Quality Assurance Developments in Asian Higher Education: Challenges and Prospects

Angela Yung Chi Hou, Ph.D.

Vice President, Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN)
Executive Director, Higher Education Evaluation Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT)
Professor, Graduate Institute of Educational Leadership and Development
Introduction and Background

- Higher education expansion in Asia over decades
- Global competitiveness and world Class Universities Building
- External Quality Monitoring as a Policy Tool
- Quality Culture Embedded on Campuses-Focus of IQA
Outline of Presentation

I. Development of QA systems in Asian Higher Education
II. International Network of QA : APQN
III. Qualification Framework and QA
IV. New QA Focus in Taiwan
V. Conclusion
I. Development of QA Systems in Asian Higher Education
Higher Education in Asia

- Rapid Expansion in HE over the past decade
  - Increasing number of universities and colleges
  - Large student populations
  - Private institutions outnumber public institutions by three times
  - Centralized system

- QA as Asian government policy
  - To enhance quality of mass HE
  - To allocate governmental funding
  - To close low performing institutions
  - To facilitate student mobility
Most Asian nations have developed national quality assurance systems, with a national/quasi-governmental QA agency.

Half of the Asian nations have more than two local self-funded accrediting bodies, including Japan, China, Philippines, and Taiwan.

ASEAN national QA agencies are governmental departments.

East Asian agencies tended to be non-profit and independent bodies.
Diversity among Asian QA agencies

- Number of staff ranges from 330 to 1
- Annual budget of the agencies from 0.03 million USD to more than 33.3 million USD
- 2/3 undertake reviews at the program and institutional levels
- Adopt compulsory approach
- Assessment tools
  - Accreditation, evaluation and audit
Major Issues in Asian QA Systems
Southeast Asian national quality assurance agencies are established as governmental agencies. East Asian agencies tend to be buffer bodies where the government likely plays a major role in the agency. They are both usually considered as extended arms of government, because they are primarily funded by the state.

- ONESQA (Thailand)
- HEEACT (Taiwan)
Three features of external review processes consist of
- self-assessment, on-site visits, and peer review

Review standards and results look different
- From 4 to more than 10
- Review results
  - Accredited; satisfied; with scores

The number of review subjects quite diverse
- from just few institutions/programs to more than 1000 within a year
- Final reports are published

Almost reviewed subjects passed the accreditation or evaluation finally

It has been argued if quality assurance agencies are accountable on the effectiveness of their external reviews
Impacts and EQA Utilization

- EQA is much broadly utilized by ASEAN governments
  - determine the amount of from the government, student loans, student enrollment, particularly in public universities.
- Some do not, such as Taiwan, Japan
Most national QA agencies don’t have capacity to accredit non local programs or institutions

HK and Taiwan started oversea accreditation
  ◦ Macao
II. International Network of QA - APQN
As one of the largest QA networks in Asia
Founded in 2003 in HK
208 members from more than 40 countries
Supported by The World Bank
  ◦ Global Initiative for Quality Assurance Capacity (GIQAC)
Provide varying services for APQN members
  ◦ Chiba Principle in 2008
  ◦ Database of Consultants
  ◦ APQN Quality Award
  ◦ Online forum
  ◦ HEED journal
  ◦ Staff exchange program
Initiated in 2013 to mark decennial celebrations of APQN

- intended to identify and distinguish extraordinary or prominent QA contributions and good practices that have potential of replications in the Asia-Pacific area

Categories

- APQN’s Best/Model Internal QA Award
- APQN Quality Champions Award
- International cooperation in QA I (APQN members)
- International cooperation in QA II (outside)
- Training and Support of Reviewers
- Staff Capacity Building
Higher Education Evaluation and Development (HEED)

Emerald Publishing (since 2017)

- Current Issue: Vol. 11.2
- Jointly published with APQN
- Open access
- Free download
- Online paper submission
- Double-blind peer review
- 2 issues per annum
- Calling for paper

Access this journal online: www.emeraldinsight.com/journal/heed
Two HEED Papers in Vol. 11.1

- **Institutional research as a bridge: aligning institutional internal data needs and external information requirements, a strategic view**
  - By Chester D. Haskell

- **A comparative study of student mobility programs in SEAMEO-RIHED, UMAP, and Campus Asia: regulation, challenges, and impacts on higher education regionalization**
  - By Angela Yung-Chi Hou, Christopher Hill, Karen Hui-Jung Chen, Sandy Tsai and Vivian Chen
Asia Pacific Quality Register (APQR)

- APQR would be register of quality assurance agencies (QAAs) that demonstrate certain thresholds of maturity
  - Launched in 2015 to serve as a quality hallmark
- Basis for mutual recognition
- Basis for cross-border operation of quality agencies / institutions
- Evaluation of the evaluator
- Reference to global stakeholders on trustworthy QAAs in Asia Pacific
Request APQN to implement the review

Present the outcomes of another review and demonstrate that the review was rigorous and independent

- Mutual Recognition

Request APQN and another QA network to implement a joint review.
III. Qualification Framework (QF) and QA
National Qualification Frameworks

- National qualification frameworks
  - as a systematic structure to “make hierarchical distinctions between qualifications and categorize them by level”
  - regulates program quality and students learning outcomes with a set of standards and quality descriptors in Asia
    - Program accreditation is compulsory
    - To facilitate student mobility
- ASEAN nations have established, but East Asia do not
Role of QA Agencies in QF

- Categorized into three types
  - QA agency engages the process of development, but not an authority;
    - Most agencies
    - BAN-PT
  - QA agency is a qualification body with QF development and implementation
    - integration mechanism between quality assurance and qualification framework
    - As qualification recognition body
    - MQA
  - QA agency plays no particular role at all
    - Taiwan, Korea, Japan and India
IV. NEW QA Focus in Taiwan
Taiwan QA Framework

- **TMAC**
  Professional (medicine) by NCFMEA

- **HEEACT**
  (Higher Education Evaluation Council of Taiwan)
  Recognition body
  Institutional/Professional (program)

- **TWAEA**
  Institutional/Professional (Program)

- **CEPH**
  Professional / National Taiwan University

- **IEET (WA)**
  (engineering)
  Professional
  CMA (business)
# HEEACT Legal Status and Mission

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2005 University Law Amendment</th>
<th>Jointly established jointly by the MOE and 153 other higher education institutions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• National QA agency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Non-Governmental / Professional body</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recognition body of QA Agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2005/12 Establishment of HEEACT
New Focus: Taiwan QA System

- **Diversification and academic autonomy**
  - Varying accreditors
  - From compulsory to *voluntary* (program accreditation)

- **Quality culture on campus**
  - Quality policy embedded in teaching, learning and research
  - Emphases on IQA/Self-accreditation policy

- **Transparency**
  - Accountability
  - Social responsibilities

- **Changing role**
  - From a quality regulator to a partner of universities
Welcome to TQID.

Cross-border higher education has become a worldwide trending issue and a vital source of student recruitment within the nation, the role of quality assurance is paramount yet challenging to the
V. Conclusion
Emerging Issues in Asian QA Agencies

- Measuring student learning outcomes
- Measuring cross-border higher education
- Measuring on-line education (e.g. MOOCs)
- Quality assurance of quality assurance agencies
- Assessors training and international reviewers recruitment
- Implementation of QF into QA
- Collaborations between QA agencies and professional accreditors
Future Prospect

- From centralized to decentralized
- From national to international
- From input based to outcome based model
- From compulsory to voluntary
- From quality control to quality enhancement
- From accountability to autonomy
- From external QA to internal QA
- From a regulator to a partner
Final Remarks

APQN and Asian QA Agencies are looking forward to further collaborations with US accreditors and other professional accreditors. It is expected that more dialogues and interactions between QA agencies and HE stakeholders would occur in order to enrich QA value!!
Happy Chinese New Year
Good luck for Dog Year
Thank you for your attention

Higher Education Evaluation & Accreditation Council of Taiwan
Asia Pacific Quality Network
Fu Jen Catholic University

03544@mail.fju.edu.tw