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Standard in U.S. Regional Accreditation Commissions: Implications for Vietnamese Accreditation

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Abstract: This literature review addresses five themes that inform the faculty standards in U.S. regional accreditation commissions: faculty credentials, the relationship between institutional missions and faculty responsibilities; full-time, part-time and contingent faculty; faculty responsibilities, and faculty in disciplinary-based accreditation. The review supports institutions' responses to the standards of full time faculty adequacy and credentials in six U.S. regional accreditation commissions. The study's findings may provide common themes related to faculty adequacy to facilitate the institutions' definitions and standards for faculty adequacy. The results might be of interest to accreditors in other countries as they develop and revise their standards related to faculty adequacy. Some recommendations are made for institutional and programmatic accreditation to improve the current faculty standards and some input for HEIs to build the internal quality improvement in faculty adequacy, credentials and evaluation.

Keywords: Faculty adequacy, faculty credentials, faculty standards, U.S. regional accreditation commissions, Vietnam accreditation.

1. Introduction

Teaching, research and service are the three core components of faculty qualification in U.S. higher education institutions (Middaugh, 2002) [1]. Faculty adequacy and credential requirements always receive much attention from the six regional accreditation commissions in the U.S. Of the six agencies, five accreditors have a separate standard for faculty in their accreditation standards. Tincher-Ladner and King (2014) [2] conducted a quantitative study that used data retrieved from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and focused on the nation's six regional accrediting commissions and their standards. The findings stated that the requirement of faculty adequacy such as ratios of full-time to part-time faculty, institution size, instructional spending, and ratios of full-time faculty and full-time students have a significant correlation with increasing graduation rate. California was identified as the only state that required 70% full-time faculty in community colleges. Tincher-Ladner and King

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concluded that a high percentage of full-time faculty in California community colleges was correlated to their higher graduation rates.

The requirement of faculty adequacy and credentials in the six regional accreditation commissions is to support the mission of institutions. The purpose of this research study is to review the documents related to the faculty standard in the six regional accreditation commissions in the U.S. The findings may provide common themes related to faculty adequacy and credentials to facilitate the institutions' definitions and policy for faculty qualifications. The results might inform regional accreditors as they evaluate institutions on this standard. Finally, this study may be of interest to accreditors in other countries as they develop and revise their standards related to faculty qualifications. The major sources for this literature review were peer reviewed journal articles and dissertations relating to faculty qualifications and the faculty standards of accreditation of six regional accreditation commissions. To address the issues relating to faculty standards in regional accreditation commissions, the review of literature identified five themes relating to this topic: (a) faculty credentials, (b) institution missions and faculty responsibilities, (c) faculty responsibilities, (d) full-time, part-time and contingent faculty, and (e) faculty in disciplinary-based accreditation.

2. Faculty credentials

Of the six regional accreditation commissions, five commissions have a separate standard for faculty credentials; Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) [3] embeds faculty in the standard of human resources.

Table 1. Faculty Credentials in U.S. Regional Accreditation Commissions

Themes relating to faculty credentials in regional accrediting association standards	Regional Accrediting Commission					
	New England Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (NEASC-CIHE)	Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)	North Central Association of Colleges and Schools-The Higher Learning Commission (NCA-HLC)	Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)	Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)	WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)
Having a separate standard for faculty in the regional accreditation	Standard 5, 24 criteria	Embedded in standard II for human resource, used "personnel"	Core component 3.C and Assumed practices B	Core curriculum 2.8 and Comprehensive standard 3.7.1	Standard 10	No specific standard to faculty credentials
Faculty adequacy	x	x	x	x	x	x
Faculty categories (full time, part-time, adjunct, graduate teaching assistant)	x	x	x	x	x	x
Faculty responsibilities (teaching, scholarship and service)	x	x	x	x	x	x
Faculty credentials (degree earned)	x	x	x	x	x	x

All regional accreditation commissions (Table 1) have core requirements related to faculty such as adequacy of faculty numbers; definition of faculty categories such as full-time, part-time, adjunct, graduate teaching assistant; faculty responsibilities such as teaching, research and service; and faculty credentials such as a terminal degree or master

with minimum of 18 graduate credits in the discipline to be qualified for graduate teaching. For faculty credentials, all accrediting commissions have adopted a "common rule," which is having one degree level higher than the degree program in which the instructor is teaching.

In addition to the core requirements for faculty credentials, regional accreditation commissions also share eight similar criteria for exceptions to the terminal degree earned. These factors rather than degree earned are also accepted for the requirements of faculty qualifications. Faculty must have a record of research and scholarship appropriate for the graduate program and ongoing professional development in the field to be eligible for teaching a graduate course not addressed in their terminal degree. Other requirements for faculty credentials, especially in practice-oriented disciplines or programs that need much practical training rather than academic training are tested experience or industry certification.

2.1. Faculty adequacy and institution missions

After analyzing the faculty adequacy standards from the U.S. regional accreditation commissions, the most common theme was "the number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the mission of the institution" (NWCCU, 2012; (MSCHE), 2015; NCA-HLC, 2015; NEASC-CIHE, 2011; SACSCOC, 2011; WSCUC, 2013) [4-8]. This statement shows the close relationship between the institutional missions and faculty. U.S. institutions are classified into five major types: research universities, doctoral degree-granting universities, comprehensive universities or colleges, liberal arts colleges and two year or community colleges (Cohen & Kisker, 2010) [9]. Doctoral-granting universities are considered the most elite among institutions in higher education. Both research universities and doctoral-granting universities reward faculty based on research activity. Comprehensive universities award degrees no higher than a master degree. Community colleges often provide certification and degree programs for professions. Different types of institutions have different missions and various requirements in faculty responsibilities. Doctoral granting institutions define a high level of faculty output as the balance between instructional productivity and research productivity (Fairweather, 2002) [10]. In contrast, the faculty work in community colleges is predominantly to teach lower-level courses; therefore, the pressure for faculty members to conduct research is different than in universities (Townsend, 2008) [11].

Data gathered by National Center for Education Statistic (NCES) described the average percent of time that full-time faculty spent on teaching, research and administrative and other activities in Fall 2003 (NCES, 2003) [12]. Faculty in public and private doctoral-granting institutions reported about 50% of their time was allocated for teaching, and 28% for research. The faculty in comprehensive institutions reported about 66% of their time allocated for teaching. Noticeably, the time for research in public comprehensive institutions (14.3%) was half that of public and private doctoral-granting institutions. Public associate or community colleges reported the lowest percentage of research (3.5%) but the highest percentage of teaching (79.8%). The faculty in all types of institutions reported spending around 20% of the time on administrative and other activities (NCES, 2003). It is interesting that the percentage of time full-time faculty spent on research in the research and doctoral institutions was more than 30% in 1992. However, teaching at two-year colleges increased by 10 percentage points (from 56 % to 66%) from 1992 to 2003 (Middaugh, 2001) [13]. These percentages reflected the differences in faculty responsibilities in different types of institutions.

In order to know how each institution defines the core requirements of their faculty in relation to the regional accreditation

commission standards, an operation policy about faculty from a four-year institution and a handbook of faculty from a community college were reviewed in details. This review is hoped to provide an example on the differences in faculty responsibilities in the doctoral granting institutions and community colleges. Texas Tech University, a doctoral granting institution, describes the responsibilities of faculty as "teaching, research, creative activity, university service, professional service, and community service" (Texas Tech University, 2006, p.3) [14]. In the faculty handbook of South Plain College, faculty responsibilities involve at least 50% teaching and other services to support the student learning and department (South Plain College, 2015) [15]. The review of literature showed that faculty responsibilities differ within different types of institutions. While the policies at Texas Tech University and South Plains College cannot be generalized to other institutions, their policies do reflect the findings of Fairweather (2002) [16] related to the balance between teaching and research at doctoral institutions and community colleges.

2.2. Faculty responsibilities

Of the six regional accreditation commissions, NCA-HLC (2015) provides the most detailed description of faculty responsibilities: designing curricular and student learning outcomes (SLOs), participating in shared governance, advising students, participating in co-curricular activities, being involved in quality improvement for the academic programs, participating in professional development in the field and thinking beyond the disciplines if institutions develop interdisciplinary or non-traditional programs. NWCUU standards include two similar requirements related to designing curricular outcomes and SLOs and involving quality improvement for the academic programs. The other four regional accreditation commissions do not have specific language about faculty responsibilities. A review of the standards found four requirements related to teaching, and three related to students and administrative activities.

2.3. The changing role of faculty responsibilities

The major faculty responsibilities are commonly identified as teaching, research and service (Middaugh, 2002) [1]. The requirements of regional accreditors have changed over the past decade to add a further responsibility to faculty teaching: assessment of student learning outcomes for academic program improvement. Chaden (2013) [17] stated in his research that the new requirements of regional accrediting commissions focusing on the assessment of student learning have resulted in higher involvement of faculty in the accreditation process. The requirements to establish SLOs, assess them, and use findings to improve teaching and student learning have changed the traditional role played by faculty. In addition to delivering instruction to students, faculty are expected to be involved in the activities of the academic program. Some of these responsibilities include (a) working together to develop and implement program- and course-level student learning outcomes; (b) mapping those outcomes into curricula; (c) developing and revising rubrics for evaluation; (d) collecting samples of work, evaluating the work, analyzing the data, and recommending any necessary changes to the curriculum; and (e) repeating the process again over time to see if the quality of instruction and learning has improved. This enhanced role for faculty has resulted in several beneficial outcomes for institutions of higher education. Chaden (2013) [17] suggested that one such benefit is an increase in retention rates of students. Furthermore, Williams (2011) [18] found that the changing responsibilities of faculty included revising curricula, and increased involvement in the assessment process to provide evidence of student learning.

2.4. Faculty productivity

Faculty workload or instructional productivity is defined as the total amount of hours faculty work weekly (Middaugh, 2002) [1]. Faculty research is known as non-instructional productivity. Normally, faculty in the community colleges have higher instructional productivity and faculty in the research institutions have higher research productivity (Townsend & Rosser, 2007). Townsend and Rosser (2007) [19] analyzed the findings regarding full-time faculty at public institutions from National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) from 1993 to 2004. The findings showed instructional productivity increased in community colleges and research or non-instructional productivity increased in research institutions. Another interesting finding was that the comprehensive university research productivity increased more than the increase at research universities.

Michael Middaugh (2002) [1] led a major study of faculty productivity in higher education since 2002. Based upon the research findings, Middaugh (2002) recommended several strategies to improve faculty productivity. First, he recommended describing faculty activity in terms of service months rather than the percentage. Second, Middaugh recommended tying faculty instructional activity to student outcomes such as graduation and placement rates, licensure rates and graduate school admission to improve faculty productivity. To consider faculty productivity, Middaugh (2011) [20] suggested that institutions should take into account the external support for out of class faculty activities, especially in the fine arts, social sciences and humanities. He explained that faculty in these fields could add to their productivity in the out of class activities rather than only capturing the ratio of student credit-hours taught by faculty**.** The out of class support can be student advising, committee of thesis and dissertation and the number of course curricula designed or redesigned. He also encouraged educators to consider a variety of measurements for productivity instead of focusing on output measures such as faculty salary, number of courses taught, course enrollments, student credit-hour production, and average grade awarded.

From an institutional perspective, understanding the faculty workload and the measures to increase faculty productivity supports institutional effectiveness (Middaugh, Kelly & Walters, 2008) [21]. Although data from NSOPF describe the nature of faculty work at various types of institutions in U.S. higher education over time, Middaugh et al. (2008) claimed that the information from this source is too general for institutions to use for internal management decisions. They encouraged utilizing the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Faculty Survey for information about faculty engagement with students and faculty teaching and student learning outcomes. In addition, the Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE), administered since 2003 by the Center for Postsecondary Research at Indiana University Bloomington, is a resource that includes information about faculty opinions of students' engagement in their education. Middaugh et al. (2008) concluded that these data are very beneficial to institutional planning and effectiveness as well the improvement of faculty productivity.

2.5. Full-time, part-time and contingent faculty

Five research studies related to full-time, part-time and contingent faculty discussed the increasing use of non-tenure track (contingent) faculty, the negative impact on student learning and recommendations to address this issue. Maxey and Kezar (2015) [22] used a modified Policy Delphi approach to examine the rising contingency in the academic workforce. Participants were 40 individuals representing higher education stakeholder groups. Their research indicated that the growing number of non-tenure-track faculty members (NTTF) has a negative impact on student learning outcomes over several decades. The findings showed that the rising number of contingency faculty has resulted in a negative change in the common commitment to student learning and the health of the academic profession.

Marsh (2010) [23] found that the diverse type of faculty in a business program, especially a growing number of part-time faculty members, was a challenge during academic program redesign processes. His research identified strategies leading to program changes such as team processes, communication, collaborative decision making and high-performance outputs. The research findings showed utilizing these strategies could lead to high performance within a diverse faculty team. An inference from this study was that part-time faculty are not a deficit as long as the institution has strategies to communicate and collaborate with them. Elman (2003) [24] also offered recommendations to address contingent faculty such as developing guidelines to ensure institutional effectiveness in the use of contingent faculty, better faculty selection and review, support for non-instructional academic responsibilities, and institutional integration.

Maxey's and Kezar's research (2015) explored the stakeholders' perspectives (accreditors, policy makers, presidents) about change of the professoriate by conducting a modified Policy Delphi study. Participants included 35 individuals from the key stakeholder groups. The findings indicated that there was no protection from the deteriorating conditions of non-tenure-track faculty and they had no decision making input related to the professoriate. The findings also revealed a significant disagreement about the future of the professoriate. The authors found that not all stakeholders think the current model of the professoriate is working (shrinking tenure track, large part-time, and full-time non-tenure track). However, stakeholders expressed consensus related to the value of greater job security, shared governance, greater academic freedom than most faculty currently have, and more focus on the educational function of faculty.

Gerlich and Sollosy (2010) [25] conducted a study that provided evidence about the negative impact that increasing part-time faculty has on student learning outcomes. Their study examined the differences in student outcomes assessment scores in business courses depending upon the part-time or full-time status of the instructor. The findings of this study suggested that, when taught by part-time instructors, students' scores were 15% lower than when taught by full-time instructors. Another finding reported in this study was that students with higher ACT scores or higher cumulative GPA's showed less effect of the instruction from part-time instructors.

Speer's (2013) [26] quantitative research identified, described, and compared the perceptions of chief instructional officers (CIOs) at institutions accredited by SACSCOC regarding accreditation criteria for part-time faculty, the challenges of implementing best practices for part-time faculty employment and reasons for part-time employment. The findings showed that CIOs perceived no difficulty in meeting the SACSCOC accreditation standards regarding part-time faculty. CIOs thought that it is difficult to implement the best practices for employing effectively part-time faculty, particularly in STEM disciplines. There was a consensus regarding the most cited reasons for employing part-time faculty such as saving money, increasing institutional flexibility, and reducing the high workload for full-time faculty having significant project responsibilities (e.g., program accreditation). Speers (2013) also made some recommendations regarding the faculty requirement in SACSCOC accreditation, specifically that SACSCOC needs to clarify part-time to full-time ratios for associate's college's administrators and create clear policies for the employment ratio of full-time to part-time faculty. In addition, Speers (2013) encouraged SACSCOC to require institutions to submit the plans for part-time faculty's participation in their institutions' governance.

2.6. Faculty in disciplinary-based accreditation

The literature showed that faculty responsibilities were specifically addressed in disciplinary-based accreditation processes, particularly those of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). Hedrick, Henson, Krieg, and Wassel

(2010) [27] conducted research on the differences between business faculty and productivity in accredited and nonaccredited business programs. The findings showed that faculty in accredited programs received higher salaries, produced more research, and taught fewer courses than those faculty in nonaccredited programs (Hedrick et al., 2010) [27]. Such differences between faculty in accredited and nonaccredited business programs demonstrated the impact of AACSB accreditation on a business discipline. Bell and Joyce (2011) [28] conducted a quantitative research study to test the differences of faculty salaries by rank and gender. The study revealed that accredited business programs paid higher salaries across ranks. Female faculty were paid 15% less than their male counterparts in accredited programs. Bell and Joyce (2011) concluded AACSB accreditation had a positive effect on higher faculty salaries.

Koys, (2008) [29] studied activities that can be related to faculty qualification and sufficiency for accreditation by surveying 41 business school deans. His findings identified activities that support faculty to maintain academic qualifications, including (a) writing an article, (b) doing scholarly activities related to books such as a book review, (c) redesigning a textbook, (d) giving scholarly presentations, (e) developing teaching aids, (f) serving as an editor or (g) having scholarly work in progress. In addition, Koys suggested some activities to maintain faculty professional qualifications, including consulting, writing, presenting, and leadership development. Koys also analyzed the nature of faculty participation on committees such as student service and faculty service. These findings are a good source for business schools to consider faculty qualifications and roles, as well as sufficiency to meet the requirement of AACSB accreditation.

Finally, Boronico, Murdy, and Kong's (2014) [30] study generated a mathematical model that examines service quality as it relates directly to accreditation guidelines within an academic program to address the requirements of faculty adequacy in high quality management education at a global university. The model included the full-time faculty course allocation linear programming. The model specification included credit hour of course schedule delivered by discipline, and campus location by program. The model solutions must include the number of tenured faculty at each campus location. The model offers perspectives about the efficiency of faculty management policies such as unique approaches to integrating fixed and flexible labor classifications when operating within a multi-campus global delivery system. Two findings from this research were to change the university's policy about hiring faculty and improve the hiring process. The research findings have been implemented in a school of management to develop the strategies of faculty deployment and support the AACSB accreditation initiative.

2.7. Implications for Vietnam institutional and programmatic accreditation

Accreditation has been in place in Vietnam for more than 10 years. For the past ten years, the accreditation standards had been revised three times to facilitate the implementation. In 2017, Vietnam has decided to translate the Asian University Network-Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) version 3.0 into Vietnamese to fully implement for all higher education institutions (HEIs). This new set of standards will be used to get accredited for 65% of HEIs by 2020, one of Vietnamese strategic goals for accreditation by 2020 (Nguyen, 2017) [31]. The new accreditation standards has 25 standards and 111 criteria. The advantage of this set is to follow the quality improvement model: Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) that is quite popular with many foreign countries. The PDCA model encourages universities to set up their own plans and make improvement based on their goals and context. This is also a trend in U.S. accreditation to move away from accountability model to improvement model (Gaston, 2018) [32]. Also, in 2018, Center for testing and quality assurance issued instruction for program accreditation and the strategic goal for program

assessment by 2020 is to have 10% of programs accredited (Nguyen, 2017) [31].

Standard 6 in both institutional and programmatic accreditation addresses the faculty requirement. All the sub-criteria discuss the university strategic planning about faculty needs, the requirement of faculty adequacy and credentials, the faculty recruitment policy and faculty evaluation procedure. To address the faculty adequacy, at this point, program accreditation relies on only one assessment measure to evaluate the adequacy of faculty: student to student ratio. This is a significant indicator that have a direct impact of the instruction quality. In the hearing forum about quality improvement in education, most Vietnamese educators living abroad recommended paying attention to the faculty to student ratio and qualified faculty as the crucial criteria (The Youth, 2018) [33]. They also provided specific ratio such as 10:1 ratio or 5:1 ratio from international institutions to compare with current high ratio in Vietnam HIEs. However, the current instruction manual for both program and institution accreditation did not quantify the faculty to student ratio. Providing the minimum ratio in the evidence requirement will facilitate accreditors' judgement in the peer review process. Most importantly, quantifying the faculty to student ratio needs to be considered in the context of institution classification such as intensive research, research or application.

In order to have an accurate evaluation of faculty adequacy, it is necessary to provide multiple institutional measures to triangulate the information. For example, a U.S. regional commission (SACSCOC) encouraged institutions to provide multiple measures such as a tables and charts summarizing program size and the number of full-time and part-time faculty by program, program delivery (e.g., credit hours generated) by full-time and part-time faculty, and comparisons with peer institutions or with external benchmarks to provide evidence of faculty adequacy (SACSCOC, 2018) [34]. In addition to multiple institutional measures, U.S. accreditation commissions also emphasize the separation of full-time and part time faculty to student ratio in the data documentation. The research findings (Gerlich and Sollosy, 2010; Marsh, 2010; Maxey and Kezar, 2015; Speer, 2013) indicated that full-time and part-time faculty adequacy had a close relationship with student learning, high percentage of part time faculty might have a negative impact on student learning. Therefore, institutional document on student to faculty ratio and faculty types into full-time and part time facilitate the peer review process. Vietnam accreditation can also add this requirement to the current standard 6 evidence to provide a full picture of the faculty adequacy.

Right now, all of institutions followed MOET requirements about faculty credentials and responsibilities: teaching, research and services (MOET, 2014) [35]. All the requirements are updated to the current faculty credentials and responsibilities that other countries are using. However, it is very hard to evaluate faculty responsibilities and credentials in isolation. The first additional information that instruction manual for both institution and program accreditation needs to quantify the percentage of faculty responsibility in teaching, research and services for different types of institutions. For example, U.S. research findings indicated that the percentage of each responsibility varies by the levels of higher education institutions (HEIs) such as research institutions allocated 50% of time for teaching and 28% for research or instruction institutions allocated 66%-78% of time for teaching and 14% for research (NCES, 2003). Guidelines of HEIs' classification: intensive research, research or application (MOET, 2015) [36] can serve as a framework to facilitate the institutions' policy about faculty responsibilities and evaluation of faculty performance. Percentage of faculty responsibilities should also justify in institution's faculty handbook since it has a close relationship with institutions missions. This evidence is also good for institutional accreditation standard 3 (leadership and management), especially standard 3.1 and 3.3

(Center of Testing and Quality Assurance, 2018) [37]. Also, additional information on expected percentage of faculty time for a specific responsibility will make it easier for the peer review process to check the alignment between faculty responsibilities and institution missions.

For faculty credentials, the core requirement of U.S. regional accreditation is one level higher degree in the discipline to teach a course. If faculty does not meet this core requirement, some alternative options for teaching a course not addressed in their degree are 18 graduate credit hours, a record of research and scholarship or ongoing professional development appropriate to the discipline. If some disciplines that have a high need of hiring professionals with experience in the field to teach practical and application knowledge and skills, tested experience or industry certification is a good replacement evidence. The current MOET document addresses the core requirement of faculty credentials, one level higher degree in the discipline (MOET 2014) but has not addressed the alternative options to ensure faculty are qualified to teach a certain course. Therefore, MOET can consider adding the additional options of faculty credentials for all HEIs to facilitate the accreditation process. Or centers for education accreditation (CEA) supplement the additional evidence in the instruction manual to facilitate the compliance and the peer review process. To support the peer review, a U.S. regional accreditation commission (SACSOC) requires institutions to provide not only a list of faculty roster with degree and credentials but also the courses they teach for the past few years. The accreditors will check whether faculty were appointed to teach appropriate course with their appropriate level and discipline. This practice should be documented not only at program level but also at institutional level. The alignment of faculty credentials and appropriate course appointment ensures the best quality of instruction. This is a valuable point for CEA to include in the evidence list. For example, faculty can meet necessary credentials such as terminal degree from a prestigious university but appointed to teach a course that is not relevant or close to the discipline, that would have an impact on the quality of the instruction. In the current trend of accreditation, evidence really matters. Most of the requirements in the faculty standard for both institution and program accreditation in Vietnam are similar to U.S. regional accreditation commissions but in order to meet the criteria, the U.S. regional commissions require more specific and quantified evidence. This difference in evidence might make the U.S. accreditation one of the most challenging in the world.

In the literature review about faculty in discipline-based accreditation or program accreditation, all research findings mentioned the advantages of program accreditation to faculty policy such as hiring, evaluation and benefits (higher salary). It can be concluded that program accreditation plays a significant role to ensure the high quality of faculty within a discipline, and as a result, has a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The current goal of program accreditation is 10% by 2020. After 2020, MOET can consider increasing the percentage of program accreditation to ensure this measure would have a positive impact on quality program.

2.8. Implications for Vietnamese HEIs

Developing an internal quality assurance for faculty qualifications has a positive impact on the quality of student learning. Vietnamese HEIs can implement the current U.S practice regarding faculty qualifications to the current internal quality assurance. First, HEIs can implement multiple assessment measures to document faculty adequacy and make strategic planning for human resource development. Second, HEIs can use the multiple options of faculty credentials to improve the current hiring process and procedures. Third, HEIs can use the requirement in faculty credentials as a guiding practice to ensure appropriate faculty appointment to appropriate instruction. Fourth, HEIs can use the percentage of faculty

responsibilities as a benchmark to indicate in the faculty handbook and evaluation process. In addition, HIEs can also implement recommendations from Middaugh (2008) to evaluate faculty productivity. Lastly, HEIs should have a policy on the hiring of adjunct and part-time faculty to ensure they are same qualified as the full time faculty.

3. Conclusion

Literature review of faculty standard in U.S. regional accreditation commissions identified some major themes: faculty adequacy, faculty credentials, faculty types (adjunct, full time or part time), faculty responsibilities and faculty in disciplinary-based accreditation. When comparing the faculty standard in U.S accreditation with Vietnamese accreditation, they both address the similar requirements in faculty credentials, hiring and recruitment policy and faculty evaluation. However, to meet the requirement of this standard, U.S. regional accreditation commissions do require higher level of evidence to ensure institutions to have high qualified faculty and appropriate appointment to fulfill the instruction missions. Multiple institutional measures for faculty adequacy, quantifying the percentage of faculty responsibility in teaching, research and service for different institution classification, alternative requirement in faculty credentials to teach a course and emphasis of faculty credentials' alignment with course instruction are the current practice in U.S. that Vietnamese accreditation can learn to improve the evidence practice. Although faculty standards are similar, evidence requirement from U.S. regional accreditatip matters and makes it harder for institutions to comply with. To facilitate the peer review process, quantified evidence has a significant impact on the accurate judgment of the reviewer team. In addition to accreditation, Vietnamese HEIs can also use the recommendations from this paper to improve the institutions' policy on faculty adequacy, credentials, responsibility and evaluation.

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