Current trends in accreditation - an overview

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"Working definition"

- "Accreditation is a part of quality assurance meaning formal recognition that a body is competent to carry out specific tasks".

- Purposes:
  - Demonstrating competence in delivering educational services (legal and professional).
  - Certification of conformity by a legal body (meeting pre-defined standards).
  - Stakeholders protection.
  - Building stakeholders' trust in the accrediting institution, the accredited entity and the accreditation process.

Who ?

- **The "accreditation entity":**
  - MoE , other central structure of public administration, private entities.
  - Agency / agencies: subordinated / independent ; national / international.
- **Stakeholders involved in the decision making process:**
  - The parties involved: public institutions (central and / or local), education providers, trade-unions, employers unions, parents & students associations, experts (evaluators, auditors etc.).
  - Participation at the decision making process: deliberative / consultative.
  - Transparency: the process is public / confidential. The results must be public.
- **The financing:**
  - Public funding from central budget.
  - Public funding from local budgets.
  - Fees from the evaluated entities or other sources.

To whom ?

- **Educational institutions** (school, faculty, department, other structure).

- **Educational activity** – delivered by different kinds of institutions.

- **Educational program** – delivered by educational institutions (accredited or not) or by different kinds of institutions (accredited or not).

When ?

- Before functioning or during functioning.
- "One time" event (once for good) or recurrent.
- The duration of the evaluation process.

Where ?

- Agency Headquarters, and / or
- Education provider (on site)

What ?

- Conformity assessment to minimum requirements and / or meeting high quality standards.
- Thematic / functional areas assessed:
  - Context.
  - Input (mainly resources).
  - Processes (educational, managerial etc.).
  - Results (outputs and outcomes).
- Weighting / prioritizing different areas.

How ?

- Based on standards.
- Based on measurable indicators.
- Methods used:
  - Documents analysis.
  - Site visit – "observation".
  - Interviews and questionnaires.
- What kinds of evidences are needed and the minimum sample.
- The initiative: the agency or the provider.
- Combining external evaluation with self evaluation and / or collegial evaluation ("peer review").
- Evaluators: professionals or "colleagues" (possible conflict of interests).

What for ?

- Possible results: accreditation / non accreditation / delayed accreditation (repeating the procedure).
- The effects and follow-up procedures for accredited entities (registration, "Labeling" / "Quality Mark", reaccreditation, recurrent evaluation etc.)
- The effects and follow-up procedures for non accredited entities (closing, repeating the process etc.)
- Grievance / Contestation process. "Appeal instances".
- Reports.