Quality assurance of open and distance higher education: creating an evaluation framework

Magda Fonte[1][0000-0002-2617-8099] and António Teixeira[2][0000-0002-1339-6548]

[1] Laboratório de Educação a Distância e eLearning (LE@D), Universidade Aberta, Lisboa, Portugal

[2] Universidade Aberta, Lisboa, Portugal

magdafonte.uab@gmail.com
antonio.moreira.teixeira.pt@gmail.com

Abstract. With this research, it is intended to establish a set of dimensions, criteria and indicators for the monitoring of Open and Distance Education (ODE) courses in the Higher Education (HE) context, in response to the absence of a specific framework of quality criteria for ODE in the Portuguese HE. The research developed in the area in recent years has focused on very specific contexts, not allowing the construction of a more comprehensive view of the national reality. In this way, and given the emphasis that international guidelines have placed on this field [1] [2] [3], the first step of this research is to identify quality dimensions, criteria and indicators, based on the literature review, establishing the first version of the framework. Posteriorly, we intend to set up a panel of experts to gather points of view about the dimensions, criteria and indicators defined in the first version, reaching the final version.

1 First step results: models' review and identification of quality dimensions

Initially, 42 models were identified through a literature review of international frameworks, models and normative documents. In order to reduce the corpus of analysis, a selection of the previously identified documents was carried out, based on three exclusion criteria, reaching a selection of 25 final documents. At the same time, the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area [3] and the benchmarks for internal quality assurance systems in Portuguese Higher Education Institutions [4] were analyzed. After the analysis of all these documents were defined 33 dimensions, organized into 10 areas (see Table 1).

Proceedings of the International Conference MOOC-MAKER 2017.
Antigua Guatemala, Guatemala, November 16-17, 2017.

140

Table 1. Areas and dimensions identified through literature review.

Areas	Dimensions
1. Policy for quality assurance	1.1 Institutional vision and integration of EAD in the strategic plan; 1.2 Quality assurance system; 1.3 Technical and technological plan; 1.4 Project management and financial sustainability.
2. Design and approval of course	2.1 Definition of curriculum, course materials and learning resources; 2.2 Pedagogical design; 2.3 Technical and technological design; 2.4 Promotion of virtual mobility; 2.5 Approval process.
3. Student-centered learning, teaching and assessment	3.1 Autonomy, flexibility and customization; 3.2 Interaction, collaboration and communication; 3.3 Assessment, student progress and learning pace; 3.4 Ethical issues.
4. Student admission, recognition and certification	4.1 Consistency and transparency of admission requirements; 4.2 Completion procedures; 4.3 Recognition and certification.
5. Staff (teacher and non-teacher)	5.1 Recruitment and conditions of employment; 5.2 Qualifications and competences; 5.3 Training and professional development; 5.4 Teachers: academic activity and research; 5.5 Technical and administrative support; 5.6 Teams dimension.
6. Student support	6.1 Course induction; 6.2 Guidance and academic and administrative support; 6.3 Technical support; 6.4 Complaints.
7. Information management	7.1 Collection and use of data.
8. Public information	8.1 Dissemination of information.
9. On-going monitoring and continuous improvement	9.1 Quality assurance policy monitoring; 9.2 Monitoring of course design and approval process; 9.3 Teaching and learning process monitoring; 9.4 Continuous improvement process.
10. External quality assurance	10.1 Cyclical external quality assurance.

References

1. Bach, T., DragojeviĆ, D., Findlay, P., Hering, S., Lauri, L., Lynch, O., Olcen, Z., Udam, M.: Transparency of European higher education through public quality assurance reports (EQArep). European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, Brussels (2014).
2. European Union Law Homepage, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52013DC0654R%2802%29, last accessed 2017/08/28.
3. Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). EURASHE, Brussels (2015).
4. Referenciais para os sistemas internos de garantia da qualidade nas IES portuguesas. Agência de Avaliação e Acreditação no Ensino Superior (A3ES), Lisboa (2016).

Proceedings of the International Conference MOOC-MAKER 2017.
Antigua Guatemala, Guatemala, November 16-17, 2017.

141