

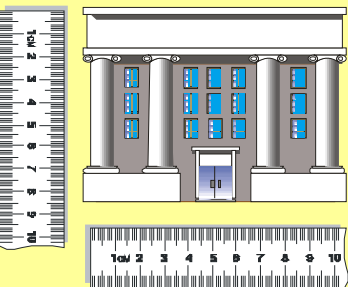
QA and recognition of qualifications including trans-national provisions

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Introductory remarks

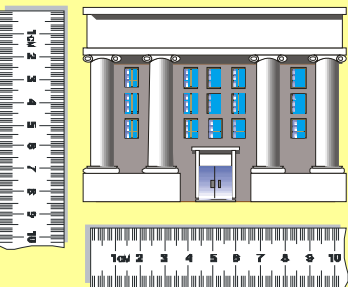


- a link exists between QA/ accreditation and international recognition of individual qualifications.
- closer cooperation between in QA and recognition has a potential to ensure that qualifications earned in one part of the EHEA will be recognized in others.
- the link is very tight yet not that trivial as it may seem



Some features of recognition

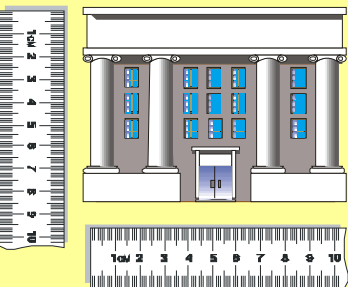
- To assess a qualification fairly means to adequately position it in the grid of qualifications of the receiving country.
- outcome is dependent on the features of both higher education systems.
- Recognition (Lisbon Convention)
 - recognize *comparable level* qualifications if there are no *substantial differences*
 - consider differences only with a view of purpose



Substantial differences – in what?



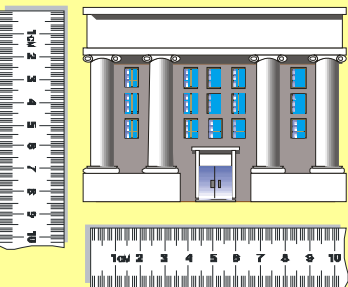
- Level
- Profile
- Learning outcomes
- Quality
- Workload



What does recognition need from QA?

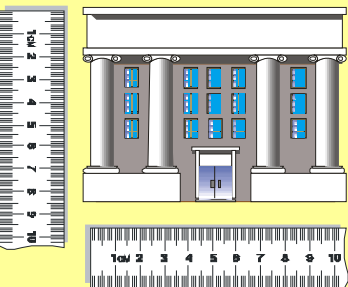


- QA is a very important first step in assessment of qualifications
- credential evaluator needs to know that the institution/ programme is of sufficient quality.
- Once that has been established, the more individualised work begins – to assess the level, learning outcomes, profile, workload, for the aim for which recognition is sought.





**What does recognition
of individual qualifications
need from quality assurance?**



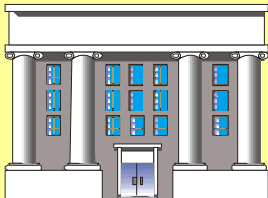
A statement confirming quality

- The main issue needed is a simple and reliable statement on quality behind the qualification/ programme.



It could be:

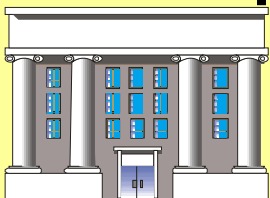
- accreditation or another judgement based on assessment.
- a statement that the stipulated learning outcomes are actually being achieved in the programme in question, or
- a statement confirming that the qualification has been included in the national qualifications framework through a quality procedure



Mutual trust between national QA systems

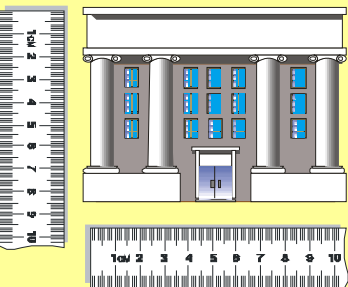


- In the huge and diverse ‘Bologna area’ there is always room for the assumption that there may be differences in quality.
- Substantial differences in the quality can be reasons for partial recognition or non-recognition.
- Recognition community therefore welcomes trust building through:
 - cooperation between QA,
 - assessment of QA agencies, and
 - having a register of trustworthy QA agencies.



Recognition of Cross-border qualifications

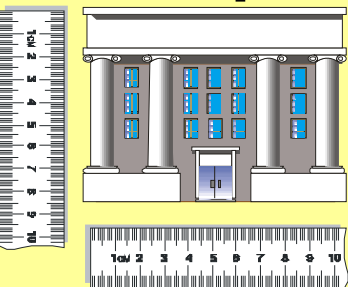
- is still one of the most difficult issues.
- The legal framework has been extended:
 - Council of Europe/UNESCO Code of Good Practice in the Provision of Transnational Education,
 - UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for quality provision in cross-border higher education
- The main difficulty still remains the information on quality
- Cooperation between QA agencies of the sending and receiving countries is still needed
- Cross-border providers should be given a chance to undergo quality assessment



Joint degrees



- **International legislation for recognition has been amended to include JDs**
- **Yet, information is needed from the QA side to confirm that**
 - **all the HEIs cooperating in the JD are trustworthy and that**
 - **all parts of the joint programme are of sufficient quality**
- **Thus, international cooperation of QA agencies is required also for recognition JDs**

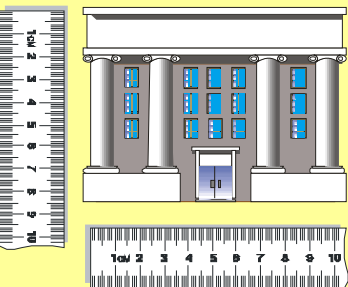


Recognition of qualifications and different quality assurance models



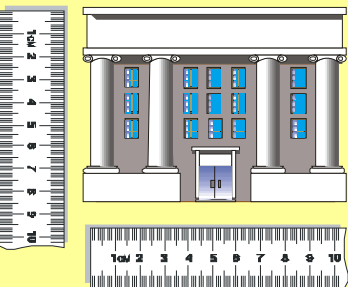
Programme accreditation.

- could be the most favoured type of QA for recognition of individual qualifications –
- as the “quality label” indeed can be attributed to individual qualifications
- However, it seems that programme accreditation currently is not the main trend.



Institutional accreditation/ assessment

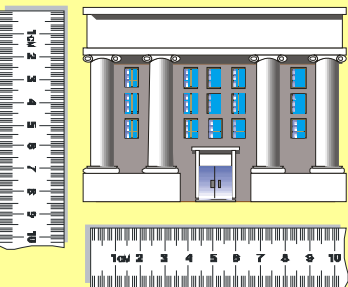
- For recognition - somewhat less useful than plain programme accreditation.
- It is leading to a judgement that allows qualifying institution as nationally recognised.
- but is not always confirming quality/ granting national recognition to individual programmes
- If the answer regarding national recognition is negative, there is little chance internationally...
- Cross-border cooperation of recognition and QA could help



Internal quality culture of the HEIs

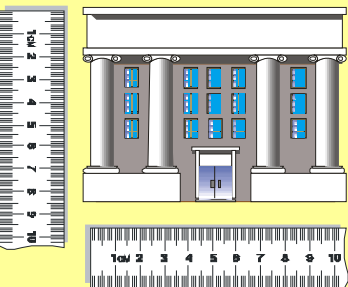


- Is the best way to continuous improvement
- is less costly
- Is the most preferred by the HEIs themselves
- For recognition –
could be supplemented with a national
'quality label' for individual qualifications.





How far are the recognition needs covered and what are the perspectives?



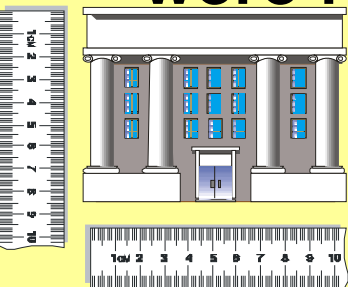
QA in 2005 Bologna Stocktaking report



- progress towards establishing national QA systems.
- especially promising in future perspective.

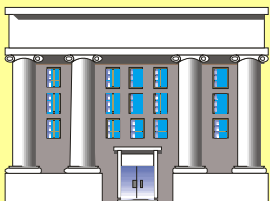
But - recognition needs QA now!

- Fully established QA system in 22 countries (how big part of HE system is actually covered?)
- All elements of national QA system: internal assessment, external review, student participation, publication of results, international participation were fully implemented in 18 countries.



Standards and guidelines for QA

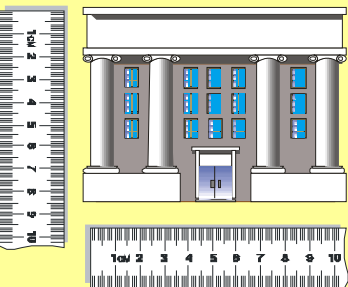
- **Adoption of Standards and guidelines is certainly a major step forward**
- **standards and guidelines will be the main reference document for**
 - **internal quality assurance,**
 - **external assessment and**
 - **assessment of the quality assurance agencies.**
- **As the 2007 stocktaking will check implementation of the S&G, it will facilitate further development of QA systems**



Cooperation between accreditation and recognition agencies



- **Basing on**
 - Mutual trust in the results of accreditation and
 - knowledge of the HE systems,
- **it should be possible to position the other countries' qualifications among own ones.**
- **such an exercise however requires a huge amount of bilateral work (1035 cross-studies among 45 participating countries)**



Cooperation between accreditation and recognition agencies (II)

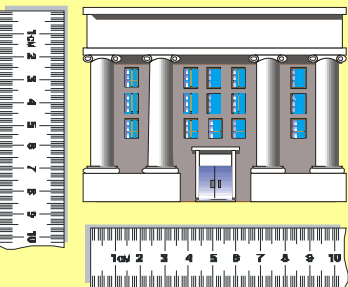


Cooperation can lead to ‘automatic’ recognition of qualifications in the sense that

- quality and the level of qualifications are considered as recognised.

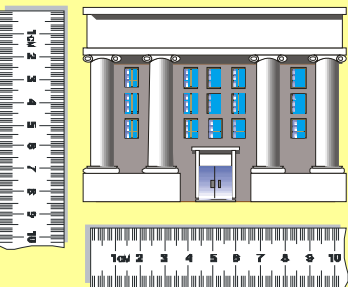
The further individual assessment,

- will have to establish whether or not the particular foreign qualification has substantial differences with regard to the purpose for which applicant wishes to have it recognised



Summary

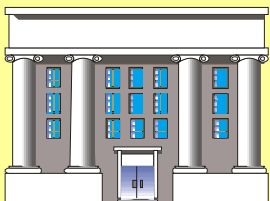
- 1. Fair recognition of qualifications across the EHEA needs sufficient information on the quality**
- 2. Hence, fair recognition of qualifications needs full implementation of QA across the EHEA**
- 3. Trust in the quality statements is also needed.**
- 4. Cooperation among QA systems, assessment of QA agencies and finally a register of trustworthy QA agencies will promote recognition.**



Summary



5. To improve recognition of cross-border qualifications, any programme or institution should have access to a fair quality assessment,
6. Where the national QA is based upon internal quality culture of HEIs, a national review confirming the quality is still useful for international use.
7. Finally – the more QA and recognition specialists will communicate and cooperate, the greater chances of the holders of individual qualifications to be fairly recognized.





Thanks for your attention!

