

Towards a Strategic Vision for Iraqi Universities Readiness in accreditation and world ranking: Case study at Anbar University

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Abstract:

The theoretical foundations of accreditation and rankings in higher education have been studied. It is also concerned with analyze experience and results of check and evaluation the merit of colleges, in one Iraqi university (Anbar University as example in this study), for get accreditation in accordance with standards of Association of Arab Universities (AARU). The paper present, academic accreditation to convert Iraqi universities to universities keep pace with progress in the universities of the world. Thus generating added value in a renewed bid for change and development of their society as a whole. In the field of accreditation originate after 2008 the experience of Anbar University in check and evaluate the merit of its colleges to get institutional accreditation and ranking initially.

Keywords: *Accreditation, Self-evaluation, world Ranking.*

1- Introduction

It has been documented that the technological developments, information and communication revolution play important role in universities evaluations (Kruytbosch: 1989) (Hawkins:2002). In higher education of Iraq, the tendency of educational institutions for academic accreditation and ranking become very important for the educational programs, as a result of challenges of negative repercussions on them since the early nineties of the last century (Huang, 2003). Recently, Iraqi universities looking for improving the accreditation and ranking to reach the world standard university (Adelman: 2009). However, these universities are still don't have enough experience. In this paper we present, the theoretical and intellectual knowledge of academic accreditation and ranking in higher education (Damme2004). The experiences in Iraq universities have been studied also.

The study presents the scientific performance to evaluate and examine the qualification of Anbar University for academic, institutional or general accreditation. The study relied in the field of applying on the evidence issued by Union of Arab Universities in the field of academic accreditation and quality assurance with adjustment that was conducted by the concerned university for the evidence examination and its assessment.

1-1 Define:

1. Academic accreditation is defined as a system of integrated components and elements targeted screening and assessing the level of quality of higher education, for the purpose of determining the ability of educational institutions or programs, or decisions, to improve the quality assurance (CHEA, 2002).

2. The self-evaluation is the process by which the performance of the institution is subduced to the rule and assessment in quantitative and qualitative based on the sense adopted by the assessor in understanding the performance, in according of these goals through the use of some of the benchmarks that helps to understand and grasp the relationship between the various aspects under evaluation, (Council of quality assurance and accreditation of Arab universities, 2008).
3. The ranking is the style of the organization to put staff in a graded ladder from top to bottom according to the advantage in the customary or agreed standards , rankings university is defined as the lists of names of universities or equivalent of institutions of higher education in descending order, starting from the best universities which got the highest grades according to measure taken by it to get to category (Rauhvargers, 2011)

1-2 Problem of study:

The problem of study were:

- I. What are the criteria of the self-evaluation that has been developed at the Anbar University?
- II. What are the results of the process of self-evaluation of Anbar University according to the specified reference standards ?

1-3 Study goals:

- I. Illustrating the intellectual frames of the academic accreditation in the orientation of universities towards the initiatives of the rankings.
- II. Identifying axis of accreditation applicable Arab area in education institutions.

- III. Highlighting the role of self-evaluation of universities in determining the roadmap of accreditation and rankings.

2- Result and Discussions

Anbar University was established in the academic year 1987/1988 and began to study the actual through the faculties of education and education for girls.

In the academic year 1988/1989 and after the inauguration of a number of colleges, now Anbar University is made up of 21 Colleges deployed over several sites which are:

I. Main site of University / Al Ramadi city:

It comprises 10 colleges: Education for Human Sciences, Education of Pure Science, College of Science, Engineering, Computers, College of Arts, Law and Political Science, Managements and Economics, Islamic Sciences and Physical Education.

II. Medical Site / Al Ramadi city:

It includes 3 colleges: Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy.

III. Eastern Site / Al Ramadi city:

It includes 2 colleges: Education College for Girls and Agriculture College.

IV. Al Fallujah city site:

It includes 4 colleges: College of Law, Management and Economics, Veterinary Medicine Islamic Sciences.

V. Western site / Al- Qaim and Hadetha cities:

It includes 2 colleges: College of Education and College of Basic Education.

In addition, Anbar University includes many consultant sites, research and scientific centers.

Also, there are 13 scientific reliable magazines in different fields published by the university plus a monthly newspaper (Sarrooh) which documents all university accomplishments.

Comparison between the internal and external evaluations for Anbar university colleges is shown in table 1. The table has been clearly shown that the college of Medicine's report did not provide a self-assessment and therefore it has not been evaluated by the Central Committee and that is why the table shows scores of zero. While, the college of girls stands first in this study.

The percentage of standards arrange between 60%-37%. The ethics standard collect high points comparison with evolutions as shown in Table 2. Evaluation regarding of standards of Association of Arab Universities (AARU), colleges has been shown different result, therefore not all the colleges in Anbar University can license as accreditations. The table also explains the gap difference between these colleges.

The result which could be shown from tables present that colleges has been marked in special property or more, all of them indicate that the role of the university administration in building infrastructure and the development of existing ones, instilling the spirit of innovation and excellence with the departments at colleges that was led to be characterized by including them in the following:

1. A presence of a comprehensive strategic plan among all the university faculties making these colleges mobilizing all their resources towards achieving its academic and administrative goals in the future
2. Archiving files of all employees in some colleges of professors, staff and students electronically
3. Having facilities of buildings with the specifications of quality standards from the offices of the members of the faculty and the staff and classrooms as long as contributing to the provision of suitable working environment for distinction, as well as providing them with adequate furniture and appliances appropriate for use.
4. The existence of scientific laboratories with good specifications in terms of appliances and equipment and other laboratory materials that contribute efficiently in the application of laboratory experiments whether for the researchers or students.
5. The existence of guide of procedures of administrative work in some colleges earned strength in defining the powers and responsibilities of all managements.
6. Non-review to the vision and mission of the university faculties continuously in response to changes in the surrounding environment.
- 7- Not involving all employees of the college upon preparing its strategic plan, Which resulted loosing of committees of the preparation of strategic plans in those colleges to take advantage of the views of others in developing them commensurate with the goals of the college.

- 8- There are no plans for training programs whether for faculty members or staff colleges emanating from the actual need based on what came in its mission and goals and declared for all.
- 9- Weakness of scientific and research cooperation agreements between the university colleges and the corresponding colleges regionally and internationally including contributing the development of scientific and research level for all employees of the college taking advantage of what has reached by other colleges in this aspect, as well as following-up the developments that occur in the external environment.
- 10- All libraries lack to the sources and periodicals both in quantity or type or in modernity, and the absence of agreements between the university colleges and research institutions for the development of the libraries.
- 11- The budget of the university is not included the granted allocations for colleges to scientific research independently that on its light planning for development will be done and its following-up and improving it in future.
- 12- Lack of access to the annual evaluation process of the performance of employees of most of the university colleges whether members of the faculty or staff, where no discussion with them in weaknesses aspects or in strength in their performance in order to correct the weakness and enhance the strengths, but saving forms of assessment in files and not informing others about the level of their performance .
- 13- There is a surplus in the number of faculty members in some departments especially the humanities ones in some colleges according to the quality standards (25 students - teachers, and what is existed is 9/1) note that there is shortage in other colleges.

14- There is no real process of evaluating between the university colleges and corresponding colleges both in terms of Iraqi universities or at the level of Arab universities, to find out where the college stand for the corresponding college level

Finally the study recommended that the university have to set up the staff to approving a quality award in the Iraqi university awarded to the university with outstanding performance, and at intervals approved by the independent commission for award based on the indicators and global standards of accreditation and quality, based on the data of the school year for a period, publishing those results in the available media. Moreover, the university have to develop the web sites to make these sites reflecting the extent of development in them in addition to carrying out the administrative works by them giving the necessary support due to the presence of international classifications of the electronic site-specific the use of internet services (Web Metrics Ranking) where universities can compete on the internet to get advanced positions in this category and other. University of Anbar need to prepare numbers of development plans per college in coordination with the college deans and the contribution of workers in those colleges, and in the light of the results of external evaluation, to correct the performance level about each axis the eleven assessments in particular, those that showed a significant decline in achievement having a relatively high importance among the axis of assessments giving special importance to each of the axis of student services, scientific research and assessments .

Repeating the experience of assessments for the purposes of institutional accreditation in light of the introduction in the implementation of development plans, in this field it can do the experiment of the assessment for a faculty alone or a number of colleges, and not necessarily all colleges of the university once giving a preliminary to repeat the experiment for colleges that showed a decline in the level of achievement.

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Table 1. Comparison between internal, and external evaluations

Assessment level	Colleges	Assessment	Evaluation results				Actions	
			Committee for College		Committee for University			
Good level	1	Education for Girls	2400	1948	81 %	1693	71 %	Needed to support the rehabilitation of institutional accreditation during the 3-6 month
	2	Education / Al-Qaim	2400	2139	86 %	1678	70 %	
	3	Pure Science Education	2400	1831	76 %	1591	66 %	
Acceptable level	4	Law / Fallujah	2400	2153	90 %	1385	58 %	Need to greater support to move to a higher level and to qualify for institutional accreditation need to be a period of time between 18-24 months at a minimum
	5	Engineering	2400	1819	76 %	1366	57 %	
	6	Management and Economics / Ramadi	2400	2274	95 %	1320	55 %	
	7	Science	2400	1942	81 %	1224	51 %	
	8	Physical Education	2400	2002	83 %	1191	50 %	
	9	Arts	2400	1060	44 %	1129	47 %	
	10	Veterinary Medicine	2400	2062	86 %	1127	47 %	
	11	Computer	2400	1713	71 %	1108	46 %	
12	Agriculture	2400	1847	77 %	1047	44 %		
13	Management and Economics / Fallujah	2400	2257	94 %	1020	43 %		
Unacceptable level	14	Education for Human Sciences	2400	1273	53 %	941	39 %	Needed to real support by all for the advancement in performance to the highest levels within the program of work needs a period of time more than others, especially medical group
	15	Islamic Sciences- Fallujah	2400	2254	93 %	871	36 %	
	16	Islamic Sciences- Ramadi	2400	1423	59 %	846	35 %	
	17	Law and Political Science	2400	1570	65 %	842	35 %	
	18	Dentistry	2400	1003	43 %	772	32 %	
	19	Medicine	2400	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	

Table 2. Evaluation in accordance with the colleges axis audit

Colleges	Axis audit quality assurance and accreditation										
	Vision and Mission 120	Leadership and organization 240	Resources 240	Faculty 360	Student Affairs 240	Student Services 96	Curricula and programs 384	Scientific Research 384	Community Service 144	Evaluation 120	University Ethics 72
Education for Girls	84	168	160	300	180	78	288	256	72	48	59
Education / Al-Qaim	90	180	168	240	180	42	304	256	99	60	59
Pure Science Education	78	156	140	264	170	48	208	176	45	40	50
Law / Fallujah	66	132	132	252	150	42	256	176	81	48	50
Engineering	72	132	152	192	160	48	264	176	81	44	45
Management and Economics –Ramadi	72	108	148	168	150	30	208	256	99	40	41
Science	78	96	112	204	130	48	192	176	90	52	36
Physical Education	72	12	120	192	140	24	216	128	45	32	54
Arts	72	114	88	252	140	30	184	144	45	28	32
Veterinary Medicine	72	90	104	192	160	24	176	208	36	24	41
Computer	84	120	120	156	170	30	176	80	72	36	32
Agriculture	66	48	124	204	160	24	168	112	63	28	50
Management and Economics / Fallujah	66	96	96	180	120	36	160	144	54	36	32
Education for Human Sciences	60	90	100	168	110	24	152	128	36	28	45
Islamic Sciences / Fallujah	66	140	120	132	60	24	168	64	36	16	45
Islamic Sciences / Ramadi	72	66	112	192	90	12	144	64	36	28	32
Law and Political Science	48	66	120	180	110	18	144	64	36	24	32
Dentistry	42	54	76	144	70	12	192	64	45	28	45
Σ	1260	1976	2192	3612	2450	594	3340	2672	1071	640	780
Completion rate (%)	58%	43%	51%	56%	57%	34%	52%	39%	41%	30%	60%
Final level classification	+++	++	+++	+++	+++	+	+++	+	++	++	+++

***Utilized to show the weaknesses or strengths in the performance of colleges and therefore must take the university administration in mind when planning for the future.**

+ : It should be give the university administration and draw attention on these themes in order to notice very low score.

++: It should be give the university administration a great interest on these themes in order to notice low score.

+ + +: It should be give attention to the university administration somewhat on these themes to notice medium score.