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Abstract

The European Standard and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG) of 2005 can be defined as one of the major Bologna documents aimed at furthering the role of students as stakeholders in internal quality assurance processes at higher education institutions (HEIs). Still little is known about students' real position in such processes. To overcome this research gap, this paper examines the role of students as stakeholders in HEIs' internal quality assurance procedures within the policy context of the ESG. Hereby, we specifically take a look at how students are actively involved and influence internal quality assurance processes at the studied HEIs. This study is an exploratory comparative case study of one German and one Dutch university faculty which draws on a range of qualitative methodologies, including desk research, semi-structured interviews and a student survey to

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investigate students' role as stakeholders from an institutional and student perspective. Moreover this study applies the stakeholder theory of Mitchell et al. (1997) to evaluate students' stakeholder position. The findings of this study revealed that the role of students majorly differs between the studied HEIs. While in the Dutch case students enjoy a high stakeholder position as weak Definitive stakeholders, students in the German case can only be defined as weak Dependent Stakeholders. In both cases, internal quality assurance systems are majorly in line with the ESG, though HEIs' compliance evolves rather unconsciously. Thus, in this study the ESG do not seem to have a major impact on students' role as stakeholders in internal quality assurance. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

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