



**AFRICAN
STANDARDS AND
GUIDELINES FOR
QUALITY ASSURANCE
IN HIGHER EDUCATION
(ASG-QA)**



This initiative is implemented on behalf of the European and African Union Commissions by:



Session 23:

The African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA) and their Linkages to Qualifications Frameworks

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Presenter: Prof. Michael Mawa

Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA)

Overview of the Presentation

1. Quality Assurance in Higher Education – Main Concepts
2. Linking ASG-QA with ACQF
 - Quality Assurance and the ACQF referencing process
3. ASG-QA and East African Qualifications Frameworks (EAQFHE)
4. ASG-QA and QFs – Basis for Transparency and Trust in Qualifications
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Quality Assurance in Education – Key Concepts



The concept of quality assurance in education has become dominating in the last decades



Quality Assurance in education is complex to define owing to different perspectives and focus – system or process or unit



Definitions of quality assurance can be seen in QA Frameworks

Some Definitions of QA

- Quality Assurance is a “general term for procedures in internal or external quality assurance procedures including accreditation, evaluation, audit both on programme and institutional levels and also concerning quality assurance agencies.” (ASG-QA)
- Quality Assurance is “an ongoing process by which the quality of a higher education system, institution, or programme is assessed by the competent authority/authorities to assure stakeholders that acceptable educational standards are continuously being maintained and enhanced” (UNESCO 2019)

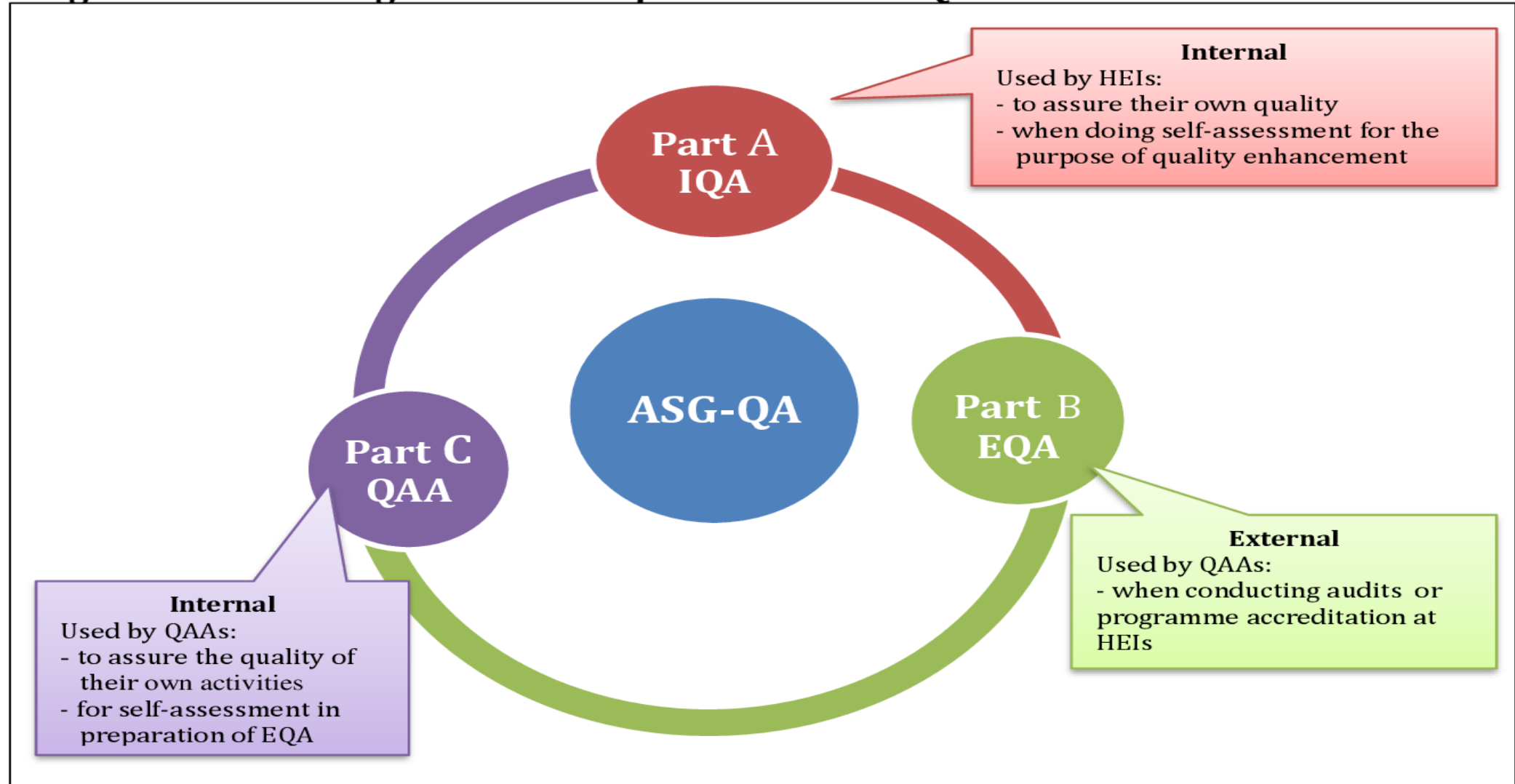
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The ASG-QA and Qualifications Frameworks

- The ASG-QA is a continental Quality Assurance Framework developed to support HEIs and Quality Assurance Agencies (QAAs) in Africa in implementing good quality assurance (QA) practices by:
 - i. guiding them in the application of standards and guidelines in higher education;
 - ii. helping them to develop adequate internal QA mechanisms that fit international best practices; and
 - iii. assisting them in assessing their own quality through self-assessment.

Components of the ASG-QA

Figure 1: Interlinkage of the three parts of the ASG-QA



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Linking ASG-QA with ACQF

A good starting point of linking the ASG-QA with the ACQF is to reflect on the purpose and objectives of these two continental frameworks.

The ASG-QA and the ACQF both have some common elements

Moreover, the ACQF is underpinned by quality assurance, the core of which is contained in the referencing process.

Purpose of the ASG-QA and Links to Qualifications

- The specific purpose of the ASG-QA is, therefore, to support HEIs and QAAs in Member States in Africa to:
 - a) have a **common framework** and understanding of QA systems for teaching and learning among all stakeholders at continental, regional and national level;
 - b) develop **mutual trust, thus facilitating recognition and mobility of students and human resources** within and across national borders of the continent;
 - c) ensure quality improvement/enhancement in higher education on the continent through self-assessment, external peer review and continuous monitoring and evaluation;
 - d) promote **transparency and accountability** by providing appropriate information on QA to the public;
 - e) support HEIs to develop a sustainable quality culture;
 - f) promote **international competitiveness** of Africa's higher education system; and
 - g) support the production of relevant teaching and learning resources as well as student assessment instruments.

The Objectives of the ACQF

- The objectives of the ACQF are to: -
 - support **comparability, quality and transparency** of qualifications and lifelong learning;
 - facilitate validation of learning from different contexts, contribute to **recognition** of diplomas and certificates and support **mobility** (of learners, workers, services);
 - work in cooperation and complementarity with national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) and systems and regional qualifications frameworks (RQFs), support NQF development and the creation of a common African education and qualifications space; and
 - promote cooperation, trust and mutual understanding, by means of referencing with qualifications frameworks in Africa and worldwide.

ASG-QA and ACQF Compared

SN	ASG-QA	ACQF
1.	Common framework for understanding QA	Common Framework for understanding qualifications
2.	Facilitate recognition of qualifications	Facilitate recognition of qualifications
3.	Facilitates mobility of students and human resources	Facilitates mobility of learners, workers and services
4.	Promotes transparency and accountability	Supports quality and transparency
5.	Facilitate mutual trust	Facilitate mutual trust

ACQF Underpinned by Quality Assurance

- The ACQF as an overarching qualifications framework and a catalyst for the development of National and Regional QF is underpinned by quality assurance.
- Quality assurance is fundamental for trust in qualifications, and for their currency and mobility.
- Quality assurance is the subject of Criterion 4 of referencing to the ACQF, which states that:
“the national quality assurance system for education and training refers to the national qualifications framework or system and is consistent with the principles of quality assurance of the ACQF.”

Quality Assurance and the ACQF referencing process

Referencing of NQFs / NQS to the ACQF is a process of:

- transparency,
- self-assessment and
- continuous improvement.

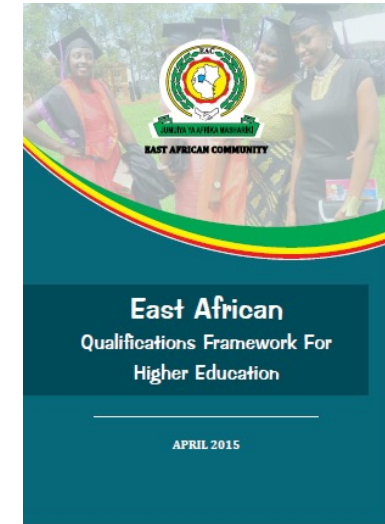
The referencing criteria provide the framework for comparability between countries, of the analytical process and results, and the robustness of the final report.

Referencing of NQF to ACQF - a Measure of Quality of National Qualifications

- The referencing of national and regional qualifications frameworks or systems to the ACQF demonstrates the degree to which quality assurance of national qualifications:
 - addresses the qualifications quality chain, from design of standards underpinning qualifications to learning, assessment, and certification;
 - addresses the application of the learning outcomes approach;
 - includes feedback instruments and processes supporting continuous quality improvement;
 - addresses internal and external quality assurance, and the regular review of quality assurance agencies; the focus of ASG-QA
 - is based on measurable objectives, standards, and guidelines for quality assurance;
 - is supported by resources; and
 - provides transparent information-sharing on results of evaluation.
- **takes account of African Union policy orientations such as African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (for higher education), to which both internal and external quality assurance adhere.**

ASG-QA and EAQFHE (East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education)

- The EAQFHE is an overarching regional framework developed to provide a set of qualifications framework policies, objectives and guidelines
- Among the many policies in the EAQFHE is the **Qualifications Issuance Policy (QIP)** - which provides a means for protecting qualifications issued in the EAC.
- The most significant means by which EAQFHE Qualifications are protected comes from “quality assurance arrangements” of authorised qualifications issuing organisations



- *The protection of qualifications requires that any authorised qualifications issuing organisations delivering, assessing or issuing EAQFHE qualifications adheres to the regulatory and quality assurance arrangements for each qualifications type. (Policy No. 22 of QIP)*

ASG-QA, EAQFHE and Programme Benchmarking

ASG-QA Standard 7: Design, Approval, Monitoring and Evaluation of Study Programmes

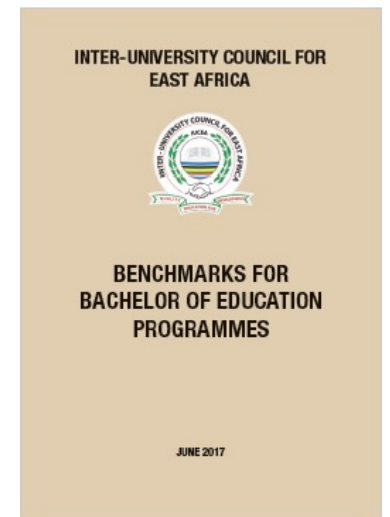
The institution shall have policies and systems that ensure the design and development, monitoring and evaluation of quality, relevant study programmes that are learning outcomes-based and aligned with the needs of stakeholders; and that contribute to the achievement of its mission, and are commensurate with national, regional and international standards.

ASG-QA Standard 8: Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The institution shall put in place, in a way that is consistent with its vision and mission, policies and procedures that promote learning and acquisition of appropriate knowledge, competencies and skills; and assure fair and transparent assessment based on student-centred assessment.

EAQFHE – Qualifications Programme Benchmarking Policy (Annex V)

- A useful policy for programme development and review
- Require benchmarks to set out the expected attributes and competencies of graduates (knowledge, skills, attitudes)
- Require benchmarks to defines the nature and extent of the programme content, teaching, learning and assessment
- Policy requires benchmarks to define expected learning outcomes; thus, it is outcome-based, learner-centred and allow for flexibility and innovation in programmes



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ASG-QA and QFs – Basis for Transparency and Trust in Qualifications

Transparency and trust in qualifications is key in a context of widespread international learner and labour mobility, and rapid transformation of types of qualifications and credentials for different needs and contexts of lifelong learning.

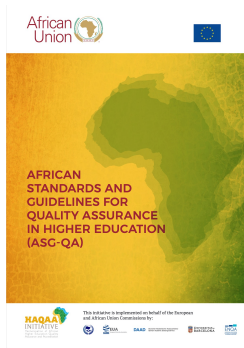
Quality assurance increases transparency and should contribute to trust in the relevance and quality of learning outcomes (that is, learners' knowledge, skills, autonomy, and responsibility, as certified by qualifications).

Such trust in learning outcomes is, in turn, based on trust in the quality of the institutions and providers of education and training at all levels and in all subsectors. (ACQF, 2022)

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Concluding Remarks

- The ASG-QA and Qualifications Frameworks (ACQF, EAQFHE) are both educational frameworks designed to:
 - guide educational stakeholders in defining quality of qualifications
 - compare QA systems and quality of qualifications
 - promote transparency and accountability in the provision of education service and the qualifications obtained, thus facilitating mutual trust
 - facilitate mobility of learners and labour force across different countries
- We note: ACQF has a different scope than ASG-QA: it is LLL-oriented / wider than Higher education; focus on outcomes (qualifications); support to RPL for inclusion of learners with work and life experience; Platform of qualifications; support to countries and regions developing their qualifications frameworks / systems; referencing NQFs-RQFs to ACQF; development of common profiles – qualifications related with emerging jobs and new skills; monitoring and evaluation, research on qualifications issues.
- National and regional authorities need to keep the complementarity of these frameworks always in focus.



ACQF
African Continental
Qualifications Framework

Thank You All
