Implementing Quality Management Systems in Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

The aim of this chapter is to revisit the debate on the applicability of quality management to the higher education sector, discussing its possibilities and impossibilities, in the light of the new developments in quality assurance in European higher education, namely the guidelines put forward in ESG Part I, since these provide indications for the institutions to set up their own systems. Some of the most well known quality management frameworks, such as the ISO 9001 standard, the EFQM Excellence Model and the Balanced Scorecard will be discussed on the basis of their usefulness for implementing quality management systems in higher education institutions. More specifically one will try to highlight how these quality management frameworks may be used to implement the seven standards for quality assurance established in the ESG Part I within HEIs, through an analysis of the criteria/indicators/requirements of the frameworks that accommodate each one of the standards. According to Sarrico et al. (2010) all these models propose to assess higher education institutions as a whole, including not only its teaching and research missions, but also other activities and, notably, institutional management, which is in the authors’ opinion the area of quality management that needs to be developed and improved further in higher education. This discussion is particularly relevant since according to Pratasavitskaya and Stensaker (2010), the analysis of models and approaches of quality assurance at the institutional level has been rarely addressed in the literature, which is considered by the authors as an unfortunate situation since “quality management, at least theoretically, can have potential benefits; for example, with respect to identifying available options higher education institutions may choose from in order to respond to increasing external pressures for demonstrating academic output” (Pratasavitskaya and Stensaker, 2010: 38).

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