

EQAF 2012

The Danish experience: An empirical study of the impact of accreditation on the quality work of higher education institutions

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Agenda

- Presentation of the Danish study
 - Method and context
 - Preliminary results
- Group discussions
 - What effects of external QA on HEI's have you experienced?
 - What can be done to enhance learning in HEI's as a result of external quality assurance?

1. Presentation of the Danish study: Method and context

The Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA)

- EVA was established in 1999
- Independent institution under the auspices of the Ministry of Children and Education
- EVA carries out evaluations, surveys and accreditations
- Member of ENQA, EQAR, ECA and NOQA.

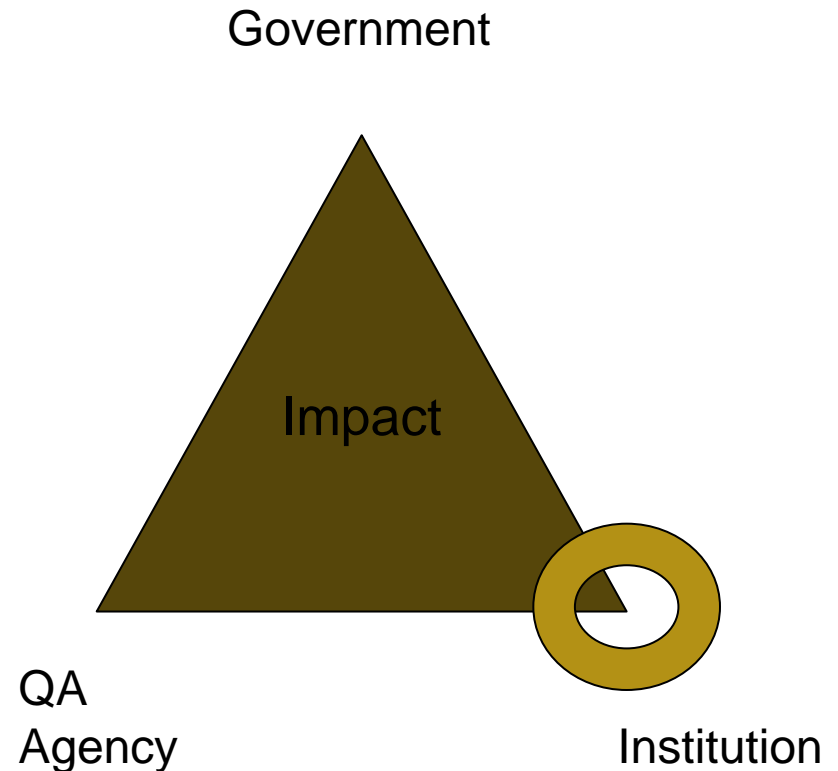
The approach

- Qualitative study looking at the impact of accreditation on the institutions' quality work.
- Focus on changes in programme quality and organisational structures and culture as a result of accreditation
- Based on interviews with institutions.

Analytical framework: Impact of accreditation

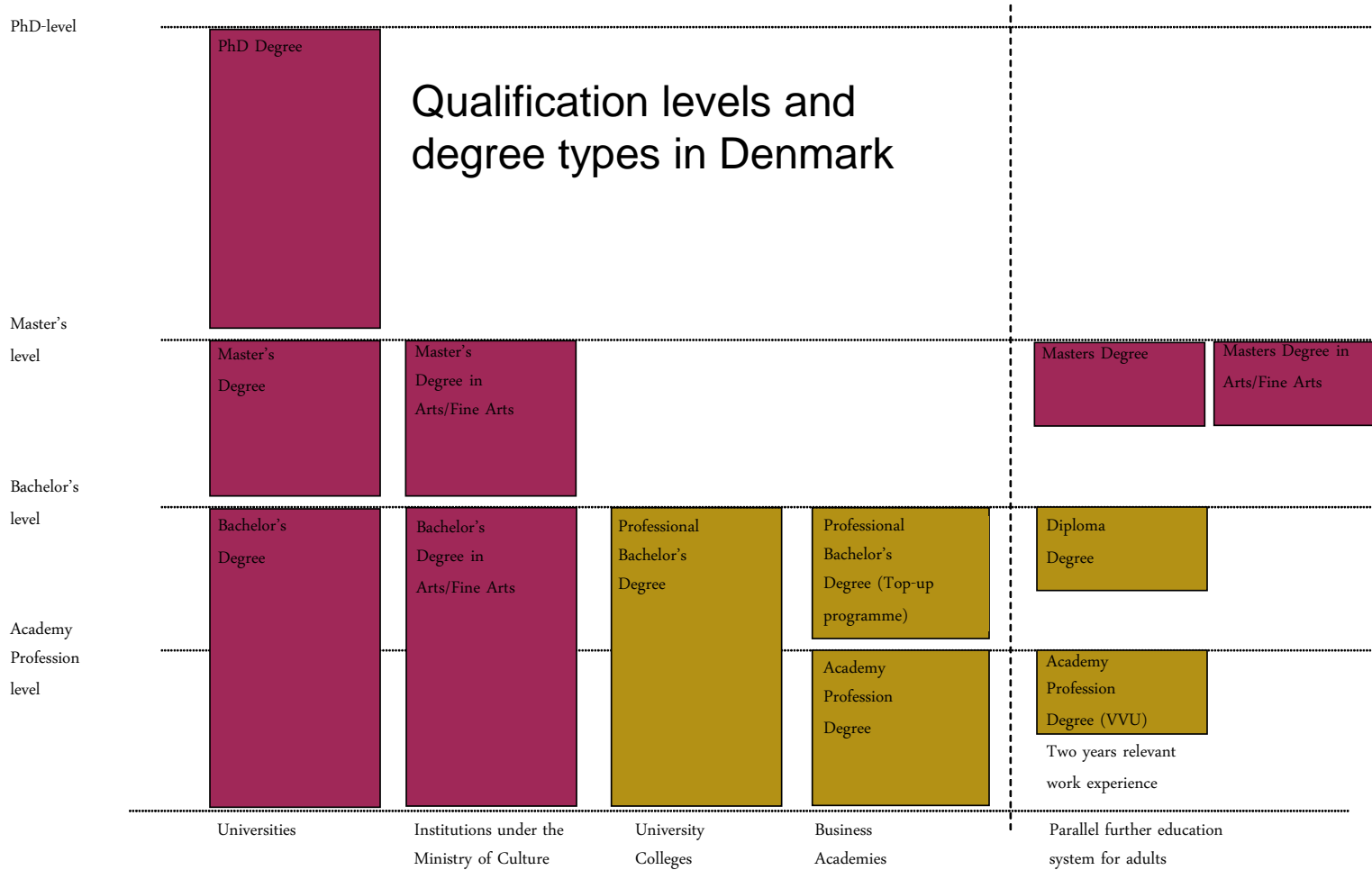
The impact depends on:

- The legal framework for the accreditation laid down by the government
- The quality agency's implementation of the accreditation concept
- The institutions' capacity and motivation for participating in the accreditation process.



The Danish accreditation system

- Accreditation of all new and existing HEI programmes
- The institutions gain or lose right to deliver the programme depending on the accreditation result
- Elements:
 - Predefined criteria and review model
 - Self-evaluation
 - Expert panel (site visit for existing programs)
 - Public report
- 6 years cycle.



Cases

Institutions:

2 Business Academies (out of 9 Business Academies)

3 University Colleges (out of 7 University Colleges)

Interviews with:

- Managing Directors (top level management)
- Education Directors (programme management)
- Quality assurance staff
- Teachers
- Students

2. Presentation of the Danish study: Preliminary results

Impact on teaching and learning

- Initiated follow up on specific quality problems addressed in the accreditation, e.g. improvement of graduate contact and the students possibilities to go on exchange
- Initiated quality discussions among the management and employees about programme quality, e.g. more open quality culture and shared understanding of quality.

Impact on organisation and management

- More advanced quality systems, e.g. accreditation has become an integrated part of the quality work at the institutions based on the criteria
- From oral to written quality culture – documentation of procedures
- Systematization of procedures
- Transparency of evaluation results between management and teachers
- Accreditation has encouraged knowledge sharing horizontally as well as vertically
- Bureaucratisation, e.g. the institutions are using time and resources on the accreditation process.

The institutions perception of when accreditation works:

- When management has the possibility to link the accreditation to internal quality assurance agendas – which was the case in many instances, e.g. gaining insight into students' evaluations of the teachers
- When the management succeeded in making the accreditation process meaningful for the employees
- When sufficient resources were allocated to the accreditation process
- When a wide range of employees are involved
- When the management has a realistic awareness of the consequences of a negative accreditation.

The institutions perception of when accreditation doesn't works:

- When actual quality problems are not addressed in the accreditation
- When experts are perceived as biased
- When documentation requirements is perceived as bureaucratic and cost-intensive, e.g. the self-evaluation report
- When the institutions do not find the accreditation criteria linked to their own perception of quality.

3. Group discussions

Based on your experience or own research give examples of EQA having a positive impact on organisation and management at HEI's?

	Examples	What can we learn from the example?
Programme accreditation/evaluation		
Institutional evaluation/audit		

Optional: institution and email:

Country:

Based on your experience or own research give examples of EQA having a positive impact on teaching and learning at HEI's?

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What can be done to enhance learning and improvement in HEI's as a result of external quality assurance?

What can
QA agencies do?

What can
HEI's do?

