INQAAHE Bulletin June 2012

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News from the Secretariat

Presentations Melbourne online

The INQAAHE Members' Forum of 2012 was held on Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 April in Melbourne, Australia. The Forum was hosted by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). Almost 150 participants from all over the world actively discussed 'the future of external QA'. The forum and especially its break-out sessions were evaluated very positive.

Here you can find the presentations that were given during the forum:

http://www.inqaahe.org/main/events-and-proceedings/inqaahe-2012-forum/presentations

Membership mutations

INQAAHE welcomes the following new members:

Full members

Korean Accreditation Board of Nursing, South Korea
Association for Engineering Education of Russia (AEER), Russia
University Grants Commission (UGC), Nepal

Affiliates

Nympha Joseph, Bahrain
Gwenaël Iynedjian, Switzerland
Leon Zbys Klich, United Kingdom

Associate members

University of Palestine, Palestinian Authority

Cipriani College of Labour and Co-operative Studies (CCLCS), Trinidad

INQAAHE-AfriQAN Workshop on Good Practices in QA

On 15 May 2012 INQAAHE and AfriQAN have organised a Good Practices Workshop in QA with funds from GIQAC. The workshop was hosted by the Commission for Higher Education (CHE), Kenya. Jonathan Mba, from the African Association of Universities (AAU) and Florence Lenga from CHE have co-organised this day together with INQAAHE. They also chaired some of the presentation sessions

Professor Peter Okebukola from the National Universities Commission (NUC), Nigeria acted as the general chair.

Over 20 participants from all parts of Africa shared and discussed the good practices implemented by their agencies. The practices were divided into 3 themes and presented by the participants: Programme Accreditation and related topics, Institutional Accreditation and related topics and the Relationship between EQAAs and HEIs. Also the INQAAHE Database on Good Practices was presented. A poster presentation session was organised as well.

These good practices will soon be uploaded on http://www.inqaahe.org/gpqa (accessible for members only)

11 Good Practices uploaded

Recently 11 Good Practices that were presented during the APQN-INQAAHE Good Practices Workshop in Tokyo have been uploaded to the INQAAHE Good Practices Database: http://www.inqaahe.org/gpqa If you have a good practice that worked for your agency and if you can demonstrate evidence of its success, please submit your practice at: http://www.inqaahe.org/gpqa/send-request.php

Save the date: INQAAHE Conference 2013

From Monday 8th until Thursday 11th April INQAAHE will organise its Biennial Conference in Chinese Taipei. The conference host is the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT).
More information will be provided soon at http://www.inqaahe.org

President's message

Dear friends,

As you know, in April we held the 2012 Members' Forum in Melbourne. It was really a great experience: we had the chance to meet, to share experiences and information and most of all, to exchange our views on the topics covered during the meeting.

I had the opportunity to present the results of a very interesting study carried out in seven countries in Latin America and Europe, where we focused on any changes that relevant stakeholders perceived as the result of the implementation of quality assurance practices. It was probably one of the first studies that looked at any changes in institutional management and in the teaching and learning process. The good news is that people really feel that there are important effects, and that QA really makes a difference!

There were also some very interesting recommendations, for policy makers, for institutional leaders and also – and most importantly – for quality assurance agencies. The presentation, as well as the report, are both on the INQAAHE website see http://www.inqaahe.org/main/professional-development/impact , if you want to learn more about the study or its results.

The Forum was organized around four main themes. Each of them was introduced by two speakers, and then we moved into breakout groups, where some really interesting discussions took place.

We recorded the outcomes of these discussions, and David Woodhouse summarised them. I will give you an overview, but again, I suggest you to visit the INQAAHE website, where you can find more information.

Theme 1: Developments in the methodology of external quality assurance

The idea behind these discussions was to take a hard look at what we are doing in external quality assurance (EQA). It seems evident to many of us that the way in which EQA is being carried out is too expensive, too time consuming, and too slow to be sustainable in the mid or long term. The discussions dealt with the challenges EQA faces, the demands made on quality assurance agencies, and some interesting suggestions were made along the following lines:

- To make EQA more efficient, by streamlining regulation and external review procedures.
- To introduce pre-accreditation processes than contribute to the overall EQA approach and outcomes.
- Shift to risk-based analysis and proportionate interventions where it is required, and which allows for a judicious use of resources and engagement with institutions.
- Site visits only where warranted, otherwise desktop EQA is conducted.
- Moves to shift from programme/course accreditation to institutional accreditation.

- Shift to thematic EQA reviews.
- Combine programme/course reviews with institutional accreditation, where all general or institutional aspects are looked only once, and programme review focuses on content and specific programme/course aspects.
- Follow up processes to reviews that ensure implementation of recommendations.

At the same time, it seems that most agencies are using the same methods and procedures that have been in place for the last thirty years – it seems essential that QA agencies conduct internal and external reviews to ensure that they keep in touch with changes in higher education and therefore, can adapt to new needs and conditions.

As the rapporteur for this theme concluded, "*Questions and ideas are emerging. There is a greater awareness of avoiding the uncritical and sometime non-contextual use of 'travelling policies and mimicry' of some dominant national EQA methods. However, for the new emerging methods, one report writer summed up the response as 'the jury is out on the risks and benefits of different country approaches'.*"

Theme 2: Institutional diversity and QA

EQA agencies are being required to cater for an increasingly diverse constituency of institutions. Can they do this successfully?

The discussion centered first on an identification of the possible issues related to diversity: types of institutions, different types of programmes offered, different quality assurance agencies and approaches. However, it was also stated that "*QA is one of the few topics where we speak the same language.*"

A second area dealt with the challenges associated to diversity: should there be different standards for institutions that focus on increasing access, particularly of those less prepared and underserved student populations? What is the balance between relevance, quality, equity? In many cases, standards based QA has unified review processes, but there is a risk that it has homogenized them. The question seems to be how to promote diversity, while not putting quality at risk – but this raises the question about how will quality be defined.

Some possible solutions:

A. Focus on outcomes instead of inputs, but:
   - How to define learning outcomes? One approach is through the development of qualifications frameworks.
   - How to assess learning outcomes? It is important to identify and implement relevant assessment methodologies; many people think that there is no way to measure learning outcomes in a sufficiently meaningful way.

- Learning outcomes are very much linked to context, and therefore, they bring us back to the problem of diversity!

B. Adoption of 'fitness for purpose' approach

A number of countries have already adopted it while the others are working towards it. It allows flexibility in QA and enables to take into account diversity of contexts among HEIs. However, it must be balanced by a 'fitness of purpose' approach, which makes it possible to test for relevance.

C. Adoption of 'non-prescriptive' standards and criteria that are open for interpretation – but here we have a problem with the interpreters: need for good, well trained external reviewers.

D. Diversity of panels, including international expertise and representatives of employers

Finally, the discussion focused on the issue of diversity and innovation, and the relationship between both. There was a consensus on the need to be innovative in dealing with emerging issues of QA. In many cases, QA agencies tend to be suspicious of innovation, and standards and procedures tend to make innovation difficult and risky for HEIs.

Theme 3: EQA and the development of an institutional quality culture

This theme highlights the principle that quality is primarily the responsibility of HEIs, and that QA agencies must support them in this respect.

In the first place, the role of the QA agency and its relationship with HEIs was discussed, focusing on the need to recognize that there are many ways in which an institution can develop internal QA mechanisms. Some may set up QA units; others prefer institutional research units, supporting not only self assessment processes, but all decision making at different institutional levels. The main point here is that IQA should be "everybody's business" and not the responsibility on a single unit or management role.

A second topic was that of learning outcomes. There is widespread recognition about their relevance, but most participants considered that QA refers more to the ways in which HEIs assure that expected learning outcomes are actually achieved: IQA is about achieving the outcomes, while EQA is assessing how does the HEI know whether they are being achieved.

If EQA focuses mostly on outcomes, its value for IQA may be reduced, since quality depends strongly on the way processes are organized and carried out. IQA should be integrated into the daily academic activity; one way of doing this is for the agency to support HEIs to follow the PDCA cycle, and to use the results of self assessment and internal reviews as essential components to institutional planning.

Theme 4: Changing Perceptions of the Independence of EQAs

The fourth theme had to do with independence, how we define it, why it is important and how to achieve it.

The first notion was to accept that it may be quite impossible to have QA processes that are free of any external influence. It may not even be desirable, since it is important that QA is aligned with national priorities and policies.

Experiences were shared that show that there are structural issues, which must be taken into account: who is responsible with setting the standards, assessing institutions or programs against those standards and making final decisions – in many cases, there are different instances charged with each of these stages.

In general, it was agreed that absolute independence of QA if not possible, but decisions and procedures should be protected from undue influences, from the ways in which criteria and procedures are determined, how external review teams are formed, the ways in which reporting is taken into consideration, to the final decisions on the outcome of the QA process.

Strong mechanisms to control conflicts of interest are essential, and periodic external reviews of EQA agencies can make a significant contribution.

THE BOLOGNA POLICY FORUM

I had the privilege of attending the Bologna Policy Forum, held in Bucharest, representing INQAAHE. It was a huge meeting, with all the Bologna countries present, as well as a large number of organizations and a large number of countries from all regions of the world.

Some of the most interesting things from my point of view:

There is an explicit priority allocated to establish links with countries from all parts of the world. While this may be an interesting proposition, it very much depends on the ways in which it is implemented, especially since many countries outside of Europe feel that this seems an extension of a colonialistic approach which they resent.

Quality assurance was mentioned in practically every speech and presentation. It is certainly the keyword for the implementation of many of the different aspects Bologna is involved in. The final communiqué states that "QA is essential for building trust and to reinforce the attractiveness of the EHEA's offerings, including in the provision of cross border education". It endorses the review made of the application of the ESG, and encourages agencies to apply for registration in the European Quality Register (EQAR).

There was a session on national qualifications frameworks, where Australia, South Africa and Ireland presented their experiences, and Colombia and the Lumina Foundation presented information on Latin America and the US. It was a very interesting discussion, and it made it clear that we need to analyse very carefully the links between the establishment and contents of NQFs and quality assurance processes.

A session on global and regional approaches to quality enhancement of HE gave me the opportunity to speak of networks at the subregional, regional and global levels, and to mention the work that INQAAHE has been doing to support the work of regional and special interest networks; at the same time, I mentioned some of the outcomes of the Members' Forum as an example of cooperation across regions.

At this session, Achim Hopbach, speaking for ENQA, talked about the need to pay close attention to the different purposes of QA, and to be clear about them in order to develop adequate structures to meet purposes. He highlighted the importance of the European experience of involving students and peers from professional fields, and the need to share some good practices and experiences.

There was a strong emphasis on the need to focus QA on the evaluation of learning outcomes. The Communiqué reiterates the commitment of the ministers of higher education with the promotion of "student centred learning, characterized by innovative methods of teaching that involve students as active participants in their own learning". It goes on to say that "higher education should be an open process in which students develop intellectual independence and personal self assuredness alongside disciplinary knowledge and skills". This seems to be the essential aspect that should be taken into account when dealing with quality. Part of this may be done through the assessment of learning outcomes, but it seems clear from the discussions in Melbourne, that if we want to promote improvement and internal quality assurance, a focus on processes is also very important.

This is an open discussion, which we should promote and conduct.

I just want to close repeating the invitation I have extended to you on many other occasions: please let us know what you think, send us your comments, your views and your suggestions. We really need them to make INQAAHE an active and responsive opportunity for development.

Maria Jose Lemaitre

News from other networks

Change in APQN Leadership-
President Dr. Stella moves to UAE,
Dr. Jagannath Patil is the new APQN President

Dr. Jagannath Patil
APQN President

Dr. Antony Stella
Former APQN
President

As Dr. Antony Stella, the President of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network would take up her new position as Commissioner in the Commission for Academic Accreditation in Abu Dhabi, UAE, she had to resign from the executive team of APQN with effect from 1 June 2012. In view of Dr. Stella's stepping down as the President, the Vice-President Dr. Jagannath Patil has assumed the office of President since 1 June, 2012. In turn, Dr. Patil relinquishes his position as Vice-President. Prof. Angela Hou Yung-chi, one of the elected Board members has been appointed as the Vice-President of APQN.

APQN wishes to place on record the remarkable contribution made by Dr. Antony Stella since the inception of APQN. In her various roles as project leader, Board member, Vice-President and President, Stella contributed to building APQN which is now a force to be recognized and admired in the international QA fraternity. APQN bids a hearty farewell to Dr. Stella and wishes her all the best in the future.

APQN is also pleased to welcome Dr. Jagannath Patil of NAAC, India as its fourth President. Dr. Jagannath Patil has been a leading figure of APQN since the past 7 years. As Project leader, Board member and Vice President JP has led several APQN initiatives. We are sure APQN will scale new heights under President ship of JP due to his rich experience and international recognition in the field of quality assurance.

APQN looks forward to the collaboration of all members and friends in continuing to work together to strengthen even further APQN's quality initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region.

For more information about APQN please visit http://www.apqn.org

15th ECA Workshop

On 13th of June 2012 the 15th ECA Workshop took place in Madrid.
The members of the four working groups: "Mutual recognition and joint programmes"; "Institutional audits and accreditation"; Qrossroads and information strategies"; and, "Mutual learning and best practices" summarized the achievements and activities of the last year. A policy paper for the next 3 years and the work plans for 2012 – 2013 were discussed.
ECA also welcomed two new members: Agência de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior (A3ES, Portugal) and Agencija za znanost i visoko obrazovanje (ASHE, Croatia).
Two ECA member agencies: Danmarks Evalueringsinstitut (EVA, Denmark) and AQU Catalunya, Spain, were invited to sign the Multilateral Agreement on the Mutual Recognition of Accreditation Results regarding Joint Programmes (MULTRA). The MULTRA agreement can be found here:
http://www.ecaconsortium.net/main/documents/mutual-recognition-agreements
ECA members appointed the new Management Group members: Lucien Bollaert (NVAO), Laureano Gonzalez Vega (ANECA), Jürgen Petersen (ZEvA) and Mieczyslaw Socha (PKA). The Consortium also elected Rolf Heusser as Chairperson and Christian Moldt (EVA) as Vice-Chairperson.
NVAO will continue hosting the ECA Secretariat and Mark Frederiks was reappointed as the ECA Coordinator.
All presentations and documents can be downloaded here:
http://www.ecaconsortium.net/main/events/detail/15th-eca-workshop/20

ECA Conference on the Training of QA Panel Members

On 14 and 15 June 2012 the European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education (ECA) organised the conference "Designing a European QA Expert: Prêt-à-porter vs Haute couture" in Madrid, Spain. The main aim of the conference was to disseminate the results of the ECA project European Training of QA Experts (E-TRAIN). The training programmes for the European QA Expert and QA staff members were presented. The perspectives and project experiences of the trainers, trained experts and staff members were shared with the audience as well. Also the main stakeholders' organisations: ENQA, EUA, EURASHE and ESU were invited to present their perspectives on the experts training issues.
The discussion focused on the possible continuation of the E-TRAIN project. The participants agreed that training European QA experts is a natural consequence of the European Higher Education Area. It was also agreed that the training programme needs to be further developed in order to fit the purposes of various types of assessments.
During the conference other project results were presented as well. One of these results, the ECApedia, which brings together the knowledge for carrying out reviews , can be found here: http://www.ecapedia.net
Another project outcome is the European Experts Exchange Database, which aims to share European experts among participating agencies so that they can participate in procedures in multiple countries. The experts database was discussed and enthusiastically welcomed by the participants.
The conference programme and the presentations can be found here:
http://www.ecaconsortium.net/main/events/detail/conference-on-the-training-of-qa-panel-members-madrid-14-15-june-2012/19
For more information on the E-TRAIN project please visit:
http://www.ecaconsortium.net/main/projects/e-train

News from members

Results of Accreditations
performed by the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA)

In 2002, the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation System was introduced in Japan (enforced in 2004), obligating all higher education institutions (universities, junior colleges and technical colleges) to undergo an evaluation once every 7 years. All graduate schools conferring professional degrees need to undergo an evaluation once every 5 years as well. In each case, the evaluating agency certified by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) conducts the evaluation process, comprehensively assessing the level of education, research, and other areas.

Since its establishment in 1947, the Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) has played a significant role in assuring the quality of higher education. On August 31, 2004, the JUAA was authorized by the Minister of MEXT as the first Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Agency for universities. Authorization for its Certified Evaluation and Accreditation later expanded to several other fields. The JUAA currently performs Certified Evaluation and Accreditation in 6 fields (universities, junior colleges, law schools, professional graduate business schools, professional graduate schools of public policy, and professional graduate school of public health).

JUAA has just finalized the results of accreditations for FY 2011and they can be found at:
http://www.juaa.or.jp/en/images/index/fy2011_results_of_accreditation.pdf

New Hungarian Accreditation Committee launched

With the higher education act CCIV/2011 a new HAC with 18 members was inaugurated on March 1, 2012. The tasks of the HAC specified in a government decree on quality evaluation and development will go into effect on September 1st. The Committee is to provide its opinion on the request of the Education Authority on applications for establishing and launching new programs, doctoral schools, and on applications for university professor positions. The currently running institutional accreditation procedures and evaluations for the accreditation of teacher training programs continue according to plan.

As an additional task, the HAC will phase in the accreditation of two-year vocational training programs offered at higher education institutions, whose credits are transferable into higher education programs.
For more information, please visit the HAC website:
http://www.mab.hu/joomla/index.php?lang=en

QAAET Conference

The Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (QAAET) is pleased to announce its second conference which will be held under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed Bin Mubarak AL-Khalifa the Deputy Prime Minister. The conference will take place in the period from 19 to 20 February 2013 at the Gulf Hotel in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Pre-conference workshops will be organised on 18th February 2013.
The conference will be held through prominent keynote speakers, presentations and workshops. Delegates from Schools, Vocational, Higher Education Institutions, and National Examinations will explore the challenges and opportunities facing quality assurance agencies locally, regionally, and globally.
The conference presentations will be conducted in Arabic or English, translation will be provided
For more information, please visit the conference website at http://www.qaa.edu.bh

Upcoming events

16th Annual IEASA Conference
Promoting Higher Education Internationalisation through International Research Collaborations, Partnerships and Innovative Teaching
29 August – 1 September 2012, Cape Town, South Africa

During this conference presentations and workshops related to the following themes will be adressed:

- Internationalisation and Quality Assurance
- Research into international education
- The role of graduate Business Schools in the internationalisation of Higher Education
- The impact and value of international students in higher education
- Policy environments for internationalisation

More information can be found at http://www.ieasa2012.cmc-uct.co.za/

Southeast Asian International and Indian National Conference on Health Professions Education
PSG Institute of Medical Sciences & Research, Coimbatore, India. 5th to 8th September, 2012

This conference focuses on social accountability of medical and health professions schools through quality assurance and accreditation. The key issue(s) for discussion and deliberation during this conference, would be how medical and other health professions institutions across South East Asian countries can respond to this challenge by curricular and institutional reforms and through quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms. Hands-on workshops will provide you with skills and competencies to enable you to implement curricular reforms and to initiate activities that would contribute to making education more socially accountable.

For more information please visit:
https://sites.google.com/site/nchpesearame2012/

EUA Doctoral Week Global perspectives, Funding of Doctoral Education and Quality Assurance
23-27 September 2012, Stockholm, Sweden

From 23 to 27 September 2012, EUA-CDE offers a special opportunity to engage with three highly relevant issues for doctoral education: global trends, funding and quality assurance. In three separate but connected events, participants will have the chance to deepen their understanding of different aspects of doctoral education, from discussions about global developments to implementing local reforms in individual universities. It is a unique opportunity to engage in dialogue with many different stakeholders and to explore the continuous development of doctoral education.

For more information about this doctoral week that will be organised by the Karolinska Institutet please visit
http://www.eua.be/EUA_Doctoral_week.aspx

Seminar on the implementation of Internal (and External) Quality Assurance and of the ESG in HEIs
27-28 September, Nicosia, Cyprus

The object of this seminar is to train individuals responsible for the management and/or coordination of internal QA at institutions (e.g. Quality Assurance managers, Quality Assurance coordinators, Quality Assurance administrators, Heads of Higher Education Institutions), so that after the completion of the seminar they would be able to organise and implement fully, efficiently and effectively internal Quality Assurance based on the ESG, preparing also in this way for the external Quality Assurance evaluation of their institutions.

This event is organised in cooperation with the European University Cyprus, and the Open University of Cyprus, both EURASHE members. Moreover it will take place under the Auspices of the Cyprus Presidency of the European Union.

For more information please visit http://www.eurashe.eu/conferences-and-

EADTU 25th Anniversary Conference 2012

'The role of open and flexible education in European higher education systems for 2020: new models, new markets, new media''
27-28 September, Paphos, Cyprus

The Open University of Cyprus will be hosting EADTU's Annual Conference in Paphos, on 27-28 th September 2012, under the EU Presidency of Cyprus in which they address topics like:

- how open and flexible education is organised as an organic part of European higher education systems
- implementing new organisational and educational models within frontrunner institutions, capitalizing on new opportunities created by ICT in education
- meeting new markets and learning needs, i.e. at the postgraduate level or related to knowledge alliances with the public and private sector, on top of the mission of widening participation
- developing open media like open educational resources, YouTube, ITunes U, broadcasting as platforms for open knowledge sharing
- developing European open and flexible higher education in a 2020 perspective

For more information visit http://www.eadtu.eu/activities/conference2012.html

International Education in the Asian Century
Australian International Education Conference (AIEC)
2-5 October 2012 Melbourne, Australia

AIEC 2012 will explore the role international education, training and research will play in the 21st century. The emphasis will be on how Australia, and other countries and regions, might work together and in partnership with Asia to help shape this "Asian Century".

The Conference will examine the potential for bi-lateral and multi-lateral cooperation, focused on the mutual needs of Asia, Australia, Europe, North and South America, the Middle East and Africa. It will take the form of a global dialogue and practice-oriented sessions encompassing both the strategic policy issues as well as the practical realities on the ground. The program will explore deep engagement and understanding between Asia, Australia and the rest of the world

For detailed information about the programme and registration of this event please visit: http://www.aiec.idp.com/program.aspx

ASEM Seminar on Quality Assurance
11-12 October Sèvres, France

This seminar will be hosted by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research of the French Republic in collaboration with the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Education Secretariat, located at the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).
The event will provide an opportunity for ASEM partners to exchange views and experiences on the best ways to advance cooperation on Quality Assurance in Higher Education within the framework of the ASEM Education process, with a view to provide secure pathways for mobility for international students within ASEM and to promote the recognition of evaluation results and of qualifications between ASEM governments and higher education evaluating institutions.

More information will soon be available at http://www.asem-education-secretariat.org/en/21012/index.html

46th Conference of the Canadian Bureau for International Education
A Fine Balance: Harmonizing International Education Policies and Practices
4-7 November 2012, Montreal Canada

During CBIE's 46th Annual Conference participants will share best practices, debate the most recent developments and learn about the latest trends and challenges in international education. They will explore new collaborations and research on what it takes to be world leaders in international education

THEMES FOR CONCURRENT SESSIONS

> Best Practices in Harmonizing Policy and Practice
> Education's Role in Delivering Economic and Social Benefits
> Responding Effectively to Evolving International Student Needs
> Enhancing the Learning Experience of Home Students
> Maximizing Potential through Innovative Partnerships
> Improving Our Competitiveness in the Global Education Market

For more information visit: http://www.cbie-bcei.ca/2012-conference