Enhancing Quality Assurance in Higher Education

E-QUALITY

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General Quality Assurance Report

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About E-QUALITY project

The E-QUALITY project - Erasmus+, KA220-HED – Cooperation Partnerships in Higher Education - aims to improve quality assurance (QA) in higher education by integrating best practices from partner universities. It seeks to move beyond compliance to foster a genuine culture of quality through transparent rules and procedures. Key initiatives include establishing a Quality Assurance Management System, an E-QUALITY Platform, and a Training Course/MOOC for QA managers and administrators. These tools will standardize QA practices, enhance institutional capacities, and introduce new monitoring models.

The partners involved are the followings:

- Greece - University of Piraeus Research Centre (Coordinator)
- Italia -UNIMED - Mediterranean Universities Union
- Bulgaria - St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo, College of Pedagogy – Pleven
- Poland - Polytechnic University - Bialystok
- Cyprus - Neapolis University
- Cyprus - Enoros Consulting Limited

More information at: www.equality-programme.eu

Content

1. Introduction

The E-QUALITY project aims to survey the experience of higher education institutions in providing and maintaining quality management systems for education, as well as the technologies they apply to improve the quality of the educational process. Based on the results achieved, ideas for quality management will be propose by introducing universal rules and procedures applicable in educational institutions in the higher education system. The project focuses on quality improvement as a basis for the development of common European standards. The goal was to evaluate the effectiveness of the university's Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) by gathering stakeholder perceptions (students, university teachers, QA coordinators and administrative staff) on key quality criteria's and standards (teaching, learning process and resources, services, educational environment).

The mission of higher education to prepare highly qualified specialists for the labor market today, in the conditions of globality and strong competition, acquires new content and new dimensions. On the other hand, Quality management systems in the universities are essential for maintaining high educational standards, but they also face several challenges. Here are some of the key difficulties:

1. Resistance to Change – Implementing new standards and procedures can be met with opposition, especially if faculty and staff perceive them as adding bureaucratic burdens.

2. Lack of Resources – Effective quality management requires funding, skilled personnel, and technological infrastructure. Limited financial and human resources can hinder the proper functioning of these systems.

3. Balancing Academic Freedom and Quality Standards – Universities strive for innovation and independence in teaching and research, but aligning these aspirations with regulatory requirements can be challenging.

4. Objective Quality Assessment – Developing reliable mechanisms for evaluating teaching, curricula, and research requires careful design of criteria and methodologies.

5. Student Engagement – The success of quality systems depends on students actively providing feedback and participating in improvement processes, but motivating them can be difficult.

6. International Competition and Standards – Universities must adapt to global trends and accreditation systems, which often demand significant changes and additional efforts.

Policies and activities related to the implementation of quality requirements and quality management in European higher education institutions are determined by the European regulatory framework and national legal documents, as well as by regulations at subordinate level. They

provide the opportunity and the right to each higher education institution to develop and implement its own system of procedures, standards and forms for maintaining quality in education and for permanent monitoring and self-assessment of what has been achieved. Based on the understanding that internal control alone could not be sufficiently objective, the norms have provided for the need for the operation of an external instrument for monitoring and regulation of quality in higher education in the face of specific structures with evaluation and control functions. Quality assurance of higher education is a complex process based on a multi-component system.

2. Methodology and data collection process. Number and profile of respondents

For the purposes of the project, a survey of stakeholders (students, university teachers and administration staff) was conducted for the period March - May 2025. Three forms has been developed – Questionnaire for Students, Questionnaire for University teachers and Questionnaire for Administrative staff and quality experts. The content of the Questionnaire forms (each documents consist between 30-32 questions) were discussing among partners and the final decision to follow the instructions and if someone wants to add additional question it should be for their own survey. The polls are anonymous, forms – written. The questionnaires are developed according to the educational status and professional experience of the respondents. The survey was conducted online. Respondents receive a questionnaire by e-mail developed in Google Forms. They fill it out, and the interviewers receive the completed questionnaires in real time including tables, histograms, round diagrams and percentages.

On the basis of the studies carried out, an analysis was made of the experience of the university in providing and maintaining systems for quality management of education, as well as the technologies applied to improve the quality of the educational process. Based on the results achieved, ideas for quality management will be proposed by introducing universal rules and procedures applicable in educational institutions in the higher education system.

The first survey is intended for students. It is aimed at evaluating quality assurance at the university. Feedback is essential for understanding awareness, engagement and perception of quality assurance processes in higher education institutions. The data collected will help improve participation and shape future quality assurance initiatives. The sample meets the requirements for unintentionality of the selection of elements, representativeness and volume. A typical sample was formed by the method of percentage selection. Each partner had to ask 20 students.

The second survey is intended for university teachers. It is aimed at evaluating quality assurance at the university. Feedback is essential for understanding awareness, engagement and perception of quality assurance processes in higher education institutions. The data collected will help improve participation and shape future quality assurance initiatives. The sample meets the

requirements for unintentionality of the selection of elements, representativeness and volume. A typical sample was formed by the method of percentage selection. Each partner had to ask 10 university teachers.

The third survey is intended for members of the administration staff and members of the Quality and Accreditation Committee. It is aimed at evaluating quality assurance at the university. Feedback is essential for understanding awareness, engagement and perception of quality assurance processes in higher education institutions. The data collected will help improve participation and shape future quality assurance initiatives. The sample meets the requirements for unintentionality of the selection of elements, representativeness and volume. A typical sample was formed by the method of percentage selection. Each partner had to ask 5 people from administrative staff.

The total numbers of the students must be at least 120 students, at least 60 university teachers and at least 30 people from administrative staff. The Neapolis University and Enoros Consulting Limited have worked together during the survey. The total numbers participating in the survey are more according to the project requirement – see the table below.

Countries/Organizations	**Students**		**Faculty teachers**		**Administrators &Quality experts**	
	Project	Real	Project	Real	Project	Real
1.Greece - University of Piraeus - research center	20	71	10	10	5	10
2.Italy - UNIMED - Unione Delle Università del Mediterraneo	20	9	10	10	5	6
3.Bulgaria - St Cyril and St. Methodius university of Veliko Turnovo College of pedagogy - Pleven	20	50	10	12	5	11
4.Poland - Polytechnic University - Bialystok	20	82	10	23	5	14

5.Cyprus - Neapolis university	20	31	10	32	5	32
6.Cyprus - Enoros Consulting Limited - working together with Neapolis UNI	20		10		5	
Total	120	**243**	60	**87**	30	**73**

3. General analysis of the Questioners

After an initial check of the questionnaires, it was found that there were no incorrectly filled in data. After the logical processing of the completed questionnaires, a ranking of the answers is carried out. The data are graphically illustrated, analyzed. Conclusions are reached.

3.1. Students

The total number of the students participating in the survey are 243. The questionnaire contains from 30 to 32 questions among the different partners.

According to the analysis of the data obtained for the surveyed students, the following general conclusions can be drawn:

1. There is a wide variety of specialties of the surveyed students - healthcare, pharmacy, archaeology, medicine, computer or social science, tourism sociology, management (incl. business, banking and financial), engineering, pedagogy (preschool and primary)

2. A large part of the surveyed students are studying full-time in bachelor's and master's programs and are in different periods of their studies, and about 10% are studying part-time in doctoral programs.

3. The average age of the surveyed students is between 20 and 30, and about 5% are over this age.

Based on the analysis of the survey conducted with students, related to the provision and maintenance of quality management systems for education, as well as the applied technologies for improving the quality of the educational process, the following conclusions are imposed, in order to play a more active role of students in the processes of quality assurance and improvement. It is important to organize events and initiatives through which they are informed and which require their cooperation and creativity:

1. Organizing awareness campaigns through which students receive information on how they can contribute to quality and how this affects their future – 87%;
2. Establishment of a Quality Student Club dedicated to discussing and applying good practices in education – 75%;
3. Organization of an annual Quality Day with various activities - presentations, exhibitions, posters, panels dedicated to quality and accreditation – 90%;
4. A forum for students to discuss their expectations and opinions on the quality of education, as moderators can be representatives of the university- 85%.
5. Students perceive the right balance between theoretical and practical education, important from the perspective of future professional work – 75%.
6. Students have the opportunity actively participate in scientific and research activities – 80%.
7. Students have access to opportunities to participate in academic exchange programs and international mobility – 85%.
8. The minority of students do not participate in the work of the quality and accreditation committees and do not have access to documents and electronic platforms related to the quality management system and accreditation processes – 20%.
9. Developing a communication strategy that would inform students about the existence of a quality assurance system at the university, which would introduce them to rules and procedures in this area- 75%.
10. Students regularly participate in the evaluation process of didactic classes, conducted every semester – 90%.
11. Students positively evaluate the quality of education offered by the university – 95%.
12. A big number of students express interest in participating in training on the quality assurance system and declare their willingness to become more actively involved in the related processes – 90%.
13. The vast majority of students recommend as a university that allows them to obtain a good quality education – 25%.

3.2. University teachers

The total number of the faculty teachers participating in the survey are 87. The questionnaire contains from 30 to 32 questions among the different partners.

According to the analysis of the data obtained for the surveyed faculty teachers, the following general conclusions can be drawn:

1. The survey involved professors of various statuses - professors, associate professors, chief assistants, assistants professors and assistant,
2. The survey involved professors from different faculties and specialties.

The conclusions that can be drawn after the analysis of the survey, based on the opinion of the surveyed university teachers, are as follows:

1. Increase the level of use of new technologies for maintaining quality at the university – 85%.
2. Improve practical approaches to maintaining the quality system- 90%.
3. Improved communication between different faculties in terms of quality - 85%.
4. Stimulates more active participation of students in the quality assessment processes - 75%.
5. Conduct more seminars and trainings to improve quality – 80%.
6. Improved the quality of student feedback – 80%.
7. University teachers rate the effectiveness of the quality assurance system at the entire higher education sector – 85%.
8. The involvement of faculty members in activities related to assessment and accreditation is perceived as high – 95%.
9. Inter-faculty communication remains an area requiring improvement – 90%.

3.3. Administrative staff and members of the quality and the accreditation commission

The total number of the administrative staff participating in the survey are 73. The questionnaire contains from 30 to 32 questions among the different partners.

Improving the university's quality system, focused on risk management and error prevention, can significantly enhance the institution's effectiveness and reliability. Here are specific suggestions. According to the analysis of the data obtained for the surveyed administrative staff and members of the quality and the accreditation commission the following general conclusions can be drawn:

1. According to the quality coordinators, the university provides appropriate training and seminars on collecting and transferring data to the unit responsible for quality assurance. – 90%
2. Quality coordinators and administrators regularly participate in training on quality assurance of education – 95%.
3. The quality assurance system functioning at the university is in line with the adopted institutional standards – 90%.
4. The quality system is subject to regular updates and improvement activities – 95%.
5. The quality coordinators emphasize the active support of the university management in the application and maintenance of the quality system – 90%.
6. The quality assurance system significantly supports the accreditation processes conducted at the university – 95%.

7. In the opinion of the coordinators, further improvements of the system should focus on increasing the number of trainings and support activities, developing the technological infrastructure and improving communication – 85%.
8. Conduct analyses to identify potential risks related to academic, administrative and financial activities - introduce a system to classify risks according to their degree of impact and likelihood; organize regular seminars and workshops to update the lists of identified risks – 85%.
9. Develop a risk management plan - establish detailed procedures to minimize risks, including clear guidelines for action in critical situations; train faculty to recognize risky situations and respond appropriately; integrate software monitoring tools that automatically alert to potential problems – 90%.
10. Error prevention - providing digital platforms that automatically monitor for inconsistencies or errors in documentation – 75%.
11. Systemic learnings and improvement, conducting seminars about risk management workshops focused on real-world examples and case studies and analyzing past mistakes to learn lessons and prevent future problems. – 90%
12. Monitoring and feedback - create incident reporting platforms that allow for quick identification of issues - analyze data to identify trends and potential areas for improvement - 90%.

4. Conclusions and key findings

Based on the received reports on the results of the survey of all partners, the following summarized recommendations can be made and certain approaches, activities, sugestions and circumstances are recommended.

A. Recommendations for future improvements to the quality system:

1. Implementation of automated data monitoring and analysis systems.
2. Description of a clear and structured approach to quality control and assessment.
3. Training of staff to work with modern tools and technologies.
4. Creation of mechanisms for collecting feedback in real time.
5. Conducting regular surveys and analysis of student and faculty satisfaction.
6. Implementation of analytical tools based on artificial intelligence.
7. Updating curricula in view of current labor market requirements and technological trends.
8. Introduction of interactive teaching methods, such as group projects, case studies and simulations.
9. Conducting regular assessments of teaching methods through surveys among students.
10. Creation of a student services center that offers academic, career and psychological assistance.

11. Organization of mentoring programs where senior students or faculty support newly admitted students.
12. Development of a standardized system for evaluating the educational process and administrative work.
13. Regularly conducting internal and external audits to verify compliance with quality standards.
14. Digitalization of processes to improve transparency and efficiency.
15. Support for research projects through funding and resources.
16. Establishing partnerships with other universities to share knowledge.
17. Organizing regular conferences and seminars to promote the scientific work of faculty and students.
18. Using surveys and focus groups to gather opinions from students, faculty, and administrative staff.
19. Holding regular meetings to discuss results and potential areas for improvement.

B. The Quality System can be an essential support in the university accreditation process through the following suggestions:

1. Maintaining detailed and up-to-date documentation that includes descriptions of curricula, teaching methods, and research activities and creating a centralized document management system that facilitates access and review by accreditation bodies.

2. Standardization of processes - implementation of clear procedures and policies that comply with accreditation requirements.

3. Monitoring and evaluation - conducting internal audits to assess compliance with accreditation criteria.

4. Provide professional development for faculty through training and certification that meets accreditation requirements. Incentivize faculty to engage in scholarly activities and publications that strengthen the university's rating.

5. Technological support - implementation of quality management software that automates assessment and monitoring processes. Provision of data analysis platforms that support the preparation of accreditation reports.

6. Transparency and communication - maintain active communication with accreditation bodies to understand and meet their expectations.

C. The future development of the quality system in higher education is related to:

1. The inclusion of universities in international educational and scientific networks, which will increase the quality and competitiveness of education;
2. The introduction of modern technologies and learning platforms to facilitate access to education and improve the efficiency of the learning process.
3. Intensifying research at universities and stimulating the participation of newcomer university teachers in research projects.
4. Building an effective link between education, science and business, which will help to adapt curricula to the needs of the labor market.
5. Improving university governance and the accreditation system, which will ensure objectivity and fairness.
6. Ensuring access to quality education for all, regardless of social or economic status.

D. Improving the quality and accreditation system can be achieved by:

1. Using standards such as ISO 9001 systems for quality management and/or others appropriated.
2. Investing in the training of faculty (to create effective innovative learning resources) and administrators for quality management and accreditation.
3. Targeting the needs of students and employers to ensure that educational programs meet real-world requirements, involving industry experts in the development of learning materials.
4. Stimulation of a culture that values quality and continuous improvement in all aspects of the educational institution.

E. Improving the quality of learning resources at the university can be achieved through the following approaches:

1. Content update: Regular updating of learning materials to reflect the latest research findings and trends in the field.
2. Student feedback: Involve students in the process of evaluating learning resources to identify weaknesses and opportunities for improvement.
3. Integration of practical examples: Inclusion of real case studies, projects and examples from practice to make the learning material more applicable and interesting.
4. Accessibility: Providing resources that are easily accessible to all students, including those with special needs.

F. Some circumstances and factors that would motivate faculty and students to use the university's quality system:

1. Visible benefits and improvement of the learning process. If the system demonstrates that it improves the quality of teaching, teaching methods and assessment, this will motivate university teachers and students to use it.

2. Time optimization.

3. Ease of access and convenience. A platform that is easy to use would encourage regular use. Providing access to materials such as university teachers, syllabi, or assessments would make the system more attractive.

4. If faculty and students are involved in the development of the system or can provide ideas for improvements, it will motivate them to actively use it.

5. Clear communication of how the system supports the learning process and what its benefits are.

6. Fast and reliable support in case of technical difficulties.

7. Introduction of mechanisms for sharing ideas and opinions that show that the university takes into account user suggestions.

8. The system should be transparent, showing how data is used to improve quality, which would create trust among university teachers and students

In the end, we can conclude that the quality management system in universities plays a key role in ensuring high educational standards, effective administration, and sustainable development of academic institutions. Here are some of its most important aspects: **Improving the educational process** – Quality standards ensure that curricula are up-to-date, aligned with labor market requirements, and encourage innovative teaching methods; **Ensuring academic integrity** – The implementation of evaluation and internal control procedures prevents academic misconduct and increases trust in diplomas and qualifications; **Encouraging scientific research** – Quality systems support the development of research projects and stimulate academic productivity; **Increasing international competitiveness** – Universities with well-functioning quality systems can attract more international students, faculty, and partnerships; **Enhancing student satisfaction** – Through feedback and evaluation mechanisms, the system ensures improvements in learning conditions, study materials, and teaching methods; **Sustainable institutional development** – Maintaining high standards leads to better resource management, financial stability, and an improved university reputation. In this context, the creation of an online platform and the development of a Training Course and MOOC for QA Managers and Administrators emerges not only as a timely solution but as a strategic imperative. The platform should address the clearly articulated needs across all respondent groups by offering:

1. Structured, role-specific training paths (e.g., students, university teachers, administrators, QA personnel);
2. Interactive and user-friendly design, with real-time progress tracking, micro-learning units, and gamified content;
3. Access to certifications, acknowledged in professional evaluations and potentially linked to promotions or career advancement;

4. Integrated tools and templates for daily QA operations;
5. Case-based, scenario-driven learning to contextualize theory into practice

Importantly, the platform must serve as more than a technical tool, it must be a vehicle for building a shared culture of quality. For students, this means demystifying QA and fostering active participation through relatable content and engagement. For administrative and QA staff, it means equipping them with the analytical, digital, and strategic competencies needed to manage quality assurance in a complex and evolving higher education landscape. Ultimately, the lessons drawn from this report affirm that while individual institutions may demonstrate strong foundational practices, the broader system still requires cohesive standards, scalable training, and cross-functional engagement mechanisms. The E-QUALITY platform and training framework can directly address these needs, establishing a sustainable model for quality assurance that is inclusive, future-oriented, and grounded in the lived realities of all stakeholders in higher education.