Subject	External Quality Assurance
Module	Networks Of External Quality Agencies
Topic	3.1 Overview

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1. Introduction

In common with other professional fields, quality assurance practitioners in higher education have, over three decades, established associations with strong cooperative bonds that provide information exchange and mutual support. A few of these organisations are populated by individuals but most are collectives of EQA agencies. These collectives are seen as 'networks' of independent agencies working together on issues, projects, conferences and other concerns of common interest.

This module describes these networks, their establishment and purpose. Some are international, while some are national in scope. Information has been gleaned from the materials on various agency websites. Students of QA should become familiar with using agency websites as a source of useful links to QA literature.

2. Module Overview

Networks Of External Quality Agencies – Overview

To begin, **The Context** presents the rationale for the establishment of EQA agency networks and an overview of selected EQA networks in action. You will learn about national and multi-national issues pertinent to higher education. The topic also provides information on the objectives of a number of EQA agencies.

Next, **INQAAHE: The First International Network**, describes the growth of INQAAHE since its inception, its objectives, purposes, and role in the assessment, improvement and maintenance of quality in higher education.

The topic, **Latin-America and the Caribbean**, traces the origin and growth of regional QA networks in:
- Latin America and Spain: Red Ibero-Americana de la Calidad del Educacion Superior (RIACES)
- Caribbean countries: Caribbean Area Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education (CANQATE)

In **European QA Networks** you will find worthwhile models for QA agency networks in a region filled with national agencies. Among these models are the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and the European

Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA). The growth of ENQA is traced from the time of the Bologna declaration in 1999.

The creation of the **Network of Central & Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEEN)** was a sign of intensive efforts to develop QA by and for the countries of eastern Europe. This topic highlights the overlap of national, regional, and international networks.

The topic, **Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN)**, discusses the emergence of an association of QA agencies in a region that contains over half the world's population. You will learn about the Brisbane Communiqué Initiative and reasons for a lack of coherence and common purpose across the region. The topic ends with an overview of the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN), its aims and purposes.

We move then to the **Eurasian Quality Assurance Network (EAQAN)**, its aims and objectives, emergence, and the effect of history and social contexts on the way that members from different countries align with QA networks.

The **Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE)** has faced significant challenges from its inception. The emergence of multiple QA networks has been a matter of concern for the Arab region.

Networks in Africa is indeed plural; you will be introduced to the African Quality Assurance Network (AfriQAN) and learn about the emergence of the Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES). We will take a specific look at the aims, mission, and initiatives of CAMES in QA for institutions (HEIs).

Special Interest Networks delves into an interesting sector, that of professional and specialised education. The networks in this sector have undertaken some challenging tasks, not least the implementation of international agreements on mutual recognition of engineering educational qualifications and competence. The underlying principles should be understood, given their potential value for other academic and professional areas.

As the title **Networks within Countries** indicates, there are QA networks within countries. There are similarities and differences between in-country and multi-country networks. We will also look at the aims, purposes and mission of a major in-country professional accreditor in the U.S.

Finally, in **Relations Between Networks**, we will discuss INQAAHE's initiatives to increase its collaboration with other networks, as well as encourage co-operation among global, regional and special interest QA networks.

3. Objectives

Objectives: Networks of External Quality Agencies

Upon completion of this module, you should be able to
- explain the range and dynamics of international and national networks and trends in collaborative activity within the EQA community.
- analyse statements of goals in order to identify network/s aligned with your own geographical area or interest in QA.
- identify the challenges inherent in establishing and maintaining a network with disparate members, sometimes conflicting goals, and an agenda subject to broader political forces.

4. Readings

Reading: Suggested Reading and Reference

- Badrawi, N. (2007). *Challenges of an emerging quality assurance network*, UNESCO Conference, Tanzania.
- Davenport, C. (2008), Personal communication
- Kalanova, S. (2008), Personal communication
- Woodhouse, D. (2004). Desarrollo Global del Aseguramiento de la Calidad, Calidad en la Educación, N°21, Consejo Superior de Educación, Santiago, Chile
- Woodhouse, D. (2006). *The Role of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education in the 21st Century*, Keynote address to 1st International Conference on Assessing Quality in Higher Education, Lahore, 11-13 December 2006