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A new generation of external quality assurance and its implications for university management

By

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Abstract

At the beginning of the twenty-first century quality assurance experienced a number of challenges and underwent transformations. The higher education sector itself was evolving rapidly to comprise new types of providers, delivery modes and areas of assessment. The digital revolution and the rapid development of Open and Distance Learning (ODL), including the appearance of MOOCs and more recently micro-credentials challenged the common EQA model. In addition, a more recent focus in policy agendas on the internationalization of higher education institutions called for new evaluative approaches to support institutional strategies in this domain.

In response to these challenges and trends, innovative approaches to EQA to demonstrate its relevance and effectiveness as a tool for change have emerged. This presentation will focus on the following major trends underlying the development of innovative approaches to EQA:

- Supporting more strongly the quality of teaching and learning with a greater focus on student-learning outcomes and their linkages to national qualifications frameworks;
- Addressing the specific needs for quality assurance for new and alternative providers, in particular open and distance learning, including MOOCs and micro-credentials;

Providing focused approaches to EQA, such as the assessments of the quality of internationalization at institutional level;

Assessing and supporting internal QA in HEIs through dialogue between QA agencies and institutions and capacity-building;

Increasing efficiency through technology-based approaches, such as online submission of self-assessment reports, thus lowering the documentation load; and

Alleviating bureaucracy and cost by introducing risk-based or differentiation approaches to diminish the frequency of external reviews of HEIs that have a good track-record.