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ENSURING QUALITY IN CRISIS: FROM FIRE-FIGHTING TO LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

EXPERIENCES FROM EUROPE

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INITIAL RESPONSE: SUPPORT AND ADVICE

- Priority: flexible and supportive towards HEIs
 - **allow HEI to focus** on addressing the current situation and planning for the new academic year
 - **reassure** re: accreditation status
 - **advice and support** on elearning (assessment, student rights, quality...) → recommendations, guidelines, training webinars etc.
- Information to and dialogue with national stakeholders, also for changes needed to **national regulations**

REVIEWS GOING ONLINE

- For external reviews, two options
 - **Postponement of reviews** (ESG do not determine duration) – initially the preferred option
 - **Go (temporarily (?)) online** – increasing, with perspective of “mid-2021”
- Mostly hybrid approach:
 - e.g. initial accreditation, follow-up, programme reviews online - institutional/full reviews/reviews of medical and lab-based programmes postponed, but shifting!
- Elaborating guidelines, (re)training experts, experimenting with best tools, addressing safety and confidentiality concerns, boosting preparation



KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR MOVING ONLINE

- All good practice and principles related to site visits remain relevant
 - Carried out by external experts, including a student member
 - Independence, professionalism
 - Confidentiality and safety (protected e-tools, identification of participants, etc.)
 - Training, briefing
 - Participation of/interviews with different stakeholders
- Preparation of the agency, of panels, and of the institution/programme even more important than usual
- Scope for experimenting new formats and structure of the visit(s)

NB. Need to ensure similar quality and validity not to put anybody at disadvantage

WHAT ABOUT ELEARNING?

- Quality concerns raised by ministries, students...
- Rome was not built in a day... COVID-19 adjustments \neq (necessarily) “elearning”, but often simply fire-fighting and “better than nothing”
- National issues: emergency legislation related to accreditation (prolongation), recognition, degree statements...
- In times of crisis: rely on the good basis of trust, and invest on dialogue and communication
- Serious monitoring in the mid-term to ensure quality beyond times of crisis





THANK
YOU

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