



INQAAHE

International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

INQAAHE Bulletin March 2010

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Register yourself for the INQAAHE Forum

We would like to inform you that the registration website for the upcoming INQAAHE Members' Forum is still open.

The 6th biennial Forum is hosted by the Namibian Qualifications Authority (NQA) and will be held in Windhoek, Namibia on Wednesday 5 and Thursday 6 May, 2010. The Forum theme will be the responsiveness of External Quality Assurance Agencies.

On Tuesday, May 4th, two pre-Forum workshops will be organized. The subject of the first workshop will be QA mechanisms for QA agencies. The second workshop will address the training of reviewers. For more details about the program, the conference host and to register yourself please visit:

<http://www.inqaahe.org/forum-2010>

Please note that the registration will close on Friday April 16th.



Extension of INQAAHE Secretariat

When NVAO's offer to host the INQAAHE Secretariat was accepted by the Board, the appointment was made for 18 months to the end of 2009. The Board has been pleased during the last quarter to extend this appointment to 30 June 2013.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Karl Dittrich and NVAO for the great amount of support for INQAAHE, and our particular thanks are due to Mark Frederiks, Leendert Klaassen, Esther van den Heuvel and Arjan Visser.

David Woodhouse
INQAAHE President

News from INQAAHE



INQAAHE membership mutations

INQAAHE welcomes the following new members:

Full Member: National Commission for Academic Assessment and Accreditation, Timor Leste
Higher Education Planning Evaluation Accreditation and Coordination Council, North-Cyprus, Turkey
Institution Member: King Saud University and Eastern Mediterranean University
Affiliates: Farida Ramadan, Elna van Heerden and Sandra Richards





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President's Report on INQAAHE Project Working Groups

1. Windhoek Forum and associated activities, 3-8 May 2010

Planning is well advanced for the Forum in Namibia, and there are many associated activities. The Commonwealth of Learning is leading a workshop on 3 May; there are two pre-Forum workshops, and the President of AfriQAN is speaking, on 4 May; the Forum proper is on 5 & 6 May; INQAAHE is hosting a meeting of networks on 7 May; GIQAC is hosting a meeting of African colleagues and a dinner of network members on 7 May; and GIQAC is holding a meeting on 8 May.

GIQAC and INQAAHE have provided generous funds to support participation in the Forum, with an emphasis on developing countries and on African countries.

If you have not yet registered, please do so at:

<http://www.inqaahe.org/forum-2010/formulier/registration/161>

2. Small States

INQAAHE has long been aware of the need to assist small states in their special needs in QA procedures and systems. In this, INQAAHE has collaborated with UNESCO.

Last year, INQAAHE published proposals on the development of quality systems in small states see:

http://www.inqaahe.org/admin/files/assets/subsites/1/documenten/1265101672_situational-analysis-on-qa-in-small-states-final-full-version.pdf

This year, GIQAC has provided funding to support some internships for members of QA agencies in small states for professional development with other experienced agencies.

INQAAHE sought applications from small states, and offers to host interns, and a good response was received. Four internships will go ahead in the next few months. (These will be announced as soon as the participants have been informed.)

3. QA in HE Clearinghouse (QAHEC)

This is a long-standing project to index the websites of a number (currently 50) of QA agencies, so that INQAAHE members may more easily locate the policies, procedures and practices of other agencies.

The Clearinghouse has been designed and the initial cataloguing is being checked with the relevant agencies. The Clearinghouse will soon be publicly available, and formally launched at the Namibia Forum in May. The creation of the material has benefited from support from the World Bank and UNESCO. The Board intends gradually to increase the number of sites catalogued.



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4. Consultants Database

INQAAHE and ANQAHE have assisted APQN in creating a database of consultants in QA.

The consultants are drawn from around the world, and are included in the database only after consideration of their applications by a team of experienced QA reviewers. The database was launched during the last quarter, and may be accessed at: <http://www.apqn.org/services/consultant>

<http://www.apqn.org/services/consultantsdb>

Members using consultants from the database are invited to let the Secretariat know their experiences.

5. Query Service

INQAAHE provides a rapid answer query service to members, through a team of about 15 people world-wide. Members simply submit queries through the relevant link in the Member Services area of the website. A few queries go unanswered if no team member feels they have expertise or experience relevant to the question, but most receive several helpful responses.

The Query Service can be consulted at:

<http://www.inqaahe.org/main/member-services-41/query-service-57>

This service is not getting a great deal of use. Members' comments on how it could be made more useful are invited.

6. Professional accreditors

In January 2010, INQAAHE held its second special meeting for professional accreditors, in Washington DC. Following the first meeting in 2009, a special area of the INQAAHE website has been created.

Professional accreditor members are asked to tell the Board what particular services they would find useful. More information can be found at:

<http://www.inqaahe.org/main/capacity-building-39/professional-accreditors-128>

7. Professional Qualification in QA

New York University and The University of Melbourne, report good enrolments in the professional QA program based on the material written by INQAAHE. Dr Jean Morse, former Board member of INQAAHE, is in charge of the program in NYU. The program, the writing of which was supported by GIOAC funds, is on the INQAAHE website. All members are encouraged to use any units for training purposes, and report their experiences to the Secretariat. For more information visit: <http://www.inqaahe.org/qap>

8. Good Practice in QA (GPQA)

This is the web area for sharing with colleagues things that you think you do well as a quality agency. In response to members' comments, submission and evidence requirements have now been simplified.

At present, we have only a few entries in the database, and members are encouraged to go to the website and submit practices of their own that they have reason to think might be helpful to other agencies.

The GPQA website can be consulted at: <http://www.inqaahe.org/gpqa>



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9. Accreditation Mills

INQAAHE is establishing a project group to address the matter of identifying accreditation mills. The World Bank and UNESCO are supporting this project. The project specification has been written, as has an outline of the work of a researcher. Discussions are underway this month with the aim of starting the project very soon and having an initial register in place by September.

There are always problems in producing 'blacklists', including the implication that anything omitted is bona fide, and the likelihood of being sued by listed entities. The intended approach is therefore to produce a 'white list' (akin to UNESCO's portal of degree mills), but that has different problems, namely that the list is likely to be large, and some countries insist that their agencies are included even though there may be cause for suspicion.

Any members interested in joining this project would be most welcome, and should contact the Secretariat.

10. Website – Member Services

A password is needed to access the Member Services area of the website. This area contains the Query Service, the Good Practices, the Consultants' Database and (soon) the Clearinghouse. I hope all designated INQAAHE contact people have requested a password and now refer to this area of the site.

The passwords allocated by the site are of course random sequences of characters. When you are logged in you can change your password to something you can more easily remember.

In addition, we strongly encourage you to give your colleagues also access to the website. After you are logged in you can use the 'Your INQAAHE' section to give your colleagues contact to the INQAAHE Member Services.

This spreads the information and resources provided by the Network more widely.

11. Website – Member Information

All members are listed on the website with the information you have given us about yourselves. Many people worldwide (including from outside the Network) use this list to learn about your organisation. Therefore, you should keep it up to date. We remind you each year when we send the request for the subscription to check your organisation's website entry. After logging in at the INQAAHE homepage you can easily consult and change them at the 'Your INQAAHE' section.

At the moment many sites are quite out of date and because it's important to provide our members with correct and up-to-date details of your organisation we would like to ask you to check them.

12. Website – Information Sharing

INQAAHE is a network, and the information we share must be provided by members. The directors see it as our responsibility to generate as much material for the website we can, but there is so much happening that we don't know about unless you tell us. Please, each year when you check the information on your organisation, consider sending to the Secretariat a brief update on developments in your organisation during the last year. Have you introduced a major new system, extended your international activities, had a major success or had a serious problem?

All these things can be helpful to other members of the Network.



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13. Constitution

There are some clauses in the INQAAHE Constitution that need correcting, and the Board has been discussing other possible changes. These will be reported for discussion at the General Assembly in Namibia, but to ensure no members are disenfranchised, any proposed changes will be put to the whole membership electronically after the Forum.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Namibia.

David Woodhouse,
INQAAHE President

INQAAHE continues outreach to Specialized and Professional Program Accreditors

The INQAAHE Board of Directors continued its outreach efforts to the specialized and professional accrediting community by hosting its second special meeting for this particular group of QA agencies on January 25, 2010. Like the first meeting, the location and timing was in Washington, DC just prior to the start of the annual CHEA conference.

The meeting was well attended with a total of 28 individuals representing 25 different professions' QA agencies. Professions with representation included areas such as engineering, architecture, pharmacy, teacher education, veterinary medicine, business, and counselling. A vast amount of information was covered in a short 90 minutes with an update of current INQAAHE initiatives, a short presentation of one profession's international QA activities, and small group discussion focused on international quality assurance issues in the professions. Summary notes from this meeting can be found on the INQAAHE website at: <http://www.inqaah.org/main/capacity-building-39/professional-accreditors-128> Although the majority of participants at this meeting were from US accrediting organizations, there were individuals from other countries in attendance. INQAAHE, however, is very interested in broadening the participation to include representatives from other countries. It is believed that broader participation from more countries and regions will create a more diverse network for our members. Thus, INQAAHE is asking for your help by providing additional contact information for programmatic accreditors worldwide. If your organization provides quality assurance reviews of professional programs or if you know of any programmatic focused QA agencies that should be added to INQAAHE's contact list, please send this information to Carol Bobby at :

cbobby@cacrep.org

This will assist INQAAHE in reaching out to a broader audience, while simultaneously increasing the information that can be shared through the network.



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GPQA – latest developments



The INQAAHE database of Good Practices in Quality Assurance (GPQA) was launched in December 2008. The GPQA now hosts 10 good practices from six members from six different countries. The GPQA will only serve as a useful tool for INQAAHE's members if the number of practices continues to expand. To achieve this goal we need our member quality assurance agencies to submit more good practices.

“A good practice is an activity that is clear and coherent and that has been documented as adding significant value to the policies or practices of a quality assurance agency and/or its stakeholders”.

The basic principle of the selection is that the relevant system or action appears to be potentially transferable to other contexts and/or adds value to the growing knowledge base on QA. The applicants are required to:

- provide a clear and coherent description of the practice and the rationale for the introduction of the practice
- provide evidence and/or examples that the practice has added value to its QA activities.

Good Practices will be validated by international QA experts before they are made public.

You submit your potential good practice online via the INQAAHE members-only site: <http://www.inqaah.org/gpqa> (same log in as for INQAAHE website).

There is an online submission form that comprises the aspects that you need to include in the presentation of your practice. The submission is to be sent electronically to the INQAAHE Secretariat that will organise the validation process.

As a new feature of the GPQA, good practices submitted in any of the six official UNESCO languages will now be accepted for review. These six languages are English, Spanish, French, Russian, Arabic and Chinese. If the submitted practice is submitted in another language than English, it is a requirement that the practice is accompanied by a short summary of the practice in English.

When your practice has been approved, all INQAAHE members will receive an e-mail that announces your new GPQA entry. As the GPQA is intended to be a tool for development for INQAAHE's members, we have added a 'comment' function to each GP. The purpose of this function is for members to comment on the practices in order to share aspects of a particular practice more widely. Members can for example share their experiences with similar practices or their experiences having adapted or adopted a particular practices.

We look forward to receiving your practices and to your active participation in making the GPQA an active member facility.



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News from Networks



Changes in Board Membership of APQN

Ms. Dorte Kristoffersen, Deputy Executive Director of the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ), has resigned from her position as APQN Vice-President effective January 7, 2010. Ms. Kristoffersen is relocating to the United States with her family. Her resignation as Vice-President led to a restructuring of the Board.

Dr Antony Stella of the Australia Universities Quality Agency was appointed by the Board as the new Vice-President to serve the unexpired term of Ms. Kristoffersen. Professor Colin Peiris, of the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of Sri Lanka, who was already co-opted to the Board, was appointed as Board member. Mrs. Fepulea'i Sinapi Moli of Samoa Qualifications Authority was co-opted to the Board.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to Dorte Kristoffersen for her great contribution to APQN. She served on the APQN Board for five years and played a significant role in APQN's establishment and consolidation process.

Jiang Yanqiao, PhD.
Secretary/Treasurer of APQN

AQAN Roundtable Meeting 2010 in Jakarta



The 3rd AQAN Roundtable Meeting 2010 will be hosted by the National Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (*Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi, BAN-PT*) in Jakarta, Indonesia from 28 until 30 July 2010.

The Roundtable – themed *The Interfacing between IQA and EQA in Higher Education* – seeks to gather representatives from quality assurance agencies or authorities, higher education providers and also professional bodies from each member countries.

The program will start with two days seminar and workshop. This is followed by the 3rd Roundtable Meeting in which, among others, will seek approval from the member countries on the proposed AQAN Constitution.

For further updates on the Roundtable, please visit the AQAN website at:

<http://www.mqa.gov.my/aqan>



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Biennial General Assembly of CEEN



The Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education will hold its biennial General Assembly meeting in Sofia, Bulgaria on 28 and 29 May 2010. Linked to this event will be a workshop "Quality Assurance in a changing world" celebrating the double anniversary of the EHEA and the CEE Network. The CEE Network held its initial meeting in 2000 although it was formally established in 2002. Workshop topics will focus on issues important for CEE Network members in the Bologna process.

The event will bring together representatives from the member agencies and participants from European organizations operating in the field of higher education, with speakers from ENQA, EQAR and the OECD.

Further information can be found on the event website at:

<http://www.neaa.government.bg/en/events/future>

ENQA Update



The year 2010 not only marks the 10th anniversary of ENQA, but also the official launch of the European Higher Education Area at the Anniversary Bologna Ministerial meeting which took place on 11-12 March in Budapest and Vienna.

Over the past few months ENQA has liaised and consulted with its members in order to produce two core documents which currently fall under ENQA's work plan for November 2009 – September 2010. These two documents are the ENQA report for the Anniversary Bologna ministerial meeting of March 2010 and the ENQA statement on the progress report on QA of the European Commission. ENQA has three events planned for 2010 and has published several reports and statements.

ENQA is fully dedicated to fostering the already established partnerships with all ENQA members, associates, affiliates, partners, regional networks and all other stakeholders, to facilitate the positive growth of the European Higher Education Area in 2010 and beyond.

Upcoming events

ENQA seminar - "Quality and Transparency in Higher Education: Expectations, Tools and the Link to Institutional Autonomy", 17-18 May 2010, Bologna, Italy

ENQA Internal Quality Assurance seminar, 8-9 June 2010, London, UK

ENQA Workshop – "Quality Assurance and Learning Outcomes", 8-9 July 2010, Vienna, Austria.



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Publications

[ENQA statement on the European Commission's Report on Progress in Quality Assurance](#)

[Information note - ENQA Board decisions on external reviews of quality assurance agencies](#)

[ENQA Report to the Bologna Ministerial Anniversary Conference of March 2010](#)

[First external evaluations of quality assurance agencies - lessons learned](#)

[Quality Assurance in Transnational Education](#)

For further information on events and publications and for ENQA's latest news, please visit the ENQA website at <http://www.enqa.eu>



ECA Conference on Joint Programmes

The European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education (ECA) will organise the conference Joint Programmes: Too many cooks in the kitchen? The conference is aimed at agencies, higher education institutions, students, recognition authorities and governments, and will be held in Graz (Austria) on 10 and 11 June 2010.

You are cordially invited to look at the programme and register on line through:
<http://www.eaconsortium.net/main/events/registration/joint-programmes:-too-many-cooks-in-the-kitchen/4>

Joint programmes are confronted with national quality assurance and accreditation procedures in the countries involved. One programme therefore has to undergo several different, national procedures. These procedures then lead to decisions that only have an impact in one national higher education system. The conference in Graz presents a methodology for a single accreditation procedure of joint programmes. An accreditation of a joint programme by one agency can then be accepted by other agencies. Furthermore, the recognition of a joint programme in one country does not necessarily entail recognition in the other countries concerned. This then leads to recognition problems regarding the degree(s) awarded by the joint programme. The conference presents how joint programmes can improve the recognition of their degrees and how recognition authorities (ENIC-NARICs) currently evaluate their degrees.

Information on joint programmes and accredited qualifications in a growing number of European countries is made available through the website Crossroads:

<http://www.grossroads.eu>

The improved and extended website will be presented in Graz.



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News from Members



News from Australia

Australia has eight states and mainland territories, plus some small overseas possessions. It has a population of 21m with 39 universities and about 160 other higher education (HE) institutions. AUQA is the overarching QA agency, carrying out quality audits of all the universities. In each of the nine state / territory jurisdictions, there is an accrediting agency / authority for the non-university HE institutions in that jurisdiction. These government accrediting authorities (GAAs) register the non-university HE institutions and accredit their programs. For reasons to do with Federal government funding, AUQA also audits about 75 of those non-university HE institutions.

It is intended that this rather messy, intricate arrangement, where there are criticisms of inconsistencies and duplication between the judgements of the GAAs in different states, will change at the beginning of 2011. A new national body, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) will be created. This will incorporate AUQA and the functions of the nine GAAs. Thus, there will be one national QA agency responsible for the whole of higher education in Australia. AUQA's audit schedule will continue (the current cycle will be completed by the end of 2012) as will the work of the GAAs. Obviously, though, these activities will need to become more integrated – it would not be sensible to have TEQSA carry out, separately, the current AUQA audit and GAA registration of a non-university institution.

The change, though, is not merely structural rationalising, but also philosophical. It is not by chance that the name of the new agency includes the word 'standards'. Australia is developing threshold academic achievement standards in a range of disciplines, and the new agency will evaluate institutions against these.

The Federal government also intends to make agreements ('compacts') with universities on which funding will be based, and it will be TEQSA's job to advise the government whether (and to what extent) the conditions of the compact have been met, and hence whether the university should receive the associated Federal government funding. Universities that were subject to no national quality check until a decade ago, and only to audit over the last ten years, will henceforth also be registered and accredited. The prime reason for this appears to be a doctrinaire 'level playing field (the non-universities have to be accredited, why should the universities escape?)', but, to be fair, the universities have never taken up the challenge, put to them for a decade now by AUQA, to demonstrate in some objective and comparative way the standards they are achieving.

AUQA is currently involved in the planning for the new system (as well as continuing and developing its normal full workload). Whether the target date of 1 January 2011 will be achieved is uncertain, but at some point there will be an announcement along the lines: 'Henceforth any reference to AUQA is to be understood as a reference to TEQSA'.



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NVAO introduces distinctive (quality) feature for internationalization



In order to underline the importance of "internationalization" the accreditation organization of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) intends to develop a special certificate. Within Dutch and Flemish accreditation frameworks this is referred to as a distinctive (quality) feature for internationalization. The NVAO proposes the following principles for the certificate:

1. The certificate is based on the ambition level of the program as defined in a policy statement;
2. The certificate is assessed and awarded at the level of the program;
3. The program's desired internationalization must have a significant impact on the overall quality of the program;
4. The internationalization of the program is reflected in the intended and achieved learning outcomes;
5. The operationalization of "internationalization" should be reflected in standards that relate to teaching and learning, staff, services and students;
6. The assessment of internationalization should be undertaken by a panel that has the appropriate expertise;
7. The assessment takes place on a four-point scale: unsatisfactory - satisfactory - good - excellent.

A framework for the assessment of internationalization and some guidelines have been drafted. From April until October 2010 NVAO will carry out pilot projects for this new distinctive (quality) feature for internationalization. Fifteen programs have indicated that they want to participate in the pilots. We expect to inform you about the results in the INQAAHE Bulletin by the end of this year.

Changes at the Hungarian Accreditation Committee

In accordance with an amendment to the Higher Education Act, the membership of the HAC has been reduced from 29 to 19. The HAC began its new, three-year term on 1 February 2010. On 12 February the Committee held its first plenary meeting and the members received their letters of appointment, signed by the Prime Minister. Roughly one third of the members are incumbents. The members elected György Bazsa as their president for a second term. At the following meeting, on 26 February, the members set up the new standing committees. According to the 2009 amendment of the Act, these have been reduced to eight expert committees, grouped according to broad sets of disciplines. The names of the new HAC members are published on the HAC website: <http://www.mab.hu/english>

As before, a HAC member heads the respective expert commission together with a vice-chair, who is usually not a HAC member. With the bachelor/master program structure implemented, a reduction in applications for new programs is expected and the HAC will be able to divert its resources to the 5-year cycle (reduced by law from 8 years) ex post institutional and disciplinary accreditation.



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Interview

OECD Feasibility Study for the International Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO)

The OECD Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO) aims to assess learning outcomes on an international scale by creating measures that would be valid for all cultures and languages.

Between ten and thirty-thousand higher education students in over ten different countries will take part in a feasibility study. Due to the immense scope of AHELO, the feasibility study has been limited to higher education institutions in OECD countries. Three to six countries will be involved in the various assessments of generic skills, engineering and economics, with about ten institutions from each country selected to take part. INQAAHE decided to ask OECD analyst Fabrice Hénard for more specific information about this challenging initiative.



Fabrice Hénard

Who came up with the idea to assess HE learning outcomes on an international scale and when?

Following on the discussions held at the ministerial conference in Athens 2006, where the focus shifted from quantity to quality of higher education, the Education Policy Committee of the OECD and the OECD programme Institutional Management for Higher Education (IMHE) decided to launch a feasibility study on the assessment of higher education learning outcomes (AHELO).

What is the main motivation? Can you please explain the uniqueness of the project?

The 21st century is witnessing the rapid transformation of higher education. More students than ever are pursuing higher education and a growing number are studying (or plan to study) abroad. The current job market demands new skills and adaptability, and higher-education institutions, (which include universities, polytechnic schools and colleges) are struggling to hold their own in a fiercely competitive marketplace. Ministers at the Athens Conference agreed that OECD countries needed to devote themselves to increasing not only the availability but the quality of higher education. AHELO is also a response to the information gap on the quality of higher education, as the existing assessment methods—including the international rankings systems—do not account for teaching and learning, which are the very missions of the vast majority of institutions worldwide.

What are the main challenges to be addressed?

The AHELO feasibility study is an attempt to measure the above-content knowledge of undergraduate students in 2 disciplines (economics and engineering) and in “generic skills.” To measure quality at the international level commands close attention to the context in which the institutions operate.



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This context includes a vast range of factors not directly related to the institutional performance (e.g., the earlier experience of incoming students).

Linguistic and cultural diversity are the core dimensions of the feasibility study, which endeavors to catch multiple determinants of quality in various contexts. The first main challenge is to test the scientific soundness of such an assessment at the international level. The second correlated challenge is to test whether such an assessment is practically possible and relevant to the faculty and students who will undergo the evaluation.

How will you design the assessment instruments?

The “generic skills strand” will be based on the adaptation of an existing instrument, the Collegiate Learning Assessment. For the additional disciplines strands, the instruments will be developed using earlier work derived from the TUNING approach and others built up by groups of employers, accreditors and researchers. Groups of disciplinary experts will help develop an assessment framework and the appropriate instruments for the feasibility study. A full-fledged assessment will not preclude the implementation of the instruments developed for the purpose of the feasibility study.

How do you assure that the questions that are going to be asked are interpreted the same way by the students from different countries with different cultural backgrounds?

The purpose of the feasibility study is indeed to explore whether such a cross-cultural and linguistic assessment is relevant and scientifically possible. This project leaves sufficient room to experiment with new and combined evaluation approaches in a sample of countries from North and South America to Asia to Europe to the Pacific.

In particular, the contextual dimension—which is meant to capture the specific factors likely to affect learning outcomes—will permeate all the discipline skills and generic skills that will be under scrutiny.

A consultative group of stakeholders has been assembled to reflect the voices of higher education institutions, quality-assurance agencies, students, employers and any organizations with knowledge to impart. INQAAHE is a member of that group.

Expert groups will be established for each strand of the assessment in order to ensure that questions and answers are meaningful and fair to students in different countries—taking into account linguistic and cultural specialties. Participating countries in the AHELO feasibility study will hence play a major role in the adaptability of the testing methods and the analysis of the results.

How are you trying to prevent that the outcomes will lead to ranking and less diversity among institutions?

The AHELO feasibility study cannot result in a ranking of institutions. The sample of institutions to be tested (up to 10 per country, for approximately 200 students



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per institution, all of which volunteer to participate) is too limited and not widely representative. The results of the assessments will be provided to participating institutions, but will not lead to a cross-national analysis. The instruments developed for the feasibility study may not be appropriate for a full-fledged assessment.

Secondly, the diversity of higher education is the cornerstone of AHELO's methodology. The sample of assessed institutions will range from small technical colleges to multidisciplinary research-intensive universities. The IMHE Governing Board and the OECD Programme on Higher Education—composed of ministries and institutions of all countries—are responsible for the direction of the feasibility study.

While most existing rankings systems use a relatively narrow range of criteria to evaluate higher education, AHELO widens the scope and evaluates education on a number of fronts, most of which are disregarded in traditional rankings. AHELO makes these distinctions a top priority and is determined never to cut back on the number of criteria it considers.

When do you expect the project to be finished?

If all goes according to plan, the first results should be released in late 2012. A major conference will be then be planned—which will include all stakeholders—to discuss the outcomes.

What kind of practical, useful tool will be created when the project is finished?

Our hope is that the project will help institutions improve their understanding of their impact in order to improve the quality of teaching. It will also allow governments to develop strategies that support teaching and learning and, in the long term benefit students.

More information about the project can be found at: <http://www.oecd.org/edu/ahelo>

ACA Annual Conference 2010 Brains on the move

Gains and losses from student mobility and academic migration



On 17 and 18 May the Academic Cooperation Association organizes its Annual Conference in Córdoba, Spain. It will explore both the international mobility of tertiary students and the international migration of researchers and university staff, themes in which ACA has specialized for a long time already. The overriding purpose of Brains on the move is to shed light on the question if international mobility represents a competitive game of 'brain drain' and 'brain gain', that is if there are clear winners and losers, or if the current movements in academia around the globe are better characterized as 'brain circulation', where gains and losses are more equally distributed.

For more information visit the conference website:
<http://www.aca-secretariat.be/index.php?id=360>



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International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

ORGANISATION
FOR ECONOMIC
CO-OPERATION
AND DEVELOPMENT



IMHE 2010 General Conference Higher Education in a World Changed Utterly Doing More with Less

The biennial conference of the OECD's Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE) programme will take place from 13 to 15 September under the title *Higher Education in a World Changed Utterly: Doing More with Less* in the OECD Conference Centre in Paris, France.

Against the background of the most synchronised recession in OECD countries for more than half a century, the conference will focus on how the higher education sector - governments, institutions and individuals - can lead the way to sustainable recovery. More information can be found at:

<http://www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/generalconference>



GUNI Conference on Higher Education

The Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI) organizes the 5th International Barcelona Conference on Higher Education "Higher Education's Commitment to Sustainability: from Understanding to Action, to be held at the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (UPC) in Barcelona on 23 - 26 November 2010.

The 5th International Barcelona Conference on Higher Education is designed to deepen the conceptual definition of the lines of change in higher education to respond to the challenges of sustainability as well as to identify ways for action. Both facilitate the transition between existing and new educational scenarios consistent with the vision of the sustainability paradigm to move from understanding to action. For more information please visit:

<http://www.guni-rmies.net/conference2010/page.php?lang=2&id=1>