AN OVERVIEW OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: THE MALAYSIAN EXPERIENCE

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OUTLINE

• Evolution in Education and Quality Assurance System in Malaysia
• Quality in Higher Education
• Quality Assurance Framework
• Challenges
Evolution (or Revolution?) in the Malaysian Education and Quality Assurance System

Pre 1996
- Ministry of Education-regulatory body
- QA internal matter of institutions
- Qualifications-diversity/Public/Private
- Recognition by specific authorities

1996 Six Legislations for Reforms—
- Access & Quality of private providers
  - 1997 QA for private providers (LAN)
  - Beginning of formal QA

1998 - 2007
- QA Implementation and consolidation
  - 2002 -05 Development of qualifications framework
  - 2004 Ministry of Higher Education
  - 2007 LAN was succeeded by MQA

2008 -
- QA for all HEIs
- MQF be upheld by QA processes
- COPPA & COPIA
- Enhanced by Programme Standards & CCGs
- Accreditation and audit
- Rating: (SETARA)
- Quality HE -K economy

National Developmental Policy & Plan
"Innovative Human Capital - Quality HE"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National HE Strategies - Innovative Human Capital</th>
<th>Expectations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Access and Equity</td>
<td>• HEIs are “essential nodes in an innovation system, producing &amp; attracting human capital needed for innovation”.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Quality of Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>• Autonomy with accountability</td>
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<td>3. Research and Innovation</td>
<td>• Social, economic and political impacts</td>
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<td>4. Strengthening of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)</td>
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<td>5. Internationalisation</td>
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<td>6. Lifelong Learning</td>
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<td>7. MoHE Delivery System</td>
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Quality in HE

Quality has become a dynamic concept, adapting constantly as societies undergo profound societal and economic transformation. “Old notions of quality are no longer enough.” (Ministers of Education at a Round Table in UNESCO (2003)

“Quality is a slippery concept”
- Definition/expectation differs between stakeholders.
- Is it a rope, wall, fan, sword-blind men touching an elephant.
- Contextualized and fitness for specified purpose.
Quality of Higher Education

What does quality mean to you? Whose dimension - institutions, academics, students, industry, employers, community and government?

“Learner focus”

Means of Providing Confidence of Quality

Approaches of External Dimension
- Quality Assurance - Quality Assured
- Accreditation Requirements
- Quality Audits
- ISO Certification
- Excellence Model - awards
- Rankings and Ratings
- Benchmarked - Benchmarking
- Recognition of Qualifications
MQA’s Quality Framework
“External and Institutional Internal Arrangements”

Malaysian Qualifications Agency est. 01/11/2007

- “Internationally recognised QA agency for the purpose of enhancing public confidence of the Malaysian Higher Education qualifications”.
- Separation of functions-Council, Accreditation Committees, Agency and Assessors
  - Supports Outcomes Based Education
  - Guardian of the Malaysian Qualification Framework
  - Implementation through QA processes and QA standards
  - Maintains a Register of Accredited Qualifications
Governing Philosophy of MQA

“Quality assurance is an ongoing process and it is the responsibility of all parties involved. Important for MQA to continuously review its quality assurance practices to ensure their relevancy, reliability, adaptability and effectiveness to address the ever changing environment within which higher education operates.

MQA hopes that both COPPA and COPIA would assist institutions to enhance their quality provisions through the self-review and internal assessment processes as well as the external audit conducted by the MQA.

In the spirit of shared responsibility and balancing the demands of autonomy, flexibility and accountability, the MQA looks forward to continuous collaboration with all stakeholders in enhancing the quality of higher education in Malaysia.”

- COPPA – Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation
- COPIA – Code of Practice for Institutional Audit

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Shared Vision and Responsibility for Quality

- Strategic partnership with local and external stakeholders
  - HEIs- Councils of Deans, staff, students
  - Professional bodies (joint technical committees - accreditation of programmes)
  - Non-statutory professional associations
  - Skills Authority
  - Ministry/Agencies/NGOs
  - Students
  - QA counterparts- MOUs – AUQA, NZQA, NQA
  - International QA networks- INQAAHE, APQN, AQAN, BAN

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Quality Assurance Related Principles

- **Quality assurance** comprises planned and systematic actions (policies, strategies, attitudes, procedures and activities) to provide adequate demonstration that quality is being achieved, maintained and enhanced, and meets the specified standards of teaching, scholarship and research as well as student learning experience.
- Voluntary (compliance)
- Developmental
- Promote institutional responsibility for quality
  - internal quality assurance system
  - Learner centred
- External Peer evaluation
- Professionalism, transparency integrity, objectivity and fairness

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Quality Assurance Framework

External and Internal Quality Audits

- External Quality assurance
- Programme Accreditation
- Institutional audits

MQA Implements MQF

Institution

Applies for Accreditation or institutional audit

Results Feedback & Support

Internal Quality Assurance system
- self-assessment and CQI

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QA Documents

The Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation (COPPA)
sets out guidelines to HEP and Assessors in relation to programme accreditation

The Code of Practice for Institutional Audit (COPIA)
sets out guidelines to HEP and Assessors in relation to institutional audit

Guidelines to Good Practices (GGPs)
sets out guidelines pertaining to non-curriculum matters, e.g. student intake, library and education resources

Programme Standards
sets out guidelines pertaining to curriculum and programme design

MQF and other QA Documents

Level of Adherence

- MQF ====== Generic statements on Generic issues
- CoP ====== Specific statements on Generic issues
- GGP ====== Generic statements on Specific areas
- PSs ====== Specific statements on Specific areas

Level of Prescriptiveness

MQF = Malaysian Qualifications Framework
CoP = Codes of Practice
GGP = Guidelines on Good Practices
PSs = Programme Standards

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Malaysian Qualifications Framework

Outcome Based Education - Quality of Graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 8</th>
<th>Doctorate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 7</td>
<td>Masters</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>Bachelor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>Advanced Diploma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Diploma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
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Credits load & Learning Outcomes Descriptors

1. Knowledge
2. Values attitude and professionalism
3. Problem solving and scientific skills
4. Managerial and entrepreneurial skills
5. Communications, leadership and team skills
6. Information management and lifelong learning skill
7. Social skills and responsibilities
8. Practical skills

Quality Assurance Standards – Scope of Assessment

Policies, Processes and Practices

1. Institutional vision, mission, goals, strategies and values
2. Programme design and delivery
3. Assessments
4. Student selection and support services
5. Academic Staff
6. Educational Resources
7. Programme Monitoring and Review
8. Governance, Leadership and Administration
9. Continual Quality Improvement NB – Culture of self improvement - Periodic Internal Quality Audit

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External Quality Assessment and Audits

- Programmes - Accreditation “Voluntary Compliance” - mandatory by policies

  Compliance to Malaysian Qualifications Framework
  Assuring programme quality
  - Stage 1 - Assessment for Certificate Minimum Quality (approval/provisional accreditation)
  - Stage 2 - Submission of Programme Self Review (IQA) - (EQA) assessment by peers/onsite for full accreditation
  - Stage 3 - Registration in the MQR
  - Stage 4 - Programme maintenance audits (no reaccreditation)

- Institutional Audits-Institutions/discipline or thematic
- NB. Academic Performance Audit and Rating

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Institutional Internal Quality (IQA) Audit/Self Assessment-CQL

- Improving institutional system for quality
- Establish internal quality systems for quality assurance - a quality unit
- 9 areas of QA requires structures, policy, processes, resources and mechanisms
- Conduct programme self assessment for programme accreditation and institutional audit
- NB. Self accrediting universities freed from MQA programme accreditation

Auditors Involvement

IQA

Quality standards and criteria, Procedures, Evaluative approach, Preparation for visits, Panel, Quality of auditors, Code of Ethics

EQA

http://repository.widyatama.ac.id
Other Institutional Measures Expected

- Establish benchmarking and KPIs.
- Enhancing inter or multidisciplinary approach.
- Graduates’ attribute survey, tracer study, employers’ satisfaction & other indicators.
- Institutional responsibility for quality.
- R & D.
- Demand strong stakeholders collaboration internal, local and external and international.
- Seeking to entrench quality culture.

Challenges

- A young framework.
- Supporting capacity building.
- Quantity and quality dilemma.
- Maintaining an overarching /umbrella role of the MQF or a seamless framework.
- Dealing with diversity – enhancing creativity.
- APEL assessment-appropriate access widening.
- Institutional conservatism, resistance and capacity,
- Seeking a pragmatic and common sense approach for implementation.
- Benchmarking with other frameworks.
- New delivery methods.
THANK YOU

www.mqa.gov.my