

A Study of Self-Accreditation Policy in Taiwan Higher Education: Implementation, Impacts and Challenges

In 2013, the Ministry of Education (MOE) launched a new quality assurance policy called “self-accreditation”, aiming to give institutional autonomy as well as to establish their internal quality mechanism. In the self-accreditation policy, higher education institutions are encouraged to develop their own QA framework based on missions and features. Yet, the implementation of self-accreditation policy brought several impacts not only on higher education institutions, but also on external QA agencies due to a drastic decline of external review activities. The purpose of the study is to realize: (1) The establishment of internal quality assurance mechanism in self-accrediting higher education institutions; (2) The 4 Year No. Item Remarks challenges that self accrediting institutions faced under the new self accreditation policy; (3) The impact of self accreditation on higher education system and examining the new role of HEEACT. The research subjects in this study are the 14 universities with a self-accreditation status recognized by MOE. They have completed selfaccreditation procedures and submitted the accreditation results to MOE during the first half of 2016. There are several major findings: (1) most universities tended to follow the HEEACT QA model without many changes which has led to a lack of innovation. There are still a plenty of aspects in external review process which need to be improved, including selection of reviewers, composition of panel, final accreditation decisions, etc. Even so, internal quality assurance culture has been gradually developed and eventually embedded with campuses. (2) Self-accrediting universities faced several challenges, such as a balance between autonomy and accountability, efficiency and quality culture, data analysis and transparency, and a conflicting role of QA office of university. (3) HEEACT is supposed to transform itself from a regulator into a partner with higher education institutions. A risk-based QA model which adopts a light-touch approach for well-established institutions is more appropriate for the new cycle of institutional and program accreditation. Besides, HEEACT can provide more training programs with reviewers, university faculty and staff in order to facilitate quality culture embedded. In conclusion, the study addressed the future direction of quality education for policy makers, self accreditation institutions, and HEEACT.