Effective TNE affiliations used to assure quality in Higher Education Institutions: Experiences from Oman

Emeritus Professor Debbie Clayton
claytoninternational@me.com
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Why Oman?

- TNE sending and receiving institutions and countries
- Oman
  - TNE affiliate requirements
  - National quality audit and institutional accreditation system
  - Rich data on effectiveness of affiliations
  - Analysis provides important considerations for sending country affiliates
Overview

- Context
- Quality assurance and institutional accreditation
- TNE affiliate data
- TNE affiliation models
- Findings from quality audits
- Considerations for affiliates
Oman Context

Ruler: Sultan Qaboos bin Al Said (since 1970); monarchy with two advisory councils (one of which is elected)

Population: 4 million:
- 2.233 million Omanis
- 1.767 million non-Omanis
  (growth rate of 6.4%)
(NCSI June 2014)

Main income: Oil and gas continue to be an important source of revenue: 84% in 2013 (9.32bn OMR)
In 1970, there were just three boys' schools in the whole of Oman.
In 2015, there are over 1300 public and private schools; and over 60 public and private institutions offering post secondary education leading to higher education qualifications.
The “Top 10 Movers” highlighted in the 2010 HD Report - those countries among the 135 that improved most in HDI terms over the past 40 years - were led by Oman, which invested energy earnings over the decades in education and public health
TNE Affiliates

- Private higher education sector
  - Introduced 1995 to meet demand
  - No national quality assurance system
  - Colleges and university colleges required to have affiliates to assure standards and quality

- Public institutions and private universities
  - Not required to have affiliates
  - Many choose to do so
There are 27 private HEIs comprising universities, university colleges and co...
Quality assurance and institutional accreditation

- Developing higher education sector
- Oman Academic Accreditation Authority
- Quality audit first stage institutional accreditation
- Institutional and program standards developed
- International affiliations in quality audit and accreditation assessment scope
Institutional Accreditation Stage 1: Quality Audits

A Quality Audit Panel at work

By the end of 2014, most public and private HEIs had been through the quality audit process. Quality Audit reports are published on the OAAA website.
TNE affiliate data

- 2008-2014 quality audits of 55 HEI’s resulted in 43 reports
- Number of international affiliations 37 from 14 countries
- Some HEI’s more than one affiliate
- Affiliates from UK, India, Australia, USA, Lebanon, Jordan, Austria, New Zealand, Germany, Canada
- Most reports contained conclusions on affiliate’s role
- Conclusions on good practice and significant opportunities for improvement highlighted
TNE affiliation models

- Conventional delivery models
  - Branch campuses, joint degrees, twinning, franchised program, validated program, distance learning

- Additional models
  - Localised twinning, affiliation for quality assurance, and affiliate as a consultant

- Models in transition
  - Quality assured program to affiliate as a consultant and supportive critical “friend”
Findings from quality audits

- Scope for differing models of affiliations
- Quality assurance most effective when international affiliate awarded qualification
- Need to clarify degree awarding powers of HEI and affiliate “attestation” particularly with students
- Need for receiving institutions to have
  - clear policies and procedures to establish affiliations
  - clearly defined roles and responsibilities for both parties
Considerations for institutions from sending countries

- Clarity of strategic motivation
- Oversight of academic standards
- Agreement on monitoring and review systems which identify performance expectations and mutual obligations
- Supporting the receiving HEI’s to develop systems for QA and benchmarking
- Supporting curriculum development, contextualization, review, assessment and moderation.
Considerations for institutions from sending countries

- Supporting staff secondments, exchanges, professional development
- Study pathways for students.
- Providing information resources to support student learning.
- Examining the suitability of intensive teaching models
Considerations for institutions from sending countries

- Impact of
  - Maturing models of institutional TNE engagement on receiving countries
  - Changes in national regulatory and quality assurance framework

- Developing a model of affiliation that
  - Changes over time
  - Is mutually beneficial
  - Acknowledges the rate of development of the receiving country’s education system
Concluding comments

- Oman developing education system
- Use of TNE affiliates from over 14 countries to support development
- Data from quality audits of 55 HEI’s
- Findings have implications for sending institutions and countries on effective TNE affiliations
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Questions?