

Subject	Operating an External Quality Agency
Segment	Methods of Review and Accreditation
Topic	2.1 Overview

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Please note that this is a text-only version. All links and animations are not activated in this version. It is recommended that you view the topic online for an interactive learning experience.

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1. Introduction



This module demonstrates how agencies differ greatly in the way in which they define quality and the methodologies they put in place to assess it. Some agencies follow the 'fitness-for-purpose' definition of quality and look into the ways in which higher education institutions (HEIs) or programs fulfil the objectives they aim to achieve. There are other QA agencies that emphasise pre-determined sets of standards for the HEIs or the programs they quality assure.

The module introduces you to a range of these QA frameworks and the methods used to implement them. There is also a focus on the self-assessment requirement for HEI quality assurance and how QA agencies make decisions based on the reports compiled by review teams.

2. Module Overview

Methods of Review and Accreditation – Overview

Let us review the topics we will cover in this module.

Implementing EQA Processes

This topic deals with the implementation of a QA process for institutions or programs. You will learn about the factors that determine the scope of operations of an agency and whether or not, for example, it will include private as well as public HEIs in its range. The topic also discusses the types of evidence required by review teams to determine its findings relative to an agency's framework of quality assurance.

Institutional Accreditation

This topic explores the history of accreditation and the role of QA agencies in the initial accreditation and recognition of institutions. It highlights the fact that accreditation in this instance is based to a great extent promises of what will come rather than on a record of achievement. You will learn about the variety of frameworks and processes used in accreditation

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Self-Assessment in EQA

This topic covers the topic of the self-assessment document (also known as self-study, self-evaluation or self-analysis) which is prepared by the institution or program as a basis for the review team's work. You will learn how agencies set expectations for the scope and depth of a self-assessment and the different methods used by institutions to carry out the work and overcome what can be significant barriers

Decision Making and Follow-up

Generally speaking, the panel's conclusions do not represent the final outcome of a quality review so this topic introduces you to the different processes used for making these final decisions. The topic also discusses what happens after the report has been finalised including the mechanisms for appeal by an institution and the follow-up by the agency on actions to be taken by the institution as a result

3. Objectives

Objectives: Methods of Review and Accreditation

Upon completion of this module, you should be able to

- outline factors to be taken into consideration when determining the scope of an agency's operations
- discuss the distinguishing features of institutional accreditation processes describe the different types of evidence for use in review processes
- discuss the compilation of self-assessment documents and the guidance provided by the agencies
- outline the different ways in which QA decisions are made on the basis of review team conclusions

4. Reading

Reading: Suggested Reading and References

- Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA). 2008. [Audit manual](#). Available at: www.auqa.edu.au
- CICA, 2008. [The UFE candidates' competency map: understanding the professional competencies evaluated on the UFE](#). Ontario: CICA.
- CNAP. No date. *Handbook for self-assessment*. Available at: www.cnap.cl (in Spanish).
- El-Khawas, E. 2001. [Accreditation in the United States: origins, developments and future prospects](#). Paris: IIEP-UNESCO.
- [The European Higher Education Area – Achieving the Goals](#), Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers Responsible for Higher Education; Bergen 2005.
- Green, D. 1994. [What is quality in higher education?](#) Buckingham: SRHE; Open University Press.
- Harvey, L. and Green, D. 1993. ['Defining quality'](#). *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* 18(1) 9-34
- Lemaître, M.J. 2005. *Between privatization and state control: Chile's experience of regulating a widely privatized system through quality assurance*. Paper presented at the IIEP Policy Forum on Accreditation and the Global Higher Education Market, Paris, France, 13-14 June, 2005.

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- Middle States Commission on Higher Education 2007. [Self-Study : Creating a Useful Process and Report](#). 2nd ed. Philadelphia, Pa.
- National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). 2007. [Manual for Assessment and Accreditation for Universities](#), Bangalore: India.
- Phelps, M. 2001. *Accreditation and the quality assurance system for higher education*. TA-3500-PHI: Education Sector Development Program. Asian Development Bank; World Bank.
- Revelo Revelo, J.; Augusto Hernandez, C. 2003. [The national accreditation system in Columbia: experiences from the National Council of Accreditation \(CNA\)](#). Paris: IIEP-UNESCO.
- Stella, A. 2002. [External quality assurance in Indian higher education: case study on the National Assessment and Accreditation Council \(NAAC\)](#). Paris: IIEP-UNESCO.
- UNESCO.2002. Report of the Experts meeting on indicators of quality and facilitating academic mobility through quality assurance agencies, UNESCO-Bangkok and National Assessment and Accreditation Council, India.
- [US Higher Education Opportunities Act, 2008](#).

Websites: There are websites mentioned at different points in this module so you will need to refer to them from time to time. You may also need to use other websites for some of the Discussion tasks in different topics included in the module. You can link to quality assurance websites through the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies (INQAAHE) at the following URL:

<http://www.ingaahe.org/members/list-full.php>

Note that there several categories of membership of INQAAHE and hence other lists to consult if you do not find an agency you are trying to locate.

5. Terminology

Reminder: These QA materials were written by an international team and so, inevitably, there is a variety of terms used throughout the text. The Syllabus section of this subject includes an overview to help you comprehend individual terms and their meanings in the QA context. You will need to consult this list from time to time!