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Abstract

The most significant reform in higher education in the last two decades has been the greater autonomy given to HEIs in the most European countries and the move away from the 'interventionary State' towards a more 'facilitatory State'. Therefore, this process has often entailed the releasing of HEIs from strict control through legislation by giving them the right to pass their own statutes in the

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broadening area over which they have autonomy. Institutional autonomy, especially in teaching and the curriculum, was strengthened by Bologna Declaration which was signed in June 1999 by 29 European ministers. There is the multilateral agreement that HEIs must play an important role in creating and structuring the European Higher Education Area through continuous efforts to remove barriers and to develop a framework for teaching and learning which would enhance mobility and closer cooperation. Quality assurance is one of the major tools for achieving the goals of the Bologna Process. There is no doubt that education, especially higher education, has entered a new era in which quality, especially quality assurance, plays an increasingly pivotal role in the international competition and labor market. Quality assurance with its numerous forms and means is considered the widely accepted way that is followed all over the world to enter the field of international competition in the era of globalization. The KMK and the HRK, during focusing on quality aspects, decide together to create an accreditation system consisting of the accreditation council and agencies being accredited by the accreditation council and thus being entitled to accredit BA-and MA-programmes. The quality of teacher education has become a key issue in recent years. The professional dimension of initial teacher education is high on the European agenda and in some countries teacher education programmes and teacher education institutes are being reviewed. Initial teacher education must be of high quality and meet high academic standards, should be research-based, and at the same time be rooted in the reality of everyday life in schools. In spite of the emphasis on the quality of teacher education in general and of initial teacher education in particular at the European and national level, there are some shortcomings and structural problems in German teacher education that have to be indicated, inter alia: A major weakness of the first phase of German teacher education, although this is being corrected in some universities, is the limited exposure of student teachers to school experience. The evaluation of teacher education courses and state examinations for teachers presents particular problems. The Gemischte Kommission Lehrerbildung as well as the Science Council have pointed out that teacher education in the Länder until now has not been subject to serious empirical evaluation and an analysis of its effectiveness. The FU Berlin is considered as one of the best universities in the FRG according to the latest Times Higher Education World University Ranking 2008 that has confirmed the outstanding position of the FU Berlin. As the FU Berlin has an outstanding position in the world university ranking, an excellence status of research and science, and strives to obtain system

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accreditation, all these reasons make it an ideal individual case study for this research as a model of university accreditation in the FRG. Therefore, the core research problem can be stated in the following question: What is the reality of quality assurance and accreditation for teacher education at the FU Berlin? This main question was branched into the following subquestions: What is the historical and structural development of quality assurance and accreditation of German higher education in general and teacher education in particular? To what extent does the FU Berlin meet the standards of teacher education? How does the FU Berlin deal with the structural problems of teacher education in light of quality assurance? What are the challenges encountering teacher education and assuring its quality at the FU Berlin?

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