QA of Internationalization in Higher Education: Quality Assurance of English Medium Instruction Degree Programs and the Role of Local Accreditors in Taiwan

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Introduction

- Student mobility across regions
  - China enrolls more than 260,000 international students, and has set ambitious targets to double that over the coming years
  - Japan has recruited more than 138,000 international students
  - South Korea recruited 78,000.
  - Taiwan is expected to enroll 120,000 international students by 2020

- Offering EMI courses
- Developing an international program
- Quality of international programs / EMI
Some questions

- How was quality review of internationalization in higher education conducted globally?
- What is the current development of EMI degree programs in non English speaking Asian country?
- What are the challenges for developing good quality EMI degree programs in Taiwanese institutions?
- What’s the role of a Taiwan local accreditor in exercising an external quality assessment over the EMI degree programs?
Development of EMI/ international programs in Asian nations

- Asian governments have encouraged EMI policies / international programs
  - South Korea
    - up to 3% of all courses
  - Japan
    - Global 30 project
    - 13 selective universities
  - China
    - guide a group of prestigious universities to offer EMI in the applied science and international trade fields
  - Taiwan
    - The recipients of Excellence Projects are required to offer international programs
Since 2005, the Taiwan government has fully committed to the promotion of EMI policy under two major national Excellence programs in Research and Teaching (Hou, 2011b).

Several private universities, such as Fu Jen Catholic University, Yuan Ze University, have implemented a university-wide EMI policy,

- in which all undergraduates in three to four engineering and business, mass communication schools are required to complete at least 6-18 credits of EMI courses before graduation (Chang, 2010, Hou, 2014).
Fu Jen experience

- Institutional support
  - Get 6000 NT allowance per credit
  - TA assistant
  - Global program (faculty development)
  - International seminars (faculty development)

- Quality assurance
  - Course evaluation
  - Under 3.5 score, the allowance would be suspended.
Several problems addressed

- many studies have shown that it has some less desirable unintended effects, particularly in learning effectiveness
  - produced less interaction between faculty and students
  - reduced the level of comprehension of subject content
  - impeded discussions among students in class,
  - increased faculty workloads
  - lowered graduation rates

- negative effects tend to be reduced when the teacher is well trained in teaching EMI and has a good command of English
Quality assurance of international programs

- In 1994, the OECD Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE) programme developed an initiative called the “International Quality Review Process” (IQRP)
- In 2000, the American Council on Education (ACE), with funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York, conducted a two year project on “Promising Practices: Spotlighting Excellence in Comprehensive Internationalization”
- The 2002-2007 Australian AUQA’s Audit of the internationalization of Australian universities
- In 2011, NAVO developed a student outcome based QA framework of internationalization
EMI degree programs in Taiwan

- MOE defined international programs as “full English taught programs enrolling at least 50 % international students out of the overall enrollment” (Ministry of Education, 2011c).
- Local students are accepted in the international programs, but they should not exceed 50% of the total enrollment.
- There are 246 international programs in 45 universities and colleges enrolling a high proportion of international students.
  - More than 60 % of the international programs are offered at the master level.
  - 31.25 % of international programs are in business and management, followed by a share of 25 % in engineering.
Assessment of International Programs in Taiwan Higher Education

- FICHET in 2009
  - The final report presented several major challenges to developing a good quality international program in Taiwan, such as the qualifications of local teachers, teachers’ incentives for using English as an instruction language, insufficient English proficiency of domestic students, and a lack of administration support for international students.

- The Higher Education Evaluation & Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT) as a leading Taiwanese quality assurance agency
  - conduct an external review over 129 international programs offered by 45 of Taiwan’s universities and colleges since 2011
HEEACT review

- The role of HEEACT
  - HEEACT published an Evaluation Handbook and provided several training workshops
  - The review teams, including the international panel, were briefed by HEEACT prior to the on-site visits
  - HEEACT’s staff provided translation services during the visit

- Quality of International Programs
  - The average rate for “highly recommended” status is 34.1%
  - 59.68% for “recommended”
  - 6.2% for denied
  - National institutions offered 72% of all highly recommended courses
1. Curriculum

- The objectives of most assessed programs have been integrated into the features and the long term strategic plans of the school.
- Many programs joined a cohort of international students who went through the program together.
- The process of selecting an advisor was the major problem for international students.
- The amount and quality of English-taught general education is a big issue.
2. Faculty quality

- the academic qualifications of faculty members at most institutions are very impressive.
- their English proficiency, particularly their accent, somewhat troubled local and non-English speaking international students.
- Several institutions rewarded teachers with 1.5 times credit pay per hour. Some universities integrated EMI into the overall context of faculty promotion and tenure.
3. Resources

- Facilities and learning environments were of international quality.
- Chinese language support varied in programs from required to elective.
- All the programs had an English website, but not all of them were up to date.
- The quality of administrative staff is a further area that needed attention.
Major findings

- Institutional support, size of institution, and a broad perception of internationalization are the significant elements for developing a good quality international program.
- **Learning outcomes and faculty development are the biggest challenges**
- The institutions are satisfied with HEEACT’s standards, procedures, and panel size
- The institutions do not yet recognize highly the engagement of international panelists or their contribution to internationalization quality.
Conclusion

- Taiwan’s experience shows that it is possible for a local accreditor to play a successful role in quality assessment of an international program.
- The use of English needs special attention from non-English speaking accreditors and institutions.
- The programs in the medium and large size institutions seem to have fewer obstacles in developing their international programs.
- The most difficult parts of developing an international program are stable funding and qualified staff.
Thank you for your attention

Fu Jen Catholic University


* Hou, Angela Yung–chi. (2012). Impact of excellence programs on Taiwan higher education in terms of quality assurance and academic excellence, examining the conflicting role of Taiwan’s accrediting agencies. *Asian Pacific Educational Review*, 13, 77–88 (SSCI). ISSN: T598–1037