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# Innovation in Teaching and Learning as part of external QA approaches

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# “Innovation” (recap)

Working definition ....

...Change for the benefit of students and other HE stakeholders

...Change with positive impact on students and other HE stakeholders



# Research questions

How can (or cannot) our agencies accommodate and support QA (assessment of) innovation in higher education?

- What is the potential of our current standards and procedures?
- How do our QA agencies position themselves concerning innovation in T&L?



# Methodology

Analysis of QA standards and procedures – which elements...

- ...encourage innovation
- ...allow innovation
- ...inhibit innovation



# Example 1

The HEI ensures that its programmes are designed and implemented in such a way that encourages students to take an active role in the learning processes, which is also reflected in examinations.



# Example 2

The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.



# Example 3

The site visit is composed of two elements:

(1) assessment in the context of accreditation and improvement: the programme proposes a schedule for the site visit, including sequence of interviews, types of interviews, participants, and duration. The panel honours such proposal wherever possible and may request adjustments to further the formation of reliable judgements;

(2) in addition, the programme conducts a so-called development dialogue with the panel, discussing potential improvements from a development perspective.





# Conclusions

- There are a few instances where explicit encouragement is given - this may refer directly to teaching methods/teaching modes and the use of technology, however in most instances we have to read between the lines and hope that, at least, innovation is allowed (passively allowed!)
- Even though our standards do not explicitly encourage innovation, there are other ways in which QA agencies are involved with innovation
- Inhibiting factors may be related to
  - governmental priorities/agendas/legislation
  - compliance-driven vs open QA framework

# Recommendations for QA agencies

- QA agencies should consider how/if innovation is important in their context (and for their assumed role), and how they may wish to proactively promote it through all activities they take part in or if they can contribute to relevant partnerships
- Making explicit what is otherwise (at best) implicit could go a long way to promoting innovation (including when reviewers/evaluators are trained, to ensure they take the same approach)
- Explicit senior management/strategic approach to innovation can avoid "pocketing" practices

# Food for thought

“Now it is time to add cooperation in innovative learning and teaching practices as another hallmark of the EHEA. We therefore commit to developing new and inclusive approaches for continuous enhancement of learning and teaching across the EHEA, and can succeed only if we do so in close collaboration with the European higher education community, in full respect of academic freedom and institutional autonomy.” (Paris Communiqué, 2018)