



Internal Quality Assurance System in Indonesia Higher Education: Literature Review

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Abstrak

Pentingnya *Quality Assurance (QA)* semakin meningkat di seluruh dunia, khususnya di negara-negara maju dimana produk dan layanannya menonjol. Tujuan dari penelitian ini menganalisis pemahaman komprehensif dan esensial tentang *Penjaminan Mutu Internal di Perguruan Tinggi Indonesia (PT)*. Pendekatan utama yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah dengan melakukan tinjauan literatur, dimana literatur yang relevan dari berbagai sumber terpercaya diidentifikasi dan kemudian disaring berdasarkan relevansinya. Penelitian ini menekankan empat topik penelitian yang memerlukan penyelidikan menyeluruh. Penerapan *SPMI (Sistem Penjaminan Mutu Internal)* di beberapa Perguruan Tinggi (PT) telah berjalan efektif dengan melibatkan lembaga penjaminan mutu di tingkat universitas, fakultas, dan program studi. Selanjutnya, persiapan dokumentasi *SPMI*, pelaksanaan siklus mutu, dan pelaksanaan *Audit Mutu Internal* oleh Tim Audit. Penerapan *SPMI di Perguruan Tinggi Indonesia (PT)* di Indonesia harus dilakukan secara konsisten dan berkelanjutan. Hal ini akan mengarah pada peningkatan kualitas dan kemampuan untuk memuaskan pemangku kepentingan melalui pelaksanaan fungsi trifokal Universitas secara efektif, yaitu pengajaran, penelitian, dan pelayanan.

Kata kunci: *Penjaminan Mutu, Penjaminan Mutu Internal, SPMI, Perguruan Tinggi*

Abstract

The importance of *Quality Assurance (QA)* is increasing worldwide, particularly in developed countries where products and services are prominent. The aims of this study analyze a comprehensive and essential comprehension of *Internal Quality Assurance in Indonesian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)*. The main approach utilised in this study involved doing a literature review, wherein relevant literature from many reliable sources was identified and subsequently filtered based on its relevance. This study emphasises four research topics that warrant thorough investigation. The implementation of the *SPMI (System of Internal Quality Assurance)* in multiple Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) has been effectively executed, with the involvement of quality assurance bodies at the university, faculty, and study programme levels. Furthermore, there is the preparedness of *SPMI* documentation, the execution of the quality cycle, and the implementation of *Internal Quality Audit* by the Audit Team. It is imperative to consistently and sustainably implement *SPMI* in Indonesian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). This will lead to an improvement in quality and the ability to satisfy stakeholders through the effective execution of the University's trifocal functions, namely teaching, research, and services.

Keywords: *Quality Assurance, Internal Quality Assurance, SPMI, Higher Education*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The concepts of *Quality Assurance (QA)* are becoming more and more significant on a global scale, especially in industrialized nations where products and services are involved. Since the 1990s, *QA* has expanded quickly in the global higher education market. In Europe, starting from the early 2000s, there has been a growing emphasis on quality assurance in higher education institutions (Cheung, 2015; Riad Shams & Belyaeva, 2019). *QA* is an important part of the Higher Education system that ensures that quality achievement efforts are following quality standards set by the government. In quality assurance efforts, there are four principles for quality assurance systems, such as: the existence of a coordinating agency to create a quality guarantee scheme, submission of self-evaluation reports/by the unit to be evaluated, field assessment by accreditation bodies and reports to the public on the results of the evaluation. The objectives of quality assurance differ among institutions. Certain institutions prioritize evaluating their institutional performance or enhancing their

institutional learning, while others concentrate on enhancing their academic and management endeavors (Hidayah & Syahrani, 2022; Marthin & Parikh, 2017). However, other institutions prioritize the equitable distribution of resources, adherence to external quality standards, and accountability to both society and government.

Internal quality assurance system of higher education is a plan, implementation, control, development of the university's quality standards consistently and continuously in order to obtain stakeholder satisfaction and ensure quality of graduates according to the assigned competencies. Improving the quality of higher education institutions is one of the implementation of effective quality assurance. Internal quality assurance has several functions, including supporting academic targets (Akareem & Hossain, 2016; Ali et al., 2016). The main function of internal Quality Assurance in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is to manage the quality cycle related to the trifocal functions of the university (teaching, research, services) and the supporting infrastructure that accompanies it, while the quality cycle consists of planning, action, evaluation, and improvement of HEIs performance (Jingura & Kamusoko, 2019; Sembiring & Rahayu, 2020). A recent study that involving 311 institutions from 94 countries around the world provides useful insights into the purpose of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA). According to previous study, IQA's most significant goals include increased academic activities, adherence to external standards, and accountability to government and society (Martin, 2018).

Developed countries have implemented a quality assurance system for higher education, which includes its own model and strategy. However, in general, their quality assurance system include both internal and external quality assurance. In Indonesia, universities have two policies for ensuring quality: internal quality assurance (IQA) and external quality assurance (EQA) (Opan Arifudin, 2019; Fadhli, 2020). HEIs should carry out quality assurance activities autonomously or independently, as part of efforts to improve and control the implementation of higher education in a planned and sustainable manner. In Indonesia, HEIs implement and manage their quality assurance both with internally driven mechanisms and external mechanisms organized by the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (*Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi/BAN-PT*). The implementation of internal quality assurance of HEIs in Indonesia has not been fully implemented when compared to external quality assurance activities. The implementation of quality assurance effectively has a positive impact on higher education institutions (Kodrat, 2019; Okeke-James et al., 2020). The direct impact of implementing effective quality assurance includes transparency in governance, effective learning, and an increase in rank or accreditation status. Meanwhile, indirect impacts include motivation and good harmonization between institutions (Bhakti & Ridwan, 2022; Egboka, 2021). The Internal Quality Assurance System (*Sistem Penjaminan Mutu Internal/SPMI*) is seen as one of the solutions to various higher education problems in Indonesia. In addition, SPMI is considered capable of answering the challenges of higher education considering that existing standardization is the result of the process of implementing SPMI in Higher Education. Standardization is a reference for all management carried out by universities. All universities must meet the standards that have been set to continue to maintain their existence.

After more than 20 years of higher education implementation controlled by the Government, there is indeed difficult for universities to carry out quality assurance autonomously or independently, so in 2003 the Directorate General of Higher Education (*Direktoral Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi/Ditjen Dikti*) initiated the idea of quality assurance in universities implemented by universities themselves. The idea was then poured into a book entitled *Quality Assurance Guidelines in HEIs*, published in 2003. This guideline was prepared not to dictate universities in carrying out the quality assurance process of higher education, but to provide inspiration about who, what, why, and how the quality assurance

can be carried out. After 5 (five) years of implementation of Higher Education Quality Assurance, the Directorate General of Higher Education then conducted an evaluation. The results of the evaluation of the implementation of Internal Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Indonesia show that of the 384 universities in Indonesia that were used as assessment samples consisting of 81 State Universities (Perguruan Tinggi Negeri/PTN) and 303 Private Universities (Perguruan Tinggi Swasta/PTS), there are 68 (18%) universities that have carried out internal assessments. QA is implemented in the good category. The results of the evaluation concluded that most universities in Indonesia have not fully implemented Internal Quality Assurance (IQA).

HEIs can develop SPMI autonomously or independently, but there are basic things that must be in SPMI. In Article 52 paragraph (2) of Law No. 12 of 2012 Higher Education, it is stated that IQA is carried out through 5 (five) main steps: Determination, Implementation, Evaluation, Control, and Improvement of Higher Education Standards abbreviated as the PPEPP (*Penetapan, Pelaksanaan, Evaluasi, Pengendalian, dan Peningkatan*) quality cycle, this means that these five main steps must be in place during implementation of SPMI, even the core of SPMI in every Higher Education. In the evaluation stage, the implementation is carried out through an internal quality audit. Policy and implementation of Internal Quality Audit which is a quality audit carried out independently by universities without interference from any party (O Arifudin, 2019; Fadhli, 2020). Internal quality audit institutions in universities have the responsibility of supervising, controlling, and evaluating educational activities in universities. In carrying out its duties, the internal quality audit institution has guidelines so that internal quality audit activities can be run by applicable regulations (Bhakti & Ridwan, 2022). The internal quality audit process aims to prepare institutions to face quality audits externally. Improving internal quality through SPMI performed first by the institution's quality assurance officer can ensure that the certification process or external quality audits will also be good (Bhakti & Ridwan, 2022; Paputungan et al., 2021).

SPMI is implemented in all fields of HEIs activities, namely academic and non-academic fields. Academic fields include education, research, and community service, while non-academic fields include human resources, finance, and facilities and infrastructure. The implementation of the SPMI in question is carried out to achieve Higher Education Standards. SPMI must be conducted by universities at least once a year. Although it has been stipulated in the Higher Education Law that every HEIs is required to carry out SPMI, some studies show that most universities prioritize external quality audit activities rather than carrying out internal quality assurance (Bancin, 2017; Reknati & Sursina, 2019). Internal and external quality audits have an inseparable relationship. The internal quality audit process prepares institutions to face external quality audits. By improving internal quality through SPMI carried out by the institution's quality assurance agency, certainly, the results of external quality audits will also be good (Paputungan et al., 2021; Reknati & Sursina, 2019).

This study aims to analyze internal quality assurance in Indonesian Higher Education. In addition, this study provides a necessary and deeper understanding and information on Internal Quality Assurance in Indonesian Higher Education and will talk about how Indonesia HEIs develop quality assurances in compliance with quality assuring standards established by the government of Indonesia. This literature review's focus highlights four research concerns that should be carefully investigated, such as internal quality assurance procedures, internal quality assurance organization, the significance of internal quality assurance, and how HEIs adhere to government-mandated quality standards. This study is have novelty and urgently needed because the usage of SPMI in Indonesian higher education has not been extensively examined. It can be assumed that this will be taken into

consideration as a model or suggestion that other universities can adopt to improve the quality of the implementation under the Higher Education Act quality assurance to improve the quality of higher education institutions because it is crucial to study this in order to have information on SPMI higher education implemented by HEIS in Indonesia. In order to improve Higher Education Quality Assurance policies, policymakers can also use the findings of this literature study as a guide.

2. METHODS

The primary technique employed in this study was the literature review method by identifying several relevant literature, then filtering based on the relevance and quality of the literature. Methodological literature reviews are essential for identifying gaps in knowledge and areas that require further research. This includes both methodological advances and new substantive discoveries resulting from enhanced methodological methods (Aguinis et al., 2023; Kunisch et al., 2018). A selection of scientific papers are analysed in literature review research so that conclusions may be drawn from them and even new ideas might be generated. A number of selected scientific papers are analyzed in literature review research so that conclusions can be drawn and new ideas can even be generated. This article uses a number of literature from various scientific publications and journals sourced from the "Google Scholar" database. The search keywords are "*Penjaminan Mutu Internal*" and "*SPMI Perguruan Tinggi*". All journal articles released from 2016 to 2023 were included in the search. The author filtered the articles that were found using three main criteria.

First, the article has an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) as a guarantee of article quality. Second, the article has easy access (open access journal). The third requirement, the selected article must be empirical research that is relevant to the research topic and provides information about the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) in Higher Education. Consequently, following a thorough screening, 10 articles remained in the final phase of the selection process. The chosen articles are thereafter examined utilising the four research issues specified in the preceding section.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

As many as 10 publications with study findings on the deployment of the internal quality assurance system in HEIs were found in the results of the literature search that was conducted. The comprehensive description of the content of research papers and journals, including the title, the year the article was published, the research method adopted, and the findings or conclusions of the study, is provided in [Table 1](#).

Table 1. Recapitulation of Articles Reviewed

No	Title	Year	Method	Result
1.	Implementation of Internal Quality Assurance System at Amik Citra Buana Indonesia University in Sukabumi City	2023	Qualitative descriptive approach. The process of data collection triangulates some data documentation, interviews, and observations.	The implementation of the SOPs did not go through the workflow stages corresponding to the standards set in the SOP document and the SPMI implementation process performed at AMIK CBI and did not follow the guidelines of SPM Dikti for optimal implementation.

No	Title	Year	Method	Result
2.	Implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance Authority of The Higher Education Office of Correctional Affairs	2022	Qualitative methods, data collection techniques in the form of observation and literature study.	The results showed that the source of internal quality assurance authority for universities in the correctional sector was Permenristek No. 62 of 2016 and Minister of Law and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia No. 27 of 2000. The implementation of the IQA authority of universities in the correctional sector is realized by the establishment of a Quality Assurance Unit organization, the preparation of SPMI documents, and the implementation of quality control.
3.	Implementation of Quality Assurance System at Private Universities in East Java Region	2021	Descriptive quantitative, that is a concurrent combination approach. Quantity data were corroborated or confirmed by semi-structured in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document studies.	Problems and causes of universities that have not or even failed to implement SPMI: 1) Weak commitment from the Higher Education authorities; 2) Limited number and competence of human resources; 3) Strong enough resistance to any changes; 4) Lack of socialization with the entire academic community, especially lecturers; 5) Weaknesses in formulating the contents of SPMI policies, standards, and manuals, including weaknesses in the implementation of quality audits; 6) Limited PT resources so that quality assurance has not become an important agenda.
4.	Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) in the Islamic Education Study Program IAINU Kebumen	2021	Research is qualitative using interview, observation, and documentation methods.	SPMI Study Program PAI IAINU Kebumen has been going well following applicable standards. There are periodic improvement efforts. Recommendation, the need for an escort to the revision of several guidelines.
5.	Quality Management and Quality Education through Quality Assurance Standards (SPMI)	2020	Qualitative research methods. Data collection techniques: observation or direct participation and	STT Ebenhaezer is implementing education implementation standards as recommended by Higher Education. However, the implementation of SPMI still needs serious efforts, starting

No	Title	Year	Method	Result
	at STT Ebenhaezer		review of documents.	from preparing documents from each cycle (PPEPP) set by Higher Education.
6.	Implementation of Internal Quality Assurance System in Improving Quality at the College of Shipping Sciences	2019	Qualitative methods of data collection through interviews, observation, and document tracking	The results of this study show an overview of the implementation of the internal quality assurance system which needs to combine ISO 9001:2015 and National Education Standards and several steps to strengthen SPMI at STIP.
7.	Education Quality Improvement Strategy through the Implementation of an Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) at Universitas Islam Nusantara Bandung	2019	Approach qualitative research with the case study method. Data collection techniques: direct observation, document and archive search, and in-depth interviews	The findings demonstrated that SPMI rules and concepts existed in both academic and non-academic standard documents created by DPM as a reference in formulating quality standards at the Study Program level, coordinating with GPM and UPM in determining, implementing, evaluating, controlling; SPMI implementation is carried out by preparing a design in the form of an SPMI cycle; and the obstacles faced by leadership commitment have not been optimal, the number of auditors is quite small, and SPMI activities are only performed on a regular basis
8.	Higher Education Quality Assurance System (Spm-PT) at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training Uin Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta	2018	Qualitative method. Primary data collection techniques through in-depth interviews based on interview guidelines with respondents and informants	Although there are no formal regulations, quality assurance management has been carried out in the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training UIN Sunan Kalijaga. The education quality assurance management model uses the PDAC approach with a circular process in each activity, namely: Formulation, Implementation, Monitoring, and Recommendations.
9.	Implementation of an Internal Quality Assurance System as an Effort to Improve the Quality of Education at Universitas	2016	Qualitative research with case study method. Data collection techniques: direct observation, document and archive search, and	The results showed: (1) SPMI policies and concepts in the form of academic documents and quality documents prepared by KJM UGM; (2) KJM UGM as coordinator in planning and implementing SPMI in all universities; (3) The

No	Title	Year	Method	Result
	Gadjah Mada		interviews.	implementation of SPMI is carried out by drafting a design in the form of the SPMI Cycle; (4) Obstacles faced: commitment of leaders, number of auditors, SPMI activities become routine.
10	Quality Assurance System at State Islamic Religious Universities in South Sulawesi	2016	Descriptive qualitative research using theological, juridical, psychological, and sociological approaches. Data was collected through interviews, observation, and documentation	The Quality Assurance System has been running using various credible quality documents through a determination. The Quality Assurance system uses a variety of quality papers as normative and academic references for constant evaluation.

Discussion

Research conducted by Sulastrri and Kustiawan states that the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in each work unit of AMIK Citra Buana Indonesia have not been implemented and fully complied with based on the results of monitoring and evaluation of LPM BAUKKK in 2013. In 2021, the SPMI policy was established which then became a guideline in the establishment, implementation, control, and improvement of Higher Education Standards in both academic and non-academic fields. The written document of the Quality Policy is useful to explain to university stakeholders about quality assurance in a concise but complete and comprehensive manner, becoming the basis or 'umbrella' for all standards, manuals, and forms, and proving that the SPMI concerned is documented (Mulyasa & Aryani, 2022; Sulastrri & Kustiawan, 2023). The management of SPMI implementation adheres to a quality management system from the PPEPP cycle which will produce kaizen or Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) in the quality of education delivery. SPMI uses a reference that is standardized by Permeristekdikti Number 62 of 2016.

In line with previous study that identified that the implementation of internal quality assurance of universities in the correctional sector through the establishment of a Quality Assurance Unit organization, then preparing SPMI documents (policy documents, manual documents, and standards), and the implementation of quality control is in line with the concept of quality assurance (Soge & Indahdewi, 2022). The organization that handles the quality assurance of universities in the correctional sector is the Quality Assurance Unit, this organization is equipped with an Internal Quality Auditor Team, appointed based on the Director's Decree, which is in charge of conducting quality audits of the supporting units of the Polytechnic Library of Correctional Sciences. Research conducted by other study analyzed SPMI on Private Universities (PTS) in the East Java region by classifying or mapping into several groups (Winarso, 2021). The implementation of SPMI has not yet reached the Evaluation stage of the PPEPP cycle. A group of 108 or 34% of 317 HEIs has formed a Quality Assurance Institute & in the process of preparing SPMI Documents.

The research conducted aims to get an overview and analysis of the internal quality assurance system (SPMI) at IAINU Kebumen, in the Islamic Religious Education Study Program (Pendidikan Agama ISLAM/PAI) (Chamidi et al., 2021). SPMI Study Program refers to the principle of continuous quality improvement with activities oriented to quality

culture. The implementation of Study Program will require all components to work based on the established Higher Education Standards (Determination), the determination of the Higher Education Standards, namely compiling and determining all SPMI Documents (Policy documents, Manual Documents, Standard Documents, and Form Documents used in SPMI). It is supported by research stated that the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) at STT Ebenhaezer Tanjung Enim is an independent activity designed, run, and controlled by the Quality Assurance Center (PPM) (Kaseke, 2020). Other research conducted stated that STIP is committed to continuing to implement the ISO quality management system because for international competition it is more profitable for STIP compared to the quality assurance model from the Ministry of Research and Technology of Higher Education (Reknati & Sursina, 2019). However, STIP must also carry out internal quality assurance as mandated in the Higher Education Law Number 12 of 2012.

Other study examines improving the quality of educational services through the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) at SPs UNINUS (Sauri et al., 2019). The implementation of SPMI is carried out through stages of the work process on an ongoing basis to improve the quality of the results of the educational process through the establishment of quality standards, implementation of quality standards, evaluation of the implementation of quality standards, quality standard control, and improvement of quality standards. There is also study that stated that the implementation of the quality assurance system at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training UIN Sunan Kalijaga is centralized, namely focusing on universities (Nurhuda, 2018). Where all policies on quality assurance are centralized in the Quality Assurance Unit (Unit Penjaminan Mutu/UPM) at the University level. The Quality Assurance Institute (LPM) of Alauddin State Islamic University (UIN) Makassar continues to show its commitment as a credible quality assurance center as evidenced by the establishment of various quality documents in each institution's work in the implementation of the Tri Dharma of higher education (Sulaiman & Wibowo, 2016) (Musgamy et al., 2016). As a form of institutional commitment in its elaboration, Alauddin State Islamic University (UIN) has set higher education standards above the minimum standards set in SNP-Dikti. The Quality Assurance system implemented within IAIN Palopo strives to always refer to the institutional vision.

The results of the discussion from these 10 articles lead to the conclusion that the implementation of SPMI in HEIs is a systemic activity intended to maintain and improve the quality of education through the implementation of the trifocal functions of the university (teaching, research, services) consistently and sustainably to meet stakeholder satisfaction. HEIs must be able to account for every implementation of the Trifocal Functions of the University (teaching, research, services) consistently. To support this accountability, HEIs need to build good Internal Quality Assurance System and always follow the development of rules related to higher education based on Good Governance. Most of HEIs are more concerned with accreditation or SPME than seriousness in running SPMI. If study programs or universities only improve quality solely to achieve good accreditation scores, there is a tendency that internal quality will not increase. The most important thing to achieve good accreditation is to apply the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) pattern (Ružičić, 2021; Saifulloh, 2012; Suliswiyadi, 2019). The Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) is a breakthrough in the framework of higher education management, this system making both public and private universities that are still developing the opportunity to become even better based on the findings of internal quality audits. Improvements made by Private and State Universities are expected to improve the quality of higher education in general (Bhakti & Ridwan, 2022; Reknati & Sursina, 2019).

Efforts to develop quality by applying the dimensions contained in internal quality assurance and referring to the Higher Education Law are autonomous, standardized,

accuracy, and sustainability aspects. HEIs has the full right to run and control without interference or instruction from the government, but in its implementation still refers to the Law of Higher Education Number 12 of 2012. Good University Governance (GUG) is a prerequisite for exercising autonomous authority in Higher Education, especially in aspects of accountability and transparency as outlined in the form of SPMI policies (Kaseke, 2020; Rokhani & Purnami, 2021). GUG can be viewed as the application of the basic principles of the concept of "good governance" in governance systems and processes in HEIs through various adjustments made based on values that must be upheld in the implementation of higher education. Understanding the basic principles in GUG will spur universities to build a good Internal Quality Assurance System in accordance with the main goal, namely continuous improvement of the quality of universities to achieve the vision and mission set. This is certainly the right moment to make a change for universities in accordance with their autonomous authority.

Based on the Statistics Indonesia report, there are 3,107 HEIs throughout Indonesia in 2022. Meanwhile, data from *Pangkalan Data Pendidikan Tinggi* in 2023 (PDDikti) shows that the total number of lecturers is 296,040 people and approximately only 14% have S3 degrees. The total number of students is about 6 million people. The inequality of higher education quality can be seen from accreditation data, the majority of institutions and study programs are accredited 'C' (BAN-PT), and a few internationally accredited study programs (ABET, AACSB, AUN-QA, and so on). Efforts to overcome the problem of inequality in higher education continue to be carried out by the Government. To create and improve the quality of universities that can produce quality and competitive graduates, the government has made many regulations so that they can be used as guidelines by Higher Education Managers. There is a policy on the quality assurance system of Higher Education as a master's program for improving and developing Higher Education and at the same time as an effort to overcome the problem of inequality in higher education. The authors recommend further research to investigate further and supplement these findings by conducting an in-depth analysis of the Quality Assurance policy in Indonesian Higher Education whether it is still relevant or regulatory changes are needed.

4. CONCLUSION

Internal Quality Assurance System (SPMI) is a breakthrough in the framework of higher education management, this system making both public and private universities that are still developing the opportunity to become even better based on the findings of internal quality audits. A comprehensive analysis of 10 articles covering the period 2016-2023 can be concluded that Indonesia HEIs develops SPMI autonomously and independently by historical background, the basic value of establishing universities, the accumulation of study programs, and resources owned without interference from the government. The implementation of SPMI in several HEIs has been carried out well, through quality assurance organizations at the university, faculty, and study program levels. In addition, there is the readiness of SPMI documents, the implementation of the quality cycle to the implementation of Internal Quality Audit by the Audit Team. Although some universities have implemented SPMI well, there are still Institutions and study program as an integral part of SPMI Higher Education that have not implemented SPMI following the guidelines of SPM Dikti.

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