

Bologna and Quality Assurance - impact, interest and issues?

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QA: impact, interest and issues

Summary of Presentation

- **Impact** of Bologna Process on development of QA policy
- How QA fits into the priorities of the Bologna Process currently: is it still of **interest**?
- Current QA-related **issues** and trends being discussed and future perspectives

My QA story!

- University Academic (1984-2001)
- University Director of Quality (2001-2005)
- Chief Executive of National QA Agencies (2005-2016)
- Member of ENQA Board (2011-2017) and President (2013-17)
- Member of ESG revision Steering Group (2013-15)
- BFUG and BFUG Working Groups Member (2013-17)

Impact of Bologna Process on development of QA

Pre- 2005

- National agencies
- National standards
- National procedures
- National experts
- No explicit links between QA and qualifications (frameworks)
- No agency reviews

2005 Ministerial Meeting

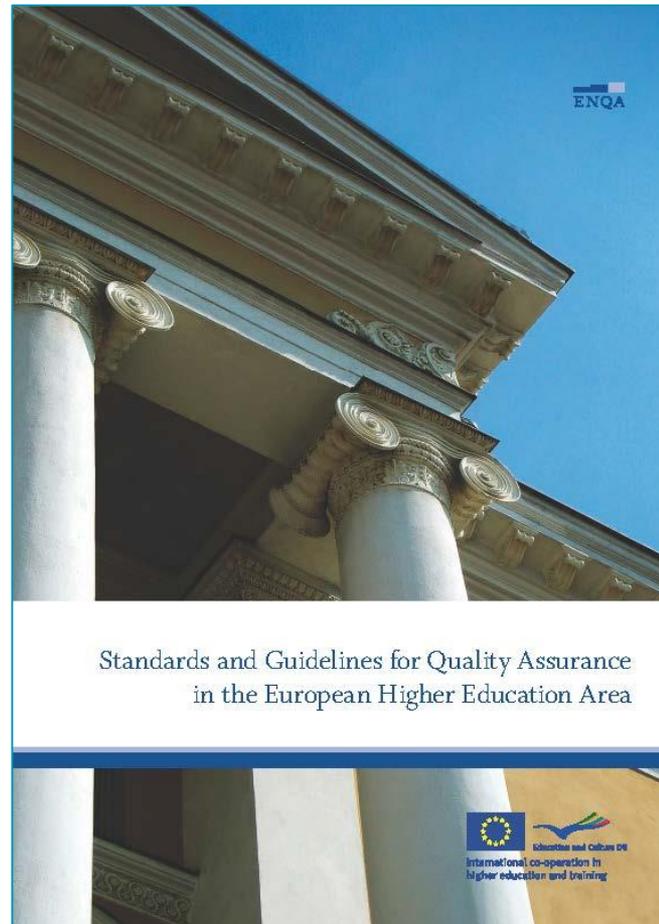
Adopted European Standards and Guidelines for:

- Internal QA
- External QA
- QA Agencies

- Introduced the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA)

- Mandated the development of National Qualifications Frameworks based on learning outcomes

2005



Impact of Bologna on QA - History

By 2008 we had:

- QAAs operating a common QA framework (ESG 2005)
- ENQA using ESG as the basis for membership
- The establishment of EQAR, a European list of agencies operating in accord with ESG, as evidenced by an external review

2008 - Establishment of EQAR

Many of the early applicants were from countries with multiple agencies (recognition, status)

- Germany
- Spain
- Ireland
- Belgium - Flanders

Trends in QA reviews

Early reviews (2006-07) were commissioned by:

- Ministries
- Other national agencies or organisations
- Nearest neighbour QA agencies

Later reviews (2010-15) were largely commissioned by ENQA

Trends in QA agency structures

Mergers of agencies across HE sectors:

- IRELAND (universities, institutes of technology)
- AUSTRIA (public universities, fachhochschule, private universities)
- BELGIUM-FLANDERS (Universities, university colleges)

Trends in agency scope

Wider responsibility for ENQA member agencies:

- FINEEC, Finland (from early childhood to higher education)
- QQI, Ireland (higher education, further education (VET), NQF, NARIC)
- NOKUT, Norway (higher education, VET, NARIC)
- EKKA, Estonia (Higher education, VET)

Trends in agency scope

Responsibility for ENQA affiliates:

- NCFHE, Malta (Further and higher education)
- AIC, Latvia (higher education, NARIC, NQF)

Trends in QA methodologies

- Movement from programme accreditation (only) to a mixture of institutional accreditation and some programme audits/accreditations
- Movement to more risk-based QA

Trends at agency level

- More countries establishing agencies and more agencies seeking to become full members of ENQA or listed on EQAR
- 24 of the 49 EHEA countries have agencies that are ENQA members
- A further 16 countries have agencies that are ENQA affiliates

Trends in QA – ENQA and EQAR

- Almost complete overlap between ENQA members and EQAR-listed agencies
- Convergence in ENQA and EQAR processes – numbers and outcomes
- Agencies asked to indicate if they intend to apply for listing on EQAR when commissioning ENQA to conduct external review
- Agreement on structure of panels
- EQAR briefing at ENQA reviewer training sessions
- Closer alignment of ENQA Board meetings and EQAR application dates
- Clarification from panel Chair for ENQA co-ordinated reviews to EQAR Register Committee if requested
- ENQA and EQAR working well together in E4+ Group

Trends in QA

- **Development of a market in German-speaking Europe**
 - Germany
 - Austria
 - Switzerland
- **Proliferation of Regional QA agencies in Spain**
 - 7 ENQA members
 - 3 ENQA affiliates

Trends in complexity of decision-making

More separation of responsibility for organising QA evaluations and decision-making

- Denmark (Accreditation Institute(AI) and Danish Accreditation Council)
- Switzerland (AAQ and Swiss accreditation council)
- Netherlands - Flanders (NVAO and agencies organising reviews)

Trends in QA

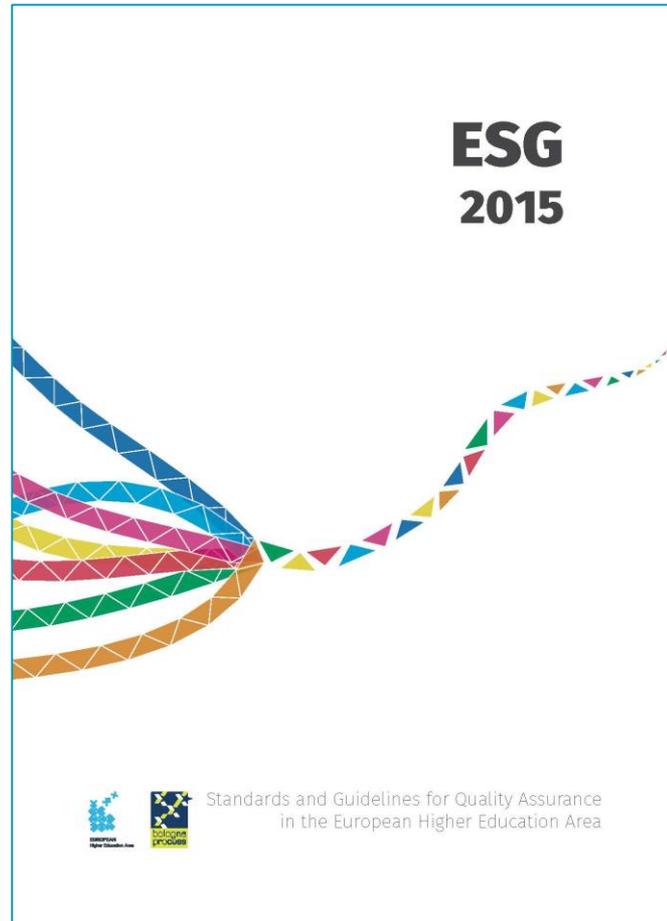
the 3 dimensions of Internationalisation of QA

- Cross-border quality assurance (mobile agencies)
- Quality assurance of cross-border higher education /transnational education (mobile institutions)
- Quality assurance of joint programmes (mobile students)

EQAF and Internationalisation

- In addition to the adoption of ESG, the 2005 report of the Ministers noted that E4 agreed to establish a 'European Consultative Forum for Quality Assurance in Higher Education'
- This forum, initially funded by the European Commission, but now sustained on a self-funding basis by the E4 Group, held its first meeting (termed EQAF, the European Quality Assurance Forum) in Munich in 2006
- The forum has meet annually since and is now the largest event that brings together staff from EQA agencies and staff and students from higher education institutions. EQAF regularly attract over 500 participants.

QA issues – post Yerevan



Current QA issues

ESG 2015 – possible challenges for agencies

- Mandatory student involvement
- Mandatory publication of full reports
- International participation in panels and agency
- Competition at home (for some)
- Markets abroad

Current QA issues

ESG 2015 – possible issues for agencies and HEIs

- Instruments – reference to NQFs
- Framework for Qualifications in the EHEA
- Student workload and ECTS
- Assessment of intended-learning outcomes
- Well-structured (QA) work placements as part of programmes

Current QA issues

ESG 2015 – possible issues for HEIs

- Student-centred learning
- Addressing the diversity of the student body
- Modes of delivery
- Learner autonomy
- Student complaints

Challenge - the correct balance between internal and external QA

ESG 2.1 External QA should address the effectiveness of the internal QA processes described in Part 1 of the ESG

STANDARD: QA in higher education is based on the **institutions' responsibility for the quality** of their programmes and other provision

- It is important that **external QA recognises and supports institutional responsibility for QA**
- To ensure the link between internal and external QA, **external QA includes consideration of** (how the institutions are addressing) **the standards of Part 1**
- These may be addressed differently, depending on the type of external QA (largely determined by the level of institutional autonomy)

Challenge - the correct balance between internal and external QA

ESG 2.2 Designing methodologies fit for purpose

GUIDELINE

- The system for external QA might operate in a more flexible way if institutions are able to demonstrate the effectiveness of their own internal QA

Is QA still a priority after Yerevan?

Communique extracts:

“Shared understanding of principles and processes for quality assurance”

“Implementation of the structural reforms is uneven and the tools are sometimes used incorrectly or in bureaucratic and superficial ways”

“By 2020 we are determined to achieve an EHEA where our common goals are implemented in all member countries to ensure trust in each other’s higher education systems”

Is QA still a priority after Yerevan?

Communique extracts:

“We will actively involve students as full members of the academic community as well as other stakeholders, in curriculum design and in quality assurance”

“Full and coherent implementation of agreed reforms at the national level requires shared ownership and commitment by policy makers and academic communities and stronger involvement of stakeholders”

“Non-implementation in some countries undermines the functioning and credibility of the whole EHEA”

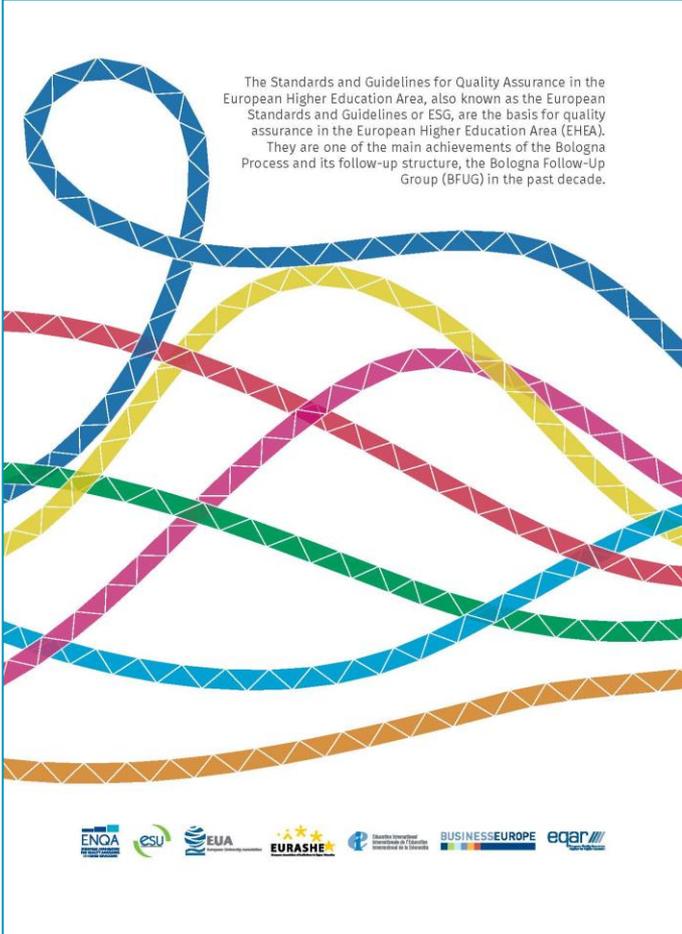
But

- BFUG AG3 reports that only 28 of the 49 member States in the EHEA have implemented ESG
- Italy, a founder member of the EEC and birthplace of the Bologna Declaration still has no agency that is an ENQA member or is listed on EQAR
- Decision to move away from periodic institutional review in UK
- QA evaluation processes adopted by Sweden resulted in loss of ENQA membership for national agency

Policies adopted at Yerevan

- Revised European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance
- European Approach to Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes
- Revised ECTS users' guide

ESG 2015



The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, also known as the European Standards and Guidelines or ESG, are the basis for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). They are one of the main achievements of the Bologna Process and its follow-up structure, the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) in the past decade.









EQAF, 18 November 2016, Ljubljana

ESG 2015

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ESG 2015



Thank You!