



Overview of the EUniQ project

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EUniQ Workshop “Towards a Quality Assurance
Framework for European Universities”

Rome – 23 October 2019

Developing a European Approach for Comprehensive QA of (European) University Networks (EUniQ)

- Erasmus+ – Key Action 3 – Support to the Implementation of EHEA reforms
- Links with Bologna Peer Support Group on QA
- EU grant 195.270€
- 18 May 2019 – 17 May 2021
- <https://www.nvao.net/en/euniq-project>



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Project objectives

- To develop a European Framework for Comprehensive QA of European Universities
 - from analysis of needs and national legislation
 - to a QA framework and pilot evaluations
 - resulting in a developed QA approach

Partnership

- Applicant Flemish Ministry; managed by NVAO
- 17 project partners:
 - 8 QA agencies: 4 from QA systems in development and 4 fully developed (cf Bologna Implementation Report; application of EA for QA of JPs); peer learning in pilots and Roadmap Group
 - 6 ministries from Peer Support Group on QA; Resonance Group
 - 3 stakeholders organisations EUA, ESU, ENQA in Roadmap Group

Partner Organisation, Country, Role in project

- 1 Flemish Community, Belgium, Applicant, Chair of Resonance Group, Ministry
- 2 NVAO, Netherlands/Flanders, Affiliated entity, QA agency, Chair Roadmap G
- 3 Ministry of Education and Sport ,Albania, Resonance Group, Ministry
- 4 Ministry of Education and Science, Bulgaria, Resonance Group, Ministry
- 5 Hcerés (representing Ministry), France, Resonance Group, Ministry
- 6 Ministry of Education and Science, Georgia, Resonance Group, Ministry
- 7 Ministry of Education, Romania, Resonance Group, Ministry
- 8 ANQA, Armenia, Roadmap Group, QA agency
- 9 AAQ, Switzerland, Roadmap Group, QA agency
- 10 NAKVIS, Slovenia, Roadmap Group, QA agency
- 11 AIC, Latvia, Roadmap Group, QA agency
- 12 UKÄ, Sweden, Roadmap Group, QA agency
- 13 NEAQA, Serbia, Roadmap Group, QA agency
- 14 ANVUR, Italy, Roadmap Group, QA agency
- 15 EUA, Belgium, Roadmap Group, Stakeholder organisation
- 16 ENQA, Belgium, Roadmap Group, Stakeholder organisation
- 17 ESU, Belgium, Roadmap Group, Stakeholder organisation

Project benefits

- European Framework for Comprehensive QA of European Universities:
 - will help alliances to both define and self-assess their quality
 - will open up a dialogue between QA agencies and European Universities
 - QA agencies will be able to use it to assess European Universities in the future in an appropriate way

Project benefits (cont.)

- The project will support the further development of QA in the respective countries of the partners, and facilitates peer support across the EHEA through Bologna's Peer Support Group on QA.
- European stakeholder organisations will be able to position their policy perspective on the facts on the ground and help guide the way in which this policy development takes root across Europe.

Project overview



Action line	Relevant partners	Objective	Deliverable
1. Roadmap Group	Lead partner: NVAO Other partners: QA agencies, ENQA, ESU, EUA	To generally manage the project, the attainment of the schedule and the production of deliverables.	Progress report (May 2020) - Report on results & development of deliverables Final report (April 2021) - Report on realisations & achieved outcomes
2. Resonance Group	Lead partner: Flanders Other partners: Ministries	To guide, monitor and evaluate the work of the Roadmap Group, to reflect on methodologies and pertinent legal issues, to involve other stakeholders.	Analysis of the proposed methodology (Dec. 2019) - Analysis, feedback and ways forward European Universities, legal frameworks and the ESG (Jan. 2021)
3. Methodological development	Partners: All partners	To develop a draft assessment methodology for (European) University Networks.	Pilot assessment framework (Dec. 2019) - what will be assessed, how will this be organised and which information will be used.
4. Pilot procedures	Partners: QA agencies	To pilot the developed draft assessment methodology.	Training day for experts and networks (Jan. 2020) Panel report template (Feb. 2020) Assessment reports (Sep. 2020)
5. Enhancement & valorisation	Partners: All partners	To convert the lessons learnt into a development roadmap for QA and the piloted methodology into a final methodology.	QA Development Roadmap (Nov. 2020) European Approach for Comprehensive QA of (European) University Networks (Jan. 2021)
6. Peer Support	Partners: All partners	To maintain the focus on peer support, to reach out to all the stakeholders	Project website (May 2019) ▲ Peer Support newsletter (Jun., Sep., Dec. 2019; Mar., Sep., Dec. 2020; Apr. 2021) Peer Support & Kick-off Event (Oct. 2019) Peer Support & Feedback Event (May 2020) Peer Support & Dissemination Event (Mar. 2021)

Next steps

- Framework for the pilots (Dec 2019)
- Pilots with 4 alliances to test the framework (2020)
- Results pilots and evaluation (Riga, Sept 2020)
- QA Development Roadmap (Nov 2020)
- Analysis of legal issues & ESG (Jan 2021)
- Finalised European Framework (Jan 2021)
- Dissemination conference (Brussels, spring 2021)

QA of alliances in the call

- QA must be an embedded component to ensure that European Universities successfully deliver the expected results and achieve an impact going far beyond the impact an individual partner organisation could achieve
- The alliance has set up a quality assessment and review, which includes specific measures for evaluation of progress, processes and deliverables (for instance through the development of suitable quantitative and qualitative indicators, including the feedback from students and staff). The quality monitoring should also ensure that the implementation of the alliance is cost-efficient

QA aspects are embedded in award criteria

- alignment of the joint strategy with the wider goals of the European Universities initiative
- consistency between the aims of the proposal and the joint planned activities to achieve them
- demonstrate how the joint strategy and activities enhance the quality of education through innovative pedagogical models and digital technologies, as well as enhancing the level of students, staff and researchers mobility, the level of engagement with key stakeholders and the local community, and how research results and innovation are fed back into education
- quality of the cooperation arrangements: clear roles and responsibilities of each partner, shared management structures with efficient decision-making and communication, common provision of services and resources, complementarity of partners.

Survey results: strategy and joint provision

- Wide diversity in strategic priorities but also commonalities: European values/identity, challenge-driven, flexible learning, tailor-made curricula, virtual/blended mobility, e-learning/platforms, social/regional engagement, participative governance, inclusiveness, bridging education/research/business, enhancing joint research, inter/multidisciplinary, language skills, intercultural competences
- Some alliances mention explicitly the joint provision they want to develop (e.g. specific joint programmes). Virtual is a common theme, e.g.:
 - Virtual mobility
 - Joint virtual eLearning platform
 - Virtual a-synchronous teaching units
 - Virtual interuniversity campus
- Joint provision also influenced by flexibility (e.g. “personalised academic curricula”), (regional) networking and involving local community

Survey results: internal QA

- Many alliances relate internal QA to the project management and set up structures accordingly (QA boards, committees).
- Other alliances mention e.g. importance of ESG; student-centred learning and student satisfaction; European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes; appreciative and development-oriented approach

Survey results: external QA

- Different perceptions:
 - national QA agencies and procedures
 - EACEA evaluations of the project
 - international advisory boards consisting of external experts that are set up as part of the internal QA arrangements.
- Alignment between internal and external QA is emphasised
- Lean, trust-based and enhancement-led approach advocated

Survey results: obstacles

- National education laws
- Accreditation system and regulations not harmonised among partner countries.
- Differences in the rules, approaches and timescales of national agencies.
- Obstacles for setting up multiple or joint diplomas.
- Differences in the autonomy of universities in each national context.
- We have chosen an appreciative approach, but for our partners operating in a completely different external QA system, this could entail a difficult balance.

Survey results: other comments

- (Virtual) forum to work on obstacles and exchange ideas and good practices.
- While designing the QA structures and tools, one should keep in mind that the QA should aim for lean and agile QA processes that do not take up an undue amount of time.

Methodological caveats

- Pilot phase -> ex ante evaluation
 - What can the alliances already demonstrate?
 - What can we deliver as a final assessment framework?
- Starting point for framework
 - Framework has to accommodate wide diversity in strategies and policies of European Universities
 - Descriptive, flexible, open
 - Not: prescriptive, rigid, focused on indicators & checking
 - Enhancement focus: helping the development of the internal QA of European Universities

Workshop: programme

- Examples of internal QA of European Universities
- Building a Framework for Comprehensive QA of European Universities
- 4 Parallel sessions on the standards and reference points

Tomorrow:

- Feedback on parallel sessions and discussion
- 2 Parallel sessions on procedural aspects: one for the pilots and one for the others
- Conclusions

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION
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