

EQuAM-M

Enhancing Quality Assurance
Management in Morocco

WHITE PAPER

‘Working together to build a national system of Quality Assurance in Moroccan Higher Education’



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‘It is therefore imperative that we seriously and resolutely address this system which we have placed at the top of our national priorities. For this system, which challenges us today, must not only ensure that all our children have equal and fair access to school and university, but also that they are ***guaranteed the right to quality education***, one which has a high level of interest and is adapted to the life that awaits them’.

Excerpt from the Royal address of 20 August 2012

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I. General Context: Challenges in Moroccan Higher Education

As in other countries, higher education in Morocco is facing several challenges related to politics (renewal and sustainability of the elite), economics (impetus for development) and sociology (social mobility). Universities today can no longer claim to ensure the sustainability of these functions that are the driving forces of progress. In the context of globalisation, the role, mission and place of universities are being called into question. The challenges facing the Moroccan University, which must support the reforms and major structuring projects initiated by the kingdom, are centred on training, employability and governance as follows:

Challenges related to academic qualifications:

- revising the national education standards;
- diversifying funding/partnerships for scientific research and facilitating its administrative procedures;
- improving the system's internal and external performance;

Challenges related to employability:

- quality education integrated at regional level and in line with society's current needs.
- a diversified career-centred training offer;
- an efficient course guidance system;

Challenges related to governance:

- university autonomy;
- reducing regional inequalities and social disparities;
- strengthening skills of the university's human resources and student social services.

To meet these challenges, the Moroccan University must adopt strategic tools aimed at connecting to the realities of its environment. Referring to national and international quality standards to perform essential functions is no longer a secondary option; rather, it is increasingly becoming a primary requirement of good governance.

That is why a White Paper summarising the fundamental requirements for implementing a comprehensive quality approach is of such vital importance to the Moroccan University.

This paper covers quality assurance (QA) in higher education institutions (HEIs), which has become a major strategic issue in recent years.

Its primary goal is to provide a ‘quality assurance mode’ that can be used to manage internal quality assurance in higher education institutions, including a benchmark to help higher education institutions position themselves. This quality benchmark is to be designed and tested for the duration of the project. The model shall include the principles, priorities, guidelines and procedures involved in different quality assurance and stakeholder contexts.

This white paper is the backbone of a proposed model for internal quality management. One of the most important aspects of the proposed internal quality assurance model should be its adaptability to the requirements of external accreditation and quality assurance agencies, whether national or international. To ensure its implementation is a success, the management model will naturally require a hybrid infrastructure composed of both qualified academic and administrative staff. In addition, the design, application and implementation of the proposed model will depend on the engagement and participation of all HEI stakeholders, including management, faculty staff, students, administrative staff and the local community.

Another aim of the white paper also aims to put forward a policy statement to HE authorities that incorporates the logic of the model into all future initiatives, thereby encouraging HE institutions to adopt an enhanced quality management and internal management system that is based on continuous improvement.

It is a document that is ultimately intended to be an external communications tool for a range of different stakeholders. Furthermore, with its recommendations on addressing the shared needs of IQA and EQA in Morocco, this white paper aims to inform key stakeholders in Morocco about the gradual implementation of the new QA system, in line with achievable expectations and with a view to improving Moroccan higher education. It will include a 10-year ‘roadmap’ for the progressive ‘evolution’ of QA in Moroccan higher education in order to help develop a culture of quality.

Moreover, since the 2000s, several national and international projects have helped strengthen the spirit of Quality Assurance, such as the following notable examples:

Project	Project objectives
<p>Tempus Project: Quality Evaluation in Higher Education in the MEDA Region Project ID: JEP/30092-2002</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish or strengthen national systems and/or regional networks for quality evaluation in HE based on the pilot evaluation of courses for engineers
<p>Tempus Project: Institutional evaluation of Mohammed V University (Project ID: UM_JEP-32146-2004) 2005-2007</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conduct the institutional evaluation in two phases, internal and external, covering the university's core functions: teaching, research, governance and management; ▪ Develop internal quality assurance mechanisms, in particular to help implement the reform and introduce the LMD system; ▪ Contribute, through this pilot evaluation, to the development of the Moroccan higher education evaluation system.
<p>Tempus Project: University Management by Quality (MUQ) No. UM JEP – 33076-2005</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establishment of a quality approach within its administrative structures, through the establishment of a Quality Management System (QMS) certified compliant to the ISO 9001-2000 standard ▪ Awareness raising and dissemination of the QMS to all Moroccan universities ▪ Training of quality managers by Moroccan universities
<p>Tempus Project, Enhancement Quality Assurance System at Moroccan universities (EQUALISM) 2005-2006</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strengthening skills of Moroccan universities in the area of accreditation and quality
<p>Tempus Project: Training on external evaluation in Morocco (FOReval) 2005-2006</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training the human resources required to implement the new regulatory measures concerning the evaluation and accreditation of higher education programmes and institutions in Morocco

<p>Tempus Project: Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Moroccan Universities, (AQAUM). Project ID: UM_JEP-34005-2006</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Establish quality assurance in Moroccan universities; ▪ Develop QA tools; ▪ Create an inter-university network/work group.
<p>Tempus Project: Strengthening Internal Quality Assurance in Mediterranean Universities (AqiUmed) 2010-2013</p>	<p>The project's specific objective is to set up an internal evaluation process at ten universities in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.</p>
<p>Tempus Project: Strengthening skills in institutional evaluation (RECET) No. 544528-TEMPUS-1-2013_1_MA_TEMPUS_JPGR, 2013-2016</p>	<p>Strengthening skills in Institutional Evaluation Provide higher education institutions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - with guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education; - a skills framework; - a training manual for experts; - a database of trained and certified experts; <p>Institutionalise the functional QA system at all Moroccan universities; Conduct an institutional evaluation of universities.</p>
<p>Institutional Twinning Project within the framework of Morocco-EU cooperation 2015-2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Institutional twinning between Morocco and the European Union, especially Spain and France, within different sectors and primarily in higher education quality assurance and the national research system (NRS) for integration into the European Research Area (ERA)
<p>Technical Assistance Project within the framework of Morocco-EU cooperation (RSAII) 2016/2017</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support for implementing the national agency for the evaluation and quality assurance of higher education and scientific research

<p>HAQAA Initiative: Harmonisation of African Higher Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ support the development of a harmonised accreditation and quality assurance system at the institutional, national, regional and Pan-African continental levels
<p>University Governance Screening Card v.2.0 (2016)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The World Bank started this initiative aimed at building a regional approach to help improve the quality and governance of post-secondary education in the MENA region. For example, the University Governance Screening Card (UGSC) programme was implemented at the Centre for Mediterranean Integration (CMI) based in Marseille, France. The aim is to develop governance indicators, conduct a basic study and create tools to monitor and compare university governance.

II. Reference framework

The Moroccan reference framework is very rich and diverse. It includes legislative and regulatory texts and the following strategic guidelines:

References	Articles
<p>National Education and Training Charter</p>	<p>Lever 16: Improving governance and ongoing evaluation of the education and training system</p> <p>Article 157 stipulates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular evaluation of the education and training system • Educational, financial and administrative audits • Self-evaluation by each educational and training institution • Recurrent survey on the opinions of educational stakeholders and their partners • Communications and publication (Report to parliament, regions, Publication for public opinion).
<p>Law No. 01-00</p>	<p>Article 77:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The higher education system as a whole is subject to a regular

	<p>evaluation of its internal and external profitability and covering all aspects of education, administration and research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- This evaluation will be based on:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Educational, administrative and research auditso Self-assessments by training institutionso Recurrent surveys on the opinions of educational stakeholders and their partners- University presidents present a status report, assessments and future prospects to be discussed by the relevant regional council, each year- The government presents a report before both houses of parliament as it reviews the year's budget bill <p>Article 79:</p> <p>To complete the audits and evaluation, specialised regulatory bodies will be created. These bodies shall have the necessary independence and autonomy, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The national higher education evaluation body- A research panel for the adequacy of higher education with respect to the economic and professional environment <p>Article 81:</p> <p>The National Commission for the Coordination of Higher Education (CNCES); a regulatory body charged, among other things, with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Determining the criteria and mechanisms for reciprocal validation of curricula and accreditation;- Providing an opinion on the creation of universities and/or any other public or private higher education institution;- Coordinating the criteria for admitting and enrolling students in the various training cycles, as well as the standards of continuous evaluation, examinations, defense and acceptance of scientific research;- Promoting scientific research and encouraging excellence
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<p>Law No. 105-12 on the Higher Council for Education, Training and Scientific Research</p>	<p>Article 13:</p> <p>A national evaluation body has been set up within the council to carry out comprehensive, sectoral or topical evaluations of the education and training system, etc.</p> <p>To this end, the national evaluation body:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assesses the overall aptitudes, knowledge and skills acquired by teachers during the training cycles and their monitoring methods; • evaluates the benefits to the national community of the education and training system, based on its financial effort to audit the system and the cost-effectiveness and efficiency requirements of education and training; • assesses the development of internal and external performance of the education and training system and the improvement of the quality of services provided to students; • develops all the evaluation tools that contribute to the proper performance of its functions and supports scientific research in this area.
<p>CSEFRS Strategic Vision 2015-2030</p>	<p>This vision dedicates several levers to the quality of the services provided by educational and training institutions</p>
<p>Departmental strategic plan 2015</p>	<p>The 2015 strategic plan of the department of higher education for scientific research and professional training is part of the strategic plan for the 2015-2030 reform developed by the higher council for education, training and scientific research and is entitled: ‘For parity, quality and promotion at school’.</p> <p>Theme 2 of this department's strategic plan is entitled ‘Promoting quality in order to improve educational performance and match it to the needs of development and the job market’;</p> <p>Theme 4 is dedicated to: ‘Better governance of the higher education system in order to improve its performance’ and in the project of this theme dedicated to ‘establishing the ANEAQ and implementing its</p>

	<p>missions’, with the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Establish a national quality assurance system to international standards;▪ Promote the quality of higher education and scientific research by means of institutional evaluation, evaluation of training programmes, research activities, cooperation projects and doctoral study centres.
<p>Law No. 80-12</p>	<p>Article 1:</p> <p>It is created under the name ‘National Agency for the Evaluation and Quality Assurance of Higher Education and Scientific Research’, a public institution with legal status and financial autonomy, designated after the creation of this Law by the ‘Agency’</p> <p>Article 3:</p> <p>The Agency’s mission is to carry out, on behalf of the State, evaluations of the higher education and scientific research system in order to guarantee its quality</p> <p>To this end, it is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- evaluating public and private higher education institutions and scientific research institutions, taking into account each institution's specialty, including its educational and scientific projects;- reviewing and evaluating training programmes for accreditation or renewal;- evaluating the activities of doctoral study centres and taking stock of the training and research carried out in these centres;- evaluating scientific research and the effectiveness of its structures;- evaluating university cooperation programmes and projects in the field of training and scientific research.

Framework Law No. 17-51	The evaluation and quality assurance component is strongly present. Moreover, this Law focuses on Title 9 (Articles 53, 54, 55 and 56) for evaluation and quality assurance, entitled: ‘Evaluation of the education, training and scientific research system and accompanying measures to ensure quality’.
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In addition to this national normative framework, the HEIs also factoring in international developments in QA, among them the European Standard and Guidelines (ESG), which frames the European experience in the development of best practices. The three parts of the ESG identify key aspects of internal QA within and by the higher education institutions themselves; external evaluation of higher education institutions and the effectiveness of their internal quality assurance; as well as the external evaluation of the quality assurance agencies themselves. These European experiences and the development of best practices could greatly contribute to establishing an increasingly effective internal QA within higher education institutions and in developing a good working relationship between the ANEAQ and higher education institutions and their QA bodies, for their mutual benefit.

The ANEAQ recently published the Evaluation and Quality Assurance Framework for Higher Education in Morocco. It was structured around five units covering the following areas:

- Governance of the institution
- Training
- Scientific research
- Student life and para-university activities
- The institution's service to society

This framework was designed to address the constant changes in the university environment. It is a vital tool in the general supervisory process for quality assurance procedures in academic institutions. It is made up of **38** standards and **146** criteria whose implementation requires identifying several indicators specific to each institution. This model uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures conducted by peer judgment, thus promoting a quality improvement process based on comparative analysis.

Apart from this regulatory framework, documents listing certain best practices for internal and external quality management support the general framework.

This new approach must be applied in the context of the different visions, missions and objectives of each higher education institution and the way the latter manages its various mechanisms for curriculum development, scientific research and social responsibility.

III. Evidence-based activities

In keeping with several projects, prior to these actions, the Erasmus+ project ‘Enhancing Quality Assurance Management in Morocco /EQuAM-M’ was launched and set its overall objective as offering to support Morocco in the development of an effective and efficient quality assurance system specifically adapted to the Moroccan context. The specific objectives of the project are to prepare the following:

- a roadmap for developing a Quality Assurance system;
- a white paper whose aim is to inform key stakeholders in Morocco on the progressive implementation of the new QA system;
- a shared toolkit that responds to the requirements of Internal and External QA in Morocco;
- guidelines on best practices for Quality Assurance management in Moroccan universities and the ANEAQ.

Before starting the various activities aimed at updating information on managing quality assurance, the project planned to make an assessment of Quality Assurance in Moroccan higher education. This assessment should make it possible to better identify governance issues, compare practices, formulate questions and serve as a basis for preparing a roadmap to establish and improve Quality Assurance in Moroccan higher education. It is in this context that, after the project launch meeting that took place in Madrid from March 7 to 9, 2018, a draft questionnaire was drawn up by ANEAQ; considered a major step in this project, the draft was discussed and finalised after several discussions. During the round table discussion held at the Cadi Ayyad University in Marrakech on 10-11 May 2018, a summary of responses to the questionnaire was presented and led to some amendments being made to the questionnaire. The latter is structured around seven key areas translated into 46 items.

- Identification of the university (4 ITEMS)
- Governance (5 items)
- Training offer (3 items)

- Student life (2 items)
- Research (3 items)
- Cooperation (2 items)
- Quality assurance (27 items)

The statistical processing of data made it possible to draw a brief overview of the universities participating in the survey and reveal some common characteristics and several differences:

Areas	Major findings
Context of universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an over-occupancy of the facilities that is reflected in an average occupancy rate exceeding 165%; • a teacher-student and administrative support ratio that is too low compared to international standards;
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universities have a functional, but not institutional, organisation chart; • Universities do not have systematically formalised mechanisms for evaluation practices.
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harmonisation of the accreditation and self-assessment processes for initial training programmes • Diversification of the training offer covering all disciplinary fields; • There are problems with the governance of Continued Training; • Lack of synergy between Initial and Continued Training.
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difference in forms of research structuring at universities; • Difference in the number of Doctoral Study Centres at universities.
QA structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seven out of eight universities have a QA structure (unit, service, etc.) affiliated with the presidency; • The QA structure consists of one or two part-time administrative staff, plus one or two teachers who are qualified in the field; • The relationship between the QA structure and the institutions is not formalised;

<p>Self-evaluation practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All universities have already had experience in conducting self-assessment through their international cooperation projects; • The self-assessment reports were written, but they were not effectively monitored; • Several constraints were detected: establishing a culture of evaluation, getting structures involved, having standards assimilated, resistance to change leading to termination, lack of motivation, and so on.
<p>External evaluation practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six out of eight universities have already had experience in external evaluation as part of their international cooperation projects (either the university or some of its components); • The evaluation reports were not disseminated and action plans for improvement were not developed;
<p>Expectations of universities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support institutionalisation and improved restructuring of existing Quality Assurance structures, and more clearly defined prerogatives, in order to align them with international standards; • Develop procedures, standards, criteria and best practice guidelines in accordance with international standards. • Establish a recurrent and comprehensive action plan that covers all aspects of the University's missions; • Build on the experiences and achievements of international projects in the field of evaluation and QA; • Strengthen human resources skills in the area of evaluation and Quality Assurance through training and practice; • Share QA best practices from European and national partners; • Align the ANEAQ's requirements and performance levels with international standards.

IV. Quality assurance approach

IV.1. Quality assurance concept and model

As part of the EQUAM-M project and in view of the current situation of quality assurance in Moroccan higher education as it has developed within the framework of the project, a 'roadmap' with multiple objectives was drafted to outline the QA approach. It will initially focus on planning the key steps towards developing the quality assurance system for higher

education and scientific research in Morocco, building on what has been achieved and drawing on successful experiences, particularly in Europe.

This roadmap, by underlining the importance of adopting a participatory approach involving all relevant stakeholders, traces the guidelines for the development of a national quality assurance system that meets the specific needs of the Moroccan university, including the following steps:

- Disseminating a culture of QA and of evaluation and its adoption;
- Operationalising ANEAQ's missions;
- Carrying out internal evaluations by Moroccan universities;
- Ensuring complementarity between IQA and EQA;
- Implementing a continuous improvement policy in terms of QA.

The measures contained therein, aimed at ensuring successful implementation of the QA approach, mainly concern:

- Organising awareness-raising campaigns, as a preliminary and essential step towards this quality approach;
- Organising thematic seminars and workshops for the development of the culture of quality assurance within institutions and universities;
- Strengthening the HR skills of ANEAQ, universities and the Ministry in QA;
- Adopting and publishing evaluation and quality assurance standards;
- Revising the legal texts governing higher education;
- Defining needs common to both IQA and EQA;
- Institutionalising self-assessment operations (programmes and institutions);
- Developing internal and external evaluation procedures;
- Institutionalising/revitalising, implementing and structuring of QA structures;
- Creating a network of QA focal points;
- Supporting universities/institutions in the institutional evaluation process;
- Developing partnerships and cooperation to support the implementation of these measures.

Operationalising all of the proposed measures requires the development of recurrent action plans in accordance with the national standard requirements. These action plans, developed specifically for questions of governance, internal and external QA, will outline the essential activities to be planned, their implementation deadlines and the parties responsible for carrying them out. The framework used to implement the QA approach, as set out in the roadmap, can also be used to identify key success factors and risk factors that might promote or hinder implementation of the approach.

IV.2. Quality assurance structures

A quality assurance structure is the permanent entity responsible for developing and implementing the quality approach. This type of entity may be named differently, depending on the institution. This entity produces indicators and surveys. While it serves as a support structure for the evaluation process, it is not the sole stakeholder.

The current trends survey found that 78% of the universities surveyed have a QA structure (unit, service, etc.) that is affiliated with the presidency and composed of one to two part-time administrative staff members plus one to two teachers who are qualified in the field.

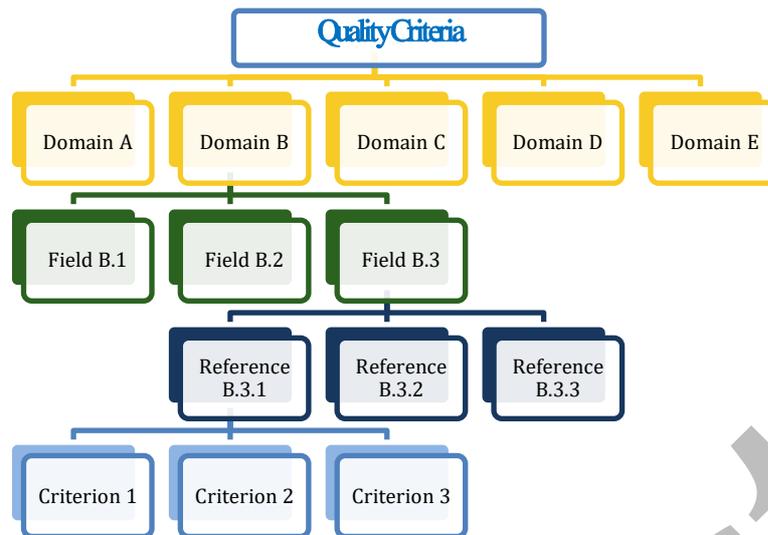
The survey also noted that the relationship between the QA structure and the institutions is not formalised, and that the structure's identified missions are as follows: Preparation of procedure manuals, REC, QMS, self-assessment, monitoring of corrective actions, etc.

IV.3. Quality criteria: National framework for evaluation and QA of higher education in Morocco

The quality criteria written and published in the Official Journal (August 5, 2019) are the result of work carried out under the European Union-funded Technical Assistance project (Succeeding the Advanced Status II Programme, or 'RSA II'), while drawing upon the results of previous projects.

They are also the result of active participation via seminars and in situ meetings with representatives of all stakeholders: several departments of the Ministry of Higher Education and other national bodies, universities, public and private institutions, and experts in these institutions.

The framework is structured into five domains with 15 fields of activity containing 38 references divided into 146 criteria.



Domains	Fields	References	Criteria
Support function governance and management	5	12	47
Training	3	6	32
Scientific research	4	11	36
Student support and student life	3	7	23
The institution's service to society	-	2	8
Total	15	38	146

Iv. 4. Stakeholder involvement: QA – everybody's business

In order for QA structures to perform their tasks, they must receive adequate support from the university's senior management and its decision-making bodies (University Council, Governing Board, etc.). They must operate within a well-defined regulatory framework and with a sufficient number of qualified academic and administrative staff.

Furthermore, and for the QA system to be effective overall, each stakeholder must be made aware of and involved in QA activities based on his or her role within the HEI. Decision-making bodies must show their support for all QA activities, from planning to implementation. Faculty and administrative staff should be encouraged to get involved, with enthusiasm, in implementing QA principles in their day-to-day work.

V. Operationalising the quality approach in Moroccan HE

V.1. Internal QA

Quality assurance both represents the implementation of a series of measures aimed at ensuring that services comply with the requirements of the standard and serves as an effective response to the expectations of stakeholders. To this end, institutions must design effective and efficient implementation mechanisms for their IQA system, mechanisms that will earn credibility when subjected to external evaluation.

Implementing an IQA system requires the following strategic actions:

- establishing a QA strategy approved by the University Council;
- establishing a culture of quality;
- setting up an organisation in charge of institutional QA;
- identifying internal operating processes;
- defining a documentation system that ensures QA traceability: procedures for teaching, research, and administrative and financial management;
- establishing an integrated information system.
- preparing a communications plan;
- implementing an institutional evaluation policy;
- developing an institutional improvement plan.

The QA roll-out requires the development of quality policy implementation tools such as indicators, action plans, overviews and internal evaluation tools.

The recently developed and published Evaluation and Quality Assurance Framework for Higher Education in Morocco outlines the requirements that all institutions must refer to in order to implement their QA, the toolkit developed as part of this same project, EQUAM-M; as its name suggests, it offers a wide range of tools to support bodies in charge of QA, in line with the continuous improvement of the services rendered. In fact, it offers tools for higher education institutions to achieve good governance and guidance for training, scientific research and also all initiatives aimed at student support and societal commitments.

V.2. Institutional evaluation

Institutional evaluation is based on an ongoing and concerted approach by the stakeholders involved. It covers all the institution's missions and activities (governance, pedagogy, research, services to society, etc.), with a view to its strategic vision. In essence, it consists of describing current status, referring to specific quality criteria.

Its primary focus is:

- self-knowledge on the part of the institution and its position at the national and international level;
- decision-making processes, institutional structures and effective strategic management;
- the relevance of a quality approach and the extent to which its results are used in decision-making and strategic planning;
- the establishment of a strong culture of quality and transparency in all areas where the university acts, with a solid emphasis on internal quality assurance mechanisms;
- strengthening internal quality assurance structures to ensure external quality assurance;
- the identification of improvement areas to increase the internal and external performance of the institution and to ensure its sustainable performance and development.

As evaluation is an essential step in any educational reform process, it is of particular interest to:

- students
- teachers
- institutions
- socio-economic partners

VI. Dissemination and communications

Any major change process must be supported by effective and controlled internal and external communications. It is an indispensable building block in each and every quality management system and is based on cross-cutting principles that contribute to the success of a quality approach and its sustainability.

Communication is linked to management, listening, courtesy and recognition. It should be dynamic and scalable. The institution must determine the internal and external communications needs required for a successful quality management system, one which focuses on harmonisation as a strength in terms of the approach.

In the context of the EQUAM-M project, communications takes precedence when it comes to helping set up the quality policy, in both internal and external aspects; as such, it should highlight objectives along with essential expectations and needs.

The communications plan must be drawn up, providing for the different communications schedules and their coordination, all higher education stakeholders, and the methods and tools to be employed. In practical terms, this means establishing a communications matrix that outlines the main characteristics of the different communications methods:

Steps: launch, diagnosis, implementation, self-assessment, external evaluation, accreditation, reviews, etc.;

Objectives: Signal the beginning, involve stakeholders, inform, disseminate achievements, etc.;

Stakeholders: President, Vice-President, Secretary-General, Quality Manager, Management Team, Deans and Directors, etc.;

Target audience: Steering Committee, Management Team, All Teaching Staff, All Administrative Staff, students, the community, etc.;

Methods/tools: Meetings (management reviews, awareness-raising meetings), internal and external dissemination tools (bulletin boards, group messaging, etc.), presentations, platforms, website, social media, etc.

Deliverables: Evaluations, reports, reviews, etc.

In order to get all staff at a higher education structure involved in the Quality approach, communication is seen as a strategic lever that is based on reciprocity and exchange; it is both upstream and downstream.

Process mapping is a tool used to synthetically formalise the process approach. Mapping can also serve as an in-house of communications tool.

Attention should also be paid to the language used when drafting and publishing written communications. Diagrams, graphs and flowcharts are common. Recipients of this information do not always have the culture necessary to read this information. Contrary to popular belief, a graph is not always easier to read than a standard text. When we want to communicate effectively, we must also use language that recipients can understand; we must also keep such messages to a minimum and stick to only what is essential.

Conclusion

The Erasmus+ EQuAM-M project has come at a crucial time: it consolidates joint efforts and builds on strengths to support those working in Moroccan higher education quality assurance, building a national quality assurance system in higher education. As a result, it is an essential condition for improving the performance and efficiency of the system, with the commitment of all project partners, i.e. the Parent Ministry, the ANEAQ and universities.

The guidelines outlined in this white paper, along with the tools that will be developed during this project such as the toolkit and the code of best practices for QA management, is intended to help improve the management of internal and external quality in higher education, through the involvement of all stakeholders.

This white paper frames the entire process for implementing educational QA through guidelines for the quality approach, its model and implementation structures, fundamental criteria, key stakeholders and methods for ensuring their ongoing commitment, effective mechanisms to achieve successful dissemination and a solid integration of quality culture; it is thus the backbone of the adopted model for quality management, which enables higher education institutions to meet the requirements for good governance.

It is a document that continues to evolve and can be used to keep up with current and ongoing changes in the Moroccan higher education landscape, as well as its entire social and economic environment.

Fundamental concepts and terminology

Accreditation: A quality evaluation procedure for the approval of a programme of study (programme accreditation) or an institution (institutional accreditation) that is carried out by a recognised independent body or external experts. Accreditation ensures that the training or institution meets quality expectations pre-defined according to quality standards.

Quality Assurance: Processes and mechanisms that can be used to evaluate the extent to which objectives are being met and to reach consensus on methods aimed at the continuous improvement of the institution's operations.

Quality audit: A formal cyclical process that analyses the quality of a higher education institution or its sub-units, by independent peers, to ensure compliance with quality data requirements and to recommend any necessary changes.

Certification: A procedure by which a recognised third party gives official written assurance that a higher education institution, training programme or service complies with specified requirements.

Criteria: A criterion is a qualitative or quantitative element that is used to assess the extent to which a framework has been implemented. Practically speaking, criteria are evaluated on the basis of evidence that is judged at the evaluator's discretion.

Quality approach: A quality approach allows a quality system to be implemented at the level of an institution. It may include modelling of the institution's activities and a description of those activities in a set of processes. These processes are then combined with procedures that outline the activity operating procedures. Indicators associated with these activities can be used to analyse their performance on an ongoing basis. This approach mobilises institutional stakeholders and is generally carried out with the help of a quality unit or service, especially those in charge of leading the process.

Higher education: All types of curricula, training or research programmes that are recognised as being part of a higher education system by the competent authorities of a Party;

Higher education institution: an institution providing higher education and recognised by a Party's competent authority as part of its higher education system;

Evaluation: A systematic audit process that determines the extent to which the institution is capable of meeting specific requirements and achieving specific objectives; it compares the institution's performance level to current standards or the institution's expectations. The purpose of the evaluation is to identify the institution's strengths and weaknesses. The public nature of the reports in this evaluation also helps motivate the institution to address any issues.

Internal evaluation: a self-assessment conducted by the institution, formalised in a report called the 'self-assessment report' which is addressed to a committee of external experts.

External evaluation: an evaluation conducted by experts outside the institution, who have no interests that might affect their judgement.

Framework: the set of values and/or objectives that the institution sets itself as part of its missions in order to meet the legitimate expectations of its users, partners and staff. The framework can be divided into a set of standards and criteria accompanied by rules of interpretation.

Standard: A standard means a value that the institution gives itself to action. Therefore, concrete actions that will contribute to the best possible level of achievement for this value must be identified. From a practical point of view, a standard is a goal to be achieved. Ideally, this standard is the result of a consensus within the institution.

Evidence: Evidence is the data used to determine the performance level for a standard, which equals the acceptable level of performance. Evidence can be qualitative and quantitative. It must be collected on a regular basis. To do this, the institution is encouraged to provide empirical data by, for example, developing a statistical system.

Higher education programme: a post-secondary training cycle recognised by a Party's competent authority as part of its higher education system and whose success provides the student with a higher education qualification;

Project

Acronyms used

QA: Quality assurance

IQA: Internal Quality Assurance

EQA: External Quality Assurance

ANEAQ: National Agency for Higher Education and Scientific Research Quality Evaluation

CED: Doctoral Study Centre

CNCES: National Commission for the Coordination of Higher Education

CSEFRS: The Higher Council for Education, Training and Scientific Research, Morocco

HE: Higher Education

HEI: Higher Education Institution

EquAM-M: Enhancing Quality Assurance Management in Morocco

ESG: European Standard and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher
Education Area

LMD: Licence-Master-Doctorate system

QAF: Quality Assurance Framework

QMS: Quality Management System

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