



Improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

An exploration of various modalities adopted to enhance quality in distance education of Under graduate & post graduate programs: The NMU, IDEAL's approach

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Abstract

support (at selected North Maharashtra University is one of the upcoming universities in India, the university was established on 15th August, 1990 under the Maharashtra University Act No. XXIX of 1989 as a teaching and affiliating University.. North Maharashtra University with its deep commitment to the upliftment of the educationally disadvantaged groups. It has established **Institute of Distance Education And Learning (IDEAL)** and this may itself be considered as an important expression of this commitment. This Institute was recently honored with the Recognition from Distance Education Council, New Delhi. An important objective of this IDEAL is to create, preserve and disseminate knowledge to all through the Distance Learning System. The IDEAL proposes to offer range of programmes (General, Professional and Liberal) keeping in mind worldwide and local inclination. IDEAL will always try to provide need-based programmes and services to its learners.

IDEAL's mission is to become a Mass Institute to facilitate 'education for all'. The Open and Distance learning approach has come a long way from the old model of correspondence courses and distance learning. We now talk of open learning, flexi learning and now the ICT based learning (virtual learning). For all these purpose and to improve quality IDEAL should prioritize the programme to be offered through distance mode in those areas only which are on offer in face to face/regular mode in the university.

The programme comprises two components, namely, Theory and Research. The programmes are presently implemented at thirteen study centers in NMU; s jurisdiction as Jalgaon, Dhule & Nandurbar.

Objective of UG/PG Course are to motivate the student, to identify strengths and weaknesses of conventional educational system, To develop skill to acquire knowledge through use of various modes.

Institute of Distance Education And Learning (IDEAL) is one of the important departments in the NMU. This department always tries to ensure quality for effective

implementation of the UG & PG programme through various modes. In this way, the IDEAL always tries to design and implement the quality parameters with the main aim to maintain quality in higher education. The range of entry qualification is very diverse. It includes, post graduate degree at one point while a person without any formal qualification, may also seek admission. All study material is available in print form, like assignment booklet, student information booklet, books available for the courses which are offered for UG/PG programme and it includes contact sessions of different duration admission year. Students get an opportunity to do research work in the various fields. Course evaluation is done through internal assessment as well as annual exam.

By adopting this process, the IDEAL ensures academic as well as administrative quality control. In spite of ODL mode, the steps taken by IDEAL help to provide human support to the students. Thus, the ODL mode along with human intervals) would certainly yield better quality output.

TITLE : ‘An exploration of various modalities adopted to enhance quality in distance education of under graduate & post graduate studies: The NMU, IDEAL’s approach’ Introduction

North Maharashtra University is one of the upcoming universities in India; the university was established on 15th August, 1990 under the Maharashtra University Act No. XXIX of 1989 as a teaching and affiliating University. This university has been taking initiative to start dual mode education facility for students who are not able to attend school & colleges regularly. Fulfilling this purpose North Maharashtra University with its deep commitment to the upliftment of the educationally disadvantaged groups has established *Institute of Distance Education And Learning (IDEAL)* and this may itself be considered as an important expression of this commitment. This Institute was recently honored with the Recognition from Distance Education Council, New Delhi. An important objective of IDEAL is to create, preserve and disseminate knowledge to all through the Distance Learning System. The IDEAL proposes to offer range of programmes (General, Professional and Liberal) keeping in mind worldwide and local inclination. IDEAL will always try to provide need-based programmes and services to its learners. It becomes a Mass University to facilitate ‘education for all’. To attain this IDEAL intends to use open and flexi-learning approaches, local language. & information & communication technology. Alternative learning systems are essential. The Open and Distance learning approach have come a long way from the old model of correspondence courses and distance learning. We now will talk about open learning; flexi learning and now the ICT based learning (virtual learning).

Paper Objective

Present paper considers only one major objective namely,

- To document quality assurance steps taken by the IDEAL regarding UG/PG programme

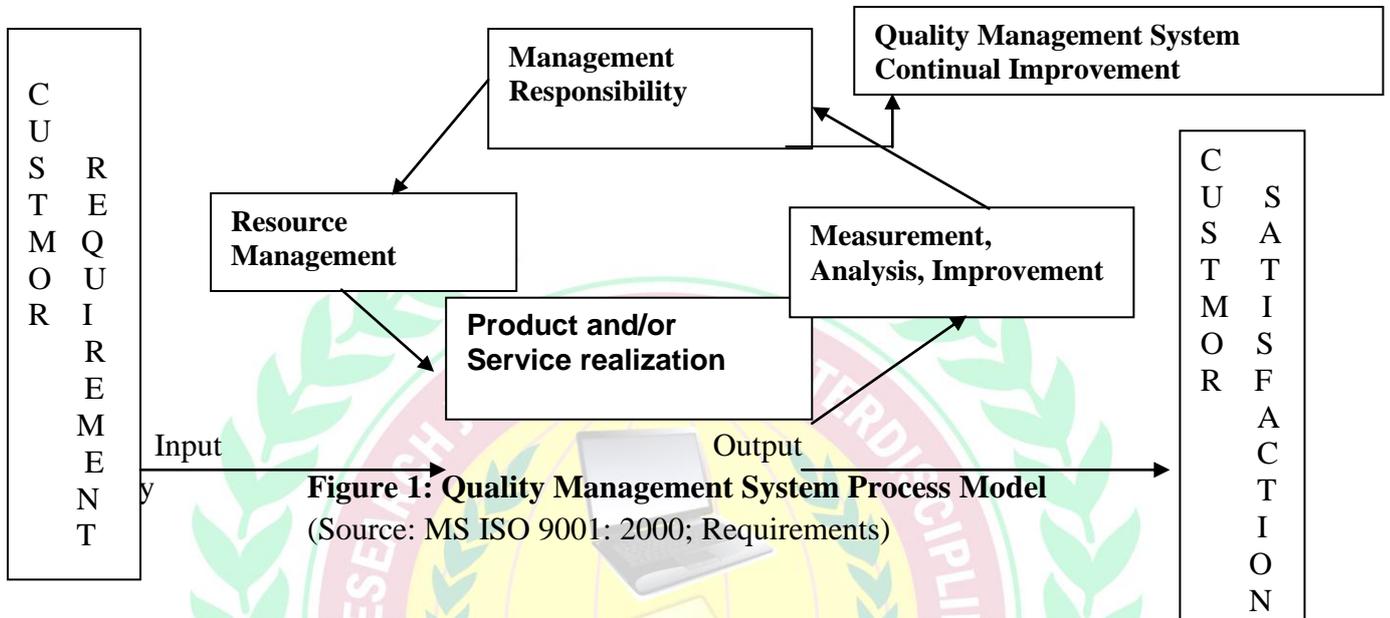
Concept of Distance Education:

In brief Distance Education is initiated with a view of widening the horizons of education and Opening the new frontiers of knowledge and democratizing the teaching learning process. Non formal education systems like Open Universities, Open schools, Distance learning or Distance Education systems are introduced to overcome the inadequacies of the traditional and formal education system. Education has to be made accessible to all irrespective of Financial, Social, Psychological and other conditions. In this context,

Distance Education has been found an alternative, a boon, and a remedial measure. Distance Education is a term that includes the range of teaching learning strategies described as home study.

Best Practices to improve quality in Distance Education

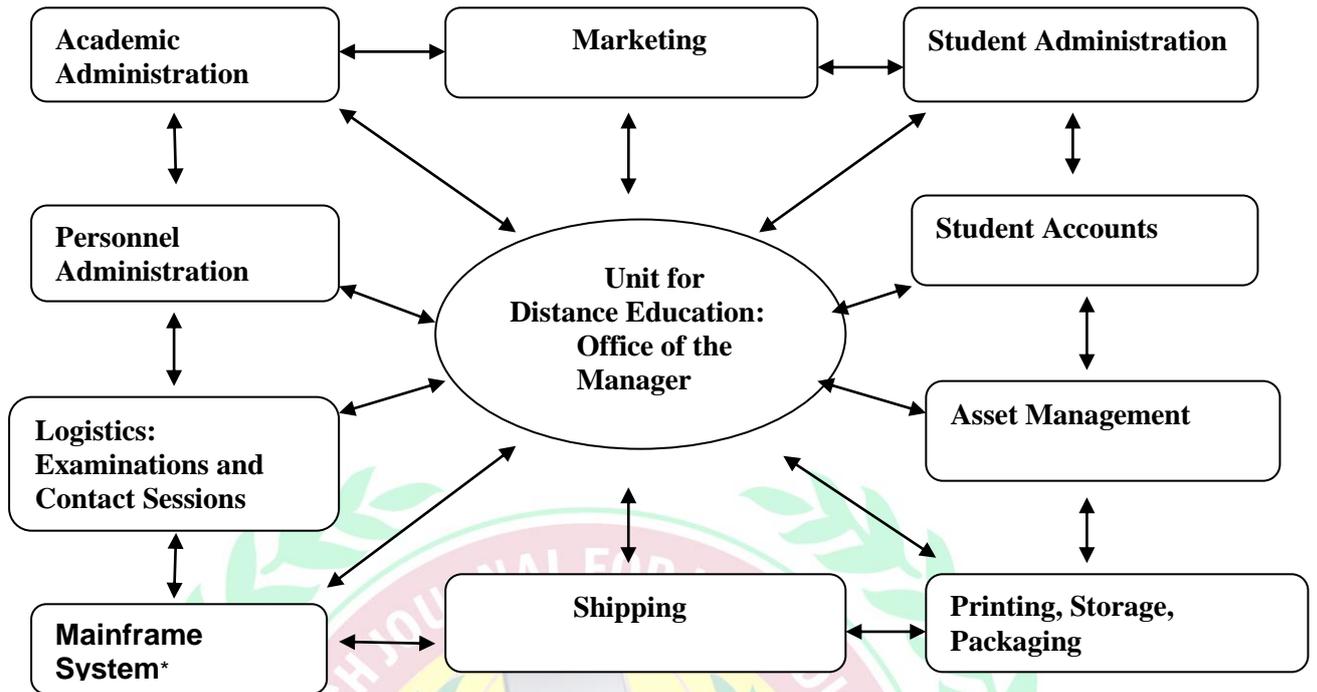
1. MODEL-1



In general, this model emphasizes the importance of identifying and understanding customer needs and expectation to ensure that customer requirements are met. Measurements of customer satisfaction are then used as feedback to evaluate and validate whether customer requirements have been achieved. The management review will then provide feedback to top management for change authorization and improvement opportunities.

MODEL-2

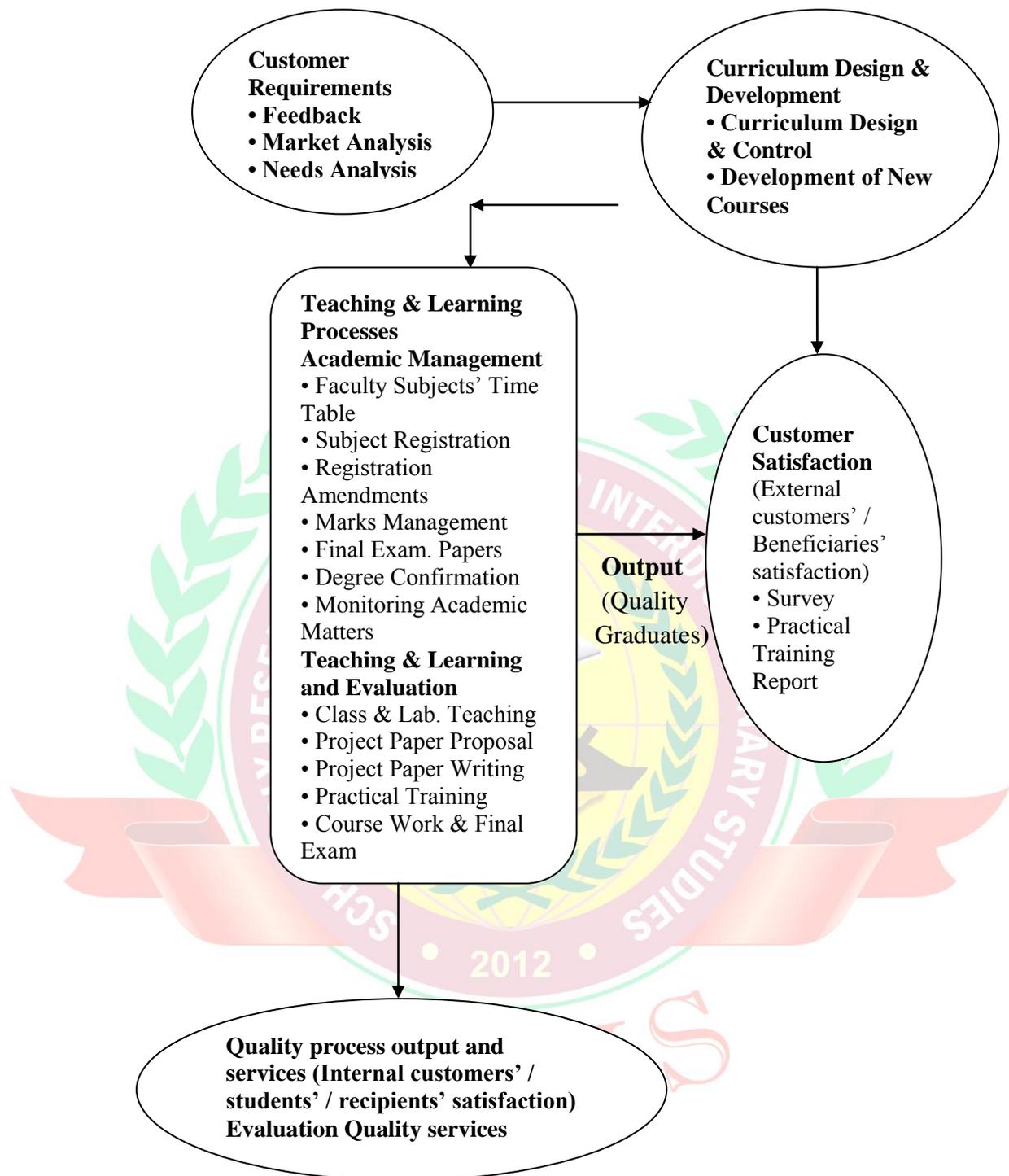
The case study revealed that specific structures and systems had to be developed in view of this happened only after it was determined that the existing systems and structures did not serve the best interests of distance education. In adopting this approach, the University therefore confirmed its commitment to distance education. The identified business processes is diagrammatically represented below.



For Increasing Enrolment & Business Processes Model

MODEL-3

The customer-driven (beneficiaries) and process-focus (recipient) conceptual model that has been designing best practices in teaching and learning process distance mode. The process-focus regards students as internal customers as they are the ones who receive output of the teaching and learning process. The output of teaching and learning process includes teaching materials, modules, class delivery, project papers and other academic related services. In this context, Quentin (2000) preferred to address students as recipients because they do not set education specification. The process is diagrammatically represented below.



Model of Quality Management System for Best Practices in Teaching and Learning through Distance Mode

According to the best practices mentioned in the models IDEAL is enhancing the quality of UG/PG programs

Institute of Distance Education And Learning (IDEAL) is one of the important departments in the NMU. This department tries to ensure quality for effective implementation of the UG/PG programme through contact sessions, through postal mail, or telephonic contact,

personal guidance, etc. Due to this procedure, students get immediate solution / response according to their problems. In this way, the IDEAL always tries to design and implement the quality parameters with the main aim to maintain quality in higher education.

Programms:

Presently IDEAL offers sixteen programmes like B.A.Gen,B.COM,M.A.in Matathi,Hindi,English,History,Sociology,Political Science,Defence & strategic Studies,Philosophy,Sanskrit,Economics, Education, LLM,M.Sc.in Maths . The IDEAL offers these programmes, by keeping constant contact with the study centers as well as students. Quality Assurance is always taken care of at every stage of programme.

Benefits or Opportunities for holders of these degree

Persons holding the degrees of M.A, M.Com, M.sc of IDEAL can have excellent opportunities in open and distance education system as well as in any area where development communication is necessary. It is relevant to point out that so many government and private agencies are introducing distance learning methodology for the training of the staff.

Other Important activities run by IDEAL:

IDEAL of NMU has conducted FOUR Self Learning Material (SLM) writing/training workshops for approved teachers of the University. Some senior teachers are also invited for SLM writing & training from other Universities of Maharashtra .These teachers have written the SLM as per DEC norms and printed in distance format by the IDEAL/University. We are happy to inform that 10 SLM books are with ISBN recognition

Developing Study Material

The UG/PG programme of IDEAL is of unique nature, which combines communication and DE aspects. The learning Material is evolved through the expertise of experienced academic person. The different stages of course material development are monitored carefully. The important aspects to be kept in view while designing the UG/PG course for students need, expectations and characteristics of the target groups etc. So SIM helped students for doing better study.

Contact sessions

The contact session have a major role to play and thereby offer academic support to student. This is extremely useful for the interaction with student and counselors as well as university staff. The UG/PG programme includes contact sessions of different duration, during admission year. The student needs to attend these, to seek answers to academic and administrative difficulties.

Summary

By adopting this process, the IDEAL ensures academic as well as administrative quality control. In spite of ODL mode, the steps taken by IDEAL help to provide human support to the students. Thus the IDEAL always tries to enhance quality through various modes like giving admission by norms, organizing contact sessions, providing study material, guidance about research work, writing assignment and annual exam ,transparent evaluation etc. These steps are taken by IDEAL to ensure to monitor and enhance quality of the programmes. Thus, the ODL mode along with human support (at selected intervals) would certainly yield better quality output.

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