

# *Concept and Application of Higher Education Quality and Higher Education Quality Assurance System*

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**Abstract:** In recent decades, China's economic level has been greatly increased, the cause of education is also vigorous upward, the construction of colleges and universities has been promoted to the height of the main theme of socialist construction. Universities, the government and the society all begin to pay attention to the quality of higher education, and the importance of the quality assurance system of higher education is self-evident. This paper takes the concept of higher education quality and higher education quality assurance system as the starting point, focuses on the connection between the two, and simply gives some ideas on how to develop the higher education quality assurance system under the current national conditions of China.

## **1. The Concept of Higher Education Quality and Higher Education Quality Assurance System**

### **1.1 The Concept of the Quality of Higher Education**

As the name suggests, the quality of higher education is the teaching quality of colleges and universities. Institutions of higher learning are the leaders of national universities. The educational quality of colleges and universities has greatly affected the whole social and cultural system. It represents the national political thoughts, cultural concepts and economic understanding at the present stage. More importantly, it has contributed a lot to the role of educational reproduction. It is generally recognized that the teaching quality and teaching philosophy of the United States and western countries are first-class. In the current development of China, although many colleges and universities have been built to improve the overall level of teachers, but it has not fully reached the first-class teaching level.

High-quality development is the development that reflects the new development concept. We can compare the higher education system to a market, and generalize the market competition into the competition of education. This kind of competition is not necessarily not a good thing. Just think, if a reasonable competition mechanism can be introduced, and these universities to improve their own education quality as the core and fair competition as the premise, this can play a certain role in promoting the whole high-quality education system. Of course, if this competition ignores the original intention of building an academic atmosphere and expands the consciousness of bad competition, it will be impossible to form a positive mechanism or even destroy the existing educational structure. It can be seen that the improvement of higher education quality is the top priority of education upgrading and education reform at the present stage.

## 1.2 The Concept of a Quality Assurance System in Higher Education

In Introduction to the Quality Assurance System of Higher Education, Professor Chen Yukun said: The quality assurance of higher education is to promote a series of quality standards and work processes, give full play to the potential and consciousness of university employees, earnestly implement and improve education and teaching plans, so as to reach or exceed the predetermined education quality objectives and gradually achieve the overall objectives <sup>[1]</sup>. Li Zhiren proposed that the quality assurance activities of higher education are based on the self-evaluation of higher education institutions, and the quality assurance institutions of higher education organize peer experts to carry out quality audit and evaluation of higher education institutions or majors <sup>[2]</sup>.

To sum up, quality assurance is to organize a normal or even higher teaching system, covering the sum total of all the systems and resources that students learn and educators know. Of course, this definition also contains various factors related to quality, expressing the link of each quality formation in multiple ways. Its essence can be understood as the educator and the educated contact expired, to absorb as many talents as possible. According to the specific quality standard system, it is significant that promote the development of the entire education system, which can enhance more worthy of social trust for the quality of education in colleges and universities.

## 2. The Significance of Higher Education Quality Assurance System to the Quality of Higher Education

According to Jia Huiliang, the quality assurance of higher education can be defined as "the management process adopted to maintain and improve the quality of higher education", including two levels: one is a series of measures and actions taken by colleges and universities to achieve certain teaching quality standards; the other is the supervision and inspection of higher education quality by education administrative department, professional evaluation committee and social evaluation. The quality assurance system of higher education takes assurance activities as the core entity as a reference, which reflects the starting point of education. Its different classification and rating standards are to cover all quality assurance activities as far as possible. By connecting the activity with the corresponding evaluation agencies, we can get a general overview of a simple quality assurance system for higher education.

Taking the quality assurance system in the United States as an example, the quality assurance activities are more concentrated based on external evaluation, including the leaderboard category and the certification category. The advantage of doing this is that it can show the intuitive and acceptable evaluation level to the society, mainly including two aspects: media Pang Hang and academic information institutions. And the certification class of the unit certification and professional certification is more authoritative, academic.

CHEA's mission is to enhance the academic quality of higher education through accreditation, to strengthen the self-discipline of schools through accreditation, and to serve students, parents, and the community. Obviously, the education assurance system is set up to ensure the quality of education, conversely, the quality of education needs to improve the professionalism and authority of certification bodies. From the perspective of the current domestic environment, such professional certification institutions are still relatively few, and the professionalism is not high, so China's higher education still stays on the standard of "degree first", and the pursuit of professionalism and academic nature is still second.

Yu Xiaobo believes that: the quality assurance of higher education refers to the relevant subjects of higher education quality assurance (here mainly refers to the government, society and universities), through the use of quality management, quality supervision, quality control, quality audit, quality certification and quality assessment means, the continuous activities of the quality of

higher education <sup>[4]</sup>. Improving the standards of educational quality assurance activities is of great significance for directly improving the academic quality. Certification bodies can directly set the academic quality of colleges and universities as one of the standards of education quality and quantify them. These quantitative standards can cover high standards such as students' learning and receipt, school education research and education services. Its measures can encourage schools to carry out purposeful reform and necessary innovation, and lay a solid foundation for truly improving the academic quality.

### **3. Some Ideas of Applying the higher Education Quality Assurance System to the Quality of Higher Education**

#### **3.1 Set Up a Circular Mechanism for the Higher Education Quality Assurance System**

Professor Anxin's book is a study on quality Assurance System of Higher Education. The book defines the "quality assurance system of higher education" as: the management system <sup>[5]</sup> established by the state, society and higher education institutions to implement continuous and effective quality control over the quality of education. Su Qin believes that the essence of establishing the quality assurance of higher education is to connect the educators and the service object (customers) through the quality system and the quality assurance activities, to win as many as possible educational "customers" at home and abroad, so that the school can achieve greater development <sup>[6]</sup>.

The implementation process of the college education quality assurance system can be realized through the circular mechanism. They are: program, implementation, inspection, treatment of four aspects. The operation of these four aspects can reflect the ideological methods and procedures of college education work. When formulating the quality assurance system for higher education, the whole social environment should be evaluated first. China is still in the stage of economic level development, and the public's understanding of colleges and universities is only on the "social facade". In this case, we can weaken the school economic activities and teaching investment in the guarantee system, that is, in order to avoid the social phenomenon of higher education to the economy

##### **3.1.1 The Setting of the Plan**

Before the setting of the scheme, we should first analyze the current situation of safety education in colleges and universities, find out the problems related to quality assurance, analyze the problems existing in quality assurance, find out the main reasons from the problems, and then conduct the preliminary setting of the scheme, mainly including certification standards, quantitative standards and other aspects. In other developed countries, the certification program attaches great importance to the quality assurance system of higher education, and even standardizes the mode of higher education such as legislation, which is worthy of reference and learning in China

##### **3.1.2 Implementation of the Program**

Tian Enshun pointed out: higher education quality assurance refers to a specific organization according to a set of quality standard system, according to certain procedures, the quality of education in colleges and universities control<sup>[3]</sup>, audit and evaluation, and to ensure the quality of higher education <sup>[7]</sup>. Thus it can be seen that the implementation of certification measures, by the government-led certification activities at the same time, the development of private certification bodies, so that the two complement each other to maintain long-term problems, give full play to the two diversified, orderly and stable characteristics. Check the implementation effect of the program.

In the primary construction stage of the guarantee system, it is very important to understand the implementation effect of the scheme. For example, according to the comparison of international experience and the current situation of China, China's quality assurance system is still in the basic stage, and the implementation of the program must not be consistent with expectations. In this case, we might as well relax the standards, let the plan implement first, and then adjust and revise it.

### **3.1.3 Inspection of the Scheme**

With the development of the popularization of higher education and the implementation of the quality assurance system, whether the plan is in line with the existing national conditions naturally emerges. We should not only consider the implementation effect of the program at the present stage, but also consider the development of universities, and look at the quality assurance system with a strategic perspective. To check the program, we should consider both the existing problems and the future problems. The inspection of the program mainly includes the inspection and evaluation mechanism set by the quality policy. The former is a re-evaluation of certification standards, or can be regarded as the fulfillment of quality commitments. Universities and certification bodies must carry out comprehensive quality management to align their educational standards and commitments.

The same as the scheme set, in the inspection stage (or can be called evaluation stage, including formative evaluation, integrity evaluation and dynamic real-time evaluation) should also be quantitative inspection scheme, on the one hand, quantitative standard should refer to the overall system of colleges and universities, on the other hand, need to consider the characteristics of the school education system and professional system. Therefore, in the program inspection stage, the combination of the internal evaluation of colleges and universities and the external evaluation of the certification institutions is very important.

### **3.1.4 Adjustment of the Scheme**

The adjustment of the program is the last stage of the whole program process, but also the reset stage of the scheme. For the existing quality assurance programs to adopt new, more in line with social standards. The reorganized scheme should take into account the solution of the existing problems, and plan and analyze the foreseen future problems, so that the implementation of the new round of scheme can play a more efficient and positive role. If the circulation system cannot solve all the problems, the remaining and unresolved security problems can also be transferred to the next cycle.

Fundamentally speaking, the quality assurance system of higher education needs to be forward-looking, that is, in a narrow sense, the importance of the adjustment stage is more important than the importance of the program setting stage. The quality assurance system of higher education should solve both the existing problems and the future problems, and mainly to solve the future problems. But at the same time, according to Marxist dialectics, the solution of the future problems cannot be separated from the current existing problems. Therefore, understanding the conflict and identity of contradictions plays a great role in solving the whole quality assurance system of higher education.

## **3.2 Promoting Collaborative, Interactive and Innovation**

The construction of the quality assurance system of higher education is not only the internal problem of colleges and universities, not only the control of the government, but also not the evaluation of the public, but a diversified and multi-angle educational force. The establishment of the education system in addition to the internal evaluation, more should introduce including the government and civil organization model of certification institutions evaluation, in universities to

innovation, research institutes, government-led, build basic system platform, through the media propaganda and evaluation, let the public can participate in the evaluation. These multiple subjects form a new and powerful driven sum education evaluation system, build a new standard of educational innovation, and finally achieve the innovation result of "1 + 1 > 2".

### **3.2.1 Certification Body**

Take the certification system of the United States as an example, in addition to the certification methods of 11 national professional certification committees and nearly 70 professional certification committees, the United States also guarantees the order of the quality of education by legal means, such as the Higher Education Facilities Law and the Higher Education Law, which are independent of the Education Law. Its independence of higher education from the education system is not to make higher education become "independent education", but to highlight the uniqueness of higher education and make it evolve into elite education. In addition, the United States has established non-profit institutions such as the Accreditation Council for Higher Education (CHEA) to serve the society, government and universities, and promote the society's diversified understanding of quality education.

From China's national conditions, the social awareness of the higher education quality assurance system is not enough, the non-government certification bodies are still relatively few. However, from a professional point of view, the establishment of special certification bodies has a prominent role in the improvement of the quality assurance system of higher education.

### **3.2.2 Media Evaluation**

The guiding role of the media for the quality evaluation can also not be ignored. Media has extensive dissemination and relative objectivity, which is conducive to the formulation of relatively fair and scientific standards for the ranking of universities. If the qualitative and quantitative methods are used for the ranking, it can also show the respect for the autonomy of colleges and universities. For example, American News and World Report launched the university rankings in 1987, and the ranking features became one of the features of American quality assurance.

### **3.2.3 Social Supervision**

Colleges and universities themselves are to serve the society, and the main service groups are parents and students. Therefore, it is very important to obtain the evaluation of parents and students to really improve the quality of colleges and universities education. Colleges and universities can directly conduct questionnaire surveys on parents and students, and they can also carry out educational evaluation activities through the media. This can understand the public expectations of higher education performance from the public, help universities to compare and understand similar colleges, and promote the communication and competition of various colleges and universities.

## **3.3 Evaluation Mechanism**

### **3.3.1 The Professionalism of the Evaluation Subject**

Whether in the certification body or in the real-time evaluation of dynamic supervision, the continuous tracking and dynamic tracking need the professionalism of certification and evaluation. Because the quality assurance system of higher education originates from the evaluation of higher education, while higher education has the classification of multiple disciplines. The traditional government evaluation can only start from the external evaluation of teaching equipment and

teaching environment, and the evaluation of professionalism cannot be in-depth. Therefore, it is necessary to develop the professionalism of the evaluation subject to improve the quality of the whole education system. For example, the quality of the American evaluation mechanism has real-time monitoring, real-time feedback, timely adjust three aspects, the early assessment qualification confirmation, evaluation of the school hard conditions, late formative evaluation of the whole, as far as possible to reflect the education quality of colleges and universities, also can achieve the purpose of "true", truly promote the virtuous cycle.

### **3.3.2 Diversity of the Evaluation Criteria**

The traditional evaluation mechanism pays more attention to the "explicit fame" and hardware equipment of colleges and universities, and knows little about the academic style and teaching system of colleges and universities. The reasons are not only caused by the certification and evaluation standards, but also related to the social atmosphere and China's national conditions. The general view of the society also takes the "education cognition" and "environment first" as the mainstream evaluation criteria.

In order to practice the diversity of evaluation standards, it is necessary to comprehensively investigate the school hardware conditions, teachers, students' performance and other objective aspects. Special attention should be paid to the evaluation of academic research and academic practice. It is advisable to quantify the number of professional-level academic evaluation activities held by universities every year and the academic achievements that meet international standards, which are divided into several first-level indicators and second-level indicators, and obtain recognition and support from the public by showing real achievements.

### **3.4 Strengthen Institutional Guarantees for Innovation**

In order to realize the integrity and rationalization of the quality assurance system of higher education, we must maintain the drive of innovation, which must need the support and guarantee of the system level. In addition to the government to improve the guarantee of material resources, we should increase the investment of project funds. With the United States' precedent of legislation on the quality of higher education, China can also consider setting up special laws and regulations for higher education, especially improving the intellectual property protection system, trying to ensure the intellectual property rights of students and teachers, safeguard their legitimate rights, and set up a strong backing to ensure the quality system.

## **4. Possible Problems in the Implementation of the Higher Education Quality Assurance System**

### **4.1 Single Research Direction**

When many scholars discuss the quality assurance system, they either only from the micro level of specific evaluation means and quantitative standards, or only from the perspective of education system, or only focus on internal evaluation or external evaluation. Because of the comprehensiveness of the research method is not strong, the whole evaluation system is single, which cannot reflect all the existing problems of the quality assurance of higher education.

### **4.2 Not Start from National Conditions**

In the research, many theoretical systems take the quality assurance system of developed countries as the model, rely too much on "empiricism", and lack the understanding of the

educational situation of China's basic national conditions. Local problems need to be solved by local problems, and the experience of other countries can only be used as a reference and cannot be copied.

### 4.3 Not Give Full Play to the Subjective Initiative of the Evaluation Subject

Colleges and universities themselves only stay on the "access standards" for the certification standards, rarely considering the mention of their own evaluation. The government is limited by professionalism, and the government evaluates the evaluation of educational system, educational content and educational standards, while the public rarely realizes that it is also a part of the evaluation subject [8].

## 5. Conclusion

Education is the lifeline of the society, and higher education is the top of the education pyramid. The role of higher education quality assurance system is self-evident. China is still in the development now, and the concept of the quality of higher education is still in the fuzzy stage. Therefore, it is necessary to rationally see the problems in the quality assurance of higher education in China and to develop the independent assurance system of higher education by drawing lessons from the content and characteristics of the quality assurance in other countries. Fully considering the innovative methods and practical innovative systems of higher education under different development modes, and thinking from the perspectives of certification subject, certification standards, evaluation subject and evaluation methods, with the accumulation of time, the quality assurance system of higher education in line with China's national conditions will be constructed.

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