



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING
7-9 rue Eugène-Delacroix, 75116 Paris

**Evaluation Report
Distance Education Course
“External Quality Assurance:
Options for higher education managers”
for the Asia-Pacific region
2 April – 29 June 2007**

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1 Introduction to the course

The IIEP distance education course on “External Quality Assurance: Options for higher education managers” was created with the objective of helping teams made up of national decision-makers, managers and officials in charge of quality assurance in higher education institutions to set up a new national mechanism of quality assurance, to develop their existing systems and to evaluate their current practices. The objective of this course is thus more geared towards institution building than the development of individual capacities.

This course was first implemented in the Anglophone African region. in September 2006. After successful results, a second course was implemented for the Asia-Pacific region, jointly organized by IIEP, the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN), and the UNESCO Office in Bangkok. This new distance education course ran from 2 April to 29 June 2007.

Sixty participants benefited from the course. They are managers and officials working for ministries of education, higher educations and external quality assurance agencies in 13 different countries. Of a total of 14 institutions initially registered, 13 completed the course. One institution had to withdraw from the course due to a coinciding heavy workload which left no time to devote to the distance education training.

The course material consisted of five instructional modules and a guide with practical information on the course (learning material, course design, assignments, schedule, etc). Each module was accompanied by a specific task. Modules 1, 3 and 4 were accompanied by a group assignment. Module 2 and 5 invited participants to join an online debate animated by a moderator.

With the exception of the online debates which required individual participation, teamwork was the core of the course. In order to get their work organized, each team had to nominate a coordinator among its members who was to be in charge of reminding participants about the work schedule and tasks, of organizing work sessions to respond to group assignments, and of making sure that the group accomplished all of the tasks assigned to them.

Communication heavily relied on email facilities, and in the case of the online debates, a special mailing list was in use. In addition, a private website was created with the purpose of making available the training materials, submissions by all of the institutions, comments by the instructors on the participants’ work and other documents related to the course, with the possibility of uploading all of these documents.

2 The evaluation form

At the end of the distance education course, an evaluation form was sent to each of the participants. The intent of this evaluation was to get to know the degree of satisfaction of the participants with regards to the: (i) course objectives; (ii) course organization and schedule; (iii) course design and content; (iv) communication; (v) course website (vi) and forum/online discussions held during the course. Additionally, participants were invited to express their general opinion of the course and to give suggestions for improvement. The last section of the evaluation form was addressed exclusively to the coordinators of the groups.

The evaluation form consisted of a 9-page questionnaire divided into 8 sections that aimed to evaluate the different aspects of the course. Each section contained different multiple choice questions. Most of them allowed participants to add their personal comments and opinions.

Of the 56 participants who completed the course, 40 submitted their evaluation form. The following evaluation report presents the outcome of the questionnaires received by the course team. A selection of the participants' comments accompanies the quantitative outcomes of the evaluation in order to illustrate their quantitative responses.

The organization of the report follows the same sections presented in the evaluation form.

3 The outcomes of the evaluation

3.1 Course objectives and personal expectations

The first section of the evaluation form consisted of two questions related to the course objectives and the participants' expectations.

3.1.1 Course objectives

The first question on the evaluation form invited participants to express their opinion on the extent to which the objectives have been reached. Responses to this question show that the degree of satisfaction, with respect to the achievement of the course objectives, was rather high.

The *first objective* of the course was to provide the participants with concepts, tools and options to put in place, develop and sustain their EQA systems. With regards to this objective, 67.5% of the participants considered that it had been "very well" attained and 32.5% of them expressed that it was "well" attained.

The *second objective* of the course was to inform the participants about the underlying implications of these different options and to stimulate reflection about their adaptation to different institutional context. 50% of the participants estimated that the second objective of the course was “very well” attained, 47.5% said that it was “well” attained, and 2.5% thought that it was “not very well” attained.

The *third objective* of the course consisted of providing participants with a range of specific examples of international experiences concerning the options in EQA. 67.5% of the participants expressed that it was “very well” attained, 22.5% felt that it was “well” attained, and 10% felt that it was “not very well” attained.

Finally, the *fourth objective* was to draw lessons on “good practices” in EQA systems so that teaching and learning practices can be improved.” 57.5% of the participants considered that it was “very well” attained, and the remaining 42.5% considered that it was “well attained.”

3.1.2 The participants’ expectations

As it was previously done for the first distance education course on External Quality Assurance for Anglophone African countries, the IIEP course team was interested in getting to know the participant’s expectations of the course in order to adapt the course to the their learning needs. Before the course formally started, participants were invited to express their expectations. These expectations were then analyzed by the IIEP course team and distributed to all the instructors.

When participants were asked in the evaluation form if their personal expectations were met during the course, 42.5% considered that they were “very much” met, 55% said that they were “much” met, and 2.5% did not answer this question. Some of the comments that accompanied the participants’ responses were as follows:

(very much) *“I feel that I have learned very much from the course”*

(very much) *“My overall comment on the course was that it was very useful to me and to my organization. It has taught me of the many lessons as well as enabling me to know the experiences and processes that are being used by other countries in the whole quality assurance aspect”*

(very much) *“It has been a very enriching experience learning about the difficulties that EQA systems from other countries are facing. More than anything, this has made me see the things that our organization has achieved and other things that we can do to improve, instead of focusing on the flaws and shortcomings of our own system, as well as of our own socio-political context and higher educational system”*

(much) *“I’m a freshman and this field is quite new for me. This course helps me a lot in understanding concepts, tools, options... as well as provides me many interesting*

exercises. Although I haven't contributed much to this course, I've collected much from other colleagues"

(much) *"The course gave me an insight into EQA, to which my organization does not have **much** experience"*

3.2 Course organization and schedule

This section of the evaluation form asked participants to provide information on the amount of the time allocated to the course, as well as to express their opinion on the course schedule and guide for participants and group coordinator.

3.2.1 The time invested in the course

In the Guide for the participants and course coordinator, it was suggested that the participants allocate an average of five hours per week on the course work. To ensure that the participants would be available to participate in the course, the head of the organization was requested to enable the participants to work on the course for the average time suggested.

When asked about the time invested in the course, 42.5% of the participants answered that they spent an average of 2–4 hours per week, 25% spent between 4–6 hours, 17.55% spent between 6–8 hours, 7.5% spent less than 2 hours, and 7.5% spent more than 8 hours.

Most comments pertaining to this evaluation item reveal that the participants experienced problems trying to combine their work schedule with the course schedule. In certain cases, participants seem to not have had flexibility in their work schedules which could allow them to devote to the course the average amount of time suggested by the IIEP course team (5 hours per week). In other cases, some of the professional activities of the participants demanded that they be absent from their offices for field work in a different part of the country. Some of the participants' comments were:

"Sometimes I was not able to spend more time because of other work commitments"

"I have to work even after office hours..."

"Some weeks we go to work to another province. We have no time to meet together. In my country some areas have problems about network where it is not easy to use internet and email..."

3.2.2 The course schedule

The course covered 12 weeks of training. The duration of Modules 1, 3 and 4 was for two weeks each. The first week was dedicated to reading the materials, and the second week for preparing the corresponding assignments. In the case of Modules 2 and 5, the participants spent a week reading the materials and the next two weeks were set aside for each of the online debates related to these modules.

When participants were asked about the course schedule, 75% of them considered that the overall schedule of the course was appropriate and 70% felt that it was appropriate in terms of time spent on carrying out the assignments. Some participants commented that, apart from heavy work loads which did not allow them to invest much time in the course, they found it difficult to complete reading the material in time considering that they are not English mother tongue:

“Due to the barrier of different language, it takes me much more time than that of a native speaker”

“It’s a little difficult for the persons from non-English speaking countries to finish the modules on time, especially if there are additional reading materials”

“It would be better if we had more time to read the material because we are non-English speakers”

3.2.3 The Guide for the participants

As previously mentioned in the introduction, a guide for the participants and coordinators accompanied the training modules. This guide provided an introduction to the course as well as practical information on the course format, materials and organization. Items such as the communication mechanisms, schedule, calendar, and certification modality were described in the guide.

When participant were asked to evaluate the course guide, 57.5% of them considered it to be “very useful”, 37.5% considered it “useful”, and 2.5% felt it was “not very useful”. Only 2.5% of the participants did not answer this question. Some of the participants’ comments described the guide as “informative”, “useful” and “helpful”. Other comments included:

“This document was quite informative and useful”

“The guide provided has been helpful”

“The guide was very helpful...My main source of information was from the guide...”

3.3 Course design and content

The intent of this section was to discover the degree of satisfaction of the participants regarding the work experience, course content, assignments, and the feedback from IIEP.

3.3.1 The teamwork experience

When participants were asked to express their opinion about their experience studying in a team, 55% of them considered that it was “very helpful”, 37.5% thought that it was “helpful” and 5% felt that it was “not very helpful”. 2.5% did not answer this question. In their comments, the participants emphasized that the experience of working in a team allowed them to exchange ideas and experiences. Some of their comments are as follows:

(very useful) *“I found it interesting to study in a team since we had the opportunity to share our views and experiences among the team members. Our team met several times during the course”*

(very useful) *“Yes, it was very helpful; it gives a balance of side of things from everyone’s point of view. I believe that sharing is very powerful, and it might be of help to those who are looking for answers to develop their own QA systems”*

(very useful) *“I found the way to study in a team is very useful. Group discussions, preparation for the assignments, we help each other, exchange ideas, face-to-face debating, they are really useful for us”*

(very useful) *“It was a good opportunity to share our experiences”*

(much) *“It’s a useful method that gives team members opportunity to contribute and collect information, experience, etc from each other, and get the singleness of mind”*

3.3.2 The relationship between the content and the participants’ professional goals

This question on the evaluation form invited the participants to give their opinion on the relationship between the course content and their own professional goals. From their point of view, 66% of the participants answered that the content of the course was “very much” related to their professional goals, 31% found that it was “much” related, and only 3% found that it was “not very much” related. Some of the participants’ comments were:

“The establishment of the Accreditation Council in my country is under process, so the knowledge acquired from the training will be useful in this regard”

“I’m trying to work as an expert in the theory and practice of quality assurance. What we learned from the course enriched my knowledge and ways of practice”

“Quality Assurance was recently introduced in my country, and a lot has to be done in the future. In this context, with the knowledge and experience gained through the course I would be able to make a significant contribution”

“...Taking part in this course has taught me a lot and has deepened my knowledge of QA...”

3.3.3 The assignments

Regarding the course assignments, 47.5% of the participants considered that they “very much” improved their understanding of the course content, while 50% of them stated that they “much” improved their understanding. 2.5% of the participants did not answer this question. Some of their comments were:

(very much) “The assignments made us think more about what we read and studied, which is of great use for us to understand the materials and to improve the skills and ways of quality assurance”

(very much) All of the assignments, and in particular Assignment 4, gave me an in depth insight of EQA. I greatly appreciated that”

(much) “...What was more invaluable and which made the entire course content clear were the discussions among our team members and between the other teams/participants from other countries through each assignment given”

(much) “(they) were well structured. It also allowed reflection on agency policies, processes and practices”

3.3.4 The instructional modules

The course materials were based on previous research conducted by IIEP, in particular from case studies that explored methodological and organizational options in different EQA systems, and from a project on the regulation and quality assurance of cross-border providers of higher education.

The last item of this section on the evaluation form asked participants about their appreciation of the different modules. Module 1, *Making basic choices for external quality assurance systems*, was considered by 50% of the participants as “very useful” and by 50% of the participants as “useful”. Module 2, *Conducting the process of external quality assurance*, was considered by 56% of the participants as “very useful” and by 44% of the participants as “useful”. Module 3, *Setting up and developing the quality*

assurance agency, was evaluated as “very useful” by 56% of the participants, as “useful” by 38% of them, and “not very useful” by 6% of them. Module 4, *Understanding and assessing quality*, was evaluated as “very useful” by 56% of the participants and “useful” by 44% of them. Finally, Module 5, *Regulating and assuring the quality of cross-border providers of higher education*, was evaluated as “very useful” by 52.5% of the participants, as “useful” by 37.5% of them, and “not very useful” by 10% of them. The participants who found it “not very useful” this module belonged to External Quality Assurance agencies that are still not involved in the regulation and the quality assurance of cross-border providers.

3.3.5 Feedback from the IIEP course team

When participants were invited to express their opinion on the feedback provided by the IIEP course team, most were found to have appreciated it. 84% of them considered that it was “very useful” and 16% found that it was “useful”. Some of their comments included:

(very useful) *“The feedback provided at the end of each module as well as the clarifications by the team during the online debates were excellent. The team was very efficient and effective...”*

(very useful) *“The feedback was very useful and immediate”*

(very useful) *“We appreciate the IIEP comments since it is really useful for our thinking as well as future direction in setting up and regulating”*

(very useful) *“In all honesty, I marvel at the efficiency of the course team in answering each concern raised, in moderating the debates, and especially in synthesizing all the various answers after each module was accomplished....The synthesis after each module was very lucid, informative and helpful in making me understand the different options and challenges raised after all the discussions and sharing experiences was done”*

(useful) *“Good written comments on assignments and useful feedback on discussions”*

Regarding the feedback provided from the IIEP course team, the participants mentioned the delay in receiving the instructor’s comments as a weakness of the course. This problem was related to the busy schedules of these professionals. In certain cases, the period allocated to the elaboration of the comments coincided with international seminars that the instructors were required to attend.

3.3.6 Additional topics to be covered

Participants were also invited to suggest additional topics to be covered in further distance education courses. The topics suggested were not numerous and very heterogeneous. The participants’ suggestions are as follows:

- *Other quality efforts in higher education such as ISO 9000, Baldrige Awards or EFQM*
- *Standards and indicators*
- *Meta-evaluation*
- *Evaluation ethics*
- *National Standards of Education in Cross border External Quality Assurance*
- *Accreditation Process*
- *Performance Indicators for HE (separate module)*
- *Quality Assurance for distance education, especially online programmes*
- *A “step by step” approach (Handbook) to setting up a Quality Agency-Audit*
- *How to sustain EQA systems*
- *Optimal utilization of resources to conduct and manage EQA*
- *Ranking of universities*
- *Cooperation between EQA agencies*
- *The internal quality assurance of higher education institutions*
- *The professional development for staff of EQA*

3.4 Communication

The distance education course mainly relied on email facilities. IIEP created a special account (qualityassurance@iiep.unesco.org) to communicate with the participants. During the three-month training, the IIEP course team communicated once or twice per week with the participants through email.

The intent of this section of the questionnaire is to get to know degree of satisfaction of the participants regarding communication.

3.4.1 The use of email facilities

In the first question of this section, the participants were asked how they found email as a means to communicate with the IIEP course team and other participants. 75% of them answered that it was a “very good” way to communicate, 22.5% said it was “good”, and 2.5% found it was “not very good”. The participants who answered that it was a “very good” way to communicate, described the email facilities as “effective” or as “a good and fast way to communicate”. The other participants that considered it was a “good” or “not very good” way of communicating stated that during the course they experienced technical problems with email communication.

3.4.2 Communication problems

In the second question, the participants were asked to comment on technical problems with sending/receiving emails and/or on accessing the website. 72.5% of the participants

answered that they did not experience any problems with communication, and 27.5% said that they experienced occasional problems. Some participants who experienced occasional problems specified that they were due to internal connectivity problems in their organizations. A few of them mentioned that they had experienced communication problems because some of the emails sent by the IIEP course team were received in their “junk mail” box.

3.5 The course website

As previously mentioned, a private website was created especially for the course. In this virtual space, the participants had access to all of the submissions from the participating teams, the instructor’s comments on the teams’ submissions, the training materials and additional reading materials.

For the first question of this section of the evaluation form, the participants were asked how often they consulted the course website. 35% of the participants answered that they consulted the website “at least once a week”, 25% consulted “at least once every fortnight”, 32.5% consulted “at least every month”, and 7.5% did not consult at all. Some participants indicated in their comments that they had a limited amount of time to dedicate to the course due to a heavy workload, which did not allow them much time to access the website.

When participants accessed the website, the documents most consulted were the training materials and the guide for the participants and coordinators, followed by “other documents related to the course”.

Submissions from other institutions and the comments from the instructors were also consulted by the participants, although with less frequency. However, when participants were asked a question regarding the usefulness of consulting these documents, 62.5% of them answered that it was “very useful”, 35% found that it was “useful”, and 2.5% did not answer this question.

3.6 The online discussions

During the distance education course, two online debates were organized for Modules 2 and 5. The participants, assisted by a moderator, discussed the different issues concerning the external quality assurance process. The online discussion for Module 2 dealt with the selection and training of external reviewers, and that for Module 5 dealt with the regulation and quality assurance of cross-border providers.

3.6.1 The online debates related to Module 2

In this section of the evaluation, the participants had to evaluate both of the online discussions. When the participants were asked about their degree of satisfaction with the online debate for Module 2 on the selection and training of external reviewers, 50% stated that it was “very useful” and 47.5% stated that it was “useful”. 2.5% did not answer this question. Some of the participants’ comments were:

(very useful) *“The selection and training of external reviewers is an urgent problem for our agency”*

(very useful) *“This debate gave me more insight into what is involved in setting up a QA and just how it works. I was also amazed at how much was happening in other parts of the world with regards to this topic”*

(very useful) *“It was very informative on the diversity of practices, their advantages and disadvantages”*

(useful) *“I have gained some ideas that we could use in my country considering that we are just initiating the External Examiner system”*

(useful) *“It’s something new to me and I learned quite a lot from the other participants”*

3.6.2 The online debate related to Module 5

With regards to the online debate for Module 5 on the regulation and quality assurance of cross border providers in higher education, 60% of the participants considered that it was “very useful” and 40% considered that it was “useful”. Some of the participants’ comments were:

(very useful) *“The online debate for Module 5 was very useful for me. There are more than 200 joint programmes and institutions in my country...We received many suggestions during the online debate...”*

(very useful) *“The heated debate not only helped us to understand what other countries did but also help us to make improvements in the development of cross-border education in my country”*

(very useful) *“We are just making the pilot accreditation for cross-border education, and we face many challenges. I have learned a lot through the debate”*

(useful) *“We are in the process of establishing policies in this area and some information was obtained”*

(useful) *“I learned a lot about the experiences of other countries in CBHE through the online debate...”*

3.6.3 Interaction with the other participants

The participants also had to evaluate their experience in interacting with other course participants during the online debates. 50% of them answered that it was “very useful”, 47.5% thought that it was “useful” and 2.5% did not answer. Some of the participants’ comments on the interaction with other participants were:

(very useful) *“...The sharing of ideas on approaches and issues has been quite marvellous for me and I enjoyed this exchange”*

(very useful) *“It gave me many new ideas”*

(very useful) *“It was useful to get the views of other participants”*

(useful) *“...I believe this was good point of learning, and the experience and network we’ve developed will be useful...”*

(useful) *“I am glad to see through the progression of the course the relationships that have been created through participants willing to share information to help each other”*

3.6.4 The moderator’s intervention

The moderators of the online debates are experts in the field of External Quality Assurance. Their role was to stimulate the discussion, synthesize the participants’ contributions to the debate, and add relevant information to enrich the exchange.

In the last question of this section, the participants gave their opinion on the moderator’s interventions throughout the online debate. 67.5% of the participants agreed that it was “very useful”, 27,5% said that it was “useful” and 5% did not answer this question. Among the comments of the participants, we find the following:

(very useful) *“They’ve been very useful in steering and guiding the debate towards the right direction. Also these interventions has been very enlightening”*

(very useful) *“The timely intervention of the moderators, especially during the debates helped keep the course going in the right direction and kept it on track especially during the few times when all the varied responses seemed to be a bit confusing already. And as efficient moderators, they knew when to intervene, and when to let the participants resolve things themselves. In terms of moderating/heading a course such as this, I learned a lot from the way the IIEP team efficiently handled this very difficult task”*

(very useful) *“Interventions of the moderators were very lively*

(useful) *“They clarified some confusion”*

(useful) *“They were friendly and willing to share information and experiences to others”*

3.7 General comments on the course

In this last section of the evaluation form, the participants were asked to comment on their experience participating in the course, evaluate the contribution of the course to the EQA practices of their countries, analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the course, and suggest improvements for future distance education practices.

3.7.1 The experience participating in the course

In the first question of this section, the participants were invited to comment on their experience participating in the distance education course. Most of the participants evaluate their experience as being positive. 47.5% of the participants considered this experience “very good” and 42.5% considered it “good”. Only 10% of the participants answered that it was “fair”. Some of the participants’ comments when responding to this question were:

(very good) *“...I got more than expected from it. I really appreciate its nice organization, the course material and reference papers, on line debating, interaction, and participating with other trainees from different countries. And we share our experience and lessons to be learnt...”*

(very good) *“This is the first distance course that I have been involved in. I quite enjoyed it and feel that it works well when you are part of a team”*

(very good) *“...I learned a lot participating in this course”*

(very good) *“ It was quite amazing the coordination of this course. It was like each participant and the course team were in one room”*

(good) *“It’s my first experience in distance education, it’s very interesting, but I am still more accustomed to face-to-face education”*

(good) *“Unfortunately I was not able to fully participate in this course as I was away from my office. However, I was able to give input to most of the assignments given”*

3.7.2 The course contribution to the development of EQA practices

Participants were also asked if they considered that the course has contributed to the development of the External Quality Assurance practices in their country. The participants considered that the impact of the course in the development of EQA practices was rather significant. 55% of the participants stated that the course has “very much” contributed to the development of EQA practices in their country, 30% found that it “much” contributed, and 7.5% found that it contributed “a little”. 5% of the participants did not reply to this question.

3.7.3 The strengths and weaknesses of the course

In another question from this section of the questionnaire, the participants were invited to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the course. A selection of frequent topics mentioned as strengths and weaknesses are as follows:

Strengths:

- Reading material
- Online debates
- Moderation during the online debates
- The course organization
- Communication
- Interaction with participating
- Share of experience and good practices
- Assignments

Weaknesses:

- Time constraints while trying to balance the course with normal full-time work
- Time is tight for persons of non English-speaking countries
- Face-to-face interaction is missing
- Some of the concepts are not explained clearly
- Countries have different levels of maturity in QA and therefore different types of issues
- Evaluation questionnaire too lengthy
- Online debates are hard to understand for countries without experience in EQA

3.7.4 Suggestions to improve further practices

Finally, the last question of the evaluation form invited participants to make suggestions to improve future distance courses organized by IIEP. Suggestions were heterogeneous, covering a wide range of topics. Some of them are the following:

- Face-to-face interaction
- Use high technology to virtually talk face-to-face through internet
- Arrangements for audio-video conference

- More time allocated for the course
- Material should be translated in different languages
- To evaluate the participant in an ongoing process
- More countries should join in
- Organize a future distance course on INTERNAL Quality Assurance

3.8 Addendum for Group Coordinator

This section of the evaluation was to be filled only by the group coordinators. The group coordinators were asked about the activities they performed during the course, the difficulties they faced, and any suggestions to improve the coordination of the course that they could provide. A synthesis of these three main points is presented as follows:

- 1) Activities performed by coordinators:
 - Try to bring the group team together
 - Maintain the group schedule
 - Organize meetings
 - Lead group discussions and allocated tasks for individuals
 - Disseminate information to the group members
 - Ensure that the assignments are sent on time
 - Keep the team informed
 - Remind the team about the deadlines

- 2) Difficulties faced:
 - Find the time to assume the role of coordinator
 - Find common time for all of the team members
 - Keeping the team on schedule
 - Consolidating a team response when individual views were diverse

- 3) Suggestions for improvement:
 - Give the participants more time for reading and preparing assignments

4 Conclusions

The evaluation outcomes demonstrate that, from the participants' point of view, the distance education course for Asia-Pacific countries has successfully responded to their training needs in the field of external quality assurance. For those participants that have recently started exploring the external quality assurance field, the course provided them with new concepts and methodological options. For those participants with more experience in this field, the course represented an opportunity to reinforce and expand their knowledge in the field.

The international perspective of the course and the possibility of learning about other countries' experiences were highly appreciated by the participants. In particular, the

material and the assignments were considered very helpful, as well as the feedback received by the IIEP course team which provided the participants with information, clarifications, and a better understanding of the issues related to EQA through their comments and interventions. However, the participants pointed out the delay in receiving the instructors' comments. This is a problem that should be taken into account for the organization of future distance education courses.

The teams' experience and exchange with other members of different teams permitted the participants to share ideas, experiences and good practices on EQA. Most of them found the interaction with participants from other countries very enriching, in particular during the online debates.

Participants were also appreciative of the coordination and organization of the course. In general, they found the course schedule adequate. Nevertheless, some participants experienced difficulties combining their work schedule with the course schedule, as their organizations do not seem to allocate special extra time to them to invest in the course. Some other participants expressed the inconvenience of respecting the time allotted for each activity because of English difficulties. Considering these language difficulties, a revision of the course schedule could be made for further distance education courses in non English-speaking countries.

The distance education modality was highly valued by the participants as an effective way of learning and for satisfying their professional needs. Among their suggestions, the incorporation of face-to-face interaction sessions through the utilization of video conferences or other high technology devices was frequently mentioned.

Finally, the outcomes of the course evaluation indicate that the participants highly appreciated their experience participating in the course and they considered that all the knowledge learnt will have a significant impact in the development of EQA practice in their country.