

Challenges of Public Administration Accreditation in a Fragmented Institutional Setting: The Case of Europe

UDK: 378.041.61(045)

Christoph Reichard

University of Potsdam
reichard@uni-potsdam.de

ABSTRACT

The paper is dealing with accreditation in higher education in Europe, based on observations in the European public administration accreditation field. Considering the existing evidence, there are positive consequences of accreditation, such as improvement of programs and teaching quality. There are also problems and weaknesses, moreover some doubts about the accreditation results. The author also predicts that in the future there may be a trend towards more homogeneity of public administration programs in Europe.

Key words: higher education, accreditation, Europe, public administration

JEL: H83, D73, P20, L33, H11.

1. Introduction

Accreditation in higher education is a rather new and emerging issue in most European countries. It came up within the last few years, not least in the context of the Bologna process of establishing a common framework and format of academic education. In classical continental Europe, accreditation as a mode of quality assurance was not needed: The state government alone provided higher education and the respective institutions. Government employed the academic staff and funded the whole education process. Universities therefore were authorised by government to establish faculties and programs, to perform the educational processes and to award the academic degrees. In

Christoph Reichard
**Challenges of Public Administration Accreditation in
a Fragmented Institutional Setting: The Case of Europe**

some countries the government was – and still is - even in charge of examinations¹. Because universities were part of the public sector, there was a clear top-down chain of command from the ruler or later from the elected government and minister to the universities; consequently the Ministry of Education (MoE) regulated all details of the academic value chain. Thus, there existed no accreditation measures, the mode of recognition was a rather bureaucratic authorisation (Talamanca, 2004), with (at least in some countries) lots of freedom for universities.

In the last few years, however, the mode of steering and control of academic education changed. In line with the NPM movement and the recent agencification processes, universities became more autonomous in financial and managerial aspects. Apart from the still dominant public universities in several European countries private universities emerged and became players in the academic field. Furthermore, competition among universities with regard to research and teaching funding increased over the years. A kind of quasi-markets emerged within the higher education sector. Additionally, student mobility strongly increased as they took advantage of various European exchange programs. This resulted in a need for homogenisation of programs and contents. Finally, the number of students and accordingly of academic programs exploded during the last two decades and made it almost impossible for a MoE to control its universities in the traditional bureaucratic-hierarchical way. All these trends demanded for a new mode of control and of quality assurance in higher education. That's why the Europeans discovered the ideas and advantages of accreditation.

Accreditation is a quite modern and fashionable term and it is defined in different ways. In the following, accreditation is understood as a process where "a (non-) governmental or private body evaluates the quality of a higher education institution as a whole or of a specific educational program in order to formally recognise it as having met certain predetermined minimal criteria or standards. The result of this process is usually the awarding of a status (a yes/no decision), of recognition, and sometimes of a license to operate within a time-limited validity" (Vlasceanu et al 2005, 19). Accreditation is one variant of evaluation, sometimes contrasted to the audit (van der Krogt 2006, 7). Relevant common characteristics of accreditation are e.g. (DEI 2003):

¹ Academic final examinations in some fields in Germany are e.g. still carried out by the state government, e.g. for lawyers, medical doctors or teachers (*Staatsexamen*)

Challenges of Public Administration Accreditation in a Fragmented Institutional Setting: The Case of Europe

- the evaluation is carried out by a panel of external experts who were appointed by the accreditation agency
- the accreditation is based on a self evaluation report of the respective institution or program
- the assessment by the experts is based on a site visit of the institution
- accreditation follows a set of pre-defined criteria or standards which usually determine the minimum level of goal achievement.

There are two major variants of accreditation: institutional or system accreditation and program accreditation (e.g. Harvey 2004). As we are dealing with public administration as an academic field, the focus of the following is more on program accreditation.

2. Institutional landscape of Higher Education accreditation in Europe

2.1 European level

As accreditation is quite new and has emerged from different sources and paths, the institutional structure in the accreditation “business” is quite diverse in Europe. At the supranational level we find a confusing plurality of associations and coordinating bodies. Here is a short picture:

- INQAAHEE: International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education. It is a worldwide network of accreditation agencies and other related bodies with more than 200 members. It aims to promote good practice and to disseminate experiences among its members.
- ENQA: European Network for Quality Assurance: It is the platform of all quality assurance institutions in Europe. National accreditation authorities as well as agencies are member of it. Membership is in some countries a prerequisite for national recognition by the respective governments. ENQA undertakes a lot of studies and surveys on quality assurance issues in Europe. In 2005 they have agreed upon common European quality assurance standards for internal quality improvement as well as for external agencies (ENQA 2005), which have been adopted by the European MoEs.

Christoph Reichard

Challenges of Public Administration Accreditation in a Fragmented Institutional Setting: The Case of Europe

- EQAR: European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education is linked with ENQA and registers accreditation agencies which fulfil the respective conditions for being recognized and registered. Currently about 17 European agencies are registered.
- ECA: European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education again is a coordinating body at European level which aims to simplify the complicated and fragmented European accreditation procedures by promoting mutual recognition of accreditation decisions in one of the member states by the other countries.
- EUA: European University Association is obviously not only involved in quality issues but generally in coordinating educational affairs and in disseminating good practice. However, this association also is active in quality assurance and promotes accreditation initiatives.

In general, most of the mentioned supranational organisations are not directly active in the accreditation business, they are primarily coordinative bodies, do networking and contribute to some convergence and harmonisation trends throughout Europe.

2.2 National level

Most European countries have established a national accreditation system. In most countries there is a regulatory body with some autonomy from government but with board members who are appointed by government. This body usually sets the standards and regulations, organises the accreditation processes and approves the assessments of the various academic institutions or programs. Sometimes it is also directly involved in accreditation missions. Apart from it, in some countries there are a few additional accreditation agencies, organised either as quasi-governmental entities or as non profit organisations. Almost all agencies apart from their accreditation fees receive some funding from government. In some countries, the agencies have the competence to decide upon accreditation while in others they only prepare the material and report for the superior body. If an accreditation agency decides on the accreditation of a program or institution, it has a separate and independent organ (accreditation committee) which ultimately decides about granting the accreditation and which awards the respective certificate. This organ is composed of representatives from several universities and of practitioners (sometimes also including students). Apart from it the agency has a professional working and support unit to organise the visits, the report writing

etc. The concept of peer-based accreditation which is well-known from the US seems to be less widespread in Europe. Usually, the experts participating in site visits receive remuneration and travel allowances.

Case of Germany: The *Deutscher Akkreditierungsrat* (German Accreditation Council) is the regulatory body with the legal status of a foundation. It was established by the coordinating body of the MoEs of the German *Länder* and of the association of university rectors. Its task is to set necessary standards, to recognize accreditation agencies and to supervise the whole accreditation activities in Germany. At present there are about 10 recognized agencies in Germany, all with a non profit status, some only for certain disciplines, others active in limited regional settings. The majority of the German agencies are "GONGOS", i.e. government organized NGOs, because they were initiated by the MoE of one of the *Länder* also receive some government funding.

3. Patterns of the European "accreditation business"

There are different variables which together form a certain pattern of accreditation procedures in a country. The following variables seem to be relevant:

a) Institutional structure:

- Some countries just have one (quasi-) governmental authority which works as the extended arm of the MoE and which is responsible for the whole accreditation business. Others have a more complex structure of a superior regulatory agency and several public or private (mostly non profit) accreditation agencies.
- Influence of government on accreditation differs: in the classical continental countries, the ministries still try to control the university sector in a detailed way and thus also supervise the accreditation activities. In the Nordic or anglophone sphere the accreditation agencies seem to be more autonomous.

b) Subject of accreditation: Generally, this is the issue of program accreditation versus institutional or system accreditation. In case of *programs* it may be asked:

Christoph Reichard

Challenges of Public Administration Accreditation in a Fragmented Institutional Setting: The Case of Europe

- Are all academic programs subject of accreditation or only newly established programs?²
- Are only academic programs to be accredited or also professional programs or other variants of vocational training?
- Is only one program of a single university, are several programs in the same discipline but offered by several universities or are different programs of one university to be accredited together in one process?³

In the case of institutional accreditation there are again some options: Does accreditation apply to all academic institutions or only to certain types (e.g. only to private universities like in Austria)?

So far, program accreditation was much more common as institutional accreditation in most countries (ENQA 2008). In the last few years, however, there is a tendency to move towards institutional accreditation.

c) Purpose of accreditation, degree of obligation and phasing:

- The most obvious reason for accreditation is the recognition of the respective program (or institution) by government, e.g. regards to funding, to legitimise academic degrees or to entitle students to receive student grants.
- Accreditation can be mandatory or voluntary. In most countries, regular accreditation is mandatory at least for all government funded programs (Finland is for instance an exception as they don't force university programs to be accredited).
- Accreditation can be done either *ex-ante* or *ex-post*. "Real" accreditation can only be done after completion of one or more intakes of an academic program because only then it is possible to observe certain effects (e.g. learning outputs). Many governments, however, ask for *ex ante* verification of new programs.

d) Accreditation standards and criteria: The evaluators can at first check certain input criteria, e.g. learning facilities (qualification of teaching

2 In Germany for instance only the „new programs“ with a bachelor and master degree are subject of mandatory accreditation.

3 The last case under the label of "cluster accreditation" is widely spread in Germany: an extended site visit team is evaluating in the same mission several programs, some times even in different departments or faculties. The quality of such a procedure seems to be doubtful. In the Netherlands f. i. there is a history of "discipline-accreditation" where in one process all programs in a discipline in all universities are accredited (and more or less compared), and where sometimes a "state-of-the-art" report of the discipline is produced.

Christoph Reichard

**Challenges of Public Administration Accreditation in
a Fragmented Institutional Setting: The Case of Europe**

staff, class room equipment, library, PC-pool). Furthermore, they can assess the quality of educational processes and the compliance with given procedures (e.g. with examination regulations or with quality assurance procedures). And finally, the outputs and outcomes of the education process can be the object of accreditation (e.g. the degree to which the teaching in a course is meeting certain learning objectives or expectations of employers). There is some evidence that the usual accreditation schemes are relying to a great extent on input and process criteria while the focus at the output dimension is less prominent (but becoming more important). This is not surprising as it is very difficult and time-consuming to measure and to attribute results of the educational process (and even more: success of alumni in their future careers) to certain elements of academic education. Previously, accreditation missions asked frequently for the subjects taught in programs and for the number of students passing exams. Nowadays, the focus has somehow shifted to the assessment of competencies the students should have acquired (van der Krogt 2006, 14-18)⁴. Finally, a more general issue is the benchmark, against which a program should be measured and assessed: while some accreditation concepts are following more formal and sometimes domain-crossing criteria, others put the mission of the respective program into the centre of investigation and assessment: to which extent is a program achieving the objectives it has formulated in its own mission statement?⁵

Looking around in Europe's higher education scene, we still find very different patterns of accreditation systems – they represent a multiple mix of parameter values of the above mentioned variables. The influence of government is different, the obligation to accredit (all or some) programs differs, the purposes and the phasing of accreditation are different and lastly the types of standards and criteria used for accreditation are varying. However, the above mentioned European coordinating bodies like ENQA do a lot to harmonise these patterns and to foster convergence.

⁴ See also the new NASPAA standards 2009, No 5 or the attempts in Europe to focus at professional competencies in higher education: <http://tuning.unideusto.org/tuningeu/>

⁵ This is for instance the case with the NASPAA standards and also with the EAPAA criteria; see http://www.eapaa.org//index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=41&Itemid=47

4. Accreditation in Public Administration: the current situation and trends in Europe

Institutional Setting: Currently there is one supranational organisation in Europe dealing with accreditation issues particularly (and only) in the interdisciplinary field of public administration: the European Association of Public Administration Accreditation (EAPAA). Although this agency has done a lot of program accreditation work in the last 10 years, it is not yet widely acknowledged in the academic community. Most of the existing academic PA programs in the various countries of Europe still are accredited by national bodies (mostly because universities are forced by their governments to do so). As we have seen, the majority of national accreditation agencies do not have a domain-specific focus. There is no specific national agency for PA accreditation in Europe so far. Apart from the widespread preference of national (obligatory) accreditation, most of the leading PA programs in Europe opted for (additional) accreditation by EAPAA because this allows a better comparative view based on the experiences with accrediting the various PA programs in Europe (Daemen/van der Krogt 2008). This applies particularly for smaller countries with few PA programs.

Very recently, there are signals that new actors may enter the scene: At first, NASPAA is planning to expand its activities to the international education markets and to undertake accreditation missions outside the USA (probably primarily for "American-style programs"). Secondly, the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration (IASIA) has started the preparation of an own accreditation program⁶. If one or both of these internationally well-known institutions finally enter the European PA scene, the situation probably will change: we have to expect broader expertise but also more competition.

EAPAA: The association was established 10 years ago with the support of NASPAA (more details: www.eapaa.org). EAPAA follows to some extent the NASPAA philosophy of peer-reviewing and of a mission-based accreditation system. EAPAA is based at the University of Twente (The Netherlands) and has there a very modest support office. It is governed by an executive committee and a secretary general. The decisions on awarding accreditation are done by an independent accreditation committee. EAPAA is so far a membership

⁶ See: http://www.iias-iisa.org/iasia/e/standards_excellence/Documents/Resolution%20of%20the%20IASIA%20BoM,%20August%202009.pdf

Christoph Reichard

**Challenges of Public Administration Accreditation in
a Fragmented Institutional Setting: The Case of Europe**

organisation, based on nearly 40 members (= universities) from different European countries; about half of them have programs accredited by EAPAA. EAPAA follows detailed procedures which are similar to those of NASPAA and other agencies. It has a set of accreditation criteria which are binding for the self evaluation reports of the candidates and for the site visit teams and their reports⁷. Accreditation is done for academic bachelor and master programs in public administration (in a broad and interdisciplinary perception, covering also elements of public policy and management) of universities in the (enlarged) European space. Although EAPAA is recognised by the Dutch accreditation body NVAO, it still does not enjoy Europe-wide recognition. Registration in the EQAR register is a challenge, as this authority – together with ENQA – still has some concerns which are related with the membership status of EAPAA (risk of dependence from members' influence) and with the very modest scale of its support office (EAPAA largely depends on the engagement of its members and not much on own administrative capacity). That's why EAPAA intends to change its status into an association with only a few institutional members, primarily probably EGPA and NISPACee).

Quality assurance in Public Administration: As PA is an interdisciplinary field, one of the challenges for quality assurance is to identify and to assess properly the various elements of PA which are taught in a program. Depending on culture and traditions, administrative sciences are perceived quite differently in the various European countries (Kickert 2008). At large three big domains of PA curricula are to be differentiated (Hajnal 2003, Cepiku/Meneguzzo 2007):

- a legal perception of PA, widespread in large parts of continental Europe, e.g. in the German speaking countries, southern European countries and some of the post-socialist states
- PA perceived from the view of political and organisation sciences, quite prominent e.g. in the Nordic countries but also in Belgium and The Netherlands
- PA perceived from the perspective of Business Administration and Management, to be found in the UK, Ireland and partly also in the Nordic and West-European countries.

The status of PA as an own and independent academic field is very different in Europe. While in some countries PA has remarkably emancipated (e.g. in some of the Nordic countries or in The Netherlands), in other countries it is

⁷ See: http://www.eapaa.org//index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&gid=41&Itemid=47

Christoph Reichard
**Challenges of Public Administration Accreditation in
a Fragmented Institutional Setting: The Case of Europe**

poorly institutionalised and quite fragmented (e.g. in Germany; see for details Reichard 2008). In countries with a low development status of PA, the role of a domain-specific accreditation concept is correspondingly weak.

Not surprisingly, accreditation of PA programs has to deal with the different contents of the PA-curricula. While some programs have a rather strong focus at law, others are more close to political sciences and again others have a clear management approach. Furthermore, not all programs are called “public administration” programs, some are labelled as “public management” programs, others as “public policy” or “public affairs” programs (see also the database of public affairs programs: www.wotpa.org). From the EAPAA view, all these programs can be attributed to “public administration” in a broader sense and thus accredited as PA-programs, if they are not too much sector-specific (e.g. health care management).

What are the most relevant issues of quality assurance in the field of PA? The following dimensions probably play a particular role for accreditation (Daemen/van der Krogt 2008, 27):

- content: one of the important issues is to check if the relevant subjects of PA are covered by the curriculum, i.e. if the basic structures, functions and processes of PA are included and analysed from an interdisciplinary perspective. It also has to be proved if the content corresponds with the state-of-the-art knowledge of PA.
- balance between academic and professional (applied) knowledge: Depending on the level of studies and the type of educational institution, it has to be assessed if there is an adequate balance between theoretical understanding of PA and the provision of knowledge and skills which are relevant for the professional career of the students.
- pedagogical implementation: It has to be examined, if the taught contents are coherent and consistent, if the faculty is applying adequate teaching modes and methods and if there is sufficient support for independent students’ learning.
- quality maintenance: It also has to be checked if the institution has applied appropriate quality assurance mechanisms, e.g. if students can regularly evaluate their teachers and if the evaluation results are followed-up by the directorate.
- adequate resources: Ultimately it is a matter of quality control if the faculty is sufficiently qualified (professors, lecturers, support staff etc) and if the learning facilities (rooms, library, computer pools etc) are adequate.

As was said before, one of the challenges for accrediting PA is to assess the content which is taught and the learning outcome of students in this field. In a professional field like PA with so many different occupational variants for graduates, it is very difficult to define clear and easy measurable core competencies (e.g. compared with business managers etc). Some accreditation authorities therefore try to circumvent the problem by using more formal and process-oriented criteria, but it is rather questionable if they come to adequate and realistic results.

5. Is there an added value of program accreditation?

Accreditation nowadays is a new and fashionable tool for quality assurance and it is unavoidable for many academic programs to receive the "accreditation seal". In many parts of Europe it is simply mandatory to receive accreditation for getting funded or for awarding academic degrees. In some cases it also has a public relation and marketing function: programs having a prestigious accreditation are better ranked and higher valued by employers or student candidates. Accreditation also has a legitimising function as it makes it public that the department responsible for the respective program is maintaining a certain level of quality. Additionally, there are two other functions of accreditation which are particularly relevant for public administration (Daemen/van der Krogt 2008, 24): the disciplinary function which safeguards the identity and integrity of the – quite complex – (inter) discipline of PA; and the emancipatory function which contributes to the further development of PA as an independent and integral part of the social sciences.

It is rather difficult to assess effects of accreditation. There are at first severe measurement problems. What is the comparator of an accredited program? How can changes of a program be attributed to the accreditation measure? Although accreditation procedures usually lead to some changes in content, teaching modes, facilities and quality management, these changes cannot clearly be traced back to the accreditation intervention. Thus, the following reflections about the positive and critical results and effects of accreditation are to some extent speculative.

Based on experiences with the (EAPAA) accreditation of several PA programs in various European countries, there is, however, some evidence of the consequences of accreditation. At first, accreditation may lead to convergence

Christoph Reichard
**Challenges of Public Administration Accreditation in
a Fragmented Institutional Setting: The Case of Europe**

of curricula and to a common understanding of the basic disciplines and elements of PA. Even if the evaluators in an accreditation project follow a mission-based approach, they will look for commonalities and conformity with their perception of a full fledged PA concept. In several cases this may result in recommendations of the evaluators to consider additional fields or functions of PA to become part of the respective curriculum. At large, it can be said that accreditation promotes a broader and more interdisciplinary perception of the program content and that historically rooted one-sidedness of the curriculum can be reduced.

Secondly, almost all program managers say that the drafting and writing of the self evaluation report already has forced them to raise uncomfortable questions which were not raised before (e.g. concerning teaching quality or didactics). They also often admit that accreditation opened a window of change as evaluators demanded for certain improvements which the program managers alone could not enforce. Thirdly, the faculty of the program is exposed to the questions of the internationally mixed site visit team. This has positive effects on the awareness of faculty members of the need for persistent development of their PA program.

Altogether, it is quite evident that PA programs will usually benefit from accreditation missions: the structure of the program will be adjusted, the contents will be partly renewed or amended, the teaching methods and facilities are critically reviewed and the quality management concept in place will be assessed. All those impulses will result in an increased quality of the program.

There are, however, also some problems and weaknesses related with program accreditation. At first, there may be some concerns about the validity of accreditation results. The assessment is usually based to a large extent on the self evaluation report. Evaluators have to believe the content of it and they can only verify a few issues. Verification becomes particularly difficult if the program is taught in a language of which most of the evaluators are not familiar with⁸. Although evaluators usually have the impression that they get a "true" picture of the program, it may be questionable to which extent it is possible to draw a valid and complete picture of a complex program within a site visit of two days where the evaluators have to rely on the oral explanations of their respondents. Another possible weakness is perhaps a mainstream bias: The picture of evaluators of a "good program" is usually based on their

⁸ In EAPAA site visit teams there shall be always at least one international expert speaking the local language of the respective program.

Christoph Reichard

**Challenges of Public Administration Accreditation in
a Fragmented Institutional Setting: The Case of Europe**

own experience and on previous accreditation missions. This may hinder an impartial and open-minded view on a program and lastly restrict innovative ideas in curriculum development⁹.

The value-for-money issue also is a point of debate: Universities in several countries have to afford a quite substantial amount of money to pay the accreditation fees. In Germany for instance, accreditation agencies ask for about 10.000 to 15.000 euro for a program accreditation¹⁰. And these are only the external costs; the preparation of a self evaluation report costs at least one man year. If a university has to get dozens of programs accredited, this will be a strong financial burden. And critical observers indeed raise the question if the whole effort of preparing the reports and carrying out the accreditation process is it really worth. There may remain some doubts...

Finally, it may be asked if accreditation agencies are able to solve the information asymmetry problem which is narrowly related with quality assurance in higher education (see also Scheele 2004). It is quite evident that the classical approach of a bureaucratic and in-depth supervision of the educational quality, as it was done traditionally by the MoEs, was and is inefficient and also not very effective. Is the new system of accreditation better off in terms of providing reliable and relevant quality information? At first – as we have seen – the institutional pattern of accreditation is much more complex as the traditional bureaucratic setting: There is the government as major funding institution and as authority ensuring the supply of educational programs. There are the various accreditation agencies and additionally sometimes independent regulatory bodies. Furthermore, we have supranational quality assurance associations and several coordinative bodies (ENQA etc). And we have the educational suppliers, i.e. the universities and other higher education institutions who have to provide the basic data for the quality assessment. All these actors are following their own interests and logic. In such a setting it would be not surprising if the agencies do not meet the expectations of the consumers of accreditation information. It is therefore probably still an open question, if – and to which extent – the accreditation agencies as “agents” are providing relevant and reliable information to their “principals” (primarily to the government).

⁹ Similar evidence is known from refereed journals where the referees sometimes force the authors to follow a mainstream approach of theories or methods.

¹⁰ EAPAA fees, by-the-way, are much lower as the peer-based accreditation concept is less costly (see www.eapaa.org for details).

Christoph Reichard

**Challenges of Public Administration Accreditation in
a Fragmented Institutional Setting: The Case of Europe**

What can be expected in the future? Although national particularities will certainly remain, there may be a trend towards more homogeneity of public administration programs in Europe, at first because of increased European collaboration (e.g. in networks like EGPA, NISPACee or IRSPM), secondly because of the harmonisation related to the Bologna processes and thirdly, however, also because of international accreditation activities. It can be hoped that all these efforts will contribute to a common interdisciplinary perception of public administration in Europe.

Dr. Christoph Reichard is Professor of Public Management and Director of the Institute of Local Government Studies at the University of Potsdam. After studying business administration (MBA from the Free University Berlin 1968) he received his Ph.D. in economics and public administration (University of Freiburg 1972). His dissertation was on Public Management. Christoph Reichard worked 20 years as professor for public management at the Berlin College for Public Administration. From 1994 to 1997 he was professor for public management at the Polytechnic University for Technology and Economics, Berlin.

Christoph Reichard

**Challenges of Public Administration Accreditation in
a Fragmented Institutional Setting: The Case of Europe**

References

- Cepiku, D., M. Meneguzzo (2007): *Public Administration Education in Italy: A Statistical Analysis*. Unpubl. Paper EGPA Conference Madrid 2007.
- Daemen, H., Th. van der Krogt (2008): Four Functions of International Accreditation: The Case of EAPAA and Public Administration in the Netherlands. in: Jenei, G., K. Mike (Eds.): *Public Administration and Public Policy Degree Programmes in Europe: The Road from Bologna*. Bratislava (NISPACEe), pp 23-35.
- DEI (The Danish Evaluation Institute) (2005): *Quality procedures in European higher education*. ENQA occ. paper 5, Helsinki.
- ENQA (2005): *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*. 3rd ed. Helsinki.
- Hajnal, G. (2003): Diversity and Convergence: A Quantitative Analysis of European Public Administration Education Programs. in: *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, 9, 2003, 245-58.
- Harvey, Lee (2004): The power of accreditation: view of academics. in: P. Di Nauta, P.-L. Omar, A. Schade and J. P. Scheele, Eds.: *Accreditation models in higher education: experiences and perspectives*. Helsinki, ENQA: pp.5-18.
- Jenei, G., K. Mike (Eds.) (2008): *Public Administration and Public Policy Degree Programmes in Europe: The Road from Bologna*. Bratislava (NISPACEe) 2008.
- Kickert, W. (Ed.) (2008): *The Study of Public Management in Europe and the US. A comparative analysis of national distinctiveness*. London usw (Routledge).
- NASPAA: *Accreditation Standards For Master's degree programs*. 2009.
- Reichard, C. (2008): The study of public management in Germany. Poorly institutionalized and fragmented. In: Walter Kickert (Ed.): *The Study of Public Management in Europe and the US. A comparative analysis of national distinctiveness*. London usw (Routledge) pp. 42-69.
- Scheele, Ko (2004): Licence to kill: about accreditation issues and James Bond. in: P. Di Nauta, P.-L. Omar, A. Schade and J. P. Scheele, Eds.: *Accreditation models in higher education: experiences and perspectives*. Helsinki, ENQA: 2004, pp. 19-25.
- Talamanca, A. F. (2004): From authorisation to accreditation – a difficult path for the university system in a changing society. in: P. Di Nauta, P.-L. Omar, A. Schade and J. P. Scheele, Eds.: *Accreditation models in higher education: experiences and perspectives*. Helsinki, ENQA: pp. 48-51.
- Van der Krogt, Th. (2006): *Quality Standards in Public Administration Education and Training*. Report issued by the IASIA/UNDESA Task Force on Standards of Excellence in Public Administration Education and Training. Mimeo, Warsaw.
- Vlăsceanu, Lazăr , Laura Grünberg and Dan Pârlea (2004): *Quality Assurance and Accreditation: A Glossary of Basic Terms and Definitions*. Bucharest, UNESCO-CEPES. Papers on Higher Education. <http://www.cepes.ro/publications/pdf/QA&A%20Glossary.pdf>

POVZETEK

IZZIVI AKREDITACIJE V VISOKEM ŠOLSTVU ZA PODROČJE JAVNE UPRAVE - PRIMER EVROPE

Članek obravnava akreditacijo v visokem šolstvu na temelju izkušenj z akreditacijo visokošolskih izobraževalnih programov za javno upravo v Evropi. Akreditacijo opredeli kot proces, v katerem državni organ ali privatna organizacija vrednoti kakovost institucije visokega šolstva v celoti (institucionalna ali programska akreditacija) ali samo za specifičen izobraževalni program (programska akreditacija), zaradi uradnega potrdila, da institucija ali program dosega neke vnaprej opredeljene kriterije ali standarde. Avtor se v članku osredotoča predvsem na programsko akreditacijo.

V zadnjih letih se je visoko šolstvo v Evropi izredno razvilo. Institucije, ki izvajajo izobraževalne programe, so postale bolj samostojne. Uveljavile so še številne nove, zasebne visoke šole. Vse to zahteva nove načine nadzora in zagotavljanja kakovosti. Akreditacija, ki ni bila potrebna, ko je bilo šolstvo izključno v oblasti države, se zdaj vse bolj uveljavlja, ponekod je celo obvezna. V Evropi obstaja več institucij, ki se ukvarjajo z akreditacijo na mednarodni, pa tudi na nacionalni ravni. Njihovi pristopi in kriteriji so precej različni.

Za področje javne uprave že deset let izvaja akreditacijo mednarodna organizacija EAPAA. Vendar v mnogih državah akreditacijo programov še zmeraj vršijo zgolj nacionalne organizacije. Tako kot je stališče do izobraževanja za delo v javni upravi v posameznih državah različno, tako so tudi programi tega izobraževanja različni.

Avtor navaja pet najpomembnejših problemov zagotavljanja kakovosti izobraževalnih programov za področje javne uprave: vsebina, usklajenost med akademskih znanjem in prakso, pedagogika pristopa, vzdrževanje kakovosti, ustrezni viri (osebje, oprema, stavbe).

Izkušnje potrjujejo, da so učinki akreditacije pozitivni. Prvič, akreditacija lahko vodi do poenotenja izobraževalnih programov zaradi boljšega razumevanja, katera so temeljna znanja za kakovost poslovanja javne uprave. Drugič, pisanje poročila o samoocenjevanju je privedlo do neprijetnih vprašanj, o katerih se prej ni govorilo (npr. o kakovosti poučevanja, o didaktiki). Tako je akreditacija odprla vrata do sprememb, ki jih zahtevajo ocenjevalci in jih pred tem ni bilo mogoče uvesti. Tretjič, mednarodna

Christoph Reichard

**Challenges of Public Administration Accreditation in
a Fragmented Institutional Setting: The Case of Europe**

akreditacijska skupina zahteva odgovore na številna vprašanja, ki odkrivajo nove poglede na izobraževalni program.

V zvezi z akreditacijo pa obstajajo tudi problemi in slabe strani. Predvsem bi večkrat lahko podvomili v veljavnost rezultatov akreditacije. Stroški akreditacije so znatni, zlasti če institucija potrebuje akreditacijo za več programov.

Kaj lahko pričakujemo v prihodnosti? Čeprav bodo nacionalne posebnosti ostale, se bodo izobraževalni programi za področje javne uprave v visokem šolstvu verjetno vse bolj zblíževali, zaradi vse boljšega sodelovanja med državami v Evropi, kot posledica bolonjskega procesa in tudi dejavnosti mednarodnih akreditacijskih institucij. Vse to naj bi privedlo tudi do enotnega, interdisciplinarnega pojmovanja javne uprave v Evropi.