



# **Quality in internationalisation, the password for the future**

**Edited by  
Simon B Heath**

**Proceedings of the 8th European Conference for International  
Relations Officers at higher education institutions for  
agricultural and related sciences**

**Held at the University of Debrecen, Centre of Agricultural  
Sciences  
June 10 – 13, 2004**

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## Preface

The 8th European Conference for International Relations Officers at higher education institutions for agricultural and related sciences was hosted by the University of Debrecen, Centre of Agricultural Sciences. Tünde Csapóné Riskó, from the International Relations Office, was the local organiser and the Conference was planned by the Executive Committee of IROICA – *the European Network of International Relations Officers at Higher Education Institutions for Agricultural and Related Sciences*.

Earlier IROICA conferences have focused on internationalisation within Europe, between continents and at home. This Conference focused on how to enhance the quality of a higher education institution's mission in internationalisation.

Irene Müller places quality assurance within higher education institutions in the context of the Bologna process and outlines the approach to quality audit of internationalisation as developed by IROICA. Brian Dennis gives a specific example of this audit process and indicative outcomes for the exercise conducted at the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University (KVL), Copenhagen. Jan Hoekstra details the IROICA audit process. Although this paper was not presented at the Conference it is included here to give colleagues an explicit overview of the IROICA Audit Process in the expectation that other institutions will follow the examples set by the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences (BOKU), Vienna and KVL.

An audit will result in an action plan for enhancing internationalisation within an institution. One such plan and its implementation for the Hanze University of Groningen is outlined by Els van der Werf. Paul Ryan describes the Tuning Project which has been developed to implement the Bologna Process at the department level within higher education institutions. This project is helping institutions to cooperate in developing an international approach to the delivery of their degree programmes.

In addition to these papers, Bruno Salmon-Legagneur, *Ecole Supérieure d'Agriculture d'Angers*, reported on a survey conducted by Silvia Chancelier of the level of internationalisation of European universities in agricultural and related sciences. Universities from 21 countries responded to the questionnaires and the results can be viewed at the Web site for the Conference at [www.teiher.gr/iroica](http://www.teiher.gr/iroica) and following the link to "activities".

IROICA has been partner in the Socrates Thematic Network for Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture and the Environment (AFANet, [www.afanet.info](http://www.afanet.info) ) over the past eight years. IROICA has played an important role in supporting AFANet in developing a European dimension to teaching and learning, both by helping to define the meaning of a European dimension and in disseminating the outcomes of the Network. We trust that IROICA's approach to quality audit will assist our partner institutions in ICA (Interuniversity Consortium for Agricultural and Related Sciences in Europe) to further enhance their commitment to internationalisation and the development of the European Higher Education Area.

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# Quality in internationalisation

Irene Müller

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## 1 Introduction

Education in general and higher education in particular was not the subject of a common European policy during the early years of the European Community, which focused on economic issues. However, with the ongoing desire to strengthen the European Community, against the background of the gradual and often hesitant growing together of Europe, it was recognised that this development could not happen solely via economic channels but that education and research were vital elements in this process. In 1992, Article 126 of the Treaty of Maastricht (Treaty on the European Union) postulated that

“The Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity.”

So, since the early 90s, the official European Union documents acknowledged the importance of education as a vital factor in the process of Europeanisation. However, **the European Community has always seen its role as a complementary one**: to add a European dimension to education, to help to develop quality education and to encourage life-long learning – without inflicting any pressure for harmonisation. All the recent European summits (from Lisbon 2000 on) have underlined the contribution of education in setting up the **European knowledge society**.

Obviously, numerous activities have been going on at European institutions of higher education focusing on this major goal, to create among the younger generations a stronger awareness for our common European heritage, for the cultural and political diversity, and to lead them on a path towards a common “philosophy of Europe”.

Within this framework higher education institutions have started to develop a completely new facet to their traditional teaching and research activities, they have added a European or international component. What had been done on a haphazard and volatile basis before became a well-structured process, new positions were created within the institutions and new funding mechanisms supported this development. In fact, over the last 10 to 15 years, internationalisation and Europeanisation of higher education gained a momentum that had been unimaginable in earlier periods.

At the political level this development was accelerated even more by the signing of the Sorbonne Declaration in 1998 and of the Bologna Declaration one year later. The Bologna Declaration has had an incredible effect on restructuring European higher education. As part of this so-called “Bologna-process” quality and quality assurance has gradually gained importance. We are now in a phase where both national and international education are no longer imaginable without a strong emphasis on the formal assurance of quality.

I would like to summarise some of the essential cornerstones of the Bologna Process because it helps us to understand how quality issues gradually gained momentum in the internationalisation process of higher education.

## **2 From Bologna to Berlin**

### *Bologna Declaration*

In the wake of the Sorbonne Declaration of 1998 the **Bologna Declaration on the creation of a European space for higher education** is a pledge taken by 29 countries to reform the structures of their own higher education system in such a way that overall convergence emerges from the process at the European level. This Declaration is not just a political statement, it rather sets out an action programme for which it defines the key aspects:

- A clearly defined common goal – the creation of a coherent European Higher Education Area, as a means to foster employability, mobility and the international competitiveness
- A realistic deadline – this European Higher Education Area should be completed within a decade
- A set of specified objectives
  - the design of a common framework of reference of easily readable and comparable degrees
  - the adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles, undergraduate and graduate
  - the generalization of ECTS-compatible credit systems

- a European dimension in quality assurance
- the elimination of remaining obstacles to the mobility of students, teachers and graduates
- an organized follow-up and implementation structure and process

In fact the process launched by this Declaration means structural change – nothing less than a reform of national educational systems including curricular and institutional structures. The follow-up structures put in place have been extremely effective – most signatory countries have set up their own Bologna follow-up groups. The country reports published for the Berlin Conference last autumn show that numerous initiatives have been undertaken and that we are really well on the way towards a European Higher Education Area.

### *Prague Conference*

The 2001 Prague Conference reaffirmed the main objectives of the Bologna Declaration, putting already a strong emphasis on the vital role that quality and quality assurance systems play in ensuring high quality standards and in facilitating the comparability of qualifications throughout Europe.

Universities and other higher education institutions were encouraged to disseminate examples of best practice and to design scenarios for mutual acceptance of evaluation and accreditation/certification mechanisms. Ministers called upon national agencies and the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) to collaborate in establishing a common framework of reference and to disseminate best practice.

### *Berlin Declaration*

It was at the **Berlin Conference** of Ministers responsible for higher education in September 2003 that a general stocktaking of the level of realisation of all Bologna goals was undertaken. In their Declaration the

“Ministers emphasize the importance of all elements of the Bologna Process for establishing the European Higher Education Area and stress the need to intensify the efforts at institutional, national and European level. However, to give the Process further momentum, they commit themselves to intermediate priorities for the next two years. **They will strengthen their efforts to promote effective quality assurance systems**, to step up effective use of the system based on two cycles and to improve the recognition system of degrees and periods of studies.”

It had become evident that the quality of higher education was at the heart of the setting up of a European Higher Education Area. Therefore the Ministers agreed on

four principles, which should be incorporated into national quality assurance systems by 2005:

- the responsibilities of the bodies and institutions involved should be clearly defined
- the evaluation of programmes or institutions, including internal assessment, external review, participation of students and the publication of results, should be systematically introduced
- a reliable system of accreditation, certification or comparable procedures should be practised
- international participation, co-operation and networking should become the rule of activities of national quality assurance bodies

At the European level, the Ministers called upon ENQA to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance, to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system for quality assurance and/or accreditation agencies or bodies.

Evidently, the Bologna Process puts a strong emphasis on quality in higher education in general and it is self-evident that this implies that quality issues have to be strongly taken into account also in the field of internationalisation of higher education.

### **3 Quality and internationalisation of higher education**

What is the relation between quality and internationalisation, are these two terms strongly interwoven, do they co-exist, or are they seen as different categories that do not interfere with each other at all?

We all know that internationalisation at higher education institutions covers a wide spectrum, from mobility programmes to joint curricula, activities of internationalisation at home to international research cooperation.

The first mobility programmes – ERASMUS, COMETT and TEMPUS were launched already in the late 80s and since those years, international student exchange has become the most typical scenario for international educational cooperation. The late 80s and the early 90s were dominated by passionate efforts to increase the number of students participating in mobility schemes, the number of cooperation agreements and the number of months that students studied abroad. Major attention was paid to quantitative rather than to qualitative aspects, the important thing was to be international no matter with whom. I suggest that quality considerations played a minor role in those days.

Only gradually has the question of quality in international cooperation become an issue. With the first introduction of internationalisation strategies by universities it became evident that it was not enough to set up nice Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) or exchange agreements without paying attention to the level of quality of the various exchange mechanisms. At the same time, new types of international activities such as double-degree programmes, gradually started to develop and the question of quality became even more of an issue.

With the growing mobility of students quality also became a selection criterion influencing the students' decision where to study – from comparability to compatibility! We can say that quality awareness has been a steadily growing element in university life during recent years and it has affected all aspects, not least internationalisation.

It is certainly legitimate to use Bernd Waechter's distinction between "Old internationalisation" with its main concern on the mobility of students and scholars and "New internationalisation" which deals with joint international efforts related to structural and regulatory issues of higher education systems such as quality assurance, lifelong learning and online education.

If we agree that quality is an issue in the internationalisation process, we then have to ask ourselves, how can it be appraised and what type of quality criteria can be applied?

I want to give you a brief overview about the general development of quality assurance mechanisms before entering into details on concrete experiences in our field.

#### **4 Quality assurance at higher education institutions**

As mentioned before, the Bologna process has done a lot to stimulate the awareness for the need of a quality culture regime in higher education. As a matter of fact, there has always been different speeds in the implementation of quality assurance systems all over Europe. While some countries had a very long tradition with evaluation and accreditation procedures (especially the UK, partly the Scandinavian countries, all Central-Eastern European countries after the fall of the Iron Curtain), others were more hesitant in their approach towards institutionalised quality control measures.

Hardly any other area in our national life is more sensitive towards bureaucratic obstacles or infringements of autonomy than the University sector. There is a deep seated fear that educational pluralism, innovation and competition might be

endangered by quality assurance mechanisms which tend to insinuate standardisation and homogeneity.

Nevertheless, nowadays it is generally accepted that quality assurance and quality enhancement are necessary. The former to assuage the fears of the funding institutions that money might be wasted. The latter because the search for excellence, an intrinsic element of every university strategy, can much more easily be achieved if a quality framework is in place. Still, the relevant procedures are many and various, and their rigour varies greatly.

With the transformation of more and more European universities into independent self-governing institutions, a change in philosophy of university management gains momentum - from bureaucratic institution to entrepreneurial university. With a leadership structure that is borrowed from the corporate world, with a clear output orientation and with the obligation to negotiate performance contracts with the Ministry, quality and quality assurance become foremost issues. As performance contracts usually serve as planning and management tools, clear performance indicators are needed in order to draw up the budgets (e.g. number of publications, impact factors, annual student numbers, costs per student, also number of international students, international partnerships, joint programmes). A special impact of becoming entrepreneurial is the increase of competitiveness, with the growing comparability of higher education institutions students will tend to pick those institutions that have the best reputation – quality wise. Consequently a high student intake is a clear indicator for high quality; likewise, a high percentage of foreign students is a signal for a good performance of an institution! Here we have the direct link to quality of internationalisation.

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At this stage, I would like to insert a short remark on the situation at Fachhochschulen, the second type of tertiary education institutions, which I belong to now: especially in Austria. These “Universities of Applied Sciences” have a flexible orientation towards the needs of the job market. They offer Bachelor-Master-programmes with a strong practically oriented focus which is reflected in their curricula. In most cases, a mandatory career-oriented practical training unit (job-based internship) is included. Due to their closer link to industry and the needs of society, accreditation and evaluation have always been an issue in this system. Every degree programme at a university of applied science has to undergo a severe evaluation at the end of its duration and its positive completion is the prerequisite for re-accreditation.

\*\*\*

What is now the present situation regarding institutionalised quality assurance in Europe?

The comprehensive survey “Quality procedures in European Higher Education” done by Christian Thune, Chairman of ENQA, in 2003<sup>1</sup>, provides an excellent overview about the general situation of quality assurance as well as the existing quality assurance concepts in Europe. The following details are largely taken from this report.

On 24 September 1998 the European Council published a **Recommendation on European Cooperation in Quality Assurance in Higher Education** in which it suggests that member states establish quality assurance systems for higher education. These systems should be based on certain characteristics identified as common to quality assurance systems, including

- the creation of an autonomous body for quality assurance
- targeted utilisation of internal and/or external aspects of quality assurance
- the involvement of various stakeholders
- the publication of results.

By now, in most European countries autonomous quality assurance agencies have been established at a national or regional level. There are agencies for the university sector and for the non-university sector, and in some countries the agencies cover both sectors.

Their main functions are

1. quality improvement, quality assurance in a traditional sense – most common function
2. disseminating knowledge and information – very important because good transparency on higher education quality is an essential condition for good employment prospects and international competitiveness of individuals
3. accreditation - quite often also the function of agencies

What is the difference between evaluation and accreditation?

Evaluation is often used as a general term for the procedure of quality assurance; in a stricter sense evaluation is a special method with different focal points such as subject, programme, institutions and theme.

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<sup>1</sup> Thune C (2003) Quality procedures in European higher education. ENQA Occasional paper no 5. European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2003, Helsinki

- **Subject:** focuses on the quality of one specific subject, typically in all the programmes in which this subject is taught
- **Programme:** focuses on the activities within a study programme (studies leading to a degree)
- **Institution:** examines the quality of all activities within an institution – organization, financial matters, management, facilities, teaching and research
- **Theme:** examines the quality or practice of a specific theme within education e.g. information communication technology (ICT)

Accreditation, on the other hand, is usually considered to follow from evaluation. It is the final formal decision following an evaluation procedure. There is a certain danger however that, while evaluation mainly aims at quality improvement, accreditation may cause this improvement function to suffer as every institution will first aim at obtaining accreditation.

Both procedures include the same methodological element, the so-called four-stage model of quality assurance which had been introduced already in 1995 as the methodological framework of the European Pilot Projects in Quality Assurance and is nowadays the shared foundation of European quality assurance:

- creation of an autonomous body for quality assurance
- internal self-evaluation
- external assessment by a peer-review group and site visits
- publication of a report

As has been mentioned before, most European countries have set up accreditation agencies by now, and it was only natural that a **European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education** would be established in order to achieve mutual recognition of accreditation decisions among the participating countries. Its main focus lies on

- cycles and levels
- qualification descriptors (the so-called Dublin descriptors have been developed in order to define generic competences for the Bachelor and Master's level. They are now widely accepted and used as reference points in national legislations and accreditation frameworks)
- credits – ECTS is widely used for describing workload and course units
- access requirements – will vary considerably within the national contexts
- progression – movement possibilities from one programme/cycle to another
- diploma supplement – all graduates should receive it free of charge by 2005
- recognition – if a qualification is not formally recognised by national higher education system it should not be part of a European qualifications framework



After these more theoretical reflections on the position of quality assurance at higher education institutions I now want to focus on the central question, how can quality be assured and guaranteed in the internationalisation process of a higher education institution?

There are two possibilities: if an institution undergoes a systematic and overall evaluation process, the status of its internationalisation will be one important aspect. This is for example the case at Austrian Universities of Applied Sciences which are evaluated every 5 years and this institutional evaluation is the pre-condition for the re-accreditation of its programmes. A similar procedure is applied in The Netherlands. In other countries quality audits of higher education institutions are still rather a voluntary exercise, programme accreditation is done by the responsible Ministry and only gradually do regular quality audits find their way into normal university life. This is likely to change dramatically with the fact that most European countries have now established accreditation agencies and that the Berlin Conference proposed the introduction of national quality assurance systems by 2005.

The second possibility is a special audit of the international activities and internationalisation strategy of an institution. There has been an exercise of this type launched by CRE, the European Rectors' Conference, the predecessor of today's European Universities Association (EUA). Although it was an institutional evaluation, it had a strong focus on the international performance of the institution.

During my former life at University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences (BOKU) Vienna and during my involvement in IROICA I had the opportunity to discuss the usefulness of such evaluations with one of the fathers of this method, Professor John Davies. As a result, the idea was born to develop a special type of evaluation which should assess the level of international performance of institutions, tailor-made to the needs of higher education institutions for agricultural and related sciences. A number of IROICA members have been involved in the two exercises that took place during the past years.

## **5 International strategies and international quality audit**

In the framework of the Socrates Thematic Network for Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture and the Environment (AFANet), of which IROICA is an active participant, a core group responsible for international relations together with two external experts developed an innovative type of quality assessment especially focused on internationalisation.

The first exercise was organised at and by BOKU in May 2001. We wanted to find out whether our internationalisation strategy was consistent and whether our efforts in this respect were on the right track. We followed the traditional scheme of evaluations starting with a self-evaluation report, followed by a site visit of external experts, finally publication of the evaluation report. The special situation lay in the fact that the two external experts, Professor. John Davies and Roger Field guided a team of evaluators – vice-rectors and directors of international offices from all over Europe. This team was first familiarised with basic principles of systematic internationalisation strategies and with the development of a strategic audit framework for assessing one particular internationalisation strategy. Secondly they then had to apply these principles on the model case that was to be evaluated, namely BOKU. It was a very ambitious undertaking, the colleagues worked hard and the outcomes were extremely beneficial both for BOKU and for the participants. I had the honour to organize this event and unfortunately was not involved in the follow-up process at BOKU since I left BOKU at the end of 2001. Nevertheless, of course I stayed in touch with my former *alma mater* and thus can provide you with some positive feedback on how BOKU made use of the evaluation results.

All basic findings and recommendations were introduced into an action plan and clear objectives, steps to be taken as well as ways to measure the achievement of objectives were formulated. I can say that after two years quite a few improvements can be noticed. Indeed, the fact that the Centre for International Relations has survived all the restructuring processes at BOKU during the last year is certainly partly due to the fact that a clear consolidated concept has been put in place and a consistent set of measures guarantee the realisation of an agreed internationalisation strategy.

A similar exercise took place in spring of 2003 at the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University (KVL), Copenhagen –see paper by Brian Dennis in these proceedings. KVL followed the same procedure as for BOKU. I am sure that the output has been similarly beneficial for our colleagues in Denmark.

Hoekstra in a later chapter describes the audit process in detail. The following documents were the essential ingredients:

\* **Questionnaires** for the host institution

\* **Self-evaluation report** of the institution to be assessed – enough time has to be allocated to this activity, lots of sessions, good organisational framework – who collects data etc.

**\*Questionnaires** for the members of the Team of Evaluators regarding their own institution

- short analysis of their own institution, containing basic data on organisation, importance of internationalisation, importance of quality management;
- SWOT questionnaire related to field of internationalisation
- organisational improvement plan for internationalisation
- by filling-in the questionnaires the evaluators gained their first learning experience and training before the main evaluation exercise at the host institution:

The essential questions that the evaluators focus on are:

Internationalisation Strategy:

- does it exist?
- is it known to all staff members?
- is it implemented?

Teaching:

- number of foreign teachers
- number of incoming-outgoing students, of mobility programmes
- number of lectures in foreign language – with intercultural background
- existence of functioning joint study schemes

Research

- number of international doctoral or post-doc students
- number of international guest researchers
- percentage of outgoing researchers
- memberships in international editorial boards, international associations
- number of accepted project proposals (EU – international projects)
- reputation of staff in the scientific community
- international prizes, awards for researchers

Infrastructure:

- functioning international relations unit –
- ideally one-stop shop for student services – both for outgoing and incoming students
- quality of international marketing

- staff training in international matters: both academic and administrative staff. They should be prepared for the “international classroom” - internationalisation at home

## **6 Conclusion**

”Quality in internationalisation, the password for the future” is the title of this year’s IROICA Conference. I am convinced that quality assurance in internationalisation is a vital part of a university’s quality culture. If quality is neglected either in the organisation of mobility programmes or in the development of joint study schemes, or even in the realisation of internationalisation at home, then the overall quality of an institution will be infringed.

I am completely convinced that the status of internationalisation is a performance indicator for every institution and its level can only be maintained if dedicated professionals look after it permanently. During the last few years there has been a discernable trend by some universities towards a reduction of staff in or even a complete dissolution of international offices. The reasoning behind this change is that once all the obvious elements of internationalisation, such as student mobility and programmes in foreign languages, are in place then the international office has completed its mission and is dispensable. I would like to warn you, this conclusion is very dangerous. Internationalisation in higher education is a very fragile plant and it needs permanent attention. If it is left alone only for a short while, it will dwindle immediately and all the efforts of years are wasted. I want you to bear this in mind, your job is extremely important to safeguard and consolidate the quality of a university’s international profile.

It is certainly one of the functions of the IROICA network to underline the special mission and importance that international officers have in this development towards a consolidated and sustainable quality culture which considers internationalisation as one of its essential ingredients. The choice of this year’s conference motto reflects this awareness very well and I am confident that you will succeed in convincing those responsible in your institutions that quality in internationalisation is indeed the password for the future.

# **Strengthening the international strategy and operations of a university through quality assurance<sup>2</sup>**

**Brian Dennis**

The Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University (KVL), Denmark

## **1 Introduction**

The review of the international strategy and operations of the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University (KVL) took the form of a highly innovative IROICA Workshop (European Network of International Relations Officers at Higher Education Institutions for Agricultural and Related Sciences) targeted for Vice Rectors and Directors of International Affairs of European agricultural universities. The Workshop was focused on the twin related topics of international strategy and international audit, and participants analysed the various issues involved in setting up and refining arrangements in these domains. As part of this process the group undertook an evaluation of KVL's international strategy and operations. In this paper the various phases of the evaluation process are described. Although the main highlights of KVL's self-evaluation and the international audit are given, emphasis is placed on the evaluation process itself rather than on the detailed findings.

## **2 Internationalisation at KVL**

KVL has a long history of international involvement, primarily through its research activities, but in recent years also in the field of education. Prior to 1995, the approach to internationalisation was fragmented and relied on dedicated individuals at sub-department level. This has since been gradually supplemented

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<sup>2</sup> This paper was previously published in *Capitalising on innovation in the curriculum in European higher education, practice and promise in the disciplines of agriculture, forestry, aquaculture and environmental sciences*. Proceedings of the AFANet – ICA Conference 2004. Ed S B Heath, Institut National Polytechnique de Lorraine (INPL), Nancy, France

with an institutional approach and an institutional commitment to internationalisation. A chronological overview of internationalisation at KVL is listed briefly in Table 1.

Today, more than 30% of KVL's students study abroad, and KVL has about 400 international students, from more than 35 countries, on campus in a dynamic international study environment. The university offers 30% of all courses in English and has set up three degree programmes in English (MSc in Agricultural Development, MSc in Parasitology and BSc/MSc in Horticulture) as well as a number of semester packages.

**Table 1: Overview of the development of internationalisation at KVL**

- Prior to 1995: focus on developing countries, ERASMUS networks, personal international research contacts predominant. KVL sets up a Centre for Tropical Agriculture and joins NATURA (Network of European Agricultural Universities and Scientific Complexes Related with Agricultural Development).
- 1995: Start of institutional approach to internationalisation, recognition of need for infrastructure to support internationalisation, first international strategy, first full degree programme in English (Land Use in Developing Countries).
- 1997: Establishment of NOVA (Nordic Forestry, Veterinary and Agricultural University), establishment of the nucleus of an International Secretariat, development of European Policy Statement.
- 1997: Establishment of political committees for International Education and International Strategy. Central pool of seed money set up for internationalisation activities.
- 1998: Implementation of ECTS credit for all study programmes.
- 1998-2001: Development of Strategy 2000, Strategy for Internationalisation, Strategy for Developing Countries. University Performance Contract with Ministry, including internationalisation goals.
- 2000: Implementation of Diploma Supplement.
- 2002: Performance indicators for internationalisation used in biennial budget negotiations between management and departments.

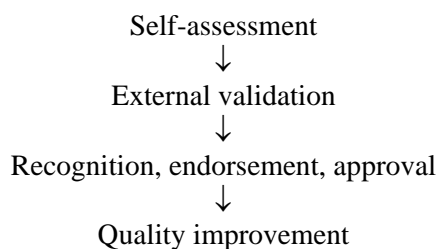
Internationalisation at KVL is characterised today by personal enthusiasm and commitment in many research and education environments, by a strong interest from students as shown by the rise of new international student organisations on campus, and by a strong executive commitment from KVL's central management.

Internationalisation is thus now an integral part of university life at all levels and available to all.

KVL's strategy for internationalisation 2000-2004 describes policy and goals, and covers research, education, international cooperation, management mechanisms and organisation. Subsequently a new university reform has been planned which will necessitate a revision of KVL's internationalisation strategy. An international evaluation was therefore particularly relevant at this time and was expected to provide a valuable indication of whether KVL's internationalisation goals are relevant and realistic, and whether the necessary means to achieve them are available.

### **3 The quality audit process**

The review exercise was based firstly on the preparation by KVL of a self-evaluation report of objectives and practices in the field of international research and development. Secondly, on an external audit of the self-evaluation report by an international evaluation team through discussions with KVL colleagues across the university. This exercise was then followed up at KVL by a process of recognition, approval and endorsement, and subsequently by the implementation of quality improvement. The whole process thus covered the four basic elements:



The audit was designed as a Workshop for Vice-Rectors, Deans and Directors of International Offices in European universities. The detailed management of the Audit and Workshop is described by Hoekstra in a later chapter. The Workshop had two purposes:

- To provide, through the application of various criteria to KVL's international operations, feedback to the institution which should be helpful in its future development.
- To provide a means by which participants in the Workshop could acquire skills in and perspectives on the development of international strategy in agricultural universities which they could subsequently use in their own institutions.

The Workshop was attended by nine participants from Austria, Finland, Germany, Norway, The Netherlands, Spain and Sweden, and was led by two facilitators, Professor John Davis, Anglia Polytechnic University and University of Bath, UK, and Professor Roger Field, Lincoln University, New Zealand.

**Table 2: Main points covered by the self-evaluation process**

**Background information**, covering a brief description of the Danish university system and some key features of the higher education system, and of Governmental policies towards internationalisation in higher education.

**International positioning of KVL**, giving a summary of the history of internationalisation at KVL and provides an overview of its Strategy for the internationalisation of KVL and Strategy for Activities in Relation to Developing Countries, describes KVL's position as an international player.

**The international context**, deals with the question why KVL should internationalise, the challenges, opportunities and threats faced, and identifies the main issues that need to be addressed.

**International activities and programmes**, presents the status for the implementation of the Strategy for Internationalisation and the Strategy for Developing Countries. For education the status covers mobility of students and teachers, policies on language and internationalisation of curricula, credit transfer and academic recognition, the use of information and communication technology. For research the report covers the emphasis placed on internationally attractive research environments, research collaboration and programmes and postgraduate training. The range of collaborative agreements is also assessed.

**Support mechanisms for internationalisation**, deals with the organisation of internationalisation at KVL, including the political support structure, the administrative support at central and departmental levels, the financial support structure, including sources and resource allocation principles, and personnel policy and staff recruitment in relation to internationalisation. The report describes and reflects on initiatives taken as well as barriers to internationalisation within KVL's structure.

**Strategic development of internationalisation**, covers the main conclusions of the self-evaluation process.

### *Self evaluation phase*

The self-evaluation carried out by KVL was a critical analysis of the institution's performance and achievements in the field of internationalisation, and involved a wide range of staff across the university together with students. The process was



coordinated by a working group comprising four faculty members, a student representative and members of KVL's International Secretariat.

As part of the work, KVL departments, collegiate committees, student organisations and the central administration were invited to comment on a number of questions formulated in relation to a draft version of the self-evaluation report as well as on their awareness of KVL's internationalisation strategy.

The self-evaluation process took approximately three months and the cross-university hearing phase a further month. The self-evaluation covered the major topics shown in Table 2.

### ***External validation phase***

External validation of KVL's self assessment was carried out by the Workshop participants during a five-day site visit in April 2003. In the first stage of the Workshop the participants considered the nature and scope of international strategy in general. Then, on the basis of the self-evaluation report, the team then split into three investigatory groups for education, research and support services. The overall tasks of the groups were to examine:

- the goals for internationalisation of KVL in its strategic setting, whether they were clearly formulated and the contribution of internationalisation to the broader development of the institution
- how these goals are translated into the institutions curriculum, research and public services
- whether the institution is providing the necessary support and infrastructure for successful internationalisation, and whether its internal structures and processes are adequate for the intended purposes
- how KVL monitors its internationalisation efforts
- the institution's capacity to change, and its autonomy in order to improve its international efforts
- the adequacy of its diagnosis and proposals for change and improvement

Each group prepared detailed questions for KVL interviewees, conducted interviews, and distilled conclusions and recommendations. Each of the three groups met with two groups of staff and students from various parts of KVL. This approach provided an effective basis for sampling a very good cross section of KVL personnel. The discussions were constructive and yielded much in the way of confirmation of the self-evaluation findings but also unearthed several additional dimensions.

**Table 3. Key aspects highlighted by the quality audit**

<p><b>Development of rigorous quality regime</b> for education, research and administration, systematic connection between quality review and staff development and planning, improved internal transmission of evaluative information, development of quality guidelines for in- and outgoing students and staff.</p> <p><b>Development of incentive structures</b> to support the internationalisation strategy and university-wide priorities, continuing refinement of performance indicators, linking performance indicators to policy level, more transparent incentive structure.</p> <p><b>Movement to critical mass</b> in teaching and research environments by expansion on existing trajectories, by adding related disciplines to the core of KVL, by consummating and strengthening existing and new partnerships, by selecting interdisciplinary research topics to embrace a wide staff group, by focussing Ph.D.'s, post doctoral positions and visiting professors in these areas, by close accountability for subsequent performance.</p> <p><b>Fine-tuning organisational structures</b> and processes, combining functions of policy development, quality assurances, audit and enhancement, validation of agreements, streamlining international committees, increasing focus on globalisation, commercialisation and strategic partnerships.</p> <p><b>Sharpening of partnership policy</b>, more selective policy and practice in terms of existing research and education, KVL's globalisation agenda, need to develop newer interdisciplinary areas for which KVL does not possess a sufficiently broad profile, need for partnerships with non-agriculturally related universities, e.g. business schools.</p> <p><b>Linking staff policy to internationalisation</b>, improved incentives and support structures, design and operation of effective study leave/sabbatical policy, development of training and staff development opportunities to support internationalisation.</p> <p><b>Future image and public identity</b>, possible re-branding of image and identity nationally to match international profile, strengthening KVL's provision within Denmark and Scandinavia.</p> <p><b>English language dimension</b>, monitoring quality of teaching, monitoring impact on assessment practices and standards, monitoring dynamic of classes taught in English, provision of incentives and support for converting courses into English, staff development.</p>
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Each of the review teams compiled a verbal report which was presented to the Rector and his colleagues for comment and discussion, which clarified and

extended various issues. A written report was subsequently completed and presented to KVL in June 2003. The main findings of the review report are listed as keywords in Table 3.

### ***Follow-up initiatives***

The international review of KVL's strategy and operations was followed by a phase of recognition, endorsement and approval in which the findings of the visiting group were analysed in terms of their feasibility, possibility for change and priority. This analytical phase was subsequently followed by an implementation phase in which the actions listed in Table 4 were begun.

**Table 4. KVL's follow-up quality improvement initiatives**

<p>1) Working groups set up to formulate action plans for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Language policy</li><li>Support structure for student mobility</li><li>Student recruitment</li><li>Staff mobility</li></ul>
<p>2) Veterinary Task Force set up to look into accreditation and student recruitment</p>
<p>3) International secretariat is working on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Outgoing student mobility</li><li>Organisation of internationalisation</li></ul>
<p>4) KVL's new International Committee is working on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Development of international goals and strategic initiatives</li><li>Ensuring information and ownership of international strategy</li><li>Development and strengthening quality assurance</li></ul>

The next steps will be an evaluation of political and financial aspects of the action plans being developed and a revision of KVL's Internationalisation Strategy. The performance contracts being introduced with departments will include internationalisation goals, and KVL's internationalisation goals will now be revised in KVL's overall Strategy and in the institution's Development Contract with the Ministry of Science.

## **4 Concluding remarks**

The IROICA quality audit concept combines the twin related topics of international strategy and international audit. By evaluating KVL's international strategy and

operations, participants in the IROICA Workshop acquired skills in the development of international strategies which they could subsequently use in their own institutions. At the same time KVL received feedback which could be used to formulate and prioritise action plans for improving the quality of its international operations. This relatively inexpensive Workshop concept has proved highly successful in the case of KVL and could be applicable for a wide range of institutions. The audit confirmed the directions KVL has posed for itself and identified a number of key areas for improvement. The audit will undoubtedly contribute significantly to KVL's international development and standing.

The process has underlined the importance of the self-evaluation phase and of involving a wide range of staff and students across the university. Both the process and the findings have demonstrated the importance of developing and maintaining cross-university ownership of the institutions internationalisation strategy on which subsequent quality improvement initiatives will rely. The success of internationalisation at KVL will however depend ultimately not on incentive schemes, marketing strategies, support structures and the like but on the continued enthusiastic efforts by both staff and students to provide a truly international academic environment.

### ***Background information***

*Strategy for the Internationalisation of KVL:*

[www.adm.kvl.dk/english/about/index.htm](http://www.adm.kvl.dk/english/about/index.htm)

*Strategy for Activities in Relation to Developing Countries 2002-2006:*

[www.studieforvaltning.kvl.dk/english/development](http://www.studieforvaltning.kvl.dk/english/development)

## **Implementing an international dimension in higher education degree programmes: policy and practice**

**Els van der Werf**

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The start of the internationalisation process in European higher education can be characterized as follows:

- it was dominated by the EU mobility programmes
- initiatives for institutional collaboration largely depended on the initiatives taken by a relatively small number of individuals, usually teaching staff
- the involvement of the management and the support of the administrative staff was usually modest
- plans were made and decisions were taken on an *ad hoc* basis and there was either no institutional policy on internationalisation, or it was in the process of development

Since then, a lot has changed. Internationalisation is here to stay and most higher education institutions now have an institutional policy on internationalisation. Such a policy encompasses areas such as the mobility of students and staff, recruitment of students, teaching of foreign languages and teaching in another language than the mother tongue, and the development of an international dimension in the programmes of non-mobile students.

The importance of “internationalisation at home” has increased since we have come to realise that physical mobility will almost certainly remain limited to a relatively small group of higher education students and staff. We have come to recognise the importance of the “mental mobility” of students and staff as a worthy alternative.

My own institution, Hanze University Groningen, a university of professional education, went through an internationalisation process which was very similar to that of most higher education institutions in Europe. We have had our fair share of ups and downs. However, in 2002, some 15 years after the start of the internationalisation process, three strategic policy decisions were taken, which

have had considerable consequences for the departments, the students, and the staff working in international relations. These were:

- Hanze University Groningen wants to strengthen the international dimension of all its degree programmes in order to improve the quality of education for the home (mostly Dutch) students,
- Hanze University Groningen wants to become more attractive for foreign students by increasing the number of programmes or parts of programmes taught in English,
- Attracting foreign students is not an aim in itself; the presence of foreign students is desirable, provided there is a 'healthy' mix of nationalities, to improve the quality of education.

The order in which I have listed these policy decisions is not arbitrary. It reflects the importance of each of the objectives. In contrast to the many higher education institutions in The Netherlands that had become infected by the recruitment virus, and had invested heavily in attracting foreign students from all over the world, Hanze University Groningen decided to focus on the internationalisation process of its traditional student body. The heads of all departments were given the assignment to make sure that all study programmes would have a clearly defined and recognisable international dimension, in line with the programme's professional profile.

How do you implement such a uniform policy in a university that offers degree programmes in a wide variety of fields? Where do you start? How do you support such a process? And how do you monitor that the institutional policy leads to concrete actions and improvements at departmental level?

The International Relations Office of Hanze University Groningen started by carrying out an institution-wide survey, with the aim of gaining a clear picture of the current state of affairs with regard to the international dimension in each of the degree programmes. The survey was done on the basis of a questionnaire with questions on:

- the professional and programme profile
- the curriculum
- study periods and practical training periods abroad
- international programmes (i.e. programmes taught in English)
- policy and objectives
- personnel

The questionnaire was not sent to the departments, but was completed by the Account Manager for internationalisation during an interview with each head of department. Since each department offers two to three degree programmes, the

survey thus provided us with information both at a departmental and at a degree programme level. On the basis of each interview a brief report was written, which was sent to the department head for comments and approval.

On the basis of the survey, the study programmes were graded. For this purpose, we devised three categories:

1. Programmes in which the international dimension is clearly present and well developed; clear policy; various activities; plans for further development.
2. Programmes which are in the process of implementing an international dimension; good plans, but few activities; unclear or *ad hoc* policy.
3. Programmes which have no international dimension to speak of; no or very few activities; low ambition level.

Each of the degree programmes was placed in one of these categories. According to the evaluation, which was done by the International Relations staff, only very few (3 out of the over 60) degree programmes were placed in Category 1. About 50% of the remaining programmes were placed in Category 2 and the rest were placed in Category 3.

These results were published in a final report, which was made available to all departments; so the results of the survey were public, even if only internally. The International Relations staff were a little apprehensive about the response which this evaluation might generate. We were more or less prepared for angry reactions from departments, especially those which we had placed in the lowest category. However, the response was very mild. The degree programmes which we had given a rap on the knuckles, as it were, because they had not been active enough in developing their international dimension, admitted that they had to agree with our evaluation. I think that one of the most important reasons for their mild reaction was the fact that the results did not come out of the blue, but were based on person-to-person interviews.

On the basis of the institution-wide report that was drawn up, the Executive Board gave all departments in categories 2 and 3 the assignment to develop a clear policy with regard to the international dimension and a plan of action to implement this policy. For many departments this will prove to be a major challenge.

Questions which we, as International Relations staff, were often asked were: How do we know when we have fulfilled the requirements? What is an international dimension in a curriculum? What does it look like? What steps could I take to implement it?

These are not very easy questions to answer if you are dealing with over 60 degree programmes in a wide variety of disciplines. We felt that each degree programme should be able to develop an international dimension that would fit the programme. However, in order to assist our colleagues, we drew up a set of guidelines for the implementation of an international dimension in a curriculum. An important source of inspiration was the Internationalisation at Home position paper, which was published by the EAIE (European Association for International Education) in 2000.

The curriculum should be revised to improve the student's **cognitive skills** with regard to the international dimension of his degree programme, through the introduction of

- modules on international subjects
- comparative modules (comparing systems used in different countries)
- country/regional studies
- language training

The curriculum should also contain modules to improve the student's **attitudinal skills**.

- modules taught in another language
- modules in which the cross-cultural skills are trained
- modules in which students have to work together in international groups

What is equally important is that each department creates an infrastructure which supports the internationalisation of the curriculum:

- a definition of the professional profile which explicitly refers to the international dimension of the profession
- a departmental policy plan which makes the department's internationalisation plans explicit
- capable staff
- a network of partner institutions

At present my institution is still in the early stages of the process. We have just gone through a major re-organisation process and the new heads of department are currently writing their strategic plans for their departments. These have to include an international paragraph. However, for the near future the International Relations staff will focus on supporting and advising the departments in this process. In this process we will also have a control function.



# Lessons from the Tuning Project in support of the internationalisation strategy of a university

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## 1 The Tuning project

Tuning Educational Structures in Europe (Tuning) is a project by and for universities. It is the Universities' response to the challenge of the Bologna Declaration and its motto is: '*Tuning of educational structures and programmes on the basis of diversity and autonomy*'. It should be emphasised that Tuning is not and cannot enforce standardisation, rather it seeks to find methods to harmonise our different traditions within the European Higher Education Area. The objectives of Tuning are to:

- implement the Bologna - Prague - Berlin process at university level
- find ways to implement the two cycles
- identify common reference points from both a discipline and a university perspective
- develop professional profiles and comparable and compatible learning outcomes for disciplines
- facilitate employability by promoting transparency in educational structures (easily readable and comparable degrees)
- develop a common language which is understood by all stakeholders (higher education sector, employers, professional bodies)

These have been implemented over the past four years under the 'Tuning 1' and 'Tuning 2'<sup>3</sup> programmes. The methodology has been to invite Universities from member countries to send academic staff to attend meetings of subject panels. Only

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<sup>3</sup> Tuning website addresses are: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates/TuningProject>, <http://www.relint.deusto.es/TuningProject/index.htm> and <http://www.let.rug.nl/TuningProject/index.htm>

one member was normally allowed from any one university and only one representative on each of the panels was allowed for each country. The project initially started with five panels, but has since grown in number as more disciplines became involved. Each group was co-chaired by an academic from the group and an educational expert with European experience.

These panels met several times for two days investigating five lines, which are summarised below. After each subject group meeting all panels met in plenary session to coordinate and discuss their results. The five lines were:

- Line 1: Generic competences, involving consultation with graduates, employers and academics on the importance of 30 generic competences and an evaluation of how well institutions in the European Higher Education Area develop them.
- Line 2: Subject specific competences, where the knowledge, understanding and skills required for each subject area were mapped and common reference points and subject specific competences defined for each of the pilot disciplines.
- Line 3: ECTS as a European credit accumulation system investigated the development of ECTS as a tool for programme design including the measurement of student workload.
- Line 4: Mapping of approaches to teaching / learning and assessment in different countries
- Line 5: Quality enhancement

A Management Committee consisting of the project leaders, co-chairs of the subject groups and representatives of stakeholders acted to ensure co-ordination of the project and to manage preparation and publication of reports (see websites).

Tuning has consulted stakeholders in an effort to define the competences required of graduates with a questionnaire that received nearly 1000 responses from graduates, employers and academics from 16 countries. These competences represent a dynamic combination of attributes, abilities and attitudes obtained by the student. They are formed in various course units and assessed at different stages and may be either subject specific (e.g. knowledge and understanding of a given academic sub-discipline) or generic (e.g. the ability to work in a team). Tuning has also developed benchmarking statements and first and second cycle descriptors for the pilot subject areas which have undergone initial validation by universities, professional organisations and other stakeholders. All of this data is available on

the Tuning websites and a more detailed account of the results of Tuning's work on competences can be found elsewhere<sup>4</sup>.

This emphasis on competences has led to a 'Tuning approach' for curriculum design. After consulting stakeholders, a set of learning outcomes should be defined for a programme. Learning outcomes are formulated by academic staff and are statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of learning. They can refer to a single course unit or module or else to a period of studies, for example, a first or a second cycle programme. Learning outcomes specify the requirements for award of credit and should be formulated in terms of competences. It is only at this stage that the actual curriculum and teaching/learning methods should be developed. This approach is more student centred and makes for a greater transparency of degrees. A human resources manager may not understand the competences gained through understanding the finer points of a given discipline, but will clearly comprehend the competence 'completing a task on time'! It was found that the individual subject groups could easily define the required competences and expected learning outcomes for their discipline. It would probably have proved impossible (and, in my opinion, most undesirable) to define a single curriculum for a given subject throughout the European Higher Education Area. Europe now expects thematic networks to develop lines 1 (generic competences) and 2 (subject specific competences) for their subject areas.

Tuning has defined methodologies for using ECTS as a crucial tool for design and delivery of curricula based on learning outcomes and for measuring workload in relation to learning outcomes and credit allocation. A model of 180 to 240 ECTS for the Bachelors has been generally accepted. A model of 90 to 180 ECTS for the Masters was preferred, although there was considerable debate about whether 90 ECTS could be obtained in a one year intensive Masters programme. ECTS should accumulate, that is a degree requires appropriate numbers of ECTS at all levels. One could not, for example, gain a Bachelors by taking nothing but first year courses. ECTS are gained by passing a module. They are currently calculated in two ways: either by calculating the student workload – about 25 hours of total student experience equals one ECTS; or by measuring staff involvement – this amounts to dividing the number of academic credits required to pass one year by 60 to work out the number of ECTS per credit and then calculating the ECTS for a module from this score. This latter approach can lead to widely different student

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<sup>4</sup> Ryan, P. D. (in press) *Redefining the expected competences of graduates, lessons learned from the Tuning Project*. Proceedings of the 7th ECHAE Conference, Copenhagen, 2004, Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, Copenhagen, Denmark.

involvement for one ECTS and can hinder student mobility and comparability of degrees.

Tuning has worked on many other areas including approaches to teaching, learning and assessment in a competence-based framework and an initial approach to quality enhancement in programmes of studies.

## **2 Tuning and internationalisation**

The Bologna-Prague-Berlin process is all about internationalisation of degree programmes. It moves us on from the more traditional model of bilateral agreements, many of which only exist on paper. The Tuning method for designing and describing degrees in terms of learning outcomes based upon student acquired competences allows for greater recognition and transparency of degrees throughout the European Higher Education Area. It also facilitates the development of multi-centre degrees as a given competence can be acquired in institutions with different traditions and methodologies. Therefore, students can gain one set of competences at one centre and another set elsewhere and still achieve a given learning outcome. Another advantage of this approach is that it allows for the development of European degrees. The Chemistry Subject Group working with the European Chemistry Thematic Network (ECTN) has defined a Eurobachelors in Chemistry<sup>5</sup>.

The Chemistry Eurobachelors is based on ECTS as a system of accumulation, accreditation and measure of student workload. The Eurobachelors standard defines reference points on an international basis and quality assurance will be used for evaluation and accreditation of programmes. Autonomy of institutions is assured, this is not a straitjacket, but a framework to be applied as the institution wishes. The standard is flexible so that it can readily be adapted as the needs of the subject change. The Eurobachelors is transparent and together with the Diploma Supplement it is an easily understood qualification. A great advantage of this concept is that it greatly enhances mobility. It makes it possible for the graduate to not only move easily within Europe, but also almost certainly throughout the world.

The implementation of the two cycle system is seen by many as opening a potential international market in Masters students. In response to this centres with established reputations, usually gained during the Erasmus and Socrates programmes, are designing suitable products, often which include substantial

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.cpe.fr/ectn-assoc/eurobachelor/>

elements of teaching not in their national language. It remains to be seen how this market will develop. Another area that is developing is multi-centre Euromasters programmes, where two or three institutions in more than one country combine their skills to develop a course. Teaching is done at one centre at a time and all teaching is intensive and taught in blocks. Students and relevant staff move to that centre for the duration of that block. Students register with their home institution and that institution gets credit for the student in spite of the fact that the student might well spend time elsewhere to be replaced by visiting students. This approach has the advantage that all the universities involved will act as recruitment areas for the course, making it more likely that critical mass will be achieved.

The definition of learning outcomes should facilitate undergraduate mobility. It is often very difficult to ensure that when a student spends part of their study time abroad that the same *syllabus* is covered. However, even if a different syllabus is taken, it is relatively simple to check that the appropriate learning outcomes have been achieved. If this is the case, then this will also encourage staff mobility as it is the Tuning experience that it is easier to agree on the definitions of learning outcomes rather than syllabi.

### **3 Conclusions**

The Bologna process is all about internationalisation as it requires the development of a European Higher Education Area with mobility of students and staff, and transparent degrees which meet the needs of the European job market. However, the list of targets summarised above do not supply a mechanism for achieving these goals. Whilst several other European bodies (e.g. Joint Quality Initiative, the European University Association) are monitoring and working on this process, Tuning is the only project that involves the individual universities at the level of individual academics and individual disciplines. The project has involved a huge number of person hours and, remarkably, is a success. The success is remarkable because initially many involved were sceptical and feared that this represented a loss of academic freedom. The commitment of the project leaders Julia Gonzales and Robert Waagner was a considerable factor in overcoming these fears. Tuning documentation discusses and develops methodologies for developing programmes that are either compatible with the Bologna process or go beyond it and take on a true European dimension. However, it is quite substantial. In particular, the Tuning approach to degree design has been found helpful in developing both trans-national and international degree programmes that are Bologna compliant. Finally, the greatest resource is almost certainly provided by the 400 or so academics who participated in Tuning.



# A guide to the IROICA process of quality audit of international strategies of institutions of higher agricultural education

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## 1 Introduction

Internationalisation<sup>6</sup> is now an imperative in the development of higher education in Europe. Even though the given rationales are diverse, the agricultural universities think it increasingly desirable to set out their international strategies as being one of the ways to:

- address the negative spiral of reduced student recruitment leading to reduced funding, lack of operational flexibility and reduced capital investment, erosion of expertise and reduction in capacity, and
- improve the quality of education, research and other service functions.

The university management needs to know where its institution stands, and to establish clear policy directions in relation to its particular environment.

The quality audit of international strategies basically consists of two parts as has been outlined in the earlier chapters of Irene Müller and Brian Dennis, namely

- a self-assessment by the institution of its international strategy; and
- external validation.

Under the umbrella of IROICA, a process has been established to audit the quality of such international strategies based on this structure but with external peer validation in a Workshop supported by two facilitators. In the Workshop the external validation team both act as the validators and also develop their own expertise in quality assurance of the international strategy of institutions. They are then able to take back this expertise to their own institution. Thus, this Workshop

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<sup>6</sup> The process to integrate an international dimension into teaching, research and service functions.

process for auditing, established by IROICA, provides for a roll out to the IROICA institutions of good practice in quality assurance of the international strategy of an institution. First, Section 2 gives a general overview of the auditing process, before the Workshop is described in detail in Sections 3 and 4.

## **2 The quality audit**

### ***Self assessment***

The self-assessment is a critical analysis of the impact of an institution's international strategy. If a strategy document is not available, the process could focus on evaluating the separate relevant activities. The key questions in the self assessment are, why does the institution think that internationalisation is important, and how are the goals of internationalisation translated into curricula, research programmes and other services?

An internal working group is assigned to prepare a self-evaluation report that deals with the institution's performance, achievements and barriers in the field of internationalisation, and to develop an organisational improvement plan. The report is based on two questionnaires, see Annex I and II. These comprise:

#### Questionnaire A (Annex I)

- the institutional context giving the profile of the institution, key-data and trends with special attention to international aspects.
- the state of the art of the concerned activities and programmes.
- the support structure, how are the international activities – politically, administratively and financially – supported?

#### Questionnaire B (Annex II)

- a SWOT analysis of the institution's international activity which is very helpful in identifying the internal strengths and weaknesses, and the external opportunities, threats.
- this analysis results in the identification of some major objectives or management challenges in order to gain the opportunities and to overcome any threats and barriers.
- this then forms the basis for an Organisational Improvement Plan: the highest priority matters (in securing organisational improvements and in seizing opportunities) which are then translated into the activities (means, steps) to be taken, specific constraints and inhibitors that have to be overcome, and how achievements can be measured.



The internal working group should comprise a cross section of the university community, representing both students and staff from education, research and administration at central and faculty level.

Once the draft internal self assessment report has been written the stakeholders within the institution should then be asked to comment on specific questions in relation to this draft report. This step of the process can be extended to stakeholders outside the university, if judged relevant, for example international companies that employ the institution's graduates. This process ensures that the stakeholders have commitment to the self assessment report which will make the subsequent outcomes from the audit process easier to implement.

### ***External validation***

The external validation is executed by a team of experts preferably with diverse experiences in the area of internationalisation. The team cross-checks and clarifies the results from the self-evaluation process through interviews.

The expert team formulates the criteria for selecting the interviewees within the institution. However, the institution may help select the persons itself, given that the institution is itself most interested in getting the best assessment results in order to strengthen its international strategy. The aim being to cross check the internal assessment with staff and students drawn from different sectors of the university. In addition stakeholders from outside the university may also be interviewed.

## **3 The IROICA Workshop to execute the external validation**

Under the process developed by IROICA the external validation is implemented by participants of a Workshop who are experienced in the area of internationalisation.

### ***Aim of the Workshop***

The aim of the Workshop on the quality audit of international strategies is two-fold.

- The Workshop results give a thorough assessment of the international strategy of an (agricultural) university. It provides feedback and recommendations to the concerned university which may assist the improvement and future development of international operations.
- The Workshop participants gain experience with a quality audit tool to evaluate issues of international strategies. They acquire skills in and perspectives on the development and evaluation of such strategies which they can exploit in their home institution.

### ***Preparatory phase***

Each Workshop participant has to critically analyse his or her own university prior to the start of the Workshop using the same questionnaires as the host institution uses for their own self evaluation (see Annexes I and II and section 2 above).

This preparatory phase is essential for the Workshop participant as it provides him/her with a good frame of reference for undertaking the external evaluation. Knowing the situation of the participant's own institution enables the participant when involved in the actual external validation to better focus on critical success factors for internationalisation and helps the participant to be focused in their questioning. Moreover, the analysis may benefit the participants own institution as it facilitates discussions how to increase the impact of internationalisation efforts.

## **4 The IROICA Workshop – the process**

The actual Workshop is hosted by the university that is to be assessed, and led by two facilitators who have extensive experience in quality assurance and internationalisation processes. The expert panel – the Workshop participants – may include Vice-rectors and Directors of International Affairs and International Relations Officers or persons with a more specific role in the overall process of internationalisation, and are of different nationalities and different professional background but all involved in international affairs. During the Workshop the participants focus on both the development of international strategies and quality management in general.

### ***Presentation of the assessed university***

The highest level of administration (e.g. rector or pro-rector of international affairs) first presents the university's position (within the national and / or international context), its general strategy and the current strategy for internationalisation. Although an elaborate self-evaluation document undoubtedly gives more detailed information, this briefing by the management will reflect the actual commitment for internationalisation, for changes and indicate priorities.

### ***Interviews***

The external evaluation team (the Workshop participants) then prepares the site visit by reading the self evaluation report and supporting documentation. Based on the major issues mentioned in the report, the experts then form several sub-groups around different focuses of internationalisation (education, research and support structure). The sub-groups prepare checklists for the interviews with the different stakeholders within the university. Each sub-group meets at least two stakeholder groups to cross-check the results and conclusions of the self-evaluation process, to

discuss specific topics in more detail and to allow triangulation of information given elsewhere.

The Workshop facilitators take care of some transverse themes: long term strategy, capacity for change and quality strategy. The capacity for change addresses matters like roles and structure; personnel; culture, commitment and ownership, and resources.

### ***Reporting***

The external evaluation team prepares and presents a verbal report to the management of the university for comment and open discussion in order to clarify and expand on different issues.

Based on the written findings of the three working groups and their own observations on transverse themes, the facilitators of the Workshop complete a review report including conclusions and recommendations.

The institution should then recognise and approve the conclusions and recommendations of the auditing process, and, next, initiate follow-up activities: prioritisation, action plans and revision of the international strategy plan if necessary.

### ***Workshop outcomes***

As indicated above the outcomes can be divided into those for the Workshop participants and those for the assessed institution.

- The institution receives a valid and valuable feedback on the current state of the international dimension of its education, research and support structure, and its related ambitions
- The participants gain knowledge about the theoretical background on both international strategies and quality audits
- The participants gain experience in a systematic approach to the evaluation of international strategies of higher education institutions

## **5 Final remarks**

- The actual review is done in a very limited period of one week including the introductory sessions. Therefore, some points may require further triangulation that cannot always be done within the scope of the Workshop.
- The results depend – rightly so – on the quality of the self-evaluation report.
- It is important to get adequate input from students.
- It may be important to obtain additional external representation or input.

## Annex I: QUESTIONNAIRE A

### INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITIES: ISSUES OF STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND QUALITY AUDIT

This questionnaire was developed for IROICA by Professor John Davies, Anglia Polytechnic University and University of Bath

Please type

Please return to :

SURNAME:

FIRST NAME:

#### KEY DATA ABOUT YOUR INSTITUTION

1. FULL NAME:

2a. FOUNDING YEAR:

2b. Special profile?

3. NUMBER OF STAFF AND STUDENTS: (*FTE = Number of Full Time Equivalents*)

FIELDS OF STUDY	STAFF		STUDENTS	
	academic	techn & adm	under-graduate	post-graduate
	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE
Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences				
Humanities (incl. Psychology and Physical Education)				
Social Sciences (incl. Law)				
Natural Sciences (incl. Mathematics)				
Engineering				
Medicine (incl. para-medical training)				
Other				
TOTAL :				

(If you are unable to provide figures in every case, please indicate where possible)

**GOVERNANCE:**

1. Academic Autonomy:

1.1 Which body decides the establishment of a new field of study or a change in the Curriculum?

on the advice of

1.2 What groups are *represented* on your academic governing board (Senate)?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Full professors (as such)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other tenured/non-tenured academic staff
- \_\_\_\_\_ Students
- \_\_\_\_\_ Technical and administrative staff
- \_\_\_\_\_ Society at large (external)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (*which?*)

2. The Executive Head

2.1 How is the Executive Head (Rector/President/Vice-Chancellor) chosen?

- \_\_\_\_\_ by election by whom?
- \_\_\_\_\_ by nomination by whom?

2.2 Does your Government or Ministry approve or appoint the Executive Head of the University?

2.3 How long is the mandate: \_\_\_\_\_ year(s)? Is reappointment possible?

**INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES:**

3. Are you involved in international co-operation schemes? ( ) Yes ( ) No

If yes, in which

- ( ) SOCRATES
- ( ) LEONARDO
- ( ) TEMPUS
- ( ) other bilateral or multilateral linkages:

4. What type of funding is available for international activities?

- regular university budget
- special grants, please specify:

5. Management of international relations:

Who has the overall responsibility for the strategic planning of international activities at the institution?

does your university have an international office?  Yes  No

If yes:

- at central level
- at faculty level

number of staff involved in the management of international relations

6. To which extent are international activities accorded priority and significance within the institution?

#### **QUALITY MANAGEMENT:**

7. Has your university been subjected to an external audit of international practices in the past five years? If yes, please specify:

8. Are academic quality assurance processes formalised and accorded significance within your institution? If yes, please specify:

9. What are the current arrangements for the management of academic quality assurance?

#### **PAST AND FUTURE TRENDS:**

10. Student numbers:

10.1 How has the number of registered students (FTE) in your institution developed over the last 5 years? (increased/decreased/remained stable/changed composition)

10.2 How has the distribution changed between nationals and non-nationals?

10.3 How do you expect the distribution to change between nationals and non-nationals?

11. Academic staff numbers:

11.1 How has the number of academic staff in your institution developed over the last 5 years? (increased/decreased/remained stable/changed composition)

11.2 Are there any changes in the distribution of national and international staff?

12. Funding:

12.1 How has the total amount of funds available to your institution developed over the last 5 years (particularly in the field of agricultural and related sciences?)

12.2 How do you predict the trend in funding for the next three years, in real terms?

Increased       Decreased       No change

13. Inter-organisational co-operation:

13.1 Please indicate any successful and durable strategic partnerships/consortia with other higher education institutions:

nationally

internationally

13.2 Please indicate any successful out-of-country operations/delivery for teaching or research, including franchise:

13.3 Please indicate any trends in your policy in the above:

## **Annex II: QUESTIONNAIRE B**

### **INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITIES: ISSUES OF STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND QUALITY AUDIT**

**This questionnaire was developed for IROICA by Professor John Davies, Anglia Polytechnic University and University of Bath**

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### **UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL STRATEGY**

This Questionnaire is an adapted form of SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Analysis, Opportunities and Threats) and OIP (Organisational Improvement Plan)

It is becoming increasingly desirable for institutions to set out their international strategies. University leaders need to diagnose where their organisations stand, and from this, to establish clear policy directions for the organisation to follow in relation to the circumstances of their particular environment. This is considered significant in terms of avoiding organisational drift, and the multiplication of internal conflict.

A useful means of approaching this challenge is the so-called SWOT analysis, and participants in the Workshop are all requested to complete a SWOT, using the attached questionnaire as a guide. It is really important that you do this, since it is considered a most interesting and valuable activity from a number of points of view:

- it facilitates your preparation for the Workshop
- it enables you to put forward particular issues of your own for discussion by colleague participants who will invariably have experienced similar difficulties, and are likely to be able to recommend good practice to you.
- it provides a very valuable focus for confidential small group discussions.

Please therefore, complete the attached Questionnaire and we would be glad if you would:

- make the analysis and objectives detailed full and frank: this will greatly facilitate discussions
- discuss your analysis with your colleagues at your University



- consider the full range of factors relevant to you (teaching and learning; scholarship; research; governance and organisation; community related activities; finance; human resources; external issues in respect of internationalisation).

In previous Workshops, it was found that this preparation was extremely valuable in focusing the group discussions and for the Facilitators. We shall explain early in the Workshop how these questionnaire responses will be utilised. However, we should emphasise that

- confidentiality rules will be respected
- since this forms a main part of the Workshop it is essential you complete the Questionnaire.

Author:

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University:

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Job Title:

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Create as much space as required to answer the given questions.

## **SWOT ANALYSIS**

### **1. Strengths**

What do you consider to be the STRENGTHS of your university in the field of internationalisation? What do you do well?

On what evidence do you base these judgements? If this evidence is not strong, how should you get the evidence you need on an ongoing basis?

### **2. Weaknesses**

What do you consider to be the WEAKNESSES of your university in the field of internationalisation?

What seems not to work so well, and therefore needs improvement, rethinking or development?

What is the evidence for these judgements? If you don't have useful evidence how would you get it?

### **3. Opportunities**

What do you consider to be the major favourable conditions affecting the OPPORTUNITIES for the development of international activities available to your university now and in the future - both in terms of factors internal to the university, but especially in terms of external opportunities (local, regional, national and international)? What is your evidence?

### **4. Threats and Barriers**

What do you consider to be the THREATS that confront your university in the field of internationalisation, and the BARRIERS to seizing the opportunities? What is your evidence from external sources (e.g. government, competition, resources etc.)?

### **5. Objectives**

In light of the foregoing, what, then, are the major OBJECTIVES or management challenges in internationalisation that the university must set or face in order to make necessary improvements to seize the opportunities and to overcome any threats and barriers? Please itemise.

## **BASIC ORGANISATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (OIP) FOR INTERNATIONALISATION**

On the attached sheet, please outline the major elements of a plan for the improvement and development of your university's internationalisation strategy. (Copy the sheet as often as required to deal with all major elements.). Be mindful of the (any) current goals and objectives. You should focus on the major items, the highest priority matters which you have identified under section 5. Please work these through in detail. You may wish to begin by engaging your colleagues in these discussions.

## BASIC ORGANISATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (OIP) FOR INTERNATIONALISATION

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **UNIVERSITY:** \_\_\_\_\_

Major OBJECTIVES in securing organisational improvement and in seizing opportunities (derived from 5)	MEANS, STEPS to be taken or ACTIVITIES to be initiated to achieve objectives and seize opportunities	Specific CONSTRAINTS or INHIBITORS to be faced	How to overcome the constraints	Ways to measure achievement of objectives or improvement