

ACCREDITATION, CHANGE AND QUALITY IN JAPANESE HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores and seeks to make sense of the concept of accreditation and quality in higher education institutions in Japan. What quality means, how it is measured, how it is interpreted by those involved, and whether it is a habit or an act will be discussed. As Japanese institutions of higher education are seeking to advance in the world rankings, global standards need to be established and ways of implementing them and accrediting institutions that achieve them, need to be explored. The paper provides a brief overview of the concept of quality in higher education in Japan and how it aligns with global standards. Based on longitudinal research of a Japanese university undergoing change associated with an accreditation procedure implemented by the *Japan University Accreditation Association*, the research will share findings of how individuals made sense of quality and accreditation. The paper concludes with observations on how managers can ensure quality and accreditation is successfully managed within their institution.

Key words: *accreditation, quality assurance, higher education management, Japan*