

Planning Project for the New Cycle of Institutional Accreditation for Universities and Colleges

Drawing on international developments in institutional accreditation and the current context of higher education in Taiwan, this study examines key issues in the existing institutional accreditation system through document analysis and consultative meetings. Perspectives from diverse stakeholder groups were collected with respect to accreditation planning, implementation procedures, result utilization, and mechanisms for continuous improvement, thereby informing the development of feasible practices and an evaluative framework for the forthcoming accreditation cycle. The findings are as follows.

First, international developments in institutional accreditation indicate gradual trends toward diversification and differentiation of accreditation models, alongside with increased attention to post-accreditation follow-up mechanisms and closer linkages between accreditation results and policy instruments. Second, the current status and major issues of institutional accreditation in Taiwan can be summarized across three dimensions. At the level of policy planning and system design, key challenges include the limited capacity of existing accreditation frameworks and indicators to adequately reflect institutional diversity, insufficient integration of quantitative data, and constraints in aligning reviewer expertise with diverse institutional contexts. At the level of implementation and procedures, concerns are raised regarding limited flexibility in the duration of on-site visits, as well as the absence of timely feedback and substantive two-way dialogue following site visits. With respect to result utilization and continuous improvement, the findings further indicate that accreditation results have

not been effectively linked to incentive mechanisms or higher education governance decisions, while mechanisms to promote inter-institutional learning and the dissemination of good practices remain underdeveloped. Based on these findings, this study proposes feasible approaches for the forthcoming cycle of institutional accreditation. At the policy level, these include maintaining an accreditation-based model while strengthening relevance and inclusiveness to respond to institutional diversity and emerging forms of education, as well as enhancing data integration across relevant agencies to improve database interoperability and overall evaluation effectiveness. At the level of quality assurance agencies, the study highlights the importance of strengthening reviewer expertise, refining conflict-of-interest and recusal mechanisms, reinforcing post-accreditation follow-up processes, and aligning international developments with local contexts. At the institutional level, universities and colleges are encouraged to strengthen self-evaluation practices, develop distinctive institutional features, and foster an internal quality assurance culture. This study presents corresponding policy and practical recommendations to inform the ongoing refinement of Taiwan's institutional accreditation system in the next cycle.

Key words: institutional accreditation, differentiated accreditation
Panning, internal quality assurance culture