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for Quality Assurance at Institutional Level“**

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Quality and Students

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In Poland the performance and teaching process assessment in this respect is primarily the role of a school of higher education. The existing national regulations include:

- Recommendations of the Act on Schools of Higher Education of July 2005, (amended Act of March 18th, 2011)
- accreditation standards of the PKA (the Polish Accreditation Committee) focused on students' performance assessment.
- recruitment policy towards university candidates, which may be regarded as a form of preliminary assessment

In the Act the following provisions can be found in section IV „The studies and students”, chapter 1 ”The organization of studies” and Art. 164:

„ The organization and course of studies, including students' rights and duties are specified in the Study Regulations.” The Regulations specify, among others, the *“conditions and mode of studies ... the scale of grades applied ... provisions related to taking examinations and obtaining credits ... provisions related to being eligible to taking the final examination and obtaining a diploma ...”*

In the PKA standards and procedures of institutional and programme evaluation of quality assurance we can find the provisions concerning the methods of student assessment adopted by schools of higher education which were applied until 2011/12 academic year:

“Quality assessment (based on an internal system of quality assurance) is related, among others, to:

- *the principles of students, doctoral students and other participants assessment as well as the learning outcomes verification,*
- *the principles of students' learning achievements are to be clear and presented to the participants at the beginning of classes; they are to be applied consistently”.*

In the new accreditation procedures modified according to the amended Act as well as introducing NQF at schools of higher education, there are more detailed statements which provide as follows:

“It is recommended to present the system of learning outcomes verification at various levels, which shall include:

- *a description of procedures of learning outcomes specification and monitoring the process of achieving them,*
- *a description of methods of learning outcomes verification at any stage of education, including:*

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- ✓ *the system of assignments, projects and examinations assessment,*
- ✓ *the system of verification of outcomes achieved during apprenticeships;*
- ✓ *the system of final outcomes verification (the process of granting a diploma), as well as career monitoring system on labour market, if feasible due to the character and special features of the training offered;..”*

The analysis and assessment of the learning outcomes verification system, including:
 “- *incorporating into the system all the categories of learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, social competences) and all the levels of education;*
 - *the possibility of measuring and evaluating learning outcomes at any stage of the process, the correctness of the procedures and methods adopted (with regard to a particular criterion evaluated) as well as grades, with the emphasis put on the diploma granting process;*
 - *standardising requirements, providing transparency and objectivity in the process assessment;*
 - *the analysis of the scale and main causes of failure rate,*
 - *accessibility of information concerning the system of learning outcomes assessment applied.”*

The assessment of support offered by a school of higher education to students during learning process includes:

- *The evaluation of the recruitment principles in terms of selecting the candidates with suitable knowledge and skills necessary to achieve, over the learning process, the learning outcomes expected. The verification if they do not discriminate a particular group of candidates. The evaluation of the principles in terms of the recruitment scale – considering the relationship between the number of students admitted and teaching potential of the institution and the quality of education.*
- *The evaluation of estimating the workload and time span necessary to achieve the learning outcomes expected – general, specific and detailed. (for the specialisation, qualification level and profile, education module).*
- *Evaluating whether the system of evaluating students performance is targeted at the learning process, provides transparency and objectivity in grade formulation, whether the requirements specified in the system are standardised.*

Please note that the principles mentioned will be compulsory for PKA and schools of higher education after the National Qualification Framework for HE is implemented, i.e. practically from academic year 2012/13.

The policy of student recruitment was described in WP6 report. We would like to repeat that the candidates for the 1st cycle studies are assessed and admitted primarily on the basis of matura examination results, whereas the criteria regarding the recruitment for the 2nd and 3rd cycle are specified by a school itself.

The most significant background for the method of student performance evaluation by schools is provided by the mentioned above amendments of the Act on Higher Education, passed on March 18th, 2011 as well as a corresponding directives published in October and November 2011.

They oblige schools of higher education to introduce in the academic year 2011/12 the new organisation of the education process complying with the National Qualification Framework for Higher Education. For schools this means the obligation to design learning outcomes oriented curricula: developing a matrix of learning outcomes expected as well as parallel to it

and complementary matrix of expected learning outcomes validation. The latter requirement should assure the actual achievement by a student of the learning outcomes expected. The statement of the directive of the Ministry of Science and Higher education concerning the introduction of NQF for HE seems to be of crucial importance in this respect; it states that in order to grant a diploma to a student it is necessary to confirm the completion by them of all the recorded in the matrix learning outcomes expected. The correctness of both the matrixes combined with the certainty that the expected learning outcomes are achieved by a student shall be verified in the future by accreditation agencies during the process of quality assessment.

Thus, for Polish schools of higher education the current academic year serves as a transition period: schools are supposed to abandon the existing procedure of student assessment, which is primarily curriculum content oriented, and to adopt a new one – learning outcomes validation with regard to aspects such as knowledge, skills and social competences. This task seems to be a real challenge and a complete shift in approaching the method of student assessment as an element of quality assurance process. All the four schools of higher education surveyed are actively involved in the process, which has been confirmed in the analysis of the documents and interviews with the actors. Nevertheless, the solutions based on learning outcomes validation are still being designed, the stage of operating quality assurance mechanisms has not been reached. The corresponding documents considering the policy of student assessment are currently being developed.

Research methodology

Our research, similarly to the previous packages, involved 4 schools of higher education. Their more detailed characteristics can be found in WP5. As all the participating schools gave their consent to publishing their contribution to the research, we present the empirical research data with reference to the abbreviated names of the schools. The four schools include:

- Uniwersytet Adama Mickiewicza/Adam Mickiewicz University In Poznań [UAM/AMU]
- Szkoła Główna Handlowa/Warsaw School of Economics In Warsaw [SGH/WSE]
- Politechnika Łódzka/Technical University of Lodz [PŁ/TUL]
- Bielska Szkoła Wyższa im. Józefa Tyszkiewicza/Bielsko College in Bielsko-Biala [BSW]

All the four micro-cases of the schools were prepared on the basis of:

- the analysis of a school documents
- the interviews with the actors indicated in the WP7 form, including students, active teachers, Quality Assurance Officers, deputy rectors and education deputy deans, chancellors and heads of education sections of the schools' administration – in respect to the decision making structure in the schools surveyed.

A substantial difficulty during the research was related to the transition period mentioned above, regarding the shift in the processes of student education and assessment. The schools are intensively working on the development of new learning outcomes oriented assessment standards and are reluctant to refer to the existing evaluation methods, which are predominantly perceived as outdated.

The answers to WP7 questionnaire questions:

| No | HEI | Answers |
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| 1. | | What is the institutional policy on student assessment? |
| | WSE | WSE does not have a separate policy related to student assessment, however, the principles of the internal education quality assurance system are focused on the measurement and studying the quality of student assessment methods. Detailed principles of student assessment have been specified in the WSE Study Regulations, which define, among others, the principles of examination session organisation (dates of examinations, examinations before a board), credits for classes (scales of grades, examination protocols, examiners), systematic credits settlement (crediting a semester, conditional registration on a consecutive semester, repeating a semester, crossing off the list of students, resuming studies, the method of the grades average calculation), the principles concerning the completion of studies (BA and MA examinations, the final study grade). The activities of the WSE Senate Programming Committee are currently focused on the principles of formulating learning outcomes complying with the NQF as well as on the learning outcomes verification methods. |
| | AMU | AMU does not have a separately formulated assessment policy, however, the university Study Regulations provide obligatory recommendations referring to: the scale of grades, the diploma scale of grades, the method of modules evaluation, other criteria. The fulfillment of the recommendations and specific activities lie in the departments' hands. New policy is being developed along with the new curricula description accompanying the NQF implementation. |
| | TUL | The document defining the student assessment policy are the Study Regulations, approved in academic year 2010/11 for the consecutive years: general assessment principles have been formulated, including the rules of students registration for consecutive semesters, the principles of crediting individual subjects, a multi-value scale of grades, the provisions of applying a binary scale of grades, general conditions of improving unsatisfactory grades, the maximum number of examinations in a summer and winter semester, the principles of dissertations assessment, the conditions of eligibility and procedures of a diploma / graduation examination and the principles of formulating the final study grade. All the learning outcomes shall be verified, specific to a particular curriculum. Learning outcomes for specialisations and individual modules of studies have been defined, their relationship (matrixes) with a field outcomes have been established, there have been works performed on the verification methods of learning outcomes adapted to their factual content. The university strives to make its assessment system international through its clarity, explicitness and the possibility to transfer the grades obtained in the European Higher Education Area. |
| | BSW | The procedures adopted by the college considering student performance assessment during classes have been specified in a separate document "The system of assessment and conducting examinations in Józef Tyszkiewicz Bielsko College", which was prepared in 2002 in cooperation with the University of Wales; as a result of the cooperation until 2008 the graduates of the college were |

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| | entitled to simultaneously apply for the diploma of the foreign university. The main directions of the student assessment policy outlined include: 1) Clarity of evaluation principles and criteria 2) Adapting the implemented by the college assessment and examination system according to evolving national and international educational standards; 3) Providing the reliability and objectivity of assessment (security principle) as regards individual subjects and a diploma examination; 4) Developing students independence as regards the learning process and continuous acquisition of new qualifications (education); 5) Developing organisational framework and procedures ensuring the appropriate organisation and execution of students knowledge and skills verification during examination sessions; 6) Implementation of organisational and technical solutions meeting the needs of disabled students; |
| | Summary: in all the schools surveyed the role of the „policy shaping” documents is fulfilled by study regulations, which are extensive and detailed; they specify all the assessment criteria necessary to ensure its objectivity. In BSW there is a separate document concerning the evaluation system, which served as a fulfillment of a condition for the international (Wales) validation of the college. Problems: all the schools are conducting works on learning outcomes verification systems complying with NQF – the levels of the works advancement vary, however, all the schools strive to complete the standardization process in the academic year 2012/13. |
| 1b | How is the relevant information communicated to students? |
| | WSE The WSE Study Regulations are commonly accessible, the document is published on a website. The principles of student assessment as regards individual subjects are explicitly specified in the syllabuses / subject cards published. Each academic teacher is obliged to present detailed information concerning the methods, conditions and criteria applied during the crediting process. |
| | AMU Students are members of the University Quality Assurance Committee, they take part in training focused on the existing and new assessment principles; the information regarding the principles is also sent to the University Student parliament. The websites offer all the information concerning the assessment system. Every academic teacher is obliged to present the requirements and evaluation criteria during the first classes. The information is also available on websites and sent to students / groups by e-mail. |
| | TUL The information is conveyed to students in easily accessible documents, which are also published on websites: Study Regulations, Subject Cards; it is also given by academic teachers of particular subjects. In a Subject Card for each learning outcome the requirements to be met by a student have been specified necessary to receive the lowest and the highest crediting grade. During the first classes each academic teacher is obliged to specify the criteria of evaluating single learning outcomes, related to the subject, including the ones referring to the intermediary grades of the scale, as well as to present the principles of formulating a final grade crediting the subject. |
| | BSW During the process of studies students receive detailed information concerning individual assessment criteria related to a particular subject (the information is given by a college teacher) as well as that concerning the overall assessment system (the information is given by a dean and the General Examination |

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| | | Supervisor). The information is sent both in electronic form (by e-mail, via the college information system Uczelnia.XP) and traditionally (direct meetings with the college authorities, availability of regulations in their printed version, etc.) |
| | | <p>Summary: in all the schools the information concerning the assessment principles is published and available. Among basic information tools we can mention study regulations, syllabuses and information conveyed by lecturers.</p> <p>Problems: in humanistic sciences specifying the measurability of assessment in terms of learning outcomes may be difficult.</p> <p>Good practices: an extended system of providing assessment objectivity at BSW, following the Welsh model.</p> |
| 2 | | How are student assessment procedures made appropriate for their purpose (diagnostic, formative, summative)? |
| | WSE | A form of preliminary assessment of the competence of students entering particular classes are subjects' prerequisites . The study regulations do not offer any recommendations on formative assessment – an academic teacher conducts it on their initiative. Final assessment is based on the criteria specified in the study regulations and syllabuses – there are no classes which are completed without a grade being given. As a specific case illustrating the influence of a student's grade on the further shape of study we can mention the selection by a student classes offered by a particular lecturer on the basis of ranking lists specified by the lecturer (complying with the provisions of the Study Regulations), in which priority of participating in the classes is given to students with highest grades. |
| | AMU | Diagnostic grades have occurred instead of the „prerequisite” – as the assessment of the ability to participate in classes; currently formative assessment applied is individually designed by teachers offering classes. When training sessions are completed and a new university syllabus pattern is developed, the assessment will be conducted according to unified principles. The conditions of summative assessment are described in the study regulations. There are no classes completed without a grade being granted. |
| | TUL | Preliminary assessment is a prerequisite formulated in the Subject Card. For the first year students, prior to their studies, there are pre-sessional compensatory courses in mathematics and physics organised, if needed. A teacher is obliged to perform formative assessment, which verifies the knowledge and skills acquired subsequently. In case of classes completed with summative assessment, it is recommended to administer formative tests. All the classes conducted at TUL are credited on the basis of summative assessment, formulated according to a multi-valuation scale (with the exception of PE and student apprenticeship assessed with the use of a binary scale). There are no classes completed without a grade being granted. |
| | BSW | <p>diagnostic: Pre-tests in English and selected engineering and natural sciences subjects aimed at unification of students competence.</p> <p>formative: Applying a wide range of forms of learning progress testing, tailored for the needs of a particular field of study (during a semester and over several semesters)</p> <p>summative: The principles of assessment and conducting examinations specified in the document <i>The system of assessment and conducting examinations at J.</i></p> |

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| | | <i>Tyszkiewicz BSW</i> , score-based system of assessment, examination sheets encrypting, conducting examinations by the General Examination Supervisor. There are no classes completed without a grade being granted. |
| | | <p>Summary: most frequently prerequisites to classes serve as a form of preliminary assessment, which is supplemented with some other forms of assessment in cases when there is a supposition that students might not meet the requirements; summative assessment is performed in all the schools, based on the principles stated in the study regulations; formative assessment is predominantly in teachers' hands; here are no classes completed without a grade being granted.</p> <p>Problems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In humanistic sciences the reliability of formative assessment is frequently insufficient, it is necessary to apply summative assessment as the main form. <p>Good practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WSE – the impact of good grades obtained previously on student's admission to selected classes – selective access to the most popular classes. • The idea of offering compensatory classes aimed at unification of students' varying level of preparation. • Occasionally applied (BWS, AMU) student self-assessment. |
| 3 | | How are student assessment procedures designed to measure the intended learning outcomes and other program objectives? |
| | WSE | <p>Since 2008 the syllabuses at WSE have had to contain a description of learning outcomes and the method of student performance assessment. As the basis for the assessment substantial criteria of individual subjects are adopted; the criteria specify the objective and the curriculum of the classes, the form of the final examination and learning outcomes achieved in the form of knowledge, skills and social competences acquisition. The learning outcomes indicated in the syllabus oblige examiners to their verification when the scope of tests and final examinations is planned; they also serve as the basis for obtaining grades in a particular subject. Works are in progress aimed at improving the system related to the introduction of NQF for HE.</p> <p>There are separate procedures concerning the approval and assessment of dissertations (BA and MA) as well as the principles of evaluation and calculating the grade on the diploma/certificate – they are predominantly based on learning outcomes, specifying general, substantial and formal requirements to be met in the dissertations and the manner of accepting them, combined with the principles of reviewing and review filing.</p> |
| | AMU | <p>The school is too big and too diversified for one assessment procedure to be applied. Therefore, (apart from the university study regulations) the assessment principles are defined by the faculties. The existing practices were only partly learning outcomes oriented, e.g. typical "skills" were assessed: teamwork, creativity, selected social competences. According to the NQF implementation schedule, the whole process of student assessment is to be learning outcomes oriented and combined with the process monitoring and external examiners involvement.</p> |
| | TUL | <p>Currently the verification of learning outcomes of individual subjects is performed in a manner suggested and declared to students by academic teachers; the validation of the verification results is conducted in an arbitrary manner. The predominant forms of assessment include: a test, a written examination, where a student is expected to solve the problems required, and a project. It can be stated</p> |

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| | | that tests constitute 10 – 20% of grades, written examinations – 50 – 60% and projects 20 – 40%. By March 2012 the school has obliged itself to develop the principles of learning outcomes verification for the three selected modules, which will serve as the pilot and possibly as an example for some other future solutions in this field. |
| | BSW | Until 2010 the assessment procedures were content oriented. The process of NQF implementation (in the academic year 2011/2012) for the first time involved the acceptance of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examining the level of the learning outcomes achievement with the individual approach (based on the student assessment criteria specified in the syllabus) as well as with the group approach (verifying whether the learning outcomes were achieved with regard to a particular subject); • evaluating the design of the matrix verifying learning outcomes, which was developed in 2010; • a new syllabus pattern specifying assessment criteria linked with individual learning outcomes. |
| | | Summary: In all the schools works are currently in progress aimed at adapting to learning outcomes, with a varied level of advancement represented – in this respect the basic determinant seems to be the presence of the curriculum described in terms of learning outcomes in syllabuses. Problems: Good practices: |
| 4a | | Are student assessment procedures undertaken in accordance with the officially stated examination rules/regulations by qualified personnel? |
| | WSE | Any assessment activities are to comply with the Study Regulations. The solutions concerning BA and MA dissertations assessment are approved by the Rector of WSE in the form of corresponding directives. The supervision over the execution of procedural solutions related to central examinations is performed by subject Coordinators. The supervision over the consistency of the curriculum proposals and the contents of syllabuses is performed by the Programming Committee of the Senate. |
| | AMU | The Study Regulations serve as the background for any assessment – it is approved by the AMU Senate. The development and implementation of the regulations is the Educational Section's responsibility. |
| | TUL | General principles of student assessment are specified in the Study Regulations. Monitoring the observation of its rules is the responsibility of the Education Deputy Rector. As far as the verification of learning outcomes related to individual subjects is concerned, a binding document is Subject Card prepared under the supervision of the quality assurance committee. The units responsible for the assessment are the Educational Section (as regards the whole university) and education deputy deans (at faculties). |
| | BSW | The assessment procedures are developed in accordance with the Study Regulations and assessment and examination system is prepared by a specialized unit – Quality Section (the former Education Section) with the support of the school authorities (Rector, Chancellor), they are approved by the Senate. |
| | | Summary: All the schools' Senates have formally approved the assessment principles; they have also been approved by specialized units responsible for the supervision of their execution. Problems: low participation of experts during the process of assessment system |

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| | development – it is difficult to reach full agreement between their expertise and the schools' administrative requirements. Good practices: |
| 4b | To what extent are the procedures dependent on the judgment of a single examiner? |
| WSE | <p>Student assessment is primarily based on the judgment of a single examiner, whose responsibility is to follow the substantial criteria specified in the syllabuses developed for particular subjects, as well as the formal principles defined in the Study Regulations. According to this document, the same scope of material and equal examination requirements should be expected regardless the date of examination in a particular subject during an examination session. The Regulations also provide a separate and independent assessment in each subject. Additionally, it sets out the principles of average semester grade calculation. Questionnaires filled in by students contain a question concerning the objectivity of assessment.</p> <p>BA and MA exams are taken before a board (consisting of a chairperson, a supervisor and a reviewer). The examination questions are formulated by the supervisor (related to the student's field of study) and the reviewer (related to the topic of the dissertation).</p> <p>Central examinations are a specific case; there have been a number of principles adopted aimed at achieving the assessment objectivity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The principle of the assessor's independence – the teacher leading the classes cannot act as the examiner. • Anonymity: the examination papers are assessed by experts, who do not know personal data of examinees. • The assessment criteria are developed by the Departments substantially related to the topic of the classes. • The supervision of the execution of central examinations is performed by subject Coordinators. |
| AMU | <p>Currently a teacher's assessment plays a predominant role. External examiners and a common standardized examination for extensive modules are planned. There is no assessment or its reliability monitoring hitherto, however, no complaints from students have been received concerning the assessment subjectivity. Student questionnaires contain questions related to the assessment objectivity. In case the assessment is questioned by a student, there is an exam before a board held. Syllabuses can be regarded as a tool aimed at assuring objectivity. Available on AMU websites, they specify the requirements necessary for the credit to be granted. The procedures of defending BA and MA dissertations are aimed at preventing subjectivity: there are BA / MA dissertations standards, external reviewers, examinations before a board, etc. Language competences are entirely standardized, according to international level criteria.</p> |
| TUL | Similar to the situation at AMU. Student questionnaires contain questions concerning the assessment objectivity. |
| BSW | The assessment procedures are imposed on teachers by the school: they are specified in the syllabus, including the components of the final assessment and the method of examination. The exams of crucial importance common for all the students are held by the General Examination Supervisor. Student questionnaires contain questions concerning the assessment objectivity. |
| | Summary: in all the schools assessment is primarily performed by a teacher, therefore it is |

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| | <p>somehow subjective. Apart from few exceptions, there are neither external examiners, nor standardised examinations. As a means of preventing subjectivity we can mention predominantly the principles of assessment set out in syllabuses and forming a board in case of the most significant examinations. Student questionnaires contain questions concerning the assessment objectivity – generally, there are no students complaints concerning unjust assessment.</p> <p>Problems:</p> <p>Good practices: WSE: unified central examinations in basic subjects, which are checked by examiners for whom students personal data remains confidential.</p> |
| 5 | <p>Do student assessment procedures have clear and published criteria for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • marking? • student absence, illness, or other mitigating circumstances? • informing students on the type, method, and criteria of assessment? • student class participation? • exam enrolment? |
| WSE | <p>The principles concerning the scale of marking are part of Study Regulations and are widely accessible for students. The issue of student absence, doctor's certificates and other absence justification is left to teachers. Attending lectures is compulsory. The principles of assessment are set out in a syllabus (final assessment components, the method of execution, etc.) – they are defined by an academic teacher.</p> |
| AMU | <p>The University Study Regulations contain provisions concerning all the issues in question and oblige a teacher to define at the beginning of classes all the crediting rules / criteria – including the attendance. At faculties the criteria of crediting and marking are compliant with the type of classes (e.g. they are different in case of workshops or lectures), the websites contain some good practice instances. Students do not find any further regulations necessary – see questionnaires results.</p> |
| TUL | <p>The Study Regulations and Subject Card contain any information and provisions related to student participation in classes. In the Study Regulations a multi-valuation scale of grades has been specified, including the absences, doctor's certificates and other justifications as well as the conditions of examination admission and execution; a Subject Card contains basic information concerning the assessment methods, types and criteria. Specific and detailed information on the assessment principles related to a particular subject is presented by an academic teacher.</p> |
| BSW | <p>The procedures are specified in detail in the document: „The system of assessment and conducting examinations of BSW students”, where all the information required by the question is specified. The document is available on the college website and in the information XP system. Academic teachers and students are familiarised with the document.</p> |
| | <p>Summary: All HEIs have clear and published criteria for the issues in question. Problems: Good practices:</p> |
| 6. | <p>Are student assessment procedures subject to administrative verification checks?</p> |
| WSE | <p>The principles of assessment and conducting examinations are verified by subject Coordinators. The WSE Rector is responsible for the verification of assessment procedures and principles as regards BA and MA dissertations. The Senate Programming Committee is responsible for the development of</p> |

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| | | educational offer and related requirements and assessment. The improvement of assessment procedures is an inherent part of the works being conducted. Recently the Senate Programming Committee in cooperation with the Rector's Deputy for Quality Assurance formed a Committee whose objective is the development of learning outcomes measurement standards as regards BA and MA dissertations, as well as the reviewing and assessment principles towards diploma projects; in addition, the Committee shall undertake works focused on the method of verification and revising the compliance with the learning outcomes specified in the syllabuses. The solutions developed have been approved of by the Rector of WSE. |
| | AMU | It is definitely the main concern and area for action of the Education Section, also inspired by students. Substantial amendments of the Study Regulations are rare, alterations are more commonly introduced at a faculty or a department level. The school does not monitor the implementation of the procedures by academic teachers, as this is the duty of a head of a department / unit (class inspections and other supervision of direct superiors). Currently adapting the assessment procedures for learning outcomes is in progress, in accordance with the matrixes developed for the curricula. |
| | TUL | It is a process constantly taking place. Currently there has been a number of units formed for the assessment adjustment according to the framework introduced: the objective of trainers of academic teachers and the Educational Committee is to offer training and consultancy in the process of specifying and verifying learning outcomes as well as developing a draft of amendments to the process of student assessment. |
| | BSW | The procedures of student assessment are verified by the school administration in the following ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dean's supervision (checking the correctness of student assessment procedures application, resolving any disputes) • Syllabuses review in terms of the criteria of student assessment, with particular attention paid to the syllabuses of new academic teachers (Planning Section) • Verification of student assessment procedures during the classes evaluation, also with the use of student questionnaires. Currently works are in progress aimed at the adaptation of assessment to learning outcomes verification, related to NQF introduction. |
| | | Summary: in all the schools the verification of assessment principles is a constant process, with selected units of the schools taking care of and being responsible for it. Problems: Good practices: |
| 6b | | If so, how are the verification checks made? See above. |
| 7. | | How do student assessment procedures reflect on students' knowledge and skills gained at the secondary education level? |
| | WSE | The only element of preliminary assessment procedure is the contest of competing results of matura examination, which serves as the basis of selective student recruitment. This process does not generate significant problems. However, the recruitment for the 2 nd cycle of studies seems to be problematic, in particular, in cases when the field of study is changed. |
| | AMU | High school competences are generically evaluated by both academic teachers |

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| | | and students as relatively limited. There are compensative classes offered for first year students, in particular, in mathematics. Occasionally a teacher obliges students to additionally complement their knowledge at this level, however, as a rule only the knowledge acquired at the university is evaluated. |
| | TUL | The procedures of student assessment basically are not referring to the knowledge and skills acquired by students in high school. The only indirect reference of the student assessment system in this school is a number of compensatory courses in mathematics and physics, as described in item 2. |
| | BSW | The procedures of student assessment refer to the knowledge and skills acquired by them at high school as regards the following subjects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>English</i> (pre-test held for all the students, aimed at specifying the level of advancement and enrolling students to suitable groups. • <i>drawing</i> (the students of interior design who have no initial preparation in this respect are offered a pre-session course in drawing organised by the college) • the system of compensatory classes in mathematics and physics has been functioning for 3 years (is dedicated for students with the lowest grades in the subjects – the matura certificate grades) Apart from the cases described above, the competences acquired at college are assessed. |
| | | Summary: generally, the competences acquired at the school of higher education are assessed, with limited reliance on the competences acquired in high school. Problems: Good practices: compensatory classes, whose objective is to develop students' better preparation, in particular, in sciences. |
| 8. | What is the role of external actors, including QA agencies, in student assessment procedures? | |
| | WSE | Insignificant – the requirements of the accreditation institutions are lower than the level achieved by the school. New standards related to the NQF implementation are expected. |
| | AMU | The accreditation process does not influence the principles of assessment, the standards observed by the university are higher than the requirements of the PKA. |
| | TUL | Currently the accreditation does not influence the process – the justification as stated above. New standards are expected, readiness to take them into account. |
| | BSW | Some examples of the impact of PKA recommendations combined with those of SEM FORUM and PTI on the student assessment system include the redefining of a graduate's profile and learning outcomes expected, as well as developing the rules of granting a diploma (general and specific, adapted to special characteristics of individual fields of studies). There has been a significant influence of PKA recommendations observed on the process of diploma granting and the curriculum of computer science, the changes were aimed at meeting all the requirements related to educating engineers. However, the most significant influence on the college system of student assessment resulted from the cooperation with the University of Wales, as part of validation procedure (the results achieved were described in good practices) |
| | | Summary: insignificant influence of accreditation at larger schools, moderate influence at a local school. Generally, the PKA standards are regarded as too basic to have a significant influence. |

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| | Problems Good practices: | |
| 9. | Have there recently been significant changes made in student assessment procedures to improve their effectiveness? | |
| | WSE | Yes: adopting substantial learning outcomes oriented criteria of student assessment along with the required documentation concerning the reviewing and evaluating BA and MA dissertations. |
| | AMU | Yes – the shift related to the NQF implementation and the new organisation of quality management system. New syllabuses, learning outcomes oriented validation and assessment – a fundamental change in the approach towards education objectives, types of assessment. |
| | TUL | Yes – a substantial change in the procedures of student assessment related to the introduction of learning outcomes oriented curricula. Currently the elements to be evaluated include knowledge, skills and social competences specified in Subject Cards and Diploma Project Cards. |
| | BSW | Yes – the recent changes can be mentioned: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation since the academic year 2011/2012 of the National Qualification Framework has also influenced the student assessment procedures (among others, entries in syllabuses, matrixes confirming learning outcomes – the procedures mentioned related to learning outcomes assessment will be developed in the current academic year) • Changes of student assessment procedures during the implementation in the college of information system Uczelnia.XP, due to technical requirements of the system. They are connected, among other, with confirming student assessment and grades filing. • Currently works related to the procedure of diploma project assessment and student performance assessment during a diploma examination are in progress, with the intention of raising the assessment quality. |
| | Summary: In all the schools works are in progress aimed at the adaptation of Study Regulations and assessment system to the provisions of the new Act on Higher Education and the directives of the Minister of Science and Higher Education related to NQF introduction. All the schools participating in the present study had commenced the works before the amended Act came into force, however, the level of their advancement varies. Problems Good practices: | |
| 9a. | Can you identify any aspect of student assessment procedures you especially approve of? | |
| | WSE | The above mentioned formulation of transparent substantial and formal criteria of diploma projects admission and evaluation offers valuable guidelines for supervisors and reviewers and serves as an excellent tool explicitly establishing good practice in this respect. |
| | AMU | Examples: * for the module with prevailing experimental component (chemical laboratory) a group of students is offered a research project (in terms of learning outcomes, 2nd cycle). The assessment includes, among others, practical skills: designing the experiment, operating the instruments and equipment; and cognitive skills: identifying the problem, selecting appropriate methods to solve it, interpreting the results, etc. ** pedagogy: multi-dimensional character of the assessment and the way in |

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| | <p>which students are able to apply the knowledge acquired in case of a particular child – in every aspect of the learning outcomes: knowledge, skills and attitudes.</p> <p>*** students: appreciate the effectiveness of e.g. an information project, which allows for the presentation of not only knowledge, but also creativity. The result of the project has to be “defended” before the group, but it may also be implemented. Students highly value the project verification against “tough criteria”. Students are required to perform the SWOT analysis of a project completed.</p> |
| TUL | <p>The system of formative assessment in the form of a monthly test + a final grade in the form of a project task requiring independent work and exploring numerous learning aids and sources of information. Presentation of the project results in front of the public + a public discussion on the project.</p> |
| BSW | <p>High appreciation of some assessment procedures, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examinations held without the leading teachers’ participation – they are conducted by the General Examination Supervisor • Encrypting examination papers and checking them by randomly selected examiners, which guarantees anonymity and objectiveness • Reviewing examination questions sets by external reviewers <p>Students appreciate, in particular, the chance to participate in the assessment process, accompanied by clarifying certain issues, evaluating progress and comparison with other papers.</p> |
| | <p>Summary: the review of „favourite methods” of assessment indicates that there are groups of academic teachers involved in the application of modern learning outcomes oriented marking methods. Although these cases are not common, they may serve as examples of good practices, which seems to be a good background for their further implementation and popularisation.</p> <p>Problems</p> <p>Good practices:</p> |

Major findings and recommendations – national level

The research results presented confirm the presumption made in the introduction to the present report stating that higher education in Poland is experiencing a transition period initiated by the implementation of the National Qualification Framework for Higher Education. The shifts postulated by the new legislation are of fundamental character, as regards the organisation of education: schools of higher education are exercising a significantly extended autonomy in respect to study curricula design and organisation; on the other hand, they have been legally bound with the duty of formulating learning outcomes oriented curricula and of developing reliable systems providing LO validation. One of the elements of the validation mentioned is undoubtedly student performance assessment system. All the surveyed schools had commenced works on new systems before the new legislation came into force. Thus, in comparison with average schools of higher education in Poland their efforts and achievements may be more advanced. Nevertheless, the results of the present research seem to adequately reflect the movement towards the reorganisation of education initiated in Polish schools of higher education.

The changes proposed comply with the statements of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance In Higher Education. Their detailed interpretation and transferring into,

e.g. accreditation criteria and standards have not been completed in Poland yet. However, the assumptions of the new PKA assessment illustrate a close link between ES&G and the implemented NQF model and PKA standards.

New solutions are deeply incorporated in the formerly binding legislation, requiring the development of Study Regulations. The schools are obliged to approve of them in the form of official documents passed by their Senates, where all the educational aspects are stipulated – including student assessment. The regulations are binding for all the school's units and have to be available to all the stakeholders, in particular, to students. Although schools of higher education exercise autonomy as regards specific solutions, they are required to develop the Study Regulations, which is monitored by accreditation.

Factors stimulating the ES&G implementation at the national level:

The fundamental character of the changes combined with lack of certainty whether schools of higher education would successfully deal with the development of autonomy and new teaching approach, contributed to the unprecedented information and training campaign launched by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and other bodies (e.g. the Group of Bologna Experts). Over the last 2 years, approximately 200 conferences, seminars and workshops have been organised, a wide range of supporting materials published and a number of projects promoting the changes launched. As student assessment methods are subject to changes, the campaign also promotes the ES&G implementation at an individual school and national level. Quality assurance has gained a new dimension in view of NQF for HE. One of the most important factors was assigning significant sums from European funds for the implementation of NQF, which contributed to creating sufficient financial support for the efforts aimed at the new study organisation. A number of activities mentioned in the interviews, such as the development and implementation of new curricula and syllabuses, internal training and other activities are financed, among others, from the funds mentioned. This creates favourable conditions for the effectiveness of the works as well as contributes to development of positive attitude of the academic society towards the changes.

The instances of good practices indicated in the present study seem to be another factor stimulating the implementation of assessment methods complying with ES&G. Each of the schools offers a different example of a good practice: they represent the whole range from those adopted from foreign partners, concerning the assessment objectivity (BSW), through the idea of central exams for basic subjects (WSE), to the concept of specific assessment methods adjusted to the nature of the learning / teaching process (TUL, AMU). **Those instances of good practices may attract wider interest during the transition period, when looking for good examples is frequent and very much needed.**

The key factor determining the success of the changes being implemented seems to be the new accreditation complying with NQF. The works focused on its standards have been initiated recently. The schools of higher education shall carefully observe the standards, as receiving a positive appraisal determines the approval of a study by the ministry. **However, the first appraisal with the new standards applied will not come into force within the next 3 years. This will be a critical moment for checking whether the student performance assessment based on learning outcomes complying with NQF, will have been conducted properly.**

Barriers and challenges of the implementation at the national level:

The barriers to the implementation of the student assessment methods adapted to ES&G – paradoxically – result also from the introduced change in the organisation of education. The changes require a new, different from traditional approach on the part of university teachers towards designing the curricula of particular classes and higher reliability and thoroughness of the outcomes validation, including student assessment. Some of the requirements specified by NQF for HE are completely new for schools – in particular, those related to personal and social competences, whose development is obligatory for schools. The learning outcomes of similar type, related to the educational function of schools have not been required before. Therefore, the corresponding assessment may be a real challenge for schools.

However, the challenges mentioned above do not include an important threat to the study quality and related to student performance assessment. The threat is posed by decreasing the assessment criteria caused by a tougher fight to attract a customer and resulting from the reduction of the overall number of students. This, in turn, is caused by demographic factors and by foreign universities competitiveness – which is significant in case of Poland. The willingness to retain students at school may lead to lowering the requirements. This threat (or practice) was not mentioned directly by any of the schools – WP7 questionnaire did not contain a direct question concerning the problem. However, the results of WP6 study focused on student recruitment and numerous remarks and comments on offering compensatory courses for non-performing students may imply the existence of the problem related to decreasing requirements.

It is quite possible then that due to the fact that there was no direct question in WP7 on maintaining a suitable level of requirements (“tough” assessment standards), a level in question is not specified in ES&G. The generic nature of ES&G combined with the principle of “fitness for purpose” allows for a variety of student performance assessment methods, tailoring it to a diversified school missions, curricula, stakeholders’ needs and other significant factors. It allows for maintaining the diversity, which is of crucial importance. At the same time it may lead to the situation of lowering a school’s requirements to the level which cannot be referred to as higher education level. The transparency of quality assurance systems, the international character of the systems of external quality assessment and the descriptors of the levels of national frameworks are the elements preventing a similar situation from occurring. However, the question concerning their effectiveness still remains open. International projects focused on education quality, such as AHELO show that a search for tougher assessment criteria based on shared elements of a curriculum gradually become a quality assurance method. This seems to be the only wider than national conclusion drawn from the present study.