

Subject	External Quality Assurance
Module	External Quality Assurance (EQA) – Roles And Responsibilities
Topic	2.1 Overview

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1. Introduction



This module discusses the generic functions of external quality assurance (EQA) and the different approaches that agencies take to discharge their roles and responsibilities. Many of the examples given relate to QA at institutional-level, but contain points that also apply to program-level QA.

2. Module Overview

External Quality Assurance (EQA) – Roles And Responsibilities – Overview

In **Frameworks for National Approaches to QA** we will identify reasons for inconsistent use of EQA terms and variations in QA approaches. The topic includes a generic definition of EQA and describes three basic EQA approaches: audit, assessment and accreditation. Finally, the topic reviews examples of EQA approaches from Indonesia, UK and India.

The topic, **Generic Functions of EQA Agencies**, highlights the link between EQA purposes and the generic functions of EQA bodies. You will also learn how evolving national contexts impact on the purposes of EQA. The topic also looks at the core functions of EQA agencies and the responsibilities associated with them. Finally, there is a brief introduction to the three stages of EQA.

QA in higher education is commonly viewed as a three stage process. The topic, **Major Phases of EQA**, identifies those stages as self-assessment, external review and the EQA outcome.

The topic, **Operational Context of EQA**, will focus on two major factors: (i) size of the system to be covered by EQA and (ii) ownership and control of EQA. We will then turn to the implications of these factors with a discussion of relevant national models.

The topic, **Implementing an EQA Process**, deals with the various aspects of QA process implementation for institutions or programs. You will learn about the variables that enter into the fulfillment of EQA roles and responsibilities and discusses approaches to the implementation of EQA.

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QA agencies have an obligation to demonstrate that their EQA processes achieve their stated objectives. EQAs are accountable to many stakeholders who expect them to display credibility and objectivity. The topic, **Who Supervises the Guardians?**, covers accountability measures taken to ensure that EQA agencies live up to those expectations.

3. Objectives

Objectives: External Quality Assurance (EQA) - Roles and Responsibilities

Upon completion of this module, you should be able to

- identify the generic functions of EQA
- describe the various approaches to performing those functions
- identify the considerations and contextual factors that shape the roles and responsibilities of EQA agencies
- explain the variations in affiliation, governance and funding of QA agencies and the impact they have on QA approaches
- analyse the implications of the various options for QA roles
- formulate an EQA system that would be effective in your national context
- analyse the direct and indirect accountability measures that operate in EQA

4. Readings

Reading: Suggested Reading and Reference

- Brennan, J. & Shah, T. (2000). *Managing quality in higher ed., international perspective on institutional assessment and change*, Buckingham, SRHE/ OECD.
- El-Khawas, E. (2001). [*Accreditation in the United States: Origins, developments, future prospects*](#), Paris: IIEP.
- Ewell, P.T., NCHEMS (2002). *A Delicate Balance: the role of evaluation in management*, Quality in Higher Education, V. 8, No.2, Carfax Publishing
- Hamalainen, K. et.al. (2001). [*Institutional Evaluations in Europe: ENQA Workshop Reports 1*](#), Helsinki: European Network for QA in Higher Ed. ENQA).
- Newton, Jethro (2004). *International Developments in Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement: Challenges & Opportunities*, Quality in Higher Education, V. 10, No. 2,
- Watson, D. & Maddison, E. (2005). *Managing Institutional Self-study*, Open University Press.
- Woodhouse, D. (2001). [*Fundamentals of QA*](#), Pre-conference workshop, INQAAHE conference 2001, Bangalore.
- Ewell, P.T., NCHEMS (2002). [*A Delicate Balance: the role of evaluation in management, Quality in Higher Education*](#), V. 8, No.2, Carfax Publishing.
- Newton, Jethro (2004). [*International Developments in Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement: Challenges & Opportunities*](#), Quality in Higher Education, V. 10, No. 2.

Websites

- [New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit \(AAU\)](#)
- [National Council for Higher Education Accreditation \(NCHEA\), Mongolia](#)
- [Academic Quality Improvement Program \(AQIP\)](#)
- [Australian Universities Quality Agency \(AUQA\)](#)
- [Council on Higher Education \(CHE\), South Africa](#)
- [Council on Higher Education Accreditation \(CHEA\), USA](#)

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- [European Association for QA in Higher Education](#)
- [Higher Education Funding Council of England \(HEFCE\), UK](#)
- [Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation \(HKCAA\)](#)
- [International Network for QA Agencies in Higher Education \(INQAAHE\)](#)
- [Malaysian Qualification Agency](#)
- [Middle States Commission on Higher Education, USA](#)
- [National Assessment and Accreditation Council \(NAAC\), India](#)
- [North Central Association of Colleges and Schools \(NCA-HLC\) The Higher Learning Commission, USA](#)
- [Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities \(NWCCU\)](#)
- [QA Agency \(QAA\), UK](#)