The role of institutions and academics in accountability

Elaine El-Khawas
Professor of Education Policy
George Washington University
Washington DC, USA

The accountability debate has focused on broad objectives.

Focus of these remarks:
How universities and other institutions can develop and use outcome measures for student learning.

Some recent initiatives look at student performance/outcomes.

The Quality Assurance Agency (UK):
statement on subject benchmarks.

US universities: using student outcome measures; developing portfolios.

Other agencies and countries have paid attention to student outcomes.
Still Neglected:

- Institutional implementation.
- The role of academics.

Institutional-level Steps to Introduce Assessment

- Planning:
  Develop instruments suitable for all study programs.
  Develop assessment criteria, cut-offs and consequences.
  Develop a program improvement strategy, based on assessment results.

Institutional Steps........

Program-level implementation.

Develop an administrative plan and schedule.
Develop a reporting process for public audiences.
Implement program improvement.
Critical issues in the planning stage

• Who will be in charge.
• Selecting instruments...or developing new ones.
• Determining criteria and cutoffs.
• Designing a program improvement strategy.

Critical issues in the implementation stage

Developing a schedule for implementation.
When will decisions count.
Interpreting results for public audiences.
Interpreting results for program improvement.