

How to transform an accreditation system from programme to institutional accreditation



n.a.k.v.i.s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s.q.a.a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education



QFORTE

*Fortifying higher education quality in Moldova.
No boundaries for quality*

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



Klemen Šubic

June 2021

www.nakvis.si

Quality assurance

„Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.“

Will Rogers

Historical overview

1994 establishment of the Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia (Council) as a national accreditation body.

In **1996** the National Commission for the Quality of Higher Education was established on the initiative of the Rectors' Conference for the development of IQA systems.

In **2004** the Council was renamed to the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, gaining new responsibilities (habilitation of HE teachers at the private HEIs).

1994 - 2004

Historical overview

In **2007**, the Office of the Republic of Slovenia for Higher Education was established to support the Council for Quality Assurance in HE (in professional and administrative matters).

In **2010**, on the basis of the HEA amendment from 2009, the SQAA (as successor to the Council for QA in Higher Education) was established as a non-governmental direct budget user and holder of public authority

In **2016** additional amendment to the HE Act were adopted and enforced the transition to the institutional evaluation, follow-up procedures, european approach (joint study programmes)

2007 - 2021

Why so many changes

2004 Bologna reform:

- massification of students, study programmes and HE institutions
- more than 950 accredited study programmes
- 47 HEIs (7 universities, 40 independent HEIs)
- the number of students increased by 2010 and then decreased due to demographic reasons (in **1994 = 43.249** students enrolled in HE and VET, in **2004 = 87.205** students, in **2010 = 104.003** students, in **2015 = 80.798**, in **2021 = 72.130**)

**Key
indications**

EQA system

2010:

- **initial and re-accreditation of HEIs and of all programmes**
- **validation: 7 years**
- **approx. 120 -250 procedures each year**
- **HEIs with more than 30 programmes were evaluated several times a year**

2010

EQA system

Findings:

- **large number of visits and procedures does not necessarily mean improvements**
- **no significant progress has been detected**
- **huge administrative burden**

Benefits:

- **HEIs established formalized IQA systems**
- **regular self-evaluation procedures**
- **adequate IQA structures and processes**

**Analyzing
progress**

EQA system

Changes made:

- **Initial and re-accreditation of HEI (validation 5 years)**
- **Initial accreditation of study programmes (valid for an indefinite period)**
- **Extraordinary evaluations of HEIs and programmes (when major irregularities or inconsistencies are detected)**
- **Evaluation of a sample of study programmes (each year at least 2% of all programmes accredited in Slovenia =20)**
- **Internationalisation (joint study programmes = european approach)**

2016

Institutional re-accreditation

Two site-visits

First site-visit (institutional aspect) – 5 standards:

1. functioning of the higher education institution,
2. human resources,
3. students,
4. material conditions,
5. internal quality assurance

Second site-visit (programme evaluation) – 3 standards:

1. internal assurance and improvement of quality of the study programme,
2. changes and updates made to study programme,
3. delivery of the study programme

**first and second
site-visit**

Evaluation of a sample of programmes

Objectives:

- not re-accreditation of study programmes, but monitoring of its continuous improvement
- feedback within 2 years after decision of the Council
- follow-up on recommendations
- Progress description can be included in self-evaluation report

**main focus -
on
improvements**

Transition

Switch to institutional accreditation:

- not re-accreditation of study programmes, but monitoring of its continuous improvement
- feedback within 2 years after decision of the Council
- follow-up on recommendations
- progress description can be included in the self-evaluation report

What?

Transition

Switch to institutional accreditation:

- **timely planned**
- **adequately communicated**
- **well-designed**
- **tested out**
- **executed with care**

When?

Transition

Switch to institutional accreditation:

- lower bureaucratic burden of HEIs and NAKVIS
- strengthen quality culture
- progress and improvement orientation
- strengthening the advisory role of the Agency
- more in dept and holistically oriented assessments
- IQA in the ownership of the HEI
- building mutual trust and cooperation

Why?

Transition

Switch to institutional accreditation:

- **change of the Criteria for accreditation**
- **involvement of all relevant stakeholders**
- **fit for purpose EQA system**
- **development of several Guidelines (accessibility, libraries)**
- **training for experts**
- **sessions and events**
- **quality standards and clear assessment provisions to all**

How?

Recap

Basic principles of operation:

- mutual trust and cooperation
- respect of institutional autonomy
- possibility to organize IQA in a way that is most suitable for the HEI
- strengthening the advisory role of the Agency
- follow up is imbedded into core activities of the HEI (quality loop)
- building quality culture awareness

benefits for HEIs vs. benefits for NAKVIS

**Principles and
benefits**

Last thought

„Quality means doing it right also when no-one is looking“

Henry Ford

Bonus round

- Same ingredients and the recipe



Bonus round

- Different results



Thank you for attention!



n·a·k·v·i·s

Nacionalna agencija Republike Slovenije
za kakovost v visokem šolstvu

s·q·a·a

Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency
for Higher Education



QFORTE

*Fortifying higher education quality in Moldova.
No boundaries for quality*

Klemen Šubic

June 2021

www.nakvis.si