Foreword

Digital technologies have transformed the way people interact, work and learn. In higher education, this has led governments, quality assurance (QA) agencies and higher education institutions (HEIs) across the OECD to reflect on how to ensure that digital education in its fully online and hybrid forms provides learners with opportunities to reach learning and employment outcomes similar to those achieved through traditional in person instruction. Concerns have emerged following the COVID-19 pandemic, during which some HEIs, instructors and students had negative experiences of fully remote online instruction as they were insufficiently prepared and supported for the digital transition. As digital technologies have – or in the very near future will – become an intrinsic part of all higher education, jurisdictions across the OECD have started to reflect on how to adapt their QA systems to strengthen the capacity of HEIs for assuring the quality of their education offer, including digital courses and programmes, and how to ensure accountability through meaningful and purposeful external QA that includes specific indicators for digital education.

The Hungarian government sees digitalisation as a key pillar for driving greater flexibility, quality and equity in higher education. As part of wider efforts to support the digital transformation of Hungarian society, the government has taken several steps to support HEIs to strengthen their digital infrastructure, especially in expanding high-speed internet access. In parallel, many HEIs, their staff and students have adopted digital practices, with the use of digital technology increasing significantly as a result of the pandemic. The government is also developing instruments to monitor the digital transformation of higher education at national and institutional level, building on a list of potential indicators developed as part of the project "Supporting the Digital Transformation of Higher Education in Hungary", carried out by the OECD in 2021–22. The project also recommended that Hungary will need to review its existing accreditation and QA practices to strengthen the digital transformation of higher education while assuring high-quality delivery. Specifically, institutions in Hungary need greater flexibility and supports to take advantage of the new opportunities presented by digital technologies to develop innovative, flexible and student-centred programmes, and should be held accountable for the outcomes as part of external QA processes.

The project "Ensuring Quality Digital Higher Education in Hungary" offers an assessment of Hungary's QA system for higher education and, more specifically, its strengths and weaknesses in assuring the quality of digital higher education. It offers recommendations and policy options to support the ongoing reform of Hungary's higher education accreditation system, as well as a list of potential digital education indicators to be integrated in the assessment frameworks used by the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (MAB) for the accreditation of higher education institutions.

The analysis and recommendations contained in this report are based on analyses of the Hungarian higher education system, international examples of policy and practice for the QA of digital higher education, and a wide range of stakeholder engagement activities. Stakeholder engagement included interviews and roundtable discussions with higher education stakeholders, as well as international peer learning and virtual site visits to six HEIs to collect the opinions of higher education students, staff and leaders.

The action was funded by the European Union via the Technical Support Instrument, and implemented by the OECD, in co-operation with the Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support of the European Commission.

From:

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