

## QUALITY ASSURANCE IN GERMAN AND YEMENI HIGHER EDUCATION: A Comparison

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### ABSTRACT

This comparative study presents two different higher education accreditation systems, which are carried out by the Yemeni Accreditation Council (YAC) and the German Accreditation Council (GAC) in the two countries, Yemen and Germany. After an examination of the Yemeni Accreditation Council and the German Accreditation Council's literature, their recently developmental accreditation systems and practical methods are subject to entirely detailed analysis. As a result, the findings of the two councils' literature analysis reveal that there is a large gap between the Yemeni and the German Higher Education Systems in the implementation of accreditation.

Accordingly, it is strongly recommended that the Yemeni Accreditation Council should benefit from the positive elements of the German Accreditation Council for example, appointments of accreditation agencies, expert groups and the German accreditation system procedures, the accreditation of accreditation agencies, the internal review and the external review which may help the YAC to create the necessary mechanisms for the quality assessment improvement within the Yemeni higher education institutions.

**Keywords:** Quality assurance, accreditation system, higher education, institutions.

### INTRODUCTION

#### Higher Education in Yemen

In Yemen, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) has attempted to establish the concepts of quality assurance and accreditation system in higher education institutions through organized workshops and/or seminars. The aim of these workshops and seminars is to make the higher education institutions and the academic staff aware of the concepts of quality assurance and accreditation standards because they mostly don't know what the quality assurance is.

In 2002, for instance a workshop was organized by the MHESR for the rectors, vice-rectors, academic staff, and officials from the institutions of higher education across Yemen. Another example, in 2006 two training workshops on quality assurance and accreditation system were performed in the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research for the higher education officials, university rectors, and other academic staff. These two workshops were practical because the attendants, particularly, the universities' rectors as well as the academic staff endeavoured to discuss the foundation of an Accreditation Council for higher education and internal quality assurance processes implementation (NARIC 2007). Besides, the international organizations in Yemen, for instance the British NARIC and DAAD, the German Academic Exchange Service, have been officially asked to hold as well as to participate in all workshop and/or seminar activities through which they can help the Yemeni higher education institutions to establish quality assurance and accreditation system. On the project funded by the World Bank called 'the Higher Education Learning and Innovation Project' (2003-2006), the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) has signed an agreement for consultant services with DAAD and NARIC to perform workshops and/or seminars on the systems of quality assurance and accreditation.

The main aim of the project presented in the following quotation:

Assistance to the two pilot universities (Sana'a University and University of Aden) in order to initiate a process of self-evaluation and improvement and to develop agreed standards, which could be applied by other public sector universities, as a basis for future accreditation; and to perform internal assessment of a selected private institution. In addition, the project will help the MHESR to prepare for the early extension of accreditation to Yemen's private universities, based on rigorous and transparent quality standards (World Bank, 2002 p.7).

### Higher Education in Germany

In Germany, a two-tiered system of evaluation established in 1999 and widely applied to the higher education institutions in all sixteen states combines the internal and external evaluation. However, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs held in 2005 resolved the indispensable main elements of the quality management system having the all forms of higher education institutions combining the various measures and procedures of quality assurance. These measures and procedures include an evaluation referring to some indicators and specifying individual tools, e.g. integration of internal and external evaluation, involvement of undergraduate and postgraduate students. The internal evaluation consists of a systematic inventory and analysis of teaching and studying taking care of research conducted by the department or the faculty that concludes with a written report. Consequently, an assessment is done by external experts who as well write down their finding and recommendation in a final report. External evaluation conducted by regional evaluation agencies is performed by a peer review (experts) from other higher education institutions, research establishment or business community and are repeated at various intervals. The evaluation measure's aim is to undergo academic standards in teaching and teaching methods and the success of teaching to regular assessment. Regarding the accreditation program, the Standing Conference (2004) resolves the following main responsibilities which the German accreditation council should carry out:

- Accreditation of agencies;
- structural requirements for binding guidelines for the agencies;
- definition of the minimum requirements for the accreditations procedures;
- monitoring the agencies responsibilities performances.

In 2005, the accreditation council was transferred to a public law foundation. Then the Foundation Accreditation Acts as a central documentation service for accreditation system that administers the database of the study courses accredited in Germany (German education system 2006).

## BACKGROUND

### Higher Education in European Countries

European Commission (1994) has encouraged Germany to launch a European pilot study on quality assessment in higher education in order to disseminate, evaluate and improve concepts applied so far in the Netherlands, UK, France and Denmark. Only a few German universities and other higher education institutions could participate in the experimental project. The main aim of this project is to make the academic staff familiar with the internal self-evaluation, and external peer's evaluation, which is based on site visits and a final assessment and report. The experimental project, mainly not based on comparison and ranking is estimated as successful and stimulating and raises the interest in further actions and detailed information about the approaches and experiences which are applied in other countries. The German Rectors' Conference and the Science Council recommend establishing a quality assurance system in German Higher Education (KMK, 2008).

The European Union Council (Lespinard, M.G. 1998) as well recommends that all states should support where necessary and establish transparent quality assurance objective systems, which are summarized in the following points:

- " protecting the higher education quality in the economic, social and cultural context of their countries while taking due account of the European dimension in a quickly shifting world;
- urging and assisting higher education institutions to use quality assurance as an instrument of teaching and learning; and
- encouraging mutual information exchanges on quality and quality assurance at community and world level and motivate cooperation between higher education institutions"

The UK Quality Assurance Agency (1998) for higher education introduces the quality assurance and states that " it is the totality of systems, resources, and information devoted to maintaining and improving the quality and standards of teaching, scholarship and research and of the students' learning experience". Quality assessment in the UK has been used since 1984 with external reviews of university research activities and later has been extended to teaching and learning in the Higher Education Funding Council Framework. Accordingly, HEQC (1991) has undertaken quality assurance audits in all higher education institutions. The HAQC was canceled in 1997 and replaced by QAA, the Quality Assurance Agency with a new mission and the responsibility for continuation audit based on "general question of how individual institutions discharge their obligations and responsibilities for academic standards and their programmes quality and awards together with the evidence that they usually apply for this purpose. The external quality assurance audits have been integrated with the quality assessment concerned with the quality of teaching and learning. Furthermore, universities may have their own internal quality assurance process assessed also by the external review in case the QAA report is good (QAA 1998).

In Germany and Austria, the higher education system of accreditation has been recently introduced in the context of Bologna Process and the introduction of new degree systems. Harvey (2004, p. 5) confirms that " Europe is rushing precipitously into accreditation and the approach taken is based on naïve views of what accreditation can be achieved". In some European countries, the institutional accreditation systems have been normally introduced by governmental and/or public/private agencies, for example, the private higher education institutions accreditation in Germany and Austria. Other systems are based on programme accreditation. Similar to that in the USA, the programme accreditation in Europe has to give a license to be practiced, but it is suspended from issuing licenses (Federkeil, G. 2008). Harvey (2004, p. 7) states that "accreditation system is more about minimum standards than about quality". Federkeil, G. 2008, p. 225) adds that "for decades, the German higher Education system has been cultivated by the myth saying that all universities are of equal quality. Coupled with a strong notion of university autonomy, this belief serves to delay the adoption of quality assessment in German higher education. Up to 1980s, notions of competition and quality assessment were opposed by many stakeholders within the higher education sector".

The Bologna Process is the main challenging factor in respect to quality mechanism steering. Only Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, and Spain have introduced the accreditation system on the Bologna –associated arguments. France has introduced a new master's degree argued on the same grounds which will be combined by some of the accreditation form although the programme is still being discussed. In England, a recent policy paper entitled " The Future of Higher Education", Bologna and European issues are probably avoided and/or concealed when referring to the institutional issues ( Schwarz and Westerheijden, 2007).

In 1990s, an active borrowing of evaluation and of accreditation programmes largely took place (Robertson, and Waltman, 1992, Van Vught, 1996). Accordingly, positive and/or negative results could be expected from borrowing new policy instruments. However, the evaluation and/or accreditation models borrowed from other countries have to be adapted contextually to the new model which should be introduced. For example, Denmark and Portugal claim that they have used the Netherlands evaluation as a model, but they are different

from one another from the original (Schwarz and Westerheijden, 2007). The quality assurance programmes, evaluation and accreditation which describe how they are related to social problems to which they must respond to have been mentioned in this literature review. In general, the European countries should remember that quality of higher education is one of the major drivers of the Bologna Process (Reichert and Tauch 2003). Reichert and Tauch (2003, p. 100) agree with Schwarz, and Westerheijden (2007)'s claim and state the following statement related as well to the Bologna Process which must be carried out by both public/governmental and private higher education sectors in all European countries:

"together with the preparation of graduates for a European labour market, it is the improvement of academic quality which is seen as the most important driving force of the Bologna Process, not just at the institutional level but also at the level of governments and rectors conferences".

### Higher Education in the Arab Region

All higher education systems and institutions should give a high priority to ensure the quality of programmes, teaching, and outcomes. Structures, procedures and standards for quality assurance should be developed in the Arab region to be commensurate with international guidelines while providing for a variety according to the specificities of each country, institution, or programme. Further higher education institutions need appropriate financial and human resources to choose higher quality of education (UNESCO, 1998).

Although individual universities may have internal processes for assuring quality, there is no national quality assurance process. Consequently, there are no incentives for either universities or the academic staff to secure higher quality and standards in what they supply. MHESR (2006) has a formal process which does not include a full evaluation of the quality of the higher education institutions input or processes. There is an example of good practice in quality assurance in Yemen. The private university of science and technology has quality assurance process that includes the evaluation of each professor twice a year, well structured and regular curricula review and formal reviews of programme impact and administration. Yemen which now has seven state and eight private universities in rethinking areas such as admission policy, quality assurance and curricula, which are responsive to market needs. Equity diversified financing and relevance will dominate a forthcoming evaluation of the sector (UNESCO, 2001).

Only few countries have quality assurance committees or agencies working dependently, but they are still controlled by the ministry of the Higher Education and the prime minister as in Egypt, Jordan, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and UAE. There is a high political influence on quality assurance in the Arab countries which have different quality assurance systems in higher education systems. All national quality assurance bodies are governmental (ANQAHE, 2008). Few institutions of higher education have founded units for quality assurance. Nearly about 30% of member states have founded a national body for quality assurance (UNESCO, 2006).

Beirut conference resolution (1998) of the ministers of higher education calls for establishing a regional mechanism for quality assurance and accreditation under the auspices of the association of the Arab Universities and calls also to Member states of the region to establish a similar mechanism at the national level.

Accordingly, several Arab countries have responded to establish mechanisms for quality assurance which have been performed by only private institutions. However, other countries, for example, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen and the Palestinian authority have founded or are contemplating the establishment of similar bodies and the adoption of procedures and mechanisms for quality assurance. Additionally, in these countries, through their own initiative, some universities have started a self-assessment process, whereas others are seeking to be accredited by international accreditation bodies (UNESCO, 2003).

In their conferences held between 2000 and 2003, the Ministers of higher education in the Arab region issued a series of resolutions which call both the Arab States to find national agencies for quality assurance and higher education institutions and to find institutional systemic rules for quality assurance. Consequently, an expert committee that the Arab universities association resolved has developed self-assessment and accreditation of higher education guidelines sent to all members of association. The quality assurance ideas and projects in higher education in the Arab region have not been realized so far because the institutions do not have highly qualified human resources to conduct them. In a word, it seems very clear that the Arab regional higher education systems and institutions still have to go a long way in implementing higher education systems for quality assurance (UNESCO/OED, 2005).

Based on the external reviewers' results of 19 universities, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project conducted in 2007-2008 on the quality of engineering programmes in 10 Arab countries (Algeria; Bahrain; Egypt; Jordan; Lebanon; Morocco; Palestine; Sudan; Syria; Yemen) reveals that the quality assessment and enhancement are judged to be good in 4 universities and satisfactory in 6 and unsatisfactory in 9. The academic standards are judged to be good in only 5 universities, satisfactory in 10 and unsatisfactory in 4. Additionally, the UNDP project highlights the common regional weaknesses and needed reform, for example, the higher education engineering sector in the Arab Region. The regional weaknesses are:

- academic standards (intended teaching outcomes; curriculum; student assessment; student achievement);
- quality of learning opportunities (teaching and learning student progress, learning resources); and
- quality assurance and enhancement which are not implemented.

Consequently, the Arabic region has to recognize the main mechanisms of a quality assurance system and to develop and implement suitable systems as quickly as possible. Irrespective of the adopted system, it has to be internally and externally reviewed at regular intervals in line with good international practice.

In order to improve the quality of, for instance, higher education engineering programmes across the Arab region, the UNDP Project (2007-2008) suggests the following important steps which should be performed in a collaborative and coordinated approach between universities, Ministries of Higher Education and other concerned stakeholders as well as looking for common implementation policy. The vital steps are:

- programme's points of reference;
- an academic programme and curricula,
- academic autonomy and control;
- cognitive skills development,
- teaching, learning and assessment, (6) student support,
- Language
- learning resources,
- quality assurance and enhancement.

Some studies on external quality assurance purposes demonstrating considerable commonality in the form of national QA frameworks conducted by Neave (1991), Kells (1995), Vroeijenstijn (1995) and Frazer (1997) are summarized by Billing, D. (2004) as follows:

- Improvement of quality; Publicly available information on quality and standards;
- Accreditation, for example, legitimization of certifications of students;
- Public accountability for standards achieved and for use of money; and
- To contribute to the HE sector planning processes.

On his comparative studies of national quality assurance frameworks, besides western Europe, Harman (1998) has covered Australasia, Brazil, Chilly, China, Colombia, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Philippines, South Africa, Taiwan, Thailand and USA. The Harman's comparative studies have been constructed differences in organizing the following key features:

- Purpose;
- National agency;
- Body responsible for QA within the institutions;
- Whether participation is voluntary or compulsory;
- Methodology (self-study, external peer review, site visits, references to statistics, surveys of students, graduates, employees, and professional bodies or testing of students);
- Focus (teaching, research, institution, national system); and
- Reporting and follow up.

#### **The study Rationale**

According to the researcher's knowledge, there is no study on quality accreditation conducted between developed and developing countries particularly of the Arab region. This current comparative study of Yemen and Germany bridges this vital gap in higher education literature.

#### **The study hypothesis**

It is hypothesized that both the Yemeni Accreditation Council (YAC, in Yemen) and the German Accreditation Council (GAC in Germany) have similar regulations and methods in quality accreditation implementation.

#### **The Study Objective is To Help**

The Yemeni Accreditation Council (YAC) to:

- know the German higher education quality assurance and accreditation systems; and (ii) know the positive elements probably found in the German higher quality assurance and accreditation systems and their practical methods which the YAC can benefit from in the development and improvement of the higher education institutions' outputs in Yemen.
- The study significance.

The findings of this comparative study will assist the Yemeni Accreditation Council (YAC) to:

- know closely the negative and positive elements which are likely found in the German higher education quality assurance and accreditation systems and its practical methods; and
- to know how to make use of the positive points in the implementation of the quality assurance and accreditation systems within the Yemeni higher education institutions.

#### **Data collection methodology**

The data on which this research draws are derived from documents of the Yemen Accreditation Council (YAC, in Yemen) and the German Accreditation Council (GAC, in Germany) including their nomination and appointments, materials of committees responsible for quality assessment and quality accreditation, reports and descriptions of the YAC and GAC, the authorized power for each council and accounts of the YAC and GAC's systems for quality assessment and quality accreditation implementation in the higher education institutions of the two countries, Yemen and Germany. The quality assurance and quality accreditation systems applied by the two councils. The YAC and GAC are subjected to the comparative analysis on the following points:

- The nominations and appointments of the two councils
- The authorized power for each council;
- The YAC and GAC's systems; and
- The YAC and GAC's methods.

## A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE YEMEN ACCREDITATION COUNCIL (YAC) AND GERMAN

### Accreditation Council (GAC)

It seems very clear that the two councils, the German accreditation council and the Yemeni accreditation council are different in many ways. The German council's members' composed of 17 are appointed by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the 16 German states (the lander) as well as the Rectors' Conference (KMK & HRK) where the Yemeni council's members composed of 9 are appointed by the Prime Minister based on the nomination of the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research (Item (a-3), Article (iii), <sup>1</sup>cp 2). The chairman of the German council could be one of the 17 members whereas the Yemeni council's chairman who is one of the nine council members is appointed by the Presidential Act with the degree of ministry deputy (Item (a-5), Article (iii), cp 2) which is relied upon the three ministers' selection and nomination, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Minister of Education, and Minister of Technical and vocational Education.

The German council members are divided into five groups which represent likely the whole stakeholders. They are presented here in the following points:

- Four academic representatives;
- Four lander representatives;
- Four professional practitioner representatives, one of whom from lander Ministers is responsible for legislation governing services and wages;
- Two-student representatives with accreditation experience; and
- Accreditation agencies' representatives in an advisory capacity.

In contrast, the Yemeni accreditation council's members don't represent all the stakeholders. They represent only one group of stakeholders, the academic staff. More clearly the Yemeni accreditation council does not have the representatives of these stakeholders: the professional practitioners representing the public and private universities that can get an easy and quick overview on how to organize the system of the Yemeni accreditation council (YAC) which will play a major effective role in the development and improvement of the higher education institutions' accreditation system in Yemen; the student's representatives in their study programmes, and the representatives of specialized agencies of accreditation from whom the YAC can benefit in the accreditation methods and procedures implementation.

The German accreditation Council's members are appointed by the Standing Conference of State Ministers of Education, and Cultural Affairs (KMK) as well as the German Rectors' Conference (HRK). On the other hand, the Yemeni Accreditation Council's members and the chairman of the council is designated by the Prime Minister and the President of the country respectively which is based on the nomination of the Prime Minister. Besides, the YAC is not financially included in the budget of the Ministry of Higher Education, and Scientific Research MHESR. It is financed by the state's public budget. Therefore, it is inferred that the YAC will not be effectively cooperative at all with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research because the YAC's members and chairman believe that they are above the MHESR. In other words, since they are designated by the prime Minister and the President of the country respectively, they think that they are not responsible to either the MHESR or to universities; they are actually responsible for the high- decision's makers in the state. As a result, the accreditation system and its procedures will be ineffective as well as negative.

The appointment of the members and the chairman of the accreditation council in Yemen contracts with the key strategic objective of the MHESR (2006) stating that universities should have a Board of Trustees, (which could be similar to the accreditation Council) which should include the academic community members

conditionally not representing majority, local business members, local authority members and other beneficial stakeholders. Besides, the Board of Trustees (the accreditation Council) should have responsibility for appointing senior officers including the rectors following open competition and transparent selection criteria which are absolutely essential for the best possible appointed people for the job within universities.

Accordingly, there is a huge gap of unclearness and/or lack of clarity about where ultimate responsibility for universities is located. The rectors of universities are completely subjected to the political appointment in the Arab region. Generally speaking, in the Arab countries rectors and vice rectors are designated by the President and/or the King of the country and the Prime Minister respectively. In European countries, however, university rectors, firstly, should be professors and secondly should be elected (Rhoads and Sporn, 2002).

The objective of the German Accreditation Council is to contribute to the development of the quality of teaching and learning in Germany and to take special care of the higher qualified accreditation agencies accredited and certified to perform accreditation procedures which are based on the highest degree of quality, comparability and transparency. Before practicing their authority, all accreditation agencies should be accredited and subjected to the council's accreditation. Similarly, within the two years of its transitional period, the Yemeni accreditation council should help higher education institutions to adopt the quality assurance systems and the use of academic standards to improve teaching and learning. It shall hold training courses and workshops for the council's members, consultants, and employees and rectors as well as vice rectors of universities. The Yemeni Accreditation Council also has to train the higher education institutions to conduct self-evaluation studies at an experimental stage in order to help to develop quality systems and to test the effectiveness and efficiency of evidence and reports used in these systems, and then select the qualified higher education institutions which are eligible for accreditation, as well as to provide technical support for the preparation of self-study to use for accreditation (Item (b), article (xii), (cp 3).

The German Accreditation Council's objective is specific whereas the Yemeni Accreditation Council's objective is wordy. The German Council is based on highly specialized accreditation agencies to carry out the methods, instruments and procedures of the accreditation system. In contrast, the Yemeni Council does not mention any committee and/or agency that may perform the accreditation systems on behalf of the council.

Moreover, the tasks of each council which have to be performed are different in numbers. The German Council's tasks are seven:

- Accreditation and reaccreditation of Accreditation agencies which are required to award study programmes the Accreditation Council's Seal;
- Collecting all the common and specific structural guidelines of the Lander and publishing them in binding guidelines for the Agencies;
- The requirement regulations for accreditation procedures which include the prerequisites and limits of bundled accreditations;
- Accreditation monitoring which the Agencies performed;
- Ensuring a fair competition among the Agencies;
- Prerequisite definition for the recognition of foreign institution accreditation;
- International cooperation promotion in the field of accreditation and quality assurance.

Although the Yemeni Council's tasks are seventeen (Article (iv), cp 2), they meaningfully correspond to those tasks of the German Council. The immense difference between the German Accreditation Council (GAC) and the Yemeni Accreditation Council (YAC) is that the Yemeni Council does not have any highly specialized accreditation agencies accredited and certified to carry out the procedures of accreditation systems. On the contrary, the German Council does have seven highly specialized, accredited and certified agencies which can perform the procedures of accreditation systems in various subject fields. These accreditation agencies are



presented alphabetically in the following table with their starting dates, functions and membership with international agencies.

Table 1  
 Description of the agencies' functions and relationship with international accreditation agencies

AGENCY	FUNCTION	RELATIONSHIP
ACQUIN (2001)	Accreditation and Quality Assurance Institute	NON
AHPGS (.....)	Accreditation Agency for Study Programmes in Health and Social Science	ENQA(2009)
AKAST (.....)	Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Canonical Study Programmes	NON
AQAS (2002)	Agency for Study Programmes Accreditation and Quality Assurance	ENQA(2002)
ASIIN(1999)	Accreditation Agency for Degree Programmes in Engineering, Informatics/Computer Science, the Natural Sciences and Mathematics	ENQA(2007)
FIBAA(1994)	Foundation for International Administration Accreditation	ENQA(2001)
ZEVA(1995)	Central Evaluation and Accreditation Agency	ENQA(2001)

Unlike the German Council, the Yemeni Council's accreditation is ineffective because the rules, regulations and instructions issued by the council should be submitted to the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research to complete their legal procedures (Item (11), Article (iv), cp 2). Besides the Yemeni Council is based completely on the MHESR to issue a warning to any higher education institution in case it violates the principles and accredited standards (Item (12), Article (iv), cp 2) whereas the study programme accreditation and the system accreditation are awarded by the German Accreditation Council's Seal lasting for either five or eight years.

Furthermore, the Yemeni Accreditation Council is authorized by some articles of the Presidential Act issued in 2009 to form different accreditation committees and/or agencies, such as advisory committees, accreditation evaluation and follow up committees working under the council's chairman (Article (ix), cp 2) to conduct the accreditation tasks that the council has resolved (Item (3), Article (iv), Item (c), Article (vi), Items (5,7), Article (vii), cp 2). However, the Yemeni Accreditation Council is directed by the chairman that is appointed by the Presidential Act with the degree of ministry deputy (Item (a-5) Article (iii), cp 2), and who also has been given many tasks to do in the council (Article (viii), cp 2). In other words, other words the Yemeni council is less independent and more centralized than the German council.

Conversely, it is inferred that the German Accreditation Council's members work as one team, and it is entirely relied upon the highly specialized accreditation agencies performing the whole procedures of accreditation systems contributing to improve and to develop teaching and learning at the Bachelor and Master degree programmes in Germany.

#### The Higher Education Programmes and Accreditation Procedures Systems in YAC and GAC

The Yemeni Accreditation Council (YAC) does not have clear and effective methods, instruments and procedures for either higher education programmes accreditation and internal quality assurance systems of higher education institutions, particularly in the field of teaching and learning. The Yemeni Council is based on an appointed specialized experienced ad hoc committee composed of no less than five and no more than eleven members, including representatives of Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research to:

- establish accreditation standards and review them every five years; and
- seek the assistance of any experts and specialists in the performance of its accreditation work.

Additionally, the Yemeni Accreditation Council states that all public and private higher education institutions are obliged to conduct the following required educational factors which will lead higher education institutions gradually towards international accepted criteria.

The institutions should establish a well recognized effective quality assurance system in their various administrative units and use its results to:

- improve their performance;
- assess periodically, objectively and scientifically themselves and their programmes in the light of their mission and policy as an effective means to review the academic programmes that they offer;
- allow the evaluation committees to carry out the tasks of evaluations resolved by the council, and
- apply for accreditation certificate in accordance with the rules and conditions determined by the council (Items (b,c,d,e) Article (xiii), cp 3).

The council concludes that evaluation and accreditation should be conducted objectively and fully transparently in accordance with the principles of evaluation and academic standards (Item (a), Article (xiv), cp 3). On the contrary, the German Accreditation Council does have extremely good methods, instruments and procedures for academic programmes accreditation and quality assurance systems' accreditation, in particular, the teaching and learning fields. To conduct the accreditation which is based on the peer review principles, the German council has to do the following steps:

- Submission of an application to a relevant agency accreditation by the institution
- An expert group appointed by the agency consists of:
  - Teachers;
  - Students; and
  - The professional representatives
- Implementation of the programmes of accreditation criteria;
- Performance of a site-visit of the institution; and
- The assessment report of the expert group.

On the basis of the expert reports and the German Accreditation Council's decisions, the responsible commission from the relevant study programmes can:

- grant an accreditation for the relevant study programmes;
- grant an accreditation with conditions; and
- either give up the accreditation process or refuse entirely the accreditation.

#### **External Review Process**

The external review process is mentioned without details' in the Yemeni Accreditation Council's tasks. Items (a, d) of the Article (xi) cp 3) authorize the major academic committee appointed by the Yemeni council to seek the assistance of any experts and specialists in the performance of its accreditation work, to establish the accreditation criteria for the council and to review the accreditation criteria every five years, or at any time it needed, or at the request of the concerned ministries, parties and beneficiaries. Article (xxiv), cp 3) also gives the Yemeni accreditation council a complete authority to perform an external evaluation in order to assess its achievement every three years. Accordingly, although the Yemeni Council has to achieve two kinds of evaluation, the internal and external reviews, they actually lack the clear steps of procedures. In other words, the internal and external reviews are not perfectly described as how effectively they should be conducted.

In contrast, the German Accreditation Council and its agencies for accreditation are subject to internal and external panels of reviewers for system and programme accreditation every five years. In fact, it is relied upon the main regulations set by the KMK and internal standards. The methods of evaluation for quality assurance

system and programmes accreditation which the GAC conducts in its accreditation work are probably similar to those applied and/or carried out in the European countries.

On the basis of the Accreditation-Foundation Act, the essential regulations for accreditation set by the KMK (the Standing Conference of the State Ministers of Education and Culture) and international criteria prepared by ENQA and ECA, the German Accreditation Council has to carry out an external review every five years.

This external review based on an internal review is presented in the points below:

- The appointment of a review panel by the KMK;
- A self-evaluation report set by the GAC includes;
  - A site visit; and
  - A review report by the panels of reviewers.
- A review report by the panel of reviewers is sent to the respective boards, the KMK and HRK, ENQA and ECA;
- A draft of a plan with commitment done by the GAC for implementing the reviewer's recommendations; and
- Publication of the review report.

#### External Review Process Schedule

In reference to either the internal or to the external reviews' achievement, the Yemeni accreditation council (YAC) does not have any evaluation methods' timetable through which it can perform its accreditation work. The two Items (a,d), Article (xi) and Article (xxiv) state that the internal review for accreditation criteria should be done by external evaluation teams to assess the YAC's performance every three years without mentioning what evaluation procedures that the YAC can perform effectively and properly on both quality assurance system accreditation and academic study programmes accreditation. On the other hand, the instruments, methods and procedures of the internal and external quality assurance used by the German accreditation council (GAC) are clearer and easier to follow and to apply than those of the Yemeni accreditation council. The German Accreditation Council can carry out both the internal, and the external reviews process at the same time. They are conducted respectively according to the following timetable:

- After the review panel is appointed by the KMK, the site visit tasks usually take place in early September;
- The draft review report is submitted four weeks after the site visit to the GAC for comments within three weeks;
- The final report is submitted to KMK and HRK, ENQA and ECA together with the comments of the GAC; and
- The German Accreditation Council has to submit a report with the in-depth-follow-up procedures usually in February to the KMK and HRK, ENQA and ECA.

#### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It seems clear that the two councils, the Yemeni Accreditation Council (YAC) and the German Accreditation Council (GAC) are likely similar in a way, in which they are appointed. The Yemeni Accreditation Council's members and chairman are designated by the Prime Minister and the President of the country (Yemen) respectively, whereas the German accreditation council's members are appointed by the Standing Conference of State Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the 16 states (KMK) as well as the German Rectors' Conference (HRK). The members of each council are completely appointed from people who work in the field of higher education institutions. The YAC, however, does not have the representatives of stakeholders, practitioners and students, having an important role in the system and the system procedures of accreditation. Additionally, the two councils, the YAC and GAC have the right to establish and/or to appoint accreditation agencies to help them to perform their accreditation work. The YAC has not appointed any accreditation agencies so far. In contrast, the GAC has seven specialized agencies of accreditation (see p.9). The YAC's

authorized so many tasks mentioned mostly by all Items of article (iv) cp 2 of the Presidential Act No. 210 of 2009 in order to perform the higher education institutions' accreditation, but they, to some extent, correspond to the GAC's which are only seven. In fact, the two councils could be convergent in academic rules, regulations and instructions but different in procedures of quality assessment implementation.

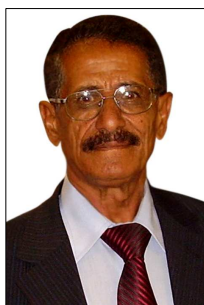
Increasingly, the Yemeni Accreditation Council has no transparent system of accreditation of higher education institutions which is mostly used in Germany, European countries and in USA. Accordingly, it is greatly recommended that the Yemeni Accreditation Council (YAC) has to make use of the German accreditation system of higher education institutions which is based on these two steps:

- the internal review (self-evaluation followed by a site visit); and
- the external review (external evaluation) through which the Yemeni Accreditation Council can develop and improve the system of the Yemeni higher education accreditation which in turn will factually play a major and effective role in serving the necessary demands of the local and regional markets in Yemen and the Middle East Area.

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