

Towards A 21st Century Competency-Based Model of Higher Education: The Pragmatics of Accountability

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Abstract. The 21st century brought unprecedented changes to higher education where the focus is increasingly on building competencies or attributes that would allow graduates (1) a better preparation to job markets and (2) an application of their learned knowledge and skills in their roles as ‘glocal’ citizens. Many aspects of competency in higher education and graduate attributes (GA) have been discussed in recent years, be it at the level of conceptualization, stakeholder identification and relative weighting, implementation strategies, curriculum approaches, staff development, quality assurance or the role of students (Hughes & Barrie, 2010). Accountability of various stakeholders is key to the success of a systematic assessment process that should be done in a continuous cyclic loop of feedback (Dugan 2004). With this loop of feedback, improving the learning outcomes and ensuring that the graduating attributes are met during the academic process and after degrees are granted. In this paper, we aim first to tackle the issue of defining competencies by delving into various works that has been done so far on defining competencies and GA. We then present some competency based models in various level of education. Finally, we identify stakeholder and discuss their roles in defining accountability parameters for a criteria-based method of assessment that would allow for comparison between the acquisition levels of different GAs at an institution-wide level.