ESG 2015: policy & practice

EQAF, 24 November 2017

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ENHANCING QUALITY THROUGH INNOVATIVE POLICY & PRACTICE

EQUIP Project

Background

- The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), 2nd edition adopted in May 2015

- The EQUIP project aims at Enhancing Quality through Innovative Policy & Practice in European higher education by supporting and promoting a consistent, efficient and innovative embedding of the ESG 2015 at grass-root level.
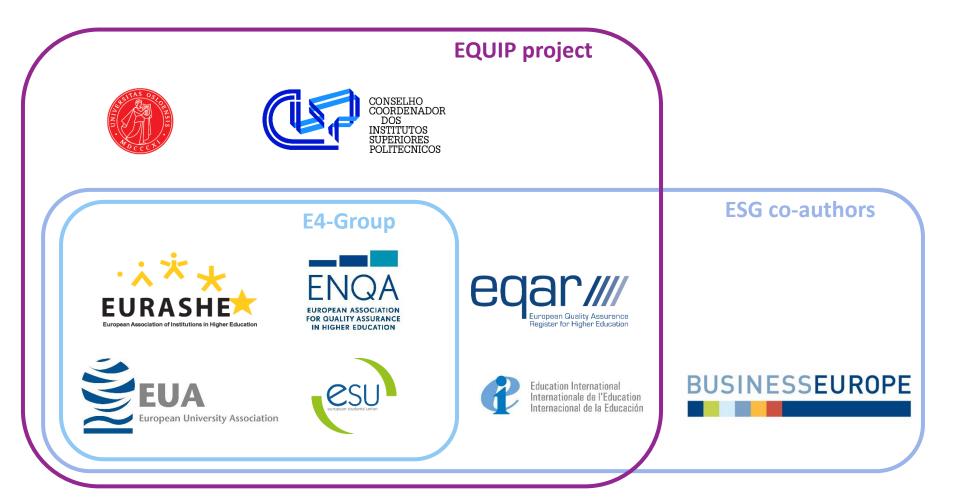
The project will:

- Highlight changes to be made in quality assurance at various levels with a study on implementation challenges, solutions and policy impact;

- Put forward European-level policy recommendations to stakeholder groups to feed into the discussions leading up to the 2018 EHEA Ministerial Conference.

Partners

Test question: your profile

What is your professional profile?

- QA agency staff

- HEI staff

- Student

- Ministry staff

- Other

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Starting point

- QA in context, one tool/process among many
- Diversity of QA approaches and changing landscape
- Impact of the ESG2015?

"stakeholders, who may prioritise different purposes, can view quality in higher education differently and quality assurance needs to take into account these different perspectives. *Quality*, whilst not easy to define, is mainly a result of the interaction between teachers, students and the institutional learning environment."

ESG2015, p. 7

5 key themes

1. **Diversity of external contexts and legal frameworks**
2. **Institutional responsibility for quality**
3. Communication about quality assurance and quality
4. Quality culture vs. bureaucracy
5. Student-centred learning (SCL)

Diversity of external contexts and legal frameworks

- Structure of national HE system including division of labour between different actors

Division of responsibilities

In your system, which of the following are in the remit of the QA agency? (select all that apply)

- Defining aim of EQA

- Developing EQA methodology

- Conducting external review and producing report

- Taking a decision (if applicable)

- Appeals/complaints procedures

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Diversity of external contexts and legal frameworks

- Structure of national HE system including division of labour between different actors

- Tensions between (legal) authorities and QA agencies? What will external QA look like in the future?

Approach to external QA

At which level is external QA carried out in your system? (select one)

- Programme level
- Institutional level
- Both
- Neither

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Institutional responsibility for QA

- Increased emphasis on internal QA: ESG Part1 & shift towards institutional external QA in certain systems

Institutional responsibility for QA

- Increased emphasis on internal QA: ESG Part1 & shift towards institutional external QA in certain systems

- The level of institutional autonomy in the design of internal QA varies, how much guidance is the right amount?

- Two approaches to internal QA
  - aligned with strategic management: QA as a means to support the achievement of institutional goals
  - explicitly linked to defining and assessing the learning outcomes and ensuring these are aligned to the national qualification framework

Approach to internal QA

Which of these approaches to internal QA do you most see in your context? (select one)

- QA aligned with strategic management to support the achievement of institutional goals

- QA linked to defining and assessment learning outcomes and ensuring these are aligned with the national qualifications framework

- A combination of the two

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Conclusions?

These discussions reflect issues that I am dealing with in my daily work. Agree or disagree?

- Strongly agree

- Agree

- Disagree

- Strongly disagree

Conclusions?

- A shared understanding of QA in broad terms and between stakeholder groups, although some differences exist

- Tentative messages
    - Look at the higher education system or institutional management structure as a whole. Do not try and do everything with every tool
    - QA is one tool among others: be clear on its purpose and design the processes accordingly
    - Ensure a legal framework and conditions, including sufficient policies, funding and incentives, to support the educational mission of HEIs

- Risk of doing QA just for the sake of it, or developing systems just to comply with the ESG?

Thank you!

Coming up…

- Brussels Breakfast event: Tuesday 27 February

- Webinar: Wednesday 28 February

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