

Institutional Regulatory Compliance in Maritime Graduate Education: An Assessment of Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Requirements

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Abstract

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) establishes policies, standards, and guidelines to ensure the quality, relevance, and continuous improvement of graduate education in higher education institutions. This study evaluated the conformity of the Asian Institute of Maritime Studies–School of Graduate Studies (AIMS-SGS) to the institutional regulatory standards of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) for graduate education. The objective was to assess how the institution complies, documents, monitors and maintains regulatory requirements and determine areas of improvement. The study employed a qualitative case study design. Data were collected through document analysis and semi-structured interviews with administrators, administrative staff, graduate students, and other relevant stakeholders within the institution. We triangulated multiple sources of data to develop a holistic assessment of institutional compliance practices and challenges. The results showed that overall, the AIMS-SGS was functionally compliant with the applicable CHED requirements in major areas of graduate education such as program administration, curriculum, faculty qualifications, admission, instruction, research, thesis and dissertation processes, learning resources, student services and quality assurance. The implementation was stronger especially in the areas of admission and graduate research, backed by existing academic policies, research supervision, defense and evaluation procedures, and institutional research mechanisms. But the findings showed that compliance gaps were not primarily defined by non-compliance but by the differences in the depth, consistency, accessibility, institutionalization, and sustainability of compliance practices. Key areas for improvement were systematic evaluation of programs, clear delineation of compliance responsibilities, continuity of digital learning and research resources, internet connectivity, specialized research infrastructure and institutional research funding. Findings also revealed that AIMS-SGS had mechanisms to meet regulatory requirements but that the compliance responsibilities were largely on the shoulders of administrators. This means there is a greater demand for clear institutional accountability and collective responsibility. The study developed an Institutional Regulatory Compliance and Quality Enhancement Framework for Graduate Education based on these findings. The framework integrates regulatory identification, applicability assessment, implementation, documentation, monitoring, evaluation, corrective action, and continuous quality improvement. The proposed framework is intended to strengthen evidence-based compliance, institutionalize quality assurance, improve resource and research support, clarify accountability, and promote the continuous improvement of graduate education at AIMS-SGS.

Keywords: institutional regulatory compliance, graduate education, CHED requirements, AIMS-SGS, quality assurance, maritime graduate education, research, institutional governance, continuous quality improvement.

