

What's QACEP?

QACEP is a two year project started in October 2009 funded with the support of the European Commission under the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme - Erasmus - Modernisation of Higher Education.

What's QACEP main aim?

To address the need for specific tools in the field of the Quality Assurance of HEIs' Continuing Education Programmes.

What's QACEP contribution to EU Policies?

QACEP addresses two main priorities in the EHEA agenda: Quality Assurance and Lifelong Learning.

Project results will be available to other HEIs in order to provide a set of concrete examples on how it's possible to implement QA systems for Continuing Education Programmes.

QACEP Consortium

QACEP Consortium is composed of eight institutions: six HEIs and two associations representing a large number of other HEIs

Partners are representative of different geographical areas and social and economic environments. Most of them are actively involved in European networks working in the field of Lifelong Learning (for example EUCEN) and Quality Assurance and/or participate in other European Projects.

The staff involved is representative of the envisaged end-user categories of project outcomes: HEIs Quality Assurance officers, administrative and teaching staff involved in the organisation and management of continuing education programmes, academic authorities.



QA for Higher Education Institutions Continuing Education Programmes

Quality Assurance for HEIs' Continuing Education Programmes

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Context and Needs

Continuing Education provided at Higher Education Institutions

Advanced knowledge-based societies require innovative and creative educational systems that are able to answer immediately to specific needs of the continuously evolving and changing labour market.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are key actors in lifelong learning promotion and they are called to implement their efforts in providing research-based higher education for lifelong learners and in guaranteeing the quality of their learning offer.

One response HEIs actually give to social challenges in terms of lifelong learning need is the provision of advanced Continuing Education and Training Programmes, mainly addressed to post graduate but also to secondary students with professional experiences.

Adapted approach for the quality assurance of HEIs Continuing Education Programmes

The growing number and relevance of continuing education programmes (CEPs) determines the need to include them in the quality assurance systems already in places.

An adapted approach for the quality assurance of CEPs is crucial considering the specific objectives of these programmes, the specific target groups, the variety of stakeholders involved, their specific relationship with labour market and society, the great variety in terms of duration, learner target groups, organization, the lack of consolidated and long tradition and sometimes a lack of consolidated rules, national regulations or guidelines for this kind of programmes.

Objectives and approach

- Objectives**
- To develop a general framework for the Quality Assurance of Continuing Education Programmes offered by HEIs, compatible and adapted to their special needs and features
 - To design specific tools for the quality assurance of these programmes
- Project approach**
- Bottom up methodology in order to collect, to compare and to discuss partners' concrete experiences
 - Confrontation with EU Policies
 - Experimental approach
- Project phases**
- QACEP project activities have been organised in three stages:

Comparative Analysis

November 2009 – June 2010

Comparative analyses within the partner HEIs with regard to CEPs and QA

Design of QA Framework for CEPs

April 2010 - December 2010

Design of a quality assurance framework, identifying the key features of Continuing Education Programmes that are crucial for a successful performance

Pilot Stage

October 2010 - June 2011

Pilot self-evaluation of a group of CEPs within the Partner HEIs, using the overall framework and testing specific tools

Expected Outcomes and Results

• QACEP Comparative Analyses Report •

Document describing the comparative analysis carried out by the six Consortium HEIs. The report is a public document aiming at fostering a mutual understanding of contexts, practices and challenges at European level.

• QA Framework for HEIs' CEPs •

Reference document for Higher Education Institutions to manage strategically the quality of its continuing education programmes.

• QACEP Pilot Stage Tools •

- Final report on QACEP Pilot Stage including suggestions on systems for data collection and information structuring for the evaluation of the programmes
- Report for CEPs self-evaluation
- Tools for surveys focused on CEPs stakeholders interviews.

Exploitation of results

- **Manual:** in order to exploit the use of the products developed, a short Manual focused on project results will be published at the end of the project
- **European Seminar** in September 2011