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Agência de Avaliação
e Acreditação
do Ensino Superior

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**Quality Assurance approach in European Joint-
programmes – major findings**

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1. Brief historical background

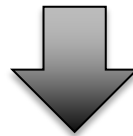
**2. Procedures for External Quality Assurance –
*European Approach (EA) methodology***

- a) Procedures for external Quality Assurance**
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3. The future: an ongoing process....

1. Brief historical background

Bucharest Communiqué (2012) and Bologna Follow-up Group (2013-14)



To develop a common approach to Quality assurance issues, with the aim of softening the Quality Assurance approach in the various countries.

“Develop a policy proposal for a specific accreditation approach for Joint programmes, which should be applied to all those joint programmes that are subject to compulsory programme accreditation at national level” (Bologna Follow-Up Group work programme, 2013-15)

1. Brief historical background

European Approach for Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes (EA) was approved by EHEA ministers in 2015, at the Yerevan conference, with the aim of **simplifying joint programme external assessment processes**.

The main arguments that sustained this common approach was twofold:

- **To facilitate** an integrated approach to quality assurance of joint programmes, that give a clear reflection on their joint nature.
- **To dismantle a set of obstacles** to the development of joint programmes, by setting common quality assurance criteria (aligned with the ones already in place on the EAHE), avoiding the application of specific national criteria.

1. Brief historical background

EA is a **methodological approach** to quality assurance of joint programmes, mainly based on the *European and Standard Guidelines for Quality Assurance in EHEA*, that considers the **distinctive nature of joint programmes**.

By using **common quality standards**, the EA should enable these programmes to be assessed in only one of the states participating in the programme.

The European Approach can only be applied to joint programmes offered jointly by higher education institutions **from two or more countries**.

2. Procedures for External Quality Assurance – *European Approach (EA) methodology*

0. Establish a **Memorandum of understanding**, between the HEI involved in the joint-programme (*identification of legal national constraints /obstacles to be properly addressed by the Accreditation Authorities*)

1. **Select a quality agency** from the European Register of Quality Agencies (EQAR)
2. **Sign a commitment letter**, to ensure that all the phases of the procedure will be respected, namely the final decision (cooperation between all the quality agencies of the different countries involved must be formally assured).
3. **Appoint an assessment experts panel**. This panel must include at least four members (3 academics/ professional specialists+1 student), from at least two countries involved in the consortium
4. **Organization of an external visit** (mandatory).
5. **Reparation of a preliminary review report**.

(As in other national assessment procedures, institutions will have the opportunity to comment on a preliminary report, and request for correction of factual errors (based on solid arguments) – institutional response.)

6. **Final review report and final decision**

It must be guaranteed that an appeal and follow-up procedures will be in place, if necessary.

2. Procedures for External Quality Assurance – *Quality standards guidelines*

The European Approach assessment methodology is based on European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). **These do not consider additional national criteria.**

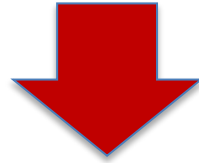
The EA focus on 9 standards:

- **Eligibility:** Status, Joint design and delivery, Cooperation Agreement
- **Learning Outcomes:** Level, Disciplinary field, Achievement, Regulated Professions
- **Study Programme:** Curriculum, Credits, Workload
- **Admission and Recognition:** Admission, Recognition
- **Learning, Teaching and Assessment:** Learning and teaching, Assessment of students
- **Student Support**
- **Resources:** Staff, Facilities
- **Transparency and Documentation**
- **Quality Assurance**

... Compiled in the SAR of the joint programme

3. The future: an ongoing process....

Despite the (conceptual) success of the EA , some relevant problems persist.



≠ National legal and regulation frameworks for quality assurance in HE

- Some countries do not accept English as the main work language
- Different countries apply different assessment scales (accreditation, non-accreditation, conditional accreditation)
- Some countries apply specific requirements for students and equal opportunities
- Different demands in terms of ECTS requirements
- Different demands in terms of (teaching and non-teaching) staff requirements

3. The future: an ongoing process....

Within the scope of european policies aiming the cohesion and strength of the European Higher Education Area, it become very clear **that efforts must be continued and reinforced on the cooperation actions towards Quality Assurance of joint initiatives.**

A3ES is committed to embrace the European Approach methodology, and to work with the government authorities and other international Agencies to find solutions to facilitate and accommodate national concerns within a broader scope of joint initiatives.

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Thank you!