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Quality issues in the internationalisation of higher education

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Abstract

Although the quality issue has become a central preoccupation in other domains of higher education, current internationalisation policies and practices in higher education have developed without much concern for quality assurance. The central thesis of this paper is that we have come to a point in the development of higher education where internationalisation policies and practices face the limits of their development unless the quality challenge is addressed in all its consequences. The paper first provides an overview of contemporary forms of and recent developments in internationalisation in higher education. From more or less "traditional" forms such as student and teaching staff mobility, internationalisation policies and practices nowadays move into activities such as exporting higher education via branch campuses and institutional co-operation, developing transnational university networks and virtual delivery of higher education, and the harmonisation of higher education systems. In these recent developments several issues and challenges arise, which in one kind or another have direct links to the quality challenge. The quality of internationalisation policies and practices itself is an important problem, but of more importance are the issues of the recognition of foreign diplomas

07.3.2026

and degrees and the recognition of credits and credit-transfer. This paper takes a critical stance towards for example the ECTS, which tries to solve these issues without much concern for quality. The way out lies in an integration of internationalisation policies and general quality assurance practices at institutional and policy levels. (HRK/Abstract übernommen) Dirk van Damme, E-mail: dirkvan.damme@rug.ac.be