




Key Factor In the Implementation of QA  
for Higher Education:  
Discipline Peer Review



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# Accountability vs. Improvement

- Main drivers of QA :
    - Accountability ( "external" )
    - Improvement ( "internal" )
  - Current focus mainly on Accountability
  - Shift in Improvement direction  
( QI instead of QA ? )
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# QA Types and Method

- External QA (EQA) vs. Internal QA (IQA)
  - Institute level QA vs. Program or Discipline QA
  - Methodology: - Process (System) QA :  
Tools: Process-checklists, Benchmarking, Inspections (ISO,TQM)  
- Product (Content) QA:  
Tools: Self-study ,Peer Review
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EDUCATION NEEDS PRODUCT-QA



# The SELF –STUDY or SELF-EVALUATION

Points of attention:

(A) A self-study report should reflect the type of QA sought by the audit level:


- Process or content oriented ?
- Summative/ quantitative/ accountability or formative /qualitative / improvement oriented?

(B) A self-study report should be an explicit preparation tool for the peer review operation.

(C) Self-study assessors should be aware of the pitfalls of quality judgments just based on performance indicators.



# PEER REVIEW

- Peer review PR : - What is it ?
    - What is a Peer ?
  - Main guidelines for a satisfactory PR operation
    - Expertise, independence, objectivity of peers,
    - Peers with high "social" IQ,
    - Mutual respect between peers and those being assessed
    - Thorough preparation on both sides (context, goals)
    - Clear-cut prior agreement on the handling of the final PR report
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## PEER REVIEW ( Continued)

- Possible drawbacks from PR : subjectivity, “networking”, conservatism, costs .



BUT - if done properly – PR an essential complement for indicators as an EVALUATION tool.


Reasons:

- “Holistic” approach
  - High Validity & Legitimacy
  - Adapted to improvement ( dialogue/collegiality)
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True in general, but especially for Discipline QA at Teaching/Learning/Research level.



# Institutional vs. Discipline Peer Review


- Both needed but ultimately Quality of Institute stands or falls with Quality in its Teaching/Learning/Research i.e. with Discipline QA and Discipline PR
  - Fundamental differences between Discipline PR and Institute PR.
  - Discipline PR cannot be a sub-operation of an Institute level PR because....
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# QA & Peer Review in Thailand

- Thai National Education Act (1999)
  - MUA/Commission for HE – IQA (1996)
  - ONESQA – EQA & Institute PR (2001)
- ONESQA has started EQA and PR in Thailand (pilot project-2002). Task “limited” to institute level EQA and PR ,but, 842 degree granting and and sub-degree institutes of HE to review in 5 years (2005?)!
- Deliberately,wisely, and of necessity left out: full Discipline QA and PR.



## Discipline QA As an Integral Part of IQA

- Factors
    - Need and type of PR is discipline dependent
    - Need and type of PR is university / institute dependent
    - Cost factors
    - Possible role of accreditations by professional associations
  - Region-Specific PR problems
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# Summary

- HE- QA must ultimately shift balance from Accountability QA to Improvement QA.
  - Attaining improvement requires (among other things) PR of Teaching / Learning/ Research on the discipline level.
  - Genuine discipline level QA and PR is – at present and quite rightly so – not part of currently foreseen Thai HE EQA .
  - To compensate for this, it would be advisable to gradually and selectively introduce discipline PR as part of the IQA procedures of the Thai institutes of HE.
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