The Meaning of Assessment in Higher Education and Research
Michel Robert

To cite this version:

HAL Id: lirmm-03279878
https://hal-lirmm.ccsd.cnrs.fr/lirmm-03279878
Submitted on 6 Jul 2021

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The Meaning of Assessment in Higher Education and Research

June 30, 2021 1:30 PM (GMT-3)
www.youtube.com/cassriograndedosul

Prof. Michel ROBERT
former president of the
Université de Montpellier 2, France

After the talk, there will be a panel with the participation of:

Prof. Raimundo Macedo, president of the Brazilian Computer Society
Prof. Marcelo Lubaszewski, vice-president of the Brazilian Microelectronics Society
Prof. Tiago Balen, Head of the Graduate Program on Microelectronics at UFRGS
Prof. Avelino Zorzo, Computer Science Committee, Capes/MEC
The Meaning of Assessment in Higher Education and Research

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Universities today have to take up many challenges: massification of higher education, excellence in research and innovation, resources, attractiveness, rankings, societal expectations... The question of the autonomy of universities is essential: the articulation between the responsibility of states and that of institutions is the subject of much debate. It is therefore important to note a different practice of institutional autonomy depending on the country, as well as varying positions on the subjects of accreditation or performance measurement. The construction of the European higher education area that began some twenty years ago (Paris Sorbonne, Bologna) has led on the one hand to harmonizing national systems (graduate, post-graduate, PhDs) to encourage mobility (ECTS credits) and on the other hand to promote quality assurance policies in training courses and universities. This is what led to the creation of assessment agencies based in particular on the same framework: the standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). These agencies can cover a national or regional scope and are themselves periodically assessed by E apa (Eipa register). This is the case in France with the HCEES (High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education), faced with these different challenges, the question of assessment is central and is taking on an increasing role. The context of the organization of an evaluation is complex and alternates several parameters ranging from internal to external; from global to local, from qualitative to quantitative, from subjective to objective. The relationship between reviewers (peers) and institutions should be based on trust and lack of interests. The distance between assessment and decision-making, as well as the interface and mediation role of the assessment agency are essential. The evocation of "evaluation" leads to tensions because of the sensitive terms linked to history, culture and practices: measurement of individual or collective "performance", academic freedom and risk-taking... Don’t researchers spend too much time being evaluated or evaluating articles in journals or conferences, projects, training courses, laboratories, institutions... other researchers? The load induced by this "industrialization" of a very large number of expertises is about several hundred reports for a university in France every five years. The definition of the evaluation grid, that is to say of the components to be evaluated within a university (diplomas, faculties and schools, laboratories and research teams) can vary according to the countries and the practices. After a presentation and analysis of the main principles and limits of evaluation systems in the field of higher education and research (mainly in France and Europe) the presentation will situate the role of evaluation, its organization, its usefulness and its effectiveness. New alternatives will be proposed to better meet current expectations.

Key words: Assessment, peer review; terms of reference; standards, quality assurance

Michel ROBERT is Professor at the University of Montpellier (France), where he’s teaching microelectronics in the engineering program. His research interests at the Montpellier Laboratory of Informatics, Robotics, and Micro-electronics (LIRMM) are design and modelling of system on chip architectures. He is currently particularly interested in the optimization of data and energy flows in green datacenters. He is author or co-author of more than 300 publications in the field of CMOS integrated circuits design. He has supervised around forty doctoral theses. He chaired the IFIP WG 10.5 (International Federation for Information Processing) from 2007 to 2011. He served as director of the doctoral school, of the LIRMM research laboratory, then of the laboratory of excellence for digital solutions and modeling, for the environment and the living, before becoming president of the University of Montpellier (2012-2015). He has held various national responsibilities in monitoring and evaluation in higher education and research. He was Director of the Institutional Evaluation Department of the High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education (Hcere) from 2016 to 2021. Michel ROBERT is author of a French-language book “The meaning of assessment in higher education and research”, published in 2020 and downloadable at https://www.lirmm.fr/users/michelrobert/index.php

See also:

After the talk, there will be a panel with the participation of:
Prof. Bemirbu Maceoa, president of the Brazilian Computer Society.
Prof. Marcelo Labawowski, vice-president of the Brazilian Microelectronics Society.
Prof. Tiago Baião, head of the Graduate Program on Microelectronics at UFRGS.
Prof. Aurelio Zorzo, Computer Science Committee, Capes. MEC.
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The construction of the European higher education area that began some twenty years ago (Paris Sorbonne, Bologna) has led on the one hand to harmonizing national systems (graduate, post-graduate, PhD) to encourage mobility (ECTS credits) and on the other hand to promote quality assurance policies in training courses and universities. This is what led to the creation of assessment agencies based in particular on the same framework: the standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). These agencies can cover a national or regional scope and are themselves periodically assessed by Enqa (Eqr register). This is the case in France with the HCERES (High Council for the Evaluation of Research and Higher Education).

Faced with these different challenges, the question of assessment is central and is taking on an increasing role. The context of the organization of an evaluation is complex and alternates several parameters ranging from internal to external, from global to local, from qualitative to quantitative, from subjective to objective. The relationship between reviewers (peers) and institutions should be based on trust and lack of interests. The distance between assessment and decision-making, as well as the interface and mediation role of the assessment agency are essential.

The evocation of "evaluation" leads to tensions because of the sensitive terms linked to our history, our culture and our practices: measurement of individual or collective "performance", academic freedom and risk-taking... Don't researchers spend too much time being evaluated or evaluating articles in journals or conferences, projects, training courses, laboratories, institutions ... other researchers, given the load induced by this "industrialization" of a very large number of expertise (several hundred for a university in France every five years). The definition of the evaluation grain, that is to say of the components to be evaluated within a university (diplomas, faculties and schools, laboratories and research teams) can vary according to the countries and the practices.

The assessment of institutions has a cost and must have a recognized effectiveness. Attentive to these difficulties, the presentation will situate the role of evaluation, its organization, its usefulness and its effectiveness : does the assessment serve the chosen objective? Is it accepted by the assessed communities? What is its impact? What are the relevant grains in the evaluation of a structure? What new practices can we consider?

There is no one-size-fits-all ideal model for implementing an assessment. It depends on the history and the national context, the political issues and the specificities of the institution. The definition of the evaluation grain, that is to say of the components to be evaluated within a university (diplomas, faculties and schools, research entities) can vary according to the countries and the practices.

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There is no one-size-fits-all ideal model for implementing an assessment. It depends on the history and the national context, the political issues and the specificities of the institution. The definition of the evaluation grain, that is to say of the components to be evaluated within a university (diplomas, faculties and schools, research entities) can vary according to the countries and the practices.

The essential role of independent assessment agencies, and the opening of borders to foreign agencies to stimulate and harmonize international good practices.
THE MEANING OF ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

MICHEL ROBERT
UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTPELLIER, FRANCE

SBC/SBMicro/CASS-RS Special Event
YouTube Live @ IEEE CASS Rio Grande do Sul Chapter
https://www.youtube.com/cassriograndedosul
1:30 PM (Brasilia Time, GMT-3), Wednesday, June 30, 2021
PRELIMINARY REMARKS

✓ THE ANALYSIS PRESENTED HAVE TO BE ADAPTED TO THE PARTICULAR CONTEXT OF EACH COUNTRY

✓ THE MAIN COARSE GRAIN STUDY IS THE INSTITUTION LEVEL (UNIVERSITY)

✓ THE OTHER THINNER GRAINS ARE OBVIOUSLY CONNECTED: DEPARTMENTS/FACULTIES, RESEARCH LABS, ACCREDITATION OF UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE DIPLOMAS, TEACHERS & RESEARCHERS …
THE MEANING OF ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

1-CONTEXT
The eco-system of higher education and research institutions

2- ASSESSMENT

3- QUALITY ASSURANCE

4- CONCLUSION
✓ Faculties and universities have been places of **knowledge development and transmission** from their origins...

... But since the last century, organizational models have become more complex: **resources, ranking, management** ... **assessment**!

➢ Universities have **common characteristics** such as the organization of student training programs (undergraduate, graduate, PhD) ...

➢ Universities have **many differences**: size, organization, selection of students, registration fees, economic model, autonomy, role of state and region, selection-appointment of the rector ...

**The meaning of assessment in higher education and research**

Sorbonne, Paris (1253)

Faculté de médecine de l’Université de Montpellier (1220)
CONCEPT: EVALUATION & COMPETITION

- **HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS (UNIVERSITIES) CHALLENGES:** Massification of higher education, competition, excellence in research and innovation, resources, attractiveness, rankings, impact, societal expectations ...

- **UNIVERSITIES HAVE DIFFERENT HISTORIES AND ORGANIZATIONS:** The level of autonomy is depending on the country, as well as varying positions on the subjects of accreditation

- **SENSITIVE TERMS:**
  - Measurement of individual or collective “performance”
  - Academic freedom and risk-taking...
  - Assessment / Control

- **ASSESSMENT:** Why? Who? When? How? Time spent and cost?

Don't researchers spend too much time being evaluated or evaluating articles in journals or conferences, projects, training courses, laboratories, institutions ... or other researchers?
Evaluation of research bodies in France

Higher Education and Research Institutions from Fine Grain to Coarse Grain

- University
- Departments, Faculties ...
- Programs & Diploma (undergraduate, graduate, PhD)
- Laboratories
- Professors, Researchers
- Other staff

users: students ...
The meaning of assessment in higher education and research

CONTEXT

✓ Observation 1: the practice of peer review of research corresponds to international standards and shared practices.
Evaluation of research bodies in France

IDENTICAL IN ALL COUNTRIES

- INTERNATIONAL
- NATIONAL
- LOCAL

✓ JOURNAL & CONFERENCE
✓ PROJECT
✓ DISTINCTION
✓ IMPACT

University

Departments, Faculties ...

Programs (undergraduate, graduate, PhD)

Laboratories

Researchers

RESEARCHERS: peer review
The meaning of assessment in higher education and research

CONTEXT

✓ Observation 2 : on the other hand, the assessment of institutions is not homogeneous and practices vary from country to country.

✓ Observation 3 : in Europe, practices are shared in the field of quality assurance.

The Bologna process led to the creation of the ENQA, which today brings together around fifty European agencies focused mainly on higher education.

ENQA = European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
Observation 1: The practice of peer review of research corresponds to international standards and shared practices.

Observation 2: On the other hand, the evaluation of institutions is not homogeneous and practices vary from country to country.

Observation 3: In Europe, practices are shared in the field of quality assurance. The Bologna process led to the creation of the ENQA, which today brings together around fifty European agencies focused mainly on higher education.

Observation 4: We must also consider the massive processing of data on a global scale, to measure performance, compare and classify!
INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY RANKINGS
THE LIMITS OF THE USE OF DATA, INDICATORS, AND STATISTICAL TOOLS

- THE SHANGHAI RANKING HIGHLIGHTS THE PROGRESS AND GROWING WEIGHT OF ... CHINA IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH THROUGH MAINLY QUANTITATIVE CRITERIA

- A CLASSIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL RANKINGS IS NECESSARY TO BETTER DISTINGUISH THOSE BASED MAINLY ON THE MEASUREMENT OF INDIVIDUAL SCIENTIFIC PERFORMANCE, SUCH AS THE SHANGHAI RANKING (PUBLICATIONS, DISTINCTIONS...) AND THOSE MORE ORIENTED TOWARDS THE COLLECTIVE PERFORMANCE OF INSTITUTIONS INCLUDING ALL UNIVERSITY MISSIONS
CONTEXT: MEETING DIFFERENT EXPECTATIONS

- specificity
- calculation
- objective
- internal
- transparent
- confidential
- external
- subjective
- emotion
- uniformity
EXAMPLE: «EXCELLENCE!» «WE ARE THE CHAMPION!» WHY?

- objective
- transparent
- confidential
- subjective
- emotion
- calculation
EXAMPLE: «EXCELLENCE»  «WE ARE THE CHAMPION!» WHY?

- objective
- transparent
- confidential
- subjective
- emotion
- calculation
TODAY : COMPLEXITY, UNCERTAINTY …

**CONTRIBUTION OF HUMAN SCIENCES … COMPLEX THINKING**

« ... FROM BIRTH, ADAPTATION TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD OCCURS THROUGH TRIAL AND ERROR, AND CONTINUES THROUGHOUT LIFE.

**KNOWLEDGE CANNOT BE BUILT WITHOUT A RISK OF ERROR. BUT ERROR PLAYS A POSITIVE ROLE WHEN IT IS RECOGNIZED, ANALYZED AND OVERCOME ... »

EDGAR MORIN. “LESSONS FROM A CENTURY OF LIFE, MAY 2021"
TODAY: COMPLEXITY, UNCERTAINTY ...

- CONTRIBUTION OF HUMAN SCIENCES … COMPLEX THINKING

« … FROM BIRTH, ADAPTATION TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD OCCURS THROUGH TRIAL AND ERROR, AND CONTINUES THROUGHOUT LIFE. KNOWLEDGE CANNOT BE BUILT WITHOUT A RISK OF ERROR. BUT ERROR PLAYS A POSITIVE ROLE WHEN IT IS RECOGNIZED, ANALYZED AND OVERCOME … »

EDGAR MORIN. “LESSONS FROM A CENTURY OF LIFE, MAY 2021”

- APPLICATION TO AUTONOMOUS SYSTEMS

Model: closed-loop (feedback) control
Accept error to progress!
Development of Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Model: closed-loop (feedback) control

Accept error to progress!

- Trajectory
- Data
- Indicators
- Standards
- Steering
- Management
THE MEANING OF ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

1- CONTEXT
The eco-system of higher education and research institutions

2- ASSESSMENT

3- QUALITY ASSURANCE

4- CONCLUSION
Mandate of the assessment:
- Perimeter?
- Objectives?
- Recipients of the results?

QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY: POSITION
ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY: SELF-EVALUATION, ON-SITE VISITS, EVALUATION REPORTS

- Each entity is evaluated every X years.  
  \( 1 < X < 8 \)
  
  \( \text{ENTITY} = \text{RESEARCH UNIT, TRAINING COURSE, UNIVERSITY & SCHOOL} \)

- Each evaluation is based on a self-evaluation prior to the assessment of the entity by an agency.

- All assessments are peer review system (experts) for qualitative evaluation completed by analysis of quantitative data and use of indicators with an on-site visit.

- Assessments aim to identify strengths & weaknesses in order to formulate recommendations for improvement.

- All evaluation reports are sent to the organizations evaluated so that they can add their remarks before publication.
INSTITUTION ASSESSMENT: PRINCIPLES

INSTITUTION

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT REPORT
+ Answer

COMMITTEE (Experts)

SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT

AGENCY (Standards ESG)
ASSESSMENT: OBJECTIVES

- The distance between *assessment and decision-making*, as well as the interface and mediation role of the assessment agency are essential.

- **Transparency** of assessment relies on website publication of:
  - *Standards and methods*
  - *list of experts and their positions*
  - *evaluation reports*

- The relationship between reviewers (peers) and institutions should be based on trust and **no conflict of interests**.
ASSESSMENT: OBJECTIVES

A OR/AND B?

A - ASSISTING EVALUATED ENTITIES IN THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF THEIR PRACTICES

B - PROVIDING CLARIFICATION FOR DECISION-MAKERS

- Public Authorities (financing, recognition of qualifications)
- Others stakeholders: local Authorities, companies, families...

A > B  Autonomy ... but expectation of the country?

A < B  Centralized national management but
- bureaucracy?
- Acceptance of the communities concerned?
ASSESSMENT: MAIN STEPS

- TERMS OF REFERENCE
  - University

- SELF-ASSESSMENT
  - Departments, Faculties ...
  - Programs & Diploma
  - Laboratories
  - Researchers

- PEER REVIEW
  - ON-SITE VISIT

- REPORTS

- ACCREDITATION
  - (UNDERGRADUATE, GRADUATE, PHD)
Open question: should the evaluation of the quality of research in a disciplinary field be done at the local level with the visit of a committee of peers, or at the national level?
FRANCE: HIGH COUNCIL FOR EVALUATION OF RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION (HCÉRES)

✓ STATUS: public service mission
  • Independent administrative authority that acts in accordance with the international standards and ESGs
  • The evaluation is mandatory for each Higher education Institution (HEI) which is funded by the French State

✓ ORGANISATION
  ▪ High Council Board of HCÉRES: members representing the stakeholders of Higher Education & Research
  ▪ Evaluation departments
  ▪ Observatory of science & technology (studies & statistics)
  ▪ Scientific integrity OFFICE

➢ Different Standards for external evaluation: institutions, research, education (graduate, undergraduate, PhD …)
Evaluation of research bodies in France (undergraduate, graduate, PhD)

- Load induced: large number of expertises for a given university every five years.

- 250 Higher education and research institutions
- 5500 Programs (undergraduate, graduate, PhD)
- 2500 Research entities

Local level
Evaluation of research entities

The evaluation standard for research entities establishes the requirements relating to the content of the research entity’s self-evaluation report, and the requirements for the external evaluation report produced by the panel of expert peers.

The methodology is based on the following key principles

- A qualitative evaluation carried out by peers with a visit of the research entity
- An evaluation takes into account the multiplicity of missions, the diversity of research and, where applicable, the complexity of its multidisciplinary dimension
- An evaluation which is based on observable facts and the assessment of their value for each criterion

The standard describes three evaluation criteria

- The quality of research activities and products: production of knowledge, reputation and attractiveness, Interactions with the economic, social and cultural environment, and with the health sector, Involvement in research-based training
- The organisational structure and general activities of the research unit
- The five-year strategy and development plan

Observable facts

Research activities, like the products that result from them, are diverse and their evaluation methods vary according to the research communities.

HCÉRES asked the communities to define both the scope, the quality indices and, if necessary, their hierarchy (for example, the scientific work and the conferences do not have the same value according to the disciplinary fields).

This work led to the production by each scientific sub-field of Guides of research products and research activities.
ITALY: ANVUR

National level

University

Departments, Faculties

Programs & Diploma
(undergraduate, graduate, PhD)

Laboratories

Researchers

A < B

ANVUR FINE GRAIN + PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS
UK : Teaching Excellence Framework
- The teaching excellence framework (TEF) is a system that assesses the quality of teaching in universities in England.
- The framework was introduced by the government in 2017 to provide a resource for students to judge teaching quality in universities and to increase the importance of teaching excellence (and bring it into line with research excellence) when rating institutions. It is important to note that currently the TEF analyses only undergraduate teaching.

UK : Research Excellence Framework
- The research excellence framework (REF) is the system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions.
- Principles :
  ✓ Accountability of establishments, responsible for preparing and selecting their data, and providing the necessary proof
  ✓ An objective centered on the quality of scientific production (each researcher being able to present at most 5 articles published in the reference period)
  ✓ A link between evaluation and funding with a rating system. The expert panels rate each element of the submission from 1 to 4 stars
  ✓ Assessment weighting: quality of research results (60%), impact of research (25%), research support environment (15%)
Example

Unit of Assessment 11: Computer Science and Informatics

84. The UOA includes the study and evaluation of methods for acquiring, storing, processing, communicating and reasoning about information and interactivity in natural and engineered systems, as characterised by the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) Computing Classification System, 2012 Revision [https://www.acm.org/publications/class-2012]. The sub-panel expects submissions in this UOA to include contributions from ACM categories hardware, computer systems organisation, networks, software and its engineering, theory of computation, mathematics of computing, information systems, security and privacy, human-centered computing, computing methodologies, and applied computing. The field is characterised by strong theoretical foundations and systematic application of analysis, design, experimentation and evaluation.

85. The sub-panel expects that the majority of the research activity submitted will have made a direct contribution to the UOA as characterised above, either by contributing new methods and knowledge or through innovative applications of state-of-the-art methods to challenging problems in other disciplines. Consequently, the sub-panel welcomes submissions containing interdisciplinary outputs that make contributions to other areas as well as computer science and informatics, though outputs that apply routine computational methods may be better returned elsewhere.
- **ANALYSIS BASED ON COMPLIANCE VERIFICATION**

Verify the implementation of organizational arrangements for activities, specific management measures, management tools, results monitoring.

- The assessment starts from an **identified model** and verifies the compliance of its implementation by the entity.
- It is often adopted by **highly centralized systems** made up of entities with little autonomy.
- The **PUBLIV authority** verifies the deployment of defined measures.

**OR**

- **PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

  - Analysis of the **results of the activities** of the evaluated entity.
  - Define a set of **data and indicators to assess the level of results** obtained by the entities evaluated, and compared (rankings).
  - This approach has a **normative** character through the choice of data and indicators measured.

**OR**

- **QUALITY ASSURANCE**
THE MEANING OF ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

1- CONTEXT

2- ASSESSMENT

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4- CONCLUSION
Development of Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Model: closed-loop (feedback) control
Accept error to progress!

- Trajectory
- Data
- Indicators
- Standards
- Steering
- Management
QUALITY ASSURANCE

**ASSUMPTION: THE EVALUATED ENTITY HAS A GREAT LEVEL OF AUTONOMY**

- ENTITY DEFINES THE QUALITY ASSURANCE STRATEGY
- ENTITY ORGANIZES THE VARIOUS INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EVALUATION MECHANISMS NECESSARY FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING OF ITS ACTIVITIES
- THE EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT CONSISTS IN ANALYZING THE QUALITY POLICY AND ITS TOOLS IN ORDER TO CONFIRM WHETHER THEY GUARANTEE AN EFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT OF THE EVALUATED ENTITY
- AN INSTITUTION DEVELOPING A QUALITY ASSURANCE APPROACH MUST IN ITS SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT:
  - Explain its strategy
  - Demonstrate its implementation and effectiveness
  - Compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG)
INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

Trends 2015: Learning and Teaching in European Universities

BY ANDRÉE SURSOCK

Impact measured over a decade

Figure 9: Does your institution have an institutional quality assurance policy and system? (Q51)

Institutional quality assurance policy and system

- We have an institutional QA policy and an integrated approach to QA at institutional level: 63%
- We have a QA policy, but the QA processes are being developed: 11%
- We have an institutional QA policy, but the QA systems are faculty/department based: 10%
- We have QA processes in place, but no QA policy: 4%
- Both QA policy and systems are faculty/department based: 3%
- We neither have a QA policy nor a QA system: 1%
DOMAINS & STANDARDS FOR EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT OF AN INSTITUTION

- INSTITUTIONAL POSITIONING AND STRATEGY
- GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT (INCLUDING QUALITY ASSURANCE STRATEGY)
- RESEARCH AND EDUCATION
- STUDENT FOLLOW-UP AND SUCCESS
- INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS
- ...
In Europe, the tendency is to favor the approach of analyzing quality policy at the level of the institution, in direct connection with the expectations of ESGs.

- ENQA contributes to the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of European higher education.
- ENQA is a major driving force for the development of quality assurance across all the Bologna Process signatory countries.
- ENQA members are higher education quality assurance agencies based in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).
- In order to become a member of ENQA, agencies must demonstrate their compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA (ESG).
- Around 50 agencies are applying for ENQA.
- The activities of these agencies are variable: assessment adapted according to the expectations of the country, consulting, international ...
Belgium: overall institutional assessment strongly focused on the analysis of the quality policy of establishments and based on the ESGs.

Switzerland: assessment by AAQ focusing exclusively on the analysis of the quality assurance system and leading to institutional accreditation. (The external evaluation of the activities of the establishment, which is obviously part of the strategy of the institution, is his responsibility)

Finland: Institutional assessment focuses on the tools put in place by the institution to maintain and develop quality.

QANU (Quality Assurance for Netherlands Universities) is an independent quality agency that conducts activities in the field of external quality assurance, commissioned by universities in the Netherlands. The assessment procedures follow a defined framework, but are managed by the institution (composition of the visiting committee for example)
Trend: simplification, integrated assessment, + performance

☑️ Undergraduate Programs: national data observatory & data analysis

250 Higher education and research institutions

5500 Programs (undergraduate, graduate, PhD)

2500 Research entities

S.A.B

FRANCE
1-CONTEXT
The eco-system of higher education and research institutions

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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The assessment of institutions has a cost and must have a recognized effectiveness! … *Try to simplify!*

- Different expectations: from **self management** to **centralized control**

  A > B  Autonomy …
  A < B  Centralized national management …

- The choice of an assessment approach depends on the maturity of the higher education and research system considered

- There is no one-size-fits-all ideal model for implementing an assessment. It depends on the history and the national context, the political issues and the specificities of the institution

- The definition of the evaluation grain, that is to say of the **components to be evaluated** within a university (diplomas, faculties and schools, research entities) can vary according to the countries and the practices
**Recommendation 1**

A **visiting** committee for the institution (A>B) and one for each department (B>A) for research and education (graduate)

**CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **University**
- **Departments, Faculties**...
- **Programs & Diploma** (undergraduate, graduate, PhD)
- **Laboratories**
- **Researchers**
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

✓ **Recommendation 2**: For research assessment, public authorities can organize national thematic panels by disciplinary fields based on shared indicators, and expert committees (ex: INRIA in France; CAPES Post-Graduate assessment in Brazil …)

✓ **Recommendation 3**: Implementation of Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) in each department (or equivalent) piloted by the university, following the procedures of the assessment agency. The institution then performs an analysis to compare the results with its strategy and internal processes, in its self-assessment report.

✓ **Recommendation 4**: The use of a shared information system to analyze certified data updated each year is essential to evaluate certain activities such as undergraduate programs (student success and professional integration).

- **Open question**: the limits of indicators to assess performance and make comparisons Creativity? Risk taking? Disciplinary specifics?
- Only a peer judgment can be relevant!
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

✅ Recommendation 5: Develop a culture of internal quality assurance at all levels
   • A shared value
   • A collective responsibility of the whole community including students and administrative staff
   • A lever for harmonizing and coordinating practices within an institution (subsidiarity)

✅ Recommendation 6: The assessed institution must position itself
   • what is your strategy?
   • what demonstration do you make of its implementation and effectiveness?
   • Situation and comparisons to other institutions
     *A successful self-assessment for a useful external assessment*

✅ Recommendation 7: The essential role of independent assessment agencies, and the opening of borders to foreign agencies to stimulate and harmonize international good practices
Faculties and universities **have been and are** places of knowledge development and transmission from their origins.

The perfect assessment process does not exist!

An evaluation model cannot be frozen: an adaptation of the rules is necessary according to the specific contexts of each country.

**CONCLUSION**

- University rhyme with Eternity!
SOME REFERENCES

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HTTPS://WWW.HCERES.FR

MICHEL ROBERT IS AUTHOR OF A FRENCH-LANGUAGE BOOK “THE MEANING OF ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH”, PUBLISHED IN 2020 AND Downloadable At:
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THE MEANING OF ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH
MICHEL ROBERT
UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTPELLIER, FRANCE

THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION!
The Meaning of Assessment in Higher Education and Research

June 30, 2021 1:30 PM (GMT-3)
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Prof. Michel ROBERT
former president of the
Université de Montpellier 2, France

After the talk, there will be a panel with the participation of:

Prof. Raimundo Macedo, president of the Brazilian Computer Society
Prof. Marcelo Lubaszewski, vice-president of the Brazilian Microelectronics Society
Prof. Tiago Balen, Head of the Graduate Program on Microelectronics at UFRGS
Prof. Avelino Zorzo, Computer Science Committee, Capes/MEC
MICHEL ROBERT (BORN 1957; PHD : 1987) IS PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTPELLIER (FRANCE), WHERE HE’S TEACHING MICROELECTRONICS IN THE ENGINEERING PROGRAM. HIS PRESENT RESEARCH INTERESTS AT THE MONTPELLIER LABORATORY OF INFORMATICS, ROBOTICS, AND MICRO-ELECTRONICS (LIRMM) ARE DESIGN AND MODELISATION OF SYSTEM ON CHIP ARCHITECTURES.

