

Standards, Principles, and Procedures Governing the External Quality Assurance Agency (EQAA)

The EQAA is a key player in maintaining and sustaining the level of excellence or quality of education. The following principles and standards underpin and contain a shared set of values, good practices, and indicators, which shall guide the EQAA affiliated with the Federation of Accrediting Agencies of the Philippines (FAAP) to ensure its professionalism, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, and integrity:

1. The EQAA has clear statements of vision, mission, and core values.

Indicators:

- Statements of vision, mission, and core values are clearly articulated
- The statements ensure the fitness of the EQAA to achieve the aims and objectives set for it
- Stakeholders are involved in the formulation and periodic review of the vision, mission, and core values
- The statements are properly disseminated and understood by the stakeholders
- A mechanism for review and evaluation of the statements are in place
- Periodic review of the vision, mission, and core values are done

2. The EQAA is supported by a legal basis, has government authority to operate, and is recognized by government agencies regulating Philippine education.

Indicators:

- Registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)
- Recognition by the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education
- Compliance with regulatory requirements, e.g. BIR, SSS, DOLE, PhilHealth, local government License

3. The EQAA has independence in its operations and its decision-making processes and its judgments are free from internal and external pressures.

Indicators:

- Demonstrate independence, act autonomously and have full responsibility for its operations and outcomes of its operations without third party influence
- The operations of the EQAA are independent of any parent or sponsoring organization, including independence concerning accreditation standards, policies, and procedures

- There are clearly defined standards, processes and procedures, and policy statements that are contained in a manual of accreditation
4. The EQAA has a legal and transparent system for electing or appointing the members of its Board of Directors/Trustees.

Indicators:

- A clear legal document that defines the election or appointment of the Board of Directors/Trustees
 - Guidelines and procedures for election or appointment of the Board of Directors/Trustees are defined
 - Elections or appointments are done following the EQAA's constitution and by-laws and duly approved guidelines
5. The EQAA policies and management practices are based on the principles of good governance, transparency, and public accountability.

Indicators:

- A mechanism to inform the public of the reasons for accreditation actions (to grant, reaffirm, deny, withdraw or defer accreditation or award candidacy or pre-accreditation or to impose notice, warning, show cause, or probation status)
 - A defined procedure is in place to take timely action to enable underperforming institutions or programs to achieve or maintain accredited status
 - Observance of procedural due process in accreditation activities is followed
 - Reliable, useful, pre-defined, consistently implemented, and published processes are defined
 - There are clearly defined standards, processes, and procedures contained in a manual of operations
 - Participation of key stakeholders in the formulation of the manual is ensured
 - The manual is disseminated to key stakeholders
 - The process to review, update and continuously improve the manual, based on current trends and developments and latest government requirements are in place
6. The EQAA keeps abreast with new developments and innovations in quality assurance, as part of its internal continuous quality improvement system.

Indicators:

- Affiliation with QA associations
- Active participation in the activities of QA associations

- Adherence to the principles of the plan do check and act cycle (PDCA), or 360-degree evaluation
 - Presence of an internal quality audit mechanism, unit, and processes related to defining, assuring, and enhancing the quality and integrity of the activities of the EQAA
 - Ongoing attention to appropriate innovation
7. The EQAA has sufficient resources to support its operations, i.e., manpower, facilities, technology, and finance.

Indicators:

- Sufficient and qualified human resources
 - The organizational chart to show the workforce, positions lines of authority and communication
 - Adequate, well-maintained, and safe facilities
 - Adequate information technology infrastructure
 - Budget including a defined budget planning process
 - Sustainable financial position and cash flow streams
 - Externally audited financial statements
8. The EQAA collaborates with key stakeholders, both national and international.

Indicators:

- Active engagement and on-going activities with member institutions
 - Affiliation with local and international QA associations
 - Joint projects with stakeholders, e.g. research, standards-setting and review, etc.
 - Duly documented terms of agreement, i.e., MOA, MOU
9. The EQAA has a reliable system for planning, controlling, auditing, and assessing all processes of its operations and for projecting and managing the present and future risks and opportunities.

Indicators:

- Clear strategic plan/roadmap to guide EQAA operations
 - Defined planning process
 - Internal and external audit mechanism
 - Presence of a system for measurement and knowledge management
10. The EQAA keeps its publics informed of its current policies, procedures, criteria, standards, and assessment results.

Indicators:

- Published manual of operations

- Participation of key stakeholders in the formulation of the manual of operations
- Deployment of the manual to key stakeholders
- Existence of website and other social media platforms for information dissemination

11. The EQAA ensures the professional development, safety, and welfare of its workforce.

Indicators:

- Competitive salary and promotions scheme
- Adequate fringe benefits, i.e., beyond the government requirements
- Availability of scholarships for continuing education of the staffs
- Existence of a staff development program
- Existence of a safety/crisis management committee
- Conduct of emergency drills and availability of emergency kits in the event of emergencies and national calamities, e.g. first aid kits, fire extinguishers, personal protective equipment

12. The EQAA submits itself for evaluation of an external quality assurance body.

Indicators:

- Evaluation from external local or international QA body, i.e., external review at least once in every five years
- Updated certification from an external QA body
- Evidence of compliance with the observations and recommendations of the QA body
- A mechanism for critical self-evaluation of the performance, standards, policies, and impact of the EQAA

FAAP Principles of External Quality Assurance Process (EQA)

The EQA process is the accreditation and related activities conducted by the EQAA. This process is undertaken to assure the quality of the programs and the institutions that voluntarily seek accreditation from these agencies. The process considers primarily the interest of the students, the stakeholders of the institution, and society at large. It also helps the school to continuously develop its quality improvement initiatives over time. The following standards on the EQA process are defined to show alignment in the accreditation and related activities of the EQAAs under FAAP and serve as guidelines to improve current practices.

1. The interest of students and the school's stakeholders should be at the forefront of the EQA process.

Indicators:

- The EQA process is designed to promote the interest of students and the school's stakeholders
- Specific standards and criteria are defined to promote their interests
- Students' and stakeholders' involvement in the EQA process is assured.
- The extent to which the EQA activities promote the interest of students and the school's stakeholders is periodically evaluated

2. The EQA process should recognize and support the IQA process of the institution.

Indicators:

- The EQA process involves the assessment of the IQA system adopted by the institution
- The EQA standards and criteria are defined to strengthen the IQA system of the institution
- Outputs from the institution's IQA system are used as evidence to prove compliance with EQA standards and criteria
- The relevance of the EQA standards and criteria developed by the EQAA with those of the institutional practices are regularly reviewed

3. The EQA process should be designed specifically to ensure its fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for it while taking into account relevant regulations.

Indicators:

- The EQA process is designed to achieve the agency's stated aims and objectives

- The EQA process assesses how institutions are attaining their respective vision and mission, how they comply with regulatory standards and criteria, how they promote the achievement of quality outcomes, and how they respond to their key stakeholders
 - The EQA process is periodically evaluated
4. The EQA process normally includes a self-assessment done by the institution itself, an external assessment done by independent accreditors which usually involves a site visit, a decision-making process on the result of the assessment, feedback on the accreditation decision, and follow-up procedures.

Indicators:

- An EQA process is defined in a manual or guidebook
 - The process is supported by policy statements with exceptions duly noted and approved by the appropriate authorities of the EQAA
 - The various elements of the process are regularly evaluated for improvement
5. A set of well-defined and published standards and criteria are used as a basis for the outcomes or judgments made as a result of the EQA process.

Indicators:

- Standards and criteria are defined and published by the EQAA
 - These standards and criteria are used as the basis for making judgments regarding the accreditation status of a program or an institution
 - Survey instruments are crafted based on these standards
 - A defined process is in place in the development and review of these standards
 - The standard-setting and review process is regularly evaluated for improvement
6. The standards and criteria are developed involving the participation of relevant stakeholders, benchmarked with local and international good practices, and are periodically reviewed.

Indicators:

- A standard-setting process engages various stakeholders
- Benchmarking and referencing activities are regularly done in the formulation and review of new and existing standards
- A set time is defined for the regular review of existing standards and criteria

7. The external assessment should be done in an objective, consistent, and transparent manner.

Indicators:

- The assessment is planned with clearly defined processes promoting objectivity, consistency, and transparency in the conduct of the accreditation
 - Assessment instruments are developed based on the EQAAs defined standards and criteria, and used in the conduct of assessment
 - A set of evidence is required to substantiate claims made by the institutions as regards the attainment of a standard or criterion, and are used by the accreditors in conducting the external assessment
 - The conduct of the assessment is regularly reviewed for improvement
8. The assessment should be carried out by a group of external accreditors who are provided training at regular intervals.

Indicators:

- External accreditors are tapped to do the external assessment
 - The duties and responsibilities of the assessors are defined including the process of their selection
 - A process is in place to ensure a match between the expertise of the accreditors with the object of the assessment
 - There is a training program provided by the EQAA regularly
 - The performance of the accreditors during visits should be regularly evaluated
9. A mechanism is in place to ensure the professionalism and ethical conduct of external accreditors.

Indicators:

- Code of professional conduct and code of ethics are defined and published
- Policy against conflict of interest is defined and enforced
- Policy on securing proprietary and personal information is defined and enforced.
- Policies to promote professional and ethical conduct among accreditors are regularly evaluated

10. The assessment result should be clear and made accessible to the institution being evaluated and the report should normally include a context description (to help locate the higher education institution in its specific context); a description of the accreditation procedure undertaken, evidence, analysis, and findings; best features and recommendations for follow-up actions; and a conclusion containing the accreditation decision.

Indicators:

- There is a standard format in the writing of the formal report
- The report goes through a transparent process of review and approval
- The report is given to the school who underwent the EQA process
- The process involved in crafting, publication, and communication of the assessment results is periodically evaluated for improvement

11. An appeal mechanism is established and accessible to all.

Indicators:

- An appeal process is defined and published
- The appeal process is regularly reviewed for improvement

12. The EQA process is assessed on a cyclical basis to promote continuous improvement.

Indicators:

- A mechanism to assess the agency's EQA process is in place
- The assessment is periodically done as part of the agencies planning process
- Controls are in place to assure that improvements proposed are implemented

Internal Quality Assurance System (IQA)

The creation of an Internal Quality Assurance System is the institution's initiative to assess its quality performance as it translates its vision/mission and goals into desired learning outcomes supported by the proper learning environment. The following statements/principles provide guidelines in developing an Internal Quality Assurance System to further enhance and sustain the quality of program offerings and the operations of an institution. The EQAAs under FAAP should consider the following IQA standards in the development of their respective standards and criteria which are used in accrediting programs and institutions.

1. Compliance with the Minimum Standards set by government regulatory bodies (CHED, PRC, DepEd, etc.) in the different academic programs offered by the institution.

Indicators:

- Certificates of Recognition issued by government regulatory bodies are in existence
- Strategies and policies in curriculum review and development are in place
- There is evidence that the program offerings comply with government regulations
- The minimum standards form part of the standards and criteria used by the EQAAs in doing accreditation work.

2. Internal Quality Assurance System supports the creation of a Quality Assurance office with qualified personnel/staff tasked to handle the Quality Assurance Management System of the institution.

Indicators:

- There are an existing organization and the management structure of the Quality Assurance office with clearly defined duties and responsibilities that have been disseminated to all sectors of the academic community.
- The development plan of the Internal Quality Assurance Office has been defined.
- The meetings and activities of the Internal Quality Assurance Office are documented.
- There is an existing manual of operations of the office which is regularly reviewed for improvement.

3. The quality Assurance Management System of the institution is designed to strengthen the uniqueness of the institution based on its vision and mission.

Indicators:

- There are constitution and by-laws that define the unique character of the institution
 - The school's brochures, manuals, and other documents show the institution's uniqueness
 - The institution's activities and programs are in place to promote the institution's vision-mission and goals
4. Quality Assurance System that requires collaborative participation of all academic community and its stakeholders in the review of the school's programs and the various areas of its operations.

Indicators:

- Governance and Financial Administration
 - Curriculum design/development (students centered learning/outcomes, teaching, and assessment)
 - Strategic Development Plan (infrastructure to support teaching and learning, faculty and staff development programs)
 - Student Support Services (system of teaching delivery modes, student learning centers, support for employment of graduates, mechanism of support for students taking licensing examinations and others)
 - Alumni Development Plan
 - Community Outreach Program (translating the vision and mission of the school to the community through the school's outreach program)
 - School's Research Agenda (Research outputs leading to the effective management of the school's program offerings and activities.)
5. A continuing assessment of the Quality Assurance Management System is periodically conducted to meet the changing needs and development in the field of education.

Indicators:

- Development Plans and activities
 - Clear participation of all sectors in the review of the system
6. The Internal Quality Assurance System is supported by the administration by providing the required funding and resources for a sustainable quality assurance system.

Indicators:

- Budget allocation for IQA initiatives is reflected in the approved institution's budget (in support of its activities and programs, staff development, and infrastructure)

7. An effective mechanism is in place to disseminate the school's program offerings, its activities, and achievements to all stakeholders and other members of the academic community.

Indicators:

- Program of activities showing the different modalities in disseminating the achievements of the institution – web site, newsletters, advertisements, and others