

Global Perspective on Quality Assurance

Establishment of a quality assurance system in higher education is a global concern now. There is a growing demand for quality assurance (QA) mechanisms at national, regional and global levels. Over the years, it is observed that there is an increase in the number of HE institutions and increased involvement of external stakeholders through changes in governance structures. The higher education institutions around the world have been introduced to quality assurance system internally with formal institutional approach and documentation. This has been done with the establishment of quality assurance agencies like accreditation bodies at the national level. The integration of Quality Assurance principles into higher education became effective in Europe under the Bologna Process which started in 1999. In Africa, Middle East and Asia significance of quality assurance in higher education is also recognized. In South Asia India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka have well-structured quality assurance system in place. Thus, the quality assurance in higher education has become an increasing and important global trend. To support the increasing number of internal quality assurance systems many quality assurance agencies are functioning across the world with standard practices. These quality assurance agencies are also very active in establishing harmony and uniformity across the countries.

Quality Assurance (QA) Networks

Cross-border collaboration in quality assurance is increasingly being practiced these days. Regional quality assurance networks have been established in many parts of the world. A few of these networks are Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN), Quality Assurance Network for African Higher Education (AfriQAN), Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE), Caribbean Area Network for Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education (CANQATE), European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). The purpose to establish these networks is to develop and foster cooperation on QA among the member countries. The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) was established in 1991. It is an association of more than 200 organizations from 130 countries active in the practices of quality assurance in higher education. INQAAHE is a forum for the discussion of global issues relating to quality assurance in higher education. Among the South Asian countries, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Maldives, Nepal and Bhutan are already full members of the INQAAHE. In 2007, the World Bank and UNESCO established a partnership that launched the Global Initiative for Quality Assurance Capacity (GIQAC) to support the evolution of quality assurance in higher education in developing countries and countries-in-transition. GIQAC will serve as an umbrella for the regional networks, providing global coherence, a forum for crossregional knowledge sharing, and leveraging additional resources to make these efforts sustainable