

Setting up and managing quality assurance units in higher education institutions

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Main argument of the presentation

- Setting up and managing quality assurance units in higher education institutions requires a sustained *quality culture embedded in an institutional culture*.



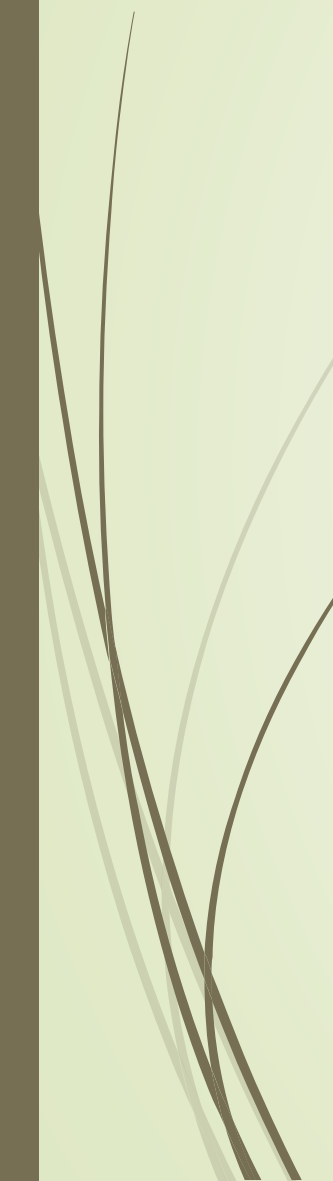
Meaning of Quality Assurance

- ▶ Systematic management and assessment procedures adopted to ensure achievement of specified quality and to enable key stakeholders to have confidence in the management of quality and the outcomes achieved

Harman, 1998:346



Reasons for the rise of Quality Assurance

- Higher Education for economic and political development
 - Increase in the social demand for higher education
 - Legislation allowing development of a private higher education
 - Curriculum reform and shifts from traditional (mode 1) to applied knowledge production (mode 2)
 - Comparability of qualifications on the continent
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Institutional culture

- “ ‘Sum total’ effects of the values, styles of interaction, collective memories – the ‘way of life’ of an institution, known by those who work and study in the university environment, through their lived experiences”

Steyn and van Zyk (2001, p. 20)



Quality culture in an institution

- An institution's value system that supports an enabling environment for achieving quality and its enhancement
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Quality Assurance Mechanisms and institutional culture

- If not carefully embedded in an institutional culture quality assurance can have adverse implications - Two examples:
 - 1) demands for compliance and accountability could lead to resistance,
 - 2) 2) top-down approaches could lead to an un engaged policy framework that fails to contribute to “quality thinking in practice” within an institution.

See Zulu et al., (2004)

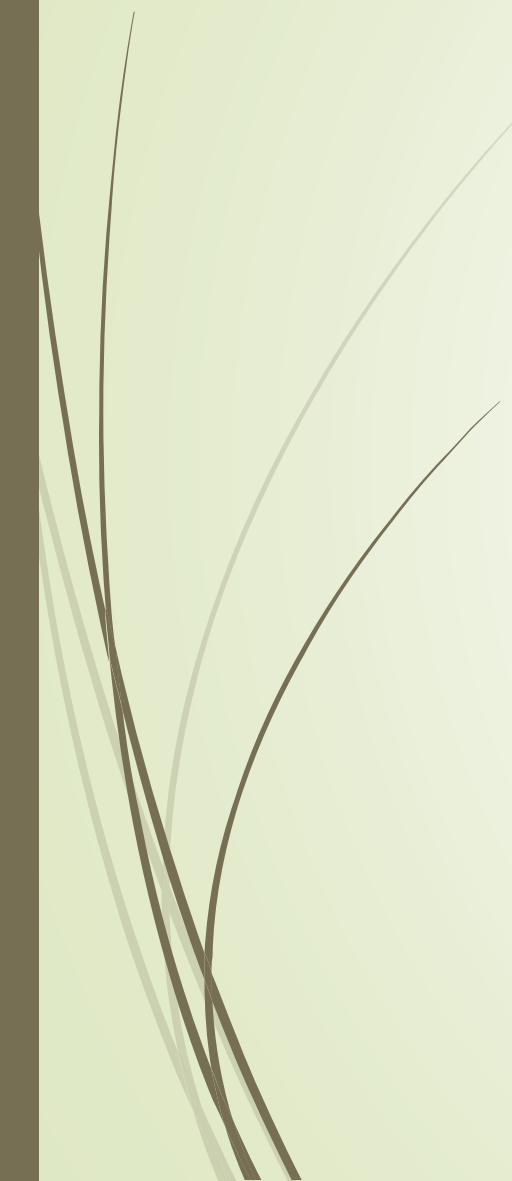
Structure quality Assurance Units

Any of the following could head the unit depending on desired structure:

- Directorship at the unit
- Senior university management
- Academic board,
- Academic committee or academic senate
- Specialist committee or board, set up by governing body, senior management or senior academic body



Roles of the Quality Assurance Units

- Lead in reviews and assessments such as self-evaluation, peer reviews by panel of experts, accreditation and so on.
 - Produce (with the help of leadership) proper policy guidelines
 - Relate to the national policy framework
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Sustaining Quality Culture – bigger picture

- ▶ Quality Assurance part of the strategic positioning of university
- ▶ Information flow is crucial
- ▶ Well planned execution of Quality Assurance
- ▶ Resources should be provided
- ▶ Staff capacity development
- ▶ Connecting programmes and courses to missions and visions



Zikomo kwejinji
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THANK YOU FOR LISTENNING