

International Accreditation in Taiwan Higher Education

(Sub theme: Quality Assurance at a Distance)

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Abstract

In response to the global competitiveness in higher education, Taiwan colleges and universities have been encouraged to seek international accreditation over years by the government, which raises several questions as well, such as jurisdiction over national accreditation, a single standards for local and global quality assurance, demand for the mutual recognition of review outcomes, etc. With a threat that international accreditation will likely pose on a national framework of quality assurance in Taiwan looming, its impact on institutions and national accrediting agencies in Taiwan is increasing rapidly now. Hence, the main purpose of the paper is to understand the current international accreditation of academic programs and institutions and recognition of accrediting organizations in Taiwan and to analyze the challenges that institutions and national accrediting agencies are facing.

Key words: International accreditation, quality assurance, higher education

Introduction

Globalization and educational changes are inextricably intertwined since the 1980's. Due to the shrinking of distance, globalization has been affecting the politics, the economic systems, and the identity and independence of nation states. Moreover, globalization affects the education agenda of states, too. Globalization is influencing teaching and learning, and the ability of a learner to deal with social and cultural differences. It is reshaping the core value of higher education institutions through market influences and symbolic concerns about cultural identity. Globalization, on the other hand, presents universities and colleges with a number of challenges and opportunities (Ginkel, 2003). In response, they develop numerous internationalization strategies on campuses.

According to Altbach (2004a), for higher education, globalization could mean 'the broad economic, technological, and scientific trends that directly affect higher education and are largely inevitable', while internationalization 'includes specific policies and programs undertaken by governments, academic systems and institutions, and even individual departments or institutions to cope with or exploit globalization' (pp. 5-6). Hence, most universities adopted the strategies of internationalization to cope with these global issues such as increasing foreign students, recruiting international scholars, supporting cross-campus research collaborations, conferences, developing branch campus abroad, etc. (deWit, 2002). For most non- English speaking European countries, like Netherlands, Finland, particularly internationalize the curriculum by promoting English as the medium of instruction in order to compete with English speaking institutions in higher education market (Wachter, 2008).

Currently, the major concern, which has been brought by globalization, is how to assure quality and international competitiveness in higher education for both states and universities through a variety of international strategies. In this context, internationalization of higher education often implies the pursuit of international image and quality in order to make the selected top institutions more globally competitive (Deem et al., 2008). Hence, quality assurance mechanism and international benchmarking, which emphasize output monitoring and measurements and systems of accountability and auditing, have become more popular worldwide (Marginson, 2007). This also rationalizes the emergence of international accreditation,

which is taken as a symbolic and powerful indicator to prove the quality standard of local institutions in globally competitive education market (Ewell, 2008).

In response to the global competitiveness in higher education, in fact, Taiwan colleges and universities have been encouraged to seek international accreditation over years by the government, which raises several questions as well, such as jurisdiction over national accreditation, a single standard for local and global quality assurance, demand for the mutual recognition of review outcomes, etc. (Ewell, 2008). With the threat that international accreditation will likely pose on a national framework of quality assurance in Taiwan looming, its impact on institutions and national accrediting agencies in Taiwan is increasing rapidly now. Hence, the main purpose of the paper is to understand the current international accreditation of academic programs and institutions and recognition of accrediting organizations in Taiwan and to analyze the challenges that institutions and national accrediting agencies are facing.

Taiwan Higher Education Moving From Elite Type to Universal Type

Over the past 10 years, Taiwan higher education expanded impressively with the increases in the number of institutions as well as the number of students. Amid flourishing economic development, social liberalization, and democratization in the 1990s, Taiwan higher education led to a more decentralized manner with less state control and universities began to seek their autonomy. By 2008, the number of higher education institutions has gone up to 163 largely due to the upgrade of junior colleges to 4-year universities. Student enrollment increased 65% with a total number of 1.3 millions. University Entrance Exam admission rate is close to 97%. Net Enrollment and Gross enrollment in higher education are approximately 55.3% (693,847/1,254,395) and 78.6% (987,914/1,254,395) (Department of Higher Education, 2008).

The quantitative increase shows Taiwan higher education has transformed from elite type into universal education. On the other hand, it has also been seen clearly that the system is moving towards openness and autonomy, and from a monolithic model to take account of pluralistic needs. Thus, the greatest challenge for Taiwan

higher education now faces is how to assure its quality and international competitiveness in the globalized society.

National Quality Assurance Framework in Taiwan Higher Education

As higher education has expanded rapidly in quantitative terms, how to maintain "quantity" and "quality" started to pressure the government highly. Apart from encouraging institutions to conduct assessments on their own, a few professional associations such as *Chinese Management Association*, *Chemical Society*, and the *Physical Association of Republic of China* were chartered by the Ministry of Education to exercise program-based academic assessments since the 80s. Moving to the 90s, the government being pressured continuously by the public to implement wide-ranging comprehensive institutional evaluations determined to establish a non-governmental professional evaluation agency to conduct higher education evaluation. In 1994, Legislative Yuan passed "University law" which stated clearly that the national government is entitled to university evaluation in order to assure higher education quality. Up to present, three independent evaluation agencies officially chartered by the Ministry of Education began to assess three different types of Taiwan higher education institutions, including 4-year comprehensive colleges and universities, universities of science and technology and technical colleges.

Starting in 2002, the evaluation of technical colleges was conducted by National Yunlin University of Science & Technology. A total number of forty institutions are scheduled to be reviewed within 4 years. Reviewers evaluate both administrative support and academic performance of an institution in a two-day on-site visit. There are four ranks of assessment outcomes (Technological & Vocational Educational Newsletter, 2007).

The other one is Taiwan Assessment and Evaluation Association (TWAEA). Established in 2003, TWAEA, as the first non-profit evaluation agency jointly founded by senior members of the academia and business sectors underwent the assessment of 38 universities of science and technology and technical colleges since 2004 (TWAEA, 2008).

In order to "oversee current assessment mechanisms, enhance teaching assessments, maintain teaching quality and periodically conduct administrative

assessment “ based on the 2005 *Revised University Law*, another professional organization jointly endowed by the Ministry of Education and 153 Colleges and Universities, Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT) was established and in 2006 started to conduct a 5-year program-based nation-wide evaluation over seventy-six 4-year comprehensive institutions and academy of military and police included (see table 1) .

Table 1: Comparison among three quality assurance agencies
By background and accreditation status

	HEEACT	TWAEA	NYUST
Background			
Starting year	2006	2004	2002
Type	Non profit Foundation	Non profit Foundation	Higher education institution
Governance	15 Board members	15 Board members	Research center (6 staff)
Funding	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education	Ministry of Education
Content of Quality Assurance			
Nature	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
Unit	Program	Institutional/ program	Institutional / Program
Scope	76 4-year comprehensive colleges and universities	38 Universities of Science and Technology	40 Technical Colleges (including 2 and 5 year junior colleges)
Process	Self evaluation / peer review	Self evaluation / peer review	Self evaluation / peer review
Standards	5 criteria	5 items in institutional evaluation and 8 items in program evaluation	5 items in institutional evaluation and 8 items in program evaluation
Review cycle	5 years	4 years	4 years
Outcome	1. Accredited 2. Accredited conditionally 3. unaccredited	Rank 1-4: Rank 1:above 80 points Rank 2: 70~80 Rank 3: 60~70 Rank: below 60	Rank 1-4: Rank 1:above 80 points Rank 2: 70~80 Rank 3: 60~70 Rank: below 60
Implication	Governmental Funding / enrollment approved	Governmental Funding / enrollment approved	Governmental Funding / enrollment approved

Source: by researcher.

The HEEACT adopted American model of accreditation featuring peer review and on-site visit in the process and procedures of evaluation. Over 800 reviewers from universities and industries are recommended by 47 Program Planning Committees formed by the Board to conduct evaluations (HEEACT, 2008). The accreditation standards developed by the HEEACT are as follows: 1. goals, features, and

self-enhancement mechanism; 2. curriculum design and teaching, 3. learning and student affairs, 4. research and professional performance, 5. performance of graduates. There are three review outcomes of accreditation including “accredited”, “conditionally accredited” and “denial”. Those with a status of “conditionally accredited” or “denial” are supposed to be reviewed again one year later to check if all major problems mentioned in the final accreditation report have been solved during a year. Currently, three rounds of evaluation have been conducted, and results of the first two rounds have been released.

According to the review outcomes in the past 2 years, the accredited programs in the spring semester of 2007 outnumbered the other three reviews. Among the total of 1303 programs, the average rate for accredited status is 75%, conditionally accredited type with 19% and denied with 5.5 % (see table 2). It is shown that Taiwan institutions are getting more and more acquainted with the HEEACT evaluation model aiming at self-enhancement as well as learning the ways of preparations for faculty participation.

Table 2 : Number and Percent of Programs by Status

Source: Higher Education Evaluation & Accreditation Council of Taiwan (2008). 2007 Annual report.

Review status			Accredited		Accredited conditionally		Denial	
Academic Year		Number of programs	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
2006	Fall Semester	362	279	77%	71	19.6%	11	3%
	Spring Semester	242	159	65.7%	55	22.7%	27	11.6%
2007	Fall Semester	241	159	66%	55	22.8%	27	11.2%
	Spring Semester	458	386	84.3%	65	14.2%	7	1.5%
Total		1303	983	75.45%	246	18.9%	72	5.5%

Taipei: Higher Education Evaluation & Accreditation Council of Taiwan.

To sum up, though a decentralized system in higher education evaluation was being formed completely after the establishment of the HEEACT in 2005, the government as an indirect role still exerted a great influence on all institutions by the policies of funding allocation and total enrollment control based on the review outcomes. Therefore, a pass in the evaluation exercise is vital for survival of an institution. If a program fails to pass the evaluation for two consecutive years, the MOE would request the university to terminate its enrollment and operation (HEEACT, 2008b).

Clearly, it represents a dilemma called “ the principal-agent problem”, that the

responsibility of the delegated evaluation agency is to ensure that government's wishes are in fact carried out though they may have their own agenda and mission (Hawkins, et al., 2006, Ewell, 2008). As a consequence, it will lead to the decentralization of the system which conflicts with a centralized state control. Hence, how to make the decentralized evaluation system more professional and independent has raised many discussions in Taiwan now.

Duplication of national quality assurance in higher education

Entering the new era of quality assurance in 2005, some voices regarding intergration or acquitision of various evaluations from colleges and universties began to be heard. To synthesize all kinds of Taiwan accreditation in higher education, there are 4 types often operating simultaneously:

1. Institutional accreditation, is an accreditation of higher education institutions in general, this means all professional specialties within a higher education institution are accredited, like the 5-year cycle MOE institutional accreditation.
2. Specialized accreditation, is an accreditation of distinct professional programs, not a general accreditation of all specialties as if in institutional accreditation such as chemistry education, engineering education, teacher education, general education
3. National accreditation is an accreditation of higher education institutions within a country, such as 5-year cycle HEEACT program-based accreditation, 5-year 50 Billion Research Program for Developing First-class University & Top Research Centers, and Teaching Excellence Program
4. International accreditation, is an accreditation whereby higher education institutions pass accreditation of specific professional programs in a foreign accrediting agency like AACSB International accrediting Taiwan business programs.

Hence, to a certain extent, an institution will likley be reviewed more than 2 times by the different types of accreditations within a whole year. In order to eleminate the duplication among various accrediting agencies and to lessen the institutional burden, in 2006, the MOE statued that 4 types of the programs accredited will be able to exempt from the 5-year cycle HEEACT programmatic accreditation.

Exemptions from HEEACT Accreditation

According to the exemption provisions of the MOE in 2006, 4 types of programs will be qualified from being exempt from the HEEACT accreditation but with the different main reasons.

As to the first type of the programs including those accredited internationally by Association to Advanced Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International), it attempts to encourage more and more programs and institutions to seek for international accreditation. For the other two types involving the programs which have gained the accredited status by *Chemical Society in Taiwan locally* and accredited by Institute of Engineering Education or remain in the process of application (IEET, Taiwan), on the other hand, it is intended to eliminate accreditation duplication. In contrast, the purpose of the last group exemption of all programs or fields of Taiwan literature and Taiwan studies which have been accredited by National Taiwan Normal University chartered by MOE in 2006, is to support national policy, which promotes the programs of Taiwan literature, humanity and language on campuses. However, the program evaluation will be integrated into the 2nd cycle HEEACT accreditation of 2011.

Compared with these 4 kinds of accreditors above, in fact, they all implement specialized accreditations. Three of them are national agencies including *Chemical Society in Taiwan, Institute of Engineering Education Taiwan and National Taiwan Normal University* operating nationally and the other international agency is *AACSB International*. Three national accrediting agencies all chartered by the MOE conduct compulsory program evaluation in comparison with AACSB International accreditation applied by Taiwan universities voluntarily. Early in 2003, AACSB International started its accreditation in Taiwan compared with IEET and CST in 2004 and NTNU in 2006. By 2008, more than 1600 programs have been reviewed by the HEEACT in contrast with 249 engineering programs accredited by IEET, 67 business programs by AACSB International and 25 programs in chemistry by *Chemical Society in Taiwan*. In addition, there are 28 programs of Taiwan literature and studies completely exempt from the HEEACT accreditation.

Table 3: Exemption from HEEACT accreditation by Type and Number

	IEET	CST	NTNU	AACSB
Year starting accrediting	2004	2004	2006	2003
Type	Specialized national vs.	Specialized national vs.	Specialized national vs.	Specialized international vs.
Program	Engineering	Chemistry	Taiwan Culture and Humanity	Business
Number	249	25	28	67

Source: by researcher

International Accreditation in Taiwan Quality Assurance System

In order to strengthen international outlook and global competitiveness of Taiwan colleges and universities, the MOE internationalizes Taiwan's higher education by four policies. First, in 2002, the MOE launched the "Enhancing Global Competitiveness Plan" aimed at fostering international exchange activities to improve international competitiveness of institutions. Second, increasing the number of foreign students studying in Taiwan has been on the priority list of the MOE since August 2003. Higher education Institutions offer scholarships and English taught courses in both undergraduate and postgraduate programs to achieve this objective. Third, the MOE encourages Taiwan students to study abroad by launching the "Study Abroad Loan Program" in 2004. In addition, the MOE expanded Taiwan Culture Research Program in scale with foreign academic institutes to attract attention on the academic stage globally (MOE, 2007). Therefore, based on the policies above, to facilitate a various types of cross-campus academic collaborative activities with foreign universities, several Taiwan universities make the great effort either to promote their global ranks or to seek international accreditation.

Since entering the 21st century, the trend of internationalization of college rankings began to develop. Shanghai Jiao Tong University of Mainland China published the first global ranking of universities in June 2003- "Academic Ranking of World Universities", or also known as ARWU. The ranking uses internationally recognized academic performances and achievements as the major indicators in rating 1,000 universities worldwide. Indeed, the release of this ranking caused widespread concern and discussions in the international community and in Taiwan as well. (Hou, 2008).

In response to the quest for a world-class university, Taiwan government launched the 5 year- 50 Billion Program for Developing First-class University and

Top Research Centers in 2005. The program aims to develop at least one university as one of the world's top 100 universities in five years and at least 15 key departments or cross-university research centers as the top in Asia in ten years (Lo, 2007). Eleven research universities were selected to be funded in 2007 compared with 12 in the first cycle of year 2005~2006. Besides, Taiwan government commissioned the HEEACT to develop a global ranking titled "*Performance Ranking of Scientific Papers for World Universities*" and published the outcomes since 2007. According to the 2008 HEEACT global ranking, there are five Taiwan universities on top 500, including National Taiwan University (141), National Cheng Kung University(328), National Tsing Hua University(366), National Chiao Tung University(463), and National Yang Ming University(475), compared to 4 in 2007 (HEEACT, 2008a).

Unlike rankings or league tables, in fact, international accreditation of programs and institutions didn't draw much national attention until the HEEACT operated evaluation in 2006. The main reason is that universities were not encouraged to do so by governmental policy or funding like 5-year 50 Billion Program or Teaching Excellence Program. But there were still some institutions working earlier at the quest for international accreditation to promote more opportunities of international academic activities with foreign universities in the early 21st century. By 2009, 4 Business schools in Taiwan Universities, including Fu Jen Catholic University, National Sun Yat Shen University, National Chiao Tung University, and National Chengchi University have gained AACSB International's accreditation.

On the other hand, national accrediting organizations in Taiwan also started to establish partnerships with foreign agencies and participate in international organizations and network of quality assurance in higher education, such as APQN (HEEACT), INQAAHE(HEEACT), Washington Accord (IEET), NCFMEA (Taiwan Medical Association Council), etc.

Internationalization and U.S. Accreditation in Taiwan higher education

With more than the number of 80 institutional and programmatic accreditation agencies, U.S. becomes a nation that is substantial exporter of quality assurance by recognizing postsecondary education in the developing nation (CHEA, 2008). According to CHEA, 40 accrediting agencies were active in 52 countries in 2006-2007, accrediting 385 non-U.S. institutions and programs compared with the fewer amounts of 364 in U.S.. Ewell (2008) clearly responded, "U.S. accreditation

may provide an additional cachet in a competitive local market especially for private institutions” (p., 153). Hayward (2001) also stated, “Some foreign colleges and universities want U.S. accreditation because it is, at least at the moment, "the gold standard" in many areas of higher education.” Obviously, American accreditation which offers a “nongovernmental, mission-oriented model, with trained and impartial evaluators and applied to both public and private institutions”, are sought by more and more institutions abroad as higher education globalizes (Morse, 2008). The fact that institutions in South America, Asia, Eastern Europe, are encouraged by governments to seek international accreditation, particularly U.S., indeed contributed to the prosperity of U.S. accreditation worldwide.

In the late 90s, American accrediting programmatic organizations started to approach Taiwan higher education institutions for non- U.S. program accreditation. Until 2002, two business schools of Fu Jen Catholic University and National Sun Yat Shen University embarked international programmatic accreditation which was recommended by their foreign counterparts in order to develop a basis of mutual understanding of quality of degrees granted by each other. AACSB International, a “not-for-profit and government organizations devoted to the advancement of higher education in business administration and management, became the first international accrediting organization accrediting business programs in Taiwan (AACSB International, 2009). Following Fu Jen Catholic University and National Sun Yat Shen University, School of Management of National Chiao Tung University, and College of Commerce of National Chengchi University have also gained AACSB International’s accreditation in 2007. Now 17 public and private institutions have become a member of AACSB International and in the mid way of accreditation.

Currently, some Taiwan universities were also getting started to pursue institutional accreditation. The Middle States commission on Higher education (MSCHE), an American institutional accreditor, which has started a pilot project accrediting non-US style institutions in 2002, accepted Ming Chuan University’s application in 2006 and announced its receipt of official notification as a candidate for MSCHE accreditation in 2008. Ming Chuan University’s candidacy embarked the other discussions about institutional exemption from the HEEACT accreditation.

Generally speaking, these Taiwan institutions above all agreed that U.S. accreditation made it easier to attract students and faculty, to develop joint degree programs, and to compete with local institutions. The most benefit is that the focus of self-enhancement help them to develop a continuous self-evaluation mechanism, to

implement the outcomes based on mission-oriented goal set internally. Their strengths and weaknesses could be also found out easily through the process of internal and external evaluation. According to Dean of Management School of Fu Jen Catholic University, Dr. Ming-Hsien Yang pointed out, "AACSB International's accreditation did help the school to develop the academic cooperation with foreign universities and to benefit its graduates in the international job market greatly" (personal interview, Feb.9, 2009).

However, several problems still challenged them both in the process of application and after being accredited. The first question was integrating international standards into local context including models of governance, qualification of faculty and staff, resource allocation, etc. And these problems even challenged public universities more. The staff and faculty in Taiwan public universities who have the qualifications of governmental officers are much reluctant to change. It may hamper the reform of governance structure to meet the requirement of international accreditation. With an independent governing board, however, private institutions have difficulties in having sufficient resources to reduce faculty teaching loads and to increase student-support services to meet standards by international accrediting agencies, too. In addition, speaking fluent English was another big challenge for all senior administrators, faculty, staff and students when they communicated with a visit team. Translation of materials into English required for accreditation also causes problems and additional work for them in the process of application and maintenance work.

International recognition of accrediting organizations

As more and more institutions seek international accreditation, local institutional and programmatic accrediting agencies, which implement accrediting tasks domestically, attempt to establish partnerships with foreign accrediting organizations, to gain international recognition, and to participate in international network of quality assurance in higher education.

Taiwan Medical Accreditation Council (TMAC) was the first Taiwan accrediting agency to gain international recognition. In 2002, reviewed by the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA), Taiwan Medical Accreditation Council (TMAC) was considered "the comparability of Taiwan's standards to the standards used to evaluate programs leading to the M.D. degree in the United States" (TMAC, 2002). This is a milestone to initiate a review of professional accreditation in Taiwan and to bring it to international level. In addition, Washington Accord signatories supported IEET as a Provisional Signatory of the Accord at the 2005 IEM Meetings. In 2007, IEET has become a formal signatory of the Accord (IEET, 2009). In order to establish international relationships, the

HEEACT applied for memberships to international quality assurance organizations. As of October and December, in 2007, the HEEACT has been granted memberships to International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), and the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) respectively (HEEACT, 2008b).

Challenges for international accreditation in Taiwan

Both Taiwan universities and accrediting organizations have been attempting to participate actively in the world of globalized higher education by internationalizing themselves. It is foreseen clearly that there will be more and more international accrediting agencies in U.S. or Europe coming to provide their services in Taiwan when Taiwan universities are advised to enhance their international competitiveness by gaining international accreditation at the same time. However, the decentralized frameworks for quality assurance or accreditation in Taiwan, so far, cannot apply to providers outside the national education system. In fact, Taiwan government is just planning if it is necessary to have the regulatory systems to register or evaluate out-of-country providers like AACSB International. On the other hand, Taiwan accrediting organizations do not have capacities to accredit programs or institutions abroad now. Some local institutions could claim accreditation by an international accrediting agency without local recognition to attract more students domestically or abroad. It will likely occur a loophole, which “permits bona fide and rogue foreign providers to avoid compliance with national regulations in many countries and makes monitoring their activities difficult” (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Numerous questions are raised as follows:

“Do criteria or conditions depend on whether providers are part of and recognized by a national education system in their home countries? Do different rules apply if the provider is for-profit or non-profit, private or public, an institution or a company? What rules apply to companies that establish institutions in foreign countries and have no home-based presence? How do regulators track all the partnerships between local and foreign institutions or companies?” (Altbach & Knight, 2007)

The development of internationalizing higher education by Taiwan government has drawn the local academic community’s attention to the issue of ‘new colonialism’

(Lo, 2008). To a certain extent, international accreditation, considered as “culture imperialism”, raises much serious issue of national jurisdiction over higher education while local universities and accrediting organizations apply international standards of accreditation and recognition into the national context (Morse, 2008; Ewell, 2008). Quality control in Taiwan higher education is, seemingly, under the threat from the dominance of Anglo-Saxon standards and practices.

Therefore, these problems mentioned above, including international recognition of local accrediting agencies, recognition of foreign accrediting agency in Taiwan, convergence of international and national standards of accreditation, emergence of accreditation mills and use of English, will continue to challenge Taiwan higher education in the future.

Conclusion

International accreditation has become a discernible trend for accrediting bodies and institutions in Taiwan in the recent years. Nevertheless, is it possible to develop an international scheme for national quality assurance system of higher education in Taiwan? There are no answers for it, but the new initiatives for mutual recognition of accreditation processes among European countries, especially in the regulated professions, could be one of good experiences learned by Taiwan (ECA, 2008).

In response to an echo from the public, Taiwan government did pay more attention to the issue. In 2008, all Taiwan accrediting agencies including HEEACT, TWAEA, NYUST, and other programmatic accrediting agencies such as *Institute of Engineering Education Taiwan (IEET)*, *Taiwan Medical Association Council*, *Taiwan Nursing Accreditation Council*, *Chemical Society in Taiwan*, were to jointly discuss about the integration and allocation of higher education evaluation tasks in Taiwan. An idea to create a coordinating organization for serving as primary national voice for the presentation of evaluation results to the public, and for assuring quality of local as well as foreign accrediting agencies was fully accepted in the forum and supported by the MOE as well (Forum on the Collaborations among University Evaluation Agencies, 2008).

Dr. Roger Chen, President of the HEEACT, indicated that, “It is time to consider organizing an independent institute such as CHEA or Germany Accreditation Council in Taiwan to integrate all evaluation resources, to define the basic requirements of the evaluation process, and to take care that any national accreditation is carried out on the basis of reliable, transparent and internationally recognized criteria.” In this way, the HEEACT will be expected highly to make more contributions to fulfill a pioneering role in the coordination of quality assurance and accreditation in Taiwan

higher education(Forum on the Collaborations among University Evaluation Agencies, 2008).

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