An introduction to EFMD accreditations: EQUIS and EPAS

Prof. Julio Urgel
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1. Introduction to EQUIS and EPAS

2. Differential features of EFMD accreditations

3. Benefits and challenges for Chinese business schools
Introduction to EQUIS and EPAS

What is EFMD?

• An international, not-for-profit, institutional membership organization of business schools and corporations based in Brussels, Belgium.

• Currently there are 700+ institutional members in 70+ countries
  – 72 members in Asia Pacific region
  – 14 members in China

• A catalyst to enhance excellence in management education and development from Europe with a worldwide reach
What is EFMD?

• “Bridge” between the corporate and management education worlds.

• Best known for our accreditation labels EQUIS and EPAS

• Other activities:
  – Networking events
  – Advisory Seminars
  – Knowledge, Surveys and Information

What is EQUIS?

• Launched in 1997 to satisfy the demand for an international accreditation scheme for business schools
  – Higher education institutions
  – Degree granting
  – Management and business administration

• Contemplate diversity effectively while not compromising expected level of quality

• Designed to evaluate and accredit high quality international business schools

• Perspective beyond that of national accreditation agencies

• To provide
  – Firstly, continuous quality improvement
  – Secondarily, international recognition and effectiveness
EQUIS in the World

- 113 Accredited schools (in 33 different countries)
  - 40 outside Europe (in 17 countries: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, India, Mexico, New Zealand, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, South Africa, USA, Venezuela)
  - 48 accredited for 3 years

- 35 reviews scheduled in 2008
  - 8 initial reviews
  - 27 re-accreditation reviews

- 20 Schools formally in the pipeline
  - of which 10 outside Europe

- New applications: 15-20 per year

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EQUIS Framework

CORPORATE CONNECTIONS

STUDENTS

EXECUTIVE EDUCATION

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

RESOURCES & ADMINISTRATION

PROGRAMMES

CONTRIBUTION TO COMMUNITY

FACULTY

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

INTERNATIONALISATION

www.efmd.org
What is EPAS?

- EFMD Programme Accreditation System
- Launched in June 2005 to satisfy demand for an international programme accreditation scheme
  - High quality degree programmes
  - Strong international perspective
- Partially motivated by the implementation of the Bologna reforms in Europe
  - Institutions often need guidance in times of reform and turmoil
  - Markets need transparency to aid vertical student mobility
- Contemplate diversity effectively while not compromising expected level of quality
- To provide:
  - Rigorous, thorough and detailed assessment
  - International recognition and effectiveness

The EPAS Portfolio

24 accredited programmes
- 21 institutions
- 13 countries
- 4 Bachelor programmes
- 6 Master programmes
- 10 (E)MBA programmes
- 4 other programmes

44 eligible programmes
- 30 institutions
- 18 countries
- 13 Bachelor programmes
- 14 Master programmes
- 13 (E)MBA programmes
- 4 other programmes

Total: 68 programmes, 50 institutions, 26 countries
EPAS Framework

Programme Value Chain Model

Benefits of EFMD Accreditations

- Information to the market on the basis of substance
- International recognition of excellence: international development
- Mechanism for international benchmarking with the best
- Sharing of good practice and mutual learning
- Agenda for quality improvement and future development
- Acceleration of quality improvement in international management education
Specific EPAS Benefits

- Detailed analysis by programme team on key attributes of programme according to EPAS framework
- Assistance with programme focus and definition
- Strategic development process for programme
- Multiplier effect to other areas and programmes
- Safer platform for on-the-job learning about international accreditations

Differential features of EFMD Accreditations
EFMD Quality Services Challenge: Single systems to cover a vast diversity

- **Institutional Diversity**
  - National education systems
  - Organisation of Higher Education Institutions
  - Private vs Public

- **Programme Diversity**
  - First degree, Postgraduate, Executive Education
  - Diverse programme formats
  - Single, dual, multiple, joint degrees

- **Geographical and Cultural Diversity**
  - Different values and expectations
  - Leadership styles
  - Professorial roles

- **Focus on quality while preserving freedom of strategy**
  - Move towards good practice without sacrificing diversity

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The EFMD QS Response

- **Promotion of diversity**
  - Source of Innovation and Creativity: a richer world

- **There is no single model**
  - European origin: diversity is the rule
  - Not based on any national or historical background
  - Some things are better for certain purposes: no best way

- **First learn...**
  - Understand the local context
  - Understand vision and strategy (Programme objectives)
  - Bring an international perspective
  - Be open to persuasive evidence

- **...only then, assess.**
EQUIS Differentiating Factors (1)

- **Institutional Assessment**
  - Whole School Assessment: all programmes, research and other activities
  - Degree or non-degree programmes, including executive education

- **Linked to both academic and corporate needs**
  - Involves both academic and corporate stakeholders at all levels
  - Balance between academic and professional skills
  - Emphasis on personal development
  - Corporate links: key criterion

- **Importance of strategy and governance**
  - Participation of experienced Deans in Peer Review Teams

EQUIS Differentiating Factors (2)

- **Internationalisation as a key criterion**
  - Of quality standards
  - Of reputation
  - Of the school culture
  - EQUIS managed by international team

- **Focus on diversity**
  - Less normative in general but especially on
    - Curriculum structure and content
    - Faculty composition and deployment
  - Random audit vs exhaustive audit
    - Consultants rather than auditors

- **Quality criteria in 10 areas**
EPAS Differentiation

- EPAS accredits individual degree programmes across the full spectrum
  - AMBA only does MBA and PEM programmes

- EPAS does not assess all of an institution’s programmes but a max of 2
  - AACSB accredits all degree programmes in management of the university

- EPAS reviews generic institutional aspects only to the extent they affect the quality of programmes under review
  - It can be a learning process for EQUIS.

Benefits and challenges for Chinese business schools
1. Clearly articulated strategy and policies

2. Active collaboration with international partners: student exchanges, joint programmes, research activity and corporate connections

3. Commitment to educating and preparing for management in an international environment

4. Attracts students, participants, faculty and staff from abroad and is proactively prepared for them

5. Produces a significant number of graduates that end up working in different countries

6. Contributes knowledge to solve managerial and business problems of international interest, relevance and/or scope
EQUIS Description of an International School

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Key observations

• The EQUIS schools are significantly more international than the non-EQUIS schools.

• Internalisation requires resources, both financial and HR.

• The whole institution must share the vision: some will prefer (and fight for) the status quo.
Key observations

• Concentrate on faculty, students, and content, but don’t forget the very important areas of staff, career, and communications.

• Expect resistance, but success breeds success:

You Can Succeed !!!

Thank you!

equis@efmd.org
epas@efmd.org
julio.urgel@efmd.org