



The European Consortium for  
Accreditation in Higher Education

# ECA NEWSLETTER



## IN THIS ISSUE:

- 1** ECA Editorial
- 2-5** News from ECA
- 5-7** News from ECA Members
- 8** Christmas greetings and information from the Secretariat

## ECA EDITORIAL:

Dear colleagues,

We are pleased to send you the Newsletter corresponding to the second semester of the year.

We close this year totally marked by the COVID-19, with our mind set on the global need to overcome this moment and leave this whole situation behind. We must focus on recovering our lives and drawing all the strength to face the challenges posed.

Without a doubt, this exceptional situation has forced us to rethink the entire system.

From ECA and all its Members the situation has been faced as a new challenge to overcome. Now more than ever we need to be connected, exchange experiences, propose improvements and changes.

This issue of our Newsletter includes examples of successfully accomplished initiatives of the ECA members and partners, despite current unfavourable circumstances.

2021 will undoubtedly be a crucial year for all countries and for all educational leaders.

Our maximum effort should be focused on not subtracting an apex of strength from any of our actions.

We must transmit security, trust and above all work on the same line to obtain the desired objectives.

Strength and health for all in this new year that is about to begin

ECA Secretariat

# NEWS FROM ECA

## “Automatic recognition and recognition of standalone online learning. ECA co-develops good practice”.

By ECA in collaboration ENIC-NARIC Networks (Nuffic, coordinator)

Over the past two years, ECA provided strategic advise to two Erasmus+ Key Action 3 NARIC projects on automatic recognition (AR-NET) and flexibilization of education. The main results are listed here:

- **Automatic recognition:** For anyone who wishes to understand de-facto automatic recognition and how to implement it, we developed this publication: [The triangle of automatic recognition. Guidelines for the application of de facto automatic recognition](#). Spoiler: it provides a clear explanation of automatic recognition and the difference between (general) access and admissions that often creates confusion
- **Portability of recognition decisions:** Portability of recognition decisions is another way to approach automatic recognition. This paper systematically

explored to what extend portability of decisions and information is possible in: [‘Portability of recognition statements in the EHEA. Fast lane or detour to Automatic Recognition?’](#).

- **3rd edition EAR-HEI manual:** The ‘EAR-HEI manual’ -containing the practical translation of the Lisbon Recognition Convention- is geüpdated! [European Area of Recognition – Higher Education Institution \(EAR-HEI\) manual \(3rd edition\)](#). The STREAM trainingplatform for credential evaluator -based on EAR-HEI- is also updated:<http://onlinecourse.ning.com/xgi=4GF7lBzBZ4Fw2c>
- The [‘Practitioner’s guide for the recognition of e-learning’](#) helps admissions officers to evaluate MOOCs and other types of certificates demonstrating standalone e-learning.
- The [‘Students guide to e-learning’](#) helps students interested to follow a MOOC with the selection from
- [‘Academic recognition of e-learning’](#) provides recommendations for providers of e-learning (higher education institutions and platforms).

ECA is also part of the Steering Group of two new projects on these topics, I-AR and STACQ. These projects recently started and more information on these projects will follow.

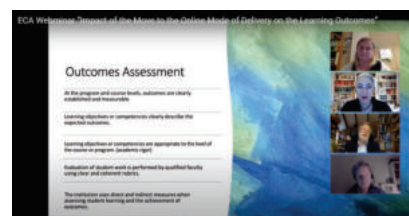


## ECA Webinar “Impact on the move to the online mode of delivery on the learning outcomes”

By Eva Fernández de Labastida Amurrio (ECA)

On 30 November 2020, ECA hosted a webinar focused on the possible long term implications of the current pandemic situation on the quality assurance landscape, including the impact of the move to an online mode of delivery on the study curricula and the achievement of the learning outcomes from the perspective of institutions and quality assurance agencies. The webinar provided valuable inputs from Dr. Robert Wagenaar from

Groningen University and Dr. Leah Matthews from the Distance Education Accrediting Commission (DEAC) (Link to [programme](#) and [video-recording](#)). Up to 30 participants took part in this webinar, which also gave the option to debate and make questions regarding this topic to the speakers.



## Systemic University Change Towards Internationalisation for Academia in European higher education institutions: an exploratory study (SUCTIA)

By ECA Secretariat (Information taken from <https://suctia.com/>)

On November 13, the [SUCTIA report](#) was presented. The SUCTIA Consortium is coordinated by the Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań (Poland) and counts among its partners four universities – University of Porto (Portugal), Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Italy), Universitat Rovira i Virgili (Spain) and Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (Spain) – as well as four sector-related organisations, including the European Association for International Education, the Global Impact Institute, SGroup (formerly a SUCTI associate, now a full SUCTIA partner) and the European Consortium of Accreditation (ECA), which is the only partner who was not a member of the SUCTI team..

SUCTIA is a European Commission-funded project (2019–2022) that aims to raise awareness about, and shift the internal culture of, European higher education institutions towards internationalisation, thus creating systemic change within these institutions and in European higher education more



## ImpEA project final event Facilitating Implementation of the European Approach to Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes

By ECA Secretariat (Information taken from <https://impea.eu/>)

On December 17 the ImpEA project final event was held.

During this online conference, the project results were presented and the future challenges for the full implementation of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes were outlined.

broadly. Building on the success of its 2016–2019 predecessor project – Systemic University Change Towards Internationalisation (SUCTI) – SUCTIA aims to empower academic staff by developing a peer training model similar to that of SUCTI, focused on providing academics with knowledge and skills related to their university's internationalisation process. This is timely and important work as, among other things, engaging European academics in the internationalisation agendas and activities of their higher education institutions is considered a key component of the ongoing effort to improve the quality of higher education in Europe and fulfil the aspirations of a European Education Area.



The main aim of the project is to support efficient implementation of the European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes:

- This aim will be achieved by successful completion of the following objectives.
- Identifying key obstacles in implementation of the European Approach in the European Higher Education Area in general, and project partner countries in particular;
- Supporting partner QA agencies in running EA-based programme accreditation procedures (ex ante and ex post).



- Supporting partner HEI in pursuing the external accreditation based on the European Approach.
- Developing an EA implementation toolkit (set of recommendations and proposed solutions for the policy makers and QA agencies).

The ImpEA project launched a [toolkit](#) to support the implementation of the European approach to Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. A great resource for Higher Education institutions and Quality Assurance agencies.

For more and complete information about the ImpEA Project, please, follow this [link](https://impea.eu): <https://impea.eu>



ImpEA Project. Final Conference



## IHES Virtual Conference 2020: MAKING A DIFFERENCE Internationalisation in Higher Education for Society (IHES) 26-27 November 2020

By ECA Secretariat (Information taken from <https://www.ihes-conference.com/>)

On November 26th and 27th was held the online free conference "IHES (Internationalisation in Higher Education for Society)". This conference was organized in the framework of the SUCTIA project.

Internationalisation in Higher Education for Society (IHES) explicitly aims to benefit the wider community, at home or abroad, through international or intercultural education, research, service and engagement.

There were three days of learning and networking, Pre-conference workshop on 25 November 2020, Conference on 26-27 November 2020, Practical examples of IHES projects, Sessions, panel discussions and networking events.

During the Conference, the IHES study was presented.

The study shows that IHES has the potential to make a meaningful and important contribution to HEIs, their local communities and the global common good. Whether this potential is ever realised will depend on the extent to which HEIs, meta-level organisations and governments prioritise IHES in their internationalisation strategies in the coming decade.

Link to Internationalisation in Higher Education for Society study [here](#). Access to complete information about the IHES Virtual Conference. [here](#).



IHES Virtual Conference



## New CeQInt website (Certificate for Quality in Internationalization)

By ECA Secretariat

Last Friday, December 18, during the ECA General Meeting, the new CeQInt website was launched and presented.

The CeQInt methodology can be used to assess the quality of internationalisation at programme- or at institutional level. A successful assessment leads to the award of the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation. This Certificate confirms that a programme or an institution has

successfully incorporated an international and intercultural dimension into the purpose, function and delivery of its education.

All information about methodology, awarded certificates and procedure can be consulted on the new web. [www.ceqint.eu](http://www.ceqint.eu)

# CeQInt.

**Excellence in Internationalisation**

New image of the CeQInt logo



## NEWS FROM ECA MEMBERS

### ACSUCYL is organising a cycle of webinars on the “challenges of official degrees from the employer’s perspective”

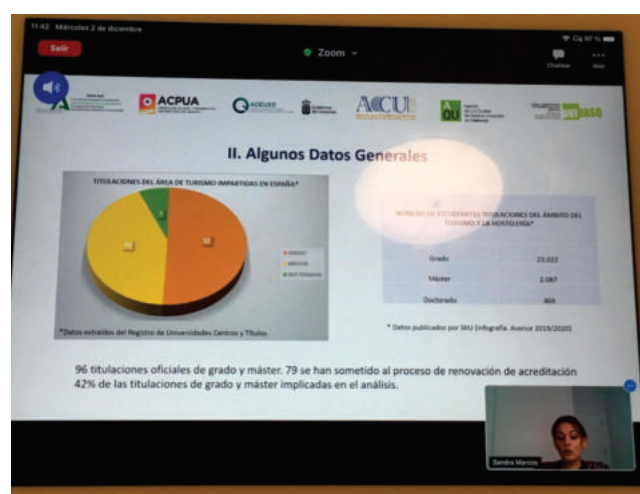
By Sandra Marcos (ACSUCYL)

These webinars are organized together with other five Spanish Regional Agencies, AQU, ACPUA, DEVA, ACCUEE and UNIBASQ and have as main objective to analyse the degrees from a national and international perspective, and to discuss on the challenges that the degrees have to face in order to fulfil the requirements of the labour market.

So far two webinars have been held, the first focused on nursing studies and the second on tourism studies. During the webinars are also presented the results of the [thematic analysis](#) that these six agencies have done about the studies. To do so, the evaluation reports of the ex-post evaluation have been analysed in order to get an overview of the studies and of the main weaknesses.

The webinars are based on the work done by AQU Cataluña about the opinion of the employers on the Higher education. To foster the discussion the results of this project is presented. In the discussion employers, students, academics as well as agencies are involved.

Next webinar is expected to be held at the end of February and will be focus on the Primary Education.

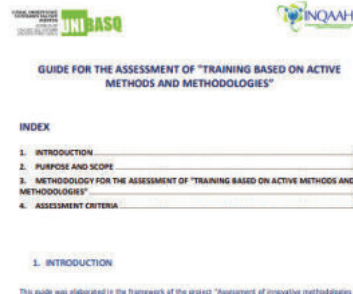


## Presentation of the outcomes of the INNOMETH project regarding the assessment of active teaching and learning methodologies

By Eva Fernández De Labastida Amurrio (UNIBASQ)

On 29 October 2020, Unibasq presented the outcomes of the project "Assessment of innovative methodologies in teaching and learning in the Basque University System (INNOMETH)", coordinated by Unibasq and financed by INQAAHE (The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education), within the framework of the Summer Courses of the UPV/EHU. The aim of the webinar was to carry out a rigorous reflection on initiatives to promote active learning methodologies in the field of higher education. Focusing on the analysis of the role of external assessment agencies, both in the current scenario and in the future post-COVID-19 scenario and

analysing specific initiatives while establishing contact links between university managers, teachers and other stakeholders that advocate the promotion of this type of methodologies in the university environment.



[Assessment guide.](#)



Presentation of the outcomes of the INNOMETH project



## Satisfaction of experts and universities representatives with virtual on-site visits within the scope of accreditation

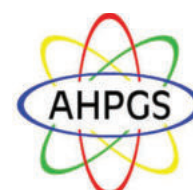
By AHPGS

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, AHPGS conducted 33 virtual on-site visits between March and July 2020. Within the scope of the survey, all participating experts (115) and university representatives (45) were interviewed. The questionnaire focused on satisfaction with preparation, positive aspects and possibilities for improvement of the virtual on-site visits. The research question is: Which processes have to be adapted by the AHPGS in order to guarantee the satisfaction of the experts and university representatives? Altogether 96.3% of the experts

and 88.8% of the university representatives were "very satisfied" or "rather satisfied" with virtual on site visits

The time savings and efficiency were cited as positive, while limited social exchange and paraverbal communication were cited more negatively. The interviewees see potential for improvement in the time schedule or breaks, technology, communication and moderation.

**Satisfaction of experts and universities representatives with virtual on-site assessments within the scope of accreditation** (for a full analysis in German see [here](#))



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# Enhancing Standards of Quality Assurance Agencies

By Maja Milas Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency (SQAA)

The context of this news article is grounded in activities of the project of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency (SQAA) focusing on exploring independence of quality assurance agencies from different national and European environments.

The focus of our project research relies on five main categories of independence:

1. The appointment of chief executive,
2. The process of preparing and adopting criteria /standards for accreditation and evaluation procedures,
3. The appointment of experts,
4. The decision-making procedures,
5. The appeal procedures.



## ASHE carried out a research on the experience of studying during the pandemic and social isolation

By Agency for Science and Higher Education Croatia (ASHE)

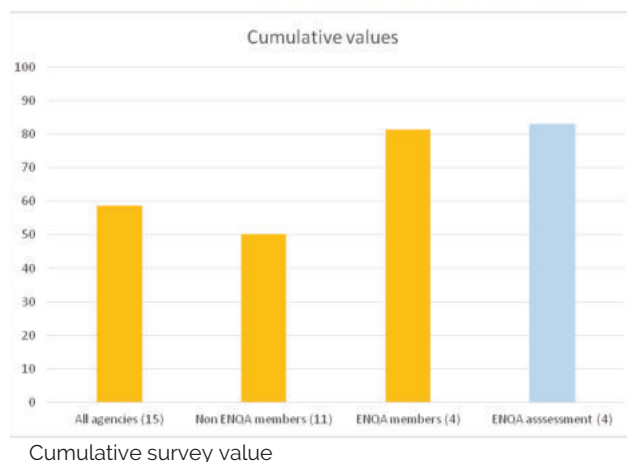
ASHE carried out a research entitled **Challenges in Higher Education during the COVID-19 pandemic and social isolation: experiences and needs of staff members and students at higher education institutions**. The research was carried out during June and July 2020 through an online survey in which staff members and students from higher education institutions throughout Croatia participated.

The research indicates that the majority of respondents from both groups - students and higher education institutions' staff members consider that online teaching is appropriate for the transfer of theoretical knowledge, but when it

Until now, we have qualitatively and quantitatively analysed questionnaires of 15 quality assurance agencies.

You can find the progress report of the project [here](#).

In the second stage of the project, we plan to upgrade the qualitative analysis by including a larger sample of agencies from different countries. We invite you to join our efforts and answer the questionnaire [here](#).



comes to practical teaching, different forms of exercises, studies in the artistic field, etc., online teaching is not applicable or, if it is the only possible way in which teaching can be delivered, it requires considerable modifications.

Furthermore, the majority of respondents from both categories, considers that direct contact is not replaceable and cannot be offset by online platforms, especially for first-year students.



agency for science and higher education





## THE-ICE forges new international partnerships with Hosco and UK NARIC

By International Centre of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education (THE-ICE)

THE-ICE has signed a [Memorandum of Understanding with the United Kingdom's National Recognition Information Centre \(UK NARIC\)](#) and also welcomed Hosco as a new Business Alliance Partner.

The MoU commits to exploring mutual collaboration in accreditation, quality enhancement, and recognition with UK NARIC, with the aim of exchanging information and expertise, and building a collaborative partnership for accreditation and benchmarking activities, paving the way for combining accreditation procedures.

THE-ICE has also [joined forces with Hosco](#), the hospitality network. Powered by Hosco's

technology, THE-ICE members can track students' and alumni's employment status, role, department, and job location, among other information, enabling them to map career development and monitor and benchmark placement activities' efficacy, to continue improving employment strategies.

These new partnerships support the mission of THE-ICE to significantly and sustainably enhance higher education quality in tourism, hospitality, events and culinary arts (TH&E) globally, and add value to THE-ICE membership.



International Centre of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education (THE-ICE)



## First virtual THE-ICE International Panel of Experts (VIPoE) draws attendance from 25 member institutions in 16 countries

By International Centre of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education (THE-ICE)

Representatives from 25 THE-ICE member institutions across 16 countries came together in October for the first virtual [International Panel of Experts, Exploring the Post-pandemic 'New Normal' of TH&E Education and Quality Assurance](#).

THE-ICE's annual signature event offers high-level panel sessions, workshops, and roundtable discussions focusing on strategic issues facing tourism, hospitality, events, and culinary arts (TH&E) education. Virtual panel sessions and workshops brought together industry and academic experts from around the world to share knowledge and

support one another in this unprecedented pandemic environment. Recordings and key takeaways from all sessions are now available via THE-ICE website.

The postponed THE-ICE 14th IPoE Forum is scheduled to take place during the week of 25th October 2021, being proudly hosted by the University of Derby in Buxton, United Kingdom, and exploring the theme Securing our Future – Exploring Sustainability in and of Tourism and Hospitality Education.







# love, peace, and joy

Let's celebrate these Christmas with optimism and all the desire in the world to keep going. Our best wishes for infinite health. Hopefully 2021 brings us the desired stability and exciting projects



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**ECA Secretariat will be on holidays from  
December 22, 2020 to January 4, 2021.  
For any urgent matter do not hesitate to send an  
e-mail: [secretariat@ecahe.eu](mailto:secretariat@ecahe.eu)**



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