

Results survey institutional accreditation and audits

ECA WG 2



nvao

nederlands- vlaamse accreditatieorganisatie

Contents

- Purposes of survey
- Questions asked
- Responses received and name of procedure
- Responses to questions 2-12
- Some initial conclusions in WG 2

Purposes of survey

- Background: Institutional approaches are increasing (often combinations with programme assessments)
- What is the European “state of the art”?
- What is the role of stakeholders?
- Improving own system by looking at what works and does not work in other systems
- Finding a common core to reach trust and mutual recognition
- Recommendations for institutional accreditation and audits

Questions asked

1. Name procedure
2. Topics and type of institutions reviewed
3. Review by whom; appointment of panel, composition, (national or international) expertise required
4. Methodology, e.g. SER, site visit, draft report, comments from HEI, final report
5. Standards, criteria, indicators used
6. Possible outcomes/decisions and consequences
7. Stand-alone review or in combination with e.g. programme or research review

Questions asked (cont.)

8. Legal basis for review, e.g. HE law, authority of agency, regulations in HE system
9. Possible pitfalls and problems encountered
10. Strengths and good practices
11. Opinions and (dis)satisfaction of stakeholders
12. Effects on quality of teaching and learning; effects on agency (human resources, costs, effectiveness, authority in the field)

1. Responses received and name of procedure

- ANECA: audit (internal QA systems in universities)
- EVA: institutional accreditation (2005-07);
institutional audit (2009, pilot in professional HE)
- FHR: institutional evaluation
- FIBAA: Systemakkreditierung
- NVAO: Institutional audit (pilots started)
- NOKUT: quality audit (institutions' systems for QA);
institutional accreditation (degree awarding powers)

1. Responses received and name of procedure (cont.)

- OAQ: institutional accreditation (voluntary); institutional quality audit (compulsory)
- OAR: accreditation
- PKA: programme accreditation, some elements of institutional evaluation
- ZEvA: institutional evaluation; institutional audit / Systemakkreditierung

2. Topics and type of institutions reviewed

- Internal QA systems: ANECA, FIBAA, NOKUT (audit), NVAO, OAQ, ZEvA
- Specific theme: EVA
- Specific standards: NOKUT (accreditation), OAR
- Universities of applied sciences etc.: EVA, FHR, NOKUT (accreditation)
- Universities : ANECA, OAQ (audit), OAR (private univ.)
- All types of HEIs: FIBAA, NOKUT (audit), NVAO, OAQ, ZEvA

3. Review by whom

- ANECA: panel members from universities; secretary from ANECA
- FHR: review carried out in co-operation with other agency
- International panel members: FHR (1), NVAO (voluntary), NOKUT (accreditation: 1), OAQ (majority), OAR (all)
- Student in panel: FIBAA, NVAO, NOKUT, OAQ (possible), ZEvA
- Academic, management and QA expertise, not always expertise from professional field
- Size of panel varies from 3-5

4. Methodology

- ANECA: potentiality of internal QA and obstacles for implementation
- Most agencies have SER and site visit, draft report, comments from HEIs, final report and publication
- Duration of site visit varies (1- 5 days), some have 2 site visits (FIBAA, NVAO)
- Audit trails: NVAO
- No SE required, but annual reports: NOKUT (audit)
- EVA (audit): development contract

5. Standards, criteria, indicators used

- ANECA: broad and flexible
- FHR: predefined topics and standards
- FIBAA: defined by German Accreditation Council
- NVAO: 6 standards accompanied by a small elaboration on what is meant (following PDCA)
- Others have predefined standards/criteria

6. Possible outcomes/decisions and consequences

- ANECA: 4 level scale; insufficient or absence of information leads to necessary modification
- FHR: obligatory improvement measures possible
- NVAO: yes (restricted programme accred), no (elaborate programme accred), conditional no (2y to improve + elaborate programme accred)
- NOKUT (audit): institution can lose right to apply for accred and authority to establish new programmes
- OAQ: yes/no with conditions; 12 months to improve
- EVA (audit): developmental

7. Combinations?

- ANECA: link to standard 9 (IQA) in progr accred
- FHR: stand-alone
- FIBAA: combination with number of progr eval
- NVAO: progr accred remains; restricted or elaborate depends on result of audit
- NOKUT: stand-alone
- OAQ (inst accred): combination with prog accred possible

8. Legal basis

- ANECA: no legal framework for audit but relationship with 9th standard progr. Accreditation
- FHR: Law empowers FHR to issue a decree on evaluation regulations
- FIBAA and ZEvA: regulations by KMK and AR
- NVAO: implementation of new system requires changes in Dutch and Flemish
- NOKUT: regulated in the law

8. Legal basis (cont.)

- OAQ: Swiss Law on Financial Aid to Universities..., Intercantonal Convention on Coordinating University Policy; Law on Universities of Applied Sciences; Directives issued by the Swiss University Conference or standards in quality audits
- OAR: in the law
- EVA: audit is voluntary, previously mandatory

9. Possible pitfalls or problems

- ANECA: first round showed shortcomings of IQA systems
- FHR: no synergies between progr accred, institutional and progr evaluations; many improvements planned including only 1 programme procedure and stronger institutional approach to EQA
- FIBAA: large HEIs with a lot of “reglementierte Studiengänge” might prefer study programmes accreditation.

9. Possible pitfalls or problems (cont.)

- NVAO: overlap between institutional and programme approach and therefore more time and money consuming; panels at programme level not independent enough
- NOKUT: institutional accreditations are harder to manage than the programme accreditations; definitions not clear, what is “high standard” in research, academic, artistic development?; possibility of political games

9. Possible pitfalls or problems (cont.)

- OAQ: difficult to guarantee good quality of study programmes; no audits in private sector, out of control
- OAR: focus on institutional and programme level might be too broad/detailed for traditional, all-embracing public universities
- ZEvA: audit does not give solutions to the problems yet unsolved. Therefore it needs to be complemented by a counselling service that offers support to the institutions attempting to further improve their management capacity.

10. Strengths and good practices

- ANECA: universities have reflected for the first time on the quality assurance system applied to the teaching and learning process; in initial stage of the development of IQA system, the agencies need to both advise and review to encourage the growth of a true quality culture.
- FHR: combination of institutional and programme approached; FHR can react to changed requirements in a relatively flexible manner by designing and/or amending regulations.
- FIBAA: more weaknesses than strengths

10. Strengths and good practices (cont.)

- NVAO: plan-do-check-act character of the framework; institutions really need to show that their results are in line with their goals; still overview of programme results, useful information for students
- NOKUT: institutional accreditation followed by defined self accrediting powers to the institution makes the programme accreditation and reaccreditation reasonable and manageable
- ZEvA: strength of the system lies in its formative nature. It relies on the motivation of the university leadership to improve the functioning of the institution.

10. Strengths and good practices (cont.)

- OAQ: strengthening the autonomy of HEIs; quality-enhancement oriented; minimizing the bureaucratic and financial burden, thus highly contributing to the development of a quality culture.
- OAR: approach is appropriate for new/small/private institutions; ex-ante institutional accred includes all institutional and programme aspects; programme accred is based on preceding institutional accred which provides useful context information; re-accreditation of institutions combines institutional and programme aspects in a procedure that is comparable to a 'Q-Audit plus programme aspects'.



nvao

nederlands- vlaamse accreditatieorganisatie

11. Opinions of stakeholders

- ANECA: one of the pitfalls identified and in process of enhancement.
- FHR and FIBAA: not available
- NVAO: institutions like the gained trust element; students stress programme level as most important; Dutch universities like open character of framework; Flemish HEIs and Dutch Univ of Applied Sciences like to have a more detailed framework; all HEIs want less time and money consuming system

11. Opinions of stakeholders (cont.)

- NOKUT: no definition of stakeholders; institutions were surveyed regarding NOKUT's performance
- OAQ: most requests for instit accred come from private HEIs which seek a quality label; satisfaction is connected to outcome; audit well accepted by the HEIs; in 2012 obligatory instit accred combining elements of both accred and audit
- OAR: private HEIs would prefer 'light progr accred or even self-accreditation for programmes
- ZEvA: HEIs would like to see it extended to all aspects of university management, not only QA of teaching and learning

12. Effects

- ANECA: audit is only focused on teaching and learning; strengthened innovation, co-ordination and efficiency of procedures within ANECA
- FHR: we assume (but do not know) a positive impact on the learning environment, infrastructure and resources.
- FIBAA: HEIs which neglected study programmes accreditation are enabled to compete. For FIBAA it means increasing manpower and costs for training of peers and staff

12. Effects (cont.)

- NVAO: more paper work at institutional level, more teaching on programme level; NVAO will need more manpower and money in starting period because NVAO composes the panels and conducts the audits; in 5 years the resources can be reduced because of wide spread restricted progr accred
- NOKUT: contributes to a competent quality awareness/culture and thereby improves quality work. Through the very open information this will eventually also contribute to stakeholders trust in quality and to quality itself.

12. Effects (cont.)

- OAQ: for accred not clear how quality of teaching and learning has improved; for audit there are visible effects in the institutional QA systems with a spreading quality culture; lower external costs than with program accred but internal costs are not clear
- OAR: strengthens management's position to implement structural changes and internal quality culture; strengthens the faculty's position (long term contracts, teaching load, research funding); students' voices are heard
- ZEvA: QM is a topic at all levels of the institutional management; has altered the profile of ZEvA in the direction of a service institution for HEIs.

Some initial conclusions in WG 2

- Need to define institutional accreditation, audit and evaluation (the latter is improvement focused)
- Complete separation between institutional and programme accreditation is not possible; growing number of combinations
- Responses questions 9-12 more diverse
- Supplementary questions regarding experiences of stakeholders needed (questions 9-12)



?



nvao

nederlands- vlaamse accreditatieorganisatie