

Scrutiny of QAA Bodies in the Egyptian Context

By
Dr. MOHSEN ELMAHDY SAID

*Professor, Mechanical Design & Production Department,
Faculty of Engineering – Cairo University, Giza – Egypt*
Former Chairman of NQAAC and QAAP in Egypt
*Executive Director and Chairman of the Board,
Projects Management Unit (PMU),
Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), Cairo – Egypt*
*Member of the International Commission (IC),
Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), Washington, U.S.A.*
*Member of the UNESCO Higher Education Expert Group
“Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education”*
*Member of the Fulbright New Century Scholars Program (NCS)
“Higher Education in the 21st Century: Global Challenge and National Response”*

February 1, 2007
CHEA Int. Comm.

Dr. Mohsen Elmahdy Said

1

The Egyptian QAAP

- QAAP is implemented across the board as a common denominator to support all the six priority reform projects
- QAAP is implemented on **two** main fronts:
 1. Establishing a National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (NQAAA)
 2. Preparing higher education institutions for accreditation based on international good practices

February 1, 2007
CHEA Int. Comm.

Dr. Mohsen Elmahdy Said

2

Projects Considered Under QAAP

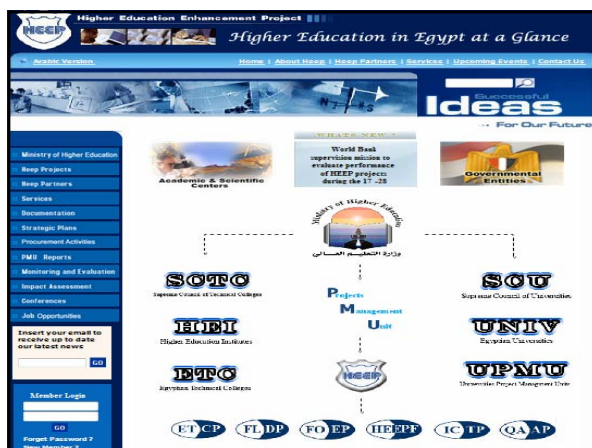
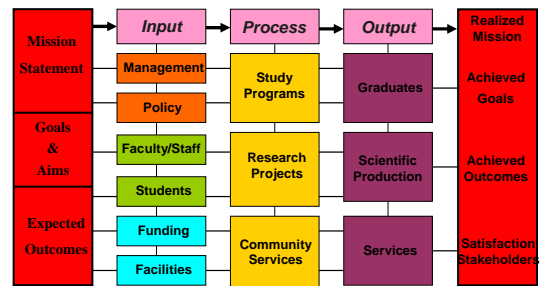
1. Development of a **Strategic Plan** for Quality Assurance
2. Establish sustainable **QAA Centers** in Egyptian Universities
3. Establish an **Internal Quality Assurance System**
4. Development of Academic **Reference Standards**
5. **Developmental Engagement Projects**

February 1, 2007
CHEA Int. Comm.

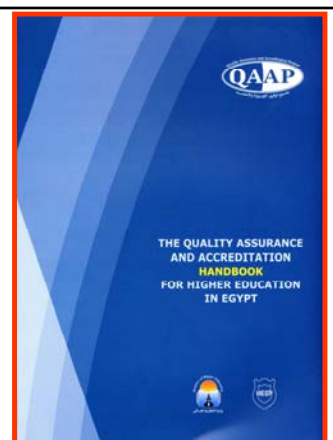
Dr. Mohsen Elmahdy Said

3

Integrated Quality Model in Higher Education



Prepared by
The National Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee NQAAC
in Collaboration with
British Consultants in Higher Education
September 2004
Websites:
www.qaap.net
www.heep.edu.eg



Developmental Engagement Criteria

- Developmental engagements will not lead to accreditation
- It only includes reviewer judgment provided that the institution would have met both the criteria of accreditation and further improvement needed
- Transitional phase to accreditation
- Enhancement agenda
- Builds upon the pilot self-studies and the development projects
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of Quality Assurance systems and processes
- Evaluation of the programs
- Evaluation of the robustness of evidence base (internal reporting)
- Testing the developing systems and processes
- Dialogue with peers through site visits and reporting
- Receiving external structured comments
- Agenda for further improvement
- Eligibility to apply for additional funds and possibly for accreditation

February 1, 2007
CHEA Int. Comm.

Dr. Mohsen Elmahdy Said

7

Developmental Engagement Framework

- Academic Standards
 - Intended learning outcomes
 - Curriculum
 - Student assessment
 - Student achievement
- Quality of Learning opportunities
 - Teaching and learning
 - Student support
 - Learning resources
- Research and other scholarly activities
- Community Involvement
- Effectiveness of Quality Management and Enhancement
 - Governance and leadership
 - Quality assurance system
 - Self-evaluation, plans and impact

February 1, 2007
CHEA Int. Comm.

Dr. Mohsen Elmahdy Said

8

Developmental Engagement Process

- **The evidence base starts with the products of internal reviews**
 - ✓ Annual faculty report (+)
 - ✓ Strategic review report (self-study)
 - ✓ Supporting documentation
- **Planning of developmental engagement**
 - ✓ By NQAAA
 - ✓ By review chair
 - ✓ By institution
 - ✓ By peer reviewers
- **Initial analysis by peer reviewers**
- **Engagements (site visit) verify and/or generate additional evidence**
- **Conclusions**

February 1, 2007
CHEA Int. Comm.

Dr. Mohsen Elmahdy Said

9

QAAP Achievements

No.	Activity	Frequency/beneficiaries
1	No. of awareness visits to universities	60
2	No. of attendees for the awareness	2380
3	No. of TOT courses delivered in universities	14
4	No. of trainees attending TOT courses	382
5	No. of training programs conducted in universities	174
6	No. of trainees attending QAA training	2933
7	No. of funded projects	188
8	No. of Strategic Plans developed	14
9	No. of Internal Quality Assurance System Projects	157
10	No. of QA Centers in Public Universities	17

February 1, 2007
CHEA Int. Comm.

Dr. Mohsen Elmahdy Said

10

QAAP Achievements

No.	Activity	Frequency/beneficiaries
1	No. of Peer Review visits (Developmental Engagements)	36
2	QAAP Internal Audit	Ongoing
3	Monitoring, evaluation and follow-up on projects	Ongoing
4	First National QAA Conference completed	1000
5	Impact Assessment of the project	Ongoing

February 1, 2007
CHEA Int. Comm.

Dr. Mohsen Elmahdy Said

11

رسالة الهيئة

NQAAA Mission Statement

اكتساب ثقة المجتمع في كفاءة الأداء وضمان الجودة والتطوير المستمر لمؤسسات ونظم وبرامج التعليم العالي في ج.م.ع. طبقاً لرسالتها وأهدافها المعلنة والتي تتوافق مع المعايير والمواصفات المحلية والإقليمية والدولية، اعتماداً على كفاءات متميزة ونظم وآليات قياس معترف بها عالمياً تضمن لها قدرات تنافسية عالية، وذلك في إطار من الاستقلالية والحيادية والشفافية

"To ensure quality, continuous development and efficient performance of Egyptian education institutions, of their systems and of their programs, in accordance with their mission statements and declared goals, and to gain the confidence of the community in their products, depending on distinguished and competent human resources, and based on internationally recognized evaluation mechanisms through an independent, neutral and transparent framework"

February 1, 2007
CHEA Int. Comm.

Dr. Mohsen Elmahdy Said

12

The NQAAA Model

- An **Independent body** reporting directly to the President of Egypt and to the Parliament (a new law was issued)
(Independent from the service provider, i.e. Ministry and H.E. Institutions)
- **National Higher Education Fund** made available for H.E. Institutions that have applied accreditation procedures by the NQAAA, and reported to be eligible to draw from the national funds *(Incentive Scheme)*
- **Top management/administration** of H.E. Institutions will be obliged to demonstrate their ability to use the National Funds to implement their reform plans
(an indirect way to encourage leaders of universities to apply for accreditation)

February 1, 2007
CHEA Int. Comm.

Dr. Mohsen Elmahdy Said

13

Strategic Objectives

1. Dissemination of **awareness of the culture of quality**
2. Coordination with the educational institutions to achieve an integrated system of **standard benchmark rules** and mechanism for performance measurement in accordance with the international standards that does not conflict with the national identity
3. Supporting **self-capacity building** of institutions while they perform self-evaluation
4. Assuring **trust of the community in the outcomes** of education on the national, regional and international levels, without losing the national identity
5. **Evaluation and accreditation of the institutions** and the academic programs **according to the reference standards** and endorsed standards for every education stage and each type of institution

February 1, 2007
CHEA Int. Comm.

Dr. Mohsen Elmahdy Said

14

NQAAA Operating Principles

- **Institutions are responsible** for the academic standards and quality of learning opportunities
- **Mission sensitive:** the outcomes respect the mission statement of the institution and the stated strategic aims
- **Integrated, sustainable process** combining the institution's systems for quality assurance with external processes for accreditation
- Supporting **continuing quality improvements**
- Including **academic standards** benchmarked nationally and internationally
- The NQAAA will use **peer reviewer-based** process to visit the institutions and prepare reports

February 1, 2007
CHEA Int. Comm.

Dr. Mohsen Elmahdy Said

15

NQAAA Operating Principles

- **Evidence-based annual faculty self-evaluation report** form the basis of the accreditation site visit
- Including **strategic reviews** and plans **every five years**
- Keeping the academic standards of **graduates' achievements and quality of learning** central to the institutions quality systems and the accreditation process
- Accreditation based on site visits leading to **review reports published** by the NQAAA
- Addressing **Governance and Administration, staff members** and other activities that are in the mission, including **education programs, community involvement and research**

February 1, 2007
CHEA Int. Comm.

Dr. Mohsen Elmahdy Said

16

NQAAA Operating Principles

- Expressing the **level of confidence** in the institutions' systems to assure quality and academic standards of the education program
- Supporting institutions and peer reviewers by **providing published guidelines and training**
- Rewarding **good practice** and applying **sanctions** to failures
- The NQAAA will conduct its affairs informed by the **principles of good governance**, notably **openness, transparency, fairness and equity**
- NQAAA is also **accountable** and should be a **model of good governance**

February 1, 2007
CHEA Int. Comm.

Dr. Mohsen Elmahdy Said

17

Concerns On the Institutional Level

- No or **limited involvement/contribution** of the main stakeholders (faculty reluctance) affiliated with higher education institutions in the development of the institution's internal quality assurance system (mission statement, self-study, etc.) (ownership)
(will barely reflect on the quality, if at all, and calls for an incentive scheme to encourage participation)
- Availability of funding is crucial for higher education institutions to fulfill accreditation requirements
(through developmental engagements and implementing their action plans)
- Leadership role is fundamental to the success of the whole quality seeking process its absence could lead to detrimental effects
(criteria need to be in place when selecting institutional leaders or when considering extension of their terms)
- The **culture of student involvement** is absent
(through student representation/involvement in all activities related to accreditation requirements)
- The majority of local R & D does not **meet international requirements**
(Incentive schemes and funding mechanisms to support its improvement)

February 1, 2007
CHEA Int. Comm.

Dr. Mohsen Elmahdy Said

18

Concerns On the NQAAA Level

- The large number of schools (over 40,000) requires decentralized operation (the issue of transparency and accountability is questionable and will open the door for corruption)
- The peer review process conducted through subcontracting large numbers of NGOs and external accrediting bodies that are not trained to perform the process (could jeopardize the accreditation process and would lead to an uneven or unfair assessment of institutions. Relevant training programs need to be in place)
- Handling of huge amounts of data in limited times imposed by the process may lead to weak assessment and unprofessional reporting (automation of the system is mandatory setting-up standardized formats for the reporting text)
- Heavy bureaucracy imposed on the NQAAA (structure, methodology, procedures catering for three commissions; secondary, higher and Al-Azhar)
- Funding mechanisms need to be committed by the government
- Gaining Public confidence in the transparency of the system has to a prime target

February 1, 2007
CHEA Int. Comm.

Dr. Mohsen Elmahdy Said

19

Status On the Regional Front

- Arab Ministers exhausted the idea of having a regional QAA body (premature to establish such body before every country has its own QAA system in place)
- The Ford Foundation is funding a study conducted by the UNESCO office in Beirut to explore the best mode for regional collaboration based on a field study among Arab countries
- Ford Foundation initiative to establish an African Higher Education Collaborative program (AHEC)
- UNESCO Initiatives in the region

February 1, 2007
CHEA Int. Comm.

Dr. Mohsen Elmahdy Said

20

Status On the Regional Front

- **Three other ongoing initiatives:**
 - Abu Dhabi initiative to establish an Arab Network among some Arab countries (delayed)
 - The Arab Society for Quality Assurance in Education (ASQAE) established in Egypt (startup of activities postponed)
 - British Council initiative to establish a regional collaborative program for developing common Academic Reference Standards among some Arab/African countries (Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Tunisia and Morocco) (underdevelopment)

February 1, 2007
CHEA Int. Comm.

Dr. Mohsen Elmahdy Said

21

Concluding Remarks

- Quality measures cannot be implemented in isolation of a comprehensive H.E. reform program
- To establish an effective accreditation mechanism quality requirements have to be fulfilled first
- Creating the environment and promoting awareness within H.E. Institutions, and the community at large, is mandatory
- Funding mechanisms must be in place to support developmental activities within H.E. Institutions
- Quality has a cost and somebody has to pay the bill
- Scrutiny of the NQAAA to the accrediting bodies needs to be seriously addressed to avoid superficial accreditation process (establish a process to accredit and certify these bodies through periodical reviews and follow-up)

February 1, 2007
CHEA Int. Comm.

Dr. Mohsen Elmahdy Said

22

Thank you

شكراً

February 1, 2007
CHEA Int. Comm.

Dr. Mohsen Elmahdy Said

23