



QUALITY ASSURANCE IN LEARNING SUPPORT IN DISTANCE EDUCATION SYSTEM: AN EFFORT TO PROVIDE QUALIFIED HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDONESIA¹

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ABSTRACT

Universitas Terbuka, a higher education institution in Indonesia which implements a distance education system with the head office located in Jakarta and 37 regional offices across the country, ensures that all activities have been conducted using quality assurance system. The system adopted from the Indonesia Accreditation Board for Higher Education and the International standard for Distance Education institution. All UT's ROs have got ISO (International Organisation for Standardisation). To ensure that the procedures in ISO have been followed accordingly, monitoring and evaluation have been done in all aspects including face-to-face tutorial. Nevertheless, Ambon RO and Kupang RO face challenges in providing qualified face-to-face tutorials as a result of limited expertise in the areas, limited facilities for face-to-face tutorials, and transportation problems. The analysis of how Ambon RO and Kupang RO implement regulations and procedures on face-to-face tutorial is carried out through document analysis. Data on face-to-face tutorial preparation and implementation in the first and second semester of 2011 for Ambon RO and first semester of 2012 for Kupang RO is analyzed. In general, Ambon and Kupang ROs have managed to follow the procedures required to ensure that they have provided quality face-to-face tutorials for students. Some adjustment have to be taken to accomodate constraints faced.

Keywords: *archipelago, face-to-face-tutorial, higher education, quality assurance, Universitas Terbuka.*

ABSTRAK

Universitas Terbuka, perguruan tinggi yang menerapkan sistem pendidikan jarak jauh dengan kantor pusat di Jakarta dan 37 Unit Pelaksana Belajar Jarak Jauh UT yang tersebar di seluruh Indonesia, memastikan seluruh kegiatan dilakukan sesuai dengan sistem jaminan mutu yang telah ditetapkan. Sistem jaminan mutu di UT dikembangkan dengan merujuk pada Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi dan peraturan dari lembaga internasional. UT juga telah mendapatkan ISO. Salah satu aspek penting di UT adalah layanan bantuan belajar untuk mahasiswa dalam bentuk tutorial tatap muka. Tulisan ini menyajikan hasil analisis penanganan tutorial tatap muka di dua UPBJJ UT, Ambon dan Kupang. Mengelola tutorial tatap muka di kepulauan membuat UPBJJ UT Ambon dan Kupang mengalami kendala dalam menunjuk tutor yang kompeten, keterbatasan sarana, dan kesulitan transportasi. Data yang digunakan dalam analisis adalah data persiapan dan pelaksanaan tutorial tatap muka semester 1 dan 2 tahun 2011 di UPBJJ Ambon dan semester 1 di UPBJJ UT Kupang. Data dianalisis secara kualitatif. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa secara

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umum UPBJJ UT Ambon dan Kupang sudah berhasil melakukan persiapan dan pelaksanaan tutorial tatap muak sesuai dengan prodedur yang ditetapkan. Meskipun demikian dilakukan ditemukan penyesuaian prosedur untuk mengakomodasi kendala yang ada.

Kata kunci: jaminan mutu, kepulauan, pendidikan tinggi, tutorial tatap muka, Universitas Terbuka

Quality assurance has become an absolute requirement for effective organization. This also applies for ODL (Open Distance Learning) institution like Universitas Terbuka (UT). Being the first higher education institution formally acknowledged by the Indonesian Government to offer ODL, the pressure to prove that UT manages to use appropriate approaches has increased. UT does it by obtaining ISO certificates from a reputable institution. UT got its first ISO certificate in 2006 and since then all 37 UT Regional Offices (ROs) have managed to acquire ISO 9001:2008 certificates for distance learning services.

Ambon and Kupang ROs, the first oversees the area covering Maluku province and the later oversees covering East Nusa Tenggara province, gain the certificates on 29 March 2010 (certificate number QSC 00784) and 4 December 2009 (certificate number QSC 00782) respectively. All activities in both Ros have to be conducted in accordance with the procedures stated and in line with requirements set in the ISO Quality Management System in terms of quality management system, management responsibility, resource management, product realization, and measurement, as well as analysis and improvement.

In spite of the fact that all aspects in distance learning services are important, an analysis on how the Ambon and Kupang ROs manage to provide quality assurance in learning support system, especially in face-to-face tutorial will benefit UT and students. Requirements needed to provide effective tutorials as well as methods of conducting and evaluating the results of the tutorials set by the UT Head Office has to be followed closely. However, due to geographical condition of Maluku and East Nusa Tenggara, the Ambon and Kupang ROs have to come up with approaches so that procedures and regulation could be followed while at the same time the uniqueness of the areas could also be accommodated.

The Ambon and Kupang ROs are surrounded by islands as part of the Indonesian archipelago. Scattered in several islands, students reside in the Ambon and Kupang ROs areas having difficulties to attend tutorial outside their islands. Figure 1 shows islands served by the Ambon RO and transportation used to commute from one island to another. There are 12 relatively big islands (Ambon, Saparua, Piru, Masohi, Namlea, Leksula, Banda, Bula, Tual, Tanimbar, Dobo, and Serwaru). The straight lines do not reflect transportation route since sea situation has to be taken into account and smaller islands around relatively bigger islands need to be attended too.

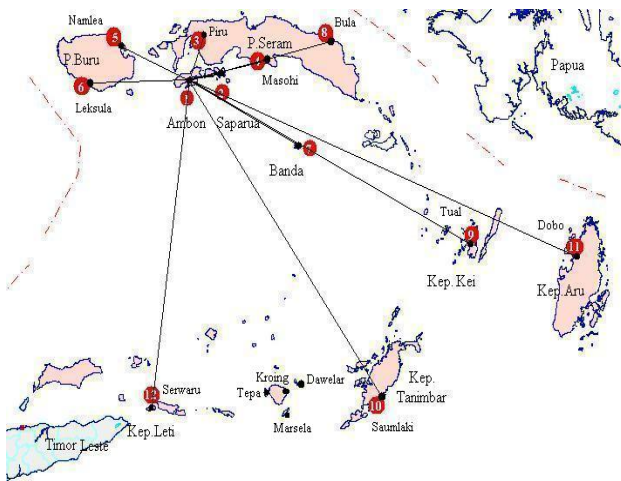


Figure 1. Map of island and transportation modes in Maluku

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance (QA) refers to the engineering activities implemented in a quality system so that requirements for a product or service will be fulfilled (ASQ, 2013). It is the systematic measurement, comparison with a standard, monitoring of processes and an associated feedback loop that confers error prevention (Marketing Accountability Standards Board, 2013). Meanwhile, Harman (2000) states that quality assurance in higher education is a set of management and assessment procedures designed to compare performance with objectives, and to ensure achievement of quality outputs and quality improvements. The Commonwealth of Learning (1999) agrees with this statement by mentioning that quality assurance is a set of activities that an organization undertakes to ensure that standards are specified and reached consistently for a product or service.

UT views quality assurance seriously and develops quality assurance system in 2002. In accordance with increasing demand for higher educational quality, both from society and government regulations and from Indonesia National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN-PT), as well as meeting international standards such as from Council for Distance Education (ICDE) and *Association of Asian Open Universities QA Statements of Best Practices*, UT integrates all requirements into one new quality assurance system called SIMINTAS 2012 UT (Pusat Jaminan Kualitas, 2012). The new system accommodates UT's mission that is providing qualified higher education access to all levels of society through distance and open education programs (Renstra UT, 2010).

UT implements the classic PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) approach (Figure 2) for its quality assurance management. The PDCA model known as the Shewhart Cycle is the central approach of 'total quality management' by Shewhart's student, W.E. Deming (Gabor, 1990).

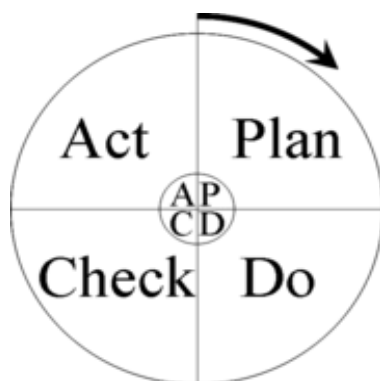


Figure 2. The shewhart cycle.

1. Plan
Establish the objectives and processes necessary to deliver results in accordance with specifications.
2. Do
Implement the processes.
3. Check
Monitor and evaluate the processes and results against objectives and specifications, and report the outcome.
4. Act
Apply actions to the outcome for necessary improvement. This stage involved reviewing all the

The implementation of SIMINTAS 2012 is targeted on increasing preparations for accreditation, accountability, and effectiveness. SIMINTAS 2012 is an effort to continuously improve quality through procedures which allow people to question and perfect all relevant processes and products. UT's ROs are also taking steps in assuring quality by promoting the ISO 9001:2008 guideline in their management systems. All of UT's ROs have got ISO 9001:2008 Certificate from reputable Agency, 25 UT's ROs have successfully gained an ISO 9001:2008 Certificate (ID 1693) for Distance Education Services from PT SGS Indonesia. The Certificate is valid through 5 November 2013. Meanwhile, the other 12 UT's ROs have individually managed to obtain ISO 9001:2008

Certificate for Distance Education Services from Sucofindo ICS. The Kupang RO (QSC 00782) got it on 4 December 2009 and would be expired on 3 December 2012 while the Ambon RO (QSC 00784) got it on 29 March 2010 until 28 March 2013 from Sucofindo ICS (<http://www.ut.ac.id/tentang-ut/sistem-jaminan-kualitas/iso.html>).

All UT's ROs get the ISO 9001:2008 for Distance Education Services which include services in face-to-face tutorial. Face-to-face tutorial has to follow work-guide "TR01-PK02 Implementation Guide and Monitoring of Face-to-face Tutorial". The guide consists of three major points, namely tutorial implementation, monitoring and evaluation, and performance indicators. Tutorial implementation deals with schedule, process, and students' and tutors' responsibilities. Performance indicator section provides indicators for planning, implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation. Table 1a-1e show details of the procedure.

Quality Assurance in Face-to-face Tutorials

For the analysis, data from face-to-face tutorial preparation, implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation processes are used. Analysis for the Ambon RO uses data from the first and second semesters of 2011 (2011.1 and 2011.2) while for the Kupang RO the data is from the first semester of 2012 (2012.1). The different semesters used will not significantly affect the analysis because the analysis is not about one-to-one comparison but more into insight of what and why something is happening. Data in Table 1 show that there are similarities between the Ambon and Kupang ROs in almost all aspects. One important thing is that both ROs have tried their best to follow requirements although in some cases they failed to do so.

One example of non-conformity of the requirements is conducting face-to-face tutorial sessions within eight weeks. The root of this problem can be found in limited number of qualified tutors and insufficient facilities. The two ROs have to recruit qualified tutors from other areas or even tutors from related subjects to facilitate face-to-face tutorials in remote and hard-to-reach areas. Even so, this approach does not always succeed since sometimes transportation is not available. In times when ship cannot sail, outside tutors cannot get into the areas and consequently tutorials have to be cancelled. Due to this situation, in some locations like Serwaru and Saumlaki (see Figure 1) where ship only sails every three weeks and flight cost more than US\$466 to get to Ambon City (Table 2), the tutorial has to be conducted semi-block. Semi-block tutorial refers to situation where face-to-face tutorial sessions are conducted four times instead of eight times as required. In one week, students attend two day tutorial sessions as opposed to one day. In fact, the approach has its disadvantage. However, this is believed to be the second best alternative in providing face-to-face tutorials in remote and hard-to-reach areas. Nevertheless, the semi-block tutorials could only be conducted if there is a written permission from UT Head Office. The written permission is necessary to ensure that the semi-block tutorial is conducted in accordance with the prevailing requirements.

Not only limitation in expertise, in some areas it is also difficult to get decent tutorial places. Therefore, in some locations, face-to-face tutorials cannot be conducted one week after the closing of registration. Not to mention that some of students have not got their modules (Table 3). In some cases, students registered in certain courses outnumbered modules or, in other words, students have not got their modules. Ambon RO tried to minimize this condition by employing SMS Reminder which reminds students to get their modules.

Eventhough the process of tutorial sessions generally follow the requirements, it also faces problems (Table 1b). The Kupang RO anticipates problems in the process of tutorial by conducting a meeting to brief and refresh tutors on their responsibilities. However, some tutors are still caught in

the act of not following all tasks, for example, they forget to give assignments to students. In some tutorial classes, tutors act like lecturers in face-to-face lectures. Students are asked to listen to tutors instead of allowing times for discussions. The tutors are asked to use learning method suitable for tutorial.

Table 1a. Requirements and Reality of Face-to-face Tutorial (Implementation – Process)
(Based on TR01-PK02 Implementation Guide and Monitoring of Face-to-face Tutorial)

Aspect	Requirements	Reality	
		Ambon RO	Kupang RO
IMPLEMENTATION			
Process	According to model chosen/developed by tutors		
	a. 1 st Tutorial session		✓
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation for tutorial activities • Assignments • Students' evaluation mechanism • Topic(s) to be discussed in next session 	✓	A briefing to all tutors is conducted before the tutorial begins
	b. 2 nd , 4 rd , and 6 th sessions started with discussion on topics given in the prior sessions and ended with topic to be discussed in the next tutorial session.	✓	
		In some cases tutors lose some of their assignments	✓
	c. 3 rd , 5 th , and 7 th sessions ended with assignment to be finished in class in 60 minutes. Remaining time is to be used for discussing the assignment and provide assignment for next session.	✓	
	Some tutors forget to give task for students	✓	
d. 8 th sessions started with discussion on topics given in the 7 th session and ended with review of the whole topics	✓		✓
	Activities during tutorial session: discussion, demonstration, exercises, information from tutors, students, and/or other resources	Mostly information from tutor	✓

Major problem faced by the Ambon and Kupang ROs concerning students preparation before attending face-to-face tutorial sessions is lack of students' awareness of the importance of reading modules prior to attending tutorial sessions (Table 1c). The fact is only 5% of Ambon RO students could not receive their modules on time (Table 3) while all students of Kupang RO received the modules on time. However, the majority of the students do not read the modules before joining face-to-face tutorial sessions which are fully attended. The ROs have encouraged tutors to give assignments based on the topics in the modules to force students to read them.

Concerning the tutors, both the Ambon and Kupang ROs face problems such as tutors' negligence to develop tutorial activity plan and tutorials' notes. (Table 1d) Both tutorial activity plan and tutorial notes are important since UT operates throughout Indonesia. Tutorial activity plan reflects topics covered and methods used in tutorial sessions. UT has to ensure that topics covered and methods used in all face-to-face tutorials are similar and according to academic requirements. One way to ensure this by using a pre-determined plan. Meanwhile, tutorial notes are important as a tool to continuously monitor activities in tutorial sessions.

Table 1b. Requirement and Reality of Face-to-face Tutorial (Implementation – Students Responsibilities)
(Based on TR01-PK02 Implementation Guide and Monitoring of Face-to-face Tutorial)

Aspect	Requirements	Reality	
		Ambon RO	Kupang RO
IMPLEMENTATION			
Students responsibilities	a. Doing all preparations prior to attending tutorial sessions, including read & learn modules	Some of the students haven't got modules on the first-third week of tutorials Majority do not read the modules	✓ Majority do not read the modules
	b. Presenting in all 8 sessions proven by signing List of Attendance	✓	✓
	c. Actively participating in activities during tutorial	✓	✓
	d. Finishing all assignments	✓	✓
	e. Providing information on tutorial if asked by tutor/RO/observer	Not necessarily finished on time ✓	✓

Table 1c. Requirement and Reality of Face-to-face Tutorial (Implementation – Students Responsibilities)
(Based on TR01-PK02 Implementation Guide and Monitoring of Face-to-face Tutorial)

Aspect	Requirements	Reality	
		Ambon RO	Kupang RO
IMPLEMENTATION			
Tutors Responsibilities	a. Attending all 8 tutorial sessions based on Letter of Duty	✓ Tutors who absent from the session ask permission and replace their time or replace by other tutors	✓
	b. Preparing learning activities and materials for each tutorial session	✓ UT provides tutorial activities or tutors are asked to develop one	✓
	c. Preparing assignment for students, including assignments for each topics and three major assignments along with their marking scheme	✓	✓
	d. Maintaining note of assignments	✓ Some tutors neglect the responsibilities to take notes on every assignments	✓
	e. Deciding rigid demand for each assignment	✓	✓
	f. Conducting/facilitating variety of tutorial activities such as, give information discussion, exercising, or demonstration	✓ Some tutors employ a classical approach of teaching	✓
	g. Providing feedback on assignments	✓	✓
	h. Gathering and marking all three main assignments to evaluate students' mastery of the learning materials.	✓	✓
	i. Evaluating the assignments according to marking scheme prepared before-hand	✓	✓
	j. Sending the recapitulation of students achievement along with the best and worst' assignments one week before first week examination	✓	✓

Table 1c. (continued)

Aspect	Requirements	Reality	
		Ambon RO	Kupang RO
IMPLEMENTATION			
	k. During the 8 tutorial sessions, writing notes on the tutorial process and input to perfecting the next tutorial	✓	Not always ✓

Concerning tutors' qualification, UT requires each tutor to have certain educational background and tutor certificate. In the Ambon RO, 98% of the tutors have passed the requirement while in the Kupang RO only 80% have passed (detail in Table 3). To manage tutor shortage, both in number and in qualification, the Ambon and Kupang ROs have provided training for uncertified tutors. At the same time, the ROs increase the competence of existing tutors by conducting training and continuously monitor the tutors performances.

UT has developed standard format to be used in monitoring face-to-face tutorial activities. Using the format, monitoring at the Ambon and Kupang ROs should be done on time. However, it is rather difficult to assess academic aspects such as assignment quality in the monitoring since not all monitorings are conducted by academic staff in relevant fields. It is necessary to modify the format so that it can serve its purpose without compromising the quality.

Table 1d. Requirement and Reality of Face-to-face Tutorial (Monitoring and Evaluation)
(Based on TR01-PK02 Implementation Guide and Monitoring of Face-to-face Tutorial)

Aspect	Requirements	Reality	
		Ambon RO	Kupang RO
MONITORING & EVALUATION			
Monitoring	Aspects to be continuously monitored: facilities, students attendance, tutor attendance, tutor quality, assignment quality, services provided	✓	✓
Evaluation	Conducted 2 times, in 4 th and 8 th sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In some areas where transportation is a big problem, monitoring can only be conducted once. In some areas where problems occurred, monitoring is done three times (Table 4) 	In some areas where transportation is a big problem, monitoring can only be conducted once.

Table 2. Location and Transportation in the AMBON RO

Location	Distance Km)			Modus & Time				Transport Cost (US\$*)		Remarks
	Straight Line	Route	Land	Sea (Ferry)		Air (Flight)		Lowest	Highest	
				Frequency	Duration	Frequency	Duration			
Ambon	0	0	ü	x	x	x	x	5.6	77.8	Ok
Saparua	44.0	75	ü	Every day	1,5 H	x	x	44.4	200.0	Ok
Piru	61.6	200	ü	Every day	2 H	x	x	33.3	200.0	Ok
Masohi	79.2	150	ü	Every day	2 H	x	x	33.3	200.0	Ok
Namlea	114.4	200	x	Every day	9 H	1X/week	30 Min	66.7	200.0	Ok
Leksula	158.4	250	x	Every 2 days	2 D	2X/week	1.5 H	66.7	200.0	Ok
Banda	184.8	185	x	Every 2 weeks	1 D	1X/week	30 Min	133.3	293.3	Ok
Bula	220.0	430	ü	Every day	1 D	2X/week	1.5 H	133.3	333.3	Ok

Table 2. (continued)

Location	Distance Km)			Modus & Time				Transport Cost (US\$*)		Remarks
	Straight Line	Route	Land	Sea (Ferry)		Air (Flight)		Lowest	Highest	
				Frequency	Duration	Frequency	Duration			
Tual	457.6	560	x	Every 2 weeks	3 D	Every day	2.0 H	177.8	422.2	Ok
Saumlaki	492.8	500	x	Every 3 weeks	4 D	4X/week	2.5 H	311.1	466.7	Sea: Irregular Air: Ok
Dobo	580.8	600	x	Every 2 weeks	3 D	3X/week	2.5 H	333.3	466.7	Sea: Irregular Air: Ok
Serwaru	422.4	950	x	Every 3 weeks	6 D	1X/week	3.0 H	333.3	466.7	Sea: Irregular

* 1 US\$ = Rp.9,000

Table 2 shows location and transportation facilities in areas under the Ambon RO's responsibilities. Table 2 describes all islands the Ambon RO has to cover and the extent to which it has in terms of responsibilities for providing qualified higher education for all the students. Using procedure and format developed as a part of quality assurance system at UT, both ROs have been able to deliver its tasks. Face-to-face tutorials, although in some cases faced problems, can be provided. Lack of qualified tutors is managed by sending qualified or similar-subject tutors from other areas. Limited physical facilities are partly solved by building networking with school so that the ROs could use the school buildings.

Table 3. Requirements and Reality of Face-to-face Tutorials at the Ambon and Kupang ROs

UT RO (Semester)	Aspect*	MODULE			TUTOR		LOCATION		CLASS
		Quantity (Exemplar)	Course (Title)	Time (Month)	Quantity (Person)	Qualification (Suitability)	Quantity (Study Group)	Quantity (Location)	Quantity
Ambon (2011.1)	1	2,010	34	-	141	100%	23	23	84
	2	1,910	34	-	141	98%	22	22	84
	3	Distance, Transportation	-	-	-	Lack of experts in certain courses	Location did not meet requirements	-	-
	4	Actively inform	-	-	-	Send experts from other area(s)	More selective in deciding tutorial location	-	-
	5	Effective	-	-	-	Effective	Effective	-	-
Ambon (2011.2)	1	2,039	39	-	152	100%	21	21	78
	2	1,939	39	-	152	100%	20	20	78
	3	Distance, Transportation	-	-	-	-	Location does not meet requirements	-	-
	4	Sending DO to UT HO earlier	-	-	-	-	More selective in deciding tutorial location	-	-
	5	Effective	-	-	-	-	Effective	-	-
Kupang (2012.1)	1	17,184	53	2	689	100%	52	52	1,477
	2	17,184	53	2	689	80%	52	37	1,477
	3	Students received modules' late	-	-	Not having tutor certificate	Lack of competency in local experts	-	Locations are difficult to reach	-

Table 3. (continued)

UT RO (Semester)	Aspect*	MODULE			TUTOR		LOCATION		CLASS
		Quantity (Exemplar)	Course (Title)	Time (Month)	Quantity (Person)	Qualification (Suitability)	Quantity (Study Group)	Quantity (Location)	Quantity
Kupang (2012.1)	4	Sending DO to UT HO earlier	-	-	Providing trainings for the tutors	Utilizing tutors from close- subjects	-	Self- monitoring and evaluation by the groups	-
	5	Effective	-	-	Effective	Not too effective	-	Not too effective	-

* 1 = Requirement, 2=Reality, 3=Challenges, 4= Approach taken to manage challenges, 5=effectiveness of the approach to manage challenges

Looking in more detail, results of continuously implementing quality assurance system for more than two years have positive results (Table 4). Students attendance at the Kupang RO (21 locations) is slightly lower than those at the Ambon RO (16 and 17 locations). Part of the reason is that the Kupang RO has a policy to have students in all islands overseen by the RO while the Ambon RO does not have such policy. This is reflected in the number of locations (equal to islands) served by the two ROs. However, this situation is not reflected in main challenges faced by the ROs. Both ROs mention difficulties to reach their areas as their main challenges .

Even though both ROs face similar challenges, the ways they deal with the challenges is different. The Kupang RO uses more approaches such as sending its staff to solve problems than the Ambon RO with only one approach, that is send information earlier so that students have enough time for preparation. The method used by the Ambon RO is relatively new at UT: SMS Reminder. Using the SMS, students are informed on dates such closing time of registration, starting of tutorials and examinations.

Table 4. Face-to-face Tutorial at the Ambon and Kupang ROs

Aspect	UT RO		
	Kupang (21 Locations)	Ambon (17 Locations)	Ambon (16 Locations)
Semester	2012.1	2011.1	2011.2
Number of Students	16,160	2,236	2,002
Number of Location	71	19	18
Number of Class	554	89	81
Number of Courses	605	214	198
Tutor Qualification	80 - 100%	98 - 100%	100%
Implementation	Regular	21	6
Tutorial (Location)	1	11	5
% Students Presence (Average)	Semi Block Student	95-100%	95-100%
	Tutor	100%	98-100%
Main Challenge	Remote location	3	12
	Transportation	5	0
	Unfamiliar with DE system	1	0
	Students are not ready	1	0
	Information	0	12

Table 4. (continued)

Aspect	UT RO		
	Kupang (21 Locations)	Ambon (17 Locations)	Ambon (16 Locations)
Ways of Dealing with Challenges	Tutors are asked to motivate students Ask students to move to closer Study Group RO staff sent to the problem area(s) Send one staff to each Study Group	Information sent earlier	Information sent earlier
Success rate (Average)	70 - 100%	100%	100%

CONCLUSION

The Ambon and Kupang ROs have followed procedures required by UT quality assurance system to provide quality higher education for their students who reside in islands scattered in Moluccas archipelago. Since the implementation of ISO 9001:2008 in December 2009 for the Kupang RO and in March 2010 for the Ambon RO, both ROs have faced challenges in implementing the procedures of face-to-face tutorials.

Main challenges faced are related to lack of certified tutors, limited physical facilities, and communication and transportation facilities especially in remote and hard-to-reach islands. These challenges force both ROs to find ways to keep on providing quality face-to-face tutorials such as sending tutors from other islands, hiring tutors from related fields, and working together with schools and other institutions in order to use their facilities. Other problems resulted from being an archipelago is in monitoring and evaluation of the tutorials which can only be done half of the required frequencies.

Based on the results, it is recommended that higher education institutions operated in archipelago areas to develop face-to-face tutorials mechanism bearing in mind minimum infrastructure and transportation facilities on the islands.

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