



# Evaluation of Higher Education in Iceland improvement of education and research

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# A few facts about Iceland

- Volcanic island in the North Atlantic
- Language Icelandic
- 103.000 sq km – 300.000 inhabitants
- 2.8 per sq km
- Life expectancy 79 men-83 women
- GDP per capita seventh highest in the world
- 2004 service sector 71.2%, industry 22.4%, agriculture 3.4%, fishing 3%



# The Higher Education System

- First University 1911
- 7 Education Institutions-4 public, 3 private
- Student population increase  
1996 – 9.564    2004 – 16.068
- Legal framework 1997
- Increased autonomy
- Secure basis for private institutions



# Development of Quality Assurance

International co-operation, ENQA-NOQA

First provision

Supervision by the Ministry

Rules on internal and external evaluation

Objectives:

- raise quality of teaching
- improve organization
- promote responsibility
- ensure international competitiveness

Institutions set up quality assurance systems

Public description of the systems



# External Quality Assurance

- Not a special agency
- Peer review groups 3-6 experts
- Self evaluation report
- Report by peers and response by institutions published
- External quality assurance can cover different units



# The Bologna-process

- Iceland signed Bologna-declaration 1999
- Unproblematic introduction
- Emphasis on quality assurance
- European Standards and Guidelines
- National Qualification Framework



# OECD Thematic Review

- 24 countries
- Japan and Iceland in both strands
- Visit of team of experts 2005
- Report published 22 August 2006
- Quality assurance discussed
- No accreditation mechanism
- Lack of quality assurance in research





# New Law on Higher Education

- Into force 1 July 2006
- Strengthen system - improve quality
- International competitiveness
- Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions



# Accreditation criteria

- Definition of role and policy
- Administration and organisation
- Organisation of teaching and research
- Personnel qualifications requirements
- Admission requirements, students rights and duties
- Working conditions
- Internal quality system
- National Qualification Framework-Learning outcomes
- Finances



# Accreditation process

- Application to Minister
- Accreditation of a field of study (Frascati)
  - Natural Sciences
  - Engineering and Technology
  - Medical Sciences
  - Agricultural Sciences
  - Social Sciences
  - Humanities
- Independent expert committee
- Accreditation revoked if demands are not met



# National Qualification Framework

- Has been issued by Minister
- Based on the Framework of Qualification for the European Higher Education Area
- Accepted by Ministers in Bergen 2003
- Systematic descriptions of degrees
- Learning outcomes
- Issued in Icelandic and English



# Quality Assurance of Teaching and Research

- Based on ENQA's Standards and Guidelines
- Special process for research
- Objectives:
  - Ensure that accreditation requirements are met
  - The Qualification Framework respected
  - Enhance quality
  - Encourage responsibility
  - Ensure international competitiveness



# Internal and External Evaluation

- Carried out regularly
- Responsibility of institutions and Minister
- Active participation of staff and students
- Three year plan for external evaluation
- Administration - the Office of Evaluation and Analysis
- Implemented by an independent agent
- Domestic and foreign experts



# The way forward-Conclusions

- Accreditation of all institutions in place mid 2008
- Rules for external evaluations under preparation
- Adjustment to rapid changes
- Reasonably successful
- Increased effort in quality assurance



# The way forward-Conclusions

- Full implementation of the new law will strengthen the position of Icelandic Higher Education Institutions and their competitiveness both in Europe and globally