

# National Quality Assurance Framework: Establishment and Operationalisation

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and

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INQAAHE 15<sup>th</sup> Biennial Conference 2019

25 March 2019

# Organization of Workshop

- Introductions (5 minutes)
- Overview of topic (20 minutes)
- US Case: Current context and reform (20 minutes)
- Sri Lanka Case: Proposal for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Commission for Higher Education (25 minutes)
- Comparative analysis of Sri Lanka case (10 minutes)
- Break (10 Minutes)
- Small group task and reporting (45 Minutes)
- Summary and suggestions for future QA development (15 minutes)

# National Quality Framework

“an NQF is an instrument used to classify qualifications in a hierarchy of levels, each level defined by a set of descriptors indicating the learning outcomes at that level. A qualification system is all the arrangements – schools, institutions, stakeholders, laws, quality assurance measures and the framework of qualifications – which ultimately deliver better qualifications for employability and lifelong learning.”

-Global Inventory of Regional and National Qualifications Frameworks, 2017

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# Purpose

- Economic impact (neoliberal) to human development (Economic-social equity-Sustainability)
- Catalyst for lifelong learning
- Learning outcomes as common language
- International communication and cooperation

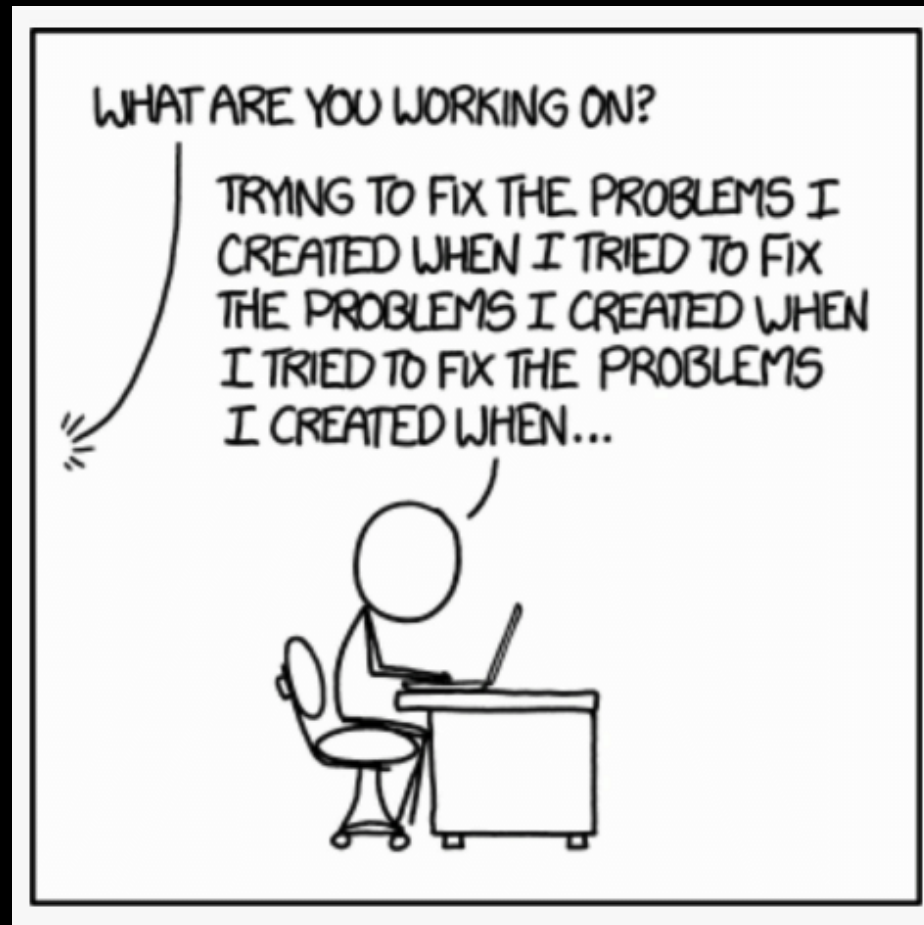
# Features

- Country specific but with common features
  - Legal and regulatory framework
    - Functions, Criteria, Tasks
  - Stakeholder involvement and dialogue
    - Specific roles and vested interest
    - With or without “agency”
  - Institutional arrangements
    - Coordinating institution; skills/sector councils; assessment and QA bodies
  - Quality assurance systems
    - Identify standards, assessments; provide certification



Source: adapted from Johnson and Scholes (1999), *Exploring Corporate Strategy*.

# Addressing “Wicked” Problems







**KEEP  
CALM  
AND TRUST  
QUALITY  
ASSURANCE**

# Quality Assurance: Background

- Long history of informal quality assurance
  - Patronage: Church and Crown
  - Sponsorship: industry, apprentices
  - Markets: Agora or Acropolis
  - Reputation: Longevity and legitimacy
  - Nationalism: Language and culture
  - Prestige: Rankings and research
  - Pride: Self-interest and integrity

# Quality Assurance: Background

- US/UK goes back 100+ years
- 1990s: Current global trend begins
  - Diversification of higher education
  - Student demand
  - Private sector
  - Internationalization
- Now necessary for a modern educational system

# Quality Assurance: Background

- Tension in implementation
- Reflecting the “Public Good”
- Focus is national system
- Government controlled or endorsed

Trust vs. Accountability

# Knights and Knaves in Public Service

LeGrand, 2003

Knights nobly fulfill the public mission



Knaves act for self-interest

# Knights and Knaves in Public Service

LeGrand, 2003

- Internal QA
  - Knights, trust and voice
  - Intrinsic motivation, noble pursuit of truth
- External QA
  - Knaves, Mistrust and choice
  - Quality validated by outside stakeholders

# What is Quality?

- Fitness of purpose
  - Is education relevant to societal needs?
- Quality for the public good
  - For the benefit of society as a whole
  - Greater than the benefit to any single individual
- Purpose is externally imposed

# What is Quality?

- Fitness for purpose
  - How well does education fulfill its objectives?
- Quality determined by mission
  - World-class is equal to vocational
  - Not measured by hierarchy, rankings, prestige
- Purpose internally determined



# What is Quality?

- Fitness to Standards
  - Does education meet performance criteria?
  - Quality is objectively measured
    - Precision within standards frame
    - Standards vary over time: debatable
  - Quality via stakeholder agreement (socially constructed)

# Quality Assurance and Legitimacy

“A generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions”

(Suchman, 1995)

# Quality Assurance and Legitimacy

- *Pragmatic* legitimacy
  - Practical value that an organization has to a particular group of constituents
- *Cognitive* legitimacy
  - Adopting an organizational form that is widely viewed as acceptable
- *Moral* legitimacy
  - The organization is doing the right thing, fundamentally altruistic

# Quality Assurance as Information Resource

- Information for decision-makers
  - Which program best meets students' needs?
  - Supports and encourages choice, competition
    - Value for investment of time and resources
  - Guide allocation of resources
    - Incentivize behavior
    - Monitor compliance

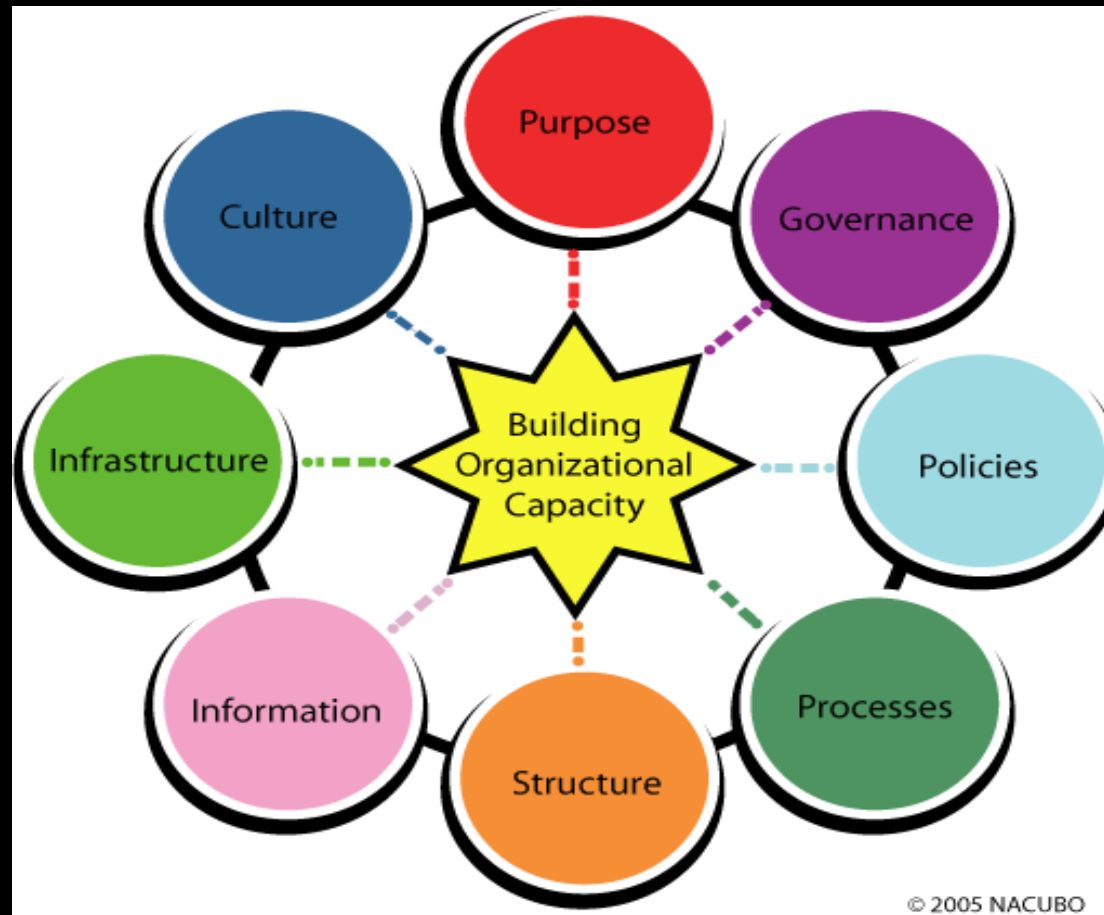
# QA as a Public Good

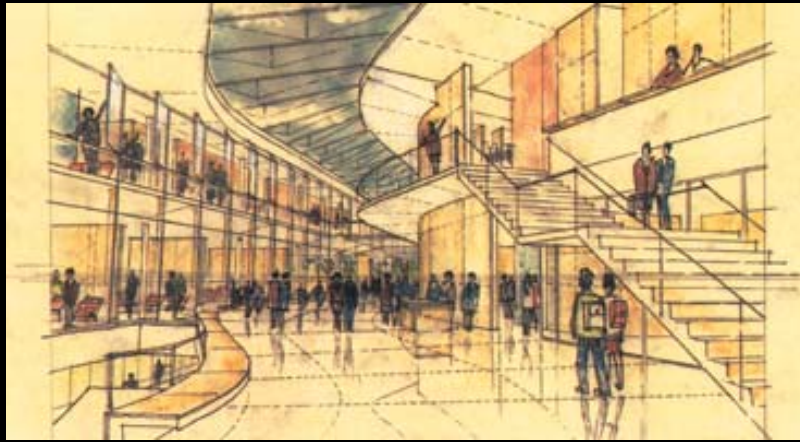
- What purpose should QA serve?
- Who should be its constituents?
- How much power should external QA have?
- Who should determine the standards?
- What should be the balance between consistency and innovation?

# QA in a Competitive Market

- Transnational QA
- Exporting QA
- QA and education-as-trade
- QA as consumer information

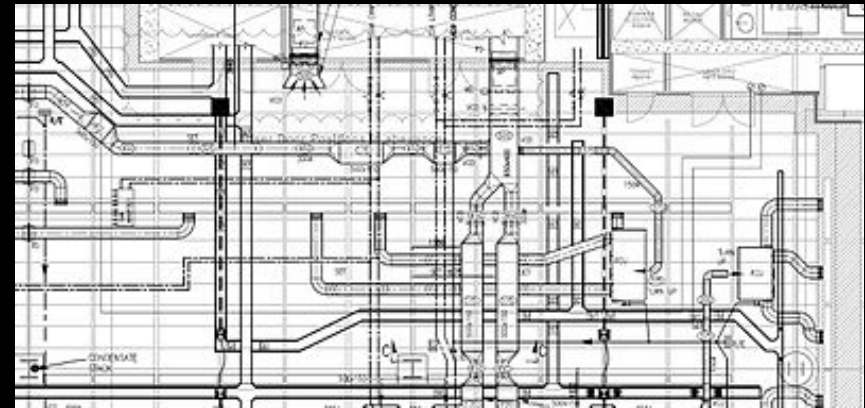
# Building Organizational Capacity for Quality Assurance





Architectural Drawing

Engineering schematic



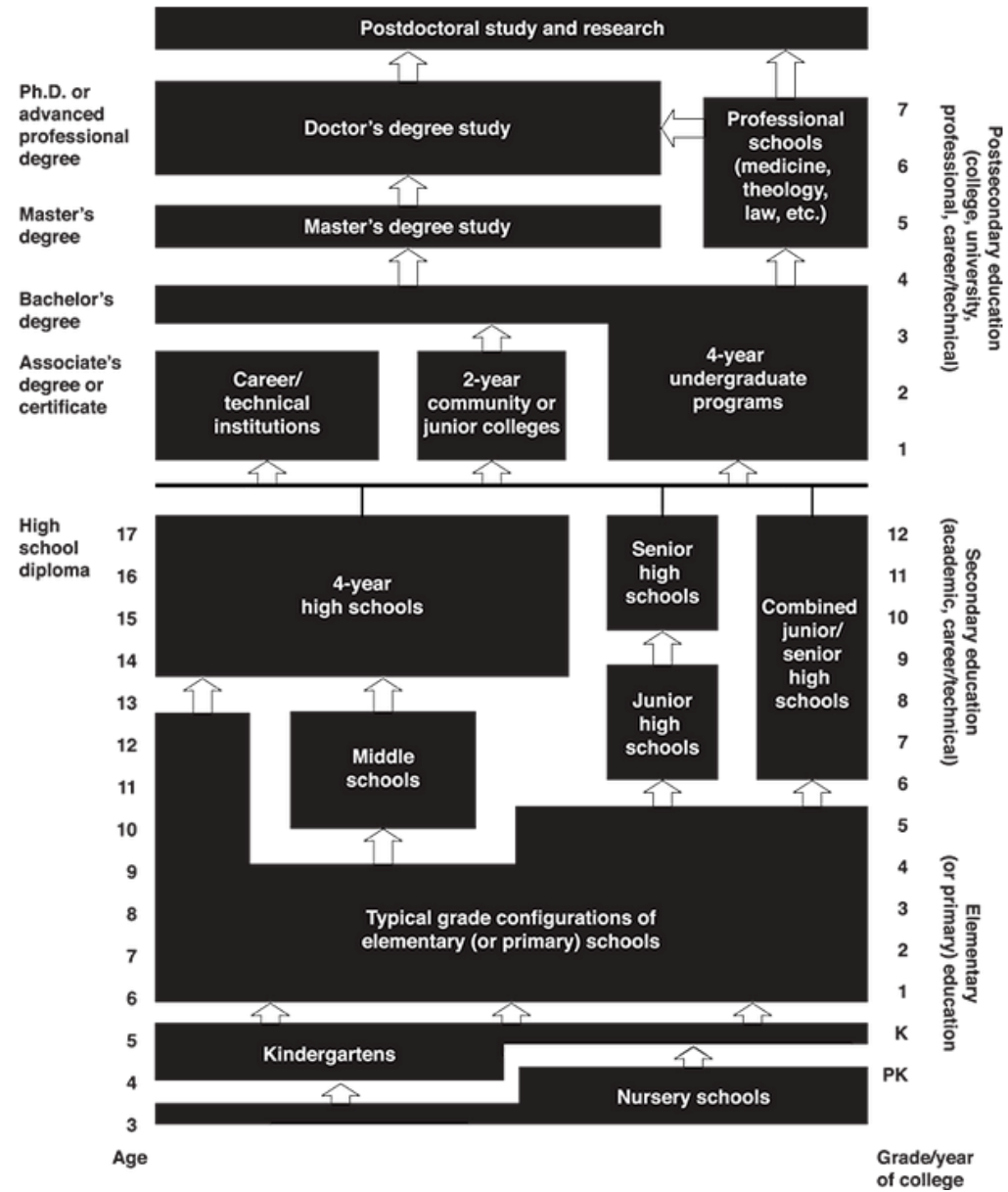


# Key Questions for Assessing Capacity

- What do you know about what your institution is doing?
  - Big picture and specific details
  - Culture of evidence
- What incentives are in place?
  - Explicit and Implicit
  - Encouraging and Discouraging
  - Internal and external
- What are your relative strengths?
  - Elevator pitch targeted to each audience
- What is your current focus for improvement?

# United States Case

Figure 1. The structure of education in the United States



# Carnegie Classification of Higher Education

Basic Classification									
Distribution of institutions by classification category and control									
Category	Number of Institutions			Column Percentage Distribution			Row Percentage Distribution		
	Public	Private, non-profit	Private, for profit	Public	Private, non-profit	Private, for profit	Public	Private, non-profit	Private, for profit
Doctoral Universities: Very High Research Activity	94	37	0	5.7%	2.1%	0.0%	71.8%	28.2%	0.0%
Doctoral Universities: High Research Activity	91	43	1	5.5%	2.5%	0.1%	67.4%	31.9%	0.7%
Doctoral/Professional Universities	29	106	17	1.8%	6.1%	1.8%	19.1%	69.7%	11.2%
Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs	161	169	19	9.8%	9.7%	2.0%	46.1%	48.4%	5.4%
Master's Colleges & Universities: Medium Programs	58	125	12	3.5%	7.2%	1.3%	29.7%	64.1%	6.2%
Master's Colleges & Universities: Small Programs	36	84	18	2.2%	4.8%	1.9%	26.1%	60.9%	13.0%
Baccalaureate Colleges: Arts & Sciences Focus	28	210	3	1.7%	12.1%	0.3%	11.6%	87.1%	1.2%
Baccalaureate Colleges: Diverse Fields	77	203	55	4.7%	11.7%	5.9%	23.0%	60.6%	16.4%
Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges: Mixed Baccalaureate/Associate's	43	36	72	2.6%	2.1%	7.8%	28.5%	23.8%	47.7%
Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges: Associate's Dominant	91	7	13	5.5%	0.4%	1.4%	82.0%	6.3%	11.7%
Associate's Colleges: High Transfer-High Traditional	113	7	2	6.8%	0.4%	0.2%	92.6%	5.7%	1.6%
Associate's Colleges: High Transfer-Mixed Traditional/Nontraditional	117	1	0	7.1%	0.1%	0.0%	99.2%	0.8%	0.0%
Associate's Colleges: High Transfer-High Nontraditional	80	2	0	4.8%	0.1%	0.0%	97.6%	2.4%	0.0%
Associate's Colleges: Mixed Transfer/Career & Technical-High Traditional	119	2	2	7.2%	0.1%	0.2%	96.7%	1.6%	1.6%
Associate's Colleges: Mixed Transfer/Career & Technical-Mixed Traditional/Nontraditional	105	1	0	6.4%	0.1%	0.0%	99.1%	0.9%	0.0%
Associate's Colleges: Mixed Transfer/Career & Technical-High Nontraditional	110	0	1	6.7%	0.0%	0.1%	99.1%	0.0%	0.9%
Associate's Colleges: High Career & Technical-High Traditional	63	8	67	3.8%	0.5%	7.2%	45.7%	5.8%	48.6%
Associate's Colleges: High Career & Technical-Mixed Traditional/Nontraditional	70	4	24	4.2%	0.2%	2.6%	71.4%	4.1%	24.5%
Associate's Colleges: High Career & Technical-High Nontraditional	74	3	24	4.5%	0.2%	2.6%	73.3%	3.0%	23.8%
Special Focus Two-Year: Health Professions	5	30	232	0.3%	1.7%	25.0%	1.9%	11.2%	86.9%
Special Focus Two-Year: Technical Professions	3	12	52	0.2%	0.7%	5.6%	4.5%	17.9%	77.6%
Special Focus Two-Year: Arts & Design	0	10	21	0.0%	0.6%	2.3%	0.0%	32.3%	67.7%
Special Focus Two-Year: Other Fields	4	20	43	0.2%	1.1%	4.6%	6.0%	29.9%	64.2%
Special Focus Four-Year: Faith-Related Institutions	0	299	1	0.0%	17.2%	0.1%	0.0%	99.7%	0.3%
Special Focus Four-Year: Medical Schools & Centers	13	21	1	0.8%	1.2%	0.1%	37.1%	60.0%	2.9%
Special Focus Four-Year: Other Health Professions Schools	17	151	114	1.0%	8.7%	12.3%	6.0%	53.5%	40.4%
Special Focus Four-Year: Engineering Schools	1	5	1	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	14.3%	71.4%	14.3%
Special Focus Four-Year: Other Technology-Related Schools	1	7	6	0.1%	0.4%	0.6%	7.1%	50.0%	42.9%
Special Focus Four-Year: Business & Management Schools	0	25	52	0.0%	1.4%	5.6%	0.0%	32.5%	67.5%
Special Focus Four-Year: Arts, Music & Design Schools	4	57	60	0.2%	3.3%	6.5%	3.3%	47.1%	49.6%
Special Focus Four-Year: Law Schools	6	22	8	0.4%	1.3%	0.9%	16.7%	61.1%	22.2%
Special Focus Four-Year: Other Special Focus Institutions	11	28	8	0.7%	1.6%	0.9%	23.4%	59.6%	17.0%
Tribal Colleges	27	7	0	1.6%	0.4%	0.0%	79.4%	20.6%	0.0%
All Institutions	1,651	1,742	929	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	38.2%	40.3%	21.5%

# United States Higher Education: Many Missions, Many Masters

- Triad: Federal, State, Accreditation
- Public, Private, For-profit
- Elite and Mass
- Autonomy and Accountability
- Teaching, Research, Service
- Innovative and Traditional
- Diversity, Choice, Selectivity

# United States Quality Assurance Systems

- Voluntary, Non-governmental Accreditation
- Linked to eligibility for financial aid
- Over sixty agencies: Institutional and program
- Main agencies have a sub-national (regional) focus
- Confidential peer review
- Standards vary, but with reciprocity

# Challenges

- Large and complex organization
- Faculty autonomy
- Discipline-based reward system
- Administrative constraints and shared governance
- Information asymmetry
- Conflicting stakeholder demands

“A Fight is Brewing in Washington over College Accreditors” (*Washington Post*, 2015)

“The Watchdogs of College Education Rarely Bite” (*Wall Street Journal*, 2015)

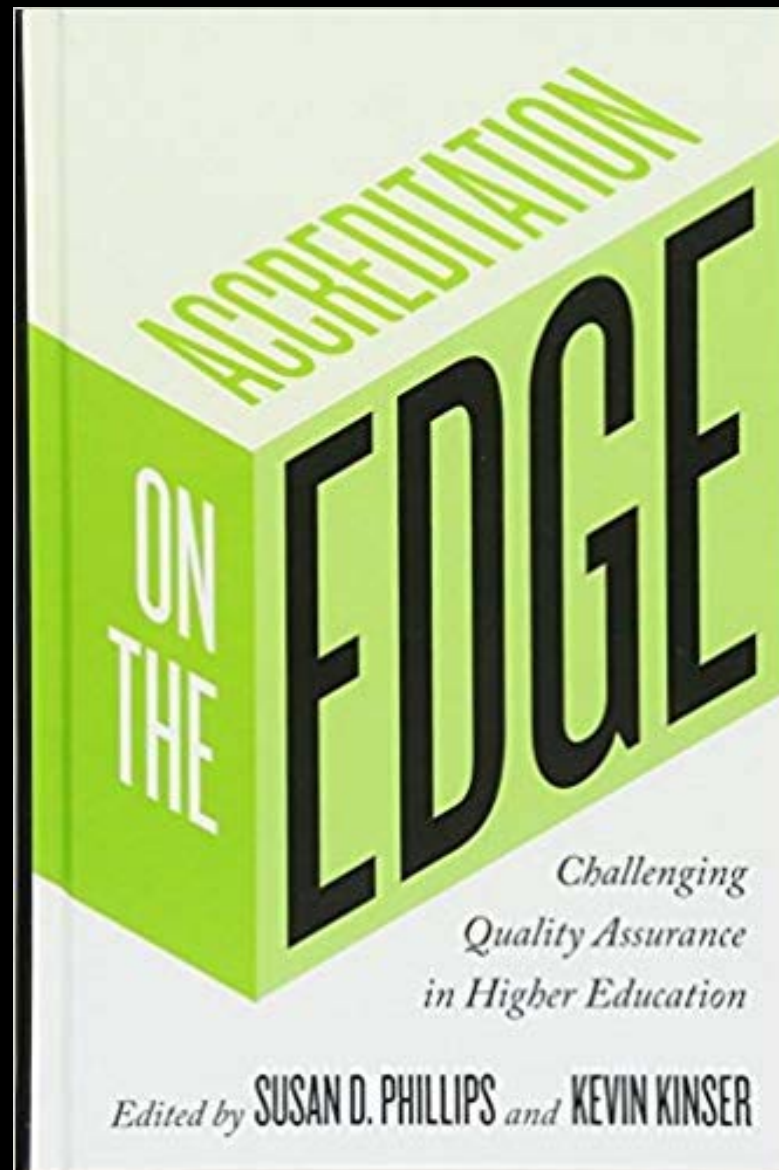
“Senate Investigative Panel Opens Inquiry about College Accreditors” (*Inside Higher Ed*, 2015)

“Who Keeps Billions of Taxpayer Dollars Flowing to For-Profit Colleges? These Guys” (*ProPublica*, 2015)

“Predator Colleges May Thrive Again” (*New York Times*, 2017)


“It Oversaw For-Profit Colleges That Imploded. Now It Seeks a Comeback” (*New York Times*, 2018)





Edited by **SUSAN D. PHILLIPS** and **KEVIN KINSER**

# Accreditation on the Edge

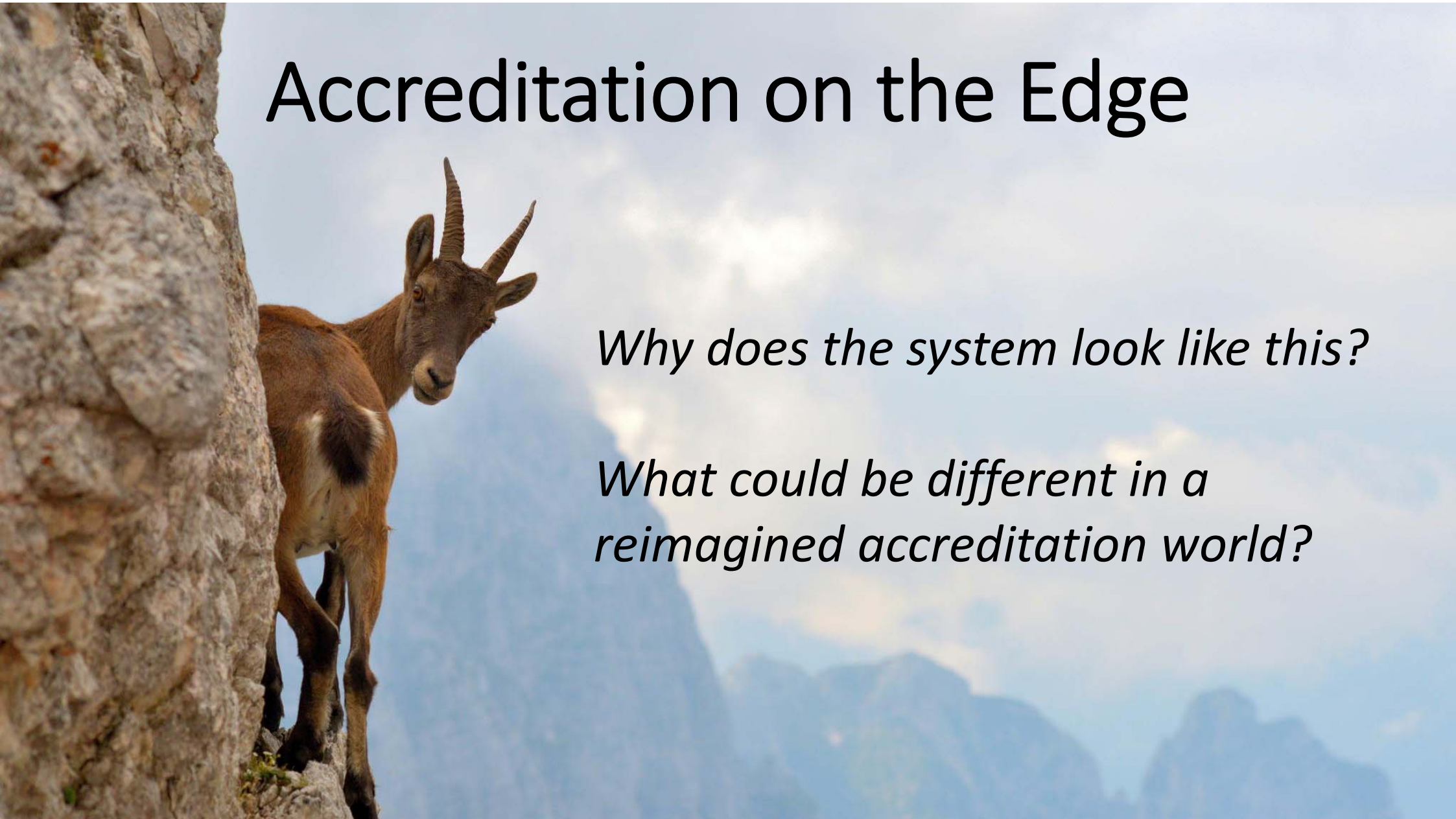


*“US accreditation as it exists now is the worst form of oversight in higher education, except for anything else we have come up with.”*

# Accreditation on the Edge

*Why does the system look like this?*

*What could be different in a  
reimagined accreditation world?*



# Perfect Storm

- New providers
- Alternative delivery mechanisms
- Scandals and Consumer protection
- Public support
- Student debt

# Accreditation on the front burner

- Is accreditation working as a reliable authority of quality?
- Can it identify bad actors and take action against them?
- Does it have too much authority, or not enough?
- How much higher ed do we want to pay for?
- Is it a good investment?
- Will graduates get good jobs?
- Will taxpayer dollars be safe?

# “New Normal” for accreditation

Can accreditors do the job  
they have been given?

Should they even have that  
job?

If not them, then who?

# Accreditation future in the US?

- Its time has passed
- The needs of the higher education system outstrip its ability to perform
- The interests of the many stakeholders are irreconcilable

OR...

- Tracking the transformation of higher education
- Re-envisioning its mission
- Shaping a high-quality 21<sup>st</sup> century educational system

# Current debates and problematic solutions

- Challenges of a messy and complicated system
- Measuring quality in higher education
- Who controls accreditation policy?
- Information and transparency
- Addressing emerging and innovative providers



# A high-quality 21<sup>st</sup> century educational system

- Is trustable and trusted
- Catches the bad actors
- Helps those who falter improve
- Makes room for new models and methods
- Makes best use of the peer- and disciplinary expert review process
- Respects the uniqueness of institutional mission and also the common mission of higher education in the US
- Encourages institutions to stay on their toes (but not necessarily dance in the same way)
- Recognizes and incorporates the increasingly global realities of higher education
- Provides information about quality that helps the public make their education decisions
- Has accountability for oversight across federal, state, and accrediting actors
- Recommits us to mission, academic freedom, and institutional autonomy--while redoubling efforts to put student learning at the center of a transparent quality assurance process.

# NATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK: ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATIONALISATION

**Prof Kevin Kinser**

Pennsylvania State University, USA  
and

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University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka

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# Higher Education In Sri Lanka

- ▣ Past – only State Universities
- ▣ Present –
  - State Universities
  - Non State Higher Education Institutes - NSHEIs
  - Trans National Education

# Quality Assurance of Higher Education in Sri Lanka

- ▣ Initiated – around 2004
- ▣ QAAC – established around 2006
- ▣ In State Universities,
  - First cycle of QA completed – Institutional and Subject Reviews
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle in progress – Institutional and Program Reviews

NSHEIs

IRs and SRs at inception

## Short title and date of operation

- Higher Education (Quality Assurance and Accreditation) Act No. ....2018



# Establishment of the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Commission for Higher Education

- ▣ Commission will be established – named the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Commission for Higher Education
- ▣ Would be referred to as Commission
- ▣ Would be the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation for Higher Education



## Objects of the Commission

- ▣ To establish a System of QAA based on the principles of good governance to maintain the high standard of quality of educational Institutions
- ▣ To act as the apex body for QAA at National level
- ▣ To map the different qualifications in accordance with the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF) to facilitate the cross mobility



## Constitution of the Commission

- ▣ Commission – will have 9 members appointed by the President from a panel of 15 persons nominated by the Minister
- ▣ The President shall appoint a member as the Chairman having regard to the members experience in dealing with matters relating to QA in higher education
- ▣ At least 5/9 members would be full time





- ▣ determine policies, standards and criteria and update standards, criteria and procedures as appropriate for Accreditation and QA of HEIs in accordance with the prescribed manuals, tools, devices or relevant international standards



# Powers and Functions of the Commission

- ▣ **SLQF**  
formulate, implement and update SLQF
- ▣ **Cooperation with QAA bodies**  
establish and maintain liaison and cooperation with any professional or any statutory or any regulatory body or QAA bodies in HE within and outside Sri Lanka on matters relating to QAA

**Powers, Functions**

- ▣ **Quality auditors**

appoint trained and experienced quality auditors to conduct institutional and program audits and external quality assurance reviews

- ▣ **Accreditation**

grant provisional and or full accreditation to HEIs and to Programs and review such accreditation from time to time

**Program**

**Institutional Audit**

- ▣ **Revoke Accreditation**

revoke full or provisional accreditation granted to HEIs and Programs conducted thereof that are not keeping up with the required quality and standards determined by the Commission

- ▣ **Complaints and Action**

inquire in to complaints relating to the noncompliance with accreditation requirements by a HEI or a Program and to take appropriate action



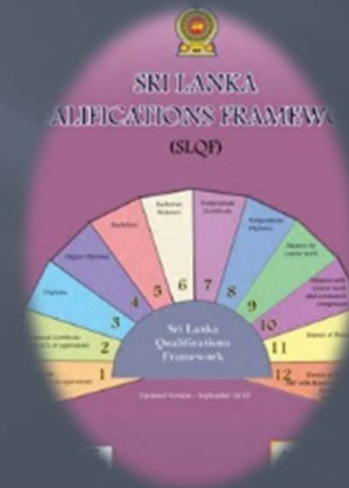
## Foreign Qualifications

evaluate foreign degrees, diplomas and other academic distinctions for the purpose of recognition or accreditation of such degrees, diplomas or academic distinctions in consultation with the relevant professional or statutory or regulatory body or foreign academic institution where necessary



- ▣ **Minimum admission criteria**

evaluate from time to time where necessary in consultation with the relevant professional bodies or statutory bodies or regulatory bodies whether the minimum admission criteria for student enrollment in to academic programs are in compliance with the SLQF



- ▣ **Qualification compliance with SLQF**

assess whether the degrees and qualifications awarded by the HEIs are in compliance with the qualification descriptors and learning outcomes as set in the SLQF

- ▣ **Recommend qualification level**

make recommendations on the appropriate level of qualifications according to the SLQF to be adopted for HE programs and vocational and technical training programs offered by HEIs



- ▣ **Mapping for cross mobility**

map higher educational qualifications against vocational qualifications including SLQF and NVQF to facilitate cross mobility of students

- ▣ **Recommendations for engagement in HE**

recommend to the HEIs to provide opportunities to persons based on their abilities, experiences and capacities including any exemptions on age limitations, enabling such persons to engage in HE

The logo for the National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) system. It features the letters 'NVQ' in a stylized, serif font. Above the letters, there are five small red dots arranged in a slight arc. The entire logo is set against a white circular background that has a soft glow effect.



- ▣ **make recommendations for quality improvements in HEIs**

- ▣ **Maintain a register**

collect, disseminate information relating to HE and maintain and update a register of accredited HEIs and accredited programs and publish the names of such accredited HEIs and accredited programs in the print and electronic media



- ▣ **Commission staff appointments**

appoint officers and employees to the staff of the Commission and to appoint experts and committees to the Commission

- ▣ **Fees**

levy fees or charges for any service rendered by the Commission



- ▣ **Agreements and contracts**

enter in to such agreements, contracts as may be necessary or expedient for the performance and discharge of the duties and functions

- ▣ **Circulars**

issue circulars from time to time to all HEIs and to their professional and academic staff as may become necessary in connection with the performance and discharge of their duties and functions



## System for accreditation

design and administer a system prescribed by regulations for accreditation of HEIs providing HE, and other organizations or bodies of persons who either directly or indirectly offer or provide any service relating to or connected with providing HE



- ▣ **Codes of Practice and Monitoring**

develop and publish codes of practice relating to the content, delivery and technical standards for HE services and monitor compliance with such codes



## **Recognition**

recognize a professional or statutory or regulatory body local or foreign in the manner prescribed by regulations under section 52

## **Require Minimum Standards**

require the relevant professional or statutory or regulatory body to determine minimum standards relating to the grant of accreditation of a professional program or qualification

Regulatory Body

- ▣ **Engage in Research**

engage in research, development studies and technical cooperation projects relating to or connected with the discharge and performance of the functions and duties of the Commission

- ▣ **Gazette notifications**

specify by notification in the Gazette the levels of accreditation or certification and inspection marks, logos approved and granted by the Commission to HEIs and its programs and control the use of such marks and logos

**COMMISSION**

## Property

acquire by way of purchase or otherwise, any movable or immovable property and hold, take or give on lease or hire, mortgage, pledge and sell or otherwise dispose of in accordance with the provisions of this Act, any such movable or immovable property of the Commission

COMMISSION



- ▣ **Accounts**

open and maintain bank accounts with any bank as determined by the Commission and authorize any person to operate such account or accounts on behalf of the Commission

- ▣ **Member**

become a member of an affiliate or any international body, the functions and duties of which are similar to the functions of the Commission by or under this Act



**FUNCTIONS, DUTIES**

## **Consultancy services**

provide within or outside Sri Lanka consultancy services or any technical, managerial or other services in any area whether by itself or in association with any other authority, in which the Commission possess the skill or expertise



## ▣ **Grants and Services**

receive grants or contributions from any sources whatsoever and to raise funds by all lawful means and apply such funds in the performance and discharge of the duties and functions of the Commission

**COMMISSION**

- ▣ **Provide training**

provide training in QA, A and SLQF whether by itself or with the cooperation of any other person as the Commission thinks fit, to the officers and employees of the Commission or any other person involved in providing HE at any HEI and to award scholarships for such training



- ▣ **Rules**

make rules in respect of the matters for which rules are required to be made under the Act

- ▣ **Engage in Acts**

do all such acts which are not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act as may be expedient for the accomplishment of the objects of this Commission

OBJECT

Thank you

# Small Group Task

Considering the Sri Lanka and US cases, and the background information, please consider the current position of your country with respect to its quality assurance framework. Looking five years out, what do you expect the future to be for your framework? What do you think will need to be added, changed, or implemented?

Focus your attention on the four common features of national quality frameworks discussed in the session:

- Legal and regulatory frameworks
- Stakeholder involvement
- Institutional arrangements
- Quality assurance systems

Please report your main ideas on a single slide that will be projected so all workshop participants can consider and discuss your points