



APQN Quality Label (APQL)

as Regional/International Accreditation of Internationalization

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ASIA PACIFIC QUALITY NETWORK(APQN)



APQN Quality Label as Regional/International Accreditation of Internationalization

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I. Executive Summary

Today, the global village witnesses the growing international activities within higher education (HE): greater mobility of students across borders, expanding international faculty exchanges, cooperating international researches, increasing numbers of cross-border partnerships among higher education institutions (HEIs) and programs. Globally, the **internationalization of higher education (IHE)** has assumed a key position on international and national policy agendas, not only for educational and scientific reasons, but also increasingly due to socio-economic considerations.

Internationalization (defined as the increasing flow of technology, finance, trade, knowledge, people, values, and ideas across borders) is one of the causes of the increased attention to quality assurance. IHE is indeed a “hot topic” in higher education worldwide. A number of international organizations, including UNESCO, OECD and the World Bank are active in the field of quality assurance. The first sentence of *Higher Education Quality Assurance Principles for the Asia Pacific Region (Chiba Principle)* issued by the APQN clearly states: “the internationalization of higher education creates the need for countries and regions to demonstrate and assure the quality and standards of their higher education systems and programs.” “The Global Alliance for Transnational Education” elaborated some principles in 1995; UNESCO and the Council of Europe adopted a “*Code of Good Practice*” in 2001; UNESCO and OECD have produced “*Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross Border Higher Education*”. All of those specifically focus on IHE, which strengthen the process of IHE in the globe. At the same time, the existence of an internationally respected national quality assurance (QA), with some sort of authority over national institutions, has become the easiest way of a nation indicating its credibility in a world of mobile students and mobile graduates.

“*APQN Constitution*” stresses IHE by stipulating “to permit better-informed international recognition of qualifications throughout the region (4.6)”. Over the past 15 years, APQN with 204 members from 40 countries and territories, has earned credibility with wider recognition and acceptability in the crosscutting areas of quality of education across the Asia-Pacific Region. The network has earned reputation and recognition as one of the most effective and efficient QA network related bodies not only within the region but with other regions like Arab, African and European regions as well.

The project of “APQN Quality Label as regional/international accreditation of internationalization” was launched in January, 2014. After a 28-month exploration, it has been finalized and is well under way in the implementation.

II. Purpose

The overall objective of the APQN Quality Label initiative is to support, develop, improve and enhance international excellence in HEIs and programs in this region. It aims to achieve this by designing and testing an APQN Quality Label accompanied by a methodology to assess the internationalization of higher education in the Asia-Pacific Region. The internationalization of APQN Quality Label is based on the foundation of HE quality. The followings are the primary purposes:

- ✓ To establish the criteria of internationalization of higher education, and determine the best way to sustainably deploy internationalization of higher education in the Asia-Pacific region
- ✓ To establish the standardization of the Quality Assurance system of internationalization, and facilitate the communications of different international experiences within the region
- ✓ To promote the international mobility of students, faculty, programs, researches, projects, exchanges of HEIs in the Asia-Pacific Region, and even the whole globe.

III. Criteria and Indicators

The evaluation criteria system of the HE internationalization is a set of integrated criteria which can reflect the fundamental elements of the HEIs’ internationalization according to the internationalization characteristics of the developing process.

In order to establish a system of issuing earned APQN Quality Label as regional/international accreditation of internationalization to the eligible HEIs or programs, there are general criteria for the acquisition of APQN Quality Label, which are made up of 5 criteria, 12 indicators and 34 review points:

Criterion	Indicator	Review Point
1. International Mission and Policy	1.1 Policy of internationalization	1.1.1 The international mission statement and strategic planning of HEIs/programs should be prominently and clearly stated with a clear, specific goal expectation.
		1.1.2 The administrative staff, teachers, students and all the relevant stakeholders should be fully participate in and have a clear understanding of implementing measures
		1.1.3 The international policy should be known by all stakeholders, and should be publicly available.
		1.2.1 All the international programs and activities are included in

<p>1.2 System of internal quality assurance (IQA)</p>	<p>the IQA system 1.2.2 The public can obtain a clear description of the whole international operation of the HEI's/program's implementations, process and achievement 1.2.3 In recruiting staff, the staff's international background, experience and qualifications are included in the recruiting standards</p>
<p>2. Organization and Administration</p>	<p>2.1 Organization 2.1.1 An international exchange office is established in which senior executives are involved and at least a responsible person for international activities. 2.1.2 The establishment of international research center, innovation base, association Secretariat or other originations 2.1.3 The mechanism of foreign credit transfer and mutual credit recognition is established</p>
	<p>2.2 Administration 2.2.1 The International exchange office regularly holds international courses, seminars or other activities 2.2.2 Adoption of original foreign teaching materials and textbooks 2.2.3 Adoption of teaching in foreign languages</p>
<p>3. International Mobility</p>	<p>3.1 Mobility of programs 3.1.1 International joint courses, dual degree courses, franchising, twinning and others are implemented in the students training program 3.1.2 International cooperation in discipline, research, program and student training are implemented 3.1.3 To provide a mechanism of program content introduction, re-selection, and other support</p>
	<p>3.2 Student mobility 3.2.1 To provide international activities of students mobility, including study abroad, seminars, research, internship and communication, etc. 3.2.2 The basic information of international students 3.3.3 Students are prepared and able to master a counterpart program in other HEIs/programs including the language competency</p>
	<p>3.3 Staff mobility 3.3.1 International funding and administrative mechanism is established to support staff; International activities of staff mobility are provided, including teaching abroad, research, conferences, visiting lecturers, internships, joint research etc. 3.3.2 The introduction of staff with international background, experience and research interests 3.3.3 The basic information of invited foreign scholars, guests and lecturers.</p>
<p>4. Student Support</p>	<p>4.1 Availability of scholarships and investments 4.1.1 Funding and other support mechanism is established to support students financially, psychologically and materially 4.1.2 Students can apply for scholarships to study abroad, adequate resources are provide to help students get more funding 4.1.3 International students can get scholarships, financial aid and other resources</p>
	<p>4.2 Human resources 4.2.1 A global social, cultural and academic support mechanism is established and a formal and informal international liaison and coordination is in function. 4.2.2 To provide an effective system of international service to students, such as visa, accommodation, safety, advisory, loans and special individual needs 4.2.3 Complete, transparent, accessible and objective information about the learning resources, programs, qualifications and expected learning outcomes should be provided</p>
	<p>4.3 Extracurricular activities 4.3 4.3.1 The international student clubs, student organizations and other organizations are in action 4.3.2 Transnational, cross-cultural campus activities are regularly in service 5.1.1 The program should be able to demonstrate the</p>

5.Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)	5.1 Academic performance and qualification	<p>achievement of the planned learning outcomes and recognition of study periods.</p> <p>5.1.2. The awarded degree or certificate shall be approved by the relevant competent authorities both at home and abroad.</p> <p>5.1.3 The diversity of students and their needs have been taken into consideration in teaching and learning process, and outcomes have been demonstrated, especially from the point of view of different cultural traditions.</p>
	5.2 Graduate	<p>5.2.1 To demonstrate the evidence of employability abroad (career advancement and tendency) of the graduates</p> <p>5.2.2 Collection, analysis and utilization system of employment information to overseas students</p> <p>5.2.3 international reputation and its characteristics</p>

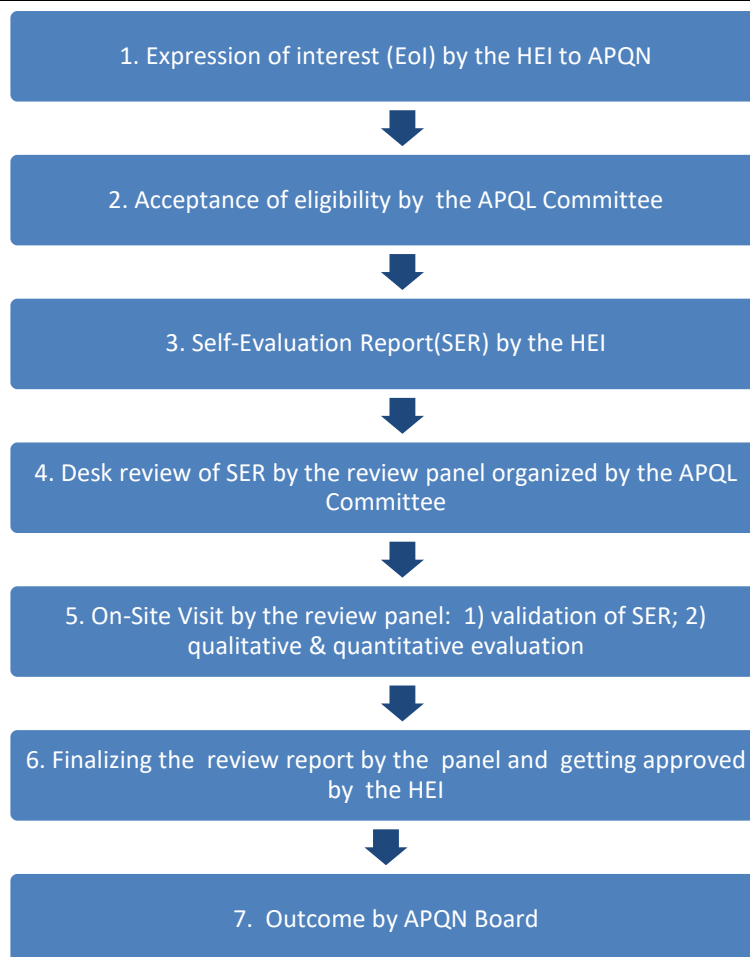
Note: Due to the different objectives of HEIs and program, the criteria of internationalization of HEIs/Programs will be respectively designed in two sets of criteria to suit the different purposes.

IV. Process

Any HEIs/programs may request APQN to implement the review of APQN Quality Label as Regional/International Accreditation of Internationalization, or request APQN and another QAA who has been registered with Asia Pacific Quality Register (APQR) by APQN to implement a joint review.

The external review process must adhere to some important requirements, which are set out in the procedures for applications.

The APQN Board is responsible for organizing the review, ensuring good practice in the review process and selecting and briefing the members of the panel to be responsible for the review. The evaluation process is below:



1. The agency should submit an expression of interest (EOI) to the APQN Secretariat or registered QAA with APQR requesting for an external review against the Criteria of APQN Quality Label and demonstrating its eligibility for the review.

2. The APQN Board decides on the eligibility of the applicant. If there are doubts about any aspect of the credibility or maturity of the applicant The APQN Board will decide not to entertain the application without giving any reasons to the applicant. If The APQN Board accepts the expression of interest, scope of the review is discussed with the applicant and a timeline and costing are agreed.

3. The applicant agency submits a self-evaluation report (SER) at least two months prior to the proposed site visit.

4. APQN Secretariat and the registered QAA compose a panel in consultation with the HEIs/programs and plan the schedule for the review. The review panel will carry on desk review of SER, read the review documents, carry out a site visit, and write the review report. The Chair of the panel is responsible for developing the program for the site visit and communicating with the agency about the panel membership and other practical details related to the review such as provision of additional information and replies to questions about the SER.

5. The applicant HEIs/programs is responsible for the practical arrangements with respect to the review, including booking and paying for travel and accommodation and organization of the site visit based on instructions from the panel chair.
6. The review report is provided to The APQN Board after getting the approval of the applicant HEIs/programs. It is The APQN Board who would make the final decision on the review result.

V. Review Result

The review result would be four categories: 1) fully achieved; 2) substantially achieved; 3) partially achieved; 4) non-achieved, based on the standards and criteria against the Chiba principal.

The review result will be valid for a period of five years. The APQN Board has the right to cancel the APQN Quality Label if there are circumstances that question the substantial adherence of the agency to the review criteria. An application for renewal is mandatory after the first five years expire. This application should include documentary evidence of how the quality criteria are being upheld and other improvements are being made. A visit of the expert group can be organized to re-review the status quo.

The award of APQN Quality Label may take place at the APQN Annual Conference and AGM during which the HEIs/programs receive certificates.

The logo of APQN Quality Label is designed as follows:



VI. Cost

Some parameters are required for the fee to be charged by APQN Council. This must cover the services of the Secretariat and the honoraria of three panel members.

3000 USD is taken as an indicative figure for the Secretariat’s services, as well as income for APQN.

The nominal honorarium for one expert per day in United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and World Bank is 600 to 800 USD. APQR can expect that the reviewers will be willing to accept a 250 USD per day. For a three-day visit and one-day advance preparation, the honorarium per reviewer would be 1000 USD.

For the whole reviewing process, the costing would be:

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Item Amount</i>	<i>USD</i>
1	Services of APQN Secretariat for APQN Quality Label	3000
2	Honorarium for three reviewers (one reviewer 800 USD as a lump-sum amount)	2400
Total (USD)		5400

Note: Air fare and accommodation and all related expenses are to be borne by the applicant agency directly. Additional expenses may include the costs of visas and ground transport unless reviewers agree to pay for these themselves.

VII. Further Information

1. The quality assurance agencies who are interested in the international accreditation of HEIs and educational programs with APQN recognition are welcomed to submit a proposal to APQN Secretariat.
2. Any other feedbacks are welcomed to APQN Secretariat(apqnsecretariat@163.com) and Prof. Dr. Jianxin Zhang (jianxin@ynu.edu.cn).