

Redefining Quality Assurance at institutional level

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Outline:

Introduction

The development of quality assurance

Challenges from within higher education: Competition and Diversification

Challenges from outside higher education: Politics and “Transparency Tools”

Conclusions

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The development of quality assurance: Implementation and Purpose

Framework conditions for emergence of QA

- obvious quality problems due to massification of higher education
- financial constraints
- Deregulation and accountability

Quality Assurance as

1) an attempt to resolve quality problems

and as

1) a steering instrument for higher education.

The development of quality assurance: Implementation and Purpose

As a consequence quality assurance serves two purposes:

Enhancement of quality:

mainly intrinsic motivation.
Emphasise on the responsibility of the institutions/
internal quality assurance.

Accountability:

Demonstrating/documenting
quality to students,
public authorities and
society at large.

The development of quality assurance: Implementation and Purpose

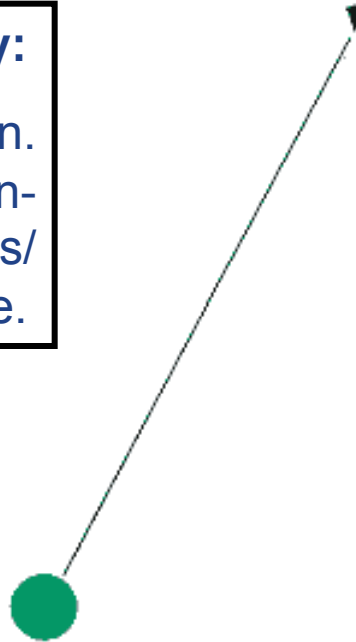
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The Quality Assurance Pendulum

The development of quality assurance: Implementation and Purpose

Although current developments affect quality assurance the fundamental framework conditions won't change.

Thus:

Quality enhancement and accountability as main purposes will remain, maybe with varying foci, but the situation won't change in principle.

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Challenges from within higher education: Competition and Diversification

Competition and Diversification as major driving forces in higher education.

Quality in higher education as core success factor at institutional level.

Trend from quality assurance towards quality oriented higher education management.

Institutional approaches gain importance!

Challenges from within higher education: Competition and Diversification

Consequences for quality assurance:

Basic principle:

HEI bear the prime responsibility for quality in HE (Berlin communiqué 2003)

Quality is a relative concept! This calls either for generic process designs or for diversification of the quality assurance processes.

- **Developmental dimension of quality assurance gains importance!**
- **Trend from quality assurance towards quality oriented higher education management.**
- **Institutional approaches gain importance!**

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Challenges from outside higher education: Politics and ‘Transparency tools’

Quality Assurance as tool for policy evaluation?

- Social inclusiveness, mobility, implementation of Bologna tools

Quality Assurance as transparency tool?

- Rankings, classifications

Quality Assurance tool to assess graduates?

- Learning outcomes’ assessment, AHELO.

Challenges from outside higher education: Politics and ‘Transparency tools’

Quality Assurance as transparency tool?

Growing interest in accessing detailed and reliable information on the quality of individual study programmes, faculties and higher education institutions.

Quality assurance has to contribute to transparent information

But: Bologna transparency tools, Quality assurance and rankings/classifications serve different but partly overlapping purposes, use different methodologies, provide different types of information.

Rankings and classifications are restricted to the accountability function, whereas quality assurance has to serve both purposes.

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In increasingly diverse HEi quality will be key for institutional success in a competitive environment.

The enhancement dimension will gain importance through the developing link between quality assurance and development of HEI as such.

At the same time the accountability/transparency functions are pushed by public.

The biggest challenges:

- to clarify the purpose of quality assurance
- to ensure that the processes are fit for purpose. The mismatch of purpose and process is a major threat for the seriousness of quality assurance.

Thank you for your attention

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