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European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA): standards and guidelines

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**FINAL SEMINAR 21.-22.9.2006
SZCZECIN, POLAND**



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What is ENQA?

- European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education – established in 2000
- transformed into European Association of Quality Assurance in Higher Education in 2004
- unites 42 quality assurance agencies so far (2006)
- goals: disseminating information, experiences and good practices in the field of quality assurance (QA) in higher education

<http://www.enqa.eu/>



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The Prague Mandate, 2001

– ENQA first official task

The ENQA was put in charge of “*establishing a common framework of reference and disseminating best practices*” in collaboration with other national bodies.

Following this, a survey was created:

Quality procedures in European Higher Education, An ENQA survey, European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2003, Helsinki



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Evaluation methods

Method Name	Description
Evaluation	The synthesis of the feedback of the various actors (through a grading mechanism, satisfaction reports ...) not necessarily in reference to a standard.
Accreditation	A process that gives a yes/no answer to the question of whether the object of the evaluation meets a certain (minimum or excellent) standard. Thus accreditation always involves benchmarking. An accreditation can be delivered <i>ex-ante</i> (before its target is in use) or <i>ex-post</i> .
Audit	A method for evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the object of the audit.
Benchmarking	A comparison of results between two objects (subject, institution ...), one of them being a reference (typically a best practice) and the other the one to be evaluated.





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Evaluation focus

Focus Name	Description
Subject	A knowledge that can be taught at different levels in various programs, e.g. marketing, computer science ...
Program	Set of studies leading to a formal degree, e.g. an MBA, a bachelor degree.
Institution	All the services constituting an institution: its organization, facilities, financial matters, teaching, and research.
Theme	One educational service that is cross-subject, e.g. ICT, student counseling.



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The most popular types of evaluation

- Program Evaluation
- Program Accreditation
- Institutional Audit
- Institutional Evaluation

and to a lesser extent:

- Institutional Accreditation
- Subject Evaluation
- Program Benchmarking
- Subject Benchmarking



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The QA system: the four-stage model

1. The autonomy and independence of the evaluation body from both the governments and the institutions
2. The use of self-assessment
3. External assessment and site visits
4. The publication of a report



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The Berlin Mandate, 2003

– ENQA second task

The ENQA was asked „to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance, to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies or bodies”.

This resulted in the report:

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education Area, European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2005, Helsinki



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Results and recommendations of the report

- European standards for internal and external quality assurance, and for external quality assurance agencies
- Cyclical reviews of European quality assurance agencies
- European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies
- European Register Committee – responsible for the inclusion of agencies in the register
- European Consultative Forum for Quality Assurance in Higher Education





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European standards for quality assurance – the concept

- designed to be applicable to all higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies in Europe
- recognising the primacy of national systems of higher education and the importance of institutional and agency autonomy
- maintaining appropriate balance between internal quality cultures, and external quality assurance procedures


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Basic principles

- providers of HE – primary responsables for the quality
- quality of academic programmes – needs improvement and support
- transparency and use of external expertise in QA processes – very important
- culture of quality within HE institutions – has to be encouraged
- processes for demonstrating HE institutions accountability and quality at home and internationally – are needed
- processes used should not stifle diversity and innovation



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Purposes and objectives of the standards

- to improve the education available to students in the EHEA
- to assist HE institutions in managing and enhancing their quality
- to form a background for QA agencies in their work
- to make external QA more transparent and simpler to understand
- encouraging development of HE institutions which foster vibrant intellectual and educational achievement
- providing a source of assistance and guidance to institutions and agencies in developing their own culture of QA
- raising the expectations of higher education processes and outcomes
- contributing to a common frame of reference for the provision of higher education and QA within the EHEA



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External quality assurance purposes and principles

- safeguarding national academic standards for higher education
- accreditation of programmes and/or institutions
- user protection
- public provision of independently-verified information
- improvement and enhancement of quality
- respecting institutional autonomy
- keeping the interests of students and other stakeholders at the forefront of external quality assurance processes
- using internal quality assurance activities of institutions

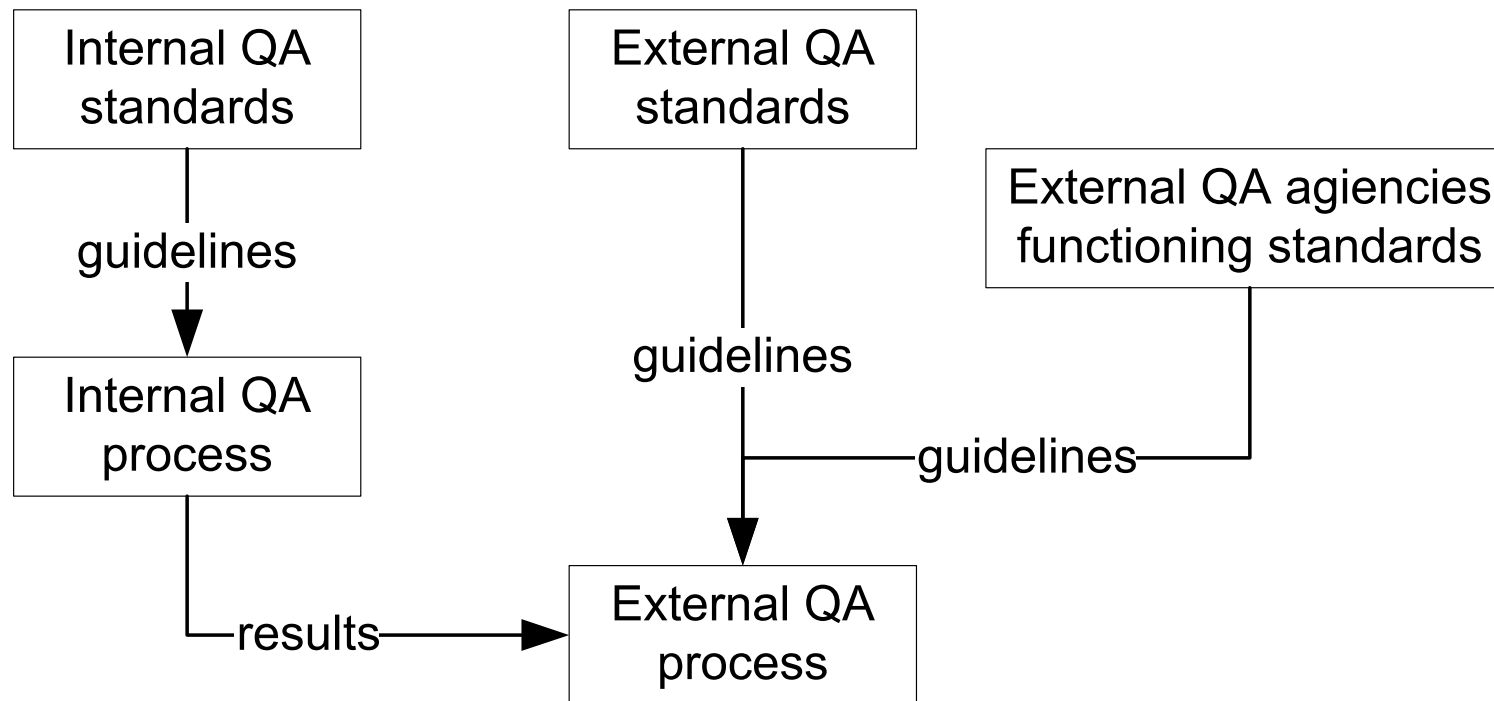




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Quality Assurance and Assessment



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Standards for internal QA within HE institutions

1. Policy and procedures for quality assurance
2. Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards
3. Assessment of students
4. Quality assurance of teaching staff
5. Learning resources and student support
6. Information systems
7. Public information



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Standards for external QA of HE institutions

1. Use of internal quality assurance procedures
2. Development of external quality assurance processes
3. Criteria for decisions
4. Processes fit for purpose
5. Reporting
6. Follow-up procedures
7. Periodic reviews
8. System-wide analyses



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Standards for external QA agencies

1. Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education
2. Official status
3. Activities
4. Resources
5. Mission statement
6. Independence
7. External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies
8. Accountability procedures



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Thank you for your attention



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