

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

UNESCO: “Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education” (2005)

- 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**

Australia

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

United Kingdom (UK)

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education: “UK Quality Code for Higher Education: General introduction” (2011)

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

United Kingdom

Committee of University Chairmen: “Guide for Members of Higher Education Governing Bodies in the UK” (2004)

- **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 to

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

Institutional Management

- 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.*

Institutional Management

- **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**”*

Institutional Management

- 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”

Staffing, physical resources and student support

- 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 ~