

Developments in Governance in Higher Education in Europe: Key Dimensions of Governance Models

28 May 2019, Beirut

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- 1. The world changes, so does higher education**
- 2. Recent trends of European higher education area, at a glance**
- 3. University governance : models, structures**

Two drivers:

- 4. Increase efficiency**
- 5. Interplay governance / quality assurance**

**1. The world
changes,
so does higher
education**

Higher education has expanded significantly over recent decades, and people with higher education now account for the largest share of 25-34 year-olds in many OECD countries.

On average across OECD countries, 36% of adults age 25-64 are higher education-educated.

As a result of the expansion of higher education, the share of younger adults (age 25-34) with higher education is 44% on average across OECD countries, much higher than the share of 55-64 year-olds (27%)



In the EU there were 19.6 million tertiary education students in 2016, of which 61 % were studying for Bachelor's degrees.

In 2016, women accounted for 54 % of tertiary students in the EU. The majority of students were men only for doctoral studies.

Almost one third of tertiary education students in the EU in 2016 were studying social sciences, journalism, information, business, administration or law.



The knowledge economy has come

- + Expansion of the knowledge economy and growing middle class in many developing nations = **higher demand for higher education.**
- + **Global massification of education, not yet saturated,**
- + **The traditional age-group for higher education is also broadening:**
 - a. The demand from mature students for higher education is growing in many parts of the world.

The crisis has changed the settings of the knowledge economy

- + 10 years ago, the 2008 financial crisis and the subsequent public debt crisis had many **negative impacts especially** on
 - a. Business innovation and R&D
 - b. Employment rate : Unemployment of highly skilled has increased unemployment rate for high-skilled workers for selected countries

- + Yet, the crisis and the recovery have been uneven across industries... and certain countries have better resisted the crisis than others: China, Korea Business funded R&D, yearly growth rate remains high

In response, Govts introduced recovering measures associated with HE reforms 1/2

- + Overall, in response, governments introduced short-term measures and longer-term reforms, a large bunch of them focusing on HE with:
 - a. **High priority and increased resources** allocated to Higher Education
 - b. **Increased budgets** for higher education and universities (Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, etc.)
 - c. Development of **HE capabilities** including infrastructures
 - d. Maintained or increased **hiring of researchers** at university during economic downturn (Italy)
 - e. **Changes in the governance of HEIs** : Reform of HEIs management and funding: confirmed trend in many countries towards greater autonomy and more competitive grant funding (away from „block“ funding) – introduction of performance- and indicator-based allocation mechanisms• Strengthen evaluation of uni/programmes

In response, Govts introduced recovering measures associated with HE reforms 2/2

+ **Strengthen education for innovation...**

- + Improve the teaching of STEM
- + **New teaching methods:** increased hours of instruction (Germany, Ireland, Norway), new **curricula, standards** (, Ireland, UK),
- + **New assessment practices** (Austria, Norway, Poland)
- + **Teacher training...**

+ **Improving the teaching of entrepreneurship:**

- + Accelerate **knowledge transfer**
- + Improving the conditions of **technology transfer**,
- + **Professionalisation**,
- + Raise awareness of **innovative performance research** in the research community (courses) and the general public

CALLING FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIVENESS!

What have been the impacts of such changes on governance?

Executive management structures

Reduced-committee based decision making

fixed-term or permanent contracts for deans/Rectors

Top management teams

Engagement in management operation and development

Increased budgetary and staff management responsibilities for Deans and Heads

Strengthen leadership at all levels

2. The European higher education landscape

- 3 degree structures
- Recognition of qualification
- Quality assurance
- Social dimension
- Employability
- Values

3 degree structure

- The dominant European model.
- But in 50 % of the EHEA countries the majority of first-cycle graduates continue to study in a second-cycle programme while 25% of countries it is less than 25 % that move directly into the second cycle.
- **Short-cycle** higher education programmes (ISCED 5 level, 120 ECTS) and in only 50% of these learning achievements can be fully recognised within first-cycle studies in the same field.
- Most countries have now completed their **NQF**, there remain a few where development is **slow or not moving**.
- **Diploma supplement...**
- => **significant differences in labor market recognition of first-cycle qualifications across the EHEA.**

Recognition of qualifications

- Formal compliance with most aspects of the Lisbon Recognition Convention (LRC) at national level is well established across the EHEA.
- But concerns with recognition of qualifications of refugees, displaced persons
- Many cases, HEIs (usually responsible for recognition decisions for academic purposes), may not always follow all the required principles of good recognition practice.
- => **Far from 'automatic recognition'**.

Quality assurance

- Much progress since 2003
- Students are not fully involved in all QA processes.
- Improvement-oriented models of external quality assurance are far less prevalent than supervisory models.
- HEIs are restricted to using national QA agencies and not EQAR-registered agencies).
- The European Approach to the Quality Assurance of Joint Programmes has hardly been implemented.
- New type of HE calls for renewed methodology
 - => **better QA, especially internal QA and fit for purpose external QA**

Social dimension

- Social dimension challenges have accompanied the Bologna Process throughout its existence.
- Disadvantaged learners still face access barriers :
 - students from low and medium- educated families (under-represented, more likely to enter HE with a delay);
 - gender imbalances,
 - life-long learning is not a reality for learners in many countries.
- Disadvantaged students also face difficulties in completing higher education, dropping out in higher proportions.
- Only a few countries have introduced measures in recent years to improve the conditions for under-represented groups to access and complete higher education.
- **=> managing social dimension is key.**

Employability

- Employment of recent graduates has improved as countries recover from the economic crisis.
- But graduate unemployment remains a significant problem in some parts of Europe, as not all countries have recovered to the same extent and at the same speed.
- **=> reinforcing connexion with labour market is key.**

Values

- The Yerevan Communiqué emphasizes shared values as the **foundation** of a renewed vision of the European Higher Education Area.
- Academic freedom and autonomy of HEIs
- Include student and other stakeholder participation in the democratic governance and management of higher education.
- “While concerns have been raised about violations of values in some EHEA countries, it is difficult to find causal explanations related to the different systems of higher education governance in operation across the EHEA”.
- **About relationships between the State and the HEIs**

3. University governance

Unitary governance model

- + One governing body exerts decision-making power
- + Senate (Ireland, Estonia, Poland)
- + or Board-type (more frequent, Nordic):
 - + More diverse, smaller, financial, strategic

Dual governance model

- + 2 governing bodies exerts decision-making power
- + Senate + Board-type (traditional, balanced)
- + Asymmetric (Board > Senate) France

Significant concentration of power

Composition of governing bodies

- + Free regulations (UK)
- + Moderate regulations (many, thresholds, %)
- + Full (Lux, Austria)
- + Continuous changes in the State policy (size, composition, roles)

Senate

- + 1 / Academics
- + 2/ Students
- + 3/ Non academic
- + Not all members have voting rights

Board

- + 1 External stakeholders
- + 2. Academics

More diversified governing bodies

Governance trends

Despite diversity....common trends

- + Granting more power to board-type bodies
- + More regulations, duties and responsibilities for a fewer number of members
- + Increasing rights of non academic members
- + Gender equality
- + Ad-hoc groups (students, alumni, corporations, civil society).

- + Several models in parallel in one country: autonomous/performing universities vs. others.

**The rationale => Increase
efficiency.**

4. Increase efficiency

Increase efficiency

From cost-effectiveness to a more diverse, multi-faceted approach of efficiency.

- + Gain / Loss analysis is incredibly challenging
- + Standardization of measurement had its limits
- + HE becomes a national/international priority => allow a chance to all institutions
- + Are the best ranked HEIs the most efficient?
- + Social dimension of Higher education

+ **EUA efficiency dimensions:**

- + **Operational** (professional, operational, support service)
- + **Academic matters** (R, teaching & learning)
- + **Strategic governance** (accountability, management, quality culture, engagement. Long term approach).

Increase efficiency

Strategic planning valued by vast majority of HEIs:

Design of strategic planning

- + 1. Rectors > heads of administration boards,
- + 2. Boards
- + 3. Deans, heads of Departments

Implementation of strategic planning

- + Units (e.g. M&E, QA committee)
- + But All are concerned

Evaluation of strategic planning :

- + increasing attention paid to annual performance of strategic planning.

Drivers for efficiency

Table 3 Drivers of efficiency

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Budget Cuts or decreasing resources	2%	5%	8%	41%	40%
New institutional approaches	3%	3%	18%	48%	23%
National or regional policies and reforms	2%	3%	26%	40%	24%
Internal institutional changes	0%	10%	18%	58%	10%
Increasing demand/growing student enrollment	8%	8%	25%	33%	21%
Increasing accountability to stakeholders and funder	0%	10%	21%	50%	13%
European policies and provisions	11%	23%	34%	21%	7%

HE Area, impact of past and future policies, 2018

Barriers to efficiency

Table 4 Barriers to efficiency

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Institutional culture / reluctance to change	3%	5%	20%	38%	34%
Financial constraints	9%	9%	22%	36%	23%
Concerns over quality	6%	12%	27%	43%	12%
Lack of expertise or qualified staff to implement the measures	9%	12%	34%	33%	12%
Technical obstacles	9%	22%	34%	31%	3%
Legal barriers	13%	30%	19%	24%	14%

HE Area, impact of past and future policies, 2018

Enablers to efficiency

Table 5 Enablers of efficiency

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Commitment of institutional leadership	0%	2%	10%	44%	44%
Institutional autonomy	0%	3%	14%	41%	42%
Inclusiveness and participation of all relevant institutional actors in the process	0%	6%	15%	48%	31%
Raising awareness of efficiency and training for staff	0%	6%	22%	51%	21%
External financial support (e.g., public or private)	3%	20%	27%	34%	16%
External expertise (e.g., through external board members, partners, consulting)	2%	14%	37%	37%	11%
Cooperation with other institutions, peer-learning	0%	25%	30%	40%	5%

HE Area, impact of past and future policies, 2018

So, what could we do in terms of efficiency?

- + **More balanced approach looking at various levels and dimensions**
- + => continuous dialogue and communication
 - + Internally within the institution
 - + With extended stakeholders (via benchmarking or peer-learning)
- + **Value the expected outcomes of the institution**
- + **Be aware of **limitations** of**
 - + transferability of efficiency measures
 - + Long term / short term effects
 - + HE is a unique social system
 - + Operational-only efficiency

Performance contract: What is that exactly?

- Performance contracts are contracts between government and individual higher education institutions,
- which set out specific goals that institutions will seek to achieve in a given time period and
- which may be linked to institutional funding.

Do we know that performance contracts work?

- Experience shows that systems that implement performance contracts tend to **maintain the orientation**, once it has been introduced.
- Performance contracts are a **very flexible financing mechanism** which allows both governments and individual institutions **to focus on certain priorities and results**, and allocates resources in order to attain those.
- Performance contracts tend to bring about **cultural change** in the higher education system, and in individual universities, as they **enhance institutional autonomy and strategic planning, and create incentives for internal reform and innovation.**

- **Performance contract as a basis for initial allocation of a proportion of public funding (Austria).**
- **The contract indicates what the government agrees to finance over a given period (3 years in Austria) and which covers the main part of the allocation. There is no penalty for non-achievement of objectives, but the results of the performance weigh in the future negotiations with the Ministry of Higher Education.**
- **A proportion of public funding is allocated to results-based funding formulas (Finland).**
- **Performance contracts are not financing tools but rather strategic planning. Specific targets (eg number of students graduating in x years) are planned.**
- **Funding is automatically allocated according to a standard system rather than through the contract itself.**
- **Financing is explicitly linked to the signing of a performance contract and the achievement of the objectives set out in these contracts (NL, Ireland)**
- **In the Netherlands, universities compete for 2% of the total training budget for a quality development plan and an additional 5% initial for a) a performance contract and b) achievement of objectives at the end of the year. contract. In case of non-achievement, there is a deduction of 5% in the following period.**

Conditions for successful performance contracts: a comprehensive content

- The **commitments** made by both the institution and the government.
- The **vision, the missions and the mandate** of the institution according to which the institution can define its objectives for the future, which constitute its priorities of action.
- From these, the institution specifies the **strategies** that it undertakes to implement over the fixed term of the contract in order to achieve the expected results.
- The stated strategies thus contain the **actions** necessary to advance its objectives.
- **Indicators** to measure the degree of achievement of the objectives set by the institution.
- These indicators can be of a **qualitative or quantitative** nature depending on the object to be measured. They can be declined at the institutional or faculty level.

Conditions for success of performance contracts

- It is advisable to **combine quantitative and qualitative** approach and to vary them according to the institutions.
- **Be careful on the quantitative objectives of performance contracts:**
 - It must be ensured that there is a causal link
 - between the objectives and the capacity of the institution to achieve it.
 - Between these objectives and the expected effect (eg number of patents / scientific policy)
- **Be careful on the qualitative objectives:**
- It must be ensured that they can be objectively appreciated (and therefore have the appropriate methods of evaluation and information system)
- **The practice is to start with a simple contract, which becomes more complex as you go (eg in terms of objectives to achieve)**

Conditions for success of performance contracts

- **Dialogue and ownership are essential, "we set the rules of the game together":**
 - Between the Ministry and the universities
 - Between universities and institutions
- **But leaving a degree of flexibility to the institutions in the objectives and indicators promotes ownership by all**
 - **The performance contract prepares itself for self-evaluation with the institutions (dialogue, flexibility).**

Can I prepare my university's performance contract tomorrow?

1. Performance contract =>
2. Strategic Plan =>
3. Self evaluation



Content of Strategic plans

- **Analysis of the current situation:**
 - an assessment of the external environment in which it is inscribed.
 - an internal evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the institution in terms of its teaching, research, service to society, the resources available to it, the way in which it is used, its organization, etc.
- **Vision of the institution.** The vision reflects the future in which the institution projects itself. This vision is translated into a strategy, which presents the axes to implement the vision.
- The vision thus contains the challenges facing the institution, which are expressed in objectives to be achieved, themselves translated into strategies to be implemented in order to achieve them effectively.
- **Institutional Development Plan.**
 - mission statement, clearly defined objectives, academic plans, staff recruitment and development methods, corporate resources, financial plan, and a plan for implementation and monitoring.

Consistency University-wide strategic plan / Faculty-Departments

1. Increase Success of Our Students

- Provide high quality instruction, opportunities for career preparation, and excellent support services to achieve steady and timely academic progress toward graduation.

2. Emphasize Academic Distinctiveness

- Offer in-demand degree programs and those that make UA distinctive; conduct high-quality, focused research in specific areas of strength; and, engage with the community in driving the economic development of the region through strong public-private partnerships.

3. Generate Additional Revenue

- Increase student recruitment and persistence to degree, fundraising, research grants with limited or no University subsidy and additional external auxiliary funding.

4. Continue to Improve Efficiency and Effectiveness

- Operate academic, academic support and auxiliary units as effectively and efficiently as possible, including possible outsourcing of some operational functions, and ensure efficient delivery of courses and degree programs through more effective scheduling, academic administration and unit reorganization.

The
University
of Akron



College of engineering



Priority #1: Increase Success of Our Students

Over the next three years, The University of Akron will increase student success by providing high quality instruction and excellent services so that students can achieve steady progress to graduation.

- a) UA will deploy academic and academic support personnel to increase undergraduate student persistence rates by 1% each year; retention rates by 3% each year and graduation rates by 2% per year.

Priority #2: Emphasize Academic Distinctiveness

During the next three years, The University of Akron will pursue academic distinctiveness with new and revised degree programs, focused research excellence and strong local partnerships.

- a) UA will create new and revised programs for emerging markets and careers, encouraging diversity in a changing market place
 - College Goal: establish research clusters that include faculty inside and outside the College.
 - Re-establish administrative framework for the interdisciplinary doctoral degree in the College office and admit graduate students into active academic research clusters (ARC) and appropriate areas.
 - Develop a common core for all first-year PhD students: an example may include written and oral communication, research methods and mathematics with statistics.

Self-evaluation: what for?

- The Strategic Plan is elaborated from the self-evaluation carried out by the institution, thus of **institutional level**.
- Based on a consultation of the **community** involved in the development of the HEI. It thus integrates the contributions and perspectives of a diversity of actors.
- It is thus a reference document for an institution wishing to face effectively the new challenges presented to it on a **participative** and **inclusive** basis.

Self-evaluation: what for?

- Show / Assert is no longer enough because:
- Crisis of confidence in the ability of universities to accomplish their missions, which are constantly increasing.
- Internationalization
- Emulation / competition between institutions
- Prepares the prioritization of the objectives of the Strategic Plan

Lessons learned from successful self evaluation (OECD, Bologna)

- The involvement of the president and the deans
- The involvement of the Quality Manager and collectively the internal Quality Unit
- Awareness of the academic community and students (although difficult to start with the latter).
- Accountability of focal points in faculties / departments
- The orchestration of the process (a dynamic, a calendar, milestones, regular feedback to participants or not (to encourage emulation).

5. Interplay governance / quality assurance



Main principles for QA in Europe

- **HEIs have primary responsibility** for the quality of their provision and its assurance
 - **EQA shall respond to the diversity** of higher education systems, institutions, programmes and students
 - QA supports the **development of a quality culture**
 - QA takes into account the **needs and expectations of students**, all other stakeholders and society → strong importance for stakeholder involvement!
-
- QA should combine the purposes of accountability and enhancement
 - Safeguard the independence of QA agencies

A common definition of quality

What do we want to do, where do we want to go?

How are we doing?

How do we know we are going the right way?

How do we change to improve?



Quality is multifaceted

- **Quality constitutes what stakeholders consider a minimum, acceptable level of conditions to integrate, train and support the student for personal and professional growth.**
- **Never neutral**
- **Depends on stakeholders**
- **Evolves over time**
- **It becomes a national stake (role of the States) AND individual**
- **Can be biased (rankings)**

An emerging consensus

- **Higher education is a public good**
- **Recognize the strengths, the specificities of all**
- **"Remediation of the landscape"**
- **States have a duty to guarantee the quality of their higher education system**
- **Institutions have the primary responsibility to ensure the quality of their training activities**
- **But sometimes a reluctance of universities to take responsibility**
- **Fluctuating Public Policies in Higher Education and Quality Assurance**

An inclusive QA

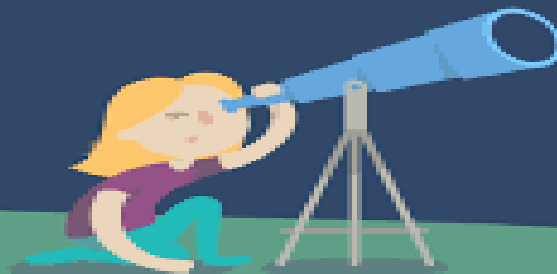
- Mechanisms that guarantee, preserve and improve the quality of higher education
- *Programmes - Training*
- *Research and innovation*
- *Student's life and support*
- *Governance - management*
- *3rd mission*
- But still challenges:
- to link all quality components
- for institutions to start off and wrap up the process

A more and more structured QA

- **Quality assurance agencies everywhere:**
 - **But difficulties to ensure their independence.**
 - **Underlying competition (EQAR)**
- **Internal committees quality:**
 - **But a lot of empty shells**
- **A growing practice of self-evaluation:**
 - **But a weak analytical capacity**
- **Evaluation frameworks**
 - **But which one should we select?**

Trends in European QA

- Possible move to “**softer**” approaches (fitness-for-purpose), especially in well-established QA systems: from programme to institutional approaches; risk-based methods; more flexible methods or methods based more on institutional priorities
- Going **beyond minimum standards** and find ways to measure and reward excellence
- Greater importance given to the **usefulness and readability of reports** (competing with international or national rankings as information source?)
- **External accountability of agencies**
- **Wider involvement of stakeholders** accepted and required

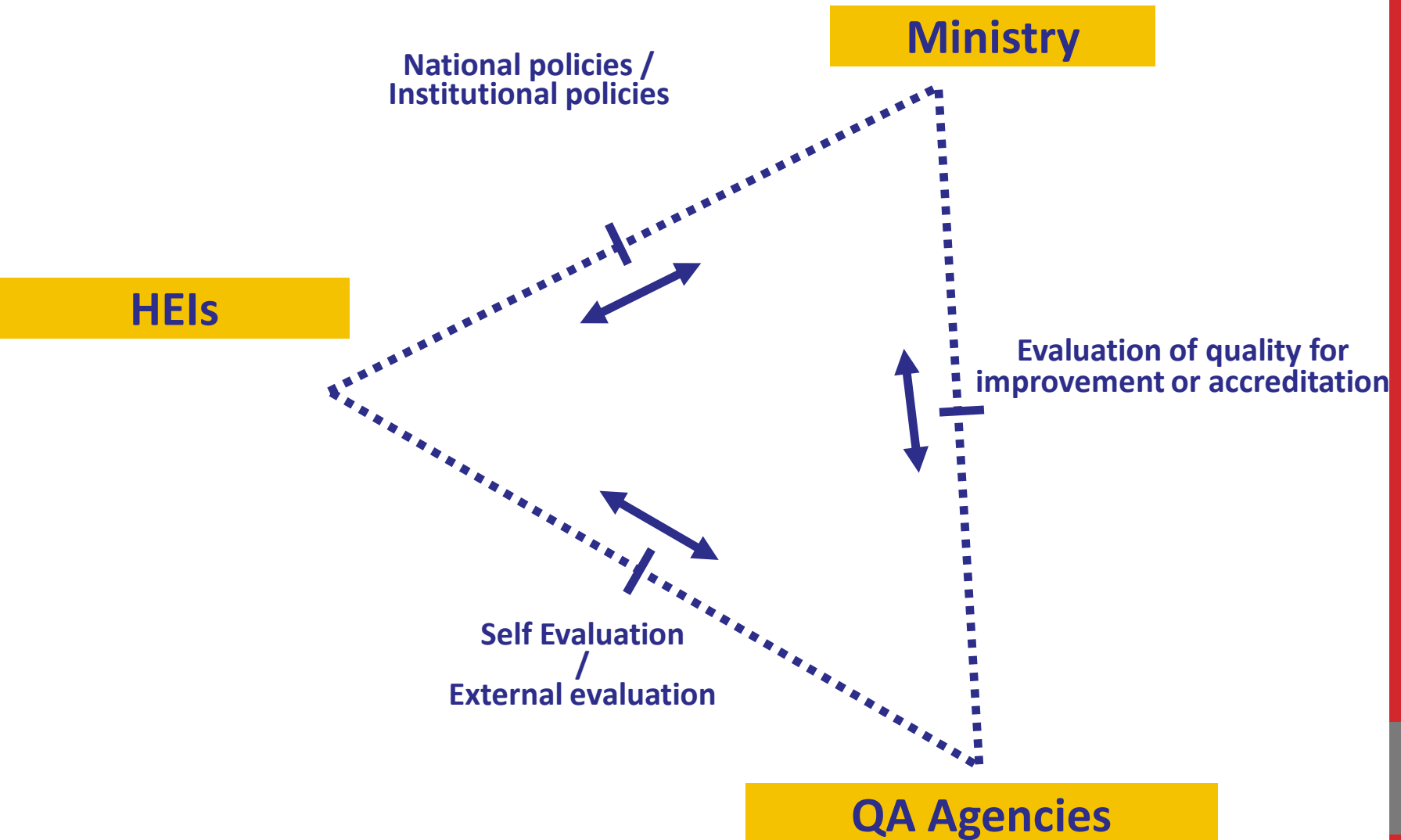


Some challenges in European QA



- student involvement
- publication of reports
- collaborative relationship with HEIs
- QA of alternative delivery modes (e-learning, lifelong learning...)
- use of international reviewers

Striking a fragile balance



Source: Bruno Curvale,
CIEP

Using QA for governance purpose

- **For the university**, getting into accreditation requires getting to know one another, being able to demonstrate that the university or training has reached or is on track to achieving quality credentials. At least the following 3 preconditions must be gathered:
 - **Management of activity and results data**
 - **Analytical skills**
 - **Strategic Vision**
- **For the State**, it is a question of establishing a solid system, meeting the international methodological requirements. Laxity in accreditation affects the reputation of the entire higher education system

Using QA for governance purpose

- **For the State, it's about making choices about:**
 - The **objectives** pursued by its quality assurance system
 - The **priorities** the State wants to evaluate in quality, for example:
 - Processes (eg curriculum development)
 - Results (eg the insertion of students)
 - The quality culture itself (eg the strategy to improve the effectiveness of training)
 - **Fields** (governance, training, research-innovation, student ...) and scale (university, institution, training)
- **Enhance the capacities** of its national agency with QA and those of HEIs.
- **Accompany** the HEIs.