

17.2.2026

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Title

Stakeholders in higher education quality assurance : richness in diversity? / Maaja Beerkens and Maiki Udam

Publication year

2017

Source/Footnote

In: Higher education policy. - 30 (2017) 3, S. 341 - 359

Inventory number

45772

Keywords

Ausland : Estland : Forschung, Hochschullehrer ; Ausland : Estland : Hochschulwesen allgemein ; Qualitätssicherung

Abstract

Stakeholder engagement has become a norm in higher education governance in Europe, particularly in the area of quality assurance. Diverse expectations and experiences of various stakeholder groups are expected to contribute to a more effective and comprehensive quality assurance system. This paper examines empirically the assumption that stakeholders differ in their expectations. Twelve focus group interviews with main stakeholders (university rectors, employers, academic staff, government officials, students) in Estonia demonstrate that the groups indeed have somewhat different perspectives on quality assurance, according to a predictable pattern. We link the results to a theoretical discussion on stakeholder engagement, concluding that the diversity in expectations may enrich the system, but it may also force the quality agency to clarify the limits of a public quality assurance system. Furthermore, an engagement process itself may help align the diverse expectations. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)