EIQAS

ENHANCING INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

ERASMUS + PROJECT

2014-2016

FINAL METHODOLOGY FOR IDENTIFICATION

OF GOOD PRACTICE IN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE (IQA)

DESCRIPTIONS OF EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE IN IQA

FREE PUBLICATION

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Methodology for identification of good practice in internal quality assurance was developed thanks to the efforts and engagement of project's partners representatives who worked collectively in working group 5 (WP5) – leaders: Mila Penelova & Todor Shopov, NEAA; members: Maciej Markowski, Mieczysław W. Socha, Łukasz Sułkowski, PKA; Bogdan Macukow & Andrzej Kraśniewski, KRASP; Madalena Fonseca, A3ES; Joao Melo Borges, CRUP; Isabel Santos, University of Minho; Jernej Sirok, Klemen Subic, Matjaz Stuhec, SQAA; Vanja Perovsek, University of Ljubljana; Veronika Piccinini, University of Nova Gorica[1]

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[1] PKA   Polska Komisja Akredytacyjna / Polish Accreditation Committee, Poland
A3ES   Agência de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior, Portugal
NEAA   Nacionalna Agencija za Ocenjavane i Akreditacija / National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency, Bulgaria
KRASP   Konferencja Rektorów Akademickich Szkół Polskich / Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland, Poland
CRUP   Conselho Reitores das Universidades Portuguesas, Portugal
SQAA   Nacionalna agencija RS za kakovost v visokem solstvu / Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, Slovenia

1. Analysis of definitions of good practice in IQA

Good practice is something we are familiar with because it seems basically reasonable as a notion. Nevertheless, there is research on hand. The following 3 definitions are instances of how experts (e.g. in the area of project management) "feel" about the notion.

- "Best practices are those actions or activities undertaken by the company or individuals that lead to a sustained competitive advantage in project management." (Kerzner, Harold, 2009, Project Management, Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley, 373)

- "Best practice: a procedure that has been shown by research and experience to produce optimal results and that is established or proposed as a standard suitable for widespread adoption." (http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/best%20practice, 25.03.2015)

- "A *practice* is a tangible and visible behaviour. When you can ask a program manager what her practice is in addressing some problem, she can answer with a description of what she does. Typically, though, a practice is also an expression of some underlying idea—an idea about how the actions entailed by the practice work to solve a problem or achieve a goal." (Bardach, Eugene, 2012, A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis, LA: Sage, 110)

The method of good practice promotes a common vocabulary: everyone, whether a management expert or not, has some intuitive grasp of what good practice is. When we use good practices to describe our ideas, we can take in one another more easily. Good practice, then, facilitates shared understanding.

Discernibly, the method of good practice produces examples which are hardly possible to describe in abstract terms and to generalize to refer to diverse situations. The former means that good practice has particular traits and the latter indicates that, unlike a standard, it has its alternatives (an alternative course of action) suitable for specific situations. So, a professional standard allows a range of concrete good practices. In other words, the interrelationship between standard and good practice can be viewed as ranging from planning (in the case of standard) to execution (in the case of good practice).

Information gathered from EIQAS project's partners and background knowledge allows us to synthesize a working definition: *good practice (also "best practice", "proven practice", and "smart practice") is a concrete activity distinguished by specific functions and particular features. As such, it is a method of project management (here IQA is viewed as a project).* (Glossary: activity – something that is done as work or for a particular purpose; function – the purpose for which something is designed; feature – a prominent part of something; source: http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/activity.)

Information on the contributions of EIQAS partners is given in the table below (Table 1).

Table 1: A descriptive matrix

Version of definition of good practice	Relevant area of good practice	Function of good practice	Distinctive feature of good practice	Chart for describing a good practice
PKA	All		-Effectiveness -Universality -Innovativeness -Exemplariness -Ethicality	-Name of good practice -Source of good practice -Purpose of good practice -Description of good practice -Criteria for the identification of good practice -Main benefits from the application of good practice -Difficulties and risks related to the application of good practice.
NEAA	All	-Setting -Verifying -Creating -Instilling -Computing -etc.	-Be successful (incl. effectiveness and efficiency) -Be innovative -Be transferable -Be sustainable	-Explain relevant area -Explain functions -Explain distinctive features -Evaluate good practice with regard to concrete standard of ESG Part 1
CRASP	-Institutional structure and culture -Institutional autonomy and public accountability			

	-Mission and resources -Consultation and interaction for continuous improvement -Quantitative and qualitative indicators -Self-evaluation and peer review -Involvement of external parties -Transparency of quality assurance processes			
University of Ljubljana	All		-Success of practice and of people involved -Inspiration set off by the practice	-Factors of success: practice itself, people involved, contexts -Organisational culture -Appreciative Inquiry
NAKVIS	HEI's operations, education and research, administration and management, and/or collaboration with the broader social environment		-Be upgrading current practices -Be novel as approach and insight -Be transferable (dissemination mechanisms) -Be supportive of quality culture -Be prone to implementation through formal and informal mechanisms -Be measurable (metrics)	

			-Be liable to bottom-up and top-down initiatives	

Definitions have been exemplified by giving samples of good practices. A simple matrix rounds out the explanations of the notion (definitions and samples). It shows the distribution of examples in relation to 10 standards in ESG Part 1. Here, a good practice is thought of as a concrete entity; in other words, it is considered an instance of a standard. General consent seems to have been reached on the scope of a good practice: even if good practice is expected to have a wide impact on a HEI's general IQA system, it should be seen as focusing on a single issue. Thus, it is distinguished in relation with a particular standard in ESG Part 1.

The distribution if given in the matrix in Table 2 completed with 19 examples of provided by project's partners (the numbers refer to the Library of Good Practice at the end of this report). In keeping with the definition of *good practice* above (p. 2), the relevance of the examples can be interpreted more broadly to connect with to more benchmarks than those mentioned. ESG standard 1.10 has not been covered as it deals with external quality assurance of higher education.

Table 2: A distribution matrix

Standard (ESG Part 1)	Teaching/learning	Research	Governance
1.1	5, 10, 16	5, 10, 16	5, 10, 16
1.2	9, 10	9, 10	9, 10
1.3	1, 3, 7, 17	17	7, 17
1.4	18	18	18
1.5	2	2	2
1.6	18	18	18
1.7	8, 11, 12, 14	8, 11, 12, 14	4, 8, 11, 12, 14
1.8	15, 19	15, 19	15, 19
1.9	6, 10, 13, 19	10, 13, 19	6, 10, 13, 19
1.10	X	X	X

Project partners have expressed concerns about concrete and specific nature of good practice. This attitude is however foreseeable with regard to any example or illustration. Overall, for the purposes of EIQAS project, descriptions of good practices in IQA and their use in the project are to be considered useful. They are easy to discover and to share both within and outside a HEI or an accreditation agency). This claim can be supported with the opinion of a leading authority on project management:

"Capturing best practices is a necessity in today's business world. This includes best practices in business as well as best practices in project management." (Kerzner, Harold, 2008, Value-Driven Project Management, 2008 International Institute for Learning, Inc.)

In the literature and indeed in project's partners' contributions, there are observations of shortcomings of the method of good practice. Here are 3 popular claims: firstly, there is the argument that pointing out a good practice may discourage all those who use alternative courses of action because they will assume they are in the wrong (therefore the method is flawed); secondly, it can be argued that the recognition good practice may imply that there is only one way of getting a task done (therefore no alternatives are necessary or possible); and thirdly, there is the argument that good practice may be viewed as the "best method" of operation (therefore no improvement is possible). We believe that all these observations are hardly valid if one observes the claims in the light of sound speculation and empiricism. So, here, we shall interpret them as their authors' subjective opinions.

However, there are objective threats and weaknesses in the process of identifying a good practice. Experts' opinions can be summarized as follows:

"Who determines that an activity is a best practice? How do you properly evaluate what you think is best practice to validate that in fact it is a true best practice? How do you get executives to recognize that best practices are true value-added activities and should be championed by executive management?" (Kerzner, Harold, 2009, Project Management, Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley, 375)

These inherent drawbacks should be addressed in the explanatory and evaluative sections of descriptions of concrete good practices. The author of a description is responsible for the clearing up these potential disadvantages.

So, the issue of recognizing a good practice needs to be tackled with care. Project's partners need to identify good practices in IQA creatively with regard to expected advantages and potential disadvantages of implementation. Obviously, the limits of a concrete good practice should be delineated by the author who is describing it. In addition, the features of a good practice need explanation based on the experience of the author's organization.

2. Development of a methodology for the identification of good practice in IQA

At that stage of development process EIQAS project's partners concentrated on the methods of collecting good practices in IQA in higher education. The outcome was a flexible methodology based on 2 procedures:

- Consultations at national level staged by accreditation agencies and HEIs in each country

- Making descriptions of IQA good practices in higher education identified at national level and presenting them as samples related to each standard in ESG Part 1

Both procedures are a spinoff of the first phase of development process in which analyses and syntheses of existing outlining and production and adoption of a working definition were executed. Consultations and descriptions were performed creatively in order to allow participants to accommodate diverse situations.

Methodology outlines the design and the procedures for the identification of IQA good practices in higher education. It is put forward in the description template presented below.

3. Consultations on the draft methodology with National Consultation Groups (NCGs)

Consultations with NCGs (composed of HEIs) were carried out, e.g. an *in situ* conference was organised for all the HEIs engaged in the projects. In addition consultations were performed at project level during online conferences and one examination session in Warsaw during Training Event 1.

The outcome is the final draft of a flexible methodology, adopted by project's partners. It is presented in Table 3 below. In the third column of the table, examples should be provided in the form of short descriptive texts. The table should be considered as a framework of reference; naturally, the authors are free to choose their own form of presentation of their examples. The short descriptive text is just a brief account; the user is expected to find more information at the respective website.

Table 3: A template for describing good practice

      This template is intended to provide a common format for exploring examples of good practice in IQA (with regard to ESG Part 1).

Descriptive Topics	Guides	Descriptive Text
Source of example of good practice	-accreditation agency and website; -HEI and website; -author of descriptive text	-a list of details
Name of activity	-original title of activity	-a noun phrase
Relevance of activity	-related ESG Part 1 standard	-a noun phrase
Abstract	-features of activity (e.g. successfulness, incl. effectiveness and efficiency; innovativeness; transferability; sustainability) -functions of activity functions (e.g. setting, verifying, creating, instilling, computing)	-a text of maximum 300 words (one page) is useful to provide a summary description of the activity

Conceptual basis	-general and abstract aspect of the activity	-a short text (50 words) and references to links to important documents is useful to explain the fundamental idea behind the activity
Objective	-purposes and concrete intents of the activity	-a list of "to do" statements
Implementation process	-sequence of phases of the activity	-a list of details, including evidence of success
BSC SWOT	-SWOT on finances; - SWOT on customers; - SWOT on internal processes; - SWOT on people (learning and growth)	-a short text (50 words) is useful to explain the internal and the external circumstances affecting the activity

4. Selection of good practice examples for each Part 1 ESG from each country and drafting short descriptions to be included in the Guide

Here partners give samples of good practices which cover standards in ESG Part 1. It has been compiled a Library of Good Practices with 19 examples from different HEIs in the partner countries. The order in which examples are given is random.

Annex 1:

LIBRARY OF GOOD PRACTICES

1 Using self-assessment in modern language teaching and learning, International Business School, Botevgrad
2 Using the "System of qualification and career growth of academic staff", Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski
3 Supporting innovativeness in teaching, with an example of Creative Semester Project, Warsaw University of Technology
4 Monitoring of Professional Careers of Warsaw University of Technology Graduates Warsaw University of Technology
5 Coherently and synergistically dual policy for quality assurance Warsaw University of Life Sciences SGGW
6 Cross verification of learning outcomes using dedicated IT tools for stakeholders, teaching staff and students, Warsaw University of Life Sciences, SGGW
7 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment, University of Warsaw
8 Information management , University of Warsaw
9 Teaching Incentive Fund, University of Gdańsk
10 Council of Employers, University of Ecology and Management in Warsaw, Architecture Faculty
11 PDCA cycle and the pedagogical quality assessment, University of Coimbra
12 Integration and ease of use of the IQA information system, Universidade do Minho
13 Streamlining the process of self-assessment of teaching and learning, emphasising the practices of reflection among the different actors, Universidade do Minho
14 Students Integration in the audit program of the IPVC IQAS , Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo, IPVC
15 Desmaterialização e Otimização dos Processos, University of Madeira
16 Weekly meetings of authorities to ensure the closing of the quality circle, University of Nova Gorica
17 Introduction of a tailored mode of studies for students – athletes, University of Nova Gorica
18 Centralised system for providing support on international issues, University of Nova Gorica
19 Centralised electronic information system, University of Nova Gorica

1. Using self-assessment in modern language teaching and learning, International Business School

No.	Descriptive Topics	Text
1.	Source of best practice example	**International Business School, http://www.ibsedu.bg/**
2.	Name of activity	Using self-assessment in modern language teaching and learning
3.	Relevance of activity	Standard 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
4.	Abstract	Self-assessment, viewed as a formative procedure, is used in modern language teaching and learning at IBS. The activities focus on second language acquisition. Electronic portfolio, eELP, (http://www.eelp.org/eportfolio/eELP_Guided_Pathway_web_en_GB.pdf) of the Council of Europe is used for this purpose (http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/home). Users keep their portfolio up-to-date. They can work offline, but they need Internet connection in order to access relevant links.
5.	Conceptual basis, Objective, Implementation process	The European Language Portfolio is a personal document that has three parts.

Inside cell 5, boxed content:

language passport	language biography	dossier
In this document, language learners can summarise their linguistic and cultural identity, linguistic qualifications, experience of using different languages and contacts with different cultures.	Language biography helps the learner to set learning targets, to record and reflect on language learning and on intercultural experiences and regularly assess progress.	In this part of ELP, learners can keep samples of their work in the language(s) they have learnt or are learning

As students acquire a second language, they record their progress in communicative competence attainment and language performance development (e.g. Self-Assessment Grid in eELP Part 3). This is a continuing process and eELP has proven to be a powerful tool offering room for addition and expansion.

eELP is pedagogically useful, as it promotes student autonomy and student-centeredness on a consistent basis. For example, the first step for a student is to create a personal profile in "My Profile" section as shown below.

6.	BSC, SWOT or other analysis	**Successful operation** Measured by cost-effectiveness, the operation is successful because it involves all students in the self-evaluation process. All students at IBS benefit from the use of eELP. The instrument's online availability ensures independent work, which is a major feature of student-centeredness. **Innovation of operation** The operation is innovative, because it has been implemented recently. eELP has been available for a number of years (since Scherer's original idea was put forth some 20 years ago), but it has been used by all the students at the university for a relatively short period of time. **Transferability of operation** Dissemination is possible, because modern language teaching/learning is a common element of university curricula. This best practice is in fact widespread, so it can be easily multiplied. Those involved in the implementation of the operation need training as modern language teachers. **Sustainability of operation** Current and future self-support activities are facilitated by the electronic form of eELP. It is available 24 hours and sustainable. Thus, students and teachers are empowered to use their potential in second language acquisition in an autonomous way. On the one hand, it provides constant motivation for learning and, on the other, its operation can be upheld and supported.

2. Using the "System of qualification and career growth of academic staff – Sofia University

No.	Descriptive Topics	Text
1.	Source of best practice example	**Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski",** https://www.uni-sofia.bg/
2.	Name of activity	Using the "System of qualification and career growth of academic staff at Sofia University *St. Kliment Ohridski*"
		An R&D project, BG051PO-001-3.1.09-0005, under Human Resources Development operational programme of the EU, 2013-2015
3.	Relevance of activity	Standard 1.5 Teaching staff
4.	Abstract	Institution's IQA-related effort has motivated university administrators and academics to create a new system of qualification development for university teachers through e-learning. The system constitutes a virtual career centre. The operation relates in general to the enhancement of quality culture and in detail to career development, appraisal, enhancement of teaching and research (adherence to respective standards).
5.	Conceptual basis	Open access is available to all university teachers. Registration is required of candidates who want to complete a full qualification course. Seven modules have been designed, including 25 curricula, necessary and sufficient materials, and adequate teaching/learning procedures. The teaching/learning modules for university teachers are as follows:
		1. ICT,
		2. Modern language learning (English, French, German, Russian, Spanish),
		3. Academic writing,
		4. Communication skills,
		5. Methods of academic teaching,
		6. Modern educational strategies and technologies,
		7. Step-by-step science.
		The virtual career centre registered 250 university teachers in its first round of admissions in 2014. Feedback on participants' satisfaction is obtained by using special questionnaires. The information is applied in continuing curriculum development and stable working on adapting the e-courses to labour market needs.

6.	BSC, SWOT or other analysis	Successful operation
		Effective production of an expected outcome "enhancing the quality culture" in HE is achieved by fulfilling the aims of the R&D project BG051PO-001-3.1.09-0005 under Human Resources Development operational programme of EU, 2013-2015. The outcomes presented above ensure usefulness and effectiveness, and prove that this operation is a "positive action".
		Innovation of operation
		Use of innovative approaches different from current ones is substantiated by the new system of qualification development of university teachers through e-learning built at the institution. It is linked to the existing e-learning platform of the university. This provides stability of the implementation of this operation in the process of modernisation.
		Transferability of operation
		Passing this approach to other areas is effected by the universal nature of the operation. Practice is visible, communicable and shareable. In addition, it is applicable to systems and regulations at other HEIs.
		Dissemination of operation is facilitated by its electronic form. The use of a native language in the practice is a drawback, which is easy to overcome.
		Sustainability of operation
		Current and future self-support of the practice is facilitated by its electronic form. It is available 24 hours and is user-friendly. Thus, update of teachers' academic knowledge and pedagogic skills is ensured. Participants are motivated to develop it because they all are members of the HEI sharing common responsibilities and accountabilities. In addition, participants are stakeholders in the education system at national and European level.

3. Supporting innovativeness in teaching with Creative Semester Project, Warsaw University of Technology

No.	Descriptive topics	Text
1.	Source of best practice example	**Warsaw University of Technology** (WUT) (www.pw.edu.pl) WUT's Creativity Booster (INFOX) – special task force to promote and implement innovative methods of teaching, set-up by the Rector (www.infox.pw.edu.pl)
2	Name of activity	Supporting innovativeness in teaching with Creative Semester Project [Kreatywny Semestr Projektowy]
3	Relevance of activity	1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
4	Abstract	A shift to teaching methods, which more actively involve students and require interdisciplinary approach and entrepreneurship, such as Project-Based Learning (PBL) or Design Thinking (DT), has been observed at many faculties of Warsaw University of Technology (WUT). To support this trend and to emphasise the significance of business-university cooperation in education, facilities that support innovative approach to teaching and learning have been located in a newly constructed building that hosts a recently established WUT organisational unit – Innovation Management and Technology Transfer Centre. Also, to coordinate the development, introduction and dissemination of innovations in teaching, a special advisor to the WUT Rector has been appointed. One of her key responsibilities is to encourage external stakeholders to get involved in teaching, i.e. to submit real-life projects to be creatively solved by students and to support students in the development of their innovative ideas. Subsequently, WUT's Creativity Booster (INFOX) – a special task force to promote and implement innovative methods of teaching has been set up by the Rector. An example of new developments in student-centred learning, exploiting the ideas of PBL and DT, conceived by INFOX also to break barriers between faculties, is a pilot module called Creative Semester Project. This module is intended for 30 students from different faculties, organised into 5 design teams that solve practical interdisciplinary problems. It includes introductory lectures, but the focus is on design, in particular on good teamwork, as the ability to cooperate effectively is - according to the opinion of employers – the key competence our graduates generally miss. The grading is based on an assessment of students' creativity, technical contribution and ability to work in a team (assessment by themselves, by their teammates and by their tutor), assessment of the final report and public presentation

		of project outcomes (by the tutor, by the reviewer and by other tutors). Based on a positive experience and feedback received from the participants, in the near future such an interdisciplinary design project will become an obligatory part of curriculum for all first-cycle students, whereas second-cycle students will deal with more complex real-world problems submitted by business and social partners of WUT.
5	Conceptual basis	WUT's Creativity Booster (INFOX) - a special task force for the implementation of innovative methods of teaching, set up by the Rector. The tasks assigned to INFOX include: • development and pilot implementation of innovative methods of teaching; • professional support for members of academic staff who prepare grant applications related to innovations in teaching; • development of organisational structures that support innovativeness in teaching; • co-operation with WUT partners (industry, regional self-government and city administration) in defining real-world design projects to be creatively solved by students.
6	Objectives	• make curricula more attractive for students; • make curricula more practical through co-operation with business and social partners; • make teaching more student-centred - foster and exploit students' creativity; • strengthen the position of WUT as a leader in teaching innovations.
7	Implementation process	• setting-up the Rector's task force – INFOX; • training of tutors in DT and PBL; • study visits; • pilot initiative - Creative Semester Project; • development of innovative design-based modules intended for large groups of students.
8	Balanced Scorecard or SWOT or other analysis	opportunities: • growing interest in teaching, in particular in student-centred learning among WUT teaching staff; • possible extra financial support through EU programmes; • offering student-centred curricula – a means to get a competitive edge in attracting good candidates for studying. challenges/problems: • cost of new teaching facilities; • increased effort of academic staff needed for introducing innovations in teaching, in many cases inadequately rewarded.

4. Monitoring Professional Careers of Warsaw University of Technology Graduates, Warsaw University of Technology

No.	Descriptive topics	Text
1	Source of best practice example	**Warsaw University of Technology** (http://www.pw.edu.pl/), Office of Development and Strategic Projects, Section of Social Research Support (http://www.swbs.pw.edu.pl/)
2	Name of activity	Monitoring of Professional Careers of Warsaw University of Technology Graduates [Monitoring Karier Zawodowych Absolwentów Politechniki Warszawskiej]
3	Relevance of activity	1.7 Information management.
4	Abstract	Monitoring Professional Careers of WUT Graduates is a social research conducted annually in co-operation with WUT Social Research Support Section and WUT Careers Office. The research focuses on the graduates' current situation in the labour market and self-evaluation of their learning outcomes and competencies in the context of their employability. **Main aims of research:** • obtain information on WUT graduates' current employment situation (employment contract; position; salary; job satisfaction; way of finding the current job); self-employment (companies founded by graduates, forms of support, number of employees, income earned); and unemployment (causes; duration; ways of job-seeking); • verify learning outcomes from the labour market perspective (significance in the labour market, relationship between the level of development of competencies and professional status; extent to which graduates use knowledge gained at the university at work); • examine graduates' opinion on the education quality at WUT (probability of choosing the same department again; recommended changes); • inquire on graduates' self-esteem in terms of their competencies in the context of the labour market, in order to understand the relationship between education quality and current professional status of the graduates and to improve education quality using feedback obtained from the graduates. **Innovativeness** Research is designed not only as a longitudinal study (possibility of combining data gathered in previous and current study to provide joint analysis/ comparisons), but also allows performing analysis with advanced methods and discover hidden data patterns useful for Internal Quality Assurance. **Research method** Online survey (CAWI); questionnaire consisting of quantitative and qualitative type of inquiry: closed questions (single/ multiple

		choice within the predefined answers); semi-open questions (personal comment outside the predefined list); open questions (individual answer).
		Sample in the latest research edition (2015) E-mail database: 3512 records; response rate: 41.2% with the sample of 1446 respondents.
5	Conceptual basis	WUT Section of Social Research Support: research into WUT internal and external socio-economic context, focused on evaluation and understanding needs. Such feedback enables to improve existing mechanisms (i.e. modification of internal quality assurance system), introduce advanced solutions and pursuit continuous progress closely tailored to stakeholders' needs. Related studies: Diagnosis of Employer Needs, Foreign Students' Satisfaction Survey, The WUT Brand Study, Careers Office Effectiveness Study, and more.
6	Objectives	List of objectives and milestones: • analyse possibility of conducting social research (people, tools, financing); • define research objectives, thus suitable research methods (i.e. CAWI) and respondents sample; • prepare research tools and test them on a small sample; • implement the tools; • collect data (in a database); • analyse data (prepare graphs, tables, data summaries); • draw a report (with data driven conclusions).
7	Implementation process	The sequence of the research: • uploading the questionnaire to the online survey software (if necessary: customisation of the questionnaire in accordance with current changes in the curriculum); • acquiring e-mail database (students and graduates) form Dean's offices, Careers Office, and other relevant units; • obtaining all necessary consents to use the e-mail database; • dispatch of e-mail invitations with individual links to the online survey; • collection of data (gathering graduates' answers in the survey); if necessary: two or three prompts reminding the respondents about the completion of the questionnaire; • promoting research via university media is welcome and helpful in reaching respondents from outside the base; • closing the distribution of the questionnaire; • data analysis, interpretation, inferences and applications; • drafting of an overall report on WUT graduates' situation and several supplements (simplified reports) for each department; • presentation of the report at the meeting of the WUT Council for Quality Assurance. **Evidence of success:** • sample: 1446 in 2015; 1278 in 2014; 625 in 2013; 587 in 2012;

		- response rate: from 34.9% in 2014 to 41.2% in 2015; - since research is conducted by an internal unit (years: 2015-2014) and not external research company (years: 2013-2012), both the sample and the success rate increase; - growing interest of some faculties in the results of research into the monitoring of graduates careers and using the data for enhancement of degree programmes and shaping the LLL offer; - research into the monitoring of graduates careers highly appraised by the Polish Accreditation Committee (PKA).
8	Balanced Scorecard or SWOT or other analysis	Features enhancing the research: - financing within WUT; - internal circulation of e-mail database; - questionnaire customisation for current needs (possibility of broadening the research); Features affecting the research: - time-consuming process of database building; - a lengthy (thus discouraging) questionnaire; - reaching alumni who graduated in the years preceding the e-mail database; - effective implementation of results.

5. Coherent and synergistically dual policy for quality assurance, Warsaw University of Life Sciences (SGGW)

№	Descriptive Topics	Text
1	Source of best practice example	**Warsaw University of Life Sciences (SGGW),** www.sggw.pl , dr Mariusz Maciejczak
2	Name of activity	Coherent and synergistically dual policy for quality assurance
3	Relevance of activity	1.1. Policy for quality assurance
4	Abstract	In 2013, Warsaw University of Life Sciences (SGGW) implemented a new Quality Assurance System (QAS), which was put to effect after the revision and development of the 2009 system[2]. The 2013 QAS is built on basic assumptions of duality. It has a **dual nature**, because it comprises the university and faculty level. In accordance with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education in Poland, the level of basic organisational units (faculties) is the elementary level of quality assurance. Therefore, the faculties are provided basic system functions to assure the highest possible quality of learning (including relevant resources and real impact of internal and external stakeholders), to monitor its effects and results, to evaluate and improve, and to effectively inform. At the university level, coordination and support functions (e.g. by providing appropriate tools, incl. ITC, to verify and supervise the system processes) are implemented to ensure effective information flow and the development of quality culture.
		The main driver of the QAS is a **formal and publicly available** (http://jakoscksztalcenia.sggw.pl/?page_id=564) **Policy for Quality Assurance document**. It has been developed as a **coherent** document incorporating **complementary guidance** of ESG, ISO 9001 and taking into account both the national context, in which the university operates, and the university context, including its strategy. Based on the university's Policy for Quality Assurance, 13 faculties adopted their formal and publicly available documents forming the Policy for Quality Assurance, which took into account their specific characteristics and strategies. Consequently, the policy for quality assurance was **tailored** to the elementary level of the university operations, at the

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[2] For more information see: Maciejczak M., Klepacki B., Szyndel M.S., 2013: *Stakeholders participation in revolutionary development of the system of quality assurance – case study of WULS-SGGW in Poland*. Proceedings of 8th European Quality Assurance Forum, Univ. Gothenburg, Sweden, 21-32 Nov. 2013. Abstr.IVb.7

		same time being **complementary** with the university's approach and **synergistic**, as the two levels of its operation generate an added value. Both at the university and the faculties levels, the process of Policy for Quality Assurance adaptation was based on **extensive consultations with internal and external stakeholders**, who were included in the QAS and took part in its **on-going monitoring and revision incl. PQA.**
5	Conceptual basis	To develop a coherent and synergistically dual policy for quality assurance.
6	Objective	To tailor the QAP for faculties (elementary level of university operations) complementary with the university's approach, in order to generate synergy effects from these two levels.
7	Implementation process	1. Appointment of a team responsible for drafting QAP. 2. Drafting QAP. 3. Consulting QAP draft with internal and external stakeholders. 4. Preparation of a final draft of QAP. 5. QAP final draft recommendation by the Senate Committees for Quality Assurance, Didactics, Science, Intl. Cooperation. 6. Recommendation on the final draft by the Rector to the University's Council. 7. Adaptation of the formal QAP by the University's Council. 8. Implementation. 9. Ongoing monitoring. 10. Periodic reviews. The same procedure has been adopted for the faculty level.
8	Balanced Scorecard or SWOT or other analysis	Conceptual efforts based on in depth knowledge of all parties involved were required to develop a coherent and synergistically dual policy for quality assurance. Once implemented, it has been considered as an innovation and involved the process of innovation dissemination, yet, with some initial resistance.

6. Cross verification of learning outcomes using dedicated IT tools for stakeholders, teaching staff and students, Warsaw University of Life Sciences (SGGW)

№	Descriptive Topics	Text
1	Source of best practice example	**Warsaw University of Life Sciences,** www.sggw.pl , dr inż. Mariusz Maciejczak
2	Name of activity	Cross verification of learning outcomes using dedicated IT tools for stakeholders, teaching staff and students
3	Relevance of activity	1.9. On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes
4	Abstract	Warsaw University of Life Sciences implemented four key IT tools to support quality assurance at the HEI: 1. A platform supporting remote verification of programmes and learning outcomes by external stakeholders; 2. A system for on-going verification of learning outcomes for teaching staff; 3. A system of on-going surveys for undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students to collect relevant information at the institutional level; 4. A system for alumni to collect relevant information at the institutional level. The main objective of this tool is to support periodic reviews of the programmes and cross verification of learning outcomes. These IT tools facilitate the collection of information about a particular module or a complex programme while granting users the right to provide anonymous opinions. The tools allow to incorporate and monitor implemented changes, both from the position of individual teachers and university or faculty management. Although they have not been integrated technically into one platform yet (conceptual works are being finalised, the university is looking for funding for this project), these IT tools are fully used to collect most relevant information forming knowledge indispensable for further development of the university's quality.
5	Conceptual basis	Cross verification of efficiency of programmes and learning outcomes. IT tool no. 1 is a publicly available interface http://platformapracodawcy.sggw.pl/ Tools no. 2, 3, 4 are functionalities of the HEI's internal IT infrastructure.

6	Objective	• monitoring and improving courses and programmes – teaching staff; • strengthening cooperation with stakeholders (stakeholders' feedback forms a vital component of this process); • encouraging students to complete the survey and improve quality assurance.
7	Implementation process	All IT tolls were implemented according to the following phases: • awareness of the need for change; • public consultation; • development of IT software; • users training; • ongoing actions; • periodic reviews of efficiency. Benefits: • programmes and courses modified according to the verification of learning outcomes conducted by the teaching staff in synergy with labour market needs, and opinions of students and alumni.
8	Balanced Scorecard SWOT or other analysis	All the IT tools required financial and conceptual efforts to be developed. Once implemented, they have been considered innovation and followed the process of innovation dissemination, with some resistance at the beginning and acceptance after 3-4 cycles. However, monitoring of their efficiency and technical support are still required in order to obtain possibly the highest outcomes. To assure quality, information flow among all stakeholders is needed and provided.

7. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment, University of Warsaw

№	Descriptive Topics	Text
1	Source of best practice example	**University of Warsaw** http://www.mish.uw.edu.pl/studia-w-mish , HEI website; http://www.mish.uw.edu.pl/
2	Name of activity	Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
3	Relevance of activity	1.3. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
4	Abstract	The master and student relationship is at the very core of interdisciplinary studies offered by the Interfaculty College of Humanities. Each student is provided with continuous care and supervised by a tutor (scientific patron) chosen by the student from among the faculty of the University of Warsaw and the Polish Academy of Sciences. Each tutor should be an expert in the discipline closest to scientific interests of a given student. The student-tutor relationship is based on mutual consent. A student may have one tutor throughout his or her studies or change tutors annually (which means that a student may study under the supervision of various faculty members during his/her time at the University. A student could have two tutors at the same time, if the chosen syllabus requires that. The tutor helps the student to select discipline, curricula, learning methods, approves annual reports prepared by the student, including lists of the courses to be completed, ECTS and grades obtained each year. The selected curriculum corresponds to the degree of specialisation of a given student's interests. In the initial years, students can take general courses in order to become acquainted with the subject matter and to decide on the major(s), but it is also possible – in the case of the students with well-defined interests – to build their curricula around a specific discipline or a group of problems in a wider humanistic perspective. In the development of their respective curricula, the students are aided by College authorities, members of the College Council, their tutors, course patrons, and College PhD students. Being well-acquainted with the particularities of a given course and of its difficulty, they are able to safeguard the students from hasty decisions, and especially from choosing classes that are too difficult at early stages of advancement. However, it is not the professors who are the authors of the curricula, but the students themselves.

5	Conceptual basis	In compliance with the guidelines of ESG Standard 1.3, the curriculum and education strategy of the College of Humanities provides for:
		• recognition of students' diversity and variety of their needs through the provision of flexible curricula;
		• flexible use of various educational methods in support of the students' educational needs;
		• selection of appropriate forms of learning and instruction methods;
		• regular evaluation and adjustment of instruction methods and forms of learning;
		• strengthening the feeling of students' autonomy thanks to the provision of teachers' support and directions;
		• promotion of student-teacher mutual respect;
		• complaint procedures in place to be applied by the students, if needed.
6	Objective	A list of "to do" statements:
		• strengthening student-tutor relationship;
		• providing institutional support to the tutors, if needed.
		• adequate institutional recognition of the tutors' efforts;
		• better recognition of students' needs.

8. Information management, University of Warsaw

№	Descriptive Topics	Text
1	Source of best practice example	**University of Warsaw,** Agata Wroczynska Head of the Office for Quality of Education
2	Name of activity	Information management
3	Relevance of activity	1.7. Information management
4	Abstract	In compliance with Standard 1.7, the University of Warsaw collects, analyses and uses data in order to more effectively manage curricula and to efficiently assure the quality of learning and teaching. The university periodically examines levels of students', PhD students' and faculty members' satisfaction with curricula and learning conditions. http://www.pejk.uw.edu.pl/?p=871) There are also annual polls on the enrolment process at the university http://www.pejk.uw.edu.pl/?page_id=405). In the recent years, research into the careers of the alumni has been carried out. The study has included analyses of educational paths of selected groups of students (cf. report: http://eduentuzjasci.pl/zespoly/186-publikacje/raport/raport-z-badania/monitorowanie-losow-absolwentow-uczelni-wyzszych/979-monitorowanie-losow-absolwentow-uczelni-wyzszych.html). A study on student dropout rates has also been recently carried out. From March to June 2015, the UW conducted qualitative research into dropout rates at the UW. The research goal of the project was to better understand the dropout phenomenon at the UW, to know the reasons and circumstances of dropping out of the university (during or immediately after the first year of study). The study methodology was based on 28 in-depth interviews. On 19th of June, a meeting was convened to present research results and recommendations concerning: 1. Steps taken by the university when a student chooses a study programme. 2. Systemic solutions concerning the diversity of knowledge levels, choice of lecturer, and work on the quality of classes.

| | | The findings of the above-presented studies are used to prepare recommendations aiming at improving the quality of teaching/learning at the university. |
| | | In compliance with the university system of learning/teaching quality assurance and improvement, each academic unit (faculty) annually prepares a report, in which it describes its strengths and weaknesses in the scope of quality assurance (in regards to the curricula, faculty, resources etc.). Individual reports, analysed by the Office for Teaching and Learning Quality Assurance, are used to draw a general report at the university level. A list and schedule of corrective measures to be taken form an important part of the report.

The above mentioned reports are published at:

www.bjk.uw.edu.pl |

9. Teaching Incentive Fund , University of Gdańsk

№	Descriptive Topics	Text
1	Source of best practice example	**Teaching Quality Department, University of Gdańsk** ug.edu.gda.pl, jakoscksztalcenia.ug.edu.pl
2	Name of activity	Teaching Incentive Fund (Fundusz Innowacji Dydaktycznych)
3	Relevance of activity	Designing methodologies fit for the purpose; implementing processes.
4	Abstract	innovativeness, sustainability, efficiency, setting, creating, computing, verifying,
5	Conceptual basis	The basic idea behind the activity was to create and develop a tool to provide financial support to the most creative and valuable ideas in higher education. The Teaching Incentive Fund is intended for university scientists and doctoral students.
6	Objective	- raise the level of teaching quality awareness; - create and maintain helpful educational tools and events; - support the implementation of innovative working methods; - support in focusing on educational and didactic income.
7	Implementation process	Each academic year, the Teaching Incentive Fund administers a financial budget to support innovative educational ideas. Till 10th of September, applicants are obliged to fill in the forms for financial grants, in which they describe the project idea, its purpose and benefits, in particular educational income for students and the university itself. The Vice-rector decides about financial support for the aforementioned projects. Granted ideas should be implemented for at least one academic year. Applicants complete their projects with a summary report, in which they describe achieved project goals and tasks. Summary reports are followed by a financial settlement of the project.

8	Balanced or Scorecard SWOT or other analysis	- manufacturing efficiency; - post planning failures; - emerging technologies; - shortage of resources.

10. Council of Employers,

University of Ecology and Management in Warsaw, Faculty of Architecture

№	Descriptive Topics	Text
1.	Source of best practice example	**University of Ecology and Management in Warsaw, Faculty of Architecture,** Bogdan Gorczyca, PhD, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Architecture, Quality Assurance & Enhancement
2.	Name of activity	Council of Employers
3.	Relevance of activity	The activity is related to the following components of ESG Part 1 Standard: 1.1 Policy for quality assurance; 1.2 Design and approval of programmes; 1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes.
4.	Abstract	The main aim of the activity is an ongoing cooperation between the Faculty of Architecture and employers and potential employers of faculty graduates, and members of the Council of Employers. The distinctive and innovative feature of the activity is a win-win strategy, which is a *sine qua non* condition for its success and effectiveness. While both parties are working together on elaborating valuable and attractive educational offer of the Faculty of Architecture, development of quality culture, creating an environment, which promotes and encourages enhancement of mutual business links between members of the Council and the Faculty of Architecture mainly concentrates on: - elaborating and submitting for consultation existing and new study programmes, - supervising research conducted on the request of individual institutions; - providing consulting services.

		The institutions, which are members of the Council:
		• conduct evaluation and advise on intended learning outcomes for existing and new study programmes taking into account present and foreseen expectations of the labour market; • submit lists of practical problems, which can be used by students as final dissertation topics; • offer placements for practical training and internships. Special attention is paid to practice-oriented study programmes.
5.	Conceptual basis	The activity is rooted in the Mission Statement of the Faculty, which reads that the main focus on individual fields of study includes high quality and interdisciplinary character of training, ensuring up to date specialisations and adaptation of education contents to evolving expectations of the labour market.
6.	Objective	The activity of the Council of Employers is intended to: • support the Faculty in developing and enhancing its education offer, keeping it up-to-date and making it attractive both for students and employers; • bring new practices, trends and developments in technology to the classrooms; • offer attractive practical placements to students; • provide employers with consulting services on request; • create conditions for tightening business relations between members of the Council.
7.	Implementation process	The preparatory stage mainly included the identification and selection of relevant institutions and signing agreements with them. The activity was kicked-off with the first meeting. At present, it is an ongoing process with regular, scheduled meetings. The new members are invited basing on mutual interests. As the Faculty offers a wide range of programmes (ranging from Design, Interior Architecture and Landscape Architecture to Spatial Planning and Development and Architecture) and the Council comprises institutions representing different interests, it was proven time-effective to occasionally organise meetings of sub-groups dealing with specific issues.

		Evidence of success: this year, two practice-oriented study programmes were elaborated with a significant input from the Council of Employers and approved by PKA.
8.	SWOT	**STRENGHTS** • effective and brief decision-making process; • very good relations with and between employers; • growing number of members who are university graduates. **WEAKNESSES** • lack of enthusiasm for collaborating with industry on the part of academics. **OPPORTUNITIES** • changes in law promoting cooperation between business and higher education institutions e.g. tax reductions for businesses offering internships; • positive changes in attitudes of academics towards cooperation with external stakeholders; • success of newly launched practice-oriented study programmes. **THREATS** • further demographic decline and growing surplus of well-qualified graduates looking for jobs; • emigration of graduates who served internships and were expected to continue their careers with host institutions.

11. PDCA cycle and the pedagogical quality assessment , University of Coimbra

№	Descriptive Topics	Text
1.	Source of best practice example	**University of Coimbra** Management system at the University of Coimbra [SG.UC] Quality policy of the University of Coimbra, namely points 1 and 3.
2.	Name of activity	PDCA cycle and pedagogical quality assessment
3.	Relevance of activity	1.7 Information management
4.	Abstract	Using the PDCA cycle [Plan – Do – Check – Act] in the evaluation of education quality allows for the participation of the entire academic community in the production of information relevant to the continuous improvement of the teaching-learning process and to the quality of courses offered by the UC.
5.	Implementation process	PLAN: Each year, evaluation procedures concerning pedagogical quality assessment are scheduled (at the end of each semester of the 1st and 2nd cycle study programmes since the academic year 2008/09, and at the end of the 1st year and upon the conclusion of dissertations as part 3rd cycle study programmes since the academic year 2011/12) and implemented improvement actions are made public. DO: In the surveying process, which includes pedagogical surveys, teaching staff and students are asked to analyse some aspects considered important for the pedagogical quality and for the continuous improvement cycle. Student surveys aim to measure the degree of satisfaction with aspects related to the course (conditions of functioning) and to quality assessment of the course units and professors. The professors are asked to assess the course(s) and course unit(s) they teach. The professors also identify the main strengths and weaknesses of course units and are asked to reflect upon improvements that could be made. Self-assessment reports are prepared for each course at the end of each academic year. A coordinator is responsible for preparing the final report, though it is recommended that this exercise involves the participation of students, professors and other bodies related to a given course (e.g. trainee host bodies, professional associations, research units). In the report, provided that indicators are made available (e.g.: demand for the course,

		pedagogical effectiveness, academic information), the course coordinator performs a SWOT analysis (in accordance with different parameters laid down in the A3ES study-cycle self-assessment guide), defines improvement measures and assesses the extent to which measures defined the previous year have been effectively put into practice.
		At faculty level, the assessment cycle involves the preparation of a report, which also includes a SWOT analysis concerning research, teaching, internationalisation, human resources, students' integration and school success, employability, partnerships, and scientific productivity. In the light of self-assessment, the faculties reassess their Action Plans and introduce adjustments they consider relevant.
		CHECK: The Evaluation and Continuous Improvement Division (DAMC) analyses the results (quantitative and qualitative ones) for each faculty and for the university as a whole and points out critical results that should lead to improvement actions.
		ACT: The assessment closes with a discussion of the main results at each faculty and with monitoring of less favourable results and subsequent actions. A pedagogical quality management report is prepared each year at the university level and made available to the public on the HEI webpage.
		The assessment cycle described above provides a lot of information that can be used by the faculties and the university to define the courses on offer, pedagogical regulations, support measures for students, and pedagogical training for professors.
6.	BSC, SWOT or other analysis	The practice is universal The surveys and the templates for the course and faculty self-assessment reports are the same for all the faculties. The practice is relatively easy to implement at any HEI and requires no significant expenditure. The practice is effective The survey results allow to have a quantitative and qualitative measure of critical points; together with a SWOT analysis, it allows to define improvement actions to be implemented the following year, in line with the faculty and strategic plan. These actions are monitored in the next cycle of assessing teaching quality. Results of pedagogical surveys and SWOT analyses are used to support decisions on issues, such as restructuring of the courses on offer, redistribution of teaching staff, management of material resources and spaces, etc. The surveying process is reviewed and improved systematically on the basis of comments provided by teachers and students. The response rates obtained show high levels of participation among students and teachers. The practice is innovative

		Since 2010/11, pedagogical surveys are integrated into the academic management system. This means that the results are immediately available on the same platform with different levels of aggregation in accordance with participants' responsibility. Data characterising students and their academic results is automatically produced. Completion of course self-assessment report on an IT platform allows for the monitoring of improvement actions and for coordination with national accreditation agency platform.
		The IT system automatically invites students and teaching staff to fill in the questionnaires, and various communications are sent through different channels calling for participation.
		<u>The practice can provide a benchmark for other practices.</u>
		Main benefits from the application of the best practice
		The biggest benefit of this practice is: the involvement of the entire academic community in the process of continuous improvement, the adoption of corrective measures and the possibility of informed decision-making.
		Difficulties and risks related to the application of the best practice
		The difficulties relate to maintaining active involvement of all stakeholders and to producing a considerable amount of information. The biggest risk is the routinisation of the process.

11. Integration and ease of use of the IQA information system, Universidade do Minho

№	Descriptive Topics	Text
1	Source of best practice example	**Universidade do Minho** http://www.uminho.pt/uminho/qualidade Quality Manual (http://www.uminho.pt/docs/quality/2012/06/14/quality-manual-uminho-1-1-2012.pdf), section 8.1.
2	Name of activity	Designing and implementing an integrated information system to support IQAS.
3	Relevance of activity	1.7 Information management
4	Abstract	The comprehensiveness of UMinho IQA system (SIGAQ-UM) and the on-line application of its main instruments implied the need for a better integration of sometimes autonomous information systems into a single institutional information system, which, in turn, required well defined procedures for the management of programmes and course units. It was thus decided to set up a specific information system to support SIGAQ-UM fully integrated with the University Information System, featuring data gathering and analysis functionalities (including on-line surveys), on-line preparation of self-assessment reports and monitoring of action plans, allowing for a paperless environment throughout the system. Detailed specifications were drafted and adopted for the type, amount and format/presentation of indispensable data forming background information to support self-reporting at the course unit, programme and school level, as well as for the definition of data sources and data analysis. The data was organised into different blocks (such as survey results, pass/failure rates, completion rates, employability indicators, access to course unit portfolios, access to aggregated data or to the full report from other (lower) levels of reporting, etc.). The background information becomes automatically available when opening the on-line self-reporting form. An agile process for accessing information was devised, through selective and user-friendly viewing interfaces, which allowed for easy and interactive navigation among a highly significant volume of information. A user can consult information at any time while drafting the self-

		evaluation report by simply clicking an appropriate icon and can automatically return to the report.
		Since the background information is prepared separately and beforehand, the drafting of self-assessment reports stands for a predominantly analytical process, free of bureaucratic load and relatively light on academic community.
		So organised data feeds the internal dissemination of information on the results of the application of IQA instruments in order to provide feedback on the feedback, and the Institutional Progress Chart as a time series of a set of performance indicators allowing for a dynamic view of the development of the University.
		The approach proved successful and effective and was identified as a best practice in the external review of SIGAQ-UM by the national QA Agency A3ES.
5	Conceptual basis	UMinho's Quality Manual explicitly considers institutional self-knowledge as an essential starting point for internal quality assurance. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning processes involves a huge amount of quantitative and qualitative data on the organisation, operation and results of study programmes. It is therefore essential for the information system supporting IQA to be firmly anchored into the University Information System and to allow all relevant stakeholders easy interactive access to and navigation through readily available information.
6	Objective	• To design and implement a specific information system to support IQAS, fully integrated into the University Information System. • To provide ready availability of predefined data and indicators as background information for the elaboration of self-assessment reports. • To allow easy surfing background information thanks to selective viewing interfaces.
7	Implementation process	The design and implementation of the IQA information system according to the specified objectives involved the following phases: • Identification and analysis of requirements; • Careful and detailed functional specification of each data set (module), namely at course unit, study programme and school level, ensuring ease of interactive selective access; • Development of different computing modules, feeding from the University Information System; • Tests prior to the implementation followed by the production of user manuals and training aimed at the end users.

| 8 | Balanced Scorecard/ SWOT or other analysis | Main benefits (opportunities/strengths): Full integration with the University Information System as a unique source for data, thus ensuring data reliability. Ready availability of specially prepared background information prior to the elaboration of self-assessment reports, thus reducing bureaucratic load on academic staff and stimulating self-reflection (analytical) and enhancement-led nature of self-assessment reports. Easy navigation through huge volumes of information on selective and interactive basis. Potential shortcomings and risks: "Upstream" constraints of the organisation and availability of reliable information on the teaching/learning processes must be carefully tackled with, to avoid hampering system effectiveness. Potential tendency for members of the academic community less familiar with SIGAQ-UM to misinterpret the information system as being the IQA system itself, and not a tool to support the IQA system. |

12. Streamlining the process of teaching and learning self-assessment and emphasising of reflective practices among various actors, Universidade do Minho

№	Descriptive Topics	Text
1	Source of best practice example	**Universidade do Minho** http://www.uminho.pt/uminho/qualidade Quality Manual (http://www.uminho.pt/docs/quality/2012/06/14/quality-manual-uminho-1-1-2012.pdf), section 5.3.
2	Name of activity	Teaching and learning self-assessment - Progressive streamlining, emphasising reflective practices among various actors.
3	Relevance of activity	1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programe 1.1 Policy for quality assurance
4	Abstract	The SIGAQ-UM strategy for monitoring, assessing and improving teaching has been developed for successive levels of intervention and gradually aggregated. It mainly consists in the preparation of annual self-assessment reports, in accordance with pre-defined specifications and format. The starting point for the analysis is the course level (course unit), which constitutes the basis for the organisation, planning and operation of teaching, and is located at the core of teaching and learning processes, as well as the interaction between its main actors (students and teachers). Quality assurance mechanisms for teaching are developed in progressive "quality cycles", starting from the level closest to the learning environments upwards to the following levels of analysis: the study programme, the organic unit (school) and UMinho as a whole. Detailed specifications concerning the structure of the self-assessment reports have been developed to facilitate their on-line preparation. A model structure has been adopted for different reports, which establishes a distinction between the background information that underlies the self-assessment process and the self-assessment exercise *per se*: • The background information is imported from sources and databases forming UMinho's information system, as well as aggregated appraisals submitted at other levels of analysis. It

		is automatically available upon opening a report. Agile access to information is thus provided thanks to selective viewing interfaces, which allow for easy and interactive navigation among highly significant volume of information.
		• The electronic form for the elaboration of the report is pre-formatted and includes self-reflection on basic aspects of the organisation, functioning and results of teaching at the level of analysis in question, the identification of strengths and weaknesses (or SWOT analysis), and specific fields to suggest improvement measures and identify best practices to be included in best practice portfolio.
		Having in mind that background information is prepared separately and in advance, the drawing of self-assessment reports becomes a predominantly analytical process, less bureaucratic and relatively light on pedagogical coordinators. However, the process ensures systematic identification of potential situations of poor quality thanks to a process of automatic identification of results that require further examination, in accordance with flagging criteria defined in the Quality Manual. If a course unit is flagged and its results need to be further examined (i.e. results stray significantly from the established goals), the self-assessment report must include reflection from the course unit coordinator on the reasons that may be at the root of those results, as well as a suggestion for an action plan to overcome or minimise the detected problems. Such reflections and suggestions are resumed at the next level of analysis – the study programme self-assessment report, which shall explicitly include a proposal for an action plan aimed at the resolution of encountered problems or a proper rationalisation for the lack of need for a formal action plan to tackle the situation in question. It is a task of Pedagogical Council to analyse and validate action plans for improvement proposed by the Study Programme Directors. Consequently, there are appropriate safety measures to ensure that such situations are duly analysed and handled.
		The structure of the reports also ensures that, even in the case of course units and study programmes without instances of flagging, there is an opportunity to present recommendations for improvement, particularly in terms of pedagogical innovation, as part of unremitting contribution towards continuous improvement.
		There are provisions for follow-up on the implementation of action plans. In particular, self-assessment reports always require an appreciation of the answers given to the

		recommendations and improvement plans included in the previous assessment.
		The practice proved to be successful and effective, and was identified as a best practice in the external review of SIGAQ-UM by the national QA Agency A3ES.
5	Conceptual basis	The complexity of teaching and learning processes, insufficient experience concerning the assessment of teaching and the level of detail, which characterises external QA standards on the subject have justified particular care for and substantially higher level of detail of the strategy for QA in teaching and learning as an essential element of UMinho's IQA system (SIGAQ-UM). Consequently, the methodologies for QA of teaching are presented in much detail in the Quality Manual, ensuring progressive streamlining of the system in order to emphasise reflective practices during the preparation of successive self-assessment reports at the levels ranging from a course unit to a school.
6	Objective	• Ensuring that self-evaluation reports are predominantly analytical, free of bureaucratic load and relatively light on academic community. • Using self-reflection results as qualitative input data for higher levels of analysis.
7	Implementation process	• Development of self-assessment reports on teaching and learning gradually aggregated at successive levels of intervention (at course unit, degree programme, school and university levels). • Preparation, in advance, of proper background information to support self-reflection. • Use of a flagging mechanism to signal potential problems. • Setting up 'feedback on feedback' procedures and follow-up improvement plans.
8	Balanced Scorecard SWOT or other analysis	Main benefits (opportunities/strengths): • Reducing bureaucratic load in the application of IQAS, without hindering the system's effectiveness. • Better use of qualitative information gathered along self-assessment procedures (at course unit, degree programme and school levels). • Motivation and more active participation of academic community. Potential shortcomings and risks: • After a few annual quality-cycles, academics may see and treat self-assessment exercises as mere

		routine work. It is essential to continuously provide feedback on the feedback to all stakeholders.

14. Including students in the audit programme of the IPVC IQAS – IPVC

№	Descriptive Topics	Text
1	Source of best practice example	**Polytechnic Institute of Viana do Costelo**
2	Name of activity	Including students in the audit programme of the IPVC IQAS.
3	Relevance of activity	1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance
4	Abstract	The IPVC considers self-evaluation as a crucial opportunity for: strengthening self-analysis and self-evaluation; promoting internal debate; QMS process revision and identification of areas for improvement. One of the principles of IQA at the IPVC is active intervention of internal community (staff and students) and external entities in the process.
5	Conceptual basis	The participation of students in the QMS - IPVC is structured from the global level, through the IPVC and schools context to the courses (study cycles) (directly or through their representatives). The forms are numerous, but all of them are fundamental and interconnected, thanks to: participation in the General Council and Academic Council; regular meetings of the Academic Federation, Student Associations and Management Bodies; participation in surveys on school, course/teachers quality and support services (libraries, laboratories, food, accommodation, scholarship); discussion and approval of course reports by the Course Commission; analysis of quality assurance teaching aspects and definition of improvement by the Pedagogical Council; workshops about QMS, accreditation/ certification processes and integration in internal audit teams. In this context, it will focus on student participation in the QMS - IPVC, namely their inclusion in the internal audits. To ensure efficient selection of students, for their inclusion in internal audits and for the needs of the transparency of the process, a procedure that fits these essential aspects was defined. Audit student forms (http://www.ipvc.pt/queres-ser-auditor-ipvc) were created and included submission as basic selection criteria (depending on the audit, to which they would apply) course and year of studies, experience/training in audit methodologies, participation in workshops or meetings organised by the institution and the date of application. To ensure that the students are prepared for the audit, workshop for selected candidates was conducted and students held preparatory meetings with the audit team.

6	Objective	Actively involve the students in the continuous improvement of the quality management system (QMS-IPVC).
7	Implementation process	It is intended that the QMS-IPVC is linked with the institution's governance mechanisms and the dynamics of the academic community; it is capable of generating information, ensures analysis and dissemination. In accordance with the mission of the institution, it was considered essential to ensure continued and effective follow-up, find strengths and improve evaluation methodologies in learning environments and processes. For the successful operation of QMS – IPVC, it has to be recognised, needs to imply responsible involvement of all, and should be evaluated internally, in accordance with needs.
8	Balanced Scorecard SWOT or other analysis	***Main benefits resulting from the application of best practice*** Students' point of view/vision is considered a strategic information to IPVC. The self-assessment process and their inclusion in audits form a key contribution to conformity assessment and to identifying opportunities for improvement, because students, being the main users of the majority of services provided by the institution are the main stakeholders of quality assurance in the scope of learning and student support services. ***Difficulties and risks related to the application of best practice.*** A questionnaire was prepared to identify the main aspects and improve their integration. The experimental methodology was initiated in 2013. 11 students participated in 18 internal audits. In 2014, 58 students candidates and 25 students were included in audit teams. Next, a questionnaire was prepared for students who participated in internal audits in 2013 and 2014 and some questions were formulated with the aim to measure student satisfaction. Questions like: quality of information about audit participation and methodologies, knowledge about QMS-IPVC; opinion about evaluation promotion; selection of candidates; integration in the audit team; the previous meeting; access to documentation and support; contribution of the audit experience to knowledge of the system and processes. Some critical points were detected and fixed earlier this year. A SWOT analysis has been made. Selected strengths and weakness are presented below: Strengths: Practical and theoretical experience; contact with QMS; increased trust in the institution; more knowledge about processes, services and administrative procedures; increased students' involvement and participation; Weakness: Students have limited time available to participate; insufficient background knowledge about iQAS and Standard Guidelines; audit preparation meeting; the number of

		workshops about quality management skills, the system and concepts.

1.5 Desmaterialização e Otimização dos Processos,
The University of Madeira

According to European Standard Guidelines, a well implemented internal quality assurance system provides key information on the quality of an institution's activities and produces recommendations for improvements and thus ensures its visibility.

Constant ensuring and improving quality are inseparable partners, in symbiosis and aware of new mechanisms for adapting to new challenges. In this sense, QAS seeks to involve representatives of various sectors and analyses the processes, always with a view to implement quality improvement measures.

Strong budgetary constraints, which Portuguese universities have experienced in recent years, have accentuated the tendency of reducing administrative support, which these institutions need to ensure various fundamental aspects of their operations. In addition, growing requirements to implement complex and expensive administrative processes are imposed on all stakeholders. In this demanding environment, there is a need to make the processes less challenging and ensure greater efficiency in their implementation. The implementation of an internal quality assurance system is essential and should be based on a document management system, which will bring benefits to all and increase participation.

№	Descriptive Topics	Text
1	Source of best practice example	**The University of Madeira**
2	Name of activity	Desmaterialização e Otimização dos Processos
3	Relevance of activity	1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programe 1.1 Policy for quality assurance
4	Abstract, concept, objectives	The University of Madeira has dedicated significant efforts to computerise its processes in order to improve services it provides to its students and employees. However, many of its activities are still supported by traditional means, with using paper forms and following lengthy filed and forwarding processes that are justified solely by the need to ensure their traceability. In some cases, the forwarding of documents among stakeholders represented 90% of the process runtime, coupled with difficulty of accessing the information contained in these documents.

In order to mitigate these problems and ensure greater efficiency of the management of the entire institution, the University of Madeira has decided to adopt a document management system featuring management capacity typical |

		for business processes (business process management) that would allow all its units to introduce the dematerialization of processes and better control and traceability of all activities in a systematic and transversal way. On the other hand, thanks to document management, improved access and sharing of documents among all stakeholders and ensuring proper access control is facilitated. Note that the documents form the basis for many of institution's activities. The implementation of a document management project allows full monitoring of communication through the workflow system.

The organisation of services and the simplification of administrative processes allows for a greater efficiency, increasing service responsiveness and reducing the response time to standard tasks. |
| 5. | Implementation process | The process aims to dematerialize and streamline all academic documents for which it makes sense and is legally permitted. Cooperation and synchronisation mechanisms will be used to facilitate the tasks assigned to different actors, and to ensure traceability and active identification of bottlenecks in the process.

The processes directly linked to the Academic Affairs Unit, where the work began, are under development and improvements in streamlining these with positive manifestations of teachers, non-teaching staff and students are already visible.

Because of its importance to the institution, "Travel and Missions" is one of the measures already under review. It will follow the process of purchasing other goods and services. Top managers, representatives of stakeholders and users of these services have been invited to participate in the analysis of the process that will be soon launched on the platform.

The computerisation of academic processes is intended to achieve average times for task resolution amounting to 48 hours (excludes delays caused by force majeure).

As for travel, it is intended to make the schedule, budget and authorisation of a journey in less than 48 hours. It is expected a reduction of costs in travel, although there are no data to estimate this reduction. Thanks to generalisation and adaptation mechanisms implemented for travel and accommodation purchases, it is intended to make more rapid acquisitions of the processes, particularly with regard to procedural components, except for external design constraints. In particular, it is intended that the components submission and approval can be performed in less than one week. |

6.	Balanced Scorecard SWOT or other analysis	Main benefits derived from applying the best practice:
		Initiatives have been taken in the UMa to meet the needs and expectations of the students, those involved in the education process and civil society. The feedback from those who participated in the process has been very positive, including that of those who perform routine tasks, as they have shown not only openness to change but that they did participate effectively.
		Difficulties and risks linked to the implementation of the best practice:
		Difficulty in motivating all the parties to participate in the proceedings, to take responsibility for their quality and to engage in improvement processes. It has been a very complex task that has required constant attention and awareness.

16. Weekly meetings of authorities to ensure the closing of the quality circle, University of Nova Gorica

No.	Descriptive Topics	Text
1	Source of best practice example	**University of Nova Gorica, Slovenia** www.ung.si
2	Name of activity	Weekly meetings of authorities to ensure the closing of the quality circle Activity implemented as part of the project: "Modernisation of the quality assurance system and reform of programmes at the University of Nova Gorica"
3	Relevance of activity	1.1 Policy for quality assurance
4	Abstract	Weekly meetings attended by the Rector, Vice-Rectors, Deans of schools and Heads of research units, President of the IQA Committee, the student recruitment specialist, and if necessary, the Head of Public Relations and a representative of the Career Centre are organised. These meetings have proven to be successful as they allow fast adapting to the necessary changes and effective communication between internal stakeholders. This practice is transferable and may have various functions, e.g. setting, verifying, creating – depending on each decision discussed.
5	Conceptual basis	The fundamental idea behind the activity is to ensure the closing of the quality circle and fast adoption of the changes in line with the HEI's IQA Manual: https://www.ung.si/org/img/storage/pravilniki-obrazci/poslovnik_kakovosti_en.pdf
6	Objective	The aim of the weekly meetings is to ensure that all UNG units follow the uniform IQA procedures and that the necessary changes are implemented as soon as possible and as effectively as possible.
7	Implementation process	The decisions reached at the weekly meetings are adopted immediately or via the upcoming Senate session of the relevant school or the upcoming session of the QA Committee (depending on the nature of the issue discussed).
8	Balanced Scorecard, SWOT or other analysis	External factor affecting the activity: Certain provisions of the national legislation might impede the implementation of decisions reached. The meetings are also an opportunity for

		staff to establish more efficient communication and share experience (professional growth).

17. Introduction of a tailored mode of studies for students – athletes, University of Nova Gorica

No.	Descriptive Topics	Text
1	Source of best practice example	**University of Nova Gorica, Slovenia** www.ung.si
2	Name of activity	Introduction of a tailored mode of studies for students – athletes
3	Relevance of activity	1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
4	Abstract	The scheme represents an opportunity for athletes to study/complete studies while continuing their sports careers. At the same time, this is an innovative form of long-term cooperation with sports clubs and similar organisations in terms of providing education opportunities for athletes.
5	Conceptual basis	The scheme is unique in the Slovenian HEI area, since UNG is the only Slovene university granting the status of a student – athlete also to athletes who do not possess the official title of a "top athlete" (awarded by the national Olympic Committee), but assigns the status to all students who are registered athletes, take part in competitions and have relevant sports achievements.
6	Objective	The objective is to provide athletes with an opportunity to study and earn a degree while continuing their sports careers, in order to enhance their future employment opportunities.
7	Implementation process	UNG has adopted regulations determining the forms of adaptations of modes of study for students – athletes. Students – athletes apply for the status of an athlete via a formal procedure. During their studies, the athletes are offered additional support by the student recruitment specialist and (if they opt for this possibility) a tutor (a member of the teaching staff). When designing individual adaptations of the timetable and the curriculum, the sports club/coach is also invited to take part in the process. The student recruitment specialist also contacts the sports

		clubs and monitors the careers of athletes and their studies.
8	Balanced Scorecard SWOT	Internal factor affecting the activity: lack of staff. External factor: complex organisation – cooperation with many sports clubs and organisations is needed.

18. Centralised system for providing support on international issues, University of Nova Gorica

No.	Descriptive Topics	Text
1	Source of best practice example	**University of Nova Gorica, Slovenia** www.ung.si
2	Name of activity	Centralised system for providing support on international issues
3	Relevance of activity	1.6 Learning resources and student support
4	Abstract	UNG has a centralised system for providing support on international issues (mobility, international projects and cooperation). It is provided by the UNG International Office. The system has been successful, because it guarantees uniform procedures for all UNG units.
5	Conceptual basis	All international issues are covered by the same support service (International Office), which offers help to students and staff.
6	Objective	The objective is to provide students and staff with essential support concerning their mobility's or engagement in international projects/research in one place, i.e. in the most effective way.
7	Implementation process	The sequence depends on the character of each issue.
8	Balanced Scorecard SWOT	Internal factor affecting the activity: lack of staff.

19. Centralised electronic information system,
University of Nova Gorica

No.	Descriptive Topics	Text
1	Source of best practice example	**University of Nova Gorica, Slovenia** www.ung.si
2	Name of activity	Centralised electronic information system Activity implemented as part of the project: "Modernisation of the quality assurance system and reform of programmes at the University of Nova Gorica"
3	Relevance of activity	1.7 Information management 1.8 Public information
4	Abstract	UNG has a centralised electronic information system in place. This is an efficient way of informing relevant stakeholders. It also serves as a tool for gathering data (through student surveys).
5	Conceptual basis	To collect, release and process data through a common system.
6	Objective	The aim of the e-information system is to collect, process and release data to relevant stakeholders. In line with the provisions of the national legislation concerning sensitive data exposure, relevant information is published on UNG website.
7	Implementation process	The sequence depends on the character of each issue.
8	Balanced Scorecard, SWOT or other analysis	Internal factor affecting the activity: lack of long-term funding for further upgrading of the system.