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QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Why quality matters in HE

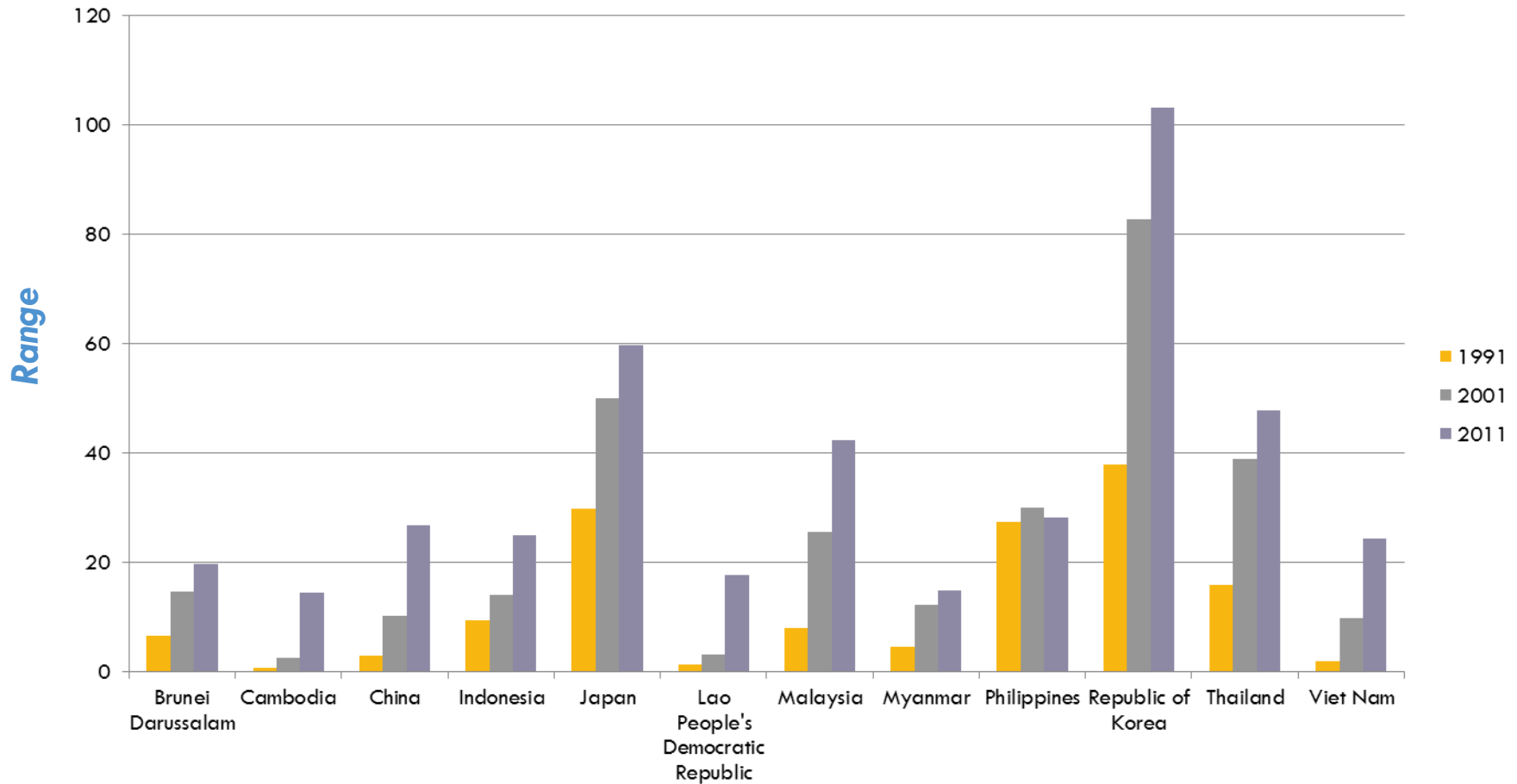
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- **Quality is concerned** with the expansion of HE systems
- Expanding access poses challenges to the quality of higher education. QA is a vital function in contemporary higher education and must **involve all stakeholders**. Quality requires both establishing QA systems and patterns of evaluation as well as **promoting a quality culture within institutions**.

- Communiqué of the UNESCO 2009 WCHE

Why quality matters in HE

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Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)

*No data available for Singapore

*Some countries have no data available for the specific year, instead data from the nearest year has been used (for example, 1990 instead of 1991).

Why quality matters in HE

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- Quality is regarded as an important part of **accountability**
- Increased public and private investment in higher education demands more accountability
- With economic downturn more social pressure on HEIs to increase '**value for money**' of public expenditures
- Government funding will be more linked to HEIs' performance and contribution to national priorities (e.g. UK, Australia, New Zealand)

Why quality matters in HE

- Quality higher education will make sure that students can **make the most** of their studies at HEIs.
- Protect students from poor quality provision of higher education (**mismatch** between what they learnt and what the employment market wants)
- **Unemployment** and **low entry-level salaries** post graduation
- **'Soft landing'** of higher education expansion

Why quality matters in HE

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- Quality assurance systems are **the major source of mutual trust** between countries when it comes to mutual recognition of qualifications, the promotion of cross-border student mobility, and regional higher education harmonization (integration).
- **ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)** by 2015
- **UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Convention** on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education

Traditions of QA mechanisms

- Systems with QA units within **central education authorities** directly monitor the quality of HE sector
- Used to be adopted in many **continental European countries**, and is still popular within the region.
- Closely linked to countries with no or less **quasi-autonomous non-governmental organizations (QUANGO)**, which perform governmental functions, often in receipt of funding or other support from government. **Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB)** in the UK.

Traditions of QA mechanisms

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- Systems with **buffer organisations** (e.g. UGC, QAA) regulating the operation of the system.
- Originated in the UK. First as a **buffer organisation** to prevent universities from direct government intervention. Later developed into **NDPBs**.
- **NDPB** with devolved governmental responsibility, but operates to a greater or lesser extent at arm's length from Ministers. (Separation of political decisions and professional implementation)
- Very popular in **Commonwealth countries**.

Traditions of QA mechanisms

- Systems with most of the regulatory functions being exerted by **professional entities**.
- Based on **peer review**, adopted in the **USA** and very influential worldwide.
- List of recognized accrediting bodies by U.S. Federal Department of Education and Council for Higher Education Accreditation (**CHEA**).
- **Institutional Accreditation**: Six Regional Accreditation Associations
- **Specialised and Professional Accreditation**

Traditions of QA mechanisms

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- Systems in favor of **institutional autonomy** where QA is regarded as the responsibility of universities.
- Strong tradition of institutional autonomy in the **UK**, based on **Royal Charters**
- In **Australia**, “university” means they are autonomous entities (**Australia National University Act (1946)**).
- In this region, there is a tendency of giving **autonomy** to top universities **in exchange for accountability**.

Traditions of QA mechanisms

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- **Japan:** In 2004, Japanese national universities were transformed into national university corporations (NUCs) (**National University Corporation Law**)
- **Korea: The Seoul National University Corporatization Law** (Dec 8 2010)
- **Malaysia:** In the 2012, five public universities have been given **autonomy** in administration, human resources, financial and academic management and student intake.

QA of teaching and learning

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- **National Qualification Framework**
- Popular in **Commonwealth countries (UK Qualification and Credit Framework; AQF, MQF)** and increasingly adopted or considered by other countries (e.g. Philippines).
- An attempt to make all kinds of qualifications develop under a unified framework, so that **credits** from qualifications are **comparable** and **transferrable**.
- To allow **diversity and flexibility within a unified framework**.

QA of teaching and learning

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- **Subject Benchmark Statements**
- **QA reference documents at subject level** set expectations for standards of degrees in a range of disciplines. Well developed in the **UK** by QAA.
- Many countries have similar **guidelines on teaching and learning in specific subject areas**, developed by National Steering Committees (e.g. **China**).
- Should engage academia, professional bodies, employers, and other stakeholders.

Contents of SBS in Educational Studies, UK

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Subject benchmark statements, UK

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Honours degree subjects

Subject benchmark statements explaining the core competencies at honours degree level

Subject benchmark statements for bachelor's degrees with honours are available in the following subjects.
[See also the benchmark statements for qualifying awards for professions in Scotland.](#)

[Accounting \(2007\)](#)
[Agriculture, horticulture, forestry, food and consumer sciences \(2009\)](#) ; note 1
[Anthropology \(2007\)](#)
[Archaeology \(2007\)](#)
[Architectural technology \(2007\)](#)
[Architecture \(2010\)](#)
[Area studies \(2008\)](#)
[Art and design \(2008\)](#) ; note 2
[Biomedical science \(2007\)](#)
[Biosciences \(2007\)](#)
[Construction, property and surveying \(2008\)](#) ; note 3
[Chemistry \(2007\)](#)
[Classics and ancient history \(including Byzantine Studies and Modern Greek\) \(2007\)](#)
[Communication, media, film and cultural studies \(2008\)](#)
[Computing \(2007\)](#)
[Counselling and psychotherapy \(2013\)](#)
[Criminology \(2007\)](#)
[Dance, drama and performance \(2007\)](#)
[Dentistry \(2002\)](#)
[Early childhood studies \(2007\)](#)
[Earth sciences, environmental sciences and environmental studies \(2007\)](#)
[Economics \(2007\)](#)
[Education studies \(2007\)](#)
[Engineering \(2010\)](#) ; note 4
[English \(2007\)](#)
[Finance \(2007\)](#)

Source: QAA website

Subject benchmark statements, UK

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Health professions

Statements benchmarking academic and practitioner standards in health care subjects

These statements are for benchmarking academic and practitioner standards in health care subjects. They are drafted by working groups that include academics, practitioners and representatives of the health care professional and statutory regulatory bodies. They underpin the programme of [Major Review](#) of healthcare education and training.

The following benchmark statements are available.

[See also the benchmark statements for qualifying awards for professions in Scotland.](#)

[Audiology](#)

[Arts therapy](#)

[Clinical psychology](#)

[Clinical sciences](#)

[Dental care professions](#)

[Dietetics](#)

[Health visiting](#)

[Midwifery](#)

[Nursing](#)

[Occupational therapy](#)

[Operating department practice](#)

[Orthoptics](#)

[Paramedic science](#)

[Physiotherapy](#)

[Podiatry](#)

[Prosthetics and orthotics](#)

[Radiography](#)

[Speech and language therapy](#)

Source: QAA website

QA of teaching and learning

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- **Specialised and professional accreditation**
- A model adopted in the **USA** to let the specialised and professional programmes be accredited by academic associations or professional bodies.
- Graduates from accredited study programmes can be entitled to take professional examinations for practicing licenses.
- Good way to keep the study programmes **updated** with the needs of each profession.

Specialised and professional Accreditors in the United States

Accreditors	Nature	Specialised programs
Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, Inc. (ABET)	NGO	applied science, computing, engineering, and technology
American Bar Association (ABA)	Professional Association	Law Schools
American Dental Association (ADA)	Professional Association	Dentistry Schools
American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)	Professional Association	Veterinary Schools
Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME)	Professional Accreditor	Medical Schools
Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)	Professional Accreditor	Business Schools
National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB)	Professional Accreditor	Architecture Schools
National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA)	Non-profit Association	Public Policy Schools

QA of teaching and learning

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- **Programme Specification**
- A programme specification describes the **intended outcomes** of learning from a HE programme, and **the means** by which these outcomes are achieved and demonstrated.
- The purposes are:
 - (1) inform incoming and prospective students, employers and potential partners;
 - (2) common template for programme development;
 - (3) reference points for internal and external review

QA of teaching and learning

The core information required for a programme specification is as follows:

- Awarding institution;
- Teaching institution (say for franchises, collaborative arrangements);
- Accreditation details (name of professional/statutory body, their specific requirements);
- Name of final award, (its relation to National Qualifications Framework);
- Programme title;
- UCAS code (if relevant);
- Programme aims;
- Relevant QAA subject benchmark(s), external reference points (e.g. professional standards);
- Learning outcomes (including explicit skills outcomes);

- Teaching learning and assessment strategies (including mode of study e.g. FT PT DL);
- Programme structure (duration, levels, modules and credit values, intermediate exit points);
- Date specification was written, approved by Faculty, etc. :
- Criteria for admission to the programme;
- Information about assessment regulations;
- Indicators of quality;
- Particular support for learning;
- Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of learning.

QA of research

□ Increasing government funding for R&D in HE

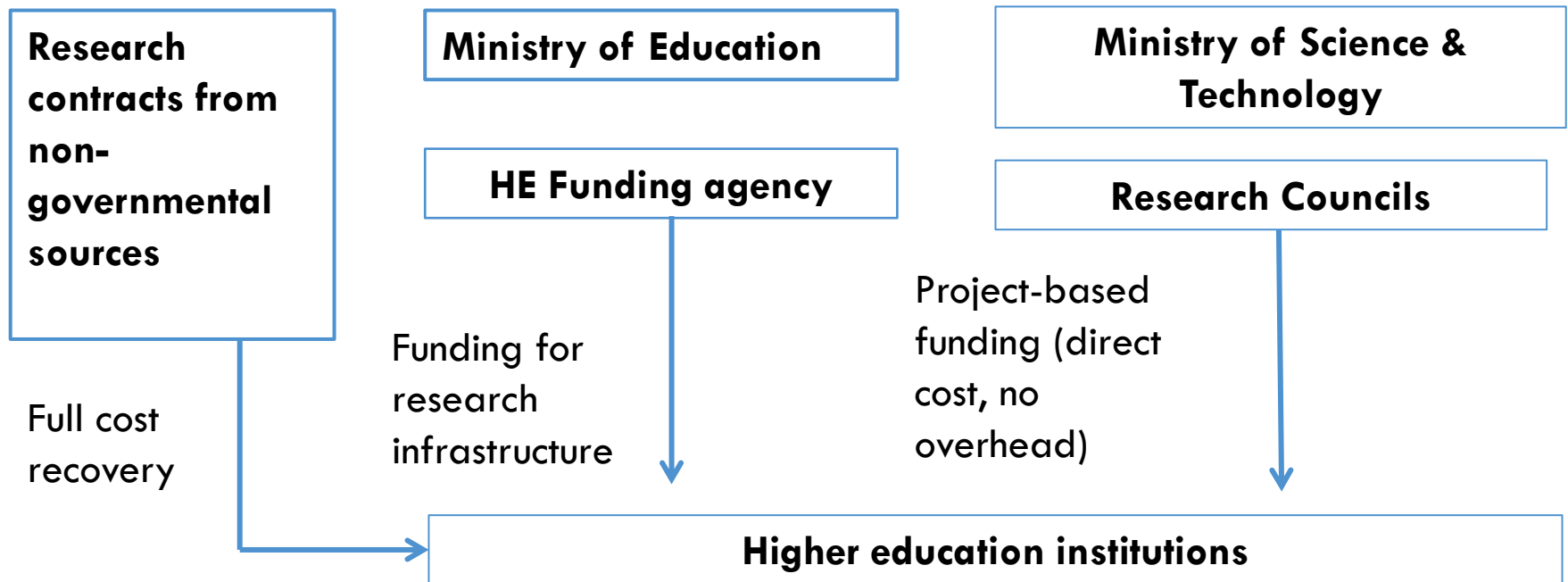
Research Excellence Initiatives in East Asia

Country	Name of Initiative	Investment horizon
China	Chinese 211 project / Chinese 958 Project	Launched in 1996 / 1999
Japan	Japan Top30 Program (Centers of Excellence for 21 st -Century Plan)	5-year funding, launched in 2002
	Japan Global Centers of Excellence Program	5 years/Launched in 2007
Republic of Korea	Brain Korea 21 Program	7 years
	World Class University Program (WCU)	5 years
Taiwan (China)	Taiwan Development Plan for University Research Excellence	4 years

QA of research

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- Funding for **university research infrastructure**
- Funding for **university research projects**



QA of research

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- Transforming traditional teaching universities into **research-intensive universities**
- To nurture a **research culture** among academic staff with capacity building programmes. **Brain gain, drain, circulation**
- A balance between **guided research** and **self-motivated research**, in favor of Govt' priorities
- Encourage **university-industry partnerships**

QA of research

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- **Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), UK**
- Organised for every 5 years by UK Higher Education Funding Councils
- **Peer-reviewed** research assessment in every subject area with 5-point scale grading system
- **Outcomes** are used to inform the allocation of **quality weighted research funding (QR)** each HEI receives from their national funding council.

QA of social service

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- **Community engagement activities** as part of university curriculum or programme credits
- **Research and development contracts** with local partners and industries.
- Social advocacy programmes, community engagement activities, technology transfers, technology incubation centres, patent licensing agreements, entrepreneurship activities, etc .

Concluding remarks

- Be more aware of your own **QA tradition and the compatibility** of experiences from other countries
- Try to establish a **balanced QA system** to promote **shared ownership** at system, institutional and faculty levels.
- QA at system level should provide a **national academic infrastructure** that allows adaptations at institutional and programme levels.

Concluding remarks

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- **Consultations** with different stakeholders are very important for **consensus building** and **effective implementation** of the quality standards.
- Build a **quality culture** within institutions and faculties through capacity building.
- Efforts should be made to promote a **Regional Quality Assurance Framework** for regional higher education integration.



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Thank you for your
attention!