

## Project

### ‘Internal Quality Management: Evaluating and Improving Competence-Based Higher Education’

Two topics have become prevalent in the European Higher Education Area in recent years, triggered by the Bologna Process. The first topic is **competence-based higher education**. The focus now is more on students and their competences and less on teachers and the knowledge they impart. This has resulted in a fundamental shift in higher education as new curricula, teaching methods, exam formats, and learning strategies are implemented. The second topic is **quality**. The quality and efficiency of European education systems are fostered by different strategies like the ‘Standards and Guidelines for Quality Management in European Higher Education Institutions’ (ESG, 2015) or the EU programme Erasmus+.

As a consequence, many higher education institutions are now looking for new quality management procedures that address students’ competences as well as the competence-based teaching and learning process. The **Project** ‘Internal Quality Management: Evaluating and Improving Competence-Based Higher Education’ took up the need for a new procedure. We developed a procedure that is primarily designed for internal quality management at higher education institutions and can be undertaken by internal evaluators or quality managers.

Our project had three **objectives**:

1. **We developed** a new quality management procedure and a corresponding toolkit to help higher education institutions implement the new procedure. The toolkit is called ‘European Toolkit for Internal Quality Management in Competence-Based Higher Education’.
2. **We implemented** and tested the new procedure and the European Toolkit in five higher education institutions.
3. **We disseminated** the European Toolkit to European higher education institutions.

The **project consortium** consisted of ten partners, coordinated by Vetmeduni Vienna.

Five institutions formed the so-called **implementation team**: (1) University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, (2) University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Cluj-Napoca, Romania, (3) University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, (4) University of Oldenburg, Germany, and (5) Vilnius University, Lithuania. These five institutions already had experience with competence-based teaching. They implemented and tested the newly developed procedure and the European Toolkit. The University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna, additionally brought its experience with a scientific pilot study on competence-based evaluation instruments to bear in developing the European Toolkit.

The **activities** of the implementation team were (a) developing the tools making up the European Toolkit, (b) implementing and testing the European Toolkit at their higher education institutions, and (c) disseminating the European Toolkit to a mostly local target audience.

The other five partners formed the **expert team**: (6) ENQA, (7) EAEVE, (8) AQ Austria, (9) as well as experts from the University of Economics and Business, Vienna, and from (10) the University of

Vienna. The expert team provided international expertise in quality assurance in higher education as well as expertise in competence research, evaluation research, and implementation research.

The **activities** of the expert team were (a) developing a handbook, (b) continually reviewing the other tools developed by the implementation team, (c) giving advice for the implementation phase and (d) disseminating the European Toolkit to a mostly international target audience.

The project had three main **results**. The first result is the European Toolkit, which includes many tools:

- A handbook on how to implement internal quality management for competence-based teaching and learning.
- Information material for decision-makers, students, faculty members, etc.
- Workshop ideas
- Templates for questionnaires
- Template for a report
- Collection of possible measures for quality enhancement and quality assurance
- and many more

The second result is the implementation of the new procedure in five higher education institutions as well as experience and lessons learned. The third result is the wide range of dissemination activities and products. The most important dissemination product is the project website [www.igm-he.eu](http://www.igm-he.eu), where the toolkit as well as the implementation partners' experience is freely available.

The project had **impact** on the project participants (e.g. they were able to integrate different perspectives on quality management and now have an expert network) and the participating organizations (e.g. they were able to implement a new quality management procedure), as well as the ultimate target group, which are European institutions of higher education who received information on the project and its results (via the website, newsletters, conference talks, workshops, etc.).

Due to a long list of implementation and dissemination actions within the project, we expect to see **longer-term benefits** of our project: The European Toolkit provides a helpful puzzle piece for enhancing the quality and efficiency of European higher education institutions.

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