

The Role of European Quality Assurance Agencies in Graduate Studies

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The Current Role

- Somewhat limited
- UK-based work through QAA
- Potential for European QA agencies to act individually or together through ENQA
- Outline of current and potential future activity...

ENQA

- network founded in 2000; became an Association in 2004
- independent umbrella organisation for European quality assurance and accreditation agencies
- 37 Full members, 10 Candidate members
- ENQA membership requires external review and substantial compliance with ESG (cf. EQAR)
- external reviews of ENQA member agencies by 2010 to confirm Full membership
- associates and affiliates: 19+2
- structure: Board, General Assembly, Secretariat
- Based in Helsinki, Finland
- co-operation within 'E4' group (EUA, ESU, EURASHE)

From the Bergen communiqué (2005)

- Doctoral level qualifications need to be fully aligned with the EHEA overarching framework for qualifications using the outcomes-based approach. The core component of doctoral training is the advancement of knowledge through original research. Considering the need for structured doctoral programmes and the need for transparent supervision and assessment, we note that the normal workload of the third cycle in most countries would correspond to 3-4 years full time. We urge universities to ensure that their doctoral programmes promote interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills, thus meeting the needs of the wider employment market.
- ... We consider participants in third cycle programmes both as students and as early stage researchers.
- We charge the Bologna Follow-up Group with inviting the European University Association, together with other interested partners, to prepare a report under the responsibility of the Follow-up Group on the further development of the basic principles for doctoral programmes, to be presented to Ministers in 2007.
- Overregulation of doctoral programmes must be avoided.

From the London communiqué (2007)

- We recognise the value of developing and maintaining a wide variety of doctoral programmes linked to the overarching qualifications framework for the EHEA, whilst avoiding overregulation. At the same time, we appreciate that enhancing provision in the third cycle ... are essential preconditions for meeting Europe's objectives of strengthening research capacity and improving the quality and competitiveness of European higher education.
- We therefore invite our HEIs to reinforce their efforts to embed doctoral programmes in institutional strategies and policies, and to develop appropriate career paths and opportunities for doctoral candidates and early stage researchers.
- 2.17 We invite EUA to continue to support the sharing of experience among HEIs on the range of innovative doctoral programmes that are emerging across Europe as well as on other crucial issues such as transparent access arrangements, supervision and assessment procedures, the development of transferable skills and ways of enhancing employability. We will look for appropriate opportunities to encourage greater exchange of information on funding and other issues between our Governments as well as with other research funding bodies.

EUA report: 'Doctoral programmes in Europe's Universities: Achievements and Challenges' (2007)

- Only generic use of the word 'quality'
- No other reference to quality assurance
- Passing reference to QAA and the code of Practice

European Council for Doctoral Education (CDE)

- New independent membership service (launched June 2008)
- Developed and owned by EUA
- Aims to develop dialogue on reform of doctoral education
- Fulfilling the Salzburg Principles (2005)
- QA agencies not currently members, but representatives are in contact with EUA
- Possible that QA agencies will be invited to join the Council in future

Objectives of EUA-CDE

- To enhance the quality of doctoral education in European universities by fostering debate and promoting the exchange and dissemination of good practice
- To encourage and support the development of institutional policies and strategies as well as the introduction of effective leadership and management practices
- To improve the availability of data and information on doctoral education in European universities
- To identify and monitor emerging trends in doctoral education inside and outside Europe
- To act as a representative voice of European universities in the dialogue with other stakeholders on the issues of doctoral education
- To contribute to strengthening the international dimension of doctoral programmes and research training through improved cooperation among its members and in particular by establishing dialogue with partner organisations in other world regions
- To build and develop a strong link between education and research policies and strategies within Europe
- To promote the doctorate and doctorate holders as careers upon which to build a knowledge-based society

EUA's statement of benefits of membership of EUA-CDE

- The opportunity to discuss and exchange experience and good practice with colleagues from across Europe and beyond
- Access to workshops, seminars and winter/summer schools and relevant materials on hot topics related to doctoral education and research training
- Participation in an annual thematic conference and members' business meeting (at a reduced fee)
- Regular information on new developments and trends in doctoral education across Europe and worldwide (regular online newsletter, EUA-CDE publications, including a members Directory, updates on events and conferences, information on recent relevant studies and publications etc.)
- The possibility to participate in research projects and studies

European Charter and Code of Conduct for Researchers

- European Commission initiative
- Adopted 2005
- Best practice guidelines
- Based on Section 1 of QAA's Code of Practice
- Aims to provide equal rights and obligations for individual researchers across Europe; increased mobility
- QAA was member of the working group
- Important role for QAA bridging gaps between Europe and UK on status of early stage researchers

Revised UK Research Concordat

- Re-launched 25 June 2008
- Sets standards for career management and recruitment of researchers
- Covers research staff and students
- Modelled on Section 1 of QAA's Code of Practice
- QAA represented on the Steering Group
- Formally recognised by the European Commission as meeting the principles of the European Charter
- Possible role for European QA agencies to oversee jointly supervised PhD arrangements

Taught Postgraduate Education

- Potential for increased role in future for European QA agencies due to:
 - Lack of consistency across Europe at master's level
 - Erasmus Mundus master's consortia
 - Increasing employer engagement
- Possible role for ENQA and European QA agencies to help national sectors show how master's awards meet the respective qualification descriptors
- QA agencies and recognition



QAA