ANALYSIS OF CROSS-BORDER QUALITY ASSURANCE AT EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION LEVEL BASED ON DEQAR DATA

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Main objectives

- to analyse data on cross-border quality assurance at European Higher Education Area (EHEA)
- to draw conclusions on tendencies of cross-border quality assurance.

DEQAR data sets from 4th of September, 2019 [1] were used: data for reports, for institutions and for agencies. Manipulation of the data structure and graphical analysis was done by open source language and environment for statistical computing and graphics R [2].

Introduction

The idea for cross-border quality assurance is a mean to show trust between higher education systems as well as to further promote this trust root in EHEA. In this work cross-border quality assurance is considered as external QA activities of an EQAR-registered QA agency, which is carried out in a country other than the one in which it is based or primarily operates [3].

Based on DEQAR data, the analysis further investigates how widespread cross-border quality assurance activities are. It has to be mentioned that not all EHEA countries have legislation allowing their HEIs to choose EQAR-registered QA agencies for their regular external QA, and that the recognition of such activities is at times limited for certain EQA procedures or institutions [4]. Methodological limitations: the DEQAR database

Fig. 1. Percentage of cross-border and national quality assurance activities by agencies who have uploaded in DEQAR.

Fig. 2. Number of national and cross-border quality assurance activities carried out within EHEA countries. Only agencies with uploaded reports included.

Fig. 3. Type (in institutional, programme, joint programme) of cross-border quality assurance activities within EHEA in %.

Fig. 4. Type of reports from in EHEA countries in DEQAR: a) includes only reports of national quality assurance activities, b) includes only reports of cross-border quality assurance activities.

From Fig. 4 it can be seen that cross-border quality assurance activities are done relatively more frequently for joint programmes and institutions compared to usual programmes. Fig. 5 shows that approximately one fifth of the cross-border quality assurance activities done by agencies registered in EQAR is done outside EHEA. Data from Fig. 6 shows that whenever an agency does cross-border activities it usually performs one type of assessment either institutional or study programme.

Fig. 5. Cross-border quality assurance done in countries belonging to EHEA and in countries beyond EHEA.

Fig. 6. Percentage of cross-border quality assurance activities done by agencies currently registered in EQAR.

Data from Fig. 3 illustrates that whenever agencies registered in EQAR are doing cross-border quality assurance activities they tend to carry out only one type of evaluation. Only a few agencies organise cross-border quality assurance activities at programme and institutional level.

Fig. 7. Decisions of reports from EHEA countries in DEQAR: a) includes reports of national quality assurance activities, b) includes only reports of cross-border quality assurance.

In Fig. 7 it can be clearly seen that in cross-border quality assurance we find a higher % of negative evaluations while in national reviews we have more positive with conditions/restrictions. In Fig. 8 we can see that these statistics look roughly the same as before if only are taken into account cross-border quality assurance activities which are part of obligatory EQA system. Also, noteworthy that majority of cross-border quality assurance evaluations (90%) are of voluntary nature. Fig. 9 also shows that currently joint programme evaluations are exclusively positive.

Fig. 8. Decisions of reports part of the mandatory external QA in DEQAR: a) includes reports of national quality assurance activities, b) includes only reports of cross-border quality assurance.

Conclusion

This work provides insight on some tendencies of cross-border QA activities done as well as difference it introduces in decisions. However, since cross-border quality assurance is just catching momentum in future it would be beneficial to analyse DEQAR data in time perspective.

References: