

# **INTRODUCTION OF STANDARDS FOR INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE IN POLISH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (0297)**

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**Introduction**

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

The goal of the outline is to present the outcomes of the own research conducted in the higher education institutions (HEI) in the Malopolska Province in Poland, in the scope of introduction of standards for internal quality assurance (recommended by the Authors of the Report: Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area). Moreover standards for internal quality assurance in HEI in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) were presented.

## **Standards for internal quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area**

One of the effects of the conference of European ministers responsible for higher education in Bergen was adaptation of the standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the EHEA.

European standards for internal quality assurance in the HEIs proposed in the Report [*Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2005, Helsinki, p. 6*] are as follow:

1. Policy and procedures for quality assurance.
2. Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards.
3. Assessment of students.
4. Quality assurance of teaching staff.
5. Learning resources and student support.
6. Information systems.
7. Public information.

The above standards were supplemented in the Report 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.

The EHEA is characterised by its diversity of higher education systems, 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 HEIs in Europe, irrespective of their structure and the national system in which they are located.

## **Information about the research**

The aim of the author of the study was to answer the question whether in higher education in the Malopolska Province were implemented standards for internal quality

assurance of education. The study took place in March 2010 and covered 26 public and private universities (Table 1).

Table 1. The number of the HEIs included in the research.

LP.	Kind of the HEI	Number of the HEI	Number of received questionnaires	Return (in percentage)
1	The state higher vocational schools	4	3	75,00
2	Public academic HEIs	7	3	42,86
3	Non-public HEIs	15	7	46,67
$\Sigma$		<b>26</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>50,00</b>

Source: Own research.

Research methods used in research is a method of diagnostic survey, which serves as a method of leading and supporting methods: the method of analysis and criticism of literature, the method of examination of documents and statistical methods.

In order to obtain the data, a questionnaire was developed, aimed at public universities for the Vice-Rector for teaching. In the case of non-public school survey was addressed to rectors, because in those schools this position is held by Rector. Survey respondents were asked to answer whether their universities have implemented different standards for internal quality assurance recommended by the authors of the Report. The survey contained 19 half-open questions about the quality assurance.

Surveys were sent electronically to the respondents. Of the 26 surveys 13 questionnaires were received, representing 50% of returns. In the case of all types of schools (public and private) received more than 40% return questionnaires, the greatest number of them arrived from state higher vocational schools (75%).

## Conclusion

The research shows that 92% of the HEIs have got policy for quality assurance and standards of their programmes and awards. 85% of HEIs developed and implemented a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. In all HEIs which procedures for quality assurance were implemented. On the basis of this data the following conclusion can be accepted: in the majority of the HEIs in the Malopolska Province have implemented the first standard for internal quality assurance "Policy and procedures for quality assurance".

85% of the respondents have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards. In all HEIs students are assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently. 92% of the HEIs have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so. The same percentage of the institutions are ensured that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate for each programme offered. All HEIs collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and publish up to date and objective information about the programmes and awards they are offering. Therefore it can be stated that remaining six standards for internal quality assurance were also implemented in responding institutions.

Survey respondents were asked to answer the question whether they represent the HEIs in which standards for internal quality assurance recommended in the Report were implemented. The vast majority of responses were positive.

The present studies show an optimistic picture of the implementation of standards for internal quality assurance in higher education institutions in Malopolska. However, it seems necessary to carry out detailed studies in this field (eg, using the techniques of interview). During in-depth interviews it would be possible to obtain answers to many interesting questions, such as procedures that were developed in terms of quality? What are the mechanisms to monitor the programs of study? Which tools ensure that staff which conducts classes have the relevant expertise?

The research presented in the outline must therefore be taken as pilot studies that will be developed in the future research.