially available -- 4.5 weeks

Goal	Organise Info assets
KPI	Median time of cataloguing urgently required titles -- 1 working day

Goal	Deliver Info assets
KPI	Median time of delivery of articles (not in library collection) received electronically -- 3 working days

3. Positive customer experience

Goal	Ambience (physical)
KPI	Complete the upgrading of Central Library premises

Goal	Accessibility
KPI	Median time of books returned at General Loan Counter of holding library accessible within 30 minutes
KPI	To ensure that the 98% accessibility to the Digital Library Services and collection is maintained

4. Resources to facilitate teaching, research & learning

Goal	Image, Reputation
KPI	70% of users rate the performance of library 4 and above on a scale of 1 (Very Poor) – 6 (Excellent), based on the Feedback forms received

(4) Monitoring and Evaluation of the QA

NUS Libraries do not utilize any assessment tool like LibQUAL or ServQUAL, however evaluation of library service quality / QA is carried out in various ways at different levels.

Individual level:

Under the NUS Performance Management System, staff performance is evaluated against the objectives set in their PMS plan. These measurable objectives are relevant to the department work plan, which is cascaded down from the Libraries strategic plan.

Departmental level:

Department's work plans are prioritized and aligned to the Libraries strategic goals.

Library level:

The quality of library processes and services are monitored/evaluated through the achievement of the KPI stated in the NUS Libraries Strategic Plan.

There is also a Quality Service Manager, who promotes quality culture at NUS Libraries.

Conduct NUS Libraries user satisfaction survey.

University level:

Students perception Survey
 Faculties Perception Survey
 Internal Audit

External:

Accreditation reports from visiting academic and professional.

(5) Conclusions

NUS Libraries, like any other academic libraries, is now facing great changes in the information environment and increasing requirements for accountability within the universities. While it is even harder now to measure the actual value of the Libraries, we can take steps to ensure that the services provided are timely and appropriate. QA cycle of setting standards/indicators, monitoring performance and assessment, is a means of improving and ensuring library service quality, and, in turn, to account for library contribution to the quality of higher education.