

# Preface

The key activities of ENQA (the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) are training and advisory support. The network also disseminates general information, experiences, good practices, and new developments in the fields of quality assessment and quality assurance. An example of such activities was a two-day workshop on institutional evaluations on 22–23 September, 2000 in Paris. The Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council (FINHEEC) and Comité National D'évaluation (CNE) were responsible for the workshop's practical arrangements.

The workshop was planned for professionals in quality agencies who have institutional evaluation responsibilities in their own countries. A total of 31 professionals from 12 countries and from the Association of European Universities (CRE) participated. The workshop had three specific objectives:

1. Document and compare the objectives, methodology and implementation strategies applied by the ENQA member states and agencies in institutional evaluation.
2. Discuss and share experiences on theoretical and practical problems of institutional evaluation.
3. Identify opportunities for increased transnational collaboration in the field of institutional evaluation.

The results of the above-mentioned seminar are published in this report. The actual texts, however, have been edited for the purposes of this publication. To start with, different concepts close to institutional evaluation are defined. Section 2 deals with the context of evaluation: universities cannot be evaluated isolated from the environment in which they operate. Furthermore, section 3 consists of six cases from different countries and one from the CRE. These examples present different institutional evaluations, including audit-type procedures. All ENQA member states are not included – rather these cases are examples of various evaluation alternatives. Some of the cases represent a long tradition of institutional evaluations, others have just started their work in this field.

Some of the cases were written especially for the seminar and this report, and the authors of these are mentioned in the text. Other cases have been taken from various evaluation publications of the respective countries and the names of these contributors are not included.

The authors of this report hope that this publication will be useful for those involved in institutional evaluations at the national level. They also hope that the report helps to create as well as to support a network of staff members engaged in the planning and implementation of institutional evaluation in the evaluation agencies so that they will be able to collaborate on a more permanent basis.

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6 February, 2001

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