



Quality Assurance in European Higher Education Policy

Klara Engels-Perenyi, European Commission
Brussels, 8 September 2015



Quality assurance progress report 2014

- Quality assurance for **quality enhancement**
- Move from process to **progress**
- Shift to **institutional evaluation**
- More **transparent** approach, but not always readable

Challenges



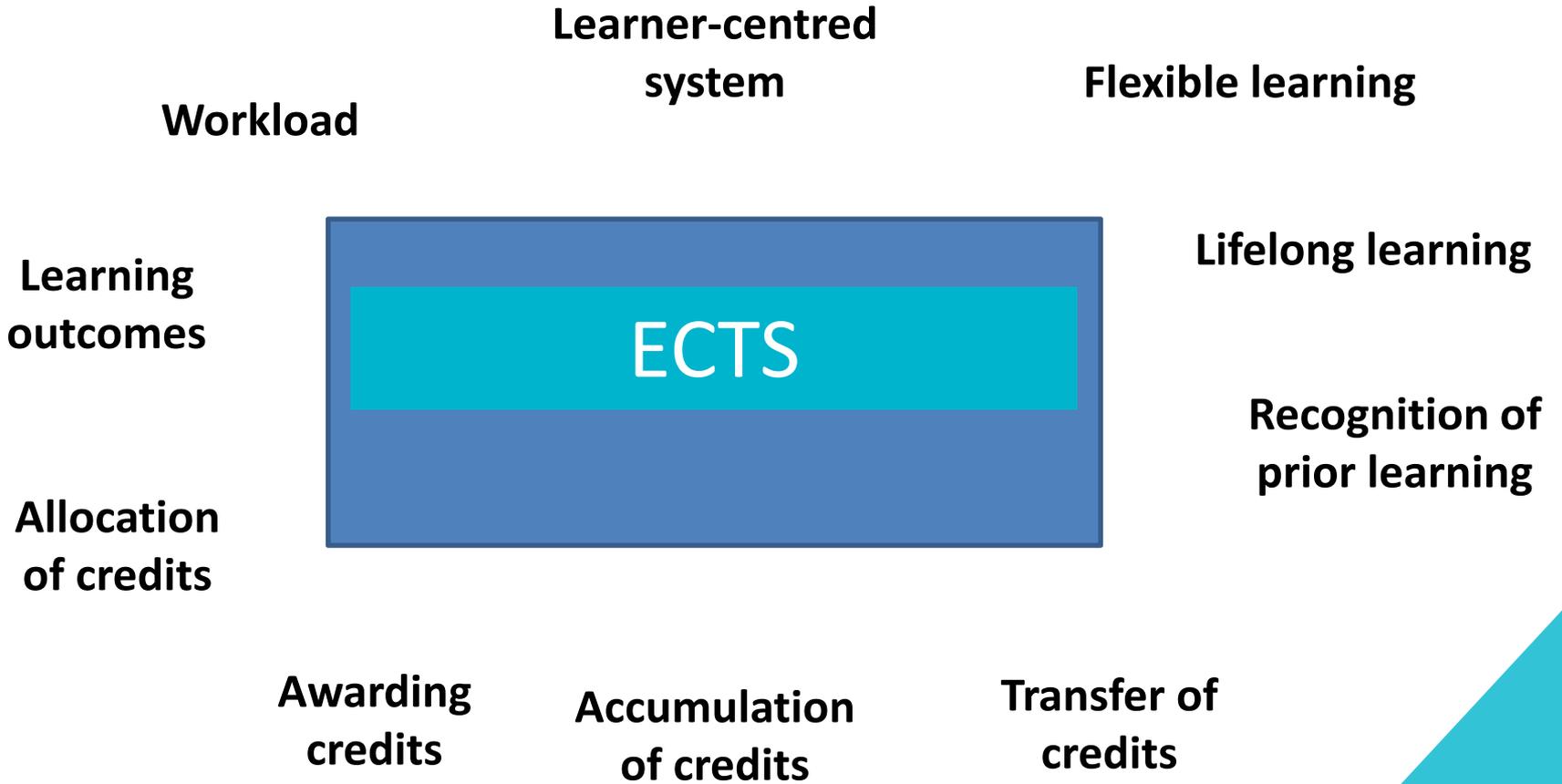
- Economic crisis
- Expanding student population
- Need to raise quality of learning and teaching
- Aligning learning and teaching to societal and labour market needs
- Skills gaps and mismatches: 2 million job vacancies in Europe, but 1/3 of employers struggle to find staff
- New technologies, digital and online learning, MOOCs
- Flexible learning pathways
- Need for effective HE systems—value for money

QA and quality enhancement



QA can encourage and incentivise HEIs to

- Widen access through **more innovative approaches to admission**
- Prevent dropout and **stimulate retention**
- **Involve students** in programme design
- **Evaluate support services** for students
- Apply **QA to programme design**
- **Meaningfully involve employers** - Work-based learning
- Employability of graduates – **Tracking, skills forecasting**
- Support HEIs in **adapting to new modes** of learning and teaching



Modernisation Agenda: Mobility & Internationalisation



Key policy issues for Member States and higher education institutions:

- Encourage institutions to **build learning mobility more systematically into curricula**, and **eliminate unnecessary barriers** to switching institutions between bachelor and master levels and to cross-border co-operation and exchanges.
- Ensure the **efficient recognition of credits gained abroad** through effective quality assurance, comparable and consistent use of ECTS and the Diploma Supplement, and by linking qualifications to the European Qualifications Framework.
- Improve access, employment conditions and progression opportunities for students, researchers and teachers from other countries, including by fully implementing the **Directives on students and researchers²²** and the **EU Visa Code** to facilitate the issuing of Schengen visas to students and researchers undertaking short stays²³.

Challenges



- Filtering out **poor quality providers** and/or **diploma mills**
- Problems with **recognition**
- Increasing **student mobility**
- External QA and recognition of **Joint Programmes** and **cross-border higher education** (franchising and branch campuses)
- Increasing **international activities of Quality Assurance Agencies** (only 2/5 of EQAR-registered QAAs operate across borders)

How can QA contribute?



- **Strong QA**: basis of internationalisation
- Growing numbers in **ENQA & EQAR**
- Including international experts in **QA panels**
- **Cooperation of QAAs** to ensure the quality of joint programmes and cross-border higher education
 - European Approach for QA of Joint Programmes

QA of digital and online content



- To be published soon: study on "The Changing Pedagogical Landscape".
- Adequate recognition and validation instruments for digitally acquired knowledge, skills and competences can support the uptake of open and innovative learning practices. (Draft 2015 Joint Report)
- QA and accreditation in HE should encourage (and not impede or prevent) the provision of more flexible educational formats.
- ECTS provides an established European framework for the recognition of learning outcomes in HE which can be easily applied to newer forms of provision.

QA of digital and online content - 2



QA agencies should:

- develop in-house expertise
- establish frameworks that are sufficiently flexible to recognise and support new modes of teaching and learning
- evaluate institutions on their active support of innovation or the lack of it, and its impact on the quality of learning and teaching
- engage in dialogue with universities to agree good practice approaches to QA for innovation in learning and teaching.

Erasmus+



- Support through a variety of actions
- More cooperation possibilities for partner countries;
- Mobility projects;
- Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees;
- Capacity Building in the field of higher education.

https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/erasmus-plus_en

Reference documents



- [Draft 2015 Joint Report – New priorities for European cooperation in education and training](#)
- [Supporting growth and jobs - an agenda for the modernisation of Europe's higher education systems](#)
- [Education and Training Monitor 2014](#)
- [European Commission Report on Progress in QA in HE](#)
- [Council Conclusions on QA supporting Education and Training, May 2014](#)
- [Modernisation of HE in Europe: Access, Retention and Employability, Eurydice, 2014](#)
- [Impact of Erasmus – study](#)