

Political Constraints on Quality Assurance

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Quality assurance still a new phenomenon

- As applied to higher education, quality assurance is still a new phenomenon
- Many HE stakeholders do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the concept.
- How should EQA set themselves to address this phenomenon so as to rally political support?
- One of the contentions of HEIs relates to protection of academic freedom and institutional autonomy. How do we factor these into EQA systems while ensuring transparency and stakeholder accountability of HEIs?

Quality assurance same as quality control?

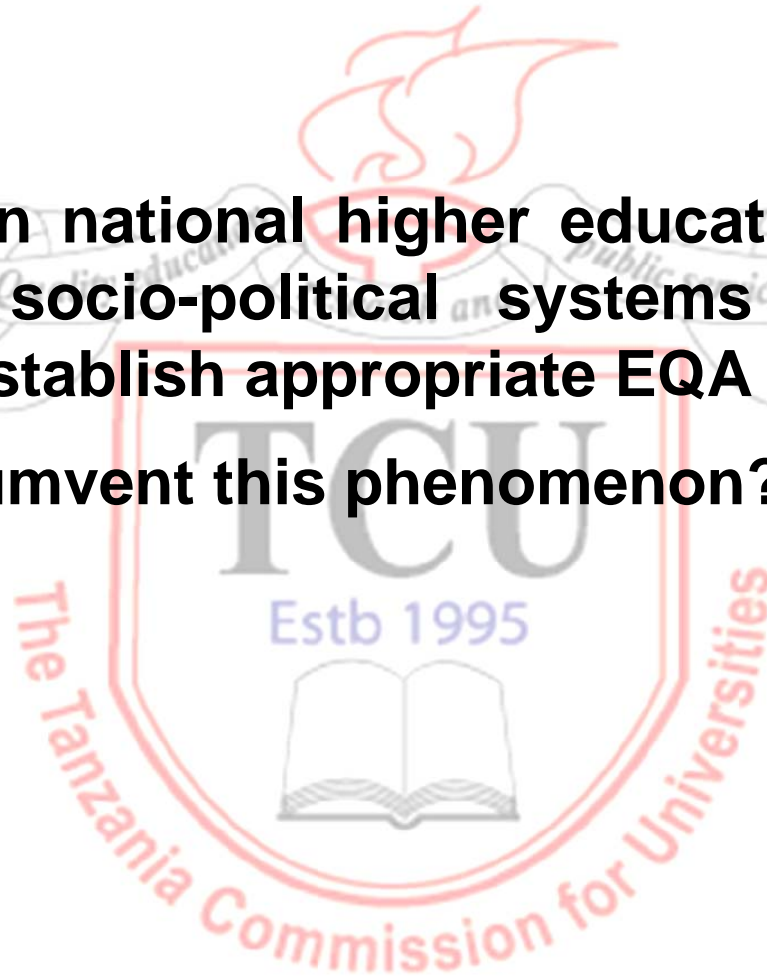
- How to deal with the mix up of quality assurance being the same as quality control
- QA for HEIs being handled by departments of ministries of education, just like for school inspectorates
- This way are QA systems denied the required independence and autonomy?

Massification of higher education

- **Is quality assurance compromised when it comes to deal with massification of higher education?**
- **How do EQA cope with masification of HE in view of political commitments leading to massification not matching with available financial, teaching and learning resources ?**

National higher education policy diversities

- Diversities in national higher education policies and other socio-political systems making it difficult to establish appropriate EQA systems
- How to circumvent this phenomenon?



Protection of national identity versus internationalization

- **Protection of national identity and the need to establish harmonized sub-regional/regional QA systems**
- **How would EQA engage themselves in dealing with that phenomenon?**



EQA functionally answerable to Education ministries

- Is there absence of political interference where national EQA are functionally answerable to Education ministries?
- How to maintain independence in the functions of EQAs in such scenarios?
- Is it feasible to establish quality assurance systems that are totally independent of the government and/or national political systems particularly in the context of developing countries, e.g. in Africa?

Session 6: Political Constraints on QA Questions for Breakaway Group Discussions

Most agencies operate within national or regional contexts and are subject to different forms of political governance and ideological preferences, which have considerable influence in the area of education. The degree of independence that agencies have from both national government and individual providers seem to be a pre-condition for the work of quality assurance agencies to take place and be effective.

- 1) What are the agencies experiences of the context within which they operate?
- 2) How do these relations affect the agencies' ability to carry out their specified tasks?
- 3) Are there any indicators/measurements of how agencies perform in this area?
- 4) Are there guidelines in this regard?
- 5) What is meant by independence?

