Examining Quality Culture:
Part 1 – Quality Assurance Processes
in Higher Education Institutions

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EUA
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Education and Culture DG
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Foreword

The quality of European education, and of higher education in particular, has been identified as one of the key factors which will allow Europe to succeed in a global competition. In 2003 in Berlin the Ministers for higher education stated that the primary responsibility for quality assurance lies with higher education institutions. Further, various policies and action lines have been developed to improve quality; among other initiatives, European degree structures have been revised, mobility of students and teachers is encouraged, and transparency and comparability of qualifications is promoted.

In parallel, EUA has supported its members in promoting an institutional quality culture that is fit for purpose and that takes account of the significant institutional diversity which exists in Europe. After a decade of work in this field, and given the official launch of the European Higher Education Area in 2010, we felt that the time had come to take a moment to analyse progress made in this respect.

The aim of the "Examining Quality Culture in European Higher Education Institutions" project has been to ask the institutions how, and through which activities, they are responding to the challenge of assuring and enhancing the quality of their provision. This report focuses on the activities developed by universities to enhance their internal quality, to improve their accountability and thereby also implementing the European Standards and Guidelines (ESGs) in practice, and is based on the results of a survey completed by 222 institutions across Europe.

Nevertheless, true high quality education cannot result only from formal quality assurance processes, but rather is a consequence of the emergence of a quality culture shared by all members of a higher education community. Hence, the work of this project will continue. The intention is to complement this report by another one which will address the complex relationship that exists between formal quality processes and the existence of an overall institutional 'quality culture'. It will also present some case study examples of this interaction.

We hope that this publication will be of interest to all our members as well as to policy makers. As the results demonstrate, while considerable progress has been made there remains much to be done. In that context, we hope that this publication will invite reflections that will contribute to this work.

Jean-Marc Rapp
EUA President

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Secondly, we are grateful to the members of the project Steering Committee (see list below), chaired by Professor Henrik Toft Jensen, former President of Roskilde University in Denmark. Ever since the first meeting of the Steering Committee we have been impressed by the shared commitment to this project and to promoting a quality culture approach within higher education institutions. This commitment has been demonstrated by the untiring willingness to comment on drafts of both the questionnaire and this report as well as to contribute to the analysis of the results.

Furthermore, EUA would like to thank its consortium partners, the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) and QAA Scotland for agreeing to embark on this challenging adventure of mapping quality assurance processes and addressing quality culture. Our thanks also go to the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme for co-funding the project.

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Executive summary

1. Setting the stage

1. High quality of provision has been one of the key aims of the current reforms in European higher education, and has led to the increasing demand for quality assurance (QA). Of all the work carried out in this regard at European level, the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESGs), adopted in 2005, are considered as a cornerstone, reinforcing the importance of institutional autonomy and responsibility in QA.

2. When working on QA processes, higher education institutions (HEIs) are ideally expected to develop internal quality cultures which take into account their institutional realities and are related to their organisational culture.

3. The project "Examining Quality Culture in Higher Education Institutions" (EQC) aims to identify institutional processes and structures that support the development of an internal quality culture. The first phase of the project focused on mapping the existing QA processes through a survey, while the second phase will provide a qualitative approach and embrace the cultural and more informal elements of quality culture.

4. The report, which results from the first phase, seeks to examine how higher education institutions (HEIs) respond in their activities to the developments in QA at policy level. It is based on the quantitative results of a survey that was conducted during spring 2010. A total of 222 institutions from 36 countries across Europe responded.

2. Quality assurance as a component of quality culture

5. The study bases its understanding of "quality culture" on the definition provided by EUA's Quality Culture project (2006), which sees it as referring to an organisational culture characterised by a cultural/psychological element on the one hand, and a structural/managerial element on the other hand. It is crucial, in the authors' minds, to distinguish quality culture from quality assurance processes, which are part of the structural element.

6. The definition of quality assurance varies from one country and institution to another. The study uses QA in its broadest sense, including all activities related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality of an HEI, thus arguing in favour of adopting an all-encompassing approach derived from institutions' own strategic goals, fitting into their internal quality culture, while also fulfilling the external requirements for QA. These activities should include, but are not limited to, activities mentioned by the ESGs. The approach adopted by the survey is therefore not limited to checking compliance with the ESGs, but also includes elements of institutional strategic management.

3. Mapping internal quality assurance processes: survey results

Quality assurance structures

7. Remarkable progress has been made in QA in recent years, and most of the responding HEIs have fundamental policies, structures and processes in place in this regard – although institutions tend not to systematically identify or call all QA practices in place as such. A large variety of organisational structures exist when it comes to supporting the implementation of QA processes. HEIs with a longer history in QA are more likely to have developed support structures such as pedagogical innovation and staff development.

8. In terms of policy and associated procedures, most HEIs have a strategic document either at institutional (for the majority of cases) or at faculty level.

Participation of stakeholders

9. The crucial role of institutional leadership in demonstrating commitment to quality has been taken on board by most HEIs, which have their senior leadership involved in one way or another in QA processes.

10. Whereas the participation of staff and students is one of the key principles in developing both a quality culture and QA processes, nearly half of the respondents do not have a committee responsible for QA. Committees are more likely to be found in HEIs having worked for longer in QA. HEIs with a longer history in QA are also more likely to give importance to the influence of student surveys as well the importance of a feedback loop and informing the students about the follow-up of QA activities they participated in. While the involvement of academic staff seems to be systematic and common in all stages, from curriculum design to involvement in formal QA processes, student involvement is not as widespread.

11. In most HEIs, external stakeholders (employers, experts, alumni...) are involved in QA processes in various ways, but the level and the nature of their participation varies, from sitting on governance bodies to being consulted as sources of information – this latter seeming to be the more common.

The use of information

12. Practically all responding HEIs have an information system for monitoring their activities. Institutions tend to collect information about their profile and what they offer, but the information related to resources available to the students (such as library services, computer facilities...) is more limited. Moreover, the information collected is not necessarily the one made public. Usually the information made public is that on study programmes, although even this does not often include information on graduate employment.

13. The link between collecting information and informing the staff or students involved in this data collection is not obvious, as some information (such as teachers' performances) is typically considered as confidential or accessible only at leadership level. Students who provide feedback through surveys are informed about the results and follow-up actions in about half of the HEIs, although a significantly higher percentage of institutions do actually conduct student surveys. Data also show that institutions that have processes in place to oblige a teacher to improve his/her performance give more consideration to the results of student surveys. These institutions, again, are those with a longer history in QA.

14. With regard to strategic management, in about two thirds of HEIs the institutional leadership conducts an annual evaluation to review the goals. However, only a little over half of the HEIs reported having formulated key performance indicators to monitor their progress.

Quality assurance in teaching and learning

15. About two thirds of HEIs have designed their QA framework for teaching and learning as institution-specific but following national frameworks and guidelines. Few HEIs chose to adopt external models (CAF, ISO…) as such.

16. The curriculum is typically designed by a committee or a working group. After a programme is up and running, a variety of processes for monitoring it exist. Most HEIs conduct some kind of internal evaluation in addition to an external one, should there be one.

17. The percentage of HEIs that reportedly have developed learning outcomes is higher than 90%, but they do not all make them publicly available. Less than half measure the student workload needed to reach the described learning outcomes through student surveys.

18. However, where institutions have developed learning outcomes, student assessment is directly related to them. Student assessment combines a variety of characteristics across Europe. Assessment methods and criteria are usually made transparent to students.

19. HEIs offer learning resources, but they do not all systematically monitor or evaluate them. Student support services are more likely to be in place and monitored in institutions having introduced their QA system before 2000.

Implementation of the ESGs

20. The last part of Chapter 3 offers an overview on the implementation of the ESGs in the light of results collected through the survey.

4. Key trends and further reflection

Trends and perceptions

21. The report argues that QA systems are largely in place, although their development in their current format is a recent phenomenon. Yet, developing a quality culture takes time and effort, as it is closely related to values, beliefs and a cultural element which cannot be changed quickly. Participation of all stakeholders in the implementation of QA processes and striving for a stronger quality culture appears to be essential, but still demands attention. Moreover, HEIs seem to have more information available on the input and on what is offered, than on the output. Finally, HEIs tend to be good at collecting information, but promoting a better and more efficient use of it may better contribute to strategic planning and foster continuous improvement.

Areas for further development

22. Several key areas for further development in internal QA processes emerge from this study. Among these, an all-encompassing approach to QA, the development of explicit feedback loops, the participation of all relevant stakeholders, and the relation between information on strategic goals and communication strategy should be underlined. Finally, the complexity of the framework in which internal QA processes operate should not be underestimated: other developments in higher education, external regulations, financial constraints, and potential reluctance from the institution's community itself are to be carefully taken into account when further developing a quality culture.

1. Setting the stage

1.1. Background

The rise of demand for quality assurance (QA) processes – both internal and external – has usually been linked to the massification of higher education, to the increase of investment and doubts concerning the possibility of maintaining quality in the resulting new circumstances, as well as to the belief in the importance of higher education in the new knowledge society.

The high quality of provision has been one of the key aims of the Bologna Process and the Lisbon Strategy as a means to promote the attractiveness and competitiveness of European higher education. The Ministerial meetings within the Bologna Process have shaped the European quality assurance framework. In 2003, the Berlin Communiqué stated that "consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself" (BPMC 2003).

Two years later the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESGs) were adopted, based on a proposal prepared by the E4 Group (ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE[1]). The ESGs yet again reinforced the central importance of institutional autonomy, which brings with it heavy responsibilities for HEIs (ENQA 2005: 11). In 2007, the Ministers endorsed the proposal of the same E4 Group to set up a European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies (EQAR), thus consolidating the framework. (EUA 2010a: 61-62)

While the above-mentioned European quality assurance framework was being developed, the work on quality assurance continued at the grass-roots level. HEIs are constantly developing and implementing quality assurance processes and consequently fostering their quality culture. Nevertheless, whereas there have been various reports prepared on the progress made in the field of external quality assurance (for example, ENQA 2008) and other reports that have aimed at covering both internal and external quality processes (for example, Rauhvargers *et al.* 2009, EC 2009; Westerheijden *et al.* 2010; ESU 2009 and 2010), there has not been a European level report specifically aimed at examining how higher education institutions have responded to the developments at policy level in their daily activities.

EUA's *Trends* series touched briefly on the topic of internal QA as part of the larger Bologna Process framework. The *Trends 2010* results demonstrate clearly that institutions find quality assurance reforms to have been among the most important developments that have shaped their strategy in recent years, since 63% of the respondents to *Trends* mentioned it among the top three developments. Furthermore, quality assurance also continues to be the second most important development expected to impact HEIs in the next five years, with 21% having mentioned it as such. (EUA 2010a: 73)

Ideally HEIs are not merely working on their quality assurance processes, but developing internal quality cultures adapted to their own institutional realities, which is a much more challenging task than that of simply setting up processes required by external parties. For quality culture is closely related to organisational culture and firmly based on shared values, beliefs, expectations and a commitment towards quality, dimensions which make it a difficult concept to manage.

It is in this context that EUA launched the "Examining Quality Culture in European Higher Education Institutions (EQC)" project with its partners, the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) and QAA Scotland, with the goal of exhibiting the processes and structures through which the higher education institutions support the development of their internal quality culture thus both enhancing their quality levels and responding to the demands of accountability.

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[1] The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European Students' Union (ESU), the European University Association (EUA) and the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE).

1.2. The Examining Quality Culture project: aims and methodology

The project "Examining Quality Culture in European Higher Education Institutions" (EQC) was launched in October 2009 and will last until autumn 2011. It builds upon the partners' long-term work on developing the concept of quality culture and examining its nature, drivers and obstacles (EUA 2005 and EUA 2006 in particular).

The aim of the project is twofold:

1) Identify internal quality assurance processes in place in HEIs, paying particular interest to how the institutions have implemented the part of the ESGs dedicated to internal QA within HEIs.

2) Discuss the dynamics between the development of institutional quality culture and quality assurance processes while identifying and presenting case practices in a final report in order to disseminate them.

In the first phase of the project the focus has been on mapping the existing quality assurance processes through a survey that was launched to gather quantitative evidence to reach the first aim. Chapter 3 of this report is based on the analysis of the data gathered via the survey, and Chapter 4 includes further reflections.

The next phase of the project will focus on the latter aim, and will comprise of interviews which will take place during the first half of 2011. Interviewees will consist of a sample of institution representatives who have answered the survey and indicated their willingness to participate in such an interview. The aim of the second phase is to contribute to interpreting the quantitative data provided during the first phase.

This twofold approach was adopted so as to allow proper data collection, and to embrace a qualitative approach that was needed to capture the cultural and more informal elements, which could not be documented as such by a quantitative approach only.

Key questions, to which the project aims to find answers, can be summarised as follows:

• How are European HEIs implementing the ESGs part 1 in practice? What kind of quality assurance processes can be identified?

• At what stage is the implementation of the quality assurance processes? While a European framework and principles have been developed, how have they influenced institutional reality? What kind of main challenges can be identified?

• What is the relationship between formal quality assurance processes and an institutional quality culture? Does having one necessarily permit or preclude having the other? How do the two interact? How can an institution ensure that there is synergy between them rather than discord?

• What kind of examples can be showcased to disseminate good practice or to demonstrate challenges to a quality culture?

The first two questions above are of primary interest in this report and the second report will take a closer look at the two latter points identified. Therefore, it is worth underlining that *the main focus of this particular report is on the formal quality assurance processes and the progress HEIs have made in this regard in the light of the survey conducted.*

The final project publication – which is to follow – will take the discussion one step further considering the relationship between quality culture and formal quality assurance processes aiming at a better understanding of these concepts (their synergies, similarities and differences) while presenting some case examples and citing observations made in the course of the project.
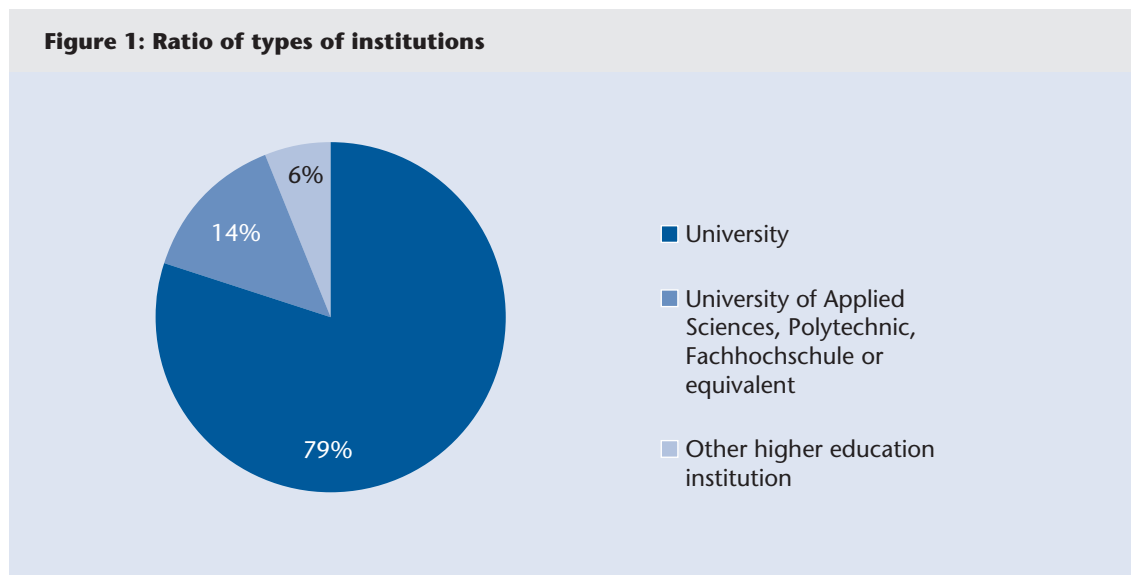
The survey

The EQC survey was designed in order to capture the developments in quality assurance processes within European higher education institutions (HEIs) in a quantitative manner. The questionnaire (see annex) consists of two main parts: one focussing on questions dealing with the development of the institutional quality assurance system or concept, and the main body of the questionnaire focussing on questions on quality assurance in teaching and learning while adapting the logic of the ESGs.

Prior to the launch of the questionnaire, the project partners invited 14 HEIs across Europe to test it and provide feedback. The online survey was launched at the beginning of February 2010 and advertised by the three project partners. An invitation to participate, along with reminders, was addressed, inter alia, to all EUA member institutions. A number of partner organisations active in European higher education were also asked to encourage their members to respond. The responses were analysed in terms of general trends and respecting, at this stage, the principle of confidentiality: therefore no institution or individual is identified in this report. The analysis of results as stated under Chapter 3 is solely based on responses received from the survey.

A total of 222 institutions from 36 countries answered the questionnaire by the deadline of 30 April 2010. Whereas there was one answer from each of seven smaller countries, it appears that none of the larger countries is overrepresented in the sample. Countries from which more than 10 answers were received are Finland, Germany, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and United Kingdom (See Figure 2).

Figure 1: Ratio of types of institutions

- University
- University of Applied Sciences, Polytechnic, Fachhochschule or equivalent
- Other higher education institution

The vast majority of respondents were universities (176), followed by universities of applied sciences (32), and other higher education institutions (14) – the latter being composed of discipline-based institutions and university colleges (see Figure 1). Most of the responding institutions (195), including all types, train their students up to the doctoral or third-cycle equivalent level.

About 59.5% (132) of the responding institutions count more than 10,000 students, whereas 35.1% (78) are middle-sized (between 1,000 and 10,000 students), and 5.4% (12) small (less than 1,000 students).

Figure 2: Distribution of respondents per country

■ Countries with 1 to 4 answers

■ Countries with 5 to 9 answers

■ Countries with 10 or more answers

■ Countries with no answer
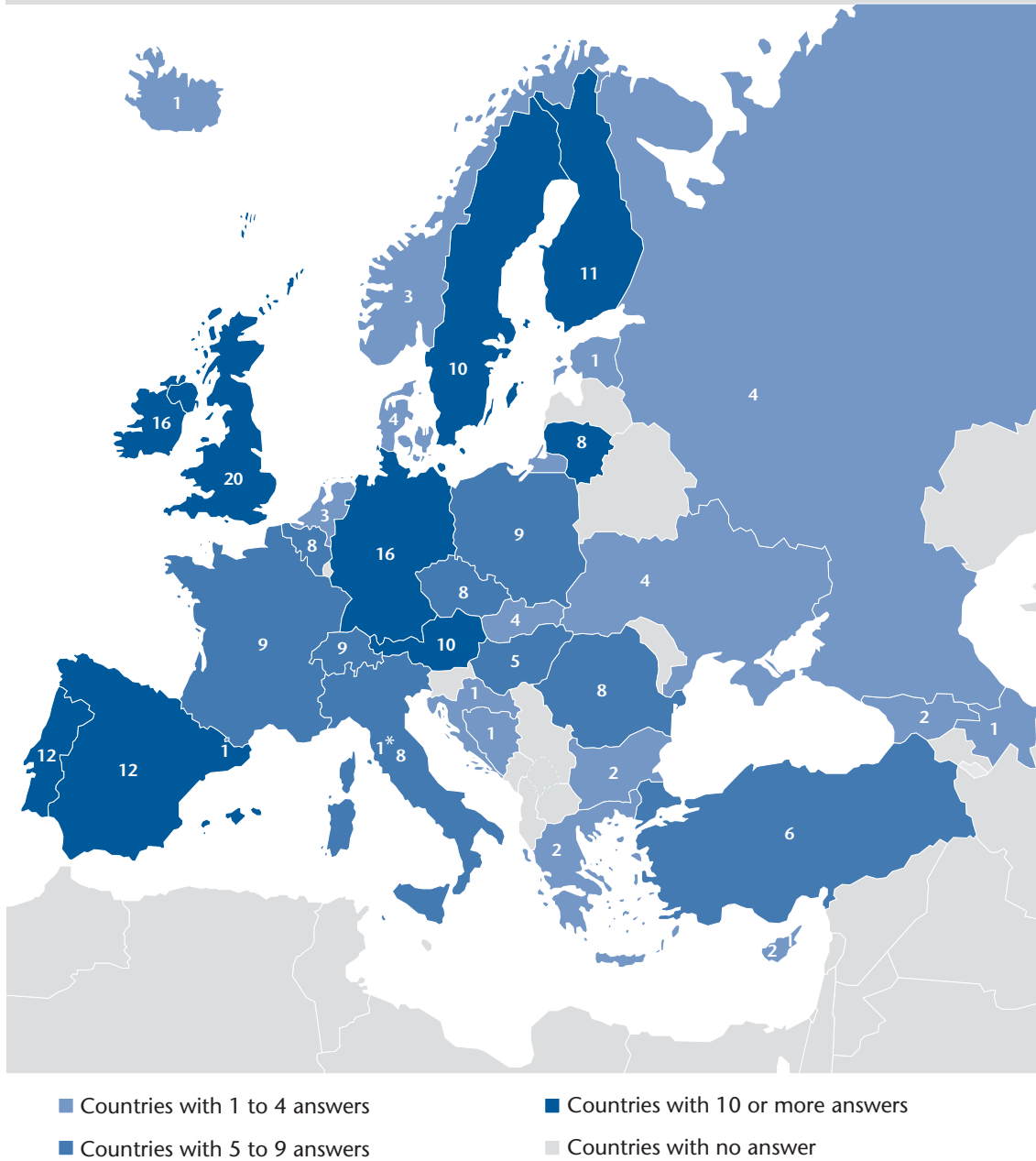
2. Quality assurance as a component of quality culture

"There needs to be a perceived value of quality assurance. Quality culture and quality assurance are not the same thing. You can have good QA in place but not necessarily a quality culture. The challenge is linking the outcomes of QA to the development of a quality culture that enhances the student experience."   **- Respondent to the survey**

"Much of the quality is dependent on the informal nature of staff/student relationships. The increasing calibration of quality indicators has led to a concern that this relationship will become formalised and thus less productive."   **- Respondent to the survey**

The name of the project – Examining Quality Culture – contains a promise of exposing the true state and nature of quality culture in European higher education institutions. As described in the previous chapter, this publication focuses on the quantitative results of the survey examining the quality assurance processes in place in higher education institutions. Before scrutinising these results it is, nevertheless, worth touching upon how we have understood both quality culture and quality assurance processes in the framework of this particular project for the research purposes. During the course of this project, we expect to reach a better understanding of these concepts and the dynamics between them and will further elaborate on this in the final publication of the project.

2.1. The elements of quality culture

EUA's Quality Culture project's (which ran in three rounds from 2002 to 2006) main aim was to "increase awareness for the need to develop an internal quality culture in institutions and to promote the introduction of internal quality management to improve quality levels". (EUA 2006: 6-7)

As EQC continues the long-standing work of EUA in promoting quality culture, the following definition of quality culture developed by the aforementioned project was chosen as the starting point for our work. Thus, in the context of this project:

[q]uality culture refers to an organisational culture that intends to enhance quality permanently and is characterised by two distinct elements: on the one hand, a cultural/psychological element of shared values, beliefs, expectations and commitment towards quality and, on the other hand, a structural/ managerial element with defined processes that enhance quality and aim at coordinating individual efforts. (EUA 2006: 10)

The recent discussions in the field of quality and quality assurance in higher education are quite unanimous in advocating promoting quality culture, so much so, that often quality culture is considered to be a synonym for "the development of, and compliance with, processes of internal quality assurance". (Harvey 2009: 1)

However, as demonstrated by Figure 3, it is crucial to distinguish these two concepts: quality culture and quality assurance. Whereas quality assurance processes are something tangible and manageable by institutional decisions, the cultural aspect of quality culture – shared values, beliefs, expectations and commitment – is far more difficult to change. (Ehlers 2009)

Figure 3: Elements of quality culture (adapted from EUA 2006: 20 and EUA 2005: 18)

Quality Culture

Formal quality
assurance processes

Communication
Participation
Trust

Quality commitment
Cultural element

Tools and processes to
define, measure, evaluate,
assure, and enhance quality

Individual level: personal
commitment to strive for
quality

Collective level: individual
attitudes and awareness
add up to culture

The basic assumption in our project has been that quality culture and quality assurance processes are interrelated and that quality culture can be enforced by structural decisions which stimulate shared values and beliefs. (Harvey & Stensaker 2008: 434) Furthermore, we accept that no one (correct) quality culture exists as a culture is always closely linked to the environment and within one HEI there might even be several sub-cultures of quality. (Harvey & Stensaker 2008; Harvey 2009; Ehlers 2009)

When describing how a HEI could go about developing its quality culture, Lanarès wrote:

There are at least two ways of seeing this. In some cases, the institution will introduce quality assurance. This will imply new values which will have to be integrated in the organisational culture. In other ones, the creation of quality assurance will start from the existing quality culture. Once finalised, quality assurance will in turn influence and modify the quality culture [...]. This second option may be preferable, considering that some continuity will facilitate change. (Lanarès 2008: 13)

This makes the challenge that HEIs are facing, and thus the topic of our project, even more intriguing.

2.2. Quality assurance processes as understood in this project

Having established that quality assurance processes form one key component of quality culture although they do not equal quality culture, and defined that the focus of this report is on quality assurance processes, the question that naturally follows is: what do we understand these to be? Indeed, it is clear that the definition varies considerably from one country and institution to another – not to mention from one practitioner to another. As the Bologna Process Stocktaking report, which asked governments about the progress made in implementing various Bologna Process action lines, observed:

It should be noted that the answers of some countries suggest that they think internal quality assurance within higher education institutions means only preparing self-assessment reports, without any reference to learning outcomes-based and improvement-oriented internal quality assurance systems. In addition, some HEIs have established a management system and they claim that it is a quality assurance system. However, some of these systems focus on measuring the performance of staff and/or units rather than on implementing ESG. This suggests there is a need to increase the focus on internal quality assurance within the EHEA. (Rauhvargers *et al.* 2009: 51)

It is correct that, in some contexts, internal quality assurance processes are seen as the processes that aim to prepare the institution or the programme for an external evaluation (i.e. preparing the self-evaluation process) or the monitoring task assigned to a specifically established quality unit. If this is the way quality assurance processes are regarded, it involves risks. Where a recent ENQA survey to its member agencies noted that three-quarters of respondents have recently changed or are about to change their quality assurance approach (ENQA 2008: 26), EUA's most recent *Trends* report concluded:

that the introduction of new national external evaluation procedures has caused some institutions to pay much less attention to their own internal accountability procedures, thus leading to a compliance culture. This seems to be particularly true when the external agency is perceived as being formalistic and bureaucratic. (EUA 2010a: 63)

In the framework of this project we have opted to:

use quality assurance in the broad meaning of the term, including in practice all elements of a strong quality culture of a HEI. Internal QA in the context of this report should not be understood merely as a specific quality monitoring (such as process descriptions, data collection and analysis) or evaluation processes often carried out by a specific quality unit, but including all activities related to defining, assuring and enhancing the quality of an HEI. (EUA 2009: 13)

Furthermore, going back to our previous quote from the Stocktaking report, we agree with Rauhvargers *et al.* that there may be a need to focus or clarify what is understood by quality assurance, but, in the light of what was discussed previously regarding culture of compliance, do not think that quality assurance should be limited to covering only the activities mentioned by the ESGs.

We would even go so far as to encourage institutions to adopt an all-encompassing approach to developing their internal quality assurance processes: an approach, thus, that would be tailor-made for the institution and derived from its own strategic goals and fit into the state-of-art of the institution's internal quality culture, while fulfilling the external requirements in the process.

It is in this context that we have intentionally chosen not to limit ourselves only to measures covered by the ESGs as it would provide a very one-dimensional view on quality assurance processes which really can – and often do – take various forms and shapes. Also, it should be highlighted that the ESGs only deal with teaching and learning activity within an institution, whereas, when planning their activities, institutions typically view their activities in their entirety. For example, in an institution which has a strong research focus and bases teaching on research, can one completely separate the quality assurance of teaching and learning from research? Furthermore, the strategic management and the quality of governance will inevitably influence the quality of teaching as OECD's Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE) argues in their up-coming publication (IMHE 2010: 2).

Also, EUA's work over the years has stressed the importance of creating a link between quality processes and institutional strategic planning (EUA 2006; EUA 2010a). An institution, having clearly defined its mission and strategic goals and knowing what quality means in the light of its own goals, lays the groundwork for a well-functioning quality assurance system. The next step involves setting up processes to ensure that this quality is reached and to monitor progress in this regard (as addressed by EGSs part 1) and finally, being able to react when all is not well or even, if all seems to be working relatively well, being able and willing to improve continuously. In this regard, an institution needs to develop a feedback loop that would strengthen the link between the results of monitoring activities and strategic planning.

As a result, we included in our survey some questions related to the institutional quality assurance framework in general as well as questions related to quality assurance in research and to strategic management. However, the main body of the survey remains focussed on quality assurance of teaching and learning following the logic of the ESGs and aspires to map that state of play in the implementation of the ESGs to provide quantitative data for the basis of any policy discussions on the progress made in that regard.

3. Mapping internal quality assurance processes: survey results

3.1. Quality assurance structures

> *"Quality culture must articulate Teaching, Research and Service to society. It should respect the diversity in specific domains and fields and rely on accurate objectives established according to the various institutional, political and cultural situations. Those objectives should be adapted to the broad context. Quality culture should aim at continuous improvement instead of ad hoc and instrumentalising evaluations."*
> **- Respondent to the survey**

> *"Some aspects of quality culture are consolidated in the university community, such as administrative services, but others are still "on paper" and not in "minds". This is clear in all aspects of evaluating teaching and learning skills, and this is a big handicap we need to overcome to transfer from simply evaluating results to real effective decisions and political commitments."*
> **- Respondent to the survey**

Data collected through the survey shows that most of the responding HEIs have **fundamental quality assurance structures and processes** in place and remarkable progress has been made in recent years, although a number of challenges remain.

Quality assurance processes most commonly cover teaching and learning activities, which is quite understandable, as the creation of the European Higher Education Area – and the ESGs as an integral part of it – has focussed on this part of HEIs' mission. Thus, 98.2% of the respondents to our survey answered that their quality assurance processes cover teaching and learning, while student support services, which are closely related to teaching and learning, are covered in only 75.7% of HEIs (see Table 1). The other activities mentioned by 6.7% (15) of the respondents cover areas as diverse as artistic activities and equal opportunity policies.

Table 1: Activities covered by institutional quality assurance processes

Which activities do your institutional quality assurance processes cover? Please choose all applicable options.	
Teaching and learning	98.2%
Research	79.3%
Service to society	47.7%
Student support services	75.7%
Governance and administration of the institution	65.8%
Other	6.7%

One common phenomenon noted was the tendency not to recognise all QA related processes within a HEI as such. For example, while 79.3% of the respondents replied that their institutional quality assurances processes cover research activities, a total of 97.3% of all respondents – when asked whether or not they have specific processes in place with regard to QA in research – recognised that they do indeed have individual processes in place. The most common processes are internal seminars where research projects and ideas are discussed (65.3%), preparing statistics on published articles (64.9%) and external peer review of research projects in relation to grant applications (53.6%). A further example of this inability to discern the

presence of certain QA processes was picked up through cross-checking answers regarding QA processes in services to society: whilst only 47.7% of the institutions declared covering services to society in their QA architecture, 95.9% of the respondents, when asked to specify which processes they have in place, pinpointed one or several processes related to services to society.

As EUA's Quality Culture project identified strategic planning as crucial in embedding quality culture (EUA 2006:13) and the first guideline for internal quality assurance mentioned in the ESGs states that HEIs "should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of quality", our survey asked HEIs if they had **an institutional strategic plan or equivalent document.** An overwhelming majority (92.8%) replied that they do have such a document. Whereas some HEIs reported that their strategic plans have been drawn up at faculty level, only three institutions admitted not having a strategic document at all. Our data further indicates that if an institution has a strategic plan, it usually also has either a separate institutional QA policy statement (68.1%) or its quality statement is included in the strategic plan (25.5%).

Further to QA policy, HEIs have a **large variety of organisational structures** in place to support the implementation of QA processes but no typical solution on how to arrange the responsibilities for QA within a HEI seems to exist. Figure 4 demonstrates the distribution of different structures among the respondents. It is noteworthy that nearly half of the responding HEIs (103) do not have any committees (neither at faculty nor institutional level) responsible for QA processes[2]. In addition, there are 80 institutions that answered that a rector or vice-rector is not responsible for QA issues. Even in these cases there was no typical solution on how to organise the institutional level responsibilities where there is a lack of institutional leadership. As examples of organisational features, out of these 80 institutions, and in combination with all sorts of other features with no typical scheme, 27 institutions have a central unit specialised in QA (among other things), 12 have a person in charge of QA (among other things) within the rectorate, and 13 have both.

Figure 4: Structures supporting the internal quality assurance processes
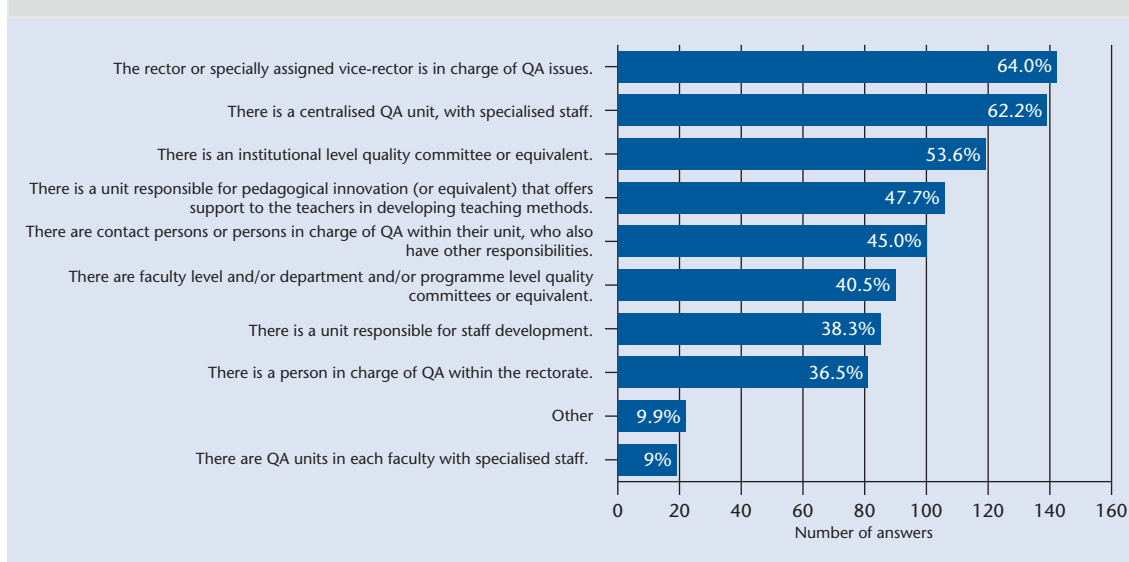
It can be noted that centralised units for QA, pedagogical development and staff development are more likely to be in place in those universities that worked on their QA system before 2000: respectively 88.2% and 55.8% of institutions that introduced their system before and in the 1990's have a unit responsible for staff development, whereas this percentage drops and never exceeds 30% for institutions that have introduced their system within the last decade. The existence of a unit in charge of pedagogical innovation follows the same trend: respectively 76.5 and 60.5% of those who introduced their system before 1990 and in the 1990's have one, while the percentage drops below 50% for institutions that introduced their system after 2000.

[2] See also Chapter 3.2. in this regard.

Thus, HEIs have the fundamental quality assurance processes and structures in place, but our data also demonstrates that **the progress made in this regard is very recent.** A little over half of the responding institutions (52%) reported that they introduced their QA system in 2005 or later, a considerable portion still being in the planning or introduction phase (Figure 5).

The timing of introduction does not appear to depend on the type or size of an institution, nor are there distinctive differences between countries, with the exception of the UK. While in all other countries there are HEIs that have started working on QA processes on a systematic basis at different times, all UK institutions replying to our questionnaire already had their processes in place by the turn of the century (Figure 6).
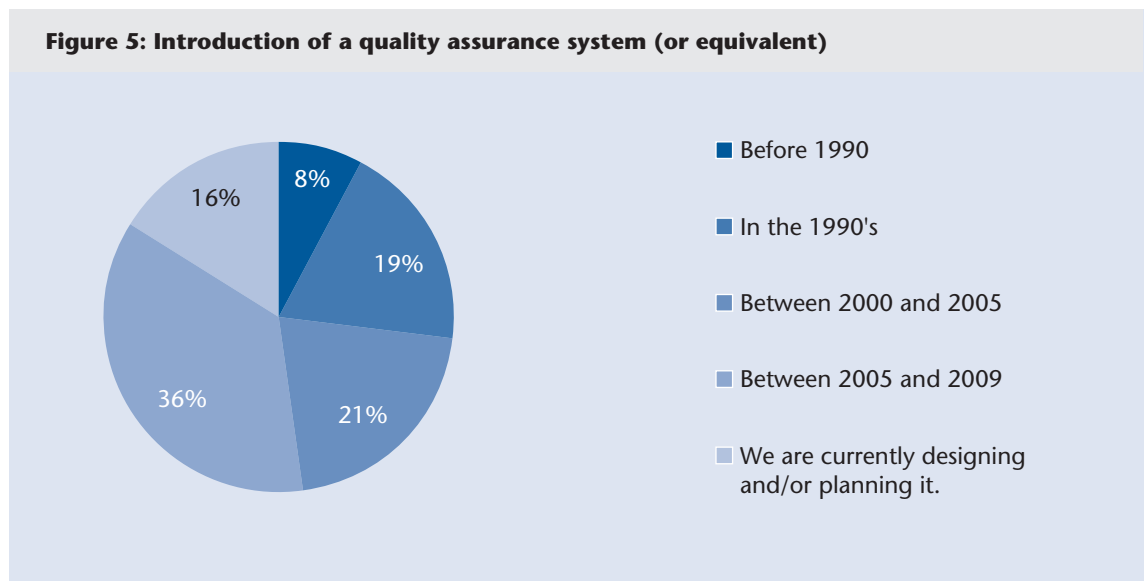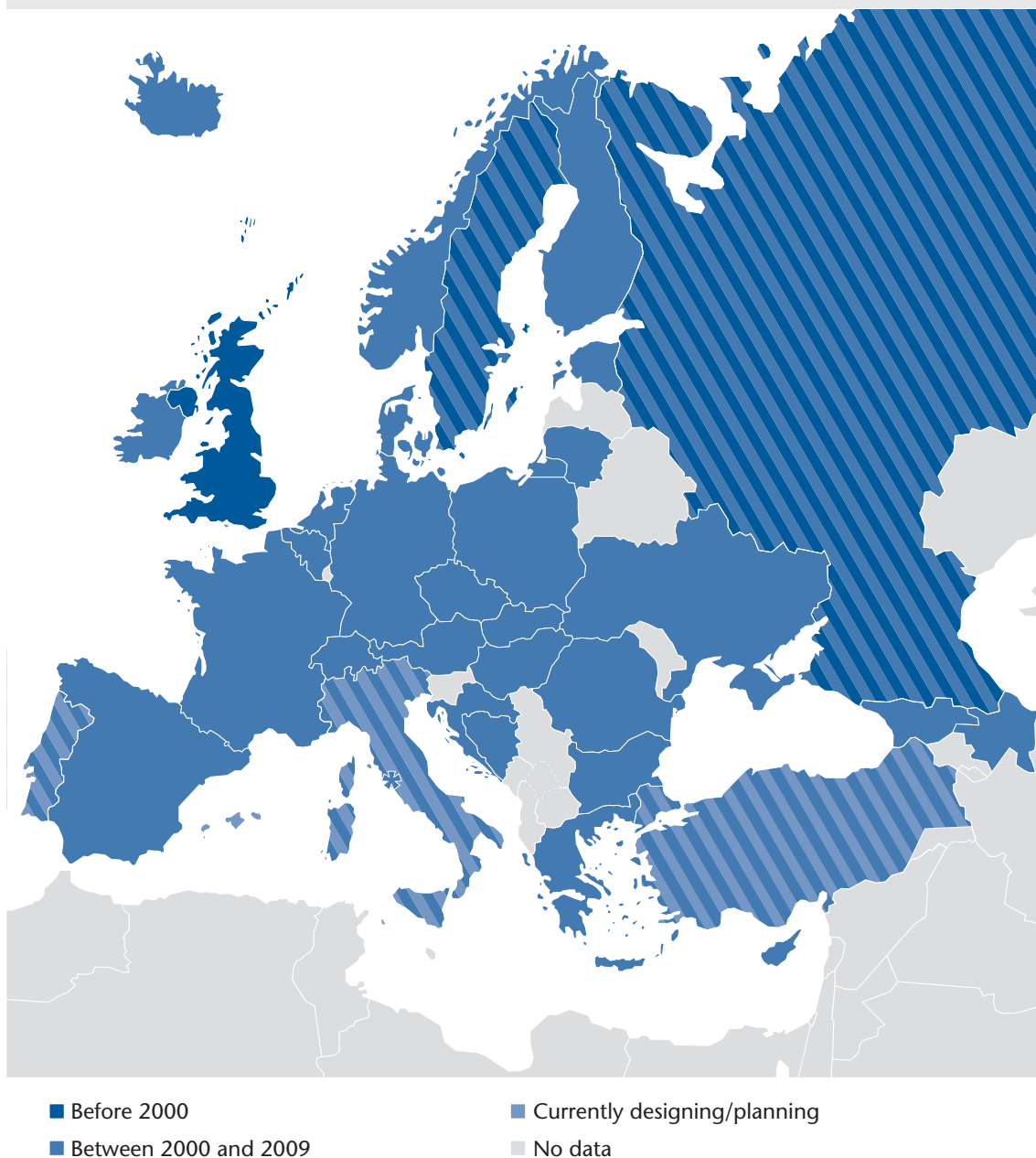
Figure 5: Introduction of a quality assurance system (or equivalent)

- Before 1990
- In the 1990's
- Between 2000 and 2005
- Between 2005 and 2009
- We are currently designing and/or planning it.

Figure 6: Introduction of a quality assurance system (or equivalent) – Breakdown per country

- Before 2000
- Between 2000 and 2009
- Currently designing/planning
- No data

Although there is a clear trend that the institutions that introduced a QA framework before 1990 are more inclined to have adopted an institutional approach, ranging from a policy statement to the involvement of internal and external stakeholders, these very institutions seem to grant less importance to making information and assessments public. However, considering that a vast majority of these institutions is from the UK, this may well just be a national feature and no far-reaching conclusions can be drawn from it.

In terms of **how the institutional QA system was introduced**, just over half (51.8%) of the respondents based their concept on the requirements of the national QA agency, while 40.5% said that the institutional leadership decided on the concept and provided instructions, training and support to the unit to implement it. In addition, 43.7% of HEIs answered that their QA concept is the result of various consultation rounds among the academic and administrative staff as well as students, while one third (32%) used pilot projects conducted by selected units in the introduction phase and disseminated good practices identified through them (Figure 7).

Figure 7: How the internal quality assurance system (or equivalent) was introduced within the institution

Category	Percentage
The concept is based on the requirement of the national QA agency which developed the standards and guidelines for this.	51.8%
The concept is the result of various consultation rounds among the academic and administrative staff as well as students.	43.7%
The institutional leadership decided on the concept, provided instructions, training and support to the units to implement it.	40.5%
The concept was introduced through pilot projects conducted by some units. Good practices were disseminated based on these experiences.	32.0%
The concept is the result of various consultation rounds among the academic staff of the institution.	14.4%
The concept is the result of various consultation rounds among the academic and administrative staff.	14.0%
Other	13.1%

Number of answers

3.2. Participation of Stakeholders

"The only way to achieve a functional quality culture is by convincing the members of the HEI that they have something to gain by analysing the qualitative processes of their day-to-day work."
- Respondent to the survey

"The biggest challenge for quality culture implementation is to combine the top-down leadership and managerial approach with the bottom-up approach, while creating favourable learning environments for academic staff and students to be actively involved in quality culture implementation activities via their own initiatives and responsibilities." **- Respondent to the survey**

Institutional leadership

As EUA's Quality Culture project's one key message was to underline the crucial role of institutional leadership in demonstrating an institutional commitment to quality, thus laying a groundwork for the implementation of quality culture (EUA 2006: 20), it is worthwhile taking a closer look at how its role plays in the light of survey results.

66.2% of the respondents defined the role of senior leadership (rector, vice-rector) in building a quality culture within their institution as taking the lead in the process. In those cases where the leadership was not leading the process, it was usually mentioned that it monitors, makes decisions or facilitates the process or some combination of these. In universities, the leadership is more likely to lead the process and make decisions than in other types of institution: indeed, out of the institutions where the leadership drives the process, 82.3% are universities – which is slightly higher than the ratio of universities in the sample of respondents to the whole survey (79%).

As mentioned above (Figure 7), in 40.5% of the cases, the institutional leadership decided on the QA concept of the HEI. When it comes to operational responsibility for QA processes, the percentage of HEIs where the rector or specially assigned vice-rector is in charge of QA issues grows to 64% (Figure 4, Chapter 3.1). Nevertheless, the data indicated that the role of the rector (or vice-rector) is more dominant in those HEIs that have worked on their QA system for more than 10 years.

Staff and students

One of the key principles in developing both quality culture (EUA: 2006, Harvey & Stensaker 2008) and quality assurance processes (see various ministerial communiqués) is the participation of staff and students. As indicated by Figure 7 (Chapter 3.1), in almost 44% of the cases, students and staff took part in the planning of the institutional quality assurance system. In addition, 28.4% of the respondents involved their academic staff in the consultations (which makes a total of 72.1% involving their academic staff), while 14% involved their administration staff (total of 57.7%).

Setting up committee(s) for quality assurance might seem a logical way of ensuring the participation of staff and students. However, after cross-checking the responses on QA structures (Figure 4, Chapter 3.1), it appears that the HEIs with committees at institutional level are mostly those that have committees at faculty/departmental level. This leaves us with 46.4% of the respondents with no committee responsible for quality assurance. However, data does show that the longer the HEI has worked on QA, the more likely it will be to have institutional or faculty level committees.

Figure 8: The involvement of stakeholders in formal quality assurance processes
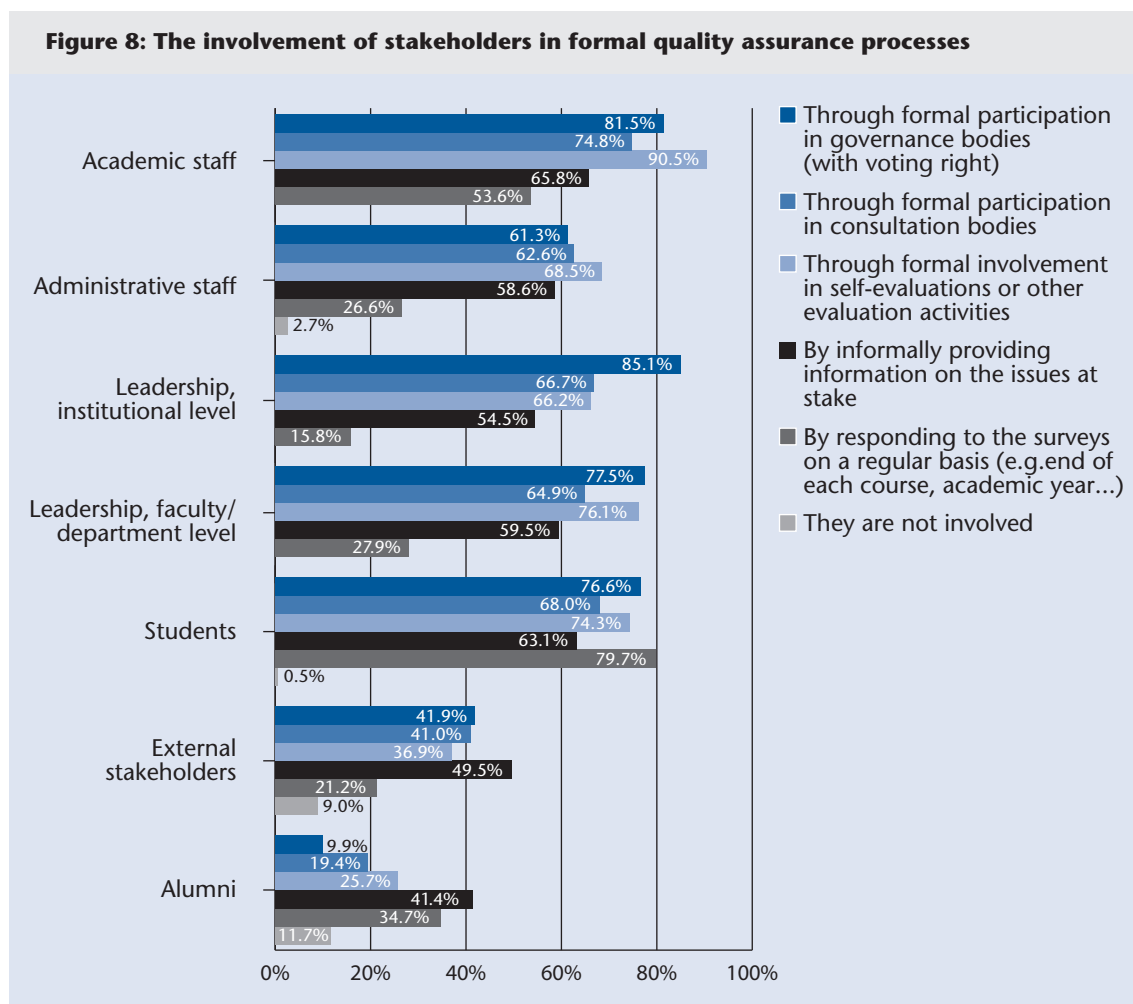

Figure 8 illustrates the extent to which various stakeholders are involved in the quality assurance processes of the responding HEIs. This shows that the level of participation is relatively high, with the academic staff being the most commonly involved. Furthermore, when HEIs reported that they have

formed working groups to prepare curricula, academic staff is almost always (99.5%) included in these working groups, with 37 HEIs reporting that their working groups are solely composed of academic staff. It is noteworthy that only in half of the cases (50.8%) are students involved.

With regard to student participation in quality assurance, some previous studies (Rauhvargers *et al.* 2009: 14; ESU 2009 48-49) have shown that, although progress has been made, there is still room for improvement, pointing out in particular the fact that students are not usually involved in follow-up measures.

To some extent, our data confirm this. The feedback loop between student surveys and the follow-up activities is discussed in further detail under Chapter 3.3, but from the perspective of promoting student participation, it can be noted that the influence of student surveys and the importance of the feedback loop are much more developed at institutions that introduced their system early on, i.e. before 2000. Indeed, 94.1% of these HEIs take the surveys into account in the curriculum design, discuss them internally, and inform students about the follow-up.

Finally, with regard to the involvement of members of the institutional community, it is worth referring to the findings indicated by Table 4 (Chapter 3.3) that conducting regular surveys among the members of the institutional community (staff and students) to analyse their perception of the institutional strategy and its implementation at grass-roots level does not seem to be a common practice (with only 27.9% reporting that they do so). Chapter 3.3 will further analyse the feedback loop and communication among the institutional community.

External stakeholders

External stakeholders (e.g. employers, experts) have been involved in QA processes from the beginning. However, their participation level varies: around 80% of the HEIs include them in different ways in their decision making: through governance bodies, consultation bodies or as sources of information, among others, while roughly 20% of the HEIs do not consult or involve them at all.

External stakeholders are more likely to be involved in preparing a curriculum (for instance as members of working groups) when the ultimate decision on the curriculum is made by a body external to the HEI. However, the results indicate that their role is usually that of information providers rather than decision makers. Furthermore, the alumni are seldom involved as such (Figure 8).

3.3. The use of information

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss what kind of information HEIs collect and store about themselves, how they communicate on the basis of this information, and how the information feeds into the internal discussions and decision making processes.

Types and sources of information

93.2% of the responding institutions reported that they have a centralised information system in place. In addition, 5.9% of respondents, when they do not have a centralised system, do have information systems that exist at faculty level. Therefore, the number of institutions that do not use any information system for monitoring their activities is extremely limited.

Most commonly, these information systems include student progression and success rates (87.7% of respondents), as well as the profile of the student population (83.2%). The teacher-student ratio per educational unit also scores high (65.5%), as does student satisfaction with their programmes (53.6%). However, this 53.6% seems low compared to the 71.6% of respondents who answered that they conduct student surveys assessing the teacher's performances and competences. Table 2 gives an overview of the different information included in institutions' information systems.

Table 2: Information included in the information system(s) regarding study programmes

Which of the following does the information system or systems include? Please choose all applicable options.	
Student progression and success rates	87.7%
Teacher-student ratio per faculty/department/institute or in the respective faculty/department/institute	65.5%
Tracking graduates' employment	40.5%
Students' satisfaction with their programmes	53.6%
Profile of the student population (e.g., age, gender, education background, socio-cultural background...)	83.2%
Available learning resources and, when applicable, their costs	44.1%
None of the above	0.9%
Other (such as the institution's own performance indicators)	10.0%

Whereas institutions collect information about their profile and what they offer, the information becomes scarce when it comes to resources available to the students. Indeed, while more than 80% of all respondents confirmed that they offer library services, computer facilities, laboratories, human support (tutors, counsellors or other advisers) and other kinds of learning facilities (see also Figure 12, Chapter 3.4.), only 44.1% feed the information on the available learning resources and, where possible, their costs, into their information system.

Interestingly, what the institutions collect most often (profile of student population, student progression and success rates) does not necessarily correspond with the information made public (see Table 3). The data most typically featured is information on study programmes, including information on qualifications granted by the programme (86.9%) and on teaching, learning and assessment procedures (82%). Whereas qualifications are documented by most institutions, they are not always part of the information on alumni employment: only 40.5% of respondents track graduate employment and include this in their information system, but Table 3 shows that 45.5% provide some kind of detail on alumni employment in the information made available on their study programmes.

Table 3: Information provided by the institution on its study programmes

The information on your institution's study programmes include: Please choose all applicable options.	
Number of students currently involved in the programme	76.1%
Number of academic staff involved in the programme	70.3%
Teacher-student ratio in the respective faculty/department/institute	44.6%
Information on the intended learning outcomes of the programme	81.5%
Information on qualifications granted by the programme	86.9%
Information on the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used within the programme	82.0%
Information on the learning opportunities (e.g., traineeships, exchange programmes, mobility possibilities, scholarships...) available to the students of the programme	78.8%
Information on alumni employment	45.5%
Profile of the current student population	43.2%
Specific information targeting international students	64.0%
Accessibility and/or possibilities offered to disabled students	49.5%
Other	5.0%

In terms of public information on QA, institutions most typically make publicly available (through websites, publications or other sources of information) the results of the external evaluations (61.3%), but are more reluctant to make publicly available the results of their internal evaluations (38.7%). Considering that the internal evaluations – at least ideally – are improvement-led, including pointing out shortcomings and suggesting remedies, the desire to keep them as internal working documents is perhaps understandable.

Feedback loop and communication

Having noted that HEIs collect data on their performance, it should be added that the link between collecting the information and informing the community involved in this data collection is not all that obvious. As an example to illustrate this point, the general trend with regard to teachers' performances is to keep them confidential and available at institutional or faculty leadership level only: 59% of the respondents reported that this is the case in their respective HEIs. 18.9% make them available at internal level (for those involved in QA, and for the teaching community in general), and only 6.3% (14 institutions) make them publicly available.

Moreover, while exploring further the feedback loop, we can see that 71.6% of respondents use student surveys as one of the means to monitor students' perceptions of the teaching they receive. Among those conducting student surveys, 92.4% take the results into account in the assessment of teaching staff. But only 58.5% of them state that students who participated in a survey are informed about the outcomes and the resulting actions taken; and the percentage drops to 6.3% when it comes to making the information on teachers' aptitudes and performance publicly available.

In the case of 22.3% of the respondents, the legal framework does not foresee the possibility of the removal of an ineffective teacher. This is one of the areas where the standards set by the ESGs at the European level clash with national regulations. As our data indicates, the feedback loop clearly functions better within the institutions with processes in place to oblige a teacher improve his/her performance. All 61 institutions that have processes in place to remove an ineffective teacher, conduct student surveys, with 49 of them taking the results into account in the assessment of teaching staff, and 44 of them informing the students on the outcomes and action taken as a result. 56 of these institutions use the student surveys as one source of information when designing and/or revising programmes.

The results of the survey lead us to believe that the QA of teaching staff may be closely connected to the timeframe of the introduction of QA. While almost two thirds (63.4%) of all institutions surveyed have specified their own requirements for hiring teaching staff, 76.8% of those who had introduced their QA system before 2000 have done so.

Link to the strategic management

Further to the questions of involving the community in the follow-up and the impact of student surveys in particular that was discussed in Chapter 3.2., the feedback loop between the results of QA processes and strategic management is one of the key success factors in sustaining quality culture. (EUA 2006: 13, 18)

The most common way of ensuring the feedback loop to strategic management appears to be the conducting of annual evaluations by the institutional leadership to review the goals that have been set (65.3%). In addition to the 65.3% who chose this option, there were others who described similar processes, although underlining that the evaluation made by the leadership happens through discussions with other key stakeholders (deans, heads of units etc.). However, the nature of this annual evaluation was not examined in further detail in the questionnaire and therefore the depth and effectiveness of this process cannot be explored here. Annual evaluations may take various shapes and follow different rationales – formal processes requested by a Ministry or other external bodies.

Table 4: Internal evaluation processes providing feedback to the strategic planning

Do you have an internal evaluation process that provides feedback to the strategic planning in place? Please choose all applicable options.	
The institutional leadership evaluates annually the progress made in terms of achieving the goals set by the institution.	65.3%
The faculties (and/or relevant units) conduct regular self-evaluations to analyse their contribution to the achievement of institutional strategic goals.	55.9%
The institution conducts regular surveys among the members of the institutional community (staff and students) to analyse their perception of the institutional strategy and its implementation at grass-roots level.	27.9%
The institution has defined a set of key performance indicators and follows its progress based on them.	55.0%
The institutional strategy and the achievement of the goals set in it are revisited when the document is revised (every 3, 5 or N years).	52.7%
Other	11.3%

Decisions on future strategic direction are ideally based on solid evidence, and QA processes are typically considered to be one of the key information sources. Nevertheless, only 55% of the responding HEIs have formulated key performance indicators (KPIs) to follow their progress based on them (see Table 4). It is logical, however, that those who are still working on the principles of their QA system are less likely to have KPIs in place.

# 3.4. Quality assurance in teaching and learning

When asked about designing a quality assurance framework in teaching and learning in particular, a majority of HEIs (64.9%) indicated that it is institution-specific but follows national QA frameworks and guidelines. One quarter (25.7%) considered it to be tailor-made to the institution's needs and does not apply any ready-made model, whereas less than 9.5% mentioned that it applies a ready-made model such as ISO, EFQM, and CAF.

Hence, quality assurance in teaching and learning does have its specificities and few HEIs have chosen to adopt external QA system models as such. The fact that the number of HEIs following their national QA frameworks is not higher is an interesting phenomenon, and it may reflect the fact that guidelines for institutional level QA framework do not exist in every country. In countries with an external QA system based on institutional level, a majority, if not all of HEIs tend to answer that they follow national guidelines. This is, for example, the case for Finland, France, Ireland and the UK, where national guidelines targeting specifically institutional level QA arrangement do exist. However, national guidelines on institutional QA provisions exist in some countries where accreditation is programme-based: for example, in Germany, Spain, Poland and Sweden, where a majority of respondents answered that they follow national guidelines in this regard.

This chapter presents selected key results regarding quality assurance in teaching and learning in particular, but it is worth noting also that some themes integrally related to the teaching and learning are also discussed in other chapters.

Curriculum design

From the answers to the questions related to curriculum design, we can draw the conclusion that a delicate balance needs to be kept during this process. Programme design – in general considered by a committee (85.1%) - whose objectives and expected learning outcomes are necessarily led at faculty level, ideally has to correspond with the strategy of the institution as defined by the HEI leadership. Mediation and communication are an essential part of the discussions. 10.8% of respondents also reported that their curriculum is designed by the Ministry or other external body and this makes the balancing act all the more challenging.

Figure 9: Designing curriculum and programmes within the institution
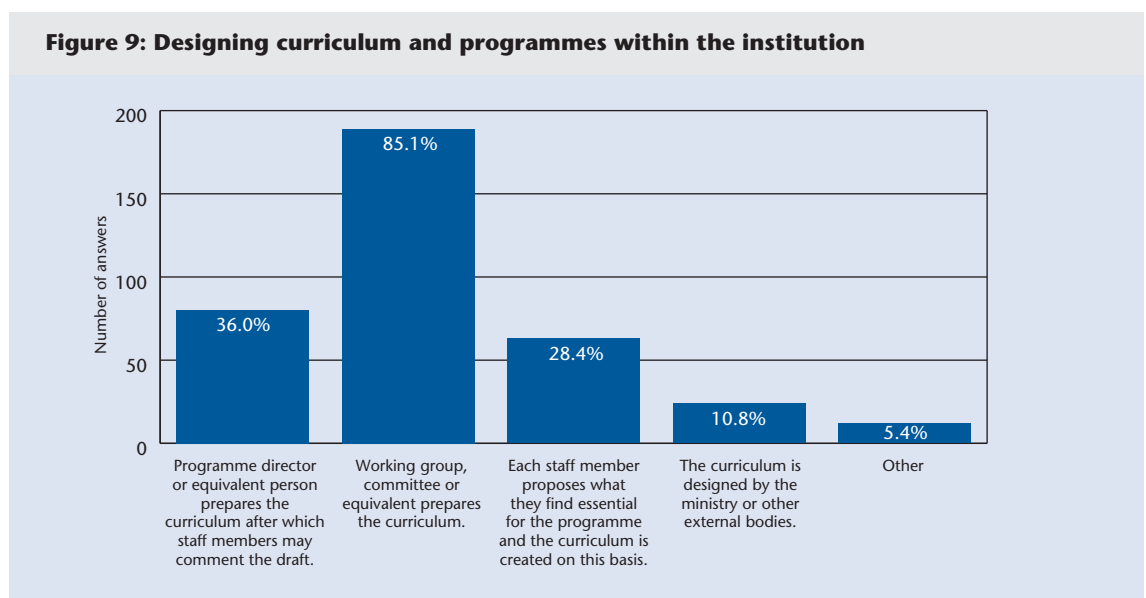

Furthermore, the traditions, internal structures, procedures as well as the type of governance within the HEI lead to highly individualised processes in this field, which may vary depending on the faculties within one institution.

Monitoring and improving an established programme

Once a programme is up and running, the frequency and means for monitoring it also vary from one institution to another. In addition, most institutions seem to conduct a variety of processes (see Figure 10) in a variety of combinations, leading to the conclusion that there is not one typical process for monitoring.

Among the two thirds of respondents who answered that the evaluation of curriculum and programmes is part of an external accreditation process, only 12 HEIs (without significant geographic concentration) answered that they do not have any other form of monitoring. This means that, in cases when such external processes are reported, most of institutions conduct, in addition, some kind of internal evaluation in order to monitor and improve their curriculum and programmes.

Figure 10: Monitoring curriculum and programmes
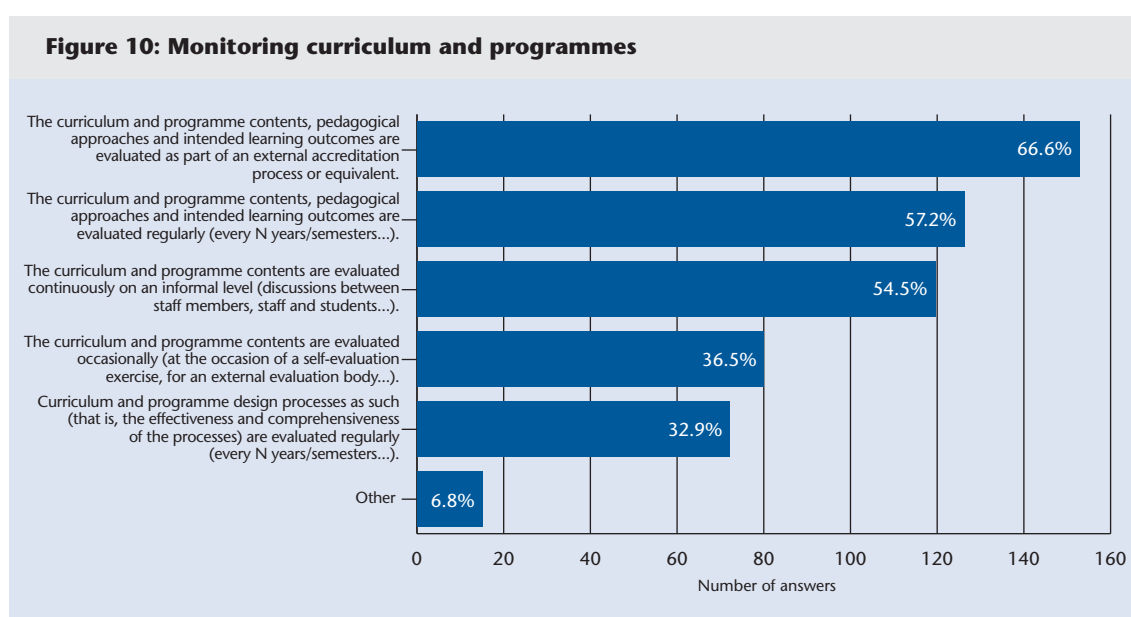
Learning outcomes and workload

Whereas 95.6% of institutions stated that they have developed explicit learning outcomes – either for all programmes (67.9%) or for some programmes (27.7%) – they do not all make them publicly available through their website, study guides or equivalent: 71.7% have done so. The number of institutions that include information on the intended learning outcomes in the information provided about their study programmes is however higher (81.5%). Further studies and research may address this area further by exploring, for example, how institutions that say they developed them make use of learning outcomes in their teaching practices.

Whilst 95.6% of respondents design learning outcomes, only 40.6% actually measure the student workload through surveys addressed to students in order to reach the described learning outcomes. This would be a necessary step in order to implement ECTS correctly since these build equally upon learning outcomes and student workload as elements. In 44.8% of cases the teachers are solely responsible for indicating the student workload and in 4.3% no workload is indicated at all.

Student assessment

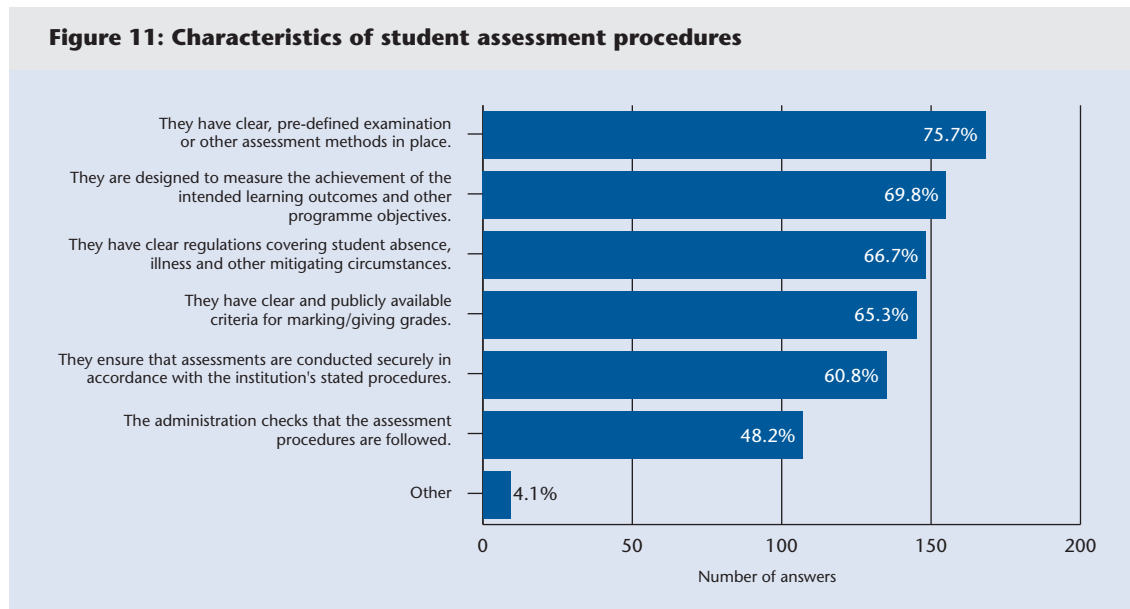**Figure 11: Characteristics of student assessment procedures**

Figure 11 summarises the main features of student assessment procedures. When cross-checking data, it is clear that those institutions whose assessment is directly related to intended learning outcomes are the same ones that have developed explicit learning outcomes, either in all or in some programmes. The link between having learning outcomes and their influence in student assessment procedures is therefore established.

Finally, only two institutions indicated that they either have none of the characteristics mentioned, or that they do not have assessment procedures. In conclusion, although none of these features scored more than 75%, most institutions have a combination of several characteristics as mentioned in the ESGs.

With regard to informing students about the assessment procedures, 82.6% of respondents make their assessment methods and criteria publicly available, and 83% rely on the teachers to inform or remind students about this at the beginning of the course. Thus, a clear majority of the institutions seem to be transparent about assessment procedures as recommended by the EGSs.

Learning resources

Almost all HEIs participating in the survey offer basic learning resources, but when asked specifically about monitoring and evaluating them, it turns out that they often do not do it systematically (Figure 12). However, interestingly enough, the number of HEIs reporting that they regularly improve the services they offer is higher than those who monitor or evaluate them. The overview seems to endorse the finding from the *Trends* series that regular evaluations of student learning services remain relatively rare while study programmes, teaching staff and research activities are evaluated more frequently. (EUA 2010: 86)

Figure 12: Institutions offering, monitoring, evaluating and improving their learning resources
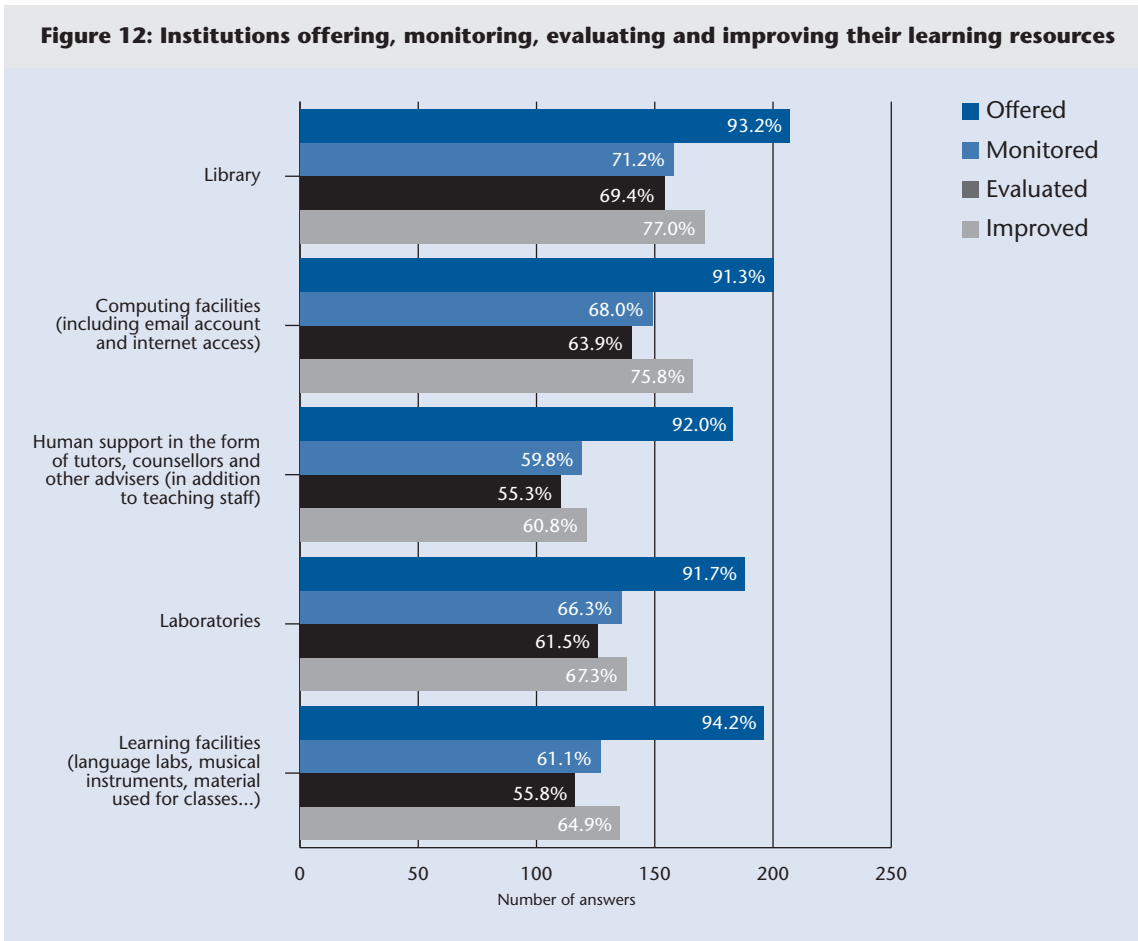
Further, with regard to student support services there seems to be a trend that those HEIs who introduced a QA system after 2000 are less likely to have QA of student support services in place than those institutions that have had a QA system since before 2000.

3.5. Implementation of the ESGs

The ESGs provide a European framework for a common understanding of the generic principles of quality assurance in teaching and learning and as such they are usually expected to guide both internal and external quality assurance arrangements of HEIs. Thus, one of the aims of this survey has been to gather quantitative data on stocktaking of the implementation of part 1 of the ESGs in HEIs. Table 5 summarises the key findings with regard to the implementation of the ESGs.

Table 5: Key findings corresponding to ESGs part 1

Corresponding ESG	**Summary findings based on the survey**
1.1 *Policy and procedures for quality assurance:* Institutions should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available. They should also include a role for students and other stakeholders.	Two-thirds of the respondents had a separate institutional QA policy statement (67.1%) and in a quarter (24.8%) of the cases the quality statement was included in another institutional policy document. 4.5% do not have any QA policy document. 98.2% of the respondents answered that their quality assurance processes cover teaching and learning.
1.2 *Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards:* Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards.	95.5% of the respondents have defined explicit learning outcomes for all or some of the study programmes and 71.7% have made them publicly available. In most cases (85.1%) the curriculum is designed by a working group consisting of various stakeholders and ultimately approved at institutional level (41%) or by an external body (30.6%). Processes for reviewing and monitoring programmes vary greatly and most institutions use combinations of various processes. Involvement of stakeholders is not always transparent or structured. Students are involved in 40.5% of HEIs in measuring student workload and, when a working group prepares the curriculum, 50.8% of HEIs report that students are part of the group.

1.3 *Assessment of students:* Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.	75.7% of institutions have clear, pre-defined examination or other assessment methods in place, including, for 66.7%, regulations covering student absence, illness or other mitigating circumstances. Most institutions have a mix of several features as mentioned in the guidelines. 82.4% of institutions make the assessment methods and criteria publicly available through their website, study guides or equivalent. In about the same number of institutions, teachers inform the students about these methods and criteria at the beginning of the course. 60.8% of institutions ensure that assessments are conducted securely in accordance with the institution's stated procedures, and 48.2% of them have their administration checking that the procedures are followed.
1.4 *Quality assurance of teaching staff:* Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so. They should be available to those undertaking external reviews, and commented upon in reports.	71.8% of institutions conduct student surveys, 63.1% have specified their own requirements for competencies of permanent teaching staff when hiring them. 61.7% offer optional pedagogical training for teachers whilst 26.1% organise compulsory training. 59% of institutions keep the information on teachers' aptitudes and performance confidential and available only at the leadership level (institution and/or faculty and/or department). In the case of 22.3%, the legal framework does not foresee the possibility of removing an ineffective teacher.
1.5 *Learning resources and student support:* Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered.	Learning resources are quite commonly offered, the most common being library (93.2%) and computer services (90.1%). However, their regular monitoring and evaluation is not quite as common.
1.6 *Information systems:* Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities.	93.2% of the institutions have centralised information systems in place that include information on their teaching mission. Most commonly this information includes: student progression and success rates (87.7%), profile of the student population (83.2%) and teacher-student ratio per faculty/department/institute (65.5%).
1.7 *Public information:* Institutions should regularly publish up-to-date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards they are offering.	The most commonly published information is on qualifications granted by the programme (86.9%), the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used within the programme (82.0%) and the intended learning outcomes of the programme (81.5%). All institutions offer, with a variety of features, some sort of information on their programmes.

4. Key trends and further reflection

4.1. Trends and perceptions

Quality assurance systems largely in place

> *"Quality was introduced a long time ago even if it was not felt and stated as quality. The development and formalisation of quality processes is done step by step. It is difficult to measure the reality of the quality in a big institution."* - **Respondent to the survey**

Data from the EQC survey shows that quality assurance developments in their current format are very recent phenomena, and impressive progress has been made during the last decade. This development coincides with the European level policy developments and would indicate that HEIs have mobilised to respond to the QA framework put in place at the policy level. In 2003, the Ministers in higher education agreed that each country should set up a national quality assurance framework and that HEIs should have their own institutional QA systems and two years later the ESGs were adopted providing generic principles for both internal and external QA processes. Consequently, since 2005, HEIs have been increasingly working on their QA systems.

Hence, the Bologna Process and subsequent changes in the national frameworks have clearly promoted a growing awareness and insight into the need for QA in teaching and learning. While Ministerial Communiqués have not defined in detail how quality assurance is understood in teaching and learning, the ESGs, adopted and published in 2005, have done so. In addition, various European level projects, organisations[3] as well as events[4], have further endorsed a common perception of the concept. While the ESGs seem to have established this framework for teaching and learning, we are tempted to conclude – based on the responses to questions dealing with other activities of a HEI – that the development of a shared understanding of quality assurance in general is something to be worked on.

The findings do indicate that when it comes to the actual processes and support structures in QA, a great variety of combinations exists, which endorses the view that there are no one-size-fits-all solutions when deciding what an institutional QA system should consist of. As varied as structures supporting QA systems may be – suggesting that there may be overlaps and additional structures, maybe even inefficient doublings and couplings – they all are proof that HEIs are working towards their QA systems.

Trends 2010 noted that recent developments in internal quality processes in teaching and learning have not necessarily been linked to European QA developments, particularly to the ESGs. HEIs seemed to be mostly responding to the external QA requirements imposed on them, and these requirements did not include the part of the ESGs that applies to HEIs, nor was the link between them and European QA developments explicit. (EUA 2010: 63) The EQC survey responses indicate that a clear majority of respondents started implementing a quality assurance framework within their institution as from 2000. Whereas this probably has happened as a consequence of the discussions and decisions at European level and new legislations to be adopted at national levels, it appears, indeed, that most institutions do not apply the ESGs as an integrated whole, but tend to show interest in one or several aspects of them.

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[3] Organisations such as the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) at agency level, the European University Association (EUA) and the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) at institutional level, as well as various discipline-based associations at European level.
[4] Such as the European Quality Assurance Forum, a yearly event gathering together various stakeholders involved in quality assurance in higher education.

Yet developing quality culture takes time and effort

"Implementation takes a lot of time, especially when, traditionally, faculties are free to develop teaching and research. To implement a quality culture a number of people engaged in developing concepts and discussing the benefits and gains of QA are needed."   *- Respondent to the survey*

As referred to in Chapter 2, quality culture is closely related to the organisational culture of respective HEIs and, as such, always exists in the form of values, beliefs etc. Although based on the quantitative results related to quality assurance processes, no far-reaching conclusions can be made on the status of quality culture in the responding HEIs; numerous open field comments indicate that the ultimate goal in manoeuvring QA processes is pursuing an improved quality culture.

Hence, the responses demonstrate that institutions are building quality-related processes and structures, but that in some cases, sometimes because of the legal framework encasing them, institutions may not have yet achieved the kind of quality culture for which they are striving. Evidently, the goal of HEIs is a genuine quality culture supported by well-functioning QA processes. Nevertheless, the state of play at the moment looks as if HEIs have found a way of implementing QA processes, but that processes may not have necessarily questioned, challenged or changed HEIs' way of carrying out their activities. The effectiveness and efficiency of the existing quality assurance processes need further qualitative examination that a survey does not allow to capture.

Ensuring the participation of all stakeholders

In the light of our results, it appears that the institutional leadership is often at least formally involved in the QA processes and also in the development of quality culture in the majority of the responding HEIs. Nevertheless, one could argue that the percentage of rectors or vice-rectors in charge of QA issues should be higher in order to demonstrate a true institutional commitment to the enhancement of quality. Relying solely on organisational structures to sustain commitment can cause QA processes to lose touch with the reality of academic work and thus, reduce the processes to bureaucratic exercises that take place in a vacuum with no follow-up activities.

But a top-down approach alone is not sufficient; the notion of shared values, beliefs and commitments implies the participation of the whole community. Furthermore, considering that one of the underpinning principles of the European QA framework is the participation of stakeholders – both internal, such as students and staff, and external – in the quality assurance processes, this survey clearly shows that more work still remains to be done in this respect.

Although, the responses indicate that academic staff – support staff to a lesser extent – and students are quite often formally involved in QA processes (see Chapter 3.2), the results, which at this stage are a result of a quantitative analysis, do not indicate how active the involvement is and how influential it is. In this context, with regard to student participation we shall therefore, refer to the conclusions of the European Students' Union:

Overall student participation in QA has progressed since 2007. However, the analysis of the answers shows the serious gaps in terms of formal participation in decision-making processes and a rather unequal rate of participation in the different processes associated with QA across different countries. We can conclude that, in spite of students being accepted as a part of the follow up rather than technical processes, they still face reluctance towards their involvement in the decision-making process. This statement is valid on a case-by-case basis, and it is not currently possible to establish a general trend on the location or scale of the phenomenon. (ESU 2009: 49)

Furthermore, with regard to student participation in particular, we have to consider that students give their feedback on, for example, courses and modules with the next generation of students in mind: they themselves will probably not profit from their responses and suggestions. Student idealism is thus, often the basis for strategic faculty and curriculum development. Therefore, should that be kept up, a follow-up has to take place in due time, and a communication strategy with regard to the follow-up activities should be developed.

Thus, the kind and intensity of participation cannot be linked proportionally to a timeline but to the recognition of the fact that QA has to integrate staff, students and different levels of leadership in formulating strategic goals to be achieved by building up a quality culture within the HEI.

We know more about offer and input than outcomes

In the light of the survey results dealing with information HEIs collect on their activities, it is clear that HEIs are in possession of a lot of information, much of which is stored in - often well developed – information systems. Some questions remain. Is the information the right kind and is it accessible? Moreover, is the information used to promote continuous improvement?

As regards the nature of the information the responding HEIs collect and store, one can conclude that it seems to be particularly focussed on the nature of their activities, what kind of programmes are available, and what kind of research is carried out. Less information is available on the results and impact of their activities. While HEIs know how many people graduate, not so many of them track graduate employment. In general, neither student satisfaction nor the results of student surveys are gathered together on a systematic basis, often because this is carried out at faculty or programme level. As *Trends 2010* noted, QA processes and their effectiveness are still too often dependent on the interest of individual teachers (EUA 2010: 85). And, after all, in order to know how to improve, one should know how successful or well-functioning existing activities are.

The second question deals with the accessibility of existing information. For the information to be used in the decision-making processes – whether at institutional, faculty, departmental or individual level – it should be accessible to those who need it. For example, prospective students would be interested in graduate employment in a specific programme as well as current student satisfaction rates; students, in the impact of their feedback given through questionnaires; heads of department or deans, in the performance of teachers etc. Also the external stakeholders, and in particular the governments who are usually the main funders of HEIs in most countries, are interested in the kind of information that will allow them to judge whether a HEI is fulfilling its public mission.

Both the nature of information available and how accessible it is, are closely related to the current on-going discussion on the need for increased transparency. Should HEIs improve the quality and accessibility of the information they provide on their performance, they might ensure the availability of satisfying sources of information on their performance, which could make the ranking of HEIs less significant for stakeholders.

Good at collecting information, but not always using it?

As already suggested, simply collecting information is not sufficient: what happens as a result of the information and how the information is used is more crucial. Will the information make a difference? Will it be analysed and used when decisions about the future are made? If the information demonstrates that there is the need to make changes or improvements, does it lead to concrete measures? And if there is evidence of good performance, will it be rewarded or further disseminated as exemplary?

The importance of follow-up activities to QA processes has been documented on several occasions. If there are no signs of impact, it will be extremely difficult to build, and even more so, to sustain quality culture. As the Quality Culture project put it: "[I]t is important to point out that if the academic community,

including the students, do not see positive results from internal quality processes, discouragement and cynicism will set in and lead to an erosion of the quality culture that will be difficult to put right again." (EUA 2006: 18)

The results of our survey – as reported in Chapter 3.3 – lead to the conclusion that the internal feedback loops within HEIs could be improved: for example, in teaching and learning, the situation now seems to be that, although students judge teachers' performances, they do not often see the results of this judgement, nor do they see how these results are used in teachers' assessments. Often students can only indirectly deduce that their feedback has led to additional training for the teachers or to farther reaching consequences. This lack of transparency can then, in turn, contribute to a vicious circle of students not filling out new evaluation questionnaires and thus leaving the HEI without valuable feedback information.

As noted in Chapter 3.3, just over half the HEIs taking part in our survey have defined key performance indicators (KPIs). While HEIs should be encouraged to develop KPIs to monitor their progress in strategic key areas, we would like to draw attention to the fact that a great deal of consideration is to be paid to the process of defining these so that that they also reflect qualitative characteristics, and not just quantitative. Furthermore, experience has shown that while HEIs have a lot of information available, it may not always be useful and is sometimes unstructured. Great care should be taken when considering this question at institutional level.

In conclusion, some doubt remains regarding the efficiency of the information gathered by HEIs and whether it is used to foster continuous improvement and strategic planning in HEIs. In the long-run, HEIs would find advantages in: 1) clearly defining their strategic goals; 2) defining the ways to achieve them; 3) analysing carefully what kind of information they – or their key stakeholders – need to monitor their performance; 4) limiting the collection of data to information that can truly be utilised; 5) paying particular attention to the transparency of this data as well as to 6) the involvement of internal stakeholders in the follow-up procedures to sustain their commitment and motivation.

4.2. Areas for further development

"The real challenge is to build Quality into every stage of our work so that the impact on working lives is spread more evenly than can sometimes be the case at present. There is always the need to reflect on the common complaint from academic staff that we are killing the geese that lay the golden eggs, and whether new QA processes duplicate existing processes and add to workloads rather than adding value to the student experience or detracting from it by using up scarce staff time."
- Respondent to the survey

Taking account of EUA's Quality Culture project's recommendations, the survey results and the guidelines framed by the ESGs for internal quality assurance processes, and while recognising that HEIs are each in a very different phase of development, we would like to highlight the following key areas which require further development in terms of internal QA processes:

- HEIs should be encouraged to adopt or reinforce an all-encompassing approach to quality assurance, derived from their institutional strategies rather than resorting to a culture of compliance aiming to satisfy external requirements.

- In this context, we urge HEIs to develop explicit feedback loops between strategic management and quality assurance processes, including ways to monitor, in particular, the results and quality of activities with the aim of feeding the information into the strategic planning process.

- Although a lot has been done in this respect, promoting the participation of all stakeholders in quality assurance processes in order to enhance the commitment to quality continues to be a challenge. Participation of students, in particular, needs to be further strengthened in the follow-

up activities of QA processes and in measuring student workload. More generally, further attention needs to be paid to informing people about the impact and follow-up of the QA processes.

• And last but not least, we would encourage HEIs to review the information on their strategic goals and on how these goals are met, with the aim of deciding on an efficient and transparent communication strategy, in particular, vis-à-vis the external stakeholders.

The list is far from being exhaustive and neither is it applicable as such to any single HEI. But the survey results indicate that these are the areas where many HEIs are still struggling in their work to develop a quality assurance system that will advance the kind of quality culture they are aiming towards.

To conclude, one should underline the danger of thinking that internal quality assurance developments exist in a vacuum where their effectiveness or impact are independent of other developments in the higher education systems or institutional contexts. Quite the contrary, the ultimate quality of a HEI's work and outcomes as well as the nature of institutional quality culture are very much subject to a variety of factors which are highly interdependent and complex, quality assurance processes being only one piece of the puzzle.

The main challenges identified by the respondents in this regard were: frequently changing external regulatory frameworks; financial constraints that HEIs are facing, the recent data demonstrating that the economic downturn in Europe is affecting European universities in a more dramatic way than foreseen even just a few months ago (EUA 2010b); and finally, the reluctance of some staff members, fearing, among other things, additional bureaucracy or losing their academic freedom.

5. Concluding remarks

As the *Trends 2010* report indicated and this survey has confirmed, quality assurance processes are truly on the agenda of European HEIs and show no signs of fading away as the expectations towards increased quality, mobility and transparency in the European Higher Education Area only seem to be strengthening. Through the results of this survey we have hopefully been able to demonstrate that HEIs are developing their quality assurance processes in a serious manner, while the results also clearly demonstrate that this is work in progress.

Whilst the case of each HEI is different – some are very well developed in certain areas while others are only just at the beginning of the journey – and HEIs work within very different national contexts, a number of challenges, difficulties or pitfalls could be identified as common to almost all. By underlining these we hope to be able to help those who are working with these matters to understand their own respective situations better and to look beyond to find solutions.

As outlined in the beginning, the main focus of this publication was the quality assurance processes in teaching and learning as framed by the Bologna Process. We are well aware – as are some of the HEIs that responded to the questionnaire – that the quality assurance processes in other activities of HEIs have not received the same amount of attention at this stage. This, however, does not undermine their importance and the links between these activities should always be kept in mind when developing and fostering an institutional quality culture.

The ESGs – which have worked as one of the reference points for our survey along with EUA's Quality Culture project – were developed as a set of generic principles in QA: they define the areas which should be covered by institutional QA arrangements in teaching and learning, but do not define how these activities should be implemented. As the results of our survey demonstrate, the ways and levels of implementation vary. HEIs have opted for various combinations of processes to suit their own institutional culture and structures. Taking account of the diversity of European higher education in general, the diversity of QA processes should be seen, in fact, as a very logical and welcome feature. But our data also indicates that there is still work to be done before we can say that part one of the ESGs is implemented in a truly comprehensive manner.

Recently, there has been discussion about the possible revision of the ESGs (see e.g. EC 2009) and we are confident that the results of this survey can contribute to the discussion. In the light of these results, we would definitely argue that the ESGs effectively incorporate and reflect the European dimension of quality assurance in higher education. HEIs have worked, or are working towards having a set of common, key processes in place, but at the same time the differences between them not only depend on the national context or the size of a HEI, but also on their organisational structures and cultures, all of which should be respected.

In addition, we strongly believe that promoting good practices and sharing experiences is important for the future development of quality assurance. As a recent EUA project recommended:

We encourage the creation of platforms for both horizontal and vertical dialogue at various levels: within institution between departments, within a country between institutions, at European level between both HEIs and QA agencies, etc. While encouraging this dialogue, it should not be forgotten that when learning from others' experiences, whether good or bad, one should never aim at merely copying successful practices, but at critically analysing which components of the practice might be applicable to one's own context. (EUA 2009: 18)

And finally, the work of our project "Examining Quality Culture" will continue. Having now mapped the state of affairs as far as quality assurance processes are concerned, it is time to move towards the more qualitative part of our study. In the next stage we will aim to deepen our understanding of the synergy, similarities as well as divergence of quality assurance processes and quality culture. In that context we will also showcase some examples of institutional practices.

Annex: Questionnaire

A. General information

1. Name of the institution in original language: _____

2. Name of the institution in English: _____

3. Country where the institution is located. Please choose one from the drop-down menu.

4. Representatives of the institution
   ○ Name of the representative of the institution:
   ○ Name of the quality assurance (QA) manager or equivalent who can be contacted for further information: _____

5. What is the type of your institution according to the national statutes? *Please choose one.*
   ○ University
   ○ University of Applied Sciences, Polytechnic, Fachhochschule or equivalent
   ○ Other higher education institution (please specify)

6. Which is the highest level (or equivalent) to which your institution educates students? *Please choose one.*
   ○ Bachelor
   ○ Master
   ○ Doctorate (or 3rd cycle equivalent)

7. How many students do you have in total? (full-time equivalent)
   ○ Up to 1.000
   ○ Between 1.000 and 5.000
   ○ Between 5.000 and 10.000
   ○ Between 10.000 and 30.000
   ○ More than 30.000 (please give an approximate figure): _____

8. How many staff do you have in total? (full-time equivalent, all categories included)
   ○ Up to 100
   ○ Between 100 and 300
   ○ Between 300 and 500
   ○ Between 500 and 1.000
   ○ More than 1.000 (please give an approximate figure): _____

9. Would you be interested in participating in interviews regarding your institution's quality culture and quality assurance arrangements?
   ○ Yes   ○ No

   If yes, please enter here the email of the QA manager (or equivalent) who can be contacted:

   _____

B. Institutional QA Framework

10. Do you have an institutional strategic plan or equivalent document? *Please choose one.*
    ○ Yes, we have a strategic plan (or equivalent) which includes an institutional mission, goals and priorities
    ○ Yes, we have strategic plans (or equivalent) at the level of the faculties
    ○ No
    ○ Other (please specify): _____

11. Do you have an institutional quality assurance (QA) policy statement? *Please choose one.*
    ○ Yes, we have an institutional QA policy statement
    ○ Yes, we have an institutional QA policy statement, and in addition other document(s) also address the QA policy
    ○ We do not have a separate QA policy statement, but it is included in another document (e.g., institutional mission statement, strategic plan, work plan or equivalent)
    ○ No, but all or most of the faculties/departments have their own QA policy statements
    ○ No, we do not have a specific QA policy statement and it is not addressed in other documents
    ○ Other (please specify): _____

12. When did your institution start introducing a quality assurance system (or equivalent)? *Please choose one.*
    ○ Before 1990
    ○ In the 1990s
    ○ Between 2000 and 2005
    ○ Between 2005 and 2009
    ○ We are currently designing and/or planning it

13. How would you define the role of senior leadership (rector, vice-rector) in building a quality culture within your institution? *Please choose all applicable options.*
    ○ The senior leadership takes the lead in the process
    ○ The senior leadership monitors the process
    ○ The senior leadership serves as a facilitator for a better communication among different levels of the institutions
    ○ The senior leadership is the decision maker
    ○ Other (please specify): _____

14. How did you introduce a quality assurance system (or equivalent)? *Please choose all applicable options.*
    ○ The institutional leadership decided on the concept, provided instructions, training and support to the units to implement it
    ○ The concept is a result of various consultation rounds among the academic staff of the institution
    ○ The concept is a result of various consultation rounds among the academic and administrative staff
    ○ The concept is a result of various consultation rounds among the academic and administrative staff as well as students
    ○ The concept was introduced through pilot projects conducted by some units. Good practices were disseminated based on these experiences
    ○ The concept is based on requirement of the national QA agency which developed the standards and guidelines for this
    ○ Other (please specify): _____

15. What kind of structure do you have in place to support the internal quality assurance processes? *Please choose all applicable options.*
    ○ The rector or specially assigned vice-rector is in charge of QA issues
    ○ There is a person in charge of QA within the rectorate
    ○ There is a centralised QA unit, with specialised staff
    ○ There are QA units in each faculty with specialised staff
    ○ There are contact persons or persons in charge of QA within their unit, who have also other responsibilities
    ○ There is a unit responsible for staff development

○ There is a unit responsible for pedagogical innovation (or equivalent) that offers support to the teachers in developing teaching methods
○ There is an institutional level quality committee or equivalent
○ There are Faculty level and/or Department and/or programme level quality committees or equivalent
○ Other (please specify): _____

16. Do you have an internal evaluation process that provides feedback to the strategic planning in place?
    Please choose all applicable options.
    ○ The institutional leadership evaluates annually the progress made in terms of achieving the goals set by the institution
    ○ The faculties (and/or relevant units) conduct regular self-evaluations to analyse their contribution to the achievement of institutional strategic goals
    ○ The institution conducts regular surveys among the members of the institutional community (staff and students) to analyse their perception of the institutional strategy and its implementation at grass-roots level
    ○ The institution has defined a set of key performance indicators and follows its progress based on them
    ○ The institutional strategy and the achievement of the goals set in it are revisited when the document is revised (every 3, 5 or N years)
    ○ Other (please specify): _____

17. Which activities do your institutional quality assurance processes cover?
    Please choose all applicable options.
    ○ Teaching and learning
    ○ Research
    ○ Services to society
    ○ Student support services
    ○ Governance and administrative services of the institution
    ○ Other (please specify): _____

18. Which of the following processes does your institution have in place in order to ensure the quality of research activities? *Please choose all applicable options.*
    ○ Internal seminars where research projects and ideas are discussed
    ○ Internal peer review of research projects
    ○ External peer review of research projects organised by the institution (inviting external peers and preparing a report)
    ○ External peer review of research projects in relation to grant applications (evaluation organised by an external body such as the European Commission, funding councils, etc.)
    ○ Pre-checking of scientific articles to be sent to the scientific journals
    ○ Preparing statistics on published articles
    ○ Monitoring the impact factors of published articles
    ○ Key performance indicators defined for each research group, department or faculty
    ○ Other (please specify): _____

19. Which of the following processes does your institution have in place in order to ensure the quality of its services to society? *Please choose all applicable options.*
    ○ Key performance indicators defined for each of the services
    ○ Monitoring the number of patents, technologies transfer agreements, etc.
    ○ Monitoring the number of co-operation agreements
    ○ Monitoring the interactions with external stakeholders
    ○ Questionnaires to key stakeholders
    ○ Forums (stakeholder groups or equivalent) to ensure that the institution receives feedback from society and responds to that
    ○ Process descriptions of activities (guidelines or other descriptive formats)
    ○ Pre-selection processes in place for initiatives taken in this field (for instance rector's or president's approval)
    ○ Alumni feedback through surveys or other activities
    ○ Other (please specify): _____

C. Quality assurance processes in teaching and learning

20. How is your QA architecture in teaching and learning designed? *Please choose one.*
    ○ It is tailor-made to the institution's needs and does not apply any ready-made model
    ○ It is institution-specific but follows national QA frameworks and guidelines
    ○ It applies a ready-made model such as ISO, EFQM, CAF... (please specify which of the above mentioned models, or mention any other model used)

21. Which of these categories of people (see horizontal row) do your formal quality assurance processes involve and how? *Please choose all applicable options for each category of people.*

	Academic staff	Adminis-trative staff	Leadership, institutional level	Leadership, faculty/ department level	Students	External stakeholders (e.g., employers, experts...)	Alumni
Through formal participation in governance bodies (where members are entitled to vote)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Through formal participation in consultation bodies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Through formal involvement in self-evaluations or other evaluation activities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
By informally providing information on the issues at stake	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
By responding to the surveys on a regular basis (e.g. at the end of each course, academic year…)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
They are not involved	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

22. How are the results of the student surveys followed up? *Please choose all applicable options.*
    ○ They are taken into consideration in the design and revision of study programmes (including teaching methods)
    ○ They are taken into consideration in the assessment of teaching staff
    ○ They are archived in order to inform future assessments of the programme/institution
    ○ They are discussed in meetings attended by staff members and students organised specifically for this purpose
    ○ Students who have participated in a survey are informed about the results and actions taken on the basis of the results
    ○ Not applicable (we do not conduct student surveys)
    ○ Other (please specify): _____

a. Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards

23. Has your institution developed explicit learning outcomes? *Please choose one.*
    ○ Yes, for all programmes
    ○ Yes, for some of the programmes
    ○ No

24. Are these learning outcomes publicly available? *Please choose one.*
    ○ Yes, they are publicly available on the web-site, study guides or equivalent
    ○ They are available upon request
    ○ They are available for the students involved in each specific course
    ○ Other (please specify): _____

25. How does your institution know the student workload needed in order to reach the described learning outcomes? *Please choose one.*
    ○ All students are asked in surveys about the workload they have for their courses
    ○ A sample of students is asked in surveys about the workload they have for their courses
    ○ The teacher responsible for the module estimates the workload
    ○ There is no student workload indication in the course description
    ○ Other (please specify): _____

26. How does the process for designing curriculum and programmes work within your institution? Please choose one. *If there are several kinds of processes in place in your institutions, please choose the most commonly used.*
    ○ Programme director or equivalent person prepares the curriculum after which staff members may comment the draft
    ○ Working group, committee or equivalent prepares the curriculum (possibly based on proposals prepared by others)
    ○ Each staff member proposes what they find essential for the programme and the curriculum is a combination of these proposals
    ○ The curriculum is designed by the ministry or other external bodies
    ○ Other (please specify): _____

27. A working group, committee or equivalent prepares the curriculum and programmes within your institution. Such a group consists of: *Please choose all applicable options.*
    ○ Students
    ○ Administrative staff members
    ○ Academic staff members
    ○ External stakeholders (employers, corporate partners...)
    ○ Alumni
    ○ Other (please specify): _____

28. What kind of processes do you have in place for monitoring curriculum and programme design? *Please choose all applicable options.*
    ○ The curriculum and programme contents, pedagogical approaches and intended learning outcomes are evaluated on a regular basis (every N years/semesters...)
    ○ The curriculum and programme contents, pedagogical approaches and intended learning outcomes are evaluated as part of an external accreditation process or equivalent
    ○ Curriculum and programme design processes as such – that is, the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of the processes – are evaluated on a regular basis (every N years/semesters...)
    ○ The curriculum and programme contents are evaluated occasionally (at the occasion of a self-evaluation exercise, for an external evaluation body...)
    ○ The curriculum and programme contents are evaluated continuously on an informal level (discussions between staff members, staff and students...)
    ○ Other (please specify): _____

29. Are the programme contents or curriculum ultimately approved: Please choose one.
    ○ At the level of the institution
    ○ At the faculty level
    ○ At the departmental level
    ○ By an external body (agency or other)
    ○ By a governmental body
    ○ Other (please specify): _____

30. Do quality assurance processes within your institution include doctoral studies? *Please choose all applicable options.*
    ○ Yes, at the level of the institution as a whole
    ○ Yes, for the doctoral/graduate/research school(s)
    ○ Yes, for the individual doctoral programmes
    ○ Yes, as part of quality assurance for teaching
    ○ Yes, as part of research assessment
    ○ No
    ○ Not applicable (we do not offer doctoral studies)
    ○ Other (please specify): _____

b. Student assessment

31. Which of the following characteristics do your student assessment procedures (i.e., examinations) currently have? *Please choose all applicable options.*
    ○ designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and other programme objectives
    ○ have clear and publicly available criteria for marking/giving grades
    ○ have clear, pre-defined examinations or other assessment methods in place
    ○ have clear regulations covering student absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances
    ○ ensure that assessments are conducted securely in accordance with the institution's stated procedures
    ○ the administration checks that the assessment procedures are followed
    ○ Other (please specify): _____

32. Are students informed of the assessment procedures? *Please choose all applicable options.*
    ○ The assessment methods and criteria applied are publicly available for example via study guides, website
    ○ The teacher informs the students about the assessment methods and criteria applied at the beginning of the course
    ○ Other (please specify): _____

c. Quality assurance of teaching staff

33. How does your institution ensure that teaching staff is qualified and competent? *Please choose all applicable options.*
    ○ There are formal national requirements for the competence of teaching staff when hiring them
    ○ The institution has specified its own requirements for competencies of permanent teaching staff when hiring them
    ○ All teachers are expected to have certain research qualifications
    ○ There are research performance evaluations for all permanent academic staff members
    ○ Teaching qualifications are part of the qualifications professor candidates are expected to demonstrate
    ○ We conduct student surveys
    ○ Compulsory pedagogical training is organised for teachers
    ○ Optional pedagogical training is organised for teachers
    ○ There is an external accreditation process of the teachers (conducted, for instance, by a QA agency or a national body).
    ○ The institution has in place a peer feedback system (teachers giving feedback to each other on teaching)
    ○ There are certain processes in place to remove a teacher from his/her duties if they continue to be demonstrably ineffective
    ○ The legal framework does not foresee the possibility of removing an ineffective teacher
    ○ Other (please specify): _____

34. Is information on teachers' aptitudes and performance (results of student surveys, evaluation of his/her teaching aptitudes...) publicly available? *Please choose one.*
    ○ Yes, it is publicly available

○ Yes, it is available for all those involved in QA procedures for teaching (including students)
○ Yes, it is available for the teaching community in general
○ No, it is kept confidential and available only at the leadership level (institution and/or faculty and/or department)
○ Other (please specify): _____

d. Learning resources and student support

35. Are the **learning resources** listed below regularly offered, monitored, evaluated and/or improved:

	Offered	Monitored	Evaluated	Improved
Library	☐	☐	☐	☐
Computing facilities (including email account and internet access)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Human support in the form of tutors, counsellors, and other advisers (in addition to teaching staff)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Laboratories	☐	☐	☐	☐
Learning facilities (language labs, musical instruments, any other material used for classes…)	☐	☐	☐	☐

36. Is there a process in place for monitoring individual students' progression (i.e. information relevant to the progression of particular students during their studies) through an entire degree cycle? *Please choose one.*
○ Yes, and the internal QA procedure regarding this is standardised at the level of the institution
○ Yes, and the internal QA procedure regarding this depends on faculty/department/institute
○ No

e. Information systems

37. Does your institution have an overarching information system (i.e. database) used for the effective management of its activities? *Please choose one.*
○ Yes, the institution has a centralised information system that covers all key activities
○ No, but the institution has a centralised, non-integrated information system (data on different activities are not gathered in one data warehouse)
○ No, but several information systems exist at faculty level
○ Not applicable, there is no information system

38. Which of the following does the system or systems include? *Please choose all applicable options.*
○ Student progression and success rates
○ Teacher-student ratio per faculty/department/institute or in the respective faculty/department/institute
○ Tracking graduates' employment
○ Students' satisfaction with their programmes
○ Profile of the student population (age, gender, educational background, socio-cultural background, etc.)
○ Available learning resources and, when applicable, their costs
○ None of the above
○ Other (such as the institution's own performance indicators). Please specify: _____

f. Public information

39. The information that is publicly available on your institution's study programmes includes: *Please choose all applicable options.*
    ○ Number of students currently involved in the programme
    ○ Number of academic staff involved in the programme
    ○ Teacher-student ratio in the respective faculty/department / institute
    ○ Information on the intended learning outcomes of the programme
    ○ Information of qualifications granted by the programme
    ○ Information on the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used within the programme
    ○ Information on the learning opportunities (e.g. traineeships, exchange programmes, mobility possibilities, scholarships...) available to the students of the programme
    ○ Information on alumni employment
    ○ Profile of the current student population
    ○ Specific information targeting international students
    ○ Accessibility and possibilities offered to disabled students
    ○ Other (please specify): _____

40. Do you inform the public about the results of evaluations carried out?

	Results of internal evaluations	Results of external evaluations
Yes, via web-sites, publications or other information material	☐	☐
Yes, when asked	☐	☐
No	☐	☐

D. Comments

41. Please use the field below for any further comment on how you perceive the implementation of a quality culture and internal quality assurance processes within your institution (Open field, 300 words).

42. Please use the field below for any further comment on what, to your mind, are the future challenges to be faced regarding the implementation of a quality culture and internal quality assurance processes (Open field, 300 words).

43. Do you think that this questionnaire was able to handle the main questions related to your institutional daily practice in quality assurance? Please comment. (Open field, 100 words)

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