

Marta Tutko*, Vitalii Naumov

QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS IN POLISH AND UKRAINIAN HIGHER EDUCATION. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The article deals with the progress made to develop external and internal quality assurance systems in Polish and Ukrainian higher education in the European Higher Education Area background. The focus of the paper is on the extent to which quality assurance systems in these countries are following the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. Furthermore, internal and external quality assurance in the European context is presented in the article. The authors of the article also conducted a comparative analysis of quality assurance systems in Polish and Ukrainian higher education.

Key words: quality assurance systems, higher education

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth in higher education made it necessary to replace the informal process of monitoring the quality of education by means of an institutionalized process. For this reason, there is a growing interest in standards for the quality of education in Europe. Ensuring the quality of education is becoming increasingly important, as there is a need to build mutual confidence in educational opportunities and to improve transparency of criteria of these opportunities, while respecting the diversity of national circumstances.

The Bologna Process has brought about fundamental change in higher education structures across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). One of the most important goals of this process, presented in the Bologna Declaration, is to promote European cooperation in quality assurance. Also at present, quality assurance is a consistent priority across the EHEA.

This article deals with the progress made in developing external and internal quality assurance systems in Polish and Ukrainian higher education in the EHEA background. The focus of the paper is on the extent to which quality assurance systems in these countries are following the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*.

Furthermore, the internal and external quality assurance in the European context is discussed in the article. The authors of the article also conducted a comparative analysis of quality assurance systems in Polish and Ukrainian higher education.

* Corresponding author: Marta Tutko, Zakład Ekonomii Stosowanej, Uniwersytet Jagielloński, ul. Prof. Stanisława Łojasiewicza 4 (pok. 2.332), 30-348 Kraków, e-mail: marta.tutko@uj.edu.pl.

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN THE EUROPEAN HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS GOALS

The basic precepts of the Bologna Process date back to the Sorbonne Joint Declaration on harmonization of the architecture of the European higher education system, signed in 1998 by the education ministers of four countries: France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom.

Afterwards, *The Bologna Declaration on the European Higher Education Area* was signed in 1999, by ministers responsible for higher education in 29 European countries. It became the primary document to establish the general framework for the modernization and reform of European higher education. The process of reform came to be called the Bologna Process, which can be defined as a series of ministerial meetings and agreements between European countries designed to ensure comparability in the standards and quality of higher education qualifications. In the Bologna Declaration, ministers responsible for higher education affirmed their intention to promote European cooperation in quality assurance.

Since 1999, eight ministerial conferences organized on the scheme of the Bologna Process have been held in different European cities: Bologna (1999), Prague (2001), Berlin (2003), Bergen (2005), London (2007), Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve (2009), Budapest/Vienna (2010) and Bucharest (2012).

At present, 47 countries are members of the European Higher Education Area¹. Poland joined the Bologna Process in 1999, and Ukraine in 2005.

The EHEA was launched during the Budapest-Vienna Ministerial Conference. As the main objective of the Bologna Process, it was meant to ensure more comparable, compatible and coherent systems of higher education in Europe. The creation of the EHEA has definitely been a success, one which shows the benefits of European cooperation on the level of higher education.

DEFINITION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

While it is a moot question whether quality of teaching in higher education has improved during the Bologna decade, there is no doubt that quality assurance systems have developed in all member countries of the EHEA. Especially in recent years, the development of quality assurance has been rapid and there have been a number of major milestones in European cooperation.

Quality assurance in higher education is a generic term which lends itself to many interpretations. It would be difficult to create one definition of quality assurance which could be adapted in all EHEA countries and which could cover all circumstances.

¹ Current signatories and thus members of the European Higher Education Area are:

- from 1999: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom;
- from 2001: Croatia, Cyprus, Liechtenstein, and Turkey;
- from 2003: Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Holy See, Russia, Serbia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia;
- from 2005: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine; from May 2007: Montenegro;
- from 2010: Kazakhstan.

Council of Europe, http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/highereducation/EHEA2010/BolognaPedestrians_en.asp#P168_15142 [6. 03. 2013].

The European University Association proposes a coherent quality assurance policy for Europe, based on the belief ‘that institutional autonomy creates and requires responsibility, that universities are responsible for developing internal quality cultures and that progress at the European level involving all stakeholders is a necessary next step’. Moreover, in the Graz Declaration, the purpose of a European dimension to quality assurance was defined as “to promote mutual trust and improve transparency while respecting the diversity of national contexts and subject areas” (Graz Declaration 2003: 9).

In higher education, quality assurance can be understood as policies, procedures and practices that are designed to achieve, maintain or enhance quality as it is understood in a specific context (Focus on Higher Education in Europe 2010: 24).

From the beginning of the Bologna Process, there has always been a strong focus on quality assurance. All communiqués published in connection with the ministerial conferences have paid attention to an evolving agenda in quality assurance, presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Quality assurance systems in the context of the European Higher Education Area.

Year	Decisions and actions concerning quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area	Document
1999	Ministers from signatory countries defined promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies to be one of the objectives of the Bologna Process.	The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999, Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education
2001	Ministers recognized the vital role that quality assurance systems play in ensuring high quality standards and in facilitating the comparability of qualifications throughout Europe. They also emphasized the necessity of close European cooperation and mutual trust in and acceptance of national quality assurance systems.	Towards the European Higher Education Area, Communiqué of the meeting of European Ministers in charge of Higher Education in Prague on 19 May 2001
2003	Ministers committed themselves to supporting further development of quality assurance at institutional, national and European levels. They stressed the need to develop mutually shared criteria and methodologies on quality assurance.	Realizing the European Higher Education Area, Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Higher Education in Berlin on 19 September 2003
2005	Ministers confirmed that almost all countries have made provision for a quality assurance system based on the criteria set out in the Berlin Communiqué and with a high degree of cooperation and networking. They adopted the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the EHEA as proposed by ENQA. They committed themselves to introducing the proposed model for peer review of quality assurance agencies on a national basis, while respecting the commonly accepted guidelines and criteria.	The European Higher Education Area – Achieving the Goals, Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education, Bergen, 19–20 May 2005

Table 1 cont.

Year	Decisions and actions concerning quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area	Document
2007	Ministers stated that the <i>Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance</i> in the EHEA adopted in Bergen have been a powerful driver of change in relation to quality assurance. They also affirmed that all countries have started to implement them and that external quality assurance in particular is much better developed than before. Ministers also requested to develop the practicalities of setting up a <i>Register of European Higher Education Quality Assurance Agencies</i> .	<i>Towards the European Higher Education Area, Responding to Challenges in a Globalised World</i> , London Communiqué, 18 May 2007
2009	Ministers affirmed that higher education is being modernized with the adoption of the <i>European Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance</i> . They also stressed the necessity of further cooperation in developing the European dimension of quality assurance and in particular to ensure that the <i>European Quality Assurance Register</i> is evaluated externally, taking into account the views of the stakeholders.	<i>The Bologna Process 2020 – The European Higher Education Area in the New Decade, Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education</i> , Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve, 28–29 April 2009
2010	The EHEA was launched, as envisaged in the <i>Bologna Declaration</i> . The Ministers declared that they will step up their efforts to provide quality higher education for all.	<i>Budapest-Vienna Declaration on the European Higher Education Area</i> , March 12, 2010
2012	Ministers defined objectives for the next three years. One of them, ‘providing quality higher education for all’, concerns quality assurance. Quality assurance is essential for building trust and to reinforce the attractiveness of the EHEA’s offerings, including in the provision of cross-border education. Ministers committed to both maintaining the public responsibility for quality assurance and to actively involve a wide range of stakeholders in this development.	<i>Making the Most of Our Potential: Consolidating the European Higher Education Area</i> , Bucharest Communiqué, 26 and 27 April 2012

Source: Personal elaboration based on documents mentioned in the Table 1

The *Bologna Declaration* encouraged European cooperation in higher education quality assurance. This process was continued, which was repeatedly confirmed by the decisions and actions concerning quality assurance in the EHEA undertaken by the Ministers responsible for higher education presented in Table 1.

The fundamental document relating to quality assurance – *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* – was adopted in Bergen. This document divides quality assurance into two types: internal and external quality assurance.

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

“Internal quality assurance refers to the processes involved in assuring and/or improving the quality of defined areas of activity within higher education institutions. Typically it involves the systematic collection and analysis of administrative data, as well as the feedback of students, lecturers, other staff and external stakeholders” (The European Higher Education Area 2012: 185).

In most of the countries in the EHEA, formal requirements for higher education institutions to establish internal quality assurance systems are embedded in higher education legislation. The exceptions are Estonia, Slovakia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom (The European Higher Education Area 2012: 68).

European standards for internal quality assurance in higher education institutions proposed in the document *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* are as follows (Standards and Guidelines 2009: 7):

1. Policy and procedures for quality assurance: Institutions should have a policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programs and awards.
2. Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programs and awards: Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programs and awards.
3. Assessment of students: Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.
4. Quality assurance of teaching staff: Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so.
5. Learning resources and student support: Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for each program offered.
6. Information systems: Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyze and use relevant information for the effective management of their programs of study and other activities.
7. Public information: Institutions should regularly publish up-to-date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programs and awards.

The above standards were supplemented in the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* by the guidelines, which provide additional information about good practice and, in some cases, explain in more detail the meaning and importance of the standards.

EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

External quality assurance systems are based on internal quality assurance systems which deliver information for external assessment. On the other hand, internal quality assurance systems are assessed by the external quality assurance agencies.

External quality assurance refers to the process of evaluation or audit of a higher education program or institution undertaken by a specialized body outside the institution. Typically the body may be a quality assurance or accreditation agency, or an ad hoc panel of experts and peers constituted by the responsible ministry. The evaluation will involve the collection of data, information and evidence for assessment against agreed standards (The European Higher Education Area 2012: 184).

During the Bologna decade, nearly all Bologna countries have established national agencies for quality assurance. Only the countries with a small higher education sector such as Cyprus, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg and Malta have not established agencies.

Although almost all EHEA countries have established some form of external quality assurance system, there are significant differences in the philosophy and approach behind the systems. Despite the adaptation of *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, systems are still quite diverse in their orientation.

The European debate on quality assurance has emphasized the importance of establishing agencies that are able to perform their work in an independent manner. In most countries, agencies are legally and operationally independent from governments and higher education institutions. Only six countries – Azerbaijan, Iceland, Moldova, Slovakia, Turkey and Ukraine – have maintained a system of central management for quality by ministries (Focus on Higher Education in Europe 2010: 25).

European cooperation in external quality assurance is exemplified by the second part of the agreement on European *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*² and the creation of a *European Quality Assurance Register*.

European standards for external quality assurance in higher education institutions are as follows (Standards and Guidelines 2009: 8):

1. Use of internal quality assurance procedures: External quality assurance procedures should take into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes.
2. Development of external quality assurance processes: The aims of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed.
3. Criteria for decisions: Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.
4. Processes fit for purpose: All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them.
5. Reporting: Reports should be published and should be written in a style which is clear and readily accessible to its intended readership.
6. Follow-up procedures: Quality assurance processes which contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan should have a predetermined follow-up procedure which is implemented consistently.

² The third part of the *European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* is relating to European standards for external quality assurance agencies. These standards are: Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education, official status, activities, resources, mission statement, independence, external quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies and accountability procedures (Standards and Guidelines 2009: 9).

7. Periodic reviews: External quality assurance of institutions and/or programs should be undertaken on a cyclical basis. The length of the cycle and the review procedures to be used should be clearly defined and published in advance.
8. System-wide analyses: Quality assurance agencies should produce summary reports describing and analyzing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments, etc.

The European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education was created in 2008. It aims at enhancing trust and confidence in European higher education by listing quality assurance agencies that operate in Europe and have proven their credibility and reliability in a review against the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA*. The register is web-based and freely accessible.

After five years of existence, the *European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education* includes 28 quality assurance agencies based in twelve European countries: Germany, Spain, Belgium, France, Romania, Denmark, Finland, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Netherlands, Poland and Lithuania (*The European Quality Assurance Register*).

One of the aims for the establishment of the *European Quality Assurance Register* was to enable higher education institutions to be evaluated by a quality assurance agency from another country. Poland is an example where new legislation provides a basis for higher education institutions to be evaluated by international agencies, and for the outcomes to be taken into consideration by the national quality assurance system (The European Higher Education Area 2012: 63).

The EHEA is characterized by its diversity of higher education systems and socio-cultural and educational traditions. This makes a single monolithic approach to quality, standards and quality assurance in higher education inappropriate. The standards are designed to be applicable to all higher education institutions in Europe, irrespective of their structure and the national system in which they are located.

QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS IN POLISH HIGHER EDUCATION

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

The importance of higher education quality assurance systems in Poland has increased in association with amendments to the act 27 July 2005 *Law on Higher Education*. Currently, in the light of the act, organizational units of higher education institutions can offer first or second degree studies if they have implemented internal quality assurance systems, taking into account the actions for improvement in curricula of the offered study programs (Rozporządzenie 2011: 4).

In the light of the act, there are no general requirements concerning quality assurance systems. The basis of the suggestions on how to design, assure and manage internal quality assurance systems are the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*. Polish higher education institutions can also choose between two paths in the process of designing quality assurance systems: the creation of their own systems

and solutions in the sphere of quality assurance, or utilization of international standards of quality management, such as ISO 9001 and/or IWA-2.

One of the most important aspects of assessment carried out by the Polish Accreditation Committee at higher education institutions is an internal quality assurance system. The assessment carried out by M. Lisiński makes it possible to notice shortcomings concerning functioning of internal quality assurance systems in Polish higher education institutions in 2008–2011 (Lisiński 2012: 112–117):

- different models of internal quality assurance systems (diversity of the applied models of the system, fragmentariness of solutions);
- lack of defined goals of establishing a system;
- use of imprecise terms concerning internal quality assurance systems (use of ambiguous vocabulary);
- domination, when assessing internal quality assurance systems, of the formal aspect over the informal aspect;
- lack of knowledge of the principles and rules of internal quality assurance systems by employees of higher education institutions (negative or neutral attitude of employees to creation and functioning of internal quality assurance systems);
- errors in practical use of internal quality assurance systems (lack of anonymity in poll studies, lack of feedback for people subjected to assessment);
- lack of knowledge about internal quality assurance systems and lack of motivation for their implementation;
- equating internal quality assurance systems mainly to the survey process;
- regarding internal quality assurance systems mainly as a method of acquiring information about the education process (only in exceptional cases, the higher education institutions' authorities, on the basis of the collected information, formulate negative opinions on academic teachers, which may lead to personal decisions);
- lack of objectivity of internal quality assurance systems' assessment;
- failure to notice relations between components of internal quality assurance systems;
- lack of a comprehensive view on internal quality assurance systems (they are treated fragmentarily, which leads not only to marginalization of the importance of this system, but also ignores further development of the higher education institution).

The above inadvertences concerning internal quality assurance systems are the basis for indicating basic directions of its improvement and manifest themselves in (Lisiński 2012: 118–119):

- the need for explicit definition of internal quality assurance systems, determination of its theoretical and methodological formula;
- definition of practical aspects of application of internal quality assurance systems;
- definition of conditions ensuring application of internal quality assurance systems by higher education institutions.

The three abovementioned problematic areas and key-rules should enable effective use of internal quality assurance systems at higher education institutions. They seem to be key

factors ensuring success of this systems implementation and an efficient instrument of higher education development, consistent with the needs of stakeholders, and provide higher education institutions with the opportunity to take advantage of its effects in increasing competitiveness on the educational market.

EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

The activities of the Polish Accreditation Committee are an indication of the external quality assurance system in Poland. In 2009 the Committee was officially accepted to the *European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education*.

The Polish Accreditation Committee, established in 2001, is an independent institution working within the higher education system for the improvement in the quality of education. “The primary objective of the Committee is to support Polish public and non-public higher education institutions in the development of educational standards matching the best models adopted in the European and global academic space. These activities aim to ensure that graduates of Polish higher education institutions rank high on the national and international labour market and to enhance the competitiveness of Polish higher education institutions as European institutions” (Polish Accreditation Committee).

The Polish Accreditation Committee is the only statutory body in Poland entrusted with the responsibility of evaluating the quality of higher education. Its opinions and resolutions have a legally binding effect. The Committee carries out assessment of education quality for study programs (program assessment) and activities of basic organizational entities of higher education institutions (institutional assessment). Both in program and institutional assessment, efficient operation of the internal quality assurance system ensuring permanent improvement to the effects of education, becomes a key criterion of this assessment. In the assessment process the following methods are used: self-evaluation, site visits, written assessment reports, published quality assessments results, and a follow-up procedure.

The evaluation process, provided by the Polish Accreditation Committee, comprises (Statutes of the Polish Accreditation Committee 2011: 8):

- a self-evaluation report prepared by the higher education institution concerned;
- a site visit undertaken in accordance with the rules laid down by the presidium;
- a report prepared by an evaluation panel in accordance with a template;
- the forwarding of the evaluation panel’s report to the higher education institution under evaluation;
- feedback on the evaluation panel’s report provided by the higher education institution under evaluation;
- a proposed quality rating together with its justification;
- a resolution on a program or institutional evaluation adopted by the presidium.

Quality assurance is a continuous, systematic and multi-aspect process. It should be based on the belief that improvement to and strengthening of the quality of education can be reached through self-evaluation, discussion, cooperation, promotion and dissemination of good practices, as well as taking into consideration the opinions of students and other stakeholders (Tutko 2012: 131).

T. Wawak presents an interesting approach to external quality assurance. He proposes that higher education institutions (units and study programs) should not only be accredited by the Polish Accreditation Committee, but their quality management systems should also be certified by a Polish external quality assurance agency (which should be appointed in the future by the Minister of Science and Higher Education) (Wawak 2012: 321).

QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS IN UKRAINIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

By joining the Bologna Process Ukraine has committed to work on bringing the quality of national education in line with European standards. A lot of work in this direction has been carried out by the Ukrainian government. *The Cabinet of Ministers adopted a resolution* dated 31.12.2005, No. 1312 “On urgent measures for the introduction of external evaluation and monitoring of the education quality”, which approved the Regulation on the Ukrainian Centre for Educational Quality Assessment. Since 2008 all applicants have been enrolled in universities on the basis of external testing results.

Ukraine has now developed a plan to improve and adapt the national higher education quality assurance in accordance with the standards and norms of the European Network for Quality Assurance, concerning internal and external higher education quality assurance and quality assurance of activities of the agencies/institutions which provide the external quality assurance in higher education.

According to the legislation, the system of higher education quality assurance in Ukraine is implemented at three levels: at the level of higher education institutions, at the state level (state and public control system), and at the international (European) level.

According to the established procedure, which is enshrined in the law of Ukraine ‘On Education’, the quality of educational services is determined by the system of state education standards. Those state educational standards establish requirements for the content, scope and level of educational and professional training in Ukraine. They are the basis for the assessment of education and qualification of citizens regardless of the form through which the education was obtained. Relevance of educational services to the state standards and requirements is defined by licensing, inspection, certification and accreditation of educational institutions in the manner prescribed by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

The system of higher education standards constitutes the state standard of higher education, branch standards of higher education, and appropriate standards of higher education institutions. Standards of higher education are the basis for assessing the quality and professional preparation of specialists, as well as the quality of educational activities of higher education institutions, regardless of their types, accreditation levels and forms of education.

INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

The internal evaluation of the quality of higher education in universities in Ukraine is carried out on the basis of self-examination. In general terms, self-examination is study,

analysis and self-assessment of an institution for the purpose of self-organization. Information about the state of the educational environment of universities and its dynamic characteristics is collected during the self-examination. This data should identify the strengths and weaknesses of individual components of higher education institutions for the development and implementation of managerial activities to improve the quality of appropriate components.

The process of choice of criteria and methods for assessing the quality of higher education depends on the subject of evaluation. The last-mentioned, shaping the goal of a system's implementation, determines the range of user of the assessment results, i.e. the subject of an assessment system determines its type. According to research carried out by the International Charitable Organization 'Centre of Testing Technologies and Education Quality Monitoring', the most common methods of monitoring quality for internal systems in Ukraine remain in their stable forms: rector tests, the results of modular tests, and examinations. A small number of representatives from surveyed universities consider that quality monitoring is some type of state certification. Some universities have indicated that in the monitoring process they use sociological surveys of students, but had not submitted any examples of how the analysis of those studies affects management decisions.

The results of web-resources monitoring for 110 Ukrainian universities give grounds to assert that only six of them posted data that could be conditionally called a result of internal monitoring of educational activities (Babin, Grynevych, Likarchuk 2011: 70). A significant amount of data which could be used for the evaluation of the quality of education is not made public. This data is information about the criteria, rules and procedures for evaluating the quality of students' knowledge or approval mechanisms, as well as periodic review and monitoring of their educational programs, procedures and criteria which would testify to the appropriate qualifications and high professional level of faculty, the conformity of material and technical base to the program content, and other important data that could be obtained as a result of using effective internal systems for monitoring the quality of education.

There are some general criteria and indicators of internal quality assurance, which are used for describing the educational environment of modern Ukrainian universities. These are various aspects of academic activities, autonomy of universities, goals and learning tools, criteria for selection and admission of entrants, existence of objective appeals procedures, quality of educational programs, quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the faculty, feedback from students, transfer and accumulation of training credits, interdisciplinarity, training in a framework of various programs, infrastructure and equipment, obtaining extra-budgetary funds, motivation of faculty and researchers, investment in buildings and equipment, systematic audits, connection with the labour markets, international scientific competitiveness, mechanisms of international quality control, participation in current public debates, and innovative potential in scientific, technical and cultural fields.

Unfortunately, such indicators for internal systems of education quality evaluation, which are established and functioning in some universities, are not typical in Ukrainian higher education institutions. Thus it is not appropriate to make general conclusions about the efficiency of such systems.

EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS

In Ukraine the main instrument and the means of the state to achieve appropriate standards of quality education in higher education institutions is accreditation. According to the law of Ukraine *On Higher Education*, an accreditation is a procedure of granting to the institution a certain right to conduct educational activities relating to higher education and training, in accordance with the standards of higher education and state requirements regarding personnel, scientific, methodological and logistical sources. At the same time higher educational institutions are assigned a certain level (I – IV). An accreditation level is a level of capability of a university to conduct educational activities relating to higher education and training. According to results of an accreditation the institution is entitled to issue a document about the education level it has achieved.

The accreditation procedure is preceded by the other permitting procedure, namely, licensing. According to the law of Ukraine *On Higher Education* licensing is a procedure for recognition of the ability of a higher education institution to begin certain types of educational activities relating to higher education and training in accordance with the standards of higher education, as well as state requirements regarding personnel, research, methodological and logistical sources.

As a result of licensing, the Ministry of Education of Ukraine, the Ministry of Education of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, and local education governing authorities provide for educational institutions (regardless of their form of ownership) a license to conduct educational activities in accordance with state requirements, with the establishment of certain educational or qualification levels of training, that meet the personnel, scientific, methodological and logistical sources, and enter them into the state register of educational institutions.

State administration provides for suspension or revocation of a higher education institution license in case of failure or gross violation of the conditions and rules of the licensed activity, of for presentation and dissemination of false information regarding its implementation.

As a result of higher education and graduate education institutions' accreditation, the Ministry of Education of Ukraine, jointly with ministries and departments governing educational institutions implements these activities (Kysil 2005: 82–87, *Systema zabezpechennia yakosti*):

- determining the correspondence of educational services to public standards of a certain education and qualification level for directions (specialties), gives the right to issuance of a document about the education of a state standard;
- determining the level of accreditation of the institution;
- providing certain autonomy to the educational institution according to the received status;
- informing the community about the quality of education and research activities of higher education institutions;
- solving in a prescribed manner the issue of the reorganization of a higher education institution with the provision of an appropriate status or liquidation.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS IN POLISH AND UKRAINIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

There are three indicators on quality assurance included in the European Higher Education Area scorecard. Table 2 presents these indicators relating to Poland and Ukraine.

The indicator *Stage of development of external quality assurance system* shows how much progress has been made in quality assurance during the Bologna Process. *Level of student participation in quality assurance* focuses on student participation in governance structures, in review teams, in the preparation of self-evaluation reports, in decision-making processes and in follow-up procedures. The third indicator, *Level of international participation in external quality assurance*, concerns international aspects of external quality assurance.

Table 2. Indicators on quality assurance relating to Poland and Ukraine.

Indicator on quality assurance	Poland	Ukraine
Stage of development of external quality assurance system	A fully functioning quality assurance system is in operation nationwide. The QA agency has been successfully evaluated against the European Standards and Guidelines in the EHEA. The quality assurance system applies to all institutions and/or programs and covers the following main issues: teaching, student support services, internal quality assurance/management system	A quality assurance system is in operation nationwide. The quality assurance system has not been evaluated against the European Standards and Guidelines in the EHEA. The quality assurance system applies to all institutions and/or programs and covers a subset of the main issues
Level of student participation in quality assurance	In all quality assurance reviews, students participate at five levels: in governance structures of national quality assurance agencies, as full members or observers in external review teams, in the preparation of self-evaluation reports, in the decision making process for external reviews and in follow-up procedures	Students cannot participate or participate at only one level
Level of international participation in external quality assurance	Three of the four aspects are met (agency is full member of ENQA and/or listed on EQAR, international peers/experts participate in governance of national quality assurance bodies, international peers/experts participate as members/observers in evaluation teams and international peers/experts participate in follow-up procedures)	No international participation

Source: The European Higher Education Area in 2012: *Bologna Process Implementation Report*, Brussels: Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency: 64–67

Analysis of the data in Table 2 as well as the foregoing material leads to these conclusions:

1. Systems of external quality assurance of higher education are successfully commissioned in Poland and Ukraine. Both systems are used to determine compliance of service quality with European standards; however, the system of external evaluation of education quality in Ukraine meets European standards for a majority of universities only declaratively. It should also be noted that higher education in Poland has advantages in the component of external quality assessment and its corresponding features, such as an expanded system of information support of students and the use of modern informational technologies for this purpose.
2. By the component which reflects the level of student involvement in the assessment of the quality of educational services the higher education system in Poland has a significant advantage. Despite the implementation of quality assessment technology by learners, as stated by the largest universities, this process has not widened in the higher education system of Ukraine since the signing of the *Bologna Declaration*. Furthermore, the results of the quality of educational services provided by the students themselves are usually not used in refining the existing educational programs of Ukrainian universities.
3. By the level of international participation in external quality assurance the system of higher education in Poland is also substantially closer to the European education system than the system of Ukrainian higher education, despite incomplete implementation of the appropriate requirements. External quality assessment in universities of Ukraine does not implement opportunities for international participation, despite the presence of the relevant legislation.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research results, it could be concluded that there is no alternative to the approach of the European standards in higher education systems for Poland and Ukraine. As well, an inevitable rethinking of their own achievements and their subsequent use is required on a new qualitative level.

The presented characteristics of quality assessment systems of higher education in Poland and Ukraine show that the participation of European countries in the *Bologna Process* allows a gradual approach of higher education systems to the same standards.

Comparative analysis of quality assessment systems in higher education of Poland and Ukraine shows that the Polish system is closer to the declared standards, although the work undertaken at the national level and the level of individual higher education institutions of Ukraine is gradually increasing in compliance with the requirements of the *Bologna Declaration*.

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SYSTEMY ZAPEWNIANIA JAKOŚCI W POLSKIM I UKRAIŃSKIM SZKOLNICTWIE WYŻSZYM.
ANALIZA PORÓWNAWCZA

Artykuł opisuje postęp w zakresie rozwijania zewnętrznych i wewnętrznych systemów zapewniania jakości w polskim i ukraińskim szkolnictwie wyższym, na tle Europejskiego Obszaru Szkolnictwa Wyższego. Tematyka artykułu jest skupiona na tym, w jakim stopniu systemy zapewniania jakości w powyższych krajach są zgodne ze *Standardami i wskazówkami dotyczącymi zapewnienia jakości kształcenia w Europejskim Obszarze Szkolnictwa Wyższego*. Ponadto w pracy przedstawiono wewnętrzne i zewnętrzne czynniki zapewniające jakość kształcenia w kontekście europejskim. Autorzy artykułu podjęli próbę przeprowadzenia analizy porównawczej systemów zapewniania jakości w polskim i ukraińskim szkolnictwie wyższym.

Słowa kluczowe: systemy zapewniania jakości, szkolnictwo wyższe