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IEP study: how IEP reports address Part 1 of the ESG

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Chapter I Introduction

Background and aim of the study

The Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) are a set of standards that provide a common framework for internal and external quality assurance in higher education. They are also used by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) as membership criteria and the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) as criteria for being listed in the Register. The ESG were originally introduced in 2005 and the current version of the ESG was adopted at the EHEA Ministerial Conference held in Yerevan (Armenia) in May 2015.

The evaluation reports issued by the Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) were assessed for their content and consistency during the last external review of the Programme, carried out by ENQA. The review report¹, published in January 2014, concluded that IEP is fully compliant with Standard 2.5 of the ESG 2005, which covers reports (Standard 2.6 in the current ESG), and praised the use of a common template for reports and the fact that IEP reports are publicly available on the IEP website.

In the review, IEP also was judged fully compliant with Standard 2.1, which covers the need for external quality assurance to address internal quality assurance processes at institutions. However, the decision letter on the renewal of IEP's listing in EQAR, which followed the review, stated that the ENQA external review report did not analyse the extent to which the standards of the ESG Part 1 are actually reflected in IEP evaluation reports and that this requires further attention in the Programme.

Since then, EQAR has published its "Use and Interpretation of the ESG for the European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies", which stipulates that, in determining compliance with the Standard 1.6 of the current ESG, even further attention will be paid in the future to how the reports cover the issues included in Part 1:

the agency should systematically include all standards of Part 1 of the ESG in their criteria and procedures used to evaluate/accredit/audit institutions or programmes, while they may be addressed differently depending on the type of external quality assurance.

Reports should at least demonstrate:

- How the agency addresses the effectiveness of internal QA processes in its evaluations, audits and accreditations.
- How standards 1.1 – 1.10 are addressed in the agency's criteria and processes for institutions/programmes.²

¹ Available at http://www.eua.be/Libraries/IEP/IEP_review_by_ENQA_2014.sflb.ashx

² "Use and Interpretation of the ESG for the European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies" pp. 4-5, http://eqar.eu/fileadmin/documents/eqar/official/RC_12_1_UseAndInterpretationOfTheESG_v1_0.pdf, consulted 30 June 2015

Therefore, the IEP Steering Committee (SC) took the decision to undertake a study in order to identify how the current IEP reports reflect the different elements of the ESG Part 1.

This study presents an analysis of a set of IEP evaluation reports and the extent to which they address Part 1 of the ESG. In order to provide the Programme with perspectives for further developments, this analysis refers to the current ESG, approved in May 2015, while recognising that this version was not available at the time that the reports were written. It is expected that the study's findings will contribute to the discussion of how systematically the ESG Part 1 should be referred to in reports in the future.

Scope and methodology

34 IEP evaluation reports were selected for analysis in this study and they provide a representative sample of all IEP reports. The following reports were analysed:

- all evaluation reports from the regular evaluation rounds 2011-2012, 2012-2013, 2013-2014 (altogether 14 reports). Only initial evaluation reports were analysed (no follow-up reports)
- all evaluation reports from the 3rd round of the coordinated evaluations in Romania, following the timeline of the evaluation round 2013-2014 (17 reports)
- three evaluation reports of universities that were evaluated in the framework of the coordinated evaluations of higher education institutions in Montenegro, following the timeline of the evaluation round 2013-2014.

For the sake of accuracy and providing an analysis of the most up-to-date trends, the study does not examine evaluation reports written before the evaluation round 2011-2012 (approx. three years ago).

The content of the 34 reports were analysed in order to identify:

- the extent to which each standard of the ESG Part 1 was addressed, based on a pre-defined assessment scale (see below)
- the chapters in the reports where the topics of the standards were addressed
- The elements of each standard most frequently addressed by the report.

It should be noted that a standard template for the structure of IEP evaluation reports was introduced for the coordinated evaluations in Romania and also used the regular evaluation rounds from 2012-2013 onwards. Reports of the evaluations that took place in the evaluation round 2011-2012 did not follow any specific template. For the sake of consistency, the chapter titles used in the report template are used in this study: Introduction, Governance, Teaching and learning, Research, Service to society, Quality culture and Internationalisation.

In order to assess the degree to which each standard is addressed, an assessment scale was developed as outlined below. This includes a numerical value (0 to 3) for each level on the scale so that for each standard, or part of a standard, an average can be calculated, showing the general extent to which it is addresses across all reports.

Degree in which a standard was addressed (and numerical value)	Explanation
Not addressed (0)	Not covered at all in the report
Partially addressed (1)	Topic(s) covered by the standard or part of a standard was briefly mentioned in the report, giving some information on the state of the art but not beyond a statement of facts, or was only mentioned in a broader context, e.g. "Students also praised modern facilities"
Substantially addressed (2)	Topic(s) covered by the standard or part of a standard was addressed in a substantial but not exhaustive manner. At least a paragraph or a part of a longer paragraph was devoted to it or it was mentioned in several places in the report; explanation on the current situation was given and some interpretation followed, frequently with recommendations; in complex standards at least two-three items were addressed
Comprehensively addressed (3)	Topic(s) covered by the standard was addressed in detail, almost fully and exhaustively, it was given a prominent place in the report, to a greater extent than in case of substantially addressed standards; explanation of the current situation was given, followed by interpretation of the facts and, in most cases, recommendations; in complex standards most of the items were addressed

It is noteworthy that the study presents an analysis of the content of the evaluation reports only. Discussions and interviews that took place during the evaluation visits, where reference to the topics covered by the standards could have been made, were not scrutinised nor taken into account.

Chapter II Analysis of the reports

Standard 1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.

Extent to which it is addressed in IEP reports

Standard 1.1 was addressed in a comprehensive way in all reports that were examined.

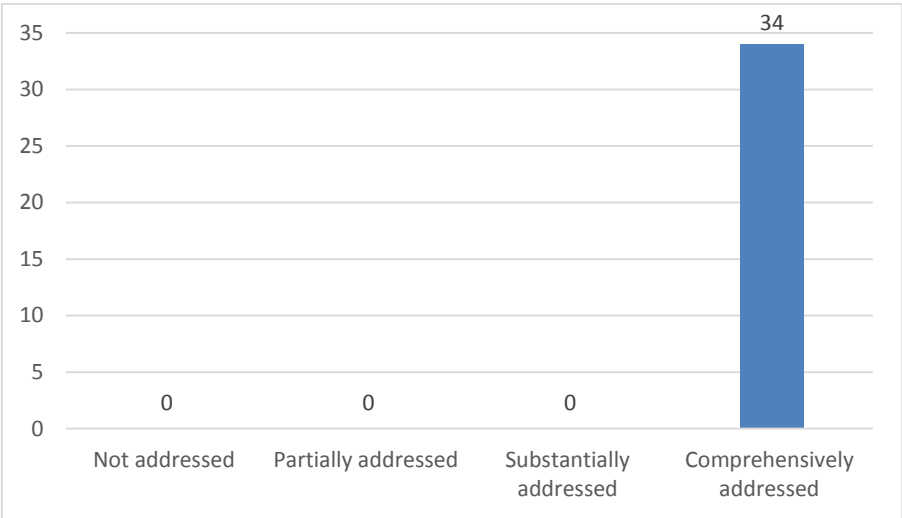


Figure 1. Standard 1.1: Number of reports/Extent to which standard was addressed

Average on the scale 0 (not addressed) – 3 (comprehensively addressed): **3.0**

Chapter in which it is addressed in IEP reports

Standard 1.1 was most frequently addressed in chapter “Quality culture”. In some of the examined reports the standard was addressed in more than one chapter, for example “Teaching and learning” and “Quality culture”.

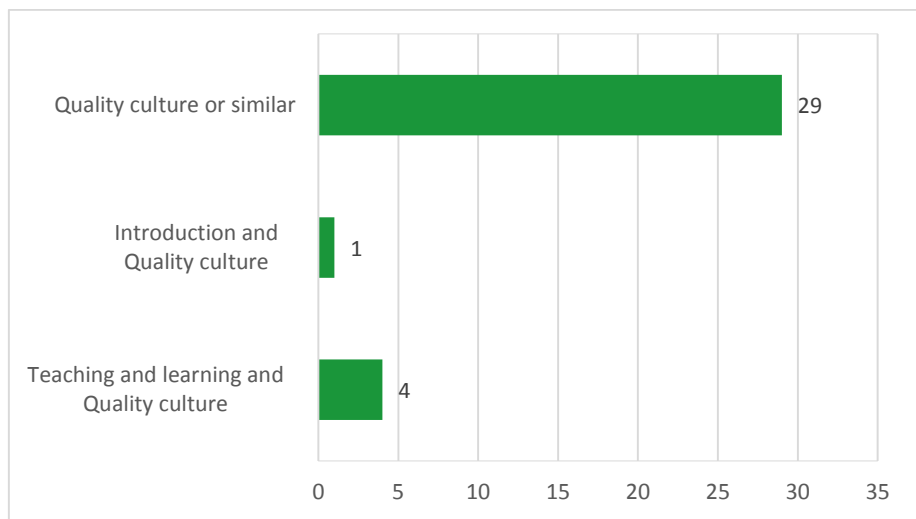


Figure 2. Standard 1.1: Chapter/Number of reports

Main findings

The analysis of the reports indicated that Standard 1.1 was considered in an exhaustive or almost exhaustive manner in all evaluation reports. With regard to the content and interpretation of the standard, the examined evaluation reports focused on and, in almost all cases included recommendations, on one or more of the following themes:

- Organisation of the quality assurance system
- Developing quality culture with involvement of various stakeholder groups
- Closing the loop of QA interventions (mostly in the context of collection and use of feedback, including students questionnaires)

In addition, in 11 reports there was a specific reference to the ESG combined with a suggestion (frequently in the form of a recommendation) that the institutions should build or develop their quality assurance systems in compliance with the ESG.

Several reports mentioned quality assurance in research, but mostly in the context of the comprehensive quality assurance system.

Standard 1.2 Design and approval of programmes

Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

Extent to which it is addressed in IEP reports

Standard 1.2 was addressed in an overwhelming number of the examined reports (28 out of 34), mostly in a comprehensive or substantial way.

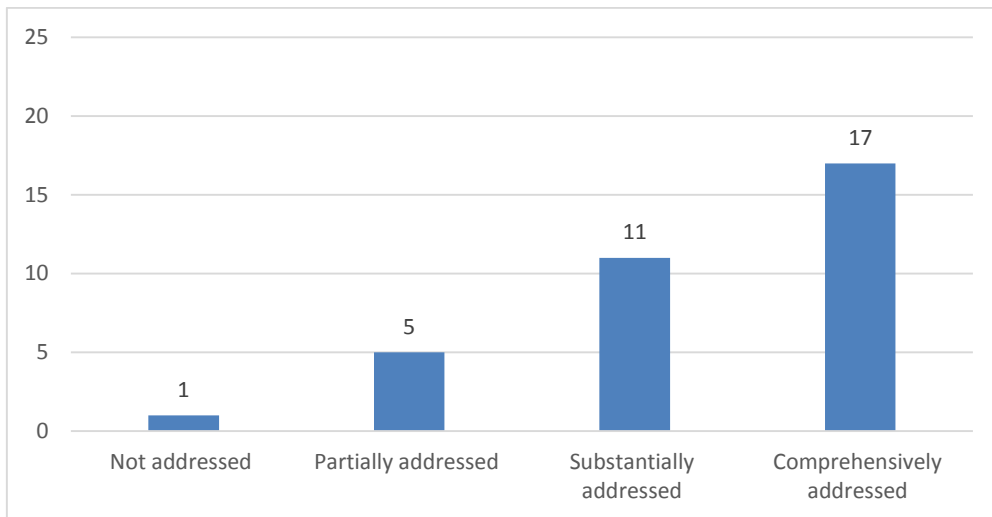


Figure 3. Standard 1.2: Number of reports/Extent to which standard was addressed

Average on the scale 0 (not addressed) – 3 (comprehensively addressed): **2.3**

Chapter in which it is addressed in IEP reports

Standard 1.2 was most frequently addressed in chapter “Teaching and learning”. In many reports it was covered in two or more chapters, for example “Governance” and “Teaching and learning” or “Quality culture” and “Teaching and learning”.

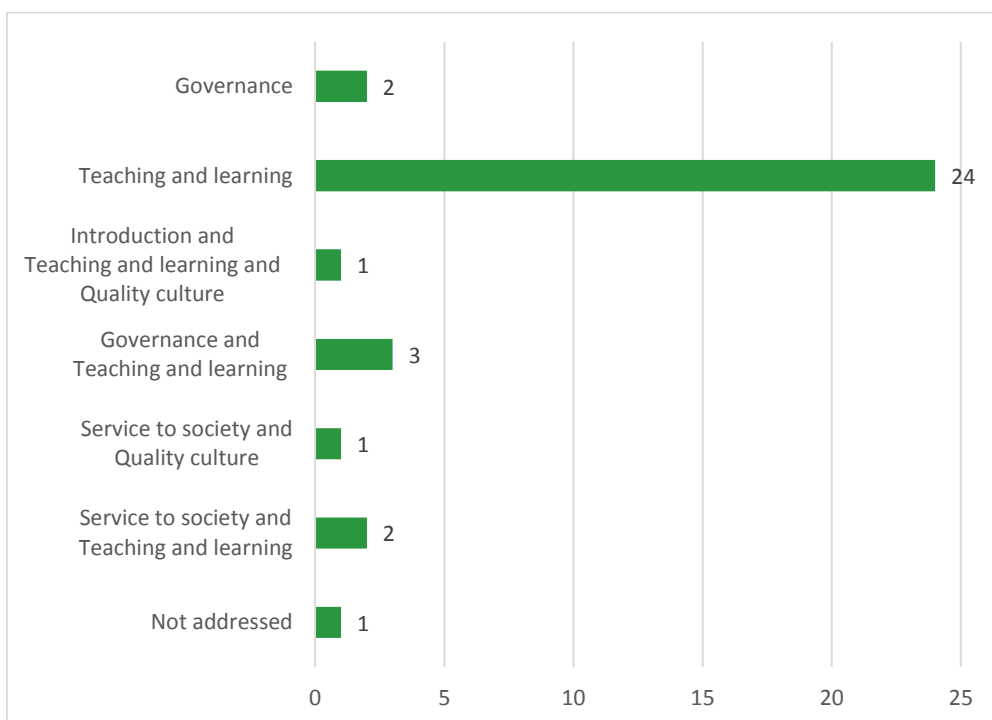


Figure 4. Standard 1.2: Chapter/Number of reports

Main findings

The analysis of the reports indicated that Standard 1.2 was well covered in the majority of reports. With regard to the content and interpretation of the standard, the evaluation reports focused on:

- Process of designing programmes
- Structure of existing programmes
- Involving external stakeholders in curriculum design
- Allocating ECTS
- Defining learning outcomes
- System of student placements
- Practical component in curricula, transferable skills, employability

19 reports contained recommendations on at least one of the above topics.

It is noteworthy that most of the evaluation reports addressed Standard 1.2 in combination with Standard 1.9, which covers the monitoring and review of programmes. However, almost no reports made a reference to national qualifications frameworks or to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, which are included in the standard.

Standard 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

For the sake of accuracy, this standard was divided into two areas, which were analysed separately: a) student-centred learning and teaching and b) assessment.

a) Student-centred learning and teaching

Extent to which it is addressed in IEP reports

Student-centred learning and teaching was substantially or comprehensively addressed in all examined reports.

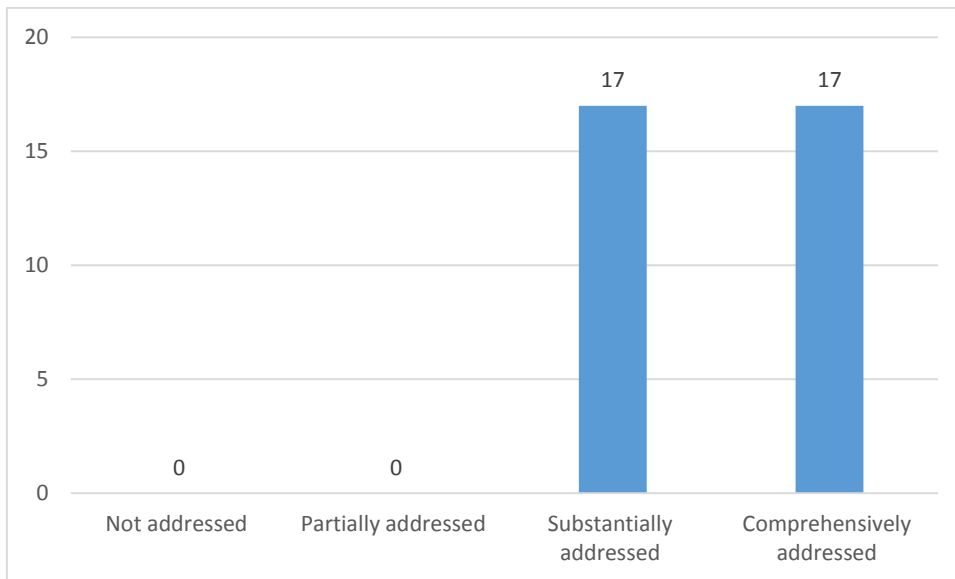


Figure 5. Standard 1.3 (student-centred learning): Number of reports/Extent to which standard was addressed

Average on the scale 0 (not addressed) – 3 (comprehensively addressed): **2.5**

Chapter in which it is addressed in IEP reports

Student-centred learning was most frequently addressed in chapter “Teaching and learning”. In some reports the standard was addressed in more than one chapter, for example “Service to society” and “Teaching and learning” and “Quality culture”.

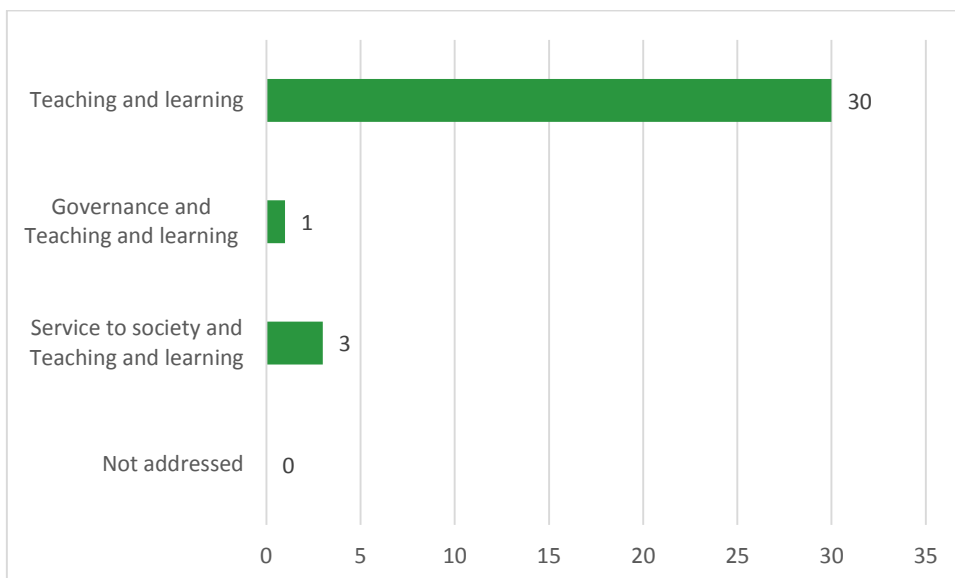


Figure 6. Standard 1.3 (student-centred learning): Chapter/Number of reports

b) Assessment

Extent to which it is addressed in IEP reports

Assessment was covered, to a varying extent, in only 12 out of 34 reports.

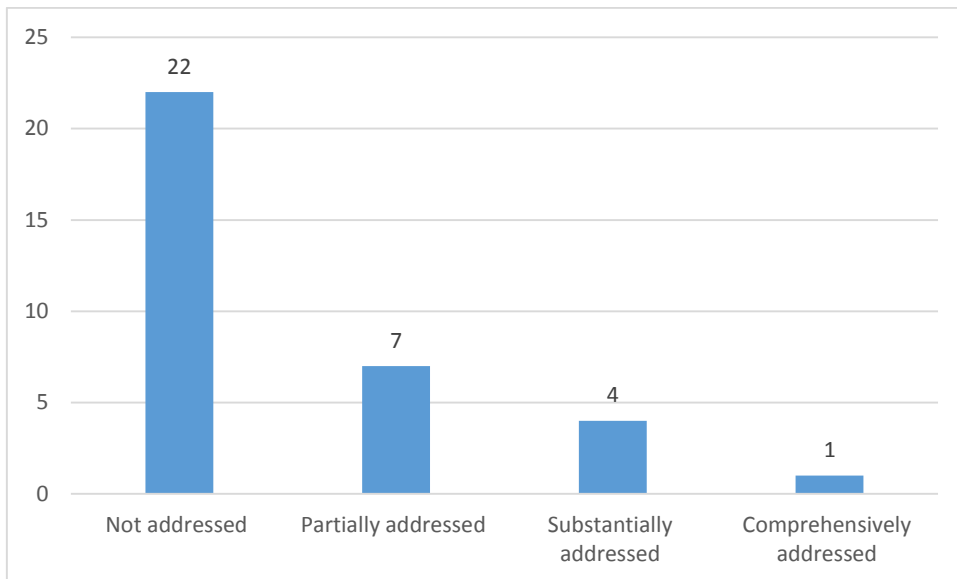


Figure 7. Standard 1.3 (assessment): Number of reports/Extent to which standard was addressed

Average on the scale 0 (not addressed) – 3 (comprehensively addressed): **0.5**

Chapter in which it is addressed in IEP reports

In the reports that did cover it, assessment was usually mentioned in the “Teaching and Learning” chapter. One report included a paragraph on this subject in “Quality culture”.

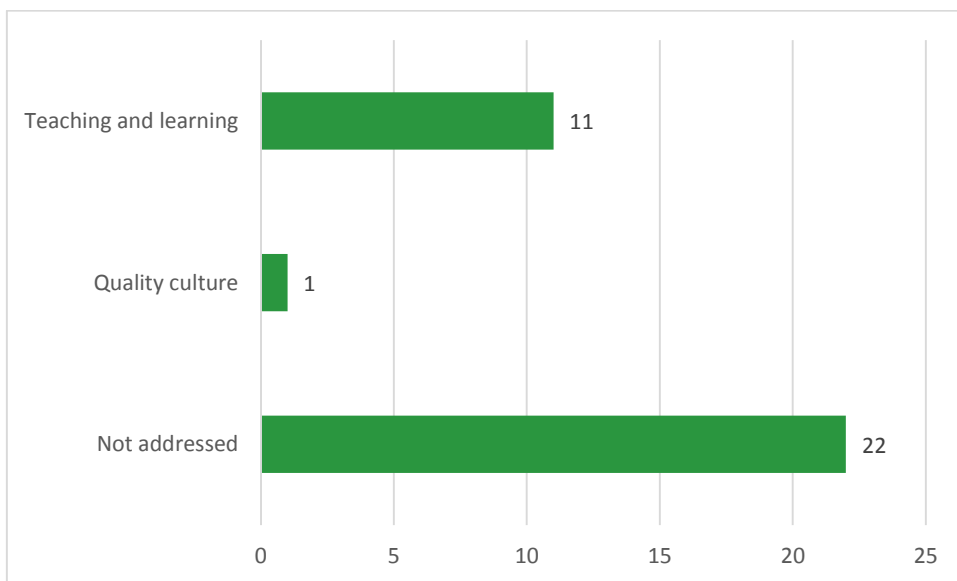


Figure 8. Standard 1.3 (assessment): Chapter/Number of reports

Main findings

The analysis of the reports indicated that Standard 1.3 as a whole was partially to substantially addressed in the reports (numerical average: 1.5).

When analysing the particular areas covered by the standard, student centred-learning and teaching proved to be addressed in a substantial way, whereas assessment in a very limited way.

With regard to the content and interpretation of the parts of the standard on student-centred learning and teaching, the examined evaluation reports focused on:

- Student experience as a learner, relationship between learner and teacher
- Different modes of delivery, with emphasis on e-learning and distance learning
- Variety of pedagogical methods
- Flexible learning paths

Almost all reports included recommendations for further implementation and development of student-centred learning and teaching at the institution.

With regard to assessment, the reports that did cover it concentrated on:

- criteria and methods of assessment
- organisation of examination procedures
- varied assessment methods
- the link with intended learning outcomes.

Standard 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle", e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.

For the sake of accuracy, the standard was divided into four areas, which were analysed separately: a) admission, b) progression, c) recognition and d) certification.

a) Admission

Extent to which it is addressed in IEP reports

The analysis indicated that admission was addressed, to a varying extent, in only 7 out of 34 reports.

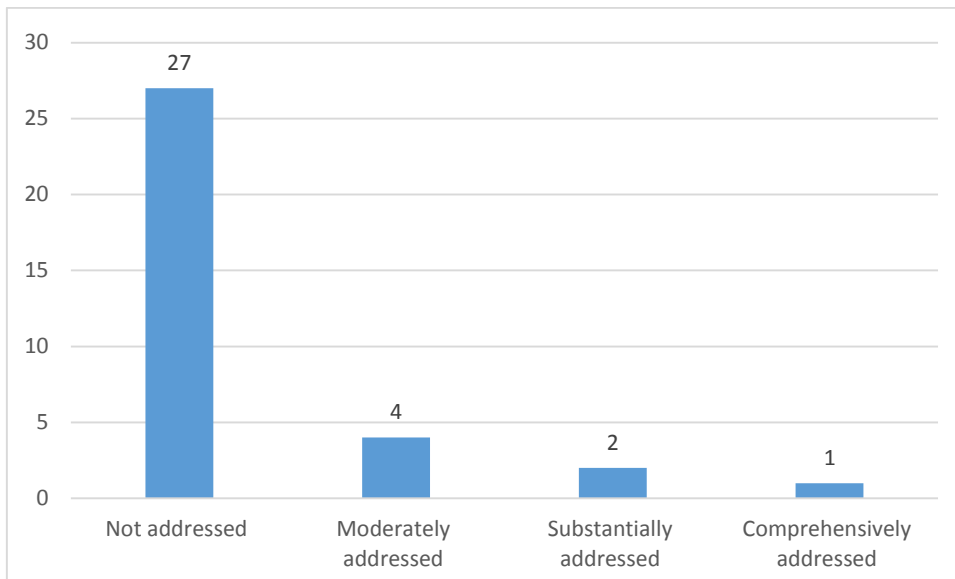


Figure 9. Standard 1.4 (admission): Number of reports/Extent to which standard was addressed

Average on the scale 0 (not addressed) – 3 (comprehensively addressed): **0.3**

Chapter in which it is addressed in IEP reports

Admission, when addressed, was mentioned in the “Teaching and Learning” chapter. One report included a paragraph on this subject in “Governance”.

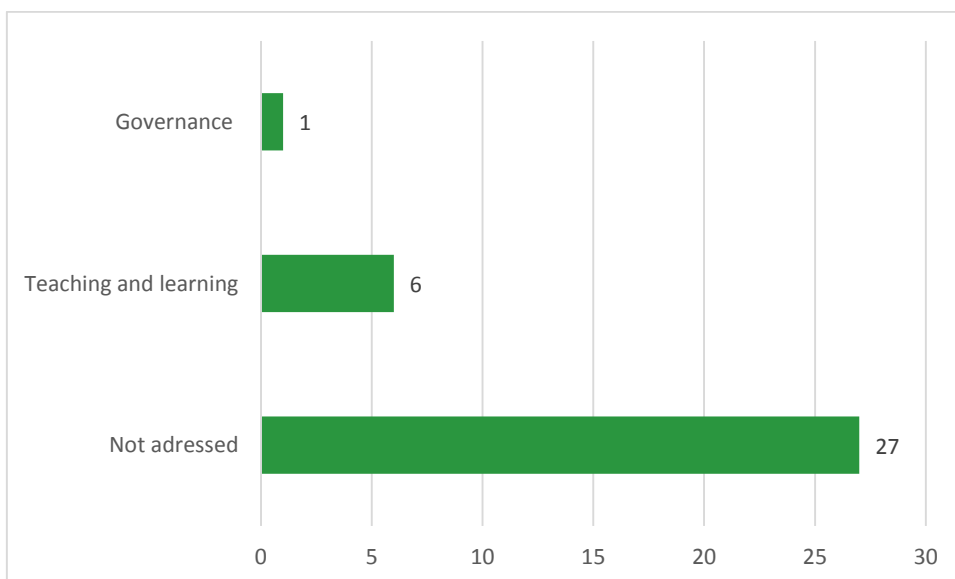


Figure 10. Standard 1.4 (admission): Chapter/Number of reports

b) Progression

Extent to which it is address in IEP reports

The analysis indicated that progression was considered, to a varying extent, in more than half of the examined reports (19 out of 34).

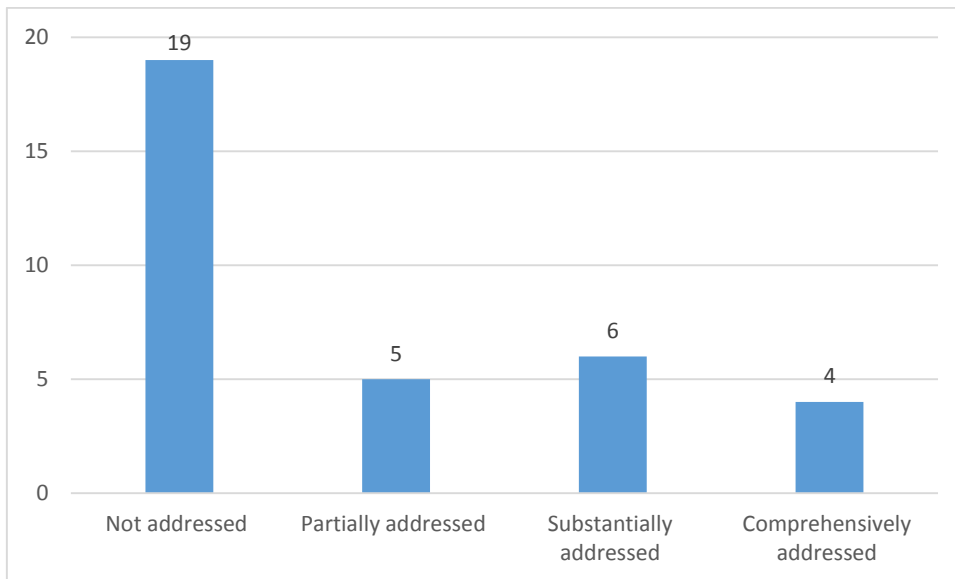


Figure 11. Standard 1.4 (progression): Number of reports/Extent to which standard was addressed

Average on the scale 0 (not addressed) – 3 (comprehensively addressed): **0.8**

Chapter in which it is addressed in IEP reports

Progression was most frequently addressed in the chapter “Teaching and Learning” in the reports. A few reports included a paragraph on this subject in “Quality culture”.

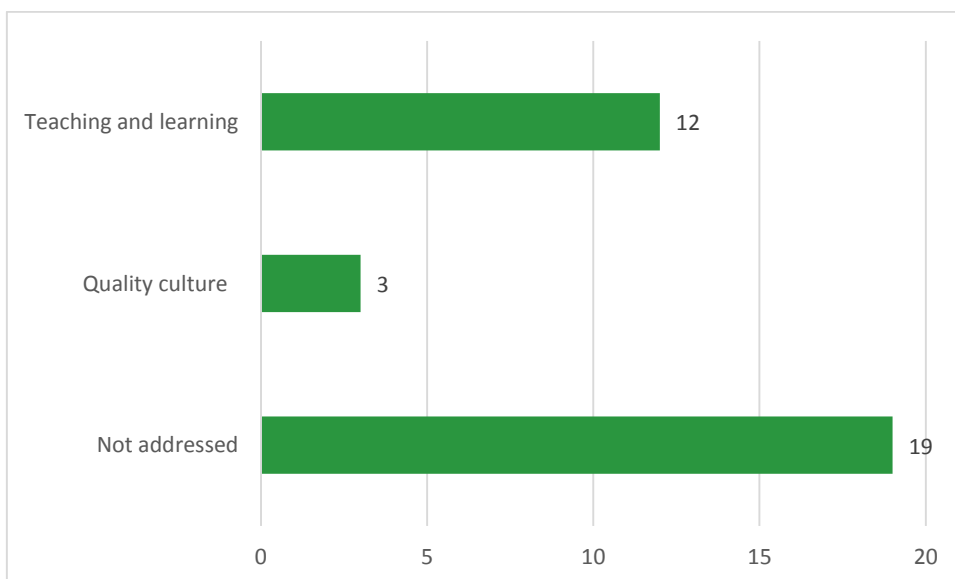


Figure 12. Standard 1.4 (progression): Chapter/Number of reports

c) Recognition

Extent to which it is addressed in IEP reports

The analysis indicated that recognition was considered in eight (8) of the examined reports, and in those only partially.

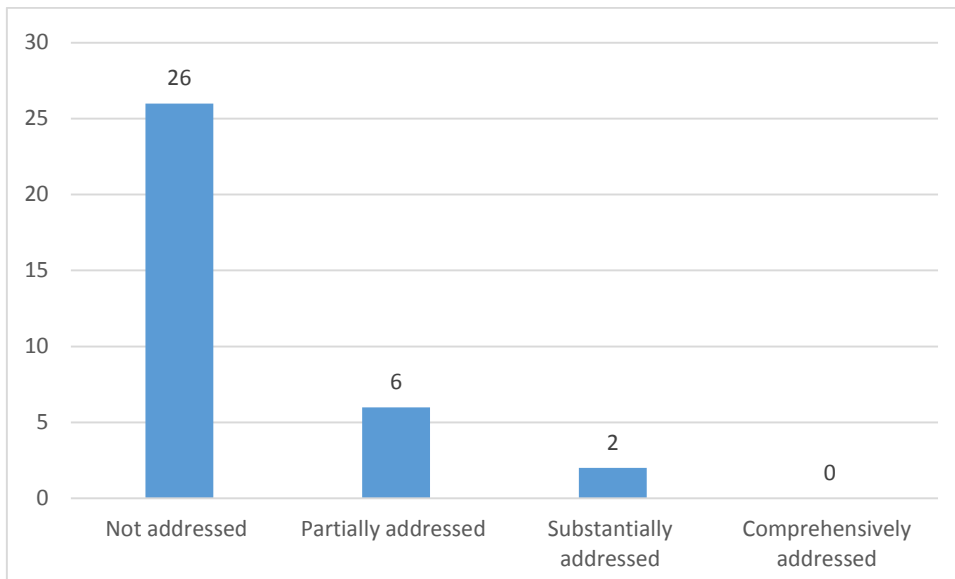


Figure 13. Standard 1.4 (recognition): Number of reports/Extent to which standard was addressed

Average on the scale 0 (not addressed) – 3 (comprehensively addressed): **0.3**

Chapter in which it is addressed in IEP reports

Half the reports that addressed recognition did so in the chapter “Internationalisation”.

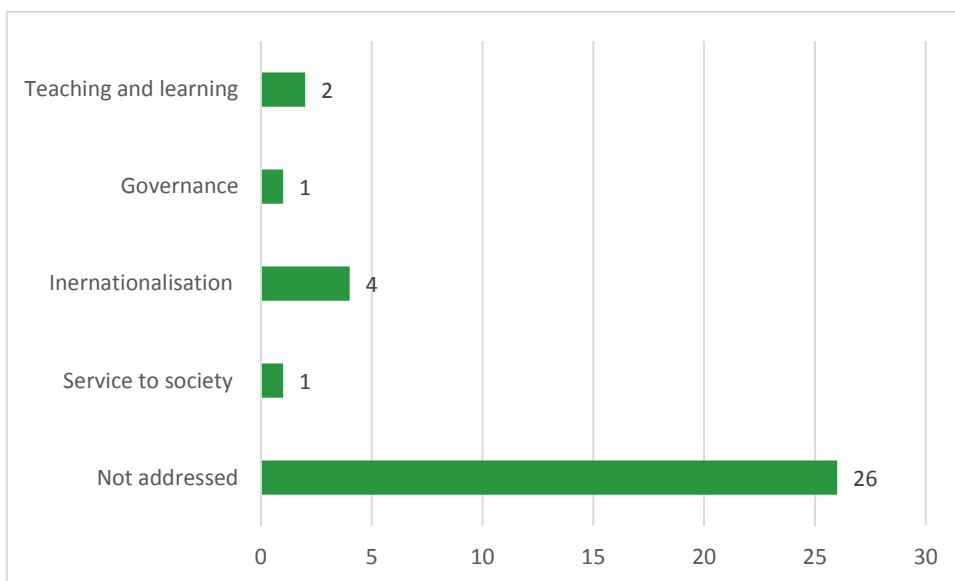


Figure 14. Standard 1.4 (recognition): Chapter/Number of reports

d) Certification

Extent to which it is addressed in IEP reports

Certification was considered, partially, only in four (4) of the examined reports.

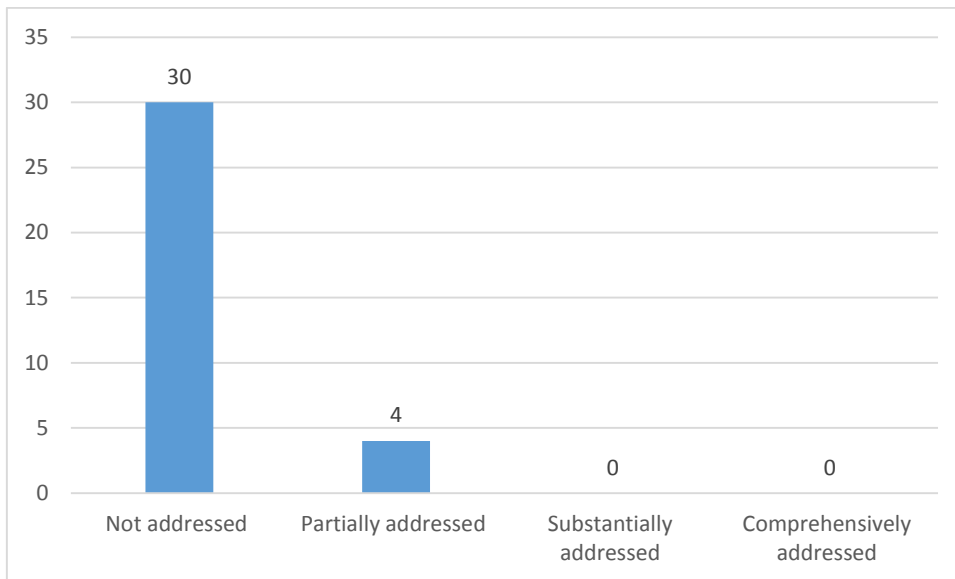


Figure 15. Standard 1.4 (certification): Number of reports/Extent to which standard was addressed

Average on the scale 0 (not addressed) – 3 (comprehensively addressed): **0.1**

Chapter in which it is addressed in IEP reports

Certification was covered in chapter “Teaching and Learning” in the reports. One report included a paragraph on this subject in “Quality culture”.

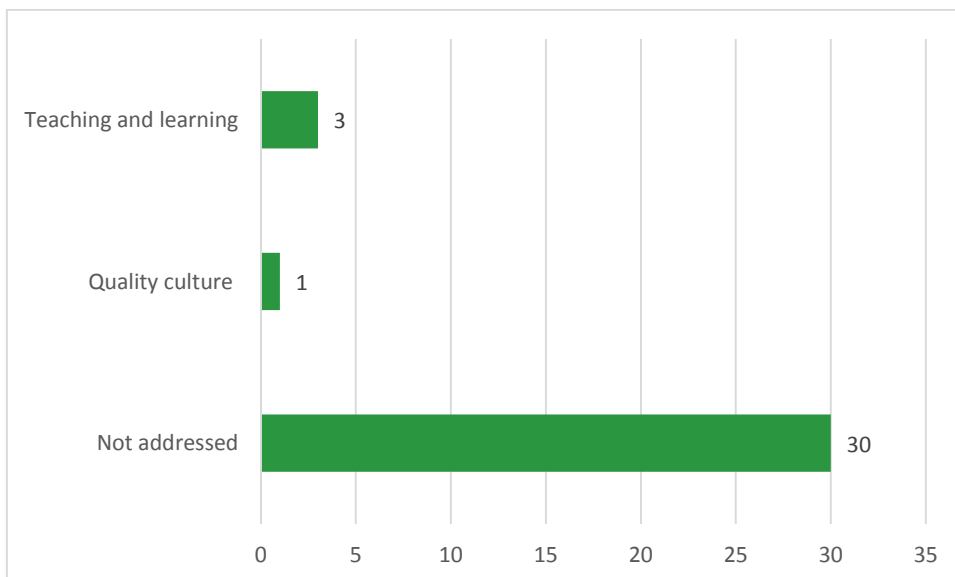


Figure 16. Standard 1.4 (certification) Chapter/Number of reports

Main findings

The analysis of the reports indicated that Standard 1.4 on the phases of the student “life cycle” was addressed, as a whole, in a very limited way in the reports: 0.4 on average.

When analysing the individual parts of the standard - student admission, progression, recognition and certification - recognition was the aspect most frequently addressed.

With regard to the content and interpretation of the standard, the examined evaluation reports focused on:

- Admission: rules governing the selection procedure and number of students
- Progression: monitoring and acting on information on student performance, with particular attention paid to drop-out rates
- Recognition: recognition of study abroad periods, e.g. Erasmus or other exchange programmes
- Certification: mention of diploma supplement issued to graduates.

Very few reports contained recommendations on any of the above areas.

Standard 1.5 Teaching staff

Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.

Extent to which it is addressed in IEP reports

The analysis of the evaluation reports indicated that the standard was addressed in 29 out of 34 reports in a substantial or a comprehensive way.

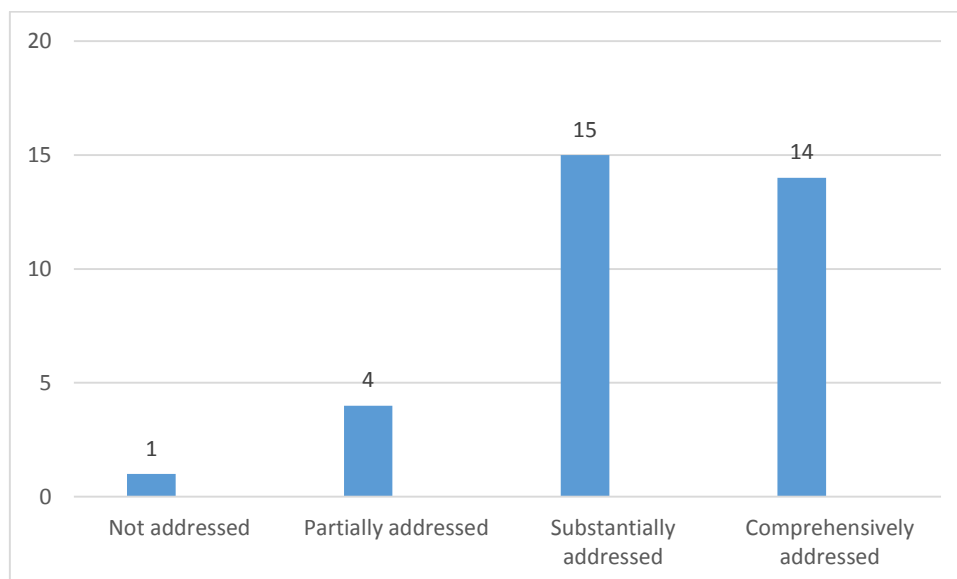


Figure 17. Standard 1.5: Number of reports/Extent to which standard was addressed

Average on the scale 0 (not addressed) – 3 (comprehensively addressed): **2.3**

Chapter in which it is addressed in IEP reports

Standard 1.5 was most frequently addressed in chapters “Teaching and learning” and/or “Governance”.

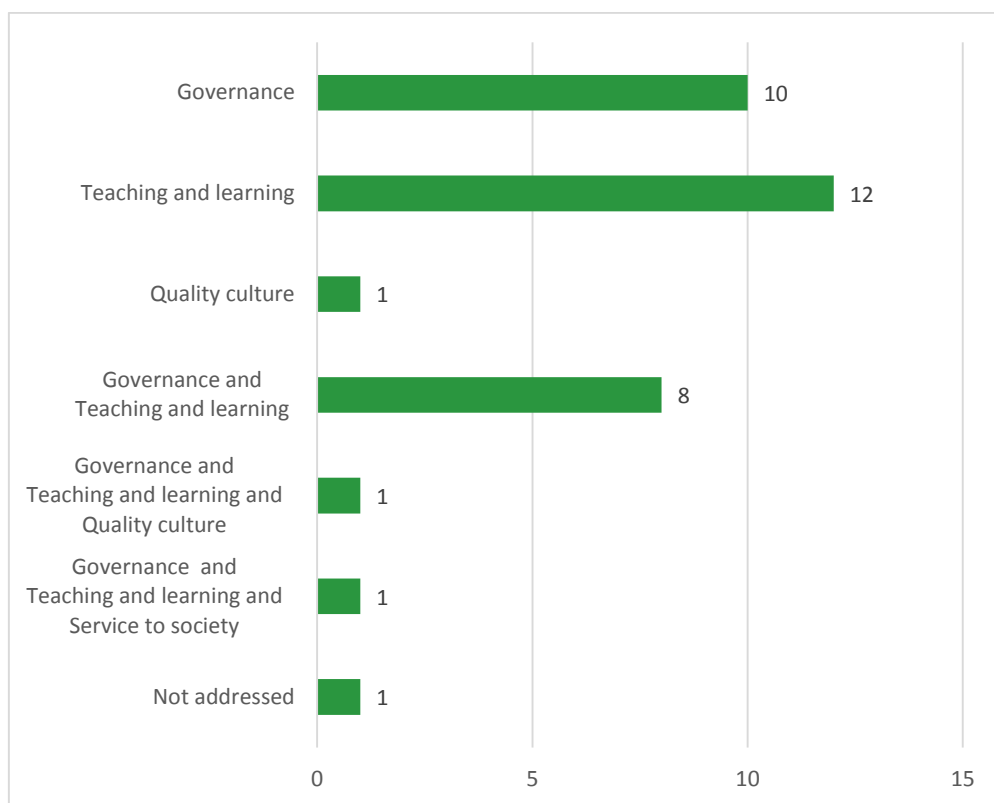


Figure 18. Standard 1.5: Chapter/Number of reports

Main findings

Standard 1.5 was substantially addressed in the reports. With regard to the content and interpretation of the standard, the reports focused and frequently gave recommendations on:

- Processes for staff recruitment and promotion, taking into account national legislation and financial constraints
- Professional development of teaching staff and institutional support in this area.

Many reports analysed teachers' skills development and staff performance in the context of implementing student-centred learning and teaching (cf. Standard 1.3). In some reports, particular attention was paid to the assessment of teachers, linked to student feedback on the quality of programmes as part of analysis of the institution's quality assurance policy (cf. Standard 1.1).

Standard 1.6 Learning resources and student support

Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.

For the sake of accuracy, the standard was divided into two areas, which were analysed separately: a) learning resources and b) student support.

a) Learning resources

Extent to which it is addressed in IEP reports

The analysis of the evaluation reports indicated that the theme of learning resources was addressed, to a varying extent, in 24 out of 34 reports.

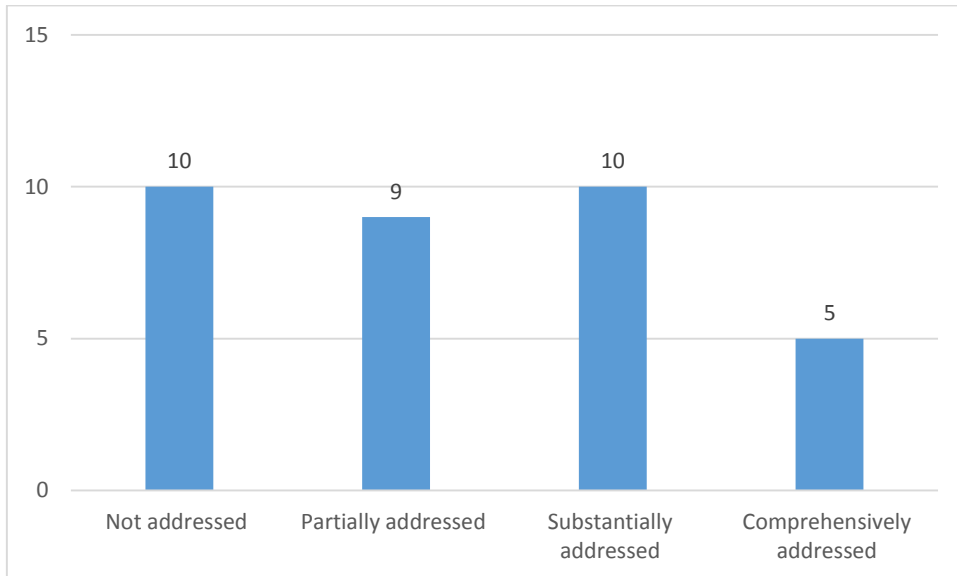


Figure 19. Standard 1.6 (learning resources): Number of reports/Extent to which standard was addressed

Average on the scale 0 (not addressed) – 3 (comprehensively addressed): **1.3**

Chapter in which it is addressed in IEP reports

Learning resources were mostly addressed in chapter “Teaching and learning” (16 out of 24 reports). Other places in the reports where references to this topic were made were: “Governance” and “Service to society”. In addition, in some of the reports the standard was addressed in more than one chapter.

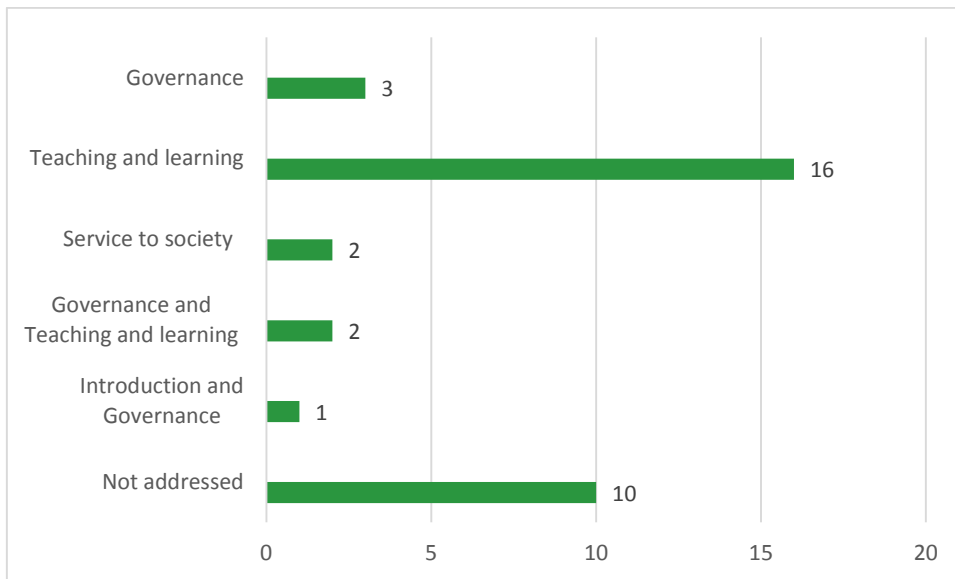


Figure 20. Standard 1.6 (learning resources): Chapter/Number of reports

b) Student support

Extent to which it is addressed in IEP reports

The analysis of the evaluation reports indicated that the subject of student support was addressed, to a varying extent, in 20 out of 34 reports.

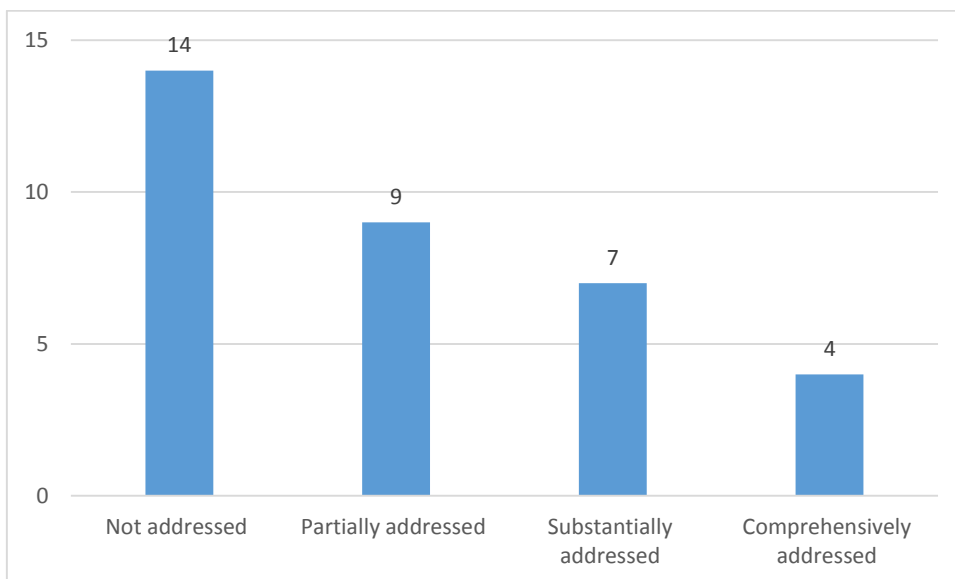


Figure 21. Standard 1.6 (student support): Number of reports/Extent to which standard was addressed

Average on the scale 0 (not addressed) – 3 (comprehensively addressed): **1.0**

Chapter in which it is addressed in IEP reports

Student support was typically covered in the chapter “Teaching and learning”, but also in some other chapters.

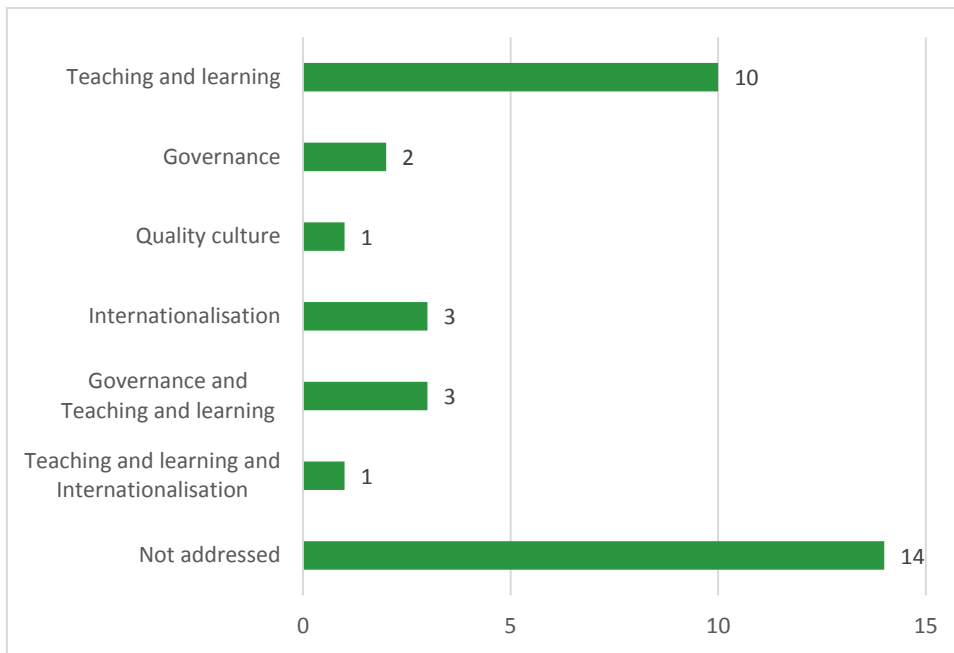


Figure 22. Standard 1.6 (student support): Chapter/Number of reports

Main findings

The analysis of the reports indicated that Standard 1.6 as a whole, was only partially considered in the analysed reports: 1.1 on average.

With regard to the content and interpretation of the standard, the examined evaluation reports focused, with some recommendations given, on one or both of the following themes:

- Learning resources: adequacy of the existing learning resources; modern platforms and tools to support teaching and learning; developing virtual learning environment (e-learning platforms)
- Human student support: tutoring and support offices and centres; counsellors.

In some reports attention was paid to support offered to foreign students and local students that undertook periods of study abroad. The need for facilities accessible for disabled students was also mentioned in some reports.

The guidelines to the standard include a reference to administrative and support staff (“they need to be qualified and have opportunities to develop their competences”) and some reports addressed this issue as well, giving recommendations on training, skills development, and a reasonable workload allocation.

Standard 1.7 Information management

Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.

Extent to which it is addressed in IEP reports

The standard was addressed, to a varying extent, in 15 reports out of 34.

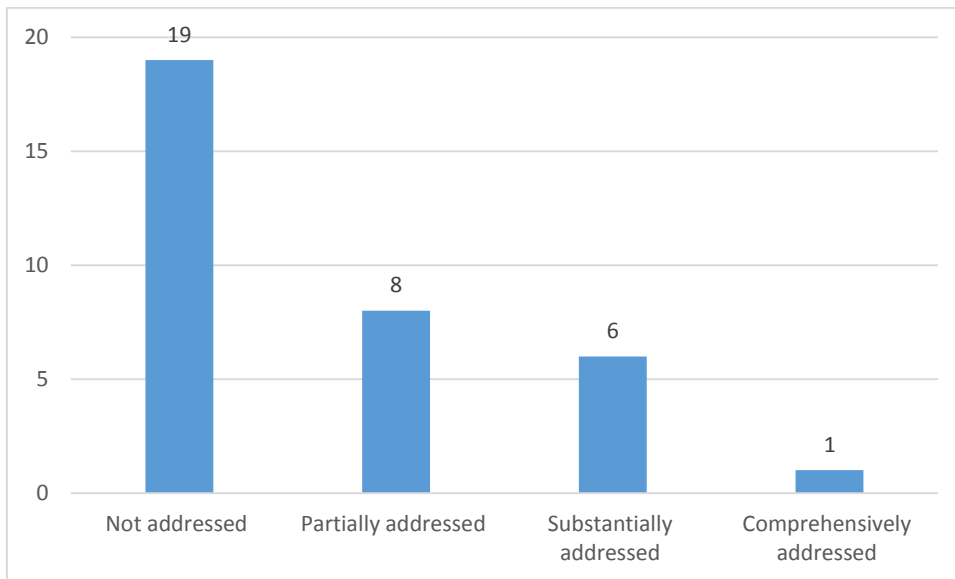


Figure 23. Standard 1.7: Number of reports/Extent to which standard was addressed

Average on the scale 0 (not addressed) – 3 (comprehensively addressed): **0.7**

Chapter in which it is addressed in IEP reports

Standard 1.7 was most frequently addressed in chapters “Quality culture” and “Teaching and learning”.

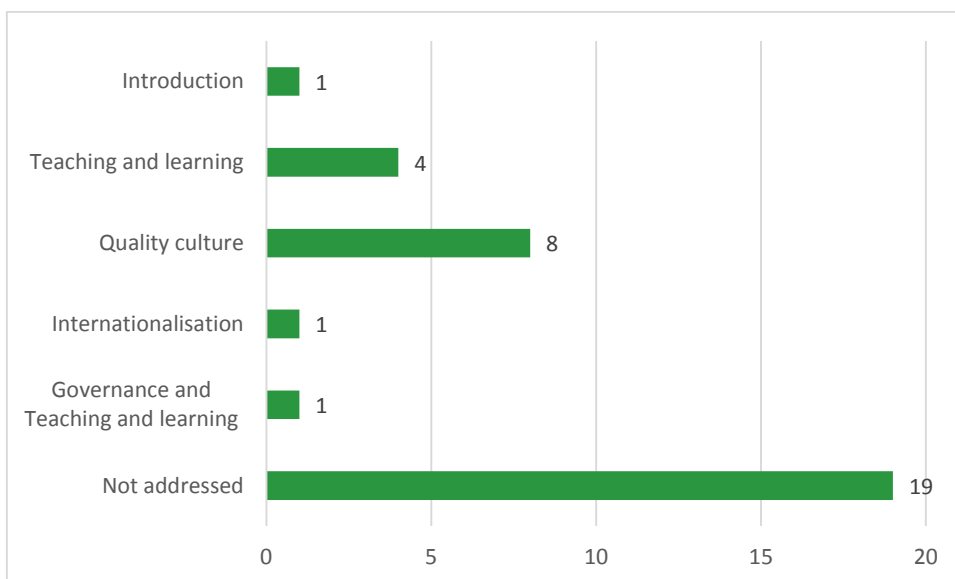


Figure 24. Standard 1.7: Chapter/Number of reports

Main findings

The analysis of the reports indicated that the standard was addressed in a limited way. With regard to the content and interpretation of the standard, the reports covered and, almost in all cases, gave recommendations on:

- Creating effective processes for data collection and management, with emphasis on the link between collection and use of data for quality purposes

- Consistent system for tracking students’ progression and performance
- Tracking career paths of graduates.

Standard 1.8 Public information

Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.

Extent to which it is addressed in IEP reports

The analysis of the evaluation reports indicated that the standard was addressed, usually partially, in 7 reports out of 34.

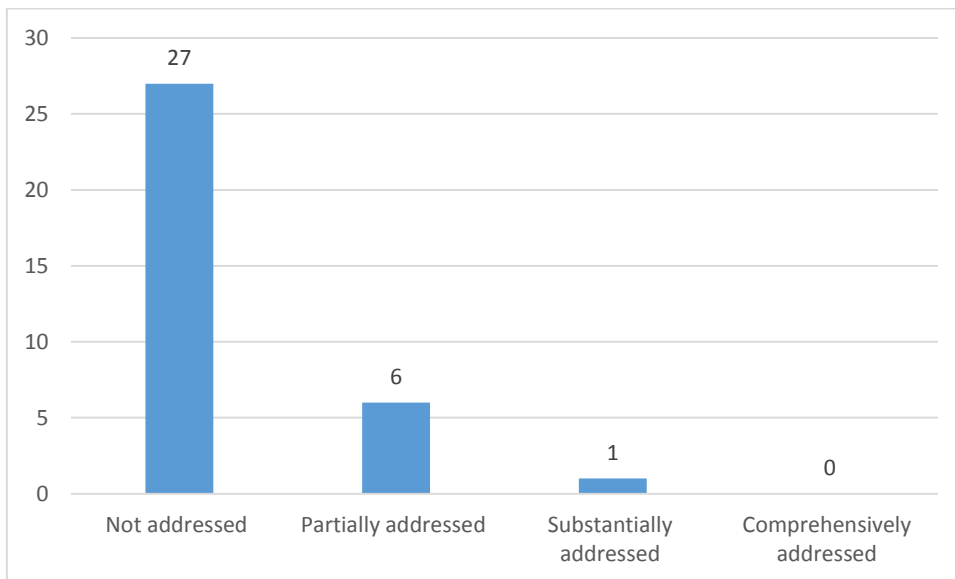


Figure 25. Standard 1.8: Number of reports/Extent to which standard was addressed

Average on the scale 0 (not addressed) – 3 (comprehensively addressed): **0.2**

Chapter in which it is addressed in IEP reports

Standard 1.8 was addressed in chapters “Teaching and learning”, “Quality culture” and “Internationalisation”.

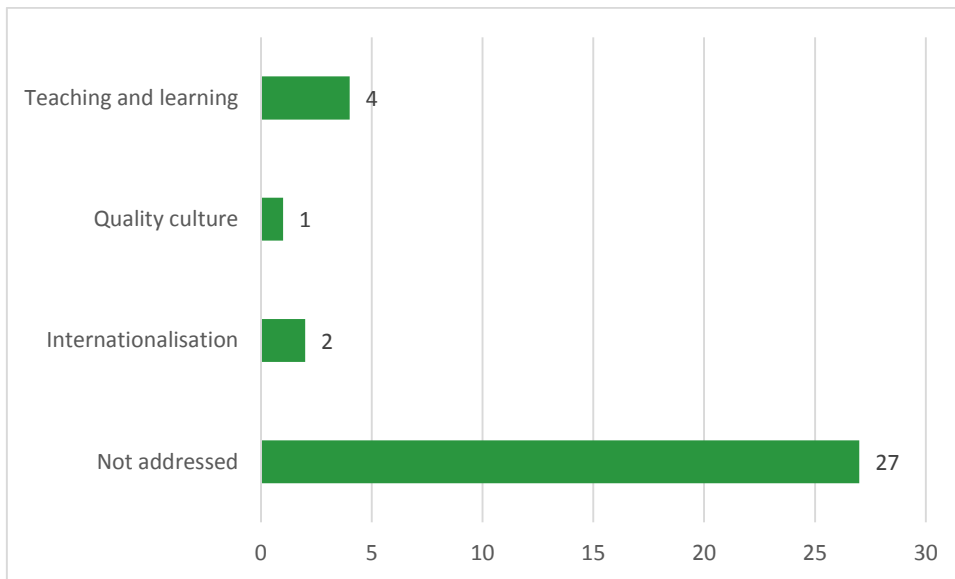


Figure 26. Standard 1.8: Chapter/Number of reports

Main findings

The analysis of the reports indicated that the standard was addressed in a very limited way in the reports. With regard to the content and interpretation of the standard, the reports either mentioned that certain information about the institution's activities, including study programmes, was available on its website or recommended that the institution should make such information accessible in this way. Two reports specifically mentioned the provision of information in a foreign language and for foreign students interested in studying at the institution.

Standard 1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes

Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.

Extent to which it is addressed in IEP reports

The analysis of the evaluation reports indicated that Standard 1.9 was addressed, to a varying extent, in 25 out of 34 reports.

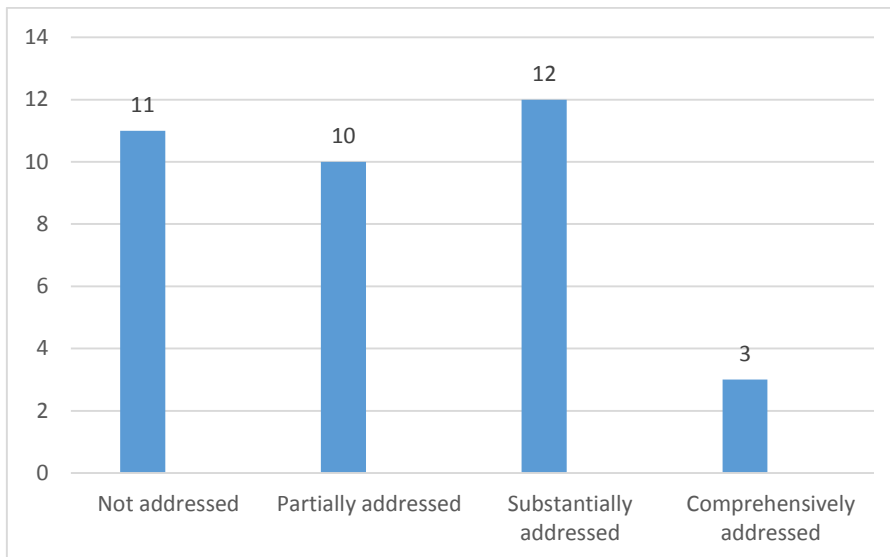


Figure 27. Standard 1.9: Number of reports/Extent to which standard was addressed

Average on the scale 0 (not addressed) – 3 (comprehensively addressed): **1.2**

Chapter in which it is addressed in IEP reports

The standard was mostly addressed in chapter “Teaching and learning” and to a lesser extent in “Quality culture”. In some reports the standard was addressed in more than one chapter.

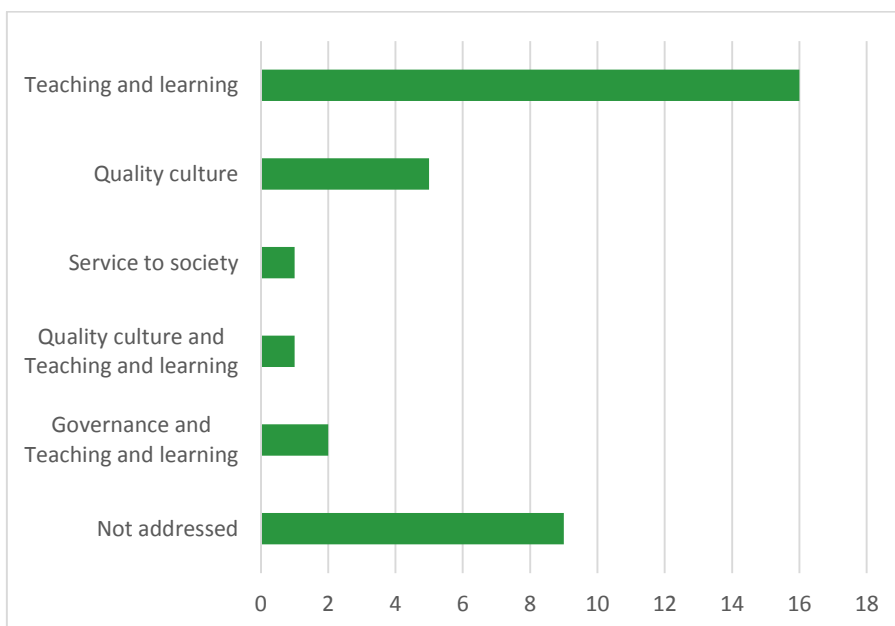


Figure 28. Standard 1.9: Chapter/Number of reports

Main findings

The analysis of the reports indicated that Standard 1.9 was partially addressed in the reports. With regard to the content and interpretation of the standard, the reports focused on:

- The need for regular monitoring and revision of the programmes

- Involving external stakeholders in programme revision
- Adapting programmes to the needs of the job market and society as a whole
- Taking into account students’ needs and expectations

Eight (8) reports contained recommendations on at least one of the above topics.

Several reports mentioned introducing more interdisciplinarity in the programmes, benchmarking with other higher education institutions, and the need to define learning outcomes.

Standard 1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance

Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.

Extent to which it is addressed in IEP reports

The analysis of the evaluation reports indicated that Standard 1.10 was addressed in 10 out of 34 of the examined reports.

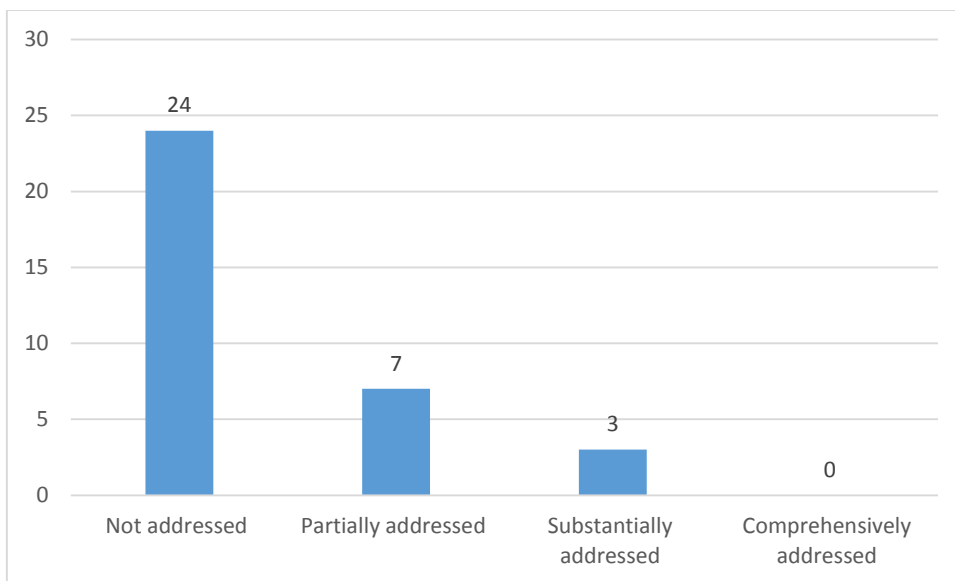


Figure 27. Standard 1.10: Number of reports/Extent to which standard was addressed

Average on the scale 0 (not addressed) – 3 (comprehensively addressed): **0.4**

Chapter in which it is addressed in IEP reports

The standard was mostly addressed in chapter “Quality culture” and in individual cases, in three other chapters in the reports.

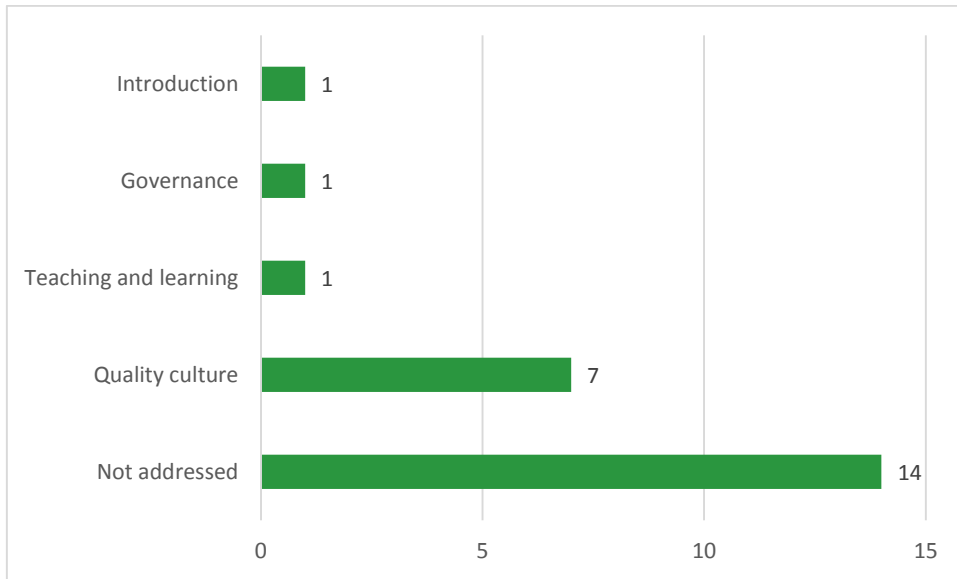


Figure 28. Standard 1.10: Chapter/Number of reports

Main findings

Standard 1.10 was addressed in a limited extent in the reports. With regard to the content and interpretation of the standard, the reports mentioned various accreditation schemes, both those foreseen in the legislative framework of the institution's national system and those completed at the initiative of institutions (for example, international accreditation of engineering programmes, ISO standards). Some reports specifically addressed institutional follow-up after reviews and accreditation procedures, reporting that some corrective actions were taken after these processes. In the case of the reports prepared for the coordinated evaluations in Romania, the accreditations performed by ARACIS were frequently mentioned.

Other areas frequently addressed

While the focus of this study was on the areas covered by the ESG, it should be noted that other aspects of institutional activities were mentioned in numerous reports. They relate primarily to governance, service to society and teaching and learning and are as follows:

- Progress in implementing Bologna Process reforms
- Participation of students in institutional governance
- Cooperation with alumni.

Chapter III Conclusions

The content analysis conducted to assess to what extent and how the IEP evaluation reports address the ESG Part 1 covered a relatively small sample of reports. The findings, nonetheless, can be considered as representative and show that IEP reports address many of the issues covered by the ESG Part 1. However, it is also concluded that the standards are addressed in a rather unequal manner: some in a comprehensive way, other partially and some in a very limited, almost non-existing manner.

Standard	Average on average on the scale 0 (not addressed) – 3 (comprehensively addressed)
1.1 Policy for quality assurance	3.0
1.2 Design and approval of programmes	2.3
1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment	1.5
<i>a) student-centred learning, teaching</i>	2.5
<i>b) assessment</i>	0.5
1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	0.4
<i>a) admission</i>	0.3
<i>b) progression</i>	0.8
<i>c) recognition</i>	0.3
<i>d) certification</i>	0.1
1.5 Teaching staff	2.3
1.6 Learning resources and student support	1.1
<i>a) learning resources</i>	1.3
<i>b) student support</i>	1.0
1.7 Information management	0.7
1.8 Public information	0.2
1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes	1.2
1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance	0.4
Total	1.5

Figure 29. A cumulative numerical average of how individual standards were addressed

One way to explain this derives from the specific methodology of IEP. IEP's evaluations are enhancement-oriented, meaning that the reports identify good practices and provide suggestions for improvement, and thus only cover topics where the teams have comments to make or recommendations to put forward. This approach, combined with the fact that IEP considers the specific institutional context and issues of strategic importance as defined by the institution, leads to the fact that the reports typically do not address all the standards to an equal degree.

However, it may be considered in the future that IEP reports should address the ESG Part 1 more systematically. This could be achieved by three means:

- **encouraging institutions** to consider the ESG Part 1 in their self-evaluation process, and thus providing ready information regarding the issues covered by the standards, enabling the evaluation teams to address them more thoroughly
- providing **systematic training to the evaluation teams**, drawing the pool's attention to the need to focus more explicitly on the topics covered by the ESG
- **elaborating the evaluation report template**, providing guidance on how and where to address each standard of the ESG.

With regard to the last point, a positive trend has been already noted when reviewing the evaluation reports written between 2012 and 2014. The reports produced later, particularly after the introduction of a common report template with obligatory sections on quality culture and teaching and learning, address the ESG in a more substantial way. This suggests that by supplying appropriate guidelines, the evaluation teams can be encouraged to provide more detailed evidence and analysis of certain aspects of internal quality assurance and particularly of the issues covered by the ESG Part 1.