Universities and quality development

From Quality Assurance to Quality Culture – an european experience

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From Quality Assurance to Quality Culture –
An european experience

1) Quality at universities
2) Institutional Evaluation Programme of European University Association
3) Bologna Process

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- It is all about quality at universities, the highest level:

- Quality in education

- Quality in research

- Quality in other services to the society

- But quality awareness?

- Quality in work?

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- What is quality?
- One knows always quality when it is there
- Quality has to be measured against standards
- ((But you get always what you measure
- and nothing else?))

- There have to be procedures it is easier
- It is time costly, less teaching and research
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- Quality has to be controlled by the leadership
- Quality has to be a common culture

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- Quality in other spheres: Architecture.

- Churches and cathedrals.

- Quality is: Many pillars and arches with summitry and repetition creates big impressive room

- The same at all places becomes boring

- Quality is also the unexpected:

- The face of a devil behind a pillar

- stone birds at an arch

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- Quality control
- Quality assurance
- Quality Culture
- Creativity in education and research

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- European area of higher education:
- E- four: Universities EUA, polytechnic EURASHE, students ESU and quality assurance agencies ENQA
- Bologna process 3+2+3
- ECTS European Credit Transfer system
- European standards and guidelines
- Learning outcome
- Qualification framework
- Quality Forum
- European register for Quality Assurance Agencies EQAR

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- Who are responsible?
- The university - the president.   BUT
- Governmental control are often a part of daily life (taxpayer used as argument)
- Governmental agencies, takes over?
- Evaluations   Supportive?
- Accreditations Conviction: yes or no
- Rankings   Competition
-                        Programmes/Institutions

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Internal structures, processes and activities:

- A quality awareness and culture at the university
- Students in the programme comities.
- Student questioners.
- Self evaluation reports
- Teacher meetings concerning the development of the program.
- Statistics: drop out - Why? Completion of study.
- Awareness of learning outcome for the students
- Annual quality report from each study program

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Internal structures, processes and activities2

- Responses from the labour market, but they are looking for actual needs, the university for the needs of future.

- Information flows: Students, staff and leadership

- Numbers of scientific publications, Citation index.

- Services to society

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- ## Create an organisation:
- The duty of the President   =?   Quality officers
- The duty of the head of department
- Involvement of staff and students
- Fora for exchange of experiences
- ## External support:
- Other universities
- Rectors conference
- Quality assurance agencies ???

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Institutional Evaluation Programme

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- EUA institutional evaluation programme
- An international perspective
- Pear review
- Critical but supportive
- Evaluated 300 European universities and other institutions of higher education (polytechnics, art schools, police and military academy) since 1994.
- 8 university systems
- Universities in South America, Africa, Middle East and Japan.

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- 4 key questions:
- What is the university trying to do?
- How is the university trying to do it?
- How does the university know it works?
- How does the university change in order to improve?

    Capacity to change or strategic capacity

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- Methodology of EUAs evaluation program:
- Universities should themselves ask for an evaluation
- 1.steep: Self evaluation with help of a template
- 2.steep: First visit. Team: 3 peers, a student, a secretary
- 3.steep: Coordinating notes among the evaluation team
- 4.steep: Second visit by the team
- 5.steep: This is finalised with an oral evaluation report
- 6 steep: A written evaluation report
- 7 steep: A follow up visit, if the university ask for it

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1.IEP Distinctive features (1)

- Main objective: to strengthen institutional autonomy and strategic capacity

- Based on *fitness for purpose* but also examines *fitness of purpose* (does the institution have a realistic strategic plan given its resources, etc?)

⇒No single definition of excellence linked with the objectives of the institution.

⇒A methodology that is applicable to all types of higher education institutions

1. IEP Distinctive features (2)

- Emphasis on the *self-evaluation* phase – as an opportunity for improving internal quality processes

- Improvement orientation – supporting the institution in developing its strategic goals and internal quality processes

- International: (no national expert on a team)

- Peer review

- The team acts as a mirror for the university

- Not linked to allocation of funds or short-term control function on behalf of public authorities

2. Institutional Evaluation Programme (1)

Focus: Institutional structure and organisation

- Affords a global view of the institution
- Examines its major characteristics, and its vision for future development
- Determines if and how it carries out its mission
- i.e. examines if the institution provides a stimulating, effective and efficient environment for learning, research and service to society.

2. IEP Distinctive Features (2)

- EUA is <u>independent</u> of national agencies or government evaluation programmes

- <u>Strengthens</u> long-term strategic management, organisation of change, <u>capacity for development</u>

- <u>Non-profit</u> approach, geared towards the interests of the university

- <u>Not linked to allocation of funds</u> or short-term control function on behalf of public authorities

- Experts are <u>independent peers, supporting this conception</u> of institutional evaluation.

3. Methodology : Evaluation Guidelines
(1) Procedures

Steps of the Evaluation Process :

| Self-evaluation report by university | Two site visits by evaluation team | Report | Follow-up (optional) |

…20…

3. Methodology : Evaluation Guidelines
(2) Procedures

Self-Evaluation report by Institution :

- Most important step, collaborative work,

- Involves the whole institution

- Organized by institution, following suggested framework,

- Try to analyze the institution's situation and give a fair view on it,

- Try to answer the key questions (and some others ones …)

Base of the work of the evaluation team…

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3. Methodology : Evaluation Guidelines
(3) Procedures

Site Visits Preparation:
- Evaluation team is chosen by IEP 3 current or former rectors or vice rectors + 1 team coordinator, all of them from different countries.

- Evaluation team visits university twice:

  Preliminary visit: 2 days duration

  to understand national and institutional constraints and opportunities; programme established by university

  Main visit: 3 days duration

 to understand strengths and weaknesses and make recommendations; programme established by IEP.

3. Methodology : Evaluation Guidelines (4) Procedures

Site visits : People to meet

- Rector + other members of the rectorate(vice-rector and rector),

- Self-evaluation group,

- Representatives of central staff, international office, financial service, quality management unit, research office, etc.

- Members of Senate/Council of university

- Deans, Academic staff, Administrative and Technical staff,

- Students,

- External stakeholders,

- Visits: Some faculties, special centers

Main purpose of the team: understand the institution …
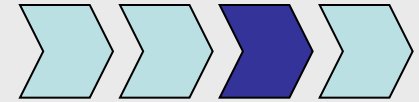
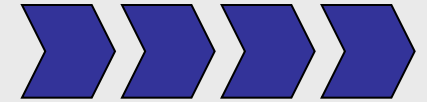# 3. Methodology : Evaluation Guidelines (5) Procedures

Report

Presentation of the conclusions on three occasions:

- To the rector (pre oral report)

- To the larger public at the university (oral report)

- Written report, to whom it might concern.

Hopefully helpful for the institution's improvement…

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3. Methodology : Evaluation Guidelines
(6) Procedures

Role of the Leadership of the University :

- Clarify the responsibilities of the Self-Evaluation Committee towards staff members who are not on the team

- Support and encourage the process along by explaining its significance and mitigating concerns

- Signs on to the evaluation report but has not to agree with every single point

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3. Methodology : Evaluation Guidelines (7)Procedures

Key Success Factors for the Evaluation :

- <u>Address fears</u> and any misunderstanding of the Programme's philosophy

- <u>Involve a cross-section</u> of the HEI from the start to the end of the process

- Focus should rather be on the process (collective task) than on the report

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3. Methodology : Evaluation Guidelines (8)procedure

- **About the teams**
  - European peer review by senior HE leaders:
  - A stable pool that has accumulated a wealth of international experience
  - Annual training focusing on emerging HE trends
  - Involvement of experienced peers from different types of HEIs
  - Teams composed by peers of different countries, none from the country of the evaluated institution.

4. Lessons learned

- A single set of narrowly defined standards for HE is **not desirable** since it clashes with the need to have an innovative and diverse HE sector

- **But** it is important that each institution is clear about its own standards

- **And** that each institution is (externally) evaluated in the context of its standards

- A strong institution is a guarantee of academic freedom for academic staff

- Strong institutional autonomy is linked to the effective development of an internal quality culture

- A strong institutional core, appropriate devolution of responsibilities to faculties, a well thought-out communication strategy and community building are the conditions for an effective institution

4.Lessons learned from EUA activities: First

- There is no single definition of quality or excellence in higher education

→ Contextual definition, based on institutional mission and goals

→ Dialogue and dynamic concept → ongoing development → improvement

- Direct correlation between autonomy and quality culture

- Autonomy and accountability – an important balance

Second-Institutional level: recommendations

- Institutional mission and goals as primary points of reference for all quality processes (fitness for purpose)

- A shared concept of quality among the university community (leadership, students & staff) -> quality culture

- Continuous improvement, and support (rather than a penalty culture), as the main purpose of internal quality measures -> forward looking

- Ensuring effective feedback loops on outcomes of quality processes (follow-up) and communication to the university community

- Complement internal quality processes with external elements -> institutional audits

Third-National level: recommendations

- Ensure independence of the expert panels
- Be wary of standards, criteria, checklists and quantitative methods because
  – They do not grasp the complexity of HE and research
  – They risk stifling further development and institutional diversity
- Analyse the impact of evaluations in order to improve them:
  – Avoid costly procedures => cost/benefit analysis is essential (include intangible costs such as stress, loss of morale, etc.)
  – Avoid overly complicated or bureaucratic procedures
- Mindful of the effects of quality measures on creativity and innovation

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Higher institutions of quality al over the world.

Universities themselves has the main role in
quality assurance

Universities should be open to dialogue with
external stakeholders

Key factors:

Leadership, Strategic thinking, Quality culture,
Mission awareness,   Financial and human
resources

5.Universities and quality development

- To remember:

- The role of the president is important:
- Connecting the administration with academia
- To assure human resource development
- To assist and support quality culture
- To secure good quality information systems
- To show that University itself take care of quality
- To promote self evaluation

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Conclusions: QA position

- Key policy goals should be to ensure creative and innovative institutions

- Quality is contextual: its definition must take into account the specific institution and the national context of which it is part.

- Quality assurance should be orientated toward improvement

- There is an inextricable link between institutional autonomy and accountability: the greater the institutional autonomy, the more robust are the internal quality processes and vice versa

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- Key policy goals should be to ensure creative and innovative institutions

- Quality is contextual: its definition must take into account the specific institution and the national context of which it is part.

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- The national and regional associations are essential: they need to negotiate, on behalf of the sector, appropriate quality frameworks

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- The Bologna proces

5.Universities and quality development

- The European Bologna process:
- Bachelors, masters and ph.d.
- Ects: European credit system
- European standards and guidelines
- Learning outcome instead of just curriculum
- The European register for quality assurance agencies EQAR

   Created by EUA, EURASHE, ESIB and ENQA

6.The Bologna Process: Goal

- To create a European higher education area (EHEA) based on international cooperation and academic exchange that will:

  – Facilitate mobility of higher education students and staff

  – Prepare students for future careers and as active citizens of democratic modern society

  – Offer broad access to high quality education based on democratic principles and academic freedom

6.The Bologna Process: Means

- Three-cycle structure to ensure readable and comparables degrees

- National qualifications frameworks (compatible with overarching European framework) that define learning outcomes for the cycles

- Instilling a culture of quality assurance (internal and external) in line with European guidelines

- Recognition of foreign degrees, aided by principles (Recognition Convention) and instruments (Common credits system -*ECTS*-, Diploma Supplement)

6.Bologna Process: Achievements

- Movement for reform across 46 countries, in a relatively short period – over 74% of HEIs said in 2005 that they consider the EHEA necessary & desirable

- Structural reform - enormous progress in the implementation of three cycle degree structures across Europe since 1999

- Flexibility and partnership as principles: with a joint responsibility of all partners for successful implementation

- A voluntary process with no legal obligations and a tiny bureaucracy

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National/institutional implementation & commonly agreed European standards & guidelines

- Three-cycle structure – in the context of an overarching qualifications framework

- Transparency & recognition of qualifications using common tools: ECTS & DS

- Quality enhancement & quality assurance on the basis of the European Standards & Guidelines (ESG)

- Reform of doctoral programmes on the basis of commonly agreed principles

6.Bologna Process: Achievements … but also still much to be done

- Making student-centred learning a reality
  - Using the different Bologna instruments & tools properly: ECTS, Diploma supplement
  - Focus on learning outcomes
  - At national level – developing qualifications frameworks
  - Progression from one cycle to another
- Engaging with society
- Removing obstacles to mobility
- Continued focus on quality – also in response to growing demands for transparency, growth in rankings etc.

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7.Quality: the three levels

- Institutional level:
  - Internal quality – a primary responsibility of the institution
  - Developing and embedding quality culture as a shared value and collective responsibility in institutions
- National/regional level:
  - External processes required by governments, usually initiated by agencies
  - Variety of concepts and procedures (accreditation vs. evaluation; programme vs. institution; standards vs. fitness for purpose)
- European level:
  - European Standards and Guidelines: Quality principles addressed to HEIs and QA agencies
  - European Quality Register of Agencies
  - European Quality Forum

8.Quality assurance: an essential tool for European HEIs - EUA QA activities

- Institutional Evaluation Programme (since 1994):
- Examples of EUA QA projects:
  - Quality Culture (2002-2006)
  - EMNEM- European Masters New Evaluation Methodology – guidelines for internal QA of joint master programmes (2006)
  - Creativity in Higher Education (2006-2007 – 32 institutions in 20 countries) and QAHECA (Quality Assurance for the Higher Education Change Agenda)
  - European Forum for Quality Assurance (2006-)
- E4 cooperation: Policy debates on the European dimension of QA (*European Standards and Guidelines*, register of QA agencies, annual QA forum)
- National and international activities