



INQAAHE
II Global Trends in Tertiary
Education Quality Assurance

II Global Trends in TE Quality Assurance: Challenges & Opportunities



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Outline

- ❑ Introduction to the Global Trends
- ❑ II Global Trends: The Methodology & The Scope
- ❑ The Team Behind It
- ❑ Key Findings: challenges & opportunities
- ❑ Acknowledgements



The INQAAHE Flagship Project



The Global Trends in TE Quality Assurance : emergence & evolution



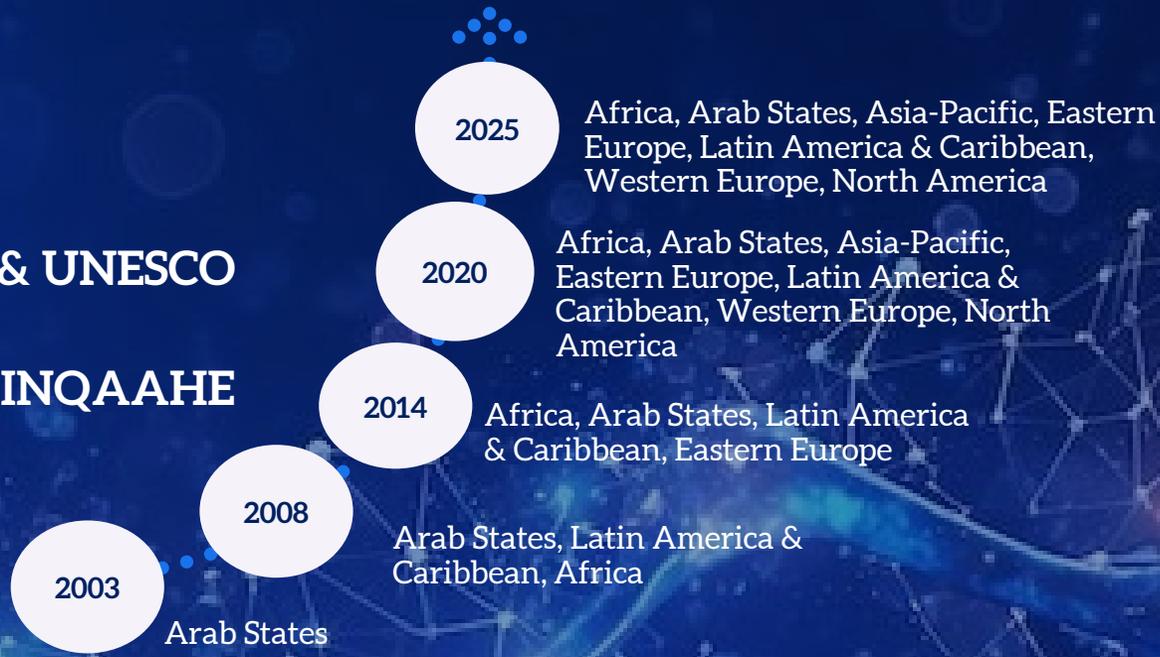
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UNESCO

UNESCO



2nd Global Trends

External & Internal QA

1st Global Trends
Mixed-method approach

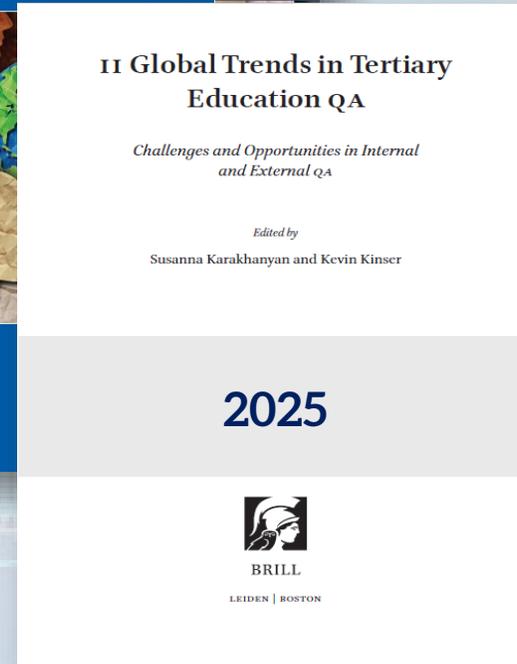
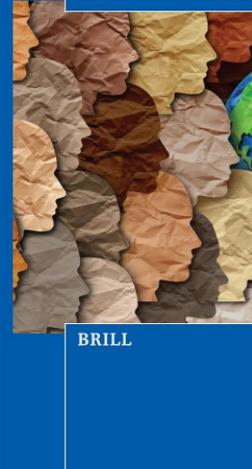
Scoping Studies:
Survey based

External QA

The Global Study Series: published quinquennially



We will launch the
III Global Trends in
2027



Western Europe



ENQA
EUA
ECA
ENAAE, EASPA
EQANIE
INQAAHE
Member EQAPs

North America



CHEA
ASPA
CONAHEC
FIMPES
INQAAHE member
EQAPs

Asia-Pacific



APQN
AUN
PNQAHE
INQAAHE
member EQAPs

Eastern Europe



CEENQA
EUA
INQAAHE Member
EQAPs

Arab States



ANQAHE
AUA
AQAAIW
INQAAHE
member EQAPs

Latin America & Caribbean



RIACES
CANQATE
REALCUP
CONAHEC
SIACES
INQAAHE
member EQAPs

Africa



AfriQAN
EAQAN
RAFANAQ
AUA
CAMES
SAQAN
INQAAHE Member
EQAPs



The Methodology

Data collection spanned from 2023-2024

Literature Review & Document Analysis

UN directives
Regional frameworks of QA and QF
Relevant research
Reports from international and regional organizations dealing with tertiary education and QA

Baseline Data

Collected from 196 countries from diverse sources, sometimes through personal contacts with national regulators
Number of TEIs, QA bodies, recognized QA bodies, NQFs, signatories to UN Regional and Global Conventions

Case Studies

Some regions also carried out case studies to delve deeper into unique practices



Surveys

Surveys addressed to TEIs and QA bodies
Administered in seven languages
989 responses from TEIs
241 responses from QA bodies
99 countries represented

Focus Group Discussions

34 focus groups were conducted: 17 with EQABs and 17 with TEIs
82 countries across 7 regions
277 participants: EQA (130) and IQA of TEIs (147) participated in the focus groups
Focus groups were conducted in three languages: English, Spanish, French

***Regional and global engagement, on voluntary basis,
with a noble mission to contribute to the regional and
global TE quality cause***

~ 30

**Regional and international organizations, including
UNESCO IESALC Higher Education Office**

~ 80

Quality assurance and tertiary education experts

37

Authors and co-authors

21 NETWORKS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE BODIES IN TERTIARY EDUCATION AND 9 NETWORKS OF TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS SUPPORTED THE STUDY WITH DATA COLLECTION AND SHARING THE EXPERTISE

NETWORKS OF QUALITY ASSURANCE BODIES IN TERTIARY EDUCATION

AfriQAN: The African Quality Assurance Network

ANQAHE: Arab Network of Quality Assurance in Higher Education

AQAAIW/IQA: Association of QA Agencies in the Islamic World

AQAN: ASEAN Quality Assurance Network

APQN: Asia-Pacific Quality Assurance Network

ASPA: Association of Specialized and Professional Accreditors

AUN-QA: ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance

CANQATE: Caribbean Area Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education

CAMES: The African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education

CEENQA: Central and East European QA Network

CHEA: Council for Higher Education Accreditation

EAQAN: The East African Higher Education Quality Assurance Network

EASPA: European Alliance for Subject-Specific and Professional Accreditation and Quality Assurance

ENQA: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

ECA: European Consortium of Accreditation

EQANIE: European Quality Assurance Network for Informatics Education

ENAE: The European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education

RAFANAQ: Le Réseau Africain Francophone des Agences Nationales d'Assurance Qualité

RIACES: La Red Iberoamericana para el Aseguramiento de la Calidad en la Educación Superior

SAQAN: South African Quality Assurance Network

SIACES: The Ibero-American Quality Assurance System of Higher Education

NETWORKS/ASSOCIATIONS OF TERTIARY EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

AAU: Association of African Universities

AARU: Association of Arab Universities

AUN: ASEAN University Network

CRUP: Network of private universities in LAC

EUA: European University Association

CONAHEC: Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration

FIMPES: Network of private universities in Mexico

PNQAHE: Pakistan Network of Quality Assurance in Higher Education

REALCUP: Network of private universities in LAC

*Organization of the book:
In publication with Brill|Sense*

Part I: the Global Trends

**5: UNESCO:
SDG& RCs**

4: IQA

3: EQA

**2: Global
Mega-
Trends**

1: Intro

2021-2025

Part II:

Regional Trends

North
America

11

LAC

10

Europe:
EE & WE

9

Asia-
Pacific

8

Arab
States

7

Africa

6

2021-2025

*Organization of the book:
In publication with Brill|Sense*

The Editors & Authors

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Key Findings

Some Insights: Internal Quality Assurance of TEIs

Definition of Quality



- Definitions vague, but methods are strikingly similar
- A convenient vagueness that allow standards to be flexed in support of institutional narratives of successful educational activities

IQA Functions



- Centralisation and institution-wide standardisation for efficiency
- Organisational silos In tension with faculty autonomy

Efficiency



- IQA is “bureaucracy” :: redundant with EQA demands
- Accreditation fatigue

Relevance



- IQA is key, but is dominated by EQA requirements which lack understanding of the specific institutional context
- The constituents most intended to benefit are indicating frustration with the process rather than appreciation for the service

Transformative Power



- Rhetorically, yes :: examples rare (e.g., student success vs teaching transformation)
- Nevertheless, IQA does compel better activities and constrain worse ones

Incredible individual commitment to keep the system strong from the inside

The Global Landscape of TE and EQA

Year	World population	Student population	Number of TEIs	Number of EQABs	Number of Recognised EQABs
1995	5.7 b	82 m (16%)	~21 k	~100	18 (USSE recognised)
2020	7.8 b	222 m (40%)	~60 k	332	121
2024	8.1 b	256 m (42%)	~100 k	801	178

- Around 15% do not have national EQA
- Accreditation mostly voluntary
- Less than ~50% of TEIs covered by QA
- Only 22% covered by externally reviewed EQA bodies

Trends in External QA: turning challenges into opportunities

Definition of quality

- Vague link between QA standards and quality definitions

TEIs vs EQA

- TE community, faculty and staff are dissatisfied from the EQA practices
- EQA bodies blame the lack of capacity of TE providers to take a proactive role.

EQA capacity

- Constructive organizationally :: Reactive: questionable capacity to respond to rapid diversification of TE
- Unbalanced coverage globally

Expansion of cross-border QA

- Distrust in the capacity and inadequate methods of national accreditors
- Commercialisation trend of QA bodies

Politicisation

- QA as a mechanism for governmental control
- Alignment with political agendas vs academic excellence

Diversification of QA

- Expansion of missions beyond initial purposes
- Rapid growth in professional accreditors

How to ensure trust and credibility of EQA

- No universally recognised regulatory framework allows questionable accreditation practices
- The problem of accreditation mills

Growth in QA networks:

- Collaborative platforms for capacity building in QA
- Meet challenges, innovative solutions
- Fragmentation of QA globally

Zooming into Africa

54

Countries

1.4 bln

18% of global population

1962

1st EQAB in Africa - Nigeria's NUC

1968

First network with a mandate in QA: CAMES

6

QA networks

- CAMES
- AfriQAN
- EAQAN
- SAQAN
- RAFANAQ
- HEQMISA

	# of countries	# of public/national EQABs	Prof. accreditors (out of total)	Total # of EQABs	# of externally evaluated EQAB	Number of TEIs	NQF	Regional Conv	Glob Conv
1 Africa	40	29	5	34	0	1176	21	14	4

A key issue affecting QA systems in Africa:

- ❑ Fragmentation of QA bodies and directions also expressed in growing number of QA networks
- ❑ Multiple EQAPs with overlapping roles creating confusion about standards and processes, causing unnecessary duplication, diluting effectiveness

Impact of QA

Major changes	%
Design, approval, monitoring and review of programs	50%
IQA at program level	48%
Student admission, progression, recognition and certification/ diploma award	29%
Student assessment	21%
Faculty teaching methodologies	21%
Physical and human resources	19%
Student learning approaches	14%
Student support services	12%
Research productivity	10%
Management Information System	8%
Community engagement/services to society	8%
Provision of public information	5%

Observations

- ❑ QA impacts predominantly at the level of institutional processes
- ❑ QA has limited impact on faculty and student behaviour
- ❑ Transformative changes at teaching, learning, assessment and research levels are yet to be achieved

Despite the benefits of institutional reviews, TEIs face challenges:

- lack of understanding of specific contexts (58%)
- high costs (53%)
- time-consuming engagements with limited cost-benefit ratios (42%)
- accreditation fatigue (31%) on one hand, systems/TEIs not touched by QA on the other
- misalignment between standards and institutional profiles (23%)

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