



Quality Assurance of Cross-border Higher Education



# Quality Assurance of Cross-border Higher Education (QACHE project)

ENQA General Assembly, Dublin, 22th October 2015

## HCERES

Haut conseil de l'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur



AGENCIA NACIONAL DE EVALUACIÓN DE LA CALIDAD Y ACREDITACIÓN

1. Overview of the QACHE PROJECT
2. The toolkit
3. What's next ?

# 1. Overview of the QACHE PROJECT

HCERES

Haut conseil de l'évaluation de la recherche  
et de l'enseignement supérieur



- Erasmus Mundus Project (QACHE) “Quality Assurance of Cross-border Higher Education”
- Coordinated by ENQA 2013-2015
- 5 QA Agencies and 3 QA networks



Australian Government

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency



HCERES

Haut conseil de l'évaluation de la recherche  
et de l'enseignement supérieur



## Project's innovative aspect

- Creation of a common European QA approach to cross-border higher education
- Contribution to the promotion of European higher education in other parts of the world.

## Project's activities :

- Surveys (regional networks and European providers)
- Country reports
- Regional events
- The Toolkit

## Our main findings (1) :

- No single definition of CBHE
- CBHE is a global phenomenon :
  - Double/joint programmes
  - Offshore campuses
  - Networks
  - Mergers
  - Virtual education
  - Many others (expansion and development)

## Our main findings (2) :

-Regulation of and information about CBHE is patchy:

- Absence of a common approach to CBHE
- Absence of developed QA systems for CBHE
- Absence of comprehensive data about CBHE
- Lack of reciprocal understanding by sending & host countries of each other's QA frameworks

## Blurred picture...or slightly out of focus?



## Our main findings (3) :

- Strengthening inter-agency cooperation, the way forward in
  - the promotion of mutual understanding
  - the sharing information and good practice
  - the building of trust
- Regional networks and QAA as key players
- Dialogue is needed between sending and receiving countries of CBHE

- Primarily for QA agencies, but includes also recommendations for QA networks and HE providers
- Aims to complement the UNESCO/APQN Toolkit's (2006) effort to support the implementation of the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines (2004)
- Offers guidance on how QA agencies can realise the mutual understanding, trust and cooperation that are required to 'share the responsibility of quality assuring CBHE' (UNESCO/OECD)
- Sets out general recommendations supported by explanatory text and good practices
- Respects the autonomy of different national systems
- Organised in *Information, Cooperation and Networks*

### The Toolkit: information sharing (QA agencies)

In order to facilitate mutual understanding and trust, QA agencies should:

- have clear and easily accessible policies for the quality assurance of inbound and outbound CBHE
- make easily accessible a list of those institutions which they have quality assured, including any eventual list of quality assured CBHE provision, either inbound or outbound, and associated reports
- seek to establish regular channels of communication to facilitate information sharing, strengthen mutual understanding, and explore ways in which to cooperate in the quality assurance of CBHE

### The Toolkit: cooperation in QA

In order to avoid the duplication of procedures/efforts and to lessen the burden on providers, QA agencies should:

- contact the counterpart agency whenever undertaking review of inbound or outbound CBHE
- seek ways to make use of or rely on each other's collected information or quality assurance decisions
- seek ways in which review activity of CBHE could be undertaken jointly

### The Toolkit: networks of agencies

In order to facilitate inter-agency cooperation, networks of QA agencies should:

- facilitate information sharing about quality assurance and higher education systems in their member agencies' countries
- strengthen cooperation with other networks to promote policy dialogue, information sharing, and dissemination of good practice on the quality assurance of CBHE
- undertake projects and initiatives aimed at supporting agencies in implementing the recommendations included in this Toolkit.

### The Principles behind the Toolkit:

- should be considered as a **“New Deal”** in terms of **transparency and information sharing** among quality assurance agencies and networks;
- **reinforce previous efforts on QA of CBHE** made by international organisations such as OECD and UNESCO;
- Are an unique opportunity to **“mise en valeur”** the **existing QA mechanisms** in CBHE at the national or QAA level;
- **raise awareness** among QA bodies and networks **to be active** in QA assurance of CBHE

## 2. The Toolkit: some principles behind

- The Toolkit should be treated as a **point of reference and a means of good practice** within a broader international strategy of the organisation
- Such strategy should be **focused on the regional context** with practical actions and tasks and clearly linked to the broader global reference point represented by the OECD/UNESCO Guidelines.
- The Toolkit **cannot be used as an obligatory document** to be officially approved and ratified, but a public compromise before the public opinion and the international actors
- In the international provision of HE the **same standards** should be provided (and quality assured?)

## 2. The Toolkit: some principles behind

- They cannot be considered as a contract binding the higher education institutions to accomplish particular QA procedures in the receiving country,
- They are not a proxy QA procedure that could replace its obligations with both its inbound and outbound bodies
- The Toolkit should contribute to ensure that QA of CBHE focusing on three different dimensions:
  - student protection,
  - the QA of the education delivered and
  - To inform local QA authorities and/or QA bodies

### 3. What's next ?



- An international debate on updating a new set of Principles/guidelines ?
- Are QAA agencies ready ?
- What role for QAA networks? (if any)
- What is the role for EQAR? (if any)
- What is the role for multilateral bodies: EC, OECD, UNESCO, etc. (if any)

### 3. What's next ?



- What is the role for ENQA? (as a think tank and European membership body)
- Does ENQA have a road map for future trends in CBHE?
- Should ENQA spearhead in terms of quality assurance the international activities of European HEIs?
- Can ENQA act as an informed partner on CBHE debates at the European/global level?

QAche

Quality Assurance of Cross-border Higher Education



With the support of the Erasmus Mundus programme of the European Union.