

EIQAS

ENHANCING INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

ERASMUS + PROJECT

2014-2016



COUNTRY REPORT: POLAND

FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY ON PART I OF THE EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AND INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

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This publication has been funded by the European Commission as part of the Erasmus+ programme. The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views of the authors only, and neither the Commission nor the National Agency of the Erasmus+ programme can be held responsible for any use, which may be made of the information contained herein.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance

The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (European Standards and Guidelines, ESG), developed by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), provide a common framework for quality assurance of learning and teaching at European, national and institutional levels. They were adopted by the Ministers responsible for higher education as part of the Bologna Process in 2005. A recently revised version of the ESG (<https://revisionesg.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/esg-draft-endorsed-by-bfug.pdf>) was endorsed by the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) in September 2014 and is expected to be approved by the Ministers in May 2015. Like the 2005 version, the revised ESG include three interrelated parts:

Part 1 – Internal quality assurance;

Part 2 – External quality assurance;

Part 3 – Quality assurance agencies.

1.2. EIQAS Project

The survey on Part 1 of the ESG and internal quality assurance systems was a key initial activity in the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership project 'Enhancing internal quality assurance systems' (EIQAS), approved for funding in autumn 2014. EIQAS is a joint initiative of national quality assurance agencies and Rectors' Conferences and / or higher education institutions (HEIs) from four countries, Poland (Polish Coordinator), Bulgaria, Portugal and Slovenia. It has two objectives. Firstly, it aims to support HEIs in the further development of their internal quality assurance (IQA) systems by enhancing their awareness and understanding of Part 1 of the ESG. Secondly, it aims to support the national agencies in the further development of their methodologies for the external assessment of IQA systems at HEIs, thus addressing one of the standards in Part 2 of the ESG. The two main outputs of the project will be a Guide to IQA based on Part 1 of the ESG and a reference framework for comparative analysis of the participating agencies' methodologies for the external assessment of IQA. More details about EIQAS at: <http://www.eiqas.com>.

1.3. EIQAS Survey

Pursuing the first objective of EIQAS, the survey focused on IQA in the context of Part 1 of the ESG and was conducted at institutional level. It aimed to collect data on overall progress that HEIs had made in the implementation of their IQA systems, the extent to which (elements of) Part 1 ESG are integrated into their IQA systems, and the problems HEIs had faced and / or might face when integrating the ESG into their IQA systems. The survey findings will feed into an EIQAS Training Seminar on IQA and the ESG for HEIs to be held in spring 2015. Together with suggestions and conclusions from the seminar, they will also be used to develop the above-mentioned Guide to IQA which will be available to all HEIs concerned.

The survey was based on the BFUG-endorsed draft of the revised ESG, which, to a large extent, overlaps with the 2005 version. As the draft was yet to be approved in May 2015, HEIs were not expected to have the new ESG elements in place, though some might have integrated such or similar elements into their IQA systems regardless of the ESG. Since EIQAS is forward-looking, the main reason for choosing the draft ESG for the survey was that this enabled the EIQAS partners to identify (elements of) Part 1 of the ESG which should be given special attention both at the Training Seminar on IQA and the ESG and in the Guide to IQA which will be based on the revised ESG.

The questionnaire was designed to provide mainly quantitative data as a basis for an in-depth and qualitative analysis during the EIQAS Training Seminar on IQA and the ESG. It comprised 45 questions. General questions about IQA systems covered, in particular, the period when a HEI started

implementing its system and the main motivation behind the decision to do so; the scope of the system; progress in its implementation across the institution and problems encountered; beneficial changes resulting from its operation; general links with the ESG, and activities undertaken to raise internal awareness of the ESG. These were followed by detailed questions about procedures, processes and / or other arrangements covered under each of Part 1 ESG. HEIs were also requested to identify the ESG which had been or could be most difficult to implement, and those where they would need more clarification and guidelines. For details, please see the full questionnaire in the Annex.

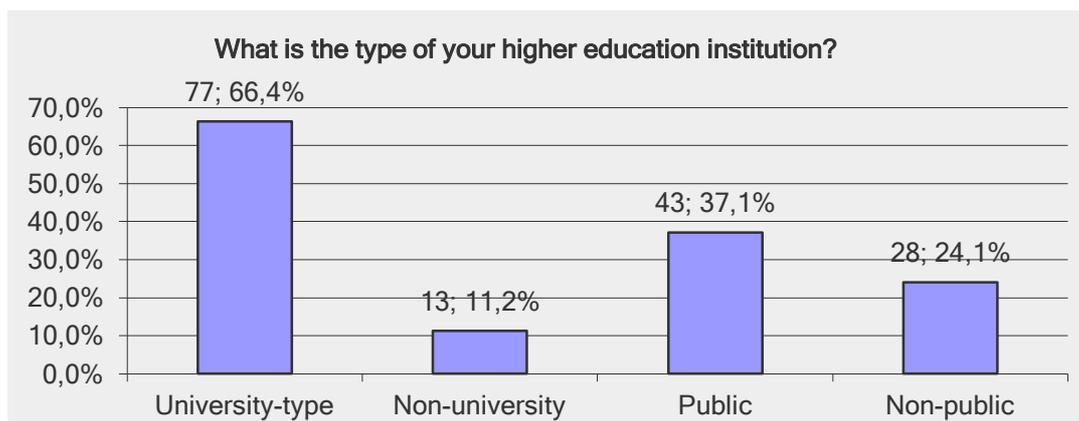
The survey was conducted online between 3 February and 3 March 2015 among HEIs in all four countries participating in EIQAS. Depending on the total number of HEIs, the number of those invited to complete the questionnaire varied between the four countries.

The Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Poland are divided into state (*public*) and private (*non-public*) institutions. There are two main categories of higher education institutions: *university-type* and *non-university institutions*. In the university-type HEIs, at least one unit is authorised to confer the academic degree of Doctor (*PhD*), i.e. offers at least one doctoral programme. In Polish HE system there The higher education institutions run full-time, extramural, evening and external courses. The full-time courses are defined as the basic type of studies. Poland conforms to the guidelines from the Bologna Process in European higher education. The degree system based on the three-cycle structure has been successfully implemented together with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). The European standard in higher education makes it easier for students to obtain recognition of their qualifications in other countries.¹

According to the typology in Polish HE system there are following HEIs: universities, universities of technology, university schools of sports, medical universities, universities of economics, universities of arts, universities of agriculture, universities of pedagogy, higher schools of professional education, military higher schools, church higher schools, non-public higher schools.

In Poland 431 HEIs (of which 139public/state HEIs and 292 non-public/private HEIs), representing 100% of the total number of HEIs, were invited to complete the questionnaire. 116 out of 431 HEIs completed the questionnaire (i.e., over 66% university-type HEIs see Figure 1).

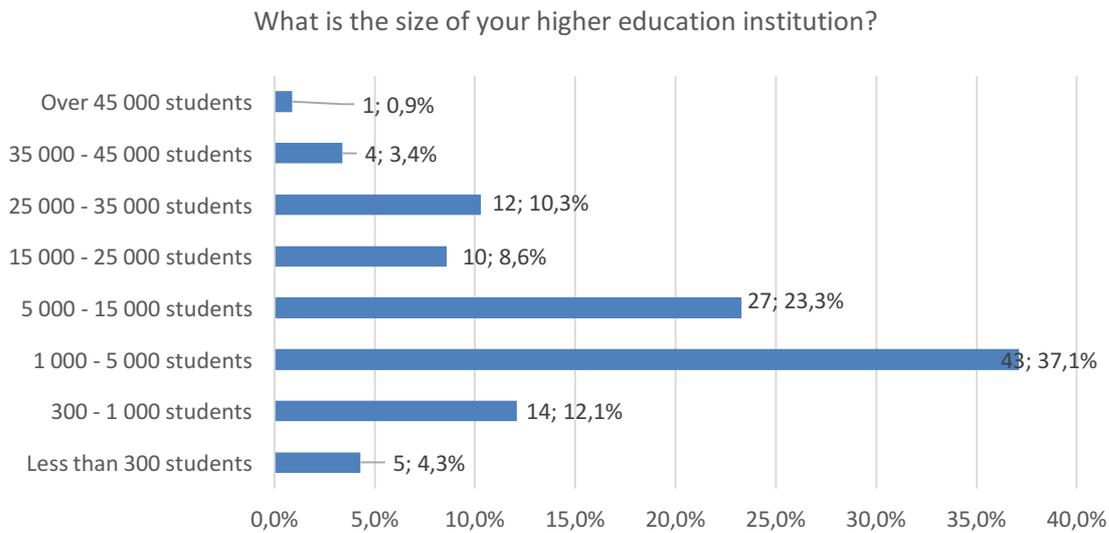
Figure 1



HEIs with the number of students ranging from 1000 to 5000 constitute the majority of respondents. Details on the size of the HEIs participating in the survey are shown in *Figure* below:

¹ Source: webpage Ministry of Science and Higher Education

Figure 2



In most of the cases the questionnaire was filled in by the Vice-Rectors of HEIs (29%) or the Institutional Quality Assurance Coordinators (20%). The position/function of the individuals who filled in the survey questionnaire is shown in *Table 1* below:

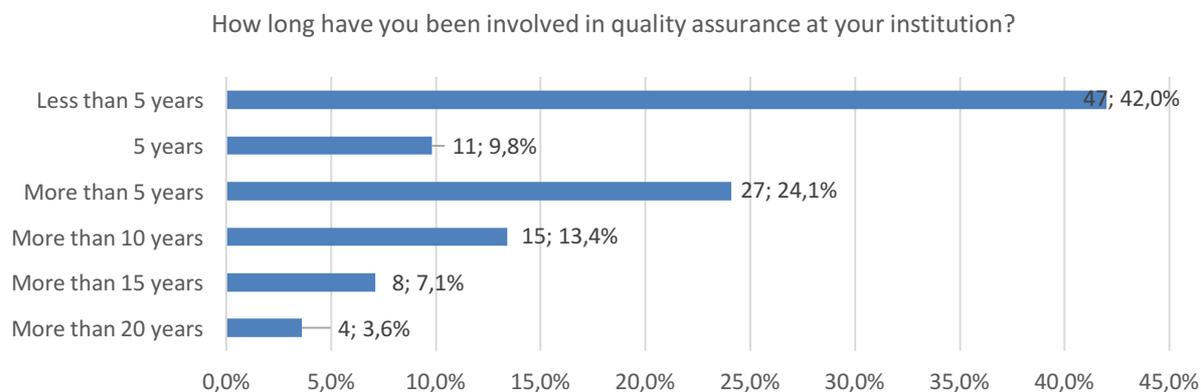
Table 1

| What is your function / position at your institution? | | |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Rector / President | 6.1% | 7 |
| Vice-Rector / Vice-President | 28.9% | 33 |
| Institutional Quality Assurance Coordinator | 20.2% | 23 |
| Head of the Quality Assurance Unit / Office | 14.9% | 17 |
| Administrator | 14.9% | 17 |
| Other (please specify) | 14.9% | 17 |
| Question answered by | | 114 |
| Question skipped by | | 2 |

However, the majority of individuals (55,4%) filled in the questionnaire in consultation with colleagues at their institution. Remaining respondents (44,6%) decided to answer questions individually. Still 4 out of 116 respondents skipped the question.

42% of respondents had also been involved less than 5 years in quality assurance at their institution. Bearing in mind that the majority of responding individuals are Vice-Rectors, the length of involvement in quality assurance activities might be also linked to HEI bodies' terms of office. Only 4 respondents had been involved for more than 20 years in quality assurance activities.

Figure 3



1.4. Basic facts about Internal Quality assurance in Poland

Before central regulations came into force in 2007 some Polish HEIs had developed IQAs on their own initiatives. In accordance with the regulation of the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 12 July 2007 on education standards², HEIs have been obliged to ensure high quality education and to introduce internal quality assurance systems. After the amendment of the Act - Law on Higher Education in 2011, the obligation to have internal quality assurance systems in place has been stipulated in the Regulation on the conditions for the provision of degree programmes in a specific field and at a specific level of study, which stipulates that "An academic unit may provide first-cycle programmes or second-cycle programmes, if it has implemented an internal quality assurance system, including actions aimed at the enhancement of the teaching programme in the field of study provided". Some elements of the system, such as student opinion questionnaires and periodical academic staff evaluations or monitoring the careers of graduates, have been defined as indispensable preconditions in the Law on Higher Education. Moreover, particular elements of the system have been identified in the implementing regulations of Minister of Science and Higher Education as well as the Polish Accreditation Committee's institutional evaluation criteria, which stipulate that academic units under evaluation should have efficient internal education quality assurance systems in place.

Under the current legislation internal quality assurance systems covering the whole educational process should, in particular, take account of:

- 1) the method of verifying learning outcomes in the course of the whole educational process in individual fields of study;
- 2) the way of using outcomes from academic staff evaluations performed by students under Article 132 (3) of the Act;
- 3) the verification of the achieved intended learning outcomes;
- 4) the conclusions from the analysis of monitoring graduates' careers on the labour market referred to in Article 13b (10) of the Act and where a HEI conducts its own graduate career monitoring – also conclusions from analysis of that monitoring; action taken by HEIs aimed at the prevention of plagiarism and their detection.

HEIs develop their own quality assurance systems which take into account the individual characteristics of a HEI, its mission statement, education profile, population of students, staff, academic tradition and external conditions. Legal regulations in force in Poland until October 2011 limited the autonomy of

² Central list of fields of study and standards

HEIs in the shaping of study programmes, due to the requirement to follow the central list of fields of study and education standards. To a certain extent, it also limited the dynamics of the introduction of such systems by HEIs. The abandonment of the central list of education standards and the issuance of diplomas marked by non-public HEIs not the State made the responsibility of HEIs for the quality of education become real, and as a result, greatly affected the criteria of external evaluation conducted by PKA. Implementing regulations resulting from the amended law published in September 2011 introduced stricter legal requirements than those in force since 2007. The former requirements called for the introduction of internal quality assurance systems by HEIs, but did not specify their structure or scope. Changes relating to higher education institutions also involved modifications of the external evaluation of education quality. Both the former education quality evaluation and the new formula for programme evaluation provide for the assessment of the efficacy of an internal education quality assurance system from the perspective of its operation within a field of study. This means that the evaluation pertains to all stages and aspects of the teaching process, provides for the verification of learning outcomes and continuing improvement of the programme offer (see programme evaluation criteria annexed to the Statutes). However, the institutional evaluation procedure focuses mainly on the assessment of mechanisms, methods and efficiency of the operation of an internal quality assurance system. If, as part of institutional evaluation, a HEI proves that its internal quality assurance system operates in a comprehensive and efficient manner (i.e. depending on the degree of complying a criterion, it obtains positive or outstanding ratings), PKA refrains from the programme evaluation of all the fields of study offered by a unit over the period indicated in the criterion (six years in the case of positive ratings, and eight years in the case of outstanding ratings), save in circumstances, which would call for concluding such an evaluation earlier. The evaluation of the operation of internal quality assurance system is made with the observance of detailed criteria which are made public (published on PKA website www.pka.edu.pl) and reflecting Part 1 of ESG. They clearly indicate the requirements to be met by a system, which include its structure, decision-making process, the procedures, and the evaluation of its efficiency.

The law did not refer explicitly to ESGs (adopted in 2005). In the Law on Higher Education, the Polish Accreditation Committee was entrusted with external assessments of education quality. The Committee was appointed as the sole body responsible for external quality assurance of higher education system whose opinions and resolutions have legal validity. Observing standards and guidelines for quality assurance of education in the European Higher Education Area, and with the consistency of the national quality assurance system in mind, apart from the external evaluation procedure of education quality PKA has also introduced evaluations of the efficiency of internal quality assurance systems at HEIs academic units under review. The introduction of a new procedure for programme and institutional evaluation as a result of the amendment of the law is aimed at a larger focus on the assessment of the efficiency of internal education quality assurance systems operated by HEIs. The previous formula for programme accreditation involved an assessment of the system but only to a limited extent. That kind of approach resulted mainly from the fact that quality assurance was a relatively new phenomenon in the operations of majority higher education institutions. PKA included IQA criteria in its methodology for institutional and programme evaluations. PKA makes use of its own system of criteria for institutional and programme evaluations including four separate dimensions – teaching and learning, governance and the cooperation in social and economic dimension of HEIs. IQA covers all four areas of activity and in the process of evaluation it is also assessed as a separate criterion –IQA.

The PKA criteria linked to the assessment of IQA are as follows:

Table 2

| PKA criteria for IQA assessment | |
|---|--|
| Programme evaluation | Institutional evaluation |
| <p>1. The unit has developed an effective internal quality assurance system geared towards assessing learning outcomes and improving the programme of study as well as towards achieving high education quality culture within the programme under evaluation.</p> <p>1.1 with the quality assurance policy in mind, the unit has implemented an internal quality assurance system enabling the systematic monitoring, evaluation and improvement of the educational process within the programme under evaluation, including the evaluation of the degree to which the expected learning outcomes have been achieved, and a periodical review of study programmes aimed at their improvement, including:</p> <p>1.1.1 the designing of learning outcomes and their modification as well as the involvement of external and internal stakeholders in this process</p> <p>1.1.2 the monitoring of the degree to which the expected learning outcomes have been achieved for all types of classes at each level of education, including the process of awarding diplomas</p> <p>1.1.3 the verification of learning outcomes achieved by students at each stage of education and for all types of classes, including the prevention of plagiarism and its detection,</p> <p>1.1.4 the principles, conditions and the mode of attestation of learning outcomes achieved outside of the higher education system</p> <p>1.1.5 using the results of graduate career monitoring to evaluate the relevance of their learning outcomes to the labour market,</p> <p>1.1.6 staff conducting and supporting the teaching/learning process within the programme under evaluation and the current staff policy,</p> <p>1.1.7 making use of conclusions resulting from student evaluations of academic staff in the process of evaluation of teaching staff quality,</p> <p>1.1.8 material resources, including teaching/learning facilities and financial support for students,</p> <p>1.1.9 methods of collecting, analysing and documenting activities aimed at ensuring education quality,</p> | <p>1. The unit operates and improves an internal quality assurance system.</p> <p>1.1 The unit operates a coherent system of internal regulations governing the internal quality assurance system and its improvement, compliant with the unit strategy, quality assurance policy and general legislation in force determining:</p> <p>1.1.1 the scope and objectives of the internal quality assurance system,</p> <p>1.1.2 a transparent organisational structure and the assignment of responsibilities and rights,</p> <p>1.1.3 the participation of internal and external stakeholders in ensuring education quality,</p> <p>1.1.4 key processes in the area of study, and procedures as well as tools serving the purpose of the monitoring, assessment and improvement of education quality as well as of the system</p> <p>1.2 The internal quality assurance procedures are comprehensive, prevent pathologies and ensure that the unit can verify, assess and improve the quality of all identified processes, in particular in the scope of:</p> <p>1.2.1 the designing, approving and periodical reviewing of programmes and evaluations of expected learning outcomes for first-cycle, second-cycle, long-cycle, third-cycle and postgraduate programmes,</p> <p>1.2.2 the participation of labour market representatives, including employers, in the determination and evaluation of learning outcomes</p> <p>1.2.3 student admission, evaluation of students', doctoral students' and post-graduate students' learning progress and making use of the results of graduates' career monitoring in order to evaluate learning outcomes on the labour market, as well as the principles, conditions and mode of confirming learning outcomes achieved outside of the higher education system,</p> <p>1.2.4 staff providing and supporting the educational process and the staff policy</p> <p>2.2.5</p> |

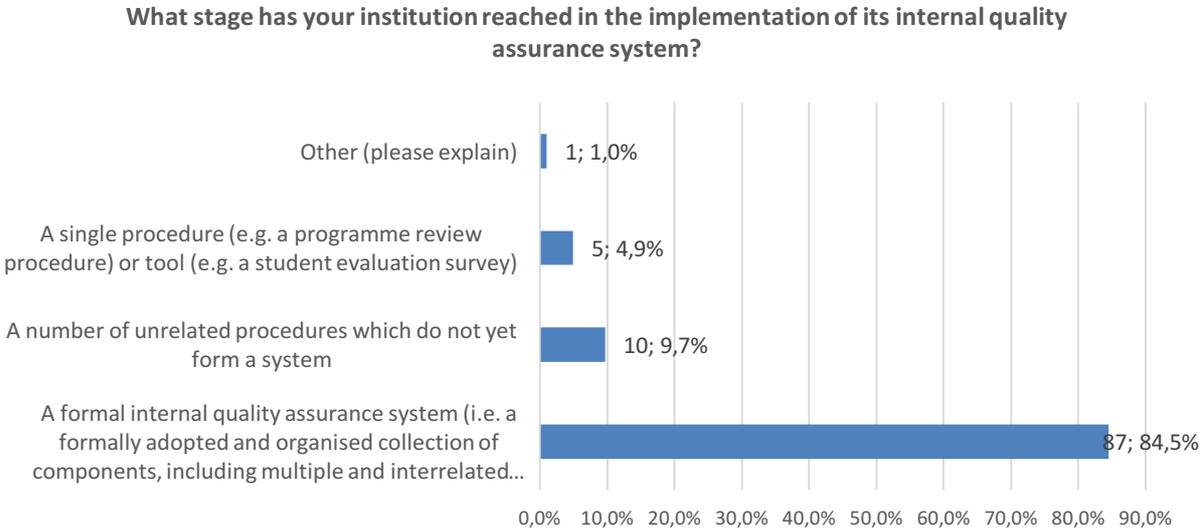
| | |
|---|---|
| 1.1.10 access to information on the programme and educational process linked to the programme under evaluation and its outcomes. | material resources, including teaching and academic facilities as well as resources available to support students and doctoral students |
| 1.2 The unit carries out systematic evaluations of the internal quality assurance system and of its influence on raising education quality within the programme under evaluation, and uses its outcomes to improve the system. | 2.2.6 managing information relating to the educational process, e.g.: the method of collecting, analysing and using relevant information for the purposes of education quality assurance, 2.2.7 public access to the current education quality policy, updated and objective information on the study programmes, expected learning outcomes, and the organisation and procedures of study programmes. |
| | 2.3 The unit monitors the operation of the internal quality assurance system, regularly evaluates its effectiveness and uses the results thereof to improve the quality policy and to build an education quality culture. |

The compliance of PKA criteria with ESG was confirmed by ENQA review procedures in 2008 and 2013 (for further information see PKA webpage pka.edu.pl). The external review process also showed that HEIs’ needs and expectations linked to further interpretation of Part 1 ESG related to the enhancement of IQA were still relevant.

2. OVERVIEW OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (IQA) SYSTEMS

84.3% of responding Polish HEIs confirm that their IQA systems have reached the stage of formal implementation. The remaining 9.7% declare that they have a number of unrelated procedures which do not yet form a system and 4.9% have only a single procedure (e.g. a programme review) or tool (e.g. student evaluation survey). The “other” answers showed that implementation of IQAs or their procedure is in progress. 13 out of 116 respondents decided to skip the question about the stage of implementation of internal quality assurance system.

Figure 4



Besides, 53,8 % of HEIs introduced their own IQA Manual.

Table 3

| Does your institution have a Quality Manual / Handbook providing details about its internal quality assurance system? | | |
|---|------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Yes | 53,8% | 50 |
| No | 46,2% | 43 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | 93 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | 23 |

In most of the cases (56.3%) IQAs were established between 2006 and 2011 and were prompted by national requirements which came into force in 2007. On basis of survey results we can also observe the further intensive development (29%) of formal IQA systems between 2012 and 2014 which was mainly caused by legislative changes at the same time. Besides, the Polish Accreditation Committee began to assess its internal quality assurance system within the institutional evaluation framework.

The breakdown of responses is presented below (still 29 out of 116 respondents skipped the questions):

Figure 5

When did your institution start establishing a formal internal quality assurance system?

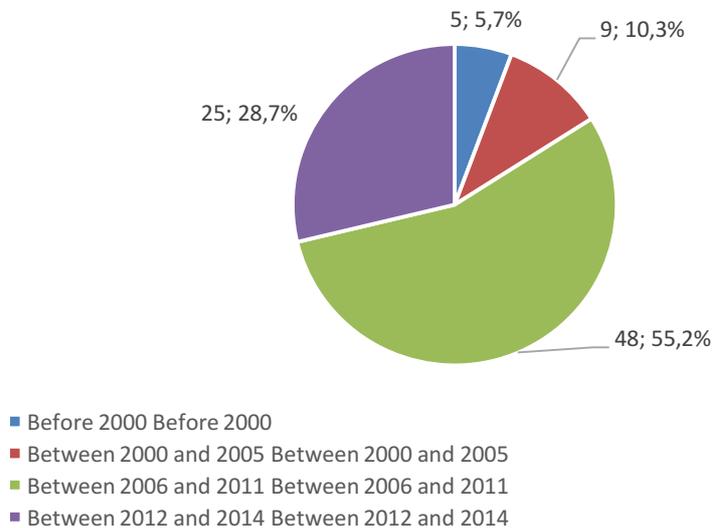
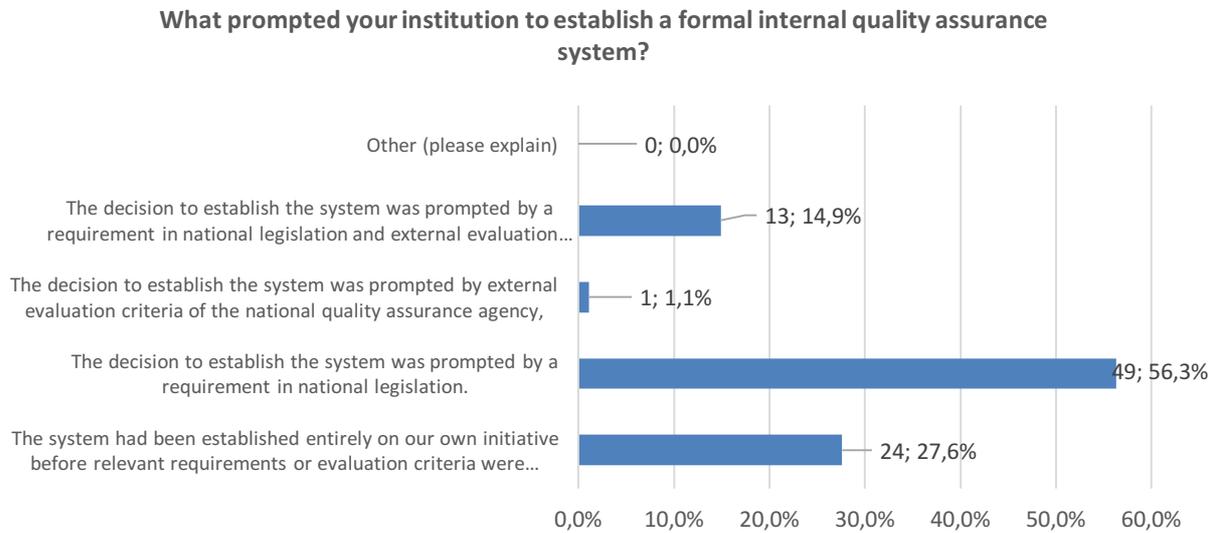
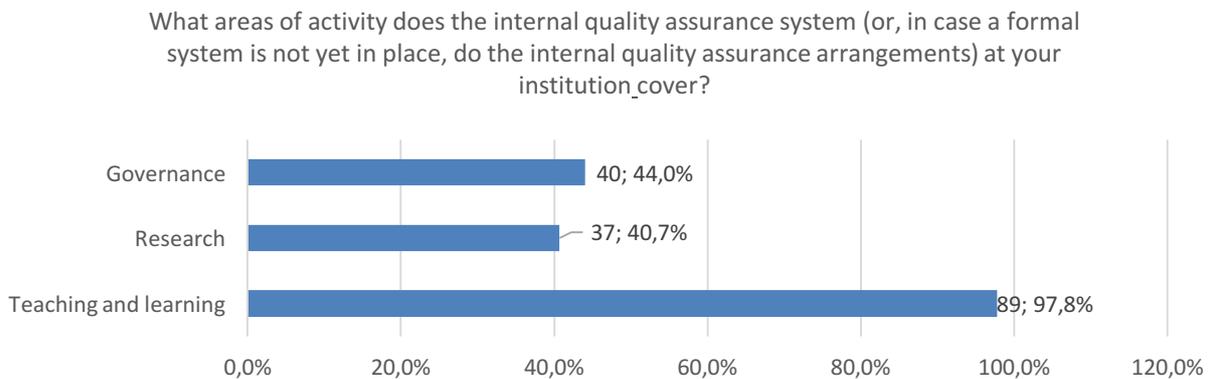


Figure 6



In 97.8% of cases the IQA systems cover teaching and learning activity while research and governance is covered only in 40.7% and 44 % of responses. A great number of HEIs (25) also decided to skip the question. It showed the common practice among HEIs that research and governance are not usually included in the IQA systems.

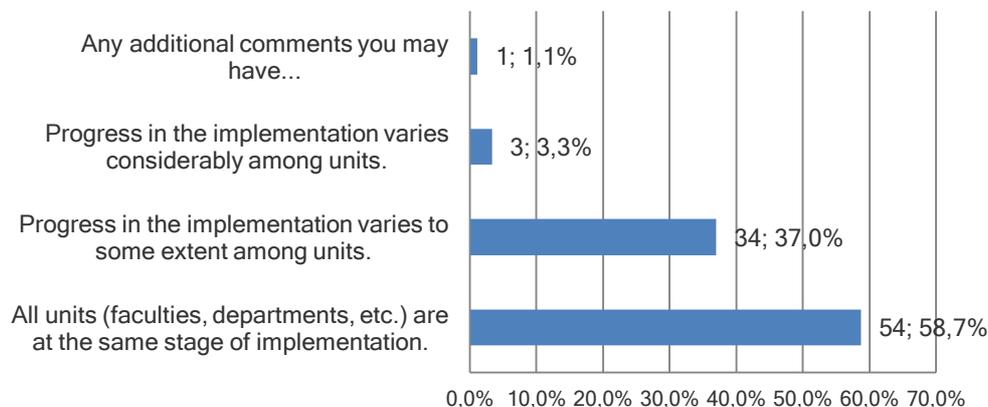
Figure 7



More than half of responding HEIs confirmed that internal quality assurance system covers all units (faculties, departments etc.). At the same time 37% of respondents declared that the progress varies to some extent among different units only in 3 cases it varies considerably. In open-end question 1 HEI pointed out that difference among 24 HEIs skipped the question which might indicate that awareness on the stage of implementation of internal quality assurance systems is rather low or difficult to interpret. The level of implementation of the IQA system in individual units of the HEIs is shown below:

Figure 8

How would you describe progress in the implementation of the internal quality assurance system (or, where a formal system is not yet in place, in the implementation of individual procedures) across your institution?



Still respondents identified some problems with IQA systems. Firstly, individual HEIs report teachers' and administrative staff's reluctance to IQA activities (e.g. lack of interest and awareness, poor knowledge of quality management area; reluctance and resistance, lack of involvement on the part of academic staff in internal activities, teachers' reluctance to be evaluated by students, staff fearing changes, conservative attitude to teaching and learning, stereotypes, problems with training).

Secondly, legislative and financial obstacles are reported in many cases (e.g. frequent changes of the Law on HE, national regulations concerning IQA is not clear and transparent, no strict guidance how to build up the system, national law causing difficulties for the implementation of IQA systems, lack of national guidelines for the structure of the system and relevant procedures, lack of consistent legislation, lack of money, no financial support for quality assurance units, costs of implementation of IQA systems).

Thirdly, HEIs report difficulties related to bureaucracy (e.g. paperwork, formalization and complexity of procedures, unnecessary formalization of good practice, administrative staff burdened with red tape) and at the same time they complain about the lack of students' interest in quality assurance activities (e.g. few students fill in questionnaires, low level of knowledge, low level of engagement of part-time students), problems with internal communication (e.g. top-down approach, different stages of implementation in different units), technical support (e.g. IT tool).

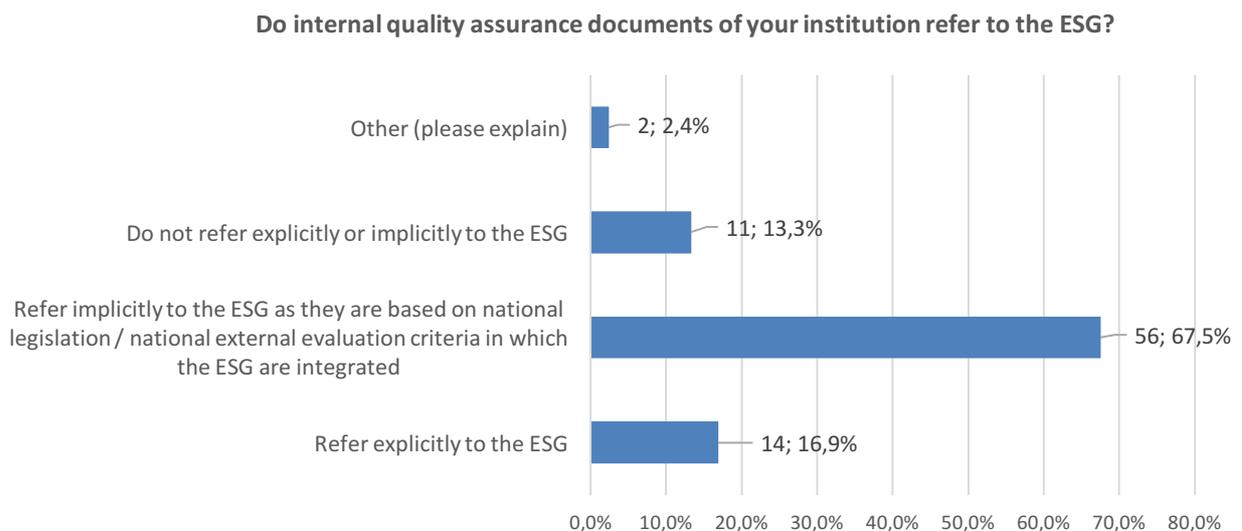
Surprisingly, also respondents observe beneficial qualitative and quantitative changes or innovative practices introduced on the basis of evidence collected through the internal quality assurance system. Here are some examples of beneficial changes that have occurred after the implementation of IQA systems: improvement of teaching quality and the development of academic staff's competences (e.g. the Centre of Excellence in Academic Teaching, tailored training courses, increase of self-discipline among lecturers involved in research, changes in teaching methods, better adjustment of teaching methods to students' expectations, more effective use of contact hours with students, increased discipline among academic staff, well-organized teaching methods, motivating academic staff to update teaching methods); increase of external and internal stakeholders' involvement in the development of curricula (e.g. stronger cooperation with business representatives, formal involvement of external stakeholders in the procedure of designing curricula, feedback from external stakeholders on graduates' skills, introduction of new forms of teaching and learning, deepened reflection on courses and their learning outcomes, implementation of new modules in curricula in all academic programmes (e.g. business classes for engineers), improvement of the quality of diploma

theses (e.g. antiplagiarism approach, standardization of requirements for theses), enhancement of quality awareness (involvement of internal stakeholders in different activities, increasing teaching and administrative staff's knowledge in terms of quality assurance,), improvement of teaching resources and synergy effects.

On the basis of this information, it is not possible to establish any relation between the date of establishment of IQA systems and progress made in quality assurance. Data reported at institutional level point to a state in which significant compliance with requirements has been achieved. Also, no relation between the type and size of an institution and beneficial changes is evident.

According to the majority of responding HEIs (67,5%), internal quality assurance documents refer indirectly to the ESG as they are based on national legislation/national external evaluation criteria in which the ESG are integrated. Only 13,3% respondents admitted that documents do not refer to ESG at all. In two open-ended "other" answers 1 respondent described that his institution owned internal documents comparing alignment with ESG, the other said that the ESG issue was beyond the scope of his knowledge. 33 HEIs skipped the question which might indicate that ESG awareness is rather low. The IQA systems of responding HEIs vary with regard to their reference to the ESG, as shown below:

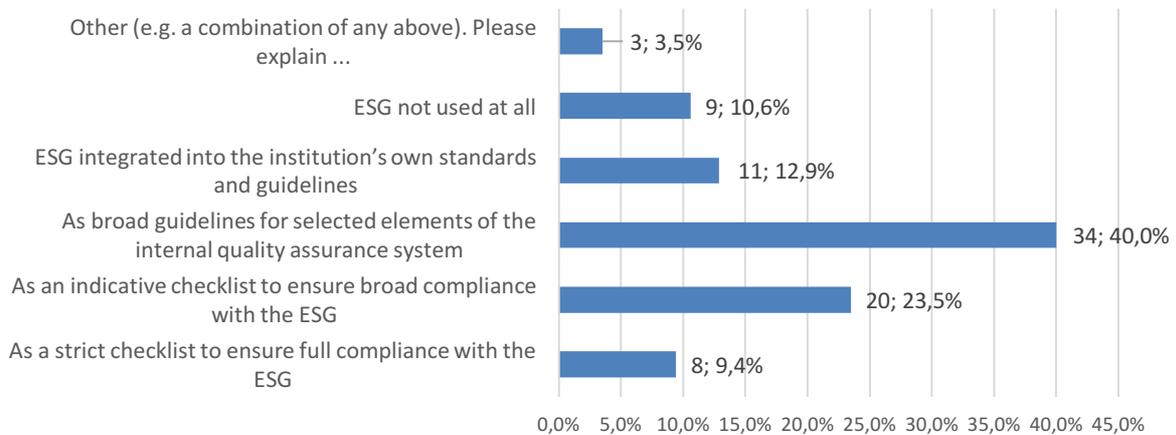
Figure 9



The majority of the HEIs (40%) use the current version of ESG as broad guidelines for selected elements of the internal quality assurance system. The rest of the HEIs use the ESG as an indicative checklist to ensure broad compliance with the ESG (23,5%), or they have integrated the ESG into their own standards and guidelines (12,9%). 9 HEIs do not use ESG at all while 31 HEIs left the question without answer. In open-ended "other" answers respondents indicated that due to the short time of HEI operation or period of their employment they were not able to answer.

Figure 10

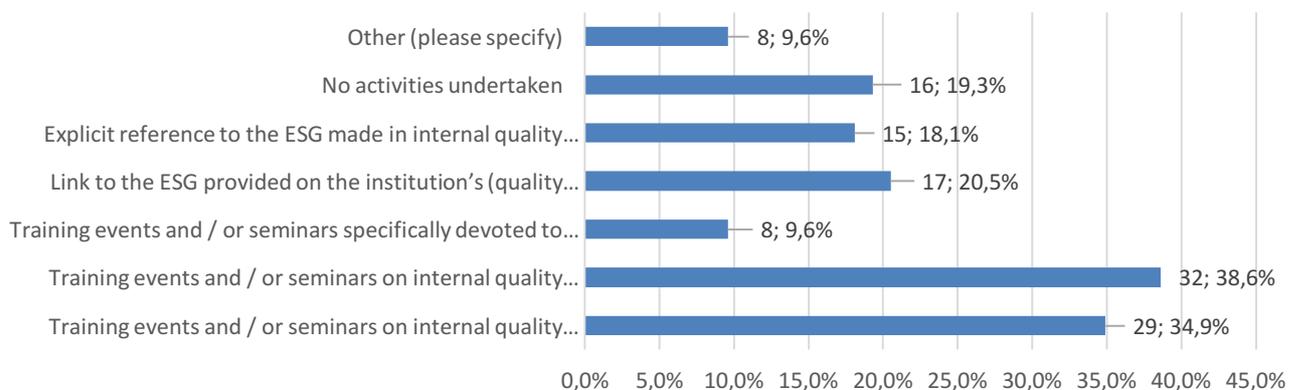
How does your institution use the 2005 version of Part 1 of the ESG in its internal quality assurance?



With regards to activities which have been undertaken to familiarise stakeholders with internal quality assurance/ or the 2005 version of Part 1 ESG only 9,6% of responding HEIs organised training events or seminars specifically dedicated to the ESG. The majority of HEIs 38,6% held training events and seminars on internal quality assurance where the ESG were not explicitly discussed. It is worth mentioning that in open-ended "other" question respondents provided examples of disseminating activities such as presentations on ESG and IQA during Senate's meeting or other collegiate gatherings of academic community, webmail communication with internal stakeholders, distribution of relevant reports and publications.

Figure 11

What activities has your institution undertaken to familiarise its internal stakeholders (teaching staff, students, quality assurance coordinators / advisers and others) with internal quality assurance and / or the 2005 version of Part 1 of the ESG?

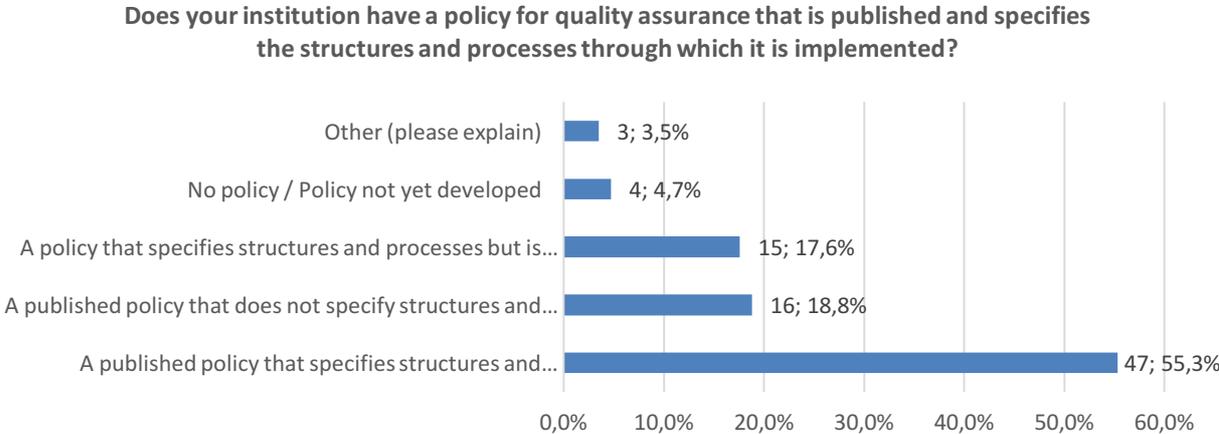


3. INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS AND PART 1 OF THE ESG

3.1. ESG 1.1: Policy for quality assurance

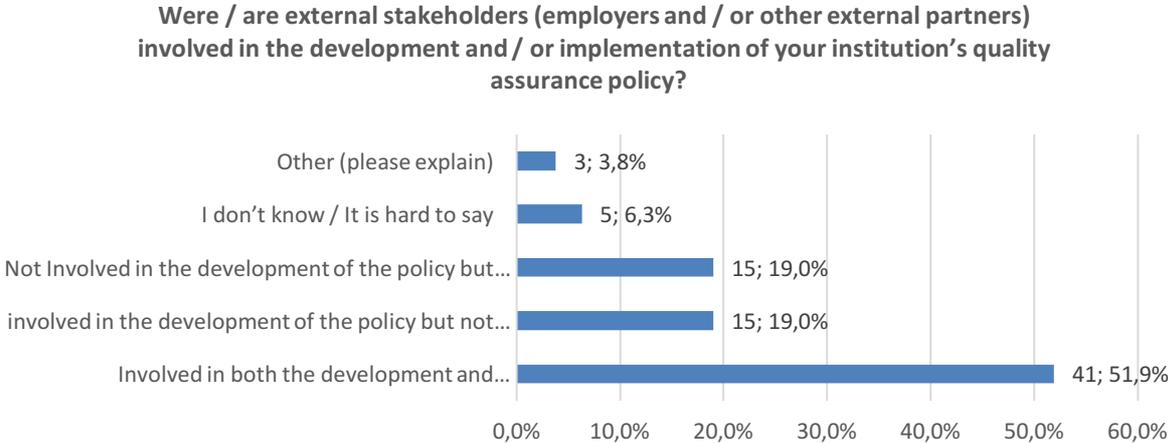
The majority of responding HEIs (55.3%) have a published policy for quality assurance that specify the structures and processes through which it is implemented. The rest of HEIs have policies for quality assurance that do not refer to the structure and processes (18.8%) or have a policy for QA that is not published (17.6%) , whereas 4.7 % respondents admit that no policy for quality assurance has been developed yet. 31 out of 116 respondents decided to skip the question which might leave room for improvement.

Figure 12



As shown in Figure below, in most of the cases (51.9%), institutions involved external stakeholders in the development and implementation of their QA; and 19% of HEIs involved external stakeholders in both development but did not involve them in the implementation of the policy or vice versa. In 6,3% of cases external stakeholders weren't involved at all.

Figure 13



94.9% of respondents confirm that their policy for quality assurance is periodically reviewed while on an on-going basis by 44.2% of HEIs, annually by 40.3% of HEIs and every two years by 6.5% of HEIs. The remaining HEIs review their policy every four years after electing new authorities.

3.2. ESG 1.2: Design and approval of programmes

79% of responding HEIs operate a formal procedure for designing programmes for all fields of study, while 83% of HEIs operate a formal procedure for the approval of programmes for all fields of study.

Table 4

| Does your institution have in place (a) procedure(s) for the design and / or approval of programmes? Our institution: | | | | | |
|--|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | In no field of study | In some fields of study | In most fields of study | In all fields of study | Response Count |
| Has in place a formal procedure for the design of programmes | 3 | 6 | 8 | 67 | 84 |
| Has in place a formal procedure for the approval of programmes | 2 | 3 | 8 | 66 | 79 |
| <i>Question answered by</i> | | | | | 84 |
| <i>Question skipped by</i> | | | | | 32 |

In terms of compliance with ESG, there is still room for improvement in the process of programme designing and approval, as some activities are not carried out in all fields of study as yet. However, the majority of programmes are designed in line with the institutional strategy, mission statement and vision and with the objectives that have been set for them (78%). They lead to clearly specified qualifications which refer to the relevant level of the National Qualifications Framework with (83%). They define intended learning outcomes to be achieved by students and expected student workload in terms of ECTS (93%). They also include student practical placement where appropriate. There are still some HEIs which design programmes without students’ and external stakeholders’ involvement (68%).

One HEI also expressed some concern about its doctoral programmes and non-degree postgraduate programmes with regard to their design and approval process: *“students have not been formally involved in developing postgraduate programmes, while stakeholders have not formally participated in programme design at both doctoral and postgraduate level while for all other fields of study (1st and 2nd cycle, incl. short - term and long - term cycle studies) all the above mentioned criteria have been met”*. HEIs were not asked explicit questions about their doctoral and postgraduate studies which might have revealed some further pressing problems in IQA system complexity.

The detailed breakdown of responses to the questions can be seen in the Table below:

Table 5

| To what extent do the statements below apply to your institution? Programmes at our institution: | | | | | |
|--|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | In no field of study | In some fields of study | In most fields of study | In all fields of study | Response Count |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|----|----|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Are designed in line with the institutional strategy, mission statement and vision | 0 | 5 | 13 | 64 | 82 |
| Are designed in line with the objectives set for them | 0 | 5 | 11 | 64 | 80 |
| Are designed by involving students | 4 | 14 | 17 | 46 | 81 |
| Are designed by involving external stakeholders (employers and other partners) | 3 | 16 | 20 | 41 | 80 |
| Are designed so as to enable smooth student progression | 2 | 4 | 21 | 54 | 81 |
| Define intended learning outcomes to be achieved by students | 0 | 3 | 5 | 71 | 79 |
| Define the expected student workload in terms of ECTS credits | 0 | 2 | 3 | 74 | 79 |
| Include student practical placements where appropriate | 0 | 8 | 17 | 55 | 80 |
| Lead to clearly specified qualifications which refer to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework | 1 | 3 | 9 | 67 | 80 |
| | | | | Question answered by | 84 |
| | | | | Question skipped by | 32 |

3.3. ESG 1.3: Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

With regards to variety of teaching and learning methods HEIs indicate that they:

- provide programmes in different modes of delivery (e.g. full- and part-time, campus-based and distance-learning) (37% in most fields of study);
- offer flexible learning paths to students (e.g. individual study programmes/paths) (58% in all fields of study);
- use a variety of teaching and learning methods, including those which encourage active and interactive engagement of students in their learning (60% in all fields of study)
- evaluate and adjust the modes of delivery of programmes on a regular basis (68% in all fields of study)
- evaluate and adjust their teaching and learning methods on a regular basis (66% in all fields of study).

The breakdown of the responses (see *Table below*):

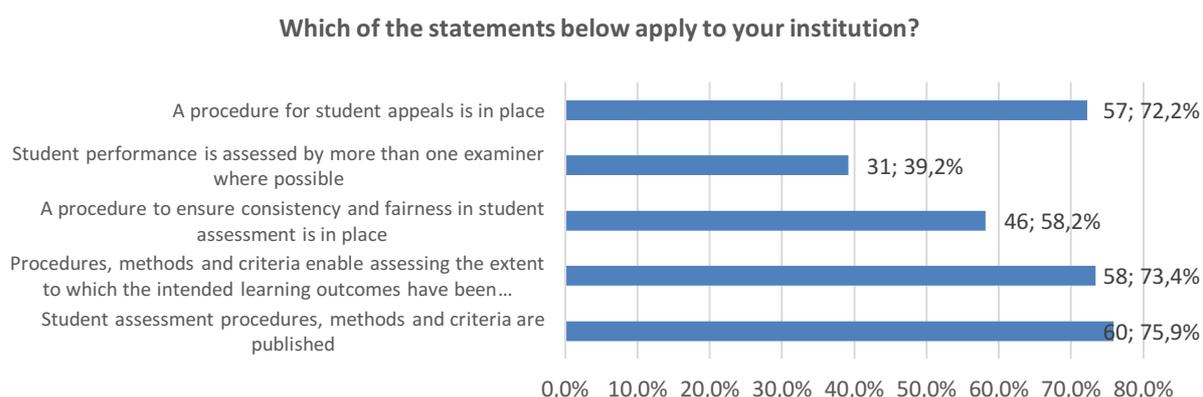
Table 6

| To what extent do the statements below apply to your institution? Please tick the most appropriate answer in each of the points below. Programmes at our institution: | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | In no field of study | In some fields of study | In most fields of study | In all fields of study | Response Count |
| are offered in different modes of delivery (e.g. full- and part-time, campus-based and distance-learning) | 4 | 17 | 28 | 27 | 76 |
| Offer flexible learning paths to students (e.g. individual study programmes / paths) | 1 | 16 | 15 | 44 | 76 |
| Use a variety of teaching and learning methods, including those which encourage active and interactive | 1 | 11 | 18 | 46 | 76 |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|----|-----------------------------|-----------|
| engagement of students in their learning | | | | | |
| Evaluate and adjust the modes of delivery of programmes on a regular basis | 0 | 4 | 20 | 51 | 75 |
| Evaluate and adjust teaching and learning methods on a regular basis | 1 | 5 | 20 | 50 | 76 |
| | | | | Question answered by | 76 |
| | | | | Question skipped by | 40 |

Furthermore, there is significant compliance regarding this standard as 75,9% of respondents declared to publish student assessment procedures, methods and criteria have a procedure for appeals in place, 73,4% have in place procedures, methods and criteria enabling assessment the extent to which intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Besides 72,2% have in place a procedure for students appeals and 58,2% a procedure to ensure consistency and fairness in student assessment. Nevertheless, comparing to previously mentioned data there is still little interest in assessing student performance by more than one examiner where possible. Besides, over 31% of HEIs decided to skip the question which might indicate a need for further improvement in that area.

Figure 14



In the opinion of HEIs consistency and fairness are achieved to a great extent (51%) or to some extent (26%). The majority of responding HEIs (61%) decided to skip the question at all that might indicate some problems with understanding and further achievement.

Table 7

| In your opinion, to what extent are consistency and fairness achieved through the procedure of student assessment (previous question) | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | I don't know / It is hard to say | To no extent | To a small extent | To some extent | To a great extent | To a very great extent | Rating Average | Response Count |
| | 3 | 0 | 1 | 12 | 23 | 6 | 3,62 | 45 |
| | | | | | | | Question answered by | 45 |
| | | | | | | | Question skipped by | 71 |

3.4. ESG 1.4: Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

In terms of introducing and publishing regulations, the progress of institutions can be described as follows:

- regulations on student admission (93% in all fields of study);
- regulations on student progression (81% in all fields of study);
- regulations on certification / the award of diplomas and certificates (97% in all fields of study);
- regulations on the recognition of study periods completed at other institutions in the country and abroad (78% in all fields of study);
- regulations on the recognition of qualifications (degrees) awarded by other institutions in the country and abroad (68% in all fields of study);
- regulations on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning (57% in no field of study and 16% in all fields of study).

In the majority of cases (85.9%) institutions apply consistent procedure(s) to ensure that their regulations concerning admission, progression, recognition and certification are consistently applied.

Table features these regulations for each responding HEI:

Table 8

| Which of the regulations concerning student admission, progression, recognition and certification listed below are published by your institution? | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Answer Options | In no field of study | In some fields of study | In most fields of study | In all fields of study | Response Count |
| Regulations on student admission | 0 | 2 | 3 | 73 | 78 |
| Regulations on student progression | 3 | 4 | 7 | 63 | 77 |
| Regulations on certification / the award of diplomas and certificates | 0 | 1 | 1 | 74 | 76 |
| Regulations on the recognition of study periods completed at other institutions in the country and abroad | 5 | 4 | 7 | 59 | 75 |
| Regulations on the recognition of qualifications (degrees) awarded by other institutions in the country and abroad | 9 | 8 | 7 | 51 | 75 |
| Regulations on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning | 43 | 17 | 3 | 12 | 75 |
| Question answered by | | | | | 78 |
| Question skipped by | | | | | 38 |

As stated in additional answers given by HEIs, the development of regulations on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning constitutes a great challenge to the system and development or relevant procedures are in progress at the moment. Under the Law on Higher Education, the recognition of non-formal and informal learning will have been implemented by Senates till 30th June 2015.

3.5. ESG 1.5: Teaching staff

With regard to teaching staff, institutions guarantee the competence of their teachers. Progress can be defined by the following 8 descriptors, where a HEI:

- has operated a transparent and fair recruitment process for teaching staff (80% in all fields of study);
- provides professional development opportunities to teaching staff (61% in all fields of study)
- offers incentives to encourage the professional development of teaching staff (50% in all fields of study);
- offers incentives to encourage innovation in teaching (41% in all fields of study);

- offers incentives to encourage the use of new technologies in teaching (47% in all fields of study);
- has in place mechanisms for rewarding teaching achievements (59% in all fields of study);
- regularly assesses teaching staff performance (86% in all fields of study);
- regularly monitors teaching staff satisfaction (35% in all fields of study).

This correlation can be seen in the following Table:

Table 9

| To what extent do the statements below apply to your institution? Our institution: | | | | | |
|--|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | In no field of study | In some fields of study | In most fields of study | In all fields of study | Response Count |
| a) operates a transparent and fair recruitment process for teaching staff | 3 | 5 | 7 | 61 | 76 |
| b) Provides professional development opportunities to teaching staff | 2 | 10 | 17 | 46 | 75 |
| c) Offers incentives to encourage the professional development of teaching staff | 10 | 12 | 14 | 37 | 73 |
| d) Offers incentives to encourage innovation in teaching | 10 | 18 | 15 | 31 | 74 |
| e) Offers incentives to encourage the use of new technologies in teaching | 11 | 13 | 15 | 35 | 74 |
| f) Has in place mechanisms for rewarding teaching achievements | 9 | 12 | 9 | 44 | 74 |
| g) Regularly assesses teaching staff performance | 1 | 4 | 5 | 65 | 75 |
| h) Regularly monitors teaching staff satisfaction | 31 | 12 | 5 | 26 | 74 |
| <i>Question answered by</i> | | | | | 77 |
| <i>Question skipped by</i> | | | | | 39 |

In relation to the above descriptors, the following model activities have been quoted by responding HEIs:

Professional development opportunities to teaching staff

- ✓ the authorities of the university offer more professional development of opportunities and incentives for teachers involved in Master degree programmes (and at the primary place of work);
- ✓ numerous workshops, seminars and conferences dedicated to professional development at university and faculty level;
- ✓ institutional support (incl. financial) for staff participation in conferences, training etc. in Poland and abroad;
- ✓ the Leonardo da Vinci programme - exchange of experience;
- ✓ financial support for professional development in some fields of study (e.g. paid sabbaticals, (co)funding of different forms of activity);
- ✓ individual coaching;
- ✓ Centre of Excellence in Academic Teaching Ars Docendi;
- ✓ fellowships sponsoring, both domestic and abroad;

Incentives to encourage the professional development of teaching staff

- ✓ Rector's awards in the field of didactics, taking didactics into consideration in periodic staff evaluation and annual surveys (reporting individual and institutional activities and achievements in didactics and research), etc.
- ✓ incentives and financial support in the process of obtaining academic degrees;
- ✓ increased salaries for the best teachers, Rector's reward for outstanding achievements in teaching, student award "Laur Studencki" for the "friends of students";
- ✓ implemented an incentive system that includes rewarding teachers for academic research and teaching;
- ✓ Centre of Excellence in Academic Teaching Ars Docendi

Incentives to encourage innovation in teaching

- ✓ Rector's awards for achievements in didactics, awards for teachers receiving the highest ratings in student surveys, institutional support for didactic development projects (incl. raising external funds), presentation of best practices in the university magazine, during Q Days, etc.;
- ✓ laboratories with modern equipment;
- ✓ teachers were in the TOP 500 project;
- ✓ institution offers teachers a financial reward for preparing e.g. e-service of a programme or a case study;
- ✓ internal open competition for the best innovation in teaching;
- ✓ higher education institution has purchased the latest software and specialist equipment enabling innovation in teaching;
- ✓ teachers have opportunities to familiarize themselves with new methods of teaching at foreign partner universities and apply them at their university;
- ✓ chance of using different simulating devices, systems. Cooperation with internal institutions;
- ✓ scholarships for teachers to support their scientific development;
- ✓ courses in on-line teaching;
- ✓ opening of the Haas Centre and the HTEC Centre at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Aeronautics;
- ✓ Rector's Prize for the contribution to the quality of education, the implementation of educational innovation;
- ✓ Rector's Fund for Didactic Development Ars Docendi;
- ✓ professional courses;
- ✓ financing the development of science

Incentives to encourage the use of new technologies in teaching

- ✓ establishing a new unit to support staff in introducing new technologies - starting with e-exams, workshops on e-learning, development of an university medical simulation centre, applying for external funds to introduce university-wide e-learning system;
- ✓ laboratories with modern equipment;
- ✓ annual Rector's award or higher salaries for those using e-learning methods;
- ✓ introducing e-learning platforms;
- ✓ the institution organizes training courses, seminars and conferences. It also allows teachers to participate in various training courses in accordance with individual or collective needs. The institution welcomes any initiatives coming from our teaching staff;
- ✓ higher education institution has purchased the latest software and specialist equipment enabling the use of new technologies in teaching;

- ✓ access to new technologies;
- ✓ involvement in the development of e-learning courses included in teacher assessment forms, workshops and courses organized for teachers to develop their distance learning skills;
- ✓ compulsory use of Moodle;
- ✓ access to modern laboratories, well-equipped classrooms, modern ICT tools;
- ✓ periodic evaluation procedure includes this criterion; financial rewards may follow; open classes are organized and the achievers are promoted;
- ✓ activity of a special department supporting the promotion of using new technologies in teaching methods;
- ✓ Rector's Fund for Didactic Development Ars Docendi;
- ✓ e-learning platform courses;
- ✓ introduction of an e-learning system – Moodle - in all programs offered

Mechanisms for rewarding teaching achievements

- ✓ Rector's awards for accomplishments in teaching, awards for teachers receiving the highest ratings in student surveys, etc.
- ✓ the amount of salary increases depend on an assessment of teaching activities;
- ✓ every year, students fill in evaluation surveys which help choosing two best teachers from every department (teaching achievements);
- ✓ Rector's Prize for the contribution to the quality of education, the implementation of educational innovation;
- ✓ the Pro Arte Docendi Award is given to outstanding academic teachers for the high quality of their teaching, and especially for sharing their knowledge with their students, outstanding educational achievements, individual work with the best students, cooperation with student societies, excellent relations with students and the use of innovative methods and techniques in teaching;

Regular monitoring of teaching staff satisfaction

- ✓ annual surveys that gather staff opinions on teaching quality, incl. didactic work organization and terms, support received from the university/faculty administration, motivation and satisfaction derived from working at the university;
- ✓ evaluation of job satisfaction;
- ✓ seminars and regular meetings;
- ✓ there is no monitoring of teaching staff satisfaction;
- ✓ periodic assessment / exhibitions / informal and irregular monitoring / meetings within the Faculties;
- ✓ interviews conducted by the Rector and Department Heads

The breakdown of the responses indicates that the observance of this standard varies depending on different fields of study. Still, a lot of responding HEIs decided to skip the question in spite of the fact that there is a legal requirement to assess the quality of teaching staff on a regular basis.

3.6. ESG 1.6: Learning resources and student support

Majority of HEIs provide to its students' academic support (in all fields 85%), financial support (in all fields 85%), advice and support to outgoing and incoming students (in all fields 90%). Besides HEIs have in place mechanisms for informing students about support and services available (in all fields 86%); a

mechanism for assessing whether learning resources are adequate and accessible (in all fields 64%) as well as a mechanism for assessing whether student support is adequate and accessible (in all fields 65%). HEIs operate procedures to ensure that administrative staff are properly qualified to deliver support services to students (in all fields 57%) and offer professional development opportunities to administrative staff providing support services to students (in all fields 60%).

All this data has also been shown in the chart below:

Table 10

| To what extent do the statements below apply to your institution? Please tick the most appropriate answer in each of the points below. Our institution ... | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | In no field of study | In some fields of study | In most fields of study | In all fields of study | Rating Average | Response Count |
| a) Provides academic support to its students | 0 | 5 | 7 | 66 | 3,78 | 78 |
| b) Provides financial support to its students | 0 | 6 | 6 | 66 | 3,77 | 78 |
| c) Provides advice and support to outgoing and incoming students | 0 | 5 | 10 | 61 | 3,74 | 76 |
| d) Has in place mechanisms for informing students about the support and services available | 0 | 2 | 8 | 65 | 3,84 | 75 |
| e) Has in place a mechanism for assessing whether learning resources are adequate and accessible | 7 | 4 | 16 | 49 | 3,41 | 76 |
| f) Has in place a mechanism for assessing whether student support is adequate and accessible | 11 | 7 | 8 | 50 | 3,28 | 76 |
| g) Has in place procedures to ensure that administrative staff are properly qualified to deliver support services to students | 11 | 9 | 13 | 42 | 3,15 | 75 |
| h) Offers professional development opportunities to administrative staff providing support services to students | 4 | 16 | 10 | 45 | 3,28 | 75 |
| <i>Question answered by</i> | | | | | | 78 |
| <i>Question skipped by</i> | | | | | | 38 |

In relation to the above descriptors, the following model activities have been quoted by responding HEIs:

Table 11

Exemplary activities mostly referred to the measuring students' satisfaction with resources and support

annual surveys on the quality of student support services and learning resources at the University (incl. assessment of student orientation, dean's office and other administration units, information for students, infrastructure and facilities, library, dormitories, student organisations, rights, etc.);

surveys for students participating in international exchange programmes (incoming and outgoing) on the support received in the receiving unit;

student Satisfaction Surveys as an element of Brand Attribute Surveys has been conducted since 2006;

in-depth interviews - each student group has a guide chosen from academic staff who is responsible for providing information about the process of learning. The student government and organizations are an important source of information;

each faculty has a special committee analysing learning resources and their availability. Student support is analysed by a special team including faculty authorities, teaching staff and students' representatives;

all the problems are reported by the student government;

all internal stakeholders submit their written improvement proposals to be implemented the following year;

lack of financial support or certain procedures only in the case of post-graduate students– and to some extent –of our English Division students. To improve support services and the process of adaptation of our international students we have just started a 1.5 - year long project entitled "SUPP" that envisages, among other things, the creation of a comprehensive student support system (incl. psychological, intercultural ,etc.)

there are no mechanisms or procedures to measure satisfaction with student support;

3.7. ESG 1.7: Information management

The majority of HEIs have a formal mechanism for analysing and using data collected for the purposes of quality improvement or enhancement. The most popular data gathered by HEIs covers profile of student population (83,3%), student progression, success and drop-out rates (83,3%), student satisfaction with their programmes (78,2%) and indicators of graduates' employability (70,5%). 38 out of 116 HEIs decided to skip the question which might show room for improvement. The breakdown of responses can be described as follows (see Figure below):

Figure 15

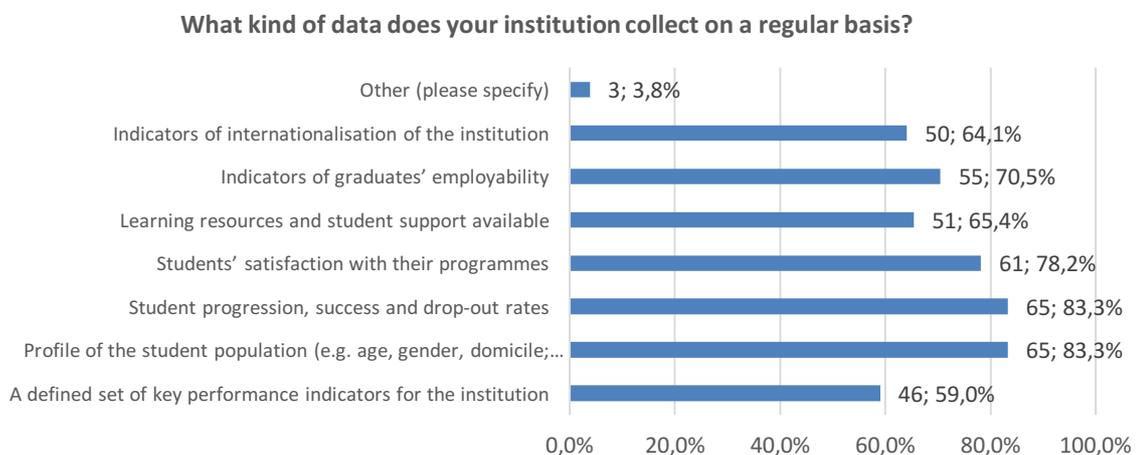


Table 12

How the data collected have been used for quality improvement or enhancement – examples.

| <u>Teaching and learning process</u> |
|--|
| ✓ student and graduate satisfaction barometer with regard to various aspects of study; |
| ✓ the revision of curricula on the basis of the monitoring of graduates' employability ; |
| ✓ data collected has been used to: introduce changes in curricula (on a regular basis, every year - incl. changes in study plans, syllabuses, etc.); plan and deliver training for teaching staff (in the fields identified as weaknesses - e.g. for 200 teachers in 2014); plan peer review visits (courses to be evaluated were selected on the basis of student survey results); award teaching excellence (e.g. the best teacher award); initiate university- and faculty - wide development projects (e.g. co-funded by the EU, EEA.); |
| ✓ on the basis of information gathered by means of annual on-line questionnaires to be completed by students and doctoral candidates, as well as teaching and research staff and faculties' self-evaluation reports, the following steps were taken (examples): education programmes were reviewed with regard to the compliance of learning outcomes for the entire programme with the learning outcomes for Individual subjects; at many faculties clear programme designing principles were defined and programme councils set up; pedagogy workshops were organized for improving teachers' qualifications by organizing; methodical workshops and site visits; student governments at faculties were provided with material resources (e.g. a room, computer, phone); compulsory training for 1st - year students on the functioning of the faculty were organized; |
| ✓ dedicated student surveys e.g. to change ECTS, to improve a subject, to change a teacher; |
| ✓ we developed programmes involving a more practical approach to the process of learning and which expand student entrepreneurship; |
| ✓ the adjustment of education offer and study programmes to the needs of the labour market, development of practical educational profiles, monitoring of the quality of lectures etc.; |
| <u>Staff development</u> |
| ✓ introduce a new system for building the teaching capacity of academic staff (including a completely modified programme for doctoral students); introduce numerous changes in the infrastructure, learning resources and support services for students; introduce numerous changes on the level of didactic units (incl. staff changes, introduction of new didactic and student assessment methods, discussing exam results with students, etc.); |
| <u>Stakeholders involvement</u> |
| ✓ all data collected from the internal stakeholders' survey enhances improvement actions, which are implemented on an ongoing basis. One of the examples of the quality improvement consists in enhancing curricula by introducing new subjects. |
| <u>Teaching and learning staff resources</u> |
| ✓ Library opening hours have been extended, and there have been new additions to the collections of books and manuscripts. Thirdly, owing to the data, the university has started monitoring graduates' employability; |
| <u>Internationalization</u> |

- ✓ based on the results of student mobility the University Intensified its information campaign promoting mobility among students. Recommendations based on the results of quality research are forwarded to the faculties. An anti-plagiarism system was implemented;

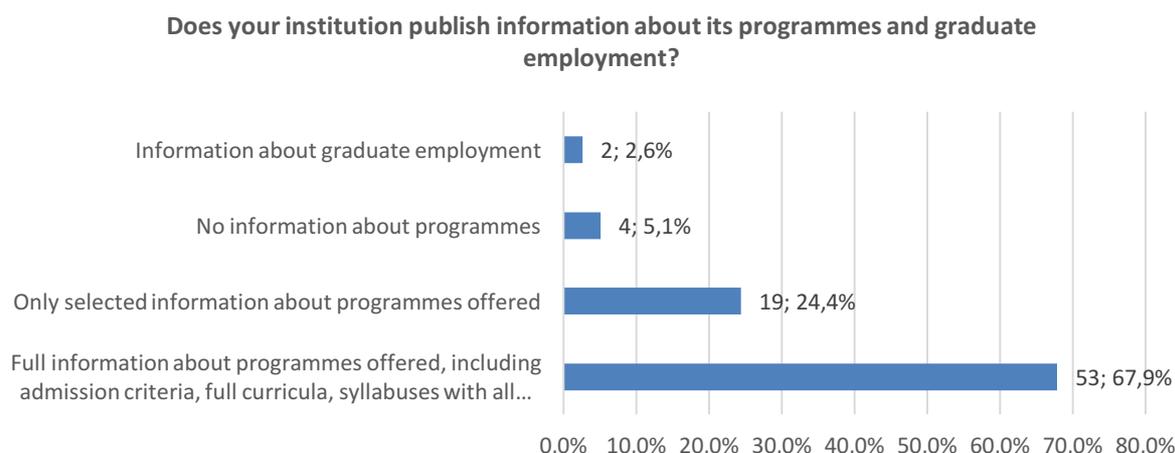
Management of QA/Strategic management

- ✓ guidelines and reports are published by the data analysis section and recommendation for the departments are formulated;
- ✓ data is analysed by the Faculties' Quality Assurance Teams. This process is supervised by the School Quality Assurance Teams which draws conclusions and works on developing our internal quality assurance systems;
- ✓ regular reports on the meetings of faculties, Senate and the institutional committee on quality improvement;
- ✓ on the basis of the reports which analyze the previously mentioned indicators , discussions are organized and decisions made. These decisions concern the improvement of procedures linked to the educational process of and to cooperation with the labour market.
- ✓ within two years the University implemented the European programme to improve the quality of education and management: 2012-2104;
- ✓ if problems are identified, then corrective measures are taken. The efficiency of such corrective measures is analyzed in the subsequent academic year;
- ✓ the university has developed a guide to quality assurance procedures– it is a set of mechanisms and rules designed for the management, based on survey results among other things and created with the help of internal stakeholders. The University provides scanners for students' use and uploads course materials on our e-platform.

3.8. ESG 1.8: Public information

67.9% of responding HEIs provide full information about their programmes, including admission criteria, full curricula, syllabuses with all names and contact details, reading lists, intended learning outcomes, qualifications awarded and student assessment procedures (87.5%); while the rest of HEIs (24.4%) - only selected information. 5.1% of HEIs do not provide any information about their programmes. Besides 38 out of 116 HEIs didn't fill in the answer which might show some problems in that area.

Figure 16



Respondents delivered some examples of public information which basically overlaps previously mentioned data:

- ✓ learning outcomes and matrix, graduate’s profile and concepts of education, syllabuses, program of placements, some educational materials;
- ✓ admission criteria, full curricula, syllabuses with all names and contact details, reading lists, intended learning outcomes, qualifications awarded and student assessment procedures
- ✓ qualifications awarded and student assessment procedures
- ✓ reports on monitoring of graduates and employers, self-assessment of university units, report on the quality of lectures, legislation on the internal quality assurance system

3.9. ESG 1.9: On-going monitoring and periodic programme reviews

69% of responding HEIs confirm that they operate procedures for ongoing monitoring and periodic programme reviews within all fields of study, as it is shown in the following Table:

Table 13

| Does your institution have in place (a) procedure(s) for on-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes? | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Answer Options | In no field of study | In some fields of study | In most fields of study | In all fields of study | Rating Average | Response Count |
| | 6 | 7 | 11 | 54 | 3,45 | 78 |
| | <i>Question answered by</i> | | | | | 78 |
| | <i>Question skipped by</i> | | | | | 38 |

This is partly regulated by the Law on Higher Education which provides that:

The head of a basic academic unit, having sought the opinion of academic staff teaching in a specific field, at a specific level and profile of study, and taking into consideration the opinion of academic staff forming the minimum staff resources³, shall submit an evaluation of the achievement of expected

³ Qualitative and quantitative core Staff requirements are defined by regulation of Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

learning outcomes to the board of the unit at the end of an academic year. Conclusions drawn from this assessment shall be taken into account in the process of improving study programmes.

External evaluation reviews are conducted periodically by PKA at institutional and programme levels.

The results of on-going monitoring and periodic reviews are mainly used for changes, revision or re-designing of study curriculum, programmes, introduction of new study programmes, courses, improvement of study process, changes of ECTS, adjustment of methodology of teaching and learning, adjustment to labour market requirements and employers' expectations, capacity building of teaching staff.

78% of responding HEIs confirm student involvement in all fields of study in the process of programme monitoring and/or reviews as full members of bodies responsible for these activities. Still, course evaluation surveys are not filled in by students of all fields of study, which is quite surprising in the light of the existing legal requirements. Over 50% of HEIs report that they receive regular feedback on findings from course evaluation surveys, besides, they are regularly informed about measures to be taken as a result of course evaluation surveys and receive suggestions how to improve their curricula and/or teaching/learning methods.

Table 14

| How are students involved in the programme monitoring and / or review procedure at your institution? | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Answer Options | In no field of study | In some fields of study | In most fields of study | In all fields of study | Rating Average | Response Count |
| Are involved as full members of bodies responsible for programme monitoring and / or review | 4 | 3 | 8 | 56 | 3,63 | 71 |
| Fill in course evaluation surveys | 0 | 5 | 3 | 61 | 3,81 | 69 |
| Regularly receive feedback on findings from course evaluation surveys | 4 | 13 | 13 | 37 | 3,24 | 67 |
| Are regularly informed about measures to be taken as a result of course evaluation surveys | 7 | 16 | 11 | 33 | 3,04 | 67 |
| Propose measures to improve curricula and / or teaching / learning methods | 7 | 12 | 15 | 36 | 3,14 | 70 |
| Other (please specify) | | | | | | 1 |
| Question answered by | | | | | | 71 |
| Question skipped by | | | | | | 45 |

37% of responding HEIs involve external stakeholders in all fields of study as full members of bodies responsible for programme monitoring and/or review, or as members of advisory/bodies (45%) or feedback providers on knowledge and competences of graduates employed (44%).

Table 15

| How are external stakeholders (employers and / or other partners) involved in the programme monitoring and / or review procedure at your institution? | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Answer Options | In no field of study | In some fields of study | In most fields of study | In all fields of study | Rating Average | Response Count |
| Are involved as full members of bodies responsible for programme monitoring and / or review | 18 | 14 | 11 | 26 | 2,65 | 69 |
| Are involved as members of advisory / consultative bodies | 2 | 19 | 17 | 32 | 3,13 | 70 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|----|----|----|------|--------------------------------|
| Provide feedback on the knowledge, skills and competences of graduates employed (e.g. as part of employers' surveys) | 2 | 19 | 16 | 30 | 3,10 | 67 |
| Other (please specify) | | | | | | 4 |
| | | | | | | Question answered by 71 |
| | | | | | | Question skipped by 45 |

3.10 ESG 1.10: Cyclical external quality assurance

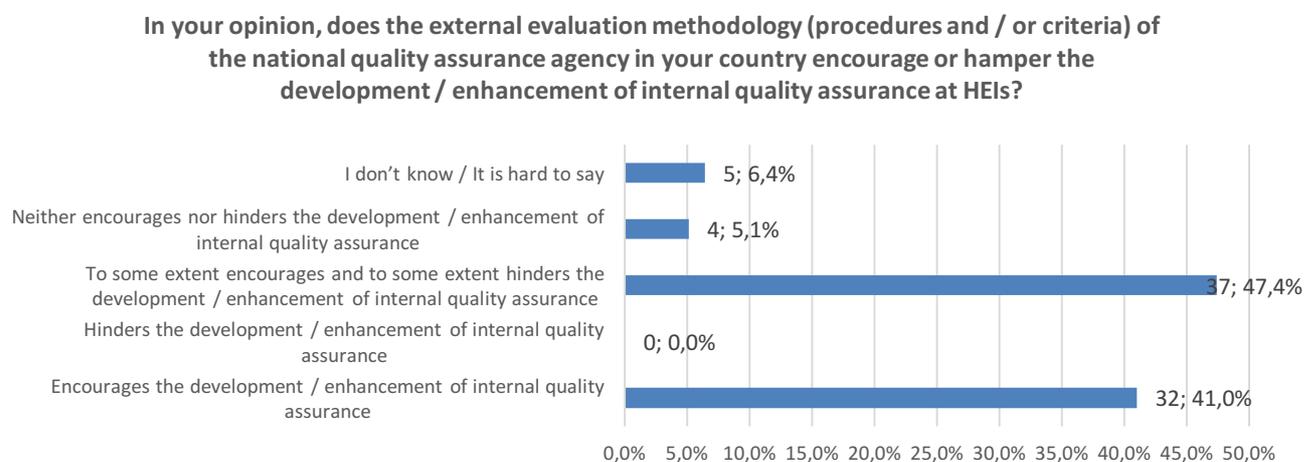
The Polish Accreditation Committee evaluates the quality of education in a specific field of study and at a specific level and profile of study (programme assessment) and – within a framework of institutional evaluations – the basic activities of units of higher education institutions as well as quality evaluation of third – cycle and non-degree postgraduate programmes (if offered).

Institutional evaluation can be conducted in the unit which:

- 1) over the five years preceding the institutional evaluation has not obtained a negative rating as a result of a programme evaluation, and in the case of a conditional rating, its grounds did not include reservations concerning the structure and operation of the internal quality assurance system;
- 2) a programme evaluation of the majority of study programmes offered by the unit was performed.

According to the majority of responding HEIs (47.4%) external QA provided by PKA both encourages and hinders the development/enhancement of internal quality assurance to some extent. 38 out of 116 respondents decided to skip the question.

Figure 17



According to HEIs, the external evaluation methodology of the national quality assurance agency in the country could be improved / enhanced:

Table 16

Proposal of improvement of the methodology of national quality assurance agency

| Criteria |
|---|
| criteria and mechanisms of programme and institutional assessments should be verified, reports on the self-assessment of units or programme should be verified, |

precise assessment criteria should be available in order not to interpret the existing ones in many different ways.

some standards or criteria of Polish national legislation are too stringent. They should be more flexible, because some of the criteria unnecessarily increase the costs of studying, e.g. PE classes included in part-time programmes,

Methods

PKA needs objective assessment methods

the activity of PKA should focus on verifying that the requirements for the educational process are fulfilled and all procedures imposed by the Law on Higher Education are followed

we hugely appreciate the introduction of institutional evaluation by PKA - far more comprehensive, motivating and enhancement - oriented than the programme one, but we believe the focus is still more on quality control than on development (and so is the perception of accreditation among academic staff, based on their contacts with QAA experts)

much more emphasis should be put by PKA on quality enhancement instead of control. It should appreciate more attempts of institutions to perceive quality management as an empowering tool and not as a purely bureaucratic exercise of making sure that all the documents are correct

PKA procedures should be described in details, should be more coherent

PKA process of evaluation should be treated holistically

PKA process of evaluation should be less bureaucratic, more straightforward and clear instructed, less reporting or reports more concise

PKA external evaluation, which is an administrative process, focuses more on the legal aspect than on the quality of adopted solutions

reduction of bureaucracy, more freedom given to the University, greater legal stability (too frequent changes in a short span of time).

PKA assessment procedures should be clearly defined so that panel of experts cannot apply different interpretations to these procedures

PKA procedures should be in line with procedures used in international accreditation (e.g. in EQUIS)

external evaluation in Poland should aim at providing the real quality of education rather than the management of the quality of education and at assessing the real quality of education, rather than formal analysis of the red tape

PKA methodology seems to be fair but its use by national QA agency members should improve (sometimes a good methodology is misused)

the external evaluation methodology is correct but PKA should organize workshops, training and conferences.

PKA external evaluation methodology could be improved by enhancing cooperation between the national quality assurance agency and the University

more qualitative research in PKA evaluation is needed

PKA should put more emphasis on the real problems of the quality of education and a less formalistic approach to evaluation

PKA external evaluations put universities under obligation to prepare a large number of documents that serve the evaluation only. The administrative aspect should be simplified

PKA evaluation methodology should also be more transparent

the university is satisfied with feedback received from the PKA

Time & costs

in Poland the external evaluation methodology of the national quality assurance agency has undergone too frequent changes and higher education institutions do not have enough time to implement them

if PKA made less frequent changes to the requirements concerning the quality assurance, and allowed more time to implement the changes, higher education institutions' activities in this field would be more effective

significant impact of the PKA, but the changes, though time-consuming and laborious, are needed

Experts:

PKA experts are of unequal quality. Some experts are good, some are incompetent. After each evaluation the institution fills in a survey questionnaire about the visiting committee, but we have never seen the results of such surveys. Moreover, we continued to see the same incompetent experts working for years

PKA panel of experts should involve foreign specialists, not only national ones, to ensure more diversified and objective evaluations

PKA external audits of higher education institutions should be more amicable; without priority given to mistakes and inaccuracies

Support & consultancy

PKA should provide universities with more good practices and advise how to develop IQA

The Quality Forum is irregular and there is an increased need for such events

by giving Polish HEIs clear guidance, support for a more inclusive, civilized quality culture with respect to academic freedom

by providing for Polish HEIs more money to implement changes that create additional costs. To introduce legal stability

by more decision making meetings with Polish HEI's authorities to convince them to upgrade the position of the quality assurance unit in the HEI's governance system

by more counselling for Polish HEIs on everyday bases should be offered. There is too much focus on evaluation only

by putting more emphasis on evaluating the legitimacy and usefulness of new fields of study at Polish universities with different profiles than those proposed in new courses of study

IQA versus EQA

too many procedures in Polish HEIs, sometimes there is impression that multiplying procedures (which are validated by a external agencies visiting university) is useless. They should reward the results, not the ways to achieve them

Other remarks

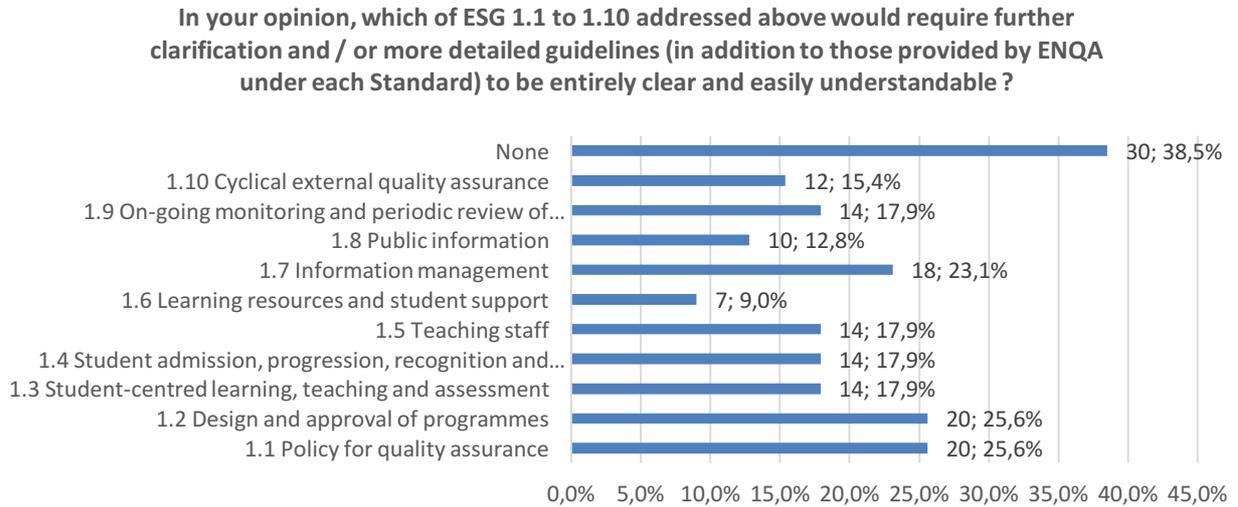
there should be more accreditation/ external quality assurance bodies in Poland, instead of just one body

no need to change in Polish QA system

3.11 Most difficult ESG in Part 1

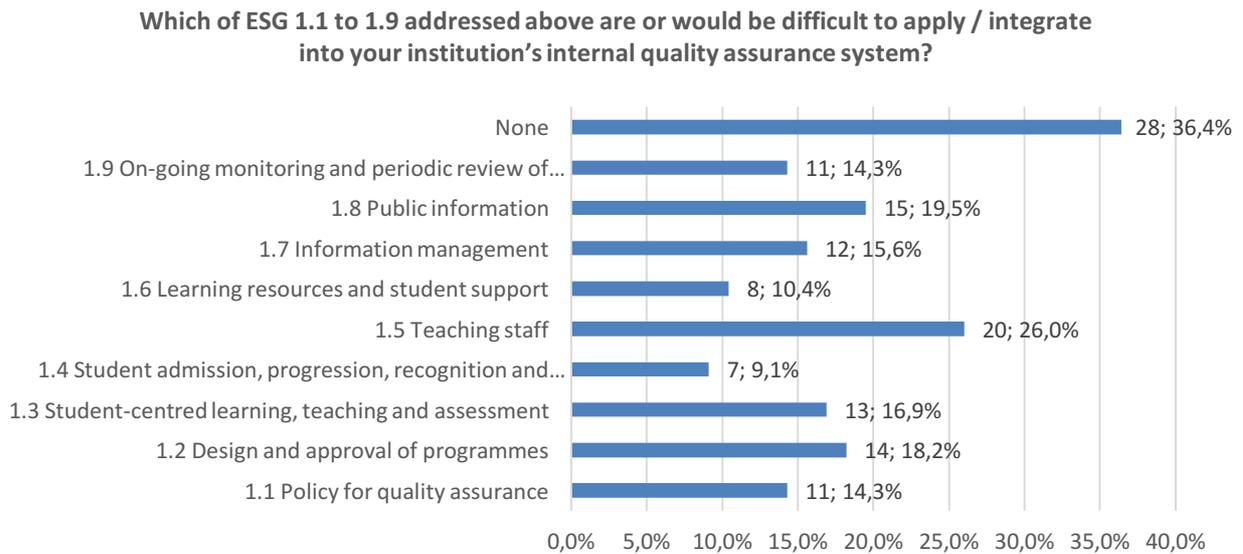
In this respect, HEIs report a range of issues. The majority of institutions (over 50%) do not find it difficult to understand and implement the standards in Part 1 of ESG. However, there is still a need for further clarification of the following standards (Part 1 of ESG).

Figure 18



In line with the above mentioned concerns HEIs report that they find it difficult to apply the following ESG standards in their IQA systems:

Figure 19



36.4 % of HEIs do not have difficulty in integrating the revised standards for ESG in their local IQA systems.

The following internal and external obstacles likely to affect the successful introduction of ESG into IQAs have been quoted as examples by HEIs:

I

Table 17

Internal and external obstacles of applying/introduction ESG into IQAs

| Internal obstacles | |
|---|--|
| Teaching staff resistance | Examples |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ the main problem is that academic teachers are not involved enough in integrating these standards into our system; ✓ reluctance to change; ✓ the so called “old” mentality of teaching staff; ✓ academic staff overburdened with research activities are generally not encouraged to take part in activities aimed at improving their teaching skills; ✓ too much formality and no time for other important things, like teaching; ✓ most teachers believe that some of the activities result from good academic practice and in order to ensure quality they shouldn’t be formalized; ✓ teachers’ resistance to implement new procedures; ✓ staff’s mental barriers; ✓ teachers’ lack of understanding; ✓ teaching staff’s reluctance to perform paperwork; ✓ incomprehension; |
| Internal and external stakeholders involvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ cooperation with stakeholders, problems with obtaining regular feedback from employers, most of them see no need to participate actively in IQAs; ✓ external stakeholders are rather passive, uninterested, financially constrained, unwilling to invest in future employees; ✓ difficulty with involvement of external stakeholders in monitoring projects ✓ involvement of employers in program designing/verifying (they are too busy); ✓ involvement of students in the implementation procedures of the internal quality assurance system; ✓ students are not involved enough in integrating these standards into our system; ✓ part of external stakeholders would offer more involvement for financial compensation; ✓ involvement of employers in the support of teaching staff in designing and evaluating programmes ✓ students are passive, not interested in playing active roles in affecting the contents of their studies apart from taking shortcuts to their graduation; ✓ involvement of students in the support of teaching staff in designing and evaluating programmes; ✓ students’ unwillingness to participate in designing and monitoring ;low participation rates in surveys among students; ✓ students are sometimes reluctant to fill in survey questionnaires because they disbelieve that their outcomes might change anything or because of laziness and/or dislike for any extra academic activity. Some of them just don't want to cooperate; |
| Development of quality culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ college authorities are sceptical and unwilling to support the quality assurance system; ✓ uncertain position of the quality assurance in the college governance system - lack of decision -making powers, only a few members of the unit active and willing to contribute their time and creativity to the development of new policies and procedures; ✓ teaching staff have too little knowledge of national legislation regarding the quality assurance system and European standards for higher education; ✓ involvement of all employees/external stakeholders; ✓ acceptance of the continuous nature of the quality assurance system by all stakeholders; ✓ lack of understanding of the rationale behind all the QA activities; |
| Limitation of resources (human, financial and adequate ICT tools) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ only few experts with knowledge on the quality assurance system; ✓ it requires dedicating the necessary amount of human and financial resources to the support for and the on-going improvement of the quality of teaching and learning; ✓ knowledge about quality assurance processes and about the possibilities that those processes offer is quite poor; |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ shortage of administrative staff in the field of quality assurance systems; ✓ there should be other people to do this, not teachers; ✓ support for teaching staff; ✓ lack of IT support; ✓ lack of an affordable e-system supporting the process of collecting and using quality-related data; ✓ problems with respecting students' needs - high costs of providing flexible learning paths; ✓ generally, no incentives are offered to encourage innovation and the use of new technologies in teaching; ✓ new knowledge of teaching, learning and research in teacher education; ✓ financial constraints; ✓ need for funds for activities related to the introduction of the quality assurance system; ✓ incentives to encourage the use of new technologies in teaching are sometimes hindered by lack of funds; |
| <p>Organization/complexity of the system/internal regulations/efficient use of information</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ the complexity of the system in each unit/department; ✓ difficulty to unify the procedures within all courses, departments etc.; ✓ problems with the standardization of the quality system for all units; ✓ existing good practices might not comply with ESG; ✓ coordination between all the existing procedures; ✓ cooperation between different fields of study at our University, e.g.: misunderstandings between administration and pedagogy programmes; ✓ a small number of students in particular fields of study is an obstacle in applying general standards; ✓ EC VET; ✓ top-down approach; ✓ the aim of integrating these standards is not clear; ✓ the system concentrates on the process and not on the effects; ✓ revision of procedures not resulting in actions; ✓ too many formal procedures in developing programs; ✓ not easy to apply so many standards and criteria to artistic schools' programmes; ✓ problem of monitoring employers' opinions on graduates' competences; ✓ problems with the evaluation of high ranking and experienced academic staff; ✓ thread of breaking the data protection law by publishing the results of surveys which should be anonymous and confidential; ✓ issue of open access to detailed programme information; ✓ programme monitoring; ✓ lack of efficiency of graduate evaluation after 3 and 5 years; ✓ academic staff recruitment procedure do not verify the teaching skills of young PhD employees, they do not have adequate knowledge on the objectives and functions of the internal QA system; ✓ introduction of a new EU regulation relating to medical professions programmes; ✓ generally, there is no institutional programme of professional development of administrative staff providing support services to students; individual bottom-up initiatives are often hindered by lack of funding; ✓ outdated assessment system; ✓ on-going reviews of programs are very difficult and time-consuming, given the lack of man-power and complexity of programs as well as the changeability of the legal system; ✓ no balance between the promotion of good teaching and research with emphasis on the latter; ✓ Introduction of so called good practice rules at the University; ✓ designing new programmes and new standards (which is especially difficult if our institution is a pioneer); ✓ learning outcomes readjustment to the Polish Qualifications Framework; ✓ assessment and recognition of learning outcomes; ✓ recognition and certification of qualifications; ✓ Introduction of the recognition of non-formal and informal qualifications; ✓ no advantages; ✓ generating documents (red tape); ✓ much more paperwork for administrative departments; ✓ too much paperwork for teaching staff; ✓ disinformation among staff and students; ✓ effectiveness of IQA; |
| External obstacles | |
| <p>Legal regulations</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ too many changes in legislation; ✓ obligatory quota in employment too high (so called core staff minimum); ✓ lack of previous regulations concerning the evaluation of teaching quality; |

| | |
|--------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ too many regulations; ✓ unclear and changing external legal requirements, excessive codification of requirements (standards) likely to cause the deterioration of the quality of education; ✓ vagueness of documentation relating to legislative and normative acts; ✓ ambiguity of the regulations of the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education; ✓ model documents should be prepared by PKA or Bologna Process experts or by the Polish Ministry of Science and a HEI or another institution including the recommended and suggested models of procedures generally described in ESG; ✓ too much bureaucracy in the legal aspect; ✓ expansion of bureaucratic procedures; ✓ excessive bureaucracy; |
| Funds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ not enough financial support from the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education; ✓ the Polish Ministry of Science and HE has to provide financial support (via dedicated subventions) to internal QA systems in HEIs; ✓ lack of financial support from external body; ✓ general financial problems |
| EQA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ cyclical external quality assurance; ✓ interpretation of standards by the national QA agency; ✓ quality assurance standards indicate a need for the development and publication of a lot of procedures; ✓ little methodological training in the quality assurance system; ✓ the requirements concerning quality assurance are not adapted to higher education in artistic institutions; ✓ the need for training in the implementation of the education quality system; ✓ time pressure (due to external quality assurance); ✓ the ambiguity of laws and their interpretation, e.g. by the Polish Accreditation Committee; ✓ lack of official Polish translations of international documents dealing with quality assurance, such as the ESG; only few publications; |

4. CONCLUSIONS

- *IQA General:*

The survey completion rate is rather similar to the surveys of that type. The level of response rate was monitored on an ongoing basis during the survey period and intervention activities were taken by national project partners (two reminder emails, changing the time of day and the day of the week were sent out so that as many different respondents as possible could have been reached). The project does not foresee interviews with individual HEIs, however, during the Training Event 1 in Warsaw the further in-depth examination on Part 1 ESG will be conducted.. In most cases responding HEIs decided to skip some survey questions which might have had a bearing on the final conclusions and demonstrated that awareness of Part 1 ESG principles was rather low or that there was still great need for improvement, or both.

In the last decade Polish HEIs have witnessed a pronounced and dynamic development of internal quality assurance systems. After the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) were adopted in 2005 and as a result of legal provisions containing a clear obligation to create them (2007:2011) HEIs turned to a systemic approach to quality assurance and to the formalisation of solutions to this issue. At present, the majority of HEIs declare that they operate internal quality assurance systems. The development of those systems and their effectiveness is monitored on an ongoing basis and evaluated by the Polish Accreditation Committee - the sole legal body responsible for quality assurance in higher education. The primary objective of the Committee is to observe the fulfilment of standards agreed for higher education referring to the best models adopted in the European and global academic area as well as to support Polish public and non-public higher education institutions in the process of enhancing quality education and building quality culture. The Polish Accreditation Committee performs its mission by conducting obligatory programme and institutional evaluations of education quality and by giving opinions on applications submitted by higher education institutions for the authorisation to provide degree programmes. The Committee strives to ensure that its opinions and evaluations leave ample room for autonomous initiatives promoting innovativeness in the teaching process and education quality culture.⁴

PKA was externally evaluated in 2008 and 2013 for the purpose of inclusion in the EQAR and full membership in ENQA. Both external evaluations proved full compliance with the majority of ESGs and substantial compliance with a small number of standards. The constant improvement of the external quality assurance system of the agency is a priority for its future operations.

Indeed, PKA criteria are aimed at further IQA development. Besides, in its strategy PKA foresees further support for the enhancement of the IQA (preparation of a best practice brochure, Guide to IQA, commitment to the continuous improvement of the Agency's procedures by providing an additional interpretation of the assessment criteria, improvement of training programmes for PKA experts, etc.).

- *ESG: Progress made so far*

On the basis of the survey results it is difficult to perform a comparative study with the previous period as no similar study has been conducted in Poland as yet. Besides, it is not possible to establish any correlation between the implementation of different ESG standards in HEIs and its timing. It is only confirmed that the intensive development of IQAs after 2007 and after 2011 has been driven by changes in the Law on Higher Education rather than by any other events. All ESG standards are covered by different activities of HEIs, which was reflected in the survey results and examples given by respondents. ESG are treated rather as a broad framework.

⁴ PKA Mission Statement

On the other hand, from PKA perspective, as external assurance agency, progress made in the development of IQAs has been significant since 2007, which is mainly reflected in its assessment results analyzed in annual reports.⁵ The introduction of institutional evaluation in 2011 and further legal requirements with regard to IQA forced HEIs to make a transition from the traditional to a more systematic and formal approach to IQA. The survey results showed that the decision to establish the system was mainly prompted by a requirement in national legislation

It is worth noticing that there is still room for improvement as progress in the implementation of ESG and IQAs varies to some extent among different units and fields of study. The common model of a decentralized approach to IQA systems evident in Polish HEIs and the full autonomy/responsibility of units/faculties for further IQA activities may result in a wide diversity of results. An aspect of enhancement consists in supporting institutions in this domain at national and European level. ESG should be popularized in Poland and more seminars or workshops should be dedicated to that issue (only 18% of HEIs organized training events or seminars dedicated to ESG).

- **ESG: Accents**

Responding HEIs have IQA systems in place whose functioning varies greatly among faculties/units and fields of study. Only 13% of responding HEIs have a number of unrelated procedures which do not yet form a system. The IQAs mainly focus on teaching and learning activity while research and governance is not yet satisfactorily covered. Partial lack of consistency and complexity may be caused by a lack of experience in quality management. The majority of responding HEIs also report low awareness of quality management principles among internal stakeholders, especially teaching staff, and their increasing reluctance. Quality Coordinators still meet internal and external obstacles in developing sufficient IQAs but at the same time they provide many good examples of activities undertaken in that area and observe beneficial qualitative and quantitative changes. Besides, frequent changes of legal requirements cause some dissatisfaction among people involved in IQA at management as well as operational levels. HEIs declare difficulties related to bureaucracy which can be considered a hot potato in the higher education and quality assurance system at the moment.

ESG 1.1. Policy for quality assurance

Over 50% of HEIs have a published policy for quality assurance and external stakeholders were involved in both the development and implementation of the policy. In most cases quality strategic goals are directly incorporated by HEIs into strategic plans and they do not develop separate documents for their quality assurance policy. Cooperation with external stakeholders shows an increasing tendency for the last few years and confirms the significant response of the HE sector to the labour market needs. It is also reflected in legal requirements and assessment criteria of the PKA relating to the IQAs.

ESG 1.2. Design and approval of programmes

The procedure for design and approval of programmes is not followed in all fields of study. While the approval procedure does not generate a problem for respondents, the designing procedure is declared as a weakness. Nevertheless, the majority of programmes are designed in line with institutional strategies, mission statements and vision and refer to the National Qualification Framework. The involvement of external stakeholders in the procedure of design and approval still require more attention.

ESG 1.3. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

Students are systematically involved in IQA activity, and student-centred learning, teaching and assessment is said to be well understood by HEIs. However, the actual implementation of this range of issues in the revised ESG should be more fully addressed.

⁵ Annual PKA reports

Fairness and consistency achieved through the procedure of student assessment was quite misunderstood by most HEIs and over 70% respondents decided to skip the question.

ESG 1.4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

HEIs apply consistent regulations concerning student admission, recognition and certification. At present, the development of regulation on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning constitutes a great challenge for the IQAs. Under the Law on Higher Education, the recognition of non-formal and informal learning by HEIs will have been implemented by Senates till 30th June 2015.

ESG 1.5. Teaching staff

As regards the legal requirements including obligatory assessments of teaching staff the survey results confirmed that the performance of teaching staff is assessed on a regular basis. The remaining activities which include professional development opportunities provided to teaching staff, incentives to encourage the professional development of teaching staff, incentives to encourage the use of new technologies in teaching, or mechanism for rewarding teaching achievements vary greatly among units and fields of study. The main problem is linked to the regular monitoring of teaching staff satisfaction.

ESG 1.6. Learning resources and student support

Similarly, the compliance with ESG 1.6. varies greatly among different fields of study and units. At present, all of responding HEIs provide academic, financial and personal advice to students. Besides, they have in place a mechanism for informing students about the support and services available. At the same time there are still HEIs which declare that they do not have a mechanism for assessing the adequacy and accessibility of learning resources or student support, or do not have in place procedures to ensure that administrative staff are properly qualified to deliver support services.

ESG 1.7. Information management

The majority of HEIs have a formal mechanism for analyzing and using data collecting for quality assurance enhancement purposes e.g. key performance indicators, profile of the student population, student progression, success and drop-out rates, students' satisfaction with programmes, etc. It shows a fairly good observance of standard requirements by HEIs.

ESG 1.8. Public information

HEIs provide full information about the programmes they offer, including admission criteria, full curricula, syllabuses etc. However, some of them declare that some legal requirements (data protection law) might hinder public information activities.

ESG 1.9. On-going monitoring and periodic reviews of programmes

External stakeholders are still not fully involved in the on-going monitoring and periodic reviews of programmes. This is still a new development in Polish HE, which has recently been regulated by the Law on Higher Education. Higher education institutions shall co-operate with the socio-economic environment, in particular by conducting research and development for business entities on the basis of organizationally and financially independent economic structures, including the establishment of a special purpose vehicle (SPV), referred to in Article 86a of the Law on Higher Education, as well as through the involvement of employers' representatives in the development of study programmes and teaching processes. Nevertheless, PKA has noticed some progress in this respect.

ESG 1.20. Cyclical external quality assurance

According to HEIs the external evaluation methodology of PKA could be improved in the aspect of the criteria and methodology of assessment, time and quality-related costs, trainings of experts as well as further support and consultancy. The complex and multi-area impact study on influence of EQA on HE system could improve the knowledge of quality assurance agency and its adjustment to relevant expectations and needs.

- **ESG: Standards which are not entirely clear**

Respondents expressed a need for clarification of the following standards:

- ✓ ESG 1.1 Policy for quality assurance
- ✓ ESG 1.2 Design and approval of programmes
- ✓ ESG 1.8 Information management
- ✓ ESG 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
- ✓ ESG 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
- ✓ ESG 1.5 Teaching staff
- ✓ ESG 1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic reviews of programmes

In line with the above mentioned concerns, HEIs report that they find it difficult to apply the following IQA standards in their IQA systems:

- ESG 1.5 Teaching staff
- ESG 1.8. Public information
- ESG 1.2. Design and approval of programmes
- ESG 1.7. Information management
- ESG 1.3. Student-centred learning, teaching, assessment
- ESG. 1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic reviews of programmes
- ESG 1.1. Policy for quality assurance
- ESG 1.6 Learning resources
- ESG 1.4. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

HEIs are still identifying a number of internal and external obstacles which might prevent full compliance with the ESG standards such as stakeholders' reluctance, insufficient resources, organizational deficiencies, ambiguity of legal regulations, lack of financial support, weak support from external quality assurance providers.

- **Agency's methodology:** *Any conclusions concerning possible improvements in the agency's methodology for the assessment of IQA;*

The survey results showed the need for further improvement of EQA at national level. This can be achieved by a stronger involvement of external stakeholders in the development of assessment criteria and procedures, rethinking of the pilot procedures approach, introducing the process of clarification and information supported by the consultancy services of the agency, systematic approach to experts' training, internationalization of assessment procedures, and delivering an impact study on EQA versus IQA. For instance, it can also be provided by publishing manuals on assessment procedures for PKA experts as well as for HEIs, a national Guide to IQA with IQA Good Practices. It should contain descriptions of generally accepted practices backed up by relevant theory. These manuals and publications should be available in the national and foreign languages.

- **Other:** N/A

- **Other, EIQAS Seminar & Guide:** *Aspects of IQA systems and ESG which should be given special attention at the Training Seminar and in the Guide to IQA;*

Interpretation of 10 standards from Part 1

Interpretation of guidelines to the Part 1 standards

Discussion of the notion of "IQA system"

Discussion of the notion of "quality culture"

Discussion of the notion of "compliance with an ESG standard"

Discussion of the definition of "best practice in IQA"

Discussion of relationship between ESG and current national evaluation and accreditation criteria

Best practice examples

Annex 1

QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY ON PART 1 OF THE EUROPEAN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE AND INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

INTRODUCTION

The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (European Standards and Guidelines, ESG), developed by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), provide a common framework for quality assurance of learning and teaching at European, national and institutional levels. They were adopted by the Ministers responsible for higher education as part of the Bologna Process in 2005. A revised version of the ESG (<https://revisionesg.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/esg-draft-endorsement-by-bfug.pdf>) was endorsed by the Bologna Follow-Up Group in September 2014 and is expected to be approved by the Ministers in May 2015. Like the current version, the revised ESG include three interrelated parts: Part 1 – Internal quality assurance; Part 2 – External quality assurance; Part 3 – Quality assurance agencies.

This survey is a key initial activity in the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership project ‘Enhancing internal quality assurance systems’ (EIQAS), approved for funding in autumn 2014. It involves Poland as the coordinating country, Bulgaria, Portugal and Slovenia. EIQAS is a joint initiative of national quality assurance agencies and Rectors’ Conferences and / or higher education institutions (HEIs). It aims to support HEIs in further development of their internal quality assurance systems based on Part 1 of the ESG and national agencies in further development of their methodologies for external evaluation of internal quality assurance systems at HEIs, thus addressing one of the standards in Part 2 of the ESG. For more details about EIQAS, see the project website at: <http://www.eiqas.com>.

The survey focuses exclusively on internal quality assurance at HEIs in the context of Part 1 of the ESG. It is being conducted in parallel among HEIs in the four countries participating in EIQAS. As EIQAS is forward looking, the survey is based on the draft of the revised ESG which, however, overlap to a large extent with the current version of the ESG. The survey aims to collect data on the extent to which Part 1 ESG are integrated in internal quality assurance systems at HEIs, and the problems HEIs have faced or may face when integrating the ESG into their internal quality assurance systems. Survey findings will feed into an EIQAS Training Seminar for HEIs to be held in spring 2015. Together with suggestions and conclusions from the seminar, they will also be used to develop a Guide to Internal Quality Assurance based on Part 1 of the ESG available to all interested HEIs.

Aside from introductory questions about the institution and the respondent completing the questionnaire, the questionnaire includes 38 (30 close-ended / multiple choice and 8 open-ended) questions. It is divided into two parts: general questions (Section I) and more specific questions (Section II) about internal quality assurance systems and the ESG. All questions in Section I and a number of questions in Section II refer to the level of the institution as a whole; where differences between fields of study may be relevant in other questions, this is reflected in multiple choice answers. The questions in Section II are structured according to Standards of Part 1 of the ESG; thus, each set of questions begins with the relevant Standard as it is phrased in the draft of the revised ESG. The questions refer only to basic issues covered by Part 1 Standards and are intended to collect mainly quantitative data; each Standard will be discussed in greater depth at the Training Seminar in spring 2015.

QUESTIONNAIRE

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSTITUTION AND THE RESPONDENT

1. Where is your institution located?
a) Bulgaria b) Poland c) Portugal d) Slovenia
2. When was your institution established? (year)
3. What is the type of your higher education institution? Please tick the boxes that apply to your institution.
a) University-type b) Non-university c) Public d) Non-public
4. What is the size of your higher education institution? Please tick the appropriate box.
a) Less than 300 students b) 300-1 000 students c) 1 000-5 000 students
d) 5 000-15 000 students e) 15 000-25 000 students f) 25 000-35 000 students
g) 35 000-45 000 students h) Over 45 000 students
5. What is your function / position at your institution?
6. How long have you been involved in quality assurance at your institution? Since (year)
7. Are you filling in the questionnaire individually or in consultation with colleagues at your institution? Please tick the appropriate box.
a) Individually b) In consultation with colleagues
8. What stage has your institution reached in the implementation of its internal quality assurance system? Please tick the appropriate box. Our institution has in place:
a) A formal internal quality assurance **system** (i.e. a formally adopted and organised collection of components, including multiple and interrelated procedures and tools)
b) A number of unrelated procedures which do not yet form a system
c) A single procedure (e.g. a programme review procedure) or tool (e.g. a student evaluation survey)
d) Other. Please explain: ...

If you ticked "b", "c" or "d", please go to Question 6.

9. When did your institution start establishing a **formal internal quality assurance system** (as defined in the previous question, and **not only** individual and / or unrelated procedures or tools)? Please tick the appropriate box.
a) Before 2000
b) Between 2000 and 2005
c) Between 2006 and 2011
d) Between 2012 and 2014

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- 10 What prompted your institution to establish a **formal internal quality assurance system**? Please tick the appropriate box.
- a) The system had been established entirely on our own initiative before relevant requirements or evaluation criteria were introduced at national level.
 - b) The decision to establish the system was prompted by a requirement in national legislation.
 - c) The decision to establish the system was prompted by external evaluation criteria of the national quality assurance agency,
 - d) The decision to establish the system was prompted by a requirement in national legislation and external evaluation criteria of the national quality assurance agency.
 - e) Other. Please specify:
- 11 What areas of activity does the internal quality assurance system (or, in case a formal system is not yet in place, do the internal quality assurance arrangements) at your institution cover? Please tick all boxes that apply to your institution.
- a) Teaching and learning
 - b) Research
 - c) Governance
- 12 Does your institution have a Quality Manual / Handbook providing details about its internal quality assurance system? Please tick the appropriate box.
- a) Yes b) No
- 13 How would you describe the progress in the implementation of the internal quality assurance system (or, in case a formal system is not yet in place, in the implementation of individual procedures) across your institution? Please tick the appropriate box.
- a) All units (faculties, departments, etc.) are at the same stage of implementation.
 - b) Progress in the implementation varies to some extent among units.
 - c) Progress in the implementation varies considerably among units.
- 14 Please describe briefly three main problems that your institution encountered when developing and / or establishing its internal quality assurance system (or individual procedures in case a formal system is not yet in place).
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- 15 Please give three examples of beneficial qualitative and / or quantitative changes or innovative practice that have been introduced on the basis of evidence collected through your internal quality assurance system (or individual procedures if a formal system is not yet in place).
- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- 16 Do internal quality assurance documents of your institution refer to the ESG? Please tick the appropriate box.
- a) Refer explicitly to the ESG
 - b) Refer implicitly to the ESG as they are based on national legislation / national external evaluation criteria in which the ESG are integrated
 - c) Do not refer explicitly or implicitly to the ESG
 - d) Other. Please explain:

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- 17 How does your institution use the current version of Part 1 of the ESG in its internal quality assurance? Please tick the appropriate box.
- a) As a strict checklist to ensure full compliance with the ESG
 - b) As an indicative checklist to ensure broad compliance with the ESG
 - c) As broad guidelines for selected elements of the internal quality assurance system
 - d) ESG integrated into the institution's own standards and guidelines
 - e) ESG not used at all
- 18 What activities has your institution undertaken to familiarise its internal stakeholders (teaching staff, students, quality assurance coordinators / advisers and others) with internal quality assurance and / or Part 1 of the ESG? You may choose one or more answer(s).
- a) Training events and / or seminars on internal quality assurance where the ESG were explicitly discussed
 - b) Training events and / or seminars on internal quality assurance where the ESG were not explicitly discussed
 - c) Training events and / or seminars specifically devoted to the ESG
 - d) Link to the ESG provided on the institution's (quality assurance) website
 - e) Explicit reference to the ESG made in internal quality assurance documents
 - f) Other. Please specify:
 - g) No activities undertaken

PART II: SPECIFIC QUESTIONNES ON ESG PART 1

ESG Standard 1.1: Policy for quality assurance: *Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.*

- 19 Does your institution have a policy for quality assurance that is published and specifies structures and processes through which it is implemented? Please tick the appropriate box.
- a) A published policy that specifies structures and processes
 - b) A published policy that does not specify structures and processes
 - c) A policy that specifies structures and processes but is not published
 - d) No policy / Policy not yet developed
 - e) Other, please explain:

If you ticked "d", please go to Question 23.

- 20 Were / are external stakeholders (employers and / or other external partners) involved in the development and / or implementation of your institution's quality assurance policy? Please tick the appropriate box.
- a) Involved in both the development and implementation of the policy
 - b) involved in the development of the policy but not involved in its implementation
 - c) Not Involved in the development of the policy but involved in its implementation
 - d) I don't know / It is hard to say
 - e) Other. Please explain:

- 21 Does your institution review its quality assurance policy? Please tick the appropriate box.
- a) Yes
 - b) No

If you ticked "No", please go to Question 23.

- 22 How often does your institution review its quality assurance policy? Please tick the appropriate box.
- a) On an on-going basis
 - b) Every year
 - c) Every two years
 - d) Every three years
 - e) Other. Please specify:

ESG Standard 1.2: Design and approval of programmes: *Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.*

- 23 Does your institution have in place (a) procedure(s) for the design and / or approval of programmes? Please tick the most appropriate answer in points "a" and "b". Our institution:
- a) Has in place a formal procedure for the design of programmes
In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study
 - b) Has in place a formal procedure for the approval of programmes
In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study
- 24 To what extent do the statements below apply to your institution? Please tick the most appropriate answer in each of the points below. Programmes at our institution:
- a) Are designed in line with the institutional strategy, mission and vision
In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study
 - b) Are designed in line with the objectives set for them
In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study
 - c) Are designed by involving students
In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study
 - d) Are designed by involving external stakeholders (employers and other partners)
In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study
 - e) Are designed so as to enable smooth student progression
In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study
 - f) Define intended learning outcomes to be achieved by students
In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study
 - g) Define the expected student workload in terms of ECTS credits
In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study
 - h) Include student practical placements where appropriate
In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study
 - i) Lead to clearly specified qualifications which refer to the correct level of the National Qualifications Framework
In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study

ESG Standard 1.3: Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment: *Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.*

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- 25 To what extent do the statements below apply to your institution? Please tick the most appropriate answer in each of the points below. Our institution:
- a) Provides programmes in different modes of delivery (e.g. full- and part-time, campus-based and distance-learning)
In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study
 - b) Offers flexible learning paths to students (e.g. individual study programmes / paths)
In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study
 - c) Uses a variety of teaching and learning methods, including those which encourage active and interactive engagement of students in their learning
In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study
 - d) Evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery of programmes on a regular basis
In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study
 - e) Evaluates and adjusts teaching and learning methods on a regular basis
In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study
- 26 Which of the statements below apply to your institution? You may tick no, one or more answer(s). If you tick "c", please additionally choose one of the answers available.
- a) Student assessment procedures, methods and criteria are published
 - b) Procedures, methods and criteria enable assessing the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved by students
 - c) A procedure to ensure consistency and fairness in student assessment is in place
In your opinion, to what extent are consistency and fairness achieved through the procedure in place?
To no extent – To a little extent – To some extent – To a great extent –To a very great extent
 - d) Student performance is assessed by more than one examiner where possible
 - e) A procedure for student appeals is in place

ESG Standard 1.4: Student admission, progression, recognition and certification: Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.

- 27 Which of the regulations concerning student admission, progression, recognition and certification listed below are published by your institution? You may tick no, one or more answer(s).
- a) Regulations on student admission
 - b) Regulations on student progression
 - c) Regulations on certification / the award of diplomas and certificates
 - d) Regulations on the recognition of study periods completed at other institutions in the country and abroad
 - e) Regulations on the recognition of qualifications (degrees) awarded by other institutions in the country and abroad
 - f) Regulations on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning
- 28 Does your institution have in place (a) procedure(s) to ensure that the regulations concerning admission, progression, recognition and certification are applied consistently? Please tick the appropriate box.
- a) Yes b) No

ESG Standard 1.5: Teaching staff: *Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.*

- 29 Which of the statements below apply to your institution? You may tick no, one or more answer(s).
Our institution:
- a) Has in place a transparent and fair recruitment process for teaching staff
 - b) Provides professional development opportunities to teaching staff
 - c) Offers incentives to encourage professional development of teaching staff
 - d) Offers incentives to encourage innovation in teaching
 - e) Offers incentives to encourage the use of new technologies in teaching
 - f) Has in place mechanisms for rewarding teaching achievements
 - g) Regularly assesses the performance of teaching staff
 - h) Regularly monitors teaching staff satisfaction
- 30 If you ticked "b", "c", "d", "e", "f" and / or "h" above, please give at least one example of professional development opportunities available and / or each type of (financial, promotion-related or other) incentive or mechanisms used.
- a) For "b" above:
 - b) For "c" above:
 - c) For "d" above:
 - d) For "e" above:
 - e) For "f" above:
 - f) For "h" above:

ESG Standard 1.6: Learning resources and student support: *Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.*

- 31 Which of the statements below apply to your institution? You may tick no, one or more answer(s).
Our institution:
- a) Provides academic support to its students
 - b) Provides financial support to its students
 - c) Provides advice and support to outgoing and incoming students
 - d) Has in place mechanisms for informing students about the support and services available
 - e) Has in place a mechanism for assessing whether learning resources are adequate and accessible
 - f) Has in place a mechanism for assessing whether student support is adequate and accessible
 - g) Has in place procedures to ensure that administrative staff are properly qualified to deliver support services to students
 - h) Offers professional development opportunities to administrative staff providing support services to students
- 32 If you ticked "e" and / or "f" above, please explain briefly how you measure the satisfaction of students with the learning resources and / or student support available?

ESG Standard 1.7: Information management: Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.

33 What kind of data does your institution collect on a regular basis? You may tick no, one or more answer(s).

- a) A defined set of key performance indicators for the institution
- b) Profile of the student population (e.g. age, gender, domicile; level, mode and subject of study)
- c) Student progression, success and drop-out rates
- d) Students' satisfaction with their programmes
- e) Learning resources and student support available
- f) Indicators of graduates' employability
- g) Indicators of internationalisation of the institution
- h) Other, please specify:
 - 1)
 - 2)
 - 3)
 - 4)
 - 5)

34 Does your institution have a formal mechanism for analysing and using the data collected for quality improvement or enhancement purposes? Please tick the appropriate box.

- a) Yes
- b) No

If you ticked "No", please go to Question 36.

35 Please give some examples of how the data collected has been used for quality improvement or enhancement purposes

ESG Standard 1.8: Public information: Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.

36 Does your institution publish information about its programmes and graduate employment? Please tick the answer(s) that apply to your institution.

- a) Full information about programmes offered, including admission criteria, full curricula, syllabuses with all names and contact details, reading lists, intended learning outcomes, qualifications awarded and student assessment procedures
- b) Only selected information about programmes offered
Please specify:
- c) No information about programmes
- d) Information about graduate employment

ESG Standard 1.9: On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes: Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.

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37 Does your institution have in place (a) procedure(s) for on-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes? Please tick the most appropriate answer.

In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study

If you ticked "In no field of study", please go to Question 41.

38 Please give some examples of how the evidence collected through your programme monitoring and / or review procedure(s) has been used ...

39 How are students involved in the programme monitoring and / or review procedure at your institution? Please tick the most appropriate answer in points "a" to "e" below. Any additional ways of student involvement can be briefly described in point "f".

a) Are involved as full members of bodies responsible for programme monitoring and / or review

In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study

b) Fill in course evaluation surveys

In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study

c) Regularly receive feedback on findings from course evaluation surveys

In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study

d) Are regularly informed about measures to be taken as a result of course evaluation surveys

In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study

e) Propose measures to improve curricula and / or teaching / learning methods

In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study

f) Other. Please specify:

40 How are external stakeholders (employers and / or other partners) involved in the programme monitoring and / or review procedure at your institution? Please tick the most appropriate answer in points "a" to "c" below. Any additional ways of external stakeholder involvement can be briefly described in point "d".

a) Are involved as full members of bodies responsible for programme monitoring and / or review

In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study

b) Are involved as members of advisory / consultative bodies

In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study

c) Provide feedback on the knowledge, skills and competences of graduates employed (e.g. as part of employers' surveys)

In no field of study– In some fields of study– In most fields of study– In all fields of study

d) Other. Please specify:

ESG Standard 1.10: Cyclical external quality assurance: *Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.*

41 In your opinion, does the external evaluation methodology (procedures and / or criteria) of the national quality assurance agency in your country encourage or hamper the development / enhancement of internal quality assurance at HEIs? Please tick the appropriate box.

a) Encourages the development / enhancement of internal quality assurance

b) Hinders the development / enhancement of internal quality assurance

c) To some extent encourages and to some extent hinders the development / enhancement of internal quality assurance

d) Neither encourages nor hinders the development / enhancement of internal quality assurance

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42 Please explain briefly how the external evaluation methodology of the national quality assurance agency in your country could be improved / enhanced?

43 In your opinion, which of ESG 1.1 to 1.10 addressed above would require further clarification and / or more detailed guidelines (in addition to those provided by ENQA under each Standard; full text of the ESG available at: (<https://revisionesg.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/esg-draft-endorsed-by-bfug.pdf>) to be entirely clear and easily understandable to teaching staff and students? You may choose one or more answers:

a) 1.1 b) 1.2 c) 1.3 d) 1.4 e) 1.5 f) 1.6 g) 1.7 h) 1.8 i) 1.9 j) 1.10 k) None

44 Which of ESG 1.1 to 1.9 addressed above are or would be difficult to apply / integrate into your institution's internal quality assurance system? You may choose one or more answers:

a) 1.1 b) 1.2 c) 1.3 d) 1.4 e) 1.5 f) 1.6 g) 1.7 h) 1.8 i) 1.9 j) None

45 Please indicate five main problems which you have encountered or may encounter in integrating these standards into your system / applying these standards

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

OTHER COMMENTS (any other additional comments that you may wish to make regarding the questions in Section I and / or II of the questionnaire or related issues):

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME!