Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Examples from European Universities

October 9, 2018

11:00–16:30

Venue:

Parkhotel – Bellevue Lounge, U Borského parku 31, Plzen 301 00 Czech Republic

Programme:

11:00–11:30	**Registration, Buffet**
11:30–11.45	**Official Opening** Miroslav Holecek, *rector, University of West Bohemia, Plzen*
11:45–12:45	**Making Sense of Quality Assurance – The Trouble with Conflicting Logics** Oliver Vettori, *WU Vienna, Vienna, Austria*
12:45–13:45	**Transparency and Plurality in the Current Trends of Quality Assurance** Maarja Beerkens, *Leiden University, Netherlands*
13:45–14:15	**Coffee Break**
14:15–15:15	**Evolution of the Internal Quality Assurance at One University** (E-presentation) David O'Sullivan, *NUI Galway, Ireland*
15:15–16:15	**Quality Assurance and Enhancement at the University of Edinburgh** Nichola Kett, *University of Edinburg, Edinburgh, United Kingdom*
16:15-16:30	**Concluding remarks** Tereza Slehoferova, *vice dean, Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, University of West Bohemia*

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About speakers

dr. Maarja Beerkens, *Director of Studies, Institute of Public Administration, Faculty Governance and Global Affairs (FGGA), Leiden University, Netherlands*

Brief biography

Dr. Beerkens is assistant professor in international governance and director of studies at the Institute of Public Administration at Leiden University. Her research covers a range of issues in higher education and science policy, from quality assurance, research management and internationalisation to student experiences and teaching practices. Her book *Public Policy for Academic Quality: Innovative Policy Instruments* (co-edited with D.D. Dill) examines an interaction between state-centred, market-based, and self-regulatory instruments in higher education quality assurance, a special interest of hers. Her interest in policy-relevant research is expressed in her involvement in various advisory projects for the European Union, World Bank and national governments in and outside of Europe. Dr Beerkens holds a PhD degree in Public Policy Analysis from the University of North Carolina, U.S.

Contribution at the WS: Transparency and plurality in the current trends of Quality Assurance

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Abstract: Higher Education Quality Assurance has been in a continuous evolution over the last three decades. Current trends in many countries focus primarily on transparency and plurality in quality assurance. First, there is an increasing recognition that external quality assurance should provide information on quality, support an informed decision-making of potential students, and thereby trigger quality improvement within institutions. On the other hand, there is an increasing recognition of various stakeholders – students, teachers, employers, society – in defining what quality is and what matters for a specific university. How these trends reflect in current quality assurance and governance practices will be discussed in this presentation.

Nichola Kett, *Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement Team, University of Edinburg, Edinburgh, United Kingdom*

Brief biography

Nichola Kett is Head of the QA and Enhancement Team in Academic Services and focuses on the implementation and management of the quality framework at the University of Edinburgh. She is also a member of and contributor to Senate committees, in particular the

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Researcher Experience Committee and Quality Assurance Committee. Nichola Kett engages with and contributes to key University learning and teaching activities, including the Personal Tutor system and assessment and feedback. She has strong experience of policy development and review and of project management.

Contribution at the WS: Quality Assurance and Enhancement at the University of Edinburgh

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Abstract: This paper will present an overview of the University of Edinburgh's quality framework. Background information will be provided on the enhancement-led approach to quality assurance and enhancement within Scotland through an explanation of the Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework, which supports higher education institutions in Scotland to assure academic standards and enhance the student experience. Key University of Edinburgh quality assurance and enhancement processes will be outlined, including: annual and periodic review of academic provision, annual review of student support services, thematic review, external examining, student engagement, and enhancement themes. Recent improvements made to some of those key quality assurance and enhancement processes will also be outlined, along with the impact of these improvements. Attendees will then have the opportunity to ask questions about the University of Edinburgh's quality framework and to discuss similarities or differences to their own quality assurance and enhancement arrangements.

dr. David O'Sullivan, *Director of Quality & Professor of Industrial Engineering, NUI Galway, Ireland*

Brief biography

David O'Sullivan (Ph.D.) is researcher and teacher at NUI Galway. He is also Director of Quality where he facilitates management teams with strategic and operational planning, quality management and performance management. David works with industry on new ways of improving innovative capacity and research projects have involved IBM, Ingersoll-Rand, Fujisawa, Hewlett-Packard and Boston Scientific. He also works on research projects with small to medium sized industries and service organisations including hospitals, local government and public services.

Contribution at the WS: Evolution of the Internal Quality Assurance at One University

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Abstract: Quality Assurance (QA) at one university has evolved significantly over the past 15 years in keeping with emerging European standards, reported best practices and structured feedback from key stakeholder groups. In 2001, the QA process was focussed primarily on peer review and involved extensive information reporting. It was characterised largely as a defensive

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process that struggled to convince various stakeholder groups that QA provided value. In 2018, peer review is now just one element of a broader QA process that is significantly leaner, evidence based and focussed around enhancement. This extended or 'total' QA process now incorporates a variety of activities including benchmarking, annual operational planning, controlled policies and procedures and performance measurement. The QA system has evolved to become a more significant agent of change and is broadly endorsed by key stakeholder groups.

dr. Oliver Vettori, *Dean, Accreditations & Quality Management/Director, Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU Vienna), Vienna, Austria*

Brief biography

Dr. Vettori is Dean of Accreditation and Quality Management and Director of Program Management and Teaching and Learning Affairs. He holds doctoral degree in Sociology/Organisation Theory and is a Research Associate at the Institute for Organization Studies and the Institute for Public management at WU Vienna. Dr. Vettori has been working in higher education management and research for more than a decade now, as a reviewer, trainer, researcher and expert in more than 25 different countries on four different continents including for EUA, ENQA, UUEP-UNESCO, ASEAN-QA. He serves on the international Editorial Board of Quality in Higher Education and as the academic adviser to the European Quality Assurance Forum (EQAF). He is also a member of the EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme expert pool and is an advocate for European university collaboration on learning and teaching evolution.

Contribution at the WS: Making Sense of Quality Assurance – The Trouble with Conflicting Logics

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Abstract: The fact that QA makes use of a fairly standardized arsenal of tools and instruments and is also oriented at common standards and guidelines, at least across the European Higher Education Area, often renders invisible that actors' understandings of what and how things could be kept stable or even improved can differ greatly. This presentation will turn the focus towards the often latent patterns of meaning QA practices and policies are built upon and how these patterns can be subverting each other or even create actual conflicts on the manifest level of action. Particular attention will be paid to the conceptual differences of quality management as a managerial construct and quality assurance as a political constructs. The presentation ends with suggestions on how such conflicting logics can be dealt with in practice, even if not fully reconciled.