

How to make
quality assurance matter for
the employment sector
—
a contribution from the
university continuing education
perspective



European University
Continuing Education Network

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Presentation

1. University Lifelong Learning and eucen
2. **University continuing education, quality assurance and the employment sector**
3. **Recommendations for connecting people/worlds**

ULLL in Europe

- **ULLL definition** from the BeFlex project (eucen):
“ULLL is the provision by higher education institutions of
 - learning opportunities, services and research - for:
 - the personal and professional development of a wide range of individuals – lifelong and lifewide; - and:
 - the social, cultural and economic development of communities and the region.It is at university level and research-based;
it focuses primarily on the needs of the learners; - and
it is often developed and/or provided in collaboration with stakeholders and external actors.”

- **eucen** - European university continuing education network
an Association (not-for-profit) legally established under Belgium law
founded in 1991
currently 184 members (institutional membership) from 34 countries
including 17 National/Regional ULLL Networks in 15 different countries

- **eucen's aims**

To contribute to the social, economic, and cultural life of Europe by the promotion and advancement of LLL within Higher Education Institutions in Europe and elsewhere

To foster universities' influence in the development of LLL knowledge and policies

eucen for Europe

Academic knowledge solving current problems

- > exclusion: employment, third age, refugee challenge
- > economic activity: innovations, entrepreneurship
- > sustainability: production, consumption, clean technologies

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Opening doors to university learning

- > widening participation, responsible citizenship, post-experience training
- > student-centered approach, learning outcomes, digitalisation of learning

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Bridging the gap between research and everyday life

> HE and adult education, social and economic initiatives, HEI and companies and public sector, European universities

eucen for Europe

eucen's strong expertise

- > ULLL, social dimension, project implementation and management
- > membership of practitioners and researchers, national networks, eucen secretariat
- > recognition of prior learning, validation of non formal and informal learning, social dimension of universities, utilising research in teaching, quality enhancement of teaching and learning

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University continuing education, quality assurance and the employment sector

Evolution from UCE as a side activity of universities

To a growing activity with high volume of participants

transfer of research results into practice

request from trade unions, companies, groups of interest

-> Need to monitor this activity and insert it in the HEI strategy and QA system

In fact, Europe as a patchwork again.

Quality among main topics of eucen

Expertise of eucen members

European Projects:

EQUAL-EQUIPE-EQUIPE + -> Quality management tool

ALLUME -> benchmark tool towards the EUA Charter for LLL

(Rec 6: “Embracing a quality culture”)

Diagram 3. CHALLENGES AND OBJECTIVES



University continuing education, quality assurance and the employment sector



UCE as one of the concrete ways for HEI to collaborate with the employment sector

UCE audiences: demanding professionals with specific needs related to their professional practice

Transfer of research results into practice

Financial principle of self-sustainability -> incentive to quality

Cases linking UCE, QA and the employment sector

Validation of non formal and informal learning in France

Accreditation of programs in Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium

Quality development of UCE programs in Switzerland

University continuing education, quality assurance and the employment sector

The swiss case-study

UCE present in all institutions, more or less developed

Programmes aimed at professionals essentially, some for personal interest and development

Totally separated from BA, MA, PhD programs

Self-financed

Rector's conference -> harmonization in the 10 universities/2 polytechnics

National Network -> coordination of policy and conception of recommendations.

Types of programmes

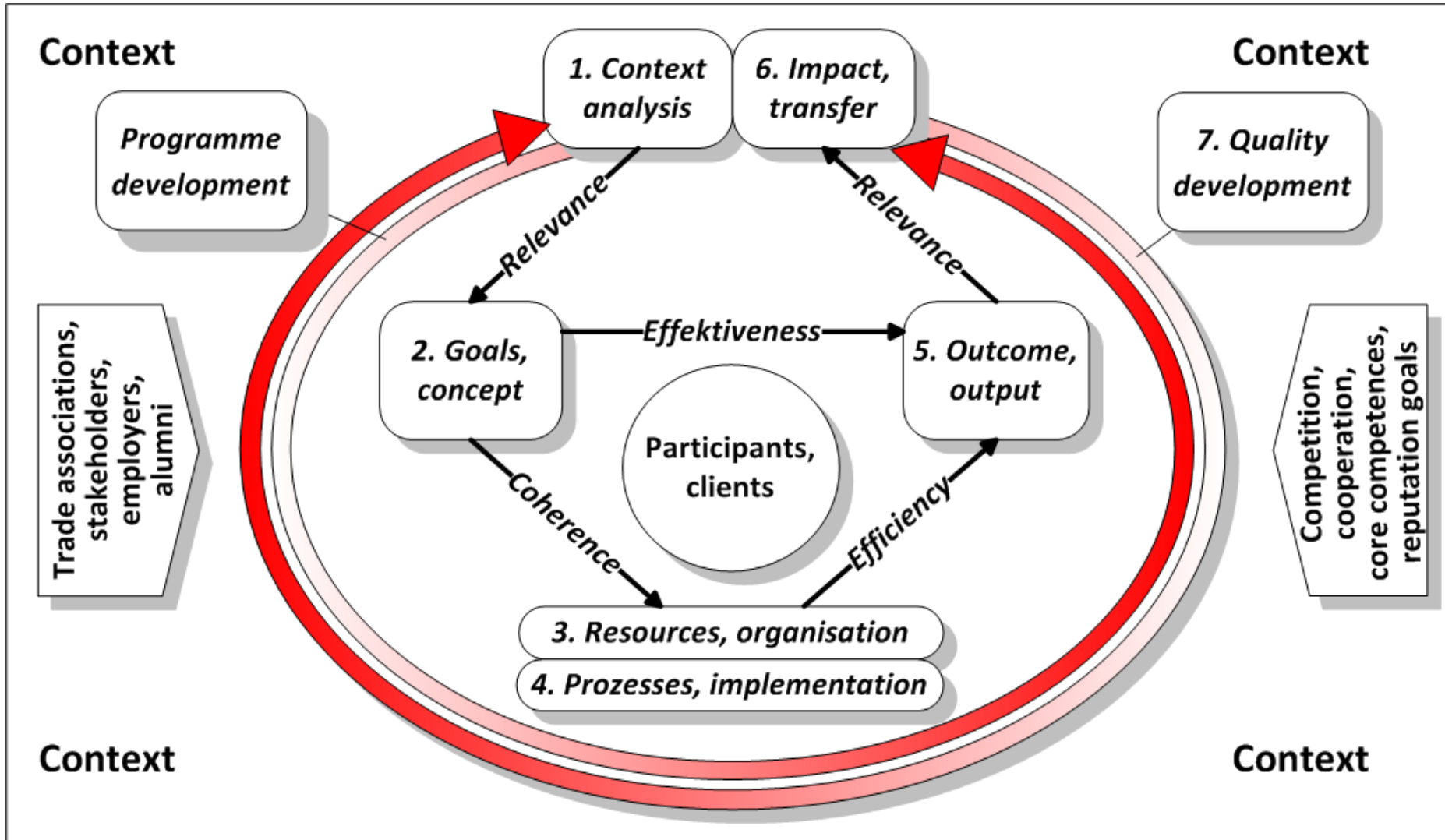
Master of advanced Studies MAS – min 60 ECTS credits

Diploma of Advanced Studies DAS – min 30 ECTS credits

Certificate of Advanced Studies CAS – min 10 ECTS credits

Short courses and Tailored-made courses

Recommendations for Quality development of UCE programs (Swissuni, in collaboration with AAQ)



Criteria for a UCE program (GE) :

- relevance**
- partnership**
- interdisciplinarity
- collaboration
- adequate pedagogy
- validation
- recognition**
- evaluation

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Recommendations

- How to make QA matter for the employment sector
or
- QA, as instrument for connecting universities and the employment sector

Recommendations for connecting people/worlds

Recommendation 1. **Mix the QA methods**

Needs and context analysis, pedagogical engineering, evaluation of programmes, evaluation of courses, evaluation of departments, evaluation of teachers, spread and consolidate a quality culture, continuous improvement spirit, impact analysis, ...

- > do it intentionally
- > logic under each method

Recommendations for connecting people

Recommendation 2. **Make what is done visible – advocacy**

If we want changes in the perceptions and representations:

Awareness

Acknowledgement

Activation of changes

Other persons as advocates

Use multiangle communication: the employment sector as consumer of education

Recommendations for connecting people

Recommendation 3. **Use QA as a common language**

Industries, companies are familiar with QA language

QA within universities -> generalization of learning outcomes

Not yet shared by all internally -> Work on quality culture

Quality Assurance as a concept to understand activities

Not the panacea to describe and understand the whole world

A- **Places for discussion**

to talk about: What is employability? What is expected from universities?

What is a successful student? What can universities offer ?

B-

C-

Recommendations for connecting people/worlds

Recommendation 3. **Use QA as a common language**

A- Places for discussion

B- **Alumni as mediators**

C-

Recommendations for connecting people/worlds

Recommendation 3. **Use QA as a common language**

A- Places for discussion

B- Alumni as mediators

C- **End of the quality loop – the impact analysis**

sit together: former student-university-employer
difficulty with methodology and gathering data
-> definitely a trail to explore!

Recommendations for connecting people

Recommendation 1: Mix the QA methods

Recommendation 2. Make what is done visible - advocacy

Recommendation 3. Use QA as a common language

Thank you for your attention

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