7th European Quality Assurance Forum
How does quality assurance make a difference?

22-24 November 2012
Tallinn University, Tallinn, Estonia

Paper abstracts 10.45-11.30 (Friday 23 November)

Ia.1 **How should internal quality processes support doctoral programmes? Illustrated by a case study of IST**

<u>By:</u> Ana Torres, Instituto Superior Técnico, Portugal
Carla Patrocínio, Instituto Superior Técnico, Portugal

<u>Room:</u> A242

<u>Chair:</u> Thérèse Zhang, European University Association

<u>Abstract:</u> The process of adaptation to the challenges in the European Higher Education Area led to the development of an Integrated Quality System at Instituto Superior Técnico (SIQuIST), consolidating the quality culture developed over the last decades. One of the most advanced dimensions of SIQuIST is the education area, through the system of monitoring the quality of the IST programmes. This system is established for 1st and 2nd cycles, which will be described and analysed in this paper, leading to some pertinent questions: how should we expand the system to the doctoral programmes? Should the instruments and sub-dimensions of analysis be the same? Or does the specificity of this level of studies require a different approach? The purpose of this paper is to present and discuss how to expand quality assurance procedures implemented to doctoral level and analyse the potential impact of this on the school supervision, in an illustrated case of IST.

Ia.2 **Do EQA and accreditation really make a difference in Flanders' higher education?**

<u>By:</u> Patrick Van den Bosch, VLIR, Belgium
Dieter Cortvriendt, VLIR, Belgium
Daphne Carolus, VLHORA, Belgium
Dries Froyen, VLHORA, Belgium

<u>Room:</u> M649

Chair: Alexander Kohler, Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance, Austria

Abstract: Due to external quality assurance (EQA) and accreditation, the quality of higher education programmes has increased. At least, that is what everyone hopes. In fact, little or no research is conducted in Flanders to measure the outcomes (impact) of EQA on the quality of higher education. The outcomes in terms of quality still remain a black box. Our goal is to give a nuanced, but critical, impression of the impact of EQA in Flanders and the added value of accreditation, based on years of experience in EQA. In this paper we distinguish five different categories of EQA- perception: EQA as a calendar, a magnifier, a mirror, a catalyst or a label. EQA, as we believe, makes a big difference when perceived as a catalyst. Based on our experiences the conditio sine qua non to enhance quality remains the willingness of all actors involved in higher education to become increasingly aware that all educational practices are a collective responsibility.

Ia.3 **QA: less Quality Assurance, more Questioning Assurance! Pleading for complexity, ruptures, and even some joy**

By: Bernhard Kernegger, University of Applied Arts Vienna, Austria

Room: A007

Chair: Bjørn Stensaker, EQAF Steering Committee

Abstract: Since its introduction to higher education about twenty years ago, formal quality assurance developed into an important and mostly uncontested pillar of university management. But although QA procedures are operational in all countries adherent to the Bologna Process, and although large amounts of public funding are spent in setting up and improving national and institutional QA systems, there is still not much empirical evidence proving the effectiveness of QA. This paper raises a number of critical questions concerning QA in its existing forms. In particular, it investigates why QA matters mostly remain in the responsibility of university administration instead of becoming an issue of the academic community as a whole, and what risks this development can bring. Concluding, several alternative approaches are denoted, concerning not only internal QA but consequently also external QA and public accountability.

Ia.4 **Quality enhancement through shared responsibilities: how to use student and graduate tracking for strategic development and quality enhancement. A case study**

By: Hanne Smidt, Lund University, Sweden
         Kristina Josefson, Lund University, Sweden

Room: A121 A

Chair: Jon Haakstad, Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education, Norway

Abstract: The presentation is a case study of how Lund University has used the mapping of existing student and graduate tracking initiatives within its faculties and central administration to introduce institution-wide tracking and developed a policy for a shared responsibility. The collected data is used for evidence-based strategic development, quality enhancement and the development of a jointly defined level of minimum student support services in all faculties. The university leadership use the information collected through both analysis of KPIs and student and graduate surveys in annual 'Quality Dialogues' with each faculty. The project is inspired by Lund University's participation in the recent EUA project: 'Tracking Learners' and

Graduates' Progression Paths', 2012. The presentation will outline the processes involved and introduce a discussion on how the tracking of students and graduates through shared initiatives between faculties and the central administration can enhance strategic development and strengthen the institutional profile.

Ia.5   How QA helps to promote students' interests in Russia

By: Petr Timoshin, All-Russian Students' Union, Russia

Room: A121 B

Chair: Maria Kelo, EQAF Steering Committee

Abstract: One of the main principles of the quality assurance procedures is to encompass the interests of all stakeholders. Yet students are a stakeholder group whom universities often do not take seriously into account, especially in Russia, where there is a long history of state orders and standards. In Russia there are several students' organisations; the biggest is the All-Russian Students' Union which has a memorandum of understanding with ESU. The Russian QA agency AKKORK works on the basis of the ESG to help to integrate and unite the students interested in participation in the procedures of quality assurance. This article describes the costs and what it is like for students in Russia to participate in QA procedures.

Ia.6   Continuing Plenary Session II: what are the lessons for QA from the recent US discussions on the future of accreditation?

By: Sylvia Manning, Higher Learning Commission, USA

Room: M648

Chair: Fiona Crozier, EQAF Steering Committee

Abstract: This session aims to explore what kind of parallels can be drawn between the recent discussions on the future of accreditation in the USA and changing expectations towards quality assurance in Europe. This session will continue the discussion started during Plenary Session II.

Paper abstracts 11.45-12.30 (Friday 23 November)

Ib.1   **Quality assessment of doctoral programmes as a supplement of the institutional evaluation – the Polish model and experience**

By: Maciej Markowski, Polish Accreditation Committee, Poland

Room: A242

Chair: Thérèse Zhang, European University Association

Abstract: The main purpose of the paper is to present the concept for the assessment of doctoral programmes implemented by the Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA) as an important supplement of the institutional evaluation. The paper presents the criteria adopted by PKA and the evaluation procedure. It attempts to summarise the current experiences and obstacles in the evaluation of doctoral studies. It also presents the inclusion of one group of stakeholders – doctoral students – into PKA's quality assessment procedure.

Ib.2   **Accreditation process in Kazakhstan: state regulation, procedures and prospects**

By: Valikhan Bishimbayev, Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kazakhstan
         Kulyanda Nurasheva, M.Auezov South Kazakhstan State University, Kazakhstan

Room: M649

Chair: Radu Damian, ARACIS, Romania

Abstract: Accreditation is recognized as the most important factor in improving the quality of education in Kazakhstan. Introduced transparent standards and procedures for quality assessment are giving clear guidance for construction of educational policy. As the Kazakh universities have inflated self-concept, they need to develop a self-critical approach. It is recommended to conduct more frequent sociological studies of consumer satisfaction with the quality of educational services. To form an effective system of education management it is planned: to implement the principles of corporate management, the system of public-private partnership in education and science; to strengthen the role of boards of trustees through the participation of parents, employers, NGOs, professional associations, etc.; to improve the monitoring of the education system, financial support for national independent ratings and participation in world rankings; to integrate science, education and production and commercialise intellectual property.

Ib.3   **Dialectical reasoning around quality culture**

By: Dries Berings, Hogeschool-Universiteit Brussel, Belgium
         Styn Grieten, Hogeschool-Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

Room: A007

Chair: Bjørn Stensaker, EQAF Steering Committee

Abstract: In this paper we elaborate the idea of dialectical reasoning as a way of reconciling managerial paradoxes. Two 'mental exercises' have been developed to stimulate such dialectical reasoning around quality culture. The first exercise is an adoption of the core quadrant method developed by Daniel Ofman. After transferring this method from the

individual to the organisational level we can use this method to make people more sensitive to the dialectical nature of a quality culture and to learn to find creative solutions for organisational paradoxes like empowerment versus management control. The essence of the second exercise is dialectical reasoning by considering opposing cultural values (e.g. teamwork vs. individual specialisation) as the context of each other in a reciprocal way. This way of mental mapping is inspired by the work of Charles Hampden-Turner and Fons Trompenaars on the dilemma reconciliation process in intercultural management.

Ib.4   Quality assurance and the learning journey: the value of monitoring progress for the student experience

<u>By:</u>   Kit Leighton-Kelly, University of Bristol, United Kingdom

<u>Room:</u> A121 A

<u>Chair:</u> Allan Päll, EQAF Steering Committee

<u>Abstract:</u> This paper argues that the aims of UK quality assurance (QA) within institutions should be concerned not only with the requirements to provide a profile of programmes, institutions and their accomplishment, but also to support individual student development. The UK QA model provides wide-ranging information which is of great importance in a competitive market. However, whilst current systems provide detail of course content, structure, teaching and assessment, they also have valuable potential for the analysis of individual student achievement. The question is can we develop the QA system to enable us (a) to monitor individual student progress and development over time; and (b) to develop feedback mechanisms that can help students to identify areas where improvement of learning and study skills are necessary? Ideally we should develop systems to assess and enhance individual student performance and its variation during the learning journey.

Ib.5   Gathering student feedback: how does it make a difference?

<u>By:</u>   Tina Harrison, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

<u>Room:</u> A121 B

<u>Chair:</u> Maria Kelo, EQAF Steering Committee

<u>Abstract:</u> Student engagement in quality systems, in particular feedback from students on their experiences, forms a central part of quality systems throughout Europe. Yet, in order for feedback to make a difference it needs to be collected with the right purpose in mind and appropriate use of the findings needs to be made in order to inform decision-making. This paper discusses the purpose and use of student feedback by UK higher education institutions. Two surveys were conducted: one external survey of UK institutions and one internal survey in the University of Edinburgh. The purpose of the study was to understand the range of feedback methods used, perceptions of effort versus value, the intended purpose of feedback surveys, survey content and approaches to analysis and distribution of findings. A key goal of the study was to benchmark Edinburgh's own approach for gathering feedback from students with the sector and to make recommendations.