

What is IQA?

What are Tools of IQA and how can Students be active in IQA

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Session Objective

To introduce participants to Internal Quality Assurance (IQA), with a focus on student involvement in IQA processes based on the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA).

Agenda

1. Introduction and Overview
2. Understanding Internal Quality Assurance
3. Key Stakeholders in IQA
4. Student Involvement in IQA
5. Reference to ASG-QA, Students Involvement in IQA and Tools and Mechanisms of IQA
6. Internal Quality Assurance vs External Quality Assurance (EQA)
7. Conclusion and Takeaways

1. Introduction & Overview

Purpose of the session

- To understand IQA concepts and tools
- To differentiate IQA from EQA
- To appreciate the role of stakeholders, especially students

“When you hear the word ‘*quality*’ in higher education, what comes to mind?” <https://www.slido.com> Code:2792773

2. Understanding Internal Quality Assurance

ASG-QA (Part A, p.13):

HEIs have the primary responsibility of *ensuring that there is a robust and well-functioning QA system for its entire activities (academic, research and community engagement)*.

Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) refers to the *ongoing, systematic process* within a higher education institution to monitor, evaluate, and improve the quality of its teaching, learning, research, and services.

The institution itself, unlike external evaluations done by accreditation agencies, manages it internally.

IQA processes include student course evaluations, departmental reviews, and curriculum audits conducted by internal committees.

Purpose of IQA:

- To ensure continuous improvement in teaching and learning.
 - To align institutional practices with national and regional quality standards.
 - To promote accountability and transparency.
 - To build a *culture of quality* among staff and students.
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3. Stakeholders in IQA



Internal Stakeholders:

- **Students:** through course evaluations, representation in committees, and feedback forums
- **Academic staff:** through curriculum development, peer reviews, and internal audits
- **Departmental and Faculty Quality Assurance Teams:** curriculum implementation
- **University Management:** policy and oversight roles
- **Administrative staff:** ensuring service quality and compliance

External Stakeholders:

- **Employers and Alumni:** feedback on graduate employability and relevance of skills and competencies
- **Professional and Regulatory Bodies:** e.g., Engineers Boards, Law Societies, Nursing Council
- **National QA Agencies:** e.g., Commission for University Education (CUE) in Kenya
- **Community Partners:** social responsibility and outreach impact

4. Student Involvement in IQA

ASG-QA Reference (Part A, Standard 2, p.14):

- The institution enables students to participate in decision-making in relevant governance bodies.
- Students should be *active partners* in decision-making, not passive recipients.
- Institutions shall have *relevant governance and management bodies ... including the Senate, Student Body*, each with a clear mandate and coordinated roles to ensure efficiency and quality.
- Institutions shall *enables students to participate in decision-making in relevant governance bodies*,

Which organs of decision-making do you participate in within your university? / What kind of student involvement have been involved in? <https://www.slido.com> Code:2792773

Ways Students Can Participate:

- Through Course and Lecturer Evaluations
- Membership in QA Committees or Boards
- Participation in Curriculum Reviews
- Peer Mentoring and Academic Support Programmes
- Feedback Platforms (Surveys, Forums, Town Halls)
- Representation in Governance Structures (e.g., Students' Body/ Association, Senate, Faculty/ School Boards, Departmental Boards)

Benefits of Student Involvement:

- Promotes transparency and trust
- Ensures relevance of academic programmes
- Fosters a shared culture of quality
- Builds leadership and accountability skills in students

ASG-QA Reference (Part A, Introduction, p.13):

“IQA promotes a culture of evidence-based quality in all institutional activities.”

5. Reference to ASG-QA, Students Involvement in IQA and Tools and Mechanisms of IQA

ASG-QA Introduction (p.9) recognizes students as *key stakeholders whose voice should be at the core of all discussions* on higher education quality.

ASG-QA Reference (Part A, Standards 7–8, p.19–21):
“Institutions shall have policies that ensure design, approval, monitoring and evaluation of quality, relevant study programmes... and assure fair and transparent assessment.”

Tools are effective only when data collected is used for *improvement decisions*—not just reporting.

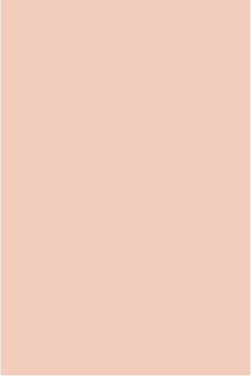
“Which IQA tool have you directly participated in or benefited from as a student?”
(Let a few participants share examples.)

Student participation is **explicitly recognized and repeatedly emphasized** in the following standards and guidelines:

Section / Standard - ASG-QA		Role of Students in IQA	Sample of Tools and Mechanisms of IQA
Standard 1 – Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives (p.14)	Students are expected to participate in the continuous and periodic monitoring		Self-assessment of academic programmes and institutional self-assessment for continual improvement and benchmarking
Standard 2 – Governance and Management (p.14)	Students should participate in decision-making bodies (e.g., Student bodies, Senate, in some cases Council committees). They are recognized as part of governance structures that uphold quality.		Feedback Mechanisms, Peer Reviews
Standard 5 – Infrastructure and Facilities (p.16)	For good higher education students’ experience, institutions should provide infrastructure and facilities that are in line with the programmes on offer, teaching, learning and research strategy.		Internal Audits, Peer Reviews, Self-Assessments, Graduate Tracer Studies, Benchmarking with other Institutions.
Standard 6 – Student Recruitment, Admission, Certification, and Support (p.18–19)	Institutions must provide guidance, welfare, counselling, and career support. Students’ needs and diversity must be considered in IQA.		Feedback Mechanisms, Needs Assessments/ Surveys, Internal Audits
Standard 7 – Programme Design and Evaluation (p.20)	Students (and alumni) provide feedback in curriculum design, review, and validation. Their feedback is part of continuous improvement.		Needs Assessments/ Surveys, Self-Assessment, Curriculum Reviews
Standard 8 – Teaching, Learning, and Assessment (p.21–22)	Students contribute to evaluation/ assessment of teaching quality, environment and resources. Their feedback is used to improve learning experiences.		Course and Programme Evaluation/ Assessment, Peer Reviews, Internal Audits
Standard 11 – Information Management (p.24–25)	Student profile, progression rates, dropout rates, graduation rates students’ satisfaction, and employment outcomes are tracked and used as performance indicators. Students are involved in data analysis and follow-up actions to address the shortcomings.		Surveys, Feedback Mechanisms, Graduate Tracer Studies, Peer Reviews
Standard 13 – Collaboration, Staff and Student Mobility (p.26)	Institutions must promote student mobility and ensure quality-learning experiences in partner institutions. HAQAA Initiative has championed this through harmonization of HE in Africa.		Benchmarking, Peer Reviews

6. Internal Quality Assurance vs External Quality Assurance

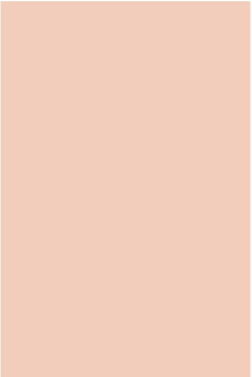
Aspect	Internal Quality Assurance (IQA)	External Quality Assurance (EQA)
Definition	Activities conducted within an institution to assess and enhance quality	Evaluations conducted by external bodies to validate institutional quality
Responsibility	University management, departments, staff, and students	National QA agencies or accreditation Councils/ Commission
Focus	Continuous improvement and self-evaluation	Compliance and accountability
Frequency	Continuous or periodic	Periodic (e.g., every 5 years)
Example	Course evaluation, internal audits	Accreditation visit for Programmes, Campuses, Institution, Mode of curriculum delivery



IQA processes precedes the accreditation inspection by CUE (EQA).



ASG-QA Reference (Part B, p.27):
“EQA complements an effective IQA system and assists higher education institutions to establish mechanisms for continuous quality improvement.”



“In your assessment how are both IQA and EQA:

- Important, and
- Complementary?”



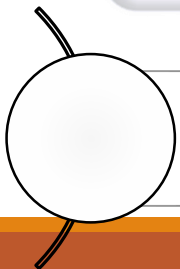
In your own opinion, can institutions of higher learning self-regulate?

7. Conclusion and Takeaways

Key Messages:

- IQA ensures *continuous improvement* within universities.
- EQA is an external validation and accountability
- IQA complements EQA and involves multiple stakeholders.
- Students play a *central role*—as evaluators, participants, and co-creators of quality.

“Quality in higher education is everyone’s business, especially the students who experience it daily.”



Reflection “In one sentence, what is one new thing you learned about IQA today?” <https://www.slido.com> Code:2792773

References

- African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ASG-QA, 2018)
- ENQA (2015). *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*

Thank You

