



ASEAN UNIVERSITY NETWORK QUALITY - ASSURANCE

MANUAL FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GUIDELINES





HRK German Rectors' Conference
The Voice of the Universities

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Preface

The Manual for the Implementation of the AUN-QA Guidelines is as a road map for what the AUN-QA calls “the Journey to Uplift the Quality of Higher Education in ASEAN Universities”.

With the Assistance from the ASEAN-EU University Network Programme (AUNP) in the area of Quality Assurance (QA), Drs. Ton Vroeijenstijn was recruited to conduct surveys and workshops at the AUN member universities in 9 ASEAN countries. Workshops were conducted, basing on the common criteria and procedures described in the AUN-QA Guidelines. In July 2005, The Chief Quality Officers (CQOs) gathered at the ASEAN Regional Workshop on QA at Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City to discuss concepts and elements of internal and external assessment and also to outline the structure of the national workshops in order to suit each university’s requirement. Subsequent workshops on QA were conducted in Viet Nam, Thailand, Indonesia, Lao PDR, the Philippines, Cambodia, Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam. The Workshops appeared that the Guidelines were not always clear and were sometimes difficult to interpret and implement. It was shown the need to set a workshop on the AUN-QA to train CQOs and to put the Guidelines into practices.

The CQOs met again at the Workshop in Yogyakarta in December 2005. They agreed to develop a Working Manual, supporting the universities for applying the AUN-QA Guidelines. The Manual would help the universities’ understanding on the Guidelines. To complete with the Manual, the German Rectors’ Conference (HRK) expressed their willingness to cooperate with the AUN in the framework of regionalization of Quality Assurance as happening in Central America and East Africa. During May - October 2006, the HRK assigned Drs. Ton Vroeijenstijn to work closely with the CQOs in order to finalize the Manual.

At the 20th AUN-BOT Meeting in November 2006, the Board of Trustees endorsed the Manual for the Implementation of AUN-QA Guidelines as the AUN publication.

On behalf of the ASEAN University Network Secretariat, I would like to express my deep gratitude and appreciation to HRK and AUN Member Universities for their support and excellent contribution to the AUN-QA. My special thanks express to Drs. Ton Vroeijenstijn and Ms. Marijke Wahler of HRK and all CQOs for their continuous commitment and valuable participation in our AUN-QA Activities.



Associate Professor Piniti Ratananukul, Ph.D.
AUN Executive Director

Table of Contents

FOREWORD.....	1
INTRODUCTION	3
<i>Development of the AUN-QA Guidelines</i>	3
<i>A manual for the implementation of the AUN-QA Guidelines</i>	5
1. QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION	8
1.1 <i>What is quality and can it be measured?</i>	8
1.2 <i>A quality model for higher education</i>	16
1.3 <i>Towards an Internal Quality Assurance system</i>	19
2. HOW TO DISCOVER OUR QUALITY?.....	26
2.1 <i>Function of the self-assessment</i>	26
2.2 <i>Principles of effective self-assessment</i>	27
3. SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE IQA SYSTEM.....	30
3.1 <i>The IQA model, a useful tool in self-assessment</i>	30
3.2 <i>Self-assessment in practice</i>	31
3.3 <i>Is the university ready for the AUN-QA label?</i>	41
3.4 <i>The follow up</i>	41
3.5 <i>The AUN-QA label</i>	41
4. SELF-ASSESSMENT AT PROGRAMME LEVEL	45
4.1 <i>A quality model for teaching and learning</i>	45
4.2 <i>Self-assessment in practice</i>	47
4.3 <i>The self-assessment report</i>	68
5. SELF-ASSESSMENT AT INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL	71
5.1 <i>A quality model for institutions</i>	71
5.2 <i>Self-assessment in practice</i>	73
5.3 <i>Strengths/weaknesses analysis</i>	87
6. INTER-COLLEGIAL ASSESSMENT.....	89
6.1 <i>Why inter-collegial assessment?</i>	89
6.2 <i>Preparing the assessment</i>	90
6.3 <i>The assessment</i>	93
6.4 <i>Concluding remarks</i>	98
7. EPILOGUE.....	99
SUPPLEMENT.....	101
HARMONISATION OF ACCREDITATION IN THE ASEAN REGION	101
INTRODUCTION	101
1. EXTERNAL ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION	102
2. ACCREDITATION IN THE REGION	103
2.1 <i>Accreditation in Indonesia</i>	104
2.2 <i>Accreditation in Malaysia</i>	106
2.2.1 <i>Lembaga Akreditasi Negara (LAN)</i>	106
2.2.2 <i>The Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA)</i>	109
2.3 <i>Accreditation in the Philippines</i>	110
2.3.1 <i>AACCUP</i>	111
2.3.2 <i>PAASCU</i>	114
2.3.3 <i>PACUCOA</i>	116
2.4 <i>Accreditation in Thailand</i>	118

3. HARMONISING ACCREDITATION	124
3.1 Quality Assurance and the Bologna Process	124
3.2 A pilot consortium for international accreditation	126
3.3 The Joint Quality Initiative and the Dublin descriptors	127
3.4. The European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA)	128
3.5. The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education	129
3.6. Final conclusion	130
4. CONDITIONS FOR HARMONISING ACCREDITATION IN THE ASEAN COUNTRIES ..	131
4.1. The INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice.....	131
4.2. ENQA Standards and Guidelines.....	135
4.3. The European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) Code of Good Practice	138
4.4 Benchmark standards for a reliable accreditation agency	139
4.5 A common framework for accreditation.....	140
4.6 Conclusions	143
APPENDIX 1: CORRELATION BETWEEN THE AUN-QA GUIDELINES AND THE MANUAL	144
APPENDIX 2: FLOW CHART AUN-QA GUIDELINES AND THE MANUAL	145
APPENDIX 3: THE REVISED AUN-QA CRITERIA FOR QA SYSTEMS	148
APPENDIX 4: CHECKLIST ON THE QUALITY OF AN IQA SYSTEM	151
APPENDIX 5: CHECKLIST ON THE QUALITY OF A PROGRAMME.....	153
APPENDIX 6: CHECKLIST ON THE QUALITY OF AN INSTITUTION.....	156
APPENDIX 7: SCALING AND RATING.....	159
REFERENCES	160
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.....	161
Figure 1. Different views of quality	9
Figure 2: Quality assurance as an object of negotiation between the relevant parties	11
Figure 3: Relationship between performance indicators and expert assessment	15
Figure 4: Quality model for a university.....	16
Figure 5: Quality model for teaching and learning.....	17
Figure 6: Quality model for research	18
Figure 7: Quality model for the contribution to society and the community.....	18
Figure 8: The quality assurance system in HE	20
Figure 9: Deming Cycle (PDCA)	21
Figure 10: Quality model for an IQA system.....	23
Figure 11: Quality model for teaching/learning.....	45
Figure 12: Quality model for institutions	71
Figure 13: Quality model for research	79
Figure 14: A common framework for accreditation.....	141
Table 1: Stakeholder appreciation of the quality aspects	10
Table 2: Organising a self-assessment	28
Table 3: Subjects for the assessment of the IQA system	43
Table 4: Draft programme for a quality audit.....	44
Table 5: Number of staff (specify reference date)	56
Table 6: Staff/student ratio and staff/graduate ratio (please specify the year)	57
Table 7: Intake of first-year students	58
Table 8: Total number of students (last 5 academic years).....	58
Table 9: Student performance (last 8 to 10 cohorts)	66
Table 10: Subjects for programme assessment	68
Table 11: Content of a self-assessment report at programme level	70
Table 12: Subjects for an institutional assessment.....	88
Table 13: Draft programme for a site visit	95
Table 14: Content of an assessment report	97
Table 15: Quality standards of ONESQA in Thailand.....	120
Table 16: Accreditation in the ASEAN countries compared.....	122
Table 17: Benchmark standards for a reliable accreditation agency	140

FOREWORD

The Chief Quality Officers (CQOs) of the AUN member universities met at a workshop in Yogyakarta In December 2005, after which the following statement was issued:

"The AUN-QA agree to revise the AUN-QA Guidelines¹ which comprise common definitions of quality, criteria and standards; guidelines and a manual for self-assessment and auditing and rules and procedures for awarding an AUN-QA-label"

During a series of workshops held within the framework of the AUNP Technical Assistance Mission "Quality Assurance in ASEAN" (July-September 2005)² it appeared that many universities found that the Guidelines were not always clear, were sometimes difficult to interpret and were not always easy to implement. This is why importance was given to developing a manual to help universities apply the AUN-QA Guidelines. The manual would help the universities to understand the Guidelines better and to implement them.

This manual does not replace the AUN-QA Guidelines, but rather complements them³.

I had the pleasure of having the lead in compiling this manual and in acting as its editor, thanks to a financial contribution made by the German Rectors' Conference (HRK). However without the valuable contribution, support and comments of the following Chief Quality Officers (CQOs) and other experts, it would have been impossible to edit this manual. Therefore, I would like to thank Associate Professor Dr. Piniti Ratananukul, Executive Director AUN, Dr. Nantana Gajasen, AUN Deputy Executive Director, Dr. Tan Kay Chuan, National University of Singapore, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rana Pongruengphant, Burapha University, Thailand, Dr. Damrong Thawesaengskulthai, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, Dr. Wan Ahmad Kamil Mahmood, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Prof. Lim Mong King, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nguyen Phuong Nga , VNU-Hanoi, Vietnam, Dr. Celia Adriano, University of the Philippines and Prof. Dr. Amri Marzali, Universitas Indonesia. However, if there is any misinterpretation of the Guidelines or any incorrect elaboration of the ideas, I take full responsibility for this just as I do for the guiding principles relating to the implementation of the AUN-QA Guidelines.

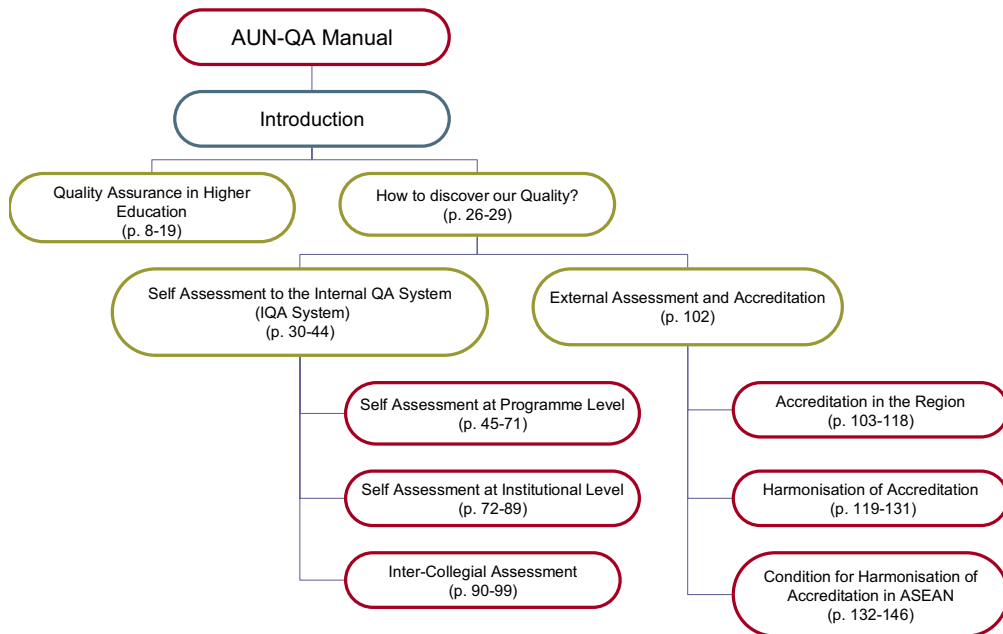
Hopefully this manual will contribute to the implementation and application of the AUN-QA Guidelines in the ASEAN region and will contribute to the development of a harmonised quality assurance system.

Ton Vroeijenstijn

¹ ASEAN University Network – Quality Assurance Guidelines, Bangkok, 2004. The full text can be found on <http://www.aun.chula.ac.th/>

² See A.I. Vroeijenstijn, *A Journey to uplift Quality Assurance in the ASEAN universities*, Bangkok 2006

³ Appendix 1 contains a table showing the correlation between the AUN-QA Guidelines and this manual. Appendix 2 contains a flow chart of the most important AUN-QA criteria for an easy and quick comparison of the AUN-QA Guidelines and this manual.



INTRODUCTION

Development of the AUN-QA Guidelines

The creation of the AUN-Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) Network was initiated in 1998 by the first Chairman of the AUN Board of Trustees, Prof. Dr Vanchai Sirichana. The 4th AUN-Board of Trustees Meeting in June 1998 considered the AUN-QA as a key priority. In committing to this, 1999 was marked as the AUN Year of Quality Education, with an AUN-QA Network Task Force convened. This Task Force was made up of the administrators responsible for quality development in each member university. The AUN-QA aimed to develop a common quality standard by sharing experience and good practices.

The 1st AUN-QA meeting was held in Bangkok, Thailand, in November 2000, under the heading "Workshop on AUN-QA Alliance". At the meeting, the collective will and commitment of all the AUN member universities was demonstrated in the Bangkok Accord on AUN-QA, which has since become the bedrock of ASEAN's future quality improvement. The Bangkok Accord provided a guideline to promote the development of a quality assurance system as an instrument for maintaining, improving and enhancing teaching, research and the overall academic standards of AUN member universities.

At the very first meeting, the AUN members agreed on a "think big, start small" principle, aiming to become the first ASEAN group to serve member universities and institutions in the region both as consultant and external assessor on quality assurance. The Chulalongkorn University was asked to act as the AUN-QA centre for coordination with the Chief Quality Officers (CQOs), appointed by each AUN member university to identify, plan and encourage the implementation of good practices for QA in higher education. Chulalongkorn University would also help to coordinate further mutual collaboration and information exchange in order to achieve the aforesaid goals.

Another big leap forward for AUN-QA was the 1st Workshop on AUN-QA held for CQOs and hosted by the Universiti Malaya in Malaysia in April 2001. The CQOs had drafted AUN-QA Common Policies and Criteria and had formulated a long-term strategic plan for AUN-QA. The AUN-QA Common Policies and Criteria agreed upon by the CQOs were later endorsed and adopted by the member universities.

In October 2001, the 2nd Workshop on AUN-QA for CQOs, hosted by Chulalongkorn University, Burapha University and the Ministry of University Affairs of Thailand, was held in Bangkok and Chon Buri. The workshop concentrated on the QA status, movement, documentation, and electronic manual and system implementation for AUN-QA activities – all of which effectively contributed to the development of AUN-QA benchmarking procedures.

Later in March 2002, the 3rd Workshop on AUN-QA for CQOs called "QA Practices: Teaching Best, Learning Best", with a focus on sharing good practices in teaching and learning, was held in Yangon, Myanmar. The workshop was highly successful as member universities actively shared their experience and expertise in teaching and learning. To accelerate AUN-QA development in accordance with ASEAN's Prosper Thy Neighbour approach, member universities also offered training programmes on

various aspects to enhance QA and to communicate this to fellow members during the Workshop.

In the 4th Workshop on AUN-QA for CQOs, hosted by Universitas Indonesia and Gadjah Mada University in Jakarta and Yogyakarta, Indonesia in October 2002, the CQOs continued to discuss AUN-QA good practices in research, services, ethics, and human resources development through sharing experience between member universities. In addition, the Workshop agreed to compile and publish AUN-QA Guidelines as a manual for member universities on pursuing QA standards mutually recognised by the Network.

As a continuous effort, the 5th Workshop on AUN-QA for CQOs was held by the Universiti Brunei Darussalam in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam, in March 2003. The Workshop further discussed the draft AUN-QA Guidelines and AUN-QA assessment through experiences shared among member universities. In addition, the CQOs identified and agreed on the AUN-QA assessment instruments, which would be used as indicators for practical assessment.

The 6th Workshop on AUN-QA for CQOs was held in Singapore in February 2004 to test the AUN-QA Assessment Indicators through case studies at the National University of Singapore and the Nanyang Technological University. In reviewing a compilation of the AUN-QA Assessment Exercises, it was consequently agreed that the Assessment Indicator Forms should be adjusted for easier integration into the internal processes of individual AUN member universities. Later, the Assessment Indicator Forms were revised on the basis of further comments by the CQOs.

In a refining process, the draft AUN-QA Guidelines were sent to all CQOs, Presidents, Rectors, and Vice-Chancellors of the AUN member universities for their comments before finalising the draft AUN-QA Guidelines.

The AUN-QA Guidelines were endorsed at the 16th AUN-Board of Trustees Meeting held in Siem Reap, Cambodia, in November 2004. The AUN-QA Guidelines were later published as a manual and reference for the distinct and unique QA movement in ASEAN, and this publication was distributed to the relevant parties.

Under the ASEAN-EU University Network Programme (AUNP)⁴, a Technical Assistance Mission - Quality Assurance in ASEAN - was launched to assist the members of the AUN in applying and, if needed, revising the AUN-QA Guidelines. Furthermore, the mission aimed to assist universities in developing internal quality assurance and in promoting a regional QA approach. The mission also aimed to assess the general applicability of the AUN-QA criteria in the ASEAN region.

The mission was conducted from June to September 2005, comprising among other aspects a regional workshop for the CQOs in Ho Chi Minh City, followed by a series of workshops for staff from member and non-member universities in the 9 ASEAN countries. In attracting a total of 543 delegates from 129 universities, the mission reached out far beyond the AUN member universities⁵.

⁴ AUNP: a joint initiative by the European Union and the AUN aims to improve cooperation between higher education institutions in European Union Member States and ASEAN countries and to promote regional integration within ASEAN countries. www.deltha.cec.eu.int/aunp/

⁵ See A.I. Vroeijenstijn, *A Journey to uplift Quality Assurance in the ASEAN universities*, Bangkok 2006

During a workshop for the CQOs held at the Gadjamada University Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in December 2005, the outcomes of the mission were discussed, and especially the use and applicability of the AUN-QA Guidelines. During the workshop the participants mentioned the development of a working manual for quality assurance as the most important priority instrument for implementing the AUN-QA Guidelines.

While the AUN-QA started its activities for its member universities in particular, its activities are also of significance to the non-member universities in the ASEAN region. The AUN-QA is not to be seen as an "elitist" network only working for the leading universities, but rather as an organisation working for all the universities in the region. Only if all the universities in the region cooperate in the process of strengthening QA in the institutions, will HE in the region be strengthened.

The AUN-QA Guidelines are not formulated as directives that have to be followed by the universities. The standards and criteria mentioned in the Guidelines are benchmark standards to be used by the universities to see how far they are on track towards quality and quality assurance. However, although not compulsory, it is advisable to implement and apply the standards and criteria. By doing so, a university gets a passport to the developments and harmonisation of higher education in the ASEAN region. The harmonisation of higher education will be promoted by applying these criteria. To strengthen the position of higher education in the ASEAN region, it is important that the HE-system makes use of a harmonised quality assurance system, based on the standards and criteria of the AUN-QA Guidelines. This applies to internal quality assurance as well to external quality assessment or accreditation.

Harmonisation does not mean that every university in the ASEAN region is forced into a uniform system. It only means that the basic concepts of quality and quality assurance and the basic framework for quality assessment are equivalent. Harmonisation asks for a shared view of quality, asks for shared criteria and standards and an equivalent way of assessing quality. The basics for internal and external quality assurance are the same for all universities and countries, but each university or country can add elements and specificities to their system.

A manual for the implementation of the AUN-QA Guidelines

The manual at hand can play a role both in the implementation of the AUN-Guidelines and in the development of a harmonised QA-system, both at university level nationwide as well as in the region as a whole. By formulating some basic ideas about quality and QA, it will help build a better quality awareness among management, staff and students and may help a quality culture develop within the institution. The way a university shapes its Internal Quality Assurance system (IQA system) may differ from institution to institution and from country to country. However, there are some basic ideas and some conditions that have to be taken into account. Experience from all over the world will help each university choose its own way.

The main aim of the IQA is to assure and enhance the quality of an institution with regard to its core activities: teaching/learning, research and the contribution to society and the community. However, it is clear that quality assurance cannot be done in isolation. An important means for finding out whether our quality is right and up to standard involves using benchmarks and benchmark standards. The most

important benchmark standards and criteria are those formulated in the AUN-QA Guidelines. As already said, these criteria and standards are not to be seen as a straitjacket for universities, but as benchmark standards. The AUN-QA criteria take account of international developments. If a university tries to achieve the AUN-QA standards, it is also trying to operate in line with internationally-accepted standards. Applying the AUN-QA standards, will strengthen higher education in the ASEAN region and will improve its position in competition with the United States, the European Higher Education Area, Australia and other parts of Asia.

This manual is not meant to be an academic, scholarly publication, but rather a practical aid for all stakeholders in the field of higher education. It tries to keep the "quest for quality" as simple as possible. Notwithstanding, shared basic ideas and some shared concepts in the field of QA are necessary. We have to speak the same language. The AUN-QA Guidelines state: "*Given the diversity of the system and the absence of an acceptable, single definition of quality, it is up to each university to define quality in its own way –*"⁶ In general, this remark is right. However, a university cannot act in isolation. Although no single definition of quality exists, some general principles have to apply. This manual aims to support the AUN-members, as well as other universities in the region in implementing the AUN-QA Guidelines. Some basic elements are important for their successful implementation:

- a generally accepted and shared concept of quality and quality assurance
- the introduction and development of an Internal Quality Assurance system
- instruments to learn more about our quality.

Chapter 1 Quality Assurance in Higher Education contains some basic ideas and concepts on the field of Quality Assurance. What is quality? Can quality be measured? Does a quality model for higher education exist, similar to those found in industry? It also discusses the need for a harmonised QA system. Why is a QA system needed? What does harmonisation mean? How can such a system be achieved? What is the role of the AUN-QA Guidelines? It contains some ideas to help a university develop its own IQA system. Universities are free to choose the best fit for their respective institution; however, some criteria and conditions have to be met.

The following chapters contain guidelines on discovering the quality of the university at various levels and in relation to various aspects:

- *Chapter 2* describes the instrument of self-assessment and the principles for effective self-assessment.
- *Chapter 3* describes a way of discovering the quality of the IQA system and of seeing whether the university is ready to apply for the AUN-QA label. Self-assessment is needed for carrying out a quality audit within the framework of the AUN-QA label.
- *Chapter 4* provides guidelines for discovering the quality of our programmes and the quality of our teaching/learning. Although universities will set their own standards and criteria, the AUN-QA criteria will play an important role in the self-assessment; this will then make it possible to see how far the university has progressed in line with the AUN-QA criteria.
- *Chapter 5* describes self-assessment at institutional level. It pays special attention to the AUN-QA Criteria 3 (Research), 4 (Services), and 5 (Ethics)

⁶ ASEAN University Network –Quality Assurance, Guidelines, Bangkok, 2004. p. 21

It is not enough only to assess our quality internally. We have to involve external experts too. In many cases an accreditation process will follow a self-assessment. If this is not the case, inter-collegial auditing can be organised as described in *Chapter 6* or the AUN can be invited to organise a programme assessment.

It is important for universities that the quality of their institution is recognised by others. Two means to this end are discussed in this manual:

- the AUN QA label (in Chapter 3)
- Accreditation (described in the supplement).

Both quality "systems" help the university compete with other universities all over the world, because it shows that the institution uses an internationally-accepted methods ensure that it has quality. Using the guidelines to learn more about our quality is also becoming increasingly important, because all universities and all programmes will be confronted with the phenomenon of accreditation. One may like it or not, but in the near future all higher education institutions will necessarily introduce internal quality assurance and will start to use self-assessment, because the external pressure of accreditation will force universities to do so. Therefore, the manual has a supplement on the development of accreditation in the region.

This manual aims to support the universities in the ASEAN region in:

- implementing the AUN-QA Guidelines
- applying the AUN-QA standards and criteria
- developing an adequate IQA system that fits both the AUN-QA criteria and international developments
- discovering their own quality by offering self-assessment instruments for IQA, the teaching/learning process, and for some institutional aspects
- applying for the AUN Quality label.

The guidelines provided here are based on long-term experience in many systems in many countries of the world. Best practices are included. This does not mean that the guidelines have to be followed slavishly. The instruments have to be adapted to each university's own situation. Quality Assurance is not a bureaucratic process. More important than any rules and instruments are quality awareness and quality culture within the university. Only then will Quality Assurance become an activity with a healthy foundation.

This manual is a road map for what the AUN-QA calls "*the Journey to Uplift the Quality of Higher Education in ASEAN universities*". Quality assurance will ask for the investment of time and money, but at the end of the day will produce big returns.

1. Quality Assurance in Higher Education

The word quality is already used several times in the introduction, without an explanation of what quality is. However, everybody who thinks about quality and quality assurance is faced with the question: "What is quality?".

1.1 What is quality and can it be measured?

Many discussions on quality start with a quote from the book *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*:

*"Quality...you know what it is, yet you don't know what it is. But that's self-contradictory. But some things are better than others, that is, they have more quality. But when you try to say what the quality is, apart from the things that have it, it all goes poof! There's nothing to talk about. But if you can't say what Quality is, how do we know what it is, or how do you know that it even exists? If no one knows what it is, then for all practical purposes it doesn't exist at all. But for practical purposes it really does exist. What else are the grades based on? Why else would people pay fortunes for some things and throw others in the trash pile? Obviously some things are better than others... but what's the 'betterness'? So round and round you go, spinning mental wheels and nowhere finding any place to get traction. What the hell is Quality? What is it?"*⁷

In spite of these reflections by Pirsig, many books and articles have been written to try to discover the nature of quality. But quality is like love. Everybody talks about it and everybody knows what they are talking about. Everybody knows and feels when there is love. Everybody recognises it. But when we try to give a definition of it we are left standing empty-handed.

The quote from Pirsig shows how desperately the writer is thinking about quality and reveals the problem that relates to quality: there is no general consensus on the concept of quality. An objective definition of quality does not exist, because quality is, just like beauty, it is in the eyes of the beholder. Whoever asks whether something has quality has a certain concept in mind and certain expectations. When we talk about the quality of a product or the quality of a service, the definition often used is the satisfaction of the client. The client has certain expectations about the product or service and wants "value for money".

While quality, in general, is already a difficult concept in itself, quality in higher education is much more confusing, because it is not always clear what the "product" and who the "client" is. Is the "graduate" the "product" that we offer society and the labour market? Or is the graduate-to-be, the student, our "client" and the programme that we offer the "product"? We can say that a university has a multiple product system and a multi-client system.

In the discussion on quality in higher education, an article by Green (1994⁸) is often quoted in which he makes a distinction between:

⁷ Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, 1974.

⁸ Green, D. *What is Quality in Higher Education? Concepts, Policy and Practice*. (1994) In: Green (ed) *What is Quality in Higher Education?* London: SRHE/Open University Press (1994)

- *Quality as excellence.* In this concept, the emphasis is on high-level standards. Being the best, being excellent. We may say that something has quality and something has more quality. People talking about promoting quality frequently mean promoting *excellence*. However, quality is not the same as being excellent. Of course, everybody likes to do their best to deliver quality, but not every university can be a Yale or MIT. A country with only excellent universities does not exist. An institution can choose not to aim for excellence, because it likes to educate a broad range of graduates and not only the brightest ones. A typical regional university with a mission to develop its country will choose differently to an institution like Berkley.
- *Quality as fitness for purpose.* With this concept of quality, the basic question is if the university is able to achieve its formulated goals. It concerns the quality of the processes. This quality concept is improvement oriented. But, will this quality approach assure achievement of the threshold quality because goals and aims are not the issue? An institution might have set its goals too low, through which it can easily achieve them. This means that we not only have to discuss the fitness *for purpose*, but also the fitness *of purpose*.
- *Quality as a threshold.* In this view, quality is seen as meeting threshold requirements. This quality concept often forms the basis for accreditation decisions. The problem is that it is not always clear what basic quality is. Setting threshold standards might also hinder innovations. Compliance with the threshold standards does not stimulate innovations.
- *Quality as added value.* This concept emphasises what happens to the students. Education is about doing something *to* the student. Quality means the value added to the student during education and training. It is the method of formulating learning outcomes and realising the outcomes in the graduates. The basic quality question is: "What has (s)he learnt?"
- *Quality as value for money.* This quality concept has its focus on efficiency. It measures outputs against inputs. It is often a concept supported by governments. The concept is connected with accountability.
- *Satisfaction of the client.* With the rise of the concept of the "student as a consumer", quality is described as: "something has quality when it meets the expectations of the consumer; quality is the satisfaction of the client".

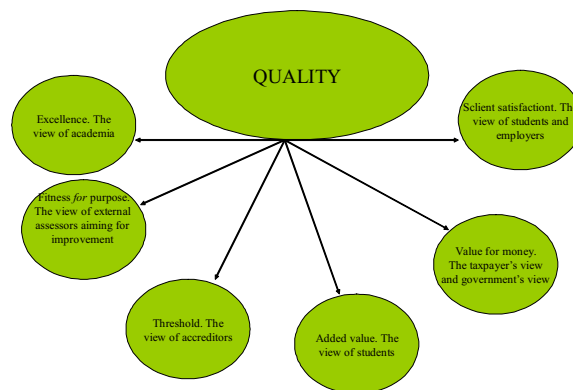


Figure 1. Different views of quality

In an article published in *Assessment and Evaluation in Education* (1993)⁹, Green and his colleague Harvey, after a thorough analysis of the various concepts, conclude: "First, quality means different things to different people. Second, quality is relative to processes or outcomes"

This conclusion fits the idea that quality is in the eyes of the beholder. When the government considers quality, it looks first at the pass/fail ratio, the dropouts and enrolment time. Quality in the eyes of governments can be described as: "As many students as possible finishing the programme within the scheduled time with an international degree at reduced costs." Employers talking about quality will refer to the knowledge, skills and attitudes obtained during the studies: the "product" that is tested is the graduate. Quality of education has a totally different meaning in the eyes of the students. For them, quality is connected with the contribution to their individual development and preparation for a position in society. Education must link up with the personal interests of the student. But the educational process also has to be organised in such a way that students can finish their studies in the given time. The academic will define quality as: "A good academic training based on good knowledge transfer and a good learning environment and a good relationship between teaching and research."

The view of quality is also fixed by people's concept of higher education. Do people see higher education as the production of qualified staff or as training for a research career? Is higher education conceived as the efficient management of teaching provision or is higher education a matter of extending life chances (Barnett 1993)?

We must conclude that quality is a very complex concept. We cannot speak of "THE Quality"; we have to speak about "qualities". We have to distinguish between quality requirements set by the student, the academic world, by the labour market (employers)/society, and by the government.

Stakeholders	Students	Employers	Government	University	Staff
Aspect of quality					
Input (for example):					
student intake			*	*	*
selection	*			*	*
budget				*	*
academic staff	*			*	
Process (for example):					
aims/goals	*		(*)	*	*
educational process	*			*	*
educational organisation	*			*	*
content	*		*	*	
advice	*			*	
Output (for example):					
pass/fail rate	*		*	*	
the graduate	*	*	*	*	*

Table 1: Stakeholder appreciation of the quality aspects

Quality is not a simple one-dimensional notion. Quality is multi-dimensional. So there is quality of input, process quality and quality of output. When discussing quality and

⁹ Harvey, L. and Green, D. *Defining Quality. Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education. Vol. 18, 1, 9-34 (1993)*

judging quality, all these dimensions have to be taken into account. We need a holistic view of quality in higher education, but we can only find quality by looking at the various aspects. This makes it important to develop a quality model for higher education. Table 1 shows how the various stakeholders (players in the quality game) appreciate the various aspects of quality. The different views and multi-dimensional notion mean that it is a waste of time to try to define quality precisely. Absolute, objective quality does not exist. However, if we take our quality seriously and if we seriously assure our quality, we have to agree on what a workable concept of quality is.

Taking into account that each player has his or her own ideas about quality, we can agree that we should try to find a definition of quality that fits most of the ideas and that covers most of the expectations. This means that quality is not a static concept. Depending on developments, the accent of quality will change (e.g. in Europe the change from process orientation towards a more output oriented quality perception).

With so many stakeholders and players in the field, we may say, *"Quality is a matter of negotiating between all the parties concerned"*. In this negotiation process, each stakeholder needs to formulate, as clearly as possible, its requirements. The university or faculty, as ultimate supplier, must try to reconcile all these different wishes and requirements. Sometimes, the expectations will run parallel, but they can conflict just as well. As far as possible, the requirements of all stakeholders should be translated into the mission and goals of an institution and into the objectives of a faculty and of the educational programme (and as far as this concerns research), the research programmes. The challenge is to achieve the goals and objectives. If this is the case, then we can say that the institution, the faculty has "quality" (see Figure 2). Although it remains necessary to strive for a good description of the different requirements and aspects of quality, the lack of a definition should never be an excuse for not paying attention to quality or for not working for quality enhancement.



Figure 2: Quality assurance as an object of negotiation between the relevant parties

Quality is not always the same as efficiency!

The discussion on quality assessment is often connected with the concept of "efficiency" (saving money, making more rational use of public resources). In assessing quality, an important question will be: *"Do we achieve the required level of quality at*

acceptable cost?" An efficiency-oriented approach as such is a good starting point, but the problem is that efficiency is not always defined as "at acceptable cost", but often as "at minimal cost", and this may threaten quality. It may be very efficient to have lectures for a thousand students, but it is not effective. It may be considered efficient to have a very structured degree programme with student assessments every four weeks, forcing students to work and to keep up with the programme. However, does this method lead to us creating the "right", independent, and critically thinking graduate? It may be considered efficient to use multiple-choice questions for student assessment, but does it enhance verbal and written communication skills?

Level, standards and quality

Within the framework of Quality Assurance, clear distinctions have to be made between level, standards and quality. Too often, these three concepts are confused:

- *Level*

A programme leading to a Master's degree is of a higher level than a programme leading to a Bachelor's degree. But this does not mean that the quality of the Master's programme is higher.

- *Standards*

For each programme it is possible to define the standards or minimum requirements to be expected from the graduates. Standards can be described as a statement in general or specific terms on the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitude to be demonstrated by successful graduates. The question is whether or not a programme with high standards and a low number of graduates is of high quality.

- *Quality*

Quality is much broader and includes standards (and outcomes) as well as the processes of teaching and learning, the activities of departments and institutions, and the correspondence between the programme goals and the competence of its graduates (Frazer 1992,1994)¹⁰.

Quality is context bound

When striving for quality, the main question is: "*Do we offer our client what we promise to offer.*" This means that a starting point for judging our quality will be our promises (= goals) and that verdict will be based on the promises. Therefore, we have to look at our quality in the given context. McDonald's, for example, will strive for quality, and when we eat a fast food meal, we will probably get quality. However, this is not the same quality as we will get when we have dinner in a restaurant with one or two stars in the Guide Rouge of the best restaurants. So, we cannot assess the quality of McDonald's with the same criteria as those used to assess a star restaurant. This also means that we may never assess a regional university in a developing country with the same criteria that we apply to more sophisticated institutions in more developed countries. If a university claims excellence, other criteria count than when a university's aspiration is to contribute to the development of the country and the region. We cannot assess the quality of the University of the Amazonas against the criteria applied to Berkley. Each level of quality has its price. The only common feature is that we may ask: "Will we get what we expect?"

Quality is context bound that is true. However, all universities also like to play a role on the international stage. This means that an institution has to meet at least the basic standards that are applied to higher education institutions. There is at least a bottom line for the threshold quality, although it is not clear what that bottom line is. This is something that the international community has to decide.

¹⁰ Frazer, etc.

Criteria and standards are also subject to negotiation

There is one hot topic in the discussion on quality: How to measure quality? What are the criteria for measuring quality? What are the standards against which quality is assessed? If we look at what is said about quality, it becomes obvious that it is impossible to identify one set of criteria or standards for the quality of higher education. The parties concerned will have their own criteria and norms derived from their own objectives and/or demands. This means that a government will formulate different criteria than an employer would, for example. It is impossible to formulate general criteria for higher education in advance. They will differ from discipline to discipline. They will differ from stakeholder to stakeholder. The expectations of the labour market will play a totally different role when assessing the arts and humanities or electrical engineering. The criteria of the different partners may actually conflict. Government may put forward as one of the criteria: *"the programme must be organised in such a way that students can finish it with a minimum dropout rate and within the given time"*; or *"the success rate in the first year should be 70%."* But these criteria may clash with a student criterion, namely that *"the programme should offer enough options and enough time for personal development"*. We have no objective yardstick at our disposal to measure the quality of education. Standards and criteria are also a matter of bargaining and negotiating between the parties involved. An absolute value for the academic level or the quality of the graduates does not exist. What is generally accepted as quality is a matter of opinion?

Performance indicators: a curse or a blessing for higher education?

As already said, a simplification of quality assessment is: *"define quality and look for a set of performance indicators to measure the quality."* We are living in an evaluative society which very much likes to measure everything: the performance of the public health system (number of patients treated, length of the waiting list for surgery), the performance of the police officer (number of fines, number of solved cases) and, of course, the performance of higher education (number of graduates, pass rates, average time spent in the university). Managers and politicians, in particular, are fond of such quantitative performance indicators (PI). They look for more and more hard, statistical data, because this is considered to be more objective. But the question is whether there is a real link between so-called performance indicators and quality. Opinions are divided. It is evident that whenever people try to derive quality directly from quantitative data, differences of interpretation arise. Consider, for example, the measurement of the quality of research. Is the total number of publications a true measure of quality? The analysis of information and experience gained elsewhere indicates that this is not always the case. Such performance indicators, like the number of articles, reveal the danger of using performance indicators. Once set, the indicator will be corrupted as soon as possible. Instead of publishing one good article, we see now that the article is split into several articles, because each counts for the record. Another example from the field of education: the interpretation of success rates. One faculty has a pass rate of 80%, another a rate of 60%. But does the figure tell us anything about the performance of the faculty? Does it tell us anything about the quality of education? Is the performance of university Y with a pass rate of 80% superior to the achievement of university X with a rate of 60%? Or has university Y lowered its level? Or is university X more selective in the first year?

A considerable amount of literature exists on performance indicators (PIs). A striking factor in the discussion on these is that there are two opposing parties. It is mostly governments who lay a strong emphasis on the importance of using performance

indicators: they are optimistic about the possibility of determining the right indicators. Higher education institutions, on the other hand, are generally very reserved and sceptical about them. Many governments are trying to formulate performance indicators that would be useful in quality assessment, but so far without any success. The following reasons can be put forward:

- *The term "performance indicator" is very confusing*, despite many attempts to define the meaning and functions of performance indicators. The problem is that a performance indicator does not always relate directly to the performance of an institution, but should rather be considered as statistical data. For example, one of the PIs used in the student population is the male-female ratio. However, this indicator says nothing about the quality of an HE institution. It is more a government indicator that shows how far the objective of "emancipation" has been achieved.
- *People attach different functions performance indicators*. Without using the term 'PI', it will be clear that the use of certain data (enrolment figures, student numbers, number of graduates, unemployment figures) is important. These data play an important role in monitoring and evaluation. Governments, on the other hand, often look to performance indicators as instruments for governing financial allocation. In fact, we can see attempts to establish a system of performance-related funding in several countries.
- *Transforming indicators into standards*. Looking at the various functions attributed to performance indicators, it is not unreasonable to fear that indicators will be transformed into criteria. The success rates may be an indicator of achieving the goal of "enabling as many students as possible to graduate". A pass rate of 70% would appear to be more successful than a pass rate of 60%. But the figure says nothing about the quality of teaching. However, there may be a tendency to specify that a success rate of at least 70% should be achieved.

The conclusion should be that all attempts and all discussions so far have failed to produce a generally accepted set of performance indicators. Putting emphasis on the quantitative performance indicators risks enforcing reality by oversimplifying quality. Quality in higher education is more than a collection of figures and data. Although quantitative aspects are more difficult to assess, we should not flee into quantitative aspects with fake objectivity. We have to learn to live with the idea that the judgement of quality in higher education is not an objective activity, but rather an activity with a human factor.

Performance indicators and peer review

Is there a role for quantitative aspects, for PIs in quality assessment? What is the value of performance indicators as opposed to peer review or in combination with peer review? Looking at the sets of performance indicators that are often used, we see that quantitative indicators are often basic data, but are immediately decorated with the notion of a "PI": they cover numbers of students, numbers of staff, dropout rates, student-staff ratios. When these data are used properly, the "performance indicators" raise questions but never give answers. The so-called qualitative performance indicators may be seen as elements that have an influence on quality aspects to be taken into account when looking at quality. The question is whether we can (or will) rely more on performance indicators than on the subjective judgements of peers.

The role of performance indicators in quality assessment is a limited one, as can be illustrated by the following example:

I have a bottle of wine and want to assess its quality. What factors are important? So, I have to decide on which factors I will apply when assessing the wine: acidity, tannin, alcohol percentage, and sediment. Of course, I can measure these wines with these factors, but still I do not know whether the wine is good or not. Someone has to decide which factor is good and which not. But there are other factors more important for the assessment: taste and smell. These factors are not quantifiable. We need a panel that can judge the taste and smell as fine or not. (Vroeijenstijn 1995); see Figure 3).

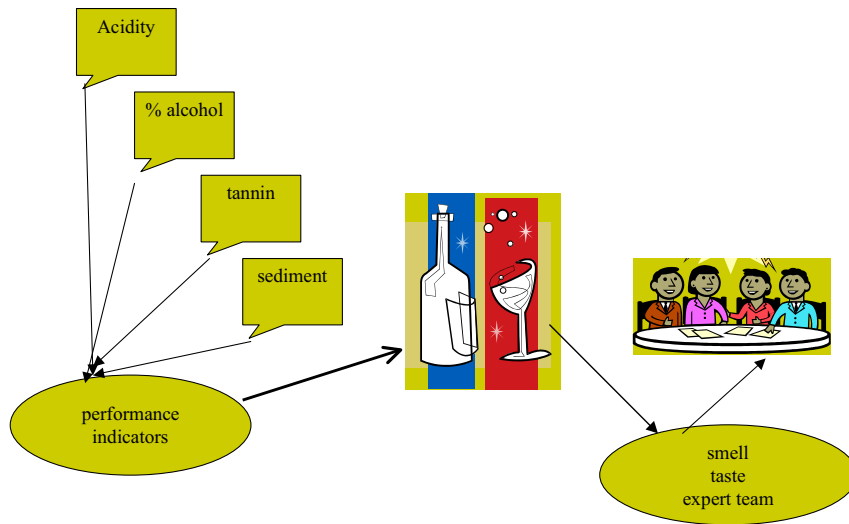


Figure 3: Relationship between performance indicators and expert assessment

Working with performance indicators seems so attractive because it looks like they might provide a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses. But these analyses must be handled very carefully and must be complemented with other information. PIs play a role in quality assessment, but only a minor one. Performance indicators as the set of quantitative indicators play a role in supporting the opinion of experts. But these performance indicators can never have the last say or take the place of expert/peer review. The opinion of the experts must be based on facts and figures, but can never be replaced by performance indicators. Performance indicators should be used not as an end in themselves to draw definitive conclusions, but to trigger areas of concern and provide a catalyst for further investigation. It will be clear that performance indicators can never speak for themselves, but must be interpreted by experts. Where they seem to be objective, they are not really performance indicators, but only statistical data or management information. Just as is the case for the concept of "quality", it is also a waste of time searching for the philosopher's stone: a set of performance indicators to measure quality

1.2 A quality model for higher education

The quest for quality is not an easy one, especially since there is no absolute quality or objective quality. Nevertheless, we expect higher education to assure its quality, to demonstrate its quality and to have its quality assessed by outsiders. And this is happening all over the world. The AUN-QA has formulated standards and criteria as benchmarks for the university to help it assess its quality. Looking around in the world, we see that those standards and criteria have a lot in common with what is going on in other countries. Everyone is looking at more or less the same aspects for assessing quality. In the United States, Europe, South America, Africa, Asia or Australia, the quality experts and universities are looking at more or less the same subjects, also called "standards" or "criteria". Sometimes the wording of the standards and criteria is different, but in most cases they cover the same topics. The same applies to the AUN-QA standards and criteria. They are in line with what internationally is accepted.

In industry, it is common to use quality models like the Baldrige model or the European Foundation Quality Model (EFQM.) The Baldrige Criteria and assessment processes help organisations identify, understand, and manage the factors that determine their success. The same goes for the EFQM model. However, these models cannot be directly applied to higher education. In contrast to industry, higher education has a multiple client system and a multiple product system. The basic principles stay intact, but the model is adapted to the specific characteristics of higher education. The model helps discover strengths and weaknesses and shows a holistic view of quality. For higher education it is important not only to look at quality in detail, but also in totality. So, we will use the quality model for higher education (Figure 4).

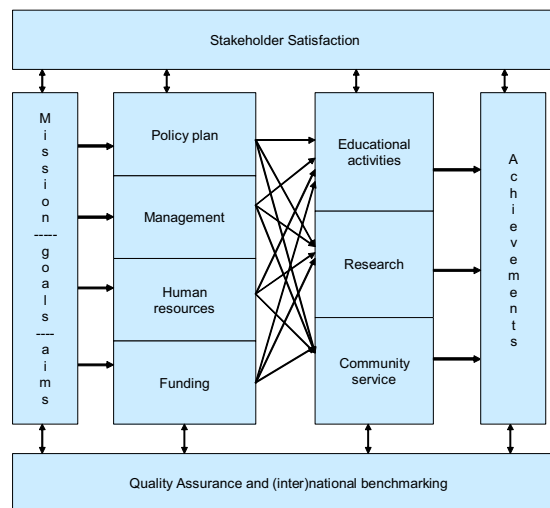


Figure 4: Quality model for a university

Quality is defined as achieving the formulated mission and goals, assuming that these reflect the requirements of the stakeholders. It will be clear that we only can assess quality if we know what we are planning to achieve. This means that quality assurance and quality assessment will always start with the question as to the

mission and goals (Column 1). The second column shows how the university is planning to achieve the goals:

- translation of the goals into a policy document and policy strategy;
- the management structure and management style of the university
- human resource management: input of staff to achieve the goals
- facilities

The third column shows the core activities of a university:

- the educational activities of teaching and learning
- research activities
- the contribution to society and to the support and development of the community.

All these activities have to be analysed with more specific models for the core activities (Figures 5, 6 and 7). The last column relates to the achievements: What has the HEI achieved? Are the achievements in line with the formulated mission and goals? The top-cell of the model considers stakeholder satisfaction and is related to all columns. Each aspect is subject to the question "How do the stakeholders feel about it?" The bottom-cell considers how an HEI assures the quality of the various aspects and what is known about the national and international benchmarking. The model can be used for self-assessment at institutional level. The core activities have to be assessed in greater detail, based on the sub-models, like teaching and learning by using Figure 5.

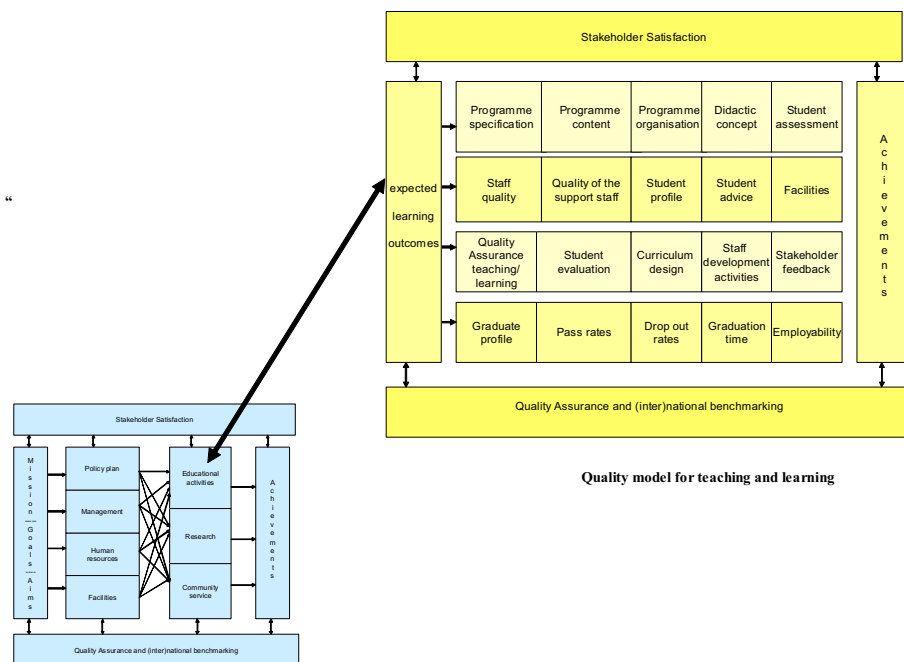


Figure 5: Quality model for teaching and learning

Looking at the quality of our teaching and learning, we have to start with the question of the goals and aims and the expected learning outcomes (1st Column). There are four rows in the middle of the model:

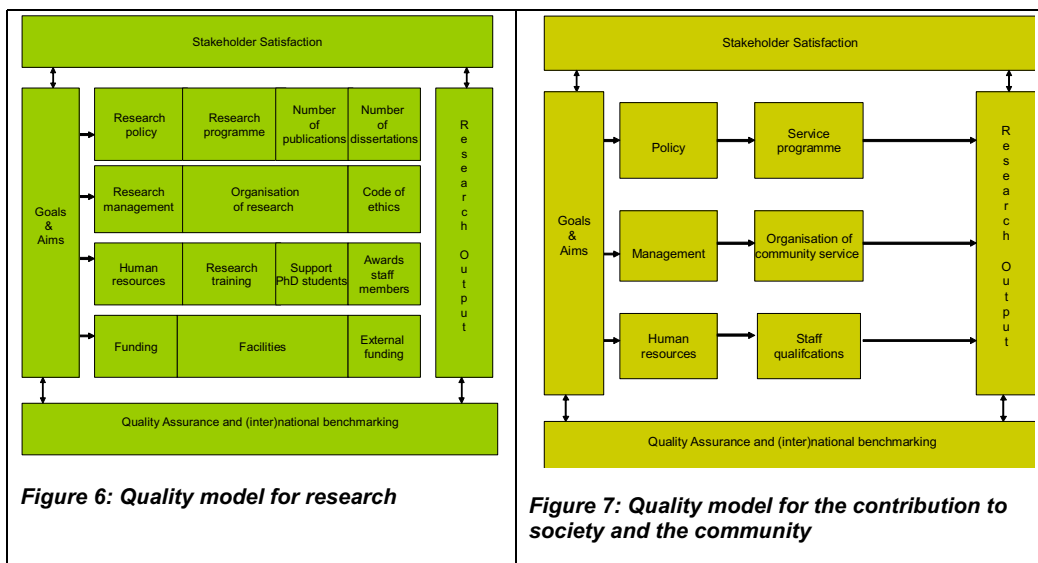
- the first addresses the question of how the expected learning outcomes are translated into the programme. What is the programme specification? What is

the programme content? Is it fit for achieving the learning outcomes? How is the programme organised? Does it help realise the expected learning outcomes? What is our didactic concept or teaching/learning strategy? And in the last cell: how do we assess what students learnt and what they were expected to learn?

- The second row considers the "input" into the process: the staff, support staff, the students, the facilities and student advice/support.
- The third row has to do with the way the quality is assured, the role of students in the evaluation of the provisions. It also looks at how the curriculum is designed. How has the university organised its staff development activities and how has it organised the feedback from the stakeholders?
- The fourth row regards the outcomes of the learning process: the profile of the graduate, the pass rates and dropout rates, the average time to degree and the employability of the graduates.

The final column will provide an answer to our final results. Did we achieve what we were expecting to achieve? The top-cell of the model has to do with stakeholder satisfaction and is related to all the cells in the model. The bottom-cell has to do with quality assurance and (inter)national benchmarking.

The second activity of an HEI is often research, although this is not always the case for all higher education institutions. If the higher education institution is a research institution, the quality of research is an important aspect of its overall quality. Figure 6 shows the quality model for the core activity "Research", Figure 7 a model for the contribution to society and the community.



There is pressure all over the world for higher education to be accountable for its quality. It has to assure the quality and it has to show the outside world, the stakeholders, that it is able to deliver quality. The problem is that stakeholders do not always speak the same language when they talk about quality. There is no objective definition of quality; there are no objective standards. Still a university has to cope with this problem. The best way to talk about quality is to share a common concept. A workable concept is: *quality is achieving goals and aims set by the university*, with the assumption that the goals and aims are formulated in dialogue and discussion with all stakeholders.

It is clear that there is a need for standards and criteria to be established against which the quality can be assessed. A university will set its own standards, but doing so, it has to take into account standards and criteria set in the outside world. This might be an accreditation council or a professional body. For the universities in the ASEAN countries, the AUN-QA standards and criteria can be used as benchmarking for their own standards.

The concept of quality and of the quality model plays an important role in shaping our Internal Quality Assurance system.

1.3 Towards an Internal Quality Assurance system

Nowadays, so much attention is paid to quality that people might think that quality is an invention that has existed since the 1980s. It looks as if higher education had no notion of quality before 1985. But of course this is not true. Attention to quality is not new: it has always been part of the academic tradition. It is the outside world that now emphasises the need for explicit attention to quality. Several reasons can be given for Quality Assurance:

- all academics want to train graduates who meet the needs of society. We all like to deliver a "product" that is wanted. We all like to be proud of our graduates.
- the labour market expects higher education institutions to provide the students with adequate knowledge, skills and attitude, important for the right job fulfilment.
- internationalisation of the profession and a world that is becoming a small village brings us greater competition than before. A university not only has to compete inside the country, but also with other countries, not only in SE Asia, but also with higher education in the US and the EU. Globalisation not only has negative aspects, but also positive ones. It offers our graduates the opportunity to enter the world market, but under the condition that their degree has quality.
- there is a need for "consumer protection": our students and their parents are spending a lot of time and money on their education. Therefore, they have the right to receive a quality education,
- In the 1950s and 1960s, the nature of higher education changed. The elite university changed into an institute of mass higher education. More and more students were enrolling in higher education, creating pressure on national budgets. Expenditure per student became much lower, but the government had to assure society that this did not endanger quality. This problem was aggravated by economic recessions. On behalf of society, governments wanted a better insight into the costs and benefits of higher education. Higher education, in their view, cost too much or was not efficient enough.
- The relationship between higher education and society changed at the same time. Society became increasingly interested in higher education. The relationship between higher education and the labour market became a topic for discussion. Some disciplines, e.g. social sciences, psychology and history, had a lot of students, but few available jobs. Unemployment was high. Other disciplines like engineering often had a shortage of students, and society could use more graduates. Such a situation causes pressure on higher education to steer the student flow in the desired direction.
- Quality has become increasingly important for higher education institutions, because the question of whether it was still possible to deliver the same quality within the given frameworks was raised. One can talk of a 'quality gap': on the one hand, governments are striving to increase the numbers of students enrolled (higher education for as many as possible); on the other hand, we see a continuous decrease in investments. Higher education institutions have to do more with less money. But at the same time quality is expected to be maintained or to improve.

- Student exchange and international cooperation require insight into quality. There always has been a exchange of students between countries, but with the world becoming a global village, it has become increasingly clear that it is very important to know about the quality at the other institutions. Questions have to be asked, such as: 'Can I recognise the course?' or 'Is it good enough?'

While the early days saw universities pay attention to quality, this was often unstructured. Nowadays, Quality Assurance must be structured.

Quality assurance (or quality management) may be described as the systematic, structured and continuous attention to quality in terms of maintaining and improving quality. Continuous quality care is a *sine qua non* for quality assurance.

One of the tools in the field of quality care is quality assessment. By quality assessment we mean every structured activity that leads to a verdict on the quality of the teaching/learning process and/or research, whether self-assessment or assessment by external experts. There is no real difference between assessment, evaluation and review. These terms are seen as interchangeable. *Quality assurance* is the overall activity of safeguarding quality. Of course, one may ask why higher education does not rely on ISO-9000 or other models in use in industry. Of course, higher education may learn from industry, but as already said, quality and the quest for quality in higher education cannot be compared with quality and the quest for quality in industry. A university is not a cookie factory. The university has a multiple client and a multiple product system. Another difficulty for applying ISO is that ISO is much more about procedures and processes, while in higher education we like to catch both the *quality of the process* and the *quality of the product*. Although some higher education institutions do apply ISO, especially in the service sector, higher education has developed its own approach to Quality Assurance (see Figure 8).

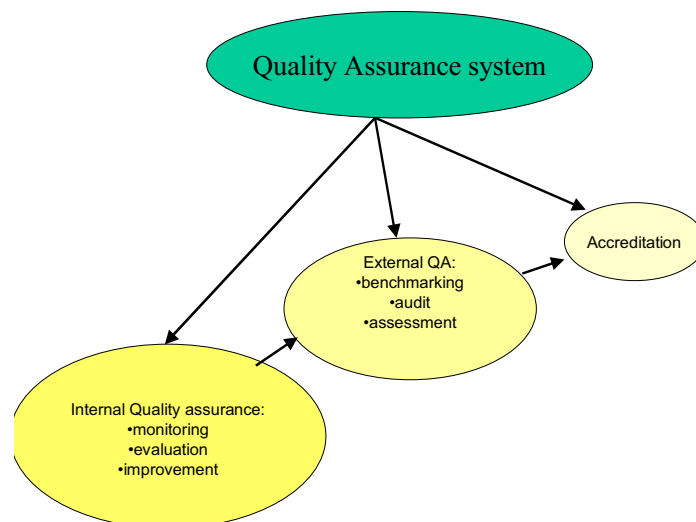


Figure 8: The quality assurance system in HE

Quality is primarily the responsibility of higher education itself. Although the government has a special responsibility regarding quality assurance in many countries, it is the university (and especially its staff and students) that is responsible for providing and assuring quality. Therefore, it is important that each university

develops an efficient IQA system. There is no one model that fits all. It is up to the university to decide what model fits it best. However, there are some basic conditions that have to be met. Of course, experiences at other universities may also be used in developing an IQA system equipped with the basic elements for monitoring, evaluation and improvement. At least the IQA system should cover the Deming cycle: plan, do, check and act (PDCA) (see Figure 9).

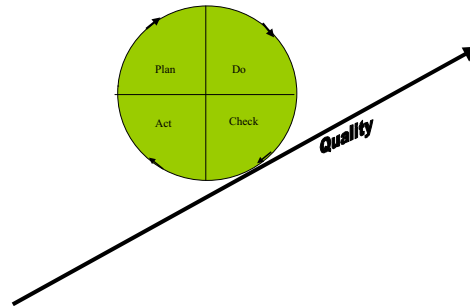


Figure 9: Deming Cycle (PDCA)

A Quality Assurance system not only has an internal aspect. External elements also exist. Inter-collegial assessment (Chapter 6) is an important instrument. A university must also be accountable to the outside world. The taxpayers must be convinced of our quality. Accreditation is an important accountability instrument with which we can verify our quality. The United States already has a long tradition in this field, the rest of the world only a few years. *Accreditation is a formal decision, based on evaluation of past performance, indicating that certain standards, certain minimum requirements are met.*¹¹ Sometimes, accreditation is seen as a bureaucratic process that tries to control higher education, but accreditation may have also positive effects, because it:

- provides us with a quality label that we can use in competition;
- offers opportunities for benchmarking
- delivers feedback on the self-assessment. Accreditation is never an end in itself, but should rather serve higher education.

One of the aims of the AUN-QA is to help its member and non-member universities introduce an Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system. Looking at the developments in the ASEAN region, we see that the universities are in a different stage of development. In general, it can be said that the AUN-member universities in most countries have a more or less well-developed system of Internal Quality Assurance.¹² It appears that many other universities in the region lack an efficient system. Most of them are in the initial phase and have problems and obstacles to face. Among these obstacles, we can mention the following:

- Lack of quality innovations
- Staff resistance because of a lack of awareness and change culture
- Resistance to a perceived threat
- Not enough knowledge available in the university. Training needed.
- Resistance because it is time-consuming and money-consuming ("We have other things to do").
- It is difficult to define what quality is; the QA indicators are not always clear

¹¹ Vroeijenstijn, *Similarities and differences in Accreditation, Looking for a common framework. The Netherlands Accreditation Organisation (NAO), June 2003*

¹² See A.I. Vroeijenstijn, *A Journey to uplift Quality Assurance in the ASEAN universities, Bangkok 2006*

- The purpose and the added value are not always clear
- Communication between staff and management is not always good.

To overcome the problems it is important:

- to understand clearly what IQA is
- to know the available instruments
- to know what requirements are set for an IQA system
- to design the system very clearly and to formulate the strategy to introduce it
- to tune the system to external developments.

An Internal Quality Assurance system (IQA system) is a system under which managers and staff satisfy themselves that control mechanisms are working to maintain and enhance the quality.

In the specific context of higher education institutions, IQA is the totality of systems, resources and information devoted to setting up, maintaining and improving the quality and standards of teaching, scholarship (student learning experience), research, and service to community.

Within the context of the institutional mission and vision, quality assurance means the process of ensuring that practices and procedures or actions intended to enhance quality and excellence in the key areas of teaching, learning, research, and knowledge-based service to community are being complied with. The overall objective is to continuously promote and improve the quality of the programmes, their mode of delivery, and their support facilities, etc.

If we like to assure our quality, it is necessary to establish a structured quality assurance system that makes it possible to monitor our quality, to improve the quality and to evaluate our quality. There is no one way or one system that is applicable to all universities. Each university has to build its own system. However, when developing an IQA system, there are some basic conditions that have to be taken into account:

- keep it as simple as possible;
- do not make it a bureaucratic process;
- it should have the support of management and staff;
- there must be a right balance between a centralised and decentralised approach
- make use of effective instruments
- the internal quality assurance system must be tuned to national and international developments.

The model in Figure 10 shows the elements of an Internal Quality Assurance system:

- the monitoring instruments;
- the evaluation instruments,
- the QA-processes for specific activities
- specific QA-instruments.

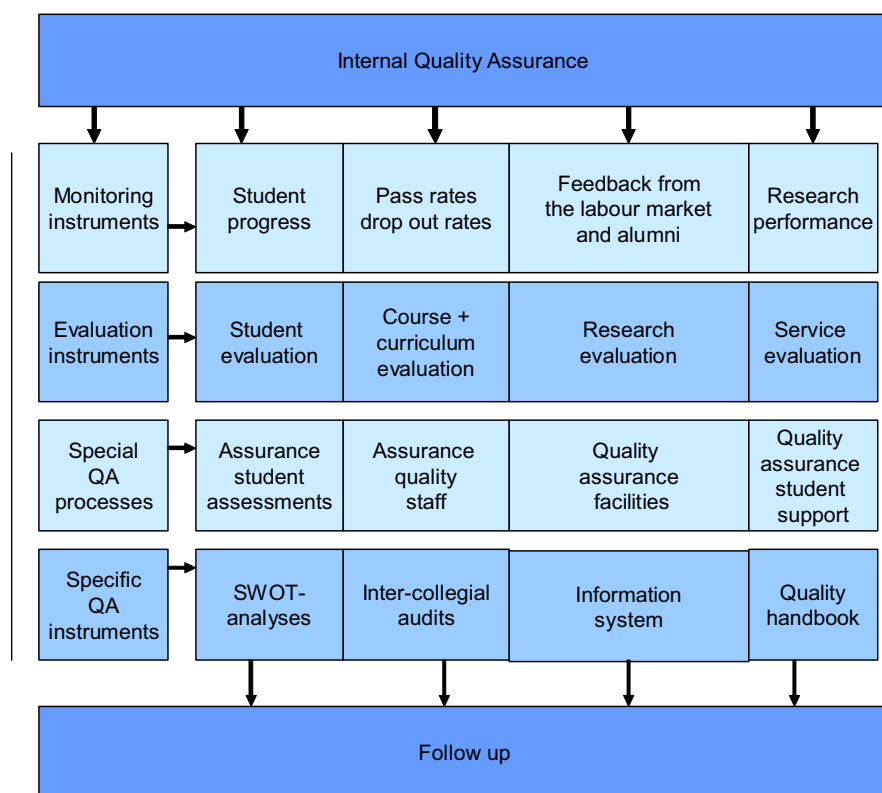


Figure 10: Quality model for an IQA system

Row 1 shows the *monitoring instruments* needed to keep track of our performance and developments. This is why we have to collect the following data:

- student progress
- pass rates and dropout rates
- outcomes of the structured feedback from employers
- outcomes of the structured feedback from alumni

As long as the data are in line with the targets we have set, there is no reason to worry. If there are deviations, it might be necessary to take action?

Row 2 shows the *evaluation instruments* that a university will use :

- *Student evaluation.* A university should carry out student evaluations. In fact this should be a regular activity in the institution to learn what students think about the programme, the staff, the form of lecturing etc.
- *Course evaluation.* Although the students will evaluate the course during the student evaluation, there might also be a need to include other stakeholders.
- *Curriculum evaluation.* Other stakeholders have to be included for the evaluation of the curriculum.

Evaluation as such does not make sense if there are no actions to enhance the quality and to overcome the shortcomings. Therefore, is it necessary to have opportunities for staff development and staff training.

Row 3 shows *QA-processes for specific activities*. There are some specific quality assurance processes within the scope of IQA that are important to assure the quality

of some activities: quality assurance of the student assessments, quality assurance of the staff, the way the university takes care of the facilities and the quality assurance of student support.

Row 4 shows *special instruments for IQA*. There are some specific instruments for Quality Assurance:

- There is *self-assessment or SWOT-analysis*. This might be at institutional level or at the level of the core activities. Self-assessment is a powerful instrument for discovering our quality and finding an answer to the questions:
 - Are we doing the right things?
 - Are we doing the right things in the right way?
 - Are we achieving our goals?This instrument will be used once every five or six years.
- It will mostly be combined with external assessment or accreditation. If there is no formal accreditation, the instrument of *inter-collegial assessment* may be applied (see Chapter 6).
- Furthermore, an *adequate information management system* is indispensable.
- Finally, the presence of a QA handbook shows the maturity of the IQA system.

Although no fixed model for an IQA system exists in higher education, some requirements do need to be met. The AUN-QA has formulated criteria for IQA (see Appendix 2). These requirements set by AUN-QA are in line with the requirements formulated by the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA).

A university must have:

- a clear policy for IQA and clear procedures for it
- an adequate system for the approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards
- an adequate system for the assessment of students
- an adequate system for the quality assurance of teaching/academic staff
- an adequate system for the quality assurance of learning resources and student support
- an adequate information system

The basic idea defined in the IQA standards is that applying these will lead to a harmonised Quality Assurance system in the region.

The AUN-QA is not only promoting the introduction of an IQA system inside the universities, but also promoting the *harmonisation* of the QA system in the countries and in the region through application of the AUN-QA Guidelines. This does not mean that all universities and all countries are expected to have the same system and the same approach. **Harmonisation is not the same as uniformity.** It is a big challenge for the ASEAN region with all its cultural, political and historical differences to strive for harmonisation, while retaining the differences. Harmonisation means that the basics of the Quality Assurance that we are applying are equivalent, but that each university and each country can add its own specific needs and instruments.

There are several reasons for harmonising Quality Assurance:

- Looking at international developments and looking at the developments in the region, it is important that the degrees of a university in one country are recognised by other countries. A basic condition for recognition is to know more about the quality and to know how quality is assured.

- Looking at student mobility we need to know the quality of the curricula in other institutions. It is already a help if we know how the quality is assessed and assured.
- Internationalisation of the profession and globalisation offer our graduates a broader career perspective. Condition: the quality of our graduates should be known.

Harmonisation of the QA-system not only affects Internal Quality Assurance, but also the external element, especially Accreditation. Some of the ASEAN countries have an accreditation council/agency that has already been operating for a long time. (Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia (for the private sector), the Philippines). These agencies are also full members of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). Vietnam just started a pilot project for the accreditation of 10 universities. Cambodia just passed a law on accreditation, but the country is still in the stage of developing the criteria.

Brunei has an accreditation council that functions as a monitoring body to maintain and ensure that the quality and standard of educational credentials are in accordance with the provisions set and required by the government. Particularly, the council accredits *degrees* from graduates earned at international universities, who apply for a governmental position. However, the council does not accredit the local university, Universiti Brunei Darussalam.

Laos is the only country without an accreditation council. There is not even any discussion on this yet. So far the countries differ greatly in their stage of development. So far the countries differ greatly in the stage of development. Of course, the development of accreditation needs to take into account the national, social and political context. However, it will be necessary to develop equivalent systems with equivalent standards, processes and procedures. More information on accreditation can be found in the supplement.

2. How to discover our quality?

Quality Assurance means systematic, structured and continuous attention to quality in terms of maintaining and improving quality. An important tool in the field of quality assurance is critical self-assessment, also called, self-evaluation or SWOT¹³ analysis. In this chapter, the words will be used interchangeably. A SWOT analysis or self-assessment can be done at the level of:

- the IQA system
- the institution as a whole
- teaching and learning
- research
- the contribution to society and the community.

Critical self-assessment is important because we are sometimes too eager to accept that everything is good: *"I have been teaching this way for years and my course has never caused problems. My students have always been content and employers have never complained about the graduates."* This may be true, in general. In an educational organisation, which is a professional organisation, the players should always aim to produce quality. Introducing a quality assurance system does not mean that quality is not in a good condition. The demand for self-evaluation is not inspired by a lack of quality. What it means is that quality has to be examined in a structural manner, within a well-defined framework. Each self-assessment asks for a specific approach. For self-assessment of the Internal Quality Assurance system, see Chapter 3, for self-assessment of teaching and learning, see Chapter 4 and for a quality assessment at institutional level see Chapter 5. The current chapter will describe the basic principles of a self-assessment process.

2.1 Function of the self-assessment

Self-assessment was introduced in higher education together with external assessment, accreditation or quality audits. In many cases, self-assessment serves as preparation for a site visit by external experts and the self-assessment report (SAR) provides the external experts with basic information. However, a self-assessment has specific value for the university itself. It provides an opportunity for discovering quality. The following key questions are important:

- Why do we do what we are doing? Do we indeed do the right things?
- Do we do the right things in the right way?
- Do we have a thorough command of the process to actually realise what we want?
- Do we really achieve what we want to?

An effective self-assessment is time-consuming. It asks for some effort by staff and students. Often, it will ask for an investment of time that has to be taken away from other activities. However, the return and the profit of a good self-assessment are high.

The self-assessment will provide information not known to everyone: the information often exists, but only a small group knows it; the facts will have another dimension when they are connected to one another. It involves co-workers and students in the

¹³ SWOT stands for analysis of **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats.

discussion on the quality of education: the discussion will be raised beyond the level of the individual who is active in the curriculum committee or administration, the views on quality of individual co-workers and students will be examined together in order to establish a policy for the institution. It shows on which points choices need to be made (choices are often made implicitly or postponed) and information gathered is brought to bear on earlier formulated principles, and a decision is reached as to whether a policy should remain unchanged or an explicit choice made.

2.2 Principles of effective self-assessment

When organising an effective self-assessment, it is good to take into account some basic principles:

- Primarily, the management of the institution must support the self-assessment completely. Relevant information is needed for an effective policy and good management. The self-assessment serves to acquire structural insight into the operation and performance of the university;
- However, it is not sufficient if management merely endorses the idea of self-assessment. It is necessary to create a broad basis. The whole organisation has to prepare itself for this. Looking at quality is more than testing the performance. It also means organisational development and shaping the institution. The professional, the staff member should be made responsible for the quality. Everybody has to be involved for real self-assessment.
- Writing a critical self-evaluation demands a good organisation. Primarily someone has to coordinate the self-assessment process. It would be good to charge someone specifically with the self-evaluation project. The coordinator has to meet some requirements:
 - it is very important that the coordinator has good contacts within the university, with the central management as well with the faculties and the staff members;
 - to obtain the required information, it is important that the coordinator has good entry at all levels of the institution;
 - the coordinator must have the authority to make appointments.
- It is desirable to install a working group in charge of the self-assessment. It is important that the group is structured in such a way that the involvement of all sections is assured. The CQO will chair the working group. The working group is in charge of the self-assessment, gathering data, analysing material and drawing conclusions.
- It is assumed that a self-assessment is an analysis supported by the whole institution. Therefore, it is important that everyone should be at least acquainted with the contents of this self-assessment and should recognise it as a document from his or her own institution. The working group might organise a workshop or seminar to discuss the draft SAR.
- Not everyone has to agree with all the points in the text of the self-assessment report. For there may be disagreement as to what are seen as weaknesses and strengths and what is to be considered as the cause of the weaknesses. Should there be very big differences of opinion between certain groups or bodies, the SAR should report on it.

It is the university that determines how the self-assessment is carried out. However, it will be wise to make use of experiences gained on several occasions. On the basis of experience with self-assessment in other universities some suggestions may be made that can facilitate the process (the organisation of the process is given in Table 2):

- Self-assessment should never be the work of one single person.
- Make a group responsible for the self-assessment.

- This group should consist of some three to five people, chaired by a coordinator appointed by the faculty.
- A clear timetable should be set up, assuming a total amount of time available of some five to six months between the moment of the formal announcement and the actual visit.
- The topics that have to be considered in the self-evaluation (see the respective manuals in Chapters 3, 4 and 5) should be distributed among the committee members and each member made responsible for collecting information, and for analysing and evaluating the situation.
- The draft results should be discussed on the largest scale possible. It is not necessary for there to be consensus concerning the report; it is, however, necessary for as many people as possible to be aware of its contents.
- Do involve students in the self-assessment as much as possible.

The self-assessments must be finalised with a self-assessment report (SAR). There are several conditions to be set for an SAR:

1. The report is the account of the self-assessment. That is to say, the SAR is not just descriptive but it is also analytical. It includes an evaluation of the problems. At the same time it provides an indication of how it is thought that problems identified will be dealt with.
2. The manner in which self-assessments are carried out can vary; also the levels of who is to be involved in the discussion of the report will differ from one institution to the next. Nevertheless, responsibility for the self-assessment lies with the Board.

Date	Activity
8 months before a planned assessment	Appoint the leader of the assessment process Compose the assessment team, including students dividing up the subjects to be dealt with
The following 6 months	Each person responsible for collecting information and data collects that information Writing drafts of the subjects
4 months after the start	Discussion on the drafts in the group Second draft
About 5 months after the start	Discussion of the 2nd draft with all faculty staff and students during an open hearing
6 months after the start	Edit the comments of the hearing for the final draft
8 months after the start	Carry out an (inter-collegial) assessment


Table 2: Organising a self-assessment

3. Since it is a self-assessment, which is of the utmost importance for an external audit team, it is important for the SAR to follow a specific format.
4. Self-evaluation forms the starting point for the discussions between the review committee and the faculty. This implies that everyone who is concerned in one way or another with the discussions needs to be aware of the contents of the self-evaluation.

5. The quantitative data require special attention. The manner in which data are presented is important for the right interpretation of the data. There is a clear need for standardisation of data such as student numbers, appointment of teaching staff, staff/student ratios, success rates, etc.

When conducting a self-assessment, it is important to draw up an institutions own standards and criteria, but it is also essential to take account of the criteria formulated by outsiders, such as an accrediting body. When analysing an institution's own quality, it is important to look for evidence on how far the criteria have been met. If there are no formally formulated standards in the country or region, the standards as formulated in this manual may be used and taken as benchmarks.

3. Self-assessment of the IQA system

An efficient Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system is necessary to assure our quality. To learn about the quality of the IQA system, the university will organise a SWOT analysis or self-assessment. The AUN-QA has formulated some criteria for an IQA system¹⁴ and is planning to organise quality audits for universities that volunteer for it. The quality audit might lead to the award of the -QA label (see Section 3.3 below). An open and critical self-assessment of the IQA system in the university is important for a successful quality audit. This chapter shows how to conduct such self-assessment. The guidelines are based on international experience and good practice¹⁵. The guidelines given for the self-assessment of the IQA system should not be seen as a straitjacket, because the IQA system may differ from university to university. Therefore, it should be seen as a benchmark: to what extent do we reach the internationally accepted standards for IQA and to what extent we comply with the AUN-QA criteria? If we do not, why not?

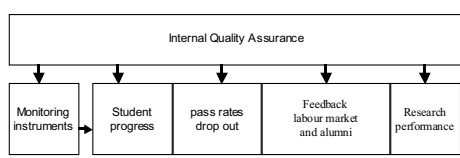
3.1 The IQA model, a useful tool in self-assessment

The IQA model in Figure 10 (see Section 1.3) for an Internal Quality Assurance System in Higher Education may be used for the critical self-assessment. Section 3.2 elaborates the model and formulates the questions, related to each cell. The following aspects are treated:

- Internal Quality Assurance: general aspects
- monitoring instruments
- evaluation instruments
- QA procedures to safeguard specific activities
- specific QA instruments
- follow-up.

The following format is used for each aspect:

1. The cells of the model are given, to remind you what it is all about, e.g.



2. The AUN-QA criteria are given in a box, e.g.

An institution has a clear policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. The university commits itself explicitly to developing quality culture and quality awareness. To achieve this, the university develops and implements a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available. They also include a role for students and other stakeholders.

¹⁴ The criteria for QA-systems in the AUN-Guidelines (pp. 14-18) were revised and endorsed by the CQOs in the Yogyakarta workshop in December 2005. The newly formulated criteria are given in Appendix 2.

¹⁵ The guidelines are based on the AUN-QA guidelines and on the publication *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, (ENQA, Helsinki, 2005)

3. If needed, an explanation and interpretation of the criteria will be given.

4. Diagnostic questions.

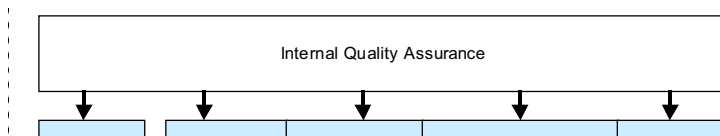
A set of questions is drawn up to help the university find evidence of the criteria being met. Please be aware of the following as far as these questions are concerned:

- *The questions set are not meant as a compulsory list that has to be completed. It is not a questionnaire to be answered point by point. It must be seen as a tool to collect information and evidence. The questions are to be seen as reminders.*
- *The model and the questions have been developed for general use. This means that the list has to be adapted to the university's own situation and to its specific identity.*
- *If it is the first time that the university has been involved in a structured self-assessment, a lot of blank spots will remain that cannot yet be filled. So a number of aspects will be left unanswered this time, but will force the university to take action.*
- *Look at the diagnostic questions and try to give the following information for each aspect:*
 - *A description of the situation at the moment*
 - *An analysis of the situation (What do we think about it? Are we satisfied with the situation or not?)*
 - *If not, describe how you think the situation can be changed and improved.*
 - *What evidence do we have that the AUN-QA criteria have been met? (documentation, effects, outcomes)*
 - *Summarise the weaknesses and strengths.*

After finalising the self-assessment and writing the draft report, discuss the report within the university and ask the staff for their opinion about the analysis and the strengths and weaknesses identified. The report should include an introductory chapter with general discussion on the results. It is important that all the participants have the same background information available. The chapter will describe who was responsible for the self-assessment and how it was done. The same chapter will give a short description of the university.

3.2 Self-assessment in practice

1. Quality Assurance: general aspects



AUN-QA Criterion:

1. An institution has a clear policy and associated procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. The university commits itself explicitly to the development of quality culture and quality awareness.
2. To achieve this, the university develops and implements a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available.
3. They also include a role for students and other stakeholders.

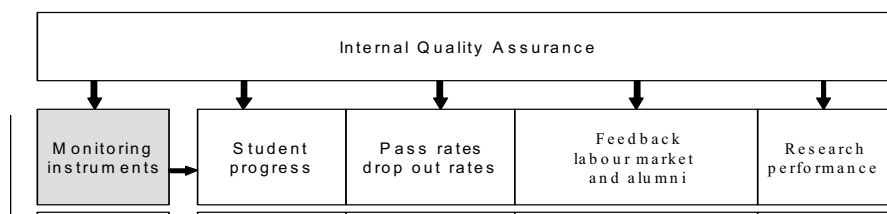
Explanation:

A clearly formulated policy and clearly formulated procedures for quality assurance provide a framework for developing and monitoring the effectiveness of the quality assurance system. They also help to generate public confidence in institutional autonomy. The formulated policy contains the statements of intent and the principal means by which these will be achieved.

Diagnostic questions:

- Does the university have a clearly formulated policy on IQA?
- Does the policy statement explicitly contain:
 - the relationship between teaching and research at the institution;
 - the institution's strategy on quality and standards;
 - how the quality assurance system is organised;
 - the responsibilities of departments, schools, faculties and other organisational units and individuals for assuring quality;
 - the involvement of students in quality assurance;
 - the ways in which the policy is implemented, monitored and revised.

2. The monitoring system



AUN-QA Criterion:

An institution has a structured monitoring system to collect information on the quality of its activities. The monitoring system includes at least:

- Student evaluations
- A student progress system
- Structural feedback from the labour market
- Structural feedback from alumni
- Number of publications
- Number of grants

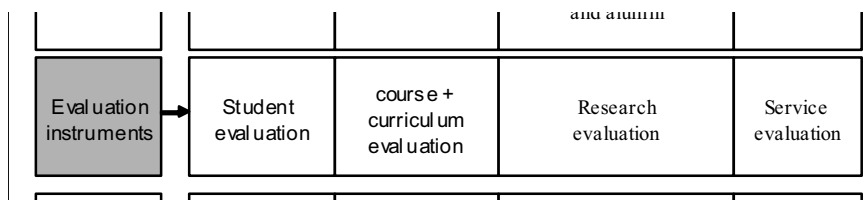
Explanation:

The confidence of students and other stakeholders in higher education is more likely to be established and maintained through effective quality assurance activities that ensure that the core activities are regularly monitored.

Diagnostic questions:

- Does the university have an efficient monitoring system, including:
- a system to watch student progress
 - a system to register pass rates and dropout rates
 - structural feedback from the labour market (employers)
 - structural feedback from alumni
 - records concerning the number of publications registered by staff
 - records on the number of research grants

3. Evaluation instruments



AUN-QA Criterion:

An institution has formal mechanisms for the periodic review or evaluation of its:

1. core activities
2. programmes and degrees
3. research activities (if applicable)
4. contribution to society and the community.

Explanation:

The confidence of students and other stakeholders in higher education is more likely to be established and maintained through effective quality assurance activities which ensure that programmes are well designed, regularly monitored and periodically reviewed, thereby securing their continuing relevance and currency. The quality assurance of programmes and the degrees awarded is expected to include:

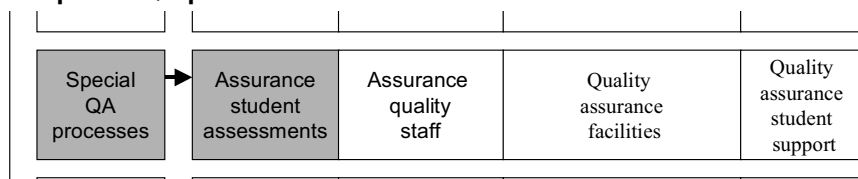
- development and publication of explicit intended learning outcomes;
- careful attention to curriculum and programme design and content;
- specific needs for different modes of delivery (e.g. full-time, part-time, distance-learning, e-learning) and types of higher education (e.g. academic, vocational, professional);
- availability of appropriate learning resources;
- formal programme approval procedures by a body other than that teaching the programme;
- monitoring of student progress and achievements;
- regular periodic reviews of programmes (including external panel members).

Diagnostic questions:

Does the university carry out:

- student evaluations?
- course evaluation, including the above-mentioned aspects (see above under explanation)
- curriculum evaluation, including the above-mentioned aspects (see above under explanation)
- regular review of research outcomes
- regular evaluation of the contribution to society and the community

4. Special QA processes: student assessment



AUN-QA Criterion:

1. An institution has clear procedures to assure the assessment of students.
2. Students are assessed on the basis of published criteria, regulations and procedures that are applied consistently.
3. There are clear procedures to assure the quality of the examinations.
4. There is an appeals procedure.

Explanation:

Student assessment is one of the most important elements of higher education. The outcomes of assessment have a profound effect on students' future careers. It is therefore important that assessment is carried out professionally at all times and takes account of the extensive knowledge that exists on testing and examination processes. Assessment also provides valuable information for institutions about the efficiency of teaching and learner support. Student assessment procedures are expected to:

- be designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and other programme objectives;
- be fit for purpose, whether diagnostic, formative or summative; have clear and published grading/marking criteria;
- be undertaken by people who understand the role of assessment in the students' progression towards achieving the knowledge and skills associated with their intended qualification; where possible, not relying on the verdicts of single examiners;
- take account of all the possible consequences of examinations regulations;
- have clear regulations covering student absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances;
- ensure that assessments are conducted securely in accordance with the institution's stated procedures;
- be subject to administrative verification checks to ensure the accuracy of the procedures;

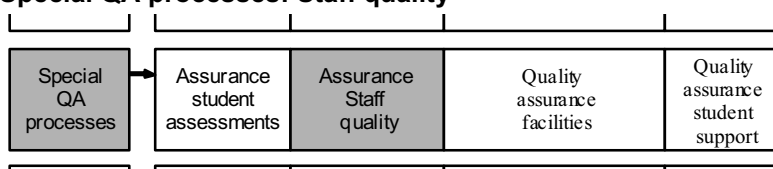
- inform students clearly about the assessment strategy being used for their programme, what examinations or other assessment methods they will be subject to, what will be expected of them, and the criteria that will be applied to the assessment of their performance.

Diagnostic questions:

- Does the student assessment meet the principles of adult learning? Adults prefer to be assessed by criterion-referenced methods and by a combination of peer, self- and teacher assessment.
- Does the assessment method foster open, flexible, reflective and outcome-based assessment?
- Are the criteria made explicit?
- Are the assessment strategies in line with clearly-defined learning outcomes?
- Do the assessment arrangements correspond with all the aims and aspects of the curriculum as taught?
- Is a range of assessment methods used in a planned manner to serve diagnostic, formative, and summative purposes?
- Is the scope and weighting of the assessment schemes known to all concerned?
- Are the standards applied in assessment schemes explicit and consistent across the curriculum?
- Are procedures regularly applied to ensure that, as far as possible, assessment schemes are valid, reliable and fairly administered?
- Do students have ready access to reasonable appeals procedures?
- Is the reliability and validity of the assessment methods documented as required and regularly evaluated?
- Are new assessment methods developed and tested?

The formulated questions have to be answered generally, meaning that they take into account the general approach across all programmes, not just in a specific programme. What is the general practice in the university?

5. Special QA processes: Staff quality



AUN-QA Criterion:

An institution has means to satisfy itself that its staff are qualified and competent to conduct the core activities of the institution: education, research and the contribution to society and the community:

1. *adequate staff appointment procedures*
2. *adequate staff appraisal system*
3. *staff development activities*

Explanation:

Teachers are the single most important learning resource available to most students. It is important that those who teach have a full knowledge and

understanding of the subject they are teaching, have the necessary skills and experience to communicate their knowledge and understanding effectively to students in a range of teaching contexts, and can access feedback on their own performance. Institutions should ensure that their staff recruitment and appointment procedures include a means of making certain that all new staff have at least the minimum necessary level of competence. Teaching staff should be given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching ability and should be encouraged to value their skills. Institutions should provide poor teachers with opportunities to improve their skills to an acceptable level and should have the means to remove them from their teaching duties if they continue to be demonstrably ineffective.

As far as the university is concerned, the qualifications and competencies of the research staff must be checked and controlled. The same goes for the contribution to society and the community.

Diagnostic questions:

- How is the staff recruitment system organised?
- How is the promotion system organised? What criteria are important for promotion?
- Are staff appraisals carried out? How are these done? What are the consequences?
- Has a clear HR policy been put in place?
- Are staff development activities carried out?

6. Special QA processes: Quality of the facilities



AUN-QA Criterion:

An institution has clear procedures to ensure that the quality of its facilities needed for student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered:

1. adequate checks on the computer facilities
2. adequate checks on the library
3. adequate checks on the laboratories

Explanation:

In addition to their teachers, students rely on a range of resources to assist their learning. These vary from physical resources such as libraries or computing facilities to human support in the form of tutors and other advisers. Learning resources and other support mechanisms should be readily accessible to students, designed with their needs in mind and responsive to feedback from

users of these services. Institutions should routinely monitor, review and improve the effectiveness of the support services available to their students.

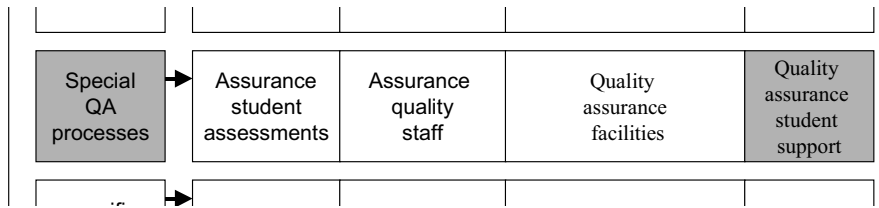
Any research facilities and the facilities needed for the contribution to society and the community must also be subjected to regular scrutiny.

Diagnostic questions:

What procedures do you have to assure the quality of:

- the lecture halls, etc?
- the libraries?
- the laboratories?
- the learning resources
- the research resources?

7. Special QA processes: Quality of student support



AUN-QA Criterion:

An institution has clear procedures to assure the quality of the student support and student advice.

In establishing a learning environment to support the achievement of quality student learning, teachers must do everything in their power to provide not only a physical and material environment that is supportive of learning and is appropriate to the activities involved, but also a social or psychological environment.

Explanation:

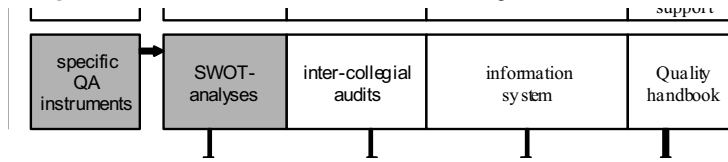
It is important that the quality of student support is assured. This may include, student advice and/or counselling plus the physical and material environment.

Diagnostic questions:

What procedures do you have to assure the quality of the student support activities:

- a tutoring system
- student advice and/or counselling
- student housing
- sports facilities

8. Special QA instruments: SWOT analysis or self-assessment



AUN-QA Criterion:

An institution regularly conducts, but at least once every 5 years, a self-assessment of its core activities and of the institution as a whole to learn about its strengths and weaknesses. This self-assessment will lead to a quality plan.

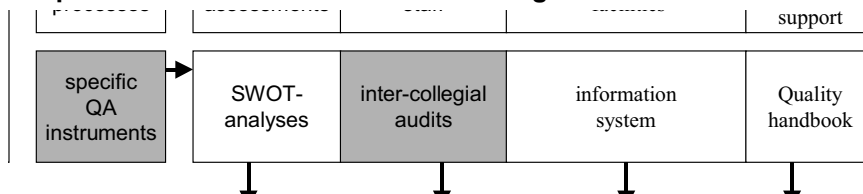
Explanation:

A self-assessment or a SWOT analysis is a powerful instrument for learning more about the quality of the core activities and the quality of the institution as a whole. It will answer the basic questions if we are doing the right things right and if we are able to achieve our goals. Often a self-assessment is connected with external assessment or accreditation, because the accrediting body or external assessors ask for a self-assessment report as input. Even when there is no connection with an external assessment, it will be productive for the university to conduct self-assessment on a regular basis.

Diagnostic questions:

- Does the university already have experience with the instrument of self-assessment?
- Is there any connection with external assessment/accreditation?
- Are the core activities being assessed?
- If not yet done, are you planning to conduct self-assessments on a regular basis?
- If you have (not yet) conducted self-assessments, how do you know what your quality is?

9. Special QA instruments: the inter-collegial audit



AUN-QA Criterion:

A self-assessment might be part of an External Quality Assessment (EQA) or accreditation process where the self-assessment report acts as input for the external review team. If the self-assessment is not connected to the EQA, the institution will be expected to organise an audit itself based on the self-assessment report.

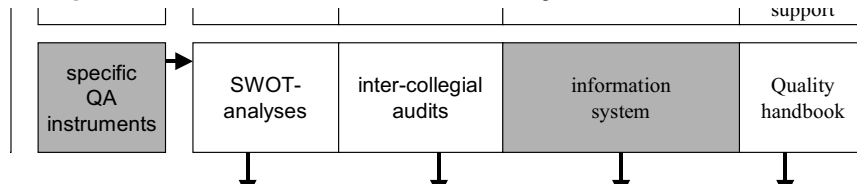
Explanation:

The self-assessment gives us a good idea about our quality. However, this is not enough. We have to check our own view against the view of the outside world. Therefore, it is advisable to organise an inter-collegial audit. This means that experts/colleagues from other departments or other universities check the findings of the SAR.

Diagnostic questions:

- Does the university have an audit system?
- How often do you use it?
- Do you have trained auditors? Where were they trained?
- What is done with the outcomes of an audit? Give some examples.

10. Special QA instruments: information systems



a. The management information system

AUN-QA Criterion:

An institution should ensure that it collects, analyses and uses relevant information for the effective management of its core activities.

Explanation:

Institutional self-knowledge is the starting point for effective quality assurance. It is important that institutions have the means to collect and analyse information about their own activities. Without this they will not know what is working well and what needs attention, or the results of innovatory practices.

The quality-related information systems required by an individual institution will depend to some extent on local circumstances, but are at least expected to cover:

- student progression and success rates; employability of graduates;
- student satisfaction with their programmes; effectiveness of teachers;
- profile of the student population;
- available learning resources and their costs;
- the institution's own key performance indicators.

An efficient information system is also important for benchmarking the university in question with other institutions in the ASEAN region.

Diagnostic questions:

- What is done with the information collected by the monitoring system?
- Does the executive management use the information collected?
- Are you using the instrument of benchmarking? How are you using it?

b. Public information system

AUN-QA Criterion:

An institution should regularly publish up-to-date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards that it offers.

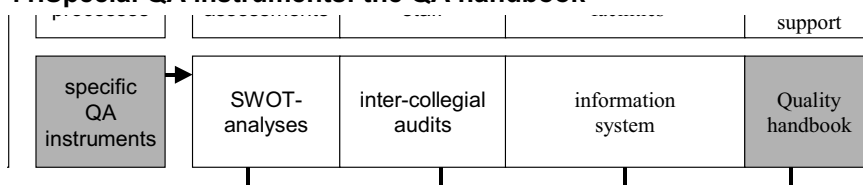
Explanation

In fulfilling their public role, higher education institutions have a responsibility for providing information about the programmes they offer, the intended learning outcomes of these, the qualifications they award, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, and the learning opportunities available to their students. Published information might also include the views and employment destinations of past students and the profile of the current student population. This information should be accurate, impartial, objective and readily accessible and should not be used simply as a marketing opportunity. The institution should verify that it meets its own expectations in respect of impartiality and objectivity.

Diagnostic questions:

- What procedures does the university have to assure the quality of the information?
- How do you ensure that the information is impartial?

11.Special QA instruments: the QA handbook



AUN-QA Criterion:

An institution has a QA handbook that documents all regulations, processes and procedures concerning Quality Assurance. This handbook is public and known to all the people concerned.

Explanation

A QA handbook contains all the documents (or references to the documents), processes and procedures concerning activities in the Quality Assurance process.

Diagnostic questions:

- Does the university already have a QA handbook?
- What is the content of the QA handbook? Sum up the chapters.
- What documents, processes and procedures are already available?
- What documents, processes and practices need to be developed?
- Who will collect and compile all the information?

3.3 Is the university ready for the AUN-QA label?

The AUN-QA is planning to introduce a label for universities that meet the Internal Quality Assurance requirements (see Section 3.5 below). To know how good the Internal Quality Assurance system at the university is and to see if the university is ready to apply for a quality audit, the university can complete the checklist in Appendix 3 after finishing the self-assessment. The university can assess the various aspects on a 7-level scale:

- 1= nothing (no documents, no plans, no evidence) present
- 2= this aspect of the IQA system is in the planning stage
- 3= documents available, but no clear evidence that they are used
- 4= documents available and evidence that they are used
- 5= clear evidence about the efficiency of the aspect
- 6= example of good practice
- 7= excellent

The total subject assessment is based on the scores given to the aspects contained in the subject category. However, it is not a mathematical exercise that just calculates an average value. It is up to the university to balance out the various aspects and to judge the respective weighting given to each aspect. Positive aspects may compensate negative ones. To be able to apply for the AUN-QA label, the university must score an average of level 4 in all subjects. See Table 3 in Section 3.5.

3.4 The follow up

The self-assessment report will cause a lot of follow-up activities:

- if connected with an external quality audit, it might lead to the AUN Quality label. The external quality audit team will formulate recommendations for improvement;
- if the decision is not to go for the certificate yet, the university may decide to invite some colleagues from other universities to audit the IQA system and to draw up recommendations;
- in all cases, the outcomes of the self-assessment and the audit must be translated into a quality plan, showing what activities the university will undertake in the near future.

3.5 The AUN-QA label

The report *A Journey, to uplift Quality Assurance in the ASEAN countries*¹⁶ made the following recommendation:

¹⁶ Vroeijenstijn, January 2006

The AUN-QA is recommended to realise the AUN-QA-quality label as soon as possible. The AUN-QA has already expressed the idea of introducing an AUN-QA-quality label. It is time to install this quality label as soon as possible. To promote the implementation of IQA, the AUN-QA will organise Quality Audits for universities that volunteer for it. The Quality Audit aims to check how the IQA system works and to see if it meets the AUN-QA criteria. If it meets these criteria, the AUN-QA will issue a quality certificate to the institution.

This recommendation was endorsed at the Yogyakarta workshop in December 2005: "In the spirit of promoting Institutional Quality Assurance among AUN member universities, it is agreed to introduce an AUN-QA label."



-QA label

The AUN-QA label is a marker issued to a university by the AUN-QA as proof that it has met the AUN-QA criteria on **Internal Quality Assurance**¹⁷

3.5.1 The process

The process of issuing the AUN-QA label to a university must follow the below-listed rules:

- Application for the QA-label is open to all universities in the ASEAN region, members and non-members of the AUN. Application is on a voluntary base. It is the university that decides to apply for the label or not.
- If a university feels it is ready for application, it asks the AUN-QA to organise a Quality Audit.
- The university conducts a self-assessment of its IQA system over a period of 6 months, using the self-assessment guidelines contained in Section 3.2.
- The university submits the self-assessment report to the office of the AUN-QA.
- The AUN-QA installs a Quality Audit team of 5 experts, 1 representative from the AUN, 1 expert from the ASEAN region outside the AUN, 1 expert from outside the ASEAN region and 2 local experts, proposed by the university to be audited. The required expertise covers a) quality assurance and b) university management.
- The audit team generally visits the university over 2 days. For a draft programme, see Table 4.
- The Quality Audit team is responsible for assessing the IQA system based on the SAR produced by the university and using the checklist contained in Table 3 and Appendix 3 (see 3.5.3)
- Based on the overall assessment by and advice of the Quality Audit team, the AUN-QA decides to issue the QA label or not. The decision might also be conditional.
- The AUN-QA will publish the name of the AUN-QA label holder in a list on its website.

¹⁷ The AUN-QA label only tells us something about the quality of the Internal Quality Assurance System and says nothing about the quality of the programmes or the quality of the institution as a whole.

3.5.2 The criteria and the checklist

It is recognised that there are differences in IQA systems and in the criteria and standards adopted by individual universities. Although there is no fixed way to design an IQA system, it is expected that the majority of the criteria applied should be in line with the common criteria adopted by the AUN-QA. The criteria to be checked are listed in Table 3. The criteria are elaborated in a checklist to be used by the Quality Audit team. The aspects represent the criteria set for an IQA. There are 12 specific subjects for assessment.

The assessment of the aspects will be done on a 7-level scale¹⁸ :

- 1= nothing (no documents, no plans, no evidence) present
- 2= this subject of the IQA system is in the planning stage
- 3= documents available, but no clear evidence that they are used
- 4= documents available and evidence that they are used
- 5= clear evidence for the efficiency of this aspect
- 6= example of good practice
- 7= excellent

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	<i>Policy and procedures for QA</i>							
2	<i>Monitoring</i>							
3	<i>Periodic review of the core activities (education, research and the contribution to society and the community)</i>							
4	<i>Quality assurance of the student assessment</i>							
5	<i>Quality assurance of staff</i>							
6	<i>Quality assurance of facilities</i>							
7	<i>Quality assurance of student support</i>							
8	<i>Self-assessment</i>							
9	<i>Internal audit</i>							
10	<i>Information systems</i>							
11	<i>Public information</i>							
12	<i>Quality handbook</i>							

Table 3: Subjects for the assessment of the IQA system

Appendix 2 provides a checklist with all the aspects. The team will complete the list at the end of the visit. To be able to apply for the AUN-QA label, the university must score an average of level 4 in all subjects. The total subject verdict is based on the scores achieved by the various aspects contained in the subject category. However, it is not a mathematical exercise that just calculates the average value. It is up to the audit members to balance the various aspects and to judge the weighting given to each aspect.

3.5.3 Organisation of the Quality Audit

The AUN is responsible for organising the audit. Based on experiences elsewhere, the following must be taken in consideration:

- The members of the Quality Audit team to be installed by the AUN must be persons of high esteem and accepted in the field.

¹⁸ See Appendix 2 for an explanation of why the 2 level and 7-value approach contained in the AUN-QA Guidelines was replaced by a 7-level scale

- The members of the audit team must be independent and there must be no conflicts of interest.
- The AUN ensures that the auditors are trained.
- The AUN secretariat discusses the programme for the site visit with the university. See Table 4 for a draft programme.
- The audit team decides on the programme and on who the team would like to meet.
- The chairman is responsible for writing the report. The other members will provide their respective input. However, it should be a team report. Therefore, minority views should be avoided.
- The audit team will treat all information confidentially, including the SAR.
- Before the audit team submits the report to the AUN, it will send it to the university for comment.
- The AUN will publish the positive label decision on the website.
- The AUN will ensure that an appeals committee is installed, if a university does not agree with the AUN decision.

Time	activity
15:00 on the day before the official visit	<i>The audit team members meet in the hotel for information about their task and discussion on</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The SAR</i> • <i>Specific questions</i> • <i>The programme</i>
18:00	<i>Reception by the rector and other officials; dinner</i>
Day 1 9:00 - 17:00	<i>Interviews with:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The authors of the self-assessment report</i> • <i>The QA officers</i> • <i>Management of the institution</i> • <i>Statistics department/student office</i> • <i>Director/head of the quality centre/evaluation centre</i> • <i>Vice-rector research</i>
Day 2 9:00 - 11:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Interviews with students</i> • <i>Interview with faculty deans</i>
11:00 - 12:00	<i>2nd meeting with the management of the institution</i>
12:00 - 13:00	<i>Visit to facilities</i>
13:00 - 15:00	<i>Formulation of the findings</i>
15:00 - 15:30	<i>Feedback to the university</i>

Table 4: Draft programme for a quality audit

The AUN-QA label is an important instrument for promoting and stimulating Internal Quality Assurance in ASEAN higher education institutions. The label will promote trust in ASEAN higher education among partners in the region and also among countries in other parts of the world. Because the IQA check involves 7 levels, it will always be possible to improve the IQA system.

4. Self-assessment at programme level

The self-assessment done at programme level to analyse the core activities of teaching and learning is important, because we need to know the quality of our curriculum and the quality of our degrees. The guidelines in this chapter aim to assist the institution with its critical self-assessment and to provide a framework in which quality may be reviewed.

4.1 A quality model for teaching and learning

As mentioned before, quality is a concept with many aspects and many factors that influence quality. The following dimensions can be distinguished with regard to teaching and learning:

- quality of the input
- quality of the process
- quality of the output.

Quality has many faces. To map quality in a self-assessment, we need a clear model to prevent us from looking at some aspects and ignoring others. Figure 11 shows a model for the analysis of educational activities.

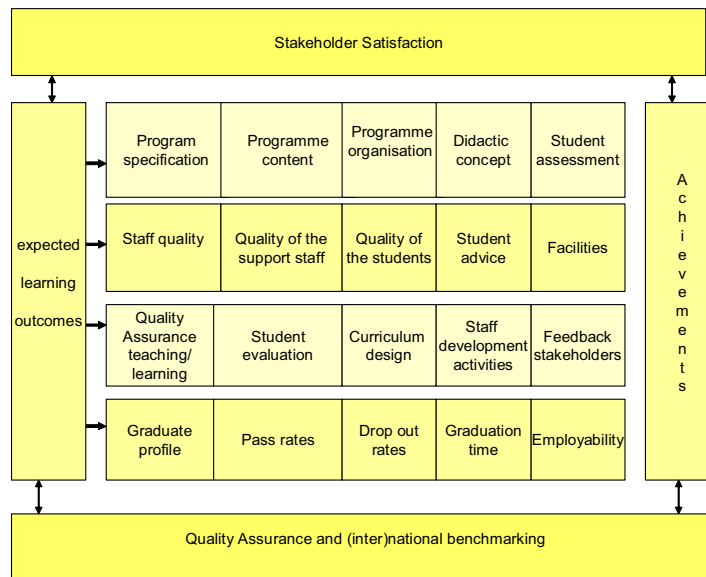
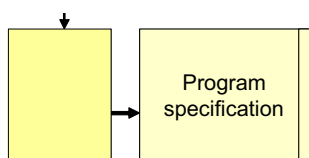


Figure 11: Quality model for teaching/learning

This model may be used for the critical self-assessment. Section 4.2 explains the model. The following format is used for each aspect:

1. The cells of the model are given to remind you of what we are considering here, e.g.



2. The AUN-QA criteria are given in a box, e.g.

1. *Universities are recommended to publish, for each program they offer, a program specification which identifies potential stopping off points and gives the intended outcomes of the programs in terms of:*
 - *The knowledge and understanding that the students will have upon completion*
 - *Key skills: communication, numeracy, the use of information technology and learning how to learn*
 - *Cognitive skills, such as an understanding of methodologies or ability in critical analysis*
 - *Subject specific skills, such as laboratory skills, clinical skills, etc. (1.10)*
2. *Program specification is a concise description of the intended outcomes of learning from a higher education program, and the means by which these outcomes can be achieved and demonstrated (1.11)*
3. *Program specification makes explicit the intended outcomes in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills and other attributes. They should help students to understand the teaching and learning method that enables the outcome to be achieved; the assessment method that enable achievement to be demonstrated; and the relationship of the program and its study elements to the qualification frameworks in each member country and to any subsequent professional qualification or career path (1.1)*

3. If needed, an explanation and interpretation of the criteria will be given.

4. Diagnostic questions.

A set of questions is drawn up to help the university find evidence of the criteria being met. Please be aware of the following as far as these questions are concerned:

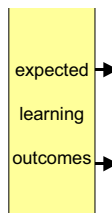
- *The questions set are not meant as a compulsory list that has to be completed. It is not a questionnaire to be answered point by point. It must be seen as a tool to collect information and evidence. The questions are to be seen as reminders.*
- *The model and the questions have been developed for general use. This means that the list has to be adapted to the university's own situation and to its specific identity.*
- *If it is the first time that the university has been involved in a structured self-assessment, a lot of blanks will remain that cannot yet be filled. So a number of aspects will be left unanswered this time, but will force the university to take action.*
- *Look at the diagnostic questions and try to give the following information for each aspect:*
 - *A description of the situation at the moment*
 - *An analysis of the situation (What do we think about it? Are we satisfied with the situation or not?)*
 - *If not, describe how you think the situation can be changed and improved.*

- *What evidence do we have that the AUN-QA criteria haven been met? (documentation, effects, outcomes)*
- *Summarise the weaknesses and strengths.*

After finalising the self-assessment and writing the draft report, discuss the report in the university and ask the staff what they think about the analysis and about the strengths and weaknesses identified. The report should include an introductory chapter with general discussion on the results. It is important that all participants have the same background information available. The chapter will describe who was responsible for the self-assessment and how it was done. The same chapter will gibe a short description of the university.

4.2. Self-assessment in practice

1. Expected learning outcomes



AUN-QA Criteria

1. *The curriculum is developed to promote learning, learning how to learn and to instill in students a commitment of lifelong learning (e.g., a commitment to critical inquiry, development of study and information-processing skills, a willingness to experiment with new ideas and practices).*
2. *The curriculum offers to graduates the ability to do advanced studies, to develop their own personality, to have an academic attitude and to be competent in their field of study. The graduates should also have transferable skills, leadership skills, and should be oriented to the job market and be able to develop their careers. (1.9)¹⁹*
3. *The curriculum has clearly formulated learning outcomes, reflecting the relevant demands and needs of all stakeholders. (1.2)*

Explanation

Students come to the university to learn something. Therefore, we have to formulate very clearly what we expect the student to learn and what we expect our graduates to have learnt in terms of knowledge, skills and attitude.

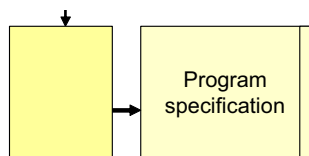
¹⁹ *The number in brackets () shows the number in the list of criteria in the original AUN-QA Guidelines. See also the flow chart AUN-QA Guidelines and the Manual in Appendix 1.*

The expected learning outcomes, sometimes also called competencies, form the starting point for the self-assessment. We have to distinguish between generic and specific skills.

Diagnostic questions

- What goal(s) has the department set itself?
- What are the expected learning outcomes?
- What is the educational philosophy behind the programme?
- How does it fit into the mission of the institution as a whole?
- How are the programme objectives formulated?
- Why are we educating?
- Does the labour market set any specific requirements for graduates to meet?
- To what extent and how do we try to tune the programme to the labour market?
- Is there a well-defined job profile?
- How are the goals and objectives made known to the staff and the students?
- To what extent do we think the goals and objectives have been realised?
- Do we have any plans to adjust the goals and objectives? Why?
- How are the goals and objectives translated into the concrete requirements of the graduate (i.e. objectives in respect of knowledge, skills and attitudes)?
- What are the specific goals and objectives of the specialisation?

2. Programme specifications



AUN-QA Criteria

1. Universities are recommended to publish, for each program they offer, a program specification which identifies potential stopping off points and gives the intended outcomes of the programs in terms of:
 - The knowledge and understanding that the students will have upon completion
 - Key skills: communication, numeracy, the use of information technology and learning how to learn
 - Cognitive skills, such as an understanding of methodologies or ability in critical analysis
 - Subject specific skills, such as laboratory skills, clinical skills, etc. (1.10)
2. Program specification is a concise description of the intended outcomes of learning from a higher education program, and the means by which these outcomes can be achieved and demonstrated (1.11)
3. Program specification makes explicit the intended outcomes in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills and other attributes. They should help students to understand the teaching and learning method that enables the outcome to be achieved; the assessment method that enable achievement to be demonstrated; and the relationship of the program and its study elements to the qualification frameworks in each member country and to any subsequent professional qualification or career path (1.1)

Explanation

The formulated learning outcomes and formulated goals and objectives should be translated into the programme. It is important that the goals and objectives are well known to everybody. Therefore, universities are recommended to publish a programme specification for each programme they offer. The programme specification should be used:

- As a source of information for students and potential students seeking to understand a programme.
- As a source of information for employers, particularly on the skills and other transferable intellectual abilities developed by the programme.
- By professional and statutory regulatory bodies that accredit higher education programmes which can lead to entry into a profession or other regulated occupations. Programme specifications should identify those aspects of the programme that are designed to meet the requirements of the relevant bodies.
- By institutional and teaching teams to promote discussion and reflection on new and existing programmes and to ensure that there is a common understanding on the goals and objectives and intended learning outcomes of the programmes. Programme specifications should enable institutions to satisfy themselves that the designers of the programmes are clear about their intended outcomes and that these outcomes can be achieved and demonstrated. Programme specifications can serve as a reference point for internal review and monitoring of a programme's performance.
- As a source of information for academic reviewers and external examiners who need to understand the aim and intended outcomes of a programme.
- As a basis for gaining feedback from students or recent graduates on the extent to which they perceived the opportunities for learning to be successful in promoting the intended outcomes. (1.13)

The following information should normally be included in the programme specification:

- Awarding body/institution.
- Teaching institution (if different)
- Details of any accreditation by a professional or statutory body
- Name of the final award
- Programme title
- Goals and objectives of the programme
- Relevant subject benchmark statements and other external and internal reference points used to provide information on programme outcomes
- Programme outcomes such as knowledge and understanding, skills and other attributes
- Teaching, learning and assessment strategies to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated
- Programme structures and requirements, levels, modules, credits
- Date on which the programme specification was written or revised.

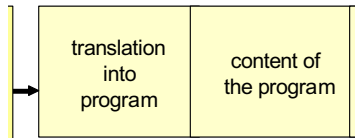
In addition, institutions might wish to include:

- Criteria for admission to the programme
- Information on assessment regulations
- Quality indicators
- Particular learning support
- Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of learning (1.14)

Diagnostic questions

- Are the goals and objectives translated into the programme and its courses?
- Does the university have a curriculum specification as formulated by the AUN-QA?

3. Programme content (curriculum)



AUN-QA Criteria

1. *The curriculum shows a balance between specialist contents, general knowledge and skills. The curriculum is designed in such a way that it will be interesting to students, so that it will attract many applicants. (1.3)*
2. *The curriculum takes into account and reflects the vision, mission, aims and objectives of the institution. The vision, mission, aims and objectives are explicit and are known to staff and students. (1.1)*
3. *The curriculum shows the expected competences of the graduate. Each course should clearly be designed to show the expected outcomes of the course competencies. To obtain this, a curriculum map should be constructed.(1.5)*

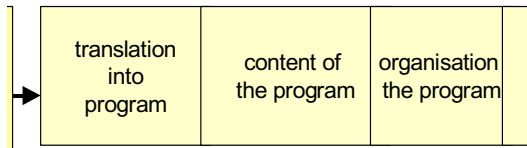
Explanation

It is imperative to ask how the goals and objectives are translated into a programme. Is the programme coherent and up-to-date? How does each course contribute to the achievement of the institution's general mission?

Diagnostic questions

- Do the contents reflect the mission and vision of the university?
- Do the contents of the undergraduate programme reflect the expected outcomes and can they be considered capable of achieving the expected outcomes?
- Are the courses in the programme clearly related? Is the programme coherent?
- Has a proper balance been struck between specific and general courses?
- Do the courses demonstrate growing complexity over the years?
- Is the programme content up-to-date?

4. Programme organisation



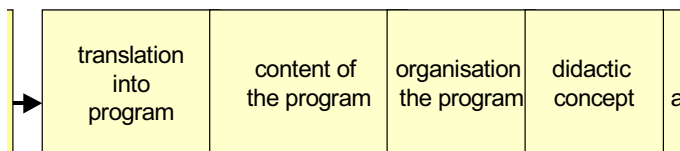
AUN-QA Criteria

1. *The curriculum is designed so that the subject matter is integrated and strengthens other courses in the curriculum (1.4)*
2. *The curriculum is structured to show range, depth, coherence and organization of the courses (1.6)*
3. *The curriculum structure shows clearly the basic courses, the intermediate courses, the specialist courses and the final thesis or dissertation. (1.7)*

Diagnostic questions

- Why was this programme structure chosen?
- Has the educational programme been changed structurally over recent years? If so, why?
- Were any requirements specified on the internal coherence of the courses? Who set these requirements?
- Is the instruction/teaching provided by other departments satisfactory?
- Does the first year of the programme provide sufficient insight into the remaining parts of the programme?
- Is the connection between basic programme and specialisation correct?
- Is the organisation of the various specialisations satisfactory?
- Is the relation between basic courses, intermediate courses and specialist courses in the compulsory programme and the optional sections satisfactory?
- Are bottlenecks experienced within the programme?
- What organisational form does the university use (term, semester, modular, problem oriented)? What do those involved think of this?

5. Didactic concept and teaching/learning strategy



AUN-QA Criteria

1. *Staff are encouraged to employ action learning. Action learning is a continuous process of learning and reflection, supported by peers, with the intention of achieving quality student learning. Through action learning, university teachers learn with and from each other by working on real problems and reflecting on their own experiences. A program of facilitated action learning is aimed at the*

improvement of student learning and the environment in which it occurs. (2.14)

2. *Quality learning is understood as involving the active construction of meaning by the student, and not just something that is imparted by the teacher. It is a deep approach of learning that seeks to make meaning and achieve understanding. Hence, the conception of teaching is the facilitation of learning. (4.1)*
3. *It is the students who achieve the aims of higher education. Quality learning is largely dependent on the approach that the learner takes when learning. This in turn is dependent on the concepts that the learner holds of learning, what he or she knows about his or her own learning, and the strategies she or he chooses to use. (4.2)*
4. *Quality learning embraces the principles of adult learning. Adults learn best in a relaxed, supportive, cooperative and informal learning environment. Deep learning is likely to take place in environments which foster collaborative learning. (4.3)*
5. *In promoting responsibility in learning, teachers should:*
 - a. *create a teaching-learning environment that enables individuals to participate responsibly in the learning process*
 - b. *provide curricula that are flexible and enable learners to make meaningful choices in terms of subject content, program routes, approaches to assessment and modes and duration of study (see Section 2). (4.9)*
6. *In engaging with feelings and values as well as intellectual development, teachers provide learning opportunities and encounters which involve the whole person, feelings as well as intellect (4.10)*

Explanation

- The AUN-QA Guidelines describe in detail how to look at the learning process and how to look at the requirements of a good didactic concept and teaching/learning strategy. In line with the overarching purpose of higher education, namely to foster higher order intellectual capacities in students, the following represent the characteristics of quality learning:
 - The ability to discover knowledge for oneself. Learners have research skills and the ability to analyse and synthesise the material they gather. Learners understand various learning strategies and can choose the most appropriate for the task at hand.
 - The ability to retain knowledge long term. An approach to learning that emphasises understanding rather than memorisation results in greater retention.
 - The ability to perceive relations between old knowledge and new. Quality learning is always trying to bring information from various resources together.
 - The ability to create new understanding. Quality learners discover what others have learnt and documented, perceiving the relations between that knowledge and their own experiences and previous learning to develop new insights.
 - The ability to apply one's knowledge to solving problems.
 - The ability to communicate one's knowledge to others. Quality learners form and substantiate independent thought and action in a coherent and articulate fashion.
 - An eagerness to know more. Quality learners become lifelong learners.
- Conditions necessary for quality learning are:
 - Quality learning occurs when learners are ready – in cognitive and emotional terms – to meet the demands of the learning task.
 - Quality learning occurs when learners have a reason for learning.
 - Quality learning occurs when learners explicitly relate previous knowledge to new.
 - Quality learning occurs when learners are active in the learning process.

- Quality learning occurs when the learning environment offers adequate support for learners.
- Of course, no one single didactic concept is valid for all. Thought must at least be given to the didactic model behind the curriculum.

Diagnostic questions

- Is there an explicit didactic concept and teaching learning strategy shared by all staff members? Is this adequate?
- Are the instructional methods used (organisation of self-instruction for students, size of classes, organisation of seminars, practical courses/internships etc.) satisfactory?
- How is the computer used in instruction?
- How are the didactic methods evaluated? Do the chosen methods fit into the objectives of the courses? Is there sufficient variety in the methods?
- Are there any circumstances that prevent these desired instructional methods from being used (number of students, material infrastructure, lecturer skills)?

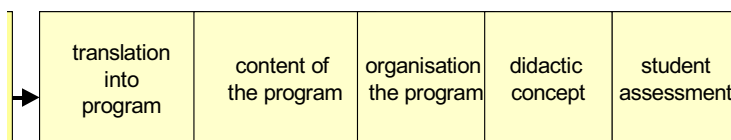
If research is a core activity for the university:

- When do students come into contact with research for the first time?
- How is the interrelationship between education and research expressed in the programme?
- How are the research findings included in the programme?

The practical training of students (trainees) is a specific aspect in the didactic concept. Describe the position given to practical training in the programme:

- Is practical training a compulsory part?
- Size in credit points.
- Have any criteria been formulated for the practical training to comply with?
- Preparation of practical training in the programme (both concerning content, method and skills).
- Is the level of the practical training satisfactory?
- Are there any bottlenecks in the practical training? If so, what causes them?
- How are students coached?
- How is the assessment done?

6. Student assessment



AUN-QA Criteria

1. *Assessment covers:*
 - *New student entrance by means of input competency*
 - *Student's study progress by means of matrix/map/portfolio of the competency and outcome-based curriculum*
 - *Final/ Exit test of the graduates by means of Graduate Competency Check-List or comprehensive and integrated assessment*
2. *In line with principle of adult learning, adults prefer to be assessed by criterion-referenced methods and by a combination of peer, self- and teacher assessment.(3.1)*
3. *In fostering open, flexible, reflective and outcome-based assessment, the teachers should provide a variety of assessments of students' learning, through self-, peer and teacher assessment where the criteria are made explicit following negotiation with the course members. The assessment strategies adopted should be congruent with clearly defined learning outcomes.(3.2)*
4. *Assessment arrangements correspond to all the aims and aspects of the curriculum as taught (3.3)*
5. *A range of assessment methods is used in a planned manner to serve diagnostic, formative, and summative purposes. (3.4)*
6. *The scope and weighting of assessment schemes are clear and known to all concerned. (3.5)*
7. *Standards applied in assessment schemes are explicit and consistent across the curriculum. (3.6)*
8. *Procedures are regularly applied to ensure that, as far as possible, assessment schemes are valid, reliable and fairly administered. (3.7)*
9. *Students have ready access to reasonable appeal procedures.(3.9)*
10. *The reliability and validity of assessment methods should be documented and regularly evaluated and new assessment methods are developed and tested.(3.10)*

Explanation

Student assessment is one of the most important elements of higher education. The outcomes of such assessment have a profound effect on students' future careers. It is therefore important that assessment is carried out professionally at all times and takes into account the extensive knowledge that exists on testing and examination processes. Assessment also provides valuable information for institutions about the efficiency of teaching and learner support. Student assessment procedures are expected to:

- be designed to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes and other programme objectives;
- be fit for purpose, whether diagnostic, formative or summative; have clear and published grading/marking criteria;
- be undertaken by people who understand the role of assessment in the students' progression towards achieving the knowledge and skills associated with their intended qualification; where possible, not relying on the verdicts of single examiners;
- take account of all the possible consequences of examinations regulations;
- have clear regulations covering student absence, illness and other mitigating circumstances;
- ensure that assessments are conducted securely in accordance with the institution's stated procedures;

- be subject to administrative verification checks to ensure the accuracy of the procedures;
- inform students clearly about the assessment strategy being used for their programme, what examinations or other assessment methods they will be subject to, what will be expected of them, and the criteria that will be applied to the assessment of their performance.

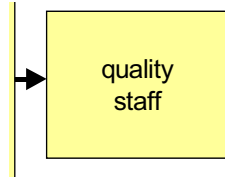
Diagnostic questions:

- Are entry assessments done on new students?
- Are exit assessments done on departing (graduating) students?
- To what extent do the assessments and examinations cover the content of the courses and programme? To what extent do the assessments and examinations cover the objectives of the courses and of the programme as a whole?
- Are the assessments criterion-referenced?
- Are a variety of assessment methods used? What are they?
- Are the pass/fail criteria clear?
- Are the assessment/examination regulations clear?
- Are the procedures clear? Are they well known? Well followed?
- Are any safeguards in place to ensure objectivity?
- Are the students satisfied with the procedures? What about complaints from students?
- Do clear rules exist for re-assessments and are students satisfied with these?

A special form of student assessment is the final project (essay, thesis or assignment). This requires students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills and their ability to manipulate the knowledge in a new situation.

- Do clear regulations exist for the final project?
- Have criteria been formulated that the final project has to comply with?
- What does the preparation for producing the final project in the programme involve (in terms of content, method and skills)?
- Is the level of the final project satisfactory?
- Do any bottlenecks exist for producing the final project? If so, why?
- Describe how students are coached.

7. Staff quality



AUN-QA Criteria

1. *Competent university teachers are able to:*
 - *design and deliver a coherent teaching and learning program*
 - *apply a range of teaching and learning methods and select methods most appropriate to desired learning outcomes*
 - *develop and use a variety of instructional media*

- employ a range of techniques to assess students' work and match these to intended learning outcomes
 - monitor and evaluate their own teaching performance and evaluate programs they deliver
 - reflect upon their own teaching practices
 - identify needs and develop plans for continual development. (2.13)
2. The teaching staff establishment is sufficient to deliver the curriculum and suitable in terms of the mix of qualifications, experience, aptitudes, age, etc. (2.1)
 3. Recruitment and promotion of academic staff are based on merit system, which includes teaching, research and services.(2.3)
 4. Roles and relationship of staff members are well defined and understood (2.4)
 5. Duties allocated are appropriate to qualifications, experience, and aptitude. (2.5)
 6. Time management and incentive system are directed to support quality of teaching and learning.(2.6)
 7. All staff is accountable to the Owner of the University (e.g. the Government, Board of Trustees, or the Foundation) through the Rector and to the stakeholders, taking into account their academic freedom. (2.9)
 8. There are provisions for review, consultation, and redeployment.(2.10)
 9. Termination, retirement and social benefits are planned and well implemented. (2.11)
 - 10 There is a well-planned staff appraisal based on fair and objective measures in the spirit of enhancement which are carried out regularly (2.12)

Explanation

A department's quality not only depends on the programme itself. We also have to look at the preconditions set for delivering the programme. The quality of the entering student will influence the quality of our process and the quality of the output. The quality of the provisions will be near impossible to achieve without qualified and competent staff. Not only the human resources are important; so too are the financial resources, i.e. the programme's funding and financing for the facilities. The term staff covers full-time and part-time teachers, visiting lecturers, support staff and administrative staff. There will be no quality without qualified and competent staff. The AUN-AQ Guidelines give a set of criteria on the staff. We have to check how far the university meets these requirements. So, we have to look at:

- The size of the staff and their qualifications
- The staff/HR management

Size of the staff and their qualifications

Use Table 5 to specify the number of staff. Mention possible vacancies separately, and specify the reference date for the data. Specify the staff/student ratio and the staff/graduate ratio as per Table 6.

Category	M	F	Total		Percentage of PhDs
			People	FTEs *	
Professors					
Full-time teachers					
Part-time teachers					
Visiting lecturers					
Support staff					
Total					

* FTE stands for Full Time Equivalent. This is a unit to calculate the investment of time. 1 FTE is equal to about 40 hours per week (full-time employment). A staff member with a weekly appointment of 8 hours is 0.2 FTE.

Table 5: Number of staff (specify reference date)

Total FTE for the training*	Number of Students ²⁾	Number of graduates Year:	Number of students per FTE-training	Number of graduates per FTE-graduates

* Realistically estimate of the number of FTEs used for the training. The number of students enrolled in the programme at the beginning of the 2004/2005 academic year. If this number is not considered to be representative, please specify what it should be made in the text.

Table 6: Staff/student ratio and staff/graduate ratio (please specify the year)

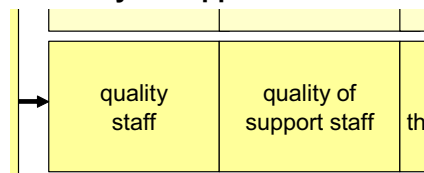
Diagnostic questions

- Are the staff competent and qualified for their job?
- Are the competencies and expertise of the staff adequate for delivering this programme?
- Are there any problems with the human resources? Age structure? Vacancies difficult to fill? How many Master's and PhD degree holders are there among the staff (see Table 4)? What difficulties are there in attracting qualified staff?
- What policy is pursued with regard to the employment of staff, both in teaching and research?
- Is a conscious effort made to involve professors in the basic training?
- Is a policy in place with regard to the involvement in seminars, supervision of final papers, practical courses and/or practical training/internships?
- What about teaching loads? The staff/student ratio? The staff/graduate ratio?
- How many contact hours of service-instruction are given in other programmes and departments?

Staff management

- Does the department have a clearly formulated staff management structure?
- Is staff recruitment based on experience in teaching and research?
- Is there a system of staff appraisal?
- What role do teaching qualifications and teaching activities play in the career of the staff members?
- What does the department think of its HR policy so far?
- What the future developments are there?
- How are teachers prepared for the teaching task?
- Is the teaching delivered by the staff supervised and assessed?

8. Quality of support staff



AUN-QA Criteria

1. There is adequate support in terms of staffing at the libraries, laboratories, administration and student services. (2.2)

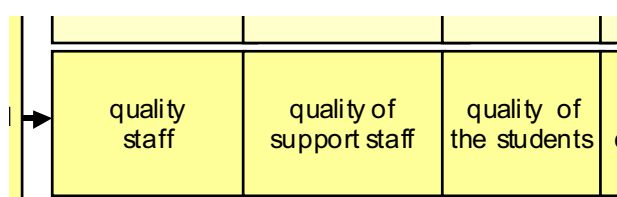
Explanation

Programme quality depends mostly on interaction between staff and students. However, academic staff cannot perform well without the quality of the support staff. These might be staff who support the library, laboratories, computer facilities.

Diagnostic questions

- Are the support staff for the library competent and sufficient?
- Are the support staff for the laboratories competent and sufficient?
- Are the support staff for the computer facilities competent and sufficient?
- Are the support staff for the administration competent and sufficient?

9 Student quality



No specific criteria have been set by the AUN-QA.

Explanation

The quality of the output depends a lot on the quality of the input. This means that the quality of entering students is important.

The intake

- Give a summary of the intake of first year students using Table 6.
- Give a summary of the total number of students enrolled in the programme using Table 7.

Academic year	Full-time			Part-time		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total

Table 7: Intake of first-year students

Academic year	Full-time			Part-time		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total

Table 8: Total number of students (last 5 academic years)

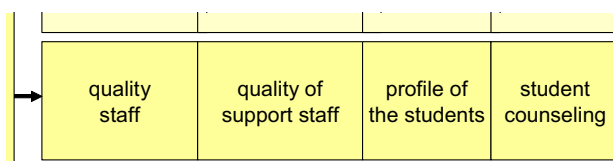
Diagnostic questions:

- How do you analyse the development of the student intake: Reasons to worry? Causes of problems? Prospects for the future?
- Are students selected?
- If so, how are they selected? What are the requirements?
- What policy is pursued with regard to the intake of students? Does it aim to increase the intake or to stabilise it? Why?
- What measures are taken to affect the quality and size of the intake?
- What effect do these measures have?
- How does the programme take into account the level of achievement of entering students? How are the programme and secondary education linked?

Study load

- Does the department have a credit points system? How are credits calculated?
- Does the programme's actual study load correspond with the prescribed study load?
- Is the study load divided equally over and within academic years?
- What measures are taken in the field of programme development and/or student advice when parts of the programme deviate from the prescribed study load (too difficult/heavy or too easy)? Are these measures effective?
- Can an average student complete the programme in the planned time?

10. Student advice and support



AUN-QA Criteria

1. *Student progress is systematically recorded and monitored, feed back to students and corrective actions are made where necessary.(3.8)*
2. *In establishing a learning environment to support the achievement of quality student learning, teachers do all in their power to provide not only a physical and material environment which is supportive of learning and which is appropriate for the activities involved, but also a social or psychological one (5.1).*

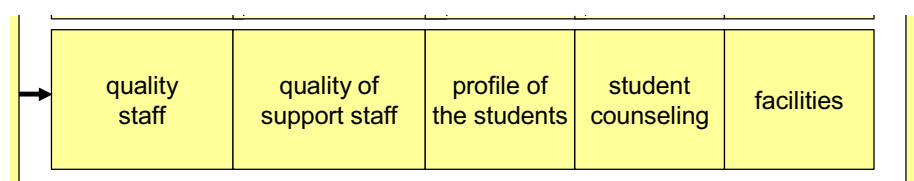
Explanation

How students are monitored and supported by staff is essential to a good student career. The AUN-QA has defined that a university must ensure that a good physical, material, social and psychological environment is in place.

Diagnostic questions

- What role do staff members play in informing and coaching students ?
- What role do they play in integrating students into the department?
- How is the information flow to potential students organised? Is sufficient attention paid to the requirements of their educational background? Does the future student get a good impression of the education offered? Is the information evaluated? If so, what happens with the results?
- How are students informed about the study facilities? How is the information provided with regard to the programme?
- Is student progress recorded? Does the recording lead to problems being pointed out in time? When is first contact made with problem cases? Does this result in remedial and/or preventive actions being introduced for the individual student or programme development?
- Is special attention paid to coaching first-year students? If so, how does it work?
- Is attention paid to study progress?
- Are specific facilities available to provide study skills for students with problems? Are these available within the department, the faculty or centrally? How is information on these matters organised?
- Is separate attention paid to coaching advanced students?
- Is assistance given in completing the final project? Where can students who get stuck with their practical training or final project get help?
- How are students advised on problems concerning course options, change of options, interruption or termination of studies?
- Is information provided on career prospects? Do students have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the labour market by means of practical training, application courses and the like?
- If students wish to extend their course of study, are the reasons examined? If yes, what are usually the findings and what measures do they result in?
- To what extent do the structure and organisation of the programme contribute to students taking on an active study approach?
- To what extent does the programme challenge students to make a satisfactory investment in their studies/programme?
- Are you satisfied with the tools available to improve study progress.

11. Facilities and infrastructure



AUN-QA Criteria

1. *The physical resources to deliver the curriculum, including equipment, materials and information technology are sufficient (6.1)*
2. *Equipment is up-to-date, readily available and effectively deployed (6.2)*
3. *Learning resources are selected, filtered, and synchronized with the objectives of the study (6.4)*
4. *A digital library is set up in keeping with progress in information and communication technology (6.5)*

5. *Information technology systems are set up or upgraded (6.7)*
6. *University computer centres provide continuously a highly accessible computer and network infrastructure that enables the campus community to fully exploit information technology for teaching, research and development, services and administration. (6.8)*
7. *Environmental Health and Safety Standards meet the local requirements in all aspects (5.2)*

Explanation

Facilities and resources should be in line with the formulated goals and aims and with the designed programme. Facilities are also connected to the teaching/learning strategy. For example, if the philosophy is to teach in small working groups, small rooms must be available. Computer-aided instruction can only be realised with enough computers for the students. The main learning resources consist of books, brochures, magazines, journals, posters, information sheets, internet and intranet, CD-ROMs, maps, aerial photographs, satellite imagery and others.

Diagnostic questions

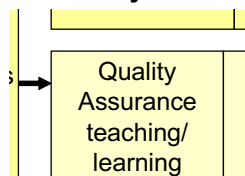
Teaching rooms

- Are enough lecture halls, seminar rooms, laboratories, reading rooms, and computer rooms available? Do these meet the relevant requirements?
- Is the library sufficiently equipped for education?
- Is the library within easy reach (location, opening hours)?
- Do you have sufficient laboratory facilities? Including support staff?
- Do the laboratories meet the relevant requirements?

Didactic aids and tools

- Are sufficient audio-visual aids available?
- Are there enough computers? Appropriate and enough computer programs (computer-aided education, maths programs, design programs, etc)?
- To what extent do the facilities/infrastructure promote or obstruct delivery of the programme?
- Is the total budget for aids and tools sufficient?

12. Quality Assurance of the teaching/learning process



AUN-QA Criteria

1. *The curriculum is periodically reviewed and evaluated as to its effectiveness. Adjustments are made after reasonable time periods.(1.8)*

Explanation

The confidence of students and other stakeholders in higher education is more likely to be established and maintained through effective and efficient quality assurance activities which ensure that programmes are well-designed, regularly monitored and periodically reviewed, thereby securing their continuing relevance and currency.

The quality assurance of programmes and the degrees awarded are expected to include:

- development and publication of explicit intended learning outcomes;
- careful attention to curriculum and programme design and content;
- specific needs for different modes of delivery (e.g. full-time, part-time, distance-learning, e-learning) and types of higher education (e.g. academic, vocational, professional);
- availability of appropriate learning resources;
- formal programme approval procedures by a body other than that teaching the programme;
- monitoring of student progress and achievements;
- regular periodic reviews of programmes (including external panel members).

Diagnostic questions

Brief outline how the department tries to guarantee quality. Is a structural quality assurance system in place? If so, please describe it and how it works.

- Which boards and/or committees are involved in internal quality assurance?
- Is there a curriculum committee? What is its role?
- Is there an examination committee? What is its role? Does it work?
- What is the role of the examination committee?
- Are the functions and responsibilities of the committees and administrators involved clear to everyone? Are there any problems with the division of responsibilities?

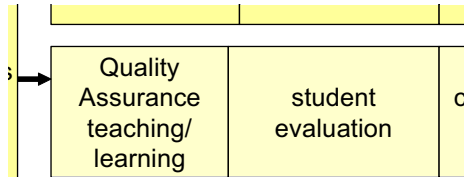
Monitoring system

- Does the department have a monitoring system for:
 - recording study progress
 - following graduates (for example, with destination surveys)
- How are the data of the monitoring system used for internal quality assurance?

Course and curriculum evaluation

- How is the programme (curriculum) evaluated? At course level? At curriculum level?
- Is the evaluation done systematically?
- How are the students involved in evaluating the education and training?
- How and to whom are the results made known?
- Is anything done with the results? How is this made transparent?

13. Student evaluation



AUN-QA Criteria

1. *A prime condition for constantly improving teaching and learning is a planned and regular process of evaluation. In this regard, teachers should foster a climate which values student involvement in the evaluation of teaching and the assessment of learning outcomes (end of page 30).*

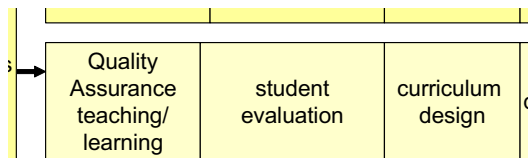
Explanation

Students are the first to judge the quality of teaching and learning. They experience the delivery method. They have an opinion about the facilities. Of course, the information given by students has to be counterbalanced by other opinions. Nevertheless, the university is expected to carry out student evaluations and to use the outcomes for improvement.

Diagnostic questions

- Does the university use student evaluations in a structured manner?
- Who is responsible for the evaluations?
- What is done with the outcome of the evaluations? Are there any examples of this contributing to improvements?
- What input do the students give who sit on the committees involved in the internal quality assurance process?

14. Curriculum design



AUN-QA Criteria

1. *The curriculum is developed as a group to ensure the representation from the faculty Quality Committee, the faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, the program team, students and stakeholders from industry, government and professional organizations (page 22 Introduction)*

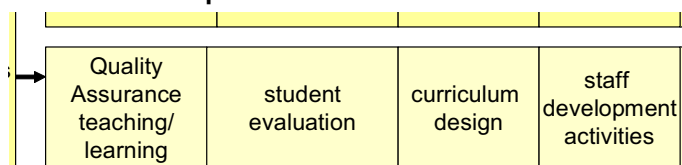
Explanation

Developing or designing a curriculum is a special activity. Too often, a curriculum is seen as a number of courses provided by the present professors. They sometimes act like small shopkeepers, selling their own product, but not knowing what others offer. Curriculum design should start with the formulation of the expected learning outcomes. The next question will be what courses are needed to achieve the objectives and finally who will teach the courses? It is important that a curriculum is seen as a joint enterprise.

Diagnostic questions

- Who is responsible for designing the curriculum?
- What do staff and students make?
- How is the labour market involved in the curriculum design?
- How do curriculum innovations come about? Who takes the initiative? On the basis of what signals?
- Who is responsible for implementation?
- When designing curricula, is there any benchmarking with other institutions?
- In which international networks does the department participate?
- With which institution abroad does exchange take place?
- Has the programme been recognised abroad?

15. Staff development activities



AUN-QA Criteria

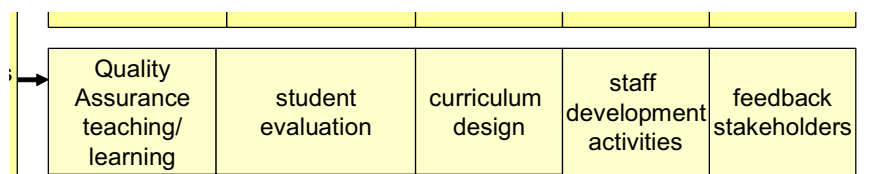
1. *Staff development needs are systematically identified, in relation to individual aspirations, the curriculum and institutional requirements. (2.7)*
2. *Academic and supporting staff undertake appropriate staff development programs related to identified needs. (2.8)*

Explanation

Teachers are the single most important learning resource available to most students. It is important that those who teach have a full knowledge and understanding of the subject they are teaching, have the necessary skills and experience to communicate their knowledge and understanding effectively to students in a range of teaching contexts, and can access feedback on their own performance. Institutions should ensure that their staff recruitment and appointment procedures include a means of making certain that all new staff have at least the minimum necessary level of competence. Teaching staff should be given opportunities to develop and extend their teaching ability and should be encouraged to value their skills. Institutions should provide teachers with

opportunities to improve their skills to an acceptable level and should have the means to remove them from their teaching duties if they continue to be demonstrably ineffective.

16. Feedback stakeholders



AUN-QA Criteria

1. Universities are encouraged to have a built-in regular curriculum evaluation and course appraisal, involving all stakeholders (decision makers, employers, students, alumni, etc). (1.15)

Explanation

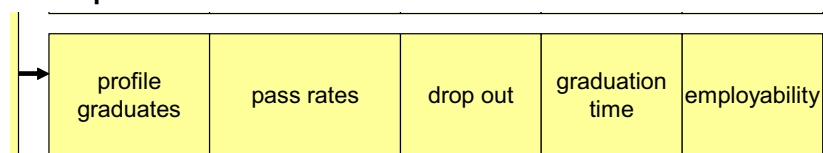
We have defined quality as "achieving goals and objectives". Formulating our objectives we have to take into account the requirements set by the stakeholders. This means that we have to ask ourselves if our stakeholders are satisfied. To learn more about this, we need to have an efficient feedback system.

Diagnostic questions

Does the university have an efficient monitoring system, including:

- a system to follow student progress
- a system to register pass rates and dropout rates
- structural feedback from the labour market
- structural feedback from the alumni
- records on the number of publications registered by staff
- records on the number of research grants

17 Output



Explanation

Proof of the pudding is in the eating. In assessing our quality we have to look not only at our process quality, but also have to take into account the output. First of all, we must look at our graduates. Did they achieve the expected standards? Are the achieved outcomes equal to the expected outcomes? Have the graduates acquired the expected knowledge, skills and attitudes?

Because the output quality has to be evaluated within the framework of the process, we have also to look at the efficiency of our provisions, among other things we have to look at the pass rates and the dropout rate, the average time to degree (graduation time), and the employability of graduates.

The AUN-QA has not formulated any criteria on output. This does not mean that this is considered not to be important. It is often included in other criteria.

Diagnostic questions

Achieved outcomes (graduates)

- Is the average standard of the graduate satisfactory?
- Do the achieved standards match the expected standards?
- Do graduates get jobs easily? Are the jobs that the graduates get in accordance with the level of graduation?
- Have any changes been signalled in the labour market prospects of graduates over the last few years? What are the prospects?

Pass rate and dropout rate

Provide information on the pass rate and dropout rates of the various years (cohort) according to Table 9..

Academic year	Size cohort *	% first degree after			% dropout after			
		3 year	4 years	>4years	1 years	2 years	3 years	>3 years
			**			**		

* numbers must be the same as in the intake Table 7

** percentages are cumulative.

Table 9: Student performance (last 8 to 10 cohorts)

Diagnostic questions:

- What does the department think of the pass rate? If not satisfactory, what measures have been taken to improve the pass rate?
- Have any fluctuations in the success rate been seen over the last five years?
- How high is the dropout rate? Are there explanations for the dropout rate?
- Does the department know where the dropout students are going?

Average time to degree (graduation)

Indicate the average number of years a student spends on a programme. If necessary, categorise the students in groups.

- What does the department think of the average time to degree?

- What measures have been taken to promote graduation and to shorten the average time to degree?
- What effect have these measures had?

Graduate unemployment

- What percentage of graduates found a job within six months of graduation over the past five years? How many within a year?
- What percentage of graduates are still unemployed 2 years after graduation?

Contact with graduates

- Does the department maintain contact with its graduates after graduation? Is there an association of graduates/alumni?
- What do the graduates think about the programme?
- Is information from graduates used (feedback about their programme, information about developments in the labour market) to adjust the programme if necessary?

18 Stakeholder satisfaction

Satisfaction Stakeholders

Explanation

After analysing the input, the process and the output, we have to analyse the satisfaction of all stakeholders. What do they think about our performance? How do we know that? This part may cause difficulties for the department, because it doesn't yet have any tools to measure the "satisfaction rate". It does not make sense to first develop tools to collect information within the framework of the ongoing analysis. It is sufficient to see that tools are missing and to describe how the problems might be solved in the near future.

Diagnostic questions

Opinion - Students

- Does the department know what students think about the courses, the programme? The teaching? The examinations?
- Is student evaluation carried out regularly? How is it done? Is it adequate?
- What is done with the outcomes of student evaluations?
- How does the department cope with complaints by students?

Opinion - Alumni (graduates)

- Does the department interview graduates on a regular basis about what they think of the programme?
- What is the opinion and feedback of graduates when they are employed?
- Are the complaints or positive feedback of the alumni used to adapt the programme?

Opinion-Labour market

- Do structured contacts exist with employers and the labour market for getting feedback on graduates?
- How do employers appreciate the graduates?
- Are there any specific complaints?
- Are specific strengths appreciated by the employers?
- How do we cope with complaints from the labour market?

Opinion - Society

- Does the university know what society-at-large generally feels about our graduates?
- Does the university have any tools to get feedback from society?

4.3 The self-assessment report

4.3.1. Strengths/weaknesses analysis

The self-assessment is followed by a strengths-weaknesses analysis. At the same time, this serves as a check to see how far the university is in compliance with the AUN-QA criteria. This is best done with Table 10 and the checklist (Appendix 4). There are 17 specific aspects for assessment, and 68 sub-criteria in total.

The checklist in Appendix 4 shows all the criteria and sub-criteria. The total subject verdict is based on the scores given to each aspect in the subject category.

However, it is not a mathematical exercise to calculate the average. It is up to the university to balance out the various aspects and to judge the weighting of each aspect. Positive aspects may compensate for some negative ones. Marking each subject leads to a verdict on each cell in the model. Filling in the total score in Table 10 produces a good overview of the strengths and weaknesses.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Goals and objectives; expected learning outcomes							
2	Programme content							
3	Programme specification							
4	Programme organisation							
5	Didactic concept/teaching/learning strategy							
6	Student assessment							
7	Staff quality							
8	Quality of the support staff							
9	Student profile							
10	Student advice/support							
11	Facilities							
12	Quality Assurance							
13	Student evaluation							
14	Curriculum design							
15	Staff development activities							
16	Feedback stakeholders							
17	Output							

Table 10: Subjects for programme assessment

Programme quality will be assessed on a 7-level scale:

- 1= nothing (no documents, no plans, no evidence) present
- 2= this subject of the IQA system is in the planning stage
- 3= documents available, but no clear evidence that they are used
- 4= documents available and evidence that they are used
- 5= clear evidence on the efficiency of the aspect
- 6= example of good practice
- 7= excellent

In terms of quality and improvement activities, the 7-point scale can also be read as follows:

- 1= absolutely inadequate; immediate improvements must be made
- 2= inadequate, improvements necessary
- 3= inadequate, but minor improvements will make it adequate
- 4= adequate as expected
- 5= better than adequate
- 6= example of good practice
- 7= excellent

Summary of strengths

Summarise the points that the department considers to be its strengths and mark the points that you are proud of.

Summary of weaknesses

Indicate which points the department considers to be weak and in need of improvement. Also indicate what you are going to do about this.

4.3.2 Content of the self-assessment report

The self-assessment ends with the Self-Assessment Report (SAR). This is the final document that will play a role in formulating a quality plan for the years to come. It might also provide the input for accreditation or for inter-collegial assessment (see Chapter 6). Table 11 defines the content of the self-assessment report.

Be sure to discuss the report within the faculty and ensure that everybody is able to recognise themselves in this picture.

Introduction <i>How was the self-assessment carried out?</i> <i>Short description of the university and the department responsible for the curriculum</i> <i>Short description of the curriculum</i>
Chapter 1: Goals and objectives/expected learning outcomes
Chapter 2: The programme <i>2.1 Programme specification</i> <i>2.2 Programme content</i> <i>2.2. Programme organisation</i> <i>5.2.3 Didactic concept</i> <i>5.2.4 Student assessment</i>
Chapter 3 The input <i>3.1 Staff quality</i> <i>3.2 Quality of the support staff</i> <i>3.3. Student profile</i> <i>3.4. Student advice/support</i> <i>3.3 Facilities and infrastructure</i>

<p>Chapter 4: Quality assurance</p> <p>4.1. QA of teaching and learning</p> <p>4.2. Student evaluation</p> <p>4.3. Curriculum design</p> <p>4.4. Staff development</p> <p>4.5. Feedback stakeholders</p>
<p>Chapter 5: Output</p> <p>5.1. Achieved outcomes (graduates)/graduate profile</p> <p>5.2. Pass rate and dropout rate</p> <p>5.3. Average time to degree</p> <p>5.4. Employability</p>
<p>Chapter 6: Stakeholder satisfaction</p> <p>6.1. Opinion - Students</p> <p>6.2. Opinion - Alumni (graduates)</p> <p>6.3. Opinion - Labour market</p> <p>6..4 Opinion - Society</p>
<p>Chapter 7 Strengths-weaknesses analysis</p> <p>7.1 Summary of strengths</p> <p>7.2 Summary of weaknesses</p> <p>7.3 Quality plan for the coming years</p>

Table 11: Content of a self-assessment report at programme level

4.3.3. What comes after the self-assessment?

The self-assessment report will lead to many follow-up activities:

- if connected with an external assessment for accreditation, the assessment might lead to recommendations for improvement;
- if not connected with any accreditation, the university may decide to invite some colleagues from other universities to carry out an inter-collegial assessment and ask for the formulation of recommendations.
- In all cases, the outcomes of the self-assessment must be translated into a quality plan that shows what activities the university will undertake in the near future. The self-assessment will show us where we are now and will give us the direction to where we would like to be 5 years' time.

5. Self-assessment at institutional level

The quality of a university is basically made at the level of our core activities: teaching/learning, research and/or the contribution to society and the community. Before we can analyse the quality of the university as a whole, however, we need to know the quality of our core activities. Yet, because university policy, university management, and university strategy have a big influence on the quality of our core activities, it is important to organise a SWOT analysis and a self-assessment of the institution as a whole.

5.1 A quality model for institutions

The model given in Figure 12 can be used for the institutional self-evaluation.

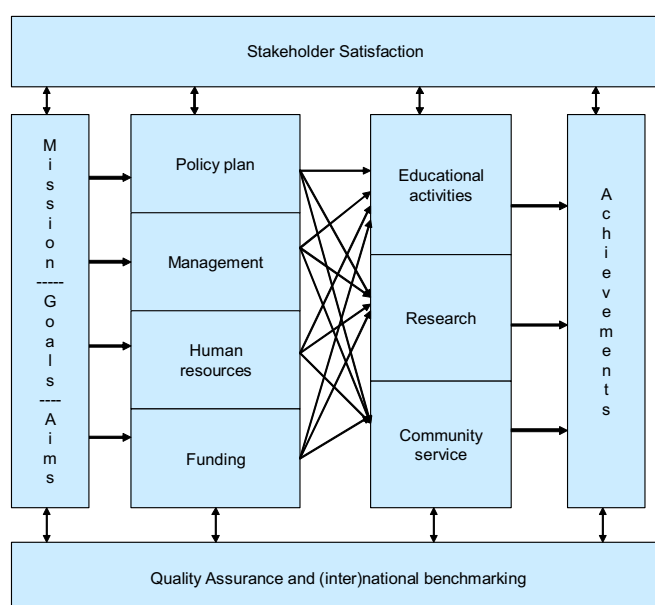


Figure 12: Quality model for institutions

Section 5.2 explains the model. The following format is used for each aspect:

1. The cells from the model are given to remind you what is being dealt with. The cell under discussion is shaded grey.
2. Special attention is paid to AUN-QA criteria 3 and 4 (Research and Services) and criteria 5 and 6 (Human Resource Development and Ethics)²⁰.

Where the AUN-QA has formulated the criteria, these are given in a box. Where the AUN-QA had no criteria formulated, a more general accepted criterion, used in the accreditation process in many countries, is given as a benchmark.

²⁰ See AUN-QA Guidelines pp. 33-39 and pp. 43-44.

AUN-QA

- *An organization shall develop and retain high-quality faculty members and supporting personnel by clearly defining their responsibility, and by evaluating their performance on a regular basis.*
- *An organization shall develop the body of knowledge possessed by its faculty members and supporting personnel to keep paces with changes in each academic discipline. (Guidelines page 43)*

3. Diagnostic questions.

A set of questions is drawn up to help the university to find evidence of the criteria being met. Please be aware of the following as far as the questions are concerned:

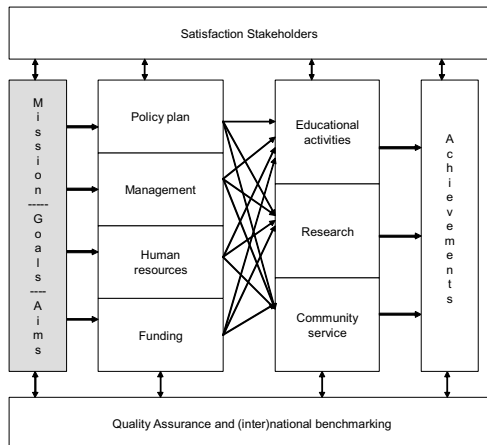
- *The questions set are not meant as a compulsory list that has to be completed. It is not a questionnaire to be answered point by point. It must be seen as a tool to collect information and evidence. The questions are to be seen as reminders.*
- *The model and the questions have been developed for general use. This means that the list has to be adapted to the university's own situation and to its specific identity.*
- *If it is the first time that the university has been involved in a structured self-assessment, a lot of blank spots will remain that cannot yet be filled. So a number of aspects will be left unanswered this time, but will force the university to take action.*
- *Look at the diagnostic questions and try to give the following information for each aspect:*
 - *A description of the situation at the moment*
 - *An analysis of the situation (What do we think about it? Are we satisfied with the situation or not?)*
 - *If not, describe how you think the situation can be changed and improved.*
 - *What evidence do we have that the AUN-QA criteria have been met? (documentation, effects, outcomes)*
 - *Summarise the weaknesses and strengths.*

After finalising the self-assessment and writing the draft report, discuss the report within the university and ask the staff for their opinion about the analysis and the strengths and weaknesses identified. The report should include an introductory chapter with general discussion on the results. It is important that all participants have the same background information available. The chapter will briefly describe who was responsible for the self-assessment and how it was carried out.

5.2. Self-assessment in practice

1. The mission statement

Quality assessment and self-analysis have to start by looking at the formulated mission and vision, the formulated goals and aims, and the formulated expected outcomes (= the standards set by the institution itself or an outside body, like an accreditation agency).



Benchmark criterion²¹

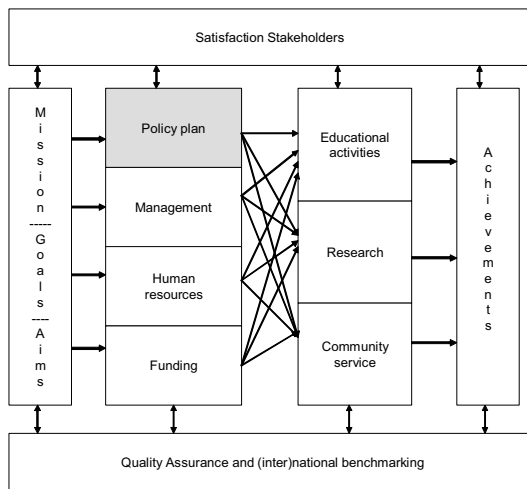
1. The university has a clearly formulated mission statement.
2. The mission statement is publicly known.
3. The mission statement is in line with the academic and social context.

Diagnostic questions

- What is the university's vision for the academic training it gives?
- What is the university's vision for its research activities?
- What is the university's vision for its role in the society?
- Has the vision (= the long-term aims) been translated into a clearly formulated mission statement (= targets to be met in the short-term)?
- Has the mission statement been translated into achievable and operationalised goals and objectives?
- What is the specific profile of this university compared with other universities in the country in question?

²¹ Wherever AUN-QA has not formulated a criterion, a generally-accepted criterion, used in the accreditation process in many countries, will be given as a benchmark.

2. The policy plan



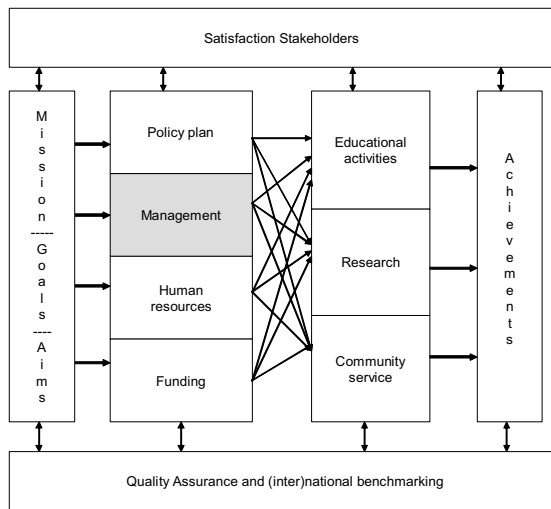
Benchmark criterion

1. *The university has a clear policy and strategic plan formulated in line with its mission statement.*

Diagnostic questions

- Does the university have a clear policy in line with its mission and vision?
- Has the policy been adequately translated into the strategic plan?
- Who was involved in formulating the policy and strategic plan?
- Are policy and strategic plan well known to all academic staff and students? Is there general agreement on this?
- Does the strategic plan reflect:
 - The types of programmes you are offering?
 - The choice of research fields?
 - The priorities set?
 - The main activities of the university?

3. The management



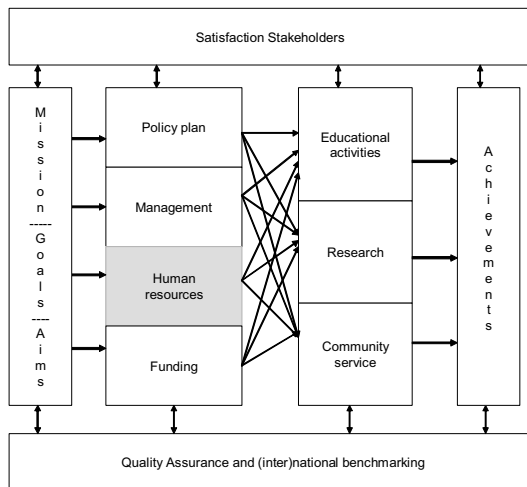
Benchmark criterion

1. *The university has a clear management structure in which the decision-making process, competencies and responsibilities have been clearly fixed.*

Diagnostic questions

- What kind of management structure does the university have: centralised and top down or decentralised and bottom up?
- Have the role and functions of the central management, faculty management and the staff been clearly described?
- Does the academic staff participate in the decision-making process on teaching and research?
- Do students participate in the decision-making process in relation to their education?
- Has the management structure of the university been endorsed by the academic community?
- Is the internal organisation structure fit for purpose?
- What management committees are in place? Are they working adequately?

4. Human resources (HR)



AUN-QA criteria²²

1. *The university develops and retains high-quality faculty members and supporting personnel by clearly defining their responsibility, and by evaluating their performance on a regular basis.*
2. *The university develops the body of knowledge possessed by its faculty members and supporting personnel to keep paces with changes in each academic discipline.*
3. *The university provides for:*
 - *establishment of a system to consider the ability, potential and need to enhance the knowledge possessed by its faculty and supporting staff in their conducting of activities that have a direct influence on the quality of teaching-learning. This should include the formulation of a concrete personnel development plan;*
 - *provision of training to develop the potential of faculty members and supporting personnel in accordance with the plan;*
 - *evaluation of the effectiveness of the provided training such as to ensure that its faculty members and supporting staff comprehend both the importance of and the relationship between the duties and activities that fall within their responsibility. This will affect the way the organization attains its quality goals.*
 - *compilation of records of education, experience, training, and other essential qualifications required of lecturers and supporting staff.*
4. *The university sets up a system of evaluation by committee to be conducted according to a set timetable at least twice a year prior to pay salary increments or promotions, or to the imposition of penalties.*

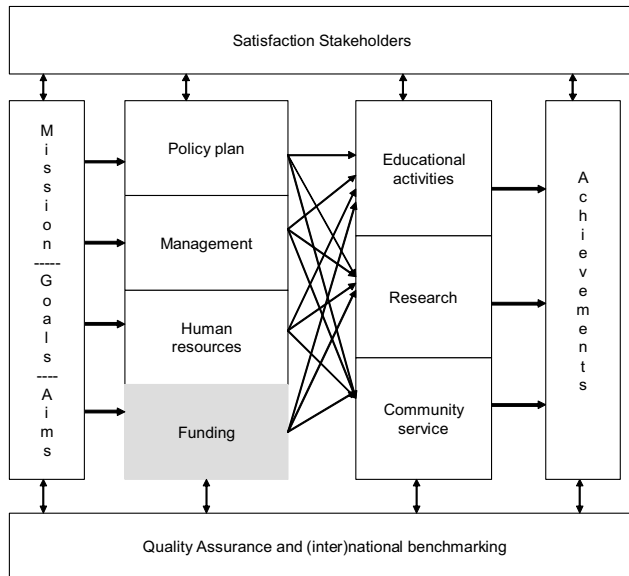
²² See page 43 of the AUN-QA Guidelines.

5. *The university establishes an activity plan and evaluates activities to encourage students, faculty members and other personnel to be conscientious in their thought, speech, and behaviour, to be kind, compassionate and honest, to possess equanimity, to be circumspect, logically-minded and far-sighted, to be responsible and willing to make sacrifices for the good of society.*
6. *The university enhances the professional ethics of its students, faculty members and other personnel*

Diagnostic questions

1. How does the university select and appoint its academic staff?
2. Is an adequate staff appraisal system in place for use in evaluating performance and promotion?
3. How is staff performance evaluated?
4. What opportunities are given for staff/HR development and training?
5. How does the university evaluate the efficiency of its staff/HR development activities?
6. How does the university stimulate the ethics of its students, academics and other staff?

5. Funding



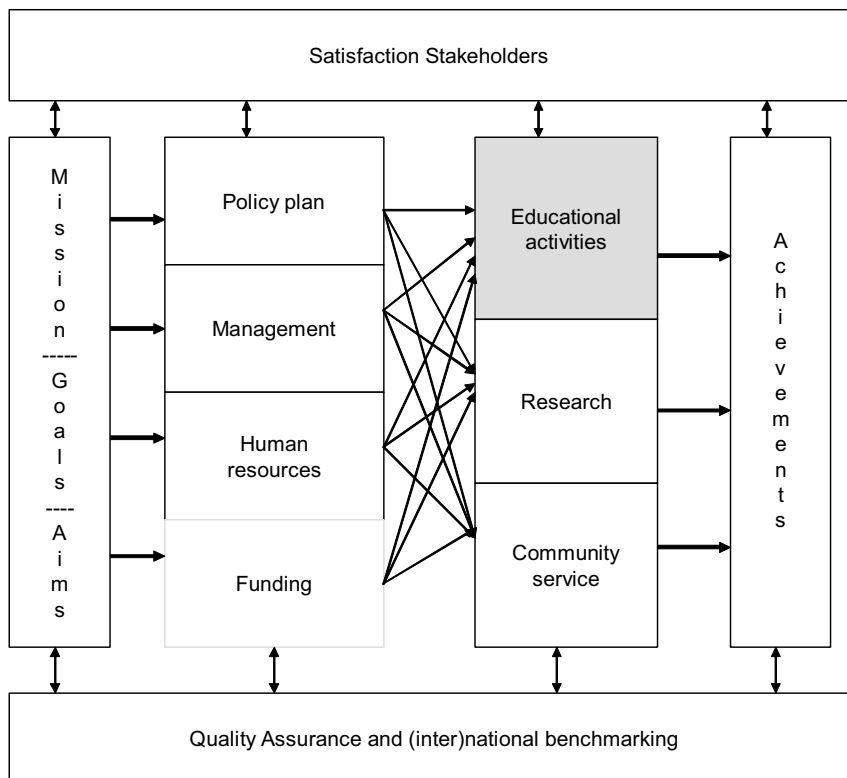
Benchmark criterion

1. *The university has adequate funding to achieve its goals and aims.*

Diagnostic questions

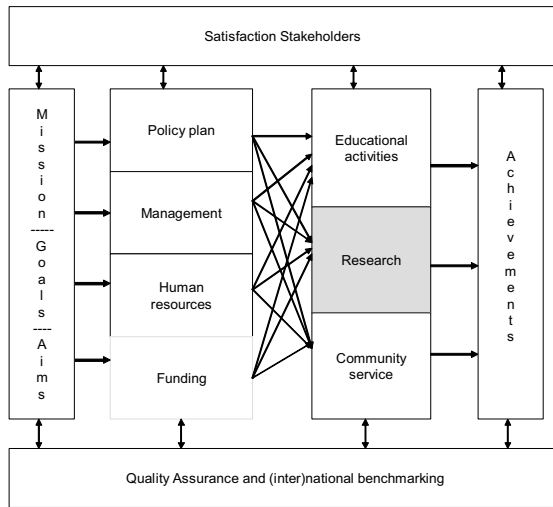
1. How is the university funded? (What percentage of the budget is public funding, student contributions, external funding?)
2. The sources of the financial resources and the conditions attached to the funding are stated transparently and do not restrict the university's decision-making autonomy in teaching and research?
3. Are the goals and aims realistic and achievable with the provided funding?
- 4.

6. Educational activities



Training academics is one of the core activities. To determine the quality of the teaching/learning process and the quality of our curricula, we have to evaluate our programmes individually and add outcomes to get a general overview of the quality. For self-analysis at programme level and for the AUN-QA criteria on teaching/learning, see Chapter 4.

7. Research



An other core activity is research. To learn more about the quality of research, we have to look at two levels, namely at institutional level and research programme/research unit level. Figure 13 shows the relation between the two levels.

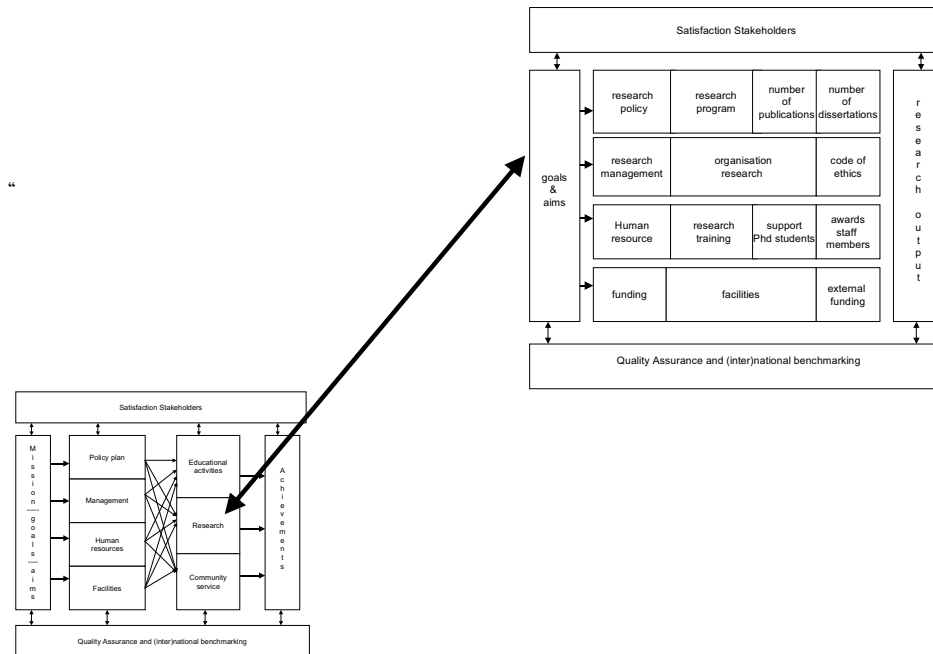


Figure 13: Quality model for research

At institutional level we have to analyse:

- Governance and organisation

- The university's research policy
- The university's intellectual rights policy
- The code of conduct for research
- The code of ethics for research

The AUN-QA had formulated several criteria in this field.

At the level of the research programme or research unit, we are interested in the quality of the research and its impact.

This means that some information can be collected at institutional level. Other information only can be collected at the level of the research unit itself.

7.1 Governance and organisation

AUN-QA Criterion²³

- 1. The university has established, implemented, and ensured uniform compliance with university-wide research policies to main the integrity of the university, protect the safety and welfare of employees and experimental subjects and ensure compliance with all other regulations governing the research process.*
- 2. The university has designed policies and guidelines as guiding principle to conduct research and development activities.*
- 3. The policies and guideline set out the obligations on all researchers to be aware of good conduct in research and comply with institutional and regulatory requirements.*
- 4. The university support scholarly, research and creative activities, which contribute to the mission of the university and ultimately provide intellectual, social and economic benefits to society.*
- 5. The university is committed to the highest professional standards of scholarly research and research ethics.*
- 6. The researchers have familiarized themselves with the contents of research policies and procedures. Misconduct in conducting or reporting research is considered to be a serious breach of academic responsibilities.*

Explanation

The AUN-QA has formulated the above-mentioned criteria on the governance and organisation of research. It is up to a university to see how the criteria are met in the most adequate way. However, the AUN-QA provides some opportunities for institutions. The organisation of research and development activities is usually based on research governance comprising at least the following entities:

- *The University Research Council*
The University Research Council oversees the university's research policy. The main function of the council is:

²³ See pp. 31/32 of the AUN-QA Guidelines

- to set out the direction of research policy
- to review policy in the management of research
- to monitor research progress
- to promote research in strategic and critical fields
- to develop strategy for the expansion of research activities
- *The University Research Management Unit*
The University Research Management Unit promotes, monitors and assesses research and development activities in the university. It also provides support for the commercialisation of research products plus consultancy.
- *The University Research Fund*
The University Research Fund provides financial support for quality research. The fund manages internal and external funding, endowments, revenue generated from investment, and from the commercialisation of research products.

Diagnostic questions

- Has a University Research Council been established? How does it work?
- Has a University Research Management Unit been established? What are its functions? Is it working?
- How does the university manage the research funding?

7.2 University research policy

AUN-QA Criterion²⁴

1. *The university has a clear research policy, setting the direction of research and deciding about research profile and research activities*

Explanation

According to AUN-QA, the University Research Policy sets the direction of research within the university. It specifies objectives of research within the university, research strategies, the code of conduct for research, and the responsibility of the Research Management Unit, including the research funds, research infrastructure, policies, procedures, standards and ethical practices of the university. In general, the University Research Policy covers the following aspects:

- Mission statement
- Guiding principles
- Research governance – membership and terms of reference
- Academic policies, academic freedom, and research
- Objectivity in research policy
- Research approval process
- Research ethics
- Sponsored projects and sponsored research services
- Policy on consultancy
- Policy on undergraduate and graduate research
- Policy on integrity in research
- Research supervision and research risk compliance

²⁴ See pp. 35/36 of the AUN-QA Guidelines

- Data management, retention, and access
- Publications and authorship
- Conflicts of interest, conflict of commitment, and research misconduct
- Technology transfer and intellectual property
- Policy on environmental health and safety
- Research collaboration and memoranda of understanding
- Research Development Fund Policy
- Policy on the protection of human subjects in research
- Policy on the use of animals in research
- Non-academic research appointments
- Campus support services and facilities
- Research quality and research assessment

Diagnostic question

Does the university's research policy cover the above-mentioned topics?

7.3 The university Intellectual Property Rights policy

AUN-QA Criterion²⁵

1. *The university has a clear policy, for the protection of creative efforts and especially for the protection of economic investment in creative efforts (Intellectual Property Right Policy).*

Explanation

Intellectual property is a broad term for the various rights which the law provides to protect creative effort, and especially to protect economic investment in creative effort. It includes copyrights, patents, designs, trade marks, circuit layouts, and confidential information. The University Intellectual Property Rights Policy has the following objectives:

- To establish a framework for the encouragement of research, innovation, invention, creative work and technology transfer.
- To set out policies in relation to Intellectual Property Rights arising from research, innovation, invention and creative output, and the management, commercialisation and exploitation of such rights.

Research conducted by or on behalf of, or supported by the university, must comply with the intellectual property rights policy established by the university. In general, the university's Intellectual Property Rights Policy covers the following:

- Policy on copyright ownership
- Administrative procedure for implementing the copyright policy
- Policy and guidelines on the reproduction of copyrighted materials for teaching and research
- Policy and guidelines on rights to the results of extramural projects or programmes
- Policy to permit use of the university's name
- Policy on patents

²⁵ See page 36 of the AUN-QA Guidelines

Diagnostic questions

- Has the university formulated a policy to protect intellectual property rights?
- Does it function adequately or are there any problems?
- How does the university cope with the problems?

7.4 Code of conduct for research/code of ethics for research

AUN-QA Criterion²⁶

1. *The university has a clear code of conduct for research, including a code of ethics.*

Explanation

A university must be committed to the highest standards of accountability and integrity in its research practices. Research and development activities should therefore be guided by a code of conduct for research which prescribes standards of work performance and ethical conduct of researchers.

A university must have formulated a Code of Ethics for Research. The term "ethics" relates to human conduct. All scientific research is conducted with the participation of humans or has an impact on humans. Therefore, it is essential that researchers understand ethical issues and the implications of their work, and act accordingly. Ethics serve to identify good, desirable or acceptable conduct and provide reasons for these conclusions. Research conducted by or on behalf of, or supported by the university, must comply with the ethical standards established by the university. Among other things, the code of ethics for research involves the following:

- Principles of ethical conduct for research
 - Integrity, respect for persons, beneficence and justice
 - Consent (informed)
 - Research merit and safety
 - Ethical review and conduct of research
- Rights and responsibilities of researchers and institutions
 - Relationship between researchers and institutions
 - Protection and promotion of integrity in research
 - Relationship between researchers
 - Data sharing
 - Reporting and publication of research
- Rights of experimental subjects
 - Relationship with experimental subjects
 - Informed consent
 - Privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality
- Rights and responsibilities of peer reviewers and referees
- Rights and responsibilities of editors and publishers
- Rights and responsibilities of funders and sponsors
- Organisational mechanisms in the field of ethics

²⁶ See page 37 of the AUN-QA Guidelines

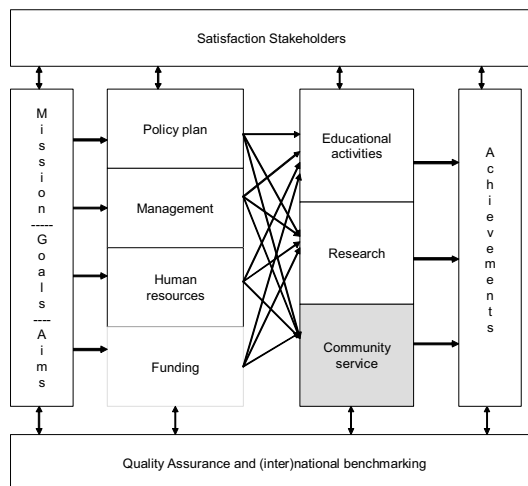
Research Ethics Committees have been set up to consider applications to conduct research. The committees convene to provide independent advice to those taking part in research, i.e. subjects, researchers, funders, sponsors, employers, organisations and professionals, on the extent to which proposals for research studies comply with recognised ethical standards. The objectives of the Research Ethics Committees are to maintain ethical standards of practice in research, to protect subjects of research/experiments and research workers from harm or exploitation, to preserve the subject's rights, and to provide reassurance to the public that this is being done. Among other things, the Research Ethics Committees deal with the following:

- Research involving human subjects
- Research involving animal experimentation
- Administration of biohazards
- Research misconduct
- Conflicts of interest
- Secret and classified research
- Management of research data and records

Diagnostic questions

- Has the university formulated a code of conduct and a code of ethics?
- Does the university have a Research Ethics Committee
- If no such committee is in place, how does the university cope with ethical questions?

8. The contribution to society and the community



AUN-QA criterion²⁷

1. The university has clear guidelines for consultancy and community service

²⁷ See page 36 of the AUN Guidelines

Explanation

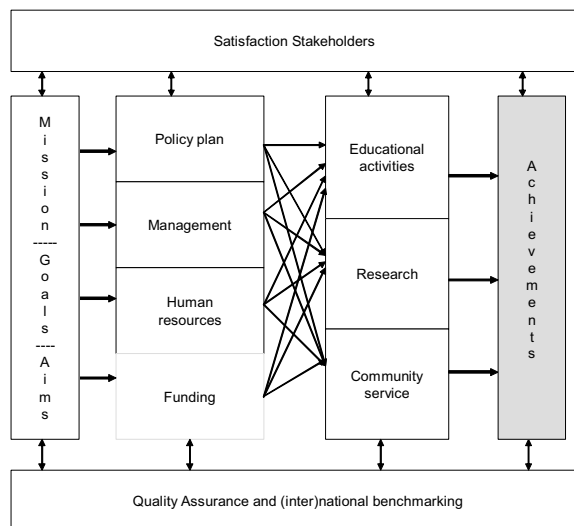
A university is not only responsible for training academics and doing research. It is also responsible for serving society. This will differ from country to country. Consultancy involves a broad range of activities. In general, the term consultancy covers the provision of professional advice or services to an external party for a fee or other non-monetary consideration. Among other things, guidelines on providing consultancy cover the following:

- Policy objectives
- Policy on key policy principles, compliance, accountability framework, legal and financial protection, conflicts of interest
- Procedures for the contribution to society and the community
- Procedures for university/academic consultancy
- Procedures for private consultancy

Diagnostic questions

- What role does the university play in the local, national and international community
- What are the key activities, which of these lie outside normal teaching or research? How do they relate to the mission?
- What are the non-profit activities of the university?
- Is there a clear policy on consultancy and the contribution to society and the community?
- How is the income from consultancy regulated?

9. Achievements



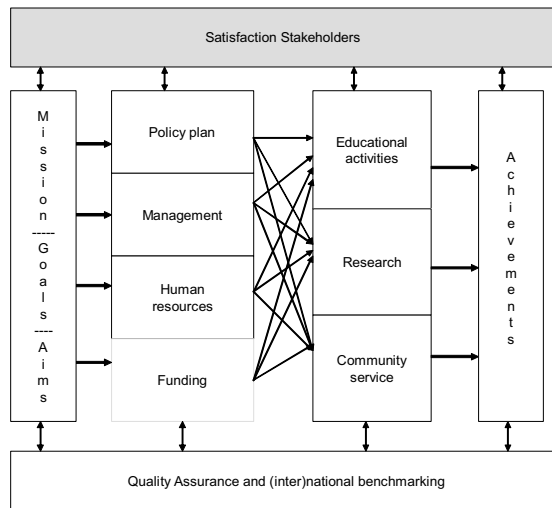
Benchmark criterion

1. A university has the means and opportunity to check whether the achievements are in line with the expected outcomes.

Diagnostic questions

- Are the achieved outcomes in line with the formulated goals and aims?
- How does the university check that it achieves what it wants to achieve?
- If the achievement is not satisfactory, what action does the university take?

10. Stakeholder satisfaction



Benchmark criterion

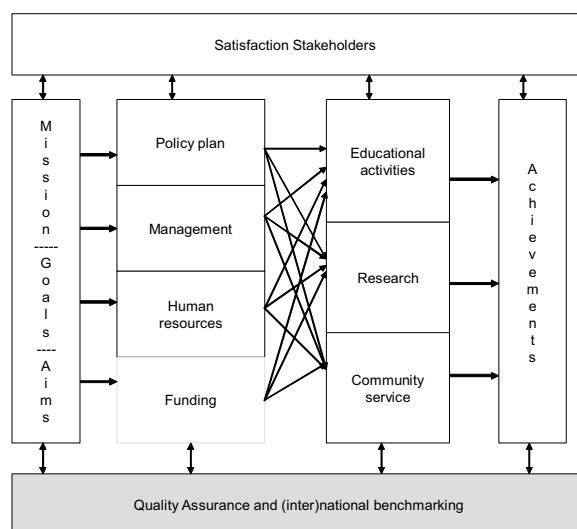
1. *A university has a structured method for obtaining feedback from the stakeholders.*

After analysing the missions of the university, the management structure, policy and strategic planning, human resource management and the core activities, the university has to analyse the satisfaction of all stakeholders. What do they think about the performance? How do we know that?

Diagnostic questions

- Is regular student evaluation carried out? How is it done? Is it adequate?
- What is done with the results of student evaluations?
- Does the university have an insight into the opinion and feedback of graduates when they are employed?
- Are the complaints or positive feedback received from alumni used to adapt the programmes?
- Are there any structured contacts with employers and the labour market for obtaining feedback?
- How do the employers appreciate graduates?
- Are there any specific complaints?
- Are specific strengths appreciated by employers?
- Does the university have any tools to obtain feedback from society?

11. Quality assurance and (international) benchmarking



AUN-QA criterion

1. *A university has an efficient internal quality assurance system.*

An efficient system of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) is necessary to assure our quality. For self-assessment of the IQA system, see Chapter 3.

5.3 Strengths/weaknesses analysis

The self-assessment is followed by a strengths-weaknesses analysis. At the same time, this checks how far the university complies with the AUN-QA criteria or benchmark criteria. This is best done by using the checklist in Appendix 5. There are 17 specific subjects for assessment, and 26 sub-criteria in total.

To finally assess the aspect of educational activities and the aspect of Internal Quality Assurance, the university will use the outcomes of the self-assessment done at programme level (Chapter 4) and the self-assessment of the Internal Quality Assurance system (see Chapter 3).

The checklist in Appendix 5 shows all the criteria and sub-criteria. The total subject verdict is based on the scores given to each aspect in the subject category. However, it is not a mathematical exercise of calculating the average. It is up to the university to balance out the various aspects and judge the weighting of each aspect. Positive aspects may compensate for some negative ones. Marking each subject

leads to a verdict on each cell in the model. Filling in the total score in Table 12 produces a good overview of the strengths and weakness.

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Mission statement							
2	Policy plan							
3	Management							
4	Human Resources							
5	Funding							
6	Educational activities							
7	Research							
8	The contribution to society and the community							
9	Achievements							
10	Stakeholder satisfaction							
11	Quality assurance and (inter)national benchmarking							
	Summarising assessment							

Table 12: Subjects for an institutional assessment

The institutional assessment is done on a 7-level scale:

- 1= nothing (no documents, no plans, no evidence) present
- 2= this subject is in a planning stage
- 3= documents available, but no clear evidence that they are used
- 4= documents available and evidence that they are used
- 5= clear evidence on the efficiency of the aspect
- 6= example of good practice
- 7= excellent

Looking at the quality and improvement activities, the 7-point scale can also be read as follows:

- 1= absolutely inadequate; immediate improvements must be made
- 2= inadequate, improvements necessary
- 3= inadequate, minor improvements will make it adequate
- 4= adequate as expected
- 5= better than adequate
- 6= example of good practice
- 7= excellent

Summary of strengths

Summarise the points the university considers to be its strengths and mark the points that you are proud of.

Summary of weaknesses

Indicate which points the university considers to be weak and in need of improvement. Also indicate what you are going to do about it.

6. Inter-collegial assessment

6.1 Why inter-collegial assessment?

Self-assessment is a strong instrument in the hand of a university when it comes to seeing what quality it offers. Self-assessments must be done very carefully, critically and analytically. However, self-assessment is not enough. We all have blind spots and take things for granted that are not. Therefore, an outsider's view of our performance is needed. The outsider will hold up a mirror to us and can find it much easier to spot our weaknesses and strengths.

Often, self-assessment takes place as preparation for an external assessment or accreditation. In this case, the university will automatically get feedback on the self-assessment. When there is no follow-up, for example through accreditation, the university might decide to organise an external assessment by itself in the form of an inter-collegial assessment. Such external assessment is important because it gives authority to our findings. If we state that the faculty is performing badly, everybody will believe us. If we are say that in general we are performing satisfactorily, nobody will believe us, because the outside world will say: "that is their own assessment, how can we trust it?"

Inter-collegial assessment also delivers confidence to stakeholders and provides evidence of quality to the public and shows that the standards agreed upon by AUN-QA are being implemented. At the same time, it provides mechanisms for continuous quality improvement in the sustainability and development of the programme, and buffers against pressures to lower quality standards.

External, inter-collegial quality assessment contributes to the recognition and acceptance of programmes that have demonstrated their competence and quality according to standards set by the field or profession leading towards the harmonisation of higher education in ASEAN countries. Graduates of these programmes are likewise recognised for their competent training and employability. External assessment also provides opportunities for accessing funding for research and instruction.

An inter-collegial assessment can take various approaches:

- The assessment remains within the university, involving colleagues from adjacent faculties and/or disciplines. For example, colleagues from mathematics, chemistry or other sciences will be invited to assess the physics programme.
- Colleagues from other universities, national or international, may be invited. An advantage of this approach is that there are more opportunities for benchmarking. A disadvantage is that this approach is more expensive, especially when international experts are involved.
- Of course, it also possible to combine those two approaches and to invite some external colleagues to participate in an internal assessment.
- A fourth option is to make it totally external and invite the AUN to organise such an assessment. Of course, the expenses have to be carried by the applicant university.

6.2 Preparing the assessment

An external, inter-collegial assessment requires good preparation. The role of an expert team is not an easy one. It has to combine various functions. The team will:

- check the outcomes of the self-assessment
- reflect on the self-assessment
- engage in dialogue and discussion with staff and students
- act as an accountant.

An external expert team is asked to combine two missions: the team should listen to the faculty and act as colleagues, using their expertise and experience to offer advice and recommendations. At the same time, team has to write a report that might be made public or remain confidential; however, the team will give its independent verdicts on the quality in that report. In one respect, the expert team has to act collegially, in another, it has to remain detached. It will not always be easy to combine the diverging roles.

6.2.1 The expert team

An effective expert team, commissioned with carrying out an external assessment, has 3 to 5 members. Membership of an expert team should include:

- a chairperson, totally independent and unconnected with the programme to be assessed. The chair does not need to be an expert in the field, but should have the confidence of those who are. If possible, the chair should have experience with management structures in higher education institutions and with the developments that have taken place over the last few years
- two experts on the subject area/discipline in question
- an expert from the labour market area taking up graduates and/or from the professional association
- an expert from abroad (but because the visit will be done in the local language, this member must be proficient in the language)
- an expert on education/learning processes.

For internal inter-collegial assessment, experts from adjacent faculties may be considered. However, there are some conditions that members have to meet:

- members should act independently
- there should be no conflicts of interest. Members should have no advantage through their verdict
- members must be accepted by the faculty to be assessed.

It is also possible to invite retired staff on the grounds that they are more independent (and have more time available). However, it is also important to have members still working in the field and with a knowledge of recent developments.

6.2.2 Preparation of the experts

In general, the task for the assessment team can be described as :

- *To form an opinion on the basis of information supplied by the faculty and by means of discussions held on site about the standard of education and the quality of the educational process, including the organisation of education and the*

standard of the graduates; in assessing quality, the team must look at the requirements and expectations of the student, the faculty/discipline and society, and, in particular, prospective employers.

- *To make suggestions on quality improvement.*

An assessment team trying to fulfil its task will encounter a lot of problems. Because the generally formulated task means that the team will tend to form opinions about everything. Therefore, both for the benefit of the team and the faculty, the terms of reference should be operationalised into a number of questions that can be formulated on the basis of the checklist (see Appendix 4). This checklist is also used by the faculty for the self-assessment. The team is responsible for completing the checklist based on the information contained in the self-assessment and on information obtained during the interviews.

The training

Assessing quality is a specific skill. Normally, experts in a team are specialists in a discipline and do not have much experience in evaluation or quality assessment. Therefore, the experts must be trained beforehand. This is easier to do if the experts come from inside the university. But care must also be taken when checking the experience of members from outside the university.

All members should have a knowledge of the basic ideas of quality and quality assurance and they all need to be aware of the do's and don'ts. Basic elements of the training are:

- What is quality?
- How can quality be measured?
- How to use the quality model
- The AUN-QA criteria and standards
- How to formulate a frame of reference for the assessment
- How to read the self-assessment report
- How to formulate questions
- How to organise the interviews
- How to behave during the assessment
- How to write the report

Preparatory work of the team members

As soon as the faculty has sent the self-assessment report to the assessment team, the members will study the report carefully before the team comes together in a preliminary meeting. As a starting point for the discussions during the preliminary meeting, each member will be invited to answer the following questions with regard to the self-assessment report:

- Is the report sufficiently critical and analytical?
- Have the problems that face the faculty been clearly formulated? Has the faculty indicated clearly how it will cope with the problems?
- Are you able to form a picture of the content of the curriculum, given the description in the report?
- Have the objectives (expected learning outcomes) been satisfactorily operationalised?
- Do you think the objectives and goals have been satisfactorily translated into the programme?
- Do you think the curriculum can be considered an academic curriculum?
- Is the curriculum well balanced?
- Can the programme, as described in the report, be done in the set time?
- Do you think it is possible to produce good graduates with this curriculum?

The members will send the answers to these questions to the chair of the team, who compares the information and sees if the SAR was adequate for the site-visit. If not the chair can ask for additional information.

By answering these questions, the member is not tied to a final verdict. It is only a first impression, based on written information. During the site visits there will be time for developing a better-informed opinion.

A second responsibility for the members to complete beforehand involves studying some student projects. A final project is an important assessment tool, since it helps the team members gain insight into the content and level of the programme. Final projects reflect how well students can apply the knowledge, skills and attitude acquired during their studies to the independent planning and execution of a task of current relevance. By reviewing the content of a number of graduation projects and the marks assigned to them by the teaching staff of the programme under review, the team also gains an insight into the standards and criteria applied by the teaching staff and hence into the way the teaching staff monitor the achievement of the learning outcomes expected within the framework of the programme. This is why it is important that the committee also studies examples of this final project. The best way to do this is to ask the faculties to send a list with titles of graduation projects that have passed the assessment. The chair sends the list to the members, who may mark the graduation projects that they wish to read. Every member reads at least two graduation projects from the faculty. In assessing the final essay or thesis project, the member will give an opinion on the following aspects:

- Have the objectives of the essay and/or the hypothesis been satisfactorily formulated?
- Does the author adhere to the formulated objectives? Is the argumentation logical and consistent?
- Are the conclusions consistent with the presented material? Is the method used correct?
- Does the author present his/her material in such a way that the research can be checked?
- Have the basic concepts been clearly defined and operationalised?
- Has the chosen method and technique been applied correctly? Are notes and references clearly and consistently edited? How is the style of writing to be assessed?
- Is the author well acquainted with the literature in the field of his/her subject?
- When you mark the essay, what grade would you give?

The verdicts on the graduation projects will be discussed during the preliminary meeting.

Preliminary team meeting

Normally the expert team will meet some time before the planned site visit. If this is not possible because experts from outside are involved, the meeting will be held on the day before the site visit begins. The topics in the meeting are:

- *Discussion on the frame of reference*

Every expert has implicit ideas about the quality of a curriculum or the qualities of the graduates. However, individual frames of reference will differ, due to different

backgrounds and different experiences. Therefore, one of the first tasks of the assessment team will be to make the implicit opinions explicit and to formulate a frame of reference acceptable to all team members. It is against this background that the team will assess the faculties.

The frame of reference is not a sketch of an ideal curriculum, but should be considered as a set of minimum requirements for a programme as seen by the team. It contains the minimum requirements for graduates meet in a special field. What makes a biologist a biologist? What makes an electrical engineer an electrical engineer? The following aspects should be taken into account when formulating the frame of reference.

- What are the goals and objectives of the curriculum in the opinion of the team?
- What are the minimum requirements for such a programme, with regard to the academic level and to the requirements set by society?
- What are the minimum requirements regarding knowledge, skills and attitudes of graduates?
- What are the special requirements set by the labour market?

Using the frame of reference, the team should always bear in mind that the goals and objectives as formulated by the faculty have to be the starting point for the expert assessment. The intention is not to impose criteria and standards from outside, for example, the AUN-QA criteria. However, the goals and objectives formulated by the faculty should be discussed to see how far they are goals at academic level, how far they are complete and clear. And, of course, there will be a benchmark to see how far the faculty meets the AUN-QA criteria.

- *Discussion on the self-assessment report*

During the meeting, the team will discuss the SAR and formulate questions to be asked during the site visit.

- *Discussion on the graduation projects*

The members will discuss the graduation projects during this meeting.

- *Discussion on the programme*

The chair sets a programme for the site visit in consultation with the faculty. The programme will be discussed to see if it fits the team's approach. Table 13 provides a format for a site visit programme.

The preparatory meeting is also important for making the group of experts into a real team. Many a review team has complained that the team did not act as a team until after the end of the site visit. The meeting, the intensive discussion on the frame of reference and the SAR will serve to form the loose group into a team that can start the site visits as a team.

6.3 The assessment

After the preparatory meeting, the expert team will come together again for the site visit. If the preparatory meeting was held on the day before the site visit, the team will start directly with the site visit.

6.3.1 What is the expert team looking for?

The expert team assesses the quality of the programme. The team will already have discussed several aspects during the preliminary meeting. The SAR will already have

provided detailed information. During the site visit, the team will be looking for evidence with the following questions in mind:

- Are the goals and objectives and the expected learning outcomes clearly formulated?
- How are these translated into the curriculum?
- Do the exams reflect the content of the programme and courses?
- Have graduates really acquired the expected knowledge, skills and attitudes?

The team is on a fact-finding mission. Of course, the SAR is the basic source of information and should provide the basic information. But other sources should also be used:

- the interviews
- the list of the literature used
- the final graduation project
- assessment and examination papers
- course descriptions and readers

This is why it will be necessary to reserve time in the visit programme for studying these materials.

6.3.2 The site visit programme

The chair of the team designs a programme for the site visit in consultation with the faculty according to a given format (see Table 13). Beforehand, appointments are made with whatever staff members and students the team would like to talk to. The interviews start with a discussion involving the *writers of the self-assessment report*. In this interview, the team can ask for clarification of any obscurities and explanation of any topics that are not totally clear.

The *interviews with the students* are purposely planned to take place before the interviews with the staff members. The students are a very rich source of information, but the information needs to be checked and tested against the ideas of the staff members. Student interviews are important to get an insight into the study load, the didactic qualifications of the staff, the coherency of the programme, to find out if they are acquainted with the goals and objectives, the organisation of the curricula and the facilities. These student interviews should be held in the absence of staff members, so that they can speak freely. The size of the student groups is ideally about ten each time. It's best to talk to about 10 students from the first year, 10 from say the second and third years, and 10 who are nearly at the end of their studies. The composition of the student panels requires special attention. It is important that the group is as far as possible representative of the whole student population in that field, i.e. that it not only includes the good students, but also the less gifted ones. It is better not to leave the invitation of students to the faculty or the staff. The best way is to ask a student organisation (if there is any) to nominate the students. If there is no such organisation, the expert team will invite students at random.

Interviews with staff members will be used for discussion on the content of the curriculum, the goals and objectives: "Why and how did you choose this programme?". Other topics to be discussed include the examinations, the final paper (if any), the final research projects, etc. It is advisable to talk with groups of about 10 staff members and with the plenary team. Only form subcommittees when it is absolutely necessary.

Other interviews will be held with *members of a curriculum committee* and with *members of the committee responsible for examinations*. This will depend on the national context. During the interview with the curriculum committee, the question of how the curriculum is kept up to date will be discussed as will the question of how innovations are planned and realised, etc. The interview with the examination committee must clearly show how the quality of the examinations and degrees is assured.

One part of the programme looks at the facilities: lecture halls, working group rooms, laboratories, practical rooms, libraries, etc. During this tour, it will be possible to feel the climate in a lecture hall with students. The team can split up into small groups when visiting the facilities.

It is advisable to organise an *open hour* where individual staff members and individual students can talk with the experts. The secretary should ensure that this open hour is made well known in the faculty. A staff member or student who wishes to talk with the team should go directly to the chair of the team. The faculty does not need to know who is talking to the team.

Time	Activity
15:00 on the day before the official visit	Team members meet in the hotel for information about their task and discussion on The SAR Specific questions The programme
18:00 Day 1 9:00 - 17:00	Reception by the rector and other officials; dinner Interviews with: the writers of the self-assessment report students staff members curriculum committee/examination committee student advisers
19:00-20:00 20:00	Dinner for the expert team Short meeting for discussion on the findings of the day and for setting the programme for the next day
Day 2 9:00 - 11:00	interviews with the faculty board additional interviews, if needed visit to facilities
11:00 - 12:00	Meeting with the management of the institution
12:00 - 13:00	Lunch for the expert team
13:00 - 16:00	Formulation of the findings
16:00 - 16:30	Feedback to the faculty board

Table 13: Draft programme for a site visit

An important question is: "Should a team attend lectures?" The quality of education depends foremost on the interaction between staff and students. It is logical that the experts should attend lectures, tutorials and seminar or research groups. However, given the short time for the site visit it is quite impossible to do so. To get an impression of how things are going in the lecture halls, a team can agree to walk into a lecture hall "in action" to feel the atmosphere. However, it must be stressed that it is not a responsibility of the team to assess an individual staff member.

6.3.3 Formulating the findings

The afternoon of the second day is used for drawing up the findings. There are about three hours available for this difficult task. The best method is as follows:

- completion of the checklist by the individual members
- discussion of topics to be treated in the oral report
- formulation of the oral report by chairman and secretary.

The first hour will be used by the members to complete the checklist (see Appendix 4). It is very important to fill out the list on the spot. Do not take the list home for completion. Of course, a mature verdict is important, but so is a first impression. Another reason for doing it at the end of the visit is that the chair needs the list in order to prepare the draft report on the faculty.

The committee members are requested to give a grade of between 1 and 7 for the various aspects. The reason for this is twofold: on the one hand, it confronts the team with possible discrepancies between the verbal verdicts and the graded verdicts after processing the information. *"We all say that a certain aspect may be assessed as good; however, when looking at the figures we are only going to award an 'adequate'. How is that possible?"* On the other hand, this grading is necessary for the final report.

To have some idea of the value of the figures, bear the following ideas in mind:

- Score 1-2 when you believe this aspect should be considered critical. The university board or faculty board have to act directly. Something has to be done and cannot wait.
- Score 3 when you believe this aspect is unsatisfactory. It must be improved, but does not directly threaten the quality of the graduate.
- Score 4 when you believe the situation is satisfactory. The faculty may be satisfied, but there is no reason to be proud.
- Score 5 when you believe this topic can be assessed as more than satisfactory, but not excellent.
- Score 6 when you believe this topic can be assessed as more than satisfactory and can be seen as an example of good practice.
- Score 7 when you believe this topic can be assessed as excellent. The faculty can be proud of it and it is certainly a strong point.

After completing the checklist, the chair will draw up an inventory of the topics to be treated in the oral presentation. Therefore, it will be handy to mark the topics in the checklist. Based on experience, it seems that about 45 minutes is needed to discuss the topics. The chair will formulate the content of the oral presentation, based on the discussions with all members. In these 45 minutes, the other members can use the time to visit facilities, if this is still needed.

The oral presentation

The oral presentation to the faculty board at the end of the visit holds a special position in the process. Sometimes, findings and conclusions are not really suitable for the report, but the team would like to make a critical statement about them. In that case, the oral presentation can be used to formulate strongly worded recommendations. In order to do justice to this principle, the oral presentation is not public: the team reports to the faculty board. The chairman should stress that this is an interim report: some conclusions may

change during the final discussion on the report. It is advisable not only to mention the faculty's weaknesses, but also its strengths.

6.3.4 The expert team's report

After a visit to the faculty, the chair writes a first draft of the report, using the completed checklists and the minutes of the oral presentation. See Table 14 for the content of the assessment report.

<i>Introduction</i> <i>Members of the expert team</i> <i>Description of the assessment</i>
<i>Chapter 1 : Goals and objectives/expected learning outcomes</i>
<i>Chapter 2: The programme</i> <i>2.1 Programme specification</i> <i>2.2 Programme content</i> <i>2.2. Programme organisation</i> <i>5.2.3 Didactic concept</i> <i>5.2.4 Student assessment</i>
<i>Chapter 3 The input</i> <i>3.1 Staff quality</i> <i>3.2 Quality of the support staff</i> <i>3.3. Student profile</i> <i>3.4. Student advice/support</i> <i>3.3 Facilities and infrastructure</i>
<i>Chapter 4: Quality assurance</i> <i>4.1. QA of teaching and learning</i> <i>4.2 Student evaluation</i> <i>4.3 Curriculum design</i> <i>4.4. Staff development</i> <i>4.5 Feedback from stakeholders</i>
<i>Chapter 5: Output</i> <i>5.1 Achieved outcomes (the graduates)/profile graduates</i> <i>5.2. Pass rate and dropout rate</i> <i>5.3. Average time to degree</i> <i>5.4 Employability</i>
<i>Chapter 6: Stakeholder satisfaction</i> <i>6.1. Opinion - Students</i> <i>6.2. Opinion - Alumni (the graduates)</i> <i>6.3. Opinion - Labour market</i> <i>6..4 Opinion – Society</i>
<i>Chapter 7 Strengths-Weaknesses analysis</i> <i>7.1 Summary of the strengths</i> <i>7.2 Summary of the weaknesses</i> <i>7.3 Summary of the recommendations</i>

Table 14: Content of an assessment report

The draft will be discussed with the team members. The second draft will be sent to the faculty for comment. The team decides what to do with the comments. After the feedback from the faculty, the chair of the expert team will send the final report to the board of the university and to the faculty responsible for the programme. The university decides if it will make the report public or not. At least the university will use the report for improvement and for formulating the quality plan.

6.4 Concluding remarks

The guidelines given in this chapter are intended to help the expert team, not to make external quality assessment a bureaucratic process. Each team of experts will tend to look for its own approach; each discipline is different. The guidelines should not be a straitjacket: however, it very weighty arguments should be needed to deviate from the proposed model. The approach given here will save team members time and guarantee all faculties a fair and equal assessment.

7. Epilogue

The "Journey to uplift the quality of Higher Education", as stated by the AUN-QA in its Guidelines, is a long journey and not an easy one. This present manual can be seen as a road map that outlines the steps to be set for discovering our quality and to show our quality to the outside world.

The guidelines provided here are based on long-standing experience in many systems in many countries in the world. Best practices are included. This does not mean that the guidelines have to be followed slavishly. Universities have to adapt the instruments to their own situation. Quality Assurance is not a bureaucratic process. More important than rules and instruments are the quality awareness and quality culture within the university. Only then will Quality Assurance be an activity with a healthy foundation.

Quality assurance will ask for an investment of time and money, but at the end of the day it will produce big returns.

Using the guidelines to learn more about our quality is also becoming increasingly important, because all universities and all programmes will be confronted with the phenomenon of accreditation. One may like it or not, but in the near future all higher education institutions will necessarily introduce internal quality assurance and will start to use self-assessment, because the external pressure of accreditation will force them to do so.



SUPPLEMENT

HARMONISATION OF ACCREDITATION IN THE ASEAN REGION

INTRODUCTION

This manual primarily aims foremost to introduce Internal Quality Assurance at the universities of the ASEAN countries and to apply the AUN-QA Guidelines. The aim is to develop a harmonised quality assurance system in the ASEAN countries. Harmonisation of the QA system not only relates to internal activities, but also to the external quality assurance of accrediting bodies.

During the workshops held in July/August 2005, it became evident that the processes and procedures for accreditation are not always clear in many ASEAN countries. Within the scope of harmonising the HE systems and harmonising QA, it is important that the procedures for accreditation in the ASEAN countries are discussed to see how harmonisation can be achieved and an equivalent system of accreditation developed so that the outcomes of accreditation can be trusted and accepted by other countries. This is why it is necessary that SEAMEO and AUN-QA develop criteria for external quality assessment. So, it will be important that the ministers responsible for higher education organise a regional conference on external quality assessment and/or accreditation. The objectives of such a conference would be:

- to analyse and compare the procedures used for accreditation
- to discuss the role and function of accreditation
- to compare the standards used by the various accreditation agencies
- to compare the criteria for accreditation
- to discuss how to achieve harmonisation
- to discuss the conditions for the mutual recognition of each other's accreditation decisions.

The following chapters are meant as background information for discussion on harmonising accreditation in the ASEAN-countries.

1. External assessment and accreditation

A quality assurance system for higher education relies strongly on the internal component. In reality, however, quality assurance systems mostly started with the creation of external quality assessment and accreditation. This was the case in the United States where accreditation was introduced for medical education at the end of the 19th century, while in Europe external quality assessment at national levels was introduced in the mid 1980s. Generally, it can be said that pressure from outside promoted internal quality assurance.

Although accreditation was often introduced before a university had a real quality assurance system, accreditation has to be seen as the final step in the quality assurance process. It is an important step, but not the most important one. Sometimes, the impression exists that accreditation is *the* central activity in quality assurance and that accreditation is an aim in itself. This is often caused by the fact that accreditation is seen as the prerogative of the government (e.g. in Europe). Accreditation is often connected with state regulation and a certain degree of distrust towards the quality of higher education and towards the self-governance of the HE system. Accreditation is sometimes conceived as something outside the HE institution and is often perceived as state control.

In many cases, accreditation in the ASEAN countries is a national activity just like in Europe, America, Australia and Africa. The phenomenon of national accreditation or accreditation by government-based agencies is a recent one. Professional accreditation is much older and has a longer tradition. It is the professional body, e.g. in engineering or medicine that accredits the curriculum that delivers the right to work in the profession.

It is difficult to define accreditation, because there are so many concepts and ideas on it. The minimum requirement is to find some common characteristics:

1. Accreditation is a *formal* decision.
2. Accreditation is based on an *overall assessment* of the higher education institution or its core activities.
3. Accreditation is based on the assessment of *at least some minimum requirements* (threshold quality).
4. Accreditation leads to a yes/no/conditional decision.
5. Accreditation might have *consequences*, for example:
 - in the professional field;
 - concerning recognition;
 - concerning funding;
 - concerning student aid.

Accreditation is defined as "*granting an institution or programme a quality mark that indicates that certain standards have been met*". Accreditation means taking a formal, independent decision on whether or not certain requirements have been met.

It is important to make a clear distinction between the accreditation process, leading to the quality label, and the consequences of accreditation.

Accreditation (= providing a quality label) as such is a professional activity to be done according to certain rules of the game.

The possible consequences connected with the quality label are a political decision. It might affect funding, the recognition of degrees, opportunities for students to get scholarships, etc.

In principle, the accreditation process must be the same all over the world, while the consequences may differ from country to country.

It is important to bear this in mind when discussing the possibilities of regional or supranational accreditation and talking about mutual recognition.

The object of accreditation may differ. In some cases, the accreditation relates to the institution as a whole, like the regional accrediting bodies in the United States. In other cases, the accreditation considers the programmes offered by the institution. Most accrediting bodies in Europe look at the quality of the programmes. Sometimes, this involves new programmes (ex-ante assessment), sometimes existing programmes (ex-post assessment). In some countries, we see a combination of institutional accreditation and programme accreditation.

2. Accreditation in the region

Accreditation in the ASEAN countries is developing differently from country to country. Some of the ASEAN countries have an accreditation council/agency that has already been working for a long time. (Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia (for the private sector), the Philippines). These agencies are also full members of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE). Vietnam just started a pilot project for the accreditation of 10 universities. Cambodia just passed a law on accreditation, but the country is still in the stage of developing the criteria. Brunei has an accreditation council that functions as a monitoring body to ensure and maintain the quality and standards of educational credentials, taking care that they are in accordance with the provisions as set and required by the government. Particularly, the council accredits *degrees* from graduates earned at international universities who apply for governmental positions. However, the council does not accredit the local university, Universiti Brunei Darussalam. Laos is the only country without an accreditation council. There is not even any discussion on this yet. So far the countries differ greatly in the stage of development. Of course, the development of accreditation needs to take into account the national, social and political context. However, it will be necessary to develop equivalent systems with equivalent standards, processes and procedures.

A description of the accreditation systems working in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand will be given in alphabetical order. This description uses:

- information from the INQAAHE website
- information from a questionnaire sent to the agencies

- information from the website of the agency (if available)
- additional articles
- information collected during the workshops in 2006.

Table 16 compares the countries.

2.1 Accreditation in Indonesia

Accreditation in Indonesia is the responsibility of the Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi (BAN-PT) or the National Board for Accreditation in Higher Education. BAN-PT is an independent institution, founded in 1994 on the basis of MoEC Ministerial Decree No. 0326/U/1994. BAN-PT is responsible for accrediting both study programmes and higher education institutions. BAN-PT is an independent institution, both in terms of organisational setting and funding system, and is acknowledged as the national authority in the field of accreditation and evaluation of higher education institutions. The term independence means that BAN-PT is an organisation with wide-ranging autonomy in the management, funding, and execution of accreditation.

BAN-PT's conceptual frameworks and operational policies are based on the new management paradigm of Indonesia's higher education system, emphasising continuous quality enhancement, public accountability, autonomous self-empowerment, self-evaluation and transparent accreditation.

The national accreditation of higher education aims to facilitate quality control and assurance at higher education institutions in order to attain national competitiveness through institutional autonomy and healthy organisation.

BAN-PT's mission is to protect the community through quality assurance of higher education using valid and reliable accreditation instruments, with consistent and clear reference to accreditation norms and standards, which are easy and feasible to apply at and in all higher education institutions/study programmes in Indonesia, so that the results of accreditation can be used as reliable information by the related community.

Accreditation is seen as validation by a group of experts of the quality of a study programme. Quality is seen as meeting or exceeding stakeholders' expectations.

The object of accreditation is the programme, both at private and public universities.

The accreditation decision offers 3 grades. 'A', 'B', and 'C' plus a non-accredited status.

- Grade 'A' means passing regional or international standards (excellent).
- Grade 'B' means passing national standards as set by peer groups of the national professional or scientific organisations (Good).
- Grade 'C' means passing minimum standards as set by the Director General of Higher Education (Fair).

BAN-PT decisions are forwarded to the Minister of National Education as recommendations. In line with the recommended decisions, the Government declares that academic and competence certification shall be granted only by accredited higher education institutions.

The accreditation process takes the normal approach:

- Self-assessment by the institution
- Visit by an expert team,
- Report by the expert team
- Accreditation decision.

Accreditation is compulsory and also has clear consequences:

- Official recognition of diplomas and certificates.
- Access to grants awarded by the Directorate General of Higher Education

BAN-PT makes direct recommendations on improving study programmes. These recommendations are based on a SWOT analysis of their accreditation results. The recommendations are also sent to the Director General of Higher Education for further formal policy actions concerning related study programmes.

BAN-PT publishes reports for all related parties in the following formats:

- The BAN-PT accreditation decision is forwarded to the accredited study programmes and institutions (accompanied with recommendations for improvement), the Association of Private Higher Education Institutions, and the Director General of Higher Education.
- Periodical Reports on the accreditation results and the whole range of BAN-PT activities are sent to the Minister of National Education via the Director General of Higher Education.
- Annual Directories of Accreditation Results are published for general public information.

The information reported in all kinds of formats is open to public inquiry and also uploaded onto the BAN-PT website.

BAN-PT describes the strengths of the system as follows:

- Because the variations in the quality of study programmes within programmes and within institutions in Indonesia is very wide, study programme accreditation provides a real picture of the condition of a study programme that cannot be achieved by an institutional accreditation system.
- Independence of the BOARD
- Use of the peer review system

As weaknesses, BAN-PT mentions the following:

- Huge number of higher education institutions spread over the country with geographical constraints.
- Limited support funds that are not sufficient for implementing such accreditation activities. This is due to the government policy of an agency attached to a government body, such as BAN-PT, having no authority of its own for collecting funds, although the agency is independent in nature.
- Inadequate support, awareness and perception among many institutions concerning the value and significance of accreditation as an effort to address higher education institution quality assurance.
- Difficulties in mobilising experts in fields of study to assist BAN-PT as peer experts.

Last year about 500 peer reviewers were used [two reviewers for each diploma and undergraduate study programme; three reviewers for each Master's and Doctoral study programme]. About 10% of the peer reviewers were not academic: these non-academics were professional and administrative reviewers. The peers came from industry, higher education institutions; religious authorities; government service units. They also came from professional associations working in the fields of health, art, engineering, education, accounting, law and agriculture. So far, all the reviewers have come from Indonesia. No foreign reviewers have been invited.

2.2 Accreditation in Malaysia

Malaysia has 10 years of tradition in accreditation, especially for the private universities. Accreditation for the public universities is still under development. Two national accrediting bodies are active:

- Lembaga Akreditasi Negara (LAN)
- Quality Assurance Division for public universities in Malaysia, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education,

There are also a number of professional accrediting bodies, such as the Malaysian Medical Council, the Board of Engineers and the Legal Profession Qualifications Board.

2.2.1 Lembaga Akreditasi Negara (LAN)

The Lembaga Akreditasi Negara (LAN) was installed to assure the quality of private education. To ensure the healthy development of private higher education, Parliament passed two Acts in 1996, namely the Private Higher Education Act (Act 555) and the Lembaga Akreditasi Negara Act (Act 556).

The Private Higher Education Act (Act 555) seeks to control the management and establishment of private higher education institutions in order to provide quality in higher education for its students. The Lembaga Akreditasi Negara Act (Act 556) aims to ensure that all courses of study and training programmes offered achieve a standard acceptable to the norms and conventions of a higher education institution. Members of the National Accreditation Board (LAN) were officially appointed on 15 May 1997. The Lembaga is headed by a Chairman / Chief Executive with nine other board members and formulates policies, procedures, standards and other matters pertaining to the quality of courses of study being offered or to be offered by private higher education institutions.

LAN was set up as a statutory body under the Ministry of Education, with the status of an autonomous body to monitor the standards and quality of higher education provided by private higher education institutions. It was also imperative for LAN to have the expertise for conducting assessment work objectively and professionally to avoid any misgivings from any quarters. With such distinctiveness, LAN is set to be an authoritative body for determining the standards and quality of private higher education.

Lembaga Akreditasi Negara formulates quality control measures which are efficient and effective, for courses of study conducted nationwide so that the education provided for by Institutes for Public Higher Education are of quality and of international standing. Thus, whilst producing all-rounded individuals, the Institutes

for Public Higher Education will be able to contribute to the development of manpower needs.

The functions of Lembaga Akreditasi Negara are:

- To formulate policies on the standard and quality control of the courses of study, and certificates, diplomas and degrees
- To set, monitor, review and oversee the standard and quality of courses and for the accreditation of certificates, diplomas and degrees.
- To determine the level of achievement for the national language and the compulsory subjects specified in the Private Higher Education Act 1996 (Act 555) as prerequisites for the award of certificates, diplomas and degrees; and
- To advise and make recommendations to the Minister of Higher Education for its approval of courses of study to be conducted by Private Higher Education Institutions with regard to the suitability of arrangements relating to the educational facilities relevant to the courses of study, and the standards and quality assurance of the courses of study.

The scope of LAN and the object of accreditation relate to study programmes offered by all private higher education institutions including private universities.

The standards for accreditation can be found in the Malaysian Qualification Framework. The MQF is designed as a unified system of qualifications offered on a national basis by all education and training institutions, which include colleges, universities, vocational institutions, professional organisations and other higher education institutions in both the public and private sector as well as workplace training and lifelong learning experiences. The MQF secures the standards of qualifications and reinforces policies on quality assurance, ensures accuracy and consistency of the nomenclature of qualifications, supports flexible education by providing typical learning pathways and recognising prior learning (RPL), encourages partnerships between the public and private sector, links non-degree with undergraduate and postgraduate levels, encourages parity of esteem among academic, professional and vocational qualifications, establishes a common currency for credit accumulation and transfer, provides clear and accessible public information, facilitates, where applicable, the presentation of the intended outcomes of qualifications in forms that enable professional bodies to gauge their contribution to professional formation, and articulates links with qualifications from other countries. The MQF is sufficiently flexible to accommodate new kinds of qualifications that may arise from time to time.

In developing the single interconnected structure, nationally endorsed criteria for naming, positioning and linking all qualifications are necessary. The "architecture" of the MQF requires understanding of its foundation, principally expressed as competency standards or learning outcomes, the volume of academic effort expressed as credits in terms of total student effort to achieve the learning outcomes, the purpose and character of the qualifications and consistency of nomenclature. Based on these criteria, the MQF includes: the Certificate (vocational and higher education), the Diploma and Advanced Diploma, Bachelors (Hons), Masters, PhD and earned higher doctorates and "conversion" awards called Graduate Certificate and Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate and Diploma.

Accreditation is seen as formal recognition of the fact that the certificates, diplomas and degrees awarded by private higher education institutions are in accordance with the standard set by Lembaga.

Accreditation is formal recognition of the fact that the certificates, diplomas and degrees awarded by private higher education institutions are in accordance with the standards set by the National Accreditation Board (LAN). Except for the 3+0 courses conducted by Institutes for Public Higher Education or Public HEIs collaboratively, the Institutes for Public Higher Education are not compelled to apply for Accreditation for any particular course of study.

Each application received by LAN will be recorded and a file will be opened with an assigned reference number. This application file will be assigned to a LAN officer for a documentation check. Having received the said document, the officer concerned will check to see if the application document is in order and will promptly inform the Institutes for Public Higher Education on its status.

Prior to the assessment visit, an officer from LAN will set up a suitable visit date with the institution. The institution will be required to disclose samples of question papers and examination answer scripts and, where necessary, additional information required based on the preliminary approval assessment report for certain subjects. This required information should be ready and available at least one week before the visit.

LAN officers and the peers will conduct the visit as per a given schedule. Such a visit will usually take between two and three days.

The final assessment report will contain recommendations on whether a course of study has:

- Passed the Assessment for Accreditation; or
- Failed the Assessment for Accreditation; or
- Received Conditional Approval pending full compliance with Accreditation.

Recommendations by the experts will be scrutinised carefully by the LAN Management and further debated at the Core Business Meeting before a written proposal is forwarded to the Board Meeting. The recommendations will be deliberated at the Board Meeting. The Board's decision on an application for Accreditation for courses of study will be conveyed to the Institutes for Public Higher Education. That decision could include any one of the following:

- Granting Accreditation for a maximum of 5 years for courses of study at degree, diploma and certificate levels. (The Institutes for Public Higher Education should renew such application for Accreditation at least one year before its expiry);
- Granting Accreditation of a different academic distinction from that applied for by the PHEI on its application form (for example, an application for Accreditation at degree level is granted a Certificate of Accreditation at diploma level);
- Refuse the application stating the grounds for refusal; or
- Granting Conditional Approval for Accreditation.

Public announcements may be made by Institutes for Public Higher Education when a course of study has been awarded an Accreditation. LAN itself will announce such accreditation via its website. The public will also be able to make a search on the status of any course of study conducted by a private institution at LAN's office or by writing to LAN.

The ascertainment of quality assessment on any course of study requires highly qualified and experienced personnel equipped with the expertise on qualitative evaluation mechanisms practised in Malaysia. LAN selects its panel of assessors from a variety of fields. These are qualified personnel from professional and industrial

bodies as well as academics from private and public tertiary institutions. An expert possesses a minimum qualification of a Masters with at least 5 years of relevant work experience. However, selection on the panel is subject to final approval by the LAN Board.

2.2.2 The Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA)

While the private sector already has a long tradition, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) has been set up for accreditation of the public sector. The basic idea merger the Quality Assurance Division (QAD) of the Ministry of Higher Education and Lembaga Akreditasi Negara (LAN) in the future.

The agency was established on the initiative of the Government and is situated within the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education Malaysia. The activities of the agency sometimes aim at institutional level, at other times at programme, subject or discipline level. The main activity at institutional level is a) quality audit b) management audit and c) institutional assessment. The evaluation is sometimes followed by a formal accreditation decision. If evaluation is followed by accreditation, it applies to professional courses such as Medicine, Law, Engineering, Accountancy, etc.

Accreditation is seen as a sign that an educational programme or institution has been officially declared to be of an approved standard. This provides confidence and guarantees local and foreign stakeholders that an institution maintains and enhances standards of educational provision at all times that are in line with their expectations and match industrial needs.

Accreditation is not compulsory. However, under the Private Higher Education Act 1996, all educational programmes are subject to a mandatory compliance of standards audit process. In around September 2006, when a new Act is enacted (Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act?) to replace the existing LAN Act, accreditation is likely to become compulsory.

The benefits of accreditation are benchmarking against accreditation standards and good practices used in other parts of international community that lead to the provision of quality education and subsequently facilitate the recognition and cross-border mobility of our graduates, whether for employment or for furthering their education.

The criteria for evaluation are the general criteria on good practice and nationally agreed criteria. The evaluation criteria are formulated by the Government in consultation with other stakeholders.

The standards checked during the assessment are confined to good practices in the following areas (both at institutional level and programme level):

- ◆ Vision, mission and institutional goals (only at institutional level).
- ◆ Learning outcomes, programme design and delivery.
- ◆ Student selection and support services.
- ◆ Student assessment system.
- ◆ Academic staff.
- ◆ Educational resources.
- ◆ Programme monitoring and review.
- ◆ Leadership, governance and administration.

◆ Total continual quality improvement.

The method used is the common approach: application, self-assessment, external review with site visit, accreditation decision. The agency has guidelines both for the self-evaluation and the external review. The guidelines are distributed via hard copy.

The agency appoints the committee members in consultation with the people being assessed. The members are academics + other experts from outside academia (a mixed committee).

The members are trained before they are appointed and meet beforehand and get instructions about what is expected from the team.

The method of reporting is as follows:

- an exit oral report is given by the visiting team before leaving the HEI
- a draft report is given to the HEI for comments on factual errors
- a redrafted report is sent to the agency, where the executive summary highlighting the HEI's strengths, areas of concern and opportunities is discussed with recommendations for improvement and enhancement.
- The full report is sent to the Vice Chancellor for quality enhancement.
- The full report is confidential, but HEIs are encouraged to make them public. The summary is made public by the agency.

Specified strengths of the approach are:

- The transparency of the accreditation criteria and standards are checked against a backdrop of a unified qualifications framework,
- It is developmental and facilitates capacity building,
- It points out both strengths and areas of concern,
- It expects measures to be taken to improve weaknesses,
- It expects continual improvement.

A weakness is seen in the fact that the system probably lacks international experts / involvement in the accreditation exercises.

2.3 Accreditation in the Philippines

The Philippines already has, at least for the ASEAN region, a long tradition in accreditation. 3 accrediting bodies are active. These are the:

- Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities of the Philippines (AACCU)
- Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU),
- Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation,

Besides these 3 accrediting bodies, the Commission on Higher Education plays a role in the quality assurance of higher education.

The 1970 Presidential Commission to Survey Philippine Education drew up the plan to establish a federation of accrediting agencies. However, it was only in 1976, during a COCOPEA conference that the Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines (FAAP) was born.

During this conference, consensus was reached on establishing a federation of accrediting agencies which would be a national, voluntary, non-profit and non-governmental agency. Its creation was in response to the need to harness private, voluntary accreditation into a more effective force for raising educational standards in the Philippines.

FAAP was formally launched in 1977 through the initiative and active support of the Fund for Assistance to Private Education. Three agencies initially formed the Federation, namely: the Association of Christian Schools and Colleges-Accrediting Agency, Incorporated (ACSC-AAI), the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU), and the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA). In 1994, the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities of the Philippines (AACCCUP) became a member of the Federation.

2.3.1 AACCCUP

The accreditation of curricular programmes in the Philippines, particularly for state universities and colleges, is the main function of the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines, Inc. (AACCCUP). It was organised in 1987, although it was officially chartered (by the Securities and Exchange Commission) as the Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines in September 1989. Under its charter, one of the functions, if not the main purpose of AACCCUP is "to develop a mechanism of and to conduct the evaluation of programmes and institutions."

AACCCUP is now closely allied with the Association of Local Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation, Inc. (ALCUCOA), organised only in the latter part of 2003.

The Agency was organised by a group of 13 initiators who were Presidents, Vice-Presidents, Deans and Senior Faculty of state universities and colleges, and was registered by the Securities and Exchange Commission. As of 2005, AACCCUP has had a membership of 107 state universities and colleges, which also own the Agency.

Accreditation is viewed as a process by which an institution at tertiary level evaluates its educational activities, in whole or in part, and seeks independent judgement to confirm that it substantially achieves its objectives and is generally equal in quality to comparable institutions.

Currently, accreditation in state colleges and universities is by programme. A programme is defined as a course or a group of related courses packaged in a curriculum and leading to a graduate or undergraduate degree. Examples of programmes are elementary teacher education, civil engineering, agriculture, etc.

AACCCUP is now considering other models, like, accrediting institutions as alternatives to or to complement programme accreditation.

Besides being programme-focused, accreditation is:

- based on the standards of the accrediting agency which are normally higher than those set by the Commission on Higher Education and other appropriate agencies, e.g. the Professional Regulation Commission;
- voluntary on the part of the higher education institution that may want to be accredited;
- an evaluation by peers, i.e. the external accreditors are mostly academic staff members from other higher education institutions, and are non-governmental.

Although accreditation is voluntary, it will have consequences. Programmes that have passed the standards and are awarded accreditation status:

- lend prestige to member institutions, justified by the possession of quality standards and unremitting efforts to maintain them at a high level;
- help parents to know which programme they may send their children to for quality education;
- make all those engaged in education aware of standards of excellence which they should strive to attain;
- make it possible for those proposing funding and those who are to provide the funding to know what to support and how much support is needed; and
- make it possible for an evaluated programme to know its strengths and weaknesses, and what aspects it needs to develop.

Accreditation has also been used in a variety of ways as a criterion in administrative decision-making:

- applicants for teaching in the Department of Education who are graduates of accredited programmes are granted credit points;
- it serves as a criterion in the levelling of State Universities and Colleges (SUCs);
- it serves as a criterion in the selection of schools for foreign students;
- some agencies consult AACCUP about the accreditation status of colleges and universities attended by their employees for purposes of promotion; and
- sometimes foreign universities consult AACCUP regarding the accreditation status of programmes attended by Filipino students seeking admission.

AACCUP is cognisant of the following potential incentives to be granted to accredited programmes/institutions:

- as a rational basis for budgetary requests;
- for normative financing;
- as a factor in the selection of Centres of Excellence (COEs) and Centres of Development (CODs);
- for SUCs levelling;
- as a requirement for the conversion of a college into a university;
- as a factor in assessing the appointment/transfer of an SUC President; and
- for matching-fund schemes where requirements for accreditation are matched with funds from CHED.

The accreditation process passes through various stages/activities:

- *Application*

An educational institution files its application to undergo accreditation with AACCUP.

- *Institutional self-assessment*

Upon approval of the application, the applicant institution will be required to make an internal assessment to determine the programme's readiness for external review.

- *Preliminary Survey Visit*
The first evaluation of the programme will be done by external accreditors. Passing the assessment entitles the programme to be awarded *Candidate status (Level I)* valid for two (2) years.
- *Formal Survey Visit*
Evaluation of a programme that has attained Level I, and if it has attained a higher level of quality, is awarded an *Accredited status (Level II)*, valid for three (3) years.
- *1st Resurvey Visit*
Involves the evaluation of an accredited programme, and if it has passed the standards set at a higher level of quality than the immediately preceding survey visit, may qualify the programme for an award of *Re-accredited status (Level II)*, valid for five (5) years.
- *2nd Resurvey Visit*
The accreditation stage conducted after a programme has enjoyed a re-accredited status for five (5) years. Passing a higher level standard of quality entitles the programme to apply for *Level III*. The programme is then evaluated and must excel in four (4) areas, namely 1) *instruction and 2) extension*, which are mandatory; and two (2) more areas to be chosen from among research, performance in licensure examination, faculty development, and linkages.
- *Level IV*
Is a higher level which, if passed, would entitle the institution to *institutional accreditation status*.

There are ten (10) criteria (areas) that are used for the assessment of programmes:

1. Mission, goals and objectives
2. Faculty
3. Curriculum and Instruction
4. Students
5. Research
6. Extension and Community Involvement
7. Library
8. Physical Facilities
9. Laboratories
10. Administration

The evaluation instrument (aide memoire) which uses the 10 criteria described above is the working guide for the accreditor. Starting with instruments for five (5) programmes in 1992; then for ten (10) programmes in 1994; there were already thirty-nine (39) instruments for thirty-nine (39) programmes which were revised for the first time in 2000. These instruments were updated in 2003. The instruments are now available for 39 disciplines.

The accreditation decision is Yes, No or Conditional. The agency also applies a certain grading/ranking by providing the different levels e.g., Level I, II, III and IV for programmes depending on the quality standard of the programme. The levels indicate an ascending order of quality.

The agency reports as follows:

- The evaluation (of programme) reports are submitted to the higher education institution concerned. They are not made public.
- The annual activity reports of this Agency are published, with copies furnished to member institutions and available as public documents.

The accreditation procedure is the usual one:

- Self-assessment
- Peer review
- Site visit
- Accreditation decision

The programme performance profile is reviewed before the actual visit. Accredited programmes of this Agency (AACUP) are reviewed by the federation body (National Network of Quality Assurance Agencies - NNQAA).

The actual accreditation survey visits are conducted by teams of accreditors usually composed of five (5) members per team per programme staying at the host institution for a period of three (3) days.

So far, AACUP has already trained over 900 senior academic staff members with various specialisations from different state universities and colleges. More than 500 have qualified, and 323 are active members of the Pool of Accreditors. Over the last year more, than 200 peers were involved in reviews. Some of them were assigned more than once. Most of the peers are academics. Only 2% were non-academic. Starting 2005, more non-academics are be included. No foreign peers are involved.

2.3.2 PAASCU

PAASCU was set up on the initiative of the higher education institutions and is an independent organisation owned by the professional body. Activities take place at programme level.

The activities of the agency aim both at the assessment of educational activities and the assessment of research by the same external evaluation team. The assessment is followed by a formal accreditation decision.

Accreditation is seen as:

- A concept based on self-regulation which focuses on evaluation and the continuing improvement of educational quality.
- A process by which institutions or programmes continuously upgrade their educational quality and services through self-assessment and the judgement of peers.
- A status granted to an educational institution or programme that meets standards of quality or excellence

Quality means fitness for purpose. The evaluation instruments developed by PAASCU identify principles and practices which are found in excellent institutions. Great emphasis is placed on the formulation of the school's purposes and objectives. Only when its goals are clear can the school discover the extent to which such purposes and objectives are being achieved.

In the Philippine setting, the government sets the minimum standards. Accreditation means going beyond the minimum standards set by government.

Areas that are evaluated during the visit are:

- Community Involvement,
- Academic Staff,
- Instruction,
- Library
- Laboratories
- Physical Plan
- Student Services
- Administration

PAASCU sets the standards. The evaluative instruments are reviewed periodically by experts from various disciplines. The standards cover:

- the goals and aims of the programme/exit qualifications
- the content of the programme
- the organisation of the programme
- the didactic concept, didactic philosophy
- teaching methods
- curriculum design
- student work, research project and/or practical training
- student assessments/examinations
- the student population (selection, recruitment, preliminary education)
- staff quality
- the quality of the facilities
- internationalisation of the curriculum
- internal quality assurance procedures
- the achieved standards
- pass rate and dropout rate
- average graduation time
- student opinion on the programme
- staff opinion on the programme
- opinion of alumni
- opinion of society at large
- other aspects: administration of the programme

The assessment takes the standard approach:

- self-assessment/evaluation
- external review
- accreditation decision

The agency has guidelines on self-assessment/self-evaluation and on external review. The guidelines are distributed via hard copy and on floppy or per email on request.

PAASCU has the following reporting policy

- The evaluation team reports to the agency.
- The agency decides on the content and format of the report
- The report is submitted to the PAASCU Commission on Higher Education and then to the PAASCU Board of Directors
- The Board of Directors makes the final decision.
- The report is confidential. However, the institution may wish to make it public and include it in its annual report or distribute it to the public.

Accreditation is a voluntary process, although the government uses accreditation to assist its regulatory function and gives benefits to accredited institutions.

Consequences of the accreditation are:

- autonomy for accredited schools
- administrative, financial and curricular deregulation
- priority in funding assistance for grants, scholarships and other subsidies from the government
- ongoing improvement within the institution
- facilitates transfer of students
- provides guidance to parents and students in the choice of worthy schools
- prestige for member schools.

PAASCU sees the strengths of the system as:

- a 50-year tradition of private voluntary accreditation
- government confidence in the system
- educators value the accreditation system and believe the process contributes to improving the quality of their programmes.
- accredited institutions are classified according to levels and the government gives benefits according to these levels
- both institutional and programme accreditation are carried out.

PAASCU sees the weaknesses of the system as:

- a need to review the survey instruments used in the self-assessment
- reorienting standards to focus more on outcomes
- a need to develop the capability to use technology to cope with expansion.

The agency has guidelines on

- Self-assessment/self-evaluation
- External review

The guidelines are distributed via hard copy and on floppy or per email on request.

2.3.3 PACUCOA

The Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA) traces its beginnings as an accrediting arm of PACU back to 1950. As an internal policy of PACU, accreditation provided the stimulus for the growth of the nucleus of accreditation in its member schools. Consequently, the publication of the first PACU Handbook of Rules and Standards of Approval and Accreditation of Private Schools and Universities followed. The final aim was to guide the member schools of PACU in achieving excellence through self-evaluation of their educational programmes in the light of their philosophy and objectives.

In 1967, the organisation's focus on accreditation intensified with the appointment of the first committee on accreditation and the adoption of the first manual.

The momentum for accreditation remained relentless with the formalisation of the accrediting body now known as PACUCOA. Eventually, in an attempt to streamline its accreditation activities, the agency adopted the 1967 manual and evaluative

instrument and laid down the foundation for the official separation of PACUCOA from PACU. With the approval of the Securities and Exchange Commission, PACUCOA, Inc. became an independent entity registered as a non-stock, non-profit corporation.

From a membership of six schools with nine accredited programmes in 1977, PACUCOA membership today lists 42 schools with 149 programmes. There has been a tremendous increase both in the number of programmes and in the number of schools accredited.

PACUCOA, in collaboration with the other accrediting agencies, developed survey instruments for the liberal arts, education and commerce programmes in 1983. The significant number of maritime students and programmes across the country called for the development of a survey instrument for the maritime programme in 1984. Similarly, responding to the needs of member schools, the following instruments were also developed.

The Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation is a non-stock, non-profit corporation that is duly recognised by the Philippine government. The organisation is a non-stock corporation that operates by virtue of its registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission - Philippine Government.

Approximately 90% of the funds come from membership fees and 10% from government subsidies.

The object of accreditation relates both to programmes and institutions in the private sector. The organisation either awards or defers the award of accredited status to an academic programme/institution. Certain benefits are granted by the government to accredited institutions/programmes. If the decision is to defer the award of accredited status, the programme is required to address the deficiencies within 6 months to 1 year.

Programmes/schools are awarded various accredited status/levels, i.e. from Level I to Level IV.

Recommendations are part and parcel of the standard reports and are drawn from the findings reached during the evaluation and are given to address the identified deficiencies/areas for improvement.

Reports on the accredited status of schools/programmes are submitted to the Commission on Higher Education and are published via newsletters and newspapers of national circulation. However, detailed reports on the on-site visit are confidential in nature and are only given to the relevant schools/programmes and are known to a select group of officers of the organisation.

Accreditation uses the standard method:

- Self-assessment
- Peer review
- Site visit
- Accreditation decision.

Peers normally come from the academic world. Only 5% were non-academic. Non-academic peers came from the industry.

2.4 Accreditation in Thailand

In Thailand, the Ministry of Education has a significant role to play in encouraging fully-fledged quality assurance systems within all public and private higher education institutions by providing policy guidelines support for knowledge sharing activities and implementing related internal quality assurance. External quality assurance is conducted by the Office of National Education Standards & Quality Assessment (ONESQA), a public organisation set up in late 2000. ONESQA is responsible for accreditation.

The reasons for establishing the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment were:

- Recognition that evaluation is an essential step for feedback information, which provides the government with the basis for assessing the extent of target achievement. It also enables the government to identify weaknesses or problems for which remedial measures are needed to facilitate subsequent planning and actions required to achieve goals effectively and efficiently.
- Recognition of the importance of evaluation, particularly quality assessment by an external and neutral body. It gives all agencies responsible for education provision - from those at national level to the smallest - i.e. educational institutions and classrooms, incentives for self-evaluation so that the quality of education will be continuously enhanced.

Quality education is seen as a public service. Therefore, an external quality assessment agency needs to be a public organisation, enjoying the status of a state body, which is neither a government office nor a state enterprise, in order to achieve the highest efficiency. With complete autonomy and decision-making powers for its administrative, managerial and financial affairs, it has the flexibility to carry out the assigned tasks more efficiently than through the bureaucratic line of command.

ONESQA enjoys complete neutrality and integrity, since there is no outside pressure to distort the assessment, resulting in a genuine system of checks and balances. External quality assessment is a public service for capacity-building to check how far the quality of education required by learners, society and the state meets the desired standards and efficiency.

The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organisation) authorises the establishment of the Executive Committee for the Office (11 members); the Committee for Development of Assessment Systems for Basic Education (not exceeding 11 members); and the Committee for Development of Assessment Systems for Higher Education (not exceeding 11 members).

ONESQA was established with the following aim: to develop criteria and methods for external quality assessment; to assess educational achievements in order to check the quality of educational institutions, bearing in mind the objectives, principles and guidelines for educational provision at each level as stipulated in the national education law. External quality assessment of all educational institutions will be carried out at least once every five years. The assessment outcomes will be duly submitted to the agencies concerned and published for the general public.

ONESQA will not carry out the assessment itself, except in the case of system and method development. The external assessment must be transparent and supported by concrete proof and evidence. Private, professional or academic organisations will

be encouraged to participate in the training of external assessors. Selection of external assessors is based on the criteria of competency for accreditation and registration as well as periodic assessment of these assessors

ONESQA is not expected to work as an authoritative body superior to other parties, especially the educational institutions.

ONESQA aims for the following strategies:

- Encouragement and development of educational institutions for adoption of internal quality assurance to improve learner quality and the institutions' readiness for external quality assessment.
- Dissemination of information to all concerned to raise awareness of and recognition for the importance of educational quality assurance as well as acceptance and appreciation of the services provided by education institutions.
- Development of an efficient system for external assessment of education institution quality with the aim of enabling them to provide learners with higher quality education.
- Building a body of knowledge on educational quality assurance, regarding education quality development, monitoring and internal and external assessment. The outcomes of the external quality assessment will be synthesised, thus producing an overall picture of the national education standard and proposing the policy for enhancing the quality and standard of national education.
- Development of lead resource persons and staff responsible for quality assurance, particularly quality assessment as well as the promotion and professional development of the assessors.
- Building a working system based on networking individuals and organisations both within and outside the country. Such networking is aimed at further development of the quality assurance system and enhancement of the educational reform measures.

All educational institutions are obliged to receive external assessment at least once every five years. Quality assessment is seen as an educational process for providing learners, parents, community and society with confidence in and assurance of the educational institutions' ability to offer services of the quality and standard required. The collective efforts of the state and private sectors will undoubtedly be most beneficial to the development of education quality and the enhancement of Thailand's competitiveness in the world community.

The first stage of quality assurance in Thailand was performed from 2000 to 2005. The assessment results only confirmed the real status of institutions and they were significant documents for reviewing the quality standard of education in Thailand. The cabinet approved the national standard on 26th October 2004. The second round of assessment and the first round of accreditation will be carried out in 2006.

Accreditation is done at both institutional and programme level.

4 groups of institutions are distinguished at institutional level:

- Group I. Teaching and Research (Institutional functions focus mainly on teaching (over 30 %) and research (30% or more))
- Group II. Teaching and Services (Institutional functions focus mainly on teaching (over 30 %) and services (30% or more))

- Group III. Teaching and Arts & Culture (Institutional functions focus mainly on teaching (over 30 %) and Art and Culture (20% or more))
- Group IV. Teaching (Institutional functions focus on teaching (40 % or above) and research, services, art & culture in each function (not over 30%))

The process followed by ONESQA is the generally accepted approach:

- The institution presents an annual report and a self-assessment report (SAR) to ONESQA
- ONESQA appoints the team of experts from fields that relate to the programmes offered by the institution in question.
- The experts review the annual report, the SAR, the common data set, and significant documents from the institution.
- The first meeting of the expert team takes place prior to the visit (to develop the schedule and plan the visit).
- Visit to the institution for 3-5 days: meeting the administrative committee, observation, interview, study of documents, finding more evidence to support the data
- Oral presentation of the assessment results to the institution.
- Submit the written report to the institution for approval or feedback within 30 days at the latest of the visit.
- Improve and correct the report within 15 days of having received feedback from the institution.
- Submit the report to ONESQA.
- ONESQA sends a report to the government, Ministry of Education, related organisations and makes it accessible to the general public.

Standards are set by ONESQA. Table 15 shows the standards and the weight of the standards used for accreditation.

Table 155: Quality standards of ONESQA in Thailand

Standards	Weighting factors	Number of indicators
1. Quality of Graduates	At least 20	6+2*
2. Research	At least 20	5+2*
3. Service(s)	At least 20	4+3*
4. Arts and Culture	At least 10	2+2*
Total Standard 1-4	100	17+9*
5 Institutional and staff Development	20	11
6. Curriculum and Instruction	20	9
7. Quality Assurance System	20	2
Total Standard 5-7	60	22
Total Standard 1-7	160	39+9*

Each standard will be marked with a grade of between 1 and 5. The accreditation decision has some options.

- 1) An institution gets full accreditation if:
 - the overall average score is at least equal to 3.51

- at least 5 standards have a score of between 3.51 and 5.00 and none of standards score below 1.51.
- 2) An institution gets conditional accreditation if:
 - the overall average score is at least equal to 2.51
 - and standards 1 to 4 have an overall average weighted score equal to or more than 3.51.
 - 3) Another possibility for conditional accreditation is that the overall average weighted score is equal to or more than 3.51 and the 4 major standards (Standards 1-4) get overall weighted scores equal to or more than 3.51 but the number of standards in the level score 3.51-5.00 amounts to fewer than 5 standards.

In all other cases, the institution will not be accredited. Institutions that get a conditional accreditation or no accreditation must develop a plan for their institutional improvement within the limited time period agreed between experts and institution.

Another way to reach full accreditation is based on programme assessment. The institution will get full accreditation when 3 out of 4 programmes offered at the institutions have been accredited and none of the programmes offered in the institution have scored overall equal to or lower than 1.50.

The expert team reports the assessment results to ONESQA. ONESQA considers and makes the decision.

The experts are appointed by ONESQA. The teams are made up of 3 to 10 persons depending on the size of institution and the number of programmes that the institution offers. The expertise comes from the experts in the various programmes within the universities. Most of them have current or previous high ranking positions in the administration and/or high ranking academic positions in areas such as President, Vice-President, Dean, Professor, Associate Professor. ONESQA selected all experts and invited experts in specific areas i.e. education, health, science, etc. All experts must complete 3 days of training by ONESQA.

Accreditation is compulsory by law (Education Act 1999 and cabinet approval in 2004). The consequences of accreditation are:

- Government allocates budgeting to support the institution
- Institutional reputation
- Public acceptance
- Institutional development plan for improvement etc.

There are 153 institutions to be accredited. The accreditation just began in 2006. We do not know yet how many will be accredited. In 2006, 74 institutions are to be assessed by September 2006. They will be assessed and accredited once every 5 years.

The strengths of accreditation lie in the fact that accreditation encourages institutions to improve their quality. The public will use the information to make their decisions.

A weakness is that accreditation will prove difficult for small or young institutions, because all institutions spend a lot of time and energy on the paperwork for this accreditation activity and this may exceed the capacity of smaller or younger institutions.

Table 166: Accreditation in the ASEAN countries compared

	BAN-PT Indonesia	LAN Malaysia	MQA Malaysia	AACUP Philippines	PAASCU Philippines	PACUOCA Philippines	ONESQA Thailand;2000
Ownership	Government;1994	Government; 1996	Government; 2002	Higher Education;1987	Higher Education; 1957	Higher Education; 1967	Government;
Object accreditation	Although institutional accreditation is mentioned, the priority is on programme accreditation	Study programmes	Study programmes Institutions	Study programmes	Study programmes	Study programmes Institutions	Institutions + Study programmes
Scope	Public and private education	Private Higher Education	Public Higher Education	Public Higher Education	Private Higher Education	Private Higher Education	Public and private
Compulsory?	Yes	Compulsory for 3+0 courses only	Voluntary. Expected to become compulsory in 2006.	Voluntary	Voluntary	Voluntary	Compulsory
Political consequences	Recognition of diplomas Access to grants	Recognition of diplomas	Recognition of diplomas	Possibility for funding Recognition as a university	May be used by the Ministry for providing specific support to institution.	May be used by the Ministry for providing specific support to institution.	Funding recognition
Criteria /standards	???	Formulated in the Malaysian Qualification Framework	Formulated in the Malaysian Qualification Framework	Minimum standards set by the Ministry Accreditation standards set by AACUP	Minimum standards set by the Ministry Accreditation standards set by PAASCU	Minimum standards set by the Ministry Accreditation standards set by PACUOCA	Standards set by the government and approved by parliament.
Accreditation process	Self-assessment Site visit Report Accreditation	Self-assessment Site visit Report Accreditation	Self-assessment Site visit Report Accreditation	Self-assessment Site visit Report Accreditation	Self-assessment Site visit Report Accreditation	Self-assessment Site visit Report Accreditation	Self-assessment Site visit Report Accreditation
Report	Report to the institution Report to the ministry General annual report	Reports are public traceable (website)	Reports are confidential Summary of report is public	Reports are confidential Annual report is public	Reports are confidential Annual report is public	Reports are confidential Annual report is public	Report to the Minister. Reports are public.

	All reports are public	Yes/no/conditional Valid for 5 years.	Yes/no/conditional Differentiated levels Valid for 3 years (level II) Valid for 5 years (level II & III)	Yes/no/conditional Differentiated levels Valid for 3 years (level II) Valid for 5 years (level II & III)	Yes/no/conditional Differentiated levels Valid for 3 years (level II) Valid for 5 years (level II & III)	Yes/no/conditional Valid for 5 years.
The accreditation decision	Differentiated decision in grades A,B,C Not clear how long decisions are valid for.	Yes/no/conditional Valid for 5 years.	Yes/no/conditional Differentiated levels Valid for 3 years (level II) Valid for 5 years (level II & III)	Yes/no/conditional Differentiated levels Valid for 3 years (level II) Valid for 5 years (level II & III)	Yes/no/conditional Differentiated levels Valid for 3 years (level II) Valid for 5 years (level II & III)	Yes/no/conditional Valid for 5 years.
Independence	Independent by Decree. BAN-PT issues recommendation to the ministry; Ministry takes decision. Question: Does the Minister always follow the recommendation?	Autonomous body LAN Board takes the accreditation decision.	AACCCUP acts independently of government. Performance of AACCCUP is checked by the National Network of Quality Assurance Agencies	PAASCU acts independently of government. Performance of PAASCU is checked by the National Network of Quality Assurance Agencies	PACUCOA acts independently of government. Performance of PACUCOA is checked by the National Network of Quality Assurance Agencies	Autonomous public organisation, but within the Ministry.
Peers	Academics and small proportion of non-academics No foreign experts	Academics and small proportion of non-academics No foreign experts	Academics and small proportion of non-academics No foreign experts	Academics and small proportion of non-academics No foreign experts	Academics and small proportion of non-academics No foreign experts	Academics and small proportion of non-academics No foreign experts

3. Harmonising accreditation

For a long time, accreditation took place in a national setting only. It was driven by national needs. There was no necessity to take into account international requirements. Accreditation checked whether a university or its programmes met the national requirements. It was consumer protection for the national market. It was the national government that looked after (assured) quality in a national setting. Nowadays, in the age of globalisation, at a time of enhanced staff and student mobility and of the internationalisation of professions, demand for an international dimension in accreditation is growing. Accreditation now is no longer only a national affair. It has an international dimension. In today's world, we see several initiatives for regional or international cooperation in the field of accreditation. Europe, with the aim of creating a European Higher Education Area, is a good example for showing how a national approach has to be complemented by an international approach.

3.1 Quality Assurance and the Bologna Process

Before the Bologna Declaration in 1999, no quality assurance agency in Western Europe used the word "accreditation". Central and Eastern Europe had broadly adopted the accreditation system from the United States to assist in the transition of higher education from the communist era to the new situation. The Bologna Declaration brought a paradigm shift in quality assurance for many countries. The word accreditation will not be found in the Bologna Declaration nor in the subsequent Prague Communiqué two years later. Notwithstanding, the word accreditation is coming into use in Western Europe too.

According to an analysis by the CRE²⁸, the European Higher Education Area as planned by Bologna requires:

- Transparency of the system, i.e. a focus on the information needs of students and external partners.
- Compatibility, i.e. an emphasis on credit transfer and a degree system that facilitates academic and professional mobility.
- Flexibility, i.e. the development of a differentiated supply and delivery system for diversified needs.
- Comparability, i.e. the creation of a credible quality assurance system and the need for a quality label to be given to institutions and programmes.

Is quality assurance of the kind seen in Europe so far able to cope with these requirements? Looking at the main features of quality assurance in Europe, we may characterise QA in Europe as follows:

- It represents a political and multi-dimensional concept that extends from fitness for purpose (improvement) through to value for money (accountability), the first approach being mainly defended by higher education institutions, the second being popular among national and regional authorities.
- It usually considers inputs and processes, sometimes outputs, much more rarely outcomes.
- They represent non-compatible systems as they express the great diversity of operational modes among agencies.

²⁸ The European Rectors Conference (CRE), now called European University Association (EUA) ran the CRE-SOCRATES project on accreditation and published several memos and discussion papers, among others Sursock, Andrée, *Towards Accreditation Schemes for Higher Education in Europe?* (no date)

- Quality assurance evokes both increasing autonomy and increasing accountability requirements within institutions. However, it only represents an embryonic institutional quality culture
- Quality assurance in Europe has marginal follow-up procedures only.

The Bologna Declaration changed Quality Assurance in Europe. The Bologna Declaration challenged the players in Europe:

- to make Quality Assurance more efficient.
- to institutionalise Quality Assurance.
- to promote an international dimension in Quality Assurance.
- to enhance the institutional capacity of Higher Education Institutions to design and implement effective Internal Quality Assurance strategies, including follow-up action and change management.
- to focus Quality Assurance more on student achievements and learning outcomes.
- to help Quality Assurance develop transparency in the HE system (clear and comparable evidence of quality for students and social partners).
- to help Quality Assurance promote the academic and professional recognition of degrees
- To ensure that QA covers "non-conventional"/transnational new providers (including virtual providers).

Only few European initiatives have been carried out so far in the field of quality assurance or accreditation. The CRE organised institutional reviews and quality audits from 1994. The European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies (ENQA) was created In 1999 as a cooperation platform aimed at fostering cooperation and exchange of good practice within Europe through workshops, pilot projects, consultancy, Internet, etc. It planned to study a first series of working topics: institutional evaluation, follow-up measures, impact of the Bologna Process on QA, QA for "non-conventional"/transnational providers, for instance.

There have been some discipline-based European accreditation initiatives, such as EQUIS (run by the European Foundation for Management Development and applied to business management education). "Non-European" players have also influenced Quality Assurance: GATE (Global Alliance for Transnational Education) proposed accreditation for transnational education activities, ABET (US-American accreditation agency for engineering education) has been active in European countries like Turkey, Iceland and the Netherlands, the AACSB (US-American accreditation agency for business management education) has also been invited to evaluate European programmes.

Bologna's main target, the European Higher Education Area, can only be realised if an efficient quality assurance system is in place that awards a quality label to the higher education institution and the programmes. One would have expected that the Bologna framework would have involved the Bologna partners discussing a European approach to accreditation. However, it was clearly stressed that it would never be possible to create a pan-European Accreditation agency or a European body that would accredit national accrediting agencies. Many European countries started to develop an accreditation system in a national setting. While the Bologna process aims at transparency in the chaos of structures, diplomas and degrees in European higher education, it looks as if a jungle of accreditation and external quality assessment will replace the jungle of structures and degrees. Every country (every government) is pursuing its own way in developing an accreditation system.

Accreditation is seen more as a national activity with national aims than as an instrument for quality assurance within the framework of the European Higher Education Area. The existing systems of external quality assessment in most of the Western European countries were sufficient to cover national needs. In countries like Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Spain (Catalonia) the system of external quality assessment has already been working successfully for more than 15 years. However, it is Bologna, with its aim of developing a better understanding of and more transparency in Bachelor's and Master's programmes and in the degrees they offer, that asks for the provision of a quality label (= accreditation). The main question is whether a Bachelor of Economics programme conferred, for example, at a Dutch university, is equivalent to a Bachelor of Economics programme offered at an Italian, German or Danish university. To find an answer to this question, two basic conditions have to be met:

- the programme has to be judged as meeting certain minimum requirements,
- this quality verdict needs to be confirmed formally by an independent body.

While it is clear that a pan-European accreditation system is neither wanted and nor feasible, there are still some initiatives that aim to make the national accreditation system more European:

- An initiative launched by the Dutch and Flemish ministers of education with a proposal for a pilot consortium for the internationalisation of accreditation (2001)
- The joint quality initiative and the Dublin descriptors
- The European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA)
- Standards and Guidelines from ENQA.

3.2 A pilot consortium for international accreditation ²⁹

The Dutch minister of education and his Flemish colleague were the first to emphasise the importance of European cooperation. Therefore, a ministerial delegation visited several European countries. The main aim was:

- to exchange views on accreditation procedures, as a follow-up to the Bologna Declaration, and, in particular, to compare the main views on establishing a Dutch system of accreditation with those of other European nations;
- to review how other countries prevent an accreditation body from simply being a "rubber-stamping" organisation, so that it is given a more intrinsic role, both in improving and being more responsible for the higher education sector;
- to investigate the willingness to cooperate and to designate specific areas in which cooperation can be developed, i.e. mutually monitoring formal quality assessment processes – even working together on their (further) development; mutually recognising accreditation systems; stimulating benchmarking; including experts from all sides on panels during external assessments; mutually assessing accreditation bodies through audits, etc;
- to investigate how accreditation agencies have been set up.

This work led to the creation of the Joint Quality Initiative.

²⁹ Vroeijenstijn, A.I & J.F Schreinemakers, *Towards a pilot consortium for internationalisation of accreditation The Hague 2001*

3.3 The Joint Quality³⁰ Initiative and the Dublin descriptors

The Joint Quality Initiative (JQI) was set up in 2001. The most concrete output produced by the JQI so far involves the so-called *Dublin descriptors*. In May 2002, members of the JQI met in Dublin and discussed the merits of seeking a single set of shared descriptors for Bachelor's and similarly for Master's programmes. The group recognised that the development of these descriptors should not hinder any national, regional or local requirements for additional descriptors. A wide variety of programmes lead to Bachelor's awards, differing in content, delivery and process, and nomenclature; for example, some countries discriminate between professional Bachelor's and academic Bachelor's degrees. Similarly, a wide variety of programmes lead to different types of Master's degree. It was agreed that the value of the generic descriptors would be enhanced substantially if they could be cross-referenced to more detailed programme profiles or specifications.

A programme profile / specification would identify the particular components of the programme leading to the qualification; for example, it should include prerequisites for entry into the programme, details of the components, their delivery and assessment, and any requirements relating to regulated professions. The form and components within the profile should reflect national, regional or institutional contexts and be related to the needs and responsibilities of those awarding or accrediting the particular programme.

The JQI group considered that in keeping with the Bologna Process the shared descriptors should be formulated in a language and style that is 'readable' by anyone with an interest in them, in particular students, their sponsors, employers, HE academics and their managers, and the general public. The following descriptors for Bachelor's and Master's degree reflect the outcomes of the discussions.

Bachelor's degrees are awarded to students who:

- have demonstrated knowledge and understanding in a field of study that builds upon and supersedes their general secondary education and is typically at a level that, whilst supported by advanced textbooks, includes some aspects that will be informed by knowledge from the forefront of their field of study;
- can apply their knowledge and understanding in a manner that indicates a professional approach to their work or vocation and have competencies typically demonstrated through devising and sustaining arguments and solving problems within their field of study;
- have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually within their field of study) to make informed judgements that include reflection on relevant social, scientific or ethical issues;
- can communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- have developed the learning skills necessary to enable them to continue to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.

Master's degrees are awarded to students who:

³⁰ for detailed information, see <http://www.jointquality.org>

- have demonstrated knowledge and understanding that is founded upon and extends and/or enhances that typically associated with the Bachelor's level and that provides a basis or opportunity for originality in developing and/or applying ideas, often within a research context;
- can apply their knowledge and understanding and problem solving abilities in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their field of study;
- have the ability to integrate knowledge and handle complexity and to formulate judgements with incomplete or limited information, but that include reflection on social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgements;
- can communicate their conclusions and the knowledge and rationale underpinning these to specialist and non-specialist audiences clearly and unambiguously;
- have the learning skills to allow them to continue to study in a manner that may be largely self-directed or autonomous.

Some countries, for example, the Netherlands and Flanders, already use the Dublin descriptors in their accreditation framework³¹. The formulation of the Dublin descriptors is an important event in the Bologna Process, because the discussion is about learning outcomes and competencies instead of discussing input factors like credit points or number of years. However, the Dublin descriptors are still seen as too generic. Better operationalisation is needed. Therefore, a discussion is in progress on developing a European Qualification Framework, including descriptors for doctorates.³²

3.4. The European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA)³³

In 2003, the Netherlands Accreditation Organisation (NAO) took the initiative to investigate developments in accreditation in Western Europe with the aim of seeing whether cooperation was possible. The report *Similarities and Differences*³⁴ was used as starting point for a workshop held in June 2003 on establishing a European Consortium for Accreditation. Thirteen accreditation organisations from eight Western European countries participated. A broad consensus emerged from this workshop, namely that European accreditation organisations would benefit mutually from cooperating with each other and that specific common issues exist within the framework of accreditation that should be addressed fairly quickly, particularly the issue of joint degrees. It was concluded that a consortium was an appropriate tool to strengthen collaboration between organisations responsible for accreditation in the higher education sector. It was clearly stated that the consortium should not aim to promote accreditation as the only instrument for quality assurance in higher education. The new consortium should collaborate proactively with other

³¹ For more information on the use of the Dublin descriptors in Europe, see: <http://www.nvao.net/>

³² see *Report on a framework for qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks, December 2004.*

³³ More information on <http://www.eacaconsortium.net>

³⁴ Vroeijenstijn, *Similarities and differences in Accreditation, Looking for a common framework, The Netherlands Accreditation Organization (NAO) June 2003*

organisations and initiatives, such as ENQA, the Joint Quality Initiative and ENIC/NARIC, and the consortium should have an open structure to allow other accreditation organisations to join in at later stages, provided they share the consortium's objectives. The ECA's *ultimate aim* is to achieve mutual recognition of accreditation throughout Europe, either bilaterally or multilaterally. The consequence of mutual recognition is that an accreditation decision taken in one country is recognised by the competent authorities in other countries. The intermediate objectives of the consortium are:

- to develop a common framework for accreditation that not only serves national needs, but also the needs of the European Higher Education Area.
- to exchange information, experience and good practices concerning accreditation, especially with regard to the European dimension.
- to develop criteria and procedures for the mutual recognition of accreditation decisions.
- to contribute to political developments concerning accreditation in the light of the Bologna Process and the follow-up in Berlin 2003.

Membership of the Consortium is open to European organisations that

- have been established by law as corporate bodies or are based on national or regional regulations or agreements;
- have accreditation as their principal function; this might be accreditation of higher education programmes, accreditation of institutions providing higher education or the accreditation of accreditation organisations;
- will contribute actively to the aims of the consortium.

The ECA members have agreed on a road map for mutual recognition, including the following achievements:

- The ECA members committed themselves to a Code of Good Practice. Compliance with the 17 standards of the Code will be externally evaluated in 2007.
- The ECA members have agreed upon a set of principles for the selection of experts.
- ECA members are involved in cooperative projects aimed at facilitating mutual recognition by increasing mutual understanding and trust.
- ECA members and ENICs/NARICs in four countries have signed a joint declaration on the automatic recognition of accredited qualifications.

3.5. The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) disseminates information, experience and good practices in the field of quality assurance (QA) in higher education to European QA agencies, public authorities and higher education institutions. While the ECA is mainly occupied with accreditation, the activities of ENQA are broader and cover all forms of external Quality Assurance.

In 2001, the European ministers of education meeting in Prague invited ENQA to collaborate in establishing a common framework of reference for quality assurance that would directly work towards the establishment of the European quality assurance framework by 2010. Two years later, in Berlin, the ministers recommended ENQA to contribute even more directly to the European quality assurance process. In the Berlin Communiqué, ENQA received a double mandate from the ministers to explore ways of ensuring an adequate peer review system is in place for quality assurance

agencies and to develop an agreed set of standards, procedures and guidelines on quality assurance.

In the Bergen meeting of May 2005, the European ministers responsible for education adopted the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" drafted by ENQA. The ministers committed themselves to introducing the proposed model for the peer review of quality assurance agencies on a national basis. They also welcomed the principle of a European register of quality assurance agencies based on national review and asked that the practicalities of its implementation be further developed by ENQA.

3.6. Final conclusion

The Bologna Declaration changed the nature of quality assurance in Europe. A quality label with an intrinsic European value is needed. Although the word accreditation is not used in the official papers, many countries are introducing accreditation. The challenge is to combine the national approach with the European dimension. The quality label should not only meet national needs, but also international requirements. The national dimension must be complemented by a European dimension. There are two basic conditions to fulfil:

- Mutual recognition of each other's accreditation decision
- Application of a code of good practice

4. Conditions for harmonising accreditation in the ASEAN countries

Looking at the situation in the ASEAN countries, several options for harmonising the accreditation systems exist. A regional accreditation system or alternatively national accreditation systems with mutual recognition of the accreditation decisions may be chosen. Regardless of the decision that ASEAN takes, there are always two important points to consider:

- the accrediting body must be a reliable body and a trustworthy agency
- there must be a common framework, supported by all countries.

The latter point is, of course, especially important if national accreditation is chosen.

In all cases it is important to clearly distinguish between accreditation as the activity that reveals whether the institution and/or programmes meet(s) the basic requirements and defines the consequences connected with accreditation. The consequences, such as funding, are still national decisions and may differ from country to country.

As long as accreditation was primarily a national activity, it was up to the country to decide if it trusted the accrediting body. With the growing importance of the international role of accreditation, the basic question, of course, is still whether the agency can be trusted. Is it indeed a reliable agency? But that question will now be asked by the international community.

The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies (INQAAHE) has already been discussing the necessity for formulated criteria for good practice for a quality assurance agency since 1999. At the same time, ENQA discussed the criteria for a reliable agency and published the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area in 2005. The European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) also formulated *Principals of Good Practice*, based on the ideas of INQAAHE and ENQA. There are more organisations that have formulated or have encouraged the formulation of standards for a reliable agency, such as the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) in the United States, the International Association of University Presidents (IAUP), and UNESCO (Global Forum on International Quality Assurance, Accreditation and the Recognition of Qualifications). Because INQAAHE, ENQA and ECA have taken these developments into account, no specific attention will be given to these outcomes, because they are often included in the documents discussed below.³⁵

4.1. The INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice

The initial draft of the Principles of Good Practice for Quality Assurance Agencies was proposed to the INQAAHE General Assembly in 2003 by a working group of the board. The Dublin General Assembly decided to:

- endorse the principles as a working document but agreed that at this stage it would be more appropriate to describe them as guidelines.
- commend them to the members of the network and to urge them to consider and apply them with regard to their work.

³⁵ For more information on CHEA <http://www.chea.org/>; on the IAUP: <http://www.ia-up.org/>; on the UNESCO Global Forum: <http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/>

The Guidelines of Good Practice were discussed again at the INQAAHE workshop in Oman. Based on the recommendations of the working group established in Dublin, it was decided to continue improving the wording of the guidelines with the aim of making them more operational and less open to interpretation and to add examples of sources of evidence needed to prove compliance with the guidelines.

Reading and working with the Guidelines of Good Practice, INQAAHE says that the following should be taken into consideration:

- The guidelines are intended to promote good practice and assist an External Quality Assurance (EQA) Agency in improving its quality by building on existing experience.
- Each EQA Agency has evolved to serve a specific context that is influenced by its specific cultural and historical context.
- A diversity of approaches to and purposes for external quality evaluation exist (e.g. but not restricted to accreditation, assessment and audit) and that these approaches can be underpinned by some common, agreed principles. (The words 'evaluation' or 'EQA' will be used as generic terms to include all types of external quality checking.)
- The guidelines should not lead to the dominance of one specific view or approach, but promote good practices, while helping to eradicate bad quality.

According to the Guidelines of Good Practice, an EQA Agency is advised to apply the following principals:

1. The Mission Statement

The EQA Agency has a written mission statement or set of objectives that takes into account the cultural and historical context of the agency. The statement clearly communicates that external quality assurance is a major activity of the agency and that a systematic approach to achieving the mission or objectives exists. There is evidence that the mission statement has been translated into a clear policy or management plan.

Examples of sources of evidence:

- Mission statement
- Policy/strategy of the agency
- Management plan
- Legislation

2. The relationship between the EQA Agency and the higher education institutions

The EQA Agency:

- *Recognises that quality and quality assurance are primarily the responsibility of each higher education institution.*
- *Respects the autonomy, identity and integrity of the institution.*
- *Applies standards that have been subject to consultation with stakeholders.*
- *Aims to contribute to both quality improvement and accountability.*

Examples of sources of evidence:

- Policies/manuals
- Feedback from institutions and other stakeholders
- Reports from external reviews of the EQA Agency
- EQA Agency self-reviews
-

3. Decision-making

The EQA Agency carries out its evaluations in relation both to the higher education institution's own self-assessment and to external reference points. An EQA agency is independent to the extent that it has autonomous responsibility for its operations and that the judgements made in its reports cannot be influenced by third parties. The agency demonstrates independent, impartial, rigorous, thorough, fair and consistent decision-making. The agency makes consistent decisions, even if the judgements are formed by different groups, panels, teams or committees.

Examples of sources of evidence:

- Manuals including instructions for experts
- Criteria on the selection, appointment and training of experts
- Legal frameworks, procedures, forms, documents, e.g. Codes of Ethics, used to avoid conflicts of interest
- Assessment frameworks and criteria

4. The external committee

Where the EQA Agency uses external panels, teams or committees to carry out the evaluations, the system clearly ensures that

- *The composition of the committee is in accordance with the guidelines applied by the EQA Agency and adequate to the tasks to be accomplished.*
- *There are no conflicts of interest.*
- *The committee is instructed clearly about its task.*
- *The committee acts independently when making its judgements, conclusions or recommendations.*

Examples of sources of evidence:

- Procedures for the nomination and appointment of experts, including the criteria applied.
- Methods of and material used for briefing and training experts.
- Description of the work-sharing between agency staff and external panel/team/committee.

5. Keeping the public informed

In its work, the EQA Agency informs and responds to the public in accordance with the legislation or cultural context relating to the agency. This includes making public and explicit its documentation e.g. policies, procedures and criteria. The agency also demonstrates public accountability by reporting openly on its review decisions and making the outcomes of the evaluation public in a way appropriate to the relevant country legislation and the type of review undertaken. The content of the public report may differ depending on the cultural context and will also depend on the requirements set for accountability.

Examples of sources of evidence:

- URL address for the EQA Agency website and a short summary of the types of information provided there
- List of publications
- Press releases
- Other ways and means of informing the public, e.g. email, newsletter.

6. Documentation

The EQA Agency has clear documentation concerning the self-evaluation and the external evaluation. In addition

- *The documentation on the self-evaluation indicates to the higher education institution the purposes, procedures and expectations of content in connection with the self-evaluation process. The documentation should distinguish clearly between recommendations and requirements.*
- *The documentation for external evaluation sets out the matters covered in these Guidelines of Good Practice, such as the standards used, the decision criteria, the assessment methods, the reporting format, etc. If the external evaluation leads to an accreditation, the accreditation framework and standards are public and the criteria for accreditation clearly formulated. The rules leading to an accreditation decision are transparent, public and are guaranteed to have been applied equally.*
- *The documents indicate clearly what the EQA Agency expects from the institution. These expectations are appropriate to a higher education institution or its core activities.*
- *The documents for the EQA clearly state that the framework will assure that each institution or part of it (e.g. subject area) will be evaluated in an equivalent way, even if the external review panels are different.*

Examples of sources of evidence:

- Manuals or guidelines including instructions for experts and/or institutions
- Protocols/minutes
- Evaluation frameworks
- Proof of adherence to internationally accepted guidelines and conventions

7. Resources

The EQA Agency has adequate and accessible resources, both human and financial, to be able to organise and run the process of external evaluation in an effective and efficient manner in accordance with the mission statement and the chosen methodological approach and with appropriate provision for development.

Examples of sources of evidence:

- Budget
- Accounts
- Activities, tasks, workloads
- Fee structure
- Fees for experts
- Average cost of external review
- Human resources profile (board, or equivalent/external committee members/staff in terms of numbers and qualifications).

8. Appeals system

The EQA Agency has an appropriate method for appeals against its decisions.

Examples of sources of evidence:

- Policy on and procedures of appeal
- Statistics over a five-year period, including e.g. the number of appeals, the number of appeals granted respectively denied.

9. Quality Assurance of the EQA Agency

The EQA Agency has a system of continuous quality assurance of its own activities, emphasising flexibility (in response to the changing nature of higher education) and quality improvements. The agency carries out self-reviews of its activities, e.g. based on data collected and analysis, including consideration of its own effects and value. The agency is subject to external reviews at regular intervals and there is evidence that the results are used.

Examples of sources of evidence:

- Quality assurance policy/system/activities/plan
- Former self-reviews
- Reports from external reviews
- Examples of follow-up activities to support the continuous quality assurance process
- Internal feedback (board or equivalent/external committee/staff)
- External feedback from institutions or other stakeholders.

10. Collaboration with other agencies

As far as possible, the EQA Agency will collaborate with other EQA Agencies, e.g. on the exchange of good practice, review decisions, providers of transnational education, joint projects, staff exchange.

Examples of sources of evidence:

- Account of meetings and visits to and from other agencies
- Staff exchange
- Correspondence between agencies on the solution of specific issues
- Participation in projects, conferences and workshops
- Membership of networks/organisations.

The principles of good practice are published on the website³⁶ and some agencies are trying to apply them to see if the principals are useful or not.

4.2. ENQA Standards and Guidelines

While INQAAHE discussed the Code of Good Practice, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) discussed the development of standards and guidelines for External Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. The European standards for external quality assurance agencies have been developed with the conscious ambition for the standards to be neither too detailed nor too prescriptive. They should not reduce the freedom of European quality assurance agencies to reflect within their organisations and processes the experiences and expectations of their nation or region. The standards should, though, ensure that the professionalism, credibility and integrity of the agencies are visible and transparent to their stakeholders and must permit comparability to be observable between the agencies and give space to the necessary European dimension.

Several "guidelines" have been added to provide additional information on good practice and in some cases to explain in more detail the meaning and importance of

³⁶ <http://www.inqaahe.org/>

the standards. Although the guidelines are not part of the standards themselves, the standards should be considered in conjunction with them.

1. Use of external quality assurance procedures for higher education

The external quality assurance of agencies should take into account the presence and effectiveness of the external quality assurance processes.

The standards for external quality assurance provide a valuable basis for the external quality assessment process. The standards reflect best practices and experience gained through the development of external quality assurance in Europe since the early 1990s. It is therefore important that these standards are integrated into the processes applied by external quality assurance agencies towards the higher education institutions.

The standards for external quality assurance should, together with the standards for external quality assurance agencies, constitute the basis for the professional and credible external quality assurance of higher education institutions.

2. Official status

Agencies should be formally recognised by competent public authorities in the European Higher Education Area as agencies with responsibilities for external quality assurance and should have an established legal basis. They should comply with any requirements of the legislative jurisdictions within which they operate.

3. Activities

Agencies should undertake external quality assurance activities (at institutional or programme level) on a regular basis.

These activities may involve evaluation, review, audit, assessment, accreditation or other similar activities and should be part of the core functions of the agency.

4. Resources

Agencies should have adequate and proportional resources, both human and financial, to enable them to organise and run their external quality assurance process(es) in an effective and efficient manner, with appropriate provision for the development of their processes and procedures.

5. Mission Statement

Agencies should have clear and explicit goals and objectives for their work, contained in a publicly available statement.

These statements should describe the goals and objectives of the agencies' quality assurance processes, how work is shared with relevant stakeholders in higher education, especially the higher education institutions, and the cultural and

historical context of their work. Statements should clearly communicate that the external quality assurance process is a major activity of the agency and that a systematic approach to achieving its goals and objectives exists. There should also be documentation to demonstrate how the statements are translated into a clear policy and management plan.

6. Independence

Agencies should be independent to the extent that they both have autonomous responsibility for their operations and that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties, such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders.

An agency will need to demonstrate its independence through various measures, such as:

- Its operational independence from higher education institutions and governments is guaranteed in official documentation (e.g. instruments of governance or legislative acts).
- The definition and operation of its procedures and methods, the nomination and appointment of external experts and the determination of the outcomes of its quality assurance processes are autonomous and independent of governments, higher education institutions, and political bodies.
- While relevant stakeholders in higher education, particularly students/learners, are consulted in the course of quality assurance processes, the final outcomes of the quality assurance processes remain the responsibility of the agency.

7. External quality assurance criteria and processes used by the agencies

The processes, criteria and procedures used by agencies should be pre-defined and publicly available. These processes will normally be expected to include:

- *a self-assessment or equivalent procedure by the subject of the quality assurance process;*
- *an external assessment by a group of experts, including, as appropriate, (a) student member(s), and (b) site visits as decided by the agency;*
- *publication of a report, including any decisions, recommendations or other formal outcomes;*
- *a follow-up procedure to review actions taken by the subject of the quality assurance process in the light of any recommendations contained in the report.*

Agencies may develop and use other processes and procedures for particular purposes.

Agencies should pay careful attention to their declared principles at all times, and ensure both that their requirements and processes are managed professionally and that their conclusions and decisions are reached in a consistent manner, even though the decisions are formed by different groups of people.

Agencies that make formal quality assurance decisions or conclusions that have formal consequences should have an appeals procedure. The nature and form of the appeals procedure should be determined in the light of the constitution of each agency.

8 Accountability procedures

Agencies should have in place procedures for their own accountability.

These procedures are expected to include the following:

1. A published policy on the assurance of the quality of the agency itself, made available on its website;
2. Documentation which demonstrates that:
 - the agency's processes and results reflect its mission and goals of quality assurance;
 - the agency has in place, and enforces, a no-conflict-of-interest mechanism in the work of its external experts;
 - the agency has reliable mechanisms that ensure the quality of any activities and material produced by subcontractors, if some or all of the elements in its quality assurance procedure are subcontracted to other parties;
 - the agency has in place internal quality assurance procedures that include an internal feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from its own staff and council/board), an internal reflection mechanism (i.e. means to react to internal and external recommendations for improvement); and an external feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from experts and reviewed institutions for future development) in order to inform and underpin its own development and improvement.
3. A mandatory cyclical external review of the agency's activities at least once every five years.

4.3. The European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) Code of Good Practice

With the aim of reaching mutual recognition of each other's accreditation decisions, the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA) also developed a Code of Good Practice as a basis for recognition. This Code of Good Practice has been endorsed by the participants.

The Code of Good Practice guarantees the comparability of accreditation procedures throughout Europe. The 17 standards are binding for ECA members and should all be met. Specifically, the Code fulfils the following purposes:

- It provides transparency for politicians, the governments and other stakeholder groups in higher education.
- It guarantees reliability of the accreditation procedure for higher education institutions.
- It defines necessary requirements for accreditation organisations. All members of the ECA must fulfil these requirements and should review their procedures regularly against this code.
- It serves as a yardstick for external evaluations of all members of the consortium.
- It serves to support the internal quality assurance policies of an accreditation organisation and provides suggestions for the continuous improvement of its quality.
- It will not lead to a predominance of any single point of view, but should instead promote good practices and prevent bad quality.
- It should be updated when necessary to conform to the international state of the art of good practices.

The ECA has formulated the following standards

The accreditation organisation

1. has an explicit mission statement.
2. is recognised as a national accreditation body by the competent public authorities.
3. must be sufficiently independent of government, higher education institutions or business, industry and professional associations.
4. must be rigorous, fair and consistent in its decision-making.
5. has adequate and credible resources, both human and financial.
6. has its own internal quality assurance system that emphasises its quality improvement.
7. has to be evaluated externally on a cyclical basis.
8. can demonstrate public accountability, has public and officially available policies, procedures, guidelines and criteria.
9. informs the public in an appropriate way about its accreditation decisions.
10. has a method for appeal against its decisions.
11. collaborates with other national, international and/or professional accreditation organisations.
12. must define its accreditation procedures and methods itself.
13. must undertake accreditation procedures and methods at institutional and/or programme level on a regular basis.
14. must include self-documentation/-evaluation by the higher education institution and external review (as a rule on site) in its accreditation procedures and methods.
15. must guarantee the independence and competence of the external panels or teams performing its accreditation procedures and methods.
16. must have geared its accreditation procedures and methods to enhance quality.
17. must make its accreditation standards public and be compatible with European practices taking into account the development of agreed sets of quality standards.

4.4 Benchmark standards for a reliable accreditation agency

INQAAHE, ENQA and ECA have put a lot of effort in formulating standards for a trustworthy agency. These have been discussed by many external quality assessment/accreditation agencies all over the world. The question is whether these criteria are applicable to an accrediting body in ASEAN.

An analysis of the three Codes of Good Practice shows that they have a lot in common. The topics discussed are more or less similar. At the moment, the standards are called Code of Good Practice or Guidelines. This means that the list of criteria can be used as a benchmark to determine how far an agency fits into international developments.

If an agency strives for international recognition as an accrediting body that can be trusted, it is important to show that the organisation meets at least these minimum requirements. Table 17 gives a summary of the requirements for a reliable agency. Such a list may be useful when working on harmonising external quality assurance in the region.

Organisation	Process
1. The agency is recognised by the competent authorities. ³⁷	1. The accreditation process is based on self-assessment and external review, unless circumstances require another approach.
2. The agency acts independently of government, higher education, business, industry, or professional associations. Third parties cannot influence verdicts or decisions.	2. The process and procedures of the accreditation are well known and made public.
3. The agency has a clear mission and clearly formulated objectives. The mission statement is translated into a clear policy and strategic plan, expressing that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accreditation is its main activity • quality improvement and accountability are also a goal • the agency takes into account the cultural and social context • it respects the autonomy, identity and integrity of the HEIs. 	3. The process respects the internal quality assurance activities of an HEI; the requirements for self-assessment are in line with it.
4. The agency has adequate human and financial resources, making it possible to run the activities. A staff development policy is in place.	4. External assessment is done by a group of experts. Such a committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is nominated according to clear rules • acts independently within the given accreditation framework • has no conflicts of interest • is well trained.
5. The agency has an internal quality assurance system and is externally evaluated on a cyclical basis.	6. The decision making process is rigorous, fair and consistent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The rules leading to accreditation decisions are transparent • The rules guarantee equal treatment.
6. The agency is accountable to the public by means of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public documents on its mission and strategy • accreditation processes and procedures • standards and criteria • evaluation outcomes. 	5. The accreditation standards and criteria are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • predefined by the agency after consultation of all stakeholders • are made public.
7. The agency cooperates as far as possible with other agencies in exchanging experience, examples of good practice, joint assessments, etc.	7. Appropriate methods for appeals against accreditation decisions exist

Table 177: Benchmark standards for a reliable accreditation agency

4.5 A common framework for accreditation

Accreditation in the international perspective means that the accreditation decision will have international value. On the one hand, the value of the decision will be guaranteed by meeting the requirements for a reliable agency, mentioned in Section 4.4. On the other hand, it is guaranteed because the accrediting agencies use the same toolkit for accreditation. Although every country has its own needs and will approach the accreditation process differently, they must share the basic principals. Before we can reach mutual recognition, it is necessary that accreditation is done in an equivalent, transparent way. The common framework, as shown in Figure 14 may help the agency.

³⁷ ENQA speaks of recognition by competent public authorities and a legal basis; EQA speaks of recognition of a **national** accrediting body. However, this is too strict because it excludes regional agencies and professional accrediting bodies. It is enough for an agency to be recognised by the competent authorities.

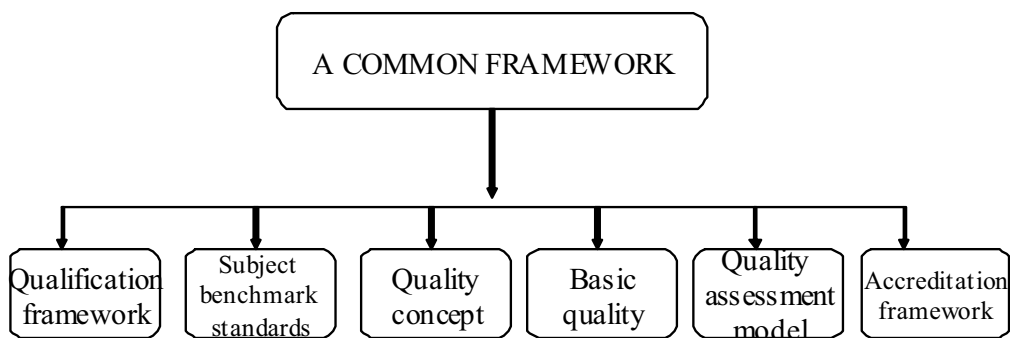


Figure 14: A common framework for accreditation

1. Shared qualification framework.

The globalisation of higher education, transnational education and the internationalisation of higher education call for the comparability and equivalence of qualifications and degrees. After gaining a Bachelor's degree, students like to go abroad and do their Master's at another university. The basic question is whether a Bachelor's degree conferred in country X is equivalent to a Bachelor's degree conferred in country Y and whether it gives access to a Master's programme. For student mobility, there is a growing need for universities and accrediting bodies to speak the same language. What do we mean by a Bachelor's degree? What do we mean by a Master's degree? What do we mean by a PhD? This is not easy, as we can see in the Bologna framework for European Higher Education. A first step to a better understanding of the degrees was taken with the formulation of the so-called Dublin descriptors and the use some countries have already made of these. The Dublin descriptors will be elaborated in greater detail in the project *European Qualification Framework* (see Section 3.1). For ASEAN countries, it is important to clearly clarify the qualifications awarded by the universities in the various countries and to look for equivalency with the degrees in the members states of ASEAN and also with other parts in the world.

2. Domain-specific standards or subject benchmark standards

It is important to describe and clarify the level of the degree, but this is not enough in itself. In fact, the level can only be described in very vague terms, because each discipline, each domain requires a specific entry or answer. Level descriptors can only be considered in the light of a discipline: What is a Bachelor of *Engineering*? What is a Master of *Biology*? This is why it is necessary to know the domain-specific or subject-specific benchmark standards. These standards are not normally set by the accreditation agency, but rather left to experts from the relevant domain and the expert teams assessing the quality.

Most accreditation agencies stipulate that the (national) domain-specific standards must be in line with international standards, whatever that may be. Each accreditation agency is faced with international benchmarking and with the fact that the assessments are to be set in an international framework.

A few initiatives are currently running in Europe that seek to define domain-specific standards. Part of the Tuning project³⁸ is attempting to define international standards for various disciplines. The applicability of these standards is being tested in the TEEP project³⁹. Furthermore, the website of the QAA in the UK contains interesting examples of benchmark standards.⁴⁰ Of course, the ASEAN countries do not need to follow Europe, but it might be of interest to see what can be learnt from this experience. As far as the internationalisation of accreditation and mutual recognition are concerned, it is important to know how a country formulates the subject-specific standards. It is especially important to see how they are internationally benchmarked.

3. The quality concept

There is no objective definition of quality. Quality is in the eyes of the beholder. Although there is no such thing as *objective quality*, it is necessary to share the concept of quality. At least, it must be clear to others what quality concept the accreditation agency is using. See this Manual, Chapter 1 for the discussion on the quality concept.

4. The basic quality

A generally accepted definition of accreditation is granting a quality label that proves that an institute or a degree course meets certain minimum or threshold requirements. The institution or the programme shows at least a basic level of quality. When we consider the equivalency of the accreditation decision, we must have a shared idea of the minimum requirements, the threshold standards and the basic quality. But what is basic quality? Who determines basic quality? As long as accreditation only serves national aims, the basic quality level can simply be determined nationally. But when accreditation also has to serve as an internationally accepted quality label, then it really requires an underlying jointly accepted notion of basic quality. Developing such a notion in consultation with the other parties will not be easy. We only have to think of the differing opinions in Europe and the United States, for example. There is no shared idea of basic quality. The only way to start is to develop the notion regionally and to benchmark it with other opinions. The external assessment committees will play a pivotal part in the development of the notion of *basic quality*, because these committees determine the quality. The more international the composition of the expert committees is, the more international the basic quality will be.

5. The quality assessment model and an equivalent quality assessment system

In general, the quality assessment systems of the various accreditation agencies are very similar. It is fair to speak of an equivalent quality assessment model. Such an equivalent approach to quality assessment is necessary for the intrinsic value of the quality label. We have to know that the assessment of quality is applied equally and so is equivalent.

6. Shared criteria for accreditation

Another important aspect in the light of harmonising and internationalising accreditation relates to the transparency of the decisions on which an accreditation is

³⁸ Tuning

³⁹ TEEP

⁴⁰ See www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/benchmark/

granted. What criteria are applied? How is the yes/no decision made? Who makes the decision? It is important to see that the agencies apply equivalent rules.

4.6 Conclusions

The ASEAN countries have reached different stages in the development of an accreditation system. A country like the Philippines already has a long tradition, while Laos has not yet started a discussion on the introduction of such a system. All countries with a functioning accreditation system use accreditation to assure the quality in the national setting. Looking at the problems that higher education faces in countries like Indonesia, it is self-evident that it is the government that decides on quality improvement and quality assurance in the country. On the other hand, national developments are influenced by global developments. Higher education institutions not only face the challenge to show their quality at national level. In international competition, it is important to have a reliable quality label. This means that the quality label must be provided by a reliable accreditation agency. The accreditation decision of one country must be recognised by the competent authorities in other countries.

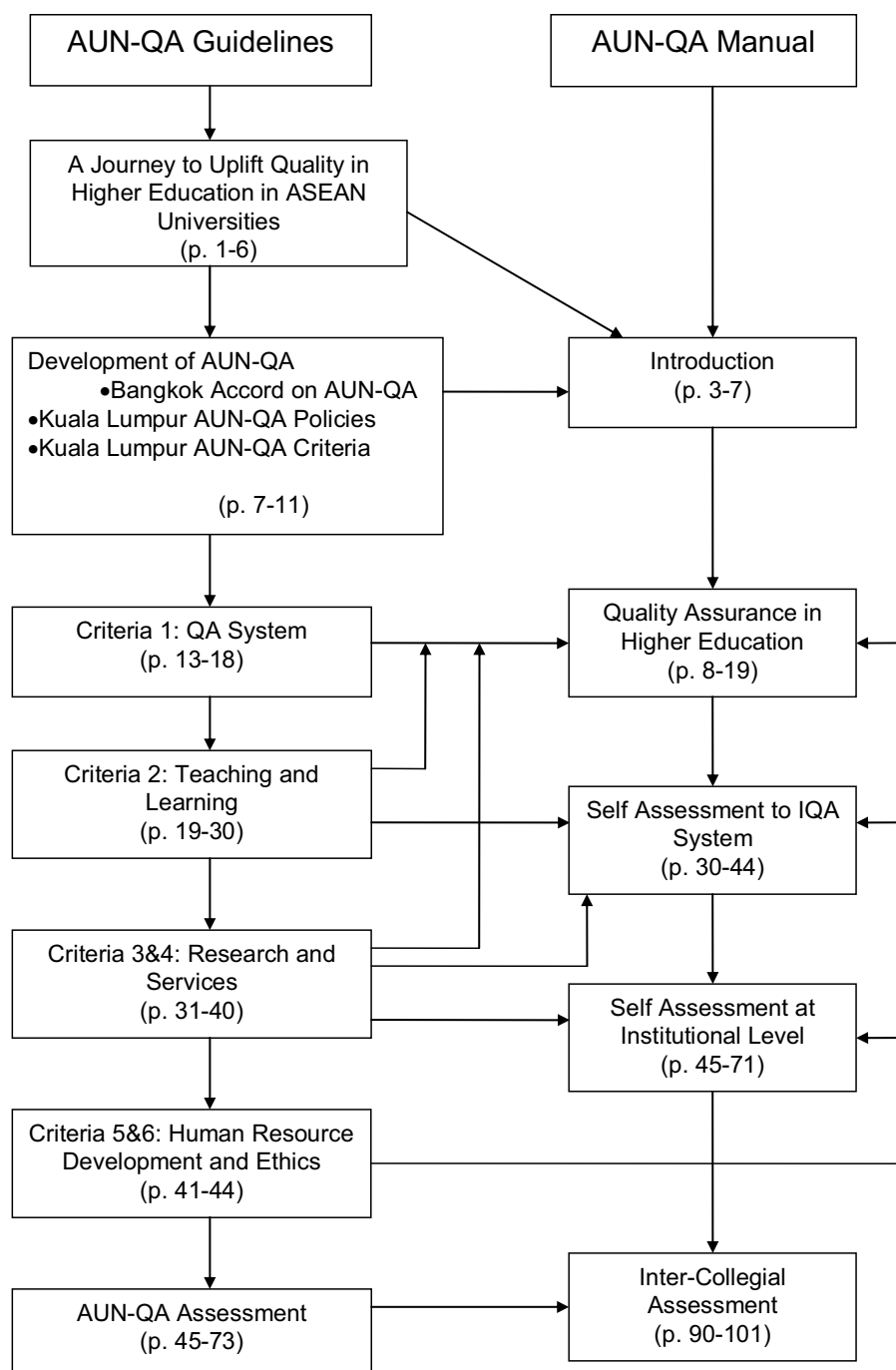
A far-reaching solution would be to have one ASEAN accrediting body, but just like in Europe, this solution is out of the question. One central agency is not possible when we look at the scale of accreditation, the cultural and historical differences, and the language problems.

The basis for a harmonised accreditation system in ASEAN always will be the national level. However, for future developments it is necessary that some conditions are fulfilled:

- The national agency must meet the benchmark standards as given in Table 17 if it wants to be recognised internationally as a reliable agency
- The national agency must tune its own accreditation framework to a shared common framework that serves both national and international needs
- The countries have to analyse the legal frameworks to see how mutual recognition can be achieved
- The countries must compare the standards and criteria used in the accreditation process and agree upon a minimum set
- The countries must discuss what is meant by “basic quality”, “threshold quality” or minimum requirements.

















Developments in Europe show that it is not an easy process to reach a common understanding of and agreement on a harmonised system, but the ASEAN countries can use the experience gained in the discussion on the development of accreditation in the ASEAN countries.

Appendix 1: Correlation between the AUN-QA Guidelines and the manual



Appendix 2: Flow Chart AUN-QA Guidelines and the Manual

This table shows where the various topics of the AUN-QA guidelines are discussed in the manual.

The AUN-QA Guidelines		The manual
<p>Criterion 1: The QA system.</p> <p>See pp. 13-18 of the AUN-QA Guidelines.</p> <p>The criteria were revised and endorsed by the CQOs at the Yogyakarta workshop held in December 2005.</p>		<p>See the revised criteria in Appendix 1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>The criteria are discussed and checked in Chapter 3 of this manual. See especially Section 3.2</p>
<p>Criterion 2: Teaching and learning</p> <p>See pp. 19-30 of the AUN-QA Guidelines.</p>		<p>In general, the AUN-QA criteria on teaching and learning are treated in Chapter 4: self-assessment at programme level.</p> <p>However, some changes have been made to the order of the criteria.</p>
<p>Number of criteria in the Guidelines</p> <p>The criteria on teaching/learning are given on pp. 22-30.</p> <p>The numbers used in the Guidelines are given.</p>		<p>Number of criteria in Chapter 4.</p> <p>Section 4.2. (self-assessment in practice) numbers the various topics from 1 to 17. The AUN-QA criteria are given for each topic. They are numbered. Consequently, 4.2/1/1 means AUN-QA Criterion 1 in Aspect 1 of Section 4.2 in the Manual. 4.2 has been left out</p>
<p>No. 1 Course Curriculum (introductory page 22)</p> <p>Introduction</p>		<p>Criterion 1/1 + Criterion 14/1</p>
1.1		<p>Criterion 3/2</p>
1.2		<p>Criterion 1/3</p>
1.3		<p>Criterion 3/1</p>
1.4		<p>Criterion 4/1</p>
1.5		<p>Criterion 3/3</p>
1.6		<p>Criterion 4/2</p>
1.7		<p>Criterion 4/3</p>
1.8		<p>Criterion 12/1</p>
1.9		<p>Criterion 1/2</p>
1.10		<p>Criterion 2/1</p>
1.11		<p>Criterion 2/2</p>
1.12		<p>Criterion 2/3</p>
1.13		<p>Not defined as a criterion, but used to</p>

1.14		<i>explain Topic 2</i>
1.15	→	<i>Criterion 16/1</i>
<i>No. 2 Academic Staff</i>		
2.1	→	<i>Criterion 7/2</i>
2.2	→	<i>Criterion 8/11</i>
2.3	→	<i>Criterion 7/3</i>
2.4	→	<i>Criterion 7/4</i>
2.5	→	<i>Criterion 7/5</i>
2.6	→	<i>Criterion 7/6</i>
2.7	→	<i>Criterion 15/1</i>
2.8	→	<i>Criterion 15/2</i>
2.9	→	<i>Criterion 7/7</i>
2.10	→	<i>Criterion 7/8</i>
2.11	→	<i>Criterion 7/9</i>
2.12	→	<i>Criterion 7/10</i>
2.13	→	<i>Criterion 7/1</i>
2.14	→	<i>Criterion 5/1</i>
<i>No. 3 Student Assessment</i>		
3.1	→	<i>Criterion 6/2</i>
3.2	→	<i>Criterion 6/3</i>
3.3	→	<i>Criterion 6/4</i>
3.4	→	<i>Criterion 6/5</i>
3.5	→	<i>Criterion 6/6</i>
3.6	→	<i>Criterion 6/7</i>
3.7	→	<i>Criterion 6/8</i>
3.8	→	<i>Criterion 10/1</i>
3.9	→	<i>Criterion 6/9</i>
3.10	→	<i>Criterion 6/1 +6/10</i>
<i>No. 4 Learning Process</i>		
4.1	→	<i>Criterion 5/2</i>
4.2	→	<i>Criterion 5/3</i>
4.3	→	<i>Criterion 5/4</i>
4.4	→	<i>The AUN-QA criteria are not to be seen as criteria. It is more a philosophy on good learning and the didactic concept.</i>
4.5		
4.6		
4.7		
4.8		
4.9	→	<i>Criterion 5/5</i>
4.10	→	<i>Criterion 5/6</i>
<i>No. 5 Environmental Health and Safety Standards</i>		
5.1	→	<i>Criterion 10/1</i>
5.2	→	<i>Criterion 11/7</i>
<i>No. 6 Learning Resources</i>		
6.1	→	<i>Criterion 11/1</i>
6.2	→	<i>Criterion 11/2</i>

6.3	→	<i>Criterion 6.3 is self-evident and therefore not specific criterion.</i>
6.4	→	<i>Criterion 11/3</i>
6.5	→	<i>Criterion 11/4</i>
6.6	→	<i>No specific criterion</i>
6.7	→	<i>Criterion 11/5</i>
6.8	→	<i>Criterion 11/6</i>
Criteria 3 and 4: Research and Services		
See AUN-QA Guidelines pp. 33-39 . Criteria are not numbered in the AUN-QA Guidelines		
<i>Governance and Organisation</i>	→	<i>Chapter 5, Section 5.2, Aspect 7.1 Criterion 1-6</i>
<i>The University Research Policy</i>	→	<i>Chapter 5, Section 5.2, Aspect 7.2, Criterion 1</i>
<i>Intellectual Property Rights Policy</i>	→	<i>Chapter 5, Section 5.2, Aspect 7.3, Criterion 1</i>
<i>Code of Conduct for Research; Code of Ethics for Research</i>	→	<i>Chapter 5, Section 5.2, Aspect 7.4, Criterion 1</i>
<i>Guidelines on Consultancy</i>	→	<i>Chapter 5, Section 5.2, Aspect 8, Criterion 1</i>
Criteria 5 and 6: Human Resources Development and Ethics		
<i>Human Resource Development</i>	→	<i>Chapter 5, Section 5.2, Aspect 4, Criterion 1-4</i>
<i>Professional Ethics</i>	→	<i>Chapter 5, Section 5.2, Aspect 4, Criterion 5-6</i>
AUN-QA Assessment (pp. 47-49)		
	→	<i>For a more detailed elaboration of the programme assessment, see chapter 6: inter-collegial assessment.</i>
AUN-QA Common Criteria and Indicators (Level + Value (pp. 50-73)		
	→	<i>Instead of scaling 2 levels and using a scale of 1-7, the approach was combined by using a 7-point scale. See Appendix 6.</i>

Appendix 3: The Revised AUN-QA Criteria for QA Systems

Approved by the CQOs during the workshop at Yogyakarta, December 2005

Criterion 1: The IQA System

All AUN Member Universities need to be aware of the significance of quality assurance and the need to establish an efficient internal Quality Assurance system. It is recognised that differences exist in the IQA systems and in the criteria and standards adopted by the individual AUN Member Universities. Although there is no fixed way to shape an IQA system, it is expected that the majority of the criteria applied should be in line with those of the common criteria adopted at the 1st Workshop on AUN-QA held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The majority of AUN Member Universities are at different stages of QA progressiveness, namely Acknowledgement and Preparation, Development, Implementation, and Internal and External Assessment. Some universities may be at a more advanced stage of quality assurance, depending largely on the university's characteristics and uniqueness.

AUN Member Universities that have implemented an IQA system have not done it as an all-encompassing activity. Rather, only selected units within the university may be earmarked for QA implementation. In other words, universities approach this QA initiative as and when they are able to on a unit by unit basis.

It is recognised that all AUN Member Universities fully support the policies developed during the 1st Workshop on AUN-QA held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

There is no one-fits-all system of IQA. A basic characteristic of an internal quality assurance system is that it offers opportunities for systematic, structured and continuous attention to quality in terms of quality maintenance and quality improvement. Continuous quality care is a sine qua non for quality assurance. One of the tools in the field of IQA is self-assessment at institutional or programme level. When implementing the IQA, a number of obstacles may be encountered:

Human Resources

- Lack of motivation/incentive
- Need for several training programmes on QA procedures
- Inadequate understanding by the university of QA issues
- Need for a new mindset among people involved to the effect that QA is everyone's responsibility, not just that of the university administrators

Procedures

- Consideration of both quantitative and qualitative aspects of academic QA
- Some QA measures may be more quantifiable than others

Budgeting

- Need for a university budget to initiate QA activities
- In some countries/universities, the government will provide a budget for QA activities

Motivation

- Setting up QA awards
- Encouraging strong ties and devotion towards one's own institution

Time

- Writing a QA manual for internal and external assessment is time consuming

It will be important to develop a strategic plan to introduce IQA at a university. When developing an IQA system it is important to take into account that internal quality assurance and external quality assessment or accreditation are two sides of the same coin. This means that criteria and standards used for IQA are in line with external requirements and international developments.

The AUN-QA has formulated a number of criteria for the IQA system. These criteria will be checked in a Quality Audit of those universities that volunteer for this. The criteria are formulated in an open way and at a certain abstract level so that all universities will be able to work with them. The criteria are also formulated with a focus on international developments.

AUN-QA criteria for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions

1. Policy and procedures for IQA

An institution should have a clear policy and associated procedures on the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards. They should commit themselves explicitly to developing quality culture and quality awareness. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly accessible. They should also include a role for students and other stakeholders.

2. A monitoring system

An institution should have a structured monitoring system to collect information on the quality of its activities. The monitoring system must at least include:

- Student evaluations
- A student progress system
- Structural feedback from the labour market (employers)
- Structural feedback from alumni

3. Periodic review of the core activities (education, research and the contribution to society and the community)

An institution should have formal mechanisms in place for periodic review or evaluation of the core activities of an institution: its programmes and degrees, the research activities (if applicable) and the contribution to society and the community.

4. Quality assurance of the student assessment

An institution has clear procedures to assure the assessment of students. Students should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures that are applied consistently. Clear procedures are in place to assure the quality of the examinations

5. Quality assurance of staff

An institution should have ways to satisfy itself that the staff are qualified and competent to conduct the institution's core activities: education, research and the contribution to society and the community.

6. Quality assurance of the facilities

An institution should have clear procedures to ensure that the quality of the facilities, needed for student learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered.

7. Quality assurance of the student support

An institution should have clear procedures to assure the quality of the student support and advice.

8. Self-assessment

An institution conducts regularly, but at least every 5 years, a self-assessment of its core activities and of the institution as a whole to learn about its strengths and weaknesses. This self-assessment will lead to a quality plan.

9. Internal audit

A self-assessment might be part of the external quality assessment/accreditation process and the self-assessment report serves as input for the external review team. If the self-assessment is not connected to the EQA, the institution will be expected to organise an audit itself, based on the self-evaluation report

10. Information systems

An institution should ensure that it collects, analyses and uses relevant information for the effective management of its core activities.

11. Public information

An institution should regularly publish up-to-date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards/degrees it offers.

12. Quality handbook

An institution has a QA handbook which documents all the regulations, processes and procedures concerning Quality Assurance. This handbook is public and known to all the people concerned.

Appendix 4: Checklist on the Quality of an IQA system

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Policy							
The institutions has a clear policy on IQA							
There is a clear formal strategy on IQA							
The role of all stakeholders is clearly described							
Overall opinion							
Monitoring:							
• Student evaluation							
• Student progress system							
• Structural feedback from the labour market(employers)							
• Structural feedback from the alumni							
Overall opinion							
Periodic review of the core activities (education, research and the contribution to society and the community)							
• Periodic review of teaching/learning							
• Periodic review of research							
• Periodic review of the contribution to society and the community							
Overall opinion							
Quality assurance of the student assessment							
• Criteria for assessments							
• Assessment procedures							
• Regulations to assure the quality of assessment							
• Appeals procedures							
Overall opinion							
Quality assurance of staff							
• Staff appointment procedures							
• Staff appraisal system							
• Staff development activities							
Overall opinion							
Quality assurance of facilities							
• Checking the computer facilities							
• Checking the library facilities							
• Checking the laboratories							
Overall opinion							
Quality assurance of student support/advice							
• Information for students							
• Student advice/support							
• Student welfare							
• Student housing							
• Sports facilities							
Overall opinion							
Self-assessment							
• Self-assessment of the IQA system							
• Self-assessment of teaching/learning							
• Self-assessment of research							
• Self-assessment of the contribution to society and the community							
• Self-assessment of the university							

Overall opinion									
Internal audit									
• Internal audit of teaching/learning									
• Internal audit of research									
• Internal audit of the contribution to society and the community									
• Internal audit of the university									
Overall opinion									
Information systems									
Information management system in general									
Information management system for teaching/learning									
Information management system for research									
Overall opinion									
Public information									
• Public information on the university									
• Public information on the educational programmes and awards/degrees offered									
• Public information on research activities									
Overall opinion									
Quality handbook									
Presence of a QA handbook									
Handbook is known to staff and students									
Overall opinion									
Overall verdict									

Appendix 5: Checklist on the quality of a programme

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<i>Goals and objectives; expected learning outcomes</i>							
• The programme has clearly formulated learning outcomes							
• The programme promotes learning to learn and life-long learning							
• The expected learning outcomes cover generic skills and knowledge as well as specific skills and knowledge							
• The expected learning outcomes clearly reflect the requirements of the stakeholders							
Overall opinion							
<i>Programme content</i>							
• The programme content shows a good balance between general and specific skills and knowledge							
• The programme reflects the vision and mission of the university							
• The expected learning outcomes have been adequately translated into the programme							
• The contribution made by each course to achieving the learning outcomes is clear							
Overall opinion							
<i>Programme specification</i>							
• The university uses programme specifications							
• The programme specification shows the expected learning outcomes							
• The programme specification is informative for the stakeholders							
Overall opinion							
<i>Programme organisation</i>							
• The curriculum is coherent and all subjects and courses have been integrated							
• The curriculum shows breadth and depth							
• The curriculum clearly shows the basic courses, intermediate courses, specialist courses and the final project (thesis, etc.) activities							
• The curriculum is up-to-date							
Overall opinion							
<i>Didactic concept/teaching/learning strategy</i>							
• The staff have a clear teaching/learning strategy							
• The teaching/learning strategy enables students to acquire and manipulate knowledge academically							
• The teaching/learning strategy is student oriented and stimulates quality learning							
• The curriculum stimulates action learning							
• The curriculum stimulates active learning and facilitates learning to learn							
Overall opinion							
<i>Student assessment</i>							
• Student assessment considers student entrance, student progress and exit tests							
• The assessment is criterion referenced							
• Student assessment uses a variety of methods							
• The assessments reflect the expected learning outcomes and the content of the programme							
• The criteria for assessment are explicit and well-known							
• The assessment arrangements cover the objectives of the curriculum							
• The standards applied in the assessment are explicit and consistent							
• The assessment schemes, the assessment methods and the assessment itself are always subject to quality assurance and scrutiny							
Overall opinion							

• The curriculum was developed as a joint enterprise by all the staff members									
• Students are involved in the curriculum design									
• The labour market is involved in the curriculum design									
Overall opinion									
<i>Staff development activities</i>									
• There is a clear vision on the needs for staff development									
• The staff development activities are adequate to the needs									
Overall opinion									
<i>Feedback stakeholders</i>									
• There is adequate structural feedback from the labour market (employers)									
• There is adequate structural feedback from the alumni									
Overall opinion									
<i>Output</i>									
• The pass rate is satisfactory									
• The level of the graduates is satisfactory									
Overall opinion									
Overall verdict									

Appendix 6: Checklist on the Quality of an Institution

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
The mission statement							
The university has a clearly formulated mission statement							
The mission statement is publicly known							
The mission statement is in line with the academic and social context							
Overall opinion							
The policy plan							
The university has a clear policy and strategic plan formulated in line with the mission statement.							
Overall opinion							
Management							
The university has a clear management structure in which the decision-making processes, competencies and responsibilities have been clearly defined.							
Overall opinion							
Human resources							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The university develops and retains high-quality academics and support staff by clearly defining their responsibilities, and by evaluating their performance on a regular basis. 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The university develops the body of knowledge possessed by its academics and support staff to keep pace with changes in each academic discipline. 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The university: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – establishes a system to consider the ability, potential and need to enhance the knowledge possessed by its academic and support staff in conducting activities that have a direct influence on the quality of teaching-learning. This should include the formulation of a concrete staff development plan; – provides training to develop the potential of academics and support staff in accordance with this plan; – evaluates the efficiency of the training provided to ensure that its academics and support staff comprehend both the importance of and the relationship between the duties and activities that fall within their responsibility. This will affect the way the organisation attains its quality goals. – compile records of education, experience, training, and other essential qualifications required of lecturers (academic staff) and support staff. 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The university sets up a system of evaluation by committee to be conducted according to a set timetable at least twice a year prior to pay rises or promotions, or to the imposition of penalties. 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The university establishes an activity plan and evaluates activities to encourage students, academics and other staff to be conscientious in thought, speech and behaviour, to be kind, compassionate and honest, to possess equanimity, to be circumspect, logically-minded and far-sighted, to be responsible and willing to make sacrifices for the good of society. 							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The university enhances the professional ethics of its students, academics and other staff. 							
Overall opinion							
Funding							
The university has adequate funding to achieve the goals and aims.							
Overall opinion							

Educational activities									
Use the outcomes of the self-assessment at programme level, taking into account the aspects from Appendix 5:									
• Goals and objectives; expected learning outcomes									
• Programme content									
• Programme specification									
• Programme organisation									
• Didactic concept/teaching/learning strategy									
• Student assessment									
• Staff quality									
• Quality of support staff									
• Quality of the students									
• Student advice and support									
• Facilities and infrastructure									
• Quality Assurance									
• Student evaluation									
Overall opinion									
Research									
• The university establishes, implements, and ensures uniform compliance with university-wide research policies to maintain the integrity of the university, protect the safety and welfare of staff and experimental subjects and to ensure compliance with all other regulations governing the research process.									
• The university has designed policies and guidelines as guiding principles to conduct research and development activities.									
• The policies and guidelines set out the obligations on all researchers to be aware of good conduct in research and to comply with institutional and regulatory requirements.									
• The university supports scholarly, research and creative activities that contribute to the mission of the university and ultimately provide intellectual, social and economic benefits to society.									
• The university is committed to the highest professional standards of scholarly research and research ethics.									
• The researchers have familiarised themselves with the contents of research policies and procedures. Misconduct in conducting or reporting research is considered a serious breach of academic responsibilities.									
• The university has a clear research policy, setting the direction of research and deciding on the research profile and research activities.									
• The university has a clear code of conduct for research, including a code of ethics.									
Overall opinion									
The contribution to society and the community									
• The university has clear guidelines on consultancy and on the contribution to society and the community									
Overall opinion									
Achievements									
• The university has the means and opportunities to check whether the achievements are in line with the expected outcomes.									
Overall opinion									

Stakeholder satisfaction							
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The university has a structured method for obtaining feedback from stakeholders 							
Overall opinion							
Quality assurance and (inter)national benchmarking							
The university uses the outcomes of the self-assessment of the IQA system. See appendix 4)							
Overall verdict							

Appendix 7: Scaling and rating

The AUN-QA Guidelines use 2 levels and additionally mention a value scale 1-7. The method of scaling and the level problem was a topic of discussion at many workshops. As such, there is no problem with the scaling at two levels if the difference between Level 1 and Level 2 is clear and unambiguous. The problem is that the distinction between Level 1 and Level 2 is often artificial and based on coincidence. Sometimes, the distinction is based on criteria that are unconnected with each other. Looking at the criteria, the distinctions between Level 1 and Level 2 are not always the same. Sometimes, Level 1 is based on having documents as evidence, while Level 2 is based on the evidence of performance. On other occasions, Level 2 is a higher level (Level 1: staff up to the Master's, Level 2: higher than the Master's).

The basic question is why do we using a scaling system? The goal is not to qualify the universities (Level 1 universities and Level 2 universities). The scaling actually aims to offer the universities and external assessors an instrument for scaling their verdicts and to see how far they have progressed on the way to meeting the criteria and to see how far quality is assured.

The decision was made to combine both approaches (Levels 1 and 2) and the value scale into a 7-point scoring scale, where the meaning of the numbers is:

- 1= nothing (no documents, no plans, no evidence) present
- 2= this subject is in the planning stage
- 3= documents available, but no clear evidence that they are used
- 4= documents available and evidence that they are used
- 5= clear evidence on the efficiency of the aspect
- 6= example of good practice
- 7= excellent

For assessing the quality of teaching and learning, the numbers have a different wording, but more or less the same meaning. The assessment of the quality of a programme is also done on a 7-point scale. For looking at the quality and improvement activities, the 7-point scale could also be read as follows:

- 1= absolutely inadequate; immediate improvements must be made
- 2= inadequate, improvements necessary
- 3= inadequate, but will minor improvements will make it adequate
- 4= adequate as expected
- 5= better than adequate
- 6= example of good practice
- 7= excellent;

In fact we can distinguish 3 levels:

- Level 1: inadequate/unsatisfactory
- Level 2: adequate/satisfactory, but no more than might be expected
- Level 3: good practice/excellent

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AACCU	Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities of the Philippines
ACC	Accreditation Council of Cambodia
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AUN	Asean University Network Quality Assurance
AUN-BOT	Asean University Network Quality Assurance Board of trustees
AUN-QA	Asean University Network Quality Assurance
BAC	Brunei Accreditation Council
BAN-PT	Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi (BAN-PT), [National Accreditation Board for Higher Education]
CEQUARD	Center for Education Quality Assurance and Research Development
CHEA	Council for Higher Education Accreditation
CHED	Commission on Higher Education
CQO	Chief Quality Officers
DLSU	De La Salle University Manila
EC	European Commission
ECA	European Consortium for Accreditation
ECTS	European Credit transfer System
EDIA	Evaluation, Development, Implementation, Audit/Assessment
ENIC	European Network of Information Centres
ENQA	European Association of Quality Assurance
EQA	External Quality Assessment
HCM-CITY	Ho Chi Minh City
HEC	Higher education cooperation
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HRK	German Rectors' Conference
IAUP	International Association of University Presidents
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
IQA	Quality Assurance
IQA	Internal Quality Assurance
ISO	International Organisation for Standardization
JQI	Joint Quality Initiative
LAN	Lembaga Akreditasi Negara
MOET	Ministry of Education
NARIC	National Academic Recognition Information Centre
NUOL	National University of Laos
ONESQA	Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment
PAASCU	Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities
PMO	Programme Management Office
QA	Quality Assurance
QAD	Quality Assurance Division
RTM	Round Table meeting
SAR	Self-assessment report
SEAMEO	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization
SWOT-analysis	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis



TA	Technical Assistance
TOR	Terms of Reference
UBD	Universiti Brunei Darussalam
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UO	University of the Philippines system
USM	Universiti Sains Malaysia
VNU	Vietnam National University

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