



**AQAS**

Agentur für  
Qualitätssicherung  
durch Akkreditierung  
von Studiengängen

Workshop for QA agencies

INQAAHE conference 2017

27.02. – 02.03. 2017, Manama, Bahrain

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# Workshop 1

## Internal & External Quality assurance for QA agencies

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# WELCOME

- Lets have a workshop, not a presentation
- Peers are most valuable learning resource
- Jointly look at IQA & EQA



# Workshop structure



- **Internal Quality Assurance**

- **Dimensions**
- **Group work**

- External Quality Assurance

- Regimes
- Group work



# Quotes regarding IQA of QA agencies



*„We are only four people in our agency. Our mission is clearly outlined in the law so we really do not need an explicit documentation on internal quality assurance. How things work is well defined in the bylaws...”*

*„ The demand for our services is big, that speaks for our quality. I think there is a QA handbook somewhere, but I have never used it yet. I think we are required to have such a thing...”*



# Quotes regarding IQA of QA agencies



*„If we have a problem in our agency we invite all people involved and discuss about it. We discuss until everybody agrees. Sometimes this can take several attempts...“*

*“When I started working for the agency I expected them to be experts in internal QA. I learnt about many of our procedures when we were subject to an ENQA review after three years of work...”*



# IQA of QA agencies

- *IQA shall reflect the needs/requirements resulting from the structure*
- *Tools & methods need to be fit for purpose*
- *Need to reflect the culture the agency works in*
- *Diversity of Agencies:*
  - *governmental / non governmental*
  - *civil service / non profit / profit*
  - *large / small*
  - *EQA as exclusive task / one of many other tasks*
  - *Embedded in different HE cultures*
- *Different needs and requirements towards IQA*



# Dimensions of EQA providers



- *ECA has developed a matrix how to look at EQA systems as part of an EU funded programme (E-TRAIN)*
- *Developed with different focus*
- *Helpful tool when looking at different requirements towards IQA*
- *The Matrix uses ten dimensions to differentiate EQA systems*



# Dimensions of EQA providers



## 1. Aims

Each EQA system has at least one (mostly more) of the following aims:

- Transparency of educational provision and processes
- Improvement of quality of educational provision and processes
- Accountability to stakeholders (government, society)
- Validation of qualifications and academic or professional standards





# Dimensions of EQA providers



## **2. Agency (agencies) coordinating the EQA**

- Status of the agency
- Mission statement
- Independence of the agency

## **3. Type, level, range and cycle of EQA**

- Names used for EQA
- Institutions (new, private...)
- Programmes (new, existing, 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle...)
- Cyclical/periodic EQA (regular intervals)?



# Dimensions of EQA providers



## 4. \*EQA methods and experts

- Self-assessment
- External assessment
  - Does a site visit take place (in some systems there are no site visits for new programmes)?
  - What is the representation of the HEI at the site visit?
- External experts
  - Is there a check on independence of experts?
  - Are there selection criteria for experts?
  - What is the composition of the panel: academics, professional field, student, QA , educational and international expertise?



# Dimensions of EQA providers



## 5. Standards and criteria

- Descriptive/checklists or prescriptive/formal criteria?
- Minimum standards/basic quality/ thresholds or “above threshold”?
- Internal QA system
- Public information
- Learning outcomes (intended /achieved; alignment with Q-frameworks)
- Assessment of students
- Teaching staff; Learning resources and student support
- Specific criteria? (Entry requirements, Curriculum/course requirements)
- Quantitative requirements (e.g. student/staff ratio, graduation rates, proportion of PhDs or professors, etc.)



# Dimensions of EQA providers



## 6. \* Reports

- Written by whom?
- Analysis/judgements substantiated?
- Commendations and/or recommendations included?
- Public?
- Easy accessible for its intended readership?



# Dimensions of EQA providers



## **7. \*Decision-making**

- Criteria and rules for making decisions
- Validity of decisions (e.g. accreditation periods)
- Appeals procedures



# Dimensions of EQA providers



## **8. Consequences and follow-up**

- Directly or indirectly linked to funding?
- Recognition of degrees?
- Consequences for reputation/rankings?
- Follow-up procedures?
- System-wide analyses?
- Intended (actions following internal and/or external assessment) and unintended (e.g. game-playing, resistance) consequences



# Dimensions of EQA providers



## **9. Costs and benefits of EQA**

- Costs (Resources of agency, Opportunity costs)
- Benefits
- Improvement of education
- Quality culture/continuous improvement (internal QA)
- Compliance (to standards/criteria)



# Dimensions of EQA providers

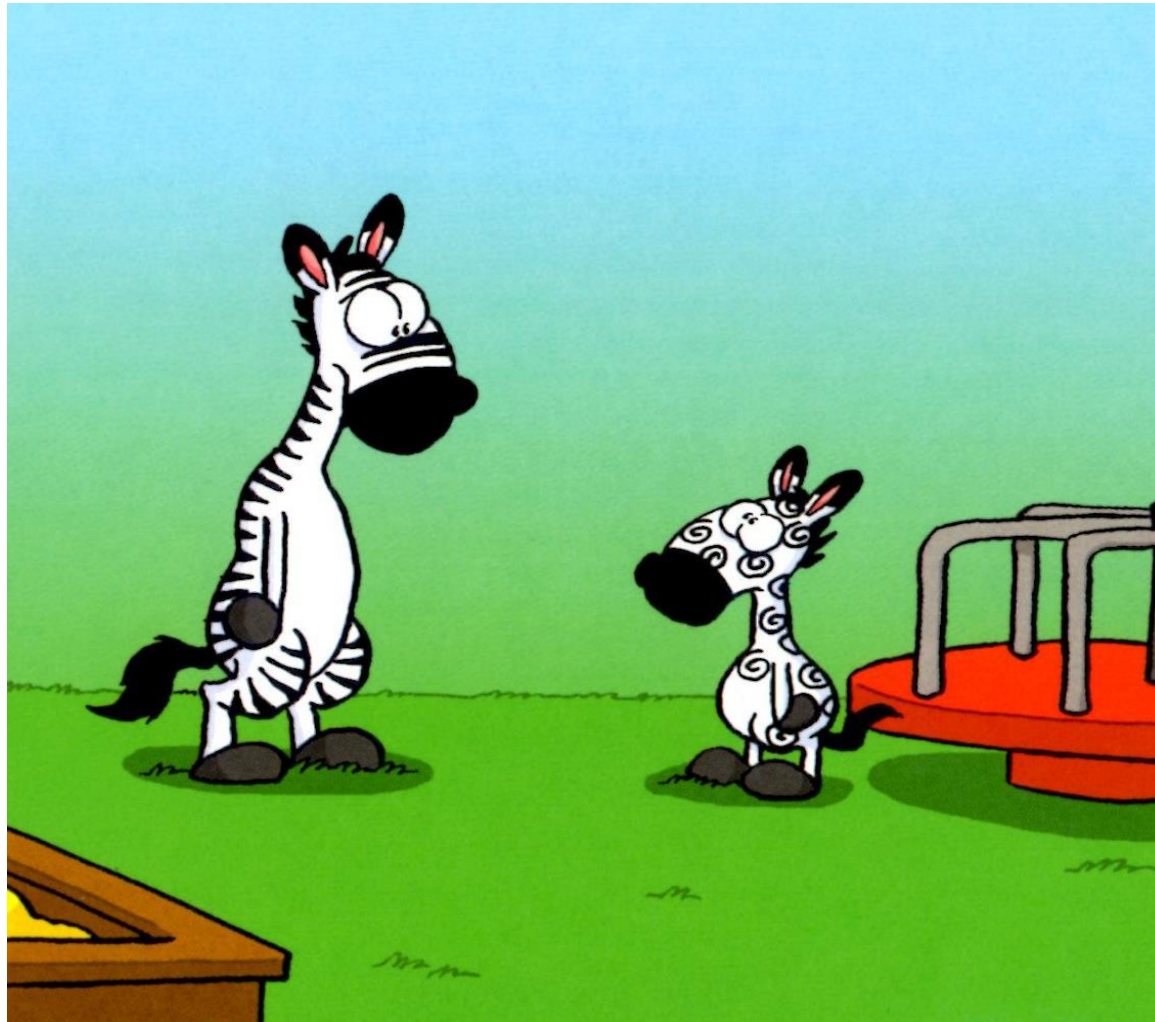


## **10. \*Stakeholders perspectives**

- Expectations of stakeholders regarding EQA (cf. 1. Aims)
- Involvement of stakeholders (government, employers, alumni, society students, academics, HEIs)
  - in external QA (reviews)
  - in follow-up to EQA
- Satisfaction of stakeholders with EQA



Any questions?





# Group work I

- Consider your Agency / organization.
- Which internal QA **mechanisms / procedures / tools** do you have in place addressing the dimension assigned to your group?
- Why do/don't you need them?
- How effective / efficient are they?
- If possible identify **2 procedures/tools** that you think should be part of every agencies IQA



# Group work I



One or two participants will present the findings.

Dimensions for the groups:

- 4. \* EQA methods and experts
- 6. \* Reports
- 7. \* Decision-making
- 10. \* Stakeholders perspectives



# Workshop structure



- Internal Quality Assurance
  - Dimensions
  - Group work
- **External Quality Assurance**
  - **Regimes**
  - **Group work**



# EQA for agencies



The external view on the agency can bring new perspectives ...





# EQA of QA agencies

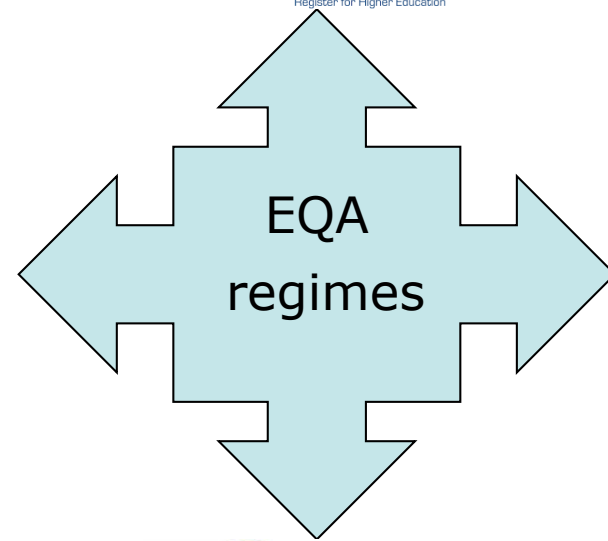


- Depending on specific context QA agencies are subject to supervision / control / accountability requirements (e.g. by national governments)
- QA agencies can also undergo external QA by external QA providers, typically by network, regional organizations or umbrella organizations
- Motivations for undergoing EQA can be very different
  - wish for benchmarking & comparison (GGP review)
  - need to proof quality of agencies work (political changes)
  - Access to markets (EQAR)

# EQA regimes (examples)

**European Standards  
and Guidelines (ESG)**

**EQAR**



**CHEA Recognition  
(United States)**



**INQAAHE Guidelines of  
Good Practice**



# European Standards and Guidelines



- ESG are a set of Standards for:
  - Internal QA for HE (part 1)
  - External QA procedures (part 2)
  - Quality Assurance Agencies (part 3)
- Reflect a European view on Education (Bologna Process)
- Alignment with the ESG is requirement for registration in EQAR
- Some European countries allow HE to use any EQAR registered agency to achieve mandatory accreditation (nationally)





# Council for Higher Education Accreditation



- Formed in 1996 by US HEI, reflects the US approach on HE
- Recognition by CHEA affirms that standards and processes of accrediting organizations are consistent with quality, improvement, and accountability expectations defined by CHEA.
- Recognition procedure has six standards
  - Advancement of academic quality
  - Demonstration of accountability
  - Encouragement of self scrutiny
  - Fair procedures in decision making
  - Ongoing review of practices
  - Sufficient resources



# INQAAHE GGP



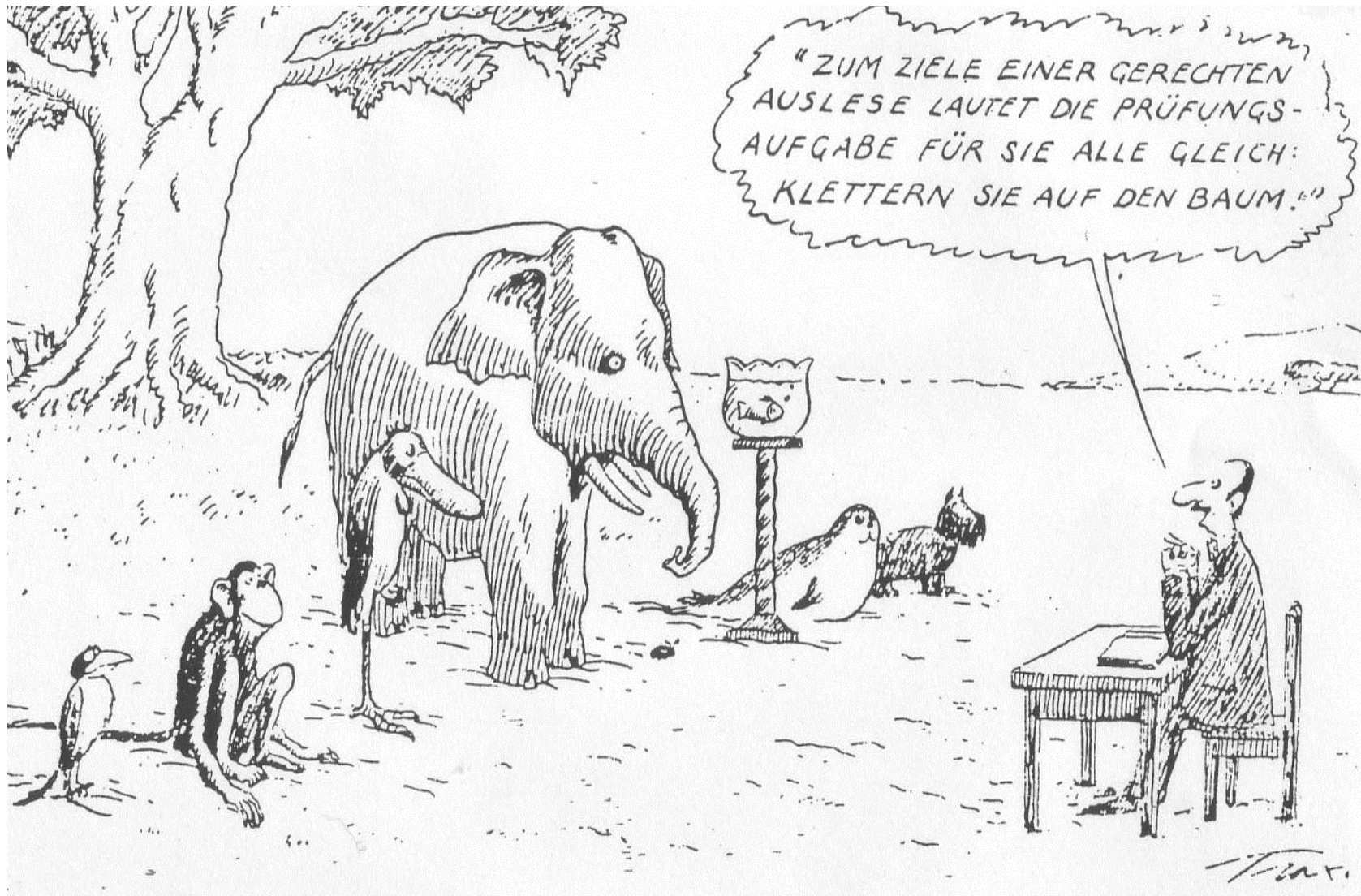
- GGP were reviewed in 2016
- Represent a broad approach towards EQA
- Allow diversity of different approaches respecting different cultural HE contexts
- GGP consists of standards with some sub-standards
- GGP aligned agencies are listed on INQAAHE website
- Opportunity for agencies were more prescriptive regimes are not in place



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- Represent a broad approach towards EQA
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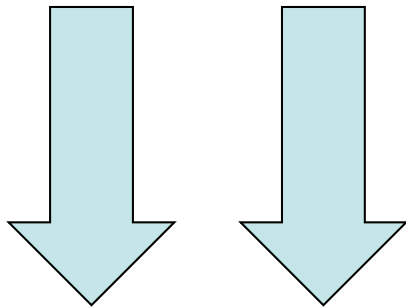
# Diversity



**„To secure the fairness of selection process you will all get the same task: climb the tree“**

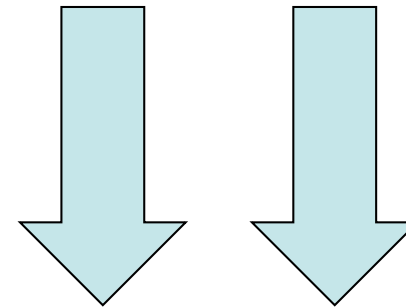
# Group work II

Return to your group



## Group 1 & 2

Benefits & Risks of  
undergoing an  
external review as an  
agency



## Group 3 & 4

The IQA requirements of  
GGP: how to demonstrate,  
what tools and policies from  
the first group-work could  
be used?

Any questions?





# Contact

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