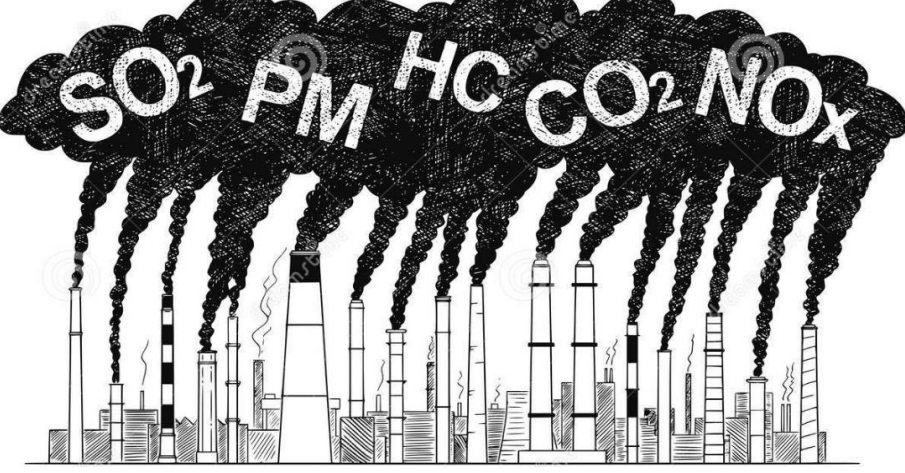


THE GREENING OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION



Greening the standards of institutional accreditation would provide colleges, universities, and business schools with the motivation they currently lack to address the climate crisis head-on. This poster provides a research-based analysis of the “greenness” of the most prevalent accreditation standards used in Higher Education today. We textually deconstruct accreditation standards, display their eco-sensitivity, and provide carrots and sticks for strengthening accrediting bodies in line with the UN SDGs and planetary boundaries.

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1. Research Questions

Primary: To what extent do national and international accrediting and quality assurance bodies in higher education, through formal accreditation *Standards*, require or encourage HEIs to address SDG issues and goals?

Secondary: To what extent do recognized public or private agencies charged with regulating national or international accrediting bodies require or encourage such agencies to address SDG issues and goals?

2. Methodology

- Using a selection of major accreditation *Standards* most widely used in international higher education today (both institutional and programmatic), we perform a textual search for words, concepts, and ideas potentially relatable to key ecological or environmental issues as described in the 17 *UN Sustainable Development Goals*.
- Key words are selected for their relevance to the SDGs, to the larger systemic threats to climate stability, as well as to ethical principles that should guide us in defining quality education.
- Word searches are performed only upon formal accreditation *Standards* and *Indicators*—the only text with which institutions are required to demonstrate compliance. Auxiliary procedural or promotional text related to the accreditation process or agency is ignored.
- Key search words that are found but whose meaning is clearly non-ecological in intent (e.g., the learning *environment*; a *climate* of collegiality; *sustainable* revenue streams, etc.) are listed but not tallied as positive indicators.
- This same methodology is used for evaluating regional, national, and international umbrella organizations (either public or private) that articulate membership criteria for subordinate accrediting agencies, associations, and commissions.

3. Data : The Eco-Sensitivity of Selected Accreditation Regimes, Commissions, & Oversight Agencies

Full Name	Acronym	Focus	Type	Accredited Members	Standards Version	Eco-Sensitivity Indicators																			
						140+	250+	110+	220+	55+	8/140+	15/70+	2	1	3	1	2	4	3	2	2				
Europe																									
EFMD-European Quality Improvement System (European Foundation for Management Development)	EQUIS	Business	Programmatic	197	2023	72/72	40/98	0/5	3/40	0	2/40	6/24	1	0	1	1	1	3	2	0	1				
EFMD-Programme Accreditation System	EPAS	Business	Programmatic	100	2023	5/9	4/6	0/2	0	1/2	1/7	4/9	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1				
Association of MBAs	AMBA	Business	Programmatic	277	2022	2/2	3/3	1/4	14/26	1/4	1/9	4/10	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0				
United States																									
Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (BA)	ABET-EAC	STEM	Programmatic	846	2022	1/1	1/1	0	1/1	0	2/3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
ABET - Applied and Natural Science Accreditation Commission	ABET-ANSAC	Applied & Natural Science	Programmatic	901	2020	2/2	2/4	0	0	0	1/2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business	AACSB	Business	Programmatic	910	2022	0	0	0	4/117	4/53	0/8	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0				
New England Commission of Higher Education	NECHE	US Regional	Institutional	200	2021	3/9	2/39	30/35	0	0	1/7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Accrediting Council for Business Schools and Programs	ACBSP	Business	Programmatic	961	2021	4/4	4/5	0	2/2	0	0/10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Higher Learning Commission	HLC	US Regional	Institutional	1200	2020	0/5	1/3	3/5	0	0	0/2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities	NWCCU	US Regional	Institutional	156	2020	1/1	0	0/4	0	0	0/5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Middle States Commission on Higher Education	MSCHE	US Regional	Institutional	600	2023	0/9	0/14	2/5	0	0	0/1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
WASC Senior College and University Commission	WSCUC	US Regional	Institutional	221	2022	0	1/4	2/2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Southern Association of Colleges & Schools Commission on Colleges	SACSCOC	US Regional	Institutional	780	2017	0	0/17	5/12	0	0	0/5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges	ACCJC	US Regional	2-yr Institutional	137	2014	4/4	1/8	16/22	0	0	0/2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges	ACCSC	Professional Education	Non-degree	650	2022	0	0	0	0	0	0/8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
International / Regional																									
Association of African Business Schools	AABS	Business	Institutional	28	2018	12/13	13/13	2/2	0/35	0	0/28	1/28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Ed. ASG-QA -- Internal Quality Assurance (A) (pp.13-26)	IQA	Institutional	Institutional	0	2018	4/4	4/11	2/6	0	0	0/2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
International Accreditation Council for Business Education	IACBE	Business	Programmatic	2075	2022	2/2	2/2	1/1	0	0	0/2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Ed. ASG-QA -- External Quality Assurance (B) (pp.27-31)	EQU	Institutional	Institutional	0	2018	0	0/3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Oversight Agencies																									
CHEA Standards of Recognition (2021)	CHEA	Oversight	General	62	2021	1/0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Department of Education	DOE	Oversight	General	37	2020	0	3/10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Ed.	INQAHE	Oversight	General	191	2022	0/1	0/12	0/3	0	0	0/1	0/4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
European Network for Quality Assurance	ENQUA	Oversight	General	54	2015	0	0/1	0/1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
ASG-QA -- Quality Assurance Agency (C.) (pp.32-37)	QUU	Oversight	General	0	2018	3/3	0/3	5/5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				

4. Initial Findings

Higher Ed Accreditation lacks engagement with SDG issues and global challenges...

- Silence of US Regional and most European *Standards* on sustainability
- Absence of the concept within formal *Standards* on ethics and integrity
- Widespread irrelevance of SDGs vis-à-vis *Standards* compliance and accreditation
- Commissions and agencies in this study accredit over **10 K** HEIs or business programs

5. Recommendations & Next Steps

...but there are compelling carrots and sticks for reforming Quality Assurance

- Join forces among agency members to re-write accreditation *Standards*
- Engage with CHEA, INQAHE, and the EU to initiate deep and urgent reform
- Inform students of this root cause of climate inaction in Higher Education
- Ensure quality assurance requires the assessment of sustainability literacy

The silence of accreditation and quality assurance vis-à-vis the ...



Words & acronyms wholly absent from accreditation *Standards* in 2020, some of which are starting to appear in 2023!



The truth, folks, is that Colleges, Universities, and particularly Business Schools won't seriously address the climate crisis, the collapse of biodiversity, and the SDGs until accrediting agencies require them to do so. It's the accrediting bodies that are holding things up!

Let's demand better of ourselves!