

Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Turkey

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Presentation Outline

- Higher Education System in Turkey
- Higher Education Institutions
- Accreditation and the Higher Education Council
- Universities going their own way
 - MÜDEK: A Voluntary Association formed by Deans of Engineering Schools and Stakeholders
 - Quality, European University Association (EUA) and the Universities
- Looking Ahead

Higher Education System in Turkey

- Higher Education Council
 - System autonomy
 - A President appointed for five years by the President of the Republic
 - A Council members of which are appointed by:
 - The Inter-University Council
 - The Government
 - The President of the Republic

Higher Education Institutions

- 54 state universities.
- 24 “Foundation” universities – private universities
 - Founded by philanthropic foundations as not-for-profit organizations
- Vocational schools of higher education attached to universities.

Higher Education Council (HEC) and Accreditation

- All new programs have to be approved by HEC.
- **All** new universities, new faculties (schools) and graduate institutes of existing universities are formed through an act of parliament.
 - Preceded by a preliminary review of HEC
 - Includes foundation (or private) universities.
- Periodic review of foundation universities.
 - Until 1993 state universities were reviewed as well.
 - Nature of which is not more than bureaucratic inspection.
- Attempts were made by HEC in mid-1990s to start QA (supported by the World Bank)
 - Aborted when faced by stiff opposition from the universities.

No Formal and National Accreditation or Quality Assurance System

- Yet, there are important developments – “creeping” quality and accreditation.
- Universities going their own way
- ABET leads to MÜDEK.
- Turkish universities becoming the best customers of the EUA.

MÜDEK: How It All Started

- A Voluntary Association formed by Deans of Engineering Schools and Stakeholders
- A Brief History of Accreditation of Engineering Programs in Turkey

Stage 1: ABET Evaluations

Stage 2: National System for Accreditation of Engineering Programs

Stage 1: ABET Evaluations

- 1993-1994: Two engineering programs from METU applied to ABET for evaluation and obtained “Substantial Equivalency”
- 1994-2005: 41 engineering programs from 4 universities (METU, Bilkent University, Boğaziçi University, and ITU) obtained “Substantial Equivalency” evaluations from ABET

ABET Evaluations versus Potential Need

| 2005 | ABET Evaluations | TURKEY + TRNC Total Numbers |
|---|------------------|-----------------------------|
| Universities with Engineering Faculties | 4 | 72 |
| Engineering Faculties | 11 | 91 |
| Program Types | 20 | 50 |
| Programs | 41 | 546 |

Stage 2: National System for Accreditation of Engineering Programs

- **Jan 2001:** Engineering Deans Council (MDK) is established
 - Deans of engineering faculties in state & private universities in Turkey and Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
 - 91 members as of 2005
 - Task force formed on the evaluation of engineering education
- **Jan 2002:** MDK decides to establish a National Accreditation System for Engineering Education
- **May 2002:** Engineering Evaluation Board (MÜDEK) is formed by MDK
- Originally frowned upon by the Higher Education Council (YÖK)

MÜDEK: Engineering Evaluation Board

- An independent, non-governmental platform
- Outcome-based evaluation system for engineering programs
- Consisting of eight members
 - One representative of the Union of Chambers of Engineering and Architects of Turkey (TMMOB)
 - One representative of the Turkish Society for Quality (KalDer)
 - Two representatives of industry
 - Four representatives of academia.
- Two years term of service, limited to three consecutive terms
- Voluntary service of MÜDEK members
- Membership closed to current deans of MDK faculties

Mission of MÜDEK

To promote and enhance the engineering education by the **accreditation of engineering programs**, resulting in better educated and qualified engineers in order to advance the welfare of the society.

MÜDEK Evaluations

- Non-governmental
- Independent
- Voluntary
- Accreditation criteria (objective, outcome-based)
- Self-assessment (self-study by the institution and programs)
- Peer-review (ad-hoc evaluation teams)
- On-site evaluation visit
- Evaluation rather than ranking
- Periodic re-evaluation (maximum six years)

MÜDEK Evaluation Activities

| | 2003 & 2004 (evaluated) | 2005 (applications) |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Universities | 3 | 5 |
| Engineering Faculties | 3 | 5 |
| Program Types | 8 | 11 |
| Programs | 10 | 21 |

Prospects?

- Establish its formal entity as a non-governmental federation of existing boards, societies and associations related to the engineering profession and education in Turkey.
- Gain formal recognition as an accreditation body in engineering education by national authorities in Turkey.
- Establish mutual agreements with accreditation boards and agencies abroad for international recognition.

European University Association

- More and more Turkish universities are applying for the EUA quality assurance process.
 - It all started with the application of Bogazici University (1997).
 - Major universities soon followed: Marmara, Middle East Tech., Istanbul Tech., Uludag, Erciyes.
 - Selcuk at Konya and Atatürk at Erzurum will follow in 2006.
 - Each year there are at least 2 applicant universities.

Turkish Universities Have Become Very Good “Customers” of the EUA

- Totally a voluntary process funded by funds generated by the university.
 - No allocations in the official state funds received by the universities.
 - Competition is the main driving force.
- There is no official encouragement, not even in the form of some official recognition that a university has adopted the EUA quality process.
- None of the private universities have applied to EUA (yet)
 - Some have it on their agenda.

Looking Ahead

- Quality and accreditation is definitely on the agenda.
- Universities going their own way with international processes is having an impact.
- All draft legislation for reform have it on their agenda.
- Yet, higher education reform is in a political deadlock.
- A new bye-law issued by the Higher Education Council. Yet to be implemented ([academic_assessment.pdf](#) available at www.yok@gov.tr.)



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