Building a quality culture, a south-east European perspective

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Summary



- Building a quality culture Croatian experience
- Lessons learned
- Open issues



Development of QA system in Croatia



EQA

2023

2009 - Act on QA in HE and Science

2022 - Act on QA in HE and Science

2005 - ASHE establishment

2011 - 1st cycle of external QA processes

In line with ESG 2005

2017 - 2nd cycle of external QA processes

2023 - 3rd cycle of external QA processes

In line with ESG 2015

2005

Follow-up activities based on the results of the 1st cycle

Follow up activities based on the results of the 2nd cycle

Development of strategic documents/strategic planning at HEIs

Strengthening of IQA activities based on PDCA cycle

Development of formal IQA documentation at HEIs

Establishment of IOA bodies

at HEIs/setting up procedures

Beginning of IQA procedures based on PDCA cycle

IQA





Agency for Science and Higher Education



TIMELINE

- . First cucle of external evaluation launched
- . Start of applications to undergraduate and integrated study programmes/HEIs via NISpVU
- ASHE Strategy 2010-2014 published . Conference "How to make Croatian economy competent?" held

- . Thematic evaluation of private scientific prognisations and other legal entities carried out
- . Launching of the thematic evaluation of
- postgraduate studies, completed in 2014
 - . Thematic evaluation of postgraduate studies

public scientific institutions system

. Establishment of seven Centers of Research Excellence

. Launching of the re-accreditation procedure of

scientific institutions outside the universities and

. Charter for Special Contribution in Education and

Promotion of Quality by the Croatian Society for

- ASHE Strategy 2016-2020 published
- . Development of a new external evaluation model in accordance with ESG 2015
- . Launching of the re-accreditation of postgraduate . ASHE hosts the meeting of the International
- Association of Admission Organisations Establishment of a Network of quality assurance
- units at higher education institutions CroQAnet ASHE became holder of the ESE project SKAZVO . ASHE was granted the MAMFORCE standard for the

- . Conference "The future of higher education" held . Start of the development of tools for the comparison of higher education institution's quality (academic classification and ranking)
- · Launching of an innovative cycle of workshop for career counsellors "Karijeriranie" . ASHE becomes the focal point for the follow-up on
- Recertification of ASHE Quality Management
- Sustem in accordance with HRN EN ISO 9001:2015; valid until 2021

- . Overview of re-accreditation of doctoral study programmes in the Republic of Croatia published
- . Evaluation procedures conducted based on a hybrid model for the first time [combination of online and on-site evaluation)
- . Research on study conditions during the coronavirus pandemic and social isolation
- . DNV external ISO 9001 audit conducted, ASHE's quality assurance system assessed with the highest grade [5]



- · Founding of ASHE as an independent national agency for quality assurance in science and higher education with the national ENIC/NARIC
- . Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) adopted
- . Development of an external quality evaluation model in accordance with the ESG 2005 and preparation for the first cycle of re-accreditation
- ASHE adopts Quality Management System in line
- * The Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education entered into force in 2009 and ASHE became holder of the external quality assurance procedures in Croatian science and
- . Scientific field committees and field committees inin ASHE
- . Central Applications Office established

- * International review of ASHE; full ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) membership and inclusion in EOAR (European Quality Assurance Register for Higher
- . Launching of the first thematic evaluation of public scientific organisations, completed in 2012

- · ASHE hosts the Annual Joint Meeting of the Network of ENIC and NARIC centers . Launching of the re-accreditation procedure of
- the public scientific institutions, completed in . Launching of the thematic evaluation of the
- scientific research vessels, completed in 2014
- · Launching of the first scientific quality evaluation for the purpose of establishing Centers of Research Excellence

- Adapting to the ESG 2015 . Introduction of an electronic sustem for application to graduate studies
- . Completing of the second scientific quality
- evaluation procedure for the establishment of Centers of Research Excellence: establishment of six new Centers of Research Excellence

- . International review of ASHE completed; renewal of ENDA and EDAR membership
- * Analysis of the five-year re-accreditation cycle of the Croatian higher education institutions presented
- . Launching of a new cycle of external evaluation of higher education institutions in accordance with
- . Charter for Special Contribution in Education and Promotion of Quality by the Croatian Society for Quality awarded to ASHE

- Re-accreditation of PHD study programmes completed
- . Directory of study programmes delivered in Croatia in a foreign language published
 - . Conference "Role of students in quality assurance" held
- . ASHE became partner in the international project KEEP IN PACT

- ASHE Strategy 2021-2025 published
- Third ENOA Agency Review
 ASHE Self-evaluation Report 2017-2021
- . DNV ISD 9001:2015 recertification audit
- · International evaluation procedures (joint programmes)



agencija za znanost i visoko obrazovanje agency for science and higher education





Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE)

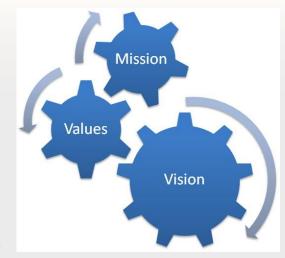


Mission

ASHE promotes the importance of quality assurance in higher education and science with the aim of **continuous quality improvement of higher education institutions**, scientific organisations and the overall Croatian system of science and higher education and its recognisability within the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area, while encouraging the society's sustainable development.

Vision

By actively participating in **shaping trends and innovative practice in the field of quality assurance**, ASHE will strive to contribute to positive changes in the European Higher Education Area.





ESG – as a tool for development of QA system







ENQA reviews of ASHE

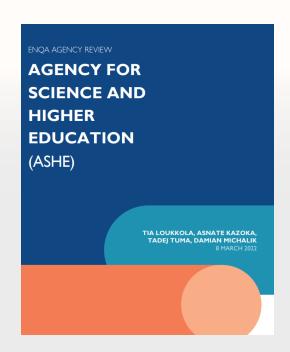


ASHE strategic goal – full member of ENQA and **EQAR**

2011 – externally evaluated – ENQA/EQAR membership/full compliance with ESG 2016/2017 - renewal of ENQA/EQAR status

2021/2022 - renewal of ENQA/EQAR status

	Panel conclusion	EQAR decision
Fully compliant	13	12
Substantially compliant	1 (ESG 3.1)	
Partial compliance		2 (2.7., 3.1)



Expectations fulfilled 🐇







ASHE activities



- 1. Quality Assurance activities in HE and Science
- 2. Collecting and analyzing data on the systems of science and higher education
- 3. National ENIC/NARIC Office
- 4. Central Applications Office
- 5. Support to various national bodies
- 6. International cooperation





Core ASHE QA activity



Institutional re-accreditation



- All HEIs in five-year cycles
- First cycle: 2011–2016
- Second cycle: 2017–2023
- This was the first time a comprehensive evaluation of the entire system of higher education in Croatia (131 institutions) was carried out in accordance with a single methodology and criteria, in compliance with the ESG and examples of good international practice.
- Conclusions: HEIs, other stakeholders and the general public recognise the importance of quality assurance, with many positive changes having taken place at the level of institutions, programmes and the system as a whole.
- Positive attitude of the heads of institutions towards the evaluation procedures and the results and outcomes thereof; these changes encourage higher education institutions to improve their activities, and ASHE to continue its work.





Areas of improvements



- Further development of functional internal quality assurance systems
- Development and modernization of study programmes based on the concept of learning outcomes
- Revision of ECTS in accordance with actual student workload
- Introducing/strengthening student practice
- Student-centred learning, teaching and evaluation
- Student support services
- Professional development of teachers and strengthening teaching competences
- Strengthening mobility and internationalization
- Enhancing quality and quantity of scientific research







- ESG as a tool for the development of internal and external QA systems
- Overregulated national regulatory frameworks as the main obstacle for QA agencies to fully comply with the ESG
- Expectations from the ministry to put more focus on compliance with the national criteria (control more important than enhancement)
- Development of a fit-for-purpose QA scheme (appropriate for the national context and specificities – no "one way fits all")
- Appropriate balance between administrative workload and effectiveness/impact of QA procedures







- Independence of QA agencies is crucial
 - **organisational independence** guaranteed in official documentation; appointment/dismissal of governing body members
 - **operational independence** in <u>setting up own procedures and methodologies</u>, <u>appointment of experts</u>
- Involvement of stakeholders in QA activities/partnership (but not consultancy!)
- Fair and equal treatment of all stakeholders (both public and private)
- Building trust among the stakeholders
- Supporting the development of staff competences (QA professionals)







- HEIs primarily responsible for the development of QA system
- regularly and consistently implement IQA procedures in accordance with the HEIs own quality concept
- conduct IQA in PDCA cycle-based quality cycles and close the loop
- to foster the culture of self-assessment and self-reflection
- link EQA and IQA results and findings to strategic goals
- HEI management's dedication to quality objectives and active inclusion is key
- provide adequate resources for the implementation of IQA processes, define competences and responsibilities
- involve internal and external stakeholders
- properly communicate IQA and EQA system purpose, processes and findings.







- External QA strongly encourages the development of internal QA
- Support of QA agencies to HEIs in the development of their internal QA systems (activities in addition to regular QA activities)
- Commitment of stakeholders in the development of reliable and efficient QA systems



Open issues

- Different stages of development of QA systems in the region?
- Further support to development of QA systems in the region?
- Removing obstacles in reaching compliance with the ESG?
- Are the QA systems in the region the guarantee of quality? Do they encourage enhancements sufficiently?
- Transparency and trust in regional QA systems?
- Impact of QA on the fair recognition of qualifications?
- Foreign QA agencies operating in the region do they apply the same standards consistently?









agency for science and higher education



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