360º Feedback

**(A Report of the Feedback Exercises Undertaken by
the Centre for Internal Quality Assurance,
Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University, 2018-19)**

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Table of Content:

1. **Abstract:**

In order to fulfil the requirements of the UGC Notification of June 23, 2017 and to improve the quality of services, feedback from multiple stakeholders is quite essential. Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU), in its efforts to improve quality, institutionalised a mechanism for collecting diverse kind of feedback through its Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA). This report summarises the rationale, modalities and implementation intricacies of conducting feedback exercises and interactive meetings with the stakeholders.

Various stakeholder communities of KKHSOU like learners, alumni, new learners, functionaries of study centres and examination centres, SLM writers, content editors, language editors, members of Board of Management and Academic Council, teaching and non-teaching employees including senior officers were approached for feedback on different aspects of functioning of the university. Hence, we have endeavoured to call this intervention as 360^ofeedback innovation. The components were carried out in a time bound manner with the help of an Action Plan (2018), which was approved by the CIQA Committee of KKHSOU.

Benchmark scores were tried to be developed through the feedback questionnaires so that the same could be administered in next few years to assess the improvement and identify the grey and weak areas. Most notable achievement was in the area of examination reforms. Based on the feedback of the Examination Monitoring Officers and the Supervising Officers, the University could streamline the examination processes and the measures helped in changing the perception of low quality in conducting the examination processes. Structured discussion in the stakeholders' meetings was another perspective.

With the feedback of the feedback exercises in 2018-19, the University would carry forward the mechanism for treading in the path of quality.

2. **Introduction and Background:**

The University Grants Commission of India released a Notification on June 23, 2017 with a number of Clauses and Annexures covering various aspects of quality improvement in distance education programmes. Establishment of Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) with clear-cut mandates, objectives and functions, is a hallmark of the Notification.

In order to improve learner engagement and to have better stakeholder relationship, it is quite essential to have dialogues and feedback from the recipients of the services of an Institution. In conformity with the UGC guidelines, CIQA of KKHSOU became functional in 2018 and started operating with the help of an annual action

1

plan. In that action plan, various provisions were made to collect feedback from diverse group viz. current learners, alumni, new learners, stakeholders including study centre and examination centre functionaries, SLM writers, content editors, language editors, researchers, teaching and non-teaching staff of the university.

Interactive sessions with the functionaries of the study centres and examination centres were held in different places of Assam. Survey instruments were administered among university employees (teaching and non-teaching), new learners, current learners and alumni etc. to elicit views of the recipients of the university services with an objective of developing benchmarks for improvement in quality.

3. **Need of the Feedback Exercises:**

3.1: Feedback from Stakeholders

KKHSOU organised an International Conference in December 2017. In that Conference, the Chief Guest from MHRD and the Honourable VC of KKHSOU urged for organising a brainstorming session with the stakeholders for developing a roadmap for the University.

3.2: Feedback from SLM Auditors

SLM is the backbone of distance education. Getting feedback from peer review is essential. Hence, SLM audit was conducted as a part of the feedback exercise.

3.3: Feedback from Examination Monitoring Officers

Conducting examination processes in Open University system is a daunting challenge as exams are conducted even in remote districts and sub-divisions. Getting the feedback regarding the conduct of examination is essential. Therefore, with CIQA as the nodal entity, the university adopted an all-out examination monitoring in the year 2018 for improvement of the system.

3.4: Feedback from Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff

Quality of internal service determines the quality of external service. Getting the feedback from the teaching and non-teaching staff of the university can provide useful insights regarding the improvement of management processes. There was a need to elicit views of the employees regarding aspects of job and their extent of satisfaction.

3.5: Feedback from Learners and Alumni

Keeping the learners engaged during their programme duration is an important element. Feedback needs to be collected regarding the problems experienced during the study and the extent of satisfaction on various aspects. The expectation survey of the new learners can also provide useful insight as regards benchmarking.

3.6: Feedback from Training Programme

CIQA initiated and conducted a number of training programmes for the faculty and non-teaching staff of the University. In the training programmes, not only the training-end feedback questionnaire, interactive session with the trainer was held for better understanding the issues of rendering quality service.

3.7: Programme Specific Feedback

The Government of Assam sponsored a Diploma Programme on Elementary Education for the teachers involved in primary education in the state. KKHSOU sponsored a Minor Research Project (MRP) for ascertaining the effectiveness of the programme. Collecting feedback from the participants was a requirement of the MRP.

4. Description of the Innovation:

4.1 Feedback from Stakeholders

Certain points from the Keynote Speech (delivered by Prof Asha Kanwar, President and CEO of Commonwealth of Learning) of the International Conference of the University in 2017 were extracted and presented in a stakeholders' meeting organised by CIQA in Guwahati on April 6, 2018. CIQA organized the stakeholders' meeting with representatives from Board of Management, Academic Council, current learners, alumni, SLM writers, study centre functionaries, content editors, language editors, research scholars, along with the faculty, officers and senior staff of KKHSOU. The meeting discussed various perspectives in terms of questions raised in a Theme Paper, specially prepared for the Meeting, a copy of which is attached herewith **(Annexure-I)**. The meeting having representation from diverse stakeholders discussed and debated the following perspectives.
i.   Increase in GER
ii.   Goals and objectives of KKHSOU Programmes
iii.   Use of OER by KKHSOU
iv.   Reducing dropout and learner engagement

The Meeting was briefed about the ongoing measures of the University for reforms in the examination processes, strengthening the internal administration and digitisation of records. The four hour long meeting with more than 100 participants indicated the strengths and shortcomings in the university functioning. There was a very positive feedback about initiatives of examination reforms. Concern was expressed regarding the quality of the translation work in Assamese. The Report of Stakeholder's Meeting is presented in **Annexure II**.

In order to improve the quality of functioning of the University, feedback of the Stakeholders is essential. This effort also helps in meeting the requirements of UGC guidelines and the forthcoming NAAC Assessment and Accreditation. In order to fulfil the partial requirements of CIQA Action Plan, another Stakeholders Meeting

was organised on 6th April, 2019 at DCB Girls College, Jorhat. The report of the meeting is attached at **Annexure III.**

The University organized a number of workshops with the functionaries of study centres in several places of Assam. CIQA participated in those meetings also**.** The reports of the meetings are attached at **Annexure IV.**

4.2 SLM Audit

Feedback from SLM Audit is essential. Keeping this in view, CIQA of KKHSOU conducted an SLM Audit with a defined methodology. A checklist was prepared with parameters drawn based on UGC guidelines, so that uniformity, clarity and transparency could be maintained in the audit process. SLM Audits were conducted on 20 Units in 2018, selected through a stratified random sampling method.

The SLM Audit results were based on the identified eight attributes on a five point scale and compliance to ten attributes in dichotomous terms (Yes/No) as identified in the checklist. 'References at the end' attribute's score is 0%, which needs to be taken care of on an urgent basis. In addition to 'Further Readings' the inclusion of 'References at the end' in each unit would add value to the unit. Likewise the meeting noted the score of 75% and 70% in two areas viz. namely 'Encourages the Learner to apply new knowledge and skills' and 'Glossary section includes explanation of technical, new and difficult words'. The overall Mean Score was 3.42 in a five point scale.

The Checklist data were arranged in pertinent tables and then were interpreted and analyzed through Percentage. **(Annexure V)**

The SLM Audit Committee expressed concern regarding the quality of Assamese translation and felt an urgent need to conduct quality audit of the same. However, this would require identification of special parameters of quality and content audit by auditors familiar with both the languages viz. Assamese and English. SLMs are being developed for various courses which would be ready within this year. In view of the above the meeting recommended conduct of similar exercise next year i.e 2019 with the left over courses.

4.3 Feedback from Examination Monitoring

In the examinations of all the UG, PG and Diploma Programmes, Examination Monitoring Officers (EMO) was deputed by the university. The centres are selected based on criteria like convenience of the learners, infrastructure of the examination centres, previous records regarding adoption of unfair means etc. EMO visits were conducted in a phase wise manner, in addition to the visit of squad by Controller of Examinations based on EMO feedback. A detailed feedback form was developed to have specified information on learner attendance, invigilation, infrastructure, adoption of unfair means, disciplinary action taken etc.

After the fixation of centres by the COE, CIQA prepared a list of EMOs so that maximum centres could be covered for monitoring. The same practice was repeated throughout 2018. The summary statistics of EMO visits are as follows.

Total number of Examination Centres visited: 209
Total number of visits by EMOs (including multiple visits): 381
Number of cases where unfair means were reported: 175
Number of cases where disciplinary action were taken: 165
(Summary report of the EMO visits- Annexure VI & VII).

4.4 Feedback from Teaching and Non teaching staff

CIQA administered feedback survey amongst the teaching and non-teaching staff of KKHSOU. In case of non-teaching staff, Assamese language was also used. The survey instrument on some aspects of job and job satisfaction was developed keeping parameters like workplace conditions, participation in decision-making, infrastructure and professional development. The response rate was 88%. Carefully chosen procedures were adopted for administering the questionnaire, collecting them through Drop Box and also for opening and coding of the filled in questionnaires.

Strong areas like confidence in management, scope for experiencing personal growth were identified. Certain weak/grey areas were indicated in respect of training, favouritism, promotions, etc. The detailed report was presented before the BoM of the university.

A report of the survey and findings with the Datasheet are presented in the following Annexures.

Annexure VIII:	Report on Feedback Survey (Academic Staff)
	Data Sheet on Feedback Survey (Academic Staff)
Annexure IX:	Report on Feedback Survey (Non-Teaching Staff)
	Data Sheet on Feedback Survey (Non-Teaching Staff)

4.5 Feedback from Learners and Alumni

CIQA administered online feedback questionnaires to the following categories of learners to elicit detailed feedback regarding the quality of services and their extent of satisfaction.
  i.   New Learners
  ii. Current learners
  iii. Alumni

KKHSOU organised an Alumni Meet on September 30, 2018 in which the questionnaire was administered offline. In the Meet, 96 nos of alumni members of different programmes from different parts of Assam participated. The Centre for Internal Quality Assurance administered a Questionnaire among the alumni members present. CIQA received filled in responses from 85 members regarding satisfaction level of learners on services received from KKHSOU.

The following are the strong areas of KKHSOU as perceived by the alumni members,

- Admission Procedure
- Fairness in the process of evaluation
- Fee Structure
- Quality of self learning material
- Services received by Counselors

The Alumni have expressed their disagreement and indecisiveness which may be inferred as some kind of negative feedback. The Alumni Association has already been formed. The University needs to strengthen library facilities and ICT facilities.

The Programme Expectation Survey administered on the new learners indicated about the favourable disposition towards the University and towards their respective programmes. The newly admitted learners are highly influenced by the reputation of the university, reputation of the chosen programme, recommendation of friends/ relatives. While deciding about admission they give high importance on the ability of the chosen programme to impart specific job related skill and facilitate their career progression.

It is expected that the survey findings would help in reflecting the existing managerial practices and making necessary intervention in the areas as may be deemed appropriate.

A report of the survey and findings with the Datasheet are presented in the following Annexures.

Annexure X: Report on Learner's Expectation Survey

Annexure XI: Report on Alumni Feedback Survey
                    Data Sheet on Alumni Feedback Survey

4.6 Feedback from Training Programme

In the in-house training programmes, feedback was obtained in three pronged manner as follows,

i.   Training end written feedback in a structured questionnaire
ii.   Oral feedback during valedictory session
iii. Interactive session (just before valediction) about related areas of functioning in the University

In each of the programme conducted for the teaching and non-teaching staff feedback forms were administered and results have been analysed.

4.6.1: Two Day Workshop on Faculty Development

A two day workshop was organized by the Centre for Quality Assurance (CIQA) of the University on 18th and 19th November, 2018 for the teaching staff of this university. The workshop dealt with skills required in preparing the Self learning materials (SLM). The resource person for the two-day workshop was Professor Prabir Biswas, Professor in Distance Education, Staff Training and Research Institute of Distance Education (STRIDE), IGNOU, New Delhi.

A feedback form was administered, which was collected in the afternoon session on the 2nd day of workshop. Feedback form for the faculty and Feedback datasheet of Faculty Development Workshop and analysis report are placed in **Annexure XII (A)**.

From the data sheet it was found that there was a very positive response on the part of the participants. It can be easily seen that the arrangement made by CIQA for the conduct of workshop has satisfied the faculty members. Most of the participants have found the sessions very interesting, informative, relevant and fruitful and very beneficial. The participants requested CIQA office to organize some relevant workshop at regular intervals on academic and non-academic matters for the benefit of teaching fraternity.

4.6.2: Training Programme for the Grade III Staff:

With the focus of training the support staff of KKHSOU on effective communication and interpersonal relations, a training programme was organised by the CIQA Office of the University on 27th November, 2018 in the Conference Hall of the Rubber Board, Zonal Office for the Grade III employee of the University. The Programme was attended by 38 support staff of the University. A feedback questionnaire was distributed among the participants for measuring the overall effectiveness and their comments regarding the programme.

A feedback form was administered, which was collected in the afternoon session. Feedback form for the support staff and Feedback datasheet of Staff Training Programme and analysis report are placed in **Annexure XII (B)**.

From the data sheet it was found that there was a very positive response on the part of the participants. It can be easily seen that the arrangement made by CIQA for the conduct of training programme has satisfied the supporting staff. Most of the participants have found the sessions very interesting, useful, very relevant, well conduct and fruitful and highly beneficial. According to most of the participants, knowledge and information gained from this training programme met their expectations and useful. The participants requested CIQA office to organize some relevant training programme at regular intervals.

4.7 Programme Specific Feedback

The MRP on D El Ed programme effectiveness examined instructional components and evaluated the effectiveness of stakeholders in implementation. The study reported feedback from 264 learners from 10 study centres. Moreover, views from 19 counsellors and 12 coordinators and centre in charge also were collected.

A minor research project awarded by KKHSOU under the guidance of Prof. N.N.Sarma, Director, CIQA was conducted on the topic "Evaluation of Diploma in Elementary Education Programme offered by KKHSOU- Lessons from its Implementation". In the initial part of the study Prof. Daisy Bora Talukdar the then Professor of Education in KKHSOU also extended guidance in the design of the programme effectiveness research. The report was submitted to KKHSOU on 14th May 2018. The report highlighted about the need for orientation workshop. These were positive feedback (70%) on the quality of SLM and practicum (78%).

5.   **Innovative Features:**

   5.1 Feedback from Stakeholders
   The innovative feature was the structured discussion based on a Theme Paper highlighting the four perspectives and corresponding questions so that the discussion could remain focused and genuine feedback could be collected**.**

   5.2 Feedback from SLM Auditors
   The innovative feature was ability to capitalize on UGC Guidelines and develop the indicators which could be replicated in future.

   5.3 Feedback from Examination Monitoring Officers
   The innovative feature was the all-out approach of the university involving all faculty members and officers including the senior officers and yearlong follow up for examination reforms.

   5.4 Feedback from Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff
   Overwhelming response to the structured questionnaire and sharing of the findings with the respondents and Board of Management was appreciated. Development of the Mean Scores in the identified areas will ensure continuity and follow up.

   5.5 Feedback from Learners and Alumni
    Programme Expectation Survey among the new learners was an innovative addition

   5.6 Feedback from Training Programme
   The oral and written feedback at the end of training programme is a routine activity. However, the unannounced brainstorming and interactive session before the valedictory led to thoughtful and positive discussion.

5.7 Programme Specific Feedback

Classroom observations and noting on desirable aspects of classroom teaching could be considered as an innovative feature in addition to the standard methodology.

6.   **Applications and Uses of the Innovation:**

6.1 Feedback from Stakeholders

Inputs from the stakeholders could help the University in identifying the weak and grey areas. The need for an Alumni Association was highlighted. That helped in the formation of an Alumni Association. Everyone present in the meeting could have an understanding of the holistic aspects in the functioning of an open university. As the meeting could generate effective discussion, the University has asked CIQA to conduct two more such meetings in 2019- one in Upper Assam and one in Lower Assam.

6.2 Feedback from SLM Auditors

The same exercise would be repeated in 2019 which is expected to give further insight to the SLM development process

6.3 Feedback from Examination Monitoring Officers

The reports of EMOs were shared with the concerned offices of Registrar, Dean (Study Centre) and Controller of Examinations. Based on EMO feedback, examination centres were informally graded and decision was taken about continuation. The feedback reports of the EMOs indicated fall in adoption of unfair means towards the end of the year.

6.4 Feedback from Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff

The survey indicated strong areas in respect of access to KKHSOU management, faculty cohesion, encouragement to new ideas, etc. The survey indicated some grey areas like perception of society acknowledgement, reimbursement of expenses for academic pursuits. The authority presented the detailed report before the BoM.

6.5 Feedback from Learners and Alumni

Analysis of Feedback Data indicated admission, SLM distribution, fee payment etc. as strong areas. The University should consolidate the functioning in these areas. Infrastructural facilities like availability of internet, library etc.in the study centres were identified as weak and grey areas. This aspect needs intervention.

6.6 Feedback from Training Programme

Training for the non-teaching staff was not a regular phenomenon in KKHSOU. Conducting the staff training was highly appreciated. The University needs to organise training programmes regularly. One feedback of having interdepartmental workshops was highly appreciated. If this could be organised, this would be an innovative training.

6.7 Programme Specific Feedback

KKHSOU is closing the D El Ed programme. However, the findings of the feedback survey would be useful for the University in the forthcoming teacher education programmes being conducted in collaboration with SCERT and NCERT.

7.   **Achievements:**

Open universities function like industrial organizations catering to the requirements of a large number of learners and that too mostly depending on external service providers. As stakeholders' relationship is crucial, 360° feedback approach can be highly effective. The interaction with the functionaries of the study centres, the interaction with the authorities conducting the examination processes in the examination centres, interaction with SLM developers, alumni members etc. could provide continuous, reliable, relevant and useful insights regarding expectations from the University and functioning. The theme paper based meeting of stakeholders could provide roadmap guidelines to the University. The efforts on examination reforms also acted as a morale booster.

8.   **Challenges and Problems:**

In the interactive sessions with the stakeholders of KKHSOU, the initiatives on examination reforms based on EMO visits were highly appreciated. The EMO efforts have resulted in curbing the unfair practices in the examination centres. However, the problem has a social dimension also. There is a common tendency in the student community in the society to adopt unfair means in examinations to which some examination centres show a kind of indifference. However, the efforts of the University should be sustained. A feedback orientation characterises an achiever. The measurement and accuracy related issues should not deter the University from adopting a 360" approach.

9.   **Future Prospects:**

9.1 In future, the SLM audit process should have external auditors. That measure will give feedback that would be more credible.

9.2 KKHSOU needs to reach more numbers of learners for obtaining the feedback. The feedback of the employers employing KKHSOU passed out learners may also be attempted.

9.3 Customised feedback from special category of learners (PWD and jail inmates, for example) may also be attempted in an effort to make it 360°. Likewise, feedback coverage of categories like institutional suppliers will give a holistic perspective.

9.4 The complaints and complements received by the university and its service providers needs to be integrated with the framework of 360° appraisal.

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