

Quality assurance in the European higher education Area – recent developments in the higher education landscape

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Towards National Qualifications Frameworks for Jordan, Final Conference

Princess Sumaya University for Technology, 5 March 2019

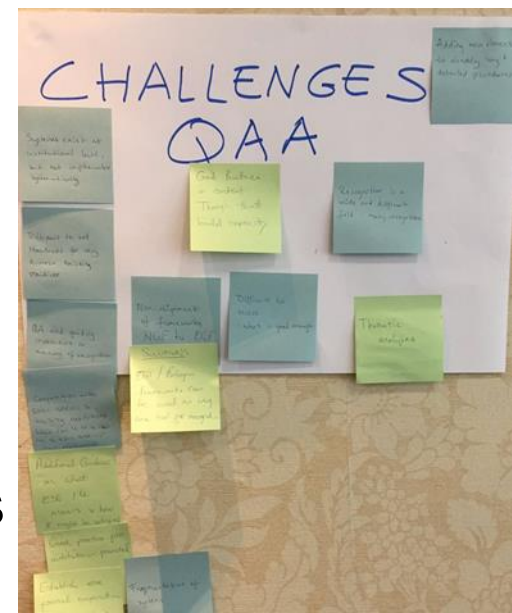
European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

- Umbrella NGO for European quality assurance agencies
- Network in 2000; association in 2004
- Structure: Board, General Assembly, Secretariat
- 53 Members in 29 countries, 57 Affiliates in 31 countries



ENQA's role in the European Higher Education Area

- ENQA aims to have a stronger role in the development of QA ensuring that ENQA supports internal quality assurance and the development of quality culture while the primary responsibility of QA lies with the institutions.
- Policy-body towards the Ministers in education
- A membership organisation



The European Higher Education Area (AREA)

The **Bologna Process** is a series of ministerial meetings and agreements between European countries designed to ensure comparability in the standards and quality of higher education qualifications. Through the **Bologna Accords**, the process has created the [European Higher Education Area](#), in particular under the [Lisbon Recognition Convention](#). It is named after the place it was proposed, the [University of Bologna](#), with the signing of the [Bologna declaration](#) by Education Ministers from 29 European countries in 1999, forming a part of [European integration](#).

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bologna_Process)

The European Higher Education Area (AREA)

As the main objective of the [Bologna Process](#) since its inception in 1999, the European Higher Education Area was meant to ensure more comparable, compatible and coherent systems of higher education in Europe. Between 1999 - 2010, all the efforts of the Bologna Process members were targeted to creating the European Higher Education Area, which became reality with the Budapest-Vienna Declaration of March 2010.

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Higher_Education_Area)

The European Higher Education Area (AREA)

- 48 countries
- Europe is diverse!
- Education policies in Europe based on subsidiarity
- The Bologna Process a voluntary process

Bologna tools

In the last two decades, several instruments have been developed at the European, national, regional and institutional levels:

- The overarching and national qualifications frameworks (QFs)
- Recognition of diplomas (ENIC and NARIC networks)
- Diploma Supplement (DS)
- European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG)

European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)



PART 1. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

PART 2. EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

PART 3. QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES

Main principles for QA in Europe

- **Higher education institutions have primary responsibility** for the quality of their provision and its assurance.
- QA responds to the **diversity** of HE systems, institutions and programmes (as well as of agencies).
- QA supports the **development of a quality culture**.
- QA **involves stakeholders** and takes into account the expectations of all stakeholders and society.

Main principles for QA in Europe

- Standards and guidelines for QA, not quality as such.
- Apply to **all higher education** offered in the EHEA regardless of the mode of study or place of delivery (TNE, e-learning, short courses...).
- Apply to **all types of QA** activities and agencies (quality audits, programme accreditation, institutional assessment...).

Main principles for QA in Europe

- Independence of QA agencies (not parts of the ministry).
- Provides **transparent and independent information** on the quality of HEIs and programmes
→ but is it accessible and easy to use?
- **External and internal QA build on each other** (one is not complete without the other).
- Main purpose always double: accountability **and** enhancement.

EHEA Ministerial Conference – ENQA's messages to ministers:

- Pleased to report solid progress
- External quality assurance systems are practically ubiquitous in the EHEA
- An increased complexity in the structure and functions of the agencies (mergers, added responsibilities..)
- Already created tools need full support from governments (such as the European Approach for the QA of Joint Programmes)

EHEA Ministerial Conference – ENQA's recommendations to ministers:

- To safeguard appropriate levels of autonomy for agencies to operate.
- To support responsible development of cross-border quality assurance.
- To encourage student participation in QA.
- To ensure that regulations allow for full publication of review reports.

What has enabled a successful European-level approach for quality assurance?

- The involvement of all stakeholders from the very beginning (every individual at institutions!)
→ ownership
- Respect for fitness-for-purpose
- Transparency at every step
- Support from national authorities/governments and their mutual dialogue
- Continuous dialogue between all stakeholders
→ building of trust
- Sufficient resources for development, training and **continuity** (should be secured by governments)

What next?

- A shift towards institutional evaluation (from programme accreditation?)
- Discussion on the scope of quality assurance:
 - QA of research
 - Specificities of online provision
 - Societal impact of universities
 - Social inclusion in higher education
 - Sustainability of higher education

EHEA Ministerial Conference – ENQA's messages to ministers:

ENQA envisages an EHEA where all students have access to high-quality education and can achieve qualifications that are recognised worldwide, a goal which is furthered by ensuring that its members work in line with the ESG 2015.

Thank you!

