Internal Quality Assurance & External Quality Assurance: what comes first, with which indicators and how do we involve stakeholders?

Lithuanian experience in Internal Quality Assurance

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Lithuania is an East European country (Baltic state) with population of 3.2 million.

- 83.7% Lithuanians
- 6.6% Poles
- 5.3% Russians
- 1.3% Belarusians
- 3.1% others / unspecified

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SYSTEM of HE in Lithuania

**HE sector**
- 24 Universities
- 24 Applied Science Universities (colegia’s)
  - 10 200 researchers (5 000 PhD)

**Research sector**
- 17 State Research Institutes (subordinated to MES)
- 18 University Research Institutes
- 7 State Research Establishments (subordinated to other ministries)
  - 1 700 researchers (1 000 PhD)

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Scheme of the system of education in Lithuania

DD - Doctor’s Diploma
MD – Master’s Diploma
BD – Bachelor’s Diploma
PBD – Professional Bachelor’s Diploma
VQD – Vocational Qualification Diploma
MT – Maturity Certificate
IUS - integrated university studies
Lithuanian Maritime Academy

- 1500 students in 5 study lines (professional bachelor degree)
- Since 2001 LMA has ISO 9000 series (industrial standard) based Quality Management system, certified by Lloyd’s Register
Topics to observe in the presentation:

• Lithuanian legislative requirements for QA in HE
• Internal QA & External QA
• Definition of Stakeholder in HE
• Quality Assurance &/or Quality Management?
• Some aspects of ISO 9000 series industrial standards application in HE
Mission of HE

“The mission of higher education and research is to help ensure the country’s public, cultural and economic prosperity, provide support and impetus for a full life of every citizen, and satisfy the natural thirst for knowledge.”

Source: Law on higher education and research of Republic of Lithuania

... policy on higher education and research guarantees the quality of higher education and research.
Responsibility for QA

Higher education and research institutions shall be responsible for the quality of research (artistic) activities, studies and other activities

Source: Law on higher education and research of Republic of Lithuania
Means for QA

The quality of research (artistic) activities and studies shall be ensured through the

• **internal systems** of quality assurance of higher education and research institutions,

• **external evaluation and accreditation** of study programmes,

• external evaluation of research activities and **external evaluation and/or accreditation** of higher education and research institutions.

Source: Law on higher education and research of Republic of Lithuania

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Main requirement for Internal QA

Centre for Quality Assessment of Higher Education raises the requirement:

Internal quality assurance system within higher education institutions should be created using basic principles of European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG)
Rhetorical question

in the name of the section:
Internal Quality Assurance & External Quality Assurance: what comes first?

The stronger is Internal QA, the less need is for External QA.
Stakeholders

• Definition: Stakeholder is a group or individual who is affected by or can affect the achievement of a higher education institution (source: Freeman)

• Stakeholders are very important players in internal and external quality assurance

• Depending on their position or involvement stage, stakeholders could be also either internal or external to institution
Internal stakeholders for HE institutions

• students
• teaching staff
• academic managers
• non-academic staff
• researchers
• Student has many roles (will be discussed later), he/she is main customer of HE institution and “employer” of teaching staff and academic managers

• Teachers are the single most important learning resource available to most students and one of the main assessors
Externals stakeholders for HE institutions

- governments
- employers
- professionals
- graduates
- potential students and their families
- QA agencies
- mass media
One more Rhetorical question

Quality Assurance & Quality Management: what comes first?
Different approach to the concept of quality reflects different viewpoint to the object of quality management.
Application of QA approach

• In higher education outcomes oriented concept of quality assurance is more frequently using comparing with QM concept

• Usually during external quality assessment, providing by national Centers for Quality Assessment of Higher Education, attention is focused on outcomes achieved by higher education institutions
Limitations of QA approach

- External QA doesn't produce quality
- External QA mostly is control oriented, saying, that HE institution is “good enough”, doesn't provoke excellence
- HE institutions orient their internal QA to follow External QA
Technological differences between QA & QM (ISO 9000)

*Quality assurance* – part of quality management focused on providing confidence that quality requirement will be fulfilled.

*Quality management* – coordinated activities to direct and control activity of an organization with regard to quality.

Generally QM includes 5 main elements:

• establishment of the quality policy and quality objectives,
• quality planning
• quality control
• quality assurance
• quality improvement
Check – implement processes monitoring and product and measuring, regarding to the policy, objectives and requirements raised for a product and inform about the results.

Source: ISO 9001

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Quality management approach

Quality management approach differs from quality assurance approach, is **processes oriented** and therefore could be more applicable to use for inside institution activities.
Factory simplified model (industrial approach)

Source: Shutler, Crawford
Higher education institution simplified model (industrial approach)

Source: Shutler, Crawford
To guarantee graduates’ quality should be:

- incoming secondary school leavers should satisfy appropriate entry requirements
- study process documentation (study plans, syllabi, timetables, etc.) should be of a certain quality
- sufficiently qualified teaching staff
- study process of an appropriate technical and methodical level
- reliable students’ knowledge and skills control
- clearly defined management responsibility and sufficient competence for implementation of necessary changes

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Students roles (based on ISO 9000 standards definitions)

• students who enter a HE institution are its “inputs”
• students are clients of a HE institution and consumers (clients) of its services
• students are active study process stakeholders
• students are assessors of obtained service quality (by choosing a HE institution and participating in surveys and etc.)
• after completion of a HE institution they are considered to be HE institution “products” (outputs)
Industrial QMS advantages

• Process oriented, highlights all functions in an organization
• Applies statistical process control, use clear selected indicators
• Customer oriented
• Could be certified and then maintained from inside and supervised from outside
Industrial QMS limitations

• Has tendency to become a well documented bureaucratic and costly structure
• “Easy”/wrong quality objectives could bring to “system for system” situation, when QMS is properly working, inducing hypnotic sleep, no improvement effect
• Concept “quality is degree of the requirements fulfilling” could do not stimulate to strive for excellence