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Evaluation of higher education libraries: the case of the Durban University of Technology Library

Sagren Moodley[1], Jaya Raju[2] and Reggie Raju[3]
1 Training Librarian, Durban University of Technology, South Africa
2 Associate Professor in Information Studies, Durban University of Technology, South Africa
3 Director of ICT & Communication, Stellenbosch University, South Africa
sagren@dut.ac.za,

Evaluation of Higher education libraries is not a new concept. Numerous tools are available to higher education libraries to measure their levels of quality and service (ARCL 1979,1989; Poll & Boekhurst 2007). In order to measure these effectively, according to the Lancaster's (1973) timeless text on evaluation and measurement of libraries, "measurement tools which are easy to apply and adequate for the purpose, are needed". In South Africa, as the impetus on quality provision in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) grows, the need for appropriate tools for measurement and evaluation of HEI libraries, becomes critical. Higher education libraries are expected to adequately support teaching and learning needs; help give effect to teaching and learning objectives; and, undergo a regular review of their support services for the core functions of the institution (CHELSA 2006). The Committee for Higher Education Libraries (CHELSA) was mandated by the Higher Education Committee on Quality (HECQ) to produce a "guide" to evaluate individual higher education libraries in South Africa. The main purpose of the CHELSA guide is to provide a framework and indicators for libraries to conduct self reviews on the management of quality processes. This involves is a detailed self review of all processes, as well as a peer review from colleagues in the profession. The Durban University of Technology (DUT) Library has recently undergone the review process and would be subject to further reviews. This paper will critically examine the DUT's application of CHELSA's "self review" guide as a tool for evaluation of higher education libraries. The intention is to draw out preliminary findings on the appropriateness of the "self review" evaluation tool to the broader process of evaluation and measurement of quality in higher education libraries in the hope of informing this important and ongoing process in all contexts.

Keywords:
CHELSA self review guide; Evaluation in higher education libraries; Measurement in higher education libraries; Quality in higher education libraries

Key References
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