Lecturers' Perceptions of the Quality Assurance System for General English Teaching Programs in Vietnamese Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Understanding lecturers' perceptions of Quality Assurance (QA) is vital for improving English language programs. Despite growing attention to QA in higher education, limited research explores how lecturers view its implementation. This study addresses that gap by examining QA practices in General English Teaching programs at two universities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (HEI1 and HEI2). Using an explanatory mixed-methods approach, data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis. Findings showed that lecturers from both institutions acknowledged QA efforts in curriculum design, teaching, assessment, staff development, and facilities. However, HEI2 consistently scored higher across most criteria. Qualitative insights highlighted HEI2's strengths in placement testing, workload design, staff training, and technology use. The study suggests HEI1 could benefit from benchmarking these practices. By involving lecturers, the research contributes to understanding QA implementation and offers practical recommendations for enhancing English programs in Vietnamese higher education.

Keywords: quality assurance, General English Teaching Program, higher education, lecturers' perception

Introduction

Quality assurance (QA) in higher education is vital for ensuring the effectiveness and relevance of academic programs. Harvey and Green (1993) describe quality in education through lenses such as fitness for purpose, value for money, and transformative potential. Robust QA mechanisms like program accreditation and regular evaluations help institutions meet defined standards (Martin & Stella, 2007). Continuous feedback from stakeholders—students, faculty, and employers—aligns program outcomes with societal and industry needs (Tam, 2001). Technology integration in QA processes enhances efficiency in monitoring and evaluation (Coates, 2005). Additionally, context-specific QA frameworks address diverse institutional and regional challenges (Biggs, 2001). A holistic approach to QA prioritizes compliance with standards and enhances the students' learning experience.

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In recent years, Quality Assurance (QA) has emerged as a cornerstone in the development and evaluation of academic programs across higher education institutions in Vietnam. QA frameworks are designed to ensure that educational programs meet institutional goals, stakeholder expectations, and international standards. In the context of General English Teaching Programs (GETPs), effective QA implementation is vital for maintaining program quality and achieving desired learning outcomes.

Despite the formal integration of QA systems into academic structures in Vietnam, many university lecturers remain unfamiliar with their roles and responsibilities in the QA process. This lack of understanding can hinder the successful implementation and effectiveness of QA initiatives. As QA principles such as accountability, continuous improvement, and stakeholder involvement are essential (Harvey & Green, 1993), the perceptions and engagement of lecturers who are key stakeholders in the teaching and learning process must be thoroughly understood.

Existing literature highlights several mechanisms that support effective QA, such as accreditation processes, program reviews, and benchmarking against international standards like the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2020). However, challenges such as limited resources (Owlia & Aspinwall, 1996), diverse stakeholders' needs (Tam, 2001), and resistance to change (Newton, 2000) often impede implementation. To overcome these barriers, institutions are advised to promote stakeholder involvement, offer professional development opportunities, and apply technological tools to improve QA efficiency (Kohoutek, 2009; Pereira et al., 2021).

Given this context, examining lecturers' perceptions of QA systems for General English Teaching Programs (GETPs) in Vietnam is both timely and necessary. The purpose of the study entitled "Lecturers' Perceptions of the Quality Assurance System for General English Teaching Programs in Vietnamese Higher Education" is to explore how lecturers perceive the implementation of QA practices, including their understanding, challenges encountered, and suggestions for improvement. This study may reveal lecturers' awareness of QA, obstacles they face, and opportunities to enhance QA practices in reality. Ultimately, understanding lecturers' perceptions will contribute to strengthening QA efforts, leading to better program outcomes, increased student satisfaction, and enhanced institutional reputation and graduate employability (Martin & Stella, 2007; Schindler et al., 2015).

Literature Review

General English Teaching Programs in higher education

To equip tertiary students with essential English language skills that are crucial for academic success and global communication, many HEIs in Vietnam provide General English programs. These programs often cater for non-English major students and are designed to develop their competencies in reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. This section reviews recent studies to highlight their relevance and effectiveness in higher education.

GETPs are characterized by a curriculum that emphasizes communicative competence (Richards, 2006). These programs often adopt a skill-based approach, integrating real-life communication tasks to enhance learners' language proficiency (Brown, 2014). In many contexts, GETPs serve as foundational courses, preparing students for discipline-specific English or English for Specific Purposes popularly known as ESP programs (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). In Vietnam, English is taught as a compulsory subject in the tertiary teaching programs other than English Language (Hoang, 2010). For instance, students might accumulate from 2 to 20 credits among more than 140 credits in their undergraduate curriculum. As stated

in the Higher education law and Vietnamese Language Proficiency Framework, B1 is the exit level for students as they wish to complete the bachelor degree.

Literature has discovered several challenges for GETPs. First, large class sizes and diverse proficiency levels make it difficult for instructors to address individual learning needs (Chen & Goh, 2011). Second, a lack of motivation among students, particularly those who do not perceive English as directly relevant to their fields of study, poses a significant challenge (Dörnyei, 2001). Third, limited essential resources and outdated teaching materials often negatively affect the quality of instruction (Gao, 2013). The context of GETPs in Vietnam also faces similar problems (Hoang, 2010).

Despite these difficulties, GETPs have found their ways to thrive in technology era. The integration of technology and blended learning, such as Learning Management Systems (LMS) and mobile applications, facilitates personalized learning experiences (Sun & Yang, 2021). Flipped classroom models, where students interact with online instructional contents before class, have also demonstrably improved learner engagement and outcomes (Wang, 2017). This technological shift complements pedagogical advancements like task-based language teaching (TBLT), which emphasizes authentic tasks and real-world applications. Research indicates that TBLT boosts students' communicative competence and critical thinking skills (Ellis, 2003).

Empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of well-designed GETPs in improving language proficiency. A meta-analysis by Zhang and Yin (2019) revealed that programs incorporating interactive activities and continuous assessment outperform traditional lecture-based models. Furthermore, aligning course objectives with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages strengthens program coherence and assessment validity (Council of Europe, 2020). To ensure quality, Quach and Nguyen (2024) suggest benchmarking English training programs in Vietnam against established standards like NEAS.

All in all, while GETPs face challenges such as resource constraints and learner diversity, they play a crucial role in higher education by equipping students with essential language skills. The incorporation of technology innovation and task-based approaches, have demonstrably improved program effectiveness. Ultimately, sustainable implementation strategies are key to maximizing the long-term impact of GETPs on students' academic and professional success.

Quality Assurance in General English Teaching Programs

Quality assurance in GETP's objectives

Defining clear desired program objectives is essential to guarantee the training quality of an institution. Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) found that well-articulated objectives provide a roadmap for curriculum design, teaching contents, teaching methodologies, and assessment methods. They are claimed to ensure alignment between program goals, student needs, and institutional benchmarks, promoting coherence and consistency in delivery (Biggs & Tang, 2011). These objectives also serve as benchmarks for evaluating program effectiveness and pinpointing areas for enhancement (Tyler, 1949). Critically, when aligned with industry needs, they boost graduate employability by equipping students with relevant skills and knowledge (Barrie, 2006). Harden (2002) emphasized that objectives not only guide instructors in shaping instructional strategies but also clarify expectations for students, fostering active engagement and self-directed learning. The importance of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) objectives in upholding quality assurance in educational programs has been widely recognized by Doran (1981) and O'Neill (2020). In essence, establishing robust program objectives is a cornerstone of achieving desired learning outcomes and maintaining high quality tertiary training.

Quality assurance in GETP's learning outcomes

Learning outcomes play a pivotal role in ensuring the quality of training programs at the tertiary level as they provide a clear articulation of what students are expected to know, do, and value upon completing a program. This, therefore, serves as a roadmap for curriculum design, instructional methods, and assessment practices (Biggs & Tang, 2011). By defining specific and measurable outcomes, institutions can align teaching strategies with desired competencies, ensuring that students acquire relevant skills and knowledge (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). Learning outcomes also facilitate transparency, enabling stakeholders including students, educators, and employers to understand the purpose and scope of the program (Harden, 2002). Learning outcomes provide a foundation for evaluating program effectiveness and identifying areas for improvement (Kennedy, Hyland, & Ryan, 2009). They also encourage active learning and self-regulation by helping students focus on key tasks and monitor their progress (Biggs, 2003). Moreover, when aligned with industry standards, these outcomes boost graduate employability by connecting academic training with real-world professional needs (Barrie, 2006). As Dang and Pham (2024) pointed out, it is essential to use precise verbs in defining learning outcomes to avoid ambiguity and ensure effective teaching, learning and assessment. They also caution against overloading individual outcomes, stressing the importance of balance for a manageable and productive learning experiences. This focus on clear, relevant, and achievable outcomes, which suggests that modern curriculum design often employs "Backward Design" approach, starting with desired learning outcomes and planning the curriculum as well as the instruction afterwards (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). In short, well-crafted learning outcomes are absolutely essential for maintaining and improving the quality of tertiary training programs.

Quality assurance in GETP's entry requirements

Entry requirements play a vital role in ensuring quality tertiary training by laying the groundwork for academic success and program coherence. Clear and appropriate admission criteria, as Yorke and Longden (2004) suggest, ensure incoming students possess the foundational knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary to effectively engage with the curriculum. This aligns with Kuh et al.'s (2006) observation that well-defined entry requirements improve student retention and performance by minimizing the mismatch between student preparedness and program demands. Furthermore, entry requirements contribute to the overall quality assurance framework by helping maintain academic standards and institutional reputation (Harvey & Green, 1993). Galloway (2009) highlights the importance of aligning entry requirements with program learning objectives to support student progression and completion rates by creating a better academic fit. Importantly, these requirements often reflect broader institutional goals, such as promoting diversity or addressing labor market needs, ensuring program relevance and inclusivity (Smith & Naylor, 2001). By carefully designing entry criteria, higher education institutions can strike a balance between accessibility and quality, building a strong foundation for student success and program success.

Quality assurance in GETP's structure and content

The structure and content of a program are fundamental in defining the quality of a program. First, a well-organized program structure provides a logical sequence of courses, ensuring foundational knowledge and skills are developed in accordance with the stated learning outcomes and programme outcomes. (Biggs & Tang, 2011). This "scaffolding" approach supports effective learning and facilitates the success of program outcomes. Furthermore, relevant and coherent program content is crucial for preparing students to meet academic, professional, and societal demands (Barnett, 2000). Alvesson and Sandberg (2013) emphasized

the need for program content to be aligned with the requirements of labor markets and global trends, which is served to equip graduates' employability and adaptability. A clear structure and relevant content also boost student engagement, as students perceive the program as purposeful and directly related to their goals (Merrill, 2002). Regular reviews and updates of program structure and content are required to maintain alignment with technological advancements and evolving knowledge domains (Fry et al., 2008), which ensures the program to be innovative, competitive, and capable of addressing current and future challenges. Therefore, a well-structured and contextually relevant program significantly contributes to the quality and effectiveness of tertiary education.

Quality assurance in GETP's learning volume

The learning volume requirement is a critical factor in ensuring quality tertiary training, as it defines the necessary workload to gain desired learning outcomes. This encompasses the total time students are expected to dedicate to learning activities, including lectures, self-study, and assessments, promoting a balanced and structured educational approach (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Well-defined learning volume requirements foster consistency across programs and institutions, facilitating comparability and transferability of qualifications (Adam, 2004). They also assist institutions in aligning their curricula with national or international credit frameworks, such as the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), which standardizes workload and enhances program quality (European Commission, 2015). Research indicates that an appropriate workload prevents student from burnout and improves academic performance by providing sufficient time for reflection and content mastery (Kember, 2004). Learning volume requirements also contribute to transparency and accountability, providing students and stakeholders with clear expectations about the program demands (O'Neill, 2020). Consequently, designing and implementing learning volume requirements tailored to students' capabilities and program objectives is essential for sustaining the quality and effectiveness of tertiary education. In credit based curriculums, learning volume is clearly stated in Vietnam Qualifications Framework (Government of Vietnam, 2016) as a QA guideline for curriculum designer to comply to.

Quality assurance in GETP's teaching and assessment methods

Teaching methods and assessment strategies have been proved to be integral to ensuring the quality of training programs at the tertiary level. Biggs & Tang (2011) affirm that effective teaching methods foster student engagement, facilitate active learning, and support the achievement of desired learning outcomes. In particular, pedagogical approaches such as problem-based learning, outcome-based learning, collaborative projects, and experiential learning have been shown to enhance critical thinking and practical skills (Prince, 2004; Driscoll & Wood, 2007; Ho & Ha, 2025). In addition, self-paced learning has been proved to be especially appropriate to tertiary learners (Johnson et al., 2020; Balabag & Cadilas, 2024). Equally important are assessment practices, which serve as tools for measuring learning progress, providing feedback, and ensuring accountability (Boud & Falchikov, 2007). Aligning assessments with learning outcomes and teaching methods through constructive alignment ensures coherence and improves the success of learning and teaching (Biggs, 2003). Formative assessments, in particular, play a critical role in supporting student development by offering timely feedback and opportunities for improvement (Sadler, 1989; Brookhart, 2023). Meanwhile, summative assessments provide a basis for evaluating the overall effectiveness of a program and its ability to meet academic and professional standards (Brown & Knight, 1994; Gu & Lam, 2023). Furthermore, diverse and inclusive assessment methods cater for different learning styles and promote equity (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004; Carless, 2023). Dang and Tong

(2024) identified key instruction-giving techniques for Vietnamese EFL classrooms, including attention-grabbing, repetition, using the mother tongue, demonstrations, and checking understanding. Consequently, the thoughtful integration of innovative teaching methods like online resources accessed through personal technological devices (Nguyen, 2024) and robust assessment practices (Yastıbaş & Takkaç, 2018) is essential for maintaining high-quality tertiary education.

Quality assurance in GETP's academic staff

Academic staff are essential for ensuring the quality of the training programs because their qualifications, expertise, and teaching practices significantly influence student learning experiences and outcomes (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Shulman (1987) emphasized that faculty with both subject-matter expertise and strong pedagogical skills are better equipped to design and deliver effective instruction, leading to deeper student engagement and understanding. Continuous professional development for academic staff is crucial for integrating innovative teaching methods, adapting to technological advancements, and aligning with evolving academic and industry standards (Knapper & Cropley, 2000). Research also highlights the importance of staff-student interaction in fostering active learning, critical thinking, and emotional support all vital for student success (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). Furthermore, academic staff contribute to program quality through research that informs curriculum development and ensures course content remains relevant to current disciplinary trends (Brew, 2006). Institutions with clear policies on recruitment, evaluation, and professional growth for academic staff are better positioned to maintain high standards of teaching and learning (Devlin & Samarawickrema, 2010). In short, the competence and commitment of academic staff in various dimensions are central to achieve and sustain quality in higher education.

Quality assurance in GETP's facilities and technology

Good facilities and technology are essential for quality tertiary training. Having suitable infrastructure regarding classrooms, labs, libraries, even recreational spaces offers a supportive environment for effective teaching and learning (Temple, 2008). Modern facilities equipped with up-to-date technology enable interactive and innovative teaching methods, like blended learning and virtual simulations, which boost student engagement and understanding (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). Plus, reliable technology and digital resources support self-directed learning and collaboration, both of which are crucial for developing 21st-century skills (Brown, 2012). It is widely accepted that institutions with well-maintained facilities and current technology tend to attract and retain both students and faculty, which helps build a strong reputation and ensures program quality (Kuh & Hu, 2001). Additionally, integrating technology into teaching, learning and assessment ensures that programs remain relevant to the evolving demands of the labor market (Laurillard, 2012). Periodic evaluations of facilities and technological resources are necessary to address emerging educational needs and sustain quality standards (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005). Tran (2024) describes modern Vietnamese students as digital natives skilled in technology and inclined toward self-directed learning. However, they still prefer traditional classroom settings over online interaction in English courses. Therefore, investing in state-of-the-art facilities and technology is indispensable for delivering high-quality higher education.

Lecturers' Perceptions

Lecturers play a central role in implementing and maintaining quality assurance systems in higher education institutions. Their perceptions of QA systems can significantly influence the effectiveness and sustainability of these systems (Newton, 2000). Positive perceptions are often

linked to a sense of ownership and involvement in QA processes. Conversely, skepticism or resistance may arise when lecturers view QA as overly bureaucratic or disconnected from teaching realities (Harvey, 2004).

Studies show that lecturers who are actively engaged in QA activities tend to recognize their value in improving teaching practices and student outcomes. For instance, Tam (2001) found that transparent communication and regular feedback mechanisms fostered greater trust and cooperation among academic staff. Similarly, Owlia and Aspinwall (1996) emphasized the importance of aligning QA goals with lecturers' professional development needs to enhance buy-in and participation.

It can be conluded that while existing literature emphasizes the vital role lecturers play in the success of QA systems, most studies have focused on institutional policies or administrative perspectives, with limited attention to how lecturers themselves perceive and engage with QA processes in practice. Although scholars such as Newton (2000) and Harvey (2004) highlight the impact of lecturers' attitudes on the effectiveness of QA, few studies in the Vietnamese context have explored this issue, particularly within GETPs. Additionally, there is a lack of research examining how QA initiatives align with lecturers' professional needs and how their involvement influences program outcomes. These gaps highlight the need for a context-specific investigation into lecturers' perceptions of QA in Vietnamese higher education. Therefore, the present study aims to explore how lecturers perceive the QA system for GETPs, the challenges they encounter, and the practices they value.

Research Questions

To fulfill the purpose of the study, the survey sought to answer the following research question:

What are lecturers' views on the effectiveness of the quality assurance system of General English program?

Methods

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

The two educational institutions surveyed share a common feature: both have been accredited by the Ministry of Education and Training or the Southeast Asian University Network (AUN). Additionally, many of their training programs have met accreditation standards set by both national and international agencies.

Both institutions place significant emphasis on the quality of their GETPs, a concern reflected in employer feedback gathered during interviews with assessors. GE is a critical issue, as many students face challenges graduating due to their inability to obtain an English certificate or communicate effectively in English in professional environments.

Students' limited English proficiency not only restricts their career opportunities but also poses a significant obstacle to the internationalization of higher education. This limitation affects their ability to integrate into and compete within a globalized context.

Table 1

Overview of General English (GE) Training Programs

Institution	Program Name	Duration	Participants	Lecturers	Level Distribution	Credits	Target Standards
HEI 1	English	180 lessons	10,000 students	45 lecturers	4 levels	12 credits	Level 3/6 (Vietnamese 6-level framework) or B1 (CEFR)
HEI 2	English for International Communication	630 lessons	1,960 students	40 lecturers (25 Vietnamese, 15 foreign)	6 levels	20 credits (earned in last 4 levels only)	

Design of the Study

Mixed methods were employed to collect the data, starting with quantitative data collected from the questionnaire, then the qualitative data was collected through interviews with lecturers basing on emerging issues from the survey data.

Data collection & analysis

The questionnaire was desiged basing on eight quality assurance requirements in chapter 2 of the Circular 17/2021/TT-BGDĐT issued by MOET on June 22, 2021 regarding curriculum standards for higher education levels including (1) program objectives, (2) learning outcomes, (3) recruitment standards, (4) study volume, (5) curriculum structure and content, (6) teaching and assessment, (7) teaching and support staff, (8) facilities, teaching technologies and materials. These contents and assessment criteria in National English Accreditation Program (NEAS) were incorporated to generate specific questions in the questionnaire of the study.

After processing the quantitative data to identify interesting or problematic issues, an interview was conducted with 12 lecturers to further discuss these issues. This helped the researcher gain a deeper understanding of the challenges associated with quality assurance and allowed for the suggestion of amendments to improve the implementation of the quality assurance system more effectively. Document analysis was also integrated into the research, focusing on sources such as official notices from institutional websites, course specifications, and training program materials.

Lecturers from HEI1 were coded as L1-1, L1-2, L1-3, L1-4, L1-5, L1-6, L1-7, L1-8, L1-9, L1-10, L1-11, and L1-12. Similarly, lecturers from HEI2 were coded as L2-1, L2-2, L2-3, L2-4, L2-5, L2-6, L2-7, L2-8, L2-9, L2-10, L2-11, and L2-12. In these codes, the first letter “L” stands for “lecturer,” the first digit represents the HEI, and the second digit indicates the lecturer's order within their institution. The data were processed and analyzed for the reliability using Cronbach's alpha, yielding the following results:

Table 2

The questionnaire reliability

Question Groups	Question	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient	Number of observed variables in the group	Total variable correlation coefficient
1	QA in the GE training program objectives	0.923	5	≥ 0.3
2	QA in the outcomes of the GE Program	0.878	4	≥ 0.3
3	QA in the entrance requirement of the GE program	0.690	3	≥ 0.3
4	QA in the structure and content of the GE program	0.933	4	≥ 0.3
5	QA in the learning volume of the GE program	0.764	4	≥ 0.3
6	QA in teaching methods and assessment of learning outcomes of GE subjects	0.863	6	≥ 0.3
7	Lecturers	0.550	3	≥ 0.3
8	QA in facilities, technology, and learning materials	0.947	4	≥ 0.3
9	External factors affecting the internal quality assurance of the school's General English students	0.693	5	≥ 0.3
10	Internal factors affecting the internal quality assurance of the school's General English training activities	0.680	5	≥ 0.3

Results/Findings

This section summarizes the results of the lecturer survey derived from the quantitative questionnaire (n = 44 in HEI1 and n = 34 in HEI2). Lecturers evaluated the quality assurance (QA) of the General English Teaching Program (GETP) at their respective institutions across multiple key criteria relevant to the QA framework in higher education. These criteria include QA in the objectives of the GE training program, QA in the expected learning outcomes, QA in the entrance requirements, QA in the structure and content of the curriculum, and QA in the learning volume assigned for the program. Additionally, the survey explored QA in teaching methods and the assessment of learning outcomes, which are critical for ensuring effective delivery and student achievement. The roles and perceptions of lecturers, as central stakeholders in QA implementation, were also assessed. Further, QA in the availability and effectiveness of facilities, technology, and learning materials was examined, reflecting the importance of infrastructure in supporting teaching and learning quality. The survey also considered both external factors such as policy, accreditation standards, and stakeholder expectations and internal factors such as institutional leadership, management practices, and staff involvementthat may influence the internal quality assurance of the GE training activities.

To complement and triangulate the survey data, the study also included document analysis of GETP materials and curriculum-related evidence, as well as in-depth interviews with selected lecturers from both institutions. These additional methods provide deeper insights into the QA mechanisms in practice and offer a more comprehensive understanding of how various factors contribute to or hinder the effectiveness of the QA systems in the GETPs at HEI1 and HEI2.

Lecturers' perceived QA in GETP's objectives

Table 3

Lecturers' perceived QA in GETP's objectives

		HEI1		HEI2		Summary of consent levels		
		Mean	**Sd.**	**Mean**	**Sd**	**Mean**	**Sd**	**Order**
OBJ1	The program has clear goals.	4.11	1.10	4.47	0.94	4.29	1.02	5
OBJ2	The program goal is to prepare students for future work skills.	3.97	1.02	4.11	0.92	4.04	0.97	4
OBJ3	The program goal is to improve students' self-learning ability.	4.0	1.09	4.07	0.90	4.03	0.99	4
OBJ4	The program content is designed to achieve the set goals.	4.02	1.02	4.15	0.88	4.08	0.95	4
OBJ5	The courses in the GE program are cohesive.	3.97	1.08	4.19	0.91	4.08	0.99	4
	General Training	**4.014**		**4.19**		**4.10**		**4**
	t-test results	t = -2.001				*Sig.=0.050*		

Table 3 shows that lecturers rated the quality assurance of General English (GE) program objectives more favorably at HEI2 (M = 4.19, SD = 0.91) than at HEI1 (M = 4.01, SD = 1.06), indicating not only higher overall satisfaction but also greater consistency among respondents at HEI2. Among the five criteria, the objective "training program with clear goals" (OBJ1) received the highest rating at both institutions, particularly at HEI2 (M = 4.47), suggesting strong institutional clarity in goal-setting. Other objectives—including the development of work-related skills (OBJ2), promotion of self-directed learning (OBJ3), alignment of content with goals (OBJ4), and cohesion across subjects (OBJ5)—were also rated positively. However, HEI2 consistently outperformed HEI1 across all items.

A t-test confirmed a statistically significant difference between the institutions (t = -2.001, df = 60.198, p = 0.050), with Levene's Test (F = 7.619, p = 0.007) indicating unequal variances. Supporting qualitative data from document analysis revealed that while both HEIs articulate their program objectives in official materials, HEI2's statements are more detailed, measurable, and explicitly aligned with practical competencies and academic outcomes. This suggests a more systematic approach to ensuring quality through well-defined and actionable goals.

In summary, both the quantitative and qualitative findings indicate that HEI2 demonstrates stronger quality assurance practices in setting GE program objectives. These include clearer articulation, better alignment with real-world skills, and stronger internal coherence. HEI1 may enhance its QA efforts by benchmarking against HEI2's more structured and outcome-oriented approach to defining program objectives.

Lecturers' perceived QA in GETP's learning outcomes

Table 4

Lecturers' perceived QA in GETP's learning outcomes

		HEI1		HEI2		Average		
		Mean	**Sd**	**Mean**	**Sd**	**Aver**	**Sd**	**Level**
LO1	The learning outcomes are realistic and achievable.	3.88	0.94	4.17	0.45	4.02	0.69	4
LO2	Students are evaluated through at least one indicator (project, presentation, diary, workbook).	3.95	1.01	4.20	0.59	4.07	0.80	4
LO3	The learning outcomes are measured to track student progress.	3.70	1.06	4.35	0.48	4.02	0.77	4
LO4	The learning outcomes are always updated to meet the needs of employers.	3.63	1.12	4.44	0.53	4.03	0.82	4
	Average	**3.79**		**4.27**		**4.03**		**4**
	t-test results	*t=-3.342*				*Sig.=.001*		

Table 4 presents that the overall quality assurance level at HEI2 was 4.29, higher than HEI1's score of 3.79, with standard deviations of 0.51 and 1.03, respectively, indicating greater consensus among respondents at HEI2.

For specific criteria, the item "Always updated to meet the needs of employers" (LO4) received the highest rating at HEI2, with a mean of 4.44, while it was rated the lowest at HE1, at 3.63. Similarly, the criterion "Students' progress is measured to track student progress" (L2-3) was highly rated at HEI2 with an average of 4.35, compared to 3.70 at HEI1. Additionally, the criteria "Realistic and achievable performance" (LO1) and "Feedback assessed through at least one indicator" (LO2) had higher mean at HEI2 than HEI1, reflecting HEI2's effectiveness and practicality in curriculum design. Overall, HEI2 demonstrated higher results than HEI1 across all criteria, featuring its superiority in quality assurance. The t-test results further confirm a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the two institutions, with HEI2 having a higher mean score. To further explain for the difference, the document study was conducted, which show that the curriculum information for HEI1 and HEI2 emphasizes the role of lecturers in shaping the position and importance of the subjects within the program. Course objectives are articulated using levels of cognitive capacity, skills, and attitudes. Both curricula clearly outline expectations for the four core skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. At HEI1, L1-7 explained that the course outcomes include "understanding the main points of clear, standardized information on familiar professional topics such as employment, technology, tourism, and history," and "listening to short, simple monologues or conversations using high-frequency vocabulary in professional contexts." L1-9 added that students are also expected to "write CVs, formal emails requesting information, and reviews of films, books, websites, and products." In addition, learners should be able to "engage in simple, everyday communication

tasks requiring direct exchanges of information" and "demonstrate continuous progress in English learning throughout the course."

At HEI2, L2-4 noted that students should "understand the main points of standard speech on common problems encountered in work, school, or entertainment" and "grasp the gist of radio or television programs on relevant topics." According to L2-7, the curriculum also expects learners to "communicate effectively in most travel-related situations, engage in unprepared conversations on familiar topics, and describe experiences, dreams, or stories in a simple but connected manner." As highlighted by L2-6, reading and writing outcomes focus on the ability to "understand texts related to work or daily life, comprehend descriptions of events, emotions, and desires in personal correspondence," and "write paragraphs describing processes, expressing opinions, narrating events, or interpreting data."

Overall, the quantitative data and all interviewed lecturers verified that the training programs were reasonable and contributed to improving the overall quality of education.

Lecturers' perceived QA in GETP's entry requirements

Table 5

Lecturers' perceived QA in GETP's entry requirements

		HEI1		HEI2		Average		
		Mean	**Sd**	**Mean**	**Sd**	**Mean**	**Sd**	**Level**
Entry1	An effective placement test to place students in appropriate classes.	4.04	1.07	4.17	0.45	4.10	0.76	4
Entry2	Students are enrolled in courses with a level appropriate to their language proficiency.	3.18	0.72	3.55	0.84	3.16	0.78	3
Entry3	Placement tests are periodically adjusted to be up-to-date.	3.93	1.14	4.01	0.97	3.97	1.05	4
	General Training	**3.71**		**3.91**		**3.74**		**4**
	t-test results	*t.=-2.676*				*Sig. =.009*		

Table 5 presents the lecturers' evaluations of the level of quality assurance in the entry requirements of the GETPs at two educational institutions. The results indicate differences between the two institutions. For the general criterion "Ensuring the quality of input for the GE subject program," HEI2 received a higher mean score and a lower standard deviation (SD) (0.75 compared to 0.97), reflecting greater uniformity in assessment.

In the specific criteria, HEI2 consistently outperformed HEI1. For Entry1, HEI2 had a higher mean score (4.17 compared to 4.04) and a lower Sd (0.45 compared to 1.07), indicating a more stable and favorable evaluation of the effectiveness of the placement test. For Entry2, the mean scores were lower for both institutions, with HEI1 scoring 3.18 and HEI2 scoring 3.55. The Sds were 0.72 and 0.84, respectively. For Entry3, which evaluates the periodic update of the placement test, both institutions achieved high mean scores, with HEI2 again leading (4.01 vs. 3.93). However, the Sd at HEI1 (1.14) was significantly higher than at HEI2 (0.97).

The t-test results indicate that HEI2 had a significantly higher average score than HEI1. Research on the structure of the GE entrance placement tests at the two institutions reveals that the tests assess three skills: Listening, Reading, and Writing, with no Speaking component.

According to management staff, the inclusion of three skills is sufficient for accurate student placement, as adding a Speaking component would unnecessarily complicate the exam process.

When evaluating Entry 2, lecturer L1-3 noted,

> "Students are not always enrolled in courses suitable for their language level. Many students struggle in English 1 because they only studied English for three years in high school or not at all. Students scoring below 4 are placed in English 1, but perhaps the school should introduce more basic English classes to support students with scores ranging from 0 to 3."

Lecturers' perceived QA in GETP's structure and content

Table 6

Lecturers' perceived QA in GETP's structure and content

		HEI1		HEI2		Average		
		Mean	**Sd**	**Mean**	**Sd**	**Mean**	**Sd**	**Level**
ST1	The courses are designed to meet the learning needs of students.	3.63	1.08	4.02	0.62	3.82	0.85	4
ST2	Courses are designed based on developments in language and technology teaching methods.	3.65	0.88	4.02	0.62	3.83	0.75	4
ST3	Each course has specific, and measurable goals.	3.88	1.08	4.29	0.46	4.08	0.77	4
ST4	Curriculumn materials effectively support lecturers in planning and implementing lessons.	3.93	1.06	4.14	0.65	4.03	0.85	4
	Average	**3.77**		**4.12**		**3.94**		**4**
	t-test results	t = -2.077			*Sig.=.042*			

However, lecturers at HEI1 note some challenges regarding student preparedness and the results in table 6 show that HEI2 received higher ratings than HEI1 across all criteria. HEI2 achieved a higher mean score and lower standard deviation, suggesting a greater level of agreement among respondents.

The overall average score for HEI2 was 4.12, notably higher than HEI1's 3.77. Among the criteria, ST3 ("Each course has specific, measurable goals") received the highest mean score at both institutions, particularly at HEI2 (4.29). Similarly, the criterion for curriculum materials showed strong performance, with high mean scores and good consistency across both campuses. Overall, HEI2 is regarded as superior in program structure and content, with clear advantages in specific criteria. The results of Levene's Test ($F = 7.029$, $p = 0.010$) confirms that HEI2's average score is significantly higher than HEI1's.

Both HEI1 and HEI2 strive to enhance their GETP to better meet students' needs. They incorporate technology each semester, including LMS exercises, e-workbooks, and video games, to support English learning. The objectives of each course are clearly defined and measurable, with carefully selected teaching materials and structured lesson plans ensuring consistency in content delivery and progress throughout the program.

> "The current courses are designed for students with an A2-level foundation according to the CEFR. Students without this background face significant difficulties, resulting in a

high failure rate in English 1, especially among engineering students." (L1-5)

"The courses reflect advancements in language teaching methods and technology, but the ability to apply technology varies among lecturers. Younger lecturers in their 30s and 40s tend to use technological tools more effectively than their older counterparts." (L1-7)

Overall, HEI2 was rated more favorably and showed greater consistency in lecturer opinions regarding entry quality assurance criteria.

Lecturers' perceived QA in GETP's learning volume

Table 7

Lecturers' perceived QA in GETP's learning volume

		HEI1		HEI2		Average		
		Mean	**Sd**	**Mean**	**Sd**	**Average**	**Sd**	**Level**
VOL1	There are enough courses at each level to meet the real needs of students.	3.77	1.29	4.02	0.62	3.89	0.95	4
VOL2	Each level must have 200 hours of class contact and supervised learning.	3.50	1.26	3.94	1.13	3.72	1.19	4
VOL3	There is an e-learning system to support General English learning.	3.47	1.04	4.47	0.78	3.97	0.91	4
VOL4	Students are given the opportunity to expand their language learning outside of the classroom.	3.29	1.35	4.11	0.53	3.70	0.94	4
	General Training	**3.51**		**4.14**		**3.82**		**4**
	t-test results	t = -4.906				Sig. =.000		

Table 7 shows that HEI2 outperformed HEI1 across all criteria, with higher mean scores and lower SDs, indicating stronger and more consistent evaluations. HEI2 scored 4.14 for "Ensuring learning volume" compared to HEI1's 3.51. The highest-rated item at HEI2 was VOL3 (e-learning system) at 4.47, while VOL4 (extracurricular language learning) showed the largest SD gap—1.35 at HEI1 vs. 0.53 at HEI2.

Lecturers at HEI1 noted limited course offerings: "Many students have to wait until their second or third year to take English classes" (L1-1, L1-3), delaying graduation. HEI1 offers 45 face-to-face and 90 self-study hours per level, while HEI2 provides 105 hours in class. Both fall short of the CEFR's 200-hour standard due to credit restrictions: "We can only allocate a maximum of 105 hours per level" (L2-2).

HEI1 has added two levels to reduce delays, using e-workbooks, speaking tasks, and group projects to enhance self-study (L1-4). At HEI2, students practice English in real-life settings: "They interview foreigners on topics like culture and tourism, after drafting questionnaires and gaining approval" (L2-4).

Lecturers' perceived QA in GETP's teaching and assessment methods

Table 8

Lecturers' perceived QA in GETP's teaching and assessment methods

		HEI1		HEI2		Average		
		Mean	**Sd**	**Mean**	**Sd**	**Average**	**Sd**	**Level**
T1	Lecturers utilizes student-centeredness to maximize engagement.	3.84	1.05	4.29	0.62	4.06	0.83	4
T2	Assessment methods are diverse, including initial, procedural and summary assessments.	4.02	1.06	4.38	0.93	4.20	0.99	4
T3	Lecturers use feedback and editing techniques to maximize student learning and engagement.	3.77	1.00	4.32	0.58	4.04	0.79	4
T4	Lecturers integrate technology to support effective learning.	4.15	0.71	4.23	0.55	4.19	0.63	4
T5	Lecturers arrange lessons and activities in alignment with the the CLOs.	3.97	0.40	4.29	0.46	4.13	0.43	4
T6	Lecturers have teaching strategies suitable for the objectives and levels	4.15	0.88	4.38	0.55	4.26	0.71	5
	General Training	**3.98**		**4.31**		**4.14**		**4**
	t-test results	t = -2.526				Sig.=.014		

The table presents lecturers' perceptions of quality assurance (QA) in the teaching and assessment methods of General English Teaching Programs (GETPs) at two higher education institutions, HEI1 and HEI2. Overall, lecturers from both institutions rated the QA practices positively, with HEI2 consistently receiving higher mean scores across all items. The general average score was 4.14, reflecting a high level of perceived QA, with HEI2 scoring 4.31 compared to HEI1's 3.98. The t-test result ($t = -2.526$, $p = 0.014$) indicates a statistically significant difference between the two institutions.

Among the six criteria, the highest-rated item was T6—"Lecturers have teaching strategies suitable for the objectives and levels"—with a combined mean of 4.26, rated particularly high at HEI2 (4.38). This reflects strong alignment between instructional methods and student needs. T2 and T5, which assess the diversity of assessment methods and the alignment of lessons with course learning outcomes (CLOs), also received high ratings from both institutions. The lowest-rated item at HEI1 was T3—"Use of feedback and editing techniques"—with a mean of 3.77, compared to 4.32 at HEI2, suggesting more effective feedback practices at HEI2.

Standard deviations were generally lower at HEI2, indicating more agreement among its lecturers, especially in areas such as the use of technology (T4) and student-centeredness (T1). These results suggest that HEI2 lecturers not only perceive stronger QA in teaching and assessment but also demonstrate greater consistency in their evaluations.

In summary, the data highlights HEI2's superior performance in implementing QA measures in teaching and assessment. This underscores the need for HEI1 to review and possibly adopt effective practices from HEI2, particularly in feedback techniques, alignment with CLOs, and the integration of student-centered strategies.

Lecturers' perceived QA in GETP's academic staff

Table 9

Lecturers' perceived QA in GETP's academic staff

		HEI1		HEI2		Average		
		Mean	**Sd**	**Mean**	**Sd**	**Average**	**Sd**	**Level**
VII	**QA in academic staff**							
LEC1	Lecturers have qualifications that are suitable for the requirements of undergraduate GE teaching.	4.38	0.65	4.55	0.50	4.46	0.57	5
LEC2	Lecturers are assigned to teach at different levels based on their experience and training.	4.00	0.71	4.29	0.67	4.14	0.69	4
LEC3	Lecturers can participate in training and continuous professional development courses to improve their GE teaching capacity.	3.79	1.26	4.38	0.55	4.08	0.90	4
	General Training	**4.05**		**4.40**		**4.22**		**5**
	t-test results	t = -2.720				Sig.=.008		

Table 9 summarizes that HEI2 outperformed HEI1 across all criteria, with higher mean scores and lower standard deviations, indicating greater stability in evaluations. Regarding the general assessment of quality assurance, HEI2 scored 4.40 (sd = 0.57) compared to HEI1's 4.05 (sd = 0.87). Levene's Test (F = 0.935, p = 0.337) supports the equal variance assumption. The t-test results (t = -2.720, df = 76, p = 0.008) indicate a statistically significant difference between the two groups, with HEI2 showing a higher mean difference (-0.35116, 95% CI: [-0.60829, -0.09402]). Overall, HEI2 demonstrated superior and more consistent quality assurance in academic staff compared to HEI1.

When commenting on the criterion "Lecturers can participate in training and retraining courses to improve their GE teaching capacity," lecturers at HEI1 said:

> "At the beginning of each semester, the head of the department has integrated in the orientation meeting a short teaching workshop such as training on the use of electronic workbooks. However, I personally feel that the department and faculty should have a master plan on organizing training for lecturers to teach GE. For example, faculties and departments need to collect lecturers' opinions on training needs, then periodically organize internal seminars close to the needs of lecturers with a frequency of 4 times a year to help ensure the same teaching quality in all classes." (L1-8)

This feedback highlights the need for a structured and proactive approach to professional development. A master plan that incorporates lecturer feedback and organizes training sessions regularly would address specific needs and promote consistent teaching quality.

> "Professional development activities need to be more focused. I think it is necessary to increase peer observation so that lecturers can learn from each other, so that the teaching method will be more uniform." (L1-6)

Encouraging peer observation is an excellent suggestion, as it fosters peer learning and helps harmonize teaching methods across classes. This can enhance both teaching quality and student

experience.

> "Many of the lecturers are dynamic in adopting modern teaching methods, which makes the classroom lively and students have the opportunity to practice the language in a fun and highly applicable context, while many classes are taught in a rather traditional, dull classroom atmosphere. I think the head of the department should increase the number of comments so that lecturers can change their teaching methods to be more exciting and effective. Attendance should be a priority to develop the teaching team at the department." (L1-2)

The observation underlines the disparity in teaching approaches. Increasing feedback and encouraging dynamic, modern methods across the department would benefit both lecturers and students. Prioritizing attendance at training and development sessions is key to fostering a cohesive teaching team.

At HEI2, the lecturers said:

> "Lecturers are informed about English teaching seminars held in Ho Chi Minh City to arrange attendance, such as the annual VUSTESOL, which is held free of charge for the community of English lecturers." (L2-7)

Sharing information about local seminars like VUSTESOL is an effective way to provide accessible professional development opportunities.

> "Webinars on English teaching are the place where the university's lecturers participate the most for many reasons, such as being free to attend, lecturers not having to travel, only needing to register and connect with a laptop, and offering a variety of topics to serve the diverse professional development needs of lecturers." (L2-8)

Webinars offer flexibility and accessibility, catering to diverse professional development needs. Institutions could further encourage participation by sharing a calendar of relevant webinars.

> "Lecturers join some communities such as VietTESOL, to attend and review diverse sources of webinars." (L2-9)

Participation in professional communities like VietTESOL provides lecturers with ongoing access to resources and peer support, which are vital for continuous development.

> "Cambridge and Oxford also regularly offer free online teaching workshops for English lecturers." (L2-10)

Collaborating with global institutions like Cambridge and Oxford offers learning opportunities, enhances the quality of professional development, and ensures exposure to international practices.

> "The General English Training Program has been accredited by NEAS, and every month lecturers have the opportunity to attend CPD (Continuous Professional Development) courses to accumulate professional development points as well as update modern teaching methods." (L2-6)

Regular CPD courses accredited by NEAS provide lecturers with structured, high-quality training, fostering continuous improvement in teaching methods.

To recap, at HEI1, the focus should be on implementing a structured professional development strategy, increasing interaction among lecturers, and encouraging the adoption of innovative teaching methods. In the meanwhile, at HEI2, the institution effectively utilizes a variety of professional development platforms, such as webinars, workshops, and accredited courses, to

support lecturers' growth. Sharing best practices from HEI2 could inspire HEI1 to expand and refine its training initiatives.

Lecturers' perceived QA in GETP's facilities and technology

Table 10

Lecturers' perceived QA in GETP's facilities and technology

		HEI1		HEI2		Average		
		Mean	**Sd**	**Mean**	**Sd**	**Mean**	**Sd**	**Level**
VIII	**QA in facilities, technology, and learning materials**							
FAC1	Facilities are invested to support the quality of GET.	3.36	1.16	4.47	0.50	3.91	0.83	4
FAC2	Technology is invested to support the quality of GET.	3.22	1.13	4.38	0.55	3.80	0.84	4
FAC3	Learning materials are invested enough to support the quality of GET.	3.68	1.28	4.41	0.49	4.04	0.88	4
FAC4	Designing teaching spaces creates conditions for students to actively participate in lesson development.	3.18	1.36	4.29	0.46	3.73	0.91	4
	General Training	**3.36**		**4.38**		**3.87**		**4**
	t-test results	t = -5.528				Sig.=.000		

Table 10 shows that HEI2 had a significantly higher mean than HEI1 on all factors, with an overall rating of 4.38 compared to 3.36. At the same time, HEI2's sd is lower, indicating a higher consensus among lecturers. Factors such as "facilities" and "learning materials" at HEI2 all received positive evaluations (4.47 and 4.41 respectively), reflecting a better and more effective investment than HEI1. The results of Levene's Test ($F = 36.745$, $p = 0.000$) suggests that HEI2 had significantly higher mean than HEI1.

At HEI1 the classroom used for teaching GE is equipped with two ceiling loud speakers, two air conditioners, long tables for 2 students to sit and difficult to turn, a chalk board, a projector and a canvas screen, two ceiling speakers, microphone plugs, internet cable for lecturers, weak wifi system. Lecturers bring their own laptops, speaker cables, and personal microphones to plug in. Commenting on facilities for GE teaching, lecturers at HEI1 stated:

> "Tables and chairs are not suitable for organizing English teaching activities. The benches and tables are close to each other, making it very difficult for lecturers to organize group activities. Most lecturers can only let students work in pairs" (L1-9)
>
> "The walls between the layers of sound insulation are not very good. Many times when the lecturer in the next room uses a speaker or microphone, my class itself is greatly affected. The audio and the voice of the lecturer in the next room drowned out the sound of my class." (L1-2)
>
> "The classroom space is not suitable for organizing English teaching. Sometimes I want to let the students stand up for questions and answers for practical role-playing, I find it difficult because I can't get a narrow classroom, I can't let students move around." (L1-10)
>
> "There are a lot of resources available online to teach English. However, the wifi is not covered enough for lecturers to apply games or activities that need to use the network." (L1-6)

At HEI2 shows that classrooms are equipped with removable chairs and individual removable tables, making it easy to move around in pairs and groups. The classroom is equipped with very good soundproof walls, modern air conditioning, a projector, a canvas screen, a desktop computer connected to the internet by cable, a computer pre-installed with the iTools of the textbook, and a wifi system that is strong enough for students to carry out online English learning activities. Commenting on the facilities at HEI2, the lecturers said:

> "I am satisfied with the facilities at the school. When I teach, I just need to compile more documents and send emails to me personally. When I get to class, I log in to the available desktop computer to download the lessons. I go to teach very lightly, I don't need to carry a lot of equipment like when I teach at other schools." (L2-3)
>
> "I love the classroom space at school. There's a large enough space in front of the classroom for me to let students do some activities that require mobility." (L2-5)
>
> "The teaching space here includes space outside the classroom. There are foreign lecturers here, so students have the opportunity to communicate when meeting them in the corridors or common areas of the school" (L2-1)

To recap, HEI2 demonstrates a clear advantage in facilities and resources, significantly enhancing teaching and learning experiences, while HEI1 struggles with inadequate infrastructure that limits teaching methods and activities.

Discussion

Quality assurance in GETP's objectives

The findings on the GETPs' objectives highlight a consistent emphasis on clarity and alignment across institutions. Document analysis reveals that both HEI1 and HEI2 articulate specific and practical goals aimed at equipping students with the necessary language skills for academic and professional contexts. HEI1 focuses on enabling students to use language in simple, professional exchanges, while HEI2 extends these goals to include understanding speech, handling real-world situations, and developing academic literacy. Despite these variations, both institutions prioritize practical application and alignment with students' broader learning needs. This consistency resonates with the educational theory suggesting that clear and well-defined objectives provide a strong framework for curriculum design and implementation (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001).

Interviews with lecturers reinforce the importance of these objectives, as they provide clear descriptions for program activities. This supports Biggs and Tang's (2011) assertion that objectives foster consistency and coherence in program delivery. Moreover, the emphasis on designing objectives based on existing programs reflects Tyler's (1949) principle of using objectives as benchmarks for improvement and success evaluation.

A notable distinction, however, lies in the broader scope of HEI2's objectives, which include academic literacy and prepare students with specialized subjects. This aligns with research advocating for SMART objectives to address specific institutional and student needs (Doran, 1981; O'Neill, 2020). Overall, the findings underscore that while variations exist, the shared commitment to clear and practical objectives contributes to achieving high standards of quality in the GETPs.

Quality assurance in GETP's learning outcomes

Contrasting GETP learning outcomes at HEI1 and HEI2 experiences notable differences. HEI2 consistently outperformed HEI1, demonstrating superior curriculum design and implementation, particularly in updating outcomes to meet employer needs and tracking student progress (Biggs & Tang, 2011). While both institutions align course objectives with cognitive skills, practical abilities, and attitudinal development (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001), HEI1 showed lower scores and greater variability. Statistically significant differences identified HEI2's advantage in quality assurance, particularly its alignment with measurable and transparent learning outcomes (Harden, 2002). HEI2's more effective design and implementation serve as a model for aligning learning outcomes with institutional and the requirements of labor markets.

Quality assurance in GETP's entry requirements

The analysis of entry requirements for GETPs at HEI1 and HEI2 reveals significant differences in quality assurance. HEI2 consistently outperforms HEI1, demonstrating a more cohesive and robust approach to student placement (Yorke & Longden, 2004). HEI2's higher scores and greater consistency across specific criteria, like placement test effectiveness and periodic updates, align with research emphasizing the importance of clear, aligned entry requirements for student success and retention (Kuh et al., 2006; Galloway, 2009). However, qualitative feedback reveals challenges. Particularly, HEI1 where there is misalignment between student readiness and placement, especially for students with minimal English background, points out the need to balance accessibility and quality (Smith & Naylor, 2001). While both institutions make efforts to ensure quality, HEI2's more comprehensive and consistent approach appears more effective in fostering academic fit.

Quality assurance in GETP's structure and content

A comparison of GETP structure and content at HEI1 and HEI2 reveals key differences. HEI2's higher scores and greater consistency reflect superior performance (Barnett, 2000; Biggs & Tang, 2011). HEI2 excelled in clear course goals and relevant curriculum materials. HEI1 faces challenges with student preparedness and varying lecturer technological proficiency, echoing the need for continuous program review (Fry et al., 2008). For example, HEI1's struggled with students lacking A2-level English skills impact success rates, focusing the importance of perceived program purpose and attainability (Merrill, 2002). While both institutions aim for improvement, HEI2's structure and content more closely align with effective program design principles, better preparing students for current demands.

Quality assurance in GETP's learning volume

The findings on learning volume assurance for GETPs at HEI1 and HEI2 reveal notable contrasts in their approaches and outcomes. HEI2 offers diverse learning opportunities, including real-world application projects, aligning with research on balanced learning activities (Biggs & Tang, 2011). HEI1 faces challenges with insufficient courses, impacting enrollment and graduation, and struggles to meet CEFR-recommended learning hours despite adjustments. These differences reflect varying approaches to workload comparability and student well-being (Adam, 2004; Kember, 2004). While HEI1 relies heavily on self-study, HEI2's structured approach appears more effective in ensuring consistent student progress and program quality.

Quality assurance in GETP's teaching and assessment methods

The findings on teaching methods and assessment practices in the GETPs at HEI1 and HEI2 highlight clear differences and align with previous studies on effective educational strategies.

HEI2 consistently outperformed HEI1, achieving a higher mean score and demonstrating greater consensus, as indicated by lower standard deviations. Notably, the criteria for diversity in assessment methods and appropriate teaching strategies received the highest ratings at both institutions (4.38), reflecting a shared emphasis on key elements of quality teaching. These results align with Prince's (2004) assertion that diverse and active pedagogical approaches, such as problem-based and experiential learning, enhance student engagement and critical thinking.

A significant disparity observed in the criterion for effective feedback and editing brings out HEI2's strength in providing formative feedback, consistent with Sadler's (1989) emphasis on its role in fostering student improvement. Additionally, the statistical results confirm a significant overall difference between the two institutions, reinforcing HEI2's superiority in teaching and assessment practices.

These findings align with Biggs' (2003) concept of constructive alignment, which integrates teaching methods and assessment practices with learning outcomes to ensure coherence and quality. However, the variability in performance suggests areas for HEI1 to improve, particularly in implementing diverse and inclusive assessment methods (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004) and providing timely feedback. Overall, HEI2 exemplifies the thoughtful integration of innovative teaching and assessment practices, which is crucial for maintaining high-quality tertiary education, as emphasized in the literature.

Quality assurance in GETP's academic staff

The findings on academic staff quality assurance in the GETPs at HEI1 and HEI2 highlight differences in institutional practices and align with prior studies on faculty development. HEI2 outperformed HEI1 across all criteria, with a higher mean score and lower standard deviations, indicating greater consistency in evaluations. The t-test results confirm a statistically significant difference, emphasizing HEI2's superior approach to academic staff development. This aligns with Devlin and Samarawickrema's (2010) assertion that clear policies on faculty growth are crucial for maintaining high standards.

At HEI2, lecturers benefit from a variety of professional development opportunities such as accredited CPD courses, webinars, and participation in professional communities like VietTESOL. These initiatives provide accessible and diverse training options, which enables lecturers to stay updated with modern teaching methods and global standards, as emphasized by Knapper and Cropley (2000). For example, regular webinars and workshops by Cambridge and Oxford ensure exposure to innovative practices, while NEAS accreditation emphasizes the institution's commitment to quality assurance.

In contrast, HEI1 faces challenges such as a lack of structured professional development plans and inconsistencies in teaching practices. Feedback from HEI1 lecturers suggests a need for systematic training, such as peer observation and frequent workshops tailored to lecturers' needs. These suggestions align with Shulman's (1987) emphasis on equipping faculty with both subject-matter knowledge and pedagogical skills to enhance teaching effectiveness.

To recap, while HEI2 exemplifies a robust and proactive approach to academic staff development, HEI1 could benefit from adopting similar strategies, such as structured training plans and collaborative learning practices, to improve teaching quality and consistency. Sharing best practices from HEI2 is believed to encourage HEI1 to better support its lecturers, ultimately enhancing the quality of its GE program.

Quality assurance in GETP's facilities and technology

The findings on facilities and technology in the GETPs at HEI1 and HEI2 show great contrasts. With a higher overall mean score and a statistically significant mean difference, HEI2 demonstrates a clear advantage. HEI2's consistent lecturer evaluations point to the high quality of its facilities (Temple, 2008; Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). In the meanwhile, HEI1 faces challenges with inadequate classroom layouts, poor soundproofing, and weak wifi, hindering interactive teaching (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005). Conversely, HEI2 provides state-of-the-art resources, leading to higher lecturer satisfaction and a conducive environment for dynamic teaching (Kuh & Hu, 2001). While HEI1 struggles with limitations, HEI2 leverages its superior facilities. It is implicated that adopting HEI2's practices could significantly improve HEI1's teaching infrastructure.

Conclusion

This study stresses the critical role of quality assurance in the success and sustainability of GETPs in higher education. A comparative analysis of two institutions reveals HEI2 as a model of best practices across multiple dimensions, containing objectives, learning outcomes, entry requirements, learning volume, program structure and content, teaching methods, academic staff, and facilities. Key findings suggest that institutions with clearly defined objectives, measurable learning outcomes, robust entry criteria, and well-structured programs consistently outperform those with less cohesive QA frameworks. HEI2's alignment with international standards like the CEFR, its strategic use of technology, and its investment in academic staff development demonstrate the combined impact of these factors on program effectiveness, student satisfaction, and graduate employability.

However, challenges such as resource limitations, stakeholder misalignment, and resistance to change persist, particularly at HEI1. These issues are consistent with previous research indicating that inadequate funding, lack of human resources, and conflicting interests among stakeholders often hinder the implementation of quality assurance (QA) initiatives in higher education institutions (Harvey & Newton, 2007; Materu, 2007). Moreover, resistance to change can stem from deeply rooted institutional cultures and the perceived threat of QA processes to academic autonomy (Stensaker, 2008). These findings reinforce the need for institutions to adopt best practices from successful models, such as HEI2, by fostering stakeholder collaboration (Santiago et al., 2008), leveraging innovative teaching technologies (Guri-Rosenblit, 2005), and embedding continuous improvement in their QA frameworks (Van Vught & Westerheijden, 1994). Such approaches not only enhance institutional effectiveness but also promote a culture of quality that supports long-term educational development.

This study just focused on the perception of the most important internal stakeholder-lecturers in enhancing and maintaining quality assurance of an academic program. Our following research will focus on the longitudinal impact of QA practices on student outcomes and investigate how scalable strategies can address diverse institutional contexts and constraints.

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