

**Template QACEP – example of questionnaire that can be used by Higher Education Institutions to present a general state of the art with regard to its Continuing Education Programmes and the quality assurance system in place**

### Introduction – QACEP project Analysis Stage

The objective of the QACEP project Analysis Stage<sup>1</sup> was to carry out a comparative analysis within the Consortium<sup>2</sup> of the project to establish a common understanding amongst all partners about the definition and main characteristics of their Continuing Education Programmes, about quality assurance and its procedures and finally to identify the main commonalities and differences with regard to quality assurance of Continuing Education Programmes.

The analysis (carried out during November 2009 – May 2010) was based on the pre-studies turned in by the six HEIs that are member of the Consortium. These pre-studies were based on a **template that has been designed to this aim** and that included concrete questions on the topics to be addressed.

Using a template had different advantages:

- it guaranteed that the information provided by the different universities touched the topics that were essential with regard to the scope of the analysis
- secondly, it resulted in a set of information that was mutually comparable
- finally, it unintentionally resulted in an instrument that can also be used by institutions outside the Consortium to present a general state of the art with regard to its CEPs and the quality assurance system in place.

The items addressed included a general introduction to the university/institute, the identification of continuing education within the institution, the identification of procedures with regard to the design of the CEPs, the identification of quality assessment procedures, a SWOT analysis and finally the description of some good practices.

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<sup>1</sup> QACEP - Quality Assurance for HEIs' Continuing Education Programmes [www.qacep.eu](http://www.qacep.eu)

<sup>2</sup>QACEP is a two year project started in October 2009 and carried out by a Consortium composed of eight institutions, six HEIs, University of Bologna - IT, Aalto University, School of Science and Technology, Lifelong Learning Institute Dipoli – FI, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven – BE, Institute for Lifelong Learning of the University of Barcelona – ES, University College of Cork – IE, University of Warsaw – PL, and two associations representing a large number of other HEIs, Inter-University Consortium AlmaLaurea – IT, Coimbra Group.

The pre-studies were analysed by one partner. The results of the comparative analysis were discussed during a workshop in which each partner took part. Based on the first analysis, the feedback and discussion within the workshop, a report was written and submitted to all partners before it was finished.

➤ **QACEP Comparative analysis report** is available in QACEP project web site [www.qacep.eu](http://www.qacep.eu).

The template contains six parts:

1. General description of the university / institute.  
General questions which need to give us an idea of the educational context as well as the quality assurance context in your university and your country.
2. Identification of continuing education within the partner university.  
Part two focuses on continuing education. What is its importance, role and place and how is it concretely implemented in your university.
3. Identification of planning and set-up procedures for continuing education programmes (programme management).
4. Identification of quality assessment procedures for continuing education programmes (quality management).
5. SWOT analysis of quality assurance of continuing education programmes.
6. Good practices of quality assurance.

In part three and four a distinction is made between programme management (3.) and quality management (4.). While both 3 and 4 are referring to quality assurance procedures as a whole, 4 refers to quality assurance in the narrow sense, i.e. quality assessment and follow-up.

The basis for this distinction is the PDCA cycle, containing four phases which we think are crucial for quality assurance:

- Plan (educational concept)
- Do (implementation of teaching)
- Check (quality assessment)
- Act (follow-up)

The questions in part 3 concern the Plan and Do stadium of the quality assurance procedures (= the planning and set-up of continuing education programmes) while those in part 4 refer to the Check and Act stadium of the procedures (= once the programmes are running).

## Template QACEP

**Name of your institution:**

**This questionnaire has been completed by:**

- Name:  
Function:
- Name:  
Function:

### 1. General description of the university / institute.

- 1.1. Describe the educational context/system of your university, e.g. which programmes you organise, what is the context in the broad offer of education (national, regional, ...)?
- 1.2. Describe the quality assurance system in your university / institute in a general way, as well as the philosophy behind this system.
- 1.3. Is there a legal framework for quality assurance? Explain.

### 2. Identification of continuing education within the partner universities / institutes.

- 2.1. Describe the Life Long Learning strategy at your university.
- 2.2. Give your definition of '**continuing education**'. In order to clarify the definition, it is also useful to describe explicitly what it is not.
- 2.3. Is there a legal framework concerning continuing education in your country and/or region? If yes, please explain.
- 2.4. Describe the regulation of continuing education within your institution.
- 2.5. Describe the current role of continuing education in your country and institution
- 2.6. Describe the local context/market of continuing education.
- 2.7. Describe the future role of continuing education in your country and institution
- 2.8. How is the funding of continuing education in general organised in your institution?
- 2.9. What are the different types of continuing education your institution offers? Is there a structure/classification of these types? If yes, please describe the criteria for this structure/classification.
- 2.10. Describe the characteristics of these different types of continuing education (CE).

	Type 1 of CE	Type 2 of CE	Type 3 of CE	...
Size*				
Certification*				
Admission requirements*				
Target group				
Funding*				
Credits*				
Exam regulations				
Quality Assurance				
Number of concrete different activities per type of CE				

\* Mandatory fields

2.11. What percentage (estimation) of these programmes is organised:

- through only distance education (online or e-learning):  
and explain your interpretation of distance education
- through only traditional education (classroom education):
- through a combination of distance and traditional education (blended):

2.12. What percentage (estimation) of these programmes is organised:

- for minimum Bachelor's degree:
- for minimum Master's degree:
- no qualification necessary:

2.13. What percentage (estimation) of these programmes is organised:

- in evening and/or weekend classes:
- in a company or in a professional environment (= outside university)
- in the institute/university

2.14. In which study domain or faculty lies the focus of continuing education? Which study areas have a rather small offer of continuing education? Explain, if possible.

	study domain or faculty	study domain or faculty	study domain or faculty	...	Total
Type of CE					
Number of students					
Type of CE					
Number of students					
Type of CE					
Number of students					
<b>Total number of CE</b>					
Total number of students					

2.15. What is the share of students participating in continuing education in relation to the total number of students?

2.16. Give your definition of ‘**continuing education programmes**’. In order to clarify the definition, it is also useful to describe explicitly what is not considered continuing education.

### 3. Identification of planning and set-up procedures for continuing education programmes (programme management).

3.1. With regard to the **initiative** to organise a continuing education programme:

3.1.1. Who takes the initiative (idea) of offering a continuing education programme?

3.1.2. How do you determine the need?

3.1.3. Which institutional unit(s), stakeholders (both internal and external) or other persons determine the target group, the conditions, the curriculum, ....?

3.1.4. How do you monitor the reasons for opting for a continuing education programme (as opposed to something else, e.g. master)?

3.2. With regard to the **decision** to organise a continuing education programme:

3.2.1. Which institutional unit(s), (internal and external) stakeholders or other persons are involved in the decision whether or not an idea for continuing education will be implemented?

3.2.1.1. *At which level the decision is taken?*

3.2.1.2. *Are there specific procedures that the decision makers need to respect?*

3.2.1.3. *Is there a formal approval?*

3.2.2. Is there a procedure to be followed in order to organise a continuing education programme? Define the responsibilities. Provide examples of the documents that are required.

3.2.2.1. *Is there an application form to be completed?*

3.2.2.2. *What are the main subjects / different elements in this report / these documents?*

3.2.2.3. *Are these documents (report) being evaluated and/or approved? By whom and on which terms / conditions / criteria?*

3.3. With regard to the **design** of a continuing education programme:

3.3.1. Who is responsible for the concrete design of the programme?

3.3.2. How is the academic level and the involvement of the professional field assured during the entire process?

3.3.2.1. *How do you define academic level?*

3.3.2.2. *How do you monitor the academic level?*

3.3.2.3. *Who is responsible for the selection of students of the programmes and how is this organised?*

3.3.2.4. *How is prior learning involved in continuing education programmes?*

3.3.2.5. *How are students evaluated?*

3.3.2.6. *How do you involve the professional field in the process? For example as stakeholders, teachers, work placement (stage), hosts, ...*

3.3.2.7. *How do you monitor 'involvement of the professional field'?*

3.4. About the **promotion and marketing** of a continuing education programme:

3.4.1. Who is responsible for the promotion of the programmes and how is this organised?

3.4.2. How is fundraising organised inside and outside the university?

3.5. About the **support** in the planning and set-up of a continuing education programme:

3.5.1. Do the organisers of continuing education programmes have any kind of support from other institutional units, departments, services or external institutions? How is this organised?

#### **4. Identification of quality assessment procedures for continuing education programmes (quality management).**

*Part 4 does not ask for the evaluation of one particular programme, but is more generally about evaluation procedures for continuing education programmes.*

- 4.1. Who or which official body/authority is responsible for the quality (management) of the continuing education programme? What are their main responsibilities?
- 4.2. Which stakeholders are structurally involved in the quality management ?
- 4.3. Are the continuing education programmes being evaluated (internally and/or externally)? Please explain the quality assessment procedures. Make a clear distinction between internal and external procedures if applicable.
  - 4.3.1. Who is responsible for the evaluation? Who takes the initiative?
  - 4.3.2. Which topics are addressed in the evaluation?
  - 4.3.3. Which stakeholders (incl. participants) are being questioned in the evaluation?
  - 4.3.4. How often are they evaluated?
  - 4.3.5. Is there a follow-up of the evaluation? How is this organised and by whom?

#### **5. SWOT analysis of quality assurance of continuing education programmes.**

- 5.1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the quality assurance approach with regard to continuing education programmes within your institution?
- 5.2. What are the main opportunities and threats your institute is facing concerning quality assurance of continuing education programmes?

#### **6. Good practices of quality assurance.**

- 6.1. Define one or two concrete examples of good practice in quality assurance (of continuing education programmes or something else that could be applicable).

Define the approach, the work methodologies and concrete tools. Provide examples of the documents.