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Quality Assurance in Greek Higher Education
Tensions, Development and Implementation

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Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the structure and characteristics of higher education in Greece with a focus on the issue of quality and institutionalised quality assurance mechanisms in the Greek higher education system. The analysis of the Greek QA system would include the initial development and implementation of the institutionalised QA mechanism in the Greek higher education system. Although the notion of world universities rankings has a totally
different methodology and point of view, a relative mention of QS as far as Greek higher education institutions is concerned, will also be discussed. Finally, the impact of QA mechanisms after almost one decade of implementation in the Greek higher education system is going to be analysed.

Greek Higher Education System: A Brief Presentation

In this section of the chapter, let us briefly introduce the Greek higher education system.

Historical Development of Higher Education

The first Greek university was established in Athens in 1837, a few years after the founding of the state. The University of Athens was called on to accomplish three missions: (a) the formation of a national identity, (b) the production of the executive strength of the state, and (c) to establish contact and coexistence with other universities in Western Europe.

By 1920, three more institutions had been established, although initially not as institutions of higher education, that demonstrates the priorities of the policy of the state and its needs: technology (crafts), economy, and agriculture. It should be noted that this creation is connected to the French tradition of the Grandes Écoles. The establishment of the University of Thessaloniki in 1925 is an important historical point. It is the first institution outside Athens; it is founded a few years after the liberation of the city.

After the fall of the last dictatorship (1974), a widening of the higher education institutions’ network takes place. This is connected to two main precepts: first, the demand for the ‘democratisation’ of higher education which bases its social legitimacy on the previous exclusions of large sections of the Greek population for political reasons, and second, a large number of students studying abroad which costs the country significant amounts in foreign exchange.

Finally, we have to mention that the provision of the Greek Constitution does not allow the operation of private higher education. Despite that the private sector either as an individual presence or as a corporate non-state presence, was present in the development of higher education in Greece. Since the 1930s, the so-called Centres of Free Studies (CFS) have been operating. They do not belong to the Ministry of Education (MoE) and provide post-secondary school professional training.
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system (b) the organisation, operation and continuous improvement of the internal quality assurance system of the institution (c) the coordination and support of the evaluation procedures of academic units and other units of the institution and (d) support in the processes of external evaluation and accreditation of curriculum and introduction of internal quality assurance within the principles, guidelines and instructions of the ‘Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency’ (Law 4009/2011 art.14).

For example, in Art and Design, six out of the top seven places are taken by specialist institutions, and the same is true in the Performing Arts and the University of Pittsburgh tops the Philosophy table despite finishing outside the top 100 in the institutional ranking (O’Leary 2016: 17).

References


EUA. 2014. Public Funding Observatory. Brussels: EUA.


