

# Quality Checks in Higher Education Delivery

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# Major Transformations

Teaching University



Research-Intensive  
University



Research-Intensive  
University + Enterprise

Civil Service



Statutory



Not-for-Profit Company

## Critical Trends & Drivers:

- **Increasingly interconnected world**
  - ❑ global economy to culture to disease outbreaks
- **Singapore becoming a knowledge-based economy**
  - ❑ new demands on universities
  - ❑ greater national investment in R&D
- **Rapid and dramatic intensification of competition**
- **Higher education is becoming a global industry**

## Guiding Principles on Quality Assurance

- **Broad spectrum of views needed – faculty, students, experts, alumni, industry, etc.**
- **Mechanism must be internalized as a process as well as externally imposed**
- **Conducted on a regular basis**
- **Funding must be driven by quality delivered**



# Quality Assurance Framework

## *Internal Framework:*

- Promotion and Tenure Process
- Regular Audits and Reviews of Programmes and Departments
- Benchmarking exercises based on several research indicators
- Office of Quality Management
- Financial Audit Process – internal accountability of funds

## *External Framework:*

- Quality Assurance Framework for Universities (QAFU) by the Ministry of Education
- International Advisory Panels and Visiting Committees
- Accreditation by Professional Societies and Organisations

## Promotion and Tenure (P&T) Process

- Assurance on the academic and teaching competence of faculty members
- P&T is an elaborate process –
  - Department Evaluation Committee >> Head >> Faculty P&T Committee >> Dean >> University P&T Committee >> Provost >> President
  - External reviewers required – reading “between the lines”
    - impact of research should be the key, and not productivity
  - Teaching evaluation based on personal statement/teaching dossier, student feedback (qualitative and quantitative, and peer reviews)

## **Regular Audits and Reviews**

- **Conducted internally, and sometimes with help from overseas experts, on a periodic basis**
- **Multi-stakeholder feedback, e.g., views from faculty members, experts, students, alumni, industry, well-wishers, etc.**
- **Usually done for multi-disciplinary programmes offered by a group of Departments**

## Internal Benchmarking for Research

- **Basket of proxies for research excellence, e.g.**
  - Publications in high-impact journals,
  - Citations, highly-cited faculty members,
  - Invitations as speakers at top conferences,
  - International and national research prizes,
  - Etc.
- **Track indicators over a period of several years for top departments and universities**
- **Address weaknesses and manage allocation of research funding and resources based on such reviews**

## **Accreditation of Programmes**

- **Applied to some professional disciplines such as Engineering, Accountancy, etc**
- **International and local professional agencies**
- **Recommendations on curriculum by international organisations**
- **Useful guide and assurance that our curriculum and pedagogy is compatible with best international practices**

## Quality Assurance Framework

- The Quality Assurance Framework for Universities (QAFU) was established by the Ministry of Education, Singapore (MOE), as a **holistic framework and development tool** for institutional **self-learning and quality enhancement** in the universities as well as a vehicle to ensure institutional accountability in return for greater operational autonomy devolved to universities.
- It involves an institutional **self-assessment** by the university against **32 institutional goals and self-selected performance indicators**, an **external validation** by the External Review Panel (ERP) commissioned by MOE, and **feedback and development** as a result of the external validation.

## Examples of Institutional Goals

- High quality faculty members
- High quality students
- Establish NUS as a global knowledge organisation
- Deliver high quality, broad-based and flexible education
- Strengthen core research infrastructure and capabilities
- Foster enterprise and encourage entrepreneurial activities
- Build a responsive stakeholder-centric environment and alumni relations
- Expand and upgrade campus infrastructure, etc.....

## Quality Assurance Framework

During its onsite validation, ERP will meet with:

- Senior Management of MOE
- Management of NUS
- NUS Board of Trustees
- Representatives from the academic, research and non-academic staff
- A mix of undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Representative from funding agencies, industry, employers
- Academic departments and research units and other facilities on campus

⇒ **The recommendations and quality improvement proposals will set out NUS' action plans to MOE**

## Visiting Committees

- **Faculty International Advisory Committees**
- **Department Visiting Committees**
- **Appointed over a period of 5 years, to review educational programmes and research performance and strategies for the unit (Faculty or Department)**
- **Two visits over the 5-year period**
- **Visits over 3 to 5 days, with a report for Department or Faculty**
- **Panels can issue a confidential report to Provost and President**

**End of Presentation**

