



HEEACT

Higher Education Evaluation and
Accreditation Council of Taiwan

HEEACT Overseas Program Accreditation Handbook

2024 Edition

Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan

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List of Acronyms

HEEACT	Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan
MOE	Ministry of Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
QA	Quality Assurance
SAR	Self-Assessment Report
PDCA	Plan-Do-Check-Act
TQID	Taiwan Quality Institution Directory

I. Introduction

1. About HEEACT

The Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT), established jointly by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and 153 higher education institutions (HEIs) in Taiwan on December 26, 2005, is a government-funded national quality assurance (QA) agency. With its vision of *Integrity, Professionalism, and Excellence*, HEEACT actively supports the government in planning accreditation and QA mechanisms, disseminates QA-related information, as well as enhances its professionalism and service quality in alignment with international QA networks and organizations. Additionally, it provides professional QA training courses, and supports HEIs in their endeavor to constantly improve their education quality through conducting third-party external accreditation. As a professional accrediting agency with global recognition and excellence in professional practice, HEEACT offers four core accreditation services, including Institutional Accreditation, Program Accreditation, Recognition of Self-Accreditation, and Overseas Program Accreditation.

2. HEEACT Overseas Program Accreditation

Since 2014, HEEACT has been commissioned by overseas HEIs to conduct program accreditation. The HEEACT Overseas Program Accreditation shares similar processes with Institutional Accreditation and Program Accreditation conducted in Taiwan, which entail the following stages:

- Preparation of a Self-Assessment Report (SAR);
- Document review;
- On-site visit;
- Decision-making; and
- Follow-up.

To support programs along the way of accreditation, HEEACT provides two online workshops to guide programs to demonstrate their capabilities in line with HEEACT's QA standards. The accreditation process will take approximately 1 to 1.5 years, depending on when programs submit their SARs.

Through the HEEACT Overseas Program Accreditation, HEEACT aims to: (1) help programs enhance their quality and develop distinct features; (2) promote the establishment of internal QA mechanisms and self-improvement mechanisms within programs; (3) help programs increase their international visibility; and (4) enhance cross-border student mobility.

3. Basic Principles

The HEEACT Overseas Program Accreditation Handbook provides a guideline for HEIs and programs which intend to apply for the HEEACT Overseas Program Accreditation. This Handbook enables the applying unit(s) (hereinafter referred to as "applicant(s)") to understand the requirements of application, accreditation standards and indicators, as well as accreditation process and procedures.

4. Eligibility and Application Procedure

The applicant(s) shall meet the following requirements:

- (a) Being accredited by a national QA agency; and
- (b) Having at least one cohort of graduates.

The applicant(s) shall submit an application form along with other required documentation to HEEACT. HEEACT will review the application and determine whether the application is eligible to proceed or not.

II. Quality Assurance Standards

QA standards, developed in alignment with the principles of fitness for purpose and the enhancement of quality culture, underpin the HEEACT Overseas Program Accreditation. The Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) mechanism is applied to both internal QA and external QA processes. Emphasizing the significance of student learning outcomes and measures, the HEEACT Overseas Program Accreditation prioritizes a comprehensive approach to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of programs. The three major standards and 12 sub-standards are indicated as follows:

Standard I: Program Development, Governance, and Self-improvement

- 1-1 Mission, vision, educational goals, and development plans
- 1-2 Curriculum planning and implementation;
- 1-3 Operations and administration support;
- 1-4 Self-assessment and continual improvement.

Standard II: Faculty and Teaching

- 2-1 Faculty composition and its relation with the program's educational goals, curriculum, and students' learning needs;
- 2-2 Capacity building and related support systems for faculty members;
- 2-3 Academic career development and related support systems for faculty members;
- 2-4 Teaching, academic, and professional performance of faculty.

Standard III: Students and Learning

- 3-1 Management of student enrollment and retention;
- 3-2 Course-related learning and support systems;
- 3-3 Other forms of learning and support systems;
- 3-4 Student/graduate learning outcomes and feedback system.

To encourage programs to develop and demonstrate their distinctive features and uniqueness, they may add one standard to undergo accreditation based on their features or needs.

III. Accreditation Process

1. Accreditation timeline

The HEEACT Overseas Program Accreditation pursues the principles of peer review and adhere to the following timeline and steps:

Table 1 Accreditation timeline for the applicant(s)

Time	Accreditation Tasks for Applicant(s)
6 weeks	1. Application Confirmed
	(1) Submitting an application form. (2) Signing a contract with HEEACT.
2 weeks	2. SAR writing workshops
	Participating in two SAR writing workshops.
36 weeks (at most)	3. SAR writing process
	Completing the SAR and related documentation within 36 weeks after the signing of contract.
2 weeks	4. SAR Submission
	(1) Submitting the SAR and related documentation. (2) Submitting supplemental documents, if requested by HEEACT.
6 weeks	5. SAR Review Feedback
	Receiving the SAR Review Feedback from the Review Panel.
2 weeks	6. Responses to the Feedback
	Submitting a written response to the SAR Review Feedback.
2 weeks	7. On-Site Visit Documents
	(1) Receiving the 2 nd SAR Review Feedback, if any. (2) Submitting the proposed interviewee list.

Time	Accreditation Tasks for Applicant(s)
1-2 weeks	8. On-Site Visit Preparatory Meeting
	Participating in an online preparatory meeting prior to the on-site visit.
2-4 weeks	9. On-Site Visit
	Receiving a 2-day on-site visit.
5 weeks	10. Draft Review Report
	Receiving the Draft Review Report within 5 weeks after the on-site visit.
2 weeks	11. Feedback to the Draft Review Report
	Submitting a written feedback to the Draft Review Report, if any.
2 weeks	12. Review Report Completed
	Receiving the Review Panel's responses to the feedback.
6 weeks	13. Accreditation Results Announced
	Receiving the accreditation results and Review Report via email (available on the Taiwan Quality Institution Directory (TQID) website as well).

2. Appointment of Reviewers

HEEACT will appoint two to four reviewers as a Review Panel to conduct an on-site visit.

3. Submission of the SAR

The applicant is required to submit a Self-Assessment Report (SAR), fact sheets featuring key statistics on program development, faculty, and students, as well as supporting documentation in English. These will serve as the primary basis for document review and the on-site visit. The content of the SAR shall be written in accordance with the accreditation sub-standards. In each sub-standard, the applicant shall describe the current state of affairs within each degree level (e.g., undergraduate degree, master's degree, and doctoral degree).

The SAR shall not exceed 80 pages per application and shall be written in 12-point Cambria font with 1.5 spacing. Supplementary documents (e.g., appendices) have no page limit.

The following documents shall be submitted as WORD and PDF files to the SAR Online Review System:

- (1) SAR;
- (2) Appendices of SAR; and
- (3) Fact Sheets.

The applicant is encouraged to follow the checklist for documentation preparation.

4. Scope of Data Collection

The information and data provided in the SAR and related documentation must cover the most recent three academic years. For example, an applicant scheduled for evaluation in 2024 must provide the relevant information and data from the academic years of 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023.

5. Itinerary of On-Site Visit

An on-site visit for the HEEACT Overseas Program Accreditation is usually completed in two days. The date and itinerary of an on-site visit may be adjusted as required. The itinerary of a typical on-site visit is presented in Table 2.

During an on-site visit, the Review Panel will review the applicant according to the accreditation standards by using the following methods:

- (1) visitation of facilities;
- (2) meetings and/or interviews with stakeholders; and
- (3) document review of SAR, fact sheets, and supporting documentation

The stakeholders may include executives of administrative offices, deans of academic offices, faculty members, administrative staff, students, graduates, and industry representatives. The applicant shall provide a list of proposed interviewees with detailed information to HEEACT in advance.

Table 2 Itinerary of On-Site Visit

	Time	Agenda
Day 1	09:00	Arrival
	09:00 – 09:20	Preparatory meeting
	09:30 – 10:00	Opening and the applicant’s presentation
	10:10 – 10:55	Interview with the Program Head
	11:05 – 11:55	Group interviews with faculty members
	12:00 – 13:30	Lunch break
	13:30 – 13:45	Document review and preparatory meeting
	13:50 – 14:40	Group interview with students
	14:50 – 15:40	Group interviews with staff members
	15:40 – 16:00	Review Panel discussion
Day 2	09:00	Arrival
	09:00 – 09:20	Preparatory meeting
	09:30 – 10:20	Group interviews with alumni
	10:30 – 11:20	Group interviews with employers (representatives from industry)
	11:20 – 12:20	Facility Tour
	12:20 – 13:30	Lunch break
	13:30 – 15:00	Review Panel discussion & Completion of indicator evaluation checklist
	15:00 – 15:20	Exit meeting with the Study Program
	15:30	Departure/End of the on-site visit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the event of any changes in the itinerary, the latest notification from HEEACT shall prevail. 		

If a scheduled on-site visit is not possible for the Review Panel to conduct due to natural disasters (e.g., pandemic, earthquake, flood, typhoon) or unexpected events (force majeure), HEEACT shall re-arrange an on-site visit or execute a virtual site visit, instead. A virtual site visit has identical goals and works very similarly to an on-site visit. However, the schedule for a virtual site visit may subject to change depending on time difference and circumstances with further notice.

6. Accreditation Results

The applicant may be awarded one of the statuses for the HEEACT Overseas Program Accreditation:

- (1) Accredited for a validation period of 6 years
- (2) Accredited for a validation period of 3 years
- (3) Failed in accreditation

HEEACT provides certificates in Traditional Chinese and English for each degree level of the accredited program. The accreditation results will be published on the TQID website in the overseas accreditation section. Please refer to Table 3 for more details of the accreditation results.

Table 3 Accreditation Results

Accreditation results	Further actions
Accredited for a validation period of 6 years	After three years of being accredited, the accredited program shall submit a self-improvement report which describes the implementation of related improvement measures as a reference for future accreditations.
Accredited for a validation period of 3 years	After two years of being accredited, the accredited program shall submit a self-improvement report which describes the implementation of related improvement measures as a reference for future accreditations.
Failed in accreditation	The program may re-apply for the HEEACT Overseas Program Accreditation; however, this shall be taken as a new application.

7. Appeals

Should an applicant object to the accreditation results for which HEEACT is commissioned to conduct, such applicant may file a written appeal to HEEACT within 30 days from the next day after receipt of the notice of the accreditation results. HEEACT then convenes an Appeals Review Committee for further actions.

IV. Accreditation Fees

Fees required for the HEEACT Overseas Program Accreditation include the following:

1	Application fee
2	Initial costs and preparatory expenses (including SAR workshops)
3	Reviewer training, workshops, and meetings
4	Document review
5	On-site visit expenses (excluding the accommodation, flight tickets, local logistics and transportation, and meals for the Review Panel, as well as the local logistics and transportation, and meals for HEEACT Coordinators)
6	Committee meetings: report review, feedback, and decision making
7	Result announcement and accreditation certification
8	Administration fee (including human resources, data analysis, meetings, printing)



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