

HRK

HRK The German Rectors' Conference

The voice of the universities

Q Quality Assurance in German Higher Education

Structure

1. Framework of QA
2. Actors of QA in Germany
3. QA from different points of view
4. Established procedures and shared standards
5. Outlook

Framework of Quality Assurance

Berlin Communiqué 19 September 2003: Realising the European Higher Education Area

- „Quality of higher education has proven to be the heart of the setting up of a European Higher Education Area“
- „...consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself and this provides the basis for real accountability of the academic system within the national quality framework.“

Framework of Quality Assurance

Bergen 2005: Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

- Standards for internal evaluation within Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)
- Standards for external evaluation of HEIs
- Standards for external quality assurance agencies

Framework of Quality Assurance

Political framework

- 16 states (Länder) coordinated by the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education (KMK)
- Federal government: only framework legislation on Higher Education System (HRG)
- German Rectors' Conference (HRK): 260 member institutions

Framework of Quality Assurance

Change in state – university relations

- decrease of detailed regulations
- increase of authority on the universities' side

QA as a means of university control:

shift from quality **assurance** to quality **development**

QA from different points of view

- no defined concept or unbiased criterion of „Quality“ or „Quality Assurance“
- idea of „Quality“ in HE depends on different interests, ideas, objectives, reference points:
 - university heads: adequate position in rankings and ratings
 - university teachers and researchers: participation in scientific progress
 - students: appropriate preparation for the labour market
 - state: effective use of finances

QA from different points of view

QA moves between a number of influences:
university, science, state, politics

some main functions are clearly visible:

- support of quality development
- promotion of autonomy and accountability of HEIs
- strengthening the HEI's position in the (inter)national competition for brains and funds
- facilitates mutual recognition of study results and diplomas

Actors of QA in Germany

- Higher Education Institutions
- Science Council
- Scientific Commission of Lower Saxony (research only)
- Accreditation Council
- Accreditation agencies
- Evaluation networks
- Evaluation agencies
- The Quality Management Project at HRK
- Funding institutions
- Ministries of the Länder (federal structure)

Established procedures: Evaluation

Objectives

- to create transparency in order to have an important basis for internal planning and decision
- to improve the quality of teaching and to set standards for the development of internal quality assurance
- to check standards and to assure quality. This objective refers to accountability about performances and the allocation of funds. Evaluation can lay the basis for a performance oriented allocation of funds by the ministries or the university heads
- Evaluation permits the comparison of performances between universities and between different departments within a HEI

Established procedures: Evaluation

Procedure

- internal evaluation (about every 5-8 years): critical self-assessment report based upon the description of data collected in the teaching report, interviews with staff and students
- external evaluation, including a two-day site visit of the peer group and the peers' assessment report (draft report, comment of the faculty under review, final report)
- follow up, including a contract between the faculty and the head of the university about measures to be taken

Established procedures: Accreditation

Objectives

- securing quality by setting standards and to provide students, employers as well as higher education institutions with a reliable orientation and improved transparency
- to check structural standards given by law (ECTS, duration, degrees etc.) to ensure structural comparability of degree programmes
- to check standards given by the scientific community, the employability of students, staff/student ratio and equipment

Established procedures: Accreditation

Procedure

1. Internal self report: Presentation of the application documents by the department
2. Peer review: hearing, interview of the applicants by the peer group, evaluation report including the vote of the peers concerning formal requirements, infrastructure and support, concept of the degree programme
3. Accreditation decision by the accreditation agency
 - The programme is accredited
 - The programme is conditionally accredited
 - The accreditation is rejected

The Two-Level Accreditation System

Accreditation Council

HEI (4), state (4), students (2), professional practise (5), intern.experts (2)

Defining procedure requirements (ECTS, Modularisation, DS etc.)



accreditation, monitoring, regulating fair competition

Accreditation Agencies

independent, with or without subject specification

Conducting accreditation procedures

Accreditation of Study Programmes

Bachelors' + Masters' degree	Bachelors' degree, accr	Masters' degree, accr	Accredited programmes
Universities: 3,308	429	489	27.8 %
Colleges of art / music: 81	4	8	14.8 %
Fachhochschulen:2,271	689	468	50.9 %

- total number of degree courses about 12.000;
5,660 of them are Ba/Ma courses

New instrument: Process accreditation (in discussion)

- process-oriented quality assurance system for teaching and learning
- Improvement of the internal organisational and decision-making structures in order to make more efficient and effective use of available resources
- views the university as a learning organisation that is itself responsible for guaranteeing the quality of the degree programmes that it offers
- accrediting internal university quality assurance processes can serve to make accreditations more effective and faster in the long term.
- compatible with European developments (ENQA standards and guidelines)

Established procedures: Q Management

no homogeneity at all, neither in the areas included...

- QM for the university as a whole
- QM for some departments
- QM for the administration only
- QM in research
- QM in student services
- ...

Established procedures: Q Management...

...nor in the methods adopted:

- DIN EN ISO 9000 ff.
- Total Quality Management (TQM)
- EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management)
- Balanced Scorecards
- Benchmarking
- Rating
- ...

Perspective: Quality Assurance and University Management

- Changing framework conditions: Autonomy and Accountability strengthen meaning of QA
- Sustainable quality enhancement and transparent demonstration of quality as precondition for success in competition
- Additive QA-procedures are replaced by a comprehensive system of quality development as core element of university management

Established procedures: Shared standards

- Two stage procedure (internal – external)
 - Participation of students and other stakeholders
 - Independence of peers
 - Participation of international peers
 - Publication of results
-
- “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area”:
 - Standards for internal and external QA in HE
 - Standards for QA agencies
 - European register of agencies

HRK

Outlook



Outlook: Challenges Ahead

■ **Evaluation:**

International standards must be applied consequently.

■ **Accreditation:**

Acceptance problems have to be solved (high workload and costs; lack of input to quality development).

■ **QA System:**

- from programme orientation to process/institutional orientation
- from monitoring minimal standards towards excellency
- from quality assurance to quality enhancement
- extension from teaching to research
- definition of quality: science-based or labour market-based?

Outlook: Challenges ahead

Some of the major objectives for the future are

- the connection of the range of measures

Outlook: Challenges Ahead

Some of the major objectives for the future are

- the connection of the range of measures
- the connection with new QA tools like
 - performance based parameters
 - contract management/target agreements

Outlook: Challenges Ahead

Some of the major objectives for the future are

- the connection of the range of measures
- the connection with new QA tools like
 - performance based parameters
 - contract management
- international cooperation

HRK

Further information:

www.projekt-q.de

**The Quality Management
Project**