

2nd GLOBAL MEETING

1) THEME OF THE MEETING

Current reforms and the rapid expansion of higher education, particularly across borders, have introduced new challenges, new opportunities as well as new actors and providers. They have also heightened the interest in the quality of higher education offered worldwide. Governments, students, higher education leaders, employers and the general public are all seeking assurance that the higher education on offer is of high quality.

Whether or not the enhancement, protection or assurance of quality is formally part of their mandates, national, regional and international associations of universities and other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are increasingly called upon to engage with issues of quality. The focus is as often on higher education offered at home as it is on education delivered across borders. HEI associations everywhere are examining their role and developing strategies to serve their members as they are confronted with the imperative to demonstrate and promote quality higher education and develop a quality culture.

The International Association of Universities has focused on the issue of quality, in particular in cross border education in the past. *Sharing Quality Higher Education Across Borders: A statement on Behalf of Higher Education Institutions Worldwide* and the related *Checklist for Good Practice* are two important examples of our approach.

The 2nd Global Meeting of Associations, organized in collaboration with the Conference of Presidents of Universities (CPU) in France is an opportunity for leaders of national Rectors'/Vice-Chancellors'/Presidents' Conferences as well as regional and international university and HEIs associations from around the world to examine in-depth their own roles in this area, to learn from each other about new approaches and to gain knowledge of pitfalls to avoid. The national landscapes of actors involved in quality assurance vary but all associations of universities have in common the obligation to respond effectively to their members' growing needs and the public's interest in this topic.

Over the course of this day and a half, gathered in a relatively small group of peers, the 2nd Global meeting offers a variety of presentations and discussion opportunities focusing on all the dimensions of the quality *problematique* – quality of higher education offered at home, quality of off shore programs, quality of incoming courses as well as the means and processes used to assess, enhance and sustain high quality of higher education, research and services.

Some of the key questions that participants will be tackling include:

- Who are the actors involved in quality enhancement and assurance?

- How are the relations with or among the various stakeholders involved coordinated or structured?
- Who defines quality and is this definition exportable?
- What role is most suited to associations of universities and what responsibilities do they have in this field?
- What services are most needed by HEIs?

Through exchanges of ideas and sharing of practices, participants will debate how associations can fully play their role in terms of policy, advocacy and member services in this area and make suggestions about possible common actions and future collaboration.