MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear friends and colleagues,

It's our pleasure to share the second edition of the HEEACT English Newsletter. Over the past months, we have successfully finished the second cycle of institutional accreditation and we are thinking of the new and innovative approaches for the third cycle of institutional accreditation after feedback and comments returned from universities. In addition to this, more than 300 programs voluntarily chose to be accredited by HEEACT. With the aims of promoting the internal quality assurance mechanism and pursuit of academic excellence, 7 universities applied for the MOE Self-Accreditation program.

One of the HEEACT's goals is to strengthen our internationalization engagement and continue to expand the QA network throughout substantial collaborations with our 21 foreign partners. Likewise, we had an exchange program in Australia with TEQSA in April. During May, MNCEA, the Mongolian national QA agency came to visit HEEACT for a week of learning and sharing QA experiences.

HEEACT is going to celebrate the 15th anniversary in 2020. It is time for us to review all our QA works to enhance governance and management effectiveness and efficiency, as well as to diversify our roles in Taiwan's higher education, including serving as a Think Tank. To make HEEACT more recognized worldwide, we would like to focus more on our research and internationalization capacities through the active engagement in INQAAHE and APQN in the year 2020. Last but not least, on behalf of HEEACT's President Huang, We’d like to share with you our activities and accomplishments in the 2nd edition English newsletter.

Happy Chinese New Year!
Jong-Tsun Huang and Angela Yung-Chi Hou
This book is devoted to the analysis of the quality assurance system and institutional research (IR) in Higher Education. IR now serves as the internal mechanism of the higher education institutions to achieve quality assurance. In response to the changes in internal and external environments. IR has not only played an important role in ensuring the quality of higher education, but it has also, via providing effective information, to meet demands for quantitative and qualitative analysis and evaluation. Moreover, IR has also contributed and promoted the overall academic quality of higher education.

The book contains 11 chapters, which begin with a theoretical analysis of quality assurance and institutional research. It is emphasized that the functions of IR include providing data and analysis and survey research to assist in managerial policy-making, enrollment management, and student outcomes assessment. Then it is followed by the exploration of the practical operation of IR and its relation to quality assurance in different countries, including the USA, the UK, Japan, Malaysia, Thailand, and Mainland China, respectively. Each chapter in this book is the product of thoughtful and in-depth research and analysis. Through the sharing of experiences and analytical account of the recent reform of related policies in different countries, this book provides to the readers more vivid and highly useful ideas for exploring the development of IR and its relationship to quality assurance.

In recognition of the important task of deepening academic knowledge, HEEACT, under the invitation of international publisher Springer, has begun to plot a comprehensive book in Taiwanese Higher Education for the wider readership across the global. Professor Angela Yung-Chi Hou, Sheng-Ju Chan and Tony Chiang act as the co-editors for this new ambitious attempt so as to cater for the knowledge gap in the higher education research community. This book will be contributed by the leading scholars in the field and it is composed of 18 chapters with three major parts. It is expected to be published in the mid of 2020.

Due to the unique historical, social and political background of Taiwan, the Taiwanese higher education system has entered its unique stage of development, and is still improving and growing in response to the changing environment and global trends. Throughout this ongoing process of achieving excellence for all, the higher education system has also been facing various challenges. This book, “Higher Education in Taiwan: Global, Political and Social Challenges and Future Trends", will explore the most important issues of the higher education in Taiwan from multi-perspectives: academics, universities, stakeholders, governments and students. It will also discuss the current situations of Taiwanese universities in facing the rapidly changing domestic and global environments and social structure, drawing on professional perspectives, data-based and systematic analysis. This book aims to discuss the most essential topics in understanding the development and changes of the higher education system in Taiwan, starting from investigating the historical, political and social background, then through exploring the internationalization and transformation, then finally guiding the readers to the frontier of rapid changes with emerging trends, current challenges and issues.
HEEACT held two cycles of program accreditation in 2009-2010 and 2012-2016 to ensure that the work of quality assurance is systematic and consistent. In general, program accreditation aims to continue the spirit of “ensuring institutions to provide students with an excellent learning environment”, and to emphasize the main idea of “ensuring student learning outcome”.

The third cycle of program accreditation started in 2019. Due to the change of program accreditation, from compulsory to voluntary, universities can now select other quality assurance agencies to conduct the program accreditation for them or to choose and conduct their program accreditation through their self-accreditation system. Universities are also given the right to not participate in any of the program accreditation processes. However, those who did not participate in any accreditation process would need to provide sufficient reasons and evidence to show the reviewers in the next institutional accreditation process that they have maintained a great quality culture and own a mature internal quality assurance mechanism.

The National Taipei University of Nursing and Health Sciences was the first university to implement the new system and apply for HEEACT Accreditation. The program Self-Assessment reports were submitted to HEEACT in August 2018, the on-site visit was conducted at the end of December 2018, then the final results of 8 programs were released in March 2019.

There are three major differences between the new and old system. First, the new system put more emphasis on IQA and quality culture rather than performance based on accountability. Second, accrediting standards were integrated into three dimensions: (1) Development and improvement of the department, (2) Faculty and Teaching, and (3) Students and Learning to reduce the preparing burdens. Third, the programs are given one of three possible results: accredited for a period of 6 years, accredited for a period of 3 years, or re-accreditation required. HEEACT accreditation team conducted the on-site visits to 19 institutions, and overall, 309 programs were reviewed by the end of 2019.

**Spotlights**

**HEEACT Program Accreditation**

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**Self-Accreditation**

In 2017, the MOE announced that programs accreditation shall be voluntary rather than compulsory in order to reduce the burden on universities and increase institutional autonomy. Thus, the universities or colleges can now choose to conduct self-accreditation at the program level. To ensure the quality, all universities who wish to conduct self-accreditation need to receive approval from HEEACT based on the completion of their self-accreditation plan and the trustworthiness of their accreditation result.

In 2019, there were nine universities conducting the self-accreditation. To date, only Yuan Ze University has accomplished its self-accreditation and recognized by HEEACT. The other eight universities, Asia University, Soochow University, National Central University, National Taiwan University of Science and Technology, Taipei Medical University, Ming Chuan University, Lunghwa University of Science and Technology and National Cheng Chi University are still in the first stage of their self-accreditation recognition process.
MOU Signed: JIHEE, JAPAN

HEEACT signed the MOU with Japan Institution for Higher Education Evaluation (JIHEE) on 26 of March 2019. During the INQAAHE 2019 Annual Conference, HEEACT delegation Prof. Dr. Angela Yung-Chi Hou, Prof. Dr. Sheng-Ju Chan, Dr. Hua-Chi Chou and Dr. Grace I-Jung Lu met the President of JIHEE, Dr. Noriaki Sagara, Secretary General, Mr. Toshihiro Ito and two of their senior directors Mr. Zhongmin Lu and Mr. Kazutoshi Enari to share each other’s accomplishments and challenges in accreditation and quality assurance.

JIHEE was established in 2004 as an organization to make evaluation of private universities, junior colleges, and other higher educational institutions in Japan. JIHEE has entered the third cycle of evaluation in 2018. Currently, HEEACT is planning the third cycle institutional accreditation. On October, HEEACT visited JIHEE with the aims to understand their implementation of accreditation. Besides, both agencies are looking forward to having further cross-border collaboration and possibly a joint accreditation in the future.

2019 HEEACT STAFF CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

Outbound: HEEACT Delegation Visits Australia Agency, TEQSA

Last year, HEEACT and TEQSA signed an MOU with the aims of strengthening the relationships between both agencies. From March 18th to March 20th, three of our staff participated in this exchange program. Both, HEEACT and TEQSA had opportunities to share more about the higher education systems in Taiwan and Australia. During this time, the staff visited TEQSA offices and were part of a series of sessions in which they learned more about TEQSA’s current operations and processes related to quality assurance and the regulation of the Australian Higher Education System and relationship with the higher education providers. Additionally, our staff visited the William Angliss Institute which is a higher education provider dedicated to the formal training and vocational education in Hospitality, Tourism and Culinary Arts.

The Staff Exchange Program culminated successfully where both agencies shared experiences and the lessons learned during these days. Likewise, this first Staff Exchange Program will continue to strengthen the relationships between HEEACT and TEQSA for further cooperation projects.

Inbound: International Staff Exchange Visitors, MNCEA

Mrs. Oyunchimeg Battumur and Mrs. Tumenjargal Nyamsuren, from Mongolian National Council for Education Accreditation, MNCEA visited HEEACT office from 13 to 16 May. To share HEEACT operations and Taiwan quality assurance system, HEEACT arranged a variety of discussions and activities, including an introduction to Taiwan Higher Education, a joint QA seminar, several discussions with HEEACT senior officers, campus tours at different universities, visiting professional QA agency, higher education classroom observation, and finally, a farewell session to share the experiences gained. The program not only provided a platform to all participants to share their experiences and ideas on the efforts of promoting quality assurance but also to establish more in-depth cooperation in the future.
The main purpose of Yushan Scholar Project is to promote the vibrant research energy of Taiwan and to invite and welcome scholars from around the world to join research teams in several Taiwanese universities. This project assists universities in Taiwan to attract the world’s elite scholars by providing internationally competitive salaries and research support. The MOE and universities jointly provide support measures required for talent attraction, such as providing research teams which will assist potential Yushan candidates in new research projects. There are two types of applications for Yushan Scholars:

1) Yushan Scholars are experienced scholars who already have outstanding contributions to their research fields. For these scholars, the universities may appoint them for three years as full-time teaching and research staff members, or as short-term exchange teaching and research staff members, to work for at least 3 months.

2) Yushan Young Scholars, are scholars who graduated from their doctoral degree within 10 years and have great potential in performing in their research fields. The Yushan Young Scholars can be appointed by universities as full-time teaching and research staff for at least 5 years.

For more information, please visit Yushan Scholar Project: https://yushan.moe.gov.tw/TopTalent/EN
After two cycles of institutional reviews, HEEACT would like to realize the changes and impacts of the quality assurance system over universities. The university representatives and students from 33 universities and colleges whoever took part in the external review process and procedures of the second cycle of the institutional review were invited to share their opinions on the roles of internal quality assurance office, IQA mechanism, and effectiveness. A total of 787 questionnaires were distributed, 715 returned, a response rate of 90.9%.

First of all, it showed that most universities developed a clear IQA mechanism and related regulations with the highest score of 4.32 on average. In addition, the QA units did support the academic units to implement the IQA mechanism and preparation of the internal review. In comparison, faculty members did not think that universities gave sufficient financial support and human resources to university QA office.

Second, 95% of the respondents agreed that the process and procedure of on-site visit in the internal review were adequate and appropriate with the highest score of 4.49. Yet, among respondents, top administrators had the highest level of satisfaction. When it came to self-assessment report writing, around 20% of the staff thought that the workloads were not equal and teammates needed to improve. Thirdly, the respondents indicated that IQA would facilitate the effectiveness of the external review. However, the respondents were worried that quality culture was not embedded on campus completely. Besides, it was found that student respondents strongly agreed on the method of the individual interview during HEEACT on-site visit. However, more than 40% of respondents did not think that the University informed them HEEACT institutional review and promoted the value to all stakeholders.

To conclude, the study shows that Taiwan higher education institutions are aware that they should be responsible for the quality of education on their own. There is perceived consciousness that internal quality assurance is a means to the success of external review by HEEACT, particularly preparation of on-site visit. Currently, student engagement is regarded as a central role in quality assurance and enhancement practices in several well-developed nations, such as the UK and Australia, Norway, etc. Students either act as one of the panels or takes part in the governance of the board of accreditors in these nations. In Taiwan, students are considered one of the significant sources who can provide advice and observation with external reviewers during the onsite visit.

They are arranged to be interviewed individually by the panel in order to share their learning experiences with the panel. The study shows that students realize the interview contents and process prior to the meeting but not the theme of the HEEACT institutional review clearly. Accordingly, institutions are expected to promote the external review activities with students and provide more information with them in different approaches.

The core value of quality assurance is continuous self-improvement. An institution is expected to become a learning organization through a well-established internal quality assurance mechanism. The Taiwan government definitely encourages universities to develop their features and strengths through a well-established internal quality assurance mechanism. However, it remains a very challenging job for universities to implement them collaboratively on campus, particularly, self-assessment report writing and student engagement. The process of instilling and embedding a quality culture remains problematic and time-consuming Taiwan higher education institutions.
The national qualifications framework (NQF) has become a global trend in the 21st century since the Bologna Process began in Europe. More than 150 countries are now developing and implementing their own NQFs; however, Taiwan has yet to develop one. Responding to the increasing needs of international student mobilization and the rapidly growing international market worldwide, in 2018, the Ministry of Education (MoE) initiated the development of the Taiwan National Qualifications Framework (TWQF). The MoE, therefore, commissioned the Higher Education Evaluation Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT) to conduct a pilot study assessing prospects, implementation methods, and potential challenges associated with the development of a first TWQF draft focused on higher education. As the outcome of the research project, a draft of the TWQF was developed, and it is presented in this booklet.

Objectives of the TWQF
In general, there are several objectives of the TWQF:

(1)To establish common descriptors for various types of qualifications to allow consistent acknowledgment of the learning outcome concept among stakeholders and to develop quality assurance mechanisms for such learning outcomes;
(2)To improve individuals’ access to education, training programs, and qualifications;
(3)To establish clear pathways for individuals to excel in their education or training and to encourage them in continuing their education;
(4)To make national qualifications transparent and to link them with qualifications from other countries;
(5)To increase education mobility and to foster mutual understanding and collaboration with higher education institutions across the world; and
(6)To increase both regional and international recognition of Taiwanese qualifications.

How Are the QF Levels Determined?
Eight levels are planned for the TWQF, and each level descriptor has three domains: knowledge, Skill, and Competencies. For knowledge, it focuses on the specialization and depth of the knowledge an individual possesses. Cross-cultural knowledge is also considered as one of the key element. As for skill, it focuses on the complexity of a skill and how different types of skills can be implied on a different level. The ability to withhold different cross-cultural insights is also considered to be important in the demonstration of skills by each individual. Finally, for competencies, responsibility and ethical awareness in the field of the profession of a person is considered as one of the most important.

Quality Assurance
A well-structured quality assurance system, both external and internal, for higher education has been fully developed in Taiwan. In 2005, a national quality assurance agency, the HEEACT, was established jointly by the MoE and 153 universities. All universities and colleges are reviewed in accordance with the University Act, and student learning outcomes have been the main focus of both institutional and program accreditation. Therefore, the development of the TWQF will help the already well-developed quality assurance system in setting more standardized descriptors of learning outcomes for the qualifications.
This will allow both national and international higher education stakeholders to acknowledge the concept of learning outcomes even more clearly and to connect such knowledge with the quality assurance process for education.
8 levels are planned for the TWQF, and each level descriptor has three domains

1. **Knowledge**
   - specialization
   - depth
   - cross-cultural insights

2. **Skills**
   - complexity
   - type
   - cross-cultural insights

3. **Responsibility and Autonomy**
   - characters and capacity
   - attitude
   - ethical awareness

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<tr>
<th>European Qualifications Framework (EQF)²</th>
<th>Taiwan Qualifications Framework (TWQF) 2019</th>
<th>ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF)²</th>
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<td>Doctoral Degrees</td>
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<td>Master's Degrees</td>
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<td>Bachelor's Degree</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Associate Bachelor's Degree</td>
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<td>• General Completion Study</td>
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<td>• Period: 5 or 2 years</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Senior Higher School Degree</td>
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**Notes:**

1. Please note that this chart does not indicate the corresponding relationship between EQF and AQRF.
2. According to the current educational system, there is no academic certificate between the degree of junior high and senior high. Thus, the content of Certificate 3, Certificate 2, and Certificate 1 are still under development.
On 28th March 2019, HEEACT was awarded the 2019 APQN Award of Staff Capacity Building. The award is presented by Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) to honor the member organizations who have made prominent contributions in training all kinds of staff capacity, supporting staff reviewers locally and/or regionally, especially those who have developed sound and effective material kit of training. The Awarding Ceremony took place during the Welcome Dinner of the APQN Academic Conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka. HEEACT is honored to win this award for two consecutive years.

In May 2018, HEEACT conducted the Staff Capacity Building Program, involving 5 participants of university and QA agency from Vietnam, Bangladesh, and Fiji. The program not only provided a platform to all participants to share its experiences and ideas on the efforts of promoting quality assurance but also to establish more in-depth cooperation in the future.

For the past decade, Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT) has dedicated immeasurable amount of effort into cultivating its staff and ensuring everyone received the courses that are constructive to his/her daily responsibilities as well as expanding boundaries, on top of the fundamental and advance knowledge on the operation and mission of the organization.

Currently, HEEACT has a total of 47 staff members: 3 research fellows, 7 specialized administrators/coordinators, 17 QA coordinators, and 20 research project coordinators (excluding top management of Board of Directors, Executive Director, Dean of Office, and adjunct research fellows). By offering basic and professional courses aligned to the current statuses of government policies, technological and higher education global trends, as well as stating an incentive system, HEEACT is trying to strike a balance between being academically driven, culturally inspired and practical, and will continuously expand its courses with current issues and trends that promote both career and personal growth.

The Taiwan Medical Accreditation Council (TMAC) has been awarded Recognition Status by the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) in April 2019. WFME Recognition Status has been awarded for ten years with immediate effect.

The TMAC is an authorized organization established by the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT) under the approval of the Ministry of Education (MoE). It was established in 2001 and conducts full reviews and follow-up visits for medical education programs. Currently, TMAC has accredited the twelve 6-year medical education programs and two post-baccalaureate medical educational programs provided by 13 medical schools.

WFME Recognition Status is the indicator to the medical education community, to students and to employers that the quality of medical education in schools or programs accredited by that agency is to an appropriate and rigorous standard. TMAC has been prepared the accreditation over one year; furthermore, it is the first time and the first medical education quality assurance (QA) agency in Taiwan to receive this recognition.