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DEAN'S DIGEST

“Without proper self-evaluation, failure is inevitable.”

John Wooden

“Continuous improvement is better than delayed perfection.”

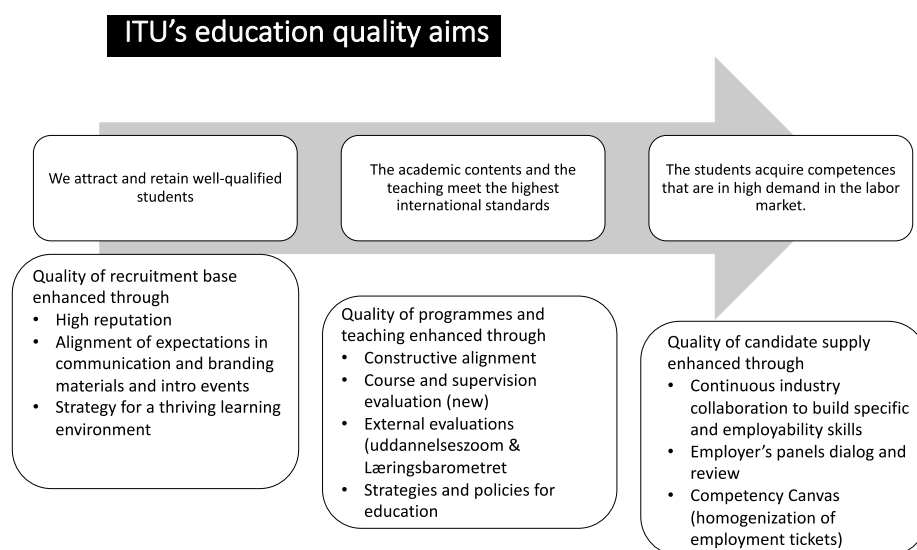
Mark Twain

Institutional Accreditation of ITU 2021-2022

Accreditation plays a crucial role in the university sector. With the fear of sounding dramatic, it is actually a matter of life or death for educational institutions, students, faculty and staff. So, a huge responsibility rests upon our shoulders the forthcoming year. Usually, it is ITU faculty who examine the quality of our students' learning outcomes, but during 2021 and 2022, ITU will “sit at the exam table” and undergo the regular Institutional Accreditation (IA). The process is somehow similar with regards to the assessment base: The Accreditation Institution (AI) and the Accreditation Panel will receive and gather quantitative and qualitative data on the practices of ITU and based on their analysis, the Accreditation Council will make their decision in September 2022 on whether ITU will pass, get a conditioned approval or flunk. We will do our best to ensure that they get the most realistic impression and knowledge platform to judge how well we quality assure our teaching and research-based study programmes and the value ITU creates.

You are probably well aware that quality assurance is the backbone of ITU's operation and development of our routines and practices. We do this to ensure our students “get value for money”. At the same time, it forces faculty and staff to continuously improve and learn. The previous issue of Dean's Digest outlined how research plays an important role in ensuring the quality of our teaching activities: we “measure” the learning outcome advancement from remembering, understanding, applying and evaluating to creating concurrently with a change from teacher-centered to student-centered learning environment. In fact, quality assurance is meshed into a lot of ITU's routines and practices and is the reason why we do things the way we do. Agreed, some of it may appear bureaucratic and unnecessary at times, but now facing an accreditation process, it really pays off.

At the education area, we operate with the following quality aims, followed by supportive action examples:



How will we “measure” the quality of ITUs learning and performance?

On May 7, we kicked off the accreditation process by presenting our characteristics and outlining our quality assurance system. The Accreditation Institution (AI) presented the new guidelines for institutional accreditation focusing more on practice than paper to avoid a bureaucratic monster. The AI and the accreditation panel will be concerned with how, and if, our system works in practice. They will pay close attention to the reasoning behind the design of our quality assurance system and our reflections on its strengths and weaknesses and how to develop the system further. The first impression at our kick-off meeting was positive.

A good thing is that ITU has well-established quality assurance processes (thanks Dorthe ☺) so we can already provide much of the necessary documents for the institution report (system description and self-evaluation), which we will hand in in September 2021. In November, the AI and a small, but well-qualified panel, will visit the Campus and meet with ITU management and a selected group of teachers and students to discuss ITU's quality assurance system and its practice.

Even though ITU is doing a lot of things well there is also room for improvement and inspiration from other specialists. After the first site visit, we will be informed on which audit trails, AI and the panel has selected for further inquiry. Audit trails illustrate how our quality assurance system works in practice to discover and act on quality issues within specific issues. In the beginning of next year, we will collect and send documentation on this to AI and the panel and in spring 2022, we will be visited again by the persons from the first visit. Finally, the Accreditation Panel and AI will write the accreditation report. ITU is then consulted and around end of September 2022, the Accreditation Council decides: positive accreditation, conditional positive accreditation, or refusal? Last time, ITU first received a conditional accreditation and after a follow-up process, we then got the positive one in 2016. In case of a refusal, a new accreditation process (respectively) will be planned and scheduled.

Thank you all for doing your best every day. Your daily efforts make ITU stand out. I am convinced that the Accreditation institution and panel will acknowledge that and let us pass big!

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