



CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG)
Quality Assessment and Accreditation: Multiple Demands;
Multiple Challenges

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Quality Assurance and Academic Corruption

***Fraud & Corruption in Higher Education:
Why, How & What Role for Quality Assurance?***

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Outline of Presentation

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2. Why Corruption in Higher Education?
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Context

Existence of corruption in HE known for decades, but its magnitude & extent not realized until recently – and it is constantly growing

“Corruption for resources, fame and notoriety place extraordinary pressures on higher education institutions.....In some instances, corruption has invaded whole systems of higher education and threatens the reputation of research products and graduates, regardless of their guilt and innocence”.

Global Corruption Report: Education, Transparency

International 2013

Why Corruption in Higher Education?

- Dramatic increase in output from secondary sector, HEIs cannot accommodate all the students
- Pressure for admission to best universities and to professional programs – medicine, law, engineering
- A university degree now a prerequisite for most white-collar jobs – many jobs even require a Masters or PhD
- A degree enables moving up the social ladder and increase family income
- Failure at university regarded as a societal stigma
- Insufficient funds in public HEIs - need to generate income in a competitive environment
- Commercialization of HE – private HEIs operate as corporate, profit-making entity
- Dramatic improvement in ICT

Forms of Corruption in Higher Education

Corruption can take place at every stage of operation of a HEI & can involve management, faculty, staff, students, etc.:

- Setting up of institution (especially private one) – corruption at level of regulatory agency
- Political interference in governance of the HEI
- Admission of students: fake documents, corrupt foreign recruiters & agents, bribery of admission officers
- Fraud in internal financial management of HEI
- Nepotism/favoritism in appointment & promotion of faculty
- Cross-Border Higher Education: bogus institutions, non-accredited programs, diploma/degree mills, fake certificates
- Cheating at examinations, plagiarism in PhD theses, faking of research results
- Sexual harassment by faculty
- Pressure from industry (especially pharmaceutical) to manipulate results of sponsored research

Global Scan of Corruption Cases in HE (1/3)

Australia

- *Degrees of Deception* video on 'Four Corners' program, ABC, 2015
- Pressure on universities to recruit foreign students & ensure they pass e.g. graduating unqualified nurses
- Fraudulent recruitment agents
- Widespread plagiarism, cheating, exploitation
- Standards of Australian universities being compromised

Russia

- 2014 paper in online Journal *International Education Studies*
- 50% of 7.5m students enrolled in 2008/09 had faced corruption
- Dean accepted bribe of Euros 30,000 for admission of a PhD
- Moscow Police report 30-40 Profs caught each year for accepting bribes for awarding good grades

Global Scan of Corruption Cases in HE (2/3)

China

- 2015 article in *International Higher Education* refers to corruption in China's HE system as malignant tumor
- Widespread plagiarism, researchers pocketing grant funding
- Favoritism in appointment of research staff
- Corrupt practices in approval of doctoral programs by Ministry of Education & in appointment of doctoral advisors

India

- Shocking *Vyapam* scandal surfaced in 2015, involving politicians, businessmen, senior officials & 2,500 impersonators in exams
- *Vyapam* – govt. body in State of Madhya Pradesh responsible for entrance exams for govt. jobs & admission to HEIs, especially medical colleges
- More than 2,000 arrested, dozens of those directly involved have died, under suspicion of murder or suicide
- Case referred to India's Central Bureau of Investigation

Global Scan of Corruption Cases in HE (3/3)

Africa

- 42 bogus HEIs in *South Africa* closed for offering fake programs, including 3 bogus US-based univs awarding degrees in 15 days
- Most common cases of corruption in *Nigeria*: promotions, journals & book publications, money extortion for handouts & marks, sexual harassment
- Of 475 students surveyed in 3 *East African* univs, 1/3 admitted to plagiarism, 25% to collusion in exams, 5% to impersonating another student in exams
- *Mauritius* closing down branch campuses of 2 private Indian univs offering degrees not recognized in India or Mauritius

What Role for Quality Assurance? (1/2)

- Main purpose of QA is to ensure quality, accountability and transparency in HEIs, which then can limit fraud & corruption
- Two approaches used in QA: Internal Quality Assurance (IQA); and External Quality Assurance (EQA) [or Audit or Accreditation] through a QA Agency
- The European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for QA in HE in Europe are perhaps the best known – they cover IQA, EQA and QA Agencies
- ESG's strategy is that the primary responsibility for ensuring quality lies with the HEI itself through its IQA system

What Role for Quality Assurance? (2/2)

- HEIs should establish policies and have processes in place for all their management, teaching and research activities that not only ensure quality but also promote academic integrity and discourage academic fraud
- As part of its IQA system, a HEI should:
 - Document its QA policies and processes and make them widely available within the institution and to external stakeholders
 - Develop a robust Management Information System (MIS)
 - Involve independent external experts, students and other stakeholders in its decision-making processes
- However, many HEIs in developing countries do not have the experience & capacity to set up a good IQA
- There is need for North-South collaboration e.g. the Joint Africa-European Union Strategy for promoting QA and Accreditation in African HEIs

What Role for Quality Assurance? (2/2)

- The EQA agency should also ensure that its operations are transparent and conducted ethically, especially in the selection of external reviewers
- EQA agencies should also put in place a satisfactory appeal system for an aggrieved institution
- Many developing countries (e.g. in Africa) are only now putting in place their EQA system and are seriously handicapped by lack of capacity, especially in the availability of experienced reviewers for external audits of HEIs
- There is need for North-South collaboration e.g. Europe-Africa Quality Connect project involving the European University Association and the Association of African Universities

Additional Measures (1/2)

- QA processes on their own may not be sufficient to limit fraud & corruption in HE - additional measures are necessary
- National Level:
 - HEIs should develop an anti-corruption policy document for their staff and students
 - They should also use available technology to detect plagiarism
 - Ministries responsible for HE should ensure that autonomy & academic freedom prevail in public HEIs and there is no political interference in the institutions' governance structure
 - Ministries should also ensure that the national EQA agency operates independently, and is not directly under its influence
 - Private HEIs should not use profit as their sole motivation; they should operate not as a business entity but as an academic institution

Additional Measures (2/2)

- International Level:
 - Efforts by UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), CHEA & Boston College's Center for International Higher Education in creating international awareness about corruption in HE and providing online assistance and resources are commendable and should be extended
 - Promote Ethics, Transparency & Integrity at all levels of education e.g. Council of Europe's new initiative - ETINED
 - Need now to set up an international coalition of major associations and organizations having expertise in HE corruption (e.g. Transparency International, CHEA, IIEP/UNESCO) to devise strategies, policies, and actions for combatting corruption in HE worldwide

The guiding principle in fighting corruption should be that higher education is neither a business nor an industry, but a public good impregnated with values



THANK YOU