

Strategic planning of quality assurance in European higher education institutions

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Quality assurance in European HEI - Context

Why strategic planning of quality assurance?

Meaning and purpose of quality assurance changes!

Quality assurance in European HEI - Context

Why strategic planning of quality assurance?

The development of the QA in Europe

Quality assurance in European HEI – Context

Growing importance of quality assurance in higher education since 1980ies because of

the emergence of obvious quality problems in the provision of higher education, due to the transition of universities and colleges to providers of mass higher education,

the increasing pressure for accountability as a result of a deregulation process furthering the autonomy of the higher education institutions.

Quality assurance as response

dealing with quality problems
demonstrating accountability

Quality assurance in European HE - Context

1994/95 Development of the 4-stage-model: (autonomy and independence in terms of procedures and methods concerning quality evaluation; self-assessment; external assessment by a peer-review group and site visits, and publication of a report)

'Quality Assessment in the Field of Higher Education', European Commission

2005: Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area, which are: "designed to be applicable to all higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies in Europe, irrespective of their structure, function and size, and the national system in which they are located."

Bologna Process, Bergen Communiqué, 19 Mai 2005

Common understanding of quality assurance, although the quality assurance systems and procedures vary.

Quality assurance in European HE – Current state

Today, after 15 years of developing QA:

Methodology of QA in Europe is well developed, main approaches

Accreditation

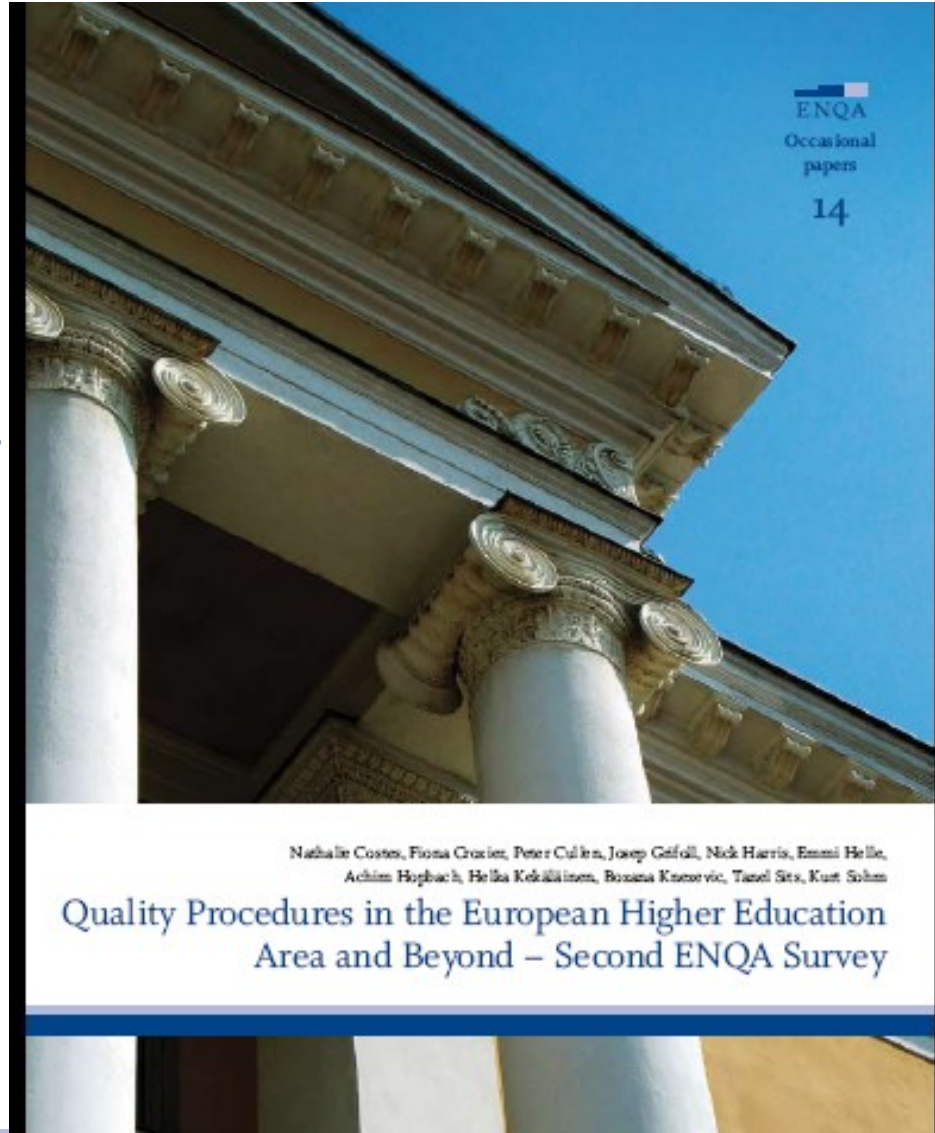
(mainly programme oriented)

Evaluation/audit

(often institutional oriented)

Serve the different purposes of QA:

Enhancement/Accountability



Why strategic planning of quality assurance?

The changing purpose of QA

From quality assurance to higher education management

**Two major developments in European HE:
HE and thus, HEI develop increasingly diverse:**

- **Diverse expectations from society**
- **Diverse expectations from employers**
- **Diverse expectations from a diversifying student population**

**lead to diversification of mission, profile, strategy of HEI
and of their provision of teaching**

**Competition becomes a major driving force in HE. HEI
increasingly compete for**

- **funds**
- **students**
- **reputation**

From quality assurance to higher education management

Impact on quality in HE and on Quality Assurance

In a changing environment of HEI proven quality becomes a core success factor for HEI

Some quality criteria:

- completion rates/placement success
- research output
- acquisition of third party funds
- effectiveness/efficiency in financial terms
- Number of nobelprices/other awars

Bologna Process: Quality is at the heart of setting up the European Higher Education Area

From quality assurance to higher education management

Impact on quality in HE and on Quality Assurance

In a changing environment of HEI quality assurance becomes a strategic management tool for the institutions in addition to the mainly intrinsic strive of the teachers for high quality

Thus:

Quality assurance becomes integral part of „regular“ management of HEI

Response of HEI: Quality assurance as strategic tool

Given the diversification and competition, thus the wider purpose of quality assurance, strategic planning of HEI starts with with the most famous question:

What is quality?

- Quality as fitness for purpose
- Quality as compliance (zero errors)
- Quality as customer satisfaction
- Quality as excellence
- Quality as value for money
- Quality as enhancement (process of changing the institution)
- Quality as control (punitive/rewarding process of quality assurance)

Response of HEI: Quality assurance as strategic tool

In the context of the increased diversification of higher education institutions across Europe definitions of quality are culturally sensitive. Quality is a relative concept. There is no proper one-size-fits-all approach.

Bologna Process: Prime responsibility for quality lies with HEI!

Response of HEI: Quality assurance as strategic tool

Since quality is a relative concept, quality assurance takes as its point of departure the mission and the objectives of a specific institution and recommend improvement in order to achieve the set goals.

- Mission
- Definition of quality
- Definition of institutional goals
- Definition of quality goals
- Institutional strategy
- Embedded strategy of quality assurance

Thus: There's no blueprint!

Response of HEI: Quality assurance as strategic tool

From QA towards quality oriented HE management/linking QA processes to other core processes of HE Management:

- **Strategic development plan of HEI translated into**
- **Allocation of resources**
- **Recruitment policies/procedures**
- **Design/Provision of programmes**
- **...**
- **Management structures and processes with clear responsibilities**

Strategy...

Planning...

Management...

Strategy...

Planning...

Management...

But

Quality Assurance is not only/not even in the first place about management. HEI are not industrial production sites; the teaching and learning process is not a standardized industrial production process

Quality cannot be decreed!

Quality evolves through participation of everybody involved in teaching and learning; quality, thus, needs a quality culture

**Management and Culture are two sides of the same medal:
Quality assurance as management issue
Quality Culture as institutional response**

Thank you for your attention

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