



The European Universities Initiative: a new challenge for quality assurance

ENQA leadership development programme 2019-20

5 March 2020

European Universities Initiative

- Proposed by the European Commission and endorsed by the European Council, Dec. 2017
- At least 20 European Universities by 2024
 - transnational alliances of HEIs from across the EU
 - that share a long-term strategy
 - Inter-university campus with new joint and flexible curricula
 - Challenge-based approach
 - promote European values and identity
 - strengthen mobility of students and staff (50%)
 - foster the quality, inclusiveness and competitiveness of European higher education

European Universities Initiative (cont.)

- In first call 17 alliances selected (June 2019)
- In second call 24 alliances to be selected (July 2020)
- 5 million euro for 3 years pilots
- Minimum 3 HEIs from EU/Programme countries; on average 7 HEIs
- Diversity in type of HEIs (e.g. comprehensive, research-intensive, applied, technical, arts HEIs) and focus (e.g. social sciences, global health, urban coastal sustainability)

Developing a European Approach for Comprehensive QA of (European) University Networks (EUniQ)

- Erasmus+ – Key Action 3 – Support to the Implementation of EHEA reforms
- Links with Bologna Peer Support Group on QA
- EU grant 195.270€
- 18 May 2019 – 17 May 2021
- <https://www.nvao.net/en/euniq-project>

EUniQ project objectives

- To develop a European Framework for Comprehensive QA of European Universities
 - from analysis of needs and national legislation
 - to a QA framework and pilot evaluations
 - resulting in a developed QA approach

Partnership

- Applicant Flemish Ministry; managed by NVAO
- 17 project partners:
 - 8 QA agencies: 4 from QA systems in development and 4 fully developed (cf Bologna Implementation Report; application of EA for QA of JPs); peer learning in pilots and Roadmap Group
 - 6 ministries from Peer Support Group on QA; Resonance Group
 - 3 stakeholders organisations EUA, ESU, ENQA in Roadmap Group

Partner Organisation, Country, Role in project

- 1 Flemish Community, Belgium, Applicant, Chair of Resonance Group, Ministry
- 2 NVAO, Netherlands/Flanders, Affiliated entity, QA agency, Chair Roadmap G
- 3 Ministry of Education and Sport ,Albania, Resonance Group, Ministry
- 4 Ministry of Education and Science, Bulgaria, Resonance Group, Ministry
- 5 Hcerés (representing Ministry), France, Resonance Group, Ministry
- 6 Ministry of Education and Science, Georgia, Resonance Group, Ministry
- 7 Ministry of Education, Romania, Resonance Group, Ministry
- 8 ANQA, Armenia, Roadmap Group, QA agency
- 9 AAQ, Switzerland, Roadmap Group, QA agency
- 10 NAKVIS, Slovenia, Roadmap Group, QA agency
- 11 AIC, Latvia, Roadmap Group, QA agency
- 12 UKÄ, Sweden, Roadmap Group, QA agency
- 13 NEAQA, Serbia, Roadmap Group, QA agency
- 14 ANVUR, Italy, Roadmap Group, QA agency
- 15 EUA, Belgium, Roadmap Group, Stakeholder organisation
- 16 ENQA, Belgium, Roadmap Group, Stakeholder organisation
- 17 ESU, Belgium, Roadmap Group, Stakeholder organisation

Project benefits

European Framework for Comprehensive QA of European Universities:

- will help alliances to both define and self-assess their quality
- will open up a dialogue between QA agencies and European Universities; enabling the assessment of European Universities in an appropriate way
- Assisting stakeholders perspectives based on facts
- Facilitates QA peer support across the EHEA

Project overview



Action line	Relevant partners	Objective	Deliverable
1. Roadmap Group	Lead partner: NVAO Other partners: QA agencies, ENQA, ESU, EUA	To generally manage the project, the attainment of the schedule and the production of deliverables.	Progress report (May 2020) - Report on results & development of deliverables Final report (April 2021) - Report on realisations & achieved outcomes
2. Resonance Group	Lead partner: Flanders Other partners: Ministries	To guide, monitor and evaluate the work of the Roadmap Group, to reflect on methodologies and pertinent legal issues, to involve other stakeholders.	Analysis of the proposed methodology (Dec. 2019) - Analysis, feedback and ways forward European Universities, legal frameworks and the ESG (Jan. 2021)
3. Methodological development	Partners: All partners	To develop a draft assessment methodology for (European) University Networks.	Pilot assessment framework (Dec. 2019) - what will be assessed, how will this be organised and which information will be used.
4. Pilot procedures	Partners: QA agencies	To pilot the developed draft assessment methodology.	Training day for experts and networks (Jan. 2020) Panel report template (Feb. 2020) Assessment reports (Sep. 2020)
5. Enhancement & valorisation	Partners: All partners	To convert the lessons learnt into a development roadmap for QA and the piloted methodology into a final methodology.	QA Development Roadmap (Nov. 2020) European Approach for Comprehensive QA of (European) University Networks (Jan. 2021)
6. Peer Support	Partners: All partners	To maintain the focus on peer support, to reach out to all the stakeholders	Project website (May 2019) ▲ Peer Support newsletter (Jun., Sep., Dec. 2019; Mar., Sep., Dec. 2020; Apr. 2021) Peer Support & Kick-off Event (Oct. 2019) Peer Support & Feedback Event (May 2020) Peer Support & Dissemination Event (Mar. 2021)

Next steps

- Framework for the pilots and selection of experts (Feb 2020)
- Analysis of proposed methodology (Spring 2020)
- Workshop for panel experts and agency coordinators (11 March 2020)
- Pilots with 4 alliances to test the framework (May-August 2020)
- Results pilots and evaluation (Riga, 7-8 Sept 2020)
- QA Development Roadmap (Nov 2020)
- Analysis of legal issues & ESG (Jan 2021)
- Finalised European Framework (Jan 2021)
- Dissemination conference (Brussels, spring 2021)

QA of alliances in the call

- QA must be an embedded component to ensure that European Universities successfully deliver the expected results and achieve an impact going far beyond the impact an individual partner organisation could achieve
- The alliance has set up a quality assessment and review, which includes specific measures for evaluation of progress, processes and deliverables (for instance through the development of suitable quantitative and qualitative indicators, including the feedback from students and staff). The quality monitoring should also ensure that the implementation of the alliance is cost-efficient

QA aspects are embedded in award criteria

- alignment of the joint strategy with the wider goals of the European Universities initiative
- consistency between the aims of the proposal and the joint planned activities to achieve them
- demonstrate how the joint strategy and activities enhance the quality of education through innovative pedagogical models and digital technologies, as well as enhancing the level of students, staff and researchers mobility, the level of engagement with key stakeholders and the local community, and how research results and innovation are fed back into education
- quality of the cooperation arrangements: clear roles and responsibilities of each partner, shared management structures with efficient decision-making and communication, common provision of services and resources, complementarity of partners.

Survey results: strategy and joint provision

- 16 out of 17 alliances responded to questionnaire
- Wide diversity in strategic priorities but also commonalities: European values/identity, challenge-driven, flexible learning, tailor-made curricula, virtual/blended mobility, e-learning/platforms, social/regional engagement, participative governance, inclusiveness, bridging education/research/business, enhancing joint research, inter/multidisciplinary, language skills, intercultural competences
- Some alliances mention explicitly the joint provision they want to develop (e.g. specific joint programmes) and virtual is a common theme (also needed to achieve 50% mobility)
- Joint provision is also influenced by flexibility (e.g. “personalised academic curricula”), (regional) networking and involving local community

Survey results: internal and external QA

- Different elements of external QA:
 - national QA agencies and procedures
 - EACEA evaluations of the project
 - international advisory boards consisting of external experts that are set up as part of the internal QA arrangements.
- Alignment between internal and external QA is emphasised
- Lean, trust-based and enhancement-led approach advocated

Survey results: obstacles

- National education laws
- Accreditation system and regulations not harmonised among partner countries.
- Differences in the rules, approaches and timescales of national agencies.
- Obstacles for setting up multiple or joint diplomas.
- Differences in the autonomy of universities in each national context.
- “We have chosen an appreciative approach, but for our partners operating in a completely different external QA system, this could entail a difficult balance.”

European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes as inspiration

Introduction and definitions

- A. Application in Different Systems of External QA
- B. Standards for QA of Joint Programmes
- C. Procedure for External QA of Joint Programmes

Note: B and C are in line with European Standards and Guidelines for QA in EHEA (ESG)

<http://www.eqar.eu/topics/joint-programmes>

Over 10 joint programmes now accredited with European Approach by different agencies (AQAS, AQ Austria, NVAO, PKA, Unibasq, ZEvA)

Essence of European Approach

European standards and procedure

- Standards and procedure according to ESG, taking “jointness” into account

Decision/result

- By EQAR-listed agency
- Accepted in other EHEA countries by other agencies

No additional national criteria!

- “Setting standards...based on the agreed tools of the EHEA, without applying additional national criteria”

Methodological caveats

- Pilot phase -> ex ante evaluation
 - What can the alliances already demonstrate?
 - What can we deliver as a final assessment framework?
- Starting point for framework
 - Framework has to accommodate wide diversity in strategies and policies of European Universities
 - Descriptive, flexible, open
 - Not: prescriptive, rigid, focused on indicators & checking
 - Enhancement focus: helping the development of the internal QA of European Universities

Evaluation questions

- What is the European University's vision on the quality of its education and, where possible, the links to research, innovation and service to society?
- How will the European University realise its vision?
- How does the European University monitor to what extent its vision is actually realised?
- How is the European University working on improvement?
- How is the quality of the European University's provision assured in an internationally accepted manner (~ESG)?

Four criteria (with each 4 reference points)

- Strategy and policies
- Policy implementation
- Evaluation and monitoring
- Improvement policy

Strategy and policies

The European University's strategy and policies enable the realisation of an inter-university 'campus' which assures, in close collaboration with internal and external stakeholders, the quality of a joint provision that responds to societal challenges.

Reference points:

- a) The joint strategy and policies of the alliance integrates a vision on the quality of its education (teaching and learning), and where possible, research, innovation and service to society, .
- b) All internal and external stakeholders, including affiliated entities and associate partners, play an active role in the development of the alliance's strategy/policies and the realisation of the inter-university campus.
- c) The alliance's strategy and policies aim at contributing to regional development and reflect the societal and other challenges that are deemed relevant by the alliance and its stakeholders (challenge-based approach).
- d) The quality assurance policies for the joint provision of the alliance are aligned with Part 1, and where relevant Part 2, of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015).

Evaluation and monitoring

The European University guarantees the effectiveness of its policy implementation for the benefit of the quality of education, and where possible research, innovation and service to society, by organising appropriate evaluation and quality monitoring systems.

Reference points:

- a) The alliance has developed an evaluation and monitoring system that includes specific measures for the evaluation of progress, processes, deliverables and cost-efficiency of the alliance, and provides relevant information pertaining to all policy domains.
- b) The scope of the evaluation and monitoring system includes the application of innovative pedagogical models; the links between education and research and innovation (e.g. how research results and innovation feeds back into education); and, the measurement of the levels of all types of students', staff' and researchers' mobility (including where relevant mobility to and from organisations other than higher education institutions).
- c) The system of regular internal and external evaluations ties in with the management model pursued and is characterised by an active role of students, staff, alumni, the professional field, and external, independent experts.
- d) The alliance monitors whether enhanced cooperation is sustained across different levels and areas of activity, building on complementary strengths and synergetic effects of the alliance's network.

Evaluation procedure

- Information provided to the panel
- Composition of the evaluation panel
- Site visit
- Evaluation report

Pilots

- EUTOPIA
- UNITE!
- YUFE
- UNA Europa (Dagmar)

Germany

Freie Universität Berlin

Italy

Alma Mater Studiorum
Università di Bologna

Poland

Uniwersytet Jagielloński w
Krakowie

UK

The University of Edinburgh

Finland

Helsingin Yliopisto

Belgium

KU Leuven

Spain

Universidad Complutense de
Madrid

France

Université Paris 1
Panthéon-Sorbonne



Mission

UNA Europa brings together eight leading research universities with global reputation and reach.

Our mission is to create a truly European inter-university environment, where outstanding research is continuously linked to transnational learning and innovative, critical thinking.

UNA Europa is a strong alliance based on shared values. Together we aim to shape Europe's future.

Diversity is a strength of our alliance; that diversity is underpinned by common principles: interdisciplinarity, internationalisation, innovation, interaction, inclusivity and impact.

UNA Europa will be a continent-wide living laboratory, where best practices and new approaches will be tested and taken up, to grapple with new and enduring challenges.

We will draw on our collective strength to create technological, cultural and social innovation impact on the local, regional, national and European levels.

100% of UNA Europa students will benefit incorporating online and blended mobility.

50% of UNA Europa students will benefit from physical international mobility.

2 million Europeans will benefit from our educational and civic engagement programmes.

Our joint research activity will have increased threefold.

We will deliver several new European joint degree programmes.

We will be central to Europe's innovative, prosperous and sustainable future.

We will leverage our collective legacies to shape Europe's shared future.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION
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Q & A
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Group work

Question for group discussion:

How can a European Framework for QA of European Universities be applied in your national context?

Plenary feedback