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CEENQA workshop
Kyrenia, North Cyprus

Evolution and perspectives of
stakeholder involvement in quality
assurance from a professional
HE point of view

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Presentation outline

- 1) Stakeholders in the EHEA policymaking
- 2) ESG for QA: a shift in paradigm between 2005-2015
- 3) Determinants of the role of stakeholders in Professional HE
- 4) Perspectives of stakeholder involvement

Prologue

Stakeholders: 'Any group or individual who is affected by or can affect the achievement of an organization's objectives' (R.E. Freeman, 1984)

Translation of 'Stakeholder' in a number of European languages shows a different treatment of SH

	English:	<i>stakeholders</i>
	French:	<i>parties prenantes / parties intéressées</i>
	Dutch:	<i>stakeholders / belanghebbenden</i>
	Spanish:	<i>partes interessades</i>
	German:	<i>Interessengruppen / die Beteiligten</i>

Stakeholders in the EHEA policy-making

Stakeholders in higher education: comprise those within a HEI, and external actors

Relevant EHEA principles and good practice in QA:

- a) Involvement of stakeholders ('their needs and expectations')
- b) Peer reviews and external experts
- c) Quality culture

a) Stakeholder involvement

- IQA: involve students & staff, so that they “own the process”
- EQA: The ‘societal mission of HE (‘services’) implies accountability towards SH & the wider community.
- Awareness of a lack of involvement ➡ an argument for 2015 revision of ESG
- SH group (students, teachers) broadened by the implication of ‘alumni’ (former students) as a first step
- Widening the scope of QA to cover broader range of topics relevant for HE (employability, internationalisation, increased access, widening participation)

b) Peer review vs (external) experts

ESG 3.3 independence requirement of agencies ➡ also holds for experts

- Peer review has its limitations: too technical, biased (fear of competition), need for quality enhancement, unprofessional peers
- Leads to recourse to 'external experts' in EQA, which also has its disadvantages (cost, unfamiliarity with the 'internal' set-up)
- External experts acting in a personal capacity

c) Quality and Quality Culture

- For PHE: quality is “the added value between input and output to the highest and longest satisfaction of all stakeholders” (L. Bollaert) → quality is always contextual
- Quality culture: focuses mostly on internal quality and cultural aspects
- ‘Embedding quality culture in higher education’ (1st EQAF)
- ‘There is always quality culture, as there is always an organisational culture’ (L.B.)

ESG FOR QA 2005-2015: shifting paradigms

ESG 2015 Part 1

1.1 'Develop and implement IQA while involving external stakeholders'

2005: "a role for students & other SH"

1.9 Ongoing monitoring & periodic review of programmes: 'collect feedback from students & external SH' (GL)

2005: "it is vital for EQA to have clear aims agreed by SH"

ESG 2015 Part 2

2.2 Fit for purpose EQA: 'SH should be involved in design & continuous improvement of EQA'

2005: "formal mechanisms for approval of EQA"

2.4 Peer review experts: 'include (a) student member(s)'

Expert group need to include a range of expertise and provide different perspectives such as those of 'institutions, academics, students, employers and professional practitioners'

2005: "including as appropriate (a) student member(s)"

International experts 'desirable as it adds a further dimension'

2.6 Reporting: 'full reports published for academic community, external partners, and other interested individuals'

ESG FOR QA 2005-2015: shifting paradigms

ESG 2015 Part 3

3.1 Activities, policy, processes: 'agencies should involve stakeholders in their governance and work'

3.3 Independence: 'everyone contributing to its work, whether as an external expert or as a nominee of a SH body acts only in their individual capacity, so that any procedures and decisions are based solely on expertise'

The extent to which the ESG 2015 met expectations:

- SH found that ESG 2005 were too 'vague', unclear distinction standards and guidelines, etc.
- Changes in revised ESG affecting relation with/impact from SH: LO approach, more emphasis on collecting, analysing and using data for management and decision making
- for QA Agencies: students in review panels; periodically publish all reports & analyses
- new ESG better communicated than the 2005 version.

What is most appreciated by (external) SH:

- Collection & interpretation of data
- Graduate tracking indicators: which graduates have successful professional lives?
- European graduate survey, (2018) also measured the social integration of graduates
- Involvement of SH in developing QA tools & policies ➡ endorsed and applied by all actors

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT:

Determinants of the role of stakeholders a professional HE viewpoint

- a) Map ESG project on the need for a revised ESG
- b) Reflection on what is professional HE (HAPHE initiative)
- c) A quality framework for professional HE (PHEXCEL project)

Determinants of the role of stakeholders in professional higher education

a) Map ESG project on the need for a revised ESG (2010-2011)

- Consultation with broad group of SH on 'clarity, applicability, usefulness of the ESG)
- EURASHE consulted all SH with an affinity with HE progr. & inst. => included alumni, student counsellors, teachers, employers
- ESG for QA hardly known among some key actors, for whom they were also intended.
- Conclusions on 'usefulness:

Mostly for QA management, then for governance, for academics & teachers only 12 %

For other SH (students, alumni, employers) => 10-13 %

Determinants of the role of stakeholders in professional higher education

b) HAPHE project (2010) Harmonisation of PHE

- Definition of PHE: “a form of higher education that offers a particularly intense integration with the world of work in all its aspects, including T & L, research and governance, and at all levels of the overarching QF of the EHEA”
- Key features of PHE:
 - institutional strategies defined in collaboration with the world of work;
 - curricula developed with stakeholders, based on L.O. related to specific professional requirements;
 - learning environment includes experience in the world of work;
 - the RDI agenda is informed by the world of work.

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Determinants of the role of stakeholders in professional higher education

c) PHEXCEL project (2016) Excellence in PHE

- mapping quality aspects of PHE in Europe: how is quality perceived in HE with a strong labour market orientation?
- identified generic quality criteria for PHE in three domains: policy and strategy, teaching and learning, research
- overview of QA 'models' (generic aspect & applicability) and 'labels' (sector-specific tools)
- Key findings: the quality of PHE education also shows from the degree of responsiveness to the expectations and needs of our stakeholders, primarily those of graduates and employers.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT:

Perspectives of involvement of stakeholders in PHE

a) how to best approach (external) stakeholder engagement:

- in line with the profile and mission of the HEI, so not a one fits all approach
- Involve them systematically, holistically, consistently: “SH involved for formulating strategic policy, for formulating intended L.O., but also in program design and realisation, and the assessment of achieved L.O. at program level’

b) Impact of SH now most felt in ESG 1.2 (design & approval of study programs) and ESG 1.9 (follow-up & periodic evaluation)

Perspectives of involvement of stakeholders in PHE

c) Measures that contribute to an increase of involvement of external stakeholders :

- recognition of reviews carried out by subject-specific agencies
- pools of experts include professional people from various disciplines
- effect of maintaining programme next to institutional accreditation

Perspectives of involvement of stakeholders

d) State of affairs on SH involvement (*E.C. progress report study, 2018*)

- IQA procedures : involvement of SH in programme design, evaluation, curriculum development: academic staff and students (70 % of respondents)
- EQA: external SH mostly national policymakers, national experts (interest groups), and last the employers
- Employers:
 - see employability as one of the most important indicators of quality HE;
 - involved in both I & EQA: in design, evaluat. & development of curricula: 65 % of agencies say it is required by law;
 - 28 % do it without such formal requirements;
 - increase relevance of curricula, provide access to work-based learning when an integral part of IQA, seen to contribute to quality enhancement
- Measurements of employability are gaining momentum among national authorities & HEIs

Perspectives of involvement of stakeholders in PHE

e) Future developments with impact on SH involvement:

- opening up QA for cooperation with other education sectors (objective of the European Education Area)
- support for cross-border cooperation
- facilitating the development of international joint programmes (European Universities Action)
- focusing on interaction with the environment; impact of Societal Development goals for HE; Corporate Social Responsibility, etc.
- SH engagement is generally considered as part of CSR (Companies in dialogue with SH to find out which societal issues matter for them)

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