



Chapter 24 - Quality Management

Lecture 1

Topics covered



- ✧ Software quality
- ✧ Software measurement and metrics

Software quality management



- ✧ Concerned with ensuring that the required level of quality is achieved in a software product.
- ✧ Three principal concerns:
 - At the organizational level, quality management is concerned with establishing a framework of organizational processes and standards that will lead to high-quality software.
 - At the project level, quality management involves the application of specific quality processes and checking that these planned processes have been followed.
 - At the project level, quality management is also concerned with establishing a quality plan for a project. The quality plan should set out the quality goals for the project and define what processes and standards are to be used.



Quality management activities

- ✧ Quality management provides an independent check on the software development process.
- ✧ The quality management process checks the project deliverables to ensure that they are consistent with organizational standards and goals
- ✧ The quality team should be independent from the development team so that they can take an objective view of the software. This allows them to report on software quality without being influenced by software development issues.

Quality management and software development



Quality planning



- ✧ A quality plan sets out the desired product qualities and how these are assessed and defines the most significant quality attributes.
- ✧ The quality plan should define the quality assessment process.
- ✧ It should set out which organisational standards should be applied and, where necessary, define new standards to be used.

Quality plans



✧ Quality plan structure

- Product introduction;
- Product plans;
- Process descriptions;
- Quality goals;
- Risks and risk management.

✧ Quality plans should be short, succinct documents

- If they are too long, no-one will read them.



Scope of quality management

- ✧ Quality management is particularly important for large, complex systems. The quality documentation is a record of progress and supports continuity of development as the development team changes.
- ✧ For smaller systems, quality management needs less documentation and should focus on establishing a quality culture.

Software quality



- ✧ Quality, simplistically, means that a product should meet its specification.
- ✧ This is problematical for software systems
 - There is a tension between customer quality requirements (efficiency, reliability, etc.) and developer quality requirements (maintainability, reusability, etc.);
 - Some quality requirements are difficult to specify in an unambiguous way;
 - Software specifications are usually incomplete and often inconsistent.
- ✧ The focus may be 'fitness for purpose' rather than specification conformance.

Software fitness for purpose



- ✧ Have programming and documentation standards been followed in the development process?
- ✧ Has the software been properly tested?
- ✧ Is the software sufficiently dependable to be put into use?
- ✧ Is the performance of the software acceptable for normal use?
- ✧ Is the software usable?
- ✧ Is the software well-structured and understandable?

Software quality attributes



Safety	Understandability	Portability
Security	Testability	Usability
Reliability	Adaptability	Reusability
Resilience	Modularity	Efficiency
Robustness	Complexity	Learnability

Quality conflicts



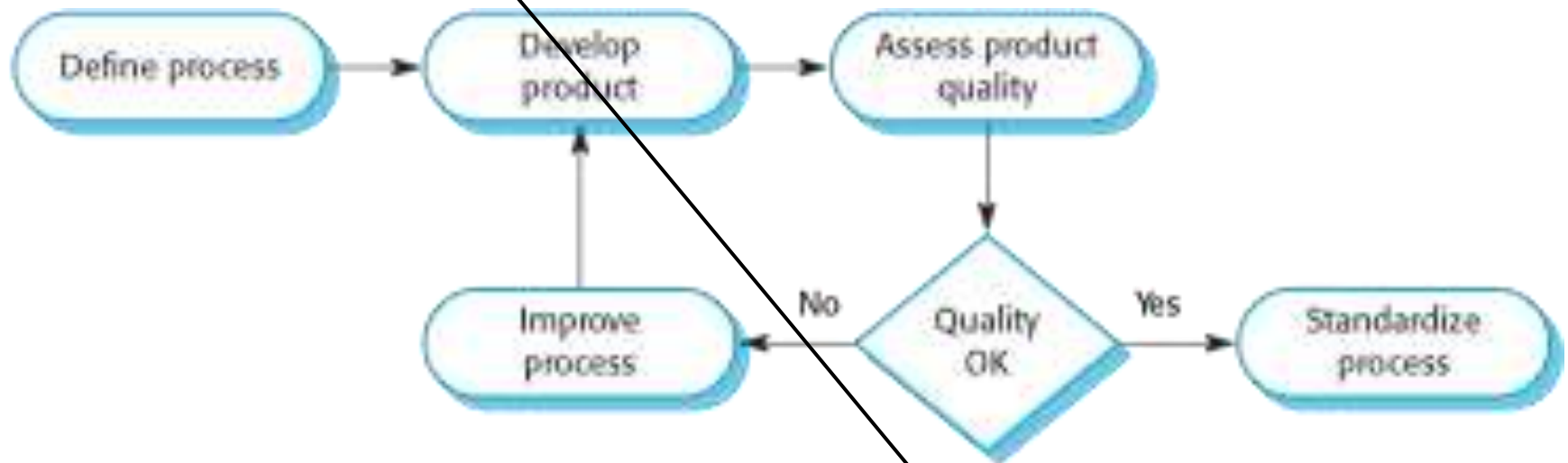
- ✧ It is not possible for any system to be optimized for all of these attributes – for example, improving robustness may lead to loss of performance.
- ✧ The quality plan should therefore define the most important quality attributes for the software that is being developed.
- ✧ The plan should also include a definition of the quality assessment process, an agreed way of assessing whether some quality, such as maintainability or robustness, is present in the product.

Process and product quality



- ✧ The quality of a developed product is influenced by the quality of the production process.
- ✧ This is important in software development as some product quality attributes are hard to assess.
- ✧ However, there is a very complex and poorly understood relationship between software processes and product quality.
 - The application of individual skills and experience is particularly important in software development;
 - External factors such as the novelty of an application or the need for an accelerated development schedule may impair product quality.

Process-based quality



Software measurement and metrics



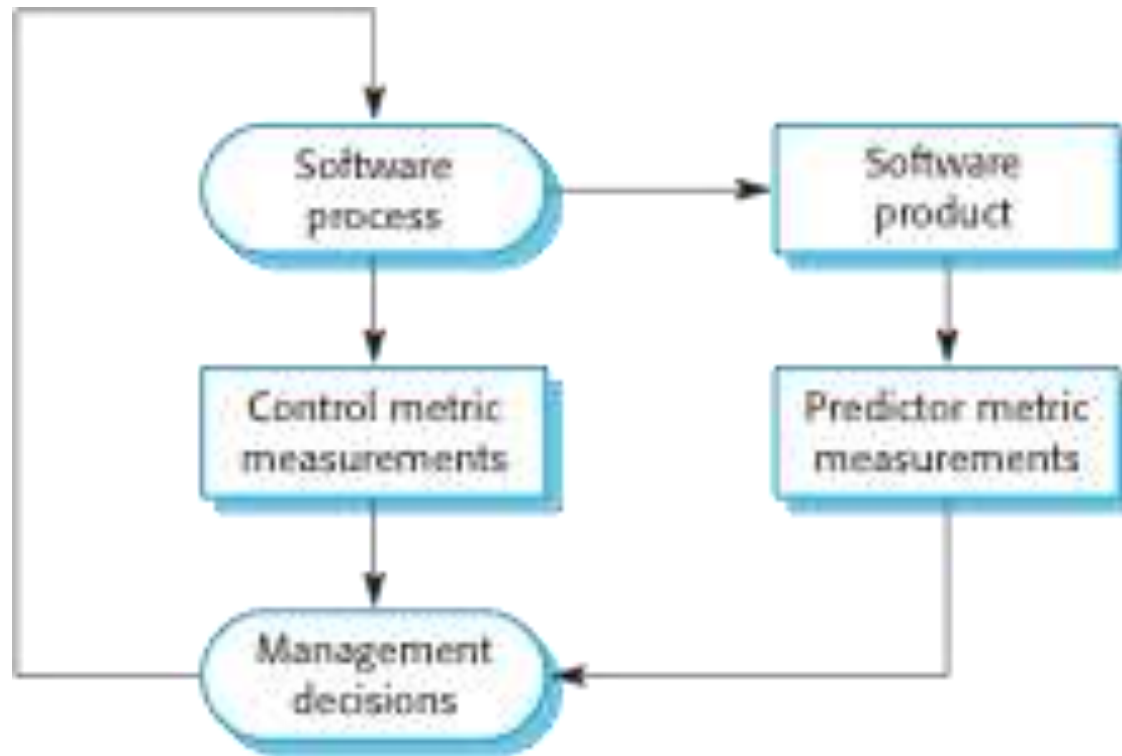
- ✧ Software measurement is concerned with deriving a numeric value for an attribute of a software product or process.
- ✧ This allows for objective comparisons between techniques and processes.
- ✧ Although some companies have introduced measurement programmes, most organisations still don't make systematic use of software measurement.
- ✧ There are few established standards in this area.

Software metric



- ✧ Any type of measurement which relates to a software system, process or related documentation
 - Lines of code in a program, the Fog index, number of person-days required to develop a component.
- ✧ Allow the software and the software process to be quantified.
- ✧ May be used to predict product attributes or to control the software process.
- ✧ Product metrics can be used for general predictions or to identify anomalous components.

Predictor and control measurements



Use of measurements



- ✧ To assign a value to system quality attributes
 - By measuring the characteristics of system components, such as their cyclomatic complexity, and then aggregating these measurements, you can assess system quality attributes, such as maintainability.
- ✧ To identify the system components whose quality is sub-standard
 - Measurements can identify individual components with characteristics that deviate from the norm. For example, you can measure components to discover those with the highest complexity. These are most likely to contain bugs because the complexity makes them harder to understand.

Metrics assumptions



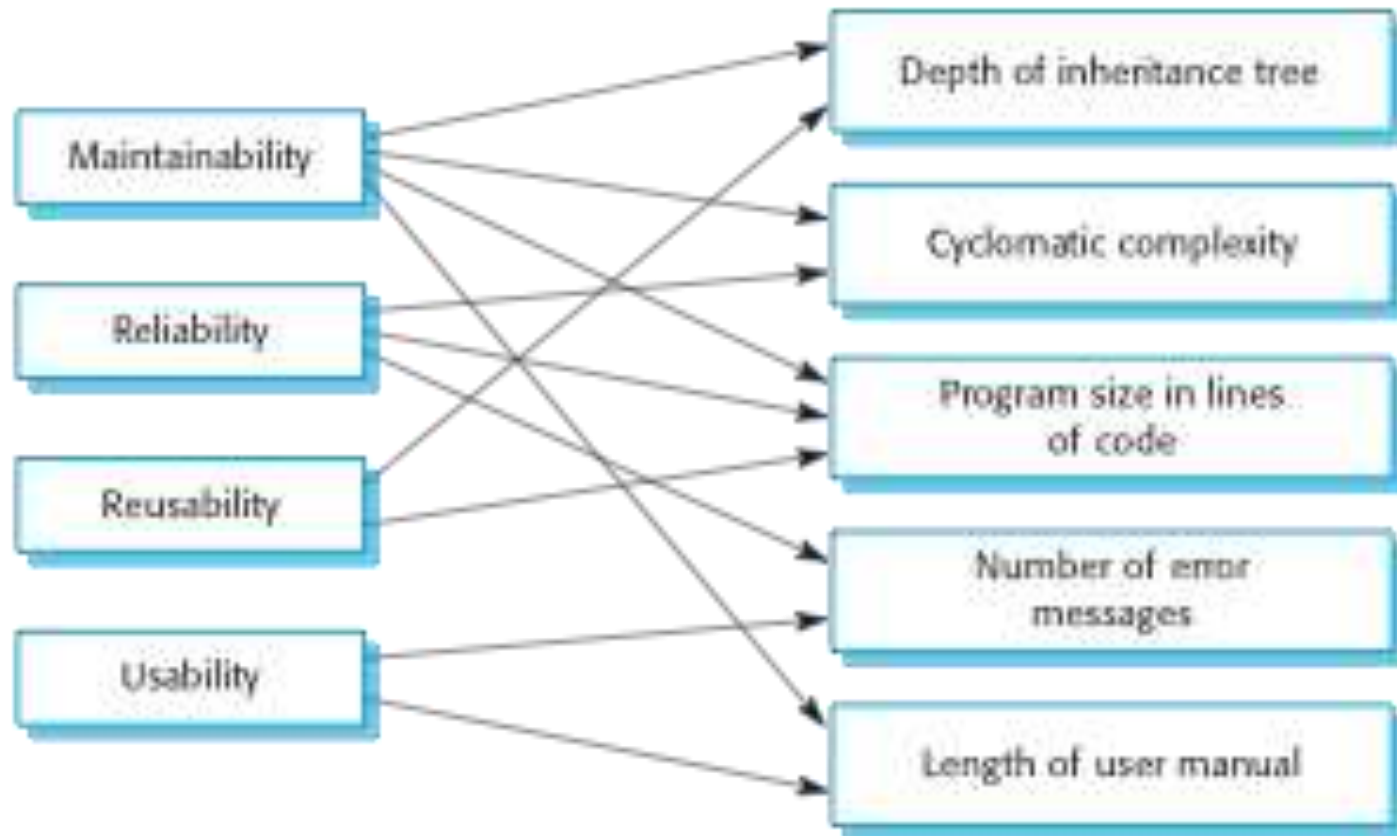
- ✧ A software property can be measured.
- ✧ The relationship exists between what we can measure and what we want to know. We can only measure internal attributes but are often more interested in external software attributes.
- ✧ This relationship has been formalised and validated.
- ✧ It may be difficult to relate what can be measured to desirable external quality attributes.

Relationships between internal and external software



External quality attributes

Internal attributes





Problems with measurement in industry

- ✧ It is impossible to quantify the return on investment of introducing an organizational metrics program.
- ✧ There are no standards for software metrics or standardized processes for measurement and analysis.
- ✧ In many companies, software processes are not standardized and are poorly defined and controlled.
- ✧ Most work on software measurement has focused on code-based metrics and plan-driven development processes. However, more and more software is now developed by configuring ERP systems or COTS.
- ✧ Introducing measurement adds additional overhead to processes.

Product metrics



- ✧ A quality metric should be a predictor of product quality.
- ✧ Classes of product metric
 - Dynamic metrics which are collected by measurements made of a program in execution;
 - Static metrics which are collected by measurements made of the system representations;
 - Dynamic metrics help assess efficiency and reliability
 - Static metrics help assess complexity, understandability and maintainability.

Dynamic and static metrics



- ✧ Dynamic metrics are closely related to software quality attributes
 - It is relatively easy to measure the response time of a system (performance attribute) or the number of failures (reliability attribute).
- ✧ Static metrics have an indirect relationship with quality attributes
 - You need to try and derive a relationship between these metrics and properties such as complexity, understandability and maintainability.

Static software product metrics



Software metric	Description
Fan-in/Fan-out	Fan-in is a measure of the number of functions or methods that call another function or method (say X). Fan-out is the number of functions that are called by function X. A high value for fan-in means that X is tightly coupled to the rest of the design and changes to X will have extensive knock-on effects. A high value for fan-out suggests that the overall complexity of X may be high because of the complexity of the control logic needed to coordinate the called components.
Length of code	This is a measure of the size of a program. Generally, the larger the size of the code of a component, the more complex and error-prone that component is likely to be. Length of code has been shown to be one of the most reliable metrics for predicting error-proneness in components.



Static software product metrics

Software metric	Description
Cyclomatic complexity	This is a measure of the control complexity of a program. This control complexity may be related to program understandability. I discuss cyclomatic complexity in Chapter 8.
Length of identifiers	This is a measure of the average length of identifiers (names for variables, classes, methods, etc.) in a program. The longer the identifiers, the more likely they are to be meaningful and hence the more understandable the program.
Depth of conditional nesting	This is a measure of the depth of nesting of if-statements in a program. Deeply nested if-statements are hard to understand and potentially error-prone.
Fog index	This is a measure of the average length of words and sentences in documents. The higher the value of a document's Fog index, the more difficult the document is to understand.

The CK object-oriented metrics suite



Object-oriented metric	Description
Weighted methods per class (WMC)	This is the number of methods in each class, weighted by the complexity of each method. Therefore, a simple method may have a complexity of 1, and a large and complex method a much higher value. The larger the value for this metric, the more complex the object class. Complex objects are more likely to be difficult to understand. They may not be logically cohesive, so cannot be reused effectively as superclasses in an inheritance tree.
Depth of inheritance tree (DIT)	This represents the number of discrete levels in the inheritance tree where subclasses inherit attributes and operations (methods) from superclasses. The deeper the inheritance tree, the more complex the design. Many object classes may have to be understood to understand the object classes at the leaves of the tree.
Number of children (NOC)	This is a measure of the number of immediate subclasses in a class. It measures the breadth of a class hierarchy, whereas DIT measures its depth. A high value for NOC may indicate greater reuse. It may mean that more effort should be made in validating base classes because of the number of subclasses that depend on them.

The CK object-oriented metrics suite



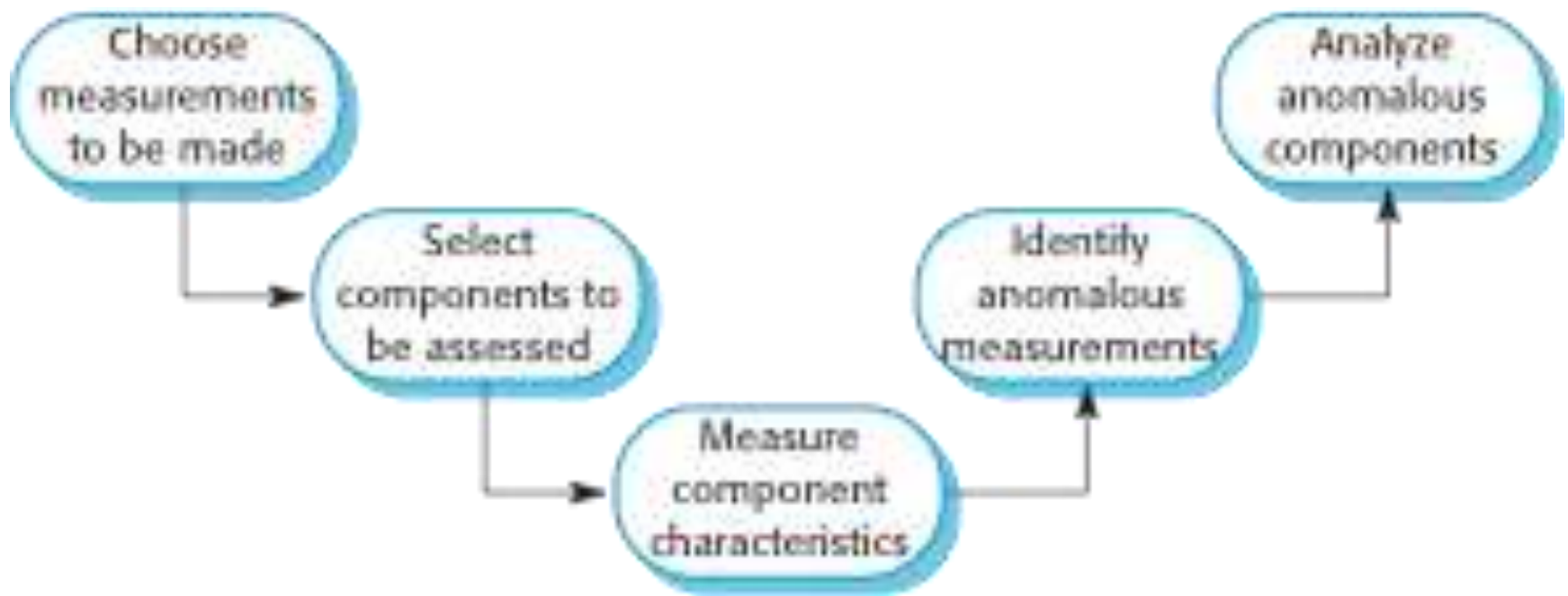
Object-oriented metric	Description
Coupling between object classes (CBO)	Classes are coupled when methods in one class use methods or instance variables defined in a different class. CBO is a measure of how much coupling exists. A high value for CBO means that classes are highly dependent, and therefore it is more likely that changing one class will affect other classes in the program.
Response for a class (RFC)	RFC is a measure of the number of methods that could potentially be executed in response to a message received by an object of that class. Again, RFC is related to complexity. The higher the value for RFC, the more complex a class and hence the more likely it is that it will include errors.
Lack of cohesion in methods (LCOM)	LCOM is calculated by considering pairs of methods in a class. LCOM is the difference between the number of method pairs without shared attributes and the number of method pairs with shared attributes. The value of this metric has been widely debated and it exists in several variations. It is not clear if it really adds any additional, useful information over and above that provided by other metrics.

Software component analysis



- ✧ System component can be analyzed separately using a range of metrics.
- ✧ The values of these metrics may then compared for different components and, perhaps, with historical measurement data collected on previous projects.
- ✧ Anomalous measurements, which deviate significantly from the norm, may imply that there are problems with the quality of these components.

The process of product measurement



Measurement surprises



- ✧ Reducing the number of faults in a program leads to an increased number of help desk calls
 - The program is now thought of as more reliable and so has a wider more diverse market. The percentage of users who call the help desk may have decreased but the total may increase;
 - A more reliable system is used in a different way from a system where users work around the faults. This leads to more help desk calls.

Key points



- ✧ Reviews of the software process deliverables involve a team of people who check that quality standards are being followed.
- ✧ In a program inspection or peer review, a small team systematically checks the code. They read the code in detail and look for possible errors and omissions
- ✧ Software measurement can be used to gather data about software and software processes.
- ✧ Product quality metrics are particularly useful for highlighting anomalous components that may have quality problems.