



SKVC on the enhancement path

Aurelija Valeikienė, Deputy Director

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Vilnius

The external quality assurance framework in Lithuania

SKVC

The mission of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) is to contribute to the improvement of quality of higher education studies through mutual accountability and fostering of a quality culture, and to create conditions for the free movement of persons in the world by increasing transparency of qualifications and the realization of their value.

We implement our mission through the activities of an external quality assurance (QA) agency and services of the academic information and recognition center (member of ENIC/NARIC).

SKVC

- **26** years of experience in external QA, committed to quality
- Co-founder of **CEENQA**, full and active member of **ENQA**
- Listed on **EQAR** as trustworthy QA agency from 2012
- Have experience of conducting evaluations abroad, incl. Joint Programmes
- Very high degree of **internationalisation** – almost all SKVC procedures with foreign experts
- Full inclusion of **students**; active cooperation with the **employers**



CEENQA

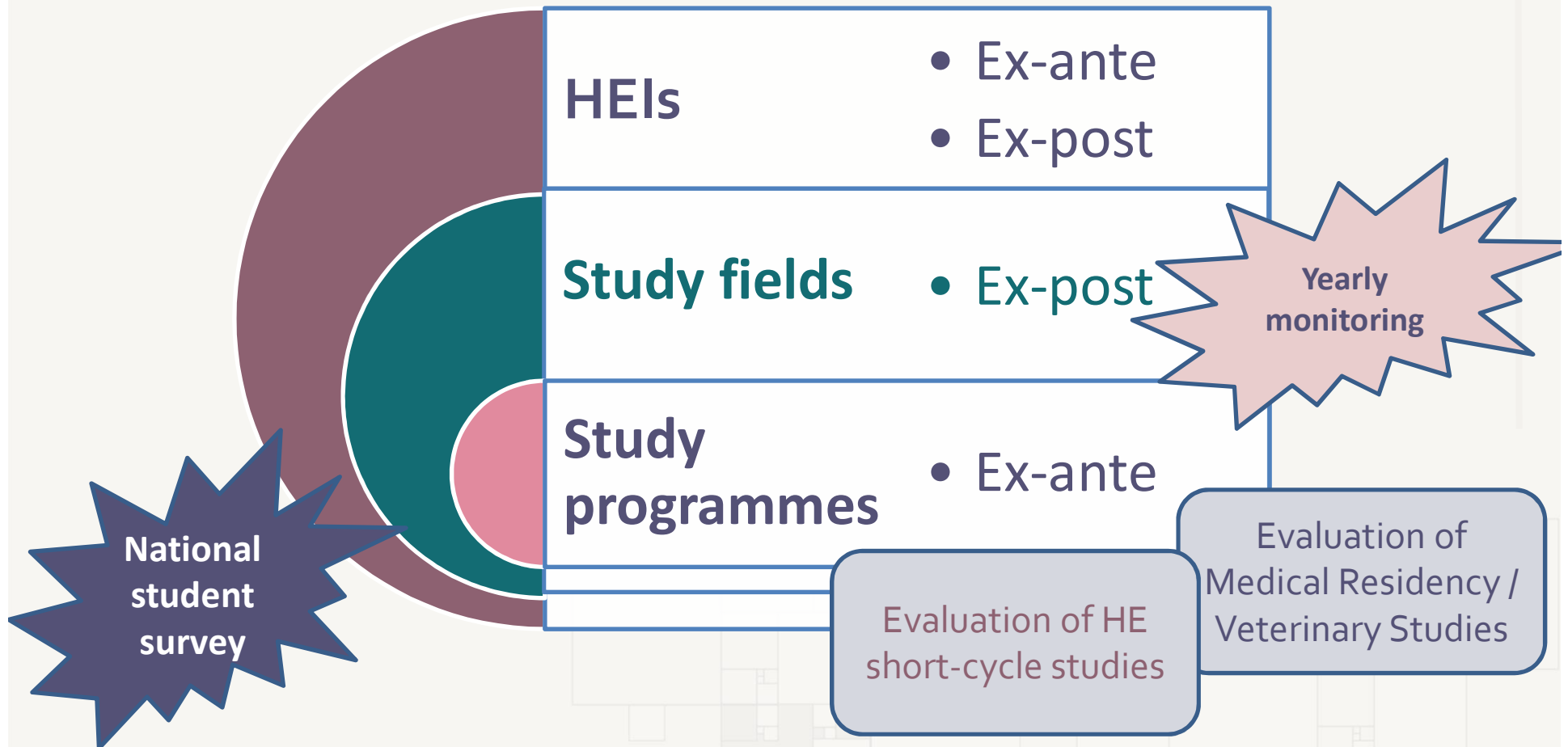
CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN NETWORK
OF QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

National quality assurance system

- Licensing of provision of studies and activities related to studies (parties involved include the Ministry, SKVC, State Security Department)
- Internal quality assurance by HEIs themselves
- External quality assurance of studies (NQF 5-7) done by SKVC [or other QA agencies listed on EQAR], institutional reviews – only by SKVC [EQAR agencies not allowed by law]
- Monitoring by the Ministry, STRATA and SKVC
- Authorisation to provide doctoral education, quality of doctoral education and research, benchmarking of research – by Lithuanian Research Council
- Oversight of innovation activities – by STRATA
- Office of the Ombudsperson for Academic Ethics and Procedures

**Principles of ESG apply,
primary responsibility for quality – by HEIs**

The new external quality assurance framework



Regulation regarding study programmes

- Other EQAR registered agencies are allowed in LT
- European Approach towards quality assurance of Joint Degrees possible in evaluation of new study programmes (ex-ante)
- Evaluation and Accreditation of JP ex-post – together with the study field:
 - In order to run a JP, a HEI has to have an accreditation of a relevant study field per relevant study cycle (separately for BA and MA)
 - OR register it as a new study programme after the external QA procedure (by SKVC or another EQAR-registered agency)
- For a new JP, a common SKVC framework for taking decisions regarding new study programmes applies
 - If an evaluation is carried out by another EQAR-registered agency, the report should be not older than 1 year, it will be analyzed by SKVC

Regulation regarding institutional reviews

- For mandatory institutional review, other EQAR registered agencies are not allowed in LT, except on voluntary basis in addition to SKVC's review (EUA IEP, OECD IMHE...)
- Separate regulation and evaluation of higher education institutions in exile
- External evaluation [but not accreditation] of branches of foreign HEIs operating in Lithuania

External quality assurance ≠ evaluation

- Continuous dialogue, training, analysis and sharing

The thematic analysis: lessons learnt

SKVC self-evaluation report 2012

ESG 2.8 SYSTEM-WIDE ANALYSIS

Standard:

Quality assurance agencies should produce from time to time summary reports describing and analysing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments, etc.

What we did?

- 20 publications of summary reports (by experts)
- Summaries on evaluation clusters of study programmes in annual reports
- 7 information bulletins
- two SKVC specialists and two outside co-authors produced a book entitled „Lithuanian Research Policy in the European Context“
- commissioned research relating to master's studies; based on it two methodologies by SKVC were developed
- SKVC employee co-authoring a publication „Tenets of quality assurance in higher education“
- Articles in journal „Quality in Higher Education“ by Vytautas Magnus University
- Providing data for research by others (e.g. the Teacher Competence Centre, MOSTA)
- participation in annual student fairs “Studies & Career”
- Interviews to the media

External ENQA review report 2013

ESG 2.8 SYSTEM-WIDE ANALYSIS

Standard:

Quality assurance agencies should produce from time to time summary reports describing and analysing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments, etc.

End result – not enough...

Conclusion: Overall whilst there are pockets of activity there needs to be coherence and attention paid to the overall task to ensure that information is correctly targeted and for this reason the panel concluded that SKVC were **Substantially Compliant**

Recommendation

Consultation with stakeholders should be undertaken to develop a more systematic production of summary reports based on stakeholder needs and with a clear focus rather than as part of the annual reporting cycle.

SKVC self-evaluation report 2016

ESG 3.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Standard: Agencies should regularly publish reports that describe and analyse the general findings of their external quality assurance activities.

Guidelines: In the course of their work, agencies gain information on programmes and institutions that can be useful beyond the scope of a single process, providing material for structured analyses across the higher education system. These findings can contribute to the reflection on and the improvement of quality assurance policies and processes in institutional, national and international contexts. A thorough and careful analysis of this information will show developments, trends and areas of good practice or persistent difficulty.

Continued past tradition of production of....

- annual SKVC activity reports
- overview of evaluated study field programmes
- interviews to the media
- participation in *Studies fair*
- occasional articles in journals (2 cases)

SKVC self-evaluation report 2016

Additionally:

- Reviews on publishing of evaluation results on HEIs websites (2011, 2013, 2015)
- Overview of External Evaluation Results of Study Programmes by Field for the Period 2010-2013
- Overview of Evaluations of Study Programmes in the Field of Pedagogy and Education (2014)
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis of study programmes accredited twice in succession for three years of study over the period 2010-2014
- Analysis of the study programmes which received the highest evaluation (in 2010-2015)
- Evaluation results of study programmes by study area in 2000-2009 and in 2010-2015
- Joint Study Programmes and their Assessment, 2010-2015
- Analysis of new study programmes submitted to SKVC in 2010-2015
- Review of excellence at the level of individual subject disciplines in 2014-2015
- Evaluation Results of Colleges in 2004-2008 and in 2011-2015.
- Overview of Internal Quality Assurance Systems in Higher Education for 2011-2015 (2016)
- SKVC staff participated in five ENQA working groups and contributed towards their publications (2014-2016)

External ENQA review report 2017

End result – still not enough...

Summarising the panel recognises that SKVC made progress since the 2012 review in the dissemination of the knowledge learned through its external quality assurance activities. Even so, the panel feels that thematic analyses need further attention in terms of procedures, topics, target audience and dissemination. The panel therefore concludes that SKVC is substantially compliant with the ESG standard on Thematic Analyses.

Panel recommendation

The agency should develop a procedure for the production of thematic analyses with the sole aim of contributing to the enhancement of the quality of higher education. Analyses need to focus on key issues relevant to a well-defined target audience. The agency might also want to reconsider the resources needed, both in human and financial terms, given the rather ambitious goals.

Panel conclusion: substantially compliant.

SKVC follow-up report 2019

A window of opportunity – end of the accreditation cycles. In addition to other regular work, the following **eight reports were produced by initiative of SKVC and two at the initiative of the MoE**, on the topics as follows:

- Study programmes which received a negative evaluation in the period of 2013-2017.
- Analysis of study field overview reports (2010-2016)
- Follow-up activities of higher education institutions (2017)
- Overview of study programme evaluation in 2010-2016
- Review on the publicity of evaluation results in higher education institutions (2017)
- **Quality Standards (2018)**
- **Review of State Colleges (2018)**
- Overview of ENQA members' activities (2018-2019)
- Follow-up after evaluation of study programmes (2018)
- Study programmes accredited twice in succession for three years of study over the period 2010-2018

[Wide and targeted dissemination]

ENQA Board 2019

Subject: follow-up report to the 2017 ENQA review

Dear Almantas Šerpatauskas,

At its meeting on 19 September 2019, the Board of ENQA considered the follow-up report arising from the external review of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) in 2017.

The Board approves the report and takes note of the progress that has been made. In particular, the Board would like to use the opportunity to applaud the agency for great efforts put so far in following the recommendations of the panel.

Yours sincerely,



Christoph Grolimund
President





Quality is a path...