„Identifying Barriers in Promoting the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance at Institutional Level"

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Slovak Comparative Analysis

Work Package 5

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Introduction

   The goal of the submitted report is aimed at presenting of the research results realized on sample of   the 4 Slovak higher education institutions (next HEIs). The research was focused on analysis of internal quality assurance (next QA) . Outputs of the report identify   the internal and external barriers affecting the QA implementation and sustainability.

Policy Context of QA

   The higher education system in Slovakia offers an education to 221 669 students on all three levels, in both forms of study - the part-time and full-time ones. It is provided by 20 public, 3 state and 10 private HEIs.
The current system of the QA in the Slovak HEIs is based on the criteria implemented by the Accreditation Commission which is an advisory body of the Slovak Government. They start from internal ESG and create a base for the external accreditation process . The first complex accreditation of the Slovak HEIs , accomplished by the Commission, was completed at all public, state, as well as four private HEIs from 8-th of January, 2009 to 19-th of March , 2010.
The European University Association (EUA) performed systematic evaluation of the Slovak HEIs based on requirements of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic as well as the Slovak Rectors´ Conference in 2007. Its aim was to motivate the HEIs to follow the best QA standards and practice and tailor them to their individual conditions.
The Academic Ranking and Rating Agency (ARRA) as an independent rating agency was established in 2004. Its main activities are aimed at the regular QA in education and research areas within Slovak HEIs. The educational process is currently provided by 10 970 internal teachers (1 598 professors, 2 254 associated professors, 6 496 assistant professors), and 1 938 external teachers.

Long-term strategies of HEIs are required to be prepared by the Higher Education Act no. 175/2008. They should declare their intentions and objectives for at least the next 6 years. The documents are also very important in terms of comprehensive accreditation processes, because the Accreditation Committee considers teaching, research , development, artistic and other creative activities in relation to HEIs long-term intentions in the context of the relevant personal, technical , information and other conditions of their work .

HEis are essentially identical and are consistent in regard of the areas in which they establish their development strategies. It is an area of education , science and research , respectively . area of artistic activity , area of project activities and international co-operation and international activities . The main attention to the institutional development strategies, quality is given to development of quality curriculum , student satisfaction with their study, creating an adequate learning resources , increasing the professional competences of teachers , improvement of information systems , review of individual study programs and the study results. The current trend is to increase attention on evaluation and enhancement the quality of research activities. Quality assurance on national level is strictly oriented in parameters of

research activities such as the percentage obtained by domestic and foreign scientific research grants , publications , operation excellent research centers, connection to external research organizations. The strategy is financially supported by state develop new research activities on HEI.

The long-term strategic goals of individual HEIs vary in the length of the period for which they are compiled. They range from 6 to 11 years . Long-term goals are continually evaluated. Development plans for a shorter period of time are not an isolated case, they are regularly updates, mainly due to steadily and relatively rapidly changing external conditions in which HEIs operate .

HEIs are required under the Higher Education Act to draw up a long-term strategies including action plans and to evaluate them from a part of the students. HEIs use the different versions of questionnaires evaluating quality of education by the students. (teaching staff, curricula…).

Low participation rates of students in questionnaires aimed at evaluation of teachers , courses, study programs became a long term problem.

Research methods

1. **Research sample**

Four Slovak HEIs have been asked to participate in the research. The individual institutions share on education of students in Slovakia as follows:

➢ Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica   5, 97 %
➢ Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra   5, 52 %
➢ The University of Žilina   5, 31 %
➢ The Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava   0, 48 %

Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra

Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra (UKF) is a public university founded in 1992 as the University of Education in Nitra which became a successor of Pedagogic Institute established in 1959 and the Faculty of Education established in 1964. University of Education in Nitra has been renamed to Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra in 1996. The university has defined itself as a comprehensive university providing education not only in traditional teacher training programs but also in many other scientific and professional study programs at all levels of study. The university has been accredited to confer degrees of associate professors and professors. The UKF had the right to realize the study in 353 study

programs in all three levels of the higher education (116 of teacher training study programs and 224 non-teacher training study programs) in 2010.

The university staff consists of 498 academic and 224 administration employees. The higher education in all study levels is offered to 13 156 students.

The University of Žilina

The University of Žilina (ZU) was established within the former Czechoslovakia in 1953 as the College of Railways in Prague as a part of the Czech Technical University in Prague. In 1959, the institution was renamed to the College of Transport and later to the College of Transport and Communications (1980). The University had the right to realize the study in 217 study programs in all three levels of the higher education in 2010. The university staff consists of 1530 employees , 670 of them are academic ones. The higher education in all study levels is offered to 11 761 students.

Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica

The Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica (UMB) belongs to the young, dynamic Slovak universities. UMB offers 290 bachelor, master and doctoral study programs in 51 fields of study. The university staff consists of 624 academic employees. The higher education in all study levels is being offered to 12 478 students.

The Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava

The Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava (VSVU) was established in 1949 as the first Slovak HEI offering the complex fine arts study. Such unique orientation of the Academy has been kept until now. The specific orientation of VSVU influences the structure of the institution. VSVU unlike the other higher education institutions, is not divided into the faculties but directly to the individual departments. The university staff consists of 102 academic employees. The higher education in all study levels is offered to 697 students.

2. Collection and analysis of data

The content analysis of documents without usage of categories has been used in the first stage. The text segments focused on the QA have been observed. Their dichotomy (the presence or the absence) has been identified in the analyzed documents. The aim of the content analysis of the official QA internal policy documents was to excerpt and summarize the relevant text segments which evaluate current situation within the individual research sample institutions. In case of VSVU and ZU the method of non - structured interview was used as well (in the case of VSVU interview with Vice Rector of education, in the case of ZU interview with Rector).

The basic analyzed documents were as follows:

- Long-term strategies of institutions
- EUA Evaluation Reports 2006 – 2008
- Educational Activities Reports
- Educational Activities Evaluations
- Annual Reports of HEIs
- Annual Reports of Faculties
- The QA Regulations for students used in the area of education/ teachers
- The QA Enquiries of students evaluating their satisfaction with education/ teachers

The 4 institutional case studies have been prepared as a result of the first stage of analysis.

Methods of a systematic content comparison of the institutional case studies as well as a thematic analysis of the basic QA institutional policy documents have been used in the second stage of the analysis.

Findings

1. Is there an institutional quality assurance policy in place? If not, why?

Based on the results of analysis, it is possible to state that all HEIs in SR pay attention to the QA with accent on an educational process. It is defined mostly in the same institutional policy documents. There are differences of the QA detailed adaptation within the appropriate

policy documents. Policies of individual HEIs also differs in ratio of the strategic goals implementation into practice.

Slovak HEIs started to pay attention to the QA establishment and its implementation in 2006. Increasing consideration to this topic has been caused by realization of the project "Institutional Evaluation of HEIs in Slovakia" realized by the European Association of Universities (EUA) and accomplished in cooperation with the Slovak Rector´s Conference. The Self Evaluation Institutional Reports have been created as outputs of the project on institutional internal levels. All involved universities have taken the project´s results as an impulse to start with establishment and implementation of the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) on institutional levels.

Awareness and dissemination of the project results and measures as well as an extension of the ESG content and conclusions among employees of the lower organizational units became a challenge for HEIs. Attention which the HEIs top managers pay to elaborating of the policy documents to the internal operational documents as well as their consecutive dissemination to the lower organizational units can be taken as one of the positive outcomes of the realized project. This causes that employees of the lower organizational units have a stronger awareness about the internal operational documents than the policy documents.

The basic policy document in which HEIs have processed own long term strategy is called "Long Term Strategy/Long Term Development Strategy". It doesn´t directly start from ESG but reflects some of their recommendations (e.g. aspiration to create own internal QA systems within all institutions, to include students in the QA in field of education as a part of the internal QA process etc.).

The Long Term Strategies have been developed by HEIs for the areas of education, research, art activities, projects and international relations. They have been processed for different periods (6 years – ZU and UMB , 8 years – VSVU, 11 years – UKF). Approach to a publicity of the Long Term Strategies is also different. Publication the Long Term Strategies (at least some parts) on their website became a common practice. It is not so usual to see the Long Term Strategies published in several foreign language mutations even though more and more HEIs started to process and publish them in English.

The strategic conclusions are continuously evaluated and reflected either in a form of the strategy actualization or creation the new one. The external changeable environment influencing the HEIs behavior affects the actualization of their policy documents as well.

Except of the Long Term Strategy, it is possible to find at HEIs other kinds of documents either focused on the relevant short term operational objectives elaborated based on the Long Term Strategy or on evaluation of the achieved strategic goals. Contrary to the Long Term Strategy, a structure of other kinds of policy documents is not unique, it varies within the individual HEIs.

The theme of quality assurance is partly reflected in the policy documents called "Report of Pedagogical Activities/Evaluation of Pedagogical Activities" which are processed by HEIs for the previous academic year.

The internal institutional policy is based mainly on the QA criteria like effectiveness of study programs, involvement of students to the study programs and pedagogues assessment, development of resources, increasing of professional competences of pedagogues, improving of information systems, monitoring of interest in the study programs and effectiveness of education (study records, credit systems, study programs, ...)

2. Does the policy involve the organization of the quality assurance system?

All sampled HEIs are focused on the internal QA process. They differ in strategies as well as a level of their implementation. The basic strategies assessed within the Long Term Strategy documents, developed based on the EUA external evaluation, declare a need to provide the internal QA on institutional level. Starting points of the internal HEIs ´ QA system are different. They vary from an indirect "intuitive" definition of quality criteria for an educational process, through an application of the ISO norms, up to the QA systems directly affiliated with ESG. It turns out that an explicit declaration of the quality system of education as one of the key objectives of the University created the basic strategy. The process of evaluation creates a part of the internal QA system. The basic evaluation process is focused on the assessment of educational process and pedagogues by students. It is realized within all HEIs regardless a character of the developed QA system. The less enlarged forms of evaluation are focused on an assessment of the educational processes by graduates as well as assessment of pedagogical process by pedagogues, by heads of e.g. departments or deans. The system of regular external evaluation provided by an independent institution (the Slovak Office of Standards, Metrology and Testing) is actually carried out in the case of one HEI.

The implementation of new components to the educational process creates the other part of QA system. The HEI developed some new internal regulations focused on processing of new framework and models in the educational process. Their implementation brought the reform of study programs and study objects in which new standards have been integrated on the level of whole institution.

3. How does the policy involve the responsibilities of departments, faculties and other organizational units?

Determination of tasks of faculties and departments in the QA process is included in the Long Term Strategies of individual HEIs as well as in the long term strategies of individual faculties and/or in the other internal policy QA documents. In the case of UKF the internal

The QA document approved by all faculties identifies tasks and responsibilities in individual areas as follows:

a/ study programs – responsible: leaders/heads of university, faculties, departments and guarantees of study programs and subjects
b/ assessment provided by students – responsible: students parliament, students, leaders of university/faculties

c/ students support – responsible: leaders/heads of university, faculties, departments, university library, directors of dormitories, manager of Center of Information and Communication Technologies

d/ information systems – responsible: managers of university/faculties (responsible for development and monitoring of effectiveness of IS), managers of faculties/departments and managers of the Study Affairs Department (updating of information in IS), Center of Information and Communication Technologies (administration and upgrading of ICT, providing of effective access to internal and external information resources for employees and students)

e/ PR activities – heads/managers of university/faculties, Department of Media Relations

Faculties of ZU have participated in the QA process based on certification of the ISO norms. The individual departments of the University have implemented an internal methodology proposed by management of ZU which was approved by managers of individual faculties. The methodology was aimed at transforming of the study programs regarding to providing their quality assurance. The University executes the self monitoring and evaluating activities based on the CAF system which offers except of internal evaluation also the external one. It is accomplished by an independent external commission.

4. **How does the policy address the involvement of students? If not, why?**

Assessment of higher education by students is required by law in Slovakia. There are several forms of student evaluation implemented within all Slovak HEIs. Majority of them has template of internal inquiries in which students assess the quality of education. The pedagogues teaching particular subject and particular study programs become the objectives of evaluation. Study programs are evaluated, by students finishing their study, e.g. within a day of the graduate´s exams. Participation of external students in the evaluation process have been enabled   in one case in which a quality of education was assessed based on the results comparing with the other HEIs. It is a trend to combine several evaluation methods in

the assessment process, e.g. combining of the students inquiries with the open round discussion.

Changes are visible in methods of dissemination and processing of the students inquiries. Classic paper forms have been replaced by on   line electronic versions. It is a trend to unify content of inquiries within each institution. The previous diversified enquiries prepared and implemented by individual departments were preceded by more sophisticated unified ones. The whole administration was centralized to the university level.

5. **How does the policy involve specification of the relationship between teaching and research**

All HEIs have defined the parameters of own scientific and research activities as a part of the QA process in their Long Term Strategies. The basic strategy at UKF is focused on supporting of the students research activities. Students are motivated to become involved to the University research activities. Bc. as well as MA. students have the opportunity to participate in the students research competition organized by individual faculties every year.

The good results achieved in the competitions bring to the most successful ones an advantage in their PhD. entrance interviews. PhD. students can participate in research conferences organized by individual faculties. They have the opportunity to ask for financial support to their research projects within the University Grant Agency. The published works of pedagogues often serve as study resources for students.

   The next part of strategy is preferably oriented in the target group of pedagogues. Indicators of successful scientific and research activities are identified in the policy as follows: a share of the grants gained within   national as well as international grant programs, comprehensiveness of published works, existence of the excellent research centers , cooperation with external institutions regarding to the basic and applied researches. The strategy is proximately oriented in establishment of new positions for employees who are preferably focused on research and scientific activities and partly involved to the pedagogical process.

   The third part of strategy is based on the process of profiling. The most important scientific and research activities directly affect profiles of the HEIs´ educational fields. The results of research thus create conditions for the next quality development in the educational area. Fields of PhD. studies are directly affected by the research profiles of the HEI as well. Financial motivation tools for pedagogues and the PhD. students to accomplish their research and scientific activities are used within all HEIs.

6. What are the ways of policy implementation, monitoring and revision?

   Implementation and monitoring of the Long Term Strategies are provided on the level of top management   using „downwards" principles. In one case (VSVU) we can observe delegation of responsibilities for monitoring to the lower management levels (e.g. head of departments, pedagogues responsible for courses, workshops…).

   All HEIs in Slovakia are obliged by law to gain the regular external QA accomplished by the Accreditation Commission which is the advisory body of the Slovak Government. It provides the regular complex accreditation process based on a six years cycle. Additional external quality assurance is provided by the NGO ARRA (Academic Ranking and Rating Agency) and the exploration „Trendence Graduate Barometer" realized on a year frequency.

   The QA policy implementation is monitored and evaluated based on short term one year cycles. It is usually aimed at the appropriate field. The monitoring and evaluation of results become a part of HEIs Annual reports, or the self - evaluating report prepared in the form of the CAF model for the appropriate period.

   Rarely, it is possible to use the shorter period than a year for the QA monitoring and evaluation, e.g. a semester. Continuous monitoring can become a part of regular meetings of heads of HEIs, faculties, academic senates, scientific boards of HEIs and faculties, advisory boards of HEIs and faculties…).

   Except of the external complex accreditation, the systematic and complex processes of quality monitoring and assurance are still absent at Slovak HEIs. They try to develop the internal relevant implementation mechanism focused on areas of pedagogical, scientific and research as well as   publishing activities. The important tool to implement   the QA consecutions became different forms of inquiries filled by students evaluating the quality of educational process. The paper form is gradually changed to the electronic one. To the important tool for monitoring of publishing and art activities of HEIs ´pedagogues belong the Central Register of Publishing and Art Activities.

As we mentioned at the beginning, implementation of the QA policy differ within the Slovak HEIs. In the case of VSVU, the responsibilities for implementation were delegated to lower management levels. The most important tool became a semestral public exhibition of the students´ art works joined with their evaluation from a side of pedagogues of the appropriate courses, departments as well as from a side of pedagogues and students of other departments. The art works become afterwards accessible for public. The main assumption of evaluation is an existence of a constructive critical environment. Discussion between pedagogues and students is very open, the invited evaluating commissions are very often composed from the Slovak or foreign external professionals. Two Boards of VSVU, the Pedagogical and Artistic ones, decide about the results of evaluating process. Three - stages evaluating levels (by pedagogues of courses, commission and pedagogues of the other departments) provide a higher externality and transparency.

7. How does the policy involve the statement regarding the collaboration with the secondary education sector?

Situation in the field of cooperation with the secondary schools, regarding to the QA process HEIs, is not unified. The Long Term Strategies don´t have included a clear policy concerning this field. They don´t declare clear goals and activities directly aimed at the secondary schools to improve quality of educational process within the basic policy document. Their implementation is not provided on base of the sophisticated integrated approach. It is realized by the departments on an individual base, eventually through personal contacts. The main area of cooperation with the secondary schools is oriented in advertisement of the HEIs study programs to acquire potential new "clients" , the next students. Specific position in cooperation with secondary schools have the HEIs with pedagogical faculties and study programs for pedagogues. They realize much larger spectrum of cooperation with the secondary schools. They offer life - long learning programs for secondary schools pedagogues, they participate in development of new secondary schools text books…

Examples of realized activities in the field of cooperation with the secondary schools are as follows:

- Informal activities for the secondary school students focused on popularization of science and research with accent on the natural sciences subjects
- Realization of the HEIs ´research projects focused on development of quality of education at secondary schools in different areas (development of competences of the secondary schools pedagogues, development of new innovative study programs for the future pedagogues, development of new methods and approaches in teaching process, development of new text books for teachers, development of secondary schools quality to improve competences of students regarding of their next application on the labor market…)
- Activities aimed at promotion of study at HEIs (organizing of the different promo events - e.g. the Open Doors Day , Career Days, regular participation of HEIs at Education Fairs, promo articles in regional and national media, web pages…)
- Preparatory courses for HEIs entrance interview

Three from four research samples (UKF, UMB and ZU) provide different regular activities developing a cooperation among the HEIs and the secondary schools. A special promotion concerning the HEIs study opportunities is provided by ZU. It realizes an interactive electronic communication with potential students where provides information about the study opportunities based on their concrete requirements. ZU also regularly sends information concerning its study to managers and pedagogues of the secondary schools as well as to the psychological advisory centers. On the other hand, a special position has other research sample – VSVU, which doesn´t have a clear policy regarding to cooperation with the secondary schools. A current lack of cooperation was caused by establishment of new forms of secondary schools so - called "associated secondary schools" which offer study programs based on combination of the vocational and fine art subjects with a stronger accent on technical vocational subjects. The EUA recommended VSVU to cooperate with the secondary schools in the field of the education of visual arts in which is currently provided a reform.

8. Identification of internal and external barriers.

ESG rules concerning an internal QA recommend to HEIs to establish their institutional internal policy including the implementation consequences providing a sustainable quality development of afforded education. Policy should have a formal status. It should be disclosed and provided based on participation of students as well as other stake holders .

The goal of WP5 was focused on discovering of real situation in establishment and implementation of internal QA based on the research sample of four Slovak HEIs. We determined if the HEIs pay the appropriate attention to the internal QA policy in their educational processes, if they have QA included in their official policy documents and how is QA implemented and evaluated. Main findings in this area are presented in chapters

4.1. – 4.7. As a positive output can be considered a fact that Slovak HEIs give care to the QA establishment and development and their QA policy is included into their official policy documents. On the other hand, quite a big differences occur among the institutions in the field of the QA policy implementation.

The following chart summarizes the barriers which negatively affect on establishment and implementation of the internal QA policy. The internal and external barriers are presented separately.

Researched aspect	External barriers	Internal barriers
Existence of the internal quality assurance policy	- discrepancies in content of policy documents admitted by the Bologna process, national authorities, national academic communities and academic communities of individual	- different comprehension of the QA process from a side of stake holders (managers, employees, students…) - absence of the internal QA

	HEIs	norms a consecutions dedicated for the HEIs´ organizational units allowed to be used in the equal/ similar QA processes
	- absence of common policy documents admitted by academic community and local self - government	- suspicion to unification of the QA process provided on centralized level regarding to differences of individual departments, institutes, study programs …. Establishment of unified consecutions in the QA process for the institution as entity became a challenge
	- discrepancies in policies/methods used in the QA process, different methods of evaluation (self - evaluation, CAF, ESG, ISO 9001:2008)	- a lack of communication among representatives of management and academic community
		- a lack of communication inside of academic community as well as inside of management
		- establishment and implementation of the QA systems are very time consuming
Influence of policy on the HEI involvement to the QA process	- different agencies use for the HEIs external QA the different criteria	- low knowledge concerning the ESG requirements, lack of the unified and clearly specified QA indicators for HEIs
	- the criteria of the HEIs QA are often changed and affected by decisions of governing bodies (i.e. government, ministries…)	- different/unclear criteria of evaluation of effectiveness of pedagogues within the different organizational units of HEIs
	- "red tape" at HEIs	- different access to development of the quality culture in the previous periods
	- insufficient credit/acceptance of research results of the art HEIs in the QA process (barriers for the art and pedagogical faculties/HEIs)	- different progress of the QA implementation within the individual HEIs organizational units
	- criteria/consecutions to subsidy HEIs are often changed from a	- no/weak coordination of the

	side of the governing body (Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport) - regional disparities are not considered as criteria of the internal QA (e.g. the regional disparities affect implementation of internal ESG in the case if the placement of graduates in the labor market is taken as criteria) - financial support of the sustainable internal QA system established and implemented based on ESG	QA consecutions within HEIs - absence of HEIs commissions focused on establishment and implementation of QA
Definition of tasks within departments, faculties and other institutional units in policy	- "red tape" occurred within the HEIs organizational units	- lack of knowledge about ESG within the lower levels of organizational units of HEIs - different level of interest in internal QA from side of the lower organizational units within individual HEIs - existence of „weak" and „strong" organizational units within individual HEIs - ESG doesn´t allow to use system of internal benchmarking - a weak motivation of individuals to participate in internal QA establishment and implementation - challenging financial support of the sustainable internal QA within individual HEIs
Participation of students in the QA process	- low diversification of motivating tools for students to participate in QA identified by	- low efficiency of the students participation in the QA consecutions at HEIs as well as

	governing body (the Ministry of Education, Research, Science and Sport)	their organizational units
		- contradiction in the declared students requirements to participate in QA and their real contribution to the QA execution
		- application of the subjectively purposed criteria in the QA process not including requirements of higher quality and seriousness of education
		- reluctance of the students to participate in the QA processes, mainly in the repeated ones

Conclusions

The identified results show the fact the Slovak HEIs and governing bodies pay attention to the QA policy. The key stimulus which started the process provided the project „Institutional Evaluation of HEIs in Slovakia" realized in 2006 within majority of HEIs.

The HEIs have declared their interest in the QA system within their official policy documents called „Long Term Strategy". The Slovak HEIs shall to establish by law this kind of the policy document and identify their strategic goals and objectives at least for 6 years periods. The policy document also plays the important role in the process of complex accreditation provided by the Accreditation Commission based on 6 years cycle. The Commission evaluates the educational, research and art activities in regard to the goals and strategies identified within the policy documents. Personnel, technical, information and other conditions in which the mentioned activities are accomplished become a subject of evaluation as well.

All HEIs declare their interest in QA within their long term policy documents. On the other hand, they differ in the systems of the QA implementation. Some of them use ESG, the other ones adapted different systems and criteria for QA (e.g. ISO) seemed to be compatible with ESG.

While a declaration of interest to use the QA process is included in the all Slovak HEIs policies, its implementation is realized on the different levels. Some HEIs have established the partial implementation QA strategies. They are mainly oriented in the particular field of

education. Systematic and complex implementation processes covering the whole QA area are rare.

The natural platform for the QA policy in Slovakia is created by criteria which are used for the regular accreditation process provided by the Accreditation Commission. It is the advisory body of the Slovak Government. Its role is focused on evaluation of the HEIs quality, their competences to provide the individual study programs as well as their capabilities to realize the educational, research, art and other activities. Orientation of HEIs in establishment and implementation of the partial policies in QA is partly caused by instability of the evaluation criteria used by the Commission. A special situation occurs in case of the art HEIs which feel absence of clear concept in establishment of the complex QA criteria from a side of the Accreditation Commission. It would like to create the unique criteria for all HEIs and doesn´t consider the special results of art activities equivalent the results of research activities.

Based on analysis of external and internal barriers in the QA establishment and implementation, we recommend in the field of external ones , to provide a stronger connection between the national QA policy and ESG (e.g. regarding of criteria for accreditation of study programs, financial subsidy…) as well as an establishment of stabile criteria for the QA process on a national level. Regarding to internal barriers, we recommend to motivate the individual HEIs to implement the QA system on the lower levels of their organizational units (faculties, departments, pedagogues). The main assumption for providing of both recommendations is to define the exact QA criteria and to provide their awareness raising among the HEIs lower organizational units.

As the most serious internal factors that negatively affect the process of implementation of ESG into practice were identified the following ones :

- Inconsistencies in the area of perception of the issues by individual stakeholders (management , staff, students) ,

- lack of systematic standards and approaches to quality assurance for individual organizational units of the HEIs,

- lack of trust to evaluation and QA procedures implemented across the institution,

- lack of communication among academic and management staff ,

- time - consuming and ineffective implementation of quality assurance,

- low awareness of the ESG, including the absence of precisely specified indicators for the ESG implementation at institutional level ,

- diversity of approaches to the evaluation of performance of teaching staff within individual organizational units of high school ,

- heritage of different approach to creating a quality culture from the previous periods,

- administrative and financial burden jointed with implementation of QA policy,

-inefficient practices of student participation in educational QA processes.

The statement of barriers connecting to the external as well as internal HEIs environment is structured by the individual aspects researched within WP5. It is summarized in the chart inducted in the part 4.8 Identification of External and Internal Barriers.

Examples of good practice

1. **Implementing of ESG**

    UKF provides the implementation of ESG including the monitoring and evaluation processes on both levels – the level of university´s management as well as on the lower level of faculties. The official QA policy of university is connected to the ESG. It is composed from the 6 standard systems valid for UKF:
    SPROG – cyclic monitoring, evaluation and accreditation of study programs (it responds to the ESG internal standard No. 2)
    HODS – cyclic evaluation by students (it responds to the ESG internal standard No. 3)
    PODP – aid and support resources for students (it responds to the ESG internal standard No. 5)
    IS – information systems (it responds to the ESG internal standard No. 6)
    PUBL – public information (it responds to the ESG internal standard No.7)

    Implementation of the QA policy based on ESG is provided mainly within „up to down" process. It concerns to the HODS, PODP, PUBL and IS systems. On the other hands, the SPROG system is implemented on the faculties level. The PERS system is equally coordinated by management of the university as well as the faculties.
    Management of UKF encourages participation of the University in the projects focused on the QA establishment and implementation. As the examples we can take the currently realized project „ Providing of the internal QA based on the ESG implementation".
    The ESG implementation on the level of faculties is significantly affected by their particularities. Their Annual Reports 2009 were oriented mainly in the research results analysis. The last Annual Reports of faculties declared a need of four from five faculties to establish and implement the internal QA system on the faculties level reflecting the policy and goals of the UKF.

2. **Implementation of the ISO and CAF standards**

    The Faculty of Electrical Engineering of ZU have provided the certified QA system based on STN ISO 9001 from 2003. It is used for evaluation of all processes running

in the Faculty with accent on education. The ISO certificate was successfully re- valid in 2010. Its relevance was prolonged to 2013. The Faculty of Special Engineering provides the QA based on norms STN EN 9001:2001. Certificate is oriented mainly in quality of educational services. Recertification was provided in 2010 and it is valid till 2013. The Faculty of Natural Sciences and Faculty of Building implemented the CAF model which is based on the self evaluation process.

Other faculties of ZU run under own QA system or their evaluation is provided by management of the university based on the CAF self evaluating model.

3. Reform of study programs

The current management of the Academy of Fine Arts and Design have provided the reform of its study programs from 2011. It is focused on revision of current assembling of the practical and theoretical subjects, establishment of the more clear profiles within all three levels of study programs, improvement of the credit system in education based on the ETCS requirements, preparing of modular system of the study programs. Discussion about planned changes and steps are openly discussed among management of HEI as well as representatives of departments and students.

4. QA of education

Implementation of the QA process in education provided based on using the different options can serve as an example of good practice. Internal option can be provided by students, graduates, alumni, colleagues, the external one is realized by the cooperative organizations and the independent evaluation organizations.

The QA consecutions in education became useful to set up the effective amount of contact classes and working endurance of the students within the study programs to affect the process of their accreditation, achieve their modularization and effective use of the HEIs human resources.

5. Assessment of quality realized by students

There have been used several tools to involve the students in the QA process. To the most enlarged belong the following ones:

- Participation of students in discussions concerning the planned reforms, providing the opportunities for direct confrontation of their opinion and opinion of representatives of higher management.
- Participation of students in establishment of enquiries focused on QA of pedagogues and educational process (e.g. cooperation of the representatives of student parliament with the vice - rector in this process)
- Participation of students in organizing of the enquiry evaluation aimed at education and pedagogues within individual faculties in cooperation with vice - dean for education
- Participation of graduates in evaluation of the appropriate study programs
- Participation of students in the three year cyclic evaluation of pedagogues. If the evaluation of the individual pedagogue is the negative one, it is repeated. In the case

of the frequently achieved bad evaluation results, the appropriate pedagogue is asked to consider finishing of own labor relation to HEI

6. Application of information systems

The field of information systems and their application in the QA process is well developed at UKF. It fills the supportive, information, registration , communication and management roles. It is composed from several information subsystems (Academic information system, Library information system, Registration of diploma works, Registration of projects, Registration of labor time, Booking registration system...) which provide collection, processing, registration and publishing of relevant information to the different target groups (managers, employees, students, pedagogues..) with a goal to make the education, research and other activities efficient. Information system is also used for the effective management of the UKF organizational units (faculties, departments...) as well as for self - management of its pedagogues, students, researchers and employees.

7. Output models

The system of the output models implemented at UMB , which can serve as an example of a good practice, positively affects a relation between education and research activities. This model is based on establishment of the following motivation financial tools: Rector´s Award, Fund for the top researchers from abroad participating at the University projects, System of financial motivation of creative workers… .

8. Realization of the projects focused on implementing of ESG

ZU started to realize the project „Development of quality culture based on ESG" in 2011. One of the main project´s objectives are   focused on establishment of sustainable quality development based on ESG at the University. The system implementation of the internal QA policy including its monitoring and evaluation, as well as development of the quality culture will create the main output of the project.

9. Cooperation with secondary schools

ZU is an active member of the cluster focused on IC technologies „z@ict" in which the secondary schools participate as well . The main goal of the cluster´s activities is to adapt a content of secondary schools ´ education to requirements of the HEIs as well as the labor market. The University also realizes the project POPULAS helping

to popularize technical and natural sciences among the secondary school students and thus to motivate them for their studying at HEIs oriented in these fields.

ANNEX

Comparing of the institutional data and findings

Q1 1. Is there an institutional quality assurance policy in place? If not, why?

Chart 1. : Establishment of the QA policy on the level of HEI as institution

	UKF	UMB	ZU	VŠVU
Resources for establishment of policy (Initial external documents)	European standards and guidelines (ESG)	Partly European standards and guidelines (ESG)	Program of the economic and social development in the Zilina region Final report of external evaluation EUA 2006 Feedback report of the model CAF prepared based on the in place expertise 2008 Feedback report of the model CAF prepared based on the in place expertise 2010	Evaluation report of the Accreditation Commission prepared based on complex accreditation 2009 European standards and guidelines (ESG)
Internal policy documents in which is the QA policy declared	Long term strategy of UKF for 2007 – 2017 Updating of the Long term strategy for 2011 – 2017 Proposal of consequences for establishment of	Long term strategy of UBM till 2013 System of quality management prepared based on STN EN ISO 9001:2009	Long term strategy for 2008-2013 Annual report 2010 The project „Development a quality culture based on ESG at ZU"	Long term strategy of VSVU Self evaluating report of VSVU

	the QA system at UKF Self-evaluation report 2006 Evaluation of the Long term strategy for 2007 – 2009			

Q2 Does the policy involve the organization of the quality assurance system?

Chart 2: Strategies of QA on level of the institutions

	Tools, methods			
Strategies	*UKF*	*UMB*	*ZU*	*VŠVU*
Declaration	Public documents Internal documents	Public documents	Public documents	Public documents
Evaluation	Realized by students	Realized by students Inspection	Realized by students Inspections Realized by graduates Realized by cooperating organizations Realized by external independent institution	Realized by students Realized by cooperating organizations
Implementation	Revision of study programs Revision of internal prescriptions			

3. How does the policy involve the responsibilities of departments, faculties and other organizational units?

Chart 3. Responsibilities provided on the level of the faculties, departments and other organizational units

	Responsibilities, tools			
Level of management	*UKF*	*UMB*	*ZU*	*VŠVU*
University	Establishment of long term policy Proposal of consecutions focused on the QA implementation	Establishment of long term policy Implementation of the ISO system	Establishment of long term policy Evaluation of the faculties to optimize their subsidy allocations	Establishment of long term policy Office for the grant and project activities
Faculty	Acceptance of the Proposal focused on the QA implementation	Long term strategy of faculty	Implementing of ISO system in the QA process Implementation of the CAF model Evaluation of the individual departments including their employees within meetings of the Faculty Scientific Board	-
Department	Revision of the study programs			

Q4. **How does the policy address the involvement of students? If not, why?**

Chart 4. Involvement of students to the policy implementation

	Tools, methods			
Processes which students participate in	*UKF*	*UMB*	*ZU*	*VŠVU*
Collection of information	Internal and external inquiries	Internal inquiries	Internal inquiries	Internal inquiries Open round discussion
Evaluation and decision making	Members of: Academic senate Advisory Board	Members of: Advisory Board Academic senate	Members of Academic senate Association of the PhD students of Slovakia	Members of Academic senate Interview commissions

Q5. How does the policy involve specification of the relationship between teaching and research?

Chart 5: Specification of relationship between teaching and research

	UKF	*UMB*	*ZU*	*VŠVU*
Specification	Supporting of the students research activities	Supporting of the research activities	Supporting of science and research activities	Supporting of the research activities

Q6.What are the ways of policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation/revision?

Chart 6. Ways of the policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation/revision

	UKF	UMB	ZU	VŠVU
External evaluation	Accreditation Commission Academic Ranking and Rating Agency (ARRA) The Trendence Graduate Barometer Central directory of publication and art activities	Accreditation Commission Academic Ranking and Rating Agency (ARRA) The Trendence Graduate Barometer Central directory of publication and art activities	Accreditation Commission Academic Ranking and Rating Agency (ARRA) The Trendence Graduate Barometer Central directory of publication and art activities Slovak office of standards, metrology and testing	Accreditation Commission Academic Ranking and Rating Agency (ARRA) The Trendence Graduate Barometer Central directory of publication and art activities
Internal evaluation	top down process minimally once per a year Annual reports of university and faculties Updating of Long term strategy Internal	top down process continuously on the levels of HEI as well as faculties	top down process minimally once per a year Annual report of university Self evaluation based on the CAF model	top down process provided based on semestral or a year periodicity, absence of systematic and complex monitoring and evaluation of the strategy Annual report Semestral monitoring of the works of all students Evaluation

	evaluation based on ESG implementation Optimization of study programs			provided by Committee of the Research Centre Evaluation provided by the Projects Office

7. How does the policy involve the statement regarding the collaboration with the secondary education sector?

Chart 7: Policy of cooperation with secondary schools

	UKF	UMB	ZU	VŠVU
Declaration of policy	In the annual reports of faculties (partly)	In the marketing policy in the part focused on recruitment of secondary school students	QA strategy	Complex strategy is absent
Ways of communication	Web pages Print media Personal contacts		internet communication (web pages, emails, facebook...) Presentation at secondary schools within a carrier advise	Web pages Personal contacts
Dominant areas of cooperation with secondary schools	Projects focused on improving competences of secondary school teachers Projects focused on improving the educational process at secondary schools Popularization of natural science	Providing the life - long learning programs for pedagogues of the secondary schools Providing of pedagogical practice for HEIs students within the secondary schools	Informing about study at the ZU tailored to the students of secondary schools Carrier advising tailored to the students of secondary schools Projects focused on improving the	Public presentation of the semestral art works of the students incl. presentation at secondary schools

| | Recruitment of students based on organizing of public events (e.g. Day of Open Door) | Membership of HEI teachers in Advisory committees of the secondary schools

Recruitment of students based on organizing of public events (e.g. Day of open door) | educational process at secondary schools

Popularization of natural science

Recruitment of students based on organizing of public events (e.g. Day of open door) | |