9th European Quality Assurance Forum

13 – 15 November 2014

University of Barcelona, Spain

Changing education – QA and the shift from teaching to learning

.

Author(s)

Name: NICOLAS PATRICI

Position: Programe Manager

Organisation: Universitat de Barcelona

Country: Spain

E-mail address: npatrici@obreal.org

Short bio (150 words max):

Programme Manager in charge of HE cooperation projects at OBREAL and at the Universitat de Barcelona (ALFA PUENTES; CODOC, AVEMPACE, JISER-MED; Linking.MED-GULF, EQUAM, MIMI,). Project Management at OBREAL in Erasmus Mundus Action 4 Projects (BRIDGES-LAC; PROMHEDEULAC); Fellow researcher at the Observatory of Globalization/WTO-Chair at the University of Barcelona. Deep knowledge of the LAC region and experience in the field of EU and LAC HE & Research.

Name: Abdullah Al-Zoubi

Position: Professor

Organisation: Princess Sumaya University for Technology

Country: Jordan
E-mail address: zoubi@psut.edu.jo

Short bio (150 words max):
Dr. Al-Zoubi received his BSc and PhD in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from the University of Nottingham, UK, in 1983 and 1987 respectively. He is a member of IEEE, Vice President of the International Association of Online Engineering (IAOE), Vice President and co-founder of the International eLearning Association (IELA). He is actively involved in research in the field of virtual engineering and remote labs and has vast experience in EU projects. He is currently and advisor to the Association of Arab Universities.

Name: Mohammad Mismar

Position: Professor

Organisation: Princess Sumaya University for Technology

Country: Jordan

E-mail address: mjmismar@gmail.com

Short bio (150 words max):

EUA
European University Association

ENQA
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION
FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EURASHE

eSU
european students' union

M. J. Mismar was born in Jordan in 1957. He received his B.Sc. in Electrical Engineering, M.Sc. and Ph.D. in Biomedical Engineering from Iowa State University, USA, in 1979, 1981, and 1982, respectively. He joined the Electrical Engineering Department at the University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan in 1983. He served as Vice-President at Princess Sumaya University for Technology from 2003 until 2007, Member of Higher Education Accreditation Commission from 2007 until 2010, and Vice-President at Hashemite University from 2010 until 2013. Currently, he is Professor of Electrical Engineering at Princess Sumaya University for Technology. His research areas of interest cover Digital Filter Design, Signal Processing, Medical Instrumentation, and Quality Assurance Management.

Name: Bashar K. Hammad

Position: Director of Academic Quality Assurance Center

Organisation: The Hashemite University

Country: Jordan

E-mail address: bkhammad@hu.edu.jo

Short bio (150 words max):

Bashar Hammad received B.S. degree from University of Jordan in 1997, M.S. degree from University of Texas at Arlington in 2003, both in Mechanical Engineering, and PhD in Engineering Mechanics from Virginia Tech (VT) in 2008. He received the Graduate Teaching Fellowship at VT in 2007. He focused on solar energy in his undergraduate study and micro-electro-mechanical systems (MEMS) in his postgraduate research. He joined the Hashemite University (HU) as an assistant professor in the Mechatronics Engineering Department. His current teaching and research interests are in solar photovoltaic systems, and energy harvesters. He served as assistant dean and is currently the director of Academic Quality Assurance Center at HU since February 2011. He is the contact person (at HU) for two Tempus projects; EQuAM and T-MEDA, and a member of the scientific and quality committees of other Tempus project; MUREE and TEJ, respectively.

Name: Khaled M Gharaibeh

Position: Associate Professor

Organisation: Yarmouk University

Country: Jordan

E-mail address: kmgharai@yu.edu.jo

Short bio (150 words max):

Dr Khaled M. Gharaibeh received his PhD in Electrical Engineering in 2004 from North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC. He is currently Associate Professor of Telecommunications Engineering at Yarmouk University, Irbid, Jordan and the Tempus project coordinator. During his career he was involved in a number of EU funded projects on reform of higher education. His academic experience includes demand-based program development, quality assurance of academic programmes and internationalization of higher education. He is a senior member of IEEE and member of IEEE Communications Society.

Name: Rafael Llavori de Micheo

Position: Head of Unit for International and Institutional Relations

Organisation: National Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Spain, ANECA

Country: Spain

E-mail address: rllavori@aneca.es

Short bio (150 words max):

Graduated in History in the Universidad Complutense of Madrid, he holds a Master in Modern Languages awarded by the same institution.

He joined the Spanish National Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Higher Education (ANECA) in January 2003, becoming the Head of the Institutional and international Unit in 2005, and has been involved in many international projects with particular emphasis on Latin America and the EuroMed regions.

He is currently Board Member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), since September 2009, where he chairs the Working Group on *Stakeholder Involvement in QA Processes*. He was elected member of the INQAAHE Board of Directors between 2009 and 2011 and he was in charge of the Programme Committee of the Biennial Conference in Taipei in 2013.

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR

Name: (Dr) Nick Harris

Position: International Advisor

Organisation: ANECA

Country: Spain

E-mail address: nharris@aneca.es

Short bio (150 words max):

For 25 years (Professor) Nick Harris led an international research group looking at plant cell developmental biology. Secondment to a research (funding) council led to appointment at QAA (UK). From 2001-2008 he was Director for Development and Enhancement and responsible for elaboration of the ±Academic Infrastructureq the Qualifications Framework, numerous subject/discipline descriptors, and a Code of Practice covering HEIq management of internal QA systems. Responsible for one of Europeq first NQFs, NH joined the group that developed the FQ-EHEA, and its ±Dublin Descriptorsq This work resulted in numerous requests for advice and support concerning qualifications frameworks development and implementation at regional, national, sectoral and institutional levels. Since 2008 NH, as an independent consultant, has held contracts with more than 30 organisations including ministries, national and regional agencies, and individual HEIs, been a UK Bologna Expert, and collaborated in consortia implementing national, multi- and trans-national projects, all in HE/QA policy and practice.

Title: **Euro-Mediterranean perspectives on the complex shifts between external and internal QA of teaching and learning, at strategic and practical levels: Enhancing Quality Assurance Management (EQuAM) in Jordanian universities.**

Abstract:
EQuAM (Enhancing Quality Assurance Management) is a collaborative project involving European and Jordanian universities and QA agencies. It links successful aspects of the Bologna Process to the development of policy and practice in Jordan. Despite significantly different contexts, shared expectations have been identified, leading to QA Guidelines. These target issues specifically faced by university leaders, academics and students, addressing their different roles, responsibilities and expectations. An accompanying White Paper provides necessary political support. Drawing on the ESG and the Jordanian (HEAC) Quality Standards the Guidelines have demonstrated an immediate impact in the first Pilots. The success of the project's approach . starting with identification of shared expectations rather than comparing procedures/criteria . will be discussed, along with some emerging answers to issues for further inter-regional collaborations such as: can the ESG be applicable in widely different contexts? How to move from very compliance and input driven QA approaches to something else - institutional responsibility and quality culture?

Background

EQuAM (1) (Enhancing Quality Assurance Management) is a joint project between European and Jordanian universities and QA agencies funded until October 2015 through TEMPUS. It builds specifically upon work within JISER-MED (2) (Joint Innovation and Synergies in Education and Research, and also Arabic for 'bridge'), an IEMED paper on enhancing quality, promoting mobility and employability (3) , and is contributing to the development of the strategic international goals of the Arab European Conferences on Higher Education (AECHE) (4).

The main European partners in EQuAM include the Universities of Barcelona, Montpellier, Tallinn and Rome Sapienza, ANECA (the national QA agency for Spanish HE), AQU (the QA agency for Catalunya) and ENQA. Jordanian partners include Princess Sumaya University of Technology (PSUT), the Hashemite University, Al-Hussein Bin Talal University, Yarmouk University, Tafila Technical University, Mutah University, the Jordanian Higher Education Accreditation Commission (HEAC) (5) and the Association of Arab Universities (AAU) (6).

A summary of the QA higher education (HE) in Jordan

Jordanian HE is overseen by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and includes 10 public and 21 private universities with a total of 285,000 students. The universities vary considerably in size, mission and priorities but all required General Accreditation at institutional level, and *ex ante* Specific Accreditation for programmes. Evaluations for General and Specific Accreditations are undertaken by the Jordanian HEAC with the Higher Education Council as the decision making body. The extensive criteria for accreditation are currently predominantly 'input' based. HEAC can, however, be considered, in part, an evaluator of 'outputs' since it is responsible for the National Testing Centre. Each year a sample of graduates from specific programmes across universities sit general and subject-related evaluations (Competency Tests).

In line with general international policy developments, there is an increasing awareness of the importance of more, and more 'explicit' internal QA (IQA) within HEIs. Consequently, all Jordanian universities should now have a 'Quality Assurance Bureau' (QAB). There are wide

variations between the universities in the extent to which QABs have been established and developed. To promote this initiative and recognise the importance of more organised management of QA within universities, HEAC has established a Quality Assurance Certificate that universities can apply for. At the start of the EQuAM project this evaluation was made against 12 standards, each with numerous criteria and mostly concerned with ±input¤parameters. These HEAC Standards are being revised during 2014.

Some Jordanian universities have, reflecting the importance internationalisation of QA, been successful in programme applications for internationally recognised ±quality labels¤e.g. the ABET accreditation of several PSUT programmes.

Rationale of the EQuAM project
EQuAM draws upon successful aspects of the QA strand of the Bologna Process in supporting Jordanian universities in the development and implementation of their IQA systems and management, through the QABs. The project recognizes the considerable contextual differences between ±Europe¤and Jordan, noting also that there are very wide differences between the different national/regional/institutional systems within Europe. EQuAM is developing a Model to support IQA management, relevant to the contexts of HE within Jordan. iI is underpinned by Principles derived from expectations and values shared both within Jordan and with its wider internationalised aspirations. The Model is also being designed in line with the new requirements of HEAC and with international expectations.

Workshops, consultations and matching exercises have contributed relevant material from Jordanian and European HEIs and QA agencies. The Model is thus based on analyses of needs and capacities in Jordanian HEIs, as well as the experiences and expectations linked to internationally-identified aspects of good practice.

The (currently draft) Guidelines (with ±soft standards¤and procedures) have been extrapolated from the accumulated evidence to support and improve the development of IQA within the wide variety of different contexts of individual Jordanian universities, and irrespective of the immediate (and different) priorities. The Model is being piloted (2014/15) in Jordanian HEIs. European experiences in building productive relationships between HEIs and their QA agencies is informing the effective implementation of the Model and reflects the importance of autonomous HEIs meeting national/international expectations whilst working in different contexts.

A model alone would be insufficient to ensure most effective uptake and implementation. The project therefore includes a work package to support capacity building within QABs and training of experts to contribute to internal and external quality evaluations. Complemented with a work package focussed to dissemination and sustainability, the project has a final component designed to identify the early impacts, successes and areas for improvement.

Changing contexts since the initiation of the project
Quality assurance is always evolving in relation to changing contexts but in this particular project the parameters within which the outcomes must be relevant and realistic are being influenced by multiple and rapidly changing contexts. The initial main reference points for the development of the project . the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) (7; 8) (predominantly Part 1) and the HEAC Quality Standards have *both* begun review and revision during the course of the project and Jordanian universities find themselves subject to significant impacts as a result of wider changes in terms of regional, social and political contexts.

Stages and progress within the project

The 'Matching Exercises'

The first stage of the project was a series of 'matching exercises' in which both Jordanian and European universities described their institutional QA arrangements and the extent to which they might, by self-evaluation, consider they meet the expectations of the ESG and HEAC Standards for their Quality Certificate.

The European universities described significantly different approaches to IQA and QC. Almost all considered that their internal institutional and the external systems applied to them were aligned to the ESG and with an emphasis on the QA of teaching and learning. Some undertook this work within the context of total quality management approaches (e.g. EQFM and ISO). None of the European universities felt confident that they could unambiguously meet all of the ESG part 1, and similarly their respective QA agencies were regarded as at different stages in the extent to which they might be implementing ESG Part 2. A common perceived weakness was in the QA of student assessment (of learning outcomes).

Jordanian universities varied considerably in the extents to which they felt able to meet the expectations of the HEAC Standards and the ESG Part 1. Generally, there was an acknowledgement that, within different institutional management models, there was greater emphasis on meeting external (*ex ante*) programme accreditation requirements, including in a few cases those for international 'labels' rather than on systematic continuous QA.

Any management of IQA was largely at programme, and perhaps department/faculty level, with little emphasis on integration of IQA at institutional level. Discussions indicated that there are large variations in the extent to which (though legally required) universities have established QABs, and in their roles and powers within the institution, and the extent to which they might have any continuity/sustainability following change of senior management.

The results of the 'Matching exercises' clearly showed the need for a set of Guidelines to support the development of IQA, particularly in regard to coordinated and sustainable management QA relating to teaching and learning.

The HEIs also identified their 'priorities' in addressing the different external standards. The results showing an interesting and significant different in one key aspect: for the European HEIs the provision of (verified) 'public information' was a (very) high priority whilst for the Jordanian HEIs this aspect was amongst the lowest of their priorities. Discussions indicated that the differences might largely be based on i) differences in expectations amongst would-be students (and those who support them), and ii) differences in academic and social contexts related to admissions. In Jordan, for example, one of the essential criteria under the Student Services Standard is the provision of accommodation for (particularly female) students, rather than 'information'

A recurring theme in the matching exercises was the different relationships that were revealed between QA and institutional governance and management structures. With no common pattern **Figure 1** was developed table to clarify the relationships essential for effective and sustainable IQA (and enhancement) within different institutional management structures.

	Responsibilities (and authorities) for IQA functions		
	Locus of primary responsibility		delegation of responsibility?
Functions within IQA	'centralised' (institutional level)	'decentralised' (faculty / department / programme	
	Within QAB	other		

	?			
	Yes	No		
Determines QA strategy				
Issues quality policy				
Defines the interest groups				
Defines the QA structure				
Defines and runs QA procedures, processes				
Determines the accountability procedures				
Establishes, runs and maintains IQA				
Collects QA data				
Collates / stores QA data				
Establishes actions to improve quality				
Disseminates good practice				
Coordinates IQA and EQA				
Figure 1. Roles and responsibilities within IQA (and with external QA) vary with institution and its management model; a table to clarify the relationships essential for effective and sustainable IQA and enhancement within different institutional management structures				

Developmental strengths and weaknesses and the impacts and apparent sustainability of on-going QA of teaching and learning are influenced to a large extent by their initiation through ±top down∙and/or ±bottom up∙initiatives. A complex pattern was apparent related to initiation of QA through top down and /or bottom up actions, with differential impacts of (changing) external expectations. It seems however the general case that, without a specific ±quality office∙systematic integration and sustainability at QA at institutional level is unlikely to occur, and even with such an office it may only be effective where the ±quality office∙is appropriately led and positioned within the senior management structure. It appears important however to identify precisely the roles, responsibilities and reporting lines in whatever system is chosen and ensure that relates to the particular governance / management of the institution.

Development of the Guidelines
The Purpose and Scope of the Guidelines
An implicit assumption at the start of the project was that the ESG might provide, when adapted to the Jordanian context, some form of basis for the Guidelines to help support and develop QABs. The ±matching exercises∙clearly demonstrated, amongst many things, that:
- a QA system must be based on principles and standards agreed with the key stakeholders . and include clear procedures and criteria.
- the purposes and scope of the Guidelines must be ±matched∙to the QA requirements and expectations placed on Jordanian HEIs,
- the Guidelines must also be related to the various external QA procedures that Jordanian HEIs must, and/or opt, to fulfil.

It was agreed that the Guidelines would need to cover the following issues:
- the establishment, maintenance, and continued monitoring of ~~internal~~ IQA arrangements within an HEI concerning the roles and responsibilities of the institution as a whole and the programmes an institution offers
- the monitoring and coordination of IQA activities that are required as evidence for periodic external evaluation of the institution as a whole

- the establishment of IQA arrangements for the programmes an institution offers
- the analysis of IQA outcomes to support improvement and enhancement

and, where relevant,

- the monitoring (and co-ordination) of programme proposals submitted from an HEI for external evaluation / accreditation.

Additionally, the Guidelines must be applicable within the different management models used within HE institutions, and there has been detailed discussion of these.

Since the development and establishment of an HEI requires *ex ante* external accreditation, the Guidelines should be concerned with matters relating to the establishment of effective IQA and its continuing provision in support of teaching and learning. Further, the Guidelines do not need to replicate those already provided by the HEAC.

Principles

In determining the key principles for the Guidelines there were interesting discussions on the basic purposes of QA. For HE in general, these may be summarised as answering the following:

- Is the institution offering the study programmes *bona fide*?
- does the institution have the resources to offer its programmes?
- are its programmes designed to meet the outcomes and standards that may be reasonably expected of the programme titles?
- do students get a fair opportunity to complete their studies?
- is students' work assessed fairly, consistently and rigorously?
- do students' achievements match with general expectations associated with the degree / award title?

The first is covered by *ex ante* institutional accreditation and outside the scope of the Guidelines but from these, and a series of agreed general principles, a set of specific principles were derived for the Guidelines under the following headings:

1. Principles for the establishment of IQA arrangements within an HEI concerning the roles and responsibilities of the institution as a whole
2. Principles for the maintenance of IQA arrangements within an HEI concerning the roles and responsibilities of the institution as a whole
3. Principles for the monitoring and coordination of IQA activities that are required as evidence for periodic external evaluation of the institution as a whole
4. Principles for the establishment of IQA arrangements for the programmes an institution offers
5. Principles for the continued monitoring of IQA arrangements for the programmes an institution offers
6. Principles for the analysis of IQA outcomes to support improvement and enhancement
7. Principles for monitoring (and co-ordination) of programme proposals submitted from an HEI for external evaluation/accreditation

For example, 4. *Principles for the establishment of internal QA arrangements for the programmes an institution offers* includes:

- the institution should ensure that QA arrangements at programme level encompass:
  - formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards that are aligned with external requirements and expectations
  - mechanisms to ensure that student assessment will be valid, relevant and proportionate and conducted consistently

The Guidelines

The Guidelines cover: 1) QA Policy, and its goals, 2) QA Administrative Structure, 3) QA Processes and Procedures, 4) QA Information Systems, 5) QA Guidelines including ±soft‡ standards and criteria for monitoring IQA.

An important aspect of the detailed table within 2) QA Administrative Structure is the identification of the key responsibilities of committees and individuals within the institution and, additionally, what these committees and individuals may reasonably expect of others within the system. There are specific sections for students and student representatives including their typical roles and responsibilities within IQA, *and identifying their reasonable expectations of the outcomes of IQA.*

The Guideline's 'soft' Standards and their criteria

Guidelines for the management of IQA require some foci, but their number, precise scope and nature, and extent and nature of their associated criteria have been the subject of much discussion during the project. As an interim the foci are currently being referred to as ±soft standards‡ the term ±standard‡is though to carry more ±weight‡within the context of Jordanian HEIs but their nature is quite different from the typical accreditation-related and often threshold-based standards that are currently the norm. The draft Guidelines include 7 such standards, covering: 1. IQA management; 2. Academic programmes; 3. Students; 4. Faculty members; 5. Resources; 6. Institutional integrity; 7. Community Engagement, all of which have been correlated with the current and likely future HEAC Quality Standards, and 1-6 of which can be correlated to the current ESG.

Guideline criteria are identified for each Standard, in tabular form, and additionally the sorts of evidence that would be appropriate to address those criteria. Wherever possible there has been an effort to indicate evidence that would typically be expected of a functioning IQA system without the addition work in collection and provision of providing new data.

Piloting of the Draft Guidelines

A Pre-Pilot was organised as an initial evaluation of the potential of the draft Guidelines. In a system used exclusively to *ex ante* accreditation at institutional and programme levels the challenge was to ensure that the exercise focussed on evaluating the draft Guidelines and was not either directly or indirectly used as a means of evaluating the institution and its IQA system. The institution was free, however, to use the exercise for its own purposes.

An integral part of ensuring that the Guidelines remained the focus was the insistence that a) there would *not* be any self-evaluation report, b) there would *not* be a site visit, rather the discussions between the panel and groups from the institution would take place at a ±neutral‡ venue (a hotel conference room), c) the institution would *not* be asked to provide substantial evidence of its IQA activities but rather consider what evidence it already had available and what additional evidence it would need to generate to meet the criteria.

The Pre-Pilot involved a panel of two Europeans and two Jordanian experts and a series of separate meetings with representatives of the institution‡s senior management, QAB, Departments' Heads and students. The discussions, focusing on the Guidelines themselves, reinforced all of the issues identified through the matching exercises, confirming the need for and relevance of Guidelines.

On the basis of the successful Pre-Pilot, two further Pilot exercises are planned; these will involve the preparation of institutional self-evaluation documents and site visits.

Training and dissemination

An integral part of any project like EQuAM is that it must include elements to support the sustainability of its outcomes. In this case a series of training workshops will be held for those involved in the development and more effective functioning of QABs in Spring 2015. A meeting was held at ANECA (June 2014) for senior HEI and QA agency staff to discuss strategic issues concerned with the development of IQA. The main theme was the shifts in emphasis in the quality assurance of HE, to meet general stakeholder expectations in both national and international contexts, and an 'evolution' in the QA of HE from extensive external evaluation to a more effective system in which *bona fide* organisations should (only need to) provide evidence, for external evaluation, in support of the effectiveness of their IQA system.

Summary conclusion
Even before its completion the EQuAM project has shown that there is a clear potential for an extra-European developmental alignment of national HE QA systems based on the (international) norms and expectations (as shared within the ESG), and based upon a recognition and respect for differences in cultural educational and wider social contexts and expectations. Such exercises can provide support for wider mobility in study options within and between HEIs and wider recognition of students' achievements.

The key to the apparent success of this project to date has been to start *not* with a detailed examination of the details of procedures and criteria but rather with (firstly) the underlying expectations and then the principles that come from an evaluation of the shared purposes of QA. The project struggled briefly with trying to develop Guidelines to promote particular priorities, but priorities can and do change as context changes . underlying principles and expectations should not. An crucial aspect in this project has been to identify the roles and responsibilities within IQA (and in relation to external QA) that vary between institutions and linked to their management models and, in particular, others' expectations of how those roles and responsibilities are carried out and with what consequences.

References:
1. For further details of the project, its meetings and presentations see: http://equam.psut.edu.jo/
2. for further details see : http://www.jiser-med.org/
3. The Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education Area: enhancing quality, promoting mobility and employability. N. Harris (2011) see: http://www.iemed.org/publicacions-en/historic-de-publicacions/papers-iemed/euro-mediterranean-higher-education-area-enhancing-quality-promoting-mobility-and-employability
4. for further details see: http://www.ub.edu/aeche
5. for further details of HEAC see: http://www.heac.org.jo/Heac/Default.aspx?lng=2&ID=3
6. for further details of AAU (in Arabic) see: http://aaru.edu.jo/Home.aspx
7. European Standards and Guidelines (current) see: http://www.enqa.eu/index.php/home/esg/
8. Current Revision proposals for the European Standards and Guidelines see: http://revisionesg.wordpress.com

Questions for discussion:
1. Should Guidelines for QA always include, as well as roles and responsibilities of the various 'stakeholders' the identification of the reasonable expectations (in terms of process *and outcomes*) for those groups and individuals participating in the process?

2. To what extent should a (national) model for institutional IQA be ±permissiveqof different types of management structure / culture? (bearing in mind that non-specialist external stakeholders will expect simple comparability of QA ±outcomesq)

3. With the ESG demonstrably applicable in widely different contexts . what are the most effective approaches for supporting a transition from very compliance and input driven QA approaches to the evaluation of how an HE institution demonstrates that it meets its responsibilities through (ongoing) IQA? and its development of a quality culture?