QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ACCREDITATION: A GLOSSARY OF BASIC TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Lazăr Vlăsceanu, Laura Grünberg, and Dan Pârlea

Preface

The present publication, Quality Assurance and Accreditation*: Glossary of Basic Terms and Definitions,* is the result of a UNESCO-CEPES initiative undertaken for the particular occasion of the Invitational Roundtable on "Indicators for Institutional and Programme Accreditation in Higher Education/ Tertiary Education" (Bucharest, Romania, 3-8 April 2003), that was organized in the framework of the UNESCO-CEPES project on *Strategic Indicators for Higher Education in the Twenty-First Century*[1]. The need to improve the quantitative assessment of higher education at system and institutional levels, the main objective of the project, has been complemented by this effort to gather and to organize the information and the mixtures of meanings surrounding the field of quality assurance and accreditation in higher education.

This glossary is, in a way, a compilation of a set of definitions associated with the various terms applied in the fields of quality assurance and accreditation. It may be used as a reference tool to better understand the connotations of the terms in circulation and to compare existing models of quality assurance and accreditation, while also offering opportunities for an increased consistency of their conceptual framework.

This publication will also be made available on the UNESCO-CEPES Webpage, allowing it thus to be updated and supplemented with information, on a regular basis.

This project being the result of teamwork, I would like to thank all the UNESCO-CEPES staff members who have contributed to its realization, particularly, Lazăr Vlăsceanu, Laura Grünberg, and Dan Pârlea.

It is our expectation that this publication will be found to be useful and will facilitate a better understanding of a very complex, but increasingly pertinent problem, that of quality assurance and accreditation, which is one of the underlying principles of the Bologna Process[2].

Jan Sadlak
Director of UNESCO-CEPES

Introduction

There has always been an individual and social need to improve the quality of life of people, including the quality of what they learn over many years of organized schooling, how they learn it, and why they learn it. Concerns about the quality of higher education are also not recent, being an intrinsic part of any discussion on the subject. Over the years, various developments have taken place relative to the assessment, monitoring, and improvement of the quality of different components of higher education (its governance, its contents, its forms of pedagogy, the services offered, etc.). What is new refers to those developments which are related to quality assurance and its management. Such concepts as "quality assessment", "quality evaluation", and "quality assurance" are widely and regularly used nowadays within the wider processes of managing quality. Frequently used, these concepts are also frequently misused. It is for the latter reason that UNESCO-CEPES took the initiative to produce this glossary of quality assurance and accreditation terms and definitions.

Many other attempts have been made to prepare such glossaries, as the references listed for the present glossary indicate. Among these, most are national, sub-national, or regional, with only a few having worldwide relevance. To propose a glossary which is meant to include a more universal set of meanings has thus been a challenging and risky task. We, nevertheless, embarked on such an endeavour being convinced of the need to assemble not so much a diversity but a commonality of meanings. The implication was that of observing how specific meanings are shared and how they operate in different contexts.

We have encountered many expected and unexpected difficulties in producing this glossary that contains thirty key terms and fifty-two associated terms related to the latter. As the attempt proved to be quite tricky and as we discovered many contradictions and paradoxes in the literature surveyed

[1] The projects was implemented within the Japanese-Funds-in-Trust for the Promotion of International Co-operation and Mutual Understanding, with assistance offered by the German Academic Exchange Service – DAAD, Bonn, Germany. More details are available at <http://www.cepes.ro>

2 This process was formally set in motion in 1999 by the adoption of the European Higher Education Area, the overarching qoal of which is the development of a European Higher Education Area along with a similar projekt to create a European Research and Innovation Area. At present. forty countries are embarked on the Bologna Process.

for this purpose, we decided to reveal and publicly share some of the problems encountered backstage, in the preparation of this glossary.

In exploring the vocabulary of the field, we were confronted with an *overpopulated* domain, with a packed field called "Quality Assurance", inflated with concepts, terms, and definitions. It was clear, however, from what we found, that the domain is also seeking *a language of its own,* not simply one substituting for a number of national, sub-regional languages. Indeed, in order for a domain to exist, to have identity and autonomy, to be fully respected and recognized, it needs *a* language of its own so as to express itself as widely and efficiently as possible. It needs a revolution of the dictionary.

It seemed to us that we were in the midst of such a revolution. The "paradox of density", as described by M. Dogan and R. Phare (1990), that the more "crowded" a given academic/scientific domain is, the less creativity one will find in it and the more confusion and repetition will be present, seems all too applicable to the field of quality assurance. Following the "infancy stage", during which creativity and innovation could be described as "over-productive", the domain then presented itself as mature, as living "its adulthood", and as being surrounded by an overwhelming diversity of terms and concepts. This evolution justifies the need of the domain for some stability, coherence, order, and certainties. Thus, the field is seeking, or should be seeking, a more general/collective language of expression and operation.

In the context of the need of the domain to create its own language, we asked ourselves, what is the present state of affairs? Has the "dictionary revolution" ended? Are the main terms and concepts about the quality of education consistently defined? How are their meanings shared? Is there a minimal consensus among specialists as to what they are discussing? How are they using terms and concepts within particular ongoing educational reforms? It seems that the answer to all these questions, for the time being, at least, is a resounding "no". As Dirk Van Damme, one of the experts having participated in the Invitational Roundtable, confirmed, "despite the widespread use of the term [quality], a more or less agreed upon definition has not yet materialized. Rather, a multitude of meanings and conceptual confusion are the result" (Van Damme, 2003).

The "revolution" has not yet run its course owing to a set of problems that we discovered when surveying major specialized literature. A linguistic baroque world exists in the field of quality assurance. There are many flowery ingredients, a very rich linguistic creativity without an "edifice" to which they can be associated. We selected certain samples of the surveyed literature to serve as "labels" in view of illustrating, not demonstrating, certain identified trends:

Confusion: There is an obvious lack of consensus in the specialized literature. Many authors mention various meanings for the same concept, and, at the same time, indicate that certain terms lack any consistent definition. One regularly reads such statements as:

- "In much contempoary disourse on education, the word, quality, is frequently mentioned, although it is rarely defined";
- "Assessment has many meanings and uses";
- "Standards and criteria [are among] the most confusing terms";
- "A performance standard is a specific result or level of achievement that is deemed exemplary or appropriate. But confusion abounds. The word is sometimes used in education as a synonym for high expectations; at other times, 'standard' is used as a synonym for benchmark.... Often one can also hear standards discussed as if they were general guidelines or principles.... Often speakers confuse content standards with performance standards. Finally, standards are routinely confused with the criteria for judging performance";
- "Quality assessment, quality measurement, and review of quality are all taken here to be synonymous with evaluation, especially when there is an external element to the procedure".

Ambiguities: It is difficult not to question the avalanche of terms and concepts and to avoid thinking about the need to "restrict" the vocabulary, allowing it to be more coherent and consistent. Linguistic proficiency seems to be more prolific than the creative generation of practices of improvement.

Quite frequently, several terms are used with the same sense. "Standards" are in fact related to "criteria" in the United States, and these are very different from criteria as defined in Europe. "Quality control" is often used interchangeably with "quality assurance" and "quality management". Quality assurance is often considered part of quality management of higher education, while sometimes the two are used as synonymous terms. An "evaluation report" is also called an "audit report" or an "assessment report". "Institutional audit" is considered to be the same as "institutional review", and "peer review", the same as "external review".

One may also find ambiguous guidance in such sentences as: "The criteria provide a framework to enable an institution to demonstrate that it is *worthy* of the status that it seeks".

Circularity: Sometimes circular reasoning is used in defining terms, *(e.g.,* "indicators indicate" or "stand-

ards standardize"); nevertheless, avoiding circularity is a basic requirement for a good definition.

Poetical/Lyrical Approaches: Possibly, one should simply accept being postmodern in a postmodern world, thus accepting plenty of ambiguities and a sort of deconstructivist perspective, like that of "mapping without routes" – as is suggested in a quote that we selected. What we have labeled as "poetic approaches" are enjoyable, subtle readings, in regard to the topic; however, we felt that they might also act as serious impediments to any attempt to clarify meanings. The following quotations may illustrate this point:

- "If we all think alike we re not thinking. We need to create a constructive ambiguity, or... provide [ourselves] with a map rather than a route";
- "Institutional audits are the reasonable ways in which we can assure reasonable accountability while maintaining reasonable institutional autonomy";
- "Benchmarking is the practice of being humble enough to admit that someone else is better at something and wise [enough] to learn how to match and even surpass [us] at it";
- "Quality assurance is a matter of awareness and commitment which one might call quality culture";
- "Quality assurance is, at est, a matter of mind, hence pertaining to quality culture".

Baroque/Flowery: Here is a sample of what we mean by "flowery" or "baroque" ways of treating the topic:

Assessing minimum standards of quality is a matter of empiricism in that they are defined by what relevant stakeholders-academics [have said] so far as academic quality is concerned, and potential employers, for questions of subsequent employability, more or less unanimously agree on as being an utter and evident requirement that has to be met by any academic study programme launched under that self-proclaimed name, purpose, and ambition.

Of course, the passage in question is not a definition and should not be judged as such. But such "essayistic" ways of writing about quality assurance may have various impacts on audiences and could induce more a sense of uncertainty than of stability. There is also the question of balance. If isolated, such baroque language is "harmless" and definitely charming. If overused, it can leave one out of breath. It certainly cannot be helpful in inducing any coherent meaning or understanding of the domain.

Tendencies like these are consequences of certain already acknowledged major problems that are dealt with in the specialized literature. They are evoked for further reflection.

Definitional Problems: As there are many types of definitions for a given term/concept (descriptive, with focus on genesis, origins, implicit/explicit, real/nominal, structural, etc.), there are also many operational meanings in use. Options in defining a term are made taking into consideration the operational necessities. Often the contextual meaning attributed to the

term is not clear, and the impression is that of a general definition. Normally, and from the start, there should be both a theoretical and a technical/operational option in defining any concept. Such is not always the case when surveying the literature in order to discover appropriate definitions.

New Bureaucracy: One should be reminded of the numerous examples of how institutions found their way out of the bureaucratic system by window dressing while hiding away the "litter". As the American sociologist, E. Goffman (1959), described the matter, the front stage was dressed in such a bright light that the back stage remained hidden in an impenetrable darkness. No doubt, the opposition of glaring luminosity to pitch darkness is not necessarily the most appropriate metaphor when dealing with gray areas. Bureaucracy entered into the field of quality assurance in many ways – with its advantages in terms of control, predictability, and efficiency – but also with its constraints, imposing power hierarchies in terms of language or influences in adopting one definition and not another. Bureaucracy has developed institutions and networks that work for the creation of a "language of its own" for the field. Over time, an overspecialized jargon has been created, surrounding the topic with a certain mystic, and separating communities of research and practitioners in the field of higher education into sub-domains making communication between fields increasingly difficult.

Linguistic Problems: These are present within the general context of the globalization of higher education. As far as the quality assurance field is concerned, translation is a serious barrier to the creation of a true-shared common vocabulary. For instance, the distinction between "assessment" and "evaluation" has no linguistic equivalence in the Latin languages, particularly French, Italian, Spanish, and Romanian. So, the various different definitions of such English terms are meaningless, or at least not useable in the national contexts in question.

Borrowing from Other Sectors: Numerous terms and concepts have been borrowed from outside the educational area. Their adaptation and use in higher education is problematic, as they were mainly framed for a specific sector and then adapted to a

totally different sector. Benchmark/ Benchmarking, for example, had roots, first in geology, and then in certain private industrial companies, being used first by the Xerox Corporation. Then the term was taken into the field of education as a means for comparing and assisting universities in becoming competitive. More recently, the concept began to be used at the level of a single discipline or subject. The same could be said for other terms as well.

"Technical" Problems: Defining quality is a question of measuring human achievement, a task that is technically problematic. Those involved in defining terms – in making decisions – should be aware of and sensitive to difficulties and implicit subjectivity in defining and measuring achievement.

Political Aspects: Assessment is in itself a sociopolitical activity. Defining assessment procedures, extracting information from the process, and then taking decisions – all these processes have social and political connotations and may have far-reaching personal and social consequences, intended and unintended, positive and negative.

These are the kinds of problems of which many of the players in the field of higher education may be aware. In our attempt to get rid of some of them, we tried to introduce a certain systematization.

When compiling the terms included in this glossary – and their definitions – a distinction was made between *key terms* and *associated terms.* The key terms are those which, in our opinion, open a wider area for theoretical and practical exploration in the fields of quality assurance and accreditation *(e.g.,* benchmarking, recognition, etc.), while associated terms are derived from the key terms and, it is hoped, contribute further clarifications to their meanings. It is also worth noting that most of the key terms are very closely related to one another and should thus be viewed as parts of the same integrating system.

This glossary should be viewed as the end result of a process of comparing developments in the fields of quality assurance and accreditation. It may also be viewed as an attempt to integrate meanings that are, more often than not, context bound. Cutting across the boundaries between the contexts of a cultural or academic type proved to be a quite difficult task, but it has become clear that only by agreeing on specific core definitions of the most important terms can genuine dialogue and substantive comparisons be made possible.

The definitions proposed in this Glossary have been compiled from some of the most recent and representative sources; nevertheless, much attention has also been paid to the history of specific developments and applications.

There were several reasons for compiling this glossary. The first was to put some order into the meanings attached to various frequently used terms in the field of quality assurance. The second was to open up new possible ways of relating the terms. Then, too, the hope was to reflect the complexity but also the weaknesses of certain existing conceptual frameworks. Last, but not least, an attempt was made to point out certain boundary meanings that might lead, when and if considered thoroughly, to the elaboration of a more consistent discourse in the field.

However, the completed glossary, as it stands now, leads to a feeling that both accreditation and quality assurance are, at this stage, too heavily loaded with context-bound practices. How global can a glossary on accreditation and quality assurance really be remains a question for the future. Right now, all that can be done is to reflect on a more integrating conceptual model that may provide for improved dialogue and compatible developments.

This glossary is structured in such a way as to present key terms (in alphabetical order), each one associated, when the case arises, with specific, derived terms. Each key term presentation is followed by certain related terms (the meanings

of which assist in its further clarification) and by the specific sources of information. The list of terms and definitions is followed by a list of national accrediting/evaluating/quality assurance bodies.

As stated above, we compiled this glossary with an eye to commonalties, rather than to differences, in a search for a more universal/general approach to the quality assurance domain. The intention was not to contribute to the "MacDonaldization" of the field, as George Ritzer (1995) might say, but to contribute to efforts underway in the domain to create a basic shared language of its own that will allow diversity to better express itself.

We have been aware, all along, that any definition is simply a *working tool of the mind* and that *defining a term does not prevent the concepts underlying it from further development.* We understand that quality assurance concepts will continue to develop further, being a permanent challenge for experts and practitioners. We hope that throughout this process, the vocabulary of quality assurance will become increasingly shared and less disputed.

Last, but not least, we would like to thank two of our colleagues, Marilena Filip and Elisaveta Buică, documentalists at UNESCO-CEPES, for their contributions to this project.

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Terms and Definitions

Accreditation

1. The process by which a (non-) governmental or private body evaluates the quality of a higher education institution as a whole or of a specific educational programme in order to formally recognize it as having met certain predetermined minimal criteria or standards. The result of this process is usually the awarding of a status (a yes/no decision), of recognition, and sometimes of a license to operate within a time-limited validity. The process can imply initial and periodic self-study and evaluation by external peers. The accreditation process generally involves three steps with specific activities: (i) *a self-evaluation process* conducted by the faculty, the administrators, and the staff of the institution or academic programme, esulting in a report that takes as its reference the set of standards and criteria of the accrediting body; (ii) *a study visit,* conducted by a team of peers, selected by the accrediting organization, which reviews the evidence, visits the premises, and interviews the academic and administrative staff, resulting in an assessment report, including a recommendation to the commission of the accrediting body; (iii) *examination by the commission* of the evidence and recommendation on the basis of the given set of criteria concerning quality and resulting in a final judgment and the communication of the formal decision to the institution and other constituencies, if appropriate.

2. The instrument by which one institution, without its own degree awarding powers or which chooses not to use its awarding powers, gains wide authority to award, and/or gains recognition of its qualifications from another competent authority, and to exercise powers and responsibility for academic provision. This authority might be the State, a government agency, or another domestic or foreign higher education institution.

Institutional Accreditation: The terms refer to the accreditation of the whole institution, including all its programmes, sites, and methods of delivery, without any implication as to the quality of the study programmes of the institution.

Regional Accreditation: (USA) Accreditation granted to a higher education institution by a recognized accrediting association or commission that conducts accreditation procedures in a particular geographic area (usually that of three or more states). The United States has six regional accrediting commissions.

Specialized Accreditation: The accreditation of individual units or programmes *(e.g.,* professional education), by "specialized" or "programme" accrediting bodies applying specific standards for curriculum and course content.

Duration of Accreditation: Accreditation decisions are time-limited. The duration of validity of the accreditation license is established by the accrediting body, which generally holds the right to suspend and/or to renew the license, upon the satisfactory resolution of any identified issues.

Accreditation of Prior Learning: The process by which individuals are awarded credit toward qualifications based on their prior learning and (sometimes) experience (also called *experiential learning).* The credit is awarded upon clear evidence that the respective learning has resulted in the student's having achieved the appropriate learning outcomes.

Accreditation Status: The formal recognition benefiting an institution or specialized programme for meeting the appropriate standards of educational quality established by the accrediting body at a regional, national, or specialized level.

Accreditation Survey . The evaluation of an institution to identify its level of compliance with the applicable standards of the accreditation body and to make determinations concerning its accreditation status. The survey includes an evaluation of documents and information (evidence) provided by the personnel of the higher education institution, following on-site observations by mandated visitors.

Portfolio for Accreditation: An accumulation of evidence (record of achievement) about specific proficiencies and the characteristics of an institution in relation to a specific type of activity, especially to learning standards. This operation can be accomplished either by a concerned institution or by an external observer/assessor.

Accreditation Body: A (non-)governmental or private educational association of national or regional scope that develops evaluation standards and criteria and conducts peer evaluations and expert visits to assess whether or not those criteria are met. It is entitled to accord formal status and sometimes a license to operate to individual higher education institutions or programmes, following the successful examination of the application and evaluation of the respective educational unit. There are different types of accreditation bodies *(e.g.,* agencies, councils, commissions, etc.), focused on general accreditation, specialized accreditation, professional accreditation, regional accreditation, national accreditation, distance education accreditation, etc.

Related terms: Assessment, Criteria, Evaluation, Quality, Quality Assurance, Recognition, Standards.

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Assessment

1. The process of the systematic gathering, quantifying, and using of information in view of judging the instructional effectiveness and the curricular adequacy of a higher education institution as a whole (institutional assessment) or of its educational programmes (programme assessment). It implies the evaluation of the core activities of the higher education institution (quantitative and qualitative evidence of educational activities and research outcomes). Assessment is necessary in order to validate a formal accreditation decision, but it does not necessarily lead to an accreditation outcome.

2. A technically designed process for evaluating student learning outcomes and for improving student learning and development as well as teaching effectiveness.

Assessment of Individual Qualifications: The formal written appraisal or evaluation of qualifications of an individual by a competent authority in order to grant him or her recognition for academic and/or professional further use.

Related terms: Evaluation, Accreditation, Outcomes, Quality Assessment.

Audit

The process of reviewing an institution or a programme that is primarily focused on the accountability of the latter, evaluating/ determining if the stated aims and objectives (in terms of curriculum, staff, infrastructure, etc.) are met. In the United Kingdom, when an audit is an institutional process carried out internally, the process is described (since 2002) as an "institutional review" process.

Institutional Audit/Institutional Review: An evidence-based process carried out through peer review that investigates the procedures and the mechanisms by which an institution ensures its quality assurance and quality enhancement. When it specifically addresses the final responsibility for the management of quality and standards that rests with an institution as a whole, the process is called an institutional review.

Audit Report/Evaluation Report/Assessment Report: (i)

The document prepared following a quality assessment peer review team site visit that is generally focused on institutional quality, academic standards, learning infrastructure, and staffing. The report about an institution describes the quality assurance (QA) arrangements of the institution and the effects of these arrangements on the quality of its programmes. The audit report is made available to the institution, first in draft form for initial comments, and then in its final, official form. It contains, among other things, the description of the method of the audit, the findings, the conclusions of the auditors, and various appendices listing the questions asked. In Europe, the document is often called an "evaluation report" or an "assessment report". *(ii)* Such a report may also be prepared about an accreditation agency, describing its quality assurance arrangements and the effect of these arrangements on the quality of the programmes in the institutions for which it is responsible.

Internal Audit: There are currently three main modes for the provision of internal audit within higher education: *(i)* in-house teams employed as staff members by the respective institutions; *(ii)* audit

consortia (which may provide services to a number of clients both within and outside the sector); and *(iii)* accountancy firms that undertake internal audits.

Management Audit: A management audit reviews the general management, policy, and policy-making of a given institution.

Related terms: Quality, Quality Audit, Peer Review.

Sources

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Handbook for Institutional Audit: England. Gloucester: QAA, 2002 <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/public/inst_audit_hbook/iaintro.htm>.

Benchmark

A standard, a reference point, or a criterion against which the quality of something can be measured, judged, and evaluated, and against which outcomes of a specified activity can be measured. The term, benchmark, means a measure of best practice performance. The existence of a benchmark is one necessary step in the overall process of benchmarking.

Benchmark Information: Explicit national statements of academic standards or outcomes for individual subjects. Some countries *(e.g.,* the United Kingdom) develop benchmarks of this type in regard to a certain group of subjects as part of their quality assurance process.

Subject Benchmark/Subject Benchmark Statements:

Subject benchmark statements provide means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of programmes in a specific subject and the general expectations about standards for the award of a qualification at a given level in a particular subject area. They are reference points in a quality assurance framework more than prescriptive statements about curricula.

Course *Development Benchmarks:* Guidelines regarding the minimum standards that are used for course design, development, and delivery.

Related terms: Criteria, Evaluation Indicators, Quality Assessment, Standards.

Sources: Same as Benchmarking (see below)

Benchmarking

A standardized method for collecting and reporting critical operational data in a way that enables relevant comparisons among the performances of different organizations or programmes, usually with a view to establishing good practice, diagnosing problems in performance, and identifying areas of strength. Benchmarking gives the organization (or the programme) the external references and the best practices on which to base its evaluation and to design its working processes.

Benchmarking is also defined as:

- a diagnostic instrument (an aid to judgments on quality);
- a self-improvement tool (a quality management/quality assurance tool) allowing organizations (programmes) to compare themselves with others regarding some aspects of performance, with a view to finding ways to improve current performance;
- an open and collaborative evaluation of services and processes with the aim of learning from good practices;
- a method of teaching an institution how to improve;
- an on-going, systematically oriented process of continuously comparing and measuring the work processes of one organization with those of others by bringing an external focus on internal activities.

Benchmarking implies specific steps and structured procedures. Depending on what is being compared or the type of information an institution is gathering, there are different types of benchmarking: *strategic benchmarking* (focusing on what is done, on the strategies organizations use to compete); *operational benchmarking* (focusing on how things are done, on how well other organizations perform, and on how they achieve performance), or *data-based benchmarking* (statistical benchmarking that examines the comparison of data-based scores and conventional performance indicators). There is also internal/external and external collaborative/trans-industry/ implicit benchmarking. Within different types, benchmarking may be either *vertical* (aiming at quantifying the costs, workloads, and learning productivity of a predefined programme area) or *horizontal* (looking at the costs of outcomes of a single process that cuts across more than one programme area). Examples of benchmarking programmes are the following:

1. The USA was the first country to introduce benchmarking activities into higher education in the early 1990s. The NACUBO (National Association of Colleges and University Business Officers) Benchmarking Project has been established longer than any other project in the field. It started in 1991-1992 and has had a statistical and financial approach to benchmarking.

2. In the United Kingdom, benchmarking, as a quality assurance tool in higher education, came to the forefront only after the 1997 Dearing Committee Report:

- The History 2000 Project, led by Paul Hyland, School of Historical and Cultural Studies, Bath College of Higher Education (example of *benchmarking of academic practice,* <http://www.bathe.ac.uk/history2000/index. html>;

- The RMCS (Royal Military College of Science) Programme at Cranfield University (example of *benchmarking in libraries;*

- The Higher Education Funding Council for Higher Education (HEFCHE) Value for Money Studies (VfM), launched in 1993 <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/current/vgm.htm>;

- "The Commonwealth University International Benchmarking Club", launched in 1996, by CHEMS (Commonwealth Higher Education Management Service), as an example of *international benchmarking* <http://www.acu.ac.uk/

chems/benchmark/html>.

3. In Europe, benchmarking in higher education is not common, but a series of initiatives has already been developed:

- The Copenhagen Business School (CBS) benchmarking analysis of twelve higher education institutions, 1995;

- The German Benchmarking Club of Technical Universities (BMC), 1996;

- The CRE "Institutional Quality Management Review" based on peer reviews and mutual visits to universities participating voluntarily in a cycle, each time focusing on a specific issue, is an example of implicit benchmarking <http://www.unige.ch/eua> (details in CHEMS, 1998).

Internal Benchmarking: Benchmarking (comparisons of) performances of similar programmes in different components of a higher education institution. Internal benchmarking is usually conducted at large decentralized institutions in which there are several departments (or units) that conduct similar programmes.

(External) Competitive Benchmarking: Benchmarking (comparisons of) performance in key areas, on specific measurable terms, based upon information from institution(s) that are viewed as competitors.

Functional (External Collaborative) Benchmarking:

Benchmarking that involves comparisons of processes, practices, and performances with similar institutions of a larger group of institutions in the same field that are not immediate competitors.

Trans-Institutional Benchmarking: Benchmarking that looks across multiple institutions in search of new and innovative practices, no matter what their sources.

Implicit Benchmarking: A quasi-benchmarking that looks at the production and publication of data and of performance indicators that could be useful for meaningful cross-institutional comparative analysis. It is not based on the voluntary and proactive participation of institutions (as in the cases of other types), but as the result of the pressure of markets, central funding, and/or co-ordinating agencies. Many of the current benchmarking activities taking place in Europe are of this nature.

Generic Benchmarking: Compares institutions in terms of a basic practice process or service *(e.g.,* communication lines, participation rate, and drop-out rate). It compares the basic level of an activity with a process in other institutions that has similar activity.

Process-Based Benchmarking: Goes beyond the comparison of data-based scores and conventional performance indicators (statistical benchmarking) and looks at the processes by which results are achieved. It examines activities made up of tasks, steps which cross the boundaries between the conventional functions found in all institutions. It goes beyond the comparison of data and looks at the processes by which the results are achieved.

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Best Practice

A superior method or an innovative process involving an actual accepted range of safe and reasonable practices resulting in the improved performance of a higher education institution or programme, usually recognized as "best" by other peer organizations. A best practice does not necessarily represent an absolute, ultimate example or pattern, the application of which assures the improved performance of a higher education institution or programme; rather, it has to do with identifying the best approach to a specific situation, as institutions and programmes vary greatly in constituencies and scope.

Related terms: Benchmarking, Code of Practice.

Sources

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Tait, Frank. "Enterprise Process Engineering: A Template Tailored for Higher Education", *Cause/Effect Journal* 22 1 (1999) <http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/html/cem9919 .html>.

Certification

The process by which an agency or an association acknowledges the achievement of established quality standards and usually grants certain privileges to the target individual (student or teacher).

Related terms: Assessment, Standards.

Source

American Society for Quality. *Quality Glossary.* Kalamazoo: Western Michigan State University, 2003 <http://www.wmich. edu/evalctr/ess/glossary/c/html>.

Code of Practice

A Code of Practice is a document, with no mandatory requirements, that describes the minimum audit requirements and those that are considered to reveal a practice worthy of consideration. A Code identifies a comprehensive series of system-wide expectations covering matters relating to the management of academic quality and standards in higher education. It provides an authoritative reference point for institutions as they consciously, actively, and systematically assure the academic quality and standards of their programmes, awards, and qualifications. A Code assumes that, taking into account nationally agreed upon principles and practices, each institution has its own systems for independent verification both of its quality and standards and of the effectiveness of its quality assurance systems. In developing a Code, extensive advice is sought from a range of knowledgeable practitioners.

Examples of Codes:

- UNESCO-CEPES and Council of Europe. *Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education.* Riga: UNESCO-CEPES and Council of Europe, 2001 <http://mail.cepes.ro/hed/recogn/lisbon/riga/code.htm>.

- Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSACHE). *Code of Good Practice in Accrediting in Higher Education.* Philadelphia: Middle States Commission of Higher Education, 2001 <http://www.msache.org/code prac.html>.

- The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA): "Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education: Career Education, Information, and Guidance" <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/public/COP/codesofpractice.htm>.

Related terms: Best Practice, Quality Assurance, Standards.

Source

Higher Education Funding Council for England. *HEFCE Audit Code of Practice.* Bristol: HEFCE, 2002 <http://www.hefce.ac. uk/pubs/hefce/2002/02_26/02_26.doc>.

Credits

A credit is a generally agreed-upon value used to measure a student workload in terms of learning time required to complete course units, resulting in learning outcomes. Generally, once gained, credit cannot be lost.

Accumulation of Study Credits. A credit gained by a student in a given higher education institution may be recognized in another institution, depending upon the commonality in terms of level and context. Thus, study credits are transferable.

ECTS (European Credit Transfer System): A European Community project initially established under the ERASMUS

Programme (1988-1995). It was developed more broadly between 1995-1999 under the higher education component of the SOCRATES Programme, ERASMUS, and proved to be an effective tool for creating curricular transparency and facilitating academic recognition. The activity of ECTS is twofold: on the one hand, it guarantees academic recognition to students of studies completed abroad and furthermore enables studies abroad; on the other hand, it provides higher education institutions with curricu-

lar transparency by offering detailed information regarding the respective curricula and their relevance in terms of an earned degree and by enabling higher education institutions to preserve their autonomy and responsibility for all decisions regarding student achievement. The Bologna Declaration takes ECTS as the common framework for curriculum design and student mobility within the envisaged European Higher Education Area.

Related terms: Descriptors, Outcomes, Recognition.

Sources

University of Birmingham, Academic Office. *Glossary.* Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 2002 <http://www.ao.bham.ac.uk/aps/glossary.htm>. "Qualification Structures in European Higher Education", *Danish Bologna Seminar,* 27-28 March 2003.

Criteria

Yardsticks/checkpoints/benchmarks by which the attainment of certain objectives and/or standards can be examined. Criteria describe in a certain degree of detail the characteristics of the requirements and conditions to be met [in order to meet a standard] and therefore provide the (quantitative and/or qualitative) basis on which an evaluative conclusion is drawn.

Performance Criteria: Yardsticks/checkpoints/benchmarks that are used to judge the attainment of performance standards. As qualities, characteristics, or dimensions of a standard forstudent performance, they indicate how well students meet expectations of what they should know and be able to do, as expressed by varying gradients of success by (scoring) rubrics or by grades.

Related terms: Benchmarks, Performance Standards.

Sources

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Van den Berghe, W. "Application of ISO 9000 Standards to Education and Training: Interpretation and Guidelines in European Perspectives", *Vocational Training European Journal* 15 (1998) <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/ampro/cinterfor/temas/calidad/doc/wouter1.pdf>.

Culture of Evidence

As it relates to institutional quality culture, the culture of evidence is that habit acquired in a higher education institution and based on clear ethical values, principles, and rules, which consists of the self-evaluation of its learning outcomes, engaging the teaching staff and the academic administration in a thoughtful, regular collection, selection, and use of relevant institutional performance indicators, in order to inform and prove, whenever (and to whomever) necessary, that it is doing well in specific areas *(e.g.,* institutional planning, decision-making, quality, etc.) and for the purpose of improving its learning and teaching outcomes. The "culture of evidence" (as opposed to "a culture of professional tradition and trust") is the empirical basis for the quality culture of a higher education institution. As formulated within the new WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges) standards, the culture of evidence requested from a higher education institution implies that the institution is stimulated to be able to provide empirical data that its programmes are consistent with its own mission and not with some pre-given "check list" of requests.

Related terms: Indicators, Outcomes, Quality Culture.

Sources

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Halpern, D. F., and Associates, eds. *Changing College Classrooms: New Teaching and Learning Strategies for an Increasingly Complex World.* San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1994.

Descriptor (Level)

Level descriptors are statements that provide a broad indication of learning appropriate to attainment at a particular level, describing the character-

istics and context of learning expected at that level. They are designed to support the reviewing of specified learning outcomes and assessment criteria in order to develop particular modules and units and to assign credits at the appropriate level.

Descriptors (Qualification): Qualification descriptors are statements that set out the outcomes of principal higher education qualifications at given levels (usually of an awarded degree) and demonstrate the nature of change between levels. At some levels, there may be more than one type of qualification. The first part of a qualification descriptor (of particular interest to those designing, approving, and reviewing academic programmes) is a statement regarding outcomes, *i.e.,* the achievement of a student that he or she should be able demonstrate for the award of the qualification. The second part (of particular interest to employers) is a statement of the wider abilities that the typical student could be expected to have developed. Upon periodical review of the existing qualification descriptors and in light of the development of other points of reference, such as benchmark statements, additional qualification descriptors at each level are elaborated.

In view of the creation of the European Higher Education Area, the Joint Quality Initiative (JQI) Group proposed considering the development of descriptors for Bachelor's and Master's Degree (BaMa descriptors) that might be shared within Europe and be available for a variety of purposes depending on particular national, regional, or institutional contexts and requirements.

Related terms: Qualifications, Outcomes, Assessment, Benchmark, Credit.

Sources

Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.* Bristol: HEFCE, 2001 <http:// www.qaa.ac.uk/crntwork/nqf/ewni2001 /part1.htm3>. Fairwather, Paul. *Glossary of Terms.* Birmingham: University of Birmingham, n. d. <http://www.ao.bham.ac.uk/aps/glossary. htm>.

Effectiveness (Educational)

An output of specific review/analyses *(e.g.,* the *WASC Educational Effectiveness Review* or its *Reports on Institutional Effectiveness)* that measure (the quality of) the achievement of a specific educational goal or the degree to which a higher education institution can be expected to achieve specific requirements. It is different from efficiency, which is measured by the volume of output or input used. As a primary measure of success of a programme or of a higher education institution, clear indicators, meaningful information, and evidence best reflecting institutional effectiveness with respect to student learning and academic achievement have to be gathered through various procedures (inspection, observation, site visits, etc.). Engaging in the measurement of educational effectiveness creates a value-added process through quality assurance and accreditation review and contributes to building, within the institution, a culture of evidence.

Related Terms: Quality Assurance, Indicators, Accreditation, Culture of Evidence.

Sources

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Institutional research and Assessment. *Glossary.* Norfolk, Virginia: Old Dominion University, n.d. http://www. odu. edu/ao/upir/Glossary/glossary.html>.

Efficiency (Educational)

An ability to perform well or to achieve a result without wasted resources, effort, time, or money (using the smallest quantity of resources possible). Educational efficiency can be measured in physical terms (technical efficiency) or in terms of cost (economic efficiency). Greater educational efficiency is achieved when the same amount and standard of educational services are produced at a lower cost, if a more useful educational activity is substituted for a less useful one at the same cost, or if unnecessary educational activities are eliminated. A programme or a higher education institution may be efficiently managed, but not effective in achieving its mission, goals, or objectives.

Related Terms: Quality, Effectiveness, Standards.

Source

Wideman, Max. *Wideman Comparative Glossary of Project Management Terms.* Version 3.1. Vancouver, British Columbia: Max Wideman, 2003 <http://www.maxwideman. com/pmglossary/PMG_E0 1.htm>.

Evaluation

The general process of a systematic and critical analysis leading to judgments and/or recommendations regarding the quality of a higher education in-

stitution or a programme. Evaluation is carried out through internal or external procedures. In the United Kingdom, *evaluation* is also called *review.*

External Evaluation: The process whereby a specialized agency collects data, information, and evidence about an institution, a particular unit of a given institution, or a core activity of an institution, in order to make a statement about its quality. External evaluation is carried out by a team of external experts, peers, or inspectors, and usually requires three distinct operations:

i. analysis of the self-study report;

ii. a site visit;

iii. the drafting of an evaluation report.

Internal Evaluation/Self-Evaluation: The process of self-evaluation consists of the systematic collection of administrative data, the questioning of students and graduates, and the holding of moderated interviews with lecturers and students, resulting in a self-study report. Self-evaluation is basically a collective institutional reflection and an opportunity for quality enhancement. The resulting report further serves as a provider of information for the review team in charge of the external evaluation.

Related terms: Accreditation, Audit, Quality Assessment, Review.

Source

UK Centre for Social Policy and Social Work: Generic Centre

OF THE LEARNING AND TEACHING SUPPORT NETWORK. *Glossary of*

Learning and Teaching Terms <http:www.swap.ac.uk/Learning/glossary.asp?initial=I>.

External Review
(See, also, **Peer Review)**

Indicators

Operational variables referring to specific empirically measurable characteristics of higher education institutions or programmes on which evidence can be collected that allows for a determination of whether or not standards are being met. Indicators identify performance trends and signal areas in need for action and/or enable comparison of actual performance with established objectives. They are also used to translate theoretical aspects of quality, a process known as *operationalization.* An *indicator* must be distinguished from a *measure,* which is data used to determine the level of performance of an attribute of interest, and from a *standard,* which is the level of acceptable performance in terms of a specific numeric criterion. Another distinction is made between the different types of indicators: *(i) indicators of economy* (following and respecting budgets); *(ii) indicators of efficiency* (actual productivity or output per input unit); and *(iii) indicators of effectiveness* (degree of attainment of objectives). A third and relatively consequent distinction is made between: *(i) context indicators,* that relate to the specific environment of a higher education institution or programme (social, economic, political, geographical, etc.); *(iii) input indicators,* that relate to the logistical, human, and financial resources used by a higher education institution; *(iii) process indicators,* that refer to the use of resources by a higher education institution, to the management of the inputs, and to the functioning of the organization; and *(iv) output indicators,* that concern the actual achievements or products of the higher education institution. This latter framework is also known as the CIPO-model *(i.e.,* **C**ontext, **I**nputs, **P**rocess, **O**utputs), frequently used in evaluation studies.

Performance Indicators: A range of statistical parameters representing a measure of the extent to which a higher education institution or a programme is performing in a certain quality dimension. They are qualitative and quantitative measures of the output (short-term measures of results) or of the outcome (long-term measures of outcomes and impacts) of a system or of a programme. They allow institutions to benchmark their own performances or allow comparison among higher education institutions. Performance indicators work efficiently only when they are used as part of a coherent set of input, process, and output indicators. As higher education institutions are engaged in a variety of activities and target a number of different objectives, it is essential to be able to identify and to implement a large range of performance indicators in order to cover the entire field of activity. Examples of frequently used performance indicators, covering various institutional activities, include: the number of applications per place, the entry scores of candidates, the staff workload, the employability of graduates, research grants and contracts, the number of articles or studies published, staff/student ratio, institutional income and expenditure, and institutional and departmental equipment and furniture. Performance indicators are related to benchmarking exercises and are identified through a specific piloting exercise in order to best serve their use in a comparative or profiling analysis.

Simple Indicator: A more general type of indicator, expressed in the form of absolute figures, intended to provide a relatively unbiased description of a process. Simple indicators are less relative than *performance indicators* in that they exclude any

judgments and/or points of reference *(e.g.,* a *standard,* an *objective,* or an *assessment).*

Related terms: Standards, Evaluation, Assessment.

Sources

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Van Damme, Dirk. "Standards and Indicators in Institutional and Programme Accreditation in Higher Education: A Conceptual Framework and a Proposal", *in,* L. Vlăsceanu and L. C. Barrows, eds. *Indicators for Institutional and Programme Accreditation in Higher/Tertiary Education.* Bucharest: UNESCO-CEPES, 2004, pp. 125-157.

Licensure/ Licensing

The process by which a governmental agency grants official permission *(i)* to persons meeting predetermined qualifications to engage in a given occupation and/or use of a particular title; *(ii)* to programmes, based on the evaluation of appropriate plans, to operate before obtaining accredited status, and *(iii)* to institutions to perform specified functions. Licensure (in the case of persons) is usually obtained through examination or graduation from an accredited institution. In some countries, a period of practical experience may be required. When such is the case, state authorization/state licensing should not be confused with institutional or specialized accreditation.

Related terms: Accreditation, Certification.

Source

Glossary of Contemporary Education Topics Relevant to the State of Iowa. Cedar Falls, Iowa: The Faculty of the College of Education at the University of Northern Iowa, 2001 <http://www.uni.edu/coe/glossary.html>.

Outcomes

Anticipated or achieved results of programmes or the accomplishment of institutional objectives, as demonstrated by a wide range of indicators (such as student knowledge, cognitive skills, and attitudes). Outcomes are direct results of the instructional programme, planned in terms of student/learner growth in all areas. An outcome must be distinguished from an objective, which is a sought-after result. Generally, each outcome statement should describe one effect of the instructional programme, and not accumulate several into one statement. Also, the statements should be clearly detailed and easily understandable by all teaching staff and students in the given area or department.

Outcomes Assessment: The process of evaluation and improvement of specific results of a higher education institution in order to demonstrate its institutional effectiveness. Assessment may concern the performance of teaching staff, the effectiveness of institutional practices, and/or the functioning of departments or programmes *(e.g.,* programme reviews, budget reviews, etc.). It is a formative procedure used for institutional self-study, financial retrenchment, programme evaluation, and better understanding of the current needs of students.

Student Learning Outcomes: Statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand, and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning as well as the specific intellectual and practical skills gained and demonstrated by the successful completion of a unit, course, or programme. Learning outcomes, together with assessment criteria, specify the minimum requirements for the award of credit, while grading is based on attainment above or below the minimum requirements for

the award of credit. Learning outcomes are distinct from the aims of learning in that they are concerned with the achievements of the learner rather than with the overall intentions of the teacher.

Student Outcome Assessment: The act of assembling, analyzing, and using both quantitative and qualitative evidence of teaching and learning outcomes, in order to examine their congruence with stated purposes and educational objectives and to provide meaningful feedback that will stimulate improvement.

Countable Outcomes: Results that can be quantified; all measures of student outcomes except learning gains, including executive function skills, and affective-related measures. Examples of countable outcomes include: numbers of persons who gain employment, numbers of people who register to vote, and numbers of people who achieve a graduate education degree. Learning gains are gains in speaking, listening, reading, writing, and numeracy. Executive function skills include problem-solving, critical thinking, and meta-cognition. Affective-related measures include self-esteem, self-confidence, and interpersonal communication.

Related terms: Accreditation; Assessment; Indicators; Quality; Quality Assurance.

Sources

American Association for Higher Education. *Assessment Forum:*

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Chico, California: CSU Chico, 1993 <http://www.csuchico.edu/community/assessment.html>. System for Adult Basic Education Support (SABES). *Glossary of Useful Terms.* Boston: SABES, 2002 <http://www.sabes.org/assessment/glossary .htm>.

Peer Review/External Review

Assessment procedure regarding the quality and effectiveness of the academic programmes of an institution, its staffing, and/or its structure, carried out by external experts *(peers).* (Strictly speaking, *peers* are academics of the same discipline, but in practice, different types of external evaluators exist, even though all are meant to be specialists in the field reviewed and knowledgeable about higher education in general.) The review may [also] vary the source of authority of peers, types of peers, their selection and training, their *site visits,* and the *standards* to be met. A review is usually based on a *self-evaluation* report provided by the institution and can itself be used as a basis for indicators and/or as a method of judgment for (external) evaluation in higher education.

Related Terms: Accreditation, Evaluation, Quality Assessment, Site Visit, Standards.

Qualification

Any higher education award (degree, diploma, or other type of formal certification) issued by a competent, registered authority attesting the successful completion of a course programme. It covers a wide variety of higher education awards at different levels and across different countries *(e.g.,* the Bachelor's and Master's Degree, the Doctorate, etc.). A qualification is important in terms of what it signifies: competencies and range of knowledge and skills. Sometimes it is equivalent to a license to practice. It is often synonymous with *credential*

Qualification Framework: A comprehensive policy framework, which defines all qualifications recognized nationally in higher education in terms of workload, level, quality, learning outcomes, and profiles. It should be so designed as to be comprehensible through the use of specific *descriptors* for each qualification covering both its breadth (competencies associated with learning outcomes) and its depth (level). It is structured horizontally in order to cover all qualifications awarded in a system, and vertically, by level. Its purpose is that of facilitating: *(i)* curriculum development and design of study programmes; *(ii)* student and graduate mobility; and *(iii)* recognition of periods of study and credentials. While certain higher education systems have their own qualification frameworks, others allow for the development of a wide variety of qualifications without providing an explicit framework. The emerging European Higher Education Area, envisaged by the Bologna Declaration, is regarded by many as being in need of a pan-European Qualification Framework.

The Bachelor's-Master's Degree generic descriptors *(e.g.,* The Joint Quality Initiative (or Dublin Descriptors); the Bachelor's-Master's Degree subject-specific benchmarks *(e.g.,* The Tuning Project); the International Credit Framework *(e.g.,* ECTS for transfer and accumulation); The Integrated National Credit Framework *(e.g.,* Ireland, Denmark); or, Learning Outcomes and Competencies – General and Specific *(e.g.,* United Kingdom, Denmark) are

among recent output-focused systems approaches and techniques used to classify and explain qualifications and qualification frameworks.

Related Terms: Assessment, Learning Outcome, Recognition, Validation.

Sources

Bologna Seminar on Qualification Structures in Higher Education in Europe, "Recommendations", Copenhagen, March 2003.

Middlehurst, Robin. *Quality Assurance Implications of New Forms of Higher Education.* Part 1: *A Typology.* ENQA Occasional Papers No. 3. Helsinki: ENQA, 2001, p. 15.

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Quality (Academic)

Quality in higher education is a multi-dimensional, multi-level, and dynamic concept that relates to the contextual settings of an educational model, to the institutional mission and objectives, as well as to specific standards within a given system, institution, programme, or discipline. Quality may thus take different meanings depending on: *(i)* the understandings of various interests of different constituencies or stakeholders in higher education (quality requirements set by student/university discipline/labour market/society/government); *(ii)* its references: inputs, processes, outputs, missions, objectives, etc.; *(iii)* the attributes or characteristics of the academic world which are worth evaluating; and *(iv)* the historical period in the development of higher education.

A wide spectrum of definitions of academic quality has been used:

- *Quality as excellence:* a traditional, élitist academic view, according to which only the best standards of excellence (usually meaning a high level of difficulty and of complexity of a programme, the seriousness of the student testing procedures, etc.) are understood as revealing true academic quality.

- *Quality as fitness for purpose:* a concept that stresses the need to meet or conform to generally accepted standards such as those defined by an accreditation or quality assurance body, the focus being on the efficiency of the processes at work in the institution or programme in fulfilling the stated, given objectives and mission. Sometimes quality in this sense is labeled as: (i) a *value for money approach* owing to the (implicit) focus on how the inputs are efficiently used by the processes and mechanisms involved or *(ii)* the *value-added approach* when results are evaluated in terms of changes obtained through various educational processes *(e.g.,* teaching and learning processes). A variant of the latter is the *quality as transformation* approach, which is strongly student centered. It considers quality as a transformational process within which the better a higher education institution is, the better it achieves the goal of empowering students with specific skills, knowledge, and attitudes that enable them to live and work in a knowledge society.

- *Quality as fitness of purpose:* a concept that focuses on the defined objectives and mission of the institution or programme with no check of the fitness of the processes themselves in regard to any external objectives or expectations. Within this approach, one may distinguish alternative approaches developed in the 1990s: *(i) quality as threshold* whereby certain norms and criteria are set and any programme or institution has to reach them in order to be considered to be of quality. In many European higher education systems, a variant defining *quality as a basic/ minimum standard,* closely linked to accreditation, is used. In this case, the starting point is that of specifying a set of minimum standards to be met by an institution or programme and to generate the basis for the development of quality-improvement mechanisms; *(ii) quality as consumer satisfaction:* quality perceived as closely linked to the growing importance of market forces in higher education, that focuses on the importance of the externa expectations of consumers (students, families, society at large) and other stakeholders.

- *Quality as enhance ent or improvement:* focusing on the continuous search for permanent improvement, stressing the responsibility of the higher education institution to make the best use of its institutional autonomy and freedom. Achieving quality is central to the academic ethos and to the idea that academics themselves know best what quality is.

Each approach has advantages and disadvantages, being more or less suitable for a specific period of time and/or national context. In terms of evolution, there are permanent movement and oscillations between relative *versus* absolute, internal *versus* externally oriented, and basic *versus* more advanced and sophisticated notions of quality. However, common to all of these quality approaches is the integration of the following elements: (i) the guaranteed realization of minimal standards and benchmarks; *(ii)* the capacity to set the objectives in a diversifying context and to achieve them with the given input and context variables; *(iii)* the ability to

satisfy the demands and expectations of direct and indirect consumers and stakeholders; *(iv)* the drive towards excellence (Van Damme, 2003).

Quality Assessment/Quality Review. Indicates the actual process of external evaluation (reviewing, measuring, judging) of the quality of higher education institutions and programmes. It consists of those techniques, mechanisms, and activities that are carried out by an external body in order to evaluate the quality of the higher education processes, practices, programmes, and services. Some aspects are important when defining and operating with the concept of quality assessment: *(i)* the context (national, institutional); *(ii)* the methods (self-assessment, assessment by peer review, site visits); *(iii)* the levels (system, institution, department, individual); (iv) the mechanisms (rewards, policies, structures, cultures); (v) certain quality values attached to quality assessment such as academic values, traditional values (focusing upon the subject field), managerial values (focusing on procedures and practices); pedagogical values (focusing on staff and their teaching skills and classroom practice); employment values (emphasizing graduate output characteristics and learning outcomes).

Quality Assurance: An all-embracing term referring to an ongoing, continuous *process* of evaluating (assessing, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining, and improving) the quality of a higher education system, institutions, or programmes. As a regulatory mechanism, quality assurance focuses on both accountability and improvement, providing information and judgments (not ranking) through an agreed upon and consistent process and well-established criteria. Many systems make a distinction between *internal quality assurance (i.e.,* intra-institutional practices in view of monitoring and improving the quality of higher education) and *external quality assurance (i.e.,* inter- or supra-institutional schemes of assuring the quality of higher education institutions and programmes). Quality assurance activities depend on the existence of the necessary institutional mechanisms preferably sustained by a solid quality culture. Quality management, quality enhancement, quality control, and quality assessment are means through which quality assurance is ensured. The scope of quality assurance is determined by the shape and size of the higher education system. Quality assurance varies from accreditation, in the sense that the former is only a prerequisite for the latter. In practice, the relationship between the two varies a great deal from one country to another. Both imply various consequences such as the capacity to operate and to provide educational services, the capacity to award officially recognized degrees, and the right to be funded by the state. Quality assurance is often considered as a part of the quality management of higher education, while sometimes the two terms are used synonymously.

Quality Control: A phrase that refers to the process of quality evaluation that focuses on the internal measurement of the quality of an institution or a programme. It refers to a set of operational activities and techniques (monitoring activities and a structured internally planned and implemented policy) elaborated and used to fulfill requirements of quality. Often used interchangeably with *quality management* and *quality assurance,* it refers to an aggregate of actions and measures taken regularly to assure the quality of higher education products, services, or processes, with an emphasis on assuring that a prescribed threshold of quality is met. It aims both at monitoring the process and at eliminating certain causes generating an unsatisfactory functioning. Sometimes a minimal quality control (mostly in the shape of some kind of certification) exists serving as a filtering mechanism in confirming that a higher education institution is fulfilling minimal agreed upon quality requirements and has appropriate quality monitoring procedures in place.

Quality Management: An aggregate of measures taken regularly at system or institutional level in order to assure the quality of higher education with an emphasis on improving quality as a whole. As a generic term, it covers all activities that ensure fulfillment of the quality policy and the quality objectives and responsibilities and implements them through quality planning, quality control, quality assurance, and quality improvement mechanisms.

Total Quality Management (TQM): A particularly influential comprehensive approach to quality management that places emphasis on factors such as continuous improvement, customer focus, strategic management, need for explicit systems to assure quality of higher education, and a view of leadership and supervision that stresses employee empowerment and delegation. Such an approach to quality management emphasizes assessment that is undertaken against: *(i)* defined objectives or standards (set internally or by external funding bodies); *(ii)* measures of customer satisfaction; *(iii)* expert and professional judgment; and *(iv)* comparator organizations. TQM is considered to have a close conceptual and philosophical link with benchmarking methodologies. Such an approach has been mostly applied in the economic sector of societies, being less used in the academic world.

Quality Audit: The process of quality assessment by which an external body ensures that *(i)* the institution of programme quality assurance procedures or *(ii)* that the overall (internal and external) quality assurance procedures of the system are adequate and are actually being carried out. Quality audit looks to the system for achieving good quality and not at the quality itself. A quality audit can be realized only by persons *(i.e.,* quality auditors) who are not directly involved in the areas being audited. Quality audits can be undertaken to meet internal goals (internal audit) or external goals (external audit). The results of the audit must be documented *(audit report).* See, also, *audit).*

Quality Culture: It refers to a set of shared, accepted, and integrated patterns of quality (often called *principles of quality)* to be found in the organizational cultures and the management systems of institutions. Awareness of and commitment to the quality of higher education, in conjunction with a solid culture of evidence and with the efficient management of this quality (through quality assurance procedures) are the ingredients of a quality culture. As quality elements change and evolve over time, so must the integrated system of quality supportive attitudes and arrangements (quality culture) change to support new quality paradigms in higher education.

Quality Planning: It consists of the set of actions that establishes the objectives and the conditions referring to the quality of higher education and to the application of the mechanism of the quality system. Quality planning includes product planning (identification, classification, and determination of the importance of the features referring to quality as well as to the establishment of the objectives, the conditions referring to quality, and its restraints), managerial and operational planning (including its organization and programming), an elaboration of quality plans, and the provision of quality improvement measures.

Related terms: Accreditation, Audit, Culture of Evidence, Evaluation.

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Ranking/ League Tables

Ranking and league tables are an established technique for displaying the comparative ranking of organizations in terms of their performance. They are meant to supply information to interested stakeholders, consumers, and policy-makers, alike on measurable differences in service quality of several similar providers. Even if somewhat controversial, especially concerning the methodological aspects, they are quite popular and seen as a useful instrument for public information, while also providing an additional incentive to quality improvement. Ranking/ league tables are generally published in the popular press and magazines, specialist journals and/or on the Internet. The ranking process starts with the collection of data from existing data sources, site visits, studies, and institutional research. Following collection, the type and quantity of variables are selected from the information gathered. Then, the indicators are standardized and weighted from the selected variables. Finally, the calculations are conducted and comparisons are made so that institutions are sorted into “ranking order”. Ranking/ league tables make use, in the process of evaluation of institutions or programmes, of a range of different indicators. The results of ranking/league tables (the “scores” of each assessed institution) may thus vary from one case to another, depending on the number of indicators used or on the indicators themselves. Ranking indicators or criteria usually take into consideration scientific, pedagogic, administrative, and socio-economic aspects: student/staff ratio, A-level points (held by first-year students), teaching and research (as marks received in teaching and research assessments by individual departments), library and computer spending, drop out rate, satisfaction, study conditions, employment perspectives, etc.

Related terms : Assessment, Criteria, Evaluation, Performance Standards.

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University of Manchester and UMIST Careers Service. *League Tables/ Reputations* <http://www.universityoptions.co.uk/ parents/1/1 .asp>.

Vaughn, John. "Accreditation, Commercial Rankings, and New Approaches to Assessing the Quality of University Research and Education Programmes in the United States", *Higher Education in Europe* 27 4, 2002: 433-441.

Yonezaza, Akioshi, Nakatsui, Izumi, and Kobayashi, Tetsuo. "University Rankings in Japan", *Higher Education in Europe* 27 4, 2002: 373-382.

Recognition

Formal acknowledgement of *(i) individual academic or professional qualifications; (ii) programmes of a higher education institution;* and/or *(iii) quality assurance agencies,* by a competent recognition authority that acknowledges certain standards and/or values with respect to special purposes that indicate the consequences of recognition. Recognition is usually of a cross-institutional and/or cross-border nature. As regards recognition of individual qualifications, learning experiences *(e.g.,* degrees, diplomas, or periods of study) are validated with a view to facilitating the access of holders to educational and/or employment activities. Here, at least two kinds of recognition, those for academic and those for professional purposes, should be distinguished (see below). Programme recognition generally refers to the recognition of a specific programme of study of one higher education institution by another. It functions on the basis of a peer-acknowledgement procedure and is meant to allow a student to engage in continued study at the latter institution or to exempt him or her from re-studying subjects and materials which are not significantly different in different higher education institutions. With regard to institutions, recognition refers to the acknowledgement of quality assurance agencies or accrediting organizations, deemed to be trustful, efficient, and accountable institutions of quality assurance, following particular recognition standards set by the competent (usually foreign) recognition authorities.

Academic Recognition: Approval of courses, qualifications, or diplomas from one (domestic or foreign) higher education institution by another for the purpose of student admission to further studies. Academic recognition can also be sought for an academic career at a second institution and in some cases for access to other employment activities on the labour market *(academic recognition for professional purposes).* As regards the European Higher Education Area, three main levels of recognition can be considered, as well as the instruments attached to them (as suggested by the Lisbon Convention and the Bologna Declaration): *(i)* recognition of qualifications, including prior learning and professional experience, allowing entry or re-entry into higher education; *(ii)* recognition of short study periods in relation to student mobility, having as the main instrument the ECTS *(European Credit Transfer System); (iii)* recognition of full degrees, having as the main instrument the Diploma Supplement.

Mutual Recognition: Agreement by two or more institutional bodies to validate each other's degrees, programmes, or institutions and/or affirmation by two or more quality assurance or accrediting agencies that the methodology of the agencies are sound and that the procedures are functioning accordingly.

Professional Recognition: Refers to the right to practice and the professional status accorded to a holder of a qualification. Owing to different regulations for the recognition of degrees or titles, a differentiation of two groups should be made: *de Jure Professional Recognition* applies to the right to work in a specific country in a legally regulated profession *(e.g.,* as a medical doctor). In the European Union, for instance, those regulations exist in both home and host countries and are subject to various European Union Specific Directives. *De Facto Professional Recognition* refers to situations of unregulated professional recognition, such as situations in which no national legal authorization exists or is required.

Recognition of Prior Learning: The formal acknowledgement of skills, knowledge, and competencies that are gained through work experience, informal training, and life experience.

Related terms: Accreditation, Certification, Evaluation, Licensure, Peer Review.

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Self-Evaluation (See, also, Internal Evaluation)

Site Visit

A component of external evaluation that is normally part of an accreditation process. However it may be initiated by the institution itself. It consists of external experts visiting a higher education institution to examine the self-study produced by the institution and to interview faculty members, students, and other staff in order to assess quality and effectiveness (and to put forward recommendations for improvement).

RELATED TERMS: Accreditation, Evaluation, Peer Review.

Standards

Statements regarding an expected level of requirements and conditions against which quality is assessed or that must be attained by higher education institutions and their programmes in order for them to be accredited or certified. Standards may take a quantitative form, being mostly the results of benchmarking, or they may be qualitative, indicating only specific targets (e.g., educational effectiveness, sustainability, core commitments, etc.). When quantitative, the standards include threshold levels that have to be met in order for higher education institutions or programmes to be accredited. More often than not, the thresholds or the "basic standards" are defined at the level of minimally acceptable quality. On other occasions, the standards refer to the highest level of quality, thus being considered as "standards of excellence". These may result from a benchmarking exercise or be asserted implicitly, being so recognized by the peers in a collegiate way. Standards may have different reference points: *(i)* inputs *[e.g., content standards]; (ii)* outputs *[e.g., performance standards], (iii)* processes. Standards can be general (for a degree level, *e.g.,* a Bachelor's or a Master's Degree) or subject-specific *(e.g.,* discipline benchmarking statements in the United King-

dom). Standards may also vary by different types of standard setting methods (such as criterion-referenced, minimal competency, or objective setting methods). In order to judge properly whether or not a particular standard/threshold level of quality is met or not, it has to be formulated clearly and explicitly and related to specific criteria which can be further divided into (more operational) indicators.

Standards are thus related to a specific (institutional programme) culture of evidence. In the context of the growing diversity of higher education, the translation of academic quality into standards and indicators has become complex. Often, a more dynamic approach to defining and assessing standards is visible (a mixture of reality-based components and potentiality-focused ones). The challenge is threefold: *(i)* to diminish the number of reference standards; *(ii)* to relate them to appropriate performance indicators while also making use of specific criteria within a consistent culture of evidence; and *(iii)* to provide for sufficient flexibility in the formulation of standards in order to allow for innovative academic developments. Standards are often used synonymously with criteria, as in the United States, while in Europe, standards are becoming increasingly distinct from criteria.

Content Standards: Level of core competencies, relevant knowledge, and skills within a subject area, *i.e.,* everything a student should know and be able to do. Content standards shape what goes into the curriculum and refer to required inputs.

Education(al) Standards: Level of requirements and conditions regarding different stages of the educational process and the relationship between those stages, such as inputs, processes, and outputs. Various types of educational standards exist with regard to learning resources, programmes, and results, in general, and student performance (content standards, performance standards, proficiency standards, and opportunity-to-learn standards).

Performance Standards: Levels of achievement/mastery that are deemed exemplary or appropriate, *i.e.,* specifications of how good the work of a student must be to meet the content standards. Performance standards shape expectations for educational outcomes.

Related terms: Criteria, Culture of Evidence, Indicators, Outcomes, Quality Assessment.

Sources: Same as for ***Criteria.***

Student Evaluation of Teachers

The process of using student inputs concerning the general activity and attitude of teachers. These observations allow the overall assessors to determine the degree of conformability between student expectations and the actual teaching approaches of teachers. Student evaluations are expected to offer insights regarding the attitude in class of a teacher (approachable, open-minded, entertaining, creative, patient, etc.), and/or the abilities of a teacher (to explain things, to motivate students, to help students think, to correct mistakes in a friendly manner, to offer information efficiently, etc.).

RELATED TERMS: (Academic) Quality, Assessment, Evaluation, Student Survey.

Source

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Student Survey

An assessment method that uses surveys and interviews to ascertain the satisfaction of enrolled students with programmes, services, and different other aspects of their academic experience. Students are usually asked to respond to a series of open-ended, close-ended, or telephone questions. The survey may include in-class questionnaires, mail questionnaires, telephone questionnaires, and/or interviews (standard, in-person, or focus group). Student surveys are relatively inexpensive, easy to administer, and can reach participants over a wide area. They are best suited for concise and non-sensitive topics, being able to give a sense, from the student perspective, of what is happening at a given moment in time, in the respective higher education institutions. Some observers may question their validity or reliability, as well as their relevance to academic policy.

Related Terms: Assessment, Evaluation, Culture of Evidence.

Validation

The process by which a programme is judged to have met the requirements for an award by a relevant institution with degree-awarding powers (insti-

tutional self-evaluation) or by a relevant examining board (validation by an outside examining body).

RELATED TERMS: Accreditation, Evaluation.

Source

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APPENDICES

Accreditation and/or Quality Assurance Bodies in Europe, the United States, and Japan

I. National Accredition and/or Quality Assurance Bodies in European Countries

Albania
Accreditation Agency of Higher Education
"Lek Dukagjinl" Nr. 5 Tirana
Phone/Fax: +355-42-579-54
E-mail: p_hoxha@albinali.com;
p_hoxha@yahoo.com

Austria
FHC Council (Österreichischer Fachhochschulrat)
Liechtenstenstrasse 22 A-1090 Vienna
Website:http://www.fhr.ac.at

Austrian Accreditation Council
Teinfalstrasse 8 A-1010 Vienna
Phone: +43-1-531-205-673
Fax: +43-1-531-208-15673
E-mail: akkreditierungsrat@bmbwk.gv.at
Website: <http: / /www.akkreditierungsrat.at>

Belgium
Flemish Community
Flemish Accreditation Organization (NVAO)
P.O. Box 556 NL-2501CN
The Hague The Netherlands
Phone: +31-70-312-2300
Fax: +31-70-312-2301
E-mail: info@nao-ho.n
Website: http://www.nvao.net

French Community
Ministère de la communauté française
204, rue Royale, 6è étage, Bureau 6539
B-1010 Brussels
Phone: +32-2-210-5577
Fax: +32-2-210-5992

Bulgaria
National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency
Tzarigradsko Chaussée
BG-1113 Sofia
Phone: +359-2-971-2102
Fax: +359-2-971-2068
E-mail: kik@neaa.government.bg
Website: <http: / /www.neaa.government.bg>

Croatia
National Council for Higher Education
41 Savska Street HR-10000 Zagreb
Phone: +385-1-4594-183
Fax: +385-1-4594-186

Czech Republic
Accreditation Commission
Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
Karmelitská 7
CZ-118 12 Prague 1
Phone/Fax: +42-2-5719-3457
E-mail: vins@msmt.cz
Website: http://www.msmt.cz/_DOMEK/default.asp?CAI=2856

Denmark
The Danish Evaluation Institute
Østbanegade 53, 3rd floor
DK-2100 Copenhagen
Phone: +45-35-55-0101
Fax: +45-35-33-1001
E-mail: eva@eva.dk
Website: <http://www.eva.dk>

Estonia
Higher Education Quality Assessment Council
Kohtu 6 EE-Tallinn 10130
Phone: +372-6962-424
Fax: +372-6962-427
E-mail: heqac@archimedes.ee
Website: <http://www.ekak.archimedes.ee>

Finland
Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC)
Annakatu 34-36a FIN-00101 Helsinki
Phone: +358-9-1607-6913
Fax:+358-9-1607-6911
E-mail: finheec@minedu.fi
Website: <http://www.kka.fi/>

France
Comité National d'Évaluation des établissements publics à caractère scientifique, culturel et professionnel (CNE)

43, rue de la Procession F-75015 Paris
Phone: +33-1-55-55-60-97
Fax: +33-1-55-55-63-94
Website: <http: / /www.cne-evaluation.fr>

Germany
Accreditation Council (Akkreditierungsrat)
Lennestrasse 6 D-53113Bonn
Phone: +49-228-501-699
Fax: +49-228-501-777
E-mail: sekr@akkreditierungsrat.de
Website: <http: / /www.akkreditierungsrat.de>

Hungary
Hungarian Accreditation Committee
Ajtósi Dürer sor 19-21 H-1146 Budapest
Phone: +36-1-344-0314
Fax: +36-1-344-0313
E-mail: info@mab.hu
Website: <http://www.mab.hu>

Iceland
Ministry of Education Science and Culture
Division of Evaluation and Supervision
Sölvhólsgötu 4 IS-150 Reykjavik
Phone: +354-545-9500
Fax: +345-562-3068
E-mail: postur@mrn.stjr.is
Website: <http://www.mrn.stjr.is>

Ireland
Higher Education and Training Awards Council
26-27 Denzille Lane IE-Dublin 2
Phone: +353-1-631-4567
Fax: +353-1-631-4577
E-mail: info@hetac.ie
Website: http://www.hetac.ie

Israel
Council for Higher Education
P.O. Box 4037 IL-91040 Jerusalem
Phone: +972-2-567-99-11
Fax: +972-2-567-99-69
E-mail: info@che.org.il
Website: <http://www.che.org.il>

Italy
National University Evaluation Council
Piazza Kennedy, 20
IT-00144 Roma
Phone: +39-6-5991-211
Fax: +39-6-5991-2223
E-mail: ossunico@murst.it
Website: <http://www.murst.it/osservatorio/nuec.html>

Latvia
Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre
2 Valnu Street
LV-1098 Riga
Phone: +371-721-3870
Fax: +371-721-2558
E-mail: jurisdz@latnet.lv; juris@apa.lv
Website: <http://www.aiknc.lv>

Lithuania
Lithuanian Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education
Suvalku 1 LT-26000 Vilnius
Phone: +370-2-210-4777
Fax: +370-2-213-2553
E-mail: skvc@skvc.lt
Website: http://www.skvc.lt/ummskvc/en/about_us.htm

Macedonia
Board for Higher Education Accreditation
Ministry of Education and Science
9 Dimitrie Cupovski Street MK-1000 Skopje
Phone: +389-2-3117-277
Fax:+389-2-3118-414
E-mail: contact@mofk.gov.mk

The Netherlands
The Netherlands – Flemish Accreditation Organization (NVAO)
The Netherlands – The Dutch Accreditation Organization (NAO)
Lange Koorhot 20 NL-2514 EE The Hague
Phone: +31-70-312-2300
Fax: +31-70-312-2301
E-mail: info@nvao.net
Website: <http://www.nvao.net>

Norway
Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance
in Education P.B. 1708 Vika NO-0121 Oslo
Phone: +47-2102-1862
Fax: +47-2102-1802
Website: <http://www.nokut.no>

Poland
The Association of Management Education
Ul. Kubańska 4m. 32 PL-03 949 Warsaw
Phone/Fax: +48-22-617-6654
Website: <http:www.semforum.org.pl>

The State Accreditation Committee (PKA)
Świętokrzyska 12 str. PL-00 916 Warsaw
Phone: + 48-22-694-49-02

Fax: +48-22-826-71-45
E-mail: pka@men.waw.pl
Website: <http://menis.gov.pl/pka/index.php>

University Accreditation Commission
Adam Mickiewicz University Ul.
Wieniawskiego 1 PL-61 712 Poznań
Phone: +(48 61) 827-32-60
Fax: +(48 61) 829-24-92
E-mail: mackoz@amu.edu.pl
Website: <http://main.amu.edu.pl/~ects/uka/uka.html.

Portugal
National Council for the Evaluation of Higher Education
[Conselho Nacional de Avaliação do Ensino Superior]
Praça des Indústrias-Edificio Rosa 2°.Dt°. PT-1300307 Lisbon
Phone: +351-213-616-141
Fax: +351-213-616-149
E-mail: cnaves@cnaves.pt
Website: <http:www.cnaves.pt>

Romania
National Council of Academic Assessment and Accreditation (NCAAA)
1, Schitul Măgureanu Str. RO-500025 Bucharest
Phone:+40-21-206-7600 Fax: +40-21-312-7135
E-mail: cneaa@cneaa.ro
Website: http://www.cneaa.ro

Russian Federation
National Accreditation Center
3 Lenin Square
RU-424000 Yoshkar-Ola
Phone: +7-8362-116194; +7-8362-113-884
E-mail: postmaster@nica.ru
Website: <http://www.nica.ru>

Slovak Republic
Accreditation Commission of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic
Stromová 1
SK-813 30 Bratislava
Phone: +421-2-5249-8955
Fax: +421-2-5249-6261
E-mail: sekrak@wm.stuba.sk
Website: <http://www.akredkom.sk>

Slovenia
National Higher Education Quality Assessment Commission
Kongresni trg 12 SI-1001 Ljubljana
Phone: +386-61-1254-117
Fax: +386-61-1254-4053
E-mail: miha.pauko@uni-mb.si
Website: <http//www.uni-mb.si>

Spain
National Agency for Quality Evaluation and Accreditation
c/Orense 2-2a planta E-28020 Madrid
Phone: +46-91-417 8230
Fax: +46-91-556-8642
E-mail: informacion@aneca.es
Website: http://www.aneca.es

Agency for Quality Assurance in the Catalan University System
Via Laietana, 28 5a planta E-0800 3 Barcelona
Phone: +34-93-268-8950
Fax: +34-93-268-8951
E-mail: infor@aqucatalunya.org
Website: <http://www.aqucatalunya.org>

Sweden
National Agency for Higher Education Luntmakargatan 13
P.O. Box 7851 SE-103-99 Stockholm
Phone: +46-8-563-085-00
Fax: +46-8-563-085-50
E-mail: hsv@hsv.se
Website: <http://www.hsv.se/english>

Switzerland
Center for Accreditation and Quality Assurance of the Swiss Universities (OAQ)
Effingerstrasse 58 CH-3008 Bern
Website: http://www.oaq.ch

Ukraine
Higher Certifying Commission of Ukraine
Khreshchatyk, 34 UA-01001,Kyiv
Phone: +38-044-221 20 41; +38 044 224 11 04
Fax: +38-044-221 20 41; +38 044 224 11 04

United Kingdom
British Accreditation Council for Independent Further and Higher Education
Suite 401 27 Marylebone Road
London NW15JS
Phone: +44-20-7487-4643
Website: http://www.caritasdata.co.uk/charity2/ch018122.htm

QAA – The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education Head Office
Southgate House, Southgate Street
Gloucester GL1 1UB Phone: +44-1452-557-000
Fax: +44-1452-557-070
E-mail: comms@qaa.ac.uk
Website: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk>

Open University Validation Services
344 Gray's Inn Road London WC1X 8BP
Phone: +44-20-7278-4411
Fax: +44-20-7832-1012
E-mail: ouvs-recep@open.ac.uk
Website: <http:// www.open.ac.uk/validate \\>

II. European Quality Assurance Networks

European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) ENQA Secretariat
P.O. Box 1425 Annankatu 34+36 A FIN-00101 Helsinki Finland
Phone: +358-9-1607-6917
Fax: +358-9-1607-6911
E-mail: nqa@minedu.fi
Website: http://www.enqa.net

European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS)
88, rue Gachard B-1050 Brussels Belgium
Phone: +32-3-629-0810
Fax: +32-2-629-0811
Website: <http://www.efmd.be>

International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)
INQAAHE Secretariat Higher Educational and Training Awards Council 26-27 Denzille Lane IE-Dublin 2 Ireland
Phone: +353-1-631-4550
Fax: +353-1-631-4551
E-mail: inqaahe@hetac.ie
Website: <http://www.inqaahe.org/>

The Network of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEE Network)
Ajtósi Dürer sor 19-21 H-1146 Budapest Hungary
Phone: +36-1-344-0315 Fax: +36-1-344-0313
E-mail: batorsky@maf.hu
Website: <http://www.ceenetwork.hu >

III. Accrediting and/or Quality Assurance Bodies in the United States of America

Commission on Colleges Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
1866 Southern Lane Decatur, Georgia 30033
Phone: +1-404-679-4500
Fax: +1-404-679-4558
Website: <http://www.sacscoc.org>

Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE)
New England Association of Schools and Colleges
209 Burlington Road, Bedford Massachusetts 01730-1433
Phone: +1-781-271-002/Ext. 313
Fax: +1-781-271-0850
E-mail: cihe@neasc.org
Website: <http: / /www.neasc.org/cihe/cihe.htm>

Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)
One Dupont Circle NW, Suite 510 Washington D.C. 20036-1135
Phone: +1-202-955-6126 Fax: +1-202-955-6126
E-mail: cihe@neasc.org Website: <http://www.chea.org/>

The Higher Learning Commission (HLC)
North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
30 N. LaSalle Street, Suite 2400 Chicago, Illinois 60602-2504
Phone: +1-312-263-0456
Fax: +1-312-263-7462
Website: http://www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org>

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
Middle States Commission on Higher Education 3624 Market Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104
Phone: +1-215-662-5606
Fax: +1-215-662-5501
E-mail: info@msache.org
Website: <http://www.msache.org>

Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCUU)
8060 156th Avenue N.E., Suite 100 Redmond, Washington 98052
Phone: +1-425-558-4224
Fax: +1-425-376-0596
Website: <http://www.nwccu.org>

Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)
985 Atlantic Ave., Suite 100
Alameda, California 94501
Phone: +1-510-748-9001
Fax: +1-510-748-9797
E-mail: wascsr@wascsenior.org
Website: http://www.wascweb.org

IV. Accrediting and/or Quality Assurance Bodies in Japan

Japan Accreditation Board for Engineering Education (JABEE)
Kenchiku Kaikan (The AIJ Building, Tokyo), 6th floor
5-26-20 Shiba, minato-ku, Tokyo
Phone: +81-35-439-5031
Fax: +81-35-439-5033
E-mail: office@jabee.org
Website: http://www.jabee.org

Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA)
2-7-13, Ichigaya Sadohara-cho
Shinjuku-ku JP-162-0842
E-mail: info@juaa.or.jp
Website: <http://www.juaa.or.jp/>