African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM)

What is the AQRM?

The African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM) is *a quality assessment tool for higher education institutions* in Africa that supports continuous quality improvement. The AQRM has been developed by the African Union Commission through extensive dialogue with the African higher education community, including the Association of African Universities. It is an official tool of the Pan-African Quality Assurance and Accreditation Framework (PAQAF) of the African Union. More specifically, aqrm is a self-evaluation/rating tool for higher education institutions (heis) which can be used as a means for the assessment and fulfilment of Part A of the African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA) (*see description below*).

HAQAA2 Initiative Implementing Team

· OBREAL/Global Observatory
  (OBREAL GLOBAL-Coordinator)
· **Association of African Universities** (AAU)
· **European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education** (ENQA)
· **German Academic Exchange Service** (DAAD)

The Implementing Team works with 6 strategic regional partners

Interuniversity Council for East Africa (IUCEA), Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA), African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education (CAMES), National Council for Quality and Accreditation of Education, Egypt (NAQAAE) and National Council for Evaluation and Quality of Higher Education, Mozambique (CNAQ), National Authority for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (AN-AQ-Sup).

The HAQAA2 Initiative also has an Advisory Board of key African regional stakeholder organisations, which it consults regularly. The European Union Commission (EC) and the African Union Commission form the key steering group.

For more information on the AQRM and to download the ASG-QA in four languages, please visit:
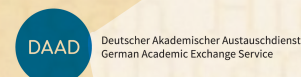
haqaa2.obsglob.org/

The African Quality Rating Mechanism: Usage, features and complementarity with the ASG-QA

HAQAA2

Harmonisation de la Qualité et de l'Accréditation de l'Enseignement Supérieur Africain

OBREAL GLOBAL

DAAD Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst German Academic Exchange Service

enqa.

African Union

THE AFRICA-EU PARTENRSHIP
LE PARTENARIAT AFRIQUE-UE

Objectives of the AQRM

- To establish an African system that will ensure that the performance of higher education institutions can be compared against a set of commonly agreed criteria, taking into account the local context of higher education delivery as well as international good practices.
- To help higher education institutions carry out self-evaluation exercises and support the development of a culture of continuous quality improvement.
- To pave the way for African universities to be globally competitive, while being locally relevant.

AQRM survey questionnaire

The AQRM survey questionnaire consists of three sections

Section 1
Background information which addresses

A the institution's general information
B the institution's profile
C students' profile
D facilities
E faculty/staff profile
F governance and management
G teaching and learning
H linkage with the industry sector
I research and community outreach
J internationalization

Section 2
Self-rating at institutional level comprising key reference points and standards for quality rating that address

A governance and management
B infrastructure
C finance
D teaching and learning
E research, publication and innovation
F community/societal engagement

Section 3
Self-rating at programme level comprised of key reference points and standards on quality rating of programmes that address

A programme planning and management
B curriculum development
C teaching and learning
D assessment
E programme results.

Institutions are asked to rate themselves against standards defined under each reference point, by assigning a value (0, 1, 2, 3, or 4)

0 POOR PERFORMANCE
1 INSUFFICIENT PERFORMANCE
2 SATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE
3 GOOD PERFORMANCE
4 EXCELLENT ERFORMANCE

Based on institutional information submitted, a score is given from 0 to 4 for each criterion. The scores are summed to provide a subtotal for each category of criteria. The rating of institutions or programmes is determined according to the overall total score. There are 49 Institutional level standards and 35 Programme level standards.

How is AQRM carried out?

The AQRM has been defined to have two broad components namely (i) self-completion of the online Questionnaire by the institution; and (ii) Site visit by independent, external panel of quality assurance experts to the institution to verify information contained in the Questionnaire.
In this sense, the completion of the online survey tool should ideally be complemented with a verification visit, conducted by an external expert panel. In the context of the initiative 'Harmonization of Quality Assurance and Accreditation Phase II (HAQAA2)', funded by the EU's Pan African programme (2019-2022), African HEIs will have the opportunity to apply for verification visits.

What is the policy status at the continental level?

The AQRM was adopted by the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMDAF) in 2007. The survey is publicly available online for any interested institutions at the website of the Association of African Universities (AAU), the lead implementing body of the African Union Commission on higher education (https://haqaa.aau.org/activities/aqrm-institutional-evaluations/). It is hoped that all African Higher Education Institutions use the AQRM as a key instrument to assess their quality and support the development of institutional culture of quality.

What are the ASG-QA?

The African Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (ASG-QA) document is a set of standards and guidelines for internal and external QA in higher education. These standards are not meant to be prescriptive, but they rather provide a mechanism for quality attainment in African HEIs and Quality Assurance Agencies (QAAs). They were developed to add value to institutions and QAAs by providing a unified framework applicable to all QA processes, allowing an enhancement-led approach for the escalation of institutional and educational quality. The ASG-QA addresses Internal quality assurance (IQA) – Part A, and External quality assurance (EQA) (Part B) and quality assessment of quality assurance agencies Part C). The latter has inspired a review process for QAAs in Africa, to ensure transparency and common standards regarding their functioning.

AQRM and ASG-QA as complementary tools under PAQAF

AQRM is an instrument to be used by HEIs to gather evidence and assess themselves in terms of their quality provision. The AQRM goes hand-in hand with the African Standards and Guidelines for QA (ASG-QA). It can be used to assess to what extent they are achieving the minimum standards contained in the ASG-QA Part A to ensure quality of provision and quality assurance processes.

AQRM is a complementary tool to the ASG-QA.