Workshop:
Quality Development in University Continuing Education Programmes

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Objectives

- Definition and Promotion of quality in decentralised UCE-settings
- Presentation of the quality development model of Swissuni - umbrella organisation for Swiss UCE
- Discussion and further improvement of the quality model, its objectives and evaluation criteria
Workshop Structure

- Kickoff Discussion
- Presentation of the Swissuni’s UCE Quality Model
- Individual Study of the Quality Criteria (Questionnaire)
- Working Groups (Strengths and Weaknesses)
- Coffee Break
- Plenary Discussion
- Synopsis, Transfer
Fostering Quality in University Continuing Education

A multidimensional, impact-oriented quality model
developed by
Swissuni, umbrella organisation for University Continuing Education
in collaboration with the
Center of Accreditation and Quality Assurance (OAQ)

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Introduction

Swissuni - Swiss University Continuing Education

Civil association:
- Umbrella organisation
- Continuing education units
- Swiss research universities

Consequences:
- Close to UCE practice
- Relative autonomy
- No decision making power
- Influence by innovation and conceptual leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lobbying, networking, concept development</th>
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<tr>
<td>Publicity and public relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lobbying</td>
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<td>Networking</td>
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<td>Inter-university cooperation</td>
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<td>Bologna Reform in UCE</td>
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<td>National qualification framework</td>
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<td>Quality development</td>
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<td>Exchange of good practice and tools</td>
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**Introduction**

Four steps towards UCE quality

- Step 1: Analysing the Swiss Higher Education System
- Step 2: Defining the general framework for UCE
- Step 3: Defining UCE qualification levels
- Step 4: Defining UCE quality criteria

Defining tools?
- Q-Labels?
- Benchmarking?
Step 1: Analysing the system

The (research) university in the Swiss HE system

- ‘Triple’ higher education system
- Alternative career paths (e.g. for widening participation)
- Universities focus on comparative advantages and core competences academic standing and research
  - 6 of 12 universities belong to the top-200 (70% of the students)
  - High master rate: 90% of the university bachelors continue
  - High PhD rate
**Step 2: Defining the framework**

Admission requirements, labels and credit points

![Diagram](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

- **Level 3 Doctorate**
- **Level 2 Master**
- **Level 1 Bachelor**

**Professional experience**

**Continuing Education** (MAS, DAS, CAS)

- **Master of Advanced Studies** (≥60 ECTS)
- **Diploma of Advanced Studies** (≥30 ECTS)
- **Certificate of Advanced Studies** (≥10 ECTS)
- **Short Courses** (1-10 days)
Step 3: Defining qualification levels

National qualification framework: UCE descriptors

Overview

- Four HE qualification levels (Bachelor, Master, Doctorate, UCE)
- UCE descriptors compared to master level descriptors
- Emphasis on problem-solving, management, innovation, professional identity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UCE descriptors</th>
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<tr>
<td>High level of specialization or interdisciplinarity</td>
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<td>Research and practice-based knowledge</td>
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<td>Problem-solving in complex environments</td>
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<td>Change-orientation and innovation skills</td>
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<td>Professional identity, professional field</td>
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<td>Management and leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication and negotiation skills</td>
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<td>Autonomous learning skills</td>
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</table>
Step 4: Defining quality criteria

Approaches to UCE quality

- **General** versus **UCE-specific**
- **Subject**-oriented versus **generic**
- **Widening** participation versus **elite**-development
- **Enablers**-based and **results**-based (**multidimensional**)
- **Institution**-oriented versus **programme**-oriented
- **Strategy**-driven versus **culture**-driven
- **Assessment**-oriented versus **development**-oriented
Six particularities of UCE quality

- Stakeholders assess UCE quality in terms of workplace performance, career and personal development.
- UCE deals with rapidly changing needs, fragmented markets, expert client groups and heterogeneous teaching staff.
- Innovation is often more important than durability.
- Programmes are often unique and highly specialized and defy any attempt at comparative ranking or sectoral standardisation.
- Programmes must be accountable to the client, in the first place.
- Quality culture and personal quality commitment are often more important than formal quality strategies and explicit standards.
Step 4: Defining quality criteria

Six principles for a UCE quality approach

- **Impact orientation:** A UCE quality approach should emphasise impact and transfer
- **Flexibility:** The quality criteria should be generic and easily adaptable
- **Multidimensionality:** The quality approach should take into account all relevant aspects of the programme’s life cycle combining input, process, outcome and impact criteria
- **Client feedback:** A UCE quality approach should provide the participants with constant feedback possibilities.
- **Stakeholder involvement:** All relevant stakeholder groups should be surveyed periodically and integrated actively in all phases of the programme cycle (as instructors, advisors or project partners).
- **Constant quality improvement:** Quality assessment and programme planning should be closely interlinked. The focus should be on quality culture and personal commitment rather than on formal strategies and standards.
Step 4: Defining quality criteria

The quality development scheme

Context
- Programme development

Trade associations, stakeholders, employers, alumni

1. Context analysis

2. Goals, concept

3. Resources, organisation

4. Prozesses, implementation

Participants, clients

5. Outcome, output

Coherence

Effectiveness

6. Impact, transfer

Efficiency

7. Quality development

Competition, cooperation, core competences, reputation goals

Context
Step 5: Defining quality criteria

Dimension 6: Impact and transfer

Keywords
Market value, reputation, transfer, long-term benefit, career, value of the degree, recognition

Quality objective
Programmes are widely recognised by participants, alumni, employers and professional associations. They provide explicit added value for the participants in their professional practice and have a positive impact on their career.

Evaluation criteria
6.1. Participants and alumni confirm the positive impact of the competences acquired on their professional practice and/or career.
6.2. The programme is known to and recognised by employers and professional associations.
6.3. Professional associations, businesses, institutions and other interested organisations support the programme financially or otherwise.
6.4. The programme meets cultural, societal, social or economic needs.

Suggested sources of data
Survey of participants, alumni and employers, statements by professional associations and key individuals
Step 5: Defining quality criteria

Quality criteria compared

- **Swissuni**: quality development criteria for UCE programmes
- **OAQ**: accreditation criteria for normal study programmes
Conclusions and next steps

Conclusions

- Impact-oriented, multidimensional model for UCE quality development that follows the lifecycle UCE programmes
- Transferable to other HE-systems: every UCE type must assess results and take into account flexibility, stakeholder involvement, client feedback and constant quality improvement.
- New balance between results and enablers. Impact orientation also requires that results be accorded more weight than strategies, and ‘lived’ quality culture more weight than formal quality mechanisms.
Thank you!

www.swissuni.ch

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Individual and group work
Goals and themes

**Goals:** Provoke questions, identify strengths and weaknesses, verify possible implementation, gather expertise and good practice

**3 Groups with different focal points:**

**Focus 1:** **Conceptual coherence:** Are the quality objectives and evaluation criteria coherent? Are they sufficient and adequate for quality assessment and development? Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, other experiences?

**Focus 2:** **Methodologies and tools:** How can achievements be measured? Is sufficient and adequate data available? Can it be gathered? With what effort? Assessment methods, tools, difficulties, opportunities?

**Focus 3:** **Steering and planning:** Are the quality objectives and evaluation criteria useful and adequate for steering and planning purposes? Strengths, weaknesses, practical experience?
Individual and group tasks

- Step 1: Please go through the questionnaire individually. Focus on the dimensions 1, 5 and 6 if you run out of time. Mark quality objectives and evaluation criteria you would like to discuss. Use keywords if you wish.

- Step 2: Please discuss your interests and remarks in the group. Select the most interesting themes. Prepare a short presentation for the plenum that stimulates discussion.
**Dimension 1: Analysis of context and environment**

**Quality objective**
Continuing education programmes are geared to the current and future needs and expectations of participants, employers and professional associations. They take into account the continuing education markets, the interests and core competences of the university and the economic, social and cultural context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation criteria</th>
<th>Focus 2: Methodologies and tools: How can achievements be measured? Is sufficient and adequate data available? Can it be gathered? With how much effort?</th>
<th>Focus 3: Steering and planning: Are the quality objective and evaluation criteria useful and adequate for steering and planning purposes? Strengths, weaknesses, experiences?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1. The stakeholders concerned (for example: responsible departments, participants, alumni, professional organisations, employers and research centres) are identified and according to the need involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of the programme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2. Programme managers identify their main competitors and potential partners.</td>
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<td>1.3. The programme aligns with the mission and strategic direction of the institution.</td>
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**Focus 1: Conceptual coherence:** Are the quality objectives and evaluation criteria coherent? Are they sufficient and adequate for quality assessment and development?
Impact measurement tools

- Career development (objective data)
- Felt transfer and career development (subjective)
- Job profiles and competence development
- Commitment of employers (funding, collaboration)
- Commitment of professional organisations (collaboration)
Impact measurement

Career development (objective)
MAS ETH in Development and Cooperation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Unemployed or in education</th>
<th>Development cooperation and related sectors</th>
<th>Consulting</th>
<th>Education</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At programme start</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Today</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job position</th>
<th>Employee</th>
<th>Project manager</th>
<th>Middle management</th>
<th>Higher management</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At programme start</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Today</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>0%</td>
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Impact measurement

Career development (subjective)
MAS ETH in Development and Cooperation

Transfer and Career Effects

Recommendations

- Highly relevant
- Not relevant

Work performance
Hiring effect (Dev. Coop.)
Career effect (Dev. Coop.)
Hiring effect (other sectors)
Work performance
Hiring effect (Dev. Coop.)
Career effect (Dev. Coop.)
Hiring effect (other sectors)

Alumni
Employers
Impact measurement

Job profile and competence development:
MAS ETH in Development and Cooperation
Impact measurement

Funding, commitment of employers: MAS ETH in Spatial Planning

- Employer
- Private and employer
- Private and scholarships
- Private funds

Percentage of participants

2005-2007
2003-2005
2001-2003
1999-2001