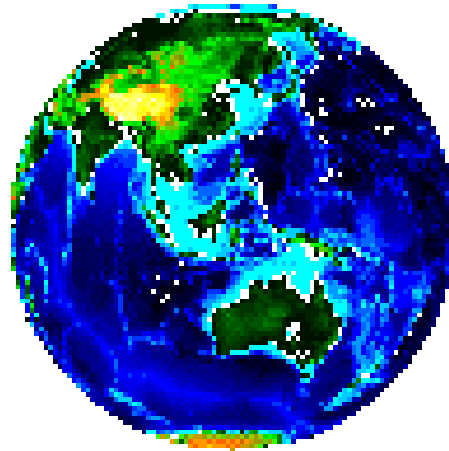


**STRENGTHENING WORLD BANK SUPPORT  
FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AND  
ACCREDITATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION  
IN EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

**Marjorie Peace Lenn**



**February, 2004**

**Education Sector Unit  
East Asia and the Pacific Region**

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

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|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>...DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ARE TURNING TO REGIONALISM AS A<br/>TOOL FOR DEVELOPMENT .....</b>                                    | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>I. QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION .....</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| <i>A. Purposes of Quality Assurance.....</i>   | <i>5</i>  |
| <i>B. Who are the users and uses of quality assurance? .....</i>   | <i>6</i>  |
| <i>C. Modes of Quality Assurance.....</i>  | <i>7</i>  |
| <i>D. Types of Accreditation: Institutional and Programmatic.....</i>  | <i>9</i>  |
| <i>E. Four Steps of Accreditation .....</i>  | <i>10</i> |
| <i>F. National Accreditation Bodies.....</i>   | <i>11</i> |
| <i>G. Responsibilities of National Accrediting Bodies.....</i>   | <i>13</i> |
| <i>H. Politics of Quality Assurance.....</i>   | <i>14</i> |
| <b>II. THE STATUS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EAST ASIA AND THE<br/>PACIFIC REGION .....</b>   | <b>17</b> |
| <i>A. General Characteristics of the Region's Quality Assurance Bodies.....</i>  | <i>18</i> |
| <i>B. Current Status of Quality Assurance Networking in the Region .....</i>   | <i>21</i> |
| <b>III. THE TRADE AGREEMENTS AND INCREASING REGIONAL MOBILITY:<br/>IMPLICATIONS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION.....</b>                    | <b>25</b> |
| <i>A. The GATS.....</i>  | <i>26</i> |
| <i>B. APEC .....</i>   | <i>27</i> |
| <i>C. ASEAN.....</i>   | <i>27</i> |
| <i>D. Regional Mobility Schemes .....</i>  | <i>27</i> |
| <i>E. Bilaterals .....</i>   | <i>29</i> |
| <b>IV. TOWARD STRENGTHENING WORLD BANK SUPPORT FOR QUALITY<br/>ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC.....</b> | <b>30</b> |
| <i>A. The World Bank and Quality Assurance.....</i>  | <i>30</i> |
| <i>B. National Capacity Building .....</i>   | <i>32</i> |
| <i>C. East Asia and the Pacific Quality Assurance Region.....</i>  | <i>33</i> |
| <i>D. Sub-Regional Capacity Building.....</i>  | <i>34</i> |
| <i>E. Regional Capacity Building.....</i>  | <i>35</i> |
| <i>F. Focal Points for Coordination.....</i>   | <i>42</i> |

**STRENGTHENING WORLD BANK SUPPORT FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION IN  
HIGHER EDUCATION IN EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

---

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>APPENDIX: NATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE BODIES IN EAST ASIA<br/>AND THE PACIFIC .....</b>                                 | <b>44</b> |
| <i>Australia: Australian Universities Quality Agency.....</i>   | <i>45</i> |
| <i>Hong Kong: Hong Kong Council on Academic Accreditation .....</i>   | <i>48</i> |
| <i>India: National Assessment and Accreditation Council.....</i>  | <i>51</i> |
| <i>Indonesia: The National Accreditation Board for Higher Education.....</i>  | <i>54</i> |
| <i>Japan:.....</i>  | <i>57</i> |
| National Institution for Academic Degrees (Governmental).....   | 57        |
| Japan University Accreditation Association (Non-governmental).....  | 59        |
| <i>Korea: The Korean Council for University Education .....</i>   | <i>62</i> |
| <i>Malaysia: National Accreditation Board, Lembaga Akreditasi Negara (LAN).....</i>                                       | <i>64</i> |
| <i>Mongolia: National Council on Higher Education Accreditation.....</i>  | <i>67</i> |
| <i>New Zealand: Academic Audit Unit.....</i>  | <i>71</i> |
| <i>People Republic of China: Centralized and Decentralized Quality Assurance Bodies .....</i>                             | <i>74</i> |
| Shanghai Educational Evaluation Institute.....  | 75        |
| Guangdong Center of Evaluation and Development Research for Education.....  | 77        |
| <i>Philippines: .....</i>   | <i>79</i> |
| Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines .....  | 80        |
| Philippines Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities.....  | 81        |
| <i>Thailand: Office of National Educational Standards and Quality Assessment,<br/>Ministry of University Affairs.....</i> | <i>82</i> |
| <i>Vietnam: Quality Assurance Unit .....</i>  | <i>85</i> |
| <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>   | <b>90</b> |
| <b>RELEVANT WEBSITES .....</b>  | <b>93</b> |

***Strengthening World Bank Support for  
Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education  
In East Asia and the Pacific***

***...developing countries are turning to regionalism as a tool for  
development.***

*Shiff and Winters, 2003*

*Regional Integration and Development*, a recent co-publication by the World Bank and Oxford University Press introduces the realization long suspected that *regionalism* is playing a major role in countries adopting: a more outward-looking stance, a greater liberalization of national policy and a sense of being a more equal partner with other countries. (Shiff and Winters, 2003) In the East Asia and the Pacific region, activities related to global, regional and bilateral trade agreements; regional and international associations; and inter-governmental organizations are contributing to an increasing sense of connection and, through these closer relationships, a new form of “peer pressure” to enhance domestic policy and practice.

National higher education systems are not immune to the dynamics of regionalism. To the contrary, higher education by its basic nature of inquiry, has traditionally sought to respond to changing circumstances nationally and has looked beyond the limits of national borders to seek new truths and ways in which the educational enterprise can continuously improve itself. With the rise of regionalism and an increased sense of their status in the global marketplace, countries are recognizing the critical role played by higher education in economic development. Indeed, the 1998-99 *World Development Study* claimed that “Knowledge has become the most important factor in economic development.” The Bank concurs:

*The last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw significant changes in the global environment that, in one way or another, bear heavily on the role, functions, shape and the mode of operation of tertiary education systems all over the world, including those in developing countries...Among the most influential changes are the increasing importance of knowledge as a driver of growth in the context of the global economy, the information and communication revolution, the emergence of a worldwide labor market, and global sociopolitical transformations. (World Bank Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education, 2002)*

The *quality* of the higher education sector, and how that quality is defined, evaluated and monitored is therefore key not only to the social and economic well-being of a nation-state, but is a determining factor related to the status of that higher education system within a region, and the overall quality of a region's higher education sector in a global context:

*As knowledge becomes more important, so does higher education...The quality of knowledge generated within higher education institutions, and its availability to the wider economy, is becoming increasingly critical to national competitiveness.*

*(Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise, 2000)*

## ***I. Quality Assurance in Higher Education***

*Quality assurance may relate to a program, an institution or a whole higher education system. In each case, quality assurance is all those attitudes, objects, actions and procedures which, through their existence and use, and together with the quality control activities, ensure that appropriate academic standards are being maintained and enhanced in and by each program. Quality assurance extends to making the process and standards known to the educational community and the public at large.*

### *International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education*

Countries with visions of economic growth are learning that a prerequisite of that growth is more of their population educated at higher levels. This translates into larger percentages of public funds designated for higher education and/or encouraging foreign education providers to enter the country and confer academic degrees. With increased funding and a growing number of degree granting entities come an increased concern by governments to be reassured on at least three counts:

- (1) Are the institutions of higher education planning to produce the graduates

Prior to the mass education movement in Europe in the 1990's, external quality review existed essentially in the United States (for all institutions of postsecondary and higher education) and in the United Kingdom (for the polytechnic but not the university sector). In the last dozen years, the number of countries which have embraced quality assurance as a mode of evaluating the quality of its higher education sector has increased to approximately 60 in every region of the world, making it an important and widely used tool for evaluating and improving the quality of higher education and for providing the government, educational establishment, students and employers with critical information about the quality of education offered at a particular institution and comparative information about the quality of a higher education system as a whole.

### **A. Purposes of Quality Assurance**

In its multiple roles, quality assurance serves both the country and higher education community. Quality assurance:

- ***Defines higher education***  
The foundation of quality assurance consists of standards or criteria for quality that are agreed upon by the communities of interest (e.g., government, higher education institutions, the professions, employers).
- ***Assists in reform efforts***  
The standards for quality can help define expectations for higher education institutions and their programs – i.e, what they are expected to become.
- ***Provides a basis for future planning***  
With the standards as anchors for definition, the institution is clearer about its present in order to plan better for its future.
- ***Provides a structure for educational improvement***  
The purposes of quality assurance are not only for purposes of assessing, but are also for purposes of enhancing the level of educational quality.
- ***Maximizes communication across education***  
A national set of standards and a process for applying them enhances a country's ability to establish comparative data across its system of higher education, and a student's ability to move from secondary to tertiary and within tertiary education.
- ***Assists users to make better decisions***

**B. Who are the users and uses of quality assurance?**

The primary users of quality assurance include government, students, employers and funding organizations, each of which use the process and outcomes for their own purposes:

| <b>Users</b>                            | <b>Uses</b>  |
|---|--|
| <b>GOVERNMENT</b>                       | <b>To define higher education country-wide<br/>To assure quality higher education for the citizenry<br/>To assure a quality labor force<br/>To determine which institutions and programs receive public funding<br/>To accept into civil service only those graduated from accredited institutions<br/>To determine which institutions receive research funding<br/>To generally use quality assurance as a means of consumer protection</b> |
| <b>STUDENTS</b>                         | <b>To assist in selecting an institution for study<br/>To ensure transfer between accredited institutions<br/>To ensure admission at the graduate level in a different institution from undergraduate degree<br/>To assist in employment, particularly in civil service and in the professions</b>   |
| <b>EMPOYERS</b>                         | <b>To assure qualified employees</b>   |
| <b>FUNDING ORGANIZATIONS</b>            | <b>To determine eligible institutions</b>  |
| <b>INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION</b> | <b>To improve institutional information and data<br/>To enhance institutional planning<br/>To determine membership in certain organizations<br/>To facilitate transfer schemes<br/>To assure a qualified student body</b>  |

## **C. Modes of Quality Assurance**

There are three primary modes of quality assurance globally: assessment, audit and accreditation. Their definitions are not sharp and when used concurrently, their functions sometimes overlap within a national system. Further, within these modes, additional quality assurance activities are practiced such as ranking, the use of performance indicators and testing/examinations. Among some private institutions throughout Asia, it is a marketing trend to undergo an ISO 9000 quality review which, because it was designed for application in industry, assists in measuring the educational “inputs” and “process” of an institution. However, there is no known quality assurance system in Asia which incorporates ISO 9000 in its own national process.

Assessment, audit and accreditation are each operative to some extent in the region of East Asia and the Pacific:

### **Mode 1: Assessment**

Assessment is an evaluation which results in a grade, whether numeric (e.g., a percentage or a shorter scale of, for example, 1 through 4); literal (e.g., A to F) or descriptive (excellent, good, satisfactory, unsatisfactory). Assessment asks “how good are your outputs?” Assessment in and of itself typically does not include the dual purpose of quality improvement, which is necessary in a developing context. Further, assessment has a tendency to be more dependent on quantitative rather than qualitative measurement (e.g., it may ask how many books are in the library rather than finding out whether these books are: current, relevant to the curriculum and are read by the students and teaching staff). In the region, India and China use assessment (in the form of grading Indian institutions or Chinese teachers) in combination with the process of accreditation.

### **Mode 2: Audit**

An audit is a check on what an institution explicitly or implicitly claims about itself. The institution claims what it will do and a quality audit checks the extent to which the institution is achieving its own objectives. Audit asks, “how well are you doing what you say you are doing?” Governments are more likely to prefer accreditation over audit, so that the auditing process is now found most typically in well-established higher education systems with strong traditions of self-evaluation internal to the institutions. In the region, Australia and New Zealand use the process of audit.

### **Mode 3: Accreditation**

Accreditation is an evaluation of whether an institution qualifies for a certain status and is the primary choice of governments for national systems of quality assurance. This status may have implications for the institution itself (e.g., permission to operate or eligibility for external funding) and/or its students (e.g., eligibility for grants or a professional degree). Accreditation asks “are you good enough to be approved (to confer degrees)?” Accreditation has a dual purpose:

(1) quality assessment as well as (2) quality improvement and should take into consideration inputs (e.g., how many volumes are in the library) but not without outcomes (e.g., how many titles are in the library; are they current, relevant and used).

Generally speaking, an institution of higher education or its programs which is accredited is found to:

1. Have educationally appropriate objectives as defined over time by the higher education community;
2. Have the financial, human and physical resources needed to achieve these objectives;
3. Have demonstrated that it is achieving these objectives now; and
4. Have provided sufficient evidence to support the belief and it will continue to achieve its objectives for some reasonable time into the future.

***Of the three modes, the most widely used regionally and globally and the most beneficial for purposes of development and capacity building is Mode 3: Accreditation.***

Accreditation in East Asia and the Pacific region takes place in: Cambodia\*, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Mongolia, Philippines and Vietnam\*\*, and is the aspiration of Thailand. In an article comparing the three primary modes, Woodhouse uses a “five-point checking sequence” for comparison purposes:

1. Are the higher education institution’s objectives appropriate?
2. Are its plans suitable for these objectives?
3. Do its actions conform to its plans?
4. Are its actions effective in achieving its objectives?
5. What is the measure of the objectives?

Woodhouse attests that when usually applied, assessment addresses #5; audit addresses #'s 2 and 3 but accreditation addresses #'s 1 through 4. (Woodhouse, 1999) Audit is used most typically in mature systems of higher education and assessment is typically used in tandem with accreditation and audit. Accreditation, on the other hand, is a process which can be used in both developing and mature systems of higher education and has been the process of choice among World Bank higher education projects throughout the last decade (e.g., Romania, Hungary, China, Argentina, Chile, Vietnam, Cambodia and others).

\*By Royal Kret April 2003 [not included in this study]

\*\* Pending final regulations

**[Note:** The three primary modes of assessment, audit and accreditation apply to the *quality assurance* of institutions of higher education and their programs. They should not be confused with licensure and certification which attest to the *competency assurance* of the individual graduate/professional. The number of graduates who achieve licensure

(typically a governmental recognition of an individual to practice a certain profession) or certification (typically a non-governmental recognition of an individual to continue to practice a certain profession) can be used as outcome indicators of quality of an institution or program but are not free-standing modes of quality assurance. (Lenn, 1987)]

#### **D. Types of Accreditation: Institutional and Programmatic**

*Institutional accreditation* focuses on the institution as a whole, giving attention not only to the overall educational program but to such areas as:

- Mission
- Governance
- Effective management
- Academic Program
- Teaching Staff
- Learning Resources (library, laboratories and educational technology)
- Students
- Student Services
- Physical Facilities
- Financial Resources

The standards relate to the achievement of the institutional mission and objectives. The criteria are broad, as is demanded by the focus on the whole institution and by the potential presence of institutions of widely different purposes and scopes (e.g., universities, colleges, polytechnics, community colleges). The criteria also provide encouragement to institutions to try innovative curricula and procedures and adopt them when proven successful.

*Programmatic accreditation* focuses on a degree granting program within an institution of higher education which typically prepares professionals or special occupations. Each program has its own distinctive definitions of eligibility, criteria or standards for accreditation. These are most effective when they are developed through the cooperation of both educators and current practitioners as well as other interested parties such as employers and public agencies. Sought are reasonable conditions for achieving the objectives of satisfactory quality. The crucial dimension of quality in program accreditation is the adequacy of the educational program as it related to professional expectations and requirements for entry and practice in a field (e.g., medical education leading to becoming a physician). During the external review process, the reviewers may review the relationship of the program to the institution for purposes of program maintenance and development.

Vital to both institutional and programmatic accreditation is the institution of higher education being able to ascertain where it is in order that it can move to where it needs to go. Quality standards and criteria can take many forms, but they generally follow a generic set of questions that can be posed for this purpose:

What are the institution's/program's purposes and goals?  
Are they known to the members of the academic community?  
What do you know about changes in the environment which could affect the goals?  
Is it possible to improve the links between stakeholder needs and the goals?  
Do the purposes and goals provide an adequate framework for institutional/programmatic evaluation?  
Where do you want to go?  
What is necessary to get there?  
What are the possible alternatives for action?  
What is needed to implement the various alternatives for action?  
Is the institution able to cover those costs?

**[Note:** An additional way in which standards can be developed for programs is through a national (and typically governmental) *qualifications framework*. The two national systems in Asia that employ qualifications frameworks for higher education are New Zealand and Australia. In both of these cases, the quality assurance mode is *audit*. Hong Kong is currently in the process of establishing a qualifications framework for postsecondary (occupational/vocational) education. As an example, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority describes itself as having a national qualifications framework designed to provide:

- *nationally recognised, consistent standards and qualifications; and*
- *recognition and credit for all learning of knowledge and skills.*

*Framework qualifications are quality assured and nationally recognised. Administered by the Qualifications Authority, the Framework is a way of structuring national qualifications in a three-pronged quality system: (1) national standards are registered; (2) the standards are used by accrediting organizations; and (3) a moderation system ensures national consistency.*

## **E. Four Steps of Accreditation**

Global practice in accreditation typically follows four steps:

### **1. Development of Standards**

Fundamental to the process of accreditation is agreement on a set of standards sponsored by a national accrediting body, which are applied evenly to all institutions of higher education or their programs in the country. These standards, whether institutional or programmatic accreditation, generally follow the component list for institutional accreditation as above. Again, the standards for programmatic accreditation are more discreet given their specialization.

## 2. **Self-Evaluation**

The institution or program undergoing the process is asked to respond to the standards in a written report. It is typical that several months are allowed for this process to assure that the self-evaluation includes as much of the community as possible (e.g., administrative and teaching staff, students, employers, etc.).

## 3. **External Review**

A team of experts, representative of the national higher education community (and professional community in the case of programmatic accreditation) review the self-evaluation report prepared by the institution as compared to the standards for accreditation and visit the institution/program for purposes of evaluating the extent to which the institution/program is doing what it says it is doing.

## 4. **Accreditation Decision**

Based on the self-evaluation and the feedback of the external reviewers, a decision is reached by the national accreditation body as to whether the institution or program is: accredited, not accredited, or is on probation for a certain period of time during which improvements have to be made. An institution or program which is denied accreditation can experience: the cessation of public or private funding; its graduates being unqualified to enter the profession; a loss of status in the national higher education community.

## **F. National Accreditation Bodies**

***Organization and Funding.*** National accreditation bodies come in four major modes of organization and funding. Regardless of mode, *it is optimal if not essential that accrediting bodies have independence in decision-making* in order to be credible, trustworthy and respected. For example, the national accreditation body can be “centralized governmental” (such as Australia which has as its members the education ministries of the states/territories) and still have independence in decision-making as long as those in government who use the outcome of the decision/accreditation for such matters as: authorizing operation or funding are *not* a part of the decision-making process leading to accreditation. *An overt conflict of interest at any level of accreditation, but particularly at the national level, neutralizes independence and its overall effectiveness.*

The two predominant modes of organization for accreditation worldwide include Centralized Governmental and Quasi-Governmental. In both, funding is derived from government. But of these two, the one which is *most* likely to remain independent in its decision-making in any political setting is the quasi-governmental mode, although the Australians would argue that their governmental process is a worthy model for their needs. Of most national systems established through participation in a World Bank higher education project, the predominant mode has been quasi-governmental (e.g., Romania, Hungary, Malaysia, Indonesia, Argentina, Chile). *However*, in systems which

are generally centrist in nature; do not (yet) have a large private sector and there is little distinction between government and higher education, a governmental process of quality assurance (even without independence of decision-making) is better than no process at all (e.g., China, Vietnam and Mongolia).

**1. Centralized Governmental**

The national accrediting body is typically housed in or under the Ministry of Education and is clearly a governmental function. In the case of Australia, the national accrediting body is composed of Territory/State ministers of education. Other models include Germany, Russia and China, the latter evolving toward Provincial and Municipal (e.g., Beijing and Shanghai) accrediting agencies. Not all governmental models can claim independent decision making in the process of accreditation.

**2. Quasi-Governmental**

The national accrediting body is paid for by government but is “owned” (administered) by the institutions of higher education. This is the predominant model of accreditation in Eastern/Central Europe (Romania, Hungary, Estonia) which, when accreditation began in the region in the early 1990’s, ensured the independence of the process from a legacy of centrist decision-making.

The two lesser used modes of organization for accreditation include Non-Governmental and Parallel Governmental and Non-Governmental, each of which have evolved in national contexts which have not been replicated worldwide:

**3. Non-Governmental**

Although professional accreditation typically is independent and non-governmental, there are few truly independent and non-governmental models of institutional accreditation. One of these is the accrediting system in the United States, which accredits 6,000 institutions of postsecondary and higher education and tens of thousands of programs all through non-governmental bodies which are a combination of national and regional. Another is the auditing process administered by the New Zealand Vice Chancellor’s Association. In these cases the funding for the accrediting body and process is derived from the institutions themselves. Americans with an historical disdain for government would tend to argue that the only independence is complete independence from government, including funding. However, for most national settings, the funding of the institutions themselves is derived from the government and makes alternative means of financial independence improbable.

**4. Parallel Governmental and Non-Governmental**

In some countries, a combination of governmental and non-governmental accreditation exists. For example, three parallel forms have existed simultaneously in the Netherlands: (1) central governmental institutional accreditation; (2) non-governmental professional accreditation administered by a single body sponsored by the professions themselves, and (3) non-governmental

accreditation administered by the association of vice chancellors/rectors and funded by the institutions (which are, in turn, funded by government). In Canada, institutional accreditation is carried out by provincial governments, while professional accreditation is administered on a nation-wide basis by non-governmental professional associations.

Another model of governmental and non-governmental activity is found in countries which have elected to nationally “recognize” accrediting bodies which, in turn, carry out the accrediting functions. In the United States where all accreditation is non-governmental, this central recognition function is carried out not only by the federal government but also by a national non-governmental recognizing body. In Chile, the governmental program accreditation body has developed a national recognition system for professional organizations which will carry out accreditation of professional education.

### **G. Responsibilities of National Accrediting Bodies**

The following constitutes responsibilities typical of national accrediting bodies. The national body, composed of any combination of representatives of government, institutions of higher education and the public, is served by a central secretariat whose business is to provide staff support for these various functions. In a rough chronological order from time of founding, typical responsibilities include:

- Developing standards of quality in consultation with institutions and major users

- Developing and updating policy manuals of accreditation for national body and institutional use

- Developing a registry of external reviewers

- Scheduling external review of institutions/programs

- Maintaining records of accreditation activity

- Maintaining a national database of comparative institutional data

- Conducting training programs for:

  - National accrediting body members
  - Institutions in the process of self-evaluation
  - External reviewers in the process of site visit

- Coordinating special committees for professional education (engineering,

medicine, law, business, etc.)

Cooperating with regional and international quality assurance bodies and organizations

Cooperating with national educational and professional agencies and organizations

Making public (publicizing) quality assurance decisions

Evaluating and renewing the accrediting process

**Two of the largest responsibilities of a national accrediting body are to: (1) select and (2) train *external evaluators*, the primary *ambassadors* of the accrediting process.** It is the external evaluators who: review the institution/program's self evaluation; conduct a site visit and provide a report (and in some cases a recommendation for accreditation) to the national accrediting body. It is therefore critical that the national body select for these positions a relatively large corps of persons from the higher education and professional community who are:

- Credible in their fields
- Without conflicts of interest
- Flexible and empathetic to diverse educational missions
- Fair and objective
- Advisory
- Trusted

Depending on the size of the higher education system, the selection and the maintenance of the external reviewer list can be a major task, but the training of these people who are at the core of the accrediting process can be an expensive and time-consuming challenge to the secretariat/national accrediting body. The training, however, is necessary to:

- Socialize the external reviewers to the process;
- Provide a broader forum for the continuing interpretation of the standards in the academic community; and
- Provide continuity in the interpretation and application of the standards for quality.

## **H. Politics of Quality Assurance**

There are some typical politics related to quality assurance which appear to be common to countries worldwide. Among them are:

### **1. A Bias Against Private Higher Education**

Until the advent of mass education, the public sector has, with few exceptions (e.g., the United States and countries in South America) had a monopoly on national higher education systems. Only those institutions of higher education funded by the State are considered of quality because it is assumed that the State is providing its citizenry the best higher education possible. Although this mythology is eroding as the result of nations being unable to keep up with rising demand thus necessitating the influx of private providers (which are by most current accounts degree granting components of other nations' public institutions), there is a tendency for governments to want to apply a national quality assurance system solely on private institutions. This is a major mistake. A nation's institutions of higher education should be viewed as a system in which *all institutions* should be subject to the same standards of quality. It is common knowledge that not all public institutions are good and not all private institutions are bad. It is a country's primary responsibility to assure that a quality higher education is provided, regardless of the public or private status of the provider.

## **2. A Tendency Toward Quantitative Measurement**

Generally speaking, immature quality assurance processes have a tendency to be quantitative in evaluation whereas mature systems tend toward qualitative evaluation. It is easier to count things and assume that the outcome has something to do with quality when it may have no bearing at all. The number of teaching staff, for example, does not tell whether each is qualified in his/her field; is active in a professional development program provided by the institution; is employed at other higher education institutions in the country; is a good teacher or produces graduates who are readily employed and valued in the workplace. The square meters of a classroom does not tell if learning is taking place; Care needs to be taken in new systems to assure a healthy balance of quantitative and qualitative measurement.

## **3. A Fuzzy Definition of Conflict of Interest**

It is imperative for accreditation to be without conflict of interest in order that its outcomes are trusted and respected by its large number of users. In countries with developing legal systems or a legacy of centrist ideology, care needs to be taken to assure that the process is as objective and fair as possible. There are multiple ways in which this trust can be violated: through the appointment of an "old guard" which is not representative of modern higher education on the national commission; through the use of external reviewers who are known to be biased against certain types of institutions; or by having the decision making process leading to the status of accreditation led by those who are not independent (such as the governmental funding body making accreditation decisions upon which funding is determined).

## **4. Ranking Institutions**

Although there are countries which claim that they can publicly rank institutions (either by number or grade) without consequence, it is generally believed that

avoiding ranking is the less divisive course in the long term development of a system of higher education. Asian countries in particular have a propensity for ranking institutions both inside and outside of their national systems. In some Asian countries, for example, it is strongly believed (likely based on their own national tendency toward ranking) that there exist not 3,000 but perhaps a dozen quality degree granting institutions of higher education in the United States. There further is a tendency in some countries for institutions to achieve top rankings based on historical precedence and remain at that rank regardless of current objective quality reviews.

To avoid ranking is not to say that there should not be *gradations or levels* of accreditation. Several systems employ at least a three status system: “accredited” (typically for a specified period of time no less than three and no more than seven to ten years; five being a reasonable time period for most systems); “probation” (for a reasonable time period less than accreditation during which certain weaknesses are to be addressed) and “not accredited” (which usually means that the institution or program needs to apply again after a certain period of time; or the status leads to a conclusion of educational activity).

### **5. Professional Accreditation**

Some industrialized countries have a bias against what they consider the self-serving nature of the professions (the “guilds”) while developing countries have a tendency to ignore quality issues in the professions altogether. While the academic disciplines have retained the interest of new accrediting systems, there is a tendency to postpone the need to pay attention to professional education. Often, there is not a strong professional body advocating a certain level of practice in the country. When this is the case, it should be the responsibility of the national accrediting body to form a specialized committee for that profession (best composed of practitioners and academics) and nurture the development of professional standards and/or develop a national qualifications framework (as discussed earlier). Where strong professional bodies exist, they should be co-opted by the national accrediting body to help it review professional education programs. In more mature stages, the national accrediting body can “recognize” the “professional accreditors” which will, in turn, carry out their specialized processes on relevant programs.

### **6. Setting the Standards Too High or Too Low**

Accreditation provides a cut-off point or threshold that can be as high or as low as desired. Accreditation is a gatekeeper role, and it is no criticism of an accreditor to observe that it has little to say to an institution that is very far above the quality threshold. A cut-off point that is too low leads to a situation of *caveat emptor* (buyer beware) while a cut-off that is too high is safer for users but can deter innovation and new institutions. (Woodhouse, 1999)

## ***II. The Status of Quality Assurance in East Asia and the Pacific Region***

As a gauge for the growth of quality assurance in higher education globally, the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education was founded in 1991 with 20 member countries. In 2003, the number of member countries that can claim a national quality assurance system is 60. This growth is mirrored in East Asia and the Pacific region. Of the 15 *major national* quality assurance bodies currently operating in 13 countries in the region, 12 were founded since 1991 and 11 of those since 1994. The 13 countries and their major national quality assurance bodies include:

- **Australia:** Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)
- **Hong Kong:** Hong Kong Council on Academic Accreditation (HKCAA)
- **India:** National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)  
[Note: India is not among the countries of the World Bank’s East Asia and the Pacific region. However, it is included in this study because it is a member of the “Asia-Pacific” regional network of accreditors, a sub-network of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education. India’s accreditable universe is larger than any other in the region.]
- **Indonesia:** The National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN)
- **Japan:**a

- **Thailand:** Office of National Educational Standards and Quality Assessment, Ministry of University Affairs (ONESQA)
- **Vietnam:** Quality Assurance Unit (QA Unit)

In addition to these, there is outstanding legislation in **Cambodia** with the potential for establishing a national accrediting council for public and private higher education. A World Bank credit is possible upon appropriate passage of this act.

[.: In earlier Bank publications, quality assurance systems were claimed in Australia and Singapore. Although Australian universities have historically been authorized by a State or Territory to confer degrees and call themselves universities, the universities have traditionally claimed themselves to be “self-accrediting”. Only in 2001 did the Australian government establish a central quality assurance body of Australian higher education (the Australian Universities Quality Agency). Similarly, Singapore is listed as having a quality assurance body. It is probable that some form of quality control activity takes place out of Singapore’s Ministry of Education, and there are Offices of Quality Assurance internal to such institutions as the National University of Singapore. But an “independent” or “semi-autonomous” body that has developed higher education standards and monitors the quality of Singapore’s public institutions and programs of higher education is not known to exist. Singapore higher education is known to use foreign quality assurance bodies in a number of its professional schools such as medicine or management. At the time of this report’s publication, Singapore is planning on establishing an accreditation process for *private* higher education. The Singapore Accreditation Council is to be administered out of the Ministry of Economy and not out of the Ministry of Education.]

#### **A. General Characteristics of the Region’s Quality Assurance Bodies**

Attached to this report is a substantial *Appendix* which describes in some detail the quality assurance body(ies) of 13 countries in East Asia and the Pacific region. For each body, the following information is provided:

- Contact Information
- Legal Establishment of Body
- Relationship to Stakeholders
- Information about the Body Itself
- Quality Assurance Activity

*Key characteristics* of the region’s quality assurance bodies found in the Appendix is presented in comparative form below in *Figure 1: National Quality Assurance Bodies in East Asia and the Pacific: General Characteristics*. For this purpose, China is counted as a single quality assurance system and only major national bodies are listed for countries where multiple bodies exist (e.g., Japan and Philippines). Figure 1 indicates that of the 15 major national quality assurance bodies in the 13 countries of the region:

- **Founding:**  
Twelve were founded by government, and three by universities (the latter being **Japan's** JUAA, **New Zealand's** QAA and the **Philippines'** PAASCU).
  
- **Independence:**  
All but **China, Mongolia** and **Vietnam** (models of “Centralized Government” bodies described earlier) claim some level of independence/autonomy from government; however, it is difficult to ascertain just what “independent” means in some national contexts. Examples include: **Japan's** NIAD, **Korea's** KCUE, **Philippine's** AACCUP, and **Thailand's** ONESQA. All of these are governmental bodies but their independence from government decision-making in higher education would need closer scrutiny than this study to determine the level of autonomy. Therefore, the category, “Quasi-Governmental” has been avoided in Figure 1. As described earlier in this section, the non-governmental bodies (the 3 founded by the universities listed above) can claim the greatest independence in decision-making.
  
- **Government Represented on National Body:**  
Governmental officials, such as from the Ministry of Education either sit on or chair the national bodies in **Australia, China, Korea, Mongolia**, the AACCUP in the **Philippines, Thailand** and, although pending policy development, most probably in **Vietnam**. As stated earlier, the level of independence maintained by the national body depends on *who* from government sits on the national body. As examples, the Minister of Education and/or those in charge of funding institutions usually do not sit on national accrediting bodies so that an apparent conflict of interest is avoided.
  
- **Funding:**
  - The 3 founded by universities are funded by the universities
  - 6 are funded by both government (for the organization) and the institutions of higher education (for the external review processes)
  - In addition to receiving funding from government and institutions, Hong Kong receives additional fees from consulting and other services.
  
- **International Participation on Body or in Process:**  
Of the 15, **Hong Kong** (one quarter of the Council members), NIAD of **Japan** (one member: head of the bilateral Fulbright organization) and **New Zealand's** Academic Audit Unit have international members serving on the national body. **Australia** and **Hong Kong** use international external reviewers in their processes. (Among the recommendations of this study is provision for a regional pool of external reviewers for the dual purposes of capacity building and building closer regional ties.)

**Figure 1**  
National Quality Assurance Bodies in East Asia and the Pacific: General Characteristics

|                   | Year Founded | Founding and Governance |                         |                  |                                | QA Type       |       |            | Funded by  |              |       | International Participation |                          |
|-------------------|--------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|-------|------------|------------|--------------|-------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
|                   |              | Founded by Government   | Non-Governmental Origin | Independent body | Government represented on body | Accreditation | Audit | Assessment | Government | Institutions | Other | On decision making body     | Among External Reviewers |
| Australia         | 2001         | X                       | X                       | X                |                                | X             |       | X          | X          |              |       |                             | X                        |
| China PRC         |              |                         |                         |                  |                                |               |       |            |            |              |       |                             |                          |
| <i>Provincial</i> | 2000         | X                       |                         | X                |                                | X             | X     | X          | X          |              |       |                             |                          |
| Hong Kong PRC     | 1990         | X                       | X                       |                  |                                | X             |       | X          | X          | X            |       | X                           | X                        |
| India             | 1994         | X                       | X                       |                  |                                | X             | X     | X          | X          |              |       |                             |                          |
| Indonesia         | 1994         | X                       | X                       |                  |                                | X             |       | X          | X          |              |       |                             |                          |
| Japan             |              |                         |                         |                  |                                |               |       |            |            |              |       |                             |                          |
| <i>JUAA</i>       | 1947         |                         | X                       | X                |                                | X             |       |            | X          |              |       |                             |                          |
| <i>NIAD</i>       | 2000         | X                       |                         | U                |                                | X             |       | X          |            |              |       | X                           |                          |
| Korea             | 1982         | X                       |                         | U                | X                              | X             |       | X          |            |              |       |                             |                          |
| Malaysia          | 1996         | X                       | X                       |                  |                                | X             |       |            | X          |              |       |                             |                          |
| Mongolia          | 2000         | X                       |                         |                  | X                              | X             |       |            | X          |              |       |                             |                          |
| New Zealand       | 1994         |                         | X                       | X                |                                |               | X     |            | X          |              |       | X                           |                          |
| Philippines       |              |                         |                         |                  |                                |               |       |            |            |              |       |                             |                          |
| <i>AACCUP</i>     | 1987         | X                       |                         | U                | X                              | X             |       | X          |            |              |       |                             |                          |
| <i>PAASCU</i>     | 1957         |                         | X                       | X                |                                | X             |       |            | X          |              |       |                             |                          |
| Thailand          | 1999         | X                       |                         | U                | X                              |               | X     |            | X          | X            |       |                             |                          |
| Vietnam           | 2002         | X                       |                         | *                | *                              | X             |       | X          |            |              |       |                             |                          |

U - Undetermined Independent Status  
\* - Pending Policy Development

## B. Current Status of Quality Assurance Networking in the Region

Although national quality assurance bodies in the region have visited each other's countries and met on occasion at international gatherings over the years, the majority of regional networking in quality assurance has taken place **since 2000**. In the last three years, UNESCO has sponsored two regional programs; the ASEAN University Network (AUN) has initiated a quality assurance activity; SEAMEO may entertain a regional policy in quality assurance and INQAAHE has formed an Asia Pacific Sub-Network. Each of these gatherings has contributed to:

- Developing a sense of higher education quality community in the region
- Assisting smaller and developing countries
- Providing forums for discussing issues common to higher education in all countries
- Identifying expertise in the region
- Providing opportunity for cross-fertilization through staff exchange or short-term professional visits

*Discussed in the final section, it is notable that the World Bank has not played any direct role in any of these initiatives although it would have the most to offer for long-term development.*

**UNESCO.** The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization with its regional offices in Bangkok has sponsored two regional conferences on quality assurance. The first was hosted by the Ministry of University Affairs of Thailand on 8-10 November 2000 and centered on the theme, "Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Standards, Mechanisms and Mutual Recognition". It was agreed that quality assurance is clearly a major issue for higher education across the region and it was predicted that "it seems certain to continue to be of key issues concern for the next decade and beyond." (Harman, 2000) A major publication of conference proceedings emanated from that conference. A second, smaller conference was convened by India's National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in August, 2002 with sponsorship by UNESCO.

Of concern at both of these conferences and to UNESCO throughout the globe is the issue of *recognition of academic degrees among countries*, particularly as greater mobility characterizes the global marketplace, including both persons and higher education itself crossing borders in virtual or physical ways. In 2001, Paris headquarters instituted a new Section in the Division of Higher Education on Access, Mobility and Quality Assurance. Among this Section's responsibilities are the regional Conventions on the Recognition of Degrees, including UNESCO's Asia Pacific Region. In UNESCO's European Convention (which includes traditional Europe, Turkey, Israel, the United States, Canada and Australia as an observer), a system of European National Information Centers (ENICS) was instituted several years ago, typically housed in the foreign education credential

evaluating divisions of Ministries of Education. It is the responsibility of these National Information Centers to provide basic public information on the authorized/accredited status of institutions of higher education in their country for purposes of transparency and be a service to students, teaching staff and others in need of checking the status of an academic qualification or the legitimacy of an institution. However, national quality assurance bodies have evolved and matured over the years with direct access and responsibility for such national higher education information. Within this context, UNESCO has indicated that they would like to explore a possible collaboration with any regional quality assurance initiatives the World Bank may initiate for purposes of exploring the feasibility of national quality assurance bodies becoming the National Information Centers in the Asia Pacific region.

**ASEAN.** The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) includes the ten countries of: **Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Cambodia.** (ASEAN countries with national quality assurance bodies are underlined.) The basis of a trade bloc (the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement), the organization sponsors a variety of activities for its member countries, including the ASEAN University Network (AUN), developed in 1995:

The general objectives of the AUN is to strengthen the existing network of cooperation among universities in ASEAN by promoting collaborative studies and research programs on the priority areas identified by ASEAN. The specific objectives are to promote cooperation and solidarity among scientists and scholars in the ASEAN Member Countries; to develop academic and professional human resources in the region; and to produce and transmit scientific and scholarly knowledge and information to achieve ASEAN goals.

A new initiative of the AUN, begun in 2000, centers on *quality assurance*:

This new AUN initiative is currently on top of the Network's priority list with the aims to promote the development of a quality assurance system as an instrument for maintaining, improving and enhancing teaching, research and overall institutional academic standards of higher education of AUN member universities while recognising and respecting the differences among member universities in their institutions and environment.

In the three workshops held since its founding, the AUN quality assurance initiative claims to have developed common quality assurance policies and criteria; discussed benchmarking procedures and best practices in teaching and learning. There are strengths and weaknesses in this network:

- A strength is that each country's strongest universities are represented on the AUN;
- A weakness is that a total of 17 universities are involved in the process

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- Facilitate research into the practice of quality management in higher education and its effectiveness;
- Provide advice and expertise to assist in the development of new quality assurance agencies;
- Facilitate links between accrediting bodies;
- Assist members to determine the standards of institutions operating both within their borders and operating transnationally;
- Permit better informed international recognition of qualifications;
- Assist in the development and use of credit transfer schemes to enhance the mobility of students between institutions (within and across national borders); and
- Enable members to be alert to dubious accrediting practices and organizations.

Since 1991, several Sub-Networks of INQAAHE have been formed representing geographical regions. On 18 January 2003, the Asia Pacific Quality Network was formed by vote of the members meeting at a regional conference in Hong Kong. Six areas of priority were identified and project committees assigned:

1. Compilation of Quality Indicators
2. Information Gathering and Dissemination on QA Agencies in the Region
3. Compilation of Information on National Qualifications Frameworks
4. Facilitation of Regional Training and Development Workshops
5. Quality Assurance of Distance Education
6. Staff Exchange and Secondment Among QA Agencies

It was at this historical regional meeting that this Study gathered information from the 13 countries of the region with national quality assurance systems both about their national systems (Appendix) as well as what activities or services they would identify as having the most importance to strengthening and maintaining quality assurance in the region (to be discussed later). Clearly, INQAAHE and its Asia Pacific Sub-Network is the premiere organization in the region whose members deal on a full-time basis with quality assurance in higher education.

### ***III. The Trade Agreements and Increasing Regional Mobility: Implications for Higher Education***

*Countries sometimes form trade blocs for non-economic reasons, such as national security, peace and assistance in developing political and social institutions.  
Shiff and Winters, 2003*

A quickly emerging dynamic which is impossible to ignore relative to quality assurance in the region of East Asia and the Pacific is the role of the trade agreements and how these will have impact on higher education in the areas of:

- National higher education policy liberalization;
- Common standards for professional education (leading to greater professional mobility);
- Cross-border provision of higher education by private providers; and
- Mutual recognition of academic credentials.

In each of these matters, the national accrediting body plays a vital role.

Most global regions are deeply involved in and heavily influenced by global, regional and bilateral trade agreements. While an agreement such as the European Union is for the purpose of economic union thereby effecting judicial, legislative and executive policy, the agreements in East Asia and the Pacific region are more typical of trade agreements: for the removal of tariffs on goods and for the liberalization of investment and policies, including those related to education services. The largest regional trade bloc is the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperative (APEC), which is scheduled to become a free trade agreement (FTA) in 2020.

But the region is not waiting until 2020 for the evolution to begin. *Just as the European Union has made it imperative for member countries to have national quality assurance systems for higher education for purposes of mutual recognition and to participate in discussions related to common standards for professional education and practice, so will other trade regions, including the Asia-Pacific region, need to follow suit or be left behind.* Attention is already being paid to regional or global standards in the professions. China has adopted the U.S. accrediting standards for architecture; Japan the global standards for engineering (through the Washington Accord); there is already an APEC engineer and architect; Hong Kong and New Zealand incorporate international evaluators into their local processes; and Singapore welcomes foreign accreditors into its higher education system. Accrediting bodies in the region are or will become a critical part of the economic viability of their respective nations and the region. Will a country be less competitive without a national accrediting system? Absolutely. The Australians found that it was necessary to their credibility as a major cross-border supplier of higher education that they not just claim that they had high quality higher education institutions but that they could through the establishment of a national third party system of quality

assurance could prove such a claim. As noted in the last section, the Australian Universities Quality Agency was founded in 2001. *Any country without a national accrediting function will not be taken seriously in the global marketplace.*

Asia boasts almost half the world's population and has comparatively low higher education enrollments nationally. As regional governments put a high premium on becoming *knowledge societies*, the need to expand the tertiary sector with private sector providers has made the region the largest higher education marketplace in the world. In a study of the global demand for transnational education, the Australian International Development Program (IDP) estimated that by the year 2020, there will be 157 million traditionally aged learners in the world, 87 million of which will be in Asia. This means a major growth in tertiary enrollment. In Thailand, for example, and assuming goals are maintained, the enrollment capacity will need to increase at an annual rate of 3% between now and 2025. In order to accomplish this goal, 20,000 students need to be added each year. (Blight and West, 2000) Are these students to be spread out across an already burgeoning system or is it necessary for the government to invite the private sector, including foreign investment, to assist by opening new programs and institutions of higher education as quickly as they can? Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore represent at least three jurisdictions in the region which have systematically welcomed private and foreign investment in higher education in order to increase access. This results in quality assurance agencies facing the new challenge of assuring the quality of foreign provided higher education. When those providers are online (providing higher education degrees by electronic means), this challenge becomes even greater.

### **A. The GATS**

The General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) calls on member countries to liberalize not only in the trade of goods (the GATT), but in the (larger) area of *services*. The demand for transnational education has made education one of the top globally traded services. The OECD reports that within the OECD membership in 1999, education services accounted for over US\$30 billion, representing roughly 3% of total trade in services in OECD countries. However, they further report that this figure is grossly low in that it reflects only students studying abroad in OECD countries and does not take into account the burgeoning number of degree programs currently being offered to students where they live. (Larsen, Martin and Morris, 2002) Moving education, not students, is a trend which is proving to have staying power.

In response to the GATS and other trade agreements, countries are seeking to liberalize policy. A clear example of this is the *Law on Promoting Private Education in the People's Republic of China*, passed by the 31<sup>st</sup> plenary session of the NPC standing committee held on 28 December 2002. With the pretense of "revitalizing China through science and education", the law enables private education at all levels to operate in China. A small number of institutions of higher education have been given permission to officially collaborate with foreign institutions in offering a degree, and approximately three dozen have been given permission to initiate electronic learning (including

partnerships with foreign providers). Although the number of foreign private institutions approved to give their own degree (rather than through a Chinese university) is still very small, the new Law and policy shifts are nevertheless evidence of liberalization taking place in Chinese higher education. It is the accrediting function of a country which is responsible for assuring that quality is maintained or enhanced with each policy change.

As of April, 2003, the GATS negotiation process, initiated with the Uruguay Round in 1995, has progressed through the three main stages of negotiation: proposals, requests and offers. The round is expected to conclude in 2005 unless extended. In the region, Japan, New Zealand and Australia have submitted negotiating proposals in education services to the WTO; Korea announced its intention to do so in April, 2003; and most other countries have made public actual or planned policy liberalization in anticipation of participation in the global trade agreement. The accrediting bodies are inextricably tied to these changes.

### **B. APEC**

One third of world trade takes place within free trade agreements, two thirds if the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is included. (Shiff and Winters, 2003) The 23 member countries of APEC include: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, United States, China, Hong Kong (China), Taiwan (China), Mexico, Papua New Guinea, Chile, Peru, Russian Federation, and Vietnam.

As stated earlier, APEC is not scheduled to become a free trade agreement until 2020. In the interim, however, there are a number of activities taking place in its name among member countries for purposes of regional harmony, including those related to higher education. APEC Education Centers have been established in designated universities in member countries. An APEC Education Foundation was established some years ago through the efforts of the Republic of Korea and the United States. Mobility schemes, such as APEC Engineer and APEC Architect will be discussed below. Until it becomes a free trade agreement, APEC activity remains unbinding. Its strength lies in the opportunity for formal deliberation on issues of common concern and in its collaborative activity.

### **C. ASEAN**

The activities of the trade bloc ASEAN, its members, and the ASEAN University Network are discussed in the earlier section.

### **D. Regional Mobility Schemes**

A number of mobility schemes have emerged in recent years in the Asia Pacific region, some related to students and their study abroad; others related to professional mobility. Some of these schemes are directly related to processes of quality assurance; others are

indirectly related. Interestingly, although the primary purpose of these schemes are for purposes of liberalizing policy related to professional mobility, as countries adopt and implement regional/global standards for professions in particular or higher education in general, both emigration and immigration should actually be reduced, assuming the local economy keeps pace with the upgrade in educational standards.

- **APEC Professions**

Australia has promoted the development of professional mobility frameworks within APEC based on the premise that it is crucial for Australian graduates to have their qualifications recognized internationally, beginning with engineering and architecture. The *APEC Engineer* lists “suitably qualified and experienced engineers who have been assessed according to agreed criteria, thus providing individuals with improved access to independent practice in all participating APEC economies. The *APEC Architect* project, which is now under way, aims to establish similar mobility arrangements for experienced architects in participating APEC economies.” (Henry, 2003)

- **JABEE**

Through an increased awareness of international benchmarking and assurances that local qualifications are globally mobile, Japan has recently created its first professional accreditation body for engineering, JABEE. As with engineering program accreditors globally, JABEE’s goal is to be recognized as a member of the *Washington Accord*, a multi-lateral agreement begun in 1989 among professional engineering degree programs. The Accord recognizes the substantial equivalence of programs accredited by member bodies and recommends that graduates of these programs be recognized internationally as having met the academic requirements for entry into the profession.

- **UMAP and UCTS**

Founded in 1993, UMAP is the University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific, a voluntary association of governmental and non-governmental representatives in the region with the purpose of achieving enhanced international understanding through increased mobility of university students and staff. UMAP members and their universities are working toward standard arrangements for the recognition of study undertaken by UMAP students and have agreed to pilot a UMAP Credit Transfer Scheme (UCTS) in which university participation is voluntary. The objective of the UCTS is to increase student mobility by ensuring that credit is received by students for study undertaken when on exchange with other universities. The UMAP International Secretariat is in Japan.

## **E. Bilaterals**

Even with the promises of regional and global trade agreements, bilateral agreements have become popular in recent months. The United States and Singapore are concluding negotiations; there are ongoing bilateral discussions between the U.S. and Japan; the U.S.- Australia FTA has begun and other U.S. bilaterals are being planned with countries in the Asia-Pacific. Central to these free trade agreements are issues of investment and mobility, including the qualifications of professionals and the assurance of quality of general academic degrees.

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The trade agreements are both driving and responding to the global marketplace, the rise of regionalism and the determination of countries to assure that they are not left behind. A decade ago, few in higher education in the most dynamic region of the world would have mentioned any trade agreement – global, regional or bilateral – as having any impact on higher education, including its quality and the mobility of its graduates. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, countries that ignore internalizing these powerful external dynamics do so at their own risk. National accrediting bodies are no longer limited to knowledge of their own system. Regionalism as a powerful means to globalization is a current reality, which will only grow in strength. It is foreseeable that quality assurance will become regionalized. Were this author to guess the progression of regionalization in quality assurance, it will begin with bilateral mutual recognition agreements for academic credentials, followed by regional accrediting functions for those professions with the most mobility (e.g., engineering), evolving over time into a region-wide process for assuring quality in higher education regardless of physical location. The basis for this has already begun as several Southeast Asian countries are already discussing the feasibility of a sub-regional system of standards development for higher education through SEAMEO.

## ***IV. Toward Strengthening World Bank Support for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in East Asia and the Pacific***

### **A. The World Bank and Quality Assurance**

**Past.** The importance of quality assurance in higher education was first formally acknowledged by the World Bank in its 1994 *Lessons of Experience*, in which “introducing policies explicitly designed to give priority to quality and equity objectives” became one of the four key directions recommended by the report for reform. This was followed by an abbreviated report in 1998: *Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Recent Progress; Challenges Ahead*. In the intervening years, the Bank led several successful projects resulting in national quality assurance systems: Romania, Chile, Argentina and Indonesia. (It should be noted for perhaps a separate study how these and more recent Bank sponsored projects in quality assurance have been influential in promoting quality assurance in additional countries in the Central/Eastern European and South American regions.)

Quality assurance is a key project component or quality is a matter of future concern in Bank project reports on countries in East Asia and the Pacific region: China and Indonesia in 1996 and Thailand and Vietnam in 1998. Of these, China and Indonesia employed centralized quality assurance processes at the time of these reports. Thailand was to initiate a national process in 1999 and Vietnam in 2002 (with final regulations still pending in 2003). Additional countries in which the Bank supports efforts through loans, credits or grants and where quality assurance systems have emerged include: Malaysia (1996) and Mongolia (2000). In Cambodia, legislation is pending to develop a national system of quality assurance.

It deserves mention that in the East Asia and the Pacific region, there also have been a number of Bank projects which call for direct intervention for “*quality improvement*” in higher education although it is unclear whether any direct connection was made during the projects between the “quality improvement” needed and the existing national formal mechanism for assuring quality. With the exception of Thailand, each of the following countries had a national quality assurance system in place at the time of each of these Bank projects:

*Malaysia Education Sector Support* (1999) [science, mathematics and information technology]

*Indonesia Quality of Undergraduate Education* (1997)

*Thailand University Science and Engineering Education* (1997)

*China Higher Education Reform* (1999) [basic science and engineering]

*Indonesia: University Research for Graduate Education* (1994)

*Korea: Science and Technical Education* (1994)

*China Effective Teaching Services* (1993)

*Korea: Environmental Research and Education* (1993) [agriculture & veterinary]

**It is recommended that in future projects when the quality of a course, program, sector or institution is of interest, that an appropriate role for the national quality assurance body in assuring that quality be seriously considered.**

**Future.** The first signs of direct World Bank involvement in the creation and/or enhancement of national accrediting bodies since Eastern/Central Europe (Romania and Hungary) and South America (Chile and Argentina) in the early to mid-1990's were in Cambodia and Vietnam in 2002. Romania and Hungary are now viable candidates for the European Union in part because of higher education systems under formal accreditation control (a prerequisite for EU membership) and Chile and Argentina are leaders in the MERCUSOR negotiations for common standards for professional education in agriculture, medicine and engineering. To what extent are their Asian counterparts ready for these inevitable regional challenges? To what extent is the World Bank insisting that accreditation in higher education is a necessary component for economic viability? Whether caused by a prolonged Bank focus on basic education, the lack of local governmental priority, or some additional cause(s), this is an attention gap too long but not too late. Although other intergovernmental and international organizations have recognized the need for strong national accrediting bodies and strong activity at a regional level in East Asia and the Pacific, these organizations as described earlier have many priorities of which higher education quality is but one. The focused attention of the World Bank on national and regional quality assurance in the coming years will serve to develop higher education systems more quickly and effectively than any other single intervention because:

- Accreditation is a proven means to improving higher education nationally as well as regionally;
- Quality higher education and viable economies are interdependent;
- Informed quality assurance bodies can upgrade professional education and therefore professional practice both nationally and regionally;
- Student and scholarly mobility can be enhanced through focused attention on improving quality;
- The potential of mutual recognition of degrees in the region is already palpable; and
- Some countries are already talking about having a single region-wide process of accreditation for higher education in the short-term (otherwise presumed to be a long-term outcome of regionalism).

There are three categories of needs in quality assurance in East Asia and the Pacific region to which the World Bank can be responsive: (1) those specific to individual countries of interest to the Bank; (2) those common to these and additional countries at a

sub-regional level; and (3) those which are common across the region. *National, sub-regional and regional assistance on the part of the Bank can serve to substantially strengthen the capacity to assure quality higher education throughout the region.*

## **B. National Capacity Building**

[**Note:** The *Appendix* is a compilation of country descriptions for all countries in the region with quality assurance bodies for higher education for staff information. For the 8 countries listed below in which the Bank has sponsored activity, a section on “Needs” was added which delineates areas in which external assistance from the Bank and other sources would serve to strengthen national capacity. The information in the Appendix was derived through a variety of sources: interviewing the senior staff at the regional meeting of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education in January, 2003; reviewing materials on each accreditation body; and, in 5 cases, from direct experience during in-country technical assistance activities in Indonesia, Malaysia, China, Vietnam and Cambodia.]

Given the critical functions of accrediting bodies to national educational and economic conditions, the World Bank is encouraged to generally support national capacity building in accreditation by:

- 1. Refocusing on the quality assurance activity of higher education activities in the 1990’s (including loans, credits and grants), including China, Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines.**

Of these countries, **China** is a special and complex case, summarized in the Appendix. In the area of quality assurance, and given the dynamic nature of reform in the country since the Bank’s 1996 study (including a 2002 Law on Promoting Private Education), a national study on the status of quality assurance in higher education at the State and Provincial/Municipal levels in China could be helpful both for international understanding and national review of practice for purposes of enhancement. Again, see the Appendix for a list of practical needs in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

- 2. Emphasizing the importance of a strong national infrastructure for quality for newer Bank higher education efforts in Cambodia, Mongolia, Thailand and Vietnam.**

*It is these countries which require the Bank’s priority attention in the short-term* because they are the newest in building national accrediting infrastructures and are therefore in need of a more concentrated national capacity building activity in the coming months and years. To these four, it is recommended that **China** be added to ensure that China’s quality assurance infrastructure keeps pace with new dynamics in the country’s higher education system, including but not limited to the provision for private higher education; the globalization of the

professions; and the decentralization of a traditionally centrist system of quality assurance.

Capacity building activity at the national level can include programming for larger numbers without the additional cost of travel. The volume involved in training *institutions of higher education* in the process of self-evaluation and *external reviewers* in the process of third party evaluation is most practically done at the national level.

The range of programs and services at a national level should include:

- National policy development
- Infrastructure development of national quality assurance agency
- Training programs:
  - National agency staff in all areas related to quality assurance
  - National accrediting body appointees in the process of standards development, oversight of the process and quality assurance decision-making
  - Institutions in the process of self-evaluation
  - The selection and training of external reviewers
  - Professional bodies in the process of professional accreditation
- Quality enhancement of quality assurance
- Dealing with relevant issues: online learning, transnational education, private higher education, etc.

### **3. Identifying new countries in the region which need attention.**

It is recommended that the Bank identify other countries in the region which do not have a quality assurance infrastructure (such as Brunei Darussalam, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and, in a different category, Singapore) to participate at a sub-regional capacity building level as described in Section D below.

[**Note:** Figure 2 at the end of this section provides a summary chart of National, Sub-Regional and Regional Capacity Building: Target Groups, Participating Countries and Program/Service Areas.]

### **C. East Asia and the Pacific Quality Assurance Region**

*“Ways of overcoming isolation include organizing conferences, providing travel grants...computer-mediated communication...international volunteer corps...research centers...”*

#### *Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise*

East Asia and the Pacific region is composed of countries with differential experience and capacity in quality assurance. However, there is unanimity among these quality

assurance agencies that there is interdependence and a definite need for regional cooperation for all the dynamics discussed in previous sections. As stated before, the heads of the 13 country national quality assurance bodies gathered in January, 2003 in Hong Kong for the purpose of establishing an Asia-Pacific Quality Network, a sub-network of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education. For this Study, the heads and senior staff of these agencies (plus other relevant governmental representatives present) were interviewed by country to determine national capacity building needs and also convened in a group to discuss at length sub-regional and regional needs. (See the Appendix for country descriptions of national quality assurance systems.)

#### **D. Sub-Regional Capacity Building**

In order to build capacity in East Asia and the Pacific region, it is recommended that the region be divided into more manageable sizes but with strategic purpose. There are many ways in which a region as large as Asia can be divided. For the expressed purposes of strengthening quality assurance in the region, **ASEAN trade bloc member countries** could represent the core target group for a logical sub-regional listing plus the 5 systems requiring the most attention at a national level. This includes about half of the countries in the region with national quality assurance systems. Consideration should also be paid to including, when appropriate, countries without a quality assurance infrastructure which are ASEAN members.

The Sub-Regional Country List recommended therefore includes the 12 countries:

- Brunei Darussalam
- Cambodia
- Indonesia
- Lao People's Democratic Republic
- Malaysia
- Mongolia
- Myanmar
- People's Republic of China\*
- Philippines
- Singapore
- Thailand
- Vietnam

[\***Note:** Some consideration should be given to dealing with China as a sub-regional phenomenon in and of itself.]

*A carefully coordinated sub-regional and national capacity building program for these countries (or any further sub-grouping of these countries) can serve for a more efficient use of resources. In this sub-regional network are countries with considerable quality assurance experience that can both help advise neighboring countries in the process as well as benefit from participation in capacity building opportunities themselves. At the*

sub-regional level, the scope of delivery is smaller than at the national level, but the target groups can center clearly on the cross-fertilization of those in national leadership positions, including:

- Quality assurance staff,
- Ministries of Education (i.e., “users of quality assurance”), and
- Appointed members of the national quality assurance body.

At this sub-regional level, a capacity building program concentrating on the following areas of national leadership would be most beneficial:

- Training in:
  - Responsibilities of national quality assurance staff in oversight and daily operations
  - National accrediting body appointees in the process of standards development, oversight of the process and quality assurance decision-making
- Quality enhancement of national quality assurance systems (practicing what they preach)
- Regional quality assurance issues from a sub-regional perspective: online learning, transnational education, private higher education, professional standards, etc.

[**Note:** Figure 2 at the end of this section provides a summary chart of National, Sub-Regional and Regional Capacity Building: Target Groups, Participating Countries and Program/Service Areas.]

## **E. Regional Capacity Building**

There are a number of initiatives that, if implemented, will serve to strengthen capacity in the world’s most populated and economically dynamic region in *major* ways. For the short-term, these will support the development of the national systems in that they will provide experienced and well-trained personnel to carry out the sovereign accrediting functions. However, no national system can afford to not look beyond its borders for very long. Therefore, for the short to medium-term, regionalized activities and services will become the core of a region-wide quality assurance forum for the discussion of common issues, ranging from professional standards to regional standards for institutions of higher education. For the longer-term, these activities and services will form the foundation for a regionalized quality assurance system - perhaps with both centralized (region-wide) and decentralized (national) functions in keeping with the trends found in other regions of the world with strong interests in trade and economic growth.

This emphasis on the regional capacity building is contrary to how most funding organizations work. Intergovernmental bodies like the World Bank operate on a country-

by-country system, and private foundations have the tendency to do the same. Credits, loans and grants are typically made to governments and governments are until lately national in nature. However, the European Union and South America's MERCOSUR do not fit this mold nor do ASEAN, SEAMEO and other regional governmental bodies, each with the potential to influence quality development in large and powerful regions. Years ago, UNESCO instituted the NGO (non-governmental organization) status because the private sector was a source of major technical or philosophical assistance in development. Funding institutions limited by rules made for a different world will serve to slow an inevitable process.

From the interviews and group meeting held in Hong Kong, a *master list of program and service needs* evolved which, if implemented, could benefit capacity building in all participating countries in the region. A summarized list includes the provision for a:

- ***Regional Pool of External Reviewers***
- ***Regional Quality Assurance Service***
- ***Regional Information Clearinghouse***
- ***Regional Staff Exchanges***
- ***Collaborative Training and Development Programs***
- ***Liaison Functions with Regional Organizations***

### ***1. Regional Pool of External Reviewers***

External reviewers are vital to the quality assurance process in that they are the “ambassadors” of the national system and it is they who are responsible for the self-evaluation review and on-site evaluation of the institution/program's compliance with national standards of quality. However, most national quality assurance systems in the region will identify external reviewers as the *weakest link* in their processes. Reasons given for this typically include inadequate selection processes; training s0( the )1854.75

enables a certain number of such regional external reviewers to be used by designated countries on an annual basis.

In this pool should be representatives of every participating country in the region. Countries with mature accrediting systems would be encouraged to include on their teams a less experienced regional representative. All countries which can pay for this service should.

## **2. *Regional Quality Assurance Service***

As regional identity becomes stronger and as international standards of quality become increasingly important to system of higher education, quality assurance systems do not have to remain only national in nature. There are a number of circumstances currently in which a regional quality assurance service, composed of experts derived from the region and globally, can provide a critical service:

- a. To countries *without a national quality assurance process*, either for the whole of higher education or for one of its sectors (like private institutions);
- b. To countries with a need to do “sectoral quality reviews”. For example, Estonia uses international teams from throughout the world to evaluate at once all programs provided by universities in the country in such fields as medicine, law, business, etc.;
- c. To countries which would prefer an international review of foreign institutions which have entered their country;
- d. To institutions who wish to undergo an international process of quality review, whether or not there is a national process in place; and
- e. To countries who desire international consultation on the process of quality assurance.

Indonesia as an example already envisions an evolution away from national quality assurance toward regional accreditation, beginning with the development of common standards for higher education and mutual recognition agreements.

Such a regional service can be coordinated centrally and care should be taken to work cooperatively with national quality assurance bodies. Base funding would be beneficial so that services are not restricted to only those capable of paying, such as private institutions of higher education or perhaps central Ministries.

## **3. *Regional Information Clearinghouse:***

Not enough is known to the region (and thus to the global quality assurance community) about national quality assurance systems in the region. Contributing to better information in this regard would be:

- Translation services to translate national quality assurance policy into English for region-wide use.
- A regional study (beginning with this one) on the nature and context of quality assurance in the region.
- A regional clearinghouse of information on:
  - Accredited institutions and programs of higher education for regional mobility purposes;
  - Transnational higher education: its origins, accredited status and patterns in the region;
  - Sources of research on quality assurance; and
  - Credit transfer schemes (probably coordinated with emerging APEC program on same).

#### ***4. Regional Staff Exchanges:***

Experience in another national setting can benefit both the inexperienced or experienced quality assurance professional. A coordinated function regionally can encourage both short-term staff exchanges and longer-term staff secondments. Countries that can afford to pay for visiting colleagues should and some central funds should be available to countries which cannot but would benefit greatly by the presence of an experienced colleague.

#### ***5. Collaborative Training and Development Programs:***

In coordination with the national and sub-regional training programs mentioned earlier are region-wide training and development programs on issues of common concern. Some of the current issues identified include:

- Quality assurance of distance education (online learning)
- Quality assurance of transnational education
- Implications of the trade agreements on quality assurance
- Regional mobility and credit transfer schemes
- The role of quality assurance in mutual (academic) recognition
- Institutional management as a chronic quality problem
- Quality assurance for research

Resources would determine how often regional gatherings could take place. When face to face gatherings are economically difficult, the use of World Bank teleconferencing facilities in the region could facilitate gathering. Consideration will need to be given to interpreting services although English appears to be a first or second language for most all senior quality assurance staff in the region at present.

#### ***6. Liaison Functions with Regional Organizations:***

A coordinating function for regional quality assurance programs and issues can serve as liaison and technical adviser to such regional organizations and SEAMEO, AUN

and UNESCO in the specific area of quality assurance. That each of these organizations is dealing with issues related to quality assurance in higher education but none can afford to make this critical topic their only priority makes a coordinated function all the more important.

\* \* \* \* \*

[**Note:** Figure 2 provides a summary chart of National, Sub-Regional and Regional Capacity Building: Target Groups, Participating Countries and Program/Service Areas.]



**Figure 2**  
**National, Sub-Regional and Regional Capacity Building:**  
**Target Group(s), Participating Countries and Program/Service Areas**

| <b>Program Level</b> | <b>Coordinator</b>                                      | <b>Country Priority Lists</b>  | <b>Target Groups for Training &amp; Development</b>   | <b>Program, Content &amp; Service Areas</b>   |
|----------------------|---|--|---|---|
| <b>National:</b>     | World Bank  | <u>Recent QA Bodies:</u><br>- Cambodia*<br>- Mongolia<br>- China (decentralization)<br>- Thailand<br>- Vietnam   | - QA Body Staff<br>- QA Body Appointees (Accreditation Council)<br>- Institutions<br>- External Reviewers<br>- Professional Bodies<br>- Ministries<br>- Other National Stakeholders | - National Policy Development<br>- Infrastructure Development<br>- In-depth Training Programs for each Target Group   |
| <b>Sub-Regional:</b> | World Bank<br><br>ASEAN<br><br>INQAAHE Regional Network | <u>ASEAN members plus above:</u><br>- Brunei Darussalam<br>- Cambodia*<br>- Indonesia<br>- Lao People's Democratic Republic<br>- Malaysia<br>- Mongolia<br>- Myanmar<br>- China**<br>- Philippines<br>- Singapore<br>- Thailand<br>- Vietnam | <u>National Leadership:</u><br>- QA Body Staff<br>- QA Body Appointees<br>- Ministry Staff  | - Training for each Target Group<br>- Forum for Discussion of Common Issues:<br>Exs: mutual recognition<br>professional standards<br>distance education<br>transnational education<br>private higher education  |
| <b>Regional:</b>     | INQAAHE Regional Network<br><br>and<br><br>World Bank   | <u>Established QA bodies:</u><br>- Australia<br>- Hong Kong<br>- India<br>- Indonesia<br>- Japan<br>- Korea<br>- Malaysia<br>- Mongolia<br>- New Zealand<br>- China<br>- Philippines<br>- Thailand<br>- Vietnam                              | <u>National Leadership:</u><br>- QA Body Staff<br>- QA Body Appointees<br>- Ministry Staff  | <u>INQAAHE Regional Forum:</u><br>- Regional Pool of External Reviewers<br>- Regional Quality Assurance Service<br>- Regional Information Clearinghouse<br>- Regional Staff Exchanges<br>- Collaborative Training & Development Programs<br>- Liaison Functions with Regional Organizations |

QA - Quality Assurance

ASEAN - Association of Southeast Asian Nations

INQAAHE - International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

\* Pending legislation approval

\*\* Advised that China could be considered a sub-region in and of itself

## F. Focal Points for Coordination

It is a priority of the World Bank to strengthen quality assurance in East Asia and the Pacific and the time is right for a major initiative in the region's higher education sector. The region's stakeholders, including universities, students, employers and governments have declared quality higher education as a top priority for mobility and economic development. Intergovernmental organizations and international associations related to education have quality assurance among their highest priorities; and national quality assurance professionals have declared what is necessary to strengthen their capacity toward the overall improvement of higher education in the region.

Strengthening the capacity for *national* quality assurance in-country will continue to involve the Bank and various other lenders working in coordination with national Ministries. But at a *sub-regional and regional level*, the capacity building activities require coordination with the national initiatives to be efficient and effective. Where should such a focal point for coordination be located?

- In a single country?
- In multiple countries in and out of the region by type of activity?
- In The World Bank?
- In a regional body such as ASEAN, SEAMEO or APEC?
- In the regional office of an intergovernmental body such as UNESCO?
- In the regional office of an international association such as INQAAHE?
- Some combination of the above?

Given potentially varying circumstances at the time of funding and implementation, (including the level of funding for which activities) the focal point or points for coordination should have the following characteristics:

- An in-depth understanding of the East Asia and the Pacific region
- An in-depth understanding of and practical experience in quality assurance
- An in-depth understanding of the needs of developing countries
- Familiarity with relevant regional organizations and associations
- Credibility among the region's quality assurance bodies
- Ability to coordinate activities among multiple and complex organizations
- Extensive international experience in quality assurance

As it appears in Figure 2, it is recommended that the new Asia-Pacific Quality Network, a sub-network of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) be a focal point for sub-regional and regional programming. The Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) has volunteered its services to act as a regional Secretariat for the Sub-network. Assuming reasonable *continuity* of secretariat services and with the coordinating and training capability of such organizations as the Center for Quality Assurance in International Education (CQAIE – National Center for Higher Education in Washington, D.C.) which authored this study, the Centre for Higher

Education Policy Studies (CHEPS – University of Twente, Netherlands), the Centre for Higher Education Research and Information (CHERI - formerly the Quality Support Centre – The Open University, London] in combination with experienced quality assurance personnel within the region, the ingredients are available for a major and influential regional initiative which strengthens capacity in quality assurance.

Expectations are high among quality assurance bodies in the region of East Asia and the Pacific that there will be a quality assurance initiative in the near future which will serve to strengthen capacity.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Note:**

***Other Geographical Regions:*** As mentioned early in this Study, World Bank projects leading to national quality assurance infrastructures have taken place in other regions of the world, and most notably Eastern/Central Europe and Latin America. The growth of quality assurance in both of these regions parallels that in East Asia and the Pacific and the dynamics of regionalism, including trade blocs and increased mobility issues, have become a daily staple in higher education activity. Particularly in Latin America, including both Central and South America, quality assurance has grown substantially in the last decade, launched with World Bank involvement. A mapping of the region's quality bodies and identification of its major issues and capacity building needs could serve both the Bank and this region as is its promise to East Asia and the Pacific.

**APPENDIX:**  
***National Quality Assurance Bodies in East Asia and the Pacific***

**Note:** The descriptions of the following national quality assurance bodies in East Asia and the Pacific region are derived largely from information supplied by the body itself and interviews with senior staff.

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <i>Australia: Australian Universities Quality Agency</i> .....   | 45 |
| <i>Hong Kong: Hong Kong Council on Academic Accreditation</i> .....  | 48 |
| <i>India: National Assessment and Accreditation Council</i> .....  | 51 |
| <i>Indonesia: The National Accreditation Board for Higher Education</i> .....  | 54 |
| <i>Japan:</i> .....  | 57 |
| National Institution for Academic Degrees (Governmental).....  | 57 |
| Japan University Accreditation Association (Non-governmental) .....  | 59 |
| <i>Korea: The Korean Council for University Education</i> .....  | 62 |
| <i>Malaysia: National Accreditation Board, Lembaga Akreditasi Negara (LAN)</i> .....                                   | 64 |
| <i>Mongolia: National Council on Higher Education Accreditation</i> .....  | 67 |
| <i>New Zealand: Academic Audit Unit</i> .....  | 71 |
| <i>People Republic of China: Centralized and Decentralized Quality Assurance Bodies</i> .....                          | 74 |
| Shanghai Educational Evaluation Institute .....  | 75 |
| Guangdong Center of Evaluation and Development Research for Education.....   | 77 |
| <i>Philippines:</i> .....  | 79 |
| Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines ....                                      | 80 |
| Philippines Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities.....   | 81 |
| <i>Thailand: Office of National Educational Standards and Quality Assessment, Ministry of University Affairs</i> ..... | 82 |
| <i>Vietnam</i> .....   | 85 |

## *Australia*

### *Australian Universities Quality Agency*

**Contact Person:** David Woodhouse, Executive Director

**Address:** Level 10, 123 Lonsdale Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000  
Australia

**Telephone:** +61 3 9639 1100

**Fax:** +61 3 9639 7377

**Email:** [d.woodhouse@auqa.edu.au](mailto:d.woodhouse@auqa.edu.au)

**Web address:** <http://www.auqa.edu.au>

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**Legal Establishment of Agency:** Founded in **2001** at the initiative of the government, the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) is an independent, not-for-profit national agency that promotes, audits and reports on quality assurance in Australian higher education. AUQA was formally established by the Ministerial Council on Education, Training and Youth Affairs (MCEETYA) in March 2000. AUQA's funding is derived from the Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers for higher education who are members of MCEETYA. The costs of the audits are derived from the institutions subject to audit.

**Relationship to Stakeholders:** Fully operational in **2002**, the Agency is expected to conduct approximately 10 audits per year. There are 51 entities to audit and this will be managed over a five-year period. The entities include all institutions of higher education with self-accrediting status (which includes all private and public universities and several specialist institutions empowered to accredit their own courses) and the state/territory accrediting agencies that accredit higher education programs offered by other educational providers. AUQA operates independently of governments local and national.

**The Agency:** The Agency is a not-for-profit company with an independent Board of Directors. There are two methods of appointment for Directors. Some are ministerial appointments and others are elected by stakeholders. The inaugural Board comprises:

- 3 directors appointed by the Commonwealth Government
- 3 directors appointed by the State and Territory Governments
- 4 directors elected by the Chief Executive Officers of Australian self-accrediting higher education institutions
- 1 director elected by the Chief Executive Officers of Australian non-self-accrediting institutions; and
- The chief executive officer of AUQA.

The company members are the Commonwealth, State and Territory Ministers with responsibility for higher education. The staff numbers 6: 4 professionals and 2 administrative support.

AUQA is responsible for:

- Conducting quality audits of self-accrediting higher education institutions and State and Territory Government higher education accreditation authorities on a five year cycle;
- Providing public reports on the outcomes of these audits;
- Commenting on the criteria for the recognition of new universities and accreditation of non-university higher education awards, as a result of information obtained during the audits of institutions and State and Territory accreditation processes; and
- Reporting on the relative standards and international standing of the Australian higher education system and its quality assurance processes, as a result of information obtained during the audit process.

Action taken by the AUQA in response to audit reports is the responsibility of the governing body of the institution concerned or in the case of State and Territory accreditation authorities, of the relevant Department and Minister. Failure to respond appropriately to reports could lead to funding sanctions by the Commonwealth or regulatory action by the relevant State or Territory Government.

AUQA is a full member of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education.

**Institutional Audit:** Academic audits of self-accrediting institutions are of the whole institution based on a self-assessment and a site visit. AUQA investigates the extent to which the institutions are achieving their missions and objectives. It assesses the adequacy of the institution's quality assurance arrangement in the key areas of:

- Teaching and learning
- Research and management
- Institution's overseas activities

AUQA further assesses the institution's success in maintaining standards consistent with university education in Australia. AUQA makes use of panels of experts with substantial senior academic and administrative experience in higher education in Australia and abroad to undertake the audits.

A register of auditors is maintained by AUQA and the Board approves each auditor listed. Attention is paid to conflicts of interest in the assignment of auditors. The evaluation teams themselves consist of two Australian-based academics, one industry representative, one internationally-based representative (usually an academic) and a member of the agency. Training is provided all Australian based auditors and international auditors receive written documentation. The audit team is responsible for a report which, upon being forwarded to the institution of higher education, is made public both in hard copy and on the Internet.

Audits of the State and Territory higher education accreditation authorities pay particular attention to the their recognition and accreditation processes; the consistency of these processes with the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes; and the consistency of their judgments with those made in other States and Territories.

**Setting National Standards:** In addition to the audit functions above and relevant to the operations of both agencies and institutions, the AUQA is responsible for the National Protocols for Higher Education Approval Processes which, among other things, set national standards and criteria for the establishment of new universities and the accreditation of higher education courses offered by non self-accrediting institutions.

## *Hong Kong*

### *Hong Kong Council on Academic Accreditation*

**Contact Person:** Wong Wai Sum, Executive Director

**Address:** 14/F, Ruttonjee House 11  
Duddell Street Central  
Hong Kong  
China

**Telephone:** +852 2801 7480

**Fax:** +852 2845 9910

**Email:** [contact@hkcaa.edu.hk](mailto:contact@hkcaa.edu.hk)

**Web Address:** <http://www.hkcaa.edu.hk>

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**Legal Establishment of Council:** The Hong Kong Council on Academic Accreditation (HKCAA) was founded in 1990 by governmental statute to give advice on the academic standards of degree programs in higher education institutions in Hong Kong and on educational standards and qualifications in general. In 2003, it is expected that there will be additional policy development that will serve to evolve the primary functions of the HKCAA toward occupational/vocational education and the ultimate creation of a Hong Kong qualifications authority. Preparations for this shift are underway at the time of this study.

**Relationship to Stakeholders:** In the early 1990s, Hong Kong followed the former practice of the United Kingdom in providing quality assurance external review only to the non-university sector. In the case of Hong Kong, this included a number of polytechnics and colleges. Upon the successful review of each individual program at these institutions, the title of the institution was changed to “university”, which brought with it self-accrediting status. Self-accrediting status, in turn, exempted the institution from any additional external review. Therefore, the only (but nevertheless significant) external review function in place in Hong Kong at present for its University sector is the **University Grants Committee (UGC)**. The UGC as the primary governmental provider of university funding has not instituted an accreditation function, but has administered major management audit reviews of the universities that have served, in part, to be a quality assurance mechanism.

**The Council:** The HKCAA is composed of 22 members appointed by the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. They are appointed in 3 categories:

1. Hong Kong Academics
2. Non-Local Academics
3. Local Non-Academics from the commercial, industrial and professional circles of Hong Kong.
4. The Executive Director is an *ex officio* member

Over a quarter of the HKCAA membership is international, a tradition kept since its founding to provide international witnessing for Hong Kong's tertiary education sector.

The Council describes its role as including:

- (a) To provide independent authoritative advice on academic standards in an institution of higher education by carrying out academic accreditation, that is:
  - (i) validating or revalidating any degree program conducted by the institution; and/or
  - (ii) reviewing the general academic standards of the institution
- (b) To advise on the academic standards of degree programs and qualifications from within and outside Hong Kong.
- (c) To advise the Registrar of Non-local Higher and Professional Education Courses on the registration of non-local courses.
- (d) To promote good practices of academic accreditation and quality assurance, and to assist in maintaining and monitoring academic standards.
- (e) To issue publications, conduct seminars, conferences and other forms of developmental activity relating to education and quality assurance
- (f) To establish and maintain relationships with educational bodies and accrediting agencies in other places and to keep under review the education systems and systems of academic accreditation of places outside the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.
- (g) To advise the Government on matters pertaining to academic accreditation and academic standards; and
- (h) To carry out such other functions connected with academic accreditation and evaluation as may be permitted or assigned to the Council by the Government and the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The HKCAA receives funding from government and through fees for services from institutions, professional bodies or individuals seeking assessment of their qualifications.

**Quality Assurance Activity and Services:** Quality assurance activity on the part of the HKCAA has the following component parts. When it was founded in 1990, only the first, or "Academic Evaluation" was its primary responsibility:

### ***Academic Evaluation***

In the form of Program Validations and Institutional Reviews, this service involves the evaluation of study programs or examinations conducted by tertiary institutions or professional bodies to ascertain whether or not these meet specified criteria or objectives which are set by the institution or the professional body, or as set by statutory requirements.

### ***Qualification Assessment***

This service involves the assessment of qualifications of individuals with qualifications in Hong Kong as benchmarks. The Civil Service Bureau (CSB), the Education and Manpower Bureau, the Education Department, the Social Welfare Department and other parts of the Hong Kong Government formally use the HKCAA to provide authoritative advice on the standards of qualifications. In particular, the CSB and the HKCAA work together through a Qualifications Assessment Liaison Group to consider activities and issues regarding qualifications and academic awards for Government appointment purposes.

In addition, HKCAA offers a qualification assessment service to institutions, employers and individuals regarding the standards of qualifications and institutions. Individuals holding non-local qualifications have their qualifications assessed by the HKCAA.

### ***Registration of Non-Local Courses***

The Non-local Higher and Professional Education (Regulation) Ordinance passed in July 1996 requires all non-local academic and professional courses leading to postsecondary and professional qualifications to be registered (unless offered in collaboration with one of the local institutions of higher education specified in the Ordinance, in which case exemption may be granted). The Registrar of Non-local Higher and Professional Education Courses is the Director of Education. The Ordinance names HKCAA as the advisor to the Registrar. In this role, the HKCAA advises whether a course should be registered or exempted from registration according to criteria stipulated in the Ordinance. Generally, the courses leading to an academic or professional qualification need to be authorized or accredited in their country of origin.

### ***Other Services***

The HKCAA further provides services centered on: (1) Consultancy on Quality Assurance to institutions of higher education and accreditation systems of professional bodies; and (2) Accreditation of the Continuing Professional Development Program for Insurance Intermediaries.

***Notes:*** Given the evolving nature of the Hong Kong Council on Academic Accreditation towards becoming a qualifications authority, this Study recommends the inclusion also of the Hong Kong University Grants Committee in regional quality assurance activity, the latter representing the tertiary sector, including universities and colleges. Both the HKCAA and the UGC are members of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education.

## *India*

### *National Assessment and Accreditation Council*

**Contact Person(s):** Dr. Antony Stella

**Address:** P.O. Box 1075  
Dr. Rajkumar Road  
Rajajinagar, Bangalore – 560 010  
India

**Telephone:** +91 080 3384045; 3120046/8/9; 3120974

**Fax:** +91 080 3124047

**Email:** [stellaa10@rediffmail.com](mailto:stellaa10@rediffmail.com)

**Web address:** <http://www.naac-india.com>

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**Legal Establishment of Agency:** The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was founded on the initiative of government in 1994. Preceding this, the University Grants Committee (UGC), founded in 1956 by an Act of Parliament, was authorized to establish any organization it deemed necessary. NAAC therefore was established as an autonomous body from government.

**Relationship to Stakeholders:** NAAC was established with the primary objective of assessing and accrediting institutions of higher education, including universities and colleges or one or more of their units in India. NAAC is the primary but not the only accrediting body in India. Little is known internationally about other accreditors which are typically regional or specialized.

NAAC has two types of accreditation for institutions and their components:

University: University central governance structure along with all undergraduate and postgraduate departments.

College: Any college affiliated/constituent or autonomous with all its departments of studies.

Department: Any single subject based in a department of the university (e.g., Department of Physics, Economics, etc.)

**The Council:** NAAC is an independent body (a “Registered Society”) governed by a General Council (GC) and an Executive Committee (EC). The General Council and Executive Committee have representatives as members from the University Grants Committee and the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The GC and EC together oversee the operation of NAAC and guide its policies and functions.

NAAC has 7 full time academic staff and 17 full time non-academic staff. NAAC is a founding member of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and NAAC staff are very active internationally. NAAC itself has hosted a biennial conference of INQAAHE and in 2002 hosted a regional conference sponsored by UNESCO on quality assurance in the region.

**Accreditation Activity:** The primary agenda of NAAC is to assess and accredit institutions of higher learning with the objective of continuous improvement in the quality of education:

Assessment: is a performance evaluation of an institution and/or its units. It is accomplished through a process based on self-study and peer review using defined criteria.

Accreditation: refers to the certification given by NAAC which is valid for a period of five years.

Any assessment and its subsequent accreditation is made with reference to certain standards in order that institutions can be compared. NAAC has identified the following seven areas of criteria to serve as the basis of its assessment procedure:

- Curricular aspects
- Teaching, including learning and evaluation
- Research, consultancy and extension
- Infrastructure and learning resources
- Student support and progression
- Organization and management
- Healthy practices

The process employed for assessment and accreditation is in three stages and mirrors best global practice:

Stage 1: Preparation of a *self-study* report by the institution, its submission to NAAC and an in-house analysis of the report.

Stage 2: *Peer team visit* to the institution for validation of the self-study report, followed by presentation of a comprehensive assessment report to the institution.

*Stage 3: Grading, certification and accreditation* based on the evaluation report by the peer team.

Since 1994, NAAC has evolved the model of assessment and accreditation and by 2000 had completed 150 assessment visits. In its first three years, NAAC's primary challenge was to convince Indian higher education of the benefits of quality assurance; and its next two years were characterized as putting into operation the process of assessment and 118 institutions of higher education (10 universities and 108 colleges). 150 institutions of higher education represents one percent (1 %) of the 11,000 Indian institutions of higher education which serve seven million students with .35 million teachers.

NAAC characterizes its philosophy as one based on "objective analysis" and "continuous improvement" rather than "punitive or judgmental" in order that all institutions of higher education are empowered to maximize their resources, opportunities and capabilities. It characterizes the benefits of assessment and accreditation:

- It helps the institution to know its strengths, weaknesses and opportunities through an informed review process.
- It identifies internal areas of planning and resource allocation.
- It enhances collegiality on campus.
- The outcome provides funding agencies objective data for performance funding.
- It encourages institutions to adopt innovative and modern methods of pedagogy.
- It gives institutions a new sense of direction and identity.
- It provides society with reliable information on quality of education offered.
- Employers have access to information on the quality of education offered to potential recruits.
- It promotes intra and inter-institutional interaction.

## *Indonesia*

### *The National Accreditation Board for Higher Education*

**Contact Person:** Prof. Dr. M.K. Tadjudin, Chairman

**Address:** Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi  
Department for National Education  
Building C, Floor XI  
Jakarta 1002  
Indonesia

**Telephone:** + 62 21 574 6045/574 6044

**Fax:** same as phone

**Email:** tajudin@dnet.net.id

**Web Address:** <http://www.ban-pt.or.id>

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**Legal Establishment of Board:** The Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi (BAN), the national accreditation board, was founded in 1994 at the initiative of government and it began operation in 1996. Support for BAN is derived from the government but the body is independent. However, BAN is not fiscally autonomous from government and is limited by the timing and size of its annual appropriation.

**Relationship to Stakeholders:** BAN accreditation of higher education programs is used by the government for funding purposes and theoretically by employers in determining the quality of professional education.

**The Board:** BAN is a self-perpetuating body with 20 members derived from the higher education sector, including the Executive Director. The BAN secretariat is composed of 10 full time academic staff and 30 non-academics.

**Accrediting Activity:** BAN's accrediting activities are limited to program accreditation but some thought is being given to institutional accreditation. BAN reports that it accredits approximately 1,200 programs annually (dependent on its annual budget from government) and that it has accredited 6,000 of the 10,000 programs in the country.

BAN describes the main purposes of its accreditation are:

- Improvement and enhancement of educational programs and institutions
- Providing information
- Promoting accountability
- Benchmarking

The BAN is a heavy user of specific indicators of quality and a predominant evaluative tool is a survey. The criteria for evaluation are derived from three sources:

1. The goals and objectives as formulated by the institution
2. General criteria of good practice
3. Criteria of the profession

These, in turn, are augmented by: a self study by the institution; an external review on site; and a student survey. For the external review, approximately 500 evaluators are deployed by BAN to the institutions.

**Needs:** The BAN experiences certain chronic needs:

1. Government controlled funding and lack of fiscal autonomy  
 BAN's accrediting activity is dependent on the level and timing of governmental funding in a given year. Further, BAN is not fiscally autonomous, therefore it has virtually no control over its budget. A *block grant from government* would free the BAN to staff, schedule and support its functions in more appropriate ways.
2. Quality of External Reviewers  
 Although BAN utilizes 500 external reviewers, the quality of these reviewers would benefit from improved compensation and training. BAN was particularly interested in the prospect of an *Asia Pacific Regional pool of external reviewers* who could act as resources to the Indonesian system. If institutions of higher education could successfully undergo an international review, BAN officials state that they would give them an "A" rating in quality.
3. Regional Mutual Recognition  
 BAN's leadership recognizes the growing importance of seeing BAN and Indonesian higher education in the context of a region. The increasing mobility of professionals and the recognition of academic qualifications is pressing Indonesian quality assurance to consider international dimensions of quality which have national implications. Accordingly, BAN has expressed the need for regional opportunities to discuss issues of common concern and to develop standards for higher education which have internationally viable dimensions.

**Note:** BAN is depicted as a welcomed addition to higher education in the World Bank's Staff Appraisal Report "Indonesia: Higher Education Support Project: Development of Undergraduate Education" (May 22, 1996): "Ban is intended to increase transparency in

the Indonesian higher education system, to guide users, to ensure accountability, and to strengthen incentives for individual universities to increase quality standards, efficiency and relevance.” (p.8)

## *Japan*

### *National Institution for Academic Degrees (Governmental)*

### *Japan University Accreditation Association (Non-governmental)*

**Note:** There are two primary accrediting bodies operating in Japan at present: the National Institution for Academic Degrees (NIAD) which is governmental and which accredits public universities; and the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) which is non-governmental and which accredits public, national and private universities. There is evidence that at least one additional body is developing a quality assurance component in 2004: the Association of Private Universities of Japan. NIAD and JUAA are each described below:

### *National Institution for Academic Degrees (Governmental)*

**Contact Person:** Tsutomu Kimura, President

**Address:** Digaku-Hyoka Gakui-Juyo Kiko  
Hitotsbubashi  
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo  
Japan

**Telephone:** +81 3 42128100

**Fax:** +81 3 342128165

**Email:** [hj1syukn@niad.ac.jp](mailto:hj1syukn@niad.ac.jp)

**Web address:** <http://www.niad.ac.jp>

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**Legal Establishment of NIAD:** The National Institution for Academic Degrees (NIAD) was founded by government in 1991 to approve programs of non-university programs and in 2000 was authorized by government to evaluate public universities. The first university evaluation report is published in 2002. NIAD's four major tasks are to:

1. Evaluate education, research and other activities of universities and provide the results of the evaluation to each university evaluated and widely to society;
2. Award academic degrees as well as assessment and recognition/approval of programs provided by higher education institutions other than universities

where learners may obtain certificates or earn credits for application for NIAD degrees;

3. Conduct research on university evaluations and research on systems of academic degrees and assessment in learning adopted in other countries as well as in Japan.
4. Collect, file and disseminate information on university evaluation and learning opportunities in higher education.

NIAD claims to be owned by government but to have autonomy. NIAD is governed by a Board of Councilors, the members of which are appointed by the Minister of Science, Education and Technology.

**Relationship to Stakeholders:** NIAD has jurisdiction among the country's public institutions of higher education, including National Universities and Public Universities.

**NIAD:** 30 persons make up the Committee for University Evaluation of NIAD, composed of approximately 24 academics and 4 members of industry, 1 representative of secondary education and 1 international representative (the Executive Director of the Japan-United States Educational Commission – Fulbright). The Secretariat for University Evaluation (Hyoka-jigyo-bu) has 6 senior staff who coordinate the activity of a Committee for University Evaluation, multiple subcommittees, evaluation teams and working teams.

**Accrediting Activity:** NIAD carries out multi-faceted evaluations in the following areas on the following types of institutions in FY2002:

- University-wide thematic evaluation (on the theme International Cooperation, involving 97 National Universities, 15 Inter-University Research Institutes and 10 Public Universities
  - Different themes selected annually
  - Based on unit of institution
- Evaluation of educational activities in each academic field (in Humanities, Economics and Agriculture involving 6 National Universities and 3 Public Universities in each field and in Comprehensive Science involving 4 National Universities and 2 Public Universities)
  - Based on the unit of faculty of undergraduate or graduate
- Evaluation of research activities in each academic field (in Humanities, Economics and Agriculture and Comprehensive Science in the same number of types of institutions as above)
  - Based on the unit of faculty of undergraduate and/or graduate, university research institute or inter-university research institute

## *Japan University Accreditation Association (Non-governmental)*

**Contact Person:** Mr. Kyoji Miyake, Executive Director

**Address:** 2-7-13 Ichigayasadohara-Cho  
Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 162  
Japan

**Telephone:** +81 3 5228 2200

**Fax:** +81 3 5228 2323

**Email:** [info@juaa.or.jp](mailto:info@juaa.or.jp)

**Web address:** <http://www.juaa.or.jp>

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**Legal Establishment of JUAA:** The Japan University Accreditation Association, Inc. is an independent organization of universities. The Association was organized on July 8, 1947 under the sponsorship of 46 national, public and private universities. The Association was established to “improve the quality of universities in this country by self-directed efforts and the mutual support of its members”. The first accreditation took place in the 1951-52 academic year. The number of institutional association members now is 281, about 40% of the universities in Japan. They include 42 national, 21 public and 218 private institutions.

**Relationship to Stakeholders:** When first organized in 1947, JUAA’s standards were used for approving the establishment of universities. Since 1956 when the national government promulgated the University Establishment Standards via a ministerial ordinance, the Association’s University Standards have been administered solely as standards for accreditation by the JUAA. Since 1996, the Association has launched a new accreditation system, one that incorporates self study into the examination and appraisal processes by universities.

### **The Accreditation Association:**

The JUAA carries out its decision-making process through a Board of Trustees, elected by the Board of Councilors, that is comprised of a representative of each formal member of the Association. JUAA uses over 200 academics and members of the public (such as those in accountancy or law) to carry out external reviews of the member institutions. Its operating budget is derived from membership dues and accreditation fees.

**Accrediting Activity:** JUAA both accredits and reaccredits in 10 year cycles and only those institutions with governmental approval to operate. The only difference between the two processes is that upon reaccreditation, the decision to include the university into the association is unnecessary. Since JUAA started these two processes since 1996, it has accredited 87 universities and reaccredited 95 universities for a total of 182 institutions of the 281 membership which have applied for accreditation from the Association. Due to the continuing decrease in traditionally aged students, universities are finding that they need to identify competitive advantage, including claiming accreditation. JUAA describes the benefits of accreditation as follows:

- A university so accredited will be socially and publicly warranted to fill the role required of a successful university and to endeavor to improve and reform itself through self-study, with the aim of applying its own mission and realizing its own objectives.
- Such a university is entitled to receive useful advice from the Association regarding how to further develop its strong points and how to correct its problem areas, with the aim of applying its own missions and realizing its own objectives.
- Because one condition for accreditation by the Association is that a university seeking accreditation or reaccreditation monitors and evaluates itself in terms of vitally important requirements specified by the Association, a university can use this requirement to good advantage by creating and implementing a comprehensive program for self-study that really is suited to its own characteristics and features.

The standards for accreditation or reaccreditation are only four in number and are general in nature:

1. In order to perform educational and research activities in the most appropriate manner, a university shall make clear its missions and objectives and keep in good condition its educational and research systems, as well as the human, materials, and financial resources necessary therefore, and shall pay appropriate attention to achievements and developments in the fields of education and research.
2. In order to develop the varied personalities and abilities of individual students and to help them to improve their strengths and to achieve their educational goals, a university must pay special attention to educational guidance to its students. A university must also made efforts to give sufficient consideration to student life so as to help students to devote themselves to studying without worries and to help them cultivate their human qualities.
3. A university must conduct its management, operational and personnel-administration activities in an appropriate manner, and must make secure the

positions and social status of its personnel, particularly for its teaching staff. Also a university must keep its finances under reasonable control and must make efforts to establish a sound financial foundation for its operations.

4. In order to develop and improve its educational and research activities, a university must constantly monitor and evaluate its organization and its activities.

## *Korea*

### *The Korean Council for University Education*

**Contact Person:** Dr. Hyun-Chong Lee  
Secretary General

**Address:** 27-2 Youido-Dong, Youngdungpo-GU  
Seoul 150-742  
Korea, South

**Telephone:** +82 2 783 3066

**Fax:** +82 2 780 8311 or 82 2 784 9806

**Email:** leehc@kcue.or.kr

**Web address:** <http://www.kcue.or.kr>

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**Legal Establishment of Council:** The Korean Council for University Education was founded in 1982 (the KCUE Act) as a semi-governmental organization responsible for the public, private and national four-year college and university sector. It describes itself as a liaison organization between government and the university community.

**Relationship to Stakeholders:** The Council's role is broad relative to its 194 four year institutions of higher education including: college admission assessment, in-service training for administrative and teaching staff, policy formulation and the development of the curriculum. In addition is the evaluation for assurance of quality in the form of accreditation. Institutional evaluation is scheduled every 5 years and departmental (program) evaluation also every 5 years.

**The Council:** The accrediting functions of the Council are carried out by a Committee for University Accreditation in its Division of University Evaluation and its general purposes are noted as:

- Evaluating member institutions and academic programs
- Administering the Committee for University Accreditation
- Compiling statistics on member institutions

**Accrediting Activity:** The KCUE develops the criteria of accreditation, collects data, on-site evaluation procedures and announces accreditation results. This is done at both the institutional and program level.

The university accreditation consists of the comprehensive accreditation and department evaluation. The comprehensive accreditation refers to the evaluation of each university in terms of:

- Educational goals
- Curriculum
- Financial capability
- Facilities and educational equipment
- Administration
- Students

Whereas the academic program evaluation concerns the quality of each program by the standards of:

- Educational objectives
- Curriculum
- Student services
- Quality of faculties
- Quality of facilities
- Administration
- Finance

## *Malaysia*

### *National Accreditation Board*

#### *Lembaga Akreditasi Negara (LAN)*

**Contact Person:** Prof. Dr. Mohamed Suleiman, Chairman/Chief Executive

**Address:** 14<sup>th</sup> Floor, Block B, Menara PKNS-PJ  
No. 17, Jalan Yong Shook Lin  
46050 Petaling Jaya Selangor  
Malaysia

**Telephone:** +60 3 7569162

**Fax:** +60 3 7569496

**Email:** [akreditasi@lan.gov.my](mailto:akreditasi@lan.gov.my)  
[ssheikh@lan.gov.my](mailto:ssheikh@lan.gov.my)

**Web address:** <http://lan.gov.my>

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**Legal Establishment of Board:** The context for the 1996 Act which enabled the Lembaga Akreditasi Negara - LAN (National Accreditation Board) centered in rapid economic growth triggering a demand for a highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce and the administration envisioning Malaysia as a regional hub for higher education. Concurrently was passed the Private Higher Education Act which seeks to control the establishment and management of private higher education institutions so as to provide a quality higher education environment for students, while the LAN is to make certain that all course studies and training programs achieve a standard acceptable to the norms and conventions of higher education.

**Note:** At the time of this Study, there does not exist a national accreditation system for *public* institutions of higher education although there is legislation pending for such.

**Relationship to Stakeholders:** In recent years, Malaysia has experienced a rapid development in education in both the public and private sectors. In the public sector, 13 universities have been established, excluding polytechnics and teacher training colleges. Enrollment at the public universities exceeds 150,000 students. In the private sector, 500 institutions of higher education have emerged with an enrollment totaling more than 100,000 students. Whereas the Ministry of Education has regulations which have

influence on the organization and quality of public institutions, none such mechanism existed for the growing private sector until LAN was established. Because Malaysia wishes to increase the capability of students to remain in Malaysia for their tertiary education, it is assumed that the private sector will continue growing.

**The Board:** LAN is a statutory but “autonomous” body. Members of the LAN were officially appointed in May, 1997, the majority derived from academia (although it is unknown whether this is the public and/or private sector) and some representatives of the public (such as from the Federation of Consultants from Islamic Countries). Headed by the Chairman/Chief Executive with nine others as members, LAN formulates policies, procedures, standards and other matters pertaining to the quality of courses of study being offered and will be offered by private institutions of higher education. (It does not concern itself with institutional accreditation *per se*.) Specifically, LAN’s functions are to:

- Formulate policies on the standard and quality control of:
  - Courses of study; and
  - Certificates, diplomas and degrees
- Set, monitor, review and oversee the standard and quality:
  - Of courses of study; and
  - For accreditation of certificates, diplomas and degrees
- Determine the level of achievement for the national language and the compulsory subjects specified in the Private Higher Education Institutions Act 1996 [including religion] as prerequisites to the award of certificates, diplomas and degrees; and
- Advise and make recommendations to the Minister for his approval of courses of study to be conducted by private higher education institutions with regard to:
  - The suitability of arrangements related to the educational facilities and relevant to the courses of study; and
  - The standard and quality assurance of the courses of study.

The LAN is supported by a staff exceeding 100 persons and a panel of assessors which undergo training before reviewing an institution’s programs. LAN’s budget is derived from application fees from the institutions undergoing review.

**Accrediting Activity:** As of the end of 2002, 184 courses (degrees) at 48 private had successfully undergone the LAN accrediting process. There are 5 sets of materials against which a private institution of higher education is to be evaluated:

- Criteria for Standards and Quality of Courses:

Includes minimum standards of courses of study, procedures of continuous assessment, and policies related to twinning programs with international institutions of higher education.

- **Approval and Accreditation of Courses of Study:**  
These materials depict the responsibilities of the private institutions of higher education in how to conduct study courses, assess minimum standards and achieve accreditation, including information on courses of study, teachers, physical facilities, management system and rationale for conducting the course study.
- **Syllabus for National Language and Compulsory Subjects:**  
These materials offer mandatory detailed syllabus for the National Language (Bahasa Kebangsaan)\* and compulsory subjects such as Malaysian Studies, Islamic Studies and Moral Education.

\*This requirement can be waived by the Minister of Education.

- **Criteria and Quality Control Standards for Distance Education Courses:**  
These include standards for courses plus requirements for qualified teaching staff at every level of the course, curriculum standard, course matter design standard and assessment standards.
- **Guidelines for Post-Graduate Courses:**  
These guidelines provide approaches by and requirements of private institutions of higher education in applying for approval to conduct courses at the post-graduate level (Masters or Ph.D.).

To quote LAN, “Preparing documents to be sent to LAN is quite a complex process.” Accordingly, LAN provides daily consultation services, weekly familiarization clinics and a mobile document preparation seminar to assist institutions in preparing their application materials. In the materials provided in English, there was not reference to the duration of accreditation but there was a general statement, “Under Section 42 of the LAN Act of 1996, ‘the Lembaga shall have the power to reassess, from time to time, certificates, diplomas and degrees in respect of which Certificates of Accreditation have been granted.’”

Finally, LAN approved institutions must submit an annual report.

**Needs:** With the exception of the funding circumstances, LAN’s needs mirror those of neighboring Indonesia. In addition, LAN has immediate needs for:

1. A building adequate and appropriate for their operation; and
2. Training assistance with their huge cadre of external reviewers

## *Mongolia*

### *National Council on Higher Education Accreditation*

**Contact Persons:** Mr. D. Tsogzolmaa, Executive Director  
Mrs. Dagvadorj Chuluuntsetseg, Officer of External Relations and Program Accreditation  
(Mrs. Dagvadorj was sponsored by the World Bank to attend the regional meeting of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education in Hong Kong in January, 2003)

**Address:** Barilgachdyn Talbai-2  
Room 302  
Ulaanbaatar – 46, Mongolia

**Telephone:** +976 11 353537

**Fax:** +976 11 353537

**Email:** [ACCMON@mongolnet.mn](mailto:ACCMON@mongolnet.mn)

**Web address:** <http://www.accmon.mn>

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**Legal Establishment of Agency:** The Mongolian National Council for Higher Education Accreditation was established at the initiative of the government in 1998 for purposes of accrediting institutions of higher education, beginning with institutional accreditation. In 2000, the Council formally became an independent body. Additional legal authority was conferred in 2002 to initiate accreditation in vocational and technical institutions. 2002 was also the year in which program accreditation was initiated. The Council further states that it provides management consulting to institutions of Mongolian higher education.

**Relationship to Stakeholders:**

The Council operates in a close working relationship with higher education institutions, professional associations and the Ministry of Education. Although there is no formal oversight or control from government, the government supplied the initial start-up funding, chairs the Council and continues to set the cap for the fee the institutions pay for accrediting services. Further, the government uses the accredited status of the institution to determine government allocations to institutions and students enrolled in accredited institutions of higher education are eligible to receive financial assistance, grants and scholarships. By law, the Council submits an annual report to the government.

**The Council:** The Council has 15 members from governmental and non-governmental sectors, including: 9 from institutions of higher education, 4 from professional organizations and 2 from research organizations. At present, the Chairperson of the Council is the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Science, Technology, Education and Culture (unusual for a body which claims independence from government) and the Vice Chairperson is President of Mongolian Technological University.

The Council is served by a staff of four: an Executive Director; an Officer of Program Accreditation and External Relations; an Officer of Institutional Accreditation and an Accountant (who recently inherited the responsibility for vocational/technical accreditation). The Council further employs approximately 90 evaluative experts to carry out accreditation activity upon request (see training needs below).

The Mongolian National Council for Higher Education Accreditation is a full member of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education.

**Institutional Accreditation:** Mongolia has 184 institutions of higher education, including public, private, colleges and universities for a population of two and a half million. When vocational/training institutions were added to the accrediting load in 2002, one of the four staff members inherited this sector – the Council’s accountant.

Council materials state that both that institutional accreditation is voluntary and that all institutions in the country are required to undergo the process. Through a phase-in schedule which includes all public institutions and select private institutions, 42 colleges and universities have to date undergone the process.

The process employed by the Council follows general global practice for purposes of educational assessment and enhancement:

- (a) Benchmark quality standards developed by the Council\*
- (b) A self-analysis report by the institution
- (c) A site visit and report by external reviewers
- (d) A determination by the Council as to the accredited status of the institution based on the combination of the above.

\*The criteria for evaluation employed at present are the following, patterned after one of the U.S. institutional accrediting bodies (which is charged by its counterparts as not having “standards”). If specific supporting indicators of quality are not available, the following criteria in an emerging system of accreditation are likely inadequate:

*Criteria One:* The program has clear and publicly stated purposes consistent with the mission of an institution of higher education.

*Criteria Two:* The program has effectively organized the human, financial and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes.

*Criteria Three:* The program is accomplishing its educational and other purposes.

*Criteria Four:* The program can continue to accomplish its purposes and strengthen its educational effectiveness.

*Criteria Five:* The program demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships.

**Program Accreditation:** Program accreditation began in 2002 with the hiring of a fourth staff member in the Council. The scope is enormous: thousands of programs in the country's 184 institutions of higher education. Although it is unknown how the following were targeted, pilot accreditation projects are being initiated in the following areas:

- Telecommunications engineering
- Dentistry
- Veterinary medicine
- Accounting (Mongolian National University's School of Finance)
- History and social studies (Pedagogical University)
- Pre-school Teaching (Pedagogical University)
- Solo musicianship

It should be noted that the Higher Education Law of 1995 empowered institutions to confer academic degrees (Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral) and organize the curriculum on the basis of credit hours. A minimum number of credits now are set for a program of study.

**Needs:** The Council's needs rest in two primary areas of capacity building: operational funding and technical assistance.

### **1. Operational Funding:**

The government cap for fees paid by institutions for accrediting services contributes directly to the Council's insufficient funds to carry out their vast functions. Four (4) staff at present coordinate the accreditation of 184 institutions of higher education and their individual programs. Institutions and programs enter accreditation voluntarily, which contributes to the uncertainty of income, and augmenting this income such as through the assessing of professional bodies has not been entertained.

### **2. Technical Assistance:**

Staff identify training and technical assistance as their top priority. Four staff with inadequate access to training in accreditation and insufficient funding have the overwhelming responsibility of training: (a) 15 Council members; (b) 88 (part-time) paid but untrained evaluation "experts"; and (c) 184 institutions and their programs in the process of internal evaluation, including the instituting of quality assurance units. Staff wish that they also can keep pace with international practice in both institutional and program accreditation and would appreciate the opportunity to be exposed to best practice.

The Council reports cooperation with the Education Sector Development Project of the Asia Development Bank and the Mongolian Foundation for Open Society of the Soros Foundation.

## *New Zealand*

### *Academic Audit Unit*

**Contact Person:** John M. Jennings, Director

**Address:** PO Box 9747  
Wellington, New Zealand

Level 7, Education House (West Block)  
Wellington, New Zealand

**Telephone:** + 64 4 801 7924

**Fax:** +64 4 801 7926

**Email:** director@aau.ac.nz

**Web address:** <http://www.aau.ac.nz>

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**Legal Establishment of Unit:** The Academic Audit Unit (AAU) was established on the initiative of the New Zealand's 8 *universities* and approved by the New Zealand Vice Chancellor's Committee in 1994. Its terms of reference can be summarized:

- To review and comment on the effectiveness of systems for monitoring and enhancing academic quality and standards in New Zealand universities to ensure that they are appropriate for achieving the universities' stated aims and objectives, and that they are applied effectively, and
- To identify, devise, disseminate and commend to universities good practice, assist universities to improve educational quality, advise the New Zealand Vice Chancellor's Committee on quality assurance matters, and interact with other national and international agencies and organizations engaged in quality assurance in education.

**Relationship to Stakeholders:** Ownership of the AAU is in the hands of the universities. The AAU's vision is to contribute to the achievement of quality, quality enhancement and excellence in New Zealand universities as measured by the improved quality of their scholarly activities and outcomes – namely: research, teaching, learning and community service provided by their graduates and staff to the measurable benefit of people and societies both inside and outside of New Zealand.

**The Unit:** The AAU is governed by a governing board, formally appointed by the New Zealand Vice Chancellor's Committee which meets twice a year and comprises 12 members:

- Chair
- Director of the AAU (ex officio)
- 2 senior academics: one the nominee of the Association of University Staff of New Zealand (university trade union) and the other a nominee of the Australian Vice Chancellor's Committee
- 1 member of the New Zealand Vice Chancellor's Committee
- 2 nominees of Professional Associations
- 1 nominee of the Council of Trade Unions (national trade union body)
- 1 member of the New Zealand University Students' Association (national student movement)
- 1 nominee of New Zealand's Employers' Federation (national employers body)
- 2 representatives of the public

The activities of the AAU are evaluated from time to time by an independent review committee set up for this purpose.

**Auditing Activity:** Since operations began in 1994, the AAU has completed two cycles of university audits and has itself been audited by an independent review panel at the end of each cycle. The Unit has just completed a planning exercise for the period 2002-2006 and has determined six strategic objectives for the period 2002-2006 in the areas of:

- quality enhancement
- international benchmarking of the Unit's activities
- the development of quality policies and practices
- quality audits
- communication with the Unit's communities of interest
- networking with New Zealand and international quality and educational agencies

The aim of the New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit is to add value to the universities' own programs of quality improvement. The AAU reports that Cycle 2 audit reports, produced during 2000-2001, reveal a vast improvement in universities' own quality processes and procedures and that the Unit's activities will continue on three fronts:

1. The third cycle of *institutional audits* during the period 2003-2006 with a particular focus on teaching quality, program delivery and the achievement of learning outcomes, together with a review of aspects of the universities' quality programs and activities that were earmarked for improvement during cycles 1 and 2;

2. A *watching brief* whereby the universities report on their own programs of quality improvement, and through which the Unit can interact professionally with universities in assisting and monitoring their work and through which the Unit can improve its knowledge about the culture of universities so as to be better informed of the universities' cultures at the time of audit; and
3. *Systems reviews* in which the Unit will conduct audit in topics which are known to be of importance and concern to the university system as a whole and which may also be of interest to external agencies and groups with responsibilities in tertiary education.

The cycle 3 *institutional audits* to be carried out by the Unit will have as a focus the ways by which the universities ensure the quality of their teaching, the delivery of programs, and the achievement of learning outcomes by their students. The audits will also evaluate the effectiveness of changes made by universities in areas highlighted in cycle 1 and 2 audits. The *system reviews* are a new development for the Unit, and the Unit plans to conduct 2 per year. The Unit has now developed a procedure for the conduct of these audits, and among the topics being considered for further evaluation are:

- The quality of university planning and reporting processes and documents;
- The nature of the balance in the provision of programs and qualifications across New Zealand universities;
- Values, culture, objectives and indicators that are distinctive to, and shared by, universities;
- Treaty of Waitangi representatives;
- Governance and management of universities;
- Staff recruitment, induction, development, appraisal;
- Student progression, retention and completion;
- Discipline reviews/audits across the system; and
- Cross credit of courses among universities.

Four of these topics are being examined in some detail at present to determine the key issues and key questions that should be asked and key hypotheses that should be tested. The planning process involves consultation with relevant national agencies prior to the final determination of the topic and administration of an audit so as to ensure that there is a minimum of duplication of effort in the areas of audit and reporting to which universities are subjected. The Unit hopes that system audits will lead to a better informed university system as well as to better informed communities of interest who support New Zealand universities.

## *People's Republic of China*

### *Centralized and Decentralized Quality Assurance Bodies*

**Note:** *The People's Republic of China has both centralized and decentralized quality assurance bodies and the policy framework appears to be a "work in progress":*

*In the 1980's, assessment in higher education was mainly concentrated on disciplines, subjects, and courses. In October 1990, the State promulgated "Provisional Regulations on Educational Assessment of Regular Institutes of Higher Learning".*

*In early 1995, the Ministry of Education initiated an assessment of teaching of regular courses. This is carried out in three steps: "qualification" assessment (a "pass" or "not pass" process carried out in new institutions with emerging programs), "outstanding" assessment (carried out in established institutions where "pass" appears to be a foregone conclusion) and "random" assessment (carried out in institutions which fit somewhere between the emerging and established institutions and which can be assessed as "excellent", "good", "qualified" or "not qualified"). By April, 2000, the Ministry of Education had assessed 160 institutes, 34 of which did not pass the first time. 13 institutions applied for outstanding assessment and 2 did not pass the first time. Random assessment took place in one institution but the outcome is unknown. (Zha, 2000)*

*In 1985, the Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council began assessing the quality of degrees conferred on "research" students, disciplines and subjects. (A centralized body was necessary because institutions of higher education were found in several line ministries, not just the Ministry of Education.) In 1994, the Institute for Assessing the Quality of Degree and Graduate Education in Institutes of Higher Education and Research was founded to organize and carry out this area of assessment. In 1996-97, it carried out a large scale inspection and assessment of Ph.D. and Masters programs throughout the country.*

*Institutions of higher education generally fall into two categories: those under the Ministry of Education; and those under Provincial oversight. There are 100 institutions of higher education which are the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. In addition are 900 institutions of higher education once under the auspices of the line ministries, but were in recent years moved to municipal/ provincial oversight. Although the following will outline the organization and function of two of these decentralized accrediting bodies (Shanghai and Guangdong), and although decentralization of quality assurance was a primary recommendation of the 1996 World Bank study cited above, the national picture continues to be a work in progress and is not completely clear. For example, it is unclear whether the various Provinces communicate relative to nationally acceptable standards for institutions of higher education; or whether the validity and reliability of the various processes are assured; or whether there is or should be a centralized "accreditor of accreditors" for Chinese institutions of higher education at the Ministry of Education (MOE) level. In 1996, following the World Bank's report, "China: Higher Education*

*Reform” (June 27, 1996), only two Municipalities, Beijing and Shanghai, had the capacity for becoming decentralized accreditors with Anhui Province hoping to develop a process in the near future. Does this mean that provision has been made to train all the Provinces in the process of quality assurance, or has the tertiary sector been put into the hands of those with experience primarily in basic education?*

To add to the dynamic nature of reform, the Law on Promoting Private Education in the People’s Republic of China was passed in December, 2002. This law is to be carried out by governments at the county level and above and can serve to further complicate the accrediting functions for higher education throughout China that is trying to catch up with the public sector. At the time of this report, the Beijing Academy of Educational Research has been charged with planning a national accreditation process for private higher education by 2005.

### ***Shanghai Educational Evaluation Institute***

**Contact:** Jin Tong-Kang or Wang Zhi-Zhong  
Director

**Address:** 202 South Shan Xi Road  
200031 Shanghai  
China

**Telephone:** +86 2154033370

**Fax:** same as telephone

**Email:** [seeimail@sh163.net](mailto:seeimail@sh163.net)

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**Legal Establishment of Agency:** The Shanghai Educational Evaluation Institute (SEEI) was established November 1, **2000** on initiative of the provincial government, and specifically the Shanghai Education Commission (SEC). SEEI is responsible to the Shanghai Education Commission and is a governmental organization. [It is unclear how the SEEI function is different from the accrediting function previously provided by the SEC. However, it is claimed that more than 50 programs were reviewed in the two year period 1998-2000 which leads one to conclude that the SEEI is the new name for the accrediting arm of the SEC.]

**Relationship to Stakeholders:** Institutions of higher education in Shanghai are under the auspices of the Shanghai Education Commission and therefore subject to SEEI assessment and accrediting processes.

**The Institute:** The SEEI is governmental and its members are appointed by the Shanghai Education Commission. SEEI appoints external reviewers and institutions being evaluated are not provided any say in who is appropriate to review them, but they are derived both from academia and the public. There are 17 academic staff involved in SEEI and 7 non-academic staff. The Institute is funded both by the government and by individual institutions undergoing review.

**Quality Assurance Activity:** It appears that there are two levels of quality assurance activity: institutional assessment and program accreditation. The SEEI claims that it has an accrediting load of 25 programs visited annually. The primary purposes claimed for this quality review are:

- Accountability
- Improvement/enhancement
- Benchmarking
- Providing information

Reports on the reviews are made public but are not widely distributed. Relative to program accreditation, the following areas are particularly reviewed:

- Goals and aims of the program
  - Program content
  - Program organization
  - Teaching methods
  - Curriculum design
  - Student work, research projects and practical training
  - Quality of the teaching staff
  - Quality of the facilities
  - Rate of student retention
  - Student and staff opinion
  - Opinion of public
-

***Guangdong Center of Evaluation and Development Research for  
Education***

**Contact Person:** Zhou Daiqing

**Address:** 723 Dongfeng Dong Road  
Guangzhou, 510080  
China

**Telephone:** +86 20 3762 6931/ 3762 6923

**Fax:** +86 20 3762 6932

**Email:** [daiqz@gdhed.edu.cn](mailto:daiqz@gdhed.edu.cn)

**Web address:** <http://www.gdhed.edu.cn>

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**Legal Establishment of Center:** The Guangdong Center of Evaluation and Development Research for Education (The Center) was founded in June, **2000** at the initiative of government. The Center describes itself as a semi-governmental organization with independent statutory affiliation to the Education Department of Guangdong Province. It further describes itself as being controlled/supervised by government.

**Relationship to Stakeholders:** The Center conducts institutional assessment and program accreditation.

**The Center:** The Center is governmental. Institutions being evaluated are not provided say in who is appropriate to review them, but they are derived both from academia and the public. There are 10 academic staff involved in the Center and 5 non-academic staff. The Institute is funded both by the government and by individual institutions undergoing review.

**Quality Assurance Activity:** There are two levels of quality assurance activity: institutional assessment and program accreditation. The Center claims that it has an accrediting load of 29 programs visited annually and has since 1998 reviewed 50

institutions (although it was founded in 2000). The purposes of the Center's quality assurance activity parallel that of SEEI earlier.

**Note:** The descriptions of these quality assurance bodies is derived from the bodies themselves. An overview of the Chinese system is derived from multiple sources ranging from World Bank staff and reports to published materials from the Ministry of Education.

## ***Philippines***

### ***Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines***

***Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities***

***The Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation***

***The Association of Christian Schools and Colleges Accrediting Agency***

***Note:*** *With mass higher education in the Philippines and the subsequent rise of public and private institutions of higher education with varying capacities to deliver quality education, the government has demanded more accountability for the country's institutions of higher education and has called upon the accrediting bodies to carry this out. A brief history of accreditation in the Philippines follows, and the coordinates of the two most internationally active accreditors are provided.*

*Excerpted from "Historical Perspectives of the Philippine Quality Assurance System" (Journal of Philippine Higher Education Quality Assurance, Vol. 1, No. 1, January, 2003):*

*Accreditation officially started 46 years ago in 1957 with the establishment of the first accrediting agency, the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities. The general condition of the education system then must have influenced the birth of an agency dedicated to the promotion of quality in the education sector. It was a time characterized by structural reorganization and the rapid growth of privately-owned educational institutions, many of which were derogatorily branded as "diploma mills".*

*Two other accrediting agencies followed after almost two decades: The Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities – Commission on Accreditation (PACU-COA) emerged in 1973 followed closely by the Association of Christian Schools and Colleges – Accrediting Agency (ASCA-AA) in 1976. These three agencies: PAASCU, PACU-COA and ACSC-AA organized themselves into the Federation of Accrediting Agencies in the Philippines (FAAP) in 1977.*

*At a much later time (1987), accreditation was initiated in the public sector, among state universities and colleges...The Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC) soon sponsored the creation of an independent body, the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACCUP) which was formally organized in 1989...AACCUP became the fourth member of FAAP.*

*[Today] higher education institutions can choose any of the four accrediting agencies for the accreditation of their programs. In practice, however, the agencies cater mostly to their respective clientele... Given the long exposure to accreditation and the availability of accreditation services practically to all types of schools in the country, we would expect a record number of accredited programs to date. Unfortunately, only 15% of the higher education institutions, public and private, have taken advantage of the program of accreditation offered by the accrediting bodies.*

[In 2000, the Presidential Commission on Educational Reform: PCER] while respecting the autonomy of the four accrediting bodies, recommended the adoption of common standards. [This activity was concurrent with an ADB initiative concerning quality assurance in the country at the time.] More importantly, it suggested that CHED [the government agency, Commission on Higher Education responsible for higher education] be responsible in certifying the accreditation status granted by the accrediting agencies, thus withdrawing this authority from FAAP.

*The scheme to provide a system of autonomy with accountability needs a clear definition of the roles of the key players in accreditation. The accrediting agencies will:*

- 1) adopt a program of accreditation services with their own standards, processes and protocols;*
- 2) conduct assessment of programs;*
- 3) grant and certify accreditation status; and*
- 4) be accountable for the quality of their delivery systems as well as their finances.*

*The government's role will be to:*

- 1) give official recognition to accrediting agencies after qualifying based on its standards;*
- 2) monitor the operation of accrediting bodies;*
- 3) grant incentives to accredited programs and institutions;*
- 4) provide financial subsidy to recognized accrediting agencies; and*
- 5) use accreditation reports in the oversight of education, and in making decisions where quality is a critical consideration.*

*The two most internationally active of the Philippine accrediting bodies are:*

### ***Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines***

**Contact Person:** Manuel T. Corpus, Executive Director

**Address:** 812 Future Point Plaza I  
112 Panay Avenue, South Triangle  
Quezon City  
Philippines

**Telephone:** +63 2 415 9016

**Fax:** +63 2 415 8995

**Email:** [aaccup@axti.com](mailto:aaccup@axti.com)

**Web address:** n/a

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***Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities***

**Contact:** Concepcion V. Pijano, Executive Director

**Address:** The Tower at Emerald Square, J.P. Corner P. Tuazon Sts.  
Project 4, Quezon City  
Philippines

**Phone:** +63 2 911 2845

**Fax:** +63 2 911 0807

**Email:** [paascu@i-manila.com.ph](mailto:paascu@i-manila.com.ph)

**Web address:** n/a

## *Thailand*

### *Office of National Educational Standards and Quality Assessment Ministry of University Affairs*

**Contact Persons:** Porntip Kanjananiyot                      Chantavit Sujantanond  
Director    Assistant Permanent Secretary  
Higher Education Standards  
Bureau

**Address:** Ministry of University Affairs  
328 Si Ayuthaya Road  
Bangkok 10400, Thailand

**Telephone:** +662 0 2245 9036/    +662 245 5900  
+662 0 2246 1106 14 x716

**Fax:** +662 0 2245 8925    +662 0 245 8636/  
+662 0 245 8255

**Email:**    [ptk@mua.go.th](mailto:ptk@mua.go.th)    [chanta@mua.go.th](mailto:chanta@mua.go.th)

**Web address:**    <http://www.qa.mus.go.th>  
<http://www.inter.mua.go.th>

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**Legal Establishment of Agency:** The Ministry of University Affairs (MUA), established in 1982, has been recently charged to carry out “the firm commitment of the country to enhance quality of institutions of higher learning and their graduates”. The Eighth National Higher Education Development Plan (1997-2001) noted “Quality and Excellence” as one of six main policies whereas the Ninth National Plan (2001-2005) stipulates quality as the main emphasis in implementation. A brief chronology of quality assurance activity in Thai higher education includes:

**1994:** Council of University Presidents, in cooperation with the MUA, propose principles and a direction for quality assurance

**1996:** MUA’s quality assurance policy goes into effect, charging MUA with developing principles of quality and appointing a subcommittee to monitor and administer education standards and accreditation in the higher education sector.

The policy further encouraged institutions of higher education to develop their own internal quality assurance systems as a tool to improve the quality of education management.

**1999-2000:** With the National Education Act of 1999, an Office of Educational Standards and Evaluation is created and pilot projects are conducted which audit faculties in education, engineering, medicine, nursing and science. A time period of 5 years between external reviews is established. All institutions of higher education are expected to undergo the process and the results are to be made public.

**2000:** A Royal Decree establishes the Office for National Educational Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA). Its first meeting is held in January, **2001**.

**2001-2002:** The ONESQA began with a pilot of 5 institutions: 2 public universities, 2 private universities and a Rajabhat (Institutes which are former teacher training colleges)

**2003:** 20 additional external reviews are scheduled to begin this year

**2005:** Year by which all institutions are to be evaluated. [This is a goal unlikely to be met at the current pace of activity.]

**Relationship to Stakeholders:** ONESQA has as its responsibility the following institutions at the postsecondary level:

- 78 public and private universities (under Ministry of University Affairs)
  - 41 rajabhat institutes (under Ministry of Education)
  - 35 lajmongla – vocational/occupational/technical colleges
  - 2 Buddhist universities
  - 2 technology institutes
  - 12 community colleges (associate’s degree institutions in their first year)
- (The quality of basic education, which includes 40,000 schools and 5,000 vocational/technical schools, is being contracted to private sector companies.)

Institutions are charged 80,000 bhat (US\$1,500) which ONESQA claims is not enough to carry out its functions.

**Institutional Audit:** It appears that ONESQA’s primary role is “audit” with a move toward establishing accreditation in the next 10 years, although staff say that the law currently calls its function accreditation. This means that it assures that each institution under its supervision establish an internal quality assurance system which is regarded as part of the educational administration and which is expected to be a continuous process. The institutions are expected to undergo an external evaluation (audit) and are further expected to submit an annual report on this subject to the Ministry. In addition to external

reviews being carried out by teams of university presidents, it appears that surveys are a major source of information as to the extent of institutional compliance with national policy.

In March, 2001, a set of “Quality Factors and Indicators” were established based on the main components of higher education missions. The Quality Factors include:

- Aspect 1: Philosophy, Commitments, Objectives and Implementation Plan
- Aspect 2: Teaching and Learning
- Aspect 3: Student Development Activities
- Aspect 4: Research
- Aspect 5: Academic Service to the Community
- Aspect 6: Preservation of Art and Culture
- Aspect 7: Administration and Management
- Aspect 8: Finance and Budgeting
- Aspect 9: Quality Assurance and Enhancement

These factors and their subsequent indicators are not unlike standards for accreditation in global practice.

**Needs:** Thailand is very new at quality assurance. It is unclear why accreditation is being deferred “for a decade”, unless the so-called “lighter touch” of audit is easier to implement in current higher education politics.

The national quality assurance process is not well defined outside of Thailand. The international quality assurance community is aware that a law was passed; however, because the piloting began only in 2002, most of the activity in country to date appears to be centered in awareness building (e.g., seminars, conferences and training programs for audit committees). In November 2000, MUA sponsored a quality assurance conference in collaboration with ASEAN and claimed a working relationship with British and Australian quality assurance, although the latter only began a national process in July, 2002. It would behoove the ONESQA to become active in the global professional body for quality assurance: the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education.

When interviewed for this study, MUA officials were particularly interested in the potential of a Asia Pacific regional pool of external evaluators which could be used to augment their national system. They further expressed a need for training for universities to build quality assurance units at either the national or regional level. Finally, they were interested in learning more about two new areas of challenge for Thai higher education: e-learning and transnational education and the role of quality assurance as related to both.

## *Vietnam*

### *Quality Assurance Unit*

**Contact Persons\*:** Prof. DrSc. Banh Tien Long  
Emeritus Lecturer  
Director General, Higher Education Department  
Head of Department of Material Cutting and Industrial Instrument,  
Hanoi University of Technology

**Address:** Ministry of Education and Training  
49 Dai Co Viet Stra.  
Hanoi, Vietnam

**Telephone:** +84 4 8691414 / +84 4 8692007  
Mobile: 0903 463 737

**Fax:** +84 4 8694085 / +84 4 8691414

**Email:** [Btlong@moet.edu.vn](mailto:Btlong@moet.edu.vn)  
[btlong@mail.hut.edu.vn](mailto:btlong@mail.hut.edu.vn)

**Web address:** <http://www.moet.edu.vn>

**Alternative Contacts:** Mr. Thanh, Q.A. Unit, Head, Division for Higher Education Accreditation, Ministry of Education and Training, 49 Dai Co Viet Stra., Hanoi, Vietnam  
**Telephone:** +84 4 9740703 **Fax:** +84 4 8683359 **Email:** phxthanh@moet.edu.vn

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**Legal Establishment of Unit:** While a Quality Assurance Unit (QA Unit) was established in the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) early 2002, pending approval in early 2003 is a *Regulation on Higher Education Quality Accreditation* that will authorize accrediting activity. The draft regulation calls for a national quality accreditation system for the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for all academic programs in all institutions of higher education (colleges, graduate and postgraduate) as well as training institutions, whether public, private or foreign. The accreditation is proposed for both the institution and program levels.

**Relationship to Stakeholders:** Vietnam higher education has been studying accreditation for a number of years. Centers for quality assurance were established in the two major national universities (Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City) and national and institutional seminars and workshops have taken place to distribute information and

discuss the issues. Representatives from the institution-based centers are found on the programs of international quality assurance conferences (such as that of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education). The extent to which professional bodies in Vietnam have been part of the discussions is unknown.

**The QA Unit and Accreditation Committee:** As of the time of this study, there are two employees in the QA Unit in the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET). Proposed for the Accreditation Committee are appointees by the Minister of MOET who also will determine how many will serve on this body. Chairing the Committee is the Minister of MOET and the Permanent Vice Chairman is the Vice Minister of MOET. Additional Vice Chairmen include representatives of the National Education Council, leading governmental officials and related agencies. It is proposed that the members have 5 year terms. This Accreditation Committee is clearly not an independent body. It is proposed that a combination of government and institutions pay for accreditation in Vietnam. It is further proposed that the Committee can receive financial support from national and international individual and organizational funders.

**Proposed Accrediting Activities:** There are two forms of accreditation proposed for Vietnam: institutional and program.

A. Institutional Accreditation

Accreditation for an institution is to review the whole of policies, objectives, plans and activities of institutions, including training areas, research, technology development, socio-economic support, management and operation, development of teaching staff, students, student services, financial resources, facilities and some other related areas in relation with the institution's stated mission and goals. For institutional accreditation, a draft set of Standards has been created for application to the full spectrum of Vietnamese institutions of higher education.

B. Program Accreditation

Accreditation for an academic program of an institution is to review the extent to which graduates can meet requirements of employers and professional associations in keeping with the institution's stated mission and goals.

For both forms of accreditation, international practice is proposed for the process, including:

1. Development and periodic review of the accreditation criteria
2. Self-evaluation by higher education institutions and their programs
3. External review by peer reviewers (of which there is a plan to develop a registry of external reviewers)
4. Accreditation Committee's decision of recognition

## Needs

In late April through June, 2002, the World Bank responded to the emerging quality assurance activity in Vietnam in two ways. The first took the form of an in-country training program and the second produced a detailed action proposal for instituting accreditation in Vietnam. The following are *excerpts* from a document that outlines **short-term needs**. This document (dated April 26, 2002) assumed that a regulation launching an accreditation infrastructure would be approved by the end of 2002 given the level of activity focused on quality assurance:

**Background:** A “Q.A. Unit” in the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) emerged about two months ago with a staff of two. For at least two years, the national universities in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City have hosted Q.A. Centers which have served to provide rudimentary information and promote a climate of self-evaluation in approximately 30 universities. The major incentive for this self-evaluative posture has centered in the *quality grants available through the Higher Education Project funded by the World Bank*. To qualify for these grants, universities must have at least completed an annual survey; conducted a graduate tracer survey and undergone a strategic planning exercise.

The following overview of short-term needs (i.e., within a year) is derived after a week’s external review by an international expert in quality assurance. During this initial exploratory period, meetings were conducted with the Q.A. Unit, the Q.A. Centers in the National Universities; the Project Coordinating Unit of the Higher Education Project, the national Q.A. working group convened by HEP and the government, 50 university and MOET representatives in a training session and a very positive session with the Minister of Education.

**Organizational Needs:** A national accreditation process for a system in excess of 100 institutions cannot be staffed, nor can accreditation decisions be made by just two people. Necessary to a health infrastructure are at least three things:

1. Appointment and Training of a National Accreditation Commission  
It is recommended that an interim body be formed, chaired by the Minister of Education and composed of a balance of governmental, public and university representatives. It will be among this commission’s responsibilities to appoint a permanent commission by year’s end that should include representatives from government, major employers and public, and universities. A body that mirrors the desired composition of such a body is the Steering Committee for the Higher Education Project. Both the interim and permanent national commissions will require training in their roles and responsibilities related to assuring quality.
2. Appointment and Training of a Working Group  
A working group already exists which has 4-5 members from MOET and the Q.A. Centers at the National Universities. This Working Group in either its

current or expanded form can augment the Q.A. Unit in its secretariat functions to research and inform the national accreditation structure. This body plus Q.A. staff will require training in all aspects of accreditation, including such areas as: global practice (through study tours and attendance at international conferences); and the development of standards and the process of self-evaluation (through local training sessions).

3. Capacity Building of Q.A. Unit

The Q.A. Unit will require additional staff in the near future. Although research and training augmentation can be supported by the Q.A. Centers in the national universities, the Minister of Education has acknowledged that additional staff will be necessary and has mentioned the potential of the Higher Education Project staff as a potential source of qualified assistance in this regard. The Q.A. Unit staff will require training concerning the role and responsibilities of a national Secretariat.

**National Information Needs:** It is very possible that most universities are unaware that a Q.A. Unit has been established in MOET and it is certain that all are unfamiliar with the process of accreditation and the necessity for universities to create an internal climate of self-evaluation both for their own purposes as well as in preparation for an external review. Necessary to an information campaign therefore are at least two activities:

1. Regional Conferences on Accreditation

Vietnamese higher education is physically situated in three distinct geographical areas: North, South and Midlands. At least two conferences (North and South) need to take place to which at least 2 representatives per university are invited. These two representatives, in turn, should be responsible for the quality assurance process internal to their respective institutions as well as be appointed to become the quality assurance liaisons to the national accreditation activity. It has been suggested that the Director of Academic Affairs and one other person be assigned from each institution.

2. Training Programs for Universities Undergoing the Pilot Accreditation Process

Up to five institutions of higher education should be designated to undergo a national pilot exercise of the accrediting process after the national standards for accreditation are drafted. To be responsive to the standards, these institutions will benefit from exposure to the process of institutional self-evaluation and will require training and monitoring during the approximate period October, 2002 - March, 2003.

In preparation for the above, it would behoove the government to *inventory the country's institutions of higher education* to determine how many fit into what categories (i.e., how many are called "universities"; how many are "people's founded"; how many private; how many foreign).

Note: Since the Bank's activities in April-June 2002, Vietnam has:

- Drafted the *Regulation on Higher Education Quality Accreditation*
- Drafted the *Institutional Accreditation Standards*
- Sent six representatives to the regional meeting of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education in Hong Kong in January, 2003, including key high level MOET staff (HEP Program funding)
- Sent one of the two QA Unit staff to the Netherlands for 3 months of training in quality assurance
- Aborted 2 international study tours: the first to take place June, 2002 and a second September, 2003
- Has two National Universities involved in the ASEAN University Network (AUN) which is focusing on quality assurance in universities

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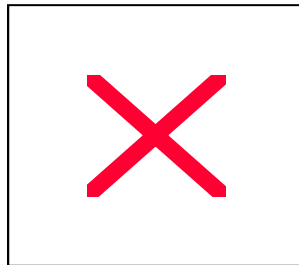
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[paascu.sphosting.com](http://paascu.sphosting.com)

University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific

[www.umap.org](http://www.umap.org)



Center for Quality Assurance in International Education  
National Center for Higher Education  
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 515  
Washington, DC 20036  
(202) 293-6104  
(202) 293-9177  
[cqaie@aacrao.org](mailto:cqaie@aacrao.org)  
[www.cqaie.org](http://www.cqaie.org)