Quality Assurance frameworks in context: a diversified implementation of the ESG by various French-speaking quality assurance agencies

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The FrAQ-Sup network

- created in 2014 by four QA Agencies (AAQ, AEQES, CTI and HCERES) operating in three French-speaking countries (Switzerland, Belgium and France)

- extended in 2015: ANAQ-Sup (Senegal) and CEEC (Canada – Québec)

- shared goals: "*… to cooperate, to mutualise and promote, in French, the expertise and professional experience in the field of quality assurance for higher education and research*"

the network agencies

AAQ	AEQES	ANAQ-Sup	CEEC	CTI	HCERES
Switzerland 2001/2015	**French-speaking Belgium** 2002/2008	**Senegal** 2012	**Quebec** 1993	**France** 1934	**France** 2014 (AERES)
Ca 230,000 students. 10 universities, 2 EPF, 8 HES, 20 HEP, > 50 private HEIs	Ca 215,000 students. 6 universities, 20 university colleges, 17 Art schools and 84 adult education centres	Ca 150,000 students. 7 public HEIs and > 200 private HEIs	Ca 215,000 students 106 HEIs	36,992 graduates (ref 2015)	2,470,700 students, 310 HEI > 5,000 programmes > 25 sites
institutional and programmes accreditation, quality audits, assessment and EUR-ACE label	Evaluation of BA and MA programmes in *clusters* >> System-wide analyses and meta-analyses	institutional evaluation, programmes evaluation, evaluation of doctoral schools	audit (programmes, assessment of apprenticeship, strategy and academic success plans)	accreditation of engineering programmes Label EUR-ACE	Evaluation of programmes (L,M,D) research units, institutions and cluster of sites
15 staff members 4 languages ENQA/EQAR	11 staff members Steering committee 24 members ENQA/EQAR	AfriQAN Tuning	4 Commissioners supported by 21 staff members	6 staff members and Commission (32 members) ENQA/EQAR	200 staff members Council (30 p.) ENQA/EQAR

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first achievements

- February 2015, first international conference in Nancy *(new challenges for quality assurance: from ESG 2.0 to MOOCs)*

- May 2015, translation into French of the revised version of ESG – communication & diffusion http://www.enqa.eu/indirme/esg/ESG%20in%20French_by%20R%C3%A9seau%20FrAQ.pdf

- May 2016, second international conference in Brussels *(how to quality assure the link teaching/research? How to quality assure the student-centered teaching/learning ?)*

- creation of the website http://www.fraq-sup.fr/

- October and November 2016, joint communications

- …

comparative analysis of the QA frameworks

- <u>goal</u>: identifying differences and similarities between quality instruments (QA frameworks), drawing lessons from them

- <u>methodology</u>:

- building a matrix with the ESG (part 1) and the corresponding items from each framework

- highlighting the areas of convergence and divergence and the possible areas looked at by each national system beyond the ESG

- analysis of the results

lessons learned

- whatever the methodological approach used (institutional, programmatic, even a combination of both), the **themes analysed are largely convergent**

- differences in **terminology** and **concepts** are real (subject areas, themes, fields or criteria)

- the global **architecture** of the frameworks, their **granularity** and their **focuses** are different

lessons learned

- the frameworks consider items beyond those proposed by the ESG, indicators of the **specific background** in which they work

- the wording reflects the **positioning** of each agency and conveys the way each views **quality**

Examples…

- **For AAQ** the notions of the autonomy and responsibility of the HEIs as far as quality assurance is concerned is a key question. The wording chosen for many of the standards is very relevant: "*the **system of quality assurance** allows to be sure that…*" instead of "*the institution…*". The focus is on the QAS and not on the institution.

- Besides the AAQ framework for the institutional accreditation addresses a sector which is fairly marginal in the ESG: **communication,** internal and external, of quality assurance (its strategy, its processes, its results). This is a key component to develop a culture of quality. In line with a fair balance between confidentiality and transparency, an effective communication can strengthen and enhance the visibility of the institutional system of QA, which then can work in an even more incisive and coherent way.

- The guideline includes the issue of gender.

examples...

For AEQES :

- use of the concept of **criterion** (relevancy, coherence, efficiency) next to words related more closely to themes (governance, quality assurance, building up of programmes, etc.)

- and the very educational-oriented approach

(see criterion 3 of the framework - a programme is coherent if the following are aligned *: learning outcomes/ learning activities/ assessement of the achievement level for the intended learining outcomes/ "reasonable" time foreseen for achievening the intended LO)*.

This pedagogical approach is enhanced thanks to the contribution of educationalist in the experts panels. This is consistent with the concept *student-centered learning.*

examples…

- The **CEEC** framework is based on the recognition of the expertise developed within the institutions in the last 20 years and therefore on **the institutional autonomy and responsibility** in relation to QA (which is reflected in the respect to institutional particularities). The definition of quality is that of a "consistency with the institutional objectives". Thus the judgement of CEEC bears on the system and not on the institution: *"… considers that the system of quality assurance of the HEI and the way it is managed ensure an ever-improving quality"*.

- In a forward-looking perspective, it appeals to continuous improvements. The aim pursued is to contribute to the development of the quality of HEIs and to make it known. The forecast **2nd cycle will be built on the experience acquired with the first**. From now on CEEC asks the institutions to think about it in a more global and better integrated approach.

examples…

- For **CTI** some aspects of the framework are linked to its field of assessment/accreditation, the trainings for **engineers** (e.g.: a scientific base, in-company internships…). The framework is focused not only on teaching issues, but also on issues of **employability** and the role of students in the socio-economic situation.

- Some stresses are also put according to background concerns. This explains the implementation of extra "**focus"** while evaluating programmes, focus on some new themes corresponding to the framework and by extension to ESG (action areas in 2015-2016 & 2016-2017: **S&ST, innovation & entrepreneurship, sustainable development**)

examples…

- **For HCERES**, the assessment is "**integrated**", which means that it covers and concerns the various components of ESR: trainings, research units, institutions and territorial groupings. (the guideline used for the analysis is the guideline **institution**)

- Starting point: "assertion of its identity and its communication".

- Owing to its target, it deals with ESG with a filter « governance » and covers topics from a political and strategic angle:

  - o Policy of training
  - o Policy of research
  - o RH, financial policy
  - o International policy…

  links assessment with the **background** of the institution and its **stakes** and focuses improvement in that direction

- A field "student success".

- The assessment links European process/public concerns/supporting of development.

to conclude...

- this comparison lead us to think about the frameworks as a **« P-tool » (powerfull, political, philosophical…)**

- the ESG bring a framework for harmonization and in the same time are compatible with the diversity of HE systems

- **harmonization does not mean standardization**

- any evaluation depends highly on the background

- each framework reflects a particular view of quality, with a stress on some key aspects

- within a background of internationalisation of teaching and its practices of quality assurance, this finding is not uninteresting!

references

- AAQ   http://aaq.ch/fr/accreditation/accreditation-institutionnelle/

- AEQES http://www.aeqes.be/documents/20150624referentielAEQES2.0.pdf

- CEEC   http://www.ceec.gouv.qc.ca/bibliotheque/?doc=67364

- CTI   http://fond-documentaire.cti-commission.fr/

- HCERES

  http://www.hceres.fr/MODALITES-D-EVALUATIONS/Campagne-d-evaluation-2015-2016/Modalites-de-la-campagne-d-evaluation-2015-2016-vague-B

some questions to you

« The ESG may be the common framework and allow for a diversified implementation according to the local contexts. They leave room for expressing – through language and terminology – a specific vision of quality »

How much context-dependent is it in your situation?

How could you express the specific vision of quality of your own QA system?

What are the main drivers today: the international trend? The European dimension? The national or regional contexts?