

The European Students' Union

REPRESENTING STUDENTS SINCE 1982



Expectations of students on quality assurance in Europe

**ENQA Seminar – Quality Assurance in
the European context
Brussels, Belgium
15th of June 2017**

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Overview

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Content of Presentation



- 1. What is the European Students' Union?**
- 2. ESU's work on Quality Assurance**

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What is the European Students' Union?

students' union;

What?



- The European Students' Union (ESU) is an **umbrella organisation of 44 National Unions of Students (NUS) from 38 different countries**. Through its members, ESU represents over 15 million students in Europe
- The NUSes are open to all students in their respective country regardless of political persuasion, religion, ethnic or cultural origin, sexual orientation or social standing
- Our members are also student-run, autonomous, representative and **operate according to democratic principles**

The beginning....

West European Student Information Bureau

West European
Student
Information Bureau
WESIB

Minutes of the Board Meeting held in Stockholm, 18th October, 1982

Present:	<u>Members</u>	SFS	-	{Sweden}
		NJS UK	-	{United Kingdom}
		NSU	-	{Norway}
		UNEF ID	-	{France}
		SHI	-	{Iceland}
<u>Observers</u>	VVS/UNES	-	{Switzerland}	
	SYL	-	{Finland}	
	OH	-	{Austria}	

Main Working Areas



Social Dimension: Access and support

Funding and Governance: Public responsibility for education

Quality and transparency: Quality Assurance, Student Centred-Learning, Recognition, Qualifications Framework

Mobility and internationalisation

How Is ESU Working in These Areas?



- Representation & advocacy
- Research & concept development
- Capacity-building & information exchange

**ALL THESE WORKING FIELDS ARE ASPECTS OF
STUDENTS INVOLVEMENT IN THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF EHEA**

Current Involvement



Working Area Representation & Advocacy

- **Ministerial Conferences** (every 3 years)
- **Bologna Follow Up Group**
 - Board
 - **WG1 – Monitoring**
 - **WG2 – Fostering Implementation of agreed key commitments**
 - **WG3 – Policy development for new EHEA goals (co-chairs)**
 - **AG1 – EHEA International cooperation**
 - **AG2 – Diploma supplement revision**
 - **AG3 – Dealing with non-implementation**
 - **AG4 – Support for the Belarus Road-map**
- Cooperation with **European Commission** (Directorate General Education and Culture, DG EAC) and the **European Parliament** (Committee on Culture and Education, CULT)

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ESU's work on Quality Assurance

Assurance
Quality

ESU's work on QA



- In designing and promoting the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG2005 and ESG2015)
- Overview of QA implementation in the BP → BWSE.
- EUA's Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP)
- ENQA quality assurance agencies' evaluations
- Institutional evaluations organised by national quality assurance agencies.
- EQAF (co-organised by the the E4 group)
- QA related project lead by ESU or Projects in Partnership (ESPAQ, EQUIP)
- **ESU's QA Students Experts Pool**

E4 organisations



ESU's QA Student Experts Pool



In 2009, **ESU** established a **pool of** committed and well prepared **students** who aim to contribute to improve Higher Education provision in Europe through Quality Assurance procedures.

The establishment of this pool is a way how ESU is **promoting and developing student participation in Quality Assurance** all over Europe.

The pool is renewed once a year and has an **independent Steering Committee**, which launches the calls and selects the applicants based on public criteria.

ESU organises **study sessions, workshops** and other events for pool members where they are trained.

The pool **brings together** students from all parts of Europe, their **experience and knowledge**, and it is an excellent forum for debating, sharing views and learning about Quality Assurance.

These students contribute to **ESU policy making process**, act as **multipliers agents in their respective countries**, collaborate in several **projects, participate in Quality Assurance reviews**, etc.

ESU's QA Student Experts Pool



Principles of the Quality Assurance pool

- balanced by region and field of study
- run by students
- selecting the most competent students every year
- bringing student experiences together
- enhancing the role of students' in quality assurance

Cooperation

- National Students' Pools
- Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) of EUA
- ENQA - External evaluation of Quality Assurance Agencies
- Quality Assurance Agencies
- Higher Education Institutions

Over 50 Students are now participating in the pool.

They are:

- from 22 different European countries
- gender-balanced: 55% women, 45% men
- from 21 different study fields
- well trained and experienced

Students are committed to systematic improvements of higher education provision in Europe

You can contact the Steering Committee at qapoolsc@esu-online.org

ESU's work on QA



- Policy Paper on quality of Higher Education
 - Student-centred learning (SCL)
 - Qualifications frameworks
 - Recognition
 - **Quality assurance**
 - Transparency and information provision

ESU's policy on QA



- **Quality assurance**
- **Quality assurance should have multiple purposes.** Primarily among them is the **enhancement of quality in the learning-process**, including study programmes, learning opportunities and facilities available for students; **creating and promoting a quality culture within higher education institutions; staff development; increasing mutual trust between actors in higher education; enabling reciprocal recognition; facilitating comparability of qualifications and addressing the aspect of social dimension of higher education.** Moreover, as a logical consequence of institutional autonomy and the notion of higher education as a public responsibility, **quality assurance should also intend to hold higher education institutions accountable.** At the same time it **should provide relevant information about their activities and performance to students, external stakeholders and society at large.**

ESU's policy on QA



- **Internal Quality Assurance I**
- ESU believes that higher education institutions hold the primary responsibility for the quality of their education provision,... Key activities of the internal quality assurance systems should include monitoring and evaluating activities of all education delivery, including the study programmes and their design, and student support services.
- As full members of the academic community and competent co-responsible partners, students should be fully involved in defining the quality assurance policy of the institutions and its internal system...

ESU's policy on QA



- **Internal Quality Assurance II**

- Internal quality assurance systems should be aligned with higher education institutions' mission and strategic priorities and act as an integral part of the managerial structures of higher education institutions. ESU also emphasises that while quality assurance bodies are a supportive structure within the higher education institutions, they can neither replace governance bodies and student participation within these bodies, nor undertake their responsibilities.

ESU's policy on QA

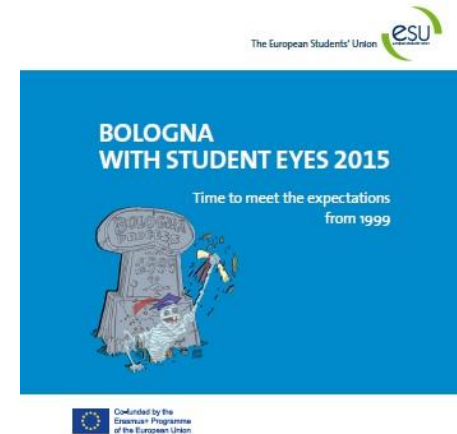


- **External Quality Assurance I**

- ESU believes that internal quality assurance systems should be supported and complemented by external quality assurance activities. Independent quality assurance bodies or agencies should carry these activities out through peer review evaluation, where students are also fully involved...
- External quality assurance bodies or agencies should have an autonomous responsibility for their operations, and the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports must not be influenced by third parties' political agendas.
- ESU demands student representation in the relevant governing and decision-making bodies of the quality assurance agencies. National governments are also responsible in setting up the frameworks for quality assurance in cooperation with students and other relevant stakeholders.

- **BWSE 2015 Recommendations I**

- Quality Assurance must continue to be a priority for higher education systems in order to remove obstacles to take up, pursue with and successfully complete degrees. It has to ensure academic freedom, integration of teaching, learning and research as well as prepare students for being active citizens in the future without excluding any of the groups within the society.



• BWSE 2015 Recommendations II

- Quality Assurance systems should be based on the principles and values of trust, participation and ownership of stakeholders and a drive for real improvement.
- The internal QA should embrace evaluating and monitoring all of education activities within a HEI. The reports from the evaluation have to be accessible for students, other stakeholders and wider public and include the recommendations that should serve for the action plans for future improvement. HEIs need to make sure that the progress is monitored.
- Independent QA agencies have to be established in every country across the EHEA to provide the complementary reviews and support HEIs in enhancing quality on institutional and programme level. The autonomous responsibility for their operations should ensure non-political character of the conclusions and recommendations.

• BWSE 2015 Recommendations III

- The meaningful representation of students is a must in the QA. Students have to be recognised as competent and equal partners and act as full members in the decision-making bodies of internal and external QA.
- It is essential that the revised version of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) in the EHEA are rapidly implemented in cooperation with national stakeholders. The student-centered learning standard is of an utmost importance and the countries across the EHEA should strive for full transformation of the national provisions to execute this standard in practice while carrying out the reviews with full and meaningful engagement of students.
- The possibilities for further development of EQAR should be explored in order to provide information about quality-assured higher education provision in EHEA. This could be achieved, for instance, by establishing a database of official degrees and study programmes offered within EHEA.

**Thank you for your attention.
Questions?**

Questions?

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ESU has received financial support from the European Commission through Erasmus+ Programme: KA3, Support for Policy Reform- Civil society cooperation in the field of education and training.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



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