

IBAR PRAGUE SEMINAR: MINUTES

Prague, 19th-21st May 2013

19th May reserved for informal discussion among seminar participants

20th May, morning session:

- **Presentation of major findings from the WP10 cross-national comparative study (PL team)**

Discussion: Some difficulty in collating vital information on the relationship between quality and teaching staff into the comparative table with a simple structure, appended to the study, was noted. This was due to quite diversified information of qualitative nature included in the national reports. The information from the national reports point towards missing internal motivation of teachers for quality enhancement, not least due to economic crisis, overloading of teachers, multi-employment contracts and also some limitations in institutional autonomy (in PL and LV). Institutions tend sometimes to be compliant by themselves (some Latvian HEIs). A different situation is in the UK where HEIs are fully autonomous but much under market pressures, competing for students. Differences can also be found internationally due to different interpretations of some descriptive/normative, quality-related words in particular contexts (e.g. insufficient, standard). Overall, all this poses challenges for creating workable institutional quality culture(s) and the corresponding research.

Important dates:

31st May - Comments of all teams on the WP10 cross-national comparative study to the Polish team

10th June - Finalisation of the WP10 cross-national comparative study

- **Presentation of preliminary findings from the WP11 cross-national comparative study (SK team)**

Discussion:

The issues related to quality and information provision also bear on trust. Student/staff ratios are not always the most important indicator of teaching efficiency to be publicised. Similarly, having more contact hours does not necessarily mean that student will get more relevant information input. Size of a HEI plus the (limited) methods of data collection also have a role as far the extent of information provision is concerned. Several models (student consumption x satisfaction x engagement) exist for explaining the situation in different contexts and make it possible to formulate useful conclusions (also usable for the IBAR book). Risk of bureaucratisation should be observed when working towards the WP11 conclusions based on the reported findings.

Important dates:

10th June - the draft version of the WP11 cross-national comparative study sent to project partners

19th June - Comments of all teams on the WP11 cross-national comparative study to the Slovak team

28th June - Finalisation of the WP11 cross-national comparative study

- **Presentation of food for thought on the WP12 (CZ team)**

Discussion:

Several suggestions of issues which the WP12 should address were made. They concern especially: application of national qualification frameworks to investigate the extent of harmonisation of HE and secondary education (SE) curricula, situation of students from non-traditional backgrounds (mature, disabled, socially or economically disadvantaged etc.). Empirical investigations at the level of individual secondary schools are necessary for this WP to deliver. Cross-referencing to previous WPs (e.g. WP5, WP6) can be done and is likely to be needed in most cases to concentrate, in this WP, on secondary school-driven aspects of quality.

Important dates:

17th June – National WP12 reports of all project partners to the UK and CZ teams
31st July – Finalisation of the WP12 cross-national comparative study

20th May, afternoon session:

- **Information on the IBAR book (UK team) + editor's discussion of chapter drafts with individual authors**

Discussion:

The complete manuscript should be sent by the editor (H. Eggins) to the Sense Publishers by 15th September. Therefore, for the manuscript to be edited and sent in time, the authors are obliged to produce and send all the chapters, but the concluding one, to the editor by July 8th. The concept of the implementation staircase should be referred to throughout all the chapters as a theoretical linkage enabling for some general observations in the concluding chapter (concluding chapter to be written jointly by J. Kohoutek and D.F. Westerheijden). The final versions of the chapters should be in as perfect English as possible. Updated information on authors' profiles should be sent to the editor if there is a need to do so. The promotional leaflet of the book will be available for the final IBAR international conference held in early November. The CZ team asks all the project partners to provide it with IBAR-related conference/seminar (powerpoint) presentations so that they could be inserted on the IBAR website as dissemination activities.

Discussion of the book editor with individual authors on the drafts of their chapters.

- **Possibilities of IBAR dissemination and follow-up**

Several possibilities for the IBAR follow-up, run on the project basis, were mentioned and discussed in brief (LLLP, Alfa 3, Soros Foundation etc.). As regards IBAR dissemination, again, several planned activities were mentioned (CHER, EAIR, Quality Assurance Forum). Importantly, the papers for the special issue of the EHEA Journal (up to 5,000 words per paper) should be delivered to the PT team by 31st March. The journal special issue, summing up major findings from IBAR WPs 5-11, should be published in the second half of 2013. To possibly update the information on institutional QA systems, the LV team asks the project coordinator to send the WP5 cross-country comparative study again to all the project partners for checking it.

21st May, morning session:

- **Presentation of financial and organisational issues (CZ team)**

Discussion:

The final IBAR conference, attended by international audience, will be held from 10th to 12th November in Prague. The IBAR budget allows for covering conference expenditures of ten international experts in quality assurance to take part in the event (also for dissemination purposes). The preliminary list of names was drawn up to be finalised via e-mail right after the seminar. This will enable the CZ team to send out the invitations as soon as possible to ensure maximal expert participation. This also applies to the external evaluators of the IBAR project as a whole, who will again be Ellen Hazelkorn and Bjorn Stensaker. Different designs of the final conference were brought up (e.g. a way of presenting the final synthesis report, separate meeting for all the project partners to finalise the report etc.)

- **Presentation of ideas on the structure and content of the Final Synthesis Report (CZ team + UK team)**

Discussion:

General agreement was reached on the structure of the report. As to style, the report should be tight, easy to read and have pertinent policy recommendations for all major organisational levels and actors involved. A working draft of the report should be ready for the final IBAR conference event.

Important deadlines				
Action	WP10	WP11	WP12	Book
National studies			June 17	
Draft version of comparative study		June 10		
Comments	End of May	June 19		
Final version	June 10	June 28	July 31	
Chapters sent to Heather				July 8
Book sent to Sense Publishers				September 5
Leaflet				November