Assessment of the IMIA Educational Accreditation Process

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Quality of education

• Programs want to attract the best students of their country and possibly international students
• Due to the growing internationalization of education the quality of a higher education program affects its international status and therefore its attractiveness for students
• International experts may be invited to evaluate the international status of programs; can be expensive
Another approach

- IMIA can serve as an accreditation agency
- Accreditation by IMIA does not replace but is an addition to the national accreditation
- Being accredited means a competitive advantage for the program because it assures students of the quality of the program.
- IMIA accreditation will be less expensive
Procedure

- Program writes a self assessment report
- Site visit
- Site visit committee writes the Accreditation report
- IMIA’s Accreditation Committee monitors the procedure
Different specialties and orientations

- Programs may have different foci and be either of a vocational or an academic orientation; problem for evaluation?
- Not when the description of the qualifications of the graduates is used as golden standard:
  - Description indicates the knowledge, skills and attitudes that the graduates have obtained and *which they have not*
Questions answerable on the basis of the program description

- Is the job market in need of graduates with the described qualifications?
- What is the orientation of the program, vocational or academic?
- Are the objectives of the program (the specialization) comparable to those of internationally accepted programs?
- Does the curriculum content indeed lead to the described qualifications?
Self Assessment report answers the following questions:

• What is the intended purpose of the institute?
• With which programs offered?
• With which staff?
• With what facilities?
• Does the institute guarantee the quality of the program?
• Are the goals routinely reached?
Site visit

• Three experts (the panel) visit the institution during two or three days
• Judgement guided by the self-assessment report
• Panel consults textbooks and other learning material used by the program
• Panel consults with management, staff, students, employers and alumni
• Panel visits the teaching facilities
Judgment

• Each subject (related to a question) comprises a number of facets that should be judged.
• Each facet is judged on a scale ranging from insufficient via sufficient and good to excellent.
• Each subject is judged sufficient or insufficient by weighing the judgments of the individual facets.
• Total evaluation is sufficient if all subjects are judged as sufficient, otherwise insufficient.
# Checklist for site visit committee members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject 1: Goals of the program</th>
<th>Score facet</th>
<th>Score subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facet 1: Domain specific requirements</td>
<td>E/G/S/IS</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Subject 2: Educational program</td>
<td>S/IS</td>
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<td>Facet 2: Academic requirements</td>
<td>E/G/S/IS</td>
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<td>Facet 3: Relation between goal and content</td>
<td>E/G/S/IS</td>
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<td>Facet 4: Rapport between form and content</td>
<td>E/G/S/IS</td>
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<td>Facet 5: Study load</td>
<td>E/G/S/IS</td>
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<td>Facet 6: Relation between intake and program</td>
<td>E/G/S/IS</td>
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<td>Facet 7: Legal requirements</td>
<td>E/G/S/IS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facet 8: Judgement and examinations</td>
<td>E/G/S/IS</td>
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• Accreditation Committee (IMIA)
  • Accreditation Committee (IMIA)
    – Communicates with the institution to be accredited
    – Appoints members of the site visit committee
      – Sends the report of the site visit committee to the institution for correction of factual errors
        – After possible amendments makes the final
Organization -2

- Duration of accreditation: five years
Decisions made by IMIA’s General Assembly

- Trial with 3 to 5 programs to check the accreditation protocol
- The accreditation protocol and results are evaluated by an independent committee of the IMIA Board
- Three programs have already been assessed
Site visits

• Chile, DuoC, Diploma (Vocational program) implemented in 3 cities
• Germany, University of Göttingen, Bachelor and Master’s Programs in...
SWOT ANALYSIS

Primary factors

Strengths

Weaknesses

Opportunities

Threats

• ...
Strengths

• IMIA has the highest reputation in the scientific field of biomedical informatics.

• The IMIA Educational Recommendations are a document that has been used on all continents to improve existing courses and to assist in establishing new programs.

• Enough suitable experts within IMIA and its member organizations who have experience in national and international educational (accreditation) processes
Weaknesses

• Shortage of logistical and secretarial support for the site visit committees.
• IMIA’s internal procedure led to delays in finalizing decisions.
• Transparency required at all phases including the necessary financial coverage of the expenses of the site visit committees.
Opportunities

• There are many institutions and universities across the world wanting an IMIA accreditation.

• There are countries where the culture of national evaluation is rather weak or still developing, providing an opportunity for international organizations such as IMIA to play an important role.

• Current healthcare systems require well organized programs in biomedical informatics that will provide, at a level that is recognized internationally, education for their healthcare professionals.
Threats

• The accreditation process, now approved by IMIA’s General Assembly, needs to be implemented and institutionalized as quickly as possible following a rigorous business process and avoiding the trap of internal bureaucracy.

• IMIA as an international organization has moved first to provide a formal biomedical informatics accreditation process. There is always the danger, however, that if the program is not supported from within the IMIA community, there will be space for other organizations to fill the gap. IMIA accreditation should be marketed!
Conclusions

• IMIA has a long and successful tradition in Education
• IMIA developed Educational Recommendations well accepted by the International Community
• IMIA initiated an Accreditation process that will be equally successful and accepted by the Academic Community
Thank you very much for your attention