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Licence to kill: about accreditation issues and James Bond [1]

Ko Scheele

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Abstract

Accreditation has become something of a hot topic in higher education. In Europe it has been described as a ‘Licence to Kill’. The James Bond metaphor is particularly illustrative when reflecting on quality assurance challenges in higher education. Publications on this subject in recent years reveal that the array of issues associated with accreditation are eminently explainable using titles of Bond films. This article addresses various accreditation topics, beginning with the origin, the necessity of a world standard and comparability of systems. Although the Bologna Declaration aims at quality assurance convergence, it seems that, from a system point of view, divergence is the main trend. The present evaluation scene is dominated by the concept of ‘peer-evaluation’. This lays an emphasis on the working methods as will be illustrated using a Dutch trial accreditation report. Last but not least, the article pays attention to the accreditation results, in particular, the follow-up procedures. In theory, there are

consequences in the event of critical reports and serious shortcomings but in practice the systems aim at improvement. Perhaps stimulatory supervisions will become the new evaluation hype.

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Notes

This is a minor adaptation of the Dutch article in the retirement bundle presented to former Chief Education Inspector, Frans Leeuw.

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