

## Student Assessment of Service Quality in the Organization of Foreign Language Exams and Certification at the University of Labor and Social Affairs



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**ABSTRACT:** The article has provided an overview of the regulations on foreign language output standards of the Ministry of Education and Training, English output standards and supporting activities in organizing English exams and certificates at the University of Labor and Social Affairs. To accomplish the set research objectives, the authors used quantitative research methods with a sample size of 385 students who participated in the exam and received English certificates. The survey data were included in statistical analysis and multivariate regression. The analysis results show that the service activities in the organization of exams and certification of output standards are highly appreciated by students. All observed variables with the following contents: Exam organization plan, certification; Organize for students to register for the exam; Informing students about the exam schedule and time of the exam; Announcement of exam results and issuance of certificates to students both have a positive, positive impact on students' perceived quality. Especially, the activity of issuing certificates to students who meet the English output standards has the strongest impact. From the analysis results, we also found that the factors included in this study could only explain 27.6% of the dependent factors, which is perceived quality. Therefore, in future studies, we need to pay more attention to and evaluate factors that have the potential to influence such as gender, major, and number of years of schooling of students to better assess perceived quality.

**KEYWORDS:** Foreign language certificate, Student, Service quality, University of Labor and Social Affairs

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Economic integration has helped Vietnam receive a huge source of FDI. Established FDI enterprises have developed rapidly, continuously appearing in many fields and industries. With the development of import and export, enterprises have increased their search for foreign partners to develop their products' production, business and consumption. This economic development has increased the need to recruit high-quality human resources for import-export and foreign-invested enterprises. One of the factors assessing the quality of human resources of enterprises is good foreign language skills. The foreign language output standards for university training are compulsory regulations of the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam. Regulations on criteria for reaching the threshold The English output standard is different at educational institutions and depends on the training industry and the quality of the training program. The University of Labor and Social Affairs promulgates regulatory documents on English output standards in accordance with regulations and assessment standards in accordance with regulations. The school has organized exams and provided English output standards for many training courses. This activity has become a regular activity of the University. Assessing the quality of staff's perception of service activities in the organization of English exams and certification at the University of Labor and Social Affairs after a period of implementation is essential for us to see what activities are not working and which service activities need to be improved or changed in methods to improve service quality, thereby enhancing student satisfaction. With that goal in mind, we have conducted a study on the content "Student Assessment of service quality in the Organization of foreign language exams and Certification at the University of Labor and Social Affairs".

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

**2.1. Regulations on foreign language output standards** According to Decision No. 1982/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister: Approving the Vietnam National Qualifications Framework issued on October 18, 2016, for Level 6 for university diplomas, the output

## Student Assessment of Service Quality in the Organization of Foreign Language Exams and Certification at the University of Labor and Social Affairs

standard for graduates of the training course must have "Foreign language ability level 3/6 Vietnam's Foreign Language Competency Framework". This foreign language requirement of the university training level corresponds to the B1 level according to the European Framework. Currently, Vietnamese universities are allowed to choose one of many languages to build output standards in foreign languages for their units such as English, Chinese, Korean, and Russian ... but some schools only specify one type of Foreign Language Output Standard and English. There are two ways for students to meet the Foreign Language Output Standards, such as taking an exam at the Foreign Language Output Standards Examination Council organized by the school or using prestigious foreign language certificates following the requirements of the school to apply for the achievement of the Foreign Language Output Standards. As we mentioned, B1 is a level equivalent to level 3/6, so B1 is the minimum level used by most universities to consider Foreign Language Output Standards. Some specific fields of study and some universities have foreign language-related majors, high-quality majors, and associate programs often require a higher score on the Foreign Language Output Standards. In addition to using foreign language proficiency standards according to the 6-level competency framework and B1, many schools accept (via conversion) international English certificates such as IELTS, TOEIC, TOEFL, and APTIS. Universities determine the score range from 5.5 to 6.0 on the IELTS and the score for the TOEIC test is between 450-550 points. Many schools such as RMIT University, National Economics University, Faculty of Foreign Languages - Thai Nguyen University, Faculty of International Relations - Vietnam National University, Hanoi (Hanoi) also require students to have IELTS scores between 6.5 and 7.0 to be qualified to graduate. Some schools have average requirements such as the University of Technology - Hanoi National University requires IELTS 5.5, University of Electricity requires IELTS 5.0 - 5.5, Hanoi University of Pharmacy requires IELTS 5.0 - 5.5, FPT University requires IELTS 6.0 and Vietnam Maritime University is IELTS 4.0 (CLC: IELTS 5.0, Foreign Language Department IELTS 6.0+).

**Table 1: National Economics University foreign language output standards**

Industry/Training Program	Vietnam Foreign Language Competency Framework	International Certificate in English			
		IELTS	TOEFL IBT	TOEFL ITP	TOEIC
English language	Level 5	6,5	79	x	x
Advanced program	Level 5	6,5	79	x	X
High-Quality Programs, POHE and English Language Programs	Level 4	6,0	60	543	730
Regular Program (Learning in Vietnamese)	Level 4	5,5	46	500	600

**Source:** National Economics University Website, Hanoi, Vietnam

### 2.2. Regulations on English output standards at the University of Labor and Social Affairs

University of Labor and Social Affairs is one of the universities that train highly qualified human resources in the application-oriented direction with strengths in the fields of Human Resource Management, Social Work, Insurance, Accounting and Business Administration; is a center for scientific research, technology transfer, international cooperation in the field of economy - labor - society to meet the development requirements of the industry, the country and international integration. In order to carry out the mission of training high-quality human resources for the social economy, the University of Labor and Social Affairs has issued regulations on foreign language output standards as prescribed by the Ministry of Education & Training. In 2021, before a number of new points in the Higher Education Law, the Ministry of Education & Training issues Circular No. 08/2021/TT-BGGDDT dated March 18, 2021, of the Minister of Education and Training on the Regulation on training at university level. The University of Labor and Social Affairs has issued a new Regulation on training at the university level according to this circular. Before the change in the Regulation on training at the university level, the University implemented the rebuilding of regulations on foreign language output standards. Therefore, Decision No. 1838/QĐ-DHLĐXH dated October 27, 2021, of the Rector of the University of Labour and Social Affairs on promulgating regulations on English output standards, assessment and recognition of English output standards for full-time undergraduate students of the University of Labor and Social Affairs, replacing the old decision and taking effect for graduates in English in 2021. Graduates of the University of Labor and Social Affairs need to achieve the English language output standard equivalent to the TOEIC score of  $\geq 450$  for majors in the Faculty of Business Administration and  $\geq 400$  for the remaining majors. The decision also stipulates the organization of the assessment of English proficiency standards in Article 3 of this decision. The school continuously organizes assessments of English language proficiency for regular university students. Students have the right to register and take the assessment many times to achieve the output standard before graduation. After students participate in the evaluations organized by the University and achieve the points specified in Article 2 mentioned above, they will be recognized by the school as meeting the output standards of English proficiency. The regulations also specify the part

## Student Assessment of Service Quality in the Organization of Foreign Language Exams and Certification at the University of Labor and Social Affairs

that considers transferring scores of English certificates that students already have in order to exempt these students from taking the exam. Accordingly, when students have English certificates issued by IIG organizations that are representatives of the American Educational Testing Service (ETS), the British Council, the IDP organization of Australia and the ESOL organization of the University of Cambridge (UK). Students who have one of the international English certificates converted to TOEIC scores that meet the requirements in Article 2 will be exempt from assessment and will be recognized as meeting the output standards of English proficiency. The University of Labor and Social Affairs stipulates that English is the only language that considers the foreign language output standards for students. The form of consideration includes the organization of direct exams for students at the school and the form of conversion from the certificates specified in this decision. The University of Labor and Social Affairs' foreign language output benchmark is in the average group, ensuring the threshold of the Ministry of Education & Training. The school does not have high regulations because we have not trained high-quality subjects and specific training disciplines. However, in the near future, we need to have some changes in the Foreign Language Outcomes Standards for English Language majors to be enrolled starting in 2022.

**Table 2: Converting TOEFL and IELTS scores to TOEIC scores**

TOEIC	TOEFL PBT	TOEFL CBT	TOEFL IBT	IELTS
400	400	120	40	4
450	450	133	45	4,5

Source: University of Labor and Social Affairs

### 2.3. Supporting activities in organizing English exams and certificates at the University of Labor and Social Affairs

Service is assessed by attitude, behavior, communication ability, skill level, education level, health status, appearance, and age ... Serviceability includes the capacity and service quality of student support staff. According to Decision No. 65/2007/QĐ-BGDĐT of the Minister of Education & Training on the Promulgation of Regulations on university quality assessment standards and a set of quality accreditation standards in Higher Education, the service factor is assessed through a team of technicians and staff with sufficient numbers, professional capacity and periodic professional training, effective service for learning and research. But in Circular No. 12/2017/TT-BGDĐT dated May 19, 2017, of the Ministry of Education & Training promulgating regulations on accreditation of higher education institutions to replace Decision No. 65/2007/QĐ-BGDĐT, the activities serving learners are specified more specifically and clearly in Article 20 of this circular. Accordingly, activities to serve and support learners must perform well the following contents: Plan to implement activities to serve and support learners as well as a student monitoring system. Student service and support activities as well as learner monitoring systems are implemented to meet the needs of stakeholders. Student service and support activities as well as learner monitoring systems are reviewed. The student service and support activities as well as the learner monitoring system are improved to meet the needs and satisfaction of the stakeholders. Referring to the standards The activities to serve and support learners are specified in this circular, the organization of the exam and the issuance of the English output standard certificate must ensure the following contents: There is a plan to organize the exam and issue the English output standard certificate for students; Organize for students to register for the English output standard exam; Inform students of the exam schedule and time of the exam before the exam takes place; Notify exam results to students; Issue certificates to students who meet the English output standards. The above are some of the service contents of the training support block in organizing exams and granting certificates of English output standards for students. The activities in service of marking exams, assisting students in reviewing exam results and organizing examination exemptions are not mentioned in this article.

### 3. METHODS

The study used both general and quantitative research methods. In the review study, the authors conducted an understanding of Vietnam's university training regulations and regulations on competency frameworks. From these documents, the authors have provided a theoretical basis for the regulation of foreign language output standards in Vietnam. Next, the research team reviewed the regulations issued on foreign language output standards at universities across the country to get an overview of the current assessment of foreign language output standards for students such as: organization, calculation and conversion of points from prestigious foreign language certificates. With the research space conducted at the University of Labor and Social Affairs, the authors also reviewed university training regulations and decided on the schools English output standards. From the regulations of the University of Labor and Social Affairs, the authors analyze and compare this activity with other universities, recognizing the point that needs to be changed in the regulations on English output standards at the University of Labor and Social Affairs. Based

## Student Assessment of Service Quality in the Organization of Foreign Language Exams and Certification at the University of Labor and Social Affairs

on the set of educational quality assessment standards issued by the Ministry of Education & Training, the research team assesses the requirements for student service and support activities specified in this set of evaluation criteria and identifies service activities in the organization of exams and issuance of English output standards at the University. Based on the provided service criteria, the research team used the quantitative research method and conducted a survey of students who took the exam and received the English Output Standard certificate to know how the student's evaluation of the service quality in the organization of the English exam and certification at the University of Labor and Social Affairs is today. Collected data is included in statistical analysis by the author's team to identify the students' choice of assessment options and see which factors are assessed as weak. Next, the authors used multivariate regression analysis to assess the impact of service activities on the perceived quality of students in this activity. The independent variables are the activities to serve and support the learners, the perceived quality is the dependent variable. The hypothesis for regression analysis is that student service activities in the organization of exams and certification of English output standards have a positive relationship with the perceived quality of students.

### 4. RESULTS

The study sample included 385 students who took the English Outcomes Standard exam and received the University of Labor and Social Affairs English Outcomes Standard certificate. The sampling method is the specified method. This sampling method is not recommended for use in investigation and evaluation activities. However, it is suitable for supporting the resolution of the objective set forth in this study. Survey participants will be interviewed directly and data about personal information will not be made public. The survey consists of 6 brief questions for students to assess service quality. The results of the evaluation of the activities for the organization of the certification exam and the perception of the quality of the students are presented in the following section.

#### 4.1. Descriptive statistical results on observed variables of service and perceived quality

##### *Plan to organize exams and issue certificates of English output standards*

The question used for the survey was "The school always plans to organize exams and issue certificates of English output standards for students". This independent observation variable we denote as SER1. The analysis results of SER 1 show that the number of votes Agree and Totally Agree is 314 selections, accounting for more than 80%. The group of students who chose to hesitate was 48 times, accounting for 12.4%. The lowest is the two options. Strongly disagree and disagree with only 23 choices and account for 6% of the total opinions of students participating in the survey. From this result, we see that students agree and believe that the University always plans to organize exams and issue certificates of English output standards for students. We know, the school plans to organize the English output test for students twice per month and continuously throughout the year. Thus, students can base themselves on their plans and the school's exam organization plan to choose for themselves the appropriate exam time. In addition, exchanging with many students also commented that "The process from planning to organizing the English output test for students is always correct", so they do not worry about their intentions. However, in the survey we still have 6% of the votes disagree and strongly disagree. Discussing to find out the reason, these students thought that they did not receive the plans and were passive in their registration for the English output standard exam.

**Table 3. Analysis results on the plan to organize the exam and issue**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very mush disagreement	5	1,3	1,3	1,3
	Disagree	18	4,7	4,7	6,0
	Hesitate	48	12,5	12,5	18,4
	Agree	182	47,3	47,3	65,7
	Totally agree	132	34,3	34,3	100,0
	Total	385	100,0	100,0	

**Source:** Processing of survey data of the research team

##### *Organize registration for the English Output standard exam*

We use the question "The head of the organization allows students to register for the English output test easily and quickly". This independent observation variable is denoted SER2. The results from the survey and analysis showed that only 1 vote chose the option strongly disagree and 9 times chose the option Disagree. This group of students said that it is not easy to register for the English test. The reason given by these students is that registration for the exam is required to register directly at the Training Management office, but not online. To explain this question, we have discussed it with the registration service staff, we know that

## Student Assessment of Service Quality in the Organization of Foreign Language Exams and Certification at the University of Labor and Social Affairs

the continuous organization of the exam and the students taking the exam of many different courses, the continuous opening of online registration will cause an increase in operating costs, leading to an increase in the exam costs of students. Thus, there is no form of registration for the online English output test because the University wants to reduce the cost of taking the exam for students. The remaining opinions all chose to agree and strongly agree, although a large number of students hesitated, the reasons were the same as the group of students who chose not to agree.

**Table 4: Results of analysis of activities of organizations registering to participate in the English Output standard exam**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very mush disagreement	1	,3	,3	,3
	Disagree	9	2,3	2,3	2,6
	Hesitate	120	31,2	31,2	33,8
	Agree	157	40,8	40,8	74,5
	Totally agree	98	25,5	25,5	100,0
	Total	385	100,0	100,0	

Source: Processing of survey data of the research team

### Notice of exam schedule and exam time

To find out about this issue, we use the survey question "The school always fully informs students about the exam schedule and exam time before the exam takes place". The symbol of this question is SER3, the analysis results show that the majority of students choose the option Agree and Totally agree with a total of 285 turns, accounting for 74%. Students who chose the salary option had 96 times, accounting for 24.7%. The number of times choosing the option Strongly disagree and Disagree accounts for a very small percentage of 1.3%. When talking with students, we noticed that they thought that the school's service in the announcement of exam schedule and exam time was done very well. The information about the exam schedule, exam room, registration number and list of students taking the exam is specific to each test location, exam date, and exam and this information is sent to each student's account before the exam date.

**Table 5: Analytical results of notification activities about exam schedule and time of exam organization**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very mush disagreement	1	,3	,3	,3
	Disagree	3	,8	,8	1,0
	Hesitate	96	24,9	24,9	26,0
	Agree	175	45,5	45,5	71,4
	Totally agree	110	28,6	28,6	100,0
	Total	385	100,0	100,0	

Source: Processing of survey data of the research team

### Notify students of exam results

We use the question "The school always informs students of exam results at a suitable time" and denoted SER4. The results of the investigation and data analysis showed that none of the students chose the option Strongly disagree. The number of students choosing the option Disagree was 7 times, accounting for 1.8%. The Hesitating option had 92 turns of students choosing, accounting for 23.9%. Selecting the option Yes, there were 113 turns of students with a rate of 29.4%. With a rate of nearly 50%, it belonged to the Totally Agree option. Thus, the majority of students think that the school's job of announcing exam results for students has been done very well. Students said that after taking the test for about 10 days, the results of the English output standard exam will be published on the school's website and on each student's personal information page. Time to pay test scores quickly helps student's self-control their study plans and retake the exam if they do not pass.

**Table 6: Analytical results of student notification of exam results**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	7	1,8	1,8	1,8
	Hesitate	92	23,9	23,9	25,7
	Agree	113	29,4	29,4	55,1

## Student Assessment of Service Quality in the Organization of Foreign Language Exams and Certification at the University of Labor and Social Affairs

	Totally agree	173	44,9	44,9	100,0
	Total	385	100,0	100,0	

Source: Processing of survey data of the research team

### Issuing certificates for students

The question included in the survey was "The school issues certificates to students who meet the convenient and easy English output standards" denoted SER5. The results of data analysis showed that more than 300 surveyed students chose the option Agree and completely agree with a total rate of 81.8%. The option Strongly Disagree with 4 choices, accounting for 1%, the option Disagree with 3 choices, accounting for 1.8%, the option hesitantly has 63 choices, accounting for 16.4%. These students also feel that the awarding of certificates is only done on one day of the week, making them feel uncomfortable. When discussing this issue with the Certificate Authority, it is known that the certificate is only awarded to students who have needs and need to register first. In addition, the school's training management department does a lot of work such as organizing learning, organizing exams, and organizing enrollment, so there are not enough human resources for assigning officers to pay certificates every day.

**Table 7: Analysis of survey data on certification activities**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very mush disagreement	4	1,0	1,0	1,0
	Disagree	3	,8	,8	1,8
	Hesitate	63	16,4	16,4	18,2
	Agree	148	38,4	38,4	56,6
	Totally agree	167	43,4	43,4	100,0
	Total	385	100,0	100,0	

Source: Processing of survey data of the research team

### Quality of service for exam organization and certification

This is the last question in our survey. The purpose of this question is to determine the students' perception of quality with the University of Labor and Social Affairs' Quality of Examination and Certification Service. This result will show whether the school's service in training has been appreciated or not, the symbol of this dependent observable variable is QLT. The survey results show that there are 4 students choosing the option completely disagree, accounting for 1%, 7 students choosing the option Disagree, accounting for 1.9%, 50 students choosing the option Hesitating, accounting for 13%, 165 students choosing the option Agree, accounting for 42.9%, 159 students choosing the option totally agree, accounting for 41.3%. The results presented in Table 8 show that students perceive the service quality of the examination and certification activities very well.

**Table 8: Perceived analysis results on the quality of examination and certification activities**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very mush disagreement	4	1,0	1,0	1,0
	Disagree	7	1,8	1,8	2,9
	Hesitate	50	13,0	13,0	15,8
	Agree	165	42,9	42,9	58,7
	Totally agree	159	41,3	41,3	100,0
	Total	385	100,0	100,0	

Source: Processing of survey data of the research team

### 4.3. Multivariate regression analysis

The purpose of the research team when performing this analysis is to clarify how the impact of service factors affects the perceived quality of students and how much these factors explain the perceived quality. The analysis results show that R Square = 0.276, which indicates that the factors serving exam organization and certification can explain 27.6% of student's satisfaction with the perceived quality, and the factors that have not been mentioned in this study play the role of explaining the rest of the students' perceived quality. The results of the ANOVA test also show that the research group's hypothesis is accepted. It means that student service activities in the organization of exams and certification of English output standards have a positive relationship and a positive impact on the perceived quality of students. The table of multivariable regression results shows the influence of each factor. Accordingly, the strongest impact on students' perceived quality of quality is the SER5 factor, the second is the SER2 factor.



## Student Assessment of Service Quality in the Organization of Foreign Language Exams and Certification at the University of Labor and Social Affairs

The remaining factors are SER1 ranked 3rd, SER 3 ranked fourth and finally SER 4, these three factors have the lowest influence on the perceived quality of students.

**Table 9: Results of multivariable regression analysis**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta				Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	,873	,305			2,857	,005		
SER1	,128	,043	,137		3,000	,003	,912	1,097
SER2	,179	,045	,180		3,999	,000	,946	1,057
SER3	,095	,051	,090		1,886	,060	,839	1,192
SER4	,054	,045	,057		1,203	,230	,849	1,178
SER5	,359	,046	,362		7,841	,000	,898	1,113

a. Dependent Variable: QLT

Source: Processing of survey data of the research team

### 5. CONCLUSION

The analysis results for each observed variable presented in the above section show that students rate the service quality of the school in organizing exams and granting certificates of English output standards very high. Combined with the results from descriptive statistical analysis for all survey variables, we have more and more grounds to confirm that the school's service activities have been very successful. The average value of the variables is almost above level 4. For example, the observed variables SER4 and SER5 with Mean = 4.22, observed variables SER1 and SER3 have an average value above 4, and the lowest level is the variable SER2 with 3.89. Multivariate regression analysis showed that all independent observed variables have a positive and positive influence on the independent variable. However, the largest degree of influence belongs to the observed variable SER5, which tells us that in order to improve the perceived quality of students, it is necessary to focus on improving the quality of service for issuing standard output certificates for students. In addition, the article also points out the causes and reasons leading to the mixed opinions of students, making their perceived quality very low. Although the University creates all conditions to reduce exam costs for students, we do not clearly inform students, which has led to frustration for students. Strengthening the dissemination of this information in an official way to students is the solution that needs to be taken to solve the above problems.

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