The Effect of the QA system in Israel on Higher Education Institutions and National Policy Makers

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The Council for Higher Education (CHE) – Establishment & Structure

Established in 1958 according to
"The Council for Higher Education Law"

Structure & activities:

- 25 members

- Accredits **new** HEIs & **new** study programs

- Regulates planning & budgeting HE in Israel
  (Planning and Budgeting Committee – PBC)

- In 2004 - established QA system and the QAD:
  quality assessment of accredited programs

What prompted this change in 2004? Some major reasons

- Transition to mass higher education.

- Internationalization of higher education.

- Economic/budgetary pressure.

- Pressure from stakeholders.

Transition to Mass Higher Education

Institutions	1990/91	2004/05
Universities	7	7
Open University	1	1
Art Academies	2	2
Comprehensive Colleges	0	6
Engineering Colleges	2	7
Teachers' Colleges	7	27
Non-Budgeted Colleges	2	7
Total	**21**	**57**
*Students	89,000	~240,000

*Not including branches of foreign institutions

Goals of QA System

- To create a culture of continuous quality improvement.

- To bring about the continuous improvement of the various academic fields.

- To provide information to the public

- To be an active participant in the global HE quality evaluation and improvement endeavors

Main Features of the QA System

- **4 stages:** self-study; external review; discussions & decisions (CHE); publication of reports & decisions.
- All programs within a discipline are reviewed at the same time by the same committee.
- Committees are asked to provide:
    - Individual reports for each program to serve as guideline for improvement
    - General overview of discipline to serve as a guideline for CHE & PBC policy decisions
- Committees are international
- 32 disciplines were (and are being) evaluated since 2004 in more than 200 Departments.

Prior to the Establishment of the QAU

QA activity was rare in Israeli HEIs

- <u>2 universities</u> were conducting periodical QA reviews of each faculty
- <u>1 university</u> - limited number (2-3) of departments would be reviewed every few years
- <u>3 universities-</u> non-systematic manner in compliance with specific needs at the time
- No reviews in remaining 2 universities or colleges

Impact on Institutions

- Every HEI appointed a (senior) official to manage QA activities

- Creation of comprehensive internal QA mechanisms which provide the platform for discussion of the results of the self evaluation activity, the conclusions and recommendations of the CHE evaluation committees, and methods to correct the deficiencies that were identified

creating a culture of ongoing assessment & improvement

Impact on Institutions - cont.

Recommendations actualized through:

- curricular changes
- creation of additional faculty lines
- allocation of resources to improve infrastructure (libraries, laboratories, technological equipment)
- enhanced cooperation between various departments within the universities and between departments in the different universities.
- Examples – Statistics, Communication, Economics

Impact on National Policy

- <u>Background</u>:
  - Budgetary Cutbacks between 2000-2006 caused: reduction in the number of faculty members, increase in no. of students
  - General Report submitted to PBC & CHE
  - Effects of cutbacks illustrated clearly in the general reports

- Used as tool to identify problems, to shape national academic planning & to leverage additional budget from Ministry of Finance

Impact on National Policy – cont.

1. National HE budget for the next six years was significantly increased - main element - increase in the number of academic faculty and investments in returning faculty

2. PBC prioritizes and allocates the budget in consideration of the QA's committees' reports

3. Academic Planning - Approval of requests to develop academic programs granted/denied based on reports

4. Changing tariff for some fields (psychology – laboratory science, social work – field work).

Impact on National Policy – cont.

1. Coordination between departments & the guild: licensing exams and the academic curriculum (psychology & architecture)
2. Seed money allocated for renewing infrastructure (e.g. physics labs)
3. Creation of a safety code for chemical engineering laboratories
4. Establishment of a national consortium for graduate studies due to the limited number of faculty/students– being considered by PBC

Self-Study

- In 2009, after 4 years of operation (2004-8), the QAU conducted a survey to evaluate its QA system.
- Sample: Four target groups
  - senior administration of HEIs
  - department chairs and faculty deans
  - members of our external QA committees
  - QAU staff
- Use of external company
- Response rate:
  - 70% - senior administrators from the institutions
  - 59% - department representatives
  - 66% - committee members
  - 91% -QA staff

Summary of Findings

<u>Institutional Administration:</u>

- Believes that the self evaluation process contributed to the identification of strengths and weaknesses in the <u>**institution**</u>
- 75% maintained that the whole QA process contributed to the improvement of the HE system in Israel

<u>Deans and Department Chairs:</u>

- 60% maintained that the self evaluation process contributed to identification of strengths and weaknesses in the <u>**department**</u>
- 75% responded that the entire QA process contributed to the improvement of the higher education system in Israel

<u>QA Committee Members:</u>

- Think that the self-evaluation process contribute to the institution's/ department's identification of strengths and/or weaknesses
- Think that the QA system greatly contributed to quality improvement in the institutions

Changes to Improve Process

- Aim to improve our methodology to increase the effectiveness of our system
  - identify the actual needs of the HEIs and the system in general
  - continuous self study

    Examples: adaptation of self evaluation guidelines; site visit structure; committee composition

    all based on feedback
- Goal: to strengthen internal QA mechanisms within the HEIs for on-going improvement – creating culture of QA
- Future plan of QAD: QA on institutional level

THANK YOU
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LISTENING