2019

ECA Barometer

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Foreword

It is my great honour to present the first edition of the ECA Barometer. This publication is the result of almost full year of work of several quality assurance agencies engaged in the ECA's activities.

European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA) aims to spot and exploit opportunities for innovative approaches in quality assurance. We are proud of our current track record in this area. We developed and pilot tested methodology for single accreditation procedure of joint programmes, which later on significantly contributed to the European Approach to Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes. ECA Certificate for Quality in Internationalisation (CeQuInt) provides unique opportunity for higher education institutions to foster continuous improvement of the education quality through internationalisation. Becoming CeQuInt-labelled institution allows higher education institutions to get credible recognition for its internationalisation attempts and communicate it to the global community.

We want to continue our search for innovative methods of quality assurance in more and more diverse environments. Therefore, we made an effort to combine our thoughts in single publication in order to recognise the importance of forthcoming trends and phenomena not only for the higher education but also for the quality assurance landscape.

The ECA Barometer aims to become beacon for quality assurance community and explore possible futures, without making any judgement or taking any particular stance. We want to engage our partners and stakeholders to co-create the future of quality assurance and we hope that the articles we present to you will be good starting point for it.

Finally, would like to express my gratitude to all the authors for their effort and contribution, as well as to Francois Pernot for coordinating this project.

hope you will enjoy the reading and join us in making quality assurance more innovative and adapted to the challenges of the modern and future world.

Maciej Markowski

Chair of the Board

european consortium for accreditation

Introduction

At a global level higher education and research have been transformed and have been undergoing deep and accelerating transformation since the early 2000s[1].

First of all student enrolment increased by more than 50% in 10 years, from 139 to 212 million between 2005 and 2015, and this trend could lead to 80 million additional students in 2025. The strongest growth takes place today in the Asia-Oceania region, ahead of sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. Student enrolment has markedly risen in low-income countries, but in terms of volume, it is in middle-income countries that the increase has swollen.

Moreover, as tuition fees are generally increasing, higher education is increasingly seen as a consumer product, paid service, and students and their families are therefore increasingly demanding in terms of the quality of training and teachers.

Students are also increasingly mobile and international mobility is expected to double in 10 years, between 2015 and 2026, as the major traditional mobility destinations (the United States, Europe, Australia) are increasingly competing with countries in Asia and the Middle East. However it should be noted here that this trend has stalled somewhat since 2015 due to the political, military and economic crises that regularly shake the world: the current conflicts, the increased instability of certain regions of the world, have a real negative impact on international university cooperation, and in many countries we have seen the development of programmes operating on the principle of "internationalisation at home", or "offshore campuses" (more than 200 in 2011, nearly 300 in 2020) or "mirror campuses", with American and European universities preferring to establish themselves abroad rather than to establish sometimes fragile partnerships.

At a global level higher education and research have become both a market and a strategic challenge of influence in which new players are emerging. As a result private operators are increasingly establishing themselves in regional education markets and companies are creating online learning platforms that offer more and more open access courses. In fact higher education and research are deeply impacted by the "digital knowledge revolution" and the development of online courses and Mooc platforms, mainly in Europe, Asia and the United States.

[1] Cf. All the following data are available, detailed and explained in: Nicolas CHARLES, Quentin DELPECH (with the contribution of Julian MICHELET), Investir dans l'internationalisation de l'enseignement supérieur, France Stratégie, janvier 2015 (available on line) ; and Andrée SURSOCK, Trends 2015: Learning and Teaching in European Universities, European University Association 2015.

Finally, last but not least, in more and more countries of the South, the three traditional pillars of higher education and research - training, research and innovation - are giving way to a trinity revisited on one point - training, research and societal responsibility - the latter pillar being referred to in some countries of Central and South America as “vinculación”, in other words the “link” between the university and society, the country, social issues, such as sustainable development and ecology.

The higher education sector has undergone a complete transformation: it is now easier to stop and resume studies; lifelong learning has become a reality; it is easy to start studies at a university and then follow a semester or a year of international mobility; new knowledge acquisition practices have developed, books and print are gradually giving way to electronic publications, online, recorded, podcasted courses, and social networks are everywhere in the world of higher education and research. Above all there is a growing interest not only in the knowledge acquired, but also in the skills, know-how and attitudes that a student acquires during his or her training, both in and out of university.

In terms of research, the isolated research centre model is obsolete, now research can only be conceived at a high level in networks or clusters of research centres and, in a world of research where everyone has a very easy access to a lot of data, the quality of research and scientific integrity have become major issues in the first quarter of the 21st century.

Finally the very structure of higher education and research institutions is changing. The latter’s strategy for progress in the higher education and research market and their mode of governance are changing considerably, as can be seen from the multiplication of rankings or from the projects of European universities networking institutions, training courses and research centres at varying degrees of size.

Faced with all these transformations, these changes, these evolutions of higher education and research institutions, of training, of research centres, in order to avoid “forgeries” which are also developing exponentially and have become a global scourge - forgeries, fake diplomas, fake institutions... - the only common thread that shapes the whole, which makes it possible to reassure and inform students, families, decision-makers and authorities in a country is quality assurance.

The work of higher education and research quality assurance agencies and bodies responsible for the evaluation and accreditation of institutions, training and research centres has therefore become fundamental and a major challenge of the 21st century. Major changes in the higher education landscape and in quality assurance, LLL processes, flexible learning and digitalization, future skills and competencies and their impact on quality assurance, social dimension of higher education, the European universities and their impact on quality assurance and quality assurance of research, all these points are developed here in six substantive syntheses written by representatives of ECA member agencies, in the first ECA Barometer, coordinated by Hcéres in 2019.

François Pernot

Director of the Europe and International Department of Hcéres

The Tumultuous Higher Education Landscape and the Response of Quality Assurance

Dr Craig Thompson, CEO of THE-ICE & Ms Pauline Tang, Former CEO of THE-ICE

The Perfect Storm Within Higher Education

There is little doubt that higher education is facing a 'perfect storm' of challenges, which are increasing in number, complexity and scope. At the 15th INQAAHE Biennial Conference (March 2019, Sri Lanka) one key note presenter after another chose to highlight a myriad of processes that contribute to the storm marked by;

- Exponential growth in the number of universities worldwide, with over 10,000 having been founded in the last 50 years (Williams, 2019)

- Consequential rapid growth in the number of students to 2017 million worldwide, up from half that number in 2000 (Salmi, 2019)

- And, as part of this, growth in international students to some 5 million in 2016, representing a doubling in the last 15 years (Salmi, 2019)

- A proliferation in the form of study, marked by a growth in the percentage of US students enrolled in at least one online course from below 26% in 2013 to more than 33% in 2017 (Williams, 2019)

- Changes in the form of study, including problem based learning, experiential learning, multidisciplinary programmes, competency based learning, and

- Growth and diversification in the shape of awards (microcredentials, mini-masters, nano-courses, Moocs) and

- Related changes in the form of institutions (industry based, boot camps, online) (Salmi, 2019)

The Response by Quality Assurance

The challenge of this growing and intensifying storm has been met by significant and sustained growth and development within Quality Assurance. As UNESCO reported, over the last three decades, quality assurance in higher education has gained significant momentum worldwide. Major drivers for this momentum include: increased public demand for better performance of higher education institutions, widening of access and a clear call from stakeholders for greater efficiency and accountability, the need for

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better quality graduates to drive national economies, better use of public resources for higher education and increasing cross-border provisions.

Furthermore, whilst the quality assurance procedures that were often dependent on national directorial traditions have gradually tended to converge and led to a setup of common tools and standards (Georgios et al, 2016), reflected in the creation of a number of regional agreements relating to quality assurance in higher education;

- Latin America development of sub-regional guiding principles, which are still pending (1974)

- Arab States protocol (1978)

- ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (2015)

- African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (2018)

Within the European context, the Sorbonne Declaration, signed in 1998 by ministers of France, Italy, UK and Germany and the establishment of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), laid a solid foundation in changing the landscape and operational environment cross-border education.

The Declaration became the driving force that encouraged, supported and facilitated the mobility of students, teaching staff and academics, enabling them to pursue the benefit of a study period in Europe and outside of their home countries.

Furthermore, the commitment at and the concerted effort from ministerial level have contributed significantly in providing a common quality assurance framework for the successful implementation of internationalisation of higher education in Europe. Notably, the adoption of the 'Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)' in 2005, a proposed model for peer review of quality assurance agencies on a national basis as prepared by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in co-operation with the European Students' Union (ESU), the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) and the European University Association (EUA); the establishment of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG); the setting up of the European

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Register for Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAR) - for the register of QA agencies that comply with the ESG in 2007; the revised ESG (2015, Brussels, Belgium)[1] to include the recognition of digital learning, flexible learning tracks and competencies gained outside formal education; to name a few.

The Challenge of an International Approach to Quality Assurance

Notwithstanding the well-articulated standards and guidelines (ESG), harmonisation of quality assurance, be it institutional-based or program-based, poses complex challenges.

'One size fit all', unfortunately, is not relevant or applicable in QA. The reality is, amongst the stakeholder countries and agencies, the level of development and evolution of their respective quality assurance policies and standards, or national qualifications frameworks, varies significantly. But the challenge is compounded by the need for compliance with the legislative requirements of each country, which render the development of mutual recognition of QA standards a major task. Some key challenges include:

- How to reconcile variance in QA standards between the two national qualification framework – which country's framework is to be used as the basis of the cross-mapping?

- The operational logistics – the impact of the variance in the implementation of assessment process and procedures? For example, whether accreditation is undertaken at institution or programme level and the significance accorded to each, and differences in the validity period of each assessment cycle.

- Significant differences in educational systems (time based or competency based) and assessment practices, and the impact on these on quality assurance.

Despite the challenges, breakthroughs have been made including a bold and

[1] See full document: https://enqa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ESG_2015.pdf

groundbreaking agreement between the NVAO (Accreditation Agency of the Netherlands and Flanders) and THE-ICE (International Centre of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education), which enabled all five Dutch hotel schools to combine national and international accreditation (by NVAO) with international accreditation (by THE-ICE) in 2018. The process not only reduced the accreditation burden on the institutions and agencies involved, but (perhaps more significantly) enabled the NVAO and THE-ICE to understand and share good practices, which paves the way for further national and international integration. On the basis of this, THE-ICE is currently pursuing similar agreements with PACUCOA (The Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation), HEEACT (Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan) and TEQSA (Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency).

Increasing Collaboration….It's the Only Way

The real challenge to increasing collaboration in quality assurance of higher education is not however the variances between current systems, either educational or quality, but the relentless growth in the tide of other 'disrupters' as described earlier. In simple terms, if quality assurance is to prevail (which, of course, it must) its rate of change and development must at least match, and ideally outstrip, the rate of development of the disrupters. Which is no mean task. If quality assurance fails to provide the system and the assurance stakeholders need, they will inevitably look elsewhere for assurance. The recent proliferation of rankings and the significance accorded to these may be seen as evidence of this process in action.

As such, QA agencies must be prepared to be innovative and nimble. They must be prepared to accommodate and compromise, to challenge and adapt nation

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LLL processes, flexible learning and digitalization: dream or reality?

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1. Agencies working on the chapter

- AIKA (Latvia)
- ASHE (Croatia)

2. Topics

I. Distance learning programs and universities (e-learning, MOOCS)
II. Flexible learning
III. Artificial intelligence impact
IV. Open education
V. Fraud and digitalization

3. Contribution to the topic

INTRODUCTION NOTES

According to Stefania Giannini, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Education, UNESCO's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[1] is grounded on the principle of lifelong learning. On the level of EU, The Lifelong Learning Platform[2] is established as an umbrella that gathers 42 European organisations active in the field of education, training and youth, coming from all over Europe and beyond. Currently these networks represent more than 50 000 educational institutions and associations covering all sectors of formal, non-formal and informal learning. In the coming years, the education market will adapt to the needs of people born in the digital age, with an emphasis on technology used in all aspects of life, thus creating a need for gaining knowledge about and through using new technologies. LLL could and should be a solution for obtaining necessary skills and competences for the future, thus making flexible learning and digitalization reality.

I. Distance learning programs and universities (e-learning, MOOCS)

Main issues

As the population becomes more mobile there is a growing necessity to provide different services online, including education. It is important to provide education at any time and without a specific location – the location does not anymore define what the person is able to study. Distance learning gives freedom of choice and comfort.

The flexibility offered by online education can contribute to the strengthening of lifelong learning and equality in education and it opens possibility for professionals in need of lifelong learning to follow courses in one's own time and at one's own place. Online learning is also expected to make higher education more inclusive as it opens up new learning possibilities to groups that traditionally have little access, such as refugees. Distance learning also reaches out to underserved populations of lower socioeconomic status, more remotely positioned learners, including many who are homebound with disabilities.

[1] https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/

[2] http://lllplatform.eu/who-we-are/about-us/

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Until 2018 more than 100 millions of serious students and inquisitive individuals[3] have enrolled in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) from top-name universities and professors for free. Today's workplace demands continuous learning at any stage of a career. Opportunities abound for individual advancement through online corporate training, bachelors and graduate degrees and certificates of specialization.

Moving forward, online education providers are more curious to embark upon lifelong learning with a little help from technology. More valuable opportunities for the progress paths are made possible through distance learning today.

According to writer, blogger and entrepreneur John Unger[4] among the advantages listed for distance learning is the wide selection of learning opportunities, accessibility, convenience and opportunities for networking. Online learning platforms allow students to move at their own pace and learn from world-class experts.

The largest online community of e-learning professionals in the industry "eLearning Industry" (elearningindustry.com) claims that distance learning is currently developing in two directions – educational online platforms offering massive open online courses and training programmes developed by companies, for example, computer language, marketing etc[5].

Future orientations

In the coming years, the education market will adapt to the needs of people born in the digital age, with an emphasis on technology.

Following inevitable development of the distance learning programs and institutions providing such programs, future activities should focus on following:

- Strengthening the Quality Assurance procedures of the distance learning courses, as well as their providers,
- Improving and evaluating skills/competences that are associated with new learning methods (e.g. digital skills, time-management skills, understanding and recognizing credible information, online communication skills).

[3] https://www.classcentral.com/report/mooc-stats-2018/

[4] https://elearningindustry.com/2018-online-education-key-trends-7

[5] https://elearningindustry.com/2018-online-education-key-trends-7

II. Flexible learning

Main issues

According to the IGI Global dictionary[6] flexible learning is defined both as systems in which students may complete some of their learning on-campus and some off-campus as well as the design and delivery of study programmes, courses in a way to cater student demands for variety, access, recognition of diverse learning styles and also as the approach to learning in which the time, place and pace of learning is defined by the learner.

Learning environment should grow out of the need for a training that can adapt responsively and flexibly to the everyday learning and educational requirements of individuals and allied businesses. Some of our courses involve workplace delivery and assessment, to ensure you gain practical work experience in your chosen career. Where is needed, education should provide students with a unique practical placement experience. One which is diverse in the various scope of practices and where students can experience a range of services that student will be engaged with when on a placement. Flexible learning should provide a meaningful learning experience by giving students as much control as possible over what, when, where and how they learn. Accessing resources flexibly is not so much about enabling people to gain a qualification online but rather it is about using technology to provide an exciting, highly interactive learning experience that takes advantage of the various resources and technologies available.

All definitions lead to the concept of student-centered learning which is becoming more and more recognised in the higher education community and is emphasised by the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), namely by the standard 1.3. Student-centered learning addresses the diversity of students, the variety of pedagogical methods, modes of delivery, sense of autonomy in the learner. There have been several projects on defining student-centered learning and assessing its implementation in higher education institutions, for example, “Time for a paradigm change: student centered learning” (T4SCL)[7] and “Peer Assessment of Student Centred Learning” (PASCL)[8].

Future orientations

Flexible learning should be seen as an opportunity to attract new potential students, who are not able to acquire knowledge according to the established ways due to various obstacles, both private business. In addition, they can contribute to higher completion rates.

Evaluating flexible learning in terms of course quality is one of the ways of recognition of the added value of the education providers.

III. Artificial intelligence impact

Main issues

Artificial intelligence (AI) should be perceived as an area of computer science in combination of mathematics and other complex sciences, putting emphasis on the creation of intelligent machines that work and react like humans[9]. Among the advantages of artificial intelligence is the error reduction (reaching accuracy with a greater degree of precision), possibility for daily application, possibility of taking decisions logically without emotional side, performing repetitive tasks/activities.
AI is good in logical/technical matters but not in creativity, social perceptiveness, design and working in teams. Academic world is becoming more convenient and

[6] https://www.igi--global.com/dictionary/classification-approaches-web-enhanced-learning/11249

[7] http://www.t4scl.eu/

[8] http://pascl.eu/

[9] https://www.techopedia.com/definition/190/artificial-intelligence-ai

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personalized thanks to the numerous applications of AI for education that help reducing the administrative burden or help improve process of gaining knowledge. AI systems could be programmed to provide expertise, serving as a place for students to ask questions and find information or could even potentially take the place of teachers for very basic course materials. It could also offer students a way to experiment and learn in a relatively judgment-free environment.

Among the disadvantages of artificial intelligence is the high cost for maintaining the software programmes, the fact that artificial intelligence does not replicate humans, the fact that it cannot be improved with experience as the way artificial intelligence can be accessed and is used is very different from human intelligence and no original creativity.

To sum up this, on one hand, it is essential to develop the science of artificial intelligence and, on the other hand, it is important to promote and educate about the responsible usage of artificial intelligence. Generally speaking, most things that have been created across the world are a continuous result of intelligence – AI empowers human intelligence; so as long we are successful in keeping technology beneficial, humans will be able to help human civilization.

Future orientations

Usage of AI within study programs delivery should be evaluated and recognized within formal evaluation procedures for QA. This could be done through an existing ESG standards (e.g. 1.3.).

IV. Open education

Main issues

The European Commission's defines open education as "a way of carrying out education, often using digital technologies". Its aim is to widen access and participation to everyone by removing barriers and making learning accessible, abundant, and customisable for all. It offers multiple ways of teaching and learning, building and sharing knowledge. It also provides a variety of access routes to formal and non-formal education, and connects".[10] Opening up education is an important item on the European policy agenda for many reasons

[10] https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/open-education

(it helps to reduce or remove barriers to education, it supports the modernisation of higher education and it opens up the possibility of bridging non-formal and formal education).

Open education is education without academic admission requirements and is typically offered online. Open education expands access to learning and training traditionally offered through formal education systems. Institutions practice to eliminate barriers for entry, i.e., such education would not have academic admission requirements. In general, open education is also philosophy about the way people should produce, share, and build on knowledge, and everyone should have access to high-quality educational experiences and resources. Open education encompasses resources, tools and practices that employ a framework of open sharing to improve educational access and effectiveness worldwide.

The advantages of using open education include expanded access to learning, easiness to distribute widely with little or no cost, supplementing lectures where deficiencies in information are evident, enhancement of regular course content, quick circulation, less expenses for students, possibility for strengthening ties for alumni and continually improved resources.

By providing free and open access to education and knowledge, open education helps create a world to support learning. Students can get additional information, viewpoints and materials to help them succeed. Workers can learn things that will help them on the job. Faculty can draw on resources from all around the world. Researchers can share data and develop new networks. Teachers can find new ways to help students learn. People can connect with others they wouldn't otherwise meet to share ideas and information. Materials can be translated, mixed together, broken apart and openly shared again, increasing access and inviting fresh approaches. Anyone can access educational materials, scholarly articles, and supportive learning communities anytime they want to. Education is available, accessible, modifiable and free.

Among the disadvantages are the quality issues, lack of human interaction between teachers and students, language and cultural barriers, technological issues, intellectual property/copyright concerts and sustainability issues.

Future orientations

Quality of open learning will become an issue and possible procedures for assuring the quality to give quality education should be developed.

V. Fraud and digitalization

Main issues

E-learning awards, but also traditional one, come in many different forms, the most common being degree or diploma style certificates and digital or open badges.

Digitalisation has both positive and negative effect on fraud. On the one hand, with increased digitalisation there are also increased possibilities of fraud and the higher education institutions and authorities have to increase their efforts in thinking about safe and modern tools for fighting fraud, for example, the document fraud, diploma mills and accreditation mills etc. Also there is question on prevention the frauds when testing e-learning.

On the other hand, with increasing digitalisation there are also more tools that the higher education institutions and authorities can use. Such tools include databases of higher education institutions and study programmes, tools for authentication of learners. Higher education institutions with online education traditions have developed their own solutions to ensure academic integrity. There are also new initiatives, for example, the "An Adaptive

Trust-based e-assessment System for Learning" (TeSLA) project with the aim to develop publicly available solutions that all higher education institutions could use[11]. Many providers of higher education online degrees have developed strategies on how to fight plagiarism and exam's cheating. Purdue University is one of them that listed several solutions on how to preserve academic integrity[12].

The development of new and more advanced tools is still in process. A new alternative for reducing fraud and fostering academic recognition is the blockchain technology.

Future orientations

Development and usage of tools for authentications of qualifications should be a standard in providing education that will be trustworthy.

Education institutions should put additional efforts to education of users of educational services (students, professors but also external stakeholders), both in the ethical (academic) behaviour and the consequences of fraud.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE AND INITIATIVES ON LLL

The European Commission has funded several projects that are considered examples of good practice in this field. For example, "BEFLEX PLUS – Progress on Flexibility in the Bologna Reform", coordinated by the European Association for University Lifelong Learning, which analyses how lifelong learning in higher education is developing in Europe, and describes how Bologna tools can be used for developing policy and practice by higher education institutions.

More examples of good practice in LLL can be found in documents published by European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)[13] or European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning (EUCIS-LLL)[14].

CONCLUSION

The need for quality assurance systems to embrace challenges in lifelong learning was underlined more than a decade ago in the European Universities Charter on Lifelong Learning[15]. The European Union set itself the target to increase the share of 30 to 34-year-olds who complete tertiary education or equivalent to at least 40 % by 2020. Reaching this goal depends partly on widening access to tertiary level institutions. One way of reaching this goal is to recognize and encourage the development of online study programmes and distance learning in general.

In order to encourage higher education institutions to introduce more distance learning courses or study programs, and generally to use modern technologies (eg. MOOC, AI), it is necessary to somehow acknowledge their efforts they have invested in it. QA procedures that evaluate the quality of their work could be a convenient way to recognize their investment of resources into development of new ways to teach.

[11] http://tesla-project.eu/

[12] Strategies for Online Academic Integrity: Plagiarism and Cheating Prevention (https://www.purdue.edu/innovativelearning/supporting-instruction/portal/files/14_Strategies_for_Online_Academic_Integrity.pdf)

[13] Adina Timofei, Lifelong Learning: Impediments & Examples of good practice (The results of a EURASHE study), 2018. (https://www.eurashe.eu/library/modernising-phe/LLL_Impediments_Examples_December2008.pdf)

[14] EUCIS-LLL, Social Inclusion in Education and Training, 2011 (http://lllplatform.eu/lll/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/EUCIS-LLL-Publication-Social-Dimension.pdf)

[15] "European Universities' Charter on Lifelong learning", published in 2008 by the European University Association (https://eua.eu/resources/publications/646:european-universities%E2%80%99-charter-on-lifelong-learning.html)

Future skills and competencies – impact on quality assurance

Maciej Markowski (PKA, Poland)

Landscape – what and why is changing?

"If a typical person can do a mental task with less than one second of thought, we can probably automate it using AI either now or in the near future[1]." This single sentence indicates the most probable future of majority of industries and jobs. Automation and artificial intelligence are part of so called Fourth Industrial Revolution or Industry / Economy 4.0. The Fourth Industrial Revolution is described as "a fusion of technologies that is blurring the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres"[2].

As previous ones, Industry 4.0 already has a tremendous impact on labour market. However, this does not necessarily need to mean simple jobs replacement by robots. Quite on the contrary, the Manpower report based on the research study among 19,417 employers across 6 industry sectors in 44 countries, shows that 87% of them plan to increase or at least maintain current level of employment. However, the same report indicates that the surveyed companies plan to invest in upskilling of their employees in order to enable them to perform new roles, complementary to those done by robots[3]. The most significant changes will undoubtedly affect the IT and manufacturing industry[4], but it will have its implications almost to every sector, including finance, accounting, administration, human resources, customer relations, etc.

Technological revolution fuels not only micro-level single company changes. It also supports macrotrends we already know very well. OECD indicate that global value chains enabled by increasing level of globalisation create unpreceded opportunities for individuals, companies and whole economies to speed up growth

[1] Ng, Robert, What Artificial Intelligence Can and Can't Do Right Now, Harvard Business Review. November 09, 2016

[2] Schwab K., The Fourth Industrial Revolution: what it means and how to respond, World Economic Forum. World Economic Forum. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-what-it-meansand-how-to-respond.

[3] Humans Wanted: Robots Need You, Manpower, 2019

[4] Skills Gap and Future of Work Study, Deloitte Insights and The Manufacturing Institute, 2018

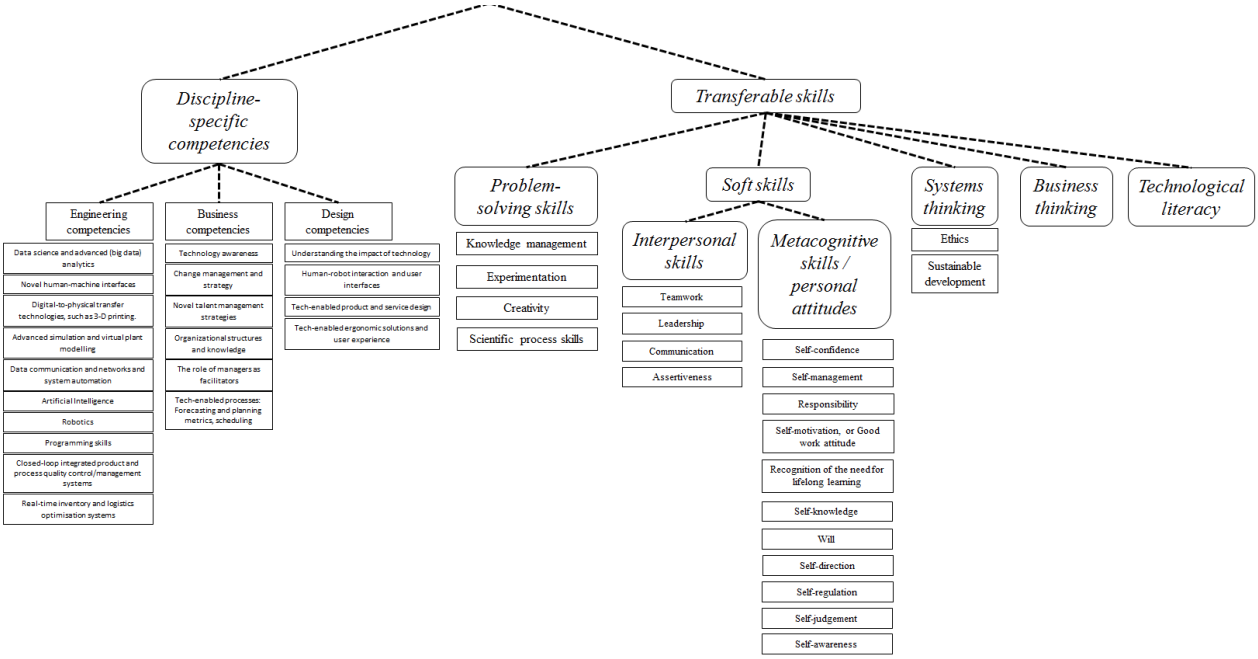

Figure 1. Working life skills framework – Universities of the Future project
Source: State-of-maturity and competence needs. Industry 4.0 Implications For Higher Education Institutions, Universities of the Future project, https://universitiesofthefuture.eu/comunication/, 2018

and wealth. However, full potential of global and almost instantaneous access to markets, customers and suppliers require different skills then before[5].

Finally, modern globally competitive market is foreseen to be more and more influenced by new business models, delivering new values to the customers (i.e. sharing economy)[6].

What skills are foreseen to be important?

New jobs, professions, knowledge-based economy and hyper-connected society require new skills. In general, the starting point for searching of the such skills is to identify the areas which are hard to replace by artificial intelligence or automation. Communication, empathy, creativity, strategic thinking, questioning, and dreaming and very good examples[7].

More advanced studies[8] focusing on technologically intensive Industry 4.0 requirements indicate that the most desired profile of ideal job candidate will be a mix of discipline-specific competencies and transferable skills (Figure 1) .

When forecasting future skills and competencies, it is important to remember about high dynamics of the modern world. Results of the regular research performed by the World Economic Forum among chief human resources and strategy officers from leading global employers[9] reflect these changes:

[5] OECD (2017), OECD Skills Outlook 2017: Skills and Global Value Chains, OECD Publishing, Paris

[6] Disruptive Trends That Will Transform the Auto Industry, McKinsey & Company (2016)

[7] Marr B., 7 Job Skills Of The Future (That AIs And Robots Can't Do Better Than Humans), Forbes, August 6, 2018. https://www.forbes.com/sites/bernardmarr/2018/08/06/7-job-skills-of-the-future-that-ais-and-robots-cant-do-better-than-humans

[8] State-of-maturity and competence needs. Industry 4.0 Implications For Higher Education Institutions, Universities of the Future project, universitiesofthefuture.eu, 2018

[9] Grey, A., The 10 skills you need to thrive in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, World Economic Forum, January 2016, https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-10-skills-you-need-to-thrive-in-the-fourth-industrial-revolution/

In 2020	In 2015
1. Complex problem solving	1. Complex problem solving
2. Critical thinking	2. Coordinating with others
3. Creativity	3. People management
4. People management	4. Critical thinking
5. Coordinating with others	5. Negotiation
6. Emotional intelligence	6. Quality control
7. Judgement and decision making	7. Service orientation
8. Service orientation	8. Judgement and decision making
9. Negotiation	9. Active listening
10. Cognitive flexibility	10. Creativity

Source: Future of Jobs Report, World Economic Forum, 2016

What are foreseen implications for higher education?

Higher education is widely perceived as the most certain way of raising social and economic status of an individual. Therefore, it is not surprising that more than 40% of citizens of the OECD countries of age 25-34 graduate from a university[10]. However, so called premium on education increases in inverse proportion to the overall percentage of the country's population holding equal degree[11]. That means that in average increase of income of higher education graduate compared to a person without such degree is higher in countries where percentage of population with higher education is lower. Therefore, more and more research among employers world-wide emphasise the importance of soft or transversal skills for future employability. As the phenomenon grows, national and international policy makers adjust national policies and strategies to face this challenge. More and more OECD countries develop their skills strategies in order to adjust their education systems to new realities and assure "lifetime employability"[12]. The skills strategies are composed of two complementary documents Diagnostic Report and Action Report. Aims, objectives and actions foreseen in them include also higher education system in given country. Therefore, it is highly probable that during the implementation phase of skills strategies, higher education institutions will be encouraged and incentivised to actively participate and contribute to their full achievement.

What might be implications to quality assurance?

The response to the challenges and actions highlighted above would most likely be expected. It can differ depending on the maturity and of the higher education system and its advancement in facing them. Most definitely internal quality assurance systems would need to be adjusted to support better achievement of the most desired skills and competencies. This means not only making sure that the relevant intended learning outcomes are integrated into every curriculum, but also supporting the teaching staff in achieving them and providing meaningful feedback for further enhancement.

[10] Going to university is more important than ever for young people, The Economist, Feb 3, 2018

[11] Chamorro-Premuzic T., Frankiewicz B., Does Higher Education Still Prepare People for Jobs?, Harvard Business Review, January 07, 2019, https://hbr.org/2019/01/does-higher-education-still-prepare-people-for-jobs

[12] http://www.oecd.org/skills/nationalskillsstrategies/ildingeffectiveskillsstrategiesatnationalandlocallevels.htm

External quality assurance systems might also support higher education institutions in better adjustment and fulfilment of above-mentioned goals. This might happen through various means and methods, more direct or more descriptive.

Emphasising key of skills and competencies of particular importance for given country in the external quality assurance frameworks might be one of the ways. Others might include including special panel members proficient in evaluation and focusing only on the transversal skills aspects of given programme or higher education institution.

Providing meaningful feedback to the higher education institutions under review requires obviously appropriate preparations of the panel members. This might be achieved by developing and implementing a dedicated training programme for external quality assurance experts. Such training should enable and / or enhance their ability to provide meaningful evaluation and feedback regarding institutions' effectiveness in developing skills and competencies relevant for their success on the future labour market.

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Social Dimension of Higher Education: what role and what perception for our institutions?

Eva Fernandez de Labastida, (Unibasq, Spain)

Social Dimension of Higher Education: what role and what perception for our institutions?

The objective of the paper is to outline the approach to social dimension in higher education in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) through an overview of the way it has been addressed in the different higher education Ministers' Communiques. In addition, the way it has been approached in the Basque University System linking it to social responsibility and with the support of the Basque Government will be highlighted.

The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the Social Dimension

The Ministers responsible for higher education in the EHEA reiterated their commitment at the 2018 Bologna Ministerial Conference in Paris to strengthen the social dimension of higher education and further national strategies. The concept of the social dimension of higher education is not new. In fact, is one of the overarching topics within the Bologna Process and has already been on the agenda now for nearly 20 years. The main objective is to increase equity and inclusion in higher education by removing barriers in access. The goal of the social dimension, which was first mentioned in the Prague Communiqué in 2001 has been developed through the years and its evolution can be seen through the different higher education Ministers' Communiqués.

In the Prague Communiqué[1] (2001) the "...Ministers reaffirmed the need, recalled by students to take account of the social dimension in the Bologna process...".

Afterwards, the social dimension was described as an integral part of the EHEA and a necessary condition for enhancing the attractiveness and competitiveness of the EHEA (Bergen Communiqué, 2005[2]). With the London Communiqué[3] (2007), it was agreed a common definition for the objective of the social dimension:

[1] http://ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/2001_Prague_Communique_English_553442.pdf

[2] http://ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/2005_Bergen_Communique_english_580520.pdf

[3] http://ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/2007_London_Communique_English_588697.pdf

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"We share the societal aspiration that the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations"

and the Ministers also stressed
"the importance of students being able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background".

Further on, Ministers further agreed in setting national strategies and policies, including action plans and reports on their progress at the next ministerial meeting. It was also recommended to work towards defining comparable data and indicators for the social dimension of higher education". Later, the Ministers committed further on to
"...set measureable targets to widen participation of underrepresented groups in higher education, to be reached by the end of the next decade..."

(the Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, 2009[4]). In Bucharest, the Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the social dimension in higher education and thus to working towards the goal that
"the student body entering and graduating from higher education institutions should reflect the diversity of Europe's populations"

and agreed to
"step up [their] efforts towards underrepresented groups through developing the social dimension of higher education, reducing inequalities and providing adequate student support services, counselling and guidance, flexible learning paths and alternative access routes, including recognition of prior learning"

(the Bucharest Communiqué[5], 2012). Following this last communiqué, the PL4SD, Peer Learning for the Social Dimension[6] was introduced which focused on supporting the process of international exchange and learning of good practices on the area of the social dimension. The social dimension was also an important part of the Yerevan Ministerial Conference[7] (2015) reflecting on the progress made so far and looking forward to 2020. The ministers committed themselves
"to make our higher education more socially inclusive by implementing the EHEA social dimension strategy."

and defined some priorities in a renewed vision for the European Higher Education Area regarding the social dimension:
"Making our systems more inclusive is an essential aim for the EHEA as our populations become more and more diversified, also due to immigration and demographic changes."

They also agreed to undertake to widen participation in higher education and support institutions that provide relevant learning activities in appropriate contexts

[4] http://ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/Leuven_Louvain_la_Neuve_Communique_April_2009_595061.pdf

[5] http://ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/Bucharest_Communique_2012_610673.pdf

[6] http://www.ehea.info/pid34436/social-dimension.html

[7] http://ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/YerevanCommuniqueFinal_613707.pdf

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for different types of learners, including lifelong learning, improving permeability and articulation between different education sectors as well as enhancing the social dimension of higher education, improving gender balance and widening opportunities for access and completion, including international mobility, for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. To do so mobility opportunities for students and staff from conflict areas will be provided, while working to make it possible for them to return home once conditions allow. In the Yerevan Communiqué, there was also a wish to promote the mobility of teacher education students in view of the important role they will play in educating future generations of Europeans.

Finally, in the Paris Communiqué[8] (2018), ministers recognised that

"[...] further effort is required to strengthen the social dimension of higher education. In order to meet our commitment that the student body entering and graduating from European higher education institutions should reflect the diversity of Europe's populations, we will improve access and completion by under-represented and vulnerable groups. Therefore, we mandate the BFUG to take this issue forward by the next EHEA Ministerial conference."

The Ministers also agreed to develop a common understanding of the concept of social dimension within the Bologna Follow-Up Group[9] (BFUG) and a dedicated Advisory group on Social dimension[10]. As such the Ministers agreed to develop proposed principles and guidelines for the social dimension of HE within the EHEA and to have them submitted to the 2020 Ministerial Conference for adoption, through the BFUG. Other objectives agreed at the Paris Ministerial Conference aim at gathering and examining of the data on good practices regarding social dimension, drawing on previously agreed commitments and existing data, exploring the scope of the EHEA cooperation to strengthen the social dimension of HE as well as start working on Peer Learning Activities within the social dimension area. The main aim of the Advisory group on Social dimension is to develop the future "Principles and Guidelines for Social Dimension" as established in its work plan[11] and vision and SWOT[12]. This advisory group had its first meeting at the beginning of 2019 and plans to have the document ready for the 2020 Ministerial Conference. Some of the issues already discussed are the current state of play of

[8] http://ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/EHEAParis2018_Communique_final_952771.pdf

[9] http://ehea.info/page-work-plan-2018-2020

[10] http://ehea.info/page-Advisory-Group-1

[11] http://ehea.info/Upload/AG_1_SD_Work-plan_2019-2020.pdf

[12] http://ehea.info/Upload/AG_1_SD_Vision_SWOT.pdf

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the social dimension in the EHEA[13] which concluded that even if there is a recognized importance of the social dimension in HE for enhancing social inclusion and social cohesion in EHEA policy papers, the question remains regarding the priority given to these policies as very few countries have national strategies already developed; even if the majority of countries have some targets related to widening participation in HE, there is no reference to specific under-represented groups and even if there is an increase in the data collection regarding the composition of the student body and on policies to enhance the social dimension, not all the systems monitor the same data or have specific information regarding under-represented groups in a systematic way. In their second meeting, they approached, among some other topics like Data collection for the social dimension[14], the links between social dimension and quality assurance[15] highlighting that fostering social dimension could be improved if there is a national strategy or programme aimed to do so, or if it is embedded in the national HE quality assurance model or if there are institutional policies and mechanisms aimed at enhancing the social dimension. Regarding the embedment of social dimension in the national HE quality assurance model, it concluded that the inclusion of elements of social dimension in the external evaluation procedures and QA standards and criteria, would set up a framework towards continuously motivating HEIs to enhance their social dimension involving all the stakeholders in fostering social dimension at the institutional level.

In the last years, several EU funded projects have addressed the topic of social dimension and how to improve it, as the IDEAS project[16] (Effective Approaches to Enhancing the Social Dimension of Higher Education), where by identifying effective and efficient approaches to improve the social dimension in higher education, examples of good practice with proven quantitative and qualitative successes are presented; while some other have

[13] http://ehea.info/Upload/AG_1_SD_Current_State_of_Play_for_SD_in_the_EHEA.pdf

[14] http://www.ehea.info/Upload/AG_1_SD_2_Data_Collection.pdf

[15] http://www.ehea.info/Upload/AG_1_SD_2_Link_SD_Quality_Assurance.pdf

[16] http://www.equityideas.eu/

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dealt with social responsibility (UNIBILITY - University Meets Social Responsibility project[17]) aiming at strengthening the relationships of universities with their local communities. Specifically, the project developed strategies how universities can increase their social responsibility actively on student and researcher level. Lately, the INVITED (Strategies towards Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at Universities[18]) project led by EUA aims to support universities in developing strategies towards equity, diversity and inclusion. It also seeks to promote dialogue between stakeholders at the system level in order to ensure that regulatory and funding frameworks empower universities to fulfil their social responsibility.

Application and examples of the Basque HE and QA system

If we narrow the focus to the Basque University System and addressing the need to develop specific national or even regional strategies to foster the social dimension of higher education, we find the experience of the Basque Government which funded through some institutional agreements in the framework of the four-year university plans specific actions regarding among other social responsibility related activities and fostered the social dimension of the three institutions of the Basque University System since 2011. These institutional agreements, signed between the Basque Government and each of the universities in the Basque University System, have as a main purpose to mobilize universities for the achievement of the specific objectives established in the regional University Plan. Unibasq has reviewed the indicators and the activities done and made a report for the Basque Government since 2008. The main outcomes regarding social responsibility in the period from 2011 to 2018 are:

- Elaboration of equality plans
- Elaboration of strategic plans regarding sustainability
- Improvement of the environmental management
- Improvement of the accessibility to infrastructures
- Development of communication plans
- Efficient economic resources management

[17] https://www.postgraduatecenter.at/en/life-long-learning-projects/university-extension/finished-projects/university-meets-social-responsibility-unibility/about-unibility/

[18] https://eua.eu/101-projects/737-invited.html

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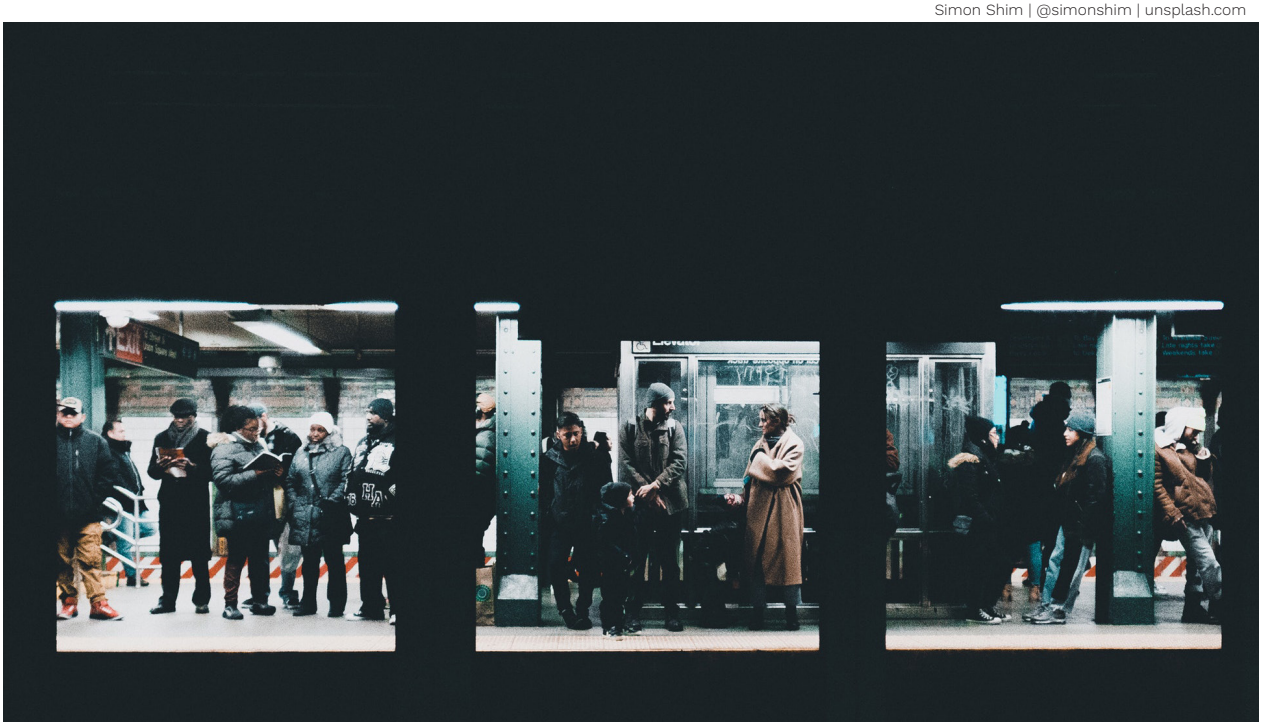

(analytic accountancy, e-administration...)
- Development of actions to improve the employability of graduates
- Agreements with organizations of social nature

For example, the three universities are involved in the development of gender equality plans. In fact, the public university of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU) has already approved its 3rd Equality plan (2019-2022), has created a specific department on equality and, as an evolution, it is planning to include a gender equality subject in all its Bachelor degrees[19]. In the case of the University of Deusto, it has a dedicated web page regarding all the initiatives and activities related with university social responsibility, including equality, inclusion, social justice, environment and health[20].
The next university plan for the 2019-2022 period[21] is a share effort between the Basque Government and the three Basque higher education institutions, including an integral strategic planning. Regarding the social dimension, the Basque Government is totally engaged with the UN 2030 agenda and the UNESCO Global goals for sustainable development mainly through the following six priorities:
- Inclusive education
- Gender equality
- Economic growth and employability
- Infrastructures and innovation
- Reducing the inequality
- Alliances and development cooperation

More in detail, the new university plan establishes a specific "University community line" with the following focus on:
- Fostering gender equality
- Extending the use of the Basque language
- Equity

Some questions for reflection regarding the topic:
- In a growing age of marketization and competition among HEIs, is the social dimension a priority for our institutions?
- How is the social dimension related with social responsibility [22]as a broader term and

[19] https://www.ehu.eus/es/web/berdintasuna-direccionparalaigualdad/aurkespena

[20] https://www.deusto.es/cs/Satellite/deusto/en/university-social-responsibility?cambioidioma=si

[21] http://www.euskadi.eus/contenidos/informacion/uni_planes_universitarios/es_def/adjuntos/Plan_del_Sistema_Universitario_2019-2022_cast.pdf

[22] In the ISO 26000 guidelines on social responsibility established by the International Organisation for Standardisation, SR is defined as follows: "the responsibility of an organisation for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the envi-

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with the so-called “third mission” of higher education?

- How can HEIs embed the UNESCO Global goals for sustainable development (SDGs)? Regarding the inclusion of the UNESCO SDGs in higher education, in addition to the individual initiatives developed in each institution, there are some global initiatives to guide the institutions on how to start like the “Getting started with the SDGs in Universities – A guide for universities, higher education institutions, and the academic sector”[23], which provides general tools and guidance including mapping already in place activities; engaging with stakeholders and leadership; capacity building; identifying priorities, opportunities and gaps; integrating, implementing and embedding the SDGs within university strategies, policies and plans; monitoring, reviewing and eventually reporting and communicating their actions on the SFGs. Moreover, even if incipient some initiatives for the external review of these actions into a general institutional evaluation framework are being developed like the INQAAHE funded project on “Sustainability & Quality in Higher Education” led by ACPUA (Aragon Agency for Quality Assurance and Strategic Foresight in Higher Education) and AQUA (Quality Agency of Andorra), which developed a set of indicators on compliance with the SDG in the institutional evaluation.

ronment, through transparent and ethical behaviour that:
- contributes to sustainable development, including health and the welfare of society;
- takes into account the expectations of stakeholders;
- is in compliance with applicable law and consistent with international norms of behaviour;
- is integrated throughout the organisation and practiced in its relationships.” https://www.iso.org/iso-26000-social-responsibility.html

[23] http://ap-unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/University-SDG-Guide_web.pdf

European universities and impact on QA

Klemen Šubic, (NAKVIS, Slovenia)

European universities initiative has been outlined at the 2017 Gothenburg Summit. In its December 2017 Conclusions, the European Council called on Member States, the Council and the Commission to take forward a number of initiatives, including:

„...strengthening strategic partnerships across the EU between higher education institutions and encouraging the emergence by 2024 of some twenty ‚European Universities', consisting in bottom-up networks of universities across the EU which will enable students to obtain a degree by combining studies in several EU countries and contribute to the international competitiveness of European universities'.

Co-developed by higher education institutions, student organisations, Member States and the Commission, the European Universities Initiative responds to this call. Today, it is one of the flagship initiatives of the EU's ambitions to build a European Education Area.

The initiative is based on the key values of the EHEA and tangles a wide range of strategic goals from:

- Improving the competitiveness of European higher education on the global scale and strengthening the internationalization of participating institutions,

- Improving mutual cooperation between European universities / Institutions covering a wide European geographic scope, with the emphasis on creating the European identity of all stakeholders, stimulating the universities in playing the key role in multicultural, multisocial, multilingual and multidisciplinary fields of education, research, with particular emphasis on innovation, transfer of knowledge, technologies and skills,

- Promoting and strengthening partnerships based on diversity and plurality of its members, with a strong emphasis on effective governance and management,

- Creation of new individual plurilingual joint study programmes, which will enable individuals (including open access) to select the best quality content the Consortium's of European universities can offer,

- Promoting the mobility of all stakeholders (teachers, researchers, students, staff),

Simplification of procedures and criteria for selection (of candidates), promotion, recognition (of qualifications, skills, competences), and up to a single European diploma, which will be recognized in all EHEA members.

By 2024 the European Commission has in place a financial mechanism plan to support 20 such Consortia of European universities that will rise the competitiveness of the EHEA in a fast-growing and diversified world. The new objective is to encourage cooperation of 48 Consortia of European universities by 2027.

External QA and Quality enhancement of European universities, the area of mutual cooperation and integration.

The ambitious goal of the European Commission is following the initial steps that started with the introduction of the Erasmus program in 1987 (the first student mobility) and strongly evolved over the past 32 years, offering opportunities in vocational and professional education, elementary and secondary schools, adult education, youth and sport. This enabled the participating institutions to collaborate in the administrative, management, financial, as well as educational, professional and research fields. In 2012 (Bucharest Communique[1]) the Ministers for Higher Education agreed to „recognize the quality assurance decisions of EQAR-registered agencies on joint and double degree programmes". Despite this, the full recognition of formal outcomes resulting from a single external quality assurance procedure often remains a cumbersome and bureaucratic process. Since 2015, several EU countries have formalized the European approach[2] that results in the recognition of accreditation decisions by EQAR registered agencies in the procedures of joint study programmes. Attempts to automatically recognize previously acquired knowledge and comprehensive treatment, monitoring, and quality improvement remain an open issue that will have to be addressed simultaneously with the development and establishment of European universities.

Similarly to the evolution in the internationalisation of HEI's have also QA Agencies strengthened their international collaboration in various associations and consortia, including the ECA Consortium[3]. Since 2008 ECA have been very active in piloting projects to strengthen the internationalisation of member Agencies, their operations, with special emphasis on accreditation and evaluation procedures of joint study programmes. The challenges successfully addressed in the pilot projects were facilitated by the trustworthy cooperation of the agencies, their interconnection, joint operation, and uniform decision-making in these procedures. Through projects, such as MULTRA[4], JOQAR[5], and CeQUINT[6] the internationalisation of ECA, its members and procedures has been furtherly evolving.

As part of the internationalization of higher education institutions, mobility activities were also part of the external quality assessment, but mostly only indirectly. Monitoring and improving of internal and external quality system of the European universities exceeds the operation of individual university, one student organization and even one quality assurance Agency, but requires from all stakeholders close cooperation from the outset of their establishment.

The cooperation is mainly identified in:

[1] http://ehea.info/Upload/document/ministerial_declarations/Bucharest_Communique_2012_610673.pdf

[2] https://enqa.eu/index.php/work-policy-area/enqa-the-bologna-process/european-approach-to-joint-programmes/

[3] http://ecahe.eu/

[4] http://ecahe.eu/home/services/joint-programmes/multra/

[5] http://ecahe.eu/w/index.php/JOQAR_2010-2013

[6] http://ecahe.eu/home/internationalisation-platform/certification/

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- calibration / compliance with national legislative specificities and specificities in the implementation of EQA at the level of individual agencies;

- unifying the quality standards and the operation of the EQA (the expansion of the QA spectrum in case of European universities can go beyond the set of ESG quality standards or national benchmarks and standards);

- distinguishing between institutional and program accreditations/evaluations (taking into account different types of universities, their fields of education, operation and scientific disciplines, ways of implementing education and cooperation, their scope, capacities, and available resources;

- taking into account the interdisciplinarity and dimension of development and the potential of European universities within EHEA and beyond;

- accessibility of education for all interested (physical, digital, communication, socio-economic, social, linguistic, cultural, inter-generational accessibility ...);

- taking into account all three missions at European level (qualifying the human potential: education - first mission; creating new knowledge: research - second mission; and its third mission, where universities shall engage with social needs and market demands by linking the university's activity with its own socio-economic context).

The starting point is the ESG, with which more or less fully complies the individual national systems and QAA's operations.

In order to successfully address this role, ENQA / EQAR agencies will have to develop and provide for:

- Joint strategy and joint action within Consortia of agencies and/or Associations;

- Continuous cooperation and mobility of agency staff, transfer of good and adaptable practices and the introduction of innovations into procedures;

- Inclusion and participation in the creation of tools and mechanisms for the (automatic) recognition of qualifications, for creation and establishment of unified

European diplomas and the support of the transparency of skills and qualifications, which is indispensable to the digitization of EU Higher education (according to Digital Education Action Plan from EC);

- The creation of universal quality standards that will follow the values of the EHEA and the ESG, nevertheless taking into account the specifics of individual European universities Consortia and their environments;

- Building mutual trust in the context of automatic recognition of accreditation and evaluation decisions;

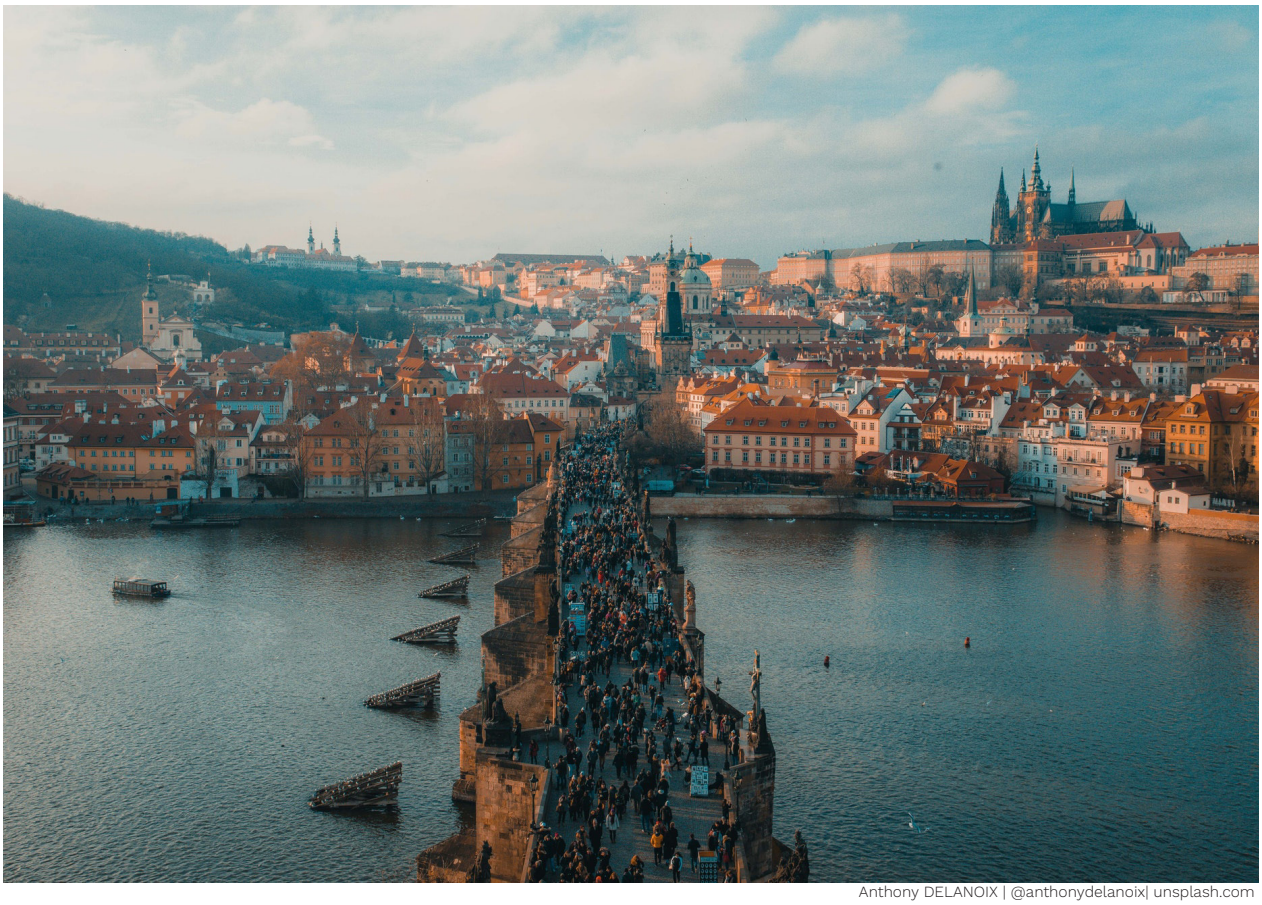
- Developing and applying new and innovative approaches and methods of monitoring and improving quality that will prevent various forms of abuse and diploma mills;

- Adequate experts training programmes and a sufficient pool of highly professional independent experts (including students), which will be trained to assess Consortia of European universities, their study programmes, as well as their scientific and research work;

- Establishing, disseminating and strengthening the values of the EHEA and

- much more.

Ensuring quality or improving it is a constant process that requires transparency, commitment, cooperation and mutual trust from all stakeholders in EHEA. If we want to remain competitive and competent, and at the same time to follow the changes in the paradigms of life, learning and teaching, research and integration, all stakeholders will have to accept and adapt the innovations. The need for life long learning is expanding the range of student life-cycles, which is not limited only to the education of young people, but is a process that is constant and varied, while taking into account all forms of formal, non-formal and informal education. As guardians of compliance with quality standards, quality assurance agencies are those who are responsible for their implementation and integration and for strengthening the quality culture at national and international level.



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Quality Assurance of Research

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Loulou von Ravensberg (UKÄ, Sweden),

François Pernot, (Hcéres France),

Solange Pisarz, (Hcéres France)

The landscape of higher education changes constantly adjusting to the needs and demands of the surrounding society and so do the tools of assessment.

The existence of quality assurance of research is, in some form, probably as old as the universities themselves. In recent years, however, quality assurance of research has increasingly attracted the attention of stake holders, policy makers and evaluators outside the universities. In some countries quality assurance agencies have recently introduced new methods to assess quality assurance of research into their assessment portfolios. In other countries existing methods for assessing research have been subject to changes. Sweden is an example of the first case; UKÄ, the Swedish Higher Education Authority, has been instructed by the Government to extend the existing national system for quality assurance to include quality assurance of research. France is an example of a country where assessment of research/research bodies has been performed for many years by the French national quality assurance agency (Hcéres). And HCERES has recently introduced some innovations to its activities and in particular with the pilot evaluation of European Research infrastructures.

1. Extension of UKÄ activities to QA of research

UKÄ[1], the Swedish Higher Education Authority, has recently been instructed by the government to extend the existing national system for quality assurance to include also quality assurance of research. The model is being developed by UKÄ in close cooperation with the Higher Education Institutions/the Association of Swedish Higher Institutions, students, the labour market and with VR, (the Swedish Research Council), the largest of all the government research funding bodies.

Research is, to a certain extent, already assessed today within the national system för quality assurance of higher education, especially its links to education. The focus of the model under development is on how the quality of research is assessed and secured by the Swedish Higher Education Institutions. UKÄ is ex-

[1] https://www.uka.se

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pected to take a decision on the model before the summer 2019. A pilot study will start thereafter in the autumn.

UKÄ's present quality assurance system is developed and implemented in accordance with the Higher Education Act, the Higher Education Ordinance and based on the Standard and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Eduation Area (ESG). The aim of the quality assurance system is twofold; to assure quality and to develop the quality of higher education.

The present evaluation system consists of four components; the appraisal of applications for degree-awarding powers, programme evaluations, thematic evaluations and institutional reviews. The reviews of the components are based on four assessment areas, the same for all components- governance and organisation
- preconditions
- design, implementation and outcomes
- student and doctoral perspectives
- labour market perspective

The more detailed contents of these four assessment areas varies according to the component and the level evaluated. For example, an application concerning degree-awarding powers for a doctoral degree is more comprehensively scrutinized when it comes to research than an application for a Bachelor or a Master degree.

In programme evaluations where the quality of existing programmes are reviewed, the link between research and higher education is of particular importance. The panel would, for example, take a close look at the competence and scientifique background of teachers.

UKÄ has, so far, carried out only one thematic evaluation within the framework of its existing quality assessment system. Sustainable development was the subject of this thematic study. Research was only indirectly included; the link between education and research for example was touched upon in connection with the competence and the scientific background of the teachers. The lessons drawn from this thematic evaluation were that in the future, certain elements of quality assessment of research could be included.

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The focus of institutional reviews concerns policies for internal quality assurance and for the continous improvement of higher education whereas research is included only to a lesser extent in the present system.

UKÄ is of the opinion that the two components, degree-awarding powers and programme evaluations, do not need any major modifications in view of the new mission from the government. Research is already sufficiently included in these two components, but the new mission implies that the component institutional reviews has to be modified to include more quality assurance of research. UKÄ is now developing a model for assessing quality assurance of research within the component for institutional reviews. Assessments of quality assurance of research will be carried out simultaneously with the institutional reviews of education in order to strengthen the link between education and research. The assessment of quality assurance of research will, however, be based on separate guidelines and separate self-evaluations for each assessment area. The evaluations will continue to include the HEIs own analyses of relevant quantitative as well as qualitative data and the evaluations will continue to be carried out by external peer groups.

2. The French expertise on Research entities evaluation

In France, Hcéres[2] is the French public service agency responsible for the periodic evaluation of all State-contracted higher education and research institutions in France, their study programmes (bachelor's degree, master's degree and doctorate-level) and their research units. It also evaluates research bodies and groupings of institutions.

Performing several thousand evaluations throughout France every 5 years (250 institutions, 5,700 study programmes, 2,800 research units, 25 groupings of institutions) according to a robust methodology

[2] https://www.hceres.fr/en

defined in compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG), Hceres is a member of ENQA and listed on EQAR.

Regarding the evaluation of research bodies, their external evaluation is carried out by Hcéres and concern their overall governance and activities in accordance with their status and remit. 20 research bodies are evaluated every 5 years.

Regarding the evaluation of research entities, Hcéres evaluates publicly certified and financed research entities in five consecutive campaigns covering the whole of France. These entities are primarily research units (équipes d'accueil [research training centres hosting intern students], and unités mixtes de recherche [joint research units]). Other entities evaluated include federative structures, clinical investigation centres, the research departments of university hospitals, technological research institutes and the joint research units of French research units situated abroad.

The evaluation of a research entity is conducted in three major stages:
- Preparation for the evaluation;
- Visit of the research entity;
- Production of the evaluation report.

The external evaluation is based on dedicated standards. They describe the three chosen evaluation criteria, which cover all activities and outcomes of research entities:
- The quality of research activities and products, including:
    - The production of knowledge, reputation and attractiveness,
    - Interactions with the economic, social and cultural environment, and with the health sector,
    - Involvement in research-based training.
- The organisational structure and general activities of the research uni
- The five-year strategy and develop ment plan.

The evaluations are not graded or scored. For each criterion evaluated, the panels of experts, after mentioning the strengths, the areas to be improved and making recommendations, write a global synthesis report that acts as an evaluative judgement.

In addition to this, Hcéres also capitalises on French experience by putting it to good use internationally, for example for the evaluation of European Research Infrastructures. On 1st of April 2019, the European evaluation agencies HCÉRES (France), ANVUR (Italy) and AEI (Spain) signed a framework agreement to cooperate in the evaluation of European research infrastructures, thus establishing the ERIEC (European Research Infrastructure Evaluation Consortium).

For its first mission, ERIEC will be evaluating the ECRIN-ERIC (European Clinical Research Infrastructure Network[3]) a European network of research centres for the development and implementation of multinational clinical trials. Based on the European standards, the evaluation will be organised in two key stages: a self-evaluation conducted by the ECRIN-ERIC followed by an external evaluation, including a site visit, by a panel of international experts selected by the ERIEC consortium. The final evaluation report will be available at the end of 2019

3. Brief overview of other European countries[4]

There are international agreements concerning research and quality assessment of research but there are no agreements equivalent to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the Euro-

[3] https://ecrin.org/

[4] The information in the country sections below emanate from the following sources:
- a Study from the Swedish Research Council published in 2013, U2013/1700/F (mapping national systems for quality assurance of research;
- interviews with and websites of national quality assurance agencies

pean Higher Education Area (ESG). Below are some examples of how quality assurance of research is handled in some other countries.

In Norway the responsible body for evaluations of higher education and programme accreditation as well as accreditations of Higher Education Institutions is NOKUT (the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance and Education). Quality assessment of research is, to a certain degree, indirectly part of these evaluations since laws and regulations stipulate that there shall be a link between research and education enabling the Norwegian universities to conduct activities of high quality. The Higher Education Institutions shall have a strategy for higher education and research for example that teachers with scientific competence must exceed a certain percentage of the total number of teachers. Norges forskningsråd (the Research Council of Norway), is responsible for conducting evaluations of research. One important component of its evaluations is societal impact. There is a work in progress in Norway with the aim to assess education and research simultaneously. The purpose is to obtain comprehensive assessments including both education and research.

In Finland it is FINNEC (the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre) that is responsible for evaluations of higher education. The Higher Education Institutions are themselves responsible for evaluating their education and research. But the universitites are also obliged to participate in external evaluations of higher education as well as in external assessments of their own internal quality assurance systems. In the present evaluation cycle (2018-2024), quality assurance of research has been given a more important role in the evaluation system than before. A new element is that societal impact is included and has been given a more prominant role in the evaluation system.

In Iceland, accreditations and evaluations are carried out by the Icelandic Centre for Research, RANNIS. RANNIS has developed a framework for quality assurance, the Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF), which includes quality assurance of research. Subject evaluations of higher education and assessments of research are carried out by the higher education institutions themselves based on QEF. Every seventh year, RANNIS carries out institutional audits based on the results of these evaluations. The assessment of research is focussed on the link between research and education, the funding, societal impact and the so called blue-skies research in non-traditional subject areas.

The Netherlands includes, in a very distinct way, quality assessment of research in their general quality evaluation system of higher education. In the Netherlands it is the responsibility of the universities to carry out quality assessments on the basis of the Standard and Evaluation Protocol (SEP). A university has to evaluate all its research within a six year period. The purpose of SEP is to function as a framework which can be applied to different research areas since the indicators are adjusted to the research area assessed. The SEP facilitates the internal quality assurance whithin universities and among universities. The research evaluations are often carried out by an independent body, the Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities, QANU. But it is also possible for the universities themselves to go together and carry out joint asssessments.

The United Kingdom has had a national system for evaluating the quality of research since 1986 recurring at intervals of four to six years. The system has successively been refined in close dialogue with the sector. Evaluations are carried out within the Research Excellence Framework (REF 2014) which reflects a growing interest in demonstrating the benefits of investments in academic research. REF does not aim to evaluate all research,

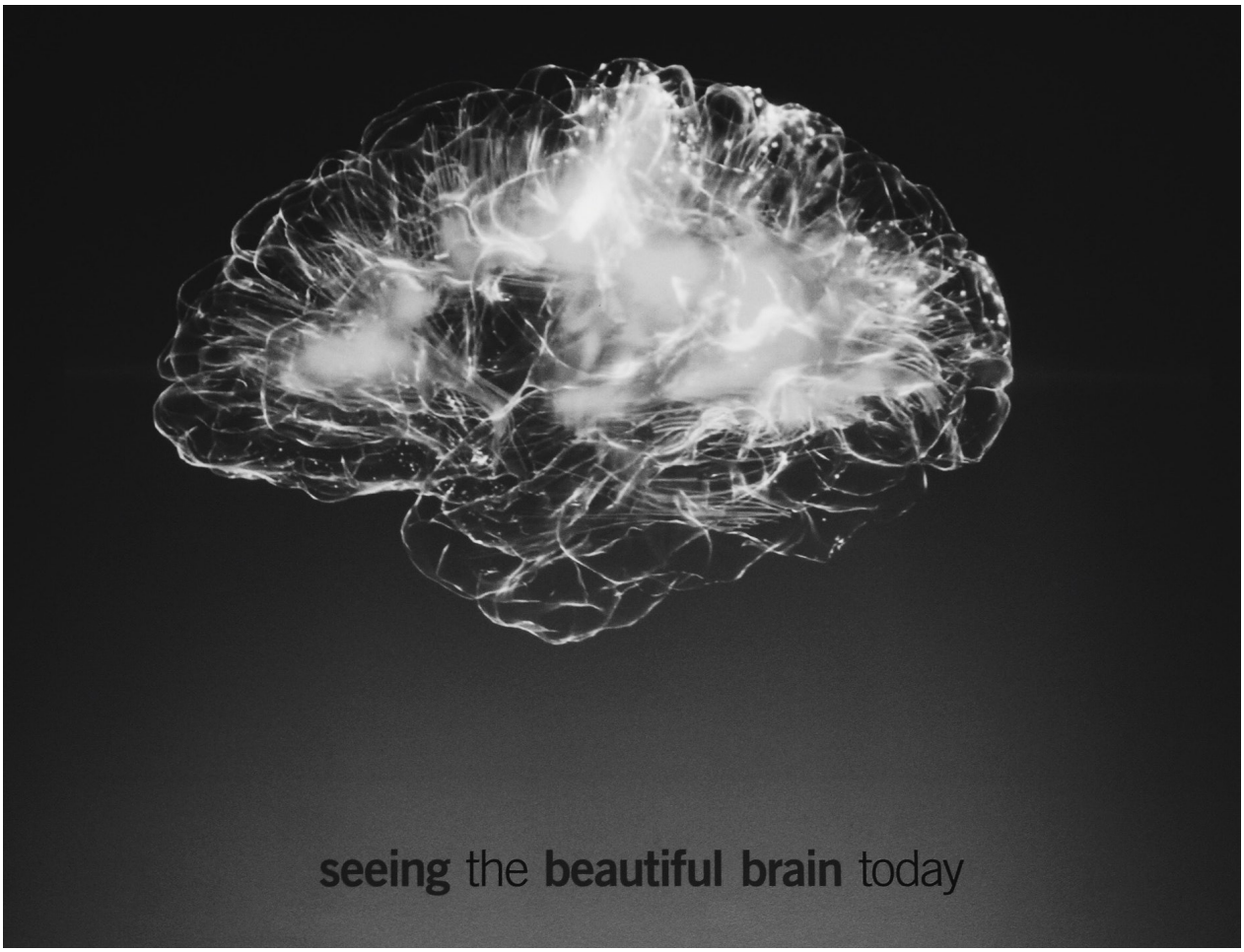
the Higher Education institutions select themselves which research they submit for assessment. According to a report from the Swedish Research Council in 2013, the proportion of researchers covered per Higher Education Institution varies from 25 to 95 percent[5]. The REF 2014 has three aspects; output, impact and environment. The purpose of the system is multifold; to provide a basis for allocating grants for research at Higher Education Institutions, to provide accountability showing that public money is well spent, to foster quality and to ensure societal impact.

Conclusion

The landscape of higher education changes constantly to the needs and the demands of the surrounding society. The increasing competition for public means will continue, leading to even more focus on the Higher Education systems that in most countries account for very high proportions of the national budgets. This competition for public funds implies that stakeholders of Higher Education will intensify their surveillance/monitoring of the sector including their interest in quality assurance. A trend in the recent developments of quality assurance of research in many countries is that societal impact has been given a more prominent role than in the past.

One example of good practice can also be found with the agreement signed by Hcéres, ANVUR and AEI, for a more internationalised evaluation of research. This might be an interesting trend for the future, with the increase of international cooperation in the area of quality assurance among national agencies that extends also to quality assurance of research.

[5] Kartläggning av olika nationella system för utvärdering av forskningens kvalitet U2013/1700/F, page 6, a Study from the Swedish Research Council published in 2013, U2013/1700/F (mapping national systems for quality assurance of research



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