

Quality Assurance of Higher Education in Montenegro -achievements and challenges-

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A decorative graphic consisting of several thick, white, diagonal lines of varying lengths and angles, originating from the bottom left and extending towards the top right, set against a red background.

The main characteristics of Montenegrin higher education system:



- The Bologna Process- since 2003
- Small sized but competitive- 7 higher education institutions (2 public, 5 private)
- The reforms continuity:
 - The last reform took place in 2017 (establishment of ACQAHE, model of studying 3+2+3, 25% of practice in teaching)
 - The new one is in the process

Current legal framework:

1. Law on Higher Education
2. By-laws:
 1. The set of national standards with criteria for external evaluation;
 2. The set of procedures on external evaluations.
3. Law on administrative taxes
4. National qualification framework

The current legal framework addresses the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG), but individual stipulations do not provide their comprehensive and consistent implementation.

Stakeholders:



- HE institutions
- Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport
- ACQAHE
- Council for Qualifications
- Independent experts
- Students
- Real sector

The studies are differed by:

- Cycles: bachelor, master and doctoral;
- Type: academic and applied;
- Ownership: public (faculties cannot be legal entities) and private (faculties can be independent legal entities);
- Organization of study programs: independent, joint programs with national or foreign institution;
- Organization of lectures: traditional, distance learning and/or in English.

Statistic in nutshell

- 293 study programs in 8 scientific fields
- 7 HE institutions: 4 universities and 3 independent faculties
- 1 public university and 3 private, 1 public faculty and two private
- Public university performs 168 study programs at 18 faculties, 1 art academy and 2 research institutes. Independent public faculty performs 2 study programs
- 116 study programs are realized at 25 faculties of 3 private universities . 7 study programs are performed at 3 independent faculties
- The average number of enrolled students per year in all three cycles: 24,500
- The average number of graduated students per study year in all three cycles: 4,800
- The major number of all enrolled students start studies at a public university (average 74%) and 72% of average graduated students finish studies also at a public university.

The (short) history of ACQAHE:

- Defined through amendments on Law on Higher Education (June 2017).
- Established by the Government in November 2017.
- Three-members of the Board of Directors are nominated by the Government in November 2017.
- Agency has started to work in full human and technical capacity since September 2018.
- Today, 15 people are employed in three sectors:
 1. Sector for Quality Control;
 2. Sector for quality assurance and reasearch;
 3. General affairs.

Mission and Vision

- MISSION – contribution to the quality improvement of higher education in Montenegro by implementation of [European Standards and Guidelines](#) in evaluation of higher education institutions, their study programmes and lifelong study programmes in order to ensure the integration of Montenegrin system of quality assurance of higher education into the European one.
- VISION - **Credible, internationally recognizable and competitive** higher education system in Montenegro is the basis for its essential integration into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and economic and social improvement of Montenegro.

Quality assurance procedures

- Internal quality assurance – performed by HE institution
- External quality assurance:
 1. HE institutions and programmes – performed by ACQAHE through three procedures (2019-2021):
 - a) Accreditation of study programmes (71 accreditations);
 - b) Reaccreditation of HE institutions (9 reaccreditations);
 - c) Accreditation of lifelong learning programmes (2 accreditations).
 2. Agency- to be performed by ENQA.

Four procedures of external evaluations:

1. Accreditation of study programs with 5 years validity period;
2. Re-accreditation of HE institutions with 5 years validity period;
3. Accreditation of long-life learning programmes.
4. Periodical evaluations on initiative of Ministry or HE institution.

International cooperation

- Affiliate member of ENQA
- Full CEENQA membership
- Memorandum on cooperation with countries from the region
- Participation in 10 ERASMUS and World Bank Projects
- Study visits, staff mobilities, webinars, courses.
- Networking

Analyses and registers



- Selfevaluation report on QA system in Montenegro based on ESGs – RCC, October 2020
- Research on HE teachers' competencies from the stakeholders' point of view- BAQUAL, spring 2021
- Comparative analyses on aspects of institutional framework of quality assurance systems in 14 countries- September 2021
- Efficiency of evaluation procedures- continuous activity
- Trends in higher education system of Montenegro- continuous activity
- Register of accredits study programmes and register of reaccredited institutions

New trends in Montenegrin QA system

- Drafting of the new Higher Education Strategy is in final phase
 - One of 4 strategic goals is: Compliance of higher education with ESGs
- The drafting of new Law on Higher Education is in final phase:
 - A new model of studying
 - Agency adopts methodology and criteria
 - The independent body is decision maker on external evaluations (expert panel members, appeals, decision on accreditation)
 - Inclusion of stakeholders in external evaluations
 - Follow-up is mandatory part of external evaluations
 - New types of external evaluations: extraordinary and sample of study programmes
 - A new criterion for changes of study programmes
- ACQAHE got a new director in October 2021- Mr. Goran Danilovic, professor of philosophy

Key challenges in QA of Montenegro:

1. Adoption of ACQAHE 's suggestions in new Law on Higher Education
2. Preparation of efficient and effective procedures on external evaluations
3. Improvement of national standards and criteria for external evaluations
4. Development of electronic platform for evaluation procedures
5. Support to HE institutions in strengthening internal quality assurance
6. Development of ACQAHE internal quality assurance
7. Development of research component of ACQAHE
8. Continuous capacity building and development of resources.

Thank you.



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