



organ für akkreditierung und qualitätssicherung
der schweizerischen hochschulen

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Internal Quality Assurance at Higher Education Institutions. Requirements and Good Practices

Notes taken during the Workshop led by FINHEEC

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1 Present state in the light of European standards

1.1 Homework

1.1.1 Representatives of higher education institutions including students: Come up with one sentence that captures the current state of internal quality assurance in your home institution

We make an effort to correlate QA with the outputs. It means that our Internal QA system seek to be useful, simple and helpful, for the researchers as well (QA of Research is to be taken in higher consideration).

From teaching evaluation to faculties self-evaluation. The gentle spreading of quality culture.

Our quality culture is based on the active commitment of all the employees and students of the institution.

Our institution should further develop course evaluations, although the collaborators (professors) oppose the publication of results. This could be a good start for internal QA.

At present, knowledge and practices of quality assurance and quality development at our institution are uneven, and there is a need to bring the various efforts into a common fold. The new institution directorate initiated a quality assurance and quality development strategy to strengthen structures, introduce a systematic and regular use of QA-instruments that would lead to a common quality culture.

At the present state of affairs concerning our quality system, our institution has a good foundation; this means that sustainable quality improvement is possible with our three instruments (reporting, evaluation of academic units and of course evaluation), but they need to be linked the one with each other to reach a real quality culture and for this we need an appropriate communication strategy.

We are about to start the development of a Quality Management System for our institution.

We have the tools in our institution to build up an internal QA system and eventually obtain an accreditation, but we don't fully exploit them and not yet in the right perspective. Students are participating, they have a voice but their points of view are not enough taken into consideration. There are questionnaires about the quality of teaching and learning outcomes but there is no feedback on these evaluations. There is no transparency on the results of the questionnaires and on what they are used for.

A lot of work, a lot of attention, too little credit: how can we make them (everybody) to like us?

Since two years we are pursuing quality excellence throughout systematic reporting and ad hoc projects, implementing strategies and processes, looking forward to national decisions of accreditation for schools of applied sciences.



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Our institution undertakes QA activities widely but not systematically, depending on individual problems encountered.

Internal QA is strategically developed, implemented and accepted. A big emphasis is given on the quality of teaching.

Our internal QA system can be described by the following metaphor: pieces of puzzle waiting on the table for players. Our processes aim to risk reduction.

Our goal is to implement different processes, taking into account different needs and reduce tension between those needs.

We have undergone accreditation by AACSB, Equis and OAQ! Our QA system is therefore quite developed.

We have not developed any system of quality assurance yet, but we realise its importance.

Quality assurance should create a culture inside the institution by promoting a permanent, reflective approach of quality and by sharing the responsibilities within the university community. We have developed a bottom-up system to define quality and the processes to assure it and we have incorporated it into the strategic management plan.

Quality is an endless process: we know that there is much more to get to know and to learn and to implement.

QA at our institution is at the very beginning. Everything still needs to be implemented.

As for external evaluation, ministers of cantons regulate teaching education and they set up minimal criteria that have to be fulfilled. As for internal QA, we have built up a system coordinated by a working group; the conditions come from outside but their implementation is decided internally. Our aim is to be integrated into the Swiss accreditation system.

We have an operational QA-system in place since 2001.

Fragmented process with little institutional visibility and poor leadership, no common framework

Real wish from the part of the Direction to collaborate with every part of the institutional staff to improve the system, but there is a great lack of transparency and lack of feedback

QA is considered as an external imposed obligation, both cost- and time-consuming and of little benefit for the institution

We have applied internal evaluation procedures since several years. They take into account the quality of study programmes, the individual teaching staff performances, the quality of research as well as the student learning and support services, with clear assignation of responsibilities and related tasks. Nevertheless, all those processes of monitoring, reviewing and improving the institution performances in each sector are not supported by formally stated quality assurance

policies. Moreover, the institution strategy for the enhancement of quality is not formalized in a written public statement

We are working to establish an internal QA as well as a framework for strategic development.

Internal QA is on the move, in a fragmented way, using some electronic methods, but we have not yet closed the loop in acting on feedback.

The QA system looks more like a puzzle at the moment, always on the move. A quality culture exists but it is not necessarily related to an operative quality organisation.

We are progressively working towards the achievement of a shared quality culture and the implementation of an internal framework of quality assurance policies and procedures (in a challenging environment!).

We are building up a stronger quality assurance system in order to be able to pass the next OAQ audit in 2007.

Our institution is working with a spectrum of attitudes, which are evolving from those in discovery mode to those with an active focus on continuous improvement through the adoption, and adaptation of good QA principles.

There are many quality initiatives at our institution, but they are not linked together.

In the Swiss Education Group, quality is assured through student-orientated processes but communication between schools, employees and students needs to be improved.

Students participate in internal committees but not in external ones. Our institution is conducting experimental programs in cooperation with our regional QA agency in order to further include the students in external QA processes.

1.1.2 Representatives of quality assurance agencies and others: Come up with one sentence that captures the current state of internal quality assurance at higher education institutions in your country

Accreditation of universities and programmes can be facilitated by the introduction of a QA culture. Follow up mechanisms may be the key to QA.

From now on, the law establishes that all new official degrees will have to be evaluated compulsory with accreditation purposes.

Universities were for a long time hostile towards a coordinating approach from outside; they have therefore started quite recently with the implementation of internal QA processes.

A long and pragmatic tradition of quality assurance in teaching, research and services.

Internal quality assurance systems in HEIs are extremely diverse, reflecting the diversity of each institution.



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There is a strong general awareness about the relevance of QA for development purposes, and institutions use a broad set of QA tools, although without a systematic approach.

Important differences between universities in implementing quality assurance measures still exist, but there is some room for improvement. Quality assurance should be implemented as a culture and not as an examination.

Higher Education Institutions declare that an Internal Quality Assurance system is established, but it needs much more acceptance by the academics and heavy internal improvements.

All universities are immersed in the process of establishing an internal quality culture and have progressively presented their readiness for voluntary evaluation. The process involves self-evaluation of the programmes followed by external evaluation. The objective is quality improvement.

From an outside point of view QA is a very new topic for HEIs that have to find their own way.

After two years under our agency's audit regime HEIs seem increasingly aware of the obligation to build up a quality system as a useful tool in administration and management. The whole process is not anymore perceived merely as an additional burden.

There is very good will from the majority of the institutions to fulfil the international requirements and the whole set of new standards, although unaware and therefore suspicious about the "consequences" of non-compliance.

In technological institutions we follow the "EFQM" model of evaluations. There are no examples of strong QA systems. A big general weakness is that professors focus much more on research than on quality teaching.

Each institution has good internal QA processes, although not enough integrated at the Board level because of institutional autonomy. They undergo a quality review every few years.

We are quite a new QA agency, beginning the development of processes of external and internal quality activities.

In the European region there is a convergence in terms of the understanding of a quality culture and the need to develop it within institutions as a grass roots movement; however, developments are still uneven across Europe in terms of implementation.

There are many institutions with many different ways of QA implementation mechanisms.

Internal QA is a very young concept. HEIs need assistance to build up QA mechanisms.

The Institution's response to the national QA demands has been generally positive. However HEIs are in different situations when it comes to operating their QA systems effectively and getting results.

According to the law, our institutions of applied sciences are obliged to have an internal quality assurance system and most of them have implemented it, some better, some worse. It is an ongoing process.

The situation is under development. At present two different systems are used: process-oriented and outcome-oriented QA systems. Three institutions are experimenting the web based information model, developed as a research effort (not officially adopted) and sponsored by our national evaluation agency. At the same time we have undergone the so-called CAMPUS-ONE evaluation (standing rectors conference). The information model is a synthetic, outcome-oriented, internal QA-tool, whereas CAMPUS-ONE is an analytic, process-oriented, internal and external evaluation tool.

QA is relatively new and has to be improved, mainly through the benchmarking with other (European, International) countries and systems.

QA systems are introduced internally within HEIs at every level; at the same time external quality standards are required from the government, leading to programme accreditation.

Many models exist (EFQM, ISO, EQUIS etc) which can be chosen to suit an institution's need. For example at the level of administration they tend to choose ISO, whereas EFQM fits better the management level.

For our institutions QA is a matter of fact rather than faith: it is considered a natural process rather than an enforced one.

The internal QA is not yet well developed and significant progress is still needed. There is reluctance to accept the benefits of QA.

Internal QA processes are well developed within institutions but improvements are needed in certain recently identified key areas, particularly in the areas of linkage with strategic planning and in student evaluation of the quality of teaching.

QA is highly autonomous, rather uneven in practice, and under development and clarification.

1.2 Group discussion: what are the main concerns relating to internal QA?

1.2.1 HEIs' lack of readiness for innovation, adaptation, change, flexibility, sustainability

It is more difficult to measure the capacity of adaptation than to evaluate steady-state processes. As HEIs did to adapt to the Bologna process, it is important to set up mechanisms enabling to remodel, support and implement the reform agenda, including less radical changes.

A challenge is to avoid the risk of becoming "system-blind".

Another challenge is to develop ad hoc QA policies for different faculties (or any sub-body of a HEI), thus being fully integrated into an overall institutional strategy.

How to make existing mechanisms coherent with ongoing international procedures? And how to integrate the national framework into the internal QA system?

There is a slight fear that the whole system might collapse due to “review fatigue”: carefulness in finding sustainable procedures!

1.2.2 Lack of QA institutional short/medium/long term strategy

The effectiveness of an institutional QA strategy is largely dependent on its full integration and coherence with planning, policies, procedures, implementation and feed-back.

QA instruments should be fully integrated and in line with the institutional mission. Evaluations are useless if they are not incorporated into a specific strategy involving all levels of the institution.

The impact on quality has to be assessed in different terms (short, medium or long) according to the parameters taken into account.

1.2.3 Difficulty in making an effective utilisation of the results including the implementation of follow-up measures

What activities follow of the results of an evaluation? How to implement the follow-up recommendations? A clear solution therein is to link these mechanisms with transparency and with the overall institutional long-term quality strategy.

1.2.4 Transparency and publication of all results

The process must be fair and transparent to all actors in the system, also in order to avoid a misuse of the results.

Quality measures and their results -including all reports- should be published, otherwise the information might leak out in an uncontrolled way.

1.2.5 Difficulty in finding a balance between the resources invested and the impact on quality

Where is all this leading and at what price? Is all this effort really leading to an improvement in the pedagogy and the learning?

A link is missing between assurance and compliance.

There are different QA models available: EFQM (management), ISO (Administration): how to incorporate them in a single strategy and how to assess their effective impact on quality?

Hard to balance the ratio between achieved quality and costs, especially for long-term results. Moreover: how to assess long-term developments? Some parameters are very difficult to measure, such as the improvement of student employability or learning outcomes.

1.2.6 Limited resources

It is hard to combine external with internal requirements and realise something concrete, measurable and useful with limited resources. Moreover there is a lack of quality experts within the institutions, in other words qualified resources that could catalyse the efforts made at all levels and canalize them into the institutional internal QA strategy.

QA and quality development need human and financial resources. A challenge is to optimize the deployed resources in order to avoid loss of time and money.

The disparity due to different financial resources (and different starting conditions for the settlement of an internal QA system) might increase the gap between top-quality HEIs and other HEIs.

1.2.7 Lack of a quality culture within the institution

QA fails if it does not become an everyday-mode-of-operation rather than a mere response to an external obligation. It is essential for the institution to transform an external duty into internal commitment. If quality is treated as a separate function the focus on quality may become a distraction from the core activities of research and education.

Having common principles shared in the institution is a crucial ingredient for the development of an institutional quality culture. It will contribute to the building of trust among all actors involved and consequently between the HEI and the external stakeholders.

Hands should not be bound: the HEI directorate should facilitate the building of a quality culture. The QA system should not only focus on teaching and research, but on services and lifelong learning as well, perceiving the institution as micro-universe mirroring the whole society.

1.2.8 Involvement of all levels in the internal QA process

The structure created in a HEI to initiate a quality culture must reach all levels of the institution, because if some people do not feel involved in quality processes, quality will not become a common mission. Moreover, when only a few actors are involved in the process there is a higher risk of misuse of power for controlling or marketing purposes.

Not only the top management and the students should be involved, but also senior academics, lecturers, trainers, researchers, the faculty, the departments, the administrative staff. A challenge is let it be perceived as an everyday commitment rather than an extra burden.

All these bodies should be linked with effective optimized and canalized communication. A central QA unit (or, worse, a single person!) should therefore not take up all responsibilities but simply coordinate and link together everyone's work in the quality process.

How to convince academic staff and the faculties of the advantages of the process?

1.2.9 Carefulness with regards to the increase of bureaucracy

Too much bureaucratisation and overload of control mechanisms do not have real consequences for educational improvement of quality. When the internal QA processes are embedded, it is important to be alert to the dangers of bureaucracy and to define the minimum requirements therein.

A challenge is to find the right way to avoid the multiplication of procedures. For instance, how are internal and external procedures combined? How to be sure that the recommendations at all levels are implemented without duplications? The development of an internal QA process should never be wasted in the name of the external reporting. The two activities should have common objectives and be compatible.

1.2.10 Legal enforcement versus institutional autonomy

Will the future laws and political situation change the Swiss scenario in a binding way? QA is often viewed rather as an external controlling tool rather than a chance for improvement.

It is essential to respect the autonomy of the institution in the choice of the method and the tools for the implementation of QA processes.

1.2.11 Increase of exposure to market competition

Are QA policies too much market oriented? There is a substantial traditional difference between public and private institutions and the latter might be advantaged by a long-lasting market oriented approach built up to respond to customer pressure and to guarantee customer satisfaction. The problem is that students enrolled in public institutions do not feel customers but partners and the education is not merely perceived as a service but rather as a right.

1.2.12 Lack of a sound methodology for comparison

QA seems to be an international “deal”. There is an increasing need of benchmarking with other countries and other systems in order to learn, improve and develop QA strategies fulfilling international requirements and enabling easier processes towards mutual recognition of degrees.

2 Identifying challenges and filling the gaps

2.1 Standards and guidelines

2.1.1 ENQA 1.1 - Policy and procedures for quality assurance

2.1.1.1 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.

2.1.1.2 Guidelines

Formal policies and procedures provide a framework within which higher education institutions can develop and monitor the effectiveness of their quality assurance systems. They also help to provide public confidence in institutional autonomy. Policies contain the statements of intentions and the principal means by which these will be achieved. Procedural guidance can give more detailed information about the ways in which the policy is implemented and provides a useful reference point for those who need to know about the practical aspects of carrying out the procedures.

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.

The realisation of the EHEA depends crucially on a commitment at all levels of an institution to ensuring that its programmes have clear and explicit intended outcomes; that its staff are ready, willing and able to provide teaching and learner support that will help its students achieve those outcomes; and that there is full, timely and tangible recognition of the contribution to its work by those of its staff who demonstrate particular excellence, expertise and dedication. All higher education institutions should aspire to improve and enhance the education they offer their students.

2.1.1.3 What has to be done in order to fulfil the standard?

To define:

- Relationship between teaching and research
- Institution's strategy

To be done

- Create a quality assurance system
- Define people and bodies in charge of QA
- Involve students in the definition of the way teaching is evaluated and by their presence in the governing bodies
- Create a "reasonable" book of practice (manual)

What is missing: something related to

- Resources
- Administrative staff
- Environment level (regions/country/EU)

2.1.2 ENQA 1.2 - Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards

2.1.2.1 Standard

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

2.1.2.2 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.

The quality assurance of programmes and awards are expected to include:

- development and publication of explicit intended learning outcomes;
- careful attention to curriculum and programme design and content;
- specific needs of different modes of delivery (e.g. full time, part-time, distance-learning, e-learning) and types of higher education (e.g. academic, vocational, professional);

- availability of appropriate learning resources;
- formal programme approval procedures by a body other than that teaching the programme;
- monitoring of the progress and achievements of students;
- regular periodic reviews of programmes (including external panel members);
- regular feedback from employers, labour market representatives and other relevant organisations;
- participation of students in quality assurance activities.

2.1.2.3 What has to be done in order to fulfil the standard?

Increase the focus on the outcomes: defining explicit goals and design the study programmes from the perspective of targets that should be achieved. Programmes must be published.

All processes must be clearly designed and responsibilities clearly defined.

Usually programmes are designed for full-time students, everything else is individual and exceptional: further development is needed. The learning process should be clearly designed and the needs of learning resources identified.

Legal and political processes must exist in order to define who has the right/power to check the contents (professional bodies, accreditation procedures, evaluations). Identify persons or bodies responsible for the assurance that contents of well-designed programs are conform to existing guidelines.

Collect data and set up monitoring tools.

Define structure and set standards for reviews.

Pay more attention to students' integration by way of informing them (information disseminated by the teachers as well as by the student groups; proactive process).

Identify target professional roles, key competences (for each target role) for the definition of learning outcomes and the instruments to measure them. – Development coherence

Give incentives, communicate that there is a benefit in investing on quality.

2.1.3 ENQA 1.3 - Assessment of students

2.1.3.1 Standard

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

2.1.3.2 Guidelines

The assessment of students is one of the most important elements of higher education. The outcomes of assessment have a profound effect on students' future careers. It is therefore important that assessment is carried out professionally at all times and takes into account the extensive knowledge existing about testing and examination processes. Assessment also

provides valuable information for institutions about the effectiveness of teaching and learners' support.

Student assessment procedures are expected to:

- be designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and other programme objectives;
- be appropriate for their purpose, whether diagnostic, formative or 'summative';
- have clear and published criteria for marking;
- be undertaken by people who understand the role of assessment in the progression of students towards the achievement of the knowledge and skills associated with their intended qualification;
- where possible, not rely on the judgements of single examiners;
- take account of all the possible consequences of examination regulations;
- have clear regulations covering student absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances;
- ensure that assessments are conducted securely in accordance with the institution's stated procedures;
- be subject to administrative verification checks to ensure the accuracy of the procedures.

In addition, students should be clearly informed about the assessment strategy being used for their programme, what examinations or other assessment methods they will be subject to, what will be expected of them, and the criteria that will be applied to the assessment of their performance.

2.1.3.3 What has to be done in order to fulfil the standard?

National or regional regulation in addition to own (university) regulation connected to one study program or course, all that should be existent and published.

Transparency is very important: students should clearly be informed and therefore know what the policies are.

Ask the students about the state of accomplishment of this standard: undertake an internal feedback from the actors concerned.

Develop a "culture of fair assessment": not only assessment guidelines should be included in the institution's regulation and enforced. Also, the human dimension should be given the right importance and oral explanations of marks crucial in providing an added value in the feedback given to student's work.

Furthermore, such a culture of assessment should always consider the latest European or international developments therein, and make own regulations compatible with international ones, in order to facilitate student mobility by easing the conversion of marks.

There must be a way or a body where students can discuss assessments and results (like an ombudsman). After a first oral feedback from the professor or lecturer, students should be able to discuss results in an appropriate commission, if needed. Then there should be an institutional administrative court where you can bring your case, in extreme cases. Otherwise there is the National Court as a last chance!

2.1.4 ENQA 1.4 - Quality assurance of teaching staff

2.1.4.1 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.

2.1.4.2 Guidelines

Teachers are the single most important learning resource available to most students. It is important that those who teach have a full knowledge and understanding of the subject they are teaching, have the necessary skills and experience to transmit their knowledge and understanding effectively to students in a range of teaching contexts, and can access feedback on their own performance. Institutions should ensure that their staff recruitment and appointment procedures include a means of making certain that all new staff have at least the minimum necessary level of competence. Teaching staff should be given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching capacity and should be encouraged to value their skills. Institutions should provide poor teachers with opportunities to improve their skills to an acceptable level and should have the means to remove them from their teaching duties if they continue to be demonstrably ineffective.

2.1.4.3 What has to be done in order to fulfil the standard?

Selection criteria basing on teaching skills for both permanent and non-permanent teaching staff should be clearly established. A full check of competences before recruitment must be undertaken.

Not only the competences in research but also in teaching should be considered when hiring a professor, when promoting him / her.

The incentive given for teaching should be the same as for research. Teaching might be supported by economic incentives as well (*bonus-malus* motivation system).

Questionnaires and reports presented by students on the quality of teaching staff should be considered and receive the necessary feedback.

Improve self-responsibility, awareness of own teaching capacities having full controlling of them.

Methodological and pedagogical training should be offered to “new professors” and up-do-date training made compulsory for all teaching staff.

Show the pieces of evidence that teachers have participated, and participate to development activities in order to promote their life-long learning. Devote part of the budget for QA and improvement opportunities.

Divert some less skilled lecturers (in teaching ability only) from basic courses to specialization courses, addressing to senior students on a higher level.

Establish a “security system for poor teachers”, giving the possibility to the students to express their opinion not only at the end of the academic year, but also during the each course.

Give incentive for improvement to lecturers through exchanges, comparison and benchmarking with other institutions at least at a European level. Promote teaching staff mobility and complementary roles of one local and one foreign teacher for one single course.

2.1.5 ENQA 1.5 - Learning resources and student support

2.1.5.1 Standard

Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered.

2.1.5.2 Guidelines

In addition to their teachers, students rely on a range of resources to assist their learning. These vary from physical resources such as libraries or computing facilities to human support in the form of tutors, counsellors, and other advisers. Learning resources and other support mechanisms should be readily accessible to students, designed with their needs in mind and responsive to feedback from those who use the services provided. Institutions should routinely monitor, review and improve the effectiveness of the support services available to their students.

2.1.5.3 What has to be done in order to fulfil the standard?

First step: Bottom up approach – information about the state of programs that do not have enough resources and assistance

Second step: Top down approach – the annual budget plan each year should correct the situation.

Planning of programs should include an estimation of the costs: financial and human resources.

Information about the use of resources should be included in the process.

Reporting instrument enforced: students should formally report their evaluations.

Moreover an external reviewer might:

- Ask the students on their perception of the learning experience and compare from cohort to cohort over a number of cycles
- Ask the teaching and support staff on their ability to provide the learning experience required (in terms of programme / curriculum requirements)
- Check the adequacy of the resources against what is required – infrastructure, classrooms, laboratories, IT, library, sufficient access (in terms of space and time) etc, as well as the adequacy of the human resources
- Check the adequacy of the systems in place to support students and teachers
- Evaluate results sheets from cohort to cohort, cycle to cycle etc with regards to whether learning has taken place

- Compare institutional / departmental / programme inputs and outputs against national and international standards

Also, institutions should ensure that students are given the opportunities to learn how to learn and use the resources provided in the appropriate way.

2.1.6 ENQA 1.6 - Information systems

2.1.6.1 Standard

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

2.1.6.2 Guidelines

Institutional self-knowledge is the starting point for effective quality assurance. It is important that institutions have the means of collecting and analysing information about their own activities. Without this they will not know what is working well and what needs attention, or the results of innovatory practices.

The quality-related information systems required by individual institutions will depend to some extent on local circumstances, but it is at least 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.

There is also value in institutions comparing themselves with other similar organisations within the EHEA and beyond. This allows them to extend the range of their self-knowledge and to access possible ways of improving their own performance.

2.1.6.3 What has to be done in order to fulfil the standard?

Each institution must be given the possibility to gather all collected or provided data according to its own procedures, compatibly with external requirements. The harmonisation of data gathering processes is therefore undesirable and useless because it does not meet specific institutional policies or particular needs.

To be done:

1. Establish and implement a management information system
2. Produce guidelines for data collection, analysis etc including mechanisms and tools
3. Identify the administrative tasks and functions required to achieve point 2
4. Staff development and training
5. Use data for strategy planning including feedback and communication of processes

2.1.7 ENQA 1.7 - Public information

2.1.7.1 Standard

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

2.1.7.2 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 assessment procedures used, and the learning opportunities available to their students. Published information might also include the views and employment destinations of past students and the profile of the current student population. This information should be accurate, impartial, objective and readily accessible and should not be used simply as a marketing opportunity. The institution should verify that it meets its own expectations in respect of impartiality and objectivity.

2.1.7.3 What has to be done in order to fulfil the standard?

A central way to publish information must be established, privileging web tools (internet / intranet).

All information must be checked and it ought to be exhaustive, user-friendly, impartial and objective.

Transparency must be offered at all levels and information should be available in both paper- and electronic-format.

A specific Information office running all the year should be put in place. Its personnel should be friendly, competent and enough to respond to everyone's need in searching information. It should be equipped with several computers and relevant brochures.