

The application of quality assurance of higher education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

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Abstract:

This study aims to present the Saudi experience in the field of higher education quality, through the presentation of the most important procedures and the standards set by the Saudi National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment to bring Saudi higher education institutions to the international level of quality.

The study concluded that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has achieved the expected level of quality. Therefore, this success reflects the levels that Saudi universities have reached in the international rankings, as they became the first in the Arab world and within the top 200 universities globally.

Keywords: Higher education; Quality assurance; Institutional accreditation; Program accreditation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Economic development relies heavily on the higher education outcomes, and all what higher education institutions provide concerning ; research, consultations and graduates with high qualifications which enable them to bear the burdens of jobs and works characterized by the feature of continuous change and development, as a consequence of the environment's data and results in which they are active, it is also characterized by

dynamism, and the need for high creativity and innovation potentials required for any economic activity.

Most countries have realized this fact, including the Arab countries that prompted them to focus on the educational process to ensure quality at the level of all its components, including; inputs, processes and outputs. It has established bodies and centers which are responsible for the quality assurance process in higher education institutions, whose functions are to ensure the implementation of quality standards by higher education institutions.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has established the Evaluation and Accreditation Authority for Quality Assurance in the field of higher education, which is responsible for granting accreditation in the Kingdom, as it issues documents indicating the ways and methods of implementing the quality system, including the Program and Institutional Accreditation Standards Guide, the Requirements Guide for Program and Institutional Accreditation, and the Key Performance Indicators Guide, which is considered as a guiding tool for institutions wishing to obtain accreditation and implement quality standards.

1.1 The problem of this study:

Based on the above, this research paper has been addressed to a problematic study: **How to benefit from the Saudi experience in the field of quality assurance of higher education?**

1.2 Objectives of the study:

This research paper aims to:

- ◆ Presenting the Saudi scientific experience in the field of ensuring the quality of higher education;
- ◆ Learning about the standards and steps followed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to ensure the quality of higher education;
- ◆ Identifying the status of Saudi higher education institutions in the Arab world and internationally according to international classifications.

The importance of this research paper is to attempt to benefit from the Saudi experience in the field of quality assurance of higher education. Furthermore, to research the most important steps followed and the standards described by the body responsible for granting accreditation to Saudi higher

education institutions that enabled them to reach important ranks in international rankings.

To tackle the topic of this study, the research paper was divided into three sections:

- ◆ Saudi scientific experience in the field of quality assurance of higher education.
- ◆ The steps and requirements for obtaining accreditation.
- ◆ The status of Saudi higher education institutions in the Arab world and internationally.

1.3 Related work:

Among the previous studies that dealt with the issue of quality assurance in Arab educational institutions, the following are:

- Bouhdid Leila's study entitled “**An Inductive Study of Arab Experiences in Applying Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation Standards in Universities**” in 2019: The study aimed at identifying what academic accreditation is and the motives for its application in higher education institutions, in order to shed light on the college standards programs in Arab higher education institutions. The study presented some Arab experiences in quality assurance and academic accreditation. It concluded that the Arab countries' interest in quality assurance contributes to the advancement of their higher education institutions, this is reflected in qualified graduates who are equipped with science, knowledge and skills that enable them to engage in the labor market locally, on the Arab world and internationally. (bouhdid, 2020)
- The study of Al Muslim Abdallah entitled “**Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**” in 2009: The study aimed at providing a description of what has actually been achieved in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the field of quality assurance and accreditation. Thus, the researcher presented a summary of some important issues and challenges which must be dealt with effectively resulting from the application of the new system for quality

assurance and accreditation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. (Al Muslim, 2009).

- The study of Al-Baqami Saud entitled “**The Application of Quality Assurance in Saudi Arabia: A Comparison between Intermediate and Partial Levels at Prince Sultan University**” in 2015: The study aimed to explore quality assurance mechanisms and identify the factors that promote or prevent the effectiveness of the quality assurance system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A case study of Prince Sultan University was used. Furthermore, data collection and semi-structured interviews were used with both the middle and partial levels. Some restrictions were found to the implementation of the quality assurance system, the most significant is the resistance of faculty members, and the inadequacy of the infrastructure, foremost among them is the physical and human capital. (Al Baqami, 2015).
- Ali Al-Shayaa’s study entitled “**Improving Quality Assurance in Saudi Higher Education**” in 2010: The study aimed at presenting the measures taken by the Saudi authorities to tackle higher education short comings, improving its level, and rising to the level of international standards. The study found that although higher education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is not yet satisfactory, but it has achieved great success in the efforts made and the system designed to ensure quality because, it contains the tools of success, the most important are human and material capabilities. (Alshayaa, 2012).

2. The concepts of quality in higher education

- **Quality of higher education:** means the ability of the sum of the characteristics and advantages of the educational product to meet the requirements of the student, the labor market, society and all internal and external beneficiaries, Furthermore, achieving the quality of higher education which requires directing all of the human resources, policies, systems, approaches, processes and infrastructure in order to create favorable conditions for creativity and innovation ensuring that the educational product meets these requirements. (ben oum elsaad & rifaa, 2019, p. 3)

- **Quality assurance of higher education:** is a set of tools, methods and procedures aimed at achieving quality and maintaining its continuity within the educational institution (kihli, mesghouni, & amani, 2017, p. 31), which is a process of building the beneficiaries' confidence that the inputs, processes and outputs of the educational process meet expectations, amounting to the minimum requirements. (Lemaitre& karakhanyan, 2017, p. 1).
- **Accreditation:** is a review of the quality of higher education institutions and programs. In other words, the institution or program grants accreditation when it meets minimum quality standards. The most important component of accreditation is quality assurance assessment and continuous improvement. Standards which are set to guide institutions and programs in the process of voluntary commitment to continuous improvement when requesting accreditation, these criteria are used as a basis for making recommendations and making a decision whether to grant accreditation or not. (Ryan, 2015, p. 3).
- **Program accreditation:** which means the evaluation of programs in an institution that has obtained institutional accreditation, to ensure the quality of these programs and the duration of their requirements' achievement of the certificate granted in accordance with the stated standards and regulations, also the recognition that the educational program has achieved or reached at least the minimum standards of adequacy and quality set on the part of the accrediting body. (klaa, 2020, p. 166)
- **Institutional accreditation:** is to ensure that the institution has the ability and capabilities to implement its mission and goals in accordance with specific standards about the adequacy of facilities and resources, furthermore to provide; academic and student support services, approaches, levels of student and faculty achievement, and other components of the educational process (yeddou, 2017, p. 409). It is an academic rank granted to the institution in exchange for meeting national, Arab or international quality standards. Accreditation is a

basic plan for the institution to move towards excellence and harmony with the best-known international standards. (klaa, 2020, p. 166).

3. Saudi scientific experience in the field of quality assurance of higher education

Saudi educational institutions managed to enter international rankings in the field of higher education, as they have become classified as the best Arab universities, they are one of the most important assisting factors is the Kingdom's commitment to implement the quality assurance system in all aspects of the educational process, through the National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment.

3.1 The National Commission for Evaluation and Accreditation:

The National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment was established based on the high approval of the Higher Education Council's decision in 1424 AH to establish it. This body enjoys moral personality and administrative and financial independence, under the supervision of the Higher Education Council, which is the body responsible for academic accreditation affairs in tertiary higher education institutions except for the military, to improve the quality of private and government higher education, also to ensure clarity and transparency, and to provide codified standards for academic performance.

Quality centers in higher education institutions are considered as an important component in most countries in which bodies for accreditation and quality assurance have been established, a process that can only take place through the educational institution itself, However, this requires great efforts, distinguished leadership and appropriate support from those responsible for the educational institution and those in charge of works' implementation of these centers.

Hence, the process of establishing quality centers within educational institutions has become an important procedure and a basic requirement asked by accreditation and quality bodies from any institution of higher education that seeks to obtain accreditation and quality assurance. (Academic Accreditation, 2020).

The National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia prepares standards for academic evaluation

and accreditation, as it aims to evaluate programs and institutions of higher education, the Commission is committed to a strategy of encouraging, supporting and evaluating quality assurance processes in higher education institutions, in order to assure that the quality of education and administration in higher education institutions is in line with high standards. The Commission is preparing a guide that helps higher education institutions to present and develop procedures ensuring their internal quality and preparing them for the external evaluation carried out by the authority to ensure that these institutions reach high-level performance. (Manual of Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2008, p. 3)

3.2 Standards of quality assurance and accreditation:

Among the Commission's publications are the Program Accreditation Standards and the Institutional Accreditation Standards Documents. It has set out to develop standards from several pillars, the most important are; supporting national trends related to higher education, focusing on the impact and taking into account the tangible level of maturity reached by the Kingdom's higher education institutions in the field Quality assurance, in addition to the consistency with global practices, while giving space for: (2018, p. 2) higher education institutions for innovation and excellence.

- **The program accreditation** standards include six that cover the main (2018, pp. 3-10) program activities, including:
- **Mission and Objectives:** The program must have a clear, appropriate and consistent mission with that of the institution and the college / department, which supports its implementation, it is directed to planning and decision-making, linked to the program's goals and plans, it is reviewed periodically.
- **Managing the program and ensuring its quality:** the program must have effective leadership that applies institutional systems, policies and regulations, and plans, implements, Furthermore, it follows-up and activates quality systems which achieve continuous development of its performance within a framework of integrity, transparency, justice and a regulatory climate that supports work.
- **Teaching and learning:** The characteristics of the graduates and the learning outcomes in the program must be precisely defined, and consistent with the requirements of the National Qualifications

Framework, and with academic and professional standards, the requirements of the labor market, the curriculum must comply with the professional requirements, moreover, The teaching staff should apply various effective teaching and learning strategies and assessment methods appropriate to the different learning outcomes, in other part, the extent of the achievement of learning outcomes must be evaluated through various means, and the results are used in continuous improvement.

- **Students:** The standards and conditions for student admission must be clear and stated, also, they must be applied fairly, besides, information about the program and requirements for completing studies must be available, also students must be informed of their rights and duties, the program must provide effective guidance and counselling services and extracurricular and enriching activities for students, and to work on evaluating the quality of services and activities provided to students, improving them and following up on graduates.
- **Teaching staff:** The program must have sufficient numbers of qualified teaching staff with the competence and experience necessary to carry out their responsibilities, also they staff must be aware of academic and professional developments in their specializations, and participate in scientific research activities, community service, program development and institutional performance. Therefore, their performance is evaluated according to specific criteria, and the results are used in development.
- **Learning resources, facilities and equipments :** must be sufficient to meet the needs of the program and its academic decisions, and be available to all beneficiaries with an appropriate organization, also the teaching staff and students must participate in identifying them based on needs, and evaluate their effectiveness.

As for the **institutional accreditation** standards, they included eight standards covering all activities of the educational institution, as follows:

- **Mission, Objectives and Strategic Planning:** The institution must have a clear and appropriate mission and goals that define the purpose of its establishment and direct planning, decision-making and work in all academic and administrative units, However, its strategic plan is linked to a clear vision that is in line with national and global trends, and institutional performance is monitored and evaluated based on indicators Head of Performance (2018, p. 3)

- **Governance, leadership and management:** the institution must have systems of governance that guarantee its effectiveness and efficiency, and apply policies, regulations and procedures that support its mission, objectives, and strategic and operational intentions, as it has a clear and applied organizational structure, and defines tasks and powers for all functions. The institution must have a leadership style and management system which depends on planning, follow-up and implementation, and works to activate quality systems that achieve continuous development of performance in a framework of integrity, transparency, equality and justice, in an regulatory climate that supports work, furthermore, the institutional performance related to this matter must be evaluated based on key performance indicators (2018, p. 4)
- **Teaching and learning:** The educational institution must have clear and effective policies and procedures for designing, approving and evaluating academic programs and courses, the programs are planned to contribute to the achievement of the institution's mission and goals. The institution must define characteristics for graduates and learning outcomes in itself and program level, compatible with its mission and the requirements of the National Qualifications Framework. It must have also an effective system that ensures the achievement of high levels of teaching and learning in all offered programs, moreover, the quality of teaching and learning is monitored regularly, and through appropriate mechanisms, and periodic review processes are conducted for their development (2018, p. 6)
- **Students:** The student admission policies and regulations in all the institution's programs must be clear and stated, with the importance of providing an effective electronic system for managing and securing student records. Students' rights and duties must be defined, announced and committed to them; also the institution should set rules for good behaviour and procedures for discipline, recourse and appeal. It is characterized by transparency, justice, and effective mechanisms for guidance and counselling and providing all services that students need equally, taking into account people with disabilities. It must have an effective policy to benefit from the opinions of graduates, in addition to adopting programs to take care of international students, if any. (2018, p. 9)
- **Teaching staff and employees:** the institution must have a sufficient number of teaching staff and employees with appropriate qualifications

and experiences to carry out their responsibilities well deservedly, as they must be provided with the necessary support, in addition to providing professional development programs for them /The institution must also evaluate their performance periodically. The results of the evaluation are used for improvement. (institutional accreditation standards, 2018) (2018, p. 11)

- **Institutional resources:** The institution must have adequate financial resources and physical and technical infrastructure to support its activities and operations in all its headquarters and branches, it must be managed in an effective manner, and comply with the rules and regulations, it must verify also through periodic evaluation processes that its resources are sufficient to ensure the quality of its educational programs Support continuous improvement, and have an effective safety and risk management system; (2018, p. 12)
- **Scientific Research and Innovation:** The institution must have specific plans for scientific research and innovation activities that reflect its strategic orientations and are consistent with its nature and mission. It must provide its necessary resources, and appropriate support to faculty members, students and other employees of the institution to play their role in these activities, it must also work to follow up its activities, documenting them, preparing periodic reports on them, and taking the necessary measures for improvement and development; (2018, p. 14)
- **Community partnership:** The institution must have specific plans and mechanisms for community partnership that reflect its strategic orientations and are consistent with its nature and mission, or support the effective participation of the faculty, students and employees in it. Furthermore, it must also establish effective cooperation relationships with the local and international community, professional bodies and various sectors of work. And to work on documenting its activities and following up the effectiveness of the community partnership, improving and developing it. (2018, p. 15)

4. Steps and requirements for obtaining accreditation

The National Centre for Academic Accreditation and Assessment aims to contribute enhancing quality and excellence in higher education institutions and their programs through evaluation and academic accreditation processes. Moreover, to make the certification process and procedures easy to implement and efficient; One of the strategic initiatives that fall under the responsibility of the centre in the commission's plan

included improving and simplifying the accreditation process, thus, this contains several aspects, including: Defining the steps and requirements of the review process and its procedures and making it easier and smoother (StepsofAccreditation, 2020)

4.1 Steps for program accreditation:

The review and approval process for the programs goes through six steps, which are: (StepsofAccreditation, 2020)

- **The first step: Applying for accreditation:** the institution that owns the program applies for accreditation by contacting the National Centre for Academic Accreditation and Assessment.
- **The second step: Providing the necessary training and support:** The Training Department undertakes the implementation of the training that is included in the accreditation contracts, and the training workshops in the program accreditation contracts are limited to two workshops, each one for one day only, besides, its topics are determined according to the need of the program.
- **The third step: Verifying the program's eligibility for accreditation:** The program sends its basic documents to the centre, which include the self-study report and eligibility requirements for accreditation, including statistical data: the program file, key performance indicators, self-evaluation measures, and the results of the three surveys, include: the program's evaluation questionnaire Course evaluation questionnaire, learning experiences evaluation questionnaire, and other types of questionnaires can be added such as graduate opinion poll, employer survey. The Accreditation Operations Department undertakes the receipt of documents, it archives them and transfers them to the authorized representative, and a consultant which is appointed to review the documents and ensure their completeness, and verify the program's eligibility for accreditation.
- **The fourth step: Determining the date of the visit and forming the review team:** The Coordination Committee for Accreditation Processes selects the review teams for the qualified programs, whereas, the Auditors Unit sends invitations and coordinates with the auditors, while the Accreditation Operations Unit handles the logistical matters for the review the visit;
- **The fifth step: the field visit to the institution, and the submission of the audit report:** The number of reviewers varies from two to three according to the size of the program and branches, the number of visit

days is from two to three, the team leader is fully responsible for the review process, it is referred to the accreditation consultant or the unit director when they are needed, furthermore, the visiting team is accompanied by an employee from the public relations department to follow up on the logistical matters of the team, an employee from the accreditation operations department to coordinate and supervise the audit process, in order to be a link between the team leader and the coordinator from the institution on the one hand, and with the accreditation advisor or the director of the specialized unit on the other hand. The auditors submit their reports to the center, including : the complete visit report, the standards compliance table, evaluation metrics, which are a tool that enables the auditors to quantitatively evaluate each criterion, contribute to the issuance of a judgment on the program, and assist in making comparisons, extracting data and various statistical reports;

- **Sixth step: Accreditation decision:** The Advisory Committee for Accreditation reviews the auditors' reports to verify their consistency and credibility, and submits its recommendations to the Executive Director. In other part the centre director adopts the recommendations of the auditors' team, the recommendations of the advisory committee, with the announcement of the accreditation status.

4.2 Steps for institutional accreditation:

The review and accreditation process for institutions goes through six steps: (StepsofAccreditation, 2020)

- **Applying for institutional accreditation:** The institution applies for accreditation by contacting the National Center for Academic Accreditation and Assessment.
- **The second step: Verifying the institution's eligibility for accreditation:** The institution sends the documents pertaining to eligibility requirements for institutional accreditation, which are reviewed by the centre's advisors while the examination report sends the institution.
- **The third step: forming the team and determining the date of the visit:** the final list of the auditors' team is formed and approved, then the visit schedule is prepared and approved in coordination with the review team and the institution, besides, a meeting is held with the institution's officials to prepare and verify the final preparations for receiving the visit team.

- **The fourth step: the field visit to the institution and the preparation of the review report:** The field visit to the institution is conducted for a period of four days, during which the interviews are conducted with all groups in the institution and the facilities and equipment are visited and more documents are examined according to the schedule set for the visit, and the team leader is fully responsible for the process review, and refer to the accreditation consultant when needed, and after the visit ends, the team leader delivers the initial draft of the report, which is reviewed by the center's advisor, then sends a copy (without the final recommendation) to the institution to review the general information contained in the report, and accept the recommendations;
- **Fifth step: Accreditation decision:** Submits the final report to the advisory committee to verify its accuracy and consistency with the reports of the rest of the accredited institutions and recommend accreditation, then the accreditation board adopts the recommendations of the team of auditors, thus, the recommendations of the advisory committee, and the institution's accreditation status is announced.
- **Sixth step: Periodic follow-up of accredited institutions:** The institution prepares an annual report on the university's status. The efforts made to implement the recommendations contained in the accreditation report, then it is studied by the center's advisors with a visit which is made to the institution if required, also the follow-up report is prepared and sent to the institution, for the institutions The conditional accreditation holder submits a request to convert its accreditation to a full one after fulfilling the conditions for accreditation contained in the audit report along with sending the necessary evidence, furthermore, the reports and documents submitted are studied, and a visit is made to the institution to verify that it meets these conditions if required, then the report is presented to the supervisory committee on operations Accreditation to study it and recommend transferring the accreditation to full accreditation.

4.3 Requirements to qualify for program accreditation:

Eligibility for program accreditation requires: (2019, pp. 2-3)

- **The final license for the program:** includes: the decision to establish the program (for public universities), the final licensing decision (for private universities);

- **Conformity with the Saudi framework for qualifications:** represented in determining the consistency of the program with the requirements of the Saudi framework for qualifications;
- **Availability of institutional accreditation requirements:** the university must obtain institutional accreditation or qualify for accreditation (the review visit has been scheduled);
- **Introductory guides for students and faculty:** includes: the introductory guide for the program, admission and registration, regulations for studies and tests, guidance and counselling services, rights and duties, complaints and grievances;
- **Quality assurance system in the program and its performance reports:** includes: the program's quality system manual, a guide to the policies and procedures for approving and modifying the program and academic courses, including a matrix of powers at all levels, the annual report of the program for the last two years according to the National Centre model, the course reports in the program for the last two years (report One for each course per year), Report the results of opinion polls for those involved (students, graduates, employers, faculty, and employees) for the last two years;
- **Program and course description:** represented in: the program description according to the National Center model, the program's course description classified according to levels;
- **Learning outcomes measurement plan and reports:** These are : the program's learning outcomes measurement plan, the program's assessment of all learning outcomes.
- **Graduation of students (at least one promotion):** to submit a statement of the number of promotions that graduated from the program and the number of students in each promotion;
- **Program advisory committee:** meaning the formation of the committee, specifying its tasks, and submitting a report on the committee's performance and outputs;
- **Key Performance Indicators and Benchmarks:** where the report on measuring the program's KPIs and benchmarking for the last three years is presented;
- **Self-study of the program:** is addressed through : Self-evaluation measures of the program, taking into account that the evaluation level is not less than three points for each of the main milestones set by the centre and for each criterion, the self-study report of the program, the evidence for the self-study report,

- In addition to the requirements for postgraduate studies, which are: (2019, p. 3)
- **The executive plan for scientific research and its monitoring:** includes: the operational plan for scientific research in the program according to its nature, a system for monitoring and documenting scientific research activities in the program, periodic performance reports for the scientific research plan;
- **Scientific supervision system for theses, projects, or vocational training:** includes: Evidence and regulations for scientific supervision of theses, projects, or vocational training, reports of follow-up scientific supervision in the program.

4.4 Requirements to qualify for institutional accreditation

Qualifying for institutional accreditation requires adherence to the following: (2019, pp. 2-3)

- **The final license for civil institutions or the decision to establish government institutions;**
- **The institution's strategic plan and its achievement reports:** It includes: the institution's strategic plan, operational plans for the strategic steps, periodic completion reports of the strategic plan;
- **Organizational guide for the institution, policies and procedures:** represented in: policies, procedures, organizational structure, tasks and powers, job description;
- **Introductory guides for students, teaching staff, and employees:** include: introduction to the institution and its programs, admission and registration, regulations for study and examinations, guidance and counselling services, rights and duties, employment and promotions, complaints and grievances
- **Description of the academic programs offered by the institution:** that is, a description of all academic programs in the institution according to the National Center model;
- **Course descriptions for academic programs at the institution:** to include: one college requirement (one course), program requirement (two courses one of which are from the first and second levels of final levels), and the field training course, if any.
- **Quality assurance system and its performance reports:** including: the institution's quality system manual, a guide to policies and procedures for approving and amending academic programs and curricula, including a matrix of powers at all levels, a follow-up system

for teaching and learning quality, including mechanisms for measuring graduate characteristics and learning outcomes, follow-up reports the quality of the institution, the report of the results of the opinion polls for the related people (students, graduates, employers, faculty, and employees) for the last two years;

- **Key performance indicators and benchmarking:** is represented in submitting the report of measuring the key performance indicators and benchmarking for the last three years
- **An electronic system for collecting and analysing data and information:** represented in: a manual for the data collection and information analysis system, including the powers granted to academic and administrative units, a sample of reports issued by the system for all levels of the system users;
- **The scientific research plan of the institution and its follow-up:** represented in: the scientific research plan of the institution in the event that it is not included in the strategic plan, the monitoring and documentation system of the institution's scientific research activities, periodic performance reports of the scientific research plan;
- **The institution's community partnership plan and its follow-up:** includes: the institution's community partnership plan in the event it is not included in the strategic plan, a system for monitoring and documenting the institution's community partnership activities, and periodic performance reports for the community partnership plan.
- **Institutional self-study:** is represented in: measures of self-evaluation of the institution, taking into account that the level of evaluation is not less than three points for each of the main criteria set by the center and for each criterion, the report of the institutional self-study, evidence for the self-study report.

5. The status of Saudi higher education institutions in the Arab world and internationally

Saudi universities have managed to occupy important ranks among the best universities in the world. As they were able to achieve advanced levels in world classifications according to the most important classification indicators: QS classification, the British Times classification, and the Shanghai international classification of world universities,

Table01: Ranking of Saudi universities in 2020 according to the most important global indicators

University	QS ranking		Times ranking	
	Arabic	International	Arabic	International
King Abdul Aziz University	05	143	01	201
KingFaisalUniversity	18	801	02	251
King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals	01	186	09	502
King Sauduniversity	03	287	10	501
King Khalid university	22	601	17	601

Source: Prepared by researchers based on the website:<https://www.almuheet.net/130138>

Through the table, the status of the Saudi University in the Arab world and internationally is shown according to both the QS classification and the British Times classification, where Saudi universities topped the first ranks at the level of Arab universities, namely, King Abdulaziz University, where it came first in the Arab world and 201 globally, and King Faisal University, which ranked second in the Arab world and 251 In the world according to the British Times Classification for the year 2020 issued by the British newspaper The Times, which ranked the best 1,396 universities from 92 countries, while the first ranks were for King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals and King Saud University according to QS for the year 2020, where King Fahd University was ranked Petroleum and Minerals were the first in the Arab world and 186 globally, and King Saud University was ranked third in the Arab world and 287 globally, such ranks reflect the results of the efforts of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to ensure the quality of higher education. In the last year, 10 Saudi universities managed to strengthen their position in the world, the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals is among the top 200 universities in the world, this position achieved by the Kingdom is considered as a successful experience to be emulated by other Arab universities in the field of ensuring the quality of higher education.

6. CONCLUSION

This study attempted to present the Saudi experience in the field of quality assurance of higher education, based on previous studies on the same subject. This study is similar to previous studies in which it investigates the issue of ensuring the quality of higher education and the most important measures that enable it to be achieved (a study with Leila Bouhdid), especially in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (the study of the Al Muslim, the study of Al-Shayaa, the study of the Baqami), but it differs with them in the proposition and the results because the previous studies that were presented earlier and differently, as they tried to present the Saudi experience at the time of the beginning of the implementation of the quality and accreditation system, which led to results in the short term, thus, at a time considered to be the establishment of the quality and accreditation system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Through our study it was concluded that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, after a considerable period of establishing the National Commission for Accreditation and Assessment and the National Center for Academic Accreditation and Assessment, it has already been able to gain experience in the field of quality assurance and accreditation, this is reflected in its issuance of documents that have known renewal and revision in their contents. As we see maturity and improvement in the guide issued by it, whether the accreditation standards guide, the key performance indicators guide, the qualification requirements guide for accreditation and other documents issued by the authority.

Also, the ranks that Saudi universities ranked in international classifications, the most important are the QS classification and the British Times classification, which reflect the efforts made by the Kingdom in improving the quality assurance system and achieving international standards in the educational process, as it became the first in the Arab world and among the top 200 universities internationally, these results indicate The Saudi experience in the field of quality assurance is a successful one that can be used by other countries that seek to achieve high levels of performance and ensure the quality of their educational institutions.

From this, some suggestions can be drawn up:

- Reviewing the Saudi experience, studying the factors that helped to achieve its success, and adapt it to the reality in countries trying to achieve quality assurance of higher education.

- Concluding agreements with the bodies responsible for quality assurance and accreditation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to transfer their expertise and benefit from them.
- Activating the student scholarships system, and staff training to and from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as a first step to transfer knowledge and expertise.

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