



Quality Assurance in Military Higher Education Institutions: Worldwide Patterns and Trends

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Abstract: This article explores the multifaceted landscape of quality assurance practices employed by military higher education institutions worldwide to identify common features and demonstrate diversity. The findings reveal that internal quality assurance in military higher education institutions typically aligns with national academic requirements, influenced by the political system and participation in regional political associations. Most countries follow a three-level model of quality assurance, encompassing internal procedures, external evaluation by independent or government-controlled agencies, and the quality assurance of accreditation bodies. Despite initial resistance due to corporate culture, the institutionalization of internal quality assurance systems in military higher education institutions is advancing, driven by external pressures. Challenges in external evaluations of military entities based on civilian university criteria arise from differences in human resource policies, management systems, and the organization of educational processes. The application of academic quality assurance standards (national or regional) by military higher education institutions promotes their integration into national (or sub-regional) higher education frameworks but does little to advance defense institution-building. To address these challenges, the study suggests developing specialized quality standards for military education institutions, considering their unique management characteristics and contributions to national security and defense. Such standards, whether national or international, should complement existing frameworks and facilitate the integration of military education into broader security initiatives.

Keywords: quality assurance, military higher education institutions, accreditation bodies, institutionalization, standards, national experience.

Introduction

Formally approaching quality assurance in higher education is a global trend. Different countries employ various practices to improve teaching standards and enhance the quality of educational programs, services, and outcomes. These practices include accreditation, academic program assessment, implementation of quality management systems, faculty development, and improvements to student support services.

The application of industrial quality management models, such as ISO standards or the EFQM model, in higher education in the early 2000s contributed to the spread of new management approaches within educational institutions. During this period, European countries sought effective ways to collaborate and develop a unified higher education area. These efforts led to the creation of a three-level quality assurance model, outlined in the 2005 *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*, which is now recognized globally as one of the most effective.

The model consists of interconnected levels, each focusing on different aspects of quality assurance within institutions or across broader educational systems:

1. *Institutional level* – internal quality assurance within a higher education institution, involving the implementation of a quality management system to coordinate, monitor, and harmonize institutional processes and resources.
2. *National level* – external quality assurance, engaging stakeholders such as accrediting agencies, regulatory bodies, employers, and professional organizations to oversee and evaluate institutions through program or institutional accreditation and procedures for launching or reorganizing institutions.
3. *International level* – quality assurance of accreditation bodies, which involves recognizing external stakeholders whose reports can be trusted.

By implementing robust quality assurance mechanisms, institutions can demonstrate their commitment to excellence and contribute to the advancement of higher education. For a long time, military higher education institutions (MHEIs) have relied on their own approaches to quality assurance, rooted in a distinct corporate culture. A notable example of such a system is NATO's institutional accreditation, which aims to strengthen the capabilities of defense educational and training institutions by enhancing their interoperability.

However, MHEIs are now adopting other quality management tools and building internal quality assurance systems (IQAS) based on national and sub-regional standards, such as the ESG. But what exactly are these tools? Are quality assurance practices from civilian universities truly applicable to military education institutions? What challenges do MHEIs face in this process, and how do

they evaluate the outcomes of their internal management reforms? Most importantly, how does this impact the broader goal of defense institution building? This study seeks to answer these questions by exploring quality assurance approaches in MHEIs worldwide.

Diversity of Quality Assurance in the MHEIs

Since the late twentieth century, significant efforts have been made to harmonize quality assurance processes and standards at regional levels. In addition to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), standardized approaches to forming internal requirements and external principles of quality assurance, as well as the establishment of regional quality assurance bodies, have been initiated across the African, Arab, Asia-Pacific, and Latin American regions. While differences in specific practices between countries remain, there is a clear convergence of efforts to develop a common framework for quality assurance.

Notably, an *Overview of Authorization and Quality Assurance of Higher Education Institutions*¹ identified several key elements of internal quality assurance that are shared by regions like Africa, the Arab world, Asia-Pacific, and Europe. These include a commitment to fostering a quality culture, transparency regarding an institution's awards, programs, research, and facilities, clear public communication of institutional quality assurance processes, involvement of diverse stakeholders at various levels of internal quality assurance, and the provision of appropriate resources to ensure effective teaching, learning, and research.

Publications on quality assurance in MHEIs are predominantly presented as case studies. For example, Lavinia Gavrilă conducted research on the implementation of European standards and recommendations for internal quality assurance at the Romanian Air Force Academy "Henri Coandă."² A study on the technical and economic indicators at the Military Academy Magelang (Indonesia)³ demonstrated that their internal quality assurance model, based on ten national standards, is feasible and acceptable, even though the academy's organizational structure and internal quality standards require further development.

¹ Kevin Kinser and Jason E. Lane, "An Overview of Authorization and Quality Assurance of Higher Education Institutions," *UNESCO Digital Library*, Background paper prepared for the 2017/8 Global Education Monitoring Report *Accountability in Education: Meeting Our Commitments* (UNESCO, 2017), 27, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000259561>.

² Lavinia Irinel Gavrilă, "The Implementation of the European Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance within 'Henri Coandă' Air Force Academy," *Review of the Air Force Academy* 23, no. 1 (2013): 53-62, https://www.afahc.ro/ro/revista/Nr_1_2013/41%20Lavinia%20Gavrilă.pdf.

³ Endang Sri Kurniatun et al., "Developing a Model of SN-PT-based Internal Academic Quality Assurance System in the Educational Training Institution of the Military Academy Magelang," *The Journal of Educational Development* 5, no. 2 (June 2017): 284-296, <https://doi.org/10.15294/jed.v5i2.14409>.

Joao Ricardo and Ivo Soares developed an internal quality assurance model for the Portuguese Naval Academy, stressing that an effective quality management system is essential not only for ensuring the academic quality of study programs but also for fostering student-centered learning and meeting the future needs of the Navy.⁴ A study on the application of quality management principles within a military training unit of the South African Armed Forces,⁵ based on individual interviews, revealed that strong leadership, stakeholder involvement, and a robust quality culture are key principles for quality assurance that enhance the effectiveness of military training.

Based on a student survey conducted at three military universities in Poland, the quality of education—encompassing the educational process, training, strengths and weaknesses of education, guidance, and facilities—was assessed in the context of the quality standards set by the European Higher Education Area, national higher education standards, and the standards of the Polish Accreditation Commission. The authors note that, although reforms in Polish higher education “could be used to create a more coherent legal system for military education, they focused on limiting the autonomy of military higher education centers in comparison to the civilian ones (see, for instance, approving the statute and rules of study, appointing chancellors, and supervising study programs).”⁶

Slobodan Čurčija and Dario Matika⁷ proposed ways to transform the Croatian military education system, specifically focusing on the Croatian Defense Academy, based on their study of military education systems and quality assurance practices in higher education across several European countries. They emphasize that investing in human resources in modern organizations requires continuous employee education and training, and military organizations are no exception. Thus, the military education system in Croatia needed profound, long-term transformation rather than temporary changes.

⁴ Joao Ricardo and Ivo Soares, “Quality Assurance as a Tool to Enhance Student-centred Learning in Military Higher Education – Case Study in Portuguese Naval Academy,” 14th International Conference on Education and New Learning Technologies *EDU-LEARN22*, July 4-6, 2022, Palma, Spain:6604-6607, <https://doi.org/10.21125/edulearn.2022.1555>.

⁵ Renier C. Els, Helen W. Meyer, and J. Heystek, “Exploring the Application of Quality Management Principles within a Military Training Unit,” *Journal for New Generation Sciences* 20, no. 2 (2022): 25-39, <https://doi.org/10.47588/jngs.2022.20.02.a3>.

⁶ Jerzy Kojkol et al., “Military Higher Education in Poland from the Perspective of Quality Assurance (ESG) in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA),” *Colloquium wydziału nauk humanistycznych i społecznych kwartalnik* 9, no. 3 (2017): 145-172, 159, <https://colloquium.amw.gdynia.pl/index.php/colloquium/article/view/485>.

⁷ Slobodan Čurčija and Dario Matika, “Transformation of Military Education System in Croatia,” *Annals of Disaster Risk Sciences* 1, no. 2 (2018): 117-127, <https://hrcak.srce.hr/212763>.

Sandrino Vergara-Paredes⁸ conducted a detailed analysis of the accreditation process for three leading military universities in Chile—Bernardo O’Higgins Military Academy, Arturo Prat Naval Academy, and Captain Manuel Ávalos Prado Aviation School—by the Chilean National Accreditation Commission, explaining why military education institutions should not be accredited by the same criteria used for civilian institutions. Stephanie Hostetter⁹ highlighted the U.S. Air Force’s eSchool of Graduate Professional Military Education’s experience in implementing course quality checklists to ensure the quality of online courses. Nadiya Shabatina¹⁰ showed that in NATO member nations, military education systems are gradually being integrated into national education systems, with independent accreditation bodies assessing the quality of military schools. Furthermore, internal quality assurance systems (IQAS) in MHEIs are based on both national and NATO standards.

The variety of approaches to quality assurance in MHEIs across different countries prompts the identification of patterns and trends in this field, including external standards and internal procedures, external evaluation bodies, and the level of institutionalization of internal quality assurance systems (IQAS). This study aims to explore these aspects. The article provides an overview of the legislation on quality assurance in higher education, internal quality standards in MHEIs, and the corresponding external quality assurance agencies in different countries. Given the distinct characteristics of higher education sub-regions forming today, the study is organized on a continental basis (North America, Europe, Africa, South America, and Australia).

Approaches to quality assurance in Asian countries vary significantly, ranging from the liberal three-level model in ASEAN countries to the system of state control in Kazakhstan and China. Israel offers a unique experience in ensuring the quality of higher education. Meanwhile, the quality assurance situation in Russian military universities is ambiguous due to Russia’s withdrawal from the Bologna process. Consequently, Asian countries and Russia are presented in a separate section, distinct from the continental classification.

At the same time, it is important to point out the limitations that may affect the study results. Access to information about the activities of MHEIs varies significantly, ranging from very limited to complete. The English versions of the official websites of educational institutions used for analysis sometimes do not

⁸ Sandrino Alfonso Abdón Vergara-Paredes, “Proposals for the Accreditation of the Institutes of the Chilean Armed Forces,” *Revista Científica General José María Córdova* 19, no. 35 (2021): 525-545, <https://doi.org/10.21830/19006586.754>. - in Spanish

⁹ Stephanie Teague Hostetter, “Developing a Quality Assurance Approach for an Online Professional Military Education Institution,” *The Journal of Applied Instructional Design* 11, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.59668/377.8134>.

¹⁰ Nadia Shabatina, “The Principles of Projecting the Guarantee of High Military Education Quality System According to the Experience of NATO Member States,” *Military Education* 41, no. 1 (2020): 301-309, <https://doi.org/10.33099/2617-1783/2020-1/301-309>. - in Ukrainian

fully correspond to the original language pages. Notably, universities in France and Israel do not have their own websites; information about these institutions is available on their respective Ministries of Defense websites.

The National Defense Academy of Japan even publishes the number of entrants and students. Higher education institutions in Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, and Latvia, following European quality assurance standards, publish information about their decision-making procedures. On the websites of these institutions, data is available not only on the accreditation results but also on regulatory documents related to internal quality assurance.

In contrast, the official websites of U.S. military higher education institutions contain a mix of open data and restricted access information. For example, the National Defense University provides access to a wide range of information, while the Joint Special Operations University and the Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute restrict access to their resources. It appears that U.S. universities offering academic education have a more public-facing profile, whereas those providing professional military education tend to limit access to their information.

Decentralization as a Key Principle of Quality Assurance in North American MHEIs

The system of external quality evaluation in the United States is managed by a structure of non-governmental organizations that regulate the development of higher education through public oversight, accreditation, allocation of funding, and ranking of higher education institutions (HEIs). The internal quality assurance system (IQAS) is based on self-assessment using quantitative and qualitative criteria (indicators). U.S. legislation does not mandate the institutionalization of IQAS within HEIs. As a result, the website of the National Defense University (NDU), for instance, does not provide information about its IQAS but does include data on accreditation.

Since 1997, NDU has been accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), an institutional accreditation agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. MSCHE's *Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation* (13th edition)¹¹ include the following criteria: mission and goals; ethics and integrity; design and delivery of the student learning experience; support for the student experience; educational effectiveness assessment; planning, resources, and institutional improvement; and governance, leadership, and administration. As of

¹¹ Middle States Commission on Higher Education, "Standards for Accreditation and Requirements of Affiliation," Thirteenth Edition, May 2015, accessed April 15, 2024, <https://www.msche.org/standards/thirteenth-edition/>.

June 22, 2023, NDU's current accreditation status is "Non-Compliance Warning."¹²

The Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) programs at NDU are accredited by the Process of Accreditation for Joint Education (PAJE), a specialized accrediting agency recognized by the Department of Defense (DoD) through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Additionally, the Senior Acquisition Course is accredited by the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics through a specialized process recognized by the DoD. The university's Information Assurance programs are accredited as a Center of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance Education by the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Hence, academic and professional military education programs in the U.S. can be evaluated by multiple accrediting bodies, depending on their specialized areas.

Canada's higher education system, like that of the United States, is grounded in external assessment standards and internal quality monitoring. It emphasizes continuous improvement, focusing on enhancing the quality of study programs and higher education institutions (HEIs) while supporting student-centered approaches that emphasize learning outcomes, engagement, and student support services. However, due to differences in the management of the higher education system and national priorities, quality assurance in Canada has unique characteristics.

Canadian approaches to quality assurance are highly decentralized, varying not only at the provincial level but also at the university level. Ensuring the quality of study programs is a top national priority in Canadian higher education and a key component of internal quality assurance systems. Another crucial aspect of internal quality assurance is the quality of learning and teaching.

At the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC)—a university under the Canadian Armed Forces, authorized by the Government of Ontario to confer degrees in the social sciences and humanities, science, and engineering through *The Royal Military College of Canada Degrees Act of 1959*—internal quality assurance is regulated by the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP). IQAP is RMC's protocol for reviewing academic programs. Despite RMC being Canada's national military university, its program reviews fall under the Ontario University Council on Quality Assurance (OUCQA) purview.¹³

RMC's IQAP is designed to meet both OUCQA requirements and the internal quality standards of the institution. To organize and monitor quality assurance activities, RMC has established an Office of Quality Assurance, with responsibilities that include conducting student surveys for all courses, maintaining up-to-date IQAP protocols, ensuring compliance with IQAP requirements within RMC,

¹² "Directory Listing: National Defense University," *Middle States Commission on Higher Education*, accessed April 15, 2024, <https://www.msche.org/institution/0140/>.

¹³ "The RMC Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP)," *Royal Military College of Canada*, www.rmc-cmr.ca/en/academic-wing/rmcc-institutional-quality-assurance-process-iqap.

assisting in the cyclical reviews of programs, communicating with stakeholders on quality assurance matters related to RMC's programs, courses, and services, and informing the community about RMC's quality policy.

MHEIs on the Way to Establishing a European Security Area

Slobodan Čurčija and Dario Matika¹⁴ highlight the following patterns in European military education:

- Most European military universities offer comprehensive academic programs or professional military training, enabling officers to continue their professional development after initial education.
- Military education has been aligned with the provisions of the Bologna Declaration while maintaining the national traditions of military education.
- MHEIs have taken full responsibility for developing study programs for the cadets.
- Students, faculty, and military institutions (colleges and academies) have benefited from the new education system, which promotes better coordination and cooperation between military and civilian higher education systems nationally and internationally. This system also ensures a transparent method of comparison and evaluation and increased mobility for teachers and students.

The quality assurance system of higher education in France was shaped by societal demands for standardized educational criteria across various national education institutions and by European integration processes. It retains unique national assessment procedures while aligning with the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Since 1996, self-assessment of university study programs, which includes student surveys, has been mandatory. HEIs receive budget allocations based on internal quality evaluations.

The Law on "Freedom and Responsibility of Universities"¹⁵ has increased university autonomy, and educational institutions retain the primary responsibility for managing the quality of educational services. Furthermore, the Higher Education and Research Act¹⁶ requires each institution to establish a self-assessment committee at the internal level.

MHEIs in France comply with national quality assurance standards. The following institutions have been accredited by the Higher Council for the Evaluation

¹⁴ Čurčija and Matika, "Transformation of Military Education System in Croatia," 121.

¹⁵ "Law No. 2007-1199 of August 10, 2007, on Freedoms and Responsibilities of Universities," *Legifrance*, last modified February 22, 2008, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/dossierlegislatif/JORFDOLE000017758191/>. – in French

¹⁶ "Law No. 2013-660 of July 22, 2013 on Higher Education and Research," *Legifrance*, last modified July 27, 2019, <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000027735009>. – in French

of Research and Higher Education (Le Haut Conseil de l'évaluation de la recherche et de l'enseignement supérieur, Hcéres), which assesses research quality: Saint-Cyr Special Military School (L'école spéciale militaire de Saint-Cyr), the School of Air and Space (L'école de l'air et de l'espace), and the Polytechnic School (L'école polytechnique).¹⁷

Additionally, the Engineering Qualifications Commission (Commission des Titres d'Ingénieur, CTI), which accredits engineering HEIs and evaluates their study programs and degrees, has accredited Saint-Cyr Special Military School, the School of Air and Space, and the Naval School (L'école navale).¹⁸ CTI standards include school management and quality assurance systems as part of their evaluation criteria for HEIs.

In Finland, the primary responsibility for ensuring the quality of education is legally assigned to the institutions of higher education. External assessments, typically carried out by the Finnish Education Evaluation Centre (FINEEC), are advisory in nature. These assessments aim to engage staff, students, and other stakeholders in identifying strengths, implementing best practices, and setting development directions for educational organizations. There are no national guidelines for internal evaluation methods, allowing each institution to develop its internal quality assurance system (IQAS) based on its specific needs and goals.

External audits focus on the procedures universities use for support and development.¹⁹ At the National Defense University of Finland, quality assurance is aligned with national requirements and follows the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) methodology. The university's quality management system is designed to ensure the successful implementation of its strategy through established processes. Regular surveys of students and stakeholders, which provide valuable feedback, are the key tool for quality monitoring. Additionally, each student and staff member receives performance feedback to help improve their learning outcomes. The most recent FINEEC audit of the National Defense University took place in June 2023, and its results will be valid for six years.²⁰

Latvia's main quality assurance methods include external quality assurance (such as licensing study programs, accrediting study fields, and accrediting higher

¹⁷ "Directory of Establishments," *Hcéres*, accessed April 15, 2024, www.hceres.fr/fr/annuaire-des-etablissements. – in French

¹⁸ "Accreditation Area," *Commission des titres d'ingénieur (CTI)*, accessed April 15, 2024, <https://www.cti-commission.fr/accreditation>. – in French

¹⁹ Svitlana Kalashnikova and Volodmyr Luhovyi, eds., *Development of the Quality Assurance System of Higher Education in Ukraine* (Kyiv: DP "NVTs 'Priorytety'," 2015), Chapter 1, 17-19, <https://rb.gy/4l3s1q>. – in Ukrainian

²⁰ "Quality," *National Defence University*, accessed April 25, 2024, <https://maanpuolustuskorkeakoulu.fi/en/quality>.

education institutions and colleges) and internal quality assurance (IQAS).²¹ According to the Law on Higher Education Institutions, dated November 2, 1995 (amended in 2018),²² Latvian HEIs must implement IQAS in line with the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ESG). In particular, the Quality Policy of the National Defense Academy of Latvia (NDAL),²³ which outlines the conceptual framework, purpose, standards, and guidelines for internal quality assurance, was developed following ESG 2015 and the regulations of the Republic of Latvia.

The peculiarity of the quality assurance system in Romanian higher education is that the external evaluation of educational institutions can be conducted not only by the national body—Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (Agenția Română de Asigurare a Calității în Învățământul Superior, AR-ACIS)—but also by other agencies registered with the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR). The internal dimension of academic quality in Romania depends on the specific characteristics of each university, along with the traditions and cultural heritage of higher education in the country. This responsibility falls entirely on each university and the providers of study programs.

An analysis of scientific publications reveals that, until 2015, Romanian military universities retained distinct features in the organization of educational and scientific activities compared to civilian HEIs.²⁴ However, significant changes occurred after the military education system's transformation between 2011 and 2015, which aimed to make Romania's military education more open and receptive to European and Euro-Atlantic innovations. As a result, military educational institutions were integrated into the European higher education area, similar to other HEIs. For instance, at the Henri Coandă Air Force Academy (AFAHC), the internal quality assurance system (IQAS), integrated into the strategic management framework, is based on the Education Quality Assurance Code, which

²¹ "Latvia: Quality Assurance in Higher Education," *Eurydice*, last modified November 27, 2023, <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/latvia/quality-assurance-higher-education>.

²² "Law on Higher Education Institutions," *Likumi*, <https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/37967>.

²³ "Quality Policy, National Defense Academy of Latvia: Oder No. 195, December 2, 2022," *National Defense Academy of Latvia*, accessed April 25, 2024, www.naa.mil.lv/sites/naa/files/document/Quality%20Policy.pdf.

²⁴ Jamil Salmi, Cezar Mihai Hâj, and Daniela Alexe, "Equity from an Institutional Perspective in the Romanian Higher Education System," in *Higher Education Reforms in Romania: Between the Bologna Process and National Challenges*, ed. Adrian Curaj et al. (Cham: Springer, 2015), 63-86, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-08054-3_4, quote on p. 81; Liviu Matei, Cezar Mihai Hâj, and Daniela Alexe, "Student Centred Learning: Translating Trans-National Commitments into Institutional Realities. The Romanian Experience," in *Higher Education Reforms in Romania*, 105-125, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-08054-3_6, quote on p. 110.

aligns with European standards and requirements. AFAHC is accredited by ARACIS, with a “High Level of Trust” institutional accreditation valid for the period 2021-2026.²⁵

According to Bulgarian law,²⁶ HEIs are responsible for ensuring quality assurance. To achieve this, they implement an internal system for assessing and maintaining the quality of both education and the scientific and pedagogical staff. The Academic Council, which governs each HEI’s educational and scientific activities, approves this system and oversees its implementation and continuous improvement. The Rector prepares and submits the annual report on the institution’s performance, including IQAS results, for approval by the Academic Council.

The Student Council is granted the right to participate in monitoring the internal system and in developing questions for student surveys. The National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency (NEAA), operating under the Council of Ministers, is the specialized state body responsible for assessing, accrediting, and ensuring quality control in HEIs. A comprehensive assessment of the quality of education and its compliance with labor market needs is one of the criteria for determining state budget allocations to educational institutions.

The Georgi Rakovsky National Defense College has both institutional and program accreditation from NEAA in two of the nine areas of higher education and three professional training fields. The responsibility for managing educational quality at this institution lies with the Educational Department, a scientific and methodological body tasked with overseeing educational quality and implementing the College’s policy. Since 2006, the College has certified its quality management system according to the ISO 9001 standard.²⁷

The experience of Croatia illustrates that study programs tailored specifically for military personnel within a military training unit, which holds the status of a higher education and research institution, offer more advantages compared to joint programs with civilian universities. Historically, the Croatian Defence Academy (CDA) was unable to comply with national accreditation requirements for higher education fully, leading it to collaboration with the University of Zagreb and the University of Split, which were accredited by the National Agency for Science and Higher Education (ASHE). However, this arrangement did not ensure full compatibility with the European higher education system and NATO educational standards.

As a result, the diplomas and certificates awarded through unaccredited CDA programs were officially recognized only within the Croatian Armed Forces, lim-

²⁵ “Quality Certificate, Henri Coanda Air Force Academy,” accessed April 25, 2024, https://www.afahc.ro/images/Certificat_ARACIS.pdf.

²⁶ “Bulgaria: Quality Assurance in Higher Education,” *Eurydice*, last modified November 27, 2023, <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/bulgaria/quality-assurance-higher-education>.

²⁷ “Certificate of Approval,” G. S. Rakovski National Defence College, accessed April 25, 2024, <https://rndc.bg/sertifikat-za-odobrenie/>.

iting the post-military career prospects of graduates in civilian contexts. This created challenges for experienced military professionals seeking employment after their service.²⁸

A turning point occurred when the Croatian military education system underwent a transformation. This reform enabled the CDA to meet national accreditation requirements, leading to the establishment of a new institution with the status of a higher educational and research institution—the Dr. Franjo Tuđman University of Defense and Security, which now operates under the Ministry of Defense of Croatia.²⁹ The new university independently manages all study programs in security and defense, ensuring that its graduates hold degrees and certifications recognized nationally and internationally.

The Armed Forces Academy of General Milan Rastislav Štefánik in Slovakia operates two distinct internal quality assurance systems to meet different sets of standards. For academic education, the Academy adheres to the national requirements established in line with the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) since 2018. In parallel, the institution follows NATO quality standards for professional military education, ensuring its programs align with international defense needs and interoperability goals.³⁰

Other NATO-accredited education facilities in Europe that exemplify similar dual compliance include the Department of Foreign Languages at the Vasil Levski National Military University in Bulgaria, the Finnish Defence Forces International Center within the National Defense Academy, the Regional Department of Defense Resources Management Studies and the Crisis Management and Multinational Operations Department at the National Defense University “Carol I” in Romania.³¹ These institutions illustrate how European MHEIs integrate national academic standards and NATO accreditation, ensuring they meet educational and defense needs.

European MHEIs typically adhere to national requirements based on the ESG when forming their internal quality assurance systems. Some also follow NATO standards regarding the quality of professional military education. Certain institutions have adopted the international ISO 9001 standard or the EFQM model as the foundation for developing internal quality assurance systems, while others are guided by the standards of external quality agencies. The European Higher

²⁸ Čurčija and Matika, “Transformation of Military Education System in Croatia,” 119.

²⁹ “Croatian Parliament Passes Act on Establishment of Defence and Security University,” *Republic of Croatia Ministry of Defence*, April 1, 2021, <https://www.morh.hr/en/croatian-parliament-passes-act-on-establishment-of-defence-and-security-university/>.

³⁰ “Quality Assurance Documents,” *Armed Forces Academy of General Milan Rastislav Štefánik*, last modified September 29, 2023, <https://webim.aos.sk/en/article/quality-assurance-documents>.

³¹ “NATO QA Programme Members,” *NATO QA Hub*, accessed April 26, 2024, <https://qa.sidecloud.net/institutions>.

Education Area has served as a catalyst for the standardization and institutionalization of quality assurance systems, not only within the European Union but also across Africa, Latin America, and South Asia. However, the introduction of academic mobility programs for military personnel has highlighted the need for establishing a unified European security education area.

Levels of Quality Assurance Institutionalization in MHEIs on the African Continent

The armed forces of many African countries were primarily formed during the post-colonial period, which has influenced their role in national governments. Even today, in many African nations, control over the military is often viewed as a means of consolidating power and wealth.³² Consequently, the existence of professional military education institutions in an African country does not necessarily indicate high levels of military professionalism. Trust in the military tends to be higher in countries with high-quality study programs and a strong culture of professional military education rooted in democratic civil-military relations and an apolitical military stance. For example, the websites of military universities in Nigeria, Ghana, and Ethiopia do not provide information on internal quality assurance. In contrast, military education institutions in more developed countries with stable economies and advanced infrastructure, such as South Africa and Botswana, have institutionalized IQAS.

The South African Military Academy is currently part of Stellenbosch University, which adheres to internal quality standards. The University's Center for Academic Planning and Quality Assurance is tasked with several key responsibilities: maintaining relationships with other HEIs in South Africa and interpreting the university's educational policies; assisting faculty in the planning, development, and revision of study programs; managing the university's quality assurance cycle to ensure that all study departments and support services conduct self-assessments, facilitate visits by external evaluation experts, and implement quality improvement measures. The Center also oversees institutional audits, national reviews, and other quality assurance and enhancement initiatives in collaboration with multiple partners and stakeholders.³³ All educational units of the university, including the South African Military Academy, implement quality assurance measures according to university standards, which align with the national accreditation body's requirements – the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

³² Emile Ouédraogo, *Advancing Military Professionalism in Africa* (Washington, D.C.: Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2014), 64, <https://africacenter.org/publication/advancing-military-professionalism-in-africa/>.

³³ Stellenbosch University, "Stellenbosch University: Institutional Audit Self-Evaluation Report 2018-2021," June 24, 2022, www.sun.ac.za/english/learning-teaching/learning-teaching-enhancement/APQ/Documents/Strategic%20Projects/Institutional%20Audit/Stellenbosch-University-institutional-audit-self-evaluation-report.pdf.

Despite the diversity of MHEIs in Africa and the existence of regional networks and national bodies for external quality assessment, as well as quality assurance standards at various levels (international, regional, national), the standardization and institutionalization of IQAS among military institutions remain rather low. Although there is a growing demand for high-quality professional military education in African countries, this study found proven quality assurance practices only in military education units integrated into civilian HEIs.

The Experience of MHEIs Accreditation in Latin America

In recent years, quality has become a key issue in higher education in Latin America, leading to significant improvements in HEIs. However, quality assessment processes tend to focus more on traditional academic and regulatory aspects rather than on new priorities, such as fostering innovations in teaching and promoting continuous improvement. Despite several joint regional initiatives, the creation of a fully developed Latin American Higher Education Area remains an ongoing process. At the same time, stakeholders have started placing great importance on the accreditation status of HEIs and study programs. As a result, in many Latin American countries, accreditation has become more of a goal than a means for institutional improvement. Therefore, the quality assurance system in this sub-region needs further development and a shift toward “second-generation” quality assurance practices.

Chile demonstrates a successful transition to new approaches in quality assurance. According to the Law on the Establishment of the National Quality Assurance System of Higher Education,³⁴ HEIs are responsible for the quality of the educational services they provide. However, similar to the United States, there is no mandatory requirement to institutionalize IQAS. The primary source of data on internal quality assurance in HEIs is the self-assessment report, which is prepared for institutional accreditation—mandatory for all types of HEIs, including military institutions. Since 1990, military institutes in Chile have been recognized as HEIs, although they retain certain characteristics distinct from civilian educational institutions. Despite these differences, the Chilean National Accreditation Commission (Comisión Nacional de Acreditación, CNA) evaluates MHEIs based on the same parameters used for civilian professional institutions. For example, the self-assessment report of the Bernardo O’Higgins Military Academy³⁵ thoroughly detailed the methodology of internal quality assessment, assessment criteria, indicators, and questionnaires, including validity evaluations.

³⁴ “Law No. 20129 Establishes a National System for Quality Assurance of Higher Education,” *Library of the National Congress of Chile*, last modified October 20, 2022, www.bcn.cl/leychile/navegar?idNorma=255323&idParte=8721503. – in Spanish

³⁵ “Self-Assessment Report 2021,” *La Escuela Militar*, accessed April 27, 2024, <https://www.escuelamilitar.cl/docs/default-source/default-document-library/informe-acreditacion.pdf>. – in Spanish

Based on the external evaluation of three Chilean MHEIs by the CNA, several challenges were identified regarding their accreditation under the criteria for civilian institutions. First, MHEIs lack autonomy, as they are dependent on decisions made by the top command of the forces to which they are subordinate. Additionally, there is no central governing body overseeing MHEIs at the Ministry of Defense level in Chile; each institution follows the standards and requirements of its respective military branch. Unlike civilian HEIs, where diverse external partnerships are a key criterion assessed by the CNA, MHEIs have a more limited partner environment, with their affiliated military forces often being their only employer and primary partner. Furthermore, due to the particularities of military HR policies, the heads of these institutions typically hold their positions for only one or two years, creating uncertainty in the management of long-term strategic projects, as new leaders may not continue the policies of their predecessors. Finally, the organization of the educational process in MHEIs emphasizes practical skills, which differs from the more academic focus in civilian institutions.

According to Sandrino Vergara-Paredes,³⁶ these unique characteristics highlight the need for quality standards specifically tailored for military educational institutions. Despite skepticism within the military academic community about being evaluated based on civilian education criteria, institutional accreditation has shown to be beneficial for MHEIs. It supports their integration into the national educational system and should not be abandoned. For example, the Bernardo O'Higgins Military Academy identified two main advantages of accreditation: 1) it confirms that the institution's activities align with its mission and demonstrates effective self-regulation mechanisms, and 2) it provides students with access to public funding and fiscal guarantees to finance their studies.³⁷

Quality Management in Australian HEIs with Study Programs for the Militaries

The quality assurance system in higher education in Australia is unique in that HEIs themselves are responsible for verifying the effectiveness of their quality assurance systems and ensuring alignment with their strategic goals. The supervisory body, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA), primarily checks for compliance with "minimum threshold" standards.³⁸

To provide academic-level education, Australian MHEIs collaborate with universities authorized to self-accredit their study programs. For instance, cadets at

³⁶ Vergara-Paredes, "Proposals for the Accreditation of the Institutes of the Chilean Armed Forces," 542.

³⁷ "Military School Successfully Completed Accreditation Process," *La Escuela Militar*, March 24, 2022, www.escuelamilitar.cl/noticias/noticia//2022/03/24/escuela-militar-finaliz%C3%B3-con-%C3%A9xito-proceso-de-acreditaci%C3%B3n. – in Spanish

³⁸ "Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021," *Federal Register of Legislation* (Australian Government), last modified December 9, 2021, <https://www.legislation.gov.au/F2021L00488/latest/text>.

the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) receive professional military education at the Defence Academy, while their academic education is provided by the University of New South Wales in Canberra (UNSW Canberra). UNSW Canberra confers the qualifications for ADFA cadets.

UNSW Canberra's quality management model is described in its Education Quality Policy,³⁹ which was developed following national legislation. The internal quality evaluation system involves not only collecting student feedback on study programs but also providing mandatory feedback on all courses. This process helps to improve the quality of the content and teaching methods of the courses, assess instructors, and inform contract renewal decisions.

Unveiling the Uniqueness: Quality Assurance in MHEIs of Asian Countries and Russia

In regions with established international political and economic associations, there is often a growing need to integrate national higher education systems over time. One key integrating factor in this process is the development of quality assurance structures and practices. A notable example of such integration is the creation of the Quality Assurance Network of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (AQAN), which today brings together the external quality assurance agencies of ten regional countries. In collaboration with the EU, AQAN developed and implemented the ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF),⁴⁰ which is structurally similar to the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG).

In Indonesia, for instance, MHEIs are accredited by the National Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (BAN-PT). According to BAN-PT's requirements, study program accreditation is based on ten standards aligned with AQAF, and each program is graded on a specific scale. Depending on the points awarded for each standard, a program can be accredited at levels A, B, C, or NA (unaccredited).⁴¹ The Military Academy in Magelang has developed an internal quality assurance system in compliance with BAN-PT standards and has achieved institutional accreditation at the highest level (A). Additionally, three of its study programs have been accredited: Defense Civil Engineering at level A, Defense Electronics Engineering at level B, and Defense Engineering at level A.⁴²

³⁹ "Education Quality Policy," *University of New South Wales*, last modified May 6, 2017, <https://www.unsw.edu.au/content/dam/pdfs/governance/policy/2022-01-policies/educationqualitypolicy.pdf>.

⁴⁰ "ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework," *ASEAN Quality Assurance Network*, accessed April 27, 2024, <https://www.share-asean.eu/sites/default/files/AQAF.pdf>.

⁴¹ "Indonesia National Accreditation Board of Higher Education (BAN-PT) Website: Change of Website Address," *British Council*, May 24, 2017, <https://opportunities-insight.britishcouncil.org/news/market-news/indonesia-national-accreditation-board-of-higher-education-ban-pt-website-change—0>.

⁴² "Center of Excellence," *Akademi Militer*, accessed April 27, 2024, www.akmil.ac.id. — in Bahasa

China's higher education management system operates under a three-level hierarchical structure: the central government oversees national-level management; provincial governments are responsible for implementing state policies and guidelines at the regional level; and HEIs are tasked with conducting teaching, research, technological development, and institutional planning at the institutional level. Control over HEI activities involves multiple stakeholders—government, institutions, employers, parents, and students—through an evaluation system known as “five in one.”

In addition, to improve the quality of academic disciplines and higher education and to provide transparent information to society about the quality of universities and research institutions, the China Academic Degrees and Graduate Education Development Center (CDGDC) organizes the China Discipline Assessment (CDE). This non-profit program, which is conducted every 4-5 years on a voluntary basis, has gained significant domestic and international recognition over nearly two decades. Despite this, state policy remains heavily focused on external evaluation procedures, meaning that internal quality assurance within many Chinese HEIs aims primarily at meeting external requirements.

Many HEIs in China lack institutionalized quality management systems, and there are very few independent external quality assessments. Additionally, there are no uniform standards for evaluating quality assurance agencies, which results in state control continuing to dominate external quality assurance processes.⁴³

The information on quality assurance in MHEIs in the People's Republic of China is extremely limited. However, compliance with academic quality standards at some Chinese military universities can be indirectly demonstrated by their involvement in national initiatives such as Project 211, which aimed to strengthen the top 100 universities in China. In particular, the Nanjing People's Liberation Army College of Politics and the National University of Defense Technology (NUDT) were part of this project. NUDT was also included in Project 985, which focused on building world-class universities.

According to the results of the fourth round of the China Discipline Assessment (CDE), NUDT ranks 11th among national universities, with eight of its first-level disciplines being highly ranked. Additionally, five of NUDT's disciplines were selected for inclusion in the national “Double First Class” discipline list, further highlighting its academic standing.⁴⁴

According to Japanese legislation, higher education quality assurance is achieved through three main components: the system for establishing or reorganizing universities and colleges; the Certified Evaluation and Accreditation

⁴³ Lan-Yong Zhang et al., “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area: Development and Inspiration,” *DEStech Transactions on Social Science, Education and Human Science* (February 2019), <http://dx.doi.org/10.12783/dtssehs/icesd2019/28072>.

⁴⁴ “Key Disciplines,” *National University of Defense Technology (NUDT) (China)*, accessed April 27, 2024, <https://english.nudt.edu.cn/nav/About/KeyDisciplines/index.htm>.

(CEA) system, represented by independent evaluation and accreditation agencies certified by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology; and independent quality assurance of education and research activities conducted by HEIs.

Universities and technology colleges are required to undergo institutional assessments, while professional HEIs must also undergo sector-specific assessments (CEA for academic disciplines). Although evaluation is mandatory, HEIs have the freedom to choose their external evaluation agency. To foster cooperation, information exchange, and stakeholder awareness of quality assurance, CEA agencies are part of the Japan Network of Certified Evaluation and Accreditation Agencies (JNCEAA). Self-assessment results, including data on new student enrollment, current student numbers, and tuition fees, must be disclosed.⁴⁵ Therefore, while internal quality assurance is conducted through self-assessment, there is no standardized approach across institutions.

The National Defense Academy of Japan, the National Defense Medical College, and the Japan Coast Guard Academy are accredited under the standards of NIAD-QE, one of Japan's leading accreditation organizations.⁴⁶ To meet NIAD-QE requirements, the National Defense Academy of Japan has established an internal quality assurance system known as "Faculty Development." The Academy's Committee for the Promotion of Education, unlike those in civilian HEIs, includes not only academic and administrative staff but also the command of cadet units. One of the Committee's key responsibilities is engaging with various stakeholders and providing transparency about its activities and improvements.⁴⁷

Israel has a unique approach to higher education quality assurance. Although the country did not sign the Bologna Declaration, it actively cooperates with EHEA nations and has successfully integrated into the European Higher Education Area. Public and institutional policies focus on enhancing the global competitiveness of Israeli higher education and research. Quality assurance strategies vary significantly across universities in Israel, and there are typically no formal documents such as quality policies within HEIs. Internal quality assurance is generally based on international standards, including ESG. Key areas of internal quality assurance include improving the pedagogical skills of academic staff, implementing award-based systems for recognizing quality teaching, developing bilin-

⁴⁵ "Quality Assurance System," *NIC-Japan (National Information Center for Academic Recognition)*, accessed April 27, 2024, <https://www.nicjp.niad.ac.jp/en/japanese-system/quality.html>.

⁴⁶ "Awarding of Degrees for the Completion of Programs at NIAD-QE-Approved Educational Institutions Operated by Government Ministries and Agencies in Academic Year 2021," *National Institution for Academic Degrees and Quality Enhancement of Higher Education (NIAD-QE) – Japan*, accessed April 27, 2024, <https://www.niad.ac.jp/english/news/en2023/entry-4982.html>.

⁴⁷ "Initiatives to Improve Education (FD Activities)," *National Defense Academy of Japan*, accessed April 27, 2024, <https://www.mod.go.jp/nda/about/fd.html>. – in Japanese

gual (Hebrew and English) computerized curricula, conducting student satisfaction surveys, integrating digital technologies in teaching and learning, and promoting student mobility. These tasks are primarily managed by educational and methodological centers established between 2010 and 2016 as part of a state program to improve the quality of higher education in Israel. However, there are no specific government regulations or guidelines regarding the organizational structure or activities of these centers.⁴⁸

Military educational institutions in Israel focus on vocational training programs tailored to the country's military service and security needs. Academic degrees for military personnel are offered in collaboration with civilian universities, similar to the model in Australia. While academic quality standards are overseen by the universities where cadets earn their degrees, the internal quality assurance systems (IQAS) in Israeli universities remain less institutionalized compared to the regulated and documented quality management systems found in Australian universities.

Kazakhstan has been adopting European approaches to quality assurance in higher education since 2010, when it joined the Bologna Process. Following higher education reforms in 2011, accreditation has played an increasingly important role in improving the quality of educational services. According to the Law on Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan,⁴⁹ accreditation is voluntary and carried out by non-profit, non-governmental organizations. Educational institutions can independently choose their accreditation body. Through the Committee for Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education under the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Kazakhstan, the state retains the right to regulate accreditation providers by recognizing them and listing them in the National Register of Accredited Bodies. National and international accreditation agencies in Kazakhstan are required to follow the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG).

In practice, however, state control over external quality assessment agencies and HEIs remains dominant. Military higher education institutions (MHEIs) do not have institutionalized internal quality assurance systems (IQAS), although they do implement some quality control measures related to educational and teaching activities (such as attendance monitoring, teacher training, student self-study organization, planned and unplanned class inspections, and student evaluation under the credit system). As a result, while MHEIs in Kazakhstan confer master's and PhD degrees aligned with the European qualifications framework, EHEA quality assurance practices have not been systematically implemented in these institutions.

⁴⁸ Iryna Sokolova, "Higher education in Israel: national realities and strategies for development in the XXI century," *Bulletin of the Cherkasy University*, no.5 (2017): 111-120. – in Ukrainian

⁴⁹ "Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated July 27, 2007, No. 319-III on Education," *Yuryst*, last modified May 1, 2024, https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=30118747. – in Russian

Unlike Kazakhstan, only three out of 28 universities in the Russian Federation show signs of institutionalized internal quality assurance systems (IQAS): the Black Sea Higher Naval School, the Khrulev Military Academy of Logistics, and the Makarov Pacific Higher Naval School.⁵⁰ Notably, the Black Sea Higher Naval School, located in Sevastopol on Ukrainian territory occupied by Russia, held an ISO 9001 certification valid from 2019 to 2022.

One indicator of IQAS institutionalization in these HEIs is the expanded list of internal educational standards. Analysis of these documents reveals that internal quality assurance primarily focuses on implementing the Federal State Educational Standards of Higher Education, which are mandatory for Russian HEIs, as well as the Qualification Requirements for Military Professional Training in a military specialty, approved and controlled by the Ministry of Defense. However, following Russia's withdrawal from the Bologna Process, the latest edition of the Federal State Educational Standards no longer differentiates between federal, regional, and institutional components. Additionally, Russia has abandoned the three-level system of qualifications in higher education.

Thus, there is a tendency toward forming a quality assurance system in both higher and military education in Russia that is increasingly centered on state control, with little emphasis on the development of internal quality assurance mechanisms.

Conclusions

This study highlights the following patterns and trends in the quality assurance of military higher education institutions across different countries.

Internal quality assurance in MHEIs is typically developed in accordance with national requirements, which may incorporate or be based on regional or international quality standards. These national requirements for quality assurance of military education are shaped by a country's political system, the role of the armed forces in upholding this system, and their involvement in public administration. In democratic nations, internal quality assurance is usually the responsibility of the educational institution. In contrast, authoritarian regimes often maintain state control over higher education institutions, where internal quality assurance practices play a less decisive role. Most countries in this analysis adopt a three-tiered model of quality assurance in higher education, which also applies to MHEIs: internal quality assurance within institutions; external evaluation by quality assurance agencies (whether independent or government-controlled, national or international, one or more, universal or professional); and the oversight of these external agencies through state control or by their inclusion in national, regional, or international networks. The exception is the Russian Federation, where only the external quality assurance mechanism is institutionalized.

⁵⁰ "Higher Education Institutions," *Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation*, accessed April 15, 2024, <https://vuz.mil.ru/Vyshshie-uchebnye-zavedeniya>. – in Russian

The low level of competition and the corporate (closed) nature of the security and defense sectors initially limited the adoption of internal quality assurance practices among MHEIs. However, external factors such as integration processes in higher education, pressure from national governments, and the need to recognize qualifications earned through professional military education have driven the institutionalization of internal quality assurance systems in military institutions. In some countries (Bulgaria, Latvia, Romania, Australia), these systems are more institutionalized, with their structure, tasks, and distribution of responsibilities among units, collegial bodies, and stakeholders regulated through normative documents (internal standards). In others, the formalization of internal quality assurance occurs primarily through self-assessment reports (Chile, Israel, Japan, China). MHEIs employ a variety of methodological approaches when developing their internal quality assurance systems: ISO 9001 (Bulgaria), EFQM (Finland), ESG (Latvia, Romania, Croatia), NATO standards (Slovakia), and standards set by national external quality assessment bodies (France, China).

The level of transparency among MHEIs varies significantly between countries. For example, military universities in the Russian Federation and France do not have dedicated websites; instead, information about these institutions is only available through the websites of their respective Ministries of Defense. In contrast, Japan's National Defense Academy publishes detailed data, such as the number of entrants and students, as required by national legislation. Generally, HEIs offering academic education tend to be more transparent, while those focused on professional military education often limit access to information about their activities. External assessments of MHEIs in most countries are conducted by national evaluation bodies. In the United States, accrediting organizations responsible for inspecting institutions within the national security sector must follow federal government verification procedures. In addition to accreditation agencies, external evaluations can also be conducted by the Department of Defense (USA) or regional governments, such as in Canada and China.

Internal quality assurance standards across different countries are quite similar in content, though their structure varies based on public policy priorities. These standards typically include requirements for strategic management of HEIs, the development and revision of study programs, information management, the assessment of teaching and learning, recognition of qualifications, financial and logistic support, student support services (such as university facilities), and transparency.

MHEIs in different countries face similar difficulties during external evaluations based on criteria designed for civilian institutions. These challenges arise from the unique aspects of HR policy, management systems, and the organization of the educational process within military entities. Yet, the implementation of institutionalized internal quality assurance practices in MHEIs offers several advantages, including alignment with stakeholder needs, continuous improvement, internationalization, access to state funding, mutual recognition of qualifications, and increased quality of scientific research.

Institutionalized quality assurance practices in higher education serve as a mechanism for integrating national and international higher education systems. The creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), driven by the implementation of the ESG, is a prime example of this process. Similarly, NATO aims to ensure interoperability among its affiliated educational institutions through the implementation of quality assurance standards for education and training. By adhering to national accreditation requirements, MHEIs become integrated into national higher education systems, facilitating the recognition of military qualifications by civilian institutions. While this approach contributes to strengthening national higher education systems, it does little for defense institution building. Therefore, the proposal to design specific quality standards for military education entities should be endorsed. These standards, whether national or international, should reflect the unique aspects of the organization of educational activities in MHEIs, particularly in their role in enhancing national (or regional) security and defense. With the ongoing initiatives to build a European security area, the development of European standards for quality assurance in professional military education appears to be the next logical step following the release of the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for the Military Officer Profession.

Disclaimer

The opinions, findings, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Partnership for Peace Consortium, its participating institutions, or any governmental or international organizations affiliated with its governance structure.

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