Setting and Monitoring Professional Standards: a QMS approach

The concept of organisation: Participants in the examination process

Quality Standards: how to set ALTE Quality Standards?

"Best Practice Models" = Good practice
Satisfactory = Quality Standard in need of improvement

Best Practice
Satisfactory
In need of improvement

Minimum standards for establishing Quality Profiles in ALTE examinations

The Quality Profile is created in each case, by explaining how the examination meets the following minimum standards, and by providing adequate evidence:

1. The examination is based on a theoretical construct, e.g. on a model of communicative competence.
2. You can describe the process and content of use of the examination.
3. The examination results and mark analysis are presented and understood by the test developers.
4. Test developers can make claims that the examination has good, or acceptable, known-group reliability.
5. If you make a claim that the examination is linked to an external reference system (e.g. Common European Reference Levels), you can provide evidence of alignment to this system.
6. An examination administration system has been selected and supported to meet the needs of the examination.
7. Examination papers are delivered in excellent condition and are accessible for the administration of multiple sessions.
8. Final examination results are used by test users (e.g. students, employers) to select their candidates.
9. Grading is consistent from one examination administration system to another, and is supported by an established and agreed procedure.
10. The examination administration system provides support for candidates with special needs.
11. The examination results are published in a timely, accurate, and reliable manner, and are made available to relevant stakeholders.
12. The examination results are subject to continued validity over time, despite changes in the nature of the test.
13. The examination is validated by external stakeholders.
14. The examination results are validated at the test level, the level of the test takers, and across different groups and subgroups.
15. The examination administration system communicates the results of the examination to candidates, and examination users, on an agreed schedule and in an agreed format.
16. You provide information to stakeholders on the appropriate and consistent use of the examination, its results, and its reliability over time.
17. You provide information to stakeholders to help them interpret the results.

Developing the ALTE code of Practice (1994)

Striving for fairness for stakeholders of the examinations

The Code of Practice identifies the roles of three groups of stakeholders in the testing process:

- the examination developers – e.g. members of ALTE
- the examination takers – primary users – who take the examinations by choice, direction or necessity
- the examination users – secondary users – who require the examination for some decision-making or other purpose

The Code of Practice lays down four broad areas of responsibility:

- developing examinations
- interpreting examination results
- striving for fairness
- informing examination takers

The ALTE Principles of Good Practice

Based on VSEP features
- validity
- reliability
- impact
- practicality
- cost
- additional features
- quality of service

Considerations for ALTE Members

The two aspects of quality needed to be considered:

- Better understanding of Principles of Good Practice – theoretical concerns and knowledge
- The practical application of the principles within each ALTE organisation

Features of QM Systems

- Effective initiative for QMS usually involves:
  - A public statement – often in the form of a Code of Practice or Charter
  - A commitment to the change process typically involving the following steps:
    - Define your mission = role of institution, future directions/aims
    - Assess what you currently do
    - Identify areas in need of improvement
    - Decide on measures of improvement and the action plan
    - Car out action to bring about improvement
    - Review progress and revise plan

Applying an ALTE QMS (2000-05)

QM approach

Seek to understand the nature of your ‘organisation’ and to involve all participants

Self-evaluation and quality improvement

Towards as far:
- Test Design and Construction
- Administration
- Processing – marking, grading, issue of results
- Analysis and Review