

Comparative Study on Students Involvement in Quality Assurance

IMPRINT

Comparative Study on students involvement in QA

Co-funded by the European Commission.



Co-funded by the
Tempus Programme
of the European Union

This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

In this publication the name "The European Students' Union (ESU)" is being used to refer to "ESIB - The National Unions of Students in Europe" Belgian asbl BE0890.019.936, due to the fact that both legal entities are going through a merging process. Likewise the visual identity of ESU is being used instead of the one from ESIB.

Author Laura Fedeli (UNIMC)

E-mail address laura.fedeli@unimc.it

Contributors Anush Gasparyan (ANQA); Ella Karagulyan (ANQA); Gohar Hovhannisyan (ANSA); Nerses Gevorgyan (ASUE); Cristi Popescu (ESU); Maria Andronie (SHU); Mihai Andronie (SHU); Iustin Andronie (SHU); Stefan Barbalata (SHU); Florin Fainisi (SHU); Yelena Baytalyan (YSAFA)

Reviewer Simone Betti (UNIMC)

Layout Emily J Fischer

Photo credits ESU, Alexandra Antonescu

Cover image: Shutterstock.com

European Students' Union—ESU

www.esu-online.org

ESPAQ

www.espaq.eu

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREMISE	4
THE STRUCTURE OF THE DELIVERABLE	4
INTRODUCTION	5
THE EUROPEAN OVERVIEW	7
Student participation in Quality Assurance within the Bologna Process: Ministers' commitments	7
State of art as seen by students	9
INPUTS FROM THE DESK RESEARCH	13
Official regulations and external QA agencies	13
Student participation in QA processes and procedures.....	18
ANNEX 1	21
HE Country data: Portugal	21
ANNEX 2	27
HE Country data: Spain	27
ANNEX 3	31
HE Country data: Romania	31
ANNEX 4	37
HE Country data: Serbia	37
ANNEX 5	43
HE Country data: United Kingdom	43
ANNEX 6	47
HE Country data: Belarus	47
ANNEX 7	49
HE Country data: Moldova	49
ANNEX 8	53
HE Country data: Armenia	53
ANNEX 9	57
HE Country data: Georgia	57
ANNEX 10	63
HE Country data: Ukraine	63
ANNEX 11: collection of practices	66
Germany	66
Romania	67
Romania	68
Finland	69
Portugal	70
Serbia	72
Georgia	73
Armenia	74

PREMISE

The present document is the result of a collaborative effort among project partners involved in the work package. The desk research has been managed by the University of Macerata team, but collectively carried out with the contribution of different partners, namely, the *National Center for Professional Education and Quality Assurance Foundation (ANQA)*, the *Armenian National Students' Association (ANSA)*, the *Armenian State University of Economics (ASUE)*, the *European Students' Union (ESU)*, the *Spiru Haret University (SHU)*, the *Yerevan State Academy of fine Arts (YSAFA)*.

The report is meant as a reflection tool in order to highlight consistencies and discrepancies that could help understand the current involvement of students and student associations in quality assurance (QA) in some European countries and to provide an overview of what is happening in Armenia and its neighbouring countries where QA agencies are younger and, in some cases, just born.

The first version of the deliverable has been submitted to a reviewer who is a member of the scientific staff of UNIMC and then disseminated through the project mailing list in order to let every partner share and discuss their comments to improve the quality of the document. The author and contributors, in fact, need to take into consideration the partners' feedback and set the proper changes to the document if needed. A definitive document will be, then, made available and stored in the Alfresco platform, the project document management system.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE DELIVERABLE

The report is organized around three main sections: an overview of the European standards to frame the reference context of the analysis; a discussion section where data, related to the different above mentioned countries and collected through the same formats, are synthesized and briefly commented; the annex area in which the single country data formats are reported along with the different cases of best practices.

Following the rationale of the application and the WP2 work plan, 10 countries were analysed in the desk research: Portugal, Spain, Romania, Serbia, UK, Armenia and its Eastern neighbouring countries (Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus).

Azerbaijan was not included in the analysis since partners involved in the desk research couldn't find relevant available information about the QA system and the HE students' involvement.

Additionally, 8 cases were described containing best practices from 7 different countries: Germany, Romania (2), Finland, Portugal, Serbia, Georgia, Armenia.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of deliverable 2.1, namely “Comparative Study on students’ involvement in Quality Assurance (QA)”, is to build a consistent overview of the current situation in Europe, Armenia and Eastern neighbouring countries (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus).

Participation of students in QA processes is the focus of the study in which the comparative objective is developed around aspects related to both external and internal QA as identified through the wide available literature, such as the existing reports by ENQA,¹ the European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and the documentation published within the activity range of the QUEST project.²

The country level is the privileged context of analysis, but the study will also take advantage of the so called grey literature to identify best practices, projects and innovative events at a more circumscribed level (e.g. Regional) This may imply the involvement of different actors: student associations, project partnerships, etc.

In fact, during the kick off meeting,³ as reported in version 1.0 of the WP2 work plan document, “*the consortium agreed to take as level of analysis the Country level, with the reference Units, but to investigate as case studies also the Higher Institution Level, and the Students level. The case studies will offer an in-depth and not-official view of practices in action, by contributing to a more completed overview of the state of the art of the QA processes implemented in the addressed countries*”.

Student involvement in QA can affect:

- Internal Quality Assurance (IQA): it occurs when the HE institution carries out its own assessment using internal staff to check if policies and procedures, set to ensure quality, meet the standards;
- External Quality Assurance (EQA): it occurs when entities (governmental, para-state or private agencies) carry out the assessment of the HE institution. The process may consist of periodical quality reviews, audits, accreditation grant.

The value and relevance of the processes grouped under the phrase “student participation” will be addressed analyzing their range of action in terms of opportunities and contributions in QA policies and procedures on both administrative and pedagogical/educational dimensions.

The designed formats to collect country data and best practices (Annexes 1-2 disseminated in April 2015 along with the WP2 work plan) aimed at supporting and orientating the desk research.

At IQA level, those tools aim to put forward the potential involvement of students:

- in internal groups/committee in charge of the development of the institution self-assessment (replying to questionnaires; compiling reports; participating in focus-groups/seminars);
- in formal meeting with external evaluators during their periodical visits.

At EQA level, the focus was the verification of the involvement of students:

- in the design and planning of the assessment as members of the committee of the external agencies/bodies;
- as participants in the assessment of the external agency itself.

REFERENCES

¹ The European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

² Quest for Quality for Students (QUEST) website is available at: <http://www.esu-online.org/projects/current/quest/>.

³ The project kick off meeting took place in Yerevan (AM) on 13th-14th February, 2014.

responsibility for higher education and research

Council of Europe Publishing

recognition: the Lisbon Recognition Convention

Council of Europe Publishing

European universities

Council of Europe Publishing

European universities

Council of Europe Publishing

res publica

Council of Europe Publishing

2000-2009-09

... and ...

THE EUROPEAN OVERVIEW⁴

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN QUALITY ASSURANCE WITHIN THE BOLOGNA PROCESS: MINISTERS' COMMITMENTS

Quality Assurance is one of the key elements of the Bologna Process, contributing to building and consolidating trust within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and encouraging a coherent and continuous development of quality of higher education. Even if different stakeholders have different approaches towards Quality Assurance, Bologna Process and EHEA offered an amazing platform of cooperation in this field, harmonising the views and expectations towards what quality in higher education means and what can be done to reach it.

From the early days of Bologna Process, the Ministers responsible for higher education decided that “promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies” is one of the objectives of primary relevance for the first decade. This opened the gates for a closer cooperation between different stakeholders within quality assurance at national and European level, creating the foundation of one of the most efficient reforms of the Bologna Process, as Ministers noted in the following Ministerial Communiqués.

The second official Ministerial Conference held in Prague (2001) kept “promotion of European cooperation in quality assurance” as one of the six objectives of the Bologna Process, giving details about the further actions that need to be done in this area. The Ministers decided to create the Bologna Follow-up Working Group (BFUG), encouraging it to arrange seminars to explore the cooperation concerning quality assurance. The Communiqué stated that National Unions of Students in Europe (ESIB - latter called European Students' Union - ESU), together with other stakeholders, should be consulted by BFUG.

REFERENCE

⁴ This paragraph and related sub-paragraphs are authored by Cristi Popescu who used the following references: Bologna Declaration (1999). Joint declaration of the European ministers of Education convened in Bologna on 19 June 1999; Conference of ministers responsible for Higher Education (2001). Towards the European Higher Education Area. Communiqué of the Conference of ministers responsible for Higher Education in Prague on May 19, 2001; Conference of ministers responsible for Higher Education (2003). “Towards the European Higher Education Area: realising the European Higher Education Area. Communiqué of the Conference of ministers responsible for higher Education in Berlin on September 19, 2003”; Conference of ministers responsible for Higher Education (2005). The European Higher Education Area—Achieving the Goals Communiqué of the Conference of European ministers responsible for Higher Education, Bergen, 19–20 May 2005; Conference of ministers responsible for Higher Education (2007). London Communiqué. Towards the European Higher Education Area: responding to Challenges in a Globalized World; Conference of ministers responsible for Higher Education (2009). The Bologna process 2020—The European Higher Education Area in the new Decade. Communiqué of the Conference of European ministers responsible for Higher Education, Leuven and Louvain-la-neuve, 28–29 April 2009; Conference of ministers responsible for Higher Education (2012). Making the most of Our potential: Consolidating the European Higher Education Area. Bucharest Communiqué (<http://www.ehea.info/Uploads/%281%29/Bucharest%20Communique%202012%281%29.pdf>); Conference of ministers responsible for Higher Education (2015). Yerevan Communiqué, Yerevan, 14–15 May 2015; European Students' Union (2015). Bologna With Student Eyes 2015 – “Time to meet the expectations from 1999”, April 2015.

However, the first direct commitment about student participation in quality assurance was made by Ministers only in 2003, during the Ministerial Conference in Berlin. The Communiqué stated that by 2005 national quality assurance system should include the participation of students, together with other relevant aspects like a definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved in quality assurance, evaluation of programmes and institutions (including internal assessment and external review), a system of accreditation and international participation. The Communiqué made it very clear that “students are full partners in higher education governance”, and have an important role not only in quality assurance, but in all decisions regarding higher education. The Ministers also emphasized the idea that the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies to each institution, which nowadays represents one of the basic principles of quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area. There were changes in the follow-up structures of the Bologna Process as well. Ministers decided to give the title of consultative members to ESU, the Council of Europe, EUA, EURASHE and UNESCO/CEPES. A board of the BFUG was created to oversee the work between the meetings of the BFUG, with one representative of ESU in it, together with other relevant stakeholders.

Another important element of this Communiqué was the call made by the Ministers towards ENQA, in cooperation with EUA, EURASHE and ESU “to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance, to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies or bodies, and to report back through the BFUG to Ministers in 2005”. From 2003 to 2005, until the next Ministerial Conference held in Bergen, the 4 organisations nominated by the Ministers (called the E4 group) worked to shape a common view towards what quality of higher education means and what can be done to reach it and to safeguard it. This process of continuous consultations and agreement meetings resulted in a document called *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG), to which students contributed significantly through ESU, who organised consultations and debates with all of their members who had the chance to give their input to the document. Moreover, the consultations were not organised only at European level, but also at national level.

The ESG were adopted by the ministers in Bergen and contained important references regarding student participation in internal quality assurance processes, in quality assurance agencies, in external peer reviews and in reviews of quality assurance agencies. The Communiqué noted that even if there were important developments made in the area of quality assurance in the Bologna Process participating countries, “there is still progress to be made, in particular as regards student involvement and international cooperation”. The Ministers also welcomed the idea of creating a European register of quality assurance agencies where all the agencies within EHEA who worked in line with the ESG to be listed. They asked that the practicalities of implementation be further developed by E4, where the voice of students was represented again through ESU.

During the next Ministerial Conference in London (2007), the Minister noted the ESG have been a powerful driver of change in relation to quality assurance, underlining the progress made in the external quality assurance and the extent of student involvement at all levels since 2005. However, regarding student involvement it was stated that “improvement is still necessary”. The Ministers took note on the establishment of the Register of European Higher Education Quality Assurance Agencies (later known as EQAR – European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education) and agreed on the operational model proposed by the E4 group, having all four organisations working in partnership within the register. In other words, students were an important part of the development and functioning of EQAR since its very first beginning.

The Ministerial Conference hosted by the Benelux countries in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve in 2009 did not bring any important changes for quality assurance within the Bologna Process. The Ministers saluted the impact that EQAR and ESG had in the development of quality assurance and asked the E4 group to continue its cooperation and to ensure that EQAR is evaluated externally, taking into account the views of different stakeholders. The Ministers also made some clarifications stating that transnational education should also be governed by the ESG as applicable within the EHEA. The Ministers met in 2010 in Budapest and Vienna to launch the European Higher Education Area, as envisaged from the first meeting in 1999 when the Bologna Process was established. With this occasion, Ministers appreciated the unique partnership between public authorities, higher education institutions, students and staff, together with other relevant stakeholders as employers, quality assurance agencies, international organisations and European institutions, which represented the basis for the reforms that have been implemented in order to build the EHEA.

In the Ministerial Conference organised in Bucharest in 2012, the Ministers reaffirmed the importance of quality assurance to build trust and reinforce the attractiveness of EHEA. They acknowledged the report made by the E4 group on the implementation and application of ESG and asked the four organisations, in cooperation with Educational International, BUSINESSEUROPE and EQAR, to work for a revised proposal of ESG. On the same time, Ministers welcomed the external evaluation of EQAR and encouraged quality assurance agencies to apply for registration. A student was part of the evaluation panel of EQAR.

The most recent meeting of the Ministers responsible with higher education was in 2015 in Yerevan, where new commitment regarding student participation in quality assurance was made. The Ministers affirmed they “will actively involve students, as full members of the academic community, as well as other stakeholders, in curriculum design and quality assurance”. This was an important reinforcement of the commitment made in 2003 and a guarantee that students will continue to play an important role within quality assurance in EHEA in the following years. Furthermore, the Ministers reinforced stronger than ever the participation of students in the governance of institutions – “We will support and protect students and staff in exercising their right to academic freedom and ensure their representation as full partners in the governance of autonomous higher education institutions.” A revised version of European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) was adopted by the Ministers, following the proposal of the 7 organisations nominated by them in the previous Ministerial Conference, including the European Students’ Union (ESU). The revised ESG kept the recommendations regarding student participation in quality assurance and emphasizes a more student-centred approach in quality assurance of teaching, learning and assessment. A document regarding the European approach for quality assurance of joint programmes was also adopted.

Even if quality assurance systems are widely different within the EHEA and there are different approaches on what quality of higher education means and how quality assurance developed in the last years, EHEA ministers responsible for higher education agreed from the early stages of the Bologna Process that students play an important role in the development of higher education and need to be full partners within quality assurance processes at all levels. This commitment was followed in all the actions and reforms made in the area of quality assurance within EHEA, where students were involved as full partners through the European Students’ Union.

STATE OF ART AS SEEN BY STUDENTS

Even if numerous commitments and recommendations were made by Ministers within the Bologna Process and, later on, within the EHEA, these were not always reflected in efficient active measures. The Ministers themselves admitted several times within the Ministerial Communiqués that the implementation of reforms is not even within the countries of EHEA and, specifically referring to student participation in quality assurance, that progress is still necessary.

On the other hand, sometimes simple regulations are not enough to ensure a process is being implemented efficiently and there are other factors which can contribute to the success or failure of a reform.

Having these in mind, in order to have a realistic image on the student participation in quality assurance within the Bologna Process we looked into the study launched by The European Students’ Union during the most recent Ministerial Conference in Yerevan – Bologna With Student Eyes 2015, Time to meet the expectations from 1999, which reflects the view of 38 National Unions of Students – reaching from Norway to Malta and Ireland to Armenia, regarding the effectiveness of the implementation of Bologna Process.

Only one of the respondents of the study, namely Belarus, stated that students do not take part in internal quality assurance processes in the country. A significant number of respondents (26 out of 38 national student union) stated that students are formally involved as full members in the bodies of internal assessment processes. The majority (29 out of 38 union) stated that students are involved in providing information and feedback (filling questionnaires, being part of focus groups etc.), while some (one third of the responding unions) said students are actively involved in follow-up processes and only very few said students are involved in drafting and implementing the recommendations.

The majority of the national student unions (33 out of 38) indicated students are involved in several different ways in external quality assurance, mostly as full members in review panels (as stated by 29 unions). However, only in the case of three countries students are allowed to hold positions of chair or secretary of the external panel review. Unfortunately, national student unions from four countries (Belarus, Luxembourg, Malta and Italy) underlined students are completely excluded from external quality assurance processes.

According to the survey implemented by ESU, Belarus, Bulgaria, Latvia and Luxembourg have no quality assurance agencies. In the rest of the countries where the respondents came from, 28 out of 34 responding national student unions stated that students take an active role in the governing of the quality assurance agency(es) from their countries. In the majority of the cases (22 unions), students act as full members within the governing (decision-making) bodies of the agencies, while the others are included only as members of consultative bodies. The study also shows that the majority of the national student unions (22 out of 38 unions) were consulted by governments from their countries on issues related to quality assurance across the EHEA.

An important example of student involvement in quality assurance is the existence of Quality Assurance Student Experts' Pools, groups of students trained for quality assurance processes. 21 national student unions answered that these kind of pools exist in their countries, but are operated in different ways. In eight cases the pools are independently operated by national student unions, in other eight cases they are operated by the quality assurance agencies and in the rest of 5 countries both the quality assurance agencies and national student organisations hold the governance of the pool. In the vast majority of the countries (20 out of 21), the existing pools are widely used by QA agencies, higher education institutions and other institutions for the purpose of quality assurance evaluations and beyond. This type of pool exists at European level as well and it is governed, trained and monitored by the European Students' Union.

The study also looked into the students' perception on the obstacles they face in their involvement in quality assurance in their national contexts and, unfortunately, the national student unions defined a significant amount of them, especially on the grassroots or local level. The main obstacles they pointed out include insufficient information and training, extended bureaucracy and not treating students as equal partners in the process. Other obstacles mentioned were that students regard quality assurance as useless due to the lack of consequences as a result of evaluations, the lack of transparency in the processes and poor follow up and monitoring processes.

The European Students' Union gave some recommendations to improve the student involvement in quality assurance. The representative of students suggested that students should be included in all quality assurance related processes, meetings and/or trips and the internal quality assurance should expand to embrace evaluating and monitoring all of education activities within the institution. They stated the evaluation reports need to be accessible for students, other stakeholders and wider public in general and to include the recommendations which need to be followed by the institution, which has the role to further monitor the progress made. Another important recommendation was that students must be considered equal members in the quality assurance processes and need to be represented in all decision-making within the universities and higher education system as a whole.

It was noted that meaningful participation of students in quality assurance at all levels has slightly increased in the last years, but quality assurance must continue to be a priority for higher education systems, to be more transparent and less bureaucratic in order to ensure that the needs and expectations of students are heard and students are treated as equal and competent partners who can give an unique input and approach within quality assurance processes.

Internal QA

-total

Teacher of 1st
year + 2nd year
and 3rd year is
involved

Self evaluation
report made by
the students

Student organizes
sessions in class
in collecting the
feedback on subject
regarding in different
areas

Student organizes
two direct annual
reports on the imple-
mentation of the
work done

Feedback from
all stakeholders
(Students, Faculty,
Parents, Management,
Society, etc.)
is taken into
account

QA starting
FROM early
beginning
from Faculty
Examination Section

High student
motivation on
involving in QA
Transparency
of QA

Direct
Board to Board
Direct
completing
to Minister
Good level of
compliance

INPUTS FROM THE DESK RESEARCH

Collected data from the desk research (fully reported in the related annexes) are here organized and discussed around the following key aspects:

- The presence of official regulations and external QA agencies;
- The characteristics of the QA agencies (autonomy, memberships, range of activities);
- The student participation in QA processes and procedures (IQA and EQA).

OFFICIAL REGULATIONS AND EXTERNAL QA AGENCIES

All countries analysed for the desk research show that there is a legislative attempt to focus on the quality concept with a different history and a diverse attention to students' role and involvement in the QA enhancement in higher institutions. Student engagement may follow both formal and informal mechanisms.

As we will see in the paragraph dedicated to student engagement, most countries rely on regulations which set the student level of involvement in QA. In some cases the regulations are set by the national/regional agencies while in others they are expressed in the legislative system.

We will here synthesize the "UK Quality Code for Higher Education – Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality Chapter B5 « Student Engagement »"⁵ that was published in June 2012 and it's related to undergraduate and postgraduate level of study.

The chapter is focused on two intertwined aspects:

- The HE providers' role in fostering active student participation (implementing the due procedures and environments);
- The concept of "partnership" that ties students and academic staff in a shared vision/mission in QA (e.g organizing evidence-based discussions).

Student engagement refers to students playing an active role, meaning having the opportunity to take part in the design phase of a new curriculum, in the approval step and in the periodic programme review.

Those tasks can be fulfilled providing the due mechanisms/procedures to collect student voice, but also organizing ongoing training and support actions to equip students to fulfil their active roles in enhancement and quality assurance.

As reported in the chapter mechanisms/procedures to involve students may include: questionnaires, student representative structures research activities; student membership of committees, student consultation events, student involvement in new projects, student dialogue with decision makers, online discussion forums, formal quality processes. It is, thus, necessary to make students aware of their responsibility and activate the proper training to help students "give feedback that is of use".

An interesting aspect is the focus on the recognition of the value of the engagement of students and the attention on the assurance that students feel rewarded for their active involvement.

As mentioned earlier, there are countries in which the QA and the student participation are not set by the national laws but by regulations and criteria set by independent agencies whose presence is undoubtedly a step forward in the quality culture and enhancement.

But the sole presence of external QA agencies (see table 1) does not ensure the successful development of quality processes in higher education. All countries included in the desk research appear to have established an autonomous QA agency (except Belarus where it is not clear how the Ministry of Education is managing the quality processes and procedures), but their activity and its impact on QA shows rather different results (see country data Annexes). As highlighted in the above mentioned table, Armenia and neighbouring countries have established their agencies just in the last years and their organisation is still in progress (Ukraine will have a working agency starting from 1 September 2015).

REFERENCE

⁵ UK Quality Code for Higher Education - Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-b>.

Table 1. Reference Laws And Qa Agencies In Selected countries.

Country	National laws (selection)	Evaluation Agency at national level
Portugal	Higher Education Evaluation Act (1994)	✓ A3ES (from 1998 to 2006 CNAVES)
Romania	National Education Law no.1 (2011)	✓ ARACIS (2005)
Serbia	Law on Higher Education (2005)	✓ CAQA (2006)
Spain	National Plan of Quality of Universities (PNECU) 1996-1998-1999, 2000	✓ ANECA (2002)
UK	UK Quality Code for Higher Education (it covers all four nations of the UK, England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) (2013).	✓ BAC (1984) ✓ QAA (1997)
Armenia	Law on Accreditation was adopted by the National Assembly, which defines the rules and regulations on the national accreditation system (2012)	✓ ANQA (2008)
Belarus	Code of the Republic of Belarus on Education (2011)	Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus
Georgia	Georgian Law on Higher Education; Georgian Law on Education Quality Enhancement; law "Development of Quality of Education"(2010)	✓ EQE (replacing LEPL)(2010)
Moldova	Education Code of the Republic of Moldova (2010)	✓ ANACIP (2015) (the German agency AQAS and the Romanian agency ARACIS also operate in Moldova)
Ukraine	Law of Ukraine on Higher Education (2014)	In accordance with the new <i>Higher Education law</i> , the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education is scheduled to start work in Ukraine on 1 September 2015.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE QA AGENCIES

QA agencies play a leading role in most countries and their range of action often goes beyond the national boundaries and embrace international initiatives. The characteristics of QA agencies established in addressed countries can be summarized around the following aspects (see table 2):

- the legal status;
- the inclusion as members of ENQA;
- the target activity;
- the level of action;
- the way of formalizing those actions.

Autonomy can be a relevant issue for QA and it is one of the criterion set by ENQA when evaluating an agency's application for a full membership.

The inclusion as full members in ENQA may be used as a parameter to evaluate the effectiveness of the quality measures and procedures run by agencies and to verify to what extent they satisfy the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). The membership criteria are specifically relevant for this study since the participation of students is clearly stated in criterion 5 and 6 of the document "ENQA membership criteria".

The agencies, in fact, should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis and demonstrate, in this process, their "independence", that is, they should not be influenced by higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.

But as said "*relevant stakeholders in higher education, particularly students/learners, are consulted in the course of quality assurance processes*". The agency can choose to include, as appropriate, students in its group of expert in external assessment.

As for target activities and levels of QA measures agencies show a variety of options focussing most of them on: IQA, EQA, auto-evaluation, accreditation of HE providers and training courses for students.

Table 2. Characteristics of QA agencies.

Evaluation Agency	Legal Status	Membership of ENQA	Target Activity	Levels of Quality Evaluation	Ways of formalising the evaluation and accreditation process
A3ES (Portugal)	National private foundation, Autonomous institution	Full membership (2014)	Accrediting both higher education institutes and courses.	4 levels of quality evaluation: internal quality assurance, auto-evaluation, external evaluation, accreditation and institutional auditing.	ICT based platform: the proposals for the new programmes, the self-evaluation reports, and the external evaluation reports, among other documents are submitted and analysed online.
ANECA (Spain)	National	Founding Member (2003); full membership (2004)	Accrediting both higher education degrees, programmes, staff.	The mission is organized in: evaluation Programmes, organization and promotion of training courses to make students approach the so called "quality culture".	The agency publishes a yearly activity report which includes the objectives that have guided ANECA throughout the year, together with the institutional and evaluation activities that have been carried out within the scope of responsibilities of the Agency.
AAC-DEVA (Spain)	Andalusian Agency. government-run public entity with legal personality,	Full membership (2000)	Evaluate and accredit universities, programmes, teaching staff and the research activities conducted within the Andalusian System of Knowledge.	Develop the implantation of follow-up, control and excellence systems in quality and research.	Reports are evaluated by Commissions formed by members outside the Andalusian regional community and all the information (except for personal data) is available online.
ACSUCYL (Spain)	It is independent from the regional government, directed by a Board of Directors. external assessment body for the university system in Castilla y León	Full membership (2010)	Development of programmes for quality assessment of the universities in the Autonomous Region and also collaborates in the processes of assessment, accreditation and certification of universities and higher education institutions outside the Autonomous Region of Castilla y León in the context of the European Higher Education Area.	Evaluation, certification and accreditation of the activities related to the quality of the university system, and specifically the evaluation of teaching staff, degrees, research, as well as institutional quality.	Final reports include recommendations for improvement that are evaluated periodically; When the evaluations are finished, the final reports are published on the website, and processes are reviewed in order to improve them.
ACSUG (Spain)	It is independent legally established as a consortium between the Regional Government of Galicia and the three Galician universities: A Coruña (UDC), Santiago (USC) and Vigo (UVI).	Full membership (2009)	Evaluation, certification and accreditation for the activities conducted by Galician universities, especially related to teaching, research, knowledge transfer and management.	Assessment, certification and accreditation of institutions (programmes, services, teaching activity evaluation, Internal Quality Assurance Systems of the centres and other processes). constant support for gathering and channeling information for the Galician universities, other institutions and social agents.	The final decision about the evaluation comes after a self-evaluation process done by the applicants of the evaluation activity and an external assessment by review panels appointed by ACSUG



Evaluation Agency	Legal Status	Membership of ENQA	Target Activity	Levels of Quality Evaluation	Ways of formalising the evaluation and accreditation process
AQU (Spain)	The agency is an independent body, and it is funded by the government of Catalonia	Full membership (2000)	Assessment, accreditation and certification of quality in the sphere of the universities and higher education centres of Catalunya (degree courses, faculties and schools, services and institutions)	Implementation of the Framework for the validation (ex-ante assessment), monitoring, modification and accreditation of recognised awards. Pre-selection assessment of academic staff; assessment of the individual merits in teaching, research and management of teaching and research staff at Catalan universities.	No information available
Unibasq (Spain)	public entity submitted to private law and attached to the Basque governmental department responsible for universities	Full membership (2014)	Reviews Basque Country university study programmes, faculties, and institutions.	Defines the evaluation process for each area of activity; assesses the individual merits of academic staff for additional remuneration at the Basque Public University (UPV/EHU); carries out the pre-selection evaluation of academic staff	The evaluation is carried out by a panel of external experts.
FCM (Spain)	not-for-profit organization established under the initiative of the regional government of Madrid.	Full membership (2015)	Evaluation of official degrees, faculties, and institutional programmes of the universities of Madrid.	Evaluation, accreditation and performance measurements of the public higher education service.	The Approval of the final report by the Evaluation and Accreditation Committee comes from a Self Evaluation Report drafted by the applicant, Evaluation and site visits by a panel of experts.
ARACIS (Romania)	It is a legal, financially independent and autonomous public institution of national interest.	Full membership (2009)	No information available	Evaluation (on an ongoing basis and upon request), review, audit, and accreditation	No information available
CAQA (Serbia)	It is an independent body of the National Educational Council. It is the only formally recognised commission responsible for external quality assurance of higher educational institutions in Serbia.	Full membership (2013)	Accreditation procedure for higher education institutions and study programmes.	Develop accreditation and quality assurance standards, help assure quality of institutions and educational programmes and proceed with external quality assurance processes in forms of accreditation and evaluation of all the existing higher education institutions and programmes	Peer reviews, on-site visits, publication of reports.



Evaluation Agency	Legal Status	Membership of ENQA	Target Activity	Levels of Quality Evaluation	Ways of formalising the evaluation and accreditation process
QAA (UK)	It is an independent body, a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity.	Full membership (2015)	It Safeguards standards and improves the quality of UK higher education. It reports on standards and quality under contract to government.	Reviewing of private providers, as required by UK Border Agency regulations; scrutinising applications from institutions wishing to obtain degree-awarding powers and university title. QAA also regulates the Access to Higher Education Diploma.	Peer review, based on the Expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Universities and other degree-awarding bodies are reviewed through three distinct peer-review methods: Institutional Review (England and Northern Ireland); Institutional Review (Wales) and Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (Scotland).
BAC (UK)	Independent organisation, established to be the national accrediting body for independent post-16 education in the UK. It is a not-for-profit charitable organisation and is self-financing through accreditation fees. It receives no public funding.	Full membership (2000)	Accrediting institutions.	Consultancy service in all aspects of quality assurance and accreditation.	Documentation scrutiny exercise and inspections. Institutions are subject to regular monitoring, interim visits and the submission of annual returns.
ANACIP (Moldova)	National agency approved thanks to a government decision and whose Interim Governing Board was selected by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Economy and the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS)	No	Accrediting both higher education institutes and programmes	Evaluating the curricula of all technical vocational schools, universities and training institutions; carrying out institutional accreditation; performing state policies on quality assurance; periodically reviewing the accreditation standards, national reference standards and performance indicators used in the evaluation and quality assurance.	No information available
EQE (Georgia)	The National Center for Educational Accreditation was founded by Order of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia.	No	carry out the institutional and programme accreditation in higher, vocational and general education institutions of Georgia	Validation of Educational Documents Issued in Georgia; promotion of the development of quality assurance mechanisms ; external evaluation of compatibility of an institution with standards; certifying internal (self) evaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-evaluation of an application for accreditation - Setting-up of an accreditation expert commission; - Accreditation visit; - Accreditation expert commission - oral hearing on accreditation related issues; - publication of the final decision.



Evaluation Agency	Legal Status	Membership of ENQA	Target Activity	Levels of Quality Evaluation	Ways of formalising the evaluation and accreditation process
ANQA (Armenia)	It is founded and subsidised by the Armenian government and is projected to be financed through entrepreneurial initiatives. It is governed by a board of stakeholders and is independent of the Ministry of Education and Science and institutions at higher education level.	No	Accrediting the quality of programmes and providing that decision to the Ministry of Education and Science for state accreditation;	Conducting academic audits of HEIs; evaluating and accrediting HEIs; providing those decisions to the Ministry of Education and Science for state accreditation of HEIs; evaluating the quality assurance systems of HEIs and make recommendations etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-evaluation by the unit undergoing an external QA procedure - On site visit by a group of trained external experts - Decisions based on the results of the first two phases and publication of results.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN QA PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES

The desk research highlighted the presence of different roles attributed to students in the QA processes (see table 3). At EQA level the engagement can vary from the role of “observer” to the more active roles of “expert and stakeholder”, while in IQA most countries take advantage of the “informant” role of students using collection tools (questionnaire, focus groups) to collect useful data on the learning programmes, environments and teaching staff. Just in few cases students are seen as “equal partners” in the academic community even if their special interest perspective is recognized as relevant for the quality enhancement.

This one of the discrepancies between the formal role assigned to students and their actual role, a situation that can also be badly affected by the fragmented structure of the students’ organizations in some cases.

Table 3. Student participation in QA.

Country	Student participation (Yes/No)	Level of engagement (Role)	Modality
Portugal	Yes. In CNAVES review teams were formally obliged to take into account students’ voice. But even if they were formally represented their actual range of action is limited	Informant in IQA and with the establishment of A3ES the student participation was strongly encouraged also as external expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) integration in the auto-evaluation step: mandatory involvement in the pedagogical meetings and in students associations; b) participation in pedagogical questionnaires related to the evaluation of professors and courses, this step is mandatory and integrated in the auto-evaluation step; c) participation in the external evaluation by way of being interviewed during external procedures. In the Government Decree (369/2007, Article 15) the participation in the external evaluation is fulfilled with mandating two student representatives in the A3ES Advisory Council; d) involvement in the election of representatives to be selected in students associations and to be integrated in the accreditation agency.
Romania	Yes	The students representatives are members of the Quality Assessment and Assurance Commissions at the Senate and Faculty levels.	Student’s assessment of the teaching staff and of the teaching/learning environment/path is made through questionnaires.

Country	Student participation (Yes/No)	Level of engagement (Role)	Modality
Serbia	Yes	Students are informants in IQA procedures, but also involved in governance and decision-making (equal partner). Representatives of students shall take part in professional bodies and their organs; students shall account for up to 20 per cent of the members of the professional bodies	Students participate in IQA
Spain	YES. The participation of students in ANECA has grown exponentially over the years 2008-2010.	In former programmes they were observer members of the external evaluation committee, and later they could play a more active role as full members	They take part in the agency's Advisory Council and the Working Group for Student Participation in Quality Policies. The student participation also exists in the Quality Label program for doctoral programs in Spanish universities, in the VERIFICA program, in the DOCENTIA program and in the AUDIT program (drafting internal quality systems for universities).
UK	Yes	In EQA: Experts – there is at least one student as full member in each review team: Informers – all reviews involve meeting with student groups and student representative bodies. In IQA: Experts – there are universities where students can be full members in the internal bodies responsible with quality assurance; Consultative partners – there are universities where student representative bodies are consulted by structures responsible with internal quality assurance; Informers – providing feedback on different aspects related to learning and teaching or student life .	In EQA: participating in review teams; submitting Student Written Submission (SWS) to external review teams; providing feedback to external review teams (via focus groups or filling questionnaires). In IQA: participating as full members or consultative partners within internal quality assurance bodies (e.g. participating to meetings, contributing to policies, reports, analyses made by those bodies, voting on decisions upon quality assurance etc.); providing feedback to different internal structures (e.g. about the teaching and learning methods, about the curricula, about the performance of each teacher, about student facilities, about student support services etc.); providing general feedback about higher education (National Student Survey, the Key Information Set); contributing to the development of learning and teaching (e.g. by providing feedback, by participating in the drafting process of new courses etc.).
Armenia	Yes	Students are involved in governance structures of National QA agencies, as full members in external review teams, In IQA they are Informants, in EQA they are observers. As experts they participate in the accreditation process.	They are involved in the preparation of self evaluation reports, in the evaluation of teaching, learning and estimation efficiency through surveys, in follow-up procedures and in the decision making process for external reviews.
Belarus	No	None	None
Georgia	Yes	Informants and stakeholder (IQA). Stakeholder in external audits.	Students are involved in a systematic assessment of the quality of programmes and their administration through online surveys, focus-groups, participation in accreditation processes (i.e. external audit). Targeted intervention include student focus-groups for in-depth analysis of the problems with academic programme delivery and administration services.
Moldova	Yes	Students are involved in governance structures of National QA agencies (full members). As observers in external review team.	In IQA: preparation of self evaluation reports, follow-up procedures.
Ukraine	Yes	Involvement of students at the external quality assurance level, specifically, as sector-based expert.	Some reports state the involvement of students also at IQA level replying to questionnaires.



1 ANNEX

HE COUNTRY DATA: PORTUGAL

Authored by Laura Fedeli (UNIMC)

A HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

The education system implies three levels: ensinos básico, secundário and superior. The compulsory education is divided in ensino basico (three stages of four, two and three years respectively) and ensino secundario (three years). The ensino superior is organized as a binary system which consists of universities institutions and polytechnics (both public and private). The university system is in charge of providing the needed academic education/training to make students develop a professionalizing habitus and encourage them to commit themselves in research and critical analysis, the polytechnics are vocationally or professionally oriented.⁶

Graduate courses:	Minimum age	Required certification	Length
First cycle [Licenciatura] Bachelor at University	--	High school diploma or technological specialization courses (post secondary training courses). Students must have taken the necessary entrance exams	Normally it lasts between six and eight curricular semesters of student work (180-240 ECTS)
First cycle [Licenciatura] Bachelor at Polytechnic	--	High school diploma or technological specialization courses (post secondary training courses). Students must have taken the necessary entrance exams	Normally it takes six curricular semesters of students' work (180-240 ECTS)
Higher education short cycle diplomas	--	High school diploma or technological specialization courses (post secondary training courses). Students must have taken the necessary entrance exams	This diploma is positioned at level 5 of the EQF (at least 120 ECTS).

REFERENCE

⁶ Main decree laws which regulate higher education in Portugal: The comprehensive act for the education system (act 46/86 of 14 October); The University Autonomy Act (act 108/88 of 24 September); the Autonomy of Polytechnic Higher Education Institutions Act (act 54/90 of 5 September); the Private and Cooperative Higher Education Act, Decree Law 88/2006

Postgraduate courses:	Minimum age	Required certification	Length
Second cycle [Mestrado] Master's degrees	--	Bachelor	(90-120 ECTS; 60 ECTS in some specialist subjects)
Second cycle [Mestrado Integrado] Integrated Masters	--	Bachelor	(300-360 ECTS). Normally it takes 10 and 12 curricular semesters of work
Third cycle [Doutoramento] PhD (awarded only by universities and university institutes)	--	Master degree	The duration and the total number of ECTS of the cycle of studies that leads to the doctoral degree aren't regulated in the applicable legislation, nevertheless the higher education institutions usually attribute 180 ECTS to a 6 semesters duration and the remaining don't have more than 240 ECTS to 8 semesters.

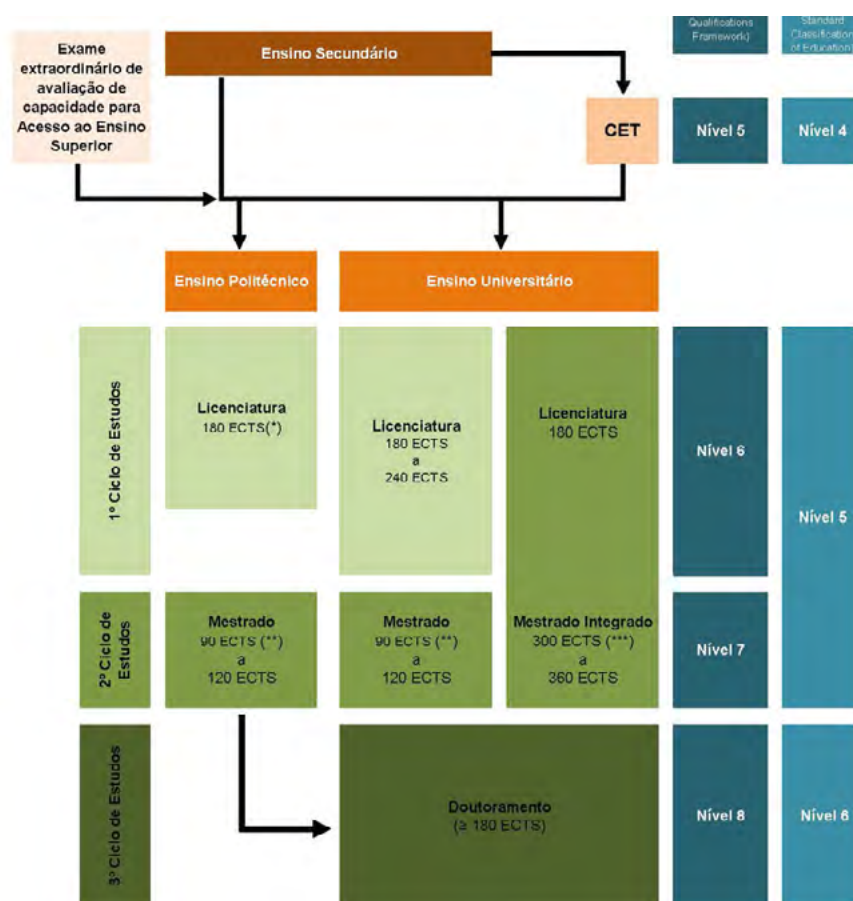


Figure: Higher education system,

URL: <http://www.dges.mctes.pt/DGES/pt/Reconhecimento/NARICENIC/Ensino+Superior/Diagrama/>

B QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Premise: Autonomy is a central issue to consider if we wish to address the quality assurance system in Portugal: *“The common fundamental principle of the degree laws is the prevalent autonomy of the public universities. These universities are, in terms of the law, entitled to statutory, scientific, pedagogical, administrative and financial autonomy. This means that the universities have almost complete freedom to initiate, suspend or cancel study programmes. The Ministry of Science and Higher Education (DGES), which holds the formal responsibility for the universities, registers all new study programmes and degrees. With the University Autonomy Act of 1988, this approval process was reduced to a bureaucratic procedure without any actual impact. The Ministry is only entitled to refuse study programmes or degrees if they are inconsistent with formal requirements in terms of duration of the programme or number of total credits needed to obtain a degree. Regardless of this, decisions are not based on evaluations or accreditations. The autonomy of the public polytechnic institutions is almost similar to that of the universities, but the procedure for approval of new study programmes is somewhat more restrictive. The public polytechnics are not allowed to create new study programmes without a formal approval by the Ministry. They are obliged to submit all proposals to the Ministry (General Director for Higher Education at the Ministry of Science and Higher Education) for approval.”*

GENERAL DATA

- Is there any law/regulation and/or national standards about quality assurance in higher education? **YES**

If yes, please provide the needed details and the source you are referring to (add URL website/document: <http://www.enqa.eu/indirme/papers-and-reports/occasional-papers/EPHEreport.pdf>; <http://www.a-pagina-da-educacao.pt/>)

The basis of quality assurance processes in higher education can be found in the Higher Education Evaluation Act (act 38/94). Since the Portuguese system is made of the synergies of universities and polytechnics one of the main issue to be considered in establishing a quality assurance set of principles is the “negotiation” of each actor/subsector involved. This situation brought to the presence of representative entities for each sector with its own evaluation council namely: The Evaluation Council for Public Universities (FUP), The Evaluation Council for Public Polytechnics (ADISPOR); and The Evaluation Council for Private Universities and Polytechnics (APESP). This can be considered one of the major strengths of the QA system in fact, *“To some extent, the division into four evaluation councils has contributed to a more equal representation between the sub sectors in the quality assurance processes, though this is not fully realised. Although the panel strongly recommends a comprehensive system for the future, the new quality assurance system should also be able to reflect the present divided structure”*.

In order to ensure a smooth coordination and consistency among the different sub-system a meta-level organisation was established (Degree Act 1998) in the form of the National Evaluation Council for Higher Education (CNAVES). The specific responsibilities of evaluations councils (FUP, ADISPOR, APESP) are to:

- organise and coordinate the external review process;
- propose to CNAVES the composition of the peer review panels;
- propose to CNAVES the guidelines for the self-evaluation process;
- monitor and support the development of the self-evaluation process;
- ensure the publication of the external review reports as well as any refutations offered by the institutions whose study programmes are assessed;
- issue suggestions and recommendations with the aim of stimulating quality and improving the evaluation model.

REFERENCES

⁷ENQA- Quality Assurance of Higher Education in Portugal, 2006, p. 19,
URL: <http://www.enqa.eu/indirme/papers-and-reports/occasional-papers/EPHEreport.pdf>.

The specific responsibilities of CNAVES are to:

- appraise the global coherence of the quality assurance based on a comparative study of the evaluation reports;
- appoint review panels based on the coordination of the proposals from the evaluation councils.⁸

As a final remark we can add that CNAVES had a relevant role in encouraging HE institutions to develop their own internal quality assurance systems. The evaluations performed by CNAVES had, in fact, enhanced the reflective practice and fostered institution to make their programmes more transparent. CNAVES was operation from 1998 to 2006 and then replaced by A3ES.

- Is there any evaluation agency, at national or regional level, appointed to assess quality assurance in higher education? **YES**

If yes, please provide the needed details and the source you are referring to (A3ES: <http://www.a3es.pt/en>; <http://www.a3es.pt/en/accreditation-and-audit/regulations>; <http://www.a3es.pt/en/accreditation-and-audit/norms-external-assessment>).

Decree-Law 369/2007, 5 November, states the establishment of the Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education (Agência de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior, A3ES). In June 2012 the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) has accepted A3ES as a member and the Agency joined the ECA Agreement of Cooperation for the period from January 2012 until June 2015.

A3ES is an autonomous institution in charge of accrediting higher education institutes (Polytechnic and Universities, public and private) and courses.

The Agency provides 4 levels of quality evaluation: internal quality assurance, auto-evaluation, external evaluation, accreditation and institutional auditing.

Portugal was recognized to be the first country implementing a system to support the evaluation of the higher education system through an ICT platform: *"A3ES established that the necessary procedures to formalise the evaluation and accreditation of study programmes are to be performed online, through an ICT platform based at the A3ES website. As such, the proposals for the new programmes, the self-evaluation reports, and the external evaluation reports, among other documents are submitted online (and analysed online)"*.

REFERENCE

⁸ ENQA- Quality Assurance of Higher Education in Portugal, 2006, p. 22-23,

URL: <http://www.enqa.eu/indirme/papers-and-reports/occasional-papers/EPHEreport.pdf>

⁹ MINISTRY OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND HIGHER EDUCATION, PORTUGAL, The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in Portugal, FHEQ-Portugal, 2010, p. 7 URL: http://www.dges.mctes.pt/NR/rdonlyres/90DBE647-5CB6-4846-B88F-101180D9E425/4933/FHEQPortugal_22Nov_2010.pdf

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN QA

- Are students involved in QA processes? YES

In the national system of evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions the students were integrated in the process since the beginning of the legislative actions related to evaluation (Law 38/94; Decree-law 205/98).

Currently student participation is mainly at the level of definition and political coordination of the evaluation process, in the pedagogical questionnaires they are required to fill in and in the participation in the audits managed by the external commission of evaluation (art. 12º and 19º Law 38/2007).

- If yes, please, specify (add the source you are referring to)

- *The level of involvement (e.g. as informants, experts, etc.: provide some examples)*

There's a discrepancy between the formal role assigned to students and their actual role. IN CNAVES review teams were, in fact, formally obliged to take into account students' voice. But even if they were formally represented their actual range of action is limited. The documents analysed and quoted in this report show that "the students have never managed to manifest themselves as a **key player** - neither in the internal self-evaluation processes nor as members of the external review teams". One of the downsides to be underlined is the fragmented structure of the students' organizations. But with the establishment of A3ES the student participation was strongly encouraged also as external expert in CAE (Comissões de Avaliação Externa) with an experimentation run in 2011-2012 and whose results brought to a yearly recruitment and student training process.

- *The timing (e.g. at the end of a course; along the whole academic year, etc: provide some examples)*
No information available in official documents

- *The modalities (e.g. replying to institutional written questionnaires, participating to external audits, etc.: provide examples)*

Within the new regulations (art. 12º Law 38/2007) students' participation is established in the following aspects (internal and external quality assurance):

- a) integration in the auto-evaluation step: mandatory involvement in the pedagogical meetings and in students associations;
- b) participation in pedagogical questionnaires related to the evaluation of professors and courses, this step is mandatory and integrated in the auto-evaluation step;
- c) participation in the external evaluation by way of being interviewed during external procedures and to ensure the "appointment of student association representatives to the agency body". In the Government Decree(369/2007, Article 15) the participation in the external evaluation is fulfilled with mandating two student representatives in the A3ES Advisory Council;
- d) involvement in the election of representatives to be selected in students associations and to be integrated in the accreditation agency.



2 ANNEX

HE COUNTRY DATA: SPAIN

Authored by Laura Fedeli (UNIMC)

A HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Education in Spain for children is compulsory from the ages of 6 to 16, with primary education (*primaria*) lasting six years followed by four years of compulsory secondary education (E.S.O.) at the end of which a Certificate of Education is received.

Higher education comprises university and professional studies. University education, provided in universities, lead to the award of Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees. Advanced vocational training is provided in the same institutions than those offering intermediate vocational training.

Graduate courses:	Minimum age	Required certification	Length
First cycle Bachelor	18	Upper secondary education (Bachillerato) <i>Additional criteria:</i> entrance examination, final grade obtained in the studies completed or in specific modules/subjects; relationship between the curricula of the studies completed and the relevant university degree; additional academic or vocational training and previously taken higher education studies.	4 years (240 ECTS)

Postgraduate courses:	Minimum age	Required certification	Length
Second cycle Master's degrees	--	Bachelor	1 or 2 years (60-120 ECTS)
Third cycle PhD (awarded only by universities and university institutes)	--	Bachelor's degree, or equivalent, and a Master's degree	3-4 years

B QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

GENERAL DATA

- Is there any law/regulation and/or national standards about quality assurance in higher education? **If yes**, please provide the needed details and the source you are referring to (http://www.fga.it/uploads/media/J._Vidal__C._Ferreira__THE_STATE_OF_EVALUATION_IN_THE_SPANISH_UNIVERSITY_CONTEXT.pdf)

Quality assurance policies in higher education have existed in Spain for over 10 years, when in 1996 the Universities Council launched the first National Plan of Quality of Universities (PNECU) 1996-1998-1999, 2000

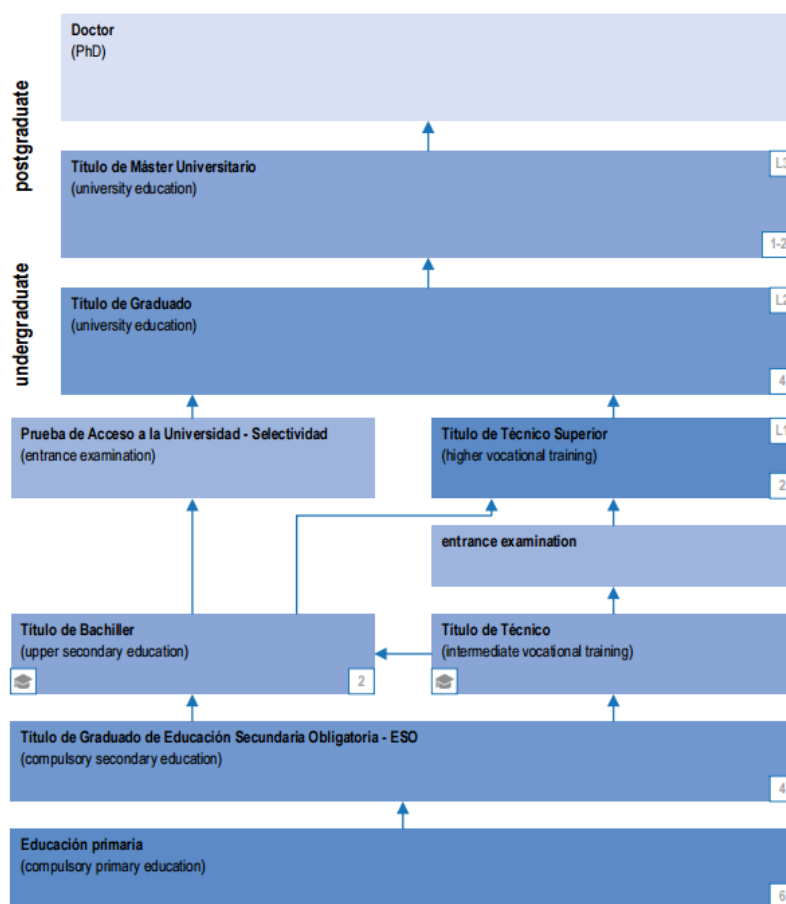


Figure: The education system in Spain, URL: <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/library/education-system-spain.pdf>

- Is there any evaluation agency, at national or regional level, appointed to assess quality assurance in higher education? **If yes**, please provide the needed details and the source you are referring to (add URL website/ document)

The Spanish National Agency for Quality Assessment and Accreditation is ANECA (<http://www.aneca.es/eng/ANECA>), additionally there are regional quality assurance agencies (of the Autonomous Communities) such as the Agency for the quality of the university system of Catalonia (AQU, http://www.aqu.cat/index_en.html) and the Unidad para la Calidad de las Universidades Andaluzas (UCUA, <http://www.ucua.es/>), the Axencia para a Calidade do Sistema Universitario de Galicia (ACSUG, Axencia para a Calidade do Sistema Universitario de Galicia), the Agència de Qualitat Universitària de les Illes Balears (AQIB, <http://www.aquib.org/cat/aquib/>), and the Agencia para la Calidad del Sistema Universitario de Castilla y León (ACSUCYL, <http://www.acsucyl.es/ac-sucyl/opencms/agencia/index.html>).

ANECA is strongly committed in the organization and promotion of training courses to make students approach the so called “quality culture” and foster their possible recruitment to participate in assessment programs.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN QA

- Are students involved in QA processes? (YES)
- **If yes**, please, specify (add the source you are referring to: http://www.eua.be/Libraries/EQAF_2010/PaperAbstracts_WGS1a_2_Esteve_Mon_Galan_Palomares_Pastor_Valcarcel.sflb.ashx; <http://www.esu-online.org/asset/News/6068/QUEST-for-quality-for-students-publication-Part1.pdf>)

▶ *The level of involvement (e.g. as informants, experts, etc.: provide some examples)*

In 2006, ANECA contacted CREUP (The student association that represents the majority of students at a national level) and other national student organizations, calling for the creation of a working group. The ANECA Working Group for Student Participation in Quality Policies (GATPEPC) was then established, initially formed by staff from ANECA's international and institutional relations unit and representatives of students from several Spanish universities. The aim of the working group was to propose possible methods for student participation in the processes of the quality assurance agencies.

The Spanish students were taking part in an official institutional assessment programme for the first time in 2007 as **observer members** of the external evaluation committee, and in 2008 as **full members** in another programme. Today, students are participating in the verification of recognized degree programmes.

In the final quarter of 2007 ANECA invited students to participate in one of its programs, the Institutional Assessment Programme (PEI). It was the first example and experience, nationwide, of student participation in an ANECA program.

A specific case is that of students from Catalan universities who can join the AQU Student Commission to participate in AQU Catalunya's review activities, advise the Agency on projects with a direct impact on the student body, and participate in producing studies of interest to the student body.

▶ *The timing (e.g. at the end of a course; along the whole academic year, etc.: provide some examples)*
No information available in official documents

▶ *The modalities (e.g. replying to institutional written questionnaires, participating to external audits, etc.: provide examples)*

In short, the participation of students in ANECA has grown exponentially over the last two years (2008-2010). Not only in the agency's Advisory Council and the GATPEPC, but student participation also exists in the Quality Label program for doctoral programs in Spanish universities, in the VERIFICA program, in the DOCENTIA program and in the AUDIT program (drafting internal quality systems for universities). That is, there are currently students participating in all programs where such participation is necessary.



3 ANNEX

HE COUNTRY DATA: ROMANIA

Authored by Andronie Maria, Fainisi Florin, Barbalata Stefan (SHU)

A HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Graduate courses:	Minimum age	Required certification	Length
Laurea triennale (Bachelor)	18	Secondary/high school diploma	3 years (180 ECTS- European Credit Transfer System)
Laurea magistrale (Degree)	--	Laurea triennale (Bachelor)	2 years (120 ECTS)
Laurea magistrale a ciclo unico (Degree)	18	Secondary / high school diploma	5 or 6 years (300 or 360 ECTS)

Postgraduate courses:	Minimum age	Required certification	Length
Post-university (Specializing course)	--	Laurea triennale (Bachelor)	6 months/1 year
Post –secondary / high school	--	Secondary/high school diploma	3 years
Master (Master course)	--	Laurea triennale (Bachelor)	2 years (120 ECTS)
Doctorate	--	Master diploma	3 years
Post-doctorate	--	Doctorate diploma	2 years

B QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

GENERAL DATA

- Is there any law/regulation and/or national standards about quality assurance in higher education?
If yes, please provide the needed details and the source you are referring to (add URL website/document):

YES, the Quality of Higher Education in Romania is ruled by:

- National Education Law no.1/2011 (modified and completed)
http://www.aracis.ro/uploads/media/Lege_nr.1_din_2011__actualizata_01.01.2014_.pdf
- Law no.87/2006 regarding Quality Assurance in Education (modified and completed)
<http://www.aracis.ro/uploads/media/legea87.pdf>
- Law no. 288/2004 regarding Organizing the HE Studies <http://www.aracis.ro/uploads/media/288.pdf>

- Is there any evaluation agency, at national or regional level, appointed to assess quality assurance in higher education? If yes, please provide the needed details and the source you are referring to (add URL website/document)

YES, the evaluation agency at national level, appointed to assess quality assurance in higher education is ARACIS (Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), member of ENQA and registered in EQAR

<http://www.aracis.ro/>
www.enqa.eu/index.php/enqa-agencies/members/full-members/
<https://www.eqar.eu/register/search.html>

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN QA

- Are students involved in QA processes? (YES)
- **If yes**, please, specify (add the source you are referring to)
 - *The level of involvement (e.g. as informants, experts, etc.: provide some examples)*

The students representatives are members of the Quality Assessment and Assurance Commissions at the Senate and Faculty levels and some of them are participating in the teachers assessing.
 - *The timing (e.g. at the end of a course; along the whole academic year, etc: provide some examples)*

The activities of those Commissions for quality assessment and assurance are acting throughout the whole academic year, based on a plan set up every October. The Commissions organize monthly meetings for detailing the working plan and analyzing the quality of the educational process.
 - *The modalities (e.g. replying to institutional written questionnaires, participating to external audits, etc.: provide examples)*

At the faculties level different questionnaires are distributed -representing one strong support for the application of operational procedures used in the process of quality assessment and assurance, as regard: teachers' evaluation by the students, evaluation of the teaching/learning environment offered by the universities, the students' own learning route etc.

REGULATIONS, NATIONAL STANDARDS AND QUALITY AGENCIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In Romania, the Law 1/2011 of National Education provides a framework, under the Romanian State authority, for the exercise of the fundamental right to education throughout life. The law shall regulate the structure, functions, organization and functioning of the learning national system.

The law has a vision of promoting a values-oriented education, creativity, cognitive capabilities, volitional capabilities, action capabilities, fundamental knowledge and direct utility knowledge, skills and abilities related to profession and society.

The mission assumed by law is through education, training, infrastructure of the Romanian society of mental, in accordance with the new requirements, deriving from the status of Romania's European Union member country, and from the operation in the context of globalization, and sustainable generation of a highly competitive national human resources, able to operate efficiently.

The State ensures the equal rights of citizens of Romania's access to all levels and forms of higher education, as well as to learning throughout life, without any form of discrimination.

The national system of higher education is based on the following principles:

- a) the principle of autonomy of the University;
- b) the principle of academic freedom;
- c) the principle of public liability;
- d) the principle of quality assurance ;
- e) the principle of equity
- f) the principle of managerial and sound financial management efficiency;
- g) the principle of transparency;
- h) the principle of observance of the rights and freedoms of students and academic staff;
- i) the principle of independence of ideologies, religions and political doctrines;
- j) the principle of national and international mobility freedom of students, teachers and researchers
- k) the principle of consultation of social partners in decision-making;
- l) the principle of student-centred education

Higher education there is no discrimination on grounds of age, ethnic origin, sex, social origin, political or religious orientation, sexual orientation or other types of discrimination, with the exception of positive measures provided by law.

Quality assurance in higher education and university scientific research is an obligation of the institution of higher education and a fundamental task of the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research.

Students are full partners in the process of quality assurance.

Students are considered partners of institutions of higher education and equal members of academic community. In the confessional education students are members of the academic community as disciples.

Students have the right to establish in the state or private higher education institutions, workshops, clubs, bands, sports organizations and publications, in accordance with the law.

The students are represented in a percentage of 25% in all decision-making and consultative structures of the university.

National Student Federations, are legally constituted bodies, which expresses the interestsof university students in relation to the State Institutions.

The University Senate is composed of 75% researchers and teachers and of 25% students' representatives.

The students have at least one representative in the ethics, selection of accommodations, quality assurance committees, as well as in other social committees.

The teachers' evaluation by students is mandatory. The results of the assessments are public information.

In Romania the quality in higher education is governed by the Emergency Ordinance nr. 75/2005 concerning the preservation of the quality of education, as amended and supplemented.

According to the above mentioned normative act "the quality of education is the totality of the characteristics of a study programme and the supplier thereof, through which beneficiaries' expectations are met, as well as quality standards".

The quality of education evaluation lies in the multi- criterial examination of the extent to which a providing education organization and its programs meet standards and reference standards. When the quality assessing is done by the education provider organization itself, - it takes the form of internal assessment. When quality evaluation is performed by a national or international specialized agency, it takes the form of external assessment.

The provision of quality education is carried out through a set of actions for the institutional capacity building for drafting, planning and implementation of study programmes, by which beneficiaries will be assured that the supplying education organization meets quality standards. Quality assurance expresses the supplier organizations' capability to offer education programs in accordance with the announced standards.

Education Quality is a permanent priority for any education supplying organization and for its employees. Providing quality education is mainly centred on the results.

The results are expressed in terms of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, which are obtained through completion and finalization of a level of education or training programme.

Methodology for Quality Assurance in education includes the following components:

- a) criteria;
- b) standards and reference standards;
- c) performance indicators;
- d) qualifications.

Quality in education is ensured through the following processes:

- a) planning and actual implementation of the expected learning results ;
- b) monitoring of results;
- c) internal assessment of results;
- d) external evaluation of results;

Quality Assurance of education is relating to the following areas and criteria:

A. Institutional capacity resulting from internal organising of the available infrastructure, defined by the following criteria:

- a) institutional, administrative and managerial structures;
- b) material base and optimization of the use of material base;
- c) human resources and institution capacity for attracting the foreign human resources, included, in accordance with the law;

B. Educational Effectiveness, which lies in the mobilization of resources in order to achieve the expected learning results, through the following criteria:

- a) content of study programmes ;
- b) learning outcomes;
- c) commitment
- d) organization financial activity;

C. Quality Management is reflected by the following criteria:

- a) strategies and procedures for quality assurance;
- b) procedures relating to the initiation, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and activities;
- c) objective and transparent procedures for the assessment of learning outcomes, including by students;
- d) periodic assessment procedures of the quality of the teaching staff;
- e) adequate resources accessibility for learning;
- f) systematically updated database, relating to internal quality assurance;
- g) transparency of public interest information, including those concerning the study programmes and, as appropriate, the certificates, the diplomas and qualifications offered;
- h) functionality of the education quality assurance structures, according to the law.
- i) accuracy of the reports laid down according to the legislation in force

INTERNAL ASSURANCE OF EDUCATION QUALITY

Each of the organisations providing education in Romania has a Commission for evaluation and quality assurance. Operatively, the Commission should be chaired by the head of the organization or by a designated coordinator. The leader of the organization is directly responsible for the quality of education provided.

The Commission for evaluation and quality assurance within higher education institutions include:

- a) 1-3 representatives of the teaching staff, which meet the criteria for obtaining the title of Associate Professor, established by order of the Minister of Education, elected by secret ballot by the University Senate;
- b) a representative of the Trade Union, appointed by the latter;
- c) a representative of students, appointed by the student organization.

Member of the Commission could be a representative of the employers.

Member of the Commission could be a representative of a minority from among the teachers or students.

Members of the Commission may not perform managerial functions in the educational institution or the organization concerned, except the person who ensures its operative management.

Powers of the Commission for evaluation and quality assurance are:

- a) coordination of the application of procedures and the activities of evaluation and quality assurance, approved by the leadership of the supplying education organization;
- b) creation of an annual report for internal evaluation on the quality of education in the respective organization. The report shall be made known to all of the beneficiaries by the display or publication;
- c) formulation of proposals to improve the quality of education.

EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

External evaluation of quality of education includes:

- a) the assessment of the institutional capacity of the organization providing education;
- b) evaluation of educational effectiveness of the organization providing education;
- c) quality management assessment at the institutional level;
- d) quality assessment of the study programmes offered;
- e) evaluation of the consistency of the internal assessment and the real situation;
- f) inter- institutional comparative evaluation of the same kind of study programme offered by various organisations providing education

For the external evaluation of the quality of education, The Romanian Agency For Quality Assurance In Higher Education, hereinafter ARACIS was established. ARACIS is an autonomous public institution of national interest, with legal personality and its own budget of revenue and expenditure.

ARACIS has the following powers in the field of accreditation:

- a) periodically, draws up methodology and accreditation standards for the various types of programs and providers of higher education, which is endorsed by the Ministry of Education and is approved by the Government;
- b) under the standards and methodology approved by decisions of the Government, upon request or on its own initiative, makes assessments and propose the authorisation, accreditation of higher education providers and their programmes of study. Based on the reports of accreditation, Ministry of Education and Research develops normative acts for setting up the structures of higher education.

ARACIS has the following duties in quality assurance:

- a) to formulate and periodically review, based on good practices, national reference standards and performance indicators for evaluation and quality assurance in higher education;
- b) to collaborate with the Ministry of Education in developing and promoting policies and action strategies, for increasing the quality of education in Romania;
- c) annually, to organize consultations with the higher education institutions to establish priorities on quality assurance;
- d) to develop and make public its own external quality assessment procedures for education;
- e) to conclude with educational institutions in the country and abroad, providing services for the external quality assessment of the programs and providers of specific education programs in higher education, as well as for inter-institutional evaluation of similar programmes;
- g) to make public the results of external assessments;
- h) to publish books, papers, guides for good practice assessment and quality assurance;
- i) periodically, every three years, to draw up analysis of the quality of the higher education system of Romania;
- j) to cooperate with similar agencies in other countries for the development and implementation of effective measures to improve the quality of higher education programmes;
- k) to develop a professional Ethics Code for ARACIS experts;
- l) to publish an annual report regarding its own work;
- m) once every 3 years, quality self-evaluation reports for its own activities, in order to prepare for external assessment by agencies from other countries.

ARACIS is governed by a Council composed of 21 members. There are 17 teachers with teaching positions in higher education, which usually represent areas of university studies.

One representative of employers, one representative of a Trade Union with the most members in higher education and two students, as representatives of the student federations from Romania, reconfirmed at the beginning of each academic year, belong to ARACIS Board, too.



4 ANNEX

HE COUNTRY DATA: SERBIA

Authored by Andronie Mihai, Andronie Iustin (SHU)

A HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Specify the different levels in the system specifying for each item:

Graduate courses:	Minimum age	Required certification	Length
Bachelor applied (Basic professional studies – level I Bologna)	18-19	4 year school graduates, with admission test or ability check passed	3 years, 180 ECTS
Bachelor (Basic academic studies – level I Bologna)	18-19	4 year school graduates, with admission test or ability check passed	3-4 years, 180-240 ECTS

Postgraduate courses:	Minimum age	Required certification	Length
Master (level II Bologna)	21-23	Bachelor finished	1-2 years, 60-120 ECTS
Post –secondary / high school	21-23	Bachelor finished	1 year, 60 ECTS
Master (Master course)	23-24	Bachelor applied finished	1 year, 60 ECTS
Doctorate	21-23	At least 300 ECTS at the basic studies achieved	3 years, 180 ECTS

Higher education system has two types of studies:

- academic studies organized at universities, and
- applied profession-oriented studies organized either at colleges of applied studies or at universities.

Academic studies are structured on a three-cycle system that includes:

- Basic academic studies (Bachelor) lasting 3-4 years, with 180 to 240 ECTS,
- Master studies lasting 1-2 years with 60 to 120 ECTS, and
- Doctoral studies (PhD) with a minimum of three years of study or 180 ECTS.

The field of medical science (the studies of medicine, dentistry and veterinary medicine) is different from other fields. It lasts for 6 years and must carry a minimum of 360 ECTS.

Applied studies and vocational studies are also found in Serbia. They are structured on two levels:

- Basic applied studies, three years, 180 ECTS
- Specialized applied studies, one year, 60 ECTS

B QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

GENERAL DATA

- Is there any law/regulation and/or national standards about quality assurance in higher education?
If yes, please provide the needed details and the source you are referring to (add URL website/document)

- Yes, there is The Law on Higher Education (LHE, 2005 and amendments in 2008, 2010 and 2012) which can be accessed at the following link: <http://www.minoritycentre.org/sites/default/files/law-higher-education-serbia.pdf>.
- Serbia joined the Bologna Process in 2003 and thus initiated a reform process, which received its legal support in 2005 by the adoption of the Law on Higher Education. The Serbian Law on Higher Education governs the higher education system, the conditions and manner of carrying out higher education activities. It also deals with financing and other matters of importance for the performance of higher education in Serbia. The Law on Higher Education introduced in Serbia the European Credit Transfer System, the three-cycle system of study and the diploma supplement. From 2007/2008 all new students study under the new reformed study programmes at all higher education institutions.
- All higher education institutions must be accredited in order to obtain the working license issued by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development. Private higher education institutions (not founded by the state) have the same status as public ones.
- Each higher education institution is responsible for the quality assurance of the study programs it offers. According to the Law on Higher Education, the accreditation process is as follows:
 - The higher education institution, by its Statute or a general legal act, defines bodies and procedures concerning overseeing, assurance, promotion and development of the quality of study programmes, teaching and working conditions. It should also review the compliance with the quality assurance obligations by an independent higher education institution or a unit thereof shall be carried out in accordance with the regulations adopted by the Minister responsible for higher education, at the proposal of the National Council.
 - Quality review procedure also includes the assessment of study programmes made by students.
 - The Commission reviews the compliance with the quality assurance obligations by an independent higher education institution or a unit thereof according to an annual plan of activities, upon a specific order of the National Council, at the request of an independent higher education institution or that of the Minister.
 - The Commission reports on compliance with the quality assurance obligations by a given independent higher education institution or a unit to the National Council, the Minister and to the independent higher education institution itself.
 - The independent higher education institution may submit its comments on the quality review report to the National Council within a 15 days from the date of the receipt of the report.
 - The National Council forwards the report of the Commission to the Conference of Universities and the Students' Conference of Universities and/or the Conference of Academies of Professional Career Studies and the Students' Conference of Academies of Professional Career Studies.
 - The National Council makes its own assessment of whether the independent higher education institution concerned complies with its quality assurance obligations on the basis of the report of the Commission and forwards it to the independent higher education institution concerned and to the Minister.
 - The outcome of the review of compliance with quality assurance obligations by an independent higher education institution is publicized, in accordance to the legal act adopted by the National Council.

- Is there any evaluation agency, at national or regional level, appointed to assess quality assurance in higher education? If yes, please provide the needed details and the source you are referring to (<http://www.kapk.org/>)

- ▶ Yes, National Council for Higher Education - Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission. The National Council of Higher Education has set up the Accreditation and Quality Assurance Commission to deal with accreditation, quality assurance of higher education institutions in Serbia and evaluation of study programs.

The Commission, according to the law, is independent and functions on the principle of professionalism. Besides the implementation of the accreditation procedure and issue of licenses to higher education institutions, the Commission proposes quality standards and procedures:

- standards and procedures of accreditation of higher education institutions;
- standards and procedures of accreditation of study programs;
- standards and procedures of self-assessment and quality evaluation of the higher education institutions;

The National Council, according to the law, is made up of 16 members appointed by the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia:

- ten members among full professors, top scholars and scientists and/or artists with internationally recognized works or who have considerably contributed to national culture;
- two members among professors from the field of professional career studies, at the recommendation of the Conference of Academies of Professional Career Studies;
- four members shall be appointed from among prominent scientists or scholars, cultural figures, educators, artists or businessmen, three of them at the proposal of the Government of the Republic of Serbia

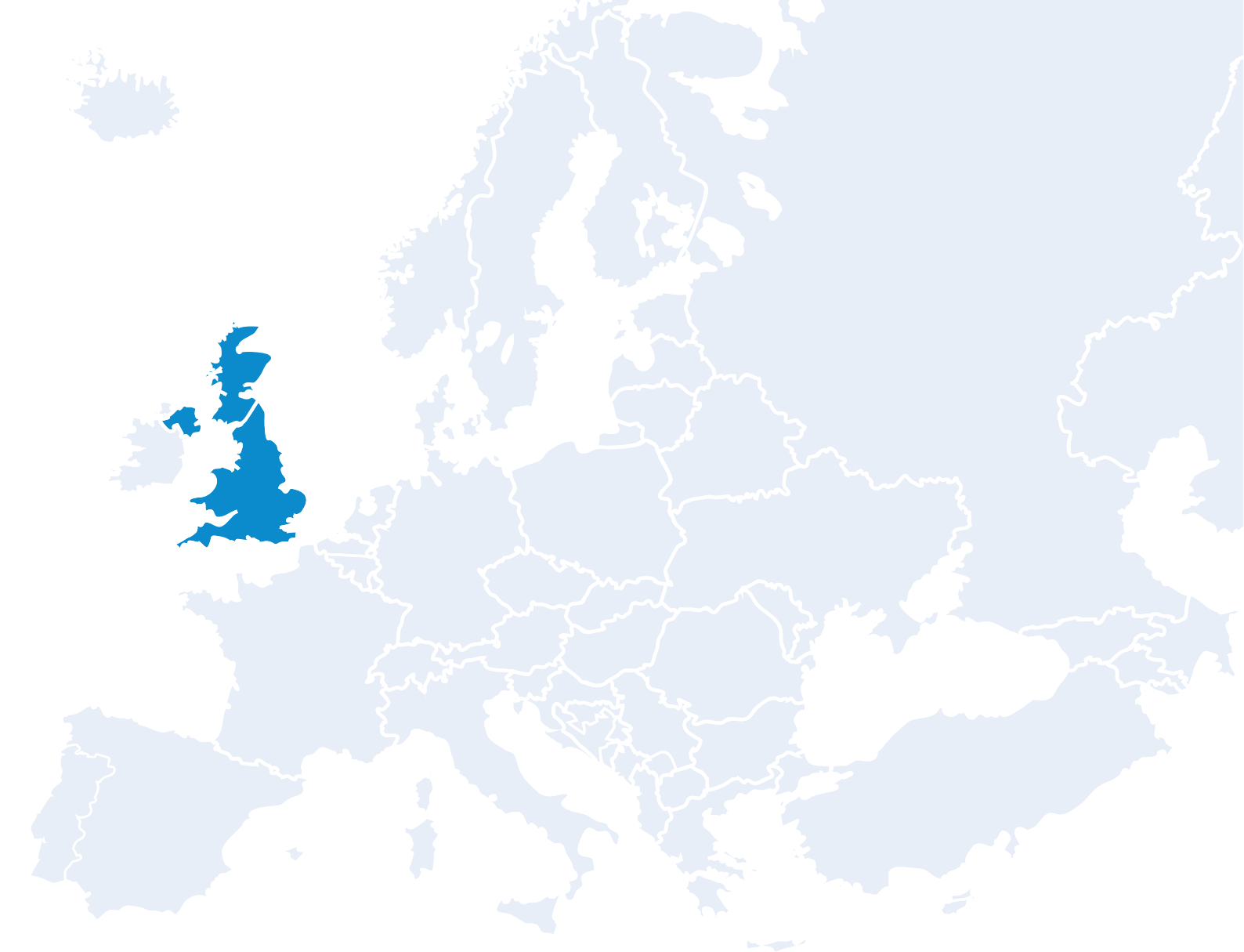
The National Council, according to the Law on Higher Education, has the following duties:

- to oversee the development of higher education and its conformity to European and international standards;
- recommend to the Ministry responsible for higher education affairs policies concerning higher education;
- provide advice on the policy of admission to higher education institutions;
- offer advice in the process of adoption of the legislation governing matters of relevance to higher education activities;
- make recommendations to the Government regarding general rules and standards for the work of higher education institutions, as well as financial resources for their implementation, upon receiving advice from the Conference of Universities and the Conference of Academies of Professional Career Studies;
- identify scientific, artistic and/or professional fields of activity as stipulated in the Law on Higher Education, at the recommendation of the Conference of Universities and the Conference of Academies of Professional Career Studies;
- set standards for internal assessment and quality evaluation of higher education institutions;
- set standards and the procedure for external appraisal of the quality of higher education institutions;
- establish standards for the issuance of work permit;
- establish standards and the procedure for accreditation of higher education institutions;
- establish standards and the procedure for accreditation of study programmes;
- decide in the second instance on appeals regarding the procedure of accreditation;
- make recommendations on more specific conditions relative to the election to the teaching positions;
- compile a list of professional, academic and scientific qualifications indicating the degree at a given level of study in a given field and abbreviations for these professional, academic and scientific qualifications;
- carry out any other tasks in accordance with the law.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN QA

- Are students involved in QA processes? (YES/NO) - YES
- **If yes,** please, specify (add the source you are referring to)
 - *The level of involvement (e.g. as informants, experts, etc.: provide some examples)*
 - According to the Law on Higher Education students are involved in governance and decision-making, in particular in matters relating to teaching quality assurance;
 - The quality review procedure must also include the assessment of study programmes by students;
 - Internal assessment procedure includes also an assessment made by students;
 - According to the Law on Higher Education, a higher education institution shall have a Students' Parliament – Article 56 of the Serbian Law on Higher Education;
 - The Council of the Higher Education institution referred to in the Serbian Law on Higher Education shall also comprise of students representatives;
 - According to the Law on Higher Education, in discussing and/or deciding the issues related to courses quality assurance, reform of study programmes, analysis of study effectiveness and the determination of the number of ECTS credits, representatives of students shall take part in professional bodies and their organs; students shall account for up to 20 per cent of the members of the professional bodies;
 - The Serbian Law on Higher Education establishes a Student Conference of Universities and a Student Conference of Academies of Professional Career Studies, established to pursue the common interests of students as partners in the process of higher education. The Student Conference of Universities is comprised of representatives of students' parliaments of universities. The Student Conference of Academies of Professional Career Studies is comprised of representatives of students' parliaments of academies of professional career studies. The Statute of the relevant Conference regulates organizational arrangements and work of the Conferences. According to the law, two representatives designated by the Student Conferences may take part, without the right to vote, in the work of the National Council.
 - *The timing (e.g. at the end of a course; along the whole academic year, etc: provide some examples)*
 - Providing feedback during and after the courses, from the students point of view, in the organisms they are participating, related to the quality of the program studies;
 - The students also can have their interests represented in the Council, as members of the Student Conferences, whenever the Council has meetings, but without the right to vote.
 - *The modalities (e.g. replying to institutional written questionnaires, participating to external audits, etc.: provide examples)*
 - Students are representing their interests related to quality assurance of higher education mainly by participating in different organisms at quality assurance level:
 - Professional bodies;
 - Students' Parliament;
 - The Council of the Higher Education;
 - Student Conferences.





5 ANNEX

HE COUNTRY DATA: UNITED KINGDOM¹⁰

Authored by Cristi Popescu (ESU)

A HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Undergraduate Programmes:	Minimum age	Required certification	Length
Bachelors` Degree	--	Secondary Education Diploma (A levels, International Baccalaureate, Scottish Highers or equivalent qualifications for graduating secondary education)	3 years, 4 in some cases
Foundation Degree	--	Secondary Education Diploma (A levels, International Baccalaureate, Scottish Highers or equivalent qualifications for graduating secondary education)	2 years
Diploma of Higher Education	--	Secondary Education Diploma (A levels, International Baccalaureate, Scottish Highers or equivalent qualifications for graduating secondary education)	2 years
Certificate of Higher Education	--	Secondary Education Diploma (A levels, International Baccalaureate, Scottish Highers or equivalent qualifications for graduating secondary education)	1 year
Higher National Diplomas (HNDs)	--	Secondary Education Diploma (A levels, International Baccalaureate, Scottish Highers or equivalent qualifications for graduating secondary education)	2 years

REFERENCE

¹⁰ Regarding the student engagement in quality assurance within UK, we will refer to the situation in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, having in mind Scotland has a slightly different situation.

Postgraduate courses:	Minimum age	Required certification	Length
Masters' Degree	--	Bachelor Degree	1 or 2 years
Master of Business Administration (MBAs)	--	Bachelor Degree	2 years
PhDs/Doctorates	--	Bachelor Degree	3 years
Postgraduate diplomas and qualifications	--	Bachelor Degree	Can vary very much – from some months to 1 or 2 years
Professional and vocational qualifications	--	Bachelor Degree	Can vary very much – from some months to 1 or 2 years
Conversion courses	--	Bachelor Degree	Can vary very much – from some months to 1 or 2 years

B QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

GENERAL DATA

- Is there any law/regulation and/or national standards about quality assurance in higher education? **If yes**, please provide the needed details and the source you are referring to (add URL website/document)

Yes, there is **The UK Quality Code for Higher Education**, written by Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in cooperation with the UK higher education sector. The UK Quality Code for Higher Education has three main sections – setting and maintaining academic standards, assuring and enhancing academic quality and information about higher education provision.

Higher education providers use the document as a starting point to define their own vision about quality in higher education, in conjunction with their own internal policies. The document is also used by QAA reviewers as the main reference point for their Higher Education Review work.

Sources: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code>

- Is there any evaluation agency, at national or regional level, appointed to assess quality assurance in higher education? **If yes**, please provide the needed details and the source you are referring to (add URL website/document)

Yes, there is **The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)**, an independent body which is responsible for monitoring the standards and enhancing the quality of higher education in UK. QAAs is not appointed directly by the law to carry external reviews, but it has contracts with UK public funding bodies (Scottish Higher Education Funding Council, Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, Department for Employment and Learning, Higher Education Funding Council for England) to carry their function of ensuring that the provision they fund is quality assessed.

All the reviews carried out by QAA are peer reviews and have at least one student in the team.

Sources: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us>

http://www.qu.edu.qa/offices/vpcao/documents/accreditation/UK_QA_in_higher_education.pdf

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN QA

- Are students involved in QA processes? (YES/NO) - YES
- **If yes**, please, specify (add the source you are referring to)
 - *The level of involvement (e.g. as informants, experts, etc.: provide some examples)*

For external quality assurance:

 - Experts – there is at least one student as full member in each review team
 - Informers – all reviews involve meeting with student groups and student representative bodies

For internal quality assurance:

 - Experts – there are universities where students can be full members in the internal bodies responsible with quality assurance
 - Consultative partners – there are universities where student representative bodies are consulted by structures responsible with internal quality assurance
 - Informers – providing feedback on different aspects related to learning and teaching or student life
 - *The timing (e.g. at the end of a course; along the whole academic year, etc: provide some examples)*

For external quality assurance:

 - Along the whole academic year, depending on when the QAA reviews are being operated

For internal quality assurance:

 - Along the whole academic year – if the students are full members or consultative partners within internal quality assurance bodies
 - Sometime during the course or at the end of a course – for providing feedback on teaching and learning or student life in general
 - *The modalities (e.g. replying to institutional written questionnaires, participating to external audits, etc.: provide examples)*

For external quality assurance:

 - Participating as full members in review teams
 - Submitting Student Written Submission (SWS) to external review teams
 - Providing feedback to external review teams (via focus groups or filling questionnaires)

For internal quality assurance:

 - Participating as full members or consultative partners within internal quality assurance bodies (e.g. participating to meetings, contributing to policies, reports, analyses made by those bodies, voting on decisions upon quality assurance etc.)
 - Providing feedback to different internal structures (e.g. about the teaching and learning methods, about the curricula, about the performance of each teacher, about student facilities, about student support services etc.)
 - Providing general feedback about higher education (National Student Survey, the Key Information Set)
 - Participating in decision-making processes (as full members)
 - Representing student views through a students' union or other representative body
 - Contributing to the development of learning and teaching (e.g. by providing feedback, by participating in the drafting process of new courses etc.)

Sources: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/partners/students>
<http://www.enqa.eu/indirme/papers-and-reports/workshop-and-seminar/Student%20involvement.pdf>
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/partners/students>
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/partners/students/our-review-methods/student-reviewers>



6 ANNEX

HE COUNTRY DATA: BELARUS

Authored by Gohar Hovhannisyan (ANSA)

A HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Graduate Programmes:	Minimum age	Required certification	Length
I ступень (High educated specialist Degree)	--	certificate or diploma of vocational or specialized secondary education	4-6 years
II ступень (магистратура) (Magister Degree)	--	I ступень (High educated specialist Degree)	1-2 years

Postgraduate courses:	Minimum age	Required certification	Length
Адъюнктура «Исследователь» (Postgraduate Degree)	--	II ступень (магистратура) (Magister Degree)	3-5 years
Докторантура (Doctorate degree)	--	Адъюнктура «Исследователь» (Postgraduate Degree)	3-5 years

B QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

GENERAL DATA

- Is there any law/regulation and/or national standards about quality assurance in higher education? **If yes**, please provide the needed details and the source you are referring to (add URL website/document)

Code of the Republic of Belarus on Education (Кодекс Республики Беларусь об образовании 2011 <http://cis.rudn.ru/document/show.action;jsessionid=B894B7CAF5530180D7F3EA2618254DD5?document.id=2108>)

Is there any evaluation agency, at national or regional level, appointed to assess quality assurance in higher education? **If yes**, please provide the needed details and the source you are referring to (add URL website/document)

Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus (Министерством образования Республики Беларусь <http://edu.gov.by>)

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN QA

- Are students involved in QA processes? (YES/NO) NO



7 ANNEX

HE COUNTRY DATA: MOLDOVA

Authored by Gohar Hovhannisyan (ANSA)

A HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Graduate Programmes:	Minimum age	Required certification	Length
Licența (the Bachelor degree)	17	DIPLOMA DE BACALAUREAT (Secondary school credential/certificate/diploma(s))	-4 years (180- 240 ECTS) 5-6 years for medicine and pharmacy (300-360 ECTS)
the Master degree	--	baza diplomei de licență (based bachelor degree)	1.5-2 years (90-180 ECTS)
the Doctoral degree (Ph.D)	--	master's degree or higher degree	3 years (180 ECTS) in general 4 years in human medical, veterinary medical, agricultural, biological and pharmaceutical sciences

Postgraduate courses:	Minimum age	Required certification	Length
Postdoctorat (postdoctoral)	--	Ph.D degree	Max 3 years

B QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

GENERAL DATA

- Is there any law/regulation and/or national standards about quality assurance in higher education? **If yes**, please provide the needed details and the source you are referring to (add URL website/document)

The Quality assurance in Moldova is defined by the Code of Education Article 99 (<http://lex.justice.md/viewdoc.php?action=view&view=doc&id=355156&lang=1>). Other legal documents are:

- Law on Education (nr. 547-XIII of 21.07.1995)
- Law on the evaluation and accreditation of educational institutions (Nr. 1257-XIII of 16.07.1997)
- Regulation on the evaluation and accreditation of educational institutions (Nr. 423-XIV of 04.06.1999)
- Regulation on Quality Management System (2000)
- Conceptual benchmarks on the implementation of QMS in HEIs (2009)
- Development National Strategy of the Republic of Moldova 2012-2020

- Is there any evaluation agency, at national or regional level, appointed to assess quality assurance in higher education? **If yes**, please provide the needed details and the source you are referring to (add URL website/document)

Few months ago on 01.04.2015 The government of Moldova approved organization and functioning of ANACIP (National Agency for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education <http://anacip.md/>). ANACIP will do the external evaluation of the educational process. It will evaluate the curricula of all technical vocational schools, universities and training institutions and to carry out institutional accreditation.

Also the AQAS (Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes www.aqas.de) and ARACIS (Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education www.aracis.ro) operate in Moldova.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN QA

- Are students involved in QA processes? (YES/NO) - YES
- **If yes**, please, specify (add the source you are referring to)
 - *The level of involvement (e.g. as informants, experts, etc.: provide some examples)*
No information
 - *The timing (e.g. at the end of a course; along the whole academic year, etc: provide some examples)*
No information
 - *The modalities (e.g. replying to institutional written questionnaires, participating to external audits, etc.: provide examples)*
Students are involved in governance structures of National QA agencies, As observers in external review team, In the preparation of self evaluation reports, In follow-up procedures (source: National Report regarding the Bologna Process implementation 2012-2015 Moldova)





8 ANNEX

HE COUNTRY DATA: ARMENIA

Authored by Gohar Hovhannisyan (ANSA)

A HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Graduate Programmes:	Minimum age	Required certification	Length
Բակալավր (Bachelor diploma)	--	high school diploma	4 years (180-240 ECTS) 5 years for Medical and Agricultural programs (300 ECTS)
Մագիստրոս (Master diploma)	--	Բակալավր (Bachelor diploma)	1-2 years (60-120 ECTS)

Postgraduate courses:	Minimum age	Required certification	Length
Ph.D/ Candidate of Sci./Researcher	--	Մագիստրոս (Master diploma)	3 years
Doctor of science	--	Ph.D/ Candidate of Sci./Researcher	

B QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

GENERAL DATA

- Is there any law/regulation and/or national standards about quality assurance in higher education? **If yes**, please provide the needed details and the source you are referring to (add URL website/document)

Statute on State Accreditation of Tertiary Level Institutions and Academic Programmes in the Republic Of Armenia (URL: <http://www.anqa.am/en/Portals/0/STATUTE%20ON%20STATE%20ACCREDITATION.pdf>)

The Law of the RA on Higher and Post-Graduate Professional Education (URL: <http://studyinarmenia.org/html/1280.html>)

- Is there any evaluation agency, at national or regional level, appointed to assess quality assurance in higher education? **If yes**, please provide the needed details and the source you are referring to (add URL website/document)

Yes, The Armenian National Centre for Professional Education Quality Assurance Foundation (URL: www.anqa.am/en/).

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN QA

- Are students involved in QA processes? (YES/NO) - YES

- **If yes**, please, specify (add the source you are referring to)

- *The level of involvement (e.g. as informants, experts, etc.: provide some examples)*

Informants due to some discussions.

Members of the expert panel (Source: ANQA Accreditation manual,¹¹ Statute on Expert Panel Formation¹²).

Members of the ANQA Board of Trustees¹³

Members of the Accreditation Commission (Source: The Statute on Accreditation Committee formation and operation¹⁴)

- *The timing (e.g. at the end of a course; along the whole academic year, etc: provide some examples)*

Along the whole academic year depending on the Accreditation Timeline.

- *The modalities (e.g. replying to institutional written questionnaires, participating to external audits, etc.: provide examples)*

Students are involved in governance structures of National QA agencies, As full members in external review teams, As observers in external review team, In the preparation of self-evaluation reports, In follow-up procedures and in the decision making process for external reviews (source: National Report regarding the Bologna Process implementation 2012-2015 Armenia).

REFERENCES

¹¹ Source: <http://www.anqa.am/en/Portals/0/ANQA%20Accreditation%20Manual.pdf>

¹² Source: <http://www.anqa.am/am/%D4%B3%D5%B8%D6%80%D5%AE%D5%A8%D5%B6%D5%A9%D5%A1%D6%81%D5%B6%D5%A5%D6%80/%D4%B8%D5%B6%D5%A9%D5%A1%D6%81%D5%A1%D5%AF%D5%A1%D6%80%D5%A3%D5%A5%D6%80.aspx>

¹³ Source: <http://www.anqa.am/en/ANQA/StructureandStaff.aspx>

¹⁴ Source: <http://www.anqa.am/am/Portals/0/Havatarmagrman%20karg-nor.pdf>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT STUDENT PARTICIPATION

(authored by Nerses Gevorgyan - ASUE)

- ▶ *The level of involvement (e.g. as informants, experts, etc.: provide some examples)*
 1. Participation in external quality assurance (accreditation process) as experts
 2. Participation in internal quality assurance as informants (participation in self-assessment and evaluation of teaching, learning and estimation efficiency through surveys)
- ▶ *The timing (e.g. at the end of a course; along the whole academic year, etc: provide some examples)*

About 2 weeks
- ▶ *The modalities (e.g. replying to institutional written questionnaires, participating to external audits, etc.: provide examples)*
 - Replying to questionnaires
 - Participating in self-assessment
 - Participating to external quality assurance.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT STUDENT PARTICIPATION AT YSAFA

(authored by Yelena Baytalyan - YSAFA)

- ▶ *The level of involvement (e.g. as informants, experts, etc.: provide some examples)*

Students participate in surveys, interviews and focus groups conducted by the Quality Assurance Department of Yerevan State Academy of Fine Arts (YSAFA).

Some of the students participate in the preparation of the YSAFA self-assessment report.
- ▶ *The timing (e.g. at the end of a course; along the whole academic year, etc: provide some examples)*

Surveys and interviews are conducted throughout the whole year. There are yearly surveys and those that are conducted every 3-4 years.

Examples: Course assessment by the students, student assessment of the resources and the services provided by the Academy.
- ▶ *The modalities (e.g. replying to institutional written questionnaires, participating to external audits, etc.: provide examples)*

YSAFA is currently preparing an institutional self-assessment report to be presented for accreditation.



9 ANNEX

HE COUNTRY DATA: GEORGIA

Authored by Anush Gasparyan (ANQA)

INTRODUCTION

In order to fulfil requirement of the WP 2, Dev. 2.1, have been conducted desk research.

The research was accomplished based on the documents, legal sources and websites. Due to time limitation, core base for this research is considered Law of Georgia on Higher Education, sources shared on official website of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and some documents, reports of TEMPUS projects.

A HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

Higher Education system of Georgia consists of three cycles:

- First cycle – Bachelor's Degree (240 credits);
- Second cycle – Master's Degree (120 credits);
- Third cycle – Doctor's Degree (180 credits).

The first cycle program leading to the degree of Certified Specialist provides 120-180 credits. Medicine, dental medicine and veterinary medicine (300-360 credits) are integrated education programs and their learning outcomes lead to the qualification equal to master's degree.

As above mentioned, the three-cycle higher education (HE) system has been implemented in Georgia. Bachelor, master and doctoral programmes have already been introduced in all accredited higher education institutions. All students below doctoral level are enrolled in the two-cycle degree system (except for certain specific specialisations such as medicine). Higher professional programmes have been introduced as a short cycle within Bachelor studies for students who are interested in acquiring practical skills. Upon completion of this type of programme, they receive a qualification from a certified specialist. These programmes correspond to 120 to 180 ECTS credits. These credits can be recognised for Bachelor programmes if students continue their education. Bachelor programmes cannot comprise less than 240 ECTS credits whereas Master programmes comprise 120 ECTS and doctoral programmes 180 ECTS. In addition, Medicine, dental medicine and veterinary medicine (300-360 credits) are integrated education programs and their learning outcomes lead to the qualification equal to master's degree.

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The following are the higher education institutions in Georgia:

- College – higher education institution implementing professional higher educational programme or/and only the first cycle programmes – Bachelor programmes;
- Teaching University – higher education institution implementing higher educational programme/programmes (except for doctoral programmes). It is required to provide the second cycle – Master educational programme/programmes.
- University – higher education institution implementing educational programmes of all the three cycles of higher academic education.¹⁵

REFERENCE

¹⁵ <http://www.mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=131&lang=eng> MEG

LENGTH OF THE COURSE AND REQUIRED CERTIFICATION TO ACCESS

Only the persons holding the state certificate of full general education or those with equal status shall have the right to take a bachelor's programme.¹⁶ The duration of the first stage is usually four years.¹⁷ Students having a Bachelor's degree or equivalent shall be entitled to take a master's program.¹⁸ A person holding a master's or an equivalent academic degree shall be entitled to take a doctoral programme.¹⁹ The duration of a masters degree is two years.²⁰ Students who were awarded a masters degree may continue their studies at the third stage. Doctorate comprises three years' study and ends with the presentation and defense of a thesis that leads to a PhD.

Law on HE of Georgia does not specify minimum age of access to higher education.

Graduate Programmes:	Minimum age	Required certification	Length
(Bachelor)	--	Secondary high school diploma	4 years 240 credits
(Degree) Master	--	Bachelor's or equalised thereto degree	2 years 120 credits

Postgraduate courses:	Minimum age	Required certification	Length
Doctorate	--	Master's Degree	3 years 180 credits

B QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM IN GEORGIA

GENERAL DATA

Georgian education area is regulated by the following legal acts:

Georgian Law on Higher Education; Georgian Law on Education Quality Enhancement; Other related laws and bodies.

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The principle of autonomy of the higher educational institution is stipulated in the Law of Georgia on Higher Education as one of the leading principles of the national HE system. New amendments to the Law on Higher Education (2011) provide for different legal status of HEIs and responsibilities of state authorities differ respectively. There are three legal forms of HEIs: legal entity of public law, legal entity of private law and non-commercial non-profit legal entity (NNLE) (the last can be also established by the state). Law defines the functions and responsibilities of the state authorities. The state authorities have certain powers in the field of higher education:

REFERENCES

¹⁶ LAW OF GEORGIA ON HIGHER EDUCATION Chapter I General Provisions Article 48, 1.

¹⁷ <http://www.euroeducation.net/prof/goergco.htm>

¹⁸ *Id* at Article 48, 3

¹⁹ *Id* at Article 49, 1

²⁰ *Supra* note 3

– Parliament of Georgia: defines the key guidelines of HE policy and management, and passes appropriate legislative acts. – Government of Georgia: defines the amount of the state education grant and draws up social programmes and state programmes in the field of higher education; The Government can also establish an HEI as a legal entity of public law. The Prime Minister appoints directors of the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement and National Examination Centre. – Ministry of Education and Science (MoES): implements a unified HE policy; develops basic documents reflecting HE system indicators; proposes the amount of state education grants. – Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection and Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs: decide the normative acts in the sphere of fine arts and sports higher education and finance fine arts and sports higher education.

HEIs having the status of legal entities of public law are subject to greater control by the Ministry of Education and Science: the MoES approves the charter of public HEIs upon the proposal of the Council of Representatives; the MoES exerts state control over them and is responsible for enforcing normative acts enacted in the field of HE. In case of non-commercial non-profit legal entity, founded by the state, governmental control is significantly reduced. At the same time, HEIs, independently of their legal form, are free to develop and approve study, research and creative work policies, develop and approve rules for personnel recruitment, their internal regulations, elect their management bodies and officials and manage their finances and property. The formal autonomy of HEIs granted by law is evolving into an effective autonomy. The establishment of a Council of Rectors of Public Higher Education Institutions and a Council of Rectors of Private Higher Education Institutions in 2009 is a clear sign of the growing self-confidence of HEIs.

Governing bodies of the higher education institutions The law of Georgia on Higher Education (Chapter IV) defines the governing bodies of public higher education institutions as having the status of legal entity of public law. The new legislation defines faculty members, students and professors as chief agents in higher education. Rectors of HEIs are no longer appointed by the President but elected by the members of the Academic Council.²¹

LAW OF GEORGIA ON HIGHER EDUCATION

This Law shall regulate the process of conduct of educational and scientific-research activities of higher educational institutions in Georgia, the principles and procedure of management and funding of higher education, establishes the rules and procedure of foundation, performance, reorganisation and liquidation of a higher education institution, as well as the principles of authorisation and accreditation.

Article 3 of the law defines Goals of Higher Education “2. d) Establishment of quality assurance systems including authorisation system, accreditation system and quality management (assurance) services at higher education institutions”²²

LAW OF GEORGIA ON DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The aim of this Law is to define legal foundation of mechanisms of assistance to development of quality of education. Chapter 2 of the law is on Body Authorized for External Mechanisms of Assistance to Development of Quality of Education and article 3 recognizes the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement as QA of higher education and article 5 defines Main Directions of the Activities of the Center like it shall assist improvement of development of quality of education by development of recommendations etc.²³

REFERENCES

²¹ European Commission

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/tempus/participating_countries/overview/georgia_tempus_country_fiche_final.pdf

²² <http://eqe.ge/res/docs/2014120816000571585.pdf>

²³ <http://eqe.ge/res/docs/201412081600419310.pdf>

EVALUATION AGENCY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE ASSESSMENT

Mechanisms of quality assurance, including authorization and accreditation, are defined by the adopted law “Development of Quality of Education” (July 2010). Through the authorization mechanism an institution is granted the status of a higher education institution if it complies with defined standards in certain areas of performance. The standards for authorisation are in: a) educational programmes, b) material resources, c) human resources. The state recognizes diplomas, issued only by authorized HEIs. Authorization is granted for five years. The accreditation process defines the status (the right to issue the certificate recognised by the state) of an existing HEI and/or educational programme. The aim of the accreditation mechanism is to enable systematic self-evaluations of higher educational institutions. The goal is to improve the quality of education by having educational programmes comply with the standards of accreditation and quality improvement mechanisms.²⁴

A special state authority – the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) – has been established to ensure authorisation and accreditation processes. It operates in compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.²⁵

The Legal Entity of Public Law (LEPL) – National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement was founded on 1 September, 2010 under the Law of Georgia on Educational Quality Enhancement. The EQE is the legal successor of the LEPL - National Center for Educational Accreditation.

As a result of amendments made to the Law of Georgia on Higher Education and the Law of Georgia on General Education the same September 2010, mandatory licensing and institutional accreditation were substituted by the authorisation procedure. The content of accreditation was also modified – it establishes the compatibility of an educational programme with accreditation standards and aims at introducing regular self-evaluation for the improvement of educational quality and promotion of further development of quality assurance. Authorisation is a mandatory procedure for educational institutions, whilst accreditation – is a voluntary one.

Until these amendments the licensing and accreditation were not mandatory for the acquisition of the status of an educational institution. The licensing procedures were administered by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia and accreditation –by the LEPL - National Center for Educational Accreditation.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia launched the institutional accreditation in 2004 and on 27 March 2006 the Legal Entity of Public Law – the State Service for the Accreditation of Educational Institutions of Georgia, later the National Center for Educational Accreditation was founded to this end by Order №222 of the Minister of Education and Science of Georgia. The Center was authorised to carry out the institutional and programme accreditation in higher, vocational and general education institutions of Georgia.²⁶

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN QA

According to the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, student self-governance was granted certain powers to participate in HEI management. According to Article 45 of the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, student self-governance, in compliance with its statute, is granted the powers:

- to ensure students' involvement in the higher education institution management,
- to promote protection of students' rights,
- to elect representatives to the Faculty Council,
- to make recommendations on improving the faculty/higher education institution's management systems and quality of studying, and present them to the Faculty Council, Senate and Academic Council and to exercise other powers as may be defined by the statute.²⁷

Additional information authored by Andronie Mihai and Andronie Iustin (SHU)

REFERENCES

²⁴ *Supra note 7*

²⁵ *Id*

²⁶ <http://eqe.ge/eng/static/5/about-us>

²⁷ <http://eqe.ge/res/docs/2014120816000571585.pdf>

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN QA

- Are students involved in QA processes? (YES/NO) - YES
- **If yes**, please, specify (add the source you are referring to)
 - *The level of involvement (e.g. as informants, experts, etc.: provide some examples)*
 - Students are involved in a systematic assessment of the quality of programmes and their administration.
 - University-wide student population is comprehensively involved in the process through online surveys.
 - Survey results (both qualitative and quantitative) are acted upon while planning for the improvement of the learning services.
 - Targeted intervention include student focus-groups for in-depth analysis of the problems with academic programme delivery and administration services.
 - *The timing (e.g. at the end of a course; along the whole academic year, etc: provide some examples)*
 - At the end of an academic semester, twice within an academic year.
 - *The modalities (e.g. replying to institutional written questionnaires, participating to external audits, etc.: provide examples)*
 - Online surveys, focus-groups, participation in accreditation processes (i.e. external audit).

CASE STUDY

Authored by Anush Gasparyan (ANQA)

Stakeholder Survey Analysis on Quality Assurance Process in Georgia National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement (NCEQE) Tbilisi, 2013

The following survey was undertaken within the framework of the project on “Promoting Internationalization and Comparability of Quality Assurance in Higher Education” in the timeframe of February-March 2013

Students Overall, 140 students were surveyed in all 4 partner HEIs.

The student questionnaires focused on student experience regarding accredited programmes, their expectations and involvement in quality assurance process at a HEI. Bachelor students (67.4%), Master students (18.8%), Graduate medical students (3.6%) and PhD students (10.1%) were surveyed. 97.8 percent of respondents were involved in accredited HE programmes. 84.7 percent of students indicated that they are well aware of programme accreditation and see the advantages of studying on an accredited programme, while 15.3 percent indicated they were not

aware of programme accreditation. The survey showed that students have clear understanding of programme accreditation and its advantages, 74.3% of students are aware of authorization of educational institutions, while 23.6% of respondents indicated they don't have information about authorization. 83.1% of respondents indicated that authorization is highly significant, while 10.3 % considered is significant and less than 3% said it was insignificant.

The majority of respondents supported the idea that standards for educational institutions should be defined by the State (78.3%), while only 13.8% indicated, they did not have a clear idea who should define the standards and 8% opposed the practice that the State should define the standards. As to the student involvement in quality assurance process, the results showed the low involvement of students. 12.5% of students indicated they are actively involved and 87.5% responded they have never been involved.²⁸

²⁸http://www.picqa.org/en/Portals/o/PicqaFiles/6_2%20NCEQE%20stakeholder%20surveys%20report%20final%203-%20onk.pdf



10 ANNEX

HE COUNTRY DATA: UKRAINE

Authored by Ella Karagulyan (ANQA)

A HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Course	Minimum age	Required certification	Length
Молодший спеціаліст- Junior specialist (incomplete higher education)	--	Complete general secondary education certificate ²⁹ or Diploma of qualified worker	2-3 years- 120-180 ECTS (3-4 years based on Basic general secondary education certificate)

Graduate Programmes:	Minimum age	Required certification	Length
Бакалавр- Bachelor	--	Junior specialist diploma or Complete general secondary education certificate	3-4 years- 180-240 ECTS (2-3 years on the basis of the Junior specialist diploma)
Спеціаліст- Specialist	--	Bachelor diploma	1-1.5 years- 60-90 ECTS (Programmes in medicine and veterinary have a duration of 5-6 years- 300-360 ECTS.)
Магістр- Master	--	Bachelor	1-2- years- 60-120 ECTS (Programs in medicine and veterinary have a duration of)

Postgraduate courses:	Minimum age	Required certification	Length
Кандидат наук- Candidate of science (doctoral)	--	Specialist or Master diploma	3 years
Доктор наук Doctor of science (post-doctoral)	--	Candidate of science diploma	3 years

B QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

GENERAL DATA

- Is there any law/regulation and/or national standards about quality assurance in higher education?
If yes, please provide the needed details and the source you are referring to (add URL website/document)

REFERENCE

²⁹ Persons with basic secondary education may study in the educational and professional programmes of junior specialist's training, simultaneously obtaining complete secondary education.

Please, note, that currently Ukraine undergoes structural reforms on quality assurance of higher education. The new Law of Ukraine on Higher Education entered into force in September, 2014, and the establishment of the new system for quality assurance is in its preliminary stage (creation of regulations, relevant bodies, etc.).

The system of quality assurance in the country is regulated by Section V (Quality Assurance of Higher Education) Articles 16-25 of the Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education" (entered into force- September 6, 2014).³⁰

According to Article 16 of the Law, the system for higher education quality assurance in Ukraine consists of:

- the system for education activity quality assurance and higher education quality assurance by higher educational institutions (internal quality assurance system);
- the system for external quality assurance of education activity of higher educational institutions and quality assurance of higher education;
- the system for quality assurance of the work of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance and independent institutions for higher education quality assessment and assurance.

The National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance is a permanent collegial body authorized by the Law to implement state policy in the sphere of higher education quality assurance (Article 17 of the Law). The competences of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance are established by Article 18 of the Law.

Article 19 of the Law determines the membership of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance.

Sessions of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance are duly constituted if attended by at least two thirds of its members. Decisions on all issues are made by a majority vote of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance members. Members of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance carry out functions vested in them on the basis of civil law agreements concluded with them. The National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance can involve independent institutions for higher education quality assessment and assurance accredited by it, to take part in the procedure for education program accreditation (Article 20 of the Law).

According to Article 21 of the Law, sector-based expert councils of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance are formed for a term not exceeding 3 years, of 9 to 15 members who hold an academic degree in the appropriate discipline or a minimum of 5 years of experience of professional work in the sector, except for representatives of student self-government bodies. Sector-based expert councils can include representatives of the state, employers, their organizations and associations, professional associations, higher educational institutions of all property forms, academic institutions, the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, national sector-based academies of sciences, representatives of student self-government bodies, and international experts.

An independent institution for higher education quality assessment and assurance is a non-government organization (institution, agency, bureau, etc.) accredited by the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance, which assesses education programs, education results, and/or higher educational institutions (their organizational units) in order to produce recommendations and assist higher educational institutions in organizing a system for higher education quality assurance, and submit proposals to the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance concerning education program accreditation (Article 23 of the Law).

Article 24 of the Law establishes that educational activity in the sphere of higher education is conducted by higher educational institutions and academic institutions (to prepare specialists with a doctor of philosophy degree) on the basis of licenses issued by the central executive authority in the sphere of education and science, according to the procedure established by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine according to the Law. In order to procure a license for education activity, an applicant submits a written application and an expert opinion of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance to the central executive authority in the sphere of education and science. Based on the received documents, the central executive authority in the sphere of education and science, within 10 working days, issues the appropriate higher educational institution with a license to conduct education activity, or denies such license.

REFERENCE

³⁰ The abstract of the Law is available in English, however, the full text is available in Ukrainian only.

The decision to deny the license must be substantiated and contain references to specific provisions of the education activity standard that the applicant fails to conform to. Licenses are issued separately for each specialty, for a term of 10 years, and can only be annulled for reasons provided for by the Law. Information about license issue and annulment is entered into the Single State Electronic Database in the Issues of Education.

The procedure for education program accreditation is established by Article 25 of the Law.

Source: Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. Law of Ukraine on Higher Education | from 01.07.2014 № 1556-VII (Abstract text). (n.d.).

Retrieved May 15, 2015, from <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/annot/en/1556-18> [Abstract text in English].

Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. Law of Ukraine on Higher Education | from 01.07.2014 № 1556-VII (Page 1 of 6). (n.d.). Retrieved May 15, 2015, from <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/en/1556-18> [in Ukrainian].

Is there any evaluation agency, at national or regional level, appointed to assess quality assurance in higher education? If yes, please provide the needed details and the source you are referring to (add URL website/document).

The new Law of Ukraine on Higher Education stipulates the creation and functioning of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance as a permanent collegial body authorized by the Law to implement state policy in the sphere of higher education quality assurance. However, the implementation of the law is in its preliminary stage: the agency is being created and regulations are being formed.

As of now the Ukrainian system of quality assurance is being implemented via licensing and accreditation procedures. The Department of Licensing, Accreditation and Notification of Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine is in charge of licencing and accreditation of HEIs. Other government bodies enrolled in the process of higher education quality control are State Accreditation Commission, Supreme Attestation Commission, and State Inspectorate on Educational Institutions of Ukraine.

Source: Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. (n.d.). Retrieved May 15, 2015, from <http://old.mon.gov.ua/en/>

DINZ. (n.d.). Retrieved May 15, 2015, from <http://dinz.gov.ua/index/en>

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN QA

- Are students involved in QA processes? (YES/NO)

The new Law of Ukraine on Higher Education defines the involvement of students at the external quality assurance level, specifically, as sector-based expert councils of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance (Article 21 of the Law).

"Sector-based expert councils can include representatives of the state, employers, their organizations and associations, professional associations, higher educational institutions of all property forms, academic institutions, the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, national sector-based academies of sciences, representatives of student self-government bodies, and international experts."

Some reports also state involvement of students at the internal quality assurance level, including replying to questionnaires, however, this needs further inquiry from the HEIs and the Department of Higher Education of MoES.³¹

REFERENCE

³¹ http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/links/documents/HigherEducation_in_Ukraine_Russian.pdf

11 ANNEX: COLLECTION OF PRACTICES

GERMANY

Authored by Cristi Popescu (ESU)

<i>Country of the practice:</i>	Germany
<i>Source of the information (e.g. website, article, reference persons, etc.)</i>	The European Students Union, Quest for Quality for Students: Going back to basics, 2012 http://www.esu-online.org/asset/News/6068/QUEST-for-quality-for-students-publication-Part1.pdf
<i>Context of development (what HE institution, course of study, etc)</i>	National level, students from different federal states
<i>Promotor (Association, Agency, Ministry, etc.)</i>	fzs, the unions of students of the federal states, the general assemblies of study programmes of Germany
<i>Relevance for ESPAQ:</i>	It shows a good example of a very well developed Quality Assurance Student Experts Pool
<i>Summary (brief description of the practice, initiative, etc.)</i>	<p>Since 2001, the students involved in the QA system in Germany belong to an experts` pool. The pool is the only legitimate structure which is allowed to delegate students to every position connected to the German QA system. The pool consists of approximately 700 students and it is maintained by three organisations: FZS (the National Union of Students from Germany), the unions of students of the federal states, the general assemblies of study programmes of Germany. The pool is responsible for training students for their positions and provide regular activities to allow the students to keep themselves up to date and to share their experiences. Nearly all study programs are represented by the students in the pool, although there are some imbalances between them.</p> <p>The pool`s most important body is the General Assembly, consisting of all members. The GA elects the Executive Committee, which consists of three to five members, which is responsible with the daily work. The pool has two employees who are responsible for interaction and communication with the agencies, planning the study sessions and trainings, delegation of students to the quality reviews, and financing. Selecting students for the reviews is done on a random and gender equality based system.</p>
Additional information	
<i>Role of students</i>	They are the only ones who lead and organise the activity of the QA Student Experts` Pool
<i>People involved (e.g. academic staff, technical and administrative staff, policy makers, etc.)</i>	Only students, together with the staff employed
<i>Monitoring/evaluation process and/or structured feedback put in place</i>	No information about this
<i>Added value of the practice for enhancing participation of students in QA at the HE</i>	The wide number of students who are part of the pool are actively involved within QA processes in their own universities or in external evaluations.

ROMANIA

Authored by Cristi Popescu (ESU)

<i>Country of the practice:</i>	Romania
<i>Source of the information (e.g. website, article, reference persons, etc.)</i>	The National Alliance of Student Organisations in Romania – Dragoş Dumitru, General Secretary
<i>Context of development (what HE institution, course of study, etc)</i>	National level, including students from different HE institutions in Romania
<i>Promotor (Association, Agency, Ministry, etc.)</i>	The National Alliance of Student Organisations in Romania (ANOSR), The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ARACIS)
<i>Relevance for ESPAQ:</i>	It shows an example on how the quality of student involvement within QA processes can be improved
<i>Summary (brief description of the practice, initiative, etc.)</i>	<p>Students from Romania have their own Quality Assurance Student Experts` Pool managed by ANOSR. In order to be member of this pool, each student has to participate to a training organized by ANOSR in which participants learn more about the Bologna Process, the national framework of Quality Assurance, internal and external QA practices and, at the end, they simulate an external evaluation of the host university of the training (including site visits, discussions with stakeholders, desk research on official documents and writing a report at the end).</p> <p>The training lasts 4-6 days and the participants are assessed by ANOSR based on their performance during the training, their involvement in the simulation of the external evaluation and the final report. Based on that assessment, the best participants are selected to be part of external evaluation teams for future QA evaluations organised by ARACIS or other QA agencies.</p> <p>The training is organised every year by ANOSR, with the support of ARACIS and a different HE institution. The call is open to every student in Romania and it is made public on the website of ANOSR and promoted using media. The content is fully prepared by ANOSR, as well as the selection of participants.</p>
Additional information	
<i>Role of students</i>	Students, through ANOSR, organise the content of the training, are in charge of the call for participants, select the best applications and facilitate the sessions of training. The entire process is led by ANOSR, while ARACIS and the hosting HE institutions are supporting it with resources.
<i>People involved (e.g. academic staff, technical and administrative staff, policy makers, etc.)</i>	Student representatives, members of the Board of ANOSR (for leading and organising the training), administrative staff of ARACIS (for financial practicalities), administrative and academic staff of the HE institution (during the simulation)
<i>Monitoring/evaluation process and/or structured feedback put in place</i>	The participants are monitored and assessed by ANOSR. At the end of the project, there is a meeting between ANOSR and ARACIS where ANOSR presents a report of the training, including the feedback of participants who have to fill a questionnaire at the end of the training.
<i>Added value of the practice for enhancing participation of students in QA at the HE</i>	The training helps the students to be well prepared when participating in external QA evaluations. They have all the information they need about how an external evaluation is organised and they feel more confident as full members of the evaluation teams. On the other hand, they learn more about the ESG and the national methodology for QA and they can be more involved in internal QA processes within their own university.

ROMANIA

Authored by Andronie Maria, Fainisi Florin, Barbalata Stefan (SHU)



<i>Country of the practice:</i>	Romania
<i>Source of the information (e.g. website, article, reference persons, etc.)</i>	Rules and procedures included in the Quality Manual, worked out at the university level www.spiruharet.ro www.edu.ro
<i>Context of development (what HE institution, course of study, etc)</i>	Development of the educational services offered by faculties and university
<i>Promotor (Association, Agency, Ministry, etc.)</i>	University Management and ARACIS (Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education), Ministry of Education & Scientific Research
<i>Relevance for ESPAQ:</i>	Contribution to the HE quality raising by adaptation of the educational services offered to students in order to get specific competences
<i>Summary (brief description of the practice, initiative, etc.)</i>	<p>Elaboration and application of an assessment procedure regarding the rate of satisfaction of the students as for by the university offered learning/development environment.</p> <p>Description:</p> <p>Polls done by each faculty in order to know the students opinions regarding their appreciation of the learning/development environment offered by university and their own learning route.</p> <p>In that respect are used the questionnaire included in the Procedure for students satisfaction evaluation.</p> <p>The members of the Quality Assessment and Assurance Commissions are applying the questionnaires and the members of each Department are centralizing the results and make the conclusions presented to the Faculty management team, based on which they are disposing measures for continuous improving of the learning/development environment and of the students own learning route. The IT Department give their special support for the implementation of the questionnaires on the e-learning Blackboard platform and for the electronic centralisation of results</p>
Additional information	
<i>Role of students</i>	By answering the questions from the questionnaire each student makes an objective appreciation of the learning/development environment offered by the university. Students, as members of the Quality Assessment and Assurance Commissions at the faculty level warrant the validation and the interpretation of the results.
<i>People involved (e.g. academic staff, technical and administrative staff, policy makers, etc.)</i>	Academic staff, technical and administrative staff, policy makers, students, Quality Assessment and Assurance Commissions members, SHU Quality Management Department, Council of the Course of Study Department, Council of the Faculty, IT Department, Vice Rector for HE Quality
<i>Monitoring/evaluation process and/or structured feedback put in place</i>	The right implementation of the <i>Procedure for students satisfaction evaluation</i> regarding the learning/development environment is permanently monitored by the Comission of inner audit of the Senate and the Comissions at the faculty level, by SHU Senate through its specialized Comissions, by SHU Quality Management Department
<i>Added value of the practice for enhancing participation of students in QA at the HE</i>	Added value of the practice for enhancing participation of students in QA at the HE is coming from the right implementation of the <i>Procedure for students satisfaction evaluation</i> .

FINLAND

Authored by Cristi Popescu (ESU)

<i>Country of the practice:</i>	Finland
<i>Source of the information (e.g. website, article, reference persons, etc.)</i>	The European Students Union, Quest for Quality for Students: Going back to basics, 2012 http://www.esu-online.org/asset/News/6068/QUEST-for-quality-for-students-publication-Part1.pdf
<i>Context of development (what HE institution, course of study, etc)</i>	National level, including the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC) and 9 universities and universities of applied science
<i>Promotor (Association, Agency, Ministry, etc.)</i>	The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC)
<i>Relevance for ESPAQ:</i>	It shows an example of how HE institutions can be supported to develop more student-oriented QA systems
<i>Summary (brief description of the practice, initiative, etc.)</i>	As a consequence of Bologna Process and the first adopted ESG, in 2005 all Finish universities adopted quality assurance systems. In order to support universities to develop more student-oriented quality assurance systems, FINHEEC organised in autumn 2005 a training project for 9 universities and universities of applied science. The HE institutions worked to produce innovative models for the role of students in their own contexts and the training showed that universities' quality assurance systems can include multiple types of student participation.
Additional information	
<i>Role of students</i>	2 full members (out of 12) of FINHEEC are students, representing the two national student unions from Finland (SYL – representing students in universities and SAMOK – representing students in universities of applied science). In this way, students were involved in the training and provided feedback.
<i>People involved (e.g. academic staff, technical and administrative staff, policy makers, etc.)</i>	Members of FINHEEC and academic staff, technical staff and internal QA policy makes within the 9 universities.
<i>Monitoring/evaluation process and/or structured feedback put in place</i>	There is no information about this aspect.
<i>Added value of the practice for enhancing participation of students in QA at the HE</i>	The training made HE institutions more aware of the role of student participation in QA internal processes and helped them to find creative ways of involving students in their own local contexts.

PORTUGAL

Authored by Laura Fedeli (UNIMC)

Country of the practice: Portugal

Source of the information http://www.forumgestaoensinosuperior2011.ul.pt/docs_documentos/15/paineis/08/ma_ms_cc.pdf
(e.g. website, article, reference persons, etc.)

Context of development (what HE institution, course of study, etc) University of Coimbra (UC)

Promotor (Association, Agency, Ministry, etc.) UC with the collaboration of internal and external Stakeholders

Relevance for ESPAQ: In 2014 UC received a special mention for the Excellence recognition -Portugues system of quality (Menção Honrosa no Prémio de Excelência 2004 - Sistema Português da Qualidade). Relevant role of UC student participation in the QA process

Summary (brief description of the practice, initiative, etc.) The University of Coimbra (UC) is a reference institution at European level since it's recognized to be the Portuguese university that satisfies most quality standards. UC established a strategic plan (2011-2015) and within its missions related to research, teaching and knowledge transfer, a special mention is to be attributed to teaching and its quality assessment. Among the strategic initiatives the UC focuses on the students' participation and involvement.

Tools to monitor and support the assessment were established in order to integrate the different actions within a quality management system (Sistema de Gestão da Qualidade da UC).

A reference document produced by UC is the quality handbook (Manual de Qualidade) in which a specific chapter is dedicated to quality in the teaching/learning process (see, for example, the orange box in the image "Management of the pedagogical quality").

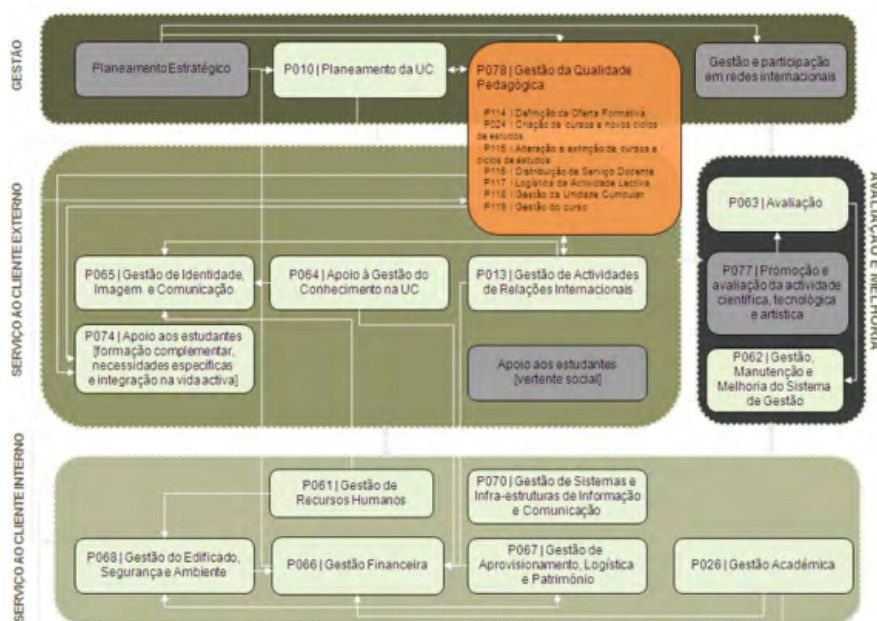


Figura 1. Mapa de macro-processos da Universidade de Coimbra

Audits with professors and students are a relevant aspect of the quality system. Internal audits are organized each semester and involve staff of different disciplinary background. Written questionnaires to assess the courses are submitted in first and second cycle of studies.

Additional information

Role of students

Students worked in deep collaboration with the University units sharing a relevant role in the establishment of a quality system in the teaching/learning process and in the follow up activities of reflection and discussion of gathered data.

People involved (e.g. academic staff, technical and administrative staff, policy makers, etc.)

Academic staff, students, internal and external stakeholders

Monitoring/evaluation process and/or structured feedback put in place

Written questionnaires and follow up activities (discussion, reflection, SWOT analysis)

Added value of the practice for enhancing participation of students in QA at the HE

Values assigned to students' feedback in the open questions and comments sections in the questionnaire. Students' continuous involvement in the reflection process.

SERBIA

Authored by Andronie Mihai, Andronie Iustin (SHU)



Country of the practice: Serbia

Source of the information
(e.g. website, article, reference persons, etc.) Serbian Higher Education Law

Context of development (what HE institution, course of study, etc) The practice can be found at the level of each higher education institution or unit as it is imposed by the Law of Higher Education in Serbia

Promotor (Association, Agency, Ministry, etc.) The practice is promoted at national level through the Law of Higher Education

Summary (brief description of the practice, initiative, etc.) The existence of a Students' Parliament for representing the students at higher education institution/ unit level.

According to the Serbian Law of Higher Education, the Students' Parliament has the following attributes:

- Students' Parliament is the body of a higher education institution and a higher education unit that has an administrative body and enrolled students.
- The manner of election and the number of members of Students' Parliament shall be established by the general act of a higher education institution.
- The right to elect and be elected members of Students' Parliament shall have all students of a higher education institution and/or a higher education unit, enrolled in the academic year in which Students' Parliament is elected.
- Members of Students' Parliament shall be elected for a period of one year.
- Members of Students' Parliament shall be elected by secret and direct ballot in April every year.
- With a view to exercising the rights and protecting the interests of students, Students' Parliament shall select and de-select students' representatives in the bodies of a higher education institution and/or a higher education unit.
- It shall also select and de-select students' representatives in the bodies of other institutions in which students are represented, in accordance with the Statute of the institution.

The Students' Parliament can represent the students interests related to the QA at the level of each higher education institution.

Additional information

Role of students Students can represent their own interests related to QA at the level of the learning institution.

People involved (e.g. academic staff, technical and administrative staff, policy makers, etc.) Students, working together with the higher education institution management.

Monitoring/evaluation process and/or structured feedback put in place Feedback can be passed from the students, through their representatives (the Students' Parliament), to the people in charge with the QA at institution level.

Added value of the practice for enhancing participation of students in QA at the HE The added value of the practice consists in the fact that students can be represented at the management of the learning institutions they attend.

Not only QA issues can be addressed through the Students' Parliament, but also other issues the students are facing.

GEORGIA

Authored by Andronie Mihai, Andronie Iustin (SHU)

Country of the practice: Georgia

Source of the information
(e.g. website, article, reference persons, etc.) National Center For Educational Quality Enhancement website <http://eqe.ge/eng/>

Context of development (what HE institution, course of study, etc) Accreditation expert commissions at the moment of the accreditation visit

Promotor (Association, Agency, Ministry, etc.) National Center For Educational Quality Enhancement through their accreditation commission

Summary (brief description of the practice, initiative, etc.)

- Members of the accreditation expert commission can include a student and NCEQE employee and in the case of a regulated educational programme – also a representative of respective professional associations. Students can in this way take part in the accreditation processes of learning programs.
- Students and other personnel of a higher education institution can be interviewed during the accreditation visit. In such a way the student's opinion related to the QA in the institution can be expressed.

Additional information

Role of students Students can be both part of the accreditation commissions and can be interviewed in the accreditation process.

People involved (e.g. academic staff, technical and administrative staff, policy makers, etc.) Students, other members of the accreditation commission, NCEQE employees etc.

Monitoring/evaluation process and/or structured feedback put in place Input is provided from the student's point of view during the accreditation process of learning programs.

Added value of the practice for enhancing participation of students in QA at the HE The study programs that are accredited are better adapted to the student's requirements.

ARMENIA

Authored by Gohar Hovhannisyan (ANSA)

Country of the practice: Armenia

Source of the information
(e.g. website, article, reference persons, etc.) http://media.asue.am/upload/HPTH_inqnaverlucutyun.pdf
(Self-analysis of Institutional Capacity of ASUE)

Context of development (what HE institution, course of study, etc) Armenian State University of Economics (ASUE)
The practice is promoted at national level through the Law of Higher Education

Promotor (Association, Agency, Ministry, etc.) ASUE with the collaboration of internal and external stakeholders

Relevance for ESPAQ: Self-analysis of Institutional Capacity of ASUE done in 2014 releaves all the fails in quality assurance system and mainly in students involvement. Due to SWOT analys one of the weaknesses for ASUE QA system is the imperfect mechanism of students' participation in QA process. And this question is involved in the improvement areas. ASUE intends to enlarge students participation in QA system.

Summary (brief description of the practice, initiative, etc.) ASUE started to work on the subject of QA since 2008 when The Temporary Order for Internal QA of Vocational Education was developed. Since then, the order was amended on the basis of the results of many surveys and discussions among students and professors of ASUE. During this time, the QA system improved. The university cooperates with both internal and external stakeholders. Employees are involved in developing educational programs. Also the university is regularly conducting surveys among alumni.

ANSA established a strategic plan of development for 2012-2016 where within its missions related to research, teaching and knowledge transfer, a special mention is to be attributed to teaching and its quality assessment. One of the most important points is the investment in the Quality management system of the university and also the arrangement of regular internal and external audits of educational programs. ASUE also focuses on the students' participation and involvement which is clearly defined in the Quality Assurance Handbook (educational guidance) published in 2013 (http://media.asue.am/upload/VORAKI_DZERNARK.pdf).

Additional information

Role of students Some students are interested in processes of QA, but the vast majority are not motivated to participate. The cause may be their lack of information on the essential concepts of both Bologna process and QA system.

People involved (e.g. academic staff, technical and administrative staff, policy makers, etc.) Academic staff, students, internal and external stakeholders

Monitoring/evaluation process and/or structured feedback put in place Written questionnaires and follow up activities (discussion, reflection, SWOT analysis)

Added value of the practice for enhancing participation of students in QA at the HE Practice shows the need of developing a working system for enhancing students' involvement. And this reflects in the upcoming strategic plans which should try to solve it during some time.

ENHANCING STUDENTS PARTICIPATION IN QUALITY ASSURANCE IN ARMENIAN HIGHER EDUCATION (ESPAQ)

The ESPAQ project is looking at one of the core challenges of Armenian higher education (quality of its provision and outcomes), by engaging the students into processes of quality assurance (QA) and enhancement of their learning experience. With the help of project consortium, it will be explored the motivation and barriers for Armenian students to partake in QA on various levels. Project aims to improve the conditions for engagement by raising awareness on the importance of students' say within the academic community providing capacity building support and by suggesting relevant changes in the legislation/HEI regulation.