

Needs Assessment on Evaluation Competencies for Program Accreditation of Higher Education in the Fast Changing Environments: Taiwanese Case

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Introduction

- Reviewers play essential roles in program accreditation.
- With appropriate evaluation knowledge and skills, reviewers can make judgement and help institutions to make improvement.

- As the diversity of higher education increased, not only the ways of quality assurance need to change, but also the reviewers should be familiar with new evaluation concepts to respond to the fast changing environments.
- Appropriate ECB training can help to keep reviewers informed of the new evaluation knowledge, skills, and higher education policy.

- Evaluation trainings of higher education were often designed and delivered to the trainees by quality assurance agencies,
- but the needs of evaluation capacity building (ECB) from stakeholders of higher education were seldom discussed.

- As acknowledge of the changing environment of higher education, Taiwanese government adopted two new higher education policies recently: university self-accreditation, and globalization of higher education.

- First, Ministry of Education approved the self-accreditation status for 34 universities.
- The self-accrediting university can develop its own accreditation standards for program review in order to have more autonomy to develop its own specialty.
- The institutional staff is expected to have more capability to do evaluation and to use evaluation for self-monitoring education quality and institutional improvement.

- Second, Taiwanese government has been devoted to globalization in order to promote knowledge economic growth.
- A globalization plan, Golden Ten Year Project, was proposed to facilitate the internationalization and globalization of higher education, including encouraging international branch campus to set up in Taiwan, and facilitating joint degree or double degree with international partner universities.
- However, are the reviewers and institution staff ready for facing the changes with appropriate evaluation knowledge and skills?

Aims of the Study

1. Fill the gap by understand the needs of stakeholders involved in program accreditation, including general reviewers, program planning committee member, institutional staff, and quality assurance agency staff.
2. Examine the gap between supply and demand of evaluation trainings in the fast changing environment of higher education in Taiwan.

Method

- Both survey and interviews were applied to identify the importance and current performance of ECB for reviewers and institutional quality assurance staff.
 - examine the opinions of four stakeholder groups of program accreditation about the importance and current competencies of ECB, consisting of
 1. general reviewers,
 2. coordinating reviewers,
 3. institutional QA staff,
 4. and quality assurance specialists from QA agency.

Method

- A total of 511 questionnaires were collected and 12 persons were interviewed.
 - with an average return rate of 81.4%
 - a Likert-type 6-point scale ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree

Results and Discussion

- for Program Reviewers, Understanding evaluation standards as the most important and Higher Performance ECB
- for Institutional staff, Items related to International Evaluation are Less Important and Lower Performance ECB
- Comparison of ECB Ratings among 18 Items: Similar Descending Order but Lower Scores for Institutional QA Staff than Program Reviewers

Results and Discussion

- **Taiwanese Context Influence in ECB**

1. Fast-changed and new higher policy adopted in Taiwan.
2. Ethics issue is crucial.
3. Institutional staff of self-accreditation universities needs to have high performance level of ECB than those in traditional universities.

Results and Discussion

Align ECB Training with the results of needs assessment

- Demand from the stakeholders concentrated on direct-use trainings.
- Supply and demand of ECB training should be aligned.
- It is crucial to facilitate the stakeholders valuing the indirect-use courses and preparing for long term institutional improvement.

Conclusion

- Quality assurance practices of higher education entered a new era with increasing diversity as the higher education environment changed dramatically.
- In response to these changes in quality assurance, the reviewers who control the gate of university quality also have to adopt their evaluation skills, but also the evaluation conceptions.

Conclusion

- Evaluation training should be designed and delivered to keep the reviewers as well as institutional QA staff informed with the new changes of higher education policy and international evaluation.
- The supply and demand of ECB training should be aligned with each other. It is crucial to facilitate reviewers and institutional staff valuing the indirect-use trainings for long-term institutional improvement.

Thank you for Listening!

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