Good principles in implementing an effective IQA system
What will you learn?

- Explain the features of an integrated IQA system linked to university management and decision-making;

- Identify factors that condition the successful implementation of IQA at universities;

- Capture good principles and practices for effective IQA including strategies that successfully balance centralisation and decentralisation of IQA at a university;

- Identify those practices you intend to implement in your University’s IQA
How to close the loop between evidence and decision-making?

Module 4 - Part 1
Question for reflection

How can be make sure that evidence generated from IQA is used for decision-making?

Take 5 minutes to reflect on this question and discuss with you neighbour
IQA integrated with strategic planning

A framework of values and objectives that guide IQA in its goals, missions, tools and processes.

Generates data and provides evidence for multi-year planning and resource allocation.
Importance of closing the loop at different levels

Individual academics introduce changes in their teaching from IQA results.

Change is made to programmes based on a stakeholder dialogue.

Planning decisions are made at the central university level based on IQA results.

- Microscopic
- Mesoscopic
- Macroscopic
IQA in support of management capacity

- Performance Target Agreements
- Internal Evaluation
- External Evaluation
- Certification
Performance Target Agreements

**Objective:** To align the operation of the units with the institutional strategic plan

- Pro-rectors and vice-rectors
- Faculties
- Institutes
- General offices

Institutional strategic plan
Internal evaluation

**Objective:** To evaluate consistency between existing practice & university mission

**Modalities:**
- Internal evaluation committee
- Self-evaluation report
- Improvement plan
External (institutional) evaluation

**Objective:** To assess whether management is supportive of institutional goals

- Setting up a self-evaluation team
- Conducting the self-evaluation
- Organizing a preparatory meeting before external visit
- Conducting the meetings with staff and students
- Preparing an oral/written evaluation report
- Submitting the report to national accreditation agency
  - In case of conflict, followed by an appeal process
Certification

Objective: Streamlining and formalising administrative processes

Involves

- Analyzed unit produces the necessary resources (description of their management processes)
- Special unit supports the certification process
- Internal follow up of the progress
- The submission of a report and a presentation to an evaluation panel
- A visit from the evaluation panel
Which factors support effective IQA systems?

Module 4 - Part 2
Questions for reflection

Which factors are necessary to support an effective IQA system?

Are these factors present at my university?

Stop the video and take 5 minutes to reflect on these questions.
Internal conditioning factors

- Leadership support
- Solid data information system
- Active stakeholder participation
- Student involvement and support
- Quality and quantity of human resources
- Financial incentives
Leadership support

Importance

• Helps to support the formulation of policies and resource allocation for IQA.
• Can organise training to personnel in charge of IQA.
• May disseminate good IQA practices throughout the university, as well as results from IQA.
• Supports the development of a quality culture through promoting a dialogue on quality.
Solid data information system

**Importance**

Affects the availability of quantitative data for quality monitoring: student progression and completion, as part of an evidence-based dialogue on quality.
Active stakeholder participation

A well-structured IQA system should be based on the needs of stakeholders. Participation of academics and students in IQA was identified as a success factor in most case universities.

Importance

*Stakeholder participation is important to develop ownership for IQA and to facilitate the adoption of IQA results*
Student participation and support

Students provide feedback on the quality of teaching. They can also be involved in discussing improvement.
Financial incentives

Importance

Financial incentives can be helpful to motivate staff to engage in IQA.

Its importance depends on whether or not IQA is seen as part of the regular responsibilities of staff.
Quality and quantity of human resources for IQA

Importance

• The lack of qualified human resources makes staff feeling heavily burdened by IQA activities.

• Training personnel is a key factor in implementing internal quality assurance.
What best practices could make an IQA system successful?
Module 4 - Part 3
Overall conclusions on good practices

1. The structure of IQA
2. Tools and processes
3. The importance of communication for organisational learning
4. Other factors that support effective IQA
Questions for reflection

Does your university have a central support structure for IQA?

What are its tasks? How does it interact with the faculties and departments?

Stop the video and take 5 minutes to reflect on these questions
1. The structure of IQA

Tips & recommendations:

- Find an appropriate balance between central steering of IQA and decentralised ownership

- Integrate IQA with strategic planning, management, resource allocation, and organisational change
## Centralised vs Decentralised IQA structures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisational structure</th>
<th>Centralised Content</th>
<th>Decentralised Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centralised</td>
<td>Content specification by senior management and central implementation</td>
<td>Content autonomy by faculties and central implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralised</td>
<td>Content specification by senior management and independent implementation</td>
<td>Content autonomy by faculties and independent implementation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Designing Effective Quality Management Systems in Higher Education Institutions*, Frank Niedermeier, p. 82
What type of IQA structures?

- Unit as part of the regular administration
- Unit in support of senior management
- Independent center or unit
# Unit as part of the regular administration

**Function:** Bundles IQA with the planning, development and controlling functions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Easier coordination with other administrative departments</td>
<td>Only indirect link to senior management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better integration into the whole institution</td>
<td>Risk concentrating on controlling strategic direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent posts can be created more easily</td>
<td>Risk of making organisation development more difficult</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Designing Effective Quality Management Systems in Higher Education Institutions*, Frank Niedermeier
Unit in support of senior management

**Functions:**

- Suggests IQA policy and tools
- Follows up on information on quality generated from IQA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct link and communication with senior management</td>
<td>Higher risk of becoming a bureaucratic structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to implement without need of restructuring or big changes</td>
<td>Unit might be seen as the extended arm of senior management, leading to fear of loosing control by academics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Designing Effective Quality Management Systems in Higher Education Institutions*, Frank Niedermeier
## An independent center or unit

**Function:** An entity between senior management and the faculties and departments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stronger scientific work that is more appropriate for the teaching and learning environment of academics</td>
<td>Expensive model usually only fitting to larger size institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibility of conducting research can support quality enhancement with new findings and techniques</td>
<td>Often not all the organisational development and controlling functions can be covered, leaving some of them in the administration or elsewhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stronger reputation within and outside the institution</td>
<td>Difficult to place permanent staff, therefore less sustainable option</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EX2: University of Bahrain-Academic Quality Structure

**University level**
- Quality Assurance and Accreditation Center (QAAC)
- President’s Advisor for Quality Assurance
- Academic Committee (University)

**College level**
- College Quality Assurance Office (QAO)
- Academic Committee (College)

**Department level**
- Department Assessment Committees (DAC)
- Academic Committee (Department)

Quality Structure
Other issues that condition the choice of the support structure

- Size of the institution
- Diversity of disciplines
- Budget and resources
- Geographic dispersion of campus
- External rules and demands
- Context, institutional setting and tradition
- Quality notion and model

Conditions of the choice of the support structure
Conclusions : Tools & processes

Tips & recommendations:

- Approach IQA as an integrated set of processes and tools
- Use flexible and qualitative tools
- Design tools and processes for IQA to integrate multiple stakeholder perspectives
- Use employability-sensitive IQA tools
Conclusions : Communication

Tips & recommendations:

- Give importance to communication and organisational learning for effective IQA
- Develop appropriate formats of information to nurture the discussion on quality at the grassroots level
Conclusions: Other factors

Tips & recommendations:

- Leadership support, stakeholder involvement, and analytical capacity
- Recognise and reflect the considerable diversity of higher education
- Develop EQA that is supportive of internal quality assurance
Overall conclusions

• IQA needs to find means to « close the loop » between evidence and decision-making
• IQA is an integral part of management, it can support management through an analysis of its effectiveness
• Leadership support is an important factor for IQA effectiveness
• The structure for IQA needs to balance centralization and decentralization