

Stakeholder cooperation - similarities, differences and good practices

A NOQA project in process

INQAHEE Madrid

4-7 April 2011

Karin Agéll
Stefán Baldursson
Karl Holm
Tove Blytt Holmen
Thomas Lange
Ellen Silleborg

What are we doing

- The Nordic Quality Assurance Network in Higher Education (NOQA) annual joint project 2011.
- The main objective is to create an understanding of different Nordic points of view and practices regarding stakeholder cooperation.
- Particular focus with respect to employers and other representatives of working life.
- By the end of the project comparisons have been made, conclusions have been drawn and examples of good practice found within our different countries.
- Information of the project will be disseminated through workshops for the staff at the Nordic QA-agencies' interested stakeholders.

Main questions for the project are:

- What is the definition of a stakeholder in our different QA-contexts?
- Who are our main stakeholders?
- How and when do we cooperate with stakeholders?
- What are the benefits of stakeholder cooperation for different actors?
- What competencies are needed from stakeholders taking part in our evaluation of higher education?
- How and where do we find relevant individuals representing working life?

Nordic cooperation in QA

- some statements

- What is a Nordic approach in QA?
- Attention to national demands from the government as well as from the HEIs and representatives from working life.
- The Nordic Quality Assurance Network in Higher Education (NOQA) has been established by the five Nordic countries and their respective national organizations engaged in evaluation and quality assurance of higher education.
- The main objective of the project is to create an understanding of different Nordic points of view, experiences and practices regarding stakeholder cooperation, in particular with respect to employers and other representatives of working life.

... some more ...

- Governments in each country have assigned one special agency/unit (two in Denmark) to assure and nationally evaluate the quality of higher education.
- Output of the HE sector should be in line with the needs and requirements of the working life and society in general. Essential is to establish sustainable and open cooperation with stakeholders.
- To establish accepted definitions of quality and common general understandings.
- Agencies/units should have autonomous responsibility for their operations.

... even more

- A delicate task for agencies is that conclusions and recommendations should not be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, governments/ministries or other stakeholders.
- The peer-review model is used when evaluating. Peer/expert groups include representatives from working life.
- A tentative scenario in a peer-less QA-system is that “hard facts” which are easy to gather and measure, for example quantitative figures showing examination rates, retention/drop-out rates or transition rates from university to working life, becomes the main basis for evaluation.

Nordic Agencies

Denmark

- ACE-Denmark: accreditation of universities
- EVA: accreditation of colleges and academies

Finland - FINHEEC

Iceland - Ministry of Education

Norway - NOKUT

Sweden - Högskoleverket SNAHE

- General description of the agencies - key national and international stakeholders includes the HEIs, the Ministry, rectors' councils and student organisations as well as various evaluation organisations and relevant working life.