

# Learning Outcomes and Quality Assurance Challenges for Japanese Higher Education

**Akiyoshi Yonezawa\***

Associate Professor  
Tohoku University

**Rie Mori**

Associate Professor  
NIAD-UE

## Abstract

Under increasing pressure stemming from globalization, learning outcomes and quality assurance in higher education have become central issues for countries throughout the world. The challenges facing Japan in addressing this issue could be categorized as particularly difficult. In this paper, the authors examine recent policy trends that emphasize learning outcomes and quality assurance in Japanese higher education, and the social background of these governmental initiatives. Their analysis presents a policy dilemma: The decentralized nature of learning and research activities at the higher education level must somehow be reconciled with the inherently centralizing impetus of social requests for accountability and quality assurance towards government. The authors highlight the implications of this discussion for East Asian countries, outlining how the performance of higher education systems might be optimized by combining initiatives by the state, academics, and the market in a globalized era.

**Keyword:** Quality Assurance; Learning Outcome; Japan