

Support Services

A proposed scheme

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Executive Summary

This report intends to support the effort of creating a service quality framework within the organization. It adopts a specific path which recommends the following:

- Create a “Support Services Committee”
- Prepare and perform a Review plan
- The review plan and its implementation will be the essential tool to create and maintain a high quality of services framework

Moreover, this scheme recommends the methodology of performing the review plan, by detailing its crucial components, and defines the terms of reference and responsibilities of the Committee.

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Guidelines for the “Support Services Committee”

Purpose

The purpose of the Committee is: (a) *to ensure* that support services among all organization’s entities remain in high quality standards, (b) *to utilize* learning from feedback processes in order to effect improvement and (c) *to act as an advisory group* to the organization’s top management in order to best serving the needs for service quality.

To achieve its purpose, the Committee should design and incorporate a *Review Plan* which will be driven by a certain number of principles. This plan will be used as a tool and a guide to perform all the necessary steps required meeting its purpose. The Review Plan should be considered as a prerequisite for the sustainability of this effort.

Members of the Committee

Members could be a specific number of participants, no more than four (4), both from the internal of the organization as well as external assessors.

Guiding Principles for review

The principles should meet the values and principles of the organization and should align with its general mission and objectives. In any case, there is a recommendation of a number of key areas that could be included as well, which are the following:

Principle 1: Quality of service is the professional responsibility for each individual and work group within organization;

Principle 2: Collaboration is the mean to achieve quality improvement and the development of a learning organization in terms of service standards;

Principle 3: Commitment is necessary to develop policies that will assure comparable treatment in all areas of the organization;

Principle 4: External points of reference should be maintained to provide valuable perspectives for further reflection and action;

Principle 5: Maintain an approach of “fitness for purpose”; the mentality of support services should circle around the purpose as it was stated in the previous section;

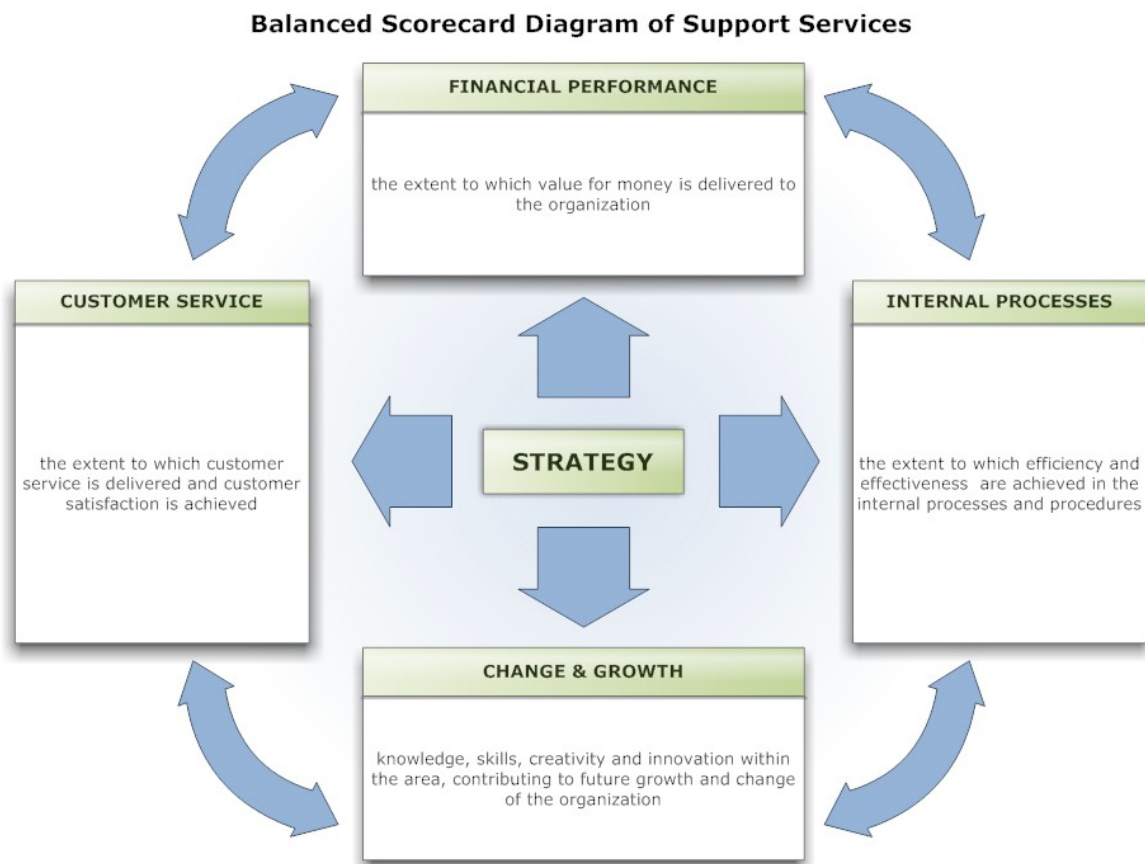
Principle 6: Implement a systematic approach through careful monitoring for ensuring the validity of results and the evaluation of feedback;

Principle 7: The value of open, thoughtful and complementary approach should be adopted in terms of quality, and how this could be incorporated;

Principle 8: The establishment of a benchmarking process is considered necessary in order to measure and evaluate the results on regular basis;

Scope of review

Support services reviews include: organizational structure, management and quality assurance, human and physical resources, core services, professional and community activities.



Unit of review

The Committee will have the responsibility for scheduling periodic reviews. The “unit” for review may be a whole department, a group, an individual or any combination of these. Follow to this, there will be issued a review report available to all parts involved.

Review cycle

Review cycle will be varied according to the nature of services under evaluation. In any case, processes that are applied on daily routine should be reviewed at least on a monthly basis.

Support

The Committee is possible to ask for external help or guidance, in terms of improving its experience and status. Moreover, internal support may be required as well as need for resources.

Terms of Reference

Terms of reference ensures consistency of review across the organization. They also ensure that reviews meet the requirements and are aligned to the organization's strategic planning and policy documents. The suggested terms of reference are the following:

↳ Organizational structure, management, quality assurance and improvement

- use of communication activities and materials;
- use feedback for improvement in all areas; ensure quick response to changes in stakeholders' needs;
- measuring, management and monitoring towards key objectives and use of performance indicators;
- clear directions and communication of the organization's strategic plan to each individual and group;
- ensure that the organization is proactive in seeking opportunities to enhance stakeholders' experience, including developing strategies to promote the welfare and well being of all participants, and respond quickly to any deficiencies identified;
- coordination of an integrated and comprehensive network of services and support, provided by a variety of departments and other stakeholders;
- ensure that all involved entities (stakeholders) collaborate closely and effectively;
- advise the Administration Board and other Management Committee of the organization on strategy relating to the stakeholders' experience and the resourcing of support services;

↳ Human and physical resources including IT

- staffing profile and skills in relation to objectives and plans;
- introduce processes to ensure future employees' capability, including induction and mentoring of new staff, staff training and development, performance management systems;
- provision and utilization of appropriate information technology;
- provision and utilization of appropriate accommodation and equipment;

↳ Core services

- identification of stakeholders (students, staff, parents, candidates etc) and definition of objectives to meet their needs and expectations;

- identification of core services to meet our customers' needs;
- plans for new services;
- improvement of existing services or alterations according to feedback;
- ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to seek the views of all identified stakeholders on their experience;
- customer relationship orientation and service management processes;
- processes to identify with regard to problems raised by our stakeholders and take appropriate action;
- benchmarking performance;

☞ **Professional and community activities**

- links with professional associations, the local community etc.;
- public awareness of the contribution to society;
- relationships with individuals and groups other than our identified stakeholders;
- participation in societies and activities;

Areas of Responsibility

The Committee should:

- participate fully in review processes and evaluate the feedback provided;
- cooperate with the Departmental Managers in terms of major issues and findings;
- recommend and advise to other management committees and provide its knowledge and expertise regarding the area of its applications;
- perform and publish review reports either on groups or individuals;
- contribute in the formation of future policies on relevant issues;
- monitor and disseminate information on departments and individuals;
- monitor closely areas for improvement and perform benchmarkings;
- establish patterns and trends;
- bring issues and concerns in the appropriate organization's committees and bodies;
- introduce changes and innovative philosophies in terms of serving its purpose;
- recommend actions or recovery plans in terms of improving the service standards in all procedures and processes;
- enable an environment for the cultivation of "service quality" mentality;
- organize support for the groups and individuals that need it;
- assist in every aspect the organization, for achieving its targets and plans;

Self-Review

This should be the first phase of the review process. This is an opportunity for the group, department or individual to consider its directions, progress, achievements, strengths and weaknesses as well as areas for development and improvement and the means to achieve this.

The technique of self-review will help in avoiding any possible misunderstandings about the purpose of the Committee. The self-review will have the same characteristics of the review that will follow from the Committee. This procedure will advance synthesis and merging of useful ideas and findings.

The purpose of the self-review should be to provide a summary of the outcomes, where the group itself will identify and suggest. In regards, the Committee should adopt a “helicopter view” which will enable an overview of all relevant aspects according to the terms of reference.

Review panel

Panels should be selected and appointed by the Committee. It is not necessary the participants to be always internal staff of the organization. The selection of panel membership should be based in experience and expertise in regard to the terms of reference.

Review process

The review process could be consisted of the following steps:

1. Review panel will ask and receive the *self review document* from the object in review (group, department, individual).
2. If it is considered necessary the panel could ask for *further documentation*.
3. A *review visit* may be arranged soon after the reading of the documentation.
4. A *review report* should be extracted based on the documentation, visit and meetings with the involved entities.
5. *Post-review implementation* should be followed in order to ensure that findings and suggestions implied in the review report were incorporated and implemented in terms of adoption and practice.

Review calendar

It is necessary for the Committee to arrange a specific calendar of actions including all its efforts at least on a 6-months basis. This will not be a typical calendar of events. Instead, this will be reviewed in order to be improved occasionally. The review calendar may be a mean of investigating Committee’s job and performance according to the terms of reference.