

CHEA INTERNATIONAL QUALITY GROUP INTERNATIONAL QUALITY PRINCIPLES

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Context

The growing international activity within higher education – greater student mobility, expanding faculty exchanges and research collaboration, more cross-border partnerships among institutions and the growing reliance on online or Web-based education – has created a sense of urgency for a shared understanding of educational quality. While any single worldwide regimen of educational quality would be difficult and perhaps undesirable, a shared understanding about the dimensions of quality would be useful. These guiding principles are one effort to move toward such understanding while acknowledging and respecting the many differences of history, culture, beliefs and values that shape our systems of higher education and our perspectives on quality.

Purpose

The guiding principles are intended to serve as a framework for international deliberation about quality in higher education. Their aim is to seek common ground and establish a foundation for understanding quality. The principles may be used to inform discussions of quality, quality assurance and qualifications at the country, regional or international level. The intended audiences include academics and other higher education professionals, students, employers, government officials and the public. They are invited to affirm and use these principles in the ongoing quest for effectiveness and quality in higher education.¹

Principles

1. **Quality and higher education providers:** Assuring and achieving quality in higher education is the primary responsibility of higher education providers and their staff.
2. **Quality and students:** The education provided to students must always be of high quality whatever the learning outcomes pursued.
3. **Quality and society:** The quality of higher education provision is judged by how well it meets the needs of society, engenders public confidence and sustains public trust.
4. **Quality and government:** Governments have a role in encouraging and supporting quality higher education.
5. **Quality and accountability:** It is the responsibility of higher education providers and quality assurance and accreditation bodies to sustain a strong commitment to accountability and provide regular evidence of quality.
6. **Quality and the role of quality assurance and accreditation bodies:** Quality assurance and accreditation bodies, working with higher education providers and their leadership, staff and students, are responsible for the implementation of processes, tools, benchmarks and measures of learning outcomes that help to create a shared understanding of quality.
7. **Quality and change:** Quality higher education needs to be flexible, creative and innovative; developing and evolving to meet students' needs, to justify the confidence of society and to maintain diversity.

¹ These principles are consistent with existing international standards and guidelines such as the 2005 UNESCO-OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education (http://www.unesco.org/education/guidelines_E_indd.pdf); the 2007 INQAAHE Guidelines of Good Practice for Quality Assurance (<http://www.inqahe.org/main/professionaldevelopment/guidelines-of-good-practice-51>); the 2008 Chiba Principles: Higher Education Quality Assurance for the Asia Pacific Region developed by APQN (https://www.aei.gov.au/AboutAEI/Policy/Documents/Brisbane%20Communique/Quality_Assurance_Principles_pdf.pdf); 2015 Revised European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance (<http://www.ehea.info/news-details.aspx?ArticleId=355>).