

Internal quality assurance and institutional development

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Why work on internal QA?

- **EUA's Trends 2010:**
 - Enhanced internal QA one of the most important changes in the past ten years
 - In the next 5 years the 2nd most important theme
 - Relationship between robust internal QA and internationalisation
 - Increased competition and collaboration between HEIs
 - Development of external QA systems and demands for accountability
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EUA activities in QA (in short)

- Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP)
 - Workshops and events on management etc.
 - Projects, e.g.
 - Quality Culture, 2002-2006
 - European Masters New Evaluation Methodology (EMNEM), 2005-2006
 - Creativity project, 2006-2007
 - Quality Assurance for the Higher Education Change Agenda (QAHECA), 2008-2009
 - Examining Quality Culture in Higher Education Institutions (EQC), 2009-2012, followed by Promoting Quality Culture (PQC), ongoing
 - Accountable Research Environment for Doctoral Education, 2010-2013
 - Empowering universities to fulfil their responsibility for quality assurance (EUREQA)
 - Co-operation with ENQA, ESU and EURASHE (E4 group)
 - Annual European Quality Assurance Forum with since 2006
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EUA's policy position on QA

- Main responsibility for QA lies with the institutions
 - Context sensitive (institutional and disciplinary diversity)
 - Fitness for purpose approach
 - Enhancement oriented
 - Internal and external evaluations or QA processes should be complementary
 - Transparency and co-operation
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The European situation: an overview (1)

- The Berlin Communiqué in 2003 marked a major turning point by stating that
 - “consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself” and
 - Defined key characteristics of national QA systems
 - European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance adopted in 2005
 - Revision of the ESG currently under discussion
 - European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) established in 2008
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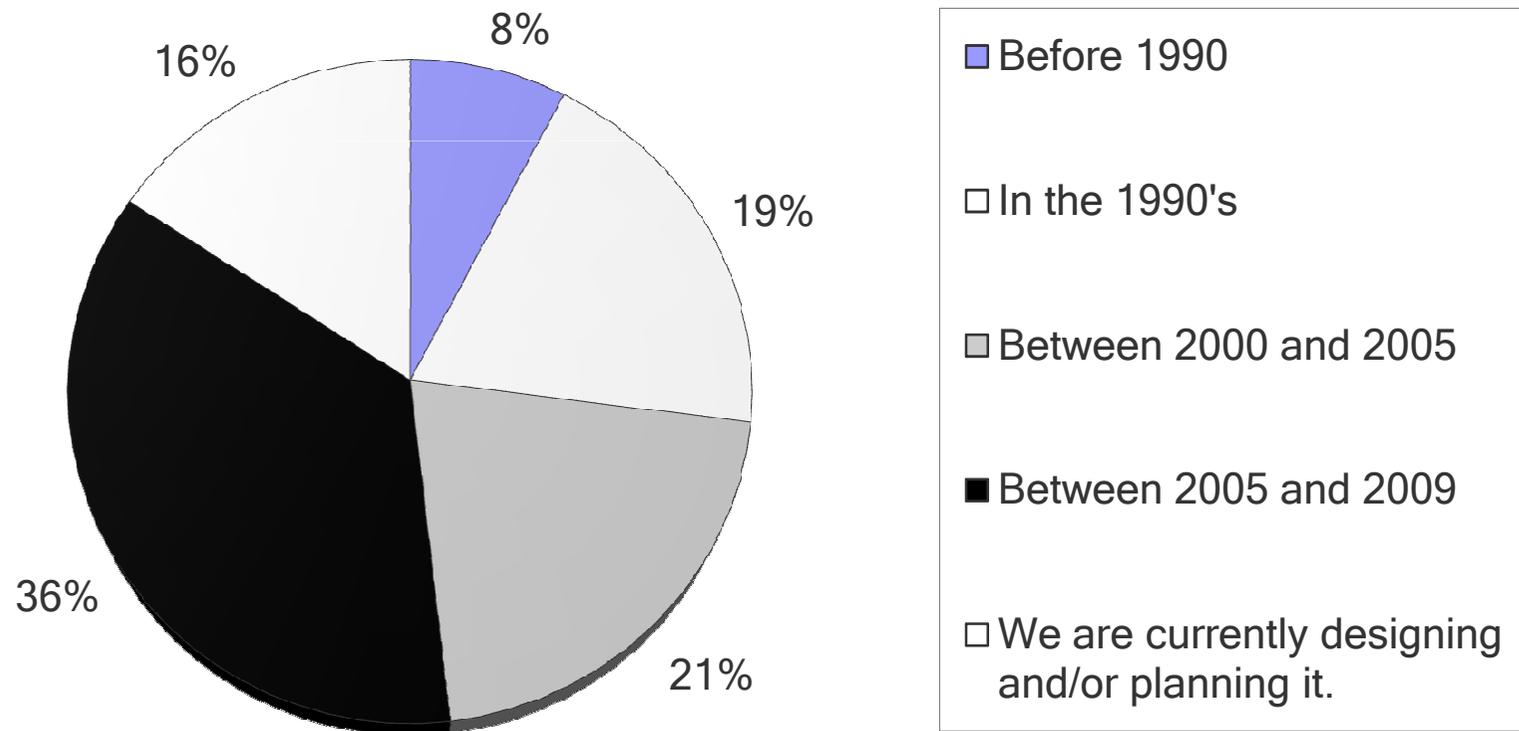
The European situation: an overview (2)

The European diversity

- Variety of approaches when creating national quality assurance systems:
 - ✓ (programme or institutional) accreditation
 - ✓ Evaluations
 - ✓ Audits
 - ✓ “Yes/No” approach, enhancement-led, peer-review...
 - Level of institutional autonomy in creating internal QA systems varies.
 - Countries and also institutions are in different phases in implementing institutional as well as national QA systems.
- > ESG provide framework for sharing good practice within EHEA
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Internal QA in Europe (1): Introducing QA system or equivalent

When did your institution introduce a quality assurance system (or equivalent)?



Internal QA in Europe (2): Activities covered

- Activities covered by QA processes:
 - Teaching and learning nearly 100%
 - Research 80 %
 - Service to society 50 %
 - Student support services 75 %
 - Governance and administration of the institution 66 %

 - Tendency not to recognise all QA related processes within a HEI as quality assurance processes (may be a quality culture)
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Internal QA in Europe (3): QA structures and strategies

- 90% have institutional strategic document or equivalent document
 - 2/3 have either a separate institutional QA policy statement
 - 1/4 have its quality statement included in the strategic plan
 - Large variety of organisational structures
 - QA system in teaching and learning, in particular:
 - 2/3 institution-specific but follows national QA frameworks and guidelines
 - 1/4 tailor-made to the institution's needs and does not apply any ready-made model
 - whereas less than 10 % mentioned that it applies a ready-made model such as ISO, EFQM, and CAF
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Internal QA in Europe (3): Responsibilities and stakeholders' involvement

- In 66% the senior leadership takes the lead for the process.
 - In those cases 33% where the leadership was not leading the process, it still somehow follows-up the process.
 - Half of the respondents have no committee responsible for curriculum and quality assurance.
 - When such committee exist, they involve students in 50% of cases.
 - Students are formally involved in only 25% of the universities
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Internal QA in Europe (4): The feedback loop

- 70% of respondents use **student surveys** as one of the means to monitor students' perceptions of the teaching they receive. Among them:
 - 90% take the results into account in the assessment of teaching staff.
 - 60% of the respondents state that students who participated in a survey are informed about the outcomes and the resulting actions taken.
 - 5% make the information on teachers' aptitudes and performance publicly available.

⇒ Development of explicit feedback loops

Internal QA in Europe (5): Trends, key perceptions

Institutions have been responding to the increased demand for quality, yet it is still work in progress:

- ✓ QA systems in place and very much developed in recent years
 - ✓ Developing a quality culture takes time and effort
 - ✓ Participation of all stakeholders still demands attention
 - ✓ The goal should be an institutional quality culture supported by the QA processes, not the processes themselves (as emphasised in the ESGs)
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Internal QA in Europe (6): The Quality Culture project (2002-2006)

To increase awareness of the need to develop an internal quality culture in universities in order to:

- Improve quality levels, without stifling diversity and innovation
- Strengthen institutional autonomy
- Promote non-intrusive external QA procedures, i.e., institutional audit

Carefully chosen title: Quality culture vs. Quality control or Quality management to indicate:

- The importance of a change in attitude and behaviour within the institutions
 - The importance of a grass-root development of quality
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Internal QA in Europe (7): Key success factors for a quality culture

- The success of the **first steps** in introducing a quality culture is essential for an effective development
 - The importance of **institutional governance** and **community building** for an effective quality culture
 - The importance of **strategic thinking**, based on an appropriate institutional analysis (SWOT or similar analytical instruments)
 - The integral causal link between strong **institutional autonomy** and the effective development of a quality culture
 - The link between quality development and appropriate **financial and human resources**, including staff development schemes
 - Avoid the bureaucratisation of QC (i.e., proper staffing of QC unit)
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When the universities are evaluated...

- Independance, competence and ability of expertise
 - Concerns over a compliance culture: « why are we doing it? »
 - Consistency between different evaluations
 - Primary responsibility for QA lies with the institutions
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The Institutional Evaluation Programme

- **Objective:** support HE institutions and systems in developing the capacity for change
 - Since 1994, over 300 institutional evaluations in 45 countries worldwide
 - Independent service of EUA
 - Full member of ENQA, listed on EQAR
 - Distinctive features:
 - ✓ *A voluntary process*
 - ✓ *Strong emphasis on the self-evaluation phase*
 - ✓ *A European and international perspective*
 - ✓ *A peer-review approach*
 - ✓ *Improvement oriented*
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The Institutional Evaluation Programme (2): Methodology

- Focus on institution as a whole, and on:
 - ✓ Decision-making processes and institutional structures and effectiveness of strategic planning (examination of short and long term objectives)
 - ✓ Relevance of internal QA processes
 - Examination of internal/external constraints: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
 - Address the issues on internal QA identified by the ESG
 - No standardised solution nor imperative proposals, but support to the institution for improvement.
 - No summative judgement, no legal consequences
- *Contributes to the dynamics of development and evaluates the University's **capacity for change***
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The Institutional Evaluation Programme (3): 4 Key questions

- *What is the institution trying to do?*
- *How is the institution trying to do it?*
- *How does it know that it works?*
- *How does the institution change in order to improve?*

This translates into:

- ✓ Mission, aims, objectives and their appropriateness, how the university sees itself locally, nationally, internationally
 - ✓ Processes, procedures, practices in place and analysis of their effectiveness
 - ✓ Feedback systems in place
 - ✓ Strategic planning, capacity and willingness to change
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The Institutional Evaluation Programme (4): The evaluation process

- IEP teams include a chair (rector or former rector), a coordinator, and team members (including one student member)
 - Self-Evaluation Report produced by the University
 - Two visits to the University
 - Oral report (with main findings) during 2nd visit
 - Written report by the team
 - Dissemination by the University and the IEP
 - Follow-up evaluation (optional)
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The Institutional Evaluation Programme (5): How to use it for a strategic planning exercise?

From the IEP experience:

- ✓ The IEP strengthens a long-term development.
 - ✓ Importance of **the internal debate and movement created** around key issues and necessary transformations: allows the mobilisation for the necessary discussion re. the development of a strategy based on shared understanding, analysis and data.
 - ✓ The preparation for and **the process** leading to the **self-evaluation** report have to be considered fundamental: allows to gain self-awareness and improve internal communication re. strategic goals, areas of strengths/weaknesses...
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The Institutional Evaluation Programme (6): How to use it for a strategic planning exercise?

External report and dissemination lead to:

- The valorisation, at internal level and through an external eye, of important institutional aspects “hidden” by routine and everyday practice
 - At both internal and external level, increased trust towards existing or planned initiatives
 - For stakeholders (Ministry, partners, prospective students...), added demonstration of the quality of the institution and the righteousness of its strategic choices
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Lessons learnt from EUA's QA activities (1)

- A single set of standards for HE is not desirable since it clashes with the need to have an innovative and diverse HE sector
- But it is important that each institution is clear about its own standards
- And that each institution is (externally) evaluated in the context of its standards

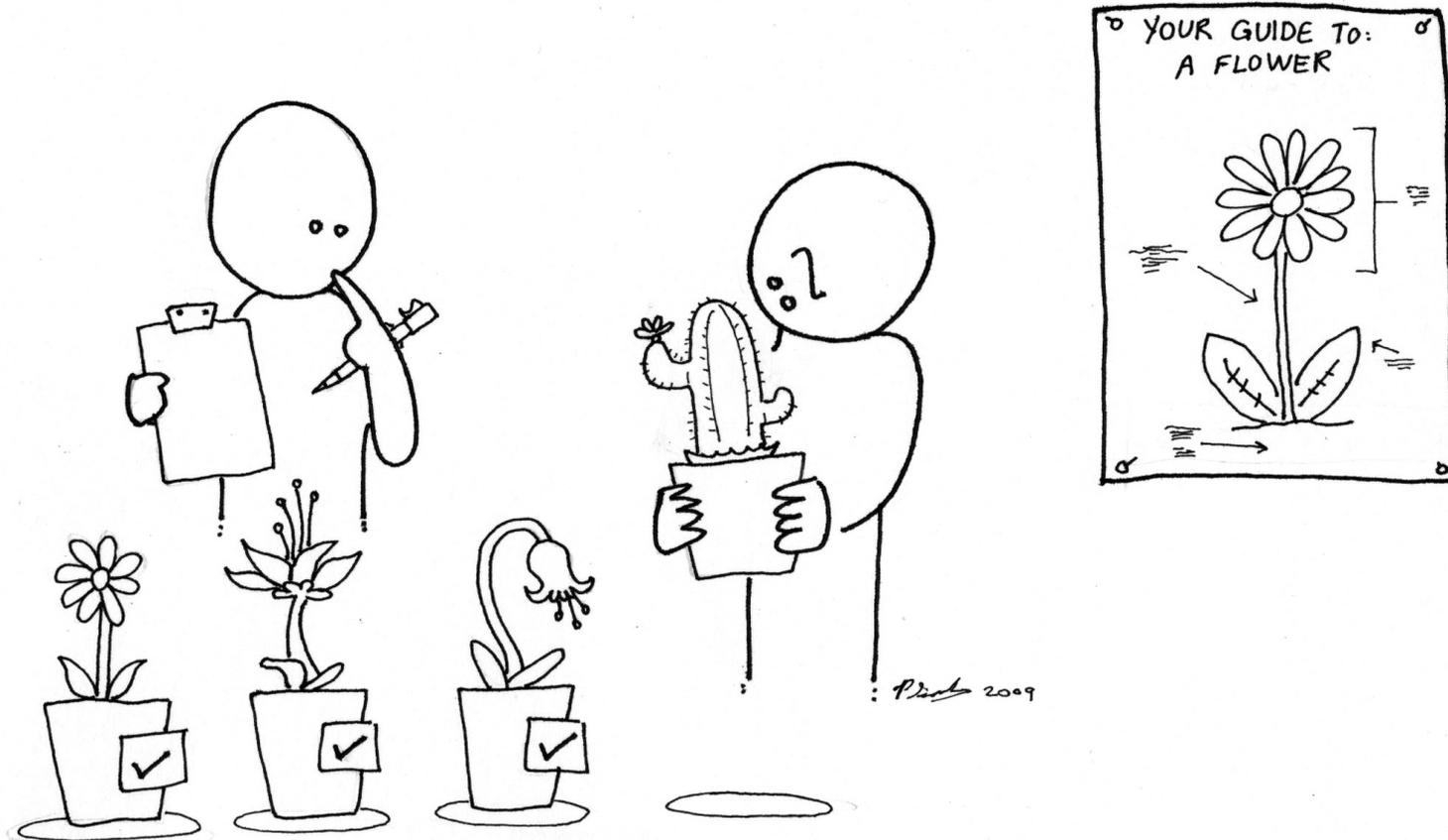
=> No « copy-pasting » of good examples: building up a quality culture takes time and effort

Lessons learnt from EUA's QA activities (2)

The most effective internal QA systems:

- Are context sensitive taking account of different organisational cultures
 - Are closely linked to institutional strategic priorities
 - Are coupled with effective internal decision making processes and structures
 - Use combination of several tools to triangulate information on the quality
 - Would allow risk-taking and failure in order to not hinder creativity and innovation
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TO GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING
OF HOW HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS & QA AGENCIES'
QUALITY PROCEDURES & PRACTICES TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE
DIVERSITY OF INSTITUTIONAL MISSIONS & PROFILES



Now, to take things further...

- How would this overview and these conclusions match the situation in Jordan?
 - Are there comparable features, trends, developments?
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Thank you for your attention!

More information on EUA's work: www.eua.be

More information on IEP: www.eua.be/iep

**The cartoon is from Patrick Sanders,
<http://www.patricksanders.co.uk/>
(4th European Quality Assurance Forum, Copenhagen 2009)**