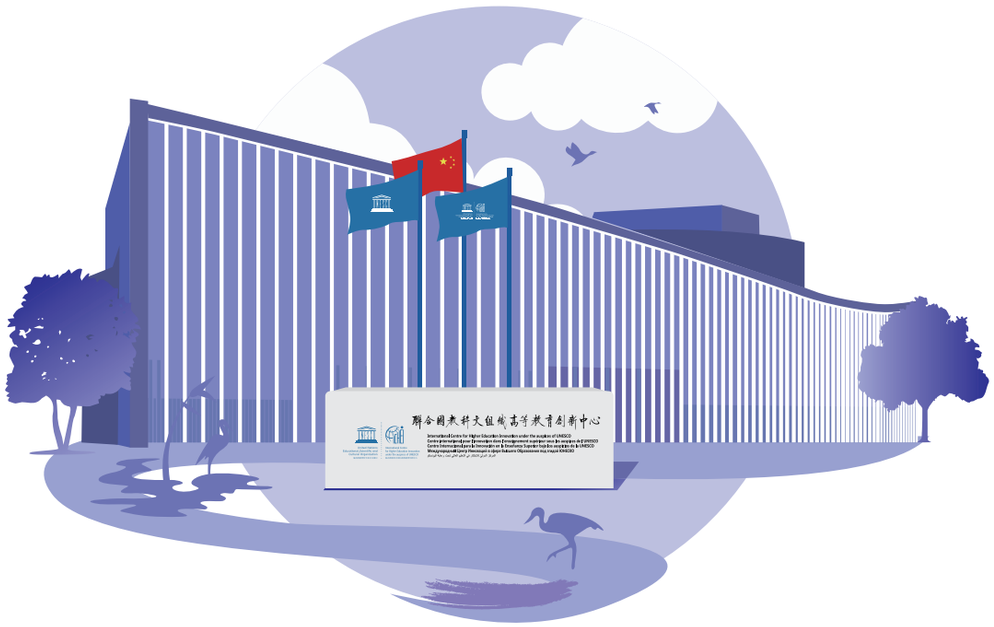

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CLOUD

CONNECTING LEADERS ONLINE FOR UNIVERSITY DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

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Back to the Basics:

Quality Assurance for the Futures of Higher Education

CLOUD - Connecting Leaders Online for University Digital Transformation

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CLOUD is the quarterly publication launched by the International Centre for Higher Education Innovation under the auspices of UNESCO (UNESCO-ICHEI) in 2021. The name ***CLOUD*** symbolises a global network for knowledge sharing driven by Information and Communications Technology (ICT). ***CLOUD*** aims to build an exchange platform that connects professionals in the realm of global higher education by sharing knowledge, project updates, data and best practices related to the digital transformation of global higher education.

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approved the establishment of UNESCO-ICHEI in Shenzhen, China, which is the first Category 2 centre for higher education in China

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CONTENT

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Preface

Sir Ken Robinson, remarked in 2011 that "What you are doing now, or have done in the past, need not determine what you can do next and, in the future". His words are even more relevant now – a decade later – as they were then.

What we need now is a reinvention and a reimagining of education. We need to continually and routinely as ourselves: What are we really here for as educators and learners? Who, where, and why are we educating? What is our research really for? Is the old maxim of 'knowledge for knowledge's sake' still valid? Controversial questions for sure. But do we ignore them and carry on as we always have, or, do we seek potentially uncomfortable answers and then stop to reflect and rethink self-critically on we do next?

Such innovation and critical thinking of education provisions for new realities must not act in isolation of ensuring standards in, and the continuous quality enhancement of, educational delivery seen through the lens(es) of relevance, equity of access, accountability and reliability. The third volume of CLOUD reinforces this continuity of practice in the face of ever-changing manifestations of higher learning; of creating innovative lifelong learning opportunities for all types of would-be learners in different learning spaces and places, and underpinning these with robust internal and external procedures and practices on quality assurance (QA). Such measures are the gatekeepers for ensuring the trust and confidence of all stakeholders in continuous learning and professional development that UNESCO-ICHEI holds paramount in its own mission.

But we still have a long way to go. Embedding QA – better still quality enhancement in educational spaces is still too often more regarded as a possibility than an essential reality.

Regardless of whether those spaces are in the university or the meta-versity, the critical question that institutions may stop and ask themselves in their drive for a 360-quality approach is this: to what extent (as Aristotle articulated) is quality (in our activities) an act or a habit?

Despite all good intentions, without generating a culture or habit of QA, we run the risk of QA being but a hollow anachronism. Do old habits have to die hard?

Passion is however the key that cements QA and the fundamentals of why we empower learning for all ages. Learning to learn and learning to be a passionate lifelong learner, are at the very heart of why we attend school, universities, colleges or professional training courses – such as those pioneered by UNESCO-ICHEI and IIOE. This passion for new understandings, new solutions and new ways of thinking about the world around us, speaks directly to addressing the world's most pressing challenges articulated in each of the Sustainable Development Goals – not only SDG 4 on Education. This is collective global problem-solving agenda on a scale never-before witnessed or harnessed. The contributions of every individual, from every pre-schooler to the vast experiences of the generations before them, cannot be overstated. Learning is universal and the passion to understand more is what drives humanity forward and will – with the will of all – make a decisive difference.

In one of his final TED Talks, Ken Robinson lamented, that "The fact is, that given the challenges we face, education does not need to reform – it needs to be transformed. The key to this transformation is not to standardise education but to personalise it, to build achievements on discovering individual talents; to put students in an environment where they want to learn and where they can discover their true passions".

The current issue of CLOUD is a testament to the passionate pioneering of the many experts drawn together here and the visions of UNESCO-ICHEI.

P. J. Wells
Chief, Higher Education,
UNESCO

Stories

01

Introducing IIOE Quality Assurance 2.0

01

Quality Assurance in Higher Education: A Brief Review

Over the past three decades, quality assurance (QA) development has become one of the most critical aspects of higher education reform worldwide. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have experienced a period of constant change, wherein institutions and programmes have undergone a process of privatisation and diversification. As a result, there has been a growing concern about the quality of HEIs and their programmes, and has consequently driven the development of external quality assurance (EQA) mechanisms in higher education and prompted many individual HEIs to set up their internal quality assurance (IQA) mechanisms for monitoring and management.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the urgency of adopting online and blended teaching and learning (OBTL), especially at HEIs in developing countries. However, adopting OBTL is challenging for many HEIs, and it is often the case in developing countries. Challenges include but are not limited to the lack of institutional organisation structure, policies and digital infrastructure, limited capacity and experience to conduct OBTL, lack of support for students to manage their learning online.

Some HEIs also face limited capacity to develop new programmes and courses to meet the changing demands of the labour market and society in the digital era. Addressing these challenges requires a holistic approach that coordinates the efforts of all higher education stakeholders, including the higher education workforce, HEIs, governments, and the private sector. An updated and validated QA framework and an associated toolkit has to be developed for HEIs to build an ecosystem that drives and supports OBTL.

The ever-evolving higher education landscape calls for actionable and practical guidelines on how HEIs could drive and support OBTL, especially those with unique contexts and limited resources in the global south. Therefore, QA is developed to support HEIs to navigate this new landscape.

UNESCO has multiple projects and initiatives dedicated to higher education quality assurance, such as the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education, The Tokyo Convention, and UNESCO-Shenzhen Funds-in-Trust (UNESCO-SFIT) Project, to name a few.

Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education

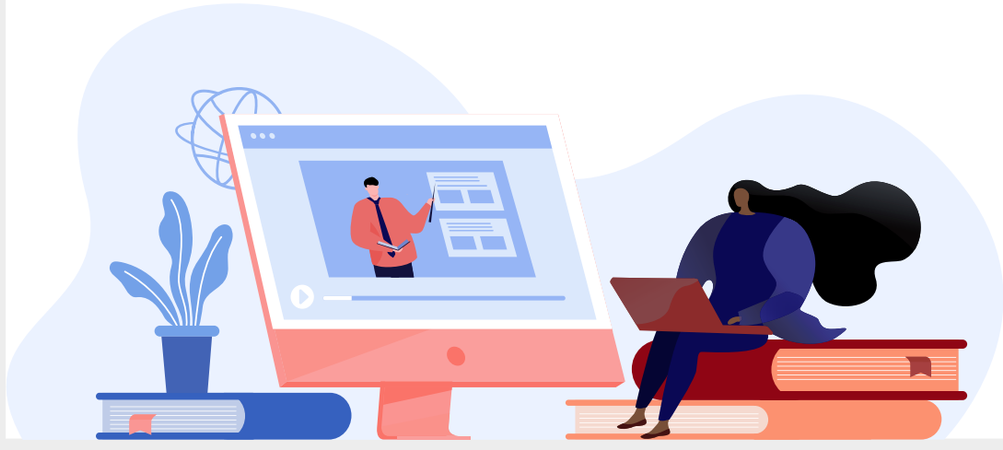
In November 2019, *the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education (Global Convention)* was adopted by the 40th session of the UNESCO General Conference, becoming the first United Nations treaty on higher education with a global scope. The *Global Convention* is designed to facilitate international academic mobility and promote the right of individuals to have their higher education qualifications evaluated through a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner. It aims to expand access to higher education and strengthen research cooperation by facilitating international exchanges of students, teachers, researchers and job-seekers. (**Source: UNESCO official website**)

The Tokyo Convention

The Tokyo Convention promotes sharing authoritative information in the Asia-Pacific to facilitate fair and transparent recognition of qualifications and recognition of non-traditional modes of delivery. The Convention commits Parties to work towards best principles and practices for recognising qualifications through an effective and sustainable framework for international cooperation, supporting cross-border student mobility. Fair and transparent qualifications recognition supports students and graduates pursuing further education and training, ultimately leading to improved employment prospects and supporting economic and social recovery efforts. (**Source: UNESCO official document**)

UNESCO-Shenzhen Funds-in-Trust (UNESCO-SFIT) Project

In May 2015, the Shenzhen Municipal Government and UNESCO initiated the UNESCO-Shenzhen Funds-in-Trust (UNESCO-SFIT) project to carry out higher education capacity-building tasks in 12 countries in Africa and Asia-Pacific. Supported by the Higher Education Sector of UNESCO in close collaboration with UNESCO regional and field offices in Africa, the African project of UNESCO-SFIT takes quality assurance in higher education as a focal point and has been implemented in 10 African countries, namely Egypt, Gambia, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Mali, Niger, Zambia, Malawi, Namibia. The aim was to build, enhance, or consolidate higher education quality assurance agencies and mechanisms in Africa in accordance with the local context. UNESCO-SFIT has been recognised as a flagship project by the UNESCO Higher Education Sector and has played a significant role in supporting UNESCO to realise its efforts in higher education. **(Source: UNESCO official website)**



What is IIOE Quality Assurance (QA)?

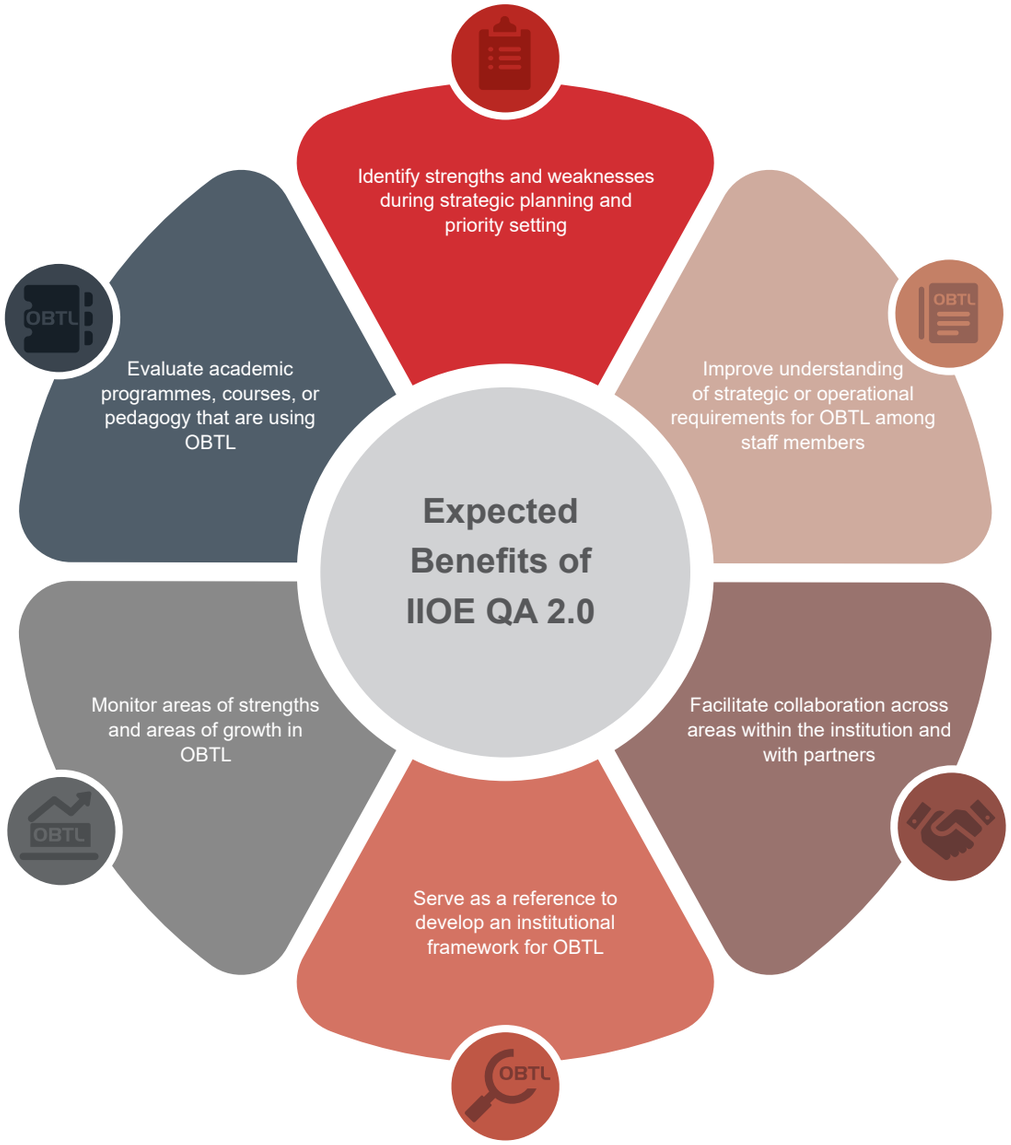
UNESCO-ICHEI launched the International Institute of Online Education (IIOE) with 11 leading higher education institutions (HEIs) in Africa and Asia, 9 global EdTech enterprises, and 4 HEIs in China in December 2019 in Shenzhen, China. IIOE is committed to addressing the challenges of higher education in developing countries. These challenges include but are not limited to the lack of institutional organisation structure, policies and digital infrastructure, limited capacity and experience to conduct online and blended teaching and learning (OBTL), lack of support for students to manage their learning online, and limited capacity for HEIs to develop new programmes and courses to meet the changing demands of the labour market and society in the digital era. Supported by UNESCO, IIOE aims to strengthen the capacity of HEIs and its higher education workforce for OBTL. Such institutional capacity will ensure that the partner HEIs are more likely to create an ecosystem that drives and supports OBTL for improved access to and enhanced equity and quality of higher education in developing countries, in alignment with SDG4 and the Futures of Education initiative.

IIOE currently provides extensive support for partner HEIs in institutional policy guidance, especially the IIOE QA for OBTL. The IIOE QA 1.0, including the first version of the framework and its associated online self-assessment tool, was an integral part of the launch of IIOE and has been adopted by the partner HEIs in Africa and the Asia-Pacific. UNESCO-ICHEI upgraded the IIOE QA Guidelines and Toolkit (IIOE QA 2.0) from the IIOE Quality Assurance Framework 1.0 and its tool.

Similar to UNESCO-SFIT, UNESCO-ICHEI was also a collaborative effort by UNESCO and the Shenzhen Municipal Government to support long-term collaborations among the Global South. In the same thread, quality assurance of higher education in developing countries has been one of the major focus areas of UNESCO-ICHEI since its launch. Also echoing with the Global Convention and relevant efforts of UNESCO in strengthening QA mechanisms in the next few years, UNESCO-ICHEI set QA for OBTL as a focal point of IIOE's development strategies and an entry point to establish the IIOE global network. As UNESCO states, "good structures for the quality assurance of higher education are crucial for enabling trust in a qualification and protecting academic standards and integrity." UNESCO-ICHEI and IIOE are dedicated to promoting quality assurance through the lens of OBTL and building the institutional capacity of HEIs for OBTL by utilising IIOE QA 2.0.

Objectives of IIOE QA 2.0

The objectives of the IIOE Quality Assurance Guidelines and Toolkit (IIOE QA 2.0) include supporting HEI with a conceptual framework and providing guidelines on the implementation of online and blended teaching and learning (OBTL) at the institutional level (meso) and course and program level (micro). The IIOE QA 2.0 assists HEIs to evaluate their existing capacity in implementing OBTL and helps policymakers identify strategies and pathways for further capacity building for OBTL.



Resources and Methodologies

UNESCO-ICHEI initiated the development of IIOE QA 1.0, and Professor LIM Cher Ping, the Chief Expert of IIOE, chaired the literature review process. To create the foundational framework of IIOE QA 1.0, an extensive review and systemic analysis of existing international, regional, and national QA frameworks for OBTL was conducted. The categorisation of reviewed frameworks is presented in Table 1.

1.0

Scope	Accreditation	Benchmarking	Certification	Advisory Framework
International				Commonwealth of Learning
Regional	Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Quality in Distance Education (CAL-ED).	Australasian Council on Open, Distance and E-Learning (ACODE); Benchmarking in European Higher Education: A step beyond current quality models.	European Association of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)	African Council for Distance Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (ACDE); Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU); African Virtual University (AVU).
National	Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) (U.S.); Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) (U.K); *E-learning Standards for Licensure and Accreditation* by Commission for Academic Accreditation, Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (United Arab Emirates).			NADEOSA (South Africa)

Table 1. Mapping and analysis of Quality Assurance frameworks in IIOE Quality Assurance Framework 1.0

When upgrading the IIOE QA framework from 1.0 to 2.0, Professor LIM led a more systemic study on the latest versions of quality assurance frameworks worldwide (as shown in Table 2). The team also draws upon promising practices of developing quality assurance mechanisms or structures as references during the refinement process.

2.0

Scope	Accreditation	Benchmarking	Certification	Advisory Framework
International				Benchmarking Toolkit for Technology-Enabled Learning by Commonwealth of Learning/COL (2019)
Regional	CAL-ED (Latin-America)	EADTU(Europe)	European Maturity Model for Blended Education by EADTU(2021)	ACDE (Africa), AVU (Africa), Quality Assurance of Online Learning Toolkits by Australian Government and APEC (2017), Practical Guide For the Quality of Distance Learning Programs by Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of the Federation of Arab Universities (2020)
National	CHEA (U.S) , QAA (U.K) ,UAE (UAE)	Benchmarks for Technology Enhanced Learning by Australasian Council on Open, Distance and e-learning/ACODE (2014)		NADEOSA (South Africa)
Institutional				Higher Education Digital Capability (HEDC) Framework, by HOLONIQ (2020)
Programme/ Course				Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended Learning Programmes Quality in MOOCs: Surveying the Terrain by COL (2016) ; National Standards for Quality Online Courses (2019)

Table 2: Mapping and analysis of Quality Assurance frameworks in IIOE Quality Assurance Framework 2.0

Professor LIM Cher Ping and the IIOE QA 2.0

Short bio of Professor LIM

Prof. LIM Cher Ping, the Chief Expert of International Institute of Online Education (IIOE), is the Visiting Professor of Center for Higher Education Research of SUSTech and the Chair Professor of Learning Technologies and Innovation of the Education University of Hong Kong.

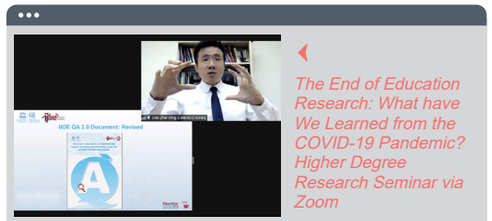
Prof. LIM Cher Ping Engaged in World Bank Project on Behalf of EdUHK to Build Higher Education Teacher Capacity in Cambodia

Prof. LIM has served in more than ten international organisations, including the United States Agency for International Development, the World Bank and UNESCO. As the Chief Expert of IIOE, he has chaired the research team at UNESCO-ICHEI to create multiple knowledge production deliverables supporting the capacity building of the IIOE global network. These deliverables include the IIOE Quality Assurance 2.0 and the IIOE Competency Framework for Higher Education Workforce, to name a few.

Prof. LIM's work and academic experience are primarily linked to ICT use in teaching and learning, curriculum and innovation, and quality assurance in education systems. As an outstanding scholar, he has published hundreds of high-quality academic articles and been selected as the Editor-in-Chief of The Internet and Higher Education.

Prof. LIM Cher Ping with UNESCO Expert and UNESCO-ICHEI Staff

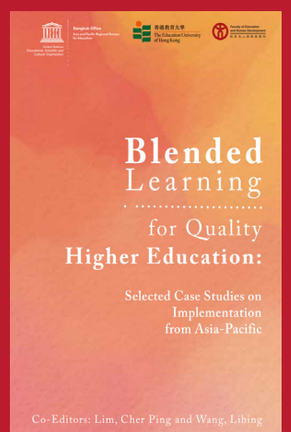
Over the last two decades, Prof. LIM has engaged major education stakeholders at national and international levels and has been actively involved in education policy development to enhance higher education equity, quality, and efficiency.



The End of Education Research: What have We Learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic? Higher Degree Research Seminar via Zoom

Prof. LIM Cher Ping introducing the IIOE Quality Assurance 2.0 in the Consultation Meeting on 28 October 2021.

Blended Learning for Inclusive and Quality Higher Education in Asia LIM, C. P. & GRAHAM, C. R., 2021, Singapore: Springer.



Blended Learning for Quality Higher Education: Selected Case Studies on Implementation from Asia-Pacific LIM, C. P. & WANG, L., 2016, Bangkok: UNESCO Bangkok Office.

Excerpt from the IIOE QA 2.0 Keynote Presentation by Professor LIM

Some of the first questions to highlight before discussing the IIOE QA 2.0 are the 'Why's. Why should people engage in online and blended teaching and learning (OBTL)? Why there is a need for a QA framework and a set of the toolkit? The whole notion of IIOE being here is to enable our partner HEIs to drive and support the internal institutional capacity building.

The research team at UNESCO-ICHEI approached the whole notion of OBTL holistically when drafting the QA framework and relevant documents back then in 2018 and 2019. The team was able to look at the entire suite of different dimensions rather than simply focusing on technologies or professional development. The IIOE QA 2.0 is based not only on the experiences of partner institutions and UNESCO-ICHEI but also on drawing a lot of international and regional frameworks, looking through the literature on research about all disciplines, and trying to adapt and customise for the different regions that we are working. IIOE QA 2.0 also takes collaboration/partnership and monitoring/evaluation into account. The higher education sector must draw upon multiple stakeholders and reflect on their performance in OBTL development.

To be more specific, the revised IIOE QA 2.0 has slightly reworked the categories of components and changed some of the phrases. For example, what IIOE QA 1.0 used to call "learning support" is now "student support" because students need learning support and technical and administrative support. Another example of increased clarity would be in Component 8: monitoring and evaluation and its sub-components. Compared to the previous version, there are more details on enacting the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The research team specified the need for a centralised committee, highlighting the different levels of committees. In addition, the resources are reworked with explanations of the links. The research team constantly adds more localised information for various countries. The new self-assessment tools are based on the framework, and HEIs could reflect upon their readiness of OBTL from the QA perspective as they will be able to identify gaps for OBTL and engage in strategic planning to address those gaps. The team also designed additional tools to support HEI's understanding of the framework.

We are very fortunate to get responses from our partner institutions. We have about 13 partners HEIs that have responded from nine countries. When we look at the quantitative responses, basically all 13 HEIs except two of them responded to the question in terms of agreed or strongly agreed that the framework and toolkit were comprehensive, relevant to the institution, applicable, and customisable. Two of them did not agree with some of the items. One of them was neutral in its view about the relevance and applicability of the toolkit to their institution. The other one disagreed that the framework applied to their institution and disagreed that the toolkit was applicable and customisable. Whether they agree or disagree, these are excellent comments and suggestions. The UNESCO-ICHEI research team are trying our best to do that better by providing more details for the guidance and integrating local resources, which calls for help and support from our partner HEIs.

To move forward, the UNESCO-ICHEI team needs to ensure that IIOE QA 2.0 is not the final document and keeps improving on it with partner HEIs' input, feedback and co-development. The research team would also love to increase the localisability of IIOE QA 2.0 by integrating the existing QA framework. Local contexts might vary drastically, so there might be more consultative sessions or case studies to learn about promising practices and lessons.

Upgrading the IIOE Quality Assurance Framework: From 1.0 to 2.0

02

Why is IIOE Quality Assurance 2.0 developed?

IIOE QA 1.0 was validated by 11 IIOE founding institutions in Africa and the Asia Pacific in December 2019 and widely utilised in partner HEIs as a reference to revise and complement their own QA framework to support and drive OBTL. While IIOE QA 1.0 provides a holistic approach towards the quality enhancement of OBTL, the existing framework has little clarity or details on operationalising related guidelines at different levels. Also, as COVID-19 drastically and profoundly changed the higher education landscape, it became increasingly urgent for HEIs, especially those in the Global South, to look beyond pandemic responses and aim for a comprehensive transformation of their currently available OBTL strategies or quality assurance system. Additionally, IIOE QA 1.0 was extended to a broader global higher education community in Africa, Asia and the Arab States with the support of the UNESCO network, though initially designed for IIOE partner HEIs. Most participating HEIs highlighted the need for a more adaptable QA framework to apply international best practices to their local context during the implementation of IIOE QA 1.0. As a result, IIOE QA 2.0 was designed to support HEIs through a toolkit and an updated QA framework. IIOE QA 2.0 was also accompanied by a suite of tools and resources supporting the operationalisation of relevant guidelines.

Comparison between Frameworks in IIOE Quality Assurance 1.0 and 2.0

Although the framework in IIOE QA 2.0 (referred to as "Framework 2.0" in the following paragraphs) kept most items of the original one in IIOE QA 1.0, two new components and associated sub-components have been added, and existing sub-components and statements have been revised. Framework 2.0 also responds to the challenges identified by IIOE partner HEIs in transition to online and blended higher education during COVID-19 and beyond, as demonstrated in the refined version.

While the 1.0 version has 6 Components, 20 Sub-components and 60 Statements, Framework 2.0 consists of 8 Components, 20 Sub-components and 73 Statements covering HEIs policies, structure, digital infrastructure, higher education workforce, online programmes design, students and partnership. The two newly added components are Component 7: Collaboration and Partnerships and Component 8: Monitoring and Evaluation. The following table compares major differences between the two frameworks in QA 1.0 and QA 2.0.

1.0 IIOE Quality Assurance Framework 1.0

6 Components	20 Sub-Components	60 Statements
• Institutional policies and mission	4	11
• Teaching and learning Infrastructure and Resources	3	9
• Development and Implementation of Online and Blended Programmes/ courses	6	17
• Learner assessment and evaluation	3	8
• Learner learning support and progression	2	4
• Professional development and support for teachers and staff	2	11

2.0 IIOE Quality Assurance Framework 2.0

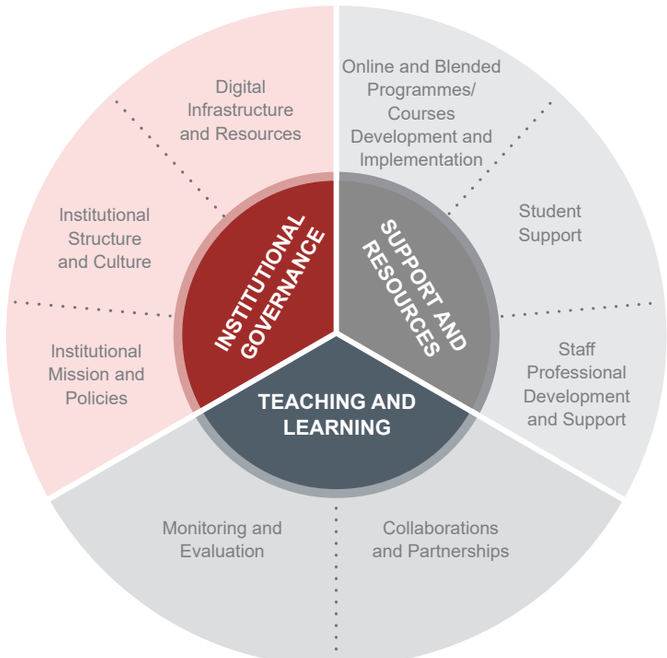
8 Components	20 Sub-Components	73 Statements
• Institutional policies and mission	3	9
• Institutional Structure and Culture	3	4
• Digital Infrastructure and Resources	2	10
• Online and Blended Program/ Course Development and Implementation	3	20
• Student Support	2	10
• Staff Professional Development and Support	3	9
• Collaboration and Partnership	2	2
• Monitoring and Evaluation	2	9

Table 2. Comparaison of IIOE Quality Assurance Framework 1.0 and IIOE Quality Assurance Framework 2.0

Contents of IIOE Quality Assurance 2.0

03

IIOE Quality Assurance Framework 2.0



Institutional Mission and Policies Mission	Planning	**Institutional Structure and Culture** Structure	Culture	**Digital Infrastructure and Resources** Digital infrastructure and resources for governance and management
Policies	**Monitoring and Evaluation** Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms	Feedback Loop	Roles and responsibilities	Digital infrastructure and resources for OB TL
Online and Blended Programmes /Courses Development and Implementation OBTL Programmes /Courses planning	Online and blended course/programme implementation	**Collaborations and Partnerships** Internal collaborations and partnerships	External collaborations and partnerships	Guidelines
Online teaching and learning review and evaluation	**Student Support** Learning support	Administrative and technical support	**Staff Professional Development and Support** Access	Incentive

IIOE Quality Assurance Framework 2.0

The eight components of IIOE Quality Assurance Framework 2.0 includes:

Institutional Mission and Policies

The institution has clear mission statements and has formulated policies and mechanisms for procedures, efficient management and administrative capacity, physical facilities and adequate resources for the implementation of online and blended teaching and learning (OBTL).

Institutional Structure and Culture

The institution has a well-defined institutional structure that allocates specific roles and responsibilities to organisational units for implementing OBTL. The institution also seeks to create a culture that is conducive to OBTL practices.

Digital Infrastructure and Resources

The institution has clear mission statements and has formulated policies and mechanisms for procedures, efficient management and administrative capacity, physical facilities and adequate resources for the implementation of online and blended teaching and learning (OBTL).

Online and Blended Programmes/ Courses Development and Implementation

OBTL Programmes/Courses are developed and delivered to meet the needs of different students to access quality education. The online course resources precisely present the intended learning outcomes, teaching-learning activities, assessments and student support. Policies and mechanisms are in place to ensure that assessment tasks for students studying online are well communicated, effectively moderated, and allow students to demonstrate the programme learning outcomes.

Student Support

Students in online and blended courses and programmes have to be supported to monitor and manage their own learning. The student support may include academic advising, study skills development, senior student mentoring, professional counselling, and peer support groups or buddies, and technical and administrative help desks and workshops that facilitate students' holistic learning progression.

Staff Professional Development and Support

The role of teaching staff in developing and implementing quality online and blended teaching and learning in their institutions is pivotal. However, they need the support from institutional leaders and education support staff (technical staff, administrative staff, instructional designers, and multimedia developers). The teaching staff, leaders and support staff form the higher education workforce that work together to ensure inclusive and equitable quality online and blended teaching and learning. To play their expected roles, they have to be equipped with professional development opportunities and professional support. In this component, the higher education workforce is referred to as staff.

Collaborations and Partnerships

There are collaborations and partnerships within and outside the institution to support the development, implementation and the sustainability of online and blended teaching and learning.

Monitoring and Evaluation

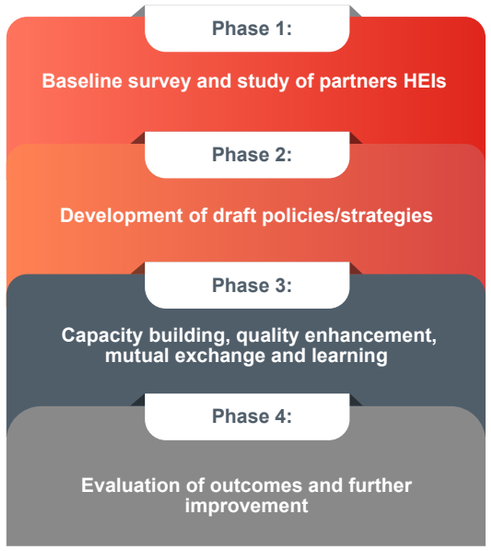
The institution has an existing mechanism to monitor the process of OBTL implementation and to evaluate the impact of OBTL implementation. A coherent feedback loop is in place to integrate the monitoring and evaluation findings into existing practices to continually improve the implementation of OBTL.

IIOE Quality Assurance 2.0 Operational Guidance

Operationalisation at the Institutional level.

At the institutional level, IIOE Quality Assurance 2.0 could guide partner HEIs to drive and support OBTL-driven higher education in the following ways:

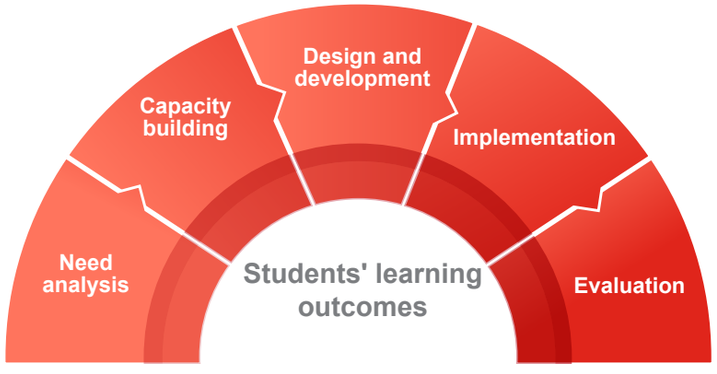
- Systemically analyse gaps and issues in partner HEIs' existing OBTL-relevant quality assurance frameworks and mechanisms;
- Facilitate partner HEIs to revise and refine their existing OBTL-relevant quality assurance frameworks and mechanisms to improve higher education equity, quality, and efficiency that is enabled by OBTL-driven higher education;
- Support partner HEIs to formulate strategies and pathways for implementing OBTL-driven higher education.



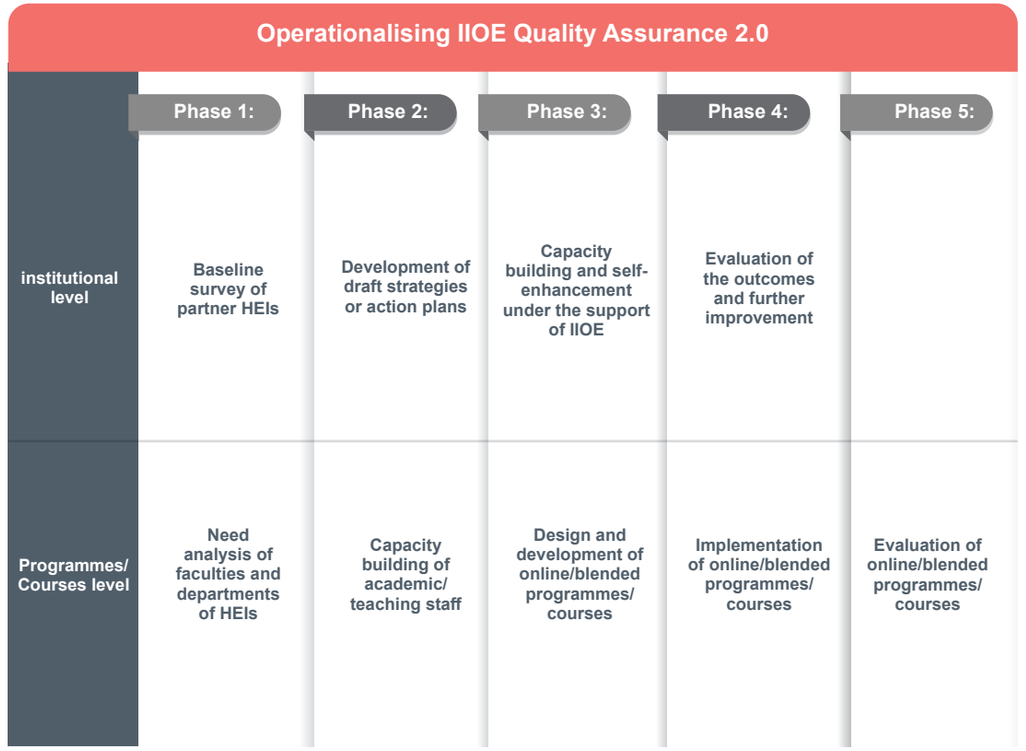
Flowchart for Institutional-level Operationalisation

Operationalisation at Programmes/courses level.

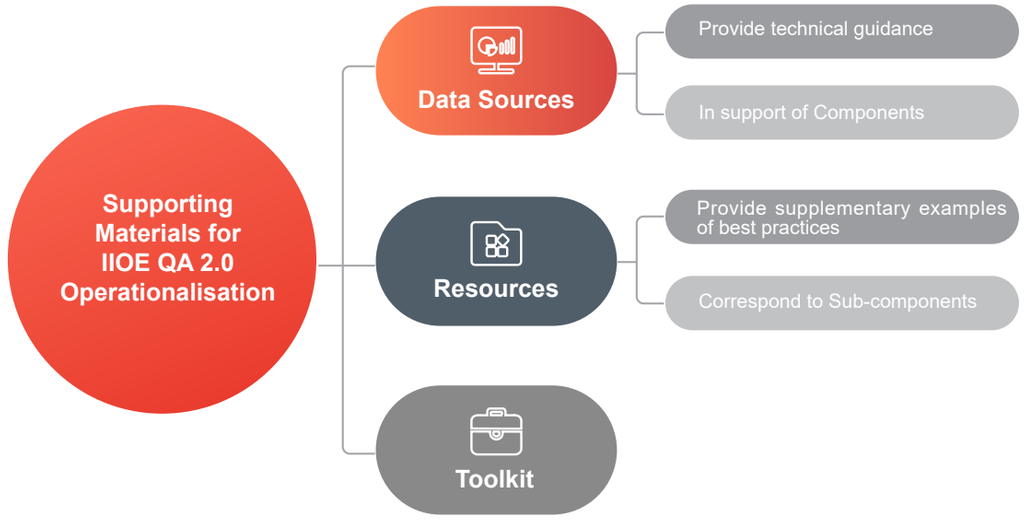
The IIOE QA Framework 2.0 offers the higher education workforce a clear understanding and a set of guidelines for planning, implementing, reviewing, and evaluating online/blended programmes/courses. The tools accompanied by the framework also offer resources for the higher education workforce to self-develop and implement blended and online programmes/courses in their local context.



Flowchart for Programmes/ courses-level Operationalisation



Comparison of Operationalisation Flows at Institutional Level and Programmes/courses Level

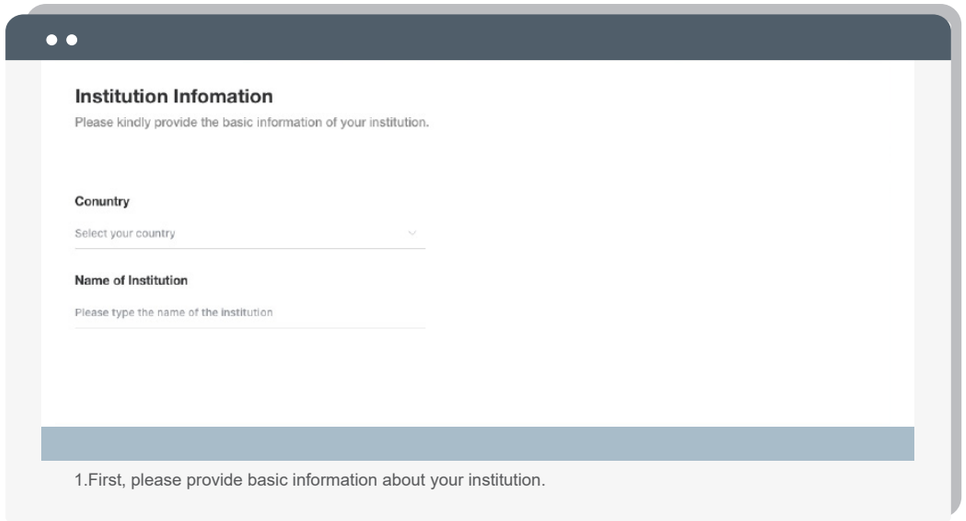


Supporting Materials for IIOE QA 2.0 Operationalisation

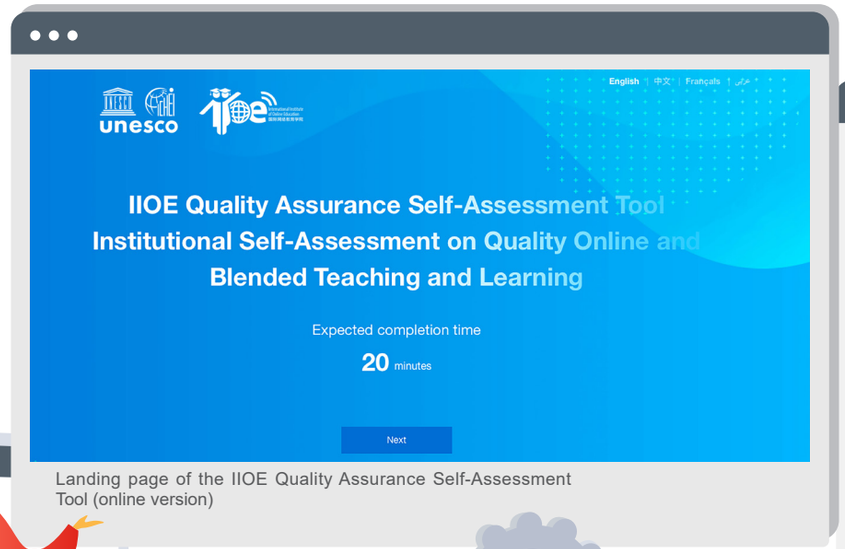
IIOE Quality Assurance 2.0 Toolkit

1 IIOE Quality Assurance Self-Assessment Tool

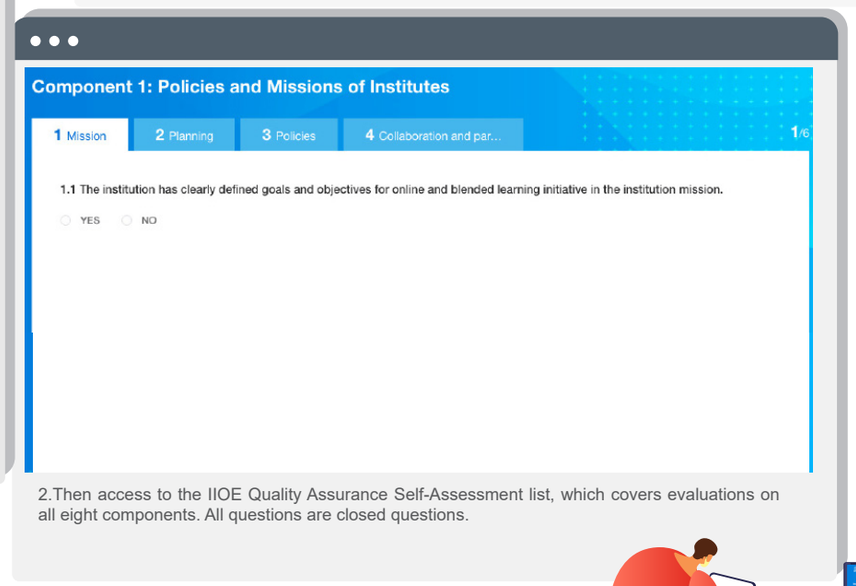
The IIOE Quality Assurance Self-Assessment Tool (access to the first version online through **https://www.iioe.org/qa/start**) is designed to facilitate higher education institutions (HEIs) to self-evaluate their readiness in online and blended teaching and learning (OBTL) implementation. This assessment will help HEIs gain a general understanding of their status quo and identify their areas of strengths and growth in OBTL development, especially in Phase 1 of the institutional-level operationalisation ("Baseline survey and study of partner HEIs"). HEIs may also develop draft action plans or strategies for OBTL based on the self-assessment results. It is also encouraged that HEIs undertake this exercise through designated commissions or people in charge of quality assurance to ensure that the decision-making structures are aware of the results and are thus able to propose appropriate actions. The self-assessment tool is available in both paper and online format and in three languages (Chinese, English, French), and the expected completion time is 20 minutes.



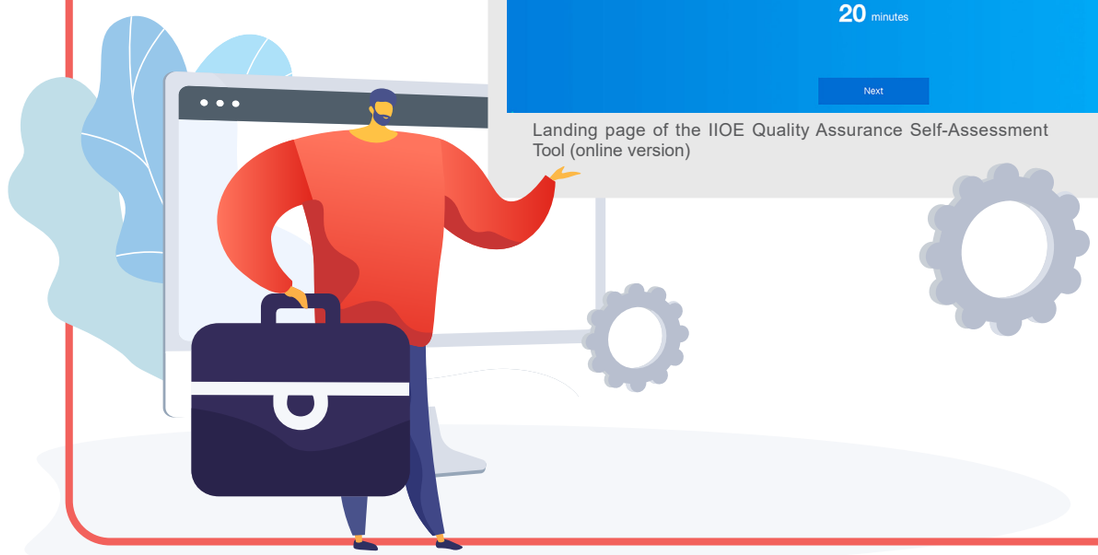
1.First, please provide basic information about your institution.



Landing page of the IIOE Quality Assurance Self-Assessment Tool (online version)



2.Then access to the IIOE Quality Assurance Self-Assessment list, which covers evaluations on all eight components. All questions are closed questions.



2 IIOE Quality Assurance Institutional Assessment Report Template

While the self-assessment tool provides a sketch of HEI's context in OBTL development, the Report Template helps HEIs and decision-makers reflect on each QA component in depth. The template asks report-takers to summarise key findings from the assessment, observe areas for improvement, and collect referrable evidence and good practices in OBTL. By completing this template, HEIs and relevant stakeholders can obtain a comprehensive picture of their current OBTL strategies and envision future actions to develop OBTL in their institutions.

IIOE Quality Assurance Institutional Assessment Report Template

1 Summary of IIOE QA Assessment Report			
Name of Insititution		**Country**	
Time of QA Assessment		**Contact Information**	
Assessment scope: The assessment is conducted in its entirety or inselected components			
Review findings:			
Rationale: Please state in a couple ofsentences how and whereyou see this in action withinyour institution.			
Evidence: Please link to documentsand/ or websites. or otherrelated data source thatsupports the review findingswithin the institution			
Follow-up actions: Actions that will be planned toimprove weakness identified inthe assessment findings			

IIOE QA Institutional Assessment Report Template (English version)

3 Self-Check List for Course Development

Another tool included in the IIOE Quality Assurance 2.0 toolkit is the Self-Checklist for Course Development, assisting HEIs to enhance quality assurance for OBTL at the programme and course level. Course developers might refer to this self-check list to examine whether the course to be reviewed are complete or aligned with common standards. While IIOE also provides quality audit services, self-examination of available programmes and courses is no less crucial for equitable and quality OBTL implementation.

Annex 2

Self-Checklist for course development (by course developers)**

For facilitating course development, a self-checklist is provided for course developer tounderstand and self-check the key information needed in course development and courseoutline

Item	Tick
1.Template ● IIOE course outline template is used.	
2.Course Introduction ● Pre-requisites and learner background for the course are stated.2.2 target certification is stated. ● Expected time commitment for learners is stated. ● Developers' introduction or bio available for the course.	
3.Course structure ● Course description is provided3.2 Course objectives are stated. ● Grading criteria and certificate requirements are stated	
4.Instructional activities and assessment ● The course includes interrelated resources and activities. ● The length of video segments is appropriate(e.g. average between 3 to 10 minutes). ● The course provides online reading materials/reading list and notes. ● The course provides downloadable copies/accessible links of presentation materialsused in the videos ● The assessment tasks are aligned to the course objectives. ● Assessment rubrics are developed and provided for peer and self-assessment. ● The course includes gradable assignments, e.g.exercise/quizzes.	
5.Learner engagement ● Peer-collaboration is considered in learning activities and/or assessments. ● The requirements for student interaction and progression through thecourse are clearly articulated.	

"adapted from edX MOOC Development Checklist and Guidelines for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Moocs(2016) from Commonwealth of Learning.

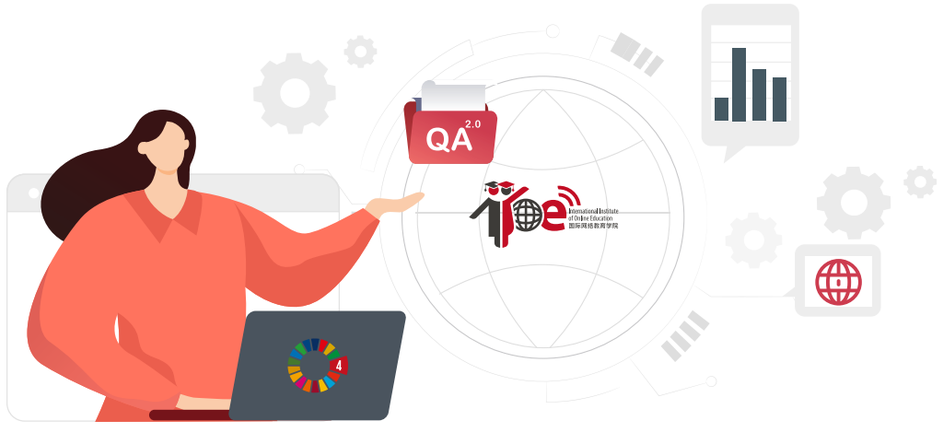
Self-checklist for Course Development (English version)

Expert Review on IIOE Quality Assurance 2.0

04

Background of the Expert Review

On 29 July 2021, the International Institute of Online Education (IIOE) Partnership Meeting 2021 (Africa and West Asia) was successfully held. The meeting discussed how IIOE Quality Assurance 2.0 could take up the full potential of HEIs to conduct online and blended higher education. More than 100 delegates, including representatives from partner HEIs, governments and UNESCO, teachers and experts from over 20 countries in West Asia and Africa, and representatives from partner enterprises in China, attended the meeting.



Antoinette van der Merwe

Antoinette van der Merwe is the Senior Director of Learning and Teaching Enhancement at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. Her work and academic experience have been primarily linked **to the scholarship of educational leadership** and **the effective use of learning technologies in higher education.**

IIOE QA 2.0 is incredibly relevant to higher education institutions in the Global South, especially in its holistic and comprehensive approach and operationalisation. The toolkit itself also contributes to the relevance of IIOE QA 2.0 since it contains resources that one can click through to get best practices and examples and data sources, both primary and secondary, that are suggested for some of the components.

It is essential to determine whether the framework applies all the components to an equal measure for OBTL. It is necessary to focus on learning and teaching instead of technology and add them into institutional mission and policies. In terms of the development and implementation of online and blended programmes, what counts is focusing on QA of online assessment in the unique context of Africa, especially learning material design and online assessment through emergency remote teaching and learning assessment. Regarding learner support, digital literacy should be considered and added to the framework. Also, it would be better if the toolkit could include monitoring and evaluation.

Hypothetical examples of IIOE QA 2.0 implementation in higher education institutions include: conducting a self-evaluation in the university, viewing the result through the online version, then developing strategies and plans to address areas of weakness and develop areas of strength accordingly; partnering with other institutions to deliver capacity development, sharing good practices and evaluating the success of interventions.

Tian Belawati

Tian Belawati is a Professor and the Rector at Indonesia Open University, Indonesia. She is a seasoned academician, researcher, and practitioner in **open and distance learning (ODL)** who has extensive experience in research, teaching, and administration of a large-scale open university system.

The IIOE Quality Assurance 2.0 is quite comprehensive as it takes missing parts of IIOE QA 1.0 into consideration. Two of the newly added components, *Collaboration and Partnership, Monitoring and Evaluation,* are particularly important.

It is suggested to determine the jurisdiction of different operationalisation levels when developing the next version of IIOE QA. The guidelines for operationalisation are beneficial. However, it is essential to decide what HEIs could do and what the higher education workforce could manage. Not all QA components are relevant for the workforce level, so a matrix or map is required to explain the connection between the QA Components/Sub-components and the operationalisation levels. For example, Component 1, 2, 3 are primarily relevant for the institutional level only.

The toolkit has both areas of strength and areas of growth. Descriptions of Components, Sub-components and Statements are necessary and precise, and the lists of resources and references for each Sub-component are helpful to supplement understanding of the Components. Two notable strengths of online learning are seamless networking and access to ample resources that prevent "reinventing the wheel" and thus promote resource sharing. In this sense, making connections with Open Educational Resources (OER), which has not been done in QA 2.0, is significant.

Grace Oakley

Grace Oakley is the Associate Professor and the Deputy Dean of the Graduate School of Education of the University of Western Australia. She has strong interests in creating **innovative learning experiences** and focuses on **literacy and technology.**

The IIOE QA 2.0 has done an excellent job refining the original version, especially in terms of elements related to teaching and learning.

Component 1("Institutional policies and mission") requires a couple more examples for institutions' reference in mission statements. When it comes to policies, policy implementation on the ground is not often in alignment with what we expect, so policymaking should let stakeholders at multiple levels share a common understanding of policies.

Component 2 ("Institutional structure and culture") is a new component of great significance. It is usually challenging to reach a consensus on what the culture of a particular institution looks like, let alone altering the institutional culture. Therefore, IIOE QA 2.0 should consider how its framework could advise HEIs to identify their institutional culture.

Component 4 ("Online and Blended Programme/Course Development and Implementation") implies that situational analyses on stakeholders' needs are essential. The self-evaluation toolkits could be beneficial, and it is hoped that IIOE QA 2.0 could dive into usability research in depth.

Way Forward

05

Since its launch, the IIOE Quality Assurance Guidelines and Toolkit (IIOE QA 2.0) developed by the research team at UNESCO-ICHEI has received generous endorsements and has been considered for localisation worldwide. Global experts and partner higher education institutions (HEIs) have been actively engaged in the consultation and validation process of the framework and toolkit. Critical comments and suggestions from the consultation sessions have been addressed and incorporated into the revised version to ensure that the validated framework and toolkit are more relevant and meaningful to the higher education stakeholders. As a crucial step toward UNESCO-ICHEI's mission of expanding equitable and quality higher education through inter-institutional collaborations on online and blended teaching and learning (OBTL) capacity building, UNESCO-ICHEI plans to officially release the IIOE QA 2.0 document in three languages - Chinese, English and French in 2022.

To document evidence-based promising practices and lessons learnt, the IIOE QA 2.0 research team is organising pilot studies at Ain Shams University in Egypt and Ahmadu Bello University in Nigeria. During this pilot phase, UNESCO-ICHEI will provide workshops on implementing and operationalising IIOE QA 2.0 and develop case studies and tools to be shared with other partners. The team will also continuously collect feedback and refine the existing IIOE QA 2.0 and relevant workflows before scaling up to other partner HEIs.

Quality assurance continues to be a focus area of UNESCO for the higher education sector. Designed to promote quality assurance to drive and support the global trend of digital transformation, the IIOE QA 2.0 will be presented at the UNESCO World Higher Education Conference 2022, representing voices of HEIs in developing countries. In addition, the UNESCO Shenzhen Funds-in-Trust (SFIT) project in Africa, which also focuses on quality assurance development, has now been widely recognised as one of the UNESCO flagship projects in higher education. With the project's concluding meeting approaching in 2022, the UNESCO-SFIT project in Africa has indeed made remarkable and sustainable contributions to the world of higher education with fruitful achievements in establishing and enhancing quality assurance agencies and systems. It is also believed that the IIOE QA 2.0 will set the foundation for future SFIT projects related to quality assurance for OBTL.

UNESCO-ICHEI is dedicated to raising HEIs' awareness of quality assurance development and facilitating HEIs to adapt to digital transformation through OBTL. IIOE QA 2.0 will be a milestone of the journey for quality assurance, but not the endpoint indeed.

02

Us

Towards Quality Online Education at ASU

ASU Main Campus

Total Quality Management (TQM) is a general management philosophy and a blend of various methodologies and tools which help educational institutions to practice a description of quality and to develop the means to achieve it. Adoption of TQM helps Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to maintain their competitiveness, to eliminate incompetence in the organization, and to achieve high performance in all areas. It also helps HEIs to focus on the market needs and meet the needs of all stakeholders. This will lead to improvement of education in the form of improving educational process, programs and curricula, making educational environment more motivating, and reducing costs, that will end up with excellence in higher education.

Now, in the era of digital transformation and where the technological paradigm shift is reshaping Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the question of quality assurance (QA) is at the forefront of universities' priorities worldwide. Quality Assurance (QA) in eLearning is defined as "the means by which the institutions set their eLearning program goals and measure results against those goals."

The existing eLearning QA system applied at Ain Shams University (ASU) is based on setting a benchmark for online/blended learning that is aligned with the Egyptian accreditation standards developed by the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education "NAQAAE" and international ranking standards, and here it worth saying that ASU has got 5 stars in online learning according to the latest QS star rating. Our existing QA system is also based on ASU approved and published standards and minimum requirements for online/ blended courses.

Prof. Mona Abdel-Aal

Professor of Public Health,
Executive Director of Education Strategy Administration
Ain Shams University
m_zahry@med.asu.edu.eg
+201004976136

Our Vision

Achievement of leadership and distinction in the field of eLearning to ensure successful practices and educational development.

Our Mission

Setting the strategic plans of the e-learning system that aims at providing varied and distinguished educational tools in response to the growing...

Innovational Tools

Our institution depends on effective innovation tools which provoke student's curiosity, boost their engagement, and lead to better learning and comprehension.

Awesome Support

We have expertise team who work hard to help and support our users as best we can

ASU eLearning Portal "ASU2Learn"

As "we cannot improve, what we cannot measure", we use specific tools for QA including peer review evaluations that are structured around three subcategories; accreditation external audit that are done based on accreditation standards, academic program review that features self-study, internal audits, and external peer review at the discipline, department, or program level, and the ranking and rating studies. Other used tools are stakeholders' evaluation and review, key performance indicator (KPIs) reporting and students' assessment and outcomes analysis.

While most universities have implemented some form of internal self-regulated QA procedures, it is hard to find a comprehensive and practical QA framework that systematically covers higher education inputs, processes and outputs. And here comes the importance of developing IIOE Quality Assurance 2.0 framework and toolkit that is a very significant and crucial step towards quality online education at ASU and at all partner HEIs.

"ASU2Learn" Services

LMS
Professional LMS for each Faculty

TECHNICAL SUPPORT
Our expertise team work hard to help and support you

STAFF & STUDENTS TRAINING
Tailored training programs for staff & students

REPORTS AND ANALYTICS
Data Analytics and reporting to Provide Continuous Improvement

After deeply reviewing IIOE QA 2.0 framework and toolkit, I believe it will help improving quality management system at ASU in many ways . It is applicable to most online learning strategies at ASU and can be easily integrated within the existing institutional strategic planning processes. Beside focusing on compliance and accountability, IIOE QA 2.0 is designed to have a major effect on the student learning experience.

As a part our strategy for continuous improvement of our key processes and enhancing the performance of our ongoing processes, ASU Education Strategy Administration is planning to assess the implementation IIOE QA 2.0 framework by conducting a strategic review meeting with all stakeholders (ASU QA Unit Director, eLearning Central Unit Director, Vice Deans for Education, …) to discuss how to customize the quality framework to be compatible with and applicable to the local context, particularly when translating the existing standards into operational checklists. In addition, comparing the IIOE QA toolkit with the existing tools and making the needed Arabic translation.

18
Faculties

1,431
Programs

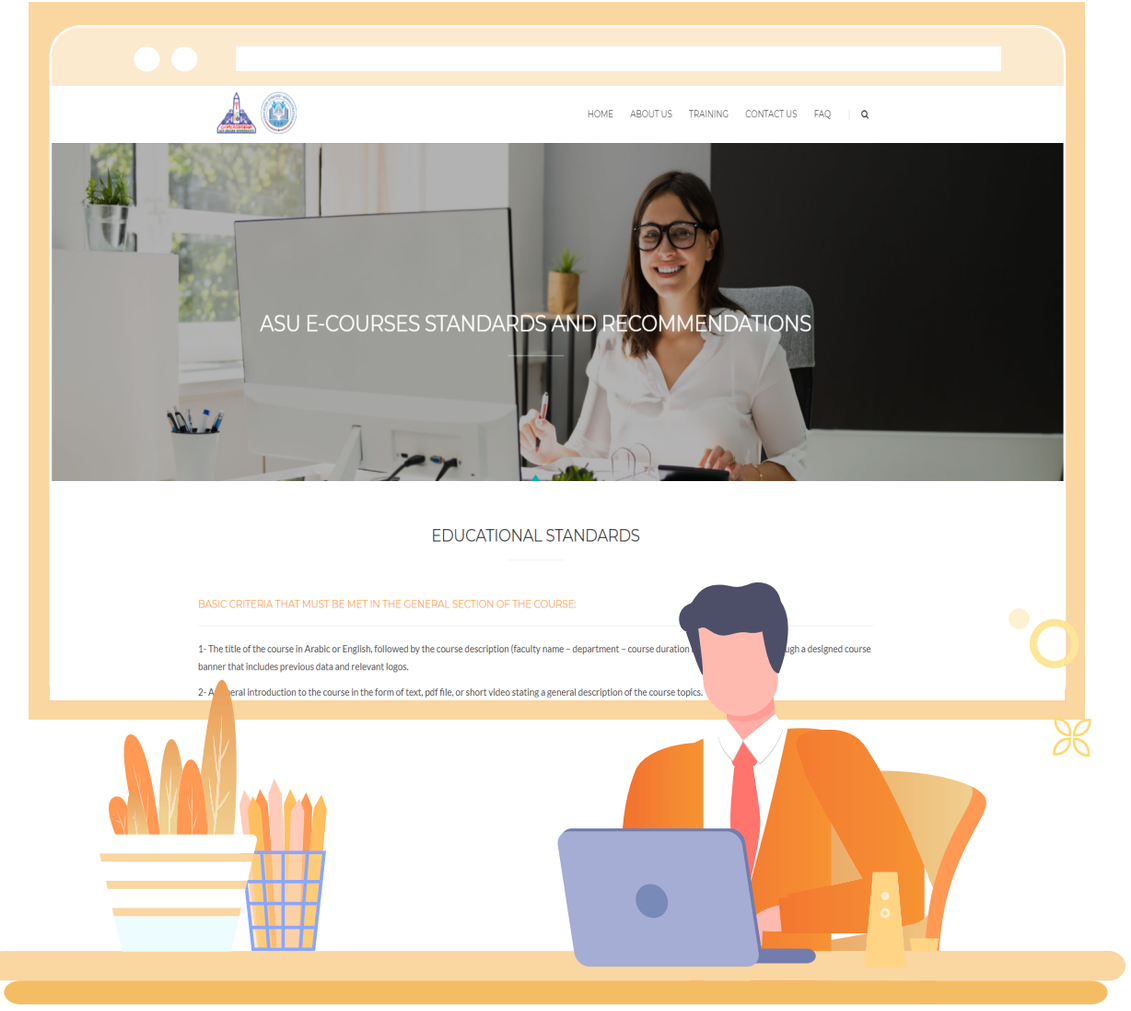
43
Joint & Dual Degrees

13,082
Courses

15,000
Registered Staff

210,000
Registered Students

"ASU2Learn" Services



ASU eLearning Standards

However, implementing IIOE QA 2.0 at ASU may carry some challenges such as adopting standards of our targeted accreditation bodies, this may need some modifications. I also believe that the human factor is crucial during implementation of quality education, thus providing adequate training in quality management principles and tools and raising the teachers' competencies in order to adopt the change of their traditional curricula and program specifications are on top of our challenges as some of our academic programs are still totally face-to-face. Allocating adequate time, resources and infrastructure for online course design, development and deployment is another challenge.

To sustain quality practices and overcome the challenges of implementation, quality management must be driven from clearly defined goals and strategic plans. It must be planned and managed with the same enthusiasm as any other organizational strategy. At the same time, we should ensure senior leadership commitment (as Deans/Vice Deans/ Program Coordinators) and maintain a flexible, responsive organizational culture. Empowering employees and teachers can also overcome the challenges of implementation. And last but not least, adopting a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Program at all levels can increase the engagement, reduce the resistance, and improve the overall performance.

The Relevance and Applicability of IIOE QA 2.0 in the Distance Learning and Teaching in Developing Countries—The Case of Cadi Ayyad University

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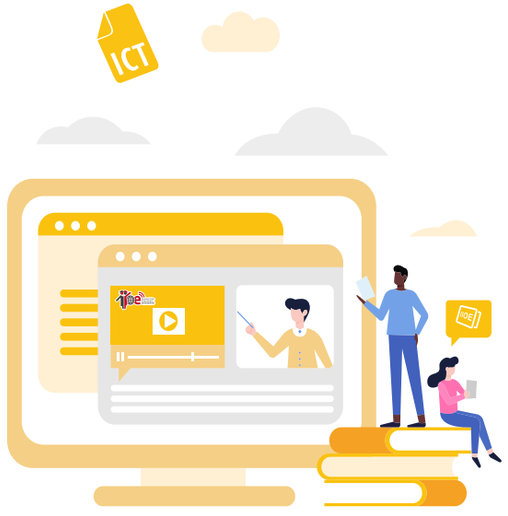


Abstract : Quality assurance, in the Universities of the countries of the South, engaged in -Distance Learning-Teaching (DLT), is of vital strategic interest, because of the eminently hybrid nature of this education, and, of the relatively recent start of the digital transition, in a context of globalized chrono-competition.

In Morocco, the adoption of the IOEE QA 2.0 Framework in the very edifying case of Cadi Ayyad University, a predominantly French-speaking university pioneer in hybridization, presents a major opportunity, to consolidate the still in its infancy process of quality assurance. Especially since it is a Framework oriented more "continuous improvement of internal quality", than towards "normative assessment of external quality". Assessment which is preponderant at the Moroccan university, for cultural reasons, given the persistence of the "logic of honor", and the hierarchical distance.

Cadi Ayyad University

According to our analysis, the adoption of the IIOE's QA Framework 2.0 will face a very mobilizing dual challenge; that of relevance, in terms of alignment, and that of applicability in terms of appropriation.

Meeting this double challenge requires a slight reconfiguration of the IIOE QA 2.0 Framework itself, and the advent of "redistributed leadership", reinventing the logic of honor as well, and promoting the establishment of a quality culture.

The purpose of this article is to make a contribution in these directions.

Keywords :

quality assurance · continuous improvements · alignment · interoperability · ownership · logic of honor · hierarchical distance · quality culture

1 Introduction

Quality Assurance (QA) is a concept with multiple meanings. In university education, it refers to a series of upstream procedures and mechanisms to ensure quality, which is understood here as the "applicability"(Footnote 1) [5] of syllabi, institutions and of the national education/training/research system as a whole.

QA is a negotiated agreement intended to reduce uncertainty for the stakeholders of universities, especially with priority for future graduates as well as professional and enterprise partners.

Morocco has a history of high-quality higher education which can be traced back to the Golden Age of the Arab world. At Université Al Quaraouiyine, founded in 859, teachers teach between prayers in Arabic, the lingua franca of science, such courses as algorithm, which is the predecessor of modern calculation, and Platoism. (Footnote 2)

At that time, QA was performed in academic and economic affairs. A system of layer-by-layer optimization connected teachers with their colleagues and students (Footnote 3), echoing the logic of honor (Footnote 4) [6].

The practice of QA in the modern sense appeared relatively late in Moroccan universities, starting from the reform in 2000. But in this framework, no special attention is paid to distance learning and teaching (DLT), on which the QA practice for face-to-face teaching is imposed. In this aspect, the case of Cadi Ayyad University is very inspiring.

Platonic Academy

University of al-Qarawiyyin

Cadi Ayyad University is a regional university founded in 1978 with multiple campuses and multiple disciplines, passing the ISO9001 certification in 2009. It has always been a pioneer in digital teaching, especially in the harsh condition of Covid-19 disrupting teaching continuity. Cadi Ayyad University, with its internationally leading influence, has been chosen as the first partner for cooperation. Now the university has multiple QA Frameworks jointly developed with the European Union, such as QESAMED, DAfrAli and EQuAM-M, but it lacks a QA framework designated for DLT.

QESAMED
Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union

QESAMED Framework

DAfrAli

DAfrAli Framework

EQuAM-M
Enhancing Quality Assurance Management in Morocco

Enhancing Quality Assurance Management in Morocco（EQuAM-M）

At the moment, the assessment for DLT is proceeded together with that of face-to-face teaching, which is based on the self-assessment of CNPN and related institutions, and conducted during the authentication/re-authentication of the syllabi and subjects.

The tools used by the face-to-face education QA system are based on the CNPN and the statements and comments in the institutional assessments and checking reports of ANEAQ. ANEAQ was established in 2014, after several rounds of endeavor, the agency jointly developed an assessment framework in cooperation with the European Union in 2020 (Footnote 5). This is the significance of this paper, which is to assess the relevance and applicability of the IIOE QA 2.0 (Footnote 6).

ANEAQ
Agence Nationale d'Evaluation et d'Assurance Qualité de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique

National Agency of Evaluation and Quality Assurance of Higher Education and Scientific Research (ANEAQ)

Before the reflective discussion, this paper will first introduce the methodology and results.

2 Methodology

When assessing the relevance and applicability of the IIOE QA 2.0, to reduce deviation caused by social expectation, we used the triangle method, combining the conclusion, suggestions and statements with a qualitative approach.

After studying the related assessment reports on DLT at Cadi Ayyad University during the Covid-19 pandemic, we established a small special committee for internal consultation and interviewing teachers and students, especially graduate students.

According to the experts' suggestions, we mainly examine the internal alignment of the draft of the IIOE QA 2.0 and evaluate its external effectiveness by analyzing the wording of its content.

The characteristics of the IIOE QA 2.0 are clear. It does not set strict procedures, but guides the procedures to develop in line with the best practices. Thus, the aim of the IIOE QA 2.0 is assuring quality by encouraging continuous improvement, rather than setting mandatory regulations and standards. Its predecessor is the IIOE QA 1.0, and the new version is equipped with a toolkit.

The IIOE QA 2.0 covers teaching and learning, but not research, because it aims to assure the quality of technology-based education and training, including course provision and student support. This framework is not only applicable to universities, but also to all HEIs, especially those in the developing countries with relatively limited resources.

3 Results

A/ Challenges for the relevance and alignment of the IIOE QA 2.0 (MLS)

The structural design of the IIOE QA 2.0 reflected upon the application of the IIOE QA 1.0. It illustrates the usage and aim of the framework. It is divided into three chapters and 8 components, which consists of 73 statements, covering all the teaching processes in universities.

A Institutional governance

- 01 Institutional policy and mission
- 02 Organization structure and culture (added)
- 03 Digital infrastructure and resources (revised)

B Support and resources

- 01 Development and implementation of online and blended courses/ syllabi
- 02 Student support (revised according to Components 4 and 5)Personnel
- 03 professional training and support

C Teaching and learning

- 01 Cooperation and partnership (added)
- 02 Monitoring and assessment (added)

Such a structure of the IIOE QA 2.0, which is based on wholeness, can hardly embody its internal logic, and is out of line with the common normative structure (High Level Structure). We think that this will affect the alignment of the framework and the acceptability on the cognitive aspects, while alignment is of crucial importance to the connectivity between organizations.

The sections "cooperation and partnership " and "student support " can be integrated into Chapter A (Institutional governance) and Chapter C (Teaching and learning). Besides, the framework does not include chapters about research because it is a special capability of public universities when faced with private universities and the fierce competition between schools.

The framework proposed by ANEAQ has a similar structure with the common structure, quite different from the IIOE QA 2.0. Therefore, it is more likely to lead to problems in connectivity. The structure proposed by ANEAQ is as follows:

A GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF SUPPORTING FUNCTIONS

- 01 Institutional governance
- 02 Quality assurance policies and management
- 03 Information and communications system

B TRAINING

- 01 Design and provision of training
- 02 Planning, organization, implementation and assessment of training
- 03 Innovative teaching

C SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

- 01 Scientific research policy and its organization
- 02 Research cooperation
- 03 Research output and usage
- 04 Research assessment

D STUDENT ASSURANCE AND UNIVERSITY LIFE

- 01 Student enrollment and guidance
- 02 University life and extracurricular activities
- 03 Graduate follow-up and employability

E SOCIAL SERVICE OF INSTITUTIONS

However, a directive self-assessment of the blended education system in Cadi Ayyad University that is based on the IIOE QA 2.0 exposes an obvious difference, 54% of which is distributed between Component 4 "Development and implementation of online and blended courses/syllabi" and Component 8 "Monitoring and assessment".

Therefore, the application of the IIOE QA 2.0 will undoubtedly create value, enabling the present remote teaching management system to shift from semi-planned management to planned and controllable management, so as to optimize QA management, smoothing the path to excellence. But to make this happen, all stakeholders must take the initiative to apply this framework.

B/ Challenges in the applicability and acceptability of the IIOE QA 2.0 (MLS)

As a management tool, a QA framework needs to go through a process of acceptance, during which the stakeholders should accept and absorb its functions and goals when using the tools. And this requires the recreation of meaning (Footnote 7) [7]. If a tool is technology-based and its procedural rationality is higher than that of social cognition, the recreation of meaning will probably be slow and discontinuous. We think this demonstrates the current situation, on one hand, the operation method proposed by IIOE is top-down, on the other hand, the hierarchical distance exists (Footnote 8) [3].

The advocates of the IIOE QA 2.0, being aware of its operation requirements, suggest support on the institution level and the program level. It is divided into four phases, plus a toolkit and a checklist. The toolkit includes assessment reports of the 8 components, and the checklist is for the course development and assessment of remote learning courses.

However, in the process of supporting ability acquisition, the cultural factor, namely the logic of honor and the hierarchical distance, may lead to the acceptance on the level of tools, but with no impact on behavioral characteristics. In contrast, the acceptance on the level of cognition is much slower, but more transformative. This is exactly the significance of discussing the challenges facing the adoption of the IIOE QA 2.0.

In fact, it is hardly possible to standardize tools due to the disparity of local conditions. For example, there is no comparison between an institution with strict limitation in enrollment, with a teacher-student ratio of 1:20, and an open institution with a teacher-student ratio of 1:30. Even if the marginal cost of the same DLT service may be zero, there is still a difference in scale.

At the same time, we should avoid the co-existence of two education management systems, that is to say, managing DLT and face-to-face teaching separately without integrating them. In our view, building a de-centralized single management structure, reducing hierarchical distance, and adopting the auxiliary principle are the prerequisite of realizing the organizational connectivity of tools and the acceptance on the level of social cognition. These factors also guarantee the effectiveness of all QA systems.

In addition, we should adjust the logic of honor through training and active listening. Influenced by the logic of honor, it seems sensitive for students to make any assessment for teaching, while DLT brings both teachers and students many challenges and requirements such as language distance, immediacy and synchronism, and the constant assessment of teaching and learning activities.

Besides the digital reform in universities, we should take action earlier, starting from the last years of high school, or even earlier (from kindergarten to the 12th grade), to prepare future students to better adapt to DLT (Footnote 9) [2].

4 Discussion

When summarizing this research, we can clearly find that challenges still exist in alignment and acceptance when comparing the status quo of DLT in Cadi Ayyad University with the basic standard and goals of the IIOE QA 2.0.

Facing these two challenges, the IIOE QA 2.0. can be a very good tool to promote the progress and maturity of QA, facilitating it to transform from semi-planned to planned, and then to optimized and controllable, thus smoothing the path to excellence.

The obstacles in this operation process are mostly soft. The unadjusted logic of honor may harm the basic logic of contract of QA. Besides, the under-developed level of digitization in elementary and secondary schools may not be helpful for equipping students with the self-consciousness needed to adapt to the flip-classroom supported by Fab-Lab and the University 4.0 mode.

But such obstacles are not at all insurmountable. Possible measures include the reorganization, discussion, and reshaping of digital leadership and constant dialogues, so as to reasonably reduce the innate risks in the QA system. (Footnote 10)

Finally, this research is explorative, it adopts a qualitative analysis method and has some limitations. But it is worth further studies in other universities in developing countries, so as to confirm the relevance and applicability of the IIOE QA 2.0. to all internal and external stakeholders.

5 Acknowledgments

My gratitude goes to all those who contributed to the writing of this paper, especially Prof. Fatima-Zohra IFLAHEN and his colleagues Mr. Brahim ELAFQIH and Mr. Mohamed larbi OUAAZIZ.

Footnote and Reference

[Footnote 1] Zhu Lan, Quality is Applicability, 1999

[Footnote 2] In 387 BC at the doorstep of the Platonic Academy in Athens, Plato carved the remark Let None But Geometers Enter Here ! This demonstrates the Quality Assurance in student enrollment.

[Footnote 3] Quality monitoring in multiple aspects should be conducted when performing duty. Meanwhile, when the consignors are not satisfied, they can file complaints to the ALAMINE to negotiate a solution, or revoke untrue complaints. If they are not revoked, clients can file complaints to the ALMOUHTASSIB to fight for their rights.

With the same spirit of quality, the ban in interest was broken by the trading procedures recognized by the legal theories.

[Footnote 4] Iribarne P.D'(1989).

[Footnote 5] Quality standards.

ANEAQ Quality Assurance Framework, Nov. 2020.

CSMD suggested in its report to establish an individual institution to assess the quality of education.

[Footnote 6] IIOE QA 2.0: Framework and Toolkit for Driving and Supporting Online and Blended Teaching and Learning

[Footnote 7] Iribarne P.D' (2003)

[Footnote 8] Hofstede G. (2010)

[Footnote 9] The Special Committee of Development Modes believes that Morroco has to become a digital country.

[Footnote 10] ISO 21503 (Management of projects, project groups and project combinations), Criteria for Project Group Management (Fourth edition), successful project group management (MSP, AXELOS). On the level of operation, it is suggested to include Prince 2、ITIL、SCRUM into the toolkit.

[1] ANEAQ-Maroc, (2020), CRITERES DE QUALITE

[2] CSMD (2021) LE NOUVEAU MODELE DE DEVELOPPEMENT Libérer les énergies et restaurer la confiance pour accélérer la marche vers le progrès et la prospérité pour tous

[3] Hofstede G & Al. (2010) Cultures et organisations, Nos programmations mentales, Pearson.

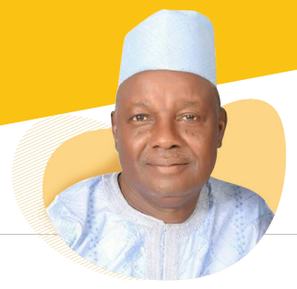
[4] IIOE (2019) Quality Assurance 2.0 : Framework and Toolkit for Driving and Supporting Online and Blended Teaching and Learning

[5] Juran Joseph M. De Feo Joseph A.(2010), Juran's Quality Handbook: The Complete Guide to Performance Excellence, Sixth Edition, The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

[6] Iribarne P.D' (1989), La Logique de l'honneur. Gestion des entreprises et traditions nationales, Edition du Seuil

[7] Iribarne P.D' (2003), Le Tiers-Monde qui réussit - Nouveaux modèles ; Editions Odile Jacob (Editions)

Past, Present, and the Future: Sharing Ahmadu Bello University's Experience in Quality Assurance Development



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General Context of Ahmadu Bello University (ABU)

1

Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria is a federal government University located in Zaria, Kaduna State, Northern Nigeria and is the largest and most cosmopolitan in Nigeria. ABU was founded on October 4, 1962, and named after the Sardauna of Sokoto, Alhaji Sir Ahmadu Bello, the first premier of Northern Nigeria.

Ahmadu Bello University (ABU)

The University operates three campuses: Main campus (Samaru), Kongo campus and the Medical Complex. The Samaru campus houses the administrative offices, research facilities and 12 Faculties. The Kongo campus hosts the Faculties of Law and Administration. There are a total of 106 Departments in the 17 Faculties of the University, 16Research Institutes, 3 Colleges of Agriculture and 3 Schools. The Medical complex hosts the Faculties of Clinical Sciences, Dentistry, Applied Health Sciences and the ABU Teaching Hospital.

The University has three Directorates: Directorate of Academic Planning and Monitoring, Directorate of Public Affairs and Directorate of University Advancement. The Directorate of Academic Planning and Monitoring is the key directorate, responsible for developing and monitoring implementation of academic policies and quality assurance. It has four sub-units, namely, Planning and Statistics, Quality Assurance, Affiliations and Research and Innovation.

The University runs a wide variety of undergraduate (over 100) and graduate programs (over 600) (and offers associate degrees (diplomas) and vocational and remedial programs).

ABU also hosts three African Centres of Excellence (ACE) namely ACE for Neglected Tropical Diseases and Forensic Biotechnology (ACENTDFB), ACE on New Pedagogies in Engineering Education (ACENPEE) and ACE on Sustainable Procurement, Environment and Social Standards (ACESPESS).

ACE for Neglected Tropical Diseases and Forensic Biotechnology (ACENTDFB)

ACE on New Pedagogies in Engineering Education (ACENPEE)

ACE on Sustainable Procurement, Environment and Social Standards (ACESPESS)

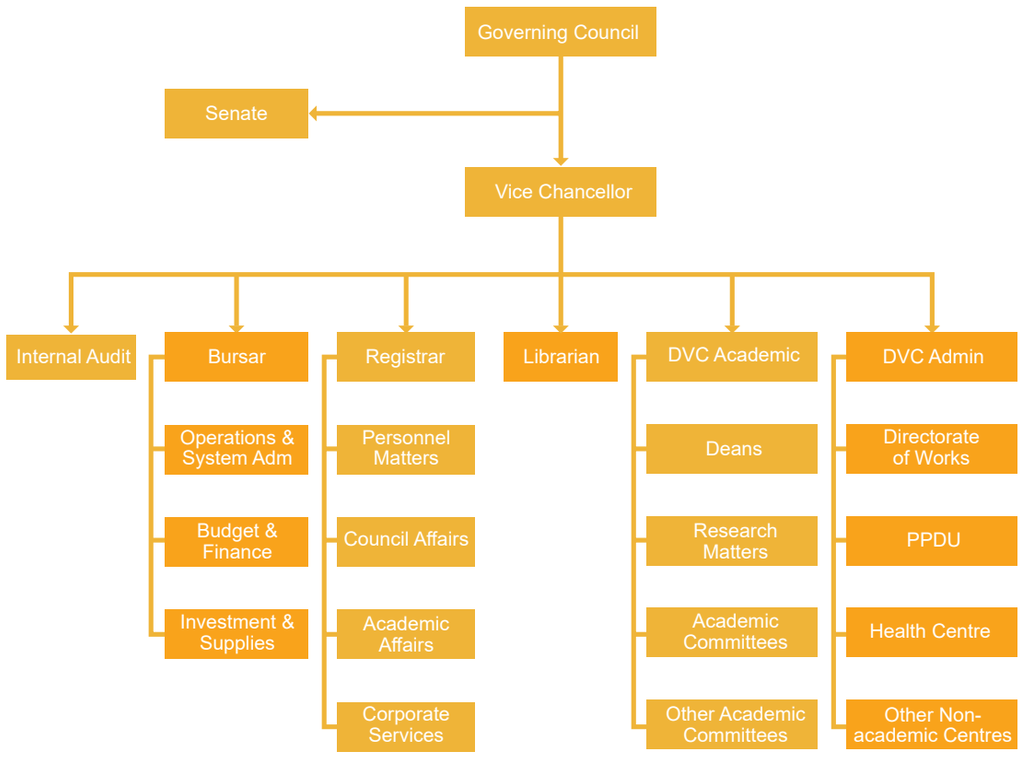
The total student enrollment in the University's degree (undergraduate and postgraduate) and sub-degree programs is about 80,000. There are 3,038 academic and research staff (2,451 males and 587 females) and 8,838 support staff (7,065 males and 1,773 females). Over 600 of the academic staff are full professors.

80,000
The total student enrollment

8,838
Support staff

3,038
Research staff

600
Academic staff are full professors



Organizational Structure of ABU

ABU's Journey of Quality Assurance Development

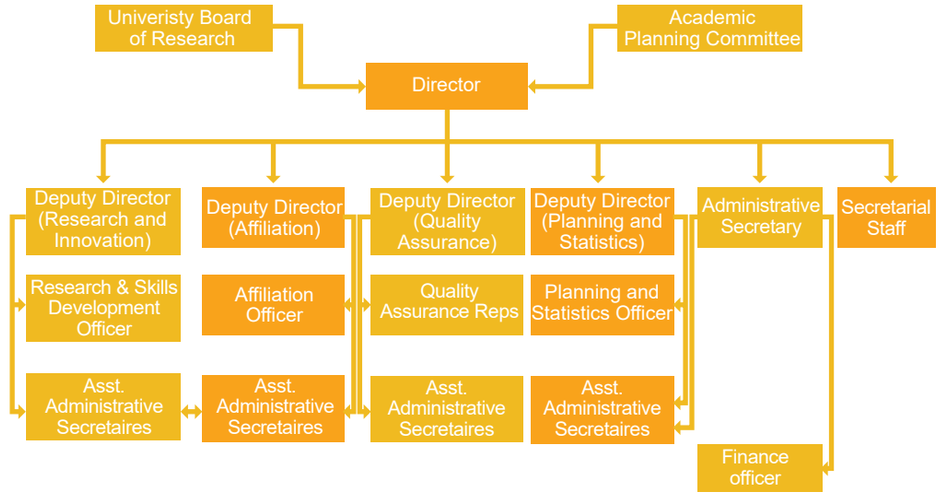
2

The ABU QA Policy provides a general framework for enhancing quality in all areas at the University. The policy is an essential instrument and a basis for implementing quality assurance activities to enable the University to achieve quality service delivery. The policy underlines the commitment and compliance to quality, continual improvement and effectiveness of the University's Quality Management System (QMS). It also underscores Quality Management Framework (QMF) that provides planning, strategy, reporting and implementation processes.

The policy has seven major components:

- A Quality assurance of human resources
- B Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes
- C Quality assessment of students
- D Quality assurance of human resources
- E Quality of teaching and research
- F Quality of facilities, learning resources and students' support
- G Academic calendar and public information

The Quality Assurance unit in the Directorate of Academic Planning and Monitoring (DAPM) is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Policy. In order to effectively coordinate the QA mechanism in the University, an administrative structure has been designed. The QA mechanism involves all relevant stakeholders and operate on a committee-based structure in a hierarchical order: Central QA, Faculty/ Institute/Center QA, and Departmental/Unit QA.



Organogram for DAPM

A Quality Assurance Tool Used in ABU: External Examination/ moderation/ assessment

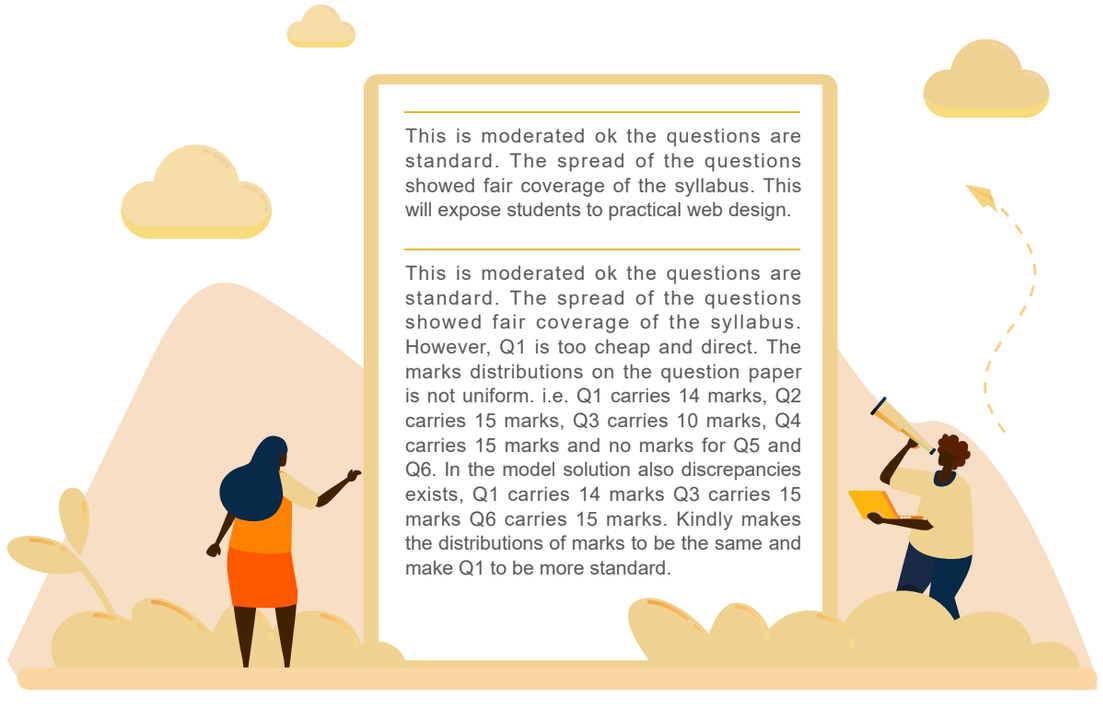
3

External Examination/moderation/assessment as a quality assurance mechanism (key item under the "Checklist on Exams Management and Materials") involves the appointment of an independent expert outside the University (ABU) to provide independent quality assurance for the assessment process and to ensure that standards appropriate to the award level are consistent with the National Standards (National Universities Commission's Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (NUC BMAS)) and comparable to international best practices.

The External examiner is a member of the broader University system within the programme field of learning, and whose accomplishments attest to his/her likelihood of having the authority necessary to fulfill the responsibility of the role of an External Examiner. The person is usually expected to someone in the Professorial cadre.

The Head of Department (Chief Examiner) proposes an External Examiner/Moderator/Assessor to the Departmental and Faculty Boards of Examiners and such a person is expected to have no existing relationship with the Department or any of its key personnel (to avoid any issue of conflict of interest). The University Senate (highest body responsible for all academic related matters in the University) approves the appointment of the External Examiner/ Moderator/Assessor for a two-year period) and the person sends his/her report (bordering on the quality, standards, coverage/spread, correctness (of both questions and answers), etc. directly to the Vice Chancellor. The Vice Chancellor then mandates the DAPM to liaise with the Head of Department to ensure that the observations of the External Examiner/ Moderator/Assessor are addressed. A sample of such report is as shown (The DAPM ensures that the issue(s) raised are properly addressed by the Examiner under the supervision of the Head of Department) before the exams can take place):

Sample of the Report



This is moderated ok the questions are standard. The spread of the questions showed fair coverage of the syllabus. This will expose students to practical web design.

This is moderated ok the questions are standard. The spread of the questions showed fair coverage of the syllabus. However, Q1 is too cheap and direct. The marks distributions on the question paper is not uniform. i.e. Q1 carries 14 marks, Q2 carries 15 marks, Q3 carries 10 marks, Q4 carries 15 marks and no marks for Q5 and Q6. In the model solution also discrepancies exists, Q1 carries 14 marks Q3 carries 15 marks Q6 carries 15 marks. Kindly makes the distributions of marks to be the same and make Q1 to be more standard.

Current Needs and Gaps of ABU's Quality Assurance System

4

ABU needs an OBTL based or OBTL relevant QA system in its current stage of development as it will help to outline how the University plans its core purpose of teaching, research and learning in terms of its curriculum and the realities of the new "norm" occasioned by the recent pandemic of COVID-19. It is also important to the plans of the University in the following areas: acceptable use of technology, equal opportunity, equity and diversity, code of conduct, channels of complaints, intellectual property, e-mail, IT security, environmental protection, sustainability and research. This will further help to enhance students' learning and teachers' performance, optimize the use of active learning strategies, and potentially improve student learning outcomes as it is emphasized in the University's strategic plan. Based on such context, needs and gaps of implementing such an OBTL-based QA mechanism at ABU are:

- **A** Digital Infrastructure and Resources: Internet Access, Robust Network Connectivity, Smart Classrooms (SCR)
- **B** Staff Professional Development and Support: Capacity Building Trainings and Workshops, Webinars, Continuous Education, etc.
- **C** Institutional Structure and Culture: Acceptability and Promotion of OBTL and Adherence to the QA framework

Considering the needs and gaps, the University is open to internationally-validated QA frameworks to refer to in further developing its own OBTL-based QA strategy. For example, some specific features of IIOE QA 2.0 may help ABU to develop its OBTL ecosystem, namely:

- **A** Digital Infrastructure and Resources
- **B** Collaboration and Partnership
- **C** Staff Professional Development and Support

ABU's Experience in Localizing a Quality Assurance that is Internationally Applicable

5

The University commenced the gradual process of "virtual" teaching and learning and viva for its postgraduate programs in January 2021 and as a result had started work on developing a new policy framework to support such initiatives in addition to developing a corresponding QA framework. The new policy termed the Learning and Teaching Policy (TLP) has two major sections: OBTL and Institutional Teaching and Learning Policy (ITLP) and this was approved by the Senate of the University on November 25, 2021. The corresponding QA framework, which derives a lot of its essence from the IIOE QA2.0 is undergoing final reviews from the DAPM and the University Academic Planning Committee before being presented to the Senate for final approval.

One of the biggest challenges is what we regard as "culture shocks" and this refers to issues that will arise from, especially, the staff on transitioning from the normal way of teaching to the new norm of OBTL. This will require changes in several areas: teaching pedagogy, course material and delivery, examination proctoring, effective use of technology, attitudinal changes, etc. These are things that generally take time over here to overcome.

Blended Learning, Quality Assurance, and Post-pandemic Development: Makerere University's Contributions

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About Makerere University

1

Makerere University began as a technical institute in 1922. The Institute was established to meet the high demand for native artisans in the East African territories of Uganda, Kenya, and Tanganyika; and beyond. Makerere quickly gained a reputation in the territories for producing quality artisans, school teachers, and medical, veterinary and agricultural officers; as well as other administrative support staff for the colonial administration of these territories. Over the years, Makerere became a College of the University of London, a College of the University of East Africa, and in 1970 it became an independent national University through an Act of Parliament.

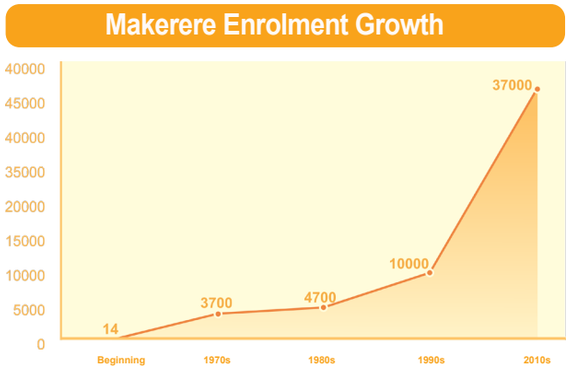
Makerere University's Core Values

Makerere University was established as a national and regional symbol of a traditional African University with the main objective of human resource capacity development for the newly independent countries of East African. The University trained the leaders in all fields who ably took over the administration of their countries at independence and beyond. Makerere achieved world-class status along the way, especially through groundbreaking research carried out in Medical School. Currently, the university holds 25% of the university students in Uganda and the most comprehensive curriculum – all the fields of study in all other universities in Uganda do exist at Makerere University.

THE FOUR GOALS ARE:

- A research-led university responding to national, regional and global development challenges
- An engaged university with enhanced partnerships with industry, the community and international institutions
- Innovation in teaching and learning that responds to the changing environment
- An engaged university with enhanced partnerships with industry, the community and international institutions

Makerere University's Strategic Goal 2030



Makerere University's Enrolment Growth

Blended Learning Development to Ensure Quality Curriculum During the Pandemic

2

The break of the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) that led a massive lockdown across countries in the world has had a significant impact on African higher education systems, and Uganda in particular has been badly affected, with campuses closed for up to a year and a half. However, as much as this was the case the lockdown made revelations on the urgency of delivering online education by universities to their students. In the case of Makerere University, there was already existing efforts on making blended learning as a mainstream method of delivery; these efforts date as far back as the year 2000. The initial motivation then was responding the increased demand for university education amidst limited resources (Human Resources, Infrastructure and other inputs). Efforts to mainstream this form of delivery had to proceed at a measured pace with the requirement of having any form of delivery in the curriculum to be approved by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). The NCHE was established by Act of Parliament (The Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act of 2001) to regulate the provision of tertiary education in Uganda.

NCHE Figures

The university has been progressively reviewing its curriculum structurally re-orienting it towards having Online Distance and E-Learning (ODEL) leveraged. Having the huge task of transforming existing curriculum, which was very large in volume, to the required standards has been kept in view. In addition, the entire spectrum of quality requirements for curriculum development had to be adhered to for any reviews to be accepted by the regulatory agency (NCHE) and appreciated by the key stakeholders (Government of Uganda, University Administration, Students and Staff). The curriculum review process sat on a very delicate balance and would sometimes be held at bay by any of the key stakeholders if its implementation meant major disruptions in the stakeholders' processes. For example, with the lockdown caused by COVID-19 the Government of Uganda gave leeway to universities to deliver emergency online classes. The National Council for Higher Education was instructed to accredit this mode of delivery for qualifying universities after inspection. The universities applying for this accreditation were required to survey the students on the students' readiness for this mode of delivery. About 70% of the students said they were ready to continue with this mode. The universities continued with those that were ready and provided alternatives for those that were not in position to access this mode at that time.

The Ministry in charge of Education in Uganda has now developed a policy (yet to be approved) for delivering online education at all levels of training.

Governance Structure and Mechanism to Establish Quality Assurance at Makerere

3

In the governance structure of Quality Assurance at Makerere University there is the University Council Committee in charge of Quality Assurance and Gender. The University Council is the supreme governing body for the University and the committee of Quality Assurance and Gender is one of the five committees of the University Council. It is also the largest in terms of membership. There is in place a university policy for Quality Assurance that guides the activities of this committee as well as those of other administrative structures for Quality Assurance. The policy stipulates on mechanisms for quality assurance.

The Executive Committee of IUCEA and its Sub-committees
The current standing committees are:

- **Scholarship Students and Staff Mobility Committe**
- **Planning, Finance and Human Resources Committee**
- **Quality Assurance Committee**
- **Common Higher Education Area Committee**
- **Audit Committee**

The Executive Committee of IUCEA and its Sub-committees

A key mechanism for quality assurance is curriculum development and review. This mechanism is well guided at the university level, at the level of the regulatory authority (national level) and regional level (by the Inter University Council for Higher Education) (Picture 5). The guidance by the Inter University Council for Higher Education is a new phenomenon to allow for transfer of academic credit and interpretation of qualifications amongst member countries of the East Africa Community. The curriculum review mechanisms are very elaborate and requires every course unit (the smallest division of an academic program) to stipulate specific elements like: Rationale for course, Learning Outcomes, Course Descriptions, Available Human Resources and other inputs, Course Structure, Methods of Delivery, Assessment Methods, Views from Stakeholders, Reference Materials and Duration of the course unit. A specific course unit is then aligned with other units to form a curriculum. The Committee of Quality Assurance and Gender will assess the curriculum based on the stipulated requirements for each course and adherence across the course units in forming desirable proficiencies for the entire program.

The Quality Assurance Directorate University Quality Assurance Policy and Framework of 2007 guide the activities of the Directorate which are:

- Ensuring the development and maintenance of high-quality academic programs
- Ensuring a high-quality support environment for staff and students for effective teaching, learning, research and knowledge transfer partnerships
- Ensuring an efficient staff recruitment, development and appraisal systm
- Development of mechanisms to motivate high quality and competitive research
- Ensuring an effective external examination system
- Enhancement of Quality experiential and Flexible learning
- Contributing to the formulation of the university quality assurance enhancement policies and practices; to their implementation and monitoring across the University and where appropriate with collaborative partner institutions
- An effective student admission, assessment and progression process

Activities of the Quality Assurance Directorate at Makerere University

QAD SERVICES

- **CHS Work Load Form**

- **Plagiarism Checking for Promotions and Related Reasons**

- **Quality Academic Programmes**

Quality Assurance Directorate's Services

Blended Learning Development to Ensure Quality Curriculum During the Pandemic

4

The biggest gap in the traditional system of quality assurance lies in it not being forward looking; tended to engrave the traditional modes of delivery and left online modes at the periphery. The integration of these elements presumes that there will be capacity on part of the teachers, the students, the technology and the supporting environment for learning. The second challenge is the volume of work associated with the large number of course units to be converted. The university curriculum comprises of about 5000 Course units and over 250 study programs. About 70% of this curriculum lies in the fields of Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) with a lot of practical elements. It is a broader task to convert curriculum that has a lot of practicals into online delivery modes. In the initial instances, students and other stakeholders have an inbuilt bias towards equivalence of online delivery modes when it comes to lab-based classes. Even the regulatory agencies have specified very small staff to student ratios (say one staff to eight students and sometimes smaller numbers when it comes to the clinicals). These small staff to student ratios imply a great deal of human attention when it comes to clinical course units. On the continuum of transformation of curriculum into the online modes makes clinicals come in towards the very end.

Student side issues, such as equipment, skills and infrastructure are a hurdle in the way and were never completely articulated in the current policies in use; on the side of Teacher, pedagogical issues are predominant in addition to lack of equipment and ICT skills. The support environment has a lot of issues that range from availability of resilient infrastructure to resistance to cyber-attacks.

Makerere University is faced with a great opportunity of reworking its quality assurance system in line with the needs of OBTL. The Toolkit has exposed a lot of gaps we have in our traditional QA system. So, we are using IIOE QA Toolkit to analyze gaps and issues in existing quality assurance framework and processes systematically with respect to Online and Blended Teaching and Learning (OBTL), as well as facilitating Makerere University to revise and refine the existing quality assurance framework and processes to improve the provision of OBTL. The toolkit could also support Makerere to formulate strategies and pathways for implementing OBTL and capacity Building for Makerere in OBTL. Makerere University's interface with the toolkit will be beneficial to the entire team utilizing the toolkit in that resource stressed environments are likely to come up with innovative mechanisms to work around the hurdles in their way. These solutions are likely to benefit the entire community.

03

Lift

Strengthening Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa: the UNESCO-SFIT Project

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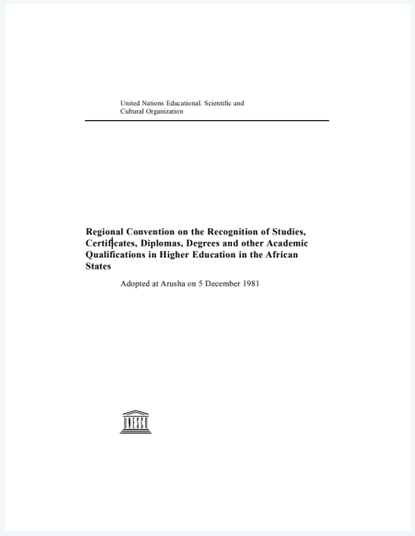
1 Introduction

For the past 3 decades or so, African countries have been experiencing rapid expansion of higher education to unprecedented levels. However, due to limited human, financial, and other resource, that expansion has continued to pose major challenges in safeguarding the quality of the education provided. This has prompted many African countries to established systems for assurance the quality of the education provided by higher education institutions. However, the effectiveness of the systems is challenged by inadequate institutional capacity in terms of human, financial and other resources. There are also limited opportunities for collaboration among the quality assurance agencies (QAAs) in Africa for the purpose of sharing information and best practices.

In 2016, out of 54 countries in Africa there were only 24 with national QAAs. In addition, most higher education institutions in Africa have adopted one form or another of internal quality assurance system. Some countries have even developed qualifications frameworks as instruments enabling harmonization of education and training systems, and for facilitating recognition of qualifications within countries and across borders. Despite these efforts, the challenges lie in the funding and technical expertise to conduct quality assurance activities; lack of a framework for accreditation of open and distance learning programmes; accreditation of trans-border higher education; multiplicity of accreditation bodies; rigour of continual revision of minimum academic standards; and outdated minimum standards used for accreditation.

Meanwhile, recognition of qualifications is appreciated as one of the important platforms for the Continent's enhanced socio-economic integration. In that regard, in 1981 UNESCO launched the Arusha Convention on the Recognition of Diplomas, Degrees and Qualifications in Higher Education in Africa[1] , which was revised in 2014 and re-named the Addis Convention[2] . Operationalization of the Convention, among others, requires the existence in African countries of appropriate systems for assuring the quality of education leading to the qualifications to be recognised. There is also the need for a system to facilitate collaboration and networking among Africa's QAAs in order to promote sharing of experiences and best practices.

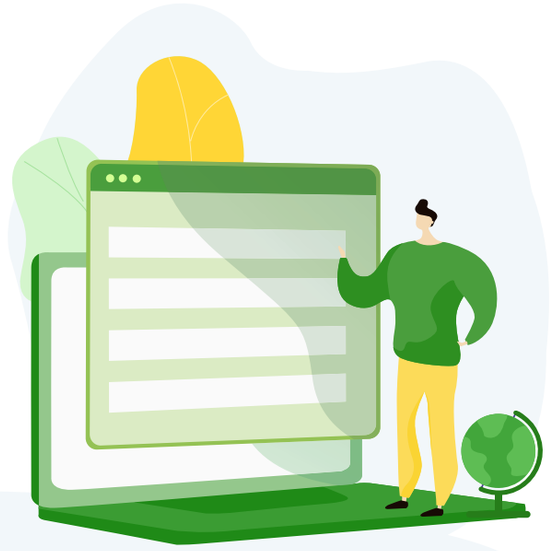
Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in the African States



United Nations Educational. Scientific and Cultural Organization

Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in the African States

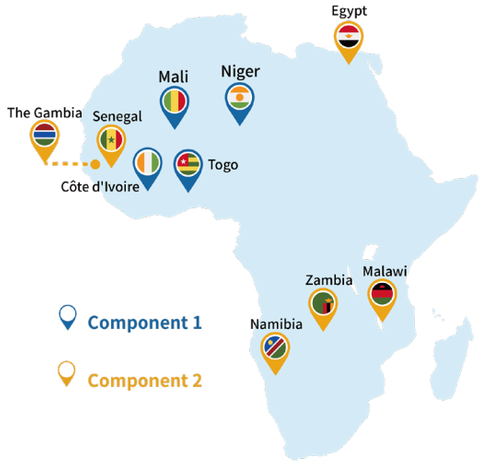
Adopted at Arusha on 5 December 1981



Footnote:
[1].(http://www.unesco.org/education/pdf/HIGH_4_E.PDF)
[2].(http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=49282&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

2 THE UNESCO-SHENZHEN FUNDS-IN-TRUST (UNESCO-SFIT) PROJECT

The above scenario prompted UNESCO to develop the UNESCO-SFIT Project in Strengthening Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa, among whose thrusts focuses on consolidating existing quality assurance networks and facilitating the development of mutual recognition tools for external QAAs in Africa. The project was established with support from the People's Republic of China through financial contribution from the Shenzhen Municipal Government. It was initially designed as a three-year intervention whose implementation started in 2017. As the project name suggests, the project aims at strengthening higher education systems in Africa by developing quality assurance mechanisms in ten countries, namely: Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Senegal, The Gambia, Togo, and Zambia. Other beneficiaries are the existing and emerging Quality assurance Networks in Africa.



Countries involved in SFIT

The project has been established with an overall objective to assist African higher education systems to further develop their quality assurance mechanisms, putting in place the necessary quality assessment tools to facilitate the recognition of foreign higher education credits, study programmes and qualifications, and thus contribute to the enhancement of trans-national mobility of students. Quality assurance systems are ultimately the

UNESCO-Shenzhen Funds-in-Trust Project

factor that can determine recognition arrangements and recognition outcomes of qualifications in both domestic and cross-border contexts. They are the main source of mutual trust among the Member States of UNESCO, and therefore, are key to the successful implementation of the Addis Convention.

The UNESCO-SFIT project includes three interrelated components. Component 1 focuses on supporting the establishment of national QAAs through building upon the on-going UNESCO initiatives, Beneficiary countries under this component are: Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger and Togo. Component 2 is intended to provide support to institutional capacity building initiative in the recently established QAAs. Beneficiary countries under Component 2 are: Egypt, the Gambia, Malawi, Namibia, Senegal and Zambia. Component 3 focuses on consolidating existing quality assurance networks in Africa and development of continental tools for mutual recognition of qualifications.

UNESCO launched Component 3 of the UNESCO-Shenzhen Project on 20 November 2018, in Johannesburg, South Africa

One of the outstanding features of the UNESCO-SFIT project is that the activities of each country project are tailormade. These activities geared towards the development of national regulatory mechanisms and supported capacity building in quality assurance in higher education, for which strong national/country partners and authorities are involved in a participatory manner. Moreover, the creation activities envisaged in the project are demand-driven from the beneficiary countries, which include the representation and involvement of in-country stakeholders, also organization of national fora, and the capacity building activities that provide an opportunity for the reflection and development of relevant local perspectives, hence their proper management, nurturing ownership of the process by the organization, and developing an adequate implementation plan.

In light of the above mentioned, all country projects have successfully their objectives in creating their national QAAs, including the capacities to cater for the needs of the Sector. Box1, will expand on the Malian experience in establishing the national QAA in Higher education known with its French acronym l'Agence malienne d'assurance qualité pour l'enseignement supérieur et la recherche (AMAQ-Sup) describing the main results obtained as one of the beneficiary countries of the project under Component 1.

Box 1

Creation of the AMAQ-S and Internal Quality Assurance Units in Malian Higher Education Institutions

The creation of the national QAA in Higher Education and Research in Mali is the outcome of in-depth feasibility study and a number national consultation meetings with great number of relevant stakeholders including the academic community and student bodies. The recommendations included the operationalization process of the concept.

Active involvement of academic community facilitated the development of standards aligned with national and continental levels; also, development of internal quality assurance guidelines for higher education institutions and training of trainers meant assessment of procedures at institutional and programme levels. Training programmes are of holistic nature meant the overall management of the quality assurance structure in the country.

Regarding Component II-Capacity building, several benchmarking missions to more matured agencies have provided opportunities of sharing best practices and consolidate relations with agencies visited, such as Morocco and Senegal.

A point in case, is training and awareness of students in different dimensions in internal quality assurance and the articulation between internal and external quality assurance, namely between the CIAQs and AMAQ-S.

Under Component III-AMAQ-Sup is one of the founding Members of the RAFANAQ (Network of National Quality Assurance Agencies for French-speaking Africa), aimed the consolidation of relations with the member agencies of these networks, and forge cooperative projects at regional and Continental levels in the field of quality assurance.

Workshop for the development of the AMAQ-SUP operating procedures manual

In conclusion, the UNESCO-SFIT project allowed the strengthening of capacities in the country, establish and operationalize the National Quality Assurance body. Indeed, the law establishing the ANAQ-S was promulgated in June 2018 and the decree fixing its organization and its operational procedures was signed on 21 September 2018. The Executive Director of AMAQ-S was the focal point of the country project.

The other beneficiary countries' achievements under Component 1 include: Niger has created the national QAA and is further developing the capacity building strategies aimed the sustainability of the agency; Togo has conducted similar workshops and meetings country wide and the decree project for the official establishment of the national QAA is under adoption by the parliament including the operational procedures; Cote d'Ivoire has created a Council and is hosted by the Ministry.

Establishment of a national quality assurance agency in Niger

Box 2

Capacity Building in Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Malawi

The Government of Malawi established National Council for Higher education (NCHE) through an Act of parliament number 15 of 2011 to promote and regulate higher education. Following the enactment of the Act, NCHE started its operations in 2014. Since then, NCHE, Ministry of Education and other key stakeholders have demonstrated continued commitment to promotion of quality assurance in higher education. However, considering the fact that NCHE is a new regulatory body and a concept of quality assurance is a relatively new in the higher education sub sector in Malawi, a lot of sensitisation, awareness, stakeholder engagements, collaboration and capacity building on quality assurance were necessary at all levels of higher education. With support from UNESCO-SFIT project, a number of activities were conducted in order to strengthen the internal and external quality assurance systems for higher education.

National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) in Malawi

The following activities were implemented under the auspices of the project:

1. Development of standards and procedures in curriculum development and review process which resulted into the development of the Template for programme development which all HEIs are using when developing new programmes.
2. A needs assessment on quality assurance units in higher education institutions (HEIs) was conducted, and the outcomes informed the project about areas requiring support and great focus.
3. Launching and conducting awareness campaign about the mandate of NCHE and importance of adopting quality culture and quality assurance in HEIs which resulted in improving the relationship between NCHE and its stakeholders in pursuit of quality assurance in HEIs. Eventually, some HEIs introduced quality assurance units in their respective institutions.
4. Conducting training for capacity building of quality assurance professionals which resulted in the development of internal guidelines for quality assurance units in HEIs.
5. Participation in international workshops and conferences by QA professionals which resulted in building capacity of officials from NCHE and Ministry of Education.
6. Attachment/placement of two quality assurance Specialists from NCHE to Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education to build their capacity in QA processes, policies, procedures and tools.
7. Quality Management Systems development training workshop based on ISO 9001: 2015 which built capacity of participants on the development of the quality management systems in HEIs.

SFIT officially launched in Malawi

It is worth mentioning that to subscribe to the ethos of gender equality and human right based approach, the project took deliberate steps to advance and empower women in all its activities. When identifying participants for capacity building in quality assurance, special attention was given to gender, and mostly women were encouraged to participate.

Tangible outcomes at the end of the project include:

- 34 institutions were visited in the period 21 August to 8 November 2019 for sensitisation and awareness meetings about the mandate of NCHE and adopting a quality culture and quality assurance in HEIs beating the targeted 30 HEIs.
- Increased visibility of the UNESCO-SFIT project in Malawi.
- Increased awareness of NCHE mandate and clear the misconceptions HEIs had towards NCHE.
- Feedback from HEIs about quality assurance status in Malawi was sought.
- Identified weak areas in the management of QA by NCHE and suggestions for improvement were also sought.

The project was implemented by NCHE in close collaboration with Ministry of Education, regulatory and professional bodies as well as HEIs. Thus, the direct beneficiaries of the project are NCHE, Department responsible for Higher Education in the Ministry of Education, selected professional and regulatory bodies as well as HEIs whose staff were equipped with capacity building on processes, standards, guidelines, mechanisms and procedures of quality assurance in higher education.

The project has also reinforced NCHE's networking in quality assurance on the continent and alignment of its quality assurance system to international standards. In addition, most HEIs are now receptive to develop and implement quality assurance systems in their institutions which was not the case before the project. There is a need therefore to come up with similar project for a continued and consistent strengthening of quality assurance systems in HEIs.

In summary, The project was very critical in promoting quality assurance for higher education in Malawi. Officials from the Department of Higher Education, HEIs and NCHE including some officials from other regulatory bodies have been equipped with knowledge, skills and competencies in internal and external quality assurance in HEIs. Generally, all the activities under the project received overwhelming support from the stakeholders because of their positive impact. Future project on the same would underscore and strengthen further the quality assurance system in higher education in Malawi.

Other country projects under component 2 have conducted similar activities to those in Malawi as well.

In terms of Component 3-Strengening Networking in Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa and development of Mutual Recognition Tools, the objectives of the component have been achieved successfully. The activities include undertaking detailed research in profiling quality assurance in Africa, and two major workshops were organized.

1

Sensitization Workshop held in Dakar in February 2020. The Workshop discussed the outcomes of the research in profiling the quality assurance in the Continent and the draft Terms of reference of the Mutual Recognition Tools for Quality Assurance Agencies and Accreditation Bodies decisions in Africa.

2

Validation workshop of the Mutual Recognition Tools for the Quality Assurance Agencies and Accreditation Bodies Decisions in Africa held virtually from 31 May to 02 June 2021. The meeting discussed the details of the Tools, including the objectives, benefits and challenges. At the end of the Workshop, the Mutual Recognition Tools were adopted unanimously.

In conclusion, the UNESCO-SFIT project was the first project developed and implemented in strengthening the quality assurance in higher education in Africa. The project attained its objectives through the creation of 4 new national QAAs, more than 200 specialists are trained, and that Mutual Recognition Tools in Quality Assurance Agencies are developed and adopted by African countries to facilitate harmonization of quality assurance in the Continent.

The project will officially be closed on 30 June 2022.

Integrating"Course-Competition-Innovation", Shanghai Jiao Tong University Joins Hands with Huawei to Create a New Model for Talent Cultivation

The new talent cultivation model "Course-Competition-Innovation", jointly developed by Shanghai Jiao Tong University and Huawei, not only promotes the reform of course content and teaching method, facilitates students' entrepreneurship, but also sets a new example of "integrating industry and education, achieving a win-win situation for academies and enterprises".

Mr. Pengzhi Chu

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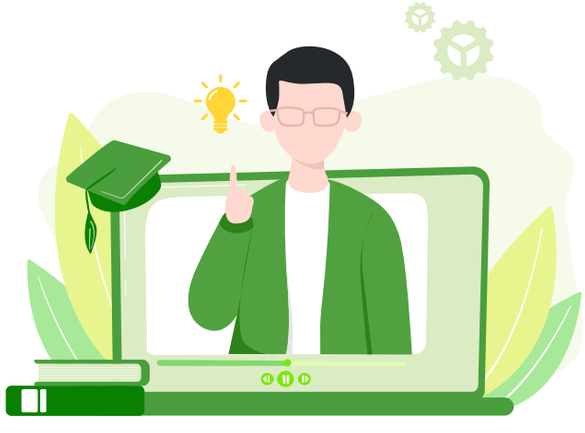
"Looking back, we see our path hidden in shades of green." Time flies by, and Shanghai Jiao Tong University has been on the journey of integrating industry and education for five years.



In 2017, Shanghai Jiao Tong University (SJTU) joined hands with Huawei to establish the Huawei ICT Academy Innovation Talent Center. Five years on, both sides have cooperated closely and adopted the talent cultivation model "Course-Competition-Innovation" (Course exposure—Competition—Innovation and entrepreneurship). By holding competitions for secondary school students, the two sides have not only made ICT better known among adolescents, but also formed a virtuous circle to cultivate ICT talents. After overcoming unknown challenges, we now embrace a fruitful harvest in autumn.

To speed up the construction of a National Demonstration Base for Mass Entrepreneurship and Innovation, as well as cultivate more innovative talents, in 2016, SJTU adapted the previous Engineering Training Center into a Student Innovation Center, hoping to provide students with the environment and conditions to practice and explore, and make all possible efforts to support student innovation and entrepreneurship by building this "skill-training hall for future leaders in science and technology, and a handshake area between industries and academies."

In the early days of the Student Innovation Center, SJTU found that there were areas for improvement in this talent cultivation model. First, the goals for talent cultivation in some majors were not forward-looking enough and did not have unique features. Second, gaps existed between the capabilities of the talents and the demands of the actual jobs in the society. Third, the university lacked frontier technology platforms in the industries, which was unfavorable to supporting and expanding teaching and learning. These aspects urgently needed to be improved by integrating industry and education.

As a world-leading provider of ICT (information and communications) infrastructure and intelligent terminal, Huawei was actively cultivating ICT talents through university-enterprise cooperation programs at that time. With our common goals and different advantages, we clicked and started the journey of cultivating innovative talents together.

Course exposure: exploring the mystery of frontier technologies

In recent years, the new generation of ICT technologies, such as the internet, cloud computing, big data and artificial intelligence emerged one after another. How to help students acquire cutting-edge technologies faster, challenge relevant scientific research and achieve innovation and entrepreneurship? This is the problem we have been working on.

Therefore, since 2017, focusing on such cutting-edge technology fields as Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI) and HarmonyOS, we have joined hands with Huawei and offered more than ten Innovation Training courses with different emphasis such as "Introduction to LiteOS+NB-IoT," the IoT Engineering Practice Course, the Artificial Intelligence HCIA Open Course, the Big Data Course for five universities in East China, Huawei Self-driving Simulated Training, Huawei Cloud ModelArts Technology Open Course, Network Security Practice, and HarmonyOS Innovation Training. We have launched such courses for more than 30 times and cultivated over 2000 frontier technology talents.

"Introduciton to LiteOS+NB-IoT" Innovation Training held in SJTU

For example, the Artificial Intelligence Open Course offered in 2018 not only attracted more than 400 students from diverse majors including Dynamics of Machinery, Electronic Information, Ship Building, Material Engineering, Economics and Management, many teachers also signed up. Students of different majors and grades gathered to learn from each other the knowledge and expertise beyond their own discipline or major, which not only broadened their horizons, built a more comprehensive knowledge system, but also laid a solid foundation for their future practice and innovation.

What is worth mentioning is that, different from the traditional theory teaching, the courses in Huawei Innovation Training adopts a teaching model that combines basic theory and project programming practice, one which transforms lecture contents into actual plans. Such a teaching mode has greatly improved students' practical abilities, enabling them to finish developing the projects after class, and go through evaluation, presentation and examination, and participate in competitions. This model that integrates learning, practice and competition not only enhances students' mastery of the essense of technology, but also motivates them for continuous innovation.

By working together with Huawei, and carrying out teaching reform and innovation based on actual conditions, we have cultivated a large number of innovative talents. Our teaching outcomes have not only been recognized by the university, but also gained a lot of national-level awards. For example, the innovative education system featuring openness, sharing, cross-disciplinary development, industry and education integration and strong complementarity between teaching and innovation developed by the Student Innovation Center won the Grand Prize of the 2019 Shanghai Jiao Tong University Teaching Achievement Awards; the In-depth Learning Algorithm and Practice course won the Grand Prize in the Second National College Innovation Competition for Blended Teaching Design.

The In-depth Learning Algorithm and Practice course won the Grand Prize in the Second National College Innovation Competition for Blended Teaching Design

Competition: Enhancing Students' Self-motivation for Innovation

Technology competition is another focus of the SJTU Student Innovation Center in promoting students' growth. We encourage students to put the knowledge gained in the Innovation Training into practice, design their works according to market demands and participate in various kinds of competition. By stimulating students' motivation for innovation, we have realized "promoting learning and innovation through competition".

Since 2018, SJTU has attended the the Innovation Competition of the Huawei ICT Competition for four years in a row and gained the championships in the international finals of the 4th and 5th Innovation Competitions. In the 5th Huawei ICT Competition, the postgraduates from School of Mechanical Engineering put what they learned about AI and cloud computing in the Innovation Training into use and developed a "End-Cloud-Collaboration Intelligent Driving Practice Platform." By comprehensively utilising algorithms like image augmentation, GMapping and AMCL positioning, the platform could perfom tasks in various intelligent driving scenarios such as identifying traffic lights, imposing and lifting speed limits, identifying zebra crossings, avoiding pedestrians and obstacles, identifying lanes, driving through crossroads and automatic parking, which was truly impressive.

Likewise, in the "2018 National College Student IoT Design Competition", students from SJTU innovatively applied what they have learned about IoT from the Innovation Training into their design of the "Intelligent Reservation System of Library Seats" and the "NB-IoT-based AED Intelligent Management System", which won the first prize, the former also won the Huawei Special Innovation Award.

SJTU students won the championship in the international finals of the Innovation Competition of the 4th Huawei ICT Competition

Innovation and Entrepreneurship: cultivating industry-oriented talents

If learning ICT technology and participating in competitions are the new channels for students' growth, encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship can not only demonstrate talents' value, but also speed up the development of technology to change our lives. To respond to the Ministry of Education's promotion of the "National Training Program of Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Undergraduates", the Student Innovation Center will promote the achievements of the Innovation Training by guiding students to carry out innovative projects and programs, encouraging entrepreneurship and facilitating their works to be applied in industries, so that theory can empower practice, and boost the development of industries.

Our innovative practices have gained fruitful results. Four postgraduates from School of Mechanical Engineering and School of Electronic Information and Electrical Engineering developed a virtual live-streaming service platform based on Huawei Cloud, using the Cloud and AI technologies. Through an advanced AI visual algorithm, it greatly lowered the threshold of virtual live-streaming, and enabled e-commerce businesses to integrate VR elements and allowed people to interact with virtual live-streamers, thus making it more fun. In 2019, this team named its work "I am a Super Star"and won the first prize in the Innovation Competition of the 4th Huawei ICT Competition. Based on this technology, the students later established the "VOKA Technology Company" which has attracted capital from the society, and they will put their iterated product into the market. This case is doubtlessly a real practice of promoting social progress through individual actions.

"A country can be smart and rich once its youth are smart and rich." Our aim is not only to cultivate innovative talents in our university alone, but we strive to ignite the passion of more adolescents to pursue science. Therefore, since 2019, we have been joining hands with Huawei in holding the Driverless Cars Challenge Cup, an AI activity facing outstanding secondary school students, and we have already held it for two consecutive years. This event aims at exploring the transition between primary education and higher education, so as to facilitate the cultivation of AI talents.

The cooperation achievements of SJTU and Huawei not only promote the reform in course content and teaching method, facilitate students' entrepreneurship, but also set a new example of "integrating industry and education, achieving a win-win situation for academies and enterprises". Now, this model has been widely recognized by many universities and enterprises, and has been duplicated and popularized in such schools as Harbin Institute of Technology and Tianjin University.

"With the rising tide our path is widened, with the wind blowing it's time to set sail." In the future, we expect enhanced cooperation with Huawei, we will push forward the cultivation of competitive innovative ICT talents with a focus on frontier technologies like AI and HarmonyOS. In this way, we promote the emerging engineering fields with our endeavor, and make greater contributions to the prosperity of industries.

Ideas

04

Response to IIOE QA 2.0: A view from the South

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Relevance of the IIOE QA 2.0 to higher education institutions in the global South

The IIOE QA 2.0 is very relevant to higher education institutions in the global South, specifically in terms of its holistic and comprehensive approach and how it can be operationalized. During the COVID-19 crisis, emergency remote learning and teaching assessment became our reality and never before have we realized how important the ecosystem of using learning technologies in Higher Education is. We were again reminded how various activities are interdependent and fit together within our institution and that we need to collaborate and work across silos to be successful. We also again became aware that Stellenbosch University is part of a bigger ecosystem with many linkages outside Stellenbosch University that need to be nurtured to be successful. To reflect on the quality of our interventions we therefore require a holistic and comprehensive approach to quality assurance which the IIOE QA 2.0 provides.

Furthermore, because of the wide diversity of institutions in the global South, there cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach that will work for all institutions. The focus of the IIOE QA 2.0 on individual institutional self-assessment is therefore very useful in that it enables every institution to identify their own strengths and weaknesses, draft their context-specific strategies and policies and evaluate and adapt their strategies and plans accordingly. In this way, institutions can close the quality assurance loop through their own contextual evaluations and adaptation of strategies and plans.

Toolkit Strengthened the Relevance IIOE QA 2.0 for HEIs in the Global South

The relevance IIOE QA 2.0 for higher education institutions in the global South is further strengthened through the toolkit which contains resources that an institution can click through to access best practices and examples. The primary and secondary data sources suggested for some of the components also add richness to the components and allow for further exploration and application by individual institutions within their own contexts and where applicable.

Areas or issues that IIOE QA 2.0 could consider to make it more relevant

Currently no distinction is made between blended and fully online teaching and learning. It will be important to determine whether the framework applies in all the components to an equal measure for blended and online teaching and learning. At present, there is no real distinction between blended and online learning in the IIOE QA 2.0 and it is therefore necessary to reflect on what the differences are and what elements could be added to the framework to distinguish between blended and online teaching and learning.

Stellenbosch University

The focus should remain on learning and teaching instead of technology per se and section Component 1, Institutional Mission and Policies, especially 1.3 (Policy) of the framework could be strengthened by also including references to the institution's learning and teaching and assessment policies. These are core policies that should also inform the use of learning technologies.

Then, in terms of component 4: Online and blended program/Course development and Implementation, the focus on the quality assurance of online assessment could be sharpened. During emergency remote learning and teaching we realized how crucial valid and reliable online assessments are and we need to continuously reflect on the quality assurance thereof.

Another component that could be strengthened under Component 4 that relates specifically to the African context, is learning material that is "data light" because of the low bandwidth within Africa and especially the cost of data. During emergency learning, teaching and assessment, Stellenbosch University did partner with mobile network operators to procure data bundles for students, but we still needed to remain aware of how learning material design is done to allow students with limited data access to learning material. We also had to adhere to principles of universal access and these aspects could also be added to the framework and by adding these principles as well as principles focused on learning material design for low bandwidth conditions, the framework could be strengthened for the African context.

As for component 5, specifically with regard to learner support, a sharper focus should be considered on the broader concept of digital literacies and not only technical skills. It is not sufficient to only provide technical support to students but support for students as to how to learn online is an activity that deserves more attention. These digital literacy competencies should be added to the framework as well.

Component 8, monitoring and evaluation, is vital and can be expanded in the future.

Implementation of the IIOE QA 2.0 in higher education institutions

Stellenbosch University is willing to engage in a self-evaluation at our university, using the 8 components. We can use the online version to identify our strengths and weaknesses, develop strategies and plans to address areas of weakness and grow areas of strength accordingly. We can also explore partnering with other institutions to deliver capacity development, share good practices and evaluate the success of interventions.

Implementation of the IIOE QA 2.0 in Stellenbosch University

On-campus, hybrid and fully online short courses

(non-credit-bearing - certificate of completion/competency)

Online platform: SUNOnline

Fully online open educational resources (e.g. massive open online courses, or MOOCs)

(non-credit bearing)

Online platform: Various

On-campus modules and programmes

(credit-bearing)

Can include a blend of different facilitation approaches and learning technologies

Online platform: SUNLearn

Hybrid-learning (HL) modules and programmes

(credit-bearing)

Calendar 'blocks' of fully online learning, supplemented with synchronous (contact) learning - either online or on campus

Online platform: SUNLearn

IIOE Quality Assurance 2.0 Consultation Meeting: Views from an Australian educator

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There are three main questions I would like to address: 1) How relevant is the IIOE QA 2.0 to higher education institutions in the global South?; 2) What are the areas or issues that IIOE QA 2.0 should consider to make it more relevant? and; 3) How could the IIOE QA 2.0 be implemented in higher education institutions? The first two questions were mentioned in my speech at the July meeting and the last question is new here.

Overall, the QA 2.0 document is comprehensive and easy to understand, with 8 components, 27 sub-components and 73 statements. All of the components represent elements that we know from research to be important in supporting, implementing and evaluating quality OBTL. The QA 2.0 has been designed to help institutions improve quality, inclusive access and efficiency, which should result in better student outcomes. We should remember that student experience is also an extremely important aspect of quality higher education that should be considered alongside student academic achievement.

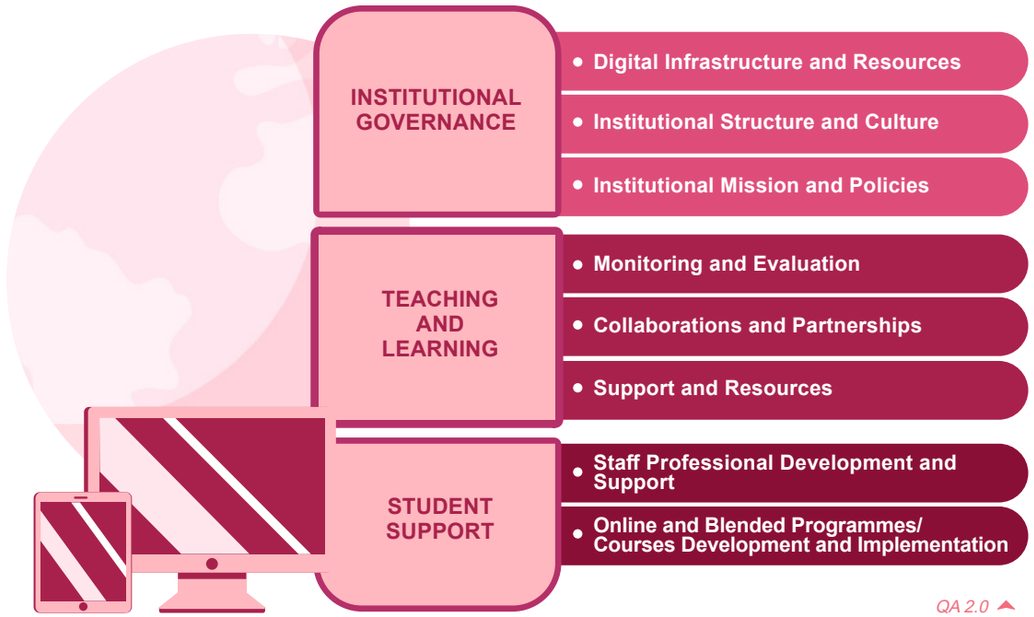
How relevant is the IIOE QA 2.0 to higher education institutions in the global South?

Some of the statements in the IIOE QA have been reworded in the new version and this has added to the clarity and usability of the framework, which will help institutions determine the relevance to their own contexts. Compared to the last version, the new version also has an improved toolbox with a better layout, as well as useful information about operationalisation.

In addition, I really like the fact that the toolbox includes research and resources generated in the global South, as it is becoming increasingly apparent that knowledge and perspectives from the global North may not necessarily translate or be relevant to all countries. Furthermore, there is increased ownership and empowerment for countries in the global South when their own particular perspectives and knowledges are valued and represented.

The improved Monitoring and Evaluation component (Component 8) is valuable – however, it is important to acknowledge that the responsibility for monitoring and evaluation should not primarily rest with organisational leaders and committees; teachers themselves need to participate in self- and peer-evaluation, always with a view to enhancing student learning and student experience.

The Monitoring and Evaluation component has two sub-components, Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms and Feedback Loop. One of the statements for sub-components 8.1 reads: "The institution has a clearly defined set of mechanisms and procedures to monitor the implementation process of online and blended teaching and learning at the institutional, faculty and departmental level."Whilst it is of course necessary to have such mechanisms at institutional, faculty and departmental levels, there should also be mechanisms and tools at the course level and the individual teacher level to encourage those who design and deliver courses to monitor and evaluate their courses and their teaching. One way of doing this is through peer-review of teaching, where a peer may sit in a class (including online classes) and provide constructive feedback. For example, a peer may provide feedback about the resources, assessments, interactions and differentiation strategies within a course.



QA 2.0

The Relevance of IIOE QA 2.0

I mentioned in my speech in July that the component Institutional Structure and Culture (Component 2) has considerable importance because without appropriate structures and cultures, it is difficult to design, deliver, support and monitor quality courses. Unfortunately, in some settings, structural and cultural factors may not be sufficiently considered. It also needs to be remembered that changes in Institutional Structure and Culture will have an impact on other components. For example, higher education institutions in Australia and other Western counties often go through restructure and reorganisation processes and when this happens, there will invariably be an impact on other components. In other words, the eight components of the framework represent a system.

Any organisation can be seen as a system within a wider ecosystem, and different elements in a system inter-relate and inter-depend. The ways in which elements of a system inter-relate can vary across contexts and over time. As pointed out by Dhukaram et al. (2018, p. 4), “any change in one system will ripple through and influence others leading to various complexities”. This makes it important that clear and effective communication and feedback loops between different stakeholders and staff are in place.

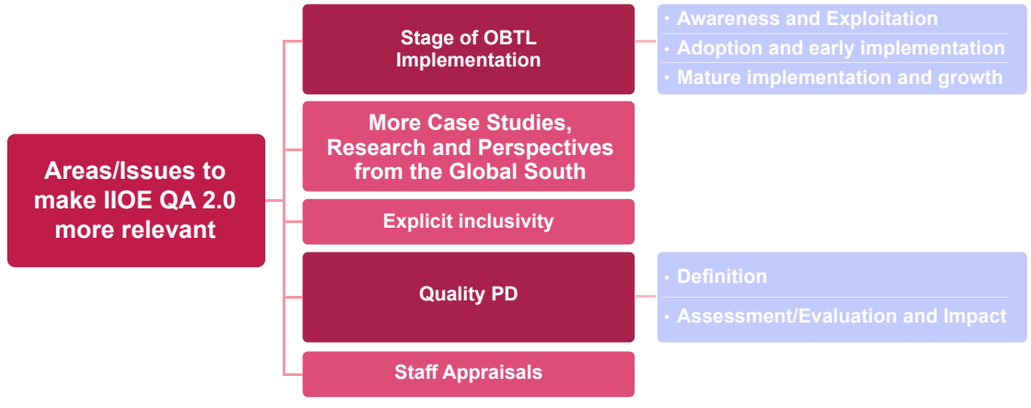
I want to emphasise that culture is a crucial consideration in designing, implementing and evaluating quality OBTL. However, culture is a complex construct and can be difficult to analyse and change. There may be many different cultures and sub-cultures within an organisation, some nested within others. Understanding existing cultures, which are often dynamic and constantly evolving, and cultivating cultures that are deemed to be conducive for providing the conditions for innovative may not always be easy. Indeed, there may be tensions between this component and other components in the framework. For example, when we think about cultures that are conducive to innovation and change, trust is a big part of it, so Monitoring and Evaluation processes, for example, need to take this into account. There needs to be an appropriate degree of trust in staff, and support for staff, so that they can innovate.

What are the areas or issues that IIOE QA 2.0 should consider to make it more relevant?

The components, subcomponents and statements might seem like a lot to deal with for some institutions in the Global South who are just beginning to think about implementing OBTL, or who are in what Graham and colleagues (2013) call the Adoption/Early Implementation Stage, or even earlier (Awareness and Exploration stage). This may make the framework seem a little overwhelming and, perhaps, less relevant. To address this potential issue, it may be possible to prioritise the components, subcomponents and statements according to implementation stage. There could possibly be some pointers in Part 3 on operationalising IIOE QA 2.0 in this regard; the advice given could be more nuanced for institutions that have different levels of experience.

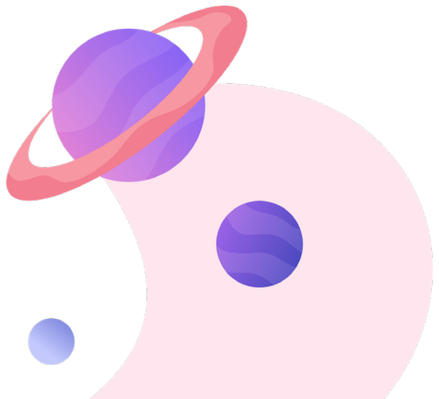
I have previously mentioned that it is important for research and perspectives from countries in the Global South to be incorporated in the IIOE QA and this is an area for ongoing improvement. The toolkits need to be continually updated to include more case studies, research and perspectives from countries in the global South. Such case studies could include information about processes, successes and challenges in:

- Carrying out needs analysis and gauging current capacity in the particular context
- Creating the mission statement and institutional policy
- Designing, implementing and evaluating courses that are suitable for the context
- Designing, implementing and evaluating professional development for staff, including academic and professional staff
- Identifying and responding to contextual changes



Areas/Issues to Make IIOE QA 2.0

One of the aims of the IIOE QA 2.0 is to improve inclusive access to quality education. However, there is more to inclusivity than mere access. According to UNESCO (2009), inclusion involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies. Component 4, Online and Blended Program/ Course Development and Implementation, could possibly be more explicit about designing for inclusivity; for example, providing differentiated learning experiences and resources for students from different language backgrounds, different literacy abilities and different preferences in the way they learn, as well as students with disabilities such as visual and hearing impairments.



One highly useful framework that could be recommended to assist in the provision of inclusive course design is Universal Design for Learning (UDL). The UDL framework (see https://www.cast.org/impact/universal-design-for-learning-udl) is intended to provide guidance in designing learning goals, teaching and learning resources, teaching and learning strategies and assessments that will meet diverse needs. The UDL guidelines suggest that students should be provided with: multiple means of engagement; multiple means of representation and multiple means of action and expression. The provision of multiple means of engagement, representation and action and expression is greatly enhanced by the use of learning technologies. There are also accessibility tools available in various platforms, such as read-aloud options. Video recordings should be sub-titled where possible, or transcripts should be provided to assist students who may struggle with listening to highly technical oral language, especially if this is not in their first language.

When it comes to Component 6, Staff Professional Development and Support, there are three sub-components, access, incentive and guidelines. Whilst these components are well conceived, some advice regarding what quality PD could 'look like' in different contexts might be included in future versions of the IIOE QA framework. It might also be useful to provide advice on the evaluation of professional development in terms of quality and impact. Finally, if the PL is to be part of the staff appraisal process, which is suggested in some of the statements, this should as far as possible be a supportive process that aims to help the staff to become better educators, rather a punitive approach.

How could the IIOE QA 2.0 be implemented in higher education institutions?

The IIOE QA 2.0 framework and toolkit could be implemented in many settings, as is the intention. An example of implementation might start with the institution reviewing its mission statement and an audit of current capacity. In conjunction with this, institutions should ensure they have a clear picture of the needs and demands of the target students and other stakeholders. It is important not to make assumptions about the capacities, wants and needs of the stakeholders and students. I'd also like to reiterate that contextual factors can vary greatly; some countries have a lower level of technology in terms of affordances and availability, for example, so design and implementation of courses needs to be feasible within the particular context. There may also be political issues to consider, such as gender equity issues. For example, it is known that in some contexts females have lower access to technology tools.

The Implementation of IIOE QA 2.0 in HEI

Use Possible Data

+

Mission Statement and Audit of Current Capacity Needs and Resources

+

Think about Feasibility

The Implementation of IIOE QA 2.0

To conclude, wherever the framework and toolkit is implemented, I think it is important to realise that there should be regular review of its implementation and operation because there may be frequent contextual changes that need to be considered. Examples of contextual changes might include improvements in technology, changes in the content and curriculum, or issues such as natural disasters, wars or changes of government policy. For example, the outbreak of COVID-19 has clearly had a large impact on how things are done in higher education and OBTL.

It is crucial to remember, as already mentioned, that the components in the framework are interconnected and that changes in one component will often affect other components. Therefore, clear and frequent communication between different organisational units within the institution are important. In evaluating OBTL, one should constantly be thinking about what actually constitutes quality and inclusivity, and how can it be improved in the particular context. The IIOE QA 2.0 framework will help institutions do this. I would like to congratulate the people who have been working on it on the new version.

The Relevance of IIOE QA 2.0 in Senegal and the Aspects for Consideration

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The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the necessity for higher education institutions (HEIs) to strengthen remote learning or double-mode higher education. COVID-19 has triggered a public health emergency, and most African countries have taken special measures to prevent the spread of the virus, such as closing their land and air borders, suspending inter-city transportation, total or partial lockdown, closing teaching institutions and universities etc. Facing such a situation, in many African countries including Senegal, most public and private HEIs started to promote online and blended teaching and learning (OBTL) to ensure the continuity of teaching and its quality assurance operations. During this process, many online platforms such as Moodle, Collaborate, Team and Google Classroom have been used.

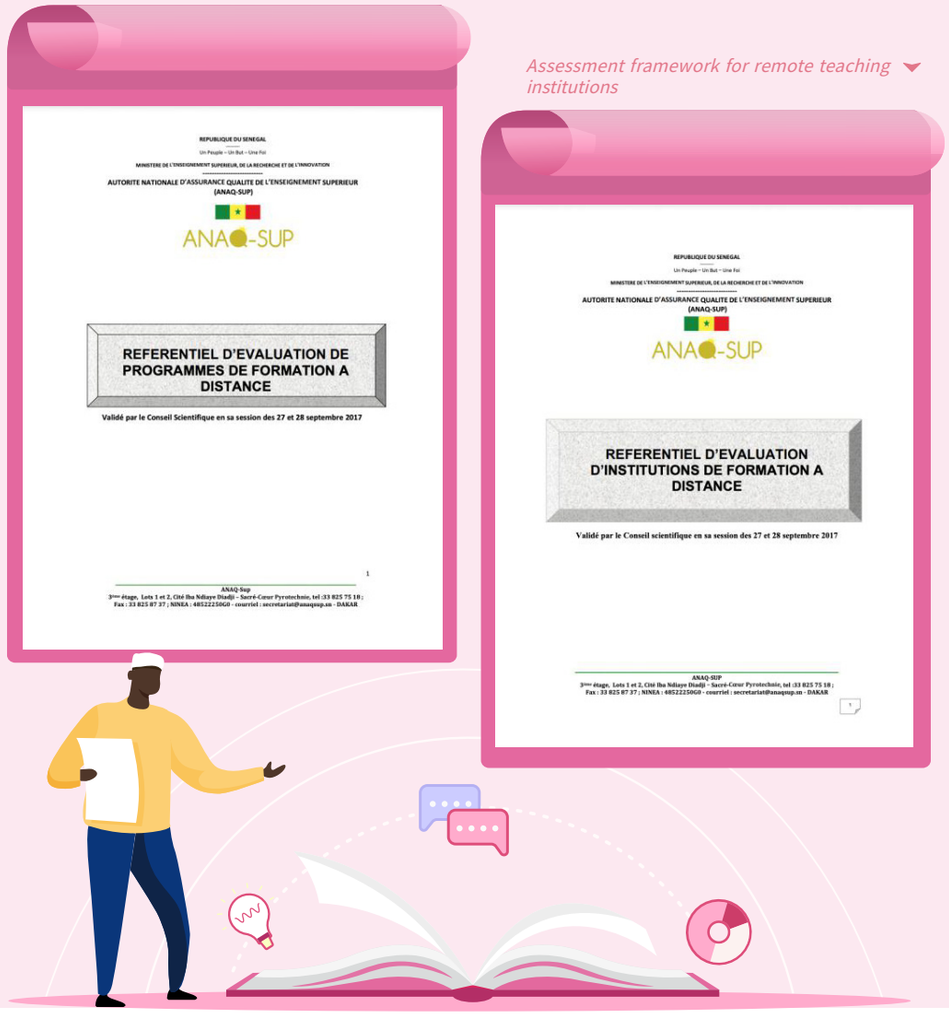
Remote teaching has been applied in more and more institutions, but most remote teaching programs do not have corresponding quality assurance tools, leading to concerns regarding its quality assurance. In fact, as early as before this crisis, ANAQ-Sup had already launched the assessment procedures for remote teaching in Senegal. Since 2017, we have designed two sets of reference frameworks designated for remote teaching. First, we established an institutional assessment framework for the accreditation of HEIs. Virtual University of Senegal (UVS) was assessed based on this framework. Second, we built up an assessment framework for the accreditation of remote courses, that is to say, regulations were specially designed for remote courses.

Virtual University of Senegal (UVS)

But up till now, Senegal still haven't got a reference framework for blended teaching. In this regard, certain internationally-accredited quality assurance frameworks such as IIOE Quality Assurance 2.0 (IIOE QA 2.0) may benefit HEIs in Senegal by serving as the regulatory basis. First, this framework can complement the remote teaching reference framework proposed by ANAQ-Sup, and become a guideline for HEIs to manage and implement OBTL courses. Second, HEIs can benefit from the online training sessions related to this framework, improving the capacity of the participants such as teachers, researchers, administrate staff, technology specialists and service personnel. Third, this framework can become the online self-assessment tool for HEIs, to identify the areas for improvement. Fourth, this framework can expand access to higher education; Fifth, in a crisis or emergency such as the COVID-19 pandemic, this framework can play an active role to ensure the continuity of educational activities. Sixth, this framework can provide HEIs with a teaching assurance toolkit, including the determinants of quality assurance (such as framework, standards etc.). Seventh, this framework builds up a platform for helping each other and sharing outstanding international practices. Eighth, this framework involves regular tracking and evaluation of relevant systems, and is therefore helpful in making necessary adjustments. The above are the benefits of adopting IIOE QA 2.0.

Assessment framework for remote courses

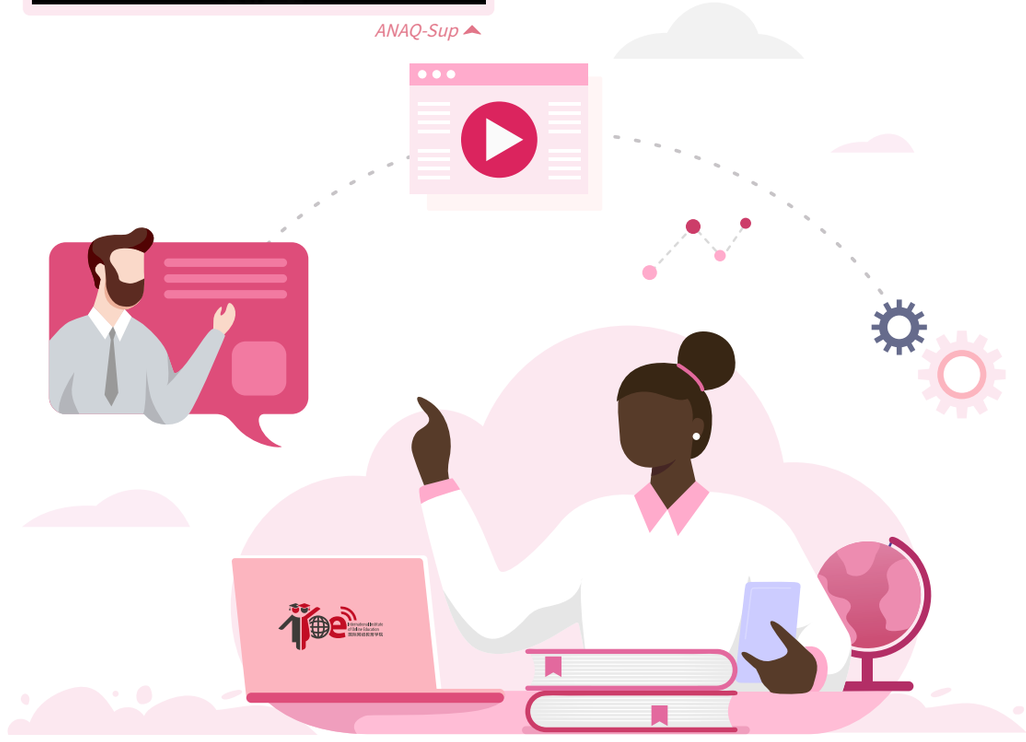
Assessment framework for remote teaching institutions



The above benefits focus on the university level. But it is obvious that we still need to adopt other strategies according to local contexts. In this process, we need to do the following: First, we need to implement strong policies and stimulating measures in internet service and IT support (online platforms, computers, software etc.). Second, we should strengthen capacity building of higher education personnel (teachers, researchers, administrative staff, technology specialists and service personnel). Third, we need to provide adequate resources and infrastructure for remote teaching activities. Fourth, we should help students to obtain online learning terminals (computers, tablets etc.). Fifth, we need to provide high-speed Internet service, which is a challenge for developing countries. Sixth, we need to assess online teaching to ensure its security, reliability and the effectiveness of its standards. Seventh, we need to build an internal quality assurance system to ensure quality standards and other requirements are met. Eighth, we need to focus more on the development strategies of the scientific fields which are faced with more challenges and provide practice training. Ninth, we need to integrate contents about employability and entrepreneurship into the courses.

To sum up, Senegal is equipped with the conditions to implement and utilize IIOE QA 2.0. The ANAQ-Sup (the national quality assurance authority) works closely with the Ministry of Higher Education and the public and private HEIs, they can work as partners to implement IIOE QA 2.0. In fact, the situation in other regions of Africa is very similar.

ANAQ-Sup



*This article is adapted from the speech by Prof. Lamine Gueye at the IIOE QA 2.0 Consultation Meeting in October 2021.

05

Digits

A Brief Overview of
Quality Assurance

"As a regulatory mechanism, quality assurance focuses on both accountability and improvement, providing information and judgments (not ranking) through an agreed upon and consistent process and well-established criteria." ——UNESCO

3 mechanisms

QA, especially external QA, has three mechanisms, namely evaluation, accreditation, and quality audits.

- **Evaluation**
- **Accreditation**
- **Quality audits**

- **Quality control**
- **Improvement of existing practices**
- **Accountability**

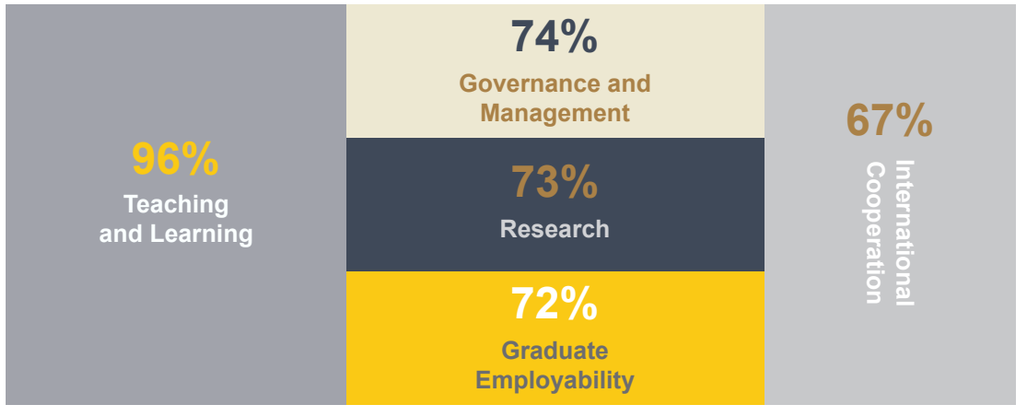
3 objectives

Harvey and Greene (1993) identified three main categories of objectives for QA: quality control, accountability, and improved practices.

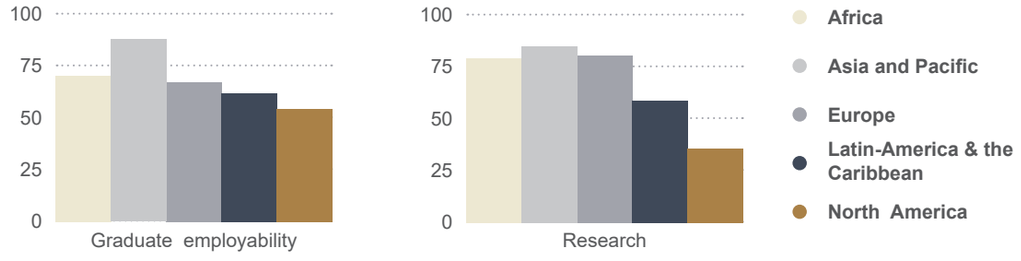
UNESCO-IIEP. (2021). A New generation of external quality assurance dynamics of change and innovative approaches.
UNESCO-IITE. (2012). Quality management and assurance in ICT-integrated pedagogy.
UNESCO-IIEP. (2007). External quality assurance of higher education in Anglophone Africa.

Focus Areas

Percentage of responding institutions rated certain QA focus areas as important, based on a UNESCO-supported international survey.



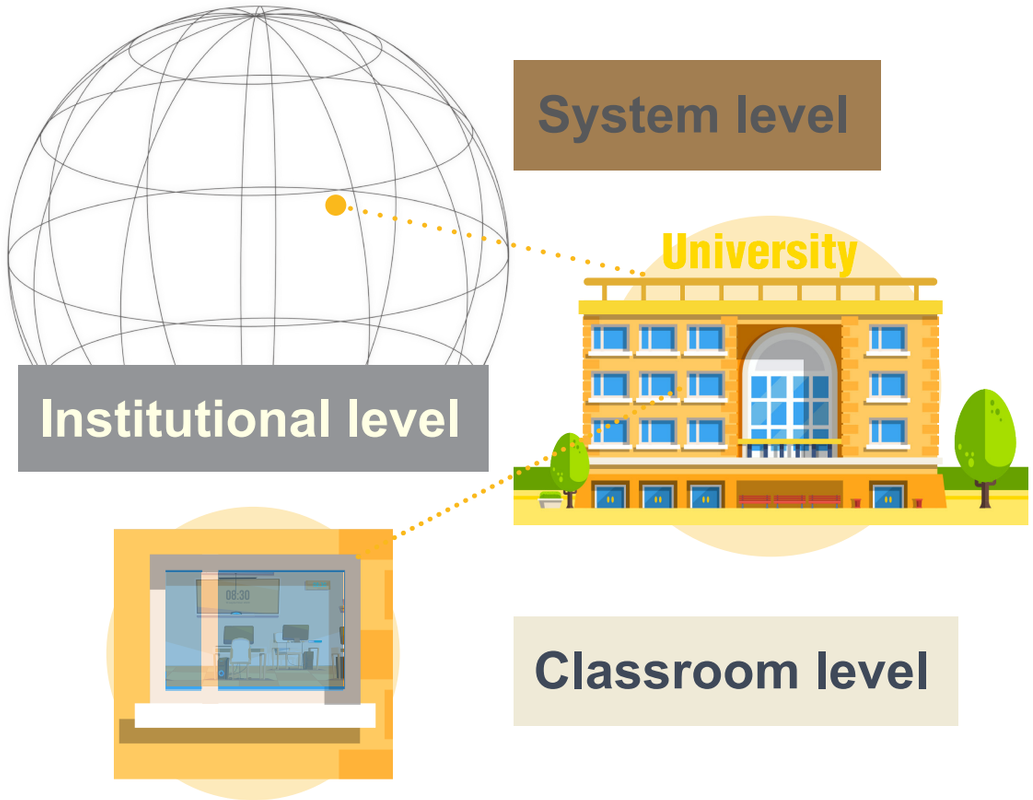
Percentage of responding institutions rated certain QA focus areas as important, **by region**. The results are based on the same survey as above.



QA Keywords

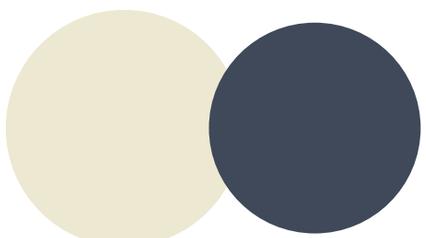
ongoing
continuous
process
evaluating
monitoring
improving
system
institution
programme

Different Types of
Quality Assurance



82%

HEIs worldwide have institutional quality policy



HEIs worldwide have quality management handbook

56%

UNESCO-IIEP. (2021). A New generation of external quality assurance dynamics of change and innovative approaches.
UNESCO-IIEP. (2017). Internal quality assurance: enhancing higher education quality and graduate employability.
UNESCO-IIEP. (2017). Quality management in higher education: developments and drivers: results from an international survey.

Regulation of Self-regulation

Need for self-regulation

Institutional autonomy

External Quality Assurance

External quality assurance (EQA) refers to the actions of an external body, which may be a Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) or another body different from the institution, which assesses its operation or that of its programmes in order to determine whether it is meeting the standards that have been agreed on.

External body

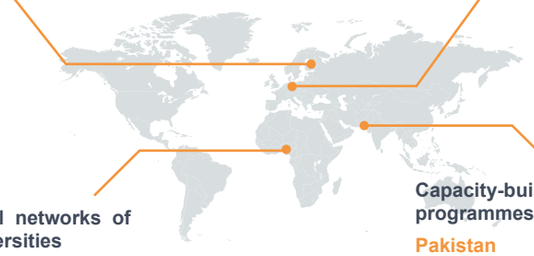
Assesses its operation

Meeting the standards

Examples of EQA supporting IQA

Quality audits
Finland

System accreditation
Germany



Local networks of universities
Nigeria

Capacity-building programmes
Pakistan

Policies and mechanisms

Ensuring

Fulfilling

Internal quality assurance (IQA) refers to each institution's or programme's policies and mechanisms for ensuring that it is fulfilling its own purposes as well as the standards that apply to higher education in general or to the profession or discipline in particular.

Internal Quality Assurance

Global Development of Quality Assurance

Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education

1963

A preliminary note on whether matriculation certificates, diplomas and academic degrees should be included in the programme and budget for 1965-66.

1972

Director General was authorised to extend the activities concerning the comparability and recognition of studies and diplomas of post-secondary education.

1987

UNESCO started a feasibility study for an international convention.

1993

The General Conference adopted the Recommendation on the Recognition of Studies and Qualifications in Higher Education.

2011

A UNESCO feasibility study had underlined the urgent need for a Global Convention to respond to the need for improved recognition of foreign qualifications worldwide.

2016

UNESCO established a drafting committee consisting of experts from all regions

2017

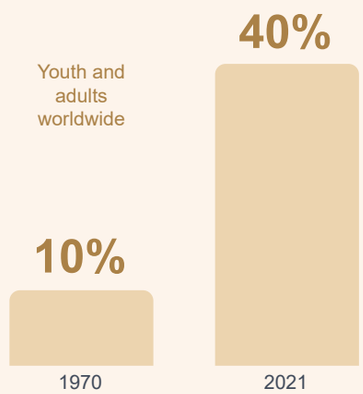
UNESCO finalised a preliminary draft and the draft was circulated among Member States for comments.

2019

UNESCO presented a revised draft and more than 260 technical and legal experts from around 150 Member States approved the draft; UNESCO's 40th Session of the General Conference adopted the draft text.

58 Years

- **Preparations leading up to the Global Convention**
- **The formal process of drafting the new Global Convention**



Global participation in higher education

1990

While participation in higher education was predominantly male in the 1970s and 1980s, gender parity was reached around 1990 and female participation has continued to grow faster than that of men since 1990.

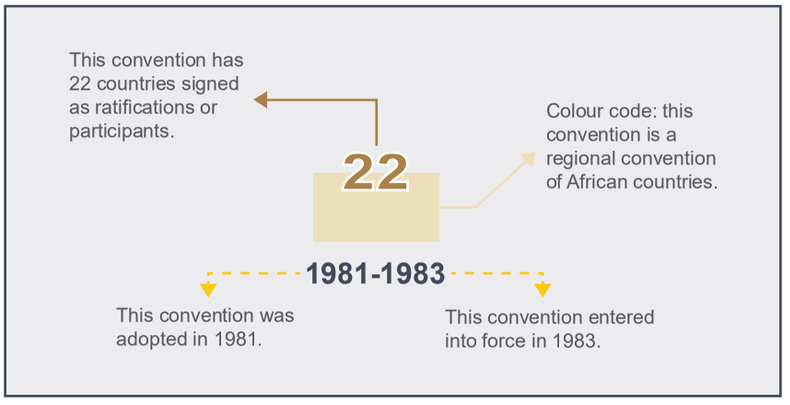
Gender parity in higher education participation

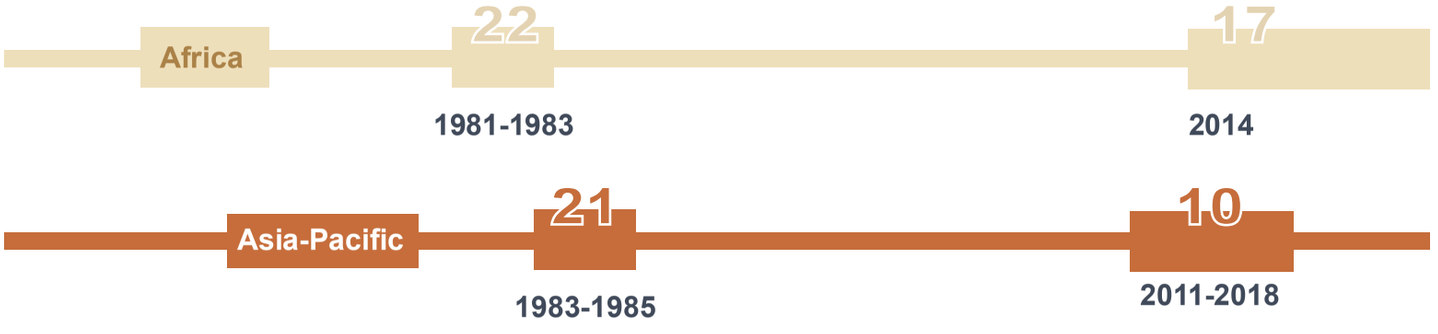
UNESCO & International Commission on the Futures of Education. (2021). Reimagining our futures together: a new social contract for education.
UNESCO. (2021). Executive Board 23th Session: Implementation of Standard-setting Instruments Part I: General Monitoring.
UNESCO. (2019). Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education.

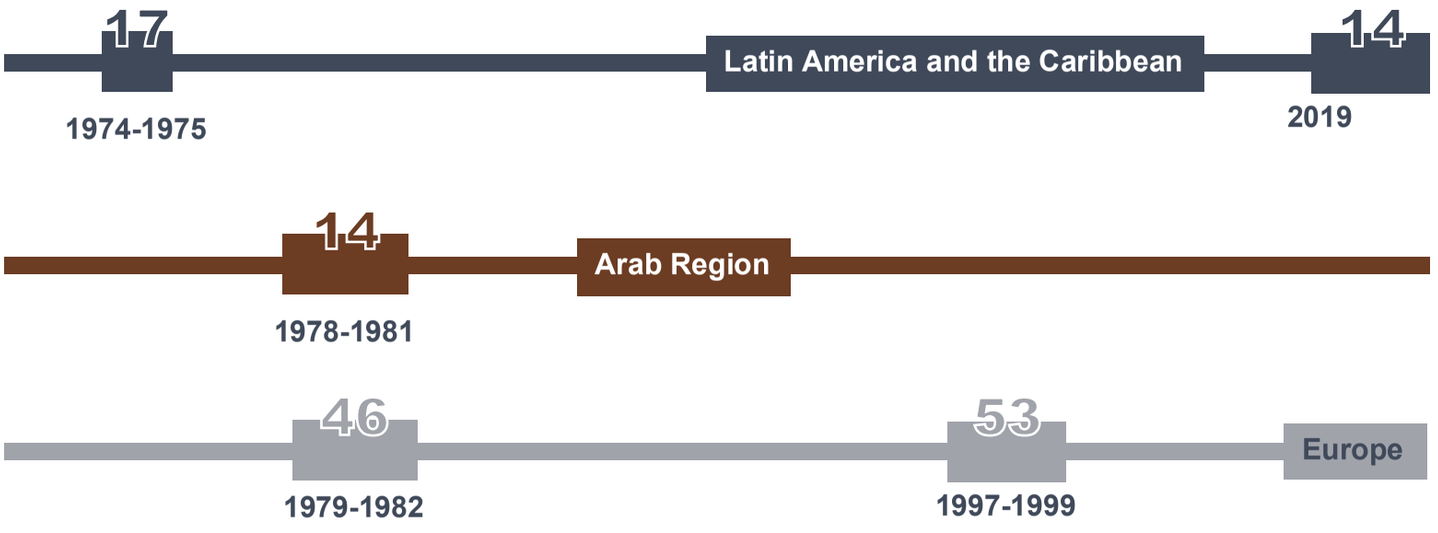
Regional Development of
Quality Assurance

"UNESCO has established a number of regional recognition conventions in higher education. The conventions constitute a unique legal framework for allowing the recognition of qualifications in higher education between States Parties." —— UNESCO

Check the grey box on the right to learn how to read the timeline of UNESCO regional conventions in higher education.







47

As of December 2021, 47 years have passed since the first regional convention concerning higher education qualifications (in Latin America and the Caribbean) was adopted.

11

As of December, 2021, there are 11 regional conventions of recognition of qualifications concerning higher education, covering 6 geographical regions worldwide.

53

The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region has 53 ratifications, the biggest number of all adopted regional conventions.

8

The Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education took 8 years to enter into force, the longest among all adopted conventions so far.

UNESCO. (2015). Revised Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in African States.
UNESCO. (2012). Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education.

External Drivers of
Quality Assurance

External Drivers Overview

Percentage of responding institutions agreeing on certain external drivers to develop quality assurance mechanism, based on a UNESCO-supported international survey.

Requirements of the national quality assurance system	89%
Enhancement of self-image	87%
International aspiration	80%
Requirements of the *NQF	77%

*NQF: National Qualifications Framework

2 types

Public policy and market demands are two major types of QA external drivers

UNESCO-IIEP. (2021). A New generation of external quality assurance dynamics of change and innovative approaches.
UNESCO. (2019). Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education.
UNESCO-IIEP. (2017). Quality management in higher education: developments and drivers: results from an international survey.
UNESCO. (n.d.). Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

Key External Driver 1

National and international regulations or conventions

154

countries and regions have at least one national qualifications framework.

1990s Quality was emphasised as an important factor of knowledge societies, putting QA at the heart of international discussions on higher education reform.

2000s UN Special Rapporteurs on the Right to Education have referred to education as a public good that safeguards the collective interests of society.

2005 The United Nations Human Rights Council resolutions on the right to education.

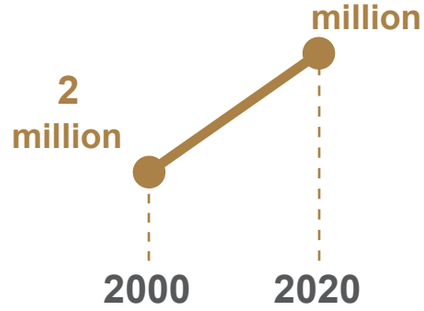
2015 The Education 2030: Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action.

8 million

students are studying abroad, according to estimated statistics.

Students pursuing their **higher education** abroad, 2000-2020 increase.

5.3 million



1% 1% of higher education students worldwide are studying **outside their home region.**

Increasing student/scholar mobility in higher education

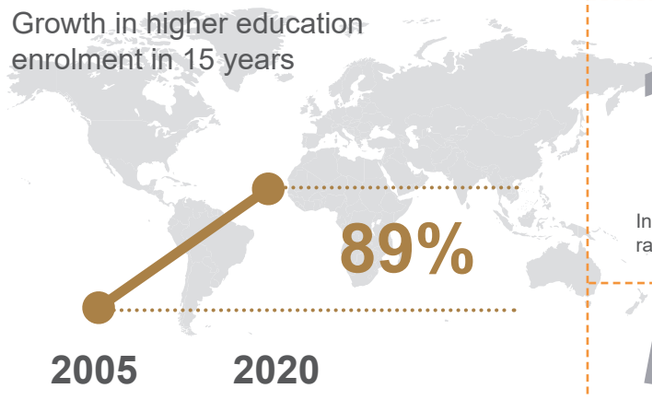
Key External Driver 2

Internal Drivers of
Quality Assurance

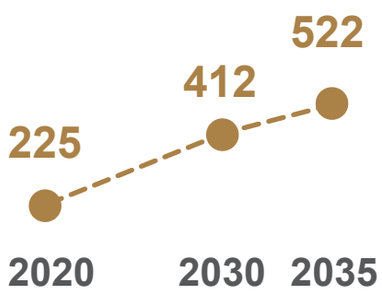
Key Internal Driver 1

Soaring number of students having access to higher education

Growth in higher education enrolment in 15 years



Projected number of students enrolled in universities (in million)



50+

More than 50 countries/territories have attained mass higher education status.

15%

In these countries/territories, enrolment rates exceed 15%.

50%

Systems providing universal access to higher education have more than 50% enrolment rates.

33%

countries/regions worldwide have universal access to higher education.

UNESCO & International Commission on the Futures of Education. (2021). Reimagining our futures together: a new social contract for education.
UNESCO-IIEP. (2021). A New generation of external quality assurance dynamics of change and innovative approaches.
UNESCO-IIEP. (2017). Quality management in higher education: developments and drivers: results from an international survey.

Internal Drivers Overview

Percentage of responding institutions agreeing on certain internal drivers to develop quality assurance mechanism, based on a UNESCO-supported international survey.

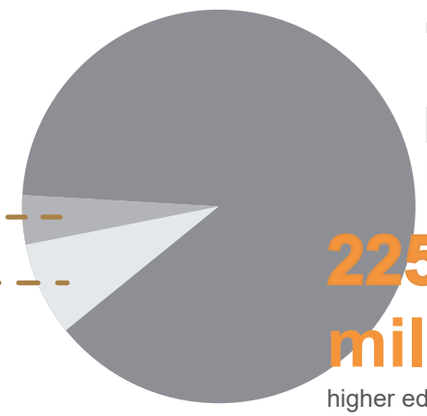
Leadership support	90%
Staff participation	88%
Statistics available	82%
Department involvement	80%
Student participation	68%

Key Internal Driver 2

Increasingly diverse modes and types of higher education

9 million
students were involved in online provision.

17 million
distance education students.



110 million
learners took a MOOC.

225 million
higher education students.

Features of Outstanding
Quality Assurance

Outstanding Quality Assurance Should Be...

A considerable amount of UNESCO reviews and reports have identified desirable features of outstanding quality assurance mechanisms or frameworks. Here are some of them:

Enabling
trust in a qualification

Engaging
teachers and providing professional development

Promoting
international cooperation and interregional initiatives

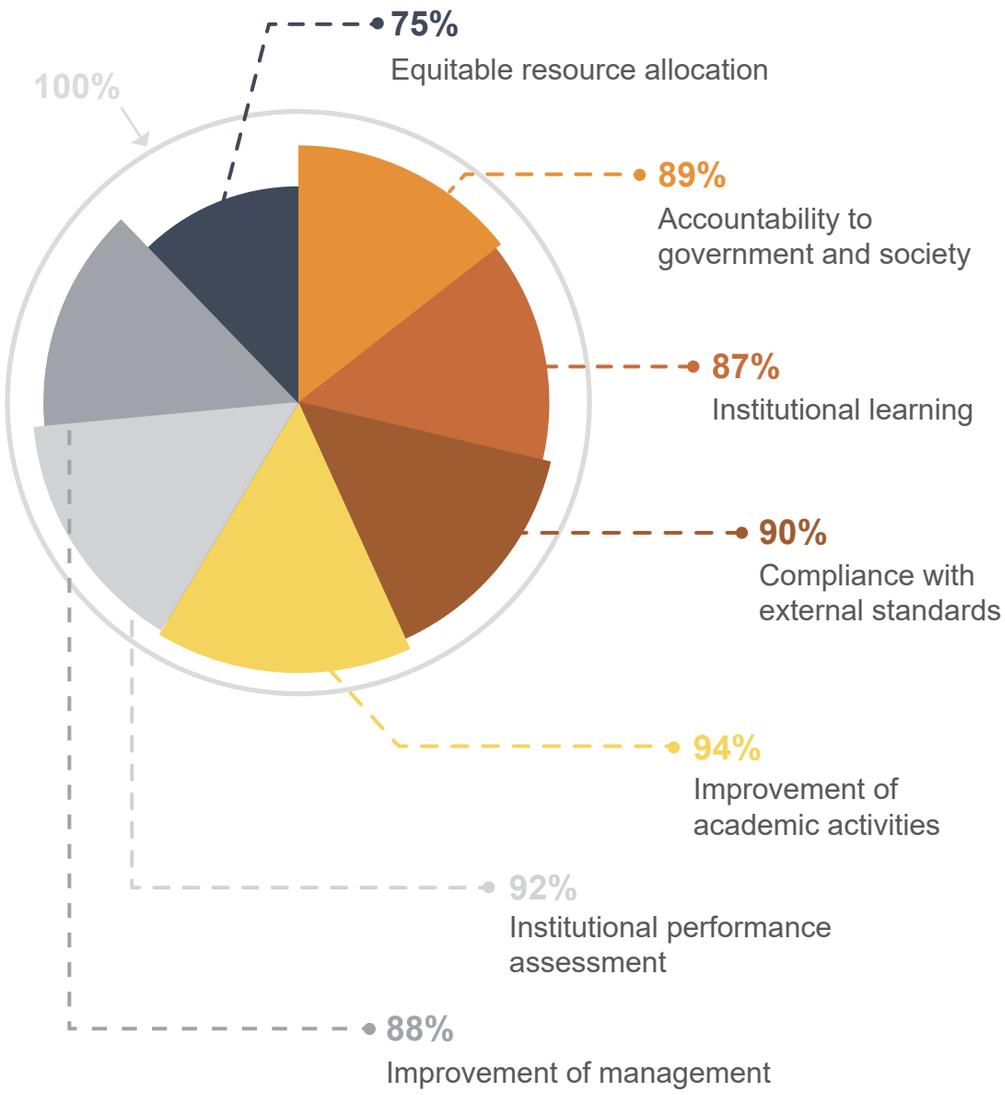
Protecting
assessment information and personal data

Dealing with
challenges for the QA development

1. Staff resistance
2. Inadequacy of ICT to collect data
3. QA not integrated into strategic planning
4. Lack of legal framework

Outstanding Quality Assurance Will Bring...

Percentage of responding institutions rating certain purpose of quality assurance as "important" or "very important", based on a UNESCO-supported international survey.



UNESCO. (2019). Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education.
UNESCO-IIEP. (2017). Internal quality assurance: enhancing higher education quality and graduate employability.
UNESCO-IITE. (2012). Quality management and assurance in ICT-integrated pedagogy.

Roles and Structures of Quality Assurance

1 A dedicated unit/cell with specialised staff for QA at the institutional level

2 A dedicated person (i.e. a QA officer) in charge at the institutional level

3 Senate (or equivalent institution-wide structure in charge of academic affairs)

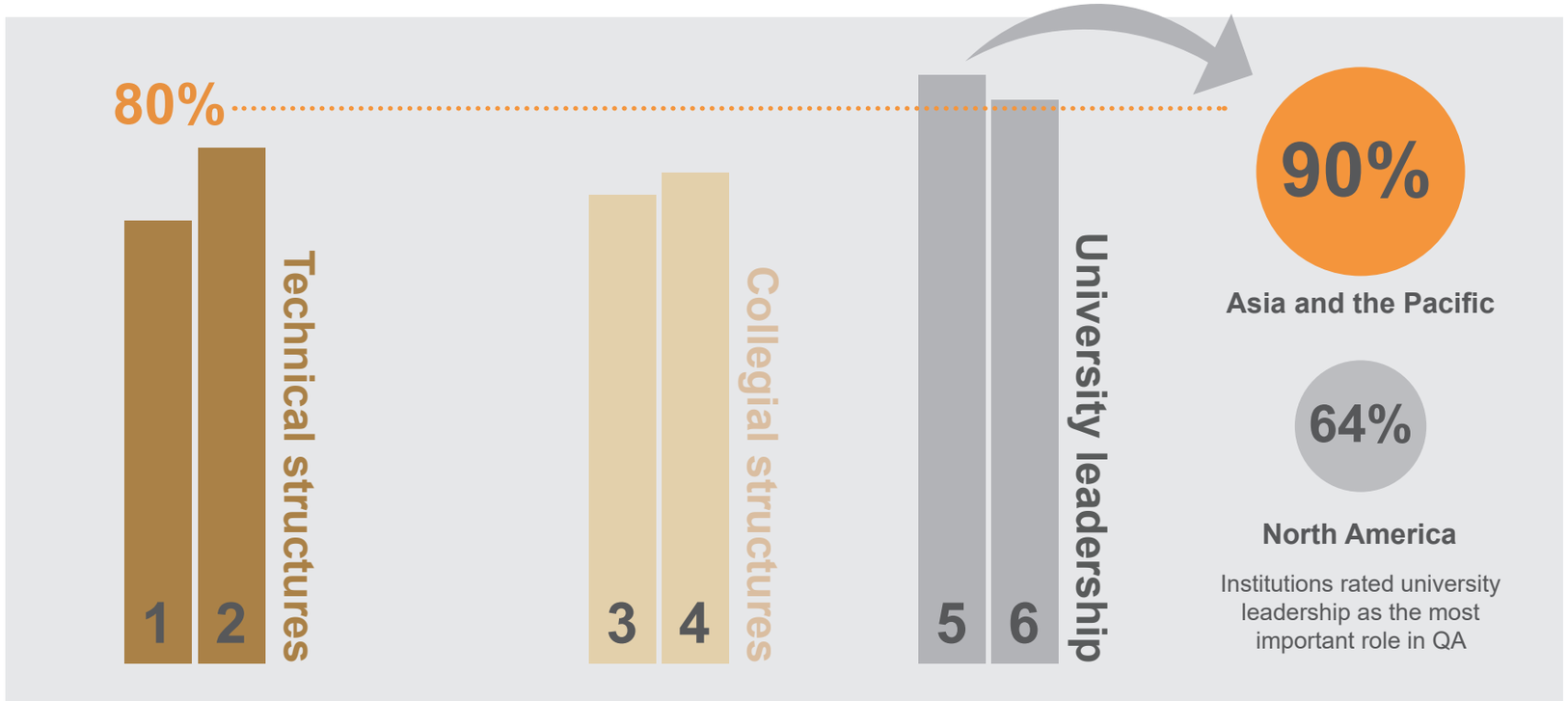
4 A quality committee that operates at the institutional level

5 Head of the institution

6 A vice-rector or equivalent

Roles/Structures Overview

Percentage of higher education institutions identifying certain people or structures being involved in their Quality Assurance or Quality Management mechanism, based on a UNESCO-supported international survey.



States and Policymakers' Obligation

Fulfil

The state's obligation to fulfil includes a duty to facilitate and to provide.

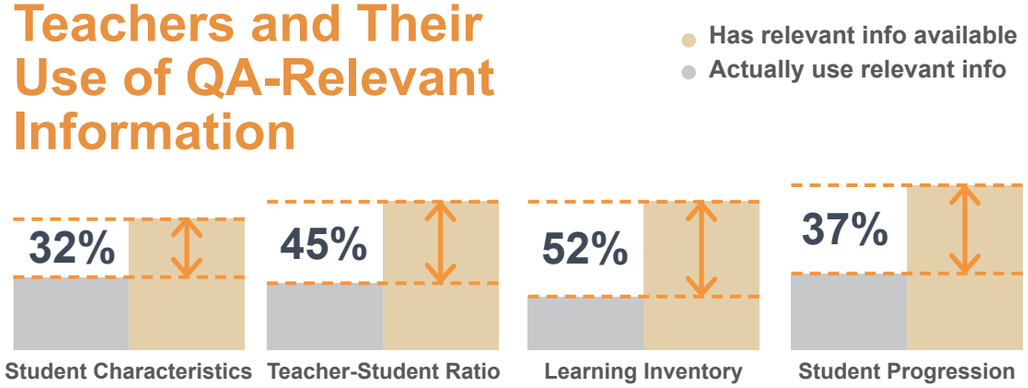
Protect

To protect and prevent third parties from interfering with the right to education.

Respect

Prevention against measures undermining the right to education.

Teachers and Their Use of QA-Relevant Information



UNESCO & International Commission on the Futures of Education. (2021). Reimagining our futures together: a new social contract for education.
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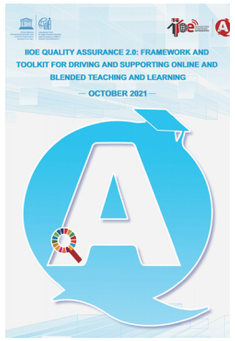
UNESCO-IIEP. (2017). Quality management in higher education: developments and drivers: results from an international survey.

06

Knowledge

Knowledge

IIOE Quality Assurance 2.0: Framework and Toolkit for Driving and Supporting Online and Blended Teaching and Learning



The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the urgency of adopting online and blended teaching and learning (OBTL), especially at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in developing countries. However, HEIs in those countries with unique contexts and limited resources face plenty of challenges at all levels. IIOE Quality Assurance 1.0, including the first version of the framework and its associated online self-assessment tool, has been adopted by the partner HEIs to ensure the quality enhancement of OBTL, but has also exposed its limits. Therefore, an updated and validated quality assurance (QA) framework and an associated toolkit have to be developed for HEIs to build an ecosystem that drives and supports OBTL in the post-Covid-19 era.

The framework developed in IIOE QA 2.0 is updated from the IIOE QA 1.0. It consists of 8 Components, 20 Sub-components and 73 Statements covering HEIs policies, structure, digital infrastructure, higher education workforce, online programmes design, students and partnership. In the updated version, two new components and associated sub-components have been added, and existing sub-components and statements have been revised, according to feedback and suggestions from IIOE partners during the implementation of QA 1.0. Meanwhile, IIOE Quality Assurance Framework 2.0 studied promising practices from the world's latest developed or updated quality assurance frameworks.

IIOE QA 2.0 could function at both institutional and higher education workforce levels. There is also a toolkit including examples of Data Sources that correspond to each component of the IIOE QA 2.0 and an overall Report Template that will guide HEIs to make a comprehensive assessment of their situation or readiness in online and blended higher education.

Link:
https://www.ichei.org/Uploads/Download/2021-11-05/6184ea7204175.pdf

Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications Concerning Higher Education


GLOBAL CONVENTION ON THE RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS CONCERNING HIGHER EDUCATION

CONVENTION MONDIALE SUR LA RECONNAISSANCE DES QUALIFICATIONS RELATIVES À L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR

CONVENCIÓN MUNDIAL SOBRE EL RECONOCIMIENTO DE LAS CUALIFICACIONES RELATIVAS A LA EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR

ГЛОБАЛЬНАЯ КОНВЕНЦИЯ О ПРИЗНАНИИ КВАЛИФИКАЦИЙ, ОТНОСЯЩИХСЯ К ВЫСШЕМУ ОБРАЗОВАНИЮ

الاتفاقية العالمية للاعتراف بالمؤهلات المتعلقة بالتعليم العالي

承认高等教育相关资历全球公约

In November 2019, the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education was adopted by the 40th session of the UNESCO General Conference, becoming the first United Nations treaty on higher education with a global scope.

The Global Convention is designed to facilitate international academic mobility and promote the right of individuals to have their higher education qualifications evaluated in a fair, transparent and non-discriminatory manner. It aims to expand access to higher education and strengthen research cooperation by facilitating international exchanges of students, teachers, researchers and job-seekers.

The Global Convention offers avenues for further study and employment and makes it easier for students abroad to return to their home countries and have their degrees recognised. Moreover, it promotes the recognition of refugees' qualifications, even in cases where documentary evidence is lacking.

By ratifying the Global Convention, countries commit to strengthening international cooperation in higher education, raising its quality at home and worldwide, and helping make academic mobility and the recognition of qualifications a reality for millions worldwide.

To facilitate its implementation, UNESCO has developed a Practical Guide to Recognition. The guide offers a step-by-step approach to recognising foreign qualifications both for credential evaluation practitioners and for individuals seeking recognition of their foreign qualifications.

Link:
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373602?2=null&queryId=48c01b76-50e0-4268-9a44-b4a887cc9d51

Quality Assurance and Recognition of Distance Higher Education and TVET

The spread of the COVID-19 has compelled most countries to impose mandatory, temporary closure of higher education institutions (HEIs) and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions, leaving more than 200 million students out of their institutions. Extended closures of HEIs and TVET institutions may cause loss of learning in the short-term and further loss in human capital and diminished economic opportunities in the long term. Many countries pursued options to utilise open and distance learning (ODL) to mitigate learning loss to manage and cope with the crisis. However, there are immediate challenges, including equity, participation, infrastructure, broadband capacity, research, assessment and validation of learning outcomes, quality assurance and accreditation, and pedagogic capacity. Accordingly, this Note seeks to contribute to the global dialogue and policy debate on issues and challenges in further promoting Open and Distance Learning and provide practical suggestions to ODL practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and managers of distance higher education and TVET for the enhancement of ODL.

Link:
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000373754?posInSet=15&queryId=0508af7f-95ad-4284-88cb-3e7b8ec7a40c

Confronting COVID-19 by Strengthening Cooperation in Qualifications Recognition in the Asia-Pacific and beyond: Statement on COVID-19 by Parties to the Tokyo Convention

The COVID-19 pandemic has led educational institutions to transition to remote online learning and teaching forms. However, an estimated 40% of less developed countries have not been able to make this adaptation and struggle to provide specific support to learners who are now at risk of exclusion during the pandemic.

Parties to the 2018 Tokyo Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education are aiming to address these widespread disruptions to education systems. As large-scale distance learning has been implemented in the Member States, it plays a crucial role in minimising disruption to education by facilitating fair and transparent recognition of diverse modes of learning.

This statement reflects on the role and value of the Tokyo Convention, which is to promote the sharing of authoritative information in the Asia-Pacific to facilitate fair and transparent recognition of qualifications and non-traditional modes of delivery. The statement also suggests specific action items to strengthen cooperation, including but not limited to fully respecting all domestic settings and systems and the autonomy of decision-makers, while protecting the rights of an individual to have their studies and qualifications recognised; strengthening information sharing and provision, sharing updated information and experiences, advancing a deeper understanding of the diversity of qualifications, education and training systems, and qualifications recognition systems.

Link:
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374819

Strengthening Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Africa: UNESCO-Shenzhen Funds-in-Trust Project

In 2016, UNESCO and the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government of China joined hands with 10 African countries to initiate the UNESCO-Shenzhen Project, aiming to strengthen higher education systems by developing quality assurance mechanisms. The three-year project implemented since 2017 represents the commitment of UNESCO to the realization of Target 4.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals to "ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university" and the Education 2030 agenda.

This periodic update features highlights of the implementation of the UNESCO-Shenzhen Project to facilitate sharing of information and best practices in quality assurance in the ten project countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Senegal, The Gambia, Togo, and Zambia.

Link:
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374015.locale=zh

UNESCO-China Funds-in-Trust (CFIT) Project

The UNESCO-CFIT consultative meeting welcomed the five new participating countries – Congo, DR Congo, Liberia, Tanzania, and Uganda – in October 2013. These five countries have finished the drafts of the needs assessment reports and started preparing for the project document and work plan (ProDoc).

The meeting gathered country representatives, Permanent Delegates, National Commissions from all participating countries and China, representatives from Chinese Embassies (Tanzania and Côte d'Ivoire), as well as international experts and staff from UNESCO headquarters and field offices.

The five countries have located their focus areas based on available needs assessment reports, leading to the ProDoc and relevant budget, timeframe, and CFIT key action areas. They have also roughly identified several critical components of the operationalisation strategy, which may serve as working document references to project teams who may engage in similar activities.

Link:
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000229859?posInSet=30&queryId=0508af7f-95ad-4284-88cb-3e7b8ec7a40c

A New Generation of External Quality Assurance: Dynamics of Change and Innovative Approaches

Over the past three decades, the field of higher education has seen a rapid rise in student enrolment, coupled with an increase in the privatisation of these institutions. The new public management model guiding governance reform emphasised the need for both autonomy and accountability in HEIs. The implementation of QA was highlighted as a means for HEIs to achieve these two factors.

The book proposes to take stock of the new dynamics, innovative approaches, and trends in EQA to ensure that EQA remains relevant and aligned to fast-changing higher education sectors. The publication also aims to participate in global discussions on the future path of the external quality assurance model.

The publication is structured under three thematic sections. The first section is about definitions, objectives, and related quality assurance mechanisms. Then the following chapter identifies challenges for the current global QA model. The third chapter lists six innovative approaches to EQA responding to the changing landscape of higher education and potential areas of growth in the current QA model. The publication also points out that a relevant EQA system should accommodate the diverse and changing needs of the higher education system, although a standard global model becomes increasingly desirable.

Link:
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377497?posInSet=1&queryId=b1f39be4-85bb-4c2a-a927-0f8f54e4d4ed

Internal Quality Assurance: Enhancing Higher Education Quality and Graduate Employability

Higher education systems and institutions have experienced a period of constant change, wherein institutions and programmes have undergone a process of privatisation and diversification. As a result, there has been a growing concern about the quality of HEIs and their programmes. Such concern has consequently driven the development of external quality assurance (EQA) mechanisms in higher education and prompted many individual HEIs to set up their internal quality assurance (IQA) mechanisms for monitoring and management.

Based on the UNESCO-IIEP research project findings, this publication aims to identify international trends, innovative practices, and other sound guiding principles for IQA. It is hoped that the results presented will be helpful as a guide to HEIs planning to design and develop their own IQA systems.

The publication begins with a comparative overview of international trends derived from the global survey and then analyses innovative structures for IQA. Innovative IQA tools supporting quality, employability, and quality culture are also discussed. Overall, the publication presents a comparative analysis of the effects of IQA on teaching, learning, employability and management.

To conclude, this publication emphasises the importance of flexible, qualitative tools that function together with quantitative tools for IQA. It also highlights the need to balance academic- and employability-related IQA tools and accentuates the importance of evidence-based dialogue on quality improvement among university stakeholders to the success of IQA.

Link:
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000261356

APEC Quality Assurance of Online Learning Toolkit | APEC

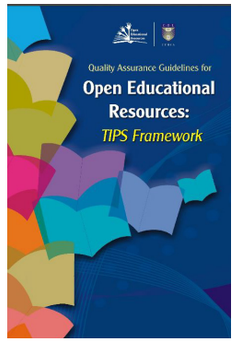
This toolkit has been developed in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders. In 2016, experts from the government, quality assurance agencies and higher education institutions from 13 APEC economies gathered together at the APEC Quality Assurance of Online Learning Workshop to discuss and refine the draft toolkit. Further validation workshops were scheduled in Viet Nam, Indonesia and Mexico in 2017. All of this feedback has been instrumental in preparing this document.

As online education methods grow and diversify, it is crucial to ensure these new forms of delivery support rather than reduce the value, quality, and validity of higher education qualifications. Additionally, as the use of online technologies becomes more integrated into traditional teaching and learning, the need to recognise higher education outcomes regardless of delivery mode has become a priority.

In many economies, agencies are developing approaches towards online and blended education quality assurance. This toolkit supports an integrated model of quality assurance whereby each domain can apply to any mode of delivery. A broad suite of frameworks, rubrics, assessment criteria and systems for higher education quality assurance has also been considered in developing the toolkit. These include frameworks that assess online and blended programs, and others that assess programs regardless of mode.

Link:
https://www.apec.org/Publications/2019/12/APEC-Quality-Assurance-of-Online-Learning-Toolkit

Quality Assurance Guidelines for Open Educational Resources: TIPS Framework



This TIPS Framework sets out to present ideas to teachers as prospective creators of OER: offering ways they could reflect upon to develop a culture of quality within their respective local communities of practice. The rationale for the TIPS Framework is to offer suggestions to teacher-practitioners as creators and authors of their own OER.

The Framework is also supposed to help institutions support OER development and adopt these Guidelines in their internal quality assurance practices. These Guidelines aim to nurture the idea of quality as a culture. Developing a quality culture through teacher continuous professional reflection may be the best way forward rather than simply seeking to store an individual teacher's lesson materials somewhat permanently digitally. To this end, rubrics for Quality Improvement was added to go alongside OER and these Guidelines.

Link:
https://en.unesco.org/icted/content/quality-assurance-guidelines-open-educational-resources-tips-framework