BRINGING OUT THE BEST IN EDUCATION

Enhancing quality in higher education

A Tempus survey

European Commission
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Introduction

Excellence is a cornerstone of academia, but the quest for quality has acquired a new urgency in recent years.

Universities are operating with increasing autonomy. Many governments provide their higher education institutions with lump-sum funding, while in return demanding increased accountability. At the same time there has been a growth in the number of private higher education institutions and a consequent need to establish the quality of their education and qualifications.

With the introduction of 'real' tuition fees in many countries, students and their families increasingly tend to view education as a consumer product. They have become more selective. They expect high quality and proof of it.

Mass access and competitive remuneration from industry have put pressure on the quality of teaching: at the same time as more teachers are needed, attractive salaries are luring highly qualified graduates and experienced staff into the private sector.

Mobility and the demands of the international market provide incentives for countries to cooperate in the recognition of qualifications and to open their higher education systems to students from other countries. The European Higher Education Area and the Bologna Process are prime examples of such developments and their associated need to agree on standards for quality assurance which can be demonstrated and recognised across borders.

In many of the countries that receive support through the Tempus Programme[1] these issues are even more urgent, first of all because changes are taking place more rapidly, but also because a large number of these countries have developed such close links with Europe that the achievements of the Bologna Process are reverberating through their own higher education system.

The Tempus Programme has always closely followed trends in higher education and recognised the central importance of quality, not only in teaching but increasingly also in university management.

This document reviews general developments in quality assurance in the countries that are supported through Tempus (the Tempus partner countries), in the context of case studies of Tempus projects that addressed quality assurance at seven institutions in six countries.

Quality assurance touches all aspects of university life. The seven projects were therefore selected so as to cover quality management, quality assurance in curriculum development, staff development for quality assurance and quality assurance information systems. The projects were carried out in different political and cultural climates, and in private as well as public universities.

The selected projects demonstrate good practice that is impressive and inspiring. They also reveal continuing challenges and areas where a deeper understanding may be needed, which may in turn provide an agenda for future Tempus priorities and projects.

It is hoped that this document will provide useful references of good practice and identify common issues in quality assurance for discussion and development. The key issues are indicated in sections I and IV. The general commentary on the study visits (section IV) is cross-referenced with the case studies in section III, so that readers can concentrate on those that cover specific topics.

Brief methodology

After the scope of the study had been defined, with the help of the staff of the Tempus Department at the European Training Foundation in Turin 32 recent Tempus projects were selected. From these, six projects in six different countries were selected, two for each Tempus region. The key selection

[1] http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/tempus/index_en.html

criteria were quality and scope (topic), to ensure a broad range of examples of good practice. A seventh project (in Kazakhstan) was added later.

A key decision was to avoid brief descriptions of a large number of projects, and instead to provide detailed, practical information on a small number of projects, identifying strengths and challenges.

A questionnaire designed to provide general and comparable information about national developments in quality assurance was circulated to all the National Tempus Offices, who responded with valuable information and insights. The questionnaire is included as Annex I. An analysis of the results of the questionnaire is given in section II.

The seven projects were visited in order for interviews to be carried out with senior managers, project staff, teaching staff, administrative staff and students.

These visits were invaluable. They revealed the extent to which projects and change were driven by enthusiastic and committed staff and the obstacles and challenges which they had encountered. Face-to-face meetings added a dimension to the understanding of what had been achieved and what still remained to be done, which could not have emerged from the formal reports on the projects. Perhaps most important of all, the meetings demonstrated the impact on the individuals and teams who were implementing radical changes. The results of the case studies can be found in section III.

In addition to the visits to the universities, meetings were arranged with a variety of staff involved at national level in each country, including ministry staff, staff of the national quality assurance agencies where these existed, European Delegation staff, and project staff of quality assurance reform initiatives from other donors[2].

The case studies illustrate how Tempus contributes to changing the higher education landscape through projects that have an impact well beyond the beneficiary institutions. They also illustrate the creativity and enthusiasm with which people in challenging circumstances commit themselves to raising standards and defending the quality of higher education.

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to acknowledge the many people without whom conducting this study would have been all but impossible.

These must include the staff of the National Tempus Offices who have all responded to the questionnaire on national developments, and in particular the staff of the National Tempus Offices in Almaty, Cairo, Moscow, Rabat, Sarajevo and Zagreb, without whose untiring support the study visits would have been impossible to organise.

All staff of the universities, national agencies, authorities and EC Delegations that were visited also deserve due acknowledgement for their considerable time and admirable hospitality. The enthusiasm we encountered was truly amazing. At many institutions we saw literally dozens of people, who all took time out of their busy schedules to feed our insatiable hunger for information. This acknowledgement should also be extended to the people at Tanta University in Egypt, who had no Tempus project but showed us the ins and outs of the HEEP[3] work in quality assurance.

Last, but certainly not least, acknowledgements are due to the good people at the Tempus Department of the European Training Foundation and staff at the European Commission, most notably Deirdre Lennan in Turin and Claire Morel in Brussels, whose dedication and enthusiasm have been truly inspiring.

April 2008

John Reilly, Canterbury
Ard Jongsma, Odense

[2] Most notably the quality assurance branch of the Higher Education Enhancement Project (HEEP) of the World Bank in Egypt.

[3] Ditto.

Executive summary

Across the world, quality assurance has become an increasingly dominant theme in higher education in the past ten years, and international processes play an important role in the way quality assurance is interpreted and implemented.

This applies equally to countries within the European Union and to the countries surrounding it. Largely as a result of the Bologna Process, the latter often consult European partners as sources of expertise, inspiration and good practice.

The EU Tempus Programme, with its long and established history of developing cooperative networks among European universities and their counterparts in neighbouring regions, is perfectly positioned to assist universities in these countries in the development of quality enhancement and assurance mechanisms.

It has done so throughout the first few years of the millennium. This review bears testimony to its achievements. It also illustrates the often very specific problems these countries still face in implementing quality assurance mechanisms that can support the need for continuously maintained excellence in knowledge societies.

General picture

The overall picture revealed from work carried out within the framework of this study shows that the evolution of quality assurance is still at an early stage in many of the Tempus partner countries.

While accreditation is universal and often involves some form of self-assessment, the accreditation process does not necessarily permeate institutions with a quality culture.

The concept of quality enhancement and the involvement of key stakeholders, such as students and employers, tends to be limited and, in the case of employers, is relatively rare.

The results also suggest that in some countries and institutions there may be a gap between the formal legal requirements and the actual implementation of quality assurance.

They also suggest that in many countries there is a lack of publicly available transparent information about the quality assurance process and its outcomes.

This also applies to the accreditation process. While higher education institutions have a good understanding of this, and often receive feedback with the results, the publication of information for students, employers and the public seems to be less than universal.

Partner country conclusions

There would seem to be a need for Tempus partner countries to promote the development of national qualifications frameworks as an integral component of quality assurance in the country.

In many countries there is also a need to speed up the development of genuinely independent accreditation, easily accessible quality assurance agencies and the associated provision of public information on procedures and codes of practice. In the interest of transparency, national and institutional performance indicators should also be published.

Quality assurance units and offices in higher education institutions tend to be inadequately

staffed. Programmes for academic and administrative staff development should be launched and resources should be earmarked for the ongoing professional development of university staff.

Central information systems, which are key to good decision making, are still a weak spot in many universities. These must be upgraded and coupled with the increased use of institutional intranets for communication, teaching and learning.

Although there are some excellent exceptions, the involvement of employers and students in quality assurance and curriculum processes is generally still weak. Such involvement must be encouraged and supported.

There is an urgent need to further develop institutional autonomy and responsibility for curriculum development and programme management within parameters established at a national level.

Tempus programme conclusions

In some countries, Tempus has helped to establish genuinely independent national quality assurance and accreditation agencies, and has assisted these agencies in establishing effective up-to-date codes of practice which higher education institutions can implement according to their particular structure and needs. This experience should be further exploited in future projects.

In many countries there is an urgent need to develop effective materials and courses for staff development and training for all levels and types of staff. The modalities of the Tempus programme allow it to play a supportive role in this process.

One focal area could be leadership courses for the senior managers of universities – rectors, vice-rectors, deans, and heads of department. It could also cover courses for academic staff on the principles of quality assurance, approaches to curriculum development, new teaching methods and general professional skills updating. Finally, priority support should be reserved for courses for senior administrative staff working in the field of quality assurance and associated administrative areas.

Future projects focusing on student and employer participation in all aspects of quality assurance nationally and at the institutional level would be a welcome addition to the current array of projects.

There is also a strong demand for expertise in self-assessment for external and internal purposes. Tempus is in an excellent position to respond to this demand.

In all this work, however, it must be remembered that although European models for quality assurance can be used as a powerful source of guidance and inspiration, they must never simply be copied into a foreign context. Quality assurance models and mechanisms are and must be strongly rooted in the academic traditions and culture of a country or even institution. Assistance must help to develop the capacities to *design*, not just copy and implement, quality enhancement and assurance mechanisms.

Nevertheless, there is a strong and genuine interest in developments related to the Bologna Process and its converging forces. There would therefore be considerable scope for projects tackling the development of information systems and performance indicators using the European Standards and Guidelines.

I. Quality assurance in context

This brief survey attempts to highlight key features in the quality enhancement process in Europe and to demonstrate that the quality agenda reaches to the heart of the organisation and structure of higher education and its responsibilities to the wider community.

Quality assurance has become an increasingly dominant theme in European higher education in the past ten years.

However, it would be a mistake to deduce from this increasing preoccupation that quality has not previously been an issue for higher education institutions.

Humboldt and Newman both set higher education ambitious and far-reaching goals for excellence in the pursuit of knowledge.

While it may be argued that these 'academic' goals have been superseded by a more instrumental approach, they still stand as important pillars linking higher education and research. The pursuit of knowledge and its transmission remain at the heart of the higher education mission and this is recognised implicitly and explicitly in the key documents on quality assurance.

Within this broader context, new drivers are playing an important role. The growth in student numbers, a recognition that higher education and skill levels are vital for the economic, political and social success of the European economy and that of Member States, and the understanding that higher education has become an international and competitive market area, all contribute to the understanding of the need for more transparency and consistency in quality assurance.

European developments

In September 1998 the European Parliament and Council recommended European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education "in order for it to become more transparent and trustworthy for European citizens and for students and scholars from other Continents"[4]. The *Recommendation* outlines the essential features for the quality assurance system. These have in large part been implemented throughout the EU. They have been reinforced by the publication in 2005 of the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*[5].

In February 2006 the European Parliament and Council published a further *Recommendation*[6] urging the establishment of a register "of independent and trustworthy quality assurance agencies operating in Europe": "Higher education institutions active within their territory (should be able) to choose among quality assurance or accreditation agencies in the European Register, an agency which meets their needs and profile, provided that this is compatible with their national legislation or permitted by their national authorities."

The European Register has now been established[7], though it remains to be seen to what extent higher education institutions will wish or be able to seek assessment by an agency that is listed in the European Register but is outside their own country.

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4 Council Recommendation 1998/561, European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education.

5 Published in the framework of the Bologna Process at the meeting in Bergen in May 2005. See Annex III.

6 Council Recommendation 2006/143, Further European cooperation in quality assurance in higher education.

7 http://www.eqar.eu/

Alongside the development of quality assurance in higher education, the European Commission has addressed issues of quality assurance in vocational education and training and published a *Common Quality Assurance Framework* (CQAF) for vocational education and training in Europe. This, too, places an emphasis on institutional responsibility and provides a model approach "to facilitate planning, implementation, evaluation and review of systems at the appropriate levels in Member States". The model involves a methodology, a monitoring system and a measurement tool for both internal and external reviews; it has developed guidelines for both types of review and stresses the importance of making the results of the quality assessment procedure publicly available.

The *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*[8] establish a set of common principles for internal and external quality assurance and for quality assurance agencies themselves. The *Guidelines* stress that quality assurance and accreditation agencies should be independent, and underline "the central importance of institutional autonomy" with the concomitant responsibilities which this brings.

The establishment of national quality assurance agencies in conjunction with autonomous higher education institutions creates an immediate tension. The emphasis is on embedding within each higher education institution a quality enhancement culture that suits its mission and recognises the distinctive nature of the institution and its mission. At the same time, governments, society and employers need to be assured of the effectiveness and the level of processes within institutions. This means that they must introduce measures of continuous self-assessment, while also being subject to external evaluation by their peers and key stakeholders on a regular and systematic basis.

In conjunction with this external evaluation, detailed data are collected and published to provide further indicators of performance. Publication and transparency are fundamental to the European approach to quality assurance. Increasing and improving the quality of information available to students, parents and employers about all aspects of the higher education process will improve confidence and trust in the outputs of higher education.

The development, publication and analysis of performance indicators have contributed to the trend of constructing league tables and ranking both institutions and subjects. The extent to which this is now an area of public debate is prompting the higher education sectors of some EU countries to explore a more formal and objective approach that would take account of types of institution and their varying missions. It is hoped that this will not be judgemental or competitive, but will simply provide more structured information. However, in practice it would be difficult to avoid any form of ranking or performance indicators being used to judge the quality of an institution, and difficult to avoid such indicators developing a competitive dimension. Indeed, it could be argued that the ranking of institutions will constitute a form of benchmarking that will contribute to quality enhancement.

International networks

The international dimension of quality assurance is manifest in the establishment of a number of international networks of quality assurance agencies. The European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA) increasingly helps to shape the European quality agenda. It works in collaboration with partners such as the European Universities Association (EUA) in a wide range of projects evaluating, on a trans-national basis, the quality of higher education at institutional level. The

[8] See Annex III.

EUA has also undertaken studies on quality in joint masters and doctoral programmes, and its *Trends* reports prepared for the Bologna Process follow-up meetings provide a comprehensive survey of quality developments in European higher education.

A Central and Eastern Europe network of quality assurance agencies (CEE) has been established and there is an International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). In its Higher Education Forum, the Council of Europe has also explored the role of public authorities and institutions, at a meeting in Strasbourg in September 2006.

Student involvement

In the development of quality assurance processes, European stakeholders have recognised the need to involve students actively and fully in all aspects, including both external and internal evaluation, as full members of the relevant bodies.

Student feedback in the form of questionnaires is becoming prevalent and is contributing to curriculum development. National student surveys such as those conducted in many European countries can also provide valuable information for students applying to university and for other stakeholders about student perceptions of the quality of their education.

Student evaluation constitutes an important performance indicator that is contributing to the new league tables and the ranking of higher education institutions and subjects in a number of countries.

Quality assurance vs. accreditation

In the past, quality assurance tended to be identified with the process of accreditation either of institutions or of study programmes. While quality assurance is a fundamental aspect of accreditation, there seems to be a growing realisation that a distinction should be drawn between accreditation and quality assurance. In a number of countries the two processes are now being separated, with quality assurance agencies focusing more on support and help for institutions in their internal development of quality enhancement processes.

Qualifications frameworks – Quality Assurance and Learning Outcomes

One important element of the quality assurance process has been the development of qualifications frameworks.

In Bergen in 2005 the Ministers involved in the Bologna Process approved the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (EAQF). A year later, the European Commission published its recommendation on a Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning[9]. This was formally adopted by the European Council in February 2008. The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) provides four levels from the end of secondary education (levels 5, 6, 7, 8), corresponding with the levels in the EAQF.

The importance of the European frameworks in setting overarching international frameworks lies in the fact that they provide a common understanding of levels in higher education and (in the case of the EQF) vocational education, with level descriptors that provide a quality benchmark for institutions to aim for.

All signatories to the Bologna Process are committed to establishing national qualifications frameworks that will articulate with the European frameworks. Higher education institutions will

[9] Council Recommendation 2006/0163, European qualifications framework for lifelong learning.

need to ensure that their programmes of study meet the standards specified in national and European qualifications frameworks.

Qualifications frameworks are important elements in the quality process because they provide transparent statements for students, employers and the public of the levels which can be expected from qualifications throughout the signatory countries. Both the EAQF and the EQF use level descriptors which give "generic statements of typical expectation of achievements and abilities". They are thus integral to the establishment of explicit academic standards for qualifications.

Both the qualifications frameworks and the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance*[10] emphasise a student-centred approach, based on "the development and publication of explicit intended learning outcomes".

This emphasis on outcomes rather than input is central to the development of the quality assurance agenda. Processes, structures and codes of practice will only be judged to be successful if the quality of graduates is assured by their recognition and employment success in the regional, national and international labour markets.

Related developments

As well as specific quality assurance instruments, agencies and processes, there are a number of other European initiatives which seek to reinforce quality concerns. The Erasmus University Charter (a prerequisite for participation in the flagship Erasmus programme) specifies quality requirements for participation in the Erasmus programme. Similarly, the European Commission Quality Charter for Mobility[11] seeks to put quality at the heart of the mobility experience by establishing a set of principles "on mobility arrangements for learning or other purposes".

European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System – ECTS

The development of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) embodies key aspects of the quality agenda. It stresses the importance of detailed and timely institutional and curriculum information, incorporating assessment processes and criteria. In the allocation of credits it provides a basis for transparent and equitable curriculum planning based on learning outcomes and the associated workload for an average student.

Recognition

'Recognition' is a central objective of the quality process. ECTS stresses the importance of recognition and the provision of information to reinforce recognition through detailed transcripts which, in turn, can contribute to another quality instrument – the Diploma Supplement.

The Diploma Supplement

The Diploma Supplement provides, in a coherent and consistent form, easily accessible information about the content and level of a qualification together with a range of other information to assist stakeholders in its evaluation.

Tuning Educational Structures in Europe

A rather different approach to the quality process is exemplified by the Tuning project – Tuning Educational Structures in Europe[12]. This project has sought to engage networks of academics

[10] See Annex III.

[11] Recommendation (EC) No 2006/961 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on transnational mobility within the Community for education and training purposes: European Quality Charter for Mobility.

[12] For more information on Tuning, see http://www.unideusto.org/tuning/.

in specific subject areas in interpreting and implementing the Bologna Process in each of the three cycles (Bachelor's, Master's and doctorate).

By helping to develop a more systematic understanding of learning outcomes and competences at subject level, by involving the key stakeholders, and by making the whole process more transparent, the project has contributed to the process of quality enhancement in curriculum development and evaluation.

Staff development

Staff development and training is a fundamental aspect of the implementation and sustainability of a quality assurance and enhancement culture. The primary responsibility for training and development lies with higher education institutions.

While in some countries there are formal training requirements for new academic staff, there is a general tendency to emphasise academic qualifications as the basis for entry to the profession, and little formal training in university teaching is given or required.

Similarly, commitment to continuing professional development for teaching is not systematic, nor, in general, is it a contractual requirement. Nevertheless, at a personal level, through professional associations and projects such as Tuning Educational Structures in Europe, individuals and groups of academics have increasingly focused on methods of teaching and learning. The shift to a student-centred learning outcomes approach and the whole quality agenda are giving increasing purpose to this process of self-development.

II. Quality development in Tempus partner countries

The following comments are based on the responses to a brief questionnaire which was completed by the National Tempus Offices in consultation with relevant authorities in 25 out of the 27 Tempus partner countries. A copy of the questionnaire is included as Annex I.

Approximately 40% of the countries in the Tempus programme are signatories to the Bologna Process and a third have implemented a national qualifications framework. Nearly 80% have a national credit system, and for 40% this is either ECTS or a system compatible with ECTS.

Quality assurance is a priority in virtually all Tempus partner countries. As well as Tempus funding, some 85% have quality assurance projects funded by other sponsors, most notably the World Bank, emphasising the importance attached to quality assurance in higher education for economic, political and social development.

The Council of Europe, in collaboration with the European Commission (though not through Tempus), is also supporting some major quality initiatives. In a small number of countries there are multiple donors supporting quality developments.

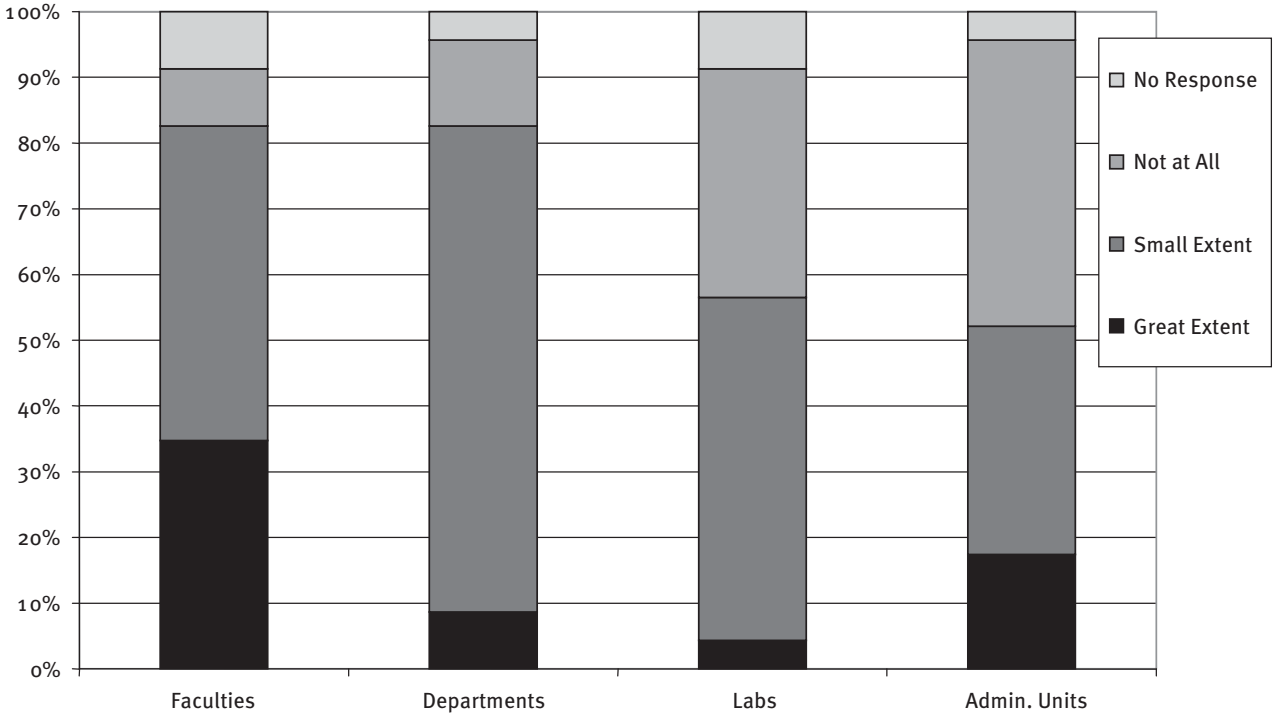
Over half the countries reported that they have national guidelines for the recognition of prior learning and experience, but in half of these cases such recognition operates only for admission to universities and does not apply to the allocation of credit towards qualifications. In other words, learning experiences other than those acquired in formal education help people to gain admission to a university but are not acknowledged as being equivalent to *part of the* degree they intend to study. On the other hand, nearly 80% of countries have national guidelines for the recognition of qualifications obtained from another country.

The levels of participation of business and industry in quality assurance vary, but in general are low. This is not to say that individual higher education institutions may not be active in engaging social partners, but the overall picture suggests that this is an underdeveloped area.

In general, university autonomy is restricted in all Tempus partner countries. A continuing feature in a number of countries is the relative autonomy of faculties, although the degree of their independence varies. Evidence from the site visits suggests that in some countries the role of the faculty in most aspects of university life remains significant, and this shows in the field of quality assurance, with faculties in many institutions having virtually independent quality assurance units.

The collection of key performance data varies substantially. Although there is evidence that institutions are increasingly collecting data, the information gathered is not comprehensive. A good deal of work still needs to be done at institutional and national level to develop reliable data on student progress, employability and other performance indicators.

Question 6: The extent to which faculties, departments, laboratories and administrative units act independently

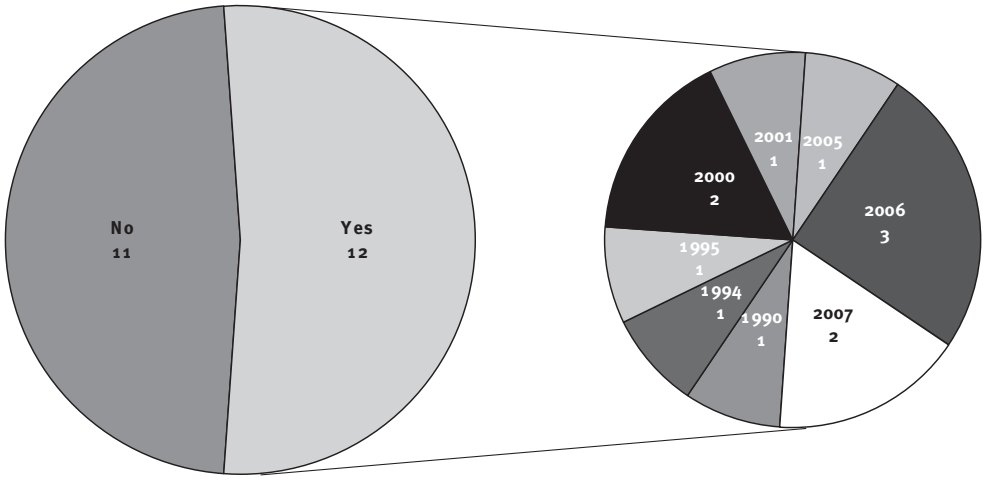


This additional information might include admission and entry standards, student surveys (national and institutional), institutional and subject quality assurance assessments, staff–student ratios, completion and drop-out rates, peer surveys, and a variety of other indicators which would take account of the particular situation in the country.

Although quality assurance is generally a national priority in Tempus partner countries, and although there have been a substantial number of good Tempus projects in the field of quality assurance, it is surprising that nearly half of the respondents to the questionnaire indicated that there is currently no national quality assurance agency. In this context it is not surprising that fewer than half of the Tempus partner countries have implemented a national quality assurance system. Of those which have, two-thirds indicated that the national system had adopted the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*[13].

[13] See Annex III.

Questions 8.1 and 8.2: National quality assurance agencies



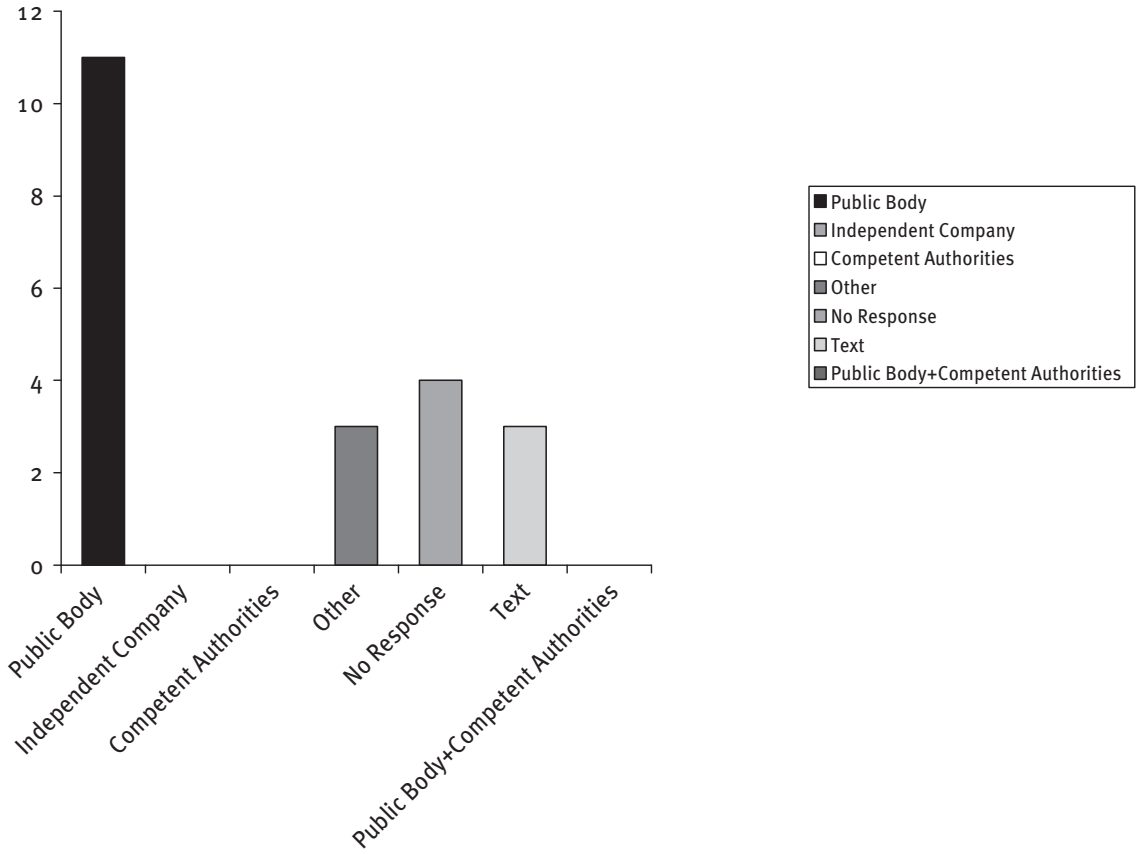
Twelve of the countries have a national quality assurance agency (see text on the confusion between national quality assurance agencies and national accreditation agencies). Belarus was the first to create one in 1990, followed by Uzbekistan in 1994 and Russia in 1995. Albania and Moldova did so in 2000, followed by Macedonia in 2001. Between 2005 and 2007 agencies were created in Croatia, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Morocco and Serbia.

It would seem that there is some confusion between the concept of a quality assurance agency and the concept of an accreditation agency. Some of the respondents indicated that a quality assurance agency was responsible for accreditation, and a small number of countries have a separate accreditation agency.

The evidence from the site visits undertaken in connection with this study suggests that in most (if not all) Tempus partner countries, accreditation is the responsibility of the relevant ministry, and while accreditation is generally undertaken by teams of senior academics, the agency is not independent.

In those countries where a national quality assurance agency has been established, the degree of its independence is uncertain. A third of the respondents said that operational independence from higher education institutions is guaranteed by the legal instrument establishing the agency. Although the agencies are generally public bodies, it would seem that it they are still dependent on the ministries.

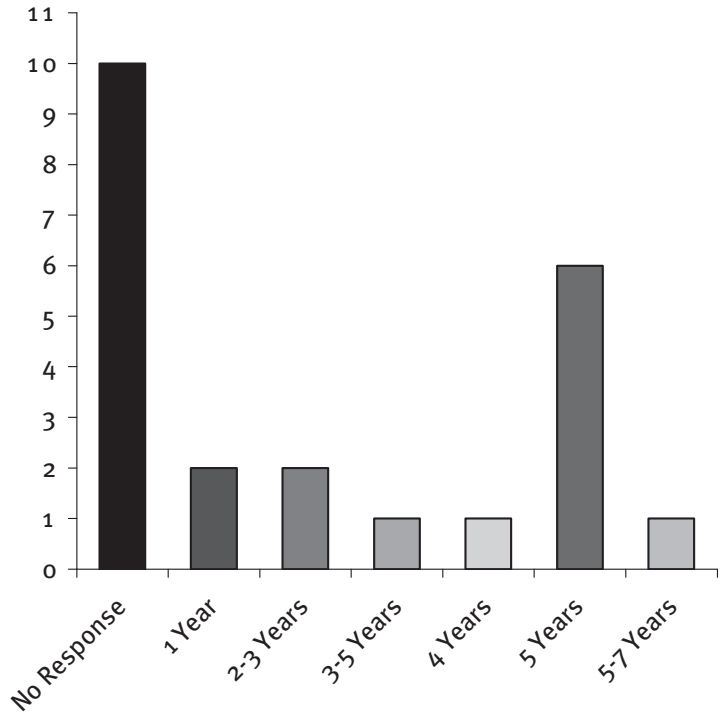
Question 11: Legal status of the quality assurance agency



Where quality assurance agencies have been established, the majority have publicly available statements of processes, criteria and procedures, accessible online, in hard copy, or both. However, it is a matter of concern that there appear to be a number of cases in which either there is no statement of processes, criteria and procedures, or any such statement is not publicly available.

In the majority of cases the quality assurance (accreditation) agencies undertake reviews of institutions, and for accreditation purposes most countries undertake regular reviews, typically (but not always) on a five-year cycle.

Question 13.1, 13.2 and 13.3: External reviews



The responses to the questionnaire make it difficult to comment on the form of review used, though self-assessment is becoming an increasingly important feature in quality assurance and accreditation throughout the Tempus partner countries.

While many institutions have developed internal quality assurance procedures, there remain a substantial number which have not. This is disappointing in the context of the significant number of excellent Tempus quality assurance projects.

About 80% of the respondents indicated that students were involved in some way in quality assurance procedures. The site visits suggested that while this may be true formally, the extent of student participation is often limited and not highly developed.

Summary

The overall picture revealed by the questionnaire and other documentation, including Tempus projects, site visits and impact studies, is that quality assurance is still at an early stage in its evolution in many Tempus partner countries. While accreditation is universal and often involves some form of self-assessment, the accreditation process does not necessarily permeate institutions with a quality culture. The concept of quality enhancement and the involvement of key stakeholders, such as students and employers, tends to be limited and, in the case of employers, is relatively rare. The questionnaires also suggest that there may be a gap between the formal legal requirements and the actual implementation of quality assurance at both national and institutional level.

They also suggest that in many countries there is a lack of publicly available transparent information about the quality assurance process and its outcomes. This applies equally to the accreditation process. While higher education institutions have a good understanding of the process and often receive feedback with the results, the publication of information for students, employers and the public seems to be less widespread.

III. Case studies

1. University of Zagreb
Zagreb, Croatia
UM_JEP-16015-2001
Development of Quality Assurance Systems in Higher Education (QUASYS)
2002–2005

Situation

Croatia is in the process of reforming its higher education but faces a serious challenge to the legislative intentions. Faculties remain legal entities and *de facto* employers of their staff in a number of universities. Although universities now receive lump-sum funding from the national authorities, in practice they are highly restricted in how this can be allocated and do not seem to have the power to challenge the way in which funds are distributed. Efforts to create integrated universities by legal means have been either ignored or held up by judgements in the courts.

In such an environment, change is hard to pursue. It is therefore all the more remarkable that a Tempus consortium coordinated by the central management of the University of Zagreb, and with crucial involvement of the universities in Rijeka, Split and Osijek, has achieved, if not wholesale reforms, then at least the irreversible beginnings of such reforms. In three difficult years they have planted the seeds that are beginning to show promising growth.

Challenges

In the early years of the new millennium, concern grew in Croatia about the quality of education. The growth in student numbers, the autonomy of university faculties, labour market demands for relevance, and international developments – especially the Bologna Process – have all contributed to the quest for a systematic approach to quality assurance in Croatian higher education.

In 2001, some 500 of the 4,500 teaching staff at the University of Zagreb subscribed to a change initiative at the university. Eventually, 50 of these drew up the development plan that became known as *Breakthrough 2001*. This laid the foundation for the Tempus Quasys project. Four Croatian universities applied for Tempus support in the second year of Croatian participation in Tempus.

Their goal was ambitious: to raise awareness of the fact that the academic community has to change in order to prepare for the requirements of Bologna, by streamlining admission procedures in Croatia, and introducing ECTS.

They took a strategic and inspired decision to involve the national education authority and the National Council for Higher Education. Although the participation of the education ministry remained limited throughout the project, the backing of the Council was assured because the coordinator, a vice-rector from Zagreb, was its president. This was a key success factor.

Reform of the admissions process was an initial priority because of the surge in applications, the tendency for the majority of students to apply to the University of Zagreb and the difficulties of applying *numerus clausus* rules because certain faculties could increase their financial standing by accepting additional full-fee-paying students. However, the project was concerned with a number of other issues and had a widespread impact.

Solutions

Few staff in the universities had an appreciation of international developments in the field of quality assurance. The project therefore set out to increase awareness in the academic community of the urgent need to change and to develop a quality culture.

Four workshops were organised to share knowledge and know-how among partners. They covered the European experience of quality assurance, the development and implementation of quality assurance, the integrated university, and change management in higher education. Thirty Croatian participants, among them several senior managers, attended each of the seminars. This created a group of people who could take the discussion back to their own universities and faculties.

The project produced new transparent rules for admission to all universities that allow for better comparison between the different institutions. Students may still apply directly to each university, and usually sit an admissions test set by the relevant faculty, but a key change has been that students who are unsuccessful in gaining a place at the University of Zagreb can use the scores in the Zagreb tests for other Croatian universities.

Three boards – one for quality assurance, one for the introduction of ECTS, and one for teaching and learning – were established centrally at each university. These structures were subsequently mirrored within each faculty. This resulted in the involvement of large numbers of staff and helped the embryonic development of functional integration of the university.

Information was disseminated through staff development seminars. Staff development was supported by other projects which involved networking with similar universities in Europe and the USA, such as other Tempus projects and an EUA Quality Culture Strand 3 Leadership Project. The project produced a newsletter, which was widely distributed.

The University Statute of 2005 emanated from the project. It is important to note that at that stage, the leader of the project had become rector of the university and so was in an even more powerful position to influence change.

The project led to the establishment of the University of Zagreb Quality Assurance Office. A national project helped to finance both the quality assurance system and the office. The project recommended a staff of seven for the office, but there is currently only one member of staff. This reinforces the enormous challenge involved in writing detailed procedure notes for quality processes which, as indicated earlier, touch on all aspects of university life, including management, finances, student administration and curricula.

The project contributed to the formulation of a new law that made the National Council for Higher Education responsible for educational quality in Croatia. The Tempus project proposed a revised legal basis for the National Council, and in particular recommended that it should be supported by an independent Agency for Science and Higher Education, which would manage the quality assurance process.

A *Handbook for Quality Assurance* has been drafted and is in use in all faculties.

Prior to this project there were no institutional measures of quality. The first student feedback exercise was launched within the framework of the project in 2005, and this has been followed up in successive years with larger surveys. The greatest challenge here was to convince professors that such feedback was not threatening them as individuals. There had not been a lot of feedback from the first student questionnaire because students had not understood the justification for the questionnaire, but they had been involved in preparing the second survey, and the outcome and response were much improved, since students were beginning to appreciate that their views were taken seriously.

The information system is still an area of weakness. At the moment, only individual faculties can provide detailed data, and in many cases this data is defective and out of date.

Conclusion

The project established a basis for all systematic work on quality in Croatian universities. Its implementation is still work in progress with a long way to go, but the foundation has been laid.

By involving all Croatian universities, the National Council and the ministry, the project sought to bring about change in the culture of higher education in Croatia, to increase awareness of international developments in the field of quality assurance and to influence national policy. It was thus aimed simultaneously at the national and the institutional level and, inevitably in the Croatian context, at the faculty level.

The project workshops involved a wide spectrum of Croatian staff. This has created a cohort of trained staff with an understanding of quality assurance issues and structures. They are committed to change and reform. Thus a project which had a strong layer of senior management has generated a bottom-up approach. Other far-reaching outcomes of the workshops have been the establishment of quality assurance management offices in all Croatian universities, the establishment of the National Agency, the development of quality assurance handbooks, the use of student feedback questionnaires and the introduction of a staff development process.

Progress is inevitably still ongoing, but the formal establishment of the quality assurance offices ensures an element of sustainability. However, it is evident that the fragmented nature of the universities remains an obstacle to the coherent implementation of quality assurance practices. Moreover, although all programmes of study have recently been accredited, there is still a need for the development of a student-centred learning outcomes approach. Nevertheless, increased student participation and a positive response to student questionnaires will be forces for development and change.

2. Cairo University
Giza, Egypt
CD_JEP-30095-2002
Enhancement of Risk Perception in Engineering Education
2003–2007 (project extended by one year)

Situation

In 2000 the Egyptian government announced a wholesale reform of the quality infrastructure and mechanisms at its universities. Launched in 2002, this operation is financed through the Higher Education Enhancement Project (HEEP) whose sources of finance are a large IBRD (World Bank) loan and considerable additional funds from the national budget.

One of the six pillars of HEEP is a Quality Assurance and Accreditation Project, which recently culminated in the adoption of a law establishing a National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education. Established in early 2008, this agency supports and improves quality assurance procedures at all Egyptian higher education institutions. It works on the basis of strong support to central quality management centres at *all* universities, which in turn support and receive input from quality assurance units in *all* their faculties.

Tempus projects had to respond and adjust to these reforms and changes as their project developed. The consortium developing new curricula in risk assessment in the Faculty of Engineering at Cairo University provides an excellent example of this process of adjustment and response to national and institutional change during its implementation.

Challenges

On paper, the project challenge was straightforward enough and was not in itself

a driver to ensure an out-of-the-ordinary focus on quality assurance. Egyptian academia does not place great competitive demands on quality: teaching staff enjoy unrivalled job security and students are assigned to each university on a geographical basis. Moreover, Egypt badly needed a programme on issues related to risk, and the enthusiastic faculty supported by a capable consortium were up to the task of delivering it.

But underlying challenges and new developments at the coordinating university forced the project team to build in a series of quality assurance procedures from the outset. As it turned out, the eventual result was a curriculum development process that was a case study of good practice.

Egyptian universities are overcrowded, and are expected to become more overcrowded still in the decade ahead. By 2022 the government wants to boost participation in higher education from its current level of 28% of the typical age cohort to 40%. An added factor for an engineering faculty with 15,000 students is that the government wants to raise student numbers in science and engineering and decrease the unsustainably high level of graduate output in the humanities.

This puts a massive strain on the meagre resources and leaves little opportunity for experimentation and innovation. One of the intentions of the project was therefore to make the new courses sustainable by targeting staff employed in companies that would pay full fees.

Targeting critical, fee-paying students and their employers with an interdisciplinary (and for Egypt, highly innovative) programme presented an array of challenges: employers' recognition, thorough and transparent programme documentation, client orientation (student-centred learning), skills and competences needed and recognised by employers, student evaluation and feedback, continuing enhancement and development, alumni follow-up, and finally the process of accreditation and national recognition. All of these are classic quality assurance ingredients.

Solutions

From the outset, a teamwork approach was adopted for curriculum development. This started with brainstorming meetings to identify relevant and appropriate topics for the programme. Tasks and the development of courses were identified for each participant to undertake, and regular workshops were held to follow up progress.

As an example of the working arrangements, the environmental risk team of six people worked with consultants from industry, different departments within the faculty and representatives of the Egyptian Ministry of Environment who also sat on the steering committee. One person was nominated to take all the material arising from the brainstorming/working group meetings and develop it into a full curriculum.

Following the development of the curriculum, it was reviewed and validated by the consortium. It was also subject to independent review by industry partners and consultants.

Students who had completed the first programme were actively involved in providing material and feedback which helped to improve and shape the programme for the second cycle of students.

The curriculum design did not, initially, formally articulate intended learning outcomes, although these were implicit; indeed, the nature of the course and the consultation with industry effectively emphasised an outputs approach. As a consequence, the forms of assessment and the assessment criteria were not specified in the early documentation.

This weakness was identified through the monitoring and feedback process, particularly

through feedback from students. Explicit intended learning outcomes, forms of assessment and assessment criteria have been developed and are now part of the core course material.

The project process has helped to shape the vision of the programme, which is not a traditional one and which has been groundbreaking. It was developed while new quality assurance processes were being introduced in the Faculty of Engineering. The team sought to incorporate and adapt to these requirements. Hence, monitoring is now regulated by a faculty process that includes observers attending classes, a review of the student workload, regular formal exams, a mid-course student evaluation by email and a final course evaluation on the basis of a formal questionnaire.

Staff evaluation has not been systematic, although teachers are required to produce individual reports. The team is aware that a more formal team evaluation of all aspects of the course, including the student feedback, would be valuable. They are now considering how best to implement this.

In terms of the employment of graduates, the results have been excellent. It is evident from employer feedback that the programme has generated new attitudes among the students and developed high-level skills that are relevant for employment. A strong emphasis on learning by observing has been developed, and this is incorporated into workshops. Material produced by students has been incorporated into the course material.

The programme is self-financing and there are clear returns for the industries financing students. Indeed, companies have been asked to estimate the cost benefits of funding employees to participate and in all cases this has shown a positive return to the company.

Monetary contributions were received from industrial partners. These were used to grant five scholarships (out of 36 places) for new graduates who could not afford to pay fees for their postgraduate degrees.

The Faculty of Medicine has introduced parts of the programme to interns in hospitals and the Faculties of Science and Agriculture are currently discussing how best to introduce it. A model programme has been distributed on a CD to all departments of the Faculty of Engineering and some other faculties of Cairo University.

Further spin-offs

Consultancy projects for gas works, power stations and training at Cairo Airport are among the projects which have been undertaken by a group of staff and students involved in the programme.

Projects which students undertake are based on real situations in their workplaces, which are varied and have included major improvements in a Cairo Hospital.

Conclusion

This has been an exceptional curriculum development project which has had strong quality elements that were not formally documented from the outset. This included the involvement of industry, the active involvement of students in the teaching and learning process that began to develop once the course was in place, a constant emphasis on developing new material, the monitoring of student progress (not only through the course but also in their employment), the development of curriculum information with explicit intended learning outcomes and related assessments and assessment criteria, and the creation of an effective alumni association that is able to continue to contribute to the course.

3. Kazakh National Agrarian University
Almaty, Kazakhstan
UM_JEP-23042-2002, CM_SCM-T030B05-2005
Development and implementation of an internal quality assurance system
2003–2006
Dissemination of quality assurance system and Kazakhstan universities
2006–2007

and

4. International Academy of Business
Almaty, Kazakhstan
SM_SCM-T028B04-2004
Developing and implementing quality management system in higher education in Kazakhstan
2005–2006

Situation

Central Asia is a region that is trying to establish its own identity in higher education, retaining the best from the former Soviet system and implementing new elements from the quality assurance practice in Europe. Tempus has supported these developments through national projects and regional initiatives, such as the recent EURASHE (European Association of Institutions in Higher Education) symposium in Almaty, funded with a Tempus grant.

Several Tempus projects in Kazakhstan have addressed quality assurance and enhancement. Two recent projects helped the Kazakh National Agrarian University to develop a comprehensive internal quality assurance system. Another project supported the development of a quality management system at the private International Academy of Business in Almaty.

Both projects are prime examples of how Tempus can support institutions in implementing national reforms in an innovative way, and at the same time contribute to the national reform process. The Kazakh education authorities worked with both projects and as a result the outcomes, which have been widely disseminated, are being used at a national level.

Challenges

The challenges in Kazakhstan are manifold. Rapid economic development has brought both opportunities and challenges. The demand for larger numbers of highly skilled graduates, in particular in the energy industries, and the salaries that they can command, has induced the more traditional areas of study to review their recruitment and curricula to ensure that they remain competitive and meet the changing needs of Kazakhstan. Private education and large cohorts of fee-paying students at state universities force education institutions to demonstrate a return on parents' investment in the education of their children. The introduction of a national credit system and the increasing level of freedom for universities to develop their curricula call for greater transparency. In addition, the elimination of corruption aims to inspire confidence among employers, students and the public in the qualifications awarded. This also contributes to an urgent agenda for coherent and universal quality assurance procedures that extend beyond the periodic accreditation process.

Solutions

Kazakh National Agrarian University

With the help of a Tempus project, the Kazakh National Agrarian University has developed a quality assurance system tailored to the Kazakh situation and the specific needs of the university.

A detailed document on the concept of quality, the aims and objectives, the content, the necessary training, the structure and organisation of the management, the quality management cycle and the anticipated results was published and adopted by the university's Training Methodology Council and Academic Council. This has become a basic management tool.

In order to guarantee the sustainability of the project, effective university structures were introduced and a process of full documentation of procedures was put in place.

The new structures, which are overseen by the vice-rector for education, include a Department of Education Quality Management consisting of a Unit for Quality Management, a Unit for Monitoring and Testing, the Student Records Office and the Timetable Office.

Staff have been retrained, and training is continuing following a planned schedule. All the relevant processes have been accurately described in 25 process documents. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have been employed to provide more automated and objective evaluation processes, particularly for assessment and examination results.

In the past, student records were managed by each faculty independently. As a result of the project a central student record system has been established for which the university has direct overall responsibility. The establishment of this new online system has had far-reaching implications. It is now possible to collect, process and analyse a wide range of student data. A new system of assessment has been introduced with more frequent, varied, objective and regular assessment. The results of each assessment are entered on line, and this has gone a long way towards eliminating the subjective element in assessment. This has had a significant impact on both student motivation and staff attitudes.

In the Soviet era there were only two formal 'control' (assessment) points within the 18-week semester, and these were the sole basis for admission to the end-of-semester examinations. Now students are subject to a continuous assessment process. All resulting grades are recorded, and only students who have obtained 70% of the continuous assessment requirements are entered for the examination.

The new system allows students to select courses from different faculties. All course choice information is collected by the Student Records Office, which transmits this information electronically to the Timetable Unit. As well as the substantial benefits it has for students and staff, computerisation has meant that 11 members of staff now undertake all the work (and more) that was previously undertaken by 50 members of staff.

A subsequent Tempus-funded dissemination project extended the results to five agrarian universities, which have now adopted the concepts. Seven seminars were attended by 160 teachers and heads of department. Participants have been surveyed and the results show real interest in the new approach.

The outcomes of the first project have been presented to international conferences and to the Council of Rectors of Agricultural Universities. The sustainability of the project has been assured through the support of the Ministry of Education and Science.

International Academy of Business

The International Academy of Business is a private non-profit organisation formally owned by a company. It has 2,000 students, 1,500 of whom are in the four-year Bachelor's programme. The remaining 500 are registered for MBAs.

Its Tempus project started in 2005, and aimed to develop a quality management system based on international standards and total quality management (TQM) principles. Quality had hitherto largely been measured in numbers rather than in terms of achievements. The project coordinators worked closely with the ministry to identify and introduce a more qualitative approach to the quantitative elements of the current system.

A general concept of quality accompanied by a *Manual for Education Quality Evaluation* was

developed, together with a coherent system of staff development. Throughout the academy, this has engendered a commitment to self-training and professional development in the management of educational quality. Regular meetings of teachers are held to share best practice and ideas.

One key, and indeed innovative, achievement has been the development of two scientific laboratories, one for students and one for faculty. Meeting once a week, the Student Scientific Laboratory and the Staff Scientific Laboratory coordinate their activities and developments within a new Centre of Innovation in Education.

The two laboratories are sources of innovative activity and initiatives that contribute to the improvement of teaching, curriculum development and research.

The Faculty Scientific Laboratory has developed the concept of academic quality, and introduced TQM principles and the idea of quality 'improvement' into the range of educational services provided by the academy.

The project introduced an annual 'quality prize' for teachers who contribute to the academic mission of the institute. It also led to the implementation of a remuneration system that provides additional payments to teachers for quality performance.

As a result of the project, the academy created the statute for a new Quality Coordinating Council, a Centre for Quality Management and Monitoring and the post of Head of Quality Management.

The Quality Management System that has been established functions on the basis of data obtained from internal audits and from questionnaires to parents, students, employers and teachers.

It is supported by an excellent database and by good contacts with alumni. Employers are surveyed regularly. The Quality Coordinating Council receives monitoring reports. It analyses all the data and decides how to respond.

Contact with parents – critically important for a privately funded institution with high tuition fees – is made by telephone and email. It seeks to determine parents' satisfaction with the level of education, organisation and conditions. Parents' feedback is usually gathered in the first and third years.

Continuing teaching assessment is the responsibility of an Internal Expertise Group consisting of 12 teachers whose task is to assess teaching quality and individual achievements. Each semester members of this group attend the classes of about 50 teachers and produce written reports.

The Faculty Scientific Laboratory has launched an Educational Services Improvement facility, which distributes syllabuses to all Kazakh higher education institutions, organises methodological seminars, and publishes learning materials and aids in business and economics.

It is proposed that the Centre of Innovation in Education, having extended well beyond its original mandate, will be developed into a Centre for Pedagogical Technologies in Business Education, providing an enhanced facility for the academy and more widely in Kazakhstan.

Students were actively involved in the Tempus project. They initiated the student feedback questionnaire, collaborating closely with the Faculty Scientific Laboratory. The level of student participation in the feedback questionnaire has been 100%.

An important view expressed by teachers and students is that the separation of the faculty and student laboratories was critical because it gave them a measure of independence, and hence credibility, among students and staff. At the same time, both contribute to the quality agenda of

the academy and cooperate and coordinate their work in a supportive and effective manner, which is an illustration of best practice in student–staff relations in the field of quality assurance.

This project has been well focused and well implemented. The commitment and involvement of management, students and staff demonstrate a pride in the academy and offer fertile soil for the development of a quality culture. The project benefits from the relatively small size of the academy, and the fact that it is a private institution acting in a competitive environment and employment market. Nevertheless, it also offers examples of good practice for larger and public institutions in Kazakhstan which face similar challenges.

By being open about its curriculum development and teaching and learning aid publications, the academy is also contributing to a wider dissemination of quality assurance in Kazakhstan and is helping to influence the national debate.

5. University of East Sarajevo
Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
CM_SCM-C005A05-2005
Quality Management in Medicine
2006–2007

Situation

Bosnia and Herzegovina is probably the most complex political construct in Europe. In 2007 three new higher education laws successfully pushed through a number of difficult decisions. One of these laid the foundation for the establishment in Banja Luka of an independent Higher Education Agency to oversee quality assurance and accreditation. It also committed universities to integrate (with EU support) the loose confederations of faculties which previously had had a large degree of independence and a legal identity. There is resistance to this process, but with the adoption of the Bologna Declaration in 2003 it has become irreversible.

One result of faculty autonomy has been that the development of quality assurance mechanisms in Bosnia and Herzegovina has tended to be decentralised. This does not mean that no progress has been made. On the contrary, in anticipation of the demands of new legislation and the implementation of the Bologna Process, some faculties have seized the initiative.

Among these are the medical faculties. Since 1998, in a series of closely related Tempus projects, they have collaborated to improve the literature base, the curricula, and the teaching and examination methods. They have introduced self-assessment, ECTS and, most recently, quality assessment methods. They were initially led by staff at the University of Mostar, and subsequently by a young and energetic group from the Faculty of Medicine at the Foča branch of the University of East Sarajevo.

Challenges

The medical faculties were driven by a dire need. Participation in higher education is the second lowest in Europe after Albania. In medicine, the low number and low quality of applicants were serious worries. The situation was compounded by the number of students who for a variety of reasons were dropping out of medicine, though no one had yet sought to identify the underlying reasons, or indeed propose solutions.

The lack of practical skills among medicine graduates was a widely recognised problem. When staff in the first Tempus project visited Germany, they concluded that the level of practical skills among second-year students there was higher than that of graduates at home, where studies were too theoretical.

There was an urgent need to change student attitudes. In the past, students had been passive receivers of teaching and were reluctant to engage proactively in a student-centred learning environment.

Solutions

The sequence of projects makes it difficult to establish which innovations were the result of which project. Early on in the series of Tempus projects, the faculties had encountered quality assurance issues. They chose to tackle these through core groups in each participating department. Key people were sent to Heidelberg for a course and certification by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM).

This yielded powerful analyses and self-assessments which formed the basis of a project dedicated to quality assurance. It seemed that the time was right for the medical faculties to put all the ad hoc quality assurance lessons learned in earlier projects into a system that could be migrated to a university-wide platform.

The project was designed to train 20 teaching and administrative staff in self-assessment procedures, develop new guidelines for self-assessment in the medical faculties, establish self-assessment teams, and disseminate the project results through a conference.

The project team worked on a range of topics (identified from the EFQM model) to develop standardised tools for self-evaluation. These topics included management structures, students, staff, curriculum, facilities and finances.

While some of these fields did not prove problematic, others did – in particular, staff. An early problem had been how to accomplish staff change. A new problem was how to measure it. Staff feedback questionnaires were introduced, but they were neither comprehensive nor systematic, and initially a number of staff were unwilling to complete the questionnaire in a serious manner.

One important objective was to produce a transparent and effective student admissions procedure which would help to improve the quality of the intake. At the same time the project sought to provide full and transparent information for students. However, as a result of prevailing student attitudes, student involvement has remained a challenge, and it is recognised that there is a need to develop a new critical and analytical approach.

The faculties have each established a Quality Assurance Office, paid for from the project. The office in Sarajevo has five part-time staff (without a clear full-time equivalent). The project has produced a document setting out the responsibilities and obligations of the staff of the office, and published a *Manual for Quality Management in Medicine* which is a framework document outlining procedures and processes. This framework document is a key product of the project which, with appropriate modifications, can be used throughout the university.

While student feedback is being developed, the involvement of the students in reflective review and development of the curriculum is not yet fully in place. The process of monitoring student progress and curriculum effectiveness needs further work. A comprehensive information and data system will facilitate this, but this will depend on the success of a university-wide adoption of quality assurance procedures.

One critical success factor in the projects was that the team initially worked only with 'friendly' departments. Those that were reluctant or even hostile towards innovation were left alone. The team believed that they would be persuaded by the success in the departments that implemented the changes. They were correct. The team made faster progress this way and could soon produce convincing data and evidence to convince reluctant colleagues.

Conclusion

A key feature of this Tempus project has been the way in which it built on and developed work from

previous Tempus projects. The outcomes of the series of projects have been a radical change in the medical curriculum and a substantial increase in transparency, with the curriculum being student-centred with clear statements of intended learning outcomes. The catalogue of skills and competences for students is as significant an achievement as the publication of a *Manual for Quality Management in Medicine*.

Although these projects were conducted independently by the medical faculties, the outcomes have been disseminated widely and successfully. They are having an impact at national level and throughout the universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which are now adopting the approaches developed in the project.

6. Lobachevskii State University
Nizhni Novgorod, Russian Federation
UM_JEP-24069-2003
Achieving Bologna through Total Quality Management
2004–2007

Situation

Among the universities in Eastern Europe that have arguably benefited most from international support programmes such as Tempus were those in the previously 'closed cities' of the former Soviet Union.

In the 1990s, academics in cities such as Kaunas, Dniepropetrovsk and Kaliningrad experienced for the first time what had long been regarded as essential by their contemporaries around the world: dialogue with their peers abroad.

One Russian university which has derived full benefit from the Tempus programme was Lobachevskii State University in Nizhni Novgorod, the formerly closed city of Gorki. In the 15 years between 1992 and 2007 it hosted 25 Tempus projects, which helped to transform a closed community of academics into an outward-looking international institution.

The university has 15,000 students and is the only university outside Moscow and St Petersburg to have won a ministry contract to set national training standards. These standards describe the percentage of the curriculum that remains prescribed nationally – currently around 70% (undergraduate), which will be reduced to approximately 50% in a third phase starting in 2009. Lobachevskii State University sets the national standards in radiophysics.

Challenges

As elsewhere in Eastern Europe, the opening of the higher education market to private actors and the gradual liberalisation of curricula in Russia has put a strain on the quality of education, which until the beginning of the 1990s had been under strict government control. In a country with 1,500 universities and seven million students, the government focus was and remains quality control through licensing and accreditation. At the same time the national authorities are pressing universities to strengthen internal quality procedures, in part as a result of the signing of the Bologna Agreement in 2003.

By the turn of the millennium Lobachevskii State University found itself recruiting in an increasingly competitive market and realised that state accreditation was not enough to ensure a continuous influx of fee-paying students who would account for two-thirds of its budget. It needed mechanisms to maintain, enhance and prove the superior quality of its education to businesses and students.

In 2003, together with the European Centre for the Strategic Management of Universities (ESMU), London Metropolitan University and University College Dublin, it set out to develop a quality assurance policy and put it into effect.

Under the committed leadership of a dedicated team of a rector and eight vice-rectors, the project endeavoured to tackle perhaps the biggest challenge of all: to change the prevailing perception among university staff that quality assurance is a control mechanism rather than a collective effort to raise educational standards in response to new demands from students and employers.

Solutions

The project's creative engine was a constellation of 'quality circles' that were developed in three pilot focal areas. The first, a 'corporate quality circle', was composed of the university management and the senior managers from the partner universities. It developed the programme of action. The other two quality circles focused on information technology, and business and management. These groups maintained strong links with the local business community in Nizhni Novgorod and developed detailed subject-relevant quality assurance processes.

The quality circles laid the foundations for a new university quality infrastructure, which was the project's core contribution to the sustainability of the process.

The work of the quality circles led to a revision of curricula and syllabuses. During the project the information technology circle developed new curricula in collaboration with Moscow State University.

A Council for Quality, charged with strategic development, was established at university management level. Its counterparts in the faculties are faculty councils and methodological boards. Their executive body is a newly established Centre for Educational Quality[14].

The centre functions as a resource centre, collecting good practice from the faculties and departments and making these widely available through publications and training. It publishes a magazine, *Issues of Quality in Education*. It has published a university policy on quality and a handbook on quality assurance, which includes a template that every teacher uses in the design of new programmes. While this gives academic freedom, within the limits allowed by the state standards, it also sets clear standards and checkpoints, including guidance on descriptions of 'intended outcomes' and 'assessment specifications'.

Another role of the Centre for Educational Quality is monitoring and auditing. To this end, the centre will eventually collect and analyse data on all aspects of student performance.

Since it was anticipated that staff would be reluctant to engage in radical change, staff development was made a critical part of the project. However, because of the size of the university and the fact that the project only piloted activities in two areas, not all of the necessary staff development could be completed before the end of the project, and this is still work in progress.

A peer review system for monitoring teaching practice was in place in the Soviet era but fell into disuse during the 1990s. It has been revived in an adapted form. Students are surveyed on teacher performance and course content through annual anonymous questionnaires, the results of which are collated and remain at departmental level. Collecting student feedback is generally accepted as good practice, though it is not obligatory.

Staff seemed doubtful about the merits of involving students in the first cycle of curriculum

[14] Variously translated as Centre for Educational Quality, Centre for the Quality of Education and (in the project proposals, but later abandoned) the Quality Assurance Resource Centre.

development. Moreover, it seems that little thought has been given to their active involvement in the second and third cycles.

One innovation that illustrates a proactive approach to quality assurance is the new Centre for Graduate Employment, which not only supports students in their search for employment after graduation, but is also intended to gather reflective data from alumni, particularly in relation to skills and competences, and to maintain links with them as their careers develop.

Conclusion

The structures which have been put in place are robust and sustainable because they remain under the direction of the senior management, which to the university at large indicates a real commitment to change.

Two areas in which there is work still to be done are the ongoing development of academic staff and the way in which students are actively involved in quality procedures.

Overall, this has been an ambitious project which has produced a wide range of successful outcomes, including the sustainable organisational framework, active involvement of employers and the development of alumni relations feeding back into curriculum development.

7. Ministry of National Education, Rabat
Rabat, Morocco
SM_SCM-M004BO4-2004
FOREVALE – Formation à l'Evaluation Externe au Maroc
2005–2006

Situation

Moroccan higher education is expanding rapidly and there is a need for further growth. However, drop-out rates exceed 50% and graduate unemployment is high. In order to address these challenges the country has undertaken a fundamental review of its higher education system.

The *Charter for Higher Education* set out the essential rights and responsibilities of the sector. The Charter was published, together with a far-reaching law, in January 2000, and set in train a range of complementary actions, all of which were designed to enhance quality and performance.

Key features of the Moroccan reform process include the organisation of higher education in cycles, programmes of study, modules and semesters, with the potential for mobility between programmes of study and higher education institutions.

A formal system of accreditation of programmes of study has been established and will operate on a four-yearly basis. The process of accreditation has been a stimulus for looking at external evaluation in a wider sense.

The reform is wide-ranging and ongoing. At its heart is a commitment to quality assurance through ongoing evaluation at all levels. It was recognised, however, that there was no general experience or understanding of what might be involved. This was a key incentive for the Forevale project.

Challenges

Morocco has a long history of evaluation as a form of quality assurance, though this often took the form of ad hoc responses to particular crises or problems arising in the system. In other words, quality assurance was not systematic, embedded, regular and all-embracing.

Although the initial focus of reform was the reorganisation of higher education and the accreditation of programmes of study, it was recognised that this required improved national

and institutional quality assurance processes. Indeed, the Conference of Presidents had expressed concern about the quality of evaluation and the need to develop more skilled and well-trained evaluators.

They expressed concern at the small number of colleagues with experience of evaluation and the fact that few had received formal training and development in this field. Although a number of Tempus projects were looking at various aspects of quality assurance it was felt that priority should be given to developing and training a high-level team of academic and administrative experts in the field of quality assurance who would be a resource for both the country and its institutions.

Solutions

The Forevale project was designed to focus at a high level on issues relating to quality assurance and the relationships between internal quality assurance, self-assessment and external processes. It was not concerned with issues relating to specific programmes of study or levels.

Each of the 13 state universities nominated two participants. Formally these 26 were academics, but in a number of cases staff with administrative responsibilities were selected.

In addition to the nominations from the thirteen universities, six administrative staff from the Ministry of Education and the three coordinators of the national commissions in charge of accreditation and the development of quality assurance processes took part in the project.

They undertook a review of European experience (France and Germany in particular), including site visits that helped to demonstrate how quality assurance operated in practice in those countries. A training seminar in Morocco supported their activities.

Three regional groups emerged from the project. These are led by people who participated in the Forevale Project. They have been looking at all aspects of quality assurance – institutional and national – while focusing in each group on specific aspects.

One group focused on issues relating to internal quality assurance, a second on external quality assurance and a third on appropriate mechanisms and tools. The process itself has produced a wider group of Moroccan staff with experience and understanding of quality assurance. It has sparked a genuine national debate that is rooted in the institutions.

The groups will be reporting early in 2008 and it is anticipated that guidelines will then be produced and a national structure established.

The process has identified the importance of appropriate resourcing for quality assurance in the institutions and within national authorities. There is a need for leaders in institutions at all levels: senior management, faculty and department. A major challenge in all parts of the system is to persuade colleagues of the importance and benefits of full engagement with the quality assurance agenda.

One question still to be addressed is how best to involve students in a way that will be beneficial both in terms of the self-development of students and the continuing enhancement of study programmes. This is a major cultural challenge in an environment in which, notwithstanding the Charter and legal commitment, teaching and learning at first-cycle level tend to remain teacher-centred.

Conclusion

To say that the outcome of the project (the training and development of 36 senior members of staff in universities and the ministry in the field of quality assurance) was as planned would be to understate

the substantial impact of the project, not only on the thinking, understanding and personal development of those involved but also in terms of the approach being adopted in Morocco to the introduction of a global quality assurance process.

The project has led to a fundamental reflection on how quality assurance should be developed. Although the project has not produced the anticipated *Good Practice Guide*, there are excellent reasons for this: the experience taught those concerned that a more profound reflection was needed on how the process of quality assurance should be adapted and implemented in a way which met the specific needs and preoccupations of higher education in Morocco, while at the same time ensuring that it recognised the international dimension and standards.

A key outcome of the project has been a much clearer understanding on the part of those who are now leading the process of establishing quality assurance in Morocco, that, while the process must have due regard for international models and standards, it has to be Moroccan and recognise the cultural, political, social and economic context.

The opportunity to look at European examples and to work as a group over an extended period discussing all aspects of quality assurance has undoubtedly assisted in this process and engendered a serious and broad debate within Morocco. At the same time, as a result of the experience of the project Morocco has acquired a cohort of leaders in the field of quality who are operating at both national and institutional level.

IV. Quality Assurance in Tempus

A retrospective view of seven site visits. Case study numbers refer to examples of good practice or [in square brackets] examples where the topic in question has caused or still causes problems.

The projects which were visited varied in nature, scope, size and type of higher education institution, and country. Any attempt to identify common features must therefore carry a serious health warning. Above all, it must be stressed that the points listed below were not common to all projects. Indeed, in some cases they may have arisen from one project only, though their nature suggests that they might have wider application.

Indeed, the variety of solutions encountered underlines the need to adapt solutions to local situations. European models for quality assurance can be used as a powerful source of guidance and inspiration but must never simply be copied into a foreign context.

While a number of the Tempus partner countries have committed themselves, typically in the context of the Bologna Process, to adopting common principles in the application of quality assurance, as expressed in the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*[15], it is self-evident that, within this common framework, the application, structure and organisation of quality assurance has to take account of the national/regional, historical, political, social and economic situation. In other words, there is a strong and important cultural dimension to quality which should not be obscured by the increasing search for international standards. Notwithstanding the different cultural and historical contexts, a common vocabulary and understanding of concepts is developing.

The main drivers of change in higher education and the incentives for introducing a national and institutional quality assurance process can be identified as:

- the growth in higher education,
- concern to improve standards for local and national employment and international recognition,
- the need to respond to an increasingly competitive environment,
- the implementation of the Bologna Process, even in countries which are not formal signatories,
- the requirements of national legislation.

All contribute to the process of curriculum reform and quality assurance, which are intimately linked.

In the context of this study it is evident that ministries of higher education and higher education institutions have adopted a strategic approach to the use of Tempus project funding for the introduction and implementation of quality assurance processes and procedures.

The impact of the projects on individuals, faculties, institutions and indeed whole countries is remarkable and is undoubtedly contributing to a change in culture and an ever-widening dissemination of ideas and reflections on the quality agenda.

The implementation of a more structured approach to quality assurance and enhancement is a challenge for academic and administrative staff at all levels.

[15] See Annex III.

Leadership

The projects visited varied from those which might be broadly described as 'top-down'[1] to those which might be similarly described in broad terms as 'bottom-up'[2]. In all cases, the quality of the leadership and the support of the most senior management was a *sine qua non*. Initiating change in essentially conservative institutions, where power is often still vested in faculties and departments, requires considerable management skills, vision and leadership qualities. None of the projects, however, explicitly addressed the development of leadership skills as part of the quality agenda, and this may be a topic which institutions, governments and the Tempus programme should consider further.

[1] Case study references: 3, 4, 6

[2] Case study references: 2, 5

Teaching
(Case study references: [2], 7)

Achieving change also requires an explicit recognition of the professional importance of teaching and ongoing staff development. While all those involved in Tempus projects evidently experienced significant personal development and were acting as disseminators and multipliers, staff development for the bulk of the staff still remains largely voluntary and to a certain extent ad hoc.

Attestation procedures which review teachers' contracts every three years continue to place a heavy emphasis on formal qualifications and publications. The results of student feedback questionnaires play a part, but this tends to be negative rather than positive: poor student feedback results over a period of time might, in extreme cases, lead to the termination of a contract, while in general, evidence of high-quality, effective teaching does not appear to lead to explicit reward or recognition, although some examples of such practice were encountered. Indeed, the process of 'attestation' is not a substitute for a process of more regular staff evaluation within the higher education institution, linked to a policy of continuing professional development.

Staffing
(Case study references: [1], 3)

A key area for staff development relates to senior administrative staff[16]. Such staff are essential in a range of areas of university life and work, but, in the context of this study, particularly in the development of the quality assurance structure and the staffing of quality assurance units. Quality assurance is a developing field and the staff charged with responsibility for implementing and overseeing this work need to keep up to date with local, national and international developments in the area. In most institutions this will require a dedicated team of professionals, who will gain and keep the respect of colleagues through their commitment to professional standards.

Although quality assurance units and offices are being established, it is evident that, in general, their staffing is minimal. Often it consists of part-time academics who obviously have a range of other responsibilities. In large higher education institutions it is essential that the quality assurance office should have an appropriate full-time level of staffing capable of ensuring the implementation of all aspects of quality assurance and enhancement within the institution. It is not sufficient simply to develop full documentation of processes and procedures, which in itself is a significant and time-consuming

[16] There may be a semantic issue here, but in this context the term 'senior administrative' staff does not include rectors, vice-rectors, deans and heads of department, but rather professional, highly qualified administrative staff who might be considered as analogous to senior civil servants within a university.

professional task; effective implementation of the processes must be supported and maintained, and documentation kept continually up to date. Achieving this will require professional, well-qualified administrative staff who are well supported and included in the staff development process.

Self-assessment
(Case study references: 4, 7)

Self-assessment is used widely in the preparation for national accreditation. It is evident that it is demanding and that it happens in a regular cycle – normally five years. However, the focus is on meeting the demands of the accrediting body and responding to the criteria which it sets – frequently with an emphasis on quantitative data. It is less evident that institutions are embedding concepts of self-assessment within their internal quality enhancement processes. Thus, while there is increasing use of student feedback questionnaires, there is less evidence of programme monitoring meetings collecting the views of academic staff, and little evidence of 'regular periodic reviews of programmes' (including external panel members). External accreditation is not a substitute for such internal quality enhancement processes.

Industry involvement
(Case study references: 2, [5], 6)

The projects reveal excellent examples of the imaginative and effective involvement of employers. However, these best practices were not always consistent, even within a project, and certainly not within the whole institution. Humanities and Social Sciences were perceived to be a difficult area for such engagement, which was a way of saying that none existed.

Employers might be surveyed in relation to the skills and competences of graduates, but it is rare that they have an involvement in the quality assurance process, particularly at an institutional level, and it is equally rare that there is any consultation at the stage of curriculum development. This is noteworthy because there is an evident shift towards an outcomes approach and a recognition that employability is of critical importance for all the stakeholders.

State involvement and accreditation
(Case study references: 1, 6)

While there is a tendency to recognise the need to give increasing responsibility and autonomy to higher education institutions, in practice the state continues to exercise significant control over these institutions. This is manifest through the setting of 'national standards' for programmes of study prescribing a substantial amount of the curriculum, and through the licensing and accreditation processes.

While accreditation represents a quality assessment of the institution and its programmes of study at a given point in time, it is increasingly recognised as being separable from the process of quality assurance and enhancement. Nevertheless, there is a tendency for higher education institutions to direct their quality activities in large part towards the achievement of accreditation within the cycle that it dictates. This reinforces the difficulty of encouraging a culture of quality assurance, because in the past, and to some extent in the present, it has been identified with state control and with a tough accreditation process. It is thus perceived as quality 'control'. Changing this cultural perception remains a challenge which will persist if accreditation is seen as the principal goal.

For understandable and historical reasons, accreditation bodies have tended to be, and still are, closely associated with ministries. Although changes are in progress, it is doubtful whether many countries would satisfy the ENQA-specified standard that "agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the

conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders".

Faculty autonomy
(Case study references: [1], 3, 4, [5])

The concept of an autonomous, responsible higher education institution is difficult to realise in a situation where units within the institution, such as faculties and departments, have a large degree of independence – indeed, in some cases, are effective legal entities. Such a situation militates against a coherent and consistent application of quality assurance and enhancement processes. It cannot be in the best interests of students, who will increasingly wish to study on a multi- or interdisciplinary basis and take units or modules from outside their department or faculty as part of their personal development and in preparation for the diverse needs of the contemporary labour market.

Student involvement
(Case study references: 3, [6])

The student experience is fundamental to the quality debate. While feedback questionnaires are increasingly becoming the norm, they are by no means universal and there is some obscurity about exactly how they are being used and the extent to which there is consistency throughout institutions. Moreover, student feedback questionnaires should not be seen as the only way in which students can be engaged in the quality process.

The implementation of student feedback questionnaires has been a positive development, but it needs to be set in the context of more comprehensive performance indicators, including graduate employment, feedback from employers and, as in some institutions, more active involvement with alumni over an extended period of time.

The view was frequently expressed that students are not culturally prepared or mature enough for a more active and responsible role in their own education and in the evaluation of their experience, and hence that their education needs to remain 'teacher-centred'. This is evidently a challenge, but just as employers will need to be more actively engaged in a variety of ways, so it is necessary that, in a student-centred learning environment, students should be encouraged to develop a critical awareness and understanding of the teaching and learning process for their personal development, and an analytical approach to evaluating their experience. This cannot be limited simply to feedback questionnaires, but must involve other ways of engaging students in a way which will enhance their personal development, while contributing to the enhancement of the quality of their learning experience.

While many institutions are developing formal structures for quality assurance and associated documentation, and have also introduced student feedback procedures, there is less evidence that nationally or institutionally there is widespread publication and transparency in relation to the quality assurance process. Increased transparency will not only help to build public confidence, it will also act as a powerful incentive to all staff and students within an institution to adopt a responsible and proactive approach to enhancing quality.

Competition
(Case study references: [2], 4, 6)

Competition is explicitly a driver for the introduction of quality procedures in a number of institutions. In these institutions the competitive environment may be generated by different factors: a selective admissions process within which students and their families are acutely aware of what the higher education institution is offering; the need to earn and justify higher tuition

fees; an awareness of national or international competitors; the demands of the labour market; an increasing awareness of international competition for the best students. Competition for the most able professional staff also provides a powerful incentive for institutions to address issues of quality in order to enhance their reputation and attract and retain the best staff.

One interesting by-product of the introduction of an increasing number of electives in the first cycle has been to engender an element of competition between the teachers of elective courses, who recognise that if they are to attract students and to retain numbers they must focus on the quality of the learning experience.

Information systems
(Case study references: 3, 4)

"Institutional self-knowledge is the starting point for effective quality assurance," according to the European Standards and Guidelines. "It is important that institutions have the means of collecting and analysing information about their own activities. Without this they will not know what is working well and what needs attention or the results of innovatory practices."

While there is a general recognition of the importance of this principle, its implementation is less uniform and would not in general meet the European guidelines. In many institutions it is hampered by the virtual or real autonomy of faculties and departments who do not readily share information with the university and who inevitably collect it in disparate and inconsistent ways. The absence of effective information systems that make the fullest use of ICT and interactive software means that a pillar of the quality assurance requirements is missing. It is difficult to see that effective self-assessment for external or internal purposes can take place without such information.

Corruption
(Case study references: 3)

There is a body of literature on corruption in education which suggests that this may be an issue in some Tempus partner countries. This was not a focus of the present study, and while there was a recognition that, as in all walks of life, corruption might be present in higher education, it was not considered to be a burning issue within the context of the project. On the other hand, it was evident that the development of quality assurance procedures can be an important means of reducing the opportunities and potential for corruption. The introduction of a system of continuous assessment, the use of ICT for recording marks as they are given, and the ownership of the system by the higher education institution through its Student Records Office or central administration mean that the process has become significantly more transparent and can be easily monitored. The use of multiple-choice examinations alongside traditional oral examinations and the use of external examiners from other institutions provide a further safeguard.

All of this means that the potential for individual students or staff to evade system requirements and obtain progress through personal patronage or payment can be substantially reduced, if not eliminated, through effective quality assurance. At the same time the monitoring of results can help to detect any aberration which, under the previous manual records practice and less frequent assessment, might have gone undetected. Students and staff appreciate that the new system requirements mean that they cannot easily evade monitoring of their progress and that the consistency of individual and group results has become more transparent and open to scrutiny. Not only has this had an impact on reducing actual and potential corruption, but it has also given powerful motivation to students. It must be stressed that all this is only possible with an effective, up-to-date and pervasive information system.

It should perhaps be pointed out that while in the best practice cases the implementation of the quality processes described above has had a marked impact on student success, there were still concerns in other institutions and countries that student motivation and success did not appear to have improved with the introduction of quality processes. However, this may be because the focus has been on meeting the needs of national accreditation and not on a radical review of the curriculum that requires a student-centred approach and makes increasing demands on students to demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes, skills and competences of the course.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

The following is a brief set of conclusions and recommendations that are designed for both the Tempus programme and the partner countries. Inevitably, there is overlap and repetition.

Tempus programme

1. Future projects should aim to establish genuinely independent national quality assurance and accreditation agencies and to assist the agencies in establishing effective up-to-date codes of practice which higher education institutions can implement according to their particular structure and needs.

2. Future projects should seek to develop effective materials and courses for staff development and training for all levels and types of staff. These should include leadership courses for the senior managers of universities – rectors, vice-rectors, deans, and heads of department. They should also include courses for academic staff on the principles of quality assurance, approaches to curriculum development, new teaching methods and general professional skills updating, as well as courses for senior administrative staff working in the field of quality assurance and associated administrative areas.

3. Future projects focusing on student and employer participation in all aspects of quality assurance nationally and at the institutional level would be a welcome addition to the current array of projects.

4. The same applies to projects covering best practice in self-assessment for external and internal purposes.

5. European models for quality assurance can be used as a powerful source of guidance and inspiration, but must never simply be copied into a foreign context.

6. Finally, there would seem to be a need for projects tackling the development of information systems and performance indicators using the European Standards and Guidelines.

Partner countries

1. Partner countries should promote the development of national qualifications frameworks as an integral component of quality assurance in the country.

2. They should speed up the development of genuinely independent accreditation, easily accessible quality assurance agencies and the associated provision of public information on procedures and codes of practice.

3. They should publish performance indicators at a national and institutional level.

4. Programmes for staff development at all levels – academic and administrative – should be launched, and resources should be earmarked for the ongoing professional development of university staff.

5. Quality assurance units and offices in higher education institutions must be adequately staffed.

6. Information systems in all higher education institutions must be upgraded and coupled with the increased use of institutional intranets for communication, teaching and learning.

7. Outcomes of external quality assurance and accreditation processes must be published (and disseminated) in a form which is accessible to the public and stakeholders.

8. Institutions must be supported in the development of an integrated institutional approach to quality assurance and management structures.

9. The involvement of employers and students at a national and institutional level in quality assurance and curriculum processes must be encouraged and supported.

10. There is an urgent need to further develop institutional autonomy and responsibility for curriculum development and programme management within parameters established at a national level.

Annexes

Annex I - Questionnaire

QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH TEMPUS

Questionnaire for National Tempus Offices on national developments in quality assurance and quality enhancement in higher education

Instructions:

All boxes can be ticked with the mouse. Open questions are followed by a text box in which you can type. Otherwise this document cannot be edited.
There are some questions where multiple answers can be ticked.

If there are any questions to which you have no way of finding the correct answer, please let us know in the accompanying email so that we do not take a 'don't know' answer to mean 'no'.

----------**General details**----------

Person completing this questionnaire:

Email:

Country:

----------**Questionnaire**----------

1 Is your country a formal signatory to the Bologna Process?

Yes ☐ / No ☐

2.1 Is there a National Qualifications Framework?

Yes ☐ / No ☐

2.2 Is there a national credit system?

Yes ☐ / No ☐

2.3 If so, is it:

☐ The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)?

☐ Compatible with ECTS?

☐ A different system?

3.1 Are there developments in quality assurance in your country resulting from projects funded by sponsors other than Tempus?

Yes ☐ / No ☐

3.2 If yes, please give brief details. (Please type in the box below.)

4.1 Are there national guidelines for the recognition of prior learning and experience?

Yes ☐ / No ☐

4.2 If so, do they provide a basis for:

☐ Access to Higher Education

☐ The allocation of credits towards a qualification

4.3 Are there national guidelines for the recognition of qualifications obtained in another country?

Yes ☐ / No ☐

5 Have universities begun to involve partners in business and industry in quality assurance procedures?

☐ All ☐ Many ☐ Few ☐ None

6 To what extent are faculties, departments, laboratories and administrative units able to act independently? (Please tick one box in each column.)

	Faculties	Departments	Labs	Admin. units
To a great extent	☐	☐	☐	☐
To a small extent	☐	☐	☐	☐
Not at all	☐	☐	☐	☐

7 Is information collected at institutional and national level on:

	Institutional level	National level
Student progression and success rates	☐	☐
Employability of graduates (e.g. through tracking of graduates in the labour market)	☐	☐
Student satisfaction	☐	☐
Effectiveness of teachers	☐	☐
Profile of the student population	☐	☐
Learning resources and their costs	☐	☐
Key performance indicators	☐	☐

8.1 Is there a national quality assurance agency?

Yes ☐ / No ☐

8.2 When was it established? (Please type in the box below.)

8.3 Has a national quality assurance system been implemented?
Yes ☐ / No ☐

8.4 If so, does it relate to *The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area?*

Yes ☐ / No ☐

9.1 Is the quality assurance agency responsible for accreditation *and* quality assurance?
Yes ☐ / No ☐

9.2 If no, is there a separate agency for the accreditation of qualifications?
Yes ☐ / No ☐

9.3 When was it established? (Please type in the box below.)

10 If there is no agency for accreditation, what is the process for the accreditation/validation of higher education qualifications? (Please type in the box below.)

11 What is the legal status of the quality assurance agency?

- ☐ Established by law as a public body.
- ☐ Established as an independent company or similar legal entity.
- ☐ Recognised formally by the competent authorities.
- ☐ Other, please specify:

12.1 How is the independence of the agency ensured?

- ☐ Operational independence from higher education institutions and the government is guaranteed in official documentation.
- ☐ The nomination and appointment of external experts is autonomous and independent from the government and from higher education institutions.
- ☐ The procedures and outcomes of the quality assurance process are the sole and independent responsibility of the quality assurance agency.

12.2 Is there a statement of the processes, criteria and procedures used by the agency?

Yes ☐ / No ☐

12.3 Is this publicly available on the internet and in hard copy?

Yes ☐ / No ☐

13.1 Does the national quality assurance agency undertake reviews?

Yes ☐ / No ☐

13.2 Are institutions reviewed on a regular basis?

Yes ☐ / No ☐

13.3 What is the normal period between reviews? (Please type in the box below.)

13.4 What form does the assessment procedure used by the agency take?

- ☐ Institutional evaluations
- ☐ Subject or programme evaluations
- ☐ Accreditation at: subject/programme/institutional level
- ☐ Higher education institutions are required to prepare self-assessment documents
- ☐ Other, please specify:

14.1 Do institutions have internal quality assurance procedures?

☐ All ☐ Many ☐ Few ☐ None

14.2 Are these procedures based on national codes of practice?

Yes ☐ / No ☐

14.3 Do these national codes of practice form the basis for external quality assurance?

Yes ☐ / No ☐

15.1 Are students involved in quality assurance processes?

Yes ☐ / No ☐

15.2 If yes, in what way:

☐ In the governance of the national quality assurance agency

☐ In external reviews of HEIs

☐ In consultation during external reviews

☐ In internal evaluations

☐ Other, please specify:

15.3 Are quality assurance reports published and accessible to the general public?

Yes ☐ / No ☐

15.4 What procedures are in place to ensure that external quality reviews are followed up?

☐ There is a process to ensure that recommendations in review reports are dealt with effectively.

☐ There is a process to ensure that action plans are actually implemented within an agreed timetable.

☐ There is a possibility of further meetings between staff from the quality assurance agency and staff from the higher education institution.

16.1 Is there international participation in quality assurance?

Yes ☐ / No ☐

16.2 If so, what form does it take?

17 Is training provided for the external experts in the quality assurance process?

Yes ☐ / No ☐

18 Are study programmes required to publish explicit intended learning *outcomes?* ("Students *will be able to* use a computer" as opposed to "Students *will be taught* how to use a computer".)

Yes ☐ / No ☐

19 **Additional Information**

You are invited to give any additional information you consider relevant in relation to the development of quality assurance in your country, particularly highlighting developments arising directly from Tempus projects. (Please write in the box below.)

Annex II - List of abbreviations

CEE Network – Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
CQAF – Common Quality Assurance Framework
DG-EAC – European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture
EAQF – Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area
ECTS – European Credit Transfer System
ENQA – European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
EQAR – European Quality Assurance Register in Higher Education
EQF – European Qualifications Framework
EUA – European University Association
ICT – Information and Communication Technology
JEP – (Tempus) Joint European Project
INQAAHE – International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
NQF – National Qualifications Framework
QA – Quality assurance
SCM – Structural and Complementary Measure
SWOT – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Annex III - Resources

Bologna glossary
http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/EN/Glossary/Glos1.HTM
ENQA
http://www.enqa.eu/
EQAR - European Quality Assurance Register in Higher Education
http://www.eqar.eu/
EUA
http://www.eua.be/index.php
(Navigate menu to 'Quality Assurance'. Many links to other resources.)
Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area
http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/050218_QF_EHEA.pdf
OECD
The *OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education* contains a good chapter on quality assurance.
http://www.oecd.org/edu/tertiary/review/
Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no/Docs/00-Main_doc/050221_ENQA_report.pdf
Tempus
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/tempus/index_en.html
Tempus glossary
http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/tempus/doc/glossary_en.pdf

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