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United Nations  
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# Internal Quality Assurance and employability

*INQAAHE talk on Unlocking the potential of Quality  
Assurance in Tertiary Education to trigger  
Employability, 30 November 2024*

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## Defining employability

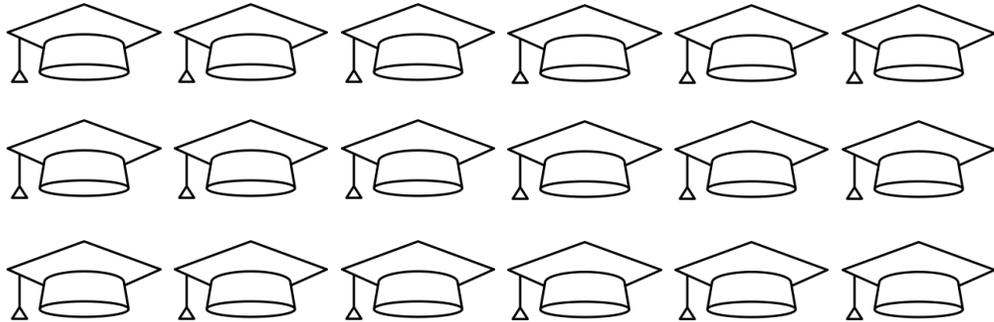
*“a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes that make graduates more employable and successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy”*

*York (2006)*

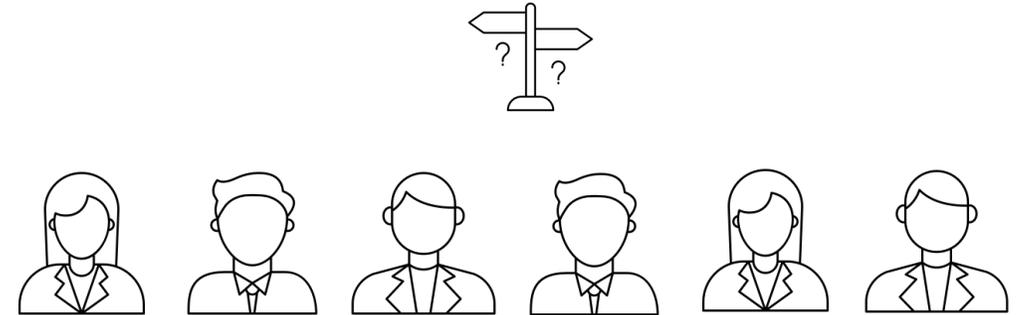
- not only about ‘getting a first job’, but also about looking into the future working lives of graduates
- must include perspectives of graduates, employers but also academics and students
- This multiple stakeholder view creates tensions

# Mismatch between labour market needs and graduate profiles

Rapid expansion of enrolments in higher education sector



Increased share of unemployed people with tertiary education in the Global South\*



No simultaneous adaptation of economies and labour market

Mismatch between skills required in the labour market and graduates' profiles

## Mismatch between labour market needs and graduate profiles

- More pressure on higher education institutions to adapt their education and training to labour market needs
- Employability is currently seen as a major outcome of HE
- Development of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) processes that are directed towards the enhancement of graduate employability



### IIEP research programme on Internal Quality assurance

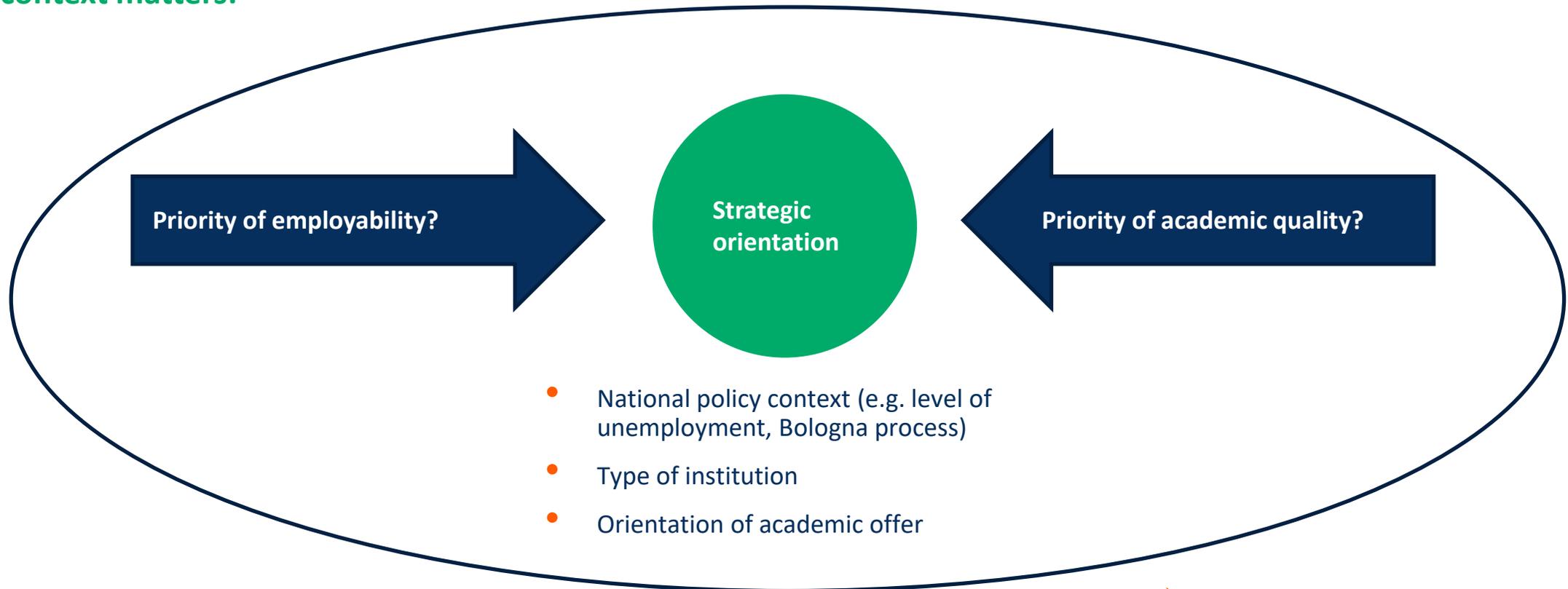
- Analysis of existing IQA practices and their effects
- International survey in 2015/16
- Eight universities from six world regions participated



How do universities integrate employability concerns in their IQA practices?

# 1. Different views on the role of the university regarding employability

The context matters:



➤ Varying views between universities

➤ Varying views between faculties



## 2. The role of IQA in enhancing employability

- Overall, IQA was seen as having a positive influence on graduate employability
- *Indirect* link between IQA and employability
  - IQA practices enhance university's reputation and graduate employability as a consequence
- *Direct* link between IQA and employability
  - IQA helped to build strong interaction between academics and labour market representatives

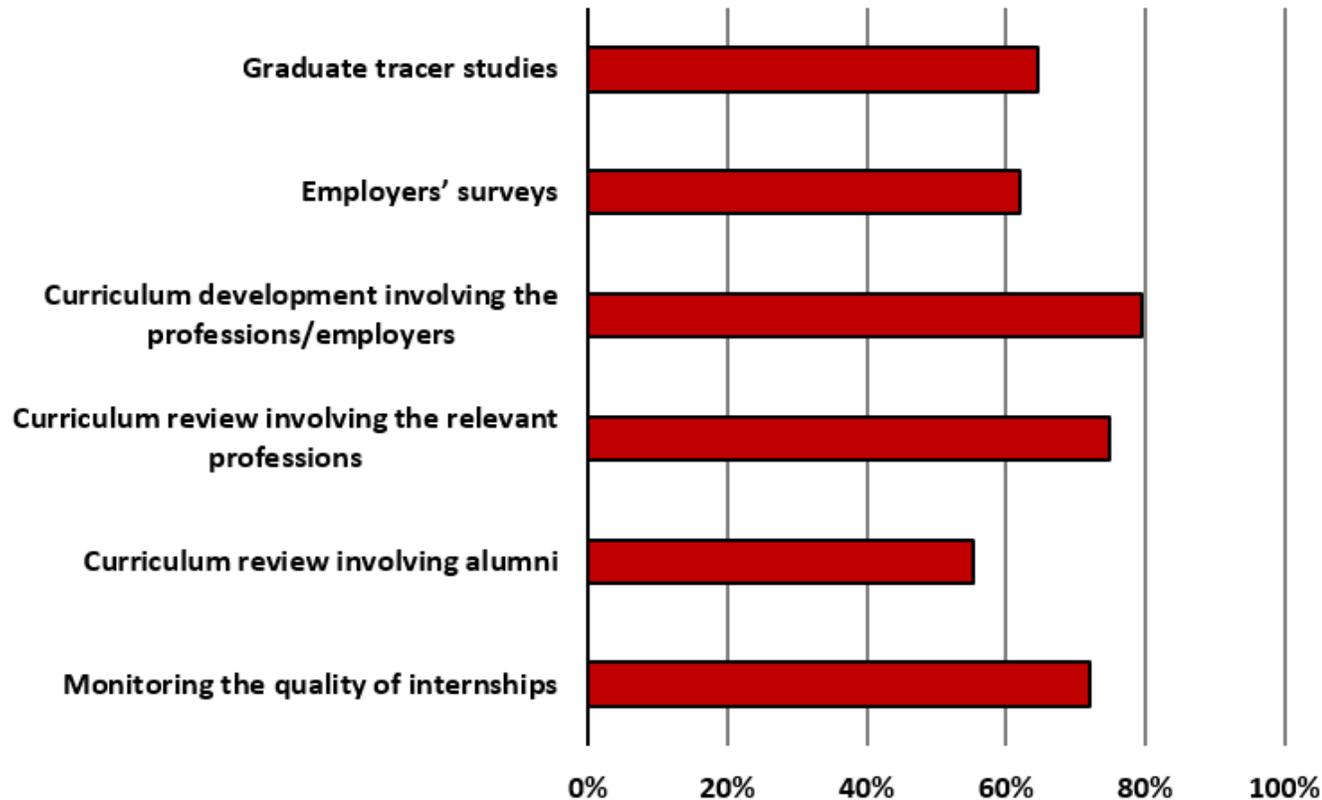


## 3. Existing IQA tools and processes to enhance employability

### Overview

1. Involving *employers, professionals and alumni* in the development and review of academic programmes and curricula
2. Graduates can be surveyed through *traces studies* at specific intervals
3. *Employer satisfaction surveys* can be conducted to collect information on employer's appreciation of graduates
4. *Monitoring of internships* can help to analyse the fit between academic programmes and the labour market
5. *Job market analysis* in order to assess market need and job opportunities

## 4. Tools and processes used to enhance employability



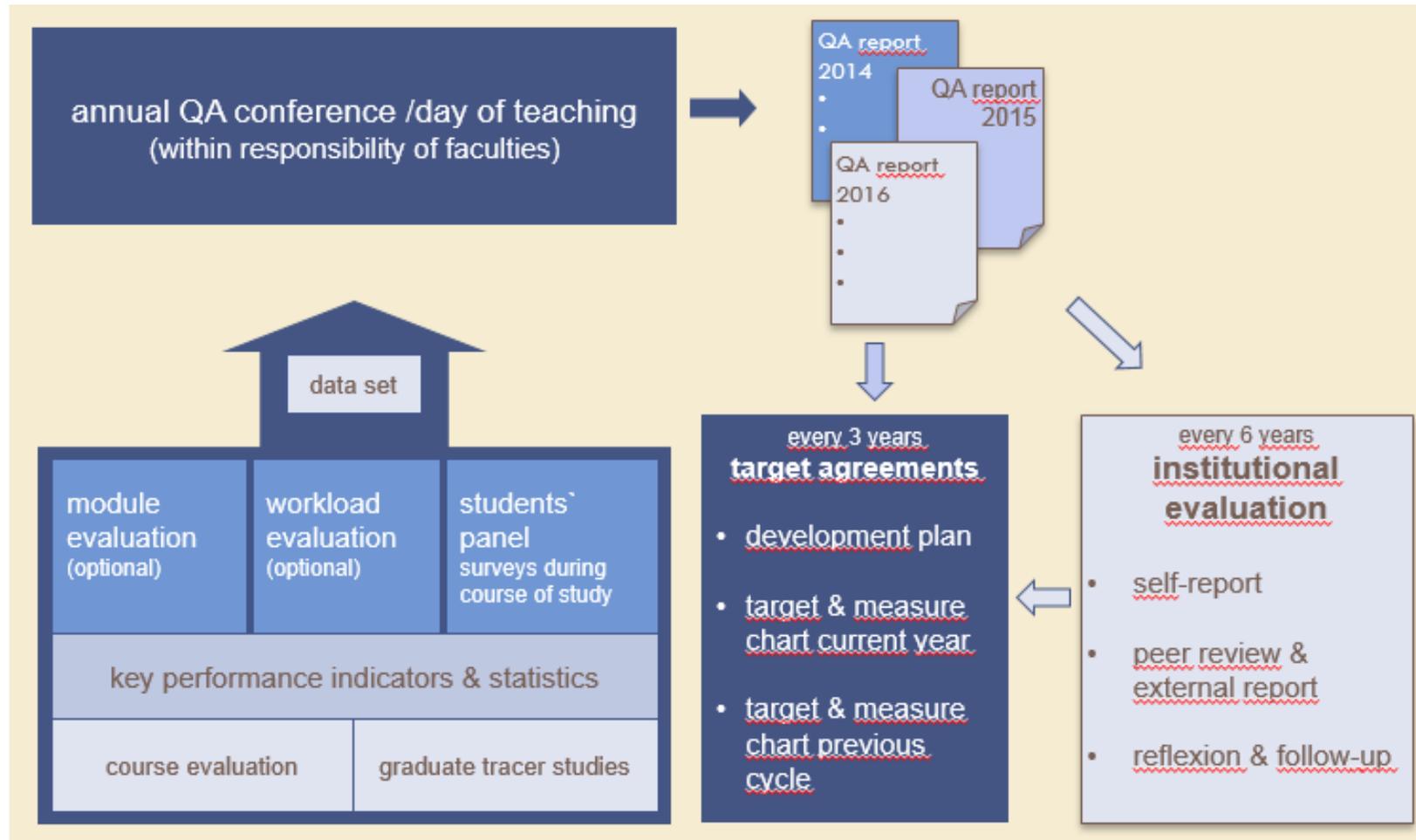
**Universities were asked about the kind of tools and processes they use to enhance employability**

- Curriculum development involving professionals (79%),
- curriculum review (75%) and
- Monitoring the quality of internships (72%) are the more popular tools



Focus on:

# University of Duisburg-Essen's use of data to enhance employability



## Conclusion

- The effects of increasing student numbers provide good reasons to regard employability as a major learning outcome of higher education.
- However, contextual factors influence the perceived importance of employability of universities.
- The participation of graduates and employers in the review of study programmes has been formalized by most universities.
- Involving external stakeholders formally or informally in programme reviews seems to be a good strategy to enhance employability.
- However, a balance between labour markets demands and academic quality of study programmes is necessary.
- Tensions remain when it comes to making decisions on strategies for the enhancement of employability.



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