

INTERNATIONALISATION AND QUALITY: TWO TRENDS IN ONE

The rapid and continuous transformation of the landscape of higher education raises many questions and challenges for higher education institutions. These changes are being felt at all levels. Higher education has taken on new responsibilities and must not only transmit knowledge for its own sake, but also provide skilled labour and produce new knowledge. Moreover, demand for education is continuing to rise at a time of ever tighter budget constraints, and the emergence of for-profit providers and new learning systems (often based on information technologies) is broadening the provision and type of education programmes. Lastly, the international dimension of this trade in education services, which has been included in the GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services), transcends geographic boundaries and raises questions about the relevance of existing models. All these factors are prompting institutions to rethink their role and objectives and undertake reform, and also raise doubts as to whether any regulation or standard-setting in this field can be provided through national frameworks.

Although institutions and governments are able to respond to some changes, the existing structures provide them with relatively few means of assuring the quality of higher education at a time when it is undergoing rapid internationalisation. The international mobility of students, the creation of branch campuses in foreign countries and e-learning are all factors that make quality assessment difficult. The OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), is conducting a study¹ on existing systems and quality assurance and accreditation trends in post-secondary education. This study shows that in many cases, quality

1. *International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and Recognition of Qualifications in Post-Secondary Education*, forthcoming OECD Publication to be released in June 2004.

A brief definition of internationalisation and quality assurance:

Internationalisation

Internationalisation is generally seen to have two major components. "Internationalisation at home". It emphasises domestic students and faculty, curriculum, research, extracurricular activities and liaison with local cultural and ethnic groups. It includes dealing with the implications of cross-border education, especially the integration of international students/scholars into campus life, teaching and research. "Education abroad or across borders". It includes development projects, institutional-level academic exchanges and partnerships, and commercial or trade initiatives. Cross-border education involves the mobility of four elements: people (students/scholars/professors), education programmes, providers (higher education institutions and new private for-profit companies) and academic collaborative projects.

Quality assurance

Quality Assurance refers to a set of approaches and procedures regarding the measurement, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintenance, or enhancement of quality of higher education institutions/providers and programs, or processes by which the achievement of education program standards, established by institutions, professional organisations, government and other standard setting bodies, is measured.

evaluation systems are not sufficiently geared to cross-border and private education programmes. It is not a foregone conclusion that internationalisation and high-quality education and diplomas necessarily go hand in hand. Although curricula with an international component should be viewed as a positive development, it does not follow that all programmes that are not covered by traditional accreditation systems are of high quality.

■ *Quality assurance in internationalisation: a necessary approach...*

This raises the issue of whether quality assurance in this field is really necessary: do accreditation agencies still meet a need in light of these new education providers and services? In fact, the continual increase in the number of parameters makes it even more important to have stable and reliable reference standards. Students, businesses and governments all wish to be able to assess the quality of the services being proposed. Quality assurance also makes it possible to prevent problems and abusive practices. As international trade in higher education services develops, quality

assurance constitutes a way of regulating this rapidly expanding market. It protects learners as consumers, and defends academic values in the broad sense.

■ *...not easy to define...*

Many questions have arisen regarding both the evaluation methods that should be used and the form that evaluating agencies should take. In particular, debate is focused on what should be evaluated, in the light of the new trends: the quality of institutions, of curricula or of individual disciplines? Who will do this monitoring, and how? Although a consensus seems to be emerging about how the tasks of evaluation should be distributed, in particular as regards the respective roles of governments and universities, many questions are still unanswered as to what should be monitored and how the results of these evaluations should be processed. The more universities diversify their missions and the greater the number of providers, the more complex the implementation of quality assurance systems will become. For example, the use of new technologies and student mobility will require quality assurance agencies to move away from the traditional approach focused

■■■ on the institutional capacity and reputation of schools and to shift towards an approach geared to measuring teaching capacity and effectiveness. A final question remains, i.e. what can be done to solve the problems that stem from this disparity of national structures and methodologies? What models should be adopted? Many initiatives have emerged to try to meet this need to set standards and they are taking a variety of forms. They have been sponsored by international networks of quality assurance institutions, international associations, consortia, networks of higher education institutions and professional organisations. For example, UNESCO and the OECD have been asked to work on the development of guidelines on «Quality provision in cross-border higher education»². We can also add that professional organisations are very active, in particular, and are encouraged by the considerable trade flows between countries and existing trade agreements. They support the recognition of qualifications and the establishment of international quality recognition systems. Nevertheless, these efforts have their limitations and come up against strong national cultural and academic traditions.

■ ...and that must be further improved

It would appear that international standards can be implemented more easily in certain disciplines that are subject to strong commercial pressures. In an article published in the IMHE Journal³, Dirk van Damme addresses this subject and describes four possible ways that international quality assurance systems might develop:

- > The first model is based on a strengthening of existing national agencies
- > The second would be based on real co-operation and networking in cross-border projects
- > The third would involve implementing a framework and standards of meta-accreditation of quality assurance agencies
- > The fourth would be the development of genuine international quality assurance schemes.

2. For more information : www.oecd.org/edu/internationalisation/guidelines

3. Article by Dirk van Damme, pages 93-136; IMHE Journal, *Higher Education Management and Policy*, Volume 14, No. 3, OECD 2002 ISSN 1013-851X.

As each system has advantages and disadvantages, the author suggests that a predominant model will only emerge over time as the market develops. This will entail two key stages:

- > Institutions will have to develop clear institutional strategies for internationalisation in order to create a sense of ownership and accountability
- > There will have to be greater co-ordination between the agencies in charge of assuring quality in higher education and the promoters of internationalisation.

■ An example: the Internationalisation Quality Review (IQR)

An important element of the response to these issues is institutional self improvement. To assist this process, an internationalisation quality review project has been set up jointly by IMHE, the European University Association (EUA), the Academic Co-operation Association (ACA), in co-operation with the International Network for Quality Assurance (INQAAHE). The project is designed to assist institutions in evaluating their international activities and planning strategic action to meet the challenges of globalisation. Many institutions have already participated in this project, which was managed by the EUA until 2002. The following questions are asked at the outset of these reviews:

- > Does the institution have an internationalisation strategy?
- > To what extent is this strategy integrated into the institution's key mission and activities?

4. – Dr. Hans de Wit, Senior International Advisor, Universiteit van Amsterdam, Netherlands
 – Isabel Cristina Jaramillo MBA, Co-ordinator for International Relations, Asociación Colombiana de Universidades (ASCUN)
 – Dr. Jocelyne Gacel Avila, Coordinadora de Cooperación Académica, Universidad de Guadalajara, México
 – Dr. Jane Knight, Visiting Professor at the University of Toronto, Canada.

Some links

<http://www.esib.org> : The National Unions of Students in Europe
<http://www.chea.org/index-iqr.htm> : Council for Higher Education Accreditation
<http://www.enqa.net/> : European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/rec_qual/recognition/index_en.html : European Commission, Recognition of Qualifications
<http://www.acenet.edu/> : American Council on Education
http://portal.unesco.org/education/ev.php?URL_ID=12516&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201 : UNESCO Higher Education Mobility, Quality and Innovation
<http://www.inqaahe.org/> : International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (many links with quality agency)

- > Has this strategy been successful and how can it be improved?
- > How adaptable are decision-making processes to the rapidly changing international environment?

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■ A new area for study: Latin America

In addition, IMHE, in co-operation with the World Bank, is taking an interest in changes in higher education and internationalisation in certain Latin American countries. This study led by a team⁴ is aimed at a number of objectives: identifying trends, analysing risks and opportunities, analysing the context and promoting interest in this topic. A publication will be released soon on this subject.

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For more information on the OECD's work on the internationalisation and quality of education:

IMHE info No. 1 2002 and No. 1 2003
<http://www.oecd.org/edu/higher>

Education Policy Analysis: 2002 and 2003 Editions. OECD Publications
 November 2002, ISBN 9264199314,
 November 2003, ISBN 9264104550

Higher Education Management and Policy, Volume 14, No. 3, OECD 2002
 ISSN 1013-851X

The IMHE welcomes the following new members :

- > Agence de mutualisation des universités et établissements d'enseignement supérieur (AMUE), France.
- > Korean Educational Development Institute, Korea.

ACUCA-IMHE seminar on governance and accountability, Hong Kong Baptist University, 24-25 October 2003

Hosted by Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), the two-day seminar on «Governance and Accountability» jointly sponsored by Association of Christian Universities and Colleges in Asia (ACUCA) and Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE) was a great success. Among the 37 participants from ACUCA and IMHE member institutions in Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Korea, Philippines, Sweden, Taiwan and Thailand were 25 vice-presidents, presidents or members of boards of governors. The challenges in governing a modern university and the different reform strategies were the main subject debated.



Elsewhere in OECD

■ Conference on Skills Upgrading, Copenhagen, Denmark, 16 June 2004

Despite a growing need to train the workforce and general support being vowed to lifelong learning, industrialised countries may have paid insufficient attention to the low-skilled. A key question therefore is whether a more strategic approach should now be taken. A major OECD conference will take place in Copenhagen on 16 June 2004 to discuss this issue and the preliminary findings of an OECD LEED (Local Economic and Employment Development) study will be made available as a background for discussion.

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■ A conference on «School Safety and Security»

was held in Paris from 12-14 November 2003. The event was organised by the OECD Programme on Educational Building and the United States Department of Education. The meeting focused on safety and security risks assessment in schools; crisis planning and management; infra-structural approaches to school safety; collaborative approaches to school safety; and education, training and support.

For more information,
www.oecd.org/edu/schoolsafety

■ Educational Facilities and Risk Management: Natural Disasters

This publication addresses the implications and effects of natural disasters, and notably earthquakes, on educational buildings and the appropriate design and use of facilities, both in their role as protection for their everyday users and in their role as emergency shelter for potential survivors.

ISBN 92-64-10144-6,
books@turpinltd.com

■ New issues of the Journal of the OECD Programme on Educational Building (PEB)

A new library for Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (Ireland) and a building development plan at Laval University (Quebec, Canada) are presented in the latest issue of «PEB Exchange». These and other articles devoted to the design, use and management of school and university facilities appear in the February issue of this journal.

ISSN 1018-9327,
subscriptions@turpinltd.com

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

Higher Education Management and Policy:

Volume 16 Issue 1.
OECD Publications 2003,
ISSN 1682-3451



The journal addresses leaders and managers of institutions of higher education, researchers and policy makers in the field of institutional management. It covers the field of institutional management through articles and reports on research projects, and provides a source of information on activities and events organized by OECD's Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE).

The PISA 2003 Assessment Framework: Mathematics, Reading, Science and Problem Solving Knowledge and Skills.



OECD Publications 2003,
ISBN 926410173X

Are students well prepared to meet the challenges of the future? Are they able to analyse, reason and communicate their ideas effectively? Do they have the capacity to continue learning throughout life? The OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) provides some answers to these questions. It assesses the extent to which students near the end of compulsory education have acquired some of the knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in society.

Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap.

OECD Publications 2004,
ISBN 9264105646



Effective information and guidance systems are essential to support the implementation of these policies. Yet there are large gaps between these policy goals and the capacity of national career guidance systems. Based upon a review conducted in 14 OECD countries, the publication explores how the gap between career guidance services and public policy might be narrowed.

IMHE CALENDAR

- 1-2 April** 62nd meeting of the IMHE Directing Group, Paris.
- 16-21 April** *Strategic Management Seminar for institutional leaders*, University College, Cork, Ireland. Contact: Jacqueline.Smith@oecd.org
- 5-7 May** *Research as an Agent for Transformation and Development*, ACU-SARIMA International Conference with IMHE sponsorship. Cape Town, South Africa. For information: www.acu-sarima.com
- 7-8 June** *The University of the 21st Century*, Okanagan University College, British Columbia, Canada. Contact: mobrien@ouc.bc.ca
- 18-19 June** EUA/IMHE Managing the University Community Workshop "Research Management: Building a strategy and funding it", Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain. Contact: Jacqueline.Smith@oecd.org
- 25 July** *Internationalisation of higher education in Latin-America*, Sao Paulo, Brazil. Contact: Jan.Karlsson@oecd.org
- 26-27 August** *Communicating in Higher Education: Image and Reality*, Paris, France. Contact: Jan.Karlsson@oecd.org

"What works" in using the institutional image to promote access

How universities and other HEIs communicate with their various stakeholders is the theme of the seminar that IMHE is organising on 26-27 August in Paris. The seminar, *Communicating in Higher Education: Image and Reality*, will examine how the image projected by institutions can contribute to the shaping and fulfilling their mission. External relations and communication strategies nowadays are important for achieving many institutional goals, be it for widening of their admission base, for recruiting students internationally, in the competition for funding – or even for good placement on ranking lists.

Registration form at: www.oecd.org/edu/higher

- 27-31 August** *Strategic management seminar for university leaders in Latin America*, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, Brazil. Contact: Jacqueline.Smith@oecd.org

- 13-15 September** 17th IMHE general conference, *Choices and Responsibilities: Higher Education in the Knowledge Society*, Paris, France. Contact: Valerie.Lafon@oecd.org

General Conference 2004

The 2004 IMHE General Conference will focus on some of the challenges faced by higher education in today's "knowledge society". These challenges are regrouped under 5 themes.

1. New funding and governance mechanisms
2. Access and equity, impact on the management of the institution
3. New missions and strategies for institutions
4. New knowledge, research and knowledge creation
5. Human resources issues

The participants are invited to bring forward their findings and ideas on various sub-themes. Proposals are invited from policy makers and institutional leaders and managers as well as from experts studying these issues.

For more information and enrolment www.oecd.org/edu/imhegeneralconference2004

- 15 September** 63rd meeting of the IMHE Directing Group, Paris.
- 11-12 October** 3rd OECD Forum on Trade in Educational Services, Sydney, Australia. Contact: Kurt.Larsen@oecd.org



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