

Report dissemination

Enhancing quality assurance and accreditation in higher education in Viet Nam for international integration

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Project Context and Methodology

A multi-angle approach to capacity building for the Vietnamese Higher education system – with reference to the UK and European standards.

Collaborative delivery: QAA experts worked with local consultants to compare the European and Vietnamese systems

Stakeholders' involvement: representatives from both Vietnamese HE institutions and Centres for Educational Accreditation were actively involved

Research Team

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Overview

- **Part 1: Quality Assurance Systems in UK and Viet Nam**
- **Part 2: Institutional Self-evaluations**
- **Part 3: Centres of Education Accreditation (CEAs) Comparative Evaluation**
- **Part 4: Recommendations: Improvements to Higher Education Quality Assurance in Viet Nam**

Findings

Part 1: Quality Assurance Systems in UK and Viet Nam

- Both countries show clear commitment to the establishment and maintenance of standards in their respective sectors, albeit with difference in how their QA systems are designed and operationalised.
- The UK employs a devolved structure, which also reflects its political devolvment, Viet Nam utilises a more centralised approach.
- The approach to external QA also differs:



Part 1: Quality Assurance Systems in UK and Viet Nam

- In Viet Nam, the implementation of a consistent set of national standards by the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) is clearly fostering the development of robust internal and external quality assurance processes, and Vietnamese higher education institutions show a growing understanding of QA.
- As such understanding develops, the external QA system could move towards a less prescriptive model.

Part 2: Institutional Self-evaluations

- **Methodology:** The self-evaluations have been undertaken against a framework of reference modelled on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG): https://www.enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf
- **Five HE institutions were chosen to be representative of the Vietnamese sector, ensuring variety in terms of size, years of operation, and geographical distribution.**

Part 2: Institutional Self-evaluations

ESG Part 1: Standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance

1. Policy for quality assurance - 8 expectations
2. Design and approval of programmes - 7 expectations
3. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment - 15 expectations
4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification - 8 expectations
5. Teaching staff - 6 expectations
6. Learning resources and student support - 5 expectations
7. Information management - 5 expectations
8. Public information - 4 expectations
9. On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes - 12 expectations
10. Cyclical external quality assurance - 3 expectations

Evaluation Criteria

Not met	Developing	Good	Exemplar
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •No formal approach/policy/ processes •No formal activities •Activities are not consistently implemented •The university’s assurance process is inexistent or not effective •No or negligible stakeholders involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Formal institutional approach which is not implemented on a cyclical basis •Discrepancies between approach/policy/ processes and activities are present •The university’s quality assurance process is not fully effective. •Occasional stakeholders involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Formal institutional approach which is consistently implemented on a cyclical basis and appropriately evidenced. •Approach/policy/ processes are consistently implemented •The university’s quality assurance process is effective and includes instances of enhancements •Consistent stakeholders involvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Formal institutional approach which is consistently implemented on a cyclical basis and evidenced in detail •Internal Quality Assurance processes are fully effective and systematically embed enhancements •Stakeholders are actively consulted, engaged, and contributing

Example

Policy for quality assurance

Providers should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders (ESG Standard 1.1).

Expectation	Not met	Developing	Good	Exemplar
1.1 The university has a quality assurance policy, which may also be publicly available	The quality assurance policy is non-existent, undeveloped, or is not formally implemented.	The quality assurance policy is adequate and formally implemented but not monitored and reviewed on a cyclical basis.	The quality assurance policy is fit-for-purpose and formally implemented, monitored, and reviewed on a cyclical basis.	The quality assurance policy is sector-leading, formally implemented, monitored, and reviewed on a cyclical basis and stakeholders are involved throughout these activities. The university shows in-depth understanding of the sector standards, and the policy embeds opportunities for enhancements.

Part 2: Institutional Self-evaluations

- **Results show that, overall, the involved institutions implement policies, processes and practices covering all the expectations of the ESG. While the level of fulfilment and consistency might vary, no manifest shortcomings or misunderstandings have been highlighted.**
- **Several areas for improvement have nonetheless been identified by both the institutions themselves and the reviewers.**
- **Overall, institutions showed an appreciable degree of maturity in assessing their own performance and identify gaps by following a structured process for internal review.**

Part 3: Centres of Education Accreditation (CEAs) Comparative Evaluation

- **The evaluation was conducted against a framework modelled on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).**
- **The purpose of using the ESG as the foundation for the framework was to ascertain the comparability of external quality assurance methodologies applied in Viet Nam and in the UK.**
- **Three CEAs were involved, with due attention to geographical distribution.**

Example

Consideration of providers' internal quality assurance

It is expected that external quality assurance recognises and fosters the provider's own responsibility for quality assurance. External quality assurance assessment approaches should therefore include an assessment of how each provider takes care of internal quality assurance, and how this compares to the standards commonly held by the sector nationally, and also internationally. The expectations included in this matrix are inspired by Part 1 of the ESG.

Expectations	NOT MET To which extent? 1. The expectation is not addressed in any way 2. The expectation is addressed marginally or indirectly, without method or rationale, in an ineffective way 3. The expectation is addressed in some ways, which might be occasionally effective, but critical improvements are needed	MET To which extent? 1. The expectation is fully met, with evidence of clear approach and consistent implementation 2. The expectation is met, while some improvements are required 3. The expectation is met at a minimum level, while important improvements are needed	COMMENTS Please elaborate on how the expectation is met or not met, including, where possible: • Details on the evidence used • Details on information emerging from interviews or other communications • Details on the circumstances of each CEAs that might have a bearing on their capacity to meet the expectation
The assessment approach considers whether providers have a policy for quality assurance that is part of their strategic management			

Part 3: Centres of Education Accreditation (CEAs) Comparative Evaluation

- **The external quality assurance system established by MOET and implemented by CEAs appears to be theoretically functional, and generally relatable to ESG expectations.**
- **A range of recommendations have been made throughout the report, addressing both gaps and areas for improvement.**

Part 4: Recommendations: Improvements to Higher Education Quality Assurance in Viet Nam

Key recommendations areas emerging from the report include:

- **A collaborative re-evaluation of strategic priorities**, measures of success and methodologies used to ascertain effective maintenance of quality and standards.
- **Guidance and training to develop self-evaluation practices**; evidence-based practices to cultivate an enhancement-led approach.
- **A pilot project which works with selected universities to develop, upskill and enhance the internal quality assurance practices** of the institution, including the involvement of staff, students and external stakeholders.
- **A pilot project with selected universities to facilitate a collaborative exploration, design and implementation of core strategies, policies and processes** which support an increased collective responsibility and distributed involvement of stakeholders.

Next Steps

Agency-level capacity building

- Collaborations to enhance the collective understanding and application of external and internal quality assurance requirements and expectations will support a sector shift toward enhancement-focused quality assurance.
- This shift enables external quality assurance agencies and universities to improve autonomy, quality of activities, and to demonstrate progress against national and international standards.
- An evaluation and review of the current CEA methodologies and requirements will support a consistent sector implementation, which also seeks to support universities in enhancing internal quality assurance practices. The evaluation should be supported by guidance and training, to enable an increased autonomy of CEAs, assessors and universities while maintaining standards.

Next Steps

Institutional-level capacity building

- Universities should consider how internal quality assurance practices are developed and enhanced. Suggested development areas include:
 - strategic, systemic and functional quality assurance;
 - governance structures and practices;
 - stakeholder engagement and consultation;
 - ongoing monitoring, evaluation and review;
 - information management, robust evidence and action planning.
- Partnerships with overseas institutions should support the development of data-driven decision-making across all areas of activity within the partnership, with the broader intention of supporting the implementation of these practices at the Vietnamese university.

Next Steps

Capacity building upcoming initiatives

Phase 2 of this project will include:

Development of detailed guidelines for the VQA quality assurance standards

Collaboration with Vietnamese consultants

Intensive training of Vietnamese experts

Broader training for sectors' representatives

External quality evaluation of Vietnamese HEIs

Evaluations conducted by QAA in compliance with its ESG-compatible current methods

CEAs assessors' participation in evaluations

Training of CEAs assessors

Training of HEIs staff



Thank You