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# Quality Assurance for the Higher Education Change Agenda (QAHECA)

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<http://www.eua.be/quality-assurance/qaheca/>

## European QA developments

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- Bologna Declaration (1999): quality is not a key issue
- Prague 2001: the role of QA agencies predominates
- Berlin 2003: Quality moves to the top of the agenda; Institutional, National and European level
- Bergen 2005: European Standards and Guidelines (proposed by ENQA)
- London 2007: European Quality Assurance Register (developed by EUA, ENQA, EURASHE, ESIB)

## EUA Policy and QA developments

<http://www.eua.be/quality-assurance/>

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- Diversity, but European dimension
- Quality Culture Project (2002 – 2003)
- Creativity in Higher Education (2006 – 2007)
- QA Forum:
  - ✓ Nov 2007 – Rome: Over 500 participants
  - ✓ Nov 2008 – Budapest: 80 papers received
- EQAR: 1st applications to be processed in November 2008
- QAHECA: EUA project to develop and test internal/external QA approaches that support creativity (2007 – 2009)
- Rankings and labels
- OECD-AHELO project

## QUAHECA: A pilot project on institutional quality mechanisms for teaching and learning

- **Overall Objective:** to develop a methodology, both for internal and external QA, which is:
- Future oriented
- Focused on the change process
- Geared towards enhancement
- Aiming to strengthen creativity and innovation in higher education

## Why a new quality methodology?

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- Quality Assurance in higher education is “under construction”
- Concerns about the potentially detrimental effects of some forms of quality processes in higher education
  - ✓ Over-bureaucratisation
  - ✓ Standardisation, compliance behaviour
  - ✓ Backward orientation
  - ✓ “QA fatigue”
  - > Stifling creativity and innovation
- Internal and external quality processes should be linked
- Need for operational recommendations
  - ✓ Focus on institutional responsibility
  - ✓ Student-centred: teaching and learning

# Project Management

## ■ Partner consortium

- ✓ EUA
- ✓ ACQUIN, Germany
- ✓ The Higher Education Academy, UK
- ✓ National University of Ireland, Maynooth

## ■ Steering Committee

composed by partner institutions and EUA Office

## Working method

- Build on the joint experience and expertise of higher education institutions and quality assurance agencies
- HEIs (23) and QA agencies (7) selected by Steering Committee through competitive open call
- Development of methodology through
  - ✓ A series of 3 seminars attended by all participants
  - ✓ Testing of draft methodology by participating institutions between second and third seminar

## What is understood by « methodology »?

- NOT prescriptive commandments ("thou shalt/not")  
NOT substituting current QA systems...

Instead:

- Questions to explore existing practice in terms of intention and impact: Eg Why do we do this? Is the outcome what we want (in terms of creativity and innovation)? How do we know? Etc
- Formulation of concise recommendations to HEIs and quality assurance agencies based on this work



### For instance :

- How can the internal QA and the external accreditation processes be shaped and enhanced by good, creative practice?
- How do you take account of creative ideas in curriculum development from a range of sources, such as students, staff in all roles (teaching and non teaching) and external stakeholders?

## Expectations of Participants

- Three main responsibilities:
  - To contribute experience and ideas
  - To involve institutions in work between seminars
  - To report back on feasibility and impact
- > Without input of experience, ideas of institutions and agencies, there can be no output



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## Key Dates

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- 2008
  - 10/11 April: 1st Seminar, York
  - 29/30 May: 2<sup>nd</sup> Seminar, Bayreuth
  
- 2009
  - 5/6 February: 3rd Seminar, Maynooth
  - Mid 2009: dissemination of final publication

## Final thought

- Does it matter that we may be confused or seeing things in differently at the moment?

*« If we're all thinking the same thing, then we're probably not thinking... »*