

Accreditation and Evaluation in Higher Education in Slovakia

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Objectives of this Presentation

- To welcome the initiative
- To provide information
- To share experience

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How it all Started ...

- 1989, totalitarian communist regime was overthrown
- 1990, Higher Education Law
 - ◆ academic liberties
 - ◆ institutional autonomy
 - ◆ a provision for 2-tier Bc/Mgr degree system was made
 - ◆ Accreditation Commission was established

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... and Why

- A guess on law-maker's intention:
 - ◆ to overcome the past
 - ◆ to open door for the future
 - ◆ to make transition viable
- (in plain text):
 - ◆ away from state control
 - ◆ towards quality control
 - ◆ checks and balances

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Accreditation Commission

- Mission:
 - ◆ to assist in development of higher education system in Slovakia by evaluating level of educational and research activities of institutions and by accrediting courses
- Legal Status:
 - ◆ advisory body of the Government
 - both before and after the new Law 131/2002 on HE

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Accreditation Commission

- Principal Tasks:
 - ◆ to accredit newly proposed degree courses and re-accredit the running courses
 - ◆ to accredit institutions
 - ◆ to evaluate institutions (Faculties)
 - (before April 2002)
 - ◆ to give opinions on proposals to establish / close down institutes / institutions (Faculties or HE institutions)

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Accreditation Commission

- Principal Tasks:
 - ◆ to give opinions on proposals to establish / close down institutes / institutions (Faculties or HE institutions)
 - ◆ to make recommendations regarding the status of the higher education institution

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Accreditation Commission

- Principles:
 - ◆ accreditation is compulsory for all degree courses at all three levels
 - ◆ accreditation is performed periodically

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Accreditation Commission

- Principles:
 - ◆ accreditation criteria are based:
 - mostly on evaluating resources: human, infrastructure, information, material, financial, laboratory etc.
 - programmatic reviews
 - to some extent, outcomes

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Accreditation Commission

- Principles:
 - ◆ institutional accreditation
 - is based on a mission (as declared by each institution)
 - concerns principal activities
 - involves
 - self report
 - peer review
 - on site visit

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Accreditation Commission

- Principles:
 - ◆ institutional accreditation
 - results in report
 - recommendation regarding the status of the higher education institution
 - university
 - research university
 - polytechnic

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Accreditation Commission

- Procedures:
 - ◆ transparency (documents including minutes of meetings on web site)
 - ◆ general criteria discussed with representation of HE
 - ◆ meetings are public;
 - frequently Minister, President of Rectors' Conference, President of HE Council, President of Students' Council take part
 - ◆ Rectors and Deans of institutions on agenda are invited as a rule

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Accreditation Commission

- Outcomes from Accreditation:
 - ◆ recommendations to the Minister:
 - to grant the right to confer degrees
 - to grant the right to nominate professors
 - to suspend the rights ...
 - to establish a new university
 - ◆ recommendations to the Rector:
 - to establish a new Faculty

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Accreditation Commission

- Outcome from Institutional Accreditation:
 - ◆ a detailed report that
 - identifies strengths and weaknesses
 - makes recommendations to the Institution

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Accreditation Commission

- Outcome from Evaluation (before April 2002, currently void)
 - ◆ for each Faculty, within a group of similar Faculties in the same broad field of knowledge: an attribute (coarse ranking)

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Evaluation Commission

- Principles:
 - ◆ new according to Law 131/2002
 - ◆ periodical evaluation
 - ◆ concerns all entities attempting to receive government funding for R/D
 - ◆ concerns solely institution's research and development
 - ◆ results in yes/no

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Evaluation Commission

- Principles:
 - ◆ evaluation is based:
 - comprehensive report on outcomes of principal activities (mainly research, publications, projects)
 - ◆ can be replaced by a certificate of compliance with management of quality ISO standard

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Discussion

- Quality of research
 - ◆ at national level:
 - some excellent, some poor
 - ◆ at international level:
 - are the universities (still) able to compete?
- Financing of research
 - ◆ generally poor (in terms of %GDP)
 - ◆ only a very small fraction allocated on a competitive basis
 - ◆ nearly all allocated to institutions regardless of the quality

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Discussion

- Quality of education:
 - ◆ Accreditation Commission serves as a kind of "safeguard" against attempts to open new courses below any reasonable
 - > threshold of quality
 - > amount of resources available
 - ◆ How do the attempting institutions assure their quality?

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Issues for the future

- Implementation of changes in the legislation
- further promoting the concept of quality in HE system and institutions
- strengthening international dimension
- strengthening professional dimension
- discussing relation of quality and financing

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