A joint initiative of the Oman Quality Network
Ministry of Higher Education
& Oman Accreditation Council

# Making the Most of Quality Training
## Reviewing the "Train-the-Trainer" concept

Training Module 16v1
**Report** of a workshop held on 10 March, 2008 at
Muscat Holiday Hotel

## INTRODUCTION

About 150 participants attended this workshop, which was held following the Official Launch of the OAC Quality Audit Manual. The workshop activity involved 12 groups addressing a number of questions pertaining to the "Train-the-Trainer" concept, and the National Quality Training Program. The information collected from those working groups is presented in this report and will be submitted to the OQN Executive to assist them in the development of future Workshops.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

1.      **Have you tried the Train-the-Trainer approach? What worked? What didn't work?**

There was a mixed range of responses. The majority of OQN Representatives and other workshop participants have not yet sought to take the workshops and facilitate the provision of them in their own workplace or location.

2.      **If you have not tried Train-the-Trainer, is there a particular reason why not (eg particular obstacles)?**

The main reasons pertain to workload, lack of resources and low commitment. Another common theme is a sense that many OQN Representatives and other workshop participants are not yet confident enough to take on a facilitating role within their institutions. This must become a matter of priority for the OQN.

3.      **How could this workshop format be improved to help with the Train-the-Trainer approach?**

There were many helpful suggestions made. The most common one was a strong demand for materials to be circulated prior to the workshop to enable people to prepare (or, alternatively, to help them make an informed choice about whether to attend or not). It may be appropriate to submit more information along with the workshop invitations. This information may take the form of the workshop activities, or 'trigger' questions. It will probably not be appropriate to circulate the seminar slides in advance. If participants choose to use the slides, but then not attend the workshop, then one of the primary benefits – the group interaction – could be undermined.

A second common suggestion was for workshop participants to undergo some form of formative assessment during or at the end of each workshop.

One particularly helpful session was for OQN Representatives who receive the workshop invitations to think critically about who the most appropriate people from their institution would be to attend each workshop.

4.      **How could the design of the module resources (the slides, handouts and website) be improved?**

There is a strong level of content with the quality of the current module resources. The most common suggestions for improvement included greater use of video clips, real life examples, and provision of Arabic translations.

5.      **What new workshops should be held over the next two years?**

Dozens of ideas were suggested. When grouped into themes, the most commonly requested topics were as follows:

- Curriculum/program development, approval and review (10/12)
- Effective, valid and reliable assessment (formative and summative) and moderation methods of student's learning (7/12)
- Establishing an organisational culture of quality (5/12)
- Preparing Portfolios and preparing for the audit visit (3/12)
- Surveys, data, statistics and reporting (3/12)

**6.  What past workshops should be repeated over the next two years? (Place a Y in the boxes)**

The general view was that all the topics should be repeated.  Most participants had only attended a few of these workshops, and general dissemination of the workshops within the OQN Member institutions has not been as pervasive as hoped for.  Given that all the resources for these modules are available on the website (www.oac.gov.om/qe/training), this may indicate that the "Train-the-Trainer" model is not yet working effectively.

The topics most commonly requested to be repeated are:
- Preparing a Self Study Portfolio (10/12)
- Quality Audit (10/12)
- ADRI (9/12)
- Strategic Planning (9/12)

**7.  How often should these workshops be held?**

There was a variety of responses, but the most common suggestion was to hold workshops monthly.

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## WORKING GROUP ACTUAL RESPONSES

The responses are provided in the order of the 12 groups.

**1.  Have you tried the Train-the-Trainer approach?  What worked?  What didn't work?**

- No, more on sharing of information
- Orientation and discussions

- An individual's interpretation could colour the presentation.
- Everyone needs to buy into the program and participate without force.
- "It's not in my contract!"
- One year or shorter contracts – teacher turnover.
- Theory is easy; putting it into practice is more challenging.

- Yes – for some
- Initial response was not as expected. We have been able to generate interest among a core group of colleagues who participate in and contribute to the process
- Explaining the concept of ADRI was a challenge. Many were not able to understand the significance

- We tried it for raising awareness to begin the QA process.x3

- Yes we have for certain modules

- Positive: Increase institutional awareness; Collaboration with other institutes; Influencing stakeholder of MOH Institutes

- Negative: Balancing between presentation & discussion of workshop activities; Insufficient Time due to workload; Insufficient Feedback from/to groups; slow uptake of ideas.

- Yes, we have tried the Train the Trainer approach on the following topics:
  - ADRI (worked)
  - KPI (didn't work)
  - Preparing Self Study Portfolio (worked)
  - Strategic Planning (worked)
  - Good Documentation (worked)
  - Risk Management (didn't work)
  - Quality Audit (worked)

- We didn't apply the approach.

- Yes, we have. Provision of content worked. Converting content into practice didn't work so well.

- There are two out of seven individuals who have had experience with the concept of train the trainer. One problem identified was that people who attend workshops go with a learning the content approach rather than the approach of learning to be a trainer.

- No, train the trainer approach hasn't been tried.

- Yes we have tried (3 participants); No we haven't (2)
- What worked: shorter time disseminating information; improved the existing system; better understanding and implementation
- What didn't work: when trainees become trainers, there is less commitment down the line

2.      **If you have not tried Train-the-Trainer, is there a particular reason why not (eg particular obstacles)?**

- Learning phase
- Preparation phase
- Becoming more confident

- The same people volunteer or are selected to pull the work load.
- Others try to avoid after school commitments – the beach is too attractive. People come for the lifestyle, though the trend may be changing.

- Time constraint
- I'm new to the job
- We see the need and hopefully succeed in the days the ahead
- In our institution we have scheduled one hour a week as part of the time table for these and other staff development workshops – 12 to 1 on Mondays. We also have longer duration workshops (half a day) on at least one Thursday in two months. Hope to use this mechanism for Train the trainer workshops.

- Lack of priority and resources.

- Rest of the workshops would be conducted in the near future
- Obstacle: Time Constraint

- We are too busy to try.
- We feel that we are not yet ready to carry it out.

- Normal excuses of a lack of time; also the concept has not been made a priority; finally, the press of reactive leadership prevents a more proactive approach to training.

- Because of administrative problems such as the emphasis of the management on teaching only and not training in other aspects
- Quality assurance is a responsibility for one person or few people who don't involve others in training.
- There is no existance of human development units in institution.

- Lack of understanding and support from top management
- Staff are busy with normal work
- Financial aspect (e.g., shortage of experienced staff)
- Lack of focus and structure within the organization

3.   **How could this workshop format be improved to help with the Train-the-Trainer approach?**

- Inform participants earlier of what is expected
- Share group recommendations
- Concentrate on giving examples

- The time must be adjusted to the goals and objectives (seminars, workshops and feedback)
- Working break?
- Use of different techniques for group activity (games, role play, moving around)
- Materials/handouts to be given to participants before the workshop

- More practical application than theory.
- Send the attendees the workshop activity in advance for more active participation.

- To strengthen OQN networking select groups at the end of a workshop and assign specific topics on which these groups could develop proposals and make them available online for others to access, use, evaluate and comment
- In order to influence institutional staff at all levels these workshop resources must be made available in Arabic also.

- More basic templates on 'how to' conduct workshops.eg. Self-study Portfolio – more templates for gathering relevant information/data on each work unit such as format for personnel details/staff profile.
- Samples of 'tools' for gathering inputs for SSP from other HEPs.
- Follow-up training program. HEP is requested to conduct the same program in their respective HEP and give feedback to OAC.

- Critique Trainees work
- Allow more members in the OQN

- Workshop activity could be improved through practical examples from the common life
- Guest speakers
- Customization of the topics, according to the institution

- One person in each college should be dedicated for the QA work to learn and implement.
- The same members should attend regularly to learn and implement?

- By using formative assessment

- The goal of training the trainer has to be clearly identified as a goal of an individual workshop in order to prepare people to assume this role. What does it mean to be a trainer; what skills are needed?

- By highlighting it more and make it accessible and available for HEP

- HE providers should send the right people (i.e., those interested and committed) to comeback and train the staff. (Type of representatives from HE providers should need to be looked at for the workshop to be more effective; there should be more commitment from them)

**4. How could the design of the module resources (the slides, handouts and website) be improved?**

- Arabic translations

- Module resources - OK

- Very professionally done!

- More examples for and explanation of slide content would help
- Over the past couple of years OAC must have gained some information on problems that are common to a majority of HEPs. Perhaps some awareness about appropriate problem solving methods/techniques could be made available to OQN.

- Video clips of OAC training session.
- Upgrade forum for chatting (members only)
- Occasional guest speakers who are expert in specialised subject areas – e.g. risk management in HE sector.

- Larger Venues
- Adding video clips
- Triggering questions prior to workshops
- More time for workshops

- Give practical examples from the Audited institutions
- Attaining the depth, Step by step (beginning from the first to last level, regarding workshop)

- We feel it is ok.

- By writing fewer points on each slide.
- Using different colours to improve readability.
- Hoping the infrastructure of communication facilities be improved!!! [This comment related to the general state of Internet facilities in Oman.]

- Overall the quality of module resources is very high. Perhaps the addition of video clips and case studies would improve the resources.

- By giving more details together with live examples from both local and international institutions

- Addition of Computer-Based Teachings and Computer-Assisted Teachings;
- Materials should be more interactive (with videos)
- The materials should be made available in Arabic for better understanding

**5.	What new workshops should be held over the next two years?**

- Formulating policies and guidelines for educational institutions (academic handbook)
- CURRICULUM REVIEW and evaluation methods/process/strategy
- Organization Models and role of quality assurance units
- Statistics in reporting
- Preparing for audit visit

- Assessment and moderation.
- Curriculum development.
- Assessment validity and reliability.
- Survey design.

- Assessment methodologies
- Curriculum Design and Review
- Teambuiding

- "QA for Board of Governors/VCs"
- Curriculum development
- Program review
- Internal assessment
- Assessment strategies
- learning outcomes – course and program
- Admin support services – assessment of performance and training needs
- Research and consultancy
- Ethics

- Curriculum design & review
- Developing standards

- Program Evaluation
- Handling Data Evaluation
- Promoting Good Practices for the implementation of Quality Assurance culture

- Workshop about importance and relevance of QA in higher education.
- Quality assurance management in higher educations.
- HR experience and qualifications.
- Program review and curriculum development.
- Good practice in finance management.

- On how to evaluate curricula
- Evaluation of students' performance
- Diagnostic, formative & summative testing

- A train the trainer workshop and a workshop preparing institutions for the actual audit visit, particularly directed to staff behavior.

- How to prepare a quality portfolio for my institution (form and language)

- How to achieve quality regarding curriculum

- How to develop a quality culture? (TQM)
- How to design, develop, and implement a quality management system to give more focus and direction to the quality initiatives

- A workshop that will discuss case studies related to the results of various implementations
- Capturing organizational knowledge so that change of staff attrition doesn't affect the quality process.

**6.  What past workshops should be repeated over the next two years?**

| Workshop Module | Repeat? (score out of 12) |
|---|---|
| 1.    ADRI | 9 |
| 3.    KPI | 8 |
| 4.    Statistics in Reporting | 4 |
| 5.    Good Documentation | 6 |
| 6.    Preparing a Self Study Portfolio | 10 |
| 8.    Process Mapping | 5 |
| 9.    Benchmarking | 7 |
| 10.   Strategic Planning | 9 |
| 11.   Consulting Stakeholders | 5 |
| 12.   Risk Management | 8 |
| 13.   Getting the Most from Student Evaluations | 6 |
| 14.   Differences in Approaches to Learning | 5 |
| 15.   Quality Audit | 10 |
| 16.   Making the Most of Quality Training | 4 |
| 21.   Quality Audit Manual | 4 |

- Note:  Needs re-training on the above mentioned activities because many people didn't attend the workshop/training

- Please repeat all of them. It is suggested that past workshops be condensed into a two day program. Participants should be given a book entitled, "How to succeed in a quality audit."

**7.  How often should these workshops be held?**

- Once a month

- Week long session to train key people from each HEI to deliver the information back to their respective colleagues with additional benefit of building community with other HEIs.
- Jigsaw key person from each HEIs to deliver specific information back to their respective colleagues.

- For those HEPs to be audited this year more frequently than others. Perhaps Twice a month
- For others once in two months

- Monthly

- Every 2-3 months

- Once a month

- Duration (Full Day)

- Four during the whole academic year.

- Once every fortnight

- Once a month is a recommended schedule.

- Each workshop should be run annually

- Key topics based on priority to be done at least once in two months
- Every topic should be repeated at least twice per year; OR
- Based on the feedback of implementation


**8.      Any other comments?**

- MAKE SURE YOU COMEBACK SOON!!!

- Thank you to Dr. Salim, Martin, Tess, and their hard-working team!
- Stakeholders need to be involved. For private HEIs this should include shareholders as well as BOD members.

- The Corporate/Managerial heads of Private HEPs should be influenced through a QA Workshop that would convince them of the significance of Quality audit and make them provide all the resources required for Institutional Quality Audit and Accreditation

- Thanks to OQN and OAC for your support

- The status of chairs of QA offices & external reviewers needs to be redefined for HEPs.
- Encouraging inter- & intra-college peer visits

- I think one more workshop is needed to reflect on the new Quality Audit Manual