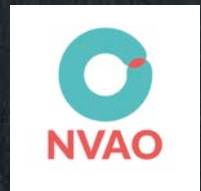


External Quality Assurance and Internal Quality Assurance - Scopes and Mutual Impacts in Higher Education Institutions

ENQA Leadership Programm: Small Group Project
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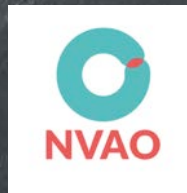


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Aim of the project

1. Based on current legislation in Austria, Flanders, Italy, and Portugal, what are the legal / governmental arrangements regarding external quality assurance of the three missions of HEIs? Is there a common line/convergence?
2. Is internal QA limited to the individual programme level or are institutions capable of building internal QA systems that are able to effectively assess quality at an institution-wide scale? If so, what is assessed on each level?
3. Is the organisation of internal QA affected by how external QA is organised and vice versa?

Methodology

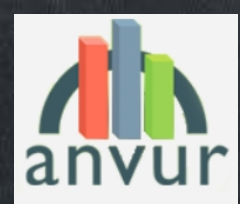
- Desktop research
- Interviews on the basis of a questionnaire
- Interview sample in the four countries:
 - public (comprehensive) universities with different performances and universities of applied sciences
 - 26 people total (5-8 for each country)
 - central level QA staff, heads of study programmes/departments, students, external reviewers

Conclusions from Desktop Research

- Legal frameworks, and consequently external QA procedures, take into account all 3 HEIs' missions in all 4 Countries (Austria, Flanders, Italy, Portugal) but at different degrees
- External QA focuses on education
- Least emphasis on third-mission, unless it is a strategic goal for the institution – what does QA for 3rd mission mean?
- External QA at institution-wide scale (in combination with programmes accreditation in some cases)

- No limitation of IQA to individual programme level - but QA for 3rd mission???
- Various understandings of „external quality assurance“
- (consequences of) EQA underexposed for most HEI staff (both academia and administration)

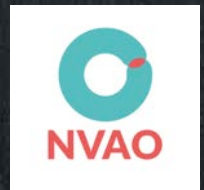
- IQA of accredited programmes responsibility of the institutions; whether institutions are capable of building institution-wide IQA systems will be part of the institutional review.
- Separate EQA procedures for education and research, with an impact on how this is organized internally; these are separate worlds
- IQA and EQA are developing side by side; HEI's want to comply, but their needs are taken into account when designing new EQA procedures (common language, mindset, quality culture, maturity)



ITALY

AQ

- QA system has been introduced recently by law. The regulatory framework sets general quality Requirements for all 3 missions. Rather young QA Agency, first round of institutional accreditation still going.
- Strong EQA impact on IQA, even if different levels of institutional commitment: opportunity vs compliance
- Lack of competence on QA within the HEI is the reason behind the general misunderstanding. Few competent QA staff with no incentives, no internal support. Lack of communication (aims and objectives of QA)
- Only few students are involved in QA activities, also due to



- Public investment/funding → ↑ concern over the level of engagement with the society and how the normal activities (education and R&D) translate outside the walls of the university
- Students involvement regarded as heterogeneous; the information conveyed, despite being scarce, it's usually one of high quality
- IQA framework seems to have been defined in order to achieve an alignment with the EQA
- HEI's seek to scale-up processes to maximize time and effort/workload involved in QA ↓

Conclusions from Interviews

- The impact of EQA on IQA is present in all 4 countries, especially in the begin phase and depending on the level of engagement of the instituion
 - „ESOPRUP ROF TIF“
 - Triggering changes
- The IQA might have an impact on EQA
 - Adaptations to frameworks take into account organisation of IQA