



USAID Partnership for Higher Education Reform (PHER)

SCOPE OF WORK

for international expert to provide technical assistance on **Quality Assurance Methods for Evaluating Online Courses** to Vietnam National University – Hanoi (VNU)

I. BACKGROUND

The Partnership for Higher Education Reform (PHER) is a five-year initiative to help strengthen Vietnam's leading public universities. The project activities are funded by USAID to support targeted reforms to improve institutional leadership and administrative capacity, improve teaching practices to enhance student learning outcomes, elevate university research capacity to international standards, network Vietnamese researchers to maximize access to global knowledge, enable university graduates to better engage with the labor market, and help university faculty to leverage their research for innovation.

To achieve these objectives, PHER activities focus on :

Governance: This pillar supports the building and strengthening of institutional performance management systems based on agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) supported by a comprehensive Management Information System (MIS) that provides consistent, reliable data for decision making and for accreditation of institutions and programs. This includes the establishment of a robust internal quality assurance (IQA) system at each of the target universities. Improved governance will help the leadership of public universities in Vietnam to make better informed decisions as they exercise greater autonomy and focus on academic quality.

Teaching & Learning: This pillar supports the growing of faculty professional development opportunities through the establishment of formalized Centers for Innovative Teaching and Learning (CITL) as well as supporting the work of less formal, more specialized faculty-driven affinity groups through Faculty Academies on Excellence in Teaching (FACET). The goals are to support expansion of faculty capacity to design state-of-the-art courses, digitize curricula, support the development of priority online courses and programs, improve student learning assessment techniques, and develop graduate students in the teaching profession. This pillar will also support technical assistance to help prepare faculty and administration for international accreditation reviews of academic programs and institutions. The objective is for improved teaching and learning at Vietnam's public universities to increase learning outcomes,

enhance recognition of high-quality academic programs, and improve the employability of graduates.

Research & Innovation: This pillar supports the enhancing of research capacity so that the scientific outputs of public universities in Vietnam meet international standards, increase knowledge sharing among specialists, grow the number of publications in recognized journals, and align research activities to the social and economic needs of the country. This will take place through faculty exchanges, visiting scholar programs, research conferences, webinars, workshops, and short course training on research methodologies and academic specialties. The key vehicle for this pillar is the establishment of Vietnam International Academic Networks (VIAN) to help scientists across Vietnam to connect more readily with fellow experts from around the world. The objective is for VIAN activity to lead to greater knowledge sharing, broader promotion of research taking place in Vietnam, and enhanced opportunities for joint research and publications with partners abroad.

The PHER project also seeks deeper exploration of policy areas vital to the improvement of Vietnamese public higher education by supporting analytical work on the areas of technology and digitization, as well as gender equity. These cross-cutting policy areas are essential to success across the four pillars and to support the long-term sustainability of higher education reforms in Vietnam.

PHER focuses on reforms at three major Vietnamese public universities and their member universities and respective institutes and academic programs:

- Vietnam National University-Hanoi (VNU),
- Vietnam National University-Ho Chi Minh City (VNU-HCM), and
- The University of Danang (the UD).

II. OBJECTIVE OF ASSIGNMENT

Covid-19 and the rapid shift to remote education accelerated the growth in online and blended learning across the world. With digitization sweeping higher education, there is a pressing need for universities in Vietnam to adapt while ensuring the quality of outcomes. Indeed, the application of information technology in education and training is now a policy priority in Vietnam. A national strategy for digitization in higher education aimed at 2030 is articulated in the Prime Minister's decision number 131/QĐ-TTg.

There have been several notable barriers to online education in Vietnam. First, public opinion regarding online education is largely negative, with a pervasive belief that online and blended learning are low-quality and inferior to in-person learning. Second, there are regulatory restrictions to the remote delivery of degree programs. The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) has capped the number of online credits at 30 percent of the total required credits for a 120-credit hour degree program. To begin exploring the possibilities for fully

remote university instruction, VNUHN received government approval in 2023 to pilot online education beginning with remote delivery of the core courses required at all member universities. This is potentially a first step toward exploring fully online degree programs at universities in Vietnam. It is clear that any online degree program will eventually need to meet quality standards through accreditation. For this reason, the partner universities of PHER seek support for assuring quality of online programs.

PHER seeks an international expert qualified to provide two packages of technical assistance. The first package will support the Institute of Education Quality Assurance (INFEQA-VNU) in **reviewing and revising its draft quality assurance procedures for online course evaluation**. These include the INFEQA criteria, tools, and guidelines for evaluating online courses. The second package of technical assistance will support the University of Engineering and Technology (UET-VNU) by **providing feedback for two of its existing online courses**.

The work of this assignment should be conducted in English. Translation and interpretation services will be supported by PHER as needed. All activities should ensure equitable treatment irrespective of gender, disability or ethnic background.

III. TIME AND LOCATION

The work should take place between **February, 2024 and November 2024** with specific dates agreed among PHER, the partner institutions, and the chosen expert. In addition to preliminary online work with the universities, the expert will lead and conduct an **in-person technical mission** to Hanoi to work directly with faculty and staff at INFEQA-VNU and UET-VNU.

IV. TASKS, DELIVERABLES, AND LEVEL OF EFFORT

The primary responsibility of the expert is to support INFEQA-VNU in developing a set of quality assurance criteria, tools, and guidelines for online course evaluation to build a core group professionals capable of adequately applying the quality assurance principles on online course evaluation and (2) UET-VNU improves their online/blended courses for better quality.

See the table below for specific tasks, deliverables, and a tentative timeline for the assignment of expert:

Tasks	Output/Deliverables	Tentative timeline	Level of effort (Days)
I. Engage in online TA launch meeting with INFEQA-VNU and UET-VNU	01 outline of technical support for INFEQA and UET-VNU	March, 2024	1 day

<p>2. Lead 01 webinar to introduce NSQOL standards (US) for:</p> <p>(1) Quality Online Teaching</p> <p>(2) Online Program</p> <p>(3) Online courses to the core group of INFEQA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 01 virtual meeting organized with agenda, background material. ● 03 topics shared and presented: <p>Topic 1: Introduce National Standards for Quality Online Teaching: https://www.nsqol.org/th-e-standards/quality-online-teaching/</p> <p>Topic 2: National Standards for Quality Online Programs: https://www.nsqol.org/th-e-standards/quality-online-programs/</p> <p>Topic 3: National Standards for Quality Online Courses: https://www.nsqol.org/th-e-standards/quality-online-courses/</p> ● Proposal for in-person training program 	<p>3rd-4th week March, 2024</p>	<p>0,5 days for preparation</p> <p>0,5 day for webinar</p>
<p>3. Lead 02 pre-mission online coaching sessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 01 coaching session for INFEQA-VNU ● 01 coaching for UET-VNU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 02 virtual meetings organized with agenda, background material. ● For INFEQA-VNU: written comments, feedback, and recommendations on draft criteria for online course evaluation 	<p>April, 2024</p>	<p>1 day for preparation</p> <p>0,5 day for coaching session to INFEQA-VNU</p> <p>0,5 day for coaching for UET-VNU</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For UET-VNU: written comments, feedback and recommendations for 02 online courses shared by UET 		
<p>4. Provide in-person training workshops to introduce the core principles of online course evaluation for INFEQA-VNU and their member universities on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards for quality online courses. Tools to evaluate online courses. Procedures to evaluate online courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training agenda and materials for VNU 01 narrative report including examples of tools and procedure to evaluate online courses 	May- June, 2024	<p>1 day for preparation</p> <p>2 days for in-person training</p>
<p>5. Lead 02 in-person coaching sessions for INFEQA-VNU and UET-VNU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 02 coaching session agendas, background materials 01 annex to the relevant narrative report containing analysis, feedback, and recommendations to INFEQA-VNU on their 1st draft of criteria, tools, procedures for online course evaluation 01 annex to relevant narrative report containing analysis, feedback, and recommendations to UET-VNU on their 02 existing online courses 	<p>May- June, 2024</p> <p><i>(in conjunction with on-site trainings in Task.4)</i></p>	<p>1 day for preparation</p> <p>2 days for INFEQA-VNU</p> <p>1 day for UET</p>

<p>6. Lead 04 post-mission online coaching sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 02 post-mission online coaching sessions to INFEQA-VNU • 02 post-mission online coaching sessions to UET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 04 coaching session agenda, background material. • 01 written comment, feedback and recommendation for INFEQA-VNU on their report of piloting criteria, tools, procedure of online course evaluation. • 01 written comment, feedback and recommendation for UET- VNU on their 02 adjusted online courses 	<p>Aug-Nov, 2024</p>	<p>1 day for preparation</p> <p>1 day for coaching session to INFEQA-VNU HN</p> <p>1 day for coaching for UET</p>
<p>7. Write final comprehensive report</p>	<p>01 final report with recommendations (<i>template to be provided</i>) submitted to the Project management team</p>	<p>Nov-Dec, 2024</p>	<p>1 day</p>
<p>Total working days</p>			<p>15 days</p>

V. SUPERVISION AND REPORTING

The consultant(s) will work under the direction of the PHER team and INFEQA.

VI. BUDGET

Applicants should submit separate financial and technical proposals describing the approach to expected interventions along with the proposed consultancy fee (daily rate).

VII. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCES

Essential:

- holds a doctorate level of education or related field;
- has deep knowledge of quality measurement of online learning and teaching, and familiarity with digital universities;
- has expertise and experience in the field of internal quality assurance/institutional effectiveness and including online courses development and evaluation;



- has experience organizing and delivering training in higher education online courses development evaluation;
- has demonstrated international and/or intercultural experience.

Preferred:

- has experience working at Vietnamese universities;
- can commit to a mutually agreed schedule for workshops and coaching.

VII. APPLICATION

The application documents include:

- A letter of motivation
- CV with three references
- A technical proposal
- Financial proposal, indicating the expected consultancy fee (daily rate)

Application documents should be sent to pher@sangkienvietnam.org titled “IQA Consultancy for Online Courses Evaluation Application” no later than 16 February, 2024. Please note that only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.