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Epistemic Governance in Higher Education

Quality Enhancement of Universities for Development

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Abstract

For the further progress of advanced knowledge society, advanced knowledge economy, and advanced knowledge democracy, universities and the higher education sectors are crucial for driving development. How should the governance of higher education, the quality enhancement of universities, and the careers of academic faculty (the academic profession) be organized? Epistemic governance introduces here a novel approach and understanding. Epistemic governance emphasizes that the underlying epistemic structure, the underlying epistemic base, or the underlying epistemic paradigms (knowledge paradigms) of those organizations, institutions, or systems (sectors), which should be governed, are being addressed. This defines a benchmark and set of criteria for internal and external governance in higher education that is interested in applying a good, effective, and sustainable governance. Quality assurance, quality enhancement, and quality management of higher education, from the perspective of epistemic governance, should also orient themselves to quality and quality dimensions that cross-refer to the underlying epistemic structure of higher education. In a traditional understanding, the academic career patterns of the academic core faculty at universities follow a tenure-track logic. Cross-employment (multi-employment), on the contrary, refers to academic faculty (the academic profession) with simultaneous employment contracts to more than one organization only within or both inside and outside of higher education. Epistemic governance, in combination with cross-employment, should add to the organizational flexibility and creativity of universities and other higher education institutions, supporting the integration of a pluralism and diversity of knowledge production (basic research in the context of knowledge application and innovation), the formation of nonlinear innovation networks, and providing a rationale for a new type of academic career model.

Keywords

Epistemic governance · Higher education · Mode 1 and mode 2 knowledge production system · Mode 3 knowledge production system · Research and experimental development (R&D) · Innovation · Quadruple helix innovation systems · Quintuple helix innovation system · New public management (NPM) · Network governance · Public-private partnerships for research and technological development (PPP RTD) · Tenure-track · Tenured · Tenurable · Cross-employment · Multi-employment