Local and International Good Practices in the Governance and Quality Assurance of the Self-financing Post-secondary Education Sector
Scope of the Study

- Conduct research and analysis through relevant publication, database, literature and Internet
- To identify major development and models of best practices from the local, regional and international perspectives
- To conduct informal discussion with relevant stakeholders
Methodology

- **Search engines/library resources**
  - Popular search engines like Google
  - Library sources at local universities

- **Websites of educational agencies overseas**

- **Websites of international and multi-lateral organisations**
  - UNESCO/World Bank/OECD/EU

- **Discussions with stakeholders and key informants**
  - Local self-financing post-secondary education sector (23 institutions visited)
  - Local QA bodies (HKCAAVQ, QAC and JQRC)
  - Key informants overseas (2 institutions visited)
Governance and quality assurance: practices abroad
Recommendations of international organisations


- Internal quality management systems make full use of competencies of stakeholders such as students and graduates
- Provide accurate, reliable and easily accessible information on procedures of external and internal QA
- Ensure transparency of the financial status
Recommendations of multilateral organisations

European standards and guidelines for quality assurance

- Regular feedback from employers
- Participation of students in QA
- Ensure resources to support student learning are adequate and appropriate
- Regularly publish up-to-date, impartial and objective information about the programmes and awards
- External QA reports should be published
Recommendations of multilateral organisations

Chiba principles on QA for higher education in Asia Pacific

- Safeguard and promote **public confidence** in quality
- **Clarity** and **transparency** in QA processes
- Generate reliable public information and reports about programmes, awards and QA processes
- **QA standards and criteria** are **publicly available** and applied consistently
- Reports on **outcomes** of QA processes should be **transparent**
Australia

National governance protocols on governing body

- Induction programme for members
- Majority external independent members
- Systematic nomination procedure
- Reporting of higher level outcomes
The University Chancellors Council: “Voluntary code of best practice for the governance of Australian universities” (2011)

- Governing body should **assess its performance**, the performance of its members and committees
- Codify and **publish** internal grievance procedures

- **Transparent** and comprehensive academic frameworks and regulations
- **Publish** information on mission, values and overall strategy

- Publish widely Statement of Primary Responsibilities, covering long-term business plans, key performance indicators and annual budgets
- Results of effectiveness reviews of governing body should be publish widely
Attributes of good practices

Principles underpinning good governance practices similar for institutions in different countries

- Participation by all relevant stakeholders
- Objective reviews of performance
- Transparency
- Accountability
Attributes of good practices

QA guidelines over and above accreditation requirements

- Participation of stakeholders in QA
- Transparency
- Accountability
Views of stakeholders and informants
Different Views

Self-financing sector:

- More autonomy as tax-payers’ money not involved
- Flexibility to respond to changing demands and compete with publicly-funded sector
- Operating cost-effectively, with income much lower than publicly-funded sector
Different Views

- There are values and behaviour standards like objectivity, openness, honesty and accountability.
- A common code for a diverse sector? But in general supportive of a code.
- Mode of financing should not affect transparency practices.
Similar Concerns

- Publication of sensitive information and commercial secrets
- Transparency => limits flexibility; misinterpretation and unfair comparison; invites media attention; deter external members joining;
- Difficult to forecast student intake due to multiple student applications
Similar Concerns

- Additional workload, increase costs of operation, unfair smaller institutions
- Additional layer of bureaucracy
- Raise public expectation
- Voluntary code becoming mandatory requirements of QA bodies
Key Elements of the proposed Code on Governance and Quality Assurance
The case for codes, guidelines, standards

Overseas experience

- Address increasingly diverse post-secondary sector
- Promote public confidence
- Safeguard interests of stakeholders, esp. students
- Institutions held accountable for outcomes
The case for codes, guidelines, standards

Local circumstances

- Expanding, vibrant and diverse self-financing sector
- Multiple pathways: meeting different and diverse learning needs of school leavers
- Substantial public (through loans/grants) and private investment (money and time)
- Meeting manpower requirements of employers
- Long-term vision: education hub?
Approach

No single model fits all

- The code should spell out arrangement in broad terms
- Voluntary compliance: institutions to follow/work towards

Broad principles => well tried out by international, multilateral and national bodies

- Participation, accountability, performance and transparency

Format: single code on governance and QA

Disclosure: choice of items and level of details

Coverage: institutional management, programme design and delivery, staffing, physical resources and student support

Minimise burden: mainly “implicit” becoming “explicit”
Institutional Management

Key elements

- Publication of mission and vision statements
- Compilation of plans and publication of abstracts
- Publication of summary of financial statements
- Governing body and key committees
  - Publication of composition, membership and terms of reference
  - Appointment procedure
  - Code of conduct,
  - Periodical reviews and management audits
Publication of mission and vision statements

“Institutions should **draw up** and **publish** mission and **vision statements** which will underpin the institutions’ design and delivery of learning programmes and QA and resource allocation policies.
● Compilation of plans and publication of abstracts

“Institutions should compile development plans which are aligned with their missions and visions and based on a detailed analysis of the institution’s own strengths and weaknesses and of the opportunities and challenges presented by the environment, and annual reports containing, among others, a review of activities undertaken during the year and the performance of the institutions”

“Abstracts of the development plans and annual reports which contain high level performance outcomes should be published”
Publication of summary of financial statements

“Institutions should publish at least a summary of a financial statement of the institution annually.”
Institutional Management

- Governing body and key committees

  “The institution should have in place a **written code of conduct for members of its governing board and key committees and staff**, spelling out their duties, a procedure for declaration of interests, requirements that its management or employees should not involve in outside employment or business interests in conflict or potential conflict with the business of the institution and **sanctions for the breach of the code**”

  “The institution **should publish the composition, membership and terms of reference of its governing body and key committees**”
Programme design and delivery

Key elements

- Frameworks, standards, mechanism & procedures in place and transparent to stakeholders for programme design and approval
- Programme contents, admission criteria, learning outcomes, articulation pathways => students
- Formalised system for internal QA and programme reviews
- Publish outcomes of internal QA and programme reviews
Programme design and delivery

- Frameworks, standards, mechanism & procedures in place and transparent to stakeholders for programme design and approval

“Institutions should set out their framework for managing academic standards and quality and develop QA mechanism and procedures that are clear and transparent to all their stakeholders including staff, existing and prospective students, employers and relevant professional bodies as well as members of the public”

“To ensure transparency, the formalised procedures for programme design and approval should be explained clearly to staff, existing and prospective students”
Programme design and delivery

- Programme contents, admission criteria, learning outcomes, articulation pathways => students

“To facilitate existing and prospective students in making informed decision on their choice of institutions and programmes, institutions should provide as much information as possible on details of their programmes including programme contents, admission criteria, intended learning outcomes and articulation pathways for further education.”
Programme design and delivery

- Formalised system for internal QA and programme reviews

“Institutions should put in place a formalised system of conducting regular monitoring and reviews in an objective manner to assess programme effectiveness, validity and relevance. Stakeholders including staff, students and employers should be kept informed suitably, and the formalised system should have incorporated feedback from stakeholders like academic staff, students, graduates and employers”
Programme design and delivery

- Publish outcomes of internal QA and programme reviews

“Institutions should publish outcomes of their QA and programme reviews in a manner that is clear and readily accessible to stakeholders like staff, students and employers”
Staffing, physical resources and student support

Key elements

- Fair and transparent human resources management system
- Adequate staffing, learning and teaching resources, and publication of such information
- Adequate student support services
- Measures to help non-local students and to facilitate integration
- Inform students of policies and regulations
Staffing, physical resources and student support

- Adequate staffing, learning and teaching resources, and publication of such information

“Institutions should publish information on staffing and learning and teaching facilities available to support programme delivery and student admission targets”
Measures to help non-local students and to facilitate integration

“For institutions admitting non-local students, measures should be in place to help non-local students adapt to learning and teaching at the institutions and daily living in Hong Kong, and to facilitate the integration of local and non-local students in programme and other student activities”
~ Thank You ~