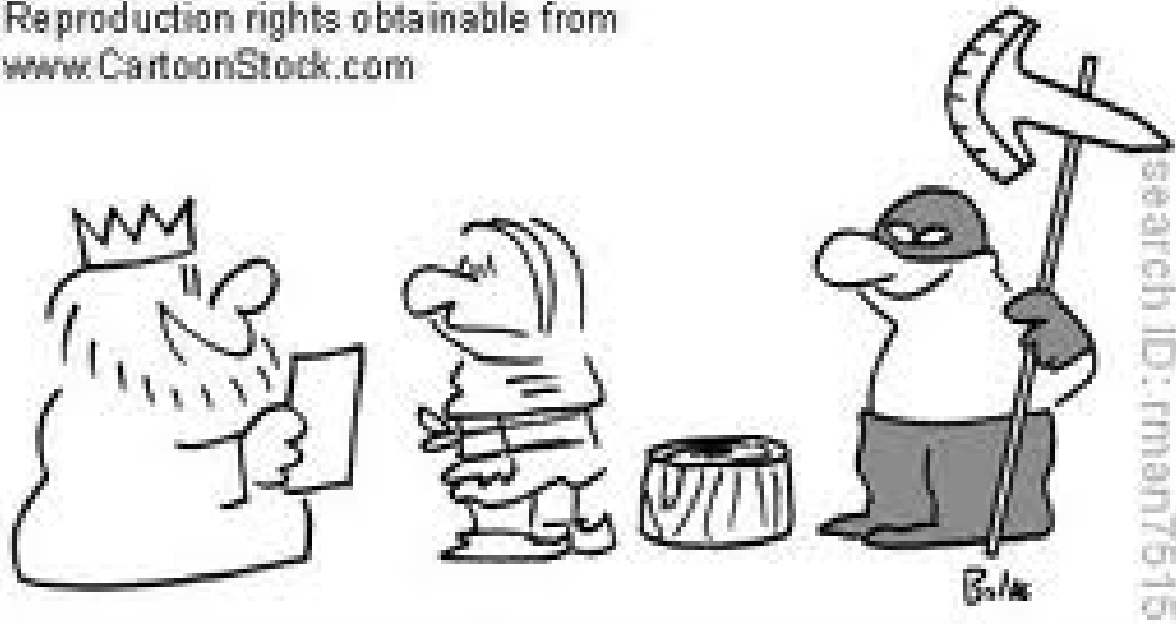


# Quality assurance

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"Mind filling out this  
evaluation form first?"

# Quality assurance

## **Definition:**

All actions taken to ensure that standards and procedures are adhered to and that delivered products or services meet performance requirements

# Quality assurance systems

**Internal quality assurance:** summative or formative

**Internal evaluation** = self-evaluation

organized by the higher education institution itself

as form of quality management or in preparation for external evaluation

self-evaluation or self-assessment is based on:

achievement / output indicators

questioning of students and graduates

moderated interviews with lecturers and students

Outcome: self-study report

The systematic collection of administrative data (achievement indicators) often is applied as summative evaluation for budget allocation, i.e. knowledge balance in Austria

# Quality assurance systems

**External quality assurance:** formativ

based on internal quality assurance self-study report  
commissened by the HE institution

formally organised by an institution outside the higher  
education institution

increased credibility and transparency

Other external quality assurance procedures are commissioned  
and formally organised by external bodies:

ad hoc evaluations for decision finding, i.e. by governmental  
bodies

rankings

# Guiding principles

According to the EUA Policy Statement on Quality and Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, Oct 2010 quality assurance should be based on the following key principles:

1. Primary responsibility for quality assurance lies with universities themselves
2. Institutional quality management requires a comprehensive, all-encompassing approach – *covers all activities of a university: research, teaching and learning, service to society and support services*
3. Quality is contextual – *must take into account the specific institution and the national context*
4. The ultimate goal of all quality assurance – both internal and external - is to enhance quality thus promoting trust among stakeholders.

# Principles for implementation

Internal quality assurance must:

1. Promote shared values and attitudes about quality (i.e. quality culture)
2. Be fit for the purposes
3. Ensure an appropriate leadership and staffing of a quality unit in order to avoid over-bureaucratisation. - The role of leadership consists in communicating the need for these processes, framing them in consultation with the university community – students, academic and support staff – and using their results in the strategic cycle
4. Ensure central institutional data collection and analysis

# Principles for implementation

External quality assurance must avoid undue bureaucratic processes and thus:

1. Seek a balance between autonomy and accountability by promoting institutional audits or evaluations based on an evaluation of internal quality processes.
2. Adopt a fitness for purpose approach respecting national, institutional and disciplinary diversity with the institutional mission statement as a starting point.
3. Demonstrate an improvement orientation that stresses the self-evaluation phase and confidentiality of parts of the process while promoting the transparency of the results.

# Evaluation standards

According to DeGEval, the German Society for Evaluation, evaluations should display the following features\*:

1. Usefulness
2. Practicability
3. Fairness and
4. Accuracy

\* DeGEval – Gesellschaft für Evaluation e.V.(2008) (Hg.): Standards für Evaluation, 4. unveränderte Auflage. Mainz: 10-13.



# Usefulness

1. Identification of involved and concerned persons
2. Clarification of the evaluation purpose
3. Credibility and expertise of the evaluators
4. Selection and extent of the required information
5. Transparency of the ratings
6. Completeness and clarity of reporting
7. Timeliness of the evaluation
8. Utilisation and benefit of the evaluation

# Practicability

1. **Adequate treatment:** the burden of the involved persons should relate to the benefit of the evaluation
2. **Diplomatic approach:** evaluations should be planned and carried out in a way enabling the highest acceptance of the involved persons
3. **Efficiency:** the expenses should relate to the benefit of the evaluation

# Fairness

1. Formal agreements of the duties of the contracting parties
2. Protection of individual rights
3. Complete and fair examination
4. Unbiased realisation and reporting
5. Disclosure of the results to all involved persons

# Accuracy

1. Unequivocal description of the evaluation object
2. Context analysis
3. Exact documentation of the approach
4. Specification of the information sources
5. Valid and reliable information
6. Systematic error checking
7. Analysis of qualitative and quantitative information
8. Justification of conclusions