

# Internal quality assurance: introduction

In the framework of TAM mission to Ukraine  
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### Why work on internal QA?

#### **EUA's Trends surveys**

- Among the most important changes
- Very strong correlation between internationalisation and QA
- Change drivers:
  - Increased competition and collaboration between HEIs
  - Increased cooperation with external (public and private) partners
  - Development of external QA systems and demands for accountability

### Why work on internal QA? (cont)

#### **Policy development**

- The Berlin Communiqué in 2003 stated that:  
“consistent with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself”
- The Standards and Guidelines for QA in the EHEA (ESG) adopted in 2005 took that principle on board
- The ESG 2015 put even more emphasis on Part 1 on internal QA
- Increasing number of systems have moved to institutional level external QA

### The ESG 2015 basics

- Three parts covering
  - Internal QA within HEIs
  - External QA carried by QAAs
  - Internal QA within QAAs
- Focus on learning and teaching in HE, including
  - Learning environment
  - Links to research and innovation
- The ESG are applicable to all types of HE; irrespective of mode of provision or place of delivery

“In addition institutions have policies and processes to ensure and improve the quality of their other activities, such as research and governance.”

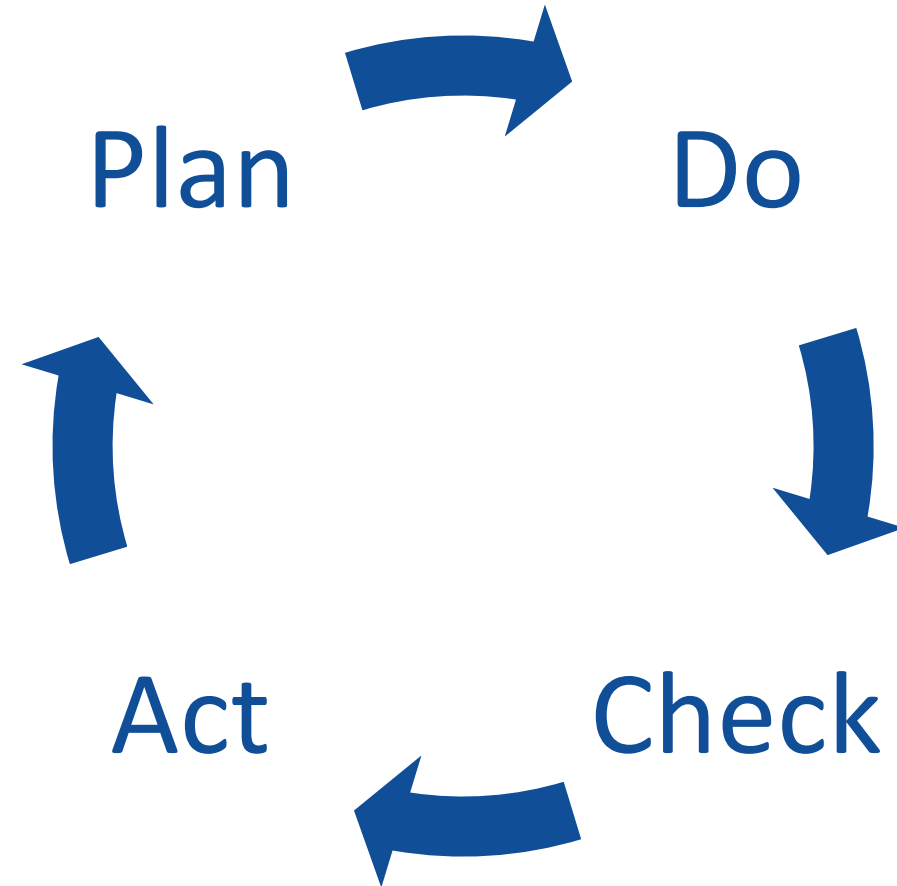
### The ESG in practice

- Standards for quality assurance, not quality
- Usually not direct reference framework for HEIs
- QA agencies more likely to use as reference
- QA agencies' practices and criteria influenced by the ESG
- Part 1 of the ESG embedded in the agency criteria, but not usually copied as such
- Allows use of other QA models – flexible enough
- Makes references to national qualification frameworks, professional and scientific frameworks

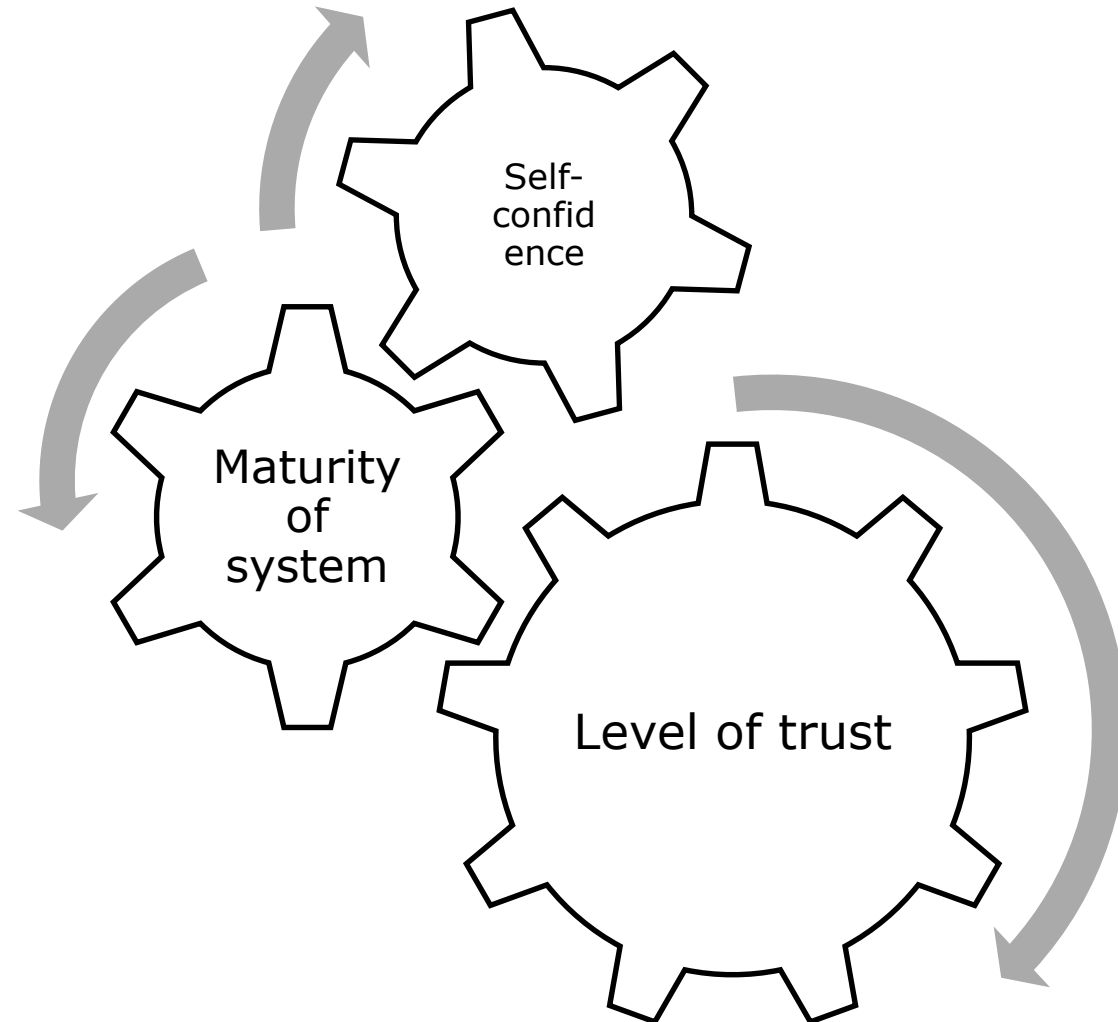
## Part 1: Internal QA

- 1.1 Policy for quality assurance
- 1.2 Design and approval of programmes
- 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
- 1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
- 1.5 Teaching staff
- 1.6 Learning resources and student support
- 1.7 Information management
- 1.8 Public information
- 1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes
- 1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance

To simplify



Three key factors impacting the design of a quality assurance system





### Three steps

#### **Laying the foundation – policy and context**

- The context influences what kind of internal QA policy and system makes sense

#### **From foundation to framework – structures and responsibilities**

- Centralised or decentralised
- Specialised QA staff or additional task for academic staff
- Promote ownership and getting the whole institution on board
- Ensure relevance for institutional community

#### **From framework to action – tools and processes**

- Use a mix of several instruments to ensure good intelligence
- Carefully consider what information is required
- Close the feedback loop
- Invest in formal and informal communication

Two  
(complementary)  
approaches to  
internal QA

### **Aligned with strategic management: QA as a means to support the achievement of institutional goals**

- The ability of the QA system to generate information that is valuable for both internal decision-making and external stakeholders
- The need to link QA to institutional strategic management

### **Explicitly linked to defining and assessing the learning outcomes and ensuring these are aligned to the national qualification framework**

- A strong link between QA and the academic quality of learning and teaching
- Ensuring the quality of student experience and success
- Demonstrate that institutions have put in place robust measures to review their programmes

### Conclusions

Development of internal quality processes is essential to institutions:

- If done well, it will be a positive factor of change and improvement within institutions
- It will (hopefully) ensure that external QA is supportive

### Selected further reading

Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015) <http://www.equip-project.eu/esg-2015/>

EUREQA Moments! Top tips for internal quality assurance  
[http://eua.eu/Libraries/publications-homepage-list/eua\\_eureqa\\_moments\\_web\\_highq.pdf?sfvrsn=4](http://eua.eu/Libraries/publications-homepage-list/eua_eureqa_moments_web_highq.pdf?sfvrsn=4)

EIQAS project: Guide to Internal Quality Assurance (IQA), Based on European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) Part 1,  
<http://files.clickweb.home.pl/homepl42655/file/r7guidetoiga.pdf>

Handbook For Internal Quality Management in Competence-Based Higher Education, <http://www.enqa.eu/indirme/papers-and-reports/associated-reports/IQM-HE%20Handbook.pdf>

A Manual for Internal Quality Assurance in Higher Education – with a special focus on professional higher education, Lucien Bollaert, EURASHE <https://www.eurashe.eu/policy/quality-he/manual-iga-2014/>

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