



M-2009 Statement on Quality Assurance in e-learning and distance education

(forwarded from the M-2009 World Conference*
to the UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education / WCHE2009)

The rise in initiatives aimed at promoting the internationalization and globalization of higher education, in particular the growth of distance education institutions with international reach and the number of their graduates, has underlined the need to establish robust frameworks for quality assurance (QA) and the recognition of qualifications. Quality assurance issues have become more important with the increased mobility of students and academic staff, as well as higher education providers resulting from the globalization of higher education. Quality assurance in e-learning is of growing interest to policy makers as e-learning has become one of the main vehicles for cross-border higher education.

The M-2009 World Conference facilitated a platform for higher education QA organizations and experts from around the globe. From the contributions in the conference it was emphasized that quality must be assured and demonstrated in measurable ways to ensure that, also in a global perspective, learners acquire the knowledge they need and to reassure stakeholders of this.

Already, UNESCO in cooperation with EADTU initiated the establishment of a Global Task Force on e-learning and distance education with involvement of ICDE and representation of the different regional representatives. The goal of this Task Force is to:

1. exchange expertise on fundamental aspects of QA in e-learning and keep up with new developments
2. update criteria based on new developments and innovations (Web 2.0)
3. inventory how to organize QA in e-learning within different contexts; show how models operate in different countries; guide them by these examples; and look into the best examples of implementation
4. discuss international delivery: how to address quality in international co-operation of delivery; single mode delivery and delivery in partnership; ensure high quality partnerships
5. collect best practices.

* M-2009 has been a one-time merger of the bi-annual conference of the world organization ICDE (International Council for Open and Distance Education) and the annual conference of the EADTU (European Association of Distance Teaching Universities). It took place 7 -10 June 2009 in Maastricht, The Netherlands.