Country Report - Spain

Quality Assurance of Cross Border Higher Education - QACHE

INDEX

Introduction

1) Objective of the Project[1]

The QACHE project aims to address, in terms of information and practical support, the quality assurance of cross-border higher education (CBHE) by looking closely into different ways in which European Quality Assurance agencies (QAAs) and higher education institutions (HEIs) address the accreditation and quality assurance of the programmes delivered outside of their countries.

The main objectives are fourfold:

•to enhance policy dialogue within European countries and between Europe and other world regions on quality assurance of CBHE, and enhance thus mutual understanding of different approaches to CBHE and different methods in quality assurance;

•to further develop the European dimension in quality assurance;

•to facilitate and enhance the engagement of European HEIs in CBHE provision

•to protect students against low standard provision and issues related to recognition of CBHE.

More specifically, the project will provide quality assurance agencies and HEIs with guidance for activities of internal and external quality assurance processes of CBHE; with support in establishing procedures for CBHE, as well as with comprehensive information on common approaches on quality assurance of CBHE. Based on good practices from Europe, Australia, Asia-Pacific and the Gulf Region, the project will elaborate basic principles for a common approach to quality assurance of European CBHE enabling higher education to be of comparable quality and meet the same standards within or outside Europe and being recognized in the host country without facing double procedures.

2) Objective of the report[2]

In order to reach the above mentioned objectives, the second phase of the Project consists in an in-depth investigation of agencies and the development of case studies/good practice examples.

In this Work package, the aim is to analyze the role and processes adopted for CBHE by QAAs in five core provider countries: France, Germany, Spain and the UK for Europe and Australia. In the framework of this investigation, an initial country report has to be prepared by the partner organizations in each of the five countries listed.

The country reports are expected to cover the following areas defined by the Project team:

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[1] http://qache.wordpress.com/objectives/
[2] http://qache.wordpress.com/activities/

•Cross-border Higher Education offered by exporting providers in each country – State of the art;

•National context and approaches to Quality Assurance (QA) and recognition of CBHE;

•Criteria and guidelines for QA of CBHE;

•Main obstacles and challenges and its QA;

•Good practice examples.

The outcome of the country reports will result in an analysis of the various methods and lead to the elaboration of a comparative perspective, highlighting commonalities and divergences between different approaches.

3) Methodology of the report

As far as the Agency has no specific competence on the Quality Assurance of Cross-border Higher Education and with the goal of elaborating the Spanish country report, ANECA decided to follow a specific and contextualized methodology.

The first step was to create an internal working group composed by two people from the Agency and one academic collaborating on evaluation procedures at national and international level.

Once the group was effective, it was decided, as described in the Project proposal, to realize several interviews on the situation of QA of CBHE in the country. Five Universities, private and public, more or less internationalized, geographically diverse, were interviewed on their CBHE policy, strategy, financial aspects, criteria used, knowledge of the existing international guidelines, role of the QAAs, challenges they are facing, etc.

As per the particularity of the decentralized system in Spain, an interview was also organized with a regional high responsible for Higher Education to have, at least, one regional perspective.

Several meetings were organized with the staff in charge of the programmes' accreditation to discuss the existing (or not) criteria and guidelines used to evaluate degrees with a CBHE dimension.

It is worth noting that, at that moment, there is no centralized information in Spain regarding the cross-border higher education offered and that the information is available at micro (Institutional) level and not at macro (i.e. Ministry or Agency) level. It also is important to specify that the present report is the result of the above mentioned methodology and though, is not a complete representation of the Spanish system.

The report is based on the guide of contents provided by the Project team and details the current situation of QA of CBHE in Spain.

Chapter 1 – Cross-border higher education offered by exporting providers in Spain – state of the art

The Spanish Higher Education system is composed of a unique provider: the University. There actually are 82 Universities, 50 are public Institutions and 32 are private. Almost all Universities are involved in activities of Cross-border Higher Education through the following main types of delivery:

- Distance learning
- Joint Programmes
- Double degrees
- Offices

Between 75 and 100% of the Spanish Higher Education Institutions are participating and awarding joint programmes for example (source: BFUG) even though the dimension of a joint degree is not always referring to cross-border as far as in Spain, we do include in the notion of joint programme, the degrees offered by two or more Spanish Universities between themselves.

Among the different types of CBHE offered we found out, through the interviews carried out that there are many different approaches:

- In the case of a private Business school, the priority being the internationalization at home, they have few double or joint degrees and they are very carefully selected.

- In the case of one of the public Universities, they only offer three official joint degrees against 30 own University degrees and also double degrees.

- In the case of one of the private Universities, they decided to offer only double degrees and no joint programmes.

So it is clear that we cannot conclude on a defined trend in the Spanish Universities at that time as far as it completely depends on the own Institutional strategy.

There currently is no campus/faculty/center abroad but what the Institutions call "Offices". These offices are implanted in foreign countries but the main objective of these structures is to attract students to go to Spanish Universities. So that, in reality, it deals more with internationalization at home through the recruitment of foreign students than with CBHE offered.

The main receiving countries of Spanish CBHE are Latin America for its particular historical and language link (with all the Spanish speaking countries), Asia (especially China, Korea and India), the Middle East-North Africa (for example Morocco and Egypt) and, of course, Europe.

Regarding the differences between the receiving regions of Spanish joint and double degrees, it is worth noting that in Spain, there are two types of degrees awarded at national and international level:

• The official degrees: accredited by a Quality Assurance Agency, fees, length and ECTS defined by Law;

• The own University degrees: designed and quality-assured directly by the Institutions, fees defined by the University.

In the case of Asia for example, the official degrees are preferred and sometimes compulsory while in the case of Latin America, the tradition is to have both types of degrees coexisting at Bachelor, Master and Doctoral levels. Nevertheless, the procedure to implement and award a joint degree is the same for official and own University degrees, which means based on a bilateral or multilateral agreement between the Universities offering the programme.

Actually it is complicated to conclude on if CBHE is a marginal phenomenon or not as far as it depends on each Institution and its strategy but, the common trend which has been noticed is that the Spanish Universities are tending to favor the development of the internationalization at home than the one abroad.

Chapter 2 – National context and approaches to QA and recognition of CBHE

2.1 Overview of the national legal framework and regulations governing quality assurance and recognition of cross-border provision

a) The Spanish Higher Education System

Spain is characterized by a model of educational administration that is decentralized and distributes competences between the National Government, the Autonomous Communities and the universities. State laws set out the competence framework of these three actors and allow the Autonomous Communities to develop their own regulations on education.

The Spanish university system is regulated by the Organic Law 4/2007, amending the Organic Law 6/2001, on Universities (LOMLOU) and the Royal Decrees that develop the said law aspects regarding the competences of the National Administration.

The National Government exercises the competences that ensure the consistency and uniformity of the education system. On the other hand, the Autonomous Communities have

competencies for the creation, modification and elimination of programmes, in both the public and private universities, and also for the core funding of public universities.

The system is currently composed by 82 Universities, 50 public (48 depending on the Autonomous Communities and other 2 directly dependent on the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport) and 32 private Universities.

Regarding Quality Assurance, apart from the *Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación* - ANECA, there are ten regional quality assurance agencies in Spain, five of them belonging to ENQA and to EQAR and they all meet within a national network (REACU) in order to establish assessment protocols.

In the Spanish university system, it is mandatory to assess the quality of official university degrees and all official Bachelor, Master and Doctoral degrees must pass an accreditation process based on three milestones:

1) Ex-ante accreditation of a programme proposal submitted by a university prior to its approval: analyses those aspects that, in advance, may guarantee the feasibility of the proposed programme.

2) A follow-up annual revision of the programme implementation, and

3) An ex-post accreditation required after a programme has been implemented (four years after in the case of a master degree and six years after for bachelor and doctoral degrees): validates that students have completed their training successfully, and ensures the future viability of the degree.

b) The Spanish legal framework on Cross-border Higher Education

The common legal framework for the Spanish Higher Education system is the Spanish Universities Act 6/2001 and establishes that evaluation, certification and accreditation are the main functions of the Quality Assurance Agency in order to promote and guarantee the quality assurance of the Spanish Higher Education Institutions, in both national and international settings.

But, there is no Act mentioning specifically the Quality Assurance of Cross Border Higher Education.

Nevertheless, the Royal Decree 1393/2007 stipulates that:

""…The University, through agreements with other national or international universities, can organize joint degrees leading to the awarding of a single official degree at Bachelor, Master or Doctoral levels. To that end, the study programme will have to include the corresponding agreement in which it will be specified, at least, that the University will be responsible for the safe-keeping of the student's record and of the awarding and registration of the degree as well

as for the procedure of modification or extinction of the study programme. In the event that the agreement is with an international University, in any case, the Spanish University will keep the records of the degrees it awards…"

This actually is the only specific regulation on Quality Assurance of Cross-Border Higher Education.

2.2 CBHE policies and strategies at national level

After the approval of the European internationalization strategy by the European Commission in 2013, the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport decided to create a working group on internationalization composed by Universities, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, the Ministry of External Affairs and Cooperation, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness, the Ministry of Employment, Universidad.es, OAPEE and finally, ANECA.

As part of the diagnosis the working group made on the internationalization of the Spanish Universities, but also in order to comply with the new European directives, it was revealed necessary, in order to solve the low level of internationalization of the Spanish Universities due to a lack of formal strategy and in spite of its high attractiveness but also to support them in the elaboration of their institutional strategy, to set up a national internationalization strategy for the period 2015-2020 in order to identify the challenges the Higher Education system is facing at that time and to define the concrete actions to be carried out.

This strategy tends to improve not only the mobility of students and signing of agreements (to what internationalization is sometimes limited) but also other aspects like the brain circulation, the internationalization of research, international joint degrees, internationalization at home, the development of transnational campuses, creation of international quality assurance systems, rankings, development of alumni…

The actions that will be carried out which include the dimension of QA of CBHE and to which ANECA will, directly or indirectly take part are:

1. **To establish and strengthen a highly internationalized University system**: a basic action to enhance the internationalization of the Spanish University system is the improvement of the legal framework through, within others:

   - The recognition of degrees and period of study: it is necessary to adapt the Spanish system to the new reality and the mechanisms used should be revised:

   ➔ by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the recognition procedure for the period of study and degrees within the European Higher Education Area and other countries. The specific actions to set up are to promote the use of the Bologna tools

like the Lisbon Convention, ECTS, Diploma Supplement , the Qualifications Framework, etc. that will allow a bigger automatic recognition.

- The transnational Quality Assurance:

➔ by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the international accreditation and evaluation procedures at institutional and programme level. This will be done through the identification of obstacles and barriers leading to the institutional accreditation and endorsement of the European focus os the quality assurance, with agreements with Quality Assurance Agencies registered in EQAR.

2. **To increase the international attraction of the Universities**:

- Joint Programmes:

➔ by increasing the offer of joint and double degrees between Spanish Universities and Universities abroad including mobility schemes for students and teaching staff. The action will be to identify the operational and regulation obstacles for the development of international joint programmes, including the dimension of recognition.

- To improve the international positioning of the Spanish Universities:

➔ by identifying the criteria and indicators for teaching, research and knowledge transfer that allow reaching a better institutional, thematic and departmental positioning within the recognized international rankings. For that, a working group will be created, involving the main stakeholders, to draw recommendations and practical guidelines in order to improve the position in the global rankings.

- Participation in networks, project and programmes on excellence at European and international levels:

➔ by encouraging the participation of the Universities and International Campus of Excellence (CEI) to new instruments of Erasmus + and Horizon 2020 of the European Union. It will be done through the establishment of incentives and support in the preparation of proposals and international consortiums in the Knowledge Alliances and Strategic Associations or Marie Curie.

3. **To intensify the cooperation in higher education with other regions of the world**: the belonging of Spain to the European Union and its participation to the Bologna Process for the development of the European Higher Education Area makes Europe a natural action zone within which, in collaboration with other European countries, the

international collaboration with other regions of the world should be promoted through:

- To strengthen the cooperation at national level with Institutions and University systems of the European Union and European Higher Education Area:

➔ by promoting the creation of collaborations and bilateral agreements with countries within the EU in fields like recognition, quality assurance, mobility and commercial promotion. The proposed action is to develop and update the bilateral agreements with priority countries with a tradition of university cooperation and with students' mobility flow.

- To reinforce the cooperation with Institutions and University systems in Latin-America:

➔ by promoting the creation of bilateral agreements for the building of common knowledge spaces and higher education. The proposed action is to develop and update the bilateral agreements with priority countries in Latin America with a tradition of university cooperation and with students' mobility flow.

- To strengthen the cooperation, at national level, with Institutions and University systems of the Higher Education and Research Euro-Mediterranean Area.

➔ by promoting the creation of bilateral agreements for the building of common knowledge spaces and higher education with Mediterranean countries. The proposed action is to develop and update the bilateral agreements with priority countries in this area with a tradition of university cooperation and with students' mobility flow.

- To strengthen the cooperation, at national level, with industrialized and emerging countries:

➔ by promoting the creation of collaboration and bilateral agreements with industrialized countries for joint projects on excellence in teaching and research. The action to be undertaken will be the development and update of the bilateral agreements with priority countries: USA, BRIC, MINT, Australia, Canada, South Korea, etc.

- To reinforce the cooperation, at national level, with developing countries:

➔ by promoting the creation of collaboration and bilateral agreements with developing countries. The action to be undertaken will be the development and update of the

bilateral agreements with countries inside the national plan of cooperation and development.

On the other hand, in Spain, there is a structure called "International Campus of Excellence" (CEI), initiative launched a few years ago by the Ministry, created to encourage the development of internationalization strategies in the Spanish campuses funding the following activities linked to cross-border higher Education:

- Development of cross-border campuses;

- Creation of international bridges with transnational mobility of knowledge and learning;

- Creation of campus of excellence abroad;

- Participation in Projects and international networks.

2.3 Financial conditions

Regarding the funding mechanisms which have an impact on QA of CBHE, the funding of Higher Education in Spain is the responsibility of the Autonomous Community who fund the public Universities and this last one, decide how to distribute it. And, there is no specific policy regarding Cross-border Higher Education in general and its quality assurance.

Actually, there are existing grants from the Ministry and Autonomous communities but these ones are much more centered on the outgoing mobility of students and teaching staff than on cross-border as a whole.

It also is important to note that the general budget for Higher Education in Spain has been reduced in the last few years and it does have an impact on the degree of implication of the Spanish Universities in some fields, including CBHE.

Chapter 3 – Criteria and guidelines for QA of CBHE

3.1. Actors involved in quality assuring (evaluating, accrediting) exported cross-border education provision

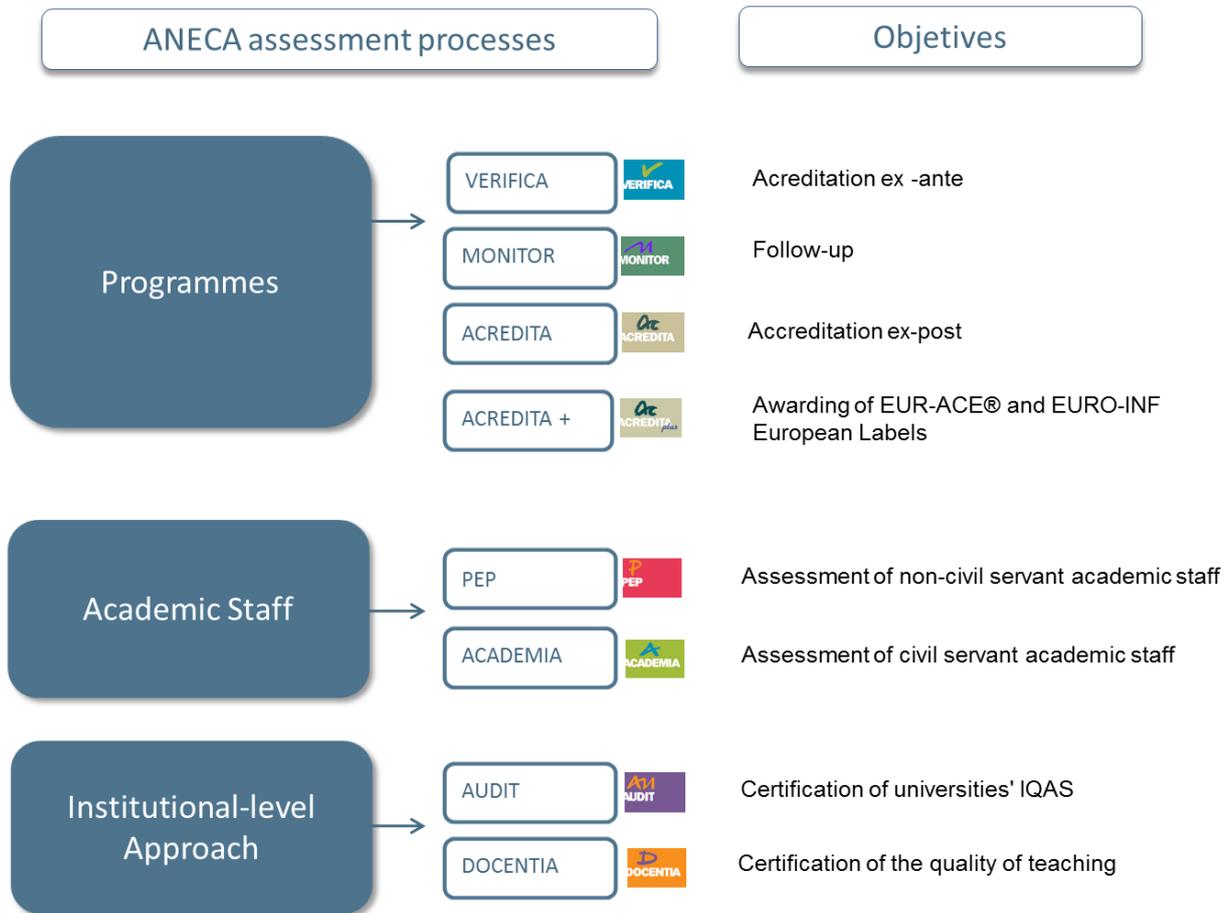**a)** Role of the national agency

ANECA is an autonomous organization created in 2002 and whose mission is to provide external quality assurance for the Higher Education System and to contribute to its constant improvement.

Its vision is to be recognized as a model for good practices at both national and international levels in the field of quality assurance in systems of higher education, which implements its mandate (pursues its mission) in accordance with the principles of independence, objectivity and transparency, and the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG), with a clear focus on service to society in general.

In order to achieve its purposes, in accordance with the Organic Law, ANECA shall carry out its activity in accordance with the principles of technical and scientific competence, legality and legal certainty, independence and transparency, on the basis of standard performance criteria governing these institutions in the international arena.

ANECA's actions cover the whole country keeping exclusive competences in the evaluation of academic staff (national accreditation to apply for civil servant academic staff positions) and in assessment assignments requested by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport. Moreover, it shares university programme evaluation tasks (ex-ante, follow-up and ex-post) with the regional agencies. ANECA is also responsible for assessing university programmes and non-civil servant academic staff positions for those Spanish regions that do not have their own quality assurance agency.

The activities performed by the Agency are related to the evaluation of programmes, academic staff and institutional-level approach evaluation. These activities are carried out through different ANECA evaluation Programmes:

ANECA assessment processes		Objetives
Programmes	VERIFICA	Acreditation ex -ante
	MONITOR	Follow-up
	ACREDITA	Accreditation ex-post
	ACREDITA +	Awarding of EUR-ACE® and EURO-INF European Labels
Academic Staff	PEP	Assessment of non-civil servant academic staff
	ACADEMIA	Assessment of civil servant academic staff
Institutional-level Approach	AUDIT	Certification of universities' IQAS
	DOCENTIA	Certification of the quality of teaching

But, currently, ANECA has no specific competences on evaluating the quality assurance of cross-border higher education.

b) Role of other actors

As mentioned previously, in Spain there are ten regional quality assurance agencies in the following Autonomous Communities: Andalusia (AAC), Aragon (ACPUA), Balearic Islands (AQUIB), Basque Country (UNIBASQ), Canary Islands (ACECAU), Castile and Leon (ACSUCYL), Catalonia (AQU), Galicia (ACSUG), Madrid (ACAP) and the Valencian Community (AVAP).

They share the same procedures for the evaluation of programmes with the national Agency and have no specific processes for the evaluation or accreditation of the quality assurance of cross-border higher education.

3.2. CBHE criteria, methods, or procedures in place

The procedures used in Spain are the same to evaluate degrees offered at national level and joint programmes. The same process, guidelines and criteria are used adding some specifications in the case of the joint programmes.

In the framework of the ex-ante accreditation of a programme proposal (submitted by a university prior to its approval and which analyses those aspects that, in advance, may guarantee the feasibility of the proposed programme), there is a specific guideline concerning the Joint degrees:

"In the event that several universities jointly organize a single official Bachelor or Master's Degree, a joint accreditation ex ante application will be submitted and the proposal shall be accompanied by the corresponding agreement that must still be in force. It must clearly specify the university(ies) responsible for the custody of student files and for issuing the Degree. It must also indicate the procedure for changing or cancelling the study programme and the responsibilities of each of the universities participating in the consortium.

Information shall also be provided on the coordination mechanisms available for teaching, mobility (where applicable), and the quality assurance system adopted for the Degree, which may be the system used by one of the participating universities or one designed specifically for the Degree...

In the case of agreements with foreign universities, the Spanish university will be the custodian of the records of the Degrees issued.

In addition to the above, if a joint Master's Degree is arranged with a foreign University, it would be convenient to apply the recommendations of the European University Association y of the European Consortium for Accreditation on the organisation of joint Mater's Programmes".

And also a specific criterion:

"Agreements aimed at arranging the incorporation of academic staff from the various participating universities must be ensured, provided that they have not been explicitly stated in the agreement".

Within the phase of the ex-post accreditation (required after a programme has been implemented and which validates that students have completed their training successfully, and ensures the future viability of the degree) there is no specific guideline or criterion but, an existing methodology in order to assess the quality of official joint programmes through:

1. The organization of virtual Interviews: during the site-visit organized for the ex-post accreditation of degrees, a virtual interview is organized with the Institution with whom the joint degree is implemented.

2. Internal Quality Assurance System: in the event of a degree offering stays abroad, the IQAS has (by regulation) to have mechanisms to guarantee the quality of the mobility programmes that the panel should look at in the self-evaluation report and during the visit.

3. Bachelor/Master thesis: deep look at the Bachelor or Master thesis of students who had a stay abroad and comparison with those of the students who did not have a stay abroad during the course.

4. Learning outcomes: both the interviews and to look at the thesis allows checking the level of Learning Outcomes reached for the joint degrees.

3.3. Role of international guidelines (OECD-UNESCO Guidelines and the ESG) on national approaches to QA of CBHE

In the case of Spain, the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) are completely endorsed by all the corresponding stakeholders and the Universities, when offering Cross-border Higher Education; take these guidelines into account as well as the national guidelines in a general way.

Nevertheless, after the different interviews carried out for this report, it was clear that the Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education of the OECD/UNESCO, are in some cases unknown and in other cases, known but not used at the time of designing, defining or implementing Cross-border activities.

Chapter 4 – Main obstacles and challenges of CBHE and its QA

4.1. For agencies

In the case of Spain, we are facing a lot of challenges at that moment as far as there currently is no specific Quality Assurance policy for Cross-border Higher Education. These challenges are also perceived as a fantastic opportunity to improve some of the points raised during the different interviews carried out to elaborate this report:

• To reach a better centralization and compilation of data regarding Quality Assurance of Cross-border higher Education:

➔ For official degrees offered abroad there actually is a possibility to centralize some data but, in the case of the own University degrees, which completely depend on the Institution with no need of being accredited by a Quality Assurance Agency, there

currently is no way to gather the corresponding data of the number of programmes offered, the knowledge area to which they are linked, the countries where they are implemented, the type of receiving Institution…

➔ On the other hand, the same structure of the Quality Assurance System in Spain, which is decentralized, is another point that should be taken into account as far as coordination would be necessary between all the Agencies in the country.

• To disseminate the OECD/UNESCO guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education: as part of the document, it is stipulated that the guidelines should be disseminated among all the stakeholders involved in the QA of CBHE and the Quality Assurance Agency, who is directly in contact with the Universities could be a channel for the dissemination of these guidelines.

• To drive actions to promote the MULTRAS and/or bilateral agreements with Agencies abroad (joint accreditation, common frameworks…) through observation missions, comparisons of systems for example. The challenge being here that it is time and money consuming for the Agencies and not always contemplated in the staff activities and budget assigned.

• To face the methodological differences between Agencies: Institutional evaluation, programme accreditation, a combination of both, focused on Internal Quality Assurance Systems of the Institutions… And though, the Agency faces the challenge of matching the evaluation criteria which should be used between the two Quality Assurance systems.

4.2. For institutions

•To define an internationalization strategy in order to find a balance or priority between internationalization at home (less developed but actual trend in Spain) and internationalization abroad.

•To improve the level of languages.

•To face the increasing number of international HEIs the national Universities are collaborating with keeping the control on the quality of CBHE offered and though on their reputation.

•To provide better information to the students going abroad (on the type of degree, recognition procedures, ECTS, learning outcomes…).

Regarding the expectations of the Institutions towards the Agency, it has been mentioned, in several interviews, that the Agency could develop its knowledge of the rankings and so, support the Universities in improving their results through a higher and better visibility (HEIs asked for the identification, in a list, of the most internationalized HEIs).

Chapter 5 – Good practice examples

On Joint procedures or requirements:

As a consequence of the London Communiqué in 2007 which encouraged the implementation of joint programmes and the mutual recognition and quality assurance decisions linked to this type of degrees, the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) coordinated two Projects to work on a possible single accreditation procedure in order to avoid the actual duplicity of evaluation processes to which the joint programmes are submitted.

The first Project, TEAM II[3], was set up in 2008 for duration of two years and aimed at developing an European methodology for quality assurance and accreditation procedures regarding joint programmes, exploring the cross-border recognition of qualifications awarded by joint programmes and finally, by extending the information tool Qrossroads.

The Project involved more than 17 direct partners, 16 European Quality Assurance Agencies (including ANECA) and one, ENIC-NARIC network but also counted with a Stakeholders' group composed by members of the European University Association (EUA), the European Students Union (ESU), the Association of Higher Education Institutions (EURASHE), Business Europe (European employers) and ENIC-NARIC Networks (Recognition authorities) and the Project outputs were, between others:

- A survey in order to see how the ENIC NARIC networks currently recognize qualifications from joint programmes, problems they encounter, the use of learning outcomes and the solutions they propose.
- A Workshop organized for the presentation of the results of this survey and to exchange on recognition methodologies and work in small groups on learning outcomes and recognition issues regarding qualifications from joint programmes.
- A methodological report regarding single accreditation procedures for joint programmes which identified the methodologies applied during 5 single accreditation procedures for joint programmes, the lessons learned and the way forward.

This last step consisting of five pilot accreditation procedures have been carried out and the pilot accreditation procedures have functioned as a basis for the report "How to assess and accredit joint programmes in Europe- Methodologies tested and proposed by the TEAM2 project". ANECA was part, with AQAS, HSV, NVAO, of the joint accreditation procedure for the Joint European Master's in International Humanitarian Action (NOHA) implemented in the University of Deusto (Spain), Université d'Aix-Marseille (France), Université Catholique de Louvain (Belgium), Ruhr- Universität Bochum (Germany), University College Dublin (Ireland), Uppsala Universitet (Sweden), the University of Groningen (the Netherlands).

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[3] http://ecahe.eu/w/index.php/TEAM_II

The result of the studies and pilot procedures were different reports on "The recognition of qualifications awarded by joint programmes" (presenting the ENIC NARIC survey results), "How to assess and accredit joint programmes in Europe" (presenting discussions on how to carry out single accreditation procedures of joint programmes) and, "Joint programmes: too many cooks in the kitchen" (highlighting the status quo regarding accreditation of joint programmes and recognition of qualifications awarded by these programmes).

Following the TEAM II Project, a second initiative was set up under the name of JOQAR[4]: "Joint programmes: Quality Assurance and Recognition of degrees awarded", to be carried out from 2010 to 2013 in order to ensure that the Erasmus Mundus programmes (and joint programmes in general) are facilitated in the areas of accreditation and recognition. In the same way as for the first Project, the members of the Consortium were essentially European Quality Assurance Agencies (8) but also two non-European Agencies from India and Colombia and a total of four ENIC NARIC Networks.

The objectives of the project were to:

1) Develop a multilateral recognition agreement regarding Quality Assurance and accreditation results based on the signature of bilateral mutual recognition agreements between accreditation agencies. In order to reach it, observation missions, including comparisons were organized.

2) Establish of a European Coordination point for external QA and accreditation of joint programmes which will provide information on internal and external quality assurance of joint programmes and information on recognition of degrees awarded from joint programmes.

3) Recognize degrees awarded by joint programmes by the awareness-raising about ENIC-NARICs' expectations regarding joint programmes, the design of the degree they award and the content of the diploma supplement.

4) Establish a common ground among ENIC-NARICs regarding the recognition of degrees awarded by joint programmes.

5) Transparent information provision regarding Erasmus Mundus programmes via Qrossroads

The results of the Project were the following:

- Pilot procedures regarding joint programmes with the single accreditation procedure of joint programmes carried out by at least one of the partner agencies under the guidance of the coordination point, followed by an on-line pilots evaluation report.
  4 joint programmes (Erasmus Mundus joint Master's programmes) have been selected for carrying out the pilot procedures.

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[4] http://ecahe.eu/w/index.php/JOQAR

- Observation missions of the accreditation procedures of another agency participating in the project. The observations were the basis for decision-making of admitting new agencies to the multilateral mutual recognition agreement regarding joint programmes (MULTRA).
- ENIC-NARIC Workshops on the recognition of degrees awarded by joint programmes to draft principles, guidelines and good practices to be discussed by ENIC-NARICs.
- Guidelines for Good Practice for Awarding Joint Degrees regarding the consortium, the joint programme, the degree, the diploma supplement and other documentation.

MULTRAS[5]

As mentioned previously, in 2010, the European Consortium for Accreditation - ECA, launched the Multilateral Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Accreditation Results regarding Joint Programmes, called MULTRA.

The purpose of the MULTRA is to simplify the accreditation of joint programmes and tends to improve the single accreditation procedure for joint programmes by one quality assurance agency but receiving relevant legal outcomes, such as accreditation decisions, in all the relevant higher education systems.

The MULTRA's signing Agencies actually are: AQ Austria, CAN Colombia, SINAES Costa Rica, EVA Denmark, CTI France, AQAS Germany, VAO Netherlands and Flanders, PKA Poland, SQAA Slovenia, ANECA Spain, AQU Catalunya Spain.

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[5] http://ecahe.eu/home/services/joint-programmes/multra/

Interviews

As mentioned previously in this report, ANECA carried out a series of interviews to different stakeholders of the Higher Education system consisting of five Universities, private and public, more or less internationalized, geographically diverse, who answered questions on their CBHE policy, strategy, financial aspects, criteria used, knowledge of the existing international guidelines, role of the QAAs, challenges they are facing, etc.

The Institutions and people involved in this process were:

- The University of Salamanca - Rafael Bonete (Professor at the Faculty of Economics and Business and international advisor)

- IE Business School – María Eugenia Marín (Director General of International Relations).

- The University of Comillas – Robert Robinson (Director of the Business School – ICADE) and Juan Pedro Montañes (Director of the Quality and Prospective Department)

- The Polytechnic University of Madrid, UPM – Ángel Álvarez (Professor and advisor to the Vice-Rector of International Relations, for Asia)

- The University of Murcia

- Directorate General of Universities for the Catalan Governement - Lluis Jofre (Director General of Universities and Professor of the Polytechnic University of Catalonia)