QA and internationalisation

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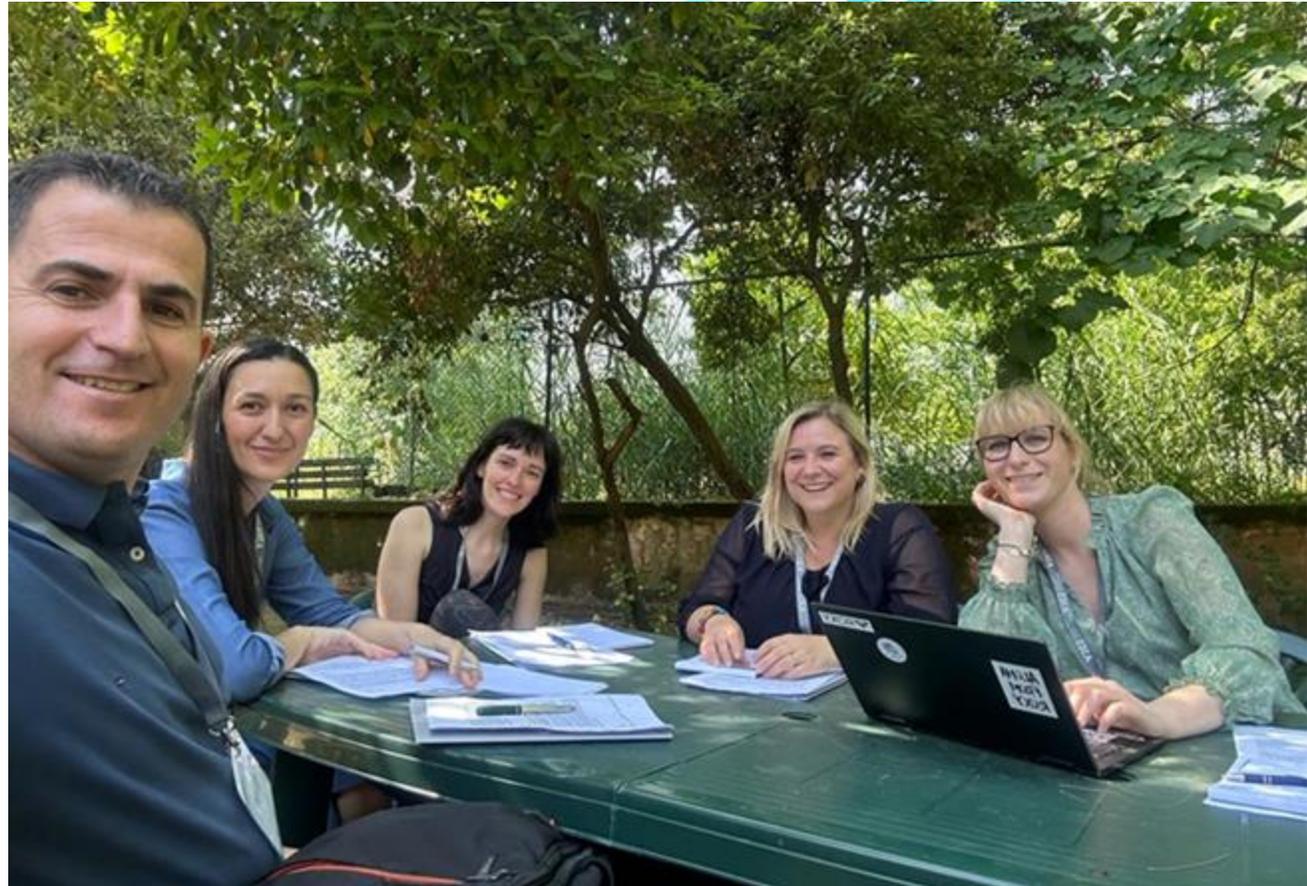
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The project was carried out as a part of the ENQA Leadership Training

Survey on the role of QA in the internationalisation of HEIs

Our main question:

What is the role of QA agencies in supporting internationalisation of HEIs?

The role of QA in the internationalisation of higher education

Dear expert,

We are a project team of 5 people working for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education in different European countries.

Our team is a part of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) programme and has been assigned to a project focused on quality assurance (QA) and internationalisation. The main goal of our small-scale project is to gain insights from your professional experience as expert evaluators regarding the role of QA agencies in supporting the internationalisation of higher education.

We would appreciate it if you could spare about 20 minutes to fill in a questionnaire and share your opinions on internationalisation in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and its assessment during accreditation processes.

Your opinions and thoughts will be highly appreciated. They will give us a broader understanding of QA agencies' role in supporting HEIs' internationalisation. Moreover, they could bring valuable ideas for improving QA agencies' procedures for assessing the level of internationalisation within European HEIs during accreditation processes.

Profile of survey respondents

➜ experts from our 5 QAs pools of experts (ACQUIN, ARACIS, KAA, NAKVIS, SAAHE)
➜ having experience in external evaluations
➜ mainly academics but also students were included
➜ 20 responses

Legend:
- Germany 15.8%
- Kosovo 26.3%
- Romania 26.3%
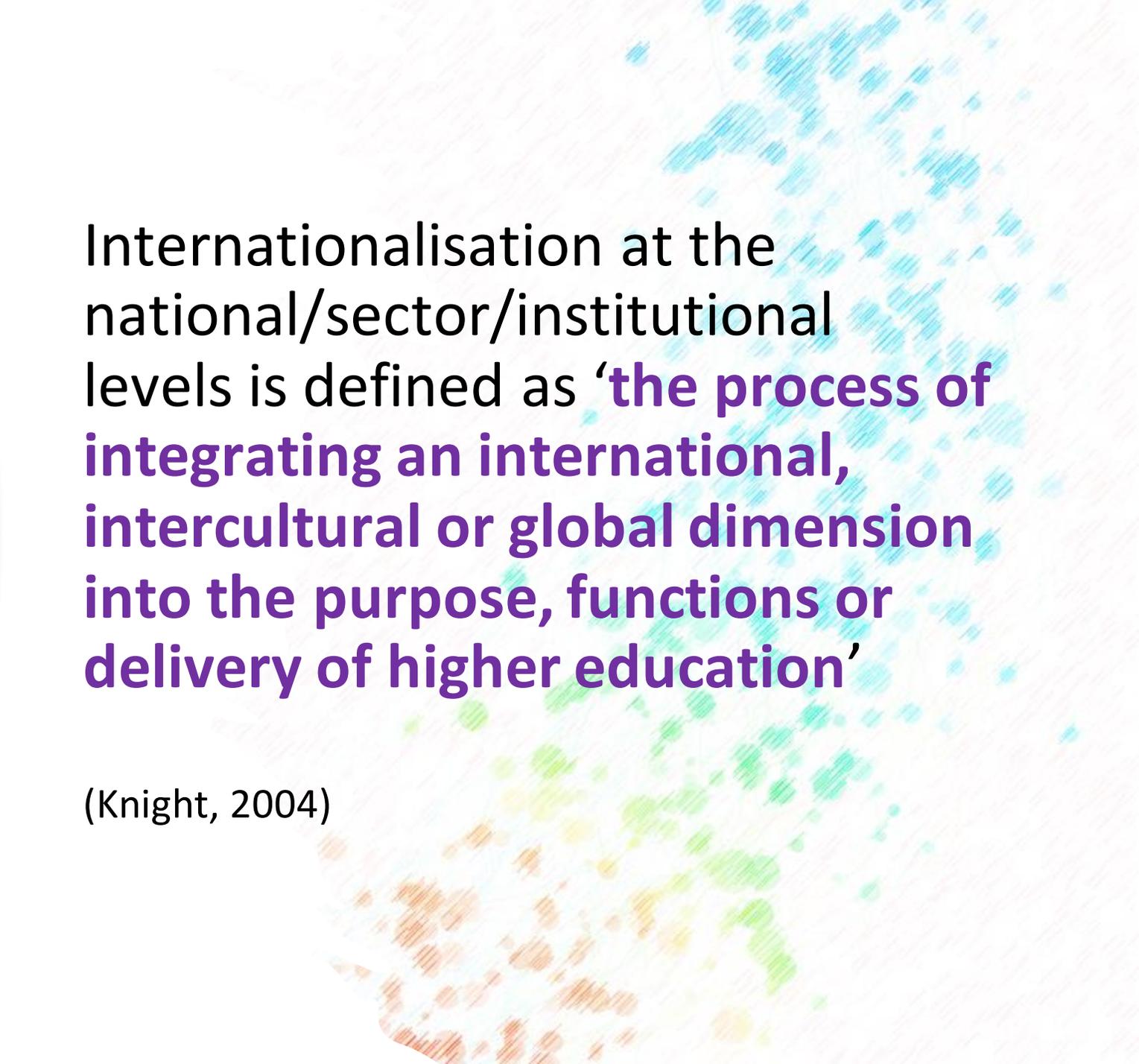- Slovenia 21.1%
- Other
- Slovakia
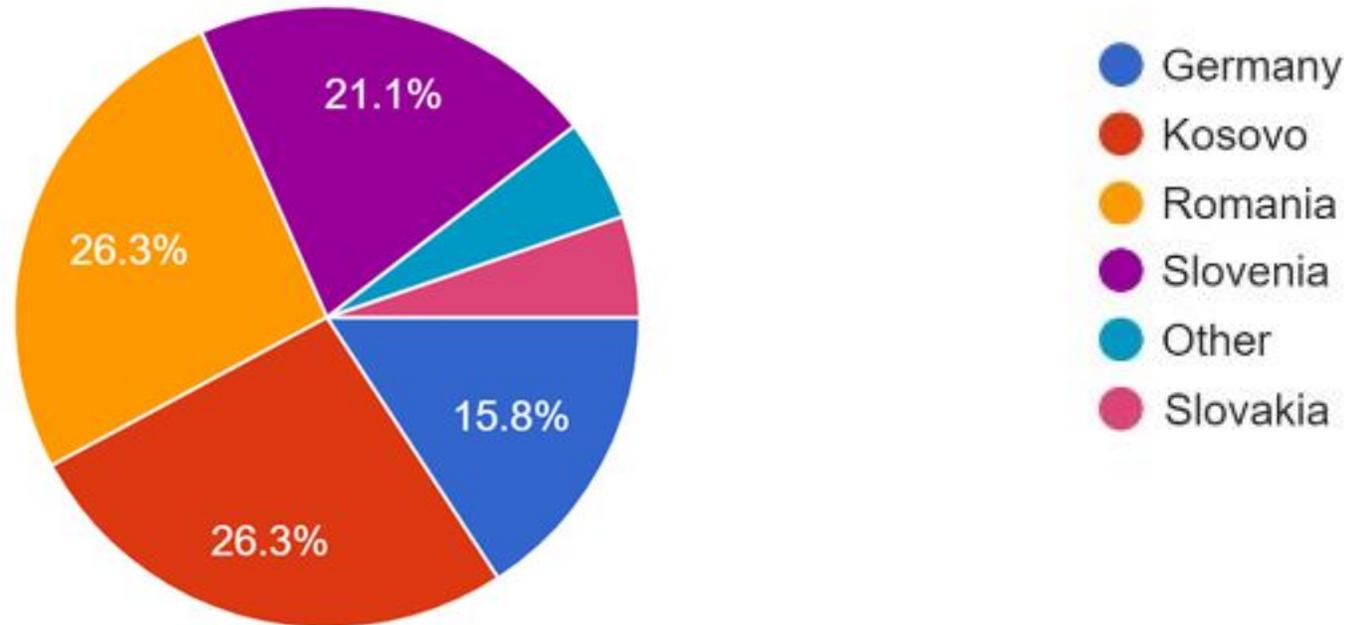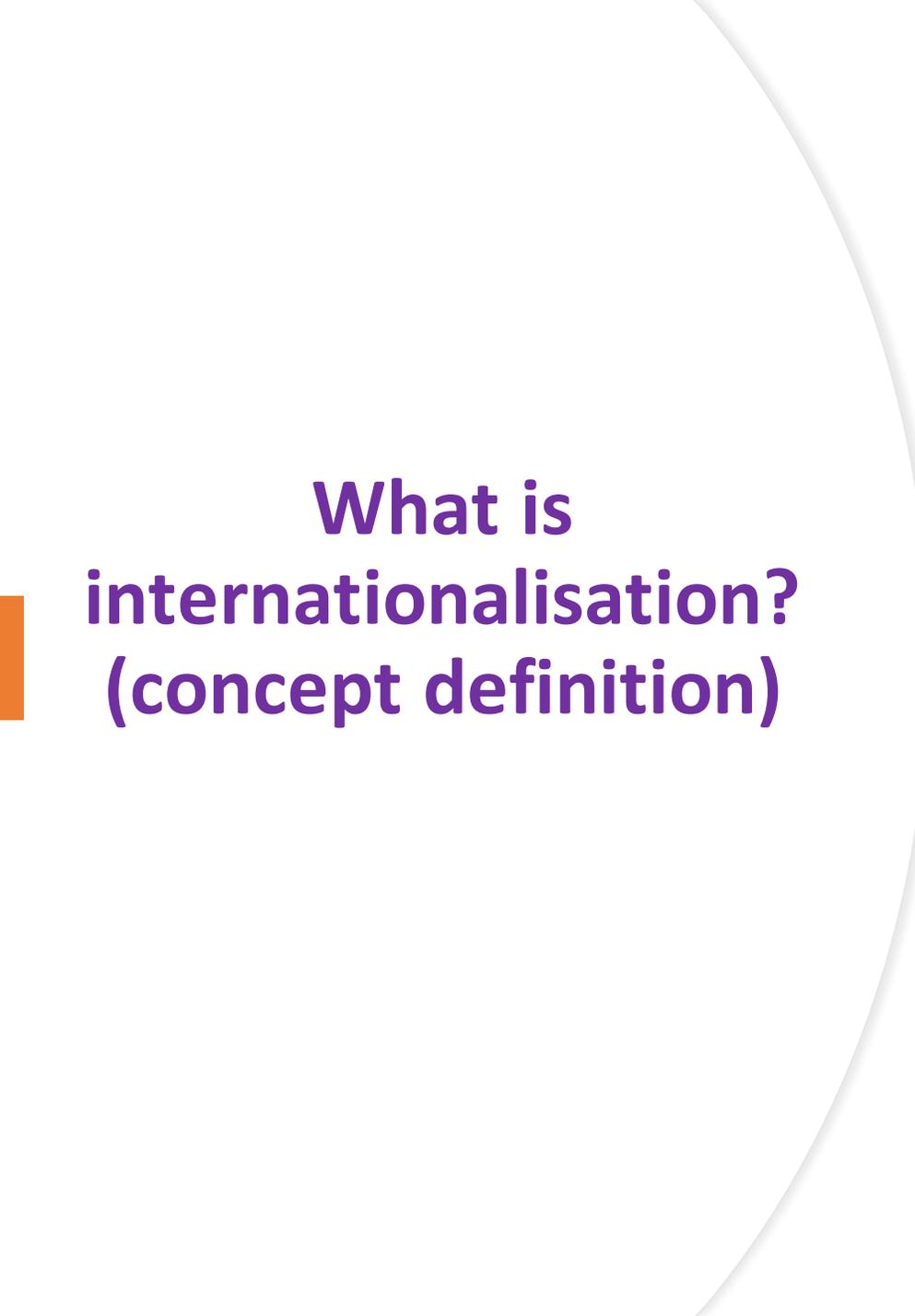
What is internationalisation? (concept definition)

Internationalisation at the national/sector/institutional levels is defined as '**the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of higher education**'

(Knight, 2004)

Survey question 1

How should **internationalisation** be measured/assessed in higher education institutions (HEIs)?

The respondents identified quantitative as well as qualitative indicators to assess the following areas of internationalisation:

1. **Student and staff mobility/Exchange programmes**
2. **International students, alumni & international teaching staff and researchers**
3. **Teaching and learning**
4. **Agreements, partnerships and projects**
5. **Research**
6. **Use of English or other foreign languages**
7. **Support structures in place at HEI level**
8. **Rankings**
9. **QA** related indicators

Less mentioned

Survey question 2a

What are the main indicators of a **successful internationalisation** within **study programmes**?

Variety of quantitative as well as qualitative indicators, grouped into internationalisation focus areas similar to those mentioned previously, but with more focus on teaching and learning.

New areas:

1. **Recognition of studies**
2. **Intercultural skills**

Survey question 2b

What are the main indicators of a **successful internationalisation** within **HEIs**?

✓ similar indicators to those identified at Q1 and Q2a;
✓ more focus on the institutional drive towards internationalisation, internationalisation of research and support structures in place;
✓ connection between internationalisation approached at institutional level and internationalisation at the level of study programmes:

"(...) *much of the internationalization of study programmes are often dictated by the institutional internationalization of HEI. Having a robust and dedicated institutional drive towards internationalization is the first step* (...)."

Our recommendation ☺

Checklist for QAs
when assessing internationalisation of HEIs or study programmes

✓ the identified areas of internationalisation can be used as part of a **framework to map internationalisation**;

✓ the need to approach both types of indicators, **quantitative as well as qualitative;**

✓ the need to measure internationalisation on the **strategic level**;

✓ the need to focus on **intercultural skills**.

Survey question 3

How could a QA agency play role in supporting the internationalisation of HEIs?

Checklist for HEIs /QA

✓QA as role model for HEIs

✓QA have knowledge empowerment of ESG

✓QA as networking factor

✓QA as consulting partner

✓QA as monitoring instance

✓QA has a an advising role

Our recommendation ☺

✓QA as role model concerning international competence, visibility and intercultural competence

✓Knowledge and Transfer of ESG interpretation and applicability into the HEIs;

✓Networking and connecting the international higher education landscape

✓Consulting internationalization strategies of HEIs

✓Regular monitoring of implementing ESG of HEIs

✓Advising and accompanying role for HEIs in their internationalization process

Checklist for HEIs / QA

Survey question 4

What do experts expect from an international accreditation?

✓ Compliance with ESG - Improvement of Quality Assurance

✓ Enhancement of international reputation

✓ International expert group

✓ Intercultural Understanding

✓ Internationalization Concept of HEIs

Our recommendation ☺

✓ HEIs with national and international standards and guidelines (ESG)

✓ International Visibility through international study programmes

✓ Enhancement of academic mobility: incomings and outgoings

✓ Inclusion of international expert and national experts

✓ Development of a internationalization concept must be ensured

✓ Global recognition and comparability of degrees

✓ Quality Management and Research

Survey question 5

What preparation do you expect from an accreditation agency if you participate in an international accreditation as an international expert?

Checklist for HEIs / QA

✓Experts expect access to essential information about HEIs, including national standards, to ensure a successful evaluation process;

✓Experts seek training and support for working across nations and understanding multicultural differences

✓Experts need to understand nation-specific aspects such as rules, logistics, language, and education systems for a thorough review.

✓Information on national and international rankings, curriculum standards, is vital for experts to adapt their evaluation techniques

Our recommendation ☺

✓Provide international experts with easy access to crucial information about HEIs, including national standards, to facilitate a successful evaluation process;

✓Implement training programs to help experts work effectively across nations, fostering an understanding of multicultural differences and promoting culturally sensitive evaluations;

✓Provide comprehensive briefings to experts on nation-specific elements such as rules, logistics, language, and education systems, ensuring a thorough review in diverse contexts.

✓Supply experts with information on national and international rankings, as well as curriculum standards, to assist in adapting evaluation techniques and improving the overall quality of accreditation assessments;

Survey question 6

What would you add to the agency's evaluation criteria for assessing internationalisation in order to increase clarity and relevance?

Checklist for HEIs / QA

✓The evaluation criteria for internationalisation in higher education could be improved, according to the respondents, if certain issues were addressed. These issues included the need for clear standards, input from international parties, and equal weighting of diversity, equity, and cultural competency.

✓The assessment should based on global learning results, an evaluation of institutional initiatives, an assurance of alignment with industry goals, and an assessment of society repercussions, including labour migration and economic ramifications, in order to measure global awareness and intercultural abilities.

✓Practical considerations like student representation, language accessibility, and multilingual services should be included in the criteria.

✓Increase the institutional-level evaluation's purview to include all facets of internationalisation efforts.

Our recommendation ☺

Recommendation on how to increase clarity and relevance

✓By addressing the need for clear standards, including feedback from international stakeholders, and guaranteeing equal treatment of diversity, equity, and cultural competency, you can improve the evaluation criteria for internationalisation in higher education.

✓To test global awareness and multicultural talents, enhance the assessment by reviewing institutional actions, ensuring alignment with industry aims, and examining societal ramifications, including labour migration and economic impacts.

✓Incorporate pragmatic factors such as student representation, language accessibility, and multilingual services into the evaluation criteria to provide a comprehensive assessment that takes into account many facets of internationalisation.

✓In order to ensure a thorough assessment that accurately reflects the complexity and diversity of international higher education activities, expand the institutional-level evaluation to include all aspects of internationalisation efforts;

Survey question 7

How do the European Standards and Guidelines **(ESG)** impact the **quality** of degree programmes and your HEI?

Most common impacts

1. **Consistent quality in the EHEA.**
2. **Establishing a culture of quality.**

Less often

1. **Student-centered learning.**
2. **Stakeholder participation.**
3. **Transparency.**
4. **Policy development.**

Main Challenges

1. **General and soft formulation.**
2. **Limited familiarity.**

Our recommendation ☺

Checklist for HEIs / QA

HEIs &/ QA need to ensure that

✓**There is a clear interpretation of the ESGs.** (+ other stakeholders)

✓**Everyone at the HEI is familiar with the ESG** (not just the QA Committee).

Survey question 8

What **suggestion** would you provide to HEIs to **promote** internationalisation and international collaboration?

Strategic planning, systematic approach, and regular evaluation

Ownership and participation

Language proficiency and global learning outcomes

Our recommendation ☺

Checklist for HEIs / QA

HEIs need to ensure that

✓**They have a clear vision of a future collaboration** (no oversigning)

✓Stimulate **collaborative research initiatives**

✓**Involve all stakeholders** in the planning of the strategy as well as in the implementation

✓Check if the **English language** is included enough

✓Global perspective and learning outcomes.

Survey question 9

What are the **main three challenges** at your HEI **to drive internationalisation** of academic and student mobility?

Based on the respondents' answers, we identified **four** main **challenges** (issues, problematic areas) to drive internationalisation of academic and student mobility. They are related to:

1) **Funding,**

2) **Knowledge of the foreign language,**

3) **Study programs and**

4) **Lack of Strategy.**

Our recommendation ☺

Checklist for HEIs (QA)
to drive (evaluate) **internationalisation**

HEIs need to ensure that

✓ **funding of mobilities** (international activities) is adequate,
✓ level of **knowledge of a foreign language** of students or academics (academic writing and speaking) is **sufficient,**
✓ enough **study programs are provided in English,**
✓ curricula of **study programs include international content and recognition of studies abroad has no major obstacles,**
✓ **clear strategy** for the internationalisation of a HEI is developed.

Survey question 10

Were there any **innovative practices** or approaches to **internationalisation** that stood out <u>among the evaluated HEIs?</u>

The majority of respondents **did not identify very specific innovative approaches** to internationalisation that stood out among the evaluated HEIs.

Based on the answers we identified one aspect that **is currently related to innovative practices and approaches to increasing internationalisation at HEIs and that is**

- **use of modern technologies by**

setting up the virtual classrooms, developing the digital international collaboration, support virtual mobility and also support collaborative online learning.

Our recommendation ☺

**Checklist for HEIs
to drive internationalisation**

HEIs need to ensure that

✓ modern technologies are used **in learning/teaching process** in order to strengthen internationalisation.

Survey bonus question

How a painting titled "Internationalisation of Higher Education" would look?

Checklist for HEIs

✓ As recommended by the study, support a range of artistic interpretations of the "Internationalisation of Higher Education," which capture many topics and viewpoints and show the phenomenon complexity.

✓ Think of illustrating ideas such as "Cultural Mixture and Transformation" or "Rainbow of Differences" to highlight how interactions with other cultures may foster personal development and how multinational parties can coexist peacefully in higher education.

✓ Examine the idea of "Global Collaboration and Learning," which emphasises flexibility, critical thinking, and assistance in accomplishing educational goals through regular communication between teachers, staff, and students from around the globe.

✓ Highlight the complexity of international education through artistic concepts like "Academic Landscape," "Cultural Exchange and Unity," and "Global Campus and Technology," showcasing physical, structural, and technological aspects, as well as the cultural variety and interdependence in international higher education.

Conclusions

QA processes can help and support internationalisation in the HEIs.

QA agencies = role models (connective bridge between ESG and HEIs).

QA agencies = enhancing the international quality (experts!).

Thank you!
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