



# Breaking Barriers Towards a Millennium of

# Quality 2015

Development  
Enhancement  
Framework

International Conference  
on Quality Assurance

ICQA2015

# Proceedings



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## **A Message from the Chairman of ICQA 2015**



On behalf of The Office for National Educational Standards and Quality Assessment or ONESQA (Public Organization), I am privileged to announce ONESQA's 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. It is a major milestone for this organization and I am very proud for all that we have achieved to date. Further, I want to thank all of our stakeholders, including you for the contributions that have led us to where we are today.

The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA), based in Bangkok, Thailand, is organizing the International Conference on Quality Assurance 2015 (ICQA2015) on the theme "Breaking Barriers Towards a Millennium of Quality: Development, Enhancement and Framework" at the Bangkok International Trade and Exhibition Centre (BITEC), Bang Na, Bangkok, Thailand, on October 14 – 16, 2015.

The conference provides an opportunity for academics, policy makers and assessment practitioners to establish dialogues and exchanges concerning important issues of quality assurance processes. The participants have the opportunity to share their good quality assurance practices as well as to engage in analyzing comparative assessment works from around the world. The conference specifically encourages collaborative networking among national and international institutions as well as assessment agencies in order to facilitate the necessary "Breaking Barriers Towards a Millennium of Quality: Development, Enhancement and Framework" for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century education.

This conference shall ultimately bring forth the mutual benefits for all stakeholders in the field of educational quality assurance throughout the region and beyond.

ONESQA welcomes participation of academics and practitioners in the field of QA that will advance the need for mutual benefits and collaboration.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping loops and strokes.

(Prof. Dr. Channarong Pornrungrroj)  
Director, ONESQA

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# About the Conference

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## Welcome to ICQA 2015

The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA), based in Bangkok, Thailand, is organizing the International Conference on Quality Assurance 2015 (ICQA2015) on the theme “Breaking Barriers Towards a Millennium of Quality: Development, Enhancement and Framework” at the Bangkok International Trade and Exhibition Centre (BITEC), Bang Na, Bangkok, Thailand, on October 14 – 16, 2015.

The conference provides an opportunity for academics, policy makers and assessment practitioners to establish dialogues and exchanges concerning important issues of quality assurance processes. The participants have the opportunity to share their good quality assurance practices as well as to engage in analyzing comparative assessment works from around the world. The conference specifically encourages collaborative networking among national and international institutions as well as assessment agencies in order to facilitate the necessary “Breaking Barriers Towards a Millennium of Quality: Development, Enhancement and Framework” for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century education.

This conference shall ultimately bring forth the mutual benefits for all stakeholders in the field of educational quality assurance throughout the region and beyond.

ONESQA welcomes participation of academics and practitioners in the field of QA that will advance the need for mutual benefits and collaboration.

## About the Organizer

The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) is a public organization established by the 2000 Royal Decree to comply with the stipulation of the 1999 National Education Act. ONESQA is an academic body specializing in external quality assessment with its main objectives to enhance the quality of education provision system in Thailand and to enable the educational institutions to provide a quality education to Thai learners who will be endowed with virtue, competence and happiness.

## Rationale

On the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015, Thailand will become part of the single market system under the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). One of the ONESQA’s strategies is to disseminate information to all concerned to recognize the importance of educational quality assurance. However, in order to achieve the highest efficiency as an external quality assessment agency to ensure quality education, ONESQA has realized the value of establishing an international conference as a means to distribute to the public all publications, ideas, and information relating to external quality assessment which is considered beneficial for educational evaluators, assessors, researchers, and other interested academics. This conference will establish a network of updated knowledge and innovative ideas

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shared by educators and evaluators in the field of educational quality assurance, and of the external quality assessment. It is believed that the outcome of the conference will provide efficient and effective assessment methods and criteria for the practice of quality assurance.

**Objectives:**

- To share information and innovations in quality assurance practices, experiences, and achievements.
- To strengthen mutual understanding and commitment to quality assurance.
- To break barriers in order to promote quality culture.

**Participants**

The conference will be of interest to all stakeholders related to quality assurance throughout Thailand and the ASEAN Community, as well as policy makers and practitioners in the field of quality assurance from all regions.

**Theme:**

Breaking Barriers Towards a Millennium of Quality:

Development  
Enhancement  
Framework

**Topics include:**

- Breaking barriers toward a quality education;
- Development of quality assurance framework, systems, mechanism, among others;
- Quality enhancement;
- National Qualifications Frameworks and Quality Assurance;
- ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework in Higher Education (AQAF) implementation;
- Quality assurance for cross-border higher education in ASEAN Countries;
- Establishing links between Thai universities and universities in the international community;
- Teacher assessment and student learning outcome assessment;
- Impacts of IQA and EQA: regional perspectives;
- Globalizing forces and national/regional goals in higher education;
- International benchmarking and innovative processes: the benefits of the regional networks; and
- Good practices in QA.

## Conference Partnership



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### Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN)

A network of quality assurance agencies of higher education in Asia-Pacific countries.

APQN has provided good practices for quality assurance to its members and enhanced the quality of higher education in Asia and the Pacific region through strengthening the work of quality assurance agencies and extending the cooperation among them.

The network has expanded and developed through cooperation of its members and support from external bodies, particularly World Bank and UNESCO.

For more information, Please visit

**<http://www.apqn.org/>**



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### ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN)

AQAN was established by 10 ASEAN quality assurance authorities in order to promote harmonization of higher education, share good practices and strengthen quality assurance in South-East Asia region.

AQAN has developed the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework with a view to facilitate the recognition of qualifications and cross-border mobility.

For more information, Please visit

**<http://www.mq.gov.my/aqan/>**




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### **ASEAN University Network**

AUN was founded in 1995 by ASEAN member countries. In 1998, AUN-QA was created to coordinate activities concerned with the harmonization of educational standards and continuous quality improvement of ASEAN universities.

For more information, Please visit  
**<http://www.aunsec.org/>**




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### **International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)**

INQAAHE is a global association of quality assurance agencies and relevant bodies. The network has offered its members various services, such as academic journals, good practice database, conferences and workshops.

For more information, Please visit  
**<http://www.inqaahe.org/>**





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### **Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO RIHED)**

SEAMEO RIHED is the South-East Asian Ministers of Education Organization Centre specializing in regional higher education development. RIHED's mission is to foster efficiency, effectiveness, and harmonisation of higher education in Southeast Asia through system research, empowerment, development of mechanisms to facilitate sharing and collaborations in higher education.

For more information, Please visit  
**<http://www.seameo.org/>**



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### **Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC)**

Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC) is mandated to administer both public and private higher education institutions in Thailand. The main functions of OHEC include the supervision on the establishment of higher education institutions by means of accrediting their curricula, mobilizing of resources, regulating quality assurance system, supervising student development and services. OHEC is under the legal direction of the Ministry of Education.

For more information, Please visit  
**<http://www.mua.go.th>**

# Keynote

Speakers



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**Air Chief Marshal Prajin Juntong**  
Deputy Prime Minister

## **Quality Assurance in Education, “Breaking Barriers... Towards a Millennium of Quality”**

Education plays a very important role because it lays the foundation for national development in the areas of economics, society, politics and government; as well as enhancing and cultivating morals, ethics, arts, cultures, and good traditions on Thai people. The government has realized the importance of education administration and aims to improve and develop the educational quality in order to solve various problems, such as quality of students, professional development of teachers, education providers that cater for profits rather than quality, graduates at the vocational and higher education levels that do not meet the needs of the job market, students' low competency in English communication skills and neighboring languages, and so on. The mentioned problems become barriers for social and economic development of all sectors, and also hinder the country competitiveness with other countries and regions.

Currently, the government aims to reform education and learning in order to develop people at all ages by encouraging lifelong learning so that they can acquire new knowledge and skills in multi-tasking which is the trend of future employment. The learning process and curriculum are being adjusted to relate to geo-social encouraging vocational education and community college to build up a skilled workforce. There is also a need for teacher training by focusing on pedagogical spirit in order to raise the quality of education. The education reform also requires the harness of information technology and other appropriate tools to modernize teaching and learning, as well as, strengthening soft skill in order to preserve and to restore Thai culture and traditions, especially conserving Thai language, local dialects and local wisdom. While there is an urgent need to uplift competencies in foreign languages, neighboring countries and international culture in order to prepare Thailand to be a part of the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community and to be a part of the world community.

Regarding the measurement and evaluation, it is necessary for all organizations to monitor achievement of the operation and to learn how to find solutions to problems, and must be continuously implemented to monitor and control the operation. This is how we can build trust for consumers and the public which is an international practice. As for education, external assessment is required as a check and balance mechanism to ensure the quality and standards of education. The principle of external quality assessment is an international standard that all countries implement and pursue. Currently, there are agencies that were established to assess quality of education at the national, regional and global levels. Their roles are to evaluate and assess educational standards of educational institutions in each country and to assure that the quality of education can be aligned with the rest of academic communities.

The complete process of quality assurance must contain both internal and external quality assurance. Internal quality assurance must be implemented by the institutions together with the support from the parent organizations to control, verify, adjust and develop the institutions to match the expected standards and environment. External quality assessment is a mechanism that guarantees the performance results of an educational institution that derived from the implementation of internal quality assurance.

For this reason, external quality assurance is very important. In order to ensure the quality of an educational institution, there must be the following components of assessment:

1. The educational institution and its parent organization must develop parameters for the quality of education. It should implement internal quality assessment and produce both short-term and long-term plans that run parallel with the institutional context, parent organization policy, and guidelines of national education reform. It should encourage and carry out self-auditing and self-assessment systems periodically to improve and develop quality of educational management as well as prepare to be assessed by the external agencies.

2. The standards and indicators for the assessment must reflect the quality of education. For example, the quantity and quality of the teachers, instructors and other educational personnel must meet expectations. Curriculum, teaching and learning methods are periodically reviewed whether they are up-to-date by combining the data collection with



efficient information technology and communication tools. Institutional management must correspond to good governance, while ensuring that arts and cultures are being preserved. Management has to safeguard that the institutional environment is conducive to enhance students' learning. Educational institutions should pay attention to deliver academic service and regularly exchange dialogues with the community and society. It is one of the main missions of educational institutions to guide community to solve social problems or to prevent any mishap in the society that matches social and economic changing contexts. The quality of learners and graduates must meet the desirable standards, attributes and competencies at each level of education. Graduating students must be smart, decent and kind persons that embrace the 12 Thai core values. Thanks to ONESQA that has set up the Third Round of External Assessment criteria with the 12 Thai core values that will certainly enrich the life skills of learners, and to preserve arts and cultural heritages. These indicators are aligned with the governmental educational policy as well as corresponding to the 12 Thai core values. It was a big success towards the educational reform because to foster morality and ethics to learners was an important foundation to alleviate corruption.

3. External assessment system and procedure must be developed for an accurate and effective result. The institutions and their parent organizations can utilize the results for their improvement, development and enhancing educational quality.

Apart from this, ONESQA is currently developing the online external assessment which will be used for the fourth round of assessment. For some institutions whose technology are not available, they will continue the former method for EQA together with developing the technology and readiness towards the online assessment for the fifth round of assessment which is aimed to be fully operational after the year 2020. The government now is reconsidering the roles and procedure of external assessment to align it with the governmental policy. It is believed that this will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of external quality assessment that will enhance the quality of education for all levels.

All stakeholders are invited to share and build the quality culture, especially the strengthening of an internal quality assurance culture and external quality assessment, and to seek a mutual understanding of all involved in the QA process by means of building trust in the QA systems, as well as harnessing the EQA results for continuous development of quality education.



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**Dr. Tienchai Keeranan**

Former Chairperson of the National Reform Council

## Quality Assurance of Education in Thailand

There are 3 main issues for quality assurance of education in Thailand: 1) the importance of quality assurance; 2) the achievement of quality assurance, strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and the opportunity for development; and 3) the reformation of quality assurance system.

Twenty years ago, the reformation of quality assurance was a new thing although its principle was well-aware, understood, and executed in the education community of many countries. Thailand started using the quality insurance system since 1993. However, the world financial crisis in 1997 that also affected Thailand, led to the modification of ideas, methods, structures, and all related regulations, especially attitudes regarding good governance, transparency, responsibility and accountability.

The participation of relevant stakeholders brought about a big reformation because it was a paradigm shift, and changing of ideas, beliefs, processes and views. For example, there was the reorganization of the government's administrative system, especially in the Ministry of Education that divided its structure into four principal administrative bodies. In the case of higher education, the administration and higher education personnel management were transferred to each university council, while the duty of Office of the Higher Education Commission (formerly the Ministry of University Affairs) was transformed into a supporting unit for the national higher education administration.

The most important feature is the change of roles in the government, the Ministry, and the Office of the Higher Education Commission that were tasked to oversee and monitor the operation of higher education institutions. The government specified a new policy that aims to properly monitor the standard of curriculum, standard of the institutions, and consumers' protection.

There is still a lot of confusion among departments about the function of executing and monitoring themselves. The status of the higher education

institutions is autonomous in terms of the administrative power but they still cannot operate independently. When we started the reformation in the past, the government emphasized its monitoring of higher education management, mainly on the input and process. Afterward, there was a need to make the monitoring cycle more complete by incorporating inputs, processes, outcomes, outputs and impacts and make sure that all stakeholders will have a mutual understanding and to implement these indicators effectively in all educational institutions.

For example, the new standard requires that a curriculum needs to specify clearly that studying towards a bachelor's degree requires the student to enroll for about 4 years or a maximum of 8 years, including requirements for the number of credit hours, or qualifications of instructors and lecturers. Educational standards are regulated to provide guarantee for the government that the country will have qualified graduates that align with the minimum standards and meet the needs of employers. The minimum standards are important because they are designed to measure not only the management of teaching and learning but also the quality of higher education personnel. However, there is no clear indication if they perform well what reward they will get or is there any penalty for not achieving the same minimum standards.

The criteria for credits transfer across borders become more important for the graduates to pursue a higher degree. EQA should be able to demonstrate the performance of each institution that would subsequently lead to institutional accreditation. In the past, the government had the responsibility to set up criteria and control. After the reform, the institutions are responsible for their own criteria and quality control. The accreditation must provide support for the credits transfer at the institutional, program, faculty and subject levels by aligning with the international reference base. Currently, there is no organization that is responsible for institutional accreditation whose roles will be to set up the standards, time frame, and accreditation and assessment procedures. The National Education Act of 1999 stipulated the existence of an educational quality assurance system to ensure the quality of end-users. The Act has outlined two areas. First is internal quality assurance in which institutions together with their parent organizations must ensure that the institutions are of good quality. Second is the external quality assessment by ONESQA whose roles are to assess the results of educational management of all institutions once every 5 years.

ONESQA should have a pivotal role for assessing the quality of education by means of setting up standards, ensure and assess that institutions perform towards the desirable standards. ONESQA and other parent organizations should cooperate to define distinctive roles and responsibilities in the quality spectrum. For example, roles of setting up standards – both internal and external standards must correspond with each other. ONESQA's assessment should be developed further for institutional accreditation.

The issue that should be considered, using the example of higher education, is that the Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC) has set a clear procedure for internal quality assessment, as well as setting up standards for assessment. However, the criteria were not consistent with the external quality assessment as well as the key performance indicators (KPIs) of each institution that does not yet include outputs, outcomes, and impacts. Many institutions must create a quality assurance unit to be responsible for internal quality in which it became less burdensome. Moreover, the evaluation of Office of the Public Sector Development Commission (OPDC) with another set of criteria has also created more burdens for public higher education institutions. The three organizations (OHEC, ONESQA and OPDC) should discuss and develop a set of KPIs that can serve common objectives of these 3 agencies. This should be re-considered and adjusted to lessen the burden. Apart from this, the end results cannot be compared due to the difference of assessors—some are not amicable and some of them have a conflict of interest.

The educational institutions' standards should correspond to the national education standards. This raises a concern to reform education for all levels as well as its system. There are three main issues towards the educational reform:

1. External quality assessment aims to develop an institution. The focus should emphasize the enhancement of educational quality rather than just to pass the assessment. The standards and criteria should be reconsidered to reflect the expected quality. The three assessing organizations should cooperate and reduce the burden from evaluation and assessment. The assessment should aim to reflect the truth of institutional performance based on outputs and outcomes. If the



assessment is to be done online, there must be a system in place to ensure that the information submitted online is true and correct. There must be a random assessment to prevent disinformation.

2. It is important to be autonomous in educational quality assessment. ONESQA is assessing the institutions all over the country. However, standards and KPIs should be adjusted to be able to reflect the truth as well as to reduce the documentation for the institutions and to provide amicable assessors.

3. Framework and standards for each level of education should be formulated. A committee should be appointed to look into the EQA reform. EQA should be conducted by using the KPIs that are formulated by educational institutions themselves for the assessment and certification of their quality. ONESQA should refrain from formulating its own criteria and standards for assessment but rather to develop an institutional accreditation process which needs to have a mechanism to review and to audit the management of educational institutions.



## Breaking Barriers Towards a Millennium of Quality

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### Professor

#### Dr. Channarong Pornrungrroj

Director, Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA), Thailand; and President, ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN).

### ABSTRACT

According to the statements of National Education Act B.E.2542 (1999) and the Amendments B.E.2545 (2002), Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) was entitled to develop criteria and methods for external quality assessment as well as publish assessment results, at least once every five years. As for the ONESQA's roles, it has cooperated with institutions' parent organizations and relevant agencies, to promote quality enhancement, as well as, to encourage institutions to utilize assessment's result for continual development.

There are three main areas towards a millennium of quality: 1) Quality Development; 2) Quality Enhancement; and 3) Quality Framework.

Quality Development (QD) refers to applying of EQA results for improving its own institution. This also includes promoting institutional collaboration towards quality education. Institutions can utilize its EQA results for many purposes. For example, it serves as an information tool for the public to make their decisions for choosing institutions for their children; it serves as a tool for government to oversee performances of education institutions in order to formulate policy for education management in Thailand; and it can be used for strategic planning for educational development, best practices and so on. Moreover, the institutions themselves are encouraged to develop quality of education further to serve social and economic development. Institutions with "excellent" assessment result can share their strength as good practices with other institutions and try to diminish weaknesses so as to move effectively ahead. Institutions with lower assessment result will be given recommendations to improve themselves towards national education standards.

Quality Enhancement (QE) includes reinforcing a positive attitude and understanding for a stakeholder to participate actively in quality assurance. Success in improvement of quality of education lies in people's attitude, understanding and participation. Assessment helps to reflect



the status of our education, as well as, a crucial part for educational development process. There are two types of assessment: internal and external quality assessment. Internal quality assessment (IQA) is the review and auditing process conducted by an institution's QA bodies or its parent organization. External quality assessment (EQA) is done by an external agency. Building a positive attitude towards QA is also important and it starts with three forces. First is motivation: a force from outside that motivates people to do or to be something; second is inspiration: a force from inside that inspires people to do or to be something; and the third force is compassion: a force that touches people's emotions and influences to do or to be something. Everyone should have a positive attitude towards QA because it reflects the stage of educational development and it is also a tool that helps uplifting national education standards.

Quality Framework (QF) is the extent for students' desired outcome. In order to achieve it's goal, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was developed. The NQF is a framework that links learning outcomes and work competency. It is designed to ensure that education develops students in the direction of the needed market. It is also encouraged to raise the NQF to the international level in order to be able to compete with the world labor market as well as to promote labor and student mobility. ASEAN countries formed a network called "ASEAN Quality Assurance Network," known as AQAN and set up the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF) as a guideline for member countries to work towards the same direction of quality assurance. This will help to reduce the gap of quality between countries as well as to enhance competitiveness with other regions.

**KEYWORDS:**

Quality development, quality enhancement, quality framework, breaking barriers, millennium of quality, ASEAN, AQAN, AQAF, NQF

For the past 15 years, the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization) or ONESQA has developed systems, criteria, and methods for external quality assessment (EQA) and education management assessment. It focuses on examining and reflecting the quality of education accurately and equitably as well as setting guidelines for enhancing Thai education towards global requirements. The determination is to assess accurately and equitably

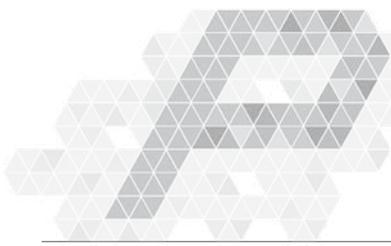
towards the continuous development based on the philosophy of breaking barriers towards a millennium of quality.

Generally, there are problems and obstacles in anything that people may do. In other words, there are always limits and limitations. Limits refer to problems, obstacles and conditions. Limitations are the level of competency to cope with problems, obstacles, and conditions under certain circumstances. To overcome the limitations demand the capacity to get through problems in order to achieve goals. It requires the change of perspective and conceptual thinking. We need to turn crises into opportunities, convert problems into opportunities to enhance our capacity. We need to break barriers of fear, and to be ready to move forward with our own competency and potential.

Education limitations constitute four limits. First is **the problem with respect to learners**. The birthrate tends to decrease and there is more aged population in the country. Lack of an emerging labor force soon will become a problem. Therefore, we should lay the foundation of an educational system that develops human resources that are in line with the needs of labor markets because one of the biggest problems today is that educational institutions produce graduates that do not correspond to the needs of the market and hence leads to underemployment and subsequently unemployment.

An important solution to this problem is to apply internal quality assurance in educational management. For example, educational institutions examine the status of its own students, adjust lesson plans and develop teaching and learning methods, and pay close attention to the needs of students and society. Additionally, parent organizations, communities, and institutional committees support the need for resources. Second is **the problem regarding teachers and educational personnel**. For example, teachers have more roles and responsibilities in teaching and running the institutions, lack of teachers, lack of expertise in the area the teachers teach—all these affect efficiency of teaching and learning. However, educational institutions can overcome their limitations by joining hands with other institutions, organizing multi-grade learning or sharing educational resources. The institutions can also invite the community experts, retired teachers and monks to help in teaching and instilling students.

Third is **the problem regarding administrations and management**. A change of administrators, for instance, can cause several problems such as the continuity of management and the qualifications of



administrators. Apart from this, when small schools are merged, a number of supporting staff becomes more than necessary. Therefore, the most important thing for the administrators is to manage an institution with the capacity to overcome limitations—to eliminate all problems or convert them into opportunities to do something new and ready to change.

Fourth is **the problem regarding budgets**. Small institutions invest more on teaching and learning per student than large institutions but receive fewer funds because the government support based on unit cost, or count number of the students. With fewer funds, the number of teachers becomes less as well as the teaching and learning equipment, other tools and buildings. This raises a gap between small and large institutions. However, it does not always mean that institutions with more funds will have more quality in educational management.

Quality assurance (QA) will help an institution to see its strengths and weaknesses. It will turn problems into experiences and discoveries. When QA becomes a part of organizational culture, quality culture and sustainable educational standards will then emerge towards the millennium of quality. There are three principles that bring QA to sustainability – 1) QD: Quality Development; 2) QE: Quality Enhancement; and 3) QF: Quality Framework.

**QD: Quality Development**—refers to the processes that enhance the quality of education. The processes must be done systematically and start from oneself. Before developing quality, there must be QA—that acts as a system and control mechanism, to assess the results as to whether it reaches the desired and expected standards. Internal quality assessment (IQA) is the assessment of quality and educational standards. It will help an institution to reach the desired standards. Apart from this, **PDCA cycle** is another tool that helps to enrich quality in working processes following the cycle of P (Plan), D (Do), C (Check), A (Act). Quality development together with the path of four Buddhist noble truths; that is suffering, the cause of suffering, how to be free from suffering, and the practice that will free suffering; will work better because the four Buddhist noble truths will help an institution to identify the causes of the problems and solve them. PDCA cycle and the four Buddhist noble truths are the tools that can be assessed in every dimension and bring about continuous feedback that leads to educational quality development. This will bring a **quality culture**—which is a core of development. An important factor that will build a quality culture is the development

of human resources in an institution, following community principles, fostering good thinking and exhibiting good behaviors which will then become a part of lifestyle–systematic and efficient life. Finally, **continuous development** is to develop educational quality towards the chain of quality, starting from self-development, institutional development and national development–to break barriers and overcome limitations to quality of education–turning limitations into capacity.

**QE: Quality Enhancement** – there are two forces that lead to educational quality, namely motivation and inspiration. To begin with, EQA must be implemented and the results must be utilized in the institutions to upgrade educational quality. For example, ONESQA has two educational quality innovation projects that institutions utilize for its results. They are educational quality enhancement innovation. First, the **“Area-Based Assessment (ABA)”** is a project that develops the educational quality assurance system in participating areas by selecting the most appropriate and suitable methods for the areas. Moreover, it aims to enhance cooperation between organizations and networks. Currently, Area-Based Assessment is conducted in all 77 provinces. A second innovation project is the **“One for Nine Project (149),”** which derives from the concept of gathering several organizations to break barriers together. Educational institutions, public and private organizations and foreign organizations volunteer to help educational institutions to develop and build a chain of quality with no expense or the so-called zero-budget project. These two projects are the results of motivation and inspiration to enhance the quality of education. Helping institutions to develop their quality amicably is an interesting solution that can help solving problems efficiently.

**QF: Quality Framework**–the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF) was set up by ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) to be a guideline for member countries to set up their national education standards for higher education and as a tool for quality assurance leading to mutual recognition of degrees and qualifications, as well as, credits transfer. AQAF is composed of four principles, namely external quality assurance agencies, EQA standards and processes, internal quality assurance system, and a national qualifications framework.

**External quality assurance agencies** should share the same missions. They should be autonomous, transparent, accurate, and cooperate both within and across countries. **EQA standards and processes** include the characteristics and qualifications of assessors as well as taking



cultural diversity into account. **An internal quality assurance system** must ensure internal quality that corresponds to external qualifications and to the needs of the public. A **national qualifications framework** is a tool that demonstrates progressiveness of an educational system. It is meant for credits transfer as well as for students and educational personnel mobility. In order to conduct quality assurance, there are three levels of assessment. First is at the **institutional level**—parent organizations should encourage its institutions to develop quality assurance in their institutions continuously. Parent organizations will help to supervise the institutions toward desired standards. Second is at the **national level**. The government should advocate a strong quality assurance system within the country to create positive attitudes toward quality assurance, and to build quality culture towards continuous development. Third is at the **regional level** (ASEAN level). AQAN encourages member countries to apply AQAF as a guideline for setting up a country's national framework while adapting it to the context of its own country in order that all member countries will have the desired capacity that can align with other countries inside and outside of the region.

In conclusion, the process to overcome the limitations is the process of changing one's thoughts and actions. It is to build hope and foster the public power as well as to create network. Problems and obstacles are like the barriers that are destined as finishing point and achieved. If problems and obstacles are the limitations, then the ultimate goal is to try and overcome them for the sake of success. On the other hand, if problems and obstacles are turned into driving forces to raise one's potential, then they become a stairway to achievement.

To think positively, properly, and possibly, are we able to overcome the problems to nourish wisdom.



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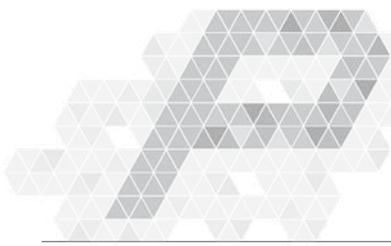
## Quality Review in the Future: What Will We Need? What Will We Want?

### ABSTRACT

Quality review of higher education, an examination of the effectiveness of colleges and universities, has experienced major growth and development in the past 25 years. Today, almost every country in the world has some form of scrutiny of its higher education activities. While the dominant form of quality review is country-based, there has also been considerable growth in regional and international approaches to quality.

The expansion of quality review has been characterized by a striking similarity in thinking and practice. Most quality review is based on the twin activities of self-reporting about performance by a college or university, accompanied by peer review and either a judgment about the quality status of an institution or recommendations for future improvement. The review is a mix of quality assurance or maintaining threshold quality and quality improvement, efforts to enhance the effectiveness of an institution. These practices characterize quality review, whether it is country-based, regional or international in scope.

As important and valuable as today's quality review has been, significant changes in higher education and in the needs of various societies are both challenging current practice and giving rise to alternative forms of quality review. Significant changes include the major growth in higher education around the world, the emergence of a substantial private higher education presence, information technology affecting all dimensions of higher education, the urgency of effective education for work, the internationalization of higher education and the emergence of innovative providers apart from traditional degree-granting colleges and universities. At the same time, alternative means to judge quality such as ranking systems, qualifications frameworks and benchmarking are increasingly available. And, there is an ongoing dialogue about moving away from the dominant country-based quality review model to greater reliance on regional or international quality expectations or standards.



All of this suggests that we are entering a new phase of quality review development, a future in which we will need to expand and diversify our thinking about what constitutes effective examination of quality. A major task for the quality review community is to address the many changes and challenges, focusing on two key questions: What of our current quality review will remain valuable? What alternative, additional or new approaches to quality might be desirable?

### **KEYWORDS:**

quality, quality assurance, accreditation, quality review, higher education, international quality assurance, international higher education, internationalization

**The Present Quality Review** is about higher education and its future.

Quality review is the work of individual accreditors and EQA, and other 'independent' actors around the world. Historically, the focus on quality review is on degree-granting colleges and universities and has been country-based—national governments that create the call for quality assurance bodies.

**Central feature** – is the use of peers to make judgments about academic quality and has been driven by degree-granting colleges and universities.

**Heart of quality review** is the concept of quality improvement. If we are really doing quality review, improvement will be realized.

Quality review is premised on **4 key values**: 1) value of self-autonomy or self-determination of the institution; 2) academic freedom; 3) peer-review; and 4) the value of academic quality. Quality review has a broad notion on academic quality about intellectual development and capacity for civic engagement among other leadership functions. Quality review is formative in nature and not summative—how well one does against standards that have been established. It's a trust-based enterprise, such as peer review that lends itself to judgments that is not always well-received.

### **Innovations of Higher Education – The Future**

What is happening with higher education? There is evidence of enormous enrollment growth in higher education that goes well beyond the norm. There are about 200 million people seeking enrollment in HEIs today that will increase to 400 million by 2030. This growth is unbalanced.

Episodic attendance has become the norm. Life-long learning, going to college, part-time student enrolment are all part of becoming a standard today. It is a challenge on the degree structure and to sustain programs over time.

Higher education has been challenged with technology, such as predictive analytics and databases, but the application of enormous amounts of data has an impact on learning in the classroom.

We are experiencing an impact on internationalization, especially when it comes to the mobility of students, faculty, locations, and curricula.

Now there are an increasing number of innovative providers, including MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) from private companies, badge platforms, and an online free university called University of the People that has a volunteer faculty. This has made headway as there is a considerable size of refugees that seek to be educated to become competitive in their newly designated homes.

No longer an innovation, private higher education or for profit higher education make money for each student that is enrolled in the institution. Private higher education around the world has approximately 30 percent of enrollments in private higher education.

Microcredentials, such as nanodegrees, and other certifications is another innovation that provides education and offers some kind of formal acknowledgment of a course structure that has been completed... less than a full-degree but there is an emergence in this type of credentials.

Another innovation is the type of providers, including MOOCs that are fast approaching 4,000 across the globe. MOOCs in the USA include UDACITY, edX and COURSERA have 12 million students in 2014; Mozilla has 13 badge-issuing platforms that presently have over 1.1 million badges; Straighterline started in 2008 in the USA with low tuition fees. Now it has over 10,000 students with credit transfer guarantees with 80 reputable colleges and universities. All of these MOOCs seem to be an innovation that will continue to grow exponentially.

We will see more new providers with new technologies and new credentialing criteria that will become increasingly global in higher education. Yet, we will continue to keep the remaining traditional colleges and universities but will no longer be alone in education delivery.



## **WHAT IS IN STORE FOR THE FUTURE OF QUALITY REVIEW AND WHAT WILL WE NEED TO DO?**

Some of the suggestions include the need to engage technology to a greater extent than what we are doing now. Our capacity to examine online education will be essential. We will need big data and predictive analytics to be analyzed to determine how it is affecting the classroom and learning and its impact on students.

As we engage in the technology, we will need to make decisions about the focus of our work. With the emerging new sector of HE providers, we will need to address these innovative providers and work in some way on how quality review will be provided. In the USA, the federal government will help the innovative providers' students to receive financial aid to take the courses as part of the experience. It will be a pilot study to look at the quality that will extend to building new QA bodies. Without a doubt, this will have an impact on HE in the USA and eventually across the globe.

There will be a need to do more in internationalizing our work. Quality review started as a country-based enterprise. Yet, it is important for quality review to have a regional focus, if not a broad international focus. Therefore, there will be a need to develop this capacity.

Further, there will be a need to develop a capacity to be competitive. Although there are QA bodies that carry out review of academic quality in higher education, there are new providers with rankings, benchmarking, with qualifications frameworks that have a focus on performance on academic quality. It may be necessary to engage in this capacity, especially in internationalization that will become more dominant.

### **KEY ISSUES**

It is known that there are some fundamental issues that need to be addressed. Some of the issues include "*public accountability*" with regard to transparency and student learning outcomes; the role of QA and its accountability to the stakeholders and the public is also crucial.

*Quality as successful education for work* is a key issue for everybody. This is also very important, especially in life-long learning. The more access a potential student has to enroll in higher education without meeting minimum requirements or the student doesn't complete the requirements to graduate, that student will not be able to compete

for a good job in the market. The question then is how the institution can be of good quality if there aren't any quality students that are graduating.

Responding to innovation, there is a need as it does put the traditional HE institutions on notice that they need to do more. Still the big question is where is the leadership in QA for innovation and HE? It has to be discussed.

Another big issue is *academic corruption*. The buying of credits or admissions for research is rampant. Quality is going to be affected and the reporting of the academic corruption findings will be essential to eliminate this practice.

*Governments are restless*. What needs to be done with changing the structure of quality review? Look at some events that are happening around the world. Ireland had 4 bodies that focused on QA and have consolidated to a single body. In Saudi Arabia and Chile, decisions are being made to make accreditation compulsory. In the UK, the QAA or the Quality Assurance Agency may be dissolved and discussions are underway to establish a new QA body.

How are the needs and wants coming together? *Change* is needed. We need to be responsive. Let's not give up the fundamental feature of peer review as academic freedom, and academic quality. We don't want to upend traditional quality review.

**There are many questions that require discussion. It is important to note that there are choices to be made to a complex and growing trend in higher education that must not be ignored.**

**What are we going to do going forward? What purpose do we serve? How do we want to operate? How are we going to structure on what we do? How far are we going to go? Is the value of peer review in need of being augmented? If resources and processes are there, what can be done to improve outcomes?**





## **ASEAN's Journey towards Harmonization and Integration: The ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework**

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### **ABSTRACT**

ASEAN's Journey towards Harmonization and Integration:  
The ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework

The paper will focus on the development of the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF) and the key actors who are involved in the process. Driving this phenomenon is the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN), established in 2008, which consists of 10 national quality assurance authorities and ministries responsible for higher education. The Network seeks to promote harmonization in higher education through collaboration and sharing of good practices while remaining mindful of the diversity of quality assurance systems, cultures and traditions within the region. The Network also seeks to facilitate mutual recognition of qualifications and to develop a regional quality assurance framework for Southeast Asia.

The development of a regional quality assurance framework is an important first step in its journey towards harmonization and integration, leading to the formation of the ASEAN Economic Community. The ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework will serve as the cornerstone for harmonization in higher education and serve as a common reference point where the ASEAN member countries can benchmark and align their quality assurance systems, leading to a shared set of values, expectations and good practice in relation to quality and its assurance, by institutions and by agencies across the region.

The Framework consists of four sets of interrelated principles which seek to provide a common ground and understanding of quality assurance within ASEAN member states. It contains statements of good practice for internal and external quality assurance as well as the establishment and implementation of national qualifications frameworks, thus creating a zone of trust for facilitating recognition of qualifications within ASEAN and beyond.

The journey to harmonization of higher education in ASEAN has been set in motion by AQAN as a response to the ASEAN integration agenda. But the journey will most likely not be easy; it will be long and difficult. The ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework is an important first step, but the road to regional integration will be a continuing journey of collaboration and cooperation, of working towards common agreements and consensus, of intra-regional exchanges and inter-regional dialogues, of alignment and convergence of ideas. Indeed, these are exciting times for ASEAN and AQAN.

**KEYWORDS:**

harmonization, integration, framework, quality assurance, collaboration, convergence, mutual recognition, ASEAN

**INTRODUCTION**

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the Bangkok Declaration by its Founding Members, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. In the succeeding years, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Vietnam, Lao PDR and Myanmar, joined ASEAN, making up what is known today as the ten ASEAN Member States.

The aims and purposes of ASEAN are: to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region; to ensure regional peace and stability; and to promote active collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest.

In 1967, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Abdul Razak, said during the signing of the Bangkok Declaration, “We, the nations and peoples of Southeast Asia, must get together and form by ourselves a new perspective and a new framework for our region”. He stated that we should “think and act together and prove by deeds that we belong to a family of Southeast Asian nations bound together by ties of friendship and goodwill and imbued with our own ideals and aspirations and determined to shape our own destiny”. He added that, “with the establishment of ASEAN, we have taken a firm and a bold step on that road”.

It has been 48 years since ASEAN first embarked on this journey. Through the years, the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization – Regional Institute of Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO-RIHED) saw the significance of a regional framework for higher education harmonization.



## **TOWARDS A COMMON SPACE IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

In mid-2007, the SEAMEO RIHED submitted a proposal to the 30<sup>th</sup> High Officials Meeting on a “Structured Framework for Regional Integration in Higher Education in Southeast Asia: The Road towards a Common Space”. The proposal was endorsed by the Ministers of Education during the SEAMEO Council Meeting in March 2008.

In response to the twin challenges of globalization and the transformation of the region into a knowledge-based society and economy, the proposal focused on the creation of a common space or area for regional higher education that will facilitate greater mobility and enhance the quality of higher education among institutions and countries in Southeast Asia. For this reason, a harmonization process among the different higher education systems in the region is of utmost importance.

Harmonization in ASEAN is defined as a process that recognizes the diversity of higher education systems, cultures and traditions while promoting common practices and guidelines.

## **THE ASEAN QUALITY ASSURANCE NETWORK**

It is significant to note that in the same year (2008) that the SEAMEO Council endorsed the proposal towards creating the ASEAN Higher Education Area (AHEA), the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) was born.

Ten quality assurance authorities and ministries representing ASEAN member states participated in the first Roundtable Meeting held in Kuala Lumpur. The meeting adopted the Kuala Lumpur Declaration which aims to contribute to the development of an ASEAN Economic Community through collaboration and sharing of good practices amidst the diversity in the region. The Declaration also acknowledged the members’ common interests and concerns and affirmed the need for a closer relationship among the peoples in the region through mobility of students, faculty and programs.

AQAN is registered as an international association network under the 1966 Societies Act of Malaysia. The network’s Secretariat is hosted by the Malaysian Qualifications Authority (MQA). At present, AQAN has 10 full members representing the ASEAN member states and seven associate members.

## **THE ASEAN QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK FOR HIGHER EDUCATION**

In 2011, AQAN embarked on a project to develop an ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework for Higher Education (AQAF) for the Southeast Asian Region. A Task Force was established with officials from the MQA; SEAMEO-RIHED; the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU); the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA), Thailand; the General Department of Education Testing and Accreditation (GDETA), Vietnam; the ASEAN University Network (AUN) and Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council (BDNAC).

The AQAF is envisioned to promote harmonization by developing a quality assurance framework in higher education where the ASEAN countries could benchmark and align their quality assurance systems. It should be noted that quality assurance systems in the region are at different stages of development and there is a need for voluntary convergence. This Framework will serve as the cornerstone for harmonization of higher education throughout the region. It will serve as a common reference point for quality assurance agencies and higher education institutions amidst the diversity of higher education systems, cultures and traditions within the region. It will also facilitate regional recognition of degrees and qualifications.

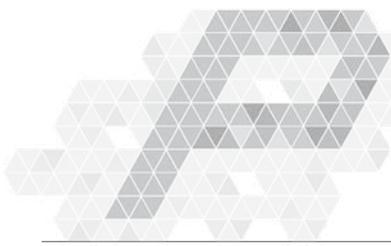
In 2013, the AQAN Round Table Meeting endorsed in principle the work being done by the Task Force. In the succeeding months, refinements were made on the Framework. In 2014, the name AQAFHE was shortened to ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF) making it more inclusive.

## **THE ASEAN FRAMEWORK FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE**

The Framework consists of four principles:

- External Quality Assurance Agencies
- External Quality Assurance Processes
- Internal Quality Assurance
- National Qualifications Framework.

Each principle focuses on 10 core statements and uses generic statements of good practices that can be adapted to various political, educational and socio-cultural settings. These four principles are intrinsically linked and together form the basis of the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework.



The **External Quality Assurance Agencies** are key players in maintaining and sustaining the quality of education taking into account the interests of students, various stakeholders and society, while **the External Quality Assurance Processes** demonstrate the systematic approach taken by agencies towards the development of standards and criteria to meet their goals and objectives.

**Internal Quality Assurance** focuses on the role of institutions in developing, sustaining and assuring quality education. Higher education institutions have the primary responsibility for quality and a quality culture should underpin their teaching, learning, research, other services and activities. The **National Qualifications Framework (NQF)** describes the qualifications of an education and training system and how they interlink. The NQF is based on learning outcomes that emphasize student-centered learning and competencies.

The primary purpose of the Framework is to enhance the quality of education in the ASEAN region and support the mobility of students, workers and professionals, both within and outside the region. Using generic principles and statements of good practice, the Framework is not prescriptive. Its purpose is to promote good practice for internal and external quality assurance. These principles can be adapted in various political, legal and cultural settings without compromising a member country's basic values and traditions. The Framework enables quality assurance agencies and higher education institutions in each country to improve and align with others across the region.

The Framework further seeks to provide a common ground and understanding of quality assurance within ASEAN countries so that its generic principles find resonance on the national level. Through the adoption of these principles and statements of good practice, consistency of quality assurance practices across Southeast Asia will be improved. Procedures for the recognition of qualifications will also be strengthened and the credibility of the work of quality assurance agencies will be enhanced. Mutual trust and understanding among institutions and quality assurance agencies will grow and mutual recognition of accrediting decisions will be fast-tracked.

## **NEXT STEPS**

While the AQAF is a reference framework that is voluntary and aspirational in nature, there is still a need to expand the basic principles in such a way that the concepts and ideas are better understood by those who use the Framework. The expansion may take the form of explanatory notes for each principle and the development of a manual for its implementation. Capacity building workshops also need to be conducted across the region to disseminate the contents of the manual and how to use it. Initiatives need to be undertaken to cover the technical aspects required by the Framework such as the development of a register of reviewed quality assurance agencies.

## **THE EU-SHARE**

On August 24, 2015, the journey towards harmonization went on high gear with the launching of a new program called “European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region (SHARE)” in Jakarta. The objective of this program is to support ASEAN in harmonizing regional higher education by sharing European expertise. Through this project, the EU will share its experience and expertise on the Bologna Process and the development of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) which are relevant to higher education in ASEAN. Like the Bologna Process, the harmonization of higher education in ASEAN does not aim to change national education systems, but rather provide tools that will connect them.

## **THE JOURNEY IS ON-TRACK**

The drive towards harmonization and the development of the ASEAN Higher Education Area is on-track and member agencies of AQAN are eager to move forward. The EU-SHARE is an important milestone in this journey towards the ASEAN Higher Education Space. It is important to realize, however, that the governments and ministries of education, quality assurance agencies, higher education institutions and professional bodies in ASEAN are the key players and drivers of change in this continuing journey towards an ASEAN Higher Education Area.



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## Imagining the Future of Quality Assurance Networking

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### ABSTRACT

Quality assurance (QA) in higher education has expanded rapidly. Concerns for quality have now found an important place through the global declaration of UNESCO.

The frequently discussed issues in QA include, but not limited to, the trend of globalisation, cross-border higher education, the role of policy makers, heightened degree of competition, changing nature of higher education institutions (HEIs) and subsequently the roles and scopes of external QA agencies (EQAAs) and internal QA agencies (IQAAs), the emergence of different types of qualifications against the conventional ones that we are familiar with, recognition of institutions, personnel and qualifications, mobility of staff and students, and the like. Although many of these issues still require further discussions and debates, they point to the same conclusion that the role of EQAAs are becoming more important than ever before. QA networks, which consist of members from amongst the EQAAs and IQAAs, are expected to play a more important role in the near future, if they are not already so.



Taking stock of the current trends and challenges, this paper presents views of the authors on the future of QA networking that will be based on the spirit of collaboration, a system driven by bridging of technology and social media and one that is based on trust and mutual respect. The paper also calls for strengthening QA as a profession. It also appeals to the higher education QA fraternity to consider an International Day for QA in Higher Education to highlight the contributions of our profession to the cause of QA in higher education in particular and to the society in general.

**KEYWORDS:**

Quality, Networking, Student Mobility

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Several issues that impact quality assurance (QA) activities of external QA agencies (EQAAs) and internal QA agencies (IQAAs) have been discussed at length at various QA-related conferences and forums over the years. The issues include, but are not limited to, the trend of globalisation, cross-border higher education, the role of policy makers, a heightened degree of competition, the changing nature of higher education institutions (HEIs) and subsequently the roles and scopes of EQAAs and IQAAs, the emergence of different types of qualifications against the conventional ones that we are familiar with, recognition of institutions, personnel and qualifications, mobility of staff and students, and the like. To a large extent, some of these issues have served as themes for the various related conferences and forums at the national, regional and international levels.

Although many of these issues still require further discussions and debates, they point to the same conclusion that the role of EQAAs are now becoming more important than ever. The ongoing harmonisation of QA standards as well as the creation and adoption of regional QA and qualifications framework are meant to facilitate and address these issues, particularly in terms of mobility of students and the resulting workforce produced to support national and regional socio-economic developments. In this regard, QA networks, which consist of EQAAs and IQAAs as members, are expected to play a more important role in the near future, if they are not already doing so.

## 2. QUALITY, ACCESS AND MOBILITY

To date, various initiatives have been taken by inter-governmental agencies to facilitate student mobility, such as the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Convention and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) process. Nevertheless, it is believed that QA networks such as the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN), CHEA International Quality Group (CIQG) and ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN), to name some, are equally positioned in facilitating this process and bridging the gaps that exist due to certain socio-political and economic considerations.

Despite the significant progress achieved by many economies since 2000, an estimated 58 million children of primary school age and 63 million adolescents of lower secondary school age, of whom girls remain the majority, are still out of school. In addition, many of those who have the privilege of going to schools are not acquiring basic knowledge and skills. At least 250 million primary school-aged children (more than 50% of whom have spent at least four years in school) are not able to read, write or count well enough to meet the minimum learning standards.

At the same time, there has been a rapid expansion of tertiary education, with total enrolment increasing from 100 million in 2000 to 196 million in 2012 in providing access and equity to a larger section of the world population. Having said so, there exists large gender disparities in accessing tertiary education, with disadvantages for females in low income countries and for males in high income countries.

In order to address the gaps, UNESCO via the Incheon Declaration has committed 'to **quality** education and to improving learning outcomes, which requires strengthening inputs, processes and the evaluation of outcomes and mechanisms to measure progress. We will ensure that teachers and educators are empowered, adequately recruited, well-trained, professionally qualified, motivated and supported within well-resourced, efficient and effectively governed systems' (UNESCO, 2015).

In addition, as many of the developing countries in the world are successful in increasing their gross enrolment in higher education, we are witnessing the move from elitist to a mass higher education system. This move has various implications which include the increased role of the private HEIs; diminishing (increasing to some) control



of governments; shift from place-bound education to mobile and more flexible forms of higher education; and an emergence of massive open online courses (MOOCs), open educational resources (OERs), and nano-qualifications, certifications and other new credentials (Eaton, 2015). Although the changes brought about a larger section of an educated population, recognition and mobility continue to be amongst the major issues that need to be addressed by EQAAs and QA networks.

In addition, these rapid changes also give birth to issues like degree and diploma mills, accreditation mills and other challenges such as immigration or visa rackets. It is apparent that governments, QA bodies, HEIs and international QA networks are under increased pressure from students and other stakeholders to play a more proactive role in safeguarding the interests of the student community whilst promoting international student mobility. Reliable information systems are one critical challenge here.

Whilst the European region has well-established information and recognition systems like the European Network of National Information Centres, and the National Academic Recognition Information Centres (ENIC-NARIC); and the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), unfortunately many other regions lack such information and resources. To address this issue, the APQN has initiated a global project on Asia Pacific Quality Information Portal (APQIP) with the help of UNESCO as well as the development of the Asia Pacific Quality Register (APQR) (APQN, 2015). If other regional QA networks could join this initiative, substantial contributions can be made in the interest of the global student community.

### **3. IMAGINING THE FUTURE OF QUALITY ASSURANCE NETWORKING**

The topic of imagining the future of QA networking has never been more apt than before. If we had only one QA network with one set of global practices and standards, then it would have been smoother to achieve the goal of global recognition and mobility. However, with the different stages of development, challenges and objectives to be achieved by the regional QA networks, this plurality and diversity of QA networking is a reality which we cannot change. However, what we could do is to try and bring all QA networks together for a common cause. On this score, some of the major issues that ought

to be considered include the configurations of EQAAs, networking of networks, strengthening QA as a profession and building the capacities of QA agencies.

### **3.1. Configurations of External Quality Assurance Agencies**

The flexible forms and changing nature of higher education such as joint and double degrees, online universities, MOOCs, OERs as well as the emergence of new qualifications and credentials have posed great challenges for the higher education QA community.

At the same time, we are seeing different configurations of EQAAs that will undoubtedly shape the future of QA networks. For instance, some EQAAs have a comprehensive structure, ranging from primary to tertiary education, whilst many focus on higher education and some even include skill-based qualifications in the technical and vocational sector. In the regional context, we are witnessing the implementation of the European QA systems and framework as well as the development of the ASEAN QA and qualifications framework (Pijano, 2015). It is therefore necessary for the QA agencies to update themselves with new tools, share and learn practices from peers as well as regional and international QA networks. As more regional QA and qualifications frameworks are developed, harmonisation becomes possible in our move towards having one single QA and qualifications framework that will facilitate recognition and mobility.

Interestingly, we are also witnessing the development of subject-specific accreditation bodies for higher education in the United States as well as in the European region. Additionally, there are accreditation bodies that have been established as an industry-specific purpose to quality assure certain professional programmes for industry practitioners in regard to competency enhancement. A good example is the Finance Accreditation Agency (FAA) which was established by the Central Bank of Malaysia and the Security Commission Malaysia to promote quality talent development in the financial services industry internationally (Amat and Chong, 2014). The membership of FAA in INQAAHE, APQN and AQAN will have implications on the future memberships of these QA networks and how they shape the higher education and professional development landscape. In this case, EQAAs within the QA networks stand to benefit from enhancing their QA standards directed at HEIs offering programmes that meet industry-specific requirements.



### **3.2. Networking of networks**

There are several good examples of how networks work together. Amongst the notable ones include the collaboration between INQAAHE and APQN to develop an international database of consultants and reviewers. Amongst the regional networks, APQN and the Arab Network of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE) have already signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for inter-regional cooperation in QA. The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), APQN and ANQAHE has joined hands to deliver the guidelines and toolkit for QA of Cross-Border Higher Education (QACHE) as a project funded by the European Union. The AQAN, on the other hand, has been working with the European Union on the ASEAN-The European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region (SHARE) project (Bienefeld, 2015). This is in addition to the ASEAN+3 and many other initiatives. A considerable number of MOUs have been signed between the EQAAs and/or regional networks as well.

Another notable example is the idea of proposed collaboration between INQAAHE-Guidelines to Good Practice (GGP) and other external reviews such as the Ibero-American Network for Higher Education Accreditation (RIACES), ENQA, Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), APQN, among others to avoid a duplication of efforts and thus reduce the cost burden on EQAAs (Patil, 2015). An implication here is that, rather than having multiple reviews, mutual recognition of reviews are possible. Such a mutual recognition can lead to the development of a Global QA Register (GQAR) in higher education.

### **3.3. Strengthening Quality Assurance as a Profession**

Statistics show that there are over 200 QA agencies around the world where its coverage has reached almost every country in the world. The INQAAHE has more than 170 full members engaged in external QA activities. The work and impact of INQAAHE and other QA networks have inspired the genesis of many other regional and special interests or professional networks of QA agencies. About 20 networks are currently active although their focus, activities and impact may vary from each other.

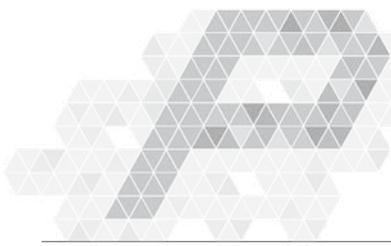
The efforts of networks and EQAAs have given a boost to internal QA activities amongst HEIs as EQAAs and IQAAs have very close functional links. In a country like India, for example, over 5,000 internal QA cells have been established in response to efforts of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council. Similar impacts can be seen in countries like Pakistan, Vietnam and Sri Lanka. As a matter of fact, interests in QA activities are so keen in Pakistan and Vietnam that several universities from these countries have become members of regional QA networks and INQAAHE. The rich and diverse tradition of QA in the Americas and advances of QA in Europe are known to all. The rise of EQAR in Europe and the recent launch of APQR have added new dimensions to the QA scenario.

In this regard, many QA networks have contributed immensely to the development of QA as a profession. Some of the examples of INQAAHE, APQN and AQAN are given in the following sub-sections.

### **3.3.1. International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education**

Being the pioneer in QA networking, INQAAHE was the first to recognise that 'the massive increase in external and internal quality assurance activities over recent decades, have created a new profession that requires a structured academic discipline and programs to educate quality assurance professionals, stimulate research and produce new initiatives ([www.inqaahe.org](http://www.inqaahe.org)).

Noting that there is very little education and training for the QA profession and its professionals, INQAAHE begun to fill this gap through the creation of a comprehensive programme for the training and professional development of QA professionals. Through the considerable expertise of its members, INQAAHE has created materials that are available for free on its website. In addition, a QA Graduate programme has been developed with the support of UNESCO some time ago. INQAAHE has also partnered with two leading universities to offer this programme as part of the university curricula. Even after the discontinuation of funds from UNESCO, INQAAHE has continued to offer scholarships to some deserving candidates to take up this programme. This initiative is seen as an important contribution to the QA profession apart from the regular activities like conferences, forums and publications.



### **3.3.2. Asia Pacific Quality Network**

The APQN is the voice of the QA community from over 50 countries in Asia Pacific with memberships from 52 QA bodies. The following lists the key initiatives of APQN in strengthening the profession amongst the QA bodies in Asia Pacific:

- a) More than 50 workshops and seminars hosted in Australia, India, Vietnam, Laos, Fiji, People's Republic of China and other countries in the region with about 2,000 participants including 177 that were sponsored by APQN;
- b) Six moderated online forums on various QA issues with more than 450 participants from the member agencies;
- c) APQN Exchange Programme which involves 12 exchanges per year amongst the member agencies;
- d) APQN Quality Award, the first of its kind initiative amongst the regional QA networks to recognise good practices of QA bodies and experts;
- e) Quality hubs across Asia Pacific;
- f) Alignment with Chiba principles and APQN criteria for the launch of APQR;
- g) Project on reviewer training package;
- h) Asia-Europe QA Expert Exchange programme between APQN and the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA); and
- i) Collaboration with UNESCO on a toolkit for QACHE.

### **3.3.3. ASEAN Quality Assurance Network**

In an attempt to develop young QA professionals in higher education, it is commendable to see the efforts of AQAN to organise the 2015 ASEAN Young QA Officers Forum and Roundtable meeting in Kuala Lumpur in November 2015.

## **3.4. Building the Capacities of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education**

QA in the industry has now been recognised as a specialised profession. The industry is always looking for individuals who are provided training and certification programmes to serve as QA professionals. As a matter of fact, a large number of institutions are offering certificate, diploma and even degree programmes in QA based on the demands

from the industry. Almost all of the recognised professions such as lawyers, engineers, doctors, teachers and the like have their own associations which are either self-regulated or regulated through the laws of their respective countries.

As INQAAHE stands at the historic juncture of 25 years of international networking in QA for higher education, this is an opportunity to reflect on what can be done to further strengthen this learned and respected profession. It is intriguing to note that, despite a huge expansion in terms of the activities and people involved, QA in higher education is yet to reach a stage to be truly called a 'profession' in many parts of the world that are comparable to many other professions.

There are several questions to be discussed with making QA in higher education as a profession:

- a) Can we map the status of QA in higher education as a profession?
- b) Is it possible to form an association of QA professionals to advance the cause of this profession?
- c) Has the time come to say that QA professionals in higher education need formal qualifications and experience in the specified QA area to be certified as 'QA professional in higher education'?
- d) Is it timely to suggest for the QA agencies to recruit certified and/or licensed QA professionals?

Related to this is to build on the capacities of IQAAs as they share very close functional links with EQAAs. There is still much to be done to bring the IQAAs on par with national and/or international QA standards. The crux to this issue is the competencies of the QA officers within the institutions and the extent to which internal QA activities are valued. It is hoped that with their participation in regional networks and/or INQAAHE, they could champion the cause of QA in their respective institutions and support the development of EQAAs in their respective countries.

#### **4. INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR QA IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

As we come to realisation that QA in higher education is becoming popular and matured as a profession, is it possible to celebrate a day as International Day for QA in Higher Education to coincide with 25 years of international networking? This can possibly be done either by making efforts to move a proposal through UNESCO or that all the QA networks



can join hands to celebrate this day voluntarily. This is viewed as an excellent opportunity for us to highlight the contributions of our profession to the cause of QA in higher education in particular and to the society in general.

## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

There are many possible things that INQAAHE and all the other regional QA networks can do if we could share, learn and collaborate with each other. The paradigm has shifted and this is the only way moving forward in order to realise our ideals of 'one network, global practices'. As part of the QA networks, we owe a much better and much different networking system to the higher education fraternity all over the world. This can only be achieved through a system based on the spirit of collaboration, a system driven by bridging the technology and social media and one that is based on trust and mutual respect (Patil, 2015).

As rightfully pointed out by Audrey Hepburn, 'a quality education has the power to transform societies in a single generation, provide children with the protection they need from the hazards of poverty, labour exploitation and disease, and given them the knowledge, skills and confidence to reach their full potential'.

Can we further add to say that the quest for quality higher education and networking of individuals across boundaries of nations, religions and languages have the potential of transforming the world into a more tolerant, peace-loving and progressive place? We as the leaders of higher education QA community owe it to this generation of students.

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## Towards Harmonization of ASEAN Higher Education

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### ABSTRACT

There is a global trend towards harmonization of higher education (working for greater comparability and compatibility of higher education structures and practices – not necessarily standardization of higher education).

Harmonization is a process that acknowledges diversity of higher education systems and cultures within the region. The moves toward harmonization involve considerable challenges related to the compatibility of higher education structures and quality assurance frameworks. Analysis of lessons learnt from Europe indicated that harmonization would increase regional appeal as a study destination and promote greater mobility with new opportunities for international academic collaboration, which may contribute to a mutual understanding and quality assurance standards and a mutual recognition of degrees.

### KEYWORDS:

harmonization, study destination, mobility, international academic collaboration, mutual recognition of degrees, higher education, quality assurance frameworks

### FUNCTIONS OF ASAIHL

The Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning (ASAIHL), founded in 1956, is the oldest regional NGO in Southeast Asia. The objective of ASAIHL is to assist member institutions to strengthen themselves through mutual support in order to achieve international distinction in teaching, research and public services which is the basic functions of the university since the old days. One key function is to promote development and academic exchanges among Southeast Asian countries with a view to establish a closer network to engender a greater appreciation of the differences in education.

In 1965, ASAIHL provided a grant for the first group of professors in an ASEAN exchange. The first ASAIHL Handbook was published in the same year. In 1970, ASAIHL received financial support from sponsors and became responsible for the establishment of the Southeast Asian Social Science Association. The second association that ASAIHL supported was the establishment of the Association of Southeast Asia Mathematics Society. ASAIHL was instrumental for founding the Learned Societies for Humanities, Natural Science and Management Studies.

In 1973, ASAIHL was given the UNESCO Consultative Status Category B for information and consultative relations. ASAIHL and UNESCO still cooperate with each other. Representatives from ASAIHL attend general conferences of UNESCO on a yearly basis.

### **ACTIVITIES OF ASAIHL**

In 1975, the first lecture was at Nanyang University in Singapore. In 1990, Australia hosted an international conference. In Australia, education is regarded as an exported product. Therefore, the embassies overseas and trade commissioners have to work hard to promote the education of Australia to other countries.

In 1990s, there were less than 100 member institutions of ASAIHL, and there was an effort to increase the number of members by including all members of UNESCO as ASAIHL members. However, Dr. Ninnat did not agree with the idea because ASAIHL should be a platform for small countries in ASEAN to exchange knowledge and education. If ASAIHL includes members from many other countries, the voice of ASEAN countries will not be heard. Moreover, ASEAN countries want to keep their identity.

### **THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY MOBILITY IN ASIA PACIFIC (UMAP)**

In 1990, Dr. Ninnat supported the Australian government to establish an association at the Asia-Pacific level called University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP). Australia hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> UMAP Conference. Later, the Japan Association of National Universities (JANU) took over UMAP and there was an exchange program between Australia and Japan. By 2006, UMAP International Secretariat moved to Thailand before relocating to Taiwan. UMAP is an international network to promote student exchanges in Asia and the Pacific. The UCTS (UMAP Credit



Transfer Scheme) prevails in the region for the improvement of higher education. UMAP coordinates with UNESCO on recognition of a certain diploma and degree in higher education. This year Thailand will organize a forum on October 27 - 29 at Kasetsart University.

In 2006, the Ministry of University Affairs organized the World University Summit at Queen Sirikit National Convention Center. During the same year, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UMAP was celebrated in Indonesia. His Excellency Prof. Dr. H. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the former President of Indonesia, addressed the opening of the event.

In 2011, UMAP organized the ASEAN Conference on Enhancing Education Partnership in New York, USA, with many participants that attended from universities in the USA, as well as from European and ASEAN countries.

In 2014, a few conferences are worth noting, starting with the 1<sup>st</sup> ASEM Conference that was organized in Europe. UMAP had a network and got involved in the Erasmus project.

Additionally, Dr. Ninnat and others went to Siem Reap to select 120 students to study in Europe but they could only come up with 90. Only 10 people from Thailand applied but among these ten, one is from Azerbaijan and one is from Myanmar. So they are disqualified because they are not Thai. They still needed 30 more students for the scholarships. So they recruited from the applicants who did not pass the selection in the first round. The recruiting committee also went to Cambodia and Mongolia to recruit more students.

Also in 2014, UMAP had a very successful conference at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore on Education Innovation for Knowledge-based Economy. At that conference, two experts from the USA were invited as keynote speakers. One of them talked about “how the brain learns”. The Minister of Education from Singapore also joined the Conference.

The second expert from the USA is a specialist on Instructional Technology. During this conference, participants had an opportunity to visit “Smart Class” at a university in Singapore. When Singapore invested in the smart class, they spent 50 - 100 million per class. Participants also saw “classroom tomorrow”, a classroom with no professors. In this kind of classes, students learn by themselves as a group. Students in each group work together through the discussions and brainstorming.

At the beginning of 2015, the biggest university in the world, with 1.7 million students organized 6 conferences in the old capital of Persia. The next conference will be held on 2 - 5 December 2015 in Siem Reap, Angkor Wat.

ASEM is the only organization in Southeast Asia with 200 member universities in 24 countries. They have organized more than 130 conferences. They also helped to ratify the UNESCO Regional Convention on the recognition of study diplomas and degrees in higher education in Asia and the Pacific, which was first adopted in 1983. Thailand hosted the conference but did not ratify the Convention. It takes time to ratify a convention because it has to go through all the processes to the Parliament for ratification.

### **ASEAN COUNTRIES**

ASEAN Motto: One Vision, One Identity, One Community

“A single market and production-based, free movement of skilled labor”.

In reality, there are still some problems in terms of free movement of skilled labor. For example, Thailand does not recognize degrees from the Philippines because basic education in the Philippines takes 10 years, instead of 12 years. How can we have a free flow of skilled labor when we do not recognize degrees from a neighboring country? The degree recognition should be based on the learning outcome and the quality, not number of the years spent in basic education.

The ASEAN Community is big, with over 600 million people, the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest in the world, with combined GDP of USD 2.3 trillion, which is the 8<sup>th</sup> largest in the world. However, the difference in per capita income of the richest and the poorest is 60 times, which is a big gap. This is called “diversity”. It sounds good but actually there is a big gap. The ASEAN member countries are in different stages of economic development.

The original 5 ASEAN members may have to help CLMV (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam) countries otherwise they cannot catch up with other ASEAN countries.

Who benefits from the AEC? We have two high income economies: Singapore and Brunei Darussalam. Three upper middle income economies: Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. Four lower middle income economies: Philippines, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. One is low income economy: Myanmar. Who benefits from the AEC? Singapore, Brunei Darussalam,



Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. Definitely, the two high income economies, as well as Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia do. The others will have to struggle.

There is a cultural difference between the government and business. For example, when dealing or negotiating, the diplomats may say “Agree First, Talk Later”. It may work for diplomatic alliances. But it doesn’t work for economic integration. ASEAN members want economic integration but not with the same determination, neither with the same urgency nor the same speed nor in the same way. Dr. Mahathir Mohamad came to Bangkok when Naresuan University gave him an honorary degree. He did not agree with the idea of the AEC. In ASEAN countries, there is a big gap in business. Business regulations in each country are different. For example, to start a business, it takes 2.5 days in one country, but more than 100 days in another. If you want a construction permit, one country takes 26 days, while another country takes 652 days. The concept of the AEC looks fine on paper. But in practice, it is not that easy. There is a disconnection between policy and practice. There is a need for harmonization in regulations and procedures. For SMEs, it is difficult because there is no harmonization in regulations and procedures in the ASEAN countries (like 26 days and 652 days to get construction permit). The business is still struggling. For harmonization of skilled labors, making academic degrees comparable is important for the free movement of skilled labor. Thailand recognizes degrees from Laos because it has changed basic education to 12 years. We trust Laos but we do not trust the other 2 - 3 countries. Trade across borders occurs only when products meet harmonized and comparable standards.

Harmonization vs. Mutual recognition: You must meet harmonized and comparable standards. We should learn from the success of Europe that works on comparability of higher education degrees. In the past, Germany and France did not have either a bachelor’s degree or master’s degree. In Germany, the degree was called diplom. Now Germany and France have bachelor’s and master’s degrees so that they can be comparable with other countries. ASEAN countries should learn from them, and we should prepare new generations for harmony and seek for mutual recognition.

Quality Assurance should be based on learning outcomes of the graduates. How much do employers want to hire our graduates? Lee Kuan Yew said students are the most important. Factors of QA include student evaluation, curriculum design and employability.

## **DIVERSE QA SYSTEM, COMPARABLE CRITERIA AND METHODOLOGY**

With the network we can build QA capacity for member countries, promote and share good practices, collaborate on capacity building, share information and mutual recognition in order to move toward a common QA Framework.

Harmonization of higher education is very important. The regional QA system is one prioritized area for harmonization which is also prioritized area for ASEAN. Asia-Europe academic cooperation should be promoted. Nowadays, Europe offers many scholarships to Asian countries. In Europe, there is the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). They also follow European Quality Assurance (EQA) and International Quality Assurance (IQA) for the mutual recognition of degrees. For ASEAN countries, we have several mechanisms of QA standards such as the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network, the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework and the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework. We also follow International Quality Assurance.

## **CONCLUSION**

We have heard of institutional accreditation, program accreditation and now there are discussions about individual accreditation. We have to strengthen the competency of the individual in terms of capacity, based on the competency that is required for a particular job. In order to produce the graduates who have skills that are in accordance with the needs of the labor market, universities must use input from private sectors to develop their curriculum.





## **Enhancing Quality, Competitiveness and Internationalisation: The European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region**

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### **ABSTRACT**

ASEAN's decision to establish an Economic Community by end of this year will accelerate development. Further ASEAN-integration will affect many sectors, including the higher education sector. In 1999, Europe started the so-called "Bologna Process" to ensure a more comparable, compatible and coherent European Higher Education Area. It was a response to increased global competition—economically as well as in the education sector. ASEAN's education landscape faces similar challenges: preserving diversity, while identifying communalities. Harmonised education systems enhance the chance for mobility for students— thereby realising people-to-people connectivity, shaping the integration of the ASEAN Community and extending opportunities for all. Europe can share its experience of the Bologna process, but also learn from the developments in the ASEAN region.

The SHARE "European Union Support for Higher Education in the ASEAN region" project aims to contribute to the harmonisation of ASEAN higher education. It will encourage establishing, implementing and disseminating important tools: Qualifications and Quality Assurance Frameworks and a Credit Transfer System. The Bologna Process taught us that the harmonisation of higher education systems can only succeed if all stakeholders from all member countries are involved from the very beginning. SHARE, therefore takes an inclusive and comprehensive approach. The project will include all stakeholders, all ASEAN countries and all relevant fields. On the political level, Policy Dialogues set the tone. Other areas of the project put an emphasis on the ASEAN and National Qualifications Frameworks and on Quality Assurance. And SHARE will provide students with scholarships mainly for intra-ASEAN, but also for ASEAN-EU mobility.

**KEYWORDS:**

EU SHARE, ASEAN, National Qualifications Frameworks, Internationalisation, ASEAN-EU mobility, Credit Transfer System, Higher Education, harmonisation

**COMMUNITY-BUILDING AND THE NEED OF HIGHER EDUCATION HARMONISATION**

*Backgrounds and pathways in Europe: from European Economic Community 1957 to today's European Union*

Regional integration in higher education has been taking place in Europe within the Bologna Process since end of the 1990s. A lot has been achieved by the member states since then; yet the journey towards the European Higher Education Area continues. We see similar movements in other parts of the world. In the ASEAN region education priorities are integrated in the ASEAN development agenda, too.

The European Union supports this development; the EU funds a 10 Million Euro project which aims at supporting ASEAN on its way towards deepened integration. The European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN region, or SHARE focuses on higher education developments, on further harmonising ASEAN's higher education landscape. The SHARE project expresses the high hopes that Europe pins on the community-building here in the ASEAN region.

The origins of the European Union reach back to the 1950s. Most of the people do not bear in mind that the EU started with a very limited scope, to name it: as European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). That was 1952 and the very first step of Europe's community-building. The European Economic Community (EEC) was established in 1957. Also, the European Atomic Energy Community had been signed in 1957. But it took more than half a century to shape the European Union as it is organised today. Over decades the European Union expanded, developed its legal structure and added many policy areas to its remit. Today, the European Union maintains common policies on many fields, among them trade and regional development, justice and home affairs. In 1999, the monetary union was established, and the Euro was introduced in 2002. The European Union has established numerous supranational institutions. Through them and by intergovernmental



negotiations the EU drives its policies. The educational and cultural dimension is a relatively new frontier becoming regionally integrated. The entire process was not predetermined. And as we see nowadays it cannot be taken for granted.

### **THE BOLOGNA PROCESS: RATIONALE BEHIND: TO FACE INCREASED GLOBAL COMPETITION**

The economic integration forced Europe's policy makers to think about harmonising education, to make degrees and qualifications readable in order to ease and to boost mobility among graduates and students. It was not least an economic rationale that initiated the Bologna Process. The overall objective is to compete successfully in the rapidly changing global economy. Therefore, the reform aims at enhancing educational quality and at increasing and easing mobility of students. Regional economic integration has expanded into the space of educational policy. The Bologna Process is complementary to the Europe 2020 economic strategy. But it is not only an economic rationale: Europe was and is a peace project. Harmonised higher education is seen as a way towards deepened integration. Harmonised education systems enhance the chance for mobility for students—thereby realising people-to-people connectivity, shaping the integration of a community and extending opportunities for all.

In 1999, 42 years after the establishment of the economic community, Europe started the so called “Bologna Process” to enhance the competitiveness and attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area.

### **ASEAN: BACKGROUNDS AND IMPACTS OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AEC**

Europe's Single Market that has brought tremendous benefits for European citizens and businesses had a huge impact on the further development of the European Union. The free movement of goods, services and capital forced many further developments. ASEAN's decision to establish an Economic Community by the end of 2015 will accelerate development, too. It is not the first step ASEAN took, but an important one that will have tremendous impacts.

Initially established in 1967, ASEAN nowadays seems to pick up pace. Different to the history of the EU, ASEAN is working similarly on three pillars: the economic, the socio-cultural and the political-security.

With its dedicated plans, ASEAN will soon move closer towards its goal of building the ASEAN Community. Having a look at all the blueprints and plans, ASEAN's development can be expected to take up speed and move forward more quickly than it did in the past. The links of free flow of goods, services, capital investment, skilled labour and social development, education and human resources development has already been established in those blueprints. The economic ASEAN-integration will affect and have already affected many sectors, including the higher education sector, namely by fostering co-operation between universities in the region or by stimulating the learning of foreign languages.

Within the context of the socio-cultural community, ASEAN wants to build a stronger community through academic cooperation and networking. More specifically the blueprint stresses the need to enhance and support student and staff exchanges and professional interactions and to promote and continue education networking.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF EHEA: 'FEATURES' AND SPECIALTIES**

The Bologna Process is named after a Declaration, signed at Bologna in 1999 by the Ministers of Education from 29 European countries. Today, the Process includes 48 countries. It is a voluntary initiative, a coordinated reform driven by the European member states; therefore it does not have the status of EU legislation. Nevertheless the European Commission, which is a signatory of the Bologna Accord as well, plays an important role and has been promoting a number of projects to promote the process. The Bologna signatories agreed on several steps to move toward enhanced convergence, in order to achieve fair recognition of foreign degrees and qualifications and to broaden access to higher education across Europe.

Apart from the introduction of the three-cycle system (Bachelor/Master and PhD), the adoption of different tools and mechanisms (such as ECTS and diploma supplements, quality assurance, qualifications frameworks) which should help to ease, facilitate, and therefore, to boost intra-regional mobility have been instrumental to shape the EHEA.

- Cooperation in quality assurance in order to guarantee comparability
  - All Bologna signatories have introduced or are introducing quality assurance systems
  - Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance describe internal and external quality assurance procedures and a review system for quality assurance agencies.



- European quality assurance agencies are organised in the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).
- The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education has been established as a register of accreditation agencies, including those that have demonstrated their substantial compliance with a common set of principles for quality assurance in Europe.
- Furthermore, the European member countries agreed on an overarching framework and have set up or are setting up national qualifications frameworks, which are compatible with the overarching Bologna Framework.
  - Degrees are now organised in a three-cycle structure.
  - The frameworks describe learning outcomes: what students should know, understand and be able to do in order to graduate in a certain programme.
- The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) facilitates recognition by attaching credits to study programme components. Credits are mainly related to learning outcomes, student workloads and contact hours.
  - The Diploma Supplement provides a standardised description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies according to a template that has been developed

### **BOLOGNA PROCESS: LONG-LASTING AND ON-GOING**

Whereas the three cycle system and ECTS have been implemented almost fully across the EHEA, 'only' 38 countries have functional qualification frameworks in place, compatible with the Bologna Qualifications Framework. Furthermore, in some countries formal implementation and actual results differ considerably.

At the moment, Europe is rethinking how to better support the implementation. Similarly to ASEAN, the European Union was heavily engaged to support those countries that were willing to join the Bologna Process, but lacking capacity. Tailor-made projects, also with financial support of the EU, helped the countries of former Yugoslavia to implement reforms, to enhance capacity and performance of the education system and their institutions.

But more importantly, we are now aware of the fact how important it is to engage all stakeholders from the very beginning. Top-down and bottom-up approaches must be balanced if such a reform initiative shall succeed in the region. No overarching cooperation can be achieved only with governmental commitment. As a result, the governance system will be discussed, too, according to these lessons learnt.

Besides the uneven implementation, new challenges have been raised and need to be tackled, such as the imbalanced mobility flows.

### **CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN QA**

In the Bologna Process quality assurance played an important role: *“quality of higher education has proven to be at the heart of the setting up of a European Higher Education Area.”* The Ministers of Education committed themselves to *“supporting further development of quality assurance at institutional, national and European level”* and stressed the need *“to develop mutually shared criteria and methodologies on quality assurance”* (Berlin Declaration, 2003). They tasked ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE to develop “an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines” (Berlin Declaration).

Since then the so-called E4 group did not only develop the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance. Meanwhile, the group also carried out a mapping of the implementation and recommended that ministers of the EHEA countries mandate the E4 organisations again to revise the ESG. For the E4 group it was always clear that when time for implementation had elapsed, the ESG would need to be reviewed. This year, the revised ESG have been adopted by the Ministers of Education.

The revised ESG reflect more specifically that QA is the responsibility of universities. They also stress the focus on learning and teaching processes for internal QA. As a result of the Bologna Process, the focus of quality assurance had shifted from internal processes to a greater use of external quality assurance mechanisms, especially with regards to the introduction of national accreditation systems. The changes were driven by the Bologna signatories in order to achieve more transparency, create trust and facilitate the recognition of credits and degrees. Moreover, the question of accountability gained ground; the needs of the society and the labour market are more often taken into account by



higher education institutions and the study programmes being offered. Ideally, accountability goes hand in hand with increased institutional autonomy.

In that respect, the revised ESG better meet what the Ministers of Education stated in 2003: that *“the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself and this provides the basis for real accountability of the academic system within the national quality framework”* (Berlin Declaration, 2003).

### **ASEAN COMMON SPACE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

ASEAN identified almost the same goals when it decided to set up higher education reforms: to become a stronger global actor, stronger than a single member country could ever get; to increase the competitiveness of the ASEAN region and to create a common space of higher education where regional harmonisation is promoted on one hand but national sovereignty, different cultures, traditions, and values are respected on the other hand as well. The aim is not to change the national systems, but to create greater convergence between them. It is not a process of standardisation. National Frameworks are the responsibility of national governments. Both in Europe and in Southeast Asia, the process of harmonising higher education cannot be enforced but needs the buy-in and the commitment of the member states.

In 2007, the SEAMEO Council Meeting agreed on a Road Towards a Common Space for Higher Education. The 2009 ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint stated that systematic mechanisms to support the integration of universities across Southeast Asia are needed and shall be developed. In the following years, taskforces on two crucial fields have been established: one is working on a QA framework under and with support of the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network, and the other is developing an ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework. In many countries national frameworks have been or are in a process of development. The next steps towards convergence of systems will be to start a reference process and to seek an alignment between the national and the regional level.

## SHARE

We have experienced that regional integration takes time. Such a reform process needs consensus among all actors, different interests need to be balanced out, and it needs a lot of support, including financial support. That leads us back to SHARE. The overall objective of the SHARE project is to support ASEAN in further harmonising regional higher education by sharing European experiences and expertise.

The starting point however is what ASEAN partners define as their priorities and therefore SHARE builds upon existing frameworks, schemes and tools. The road map of SHARE must be streamlined with the work plans of regional actors and players such as SEAMEO-RIHED, AUN and AQAN which have been identified as key beneficiaries of the Project. The EU and ASEAN member states have agreed that support in establishing regional higher education frameworks (including the regional qualifications framework, regional quality assurance), and the launch of an inner-ASEAN mobility scheme connected with a credit transfer system are priority areas to work jointly. Strengthening regional cooperation, enhancing quality, competitiveness and internationalisation of ASEAN higher education institutions shall contribute to an ASEAN Community.

## GOALS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES: INCLUSIVE AND COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

SHARE is a 4-year initiative (January 2015 to January 2019); a consortium led by British Council and comprising DAAD, Campus France, EP Nuffic, the European University Association and the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education has been selected and awarded the EU grant to implement the project.

The Bologna Process taught us that the harmonisation of higher education systems can only succeed if all stakeholders from all member countries are involved from the very beginning. SHARE therefore takes an inclusive and comprehensive approach. The project addresses different stakeholders and includes all ASEAN countries whereas the needs of CLM are taken specifically into account.

SHARE works on several result areas, namely Policy Dialogues, Qualifications Frameworks, Quality Assurance and Credit Transfer and hereby seeks to create impact at policy, institutional and individual levels.



The Consortium is aware that the process of harmonisation has to be driven by ASEAN stakeholders. Thus two ASEAN-European Expert Working Groups have been established which will mainly work in the fields of qualifications frameworks and quality assurance. In order to facilitate dialogue and ensuring ownership they are tasked with steering our project activities and providing recommendations for further development in both fields. Furthermore, close relations with the ASEAN Secretariat, the Senior Officials Meeting of the Ministries of Education and to all relevant organisations and initiatives, among them AUN, SEAMEO-RIHED and AQAN will be maintained.

A guiding principle not only of the Expert Working Group, but for the entire project is to share experiences and to learn from each other. The European partners can share its experience gained during the Bologna Process, but they do also learn from the approaches, challenges and solutions found in the ASEAN region. Inter-regional dialogue is therefore a cross-cutting issue and another layer of SHARE. In this regard a long term goal of the joint initiative is to boost EU-ASEAN mobility and to strengthen ties between the regions.

### **THE RESULT AREAS: POLICY DIALOGUES, QA, QF, CREDIT TRANSFER SCHEMES**

As mentioned, SHARE takes a comprehensive approach. SHARE will support the implementation, operationalization and dissemination of the national and the overarching frameworks and tools which ensure the comparability of higher education standards and qualifications and herewith strengthen recognition of degrees and intra-regional mobility.

On the political level, Policy Dialogues set the tone. They target the ministerial and operational levels. They will try to resolve system blockages and address technical dimensions of cooperation. Activities of result areas 2a will support the establishment and dissemination of a politically endorsed regional qualifications framework for better comparability of degrees across the ASEAN and the EU. Tailor-made national workshops will support the development of national qualifications frameworks and their alignment to the overarching framework. We build on the work of the existing taskforce on the development of the ASEAN Qualifications Framework and will work close together.

Result area 2b is focused on the further development of the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework and will support its operationalization and pilot assessments of universities as well as accreditation agencies. Therefore, we support the taskforce under AQAN that develops the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework in higher education (AQAF).

Result area 3 focuses on the ASEAN Credit Transfer System (ACTs) & ASEAN-EU Credit Transfer System. SHARE is focused on creating tools to support a common platform for credit transfer. The reviewed framework will be tested by providing 500 scholarships for intra-ASEAN and for ASEAN-EU mobility, also creating life changing opportunities for students to become global citizens. By providing scholarships we practically support mutual recognition and student mobility among higher education institutions in ASEAN and strengthen people-to-people connectivity.

### **WHAT HAPPENED SO FAR? NEXT STEPS (FOCUS ON QA)**

The SHARE project has just started. We began with commissioning studies. They will guide SHARE's future activities. A first Policy Dialogue, held in August 2015, was dedicated to mapping the scene in order to position SHARE well within the existing landscape. PD 1 gained an overview of regional higher education initiatives and structures as well as of dialogue partners in Southeast Asia. We invited all relevant stakeholders, among them university and student representatives, beneficiaries, political decision-makers and representatives of similar projects working in the field of higher education in order to discuss how to create synergies among the numerous projects and initiatives; in short, how to best push ASEANs higher education harmonisation jointly forward.

Among the initiatives SHARE can build on are also DAAD's ongoing activities in the field of QA here in the ASEAN region. In 2008 the DAAD started the ASEAN-QA-project, a joint initiative by HRK, ENQA, DAAD, AUN and AQAN. The project supports universities to develop and improve their quality assurance systems. It targets universities, provides workshops for QA professionals and supports specific projects, thereby further developing the QA systems of higher education institutions. This project, focusing on QA at institutional level can be seen as complementing the SHARE project with its focus on accreditation procedures and the interlinkages of external and internal QA.



During the first Policy Dialogue as well as with the experts of the Working Group, we discussed how to support the further development of QA cultures and the further development of a common framework. In a first step, we will support the development of the operationalization of the framework. To be more specific, we want to further develop guidelines for the external assessment of universities as well as guidelines for an external review of agencies that are similar to those guidelines we established in Europe. They shall provide more detailed guidance, samples of good practices and describe communalities of QA among all member countries.

In a second step, we want to put these guidelines to the test; we will pilot reviews for agencies and pilot assessments at the institutional level, using revised principles and guidelines. Having done the pilot assessments, we will again review the guidelines according to the experiences we will have gathered and the feedback we will have got. Results will shape the final AQAF guidelines, for submission for political endorsement. The pilot reviews and assessments are complemented by training programmes for regional assessors and staff of national QA agencies.

The published guidelines will be the subject of regional conferences, and disseminated during a series of bi(national) workshops. The conferences will define needs for capacity development and agree on action plans for stakeholders in terms of subsequent dissemination at the national level. Finally, a pool of experts will be trained via regional sessions, enabling peer-to-peer mutual learning, thus ensuring sustainability, similar to the Bologna Experts instrument used in the Bologna Process context.

Again, for the dissemination and implementation throughout the region, all stakeholders need to be involved and engaged. There is still a need to raise awareness of the importance and benefits of QA and a need to discuss and agree on communalities. Ideally, universities are the key driver of identifying communalities for internal and external QA. This commitment is crucial.

That's why it is an honour, a pleasure and a great opportunity for me to present SHARE here at ICQA 2015.

# Research

Presentations



## ABET at CMU: A Path Towards Excellence in Engineering Education

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### ABSTRACT

In this paper, we present the background, objectives, and the working plan of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) accreditation plan of Faculty of Engineering, Chiang Mai University. First, we provide the background of quality assurance system in the faculty. Then, the experience for an outcome-based education is illustrated. Last, but not least, we present the working plan of the faculty for the accreditation in the next three years with the aid from the Association of Thai Professionals in America and Canada (ATPAC).

### KEYWORD:

Quality Assurance, ABET, TQF

### INTRODUCTION

Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) is a nonprofit, non-governmental organization which is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) in United States of America. The body is established in order to promote the excellence in engineering and technology education by accreditation approach.

Faculty of Engineering, Chiang Mai University, which is one of the largest public engineering schools in Thailand, aims at excellence in engineering education since its establishment in 1970. Not only studying in the classroom, the students will be exposed to research, academic services, and international activities in an environment of interdisciplinary collaboration. The initial purpose of the faculty is to create qualified engineers who have appropriate knowledge and skill for the engineering profession, with the target of development in the country. According to the policies of Chiang Mai University and government, the faculty also aims to conducting research and providing community services.

The Faculty of Engineering consists of 7 departments and 1 center. The number of degree offerings are 10 bachelor degree programs, 13 master degree programs, and 8 doctoral degree programs. Such programs are conducted under the quality assurance systems, such as Thailand Quality Framework – Higher Education level, EdPEX (Education Criteria for Performance Excellence), or the framework of Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA).

For research and academic services, aside from the single-discipline research that has been conducted under the scope of each department, multi-discipline engineering research is highly encouraged by the faculty. We believe that the synergy from the diversity of expertise can improve the quality of research. Thus, we provide the mechanism to support staffs and students to conduct this kind of research, so called integrated research scheme.

In order to serve the education and research activities, the faculty deploys a process management scheme using ISO9001: 2008 for all key processes in all the divisions, such as Planning and Education Quality Assurance, Finance, Academic Affairs, Research, and Administration. These schemes are focused on the rigor, completion, and agility of the key processes.

### **OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION EXPERIENCE**

In this section, we present the experience of the faculty with regard to the outcome-based education which is a reason for ABET project initiation. In 2011, Chiang Mai University as one among AUN member universities proposed to participate in the program level QA of AUN. The selected program to participate in AUN-QA of Chiang Mai University was Bachelor of Engineering (Computer Engineering) program. The activities began in 2011, when the first draft of the self-assessment report (SAR) was submitted to the committees. Then, the other two drafts were submitted in 2012. Finally, the site visit activity was held during August 22-24, 2013, in which the formal title was the “8th ASEAN-QA Site Visit at Department of Computer Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, Chiang Mai University.”

The activity included observing the documents, interviewing the staffs ranged from the executives in the university level to the students, in-class observation, and infrastructure observation. In the activity, not only the staffs of computer engineering program were involved, but also the



other administrative staffs from the other programs or the centers in the institute. Figure 1 shows the opening ceremony of the site visit at the president office, and Figure 2 shows the activities during the site visit.



*Figure 1 Opening Ceremony at the Office of the President*



*Figure 2 Presentation Session at the Faculty of Engineering*

From the experience of this program, we obtained several very good comments from the assessors who were experts in Computer Engineering discipline. For example, the assessor team suggested that the program should consider the priority on the pre-determined 29 learning outcome given the specific current situation and the vision-mission of the faculty and the institute. Such priority could allow the program to emphasize on probably 4-5 ELOs as recommended by the IEEE/ACM recommendations for computer engineering program. Though, game-based learning or constructionism concepts were applying in a few courses, the assessors suggested that, the teaching and learning strategy should be tailor-made for the subjects properly. In which, the assessors pointed out that the Grow Framework of learning stage could be a guideline for this suggestion. In such framework, the learning stage of the students is classified into four levels. They are 1) dependence, where the traditional lecture is to be involved; 2) interest, where the lecturers have to give more on the motivation and be a leader in group discussion; 3) involvement, which the lecturers will be considered to be at the same level as the students and act as facilitator of the working group; 4) self-directed, where the consultant is only needed. Not all the subjects and group of students are fit to all the learning stages, but the strategy has to be tailor-made to the proper group of students. Or, the assessors pointed that the communication channels with the stakeholder should be re-considered in a more systematic approach. Meaning that, the frequency, the detail, the approach, or the communication mean of the feedback have to be re-designed in the faculty level. In addition, the result of the feedback, such as the implemented plan, should be reported back to the initiatives for retaining a good relationship between the institute and the stakeholder.

In summary, the feedbacks from the assessors are very in-depth into both the program administration and the discipline level. The faculty then embraces the system and comments from this program so far.



## **ABET PROJECT AT FACULTY OF ENGINEERING, CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY**

Inspired by the outcome-based education from the experts, the faculty then initiated ABET project to improve the engineering education in 2014 with aid from the Association of Thai Professionals in America and Canada (ATPAC). The project began with a few seminars from lead by Prof. Methi Wecharatana, Prof. Wanpracha Chaovallitwongse, and Prof. Eakalak Khan, and the core ABET team of ATPAC. Also, we worked closely with Prof. Ekasit Limsuwan from Council of Engineers to shape the project to fit to Thailand context of the engineer profession. The main objective was to acquire the accreditation at an international level in order to empower the engineering students at regional and global levels. Also, such accreditation must be an outcome-based assessment by experts in the field not just general educators.

Now, the pilot programs are Bachelor of Engineering Programs in Mechanical Engineering and Computer Engineering. The project period is 3 years until the accreditation. The detail is shown in Table 1.

At the moment, our work has finished more than half of the activities in year 1 including drafting of program educational objectives, student outcomes, curriculum and mapping, relationships between student outcomes and program educational objectives, and design of course assessment.

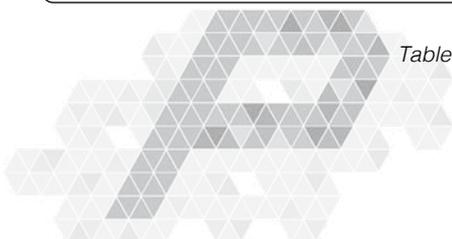
Also, we designed the mapping between the TQF learning outcome and ABET learning outcome in order to accommodate the reporting in class – level, such as TQF form 3 and 4 (syllabi), and TQF form 5 and 6 (course assessment) which have been using in the university level. An example of mapping is shown in Table 2. It can be seen that the mapping can be almost done completely. Some part could be left slightly misaligned due to a difference in philosophy between the TQF and ABET which is a professional education accreditation.

Year	Activity
2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program educational objectives</li> <li>• Student outcomes</li> <li>• Curriculum and mapping</li> <li>• Relationships between student outcomes and program educational objectives</li> <li>• Design of course assessment</li> <li>• Design of employer surveys</li> <li>• Design of alumni surveys</li> <li>• Design of graduation survey</li> <li>• Design of exit interview</li> <li>• Design of advising survey</li> <li>• Formation of industrial advisory board</li> <li>• Formation of student advisory board</li> <li>• Council of Engineers alignment</li> </ul>
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess courses</li> <li>• Survey advising effectiveness</li> <li>• Survey employers</li> <li>• Survey alumni</li> <li>• Survey graduates</li> <li>• Interview graduates</li> <li>• Industrial advisory board meeting</li> <li>• Student advisory board meeting</li> <li>• Collect of Professional Engineers examination data</li> <li>• Close the loop/continuous improvement in year 2</li> </ul>
2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation continuation and preliminary report drafting</li> <li>• Continue activities in year 1 and 2</li> <li>• Draft preliminary self-study report except for criterion 4 (continuous improvement) and appendices</li> <li>• Implementation continuation, preliminary report drafting continuation, and preliminary report submission</li> <li>• Draft preliminary self-study report for criterion 4 and appendices</li> <li>• Preliminary report completion and submission</li> </ul>

Table 1 Planning for ABET Accreditation

TQF (Engineering)	ABET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having knowledge and understanding of principle concepts.</li> <li>• Applying data analysis skills.</li> </ul>	a) Ability to apply mathematics, science and engineering principles.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Having skills as a leader and a team member.</li> <li>• Knowing an appropriate role, having responsibility for both individual and team work.</li> </ul>	d) Ability to function on multidisciplinary teams.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding Thai culture, and aware of moral, ethics, truthfulness values.</li> <li>• Having professional ethics.</li> </ul>	f) Understanding of professional and ethical responsibility.

Table 2 Example of TQF – ABET Learning Outcome Mapping



## CONCLUSION

In summary, this paper has presented the rationale behind the ABET project at Faculty of Engineering, Chiang Mai University. The main reason was that the awareness of the faculty with regard to the merit of the outcome-based education on engineering focus. The working plan to achieve the accreditation goal, which is within 3 years, was presented. Additionally, we presented the mapping between the TQF and ABET learning outcome. During this project, we hope that the excellence in engineering education can be achieved, in which our students would benefit from it.

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## China's Inspection-Based Assessment in Process of Postgraduate Instruction

**ABSTRACT**

This paper begins with the definition and literature review on quality assurance (QA) and assessment of teaching and learning, at home and abroad. It focuses on introducing a model of inspection-based assessment (IBA) in the postgraduate education instruction (PEI) in China from the perspectives of postgraduate (PE) inspectors. It will also summarize the features of the IBA as follows: a) stressing on integrity by combining academic power with administrative engagement in the IBA process; b) balancing the instruction between the capacity-based training with expertise and mastery through the IBA process; c) encouraging critical thinking and positive inquiry by promoting communication in classroom; d) the feedback from teaching and learning outcomes as important steps for the QA. Finally, the paper analyzes some challenges facing teaching assessment in Chinese higher education institutions (HEIs) and gives several possible solutions in the future development.

**KEYWORDS:**

postgraduate education, classroom instruction, quality assessment, China experiences

**INTRODUCTION**

Over the last three decades, China's postgraduate education (PE) has witnessed a dramatic growth in terms of enrollment and gross enrollment ratio (GER). According to the statistic data from the Ministry of Education (the MOE) website, by 2014, the number of doctoral education has reached 71,020, and 560,000 for master's degree programs at the same time. The number of master programs has increased 4% compared with 53,900 in previous year enrollment. Having entered into the new century, Chinese PE has been experiencing the transformation from a stage of quantitative expansion to a stage of quality enhance. In this case, the PE quality has been a key discussion topic attracting

a wide attention in both academic community and public circles. One of the most crucial challenges facing Chinese PE was to assure its quality through enhancing the effectiveness and the efficiency in classroom instruction. Looking into the QA process of the PE, we could find that making the system of inspection/supervision for the PE became necessary and significant. In fact, there indeed has been doing so in many countries. Without exception, Chinese higher education institutions (HEIs) have been attaching importance to focusing on theory and practice, and have attained much progress in both experiences and lessons. The paper expects to explore roles of educational inspectors in QA process in the PE, aimed at presenting the quality of Chinese PE through the eyes of those postgraduate educational inspectors/supervisors. First, the paper begins with definition, explanation and literature review on the QA and assessment for teaching and learning. Second, based on the observation from a perspective of the inspectors for the PE, the paper focuses on the process of the PE classroom teaching and learning, and tries to summarize the process of inspection-based assessment in the PE classroom instruction. Finally, the paper analyzes some challenges facing the teaching assessment in Chinese HEIs and gives several possible solutions in the future development. In the process of paper writings, several methods including literature review, report document analysis, institutional comparison informal interviews and internet data collection will be used.

## **1. DEFINITION AND RELEVANT STUDIES**

### **1.1 Key Concepts**

There are several keywords that are necessary to be defined. First concept is the Classroom Instruction Assessment (CIA) that is defined as the process by which various evaluation bodies, according to rational system of evaluation index and evaluation instrument, conduct all kinds of evaluation activities to assure the quality of the postgraduate education instruction (PEI) activities. Doing this aims at improving QA, and promoting faculty professional development (Zhang & Zhang, 2005). Second term is the postgraduate educational inspector/supervisors (PEI/S) who refer to academicians, professional staff, either those that are retired or on-service, and those persons that are selected and appointed to take responsibility of inspecting, guiding and assessing the PEI process. As empowered by university central administration, they are authoritative

and powerful. For instance, some of them can go into any classrooms without getting permission from the teachers who are scheduled to teach. Without doubt, the supervisors can act in crucial roles of QA process in cultivating top-notch innovative personnel and future promising scholars. The priorities placed by the PEI/S generally focus on examining teachers' ideas, inspecting their teaching contents and methods, teaching process, and examining the effects of the PEI, so on and so forth. As explicitly regulated in some graduate divisions at HEIs, the PEI/S are appointed by university executive team in charge of teaching and under the direct leadership of the PE divisions at the central administration. They are crucial in teaching management, operation and QA process. Another term is inspection-based assessment (IBA) that refers to process by which teaching outcome can be evaluated under the inspection/supervision in QA process.

## 1.2 Literature Review

The PEI, as an important part in the PE, is necessary to help students to attain expertise, skills and creativity. In this case, the QA for the PEI process has been a hot discussion topic. Meanwhile, relevant studies in this regard also became wide concerns. The questions such as how to assure the PE quality; how to improve the effectiveness and efficiency in the PEI process; how to assess the teacher's performance in the classrooms have attracted a wide attention in China and beyond. In this paper, we mainly focus on introducing the relevant studies done by Chinese academicians, aiming at presenting the status quo of research regarding China.

First, we found that a few studies have been dealing with the supervision/inspection system for the PE. Some Chinese scholars tried to analyze current situation and trends by introducing the supervision systems, based on cases of the western countries (Tang, 2013; Wang, 2008). As noted by Wang (2013), a British Education expert, the system of education supervision in the UK is professional and independent, which has been almost flawless and authoritative with legal status. It is clear what the inspecting bodies look like, what their responsibilities are, and how their work process is operated.

Second, other studies tackled with the QA process. Zhan et al., (2010) summarized common features and differences the higher education evaluation (HEE) and the QA among the United States, United Kingdom, France and Japan. They also provided evidence by presenting the



multiple bodies of the HEE, combining internal with external evaluations, obvious cooperation among stakeholders, various roles played by governments and fortified macro adjustment and control. They noted further that the systems of the PE have contributed much for social and economic development services in the four countries. They had formed relatively mature mode of postgraduate student preparation with their own characteristics (Chen et al., 2004). Some researchers also summarized the features of HEE system as a whole, noting that the main themes included some keywords, such as evaluation bodies/stakeholders, evaluation standard and indicator framework as well as usages of methods (Wu, 2010; Jiang 2014). For instance, they took the case of the UK as example, considered it as a relatively complete system of internal and external QA systems, which was based on the diversified cultivation mode and the strict examination system (Yue, 2014; Han, 2014).

Third, some of the studies focused on those issues related to issues of the PEI. Ji et al. (2012) noted that American PEI in classrooms was very effective and efficient, partly because the college teachers in USA were capable and responsible, with high academic qualification, expertise as well as professional skills. The interaction and communication between teachers and learners were two common and popular ways in American PEI process (Zuo, 2012). Yang (2009) also took the case of the PEI in Newcastle University and Loughborough University in the UK as evidence, trying to describe the PEI and cultivation modes in the UK, which are different from those in China. In fact, there have been some differences between Chinese and British higher education system. At the same time, the inspection system and the effects are different too, due to the difference in current situation of HEIs in the two countries. Besides, the differences in the two nations have brought about the differences in training modes, curriculum arrangement and administrative methods in the HEIs (Guo, 2005).

## **2. INSPECTION-BASED ASSESSMENT IN POSTGRADUATE INSTRUCTION**

### **2.1 A Brief History**

In China, the process of inspection based assessment (IBA) began with the secondary education in early days. Before long, it was adopted to higher vocational education institutions (HVEIs) and higher education

institutions (HEIs). More recently, it has been spreading into the process of the HEE and the QA. Particularly, along with the mass higher education and the expansion of the PE had been realistic nearly in 2002, the IBA process became increasingly popular and “hot” discussion topics. Looking back, it was noticeable that China’s supervision spontaneously originated in various types of HEI during the period between 1980s and 1990s. In 1990, the National Commission of Education (the NCE, renamed as the MOE in 1998) released a document - the Temporary Regulation on Evaluation of Regular HEIs, which opened a new chapter of Chinese EE, including establishing the system of supervision and inspection. In 1993, the MOE initiated the 211 Project/Program that placed one of the greatest priorities on constructing key disciplines. Ten years later, what were the results of the construction? It was time to evaluate them. In this case, the MOE was determined to focus the QA on entire disciplinary areas. During the period of 2002- 2004, the MOE had completed the process covering 80 disciplines, 375 doctorate granting institutions. Since 2003, after the China Degrees & Graduate Education Development Center (CDGDC) was established, there had been several rounds of the HEE on the PEI and the relevance in 2003, 2006, 2008, 2010, and 2013. The outcomes had been released to the public in order to help people to learn about the quality of institution and programs and to promote the evaluated institutions for improving the quality of teaching and research of the PE process.

From the 1990s onward, the MOE released many laws, regulations, policies related to the promotion of QA. For instance, in 2004, the MOE released a new document - the Action Plan for Revitalizing Education 2003-2007 (the Action Plan). In order to respond to the Action Plan, the CDGDC required every single HEI to recommend their best dissertations to compete for a limited number of the tops nationwide. During 1999-2005, 688 doctorate dissertations had been appraised and selected as the best, 560 of which were recommended from HEIs, taking up 81.4 percent of the totality, During 2006-2009, 395 doctorate dissertation were appraised as the best (CDGDC, 2006).

Pressured by the HEE, the HEIs positively responded to the call of the MOE by establishing the inspection agencies and agenda, which included several aspects. First, making policy environment was significant and necessary in order to assure the system operate and function well. Second, looking for eligible and qualified people to be



inspectors was the important step to conduct the inspecting process in HEIs. Who are eligible persons to be the inspectors? The situations varied from university to university. In some institutions, those retired and experienced academicians and senior administrators were most suitable persons. They were selected and appointed by the president or the vice presidents in charge of teaching affairs. In other institutions, eligible persons might be well known professors on service, who were influential and authoritative. Third, the role of evaluation and quality control. One of the reasons was that conducting the IBA process was something new. There would be many options and possibilities. On one hand, it was required to keep abreast of international standards. On the other hand, it must be adaptable to Chinese HEIs. No matter what models were adopted, they must be embedded in roots of China's organizational culture of HEIs. Since the system of HEE and QA process had progressed in such a short history, and the QA process with the IBA did not function well, the inspector's role on operations seemed not to be played well (Wang, 2010; He, 2013). In this case, many scholars have recognized that it is necessary to carry out the PEI evaluation and quality control by implementing the IBA process in colleges and universities. For instance, some scholars began to explore the characteristics, nature, member composition and responsibilities of the IBA process and the PEI supervision system, (Liu, 2000; Liu et al, 2000; Zhao et al, 2002). Forth, several HEIs, such as Nanjing Aeronautics and Astronautics University (NAAU), Beijing Normal University (BNU), Beijing Institute of Technology (BIT), Southeast University (SU) also tried to explore the mechanism based on their practice.

## **2.2 Features of the IBA Process**

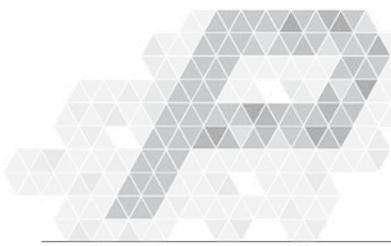
Based on the practice of the PEI in the classrooms, the IBA was found capable to promote postgraduate student preparation, and helpful to improve the QA of the PEI process. In other words, it can promote a sustainable and persistent development of the PE through combining the scale with the quality, and the structure with the benefits. The IBA process was also found to encourage the institutional innovation with changing PE management. For instance, one research-intensive university in Beijing has formed its characteristics of the IBA system focusing on value orientation, content, process and outcome of evaluation.

### 2.2.1 Integrity by Combining Academic Force with Administrative Force

In terms of the value orientation, the IBA process stresses the HEE and the QA from both administrative and academic dimensions. The IBA process is an important form of evaluating the PEI in classrooms. It may easily and directly guide those incapable teachers to improve their teaching. As commented by some scholars, the IBA process is the most direct, reliable way in the PEI (Zhang et al., 2013). The key points of the IBA process are focusing on guiding and advising teachers rather than supervising, criticizing or inspecting them. In the IBA process, supervisors should take inner-logics of the PEI as consideration. They must follow some educational principles such as the Objective Based Management (OBM), the Outcome Based Assessment (OBA), and the student centered learning process, with highlighting on the fairness and comprehension and integrity.

Generally, the IBA process was found to highly value combining administrative resources with academic resources. On one hand, the inspectors were expected to provide administrative guidance and encourage teachers to instruct according to the relevant regulations and requirements for classroom activities. On the other hand, the inspectors were expected highly to respect the academic freedom of instruction by leaving much room to teachers in the PEI process. In this case, the tasks of inspectors might focus on a normative monitoring in the PEI process and promoting teachers' academic development (Sergiovanni & Sterlanter, 2005).

When we took the integrity as one of the most important principles in implementing the IBA process, it meant that the supervisors must be engaged in guiding teachers and helping them to combine their scientific research with classroom teaching. Take two cases in the research-intensive university in Beijing we mentioned above as examples, supposing a professor was teaching a course entitled Modern Spectral Analysis, the first step he was expected to take was to introduce the latest frontier of scientific knowledge or cutting edge technology in fields of study and disciplinary area. By the IBA standard, one of the indicators to evaluate the teaching effects was to look into how much teachers can enrich teaching contents and teach with global perspectives. In another course entitled the Detonation, one of the indicators was to examine how much the teachers could dedicate themselves into the PEI process, and how much he could provide learners with expertise about military



and defense of science and technology, and how much the teacher could enlighten the students' professional spirit and open-mind. Of course, the key points were whether or not the teachers can make the PEI process interesting and attractive. From the perspectives of inspectors, we found that the teachers for some given courses must follow the progress of the overall knowledge of dynamic field and teaching method properly. It was in those two courses that all of 81 applicants had participated in the classes with high attendance rate. The evidence demonstrated that the two course outcomes were considered as the excellent.

### **2.2.2 Balancing Emphasis between Expertise and Professional Skills**

Although research and dissertation are important in the postgraduate preparation, the IBA process was expected to stress on PEI too. It especially attached importance to the cultivation of graduates' expertise and professional skills that were different from that for undergraduate students. The IBA process might deal with teaching goals, syllabi, and methods. The standard or grade evaluation might place the emphasis on how much the knowledge points can be interpreted clearly; how much the concept and teaching contents had been understood comprehensively; whether the basic knowledge and theories taught could reflect frontier of field of study and upcoming tendency of the disciplinary areas; whether the students' capacity, particularly in critical, rational and creative thinking and skeptical spirits could be improved and enlightened properly. Meanwhile, the IBA process highly valued teachers' attitudes to the reform of instruction with professionalism. For instance, the inspectors would look into how much the teachers would like to follow the advice and suggestions they gave. Of course, those advices and suggestions had to be useful and usable for enhancing teachers' classroom teaching. Under the circumstances, the IBA process would raise strict claims to the inspectors, which required them to be good at the expertise and skills of teaching evaluation. They would be required to conduct the IBA process with advanced theories and global perspectives. Only in this way that they could help the teachers change ideas and models from conventional paradigm to emerging ones. They could favor the teachers to change the PEI mode from knowledge oriented teaching to competency based training, from teacher-centered teaching to students-centered learning process.

### 2.2.3 Stressing On both Standardization and Uniqueness

In terms of outcome that teachers performed, the IBA process mainly contained evaluating teachers' performances, teaching outcome and classroom management. There were two principles of the HEE. One was the standardization, and the other was the uniqueness. The key point of standardization was to examine teachers' ability to arrange the PEI process as per planned teaching syllabus, and a scheduled teaching calendar. The purpose for the IBA process was to highlight the standard evaluation, and aimed to help teachers from misconduct on teaching process, and improve their capacity of dealing with teaching accidents.

However, the stressing standardization did not necessarily mean that teachers were appreciated by keeping a routine method of teaching without any innovation. On the contrary, the IBA process encouraged teachers to teach creatively and positively. As we know, teaching activities are kinds of artistic work, full of creativity and personal style. In the IBA process, the inspectors had to look into how much the teachers could present their teaching talents and skills, how much their PEI process reflected constructivist theory that might reflect contemporary mainstream of teaching ideas and models. The IBA process did not only focus on teachers' innovative activities but also paid attention to students' performance. Putting students in the center of teaching process was among the most important indicators. The good teaching process was marked by evidence with good questions that students could raise and good answers that teacher could interpret at the same time. The PEI process is different from that for undergraduates in many aspects. First, question-quest based instruction is very important, partly because the PEI process focuses on mastery of higher learning by exploring those unknown areas/fields of study. The PEI process was full of the sense of preparing inquiry, exploration, discovery and questioning. Therefore, the teachers were not playing roles of knowledge instructors but helpers and facilitators for students' positive learning. The duties of teachers, from the inspectors' perspective, were thought of guiding students to explore the unknown areas of discipline, discovering the problem, analyzing the problem, researching the problem as well as solving them. Therefore, in the IBA process the inspectors had to examine whether teachers could be engaged in cultivating students' inquiry ability and initiating the students' interest and enthusiasm in the studies.



### **2.2.4 Communication and Feedback as an Effective Means for Teaching and Learning Process**

In the IBA process, inspectors are encouraged to communicate with teachers in the classrooms and beyond. But in most cases, it is not practical that the inspectors usually act as auditors rather than guiders. They can seldom give teachers some useful and usable suggestions and face-to-face advice on improving teaching quality after they have finished listening to teachers' classes. For those shortcomings or serious individual teaching problems, the teachers have been exposed, the inspectors are afraid of pointing out promptly. In the IBA process, most teachers are expected to take initiatives to communicate with the inspectors by inquiring how to improve teaching level with much appreciation for supervisors' valuable suggestions.

### **2.3 Effects of the IBA Process**

Based on a survey done by a research team in Beijing Institute of Technology (BIT) in the period of 2010-2014, we evaluated the effect of PEI process. First, in terms of current situation on using the IBA process, it was noticed that the inspectors had a positive attitude to be engaged in the IBA process. They had provided a large number of teachers, young teachers in particular with lots of guidance and advice after they had been to the classroom. The courses they had participated in inspecting and advising cover various levels of programs including both doctoral courses and master courses, required or elective. Statistically, during 2010-2014, the inspectors had completed to assess and guide 304 courses with an average of 51 courses, each semester. Among the total of 304 courses, the required courses in master programs had reached as many as 98, taking up 34 percent. Interestingly, most of the teachers who had participated in the IBA process had professor or associate professor titles. According to the survey, 303 course taught by 278 teachers had participated in the IBA process. 71 of 278 teachers had professor titles, taking up 26 percent and 139 people had associate professors titles, taking up 50 percent, and lecturer titles, taking up 23 percent. Besides, quite a few doctoral students also had participated in PEI processes in master programs.

The survey also found that most of the teachers participated in the IBA process can work well. Some courses taught by them have been considered as excellence (with grade A). According to the data in the

survey, teachers who got a score above 90 reached 25%, those that scored 80-90 reached 63%, and others that scored 70-80 reached 12%. None of them had a score below 60. Therefore, the datum indicated that the teaching quality and quality control were very good in BIT where the IBA process was in operation.

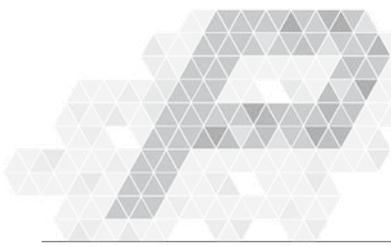
### 3. CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

#### 3.1 Problematic Realities

There are realities facing Chinese PEI process, although the IBA process has been operated in some HEIs.

First, the teaching content related to the expertise mastery seemed to be not good enough in depth and breadth. Also, based on data during 2010-2014 in BIT, a few of teaching contents had been found in courses that were similar to undergraduate education. They were not deep enough to be graduate level. For example, in the course entitled “Quantum Chemistry”, some knowledge content about the evaluation standard of illustration required the instruction. When one of the teachers was teaching the contents, he did not illustrate it clearly. On the contrary, he just kept repeating the various evaluation criteria rather than analyzing focal points and necessary parts of knowledge in the disciplines. He could not interpret them clearly, widely and deeply, the result was that the students were not satisfied with his teaching. Many postgraduates thought it was unnecessary to open the course.

Second, the teaching methods and the application of educational technology needed to be improved. It was noticed in the survey at BIT that some teachers, including young teachers lacked teaching experiences and flexible methods that good PEI process needed. For instance, some of them read the PPT contents with lack of interaction with learners. Let alone the guidance with no predesigned questions and stimulating students’ learning interests. The reasons were quite simple, partly because those young teachers had not received good enough professional training, could not accumulate deep and wide teaching content so that it was not possible for them to grasp the points of teaching. Meanwhile, it is true that a few teachers could apply a variety of teaching methods in the classroom, including seminars, simulation, case studies, in some courses, but there were still a number of teachers who could not be good at using them. For instance, we have



found that there were some teachers whose teaching paradigm had been outdated - from theory to theory without combining concepts into practice. Another problem was that the application of educational technology and means were not abundant. According to the survey, all teachers made PPT electronic courseware, but lack of the use of multimedia video, animation and other modern assistant teaching media that affected graduate's visual and listening effect. In this case, it was easy to find several classroom teaching problems, such as cell-phones usage, laptop and iPad gaming and so on.

Third, the students' class absence problem needed attention. There were two reasons. One was that some teachers had no strong awareness to implement strict management that led to high students' absence rate. Some other teachers did not have a sense of responsibility and let those who had been absent to participate in the examination and passed it easily. The others were less attractive and boring PEI process teachers used. The survey found that in some courses in which the absence rate was over 50 percent, mostly due to the fact that the teacher could not make their class teaching interesting and attractive.

### **3.2 Possible Solutions**

In order to respond to the phenomenon and solve the problems, several aspects of work should be taken in to consideration.

First, it is necessary to expand and enrich the depth and breadth of teaching contents. When delivering contents of the course, teachers should keep to systematic and prospective principles. Through mastering the classic theory and case studies, students can learn and get some useful inspiration, a mind for innovation, and a way of creative and rational thinking. In order to reach the goal, the curriculum needs to be redesigned. Second, roles of the inspectors should be strengthened. Last, the problem of the declining rate of students' attendance should be solved.

The following is a list of some tips that are expected to be helpful to the EE and QA in PEI process.

- To keep the curriculum content in line with the training level; to strengthen courses design in depth and breadth, and break through the courses boundary between the PE and undergraduate education, in case the course at two levels might be overlapped.
- To explore the deep field of disciplinary areas with the space to consider and digest what was illustrated and guided by teachers.

- To learn to make full use of modern educational technology and methods in order to make PPT perfect and make appropriate writing record on the blackboard with the focus of teaching to promote the teaching highlight.
- To be patient to take advice and suggestion given by inspectors who can guide you to improve the quality of teaching.
- To make effort to stimulate students' learning interest and enthusiasm.
- To implement microteaching, small size teaching by which flexible teaching methods may be easily adopted, and to strengthen teaching discipline by improving classroom management, to strengthen teachers' senses of responsibility and professional ethic.
- To further strengthen and to improve the IBA process.
- Incentive system for promoting teaching should be established and improved. Especially in some teaching oriented institutions, professors and associate professors should be encouraged to take more teaching workload. Their teaching performances should be taken good enough consideration for their academic title promotion.

## CONCLUSION

The Chinese system of HEE has developed and reformed over nearly three decades. The IBA process in the PE also has been in operation for many years so we have no reasons to question its effectiveness and efficiency in the HEE and the QA process. Currently, the MOE attached much importance to promote a system of the IBA process. And there are many HEIs where the system is under construction or has been in operation. They are embedded in roots of Chinese organizational culture of universities and shape China's way of QA of the PE. From the survey, we have received many good feedbacks, noting that the IBA is a good mechanism in the HEE and QA, although it is not considered as flawless.

To sum up, the features of the IBA have been presented as follows: a) stressing on integrity by combining academic power with administrative engagement in the IPA process; b) balancing the instruction between the capacity based training with expertise mastery through the IBA process; c) encouraging critical thinking and positive inquiry by promoting communication in classroom teaching; d) feedback of teaching and learning outcome as important steps for the QA.



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## External Quality Assurance of Higher Education in China

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### ABSTRACT

The paper begins with an overview of Chinese mass higher education as a setting to focus on the issue of the quality assurance (QA). The paper introduces the system of the higher education evaluation (the HEE) in China as well as the QA process initiated by different evaluation bodies at all levels. Also, this paper looks into and introduces a new pattern of the HEE—the Model of Integrating Five into One framework with a purpose of presenting China's way in the QA process. At the junction where many countries look for experiences and practices elsewhere, the paper wishes that the QA process used in China might have many valuable lessons of the others worldwide

### KEYWORDS:

Massification, EQA, Higher Education (HEd.), China

### INTRODUCTION

In the changing social context with the knowledge economy and globalization, the higher education (HEd.) sector has become a national priority of socio-economic development in many countries worldwide (GUNI, 2007). As a result, HEd. in many countries has been experiencing a dramatic shift from an elite stage to a massification stage, and even a universal stage with the rapid expansion in terms of the enrollment and gross enrolment ratio (GER). Accompanied by their rapid expansion, quality issues have been one of the hottest discussion topics and global concerns since 1990s. The reason to explain is partly because quite a few systems of HEd. have indeed confronted with the strain on higher education quality assurance (QA). Some said that the period between the early 1990s and the early 2000s was considered as “the decade or so of QA” due to the facts as follows: a) many countries have generated many policies and initiatives related to the QA as well as establishing evaluation bodies, such as the National Assessment and Accreditation Council

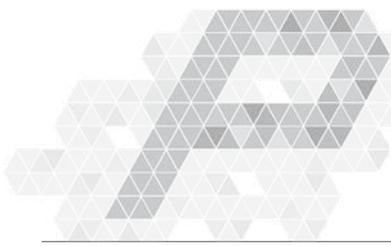
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(NAAC) in India, Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in the UK; Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) in Australia; b) the international collaboration and cooperation has been quite common under the drive of global, regional agencies, such as the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) established and located in Hong Kong in 1991, the Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE), Bahrain in 2008, and the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) in 2005; c) increasingly international conferences on HEd. have put the quality issues or relevance on the top of agenda, e.g. the theme of the world conference on HEd. in Paris during the year 1999, as well as the forums for International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education; and d) various publications have emerged in large numbers in the form of academic journals, working reports, book chapters and so forth. The evidence shows that quality of HEd. is a complex issue, which is something related to global concern and social responsibility (GUNI, 2007, pp. 5 - 10 ).

In China, without exception, issues of QA as the standard/level accreditation (LA) have been receiving a lot of attention since the late 1990s, after the higher education institutions (HEIs) witnessed a rapid expansion in terms of enrolment and GER. It was during the last decade or so (1998 - 2014) that it has stepped onto the stage of mass HEd. from the elite stage. Currently, the China's HEd. system has been the second largest in terms of college enrolment worldwide (Shi, 2015, pp. 63 - 88). For instance, with regard to the public sector, the system has nearly 2,491 regular HEIs, which comprises 1,170 four-year-degree-granting universities and colleges and 1,321 three-year-associate-diploma-offering higher vocational colleges. Of which, 548 regular universities and colleges and 282 independent national research-oriented institutions are recognized to offer graduate programs (MOE, 2014). In 2013, the student population reached close to 27 million. The average student population at a university was as many as 14,261 in the universities and colleges, while 5,876 students were in the higher vocational colleges. According to "the 2020 Outline", by 2020, the GER in the system is expected to reach to 40%, with about 35.5 million college students in enrolment (GU, 2010). Besides, at all HEIs, there were 2,179,314 full-time academics including 181,501 full professors, 432,356 associate professors, 312,606 administrators and 205,380 support staff (ibid, 2010).

Alongside the rapid growth in terms of enrolment and scale, the issue of QA has become one of the most perplexing realities. The biggest



problem confronting all institutions after the rapid expansion is that their quality has increasingly deteriorated. For instance, the shortage of well-qualified faculty both in quantity and quality, the teacher-student ratio decreased quickly, eligible graduates from high schools have declined and that many teachers complained that the newly enrolled students are less qualified than before (Shi, 2015, p. 77). To cope with the situation, the Ministry of Education (the MOE) was determined to place a great emphasis on QA. The paper expects to focus on China's system of the external QA (EQA) by reviewing quite a bit of literature including articles, documents, expert presentations, working reports, unofficial interviews and so forth. It aims to begin introducing the context of issues of the EQA in China, including its policies and initiatives, changing trends as well as looking into the new pattern of the HEd.—the Model of Integrating Five into One Framework (the IFIO). The purpose of this aims to present China's way in the EQA process. At the junction where many countries look for experiences and practices elsewhere, the paper wish that the EQA in China's way may provide many valuable lessons to the other countries around the world.

## **2. THE PURSUIT TO CHINA'S WAYS OF THE EQA**

Historically, the EQA in China dates back as far as the 1980s, when Chinese society just revived from the destructive effect of the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1977, politically, economically, culturally as well as educationally. In 1983, the National Commission of Education (the NCE, renamed the MOE in 1998) held its first national conference on HEd., proposing to speed up the development of HEd., and to initiate a process of the EQA. In order to implement the standard evaluation, the MOE established two specialized HEE bodies. One is the Higher Education Evaluation Centre (the HEEC), which is empowered to be in charge of the EQA for undergraduate education (the QAUE); and the China Academic Degree & Graduate Education Development Centre (the CDGDC), which is mainly responsible for the EQA of postgraduate education (the QAPE). Both of them are affiliated with and funded by the MOE (Li, 2004, p. 219). Meanwhile, quite a few of education evaluation agencies have been established by the Departments of Education (the DOE) in provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities. Their duties mainly focus on higher vocational education (QAHVE). Moreover, some professional education commissions also were established to take specialized/programmatic accreditation (the SA) that are relevant to

some fields of studies in HEIs, such as engineering, medical, education and so forth. The SA for engineering education (EE) is called as EE-SA (hereafter), and the SA for medical education (ME) is called as ME-SA (hereafter).

## 2.1 The QAUE Process

The QAUE process in China dates back as far as the early 1990s, which has passed over two decades, and has undergone through three stages so far (Wu, 2014). The first stage of the QAUE process (1994 - 2002) began with some pilot evaluations that were needed to adapt into the country's transformation from the planned economy to the market one (Liu, 2012, pp.23 - 33). In 1990, the NCE released the first document regarding to the QAUE process—the Temporary Provision on Evaluation for Regular HEIs. According to the document, the NCE initiated the first-round process of higher education evaluation (the HEE). Three forms of the HEE—the eligibility evaluation, the optimization, and the random evaluation had been adopted. Of which, the eligibility evaluation process was compulsory for new baccalaureate-degree-granting HEIs established or upgraded after 1976 (Li, 2014, p. 217). The process aimed at encouraging those new institutions to clarify their missions and goals, shaping the philosophy of teaching, standardizing the administration of the teaching process, enhancing the competence of the teaching staff, and improving the condition of teaching and learning (ibid.). The optimization evaluation was targeted at several leading research intensive universities. The random evaluation focused on some regular HEIs that might be selected randomly to participate in the evaluation, no matter whether or not they were willing to. The purpose of the MOE doing that was in an attempt to establish an enduring mechanism of the QAUE process by randomly selecting HEIs to implement this kind of evaluation (Li, 2014, p. 218). By the end of 2002, 254 HEIs had been given a different evaluation mentioned above (Li, 2013). Of which, 190 was for the eligibility, 18 for the optimization, and 26 for the random (Li, 2014, p. 217, Wu, 2014).

The second stage of the process (2003 - 2008) was an important period in China's history of the HEE, marked by the beginning of the first official large-scale external QAUE process. In August, 2001, the MOE released a document—Several Suggestion Points on Improving Quality of Undergraduate Education through Strengthening its Teaching Work, stating that the MOE will initiate new round HEE called the grade evaluation, which was based on previous experiences, and was expected to promote



an evaluation cycle every five years beginning in 2003. In 2002, the Action Plan of Education Innovation 2003 - 2007, which was approved by the State Council (the SC), ensured the validity of the new round process. In January 2003, the MOE further stressed principles of the HEE, which aimed at promoting development, reformation, management through the HEE and to reach a goal of combining construction with the HEE (Li Y., 2013, pp. 31 - 32). During the period, 589 bachelor degree granting HEIs had participated in the process. All of them had passed but were graded into four levels—A, B, C and D grades. This resulted in 424 HEIs that were assessed with the A grade (the best), taking up 70.90%; 144 were given a B grade, 24.44%; and 21 met the standard and the qualified with a C grade, 3.56% (Li Y., 2013, p. 32).

The third stage of HEE process (2009) was named as the HEE by classification/ category. The first round of the grade evaluation, prior to 2008, had made much achievement, but yet had been confronted with criticism due to its shortcomings (Li & Zhang, 2008, pp. 27 - 29). Almost all HEIs who had participated in the process acknowledged that the previous single indicator system of the HEE was not adaptable to various types of HEIs, mainly because the situations of HEIs varied from institution to institution. As a result, the MOE made the decision to formulate a new indicator system of the HEE and a mechanism of the EQA. The new mechanism is named as the Model of Integrating Five into One Framework or IFIO (Wu, 2014, and Liu, 2012).

## **2.2 The QAPE Process**

The QAPE process was initiated almost at the same time as the QAUE process in the mid-1990s. The QAPE process was carried out under the leadership of the National Office for Degree Commission (NODC) affiliated to the MOE, from which the CDGDC grew out in 2000.

The first process of QAPE was the eligibility evaluation for those HEIs with special agencies responsible for their postgraduate education (the PE) administration. According to the SC's Regulation on Administration and Duty of HEIs, the MOE required some key research universities to establish administrative organizations in 1995, which were in charge of the PE. However, some issues were questioned, such as which HEIs had qualifications to establish the new administrative agencies; what were the basic requirements for them and so forth. Since then, the MOE had conducted three rounds of processes for the election and the accreditation. By 2008, 56 leading universities who had a large number

of postgraduate enrolment had been approved to establish such internal agencies (Li, 2013, p. 53).

The second process of the QAPE is to review those degree programs that had been approved since 1981. Prior to the 1980s, Chinese PE administration was much centralized, but the situation changed in 1985 when the Decision on Reforming System of Education was released. Since then, the NCE began to explore the possibility of decentralizing the HEIs several powers in charge of the PE. The precondition was that they had to take periodic review given by the NOC (later by the MOE). The MOE officially initiated the first-round reviewing process in 2005, which would be expected to remain sustainable with the second-round six years later. It was the same year that the CDGDC reviewed 493 doctorate programs in 84 fields of studies nationwide. The following year, 2,106 master degree programs were reviewed. The outcome of the reviews was presented as either pass or non-pass. Those non-pass programs would be deprived from the qualification of conducting research education (Chen, et al., 2012).

The third process was to carry on evaluations as per a high standard of every discipline. In 1993, the MOE initiated the 211 Project that placed one of the greatest priorities on constructing key disciplines. Ten years later, what were results of the construction? As far as the results, the MOE was determined to focus on the QAPE process to assess all disciplinary areas. During this period (2002 - 2004), the MOE had completed the process that covered 80 fields of studies, which were established in 375 doctorate granting institutions. Since 2003, the CDGDC has brought out several rounds of the QAPE processes, which were conducted respectively in 2003, 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2013. The outcomes of them have been released to public in order to help people learn about the quality of institution and programs on one hand, and also to promote the institutions to improve the quality of teaching and research of the PE.

The fourth process was to appraise and select the best doctorate dissertation. According to the Action Plan for Revitalizing Education 2003 - 2007 (the Action Plan), the process was an important means to improve the quality of doctoral dissertations, encourage innovation and prepare promising scholars, partly because the doctoral dissertations could test the quality of the PE as whole. In order to respond the Action Plan, the CDGDC required every single HEI to recommend their best dissertations to compete for a limited number of the top dissertations nationwide. During this period (1999 - 2005), 688 doctoral dissertations



had been appraised and selected as the best, of which 560 were recommended from HEIs, taking up 81.4 percent of the total. During the period of 2006 - 2009, 395 doctorate dissertations were appraised as the best (the CDGDC, 2006, 2010).

### **2.3 The QAHVE Process**

The QAHVE process began with the eligibility evaluation in some higher vocational institutions (HVIs) in 1996. With the development of HEEd., either in the number of schools or based on the students scale and market demand, HVIs account for a considerable proportion in the Chinese HEEd. system, and are significant for development of social economy (Jiang, 2015). Then the MOE continued to conduct the optimization evaluation from 2001 to 2002, together with the QAUE process. From 2003 onward, the HEEC took responsibility of the QAHVE process and began to formulate the framework for the indicator system. After that, the HEEC began to empower the DOEs at the provincial level to implement the QAHVE process. During 2004 - 2008, nearly 650 HVIs had participated in the grade evaluation, together with the QAUE process by 2008 (Jiang, 2015). From 2009, the HEEC accepted QAHVE and operated it under the IFIO model, which stressed on the classification evaluation by different types of institutions. The QAHVE would focus mainly on improving the basic institutional capacity through reforming the instructional paradigm and curriculum design in HVIs. The purpose of doing this was aimed at changing the conventional paradigm from an emerging paradigm by placing emphasis on the teaching process rather than the teaching goal, on hardware rather than software and positive participation rather than passive participation in the QAHVE (Wu, 2014).

### **2.4 The EE/ME-SA Process**

In 1985, just after the NCE had released the document –the Notice on Conducting Research and Pilot Exploration of EE-SA, a specialized/professional agency called the Evaluation Committee of Higher Engineering Education (the ECHEE) was established to respond the call of the NCE (Wang, et al., 2014, pp. 23 - 33). In 1992, the Ministry of Construction (the MOC) began a pilot exploring the EE-SA process with six fields of studies, such as architecture, civic engineering, urban planning, engineering management, construction environment and equipment engineering as well as water supply and sewerage engineering

(Li, 2013, p. 55, Wang, et. al., 2014). By June 2006, 24 bachelor and 34 master degrees had passed the SA. In 2006, based on the first round of exploration for the SA, the MOE released the Temporary Measure of Implementation on the EE-SA, formulate four task forces in four fields of studies that go beyond civil engineering, such as mechanical engineering & automation, electronic engineering & automation, chemical engineering & technology, and computers & technology. Their main tasks were to make action plans for the EE-SA process and put them in practice. By June, 2008, the MOE had completed the EE-SA process on 41 programs in 10 fields of studies. If the EE-SA process by the MOC were counted, the total number had reached as many as 204 programs in 11 fields of studies (Li, 2013, p. 55). Surprisingly, the EE-SA process increased from six programs in four fields of studies in 1992 to 231 programs in 31 fields of studies in 94 HIEs in 2013 (Wang, et al., 2014, pp. 23 - 33). In 2013, China's SA stepped into a new chapter, marked by the evidence that its application to become a member of the Washington Accord was accepted by the IQNET at the Seoul Conference. The IQNET's acceptance provides Chinese EE graduates with "passports" to participate in and compete for opportunities in the global job markets. In 2014, the MOE collaborated with the Chinese Association for Science and Technology (the CAST) and the Ministry of Human Resource and Social Security (the MOHRSS) jointly established a accrediting body—the China Engineering Education Accreditation Association (CEEAA) (Wang, et al., 2014, pp. 23 - 33).

Encouraged by the success in China's EE, the MOE collaborated with the Ministry of Health (the MOH) and jointly established two accrediting agencies for medical education in 2008. One was the Committee for Medical Education Accreditation (the CMEA), and other was the Committee for Clinic Medicine Science (the CCMS). The two accrediting bodies took charge of the MEA and the CMS in HEIs under the administration of the MOH and the MOE. By 2010, eight medical universities in China had passed the evaluation with the international standard of the MEA, and another four medical institutions had passed the evaluation with the national standard of the MEA (ibid.).



### 3. THE “IFIO” PARADIGM: THE CHINA’S WAY OF EQA

What is the Model of IFIO? As explained by Dr. Wu, Director General of the HEEC, it refers to integrating five kinds of evaluation approaches/processes into one framework to assure the quality of Chinese HEd. (Wu, 2014). The five approaches are:

- a) the institution based self-evaluation;
- b) the government-driven external evaluation of HEIs by classification.  
It can be divided into two classifications: the qualification evaluation and the examining evaluation;
- c) the professional accreditation with employee-participation;
- d) the expert dominated evaluation with international benchmark; and
- e) the normal monitoring evaluation by database (Wu, 2014).

#### 3.1 Context

In 2010, the National Outline of Medium-and-Long-term Educational Development and Reform 2002 - 2020 (the 2020 Vision) was released by the SC, which had clear claims on strengthening the teaching evaluation system (the MOE, 2010). In 2011, in order to respond to the claims of the 2020 Vision, the MOE released a document—the Notice on the Evaluation for Teaching in Regular HEIs (the No. 9 Notice of 2011), stressed again the importance of QA by using a new mechanism of the HEE (Li, 2014, Wu, 2014). The reason, in part, was to explain the effect of the previous HEE, its limitations and deficiencies, though achievement was considered as much more than that. For instance, the outcome from the first round QAUE process indicated that too many HEIs that had been assessed achieved a score of grade A (the best) shown in Table 1.

Table (1) the results of QAUE (2002 - 2007)

Evaluation results									
Total		A	%	B	%	C	%	D	%
2007	198	160	80 .8	38	19 .2	0	0	0	0
2006	133	100	75 .1	24	18 .1	9	6 .8	0	0
2005	75	43	57 .4	28	37 .3	4	5.3	0	0
2004	54	30	55 .6	19	35 .2	5	9.2	0	0
2003	42	20	47 .6	19	45 .2	3	7.2	0	0

Source: Liu, Y., 2009

Based on the results as seen in Table 1, the outcome had been questioned by the academic community and the public. Why did so many HEIs obtain an A grade? The validity of the QAUE process had been under question, as noted by former Vice Director General, Li Zhihong that the deficiencies and limitations of the previous HEE might indicate the following: First, it lacked a specific evaluation indicator system and tools for different types of HEIs. Second, the pace of evaluation might be too fast to assure its quality. Third, in some cases the evaluation process appeared to be formalist because some of the HEIs put too much effort in obtaining excellent scores without appropriate guidance and control. Last, but not the least, the evaluation result relied mostly through on-site visits by the external experts and lacked monitoring the ordinary state of undergraduate teaching (Li, 2014 pp. 221 -222).

To avoid the limitation and deficiencies with the first-round of the HEE, Li suggested that the following measures be taken as necessary in the new round of the EQA process:

- a) to conduct various types of evaluation which may suit different HEIs;
- b) to implement the categorized evaluation to help various type of HEIs develop their distinct characteristics respectively;
- c) to weaken the categorical grade of the evaluation results;
- d) to encourage HEIs to establish the internal QA system;
- e) to reinforce the social participation and supervision, and promote the integrity and transparency of the evaluation;
- f) to establish a periodic data-publishing system to monitor teaching status;
- g) to conduct research on national basic standards of quality education;
- h) to reinforce the financial support to quality evaluation;
- i) to emphasize the publicity, awareness and positive environment (Li, 2014, pp. 223 - 225).

### 3.2 Features

First, the IFIO is designed by new ideas that draw lessons and experiences from both overseas and home processes. As noted by one of directors of the HEEC, Dr. Liu, the new model will be following principles, such as the integrity of systematic evaluation, the institution-wise internal evaluation, the evaluation by student-centered teaching and learning, normal monitoring evaluation classification by types of HEIs and so forth (Liu 2012, pp. 23 - 28).



Second, a set of EQA standards with five dimensions will be established, which aims at emphasizing the EQA process on: what degree the goals can be reached; how many social claims can be met; in what ways the faculty and facility can be provided; how possible the EQA is able to operate efficiently and effectively; and to what degree can satisfaction of students as consumers be raised (Wu, 2014).

Third, apart from the international accreditation that is popular globally, quite a few of new evaluation instruments are expected to be employed. The new techniques include a quality monitoring system based on daily teaching and normal operations; the evaluation research and analysis on database construction and so on (ibid.). In terms of structure, the new model consists of five types of approaches as follows:

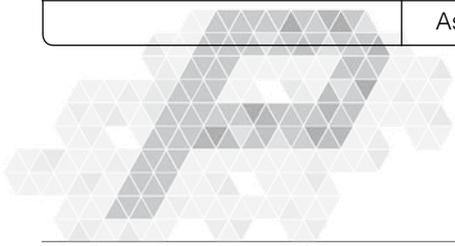
- a) The institutional evaluation process will be used to assess, guide and implement the HEIs by their grade classification. Nearly 143 HEIs, taking up 50 percent of the totality in applicants, had participated in the new round of eligibility evaluation by 2014. Meanwhile, 13 leading universities had finished reviewing the evaluation in the same year (ibid.);
- b) The EE/EM-SA made possible for enterprises and industries to participate in the EQA process. As mentioned above, 33 professional associations under the leadership of the CEEAA had jointly formulated a set system of CEEAA and finished EESA/MESA processes on 600 programs in 15 fields of studies at 200 HEIs by 2014 (Wu, 2014);
- c) The national database had been developed as a media to monitor normal status of QA;
- d) Based on the database, the HEEC published annual blue books or green books on QA, such as the report on monitoring and reviewing teaching quality in newly established institutions nationwide, the report on quality of undergraduate teaching in HEIs nationwide; a report on the quality of China's EE and the report on eligibility evaluation for newly established HEIs; and
- e) The evaluation process with international dimensions is emphasized to realize the internationalization in China's QA system (Wu, 2014).

### 3.3 Indicator System

The indicator system of the new model has been developed based on revising the previous version used in the first round of a five year grade evaluation. It also covers seven indicators at the first level, 24 sub-indicators at the second level as well as 64 points at the third level (Wu, 2014). Table 2 shows the indicator system in detail.

Table (2) Indicator system of QAUE (2009-)

First tier	Second tier	Third tier
<b>1. Idea and leadership</b>	1.1 Positioning Institution 1.2 Leaders' Role 1.3 Talent Preparation	1.1.1 School Position 1.1.2 Planning 1.2.1 Leader Capacity 1.2.2 Teaching Centered 1.3.1 Teaching Idea 1.3.2 Cooperative Education, Linkage of University & Industry
<b>2. teachers</b>	2.1 Number & Structure 2.2 Teaching Capacity 2.3 Faculty Development	2.1.1 % of teacher & student 2.1.2 Profile structure 2.2.1 Professional ethic 2.2.2 Teaching performance 2.3.1 Continues study & training
<b>3. Teaching condition</b>	3.1 Facility 3.2 Financial input	3.1.1 Lab and Practical Location 3.1.2 Library & Campus Net 3.1.3 Dormitory, Playground & Recreation 3.2.1 Financial Investment
<b>4. Professional Development &amp; Curriculum Design</b>	4.1 Fields of Studies 4.2 Curriculum & Instruction 4.3 Teaching Practice	4.1.1 Arrangement & Distribution 4.1.2 Plan for Preparation 4.2.1 Teaching Content & Course Resources 4.2.2 Teaching Method & Learning Assessment 4.3.1 Lab Teaching 4.3.2 Workplace Teaching 4.3.3 Social Activities 4.3.4 Thesis & Design
<b>5. Teaching Management</b>	5.1 Teaching Manager & Staff 5.2 Quality	5.1.1 Quality and Structure 5.2.1 Regulation & Rule
	Assurance	5.2.2 Quality Control



First tier	Second tier	Third tier
<b>6. Learning Culture &amp; Advising Student</b>	6.1 Learning Environment  6.2 Guidance and Service	6.1.1 Policy and Solution 6.1.2 Learning Atmosphere 6.1.3 Campus Culture Activity 6.2.1 Tutoring System 6.2.2 Counseling & Advice
<b>7. Teaching Quality</b>	7.1 Moral Education  7.2 Expertise and Skill  7.3 Sport & Art 7.4 External Evaluation  7.5 Employment	7.1.1 morality & political views 7.1.2 Moral Quality 7.2.1 Theory & Skill 7.2.2 Knowledge Mastery 7.3.1 Physical and Art Education 7.4.1 Teaching Satisfaction from Faculty and Student 7.4.2 Social evaluation 7.5.1 Rate of employment 7.5.2 Quality of employment

Source: HEEC

### 3.4 Outcome

The new round of the evaluation process under the IFIO began with a pilot eligibility evaluation on twenty HEIs in 20 provinces in 2009. By 2014, the HEEC had finished the testing evaluation on 37 HEIs, and it was decided to initiate the new round of evaluation on all newly established institutions from 2011 onward. Statistically, basic data from 600 HIEs had been collected and stored into a database of the HEEC in 2014, and was expected to reach 1,200 HEIs in 2015. (2014, Wu). The basic data covers seven aspects of basic information of HEIs, such as school enrolment, faculty profiles, disciplines, instruction and curriculum, student demographics, teaching management, and its QA process (ibid.).

More recently, several of China's 985 Project leading universities, such as Tsinghua University, Peking University and Shanghai Jiaotong University began exploration on evaluation with international dimensions. Xiamen University (XMU) has succeeded in participating in the Exploring Good and Innovative Options in Internal Quality Assurance in Higher Education (the IQA program) sponsored by the UNESCO-IIEP (XMU news-net, 2014). The HEEC also promotes international cooperation with its counterparts worldwide. For instance, the HEEC has organized Chinese HEIs to be engaged in international collaborative programs such as the AHELO, the U-Multi-rank with EU, and Campus Asia: QA for the student mobility with Korea and Japan (Wu, 2014).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The Chinese system of EQA has developed and reformed itself for nearly three decades, accompanied by the rapid growth of Chinese higher HEEd., and the social economy development. Alike many countries around the world, issues of quality became a hot topic of discussion with pro-and-con debates in both the academic community and public circles. Since 1999, after Chinese HEEd. had stepped onto the stage of massification, the QA process became the most important priority on the national agenda. Governments at both central and provincial levels have been playing leading roles, which are marked by evidence, such as the setting for policies, environment, the establishment of official QA agencies, social forces widening participation, the formulation of the new mode of QA process and so forth.

The new process under the IFIO is represented by Chinese features which have been embedded in Chinese roots and within social, political, economic and educational settings. Currently, the new model has been widely recognized and accepted by academic communities in China and beyond. It had been reported on several international website, such as the UNESCO-IIEP, Education & Scientific Performance Evaluation Committee in the European Union (the EU-ESPEC), the MOE in Russia, The National Institution for Academic Degrees & University Evaluation (NIAD-UE) in Japan and so on (Wu, 2014). At the international conference that was organized by the INQAAHE in May, 2014, Dr. Bobby, the conference chairperson highly commended the China's model by noting that the IFIO stressed the process as being institution-based, student development-centered, and its evaluation and guidance by institutional classification are deserving of praise. It is advanced, in part because it can conduct the process with daily monitoring of teaching quality based on the information put into the database and to report the results by publishing Green Books or Blue Books. The IFIO as China's way of the QA really sets up a good example for other countries that are dealing with the same situation (Wu, 2014).



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## **A Study of External School Evaluators' Competencies for Grade Levels 1-12 Quality Assessment in Thailand**

### **ABSTRACT**

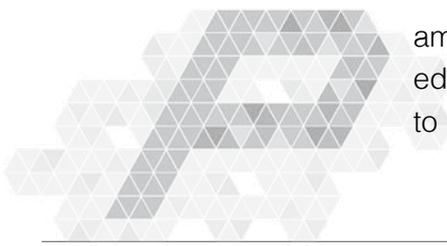
Competent school evaluators may be able to identify the causes of underachieving schools and provide data that will help school practitioners to improve teaching and learning. In Thailand, a sizable portion of the government budget has been spent on educational evaluation under the responsibility of the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA), highlighting the important role that school evaluators can potentially play in improving Thai schools. This study updated two sets of competencies for external educational evaluators of school quality at grade levels 1-12 in the Thai educational context as originally developed by Guah (2004) and Piyamas (2005). To conduct this update, the researcher used knowledge from the scholarly literature on evaluator competencies and, through four extensive surveys, collected opinions and suggestions from Thai evaluation and education experts as part of the process of developing a new set of competencies for Thai external school evaluators. The Combination Job Analysis Method (C-JAM) was used as a framework to collect and analyze data. Two sets of competencies, one for training and one for selecting evaluators, are proposed along with recommendations for practice and for additional research.

### **KEYWORDS:**

Educational evaluation, School administration, South Asian Studies

### **INTRODUCTION**

In Thailand, educational evaluation is both an interest and a concern among Thai educators and school accreditation stakeholders since educational institutions at every level in Thailand are required by law to receive external school evaluations at least once every five years



(Guah, 2004). Institutions must also conduct self-evaluation and send self-assessment reports to the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) to be reviewed as a part of the external review process (ONESQA, 2007). Thailand's Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) was established in 2000 with a belief that this quality assessment system could influence the improvement of education quality. Educational institutions can use valid and useful school evaluation findings and recommendations to improve schools' efficiency as well as to ensure that strengths that schools already possess are maintained. In addition, relevant agencies can apply evaluation results to plan and to make decisions regarding policies and regulations to improve school quality, including curriculum, resource allocations, and teacher selection and training. Many factors affect the success of external school evaluation, one of which is the quality of evaluators. Incompetent evaluators may produce invalid evaluation results (Worthen, 2003, 332), which could significantly affect school quality. If schools apply invalid evaluation results to inform decision making, such as during development of revisions to a school's administrative policies and curriculum, many negative outcomes could occur.

For basic education level only, ONESQA has certified more than 2,800 external evaluators, and ONESQA will certify more evaluators in the future (ONESQA, 2014). These evaluators are responsible for evaluating more than 36,000 schools around the country. A considerable amount of funding from the national budget (e.g. \$23 million in 2015) has been spent to operate this quality assurance system, including hiring and training evaluators, certifying evaluators, and sponsoring research studies that benefit educational evaluation activities in Thailand. Many studies funded by ONESQA were conducted around educational evaluation topics such as standards and criteria for evaluation and the use of evaluation results among schools; however, only a few research studies about evaluator competencies have been conducted so far. Examples of studies about competencies for external school evaluators conducted are by Guah Grasaesom (2004) and Piyamas Wangchayklang (2005). Yet Guah (2004) and Piyamas' (2005) studies were developed about a decade ago. The lists of competencies suggested by Guah (2004) and Piyamas (2005) need to be updated and verified to improve the validity of competencies necessary for external school evaluators

at grade levels 1-12. Therefore, it is important to conduct a systematic study to explore an updated list of competencies for educational evaluators to assess school quality at grade levels 1-12 in Thailand.

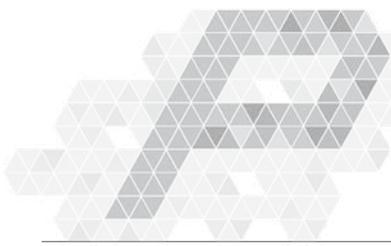
## RESEARCH STUDY

This research study sought to answer one overarching research question: what competencies should external educational evaluators have in order to conduct school quality evaluations for grade levels 1-12 in the Thai context? The study used the C-JAM technique, a form of task analysis, to answer the question. The study framework, process, and methods were adjusted from Brannick, Levine, and Morgeson's (2007) book on the same technique.

The study began by exploring the range of necessary tasks for external school evaluation at grade levels 1-12 in Thailand. A list of necessary tasks for external school evaluation was generated from a crosswalk of literature about tasks for both evaluations in general, the evaluation of schools and educational standards, and guidelines for evaluators. Then, experts were invited to respond to two surveys (Survey One and Survey Two) to provide their opinions regarding the tasks necessary to successfully conduct external school evaluations. Experts included Thai external school evaluators at grade levels 1-12 in Thailand, ONESQA staff, and Bureau of Educational Testing Department (BET) staff who had either educational or evaluation experience, or both - more specifically, staff who had worked directly with external and/or internal school evaluation.

In Survey One, experts were invited to rate the necessity of each task for external school evaluation. They were also asked to review the list of tasks for completeness and to review the language used in task descriptions for correctness and appropriateness. Survey Two was used to assign an importance value to each task. According to the established criteria, 160 tasks relating to external school evaluation at grade levels 1-12 in Thailand were selected as "necessary" competencies for external school evaluators and were subsequently included in the Survey Three.

Competencies included in Survey Three were taken from a literature review of publications relevant to evaluator competencies as well as competencies identification process using the list of necessary tasks obtained from Survey Two. Similar to Survey One, respondents were



asked to give their opinions about whether or not each competency was necessary for external school evaluators to have, if the list of competencies was complete, and if language used in competency descriptions was correct and appropriate. Survey Four included four questions and the results were used to develop two sets of competencies for selecting and training external school evaluators at the 1-12 grade levels. According to the established criteria, 122 competencies out of 130 competencies were chosen as “necessary” competencies for external school evaluators to be included in Survey Four.

### **COMPETENCIES NECESSARY FOR EXTERNAL SCHOOL EVALUATORS**

Based on the established criteria, surveyed experts reported 122 competencies, known as the Thai External School Evaluator Competencies (Thai ESEC), as necessary for external school evaluators at grade levels 1-12 in Thailand. These 122 include 29 knowledge areas, 74 skills and abilities, and 19 other characteristics. A total of eight competencies were excluded. These included, for example, competencies related to tasks those external school evaluators usually do not conduct (e.g. knowledge of cost-effectiveness analysis).

Some competencies were excluded because respondents perceived that they are not tasks required by ONESQA. For example, the ability to determine the need for a school evaluation was not necessary since schools are mandated to be evaluated every five years whether they are ready or not, according to the law. Another example is ability to plan and implement strategies in developing an effective dissemination and outreach program for evaluation reports since ONESQA is responsible to provide evaluation results to schools. The knowledge of “International Development Relevant to School Evaluation Practices” was not rated highly; this may be because evaluators are expected to evaluate schools following an evaluation process using standards and indicators already established by ONESQA. Therefore, the knowledge of “International Development Relevant to School Evaluation Practices” may not be seen as necessary, according to the study participants.

As mentioned by the respondents, the concept of social equity is not emphasized as much in Thailand as it is in some Western countries such as in the United States. Thai school stakeholders such as students, parents, and teachers in the same school usually have similar status

and characteristics, for instance, in terms of nationality, race, religion, and economic status. In addition, many respondents reported that usually, school community had limited participation in evaluation activities, such as attending the evaluation findings presentation. Thus there may be several reasons why respondents gave a lower rating score for the skill of “fostering social equity in evaluation such as inviting people with different nationalities, genders, and social statuses into meetings”.

There are two competencies that the researcher thought to be necessary, but that did not meet the criteria to be included in the set of necessary competencies.

First, the skill of systematically following up on the use of evaluation results and recommendations and attempting to prevent and/or correct misuse of evaluation results is necessary because the evaluation results would not be useful if they are not implemented and it would be a waste of resources (such as government funding and teacher time) if the results are not used. It would be beneficial for evaluators to develop a plan to evaluate the uses of evaluation results. This information could be used for the next evaluation cycle and the external evaluator could attach the review plan with the school external evaluation report.

Second, the researcher believes that there is no evaluation process that can be used universally, including the evaluation process that ONESQA established. Each school has its own unique context such as the teacher-student ratio, economic status of staff and students, and level of school evaluation readiness. The evaluation process proposed by ONESQA should be used as a guideline. However, an evaluator should be able to conduct an evaluation that is responsive to each school context. Therefore, the ability to define the frameworks and parameters for conducting an evaluation and to develop evaluation management plans that are practical and responsive to how schools operate is necessary for external school evaluators in the researcher’s opinion.

### **DO EVALUATORS NEED TO HAVE ALL THAI ESEC?**

McGuire and Zorzi (2005, 77) claimed that they were unable to define a list of core competencies that every evaluator should have, to they also mention that it is unlikely for an evaluator to be capable in all areas of evaluation competencies. King and Stevahn (2015, 12) raised the question of whether competencies should “be a function of team performance, rather than one person”. Zorzi, McGuire, and Perrin



(2002, v) answered this question by stating that “it is not possible, or even desirable, for any one person to have an in-depth knowledge of everything” since there are numerous methods and approaches that can be used to conduct evaluation. Because external school evaluators always work in teams, each evaluator may not need to acquire all necessary competencies in the Thai ESEC; however, an evaluation team should include evaluators who have competencies - the knowledge and skills needed for a specific evaluation - together as a team. (Zorzi, McGuire, & Perrin, 2002).

The ONESQA may consider organizing competencies in the Thai ESEC list in different categories, for example, a fundamental set and an optional set. A fundamental set of competencies could be required for every evaluator, including skills of school evaluation, skills of reporting, and skills of data collection and analysis. An optional set of competencies could be used for categorizing evaluators who have expertise in, for example, educational administration and school evaluation program management. This would benefit evaluation agencies by allowing them to put together teams that collectively possess all necessary competencies to successfully and effectively conduct external school evaluation.

However, future users of the Thai ESEC should be aware that this set includes all possible necessary competencies for external school evaluators at grade levels 1-12 in general. A team may need to include an evaluator with special expertise when it evaluates schools with specialties or unique contexts. For example, a team must have evaluators who are proficient in English when evaluating an international school or have expertise in Montessori education when evaluating Montessori schools.

In addition, a process of differentiating expert evaluators from novice evaluators should benefit team establishment. UNEG (2008, 5) wrote that “every position has its own set of competencies. One cannot expect the same level of competencies from a member staff at the junior officer rank compared to someone at a senior officer rank. Therefore, it is important to identify the competency requirement and describe the degree of mastery depending on the level of position”. An external school evaluation team should at least have 1-2 expert evaluators to ensure the quality of evaluation. By working closely with evaluation experts, novice evaluators are also able to learn important knowledge and skills from mentoring.

The Thai ESEC did not consider the physical ability of evaluators; however, this ability should not be ignored since a few respondents from the ONESQA and evaluator groups indicated their concerns regarding the physical ability of evaluators (e.g. difficulty in walking, seeing, and hearing) that may influence that quality of evaluation.

In summary, as mentioned previously, it is almost impossible for an evaluator to individually possess all necessary the competencies for evaluation. ONESQA, agencies or even evaluators themselves may assume that after being trained and passing the certification process, they already have sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities to successfully conduct external school evaluation. This misconception can be dangerous for the quality of school evaluation since these potentially misguided evaluators may conduct a low quality evaluation that may lead to poor results. Evaluators, especially evaluators in countries where the evaluation profession is still in the early stages, such as Thailand, should understand and be aware of their own views and perspectives. They also should conduct evaluations within their own competency limits. A clear process of establishing effective evaluation teams that include evaluators with sufficient knowledge and skills needed should help to solve this issue. Future research about the degree of expertise required for each necessary competency for an external school evaluator should be conducted.

### **TWO SETS OF IMPORTANT COMPETENCIES FOR SELECTION AND TRAINING**

In Thailand, people from a variety of professional backgrounds typically apply to be external school evaluators. Candidates who pass ONESQA's criteria must attend training programs, including workshops and field practice, and then take exams to be certified. Not many candidates have all or most of the competencies necessary to effectively conduct school evaluations before they attend these training programs since they come from various professions and backgrounds, and the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for school evaluation are quite specific (e.g. knowledge of ONESQA's standards and indicators, and skills to write reports and report formats).

The results of this research study indicated that there are 122 competencies necessary for external school evaluators (the Thai ESEC set). Among these 122 competencies, 71 were selected according to



responses and criteria to establish a set of competencies for evaluator selection purposes (the selection set), including 21 knowledge areas, 48 skills and abilities, and two other characteristics. The other set of competencies for evaluator training purposes (the training set) includes 96 competencies consisting of 23 knowledge areas, 55 skills and abilities, and 18 other competencies. There are 25 more competencies in the set of competencies for training purposes than the set for selection purposes (see Table 1).

Competencies	Necessary for Evaluators	Necessary for Selection	Necessary for Training
Knowledge	29	21	23
Skills and Abilities	74	48	55
Other Characteristics	19	2	18
Total	122	71	96

Table 1: Numbers of Necessary Competencies for Selection and Training

## COMPETENCIES FOR SELECTION PURPOSES

A total of 71 competencies were included in the selection set, and 51 competencies were excluded using responses to three questions in Survey Four. The excluded set included 8 knowledge areas, 26 skills and abilities, and 17 other characteristics. Many competencies that were not selected to be in the list are in the categories of knowledge about different aspects of basic education and skills of school evaluation project management. Most of the competencies in the “other characteristics category” were excluded. The excluded competencies included those related to the ethics of evaluators, morality and virtue, and individual characteristics and personality. This makes sense because most other characteristics including soft skills and ethics are difficult to assess, especially when recruiters/assessors have very limited time to assess these competencies. For example, ONESQA has only one day to assess and to certify evaluators.

However, this does not mean that excluded competencies from the selection set were unnecessary since most of the respondents rated them as necessary (87% to 100% of respondents rated all 122 competencies as necessary). The recommendation of only 71 competencies for the purpose of selection was to include a practical

limit for establishing evaluator selection criteria, including the most critical competencies as the time allowed for assessment and evaluation of potential evaluators is limited. However, recruiters (e.g. ONESQA) should also consider using other competencies in the Thai ESEC (122 competencies in total) if practical.

### **COMPETENCIES FOR TRAINING PURPOSES**

A total of 96 competencies were included, and 26 competencies were not included using responses to Survey Four. Based on the criteria used, the training set includes competencies that may be appropriate for training skilled evaluators, or those evaluators who have more expertise than average.

Again, this does not mean that the 26 competencies not chosen for the training set are unimportant since all or almost all respondents rated each competency in the Thai ESEC as necessary (87% to 100% of respondents rated 122 competencies necessary). Evaluators (or evaluation teams) still should possess all 122 competencies. All 26 excluded competencies were not chosen because they were rated lower than 3.5 from respondents (1 = Very little or none, 2 = To some extent, 3 = To a great extent, 4 = To a very great extent, 5 = To an extremely great extent) on the “Superior than Average” question, which asks, “To what extent do different levels of KSAO distinguish the superior from the average evaluator (compared with the other KSAO) (Superior than Average)?” If all criteria are the same, but the average score threshold for the “Superior than Average” question is lowered from “greater than or equal to 3.5” to “greater than or equal to 3,” 119 out of 122 competencies would then meet the criteria.

The selection of criteria for training competencies by using those rated as “superior than average” was intended to further Thai evaluation by selecting competencies to train evaluators to become more advanced and capable. Basic skills such as knowledge of professional evaluation standards and evaluator ethics and morals and qualitative and quantitative data analysis were excluded as they did not meet the “Superior than average” criteria based on responses to Survey Four. However, these competencies are important for evaluation and may be included in basic training programs for new evaluators who do not have these skills. In addition, some excluded competencies are soft skills that may be more difficult to develop in workshops, such as the ability to create professional networks, self-development, the ability to identify



and mitigate problems/issues, collaborative/partnering skills, leadership skills, and the ability to use authority appropriately. These are, however, skills included in the Thai ESEC set as necessary competencies and should be included in professional development programs for evaluators.

In summary, according to the criteria established, the recommended set of 96 competencies for training includes the most important competencies that should be used to train evaluators to become superior. Trainers would benefit from considering all the Thai ESEC competencies (122 in total) in the development of training and profession development programs for evaluators at different levels.

### **SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE SELECTION SET AND THE TRAINING SET OF COMPETENCIES**

A total of 60 out of 71 competencies in the selection set were also included in the training set, consisting of 13 knowledge areas, 45 skills and abilities, and two other competencies. Based on this outcome, these 60 competencies may be the most essential since they met all established criteria for defining evaluator selection and training competencies. To the extent that ONESQA recruiters are capable of finding candidates who possess necessary competencies in the selection set, training needs may be reduced, which would help to save ONESQA's resources.

### **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SELECTION SET AND THE TRAINING SET OF COMPETENCIES**

There were nine competencies in the selection set that were not in the training set. These competencies are generally basic skills for evaluators. A total of 36 of the 96 competencies in the training set were not included in the selection set. Many, but not all, of these competencies were more advanced skills for evaluators (such as specific knowledge relevant to different aspects of education and the skill of evaluation capacity building).

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE**

While the evaluation profession in Thailand is still in an early stage compared to other countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, ONESQA is nonetheless responsible to certify enough evaluators to evaluate more than 33,000 schools in Thailand. Other than attempting to obtain sufficient numbers of evaluators to evaluate schools

in Thailand, ONESQA should also concentrate on the quality of external school evaluators, which may be more important than just having a sufficient number of evaluators. With the intention to improve the quality of both evaluation and evaluators, the research study described here provided a set of competencies (Thai ESEC) necessary for external school evaluators at grade levels 1-12 in Thailand and two different sets of competencies for selection and training of external school evaluators that hopefully can benefit ONESQA, evaluation agencies, evaluators, and the evaluation profession to improve external school evaluation and evaluators' competencies.

ONESQA and Thai evaluation agencies may be able to apply the Thai ESEC to improve their processes and/or instruments to select, train, and certify external school evaluators. ONESQA and evaluation agencies should make certain that evaluators have the fundamental necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities as included in the Thai ESEC set to ensure evaluation teams are assembled with the necessary competencies to professionally perform complete and accurate school evaluations. The full Thai ESEC set of 122 competencies should be considered during development of training and professional development programs to ensure that basic evaluation needs are being met as well as to advance the practice of school evaluation in Thailand at grade levels 1-12. This research study could be applied or furthered to advance evaluator selection, credentialing and training programs in Thailand and other countries. Evaluators can also use the Thai ESEC to assess their own competence. Moreover, evaluation trainers can use the Thai ESEC to design or update their training programs.

However, more studies should be done to improve the Thai ESEC. To further improve this set of competencies, future researchers should conduct interviews or observations to gain more understanding from evaluators and other stakeholders' opinions. Statistical analysis should be conducted to help to organize this new set and to reduce similar competencies. Fewer competencies may be more practical to develop training programs and evaluator selection processes in the future. Finally, this set of competencies for external school evaluators at grade levels 1-12 in Thailand should be updated regularly to respond to changes in theories, practices, and technologies related to evaluation practice and education that happen over time.



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## Quality Assurance (QA) in Academic Programs

### ABSTRACT

There are a number of views regarding quality assurance. Some of these are subjective notions while others are categorically based on criteria and standards that are applied in a particular sector. Educationists defined quality assurance as a process of attaining a certain level of standards while business managers would view it as actions to ensure that the standards and procedures that would contribute to the satisfaction of the delivered goods and services to the customers. However, both have common intentions or purposes and they use relevant resources and defined procedures to achieve the objectives. In the education sector, quality assurance of the academic programs becomes indispensable and requires an internal and external review of the essential components to come up with a realistic, credible and transparent description of these programs. The approach for quality assurance may vary from national to global, from private to public higher education institutions, the public and stakeholders and other platforms. Their differences would still focus on common interests such as a clear vision and mission of the organization; surpassed the requirements of the internal and external reviewers and those that are prescribed by the government; relevant and responsive to the needs of the students and the stakeholders in general; the competence of the faculty must be an institutional priority; industry and market driven; strong management support, with an understanding and value of quality assurance; institution-community engagement and some other driving factors that influence the quality of academic programs. There are also principles and features that need to be observed in the process of undertaking quality assurance and these are identified. There are also important features that should be made explicit such as the quality criteria and standards based on the institution that has an inherent desire to adhere to quality. This, however, requires some forms of inspection, review,

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evaluation by external peer reviewers to erase any doubt or suspicion that the perceived quality was not made for purposes that are self-serving or with biased elements to benefit the institution. It is for this reason that all over the world, within the region or even in the national landscape, there are organizations and bodies that have set and defined procedures, standards and criteria to follow before the essence of quality is declared. Passing through their standards, would create brand status, an undeniable reputation and strong impression that indeed the institution has been peer reviewed, externally evaluated and subsequently been accredited by any of these reputed organizations.

The regular or periodic review of the curriculum is a process inherent to quality assurance of the academic programs. Curriculum and courses are a set of experiences, knowledge and skills which are products that need to be carefully examined in view of the varying needs of the stakeholders, the emerging demands of the technological developments, global trends, human resource requirements of the country, and the stiff competition in the job markets. The review is expected to focus on its objectives, contents, teaching strategies, faculty competence, resources, tools, enriching activities and sources of valuable information. These indicators/measures are highlighted. Each of these has parameters and standards usually set by experts and reviewers in consultation with the industry, professionals, alumni and government bodies so that the policies and regulations are complied with. Subsequently, the outcomes of these reviews would result in a revision or re-engineering of the entire or partial curriculum, renaming of the course, discarding the course, adding a new course both in the core and major courses, improvement of the mode/delivery system, additional resources and sources of information, and packaging of the academic programs that are deemed necessary in enhancing the university system as a whole.

**KEYWORDS:**

quality assurance, academic programs, reviews, curriculum, requirements, standards

**INTRODUCTION**

The search for quality is an endless endeavor. The vision and mission of an organization and institution which are the inherent guides for the desired direction or path that categorically speaks of quality as its ultimate goal. In the process, the search for and attainment of quality

becomes elusive and difficult. It also creates some subjective notion considering the different parameters or criteria used in various dimensions, settings, time horizon and the intent of its application and appreciation. Some eminent educationists would define quality assurance as a process of attaining a certain level or degree of standards that are acceptable or common to the academic community. Business managers would view it as all actions taken to ensure that standards and procedures are adhered to and that delivered products or services meet performance requirements. Further, quality assurance is a planned systematic activity that is necessary to ensure that a component, module or system conforms to the technical requirements. As a result, it guarantees confidence, credibility and increases trust on the company or institution's product or output. In short, it ensures customer satisfaction. However, there are other competing views on the nature of quality. It is said that quality is implicit and indefinable—"you know it when you see it." Still, others would claim it as simply a matter of reputation. The increasing cost and demands for more investments by both the public and private sectors that do not provide good return of investment. The competitive environment between public and private educational institutions and sectors is getting more stringent; the national and international standards are becoming more demanding; institutionalization and internationalization of QA activities and many others. The universal global framework for development puts more emphasis on quality education for all school age children. These are some of the emerging driving forces that recognize the need and importance of quality assurance in academic programs.

Although these views and definitions are mostly framed from business perspectives, it has a common intention and purpose; uses relevant resources; and defined procedures to achieve the objectives. Educational institutions are considered as a form of service that produces graduates as its products or outputs. One of the major components of this service is the academic program(s). It is an input but it requires systematic process in order that the desired outputs are acceptable to the sector where this is delivered or utilized. However, the approach of quality assurance varies nationally and globally, from public to private sectors, stakeholders and other platforms. Innovations, competition and creativity are quality platforms which would easily respond to new changes and challenges of quality assurance in the future.



## **DIMENSIONS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Quality assurance in the academic program is currently practiced in a number of ways with focuses on the following dimensions.

**1. Clear vision, mission, ownership and commitment** - before any quality assurance takes place, the inherent need for a clear and well defined direction of the institution is of paramount importance. It should embrace the aspirations and hopes of all that are associated with the institution. It becomes the guiding force that shapes, challenges and energizes all members of the institutions. A strong sense of commitment must be expressed and demonstrated in action to manifest ownership of this vision.

**2. Surpassed the compliance of the requirements prescribed by the government** - the government sets the policies and standards for the introduction and recognition of academic programs. Recognized programs have met the essential requirements with evidence that it has passed the standards and requirements prescribed to continue the offering of the program. Although generally voluntary in nature, accreditation of academic programs is a valuable indicator of quality. Typically, academic programs recognized by the government undergo accreditation. This is a status granted by a professional organization/ association of educational institutions to academic programs for possessing a certain degree of standards of quality. Technically, it is strategy or process based on self-regulation and continuing improvement of educational quality.

**3. Responded to the needs of the students and the development perspectives of the country or a particular area** - the relevance and responsiveness of the academic programs to the needs of the students and society as a whole provide more meaningful and valuable assurances of quality. The students in particular are the main beneficiaries of these academic programs that provide them the kind of professional preparation to compete in the world of work. The knowledge, skills and desirable values needed by the industry and the society are acquired from the academic programs assured of quality. Research is a vital tool to empirically determine the nature and extent of these needs.

**4. Faculty is competent and highly qualified** - to give life to the contents of the curriculum are the faculty members who have the competencies and educational preparation. Their continuing professional growth is a key factor to the quality of the program in view of the fast advancing technology and changes taking place in the society. The educational institution should be able to cope with these developments. The faculty development program of the institutions assures quality in the delivery of instructions and services to the students. The use and application of new technology can be effectively transferred to the students with the competence and expertise of the faculty using various modes of instruction utilizing the state-of-the-art instructional tools.

**5. Infrastructure and instructional facilities adequately provided for a favorable learning environment** - this dimension is an integral part of the academic program. In fact, it is a requirement for seeking the government's approval for offering a new program. The adequacy of the classrooms, laboratory rooms, library resources, audio-visual rooms, hardware and equipment are being counted to insure a desirable ratio with the number of students.

**6. Customer and industry-driven quality** - the customers are the students which are the central focus of any academic program. Any revision or enrichment of the curriculum should consider the suggestions coming from the various student organizations. On the other hand, the industry which absorbs the graduates has prerequisites that need to be met for production and delivery of services and goods.

**7. Positive perception and appreciation from stakeholders and parents** - public perceptions have a strong impact on the status of academic programs, in particular and the institution. Subscription to the academic program offerings of the institution would ensure enrolment. Considering the high cost of education, the parents are becoming more vigilant and selective in choosing the programs and institution where they will send their children. Generally, the public would choose the institution which has proven to be of quality according to their knowledge and belief. Feedback, recommendations and track records are sources of information that can serve as important considerations in their choice of academic programs.



**8. Students' good performance in examinations, competitions and high percentage of placement in the competitive fields around the world**

- the initial test of the applicability of knowledge and skills acquired from academic programs are shown in the performance of students in various examinations conducted by the institutions and other professional organizations. The honor and prestige that the students bring to the institution as a result of their participation in competitions organized by the institutions and those by various recognized groups in various fields such as academics, sports, cultural and literary are tangible and immediate proof of quality. The world of work is truly competitive not only domestically but also globally. The more graduates that are gainfully employed and productive indicate the quality of program they obtained.

**9. Strong management support and understanding of the challenges**

- embarking on quality assurance activities of the academic programs entail a great deal of efforts and resources in terms of financial, technical, human, material and others. It requires sustainable support from various members of the academic community and the alumni. A clear-cut development plan and policies provide the thrust and direction to carry out projects and activities directed toward quality assurance.

**10. Community outreach engagement** - one of the inherent functions of the university is the commitment and responsibility to share its resources to the community and the immediate environmental location it serves. The university through its faculty, students and staff undertake activities to uplift its reputation and quality of services. The faculty members serve as resource persons to the public and private organizations, agencies and establishments in various fields or disciplines in development activities such as seminars, workshops, conferences, research and the building of human resource capacities. The students are actively engaged in community service such as environment preservation, cleanliness, and distribution of clothing, winter blankets and food to victims of disasters. The facilities of the universities are available upon request for those who would like to use them for development purposes.

**PRINCIPLES AND FEATURES OF QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Across many countries, the quality assurance system works under some principles. These principles are basically to guide quality assurance

toward greater accountability, transparency and credibility. These principles are as follows: 1) responsibility lies on the QA system of the university; 2) focus on safeguarding the interest of the stakeholders; 3) involvement of all concerned and define clearly the area of responsibilities; 4) purpose to improve; 5) commitment for continuous improvement; 6) continuity for sustainability and maintenance; 7) organized effort under a structured body; 8) shared benefit for better ownership of the system; 9) flexibility to receive feedback and suggestions from internal and external reviewers/assessors; 10) fairness decisions and actions should be based on facts and evidence; 11) autonomy to exercise initiatives and resourcefulness; and 12) transparency that is free of doubts and suspicion or self-serving results and actions, especially on financial and academic matters.

To ensure that quality assurance works, a number of features need to be made explicit.

1. Quality standards are set externally by experts.
2. Quality standards are presented as a set of codified requirements or expectations that the institution strives to achieve.
3. Quality standards are evaluated by objective criteria.
4. Quality standards may account for local variation, only if this is a requirement of the quality assessment being undertaken.
5. Quality usually involves some forms of inspection, formal evaluation or examination.

The system of quality assurance and accreditation works on two levels—internal and external. A rigid internal quality control and assessment undertaken by interaction between the faculty and the students, and through a collective that has integrity and professionalism of an academic committee is essential. Ultimate responsibility for the quality and standards of teaching and learning offered by the institution rests with its own council or governing body. Institutions frequently involve outside assessors in course approval, review procedures, and to receive advice on course design and delivery. The external level functions in a form of an audit of the institution; it is designed and administered by the quality assurance agency or body. This body is usually recognized and owned by all educational institutions as the formal auditor of their respective institution. The audit covers the following: a) the design and review of the academic programs; b) teaching, learning and student experience;



- c) recruitment, training, development and evaluation of the faculty members;
- d) system of examination and assessment of students' performance;
- e) academic standards; and f) feedback and verification systems.

## **QUALITY ASSURANCE BODIES AND THEIR CORRESPONDING AREAS AND STANDARDS COVERED**

An institution of higher learning is accredited by an independent accrediting organization, recognized nationally and internationally. This maybe sponsored by the government in the case of India, Thailand or by some private agencies in the case of the United States, Belgium, the Philippines and others. Brief descriptions of some of these bodies are hereunder presented.

**1. The European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS), Brussels -** to be accredited under this body, schools/academic programs must be able to demonstrate that they satisfy quality criteria in three equally important areas: high quality standards of quality in all areas; a significant level of internationalization; and responsive to the academic and corporate world and integrated into programs, activities and processes. The areas covered are national status, mission, governance, scope, strategy, resources, faculty, students, student services, personal development, programs and research.

**2. South Asian Quality Assurance System (SAQS) of India -** this body is recognized by the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) with a mission to promote excellence in education development management in South Asia through quality certification and accreditation.

**3. National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) of India -** this is a government-sponsored body that looks into the quality standard of the universities before any funds could be granted to them by the University Grant Commission. Although funded by the government of India, it has been given an autonomous status to exercise a more objective accreditation function.

**4. Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education of UK -**

this body was set-up as a private limited company. It aims to promote public confidence and that the quality of provision and standards of awards or academic degrees in higher education are being safeguarded and enhanced.

**5. ISO -**

this is an International Standard Organization (ISO) which provides the means of verifying that a proposed standard has met certain requirements for due process, consensus and other criteria by those developing the standard. The ISO 9000 and ISO 14000 are among the ISO's most widely known standards that are commonly adopted. ISO 9000 is primarily concerned with "quality management" involving what the organization does to fulfill the customer's quality requirements, following the applicable regulatory requirements, enhancing customer satisfaction, and achieving continual improvement of performance in pursuit of its objectives. ISO 14000 enables the organizations to meet their environmental challenges.

**6. Federation of Accrediting Association of the Philippines (FAAP) -**

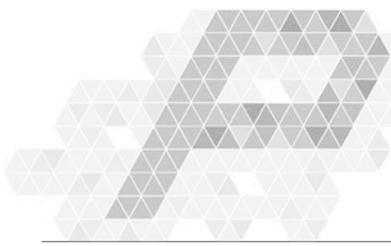
this is a body composed of all accrediting agencies or organizations that officially grant the accreditation status of the institutions upon the recommendation of the accrediting agency. It covers all levels of education and selected academic programs. In the Philippines, there are three accrediting agencies that conduct external evaluation of academic programs. They are PAASCU, PACUCOA and AACUP.

**7. International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) -**

this is an international body composed of globally recognized accreditation agencies which grants accreditation status to higher education institutions who voluntarily applied for accreditation of their academic programs to enhance its academic standing in the global academic community. PAASCU is the only member accrediting agency from the Philippines.

**8. Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) of USA -**

this is a private, non-profit national organization that coordinates accreditation activity in the United States as well as with the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation. The organization is based in Washington D.C.



**9. The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)** - this is an independent non-profit company limited by guarantee, established in the State of Victoria under the Corporation's Law whose functions have been transferred to Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). This is Australia's independent national regulator of higher education sector. It aims to create a smarter future for Australia by upholding standards of students. It is governed by commissioners appointed by the Commonwealth Minister of Education whose function, in particular is quality assurance and regulatory practice in higher education. It is responsible for the registration and re-registration of providers and the accreditation and re-accreditation of courses.

### **PROPOSED INDICATORS/MEASURES OF HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE**

Indicators or yardsticks are the measures to determine the degree or level of quality of certain programs or institution. In this paper, 10 areas have been identified where these measures will be applied. Some accreditation bodies would integrate or combine these areas into one. It will not affect the internal quality assurance results since each measure is specified and each scope is defined or described. It depends, however, to the institution to expand its scope to make the assessment more realistic and meaningful. Specifically, the parameter identifies the characteristics required, the standards in terms of acceptability by the beneficiaries or users. The possible sources of data and information need to be identified so that reviewers/assessors/users will know where to source or find these for easy access. The application of the data and information are vital so that potential users will know for what purpose and functions these are needed. The transparency, validity, and integrity of these indicators and the data need to be maintained and sustained so that quality can be assured in terms of its acceptability and applicability.

AREA	PARAMETER	STANDARDS	DATA/INFO REQUIREMENT	APPLICATION
PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity</li> <li>• Ownership</li> <li>• Viability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 100 % acceptability with the academic community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Publication of handbook, academic folders, reports, etc.</li> <li>- Number of students, faculty and staff understood and appreciated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides direction and future actions</li> <li>- Articulates aspirations, intentions and commitments of the institution</li> </ul>
COMMUNITY OUTREACH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Target beneficiary</li> <li>- Nature and type of services</li> <li>- Frequency</li> <li>- Extent of involvement/ intervention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of beneficiaries by type of services</li> <li>- Percent of Faculty, students and management involved in the delivery of services</li> <li>- Frequency of delivery of services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number and type of beneficiaries</li> <li>- Type and nature of services</li> <li>- Number of students and faculty involved</li> <li>- Number and type/nature of linkages</li> <li>- Sources of funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creates strong public interest and positive perception</li> <li>- Translates theory into practice</li> <li>- Increases level of trust and confidence among the stakeholders</li> </ul>
FACULTY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Educational qualification by degree and area of specialization</li> <li>- Status of employment</li> <li>- Teaching assignment</li> <li>- Conduct of research/ projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 60% Master's degree holder</li> <li>- 40% Doctorate degree holder</li> <li>- Ratio of full-time and part-time teachers</li> <li>- Percent of teachers' teaching area of specialization</li> <li>- Percentage of teachers engaged in research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Curriculum vitae</li> <li>- Appointment paper</li> <li>- Teaching load assignment</li> <li>- Selection, ranking and promotion</li> <li>- Performance evaluation</li> <li>- Salary scales and fringe benefits</li> <li>- Copies of the research proposals and completion report</li> <li>- Research publications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improves competence and increases material and non-material rewards</li> <li>- Develops and updates knowledge and technical-know-how in teaching</li> <li>- Determines the level of proficiency and professional efficiency</li> </ul>



AREA	PARAMETER	STANDARDS	DATA/INFO REQUIREMENT	APPLICATION
INSTRUCTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preparation of course outline</li> <li>- Use of appropriate teaching strategies</li> <li>- Curricular and co-curricular enrichment</li> <li>- Materials and tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 100% compliance in the preparation and submission of course outline/ syllabus</li> <li>- Percent of teacher using modern teaching strategies</li> <li>- Percent of teachers using English as medium</li> <li>- Adequacy of instructional materials and tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Copies of the course outlines</li> <li>- Academic performance of students</li> <li>- Schedule of academic Counseling</li> <li>- Classroom observation report</li> <li>- List of instructional tools and facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Makes learning process functional and effective</li> <li>- Improves student performance/ achievement</li> <li>- Creates conducive and meaningful learning interaction</li> <li>- Widens scope of learning and experience</li> <li>- Provides evidence of the creativity and resourcefulness of the faculty</li> </ul>
STUDENT SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Canteen</li> <li>- Sports</li> <li>- Student organizations</li> <li>- Medical clinic</li> <li>- Transport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student capacity rate</li> <li>- Student: equipment/ tool Ratio</li> <li>- Percentage of accredited organization</li> <li>- Medical staff: student ratio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Admission policy</li> <li>- Student manual</li> <li>- Profile of student organizations</li> <li>- Student assistance program</li> <li>- Alumni services and activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Addresses student ancillary needs</li> <li>- Maintains sound mind and physical well- being of the students</li> <li>- Shows the efficiency in the delivery of student services</li> </ul>
LIBRARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Total number of volumes</li> <li>- Copies by title</li> <li>- Copies by course/ discipline</li> <li>- Number and qualification of staff</li> <li>- Utilization by students and faculty</li> <li>- Seating capacity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3-5 copies per title of the textbook/ reference book</li> <li>- Student utilization rate</li> <li>- Faculty utilization rate</li> <li>- Student: chairs ratio (seating capacity)</li> <li>- 80-100 thousand volumes of library collections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Profile of staff</li> <li>- latest report of collection</li> <li>- Policies and plans</li> <li>- Library orientation handbook</li> <li>- Physical and seating arrangement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensures adequate sources of information</li> <li>- Ensures functionality of the library through regular use of students and faculty</li> <li>- Provides comfort and access to library resources</li> <li>- Creates a systematic and efficient delivery of library services</li> </ul>
LABORATORIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Computer labs</li> <li>- Language labs</li> <li>- Science labs</li> <li>- Seating capacity</li> <li>- Equipment and tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Student: unit ratio</li> <li>- Seating capacity</li> <li>- Student: equipment ratio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inventory of rooms</li> <li>- Inventory of equipment and hardware</li> <li>- Physical and seating arrangement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increases scientific consciousness of learners</li> <li>- Facilitates meaningful learning</li> <li>- Enhances the use and availability of the new technology</li> </ul>

AREA	PARAMETER	STANDARDS	DATA/INFO REQUIREMENT	APPLICATION
PHYSICAL PLANT AND INFRASTRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Campuses</li> <li>- Classrooms</li> <li>- Expansion plan</li> <li>- Facilities</li> <li>- Safety and security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Area in sq. m./acre</li> <li>- Class size (45 students max; 25 students min)</li> <li>- Viability of the expansion plan</li> <li>- Student: security personnel ratio</li> <li>- Fire extinguisher: floor ratio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Site location plan</li> <li>- Campus plan</li> <li>- Inventory of buildings</li> <li>- Type of ancillary services</li> <li>- Type of medical and sports facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creates conducive learning environment</li> <li>- Provides for future quantitative and qualitative expansion</li> </ul>
MANAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development plan</li> <li>- Organigram</li> <li>- Salary scale, welfare and benefits of teaching and non-teaching staff</li> <li>- Policy formulation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of the development plan</li> <li>- Functionality of the organigram</li> <li>- Competitive-ness of the salary scale and benefits</li> <li>- Clarity of the policies on faculty hiring, ranking and promotion</li> <li>- Practicability of student admission and retention policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organigram</li> <li>- Plantilla of non-teaching personnel</li> <li>- Administrative manual</li> <li>- Financial report</li> <li>- Annual report</li> <li>- Students' records system</li> <li>- Financial management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Improves systems and procedures in the delivery of educational services</li> <li>- Sustains holding power and security of the academic community</li> <li>- Provides just compensation and benefits for increased efficiency and productivity</li> <li>- Indicates continuous improvement in all aspects of development</li> </ul>
RESEARCH CULTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Number of research projects conducted</li> <li>- Number of research outputs published</li> <li>- Utilization of research findings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 5 research projects conducted per year</li> <li>- 1 research publication per year</li> <li>- 80-100% utilization rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Copies of research proposals</li> <li>- Linkages/networking</li> <li>- Appraisal system</li> <li>- Copies of research report</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Serves as basis for curriculum development, enrichment, revision</li> <li>- Serves as input for planning and policy formulation</li> <li>- Promotes and disseminates new horizon in the academic field</li> </ul>

## CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS/DIRECTIONS

In conclusion, quality assurance in academic programs has become a national concern and primarily to the educational institutions that enables them to respond to the emerging challenges taking place in our society. Rapid technological changes, new political culture, new concepts of governance, instability of policies and decision making, increasing demands of the public expectations, complex role and standards of the stakeholders, local and global competitiveness, emerging



cultures, practices and the exploration of new knowledge are the many compelling reasons that would catalyze the need for higher education institutions to embark in quality assurance activities. These activities are resource intensive, time consuming, technical-based actions and require a great deal of effort and commitment. When these areas or dimensions are properly placed and secured according to quality standards, a more lasting and sustainable results are attained in terms of prestige in the academic community, increased return of investments, strong public appreciation and patronage, and strengthened trust and confidence by the stakeholders. Benefits and privileges such as deregulation from government, priority to grants and financial support, autonomy in curricular offerings, and many more are accorded to institutions whose academic programs have been accredited and recognized by both local and international accrediting bodies.

Quality assurance in academic programs has brought significant improvements both in the higher education institutions and in the government bodies that implement and regulate the quality of academic programs. These improvements should not be taken as static accomplishments but rather as a challenge to do more and continuously pursue with great effort and dynamism. For those who have just started, aim for institutionalization so that the awareness, commitment and appreciation of the major players in the university will be enhanced. There are universities that have been granted accreditation at various levels, some of which are awarded autonomous status because it has proven its sustainable quality and excellence in their academic programs. It has been recognized both in the national and international arenas of academia. The need for expansion and diversification has to be given central focus in view of the varying challenges that beset education and the society as a whole. Curriculum review, continuous faculty development programs, adoption of new teaching learning strategies, practice of desirable values and attitudes, acceptable policies and regulations, closer and stronger linkages and partnerships with corporate and international institutions, and many other aspects and elements for academic program quality enhancement. The culture of quality must be shared and advocated to gain a reputation as well as international recognition. As a result, the name of your university and the academic programs it offers are in itself a brand name to patronize and subscribe to with utmost trust and confidence.

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# Poster

Presentations




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## The Antecedents Effects on the Competency of Quality Managers at Rajabhat Universities, Thailand

### ABSTRACT

This research investigates the factors affecting competency of quality managers (QM) in Rajabhat Universities, Thailand. QM's competency is one of key success factors of quality management in many firms. This study used quantitative methodology by using the causal comparative design. From the literature, five antecedents of QM's competency were referenced. Each factor was measured using a 5-point interval scale: knowledge management; perceived organization motivation; self-management; work-life balance; whereas the training factor was measured with ratio scale. Using a simple random sampling data collection method, 126 questionnaires were distributed to target respondents of quality managers. The responses collected were 105 completed questionnaires representing 83.33 percent response rate. The data collected using structural equation modeling approach with SmartPLS software. The findings revealed that: (1) self-management is a significant positive competency of QM; (2) knowledge management is positively significant competency; and (3) training directly affects on knowledge management. Interestingly, the research model explained a substantial amount of variance (64.50%) quality manager competence. The findings suggested that QM should be developed by knowledge management and self-management processes.

### KEYWORDS:

Competency, Quality Manager, Rajabhat University, Antecedent

### INTRODUCTION

The educational quality assurance in Thailand is stipulated in Chapter 6 of the National Education Act 1999, and Amendments in 2002. This spurred a significant reform of education systems. The mandatory requirement is the establishment of the internal and external quality

assurance (QA) in education system at all levels. The agency-in-charge at national level is constituted by two organizations. They are (1) Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC), under Ministry of Education that is responsible for internal QA; and (2) Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization) (ONESQA) which looks after the external QA. Both organizations deploy the policy that relates to overall performance of tertiary institutions as producing graduates, conducting research, providing academic services to the community, preserving arts and culture, and managing system (OHEC, 2011; ONESQA, 2011).

Based on a thorough review and synthesis of the quality assurance literature, a number of publications identifies that quality managers (QM) are a homogeneous group with identical goals, objectives and methods, as well as they are as one of the critical success factors to achieve effective quality management (Waddell, 1998; Badri, Davis, & Davis, 1995; Saraph, Benson, & Schroeder, 1989; Antony et al., 2002; Joseph, Rajendran, & Kamalanabhai, 1999). In the studies of the key role and responsibilities of quality managers show the ability of organizations to succeed in their functions will depend on the competencies of the assurance staff in term of knowledge, skills, problem solving and teamwork (Goetsch & Davis, 2006; Gutner & Adams, 2009). As Addey (2004) argued that the abilities now required of the quality managers go far beyond those of chief inspectors, reflecting the need to provide advice to senior management who were themselves responsible for much broader roles than in previous times. Further, Waddell and Stewart (1999) asserted that the inadequacy of their professional learning is possibly a contributory factor for the failure of quality management in many organizations.

The competency concept has been widely implemented in several areas of human resource management (HRM) for a long time, for example, the recruitment, training and development, performance management, appraisal, incentive and reward, and talent management (Ratsameetam-machot, 2008, 2011; Office of Civil Service Commission (OCSC), 2005; Horton, 2000). The original competency framework for government officers in Thailand was developed by OCSC, which is a government body responsible for HRM in public sectors. However, there has been limited research into the competence of QM personnel responsible for QA process. Therefore, the authors are interested in the competency survey of QM and factors affecting their competencies

in Rajabhat Universities, which are public higher education institutions (HEI). Results of the study that related to competency are utilized for workforce development.

### **OBJECTIVE**

To study factors that influence the quality manager competency in Rajabhat Universities.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Juran Trilogy is used to explain the functional competencies of quality manager. The Trilogy theory consists of 3 dimensions: (1) quality planning involves developing the products or services for customers need; (2) quality control addresses evaluating quality performance, comparing actual performance to established quality standards or goals, and acting on the difference; (3) quality improvement involves raising quality performance by identifying areas where quality improvements are needed, establishing project teams which have clear responsibility for bringing each project to successful conclusion, and providing the resources, motivation, and training needed by project teams (Tompkins, 2005). As recognized above, the quality improvement points out the vital of established teams or council to responsible for driving quality management. Therefore, QA officers' role is responsible for both the implementation of the quality assurance policy and systems within the organization and also expected to motivate others to adopt the philosophy, tools and processes of quality.

This research uses quantitative methodology by causal comparative type and presented as structural model.

#### **1. Research Instrument**

The use of constructs has played an important role in designing a survey instrument for management research. The format and content of the questionnaire were initially developed through the literature review. Next, ten scholars and practitioners with extensive experience in research and quality assurance examined all items of the instrument, which were reworded according to their suggestions and calculated the index of item-objective congruence (IOC). Then the questionnaire was refined based on a pilot study conducted with 32 quality managers who worked at sub-unit of each tertiary institution and illustrated the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The tests of measurement were found as follows:



**1.1 Competency of Quality Manager** - there were 25 items to reflect this factor, the IOC found 0.80-1.00, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient as 0.95. The research drew up a 5-point Likert scale.

**1.2 Knowledge Management** - this study had 15 items. The IOC found 0.70-1.00, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient as 0.93. Then, a 5-point Likert scale was used.

**1.3 Self-Management** - self-management was measured by 12 items. The IOC found 0.80-1.00 and Cronbach's alpha coefficient revealed 0.85. Each item was measure by a 5-point Likert scale.

**1.4 Work-life Balance** - the study drew up a 5-point Likert scale including 10 theory based items. The IOC as 0.80-1.00 and Cronbach's alpha coefficient showed 0.90.

**1.5 Training** - this research done by the two empirical studies developed items: Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization) (2011); Office of the Higher Education Commission (2011); collecting by ratio data in four items. The IOC found 0.80 in each item, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient indicated 0.68.

**1.6 Perceived Organizational Motivation** - this study had 23 items and drew up a 5-point Likert scale. The IOC found 0.70-1.00, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient as 0.89.

## **2. Sampling and Data Collection**

Quality managers who worked at Rajabhat University, a type of public higher education institutions (HEI), established to responsible for whole agency, 132 QMs in 40 HEIs constituted the population through which samples of this study were drawn. Simple random sampling was used. Questionnaires were mailed to QMs at each university, 126 survey responses were submitted. A total of 105 responses, presenting 83.33 percent of the sample were used for further analysis.

## **3. Data Screening and Analysis**

The 105 dataset were coded and saved into PASW V.18 and analyzed using SmartPLS V.2. During the process of data screening for outliers, and also conducted univariate normality computations using z-scores of skewness statistics and standard error of skewness as well as kurtosis statistics. The researchers used Curran, West, & Finch's (1996) threshold that normal skewness =  $\leq 2$  and normal kurtosis =  $\leq 7$ , those were shown the normal dataset.

In conclusion, the causal relationship between five antecedents is comprised of self-management, work and life balance, perceived organizational motivation, training, knowledge management, and competency of QM. According to the literature, Figure 1 represents the theoretical framework depicting the causal relationships among the variables of the study. Thus, the following hypotheses are formulated.

- H1. Self-management affects on work-life balance.
- H2. Self-management significantly influences competency of QM.
- H3. Work-life balance significantly influences competency of QM.
- H4. Perceived organizational motivation significantly influences competency of QM.
- H5. Training significantly influences competency of QM.
- H6. Training significantly influences knowledge management.
- H7. Knowledge management significantly influences competency of QM.

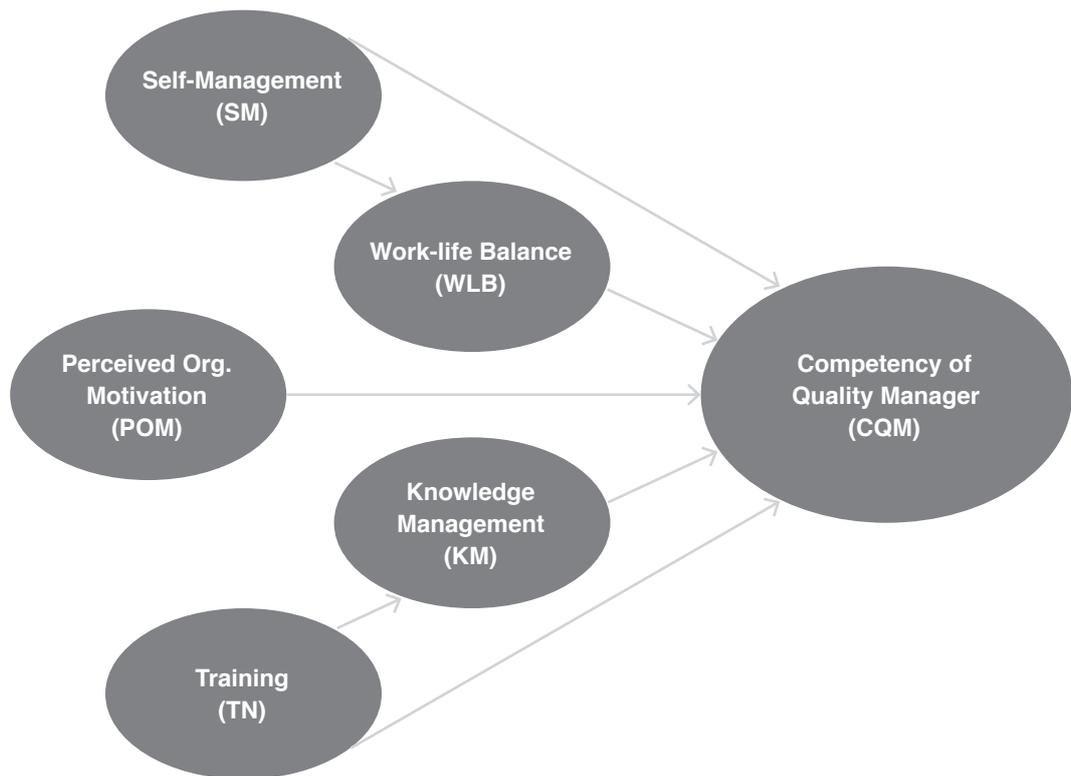
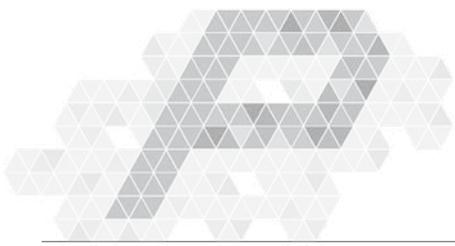


Figure 1 Research Framework



## FINDINGS

### 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The respondents' ages averaged at 34 years old. There were more of female (73.3%) than male respondents (26.7%). The most of respondents were single (58.7%), marriage (38.5%), and others 2.9%. Most of them had experienced in QA task averaging 5 years. Their qualification varies from Bachelor's degree (51.4%), Master's degree (42.9%), and Ph.D. (3.8%).

### 2. Structural Model Assessment

Referring to Table 1 and Figure 2, the five constructs were able to explain 64.50% of the variance in competency of quality managers (CQM). Meanwhile, self-management (SM) explains 1.60% of the variance in work-life balance (WLB). On the other hand, 15.30% of the variance in knowledge management (KM) was explained by training (TN). Based on path coefficient, it showed that CQM was influenced directly by SM ( $\beta=0.155$ ,  $t=1.990$ ,  $p=.049$ ) and KM ( $\beta=0.665$ ,  $t=8.328$ ,  $p=.000$ ). As a result, hypothesis H2 and H7 were supported. Further, KM was influenced directly by TN ( $\beta=0.392$ ,  $t=6.290$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Hence, hypothesis H6 was supported.

On the other hand, CQM was not influenced directly by WLB, perceived organizational motivation (POM), and TN. As a result, hypothesis H1, H3, H4, and H5 were not supported.

Hypothesis	$\beta$	t Value	p Value	Remark
H1: SM →WLB	-0.128	1.385	0.169	Not supported
H2: SM →CQM	0.155	1.990	.049	Supported
H3: WLB →CQM	0.052	0.779	.438	Not supported
H4: POM →CQM	0.041	0.362	.718	Not supported
H5: TN →CQM	0.034	0.669	.505	Not supported
H6: TN →KM	0.392	6.290	.000	Supported
H7: KM →CQM	0.665	8.328	.000	Supported

Table 1 Model Testing Results

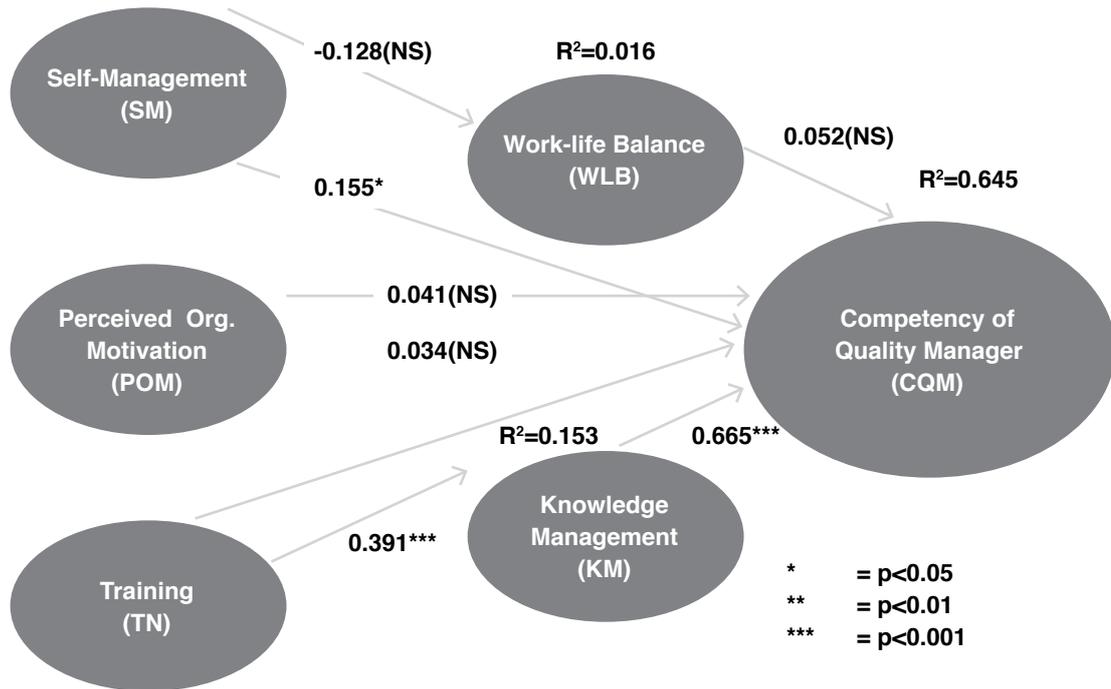
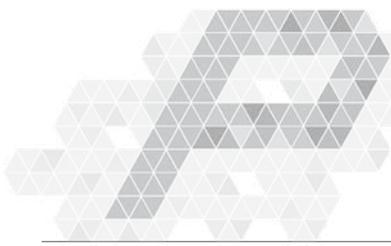


Figure 2 Result of Structural Model

## DISCUSSIONS

The empirical results revealed that influence of knowledge management was the greatest positive significant relationship with competency of QM that similar to Jafari, Akhavan, and Nikookar (2013) who found that personal knowledge management (PKM) positively showed significant relationship between PKM and organization's competency. Also, the finding confirmed by the past studies, namely, Dennise, Irene, and Sérgio (2007); and Haney (2003). Considering the influence of self-management was the positively significant relationship with competency of QM which similar to Udom (2013), Chansirisira (2012), Blanton, Schambach, and Trimmer (1998), and Dishman et al. (2005) that found self-management to have influence on professional competencies. Lastly, this study found significantly positive influence between training and knowledge management that similar to research done by Úbeda-García (2012) in Spanish firms indicated that the training policy demonstrated positively significant effect on knowledge management. In another study, Meireles, Cardoso, and Albuquerque (n.d.) confirmed that the existence of significant relationships between the professional training and KM in Portugal. Those resulted studies similar



to Khaksar et al., (2011) that their study in Iran found the training of human resources was effective on achieving the objectives of knowledge management.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Rajabhat University should emphasize on knowledge management that can apply the knowledge management process to develop QA officers, for example, acquisition process, conversion process, dissemination process, and application process, and also focus on self-management that comprises of three kinds, namely, integrity and ethical conduct, personal drive and resilience, and self-awareness and development. Because knowledge management and self-management directly influenced the personnel competency.

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## **Implementing a Diagnostic Approach of Human Resource Management and SWOT to Prepare Educators for Knowledge Management Readiness and Learning in the Higher Education Classroom in Thailand**

### **ABSTRACT**

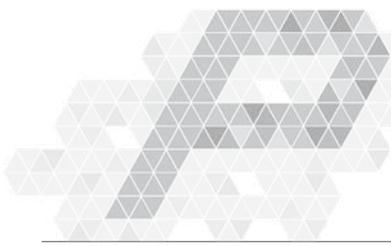
This conceptual paper explores how utilizing a diagnostic approach of Human Resource Management and a SWOT Analysis can both be incorporated either together or independently to prepare educators for knowledge management readiness and learning in the higher education classroom in Thailand. The educator can use the ARDM Model of Human Resource Management to prepare the lesson plans for a course, ready himself/herself for the teaching of the course material and knowledge management in the classroom as well. In addition to the ARDM Model of Human Resource Management, a SWOT Analysis can be utilized as a research tool to gather pertinent information in readying the instructor for knowledge management. The paper will explain what the ARDM Model of Human Resource Management and the SWOT Analysis are and then assess the advantages and limitations of both models with respect to knowledge management.

### **KEYWORDS:**

Diagnosis Approach, SWOT, Knowledge Management, Readiness, Learning, ARDM Model, Human Resource Management, Higher Education.

### **INTRODUCTION**

This conceptual paper explores how utilizing a diagnostic approach of Human Resource Management and a SWOT Analysis can both be incorporated either together or independently to prepare educators for knowledge management readiness and learning in the higher education classroom in Thailand. The educator can use the ARDM Model of Human Resource Management to prepare the lesson plans for a course, ready him/herself for the teaching of the course material and knowledge management in the classroom as well. In addition to the ARDM Model of Human Resource Management, a SWOT Analysis can be utilized as



a research tool to gather pertinent information in readying the instructor for knowledge management. The paper will explain what the ARDM Model of Human Resource Management and the SWOT Analysis are and then assess the advantages and limitations of both models with respect to knowledge management. Recommendations and further insights as to the viability and the overall fine-tuning of using both models of ARDM and SWOT Analysis will be explored as well. The results of the research can be summarized as follows.

1. An educator has the opportunity to use the ARDM Model of Human Resource Management or the SWOT Analysis model to prepare him/herself for knowledge management readiness and learning in and out of the classroom as these are methods that are available to the educator.

2. Both the ARDM Model of Human Resource Management and the SWOT Analysis model can be used independently or simultaneously as to motivate and ensure that the educator in the institute of higher learning will be fully prepared to handle knowledge management.

3. In order for the ARM Model of Human Resource Management or the SWOT Analysis model to be fully effective and less prone to errors or potential bias, an educator must assess and review the model he/she utilizes to determine whether or not it is effective in gauging the educator's readiness and learning of knowledge management.

## **RATIONALE**

Educators and instructors of courses at institutes of higher learning or universities are faced with numerous challenges to improve their courses, seek new and updated learning materials for the courses they are responsible for and to find ways to make the course interesting and relevant to the real business environment. All these challenges require the ability to not only access knowledge, but the ability to manage the knowledge acquired which can be overwhelming without proper planning and strategy. This ability and idea, knowledge management, or the management of knowledge has, in recent years, increasingly become an interesting topic that is becoming relevant in business-industry and education circles (Brewer & Brewer, 2010). Knowledge management or the processes through which organizations develop, organizations develop, organize, and share knowledge can lead to source of sustainable competitive advantage (Hatch & Dyer, 2004). Because knowledge management can give an organization a competitive advantage, it can also give a manager a competitive advantage as well. However,

the organization and the manager must be ready to handle and learn about knowledge management before a competitive advantage can be established. An instructor of higher learning, like a manager, must be ready and willing to learn about knowledge management before he/she can achieve success in the classroom whether it is teaching the course material, motivating students to participate in the lectures, conduct research etc. Once the instructor is fully ready and willing to learn about knowledge management then he/she is on the road to achieve success in harnessing and managing new and old knowledge which can lead to a competitive advantage in and out of the classroom. As we are in the Internet age where information is readily available and our world is becoming more globalized especially in the area of education, we are inundated with more and more knowledge and information which can be overwhelming to educators and academics everywhere. Educators at the university level or those who teach and conduct research at institutions of higher learning must open their eyes and embrace this concept of knowledge management as it applies to not only the business sector, but the educational sector as well.

## **METHODOLOGY**

As this is a conceptual paper in which the author wishes to examine several ways of preparing for knowledge management readiness and learning in the classroom, the author has sourced published material from appropriate journals and texts on the current concepts of knowledge management and human resource management which are relevant to the purpose of this conceptual paper. In addition, whenever possible, the author incorporates examples and ideas from his own teaching experiences to illustrate key points and examples where appropriate.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **A Diagnostic Approach of Human Resource Management: The ARDM Model**

Many problems that are experienced or encountered by an instructor in and out of the classroom of the institute of higher learning whether it is students not following classroom rules and ethics, misunderstanding of how to complete assignments, projects; or the instructor not knowing how to handle students problem etc. could all be handled and minimized at the least, if not eliminated, if the instructor had a method or approach to diagnose problems when they occur. This method or approach could



also be used to help the instructor predict potential problems and the necessary course of action to take to handle the problems. The ARDM (A = acquiring, R = rewarding, D = developing, and M = maintaining and protecting) human resource management model is a one method or approach that an instructor can use to handle problems. Although the ARDM model applies to human resource managers, the instructor is like that of a human resource manager in the sense that he/she is responsible for his/her students much like a human resource manager is responsible for employees in a department. The ARDM model with a strategic (overall, broad) focus can help the instructor focus on a set of relevant factors: it offers a map that aids a person in seeing the whole picture or parts of the picture (Ivancevich, 2010).

According to Figure 1 (Ivancevich, 2010), this is a graphical representation of the ARDM model for Human Resource Management which has been adapted for use in an institution of higher learning and which can be utilized by the institution and the instructor. The ARDM model consists of four key steps that are taken by managers or instructors (1) diagnosis, (2) prescription, (3) implementation, and (4) evaluation. The instructor must undertake these four key steps: diagnosis; prescription; implementation; and evaluation of both the external and internal environmental influences. Some of the external environmental influences include the government regulations and laws related to education and the Ministry of Education's requirements that an institution of higher learning must follow and the composition of the student body which might consist of students of different nationalities for an international institute of higher learning. The internal environmental factors include the university requirements, values and ethics, nature of the task of the instructor and the instructor's style and experience.

Under the ARDM model, the instructor completes a diagnosis of a work situation or problem by observing and identifying key factors. For example, a problem facing an instructor could be why some students are not motivated to come to class. The instructor then makes a diagnosis as why some students do not come to class whether they are personal reasons, low English ability level, apathy and others. As soon as the diagnosis is completed, the instructor then makes a prescription to translate the diagnosis into action. The diagnosis by the instructor may be that students are not motivated to come to class because of apathy. As a result, the instructor may prescribe solutions in finding ways to get students to be more interested in coming to class. Implementing a solution is the

next step in the diagnostic approach for example the instructor may come to the conclusion that he/she must give a quiz at every class meeting (either at the beginning or end of the class) which will motivate the students to come to class. Finally, after the instructor implements a solution, he/she must conduct an evaluation of the solution to see whether or not the solution is effective and solves the problem. The evaluation overall, allows the instructor to improve or change the diagnosis, prescription, and implementation steps of the diagnostic approach.

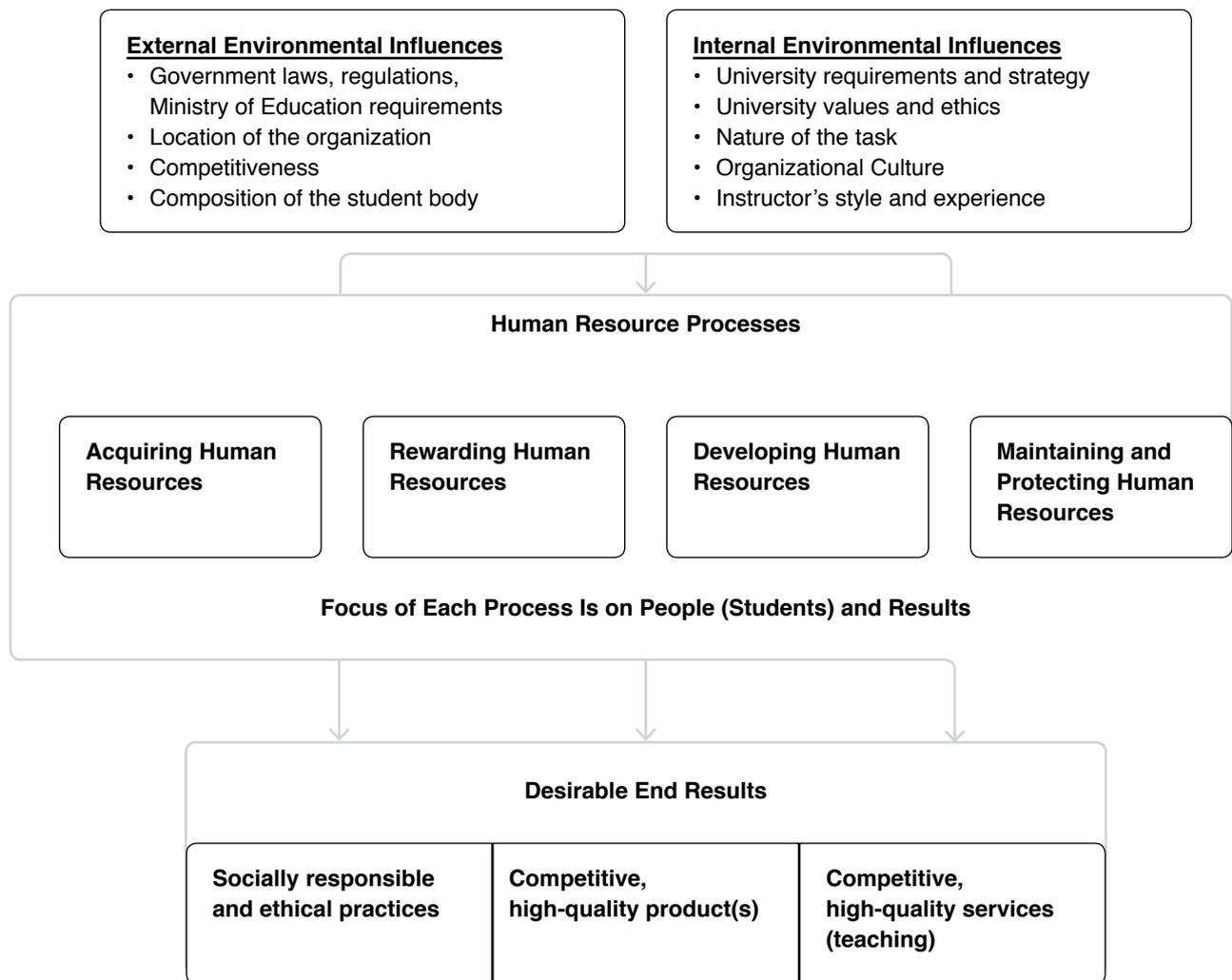
The ARDM model provides the four major anchor points to be the centerpiece of effective human resource management. If an organization teaches its members to focus on each anchor point A, R, D, and M plus the environment, it is likely to achieve socially responsible, ethical behaviors and competitive, high-quality products and services (Ivancevich, 2010). For example, the university can strive to acquire quality students and instructors to carry out the academic goals or objectives of the university. Next, the university or the instructor can reward those students who complete projects or who come to class to learn. Then, the university or instructor can develop students and instructors by offering training or scholarships to fine-tune their skills. Lastly, the university or instructor can maintain and protect the quality and skills of instructors and students by providing frequent feedback and coaching. Overall, the ARDM model calls for thorough, timely, and systematic review of each situation (Ivancevich, Konopaske, & Matteson, 2008).

Using the ARDM model of Human Resource Management to prepare for knowledge management is beneficial in that it is comprehensive and provides a road map and steps for the instructor to follow in order to achieve desired end results whether it is socially responsible behavior on the part of the instructor or providing high quality education to students. However, it is comprehensive as the instructor must look at multiple factors or variables which he/she must take into account in order to properly follow the ARDM model using a diagnostic approach to tackle and manage issues facing the instructor with respect to knowledge management. In addition, there is a fixed order of steps that have to be followed using the ARDM model. As stated previously, the instructor must follow the set order of diagnosing, prescribing, implementation and evaluating which may be limiting by not giving the instructor any flexible or the option of skipping the steps in an attempt to experiment or think out of the box. Finally, because the ARDM model is completed by the instructor, for example, everything is from the instructor's point



of view which can be biased. As a result, the instructor must evaluate the effectiveness of using the ARDM model or have an outside party or individual to assess his or her ideas or approach for total effectiveness. Nevertheless, this is an available option which an instructor can take advantage of in his or her readiness and learning of knowledge management.

Figure 1. The ARDM Model for Human Resource Management Adapted to an Internal Environmental Influences



Source: (Ivancevich, 2010)

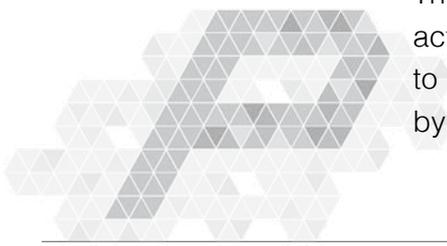
Figure 2 The SWOT Matrix

	<b>Internal Factors</b>	<b>External Factors</b>
<b>External Factors</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<b>Unfavorable Factors</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Threats</b>

Source: (Valentin, 2005)

### SWOT ANALYSIS

Marketers and people who analyze companies and business entities frequently use SWOT analysis to learn more about a company’s internal context in terms of strengths and weaknesses and scouring its external context for opportunities and threats (Valentin, 2005). The purpose of SWOT analysis is to spark strategic insight and distill fragmentary facts and figures into coherent backdrops for strategic planning (Mintzberg, 1994). An instructor or educator at an institute of higher learning can incorporate a SWOT analysis in preparing himself/herself for knowledge management readiness and learning. SWOT analysis is used widely in firms and classrooms and frequently it is the centerpiece of situation assessment (Day, 1984). An instructor can use a SWOT analysis to study their lessons’ strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (Buckingham, 2009). From Figure 2 (Valentin, 2005), the SWOT Matrix or the framework for doing the SWOT analysis comprises strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats which can be categorized under several headings: favorable and unfavorable factors and internal and external factors. A “strength” according to Figure 2 is classified as being a favorable internal factor, a “weakness” a unfavorable, internal factor, a “opportunity” an external, favorable factor and a “threat” and unfavorable, external factor. This framework for SWOT analysis is fundamentally simple and convenient for any instructor to use to analyze issues and situations as it focuses on four key components: strengths; weaknesses; opportunities; and threats. For example, should the instructor wish to assess his/her lesson plan or activities the instructor can use the SWOT Matrix before giving the lesson and/or activities to students. This will allow the instructor to do a preliminary screening of the lesson/ activities to be given to the students. After the lesson has been given to the student, the instructor can do a post screening of the lesson by having the students do a SWOT analysis of the lesson individually



or collectively as a group where the instructor asks students for their opinions and feelings. Also, the instructor could have students complete the post screening SWOT analysis anonymously depending on the requirements or discretion of the instructor. Using a SWOT analysis to assess the lessons and activities and their link to the learning objectives will often tell you why something did or did not work (Buckingham, 2009). So if an instructor uses, for example, a preliminary and/or a post screening SWOT analysis of the lesson, he/she will be able to see and determine what was useful and ineffective which impacts the overall learning in the classroom. In addition, if the instructor uses the preliminary and post screening SWOT analysis of the lesson together, then the instructor can compare both SWOT analyses and get a more thorough analysis of the lesson rather than focusing on one SWOT analysis (either preliminary screening or post screening). Results from the SWOT analysis can quickly be assessed and give the instructor some indication about what is relevant or irrelevant and what course of action should be done to handle problems, ideas, situations, etc. The SWOT analysis, then, can be harnessed by the instructor to improve and bolster the learning environment of the classroom at his/her discretion. Furthermore, the SWOT analysis is a tool that an instructor can use to prepare himself/herself for knowledge management readiness and learning. Any problems with knowledge management can be evaluated or screened through the lens of the SWOT analysis.

The SWOT Matrix or analysis like the ARDM model represents another approach for the instructor to adapt in his or her readiness and learning of knowledge management. However, SWOT analysis has advantages and disadvantages that must be addressed to fully realize the potential of this approach as a viable option. SWOT is simple, direct and easy to use and understand, as it comprises four key headings to classify information: strengths; weaknesses; opportunities; and threats as shown in Figure 2. Moreover, it can quickly be completed either by the instructor or by an outside party, and then be quickly reviewed and assessed. A SWOT analysis can be used in all situations applied to issues that the instructor may have to face in or out of the classroom in regards to knowledge management. Furthermore, SWOT can be used by any instructor regardless of rank, level of experience, academic ability, and others as it does not require years of experience or any

special knowledge or training to conduct and complete. However, SWOT like the ARDM model is not perfect and has some limitations. A SWOT analysis could yield banal or misleading results that may not be related to the issue or problem the person wishes to analyze (Hill & Westbrook, 1997). In addition, SWOT guidelines generally lack criteria for prioritizing SWOTs which means that the things listed on a SWOT analysis are listed as if all were equally important (Valentin, 2005). Some items on the SWOT could be viewed as being either strength or weakness or an opportunity or threat etc. For example, if a SWOT analysis was done in a classroom regarding group work, group work could be seen as an opportunity by some instructors or it could be seen as a threat in the sense that it does not allow for expression of individual students as everything in group work is done collectively as a group. Also, if the SWOT is drafted and completed by the instructor, then all information will be coming from the instructor which may be biased or not objective. As a result, the instructor should evaluate his/her SWOT and the results or have an outside person review and assess the format and the contents of the SWOT to ensure a degree of objectivity.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

An instructor who prepares himself/herself for knowledge management readiness and learning can use the diagnostic approach of HRM (the ARDM model) or the SWOT analysis whenever he/she is faced with issues or problems related to knowledge management. A suggestion would be for the instructor to use both methods simultaneously so that he/she can compare results and ideas. However, the amount of information may be too large and the instructor may have to invest a lot of time and work for both approaches. As a result, the instructor could complete the SWOT analysis first and then follow this up by utilizing the ARDM model, for instance. Also, as already discussed, an instructor can complete a preliminary or initial SWOT analysis on an issue related to knowledge management and then complete a post SWOT analysis on the same issue to see if results and information is consistent on both SWOT. Regardless of which method is used, every instructor should review and assess the results and information in the model that he/she uses. The instructor then can communicate the results with students or other instructors. In addition, if possible, an instructor should have another



individual either an instructor or student review the results and information in the model he/she uses. By having another person assess the results of the model, this helps to eliminate or minimize any potential bias or errors that may be evident or found by the assessor that may have been committed by the instructor. The student and the other instructor, for example, can then provide comments and feedback to the instructor on the results from the ARDM model or SWOT analysis. This, in essence, is two-way communication which allows for information or feedback to be passed on from the communicator (instructor) to the receiver (student) and then information from the receiver can be passed on to the communicator - the receiver-to-communicator feedback (Cannon & Witherspoon, 2005). The feedback that's given to an instructor when doing a SWOT analysis, for example, should be done not at the end of the SWOT analysis, but also during the completion of the SWOT analysis. Feedback given only at the end of a learning cycle is not effective in furthering student learning (Bollag, 2006). Students should be given feedback frequently or often if possible. Also, the instructor, like the student, should be given feedback on his/her work frequently as well so that action can be taken regarding problems, issues, and other concerns that come up on the SWOT analysis.

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## The Opinions of Patients with Dental Service and Stakeholders towards the Process of “Identity” and “Uniqueness” Promotion, Faculty of Dentistry, Khon Kaen University

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### ABSTRACT

The Faculty of Dentistry of Khon Kaen University has a commitment to produce graduates in Dentistry with professional identity and uniqueness, and this is in response to the desirable characteristics that have been perceived by the users. The objective of this study was to explore the opinions of patients with dental service and the opinions of the stakeholders towards the process of promoting “Identity” and “Uniqueness” at Khon Kaen University’s Faculty of Dentistry. The study samples include:

1. *Plan and Policy Analyst skilled in Special Planning and Quality Assurance in the Faculty of Dentistry, Khon Kaen University.*
2. *PR skills, Public Relations Unit in the Faculty of Dentistry, Khon Kaen University;*
3. *Administrative Officer Specialist Unit Administration in the Faculty of Dentistry, Khon Kaen University;*
4. *Educational Expert, Education Management in the Faculty of Dentistry, Khon Kaen University; and*
5. *Deputy Associate Dean for Planning and Quality Assurance, Faculty of Dentistry, Khon Kaen University.*

It comprised 305 participants and included the following 6 groups: 1) the teaching personnel; 2) the supporting personnel; 3) the 6<sup>th</sup> year dental students; 4) the alumni; 5) the graduate users; and 6) the patients utilizing dental services. The instruments consisted of the following two parts: 1) a demographic questionnaire; and 2) a questionnaire about the process of promoting “Identity” and “Uniqueness” in the Faculty of Dentistry. The content validity was examined by three experts, and the reliability of the instrument using Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient was found to be at 0.89. The findings revealed that the stakeholders had agreed that the process of “Identity” and “Uniqueness” promotion was at high level (mean±sd. =4.08±0.84 with a full score=5). The item with the highest mean score was “the course for dental students at the Faculty

of Dentistry contains skills for dental treatment and oral health promotion” with an average (mean $\pm$ sd. = 4.25 $\pm$ 0.78). The patients, who had received dental services, agreed that the process of “Identity and Uniqueness promotion was at high level with an average (mean $\pm$ sd. = 4.42 $\pm$ 0.65). The item with the highest mean score was “the result from the dental treatment was good according to the needs and the perceived value for cost of the dental treatment” with an average (mean $\pm$ sd. = 4.58 $\pm$ 0.52). This study revealed that both the patients receiving dental services and the stakeholders agreed that the process of promoting “Identity” and “Uniqueness” at the Faculty of Dentistry of Khon Kaen University was at a high level.

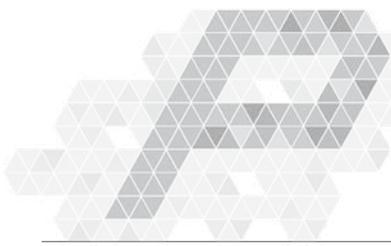
**KEYWORDS:**

Identity, Uniqueness, Patients utilizing dental services, Stakeholders

**INTRODUCTION**

The Faculty of Dentistry at Khon Kaen University was established on 14 May 1979 and celebrated its 35th year in 2014. The faculty was established by the government with the following aims: 1) to solve the problem of the shortage of dentists; 2) to increase the amount of research being conducted that was related to problems about oral and dental diseases; and 3) to offer technical assistance to the scholars in this field and to gain their cooperation. In addition to providing health services in diseases of the oral cavity and teeth to the people in the Northeastern region, the faculty’s mission was to perform 4 important roles: to produce graduates; to conduct research; to provide academic services to the society; and to promote the culture of religion. The present production of dental graduates numbers 29 years of graduates to serve society with 1,376 graduates.

During the academic years between the years 2009 – 2011, the Faculty of Dentistry performed an evaluation of desirable characteristics among its graduates and the faculty found that the graduates were satisfied. The percentages for each year according to the opinions of the graduates presented as follows: 1) 84.50 percent for 2009; 2) 78.41 percent for 2010; and 3) 86.54 percent for 2011. The hallmark of dental graduates is their creativity, self-confidence, desire to serve others, and work well with others. A belief in the concept of “self-help” fools some, but works for others, and this points to the fact, according to the opinions of the graduates, that the development of dental graduates has been



mainly focused on dental treatments. Training should focus on promoting prevention coupled together with providing treatments, and students should understand the various plans and policies associated with Community Dentistry, etc. In 2012, the executives established the “identity” and “uniqueness” through a process of engaging the participation of the staff and students at all levels in order to reflect upon the faculty’s strengths and its distinguished achievements in various fields, as well as to discover the context of the faculty in relation to society and to its graduates. In addition, they sought to explore the indicators of efficiency and effectiveness for the Faculty of Dentistry. The faculty committee decided that it should find an identity for the faculty and came up with “the graduates who have responsibility with work” and then used it to identify the faculty. Another is “the Faculty of Dentistry of the Northeast that specializes in oral diseases” (United Nations Committee of the faculty time 4 /2013 on 27 March 2013). The Faculty of Dentistry has developed a system and mechanism for quality assurance that is in accordance with the guidelines of quality assurance set forth by Khon Kaen University.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Population and Sample**

The population of this study was the clients and stakeholders, included the followings: 1) the teaching personnel; 2) the supporting personnel; 3) the 6th year dental students; 4) the alumni; 5) graduate users; and 6) patients who had used dental services.

The samples used in this study consisted of 305 people, who were divided into 6 groups. Groups 1-5 represented the stakeholders. The purposive sample was as follows: 1) the teaching personnel (75 people); 2) the supporting personnel including The Chief Secretary of the Department and the Chief of the Dental Clinic (41 people); 3) the 6<sup>th</sup> year dental students consisting of students who had completed all courses for Doctor of Dental Surgery (80 people); 4) the alumni (70 people); 5) five graduate users from each of the 7 affiliated hospitals including Dental teaching staff, dentists, and dental assistants making a total of 35 people; and 6) patients, who had received dental services in the Dental Hospital. The researcher set the types of samples used in the study. The statistics were based on the old patients, who had received treatment in 1 day or the average number of people per day, numbering 121 and were calculated based upon the method of Yamane

(1967) with samples numbering 93 people. The data was collected during the period between April - September, 2013.

### **THE INSTRUMENTS USED TO COLLECT DATA.**

The questionnaires were divided into 2 sets: 1) for groups 1-5; and 2) for Group 6. They were divided into 3 parts. The first part was general information of the respondents. The second part related to the opinions of the patients with dental service and the stakeholders regarding the operation of the faculty to promote the “identity” and “uniqueness”. The questionnaires used a 5 level rating scale. The third part consisted of other suggestions and comments. In order to check the reliability of the questionnaire and the quality of the inspection tools by direct content, there were three experts involved. The co-efficient alpha of Cronbach was equal to 0.89. Then it was sent to patients, who had utilized dental services, and to the stakeholders. The data from the questionnaires were analyzed using percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

### **A QUERY QUESTION**

Part 1: The questionnaire was used to gather general information of staff consisting of questions about the marital status, gender, age, and the length of government service.

Part 2: The questionnaire was used to gather the opinions of the patients about dental service and the stakeholders regarding the operation of the faculty to promote the “identity” and “uniqueness”. It was based on operations in the Faculty of Dentistry at Khon Kaen University.

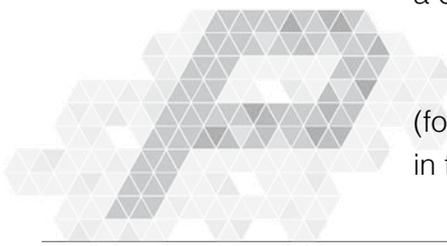
Part 3: It consisted of open-ended questions acquiring other suggestions and comments in order to promote to the identity and uniqueness in the Faculty of Dentistry at Khon Kaen University.

### **CONTROL OF DATA QUALITY**

1) Study the principles, theories, documents, books, and research articles in order to establish conceptual framework to create a questionnaires.

2) Establish a framework concept to create tools.

3) Propose draft tools to 3 experts to verify the content validity form (format), to monitor the language (wording), and to check the suitability in time (timing).



4) Improve the tools according to the recommendations of the experts.

5) The questionnaires were tried out on administrators and practitioners who were working in a manner similar to the samples including one individual from the Health Science Center of Khon Kaen University consisting of 30 people as the respondents. The validity and reliability of queries were verified using the commercial statistic program. The statistical use of coefficient alpha ( $\alpha$  - Coefficient) was 0.89 using the correlation method of Cronbach (Kijpreedaboreesutt, 1988).

6) After the test, corrections and actual applications were carried out.

## DATA ANALYSIS

In order to analyze the data, the respondents were divided into 2 groups as shown in Table 1. The variables were described by using descriptive statistics.

## RESULTS

### The Effect to Questionnaires

The group from which the researcher got the greatest percentage of responses (100%) from the questionnaires were the patients, who had received dental services numbering 93 people. The group with the second highest response rate was the alumni with 68 out of 70 people responding (97.14%). The group with the lowest response rate was the graduate users numbering 13 out of 35 people (37.14%). The comparisons are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 The respondents who commented on the operation of the Faculty with respect to the process of promoting "Identity" and "Uniqueness"

Samples		Number of samples	The system of inquiry	Percentages	
1.)	Groups of stakeholders	Total	301	212	70.43
	1. Teaching personnel		75	36	48.00
	2. Supporting personnel		41	33	80.49
	3. 6 <sup>th</sup> year Dental students		80	62	75.50
	4. Alumni		70	68	97.14
	5. Graduate users		35	13	37.14
2)	Patients utilizing dental services (Group 6)	Total	93	93	100.00
		Total	394	305	77.41

### The Opinions of the Stakeholders Regarding the Operation of the Faculty

As shown in Table 2 , all respondents participating in the study commented that the faculty had operated to promote identity. The stakeholders agreed that there was a process for promoting for “identity” and “uniqueness” with an average (mean+ sd.= 4.08 + 0.84; total possible score =5).

In terms of identity, the stakeholders agree that the operation of the faculty enhances the identity with an average (mean+ sd. = 4.03 + 0.85). When the classified items were examined, it was found that most were at a high level. The thread with an average score was “*the faculty has a curriculum to provide students or graduates with skills in dental treatment*”. Oral health promotion had the average (mean+ sd. = 4.25 + 0.78), and the thread with average minimum opinion was “*the faculty has activities*”, such as projects or extracurricular activities that promote the identity, such as sharing academic knowledge, providing service to society, volunteering and sharing Buddhism, etc., which had an average (mean+ sd.= 3.77 + 0.95). The data are shown in Table 2.

Table 2 The Opinions of Stakeholders toward the Process of “Identity” (N = 212)

The Opinions of Stakeholders toward the Process of “Identity”		Levels of the Opinions	
		$\bar{X}$	sd.
1	The faculty has the curriculum to provide students or graduates with skills in dental treatment and in promoting oral health.	4.25	0.78
2	The faculty has the curriculum to provide students or graduates. It also has the ability to work as a team with the dental and medical personnel.	4.03	0.82
3	The faculty has a curriculum that provides for students or graduates to become responsible for the work and to become socially responsible as well.	4.16	0.79
4	The faculty has a curriculum that helps students or graduates communicate, and become able to give consultations to people as a whole regarding the knowledge of oral health.	4.12	0.86
5	The faculty has a curriculum to provide students or graduates and has the ability to conduct basic research in the field of oral health.	4.04	0.82
6	The faculty offers student-centered teaching based on highlighting the known figure through analytical thinking, synthesis, creativity, problem solving, and by making decisions by themselves.	3.85	0.91
7	The faculty has organized projects or extracurricular activities to promote the “identity”, such as sharing academic knowledge, providing service to the society, volunteering, and sharing Buddhism, and other activities.	3.77	0.95
	<b>Mean of the identity</b>	<b>4.03</b>	<b>0.85</b>
	<b>Mean of identity and uniqueness</b>	<b>4.08</b>	<b>0.84</b>

### The Opinions of the Stakeholders.

It was found that the faculty had carried out operations in regards to the promotion of “uniqueness” with the average of mean+ sd.= 4.13+0.83. Most of the classified items were found to be at a high level. In addition, the thread with average score was “the faculty has dental hospital.” The center specializes in dentistry and has a high level of recognition in the Northeastern region and does justice to the oral health of people.” with the average (mean+ sd.= 4.27+ 0.85). In addition, the topics with an average level of minimum opinion is “the faculty has human potential development, academic support, and provides expertise” with an average (mean+ sd.= 4.03+ 0.85). The details are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3 The Opinions of Stakeholders toward the Process of “Uniqueness” (N = 212)

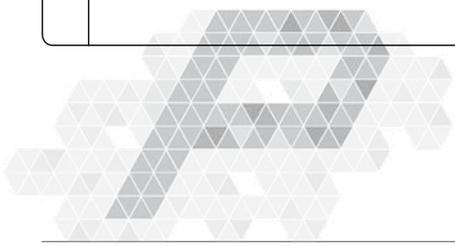
The Opinions of Stakeholders toward the Process of “Uniqueness”		Levels of the Opinions	
		$\bar{X}$	sd.
1	The faculty has the curriculum to provide students or graduates with skills in dental treatment and in promoting oral health.	4.21	0.79
2	The faculty has the curriculum to provide students or graduates. It also has the ability to work as a team with the dental and medical personnel.	4.08	0.83
3	The faculty has a curriculum that provides for students or graduates to become responsible for the work and to become socially responsible as well.	4.15	0.85
4	The faculty has a curriculum that helps students or graduates communicate, and become able to give consultations to people as a whole regarding the knowledge of oral health.	4.27	0.85
5	The faculty has a curriculum to provide students or graduates and has the ability to conduct basic research in the field of oral health.	4.09	0.84
6	The faculty offers student-centered teaching based on highlighting the known figure through analytical thinking, synthesis, creativity, problem solving, and by making decisions by themselves.	4.05	0.81
7	The faculty has organized projects or extracurricular activities to promote the “identity”, such as sharing academic knowledge, providing service to the society, volunteering, and sharing Buddhism, and other activities.	4.03	0.85
<b>Mean of the “uniqueness”</b>		<b>4.13</b>	<b>0.83</b>

**The Opinions of the Stakeholders (Groups 1-5) on the same, which Promotes the Identity of Each of the Groups.**

The study found that there were two groups with the highest level of agreement: 1) the alumni; and 2) the graduate users with respect to the thread: *“The faculty has the curriculum to provide students or graduates with skills in dental treatment and in promoting oral health”*, with the highest averages (mean+ sd. =4.40+74 and 4.08 + 0.49), respectively which is shown in Table 4.

Table 4 A Comparison of the Groups of Stakeholders toward the Process of “Identity” (N = 212)

The Opinions of Stakeholders toward the Process of “Identity”		Teaching Personnel		Supporting Personnel		6 <sup>th</sup> Year Dental Students		Alumni		Graduate Users	
		$\bar{X}$	sd.	$\bar{X}$	sd.	$\bar{X}$	sd.	$\bar{X}$	sd.	$\bar{X}$	sd.
1	The faculty has the curriculum to provide students or graduates with skills in dental treatment and in promoting oral health.	4.25	0.77	4.16	0.88	4.18	0.89	4.40	0.74	4.08	0.49
2	The faculty has the curriculum to provide students or graduates. It also has the ability to work as a team with the dental and medical personnel.	3.92	0.84	4.03	0.93	3.98	0.79	4.13	0.81	3.92	0.64
3	The faculty has a curriculum that provides for students or graduates to become responsible for the work and to become socially responsible as well.	3.86	0.96	4.22	0.71	4.16	0.82	4.29	0.71	4.00	0.58
4	The faculty has a curriculum that helps students or graduates communicate, and become able to give consultations to people as a whole regarding the knowledge of oral health.	3.89	0.85	4.09	0.93	4.20	0.79	4.22	0.93	3.92	0.64
5	The faculty has a curriculum to provide students or graduates and has the ability to conduct basic research in the field of oral health.	4.28	0.78	4.16	0.86	3.97	0.73	4.06	0.79	3.17	0.94
6	The faculty offers student-centered teaching based on highlighting the known figure through analytical thinking, synthesis, creativity, problem solving, and by making decisions by themselves.	3.83	0.91	3.97	0.93	3.67	0.87	3.99	0.95	3.62	0.77
7	The faculty has organized projects or extracurricular activities to promote the “identity”, such as sharing academic knowledge, providing service to the society, volunteering and sharing Buddhism, and other activities.	3.53	0.94	4.12	1.02	3.79	0.91	3.88	0.87	3.08	0.86
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.94</b>	<b>0.86</b>	<b>4.11</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>3.99</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>0.70</b>



## The Comments of the Stakeholders

Regarding the operation of promoting “identity”, there was an item that had the highest average value and that was agreed upon by the following 4 groups: 1) the teaching personnel; 2) the 6<sup>th</sup> year dental students; 3) the alumni; and 4) the graduate users. The threads were “The center specializes in dentistry”; “has a high degree of recognition in the Northeastern region”, and “it justly dispenses oral health to the people at the highest level with averages of mean+ sd. =3.94 +1.15, =4.35 + 0.73, = 4.51 + 0.68, and =3.92+ 0.76, respectively.

Table 5 A Comparison of Groups of Stakeholders toward the Process of “Uniqueness” (N = 212)

The Opinions of Stakeholders toward the Process of “Uniqueness”		Teaching Personnel		Supporting Personnel		6 <sup>th</sup> Year Dental Students		Alumni		Graduate Users	
		$\bar{X}$	sd.	$\bar{X}$	sd.	$\bar{X}$	sd.	$\bar{X}$	sd.	$\bar{X}$	sd.
1	The faculty has the curriculum to provide students or graduates with skills in dental treatment and in promoting oral health.	3.89	0.71	4.19	0.90	4.24	0.74	4.44	0.76	3.69	0.75
2	The faculty has the curriculum to provide students or graduates. It also has the ability to work as a team with the dental and medical personnel.	3.92	0.84	4.00	0.95	4.11	0.81	4.25	0.76	3.62	0.77
3	The faculty has a curriculum that provides for students or graduates to become responsible for the work and to become socially responsible as well.	3.92	0.91	4.19	0.90	4.26	0.75	4.24	0.87	3.62	0.65
4	The faculty has a curriculum for students or graduates that is communicative, and can help in giving consultations to the people as a whole regarding the knowledge of oral health.	3.94	1.15	4.13	0.91	4.35	0.73	4.51	0.68	3.92	0.76
5	The faculty has a curriculum to provide students or graduates that is based on research in the field of oral health.	3.81	0.92	4.19	0.74	4.16	0.85	4.24	0.82	3.54	0.52
6	The faculty offers student-centered teaching based on highlighting the known figure through analytical thinking, synthesis, creativity, problem solving, and by making decisions by themselves.	3.86	0.83	3.97	0.78	4.06	0.87	4.27	0.71	3.46	0.66
7	The faculty has organized projects or extracurricular activities to promote the “identity”, such as sharing academic knowledge, providing service to the society, volunteering, and sharing Buddhism, and other activities.	3.78	0.80	3.68	1.07	4.24	0.74	4.22	0.79	3.62	0.51
	<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>4.05</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>4.24</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>4.31</b>	<b>0.77</b>	<b>3.64</b>	<b>0.66</b>

The opinions of patients that had received dental services regarding the process of “Identity” and “Uniqueness” in general is shown in Table 6 below. The study found that the faculty had operations to promote the identity and uniqueness with the average (mean+ sd.= 4.42+0.65 and out of a total possible score of 5).

With respect to the identity of the patients that had received dental services, it was found that the faculty had operations to promote the identity with an average (mean+ sd.=4.30 + 0.73). With regard to each of the different aspects, it was found that the majority of the opinions were at the highest of all levels. In addition, the threads that rated average scores included the following 2 items: 1) *Dental students do dental treatment for you and have the skills to dental treatment*; and 2) *“Dental students were able to explain the condition of the patient thoroughly and clearly and were able to provide counseling knowledge to promote oral health.”* Both had equal averages of (mean+ sd. = 4.28 + 0.75).

Regarding uniqueness, the patients that had received dental service stated that the faculty had operations to promote identity with the average (mean+ sd.=4.54 +0.57). In each different aspect, it was found that the majority of the opinions were at a high level. *“The results of the treatments met the needs (a cure or illness better) and received treatment value or benefits.”* having an average (mean+ sd.= 4.58+ 0.5).

Table 6 The Opinions of Patients with Dental Services toward the Process of “Identity” and “Uniqueness” (N = 93)

The Opinions of the Patients with Dental Service toward the Process of Identity and Uniqueness		Levels of the Opinions	
		$\bar{X}$	sd.
<b>1</b>	<b>Operation of the faculty to promote the identity</b>		
1.1	Dental students, dental treatments, and their skills in dental treatment are satisfied.	4.28	0.75
1.2	Dental students were able to explain the condition of the patient thoroughly and clearly and were able to provide counseling knowledge to promote oral health.	4.28	0.75
1.3	There was overall satisfaction regarding treatments by dental students at every level.	4.35	0.69
	<b>Mean of the identity</b>	<b>4.30</b>	<b>0.73</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Operation of the faculty to promote the uniqueness</b>		
2.1	The faculty, which has a dental hospital, medical personnel, and a center that specializes in advanced dental	4.47	0.62
2.2	treatment, is acceptable in the Northeastern region. Furthermore, it does justice to the oral health of the people. The results of the treatments met the needs (a cure or illness better) and received treatment value or benefits.”	4.58	0.52
2.3	Overall satisfaction was achieved from the effects of medical treatment at the dental hospital.	4.58	0.56
	<b>Mean of the uniqueness</b>	<b>4.54</b>	<b>0.57</b>
	<b>Mean of the identity and uniqueness</b>	<b>4.42</b>	<b>0.65</b>

## CONCLUSION

To conclude, this study revealed that the stakeholders agreed to the process of promoting “*Identity*” and “*Uniqueness*” at the Faculty of Dentistry of Khon Kaen University. The data shown was at a high level and overall had a high average (mean+ sd.= 4.08+0.84).

The findings revealed that identity showed mean+ sd.= 4.03+0.85. and that the thread with an average score was “*The Faculty has an English curriculum to make the students or graduates have skills in dental treatment and in promoting oral health*” with the average (mean+ sd.= 4.25+0.78). In addition, the topic that had an average level the lowest was “*The faculty has organized projects or extracurricular activities to promote the “identity”, such as sharing academic knowledge, providing service to the society, volunteering, and sharing Buddhism, and other activities*” with an average (mean+ sd.= 3.77 +0.95).

Furthermore, this study also investigated the opinions of stakeholders on the operation of promoting “*identity*” and discovered that the item having a minimum average agreed upon by 3 following groups. They are 1) the teaching personnel, 2) the alumni, and 3) the graduate users. The item “*The faculty has organized projects or extracurricular activities to promote the “identity”, such as sharing academic knowledge, providing service to the society, volunteering, and sharing Buddhism, and other activities*” showed the averages (mean+ sd = 3.53 + 0.94, 3.88+ 0.49, and 3.08 + 0.86), respectively. From the unique views of the stakeholders regarding the operations for promoting the “*identity*”, the thread for which the 3 following groups were 1) the teaching personnel, 2) the supporting personnel, and 3) the alumni. The items that agreed and showed an average minimum were the faculty has human potential development, academic support, and expertise with an average (mean+ sd. = 3.78 ± 0.80, = 3.68 ± 1.07, and 4.22± 0.79).

To sum up, this study revealed that patients with dental service agreed that the process of promoting “*Identity*” and “*Uniqueness*” at the Faculty of Dentistry of Khon Kaen University was at high level overall with high average (mean+ sd.= 4.42+0.65). When considering the aspect of “*Identity*”, an average (mean+ sd.= 4.30 ± 0.73) was shown. Additionally, the 2 threads with average score rates included the following: 1) Dental students, dental treatments and their skills in dental treatment are satisfied; and 2) Dental students were able to explain the condition of the patient thoroughly and clearly and were able to provide counseling knowledge to promote oral health with equal averages (mean+ sd. = 4.28 ± 0.75).

The uniqueness showed an average (mean+ sd. = 4.54 ± 0.57). Additionally, the thread with average score was “*The results of the treatments met the needs (a cure or illness better) and received treatment value or benefits*” with the average (mean+ sd. = 4.58±0.52).

In conclusion, this study has revealed that the patients with dental services and the stakeholders agreed that the process of promoting “*Identity*” and “*Uniqueness*” at the Faculty of Dentistry, Khon Kaen University was at a high level.

## **DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS**

From the results of the evaluation, the overall average was high, and this has been caused partly by the following: 1) the faculty, who has been gathering the opinions of the personnel; and 2) comments from the students and from the Faculty of Dentistry who, together, are determining the identity. After that, the faculty committee met to consider and to set the policies and strategies into operation. Furthermore, they publicized the “*identity*” and “*uniqueness*” to the faculty, staff, students, the stakeholders, the alumni and patients with dental services. The posts were published on the website, in faculty meetings, and seminars in the planning process at the annual meeting of the faculty. After that, the faculty has annually reviewed its operational plan and examined its strategic issues, its targets, and its indicators of success for each side. The assignment of Associate Deans of various departments, the department heads, faculty, supervisors and team leaders were assigned to do the annual strategic planning, as well as organize small group meetings for the development of projects and activities in order to propel the operation in accordance with the identity and uniqueness and to achieve the performance according to the target.

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