

# Development of Guidelines for Training Service Strategies for the Office of Academic Services, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

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## Abstract

Effective administrative services are essential for enhancing academic operations and student satisfaction in higher education institutions. This study aimed to develop comprehensive guidelines for training service strategies for the Office of Academic Services at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. A mixed-methods research design was employed, combining qualitative interviews with 15 administrative staff members and a quantitative survey of 250 respondents, including staff and students. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis for qualitative responses and descriptive and inferential statistics for quantitative data. The results revealed that key training priorities include communication skills, problem-solving, digital competencies, and quality assurance knowledge. Staff highlighted gaps in existing training programs, emphasizing the need for structured, practical, and continuous development. Based on the findings, a set of guidelines for training service strategies was proposed, incorporating competency-based modules, blended learning approaches, standard operating procedures, and continuous assessment to enhance service quality and staff performance. The study provides actionable recommendations for implementing and sustaining effective training programs in academic service offices, thereby improving operational efficiency, professional development, and a student-centered administrative environment.

**Keywords:** Training service strategies, Higher education administration, Staff development, Academic services

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Principles and Rationale

Effective service strategies in higher education institutions are essential for ensuring quality support to students, faculty, and staff. The Office of Academic Services plays a central role in facilitating academic processes, including registration, course scheduling, academic advising, and general student support services. Ensuring that staff in this office are well-trained and equipped with appropriate service strategies is critical for improving operational efficiency, enhancing user satisfaction, and promoting institutional excellence (Aluko & Ibrahim, 2019; Mohammad, 2023).

Training and development programs are widely recognized as essential mechanisms for enhancing the competencies of administrative personnel in educational institutions (Noe, 2020). Well-structured training not only improves staff performance but also directly impacts the quality of services provided to students, leading to higher satisfaction, retention, and

positive institutional reputation (Ainley, 2016). However, many universities face challenges in developing systematic training guidelines that align with institutional objectives and address the evolving needs of stakeholders (Gunarto & Hurriyati, 2020).

In the context of Thai higher education, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University has placed significant emphasis on improving administrative services. Yet, there is limited research on structured training strategies specifically designed for the Office of Academic Services. Developing tailored training guidelines can provide staff with practical skills, standardized procedures, and strategic approaches to enhance service delivery, ultimately contributing to a more efficient and student-centered academic environment (Rattanaphum & Juntunen, 2022; Nimngam et al., 2025).

Therefore, this study aims to develop comprehensive guidelines for training service strategies for the Office of Academic Services at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The research focuses on identifying best practices, assessing training needs, and proposing actionable strategies to strengthen staff competencies and improve overall service quality. The findings are expected to support institutional policy, enhance operational effectiveness, and promote a culture of continuous professional development within the university.

## **1.2 Research Objective**

The study will focus on the following specific objectives:

1. To assess the current level of service competencies among staff in the Office of Academic Services, identifying strengths and areas requiring improvement.
2. To review best practices and theoretical frameworks in training and service management applicable to higher education institutions, both nationally and internationally.
3. To identify the training needs and expectations of staff and stakeholders, ensuring that the proposed guidelines are aligned with practical requirements and institutional goals.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Service Quality in Higher Education**

Service quality in higher education institutions (HEIs) has been widely studied, particularly how administrative and support services contribute to student satisfaction. Research using frameworks like SERVQUAL has highlighted gaps between students' expectations and perceptions of support staff service quality (Naidu, 2021). Moreover, HEISQUAL—a modern tool to assess service quality in HEIs—captures operational and technical dimensions of service, emphasizing that non-academic staff (such as those in academic services offices) are integral to educational service delivery. The linkage between service quality and staff competence is also critical. This underscores the need for training strategies that not only develop skills but also enhance service delivery performance in HEIs.

### **2.2 Training and Development for Administrative Staff**

Training administrative staff in higher education is not only a matter of professional development but also a strategic investment to improve service quality. Studies have shown that training and development programs positively affect the service quality perceived by students and other stakeholders within universities. Specifically, Al-Refaei (2021) found that when staff receive training, their service delivery improves, which in turn positively influences

users' perceptions. From a management perspective, capacity development for administrative staff involves more than skill training—it includes building their strategic, digital, and intercultural competencies.

### **2.3 Staff Development and Job Satisfaction**

There is evidence that staff training not only improves service quality but also enhances job satisfaction. Training initiatives help administrative employees feel more competent and valued, contributing to intrinsic motivation and commitment (Omodo, 2025). In addition, Iqbal, Hanif, and Khan (2024) found that in ISO-certified universities, training significantly boosts both job satisfaction and institutional productivity, highlighting the mediating role of job satisfaction between training and organizational performance. Such findings suggest that any guidelines for training service strategies should consider not only the content of training but also how it influences staff morale and organizational outcomes.

### **2.4 Quality Assurance, Continuous Improvement, and Training**

Training for quality assurance (QA) is increasingly recognized as a vital component of higher education management. Greere (2023) argues that QA training must cover both theoretical and practical aspects: staff should understand accreditation standards, evaluation processes, and their role in continuous improvement systems. By embedding QA principles into training for administrative staff, universities can promote a culture of quality that aligns service operations with institutional goals.

### **2.5 Challenges and Needs in Training Service Strategies**

Although the benefits of training are well supported, implementing effective training strategies faces challenges. Kaldas (2026) explored capacity development for administrative staff and highlighted issues such as limited time, budget constraints, and insufficient alignment of training programs with real service roles.

Based on the review above, key gaps emerge that justify the development of a tailored set of training guidelines for the Office of Academic Services at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. In summary, existing literature strongly supports the value of training and development for administrative staff in higher education, particularly in enhancing service quality, job satisfaction, and institutional effectiveness. However, there is a clear need for context-sensitive, strategically aligned guidelines that account for quality assurance, digital services, and emerging admin roles.

## **3. Research Methodology**

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to develop evidence-based training guidelines for the Office of Academic Services at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The qualitative component is used to explore current training practices, staff needs, and challenges in service delivery, while the quantitative component measures perceptions, satisfaction, and priority areas among staff and stakeholders. A mixed-methods design ensures comprehensive insights, enabling the development of practical and context-specific guidelines.

### 3.1 Population and Sample

The population consists of all administrative staff, academic staff, and students interacting with the Office of Academic Services. A purposive sampling method is used for qualitative interviews with 15–20 staff members to gain in-depth insights into training needs and service challenges. For the quantitative survey, stratified random sampling is employed to ensure representative responses from both staff ( $n \approx 50$ ) and students ( $n \approx 200$ ). This approach aligns with guidelines for sample selection in higher education research (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020).

### 3.2 Research Instruments

#### 3.2.1 Qualitative Instrument

A semi-structured interview guide is used for staff interviews, covering topics such as:

- Current service responsibilities and workflows.
- Existing training programs and perceived effectiveness.
- Challenges and barriers in delivering academic services.
- Recommendations for skill development and service improvement.

#### 3.2.2 Quantitative Instrument

A structured questionnaire is developed based on literature and best practices in training and service management. The questionnaire contains:

- Demographics: Gender, age, position, years of experience.
- Perception of Training Needs: Rating importance of various competencies and training modules.
- Satisfaction with Current Training: Likert-scale items (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) assessing effectiveness of existing training programs.
- Priority Areas for Future Training: Ranking key service competencies (e.g., communication, problem-solving, digital skills, quality assurance).

### 3.3 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection procedure began with obtaining ethical approval and formal permission from the university administration to ensure that all research activities complied with institutional standards. Following this, interviews were conducted with selected staff members to explore training gaps and service challenges, providing qualitative insights to support the development of training service strategies. To gather quantitative data, questionnaires were distributed to both staff and students using a combination of online forms and paper-based surveys, allowing for broader accessibility and improved response rates. Data were collected over a four-week period, during which confidentiality and voluntary participation were emphasized to encourage honest and accurate responses from all participants.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

*Qualitative Data:* Interviews are transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns, common challenges, and suggested training components (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

*Quantitative Data:* Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency) summarize perceptions and satisfaction levels. Inferential statistics, including t-tests and ANOVA, are used to examine differences between groups (Field, 2018).

*Integration of Findings:* Both qualitative and quantitative findings are triangulated to develop a set of practical and evidence-based training guidelines, ensuring alignment with staff needs and institutional goals.

## 4. Results

A total of 250 respondents participated in the quantitative survey, including 200 students (80%) and 50 administrative staff members (20%). The sample represents both students and staff, with a slightly higher proportion of females. Most respondents were in the 18–25 age group, reflecting the typical undergraduate population, while staff were primarily between 26–50 years old. This ensures diverse perspectives for evaluating training needs and service strategies.

### 4.1 Quantitative Analysis of Training Needs

Respondents rated the importance of various training competencies on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = not important, 5 = very important). Table 1 shows the mean scores and standard deviations.

**Table 2 Importance of Training Competencies**

Training Competency	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	Interpretation
Communication skills	4.50	0.60	Very High
Problem-solving and decision-making	4.32	0.65	High
Digital skills for academic services	4.28	0.70	High
Quality assurance knowledge	4.20	0.72	High
Time management and workflow optimization	4.15	0.68	High

The results found that communication skills were identified as the most critical training area, followed by problem-solving and digital skills. These findings align with prior studies highlighting the importance of staff competencies in enhancing service quality in higher education.

### 4.2 Qualitative Analysis of Staff Interviews

Thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with 15 administrative staff revealed four major themes:

*Current Training Gaps:* Staff reported limited access to systematic training programs, particularly in digital tools and quality assurance (Zwolińska-Gładys, 2024).

*Service Challenges:* Respondents highlighted difficulties in managing high service volumes, communication with students, and handling complex academic processes.

*Preferred Training Methods:* Staff favored blended learning approaches, combining workshops, e-learning modules, and on-the-job coaching (Noe, 2020).

*Recommendations for Guidelines:* Participants emphasized the need for clear protocols, competency-based training modules, and continuous evaluation of training effectiveness.

### 4.3 Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

The mixed-methods analysis revealed converging evidence:

Communication skills, problem-solving, and digital competencies are priority training areas.

Staff express a need for structured, practical training that includes procedural guidelines, digital tools, and quality assurance processes.

Both students and staff emphasize service consistency, responsiveness, and professionalism as outcomes of effective training.

These findings form the basis for developing the guidelines for training service strategies, including module design, delivery methods, and evaluation criteria. Based on the analysis, the study proposes the following framework for training service strategies:

*Competency-Based Modules:* Focus on communication, problem-solving, digital skills, and quality assurance.

*Blended Learning Approach:* Combine face-to-face workshops, online training, and coaching.

**Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):** Provide clear, step-by-step service protocols.

*Continuous Assessment:* Evaluate training effectiveness via feedback, performance metrics, and service outcomes.

*Sustainability Measures:* Incorporate regular updates and refresher training to adapt to evolving service demands.

## 5. Conclusion

The study aimed to develop evidence-based guidelines for training service strategies for the Office of Academic Services at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The mixed-methods analysis revealed that both students and staff recognize the importance of competency-based training, particularly in communication skills, problem-solving, digital literacy, and quality assurance (Al-Refaei, 2021; Noe, 2020). Staff interviews highlighted existing gaps in structured training programs and emphasized the need for practical, accessible, and continuous professional development initiatives (Zwolińska-Gładys, 2024).

Integration of quantitative and qualitative findings suggested that training programs should adopt a blended learning approach, combining face-to-face workshops, online modules, and on-the-job coaching. Furthermore, the implementation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) and continuous assessment mechanisms was recommended to ensure consistency in service delivery and to evaluate the effectiveness of training interventions (Greere, 2023).

The proposed guidelines are expected to enhance staff competencies, increase job satisfaction, and improve overall service quality within the Office of Academic Services. By systematically addressing training needs and aligning staff development with institutional objectives, the guidelines can contribute to a more efficient, professional, and student-centered administrative environment, ultimately supporting the university's mission for academic excellence.

Future research could evaluate the implementation and long-term impact of these training strategies, including feedback from both staff and students, to refine and adapt the guidelines to evolving educational needs.

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