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# Quality assurance and internationalisation: state of play and perspectives for the future



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# Cross-border QA Policy

- ▼ Cross-border QA (CBQA) in EHEA
  - ▼ London Communique (2007) – objective for cross-border QA
  - ▼ Bucharest Communique (2012) – further emphasised the aim to promote cross-border recognition of EQAR-registered agencies' external QA activities
  - ▼ Yerevan Communique (2015) – ministers reaffirmed their commitment in enabling HEIs' to assume responsibility in choosing an appropriate EQAR-registered QA agency for their mandatory external evaluation while 'respecting the national requirements'
- ▼ To date 64% of EHEA higher education systems have enacted legislative provisions to permit their HEIs' to be accredited, evaluated, or audited by an EQAR-registered agency from abroad

# Cross-border QA Practice

## In numbers

- ▶ In recent years cross-border QA has gained traction as a tool to support HEIs' internationalisation efforts
- ▶ Nevertheless, progress has been slow in opening the legal frameworks of national external QA systems in EHEA and in recognising reviews by EQAR-registered agencies.

## DEQAR data

- ▶ Majority of cross-border reviews are carried out at programme level (90%), while institutional level reviews and joint programmes reviews represent smaller share of these procedures (8% and 2% respectively)

# Cross-border QA Practice

- ▼ The use, benefits and costs of cross-border quality assurance reviews
  - ▼ may vary from country to country, and
  - ▼ depend heavily on whether the review by a foreign quality assurance agency is done in place of that usually conducted by a national agency therefore carrying regulatory consequences, or whether it is an additional voluntary process for the higher education institution.

## National requirements

- ▼ The most common national legal requirements on cross-border quality assurance can be categorised into eligibility, work conditions, system level limitations, and specific stipulations for recognition

# Joint programmes Policy

- ▼ The European Approach to Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes aims to tackle the issue of diverse national criteria and varying accreditation processes in European higher education that cause specific challenges for joint programmes.
- ▼ The European Approach consists of two main components: a set of agreed standards, and an established procedure.

# Joint programmes Practice

- ▶ While no systematic count available regarding the overall number of joint programmes across EHEA, about 60% of HEIs' responding to the QA-FIT survey answered that their institution offers such programmes
- ▶ Ministry responses to the QA-FIT survey show that, only 20 out of the 49 EHEA member countries have fully embraced the European Approach for all higher education institutions

## DEQAR data

- ▶ higher education institutions most frequently utilise the European Approach in countries where the legal framework enables the adoption of the approach.



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# QA of Transnational Education Policy

- ▼ EHEA members pledged to apply same QA standards to TNE as those used for domestic educational provision
- ▼ Employing the ESG in assessing TNE is important for:
  - ▼ ensuring quality and equality regardless of the location of the education delivery,
  - ▼ legitimising the educational services provided by cross-border providers,
  - ▼ validating the qualifications awarded, and
  - ▼ protecting student interests.
- ▼ On the global level, there are the UNESCO-OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education

# QA of Transnational Education Practice

## Benefits

For receiving countries

- ▶ allows students to gain knowledge, skills and qualifications

For exporting countries

- ▶ it may serve to support internationalisation policies but also different national educational objectives

For HEIs

- ▶ it may promote their international reputation and reach, as well as being a source of revenue

## Challenges

- ▶ the broad definition and lack of data about the volume and location of TNE
- ▶ increasing and high diversity of the types and forms of TNE
- ▶ lack of clear and consistent regulation → 44% of higher education systems lack provisions in their legal framework
- ▶ limited information regarding how quality assurance of TNE is carried out in practice → 42% of agencies cover TNE
- ▶ national capacity for quality assurance and accreditation often falls short when it comes to overseeing TNE



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# Quality assurance of European Universities alliances

## QA of provision

- ▶ around half of all stakeholders agree that the European Approach should be used

## QA of alliances themselves

- ▶ general agreement that an evaluation at alliance level is needed in addition to the evaluation of individual alliance members
- ▶ agreement that Universities alliances should develop sound internal quality assurance systems



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The QA-FIT paper is available [here](#).  
Thank you!



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