

A DECADE OF BOLOGNA PROCESS. CHALLENGES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

QA not a “one fits all” term

Various types of approaches of quality in higher education

- a. the quality of academic products;
- b. the quality of processes;
- c. quality of the management structure.

Key institutions :

- a. the national independent agencies,
- b. the international evaluation bodies.

c. *the internal quality assurance departments in universities* (undertaking self evaluations and auditing)

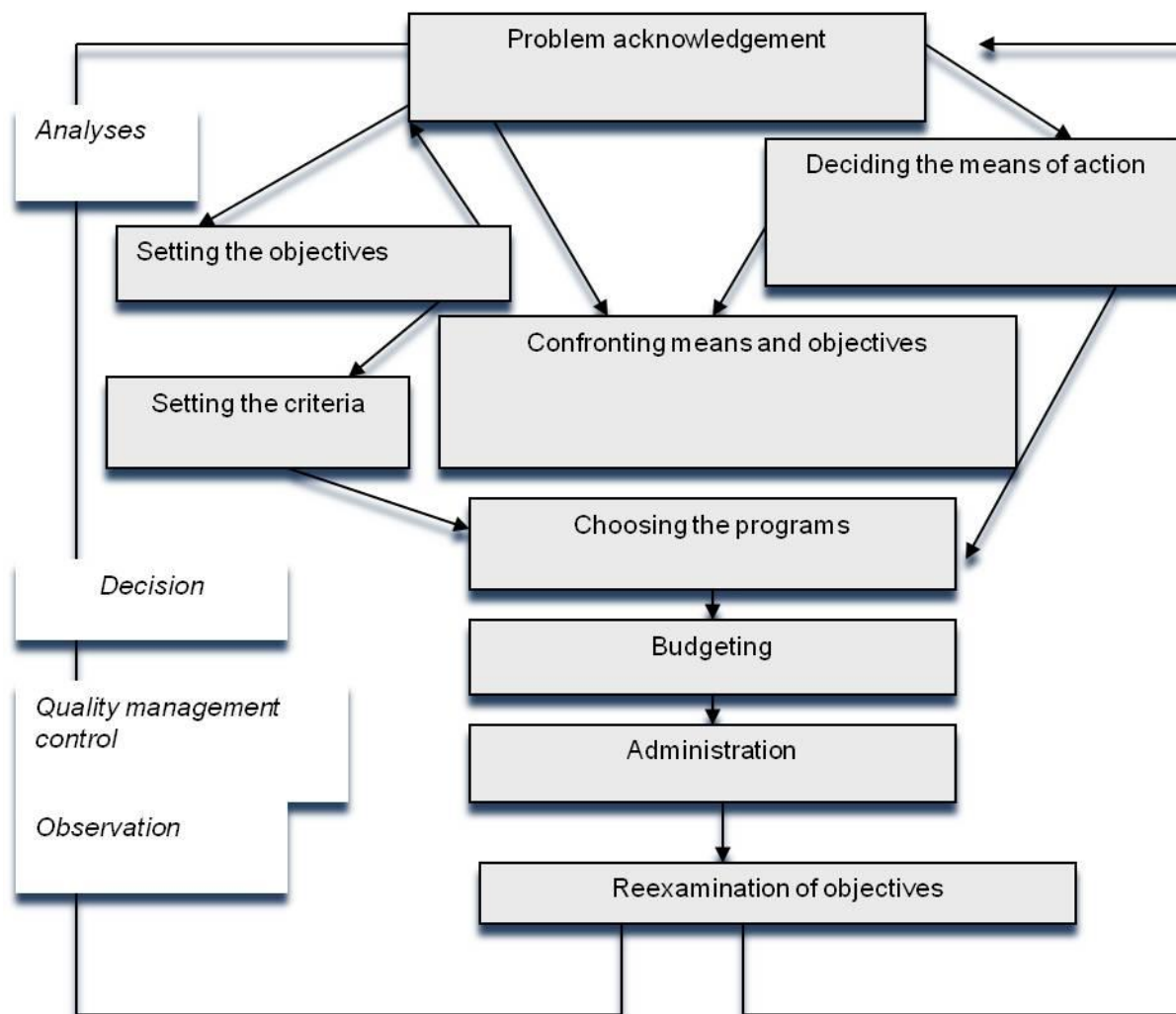
- closer to the needs
- understand better the nature of weak and strong points
- adjust better the institutional and dept. goals
- offer a better approach to diversity in the educational and disciplinary programs, in research and staff standards, in the possibility to fund education and research

Quality assurance in the Bologna process era.

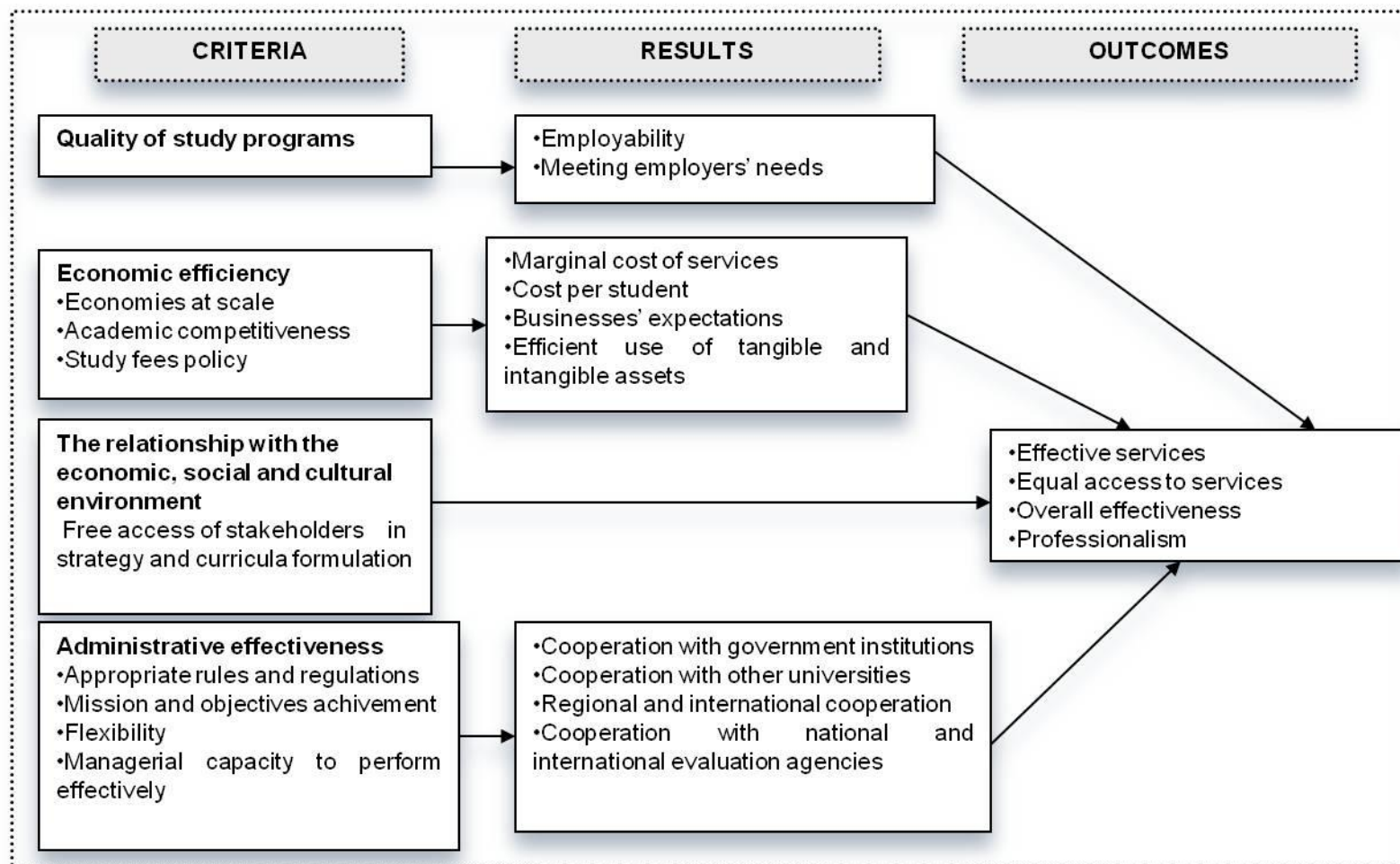
- The new approach brought by the Bologna process -
- *the final product* of the academic activity is *knowledge* offered to the community

Universities ➡ a social *responsibility* ➡ *the human capital formation*

- quality assurance means *building trust* within the community
- educational, research and artistic creation offer that meets all stakeholders' expectations and accounts for the efficiency of all resources involved (human, financial, tangible and intangible assets).
- The level of effectiveness of academic activities reflects the impact they generate on the economic and social environment
- QA is essential in a competitive environment
- The starting point of quality management is the identification of students as well as the internal and external stakeholders needs.



Quality management chart



Effectiveness approach of activity

CREATIVITY, DIVERSITY AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN THE WEST UNIVERSITY OF TIMISOARA

- **Creativity**

- integrated approach of students demand, educational offer, tutorship, academics teaching and research activities, financial resource and outcomes.
- the approach of effectiveness in each area of activity.

- **Diversity**

- dealing with creativity ultimately means considering ***diversity*** in stating the mission of the university, in setting the quality procedures, educational programs.

- **QA**

- Diversity of study programs in universities requires a diversified approach of the **QA** challenges higher education institutions must face.

West University of Timișoara -QA professionalisation-



The professionalization of quality assurance:

It should be strictly connected to the academic activities.

The head of quality assurance department should be a trustworthy academic, widely accepted by the university community, who knows best the inner problems of the main activity of the institution.

West University of Timișoara -programs and outcomes-



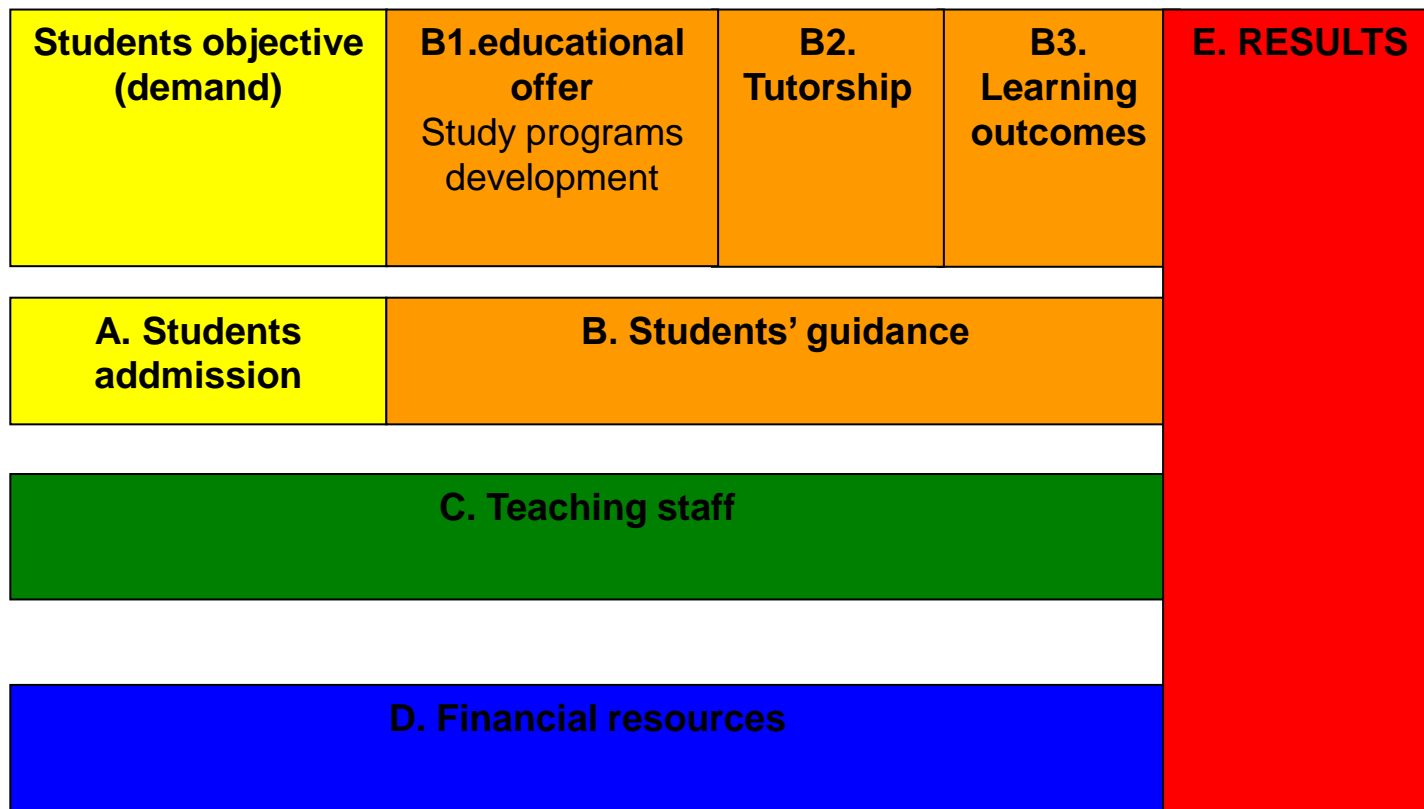
improving the masters' studies and attracting a higher percentage of students to follow the second and the third study levels.

pursuing the outcomes (i.e. the quality of the graduate of bachelor, masters' and doctoral studies, the employability of the graduates and the opinions expressed by the employers).

West University of Timișoara -effectiveness-

➡ **favours** the approach of effectiveness in each area of activity, given that the autonomy of the institution implies responsibility and accountability concerning the rendered education services, the administration of public money, etc.

➡ **monitorig** the effectiveness of the study programs (contents and financial efficiency).



Integrated view of quality assurance

- financial constraints and accountability -

- ➡ The obligation to reconsider our financial policy in order to cover the cost of education under the financial constraints.
- ➡ Efficiency must be the cornerstone in managing available funds and require a more attentive and creative use of all financial resources
- ➡ Public and private funds. The university is accountable for spending public or private funds.
- ➡ Higher autonomy , higher accountability.
- ➡ Social accountability, higher transparency.

-responsibility for the academic policies-

- ➔ Alongside the detailed regulations of higher education institutions, under diversification and autonomy, the WUT takes responsibility by developing its own policy acknowledged by the entire staff.

-number of students-

- ➔ The trend requires a more attentive analysis of the study programs, human resource policy, support services, investments. The internationalization of study programs and student /staff mobility means a diversification of the students in terms of gender, age, socio- economic background, nationality, etc.

- the indicators used in assessing the performance -



The indicators should be homogenous and not just relying on quantitative aspects.



The purpose they serve.

They must provide top and middle management with the relevant information to measure the fulfilment of internal goals. The indicators set at top management levels must reverberate in the indicators set at faculties' and other departments' level in order to ensure homogeneity in achieving the goals and the targets.



Benchmarking becomes also an issue since it allows reference to the local, regional and international standards and statistics.

Concluding remarks

The new approach of the educational system started ten years ago by the Bologna process also requires a new approach of the quality assurance system in higher education institutions.

The main trends that had been observed over the last decade:

- educational and disciplinary diversification
- various possibilities of financing the teaching and research activities
- internationalization and growing competition among universities
- an intensification of students and staff mobility

Concluding remarks

A proactive management approach is required at university level as well as the level of faculties and departments, pursuing efficiency and effectiveness, and the achievement of the stated mission and objectives.

As part of the management, the internal quality assurance must deal with the changing environment of the universities.

It is of utmost importance that a set of criteria and standards are used. The standards should not only be statistically quantifiable but should contain qualitative aspects that enrich the institutions with the ability to compete and ensure its trustworthiness in the society.



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