



Managing institutional accreditation in Poland

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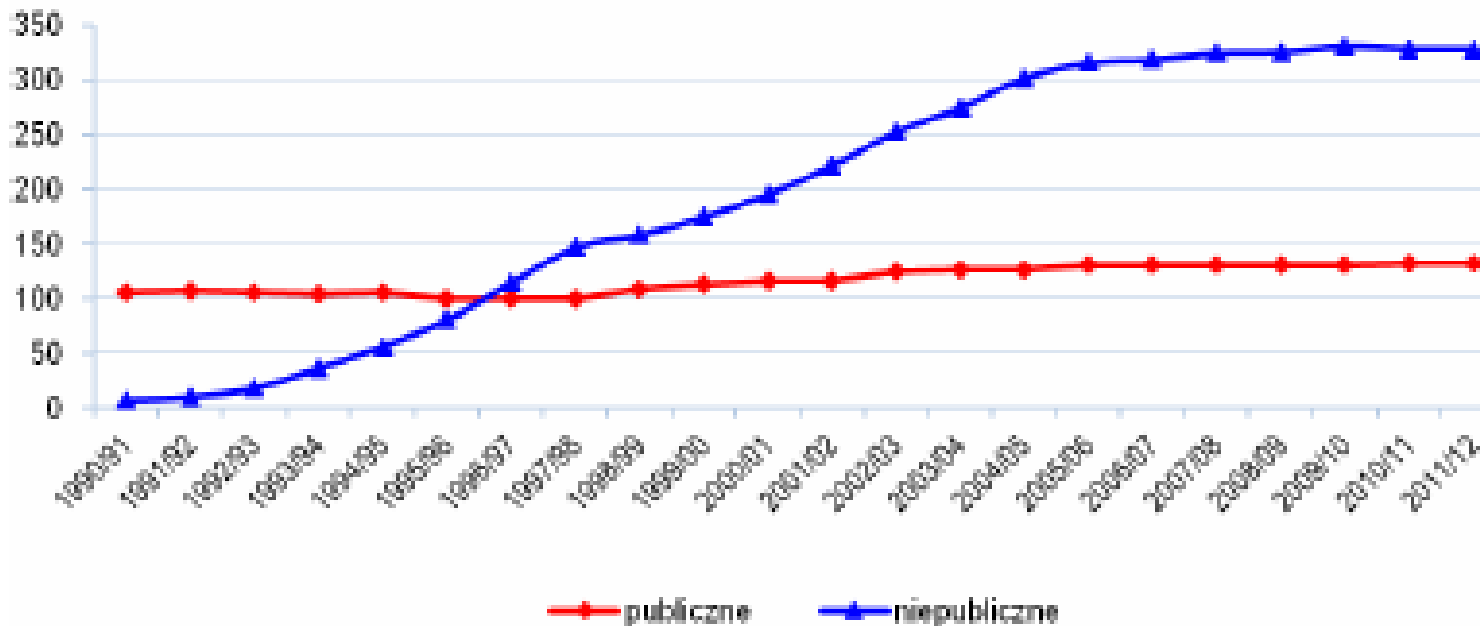
Topics

- Polish higher education system
- System of external quality assurance and accreditation in Poland
- Overview of institutional accreditation
- Lessons learned
- and possible suggestions

Diversity in Poland's higher education sector

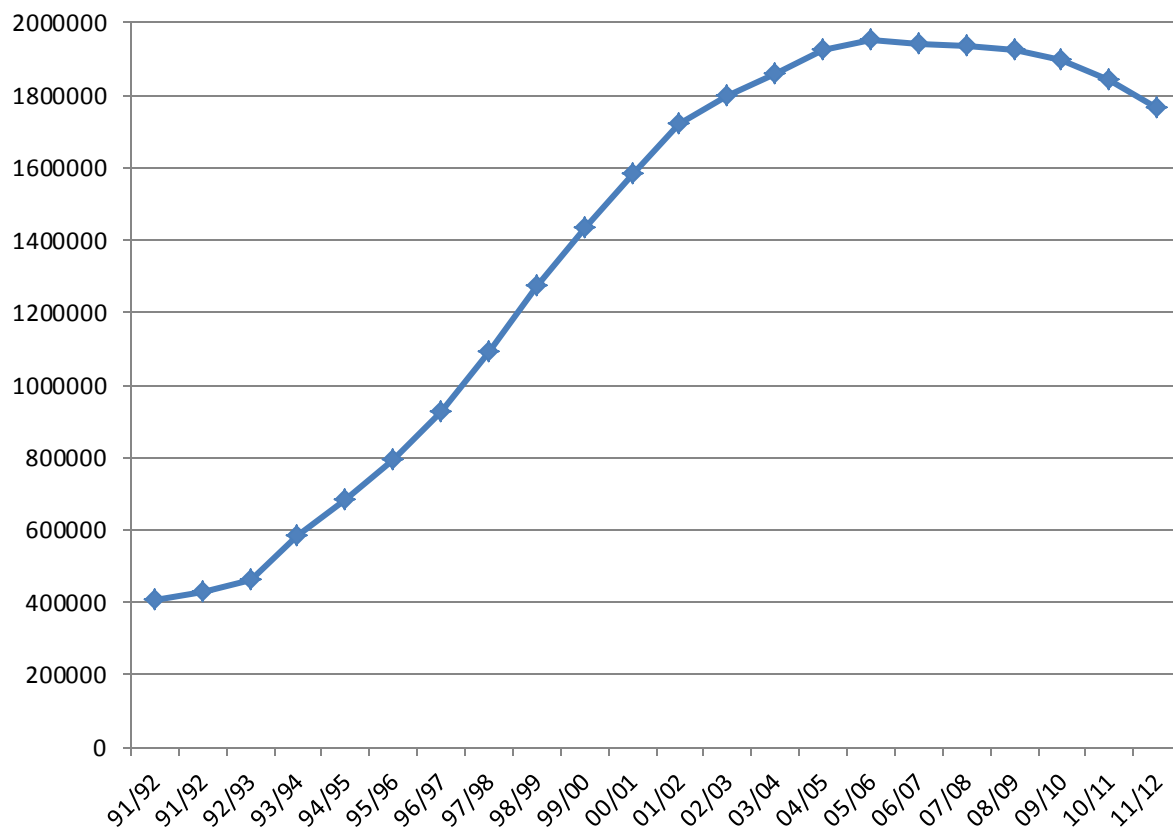
- 470 institutions
 - ✓ Non-public sector - 338
 - ✓ State Vocational HEIs – 37

Liczba uczelni publicznych i niepublicznych

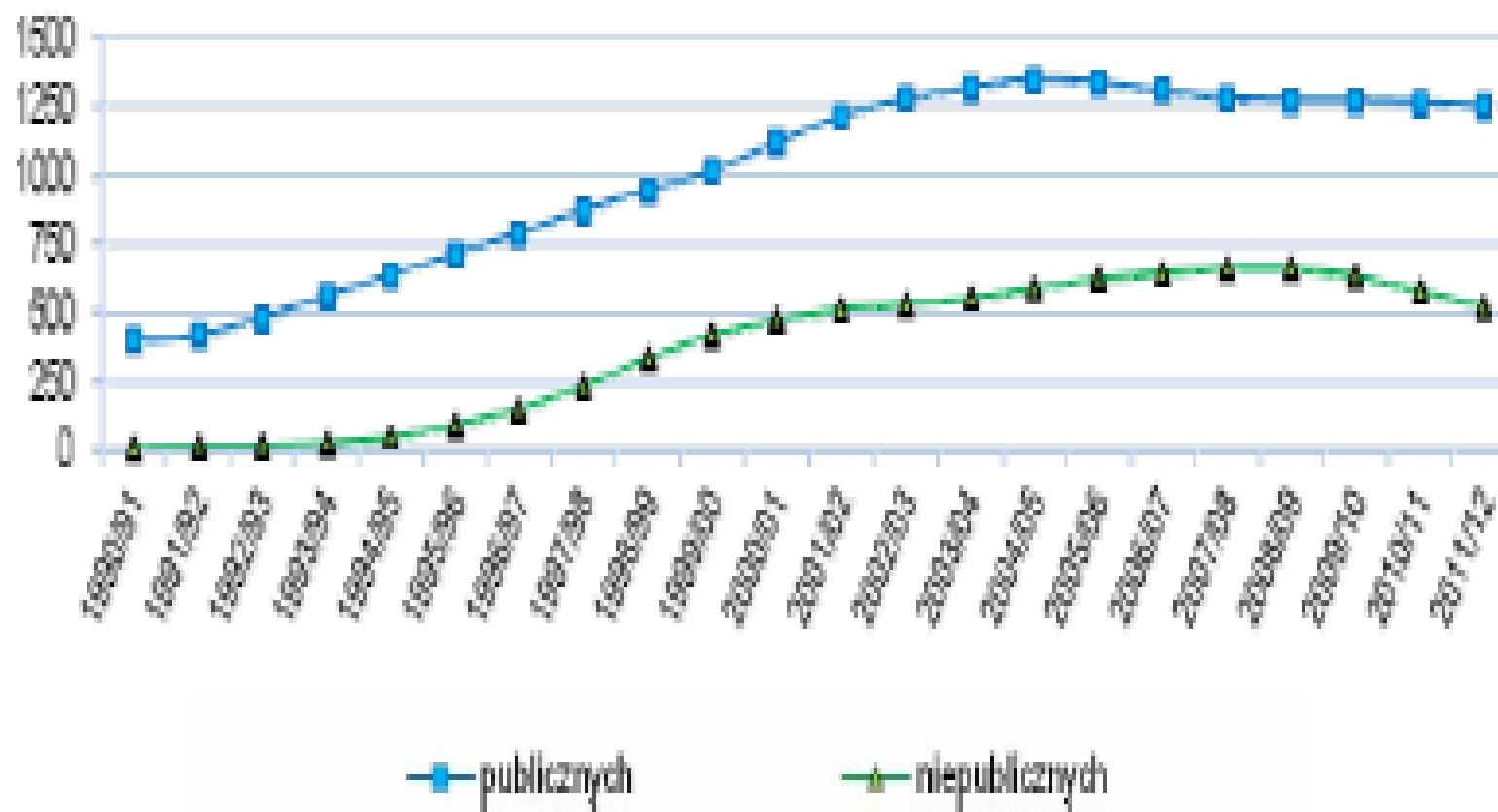


Diversity in Poland's higher education sector

- 1,76 m students (40,3 thous. doctoral students)
- 102,8 thous. academic teachers (17,2 students per teacher)



Studenci w szkołach wyższych publicznych i niepublicznych



Diversity in Poland's higher education sector

- Legal framework:
 - ✓ Law on higher education from 2005, amended in 2011
 - ✓ Two profiles of academic programmes
 - ✓ academic
 - ✓ or practical
 - ✓ National Qualification Framework introduced in October 2011
 - ✓ Legal conditions for external assessment of programmes and institutions

EQA and accreditation system

- Mandatory accreditation for all programmes and institutions
- Unified accreditation framework for public and non-public institutions
- Financial costs of accreditation covered by PKA
- Types of accreditors
 - ✓ PKA as a national accreditation agency
 - ✓ State Accreditation agency for nursery
 - ✓ and 8 accreditation agencies set up by various Rectors' Conferences – now in a process of establishing one agency

Governance and structure of PKA

- Founded in 2002
- 87 members including
 - ✓ 11 representatives of employers' organisations
 - ✓ and the President of Student Parliament of Republic of Poland
- 900 experts including
 - ✓ students,
 - ✓ doctoral students,
 - ✓ employers' organisations representatives,
 - ✓ legal experts
 - ✓ and foreign experts

Governance and structure of PKA

➤ Organisation

- ✓ President
- ✓ Secretary General
- ✓ Presidium (13 members)
 - ✓ President
 - ✓ Secretary General
 - ✓ Chairs of Sections
 - ✓ 2 employers organisations representatives
 - ✓ President of Students Parliaments of the Republic of Poland
- ✓ 2 vice-president

Governance and structure of PKA

- 8 organisational sections:
 - ✓ Humanities and Theology,
 - ✓ Economics,
 - ✓ Social sciences and Law,
 - ✓ Mathematics, Physics and chemistry,
 - ✓ Biological, Earth, Agricultural, Forestry and Veterinary Sciences,
 - ✓ Engineering and Technology,
 - ✓ Medical Medical, Pharmaceutical, Health and Physical Culture Sciences,
 - ✓ Film, Music, Visual Art and Theatre Sciences.
- Section for Ethics
- Advisory Council
- PKA Bureau resources (23 employees, annual budget € 2,2 m)

PKA membership in international organisations

- **EQAR** (*European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education*)
- **ENQA** (*European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education*)
- **ECA** (*European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education*)
- **CEENQA** (*Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education*)
- **INQAAHE** (*International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education*)
- **CHEA IQG** (*Council for Higher Education Accreditation, International Quality Group*)
- **US Department of Education accreditation**
- **Bilateral and multilateral agreements and cooperation.**

PKA main tasks

- Ex-ante assessment of new study programmes
- Assessment of existing study programmes (ex-post accreditation) at
 - ✓ first level (*licencjat*),
 - ✓ second level (*magister*),
 - ✓ third level (*studia doktoranckie*)
 - ✓ and post-diploma programmes
- External quality assessment at the level of institutions (institutional accreditation)
- Motions on establishment of higher education institutions and branch/campus or HEI by foreign institutions
- Opinions on draft legislation concerning higher education and science

PKA output

- The number of ex-ante assessments and opinions (2002-2012)
 - ✓ **5253**
- The number of ex-post assessments of programmes (2002-2011)
 - ✓ **4642**
- Institutional assessments
 - ✓ **45** (2011/2012)
 - ✓ **90** planned for academic year 2012/2013

Overview of accreditation

- Institutional and programmes accreditation
- PKA sets independently its own criteria for external assessment
- Institutions are assessed in a peer review process
- Programme objectives, curriculum and internal quality assurance system are set by the higher institutions
- Self-evaluation report and site visit are fundamentals for EQA

Overview of accreditation

- Learning outcomes (intended and achieved) and improvement/enhancement are essential
- Quality standards for programme and institutional assessments
- Assessment report
- PKA deliberations and decisions
- Appeal system

Overview of accreditation

- Systematic re-accreditation
- Institutions' evaluations of the quality of panel of experts work
- Publication of
 - ✓ all decisions on accreditation at the PKA website and Public Information Bulletin
 - ✓ and also at the Qrossroad database
 - ✓ assessment reports
 - ✓ annual reports
- Follow-up procedure

Institutional accreditation

- Initiated by the PKA or on request of institutions or Minister of Science and Higher Education
- External assessment of **HEI's units**, usually faculties
- At least half of the programmes should be granted positive accreditation

Criteria for institutional assessment (1)

1. The unit has a development strategy in place.

1) The strategy for the development of the unit is consistent with the mission statement and strategy of the higher education institution and takes into consideration the policy for assuring high quality of education.

2) The unit has developed a concept of education covering first-cycle, second-cycle, third-cycle (doctoral) and non-degree postgraduate programmes, hereafter referred to as 'programmes', which is consistent with its strategic aims and objectives.

3) The unit defines its role and position on the education market while taking into consideration the importance of the quality of education.

4) Internal and external stakeholders are involved in the process of determining the range and contents of programmes and courses offered and building a high education quality culture.

Criteria for institutional assessment (2)

The unit applies an effective internal quality assurance system.

1) The structure for decision-making in quality management is transparent and ensures the involvement of staff, students, doctoral students, learners following non-degree postgraduate programmes and external stakeholders in important decisions concerning the quality of education.

2) Internal quality assurance procedures are comprehensive, prevent pathologies and ensure that the unit may verify and assess the effectiveness of all factors which have impact on the quality of education. In particular, the internal procedures in place enable the unit to:

a) assess the extent to which the learning outcomes defined for the programmes provided by the unit have been achieved;

Criteria for institutional assessment (3)

- b) ensure the involvement of employers and other representatives of the labour market in defining and assessing learning outcomes;
- c) track graduates' careers in order to assess learning outcomes on the labour market;
- d) monitor and review study programmes on a periodic basis;
- e) evaluate the rules for the assessment of students, doctoral students and learners following non-degree postgraduate programmes, and verify the outcomes of their learning processes;
- f) assess the quality of staff involved in, and supporting, the teaching process, including the appraisal by students, doctoral students and learners

Criteria for institutional assessment (4)

- g) assess the research quality of the unit;
- h) assess material resources, including teaching/learning and research facilities as well as resources available to support students;
- i) operate an information system, covering arrangements for the collection, analysis and use of relevant information in quality assurance;
- j) ensure public access to up-to-date and objective information about study programmes, expected learning outcomes, and organisational and procedural arrangements for following programmes.

Criteria for institutional assessment (5)

3) The unit evaluates the effectiveness of its internal quality assurance system on a regular basis and uses results of such evaluations to improve its quality assurance policy and build a quality culture.

3. The unit uses a coherent description of educational aims and learning outcomes for doctoral (third-cycle) and non-degree postgraduate programmes offered, and applies an efficient and credible system to verify and confirm the achievement of the aims and outcomes.

1) The unit ensures that the doctoral programmes offered lead to the achievement of learning outcomes relevant to the research area concerned and enables students to obtain a doctoral degree.

Criteria for institutional assessment (6)

- 2) The unit ensures that the non-degree postgraduate programmes offered lead to the achievement of learning outcomes which comply with the requirements of professional organisations and employers and enable the acquisition of qualifications to practise a profession or new skills necessary on the labour market.
- 3) Internal and external stakeholders are involved in the process of defining learning outcomes.
- 4) The unit applies ECTS where the number of credits corresponds to the workload of the doctoral student or the learner following a non-degree postgraduate programme, with the workload being proportionate to the learning outcomes achieved.

Criteria for institutional assessment (8)

4) The unit applies ECTS where the number of credits corresponds to the workload of the doctoral student or the learner following a non-degree postgraduate programme, with the workload being proportionate to the learning outcomes achieved.

5) The unit has put in place a credible and transparent system accessible to all, in particular students, doctoral students and learners following non-degree postgraduate programmes, which makes it possible to assess the extent to which the stated educational aims and expected learning outcomes have been achieved.

Criteria for institutional assessment (9)

4. The unit has sufficient staff, material and financial resources to achieve the stated strategic aims and objectives and expected learning outcomes.

1) The unit provides staff resources adequate to the needs resulting from research, teaching and organisational activities undertaken and pursues a staff policy which enables its staff to develop their research and teaching competence.

2) The unit has adequate teaching and learning facilities which are adjusted to the specificity of the programmes offered and which ensure the achievement of expected learning outcomes.

3) The financial policy of the unit ensures its sustainable development.

Criteria for institutional assessment (8)

5. The unit conducts scientific research.

The unit conducts scientific research in the areas, domains and disciplines of science related to the programmes offered, and it uses findings from its research and the latest scientific achievements in a given area in the teaching process. The unit provides conditions for doctoral students to conduct independent scientific research and enables them to participate in the research conducted.

Criteria for institutional assessment (9)

6. The unit participates in in-country and international exchange of students, doctoral students, research and teaching staff and cooperates with national and international academic institutions, other institutions and enterprises.

- 1) Students, doctoral students and staff of the unit participate in international programmes.
- 2) The unit undertakes activities aimed at the internationalization of the teaching/learning process, covering, among other things, the definition of learning outcomes and the delivery of programmes.
- 3) The unit cooperates with national and international academic institutions.
- 4) The unit cooperates with its social and economic environment with a view to achieving relevant learning outcomes.

Criteria for institutional assessment (10)

7. The unit provides adequate research, learning and financial support for students and doctoral students in the process of attaining learning outcomes.

1) The unit has put in place a system for research, learning and financial support which also takes into consideration the needs of disabled people.

2) The unit has put in place an effective system for considering complaints and conflict resolution.

Criteria for institutional assessment (11)

3) The unit supports the activities of, and cooperates with, student and doctoral student self-government bodies and organisations. The governing bodies of the unit undertake activities on their own initiative in order to ensure wide participation of students, doctoral students and their representatives in the work carried out by the governing bodies and statutory and adhoc committees, in particular those whose activities are centred around the teaching/learning process and matters concerning students and doctoral students.

8. The unit has in place a coherent system of internal regulations underpinning the quality assurance process which is in conformity with the national legislation.

Composition of the panel of experts

- Chair of the panel: current or former member of PKA
- One experts responsible for assessment of internal quality assurance system
 - ✓ Pool of trained experts specializing in IQAS
- 2 other peers representing higher education institutions
- Student expert
- Doctoral student expert
- Employers organisation representative
- „Legal” expert

Team report

- Template of the report
- Each expert writes partial report
- Draft report is prepared by the chair or appointed member of the panel
- Secretary General and Director of Bureau read the draft of the report
- ...

Levels of compliance...

- Distinctively
- Fully
- Substantially
- Partially
- Insufficiently

Grading and assessment rules

➤ Outstanding –

- ✓ the criteria 1 and 2 are fulfilled at an outstanding level, and the other criteria concerning the types of programmes provided by the unit are at least fully met;

➤ Positive

- ✓ The criteria 1 and 2 are at least fully met, and the other criteria concerning the types of programmes provided by the unit are at least largely or partially met; however, no more than 25% of the total number of the criteria can be only partially met;

Grading and assessment rules

➤ conditional

- ✓ the criteria 1 and 2 are at least largely met, and the other criteria concerning the types of programmes provided by the unit are at least partially met;

➤ Negative

- ✓ the criteria defined for a conditional rating are not met.

Consequences of accreditation decisions

➤ Outstanding

- ✓ Re-accreditation after 8 years
- ✓ Additional funding by Ministry of Science and Higher Education is possible

➤ Positive

- ✓ Re-accreditation after 6 years

➤ Negative

- ✓ Shift to programme accreditation

Monitoring new system of institutional accreditation

- Questionnaire sent to the deans and rectors of all assessed institutions
- Results discussed at the national Conference with the participation of Rectors from the assessed institutions
- Quality Forum 2012 – discussion on the quality criteria and procedure

What have we learnt?

- PKA was able to introduce smoothly the new system without testing it
- The new system was appreciated by HEIs other stakeholders and experts
- However ...
- HEI do not use fully autonomy in developing their own IQASs; some of them expect from the from Ministry or PKA a ready-made, uniform IQAS
- Some institutions are disappointed not getting outstanding accreditation
- Not all experts understand the essence of institutional assessment; tendency to assess quality of programmes

Suggestions for new system

- Avoid overregulation of the system, both by state and quality assurance agency
- Institutional accreditation should be implemented only, when internal quality assurance systems are reached the mature level of advancement
- Perhaps, as a first step consider audit of IQAS
- Stakeholders' support is crucial
- A new procedures and quality standards should be tested before implementation and carefully monitoring
- Do not introduce new system in a period of other fundamental changes in higher education
- Carefully design experts training system
- Involvement of foreign experts will enrich the institutional accreditation

Further information and updates

www.pka.edu

Thank you for your attention

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