

QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE BROADER ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

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Prepared for DEEWR by APQN

QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION
IN THE BROADER ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

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(with the support of Australian Universities Quality Agency)

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Executive summary

Background

This report was commissioned by the Australian Department of Education, Science and Training (now the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations) as a scoping study in support of the goals of the Brisbane Communiqué. The latter was issued at the meeting of Asia-Pacific Education Ministers in Brisbane, Australia on 3–4 April 2006. The Ministers' Meeting agreed to actively encourage and facilitate regional student and academic mobility, and address barriers to those activities. They agreed to collaborate on quality assurance frameworks for the region linked to international standards, including courses delivered online.

This report aims to identify issues, gaps and solutions in relation to higher education quality assurance arrangements in the broader Asia-Pacific region and is based on a survey of quality assurance agencies.

Key findings and recommendations

The survey, while identifying strong commitment to and interest in quality assurance across the region, identified several key challenges to the region realising the benefits from greater alignment or linkage of quality assurance frameworks to international standards. These key challenges fall under three main headings:

- Diversity;
- Capacity; and
- Commitment.

Challenge 1: Diversity

The survey found that QA arrangements in the broader Asia-Pacific region have many variations that serve unique national contexts. The establishment, ownership, legal basis, governance, funding and the level of independence of QA agencies vary among the economies. Correspondingly, the scope and the characteristics of quality assurance frameworks differ. Variations are seen in aspects such as the level of quality assurance (institution vs program), the nature of the QA process (mandatory vs voluntary), aspects considered for QA, the role of higher education institutions in constituting the review team, role of agency staff in on-site visit, extent of public disclosure of QA outcomes, implications of QA outcome, appeals mechanism, and post-QA follow-up.

Alongside these varied characteristics, the quality assurance systems of the region also have certain common critical core elements such as self assessment based on a set of transparent criteria, validation by an external team, and the quality assurance outcome that is valid for a certain period of time.

This commonality amidst variation signals possibilities for convergence and alignment with a regional approach in the region. A regional QA framework that would serve as the common point of reference for the national systems of the region and at the same time not in contradiction with the international developments could be pursued. It involves endorsement of codes and guidelines already agreed by the international QA community as features of a good QA system. Endorsement of commonly agreed principles, values and codes of practice provides a platform for future enhancement of QA approaches.

Recommendation 1: That the countries of the Asia-Pacific region work together to identify and agree upon certain principles, values and codes of practices that would further the objectives of transparency and integration or exchangeability of higher education quality assurance frameworks.

Challenge 2: Capacity

This report recommends a strategy of co-operation in order to support all QA agencies, with all their variations and similarities, in continuous improvement and better alignment with an agreed regional framework.

This strategy would include different forms of co-operation in the region. The first form would be that of support for policy development and training towards ensuring professionalism in QA. The second would be to encourage higher levels of structured collaboration and joint projects leading to an enhanced understanding and trust.

Such co-operation would be of particular benefit for newer forms of education delivery such as distance education. Cross border higher education (CBHE) needs particular attention due to its unprecedented growth in recent years and the fact that it crosses the jurisdictions of quality assurance agencies. Quality assurance agencies need to cooperate to manage risks such as degree mills, accreditation mills and low quality providers.

Recommendation 2: That the countries of the Asia-Pacific region work together to build the capacity within and between quality assurance agencies in the region.

Challenge 3: Commitment

While the commitment of individual quality assurance agencies to their respective missions is unquestioned, the shift to a regional approach will require a high level of commitment not only from individual agencies but from governments and from other key stakeholders such as education providers, employers and students. Achievement of a regional approach will require resources and effort based upon a common understanding of the benefits to be realised from a collective interest in QA.

A major impediment to collaboration is the lack of mutual understanding and trust among QA agencies. Agencies will be able to place their confidence on each others' work if they are confident about the robustness of each others' policies and procedures. In this context, 'quality of QA' becomes relevant to strengthen collaboration. Demonstrating alignment with the regional QA framework in higher education has to be promoted as a measure of 'quality of quality assurance'.

An associated issue is building awareness of the benefits of collaboration between QA agencies and an understanding of the respective education systems and their clients. Advocacy of new and improved QA arrangements will be strengthened if the linkages between these arrangements and improved educational, social and economic benefits can be clearly drawn.

Developments in Europe may provide some insights into what is possible in the broader Asia-Pacific, although the major differences between the European and Asia-Pacific contexts must be borne in mind. Agreeing on clear goals, setting targets, making explicit commitments, ensuring political will, support at the highest levels, involvement of key stakeholders, improved information sharing are examples of issues that emerged from the European experience for strengthening regional collaboration. Although the Bologna process has shortcomings as a model for the Asia-Pacific, the approaches and processes initiated in Europe provide guideposts for development of a regional quality assurance mechanism.

Recommendation 3: That the quality assurance agencies of the Asia-Pacific region work together to identify and promote the benefits of quality assurance

Possible areas of future work

The emphasis of future work for all parties is the development and implementation of regional actions that will enhance transparency and mutual trust between countries' education systems. Actions at regional, national and agency levels are necessary for developing common principles and building capacity and commitment.

Countries will need to set short, medium and long-term targets in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. A common minimum core plan of targets and timeframes need to be agreed on at the regional level, which will then have to be taken up by the national governments for implementation in their countries ensuring the support of relevant stakeholders from the beginning. This report only begins to scope how these future activities might be developed.

Some specific areas of future work consistent with progressing the three recommendations above are:

- Identify the benefits of QA
- Awareness raising amongst key stakeholders of the centrality and benefits of QA
- Endorsing a regional QA framework built on good practices in QA
- Coordinating activities towards regional alignment in QA
- Mapping the needs of the region in QA
- Strengthening national capacity in QA
- Strengthening national capacity and regional collaboration for QA across borders
- Developing and using a regional pool of reviewers
- Promoting reviews of QA agencies to ensure quality of quality assurance practices
- Enhancing mutual understanding initiatives among QA agencies of the region
- Promoting mutual recognition initiatives
- Publishing trend and research reports on QA issues
- Improving national support systems such as national qualifications framework and national information centres
- Involving the stakeholders in developing the regional strategy to QA

Conclusion

In summary, this report indicates that quality assurance systems in the region are undergoing significant changes to match the on-going changes in the higher education systems. The survey highlights the gaps in the existing QA frameworks and also many good practices that are helpful to the still evolving agencies. As QA systems evolve, a favoured set of characteristics is emerging. It is hoped that building on these aspects and developing a regional approach along the international developments will be of value to all the countries in the broader Asia-Pacific to strengthen regional collaboration in QA.

1. Introduction

The Brisbane Communiqué (BC) initiative was launched at a meeting of Ministers and senior officials from 27 countries from across the broader Asia-Pacific region in Brisbane, Australia on 3-4 April 2006. The common goal of the Brisbane Communiqué is to increase student and academic mobility and transferability of qualifications, and greater integration or exchangeability of education frameworks. Towards this goal Ministers and senior officials identified four areas for collaboration:

1. quality assurance frameworks for the region linked to international standards, including courses delivered online;
2. recognition of educational and professional qualifications;
3. common competency based standards for teachers, particularly in science and mathematics; and,
4. development of common recognition of technical skills across the region in order to better meet the overall skills needs of the economic base of the region.

Progressing these initiatives is the responsibility of a Senior Officials Working Group (SOWG) chaired by Australia and supported by the Australian Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). To progress collaboration in the area of quality assurance frameworks this scoping study of higher education quality assurance arrangements in the region has been undertaken to identify issues, gaps and solutions already in existence and to recommend future directions.

Consistent with the wishes of the SOWG to avoid duplication of work already undertaken in the region and to work in partnership with existing regional organisations DEEWR commissioned the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) to undertake this study building upon a 2007 study on the Enhancing Quality Assurance Systems in Higher Education in APEC member economies¹. APQN is the network of quality assurance agencies, initiated in 2002 and established as a legal entity in 2004. Its region includes: all Pacific island nations and territories, New Zealand, Australia, Papua New Guinea; all island and mainland nations and territories of Asia, including Russia, Afghanistan, the other central Asian states and Iran, but excluding the Gulf states (which are covered by another network). This study was overseen by the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) and carried out by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA).

¹ available at http://www.apec.org/apec/publications/all_publications/human_resources_development.html

2. Method

This study consisted of two main steps:

- Implementation of a questionnaire survey to scope the quality assurance systems of countries in the broader Asia-Pacific region; and
- Development of a report of the survey outcomes with a comprehensive analysis of its implications for quality assurance in the region.

Scoping survey: The scoping study used the methodology of the earlier study on the APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation) economies for which a questionnaire survey had been developed to collect information on the QA arrangements. The questionnaire designed for that study, conducted in 2006, had 15 sections covering areas such as legal basis and governance of the QA body, its objectives and scope, the processes internal to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), selection and training of reviewers, site visits, outcomes and implications of the QA process, appeals mechanism, QA of cross-border higher education, co-ordination among the various QA players in the country, quality enhancement functions of the QA body, and good practices in approaches to quality. This study used the same definition of quality assurance as the APEC Study, whereby quality assurance ‘covers the processes used by quality agencies, such as accreditation, assessment, audit and registration, and also their quality improvement and enhancement activities.’

The survey for this study was distributed to the following countries: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Cook Islands, Fiji, India, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kiribati, Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Mongolia, Nauru, Nepal, New Caledonia, Niue, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Qatar, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Syria, Timor Leste, Tonga, Turkey, Tuvalu, United Arab Emirates, Vanuatu and Yemen.

The earlier APEC study collected data from the following APEC member economies²: Australia, Brunei, People’s Republic of China (including Hong Kong SAR), Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Republic of Korea, Thailand and Vietnam. The data collected from these economies has been incorporated into the analysis of this Report.

Contact details of the survey respondents can be found at Appendix 1.

Survey coverage: In all, 38 survey responses, including the 20 responses received for the APEC study, were considered in this study.

The survey respondents had a diverse profile in terms of how long quality assurance arrangements had been in operation, their relationship with the national government, governance and funding. Sixteen of the respondents (around 42%) were either newly established bodies (established after 2000), or were given an explicit external QA role after 2000. However, around 25% of the respondents had been operating for more than 20 years and almost an equal number had been established in the 1990s. The majority of them (around 80 percent) were established and funded by governments and the rest by higher education institutions or practitioners of the profession. There is almost an equal divide in the mandatory vs voluntary approach to QA. Size of the clientele varies from just eight institutions to thousands of programs to be quality assured by a single agency. Most QA bodies apply similar policies and procedures to both public and private sector institutions and where there are differences it is due to the difference in the objective such as ‘additional protection to ensure the welfare of the international students’ etc. This diversity resulted in rich data on various policies and practices of QA.

² The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the Peoples Republic of China is a member economy of APEC.

Analytical report: Based on the results of the scoping study, this report describes significant practices and emerging trends in quality assurance systems across the surveyed countries. While the higher education sector of the region is very dynamic, with many emerging quality assurance initiatives, the region also has many well established QA bodies. As systems develop, both gaps in the QA arrangements and good practices that have worked well in certain contexts emerge. An analysis of existing gaps and practices that can be emulated leads to identification of areas where there is opportunity for further co-operation and regional alignment. This report analyses these aspects and presents recommendations aimed at enhancing QA in the region.

While the scoping study methodology is based on the APEC Study, this report concentrates on developments and possible future actions in the light of the Brisbane Communiqué goal of greater integration of education frameworks.

One of the key objectives of this project is to facilitate information exchange on quality assurance issues across the region. Therefore, this report addresses readers who may not be technical experts in quality assurance and it minimises the use of technical information.

Although the survey responses form the bulk of the information input to this report, other data sources have also been tapped. Firstly, some of the survey responses were clarified through telephone inquiries. Secondly, Internet searches yielded further details through focused browses and specific investigations. Thirdly, data available within the APQN was consulted. Finally, there is a world-wide network of quality assurance agencies, the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), whose database also contributed to the data used in this report.

Quality assurance is exercised by both the traditional government bodies such as ministries and funding councils, and by a new crop of quality assurance agencies, though the government usually plays a significant role. In many countries it is the governments that have established external QA bodies to address the gaps in the QA of their higher education sectors and therefore the intentions of the governments are the drivers of the external QA initiatives. Even in systems that have QA agencies established by the HEIs themselves, it is the government that establishes the context within which the QA agency functions. This survey covers QA functions, whether carried out by stand-alone QA agencies or equivalent units in government.

3. Key developments in quality assurance

This section presents the quality assurance developments in surveyed countries. Rather than describing in detail quality assurance arrangements in individual countries, this report concentrates only on significant developments and overall trends that have a bearing on the latter sections of this report that identify good practices, gaps and areas for future action. Details of the QA arrangements in individual countries can be obtained from the survey responses. To help readers have a quick comparative picture of some key elements of the QA frameworks of the region, five tables have been developed and they can be found at Appendix 2.

3.1 Basic approaches to QA

The higher education sector in the broader Asia-Pacific region has experienced considerable changes over the last 20 years that have required consequential changes to the approaches to regulation and quality. Massive increases in student numbers, total cost of higher education, the cross-border mobility of students and graduates, and the cross-border mobility of education have all combined to require the changes. Countries have responded to these changes in many different ways and consequently, the QA approaches in the region have many variations to serve the unique national contexts.

All survey respondents have some type of registration or recognition process to approve institutions to operate as higher education institutions (HEIs) and/or to offer higher education programs. Over and above this approval mechanism, many countries have additional QA arrangements following one or more of the basic approaches to QA such as accreditation, assessment or audit.

Some QA agencies follow the accreditation model which is an evaluation of whether an institution (or program) qualifies for a certain status or threshold level. The 'yes or no' outcome of accreditation may have implications for the institution (or program) in terms of recognition as an institution of higher learning or approval for offering degree granting programs or for public funding. Some agencies follow the assessment approach and the typical outcome of assessment is a graded outcome – numeric or literal or descriptive. Assessment asks: 'how good are your outputs?' Academic audits are focused on those processes by which an institution monitors its own academic standards. Audits generally result in public reports. Examples of all these practices are found in the region.

In practice, many QA bodies of the region follow a combination of these approaches. For example, the QA agency in Indonesia uses assessment in combination with accreditation. The outcome of its quality assurance procedure is a formal accreditation decision with a grade on a four-point scale – grade A to grade D where grade A indicates that the course of study conforms to international standards, grade B indicates that the course is of good quality, grade C indicates that the course fulfils minimal requirements and grade D means not accredited.

Within the same country, one can find different QA approaches among QA bodies depending on the specific purpose each agency wishes to achieve. In India, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) declares whether an institution is accredited or not. It also combines the element of assessment and classifies an institution on a nine-point scale based on its quality. The methodology has the element of audit where a small team of external peers is sent to the institution mostly as generalists and the report is made public. The Accreditation Board (Agriculture) of India gives the accreditation outcome on a three-point scale – accreditation, provisional accreditation, no accreditation. The National Board of Accreditation (Engineering) of India attaches varying periods of validity to its accreditation outcome.

Considering the various combinations of quality assurance approaches, the survey attempted to see if there is a pattern among the quality assurance practices of the systems and a scenario of similarities and differences emerged.

3.1.1. Diversities and risk of uncoordinated developments

The survey indicates that the establishment, ownership, legal basis, governance, funding and the level of independence of the QA agencies vary among the countries. Correspondingly, the features of the quality assurance frameworks differ significantly. Variations are seen in aspects such as:

- Unit of quality assurance: institution vs programs
- Nature of the QA process: mandatory vs voluntary
- Aspects considered for QA
- Role of HEIs in constituting the review team
- Role of agency staff in on-site visit
- Disclosure of QA outcomes
- Implications of QA outcome
- Appeals mechanism
- Post-QA follow-up

On the one hand, it is a scenario of enhanced attention to quality. On the other hand, many new initiatives are highly oriented to the immediate needs of the respective national higher education (HE) sectors and therefore they develop in many different ways. In the absence of a strong external framework for reference, national developments in QA will continue to exacerbate these diversities. It implies that, to ensure convergence in further QA developments, the region needs to make a commitment to a regional approach to QA in HE.

3.1.2. Similarities: Possibility for convergence among diversity

While diversities coupled with uncoordinated developments might seem to run counter to a regional approach, the quality assurance practices of the region have the following common critical core elements as well which is very encouraging:

1. Evaluation based on pre-determined and transparent criteria: A set of standards and criteria or scope of areas to be covered are determined by the QA agency in advance and are applied objectively to all institutions of higher education or their programs in the country.
2. Process based on a combination of self study and peer review: The institution (or program) undergoing the process is asked to do a self study (evaluation) and report on how it meets the standards set or criteria identified by the agency. A team of external reviewers/peers constituted by the agency analyses the self study report of the institution and validates the claims made there in, generally by visiting the institution. The analysis of the self study report and on-site validation leads to the peer team reporting its recommendations to the QA agency.
3. Final decision-making: Based on the self evaluation of the institution or program and the recommendations of the peer team, the agency takes the responsibility for the final decision through an appropriate process.
4. Public disclosure of the outcome: In all the quality assurance mechanisms, there is an element of public disclosure of the outcome, although the extent of public disclosure varies. It may vary from disclosure of only the final outcome, as in the case of a typical accreditation, to disclosure of the full assessment report as in the case of a typical audit. Within the same country there are agencies that follow different patterns. In Japan, the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE) makes the report available while the Japan Universities Accreditation Association (JUAA) announces only the accreditation status.
5. Validity of the outcome for a specific period of time: The outcome is generally valid for five to ten years, five years being the predominant one.

This commonality amidst variations signals that possibilities for convergence and alignment with a regional approach are encouragingly evident in the region. In fact, the commonalities and good practices found in those aspects can form the basis for a regional QA framework.

In the following pages, section 3.2 analyses the developments with respect to the national QA systems and some of them have implications for contributing to the regional approach. The rest of section 3 is related to developments that go beyond the national borders.

3.2. Developments related to national QA systems

3.2.1. Balancing ownership & independence

The quality assurance systems in the region have been established with varying levels of ownership and control by the governments and the higher education institutions. Although governments play a significant role in monitoring the quality of the higher education sector, the recent explicit attention to external QA has been triggered and steered by both the governments and HEIs. Accordingly, a broad pattern of funding and lines of accountability can be observed.

In all cases – government-established or established by the HEIs – there is a need to ensure independence from the interests that are inherent in these groups. In general, QA systems are successful in ensuring their independence by balancing the involvement/representation of various stakeholders in their governance and management. But only a few have clear policies on responsibilities of these representatives; only a couple of them pay attention to the risk of conflict of interest of these representatives in discharging their responsibilities.

Irrespective of ownership/affiliation, support of the government and HEIs for the quality assurance effort without affecting its autonomy and independent functioning has worked well in many countries. In the emerging QA initiatives this aspect needs attention, and policies that support independent functioning of the QA agencies and minimise possibilities of corruption in QA have to be promoted.

3.2.2. Scope and nature of QA

QA bodies vary significantly in what they cover in their QA processes and at what level of depth and breadth. In all countries there are some forms of both institutional- and program-related QA mechanisms in place. These responsibilities are sometimes shared between multiple agencies and at times the same agency may do both. For example, in Japan, in addition to the government's role in QA, there are five certified organisations that share QA responsibilities in the higher education sector (Japan University Accreditation Association - for universities; Japan Institution for Higher Education Evaluation - for universities; Japan Association for College Accreditation - for junior colleges; Japan Law Foundation - for law schools; National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation - for universities, junior colleges, colleges of technology, law schools).

The size of the system to be covered by the QA process varies from a few thousand programs to only a few institutions. For example, the QA agency of New Zealand universities (8 institutions), the University Grants Committee (UGC) of Hong Kong (8) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) of Singapore (11) have very small systems to oversee while NAAC of India has 17,000 HEIs under its purview.

Quality assurance systems of the broader Asia-Pacific region have different objectives and functions as their priority. Although some QA agencies have 'accountability' as the priority agenda, 'quality enhancement', 'self-improvement' and 'providing information to public' find a notable mention in the scope and priority of QA.

Countries have different approaches to the mandatory vs voluntary nature of QA. It is mandatory mostly in situations where there is direct decision-making based on the quality assurance outcome, with regard to matters such as access to substantial funds or recognition to function as a higher education institution or approval to offer a program. In voluntary

systems, HEIs may be able to determine by themselves whether they have the potential for achieving criteria set for the QA exercise. Even in systems where QA is voluntary 'in principle', if the QA outcomes are likely to determine access to substantial resources or student enrolment, institutions do take the QA status seriously.

Mostly the quality assurance initiatives include both university and non-university post-secondary operations. They tend to include the private as well as public players, and apply the same standards to both categories of HEIs. Some surveys mention that the standards are different, but the differences seem to have roots in the way quality assurance developed in the national context. For example, in systems where public institutions were covered by existing QA controls, new QA initiatives emerged to consider only the private institutions and consequently they differ in their approach. Another example is the way QA developed in relation to foreign providers as opposed to domestic providers. However, where there are differences, there seems to be a move towards convergence. For example, in Malaysia, the Quality Assurance Division of the Ministry of Education had the QA responsibility for the public funded HEIs and another QA body had the responsibility for private institutions. QA for both sectors has been merged under the new Malaysian Qualifications Authority (MQA). A similar move to consider both public and private sectors under the same umbrella is developing in Singapore.

Some countries are now rethinking their QA strategies in relation to private providers and foreign providers. Many governments are keen on ensuring certain minimum levels of quality in higher education irrespective of the type of provider – private or public or domestic or foreign. They would find it helpful to look at the convergence that is taking place in some other countries to provide for a comprehensive QA system for all categories of HEIs, at the same time not losing sight of the uniqueness of each sector.

3.2.3. Criteria and indicators of quality

QA agencies use various terms such as standards, criteria and indicators as part of their QA framework. When the institution is the unit of quality assurance, the standards or criteria primarily focus on how well the institution is fulfilling its responsibility as an educational institution. If it is program level quality assurance, the educational provision and quality of the particular program and its graduates become the focus.

Some agencies have developed a set of basic quantitative indicators which HEIs must meet. These are generally found in systems that attempt to ensure compliance with a basic set of requirements. Although the use of such indicators seems to serve the fundamental objectives of QA and provides an objective and relatively inexpensive way to measure compliance with threshold standards, these indicators may not address the more substantive elements involved in quality assurance. Acknowledging this, some systems have developed benchmarks and statements of standards to guide the QA process.

The more common approach found in the countries in the region is a combination of quantitative and qualitative criteria that are developed by the QA agencies normally involving some measure of consultation with relevant stakeholders. In more mature systems with a strong internal QA culture, there is emphasis on consulting the sector and in other cases more prescriptive indicators and requirements are imposed without much involvement of HEIs in the consultations.

Although many countries pay attention to the public nature of these criteria and standards, there are considerable variations in the way QA systems understand, define and interpret them. Even within the same country there seems to be differences among key players in QA. Through substantial discussion and collective action there is a need to develop a common QA terminology and understanding in the region, amidst the diversities in the languages spoken.

3.2.4. Acknowledging internal QA processes

All the quality assurance agencies of the broader Asia-Pacific region emphasise and recognise the value of an analytical and self critical process being undertaken by HEIs who undergo the external QA process. Most quality assurance systems provide guidelines about

what is expected of a self assessment report and help HEIs to be introspective in the QA process. The capacity of an HEI to benefit from a self study depends on its maturity and development stage. Depending on the maturity of the sector, QA agencies provide varying levels of guidance to steer the internal QA processes. They publish manuals, guidelines and booklets on QA procedures. Many of them run training programs, organise forums for discussions, offer consultancy services, and arrange for briefing/orientation programs.

Although self assessment is seen as an essential element of the QA process, the format for documenting the outcome of self assessment and the expectations of the QA agency in a good self assessment report are not comparable among the agencies. Given that self assessment is a core aspect of any QA process, ensuring comparability in aspects of it is essential to support the regional approach to QA in HE. Comparative studies on the role of self assessment in QA processes will reveal ways of enabling this comparability.

3.2.5. Role of and training for external peers

External review is one of the critical elements—similar to self assessment—that has evolved as an integrated component of quality assurance in the region. External reviewer/peer is the term generally used to describe an expert taking part in the quality assurance process. Policies and practices related to participation of external peers, selection of reviewers, constituting the review team, the place given to agency staff, and reliance on training of reviewers are shaped partly by the size of the system. In large systems, there is a heavy reliance on external reviewers. Establishing appropriate safeguards to minimise inter-team variances and ensuring professionalism in such large operations become very challenging. Agencies have training programs to address issues of inter-team variance and this aspect needs further attention.

Some systems rely heavily on the recommendations of the review team. Some systems require the reviewers to only report their impressions of the institution (or program) with reference to the QA framework. Each option has implications for the roles and responsibilities of the review team and appropriate training to support those roles.

The predominant profile expected from reviewers includes subject specialisation and general expertise in higher education. Some QA systems consider representatives from employers, industry and also from professional organisations. Involving students in review panels does not seem to be in practice. A couple of the QA systems involve graduates or alumni of the institution. Involvement of these groups depends on the capacity of various stakeholders to contribute to the QA processes and also on the culture of consultation and collaboration that has developed among various stakeholders in the system.

Most QA systems maintain a register or pool of reviewers from which they choose the panel for a specific review. A couple of the QA units that carry out specific quality monitoring related functions for the ministries do not maintain such a register. They develop a list of reviewers depending on the need of the review.

QA agencies rely heavily on nominations and informal ways of identifying the reviewers but supplement them with training and evaluation. Some QA systems have thorough procedures in place such as referrals and screening to ensure the academic credibility, integrity and skills of the nominees. In most cases the reviewers are appointed to the panel by the governing board or by the Executive of the QA body. In systems where the role of government is very explicit, the government appoints the reviewers. This is an area where there are many good practices in the region and at the same time there are many ad hoc practices.

Training programs for reviewers are extremely useful in making clear the expectations of the agency, and giving them guidelines on executing their duties. These training programs could also be very useful opportunities to assess the prospective reviewers. Some reviewers may be very good in specific circumstances and an understanding of these aspects will be helpful to the QA agency in constituting the review team with the right balance of skills, knowledge and attitude. Training programs offered by QA agencies vary from brief discussions to rigorous residential workshops. Some agencies appoint only trained reviewers to their panels and claim that training helps to reduce inter-team variance. When the reviews feed into a

governmental function such as an annual inspection, there seems to be less emphasis on training of reviewers. Within the same country, depending on the type of review, agencies follow different approaches. Given the key role the external peers have in the QA process there is a need to reflect on the training needs at the regional level.

3.2.6. Role of agency staff

In general, staff members of the QA agency are involved in the development of the quality assurance framework, taking responsibility for monitoring the major phases of quality assurance, training the reviewers, and orienting the institutions for institutional preparations. In some agencies they remain as coordinators to facilitate these stages and in a few other systems, they are more extensively involved. The option depends on the size of the national system of higher education, the size of the quality assurance agency, the amount of quality assurance work to be done and, consequently, whether it is possible for the agency to send a staff member for each of the review teams. The extent of participation also depends on the interpretation of 'objectivity' of the QA process. Although extensive participation of staff does not necessarily mean that staff would unduly influence the process, some QA agencies consider 'keeping an arm's length from the QA process as one of the safeguards to ensure objectivity. This normally happens in HE sectors where QA staffs are not considered as 'peers'. Where the QA agencies have emerged as centres of knowledge on QA, the senior staffs of the agencies are seen as peers in QA. They tend to be substantially involved in the QA activities, including participating in site visits and taking a role in report-writing. In both cases, professional development of QA staff and their training needs at different levels are emerging as areas that need attention.

QA staff gain certain experiences unique to their roles and responsibilities as QA professionals and develop valuable expertise in the dynamics of QA. As QA emerges as a field of knowledge in its own right, building on the QA expertise developing in the region, there is potential to strengthen the knowledge base of QA and for increasing research and publication on various aspects of QA.

3.2.7. Eliminating conflicts of interest

QA agencies try to balance the review team composition by bringing in enough reviewers from relevant backgrounds who would not only enhance the collegiality and collective decision making of the team but would also moderate each others' different perceptions and the consequent impact. There is no right number for the size of the team to ensure this, but the QA systems acknowledge that teams should be big enough to have reviewers who can bring in the necessary background to understand the institution/program being reviewed. International presence in review teams is becoming more prevalent and quality assurance agencies tend to have a favourable attitude towards it due to the growing importance of regional dialogue among the quality assurance agencies and internationalisation of HEIs. This is an aspect that needs further support and for some systems resource implications may become an impediment.

Apart from these built-in elements to ensure the balance of the team, most quality assurance systems have formal procedures to check whether the reviewers have any conflict of interest with the institution or program to be assessed. Sound policies on conflict of interest are essential to uphold the credibility of the process. The survey responses indicate that many quality assurance agencies have similar understandings about potential conflicts but policies are not in place in most systems. Some ministry-run reviews do not have an explicit mechanism to eliminate conflict of interest. This is one of the areas that need immediate attention in the region. Certain good practices and models of eliminating conflicts of interests are found in some agencies of the region and they need to be disseminated.

3.2.8. Role of HEIs in external QA

QA agencies generally consult the respective institutions during various stages of the external QA process in order to uphold the spirit of partnership and mutual trust in the QA exercise. Institutions are consulted in the development of the QA practices, and often in deciding the review panel composition as well. If the institution or program does not have respect for the

reviewers, or considers them not to be reliable for whatever reason, their opinions/recommendations will be dismissed, and an important part of their contribution will be lost. The survey indicates that most systems acknowledge this point and consult the HEIs appropriately.

3.2.9. Reporting the outcome

The quality assurance outcome by the agency is a crucial element in the eventual impact of the quality assurance processes. When the purpose of quality assurance is to certify whether an institution (or program) qualifies for a certain status such as recognition as an institution of higher learning or approval for offering degree-granting programs or eligibility for public funding, the outcome may be a simple yes/no or accredited/not-accredited. This is the outcome of most licensing and accreditation models.

Some agencies provide the final outcome on a multi-point scale. This would be suitable if the quality assurance agency wishes to focus on outcomes and levels of attainment. For example, the accrediting agencies of the Philippines offer accreditation at four different levels, each entailing specific benefits both in terms of administrative autonomy and access to incentive funds. The higher the level of accreditation, the more autonomy is granted to the institution. A different way of implementing a multi-point scale is to use a binary decision (accredited/not accredited) but specify different durations for the accredited status depending on the perceived quality of the institution.

Some QA activities result in reports only. In practice, a quality assurance system may use a combination of the above methods to suit the national context.

'What part of the final outcome is made available to whom' is also an issue that has considerable variations in the region. "Public disclosure vs. confidentiality" of the outcome is a challenge in many countries, and there are valid arguments in favour of either strategy. Some agencies maintain that the reports are for the HEIs and what the public needs is only the knowledge of the status such as 'accredited' or 'not-accredited'. The argument against full disclosure of the reports is that both HEIs and external reviewers may be much more cautious in describing the actual weaknesses of a program or an institution if they know that the report will be published. Those who support this point of view argue that at least at the introductory stage of quality assurance processes, it may be better to have honest and complete but confidential reports, than to have 'bowdlerized' but published reports. There are agencies that make only the summary of the report public. Some agencies make the report available to key stakeholders like the government or the funding agencies. It is important to balance the level of public disclosure with the effectiveness of the process, taking into account national and local conditions.

The development of a regional approach and facilitation of cooperation and mutual trust among the QA agencies of the region would be aided by the inclusion of regional core shared components in nations' reporting structures. There is a need to reflect on reporting openly on the review decisions and on making the outcomes of the evaluation public in a way that will facilitate collaboration among QA agencies of the region.

3.2.10. Post-QA: Appeals mechanism and follow-up

An appeals mechanism allows an institution to express its reservations about or objections to or lack of confidence in the QA outcome. In general, if an HEI wants to appeal after being notified by the agency about the outcome, notice is given of the intention to appeal within certain days of receiving the outcome. Following that, the HEI submits the application (some agencies charge a fee), which sets out the grounds for the appeal against the quality assurance outcome. There are wide variations in the composition of the body/committee that deals with the appeals and the powers of the committee.

Some QA systems have standing committees that act as appellate authorities and in some cases the governing body of the QA agency acts as the appellate authority. A few others do not have a designated appellate authority and in such cases the executive head of the QA body might review the appeals. In some cases the QA agency or its governing board sets up

an ad hoc sub committee for each case. But in all cases, the appeals committee is expected to function independently and provide fair judgement about the appeal. The power vested in the appeals committee and the actions that can be taken after the appeals committee's decision also vary among agencies. Some agencies specifically allow for assessment to be subject to legal appeals.

While some form of appeals mechanism is in place in most cases, the appeals procedures are not well defined and seem to be ad hoc in some cases. A good appeals mechanism actually keeps a check on the professionalism of the QA process. Countries in the region need to strengthen attention to appeals procedures to ensure that the QA processes are managed professionally.

After the disclosure of the quality assurance outcome, the QA agency expects that the institution will take whatever actions are necessary in relation to the recommendations or issues noted in the review. While funding links and incentives may be motivating factors for many HEIs to act on the review outcomes, in many systems it is mainly the professional commitment of the HEIs that leads to improvement. Usually the responsibility and the formal role of the quality assurance agencies end with the reviews. The HEIs are responsible for the planning and implementation of follow-up measures. Depending on the nature of the recommendations, ministries of education or other stakeholders may respond to the reviews.

Quality assurance agencies have built-in follow-up procedures with varying levels of rigour. Some require binding actions to be taken by the HEIs and in other cases it may be a "soft touch" based on the professional commitment that can be expected of the HEIs. Yet another approach is to link the follow-up to the subsequent reviews.

Quality assurance is a resource intensive exercise for the HEIs and the QA systems. To benefit optimally from such an exercise it is essential that the HEIs are helped further to build on the QA outcome and enhance the quality of their provisions. Many QA systems of the region consider the participatory QA process itself as a quality enhancement activity. In addition, a suite of initiatives are found such as support to quality enhancement initiatives, seminars and various academic forums for HEIs to share experiences, support to research and projects to enhance aspects of quality education, and support for networking among HEIs. The publication program of some quality assurance agencies has made a significant impact and those agencies publish guidelines, handbooks and resource materials for the use of HEIs. Conducting training programs for quality managers and involving them in quality assurance exercises cater to the development of practitioners who are sensitised to quality-related issues and who in turn contribute to quality enhancement of their own HEIs. It is important to promote a continuing dialogue between the QA bodies and the HEIs to strengthen the post-review impact on quality enhancement.

Section 3.2 has analysed the various aspects of the QA policies and practices found among the national QA systems of the region. A set of positive characteristics as well as gaps emerge from this analysis. Developing a regional QA approach that builds on the strengths of the current practices of the region and provides guidance to areas that are still evolving appears to be the way forward.

3.3. Quality assurance of new forms of education

The broader Asia-Pacific region is a very dynamic region with regard to new forms of education. However, not many agencies have established systems in place to meet the challenges of these new forms of education. The major strands of new forms of education and consequent QA challenges are identified below.

3.3.1. Distance education and online education

This phrase embodies four modalities, as distance education may or may not be online, while online education may or may not be at a distance.

There are many QA initiatives for traditional distance education. In fact, some countries have established dedicated quality assurance units/bodies to ensure quality in distance education

programs. India is a typical example that has the Distance Education Council with the mandate to assure the quality of distance education programs of the country. Therefore, quality assurance of distance education when it is offered by a higher education provider of the national system is not an insurmountable problem. Experiences of the successful QA models of distance education need broader dissemination.

As the distinction between distance education and online education is narrowing due to the impact of new information and communication technologies in all modes of education delivery, distance and online education are becoming more entangled, and we find three different approaches to their QA in the region:

1. Most QA agencies do not monitor purely online delivery of programs but consider distance or online provision only if there is some amount of face-to-face learning integrated with it.
2. Some agencies consider all types of educational provisions and include distance education and online education in that overall attention, even if it is purely online delivery provided the provider has some physical presence. Within this approach, some give no special emphasis to investigating the quality of distance education per se, while the others have additional emphasis on areas unique to distance and online learning.
3. There are agencies that are yet to take a stand or are in the process of developing procedures to consider distance and online learning.

The greatest problem seems to be posed by purely online programs delivered by providers who do not belong to the national system of higher education. The challenge in distance and online education is mostly about tracking the providers and courses when they do not have a physical presence but exist only in virtual space. Korea has developed guidelines to assure the quality of virtual universities and similar developments can be observed in a few other countries. However, instances of fake providers who do not have a physical address are increasing and some agencies have launched campaigns and 'quality literacy' programs to help the learners make informed choices. Most countries do not recognise qualifications earned through online programs offered by non-traditional providers who may not belong to any national higher education system. This issue of quality assurance of distance education needs much greater attention across the region.

3.3.2. Cross-border higher education: Import

The type of import in the surveyed countries is mostly through partnership, twinning and articulation arrangements. Foreign university campuses are very few but might increase in future. The survey respondents have indicated that some amount of educational import through purely online distance education is found in the region, that they find very difficult to monitor.

In most countries, the government has the regulatory power to monitor import, and governments have designated the QA bodies to take part in the process. Multiple agencies share the responsibility and information on regulations is usually available through websites and publications with varying levels of clarity and transparency.

Most QA systems apply or intend to apply the same standards for both domestic and foreign providers. The few instances that deviate from this practice are related to unique procedures adopted in specific instances, for example the registration procedure for non-local courses in Hong Kong. In most cases, the home country accreditation status is considered by the QA systems of the host countries.

Steps to ensure equivalence in the incoming/imported programs are well in place in some countries. Where equivalence is not given specific attention, countries either apply the same standards in assuring the quality of the educational delivery of both domestic and foreign providers or have rigorous processes in place that will lead to comparability of standards.

Although the survey responses indicate the desire of QA agencies to monitor the quality of imported education, the capacity of the QA agencies to play that role effectively is variable.

Most QA agencies are not well advanced in monitoring quality of CBHE and this has implications for regional collaboration.

3.3.3. Cross-border higher education: Export

There are three categories of responses around QA of export: 'same regulation for import and export', 'no regulation' and 'not applicable'.

Some survey respondents have indicated that quality assurance or regulation of export of higher education programs by domestic HEIs is not applicable to them, meaning that the HEIs do not have any export operations in higher education services. But as HEIs enter into partnership arrangements, the distinction between sending countries and receiving countries is becoming blurred and the QA agencies of all countries need to be prepared to address QA issues across borders. Some QA agencies consider the twinning and articulation arrangements the domestic HEIs have with foreign providers as export of higher education services. There are some good practices on aspects such as taking the responsibility to address export issues, having similar expectations from the providers for both export and import, and ensuring transparency in policies and practices.

In practice, this is an area where many QA systems have a big gap in policies and practices. The shared role between the external QA bodies and the governments does not seem to be clear in many systems. Currently, some countries are categorised as 'mainly an importer of HE' and others as 'mainly an exporter of HE'. This distinction is gradually disappearing, but for the moment it is a factor in aligning HE systems.

To address the QA issues of both import and export of higher education, UNESCO and the OECD have developed guidelines (hereafter 'Guidelines', See section 4). To help governments put systems in place in-line with the Guidelines, UNESCO Bangkok and APQN jointly developed a Tool Kit and that has enhanced awareness of the Guidelines among the APQN members. Some QA bodies have stated that they are already working in accordance with the principles and values of those Guidelines and a few more are initiating actions and projects to build on the Guidelines. There are also a few responses indicating that either the agencies are yet to become familiar with the Guidelines or that the Guidelines are too general to be of any use to them. Considering the potential of the Guidelines to serve as a reference tool to address QA issues of CBHE, countries in the Asia-Pacific region would benefit from further capacity development to implement the Guidelines. Any regional approach to QA in HE should consider the principles and values of the Guidelines while developing a regional framework.

In the context of both import and export of HE, quality assurance in small states has its own unique set of issues. The region has a significant number of small states with notable concentrations in the South Pacific. Some small states do not have a higher education sector and some of them are both importers and exporters of higher education (eg Samoa and Fiji). Many of them lack the capacity to set up a national QA system or a critical mass of potential peer reviewers to conduct external evaluation for their HE sectors. While individual states may lack effective QA policies and practices, their combined effort may provide the critical base for a QA strategy. The University of South Pacific that serves the 12 Small States of the Pacific is an example of how collaboration among small states can work well in HE. There is scope for a similar collaboration in QA as well. The collaboration could be among themselves and with their geographical neighbours that are not necessarily small states. Strategies to ensure that they become a part of the mainstream developments in QA need attention.

3.4. Cooperation and mutual trust in the region

There are only a few examples of cooperation between countries of in the region in relation to quality assurance. Some of these are in the form of Memoranda of Understanding. For example, the New Zealand Government has a memorandum of understanding with the Malaysian Government, whereby any local qualifications delivered in Malaysia must meet Malaysian as well as New Zealand quality assurance standards. The Government of Australia has agreements with Malaysia, Thailand, New Zealand and Japan.

Quality assurance agencies of Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, China, India and Hong Kong have memoranda of cooperation with a number of other QA agencies of the region. In each case the general purpose is for further mutual understanding and trust, but each also has one or more specific purposes such as participation in quality enhancement projects, sharing information about cross border higher education, and exploring joint audits of foreign campuses in the country.

Within each country, the level of cooperation among the QA bodies is highly variable. Some have indicated that they work with the professional bodies on issues of common interest, sharing reviewers, organising joint meetings etc. In addition, reciprocity in the membership of the governing body, and joint evaluation are seen among the QA bodies in Hong Kong, Malaysia, New Zealand, Japan, and India.

In the Philippines, the major players such as the Association of Local Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation, and the accrediting agencies of the private sector work in collaboration. The Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines coordinates the activities of the three private accrediting agencies while the National Network of Quality Assurance Agencies coordinates the accrediting agencies that serve the public sector. One of the accrediting agencies in the Philippines has partnered with the Association of Philippine Medical Colleges. The Commission on Medical Education is composed of four representatives from that accrediting agency in addition to its own members. Officers and active members of the various professional associations in the country are used by the accrediting agencies as evaluators.

In Singapore, the Consumers Association of Singapore looks at the student fee protection and welfare. This scheme serves as the pre-requisite for some of the other national quality assurance schemes of the country.

In Korea, the Korean Council for University Education collaborates with the other national bodies such as the Korean Council for College Education, the Korean Educational Development Institute and the professional bodies for conducting institutional and program evaluations. In addition to conducting joint evaluations with professional bodies, the Council uses members of the professional bodies in developing criteria for program evaluation.

In summary, interaction between the agencies within one country is common and well-structured, whereas interaction between agencies in different countries is at a much earlier stage of development. The latter is more informal and occurs mainly through participation in meetings. It implies the need to promote a formal regional strategy on identified areas to strengthen regional co-operation among various QA players across borders.

A major reason for slow progress in regional collaboration may be the lack of mutual understanding and confidence QA agencies have about each other. Many survey responses indicate 'diversity in the methodology' as a challenge to collaboration but not much is happening to appreciate the dynamics of these diversities and to enhance each others' understanding of these diversities. Opportunities for agency staff to observe each others' procedures and staff secondments and attachments should be initiated.

In addition to diversities in the QA systems, lack of support systems such as a reliable source for information provision, lack of a national qualifications framework etc have been quoted as obstacles by some QA agencies. The national support systems need attention.

Closely related to diversity is the difference in the developmental stage of the QA agencies. Since QA is still an evolving area, some quality agencies have proven policies and practices while others are in the developmental stage. It means that QA agencies, to place confidence on the QA procedures of other QA agencies, need more opportunities to understand the robustness of each others' policies and procedures. Joint projects and comparative studies may enhance this understanding. Furthermore, there is opportunity to investigate the possibility of joint evaluation projects.

In this context, public assurance of 'quality of QA' becomes relevant to strengthen collaboration.

3.5. Mechanisms to assure 'Quality of Quality Assurance'

The survey reveals that most QA systems in the region monitor the quality of their operations through internal controls (such as internal audits, annual reporting requirements etc). Next to internal checks, self evaluation against set targets and action plans is the most prevalent practice. Feedback from the HEIs, reviewers and other stakeholders is also a major means for the QA systems to monitor their performance. Information exchange with the other QA systems, discussion with international and intergovernmental organisations that have an interest in quality assurance and participation in international conferences and workshops also contribute to the quality assurance of QA bodies.

Voluntary coordination in regional networks and adherence to their standards and criteria also serve as measures of quality assurance of QA bodies. The motivating factor for joining networks is the opportunity to work jointly on QA issues. Although 'accountability' is not the main driver for joining networks and associations, often QA agencies demonstrate their accountability to various stakeholders by adhering to common standards and criteria of the associations and networks.

Carrying out comparative studies has been cited by a few. Some agencies conduct impact studies and mid-cycle correction reviews that contribute to understanding the progress towards realisation of objectives. A certain amount of externality is found in some instances, such as hiring foreign and local consultants to advise on performance. Inviting international experts to observe assessment visits to give feedback is done by some agencies.

Some QA systems have undergone external reviews. There is a growing awareness among the QA agencies and their networks about the benefits of meta-evaluation or 'evaluating the evaluation itself' as a critical measure to ensure quality of quality assurance. Although some QA bodies have indicated that they have adopted 'international benchmarking' processes much of what is being done by them is internal and informal.

The picture that emerges is characterised by heavy reliance on internal and ad hoc measures. What is required is systematic benchmarking and review of QA agencies against regionally and internationally accepted good practices. Demonstrating alignment with the regional QA approach in HE has to be promoted. It is here that the developments in Europe may provide some insights into what is possible in the region.

3.6. Lessons of regional collaboration in Europe

The most significant development in the European higher education sector is the Bologna Process and it has experienced both success as well as setbacks. A brief discussion is helpful to present the implications of the key developments in the broader Asia-Pacific region.

The Bologna Process, whereby a significant number of European countries are working towards greater consistency and portability across their higher education systems, is likely to influence developments in higher education in many parts of the world. It derives its name from the Declaration, which was signed in Europe in 1999 by ministers in charge of higher education from 29 European countries. It is an intergovernmental European reform process aimed at establishing the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010. It now has 46 signatory countries that have agreed to work towards greater consistency in areas such as degree structures, credit transfer and quality assurance systems.

The political will and the commitment at the highest level by each country have made a significant impact on the uptake of the Bologna Process. Ministers meet biannually to assess progress towards the creation of the EHEA. The milestones set by ministers have had a visible impact on progress towards targets.

To date the Bologna Process has in several areas proved its worth as a means of improving the communication between the major stakeholders in the European higher education sector. It has increased the transparency and the sources of information about European higher education. It is also interesting as an efficient example of cooperation of stakeholders across

borders. Follow-up studies indicate that the level of collaborative work among the QA agencies and networks in Europe has improved significantly due to the Bologna Process.

The role of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in the QA related developments of the Bologna Process is noteworthy. European ministers have given a mandate to ENQA to be coordinator of the process of developing a European dimension to the QA of HE. The development of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) in May 2005 by ENQA is a significant development in QA developments of the Bologna Process. The ESG build on international good practice and the QA bodies of the Bologna signatories have to undergo cyclical external reviews against ESG.

A number of projects coordinated by ENQA have analysed areas such as quality convergence, transnational education, and quality culture. For example, the Quality Convergence Study coordinated by ENQA during 2003-04 asked the European QA agencies to consider 'why are we doing what we are doing?' The study pointed out the need to recognise the importance of 'confidence'. It concluded that just a 'guarantee is not enough' to build confidence but a means of providing confidence is also essential. These are valuable points for the developments in the Asia-Pacific region as well.

A European register of quality assurance agencies, covering public, private, and thematic agencies, operating or planning to operate in Europe is in progress. A European Register Committee to be set up soon will decide on admissions to the European register. The committee will use agency compliance with the ESG as identified in the cyclical review as one criterion for placement in the register.

In the ministerial summit of 2007, the stocktaking report indicated that good progress has been achieved in certain areas that include: a three-cycle degree system, quality assurance and recognition of qualifications, and study periods. Implementation of the ESG has started on a widespread basis. Student involvement in quality assurance has grown significantly since 2005, while there is more work to be done on extending the level of international participation. There is also good progress towards improving the recognition processes and countries have developed national action plans.

The stocktaking report emphasises that the Bologna Process has driven the process of higher education reform at the national level. Higher education institutions, their staff and students, business and social partners, and international organisations are more actively engaged as partners in implementing the Bologna Process than was previously the case. The sharing of expertise has contributed to building capacity at both institutional and national levels so that there has been measurable progress across all participating countries. The report also acknowledges that progress is not uniform across all countries and all action lines. It makes a number of recommendations to Ministers and countries towards setting clear policy goals and specific targets for the next phase of the Bologna Process.

In considering possible European lessons for the broader Asia-Pacific region, it should be remembered that the Bologna Process sits within a geographic region that has a regional parliament, regional currency, regional free trade area etc and that it has been developing and deepening its collaboration for many decades. Groups of countries have been working together on projects that are then able to be copied or implemented more widely such as the Nordic Mutual Recognition project, Tuning project, Dublin descriptors and the mutual recognition projects of the European Consortium for Accreditation in higher education.

Further, the Bologna Process is not free from criticisms and complex challenges. There are questions about the sustainability of the momentum of the process, unintended side effects of reforms, and lack of evidence that the Process has actually resulted in significant improvements and outcomes. It is necessary to look at both achievements and the questions yet to be answered. Although the specific context and structures of the Bologna process may not be applicable to the region, there is still value in seeking inspiration from the approaches and processes initiated by the Bologna Process and reflect on 'if and how' these approaches can be efficiently applied in an Asia-Pacific context.

3.7. Building on commonalities and strengths

The picture that emerges from this analysis is that of diversities in QA practices to suit the national contexts but agreement on common core principles of QA. With due regard to diversities in the national contexts, the region should promote the policies and practices that are strong points of the region. However, it is not always clear which policies and practices should be promoted in the region. To steer the regional development in QA towards most valuable practices, there is a need to look at the external points of reference. This regional approach to build on commonalities and strengths should also not contradict the international developments but help the region to move forward in the international QA scenario as well. To facilitate reflection along these lines, the following section analyses some of the regional and international developments on good practices in QA that have implications for the QA approach of the Asia-Pacific region.

4. Good practices in QA in the Asia-Pacific

In recent years, there has been increasing attention to the question: what is a good quality assurance system? Discussions addressing this question have resulted in identifying a set of characteristics or aspects that can be expected of ideal QA frameworks. Principles of good practice, guidelines and recommendations for QA systems to move towards this preferred framework have also been developed. Along with the terms mentioned above, the word 'standards' has been used in a few instances but, in general, all these usages are about promoting good practice to assist a QA agency in improving its own quality by building on existing experiences. They are in fact reference points, collectively agreed by a group of stakeholders and in that sense they become the standards that can be applied consistently to the members of that group.

In some cases these pointers have been developed by intergovernmental bodies such as UNESCO and the OECD, involving various stakeholders as well as experts in the field. Others have been developed by groups that have common interests such as a network of quality assurance agencies or an association of HEIs. The Guidelines of Good Practice developed by INQAAHE and Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area developed by the ENQA are typical examples of guidelines developed by QA networks. In addition, the membership criteria of some networks serve as guidelines or standards and steer the membership towards those collective expectations as in the case of APQN.

4.1. Some major influences

Three notable initiatives deserve a mention for the significant impact they have made or are likely to make in the near future on the QA practices of the countries of the broader Asia-Pacific region. They are:

- INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice (GGP), 2007;
- Membership criteria of APQN; and
- UNESCO-OECD Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education, 2005.

Founded in 1991 in Hong Kong, the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) has 189 member agencies (as of January 2008) spread in around 80 countries. During the past 16 years it has grown to be the biggest network of QA agencies in HE. The *Guidelines of Good Practice* (GGP) developed in 2003 in consultation with its members from 65 countries has been endorsed and considered by many other groups that have an interest in QA. Some member agencies have undergone external reviews against these guidelines to demonstrate their own quality. INQAAHE is designing a database of good practices in external QA and proposes to use these guidelines as the basis for its good practice database to be announced soon. These imply that the GGPs will continue to influence attention to good practices, especially through the INQAAHE members.

While INQAAHE's influence extends globally among its membership, APQN has made a strong impact in the Asia Pacific region. Initiated in 2002, formally established in 2005, and supported by external funding for the past three years, APQN has grown steadily during the past six years. With its membership of 46 spread in 27 countries of the Asia Pacific it has been a major force in steering the capacity development activities for QA in the region. Its membership criteria that lay down certain principles for external QA agencies have influenced the policies and practices of the emerging QA agencies in the region.

UNESCO, the only UN body with a mandate in higher education, elaborated 'Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education', in cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) through a drafting process consisting of three international drafting meetings and public consultation of the text. All UNESCO and OECD Member States, experts from UNESCO and OECD Member States as well as stakeholders including higher education institutions, student associations, quality assurance

and accreditation agencies, recognition agencies, academic staff associations, professional bodies, the private sector and other international organisations were invited to take part in the process. These Guidelines are based on United Nations and UNESCO principles and instruments, and serve as an educational response to the growing commercialisation of higher education. Both INQAAHE and APQN have extended support to the Guidelines and organized discussions and follow-ups to promote them among their membership. The recent survey analysis conducted by UNESCO recommended that the Guidelines do not need any revisions for the next two years and that more capacity development activities have to be initiated to help Member States adhere to the Guidelines. The external dimension of QA in the Bologna Process that is being discussed now considers these Guidelines as one of the reference points.

These three developments will continue to be major influences in determining the elements and practices that underpin a good quality system. In this context, this section of the report gives a brief overview of the principles of good practices these three notable developments promulgate and against that background tries to analyse what is practised in the Asia-Pacific region and what the implications are for future actions.

4.2. INQAAHE's Guidelines of Good Practice

The GGPs, first published in 2003, have now been revised to reflect the experience of institutions, programs, and reviewers that have used the 2003 version. The purpose of the GGP is to promote good practice for internal and/or external quality assurance and they are designed to be used by all quality assurance agencies, whatever their stage of development. The GGPs can be found at www.inqaahe.org.

The GGPs highlight the following as guidelines for good practice of the QA agencies:

- Having clarity in objectives and a systematic approach to achieving them; and having an ownership and governance structure appropriate for the objectives (GGP 1);
- Having adequate resources, both human and financial (GGP 2);
- Ensuring continuous quality assurance of the activities of the agency itself through internal self review and external reviews at regular intervals. (GGP 3);
- Informing and responding to the public; demonstrating public accountability by reporting openly on review decisions; and reporting on its own performance. (GGP 4);
- Respecting the autonomy, identity and integrity of the HEIs. (GGP 5);
- Applying standards, which have been subject to consultation with stakeholders and contributing to both quality improvement and accountability. (GGP 5);
- Documenting clearly what the agency expects of the institution. (GGP 6);
- Documenting clearly guidelines for the self evaluation process (GGP 7);
- Constituting review committees in accordance with the guidelines of the agency, and including at least one external reviewer from another country or jurisdiction (GGP 8);
- Evincing independent, impartial, rigorous, thorough, fair and consistent decision-making, and making consistent decisions. (GGP 9);
- Providing an appropriate method for appeals against its decisions. (GGP 10);
- Collaborating with other agencies. (GGP 11);
- Establishing policies relating to both imported and exported higher education that are the same as those for domestic providers and domestic provision (GGP 12); and
- Considering relevant guidelines issued by international agencies and other associations on CBHE, and consulting appropriate local agencies in the exporting or importing countries, where possible. (GGP 12).

The Board of INQAAHE envisages reviewing the GGP for possible significant revision only about every five years. Within that cycle, small changes could be made every two years as necessary. This makes the GGP a consistent tool to use over a period of time.

The INQAAHE GGPs are comprehensive and address the CBHE issues as well. Among other things, it states: “In formulating its policies and practices, the external QA agency should consider relevant guidelines issued by international agencies and other associations.”

4.3. The Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN)

APQN has four levels of membership, Full Member, Intermediate Member, Associate Member and Institutional Member. Certain criteria need to be met at each level of membership and the criteria become more rigorous for Full members. Full members must provide evidence that they fulfil the requirements for all eight criteria while members of the other categories have certain exemptions depending on the membership levels. For example, Intermediate members must provide evidence that they fulfil the requirements for Criteria 1 and 2.

The following membership criteria indicate how most of the criteria are value added statements with the potential to guide the member agencies to adopt good practices of quality assurance.

Criterion 1: Nature of the operations of the agency: The agency is responsible for reviews at institutional or program level of post-secondary education institutions or post-secondary quality assurance agencies.

Criterion 2: Mission statement and objectives: The agency has formulated a mission statement and objectives which are consistent with the nature of the agency.

Criterion 3: Agency staff (Numbers, Profile, Roles): The profile of the staff is consistent with the Mission Statement.

Criterion 4: Profile of reviewers: The profile of the reviewers is consistent with the Mission Statement.

Criterion 5: Independence: The judgements and recommendations of the agency’s reports cannot be changed by third parties.

Criterion 6: Resources: The agency has sufficient resources to run its operations in accordance with its mission statement and objectives.

Criterion 7: External quality assurance criteria and processes: The description of the processes and criteria applied should be transparent and publicly available and normally include: self evaluation, site visit, public report and follow-up measure.

Criterion 8: Quality assurance: The agency has quality assurance measures in place and is subject to occasional review.

Currently, there are 23 full members, 9 intermediate members, 15 associate members and 8 institutional members in the APQN network. While the 23 full members already adhere to all the membership criteria, there are many agencies in the early stages of development trying to move to the full or intermediate membership levels. The network activities have a special focus on capacity development of the intermediate members. This has a significant effect on the convergence of the QA practices of the region towards a robust regional QA framework. While specific practices of the agencies might vary depending on the national context, the principles behind those practices have been well received by the network members.

The APQN membership criteria give a light touch to the principles of good practice since APQN wants to be an inclusive network that can provide a platform for QA agencies of various developmental stages to discuss common issues of interest. The membership criteria for full members set the minimum expectations of an external quality agency and do not cover aspects such as CBHE.

4.4. UNESCO-OECD Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education (CBHE)

The objectives of the Guidelines are to propose tools and a synthesis of best practices that can assist Member States in assessing the quality and relevance of higher education provided across borders and to protect students and other stakeholders in higher education from low-quality higher education provision.

The Guidelines address six stakeholders in higher education (governments, higher education institutions / providers including academic staff, student bodies, quality assurance and accreditation bodies, academic recognition bodies, and professional bodies). The key recommendations for quality assurance agencies are about including cross-border education in all modes in the scope of quality assurance, strengthening the network initiatives for the quality assurance agencies, information dissemination on the quality assurance mechanism and its implications, adherence to 'Code of Good Practice', mutual recognition agreements with other agencies, strengthening cooperation with other stakeholders in the national system and strengthening the international orientation of the quality assurance processes. The underlying principle in the recommendations for all six stakeholders is to promote mutual trust, dialogue, sharing of responsibilities, and cooperation among all stakeholders.

The UNESCO-OECD Guidelines may appear to address only one aspect of QA namely the CBHE issues, but the principles and values reflected in the Guidelines are valid for any form of education including the domestic provision.

4.5. Examples of good practice in the Asia-Pacific region

Although these guidelines have influenced the practices of the QA agencies in many ways, the survey responses indicate that respondents were not sure of what their good practices were and how to identify the most notable ones. The survey questionnaire asked the respondents to identify three good practices. Some survey responses cited only the major phases of the QA process as good practices. However, a reading of their responses to the other questions and website search reveal many more specific practices that are noteworthy. This implies that more discussions about the work that has already been done on identifying good practices in QA are necessary. Enhancing the awareness level of the good practices that have already been endorsed collectively by networks of QA agencies such as INQAAHE and international bodies such as UNESCO and OECD is a good starting point.

Table 5 of Appendix 2 presents the good practices as they have been indicated in the survey responses. Considering the surveys more holistically, one can identify a large number of good practices that are either related to methodological elements or to the positive and significant impact they have made on the HE sector. If they are synthesised, to a large extent, they cover all the aspects highlighted by the three developments discussed above.

Considering these regional and global developments, the next section identifies the common issues for the region and presents recommendations to address them.

5. Analysis of common issues and opportunities for collaboration

While Ministers and senior officials from across the broader Asia-Pacific region have embraced the goal of greater integration or exchangeability of education systems and agreed in the Brisbane Communiqué to collaborate on quality assurance frameworks for the Asia-Pacific region linked to international standards, the survey results and discussion of key developments in quality assurance has highlighted that progressing the BC goal requires an awareness of the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to regional quality assurance. The following table provides a brief summary of these issues based on the above analysis.

Table 1: SWOT Analysis of Quality Assurance in the Asia-Pacific Region linked to international standards

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong commitment and interest in QA at Ministerial level Broad similarity in underlying approaches in QA between countries Presence of regional QA body in APQN UNESCO-OECD Guidelines on CBHE INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice Lessons from Bologna Process High degree of cross-border provision and collaboration 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considerable diversity between actual QA practices Considerable differences in capacity of QA agencies Weaknesses in dealing with QA of distance and CBHE Lack of a strong Asia-Pacific regional identity.
<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient commitment and resources to resolving QA issues A focus on national approaches A developing understanding of the benefits of QA and regional cooperation in QA 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach agreement on principles for QA Build capacity of QA agencies Share best practice and learning Raise awareness of benefits and relevance of QA to education systems Economies of scale and enhanced effectiveness and efficiency through a regional QA approach

The above SWOT analysis suggests that while there are many strengths and opportunities supporting the development of quality assurance arrangements for the Asia-Pacific region linked to international standards there are also some particular weaknesses and threats which need to be managed. Based on this analysis the main challenges for the countries of the Asia-Pacific in making progress towards the objective of harmonising approaches to quality assurance in higher education lies in collaborating towards collective objectives while acknowledging and respecting the diversities found among the countries of the region; developing the capacity of quality assurance systems within and between countries of the region; and building awareness of the benefits of and commitment to regional quality assurance arrangements. These “Challenges” are set out below.

Challenge 1: Diversity

The key developments in the region argue for a regional approach to quality assurance. If the countries do not reflect collectively now on what is good for regional development and agree on the regional approach, after a few years of un-coordinated development, maximising the benefits of the various national initiatives for regional development will prove to be even more difficult. On the other hand, endorsing a regional approach at this time will help to steer further QA developments in the region and facilitate regional convergence in the longer-term.

Currently, a lot of capacity building activities are going on in the region to support emerging QA initiatives. But they are highly oriented to the specific demands and challenges of the respective national higher education sectors and therefore they develop with many diverse policies and practices. To facilitate convergence in these national developments, there is not yet a strong external framework of reference in the region. There is awareness of and support for INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice and UNESCO-OECD Guidelines but efforts to implement them are very few. This calls for a regional QA framework that will serve as the common point of reference for the national systems of the region and at the same time not in contradiction with the international developments. This can be achieved by building on the good practices of the QA agencies of the region and by adapting/considering the principles and values of international guidelines and codes of good practice. It may not be necessary to re-invent a new QA framework; it may involve endorsement of codes and guidelines already agreed by the international QA community as features of a good QA system. The emphasis here is the collective agreement as a region to adhere to certain principles, values and codes of practices (hereafter 'regional QA framework') and the QA scenario of the region indicates that this is possible.

An analysis of the various QA policies and practices of the region highlights a favoured set of options and considerations generally agreed upon as good practices by QA professionals. This commonality amidst variations and attention to areas of common interest signal that possibilities for convergence and alignment with a regional framework are encouragingly evident in the region. Adequate balance between ownership & independence, broad scope of QA and its coverage, attention to both quality improvement and accountability, the role given to external peers, consultative role given to HEIs in external QA, objective decision-making process on QA outcome, and follow-up after review are in general well in place. They can be considered as strong areas of the various national QA agencies of the region and they can influence the regional approach to QA favourably. The regional QA framework has to be built on/recognise these well established common aspects.

Given that these are the areas where the QA policies and practices are in place, there is opportunity to explore the next level issues through comparative studies, joint projects, and research and publication that can be undertaken by groups of QA agencies.

While building on the strengths and commonalities, it is necessary to keep watch on the emerging QA developments. There are aspects of quality assurance that are still evolving such as policies on conflict of interest, public disclosure of QA outcome, appeals mechanism, QA for small states and QA of new forms of education. The regional QA framework has to provide guidance and serve as a common point of reference to emerging QA systems to shape their policies and practices on these areas. New forms of education are especially an area that is posing complex challenges to both emerging and well-established QA agencies (See also Recommendation 3). Addressing this issue in the regional approach needs particular attention.

Even the terminology of QA is still developing and has many variations in the region. The regional QA approach should be able to facilitate a shared understanding of quality and quality assurance across the region.

The survey indicates that the QA arrangements of the broader Asia-Pacific region have many variations related to unique national contexts. The establishment, ownership, legal basis, governance, funding and the level of independence of the QA agency vary among the economies. Correspondingly, the scope and the characteristics of its quality assurance framework differ. Variations are seen in aspects such as level of quality assurance (institution vs program), nature of the QA process (mandatory vs voluntary), aspects considered for QA, role of higher education institutions in constituting the review team, role of agency staff in on-site visit, extent of public disclosure of QA outcomes, implications of QA outcome, appeals mechanism, and post-QA follow-up.

Whatever be their practices regarding the aspects listed above, the quality assurance systems of the region have certain common critical core elements such as self assessment based a set of transparent criteria, validation by an external team, and the quality assurance outcome that is valid for a certain period of time.

This commonality amidst variations signals that possibilities for convergence and alignment with a regional approach are encouragingly evident in the region. In fact, a regional QA framework that will serve as the common point of reference for the national systems of the region and at the same time not in contradiction with the international developments is a way forward. It involves endorsement of codes and guidelines already agreed by the international QA community as features of a good QA system. The emphasis here is the collective agreement as a region to adhere to certain principles, values and codes of practices and the QA scenario of the region indicates that this is possible.

Recommendation 1: That the countries of the Asia-Pacific region work together to identify and agree upon certain principles, values and codes of practices that would further the objectives of transparency and integration or exchangeability of higher education quality assurance frameworks.

Challenge 2: Capacity

At any point of time, QA agencies will be at different stages of development and this will reflect on the level of alignment they have with the regional framework. To encourage agencies to pursue alignment with the regional framework, this report recommends a two-fold strategy:

Firstly, the regional strategy should support individual agencies and assist them to improve alignment with the regional quality assurance framework. This requires capacity development activities to bridge the gaps and to strengthen the emerging policies and practices through support for policy development and enhanced training in quality assurance procedures and practices.

Secondly, the regional strategy should recognize those agencies that are in alignment with the regional QA framework and encourage higher levels of structured collaboration and joint projects leading to an enhanced understanding and trust among them. Actions at regional, national and agency levels are necessary for capacity development, information sharing and consultation. This will enhance transparency and mutual trust between countries' education systems.

There are certain areas of interest and challenges in QA that extend beyond the national borders and they require collective action and collaboration in the region. They include exploring more effective approaches to quality assurance, research on common areas of interest, and collaborating on QA issues that span national borders such as new forms of education. Collaboration on the first two aspects is happening to some extent through network activities among QA agencies and through sharing of experiences in conferences and seminars. They are mostly informal and depend on the enthusiasm of the individuals involved. A formal strategy on identified areas is necessary to strengthen regional co-operation among various QA players across national borders.

Collaboration in the third aspect namely 'QA of new forms of education' is very weak in the region. Of the various new forms of education, cross border higher education (CBHE) needs particular attention due to its unprecedented growth in recent years. Quality assurance agencies need to cooperate to manage risks such as degree mills, accreditation mills and to ensure that low quality providers who operate across national borders are subject to appropriate oversight.

Recommendation 2: That the countries of the Asia-Pacific region work together to build the capacity within and between quality assurance agencies in the region.

Challenge 3: Commitment

While the commitment of individual quality assurance agencies to their respective missions is unquestioned, the shift to a regional approach will require a high level of commitment not only from individual agencies but from governments more broadly and from other key stakeholders such as education providers, employers and students. Achievement of a regional approach will require resources and effort based upon a common understanding of the benefits to be realised from a regional approach.

A major impediment to collaboration is the lack of mutual understanding and trust among QA agencies. Agencies will be able to place their confidence on each others' work if they are confident about the robustness of each others' policies and procedures. In this context, 'quality of QA' becomes relevant to strengthen collaboration. Demonstrating alignment with the regional QA framework in higher education has to be promoted as a measure of 'quality of quality assurance'.

An associated issue is building awareness of the benefits of collaboration between QA agencies to not only the individual agencies but for the respective education systems and their clients. Advocacy of new and improved QA arrangements will be strengthened if the linkages between these arrangements and improved educational, social and economic benefits can be clearly drawn.

Developments in Europe may provide some insights into what is possible in the broader Asia-Pacific, although the major differences between the European and Asia-Pacific contexts must be borne in mind. Agreeing on clear goals, setting targets, making explicit commitments, ensuring political will, support at the highest levels, involvement of key stakeholders, improved information sharing etc are a few positive lessons of experiences that can be drawn from the European experience for strengthening regional collaboration. Although the Bologna process has shortcomings as a model for the Asia-Pacific, the approaches and processes initiated in Europe provide guideposts for development of a regional quality assurance mechanism.

Recommendation 3: That the quality assurance agencies of the Asia-Pacific region work together to identify and promote the benefits of quality assurance.

6. Possible areas of future work

The emphasis of future work for all parties is the development and implementation of regional actions that will enhance transparency and mutual trust between countries' education systems. Actions at regional, national and agency levels are necessary for developing common principles and building capacity and commitment.

Countries will need to set short, medium and long-term targets in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. A common minimum core plan of targets and timeframes need to be agreed on at the regional level, which will then have to be taken up by the national governments for implementation in their countries ensuring the support of relevant stakeholders from the beginning. This report only begins to scope how these future activities might be developed.

Some specific areas of future work consistent with progressing the three recommendations made in the previous section are set out below.

6.1. Awareness raising amongst key stakeholders of the centrality and benefits of QA

QA agencies that have been established for specific purposes sometimes do not get their due place in the integrated QA picture of the respective countries. They are not generally consulted on key reforms in HE especially in systems where regulations and quality assurance are separate. Obstacles include the unwillingness of the bodies that have the regulatory role to exchange views with QA agencies and the lack of capacity of the regulatory groups to appreciate the emerging QA paradigm. For example, the role of QA bodies in cross border higher education is not clear in many countries. This risk of 'acting in isolation' has to be avoided. Similarly the benefits of QA to the education system as whole in terms of qualifications and professional recognition, risk management, investment and effectiveness is often not appreciated by all stakeholders. To ensure maximum benefits from the QA developments, QA agencies should be involved in information sharing, consultation and negotiations on all QA related issues. Awareness raising activities amongst key stakeholders of the desirability of reforms and the role of QA in higher education reforms is essential. A statement or declaration by the government or key stakeholder groups acknowledging the key role of QA in the integrated QA scenario would trigger discussions on this issue and draw the attention of all stakeholders to QA and its role in HE, locally and globally.

6.2. Endorsing a regional QA framework

The key developments in the Asia-Pacific region very clearly argue for a regional approach to QA. As discussed in earlier sections, a regional QA framework that will serve as the common point of reference for the national systems of the region while consistent with international developments, will be a way forward. This can be achieved by building on the good practices of the QA agencies of the region and by adapting the principles and values of international guidelines and codes of good practice. It may not be necessary to re-invent a new QA framework; it may consist of endorsement to codes and guidelines already agreed by the international QA community as features of a good QA system. Consensus on the principles, values and codes of practices that will form the regional QA framework needs to be developed.

6.3. Coordinating activities towards regional alignment in QA

A move towards regional alignment in QA will require a significant amount of focussed activities across the region and it is important to ensure coordination in these activities. There are regional initiatives that are already underway supported by international organisations such as the World Bank and UNESCO that have organised capacity building activities and initiated projects on areas of common interest to QA agencies. With the endorsement of the

regional approach in QA, a more focussed networking among QA bodies with specified targets is necessary. A regional coordinating body will be necessary to ensure this.

The coordinating role played by ENQA in the Bologna process is worth considering. The European ministers gave a mandate to ENQA to be coordinator of the process of developing a European dimension to the QA of HE and funded ENQA appropriately. In addition, the QA agencies were/are involved in the broader policy discussions directly. This has had a visible impact on the level of collaborative work between the QA agencies and networks in Europe. Governments across the Asia-Pacific region need to identify such a coordinating body and extend political will, target setting and funding to that designated body.

6.4. Mapping the needs of the region in QA

The QA agencies of the region are diverse in their policies and practices as well as in their development. When the region endorses a regional QA framework, these agencies will be at varying levels of alignment with the regional framework. Therefore, a first step for the coordinating body should be a needs analysis to map the situation of the individual agencies against the good practices of the regional QA framework. This should inform further action to help agencies make progress in their regional alignment.

6.5. Strengthening national capacity

Some countries in the region already have rigorous quality assurance systems while others are still developing or strengthening their QA systems. The region should now concentrate on making an effort to build on the well-tested structures and good practices and expand these to the other countries. This requires a considerable amount of capacity building activities in the region. The needs analysis suggested previously will enable the coordinating body to identify the capacity building needs.

In general, work will be required in two main areas – support for policy development and training towards ensuring professionalism in QA. Some agencies have more policy gaps than others and they will require capacity development activities targeting those areas. Many agencies need capacity development to do their job in a more professional manner and they need attention to one or more of the following areas: enhancing objectivity of peer review, improving the reporting structure, reducing inter-team variances, and establishing safeguards to eliminate third party influence on QA decisions.

6.6. Strengthening national capacity for QA across borders

Even for the well established systems, QA of new forms of education such as online education and CBHE are challenging areas. All countries need to strengthen their QA systems, to include all modes and forms of HE, with a transparent QA approach. This requires policy development and collaboration across borders. Actions listed under mutual understanding and mutual recognition will also feed into the developments in cross border collaboration for quality assurance of CBHE.

6.7. Enhancing mutual understanding

Slow progress in regional collaboration can be attributed partly to lack of mutual understanding among the QA agencies. Opportunities for QA staff to observe each others' practices and staff secondments and attachments to other QA agencies will enhance mutual understanding and appreciation of the diversities that exists in the QA scenario of the region. Joint projects could usefully develop and test methods that would increase the transparency and comparability of the QA arrangements in different countries. The projects will be helpful to identify the difficulties involved in the regional alignment due to the institutional, cultural and national differences. They would also contribute to sharing of experiences and learning from each other. Nothing much has been done so far in this regard in the region although APQN has plans to support such initiatives in a limited way.

6.8. Promoting mutual recognition

The Asia-Pacific region has many mature QA systems that share a common understanding of good principles of quality assurance and also practice them. It is necessary to build on these good practices and take efforts to facilitate mutual trust and understanding among those agencies. Mutual recognition projects, where QA agencies that have robust policies and procedures will be able to place confidence on each others' work, are a good move in this direction, yet there are resource implications. For example, APQN has been working on mutual recognition of QA agencies. APQN members are aiming to recognise each other's outcome by 2010. One of the project groups of APQN is analysing the QA frameworks of the participating members to explore the barriers and facilitating aspects towards mutual recognition of their QA decisions. Another project group is analysing how APQN members use indicators of quality in their QA decisions. Support to such mutual recognition initiatives deserves attention.

6.9. Publishing trend and research reports

The broader Asia-Pacific is a dynamic region with a lot of activity in QA and action towards regional alignment should not be merely reactive. To meet today's challenges, it is necessary to base actions on sound knowledge and not merely on assumptions. For this in turn, research on QA is needed. More research and publication in QA related issues has to be encouraged/supported in the region. Trend reports and information reports on QA would be helpful to facilitate understanding of policies and practices among the different countries and to inform the policy discussions on regional alignment. As QA agencies make progress in regional alignment and participate in projects to enhance mutual understanding, sharing of those experiences in the regions vital.

6.10. Improved national support systems

Effectiveness of the regional QA strategy depends on certain prerequisites that can increase the transparency and reliability of information about higher education systems. Many governments have realised the value of a national qualifications framework and a national information centre. In some countries it may be possible to designate and reinforce existing bodies to function as national information centres and to take the responsibility for developing the national qualifications framework.

6.11. Involving the stakeholders

QA can no longer operate in isolation. Many stakeholders need to be involved in QA discussions. At the international and regional levels, a multi-pronged approach is necessary to bring in the perspectives of the stakeholders in discussions on QA issues. One reason that the Bologna process started slowly was that there was insufficient involvement of all the relevant parties in its initial years. Noting this, countries in the region needs to be cautious in avoiding the recurrence of the same problem. This may be achieved by regional consultations that involve the key stakeholders such as governments, QA agencies, HEIs, Professional bodies, recognition bodies, and international and intergovernmental bodies in the development of the regional approach to QA. As mentioned earlier, a robust communication strategy is necessary to ensure this.

Most of the specific actions related to capacity building, and research and development, that are highlighted in this section are already in progress through national governments and bodies such as UNESCO, World Bank and networks of QA agencies. Especially the QA networks have been doing significant amount of capacity building activities. For example, as countries take more QA initiatives, the emerging QA agencies need procedures developed, manuals written, staff appointed, reviewers trained, systems created, institutions educated, indicators specified, and institutions assisted. The QA networks have been supporting their membership in these areas. It is possible to extend a similar support to the QA agencies of the region to improve their alignment with the proposed regional QA framework.

In implementing these action points, countries need to set short, medium and long-term targets in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. A common minimum core plan of targets and timeframes need to be agreed on, which will then have to be taken up by the national governments for implementation in their countries ensuring the support of relevant stakeholders from the beginning. This report is only a beginning to scope how these future activities might be developed. Much depends on the commitment and support the key stakeholders are able to extend to the goals.

7. Conclusion

As a result of the recognition by governments that quality higher education is central to economic development and prosperity, quality assurance systems have been created across the broader Asia-Pacific region. While there has been an impressive growth in quality assurance systems consequent upon changes in the higher education systems in region this report has identified gaps in the existing QA frameworks. There are many examples of activities that would be helpful to the still evolving QA agencies such as preparing the higher education institutions (HEIs), training reviewers, ensuring the professionalism of the process, and eliminating conflicts of interest.

This report acknowledges that the current QA activities of the region are highly oriented to the specific demands of respective national HE systems and therefore have developed with significant differences. But a situation is emerging where countries are required to look beyond the national needs and acknowledge international and regional developments. To facilitate a convergence in these varying QA policies and practices, with due recognition to national contexts, this report recommends a regional QA approach built on principles, values and codes of good practices. It also presents three broad recommendations to facilitate QA agencies of varying stages of development to progress in regional alignment.

The recommendations imply further actions by individual countries, QA agencies and the SOWG. Some actions are about making a commitment and extending support to a regional approach in QA. Other actions are about disseminating successful practices, adhering to good practices and bridging the gaps in the existing QA arrangements. This report also identifies the possibilities of working collectively and initiating projects, exploring QA models and international expectations.

This report signals that irrespective of the development stage, all QA agencies and their national governments have a significant role in progressing regional alignment. It is hoped that acting on the recommendations of this report will enhance mutual understanding and confidence among the QA agencies of the region and thus lead to strengthened cooperation in the region.

Glossary & abbreviations

Glossary

This being a generic survey designed to collect information from all APEC economies, and then from the signatories, several generic terms were used and the broad definitions of the terms used in the survey are given below in alphabetical order:

Agency: any entity, unit or authority with the responsibility for quality assurance.

Broader Asia-Pacific Region: Asia-Pacific region extending from Turkey through to the Pacific Islands as conceived at the Asia-Pacific Education Ministers' Meeting in April 2006.

Cross-border higher education: higher education provision that crosses national jurisdictional borders.

In the 'Guidelines on Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education' developed by UNESCO in cooperation with OECD, the term cross border "includes higher education that takes place in situations where the teacher, student, program, institution/provider or course materials cross national jurisdictional borders. Cross-Border higher education may include higher education by public/private and not-for-profit/for-profit providers. It encompasses a wide range of modalities, in a continuum from face-to-face (taking various forms such as students travelling abroad and campuses abroad) to distance learning (using a range of technologies and including e-learning)".

HEI: Higher education institution.

Offshore education: cross-border or transnational education – education offered in the economy of the agency by institutions from another country; OR education offered in another economy by institutions in the economy of the agency responding to this survey.

Onshore education: education offered in the economy of the agency by institutions of that same economy.

Outcomes of quality assurance: embodiment of the decision made by the quality assurance agency.

Quality assurance (QA): Assurance of quality in higher education is a process of establishing stakeholder confidence that provision (input, process and outcomes) fulfils expectations or measures at least up to threshold minimum requirements. In this survey, 'quality assurance' is used to refer to any of the different processes and approaches used by agencies, such as accreditation, assessment, audit or registration or a combination of these and it often includes improvement.

Quality enhancement/improvement: is a process which is intended to augment or improve the quality of the activities being reviewed.

Reviewers, review panel: the group of people who undertake the quality assurance activity for the quality assurance agency.

Self-evaluation/self-study/self-assessment report: outcome of the self-evaluation process of critically reviewing the quality of one's own performance and provision.

Site visit: A site visit is when a review panel goes to an institution to evaluate verbal, written and visual evidence.

Standards: specification of aspects or elements or principles by which quality is judged.

Unit of quality assurance: Quality Assurance may relate to a program, an institution, a whole higher education system or certain aspects of the higher education system.

Abbreviations

AACCUP	Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines
ACC	Accreditation Committee of Cambodia
APEC	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
APQN	Asia Pacific Quality Network
AUQA	Australian Universities Quality Agency
BAN-PT	Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi (Indonesia)
BDNAC	Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council
CAA	Commission for Academic Accreditation (UAE)
CASE	Consumers Association of Singapore
CBHE	Cross-border Higher Education
CDGDC	China Academic Degrees & Graduate Education Development Centre
CHE	Commission for Higher Education (PNG)
CHED	Council for Higher Education (Philippines)
DE	Distance Education
DEA	Directorate of Evaluation & Accreditation (Syria)
DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (Australia)
DEST	Department of Education Science and Training (Australia)
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EMB	Education and Manpower Bureau (Hong Kong)
ENQA	European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
GDETA	General Department of Education Testing and Accreditation (Vietnam)
GGP	Guidelines for Good Practice
HE	higher education
HEEC	Higher Education Evaluation Centre (China)
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HKCAA	Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation
INQAAHE	International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
ITP-Q	Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics Quality (New Zealand)
JUAA	Japan Accreditation Board for Engineering Education

JUAA	Japan University Accreditation Association
KCUE	Korean Council for University Education
LAN	National Accreditation Board (Malaysia)
MoC	Memorandum of Cooperation
MoE	Ministry of Education
MQA	Malaysian Qualifications Authority
NAAC	National Assessment and Accreditation Council (India)
NCAAA	National Commission for Academic Assessment & Assessment (Timor Leste)
NIAD-UE	National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (Japan)
NZQA	New Zealand Qualifications Authority
NZUAAU	New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit
OAC	Oman Accreditation Council
ONESQA	Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (Thailand)
PAASCU	Philippines Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities
PUC	Private Universities Council (Kuwait)
QA	Quality Assurance
QAA	Quality Assurance Authority (Bahrain)
QAAC	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council (Sri Lanka)
QE	Quality Enhancement
SHEAC	Singapore HE Accreditation Council
SOWG	Senior Officials Working Group
SPRING	Standards, Productivity and Innovation Board (Singapore)
SQA	Samoa Qualifications Authority
UGC	University Grants Committee (Hong Kong); University Grants Commission (Bangladesh)
YODEK	The Commission for Academic Assessment and Quality Improvement in Higher Education (Turkey)

Appendix 1: Contact details of the participating quality assurance agencies

Australia

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Bangladesh

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Bhutan

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Brunei Darussalam

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Cambodia

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Indonesia

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Japan

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Appendix 2: Tables

Table 1a: Scope and functions of the QA agencies

S. No.	Country	Agency	Year of Establishment	Established by	Funded by	HEIs under its Purview	Nature of the Process	Major Functions	Scope	Public vs Privates	Unit For QA
1	Bahrain	QAA	2007	Govt	Govt	14	Mandatory	Self Improvement, Accountability, Transparency	University level HEIs only	Depends on manner of establishment and scope of the licensing standards for private HEIs	Institution
2	Bangladesh	UGC	1973	Govt	Govt	80	Mandatory	Quality Enhancement, Accountability, Providing information to stakeholders	Both public funded and private HEIs	Not same	Institution, faculty and program
3	Bhutan	Royal University of Bhutan	2003	Govt	Govt	9	Mandatory	Self-improvement of HEIs, Quality enhancement, Accountability	Public funded HEIs only	Same approach	Program
4	Cambodia	ACC	2003	Govt	Govt	78	Mandatory	Self-improvement of HEIs, Quality Enhancement, Transparency	Both public funded and private HEIs	Same approach	Institution
5	India	NAAC	1994	Govt	Govt	17000	Voluntary	Quality enhancement, Accountability, Self-improvement of HEIs	Both public funded and private HEIs	Same approach	Institution
6	Japan	JABEE	1999	Engineering Societies	Engineering Societies	346 programs at 144 HEIs	Voluntary	Quality enhancement, Self-improvement of HEIs, International comparability	Both public and private, University level HEIs only	Same approach	Program
7	Kuwait	PUC	2001	Govt	Govt	10 licensed private HEIs and 5 in the process	Mandatory	All the functions listed with self-improvement of HEIs at the second place	Private HEIs only including non-university level	No – PUC is responsible only for private HEIs	Institution, faculty, programs, finance
8	Lao PDR	Ministry of Education	--	Govt	Govt	??	Mandatory	Self-improvement of HEIs, Providing information to stakeholders, National comparability	Both public and private, includes non-university level HEIs also	Different approach for different groups of institutions. Yet to develop QA guidelines	--
9	Nepal	Tribhuvan University	--	HEI	HEI	Institutes and faculties	Mandatory	Self-improvement of HEIs, Accountability, Quality enhancement	--	--	--

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S. No.	Country	Agency	Year of Establishment	Established by	Funded by	HEIs under its Purview	Nature of the Process	Major Functions	Scope	Public vs Privates	Unit For QA
10	Oman	OAC	2001	Govt	Govt	Around 50 institutions	Voluntary	Quality enhancement, Self-improvement of HEIs, Accountability	Both public and private HEIs, includes non-university level HEIs	Same approach	Institutions, academic programs and different aspects related to the areas
11	Pakistan	QAA of Hr. Edn. Commission	2002	Govt	Govt	All public and private universities	Mandatory	Quality enhancement, International comparability, Ranking	Both public funded and private HEIs	Same approach	Departmental programs
12	PNG	CHE	1983	Govt	Govt	6 universities and 22 colleges	Mandatory	--	--	--	--
13	Samoa	SQA	2004	Govt	Govt & UNDP for the establishment phase	8	Mandatory	Quality enhancement, Self-improvement of HEIs, Accountability	Both public funded and private HEIs, includes sub-degree awarding institutions	Same approach	Program
14	Sri Lanka	QAAC	2005	Govt and HEIs	Govt and World Bank fund until 2009	33 and all private (54) in future	Mandatory	Quality enhancement, Self-improvement of HEIs, Benchmarking	Both public funded and private HEIs	Same approach	Institution, program and department
15	Syria	DEA	2006	Govt	Govt	5 State universities and 9 private universities	Mandatory for private universities and voluntary for State universities	Self-improvement of HEIs, National comparability, Accountability	Both public funded and private HEIs, includes non-university level HEIs also	Different approaches since public institutions already had a QA process	Institution, faculty, program, themes or aspects – all are applicable
16	Timor Leste	NCAAA	2006	Govt	Govt	17	Voluntary	Accountability, Quality enhancement, Self-improvement of HEIs	All	Same approach	Institution and program
17	Turkey	YODEK	2005	Govt	Govt	115	Voluntary	Self-improvement of HEIs, Quality enhancement, Providing information to stakeholders	Both public funded and private HEIs	Same approach	Institution

S. No.	Country	Agency	Year of Establishment	Established by	Funded by	HEIs under its Purview	Nature of the Process	Major Functions	Scope	Public vs Privates	Unit For QA
18	UAE	CAA	2000	Govt	Govt	49	Mandatory	International comparability, Accountability, Self-improvement, Quality enhancement, Providing information to stakeholders, Transparency, National comparability	Private university level HEIs only	There is a separate mechanism for public universities	Program

Table 1b: Scope and functions of the QA agencies (APEC survey)

S. No.	Country	Agency	Year of Establishment	Established by	Funded by	HEIs under its Purview	Nature of the Process	Major Functions	Scope	Public vs Privates	Unit For QA
1.	Australia	AUQA	2001	Govt	Both. Operational cost from govt and cost recovery for audits from auditees	40 HEIs + 9 State Accrediting Agencies	Voluntary but mandatory for federal funding	Quality Enhancement, Self Improvement, More Public Information	Both private and public. Both university and non-university level HEIs. Includes state accrediting agencies.	Applies same standards.	Institution
2.	Brunei	BDNAC	1990	Govt	Govt	2 (1 university + 1 institute)	Mandatory	Quality Enhancement, International Comparability, More Public Information	University level only	Applies same standards.	Institution and program
3.	China	CDGDC	–	Govt	Govt	About 1000 Universities and HEIs	Voluntary	Quality Enhancement, More Public Information, Transparency	Both private and public. Includes non-university HEIs also.	Applies same standards.	Institution and program
4.	China	HE Evaluation Centre - MoE	2004	Both	Both	–	Mandatory	Accountability, Quality Enhancement, Transparency	Public funded HEIs only. Includes non-university level HEIs also.	Applies same standards.	Institution and program
5.	Hong Kong ³	HKCAA	1990	Govt	Self financing	13	Voluntary	Quality Enhancement, Benchmarking, National Comparability	Both private and public. Includes non-university HEIs also + private education and training operators	Applies same standards.	Institution and program

³ Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the Peoples Republic of China is a member economy of APEC.

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S. No.	Country	Agency	Year of Establishment	Established by	Funded by	HEIs under its Purview	Nature of the Process	Major Functions	Scope	Public vs Privates	Unit For QA
6.	Hong Kong ⁴	UGC	1965	Govt	Govt	8	–	–	Public funded HEIs only	Covers Public universities only	Institution
7.	Indonesia	BAN-PT	1994	Govt	Govt	3500	Voluntary	Quality Enhancement, Accountability, Self Improvement	Both private and public. Includes non-university HEIs also	Applies same standards.	Program till 2006, Institution from 2007
8.	Japan	NIAD-UE	1991	Govt	Govt	1277 (726 universities, 488 junior colleges, 63 colleges of technology)	Voluntary and Mandatory	Accountability, Self Improvement, Quality Enhancement	Both private and public. Includes non-university HEIs also.	Applies same standards.	Institution and in some cases graduate school of a particular field
9.	Japan	JUAA	1947	HEIs	HEIs	321	Voluntary & Mandatory	Self Improvement, Quality Enhancement, Accountability	Both private and public. University level HEIs only	Applies same standards.	Institution including program evaluation
10.	Malaysia	MQA	1997	Govt	both	554 private HEIs+ 20 public HEIs + 24 poly techniques+ 34 cc + >1000 training institutes	Mandatory	Accountability, Self Improvement, Quality Enhancement	Both private and public. Includes non-university HEIs also	Applies same standards.	Institution, faculty, program, themes, aspects
11.	New Zealand	ITP-Q	1991	HEIs	HEIs	19	Mandatory	Accountability, Quality Enhancement, Self Improvement	Public funded HEIs only	Applies same standards.	Institution
12.	New Zealand	NZQA	1989/90	Govt	Govt + fee for services	1200	Voluntary and mandatory	Accountability, Self Improvement, Quality Enhancement	Both private and public. Includes non-university HEIs also	Standards differ depending on the type of institution and on public vs private.	Approval of Programs, Registration of Institutions
13.	New Zealand	NZUAAU	1993	HEIs	HEIs	8	Mandatory	Self Improvement, Quality Enhancement, Accountability	Universities only All are publicly funded.	Applies same standards.	Institution

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QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE BROADER ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

S. No.	Country	Agency	Year of Establishment	Established by	Funded by	HEIs under its Purview	Nature of the Process	Major Functions	Scope	Public vs Privates	Unit For QA
14.	Philippines	AACCUP	1987	HEIs	HEIs. Occasional govt. subsidy	112 State universities and colleges	Voluntary	Quality Enhancement, Accountability, Self Improvement	Public funded HEIs only. Includes non-university HEIs also	Applies same standards.	Program
15.	Philippines	PAASCU	1957	HEIs	HEIs	More than 100 colleges.	Voluntary	Self Improvement, Quality Enhancement, Accountability	Both public funded and private HEIs	Applies same standards.	Institution and program
16.	Singapore	SPRING	1981	Govt	Govt	102	Voluntary	Quality Enhancement, More public information, Benchmarking	Private HEIs only	Different schemes cover publics and privates. Publics are not covered under Case Trust or SQC-PEO.	Institution
17.	Singapore	MOE	–	Govt	Govt	11	Mandatory	Self Improvement, Quality Enhancement, Accountability	Public funded HEIs only	Different schemes cover publics and privates.	Institution
18.	South Korea	KCUE	1982	HEIs	Both	201	Mandatory	Self Improvement, Quality Enhancement, Accountability	Both private and public. Includes University level HEIs only	Applies same standards.	Institution and Program
19.	Thailand	ONESQA	2000	Govt	Govt	264 universities 747 vocational institutes	Mandatory	Accountability, Quality Enhancement, Self Improvement	Both private and public Includes non-university HEIs also	Applies same standards.	Institution
20.	Vietnam	GDETA	2003	Govt	Govt	97 universities, 150 colleges, 256 secondary professional schools	Mandatory	Self Improvement, Quality Enhancement, Transparency	Both private and public. Includes non-university HEIs also	Applies same standards.	Institution and program

Table 2a: Review and the reviewers

S. No.	Country	Agency	Self-assessment Report (SAR)	Guidance to prepare SAR	Who participates in the preparation of SAR	Inputs considered other than SAR	Involvement of international experts	Register of Reviewers	Reviewer profile	Identifying Reviewers (N - Nomination)	Who appoints reviewers?	Role of HEI in review panel composition	Panel size	Policy on Conflict of Interest
1	Bahrain	QAA	Yes	Detailed guidelines	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students	--	Yes Membership in review panels, Involvement in the preparatory work	Yet to develop one	Experts in general higher education, International members	Identified by agency staff	--	HEI can record reservation to any member of the panel	4	--
2	Bangladesh	UGC	Yes	Brief guidelines and formats that have to be filled	Management staff, Administrative staff	Agency conducts surveys of relevant groups of stakeholders, Considers reports of professional organisations	Yes Hires international consultants as and when required	Yes	Subject experts, Experts in general higher education, International members, Representatives of professional organisations	Identified by agency staff, Nomination by agency staff	Executive staff of the agency	The HEI is consulted on the panel's membership	3-5	Yes
3	Bhutan	Royal University of Bhutan	Yes	Detailed guidelines about content and structure of SAR	Management staff, Teaching staff	Agency conducts surveys of relevant groups of stakeholders, Considers government reports, Considers input from the public	No	No	Subject experts, Experts in general higher education, Employers/ industry representatives, Staff of the QA agency, Representatives of professional organisations	Nominations from HEIs, Identified by agency staff	Program and Quality Committee of the Academic Board of the University	The HEI is consulted on the panel's membership	5 for every program	No

QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE BROADER ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

S. No.	Country	Agency	Self-assessment Report (SAR)	Guidance to prepare SAR	Who participates in the preparation of SAR	Inputs considered other than SAR	Involvement of international experts	Register of Reviewers	Reviewer profile	Identifying Reviewers (N - Nomination)	Who appoints reviewers?	Role of HEI in review panel composition	Panel size	Policy on Conflict of Interest
4	Cambodia	ACC	Yes	Provides guidelines and formats that have to be filled	Management staff, Administrative staff	None	Yes Involvement in the development of procedures and guidelines, participation in meetings and workshops, Regular/formal information exchange	Yes	Experts in general higher education, Staff of the QA agency, Representatives of professional organisations	Advertisements and calling for applications	Governing body of the agency	The HEI has no say in the panel membership	4	Yes
5	India	NAAC	Yes	Detailed guidelines and formats	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff and students	Considers all the options listed	Yes. Involvement in developing procedures, observing work of the agency, participation in meetings, regular information exchange, Memorandum of cooperation with other agencies	Yes	Subject experts, Experts in general HE, Industry reps, Reps from professional organisations	Nominations from HEIs, governments, agency staff, through advertisements	A committee set up for this purpose makes recommendations and the Executive head of the agency approves	HEIs can record reservation to any member of the panel	2 to 5	Yes
6	Japan	JABEE	Yes	Detailed guidelines and formats	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff	Agency conducts surveys of relevant groups of stakeholders	Yes. Observing the processes and work of the agency, Participation in meetings and workshops hosted by the agency, Regular/formal information exchange	Yes	Subject experts, Experts in general higher education, Employers/ Industry representatives, Representatives of professional organisations	Nominations from the appointed member engineering societies	Coordinating Committee of Examination and Accreditation of JABEE	HEIs can lodge an objection against the panel's membership if HEIs believe some of the members are not eligible.	At least 3 reviewers including one with industrial experience	Yes

QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE BROADER ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

S. No.	Country	Agency	Self-assessment Report (SAR)	Guidance to prepare SAR	Who participates in the preparation of SAR	Inputs considered other than SAR	Involvement of international experts	Register of Reviewers	Reviewer profile	Identifying Reviewers (N - Nomination)	Who appoints reviewers?	Role of HEI in review panel composition	Panel size	Policy on Conflict of Interest
7	Kuwait	PUC	Yes	Brief guidelines, formats	Management staff, Administrative staff and teaching staff	Considers reports of professional bodies, media and partner institutions	Yes. Observing the processes of the agency, participation in meetings and regular information exchange.	Yes	Subject experts, Experts in general higher education, International members and employers/ industry representatives	Nominations from HEIs and agency staff	Executive staff of the agency and Governing body of the agency	The HEI can record reservation to any member of the panel, if they have any	3-4	Yes
8	Lao PDR	Ministry of Education	Yes	Brief guidelines	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students, Graduates/Alumni	Considers media reports and input from the public	No	No	--	Identified by agency staff	Govt	--	Varies	No
9	Nepal	Tribhuvan University	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
10	Oman	OAC	Yes	Detailed guidelines and training to the HEIs	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff	Agency conducts surveys of relevant groups of stakeholders, Considers input from the public	Yes Membership in review panels, involvement in the development of procedures and guidelines, Participation in meetings and workshops hosted by the agency, Regular/formal information exchange	Yes	Subject experts, Experts in general higher education, International members, Employers/ Industry representatives, Staff of the agency	Nominations from HEIs, Identified by agency staff	Governing body of the agency	The HEI can record reservation to any member of the panel, if they have any	4-8	Yes

QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE BROADER ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

S. No.	Country	Agency	Self-assessment Report (SAR)	Guidance to prepare SAR	Who participates in the preparation of SAR	Inputs considered other than SAR	Involvement of international experts	Register of Reviewers	Reviewer profile	Identifying Reviewers (N - Nomination)	Who appoints reviewers?	Role of HEI in review panel composition	Panel size	Policy on Conflict of Interest
11	Pakistan	QAA of Hr. Edn. Commission	Yes	Formats	Management staff, Teaching staff, Students, Graduates/Alumni	Agency conducts surveys of relevant groups of stakeholders, Considers reports of professional organisations	Yes Involvement in the development of procedures and guidelines, Participation in meetings and workshops hosted by the agency, Regular/formal information exchange	Yes	Subject experts, Experts in general higher education, Staff of the agency, Representatives of professional organisations	Nominations from HEIs, Nominations from the governments, Identified by agency staff	Governing body of the agency	The HEI can record reservation to any member of the panel, if they have any, and the HEIs are consulted on the panel membership	5	No
12	PNG	CHE	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
13	Samoa	SQA	Yes	Detailed guidelines and formats, training to HEIs	Management staff, Teaching staff, Students, Any other the panel wishes to consul as source of information	Agency conducts surveys of relevant groups of stakeholders, Considers government reports, media reports, input from the public, and reports of professional organisations	Yes Membership in review panels, Involvement in the development of procedures and guidelines, Involvement as observers to the processes and work of the agency, Participation in meetings and workshops hosted by the agency, Regular/formal information exchange	Yes	Subject experts, Experts in general higher education, International members, Students, Employers/ Industry representatives, Staff of the agency, Representatives of professional organisations	Nominations from HEIs and govt, Identified by agency staff	Executive staff of the agency, Governing body of the agency, Govt	HEIs can record reservation, HEIs are consulted	Up to 5 depending on the size of the program	Yes
14	Sri Lanka	QAAC	Yes	Detailed guidelines and formats	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students	Agency considers input from the public	No	Yes	Subject experts, Experts in general higher education, Employers/ Industry representatives, Representatives of professional organisations	Nominations from HEIs, Identified by agency staff and through advertisements and calling for applications	Governing body of the agency	HEIs can record reservation to any member of the panel	3 for subject review and 5 for program review and institutional review	Yes

QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE BROADER ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

S. No.	Country	Agency	Self-assessment Report (SAR)	Guidance to prepare SAR	Who participates in the preparation of SAR	Inputs considered other than SAR	Involvement of international experts	Register of Reviewers	Reviewer profile	Identifying Reviewers (N - Nomination)	Who appoints reviewers?	Role of HEI in review panel composition	Panel size	Policy on Conflict of Interest
15	Syria	DEA	Yes	Detailed guidelines and formats	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff	Agency conducts surveys of relevant groups of stakeholders, Considers government reports and reports of professional organisations	Involvement in the development of procedures and guidelines, participation in meetings and workshops hosted by the agency	NA	Subject experts, Experts in general higher education	Identified by agency staff	--	--	5	No
16	Timor Leste	NCAAA	Yes	Guidelines	Management staff, Administrative staff	Agency considers government reports and reports of professional organisations	Yes Membership in governing body, Membership in review panels, Involvement in the development of procedures and guidelines, and Participation in meetings and workshops hosted by the agency	No	Subject experts, Experts in general higher education, International members, Employers/ Industry representatives	Nominations from HEIs and government, and identified by agency staff	Governing body of the agency	HEIs have no say in the panel membership but can record reservation	3-5	Yes
17	Turkey	YODEK	Yes	Detailed guidelines	Management staff, Administrative staff, Students	None other than the SAR	No	No	--	--	--	--	--	--

S. No.	Country	Agency	Self-assessment Report (SAR)	Guidance to prepare SAR	Who participates in the preparation of SAR	Inputs considered other than SAR	Involvement of international experts	Register of Reviewers	Reviewer profile	Identifying Reviewers (N - Nomination)	Who appoints reviewers?	Role of HEI in review panel composition	Panel size	Policy on Conflict of Interest
18	UAE	CAA	Yes	Brief guidelines and workshops and meetings with HEIs	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff	Agency conducts surveys of relevant groups of stakeholders, considers reports of professional organisations	Yes Membership in review panels, Involvement in the development of procedures and guidelines, and Participation in meetings and workshops hosted by the agency	Yes	Subject experts, International members, Representatives of professional organisations	Identified by agency staff	Executive staff of the agency	HEIs can record reservation to any member of the panel, if they have any	2–3 per program	Yes

Table 2b: Review and the reviewers (APEC survey)

S. No.	Country	Agency	Self-assessment Report (SAR)	Guidance to prepare SAR	Who participates in the preparation of SAR	Inputs considered other than SAR	Involvement of international experts	Register of Reviewers	Reviewer profile	Identifying Reviewers (N - Nomination)	Who appoints reviewers?	Role of HEI in review panel composition	Panel size	Policy on Conflict of Interest
1.	Australia	AUQA	Yes	Detailed Guidelines, Training	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students	Government reports and reports of professional organisations	Membership in review panel, observer, joint development of procedures, meetings, formal information exchange	Yes	Experts in general HE, international members, QA staff	N from HEI, N from Govt, N from GB, Identified by agency staff, advertisement	Governing Board (GB)	HEIs are consulted. They can record reservation.	3–5	Yes
2.	Brunei	BDNAC	Yes	Format	Administrative staff	Reports of professional organisations, inputs from the public and students	Joint development of procedures, meetings	No	Varies	–	–	–	–	–
3.	China	CDGDC	Yes	Detailed Guidelines	Administrative staff	Reports from professional organisations	No	Yes	Subject Experts	N from HEIs	GB	HEI s are consulted	Varies according to type of program	Yes

QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE BROADER ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

S. No.	Country	Agency	Self-assessment Report (SAR)	Guidance to prepare SAR	Who participates in the preparation of SAR	Inputs considered other than SAR	Involvement of international experts	Register of Reviewers	Reviewer profile	Identifying Reviewers (N - Nomination)	Who appoints reviewers?	Role of HEI in review panel composition	Panel size	Policy on Conflict of Interest
4.	China	HE Evaluation Centre - MoE	Yes	Brief Guidelines	Administrative staff	Surveys, Government reports,	Meetings, formal information exchange	Yes	Subject Experts, QA staff, Representatives of professional organisations	N from HEIs, identified by agency staff	Executive of the agency	HEIs are consulted. They can record reservation.	Varies according to size of the university	–
5.	Hong Kong ⁵	HKCAA	Yes	Brief Guidelines, Format	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students, Graduates/Alumni, External advisors	Surveys of stakeholders, government reports, reports of professional organisations, inputs from the public	Membership in GB, Membership in review panel, joint development of procedures, meetings, formal information exchange, Attachment to agency	Yes	Subject experts, experts in general HE, international members, employers/ industry representatives, QA staff, Representatives of professional organisations, Officers of government departments/ authorities	Identified by agency staff, Advertisement, referral by relevant bodies	Executive of the agency, GB	HEIs are consulted. They can record reservation.	4–9	Yes
6.	Hong Kong ⁶	UGC	Yes	Brief Guidelines, Briefing sessions	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff (varies among institutions)	Data collected during site visit	Membership in GB, Membership in review panel, joint development of procedures,	No	Subject to need	N from HEIs, N from government, identified by agency staff	GB	HEIs have no say in the panel membership	Varies	Yes
7.	Indonesia	BAN-PT	Yes	Detailed Guidelines, Training	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students, Graduates/Alumni	Surveys of stakeholders, government reports, reports of professional organisations, inputs from the public	No	Yes	Subj Experts, Employers/ Industry representatives, Representatives of professional organisations	N from HEI, N from Govt, Identified by agency staff, advertisement	Executive staff and GB of the agency	No say in panel membership. Rights to state objections on panel composition.	2–3	Yes

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QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE BROADER ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

S. No.	Country	Agency	Self-assessment Report (SAR)	Guidance to prepare SAR	Who participates in the preparation of SAR	Inputs considered other than SAR	Involvement of international experts	Register of Reviewers	Reviewer profile	Identifying Reviewers (N - Nomination)	Who appoints reviewers?	Role of HEI in review panel composition	Panel size	Policy on Conflict of Interest
8.	Japan	NIAD-UE	Yes	Detailed Guidelines, Format, Training for those in charge of SAR	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff	Any other data the agency investigates or collects by itself	Membership in review panel, joint research, meetings	Yes	Subject experts, experts in general HE, QA staff, Representatives of professional organisations, experts from various field of society	Identified by agency staff, recommendation from HEIs or expert organisations of the subject	Executive staff of the agency	HEI can record reservation	20–30	No
9.	Japan	JUAA	Yes	Detailed Guideline, Format	Management staff, Administrative staff, knowledgeable persons other than uni faculty	Data and material which are the basis for the SSR	No	Yes	Subject Experts, Experts in general HE	N from HEIs	GB	HEIs submit the candidate list and therefore they are not consulted.	3–5 for one faculty. According to number of faculties 15 or more review panels	No
10.	Malaysia	MQA	Yes	Detailed Guidelines	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students, Involvement of others is encouraged	Surveys of stakeholders, government reports, reports of professional organisations	Membership in review panel, joint development of procedures, meetings, formal information exchange	Yes	Subject experts, experts in general HE, international members, students, employers/industry representatives, QA staff, Representatives of professional organisations	N by the government, Identified by agency staff, advertisement	GB	HEIs are consulted. They can record reservation.	2–5	Yes
11.	New Zealand	ITP-Q	No	–	–	Reports of professional organisations	No	Yes	Experts in general HE, employer/ industry representative	N from HEIs, government and identified by agency staff	GB	HEIs are consulted. They can record reservation	4	Yes

QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE BROADER ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

S. No.	Country	Agency	Self-assessment Report (SAR)	Guidance to prepare SAR	Who participates in the preparation of SAR	Inputs considered other than SAR	Involvement of international experts	Register of Reviewers	Reviewer profile	Identifying Reviewers (N - Nomination)	Who appoints reviewers?	Role of HEI in review panel composition	Panel size	Policy on Conflict of Interest
12.	New Zealand	NZQA	Yes	Brief Guidelines	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff	Government reports, reports of professional organisations	No	Yes	Experts in HE, QA staff	Identified by agency staff	Executive of the agency	HEIs are consulted.	Program monitoring: 1 or 2; degree approval: 6–8; sub degree: 1–3	No
13.	New Zealand	NZUAAU	Yes	Detailed Guidelines	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students, Graduates/Alumni	None	Membership in review panel, joint development of procedures, meetings	Yes	Experts in general HE, international members, employers/ industry representatives, QA staff, Representatives of professional organisations	Identified by agency staff	Executive staff of the agency, GB	HEIs can record reservation.	5+Audit Director of the unit	Yes
14.	Philippines	AACCUP	Yes	Detailed Guidelines, Consultancy to HEIs	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students, Graduates/Alumni, Parents, Community covered by the community service program of the HEI	Conducts survey of stakeholders, input from public	Inviting international experts as observers and consultants, joint development of procedures, meetings, formal information exchange	Yes	Subject experts, experts in general HE, employers/ industry representatives, Graduates/Alumni, QA staff, Representatives of professional organisations	N from HEIs, identified by agency staff, self applications	Executive staff, GB	HEIs have no say on panel's membership. They can record reservation.	5	Yes
15.	Philippines	PAASCU	Yes	Detailed Guidelines, Format	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students, Graduates/Alumni, Parents	Government reports, reports of professional organisations	No	Yes	Subject experts, experts in general HE, employers/ industry representatives, QA staff	N from HEIs, identified by agency staff	Executive of the agency	HEIs are consulted. They can record reservation.	7–8	Yes

QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE BROADER ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

S. No.	Country	Agency	Self-assessment Report (SAR)	Guidance to prepare SAR	Who participates in the preparation of SAR	Inputs considered other than SAR	Involvement of international experts	Register of Reviewers	Reviewer profile	Identifying Reviewers (N - Nomination)	Who appoints reviewers?	Role of HEI in review panel composition	Panel size	Policy on Conflict of Interest
16.	Singapore	SPRING	Yes	Detailed Guidelines, training	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff	Surveys of stakeholders, government reports	Joint development of procedures, formal information exchange	Yes	Subject experts, experts in general HE, QA staff, Representatives of professional organisations	N from HEIs, govt, identified by agency staff	GB	HEIs can record reservation.	3	Yes
17.	Singapore	MoE	Yes	Brief Guidelines	Management staff	Government reports, reports of professional organisations, media reports	Membership in review panel, joint development of procedures	Yes	Subject experts, experts in general HE, international members, employers/ industry representatives	N from HEIs, govt, identified by agency staff	Govt	HEIs can record reservation.	6–8	No
18.	South Korea	KCUE	Yes	Detailed Guidelines	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff	-	No	Yes	Subject experts, experts in general HE, Representatives of professional organisations	N from HEIs, identified by agency staff	Executive of the agency	HEIs are consulted.	4–6	Yes
19.	Thailand	ONESQA	Yes	Brief Guidelines	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff	Surveys of stakeholders, reports of professional organisations, input from the public	Observers, inviting for meetings	Yes	Subject experts, experts in general HE, employers/ industry representatives, Graduate/ Alumni, QA staff, representatives of professional organisations	N from HEIs, Identified by agency staff	GB	HEIs are consulted. They can record reservation.	5–10	Yes
20.	Vietnam	GDETA	Yes	Detailed Guidelines, Brief Guidelines, Format	Management staff, Administrative staff, Teaching staff	Media reports	Joint development of procedures, meetings	Yes	Subject experts, experts in general HE, employers/ industry representatives, QA staff, Representatives of professional organisations	Identified by agency staff, advertisement	Govt	HEI has no say	7–9	Yes

Table 3a: Aspects of the site visit

S. No.	Country	Agency	Site visit	Duration	Site visit activities	Groups that meet the review panel	Role of agency staff in the panel	Ensuring skills mix of the review panel	Use of only trained Reviewers	Checks and balances to ensure objectivity of the QA process	Dissemination of QA policies	Checking complaints Handling of HEIs
1	Bahrain	QAA	Yes	3-4 days, varies	Meetings with various constituents of the institution, Visiting the facilities, Examining documentary evidence	Management, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students, Graduates/Alumni, Employers/industry representatives	Full member	Processes for selection, formal appointment and training for panel members	--	Similar to those used in other EQAs.	Website	--
2	Bangladesh	UGC	Yes	Varies 1-2 days, 3-4 days	Meetings with various constituents of the institution, Classroom observations, Visiting the facilities, Examining documentary evidence	Management, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students	Coordinator/ Secretary, Report writing	Normally permanent members of the UGC and subject experts from the universities are included in Review Panel.	No	Continues to be an issue under consideration.	There is no standard form. As per need and requirement of the reviewers.	Yes.
3	Bhutan	Royal University of Bhutan	Yes	1-2 days	Meetings with various constituents of the institution, Visiting the facilities, Examining documentary evidence	Management, Teaching staff, Students	Coordinator/ Secretary, Report writing, Full member, Chair	Guidelines on the purpose and process of validation are given to the panel. Future plans include training of reviewers.	No	Reviewers are from outside the institution being assessed. The reports are considered and approved by the academic board.	Policies and practices are developed collaboratively with all member HEIs. These are published and distributed, and are available on the University website. Sharing of best practices.	No
4	Cambodia	ACC	Yes	5-6 days. Varies	Meetings with various constituents of the institution, Classroom observations, Visiting the facilities, Examining documentary evidence	Management, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students, Internal QA staff	Coordinator/ Secretary, Chair	Training, Guidelines, Evaluating reviewer background	Yes	Ensuring transparency, governance by the Board, making relevant information public	Meetings, interviews, mailing and website	No

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S. No.	Country	Agency	Site visit	Duration	Site visit activities	Groups that meet the review panel	Role of agency staff in the panel	Ensuring skills mix of the review panel	Use of only trained Reviewers	Checks and balances to ensure objectivity of the QA process	Dissemination of QA policies	Checking complaints Handling of HEIs
5	India	NAAC	Yes	Varies depending on the size and nature of the HEI	All the activities listed	Meetings with all the groups listed	Coordinator	Training and orientation	No	Verifying conflict of interest, feedback from HEIs, feedback from agency staff etc	Newsletter, website info, meetings and publications	Yes
6	Japan	JABEE	Yes	3-4 days	Meetings with various constituents of the institution, Classroom observations, Visiting the facilities, Examining documentary evidence	Management, administrative staff, teaching staff, students, graduates/alumni	Nil	Following the guidelines for the selection and formation of examination teams	Yes	Guidelines on QA processes that are public	Criteria in the website	Yes
7	Kuwait	PUC	Yes	3-4 days	All the activities listed	Management, administrative staff, teaching staff, students and graduates/alumni	Nil	A standing committee examines CVs and forms review teams. Workshops and advice to review panels.	No	Feedback from HEIs, monitoring by the standing committee	Website, discussions, information packs, interaction with PUC staff	No
8	Lao PDR	Ministry of Education	Yes	3-4 days	Meetings with various constituents of the institution, Classroom observations, Visiting the facilities, Examining documentary evidence	Management, Administrative staff, Employers/Industry representatives	Nil	--	No	Ministry checks the quality and relevance of the programs	--	No
9	Nepal	Tribhuvan University	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
10	Oman	OAC	Yes	3-4 days	Meetings with various constituents of the institution, Visiting the facilities, Examining documentary evidence	Management, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students	Coordinator/ Secretary	Review of CVs, referee check, orientation and manuals	Yes	Following good practices in the selection and orientation of the reviewers, HEIs are consulted at various stages of the audit	Documents, online publication, e-mail communication, training program for HEIs	No

QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE BROADER ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

S. No.	Country	Agency	Site visit	Duration	Site visit activities	Groups that meet the review panel	Role of agency staff in the panel	Ensuring skills mix of the review panel	Use of only trained Reviewers	Checks and balances to ensure objectivity of the QA process	Dissemination of QA policies	Checking complaints Handling of HEIs
11	Pakistan	QAA of Hr. Edn. Commission	Yes	1-2 days	Meetings with various constituents of the institution, Visiting the facilities, Examining documentary evidence	Management, Teaching staff, Students	Coordinator/ Secretary	Experience and expertise of the panel members	No	Findings are shared with the HEIs	Meetings, seminars and circulations. Printed and electronic mail	No
12	PNG	CHE	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
13	Samoa	SQA	Yes	1-2 days or 3-4 days	Meetings with various constituents of the institution, Visiting the facilities, Examining documentary, Interviewing relevant stakeholders	Management, administrative staff, teaching staff, students, graduates/alumni, employers/industry representatives, community representatives	Coordinator/ Secretary, full member, Report writing	Selecting reviewers depending on the program reviewed	Yes	Draft report is sent to the institution for comments	Through printed materials	Yes
14	Sri Lanka	QAAC	Yes	Varies. 3 days for subject reviews, 4 days for program reviews and 5 days for institutional reviews	Meetings with various constituents of the institution, Classroom observations, Visiting the facilities, Examining documentary evidence	Management, administrative staff, teaching staff, students, Graduates/alumni, employers/industry representatives	Nil	Rigorous selection and training of reviewers	Yes	HEI is consulted on the review panel. The report has to be accepted by the HEI. Feedback is obtained from the HEI/department.	Awareness programs, publications and website	Yes
15	Syria	DEA	Yes	1-2 days	Meetings with various constituents of the institution, Examining documentary evidence	Management, Administrative staff, Teaching staff	Full member	Selection of reviewers based on their expertise in the field of the program being evaluated, guidelines to reviewers	NA	Reviewers from diverse backgrounds, elimination of conflict of interest, credibility of reviewers	--	--

QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE BROADER ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

S. No.	Country	Agency	Site visit	Duration	Site visit activities	Groups that meet the review panel	Role of agency staff in the panel	Ensuring skills mix of the review panel	Use of only trained Reviewers	Checks and balances to ensure objectivity of the QA process	Dissemination of QA policies	Checking complaints Handling of HEIs
16	Timor Leste	NCAAA	Yes	1-2 days	Meetings with various constituents of the institution, Classroom observations, Visiting the facilities, Examining documentary evidence	Management, administrative staff, teaching staff, students, graduates/alumni, parents, employers/industry representatives, community representatives	Coordinator/ Secretary	Selection and training of reviewers	Yes	Involvement of international reviewers and cross checking information with the institutions	Meetings with HEIs, training and information bulletin	Yes
17	Turkey	YODEK	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
18	UAE	CAA	Yes	3-4 days	Meetings with various constituents of the institution, Visiting the facilities, Examining documentary evidence	Management, administrative staff, teaching staff, students, graduates/alumni, employers/industry representatives,	Coordinator/ Secretary	By examining the CVs of reviewers	No	Presence of agency staff	Printed material and website	Yes

Table 3b: Aspects of the site visit (APEC survey)

S. No.	Country	Agency	Site visit	Duration	Site visit activities	Groups that meet the review panel	Role of agency staff in the panel	Ensuring skills mix of the review panel	Use of only trained Reviewers	Checks and balances to ensure objectivity of the QA process	Dissemination of QA policies	Checking complaints Handling of HEIs
1.	Australia	AUQA	Yes	3–5 days	Meeting with various constituents, visiting facilities, examining documents	Management, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students, Graduates/ Alumni, Employers/ Industry representatives, Community representatives	Full member writes the report.	Selection and training of reviewers	Yes	Training, panel composition, presence of agency staff	Manual, publications, training	Yes
2.	Brunei	BDNAC	No	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
3.	China	CDGDC	Yes	Varies	Meeting with various constituents, classroom observations, visiting facilities, examining documents	Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Graduates/Alumni, Community representatives	Writes the report.	Expertise and experience of reviewers	Yes	Expertise and experience of the reviewers	Issues information	Yes
4.	China	HE Evaluation Centre - MoE	Yes	5–6 days	Meeting with various constituents, classroom observations, visiting facilities, examining documents	Meetings with experts	Coordinator writes the report	Experience, reputation and headship	No	--	--	--
5.	Hong Kong ⁷	HKCAA	Yes	Varies: 1–2 days or 3–4 days.	Meeting with various constituents, classroom observations, visiting facilities, examining documents	Management, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students, Graduates/ Alumni, Employers/ Industry representatives, Community representatives	Yes All except chair	Training and briefing	No	Review of criteria and processes, consensus by panel, 'no surprise' principle	Workshop, publications and consultations	Yes

⁷ Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the Peoples Republic of China is a member economy of APEC.

S. No.	Country	Agency	Site visit	Duration	Site visit activities	Groups that meet the review panel	Role of agency staff in the panel	Ensuring skills mix of the review panel	Use of only trained Reviewers	Checks and balances to ensure objectivity of the QA process	Dissemination of QA policies	Checking complaints Handling of HEIs
6.	Hong Kong ⁸	UGC	Varies	1–2 days	Meeting with various constituents, visiting facilities, examining documents	Management, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students, Graduates/Alumni, Employers/ Industry representatives	Coordinator/ Secretary	Background material, discussion, expertise of members	No	consultation	Documents made available prior to the review	Subject to scope of review
7.	Indonesia	BAN-PT	Yes	3–4 days	Meeting with various constituents (interview sts, trs and other related personnel), classroom observations, visiting facilities, examining documents	Management, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students, Graduates/Alumni	Does not join the team	Leader dependent	Yes	Wrap up meeting, contact with HEI, appeals procedure	Guidelines and training	No
8.	Japan	NIAD-UE	Yes	1–3 days: depends on the type of HEI	Meeting with various constituents, classroom observations, visiting facilities, examining documents	Management, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students, Graduates/Alumni	Coordinator or Secretary and full member	Review CV and choose the right expert	No. Training is provided after selecting people for review	Sharing tentative evaluation with the HEIs, opportunity for HEIs to appeal, Ensuring objectivity of the process	Publication, web page, orientation to HEIs, orientation to reviewers	Yes. One of the standards asks 'Does the institution recognise the needs of students, faculty and ad staff or...?'
9.	Japan	JUAA	Yes	1–2 days	Meeting with various constituents, classroom observations, visiting facilities, examining documents	Management, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students	Coordinator or Secretary	Universities that nominate experts make sure of the skills of nominees. Training by JUAA.	Yes	Panel confers, check by higher committee that compares the panel report with those of other applicant universities	Web, guidebook, handbook, seminar, explanatory meeting	Yes

⁸ Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) of the Peoples Republic of China is a member economy of APEC.

QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE BROADER ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

S. No.	Country	Agency	Site visit	Duration	Site visit activities	Groups that meet the review panel	Role of agency staff in the panel	Ensuring skills mix of the review panel	Use of only trained Reviewers	Checks and balances to ensure objectivity of the QA process	Dissemination of QA policies	Checking complaints Handling of HEIs
10.	Malaysia	MQA	Yes	3–4 days	Meeting with various constituents, classroom observations, visiting facilities	Management, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students	Coordinator, Chair	3-day hands-on training on QA process	Yes	Use of documented criteria. HEIs' role in panel selection, report validated by the accreditation committee, HEIs comment on the report, HEIs evaluate the panel	Printed guidelines, web site, refresher course, seminar, circulars	Yes Student feedback on teaching and learning, facilities, welfare etc is considered.
11.	New Zealand	ITP-Q	Yes	3–4 or 5–6 days. Varies	Meeting with various constituents, visiting facilities, examining documents	Management, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students, Employers/ Industry representatives, Community representatives	Does not join the team	Training, expertise of members	Yes	4-member panel, peer review, decision by Board on recommendations of the panel	Web site, workshops, training sessions	Yes There is a standard for dealing with student complaints
12.	New Zealand	NZQA	Yes	1–2 days	Meeting with various constituents, visiting facilities, examining documents	Management, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students, Employers/ Industry representatives	Full member	Training, consistency meetings, use of advisors in specialist areas, experience of panels	Yes	Monitoring, feedback from HEIs, peer review of audit reports by a team leader and externally, team decision, peer review, internal audit, external audit of the agency, sign off by manager	Web site, consultation, e-mail and mail communications, annual regional road-shows	Yes. HEIs are expected to have a system in place and the audit checks that
13.	New Zealand	NZUAAU	Yes	3–4 days	Meeting with various constituents, visiting facilities, examining documents	Management, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students, Graduates/ Alumni, Employers/ Industry representatives, Community representatives	Full member. Writes the report.	Training reviewers	Yes	Director's presence in all panels, HEIs comment on report, Approved by Board as having followed procedures	Audit manual	--
14.	Philippines	AACCUP	Yes	3–4 days	Meeting with various constituents, classroom observations, visiting facilities, examining documents, meeting with communities served by HEIs	Management, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students, Graduates/ Alumni, Parents, Employers/ Industry representatives, Community representatives	Coordinator or Secretary and Full member. Can be the Chair.	Expertise of panel, selection, training and re-training, evaluation of members	Yes	On-site visits are supervised by agency senior staff, reports are subject to technical review, complaints are always attended to	Manuals, newsletter, seminars, conferences, consultancy visits	Yes Interview with students and guidance counsellors during the on-site visit checks this issue.

QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE BROADER ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

S. No.	Country	Agency	Site visit	Duration	Site visit activities	Groups that meet the review panel	Role of agency staff in the panel	Ensuring skills mix of the review panel	Use of only trained Reviewers	Checks and balances to ensure objectivity of the QA process	Dissemination of QA policies	Checking complaints Handling of HEIs
15.	Philippines	PAASCU	Yes	3–4 days	Meeting with various constituents, classroom observations, visiting facilities, examining documents	Management, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students, Graduates/Alumni, Community representatives	Coordinator /Secretary	Training, Commission members as Chairs, evaluation of trainee auditors	Yes	Workshop for team chairs, selection of chairs, agency staff's presence in panels, reports are sent to the various the Board.	Manual for HEIs, reviewer handbook	Yes. Minutes of meetings are checked and interaction with campus groups
16.	Singapore	SPRING	Yes	1–2 days	Meeting with various constituents, classroom observations, visiting facilities, examining documents	Management, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students	Coordinator and full member	Training	yes	Eliminating CoI, Presence of agency staff, appeal procedure	Web, information sharing sessions	Yes. Examples of case management are examined. Unresolved ones are forwarded by HEIs to CASE Trust.
17.	Singapore	MoE	Yes	3–4 days	Meeting with various constituents, classroom observations, visiting facilities, examining documents	Management, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students, Graduates/ Alumni, Employers/ Industry representatives	Coordinator and writes the report.	Selection criteria for reviewers	No	Same chair for all reviews of a particular round. Eliminating CoI	Guidelines and documents	No
18.	South Korea	KCUE	Yes	1–3 days; 2 days for UG institution, 3 for UG and graduate institution, 1 for program	Meeting with various constituents, classroom observations, visiting facilities, examining documents	Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students	Coordinator and writes the report	Compulsory participation in two workshops. HEI nominate the reviewers and they ensure the right skills.	Yes	Panel confers, discusses with HEI, each core area is covered by two reviewers	Handbook for reviewers and HEIs	Yes. Survey and interviews with students, staff and faculty with look into this issue.
19.	Thailand	ONESQA	Yes	Varies. 3–5 days	various constituents, classroom observations, visiting facilities, examining documents	Management, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students, Graduates/Alumni, Parents	Agency staff does not join the review panel.	Training, workshop and certification	Yes	Standard criteria, standardised process, peer review, meta evaluation	Agency Web site, publications, workshop, broadcasting via various media	Yes

S. No.	Country	Agency	Site visit	Duration	Site visit activities	Groups that meet the review panel	Role of agency staff in the panel	Ensuring skills mix of the review panel	Use of only trained Reviewers	Checks and balances to ensure objectivity of the QA process	Dissemination of QA policies	Checking complaints Handling of HEIs
20.	Vietnam	GDETA	Yes	3–4 days	Meeting with various constituents, classroom observations, visiting facilities, examining documents	Management, Administrative staff, Teaching staff, Students	Full member	Training	Yes	Yet to reach this stage.	--	--

Table 4a: QA outcome and its implications

S. No.	Country	Agency	Outcome	Implication	Who decides on final QA outcome	Inputs considered for final QA outcome	QA outcome given to Institution	QA outcome given to Public	Who is responsible for the report	Report conclusions	Follow-up	Validity of Outcome	Appeals
1	Bahrain	QAA	Only a report	Linked to formal status or approval	--	--	Only the report	Full report	The agency staff , All the review panel members	--	Yes	3 years	--
2	Bangladesh	UGC	Report and formal status	Linked to formal status or approval, No other formal consequence	Review panel makes recommendations and the public authority/govt makes final decisions	Review Panel's report, self-evaluation report and other relevant information	Formal status and a part of the report	Full report	All review panel members	Recommendations and suggestions fro corrective action	Yes. Normally corrective actions are monitored by the UGC.	No specific period of validity.	Yes
3	Bhutan	Royal University of Bhutan	Both report and formal status	Linked to formal status or approval	Review panel makes recommendations and the final decision is made by the Academic Board.	Review panel's recommendation or observation only.	Both formal status and report	None	The agency staff	Conditions to be met, commendations and recommendations	Yes. Submission of a definitive program document by the HEI (within 3-4 months after the review); meeting of conditions set in the report; and the annual report which includes targets	Generally a complete cycle of the program. Varies depending on the duration of the program, stability and major changes to program	No

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S. No.	Country	Agency	Outcome	Implication	Who decides on final QA outcome	Inputs considered for final QA outcome	QA outcome given to Institution	QA outcome given to Public	Who is responsible for the report	Report conclusions	Follow-up	Validity of Outcome	Appeals
4	Cambodia	ACC	Only a formal status	Linked to formal status or approval	Review panel makes recommendations and the final decision is made by the governing body of the agency	Review panel's report and self-evaluation report of the institution	Only the formal status	Formal status	The Chair of the Review panel	Recommendation and Conclusion	Yes. Follow-up by the ACC technical staff	3 to 5 years	Yes
5	India	NAAC	Both report and formal status	Varies depending on the State governments. Linked to funding in some States	Review panel makes recommendations and the governing body makes final decisions	Review panel's report and self-evaluation report of the institution	Both formal status and report	Full report and formal status	All the panel members	Overall analysis, commendations and recommendations	Yes. Annual quality assurance reports by HEIs	5 years	Yes
6	Japan	JABEE	Report and formal status	Linked to registration and mutual recognition among signatories under the Washington Accord	Review panel makes recommendations and the final decision is made by the governing body of the agency	Review panel's report, self-evaluation report, and other relevant information such as Examination Report prepared by the Coordination Committee of Examination and Accreditation	Both formal status and report	Formal status only (accreditation status)	JABEE Accreditation Committee	Recommendations or suggestions for corrective action	Yes. Recommendations will be re-examined at Interim Examination in two years.	5 years. When a program is found to have minor problems, a reduced term of validity of accreditation is granted with the intention of encouraging improvement.	Yes

QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE BROADER ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

S. No.	Country	Agency	Outcome	Implication	Who decides on final QA outcome	Inputs considered for final QA outcome	QA outcome given to Institution	QA outcome given to Public	Who is responsible for the report	Report conclusions	Follow-up	Validity of Outcome	Appeals
7	Kuwait	PUC	Both report and formal status	Linked to formal status or approval, linked to direct funding, linked to incentives	Review panel makes recommendations and the governing body makes final decisions	Review panel's report and self-evaluation report of the institution	Both formal status and report	Only formal status	All panel members	Recommendations and commendations	Yes. Done by the governing body, its secretariat and the accreditation committee	2-6 years	Yes
8	Lao PDR	Ministry of Education	Only a report	Linked to formal status or approval	Review panel gives observations only and the decision is made by the agency	Review panel's recommendation or observation only	Only the report	Summary of the report	Agency staff	Recommendations	Yes	--	No
9	Nepal	Tribhuvan University	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
10	Oman	OAC	Report and formal status	Linked to formal status or approval	Review panel makes recommendations and the final decision is made by the governing body of the agency	Review panel's recommendation or observation only	Both formal status and report	Formal status/ final decision	All the review panel members	Recommendations, commendations and affirmations	Yes	Institutions are reviewed every 4 years through alternating quality audit and accreditation. Program accreditation is valid for five years.	Yes
11	Pakistan	QAA of Hr Edn. Commission	Report and formal status	Linked to formal status or approval, Linked to direct funding and incentives	Review panel makes recommendations and the final decision is made by the governing body of the agency	--	Formal status and report	Summary of the report	All the review panel members	Suggestions/ recommendations for corrective action	No	Depending on the gravity of the situation the Review committee determines the validity period. It may even be one year or less.	Yes
12	PNG	CHE	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE BROADER ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

S. No.	Country	Agency	Outcome	Implication	Who decides on final QA outcome	Inputs considered for final QA outcome	QA outcome given to Institution	QA outcome given to Public	Who is responsible for the report	Report conclusions	Follow-up	Validity of Outcome	Appeals
13	Samoa	SQA	Report and formal status	Linked to formal status or approval, direct funding, incentives, levels of autonomy and prestige	Review panel makes recommendations and the final decision is made by the governing body of the agency	Review panel's report, self-evaluation report, and other relevant information	Formal status and report	To be decided in negotiation with the institution and the Board of the agency	All panel members document their findings and the agency staff puts them together and circulate to the panel for endorsement	Comments and recommendations	Yes	3 to 5 years, depending on the capacity of the institution to be committed to continuous improvement, major changes in personnel, student and other stakeholder complaints etc.	Yes
14	Sri Lanka	QAAC	Report and formal status	Linked to formal status or approval, direct funding, and incentives.	Governing body of the agency makes recommendations based on the review report but the final decision is made by a public/ govt authority	Review panel's report and self-evaluation report of the institution or program	Formal status and report	Full report	All the review panel members	Evidence based judgements and recommendations	Yes	5 years. Varies depending on the subject discipline	Yes
15	Syria	DEA	Report and formal status	Linked to formal status and approval for private universities	Review panel makes recommendations and the final decision is made by the governing body of the agency	--	--	--	--	Suggestions for corrective action followed by recommendations	Yes	Time needed for a class to graduate	Yes
16	Timor Leste	NCAAA	Report and formal status	Linked to formal status, direct funding and incentives	Review panel makes recommendations and the final decision is made by the governing body of the agency	Review panel's report and self-evaluation report of the institution or program	Only the formal status/final decision	Formal status/ final decision	The chair of the review panel	Recommendations and suggestions for improvement	Yes	3 years	Yes
17	Turkey	YODEK	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	5 years	NA

S. No.	Country	Agency	Outcome	Implication	Who decides on final QA outcome	Inputs considered for final QA outcome	QA outcome given to Institution	QA outcome given to Public	Who is responsible for the report	Report conclusions	Follow-up	Validity of Outcome	Appeals
18	UAE	CAA	Report and formal status	Linked to formal status and approval	Review panel makes recommendations and the final decision is made by the governing body of the agency.	Review panel's report and self-evaluation report of the institution/program	Formal status and report	Formal status/final decision	All the review panel members	Recommendations, suggestions and corrective actions	Yes	5 years and for medical and health science programs shorter period is given. Depends on the sensitivity of the program	Yes

Table 4b: QA Outcome and its Implications (APEC survey)

S. No.	Country	Agency	Outcome	Implication	Who decides on final QA outcome	Inputs considered for final QA outcome	QA outcome given to Institution	QA outcome given to Public	Who is responsible for the report	Report conclusions	Follow-up	Validity of Outcome	Appeals
1.	Australia	AUQA	Report	Federal funding, prestige	Panel makes recommendations and GB decides	Panel report, Institutional response to report	Full report	Full report	The agency staff who joins the panel, in consultation with the panel	Commendations, Affirmations, and Recommendations for further attention	In general will be done in the next audit. The institutions provide a progress report 18 months after the publication of the audit report.	Five years	Yes. AUQA Board will handle formal appeals and take appropriate steps. No appeal during past five years.
2.	Brunei	BDNAC	Report, Formal Status	Formal status	GB recommends based on review report and govt authority decides	Panel report and SAR	Formal Status and part of the report	Formal Status	All panel members	–	–	–	Yes. The Council is the appellate authority. Three appeals in the past five years and all three were granted.
3.	China	CDGDC	Report, Formal Status	Formal status or approval	Panel makes recommendations and GB decides	Panel report, SAR and other relevant info	Report and Formal Status	Formal Status	Chair	Recommendations, Commendations, suggestion for corrective action	No	Varies	Yes. MoE. Investigates and writes a report. No appeals in the past five years. No post-QA reports.

S. No.	Country	Agency	Outcome	Implication	Who decides on final QA outcome	Inputs considered for final QA outcome	QA outcome given to Institution	QA outcome given to Public	Who is responsible for the report	Report conclusions	Follow-up	Validity of Outcome	Appeals
4.	China	HEEC, MoE	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
5.	Hong Kong ⁹	HKCAA	Report, Formal Status	Approval, direct funding, incentive	Panel makes recommendations. GB decides.	Panel report, SAR, evidence gathered before and during site visit	Report and Formal Status	Formal Status	Agency staff	Recommendations, Commendations, suggestions for improvement	Yes. Fulfilment of pre-conditions and requirements	2–6 years. Depends on stage of devt of HEIs and readiness and track record of delivering prg accredited.	Yes. HKCAA Council will handle formal appeals and take appropriate steps (eg forming a review com). No appeal during past five years. Post QA reporting – varies.
6.	Hong Kong ¹⁰	UGC	Report, Formal Status	Approval, direct funding, incentive	Panel makes recommendations and GB decides	Panel report and SAR	Varies	Varies	Varies	Varies – normally recommendations, suggestions, observations etc	Varies	Varies	NA
7.	Indonesia	BAN-PT	Report, Formal Status	Approval, incentive, autonomy	Govt takes the final decision	Panel report, SAR	Formal Status, part of the report, Recommendation for program improvement	Formal Status	Chair and agency staff	Recommendations and suggestion for program improvement and further development	No	3–5 years. Depends on the accreditation status	Yes. Authority – Chair and Secretary of the board, and executive secretary of BNA-PT. Ten appeals in average – granted four and denied six

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QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE BROADER ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

S. No.	Country	Agency	Outcome	Implication	Who decides on final QA outcome	Inputs considered for final QA outcome	QA outcome given to Institution	QA outcome given to Public	Who is responsible for the report	Report conclusions	Follow-up	Validity of Outcome	Appeals
8.	Japan	NIAD-UE	Only report	Approval, linked to improvement	Review panel decides	??	Report	Full report and summary	Chair	Achievement to the standards – comments on areas that are excellent and areas that need improvement	No	There is no validity of QA outcome. HEIs have the obligation to have the review in no more than 5–7 yrs	Yes. Review panel judges the appeal. 14 Colleges of Technology appealed during 5 yrs. Nine were granted. Post QA reporting – HEIs report on substantive changes. Law Colleges have annual reporting
9.	Japan	JUAA	Report	Linked to formal status or approval	Panel makes recommendations and GB decides	Panel report, SAR and other relevant info	Report and Formal Status	Full report and Formal Status	All panel members	Recommendations, Commendations, suggestion	Yes. Panel does it with the submitted improvement report from the university within 3 years	7 years	7 years
10.	Malaysia	MQA	Report	approval, funding, incentive, autonomy	Panel makes observations. Decision is by agency or professional body	Panel report, SAR and relevant info	Report and Formal Status	Formal Status and summary of the report	All panel members	Recommendations, Commendations, suggestion for corrective action	Yes. Depends on the conditions stated in the certificate of accreditation /provisional accreditation	In general 5 years. Varies depending on conditions specified.	Yes. Authority – Minister for HE. Process- formal written representation. Outcome- Approved or rejected. Post QA reporting –depends on conditions imposed
11.	New Zealand	ITP-Q	Report, Formal Status	Approval, autonomy	Panel makes recommendations and GB decides	Panel 's recommendations or observations only	Report and Formal Status	Formal Status and summary of rep	Chair	Requirements for corrective action, Recommendations, Commendations, suggestions	Yes. Within 3 months or as agreed due to the timeline of the corrective action	One year to four years. If the Corrective Action Required (CAR) is serious then a one-year period is given with a follow-up audit after one-year, otherwise four years	Yes. Agency is the appellate – authority. It forms ad hoc sub committees of 4 from outside the agency. It makes recommendations to Board. There was one appeal during 5 yrs and it was granted. Post QA reporting - once in two yrs report

QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE BROADER ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

S. No.	Country	Agency	Outcome	Implication	Who decides on final QA outcome	Inputs considered for final QA outcome	QA outcome given to Institution	QA outcome given to Public	Who is responsible for the report	Report conclusions	Follow-up	Validity of Outcome	Appeals
12.	New Zealand	NZQA	Report, Formal Status	Status, direct funding, autonomy, less compliance costs, longer audit cycle and more autonomy	Recommendations by panel and delegated responsibility to managers for final decision	Panel's report, recommendations and SAR	Report and Formal Status	Formal Status and summary of Report	Agency staff	Meeting audit standards, Recommendations, Suggestions	Yes – Action plan – if actions are not carried out satisfactorily within the timeframe, legislation allows for compliance action	6 months to 3 years. For ITPs it is 4 years – variation depends on audit report, complaints, major changes and financial stability	Yes. CEO and finally the Board is the appellate authority. HEIs lodge a formal appeal to Board. There will be a hearing & investigation. There were 5 appeals and 4 were granted. There is annual post QA reporting.
13.	New Zealand	NZUAAU	Report	No formal consequences	Panel makes recommendations and GB decides	Panel's recommendation's and observations only	Report	Full report	Agency staff	Recommendations, Commendations	Yes – Panel Chair and Director visit the HEI after 3 months of public report. Timetable (18 months) for a follow-up report is decided then	5 years	No appeals mechanism.
14.	Philippines	AACCUP	Report, Formal Status	Approval, direct funding, incentive, prestige	Panel makes recommendations and GB decides	Panel report and SAR	Formal Status and summary of report	Formal Status	All panel members	Strengths, areas needing improvement and recommendations	Yes. Agency staff does follow-up within one year	3–5 yrs depending on the accreditation status. Candidate status for 6 months to 2 yrs. Accredited at level I is for 3 yrs. Next level is for 3–5 years	Yes. Appeals to the Board and the National Network of Quality Assurance Agencies (NNQAA). There were 3 appeals during past 5 yrs and 2 were granted. Post QA reporting - Annual reporting

QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE BROADER ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

S. No.	Country	Agency	Outcome	Implication	Who decides on final QA outcome	Inputs considered for final QA outcome	QA outcome given to Institution	QA outcome given to Public	Who is responsible for the report	Report conclusions	Follow-up	Validity of Outcome	Appeals
15.	Philippines	PAASCU	Report, Formal Status	Formal Status, incentives, autonomy	Panel makes recommendations and GB decides	Panel report and SAR	Report and Formal Status	Formal Status	Chair	Commendations and Recommendations	Yes If monitoring is needed progress report after 2–3 yrs and interim visit	3 yrs for first time accreditation and re-accreditation is for five years	Yes. GB is the appellate authority. During past five yrs there was one appeal and it was denied. Post QA reporting – annual report
16.	Singapore	SPRING	Report, Formal Status	Formal status, incentive	Panel makes recommendations and GB decides	Panel recommendations	Report and Formal Status	Formal Status	All panel members	Recommendations to award certification or deny certification	No	3 years	Yes. SQC-PEO committee is the appeals committee. HEIs give a letter of appeal and pay an administrative fee. So far there has been no appeals. Post QA reporting – mid-term reporting
17.	Singapore	MoE	Report	No formal consequences	No final specific outcome other than the report. Report is shared with HEIs for follow-up	NA	Report	none	Chair and agency staff	Commendations and Recommendations	Yes - HEIs provide response and formulate action plans	5 years	No. Post QA reports – annual updates
18.	South Korea	KCUE	Report, Formal Status	Formal status	Panel recommends and University Accreditation Committee decides	Panel recommendations	Report and Formal Status	Formal Status and Summary of Report	All panel members	Strengths, weaknesses and suggestions for corrective action	No	5 years	Yes. HEIs apply to the University Accreditation Committee which reviews the result. During the past five years there was one appeal and it was granted. Occasional post QA reports.

QUALITY ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE BROADER ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

S. No.	Country	Agency	Outcome	Implication	Who decides on final QA outcome	Inputs considered for final QA outcome	QA outcome given to Institution	QA outcome given to Public	Who is responsible for the report	Report conclusions	Follow-up	Validity of Outcome	Appeals
19.	Thailand	ONESQA	Report, Formal Status	Formal status or approval, Suggestion to policy makers	Panel recommends and GB approves	Panel report, SAR and other relevant information	Report and Formal Status	Formal status and Summary of the report	All panel members	Assessment regarding standards and criteria, commendations, and suggestion for corrective action	Yes. Office of Higher Education Commission & Minister of education by monitors action taken including timeframe	5 years	–
20.	Vietnam	GDETA	Report, Formal Status	Formal status	Panel recommends and the GB decides	Panel report and SAR	Report and Formal Status	Formal Status	All panel members	Whether HEI meets standards and Recommendations	Yet to reach that stage	In general 5 years – might vary	Yes. Minister of Ed and Trg- constitutes a working group. Yet to reach the stage of appeals and denials. Post QA report – one in mid term about 2–3 years after review

Table 5a: Good practices

S. No.	Country	Agency	Good Practice
1	Bahrain	QAA	—
2	Bangladesh	UGC	Framing tough rules for selection of Teachers purely on the basis of merit; Closely reviewing and monitoring the activities of HEIs particularly private universities of Bangladesh; In country Ph.D. and M.Phil Program offered by the UGC for young university and college teachers which enabled the teachers to do research on local problems and issues in obtaining higher degrees
3	Bhutan	Royal University of Bhutan	Validation
4	Cambodia	ACC	—
5	India	NAAC	Stakeholder participation; Continuous feedback; Sharing best practices
6	Japan	JABEE	—
7	Kuwait	PUC	Institutional Accreditation awarded by the Council; HEI's annual report evaluation; Building and facilities inspection
8	Lao PDR	Ministry of Education	Benchmarks; Monitoring and Evaluation; Audit
9	Nepal	Tribhuvan University	—
10	Oman	OAC	Training Modules; establishment of the local Quality Network for HEI; the regular consultation and involvement of the sector in different process and plans set by the council
11	Pakistan	HEC	Excellence in selection of the panel of experts and committee members; Transparency of decision making; Amicability of relationship between Accreditation Councils and Higher Education Institutes.
12	PNG	CHE	Site visits; Institutional audits; Accreditation
13	Samoa	SQA	—
14	Sri Lanka	QAAC	Curriculum development; Teaching; Obtaining Student feedback and Peers observation
15	Syria	DEA	—
16	Timor Leste	NCAAA	—
17	Turkey	YODEK	—
18	UAE	CAA	Holding workshops on strategic issues such as Development of Institutional Effectiveness Unit and operation; Insistence of adherence to quality measures; Disseminating information on accreditation status of programs to the public

Table 5b: Good practices (APEC survey)

S. No.	Country	Agency	Good Practice
1	Australia	AUQA	Approach to auditing transnational education; Cooperation with other external QA agencies; Professionalism in training of auditors and consulting with institutions
2	Brunei	BDNAC	—
3	China	CDGDC	Self-evaluation, Constituting peer teams and their site visit, Evaluation report.
4	China	HEEC – MoE	—
5	Hong Kong ¹¹	HKCAA	Quality enhancement; Self-improvement of HEI; Benchmarking
6	Hong Kong ¹²	UGC	—
7	Indonesia	BAN-PT	Quality awareness of the HEIs; Establishment of Internal QA Units in the HEIs; Public recognition of HE quality
8	Japan	NIAD-UE	The process of self-monitoring and self-evaluation itself
9	Japan	JUAA	Submitting the progress report; The level of achievement of the mission and goal of the university; Comprehensive evaluation consisting of evaluation by special field of study and evaluation of items concerning the university as a whole
10	Malaysia	MQA	Promoting quality enhancement; Objective, fair & transparent process; Involving stakeholders
11	New Zealand	ITP-Q	Audit approach; Monitoring of degree provision; Mid-term reviews
12	New Zealand	NZQA	Team work and collective planning of quality assurance projects; Proactive identification of financial risks to HEIs; Engaging HEIs in the development of policy and practice
13	New Zealand	NZUAAU	—
14	Philippines	AACCUP	Creation of internal (HEI's) assessment bodies; Preparation of program performance profile by HEIs; Self-survey
15	Philippines	PAASCU	The orientation seminar for HEIs as they start with the self-study; Being able to do both program and institutional accreditation in one Team visit; Classification of HEIs into various levels and corresponding benefits to them towards continuous quality improvement.
16	Singapore	SPRING	Involvement of both management practitioners and education specialist in the assessment team; The 2-day site assessment; Post assessment meeting with the HEI to explain the findings and provide clarifications.
17	Singapore	MOE	Annual updates by the HEIs on the progress of their initiatives and actions plans have been useful; The Ministry sets aside funding to the HEIs to pursue quality improvement initiatives following the external validation; The composition of the external review panel comprises both local and international academics and professionals from the industry.

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S. No.	Country	Agency	Good Practice
18	South Korea	KCUE	Self-evaluation; Site visit; Peer-review
19	Thailand	ONESQA	Amicable assessment; Peer review; Transparency
20	Vietnam	GDETA	—