

APQN PROJECT GROUP ON MUTUAL RECOGNITION (Project Group 8)

Mutual Recognition of Transnational Education Reviews

Purpose

1. The purpose of the project group is to look at mutual recognition of decisions in transnational education reviews in the context of the Asia-Pacific region. The outcome was intended to be a paper on good practice when setting up arrangements of mutual recognition of transnational education decisions. The paper would be based on an analysis of barriers related to the introduction of mutual recognition, the advantages of mutual recognition arrangements and the parameters which need to be in place for arrangements to be set-up between one or more countries.

Project group

1. The project group, whose members are Zita Fahmi from LAN, Anthony Stella from AUQA and Dorte Kristoffersen from AUQA, has met twice, ie in Hong Kong after the APQN meeting and in Wellington after the INQAAHE Conference.
2. At the meeting in Wellington a paper from the project group was discussed with a group of APQN members. The discussion was a very useful and illuminating discussion which identified a number of issues that need to be clarified for the project to proceed.

Issues identified for further exploration

1. Can and should mutual recognition of decisions in reviews of transnational education be separated from recognition of degrees?
2. One of the key questions asked when universities, which operate outside their home country, are evaluated either by the quality agency in their home country or by the quality agency in the foreign country in which they are active, is whether the degree offered is comparable to the degree in the home country. Methods for establishing comparability need to be explored.
3. Another interesting question to explore in regard to comparability is what areas or activities covered in an evaluation need to be comparable.
4. What aspects of the methods applied by one quality assurance agency could easily be applied by another quality agency.

Propose future working method

1. Rather than pursuing the objective of preparing a paper, it is suggested to organise a workshop as part of the AGM in Shanghai (for example in place of a paper session) and have members discuss the issue of comparability on the basis of case studies, eg real life examples.
2. Secondly it is suggested that a small working group be set up consisting of those member countries which are already moving towards mutual recognition of their evaluation activities to develop a practical approach to mutual recognition.
3. The working group believes that more efficient progress can be made through the means of physical working groups rather than electronic discussion groups.