

A Qualitative Study on the Standardization of Course Materials in Establishing the Accounting Department Graduates with the Current Professional Requirements

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Abstract. The Accounting Department of the Faculty of Economics of Universitas Negeri Medan (UNIMED) has the major objective to establish a high-quality accounting education process to produce graduates with accounting expertise competencies relevant to the user community's needs. Nowadays, accounting graduates must also hold a professional certificate related to accounting before entering the workforce. One of the best ways to achieve competency relevance is to provide material that fits the relevant exams managed by the Accounting professional certification bodies. We conducted qualitative research to design standardization of course material in UNIMEDs Accounting Department involving focus group discussions with peer lecturers and representatives from the users: industries and the Accounting Professional Body. We also run a thorough literature review and benchmark with other accounting departments in several top universities in Indonesia. Aside from the updated course material outlines, the significant results of this research is the proposal for the Accounting Department curriculum.

Keywords: Qualitative Study, Establishing, Accounting, Professional Requirements

1 Introduction

Accountants are a profession that is in great demand and needed by companies. Company operations must be distinct from financial management, and accountants as a profession related to finance are certainly still needed by companies. Apart from that, accountants can also work independently by becoming public accountants. The significant need for accountants has led to high interest in becoming accountants among students. This is proven by the many people interested in the accounting study program in the 2021 SNMPTN at Medan State University (Unimed). According to the Chancellor of Unimed, Prof. Dr. Syamsul Gultom, the Accounting Study Program ranks third in the 2021 SNMPTN (sumut.inews.id, 2021). The high level of interest in the Accounting study program is a challenge for the Accounting Department, as the manager of the accounting study program, to maintain quality so that it can compete in the world of work. To be more competitive in the world of work, accounting study program graduates or so-called accounting graduates should have a

professional accounting degree. This title is not obtained automatically when graduating from an accounting study program. However, it is obtained through special education in accounting or passing the accounting profession certification exam at certain universities in collaboration with the Indonesian Accountants Association (IAI) (PMK No. 25/PMK.01/2014 concerning National Registered Accountants).

As a study program that has many enthusiasts, the accounting study program should encourage its graduates to take and pass the accounting professional certification exam. As is known, professional certification is a form of recognition of a person's professionalism in the field they are working in. A professional certificate that a person has relatively high marketability in the job market. This certificate is also recognized as differentiating the level of quality and expertise of a worker compared to other workers. Considering the importance of professional certification in the business and industrial world, accounting majors must provide a way for accounting graduates to pass the accounting professional certification exam. One way that can be provided is to design a curriculum that supports accounting graduates so they can pass the accounting professional certification exam. The next step is to ensure that the material prepared in the core courses is relevant to the accountant professional certification test.

This article presents a conceptual review regarding developing an undergraduate accounting study program curriculum oriented towards fulfilling alum competencies following the accounting profession's and industry's demands. Furthermore, the review presented in this article is expected to provide an overview and input, especially for curriculum developers in accounting study programs at both undergraduate science and applied undergraduate levels.

2 Method

The method used in this research is a conceptual study also known as qualitative research method. The study of concepts, terms, constructs, definitions, statements, and theories is known as conceptual analysis. It entails scrutinizing their logical relationships for clarity and coherence, as well as detecting assumptions and implications. Conceptual analysis, also known as theoretical research and closely related to critical thinking, is a matter of the content of the author's expressions linguistically, that is, what authors' perspectives and points of view. Conceptual analysis can sometimes be used to expose (usually unconscious) practical inconsistency [1], such as when someone rejects logic using a valid deductive argument [2], or when someone conducts research as a realist while explicitly claiming allegiance to logic. Thus, in this qualitative study, the authors summarize the findings and concepts from similar studies that are relevant, especially for the development of sustainable competencies of alumni and future accountants.

3 Results and Discussion

In general, the meaning of profession is work that requires special knowledge or skills, so people who have this job must undergo education or training in order to be able to carry out their work well. People with a profession or work in a particular field are usually called professionals, namely, those with technical knowledge and skills in a particular field—for example, doctors, architects, lawyers, accountants, etc. The accounting profession is all fields

of work that require accounting skills, such as public accountants, company accountants, government accountants, auditors, educational accountants, and other fields of work. According to international standard guidelines, the Indonesian Association of Accountants (IAI) has designated the Indonesian Chartered Accountant (CA) designation as a professional accountant qualification. The determination of the CA designation is carried out in order to implement the objectives of establishing accountant education and improving the quality of accountants' work. This qualification is also established to maintain and increase public trust in the accounting profession, providing protection for users of accounting services and preparing Indonesian accountants to face professional challenges in the global economy. As a member of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), IAI has launched CA to comply with IFAC's Statement of Membership Obligations (SMO) Guidelines. IFAC has established International Education Standards (IES), which contain the basic framework and minimum requirements for obtaining qualifications as a professional accountant. IAI is obliged to comply with the IES as the primary guide for developing Indonesian professional accountants. The existence of a professional accountant qualification with the CA designation can guarantee and improve the quality of work of professional accountants who are competitive at the global level so that they are ready to face the ASEAN economic community [3].

Based on the provisions set by IAI, a CA certificate is given to someone deemed to have met the qualifications to carry out the role of a professional accountant according to the main competencies and particular competencies of the CA. To obtain a CA degree, one must fulfill the following requirements:

1. Pass the Indonesian CA certification exam conducted by IAI And
2. Have experience and carry out professional practices in the field of accounting, both in the education sector, corporate, and public sector, and as a public accounting practitioner whose data has been verified for at least 3 (three) years in the field of accounting obtained in the last 7 (seven) years, And
3. As a Member of IAI.

The legal basis for the accounting profession is the Minister of Finance Regulation (PMK) Number 25/PMK.01/2014 concerning State Registered Accountants. In this regulation, it is stated that an accountant is a person who has been registered in the State Register of Accountants (RNA), which the Minister of Finance maintains. Furthermore, to be registered in the State Register, a person must fulfill the following requirements:

1. pass professional accounting education or pass the professional accountant certification exam;
2. experience in accounting; And
3. as a member of the professional association of accountants.

Apart from the Minister of Finance Regulation, the accounting profession is also regulated by the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 153 of 2014 concerning the Implementation of Professional Accountant Education Programs. The

regulation states that professional accountant education programs (PPAk) are organized by universities in collaboration with IAI. The Minister of Education and Culture Regulation also states that students declared to have passed PPAk have the right to use a professional title in accounting and obtain a professional accounting certificate after being declared to have passed all accountant competency tests. The accountant competency test is a professional accountant certification exam organized by IAI.

The Indonesian Accountants Association (IAI) holds CA exams based on IFAC provisions, statutory regulations, Articles of Association, By laws, and other applicable provisions. IAI holds the CA exam to obtain Accountants as IAI Main Members who have:

1. Qualifications to carry out the role of a Professional Accountant per the main competencies and particular competencies of the CA.
2. High commitment to ethics, values, and high professional behavior; and
3. Professional skills to carry out the role. The CA exam is based on fundamental principles: competence, objectivity, independence, integrity, transparency, fairness, justice, and responsibility.

Every participant and party involved in administering the CA exam must carry out the exam based on these principles, professional ethics, and applicable regulatory provisions established by IAI.

If someone already has a professional accountant certificate, it will be easier for him to get a job in accounting. For a professional accountant, there are many choices of fields of work that can be generated, including:

1. Public accountant

He is an accountant with his own office and works independently, providing financial services to his clients. The services provided are assurance services, attestation services, and non-assurance services.

2. Internal accountant

Internal accountants are often also called company accountants because they work in companies. The work carried out by internal accountants includes designing the company's accounting system, preparing budgets, and creating company financial reports.

3. Government accountant

He is an accountant who works in government agencies such as the Financial Audit Agency (BPK) and the Development Finance Supervisory Agency (BPKP) and inspectorates in government agencies.

4. Educator accountant

Accountants are accountants who work in the field of education, either as teachers in schools or as college lecturers who teach accounting.

Apart from the professional fields above, there are many other fields that the accounting profession can pursue because the accounting field is not only limited to these fields. In

essence, if an accounting graduate has professional certification, it will make it easier for him to get a job and have a career in accounting.

The curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding graduate learning outcomes, study materials, processes, and assessments used as guidelines for implementing study programs. Based on this understanding, planning and organizing the curriculum as a curriculum cycle has several stages, starting from needs analysis, design, development, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up on improvements carried out by the study program [4]. The curriculum cycle runs to produce graduates following the learning outcomes of predetermined study programs.

The Accounting study program curriculum is prepared based on the vision and mission of Medan State University and the Faculty of Economics. Based on this idea, it is essential to describe the vision, mission, and objectives of the Accounting study program so that it becomes a harmonizing medium in curriculum development and implementation.

1. Vision of the Accounting Study Program

To become a leading department in the field of science and application of accounting in Sumatra by 2025.

2. Mission of the Accounting Study Program

Implementing a high-quality accounting education process to produce graduates with accounting skills and competencies relevant to the needs of the user community.

Carrying out research that supports the accounting education process and benefits the user community.

Carrying out community service in the field of accounting.

3. The goal of the Accounting Study Program is to produce graduates who:

- a. Have accounting competence and the supporting skills needed to work in society.

- b. Able to apply accounting knowledge in practice in the accounting profession.

- c. Produce graduates who are professional and have noble personalities-innovative products in the field of Accounting and business management in conventional and sharia companies.

Graduate competency standards are qualifications of graduate abilities. Graduate competencies include attitudes, knowledge, skills, and management. This competency standard can be used as a guideline in determining the minimum competency of educational unit graduates. The competency standards for accounting graduates are qualifications for graduate abilities, which include attitudes, knowledge, general skills, special skills, and managerialism.

Several competencies that are born from the LO (learning outcome) process include:

- a. Using knowledge of accounting and information technology to analyze accounting issues and communicate the results;

- b. Mastering basic business concepts and knowledge and general knowledge of accounting,

- c. Apply analytical skills to business and accounting issues to base decision-making, and
- d. Understand the ethical issues facing accountants,

The profile of undergraduate accounting graduates is determined through a vision-merging mechanism. Academics are carried out using SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats), market needs analysis through tracer studies for alums, and input from professional associations, stakeholders, and the community. Thus, the profile of FE-Unimed undergraduate accounting graduates is expected to be:

1. Accountant (internal, public, educator)
2. General business/tax/management consultant
3. Corporate and government financial analyst
4. Accounting systems expert
5. Sharia Accounting Expert

In formulating graduate learning outcomes, involvement from stakeholders also contributes to achieving convergence and connectivity between educational institutions and stakeholders who will later use their educational results. This guarantees the quality of graduates' abilities. The formulation of graduate abilities includes four elements to make them graduate learning outcomes, namely elements of attitude, knowledge, general skills, and special skills, as stated in the SN DIKTI. Determining the number of abilities must refer to the KKNi qualification level, especially those related to workability and mastery of knowledge. Those that include general attitudes and skills can refer entirely to (assessed for conformity with) the formulas set out in the DIKTI SN, build the uniqueness of the study program, and identify local/regional advantages or wisdom. Considering that the description of general attitudes and skills has been stated in the attachment to the SN DIKTI, this section explains the mechanism for formulating some "special skills," namely work abilities related to certain areas of expertise and knowledge.

Compiling "special skills," analysis is carried out on input regarding used competencies obtained from alumni who work 1-3 years after graduating at national institutions, proposals for work competencies required by various stakeholders (government, organizing universities, professional associations, collegiums/consortiums). Scientific knowledge), relevant work competencies that have been determined by relevant certification bodies both at national and international levels, qualifications for similar study programs that have a good reputation at home and abroad, accreditation standards from both within and outside the country, and from other sources which have been written, for example in the journal Education, about the probability of shifts in work competencies in the short and medium term developments in science and technology, as well as the development of new learning systems.

4 Conclusion

This conceptual study of the accounting curriculum provides an overview of how the university accounting curriculum produces competent graduates and its conformity with the

Indonesian National Curriculum Framework (KKNI) competency standards, the competencies needed to prepare graduates to enter the accounting profession, and the competencies that users expect. (employer). Based on the research results, in forming competent graduates, universities develop accounting curricula by directing graduates to have abilities in the fields of accounting, business, general skills, and other abilities that can support the careers of graduates from the undergraduate accounting study program. If faculties and study programs can align the accounting curriculum with the three competency standards: accounting, professional, and business, this will accelerate the increase in graduates' employability.

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