Quality Assurance Between Bologna and 2020
Recent Developments and Future Options in the European Higher Education Area

Don F. Westerheijden
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‘Cooperation Between Accreditation Committees/Agencies’
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The Bologna Declaration
Aim and Rationales

- **Main aim:** To establish the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010

- **Main European rationales:**
  - Increase ‘the international competitiveness of the European system of higher education’ in the world
  - Promote mobility within Europe
    - Europe = all countries undersigning ‘Bologna’
The Bologna Declaration

Why Did Ministers Sign?

- My opinion: There were 29 Bologna Declarations
- Each country had a national agenda
  - National reform: e.g. Germany wanted shorter time to degree
  - National aims with internationalisation: e.g. the Netherlands wanted better international recognition
- The Bologna Process got its own dynamics afterwards, with unexpected consequences, e.g.
  - Seen as part of the *acquis communautaire*
  - Expectation of cooperation
    - But does it help cooperation?
The Bologna Declaration: 6 Objectives (1-5)

- ‘easily readable and comparable degrees’
  - ‘also through … the Diploma Supplement’
- ‘two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate’
  - 1st cycle: ≥ 3 years
  - 1st cycle: ‘relevant to the European labour market’
- ‘a system of credits - such as in the ECTS system’
  - ‘also … acquired in non-higher education contexts’
- ‘Promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles’
- ‘European dimensions in higher education’
  - ‘curricular development, inter-institutional co-operation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research.’
The Bologna Declaration: 6 Objectives (6)

- ‘Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to develop comparable criteria and methodologies’

- **Comment**: Bologna Declaration is **vague** about quality assurance

- Role for quality assurance: it is the mechanism to provide much-needed transparency

- Again: expectations set high, but does it help?
Follow-Up Conference Prague, May 2001

- With regard to quality assessment, the phrase was much longer than in Bologna…
- … but there was not much more clarity in content.

- However: designation of ENQA as ‘champion’ of the further process, or ‘spider in the web’.
  - ENQA = European Network of Quality assurance Agencies
    - ‘European’ = European Union = 25 countries
    - Extended to all Bologna countries, in 2004
Follow-Up Conference Berlin, September 2003

- Communique sets operational goals until 2005
  - Comment: sense of urgency in EU Commission and Ministers

- Considerations regarding quality:
  - ‘quality … has proven to be at the heart’ of EHEA
    - It is the 1st topic in the list!
  - ‘stress the need to develop mutually shared criteria and methodologies’
    - Comment: not uniform quality of programmes!
  - ‘primary responsibility … each institution itself’
    - ‘basis for real accountability’
Follow-Up Conference Berlin, Goals for Quality Assurance

- ‘by 2005 national quality assurance systems should include’:
  - ‘definition of the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions’
  - ‘Evaluation of programmes or institutions’
    - Internal + external, participation of students, and publication of results.
  - ‘A system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures.’
  - International participation, co-operation and networking.

- Expectations, and some guidelines
Follow-Up Conference Berlin, Goals for Quality Assurance

- Responsible for action (‘Berlin Mandate’):
  - ‘ENQA through its members’, in co-operation with
  - EUA [European University Association],
  - EURASHE [Association of non-university higher education institutions] and
  - ESIB [association of national student unions]

- Goals of cooperation:
  - ‘to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines’
  - ‘to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies’
Between Berlin and Bergen (May 2005)

- Where are we now?
  - You know better than I …

- What does Bologna imply for quality assessment and accreditation?
Design Rules for Quality Assurance from ‘Bologna’

- The object of evaluation has to be the degree
  - Because that is the ‘passport’ that students get
    - to study abroad
    - to enter the European labour market
  - Programme Accreditation is ‘logical preference’
  - ‘Catch-22’: 1000s of programmes per country
    - institutional evaluation: more feasible, less informative

- Europe-wide transparency
  - What is specific, what is common to degrees from Poland and Holland etc.?
  - My opinion: we do not have to aim for uniform B.Sc., etc.
Is European Quality Assurance Needed for Students and Employers?

- Distinguish initial ↔ post-initial higher education

- Initial higher education
  - Usual degree: ‘bachelor’.
  - Functions: Initiation and transformation of students
  - Mostly local or regional catch-basin for students

- Implies: mostly local or regional information on quality needed—more efficiently at national level?
Is European Quality Assurance Needed for Students and Employers?

- Post-initial higher education
  - … and diverse forms of life-long learning
  - These students are ‘informed consumers’
  - Sometimes local/regional, sometimes European market

- There is a need for European quality information on post-initial higher education
  - But this can include ‘bachelor’,
  - *ergo* cannot be operationally distinguished from initial higher education.
Is European Quality Assurance Needed for Students and Employers?

- Users’ information needs are, I maintain:
  - Robust, not esoteric distinctions
  - *Effectus civilis*, that is: What is the meaning of the degree on the labour market?
    - official accreditation and recognition regulations may be less important than …
    - … a good answer to the question how to achieve trust in degrees from different study programmes in the eyes of employers or society?
## Development of Evaluation and Accreditation in 20 Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Assessment</th>
<th>Accreditation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1983: 0 countries</td>
<td>1989: Close to 0 countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003: All countries</td>
<td>2003: Almost all countries</td>
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Commonalities and differences

Assessment/evaluation
- Mostly according to common model
  - Internal + external
  - Publication of results
  - Few: involvement of students

- Differences in balance: input – process – output

Accreditation
- Common (mostly): linked to state recognition

- Different models
  - Part or all of HE
  - Field and/or institution
  - How much external review?
  - …

Will mutual recognition be possible?
Limitations of Quality Assurance

- It leads to statements about study programmes or higher education institutions (faculties) …
- … not about individual graduates or students
- Moreover, credits, options, modularisation, recognition of previous work experience ‘deconstruct’ the idea of a coherent study programme as a recognisable unit for evaluation
- Conclusion: Diploma recognition remains important
Scenarios for 2020

- CHEPS developed three scenarios
  - Based on a 2-round Delphi study among 160 HE decision-makers and experts across Europe (2004)

- Centralia: based largely on majority opinions in Delphi
- Octavia: most-preferred by audiences
- Vitis Vinifera: in contrast to Centralia
Scenarios in short

Centralia:
- Hierarchical co-ordination
- Power is centralised: Muscles from Brussels

Octavia:
- Network co-ordination
- Power is spread throughout the network

Vitis Vinifera:
- Market co-ordination
- Power lies with the individual institutions
Centralia Landscape

- Organized diversity: B- M- D- model is leading
- Stratification: D- in the North/West, B- in South/East

- Fairly large institutions
- Predominantly public

- Blended mode learning, life long learning
- Research and teaching: basic versus R&D
Centralia Education

- EU-wide, uniform 3+2+3 degree structure
- With more emphasis on competences

- Students are carefully guided
- Standardised course modules
Centralia Quality

- Obligatory accreditation by the European Accreditation Agency (EAA):
  - Employability is the main criterion
  - Re-accreditation is semi-automatic

- Uniform EAA quality standards, but universities lobby for exceptions.
Octavia Landscape

- A great variation in continuously changing networks
- Teaching concentrated in South/East Europe; research in North/West Europe

- Inter- and intra organizational networks
- Public, private and hybrids

- Teaching in learning-working pathways
- Research in public private innovation networks
Octavia Education

• 3+2, 3+1+1, 4+1 degrees, … and short-cycle programmes

• Higher education is a cross-institutional, cross-national journey, with diversified, modular programmes
Octavia Quality

• Internal quality assurance has led to an internal quality culture

• Many ranking guides, with criteria that go beyond the traditional criteria (quality of services and workplaces)

• Diversified student body
  • Mixture of skills and knowledge
  • Quality continuously tested in the workplace
Vitis Vinifera Landscape

- Anarchic diversity: HE too complex to classify
- Much diversity within, less across systems

- From small niche players to mega-universities
- One-third HEI is private

- All modes of learning
- Basic research and R&D
Vitis Vinifera Education

• Degree structures: B, M, D plus first and post graduate diplomas: “some things are just unclassifiable”

• Private HE: often web-based and very strong in short cycle programmes
Vitis Vinifera Quality

- Few national quality assurance or accreditation schemes left at programme level
- Market demands innovation, responsiveness, renewal and mass individualisation
- Public concern about declining/differential quality
  - Still less diverse than the USA
1st vote

Which scenario do you personally think most probable in Europe 2020?

- Centralia
- Octavia
- Vitis Vinifera
2\textsuperscript{nd} vote

Which scenario do you think most desirable in Europe 2020 for the Ministry or accreditation agency in your country?

- Centralia
- Octavia
- Vitis Vinifera
3rd vote

Which scenario do you think most desirable in Europe 2020 for a student from your country?

- Centralia
- Octavia
- Vitis Vinifera