

2018-2019 INQAAHE Funding Scheme Project

INQAAHE Funding Scheme Research and Innovation 2019: A Study of Student Engagement in the Process of External Quality Assurance in Higher Education –the Taiwan Case

ABSTRACT

Trust and engagement in tertiary education provisions have been considered as the foundation of education sustainability and quality enhancement. Stakeholders' engagement in higher education, particularly students has always been one of the major concerns for quality assurance agencies around the world. However, even though students are considered as the center of all education systems, their voices may not be heard and even be ignored in the external and internal quality assurance mechanisms, especially in the Asian context. In the case of Taiwan, this research aims to understand how students participate in the current external and internal quality assurance process in Taiwan higher education. In addition, it will explore any possibilities to engage students appropriately in Asian QA systems.

The study adopts surveys and focus groups to collect relevant data. A national-wide student survey from the second cycle of institutional accreditation in 2017 and 2018 was conducted. Overall, 339 students from the 85 universities participated in the survey. Based on the initial result of the survey, 5 focus groups by various groups of stakeholders, including the reviewers, university administrative staff, and students, were held to collect their opinions on the current situations and issues of student engagement in both institutional governance and management as well as external quality assurance system.

There are several findings in the study. First, most respondents agreed that student engagement should be encouraged in terms of IQA and EQA. Second, level of student engagement in external quality assurance system would depend if students are provided with sufficient training in QA knowledge. Third, university respondents remained conservative about having students in the panel.