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Pilot Studies



# The translation of the ESG in institutional and programme accreditation reports

Pilot Study 1 and 2

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# Analytical / Theoretical Framework

- ▶ We analyse the actual application of ESG in the domestic context from a translation perspective (Czarniawski and Sevón, 1996a, Czarniawski and Sevón, 2005).
- ▶ We see the translation process in two stages:
  - ▶ (national or cross-border) QA agencies translate the ESG in their own context. They may simply copy the ESG or they feel the need to edit these;
  - ▶ accreditation, review or audit panels use ESG (or elements thereof) in their actual review and assessment practices.

# Pilot 1 – The translation of the ESG in institutional accreditation

How are quality assurance agencies and accreditation panels translating the ESG?

# Research questions

1. How do ESG related to programme design, approval and monitoring are “translated” by national QA agencies?
2. How do panels assessing quality at the institutional level – in accreditation reports – make use of the ESG?

# Methodology

- ▶ Content analysis – based on key concepts not only from the standards but also from the guidelines, from ESG 1.2 (2005), ESG 1.2 and 1.9 (2015):
  - learning outcomes, approval procedures; participation of stakeholders; progress of students and periodic monitoring and review; qualifications framework; needs of stakeholders; student workload
- ▶ Search not only for the exact concepts but for other possible 'variants' and synonyms
- ▶ Institutional external QA reports
- ▶ 4 countries (1 report per type of HEI per country) – diversity HE systems, countries' involvement in QA, types of institutions

# Hypothesis

- ▶ Much translation takes place when national agencies develop or adjust their guidelines and protocols.  
*? Nature of ESG - considerable scope for editing and modifying*
- ▶ Alteration (radical change) is not expected to occur.  
*? Legitimacy of QA agencies at stake*
- ▶ “Seasoned” but also less experienced agencies stay close to the original ESGs (for different reasons)  
*? Solid knowledge of ESG and of QA*  
*? Concerns of ‘compliance’ – trend to ‘behave’*
- ▶ Within countries, other dynamics are expected to take place.  
*? Institutional diversity; Variety within panels*

# Sample

Countries	Types of HEIs	Sample	Designation
<b>Croatia</b>	Public universities	1 Public university	CR_Pub_Uni
	Private universities	1 Private university	CR_Pri_Uni *
	Public polytechnics	1 Public polytechnic	CR_Pub_Pol
	Private polytechnics	1 Private polytechnic	CR_Pri_Pol
	Public colleges	1 Public college	CR_Pub_Col
	Private colleges	1 Private college	CR_Pri_Col *
<b>Estonia</b>	Public universities	1 Public university	EST_Pub_Uni
	Private universities	1 Private university	EST_Pri_Uni *
	Public universities of applied sciences	1 Public UAS	EST_Pub_UAS *
	Private universities of applied sciences	1 Private UAS	EST_Pri_UAS
<b>Finland</b>	Universities (foundation and non- foundation)	1 (non-foundation) university 1 Foundation university	FIN_Uni FIN_Foun *
	Universities of applied sciences	1 UAS	FIN_UAS *
	Public universities	1 Public university	PT_Pub_Uni *
<b>Portugal</b>	Private universities	1 Private university	PT_Pri_Uni *
	Public polytechnics	1 Public polytechnic	PT_Pub_Pol
	Private polytechnics	1 Private polytechnic	PT_Pri_Pol



# Results

## 1. The translation of the ESG by national QA agencies

### Croatia – QA agency standards

Institutional management and QA

Study programmes

Students

Teaching staff

Scientific and professional activity

International cooperation and mobility

Resources: administration, space, equipment and finances

### Finland – QA agency standards

Quality policy of the HEI

- Rationale, objectives and division of responsibility
- Communication of the quality system
- Link between the quality policy and the institutions' overall strategy

Quality system's link with strategic management

- Information procedure by the quality system for strategic management
- Functioning of the quality system at different organisational levels and units

Development of the quality system

- Procedures for developing the quality system
- Development work after the first audit (or development stages of the quality system)

QM of HEI's basic duties:

- degree education
- **research development and innovation activities as well as artistic activities**
- **societal impact and regional development work**
- optional development target

Samples of degree education: degree programmes

The quality system as a whole

- Comprehensiveness and **impact of the quality system**
- Quality culture
- The quality system as whole

# Results

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## 1. The translation of the ESG by national QA agencies

### Estonia – QA standards

#### Organisational management and performance

- General management
- Personnel management
- Management of financial resources and infrastructure

#### Teaching and learning

- Effectiveness of teaching and learning, and formation of the student body
- Student programme development
- Student academic progress and student assessment
- Support processes for learning

#### Research, development and/or other creative activity (RDC)

- RDC effectiveness
- RDC resources and support processes
- Student research supervision

#### Service to the society

- Popularization of its activities and involvement in social development
- In-service training and other educational activities for general public
- Other public-oriented activities

### Portugal – QA agency standards

#### Definition and documentation of the institutional policy for quality

#### Scope and effectiveness of the procedures and structures for QA:

- in teaching and learning
- in research and development
- in the interaction with society
- in the policies for staff management
- in the support services
- in internationalisation

#### Relationship between the QA system and the governance and management bodies of the institution

#### Participation of internal and external stakeholders in the QA processes

#### Information system

#### Publication of information relevant to external stakeholders

#### Monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement of the internal QA system

#### Internal QA system as a whole

# Results

## 1. The translation of the ESG by national quality assurance agencies

- Agencies feel the urge to comply to a sufficient extent with the ESG.
- However, they interpret and translate the ESG differently
  1. Different approached to QA
  2. Different designations for the same concepts
  3. Different emphasis to different areas
  4. Addition, replacement or even omission of some areas

# Results

## 2. The use of the ESG by panels

Concepts	Learning outcomes	Approval procedures	Stakeholders' participation	Students' Progress	Monitoring & review	Qualifications framework	Stakeholders' needs	Students' workload
<b>HEIs</b>								
CR_Pri_Col_2015*	5	0	30	3	41	0	6	8
CR_Pub_Col_2005	6	0	18	3	43	0	7	11
CR_Pri_Uni_2015*	2	0	11	5	33	0	2	3
CR_Pub_Uni_2005	15	1	12	1	37	1	5	0
CR_Pri_Pol_2005	9	0	5	3	17	0	9	11
CR_Pub_Pol_2005	0	0	9	1	15	0	3	5
EST_Pr_UAS_2005	3	1	45	14	56	0	92	1
EST_Pub_UAS_2015*	3	0	114	8	138	0	87	3
EST_Pri_Uni_2015*	33	1	113	24	173	3	92	27
EST_Pub_Uni_2005	6	0	63	13	109	0	87	4
FIN_Fond_2015*	15	2	186	37	365	3	20	13
FIN_UAS_2015*	21	0	278	34	435	5	15	11
FL_Uni_2005	10	1	179	27	431	0	29	5
PT_Pri_Uni_2015*	0	2	25	11	113	0	8	0
PT_Pub_Uni_2015*	0	3	38	4	113	0	5	0
PT_Pri_Pol_2005	1	0	31	5	124	0	13	0
PT_Pub_Pol_2005	1	4	10	2	71	0	4	2

\*Reports produced after the publication of the 2015 ESG

# Results

## 2. The use of the ESG by review panels

- Emphasis on national QA elements, using phrasings and terminology from the national agencies' vocabulary
  - (managing the) monitoring and review in Estonia, Portugal and especially Finland
  - stakeholder participation (all countries)
- No different pattern emerging when comparing 2005 and 2015 ESG panel reviews
  - Indication that the panels primarily follow the national guidance
- Almost no evidence of attention for some elements of the ESG:
  - Qualification frameworks and approval procedures as well as learning outcomes (in some countries)

# Conclusions

- ▶ Much translation takes place when national agencies develop or adjust their domestic guidelines (as expected).
- ▶ Alteration but no radical change – Agencies tend to stay close to the original ESGs though editing them.

?

*? This could put the legitimacy of the agency at stake.*

*? Agencies edit the ESG so they fit with the domestic logics.*

# Conclusions

- ▶ The national guidelines defined by the QA agencies play the major role.
- ▶ The national framework for institutional review is quite nationally 'coloured'.

?

*? Countries focus on specific subjects that are important for the national HE policy, such as, internationalisation (in Estonia and Portugal), but also research and development (not part of the ESG).*

# Conclusions

- Some countries (domestic guidelines) are further away from the ESG than others.

?

*? The more years an agency exists in a country, the less the ESG are taken literally (more editing than copying).*

*? Relative newcomers to QA appear to follow the ESG more closely (more copying than editing).*



# Conclusions

- No significant differences, particular patterns or trends between types of institutions
- No differences between the approach to ESG 2005 and ESG 2015:
  - Reports after 2015 within the same country do not tend to approach the dimensions underlined by the ESG 2015.
  - Emerging dimensions were already approached by reports before the revision.

? *Agencies 'anticipated' the new dimensions and their importance for the external audits of HEIs.*

?

? *The domestic agents are influenced but also influence the supranational agenda, policies and instruments (combination of top-down and bottom-up logics).*

## Pilot 2 –The translation of the ESG in programme accreditation(DRAFT)

How do accreditation panels present evidence for the findings related to the ESG?

(NB: Still ongoing analysis – the following are preliminary results and conclusions)

# Research questions

1. How do accreditation panels offer evidence for their findings with respect to:
  - encouraging students to take an active role in creating the learning process (ESG1.3)
  - consistently applying pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle" (ESG 1.4)?
2. Are there differences – with respect to the findings under a – between countries and types of institutions?

# Methodology

- Content analysis – based on concepts (not only from the standards but also from the guidelines) related to:
  - student-centred learning, teaching and assessment (ESG 1.3):  
student's assessment, flexibility / adaptability (of curricula, pedagogical methods, students' needs, etc.), feedback to students, placements (traineeships, internships), students' complaints, students' motivation, student-teacher relationship, students' autonomy, student-centred learning and students' appeals
  - the different phases of the student 'life-cycle' (ESG 1.4):  
admission, progression, support/guidance to students (and their progression), recognition, Lisbon Recognition Convention, national quality assurance (related to recognition), student 'life cycle', ERIC-NARIC, non-formal and informal learning.
- Search not only for the exact concepts but for other possible 'variants' and synonyms
- Programme accreditation reports; Bachelor degree; Engineering

# Methodology

- ▶ 5 countries (inside and outside EHEA); 3 reports per country; Public and private HEIs
- ▶ One single (cross border) agency – ASIIN
- ▶ Still ongoing analysis – preliminary results and conclusions
- ▶ *Scale of evidence'*:
  - ▶ *explicit or total evidence*
  - ▶ *partial or implicit evidence*
  - ▶ *no evidence*

# Hypothesis

- Alteration (radical change) is not expected to occur

? Same QA agency, same guidelines

- Within countries other dynamics are expected to take place.

? Countries inside and outside EHEA

? Variety within panels

# Sample

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Countries	Sample	Designation
Cyprus	2 Private Universities 1 State Foundation University	Cyp_FoundUni_CivilEng
		Cyp_PriUni_EleEng
		Cyp_PrivUni_SofEng
Kazakhstan	2 Public Universities	Kaz_PubUni1_EleEng
		Kaz_PubUni2_MecEng
		Kaz_PubUni2_EleEng
Slovenia	1 Public University	Slo_PubUni_EleEng
		Slo_PubUni_ApEleEng
		Slo_PubUni_CivEng
Spain	1 Public University 1 Public 'Polytechnic University'	Spa_PubUni_IndEng
		Spa_PubUni_MecEng
		Spai_PubPol_InfEng
Indonesia	1 Public University	Ind_PubUni_GeoEng
		Ind_PubUni_MatEng

# Results

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## 1. The translation of the ESG by the accreditation agency

ASIIN Requirements	Corresponding ESG
1. The degree programme: concept, content & implementation	
1.1 Objectives and learning outcomes of a degree programme (intended qualifications profile)	ESG 1.3
1.2 Name of the degree programme	
1.3 Curriculum	ESG 1.3
1.4 Admission requirements	ESG 1.4
2. The degree programme: structures, methods and implementation	
2.1 Structure and modules	ESG 1.3
2.2 Work load and credits	ESG 1.4
2.3. Teaching and methodology	
2.4 Teaching and assistance	



# Results

## 1. The translation of the ESG by the accreditation agency

ASIIN Requirements	Corresponding ESG
3. Exams: System, concept and organisation	ESG 1.3 ESG 1.4
4. Resources	
4.1 Staff	
4.2 Staff development	
4.3 Funds and equipment	
5. Transparency and documentation	
5.1 Module descriptions	
5.2 Diploma and Diploma Supplement	ESG 1.4
5.3 Relevant rules	ESG 1.4
6. Quality management: quality assessment and development	

# Results

## 1. The translation of the ESG by the accreditation agency

- ▶ Different foci, different dimensions, different terminologies, but agency's 'standards and guidelines' tend to follow the ESG.

- ▶ Neither linear translation nor radical change

- ▶ Homogeneity – within panels

- ▶ Would ASIIN's 'standards and guidelines' and the composition of the panel influence how panels translate the ESG and present evidence for the ESG in the reports ?



# Preliminary results

## 2. The translation of ESG 1.3 by panels

- ▶ **Assessment:** linked to the achievement of the intended learning outcomes; familiarity with assessment methods; publication of assessment criteria and methods; consistency and adequacy of assessment.
- ▶ **Flexibility and/or adaptability** of curricula - job market, technological demands, intended learning outcomes and/or individual learning paths
- ▶ **Students' support and guidance** (not exactly the adequacy, but at least the existence) - in almost all the reports, though not to a large extent
- ▶ **Dimensions scarcely addressed**  
Student's feedback, Students' motivation, Students' complaints, Students' needs, Student-teacher relationship

# Preliminary results

## 2. The translation of ESG 1.3 by panels

- ▶ Absent expressions
  - X students' appeals
  - X students' autonomy
  - X students' engagement - Engagement and involvement are mostly associated with other internal stakeholders (as staff members) and external stakeholders (as business partners)
  - X 'student-centred learning'
- ▶ The ESG are not linearly translated, they are subject to editing and interpretation, namely with regard to phrasing and terminology.

# Preliminary results

## 2. The translation of the ESG 1.4 by panels

Concepts	Admission	Progression	Support / guidance to students' progression	Recognition	Lisbon Recognition Convention	National QA: recognition	ERIC- NARIC: recognition	Student Life Cycle	Non- formal and informal learning
HEIs									
Cyp_FoundUni_CivEng	6	7	0	2	0	2	0	1	0
Cyp_PrivUni_EleEng	6	2	7	1	0	1	0	0	0
Cyp_PrivUni_SofEng	6	2	7	1	0	1	0	0	0
Kaz_PubUni1_EleEng	9	3	7	2	0	1	0	0	0
Kaz_PubUni1_MecEng	9	3	7	1	1	2	0	2	0
Kaz_PubUni2_EleEng	23	4	8	9	2	1	0	0	0
Slo_PubUni_EleEng	13	1	2	1	0	3	0	1	0
Slo_PubUni_ApEleEng	13	1	2	1	0	3	0	1	0
Slo_PubUni_CivEng	7	3	13	6	0	2	0	0	0
Spa_PubUni_IndEng	15	15	10	7	5	3	0	1	0
Spa_PubUni_MecEng	15	15	10	7	5	3	0	3	0
Spa_PubPol_InfEng	18	9	11	1	1	2	0	3	0
Ind_PubUni_GeoEng	8	2	12	2	0	2	0	0	0
Ind_PubUni_MatEng	9	2	17	2	0	6	0	0	0
Ind_PubUni_MecEng	9	2	17	2	0	6	0	0	0

# Preliminary results

## 2. The translation of ESG 1.4 by panels

- ▶ **Admission**
  - ✓ for the definition and publication of regulations
  
- ▶ **Progression**
  - ✓ definition and publication of regulations
  - ✓ monitoring processes on student progression
  
- ▶ **Recognition**
  - ✓ recognition regulations
  - ✓ cooperation with the national quality assurance agencies
  - X The alignment with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition
  - X Recognition of non-formal and informal learning and for the cooperation with national ENIC/NARIC centres
  
- ▶ **Certification**
  - X Barely approached in the reports
  - ✓ Documentation explaining the qualification gained

# Preliminary results

## 2. The translation of ESG 1.3 and 1.4 by panels

- ▶ Some of the dimensions of the assessment and student-centred learning and student “life cycle” are more ‘present’ in the reports than others.
- ▶ Globally – Strong evidences for findings related to the standards
- ▶ BUT – Different evidences for the specific guidelines
- ▶ Not linear translation of the ESG – interpretation and editing of the ESG
- ▶ Limited to one single agency, specific bachelor programmes in specific countries - Not representative from other agencies and programme accreditation processes



# Preliminary conclusions

- ▶ Globally ESG 1.3 and 1.4 are 'present'
  - ▶ in the standards and guidelines defined by the agency
  - ▶ in the reports.

*However*, they are subject to interpretation by the agency and by the panels

- ▶ Panels edit the ESG and present different evidences for the different dimensions inside the ESG.

# Preliminary conclusions

- Lack of attention to particular and 'thorough' dimensions as 'student-teacher relationship' or 'student' engagement' or 'informal learning':

?

*? It seems that the majority of the reports are especially concerned with 'procedural', 'processual' and more 'general' aspects of student learning, teaching and assessment and of the student life cycle.*

# Preliminary conclusions

- ▶ Lack of diversity between countries and institutions

? *lack of diversity in the accreditation process:*

- *accreditation agency*
- *the assessment and accreditation framework*
- *the panel composition*

- ▶ Still, differences between countries

? *The 'conditions' and 'characteristics' framing the accreditation process might influence how panels develop the reports, approach the ESG and offer evidence for it.*



# Thank you!

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<https://www.eqar.eu/qa-results/deqar-project/pilot-studies/>