The Roadmap from Quality Assurance in Programmes and Teaching towards Quality Development as a Strategic Instrument of University Management

Bianka Lichtenberger[1]

Abstract: An inflation of publicly formulated expectations and requirements with regard to instruments and methods for preparing, securing and monitoring research and teaching quality as well as the quality of the management of higher education give the impression of an overload of quality management and thus a new "quality of bureaucracy". Behind it appears at a first glance an in transparent and confusing puzzle of highly diverse procedures which are subsumed under the term quality management. The cause of this development can be seen in the context of the Bologna process and the Lisbon strategy, which has defined development and control of a high quality in teaching and research as a central success factor in the implementation of higher education policy reforms and as an organizational obligation for Higher Education Institutions.

Keywords: teaching quality; quality management; Higher Education institutions

Methods and instruments for quality assurance have been applied since many years in higher education. Traditional forms of quality assurance are mainly project related (evaluation of teaching and externally funded projects) and aim to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The experience with these established methods of quality assurance shows, however, a limited effectiveness for the implementation of the Bologna objectives. It is not primarily the lack of constitutional follow-up processes. It is about a fundamental problem: the strategic and methodological focus on teaching is by far too limiting for a sustained process of quality development and provides especially no contribution to an organizational and comprehensive steering process for university management. Though quality control of teaching and research indicates qualitative deficits of a University, quality development methods do need to be addressed in a more comprehensive hence organizational perspective.

The claim for systems and methods of quality assurance in higher education going beyond the field of teaching and should take into account their interaction with other areas in order to act efficiently and sustainable is therefore reasonable. It was

[1] ANGroup GmbH, Zürich, Address: Eierbrechtstrasse 63, 8053 Zürich, Switzerland, Tel: 044 382 16 75, Corresponding author: lichtenberger@angroup.ch.

intensified and accelerated by the discussion of a new framework of autonomy and competition for institutions in higher education. What remains unchanged is the indispensable contribution for accountability. In this strongly outwardly function quality assurance procedures shall provide the basis for transparency of performance and securing levels of quality.

However, what is being added increasingly is the more internal oriented function of quality development in an organizational perspective arising from a point of financial justification of public funding and substitution of universities. Quality management, in this context has to be understood as both, quality assurance and quality development. Only together they form the basis for strategic and operational actions on resource allocation. Instead of sectoral, additive quality assurance in all internal university processes that are also operated in isolation from other control tasks, it is now important to understand quality development as a unifying and guiding principle and anchor of the entire university management. As a consequence decisions about the academic profile in research and teaching, as well as other decisions about the allocation of resources within higher education institutions shall be aligned and fit as a factor to develop the overall quality development of the institution.

This is a paradigm shift to a primarily self-directed and dynamic process of quality development, which is based on the self-defined strategy and goals of each university. Quality assurance and quality development are understood as two indispensable components of quality management which forms the basis for strategic and operational actions as well as allocation of resources. They also enable the conditions for success of all members of the university through

- efficiently used resources;
- increased attractiveness to students, academics and non-academic staff;
- improvement of positioning within the educational market;
- diversification of income sources;
- increased internal flexibility;
- promotion of innovation and performance.

The organizational unit of a university shall be transformed from a loose network of individual actors to a corporate actor who manages and develop itself as an educational organization. Behind it lies the hope that universities of such type can produce much more predictable results both in quantitative and qualitative terms.

Quality Management: Change of paradigm

Quality Development

Comprehensive
Management and
Governance System

Approaches:
-EFQM
- ISO 9001
-Institutional-/System
 Accreditation

Quality Management

Academic Higher Education

Quality Assurance

Application of quality
 relevant
Tools / Instruments

Methods / Tools:
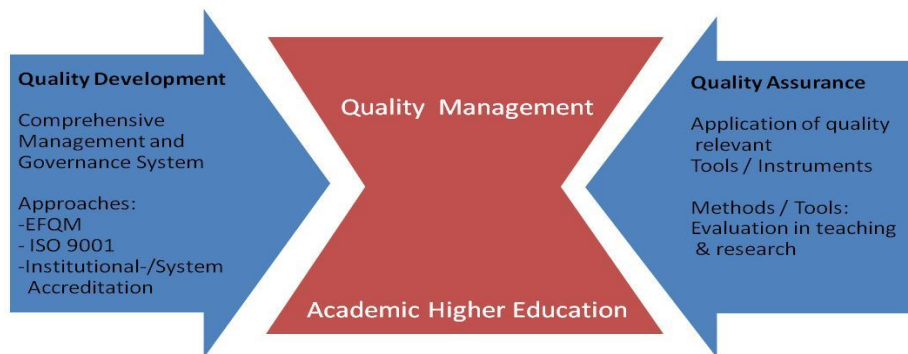Evaluation in teaching
 & research

Figure 1. Quality assurance and quality development as components of quality management

These developments appear from a social science perspective at the first moment as a massive intervention in the scientific and educational freedom of work. Pedagogical thinking and action will be limited and concentrated on the new understanding of quality assurance and culminates in the critique of the "deprofessionalisation through quality assurance" or in the general charge that educational processes would be subject to an economic logic without reference to the content of education or learning outcomes (Klieme& Tippelt 2008). Scientific quality must be measured according to this view, especially at the internal requirements of the scientific community. External defined quality claims has only a marginal role. Freedom and self-organizing competence of professors and researchers need to be protected as a precondition for scientific development and defended against "excessive exposure to corporate forces" namely university management.

The challenge for quality management in the form of an enlarged and comprehensive definition of quality is, however, not only depending on the scientific acceptance and the resulting consequences of the changed circumstances for quality assurance and quality development. The comprehensive process of quality development and assurance in the center of strategic and operational management of universities offer significantly enhanced action and design margins for all actors from universities. The central question for the regulation and organizational embedding of quality management is, therefore, how the existing and yet to be developed quality management elements can be formed to a university appropriate, comprehensive, and useful connected system. The current practical experience shows that there is no final certainty for the construction and

operation of a quality management system. The approach remains an ongoing task, or as a quality manager of a Dutch technical college formulated it at a conference presentation: "It grows slowly, will never be ready and never be perfect."

Against this background, the identification of appropriate university management practices is not easy. First, the New Public Management (NPM) played a relatively important role. The NPM is an approach to governance that emanates from a linear logic planning and control: objectives and actions are clearly related and can be derived from each other causally. Following this logic, several universities have conducted extensive processes for mission and strategy development in recent years, and from this derived organizational and implementation plans. This - somewhat simplified description of strategic management in universities has proved to be too narrow in many ways (Hanft, 2003). Universities are know-how organizations in which research findings and learning outcomes are the product of a complex system, following their own, only partially controllable dynamics. The management of universities is not to be limited by classical methods of strategic planning, but requires regular monitoring and adjustment of the overall system. Therefore management approaches that aim to achieve strategic success through a continuous, holistic organizational development do increasingly find more attention.

This is particularly true for the management and development of quality in research and teaching. Quality cannot be managed in a linear way but is a multidimensional construct (Pellert, 2002), whose production is subject to a variety of organizational requirements. The development of quality is an ongoing process that requires an adequate and appropriate process management. Evaluation methods do play a crucial, but not the only role. Additionally management methods and tools, strategy formation, external requirements and the service areas of the institution must be included in the quality management. Quality management is thereby held in a field of tension that moves between self-reflection and external assessment, but also between control and self-organization as well as between the individual and the organization. These six poles not only complement each other, they are also partially contradicting each other, which make the practice of quality management in higher education a challenging endeavor.

The requirements for a quality management system of the future, clearly formulated by research-oriented organizations such as the Donors' Association for German science or recent political debates about deregulated university landscapes are not brand new. But they clearly show that the basic requirements for a university adequate quality management system have to be based on a holistic approach, which includes the areas of teaching and learning, research, as well as strategy and management services.

Für eine erfolgreiche Zusammenarbeit ist eine gute Vernetzung über alle Abteilungen, Leistungsbereiche und Stellen eine Voraussetzung. Kompetenzen im Projektmanagement und in der Problemlösungsmethodik sind Erfolgsfaktoren für die Tätigkeit als Qualitätsbeauftragter. Wissen um und über Qualitätsmanagement und Qualitätskontrollverfahren, aber auch praktische Erfahrungen in der Unterstützung von Strategieentwicklung und Prozessmanagement, Veränderungsmanagement und Organisationsentwicklung sind die Voraussetzungen die Qualitätsbeauftragte den Hochschulleitungen zu ihrer Unterstützung anbieten können sollten./For a successful cooperation good networking of all departments, performance spaces and places is a requirement. Skills in project management and problem- solving methodology are success factors to work as a Quality Manager. Knowledge and quality management and quality control procedures, but also practical experience in support of strategy development and process management, can change management and organizational development, these are the conditions that the high school principals should offer them to support the quality manager.

For all participants, the framework in dealing with Quality Management will change therefore massively and with high dynamic. This applies equally to teaching and research techniques and methods, as well as qualification requirements for those who implement quality management strategy and operations. To coordinate and align cross-departmental projects within the university in future it requires knowledge, competences and skills in project management instead experiences in control-oriented decision-making bodies. The changing role of the quality manager will probably be difficult to implement in the future through an additional small workload of faculty or staff. Quality management will only be successful through a cross-cutting function in the organization. For a successful co-operation it needs a good networking of all departments, faculties and service centers. Skills in project management and problem-solving methodology are a key success factor for a Quality Manager. Knowledge of and about quality management and quality control procedures, but also practical experience in support of strategy development and process management, change management and organizational development, have to be provided by quality managers to support the management board of their universities.

References

Bogumil, Jörg, Heinz & Rolf G. (Hrsg.) (2009). *Neue Steuerung von Hochschulen. Eine Zwischenbilanz/ New control of universities. An interim report*. Berlin.

Hanft, Anke& Nickel, Sigrun (Hrsg.) (2003). *Plädoyer für ein institutionengemässes Managementsystem/Plea for a contemporary institutions management system*. Lüthje, Jürgen. Universitätsentwicklung. Frankfurt am Main, pp. 151-161.

Hochschulrektorenkonferenz, (2006). *Beiträge zur Hochschulpolitik: Qualitätsentwicklung an Hochschulen. Erfahrungen und Lehren aus 10 Jahren Evaluation/ Contributions to higher education: quality development in higher education. Experiences and lessons learned from 10 years of evaluation*. Bonn.

Klieme, Eckhard, Tippelt & Rudolf (2008). Qualitätssicherung im Bildungswesen/ Quality Assurance in Education. *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik, Beiheft 53/ Quality Assurance in Education. In: Journal of Educational Psychology, Supplement 53*, pp. 7-13.

Laske, Stephan, Habersam, Michael & Kappler, Ekkehard (Hrsg.) (2000*). Qualitätsentwicklung in Universitäten/Quality development in universities*. München.

Pellert, Ada, Reil, Thomas & Winter, Martin (Hrsg.) (2002). Hochschule und Qualität. In: Qualitätssicherung an Hochschulen: Theorie und Praxis/ *College and high quality in Quality assurance in higher education: theory and practice.* Bielefeld, pp. 21-29.

Rudinger, Georg, (2008). *Evaluation und Qualitätssicherung von Forschung und Lehre im Bologna-Prozess/ Evaluation and quality assurance of teaching and research in the Bologna Process*. Bonn.

Schaad, Nicole, (2008). *Das System der Akkreditierung und Qualitätssicherung an den Schweizerischen Fachhochschulen. In: Handbuch Qualität in Studium und Lehre/The system of accreditation and quality assurance of the Swiss Universities of Applied Sciences. In: Manual of quality in teaching and learning*. Stuttgart, pp. 1- 24.

The Inspectorate of Higher Education in the Netherlands, (2006). *Accreditation in International Perspectice*. Utrecht.

Von Richthofen, Anja & Lent, Michael (Hrsg), (2009). *Qualitätsentwicklung in Studium und Lehre/Quality development in teaching and learning*. Bielefeld.