

BM72 - MALTA

Resolution: Student Involvement in Quality Assurance in the Czech Republic and Slovakia

Since the fall of communism, accreditations for higher education in the Czech Republic and Slovakia have been handled without the formal participation of students. Student involvement in the process of accreditations has been marginal, with only occasional involvement in working groups as part of the accreditation agencies.

The newly amended Czech Higher Education Act of 2016 acknowledges students as equal partners present for all accreditation procedures in higher education. The resultant newly founded accreditation system requires selection of the first student evaluators. The system must be fully functional by 2019 when most reaccreditations take place.

The Slovak Ministry of Education has proposed an amendment to the Higher Education Act, along with the law that creates new, independent, national accreditation agency. So far, the Slovak Ministry of Education has not perceived students as an equal partner in the process of quality assurance. Furthermore, due to certain strict criteria, students are excluded from the final decision-making process of accreditation.

SK RVŠ and ŠRVŠ -- with the support of ESU -- urge Slovak and Czech governments, accreditation authorities, and HE institutions to adopt the following standards for a fair accreditation process:

- Students should receive the information, conditions and support that allows them to perform their role responsibly.
- Students should be involved in all levels of the accreditation processes including the review panels and the decision-making bodies as truly equal partners.
- Remuneration should be provided to the student experts for expenses related to evaluation procedures and compensation for the actual time invested (including home office, administrative tasks, report writing, etc.).
- Students should be involved in the development of accreditation procedures and standards, not treated as just consumers of the outcomes.
- The accreditation process should follow the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.
- Creation of environment where students can express their ideas and remarks freely and safely.

The European Students' Union (ESU) is being used to refer to "ESIB - The National Unions of Students in Europe" Belgian asbl BE0890.019.936, due to the fact that both legal entities are going through a merging process. Likewise the visual identity of ESU is being used instead of the one from ESIB.

- Student organizations in all fields of study should be respected as partners especially for professional experience in their fields.
- Creation of an environment that allows for the exchange of knowledge and expertise from other European systems of quality assurance (as a part of European Higher Education Area), especially the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) and The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).
- The reports and statements regarding accreditations should be made available to current and future students.

The new laws should grant higher education institutions more academic freedom and independence if they receive institutional accreditation. Therefore, it is important to adopt these standards at both the institutional and national levels.

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