Harmonisation for African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation 2

HAQAA 2 Initiative

Training for Experts

12 April 2022
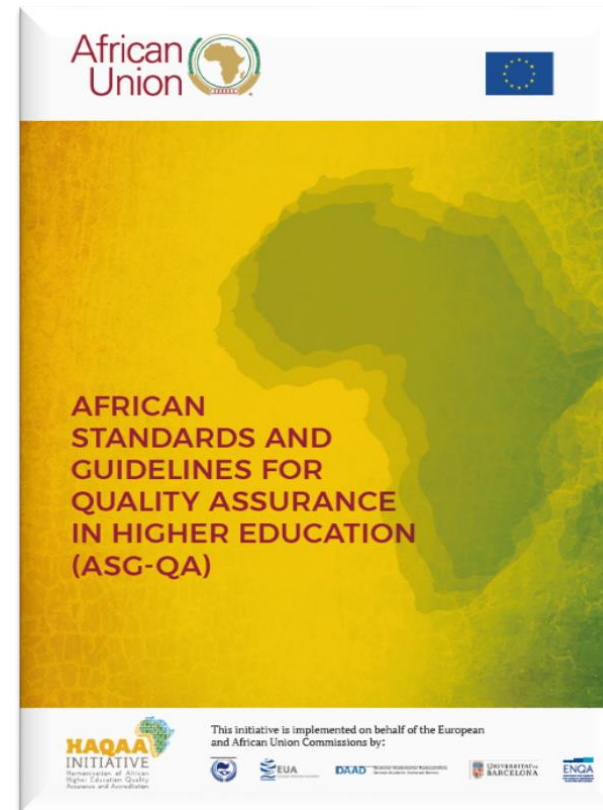
Use and Understanding of the ASG-QA

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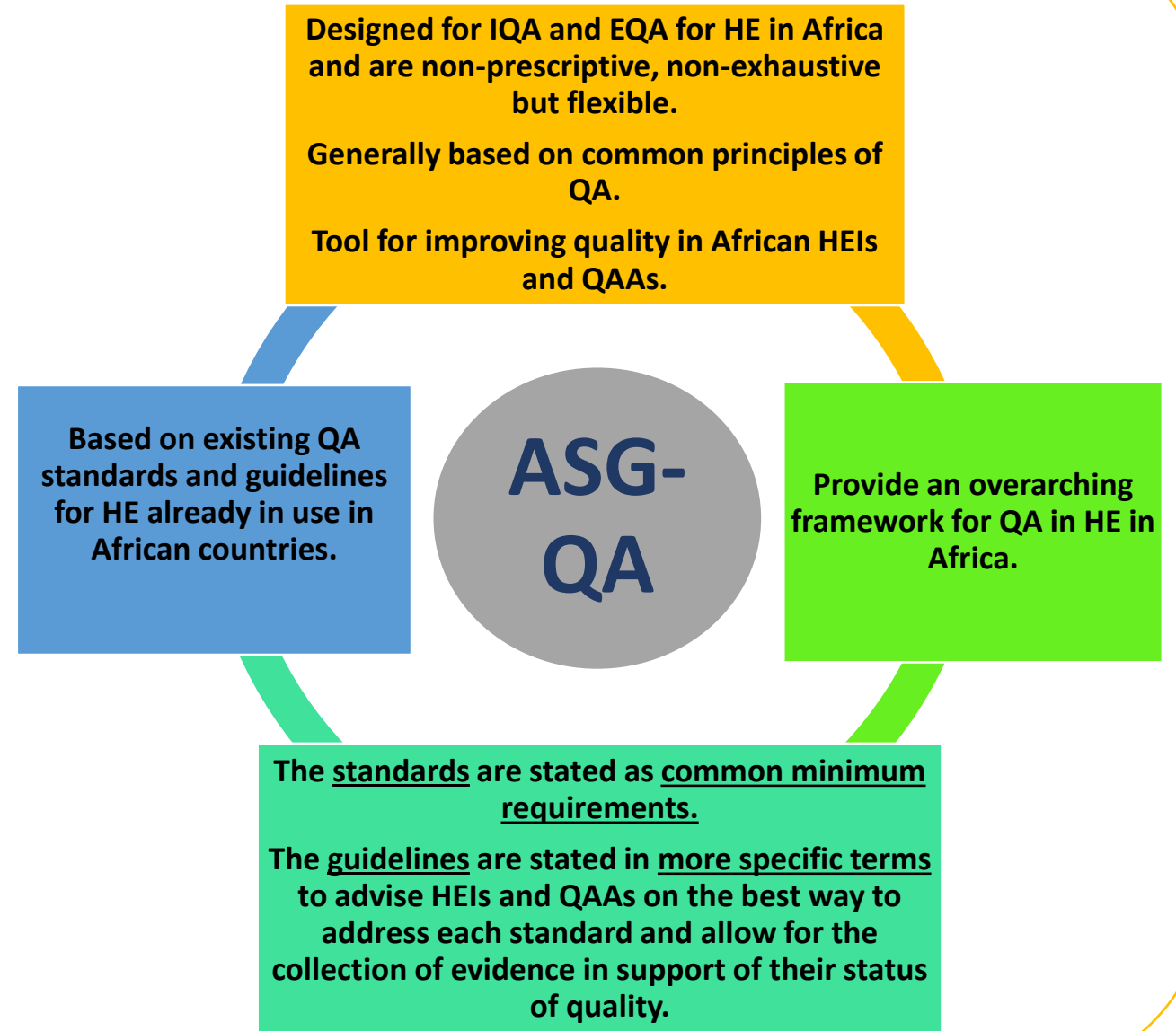Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation

The ASG-QA

- Launched in December 2018.

- Available in the four languages of the African Union, i.e., English, French, Portuguese and Arabic. Accessible at: https://haqaa.aau.org

What are the ASG-QA?

ASG-QA

Designed for IQA and EQA for HE in Africa and are non-prescriptive, non-exhaustive but flexible.

Generally based on common principles of QA.

Tool for improving quality in African HEIs and QAAs.

Based on existing QA standards and guidelines for HE already in use in African countries.

Provide an overarching framework for QA in HE in Africa.

The standards are stated as common minimum requirements.

The guidelines are stated in more specific terms to advise HEIs and QAAs on the best way to address each standard and allow for the collection of evidence in support of their status of quality.

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Purpose

- Support HEIs and QAAs in Africa in **implementing good QA practices** (develop adequate IQA mechanisms, assist them in assessing their own quality through self-assessment, etc.)

- In particular, the ASG-QA is aimed at supporting HEIs and QAAs to:

    - have a **common framework and understanding** of QA amongst stakeholders at continental, regional, and national levels.

    - develop **mutual trust** – facilitate recognition and mobility of students and human resources in Africa.

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Purpose...contd.

- Ensure **quality enhancement** through self-assessment, external peer review and continuous monitoring and evaluation.

- Promote **transparency and accountability** by providing appropriate information on QA to the public.

- Promote a **sustainable quality culture**, alongside the African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM).

- Promote **international competitiveness** of Africa's higher education system.

- Promote **harmonisation of QA in HE** in Africa in collaboration with the AAU and support from the EU.

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Meaning of Harmonisation in the Context of the ASG-QA

Harmonisation:

- Does not mean uniform system for all countries.

- Means shared view on quality, criteria and standards in an equivalent way of assessing quality.

- Is the basis for a continental QA Framework.

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Principles and Methodologies

Principles

- HEIs are the custodians of quality and QA.

- The autonomy, identity and integrity of HEIs are acknowledged and respected.

- HEIs and QAAs can adapt the standards and guidelines to their HE system and context.

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Principles and Methodologies...contd.

Methodologies

- Subjected to consultation with key stakeholders for acceptability.

- Benchmarked with regional QA networks or associations, such as Inter- University Council of East Africa (IUCEA); Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE); and the African and Malagache Councile for Higher Education (CAMES) in Francophone.

- Benchmarked with international standards and guidelines, and existing good practices, e.g., ESG (2015), INQAAHE, etc. – contextualised to suit the African higher education landscape.

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Scope and Application

- The ASG-QA apply to all types of HEIs (and QAAs) in Africa irrespective of the mode of study or place of delivery, including transnational and cross-border delivery.

- Refer always to both undergraduate and postgraduate students, unless otherwise stated.

- Include all staff – academic, research, administrative and technical/support staff, unless otherwise stated.

- Should be applied, taking into account existing qualifications frameworks and credit accumulation and transfer systems in operation in the continent.

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Parts of the ASG-QA

Three Parts:

- Part A: Internal Quality Assurance of HEIs (13 standards)
- Part B: External Quality Assurance of HEIs (7 standards)
- Part C: Internal Quality Assurance for QAAs (8 standards)

NB: The 3 parts are interlinked and together form the basis for an African QA Framework.

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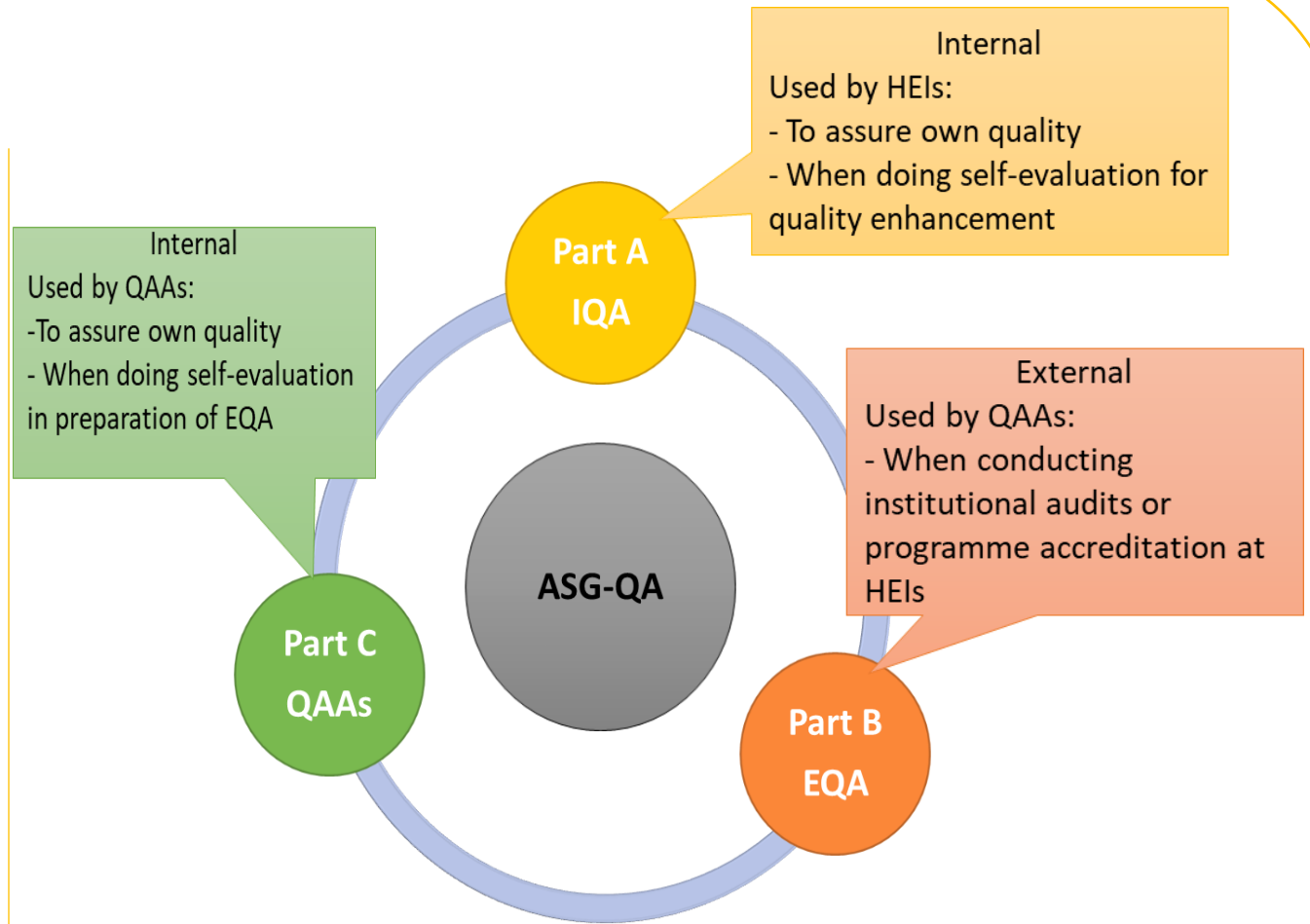
Part A: Internal QA (HEIs)

- Presents standards and guidelines for IQA at the level of HEIs.

- Incorporates standards and guidelines for Open and Distance Learning modes.

STANDARDS	
1. Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives	**7.** Design, Approval, Monitoring and Evaluation of Study Programmes
2. Governance and Management	**8.** Teaching, Learning and Assessment
3. Human Resources	**9.** Research and Innovation
4. Financial Resource Management	**10.** Community Engagement
5. Infrastructure and Facilities	**11.** Information Management System
6. Student Recruitment, Admission, Certification and Support Services	**12.** Public Communication
	13. Collaboration, Staff and Student Mobility

Part A: Interpretation of Standards & Guidelines

Examples

STANDARD 1: Vision, Mission and Strategic Objectives The HEI shall have published vision and mission statements that reflect its commitment to continuous quality enhancement; strategic objectives and clear policies and procedures that are consistent with its vision and mission.	• How does the vision, mission and strategic objectives of the institution reflect its commitment to quality improvement? • How are the various forms of planning (e.g., strategic, institutional, academic, financial, research, etc.) coordinated to ensure the quality of academic performance? • What method is used in the formulation of plans to ensure a collegial approach? • Do the plans promote a high degree of institutional integrity and responsiveness to change and are they known to stakeholders?
STANDARD 2: Governance and Management The HEI shall have clearly stated governance and management structures. This will ensure sound and ethical governance and management, including robust QA practices that support the achievement of its mission and legal mandate.	• How do your governance and management structures look like? • Do the relevant bodies have clearly defined mandates, functions and responsibilities? If so, describe the functions and responsibilities of the relevant bodies. • To what extent are students involved in these bodies?

Part B: External QA (HEIs)

- Describes the standards used for EQA of HEIs.

- Considers the standards and guidelines in Part A for HEIs.

- Ensures that IQA examined is relevant to and efficient for the concerned HEI.

- Ensures that there is consistency between IQA undertaken by institutions themselves and EQA conducted by QAAs.

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Part B: External QA ...contd.

1. Objectives of External QA and consideration for Internal QA

2. Designing External QA mechanisms fit-for-purpose

3. Implementation processes of External QA

4. Independence of evaluation

5. Decision and reporting of External QA outcomes

6. Periodic review of institutions and programmes

7. Complaints and appeals

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Part B: Interpretation of Standards & Guidelines

Examples

STANDARD 1: Objectives of External Quality Assurance and consideration for Internal Quality Assurance External quality assurance shall ensure that the HEI has clearly articulated vision and mission statements, and it shall help the institution ensure the effectiveness of its IQA mechanisms, providing an additional instrument for assessing institutional quality.	• How does the Agency ensure that the HEI has a clearly defined, articulated and publicly available vision, mission and objectives? • How does the Agency take into account the quality policy and procedures developed by the evaluated HEI? • How does the Agency contribute to strengthening the internal QA mechanisms of the HEIs it evaluates?
STANDARD 3: Implementation Processes of External Quality Assurance The standards, processes, and procedures for EQA shall be pre-defined, reliable, published, and consistently implemented for purposes of accountability.	• What means has the Agency taken to ensure that tools and processes are reliable and in line with good QA practice? • What are the steps/phases in the external process based on self-assessment? • How are HEIs informed about the objectives and purposes of the EQA processes?

Part C: Internal QA (QAAs)

- Intended for the IQA of QAAs through self-assessment of their policies, practices, procedures and activities and/or for external assessment/evaluation by another body/peer organisation.

STANDARDS	
1. Legal Status	**6.** Internal Quality Assurance
2. Vision and Mission Statement	**7.** Financial and Human Resources
3. Governance and Management	**8.** Benchmarking, Networking and Collaboration
4. Independence of Quality Assurance Agency	**9.** Periodic Review of QAAs
5. Policies, Processes and Activities	

Part C: Interpretation of Standards & Guidelines

Examples

STANDARD 1: Legal Status The QAA shall be an autonomous legal entity with clearly defined mandate, scope and powers. It will be recognised as a quality assurance agency at a national/regional level.	• Comment on the legal status of your Agency, i.e. if it is established by law, decree, Act of Parliament or any other. • Do you consider your Agency to be recognised in your country and region? Explain why.
STANDARD 3: Governance and Management The QAA shall have clearly defined structures that ensure sound and ethical governance and management, including good practices of quality assurance that support its mission and legal mandate.	• Comment and reflect on the governance structure of your Agency, including but not limited to: leadership, governance bodies and policies that are in place to ensure the proper functioning of your Agency according to the set guidelines and procedures. • Provide information on the staff complement in your Agency in relation to age, gender and academic and professional qualifications.

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Further Uses of the ASG-QA

- Can be used as an interim mechanism by HEIs that do not have existing internal QA systems, guidelines and procedures in place.

- HEIs that have established internal QA systems can use it as a mapping instrument to see how their own systems compare with the ASG-QA, including for the review of their own systems, if so required.

- Agencies that are in the process of developing their own internal QA mechanisms can use the ASG-QA as a benchmarking tool to ensure continental, regional, and national comparability.

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