



INQAAHE

International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education

Statement on EQA

Quality assurance (QA) in higher education means:

- * the collections of policies, procedures, systems and practices,
- * internal or external to the organisation,
- * designed to achieve, maintain and enhance quality and improve standards.

It includes activities internal (IQA) and external (EQA) to the institution. Different EQA agencies have different roles in QA, but the main goal of EQA is the higher education should be of high quality. EQA agencies achieve this goal both by holding higher education Institutions (HEIs) accountable for the quality of their activities at any time, and by assisting HEIs in enhancing that quality over time. In pursuit of this goal, they work both with the HEIs and with other bodies. EQA agencies and HEIs have the same stakeholders, namely:

- * Students and prospective students
- * Employers
- * Governments
- * The wider community, both national and international
- * Individuals and foundations that support students and institutions

In principle, the emphasis on enhancement should increase relative to accountability as systems mature. In practice, the advent of new institutions and the changing environment for higher education mean that both will continue to be important.