External evaluation/accreditation/certification as a tool for improvement of study programmes

a powerful means for overcoming internal opposition against change

*** Experiences at the Medical University of Graz ***

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▶▶ **October 2002:**

   Implementation of a new diploma programme Human Medicine
   – **Fundamental change process**
   – **Internal opposition**
   – **Risk of failure**

▶▶ **January 2004:**

   Transition of former Medical Faculty into a new and autonomous Medical University
   – **New legal foundations**
   – **New structures**
   – **New processes**

▶▶ **August 2005:**

   Change of legal basis of admission policy
   – **Admission tests and capacity-oriented restriction of study places**

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▶▶ **Stepwise implementation of a Quality Management (QM) system**

▶▶ **Aims of the QM system**

–   **Minimization of the risk of failure**

–   **Optimization of structures and processes**

But also …

–   **Efficient coping with the fears of involved persons**

–   **Efficient reduction of internal opposition**

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▶▶ <u>Basic understanding of the QM system:</u>

Well-tuned structures and processes aimed at reaching quality in Studies, Teaching and Continuing Education

▶▶ <u>Scope:</u>

The QM system deals with all structures and processes of the university which are relevant for the field of Studies, Teaching and Continuing Education

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Quality of Concepts
> policy to attain quality, definition of goals

Quality of Structures
> organisation, resources

Quality of Processes
> transparency, topicality

Quality of Results
> Evaluation of efficiency and effectivity

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The installation, the evaluation of efficacy as well as the continuous improvement of the QM system is accomplished by employing a multitude of established methods and techniques.

These methods and techniques complement each other, and each one deals with a different focus of QM.

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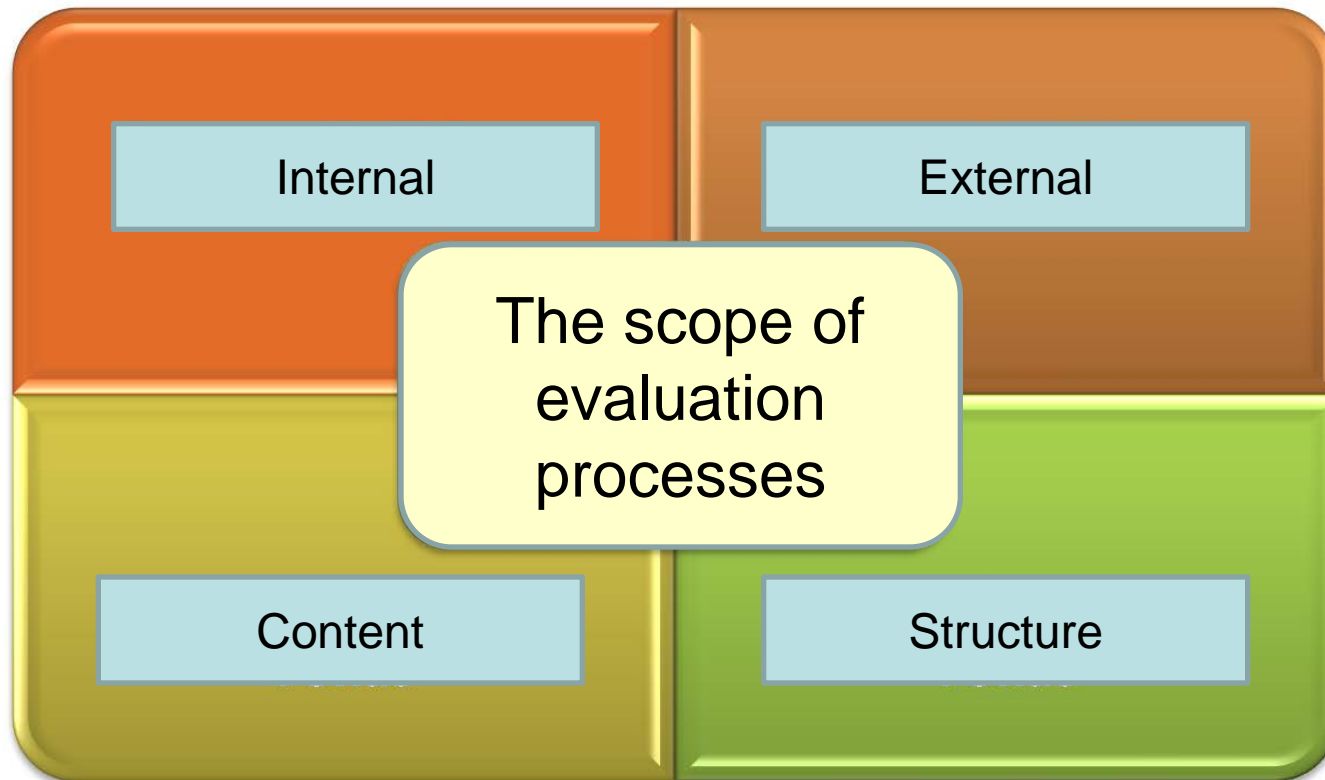
Internal methods

▶▶ **Systematic evaluation of teaching by the students**

▶▶ **Systematic evaluation of assessments**

▶▶ **Establishment of a QM handbook**

▶▶ **Establishment of a Bologna Team**

▶▶ **Continuous Management Review sessions**

▶▶ **…**

External procedures

▶▶ **AQA: Support in establishing QM procedures**

▶▶ **Charité Berlin: Progress Test Medicine**

▶▶ **ACQUIN: Accreditation of study programmes**

▶▶ **AQA: Certification of**

– **(a) the area of Studies, Teaching and Continuing Education**

– **(b) the Medical University as a whole**

▶▶ **…**

International accreditation of Diploma programmes for Human Medicine, Dentistry and PhD Doctoral Programme

- ACQUIN -

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▶ External and independent proof that
  – the curriculum reform was on the right way in an international context
  – the goals of the curriculum reform had been realized
  – the internal QM system was well designed and functioning

▶ Minimization of internal fears, opposition and resistance by systematic integration of all relevant stakeholder groups at the University (teachers, students, administration, top management) into the accreditation endeavour

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- ▶▶ Contact with ACQUIN
- ▶▶ Formal application
- ▶▶ Preliminary negotiations
- ▶▶ Contract
- ▶▶ Submission of a Self-Description
- ▶▶ Appointment of Peer Group
- ▶▶ Site visit
- ▶▶ Report of Peer Group
- ▶▶ Reaction/Comments of the University as well as of the relevant Board of ACQUIN
- ▶▶ Accreditation decision (initially with 4 further requests)
- ▶▶ Publication of results

Audit standards

1.) Objectives

Existence, transparency, validity of the objectives:

- ▶ Reference to the general objectives of the Higher Education Institute (HEI) and integration into the HEI profile
- ▶ Objectives of the study programme (career qualifications/"employability", etc.)
- ▶ Definition and appropriateness of the target group

2.) Concept

Existence, consistency, coherence and consequence with regard to:

- ▶ Structure and content of the study programme
- ▶ Learning outcomes, modularisation and ECTS
- ▶ Learning context

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Audit standards

3.) Implementation

Existence, plausibility, appropriateness of:

- Resources (human, material, spatial and infrastructural)
- Decision-making processes, organisation and cooperation
- Examination system
- Admission requirements
- Transparency

4.) Quality Assurance and Development

Existence, plausibility, appropriateness of a quality management system with regard to:

- Task/function
- Structure
- Implementation
- Appropriateness

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▶▶ Competency-based Catalogue of Learning goals

Project to define the learning goals for all modules and tracks of the diploma programmes

▶▶ Concept for „Teaching the Teachers"

Three-step programme; requirement for tenure;

▶▶ Improvements with regard to the Diploma Thesis

Clear requirements based on decisions of curriculum comitees, establishment of the necessary processes for realisation

▶▶ Systematic improvement of the interdisciplinary character of all teaching processes

Establihment of Teaching Units, modified processes of evaluation, systematic attempts for continuous optimization of the study programmes

Full accreditation was awarded

▶▶ in 2009, after satisfying the 4 requests) for the
  – Diploma Programme Human Medicine
  – Diploma Programme Dentistry

▶▶ in 2011 (without any request) for the
  – PhD Doctoral Programme

Certification of QM in the field of Studies, Teaching and Continuing Education

- AQA Audit -

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▸▸ External and independent proof for the functionality and the efficiency of the internal QM system in the field of Studies, Teaching and Continuing Education

▸▸ Transparent description of all quality-assuring measures in the field of Studies, Teaching and Continuing Education

▸▸ Strengthening the internal compliance and corporate identity by systematic integration of all relevant stakeholder groups into the process

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▸▸Six Audit standards

based on the ENQA (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) standards and guidelines

1.) Quality strategy

2.) Quality assurance as responsibility of Top Management

3.) Responsibilities and access to information

4.) Procedures of the internal quality assurance

5.) Monitoring and information systems

6.) Systematic participation of all relevant stake holders

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▸▸ Establishment of a quality documentation
(Part 1 – structure and organisation of QM, Part 2 – key processes)

▸▸ Informational visit of the Peer Group

▸▸ Official site visit of the Peer Group

▸▸ Report by the Peer Group / Response by the University

▸▸ Decision of Certification by AQA

▸▸ Follow-up-Workshop

Full certification (without further requests) was awarded for

▶ the QM system of the Area of Studies, Teaching and Continuing Education (2009)

▶ the QM system of Medical University of Graz as a whole (4 areas, 2011)
  – Research,
  – Studies, Teaching and Continuing Education
  – Personal Development
  – International Relations

▶▶ Resonable choice of procedures as well as of time points

▶▶ Choice of a suitable agency or institute

▶▶ Functioning cooperation with the agency or institute
(Schedule, informations regarding the documentation, selection of peers, etc.

▶▶ Investment of personal and financial resources

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- ▶ Careful and honest production of the Self-Report

- ▶ Open-minded and thrustful attitude towards the Peer Group
   (Try to produce a friendly and constructive working climate)

- ▶ Careful and self-conscious response to the initial report of the Peer Group

- ▶ Integration of all relevant stakeholder groups
   (If possible, careful selection of the participants)

- ▶ Quality assurance MUST BE RECOGNIZED as a central responsibility and a central goal of the top management of the university

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▸▸ External proof and assurance of functionality and efficacy of the QM system

▸▸ Valuable impulses for future developments and improvements

▸▸ Advantage in the competition between educational organisations

▸▸ Support of change management („doing the right things in the right way")

▸▸ Reduction of internal opposition against change