

Call for Applications

DIES Training Course ASEAN-QA

“Internal and External Quality Assurance in Southeast Asian Higher Education”

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) – Section for Joint Higher Education Management Programmes (DIES) – the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), and the University of Potsdam together with partners from Southeast Asia and Europe – ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN), ASEAN University Network (AUN), European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), and the Regional Center for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO-RIHED) – are jointly conducting the DIES Project **ASEAN-QA** which aims at developing capacity in the field of quality assurance (QA) in the ASEAN region. In this frame a multi-part training course will be offered to two main target groups: 1. university staff dealing with internal QA matters, and 2. agency staff being employed in the external QA sector. ASEAN-QA is part of the DIES programme (Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies) which has been jointly coordinated by DAAD and HRK since 2001.

Part I: October 17 to 21, 2011 in Bangkok, Thailand (5 days)

Part II: March 2012, Potsdam/ Berlin, Germany (8 days)

Part III: November 2012 (target group 1)/ March 2013 (target group 2) in Southeast Asia (5 days)

Course Background and Outline

Southeast Asian higher education systems have seen rapid changes throughout the past years. These changes refer to an increasing demand for education services and increasing student enrolment rates on the one hand and public demands for universities' accountability for education quality on the other. Mechanisms for assessing the quality of teaching and training at the levels of individual teachers, study programmes and entire higher education institutions (HEI) have evolved over the last years. The assessment of the universities' quality relies on what has always been the most accepted procedure in science: assessment and guidance by external assessors from the academia (peers). In terms of the assessment of study programmes or institutions this has led to a widely agreed practice for peer-reviews which consists of:

- Preparing a **self-assessment report (SAR)** performed by the study programme or HEIs under evaluation;
- Conducting an external assessment including a **site-visit** by a group of peers which aims at verifying the self-assessment report;
- Recommending **follow-up measurements** for further improvements which form the basis for the next cycle of evaluation.

All of these three stages are connected with (more or less) formalised procedures and respective methodological requirements, such as expertise in the implementation of internal evaluation mechanisms or the organisation and appropriate implementation of the site-visit. In most EU higher education systems this has led to the professionalization of both university staff members being assigned with QA related tasks and specialists in accrediting institutions (either publicly or privately operated). Furthermore, the application of QA-mechanisms as such more and more turns into an accepted criterion for the overall assessment of HEIs.

These developments create the background of the DIES training course's overall objectives. It aims at equipping universities' "QA-staff" as well as accreditation agency representatives with knowledge and practical skills in the field of QA in higher education.¹ Internationally gained experience serves as a reference point. The course is placing emphasis on the facilitation of exchange between Asian and European partners and on strengthening their liaising in QA networks. The overarching aim of the DIES training course is to contribute to capacity development in QA at the participating universities in the ASEAN region and to facilitate the establishment of a globally shared understanding of QA procedures.

Course Learning Targets and Methodology

The course activities will be subdivided in two tracks: One will address internal QA procedures performed by university staff (being in charge of QA at programme and/or institutional level). The second track will address external QA mechanisms, namely accreditation, performed collaboratively by accrediting bodies (agencies or governmental bodies) and peers. Both tracks' activities will be implemented parallel and should be completed with a mutually conducted peer review process at the involved universities at the end of the process.

Main contents of the course are:

Internal QA track

- Introduction to internal QA in higher education in a regional and international perspective.
- Introduction to instruments for higher education quality development.
- Performing internal quality assurance: self-assessment at study programmes.
- Project management: writing a self-assessment report (SAR), preparing the institution for peer reviews / assessments.

External QA track

- Introduction to external QA in higher education in a regional and international perspective.
- Running an accreditation agency effectively.
- Preparing external quality assessment exercises at programme level.
- Conducting peer trainings and preparing scholars for their role as assessors.
- Implementing site-visits at universities.

¹ The nationally different approaches to external evaluation and accreditation (e.g. privately run agencies or governmental bodies for the external evaluation of universities) will be appropriately considered.

Main expected outcomes of the course will be a furthered understanding of QA in higher education at programme and institutional level. University staff will have broadened their knowledge in the field and will be equipped with routines for implementing QA at programme level independently and in cooperation with study programme representatives. Trainings on the preparation of self-assessment reports (SAR) will serve as a basis for future work in the field. Furthermore, it is foreseen that the respective HEIs of the participating university staff will have undergone external assessment procedures (peer review) in the field of engineering, business and/or social sciences. They will receive feedback and external evaluation from an international team composed of experts in higher education management and QA from Southeast Asia and Europe.

The course ties up with established and well tested training materials, such as handbooks and training materials for the enhancement of QA at study programme level, released by AUN. European and Asian experts in the field will collaborate in teams of trainers, securing an international working atmosphere and sharing of internationally gained experiences. The working method consists of input lectures, small group work, excursions, role-plays, etc. The venues for the respective workshops will be both in the region and in Germany (University of Potsdam). The course will be sequenced in three phases resulting in a site-visit that shall be conducted at the participating universities. After having gone through all parts of the training and having participated in the site-visit the respective universities receive an assessment **certificate** which is equivalent to the standards of the regular AUN-QA assessments and will be jointly awarded by the international partners involved.

Application Process for the Internal QA Track

The course fees, costs for board and lodging, international travel, all learning materials as well as the expenses for the assignment and travel of European peers/ assessors in connection with the site visits will be covered by the DAAD with funds from the German Ministry of Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ).² The participants' home universities are expected to contribute to the costs by covering the expenses for the participants' regional travel (part I and part III) as well as the expenses for the assignment, travel and accommodation of Asian peers/ assessors in connection with the site visits.³

Universities of the ASEAN countries that provide study programmes in the area of engineering, business and/or social sciences are eligible for participation. **Criteria for selection** are the assessment of two main application documents:

1. **Letter of Intent** submitted by the universities senior management
2. **Motivation Letter** and **CV** of the QA staff which is delegated by the respective university

1. The **Letter of Intent** is supposed to include:

- A statement on the relevance of quality assurance for the applying university (including a description of the experiences in the field of QA, e.g. drafted or stipulated regulations for internal QA procedures, etc.) and on the need for programme assessment in one of the subject areas mentioned above (including an overview on the courses on BA at MA level provided)

² As Singapore and Brunei Darussalam are not eligible to receive funds from the BMZ, candidates from these two countries are invited to apply for participation at full cost (i.e. covering the expenses for travel, and accommodation in order to participate in all three trainings as well as the costs for the assignment, travel and accommodation of Asian and European peers/ assessors in connection with the site visits.)

³ Applicants from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Timor-Leste are eligible for special financial support upon justification. Respective applicants are requested to submit an additional letter signed by the universities' leadership which indicates the need for financial support.

- A justification of the delegation of QA Staff (his or her qualification, career development)
- A confirmation regarding the availability of the delegated staff to attend all three phases of the course
- A confirmation regarding the availability of the (Deputy) Vice-Rector in charge of QA and academic affairs to attend the **QA Study Visit** which will be carried out from September 19-23 2011 in Potsdam/ Berlin, Germany.

Selected universities will delegate one **staff member** who is supposed to meet the following criteria:

- being assigned with QA in higher education at programme, department and/or university level
- being in office for at least three years from the moment of application
- having very good English proficiency and good communication skills.

2. Next to the Letter of Intent to be submitted by the universities' top management the nominated QA candidate is requested to submit a **Letter of Motivation** which needs to include:

- A statement on the QA tasks the candidate is in charge of as well as information on the procedures that are in place regarding the evaluation of study programmes
- A description on the motivation and expectations of the candidate regarding the participation in the training programme
- Information on the qualifications of the candidates according to the attached CV format.

Applications which have to include both Letter of Intent and the Letter of Motivation are welcome through **June, 10th**.

Application Process for the External QA Track

The course fees, costs for board and lodging, international travel as well as all learning materials will be covered by the DAAD with funds from the German Ministry of Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ).⁴ The sending external QA institutions (agencies or ministerial departments) are expected to contribute to the costs by covering the expenses for the delegated participants' regional travel in order to participate in the phases I and III as well as in the concluding site visit exercises.⁵

AQAN member institutions are invited to apply for the participation of **up to three of their staff**. A committee composed of the ASEAN-QA partnering institutions' representatives will decide on the selection of candidates. Each AQAN member institution will be represented by at least one participant, given that the following **criteria** are being met:

- proven basic knowledge and experience in organizing quality audits/external evaluation processes/accreditation site visits
- Capacity to analyse reports, being able to do comparative analysis of the AUN program criteria/handbook and the SAR
- Ability to draft an evaluation/accreditation report.
- Good communication skills for the cooperation with the participating universities and their Internal Quality Assurance personnel
- Having very good English proficiency

⁴ As Singapore and Brunei Darussalam are not eligible to receive funds from the BMZ, candidates from these two countries are invited to apply for participation at full cost (i.e. covering the expenses for travel, and accommodation in order to participate in all three parts of the trainings, including the participation of the QA officer at the concluding site-visit exercise.)

⁵ Applicants from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Timor-Leste are eligible for special financial support upon justification. Respective applicants are requested to submit an additional letter signed by the head of the national agency in charge for external QA which indicates the need for financial support.

Applications are welcome through **June, 10th** and should consist of an **motivation letter** submitted by the individual candidates which provides

- Information on the tasks the QA officer is in charge of (particularly regarding the evaluation/accreditation of study programmes)
- A description on the motivation and expectations of the candidate regarding the participation in the training programme
- Information on the qualifications of the candidate according to the attached CV format.

Along with the candidate's motivation letter a **statement** from the employer is expected that indicates the respective AQAN member institution's support for the application and confirms the candidate's availability for all three course phases.

Applications both for the internal and for the external track should be sent by e-mail to

Dr. Philipp Pohlenz, University of Potsdam, Germany (pohlenz@uni-potsdam.de) and Cc to Karin Essig, DAAD, Section Joint Higher Education Management (essig@daad.de).

Figure 1: sequencing of the course modules

