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Insight from stakeholders involved in cross-border EQA: University of Ljubljana

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Overview of presentation

- Brief insight of UL
- Brief insight of the national QA context
- Cross-border QA at UL
- Rationale for choosing cross-border EQA
- Added value
- Challenges



Brief insight of UL

- 46 000 students, 6300 employees
- 23 faculties , 3 academies
- 154 programmes (1st cycle), 193 (2nd cycle)
- University of Ljubljana Strategy 2012-2020:
 - Encouragement of international evaluations, programme, and institutional accreditations in the relevant areas.
 - By 2020 increase the number of outgoing students by one third, the number of incoming students, foreign teachers, and researchers by one fourth.
 - Increase the number of joint study programmes and provision of programmes abroad

Brief insight of the national QA context

SQAA:

- Institutional re-accreditation every 7 years
- Programme re-accreditation every 7 years

HE law currently under revision:

- From programme eval. to institutional eval.
- Institutional eval. every 5 years



Cross-border EQA at UL

Institutional evaluations:

- of university: IEP (1995, 1997, 2007)
- at the level of faculties: 5 faculties (ASIIN, AHPGS; currently in the progress)

Programme evaluations:

- 15 study programmes at 3 faculties (ASIIN; 13 in the progress)

Sectoral QA:

6 faculties obtained programme and/or institutional accreditations by 8 different international qa agencies/ organisations



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Focus of this presentation

- EQAR listed agencies
- Experience from past evaluations and ongoing ones.



Rationale for choosing cross-border EQA

- Strategies (university, individual faculties')
 - Strengthening quality
 - Added value experience from cross-border EQA
 - International context (also to balance the effects of small size country by taking into account international trends, developments, practices)
 - International recognition / attractiveness (for students, staff)



Rationale for choosing cross-border EQA

- 2, 5 years long project (funded by ESF and ministry) provides funds for cross-border EQA
 - QAA listed in EQAR
 - for some faculties evaluation of programmes represents the preparation phase for their future accreditation (smaller scope and costs of eval. for the next 2 years)
- In the case of institutional/programme *evaluations* the motivation of HEI is slightly more focused at strengthening the quality, as national accreditations have been already obtained.



Added value

- Specific learning experience:
 - Faculties are leading their own *institutional* self-evaluation *in connection to cross –border EQA*.
 - Faculties involved in cross-border EQA are sharing their experience on a regular basis
 - Staff involved in cross-border EQA is strengthening the competences as evaluators of national QAA
 - Many evaluations taking place during the same period of time by the same agency: deeper insight into HEI



Added value

- Thinking from new perspective on „well-known“ issues, e.g.:
 - strengthening the awareness and efforts to improve students' progression rates;
 - perception of having free education – is it really free?
- Different emphasis of the same criteria, e.g.:
 - learning process,
 - evaluation of HEI's effects on an environment in a much broader context
 - Cultural dimension of each evaluated criteria (for example – how are the conflicts handled?)



Added value

- Peers feedback:
 - International angel of objectivness
 - Based on diverse knowledge of international practice (e.g. faculty find cross-border EQA very helpful when enhancing its strategy)
 - Specific for a discipline



Added value

- Improved international recognition/attractiveness
- Re-positioning of HEI within international and national area (knowing where HEI is strong and what could be improved)



Challenges

What were our challenges when UL was choosing the agency from EQAR:

- Institutional evaluation at the level of faculties (2 examples)
- Conducting more evaluations than accreditations
- Understanding of the term „evaluation“ (conducting solely evaluation, without obtaining accred. decision)
- Publicity of reports
- Peers with international experience



Challenges

- Understanding of criteria, e.g.:
 - A substantial period of time in the self evaluation process was dedicated to a common understanding of the evaluation criteria. „not familiar with the wording used to describe them“
- It takes time and additional effort for cross-border QAA to understand the national/ institutional context



Challenges

- General guidance in the manuals for selfevaluation reports emphasises the importance of reflection compared to description. However, the concrete guiding questions for self evaluation reports are often interpreted as leading to description, rather than reflection.

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Thank you for your attention!