ESF Project 1.227 Concluding Conference

Making Quality Visible
Achievements and Way Forward

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TRUST IS LIKE AN ERASER
it gets smaller & smaller

[after every mistake]
Quality Assurance

1. safeguards the quality of further and higher education within the economic, social and cultural context, on a national, European and international level;

2. ensures the use of appropriate measures as a means of improving the quality of teaching, learning, training and research; and

3. communicates the outcome of such findings within an internal and external framework of accountability.
The IQA-EQA Connection

ENHANCED QUALITY, OUTPUT, NUMBERS

EXTERNAL EVALUATION

INTERNAL EVALUATION

MARKET FORCES
"Who will guard the guards themselves?"
Capitalising on local strengths

• One Ministry of Education from pre-primary to vocational, adult and tertiary provision
• National Qualifications Framework that gave parity of esteem to vocational and tertiary provision
• Parity of esteem and same mechanism for ECTS and ECVET learning credit systems
• Same licensing and accreditation mechanisms
• Vocational providers aspired to status of tertiary providers
• Very close working collaboration between key stakeholders
Making Quality Visible in QA

- National QA Framework
- EQA Manual of Procedures
- Net-QAPE has trained 45 QA officers in IQA and EQA, covering over 95% of F&HE students
- 87% of these were today awarded the CPD Award in QA in F&HE
- 16 IQA systems developed /strengthened
- 3 pilot EQAs at UoM, MCAST and ITS
- 30 trained student evaluators
- 38 trained peer experts
- 4 trained NCFHE staff
- First steps for ENQA membership
Making Quality Visible in Accreditation

• Publication of accreditation procedures presently in place
• **Software** to provide better course and provider information to users
• Further development of accreditation procedures for **Level 8 courses**
• Development of accreditation procedures for **dual courses**
Link between Accreditation & QA

• Malta’s ‘absolute conditions’:
  – post-colonial context
  – a micro-state
  – resource poor / people rich

• Accreditation as an intrinsic part of the QA cycle

• Education: a public good or a private commodity?
IQA Standards

1. Policy for quality assurance
2. Institutional probity: leadership and financial procedures are fit for purpose
3. Design and approval of programmes to follow NCFHE standards for both self-accrediting and other providers
4. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
5. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
6. Competent FT and PT teaching staff, fair and transparent recruitment and development processes
7. Appropriate learning resources and student support
8. Information management: capacity to collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective programme management. *Info to include vulnerable groups, and participation, retention and employment rates.*

9. Public information which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date, readily accessible and *sufficient*

10. **Implement quality cycle** by on-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes, with external stakeholders. *With employment-oriented programmes, from the world of work*

11. **Cyclical external quality assurance**
EQA Standards

1. EQA to assess effectiveness of first 10 IQA standards. EQA needs to check that the IQA systems are fit for purpose, are in fact functioning and effective, and are sustainable.

2. EQA designed to be fit for purpose, with stakeholders

3. Implementing processes shall be reliable, useful, pre-defined, implemented consistently

4. Peer-review experts selected/approved by the NCFHE, to include students

5. Explicit criteria for formal outcomes

6. Publishing of full EQA reports, including any decisions

7. Clearly defined complaints and two-step appeals procedure
Lessons Learnt...

- **IQAs:**
  - work needed to bring to consciousness good practices;
  - work needed to change mentality from provider of educational service to an educational entity with intrinsic quality culture

- **IQA Reporting:** how to ensure that report is not just descriptive but truly self-reflective, identifying needs and proposing concrete and sustainable action plan

- **Peer Evaluators:** fitness of different types to diverse contexts

- **Student evaluators:** a valuable contribution

- **Judgments:** need to standardize their interpretations, BUT judgments CANNOT be compared across different categories of entities

- **F&H Framework:** having one set of standards and interpreting them flexibly for different types of providers WORKS
New challenges, new opportunities for Accreditation

1. Accreditation procedures for:
   – Level 8 programmes
   – Dual courses/programmes
   – VLE-based provision

2. Clarifying accreditation procedures for universities and self-accrediting entities

3. Adapting IQA procedures for small and micro entities

4. Activating ‘dormant’ parts of the LN, e.g. on student agreements

5. Developing procedures for withdrawal of licence
New challenges, new opportunities for Quality Assurance

1. Developing procedures for selection of peer reviewers
2. Developing NCFHE competence to ensure ‘norming’ (not sameness) of EQA reports
3. Adapting EQA procedures for small and micro entities
4. Incorporating QA requirements for informal and non-formal learning, including APL
5. Developing procedures for EQA of overseas provision
New challenges, new opportunities for NCFHE

1. Becoming full ENQA member in 2017 and EQAR member soon after
2. Enhancing info and support to the public
3. Maintaining and developing an appropriate relationship with a) Government, b) the State
4. Maintaining and developing an appropriate relationship with self-accrediting entities
5. Maintaining and enhancing trust and credibility of providers, users, civil society and international stakeholders in NCFHE
Thank You