

Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education: Changes and Challenges

NOQA Meeting

23.9.2022

QEF2

- Quality Board of international experts ($N = 7 + 2$ observers)
 - Andrée Sursock (Chair)
 - Crichton Lang
 - Ellen Hazelkorn
 - Student member - TBD
 - (appointed by LÍS, the National Union for Icelandic Students)
 - Riitaa Pyykkö
 - Norman Sharp
 - Philip Winn
- Research Evaluation Advisory Committee (REAC)
- Quality Council of Icelandic stakeholders
- Secretariat (Manager of the QB)

QEF2

- Two types of Reviews:
 - *Subject-Level Review/SLR* (institutional responsibility)
 - With independent external expert involvement
 - *Institution-Wide Review/IWR* (Board responsibility)
 1. Quality of the student learning experience
 2. Standards of degrees and awards
 3. Commentary on quality of management of research

Changes and Challenges

Secretariat staffing and developments

- New Secretariat staff member = 100% increase in staffing
 - Induction
 - Strengthening internal quality processes
- Search for new Executive Director of the Secretariat
- Publication of Fact Sheets
 - Programme review
 - More to follow

Heavy workload

- QEF2 reviews
 - Final IWR this Autumn
- Commissioned reviews
 - Review of strategic management at a university-affiliated research institute (completed)
 - Impact assessment of *Icelandic Research Fund* (pre-publication)
 - Programme-level review of Police Studies (follow-up phase)
 - IWR (follow-up phase)
 - Online provision in Iceland (preparatory phase)
 - Masters-level provision in Iceland (preparatory phase)

Joint projects

- Supporting capacity-building for internal QA in Greenland (ongoing)
 - Series of webinars
 - Virtual visits to Icelandic universities
 - Follow-up support of annual monitoring of programmes
 - Next steps?

Two HEIs part of European universities

- University of Iceland
- Agricultural University of Iceland

New Ministry

- New Ministry
 - Higher Education, Science and Innovation
 - Literal translation: Universities, Science, Industry and Innovation
 - Operates in “scrums”
 - “Nordic” model

Legal and policy environment

- Legal framework in need of revision
 - Laws dating from 2006
 - Recent Ministry “Handbook on Accreditation”
- No HE policy for Iceland
 - National policy silent on HE
 - Breeds uncertainty

Lack of common data on HE sector

- Ministry collected data from the universities up to 2017 but did not publish. Have not collected since then.
- National Statistics office collects very basic data
- Implications:
 - Annual dialogue between universities and Quality Board is not informed by up-to-date data
 - International review teams struggle to understand national context

National CRIS System

- PURE from Elsevier
- National: 7 universities and 3 research institutions
- Launched in June
- Fully operational 2024-2025?
- Promises to deliver data on
 - Publications in international databases
 - Research outputs appearing outside international databases (arts, national)
 - HR
 - Links to research funding data from national agency

Evaluation of QEF2

- Survey all stakeholders
 - Universities
 - Quality Council
 - National student union and member unions
 - Ministry
- Follow-up interviews and focus groups
 - Rectors' Conference
 - Review chairs and team members
 - Other select groups of stakeholders

Development of QEF3

- To be launched in 2024 – first IWR in 2025
- Strengthen links with ESG (new ESGs by then?)
- Keep judgments?
 - Standards of degrees, student learning experience
- New judgments?
 - Research?
 - Governance?
 - Third mission?
- New “developmental” areas?
 - EDI

Student engagement

- Fantastic national union of students
 - 1-year terms for officers
 - COVID
 - Funding and support environment
- Some universities have excellent practice around student engagement
- Students are full members of all review teams

Thank you!

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