



# Quality Assurance Processes in European HEIs

Tia Loukkola

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## The structure of the presentation

- Setting the stage
- Trends with regard to internal quality assurance
- Further reflection
- Conclusion

## Setting the stage: background

- EUA's long term work in developing internal quality assurance and quality culture
- Examining Quality Culture in European Higher Education Institutions (EQC)
  - On-going project, continues until 2011
  - Co-funded by EC LLL programme

## Setting the Stage: EQC project

- Aims to
    - Identify internal quality assurance processes in place in HEIs, in particular, how the ESGs part I is implemented
    - Discuss the dynamics between the development of institutional quality culture and quality assurance
    - Identify and present good practices in a final report in order to disseminate them
  - Two phases of implementation
    - Survey to map internal QA processes
    - Interviews for more in-depth discussion
- > The results presented here are based on the survey

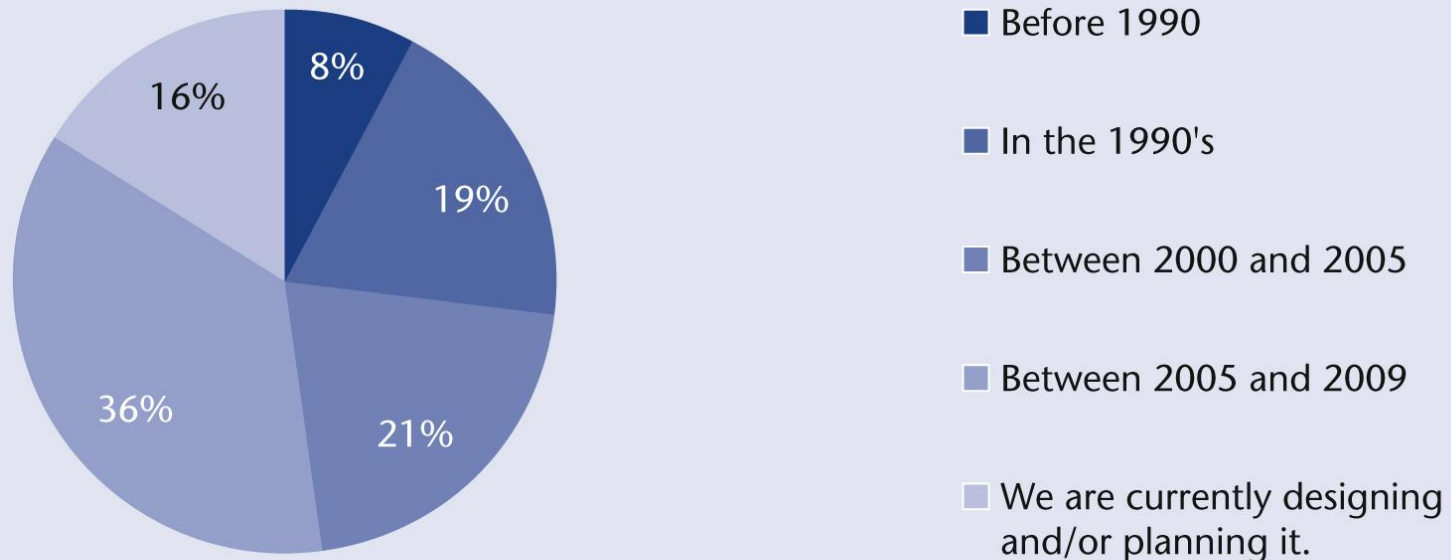
# Setting the stage: quality culture vs. quality assurance

**Figure 3: Elements of quality culture (adapted from EUA 2006: 20 and EUA 2005: 18)**



## Introducing QA system or equivalent

**Figure 5: Introduction of a quality assurance system (or equivalent)**



## Strategies and QA structures

- 90% have institutional strategic document or equivalent document
  - 2/3 have a separate institutional QA policy statement
  - 1/4 have quality statement included in the strategic plan
- Large variety of organisational structures, no typical solution
- Half of the respondents have no committee responsible for quality assurance
- In 66% the senior leadership takes the lead in the process. In the remaining 33%, it is still involved in following up the process in some way

## Coverage of QA processes

- Activities covered by quality assurance processes:
  - Teaching and learning nearly 100%
  - Research 80 %
  - Service to society 50 %
  - Student support services 75 %
  - Governance and administration of the institution 66 %
  
- Tendency not to recognise all QA related processes within a HEI as quality assurance processes



## QA in Teaching and Learning (1)

- QA system in teaching and learning, in particular:
  - 2/3 institution-specific but follows national QA frameworks and guidelines
  - 1/4 tailor-made to the institution's needs and does not apply any ready-made model
  - less than 10 % mentioned that it applies a ready-made model such as ISO, EFQM, and CAF
- The curriculum typically designed by a committee or a working group
  - In half of the HEIs students are part of this kind of committee
- A variety of processes for monitoring it exist

## QA in Teaching and Learning (2)

- More than 90% of HEIs have developed learning outcomes, but they do not all make them publicly available. 40% measure the student workload needed to reach the described learning outcomes through student surveys
- Student assessment combines a variety of characteristics. Assessment methods and criteria are usually transparent to students
- HEIs offer learning resources, but they do not all systematically monitor or evaluate them

## The feedback loop

- 70% of respondents use **student surveys** as one of the means to monitor students' perceptions of the teaching they receive. Among them:
  - 90% take the results into account in the assessment of teaching staff.
  - 60% of the respondents state that students who participated in a survey are informed about the outcomes and the resulting actions taken
  - 5% make the information on teachers' aptitudes and performance publicly available.

## Further Reflection (1)

- Trends, key perceptions
  - QA systems are largely in place
  - Developing a quality culture takes time and effort
  - Participation of all stakeholders still demands attention
  - HEIs seem to have more information available on the input and on what is offered than on the output
  - Promotion of a better and more efficient use of information is needed

## Further Reflection (2)

- Areas for further development for internal QA:
  - an all-encompassing approach to QA
  - the development of explicit feedback loops
  - the participation of all relevant stakeholders
  - the relation between information on strategic goals and communication strategy

## Conclusion

- Institutions have been responding to the increased demand for quality
- Still, it is work in progress
  - > need to encourage continuation of this work
- Ultimate goal an institutional quality culture