

## Assessment of Learning Outcomes and Internal Quality Assurance Building in Higher Education in Japan and Taiwan: The Role of External Quality Assurance Agencies and Universities

To determine how higher education institutions in Japan and Taiwan have structured measures of learning outcomes and built internal QA mechanisms, the national QA agencies in Taiwan and Japan, the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT) and the National Institution for Academic Degrees and Quality Enhancement (NIAD-QE), conducted a research project assessing learning outcomes and internal QA in higher education in the two countries. The project collected opinions from university and QA agency key persons, which provided diverse perspectives on internal QA mechanism building, and also on the learning outcomes measurement. According to the analysis and comparison of the research results, both Taiwan and Japan face the first challenge in defining student learning outcomes at institutional level. It is also another challenge to defining and selecting what learning outcome assessment methods are effective in order to understand what skills students have acquired. About the internal QA building, in both Japan and Taiwan, it seems that assessing learning outcomes has become a more common activity in today's universities; however, it remains a challenge to apply the assessment results to lead to further improvement, which eventually connects to an effective internal QA mechanism. As for the role of the QA agency, both HEEACT and NIAD-QE have developed their QA framework and standards, and have an influence on how universities proceed with their own QA. Therefore, external QA agencies both in Taiwan and Japan are expected to act as gatekeepers or guides to provide information and resources to support universities when needed