Development of Quality Culture – ASHE Role

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Overview

• The context of higher education and science in Croatia

• ASHE role

• Challenges
Shared values, beliefs, expectations and commitments towards quality
Introduction of Bologna system in Croatia

• 2001 Croatia signed the Bologna Declaration - EHEA
• Impetus - wish to improve the education structure of the population, reform the system and join the EU
• Mayor changes: binary system, three-cycle system, ECTS, QA
• MSES - Education Sector Development Plan 2005-2010
• 2005 – Accreditation of Study Programmes according to Bologna process; first Bologna generation of students enrolled
• 2006 – ESG were adopted in Croatia
• 2006 – Establishment of QA Units at HEIs; introduce change, shared understanding of its purposes
Ministry of Science, Education and Sports
(2005) objective:

‘A quality assurance system will be introduced into the higher education system of the Republic of Croatia by 2006.’

CARDS 2003 project
• Development of CQF
• Implementation of State Matura
• Establishment of new HEIs (around 30 new HEIs, mostly private colleges and public polytechnics)
• Development of QA system (institutional, national level)
Established in 2005

2009 – redefinition of its role (Quality Assurance Act) and strengthening of its independence

ASHE is a legal entity that autonomously and independently performs activities defined by Scientific Activity and Higher Education Act, Act on Recognition of Foreign Educational Qualifications and Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education

Unifies various activities related to the science and higher education system
Activities

1. Quality Assurance Role
2. Collecting and analysing data on the systems of science and higher education
3. National ENIC/NARIC Office
4. Central Applications Office
5. Support to work of various bodies
6. International cooperation
ASHE membership in international networks

- Full member of INQAAHE since 2006
- Full member of ENQA since 2011
- Listed in EQAR
- Full member of CEENQA (former CEEN) since 2008
- Member of OECD IMHE Forum since 2008
- ECA member since 2012
- APQN – observer’s status since 2012

International good practice – but implemented in the national context (“no recipe”)
QA role

- Initial accreditation
- Re-accreditation
- Thematic evaluation
- Audit
## ASHE QA activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASHE activities</th>
<th>Self-assessment</th>
<th>Peer review</th>
<th>Site visit</th>
<th>Publication of a report</th>
<th>Follow-up procedure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reaccreditation</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thematic evaluation</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Possible, not compulsory</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>Not formally, but a negative outcome is followed up by reaccreditation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Audit</td>
<td>+</td>
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QA procedures in line with ESG

- Periodic external review
- Standards and criteria (key areas)
- Accreditation Commissions/Councils
- Self-review
- Trainings
- Peer-reviews
- Site-visit
- Report
- Follow-up
- Decisions
- Outcome of external evaluations
External QA in Croatia

- First cycle, at the beginning
- 1 national agency (ASHE)
- Public and private institutions
- International peer-reviews
- Students in peer-reviews
- Representatives of economic sector in peer-reviews
- Public disclosure
- Ministry issues licences
- ASHE issues audit certificate
Initial accreditation

- New HEIs and/or new study programmes
- New scientific organisations established and/or financed by the state
- Fulfilment of **minimum criteria** is checked
Re-accreditation

- 5–year cycles
- All public and private HEIs by 2015/2016
- All scientific organisations established and/or financed by the state by 2015/2016
Re-accreditation of HEIs

All HEIs by 2015/2016

- 2010/2011: re-accreditation of 20 HEIs in the field of economics and business
- 2011/2012: re-accreditation of 32 HEIs in the field of technical sciences
- 2012/2013: re-accreditation of 9 HEIs in the field of biotechnical sciences + 14 private HEIs
Re-accreditation - Scope

- Scope of reaccreditation
  - Minimum criteria
  - Quality grade
MINIMUM CRITERIA

- Prescribed by Ordinance of Accreditation of HE
  - teacher/student ratio 1:30
  - spatial criteria 1 student per 1,25 m²
  - 50/33 percent of study programmes conducted by teachers employed at the institution/own teachers
MINIMUM CRITERIA

For HE institutions registered in the Register of Scientific Organizations

• Adopted long-term strategic programme of research in the area in which the teaching activity is performed

• Adequate number and qualifications of employed researchers (appointed into scientific position or with an adequate number of scientific papers published)

• Proof of adequate facilities and equipment for proposed research

• Proof of necessary funds secured for proposed research
Each standard consists of various criteria

Fulfilment of each criteria must be described with following levels of implementation:

- Not implemented
- Starting phase of implementation
- Partly implemented
- Mostly implemented
- Fully implemented
ASHE makes recommendation to the minister of science, education and sports to:

- Issue accreditation (for institutions and/or programmes)
- Issue a letter of expectation up to 3 years (can result in denial of enrolment)
- Revoke the licence (for institutions and/or programmes)

After expiry:
- Issuing the licence
- Revoking the licence
2010/2012 - Outcomes

- Accreditation granted to **30** HEIs
- Letter of expectation issued to **16** HEIs and **5** study programmes
- Accreditation recommendation to revoke the licence for **4** HEIs/ appeal procedure underway
- Revoke licence to **11** dislocated study programmes
ASHE QA audit

• National Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education (2009)
  ➔ ASHE carries out the procedure of QA audit - assessing the degree of development and efficiency of internal quality assurance system of HEIs.

• 21 audits carried out from 2010-2012 (universities, faculties, academies; polytechnics, colleges,) 8 certificates.
Internal Audit

- QA system of HEIs as a whole
- Scope → degree of development and efficiency of the internal QA system of HEIs

- Linked explicitly to ESG standards part I
- Integrated QA system (ISO+ESG)
HEIs QA systems

- 150 QA units are established at HEIs
- 126 QA Ordinances
- 57 QA Manuals
- 108 students members of QA units
- 35 representatives from business sector are members of QA units
- 38 Internal audits (collective experience, using existing experience, follow up, feed back to strategic management, driver for a change)
- Enhancement of quality culture

Source: ASHE QA Questionnaire, 2012
Introducing internal QA

• Setting up system, introducing performance indicators, strategic planning
• Aims to explore the role of Institutional research to support institutional decision making
• Facilitate evidence based management for continuous improvement
• New ways to approach their tasks
Introducing internal QA

- Provides control and consistency across the organisation
- Increases transparency and enhances feedback culture
- Feedback reporting for stakeholders
- Saves time and reduces cost by allowing departments to share services and reduce manual constraints
Quality cycle
Role of Students in QA system

- **Internal QA system at HEIs:**
  - Part of governance body at HEI (Senate, Faculty board, SU, …)
  - Part of advisory body (QA Council, Board, Centre)
  - Participate in evaluation of QA system/procedures at
    - Institutional level
    - Programme level

- **External QA system:**
  - Part of decision body (ASHE Accreditation Council)
  - Part of expert’s panel (audit, re-accreditation)
Strengths - Good practice

- ASHE is a member of ENQA and EQAR
- External quality assurance procedures in line with the ESG, as well as European and international best practices
- Public call for experts (peer reviews)
- Foreign reviewers in the panels
- Business representatives and students included in the Management Board, Accreditation Council, and review panels
- NGO representative member of the Accreditation Council
- Reports and decisions are public
Strengths – Good practice

- Fair and equitable treatment of all stakeholders (public, private, new or traditional HEIs)
- Involvement of all stakeholders in implementing changes and carrying out activities
- Public discussions with all stakeholders
- Public forum – ASHE website
- ASHE documents are public (standards, criteria & procedures)
- The Ministry clearly committed to independence of the national agency
Strengths - Good practice

- Surveys

- Confidentiality Statement – ASHE staff

- Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Statement (everybody participating in external QA procedures)

- Accreditation Council Ethical Code

- No gifts from HEIs, no paid lunches or dinners from HEIs (members of peer-reviews) – written procedure

- ASHE annual report is public
Challenges and Future

• Further development of external QA procedures in line with the implementation of National Qualification Framework

• International good practice – but implemented in the national context ("no recipe")

• Shift from "inputs" to "outputs" /more focus on learning outcomes and employment of graduates

• Thematic reviews of "burning issues" in Croatian HE: doctoral education, learning outcomes…

• Support to evidence-based policy making: focus on data collection
Challenges and Future

- Help our HEIs to enhance their position in EHEA and worldwide (mobility, cooperation with business sector)
- Continuing education of employees/stakeholders
- Further support to development of quality culture: workshops, conferences, reports
- Network of national QA units
- Strengthen regional and international cooperation
- ESG revision
Thank you
Thank you for your attention!

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