



DoQuP project

WP.1

Definition and implementation of an on-line documentation system for quality assurance of study programmes in partner countries

Deliverable 1.1

Standards for Quality Assurance of Study Programmes

DoQuP standards for quality assurance of study programmes in partner countries

Document approved by the DoQuP Project Board

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Summary

In the first two paragraphs the document establishes what should be intended for quality and quality assurance of study programmes and presents the standards for internal quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

Then the third paragraph presents the DoQuP approach to the definition of standards for quality assurance of study programmes in partner countries: it is defined what DoQuP intends for study programme quality and the DoQuP standards with the associated fundamental processes for a management for quality of study programmes in partner countries are identified.

In the final paragraph the DoQuP requirements for quality of study programmes in partner countries are presented.

Finally the attachment shows the correspondence between European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance and DoQuP standards for quality assurance of study programmes in partner countries and associated quality requirements.

1. Quality and Quality Assurance of Study Programmes

Quality of study programmes is certainly one of the objectives of the Bologna process, whose main aim is the harmonisation of the tertiary educational systems in the EHEA.

Coherently with the ISO 9000 definition of quality, for 'study programme quality' DoQuP intends "*the grade (level) of fulfilment of the objectives established coherently with the needs and expectations of all those who are interested in the educational service provided, that is the 'interested parties'*", or, in other words, "*the level of accomplishment of the quality requirements established coherently with the needs and expectations of all the interested parties*".

In this context, quality assurance is the instrument to make programme quality transparent and trustworthy for students and employers.

Always coherently with the ISO 9000 definition of quality assurance, for 'study programme quality assurance' DoQuP intends "*the activities (processes) in the framework of a quality management system of the educational service provided aimed at 'ensuring trust' in meeting the quality requirements to all interested parties*".

To assure its quality first of all a study programme should establish learning outcomes (i.e. what a student is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of the learning process) which meet the needs and expectations of society and labour market. In particular learning outcomes should ensure personal development and be aligned with the competences necessary to carry out the roles expected for the graduates in the labour market.

Then the study programme should implement academic strategies suitable for achieving the declared aims and promoting the improvement of its quality.

Finally the study programme should document learning objectives, educational process, learning context, results and management system, in order to provide evidence of its quality.

2. Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

Today the definition of suitable academic strategies in order to promote study programme quality can rely on the standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance established in the document of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG), adopted by the European Ministers of 45 countries in the Bergen meeting on May 2005 and which has found a generalised acceptance in the European context.

The standards are in three parts covering internal quality assurance of Higher Education Institutions, external quality assurance of higher education and quality assurance of external quality assurance agencies.

The European standards for internal quality assurance within Higher Education Institutions are reported in Table 1.

Table 1 - European standards for internal quality assurance within Higher Education Institutions

1. Policy and procedures for QA	Institutions should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available. They should also include a role for students and other stakeholders.
2. Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards	Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards.
3. Assessment of students	Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.
4. QA of teaching staff	Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so. They should be available to those undertaking external reviews, and commented upon in reports.
5. Learning resources and student support	Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered.
6. Information systems	Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities.
7. Public information	Institutions should regularly publish up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards they are offering.

These standards refer to the key aspects that, according to ENQA, characterise the quality of a study programme and that have to be considered in order to assure programme quality.

Then the ENQA document associates each standard the guidelines, which provide additional information about good practice and in some cases explain in more detail the meaning and importance of the standards. Although the guidelines are not part of the standards themselves, the standards should be considered in conjunction with them.

It is important to note that the purpose of these standards and guidelines is to provide a source of assistance and guidance to Higher Education Institutions in developing their own quality assurance system, as well as to contribute to a common frame of reference, which can be used by institutions.

It is not the intention that these standards and guidelines should dictate practice or be interpreted as prescriptive or unchangeable.

3. DoQuP approach to the definition of standards for quality assurance of study programmes in partner countries

According to DoQuP approach, quality assurance of a study programme requires:

- the adoption of a management system for quality;
- the management of a documentation process.

A management system for quality must identify the processes to be managed and how they should be managed.

Consistently with the ESG and with the models for the quality assessment and accreditation of study programmes adopted by the European agencies, the DoQuP approach to the definition of standards for quality assurance of study programmes in partner countries (and of the associated ‘quality requirements’) assumes that a study programme may be said ‘of quality’ when it complies with the national standards and requirements and:

- it establishes educational objectives (i.e. professional profiles and/or roles/activities students are to be prepared for and/or competences to be developed during the learning process by the students) consistent with the mission of the Higher Education Institution and the educational needs of society and labour market of reference, and learning outcomes consistent with the educational objectives;
- it designs and implements an educational process adequate to accomplish the learning outcomes, takes under control its development, assures a correct assessment of students’ learning and establishes appropriate criteria for students’ studies progression;
- teaching staff, facilities, financial resources, student support services and partnerships with businesses, research institutions and other Higher Education Institutions are adequate to accomplish the programme outcomes and are taken under control;
- it monitors the results of the educational process;
- it adopts an adequate and effective management system able to promote programme quality and guarantees the publicity of the information on the study programme.

These principles must inspire design, planning, development and control of a study programme and correspond to the following five ‘DoQuP standards’ for quality assurance of study programmes in partner countries:

- A - Needs and objectives;
- B - Educational process;
- C - Resources;
- D - Results;
- E - Management System.

The correspondence between ENQA and DoQuP standards is shown in Attachment 1.

Then in the context of each standard the DoQuP approach identifies the processes considered fundamental for a ‘management for quality’ of study programmes in partner countries. They are reported in Table 2.

Table 2 - Fundamental processes for a management for quality of study programmes in partner countries

Standard	Associated processes
A	A1 - Identification of the educational needs of the labour market

Needs and Objectives	A2 - Definition of the educational objectives A3 - Definition of the learning outcomes
B Educational Process	B1 - Admission requirements B2 - Design and planning of the educational process B3 - Realization of the educational process B4 - Assessment of students' learning and criteria for students' studies progression
C Resources	C1 - Identification and put at disposal of the teaching staff C2 - Identification and put at disposal of facilities (in particular: lesson rooms, laboratories, libraries) C3 - Identification and put at disposal of financial resources C4 - Organisation and management of student support services (in particular: orienteering, counselling and tutoring services) C5 - Establishment of partnerships with national and international businesses, research institutions and other Higher Education Institutions for the development of students' external education and mobility
D Results	D1 - Monitoring of the entrance students D2 - Monitoring of the students' learning D3 - Monitoring of the students' studies progression D4 - Monitoring of the students' opinion on the educational process D5 - Monitoring of the graduates' placement
E Management System	E1 - Definition of the processes for the study programme management and of the associated structural organisation E2 - Adoption of initiatives for the quality promotion E3 - Revision and improvement E4 - Publicizing of information on the study programme

4. DoQuP requirements for quality of study programmes in partner countries

Finally, the DoQuP approach identifies the expected behaviours and results of the study programme associated to each process to be managed, i.e. the 'DoQuP requirements for quality' of study programmes in partner countries, reported in Table 3.

Table 3 – DoQuP requirements for quality of study programmes in partner countries

Standard A - Needs and Objectives
The study programme should identify the educational needs of the labour market of reference, establish educational objectives coherent with the mission of the Higher Education Institution and the educational needs of the labour market of reference, and learning outcomes coherent with the established educational objectives.
Quality Requirement A1 - Educational needs of the labour market The study programme should identify the educational needs of the labour market of reference. The educational needs should be identified in terms of professional profiles and/or roles/activities expected for the graduates and required competences*.
<i>* In the DoQuP glossary 'competences' represent a dynamic combination of knowledge, understanding, skills (i.e. learned capacities, according to the Tuning glossary) and abilities (i.e. acquired or natural capacities, according to Tuning glossary). This definition is in line with the international ISO 9000 norm which defines competences as "demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills".</i>
Quality Requirement A2 - Educational objectives* The study programme should define professional profiles of the graduates and/or roles/activities

students are to be prepared for and competences to be developed and obtained by the students during the learning process consistent with the mission of the Higher Education Institution and the educational needs of the labour market of reference.

** In the DoQuP glossary 'educational objectives' are professional profiles and/or roles/activities students are to be prepared for and/or competences to be developed during the learning process by the students.*

Quality Requirement A3 - Learning outcomes

The study programme should define learning outcomes* in terms of what students are expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of the educational process consistent with the established educational objectives.

** In the DoQuP glossary 'learning outcomes' are statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning. According to Tuning, learning outcomes have to be expressed in terms of the level of competence (knowledge, understanding, skills and abilities) to be obtained by the learner. Consequently, the programme learning outcomes should align with the programme competences, not necessarily on a one to one basis, but overall.*

Standard B - Educational process

The study programme should assure students educational activities able to accomplish the established learning outcomes through contents, methods and times adequately designed and planned, take under control their development, assure a correct assessment of students' learning through suitable assessment methods and establish appropriate criteria for students' studies progression.

Quality Requirement B1 - Admission requirements

The study programme should define requirements for the admission to the study programme adequate for a profitable participation of the students to the established educational activities, in particular of the first course year.

Quality Requirement d B2 - Design and planning of the educational process

The study programme should design a curriculum and characteristics of the didactic units* consistent with the established learning outcomes.

The study programme should also plan the development of the educational process in such a way that students are able to achieve the programme learning outcomes according to a gradual process and activities coherent and coordinated with each other.

** In particular:*

- *learning outcomes specific of the didactic unit and consistent with the established learning outcomes of the study programme;*
- *contents;*
- *typologies of educational activities (theoretical lessons, practical lessons, laboratories, projects, etc.) also in terms of number of hours/credits for each typology.*

Quality Requirement B3 - Realization of the educational process

The study programme should develop the educational process coherently with the designed and planned development.

The study programme should also control the development of the educational process, in order to check its correspondence with the designed and planned development.

Quality Requirement B4 - Assessment of students' learning and criteria for students' studies progression

The study programme should define assessment methods* which guarantees a correct assessment of the students' learning and control the adequacy of the assessment tests to the learning outcomes and the correctness of the evaluation of the students' learning. The study programme should also

establish appropriate criteria for students' studies progression**.

* For instance: Written examinations (Essays, Multiple choice questions, Problems to solve, Analysis of cases/data/texts, Reports), Oral examinations, etc. and associated criteria for measuring students' learning.

** For instance: number of credits to be acquired for the passage to the successive course year; rules for working students; etc..

Standard C - Resources

The study programme should have at disposal teaching staff, facilities, financial resources, student support services and partnerships with businesses, research institutions and other Higher Education Institutions adequate for the accomplishment of the programme outcomes and able to make students' studies progression easier.

Quality Requirement C1 - Teaching staff

The study programme should have at disposal teaching staff* adequate for the achievement of the established learning outcomes.

* The teaching staff also includes teaching support staff (i.e. persons in charge of practical lessons, persons in charge of laboratory activities, etc.).

Quality Requirement C2 - Facilities

The study programme should have at disposal facilities*, with the associated equipments, quantitatively and qualitatively adequate for the development of the established educational activities and able to allow the applications of the established didactic methods.

* In particular: lesson rooms, laboratories and libraries.

Quality Requirement C3 - Financial resources

The study programme should have at disposal financial resources adequate for the development of the educational process according to the designed and planned activities.

Quality Requirement C4 - Student support services

The study programme should have at disposal student support services* relevant to the educational process and able to make students' learning and studies progression easier.

* In particular: orienteering, counselling and tutoring services.

Quality Requirement C5 - Partnerships

The study programme should have at disposal partnerships with national and international businesses, research institutions and other Higher Education Institutions quantitatively and qualitatively adequate for the development of students' external education and mobility.

Standard D - Results

The study programme should monitor the results of the educational process at least with respect to entrance students, students' learning, students' studies progression, students' opinion on the educational process, graduates' placement, in order to check the adequacy and effectiveness of the educational service provided.

Quality Requirement D1 - Entrance students

The study programme should monitor the entrance students in order to check their mastery of the admission requirements and the study programme attractiveness.

Quality Requirement D2 - Students' learning

The study programme should monitor the students' learning in order to check the effectiveness of the didactic units.

Quality Requirement D3 - Students' studies progression

The study programme should monitor the students' studies progression* in order to check the effectiveness of the educational process.

** In particular: drop-outs, number of credits acquired at the end of each course year, time to graduation.*

Quality Requirement D4 - Students' opinions on the educational process

The study programme should monitor the students' opinion on the educational process in order to check the perceived adequacy and effectiveness.

Quality Requirement D5 - Graduates' placement

The study programme should monitor the graduates' placement in order to check the correspondence of the study programme educational objectives to and the adequacy of the study programme learning outcomes for the educational needs of the labour market.

Standard E - Management system

The study programme should adopt an adequate and effective management system, able to promote the study programme quality and the improvement of the effectiveness of the processes for the study programme management and of the associated results, and should assure its continual adequacy and effectiveness.

Furthermore the SP should guarantee the publicity of the information on the study programme.

Quality Requirement E1 - Processes for the SP management and organisational structure

The study programme should identify the processes for the study programme management* and define an organisational structure** adequate for an effective management of the study programme.

** The processes should include all the processes associated to the DoQuP standards.*

*** That is, persons, committees, etc. in charge of the identified processes.*

Quality Requirement E2 - Initiatives for the quality promotion

The study programme should commit explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality and quality assurance and adopt initiatives suitable for the quality promotion of the study programme*.

** For instance: appointment of a person in charge of the SP quality; appointment of a Management Board with the participation of representatives of the labour market of reference; to provide a periodical self-assessment of the SP; to provide a periodical external assessment of the SP; etc..*

Quality Requirement E3 - Revision and improvement

The study programme should periodically revise needs and objectives, educational process, resources, results and management system, so to guarantee their constant adequacy and effectiveness, and promote the improvement of the effectiveness of the processes for the study programme management and of the associated results*.

** The process of improvement of the effectiveness of the processes for the SP management and of the associated results should be based on the analysis of the results of the educational process.*

Quality Requirement E4 - Publicity of information on SP

The study programme should make public full, up to date, easily acquired information, both quantitative and qualitative, on programme objectives, educational process, resources and results.

5. Conclusion

This document "DoQuP standards for quality assurance of study programmes in partner countries" developed and approved by the DoQuP consortium in consensus is building the first step for an introduction, a harmonization and a continuous improvement of quality management and quality assurance in study programmes in the involved Asian partner countries for the alignment with European and international quality standards by adapting to the national and regional conditions and requirements.

The identified requirements for the quality of study programmes in partner countries are the starting point for the identification of the information and data to be documented in order to assure the study programme quality.

Attachment 1 - Correspondence between European Standards and Guidelines for internal quality assurance and DoQuP standards for quality assurance and requirements for quality of study programmes in partner countries

1.1 Policy and procedures for quality assurance

ENQA Standard	Corresponding DoQuP Standards
<p>Institutions should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. They should also commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality.</p> <p>The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available. They should also include a role for students and other stakeholders.</p>	E
ENQA Guidelines	Corresponding DoQuP Quality Requirements
<p>Formal policies and procedures provide a framework within which higher education institutions can develop and monitor the effectiveness of their quality assurance systems. They also help to provide public confidence in institutional autonomy. Policies contain the statements of intentions and the principal means by which these will be achieved. Procedural guidance can give more detailed information about the ways in which the policy is implemented and provides a useful reference point for those who need to know about the practical aspects of carrying out the procedures.</p> <p>The policy statement is expected to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the relationship between teaching and research in the institution; • the institution’s strategy for quality and standards; • the organisation of the quality assurance system; • the responsibilities of departments, schools, faculties and other organisational units and individuals for the assurance of quality; • the involvement of students in quality assurance; • the ways in which the policy is implemented, monitored and revised. <p>The realisation of the EHEA depends crucially on a commitment at all levels of an institution to ensuring that its programmes have clear and explicit intended outcomes;</p> <p>that its staff are ready, willing and able to provide teaching and learner support that will help its students achieve those outcomes;</p> <p>and that there is full, timely and tangible recognition of the contribution to its work by those of its staff who demonstrate particular excellence, expertise and dedication.</p> <p>All higher education institutions should aspire to improve and enhance the education they offer their students.</p>	<p>E2</p> <p>A3</p> <p>C1</p> <p>D4</p> <p>E3</p>

1.2 Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards

ENQA Standard	Corresponding DoQuP Standards

Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards.	A, B, D, E
ENQA Guidelines	Corresponding DoQuP Quality Requirements
<p>The confidence of students and other stakeholders in higher education is more likely to be established and maintained through effective quality assurance activities which ensure that programmes are well-designed, regularly monitored and periodically reviewed, thereby securing their continuing relevance and currency.</p> <p>The quality assurance of programmes and awards are expected to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development and publication of explicit intended learning outcomes; • careful attention to curriculum and programme design and content; • specific needs of different modes of delivery (e.g. full time, part-time, distance-learning, e-learning) and types of higher education (e.g. academic, vocational, professional); • availability of appropriate learning resources; • formal programme approval procedures by a body other than that teaching the programme; • monitoring of the progress and achievements of students; • regular periodic reviews of programmes (including external panel members); • regular feedback from employers, labour market representatives and other relevant organisations; • participation of students in quality assurance activities. 	<p>A3 B2 B2 C1,C2,C4 B2 D2,D3 E3 D5 D4,E3</p>

1.3 Assessment of students

ENQA Standard	Corresponding DoQuP Standards
Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.	B
ENQA Guidelines	Corresponding DoQuP Quality Requirements

<p>The assessment of students is one of the most important elements of higher education. The outcomes of assessment have a profound effect on students' future careers. It is therefore important that assessment is carried out professionally at all times and takes into account the extensive knowledge which exists about testing and examination processes. Assessment also provides valuable information for institutions about the effectiveness of teaching and learners' support.</p> <p>Student assessment procedures are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and other programme objectives; • be appropriate for their purpose, whether diagnostic, formative or summative; • have clear and published criteria for marking; • be undertaken by people who understand the role of assessment in the progression of students towards the achievement of the knowledge and skills associated with their intended qualification; • where possible, not rely on the judgements of single examiners; • take account of all the possible consequences of examination regulations; • have clear regulations covering student absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances; • ensure that assessments are conducted securely in accordance with the institution's stated procedures; • be subject to administrative verification checks to ensure the accuracy of the procedures. <p>In addition, students should be clearly informed about the assessment strategy being used for their programme, what examinations or other assessment methods they will be subject to, what will be expected of them, and the criteria that will be applied to the assessment of their performance.</p>	<p>B4,D2</p> <p>B4,D2</p> <p>B4</p> <p>C1</p> <p>B4</p> <p>B4</p> <p>B4</p> <p>D2</p> <p>C4</p> <p>E4</p>
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1.4 Quality assurance of teaching staff

ENQA Standard	Corresponding DoQuP Standards
<p>Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so. They should be available to those undertaking external reviews, and commented upon in reports.</p>	<p>C</p>
ENQA Guidelines	Corresponding DoQuP Quality Requirements

Teachers are the single most important learning resource available to most students. It is important that those who teach have a full knowledge and understanding of the subject they are teaching, have the necessary skills and experience to transmit their knowledge and understanding effectively to students in a range of teaching contexts, and can access feedback on their own performance.	C1, D4
Institutions should ensure that their staff recruitment and appointment procedures include a means of making certain that all new staff have at least the minimum necessary level of competence.	C1
Teaching staff should be given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching capacity and should be encouraged to value their skills. Institutions should provide poor teachers with opportunities to improve their skills to an acceptable level and should have the means to remove them from their teaching duties if they continue to be demonstrably ineffective.	C1

1.5 Learning resources and student support

ENQA Standard	Corresponding DoQuP Standards
Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered.	C
ENQA Guidelines	Corresponding DoQuP Quality Requirements
In addition to their teachers, students rely on a range of resources to assist their learning. These vary from physical resources such as libraries or computing facilities ...	C2
... to human support in the form of tutors, counsellors, and other advisers. Learning resources and other support mechanisms should be readily accessible to students, designed with their needs in mind and responsive to feedback from those who use the services provided.	C1,C4 B2, C2
Institutions should routinely monitor, review and improve the effectiveness of the support services available to their students.	C4,E3

1.6 Information systems

ENQA Standard	Corresponding DoQuP Standards
Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities.	D
ENQA Guidelines	Corresponding DoQuP Quality Requirements

<p>Institutional self-knowledge is the starting point for effective quality assurance. It is important that institutions have the means of collecting and analysing information about their own activities. Without this they will not know what is working well and what needs attention, or the results of innovatory practices.</p> <p>The quality-related information systems required by individual institutions will depend to some extent on local circumstances, but it is at least expected to cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • student progression and success rates; • employability of graduates; • students' satisfaction with their programmes; • effectiveness of teachers; • profile of the student population; • learning resources available and their costs; • the institution's own key performance indicators. <p>There is also value in institutions comparing themselves with other similar organisations within the EHEA and beyond. This allows them to extend the range of their self-knowledge and to access possible ways of improving their own performance.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">D3 D5 D4 D4 D1 C1, C2, C3, C4 D1,D2,D3,D4,D5 A3</p>
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1.7 Public information

ENQA Standard	Corresponding DoQuP Standards
<p>Institutions should regularly publish up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards they are offering.</p>	E
ENQA Guidelines	Corresponding DoQuP Quality Requirements
<p>In fulfilment of their public role, higher education institutions have a responsibility to provide information about the programmes they are offering, the intended learning outcomes of these, the qualifications award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, and the learning opportunities available to their students. Published information might also include the views and employment destinations of past students and the profile of the current student population. This information should be accurate, impartial, objective and readily accessible and should not be used simply as a marketing opportunity. The institution should verify that it meets its own expectations in respect of impartiality and objectivity.</p>	E4