Quality Assurance and Accreditation – The Journey Continues

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Oh boy... what do I do now?
Accreditation: How it all began

- Early 1900’s – USA
- Late 1940’s – Japan and the Philippines
- 1960's – Ireland and the UK
- 1980’s – the rest of the world
- 1990’s – decade of quality assurance
- 2003 – Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN)
Quality Assurance

- An ongoing, continuous process of evaluating the quality of a higher education system, institution, or program
- A regulatory system focusing on accountability and improvement, providing information and judgments through an agreed upon and consistent process and well-established criteria
Elements of Quality Assurance

Internal Evaluation / Self-evaluation

- systematic collection of administrative data, surveys on students and graduates resulting in a self-study report
- a collective institutional reflection and an opportunity for quality enhancement
- instruments are used for the self-evaluation
External Evaluation

- a process whereby a QA agency collects data, information and evidence about an institution or a program to make a statement about its quality
- external evaluation is carried out by a team of external experts or peers

Stages of External Quality Assurance (EQA)

- Formulation of evaluation instruments
- Self evaluation done by the institution/submission of the report to the EQA
- On-site evaluation conducted by peers
- Decision of the governing board of the accrediting body and report of outcomes
- Periodic external review
Key Players in QA

- Government
- EQA(s)
- HEIs

Role of Government

- Legislation to regulate the HE system
- Set-up minimum standards for licensing
- Specifying requirements for EQAs
- Establishing a qualifications framework
- Establishing scope and type of accreditation (public or private, program or institutional or both)
- Providing consumer protection
Role of the EQA

- Assist the HEI to set up and develop its internal quality assurance system
- Evaluate the HEI's systems for achieving their objectives or standards, and the effectiveness of these systems
- Measure the quality and/or standards of the HEI according to some (internal or external) yardstick

Role of the EQA

- Determine whether the HEI can be permitted to offer specific programs, or qualify for some other benefit.
- Help steer the HEI in particular directions, in terms of planning, scope or methods.
- Provide a report on the HEI as a basis for government funding.
- Check the HEI's compliance with legal and other requirements.
Role of the Institution

- To create, define, support and promulgate a quality culture initiated and led by senior management.
- Involve the staff and students in the self-study process.
- Put IQA policies, processes and procedures in place.
- Develop a strategy for continuous quality improvement.

INTERPLAY OF IQA PROCESS AND MECHANISMS

[Diagram showing the interplay of planning, implementation, review, improvements, support, structures, systems, policies, procedures, and practices]
Internal Quality Assurance Cycle

Cycles of Continuous Improvement and Change Over Time

Accreditation

- a planned systematic review process
- carried out by
  - an institution
  - or
  - program
- to determine whether national published standards are being met, maintained and enhanced
Types of Accreditation

Institutional Accreditation

- Primary focus of the evaluation process is the institution as a whole.
- Most quality assurance agencies in Asia and Africa conduct institutional accreditation.

Program/Specialized Accreditation

- Primary focus are specific and professional programs.

Features of Accreditation

- Result of the process is a status, a recognition or a license to operate within a limited period of time
- Yes/No decision
- Approved/Not approved
- Accredited/Not accredited
- A point of reference or threshold
- Standards set externally
Audit

- How well is the entity achieving its purposes?
- Starts from the goals and objectives of the entity (e.g. curriculum, staff, infrastructure)
- Checks the processes are in place to achieve the stated objectives
- Investigates procedures and mechanisms for ensuring QA
- Probes QA arrangements within the institution/program
- Primarily focuses on accountability
- Standards set internally

Difference between Accreditation and Audit

- Accreditation focuses on standards external to the institution, usually national.
- Audit focuses on an institution’s own standards and goals and its success in meeting them.
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**Quality Model for the Analysis of the Organization/Program**

- **Mission statement**
- **Goals & aims**
- **Expected outcomes**
- **Realized mission**
- **Achieved goals**
- **Achieved outcomes**
- **Stakeholders satisfaction**

- **input**
  - management
  - policy
  - staff
  - students
  - funding
  - facilities

- **process**
  - study programs
  - research projects
  - community services

- **output**
  - graduates
  - scientific production
  - services
  - community services
Defining Quality in Terms of Outcomes

*Learning outcomes should pertain to what is or will become important for the department’s students. Exemplary departments carefully determine their students’ needs and then work to meet those needs. They know that student learning, not teaching per se, is what ultimately matters.*

Learning Outcomes / Result Indicators

- progression rates
- drop-outs
- graduation rates
- employment figures
- graduate satisfaction
- employer satisfaction
- entrepreneurship
GENERAL FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY EVALUATION

A New Paradigm for QA

- Seen as an outcome operating within a signal system composed of the government, the market and the universities themselves.
- Helps the market and policy makers make choices about multiple aspects of higher education.
- Highly interactive role of system components: many factors influence quality issues and various sectors have different notions of quality.

Quality assurance as a broker of signals and interests

Source: Higher Education in Asia/Pacific - Terence W. Bigalke and Deane E. Neubauer, 2009.
Lessons Learned

- Primary responsibility for QA rests with the HEIs themselves.
- EQA plays an important role in promoting higher education reform.
- The subject of educational quality is global, but the work of QA, for the most part, is local.