

The Development and Trends of European Higher Education Quality Assurance Agencies on International Quality Assurance and Student Engagement: A Case Study on AQU Catalunya

This research aimed to explore the topic of the development of student engagement in higher education quality assurance (QA), focusing on the advancements in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), and the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR). Various models and challenges about student involvement in QA in Europe and Asia were also discussed.

Through a case study involving the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency (AQU) in Catalunya, HEEACT gained valuable insights in AQU's preparation for external reviews by ENQA and EQAR while actively promoting student engagement. Data was collected through focus group interviews with AQU administrators and students who actively participated in higher education institutional reviews.

Key findings include the following: (1) The European dimension in EHEA higher education quality assurance mechanisms can still be improved; (2) Legalizing the role of students in QA is pivotal in promoting student engagement; and (3) Asian QA agencies need to endeavor towards constructing models of student engagement suitable for their local social context.

Furthermore, several recommendations derived from this study can serve as the basis for HEEACT's future development and implementation of quality assurance policies and initiatives. These recommendations are:

(1) Conducting a pilot study on student engagement in higher education;
(2) Continuing international exchanges and collaborations to develop student engagement strategies; and (3) Proactively disseminating and sharing information about student engagement in quality assurance with the public.

Key words: European Union, Student Engagement, Higher Education,
Quality Assurance