

University Accreditation in Korea: Practices and Issues

**CHEA International Commission Meeting
San Francisco, USA, January 26, 2006**

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How the UES has progressed?

1. Beginning of UES in Korea

- Introduction of University Evaluation by KCUE:

University evaluation practices in Korea go back to 1982 when KCUE conducted comprehensive reviews of the educational conditions of its member universities

- From 1982 to 1992, five-year term university evaluations were carried out two times.

2. Transition to University Accreditation System

- The university evaluation became more strategic and systematic as the institutional and program evaluations by KCUE turned to be a system of university accreditation in 1994.

How the UAS has progressed?

3. Development of UES

- The first cycle of the Comprehensive University Institutional Evaluation was conducted for 7 years from 1994 to 2000. During the first cycle, undergraduate programs of 173 universities and graduate programs of 110 universities underwent the evaluation.**
- The second cycle of the Comprehensive University Institutional Evaluation was launched in 2001 and is expected to be completed by the end of 2006.**

Evaluation Area for the 2nd Cycle of Institutional Evaluation at

- Evaluation Areas for the 2nd Cycle of UE
 1. Education
 2. Social Service
 3. Teaching
 4. Research
 5. Administrative and Supporting system
 6. Facilities & Equipments
 7. Financing & Management
 8. Specialization & Self-reforming plans and strategies

Sub-fields of Each Evaluation Area

1. Education

- Education Purpose
- Education Process and Method
- Class and learning Activities
- Students

2. Social Service

- Social Service
- External Affair/Relationship

3. Teaching

- Faculty Composition
- Teaching Workload/Benefits
- Faculty Rewarding System
- Teaching & Learning Development

Sub-fields of Each Evaluation Area

4. Research

- Research Outcomes
- Research Conditions
- Research Supporting System

5. Administrative and Supporting system

- Administrative and supporting system
- Satisfaction on the supporting system

6. Facilities & Equipments(FE)

- Conditions of educational FE
- Conditions of educational supporting system
- Conditions for research FE
- Other FE

Sub-fields of Each Evaluation Area

7. Financing & Management

- Financing
- Strategy and planning for financial management
- Administration and Rewarding system
- Decision-making system

8. Specialization & Self-reforming endeavor

- Strategy and planning for Institutional specialization
- Institutional initiatives for specialization and self-reforming efforts

Current Issues

1. *Evaluation by Government vs. Autonomous agencies*

- Who should coordinate University Evaluation?

2. *Mandatory vs. Voluntary*

- Characteristic of Participation in University Evaluation
- Universities should be evaluated mandatorily or individual universities decide the evaluation by voluntary bases

Current Issues

3. Qualitative items vs. Quantitative item

- Designing evaluation instrument with validity and reliability has been one of the challenging issues in Korean university evaluation.
- Discussion about appropriate mixture of quantitative and qualitative items in evaluation instrument is still on going in Korea.

4. Regional Standard vs. Global Standard

- The call has been raised that current evaluation standards should be refashioned to meet global standards

Current Issues

5. *Normalization among different evaluation groups*
 - Normalize the group score differences by statistical format

6. *Issue of Examiner's bias*
 - Like in many other countries, current university evaluation in Korea is peer review system. That is, accreditation review is conducted primarily by faculty peers
 - Significant variance among examiner's reviews sometimes plague evaluation results.
 - How to minimize examiner's bias is another crucial topic in discussions of university evaluation.

Current Issues

- 7. Linking evaluation results to funding mechanism*
- Some argue that like in Australia and the United Kingdom where governments utilize evaluation results in subsidizing universities, evaluation results in Korea should be linked to governmental funding for universities.
 - Yet, some experts note that linking evaluation to funding may overly strengthen the national control over higher education institutions, thus harm institutional autonomy.

Current Issues

8. The issues of publicizing evaluation results

9. Ranking vs. Accreditation

- How to present evaluation results is another tricky issue in Korean higher education. In defending accountability of higher education, many (especially those from government and the press) argue that evaluation results should be publicized in the form ranking or classification. However, opponents warn that inconsiderate presentation of evaluation results may bring negative effects including stratification of higher education in Korea.

Current Issues

- 10. Issue raised by UNESCO-OECD Guidelines for quality provision in cross-border higher education*
- Current Korean UES does not encompass non-traditional providers of higher education including distance learning and foreign providers.
 - The challenge has been raised to develop appropriate procedures and systems to cover nontraditional providers of higher education.
- 11. The issues of networking among accreditation agencies*