

QA for Higher Education Institutions Continuing Education Programmes



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

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Quality Assurance for HEIs' Continuing Education Programmes

What's QACEP?

QACEP is a two year project started in October 2009 funded with the support of the European Commission under the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme – Erasmus – Modernisation of Higher Education.

QACEP Consortium is composed of eight institutions:

six HEIs

- Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna – Italy
- Aalto University – Finland
- Katholieke Universiteit Leuven – Belgium
- Institute for Lifelong Learning of the University of Barcelona – Spain
- University College of Cork – Ireland
- University of Warsaw - Poland

two associations representing a large number of other HEIs

- Inter-University Consortium AlmaLaurea – Italy
- Coimbra Group

Staff involved are representatives of the envisaged end-user categories of project outcomes: HEIs Quality Assurance officers, administrative and teaching staff involved in the organisation and management of continuing education programmes, academic authorities.

What's QACEP approach?

- bottom up methodology in order to collect, to compare and to discuss partners concrete experiences, challenges and approaches towards Quality Assurance and Continuing Education Programmes
- experimental approach: "pilot internal evaluation" of a group of continuing education programmes

What's QACEP aim?

Context

Continuing education

Innovative and creative educational systems should have a lifelong learning perspective:

- 1] to be able to answer immediately to:
 - Social-economic developments
 - March of the knowledge society
- 2] to provide appropriate training of adults, including well specialized and graduate professionals.

Continuing Education provided at Higher Education Institutions

Higher Education Institutions are fundamental actors:

- 1] they provide research -based higher education for lifelong learners
- 2] they are defining wider and articulated strategies for lifelong learning
- 3] they are engaged in providing continuing education and training programmes ("continuing education programmes" as one of HEIs LLL activities):

Needs

The growing number and relevance of continuing education programmes (CEPs) determines the need for appropriate quality assurance systems:

- 1] HEIs' CEPs need to be included in the quality assurance systems already in place
- 2] An adapted approach for the quality assurance of CEPs is crucial considering:
 - the specific objectives of these programmes
 - the specific target groups
 - the variety of stakeholders involved
 - their specific relationship with labour market and society
 - the great variety in terms of duration and organisation
 - the lack of consolidated and long tradition (and sometimes a lack of consolidated rules, national regulations or guidelines for this kind of programmes)

Objectives

- 1] - to develop a general framework for quality assurance of Continuing Education Programmes offered by HEIs, compatible with and adapted to the needs and specific context of each individual HEI.
- 2] - to design concrete and practical tools for HEIs' Continuing Education Programmes assessment.

Expected outcomes are meant to support HEIs on the strategic and management levels as well as on the programme level, to start and increase the QA systems of their continuing education programmes by taking advantage of a theoretical framework, operational indications and guidelines.

QACEP work programme

	1 - Comparative Analysis November 2009 – June 2010	2 - Design of the framework April 2010 - December 2010	3 - Pilot Evaluation October 2010 - June 2011
OBJECTIVES	To identify the specific characteristics of Continuing Education Programmes and Quality Assurance within QACEP Partners	To determine the main components of a Quality Assurance system which addresses the needs of HEIs' CEPs	To verify the applicability of specific tools and to give suggestions for a self-evaluation activity based on the QACEP framework guidelines
ACTIVITIES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 - Design of a template that includes concrete questions on the topics to be addressed 2 - QACEP HEIs Partners Pre - studies 3 - Comparative analysis of partners pre studies focused on common characteristics and relevant differences with regard to good practices, working methodologies and concrete tools already in use 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 - Brainstorming among partners and discussion on the main principles behind the framework 2 - Draft of a version of the framework and request to HEIs in the Consortium to fill in and test the framework, providing comments 3 - Draft of QACEP Framework 	"Pilot evaluation" of a group of continuing education programmes using the overall framework and concrete and specific tools such as an evaluation report information model and a survey to track stakeholders opinions
MAIN OUTCOMES	Comparative analysis report AVAILABLE ON PROJECT WEBSITE www.qacep.eu	General Framework for HEIs Continuing Education Programmes QA	CEPs Self - Evaluation Report Model Survey tools

QACEP Contribution to EU policies

Quality Assurance and Lifelong Learning are two main priorities in the European Higher Education Area Agenda

- 1] Main references:
 - Bologna Process, Ministerial Declarations and Communiqué (2010) Budapest-Vienna Declaration
 - (2009) Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué
 - (2007) London Communiqué
 - European Universities' Charter on Lifelong Learning, European University Association (2008).
- 2] Quality Assurance and HEIs' Continuing Education, some principles from European documents:
 - Lifelong Learning should be approached from a strategic institutional perspective
 - Quality Assurance mechanisms for Lifelong Learning activities should be included in the institutional quality culture
 - Quality Assurance for HEIs continuing education should be part of the institutional quality culture

QACEP Exploitation of results

In the way to exploit the use of the products that will be developed during the project:

- a short Manual will be published (September 2011)
- a European Seminar will be organised (September 2011)

WWW.QACEP.EU

