European Association of Distance Teaching Universities

E-learning and quality benchmarking E-xcellence

Local seminar Finnish Online UAS

30 November - Jyväskylä
General objective

Creating a QA in e-learning system, because:

• The use of e-learning increases
• E-learning is an essential element for Lifelong learning
• Internationalisation of education is supported by e-learning
• E-learning has become mainstream provision

Integral part of education – Integral part of QA

E-xcellence instrument launched in 2007:
Complementary to the existing national quality assurance systems.
E-xcellence: QA in e-learning instrument

- Curriculum design, Course design, Course delivery, Services (student and staff support), Management (institutional strategies)

- E-xcellence focuses on elements in course provision that contribute to Lifelong Learning schemes, like:
  - ease of access to courses and services
  - new forms of interaction (students and staff)
  - flexibility and personalisation

- E-xcellence is a benchmarking instrument.
Why benchmarking?

The system of benchmarking includes:

• The **institution taking the responsibility for QA**
• **Self-evaluation** as a bases for self-improvement
• Using **peer reviewers** as reference and input for improvement
  *In a **collaborative process of dialogue** we create an environment of learning from each other*
  *In a **process of comparing** the university’s’ performance with best practices in the field of e-learning we identify weaknesses and strengths*
• Setting a **roadmap for improvement**
E-xcellence tool will help the university:

- to develop e-learning programmes for LLL-students
- to guide the internal discussion
- to improve the quality of e-learning performance
- to learn from other similar institutions
- to use existing good-practices
- to be up-to date on developments in e-learning
Manual

The instrument is based on the E-xcellence manual containing the benchmark statements, with the criteria and indicators. In the guide you can find the criteria and indicators. The structure of the instrument is identical to the sections in the guide and are organised into six sections.

2012

- Preface
- Chapter 1: Strategic Management
- Chapter 2: Curriculum Design
- Chapter 3: Course Design
- Chapter 4: Course Delivery
- Chapter 5: Staff Support
- Chapter 6: Student Support

Annexes:
- Glossary

Read, share and apply the newest version of the E-xcellence Manual with the latest benchmarks in quality e-learning performance. Next to an overall update of the full manual you can find new benchmarks on:

- Open Educational Resources
- Libraries as knowledge brokers
- Social media in higher education.

Pay with a Tweet

Full manual
The basic tool is the quick scan, which can be applied in three ways:

The quick scan as a quick orientation (basic option)

The quick scan with a review at a distance (extended option)

The quick scan with an on-site assessment (most comprehensive option)
E-xcellence Associates Label

Not a label of proven excellence, but a label to reward continuous educational improvement.

The label is provided based on an external review at a distance or on-site.

Self-assessment
Roadmap of improvement

Essential is integration of benchmarks

Virtual Benchmarking Community
Community

Join our community
Our community is a space where you can meet other members, share good practices and experiences, ask other members for advice, etc. Thus, a place where we can stay connected.

Stay connected
This community is a space where you can present your university to other members and share your good practices and expertise. It also works the other way around. It is a space where you will find good practices and expertise to make your roadmap a success. It is a place where we can stay connected. You are welcome and encouraged to leave messages, join our forum, upload additional videos and images related to the E-xcellence label.

Please try to contribute to our community as much as possible, and invite other label members to join our community. Thank you.
Goal: From project to mainstream implementation of the E-xcellence instrument European wide at the local level.
The main objectives of E-xcellence NEXT are:

1. **further European introduction**
   Extend local seminars European wide to 20 seminars

(2). **updating and extending the E-xcellence manual**
   Inc. Social networking and OER

(3). **broadening the partnership on European and Global level.** UNESCO Global TF QA in e-learning
(1) **Local seminars within E-xcellence NEXT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.</th>
<th>Kaunus University of Technology (KTU), Lithuania</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Master’s degree (MSc.) in Information Technologies of Distance Education</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Akademia Górniczo-Hutnicza (AGH), Poland</td>
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<td>Centre of e-Learning and Faculty of Management</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Open University of Cyprus (OUC), Cyprus</td>
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<td>Bachelor on Hellenic Studies</td>
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<td>Master on Educational Studies</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Riga Technical University (RTU), Latvia</td>
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<td>Professional Master Program &quot;Innovations and Entrepreneurship&quot;</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Universidade Aberta (UAb), Portugal</td>
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<td>Master on Administration and Educational Management (MAGE);</td>
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<td>Master on E-learning Pedagogy (MPEL).</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Hellenic Open university (HOU), Greece,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Master in Business Administration (MBA)</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics &amp; Informatics (MESI) and MESI branches in Minsk, Tver, Yaroslavl and Yerevan</td>
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<td></td>
<td>25 programs (MBA, Master and Bachelor)</td>
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QA-agencies reached with E-xcellence NEXT

• **ENQA** as Associate partner in the project NEXT

• Portuguese Agency for Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Education – *(A3ES)*,

• La Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación *(ANECA*, Spain),

• Vlaamse Interuniversitaire Raad *(VLIR)*,

• Vlaamse Hogeschoolraad *(VLHORA)*,

• Dutch-Flemish accreditation body *(NVAO)*,

• Lithuanian Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, Higher Education Quality Evaluation Centre *(HEQEC – AIKNC)*,

• Polish Quality Assurance Agency for Technical Universities *(KAUT)*,

• Higher Education Planning, Evaluation, Accreditation and Coordination Council *(YÖDAK, TR)*

• Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency *(HQAA)*.

• The National Center of Public Accreditation *(NCPA)* *(RU)*
What aspects did you like the most about the E-xcellence seminar?

- Open discussion, sharing views and experiences
- Opportunity to exchange experiences between local team and experts from other countries
- Revealing strengths and weaknesses
- Improvement plan
- E-xcellence tool is extremely useful for improving quality
- Commitment of variety of participants: managers, teachers, students, representative of National accreditation agency
- Discussions that are relevant for future development
- It was an opportunity to revise our master degree program
- The process of completing the Quick Scan
Has the use of the instrument had any impact in your organisation so far?

• Discussion on some important issues was initiated, involving stakeholders not involved before
• We have identified issues for further e-learning development
• The participation in the project has already led to adjustments of the QA system of the university
• It has opened a dialogue between different stakeholders
• We are working on improvement along the road map
• Definitely, QA became more important
• Since the project teachers see how to improve their courses
• Too early for an official impact, but it enhances fruitful discussions
• E-xcellence framework is very useful in the process of designing an own QA system
• Not yet, some changes require decision making at the central level
What role could QA agencies play in relation to QA in e-learning?

• Create an independent assessment of distance learning programmes
• They should regard e-learning as an indispensable element of modern education
• They should prepare recommendation in QA and e-learning
• Provide a more detailed implementation plan
• They should both play a constructive and an accreditive role in the development of a methodology to assess quality in e-learning
• Organise workshops and training on QA benchmarks
(2) Updating of the manual

Updating of the instrument:
1) Stakeholder input
   Input from: questionnaire, European seminar, local seminars and stakeholder meetings

2) Contextual analyses

3) Emerging Topics
   • Social Networking in HE
   • Growth of the OER movement
The Future is Blended?

• Distinctions between “conventional” and Distance Education disappear
• All universities offer a “blended” experience
• Variations in the “blend” according to institutional mission.
• DL institutions have strengths based in the origination of learning materials
• F-2-F institutions may focus on student-support aspects in VLE
Convergence in Education

Changing Communication patterns between students and tutors
  • Demand for increased communications
  • Expectations of 24x7 support

Web Resources replace text material
  • Information and learning resources not limited by book ownership or library access

Student–student communication increases
  • Asynchronous communication expands participation

VLE focus of student communities
  • Discussion routinely integrated within course design

Extensive informal student-student communication
  • Student forums and chat rooms extend informal communication

VLE used for materials distribution
  • More effective delivery but demands rapid updating
Social networking

- Opportunity to enable group work at a distance
- Opportunity to include asynchronus and synchronus communication tools
- Opportunity to combine VLE systems with public systems (social life blurring with academic life)
- ...

The challenge is to capture the essence of the pedagogic uses of social networking in QA-criteria that are not prescriptive and do not favour particular technological solutions.
What about OER?

- We expect that the quality assurance community will meet increasing use of OERs in the future

  – Content – but also tools, licences, practices…

Quality points

OER repository

Provenance
Reputation
Brand

checking

creation

peer review

use

user recommendation
Quality Dimensions

Content
- Accuracy
- Currency
- Relevance

Pedagogic Effectiveness
- Learning objectives
- Prerequisites
- Learning design
- Learning styles
- Assessment

Ease of use
- Clarity
- Visual
- attractiveness, engaging
- Clear navigation
- Functional!

Reusability
- Format
- Localisation
- Discoverability: metadata
E-xcellence

Quality Assessment for E-learning: a Benchmarking Approach

Second edition
8 Curricula are designed to include e-learning components that contribute both to the development of subject specific educational outcomes and to the acquisition of more transferable educational skills.

9 Curricula are designed to enable participation in academic communities via online social networking tools. These online communities provide opportunities for collaborative learning, contact with external professionals and involvement in research and professional activities.

2.1 Flexibility

E-learning offers the opportunity to provide flexibility in the time, place and pace of learning. The presentation of content can be
QA in e-learning
Expertise and Service Centre
(2013 -)

• E-xcellence website on QA
• University and Quality Agency Masterclasses (on-site or on-line)
• Pre-conference sessions
• University assessments (on-site or at a distance)
(3) UNESCO’s Global TF QA in E-learning

The following models represent the Regions:

• EADTU: E-xcellence; a benchmarking approach (Europe)
• CALED: Latin American cooperation on QA in e-learning
• Commonwealth of Learning (COL)
• AAOU: Asia and Pacific Region
• ACDE: African Council for Distance Education
The goal of Global Task Force QA

The global TF is committed to submit by the end of 2012 a report consisting of:

- Components of e-learning to be covered by QA
- Recommendations for QA agencies and universities on the integration of e-learning in their QA-systems

(distributed December 2012)
Thank you for your attention

www.eadtu.eu/e-xcellencenext
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