

# Different formats of external quality evaluation

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# External quality evaluation

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## The goals:

- ▼ Minimum quality assurance
  - ▼ Quality improvement
  - ▼ Quality label
  - ▼ Public accountability
  - ▼ Transparency
  - ▼ Information for stakeholders
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## European standards for the external quality assurance of higher education:

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- Use of internal quality assurance processes
- Development of external quality assurance processes (aims and objectives determined beforehand)
- Criteria for decisions
- Processes fit for purpose
- Reporting (results accessible and understandable)
- Follow-up procedures
- System-wide analysis

# External evaluation

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## Main principles

- ▼ Autonomy of institutions
  - ▼ Preserving diversity
  - ▼ Respect for tradition
  - ▼ Understanding of local context
  - ▼ Public report
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## Formats of external evaluation:

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1. External evaluation - audit

2. Accreditation

3. Benchmarking

4. Rankings

5. Complementary actions

peer judgment

# 1. External evaluation - audit

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*“Evaluation is a systematic determination of merit, worth and significance of something or someone using criteria against a set of standards”*

Wikipedia

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## External evaluation

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- based on indicators
  - based on experts' view
  - holistic
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# The Programme Evaluation Standards

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- ▼ The **utility** standards (serve information needs of intended users)
- ▼ The **feasibility** standards (ensure evaluation to be realistic, prudent, diplomatic and frugal)
- ▼ The **priopriety** standards (ensure evaluation to be conducted legally, ethically with due regard for the welfare of those evaluated and affected)
- ▼ The **accuracy** standards (evaluation will reveal technically adequate information about the features of the programme)

## 2. Accreditation

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*„A self-regulatory process by which governmental, non-governmental, voluntary associations or other statutory bodies grant formal recognition to educational programmes or institutions that meet stated criteria of educational quality”*

A.Wojtczak

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# Common aspects of external evaluation and accreditation

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Can focus on:

- ▼ Institution
- ▼ Programme
- ▼ Both

Are based on:

- ▼ Institutional self-report
  - ▼ Analysis of the report by experts
  - ▼ Site-visit
  - ▼ Final report and recommendations
  - ▼ Public report
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# External evaluation

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## Positive aspects:

- deeper insight into the institution (“mirror effect”)
- quality improvement

## Negative aspects

- subjective views of evaluators
  - inadequate awareness of local context
  - expenses
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## Accreditation differs from external evaluation by:

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- ▼ Strict reliance on standards (education, content, staff)
  - ▼ Accreditation decision combined with official certificate
  - ▼ Formal consequences
    - closing of the programme/school
    - redistribution of funds
    - follow up
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## Various accreditation system :

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### National:

- governmental
- academic
- professional

### Regional

**International:** (bidirectional agreement of agencies, international agencies, meta-accreditation)

ENQA – European Network for Quality Assurance in High Education

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EQAR – European Register of Accrediting Agencies

# Accreditation

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## Positive aspects:

- assurance of the required quality level
  - protection of students
  - public accountability
  - increase of mutual trust
  - quality improvement (?)
  - quality label (?)
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# Accreditation

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## Negative aspects:

- time needed to prepare self studies
  - expenses
  - uniformization (to fit standards)
  - inhibition of innovations/ petrification of the current situation
  - over-bureaucratization
  - activity related to quality occurs periodically
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## New approach to accreditation

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- description of programme in learning outcomes
  - compliance of learning outcomes with the National Qualification Framework
  - proper assessment of learning outcomes
  - based on the internal quality assurance systems
  - professionalization of accrediting staff
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# 3. Benchmarking

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*“ It is an ongoing process for measuring and comparing the work processes of one organization to those of another by bringing an external focus to internal activities, functions or operations”*

Kempner 1993

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# Benchmarking

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- described as a method of teaching an institution how to improve
- developed in the early 1980 at the Xerox Corporation in response to increased competition
- based on parameters of quality and efficiency

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*It is better to learn from sb`s mistakes than from the own ones*

# Benchmarking

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especially suited for HE s:

- faculty administrators familiar with research methodology
  - helps to overcome resistance to change
  - provides a structure for external evaluation
  - creates network of communication between institution with sharing of experience
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# Benchmarking

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Four kinds can be distinguished:

- **internal** (within big institution) with similar units)
  - **competitive** (analysis of processes in peer institution)
  - **functional** (as above but the group larger)
  - **generic** or best-in-class-(the broadest application to find best practices)
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# Benchmarking

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Procedures can be condensed into 4 steps:

- **planning the study** (which processes, which institutions )
  - **conducting the research** (primary or secondary research)
  - **analyzing the data** (identifying the process enablers)
  - **adapting the findings** to the home institution
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# Benchmarking

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**Prerequisites** for successful benchmarking:

- knowledge of the concept
  - proper attitude of the leaders
  - documenting processes
  - willingness to share
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# Benchmarking

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## Positive aspects

- based on institutional will to change (ownership)
  - facilitates sharing experience
  - enhances dissemination of best practices
  - helps to overcome resistance to change
  - provides a structure for external evaluation
  - promotes academic networking
  - free of legal consequences
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# Benchmarking

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## Negative aspects

- applicable only to administrative or only teaching processes (?)
- can expose institutional weaknesses
- may lead to simple copying
- solutions from other institutions may not work  
( but :” adapt not adopt” approach should be used )

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Benchmarking Code of Conduct should be followed

## 4. Ranking

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*“ It is a relationship between set of items establishing a hierarchical order according to certain criteria. By reducing detailed measures to a sequence of ordinal numbers rankings make it possible to evaluate complex information..”*

modified from Wikipedia

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# Rankings

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- have existed over 20 ys (in USA – 100 ys), now flourishing
- theoretically bankrupt, methodologically suspect
- reflect the perspective compiles
- often contain highly correlated measures
- seduce into over-interpreting small differences

but won't go away

so HE institutions should have an influence

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# Rankings

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## Positive aspects:

- Information (?) for students, foundations, governments
  - Incentives for programme administrators
  - Comparability
  - Some links to QA
  - Marketing tool valued by managers
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# Rankings

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## Negative aspects:

- lagging reputation (maintain the established order)
- accumulate “apples & pears”
- underestimation of small, specialist programmes
- distorting effect of “star” faculty
- extra advantage for English speaking staff
- escape of students from developing countries

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*“ranking is a culture of fear”*

## Possible criteria for ranking PhD programmes:

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- reputational surveys (opinion of experts in the field)
  - quantitative data:
    - faculty
    - No of publications (per-capita)
    - No of citations
    - research productivity of graduates
    - placement of graduates into faculty position
  - multiattribute approach
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## Complementary actions:

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- certification of laboratories
  - external examiners /reviewers
  - external controlling bodies
  - mobility of students and staff
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# Applicability of any method for external quality evaluation to PhD programmes

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should depend on the object of evaluation:

- quality of doctors
- quality of doctors' theses
- quality of doctoral programme
- quality of doctoral school

should avoid an over regulation of PhD programmes

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## Possible applicability to PhD programmes:

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1. Benchmarking (among comparable programmes, schools)
  2. Rankings (depending on well defined criteria)
  3. Accreditation (based on learning outcomes)
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# THANK YOU

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MERCI

Danke

Dziękuję

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