

Recent Trends in Quality Assurance in Asian Higher Education: Comparing the Cases of Japan, China, Vietnam and Indonesia, 2000- 2020

Prof. Patrick Shorb
Kansai University of International Studies, Japan

Abstract

As Asian higher education systems distinguish themselves by various international metrics—be it in overall student numbers, budget sizes or their presence on ranking tables—the pressure to formalize and enhance mechanisms of educational quality has only become more urgent. Indeed, over the last twenty years, all major Asian university systems have undertaken significant reforms to enhance the performance of their academic activities and organizational operations. This fits in with larger global trends, such as in the United States and the United Kingdom, that have been seeking to make higher education more accountable through an increased focus on student learning outcomes. Focusing on four of the largest and most prominent higher education systems on the continent --Japan, China, Indonesia and Vietnam-- this study will examine how recent policy initiatives and educational practices have advanced this global goal within specific national contexts. Drawing upon the latest work of scholars of different national systems, as well as conducting a detailed analysis of specific quality policies and practices themselves, this interpretative work will explore the ongoing balancing act that these Asian systems have engaged in as they seek to enforce basic standards of quality for *all* higher education provisions, while also allowing *individual* institutions a latitude of action to ensure learning innovation. Although, the presentation will focus primarily on the era of higher education “liberalization” (2000-2019), it will conclude by exploring the possible ways that global pandemic has both undercut and enhanced earlier trends.

Keywords: higher education, quality assurance, Asia, education trends