Global Gateway

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Harmonisation, Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Africa

HAQAA3

The interplay between EQA and IQA

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OBREAL Global

DAAD Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service

enqa.
European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

SESSION OBJECTIVE

Know the difference, see the interplay

Participants acquire knowledge of, and can differentiate between, **EQA** and **IQA** processes, and understand the interplay between these two dimensions.

1

Roles: A change of perspective

2

Responsibility and stakeholders

3

Linking IQA and EQA through the ASG-QA

4

Namibian experiences and best practices

TWO DIMENSIONS, ONE SYSTEM

IQA and EQA compared

	Internal QA (IQA)	External QA (EQA)
Who leads	The higher education institution	QA agency or regulator (NCHE, professional bodies)
Main purpose	Improvement and enhancement	Accountability, public assurance, support for improvement
Typical tools	Self-evaluation, programme reviews, student feedback, peer review of teaching	Registration, programme accreditation, institutional audits, follow-ups
Frequency	Continuous	Periodic review cycles
In the ASG-QA	Part A	Part B (Part C for the agencies)

Key point: Each dimension makes the other meaningful.

A change of perspective: From compliance to enhancement

IQA

The engine

Works every day, in every department and lecture hall. Quality is made here.

EQA

The mirror and the guarantee

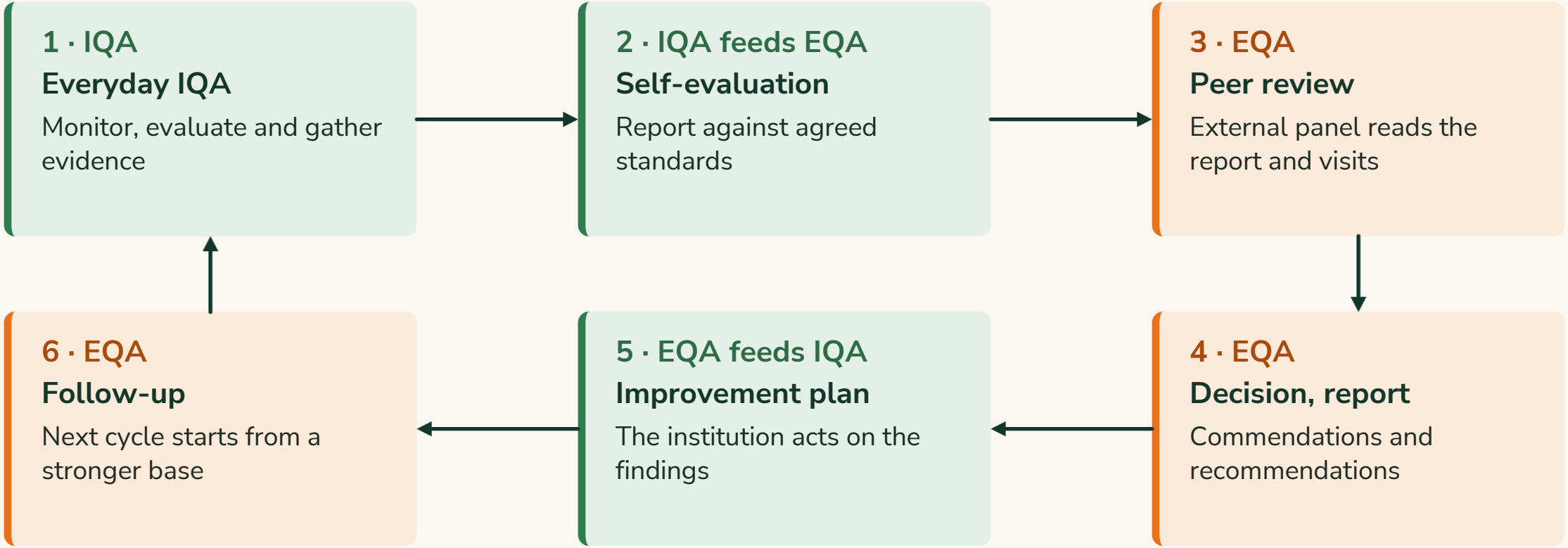
Gives an independent view, assures the public and pushes institutions to act on their own findings.

> Namibian evidence: EQA tends to stress accountability and compliance, while IQA built on a strong quality culture and does more for student learning. Genuine quality needs EQA that strengthens IQA.

Sources: Kadhila & Iipumbu (2019); E4 Group (2020)

THE INTERPLAY

One review cycle, two dimensions



Green = led by the institution (IQA)
Orange = led by the agency (EQA)

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

Higher education institutions carry the primary responsibility for quality.

Both the ASG-QA and the ESG say so, and both build EQA on that responsibility. In Namibia, the NCHE monitors institutions' own QA mechanisms: it does not replace them.

Sources: AUC & EU (2018); ENQA et al. (2015); Republic of Namibia (2003)

WHO IS INVOLVED?

Quality is everyone’ s business

Stakeholder	Role in IQA	Role in EQA
Institutions (council, staff)	Own the system; self-evaluate; improve	Report; host panels; act on findings
QA agencies (NCHE, professional bodies)	Build capacity; give guidance	Register, accredit, audit, follow up
Professional bodies	Shape professional curricula	Set and check professional standards
Government (ministry)	Funds public HEIs; sets policy	Laws and funding tied to quality
Industry and employers	Advisory boards; work placements	Panel members; employability data
Students	Feedback; seats on committees	Panel members; meet review panels
Alumni	Tracer studies; curriculum feedback	Evidence of graduate outcomes

The ASG-QA expect students, alumni and employers to be involved in programme design and review, and students serve on review panels. In Namibia, students are still under-involved.

Sources: AUC & EU (2018); Graham et al. (2023); Iipumbu (2021)

THE AFRICAN FRAMEWORK

The ASG-QA at a glance

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Part A: Internal QA for HEIs

Mission, governance, resources, programmes, teaching, research, community engagement, information, mobility

7

Part B: External QA

Objectives and consideration for IQA, fit-for-purpose design, independence, decisions, periodic reviews, appeals

9

Part C: IQA for QA agencies

Legal status, independence, the agency's own IQA, resources, periodic external reviews

Part A: 13 IQA standards for HEIs. Part B: 7 EQA standards. Part C: 9 standards for the internal QA of agencies themselves (AUC & EU, 2018).

BUILDING THE BRIDGE

Where the ASG-QA link IQA and EQA

1	**EQA starts from IQA**	Part B, Standard 1: EQA builds on the institution's responsibility and helps make IQA effective
2	**One shared reference**	HEIs keep Part B in mind; agencies recognise the Part A standards used in self-assessment
3	**Agencies practise what they preach**	Part C: Agencies run their own IQA and undergo periodic external reviews
4	**Self-assessment tools**	The African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM) helps institutions assess themselves against Part A
5	**Stakeholders on both sides**	Students, employers and alumni feed IQA and also sit on external panels

Sources: AUC & EU (2018); HAQAA Initiative (2019, n.d.)

FROM SYSTEM TO CULTURE

A quality culture needs both elements

PEOPLE

Cultural and psychological

Shared values, beliefs, expectations and commitment towards quality

THE BINDING ELEMENT

Leadership and communication

INSTITUTION

Structural and managerial

Defined processes that enhance quality and coordinate individual efforts

The ASG-QA give the structure. Our task is the culture:

- Align national standards with the ASG-QA
- Give credit for strong internal systems
- Use Part A for internal reviews, not only before visits

Sources: EUA (2006); Bendermacher et al. (2017); AUC & EU (2018)

EXPERIENCES FROM NAMIBIA

A young system that is changing fast

1996	2003	2005	2009	Oct 2025	Nov 2025
NQA established by the NQA Act 29 of 1996	Higher Education Act 26 of 2003 creates the NCHE	NCHE launched in November	NCHE QA system makes IQA compulsory for all HEIs	NCHE Minimum Standards for HEIs: three years to comply	Joint NQA–NCHE accreditation (UNAM first); National Policy on Qualifications Standards

From overlapping mandates to one integrated accreditation system. Free tertiary education from 2026 is tied to meeting the Minimum Standards.

Sources: Republic of Namibia (2003); Kadhila et al. (2013); Graham et al. (2023); Iipumbu (2021); Hansen (2025); The Namibian (2025); MEIYSAC (2025)

EXPERIENCES FROM NAMIBIA

What to keep in mind when working with universities

Bureaucratic processes

Long approval chains; each committee meets on its own calendar

Limited funds

Budgets restrict QA work such as visits to other campuses

Thinly staffed IQA offices

Few trained practitioners; QA added to other duties

Staff reluctance

Some see QA as policing; support from the top can be weak

Stakeholder involvement

Students, employers and alumni are hard to involve

Slow accreditation outcomes

Late decisions delay programme roll-out (next slide)

EXPERIENCES FROM NAMIBIA

How delays ripple through the system

Cause
Long internal approval plus a slow external decision

→

Effect 1
The programme misses the admission window

→

Effect 2
Students enrol elsewhere or wait a year

→

Effect 3
The faculty blames the IQA office; trust drops

→

Effect 4
IQA office goes on chasing approvals, focus not on quality

What helps: Shared planning

- Published turnaround times for accreditation decisions
- Submission windows that match the academic calendar
- Early informal consultation before formal submission

BEST PRACTICE FROM NAMIBIA

Outsource consultancy work to QA specialists in higher education

Example: The development of national standards for higher education in Namibia.

Workable standards
Written by the people who must apply them

Ownership
Colleagues' work, not rules imposed from outside

Consultation
Meets ASG-QA Part B, Standard 2

Local capacity
Keeps expertise in the country, at lower cost

Safeguard: The agency keeps the decision, interests are declared, and specialists come from several institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Strengthening the interplay

For QA agencies

- Align national standards with the ASG-QA
- Publish and keep to turnaround times
- Lighter-touch review where IQA works
- Invest in EQA that builds IQA capacity

For institutions

- Make self-evaluation a by-product of everyday IQA
- Shorten internal approval chains
- Staff and train the IQA office
- Bring students, alumni and employers in

For both

- Talk early and often
- Plan to the academic calendar
- Celebrate improvement, not only compliance

Sources: Kadhila & Iipumbu (2019); AUC & EU (2018)

DISCUSSION

Over to you

1. Where do you see the biggest gap between IQA and EQA in your own context?
2. What could your agency or institution change in the next six months to shorten accreditation turnaround times?
3. How could the ASG-QA be used more actively in your national or institutional standards?

Thank you

Quality is made inside institutions and strengthened from outside. Two dimensions, one system.

