



Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture



Institut international de
planification de l'éducation



The meaning of quality in higher education

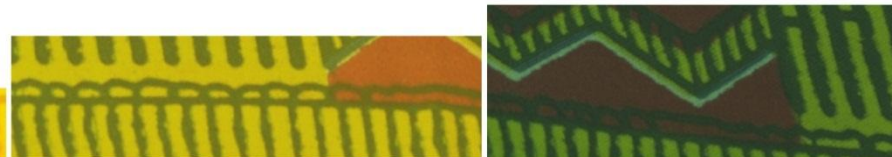
by
Michaela Martin





Structure of the presentation

1. Introduction to the concept of quality
2. Defining of basic terms
3. Approaches to EQA
4. Domains of evaluation



**ACCORDING TO YOU, QUALITY IN
HIGHER EDUCATION IS?**



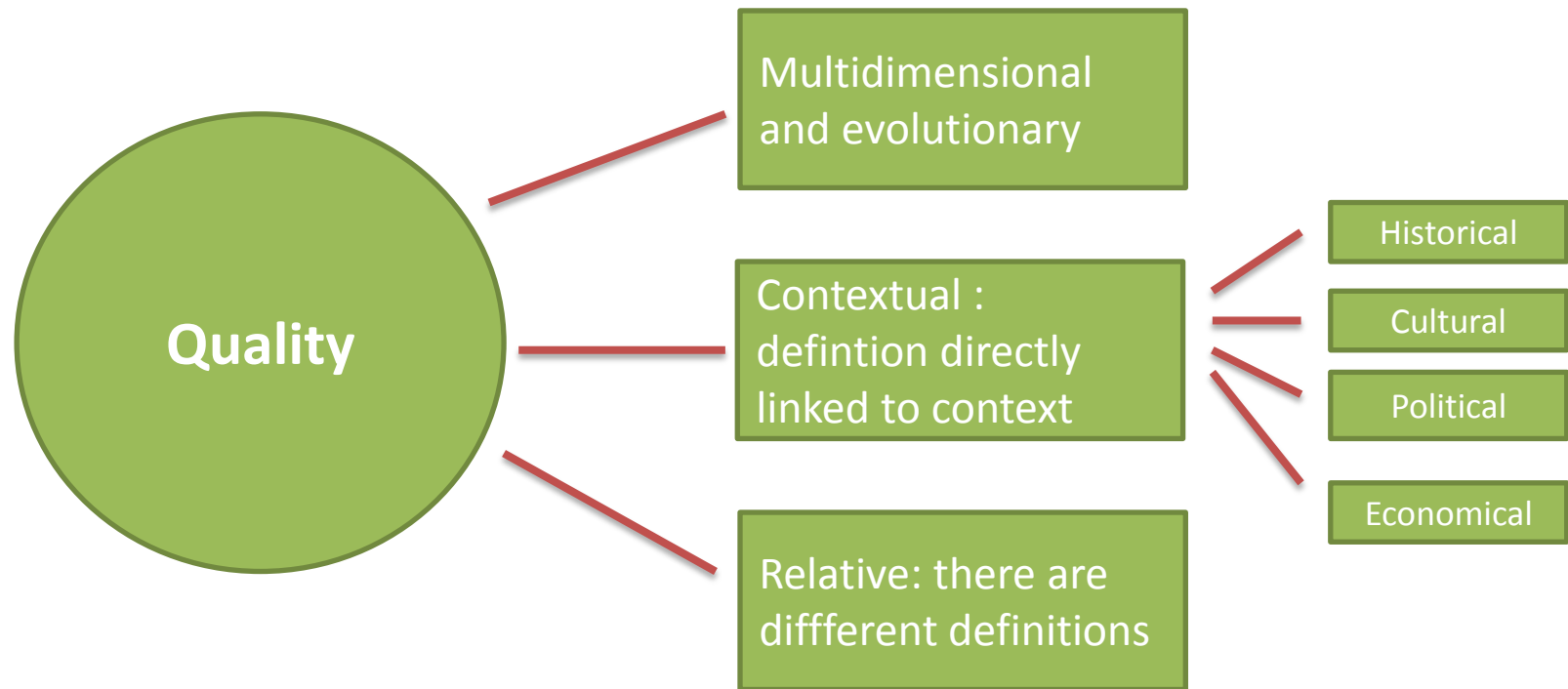
What is quality ?

Categorisation according to Harvey et Green, 1993

- Quality is excellence
- Quality is perfection(zero default)
- Quality is “fitness for purpose”
- Quality is “value for money”
- Quality is transformation/continuous improvement



The concept of quality



Different stakeholder perspectives



Students

- Quality of teaching
- Learning experience
- Learning environment
- Labour market entry



Teachers

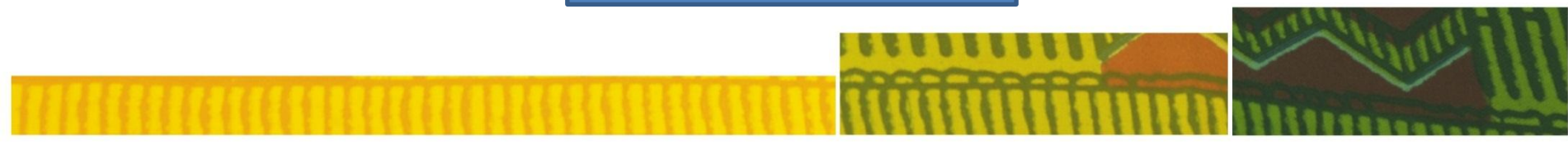
- Originality and productivity of research
- Quality of the research environment



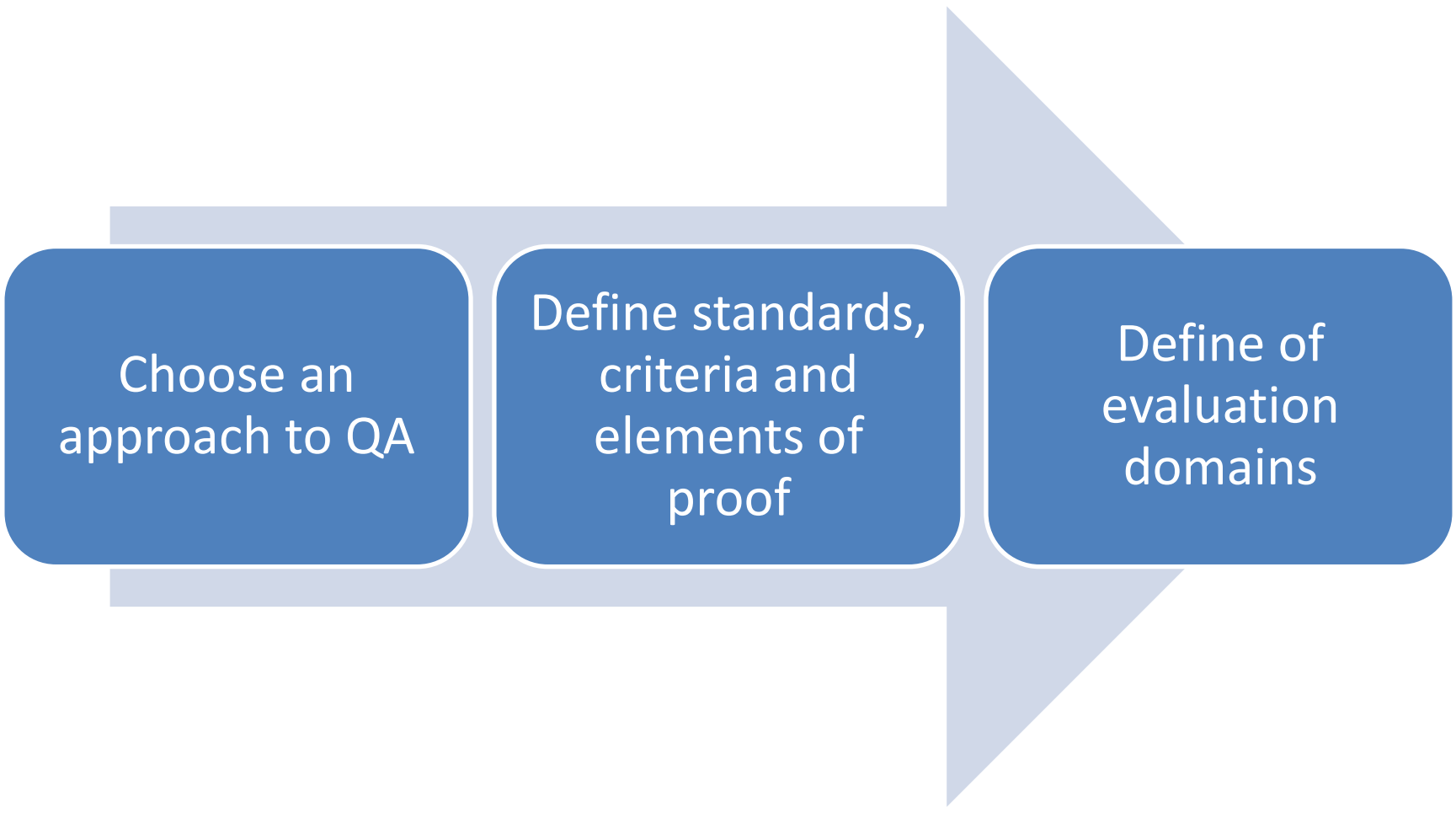
Professional bodies

- Skills and competencies

Consensus on the definition of quality



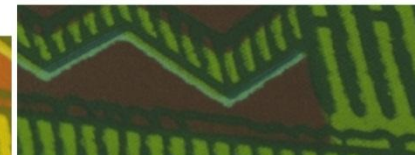
The stages in the definition of quality



Choose an approach to QA

Define standards, criteria and elements of proof

Define of evaluation domains





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A quality standard

- is a statement that specifies implicit or explicit expectations/norms
(INQAAHE glossary)
- can refer to inputs, processes, or outcomes
(Harvey 2006)



Criteria

The specifications or elements against which a judgment of a standard is made

In the higher education context, they are specifications of the [quality](#) of inputs, processes or outputs against which provision or performance can be evaluated.

(INQAAHE glossary)



Indicators and benchmarks

- An indicator is something that points to, measures or otherwise provides a summary overview of a specific concept.
- Indicators can be either qualitative or quantitative. They can be measures of many aspects of quality of an institution or programme.
- A benchmark is a point of reference to make comparisons



Performance indicators (PI)

Performance indicators are used to evaluate the effectiveness or the efficiency of a HEI or its programmes

Indicators of effectiveness

Graduation rate of students
Employment rate of graduates

Indicators of efficiency

Student/staff ratio
Utilization rate of lecture halls
Average number of years to obtain a degree

Exemple of the utilization of the concepts

A standard could be :

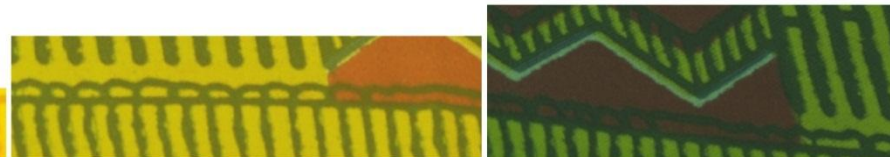
« The content of a teaching programme is periodically reviewed »

A criterion could be :

- The existence of a modality for the consultation with employers and professionals leading to change in the content coverage of an academic programme

The indicators could be :

- Minutes of meetings with the professionals**
- Number of corrective measures derived from exchange processes with professionals**





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What approach to choose ?

- A. Quality based on preestablished standards or « fitness for purpose »
- B. Minimum standards or standards of « good/best practice »



A. Quality based on standards

The quality of a HEI (ou its programmes) are measured on the basis of

PREESTABLISHED STANDARDS



Qualitative

Quantitative

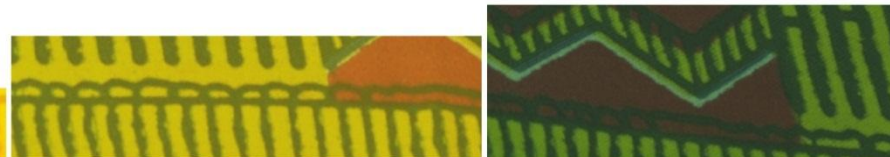


Inde: Example of quantitative standards used by Indian AICTE

- The central library for an admission of 240 students per year will have a carpet area of 400m².
- At the time of establishing a technical institution with three branches, there should be a minimum of 4000 volumes in the Library distributed as below:
 - i. Each branch will have 250 titles with four multiple copies.
 - ii. In subjects like Mathematics, Humanities, Physics, Chemistry, etc. there should be total of 1000 volumes.

USA: Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, New England Association of Schools and Colleges


- Standard one: Mission and purposes: The institution's mission and purposes are appropriate to higher education, consistent with its charter or other operating authority, and implemented in a manner that complies with the Standards of the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. The institution's mission gives direction to its activities and provides a basis for the assessment and enhancement of the institution's effectiveness.
- Standard two: Planning and evaluation: The institution undertakes planning and evaluation appropriate to its needs to accomplish and improve the achievement of its mission and purposes. It identifies its planning and evaluation priorities and pursues them effectively.




Fitness for purpose

The quality of a HEI (or its programme) is measured against **its own objectives**

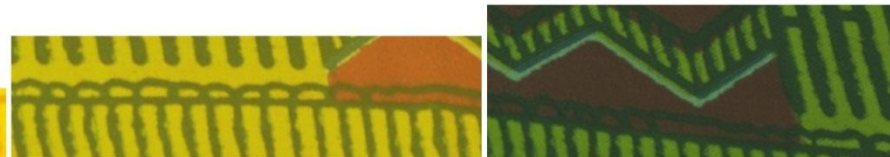
Fitness for purpose



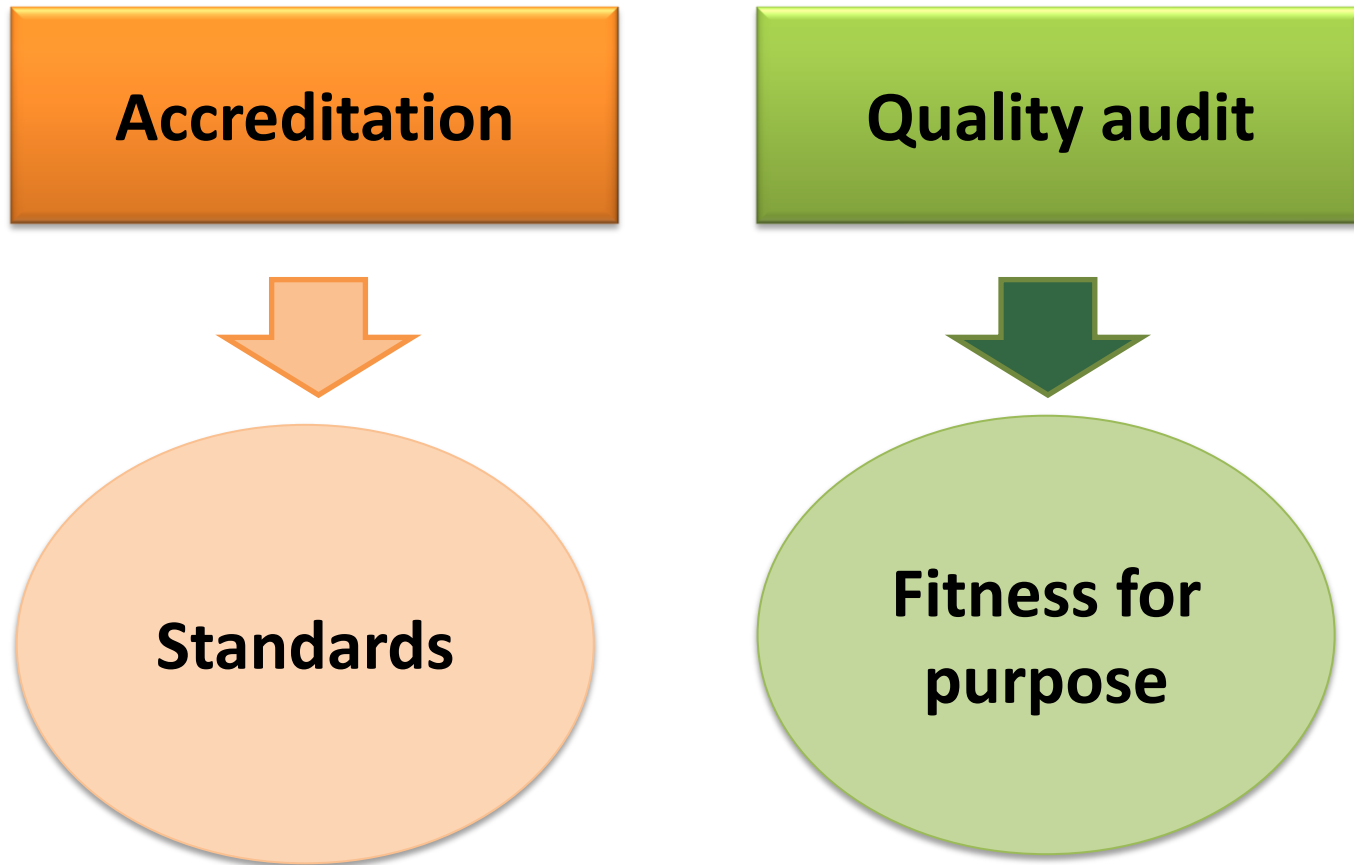
Adequate procedures
implementing the
purpose/objectives



Need of proof to make sure
that the purpose/objectives
have been attained



QA mechanisms linked to the approach



**According to you, what are
the advantages and
disadvantages of these two
approaches ?**



B1. Minimum standards

- Often used for the licensing of a HEI or a programme or its periodic renewal
- Typically a compulsory procedure
- Objective is compliance and accountability
- Meant to eliminate unacceptable levels of quality



■ B2. Good/best practice standards

- Better when minimum standards are already controlled by another mechanism (licensing)
- More commonly associated with a voluntary mode
- Aim at improvement





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Exemple of evaluation domains

- 1. integrity and mission;
- 2. governance and management;
- 3. human resources;
- 4. learning resources and infrastructure;
- 5. financial management;
- 6. student profile and support services;
- 7. curricular aspects;
- 8. teaching-learning and evaluation;
- 9. research, consultancy and extension; and
- 10. quality assurance.

(UNESCO, 2002)

Thanks for listening !

DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ?

