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**Abstract**

It is argued that systematic impact evaluation of quality assurance measures is a cornerstone of strategic quality assurance in higher education, and hence should be a core element of all quality efforts in the European Higher Education Area. Against that background, the present article proposes a comprehensive methodology of impact evaluation of quality assurance interventions in higher education institutions, which should contribute to overcoming the fragmentary nature of our knowledge about the successes and failures of quality assurance. For that purpose, an outline of the methodology, design and potential benefits of an impact evaluation is given, which ? in contradistinction to impact studies in higher education so far ? is carried out simultaneously with the ongoing quality assurance procedure, and thus systematically avoids being dependent solely on ex-post information. The suggested methodology, which has not been applied yet, would integrate all stakeholders and is not restricted to any particular quality assurance intervention. It is grossly explicated for the exemplary case of institutional accreditation with a focus on learning and teaching.

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(HRK / Abstract übernommen)