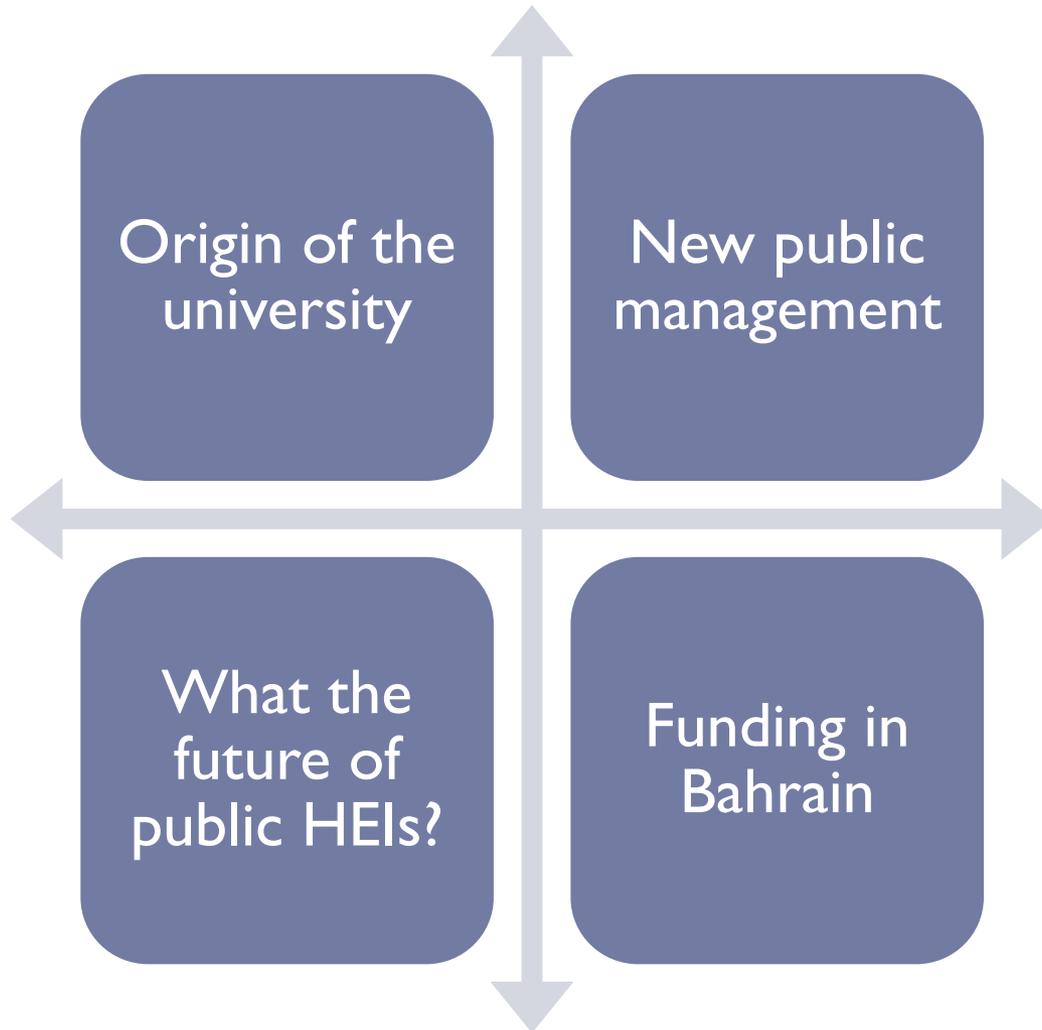


Public university reform: the future of quality assurance in Bahrain

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Context



Scenario 1: Performance linked funding

- ▶ Global trend – education provision linked to labour market needs
- ▶ Quality assurance moving towards national interest regulation e.g. Australia, UK.
- ▶ Formal quality assurance is relatively new to Bahrain. Has the BQA outgrown its current mission statement?
- ▶ Solution:
 - ▶ BQA to sit at the nexus of institutions, LMO, and government.
 - ▶ Encourage better alignment of qualification type and labour market needs.
 - ▶ Manage the time lag better market needs and educational provision



Scenario 2: Increase in tuition fees

- ▶ Global shift in burden of payment for provision to students.
- ▶ GCC governments fully fund public HEIs, however it is at a lower rate than international norms.
- ▶ Solution:
 - ▶ Quality assurance must provide more data to students and families on quality of programmes, institutions, faculty qualifications, and employment prospects.
 - ▶ Student voice.



Scenario 3: Increased industry funding

- ▶ Globally HEIs are drawing a greater proportion of their income from industry sources such as alumni fundraising, corporate donations, and commercial research.
- ▶ Challenges in increasing commercialisation in Bahraini HEIs – profit vs. teaching and learning, international criteria vs. national development plans.
- ▶ Solution:
 - ▶ Use national structures, e.g. Tamkeen, LMRA.
 - ▶ Data can now be drawn from LMO.
 - ▶ A broader remit for the BQA, including a direct relationship with industry while maintaining independence and autonomy.



Final thoughts

- ▶ All GCC countries are facing similar challenges. How can we learn from international experiences?
- ▶ BQA – mission accomplished. What next?
 - ▶ Address misalignment between public institutions and the labour market.
 - ▶ Widening qualification types on offer.
 - ▶ Encourage the private sector to fill the qualifications gap.
 - ▶ Lead policy on increased student fees and its implications.
 - ▶ Quality assurance as a conduit between public institutions, government, and the labour market.
 - ▶ Better quality assurance integration between GCC states.



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