

CHEA Council for
Higher Education
Accreditation

CHEA International Quality Group **CIQG**[®]

The logo for the UNESCO World Higher Education Conference 2022, featuring a colorful, abstract pattern of overlapping squares and rectangles in shades of blue, green, orange, and red.

**UNESCO World Higher Education
Conference 2022**

Barcelona, 18-20 May 2022

Addressing Equity Processes with International Accrediting Organizations

WHEC2022

May 18, 2022, 14:30 -16:00

Barcelona, Spain

CHEA

- Established in 1996
- Is an association of degree-granting colleges and universities located in the United States of America.
- Recognizes institutional and programmatic accrediting organizations.
- Is a major national voice and advocate for higher education accreditation and quality assurance
- Supports and works to advance the role of accreditation in maintaining the core academic values of higher education – commitments to institutional autonomy, academic freedom and institutional mission.
- Serves as a national and international authority on accreditation and quality assurance and an unsurpassed information resource.

Functions

CHEA serves higher education by:

Recognition of accrediting bodies to ensure institutional and program **QUALITY**.

Coordination of research, discussions and processes that improve accreditation.

Service as a national advocate for voluntary self-regulation through accreditation.

Collection and dissemination of information about accreditation.

Mediation of concerns and fostering of communication between and among accrediting bodies and higher education community.

Preserving the mission, quality and diversity of colleges and universities.

About CIQG

- International component of CHEA
- Established on September 13, 2012
- Committed to enhancing global quality assurance efforts in higher education by
 - ✓ studying and advancing understanding of international quality assurance
 - ✓ assisting institutions and accreditation/quality assurance organizations in their expanding international engagement
 - ✓ promoting the development of policies that further enhance capacity for academic quality in international higher education
- Formulated seven *International Quality Principles*
 - ✓ Guiding principles that serve as a framework for international deliberation about quality in higher education
 - ✓ 70 signed Memorandum of Affiliation to date

About CIQG

- 91 active members are part of CIQG
- Regular activities include
 - Presentations, webinars, discussions for its members
 - Participation at the CHEA Annual Conference
 - Think tank for broad discussions on international trends
 - Research studies regarding international Quality Assurance topics
 - Collaborations and presentations with international QA colleagues

“... CHEA’s commitment to diversity, equity and inclusiveness guides its mission and its support for equitable treatment for institutions of higher education, families and students.”

“As diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) becomes part of the everyday conversation at work, we’ve noticed a thread of skepticism from international colleagues about the relevance of diversity, equity and inclusion beyond U.S. borders. ... Unfortunately, structural inequality and bias are global phenomena.”

*(Majmudar, M & Kymal, V, (2020, November 23) Why DEI is a Global Conversation & How to Approach It? READYSET
<https://www.thereadyset.co/blog/why-dei-is-a-global-conversation-and-how-to-approach-it>*

Over the past decade, more higher education accreditation agencies across the globe have begun to play a role in promoting equity in accordance with national policies.

Purpose of Study

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation and CHEA International Quality Group (CHEA/CIQG) wished to learn if and how accrediting organizations for higher education institutions across the globe addressed the concept of **equity** and its application to quality assurance in higher education.

eq·ui·ty

/'ekwədē/

noun

- the application of fairness in policies and practices associated with inclusion from under-represented student populations and their academic success.



Survey Methodology

- Survey questions were developed by an *ad hoc* research team who are members of the CIQG Advisory Council.
- Questions were reviewed for validity of purpose.
- Survey was administered electronically from January 3 through February 22, 2022, with the assistance of CIQG Advisory Council members from diverse geographical regions outside of the United States (e.g., Europe, Africa, Middle East, Asia).
- Survey responses were captured by automated survey tool, TypeForm™.
- Incomplete surveys responses were excluded from the analysis.

Survey Questions

1. Equity in Quality Assurance

- Is *equity* an essential aspect of your organization's current policies, standards, and or practices?

2. Equity Focus Groups

- Identify which groups of under-represented students are primary considerations when addressing equity decisions by your quality assurance organization. Examples of focus groups that are included in the equity promotion policies of countries include but are not limited to: *low-income groups, first-generation students, female students, students with disability, members of ethnic groups, students from rural areas, refugees, etc.*

3. Explanation for taking equity into consideration

- Did your quality assurance organization incorporate equity into your criteria and processes because of a national mandate?

4. Delivery Modalities

- Are the equity policies, standards and practices applied to various types of instructional modalities (for example, on-campus /online /hybrid / microcredentials)?

5. Optional Information

- Additional documents that explain or support any of your responses may be uploaded as a hyperlink in this designated space.

Survey Participants

Participants were internationally focused, across all regions: 55 QA agencies from 36 countries.

No responses were received from South Asia.

Region	Countries
East Asia	2
Eastern Europe & Central Asia	5
Latin America	3
Middle East & North Africa	9
North America	2
Sub-Saharan Africa	4
Western Europe	11

Results

Quantitative Responses: inclusion of DEI criteria in 31 countries (out of 34)

Region	Countries with DEI
East Asia	2 of 2
Eastern Europe & Central Asia	4 of 5
Latin America	3 of 3
Middle East & North Africa	8 of 9
Sub-Saharan Africa	4 of 4
Western Europe	10 of 11

Region	QA Agencies with DEI in
East Asia	Japan, Philippines
Eastern Europe & Central Asia	Armenia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Kosovo
Latin America	Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico
Middle East & North Africa	Egypt, Jordan, Oman, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Israel, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Morocco
Sub-Saharan Africa	Kenya, Mauritania, Senegal, South Africa
Western Europe	Austria, Belgium, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Malta, Spain, Sweden, Turkey

Results

Most frequently mentioned equity target groups

- Students with disabilities (in all regions)
- Low income / rural students (Africa, ECA, LAC, Western Europe)
- Female students (Africa, MENA, Western Europe)
- Ethnic minorities (ECA, Western Europe)
- Refugees (LAC, Western Europe)

Results

Qualitative Responses

- No clear pattern to explain why QA agencies are starting to introduce DEI dimensions in their standards and criteria
- Notable exceptions: Africa and Western Europe (national mandate through policy and/or legislation, European QA guidelines, SDG agenda)
- When in place, DEI criteria apply to all delivery modalities (face-to-face, online, hybrid, microcredentials)

Results

Qualitative Responses

- Several agencies look at the proportion of females in university leadership positions
- A few agencies look at “added-value” to measure the learning experience of students from equity target groups
- Focus is still on high school graduates, hardly anything on lifelong learning
- No indications that QA agencies look at the impact of curriculum content and pedagogical approaches on equity and inclusion

Inferences Drawn

- The diversity of responses show that DEI is not yet a high priority in the higher education policy agenda of many countries.
- Several countries assume that because discrimination is prohibited by law, there is no need to consider DEI criteria in quality assurance.
- Several QA agencies understood “equity” as referring to the application of similar standards to all higher education institutions, or not discriminating against any person when selecting reviewers (especially gender balance).

Social Dimension in European HE

- Since the 2007 London Conference, Bologna Process includes the social dimension
- 2015 Yerevan agenda: making HE systems more inclusive
- 2020 Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen Higher Education in the EHEA
- Wherever possible EQA systems should address how the social dimension, diversity, accessibility, equity and inclusion are reflected in the institutional missions of higher education institutions whilst respecting the principle of autonomy.

Suggestions

- Quality Assurance (QA) organizations (e.g., INQAAHE) need to work with other relevant stakeholders (including higher education providers) to formulate a clear definition of what DEI means for QA (internally and externally). This would include the need to define “target equity groups” that are relevant to specific country contexts.
- National authorities could involve QA agencies in helping to think about the role of those agencies in promoting / supporting DEI policies.
- QA agencies need to focus more systematically on how the curriculum and pedagogy can be more inclusive and welcoming for students from traditionally under-represented groups.
- More research is needed to determine how DEI is delivered, and how related policies impact student and graduate success.

Questions

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noun

- the application of fairness in policies and practices associated with inclusion from under-represented student populations and their academic success.

Three stylized human figures of varying heights are shown standing on a platform. The tallest figure is on the left, the middle figure is on a small rectangular block, and the shortest figure is on a larger rectangular block. This visual metaphor represents the concept of equity, where resources are distributed to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.