

# Social dimension and quality:

Why and how the social dimension should be integrated into QA in HE

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# Structure of presentation

- Working definition of the social dimension
- The link between the social dimension and quality
- QA&A – three main steps + the role of the social dimension
- How to integrate the social dimension in QA&A

# Working definition of the social dimension

- Obstacles to access, progress and completion in HE:
  - Tuition fees
  - Participation of underrepresented groups
  - Grants/loans (portable!)
  - Health services
  - Housing
  - Counselling – academic, legal and social

# The link between quality and the social dimension

- No connection between e.g. size of wallet, and academic capacity and potential
- There are obstacles to access, progress and completion – unequal opportunities across EHEA
- Ensuring equal opportunities is not only a matter of justice, but also about improving quality

# QA&A – three main steps

- Step I: develop criteria or standards
- Step II: internal accreditation or self-evaluation
- Step III: external accreditation by an accreditation body
- The social dimension should be incorporated in step I

# How to integrate the social dimension in QA&A

- The hard part
- Fighting different social obstacles as a quality indicator
- Different levels of competencies – e.g. the grants/loans system usually a national responsibility

# Preliminary conclusions

- Social dimension: access, progress and completion in HE
- The link: ensuring equal opportunities = ensuring quality
- The social dimension should be incorporated in step I of the QA&A process – but challenges remain