



Development of a Quality Manual for the City College of Calamba: A Framework for Institutional Integrity

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Abstract

Many higher education institutions face significant challenges in establishing coherent quality assurance (QA) systems due to fragmented policies, inconsistent documentation, and limited coordination between academic and administrative units. This study addresses these issues by developing a contextualized Quality Assurance Framework and Quality Manual for the City College of Calamba (CCC) to strengthen systematic quality management and institutional integrity. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research examined current QA practices and institutional requirements in instruction, research, extension, and support services. Through purposive sampling, the study selected 22 respondents, including administrators, faculty, and staff involved in QA. The study used key informant interviews, open-ended surveys, and document analysis, and applied thematic analysis to identify core themes. To ensure credibility and reliability, the study conducted expert validation and member checking. Findings show that although basic QA mechanisms exist, the lack of a formal quality manual has led to inconsistent implementation, weak documentation systems, fragmented coordination among units, and insufficient data-driven monitoring of institutional performance. Stakeholders emphasized an urgent need for a unified framework, standardized procedures, clear role definitions, and ongoing capacity-building to foster a culture of quality within the institution. To address this, the study suggests a combined QA Framework that uses the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle and Total Quality Management. The newly developed Quality Manual aligns with CHED policies, ALCUCOA accreditation standards, and ISO 9001:2015 principles, offering standardized policies and procedures. This model offers pragmatic, policy-oriented guidance for higher education institutions aiming to institutionalize continuous improvement and accountability.

Keywords: *Quality Assurance, Quality Management in Higher Education, Quality Manual, Total Quality Management, Institutional Integrity*

INTRODUCTION

Quality assurance (QA) has become a central concern in higher education worldwide as universities face increasing demands for accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement. Many institutions must demonstrate quality through accreditation, regulatory compliance, and governance reforms focused on outcomes, performance indicators, and stakeholder engagement.

Global QA networks increasingly promote standardized systems to ensure institutional credibility and academic integrity across teaching, research, extension, and administrative services (Hou et al., 2022; Krooi et al., 2024). This shift shows that institutions are beginning to develop "quality cultures," where quality management is part of everyday life rather than simply following rules (Nygren-Landgärds et al., 2022).

Effective QA systems integrate structured frameworks, documentation, and continuous monitoring to support improvement and accountability. Research shows that these frameworks

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help ensure institutional policies align with accreditation standards, improve governance, and encourage evidence-based decision-making (Kayyali, 2023; Nugraha et al., 2023).

Universities commonly adopt principles such as Total Quality Management and the Plan–Do–Check–Act cycle to institutionalize systematic quality practices and translate policies into consistent implementation in teaching and administration (Herlambang et al., 2021; Miranda & Reyes-Chua, 2021).

In the Philippines, QA is guided by Commission on Higher Education policies, particularly CHED Memorandum Order No. 46, s. 2012, which institutionalized outcomes-based education and typology-based QA. Local Colleges and Universities (LCUs), funded by local government units, increase access to higher education, but they often have limited resources and shifting governance structures, making it challenging to establish comprehensive QA systems. These challenges can affect faculty development, infrastructure, and educational quality.

As a local institution, the City College of Calamba (CCC) is committed to accessible, quality education but currently lacks a comprehensive Quality Manual that consolidates its QA policies, standards, and procedures. This gap may lead to inconsistent practices, fragmented documentation, and difficulty meeting national and international standards such as CHED, ALCUCOA, and ISO 9001:2015.

Despite extensive research on QA frameworks and accreditation, limited studies address the development of contextualized quality manuals for emerging institutions, particularly LCUs. Existing literature often focuses on system-level frameworks but provides little guidance on translating them into operational manuals that standardize procedures and clarify institutional roles. This gap underscores the need for research that links QA theory to practical implementation in specific institutional contexts.

This study aims to develop a tailored Quality Assurance Framework and Quality Manual for CCC to align processes in instruction, research, extension, and support services while enhancing accountability, record-keeping, and continuous improvement.

Specifically, it aims to:

1. Assess the current QA practices at CCC across instruction, research, extension, and support services;
2. Identify perceived needs, gaps, and challenges due to the absence of a Quality Manual;
3. Determine the key components, standards, and policies for the proposed manual; and
4. Propose a Quality Assurance Framework and Quality Manual for CCC.

This study contributes to higher education quality management both in practice and in theory. Practically, it provides a structured framework and operational manual to help CCC and similar institutions institutionalize systematic QA processes and strengthen compliance with accreditation standards. Theoretically, it shows how global QA principles, such as PDCA and Total Quality Management, can be adapted to emerging higher education institutions, offering a reference model for developing integrated and sustainable internal QA systems.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review provides the theoretical and empirical foundation for developing CCC's Quality Manual, examining QA studies, models, and frameworks in higher education. It highlights standards, accreditation systems, the role of quality manuals, and challenges in institutionalizing quality, informing a contextualized QA framework for CCC.

Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Quality assurance (QA) in higher education ensures effective, equitable, and responsive teaching, research, and institutional operations through systematic mechanisms to monitor and

improve academic and administrative performance (Kayyali, 2023). QA systems integrate processes such as curriculum development, faculty training, accreditation, and performance evaluation to enhance accountability and institutional effectiveness (Miranda & Reyes-Chua, 2021). Contemporary perspectives emphasize that QA should support evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement, not merely regulatory compliance.

Empirical studies show that structured QA practices improve educational outcomes. Institutions with organized systems, such as integrated learning approaches, research-based teaching, and regular program reviews, show that students learn better and teachers are more effective (Nugraha et al., 2023; Herlambang et al., 2021).

Globally, QA frameworks have evolved to address digital learning, cross-border education, and increasing accountability demands (Hou et al., 2024). International organizations, including INQAAHE, advocate flexible QA systems that ensure compliance while supporting innovation and stakeholder engagement.

Across studies, researchers consistently view QA as a system of structured processes that promotes continuous improvement, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making. In contrast, some literature emphasizes compliance-oriented QA, while others advocate developmental and culture-driven approaches.

A consistent limitation is the lack of operational guidance translating frameworks into practice. This suggests that CCC's Quality Manual should explicitly define standardized procedures, documentation protocols, and feedback mechanisms to bridge policy and implementation.

Frameworks and Standards for QA

International frameworks and regulatory standards commonly guide institutional QA systems. The ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRf) promotes interconnected QA systems that ensure qualifications are transparent, credible, and comparable across institutions and countries (ASEAN Secretariat, 2017). These frameworks emphasize defined learning levels, measurable outcomes, and institutional accountability.

In the Philippines, higher education uses a quality assurance framework that focuses on results and program types, as stated in CHED Memorandum Order No. 46, s. 2012, which requires academic programs, management, and operations to align with these goals. Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) ensures coherence among learning objectives, teaching strategies, and assessment to produce clearly defined graduate competencies (Nugraha et al., 2023).

Quality management systems such as ISO 9001:2015 further support institutional effectiveness through risk-based thinking, documented processes, and continuous improvement. Institutions adopting ISO-based systems demonstrate improved process standardization, accountability, and performance monitoring (Aguenza, 2024).

Across studies, QA frameworks highlight the importance of alignment with national and international standards to ensure credibility and comparability. In contrast, institutions often struggle with operationalizing multiple frameworks simultaneously.

A consistent limitation is the fragmentation of standards into separate systems. This means that the framework should combine the requirements of CHED, ALCUCOA, and ISO into a single, process-oriented manual that clearly spells out roles, workflows, and performance indicators.

Institutional Quality Manuals and Quality Culture

Quality culture has become central to higher education QA systems, referring to shared values, practices, and norms that promote continuous improvement and collective responsibility for academic standards (Nygren-Landgärds et al., 2022). Strong leadership and stakeholder involvement are essential, as they embed quality principles into daily institutional practices.

Institutional quality manuals play a key role in sustaining this culture by documenting procedures, responsibilities, and monitoring mechanisms to ensure consistency and accountability (Pun et al., 2005; Development Academy of the Philippines, 2025). Effective quality management also depends on sound governance, human resource development, and innovation to maintain institutional credibility (Danta & Rath, 2024).

Across studies, quality culture is recognized as essential for sustaining QA beyond compliance. However, systems that focus on documentation may not instill shared values and participation. A consistent limitation is the lack of structured approaches to operationalizing quality culture. This suggests the framework should incorporate stakeholder engagement mechanisms, communication protocols, and participatory review systems within the Quality Manual.

Challenges and Directions in Institutionalizing QA

Despite widespread adoption of QA systems, higher education institutions face persistent implementation challenges. Barriers such as weak leadership involvement, limited resources, fragile governance, organizational resistance, and low stakeholder participation undermine sustainability (Pushpakumara et al., 2023; Cardoso et al., 2015).

Operational issues—including fragmented documentation, weak monitoring, and poor data management—further reduce QA effectiveness by limiting reliable evidence for evaluation (Bernardo et al., 2024). Consequently, technological integration and digital documentation systems are recommended to improve transparency, efficiency, and accountability. Stakeholder engagement—particularly faculty, administrators, and external partners—also plays a critical role in successful QA implementation (Tsoodol et al., 2021).

Across studies, common barriers include weak governance, fragmented documentation, and limited stakeholder engagement. In contrast, some institutions demonstrate improved QA outcomes through digital systems and strong leadership support. A consistent limitation is the absence of integrated monitoring and evaluation systems. This suggests the framework should include digitized documentation, clear governance structures, and defined audit and feedback cycles to ensure sustainability.

Conceptual Lens for the Study

This study adopts an integrated quality assurance model combining Total Quality Management (TQM), the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, and a quality culture. As shown in Figure 1, TQM is the guiding philosophy, emphasizing evidence-based management, stakeholder involvement, and continuous improvement across the institution.

The PDCA cycle operationalizes these principles through iterative stages of planning, implementation, evaluation, and improvement, ensuring systematic performance monitoring. Together, they provide a structured approach to institutional quality management widely adopted in higher education (Herlambang et al., 2021; Miranda & Reyes-Chua, 2021).

Quality culture makes these efforts possible and sustains them. It refers to shared institutional values, norms, and practices that promote collective responsibility for standards and accountability. Strong leadership and stakeholder engagement are essential in embedding quality principles into everyday operations rather than treating them as external requirements (Nygren-Landgärds et al., 2022).

Within this framework, leadership support, governance structures, and resources are inputs; documentation and monitoring systems are processes; standardized procedures and compliance are outputs; and strengthened accountability and institutional integrity are the intended outcomes.

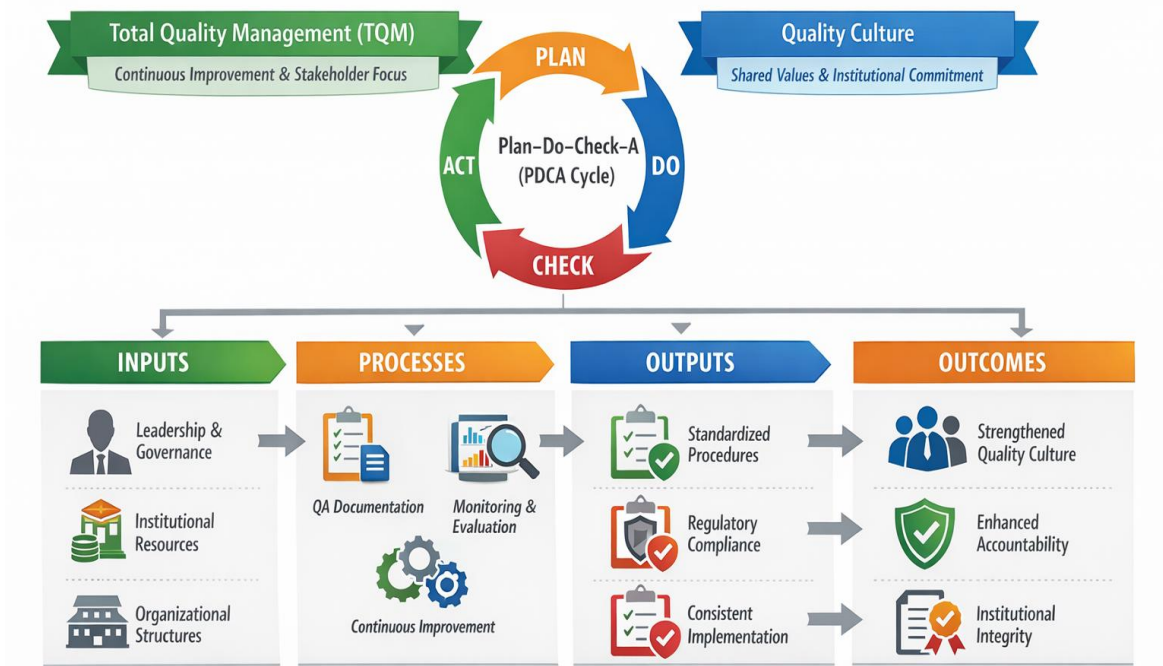


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Propositions and Design Principles for the CCC Quality Manual

Based on the synthesis of the literature, this study advances key design propositions to guide the development of the CCC Quality Manual. First, unifying QA governance structures, roles, and documentation standards is essential to ensure consistency and accountability across institutional units. Second, embedding stakeholder participation in QA processes fosters a stronger quality culture, enhancing ownership and adherence to standards.

Third, integrating digitized monitoring systems improves the timeliness, reliability, and accessibility of QA data, supporting evidence-based decision-making. Fourth, aligning CHED, ALCUCOA, and ISO standards within a single operational framework promotes coherence and reduces fragmentation in QA implementation. Finally, institutionalizing PDCA-driven processes ensures continuous evaluation, feedback utilization, and sustained quality improvement.

Taken together, these propositions provide a coherent design logic that directly informs the structure, key components, and implementation mechanisms of the proposed Quality Manual for CCC, linking theoretical insights with practical institutional requirements.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study used a qualitative case study design to examine the quality assurance (QA) practices and needs of the City College of Calamba (CCC) and to develop a contextualized QA Framework and Quality Manual. A qualitative case study was deemed most appropriate because the study aims to generate an in-depth, context-specific understanding of institutional processes, stakeholder experiences, and organizational dynamics, which cannot be adequately captured through purely quantitative or survey-based approaches.

The case study approach facilitates a comprehensive examination of QA implementation within its authentic institutional context, in contrast to quantitative designs that emphasize measurement and generalization (Yin, 2018).

The research followed a clearly defined procedural sequence: (1) identification of existing QA practices, issues, and gaps through preliminary document review; (2) participant recruitment

using purposive sampling based on QA involvement and accreditation experience; (3) data collection through open-ended surveys, key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and document analysis; (4) data analysis using thematic analysis; and (5) development of the proposed Quality Assurance Framework and Quality Manual based on synthesized findings. This structured process enhances methodological transparency and ensures alignment between data collection and framework development.

Participants and Sampling

Purposive sampling selected participants with relevant expertise in institutional quality assurance (QA). Selection criteria included: (a) direct involvement in QA processes or accreditation activities, (b) holding leadership, supervisory, or administrative roles, and (c) familiarity with institutional documentation, monitoring, and evaluation systems.

The study included 22 participants from teaching, non-teaching, and administrative units: all 22 participants completed the open-ended survey, 10 participated in Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and 12 participated in one Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Some participants took part in more than one data collection method to triangulate responses. This ensured representation from both academic and administrative sectors.

The sample size was sufficient to identify common themes, as qualitative studies typically reach saturation within similar ranges of interviews or focus groups (Hennink & Kaiser, 2021). Participants' shared institutional context and QA involvement enhanced the credibility of the findings.

Table 1. Gender and Role Demographics

Position / Role	Male	Female	Total	Percentage (%)
Teaching (Faculty/F)	2	4	6	27.3
Non-Teaching (Staff/S)	4	5	9	40.9
Administrator (Admin./A)	4	3	7	31.8
Total	10	12	22	100.0

Table 1 presents the distribution of participants according to gender and position or role within the institution. Of the 22 participants, 12 (54.5%) were female, and 10 (45.5%) were male, reflecting a relatively balanced gender composition. The largest group consisted of non-teaching personnel (40.9%), followed by administrators (31.8%) and teaching staff (27.3%). This balanced representation across gender and employment categories ensures the study's findings capture diverse perspectives from both the institution's academic and administrative sectors.

Table 2. Department/Unit/Office Demographics

Department / Unit / Office	Frequency	Percentage (%)
DAS (Department of Arts and Sciences)	5	22.7
DTE (Department of Teacher Education)	3	13.6
HRDU (Human Resource Development Unit)	2	9.1
CQAPD (Center for Quality Assurance, Planning and Development)	2	9.1
OCR (Office of the College Registrar)	2	9.1
RMU (Records Management Unit)	2	9.1
DCI (Department of Computing and Informatics)	1	4.5

OVPREPQA (Office of the Vice President for Research, Extension, Planning and Quality Assurance)	1	4.5
LIRC (Learning and Information Resource Center)	1	4.5
OVPA (Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs)	1	4.5
Guidance Office	1	4.5
DBA (Department of Business and Accountancy)	1	4.5
Total	22	100.0

Table 2 shows the distribution of participants across departments and offices at CCC. The DAS had the highest representation with five participants (22.7%), followed by the DTE with three (13.6%). Offices such as the HRDU, CQAPD, OCR, and RMU each contributed two participants (9.1%), reflecting balanced participation from administrative and support units.

Other departments and offices—including the DCI, OVPREPQA, LIRC, OVPA, Guidance Office, and DBA—each accounted for one participant (4.5%). This distribution ensured a comprehensive cross-section of CCC's organizational structure, capturing diverse academic, administrative, and support perspectives essential for developing the proposed Quality Manual.

Data Collection Instruments

Multiple data collection instruments were employed to obtain a comprehensive understanding of institutional quality assurance (QA) practices. An open-ended survey consisting of 12 questions captured participants' perspectives on (a) existing QA practices, (b) documentation systems, (c) gaps and challenges, and (d) recommendations for a Quality Manual, allowing for the identification of recurring themes across units. These questions highlight the current practices, persistent challenges, and input to framework development.

Semi-structured key informant interviews (KIIs), guided by 8 core questions, explored experiences in QA implementation, governance and policy alignment, documentation and monitoring challenges, adherence to CHED, ALCUCOA, and ISO standards, and strategies for improvement. The researchers used probing questions to deepen insights and clarify responses.

An FGD examined four thematic areas: QA practices and coordination, documentation and monitoring challenges, quality culture and stakeholder engagement, and key components of an effective QA framework. The interactive format, validated survey, and interview results enrich the perspective on framework design.

Lastly, the study conducted a document analysis of institutional policies, accreditation reports, and existing manuals to triangulate and substantiate findings. Collectively, these instruments were designed to capture three core dimensions—current QA practices, institutional gaps and challenges, and framework design requirements—ensuring alignment with the study's objectives for QA continuous development.

Data Analysis

The collected qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis following [Braun and Clarke's \(2006\)](#) framework. The analysis followed six systematic steps: (1) familiarization with the data through repeated reading of transcripts and responses; (2) initial coding of significant statements; (3) generation of preliminary themes by grouping related codes; (4) reviewing and refining themes to ensure coherence and consistency; (5) defining and naming themes; and (6) reporting and synthesizing findings in relation to the study objectives.

This rigorous analytical process ensured that patterns across survey, interview, FGD, and document data were systematically identified and integrated, forming the basis for developing the

proposed Quality Assurance Framework and Quality Manual.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

To ensure trustworthiness, this study employed established qualitative rigor strategies. The study achieved credibility through expert validation and member checking. Experts in quality assurance and higher education reviewed the research instruments and proposed framework to ensure content validity and alignment with QA standards. Member checking involved sharing a summary of the results with a few selected participants to confirm that the interpretations were accurate.

Pilot testing of the survey and interview guides ensured dependability by allowing for the refinement of questions for clarity and relevance before full implementation. Furthermore, research procedures were carefully written down so that they could be checked.

Confirmability was established through triangulation of multiple data sources—including surveys, key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and document analysis—and by grounding interpretations in participants' responses to minimize researcher bias. These procedures align with established qualitative research standards of credibility, dependability, and confirmability ([Lincoln & Guba, 1985](#)).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Current State of QA Practices

Based on insights from administrators, faculty, and support staff across multiple academic and administrative units, the findings indicate that while quality assurance (QA) practices are present across instruction, research, extension, and support services, their implementation remains uneven and fragmented. This pattern indicates that QA at CCC is operationally integrated but not yet institutionalized.

In Terms of Instruction

Rather than isolated practices, Table 3 shows a consistent orientation toward outcomes-based and standards-aligned instruction. Participants emphasized alignment with CHED requirements, structured evaluation mechanisms, and faculty development as central QA strategies. For instance, one participant noted, "Constructive alignment ensures that our course outcomes, teaching strategies, and assessments follow CHED standards" (Faculty3), while another highlighted the role of feedback systems (Faculty5).

These patterns show that CCC has a strong policy-level alignment with national QA standards. However, the lack of standardized documentation and monitoring makes it challenging for all departments to follow the same rules. This reflects a common issue in higher education institutions where OBE frameworks are adopted but not fully institutionalized through robust monitoring systems ([Meng, 2023](#)).

Institutionally, the finding indicates that QA in instruction is conceptually strong but operationally inconsistent, reinforcing the need for unified documentation protocols and feedback systems to sustain continuous improvement.

Table 3. Practices in Instruction

Codes / Categories	Verbatim Responses (Samples)	No. It Occurs	No. of Respondents	Themes	Description of Themes
Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) Implementation	"In instruction, quality assurance is operationalized through constructive alignment—ensuring program outcomes, course outcomes, and learning activities are directly mapped to CHED minimum standards." (F3) / "Class observations, OBTLRP review, and peer and student evaluations." (F6)	12	10	Outcomes-Based and Standards-Aligned Instruction	QA ensures alignment of learning outcomes, teaching, and assessment with CHED standards.
Standardization and Documentation	"Standardized process, from the forms we use down to every detail..." (A1) / "Strict adherence to institutional policies, standardized forms, office manuals." (S2)	9	8	Systematic and Documented Instructional Practices	Instructional processes follow standardized and documented procedures for consistency.
Continuous Faculty Evaluation and Development	"Faculty members undergo peer and student evaluations and participate in faculty development programs designed to strengthen pedagogical and research competencies." (F1)	8	8	Continuous Improvement through Evaluation and Training	Regular evaluation and faculty development enhance the quality of teaching.

Leadership and Vision Alignment	"The enhanced vision and mission of the institution is clear proof that we uphold and render quality and efficient services." (S1)	5	5	Vision-Driven Quality Culture	Instruction reflects institutional values and mission alignment.
Data-Driven Performance Monitoring	"Performance evaluation and client feedback are used to identify areas for instructional improvement." (F5)	4	4	Evidence-Based Instructional Improvement	Feedback and performance data guide instructional decisions.

In Terms of Research

Table 4 indicates that research QA at CCC is structured around formal evaluation processes, ethical review, and performance monitoring. Participants (e.g., Admin2) stressed the importance of evaluating proposals at multiple levels and using output indicators to show that they were following institutional and national research standards.

However, faculty involvement differed significantly across departments, suggesting that research participation and capacity were not evenly distributed. This divergence points to underlying institutional factors such as workload distribution, access to research support, and varying levels of research competence.

This finding extends prior studies emphasizing that research productivity is not solely policy-driven but also dependent on institutional support systems and capacity-building initiatives (Herlambang et al., 2021). For CCC, the result implies that strengthening research QA requires not only monitoring mechanisms but also targeted faculty development and resource allocation.

Table 4. Practices in Research

Codes / Categories	Verbatim Responses (Samples)	No. It Occurs	No. of Respondents	Themes	Description of Themes
Alignment with Institutional Research Agenda	"Research quality assurance is implemented through adherence to institutional research agenda anchored on national development priorities." (F4)	8	7	Aligned and Relevant Research Practices	Research aligns with institutional priorities and national development goals.

Ethical and Methodological Standards	"A tiered evaluation process ensures ethical compliance, methodological rigor, and publication quality." (A2)	6	5	Ethical and Rigorous Research Governance	Research undergoes ethical review and methodological evaluation.
Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms	"Research outputs are monitored using indicators such as utilization, dissemination, citation impact, and community relevance." (A1)	5	5	Performance-Based Research Evaluation	Outputs are assessed using measurable performance indicators.
Faculty Engagement in Research	"Faculty members are encouraged to participate in research activities and training to improve competence." (F6)	4	4	Building Research Capacity and Culture	Training and participation strengthen faculty engagement.

In Terms of Extension

Table 5 reveals that extension QA is firmly rooted in community engagement and participatory planning. Participants (e.g., Staff7) emphasized needs assessment and stakeholder involvement as core practices, indicating alignment with socially responsive QA approaches. Despite this strength, the results reveal gaps in systematic documentation and impact evaluation, limiting the institution's ability to measure long-term outcomes and sustainability.

This suggests that although CCC has robust community-focused practices, its QA system lacks the analytical and documentation tools needed for evidence-based assessment. This supports existing literature that points out the need to complement participatory approaches with structured monitoring and evaluation systems (Garst & McCawley, 2015; United Nations Development Programme, 2021).

Table 5. Practices in Extension

Codes / Categories	Verbatim Responses (Samples)	No. It Occurs	No. of Respondents	Themes	Description of Themes
Community Needs Assessment	"Projects undergo needs assessment, stakeholder	9	8	Needs-Based and Participatory	Programs are designed based on community

and Consultation	consultation, and impact evaluation.” (S7) / “Extension services conduct needs analysis and evaluation.” (S9)			Program Development	needs and stakeholder input.
Impact Evaluation and Sustainability	“QA focuses on the impact and sustainability of community-based programs.” (A7)	6	6	Impact-Oriented and Sustainable Extension	Programs focus on long-term community impact and sustainability.
Partnership and Collaboration	“Partnerships with LGUs and private institutions are formalized through MOAs and periodically reviewed.” (A5)	5	4	Collaborative and Stakeholder-Driven QA	Partnerships enhance accountability and program effectiveness.
Documentation and Feedback	“Documentation and feedback mechanisms are consistently maintained to assess effectiveness.” (F2)	4	3	Monitored and Documented Extension Quality	Activities are tracked through documentation and feedback systems.

In Terms of Support Services

Table 6 reveals a gradual institutional shift toward structured QA practices in support services, particularly through ISO-aligned documentation, internal audits, and performance monitoring. Participants (e.g., Admin5) highlighted audits' role in identifying process improvements.

However, inconsistencies in documentation and inter-office communication remain evident, suggesting uneven adoption of QA standards across units. Differences in resource availability, training, and familiarity with QA systems may account for these variations.

This reflects broader institutional challenges identified in the literature, where administrative QA systems often face coordination and standardization issues ([Pushpakumara et al., 2023](#)). For CCC, this study points out that it requires centralized QA governance and standardized procedures to ensure coherence across support units.

Table 6. Practices in Support Services

Codes / Categories	Verbatim Responses (Samples)	No. It Occurs	No. of Respondents	Themes	Description of Themes
ISO-Aligned Process Documentation	“QA in support services involves ISO-inspired documentation of processes, performance-based evaluation of offices, and data-driven decision-making.” (A7)	11	10	ISO-Based and Structured Service Quality	Services follow ISO-aligned processes and standardized procedures.
Internal Audits and Corrective Actions	“Activities such as process reviews, internal quality audits, and root cause analyses are conducted to identify opportunities for improvement.” (A5)	8	7	Performance Auditing and Continuous Improvement	Internal audits support process improvement and compliance.
Performance Monitoring and Evaluation	“Performance evaluation and monitoring of service indicators are regularly done.” (S9) / “We gather comments from the people we serve, review our work, and adjust methods.” (S3)	9	8	Data-Driven and Feedback-Based QA	Performance monitoring uses data and client feedback.
Staff Training and Development	“Personnel are engaged in training, performance reviews, and planning activities aimed at enhancing service delivery.” (A6)	5	5	Human Resource Empowerment for Service Quality	Staff development supports quality service delivery.

Policy and Manual-Based Operations	“QA guided by the City Government Quality Manual and corresponding Process Manuals.” (S1)	6	5	Policy-Guided and Consistent Service Operations	Operations follow established policies and manuals.
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Perceived Needs, Gaps, and Challenges Arising from the Absence of a Quality Manual

Across participants, a consistent theme emerged: the absence of a formal Quality Manual is a critical barrier to achieving institutional coherence in QA implementation. Rather than isolated issues, the findings point to systemic challenges affecting governance, documentation, and quality culture.

Perceived Needs in the Absence of a Quality Manual

Participants consistently emphasized the need for a unified Quality Manual as a central mechanism to standardize QA processes and clarify institutional responsibilities. As Admin4 noted, “Without a formal quality manual, each office interprets QA procedures differently.”

Table 7 highlights a fundamental governance gap, where the absence of a central reference leads to variability in implementation and weak accountability structures. In line with previous research (Pun et al., 2005), the results indicate that thorough documentation systems are crucial for institutional coherence. For CCC, this implies that the Quality Manual should function not only as a policy document but also as an operational guide that integrates procedures, roles, and monitoring systems.

Table 7. Perceived Needs

Codes / Categories	Verbatim Responses (Samples)	No. It Occurs	No. of Respondents Who Responded	Themes	Description of Themes
Development of a Formal Quality Manual	“Without a formal Quality Manual, there is no single, authoritative reference...” (A4) / “The absence limits accountability and transparency.” (A3)	12	10	Need for a Unified QA Framework	A centralized manual is needed to standardize QA processes.
Capacity Building and Staff Development	“Capacity-building efforts need to be sustained.” (S8) / “Personnel rely on informal	6	5	Continuous QA Competency Development	Ongoing training is needed to strengthen QA understanding.

	mentoring.” (S5)				
Digitalization of QA Processes	“Some QA processes are still manual and can be slow.” (S6) / “Feedback isn’t always turned into action.” (S3)	7	6	Need for Automation and QA Information System	Digital systems are needed for efficient QA processes.
Policy Clarification and Standardization	“The areas that most urgently need clearer policies...” (F3) / “No guidelines on how the institution will comply.” (A5)	11	9	Need for Clear and Updated QA Policies	Standardized policies are required for consistent implementation.
Strengthening QA Culture and Communication	“Some staff view QA as a compliance activity...” (S4)/ “It gets confusing especially for those who are new.” (S8)	8	7	Need for Quality-Oriented Culture	Awareness and engagement are needed to strengthen quality culture.

Perceived Gaps in the Absence of a Quality Manual

Table 8 reveals that inconsistencies in QA implementation, weak documentation, and fragmented communication are interconnected system-level gaps rather than isolated issues. For example, one participant (Staff6) noted that QA instructions are sometimes communicated verbally, leading to inconsistent practices.

This suggests that the absence of formalized processes undermines both standardization and institutional memory. Aligned with [Bernardo et al. \(2024\)](#), these findings indicate that fragmented documentation systems limit effective monitoring and evaluation. For CCC, addressing these gaps requires integrating documentation, communication, and policy systems within a unified QA framework.

Table 8. Perceived Gaps

Codes / Categories	Verbatim Responses (Samples)	No. It Occurs	No. of Respondents Who Responded	Themes	Description of Themes
Inconsistent QA Implementation Across Offices	"Not all offices are strictly following set standards." (S3) / "QA practices remain inconsistent across departments." (F1)	14	12	Lack of Uniform QA Practices	QA implementation varies across units.
Weak Documentation and Data Management	"There are gaps in data collection and analysis..." (S2) / "No standard process for documentation." (F5)	9	8	Documentation and Records Management Gap	Inconsistent documentation affects evaluation and audits.
Limited Coordination and Communication	"Coordination between academic and administrative units can be improved." (A4) / "Instructions are sometimes verbal only." (S6)	5	4	Interdepartmental Communication Gap	Weak coordination leads to inefficiencies.
Delayed Policy Updates and Implementation	"Strategic moves and initiatives are delayed due to updates of changes and revisions." (A2)	4	4	Policy Responsiveness Gap	Delays in policy updates affect implementation.

Perceived Challenges in the Absence of a Quality Manual

Beyond structural gaps, Table 9 highlights deeper institutional challenges, including limited resources, low QA awareness, and reliance on manual processes. Some participants (e.g., Admin7) viewed QA as a compliance activity rather than an embedded institutional practice.

This reflects a developing quality culture, where QA is not yet internalized across all units. Consistent with [Pushpakumara et al. \(2023\)](#), these findings suggest that effective QA implementation depends on leadership support, resource allocation, and stakeholder engagement.

For CCC, the evidence indicates that strengthening QA requires both structural reforms and cultural transformation.

Table 9. Perceived Challenges

Codes / Categories	Verbatim Responses (Samples)	No. It Occurs	No. of Respondents Who Responded	Themes	Description of Themes
Resource and Manpower Limitations	“Limited manpower and resources within the QA office...” (S7)/ “Resource limitations hinder systematic monitoring.” (A3)	10	8	Capacity and Resource Constraint	Limited resources hinder QA implementation.
Limited QA Awareness and Compliance	“Some staff members view QA as compliance rather than a culture.” (A7) / “New employees depend on oral instructions.” (S5)	8	7	Sustaining QA Awareness and Commitment	Inconsistent understanding affects QA adoption.
Manual and Time-Consuming QA Processes	“Some QA processes are still manual and slow.” (F2)/ “Feedback isn’t always acted upon.” (F1)	7	6	Operational Efficiency Challenge	Manual processes slow QA activities.
Integration and Alignment Issues	“QA processes rely on documentation but lack analytics for decision-making.” (S7) / “Different offices interpret QA differently.” (A5)	6	5	Challenge of Institutional Coherence	Lack of alignment affects system-wide QA implementation.

Key Components, Standards, and Policies that should be Included in the Proposed Quality Manual

Based on insights from administrators, faculty, and support staff, the findings indicate a clear need for a structured and integrated Quality Manual that ensures coherence in QA processes, standards, and governance across units.

Key Components

Table 10 shows that participants emphasized the need for clear workflows, defined roles, and measurable quality objectives to ensure consistent QA implementation. As one participant

noted, “The manual should clearly describe the processes and workflows of each office to ensure consistency” (Admin3).

These findings suggest that the Quality Manual should function as an operational tool—not merely a compliance document—by translating QA principles into standardized procedures and accountability mechanisms. Consistent with [Pun et al. \(2005\)](#), the study highlights the importance of process mapping, performance indicators, and continuous improvement systems in strengthening institutional governance at CCC.

Table 10. Key Components to be Included

Codes / Categories	Verbatim Responses (Samples)	No. It Occurs	No. of Respondents Who Responded	Themes	Description of Themes
Documentation and Workflow Definition	“The manual must define processes and workflows per office for consistency.” (A3) / “Procedures should be properly documented.” (S1)	9	8	Clear Process Documentation and Mapping	Processes must be clearly defined and standardized.
Quality Objectives and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	“It should contain measurable quality objectives and indicators aligned with institutional goals.” (F6)	7	6	Results-Based Quality Framework	Quality objectives and KPIs guide performance monitoring.
Roles, Responsibilities, and Authorities	“Functions, responsibilities, and authorities of each office must be explicitly stated.” (S6)	6	5	Defined Organizational Accountability	Roles and responsibilities must be clearly assigned.
Continuous Improvement Mechanisms	“There must be feedback, review, and improvement systems embedded in	5	4	Systematic Continuous Improvement	Feedback and review processes ensure ongoing improvement.

the manual.”
(A1)

Standards

As shown in Table 11, stakeholders recognized the need to align and integrate CHED, ALCUCOA, ISO 9001:2015, and OBE standards within a unified framework. As one participant emphasized, “The manual should align with ISO and CHED standards to meet national and international expectations” (Admin5).

This reflects a shift from fragmented compliance toward a coherent QA system. In line with [Aguenza \(2024\)](#) and [Hou et al. \(2022\)](#), integrating these standards enhances efficiency and institutional credibility. For CCC, the manual should serve as a convergence mechanism that aligns external requirements with internal processes.

Table 11. Standards to be Included

Codes / Categories	Verbatim Responses (Samples)	No. It Occurs	No. of Respondents Who Responded	Themes	Description of Themes
ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System Alignment	“The manual should be aligned with ISO 9001:2015 principles and procedures.” (A5)	10	9	ISO-Aligned Quality Framework	ISO standards ensure structured and consistent QA processes.
CHED, ALCUCOA, and Regulatory Compliance	“Should conform to CHED, ALCUCOA, and other accrediting body requirements.” (A1)	8	7	Regulatory and Accreditation Compliance	Alignment with CHED and ALCUCOA ensures compliance.
Outcome-Based Education (OBE) and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)	“Include standards for OBE implementation and CQI processes.” (F4)	7	6	Learning and Quality Enhancement Standards	OBE and CQI align processes with measurable outcomes.
Risk Management and Corrective Actions	“There should be standards for identifying risks and implementing corrective or preventive actions.” (A1)	5	4	Risk-Responsive Quality Assurance	Risk management supports proactive QA implementation.

Policies

Findings in Table 12 highlight the importance of structured, transparent policy governance, including clear procedures for policy formulation, dissemination, and evaluation. One participant explained, “There should be clear guidelines on how policies are formulated, approved, and implemented” (Admin6).

The evidence indicates that policy ambiguity contributes to inconsistent QA practices. Consistent with [Nygren-Landgärds et al. \(2022\)](#), establishing systematic policy processes is essential for sustaining accountability and institutional integrity. For CCC, embedding these mechanisms within the manual will support consistent implementation and continuous improvement.

Table 12. Policies to be Included

Codes / Categories	Verbatim Responses (Samples)	No. It Occurs	No. of Respondents Who Responded	Themes	Description of Themes
Policy Alignment and Harmonization	“Policies must align with existing institutional, CHED, and LGU frameworks.” (A4)	8	7	Harmonized and Aligned Institutional Policies	Policies align with institutional and regulatory frameworks.
Policy Review and Approval Process	“Include guidelines on policy formulation, validation, and approval.” (A6)	7	6	Structured Policy Development and Validation	Clear procedures guide policy creation and approval.
Dissemination and Implementation Procedures	“There must be a mechanism for policy dissemination and integration into daily operations.” (A2)	6	5	Inclusive and Transparent Policy Implementation	Effective dissemination ensures institutional awareness.
Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy Compliance	“Policies must be reviewed and updated periodically based on performance data.” (S3)	5	4	Policy Accountability and Continuous Evaluation	Regular review ensures policy relevance and effectiveness.

Proposed Quality Assurance Framework and Quality Manual for CCC

Figure 2 presents the CIVIC (Culture of Integrity, Value, Innovation, and Collaboration) Framework, which integrates Total Quality Management (TQM), Quality Assurance (QA), Quality

Control (QC), Quality Analysis, and Quality Inspection within a continuous Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle.

Anchored in CCC's vision, mission, and core values, the framework ensures that quality is embedded in institutional operations through strategic planning, standards-based implementation, systematic monitoring, and evidence-based evaluation. By aligning CHED, ALCUCOA, and ISO standards within a unified system, the framework promotes coherence, consistency, and accountability across academic and administrative units.

Each phase of the PDCA cycle contributes to institutional effectiveness: TQM establishes a culture of excellence and shared accountability (Plan), QA ensures compliance and process standardization (Do), QC and Quality Analysis verify performance and generate data for decision-making (Check), and Quality Inspection sustains accountability through audits and corrective actions (Act). Collectively, this integrated approach shifts quality from a compliance-driven activity to a culture-based and continuously improving practice that enhances organizational performance and stakeholder satisfaction.



Figure 2. CCC Quality Cycle (Integration Model)

Proposed Quality Manual for CCC

This draft aligns with CHED CMO No. 46 s. 2012, ALCUCOA accreditation standards, and ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System principles. It also reflects CCC's vision, mission, and core values of competence, commitment, and character.

Introduction

This Quality Manual serves as the principal reference for implementing, maintaining, and continuously improving the Quality Management System (QMS) of the City College of Calamba (CCC). It provides a standardized guide for academic and administrative processes that uphold CCC's commitment to quality education and public service.

The manual ensures that quality assurance (QA) practices are systematically integrated into all institutional functions—instruction, research, extension, and support services—in alignment with CHED, ALCUCOA, and ISO 9001:2015 requirements.

Institutional Quality Policy

The City College of Calamba commits to uphold excellence in education through continuous improvement, compliance with regulatory standards, and a culture of competence, commitment, and character. Guided by its vision and mission, CCC strives to deliver transformative, inclusive, and future-ready education anchored on total quality management principles.

Scope of the Quality Management System

This manual covers all institutional areas:

1. Instruction – Curriculum development, classroom delivery, student assessment, and faculty development
2. Research – Institutional research agenda, ethical compliance, and dissemination
3. Extension – Community engagement and partnership programs
4. Support Services – Administrative, human resources, records, and student affairs operations

Quality Objectives

1. To ensure alignment of institutional processes with CHED, ALCUCOA, and ISO 9001:2015 standards.
2. To promote consistency, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making in all operations.
3. To strengthen stakeholder participation and client satisfaction.
4. To institutionalize continuous quality improvement (CQI) through regular review and monitoring.

Organizational Structure and Responsibilities

Table 13. Distribution of Quality Assurance Roles and Responsibilities

Entity	Primary Functions in QA Implementation
Board of Trustees	Approves QA policies and the Quality Manual; ensures strategic direction.
Office of the President	Provides leadership, allocates resources, and ensures QA integration.
Center for Quality Assurance, Planning, and Development (CQAPD)	Acts as system custodian; oversees QMS documentation, internal audits, and improvement programs.
Deans and Program Chairs	Ensure QA implementation within departments; monitor compliance with instructional and research standards.
Faculty and Staff	Implement QA practices in teaching, research, and service; participate in evaluations and continuous improvement.
Students and Stakeholders	Provide feedback and participate in QA reviews and consultations.

CCC Quality Assurance Framework (PDCA Model)

1. PLAN (Total Quality Management)
 - a. Strategic planning and institutional initiatives
 - b. Faculty and staff development programs

- c. Policy and process documentation
 - d. Interdepartmental collaboration
 - e. Client feedback integration
2. DO (Quality Assurance)
 - a. Preventive curriculum review
 - b. Implementation of ISO-aligned processes
 - c. Stakeholder and partner engagement
 - d. Monitoring of academic and administrative compliance
 3. CHECK (Quality Control and Analysis)
 - a. Student assessment sampling and graduation audits
 - b. Internal performance reviews and data validation
 - c. Academic trend analysis and benchmarking
 - d. Outcome-based monitoring and evaluation
 4. ACT (Quality Inspection)
 - a. Compliance checks (CHED, TESDA, ALCUCOA)
 - b. Audit findings documentation
 - c. Non-conformance and corrective action processes
 - d. Management review and follow-up

Core Quality Standards

1. ISO 9001:2015 QMS Alignment – Structured documentation, risk-based thinking, and continual improvement.
2. CHED and ALCUCOA Compliance – Adherence to national QA standards and accreditation requirements.
3. Outcome-Based Education (OBE) – Curriculum and instruction anchored on measurable learning outcomes.
4. Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) – Feedback-driven process enhancement and performance evaluation.
5. Risk Management and Corrective Actions – Systematic approach to identify, monitor, and mitigate risks.

Key Quality Policies

Table 14. Institutional Quality Policies and Their Key Provisions

Policy Area	Description / Key Provisions
Policy Formulation and Review	Procedures for drafting, validating, and approving institutional policies.
Document and Records Control	Guidelines on version control, archiving, and access to QMS documents.
Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)	Standards for assessing performance indicators and service outcomes.
Corrective and Preventive Action (CAPA)	Steps for addressing non-conformities and preventing recurrence.
Stakeholder Engagement	Mechanisms for consultation, feedback, and participatory quality reviews.

Internal Quality Audit (IQA)	Regular audits to ensure compliance and identify improvement opportunities.
Risk Management	Identify and mitigate academic, operational, and compliance risks.

Review and Continuous Improvement

The CQAPD shall review the Quality Manual annually, with input from all stakeholders. Updates will reflect new CHED directives, accreditation feedback, and institutional priorities to ensure continuous relevance and improvement.

References

1. CHED Memorandum Orders
2. ALCUCOA Accreditation Instruments
3. ISO 9001:2015 QMS
4. CCC Vision, Mission, and Core Values

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that the City College of Calamba (CCC) has functional quality assurance (QA) practices in instruction, research, extension, and support services; however, these remain fragmented due to the absence of a consolidated Quality Manual, leading to variations in implementation, documentation, and monitoring. Despite guidance from CHED policies, ALCUCOA standards, and ISO 9001:2015 principles, gaps persist in policy integration, accountability, and data-driven evaluation.

For the first research objective, CCC actively implements QA initiatives across core functions. However, these operate through multiple documents rather than a unified system, indicating the need for a centralized framework. Addressing the second objective, key gaps include the absence of a comprehensive manual, inconsistent documentation, and limited systematic monitoring and evaluation, which may hinder the development of a strong quality culture and alignment with national and international standards.

Regarding the third objective, essential components identified for the manual include defined QA governance structures, standardized documentation, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, regulatory compliance, and stakeholder feedback integration. In response to the fourth objective, the study developed a proposed QA framework and Quality Manual based on the Plan–Do–Check–Act cycle within a Total Quality Management approach, integrating planning, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement aligned with CHED, TESDA, and ALCUCOA standards to promote standardized, evidence-based decision-making.

Practically, the framework may help higher education institutions—particularly local colleges and universities—standardize QA processes, strengthen internal monitoring, and meet accreditation requirements. Theoretically, it contributes to the internal QA literature by showing how TQM and PDCA principles can support institutional framework development and a culture of quality.

Institutions are encouraged to adopt the manual, strengthen QA capacity and digital monitoring systems, conduct regular reviews, and enhance stakeholder engagement. Overall, the proposed framework offers a structured approach to institutionalizing QA at CCC and supporting its mission to produce graduates with competence, commitment, and character.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

This study focused on CCC's four functional areas—instruction, research, extension, and

support services—to assess existing QA practices and develop a context-specific Quality Manual. The study collected data from internal stakeholders, including administrators, faculty, and staff, and consulted external experts solely to validate the framework's relevance and acceptability.

The study did not cover ISO certification or technical drafting processes but aimed to conceptualize a comprehensive QA framework tailored to CCC. Future research could test the manual, assess its impact on performance, incorporate ISO 9001:2015 and ALCUCOA standards, and conduct long-term studies to examine its impact on CCC's quality culture, stakeholder involvement, and overall performance.

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