Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programmes in Germany

Accreditation Council

Trends in Quality Assurance in Europe:

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), part 1

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ESG - history

- Commissioned by ministers in Berlin in 2003
- drafted by ENQA in consultation with EUA, EURASHE and ESU
- approved by the Bologna ministerial conference in Bergen in 2005

ESG 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.”

➢ **Common understanding of quality assurance**

ESG - structure

ESG consist of

- ESG for internal QA within HEIs (Part 1)
- ESG for the external QA of higher education (Part 2)
- ESG for external QA agencies (Part 3)

‘Standards’ in this context are not meant to imply ‘standardi-sation’ or ‘requirements’, ‘standards’ are statements of basic good practice; they are short and general

‘Guidelines’ are meant as illustrations of the standards in action; they provide additional information and explain why the standards are important

What the ESG ARE:

- **Generic, not specific, standards and guidelines**
- **A view of what should be done, not how it should be done**
- **A source of assistance and guidance**

What the ESG are NOT:

- **Prescriptive**
- **A checklist**
- **A compendium of detailed procedures**
- **A European quality assurance system**

ENQA

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

Part 1

ESG Part 1 as core of quality assurance in HE

Berlin Communiqué, 19 September 2003:

"Consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the **primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution** itself and this provides the bases for real accountability of the academic system within the national quality framework."

ESG Part 2

Standard 2.1Use of internal quality assurance procedures:
"External quality assurance procedures should take into account the **effectiveness of the internal quality assurance** processes described in part 1 of the ESG."

1.1 Policy and procedures for quality assurance

Standard:

Institutions should have a **policy** and associated **procedures** for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards.

They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality.

The strategy, policy and procedures should have a **formal status** and be publicly available. They should also include a role for students and other stakeholders.

1.1 Policy and procedures for quality assurance

Guidelines:

…

The policy statement is expected to include:

- the relationship between teaching and research in the institution;
- the institution's **strategy** for quality and standards;
- the **organisation** of the quality assurance system;
- the **responsibilities** of departments, schools, faculties and other organisational units and individuals for the assurance of quality;
- the **involvement of students** in quality assurance;
- the ways in which the policy is implemented, monitored and revised.

…

1.2 Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards

Standard:

Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards.

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Guidelines:
The confidence of students and other stakeholders in higher education is more likely to be established and maintained through effective quality assurance activities which ensure that programmes are **well-designed**, **regularly monitored** and **periodically reviewed**, thereby securing their continuing relevance and currency.

1.3 Assessment of students

Standard:

Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.

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Guidelines:
Student assessment procedures are expected to:

- **be designed appropriately** (measurement of achievements; fit for purpose)
- **be fair** (clear criteria, 4-eyes-principle)
- **be subject to administrative verification**

1.4 Quality assurance of teaching staff

Standard:

Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so. They should be available to those undertaking external reviews, and commented upon in reports.

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Guidelines:
Institutions should
- consider teachers' competencies in their staff recruitment and appointment procedures
- give staff opportunities to develop their teaching capacity
- have the means to remove them from their teaching

1.5 Learning resources and student support

Standard:
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Guidelines:
…
Institutions should routinely monitor, review and improve the effectiveness of the support services available to their students.

1.6 Information systems

Standard:

Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities.

1.6 Information systems

Guidelines:

Institutional self-knowledge is the starting point for effective quality assurance. …Without this they will not know what is working well and what needs attention, or the results of innovatory practices.

The information system is … expected to cover:

- student progression and success rates;
- employability of graduates;
- students' satisfaction with their programmes;
- effectiveness of teachers;
- profile of the student population;
- learning resources available and their costs;
- the institution's own key performance indicators.

1.7 Public information

Standard:
Institutions should regularly publish up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards they are offering.

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Guidelines:
In fulfilment of their public role, higher education institutions have a responsibility to provide information about the programmes they are offering, the intended learning outcomes of these, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and ssessment procedures used, and the learning opportunities available to their students.
…

ESG key features

Quality policy

Formal status

Monitoring of programmes

Assessment of students

Quality of staff/resources

Information system

Publicity

No procedures, no blue print!

Stock taking report 2009

"While the implementation of external quality assurance is proceeding at a rapid pace, development of internal quality assurance (QA) systems at HEI s is progressing more slowly, especially because in some countries the internal QA systems are still thought to amount only to writing a self-assessment report for external review. As regards fulfilling Part I of the ESG on internal quality assurance, there has been good progress in some of the areas that have been established in HEI s for a long time, such as internal approval of programmes and publication of information."

Thank you for your attention!

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