

Internationalization of Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Cross-border Accreditation in Southeast Asian Nations

Since higher education regionalization and internationalization have become a global, competitive trend, Taiwan has begun a series of worldwide collaboration by initiating the “2016 New Southbound Policy”. As Taiwan’s sole national accreditor, HEEACT now performs a crucial, strategic role in the execution of practical and constructive collaborations with Southeast Asian countries. This study on the relationships between cross-border higher education and quality assurance analyzes the complexity of higher education regionalization, and by examining the data collected based on the outlook of ASEAN and EU SHARE, and case studies from six Southeast Asian countries: Indonesia, India, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam, the study is able to conduct comprehensive document analyses, along with executing international workshop, focus group and expert interviews, and survey. By cross-analyzing the education systems and QA agencies in the six countries, this study is able to understand the roles, functions and influences of higher education internationalization and regionalization. QA systems in Southeast Asian countries are mostly centralized, and with the QA systems and qualifications frameworks gradually moving towards a compatible integration, the QA agencies play a crucial role in promoting cross-border collaboration. Over the past decade, the Taiwan QA system has been gradually improving, allowing its QA agencies to acquire cross-border experiences. In facing the countries whose QA systems are still developing, Taiwan is willing to conduct “Oversea Accreditation” or assist in “Cross-border Joint Accreditation”. On the other hand, countries with developed QA systems can follow HEEACT with MQA’s cooperation in establishing a mutual recognition in academic degrees, which is expected to largely expand the enrollment of students in Southeast Asia, provided that all parties are fully engaged in ensuring a quality education. In the future, HEEACT also seeks to play a supporting and consulting role towards mainland China, where there is a language advantage and a smaller gap in cultural differences.