

POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN DISTANCE EDUCATION

Term-End Examination

December, 2011

01763

ES-313 : LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES

Time : 3 hours

Maximum Weightage : 75%

- Note :** (i) Attempt all three questions.
(ii) All the three questions carry equal weightage.

1. Answer *any one* of the following questions in about 1200 words :
 - (a) Classify the different types of tutor comments. Explain each type with suitable examples.
 - (b) Imagine you are setting up a learner support system for a new open university. What is the structure that you prepare ? Which media would you adopt for providing various support services to the distance learners.
2. Answer *any four* of the following in about 300 words each :
 - (a) Differentiate between academic and non-academic counselling.
 - (b) Explain the meaning of 'perfect grading' ?
 - (c) What are the discrimination factors that help in discriminating between a weak and a good assignment response ?
 - (d) What is the role and functions of a Regional Centre in an open university ?
 - (e) Explain developmental counselling with examples.
 - (f) What are global comments and why are they necessary ?
3. The following is a excerpt from an actual assignment response (See Appendix. I). Write your marginal comments in the margin provided and global comments on the assessment sheet enclosed. Award a grade to the assignment response on a five point scale, using letter grade A, B, C, D and E : the notional correlates of these letter grades respectively are excellent, very good, good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory.
After evaluation attach the evaluated script and the 'Assessment Sheet' with your examination answer sheet. Award a grade in the box provided and also write the global comments on the assessment sheet.

Note : PLEASE TEAR OFF THIS APPENDIX (ASSIGNMENT RESPONSE) AND ATTACH IT WITH YOUR ANSWER SCRIPT AFTER YOUR ASSESMENT

Enrolment No : **Grade :**

APPENDIX I

ES-313 : Support Services

Space for comments Question and response

1. **Discuss in brief the various areas of management of an education institution. According to you which area is more important and why ?**

ANSWER

There are four main areas of management of an educational institution. These are academic management, administration, institutional building and institutional management.

Institution Management

This involves use of open system theory which promotes determining and defining primary tasks of the institution in order to establish leadership for particular task. It also involves managing information flow within and across the institution boundaries as well as promoting understanding of flow of authority. The institution should have a mission statement arrived at by members of the institution. This would lead to having a common purpose and promotes cooperation among members. Decision making bodies representing all members should be formed in order to make decisions on human and material resource mobilization, infrastructure maintenance and curriculum issues. There should also be linkage and good relations with education community which includes parents, teachers, administrators and the larger community.

Administration

This involves interpreting laws and exercising control over personnel, finances and infrastructures. A personnel policy on both academic and administrative staff should exist and be implemented with transparency, people should be aware of details of the policy. On finances, there should not only be control public spending of government teaching and administrative items but also exploring alternative sources of funding. It is through administrative management that the institution should identify and specify methods to follow to achieve financial prudence so as to ensure good reputation and credibility of the institution. This involves budgeting, accounting and reporting to funding authorities. As a component of administration, methods and practices the

institution would use to pursue its objectives should be specified, even those related to personnel, budgeting and accounting. An academic calendar should be produced with great care and attention so as to address objectives of the institution.

Institution building

This involves organization diagnosis and evaluation by using SWOT analysis (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunity and Threats). Such an assessment of performance of an organization leads to identification of opportunities available for improvement on which an institution improvement plan can be based. Such a plan can be arrived at by reviewing the mission statement of the institution, setting objectives related to the mission statement, identifying priority areas or activities, identifying resources required and setting time frame for achievement of objectives. If this is done together with members of the institution, it results to cultivating common interests and promotion of team spirit. These three areas of management are important just like the forth one, academic management. However I will give more emphasis on academic management because it has strong and direct link to teaching and learning which is the core function of an academic institution as reflected in the paragraph below.

Academic management

Academic management involves prescribing programmes and courses for study in order to implement the national curriculum in a manner that makes it relevant to local needs. In order to achieve this, it is important not only to get constant feedback from the society and the employers but also evaluation so as to have a demand driven curriculum in the first place. The curriculum should compare well with standards by different institutions in terms of breadth and depth of courses and standard of grading. Along with development of the curriculum, there should be laying down of appropriate instructional process and assessment system should be clarified whether it will be continuous or summative.

Academic management also involves making students aware of support services at their disposal. Some of these services include provision or reliable, accurate and compressive information about the institution itself. Information about programs and courses offered, enrolment procedures and students assessment procedures should be made available. Awareness of student services available is useful for learners to be motivated, be able to make informed decisions and avoid frustration. Academic management also involves making linkages and interface. Education system is a social system. There should be linkage with other systems at the apex and sectorial level even linkage with the society. As a result, the institution can interpolate the national education policy with the support of the local community. Good linkage with other agencies, for instance funding agencies involve providing relevant information and meeting all required conditions so that there is timely funding as such timely mobilization of resources for efficient and effective learning. Through academic management the institution facilities and environment are maintained so that teaching and learning is promoted.

In conclusion, these four areas of management form the centre where efforts by different subsystems of the main system unite so as to achieve the mission of the institution. Therefore for an organization to succeed it has to manage these four areas discussed.

2. CRITICALLY EXAMINE THE FEASEBILITY AND USEFULNESS OF OPEN UNIVERSITY PERFORMING DUAL ROLES OF ACTING AS AN EDUCATIONAL PROVIDER AND PERFORMING AS AN APEX BODY FOR PROMOTION AND COORDINATION OF THE DISTANCE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN ANY COUNTRY.

ANSWER

The Open University has indeed the role of promoting and coordinating Distance Education System. The roles have come about because of challenges open universities face in its efforts to provide education. These include existence of a vast heterogeneous learners groups, diversified needs of the learners, inadequate resources and facilities. More over to come up with effective procedures, there is need for expertise from specialist in different fields who can give guidance to ensure that courses and programs offered are of high quality. By using various mechanisms such as the Distance Education Council, the university can perform its roles through a number of activities. These include, providing education, coordinating distance education system, providing leadership, maintaining standards, promoting globalization of education but also monitoring standards. These aspects have been discussed in the following paragraphs.

Provision of education

A university has a role of providing education and is likely to identify strengths and weaknesses for different programs hence can base on such experience to improve and promote Distance Education. The Open University has other roles which include formulating programs and courses, determining content and structure of the courses, providing student services including tutorials and other local services. It also has to produce and distribute learning materials as well as provide management and administrative support related to personnel, funds and infrastructure acquisition. All these lead to supporting provision of education.

Coordination

The Open University has to coordinate with other institutions to develop data base to provide information about other Distance Education institution, programs and courses offered which could be used for different purposes. It is the Open University which can device means for stake holders to share intellectual, physical and financial resources which could lead to better provision of distance education. It is uneconomical for universities to duplicate efforts in preparing learning packages on similar programs. The open university has the mandate to pool up resources and programs. As such, there is need for common pool of such resources from where these resources will be accessed and shared. This is one of the functions open universities can perform in promoting distance education.

Provision of leadership

The Distance Education Council as a mechanism has the role of identifying priority areas in which distance education programs should be organized, including identifying specific client groups to address. It also has to provide support in organizing such programs through networking. It also has to provide training for distance students educators.

Maintenance of standards

It has the duty to prepare norms and standards for designing and developing programs as well as delivering programs and courses. The Distance Education Council for instance, provides guide lines on planning academic programs and designing the curriculum. Through networking, the Open University can put in place mechanisms for carrying out research on Distance Education, determining quality of distance education, devising monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure the expected standards from distance education are attained. It can use the results of evaluation to organize periodic review of distance education. It concerned with networking and sharing of resources. These are some of the strategies used to maintain standards.

Monitoring standards

Through the establishment of coordinating council, quality assurance is done. Of course the starting point for quality assurance is the framing of norms for the academic programs. It also involves the assessment of courses and programs before they are accredited to the common pool. Through the Open University, quality assurance panel can advise on matters relating to maintenance of quality in distance education.

Globalization

The aim of Distance education is to reach those who desire education despite varying challenges and needs. It aims at reaching out a much larger number of people many of whom are educationally, economically and socially disadvantaged. No single institution can address this challenges alone and adequately. Through the Open University and its coordination efforts, many people will be reached through the pooling of resources which makes education affordable.

As such Open University through networking and use of mechanism within the university itself like, distance education council, divisions, centres, schools, planning board, finance committee and even academic council can effectively perform the role of being both an education provider and an apex body for promotion and coordination of Distance Education System.

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ASSESSMENT SHEET

(To be filled in Duplicate)*

Enrolment No. _____ Programme _____ Assessment _____
 Student's Name _____ Course _____ Grade
 Assignment No. _____
 Study Centre Code No. _____

Evaluator's Comments

If the space is not sufficient, please use back paper

Please tick ✓ in the relevent box below

CONTENT		STRUCTURE AND PRESENTATION	
Accurate Information	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Inaccurate Information	Well Planned <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Adequate Coverage	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Inadequate Coverage	Inadequately Planned <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Good Conceptual Analysis	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Poor Conceptual Analysis	Concise <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
			Too long or Too short <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
			Clearly Expressed <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
			Not Clearly Expressed <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>