EUA
European University Association

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION
STRONG UNIVERSITIES FOR EUROPE

EUA
European University Association

**ENQA SEMINAR – QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT
15 JUNE 2017**

European QA framework:
History, principles, tools and actors

Anna Gover
Policy & Project Officer, Institutional Development Unit
European University Association

Overview of presentation

- Why a common European QA framework?
- Guiding principles
- Key organisations and structures
- QA in the Bologna communiqués
- Tools for QA

Why a common European QA framework?

- Provide a common basis for QA in the EHEA
- Enable the assurance and improvement of quality
- Support trust and transparency between systems
- Facilitate mobility and recognition
- Balance improvement and accountability

Guiding principles

- Higher education institutions have primary responsibility for the quality of their provision and its assurance
- QA responds to the diversity of higher education systems, institutions, programmes and students
- QA supports the development of a quality culture
- QA takes into account the needs and expectations of students, all other stakeholders and society

Key organisations and structures

European Higher Education Area (EHEA)

Full members:
48 Countries
European Commission

Consultative members:
EUA, ENQA, EURASHE, ESU
    (=E4 Group)
Business Europe
Education International
Council of Europe
UNESCO

EQAR

Bologna Follow-up
Group (BFUG)

QA in the Bologna Communiqués (1)

1999
- Bologna Declaration launched the Bologna Process
- Aimed to form a European Higher Education Area by 2010
- Commitment to 'Promote European co-operation in quality assurance'

2003
- Berlin Communiqué
- 'consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself'
- E4 Group invited to develop 'an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance'

2005
- Bergen Communiqué
- Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the EHEA are adopted
- Qualifications framework for the EHEA also adopted

QA in the Bologna Communiqués (2)

2006
- 1st European Quality Assurance Forum in Munich
- Continues to take place annually, organised by the E4 Group

2007
- London Communiqué
- 'encourage the four organisations to continue to organise European Quality Assurance Fora on an annual basis, to facilitate the sharing of good practice and ensure that quality in the EHEA continues to improve'
- Approval to establish EQAR

2008
- Founding of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education

QA in the Bologna Communiqués (3)

2010
- Vienna Communiqué
- Launch of the European Higher Education Area

2012
- Bucharest Communiqué
- Stakeholder organisations are invited to revise the ESG

2015
- Yerevan Communiqué
- Revised ESG are adopted
- European approach for the QA of joint programmes is also adopted

Tools for QA (1)

- Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)
  - ✓ Generic (not prescriptive) standards, guidelines for good practice
  - ✓ 2015 version is clearer, takes into account developments since the original version

- European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR)
  - ✓ List of QA agencies that substantially comply with the ESG

- European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF)
  - ✓ Largest gathering of European QA stakeholders
  - ✓ Next Forum: 23-25 November 2017, University of Latvia, Riga

Tools for QA (2)

- Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA)
  - ✓ Overarching qualifications framework for the three cycles of higher education
  - ✓ Clear reference in the ESG 2015 (standard 1.2)
  - ✓ In parallel: European Qualifications Framework (covers all education levels)

- European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS)
  - ✓ Launched in 1989
  - ✓ European Commission tool to support Erasmus mobility
  - ✓ ECTS users' guide revised as part of Bologna Process
  - ✓ Vague reference in ESG 2015 (in guidelines for standard 1.2)

- Diploma supplement
  - ✓ Developed by European Commission, Council of Europe and UNESCO, adopted in 1999
  - ✓ Commitment in the Berlin Communiqué (2005) that all students in EHEA should have access to it for free

Conclusions

- QA is a key part of the Bologna Process
- Numerous concrete developments since 1999
- Framework includes a range of tools
- Widespread acceptance of principles and approaches
- Still some work to do on implementation of some aspects