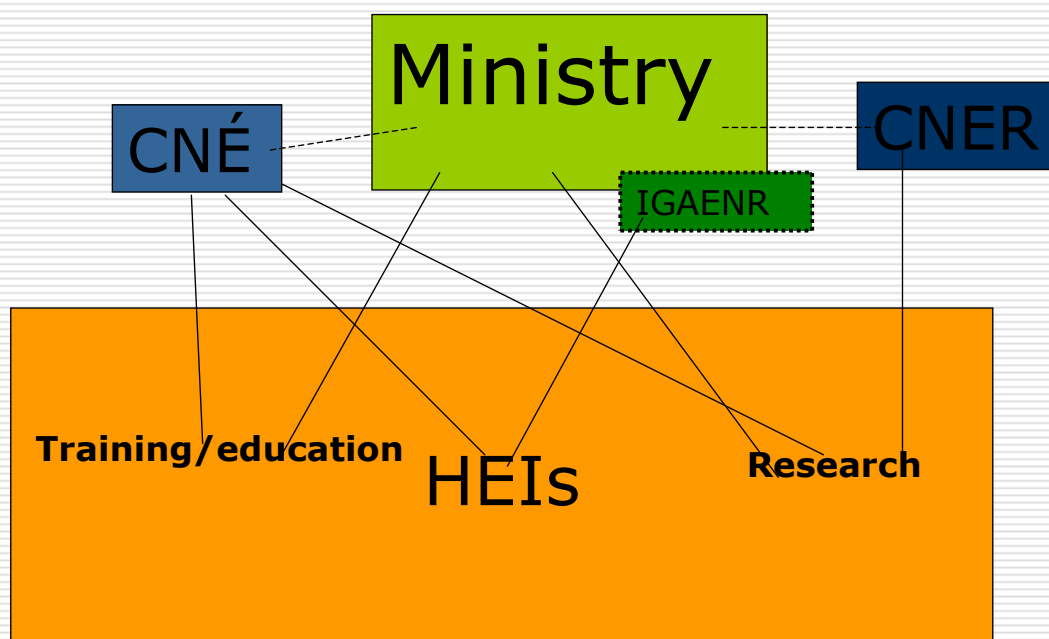


ECTS - Tagung "Kooperation mit Benelux-Länder und Frankreich" 16.-17. April 2007

Institutional evaluation, programs accreditation and quality assurance in France : a time of change

Pierre Couraud - AERES

Quality assurance and evaluation in France : a system that used to be complex



The evaluation of the training offer

From the institutional perspective (ex-CNÉ)

- Independent
- An evaluation of the training policy/strategy more than of the training itself
- Global view
- ... but ...
- Global view
- Only every 8-10 years
- Does a good institutional training strategy provide good programs ?

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The evaluation of the training offer

From the program perspective (Ministry)

- A technical/disciplinary expertise
- Detailed
- A national framework
- ... but ...
- Not independent from the state
- Not enough "outcomes oriented"
- Time and money consuming : efficiency?

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The reasons for changes

- The "crisis" of the French research
- To reduce the evaluation bodies

- Bologna process
- Lisbon strategy
- Need to fulfil ESG (ex. independency)

→ Towards a simplification ?

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L'AERES : The research and higher education evaluation agency

- Created in 2006 by the law
- Set up in 2007
- 1 agency, 3 sections :
 - The "institutional evaluation" section
 - The "research (labs) evaluation" section
 - The "training evaluation" section
- Benefits from the previous experiences
- Has to reform the practice of evaluation ?

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How to ensure the quality of programs ? Challenges for the stake holders

- For the national state :
 - Division between evaluation and decision
 - Clarification/reform of criteria leading to funding ?
- For the HEIs :
 - Increasing responsibility (HEIs are the first responsible for the quality of their programs - EUA "statement")
 - Need for more internal QA mechanisms
- For the agency :
 - Transparency and relevance : building trust
 - Reform of the evaluation methods

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Which methodology for the evaluation of the training offer ?

- The evaluation of the institutional training policy ? Not relevant and not precise enough !
- The accreditation program by program ? Too expensive (time and money) !
- Is there an intermediary solution ?
- Can we define new "objects" of evaluation that -at least partly- ensure quality of programs ?

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Which methodology for the evaluation of the training offer ? (2)

- Possible new "objects" :
 - Documents that present the programs (the so-called *maquettes*) ?
 - Diploma supplement ?
 - ECTS ?
- But is it sufficient to ensure ourselves that the evaluated HEI provides such information ?
- If not, wouldn't be a solution to focus not only on the existence of such information/documents but also on the mechanisms that objectively lead to produce them ?

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From evaluation to quality audit ? A means to ensure the quality of national and transnational programs ?

- The evaluation of internal QA mechanisms
 - Are the courses evaluated by students and if so, are the results of the evaluations used to improve the programs ?
 - Is the employability of the former students known & analysed ?
 - Are researchers, potential employers, administrative staff, etc. involved in the building of the programs ?
 - How is justified the ECTS ?
 - ...
- At which level is it relevant to evaluate it ?
 - The institution ?
 - The faculty ?
 - The department ?
 - The discipline ?

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A possible European way to evaluate transnational degrees ?

- Diploma supplement, ECTS are supposed to be common “objects” among European HEIs
- Does that help us to evaluate a transnational degree ?
- Can the ESG, that provide common and shared principles about internal QA of HEI, be of any help ?

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The experience of TEEP II

- The Transnational European Evaluation project :
 - Undertaken by ENQA between 2004 and 2006
 - Involving 6 European QA agencies and experts from 9 different countries
 - Evaluation of 3 different joint master’s programs
 - Based on the principles of the ESG
- “Lessons”
 - Experts should have experience of transnational education and evaluation
 - ESG do not provide precise criterions
 - There is a need to reach agreements, within the panel team and with the “evaluated” people, on the principle, goals, etc. of the evaluation process

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Conclusion

- ❑ ESG remains a useful tool for principles, not for criteria of evaluation
- ❑ Need for a transnational perspective for the evaluation process too ?
- ❑ As institutions are building trust between them, so are agencies...
- ❑ ... toward the European register

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Thank you for your attention

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