INQAAHE GUIDELINES OF GOOD PRACTICE (GGP)

EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT

Organization	Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA)
Place	Bangkok, Thailand
Date of the visit	Monday (17 June 2024) to Thursday (19 June 2024)

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

INQAAHE's GGP External Evaluation Process

The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) had requested the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) for an external evaluation of its performance in accordance with the Guidelines of Good Practice (GGP). To this end, ONESQA carried out a self-assessment process and submitted the self-assessment report and a list of supporting evidence to INQAAHE on 4 July 2023.

The external evaluation of ONESQA was conducted by the GGP, updated by INQAAHE in 2018 (Annex 1. Guidelines of Good Practice - GGP) and was carried out by an independent Review Panel of international experts in the areas of evaluation and quality assurance in higher education (Annex 2. Composition of the GGP Review Panel). The Review Panel was composed of the following:

- **Dr Rolf Heusser (Chair of the Review Panel):** Director of the Swiss Accreditation Agency (2001-2010). Chairman of the European Consortium of Accreditation (ECA, 2004-2014). Board Member of INQAAHE (2009-2010). International Higher Education & QA Expert. University of Zurich.
- **Dr Angela Yung Chi Hou (Committee Secretary):** Former Executive Director, Higher Education Evaluation & Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT). Professor, Department of Education, National Chengchi University, Taiwan. Former Board member and Vice President, International Network of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (INQAAHE)and Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN)
- **Dr Ronny Heintze (QA Expert):** Deputy Director for International Development, Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes (AQAS). Member of the Agency Review Committee – ENQA: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

The site visit was held for three days – Monday 17, Tuesday 18, and Wednesday 19 June 2024. It featured an agenda that included a total of 10 interviews with (58 interviewees)

with the representatives of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI), leadership and staff members of ONESQA, presidents of higher education institutions, representatives of national and international organizations associated with ONESQA, peer evaluators, students, and quality assurance leaders of HEIs (Higher Education Institutions). Annex 3 shows the agenda of the site visit and the interview sessions conducted by the Review Panel. A final session was also held with ONESQA's leadership and staff members, during which the Review Panel provided a summary of the main results of the external review process.

Based on the self-assessment document and the information gathered during the site visit and ONESQA website, the Review Panel drafted the first version of the external review report, which was shared with ONESQA for verification before being submitted to INQAAHE's Board of Directors for final approval.

About Thailand's Higher Education System

Higher education in Thailand originated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, aligning with the modernization initiatives during the reigns of King Rama V (Chulalongkorn) and King Rama VI (Vajiravudh). The first higher education institution, Chulalongkorn University was established in 1917. During the mid-20th century, there was a rapid expansion in Thai higher education to meet the growing demand for skilled professionals as well as to support national development. Subsequently, the Thai government has undertaken various reforms to improve the quality of higher education, including efforts to internationalize education, promote research, and increase university autonomy. over decades, Thailand's higher education has been transformed from a focus on agriculture (Thailand 1.0), light industry (Thailand 2.0), and advanced industry (Thailand 3.0) to innovation-driven Thailand 4.0. In the new initiative, the Thai government aims to upgrade technology, improve creativity, encourage innovation, and enhance research and development (National Institute of Development Administration, 2020).

Higher education institutions (HEIs) in Thailand comprise of public and private universities, institutions, colleges, and community colleges. Up to date, the total number of HEIs in Thailand is 172, including 155 HEIs under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI) and 17 higher education

providers under other organizations according to their establishment legislations. In total, there are 9 categories of HEIs in Thailand, including Autonomous University, public university, Raja Mangala University of Technology, Private University, Private College, Private institution, Open Admission University and Higher Education Providers under other Ministries/ Organizations (See table 1).

Table 1 Number of Higher Education Institutions in Thailand as of 2023

No.	Category	Number of HEIs
MHESI		
1.	Autonomous University	27
2.	Public University	8
3.	Raja Mangala University of Technology	9
4.	Rajabhat University	38
5.	Private University	41
6.	Private College	18
7.	Private Institution	12
8.	Open Admission University	2
Other Ministries/Organizations		
9.	Higher Education Providers under other Ministries/ Organizations	17
Total		172

As of recent data, the total number of students enrolled in higher education institutions in Thailand is approximately 1.75 million, including undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral students across various public and private universities and colleges in the country. Thailand has been increasingly attracting students from neighboring ASEAN countries and beyond, thanks to its efforts to offer more programs in English and to internationalize its campuses. Many public universities in Thailand have been granted autonomy to enable more flexible and efficient management, even though they still receive government funding. Leading universities in Thailand are increasingly focusing on research and innovation. Institutions like Mahidol University and Chulalongkorn University have made significant contributions to research, particularly in the fields of

medicine, science, and technology. Besides, the number of international students enrolled in higher education institutions in Thailand was approximately 34,202 as of 2022.

About the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA)

Since the enforcement of the National Education Act of 1999, ONESQA was authorized as the sole authority on external quality assurance (EQA) in Thailand. After the Royal Decree on the establishment of ONESQA in the year 2000, ONESQA has played a pivotal role in promoting quality of education for all levels of education including higher education in Thailand.

From the beginning of the establishment of ONESQA, the Office was under the jurisdiction of the Office of the Prime Minister. Subsequently in 2018, the Council of Ministers passed a resolution to shift ONESQA to be under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. During that period, the Ministry of Education oversaw education institutions of all levels of education, including early childhood education, primary and secondary education, vocational education, and higher education.

The turning point of the structural change of the EQA framework in Thailand occurred in 2019 when the Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC) under the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI) has promulgated the Higher Education Act of 2019. Section 64 of the Act authorizes Thai higher education institutions (HEIs) to have liberty to choose either Thai or foreign EQAAs voluntarily (from now on called as voluntary) to conduct EQA for Thai HEIs. These EQAAs include government organization or private sector within Thailand, and international EQA bodies. In this regard, ONESQA is challenged to develop the new EQA framework to fit the new environment.

Under the new Higher Education Act of 2019, the quality assurance for Thai higher education is implemented in responding to the four main missions of Thai HEIs namely: 1) graduate production; 2) conducting research; 3) delivering of academic services to society; and 4) preservation of arts and culture. In the first three rounds of institutional reviews

by ONESQA on a compulsory approach, there were approximately 237 to 260 higher education institutions accredited. In the current round, the number of HEIs to be assessed is standing at 55 HEIs (2021-2022) and 45 HEIs (2023) are in the process of EQA as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Number of Assessed HEI and Assessors, as of 5 April 2023

Item	EQA Round (Compulsory)				Voluntary
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	
	2001-2005	2006-2010	2011-2015	2016-2020	2021-2023
HEIs	237	254	260	3 (Pilot)	55 (assessed) 45 (in process)
Assessors	384	424	329	12	166

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of its continuous commitment to quality enhancement, the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) had requested the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) for an external evaluation of its performance in accordance with the Guidelines of Good Practice (GGP)in 2018. The assessment was based on written documentation of ONESQA and a three-day on-site visit in June 2024. Based on the evidence, including ONESQA's SER, related documentation, interviews on-site and the information in the public domain, the Review Panel confirms that ONESQA is a well-recognized, credible organization, trusted by the HEIs, the HE stakeholders and the public in Thailand. In alignment with the six (6) standards of the INQAAHE GGP, the major findings are as follows.

In Standard one (The External Quality Assurance Agency (EQAA): As an independent agency, ONESQA has a clear legal basis and is recognized as the national authority for QA in Thailand. The agency has a clear governance structure and provides good opportunities for staff professional development. Moreover, ONESQA has a comprehensive policy on conflict of interests and confidentiality. As a consequence of reforms in the Thai HE sectors and new trends and developments in Higher Education ONESQA shall rethink and review its mission statement and adopt it according to its new role and responsibilities in the EQA in Thailand and its role in global HE.

In Standard two (Accountability of the EQAA): ONESQA operates with a high degree of transparency and professionalism and acts on a high level of ethics, morals and integrity. Besides, ONESQA has a strong internal QA system in place for continuous self-enhancement. Currently, ONESQA gives priority to the establishment of a Management Information System with statistics and information in order to facilitate its operation more effectively. It is suggested that ONESQA shall make good use of the HE data from the EQA assessments to perform system-wide analysis.

In the Standard three (The EQAA's framework for external review of quality in higher education institutions): ONESQA has developed tailored criteria to evaluate different types of institutions, from large research universities to vocational colleges, in which it has autonomy over its decision-making on the external review. The high level of competence of ONESQA's management team, assessors, and its capable staff enables it to carry out external reviews effectively and efficiently. It is recommended that ONESQA publishes more information about its activities and results and its research, both in Thai and English languages.

In Standard four (EQAA Review and its relationship to the public): ONESQA continues to communicate with higher education institutions and the public by publishing related documentation on the website, such as establishment policies, legal documents, key QA documents, as well as the EQA manual, criteria, and assessment process. It is suggested that students and employers can be included in the external reviews.

In Standard five (Decision making): ONESQA's decision-making process is characterized by its thoroughness, impartiality, and transparency. The multi-layered system ensures that decisions are well-founded, consistent, and justifiable, fostering a reliable quality assurance environment for higher education in Thailand.

In Standard six (The QA of cross-border higher education): ONESQA has developed a strong partnership with national and international organizations and QA agencies.

In summary, through its clear QA guidelines, robust training programs for assessors, and transparent procedures, ONESQA not only upholds high standards of quality but also builds trust and credibility among the institutions it evaluates. ONESQA continues to internationalize its EQA system by collaborating with foreign quality assurance agencies. From the evidence gathered by the Review Panel, ONESQA's alignment with the INQAAHE GGP is substantial. For this reason, the Review Panel recommends that the INQAAHE Board certifies the alignment of ONESQA with the GGP.

ASSESSMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH INQAAHE GUIDELINES OF GOOD PRACTICE

I.   The structure of the External Quality Assurance Agency (EQAA)

The EQAA is a recognized, credible organization, trusted by higher education institutions and the public. It has adequate mechanisms to prevent conflicts of interest in the decisions it makes; its staff has the needed skills to carry out the functions associated with external QA. The EQAA has the needed resources to carry out its mission.

☐	☐	■	☐
Not compliant	Partially compliant	Substantially compliant	Fully compliant

1.1   Legitimacy and recognition

The Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) was established in 2000 according to the National Education Act of 1999, Section 49 of Chapter 6 at page 58. As a public organization, the **Royal Decree Establishing the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization) B.E. 2543** stipulates that ONESQA is obligated to develop the EQA system, to design standards and criteria for higher education institution, to certify and train assessors as well as to submit the annual reports to the Council of Ministers for policy formation.

There are 11 members of the ONESQA Executive Board, which serves as the organization's governing body. Apart from the 4 ex-officio board members, the Chairperson of the Executive Board, and 6 scholars members are appointed by the Cabinet. Among four ex-committee members, the Chairperson of the Committee for Development of the Evaluation System for Higher Education is mainly responsible for university evaluation. To carry out EQA activities appropriately, there are 4 bureaus: 3 technical bureaus and one supportive bureau. To date, there are 110 staff members,

including 1 Director (currently, it is an Acting Director), 4 Deputy Directors, 10 heads of section, 8 heads of unit and 52 officers.

ONESQA adopts the national policy and standards developed by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation (MHESI). However, ONESQA also attempts to follow the good practices and standards from international organizations. These include aligning EQA standards with the AQAF, participating EU SHARE project by writing an SER report, learning guidelines from several EQAAs such as conducting the benchmarking with QAA, UK, developing the joint accreditation with ASIIN, Germany, and developing the iJAS Plus framework for joint accreditation among Thailand, Japan and Taiwan. The Review Panel confirms that ONESQA follows the national QA policy and starts to take into consideration relevant guidelines issued by international networks and EQAAs to form its new EQA policies and practices. Thus, the Review Panel suggests that ONESQA follows the new HE trends and incorporates new global QA standards and guidelines into its EQA system (such as QA for micro-credentials, short learning programs and on-line programs).

The policies related to conflicts of interest by ONESQA have been in place. Several documents were published by ONESQA, including 1) Code of Ethics for governing committee, staff, and assessors, 2) the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) and Integrity and Transparency Assessment (ITA) to ensure integrity and transparency. Besides, ONESQA announced a policy on giving and receiving gifts for all executives and officers, staff, and assessors on various occasions. Thus, the Review Panel confirms that ONESQA has a clear and published policy for the prevention of conflicts of interest that applies to its staff, its decision-making body, and external reviewers. Based on these facts it can be concluded that there is **full compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 1.1.1 and 1.1.3; **substantial compliance** with substandard 1.1.2.

1.2   Mission and purposes

According to the Royal Decree on Establishing the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Public Organization) B.E. 2543, the three key objectives of ONESQA are *Development of EQA Framework and Guidelines, Selection of external assessors and Developing a training module for external assessors*. In order to complete these tasks and be in accordance with the 6 key strategies for higher education

outcomes determined by MHESI, ONESQA has developed a Strategic Plan from 2023 to 2025 with four dimensions, 1). Applying a research-driven strategy to enrich its internationalization; 2) Becoming a modern and high-performance organization; 3) Becoming a world-class organization, striving for excellence; and 4) the application of a work-life balance model to enrich its staff well-being. The development of the strategies is carried out in consultation with staff and stakeholders in three steps, as they confirmed in the interviews.

ONESQA presents its mission statement in the SER. However, this statement appears to be a list of its current main functions, rather than a real mission statement with a look into the future. The Review Panel recommends that ONESQA shall reformulate its mission statement and vision accordingly.

ONESQA emphasizes the student learning outcomes and graduate competencies acquired. To carry out the institutional assessment, ONESQA clearly defines the assessment standards and criteria in 5 areas:

1) Management outcomes based on institutional mission and goal,

2) Quality of graduates (undergraduate degrees, master's, and doctorates),

3) Quality of research work with a beneficial impact to the society,

4) Academic service, and

5) Internal quality assurance

The Review Panel confirms that ONESQA developed a valuable strategic plan, covering its short-term activities, but it shall also formulate mission statement and vision, that reflect its aspired role in Thai HE. Based on these facts it can be concluded that there is **partial compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 1.2.1.

1.3   Governance and organizational structure

ONESQA is obligated to assess and monitor all levels of education according to the national law. To implement it, ONESQA has a well-established organizational structure, consistent with its current objectives. There are three main units responsible for higher education evaluation and related QA activities, including 1) The Assessment and

Certification of Higher Education Institutions Section responsible for external quality assurance management; 2) The Assessment System Development Section responsible for develop and certify external assessors; 3) The Promotion and Public Relations Development Section responsible for preparation the HIEs to be ready for assessment and encourage them to use the assessment results. Overall, the organizational structure of ONESQA makes it possible to carry out its external review processes effectively and efficiently (organizational chart as follows) . If ONESQA's role would be changing in the future, then its structure would have to follow its new needs.

Figure 1: ONESQA's organizational chart
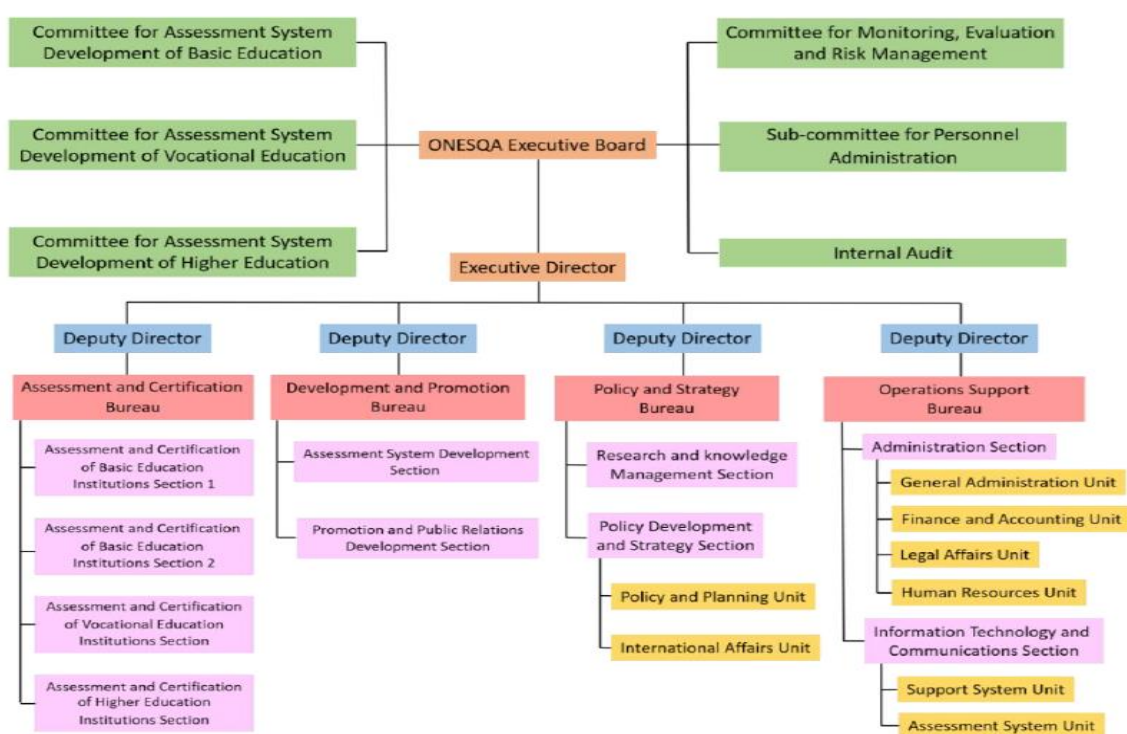
For standards and criteria development, ONESQA invites stakeholders to share their thoughts on it to ensure that the QA framework can fulfill social needs. There are serval approaches to engage stakeholders from HEIs. First, ONESQA is holding meetings with parent organizations, representatives from HEIs of all types, IQA experts, external assessors, other relevant organizations and the Office of the Public Sector Development Commission. Most importantly, meetings are held across all regions to promote the understanding on the EQA standards and criteria. Second, ONESQA collected the data from stakeholders through e-mails, websites, questionnaires, seminars, conferences, etc.

The Review Panel confirms that ONESQA makes efforts to engage HEI stakeholders in the development of QA system. However, the Review Panel suggests that employers and students shall also be included in the next round. Based on these facts it can be concluded that there is **substantial compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 1.3.1.

ONESQA is an autonomous organization and carries out EQA reviews in terms of three dimensions. First, ONESQA has a clear policy for the recruitment of assessors and provides adequate online training workshops with assessors. The draft assessment report, after the assessed HEI verified its validity, is submitted to the Committee for Assessment System Development of Higher Education to affirm its validity, reliability, and credibility. Lastly, the final quality report will be proposed to the Executive Board for approval. The reviewed HEI can make any complaints anytime regardless of what the step of the assessment is. The whole review process is independent and impartial. All participating members in each step comply with **Code of Ethics** seriously. The Review Panel confirms that the composition of the decision-making mechanism ensures the independence and impartiality of the external reviews. Based on these facts it can be concluded that there is **full compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 1.3.2.

ONESQA has developed a specific strategic plan from 2023 to 2025 and every 6 months, the progress is assessed for the future development. Several action plans are in place as well. The Review Panel confirms that ONESQA develops the objectives in alignment with key strategies. Based on these facts, it can be concluded that there is **full compliance** of ONESQA with substandard, 1.3.3 and 1.3.4

1.4 Resources

As indicated, there are 110 staff members in ONESQA, including 84 fixed-term contracts and 26 yearly contracts. The qualification of the staff shall be with a master's degree at least. In order to continue to build the QA capacity, ONESQA provides in-house training regularly. Besides, ONESQA is developing Individual Development Plans (IDP) for its staff and provides scholarships for them. One of the interviewees affirmed that she was awarded the IDP and completed her PhD degree at the end. To be a competent QA agency, ONESQA also provides international exchange programs with staff to enhance their capabilities. Throughout the interviews on site, the staff showed satisfaction with the working environment and facilities provided.

ONESQA is located in Bangkok downtown, the Phayathai Plaza Building floor 24, with some spaces on floor 19 and floor 3. The Review Panel confirms that the office is well equipped, and each staff has their own working space and is provided with a computer and WIFI internet. The technological resources to support staff at work include an electronic office system (e-office) and enterprise resource planning system (ERP). In general, the staff are satisfied with ONESQA's working conditions. However, as space is limited, the Review Panel suggests that the staff's working space can be developed bigger in the future to strengthen internal communication and collaboration. In addition, the Review Panel suggests that in line with the strategic plan 2023-2025, more investment and resources on IT infrastructure and research capacity building should be made.

Regarding financial resources, ONESQA as a public organization receives sufficient funding from the government, even though the number of review activities is reduced. The Review Panel confirms that ONESQA has sufficient human and financial resources with a well-equipped office. In order to achieve the set objectives, the Review Panel suggests that ONESQA reviews the current financial allocation scheme and annual budget plan, in particular, the areas of IT, research capacity building, and international collaboration. Based on these facts it can be concluded that there is **full compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 1.4.1, 1.4.2, and 1.4.3.

Commendations

1. The Review Panel **commends** ONESQA for collaborating with international organizations and developing the iJAS Plus and ASIIN Maturity frameworks for the joint accreditation. Such mutual learning experiences can contribute to the future development of ONESQA's EQA system.

2. The Review Panel **commends** that ONESQA has a clear and comprehensive policy on conflict of interests and confidentiality. This is also evidenced through its employment contracts for executives, staff, and assessors.

3. The Review Panel **commends** ONESQA for providing good opportunities for staff professional development.

Suggestions

1. The Review Panel **suggests** to provide students and labor market representatives with clear roles in the development of the EQA system.

2. The Review Panel **suggests** that ONESQA incorporates new HE and QA trends into its EQA, such as micro-credentials, short learning programs, QA for CBE programs, etc.

3. The Review Panel **suggests** that ONESQA reviews the current financial allocation scheme and annual budget plan in the areas of IT, research capacity building, and international collaboration in order to achieve the goals it set.

Recommendations

1. The Review Panel **recommends** that ONESQA shall reformulate its mission statement and vision and adjust its organizational structure to better align with its objectives, enhance efficiency, and facilitate the smoother implementation of future projects.

2. The Review Panel **recommends** that ONESQA add new QA standards into its EQA framework which would respond to global trends and issues in HE, in addition to the criteria set by the MHEIS, such as university social responsibility, SDGs, etc.

3. The Review Panel **recommends** that ONESQA shall reformulate its mission statement and vision in accordance with its current and future role and responsibility in Thai higher education as well as global higher education.

Conclusion of the Review Panel's assessment

- The Review Panel concludes that ONESQA is **substantially compliant** with the INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practices in examination section 1 "The Structure of the External Quality Assurance Agency".

II.   Accountability of the EQAA

The EQAA has in place policies and mechanisms for its internal quality assurance, which demonstrate a continuing effort to improve the quality and integrity of its activities, its response to the changes to the context in which it operates and its links to the international community of QA.

☐	☐	☐Substantially	■
Not compliant	Partially compliant	compliant	Fully compliant

2.1 Agency's Quality Assurance

ONESQA operates with a high degree of transparency and professionalism. One example is the careful way of selecting and training experts/panel members. They are key when it comes to the credibility of EQA procedures. Another example is the provision of handbooks and manuals that describe with great clarity the assessment procedures and the expectations related to them. Another strength is the high level of ethics and morals of ONESQA. A code of ethics/code of conduct does exist, it encompasses 9 core values that are binding for assessors. It is noteworthy that ONESQA always gets high grades in the yearly surveys carried out by NACC (National Anti-corruption Agency). Based on these facts, it can be concluded that there is **full compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 2.1.1

ONESQA has established a strong internal QA system that allows it to periodically review its effectiveness and the contribution of its operations to its mission. Among the tools applied for this purpose are periodic assessments of the EQA, internal SWOT analysis, alignment exercises, internal audits and many other measures. This robust internal control mechanism is flanked by external control measures, such as regular progress reporting to the ministry, analysis of feedback from the HEIs undergoing assessment (QC-100 surveys, participation in international QA exercises such as the shared project, etc.). ONESQA is committed to closing such feedback loops. As an example, the results of the QC-100 surveys provide direct feedback of the HEIs to ONESQA assessors. Results are directly used to adopt -if necessary- the training of the experts. An enhancement area concerns the focus of the internal evaluations: currently, there is a focus on the processes

of the procedures, in the future, it might be important to focus more on the outputs and outcomes of the procedures and therefore on the relevance of the EQA for HEIs. Q-enhancement activities might play a bigger role in the maturation of the EQA system. Based on these facts, it can be concluded that there is **full compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 2.1.2

Over the past years, a lot of highly relevant HE data have been collected by ONESQA. These data are only partly exploited. The expert panel recommends using the rich national HE data pool for system-wide analysis. From the analysis of the national data, all relevant HE stakeholders can profit: The government (as they can detect gaps in the HE sectors, the students and their parents (as they will profit from the transparency about the quality of Higher Education in Thailand, the labor market (as they learn about the trends in HE), and last but not least the HEIs themselves, as they can compare their own performance with the performance of other national HEIs. Based on these facts, it can be concluded that there is **substantial compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 2.1.3.

A strong point of ONESQA is that it assesses the entire EQA system every 5 years. When it comes to discussions about possible modification, relevant stakeholders are often consulted (e.g. change of Quality standards). Highly qualified internal management bodies within ONESQA allow to monitor the planning and implementation of the necessary actions (also visible in the strategic plans of ONESQA). Based on these facts, it can be concluded that there is **full compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 2.1.4.

2.2. Links with the Quality Assurance Community

ONESQA has established many valuable co-operations with national QAA's and international QA networks and initiatives. Such partnerships are described in detail in chapter 6.2. They help ONESQA to become aware of new developments in HE and QA at an early stage. Furthermore, the comparison with other QAA's allows to self-critically look at the performance of the own agency; the partner agencies are helping here in the role of critical friends. Based on the many examples of fruitful collaborations (22 MOUs with 14 countries) it can be concluded that ONESQA is **fully compliant** with the sub-standards 2.2.1 and 2.2.2.

Commendations

1. The Review Panel **commends** ONESQA for operating with a high degree of transparency and professionalism and acting on a high level of ethics, morals and integrity.
2. The Review Panel **commends** ONESQA for having establish a strong internal QA system that enables it to review its own activities.
3. The Review Panel **commends** ONESQA on the implementation of the QC-100 survey and the use of the results of these surveys to further improve the EQA assessments.
4. The Review Panel **commends** ONESQA for regularly measuring the impact of its EQA and for its readiness to review the EQA system every 5 years, involving relevant stakeholders in this evaluation process.
5. The Review Panel **commends** ONESQA on its attempts to reach trust-based relationships with the HEIs. ONESQA is highly recognized by the Thai HE sectors.

Suggestions

1. The Review Panel **suggests** that ONESQA continues with external evaluations conducted by international associations or networks, such as INQAAHE (new ISG released in 2024, APQN, AQAN, etc.).
2. The Review Panel **suggests that** ONESQA continues its repositioning efforts after the 2019 reforms and further explores opportunities to support institutions with enhancement-led activities.
3. The Review Panel **suggests** that ONESQA utilizes historical HE data from previous EQA assessments to conduct comprehensive system-wide analysis.

Recommendations

1. None

Conclusion of the Review Panel

The Review Panel concludes that ONESQA is **fully compliant** with the Guidelines of Good Practice associated with Section 2: Accountability of the EQAA.

III. The Agency's Framework for the External Review of Quality of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

The main concern of the EQAA is the promotion of quality education and student achievement. In doing this, it recognizes that quality is primarily the responsibility of the higher education institutions themselves and supports this principle in its criteria and procedures. These promote internal quality assurance (IQA) and provide higher education institutions with clear guidance on the requirements for self-assessment and external review.

☐	☐	■	☐
Not compliant	Partially compliant	Substantially compliant	Fully compliant

3.1. Relations between the agency and the HEIs

ONESQA recognizes that the primary responsibility for quality and quality assurance in higher education institutions (HEIs) lies with the institutions themselves. This principle is reflected in ONESQA's practices which respect the academic autonomy, identity, and integrity of the institutions and their programs. The opportunity to individualize the process along the specific profile of the institution underlines the respect to the individual character and responsibility of the university/institution.

One of the examples is that ONESQA's guidelines for institutional self-assessment reports (SARs) allow institutions to highlight their unique missions, goals, and academic offerings. By doing so, ONESQA enables institutions to maintain their distinct academic identities while aligning with national quality standards. Based on these facts, it can be concluded that there is **full compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 3.1.1.

ONESQA actively promotes the development and implementation of internal quality assurance (IQA) processes within HEIs. This involves providing guidance and support to ensure that institutions can effectively manage their own quality assurance mechanisms.

One of the examples is that ONESQA conducts capacity-building initiatives such as workshops and training sessions to help HEIs develop robust IQA systems. Institutions like Mahidol University benefit from these initiatives by enhancing their internal quality assurance practices, ensuring that they meet both internal and external quality standards. Based on these facts, it can be concluded that there is **full compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 3.1.2.

ONESQA strives to minimize the workload and cost burden their procedures place on institutions, aiming to make them as efficient and cost-effective as possible. This is achieved through streamlined processes and the use of technology to reduce administrative overhead. One particular highlight is the fact that the procedure is heavily based on existing documents of the institution so that the workload in preparation of specific documents is minimized.

The Review Panel confirms that ONESQA's transition to online submission systems for reports and documentation has significantly reduced the administrative burden on HEIs after the interviews with the staff as well as representatives of HEIs. Institutions now submit self-assessment reports and supporting documents electronically, saving time and reducing costs associated with physical documentation. However, while online systems enhance efficiency, they require adequate technological infrastructure and digital literacy, which may not be uniformly available across all institutions. Providing necessary training and resources is essential to ensure equitable access. Based on these facts, it can be concluded that there is **substantial compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 3.1.3.

3.2. The definition of criteria for external evaluation

ONESQA values institutional diversity and incorporates this recognition into its criteria and procedures. This involves creating flexible evaluation criteria that accommodate the unique missions, goals, and contexts of different HEIs. For example, ONESQA has developed tailored criteria to evaluate different types of institutions, from large research universities to vocational colleges. This approach ensures that each institution is assessed in a manner relevant to its specific context and objectives. Based on these facts, it can be concluded that there is **full compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 3.2.1.

While in the new system, the key requirements are defined by the ministry and the procedures of the agency must ensure that the requirements of the ministry are met, the specific criteria and standards implemented by ONESQA are subject to consultation with stakeholders and are regularly revised to remain relevant. This iterative process ensures that the standards reflect the evolving needs of the higher education sector. The most relevant activity in this regard is town hall meetings that are implemented in different parts of the country to involve the opinions of stakeholders. Currently, ONESQA involves a wide range of stakeholders, including faculty, and administrators, in the revision of its accreditation standards.

Regular feedback sessions and public consultations help refine these standards to meet current educational needs. The footprint of students and the representatives of the labor market in the EQA seems yet barely visible. In the eyes of the Review Panel, these are important stakeholder groups in HE. As already discussed in section 1, the Review Panel, therefore, recommends providing students and the labor market with a stronger role in the EQA. One option would be to actively involve them in ONESQA's procedures.

Based on these facts, it can be concluded that there is **substantial compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 3.2.2.

Standards and criteria consider various modes of provision, depending on the specific type of educational institution focusing on the cultural diversity of individual HEIs by creating indicators that stress identity and uniqueness. This ensures that quality assurance processes are relevant and applicable to all forms of higher education delivery. Specific provisions for transnational education or distance learning do not yet exist. Consequently, ONESQA is in partial compliance with substandard 3.2.3.

ONESQA explicitly addresses all relevant areas of institutional activity within their scope, including governance, program design, teaching and learning, student services, research, and community engagement. This holistic approach ensures a comprehensive evaluation of institutional quality. ONESQA's evaluations cover a wide range of criteria, including governance, academic programs, research output, and community involvement. This ensures that all aspects of an institution's operations are assessed for quality. Based on

these facts, it can be concluded that there is partial compliance of ONESQA with substandard 3.2.4.

Criteria include provisions for internal follow-up mechanisms and effective follow-up of external review outcomes. This ensures continuous improvement and accountability within institutions.

ONESQA requires institutions to develop action plans based on external review findings and submit periodic progress reports. This follow-up process ensures that identified issues are addressed and improvements are implemented. At the same time, it puts a strong emphasis on the autonomy of the institution. Based on these facts it can be concluded that there is **substantial compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 3.2.5.

ONESQA provides clear guidelines on how criteria will be applied, and the types of evidence required to demonstrate compliance. This transparency helps institutions understand and meet quality assurance expectations. ONESQA publishes detailed handbooks that outline the criteria for accreditation and the evidence institutions need to provide. These handbooks serve as valuable resources for institutions preparing for external reviews. Within the agency itself, the decision-making process has several layers to ensure that the SAR contains the required information to make well-substantiated judgments. The two decision-making bodies (Higher Education Committee and Executive Board) are constantly supported by the staff of the agency to also assure efficiency in the process. Based on these facts, it can be concluded that there is full compliance of ONESQA with substandard 3.2.6.

3.3. The external evaluation process

It's confirmed during the interviews on-site with the university representatives that ONESQA conducts its reviews along the published criteria and procedures, ensuring reliability and transparency. The process includes a self-assessment by the institution (based on existing documents), an external review including a site visit and a follow-up. ONESQA provides clear documentation outlining their expectations, criteria, and procedures for self-assessment and external review. This helps institutions prepare effectively for the review process. ONESQA's published guidelines clearly state what is

expected from HEIs in terms of quality criteria, standards, and procedures. The key source of information is a very comprehensive website that holds many key information. The digital platform is also used for the reviews making sure that the provided documents are delivered in the right format and easily available for all those involved in the review. Based on these facts, it can be concluded that there is **full compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 3.3.1 and 3.3.2.

The external review process is carried out by teams of experts consistent with the characteristics of the institution/program being reviewed. These experts provide input from various perspectives, including those of institutions, and academics, but not of students or labor market representatives. The expert panel acknowledges that student involvement in EQA assessments/decisions is a culturally sensitive issue (e.g. because of the principle of seniority). Nevertheless, it is believed that students are best suited to bring in the learners perspectives into the QA assessments. Interviews with the institutions showed that there might be a certain interest in having a stronger inclusion of the labor market perspective, too, as that might bring new perspectives to the table. Based on these facts it can be concluded that there is **substantial compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 3.3.3.

ONESQA has clear specifications on the characteristics and selection of external reviewers, who are supported by appropriate training and good supporting materials such as handbooks or manuals. Reviewers are trained on the evaluation criteria, evidence requirements, and procedures to ensure consistency and reliability in the review process.

External review procedures include effective and comprehensive mechanisms for the prevention of conflicts of interest, ensuring that judgments resulting from external reviews are based on explicit and published criteria. ONESQA's conflict of interest policy requires reviewers to disclose any potential conflicts before participating in a review. This policy helps maintain the integrity and objectivity of the review process. Based on these facts it can be concluded that there is **full compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 3.3.4. and 3.3.5.

ONESQA ensures that each institution or program is evaluated in a consistent way, even if the external panels, teams, or committees are different. ONESQA's standardized training for reviewers and detailed evaluation guidelines help ensure consistency across different review teams. The Review Panel could see exemplary agendas for reviewers' training. Also the involvement of two bodies in the decision-making process assures that even though the evaluation teams might differ, potential differences in interpretation of the standards are identified in the process as the decision-making bodies are in charge of accepting all reports and in case of inconsistency can return tool the Review Panels. Based on these facts, it can be concluded that there is substantial compliance of ONESQA with substandard 3.3.6.

ONESQA carries out the external review within a reasonable timeframe after the completion of a self-assessment report, ensuring that information is current and updated. ONESQA aims to complete external reviews within six months of receiving the self-assessment report. This timely process ensures that the review findings are relevant and based on current data. The Review Panel carefully discussed how realistic this target is. Single voices during the interviews made clear that in individual cases things took a bit longer that envisaged. The Review Panel suggests to ONESQA to keep an eye on the time limits and shorten the time period from finishing the expert report to the announcement of the final result as much as possible.

ONESQA provides higher education institutions with an opportunity to correct any factual errors that may appear in the external review report. After the onsite visit, institutions are given a draft report to identify and correct any factual inaccuracies. This process helps ensure the accuracy and fairness of the final review report. The Review Panel learned that this process is implemented and used by the institutions, while in most of the cases, corrections are minor. Based on these facts, it can be concluded that there is **full compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 3.3.7 and 3.3.8.

3.4. The requirements for self-evaluation

ONESQA provides clear guidance and support to institutions in the application of procedures for self-evaluation and the preparation of the on-site visit. ONESQA's self-evaluation guidelines include detailed instructions on how to conduct self-assessments,

gather feedback from stakeholders, and prepare for external reviews. A very specific feature of the accreditation process is that the Review Panel works with documents that are provided by the university that are not specifically produced for the review, but the existing documents. This increases efficiency at the side of the institution, but it puts a bigger burden on the Review Panel as the structure and validity of documents might be different from case to case.

Given the varying capacities of institutions in conducting self-evaluations, the quality of their SARs can be affected. Another disadvantage of counting on existing documents only might be the limitation of the institutions' self-reflection during the EQA assessments. Based on these facts it can be concluded that there is **substantial** compliance of ONESQA with substandard 3.4.1.

Commendations

1. The Review Panel **commends** that ONESQA has developed tailored criteria to evaluate different types of institutions, from large research universities to vocational colleges.

2. The Review Panel **commends** that ONESQA provides higher education institutions with an opportunity to correct any factual errors that may appear in the external review report.

3. The Review Panel **commends** that ONESQA organizes trainings for all its assessors and that these experts are carefully selected.

4. The Review Panel **commends** that ONESQA documents and guidelines are clear and describe well the expectations for the QA assessments.

Recommendations

1. The Review Panel **recommends** that ONESQA include students and representatives of the labor market in proactive way in their quality assessments (if the situation is perceived to be adequate).

Conclusion of the Review Panel

The Review Panel concludes that ONESQA is **substantially compliant** with the Guidelines of Good Practice associated with Section 3: the Agency's Framework for the External Review of Quality in Higher Education Institutions HEIs.

IV. The EQAA and its relationship with the Public

The EQAA makes public its policies and decisions about institutions and programs, discloses the decisions about its own performance and disseminates reports on outcomes of QA processes.

☐	☐	■	☐
Not compliant	Partially compliant	Substantially compliant	Fully compliant

4.1. Public reports on quality assurance policies and their decisions

ONESQA has published some relevant documentation on its website, such as legal documents, policies and key QA documents (including the EQA manual, criteria and assessment information. Institutions, assessors, students and their parents as well as the general public can benefit from this information. ONESQA also developed an outline/template for the EQA reports. The executive summary of the assessment results of each education institution of the previous three rounds of assessments can be accessed in the Automated QA system (AQA), which is often used to communicate with stakeholders. Through the website, the general public can understand QA activities done by ONESQA.

However, ONESQA currently does not publish the full expert reports, only the pure results of the accreditation are made public through the website. The experts recommend enlarging the information about the assessments for the public, in order to guarantee transparency and to increase the visibility of the assessed institution. Besides, ONESQA submits the financial and budgetary statement which has been gone through review by the Office of the Auditor-General at the end of every fiscal year. The report shows that ONESQA's financial management complies with accounting regulations stipulated by the Ministry of Finance. Based on these facts, it can be concluded that there is **full compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 4.1.1 and **substantial compliance** in 4.1.2 and 4.1.3.

4.2 Other public reports

ONESQA conducts an assessment result analysis or its EQA activities every year. The findings of the analysis of EQA results are reported to relevant committees of ONESQA and serve for EQA mechanism enhancement. Besides, ONESQA conducts a survey **called QC100** in order to get feedback from the stakeholders who are involved in the EQA process including the HEIs, assessors, chairperson of the team of assessors, and ONESQA's officers.

The feedback received from all parties involved has been used to revise the expert training program. Based on the EQA meta-analysis and stakeholders' feedback, ONESQA continues to develop training programs that can fit the needs of institutions and assessors. Based on these facts, it can be concluded that there is **full compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 4.2.1.

Moreover, ONESQA publishes the joint report on the 2021 Learning Outcomes and Satisfaction Report Asia Region (Japan, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam) and four Proceedings on the International Conference on Quality Assurance (ICQA) from 2013 to 2016. As described above ONESQA does not publish the results of external reviews of institutions and other self-assessment reports, such as the report on **The Review of External Quality Assurance Agencies Under EU SHARE Project** in the public domain.

Hence, the Review Panel recommends that ONESQA should make public more information about its activities. First, ONESQA could define and find an adequate format for such publications and define the main target audiences for such information. Finally, the Review Panel recommends that ONESQA periodically informs the public and its partners and stakeholders about its activities and achievements in the news section of the website. Such information might be based on the internal Management Information System of ONESQA or come from other available sources of quality information. Based on these facts, it can be concluded that there is **substantial compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 4.2.2.

Commendations

1. The Review Panel **commends** that ONESQA has published relevant documentation on its website, aiming for the public. Among such documents, one can find information about establishment policies, legal documents, key QA documents, as well as the EQA manual, criteria, and assessment process.

2. The Review Panel commends ONESQA for having built up an effective IT platform that is used for multiple purposes and is much endorsed by the staff of the agency.

Recommendations

1. The Review Panel **recommends** ONESQA to rethink its publication policy as standard 4.1.2 is not sufficiently met and evaluate if a publication of the experts' reports or a part of them (e.g. summary) is possible.

2. The Review Panel **recommends** ONESQA to periodically inform the public and its partners and stakeholders about its activities and achievements in the news of the website.

Conclusion of the Review Panel

The Review Panel concludes that ONESQA is **substantially compliant** with the Guidelines of Good Practice associated with Section 4: The EQAA and its relationship to the public.

V.   Decision-Making

The EQAA has policies and procedures in place that ensure a fair and independent decision-making process in the final review of the institution or the program. It provides effective procedures to deal with appeals and complaints.

☐	☐	☐	■
Not compliant	Partially compliant	Substantially compliant	Fully compliant

5.1 The decision-making process

The decision-making process employed by ONESQA involves several structured stages from the site visit of the experts to the final decision. This multi-step procedure ensures thoroughness, consistency, and fairness in evaluating higher education institutions (HEIs). The process begins with the site visit, a critical component where a team of external reviewers, selected based on their expertise and training, conducts a thorough on-site evaluation of the institution. Along the predefined Standards the reviewers assess various aspects of the institution, including governance, management, program design, teaching and learning processes, and resources such as finances and staffing. This comprehensive approach helps the reviewers gather extensive qualitative and quantitative data.

The reviewers integrate their findings from the site visit with the documents provided by the institution, reflecting its strengths, weaknesses, achievements, and areas needing improvement. As the Review Panel learned during the interviews on site, by combining these insights, the reviewers ensure a balanced and holistic evaluation.

Post site visit, the review team compiles their findings into a detailed review report. This report includes observations, assessments, and preliminary recommendations for the institution. The report is structured around ONESQA's published criteria and standards, ensuring that the evaluation is consistent and aligned with established benchmarks.
The review report is then submitted to ONESQA's executive committee. Before finalizing the report, ONESQA provides the institution with an opportunity to review the draft and correct any factual errors. The Review Panel learned during the interviews that this step

is perceived as crucial by all stakeholders for maintaining accuracy and fairness in the evaluation process.

The Committee for Development of Assessment Systems for Higher Education will endorse the report of the Review Panel of experts after it was submitted in the online system.

ONESQA's executive committee, comprising senior officials and experts in higher education, reviews the report, including the institution's feedback. The committee deliberates on the findings, aiming to ensure that all decisions are based on the published criteria and procedures. As the Review Panel learned during the interviews there is a strong emphasis on the consistency and impartiality of these decisions and the committee strives to apply standards uniformly across all institutions.

Once the executive committee reaches a decision, ONESQA communicates the outcome to the institution. As the representatives of the institutions confirmed, the decision letter is clear and precise, outlining the findings, the rationale behind the decision, and any recommendations or follow-up actions required. As described in the SER and also discussed on site ONESQA monitors the implementation of any recommended actions. Institutions are required to submit progress reports or (if needed) undergo additional reviews to ensure that they are addressing the identified issues effectively. This follow-up mechanism ensures that the initial review leads to tangible improvements in institutional quality.

Consistency is a hallmark of ONESQA's decision-making process. The agency's rigorous training for reviewers, standardized evaluation criteria, and clear procedural guidelines ensure that each institution is assessed uniformly. This consistency is crucial for maintaining the credibility and reliability of ONESQA's quality assurance processes. Transparency is embedded in ONESQA's operations, from the publication of evaluation criteria to the clear communication of review outcomes and follow-up actions. This openness fosters trust among HEIs and stakeholders, ensuring that the quality assurance process is perceived as fair and legitimate.

Based on these facts, it can be concluded that there is **full compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 5.1.1., 5.1.2, 5.1.3, 5.1.4 and 5.1.5.

5.2 The agency's process for appeals and grievances

If an institution disagrees with the final decision, ONESQA has established procedures for handling appeals and complaints. Appeals are reviewed by a separate panel to ensure impartiality and fairness. From the interviews and documentation, the Review Panel confirms that this additional layer of review provides institutions with a fair chance to contest decisions and seek redress. Based on these facts it can be concluded that there is **full compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 5.2.1.

ONESQA's well-established multi-layer decision-making system stands out for its ability to assure consistency and clarity. By involving multiple layers of review and decision-making, the system mitigates the risk of individual bias and enhances the robustness of the evaluations. This layered approach includes internal assessments, external reviews by expert panels, and opportunities for institutions to appeal decisions or provide additional information.

The Review Panel took note of the fact that based on an appeal a committee or subcommittee is established to review the individual case. As the panel also learned in case of complaints the investigation committee is chaired by ONESQA Deputy Director, it might be helpful to consider establishing an independent body for cases of complaints or appeals. Based on these facts it can be concluded that there is **full compliance** of ONESQA with substandard 5.2.2. and **substantial compliance** with substandard 5.2.3

Commendations

1. The Review Panel **commends** that ONESQA has developed a well-structured decision-making process from the site visit of the experts to the final decision. This multi-step procedure ensures thoroughness, consistency, and fairness in evaluating higher education institutions (HEIs).

Suggestions

1. The Review Panel **suggests** ONESQA to make sure that the appeal process and the appeal decisions are taken by an independent body.

Recommendations

1. No recommendations.

Conclusion of the Review Panel

The Review Panel concludes that ONESQA is **fully compliant** with the Guidelines of Good Practice associated with Section 5: Decision making.

VI.   The QA of Cross-Border Higher Education

The EQAA has policies relating to both imported and exported higher education. These policies take into account the characteristics of the providers and the receivers and refer to all types of transnational higher education.

■	☐	☐	☐
Not applicable	Partially compliant	Substantially compliant	Fully compliant

6.1 Criteria for cross-border education

According to the Self-Assessment Report, no CBE institution from abroad is recognized in Thailand. Such degrees are not certified in the Thai labor market, no CBE on-line provisions are accepted in Thailand. For these reasons, ONESQA currently has no framework for transnational education. Therefore, Standard 6.1 of the INQAAHE GGP is not applicable.

The only transnational activities allowed are the establishment of joint programs, the mobility of academic staff, and the use of the credit transfer system in the APQN region. ONESQA should clarify (and strengthen) its role in these areas. The agency might prepare its evaluation system for eventual future CBE activities and inform students and staff about the current CBE situation and new developments in this area.

6.2   Collaboration between agencies

This standard does not apply to ONESQA in terms of cooperation with local agencies in importing and exporting education, for the reasons mentioned above. However, ONESQA collaborates with other QA agencies and international networks to improve mutual understanding of higher education environments. In 2021, ONESQA joined an international collaborative accreditation project, also involving the EQAAs of Japan and Taiwan. The project aims to contribute to the internationalization of universities through joint accreditation. This project is perceived by the expert panel to be an example of best practices in the internationalization of QA. It's highly recommended to continue this track and add similar initiatives that promote mutual understanding between national QAAs.

The richness of national and international collaborative projects of ONESQA is noteworthy. It has been documented in 22 Memorandums of understanding, involving 14 different countries around the globe. Among the many valuable collaborative activities of ONESQA are:

- Participation in QA networks: INQAAHE, APQN, ASEAN Framework.

- Collaborative activities with national QAAs: capacity building with CHEA, joint training of experts with QAA, participation in Share Project, joint accreditation project with ASIIN (use of ESG), international joint accreditation project (with Japan, and Taiwan).

These activities promote mutual understanding of EQA systems worldwide by adapting them to local contexts and, through mutual learning, allow for the enhancement of their own QA activities.

The Review Panel confirms that ONESQA has developed international cooperation with several foreign agencies and has worked on successful joint projects. Although ONESQA does not develop specific standards or frameworks for CBHE with local agencies, ONESQA has started to pay attention to the quality of CBHE.

Regarding Standard 6.2, ONESQA is fully compliant with the expectations of the GGP. However, the Review Panel believes it may be inappropriate to assess 6.2 formally in isolation from the requirements of the entire standard 6.

In this context, the Review Panel suggests that ONESQA establish an internationalization strategy, including evaluation of CBHE, collaboration with agencies, participation in international networks, QA initiatives, and mobility of staff and students.

Commendations

1. The Review Panel endorses the richness and value of national and international collaborations of ONESQA.

Suggestions

1. The Review Panel **suggests** that ONESQA establish an internationalization strategy, including evaluation of CBE, collaboration with agencies, participation in international networks, QA initiatives, and mobility of staff and students.

Conclusion of the Review Panel

The Review Panel concludes that section 6: The QA of cross-border higher education of the Guidelines of Good Practice i**s not applicable** to ONESQA's assessment. Nevertheless, the Review Panel encourages ONESQA to begin reflecting on the evaluation of CBHE by strengthening collaboration with both local and international agencies to enhance the internationalization capacity of Thailand's higher education system.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS OF THE REVIEW PANEL

ONESQA is a robust quality assurance agency with a huge tradition in EQA, recognized by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research, and Innovation (MHESI) in Thailand. Over the many years of its existence, ONESQA has collected lots of experiences and knowledge in EQA and enjoys a high degree of social acceptance from the national HEIs. ONESQA provides a consolidated governance structure and well-regulated working processes. It has a clear and published quality assurance framework, and its staff is qualified and committed to achieving its strategic goals and action plans.

ONESQA's operations are aligned with the national regulations and the cultural contexts of the country, and at the same time, the agency is fulfilling international good standards. There is evidence of alignment between ONESQA's mission and its actions. ONESQA has the challenge of repositioning itself after the major changes that occurred in the Thai HE sectors in 2019. This transition phase is not closed yet.

To fulfil the purpose of improving the quality of Thai universities, ONESQA assumes a fit-for-purpose approach and adapts is EQA framework to the different types of universities and to the different IQA systems that have been built up at the HEIs. In this regard, ONESQA recognizes and respects the heterogeneity in the higher education system of Thailand and is flexible regarding new trends in higher education. ONESQA reviews its EQA system regularly and takes the needs of HEIs and its stakeholders into account. A future challenge might be to give students a strong voice in EQA. Also, it seems important to increase the participation of representatives from the industry during the whole accreditation process.

The transparency, integrity, and professionalism of ONESQA in its operations are noteworthy. Nevertheless, ONESQA should guarantee the independence of the Appeals Committee from the decisions of its Executive Board.

There is enough evidence in the self-assessment report and in the information gathered during the site visit regarding the respectful relationship between ONESQA and the HEIs, and between ONESQA and other national and international partnerships. ONESQA collaborates with other international agencies in MOU-based activities, joint staff training, and joint accreditation projects.

Finally, there are two aspects to remark on about the review process: the hospitality and the respectful work environment throughout the three days of the site visit and the clear, complete, and well-written self-assessment report.

From the evidence gathered in this evaluation, it emerges that ONESQA's compliance with the INQAAHE 2018 Guidelines of Good Practice (GGP) is substantial (see the summary table below); therefore, the Review Panel recommends to the INQAAHE Board of Directors to certify ONESQA's compliance with the GGP.

Summary Table: Assessment of Compliance with INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice (GGP)				
GGP Sections	Not Compliant	Partially Compliant	Substantially Compliant	Fully Complaint
Section I: The structure of the External Quality Assurance Agency (EQAA)			√	
Section II: Accountability of the EQAA				√
Section III: The EQAA's framework for the external review of quality in Higher Education Institutions			√	
Section IV: The EQAA and its relationship to the public			√	
Section V: Decision making				√
Section VI: The QA of cross border higher education	N/A			

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Review Panel extends its appreciation to the National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA), for the quality of the Self-Evaluation Report and robust review portfolio, and other supporting documentation provided, and the prompt attention to the requests made by the Review Panel.

The Review Panel also extends its appreciation to ONESQA Chairperson of the Executive Board, Prof.Dr. Bundhit Eua-Arporn for his interest and commitment to promoting a culture of quality in higher education not only in the ASEAN region but also across borders and to ONESQA Team who facilitated and supported the arrangements for the review and site visit. The visit to Bangkok was very well organized.

Finally, the Review Panel also wishes to thank all ONESQA's internal and external stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education, ONESQA executive board members, leadership team, staff, as well as the HEIs Representatives from the different Universities, assessors, international partners, and student representatives who participated in the site visit. Their feedback and insights during the interview sessions proved to be invaluable and contributed significantly to the INQAAHE GGP Review.

ANNEX 1. INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice (GGP)

I. The structure of the External Quality Assurance Agency (EQAA)

The EQAA is a recognized, credible organization, trusted by the higher education institutions and the public. It has adequate mechanisms to prevent conflicts of interest in the decisions it makes; its staff has the needed skills to carry out the functions associated to external QA. The EQAA has the needed resources to carry out their mission.

1.1. Legitimacy and recognition

1.1.1 The EQAA has an established legal basis and is recognized by a competent external body.

1.1.2 The EQAA takes into consideration relevant guidelines issued by international networks and other associations, in formulating its policies and practices.

1.1.3 The EQAA has a clear and published policy for the prevention of conflicts of interest that applies to its staff, its decision-making body, and the external Reviewers.

1.2 Mission and purposes

1.2.1 The EQAA has a written mission statement and a set of objectives that explicitly provide that external quality assurance of higher education is its major concern, describe the purpose and scope of its activities and can be translated into verifiable policies and measurable objectives.

1.3 Governance and organizational structure

1.3.1 The EQAA has a governance structure consistent with its mission and objectives, and adequate mechanisms to involve relevant stakeholders in the definition of its standards and criteria.

1.3.2   The composition of the decision-making body and/or its regulatory framework ensure its independence and impartiality.

1.3.3   The EQAA's organizational structure makes it possible to carry out its external review processes effectively and efficiently

1.3.4   The EQAA has a strategic plan that helps assess its progress and plan for future developments

1.4 Resources

1.4.1   The EQAA has a well-trained, appropriately-qualified staff, able to conduct external evaluation effectively and efficiently in accordance with its mission statement and its methodological approach.

1.4.2   The EQAA has the physical and financial resources needed to fulfil its goals and carry out the activities that emerge from its mission statement and objectives.

1.4.3   The EQAA provides systematic opportunities for the professional development of its staff.

II. Accountability of the EQAA

The EQAA has in place policies and mechanisms for its internal quality assurance, which demonstrate a continuing effort to improve the quality and integrity of its activities, its response to the changes to the context in which it operates and its links to the international community of QA.

2.1 Quality assurance of the EQAA

2.1.1   The EQAA operates with transparency, integrity and professionalism and adheres to ethical and professional standards.

2.1.2   The EQAA has in place mechanisms that enable it to review its own activities in order to respond to the changing nature of higher education, the effectiveness of its operations, and its contribution towards the achievement of its objectives.

2.1.3   The EQAA periodically conducts a self-review of its own activities, including consideration of its own effects and value. The review includes data collection and analysis, to inform decision-making and trigger improvements.

2.1.4   The EQAA is subject to external reviews at regular intervals, ideally not exceeding five years. There is evidence that any required actions are implemented and disclosed.

2.2 Links to the QA community

2.2.1   The EQAA is open to international developments in quality assurance and has mechanisms that enable it to learn about and analyze the main trends in the field.

2.2.2   The EQAA collaborates with other QA agencies where possible, in areas such as exchange of good practices, capacity building, and review of decisions, joint projects, or staff exchanges.

III. The EQAA's framework for the external review of quality in Higher Education Institutions

The main concern of the EQAA is the promotion of quality education and student achievement. In doing this, it recognizes that quality is primarily the responsibility of the higher education institutions themselves and supports this principle in its criteria and procedures. These promote internal quality assurance (IQA) and provide higher education institutions with clear guidance on the requirements for self-assessment and external review.

3.1 The relationship between the EQAA and higher education institutions

3.1.1   The EQAA recognizes that institutional and programmatic quality and quality assurance are primarily the responsibility of the higher education institutions (HEIs) themselves, and respects the academic autonomy, identity and integrity of the institutions and programs.

3.1.2   The EQAA promotes the development and appropriate implementation of IQA processes in accordance with the understanding that the primary responsibility for assuring quality resides with the institutions and its programs.

3.1.3   The EQAA bears in mind the level of workload and cost that its procedures will place on institutions and strives to make them as time and cost effective as possible.

3.2 The definition of criteria for external quality review

3.2.1 The EQAA recognizes and values institutional diversity and translates this valuation into criteria and procedures that consider the identity and goals of higher education institutions.

3.2.2 The standards or criteria developed by the EQAA have been subject to reasonable consultation with stakeholders and are revised at regular intervals to ensure relevance to the needs of the system.

3.2.3 Standards or criteria take into consideration the specific aspects related to different modes of provision, such as transnational education, distance or online programs or other non-traditional approaches to HE as relevant to the context in which they operate.

3.2.4 Standards or criteria explicitly address the areas of institutional activity that fall within the EQAA's scope, (e.g., institutional governance and management, program design and approval, teaching and learning, student admission, progression and certification, research, community engagement) and on the availability of necessary resources (e.g., finances, staff and learning resources).

3.2.5 Criteria or standards and procedures consider internal follow up mechanisms, and provide for effective follow up of the outcomes of the external reviews.

3.2.6 The EQAA procedures specify the way in which criteria will be applied and the types of evidence needed to demonstrate that they are met.

3.3 The external review process

3.3.1 The EQAA carries out an external review process that is reliable and based on published criteria and procedures. It follows a self-assessment or equivalent, and includes an external review (normally including a site visit or visits), and a consistent follow up of the recommendations resulting from the external review.

3.3.2 The EQAA has published documents, which clearly state what it expects from higher education institutions, in the form of quality criteria, or standards and procedures, for self-assessment and external review.

3.3.3 The external review process is carried out by teams of experts consistent with the characteristics of the institution/program being reviewed. Experts can provide input from various perspectives, including those of institutions, academics, students, employers or professional practitioners.

3.3.4 The EQAA has clear specifications on the characteristics and selection of external Reviewers, who must be supported by appropriate training and good supporting materials such as handbooks or manuals.

3.3.5 External review procedures include effective and comprehensive mechanisms for the prevention of conflicts of interest, and ensure that any judgments resulting from external reviews are based on explicit and published criteria.

3.3.6 The EQAA's system ensures that each institution or program will be evaluated in a consistent way, even if the external Panels, teams, or committees are different.

3.3.7 The EQAA carries out the external review within a reasonable timeframe after the completion of a self-assessment report, to ensure that information is current and updated.

3.3.8 The EQAA provides the higher education institutions with an opportunity to correct any factual errors that may appear in the external review report

3.4 The requirements for self-evaluation

3.4.1 The EQAA provides clear guidance to the institution or program in the application of the procedures for self-evaluation, the solicitation of assessment/feedback from the public, students, and other constituents, or the preparation for external review as necessary and appropriate.

IV. The EQAA and its relationship to the public

The EQAA makes public its policies and decisions about institutions and programs, discloses the decisions about its own performance and disseminates reports on outcomes of QA processes.

4.1 Public reports on EQAA policies and decisions

4.1.1 The EQAA provides full and clear disclosure of its relevant documentation such as policies, procedures and criteria.

4.1.2 The EQAA reports its decisions about higher education institutions and programs. The content and extent of reporting may vary with cultural context and applicable legal and other requirements.

4.1.3 The EQAA has mechanisms to facilitate the public a fair understanding of the reasons supporting decisions taken.

4.2 Other public reports

4.2.1 The EQAA discloses to the public the decisions about the EQAA resulting from any external review of its own performance.

4.2.2 The EQAA prepares and disseminates periodically integrated reports on the overall outcomes of QA processes and of any other relevant activities.

V. Decision making

The EQAA has policies and procedures in place that ensure a fair and independent decision-making process in the final review of the institution or the program. It provides effective procedures to deal with appeals and complaints.

5.1 The decision-making process

5.1.1 The EQAA decisions take into consideration the outcomes of both the institution's self-assessment process and the external review; they may also consider any other relevant information, provided this has been communicated to the HEIs.

5.1.2 The EQAA decisions are impartial, rigorous, and consistent even when they are based on the reports of other quality assurance bodies.

5.1.3 The EQAA decisions are based on published criteria and procedures, and can be justified only with reference to those criteria and procedures.

5.1.4 Consistency in decision-making includes consistency and transparency in processes and actions for imposing recommendations for follow-up action.

5.1.5 The EQAA's reported decisions are clear and precise.

5.2 The EQAA's process for appeals and complaints

5.2.1   The EQAA has procedures in place to deal in a consistent way with complaints about its procedures or operation.

5.2.2   The EQAA has clear, published procedures for handling appeals related to its external review and decision-making processes.

5.2.3   Appeals are conducted by a Panel that was not responsible for the original decision and has no conflict of interest; appeals need not necessarily be conducted outside the EQAA.

VI. The QA of Cross-Border Higher Education

The EQAA has policies relating to both imported and exported higher education. These policies take into account the characteristics of the providers and the receivers, and refer to all types of transnational higher education.

6.1 Criteria for cross border higher education

6.1.1   The EQAA in a sending country makes clear that the awarding institution is responsible for ensuring the equivalent quality of the education offered, that the institution understands the regulatory frameworks of the receiving countries, and that the institution provides clear information on the programs offered and their characteristics.

6.1.2   Students and other stakeholders receive clear and complete information about the awards delivered.

6.1.3   The rights and obligations of the parties involved in transnational education are clearly established and well known by the parties.

6.2 Collaboration between agencies

6.2.1   The EQAA cooperates with appropriate local agencies in the exporting and importing countries and with international networks. This cooperation is oriented to improve mutual understanding, to have a clear and comprehensive account of the regulatory framework and to share good practices.

6.2.2   The EQAA seeks ways to cooperate in the external quality assurance in transnational education provision, for example through mutual recognition.

ANNEX 2. COMPOSITION OF THE GGP REVIEW PANEL

INQAAHE GGP Review Panel

Dr Rolf Heusser
Chair of the Review Panel

- Director of Swiss Accreditation Agency (2001-2010), Chairman of the European Consortium of Accreditation (ECA, 2004-2014). Member of board of directors of INQAAHE (2009-10)
- International Higher Education & QA Expert
- University of Zurich

Switzerland

Dr Angela Hou
Secretary

- Former Executive Director, Higher Education Evaluation & Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT)
- Professor, Department of Education, National Chengchi University, Taiwan
- Former Board member and Vice President, International Network of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (INQAAHE)and Asia Quality Network (APQN)

Taiwan

Dr Ronny Heintze
QA Expert

- Deputy Director for International Development, Agency for Quality Assurance through Accreditation of Study Programmes (AQAS)
- Chairman of the certification group – European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education (ECA)
- Member of the Agency Review Committee – ENQA: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

Germany

Report signed by the GGP Review Panel

Date: 20 September 2024

GGP Project Coordinator
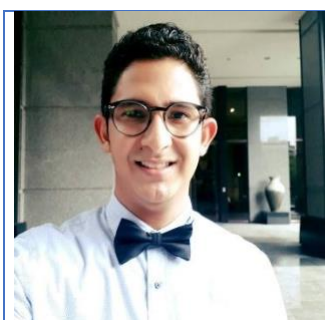
Mr. Dewin Justiniano
INQAAHE GGP Project Coordinator

Quality Assurance Senior Specialist at ADEK – 42 Abu Dhabi, UAE

Honduras

ANNEX 3. SCHEDULE OF THE VIRTUAL VISIT

Day 1: Monday 17 June 2024

Timing	Agenda
08:30	Arrival ONESQA Office
08:30-09:30	Preparatory Meeting Day 1
9:30-10:45	**Session 1** Board members of the applicant agency
10:45-11:00	
11:00-12:00	**Session 2** Leadership Team
12:00-13:00	
13:00-13:30	Office Tour
13:30-14:00	GGP Review Panel Internal Meeting
14:00-15:00	**Session 3** Professional Staff related to EQA system for Higher Education
15:00-15:15	
15:15-16:15	**Session 4** ONESQA's International Partners **(Microsoft Team)**
16:15-16:45	**Demonstration of ONESQA's Online Platform** for Data Management inclusive of QA Processes and Reviews and Automated QA
16:45-17:00	Review Panel Internal Meeting

Day 2: Tuesday 18 June 2024

Timing	Agenda
8:30	Arrival ONESQA Office
8:30-9:30	Preparatory Meeting Day 2
9:30-10:30	**Session 5** Representatives from MHESI and Representatives from professional associations

Timing	Agenda
10.30-10:45	Break
10:45-12:00	**Session 6** Rectors or senior management representatives from HE institutions with accreditation experience
12:00-13:00	
13:00-13:30	GGP Review Panel Internal Meeting
13:30-14:30	**Session 7** Quality Assurance Managers or equivalent with responsibility for the quality assurance portfolio from institutions of higher education
14:30-15:00	
15:00-16:00	**Session 8** Administrative Staff
16:00-16.30	**Session 8.1** Administrative Staff relevant to EQA

Day 3: Wednesday 19 June 2024

Timing	Agenda
8:30	Arrival ONESQA Office
8:30-9:30	Preparatory Meeting Day 3
9:30-10:30	**Session 9** Members of Assessor with experience from EQA
10:30-10:45	
10:45-12:00	**Session 10** • Representatives from student associations • Graduate user
12:00-13:00	
13:00-14:00	**Call back session** The Executive Director and staff to clarify issues if necessary
14:00-15:00	GGP Preparations to deliver the Oral Exit Report
15:00-15:30	**Oral Exit Report** Summary of the Review Panel's review findings to the Board and senior

	management
15:30 Onwards	Departure ONESQA Office