



EUA

European University Association

EUA's QA activities

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I. EUA QA activities

- Institutional Evaluation Programme
- A number of projects focused on quality (over 300 HEIs involved):
 - ✓ Joint masters and EMNEM
 - ✓ Doctoral Programmes
 - ✓ Quality Culture Project
 - ✓ Creativity Project
- Member of the E4, with ENQA, ESIB and EURASHE:
 - ✓ European standards and Guidelines
 - ✓ Register of QA agencies working in Europe
- Initiator/organiser of the European QA Forum (with the E4)
- Representation on the boards of an increasing number of QA agencies
- Participate in the work of UNESCO, OECD and CHEA International Commission (USA)

II. Institutional Evaluation Programme

- 12 years in existence
 - About 150 institutions in 36 countries, including several country-wide evaluations
 - Conceived as a strategic tool to bring about institutional change
 - Improvement oriented
 - 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
 - Emphasise the *self-evaluation* phase (as an opportunity for improving internal quality processes)
 - Member of ENQA and INQAHEE
- => Gives grounding and legitimacy to EUA QA position**

III. The growing importance of internal quality processes

- With launch of quality culture project, EUA operated a **paradigm shift** => On QA issues the point of departure is a robust internal quality culture and not external processes
- Quality culture project
 - ✓ About 130 HEIs from 30 countries in the three rounds
 - ✓ Working on a specific theme, in small groups of about 8 institutions, following a template
 - ✓ Projects outputs: institutional action plans, network reports, project report

II. The growing importance of internal quality processes

- The QC project title: The signpost of a philosophy and a method

A carefully-chosen title: Quality culture vs. Quality control or Quality management

- To indicate:
 - The importance of a change in attitudes and behaviours within the institutions
 - The importance of a grass-root development of quality rather than a top-down approach

II. The growing importance of internal quality processes

Project conclusions:

- The integral causal link between strong **institutional autonomy** and the effective development of a quality culture
- The importance of a grass-roots development
- The link between quality development and appropriate **financial and human resources**, including staff development schemes
- The need to avoid the bureaucratisation of QC (i.e., proper staffing of QC unit)

II. The growing importance of internal quality processes

Project impact:

- On the **European QA Community**: An increased recognition that quality culture is key to improving quality levels
- On **Berlin and Bergen Communiqués**: Ministers recognised that “ the primary responsibility for QA in HE lies with each institution itself”
- On **participating institutions** through their individual action plan. These types of processes exist now in a growing number of institutions (Trends V and European QA Forum show progress in commitment)

III. Creativity Project

- A way to draw attention that creativity must be at the centre of QA processes:
=> QA must be less retrospective, less quantitative
- more evaluative and enhancement oriented

IV. Conclusions: EUA's 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
- The national and regional associations are essential: they need to negotiate, on behalf of the sector, appropriate quality frameworks