

Internal Quality Assurance

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Structure

- Reasons for quality assurance
- Notion of quality in higher education
- Purposed of quality assurance
- Basic methodological approach
- EUA principles
- ESG Internal Quality assurance
- Short examples from various countries

Reasons for implementing quality assurance policies

transfer from elite to mass education

- Throw: phases of students' numbers: elite, mass, universal education (more than 50% of relevant population cohort)

diversification

- **diversified student body** → different knowledge, abilities needs, expectations

decentralization of management of HE systems

- autonomous HEIs + need to approve accountability to national state/tax payers

internationalization

- mobility of students and academics
- **necessary information about quality of education**
- new approach to recognition of studies/diplomas (Lisbon Recognition Convention)

information for external partners

- focus on long-term and stable collaboration (industry)
- employment of graduates
- success in getting relevant jobs

Complex character of quality in higher education

- 1) various users/stakeholders of HE → students, parents, academics, employers, state authorities → various expectations and needs → various views on quality of HE
- 2) understanding of quality of higher education as a complex value which does not only require the achievement of a minimum threshold/standards, but continuous improvement over time**

Approaches to quality in higher education

- Quality as perfection (academic perspective → excellence);
- Quality as zero deviation (considered rather in production, not in education);
- **Quality as suitability for given purpose views quality as compliance with specific goals, whereas it holds that quality is directly proportionate to the level of achievement of specified goals;**
- Quality as transformation → primarily associated with students in the sense of transforming original knowledge to a qualitatively and quantitatively higher level;
- Quality as a threshold → usually associated with accreditation;
- Quality as continuous growth → stimulating long-term improvement

(Harvey, Green 1993, OECD 2008).

**Repetition
from
morning
lecture
about U-
Map**

Quality assurance in higher education

- **Quality assurance for accountability** (summative process, external “control”, view prevailing from ***government’s perspective***, centralized administrative structure, quantitative indicators measuring success, explicit statements on outcomes, public information)
- **Quality for improvement** (formative process, ***internal mechanisms***, facilitative administration structures, qualitative indicators, peer review, identification of strengths and weaknesses, recommendations from peers)
- ***Both purposes are essential***, very different view on their relationship, ***David Woodhouse***: they may be combined in a balanced strategy

What could be QA phases?

Five (four)-phase quality assurance model (*OECD, Van Vught, Westerheijden 1994*)

- Coordinating agency
 - ***Autonomous internal quality assurance system implemented independently***
 - ***Self-evaluation***
 - External evaluation (peer review group) and site visit
 - Publication of evaluation report
- +
- Follow-up stage

= **quality assurance should not be isolated activity, continuation is needed, it is process**

European University Association guiding principles I.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY IS INTERNAL

Institutional quality management requires a
comprehensive, all-encompassing approach;
it covers all activities of university:

research

teaching and learning

service to society

support services

**Quality management should be derived from
mission statement and strategic goals
of HEI**

**role of external
quality assurance**
is to review internal
processes
respect and promote
primary responsibility
of HEIs in designing
them!

European University Association guiding principles II.

TO BE FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTABLE, NOT TO SUPPRESS

- * diversity,
- * innovative teaching practices
- * creative research

The ultimate goal of all quality assurance - both internal and external - to enhance quality and thus promoting trust among stakeholders.

Regardless of how quality is defined, the ultimate aim of all quality assurance processes – whether they are internal or external and related to research, teaching and learning or other activities – **should always be to enhance quality levels** through a considered examination of processes and their outcomes and by **maintaining a balance between accountability and improvement**

Further principles

- ***The importance not only of enhancing quality but also of improving transparency***

accurate information about institutional mission, activities, performance and results for learners, employers and other stakeholders

- ***Grassroots cooperation among the various stakeholders is a crucial success factor in bringing about sustainable change and improvement***

need of active involvement of all stakeholders, ongoing dialogue between partners at all levels.

European standards and guidelines of QA (ESG)

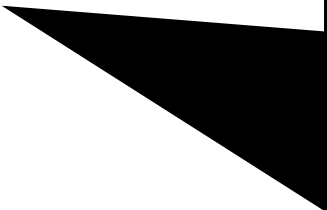
- **Origin:** Ministers' Berlin communiqué (2003) to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance
- **Official mandate to European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA)** but not free of ambiguity (ENQA not consulted before, no indication of what the ESG intention & purpose should be, what is meant by standards ...)
- officially adopted in 2005 (modified version 2015)
- Rationale: public interest in good HE quality, central importance of HE autonomy under accountability, **QA procedures to create space for quality culture and not to stifle creativity and innovation**
- **ESG non-prescriptive, generic (broad), non-mandatory!**
- **Fitness for purpose:** what is OK for what the institution plans to do

ESG 2015

- a set of **standards** and **guidelines** for internal and external quality assurance in higher education.
- not standards for quality,
- do not prescribe how the quality assurance processes are implemented
- provide guidance, covering the areas which are vital for successful quality provision and learning environments in higher education.
- should be considered in a broader context that also includes qualifications frameworks, ECTS and diploma supplement that also contribute to promoting the transparency and mutual trust in higher education in the EHEA.

ESG - „standards“

- 1.1 Policy for quality assurance
- 1.2 Design and approval of programmes
- 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
- 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
- 1.5 Teaching staff
- 1.6 Learning resources and student support
- 1.7 Information management
- 1.8 Public information
- 1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes
- 1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance



Focus on students:
learning and teaching in HE,
including the learning environment and links to research and innovation

For inspiration

1.1 policy for quality assurance standard

„Institutions **should have** a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.“

Project IQAT – Uzbekistan

Sharing experience from Europe: Spain

- To make strong efforts in raising the awareness on the importance of having a solid Quality Culture at national level and that will be then inferred at the institutional one.
- The Quality Culture should be disseminated through all target groups within the university to ensure the commitment of all actors and the understanding that it is a common process that can work and be sustainable with the commitment and contribution of groups
- **To perceive Quality Assurance as an opportunity for continuous improvement, not as an audit.**
- **To exploit already existing tools and processes at institutional level.** The idea of having a Quality Assurance system does not mean to start from the beginning. Exploiting what you already have is an asset and also one factor for success, if exploited adequately.
- **To define, design and implement the internal Quality Assurance system gradually to increase its sustainability.**

Sharing experience from Europe: Slovakia

Why to implement the internal QA system?

- It enables to adjust evaluation indicators/criteria tailored to individual needs of every HEI
- **It enables to look “inside” and better identify challenges, strategic goals, activities to achieve them, responsibilities**
- It enables a larger participation of representatives of the middle and upper management on strategic changes and better communication
- It encourages bottom – up processes in the management of HEIs
- It encourages a communication between management and staff, students and pedagogues

Challenges of internal QA system

- Preparing and implementation of internal QA represent **time consuming processes**, HEIs often don't have enough capacities to provide it
- Monitoring and evaluation of results in internal QA are necessary to follow the QA, HEIs often don't have enough capacities to provide them
- **Results of internal QA processes, reformations and measures following the results are not always popular**
- The internal QA is a **long term process**, it brings visible the positive outcomes after several years, it is not possible to expect that positive changes will come quickly

Sharing experience from Europe: Latvia

- **Building upon the existing system.** The academic process in partner universities is managed according to the national legislation and serves the needs of society of partner countries. Through the project we advise to make such changes in internal quality assurance that are not contradicting the national rules and traditions, but make changes following out of Bologna principles, in particular towards learning outcomes and ESG.
- There are certain rules and principles, that are impossible to change at the moment, e.g., because of restrictions to autonomy of universities in partner countries compared to EU. However, one could be advised to see where there are certain margins allowed and use them to make adjustments that suite the institutions.
- **There are certain chapters in ESG that could be easily introduced without affecting the existing system, and at the same time make it more transparent to partners in EU.** This concerns especially information in the internet about study programmes for general public in national languages and in English.

Czech Example in QA

- ❖ national level focused on accreditation, accountability approach,
- ❖ internal institutional QA systems not sufficiently developed at all HEIs
- ❖ students' evaluation of teaching/teachers frequent, but not visible use of results (see also EUA reports)
- ❖ mobility, ECTS, Diploma supplement – mostly well developed
- ❖ in contrary to recognition of studies/diplomas (Lisbon Convention)
- ❖ well developed information systems at individual HEIs
- ❖ institutional level – not developed at all institutions, changes expected due to new system of accreditation in CZ