

The Impact of e-Learning on External Quality Assurance and the Higher Education “Market”

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Who are we (in this room)?

(in alphabetical order)

- **Accreditation** Agencies
- Agencies for Higher Education
- Education **Evaluation** Centres
- European Commission
- European Student Union
- European Universities Association
- Open Universities
- **Quality Assurance** Agencies

Who are “they“?

(in alphabetical order)

- challenged / handicapped students
- (second) degree seekers
- employed (unemployed!) persons
- non-traditional students (having families or relatives to take care of, self-suppliers...)
- professionals (with real life experiences)
- students with special needs (alternative examination methods)
- ?traditional students?

• **the ratios???**

e-learning!

- e-learning?
- What about b-learning, l-learning, S-P-learning?
- And **e-teaching?**
 - professors substituted by TV-screens
 - “stars“
 - xyz

Bologna 1999 – Yerevan 2015 – Paris 2018

- *Enhancing the quality and relevance of learning and teaching is the main mission of the EHEA. We will encourage and support higher education institutions and staff in promoting pedagogical innovation in student-centred learning environments and **in fully exploiting the potential benefits of digital technologies for learning and teaching.***

Impact of e-learning

- on the market: **it's a coming thing**
- on HE in general: **it's a factor of and for (a) systemic change(s)**
- on QA in particular: **it's a great challenge with many questions marks**
- **And: It costs a lot of (North Sea oil) money**

External Quality Assurance

- consideration of internal quality assurance
- designing methodologies fit for purpose
- implementing processes
- peer-review experts
- criteria for outcomes
- reporting
- **complaints and appeals**

e-Quality Assurance

- QA **can have** positive impact on stakeholders
- How much should e-learning (AND TEACHING) be part of the “traditional” education delivery system?
- !Cross-cultural (different) e-learning situations and environments!
- Little research and common knowledge available at this time about applying QA assurance in e-learning and e-teaching

• **ENQA!!!**

HE market

- “Market” implies:
 - customers
 - target groups
 - demand and supply
 - competition between suppliers
 - competition between private and public suppliers
 - gap between fiction (possibilities) and reality (structural conditions, circumstances)
 - technological progress
 - at one point: customer relationship management!
 - **desirable conditions and given realities**

THAT’S WHY WE ARE HERE

The Market: Different Players (Actors)

in -hopefully- logical order

- **initiators and developpers** (per institution, per country, per continent [CDN-USA-MEX], subjects?): **HEI leaders, teachers**
 - **suppliers** (& deliverers): **ICT people**
 - **sellers** (“chewing gum for your eyes“): **marketing dept.**
 - **consumers**, rather *partners* (?) in knowledge creation: **students**
 - enrolling (which kind of contractualisation?)
 - staying! (non-completion rate/s!)
 - getting a degree (degree mills?)
- **QA: when and where, by whom?**

Higher e-Education “Market”

- growth and popularity in e-learning: 5,8 % annual European growth rate
- increasing popularity especially within / for master programs and extra-occupational studies
- Europe is the world’s 2nd largest buying region for e-learning “products”

Higher e-Education Market

- highly fragmented e-learning market
- split between corporate & academic learning
- Spain and UK lead adoption of e-learning in Europe

Ombudsman

(according to Wikipedia)

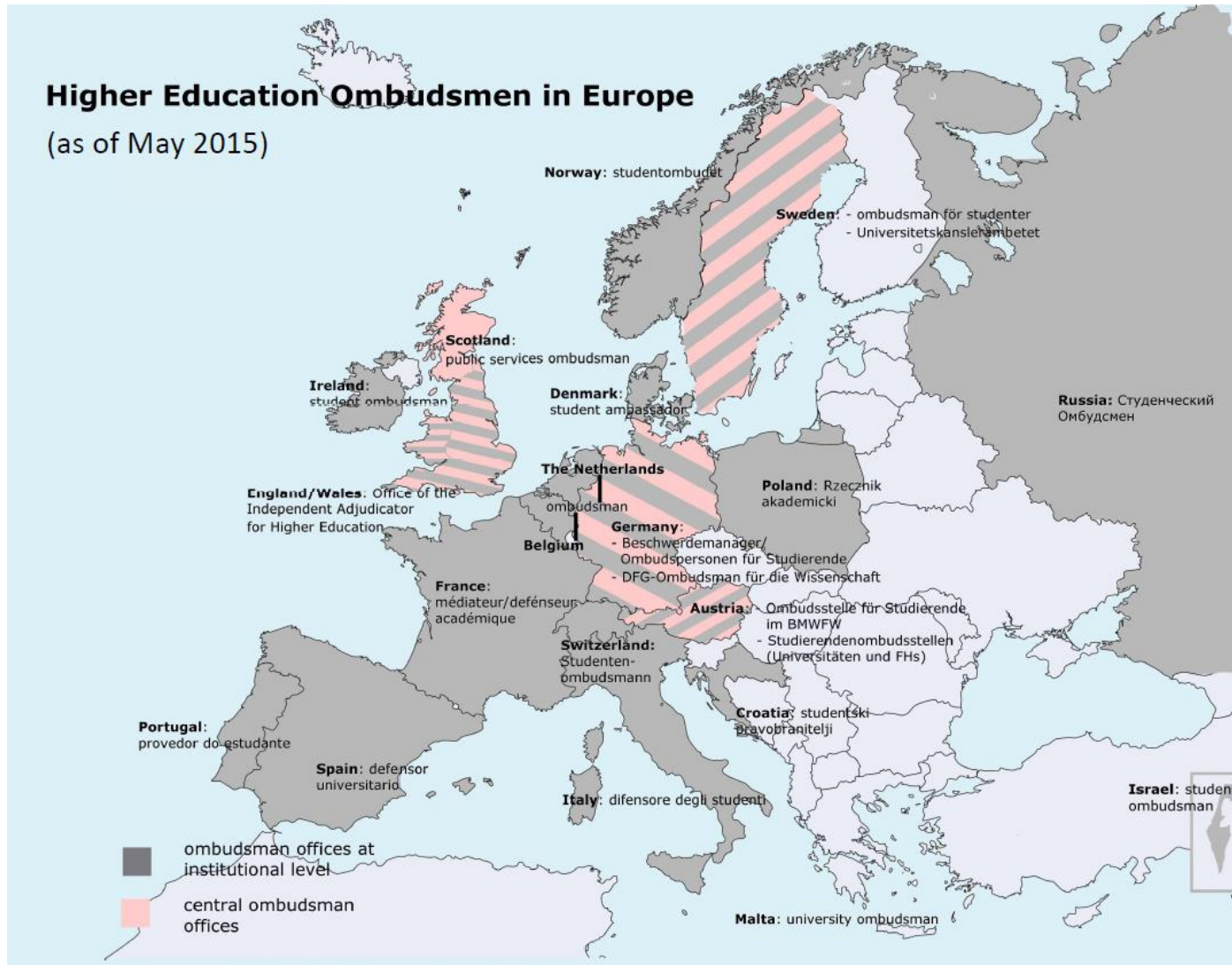
- An indigenous [Swedish](#), [Danish](#) and [Norwegian](#) term, ombudsman is etymologically rooted in the [Old Norse](#) word *umboðsmaðr*, essentially meaning **"representative"** (with the word *umbud/ombud* meaning proxy, attorney, that is someone who is authorized to act for someone else, a meaning it still has in the Scandinavian languages).

Ombudsmen in Higher Education

- since 1965 in Canada
- since the 1970s in the USA
- since 1985 in Mexico
- since 1993 in Malta (as the first European country)
- nowadays in: AM, AT, BE, CH, DE, DK, ES, FR, HR, IL, IRL, IT, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RU, SE, UK
- **European Network of Ombudsmen in Higher Education (ENOHE)**

Higher Education Ombudsmen in Europe

(as of May 2015)



ENOHE

- founded in 2003 in Amsterdam
- networking for existing ombudsmen offices, support for HEIS who want to set up Oms
- annual conferences (12 so far)
- occasional papers & conference reports
- website www.enohe.net

What do they do?

- help to solve other people's problems
- contribute to the improvement of delivery of services in teaching, examining, supervising, administrating, servicing (quality assurance / management on the micro level)
- annual reporting
- *“as much talking as possible, as little writing as necessary”* (**the Jose Manuel Bayod y Bayod – formula, 2010**)
- *“avoiding lawyers and courts”* (**Baroness Ruth Deech, 2009**)

QA: The Austrian Example

- **AQ Austria: Accreditation Guidelines for Private Universities [§ 17, (1) n]:**
 - *„Im Falle des Einsatzes von e-learning, blended learning und distance learning sind geeignete didaktische, technische, organisatorische und finanzielle Voraussetzungen gegeben, um die Erreichung der Qualifikationsziele des Studiums zu gewährleisten.“*
 - **If you offer e-learning you need appropriate didactical, technical, organizational and financial preconditions in order to guarantee student success....**

•FULL STOP /PERIOD

deutsch english magyar ελληνικά français slovenscina cesky italiano slovenski polski



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Some criticism!

- *“In practice, it seems as though online learning is simply a ‘feature enhancement’ (like adding rubber tires to wooden wheels) that allows colleges to make their offerings attractive to more people”*
- (Burck Smith, Is online education disruptive or not?, April 2011)

Some more criticism!

- *“Disadvantages capitalizing on these opportunities [hic of MOOCs] may come with some risk. The consumer of any commodity must always acknowledge the ‘buyer beware’ warning label, and this is unfortunately true with HE. Some disadvantages include:
 - Inflated expectations (esp. for transfer)
 - Coherence of the degree programs
 - Vulnerability”*

From: Three positives and negatives of HE commiditization for students

ESG 2015

(Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA)

- Standards and Guidelines for external QA
 - 2.7 Complaints and Appeals
 - *Complaints and appeals processes should be clearly defined as part of the design of external quality assurance processes and communicated to the institutions*

Green Paper UK 2015

- Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
Fulfilling our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice, November 2015

**Part B, The HE Sector,
Chapter 2: Provider Exit and Student
Protection**

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