

Research study on the engagement of stakeholders (especially students) in Quality Assurance of higher education in Europe

The purpose of this research is to clarify the European system and actual conditions of stakeholder (especially students) engagement in quality assurance of higher education, and to use this information to improve the evaluation system of the Japan Institution for Higher Education Evaluation (JIHEE). We asked the question, “What is stakeholder engagement in Quality Assurance as practiced in Europe and can it be introduced to Japan?” We conducted a literature review, and then conducted interviews and a questionnaire survey to more deeply understand the actual situation.

Interviews were conducted online with three Quality Assurance-related organizations and four universities in the UK. Through these interviews, it was found that the quality assurance-related organizations practice the idea that “the answer to what higher education should be lies entirely in the students”. During the university interviews, we were able to hear many good practices that were appropriate to the individuality and background of the universities.

The questionnaire survey was conducted through an online system, targeting members of students affiliated to the European Students’ Union (ESU). They were asked about their experiences as members of students review panels, the results obtained from their evaluation activities, and the challenges of student engagement in Quality Assurance. We found that student engagement is regarded as an essential condition for Quality Assurance in Europe, that students are passionate about protecting their rights, and that they are tackling various challenges in order to promote student engagement.

The results obtained from these surveys will be useful in considering the design of a Japanese-style stakeholder (especially students) engagement system.

Interview Survey Overview

Name of Institution	Date of interview
Quality Assurance-related organizations	
European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)	Fri, February 24, 2023
European Students' Union (ESU)	Fri, March 3, 2023
The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)	Mon, February 20, 2023
Universities in the U.K.	
Birmingham City University	Fri, May 12, 2023
University of Nottingham	Fri, June 16, 2023

University of St Andrews	Tue, June 20, 2023
University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI)	Fri, April 28, 2023

Questionnaire Survey Summary

Subjects: 72 members of ESU'S QA Student Experts Pool

Method: Questionnaire Survey using "Google Form"

Response period: Tue, May 16, 2023 - Sat, July 15, 2023

Respondents: 15 (Response rate: 20.8%)

Members in charge of this research study

Member of the Evaluation System Improvement Review Committee

Yusuke HORII Professor, Osaka University Institute for Transdisciplinary
Graduate Degree Programs

Norio OSAKO Professor, Ikuei Junior College Department of Early Childhood
Education and Care

Department of Research and Development

Zhongmin LU Director

Sumiko KOBAYASHI Chief

Yuki NAKAZATO Assistant Section Chief