



What is External Quality Assurance?

What are the tools and processes of EQA and how can students be active in EQA?

Nadia Starr



SAQA
SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY

Some disclaimers to start with...



About SAQA

THE SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY (SAQA) IS A STATUTORY BODY ESTABLISHED IN TERMS OF THE SAQA ACT (NO. 58 OF 1995) AND CONTINUING IN TERMS OF THE NQF ACT (NO. 67 OF 2008)

THE NQF ACT MANDATES SAQA TO



DEVELOP &
IMPLEMENT



ADVANCE THE
OBJECTIVES OF

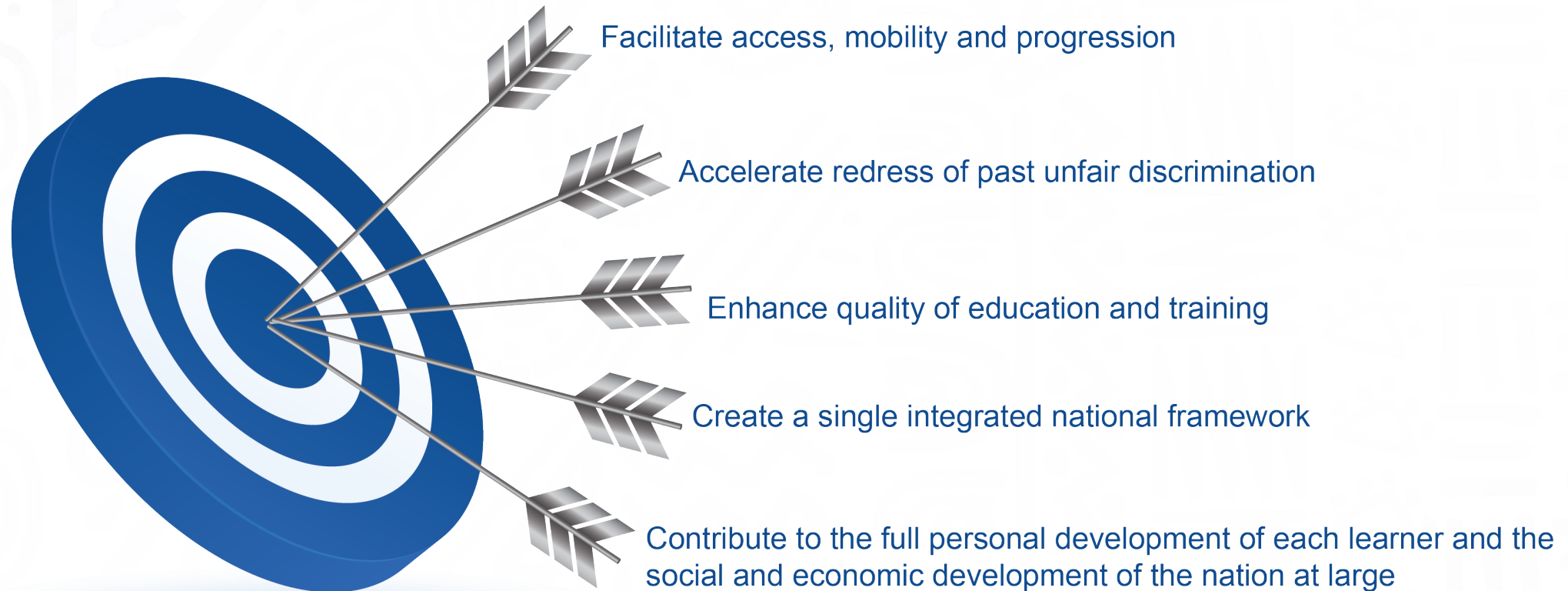


CO-ORDINATE
SUB-FRAMEWORKS

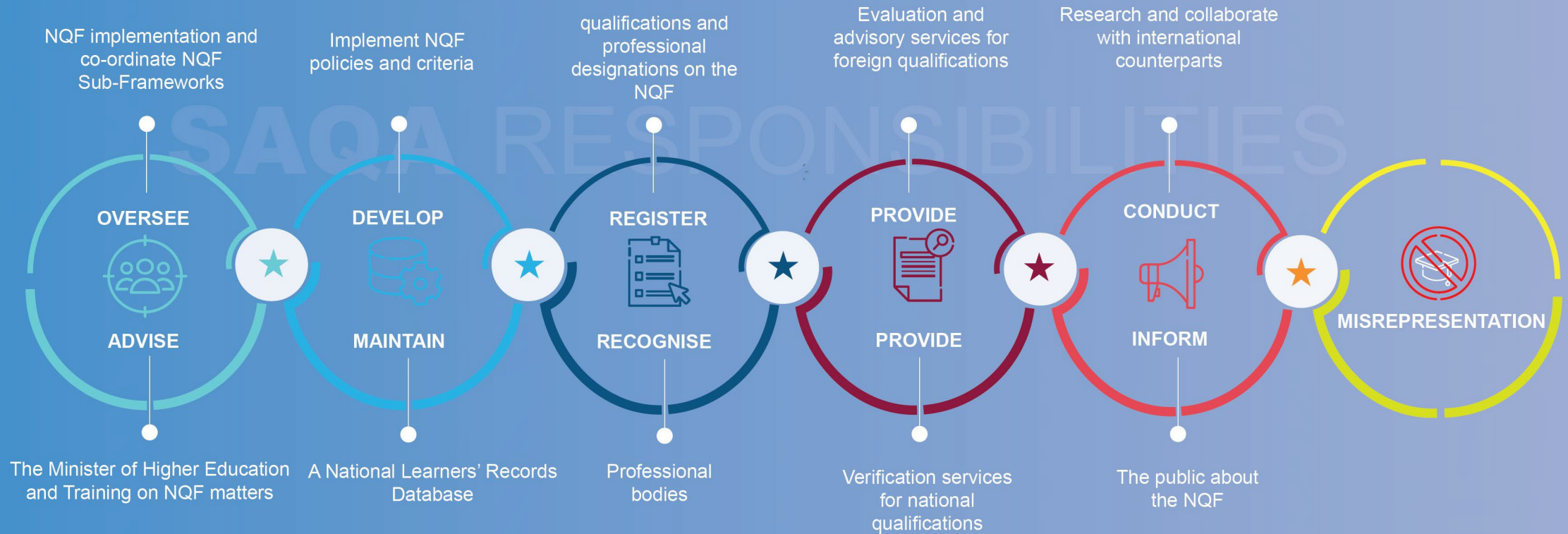
THE NQF



OBJECTIVES OF THE NQF

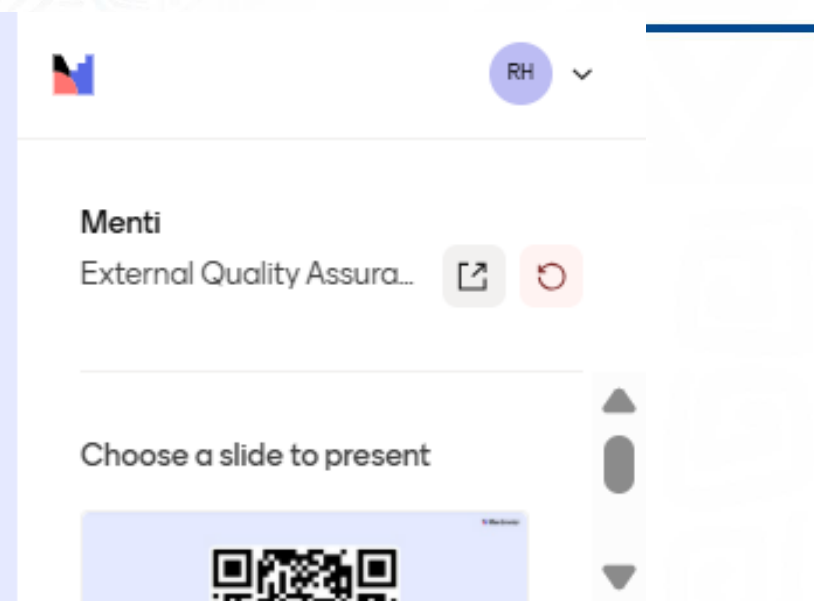


• SAQA RESPONSIBILITIES •



HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS SUB-FRAMEWORK		NQF LEVELS	 OCCUPATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS SUB-FRAMEWORK
	DOCTORAL DEGREE DOCTORAL DEGREE (PROFESSIONAL)	10	
	MASTER'S DEGREE MASTER'S DEGREE (PROFESSIONAL)	9	
	BACHELOR HONOURS DEGREE POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA BACHELOR'S DEGREE	8	
	BACHELOR'S DEGREE ADVANCED DIPLOMA	7	
	DIPLOMA ADVANCED CERTIFICATE	6	
	HIGHER CERTIFICATE	5	
	NATIONAL CERTIFICATE	4	
	INTERMEDIATE CERTIFICATE	3	
	ELEMENTARY CERTIFICATE	2	
	GENERAL CERTIFICATE	1	





Instructions

Go to **www.menti.com**

Enter the code

3168 2253



Internal vs External Quality Assurance in Education (according to CoPilot)

Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)

- Conducted by the institution itself
- Focuses on continuous improvement of teaching, learning, and administration
- Involves regular self-assessment and internal reviews
- Engages staff and students in quality processes
- Aims to build a quality culture within the institution

External Quality Assurance (EQA)

- Conducted by independent, external bodies (e.g., accreditation agencies)
- Focuses on accountability and compliance with national or international standards
- Involves external reviews, audits, and site visits
- Results in formal decisions, such as accreditation or certification
- Provides public assurance of quality and supports institutional improvement



Goals of External Quality Assurance (EQA) (according to CoPilot)

1. Ensure that higher education institutions (HEIs) have clearly articulated vision and mission statements.
2. Support the effectiveness of internal quality assurance (IQA) mechanisms within institutions.
3. Provide an additional instrument for assessing institutional quality.
4. Assist HEIs in adhering to established quality assurance principles, standards, and guidelines.
5. Help develop and entrench a culture of continuous quality improvement within institutions.

Core Functions of External Quality Assurance (EQA) (according to CoPilot)

1. Conduct external reviews, audits, and site visits by independent bodies
2. Make formal decisions, such as granting accreditation or certification.
3. Provide public assurance of quality and support institutional improvement.
4. Use tested EQA tools and methodologies
5. Ensure accountability and compliance with national or international standards.
6. Publish clear, detailed, and accessible reports and decisions for accountability.
7. Offer mechanisms for complaints and appeals, ensuring transparency and fairness.

These goals and functions are designed to strengthen both the credibility and effectiveness of higher education systems, while also supporting ongoing improvement and stakeholder confidence.

Tools and Methodologies Used in External Quality Assurance

Tools and Methodologies Used in External Quality Ass.



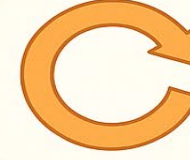
1

Institutional and Programme Accreditation



2

External Evaluations and Audits



3

Periodic Reviews



4

Site Visits by Peer Review Panels



5

Performance Indicators



7

Publication of for Complaints and Appeals



9

Stakeholder Consultation



9

Stakeholder Consultation



10

Use of Reference Documents and Monitoring Mechanisms

...(according to CoPilot)

EQA Stakeholders

National Statutory Bodies

Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET):

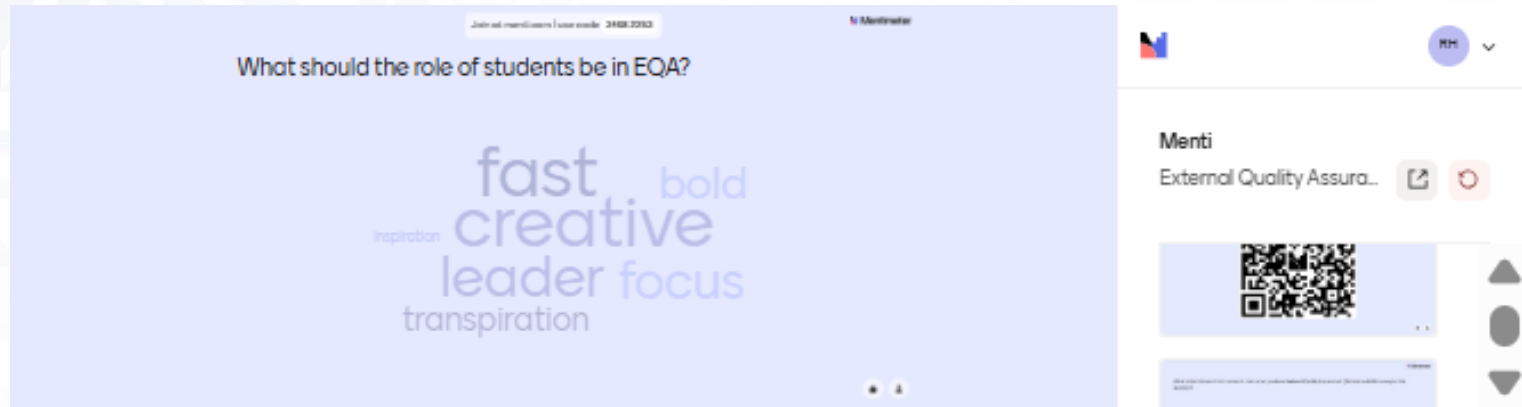
DHET oversees policy, funding, and regulation of higher education institutions. It works closely with CHE and SAQA to ensure quality and compliance.

South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA): SAQA is the custodian of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). It registers qualifications, ensures alignment with national standards, and coordinates the three sub-frameworks administered by the Quality Councils.

Council on Higher Education (CHE): The CHE is one of three Quality Councils. It is the independent statutory authority responsible for external quality assurance in higher education. It develops frameworks, sets standards, accredits programmes, and audits institutions. CHE also advises the Minister of Higher Education and Training.



The role of students



Instructions

Go to **www.menti.com**

Enter the code

3168 2253



Student Participation

Stakeholder Consultation: One of the core methodologies of EQA is the involvement of various stakeholders—including students—in designing and implementing EQA standards and processes. This ensures that student perspectives are integrated into QA frameworks and shape educational standards.

- **Site Visits and Peer Review Panels:** During EQA site visits, peer review panels conduct interviews with stakeholders, including students. This direct engagement allows students to provide feedback on their educational experience and institutional quality.
- **Student Mobility and Collaboration:** The ASG-QA promotes mutual trust and facilitates recognition and mobility of students across Africa. This is supported by transparent EQA processes that validate the quality of institutions and programmes, making it easier for students to move between institutions and countries.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** EQA processes are required to provide appropriate information on quality assurance to the public, including students. Reports and decisions are published in accessible formats, ensuring students are informed and can hold institutions accountable.

Student involvement in EQA ensures that quality assurance processes are relevant, transparent, and responsive to the needs of learners. By participating, students help shape the educational environment, contribute to continuous improvement, and uphold the credibility of African higher education systems.

Summary Table: Student Participation in EQA (ASG-QA)

Area	ASG-QA Guidance on Student Participation
Stakeholder Consultation	Students involved in designing EQA standards and processes
Site Visits	Students interviewed during peer review panels
Transparency & Accountability	Students have access to published reports and decisions
Complaints & Appeals	Students can raise concerns and challenge decisions
Mobility & Recognition	EQA supports student mobility and recognition across Africa

African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA)

S1: Objectives of External Quality Assurance and Consideration for Internal Quality Assurance



S2: Designing External Quality Assurance Mechanisms Fit for Purpose



S3: Implementation Processes of External Quality Assurance



S4: Independence of Evaluation



S5: Decision and Reporting of External Quality Assurance Outcomes



S6: Periodic Review of Institutions and Programmes



S7: Complaints and appeals



Standard 1. Objectives of External Quality Assurance and Consideration for Internal Quality Assurance

EQA shall ensure that the HEI has clearly articulated vision and mission statements, and shall help the institution ensure the effectiveness of its IQA mechanisms, providing an additional instrument for assessing institutional quality

Guidelines

EQA recognizes and supports the institutional responsibility for its QA

Assists the HEIs to adhere to established QA principles, standards and guidelines in the higher education sector

Assists HEIs to develop and entrench an institutional quality culture by having in place mechanisms for continuous quality improvement

Examples of Good Practice / Evidence

Make available the analysis of the frames of reference and documents taken into account in the external evaluation process

Show monitoring mechanisms and, if possible, results to document the agency's methodology in the external evaluation process

Explain how the agency conceptualizes its evaluation of HEIs

Existence of documentation provided to HEIs prior to the evaluation

Standard 2. Designing External Quality Assurance Mechanisms Fit for Purpose

Standards, guidelines and processes for EQA shall be designed to be fit for purpose, defined to achieve the intended aims and objectives of EQA, and to strengthen IQA systems at institutions

Guidelines

The standards, guidelines and processes developed and implemented by QAAs and institutions are created in consultation with stakeholders. The standards and guidelines are for:

Periodic programme accreditation / audit

Periodic institutional accreditation / audit

Examples of Good Practice / Evidence

Give the periods of validity of evaluation results of HEIs, training programmes and research

Documentation of stakeholder involvement and feedback, such as; national stakeholder conference, stakeholder surveys and consultation, and publication of findings

Present and analyze the methodologies and reference systems used for the various types of evaluation implemented by the EQAA

Standard 3. Implementation Processes of External Quality Assurance

The standards, processes and procedures for EQA shall be pre-defined, reliable, published and consistently implemented for purposes of accountability

Guidelines

EQA is carried out on the basis of the self-assessment prepared by the institution. The processes for EQA include:
Self-assessment by the institution and production of the self-assessment report (SAR) / self-evaluation report (SER)
Site visit to the institution and interviews with stakeholders of the institution
Site visit review report

Examples of Good Practice / Evidence

Show the existence and accessibility of reference documents
Existence of documents describing the main stages of the external evaluation and follow-up of recommendations
Existence of documents for monitoring the implementation of procedures
Use feedback, results of HEI and expert surveys to demonstrate the implementation of the processes and the resulting satisfaction of stakeholders
Available site visit reports

Standard 4. Independence of Evaluation

EQA shall be carried out by panels of external experts drawn from a wide range of expertise and experience

Guidelines

Experts:

With appropriate skills and competent to perform their task are carefully selected

Should be adequately inducted into EQA principles and procedures

Are independent in their judgement about the quality of the programme or institution

Have no conflict of interest with the institution or programme under review

Sign a declaration of independence and no conflict of interest form

The institution be given the opportunity to declare no objection on the expert review team

Examples of Good Practice / Evidence

Procedure manuals / documents for the selection and management of experts

Selection criteria

Statistics on the diversity of the experts' profiles; academics, researchers, professionals, QA specialists, students, gender, age, and geographical origin

Documentation on the training of the experts

Documentation on transparency

Signed declaration forms of no conflict of interest

Indicate the opportunity given to the HEI to give a no objection opinion on the nominated experts

Standard 5. Decision and Reporting of External Quality Assurance Outcomes

Reports and decisions made as a result of EQA shall be clear, based on published standards, processes and procedures, and made accessible, for purposes of accountability

Guidelines

External quality assessment decisions are published without undermining the integrity of the review process

The EQA reports are detailed, clear and precise to ensure easy follow-up

The review reports clearly indicate commendations, recommendations and formal decisions

The institution is given an opportunity for factual verification to ensure accuracy of the report

The decisions taken are free from external influence

Examples of Good Practice / Evidence

Make public documents relating to references, processes and procedures

Make QAA's reports and decisions public and accessible

Conduct a critical analysis of published reports on their clarity, strengths, weaknesses and decisions made

Demonstrate the existence and proven functioning of right of reply mechanism

Demonstrate the existence of codes of ethics to prevent the risk of conflict of interest

Standard 6. Periodic Review of Institutions and Programmes

EQA of institutions and programmes shall be undertaken on a cyclical basis

Guidelines

The length of the review cycle is clearly defined and published:

For academic programmes, the review cycle is consistent with the duration of the programme, or it reflects the defined validity of the accreditation period

Depending on the content of the QA system, for institutions, the cyclical institutional review is carried out preferably every five years

Every cyclical review results in a report of the general findings of the review

Examples of Good Practice / Evidence

Demonstrate the existence and accessibility of :

Clearly defined and published cycle lengths for programme / institutional reviews

Public information on the planning by the EQA of intended cyclical evaluations, such as on the EQA's website

Published reports of the undertaken cyclical programmes / institutional reviews

Standard 7. Complaints and Appeals

The procedures for lodging complaints and appeals shall be clearly defined and communicated to the institution concerned

Guidelines

There is an established complaints and appeal system with clearly defined procedures and processes

The institution and general public are allowed to raise issues of concern consistent with the complaints and appeals system

Appeals and complaints are handled professionally, within an agreed period of time

Examples of Good Practice / Evidence

Accessible, easy to read documents on complaints and appeals procedures and processes

Analysis of complaints and appeals handled, their nature, and the response time taken documented

Documented measures taken for future improvement on the issues handled

Part C – none of this works without the governance layer also being independent and accountable

When external quality assurance is for regulatory purposes, there should be security that the outcomes of the process are accepted within the HE system, the stakeholders and the public

- The QAA is established by a competent authority through legal statute and shall be independent in its operations, outcomes, judgements and decisions



*Thank you
Ngiyathokoza
Enkosi
Dankie
Ngiyabonga
Kea leboga
Ndza khensa
Ndo livhuwa*

