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Michaela Martin, with Shreya Parikh

# Quality management in higher education: Developments and drivers

## Results from an international survey

New trends in higher education

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## CONTENTS

List of figures	7
List of abbreviations	10
Acknowledgements	11
About the IIEP research study	12
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>1. Defining concepts and presenting the methodology</b>	<b>18</b>
1. Defining quality management in general	18
2. Defining quality management in this survey	19
3. Presenting the survey	21
4. Characterizing responding institutions	21
5. Scope and limitations	27
<b>2. Quality policy, quality management structures, and orientations</b>	<b>28</b>
1. Academic quality in overall institutional policy	28
2. Institutional quality policy	29
3. Quality management handbook (manual)	31
4. Structures and people involved in quality management	33
5. The purposes of quality management	36
6. Orientation and activities of quality management	38
<b>3. Quality management of teaching and learning</b>	<b>42</b>
1. Enhancement of academic programmes	42
2. Monitoring of student assessments	45
3. Monitoring the quality of academic staff performance	47
4. Evaluation of student support structures	50
5. Quality management for doctoral studies and distance education	52
<b>4. Quality management and other aspects</b>	<b>54</b>
1. Quality management and employability	54
2. Quality management and research	57
3. Quality management and governance	59
4. Quality management and international cooperation	61

5.	Quality management, income generation, and community services	63
<b>5.</b>	<b>Management information system and information use in decision-making</b>	<b>65</b>
1.	Availability and use of information on teaching and learning	65
2.	Frequency of use of survey results for feedback	67
3.	Frequency of the use of survey results to support decision-making	69
<b>6.</b>	<b>External drivers, internal factors, and challenges in quality management</b>	<b>71</b>
1.	External drivers	71
2.	Internal factors	73
3.	Challenges to the development of quality management procedures	75
	<b>Conclusions</b>	<b>78</b>
	<b>References</b>	<b>82</b>
	<b>Annex 1. Questionnaire</b>	<b>84</b>
	<b>Annex 2. Country classification by region</b>	<b>95</b>
	<b>Annex 3. Regional distribution of responding institutions</b>	<b>97</b>

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## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1	Systemic view of quality management for the survey	20
Figure 1.2	Regional distribution of institutions in the survey sample	22
Figure 1.3	Distribution of institutions in sample, by nature of funding	23
Figure 1.4	Distribution by type of institution	24
Figure 1.5	Distribution by highest level of degree offered	25
Figure 1.6	Distribution by size of student body	25
Figure 1.7	Distribution by orientation	26
Figure 1.8	Position of the individual respondent to the questionnaire within the responding institution	27
Figure 2.1	Importance of academic quality in overall institutional policy	29
Figure 2.2	Presence of institutional quality policy	29
Figure 2.3	Presence of institutional quality policy, by region	30
Figure 2.4	Presence of quality management handbook (manual)	32
Figure 2.5	Presence of quality management handbook, by region	33
Figure 2.6	Structures and people involved in quality management	35
Figure 2.7	People involved in quality management, by region	35
Figure 2.8	Structures involved in quality management, by region	36
Figure 2.9	Purposes of quality management	37
Figure 2.10a	Purposes of quality management, by region	38
Figure 2.10b	Purposes of quality management, by region	38
Figure 2.11	Focus of orientation and activities in quality management	39
Figure 2.12	Focus of orientation in quality management, by region	40
Figure 2.13	Focus of activities in quality management, by region	41
Figure 3.1	Processes and tools used for enhancement of academic programmes	43
Figure 3.2a	Processes and tools used for enhancement of academic programmes, by region	44
Figure 3.2b	Processes and tools used for enhancement of academic programmes, by region	45

Figure 3.3	Processes or tools used for monitoring student assessments	46
Figure 3.4	Processes or tools used for monitoring student assessments, by region	47
Figure 3.5	Processes or tools used for monitoring the quality of academic staff performance	49
Figure 3.6a	Processes or tools used for monitoring the quality of academic staff performance, by region	49
Figure 3.6b	Processes or tools used for monitoring the quality of academic staff performance, by region	50
Figure 3.7	Evaluation of student support structures	51
Figure 3.8	Evaluation of student support structures, by region	52
Figure 3.9	Quality management for doctoral studies and distance education	52
Figure 3.10	Quality management for doctoral studies and distance education, by region	53
Figure 4.1	Processes or tools used for the enhancement of graduate employability	55
Figure 4.2a	Processes or tools used for the enhancement of graduate employability, by region	56
Figure 4.2b	Processes or tools used for the enhancement of graduate employability, by region	56
Figure 4.3	Processes or tools used for the enhancement of research	57
Figure 4.4	Processes or tools used for the enhancement of research, by region	58
Figure 4.5	Processes or tools applied for the enhancement of governance or management	60
Figure 4.6	Processes or tools applied for the enhancement of governance or management, by region	60
Figure 4.7	Processes or tools used for the enhancement of international cooperation	62
Figure 4.8	Processes or tools used for the enhancement of international cooperation, by region	62
Figure 4.9	Processes or tools applied for the enhancement of income generation or community services	64
Figure 4.10	Processes or tools applied for the enhancement of income generation or community services, by region	64



Figure 5.1	Availability and use of information on teaching and learning in quality management	66
Figure 5.2	Use of information on teaching and learning in quality management, by region	67
Figure 5.3	Use of survey results to provide feedback	68
Figure 5.4	Use of survey results to provide feedback, by region	68
Figure 5.5	Use of survey results to support decision-making	69
Figure 5.6	Use of survey results to support decision-making, by region	70
Figure 6.1	External drivers in development of quality management	72
Figure 6.2	External drivers in development of quality management, by region	73
Figure 6.3	Internal factors in development of quality management	74
Figure 6.4a	Internal factors in development of quality management, by region	75
Figure 6.4b	Internal factors in development of quality management, by region	75
Figure 6.5	Challenges in the development of quality management	76
Figure 6.6	Challenges in the development of quality management, by region	77
Figure A.1	Distribution by nature of funding	97
Figure A.2	Distribution by type of institution	97
Figure A.3	Distribution by highest level of degree offered	98
Figure A.4	Distribution by size of student body	98
Figure A.5	Distribution by orientation	99

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAMES	African and Malagasy Higher Education Council
EFQM	European Foundation for Quality Management
EQA	external quality assurance
EUA	European University Association
HE	higher education
HEI	higher education institution
IAU	International Association of Universities
INQAAHE	International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education
IQA	internal quality assurance
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
LAC	Latin America and Caribbean countries
MIS	management information system
QA	quality assurance
QM	quality management
TQM	total quality management
WHED	World Higher Education Database

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We sincerely hope that the available data and their analysis contribute to a better understanding of the current state of quality management in higher education institutions internationally, and to the internal and external motives and factors that drive it.

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## ABOUT THE IIEP RESEARCH STUDY

Over recent decades, many higher education institutions (HEIs) worldwide have put in place quality management (QM) procedures, either in response to national requirements for quality assurance or to generate information to serve internal quality monitoring and management.

To better understand the current state of the art in the QM of HEIs internationally, UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), in association with the International Association of Universities (IAU), conducted a trilingual online survey on QM practices, structures, processes, external drivers, and internal factors. The first truly international survey of this kind, it provides first-hand primary data on QM in higher education drawn from the responses of 311 HEIs from all continents.

Analysis of the data shows that QM is already a reality in a majority of the responding institutions. Although it is widely formalized through quality policies, there is an evident shortfall in clear procedures and responsibilities for QM codified in some form of quality manual. Leadership, perhaps from the head of an institution or a vice rector, plays an important role in promoting QM, but support structures such as QM offices or units at an institutional centre and, even more so, at decentralized levels, are often lacking.

The survey confirmed the assumption that teaching and learning is at the centre of QM systems. Despite its prominence in political discourse, graduate employability tends to be neglected: QM tools relating to it are frequently absent, an indication that QM systems are not embracing the issue. Also, QM procedures are not always applied comprehensively: assessment systems, for instance, are often neglected.

Data generated from QM monitoring are often not used well: the survey confirms that feedback to students is often overlooked, and that there is a poor use of information in decision-making about quality improvement of teaching and learning.

Both internal motivations and external push factors are important drivers for the development of QM. Concern with the enhancement

of the image of an HEI is a dominating internal motivation, while a national quality assurance system is a strong driver of the development of QM. Leadership support emerges clearly as a key internal factor in the development of QM, together with participation of staff in the development of QM procedures.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the context of globalization, the quality of higher education (HE) is increasingly considered as strategically important for national economic development and competitiveness (World Bank, 2009). But although higher education is perceived as a strategic asset for the knowledge economy, there are concerns about the quality and relevance of its services. Indeed, while enrolments and overall spending have increased, public expenditure per HE student has not kept pace (OECD, 2016). Graduate unemployment has become a major concern, with labour markets not responding to the dynamic expansion of HE systems. As a consequence, there is a general perception of declining academic standards and a questioning of the relevance of HE to labour market needs, particularly in developing countries (Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumberg, 2009).

To address these concerns, many countries have created mechanisms for external quality assurance (EQA), such as accreditation, review or quality audit. IIEP's earlier work in the area of EQA (Martin and Stella, 2007) demonstrated that EQA can periodically perform quality control, but can only lead to sustainable and continuous quality improvement when backed up by policies, structures, and QM processes at the institutional level.

In addition to already existing mechanisms to manage the quality of HE, more comprehensive and systematic approaches have been introduced in many countries over recent decades. Some of them were guided by institutional initiatives, others by national reforms, and still others by regional policies, such as the Bologna process in Europe with its heavy emphasis on QM. The international spread of this reform movement has resulted in variation in policies, structures, and processes across national and institutional boundaries (Pratasavitskaya and Stensaker, 2010).

### **The IIEP-UNESCO research project on internal quality assurance**

The UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) launched an international comparative research project in 2014 on QM (internal quality assurance, IQA) in HE. The project was based on an

international survey and eight in-depth university case studies, and was aimed at providing advice to institutional and national HE policy-makers and quality managers on ways to enhance the development and application of QM in HE institutions.

IIEP focused its research on QM on the following objectives:

- to identify main international trends in the orientation, functioning, and drivers of, and obstacles to, QM; and
- to illustrate innovative practices and good principles, demonstrate effects and identify internal and external factors that condition the effective functioning of QM at universities.

The research was conducted in two complementary phases. First, baseline data on trends in QM worldwide were collected through an international survey conducted jointly by IIEP and the International Association of Universities (IAU) during November and December 2015. Second, eight international university case studies on QM were conducted to study QM in different national and institutional contexts.

The survey is the first international study conducted on QM in HEIs, and thus fills a clear knowledge gap in mapping tools used, structures, and processes. Using the World Higher Education Database maintained by the IAU in Paris, the survey was sent to a large number of HEIs worldwide. More than 400 institutional decision-makers (vice presidents or vice rectors), or officers in charge of quality management in HEIs around the world responded. This led to 311 exploitable institutional responses for analysis in the survey, in total.

This report analyses and interprets the collected data. It presents the findings from both global and regional perspectives to determine regional variations from the aggregate patterns.

Chapter 1 discusses the QM concept used in the survey and how it was disaggregated to support the construction of the survey instrument. It also describes the survey and the methodology adopted. Chapter 2 presents both an analysis of international and regional trends in various aspects of QM, and the policies and structures used in HE. Since QM can be more easily characterized by the tools and instruments in place, much attention was devoted in the questionnaire to the exploration of these structural elements. Chapters 3 and 4 focus on QM tools in the area

of teaching and learning, employability, research, governance, income generation, and community services and international cooperation. Chapter 5 addresses the uses to which data derived from quality assessment are put (or not). Chapter 6 concentrates on the interpretation of the data on external drivers, internal factors, and challenges to QM practice. A summary of important Conclusions to be drawn from the survey follows. In the Annexes may be found a copy of the questionnaire that our respondents so carefully and generously completed.



---

# **1. DEFINING CONCEPTS AND PRESENTING THE METHODOLOGY**

## **1. Defining quality management in general**

The way in which ‘quality’ is defined and put into practice has obvious implications for efforts to manage it. Yet, many stakeholders in higher education (HE) would find it difficult to define quality precisely. In reality, it is a relative concept which means different things to different people and can be defined variously according to context (Harvey, 1995). The IIEP survey did not address the question of how individuals or institutions define quality, but it did include questions on the importance that higher education institutions (HEIs) attribute to it, and whether it is addressed in their policy documents or strategic plans.

That there is a diversity in the understandings of what quality is can be seen in the variety of definitions of ‘quality management’ (QM) in the literature on HE. In the view of Vlasceanu, Grünberg, and Pârlea (2007: 76), QM is ‘an aggregate of measures taken regularly at system or institutional level in order to assure the quality of higher education with an emphasis on improving quality as a whole’. QM is seen by these authors as including quality assurance (QA) tools. In a nutshell, QM is an institutional function, and internal quality assurance (IQA) is the set of mechanisms that makes QM possible.

The understandings of what QM is and how it should operate have evolved over time. The first generation of QM mechanisms in HE was most often inspired by, and drew upon, practices derived from the corporate sector (total quality management [TQM], ISO 9000, or excellence models such as the European Foundation for Quality Management [EFQM]). Today, these practices coexist with more recent approaches that pay more attention to the specificities of HEIs (Harvey and Williams, 2010).

Present-day QM mechanisms typically comprise periodically conducted self-studies and evaluations of units; mechanisms for the approval, monitoring, and review of academic programmes; implementation of student surveys on teaching effectiveness; student and

staff satisfaction surveys; student workload assessments and graduate tracer studies; monitoring of indicators and statistical information to analyse student progression and success; and analysis of the quality of teaching staff and learning resources (EUA, 2011).

## 2. Defining quality management in this survey

For the purpose of this survey, QM was defined as ‘the process, supported by policies and systems, used by an institution to maintain and enhance the quality of education experienced by its students and of the research undertaken by its staff’.<sup>1</sup> Given the considerable semantic overlap of the two terms, and in order to facilitate the understanding of respondents, the survey questionnaire presented QM as a synonym of QA.

When developing the survey questionnaire, a systemic view of QM was adopted (see *Figure 1.1* below). Under this view, QM comprises interrelated structures such as quality policy, quality manuals, and support structures. A quality policy statement was defined in the IIEP survey as ‘a document that contains goals, principles, and rules on quality issues and determines present and future decisions on quality issues’. A QM manual or handbook was defined as ‘an operation document that describes the processes and tools that are used to conduct the practical activities of QM’. Support structures for QM might be leadership positions devoted to QM, or collegial and technical bodies (committees and QM offices) at centralized and decentralized levels that are responsible for supporting QM and making decisions in relation to the quality of academic activities.

To investigate the focus and tools of existing QM systems, different areas of QM needed to be disentangled. The survey focused primarily on the teaching and learning aspect of QM. Research and services (income generation and community services) were added since they represent the two other functions of HEIs. Given also the current strong emphasis in HE policy on graduate employability and international cooperation, it was thought that the survey should be designed to discover whether HEIs worldwide cover these aspects in their QM.

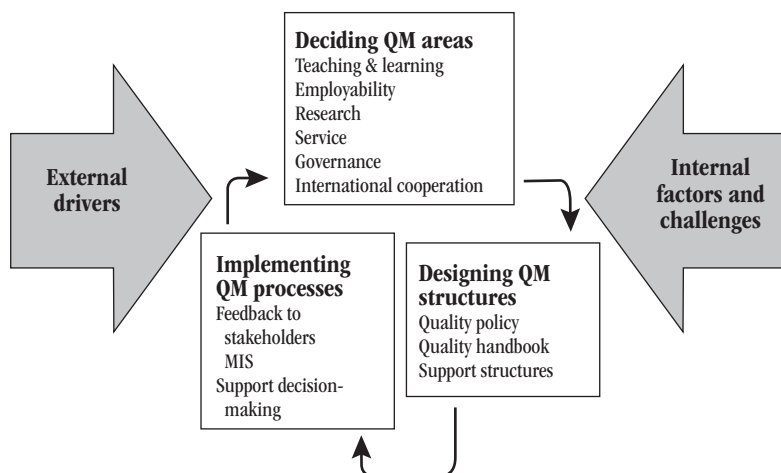
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1. This definition is from the Analytic Quality Glossary available via the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) website ([www.inqaahe.org/quality-glossary](http://www.inqaahe.org/quality-glossary)), or directly at [www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/](http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/).

Aiming to go beyond a survey of existing tools, it was also decided to investigate other processes in a QM system: the use of management information systems (MIS) for quality analysis, the feedback delivered to internal stakeholders, and the uses that are made of the information generated.

And finally, with a view to preparing policy recommendations for national and institutional decision-makers, it was decided to investigate both the external drivers and the internal factors that support or obstruct the development of QM in an HEI.

**Figure 1.1 Systemic view of quality management for the survey**



Given the particular importance of teaching and learning in QM, all the important elements of the teaching and learning systems were to be investigated. These are the tools and processes used for the enhancement of academic programmes, the monitoring of student assessment and the quality of academic staff performance, and student support structures. It was decided also to question whether QM covered distance education and doctoral studies where applicable.

### 3. Presenting the survey

This report presents an analysis of a trilingual international survey on the current state of development, external drivers, and internal factors in QM in HEIs. Primary data were generated from a mixed quantitative and qualitative (open-ended) design survey questionnaire. Respondents were higher education managers (vice-rectors of academic affairs and quality managers).

IIEP-UNESCO and IAU joined hands in conducting this survey. The instrument for the survey was developed by IIEP-UNESCO and comments were provided by IAU. It was also reviewed by a team of international experts and then piloted by the IIEP for clarity in six HEIs in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

In order to increase the response rate, the survey was translated by the IIEP into French and Spanish.<sup>2</sup> All three language versions were inputted into Survey Monkey software by IIEP. This meant that the survey could be taken online, accompanied by an explanatory email to heads of HEIs. The link to the final survey questionnaire was then distributed via IAU's World Higher Education Database (WHED).<sup>3</sup> IIEP took charge of analysing the collected responses and preparing this analytical report, including extensive comments provided by IAU.

### 4. Characterizing responding institutions

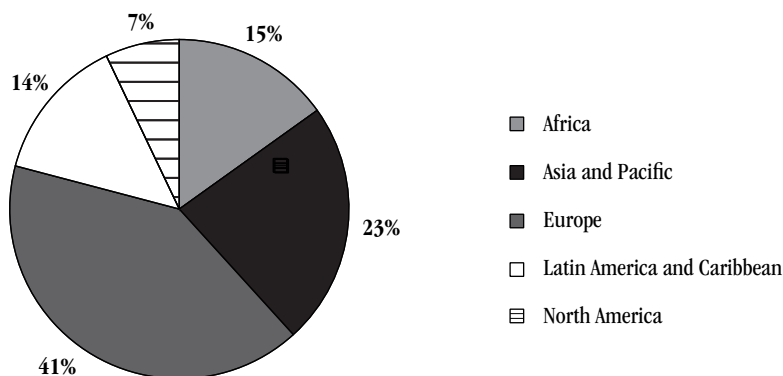
A total of 311 institutions from 94 countries in five regions provided complete responses to the questionnaire to interpret. There were 241 responses, representing 77.5%, in English, 36 responses, representing 11.5%, in Spanish, and 34 responses, representing 11%, in French.

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2. The French and Spanish translations of the survey questionnaire were produced in an effort to increase the response rate. Unfortunately, there was no significant increase in the response rate.

3. The WHED database contains a total of 6,734 email addresses, but it is not known to the researchers how many were valid. As a consequence, it is not possible to calculate a precise response rate to the survey.

**Figure 1.2 Regional distribution of institutions in the survey sample**



The countries from which responding institutions originated were classified into five regional groups, namely Africa, Asia and Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean (hereafter referred to as LAC), and North America.<sup>4</sup> Only a few responses were available from the Arab region, and the analysis of this group was not statistically valid. As a consequence, they were either grouped with the Asia–Pacific region or categorized as Africa.<sup>5</sup>

Around 41% of the responding institutions are from Europe, 23% from Asia and Pacific, 15% from Africa, 14% from LAC, and 7% from North America (see *Figure 1.2*). This roughly reflects the distribution in the mailing list used for the survey. European institutions are over-represented among the respondents, while institutions from Africa, LAC, and Asia–Pacific countries are under-represented.

The institutions were asked to select a category to best describe themselves. The first question asked them to identify the category that best suited their institution based on ownership: *public* (those with a large – 80% or more – share of public funding); *public with significant private funds* (more than 20% private funds); *private not-for-profit*; *private for-profit*; and *other*. As seen in *Figure 1.3*, about 58% of the responding institutions said they were public, with a third (or 16% of the total) of

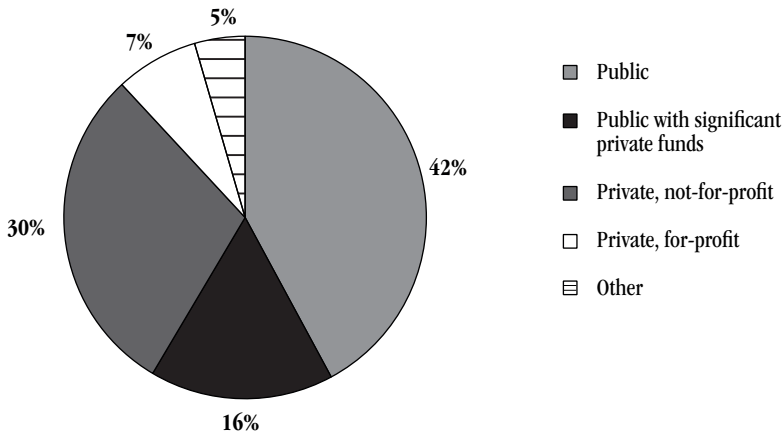
4. Canada and USA form the North America region. Mexico is categorized as LAC.

5. Distribution of countries by region is shown in *Annex 2*.

them receiving significant private funds. Around 37% of the responding institutions said that they were private, with a majority of these being not-for-profit institutions. Only 7% of the total responding institutions categorized themselves as being private for-profit institutions.<sup>6</sup>

Looking at regional distribution, the public institutions with either large public funding or significant private funding are found in relatively high proportion in Europe (74% of its total institutions), followed by Africa (66%), and Asia and Pacific (47%). LAC (33%) and North American (37%) respondents have the lowest concentration of public institutions compared with other regions; private institutions dominate, with a share of 67% (LAC) and 55% (North America).<sup>7</sup>

**Figure 1.3 Distribution of institutions in sample, by nature of funding**



Second, the institutions were asked to categorize themselves into one of *comprehensive* (multi-disciplinary university), *specialized* (university with a special focus, e.g. technology university), *post-secondary* (non-university institution such as higher institute or community college), and *other*, based on the nature of the courses taught in the institution. Sixty-two per cent responded that their universities

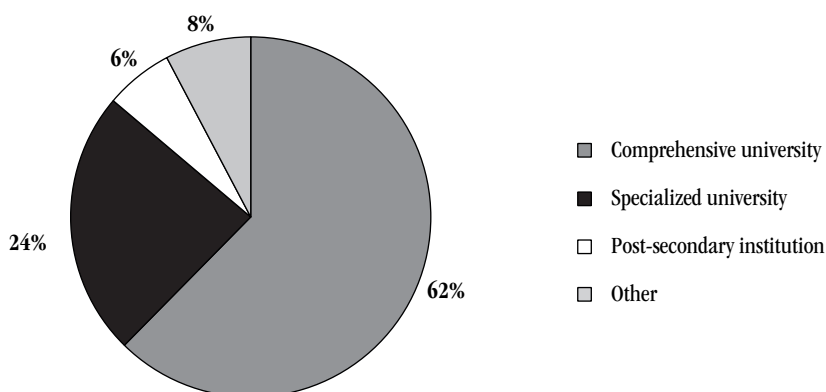
6. There is a selection bias in the population because private for-profit institutions are not included in the mailing list provided by IAU. Hence, these institutions are under-represented in the analysis.

7. See *Annex 3* for more information on the regional distribution of findings in *Chapter 1.4*.

were comprehensive in nature and 24% said they were specialized universities, as shown in Figure 1.4. Only 6% of the responses are from post-secondary institutions.

While the majority of responding institutions in all regions are comprehensive universities (ranging from 56% in Europe, to 73% in North America), the distribution of institutions in the other three categories differs at the regional level. There is a relatively higher proportion (31%) of specialized institutions among the respondents in Europe, followed by Asia and Pacific (24%), Africa (19%), and North America (18%). LAC has the lowest proportion of specialized institutions – only 9%.

**Figure 1.4 Distribution by type of institution**

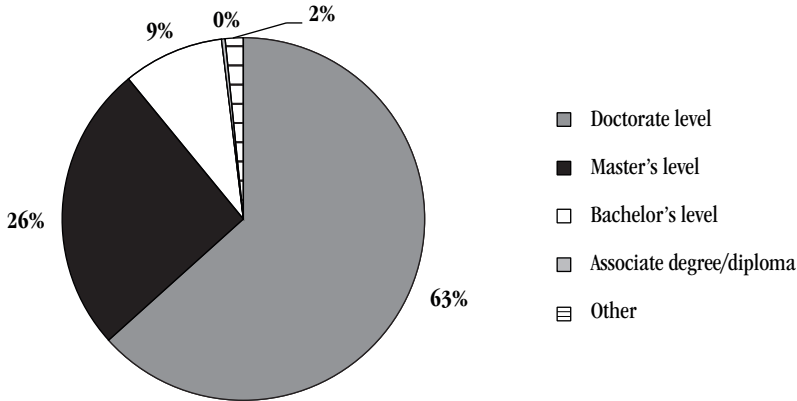


Third, the institutions in the survey were asked to indicate the highest level of degree they offer to students at their institution, namely *bachelor's*, *master's*, *doctorate*, or *diploma*.<sup>8</sup> As illustrated in Figure 1.5, a majority (89%) of the institutions offer master's level education or higher.

While most of the regions have a high concentration of doctorate-level offering institutions among the respondents, around half of the institutions in North America that responded offer education only up to master's level. Master's level education as highest degree is found to

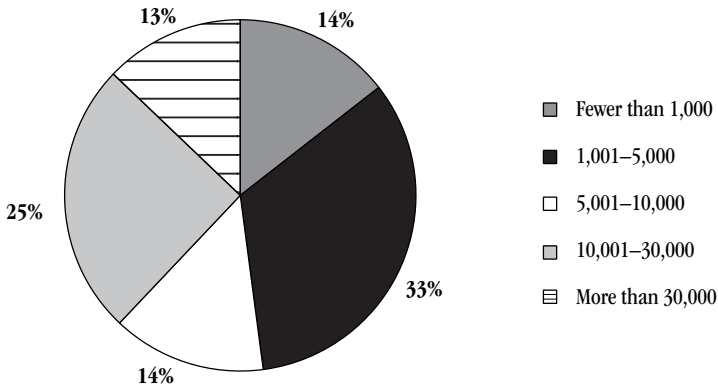
have a share of between 21 and 28% in other regions. A relatively high proportion of institutions that offer bachelor's level education as highest degree is found among respondents in LAC (21%), and Africa (17%).

**Figure 1.5 Distribution by highest level of degree offered**



Fourth, as seen in *Figure 1.6*, the size of the student body among the responding institutions varies greatly in the survey sample.

**Figure 1.6 Distribution by size of student body**



There is a high proportion of smaller institutions (i.e., those with fewer than 10,000 students) in our sample (61%). Considering the region-level distribution of the institutions by their size, the general

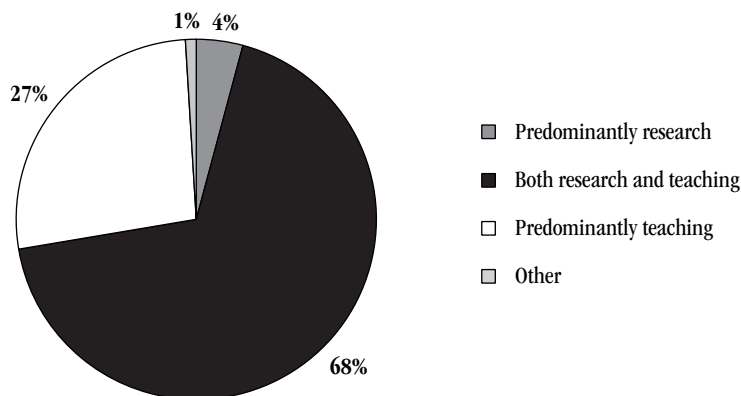


aggregate trend is reflected in the sample from Africa (66%), Asia and Pacific (61%), and Europe (58%). The sample from LAC has a majority of small institutions (74%), while there is a strong polarization in institutional size of institutions from North America, with none indicating a size of 5,001–10,000 students.

Finally, the institutions were asked to categorize themselves according to their orientation, as either teaching, research or both. A majority of responding institutions (68%) had both teaching and research as their orientations, while 27% were predominantly teaching-oriented and about 4% were only research-oriented (see *Figure 1.7*).

In this responding pool, a concentration of teaching-oriented institutions were found in North America (55%) and LAC countries (51%), while a majority (between 71 and 81%) of those in Europe, Asia and Pacific, and Africa were both teaching- and research-oriented.

**Figure 1.7 Distribution by orientation**

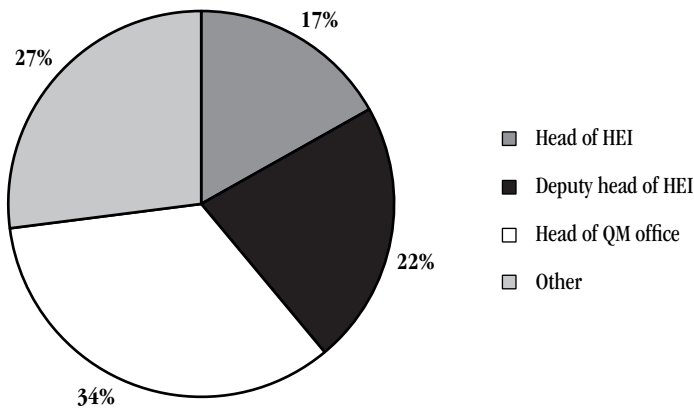


While the responding institutions for this survey have diverse characteristics, an average responding institution in our survey is a comprehensive public university with fewer than 10,000 students with a research and teaching orientation and offering education up to PhD level.

## 5. Scope and limitations

In interpreting the results of this survey, certain limitations in the sample of respondents need to be acknowledged. The sample may well not be representative of the types/numbers of institutions in each region. Therefore, the results may not be generalizable for all HEIs in the countries. It is likely that the institutions that agreed to answer the questionnaire are those that believe that their institution already has a QM system in place, while those that do not may well have decided not to respond. Hence, it is likely that our sample – the pool of institutions that responded to our questionnaire – has a self-selection bias.

**Figure 1.8 Position of the individual respondent to the questionnaire within the responding institution**



The bias arising from self-selection is clearly observed when analysing the positions of the individual who took responsibility for responding to the survey in each institution (*Figure 1.8*). Of the total of 285 responses received to the question about the position of the respondent within the institution, 97 (34%) said that they were the head of a QM office, while 111 (39%) said that they were the head or deputy head of the institution. QM is therefore quite formalized in the form of a dedicated QM structure in more than a third of the responding HEIs. As already mentioned, private for-profit institutions do not form part of the mailing list drawn from the IAU's WHED; hence, they are clearly not well-represented in our study.

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## **2. QUALITY POLICY, QUALITY MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES, AND ORIENTATIONS**

Quality management (QM) in a higher education institution (HEI) is usually embedded in a written commitment to quality, laid down in a strategic plan or quality policy. This commitment may be further formalized in a quality manual which describes the expected processes and responsibilities in HEIs through which quality will be enhanced. HEIs distinguish themselves through the structures that they possess, and in particular, whether there are QM units which provide support to the quality processes conducted at programme, department, and faculty levels. QM may be driven by different purposes, and may be either internally or externally driven. And, finally, QM can focus on different areas. The survey was designed to investigate the variation in QM with regard to these aspects, aiming to lead to a better understanding of the development of QM and to identify existing gaps.

### **1. Academic quality in overall institutional policy**

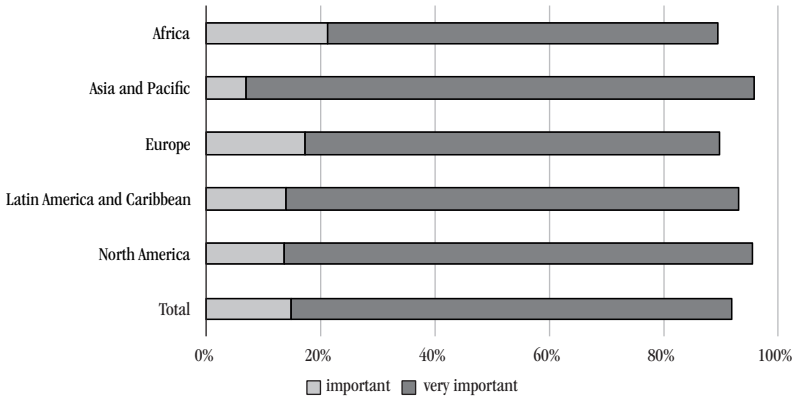
Enhancement of academic quality has become one of the most important policy imperatives for HEIs all over the world. The quality of human resource development and knowledge production is seen as a major driver for the competitiveness of national economies. Therefore, governments lay major emphasis on this aspect in their higher education (HE) policy and planning documents, and institutions respond by making quality enhancement one of their most important strategic objectives. This pattern is especially observed when HE becomes a competitive market, where quality becomes a tool to consolidate the market positioning of institutions.

A question was asked in the survey about the importance of quality in overall institutional policy. A vast majority of the responding institutions rated academic quality as a key component of institutional policy (77% rated it as ‘very important’ and 15% as ‘important’).

Looking at responses at a regional level in *Figure 2.1*, a higher proportion of responding institutions from the Asia and Pacific region said that academic quality was important in their institutional policy

(89% rating it very important and 7% important), followed by North American institutions (96%, with a lower proportion of institutions rating it very important than in Asia and Pacific), institutions from LAC (93%), Africa, and Europe (both at 89%).

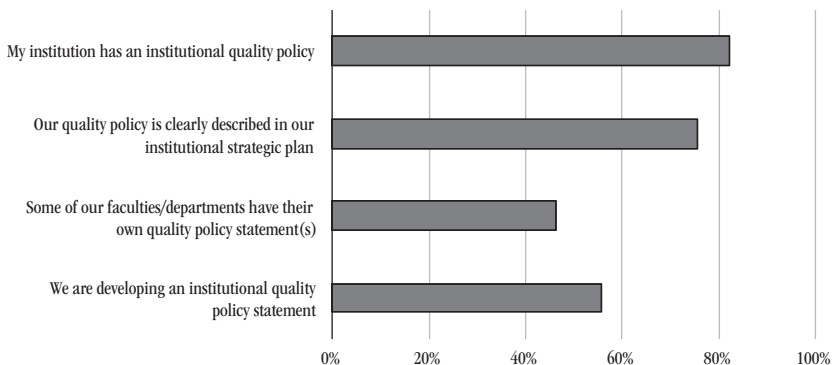
**Figure 2.1 Importance of academic quality in overall institutional policy**



## 2. Institutional quality policy

The existence and type of an institution's quality policy was investigated. Quality policy was defined by IIEP as 'a strategic document that describes goals, principles, and rules on quality issues and determines present and future decisions on quality issues'.

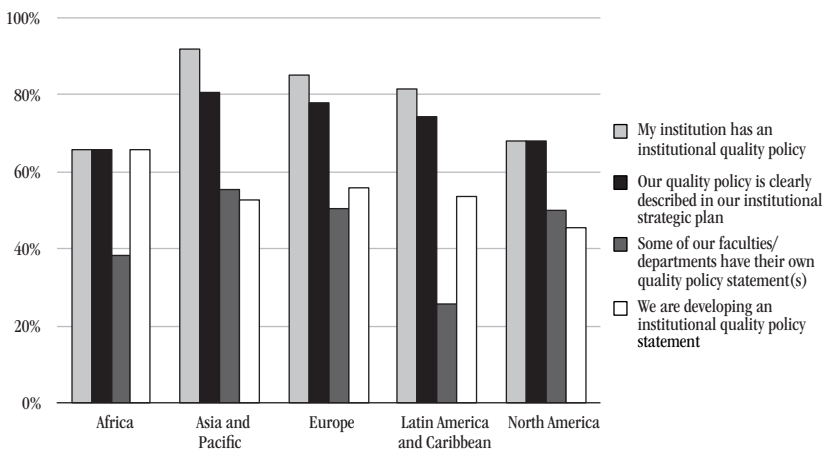
**Figure 2.2 Presence of institutional quality policy**



As indicated in *Figure 2.2*, a majority (82%) of respondents had an institutional quality policy and 76% said that their quality policy was clearly described in the institutional strategic plan. The policy tends to be rather centralized with less than half (46%) of the responding institutions indicating that their faculties and departments have their own quality policy. Slightly more than half (56%) of the responding institutions said that they were developing a quality policy statement.<sup>9</sup>

In the open-ended question on other possible modalities, responses from institutions varied markedly. Among them, one indicated that the quality policy is ‘embedded into our policies and is not a stand-alone policy’ while another mentioned that they were trying to create a policy structure that would enable a structure of continuous evaluation and improvement. A third institution stated that they ‘have many quality policies and processes, but not a central policy that governs them all’. This comment demonstrates that a concern with quality may be present in a variety of policy documents, probably developed at different points in time, and pertaining to different aspects of institutional life.

**Figure 2.3 Presence of institutional quality policy, by region**



9. This group includes institutions that already have an institutional quality policy and are now working on developing a new one. Of the total responding institutions, 45% indicated that they already had a policy and were developing one. This implies that 11% of total responding institutions did not yet have a policy but are now developing one.

While examining responses at a regional level in *Figure 2.3*, it is apparent that the patterns are rather different; there is a wide variation in the state of institutional quality policy across the responding institutions in different regions. In the Asia and Pacific region, 92% of the responding institutions indicated that they had an institutional quality policy in place, followed by institutions in Europe (85%), LAC (81%), North America (68%), and Africa (66%). There is a strong correlation between presence of an institutional quality policy and a clear description of quality policy in the institutional strategic plan.

The presence of an institutional quality policy in a responding institution, widely understood as the formalization of an institutional commitment to quality, does not imply the presence of decentralized quality policies at faculty and department level. Fewer than half of the respondents reported decentralized policies. This is evident especially in LAC responding institutions: only 26% of institutions indicated having a policy at the decentralized level. Quality policies at the decentralized level are found largely among the responding institutions from Asia and Pacific (56%) followed by Europe and North America (both at 50%).

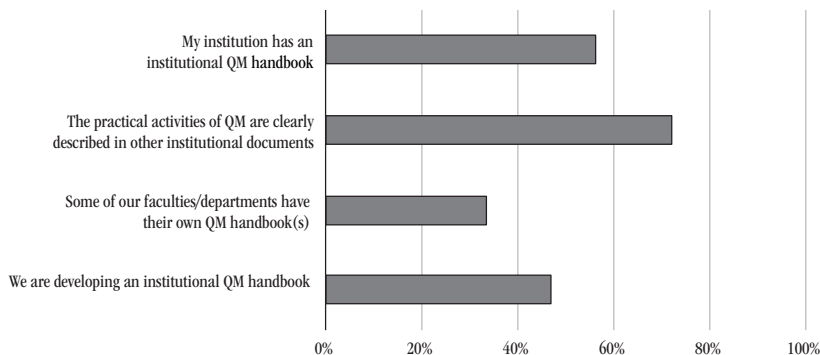
The highest proportion of responses indicating that the institution was in the process of developing an institutional quality policy statement came from Africa (66%), followed by Europe (56%), Asia and Pacific (53%), LAC (53%), and North America (45%). This indicator is independent of whether the institution already has a policy in place, as noted earlier; hence, it includes some that already have a policy and some that do not.

### **3. Quality management handbook (manual)**

Respondents were asked about the existence and nature of a QM handbook or manual in their institution. A QM handbook was defined by IIEP for the respondents as ‘an operational document that describes the processes and tools that are used to conduct the practical activities of QM’. A QM handbook is thus a further element of the formalization of the QM system in an HEI, one which describes standardized processes and responsibilities. For instance, in the teaching and learning domain, procedures for the development and review of study programmes, student assessment, course and programme evaluation and feedback,

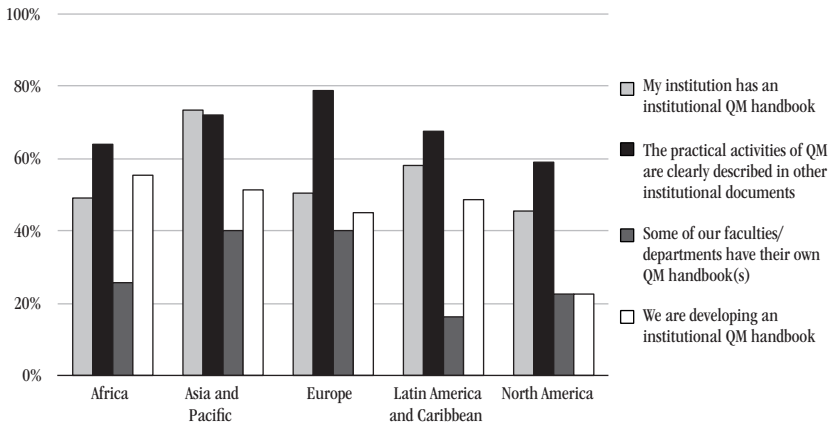
and certification procedures may be formalized in a QM handbook for teaching and learning. The existence of such a handbook indicates a potential codification of the QM structure where the goals of QM and the roles of every member are clearly defined.

**Figure 2.4 Presence of quality management handbook (manual)**



The survey results show that slightly more than half (56%) of responding HEIs have a QM handbook, while a larger group uses other institutional documents to describe the practical activities of QM. This indicates that this kind of formalization of QM is not a largely prevailing feature of QM.

A majority (72%) of the responding institutions said that they have clearly described procedures and responsibilities for QM in other institutional documents. Therefore, the lack of a quality handbook does not imply the absence of defined activities of QM at the institutional level. In line with the lack of decentralized authority over QM at department and faculty levels, as shown in *Figure 2.3*, it can be observed in *Figure 2.4* that only a third of the responding institutions have QM handbooks at department or faculty level. Only 47% of the responding institutions stated that they were in the process of developing a QM handbook.

**Figure 2.5 Presence of quality management handbook, by region**

The regional patterns among responding institutions show variation in comparison with the aggregate pattern. Institutions responding from Asia and Pacific indicated a higher presence of a quality handbook (74%) in their institutions, followed by respondents from LAC (58%), Europe (50%), Africa (49%), and North America (45%). In contrast, European institutions have a higher share of practical activities of QM clearly defined in institutional documents other than a QM handbook. In Asia and Pacific, where there is a high proportion of institutions with a QM handbook, there continues to be a reliance on other institutional documents to describe practical activities of QM. It is apparent from *Figure 2.5* that a clear description of practical activities of quality management may be a substitute for an institutional QM handbook.

In response to the open question of other modalities for the quality management handbook, one institution indicated that it ‘utilises an online quality management system containing policy, procedures, rules, and forms’. Another institution said that it ‘uses the reports compiled for currently held accreditations as templates and reference for future reports and guides’.

#### **4. Structures and people involved in quality management**

To investigate the mechanism of institutional QM, institutions were asked to indicate what leadership positions and structures are involved in QM in their institution. Responding institutions indicated a strong trend

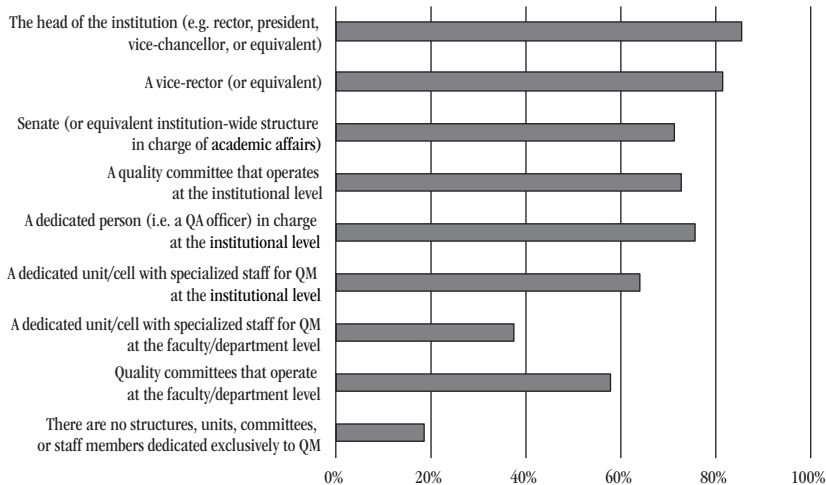
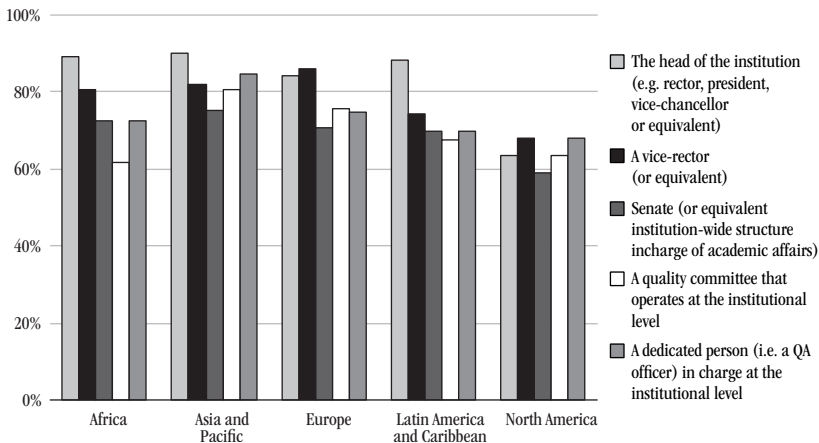


towards a high degree of centralization in organizational structure and in actors who lead and participate in the process of QM.

This question on the structure of QM is complex. On one hand, there are traditional, typically collegial structures for QM in the majority of HEIs throughout the different administrative layers, (central, faculty, departmental, and sometimes at the level of academic programmes). They typically comprise the head of the institution, the vice rector for academic affairs, the senate of the university, faculty councils, departmental councils, and sometimes committees for academic programmes. With the advent of newer forms of QM, new administrative posts and technical structures have been created, such as QM officers and units at the central institutional level, or similar structures at the decentralized levels. These technical structures are usually responsible for the development of QM policy, the content and publication of the quality handbook and the coordination of QM procedures. Sometimes, they are also responsible for the development of instruments for data collection (surveys, polls, qualitative methods, etc.) related to QM. The existence of traditional structures for QM is common, while that of more technical structures demonstrates an institutional commitment to support QM with technical and administrative capabilities.

Echoing the observation of an absence of decentralized authority over QM, as seen in *Figure 2.3* and *Figure 2.4*, it is clear from *Figure 2.6* that in the responding institutions, QM is commonly centralized, especially under the head of the institution (in 86%) or under a vice rector (81%). Senates or quality committees are seen as traditional structures to guarantee quality assurance (QA) and are found in 71% and 73%, respectively, of the institutions, while 76% reported having a dedicated individual responsible for QA at the institutional level.

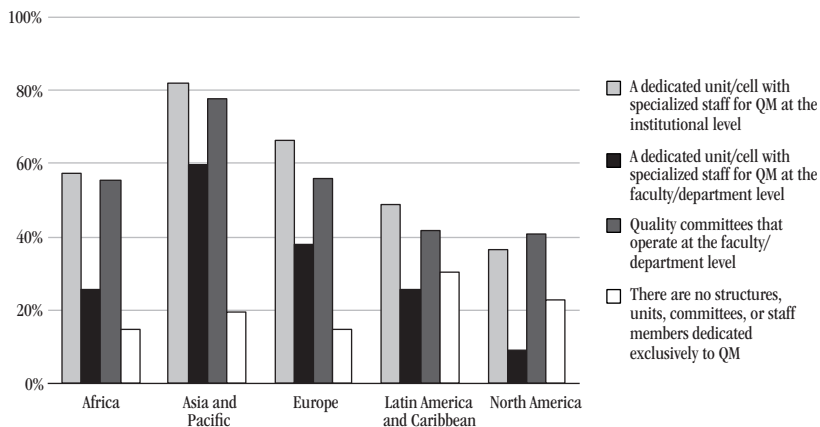
While 64% of institutions said they had a unit or cell with specialized staff responsible for QA at institutional level, only 37% reported having them at faculty or department level. Of the responding institutions, 58% reported they had quality committees operating at the faculty and department level, compared with 73% at the institutional level. These differences all lead to the conclusion that QM structures remain centralized in most institutions.

**Figure 2.6 Structures and people involved in quality management****Figure 2.7 People involved in quality management, by region**

At a regional level, the identity of the individual who plays the important role in the centralized QA structure varies, as seen in *Figure 2.7*. The head of the institution dominates in Asia and Pacific (90%), followed by Africa (89%), LAC (88%), and Europe (86%), whereas responding institutions from North America indicate a much lower proportion (64%) of involvement of the head of institution in QM. The

involvement of a vice rector or equivalent is slightly lower than that of the head in most regions, though not in Europe or North America (71% and 68% respectively).

**Figure 2.8 Structures involved in quality management, by region**



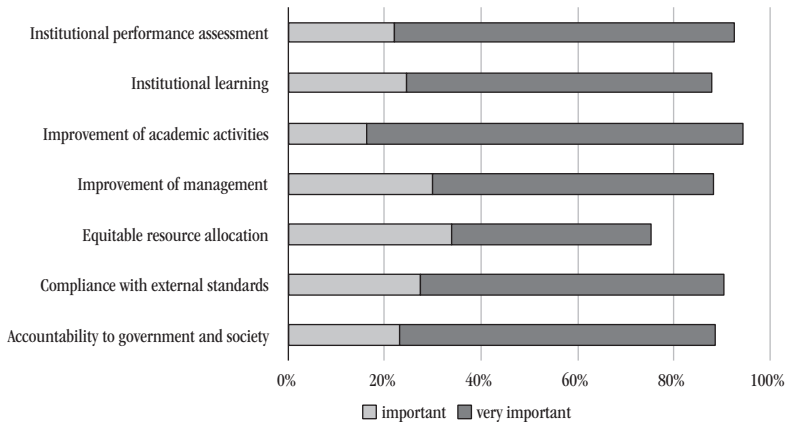
Looking at the structures involved in QM by region in *Figure 2.8*, there is a clear pattern of institutions from Asia and Pacific being more likely to have dedicated QM structures with specialized staff, followed by Europe, Africa, LAC, and North America. While there is a general absence of a dedicated unit or cell with specialized staff for QM at the faculty or department level in all regions, it is most prevalent in North America (22%). The significantly lower proportion of responses to this item parallels the previous conclusion that there are QM structures in place in most responding institutions.

## 5. The purposes of quality management

Respondents were asked about the purposes of QM in their institution. Typical purposes that are widely discussed in the literature, ranging through performance assessment, improvement, resource allocation, compliance, and accountability, were offered to respondents. While this list is certainly not complete, it covers purposes which are both externally and internally driven. Externally driven purposes include compliance

and accountability, and are geared towards the requirements of national authorities or external stakeholders. Internally driven purposes cover performance assessment, institutional learning, and management improvement. They are thus meant to improve internal processes and to strengthen institutional self-regulation.

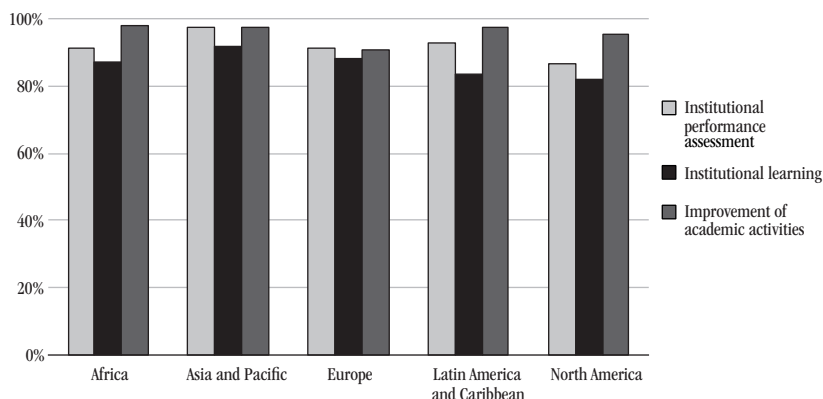
**Figure 2.9 Purposes of quality management**



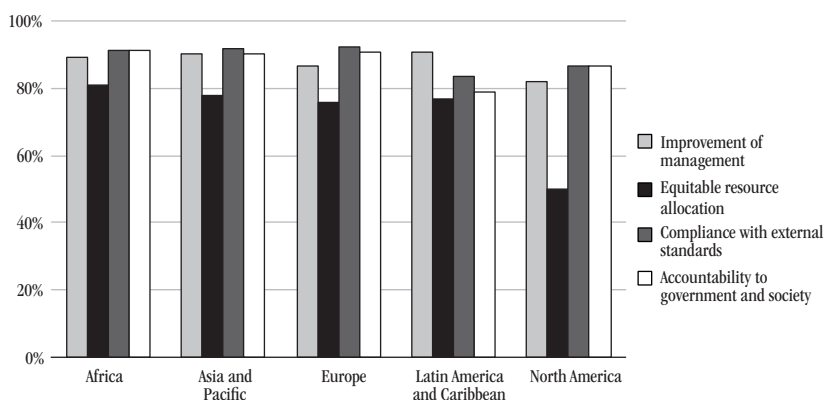
Based on the responses, the most important purposes of QM as seen by responding institutions are: improvement of academic activities (94%), institutional performance assessment (92%), and compliance with external standards (90%), as seen in *Figure 2.9*. These were followed by accountability to government and society (89%), institutional learning (87%), improvement of management (88%), and equitable resource allocation (75%). A majority of institutions marked each of the mentioned objectives as a purpose of QM policy, showing that QM remains both improvement- and compliance-driven.

Looking at the regional analysis in *Figure 2.10a* and *Figure 2.10b*, the patterns observed among responding institutions by region reflect the aggregate patterns seen in *Figure 2.9*. While equitable resource allocation generally has a lower recognition as a purpose of QM, only half of the responding institutions from North America select it as one of the purposes of QM.

**Figure 2.10a** Purposes of quality management, by region



**Figure 2.10b** Purposes of quality management, by region



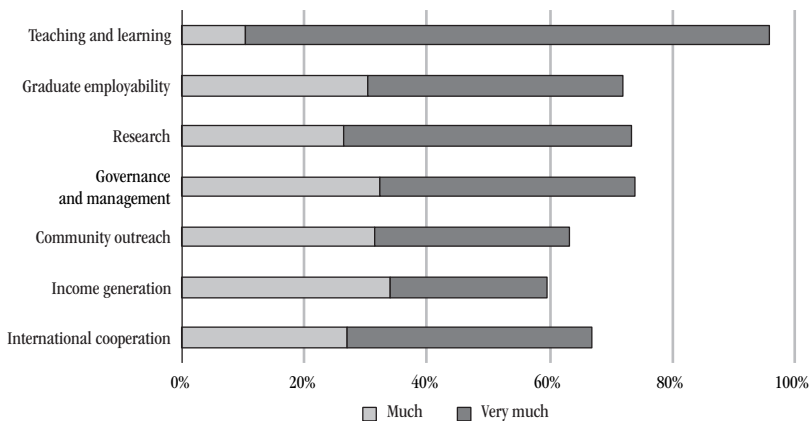
## 6. Orientation and activities of quality management

QM activities may concentrate on the functional areas of HEIs – teaching and learning, research, graduate employability, governance and management, community outreach, income generation and community services, and international cooperation. There is, indeed, much variation in the focus of QM. Considering that research is competitive and has its own procedures for evaluation and review, a hypothesis was made that QM in many countries would concentrate on the under-served functional area of teaching and learning. Since concerns with graduate employability

and international cooperation are of major policy importance in many countries worldwide, it might be expected to find QM concentrating on these aspects as well.

As shown in *Figure 2.11*, teaching and learning is indeed the primary focus of QM for the responding institutions: when asked to what extent their QM focused on certain activities, 86% rated teaching and learning as ‘very much’ and 10% as ‘much’. This observation is in line with the pattern shown by *Figure 2.1*, where academic value was widely seen as very important in overall institutional policy. Teaching and learning was followed by governance and management (74%), research (73%), graduate employability (72%), and international cooperation (67%) in terms of importance as focus of QM. Community outreach and income-generation activities were less popular, especially for North American institutions – only 23% and 27%, respectively, of the institutions surveyed considered these activities to be important in their QM.

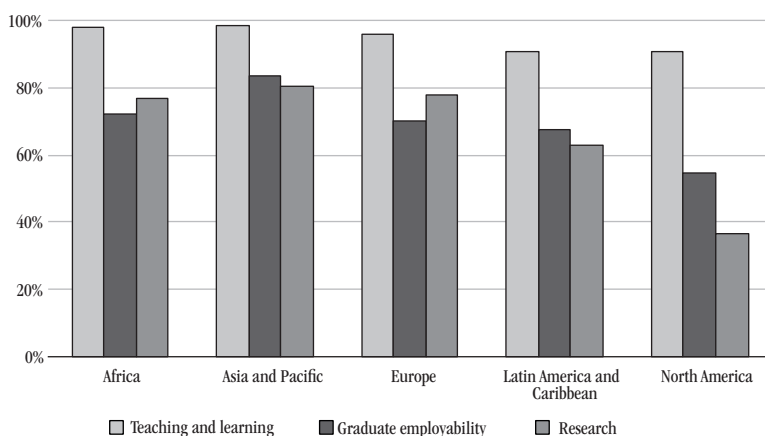
**Figure 2.11 Focus of orientation and activities in quality management**



Looking at the focus of orientation and activities in QM regionally, *Figure 2.12* and *Figure 2.13*, graduate employability is seen to be the most important for responding institutions from Asia and Pacific (83%), followed by Africa (72%), Europe (70%), LAC (67%), and North America (55%).

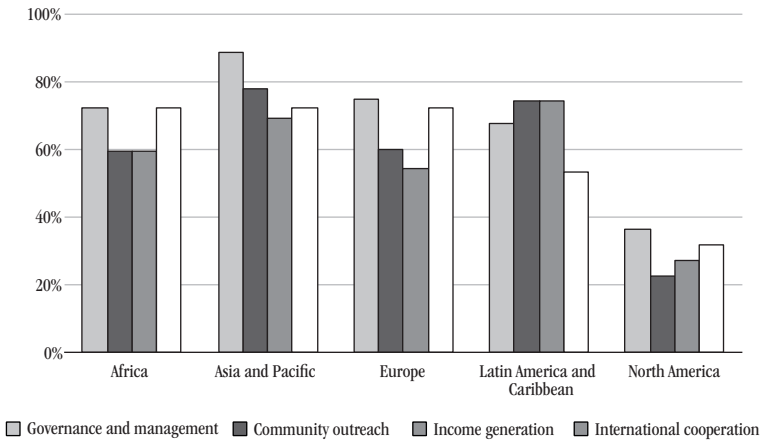
For research, a higher proportion of responding institutions from Asia and Pacific rate it as important (81%), followed by Europe (78%), Africa (77%), and LAC (63%). Only 36% of the responding institutions from North America see the focus of QM on research as important. Hence we see that the spread of academic QM remains limited to teaching and learning and does not always include research activities. Given that most institutions in our sample have both teaching and research as their orientation, as seen in *Figure 1.7*, and offer doctoral studies as their highest level of education, it can be concluded that research tends to be overlooked by current QM policies and mechanisms in the institutions in our sample. It is likely that the highly competitive nature of research, with its indicators such as publications, citations, and success in securing external grants, is deemed to be assessed separately for quality.

**Figure 2.12 Focus of orientation in quality management, by region**



Community outreach and income generation are seen as a less important areas of focus for QM than governance and management and international cooperation, except by responding institutions from LAC region, where the pattern is reversed.

**Figure 2.13 Focus of activities in quality management, by region**





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### 3. QUALITY MANAGEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

The quality of teaching and learning has become an important area of concern in the higher education (HE) policy of many countries. While research has a long-standing tradition of competitive evaluation processes, as mentioned in Chapter 2, the quality of teaching and learning was not a focus of national and institutional policy-making or evaluation for many years. As a response to this enduring lack of concern with the quality of teaching, national quality assurance (QA) systems have been set up in recent years to address the deficiencies in oversight and assessment of teaching. In response to the requirements framed and imposed by these external QA agencies, higher education institutions (HEIs) have strengthened mechanisms to monitor and, where necessary, raise the quality of their teaching provision.

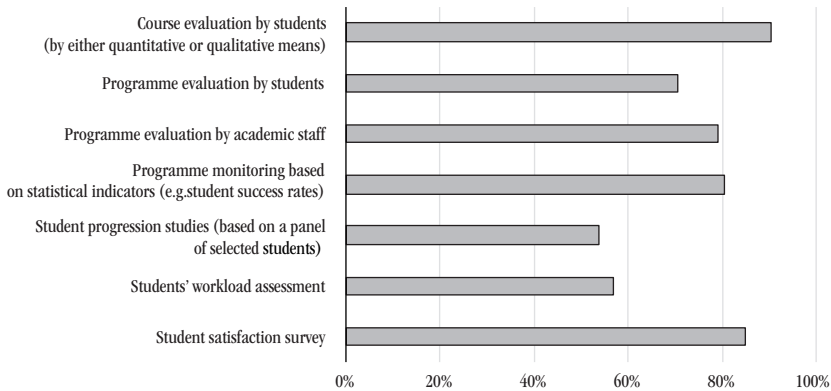
Anticipating that external requirements would lead HEI quality management (QM) to concentrate on the teaching function, the survey questionnaire intentionally placed particular emphasis on this aspect. The main components of a QM system for teaching and learning relate to the enhancement of academic programmes; the monitoring of student assessments, academic staff, and student support structures; and enhancement of doctoral studies, distance learning programmes, and academic support services.

#### 1. Enhancement of academic programmes

Given the above-mentioned trends, the following hypothesis was adopted: the enhancement of academic programmes would be an important component of QM in HEIs. One of the most widely used tools for this purpose is *student course assessment*, whereby students evaluate certain quality dimensions of teaching and learning at the course level. Over the years, new QM instruments have emerged, such as *student satisfaction surveys* and *workload assessment*. Student satisfaction surveys assess the broader student experience, and thus include the measuring of satisfaction with support services and extracurricular activities. Student workload assessments are conducted mainly as a consequence of the introduction of course credit systems, seeking to ensure that credits correspond to a

particular pre-assessed workload. Another trend has been the introduction of tools of technical capacity such as *student panel studies*. They enable longitudinal assessment of selected students at crucial moments (first year, mid-programme, and final year) of their progress in a study programme. In many countries, *programme evaluation* was introduced as a consequence of external QA (for instance, accreditation). This usually assesses the adequacy of learning objectives and whether the pedagogic system and the available resources of a programme enable students to reach the objectives. Programme evaluation is typically conducted by academic staff, but it can also involve an element of student feedback. *Programme monitoring based on statistical indicators* is a particular form of programme evaluation based on selected indicators related to certain process indicators (for instance, staff/student ratios) along with student progression and completion.

**Figure 3.1 Processes and tools used for enhancement of academic programmes**

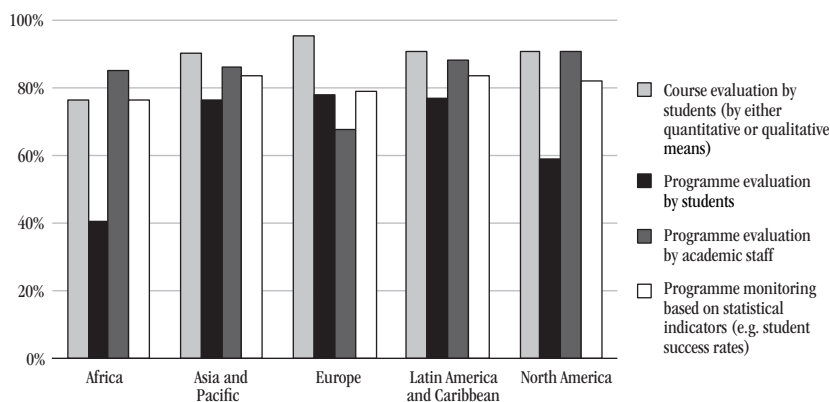


The data in *Chapter 2* show that there is a near-universal recognition of the importance of academic quality improvement among the responding institutions. To understand the ways in which this recognition affects HEIs, the respondents were asked about the processes and tools that they use for the enhancement of teaching and learning. As seen in *Figure 3.1*, a majority of the institutions use most of the processes and tools proposed in the survey questionnaire. Course evaluation by students (90%) and student satisfaction survey (85%) are the most frequently

used tools, followed by programme monitoring based on statistical indicators (80%), programme evaluation by academic staff (79%), and programme evaluation by students (70%). An exception in this trend is the use of students' workload assessment (57%) and student progression studies (54%), which reflects the fact that these tools are relatively recent introductions, and also more demanding from a technical point of view. Student workload assessment requires the recording of the workload related to each course of a given programme by students, to inform an evaluation of whether the credits associated with it are adequate. Student progression studies require the regular follow-up of a pre-selected group of students. Extensive use of both technical and human resources in these assessments means that institutions facing resource constraints will find it harder to implement them.

Other tools for the enhancement of academic programmes were reported by the responding institutions in response to an open-ended question. They included evaluation by alumni as well as relevant commerce and industry, and evaluation of module and organizational structure.

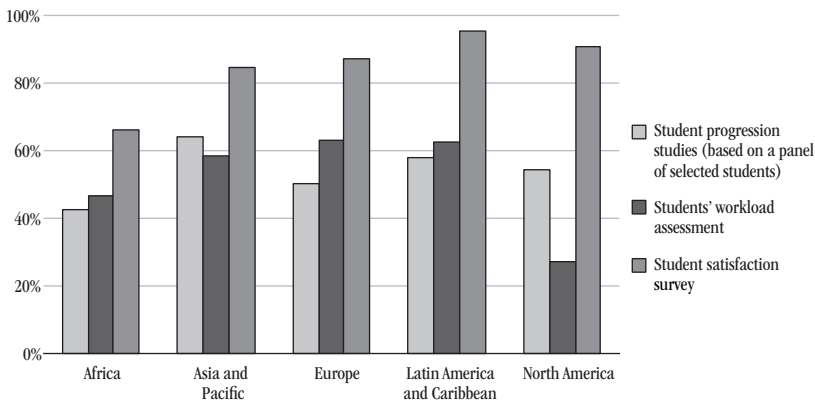
**Figure 3.2a Processes and tools used for enhancement of academic programmes, by region**



At a regional level, some patterns emerge from the study of responses as shown in *Figure 3.2a* and *Figure 3.2b*. The share of responses for each proposed tool or process is similar among institutions responding from

Asia and Pacific, Europe, and LAC. Large variation patterns emerge in a global analysis, however, as can be seen by comparing responses from Africa and North America. For example, the use of student satisfaction surveys is least common in North American institutions (27%), and use of programme evaluation by students (40%) is found least frequently in African institutions.

**Figure 3.2b Processes and tools used for enhancement of academic programmes, by region**



It is notable that students' workload assessment is most common in the European region (62%), where the process of redefining course credits under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is part of the Bologna Process. This has encouraged HEIs to request students to record their workload in specific courses or entire study programmes. Student workload assessment serves as an example of an externally originated process that has influenced the choice of tools used for QM in HEIs.

## 2. Monitoring of student assessments

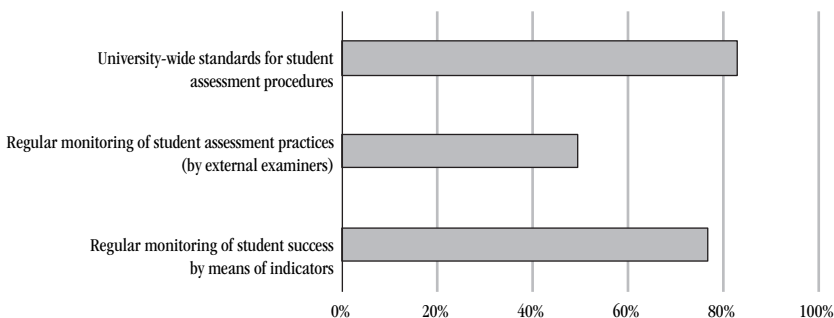
Student assessment is an integral part of a pedagogical system at the course and programme levels. There are different traditions of student assessment. In the Anglo-Saxon tradition, there is a long history of external examiners reviewing and criticizing assessment, grading, and examination processes. Academics from other HEIs evaluate the adequacy, fairness, and consistency of student assessment. In most

other parts of the world the monitoring of HEI assessment practices is traditionally an internal responsibility of academic collective bodies, such as departmental committees, at the decentralized level. Given that external QA focuses increasingly on the alignment of the learning objectives of academic programmes with student assessment, it is to be expected that HEIs are inclined to develop QM instruments for the monitoring of student assessment.

To reveal trends in monitoring of student assessments, the HEIs were asked to indicate which processes and tools they use for this task. Three tools were nominated in the survey: *university-wide standards for student assessment* procedures (such as might be laid down in internal rules and regulations, or within the framework of processes in a quality manual); regular monitoring of student assessment procedures, through *external examiners*; and the *use of indicators*.

As seen in *Figure 3.3*, regular monitoring of student assessment by external examiners was not recognized as the most important tool and was selected by only about half of the institutions (49%). University-wide standards for student assessment procedures (83%) and regular monitoring of student success by means of indicators (77%) were more widely used for monitoring student assessment.

**Figure 3.3 Processes or tools used for monitoring student assessments**

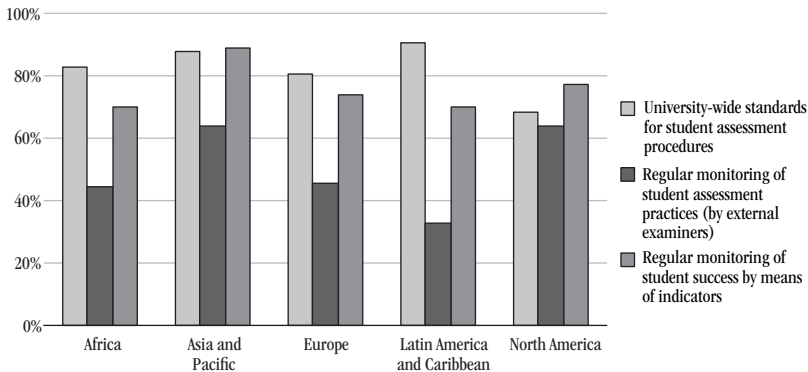


Other tools used in monitoring student assessment were mentioned in response to an open-ended question. They included centralized frameworks made available by the education ministries, and additional arrangements involving external evaluations. One of the institutions reported that ‘external examiners are used for internships and master’s

thesis defence'. The examiners included professionals from the field and academics from other institutions.

The regional analysis of the responses in *Figure 3.4* shows that regular monitoring of student success by means of indicators was the most popular tool for institutions from the Asia and Pacific region, where 89% of the institutions report using it. Regular monitoring of student assessment practices by external examiners was the least popular option in general; for instance, it was the option least practised by responding institutions in LAC countries – only about a third used it for assessment.

**Figure 3.4 Processes or tools used for monitoring student assessments, by region**



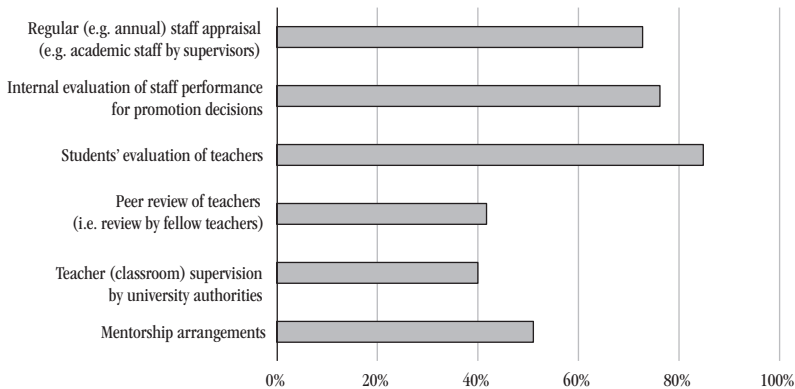
### 3. Monitoring the quality of academic staff performance

Academic staff assessment is one of the most common and crucial components of a QM system. Academic staff may be assessed on the basis of research performance and productivity by their peers, either at the national or institutional level, when seeking promotion. Such traditional systems may be supplemented by *annual performance appraisals* conducted by supervisors (heads of department), which take into account a broader range of activities carried out in the course of a year, including contributions and performance in the teaching area. It has also come to be recognized that the capacity for effective teaching is not necessarily innate and that new teaching staff are often in need of training. Therefore, *mentoring arrangements* have been developed in many HEIs to improve

the teaching capacity of academic staff at early stages of their career. Under a mentoring arrangement, a more experienced colleague accompanies a younger academic colleague in his or her teaching responsibilities. In the case of *peer reviewing of a teacher*, a colleague from the same academic institution will observe his or her colleague's class and provide feedback, typically on the basis of a set of pre-designed criteria. *Classroom supervision* by academic authorities (heads of departments for instance) may take place in certain contexts, but is not very frequent given the prevailing ethos of professional autonomy underlying academia in most higher education systems. *Internal evaluation* (or *self-evaluation*) may be used to systematically evaluate existing practices and ensure their consistency with the institution's mission. Each unit generates a self-evaluation report and interviews key informants. The information generated is used for decision-making processes such as staff promotion. *Students' evaluation of teachers* commonly involves evaluation of instructors based on preparedness for class; the promotion of learning and encouragement of student participation; the use of suitable evaluation methods on student learning; and availability for help.

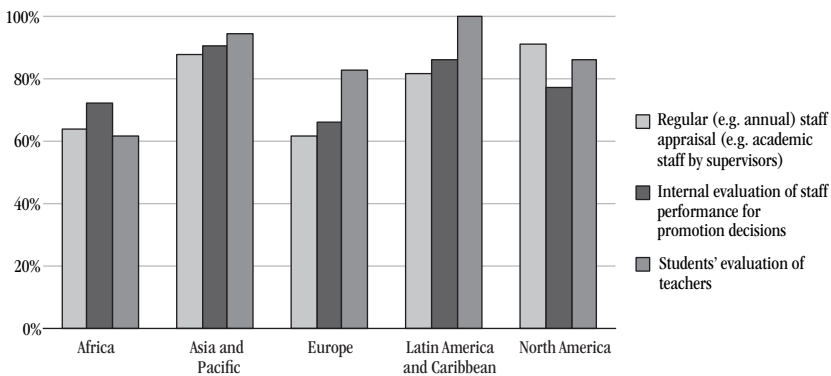
In order to understand the current patterns in academic staff assessment, institutions were asked to indicate the processes and tools used in monitoring the quality of academic staff. As seen in *Figure 3.5*, students' evaluation of teachers (85%), followed by internal evaluation of staff performance for promotion decisions (76%), and regular staff appraisal (73%) are popular processes and tools used for monitoring the quality of academic staff performance. The frequent use of students' evaluation of teachers confirms the earlier noted high frequency of students' course evaluation, since teachers are typically evaluated by students as part of the course evaluation. Mentoring arrangements (51%), peer review of teachers (41%), and teacher classroom supervision (40%) are less popular, with fewer than half of the responding institutions reporting use of these. Mentoring arrangements and peer review are relatively new modes of supporting teaching staff, and therefore less popular, while it is likely that teacher classroom supervision in many contexts is seen as incompatible with the professional autonomy of academic staff and, therefore, used less frequently.

**Figure 3.5 Processes or tools used for monitoring the quality of academic staff performance**



Among the other forms of tool used for monitoring the quality of academic staff that our open-ended question elicited were internal audits and annual development discussions. One institution remarked that their 'junior staff [members] are guided by senior staff and encouraged to further their studies,' indicating an institutional desire to promote career development.

**Figure 3.6a Processes or tools used for monitoring the quality of academic staff performance, by region**

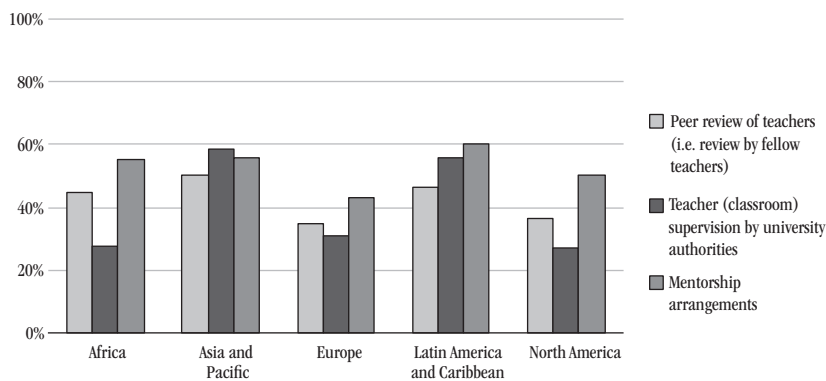


Examining the processes and tools used for monitoring the quality of academic staff performance by region in *Figure 3.6a* and *Figure 3.6b* reveals that students' evaluation of teachers is used by all the institutions



from LAC, followed by 94% in Asia and Pacific, 86% in North America, and 83% in Europe. Slightly less than two-thirds of the respondents from Africa said that they use students' evaluation of teachers in monitoring quality.

**Figure 3.6b Processes or tools used for monitoring the quality of academic staff performance, by region**



Neither peer review of teaching nor classroom supervision are common in our HEIs. This confirms the hypothesis that, across the regions, such tools are often seen as contrary to professional academics' autonomy. Mentorship arrangements are, however, commonly used tools related to monitoring academic staff. Teacher classroom supervision is somewhat more frequent in Asia and Pacific (49%) and in the LAC region (48%).

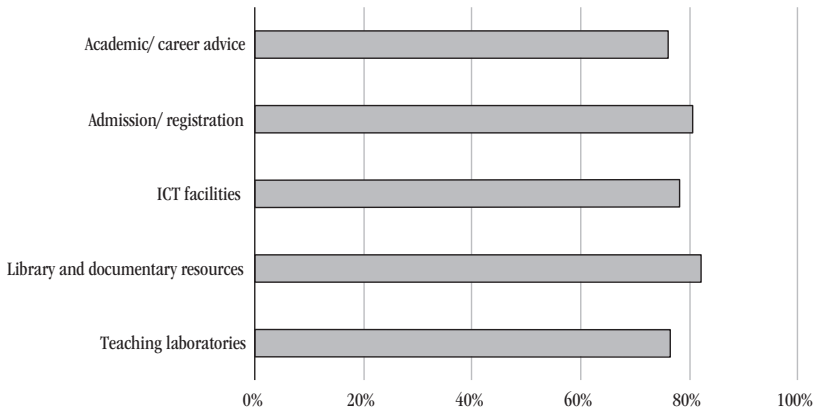
#### 4. Evaluation of student support structures

Student support services such as academic or career advice, admission and registration, information and communication technology (ICT) facilities, library and documentary resources, and teaching laboratories are an important component of the teaching and learning infrastructure. They provide necessary support to students, and so contribute to the quality of teaching and learning conditions and thus the overall student experience.

Institutions were asked whether they evaluated certain student support structures. As seen in *Figure 3.7*, a majority of the institutions

evaluate all the student support structures proposed by the survey. Library and documentary resources (84%) followed by admission and registration structures (81%) are the most commonly evaluated structures.

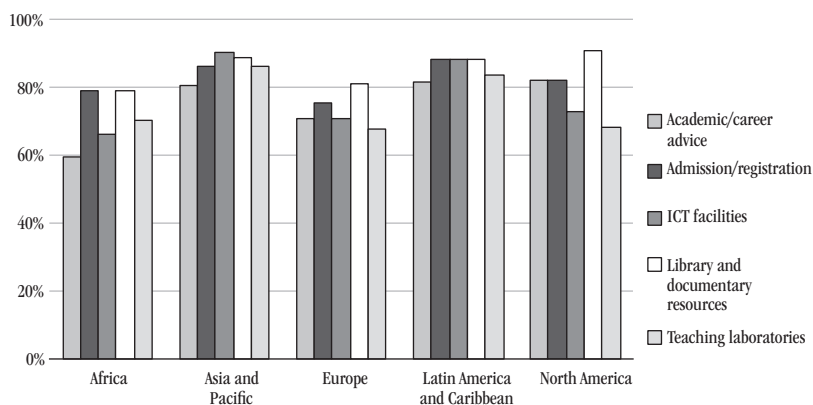
**Figure 3.7 Evaluation of student support structures**



Among other forms of student support structures mentioned in response to an open-ended question were student counselling and guidance services. One institution reported that while all the nominated student support services reported regularly on their activities, this did not necessarily lead to a formal evaluation. Another institution reported having a student satisfaction service as a means of regular evaluation of instructional quality.

The regional distribution of the evaluation of selected student support structures illustrated in *Figure 3.8* shows that the responses from Asia and Pacific and LAC are similar. The importance of QM of student support services is more pronounced in these two regions than in any others. A slightly lower proportion of European respondents evaluated student support structures, with African respondents reporting slightly lower engagement. There is a clear tendency in North American institutions to evaluate library and documentary resources.

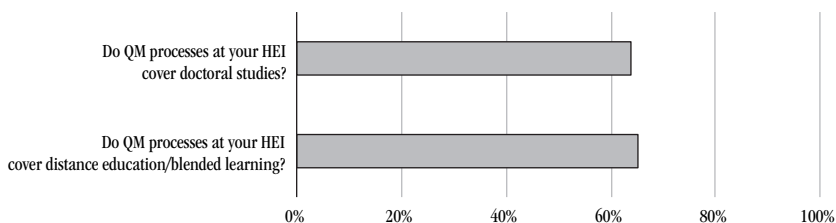
**Figure 3.8 Evaluation of student support structures, by region**



## 5. Quality management for doctoral studies and distance education

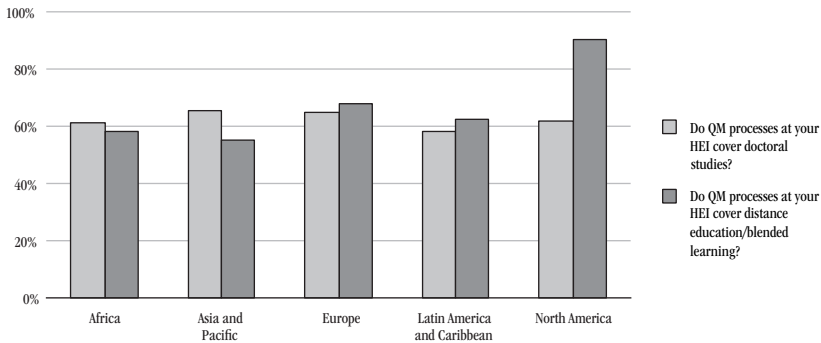
With the growing maturation of higher education systems worldwide, an increasing number of institutions offer doctoral education programmes. Often, these programmes have been grouped together in doctoral schools, with a view to concentrating research capacity in disciplinary areas and facilitating interaction between PhD students and academic staff. Also, reacting to pressure to widen access and increase the economic returns from online visibility, institutions have begun to expand e-learning services of distance or blended learning. However, these two areas of newer development may not necessarily be covered by QM, given the fact that they may require specifically adapted modes of QM.

**Figure 3.9 Quality management for doctoral studies and distance education**



To find out about the state of QM in doctoral and distance education, the survey asked institutions to specify whether their QM policies covered these functions. *Figure 3.9* looks at the share of positive responses for each of the questions asked of respondents for whom the category is applicable. For example, 251 institutions in our sample indicated that they offered doctoral programmes. Of these, 64% reported using QM processes to evaluate doctoral studies. A similar proportion of respondents that offered distance education or blended learning (65%)<sup>10</sup> said that their QM processes cover those two areas.

**Figure 3.10 Quality management for doctoral studies and distance education, by region**



Analysing regional patterns, *Figure 3.10* demonstrates that all the regions follow the global pattern (see *Figure 3.9*), but distance education and blended learning covered by QM is observed to a strikingly greater level in North American institutions (90%). Many of those HEIs are involved in distance and blended learning, and QM is well established, usually through institutional research services which collect information in the HEI and analyse it to inform internal decision-making.

10. There were 153 institutions from a total of 235 institutions in our sample that provided distance or blended learning services.

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## 4. QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND OTHER ASPECTS

Quality management (QM) in a higher education institution (HEI) can extend beyond the teaching and learning domain to cover other functional areas, such as research, governance and outreach, and community services. It can also focus on areas related to core functions, such as employability and international cooperation, which have a high political relevance.

### 1. Quality management and employability

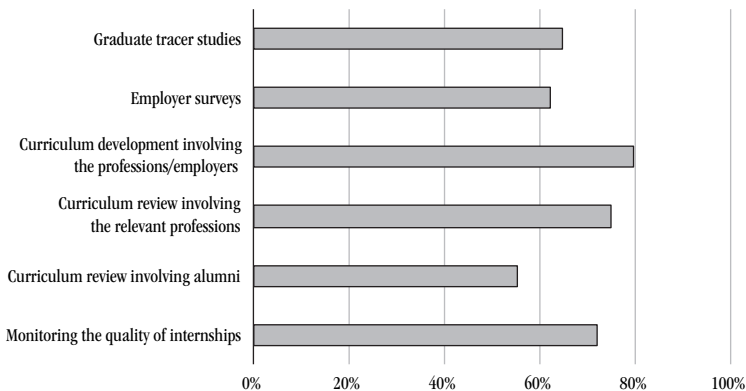
While the issue of graduate employment and the linkage of higher education (HE) to the labour market have been at the top of the HE policy agenda for many years, attention paid to the topics has gained momentum in the context of growing graduate unemployment in many countries. There is increasing pressure on HEIs to demonstrate that they deploy every means at their disposal to make sure that students get the best possible training and acquire competencies required to enter the labour market. There is an increasing expectation that HEIs should create and apply tools and processes that involve employers in quality management (QM), such as through the design and review of academic programmes and regular feedback from alumni and employers on the extent to which they think graduates are adapted to the demands of the labour market.

To discover whether and how QM takes into account the dimension of graduate employability, the survey asked respondents to specify the tools and processes that they use to measure and improve performance in this dimension through their QM. In the HEIs of certain countries, *employers or alumni* are members of committees involved in the development and review process of an academic programme. When *tracer studies* are conducted, graduates from a given academic programme are surveyed at a specified interval (Six months, one year or three years after graduation) to provide feedback on their success or otherwise in entering the labour market and their opinion of the relevance of the programme from which they graduated. *Employers' surveys* solicit, collate, and analyse employers' appraisals of an institution's or programme's graduates, in particular, collecting information about

the extent to which employers think that graduates fulfil the demands of the labour market. *Curriculum development and review involving relevant professions* consist of employer engagement in the revision of a study programme, seeking their opinions of the effectiveness of the programme in relation to graduates' preparedness to work. Under the imperative of facilitating the link between academic programmes and the labour market, *internships* have become an important feature of academic programmes, so it is important to find out whether they are assessed in terms of their contribution to the broader pedagogic system of a study programme.

As seen in *Figure 4.1*, curriculum development involving professionals (79%), followed by curriculum review (75%), and then monitoring the quality of internships (72%), are the most frequently cited tools used by responding institutions to enhance graduate employability. Graduate tracer studies and employers' surveys are used only by two-thirds of respondents, and only half involved alumni in curriculum review.

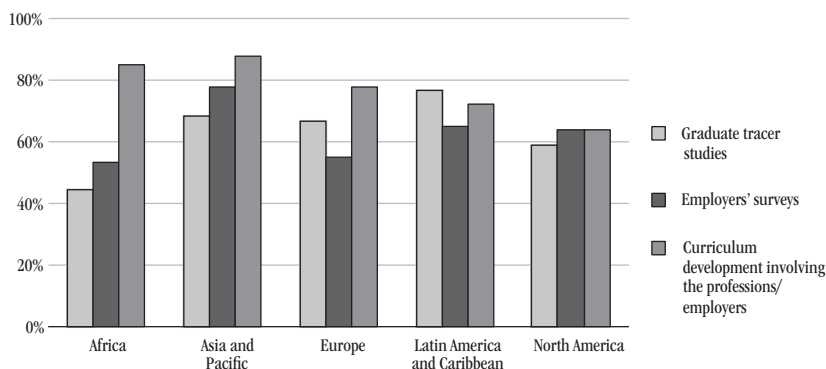
**Figure 4.1 Processes or tools used for the enhancement of graduate employability**



Responding to an open-ended question about other tools used to enhance graduate employability, institutional respondents cited discussions with employers during QM reviews of academic programmes, employers' presentations, and simulations of professional

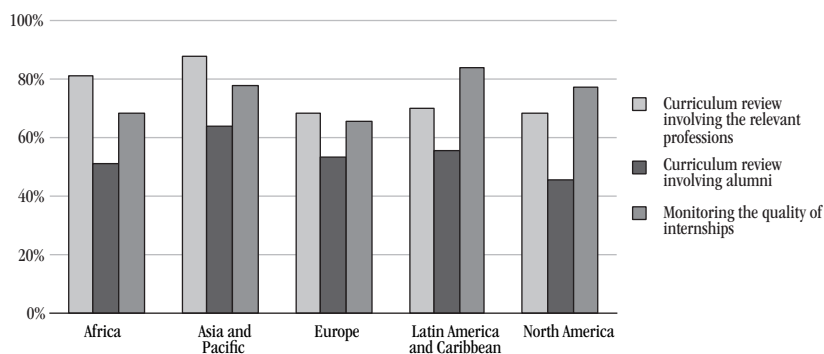
interviews for students. Graduate tracking by means of administrative data from the national social security system also featured in some cases.

**Figure 4.2a Processes or tools used for the enhancement of graduate employability, by region**



As seen in *Figure 4.2a* and *Figure 4.2b*, the choice of tools by respondents in different regions varies. For example, curriculum development involving professionals or employers is the most popular tool for the enhancement of graduate employability in responding institutions from Africa (85%) and Europe (78%), while Asia and Pacific relies most heavily on curriculum development and review (both at 88%). Institutions from LAC and North America have a preference for monitoring the quality of internships (84% and 77% respectively).

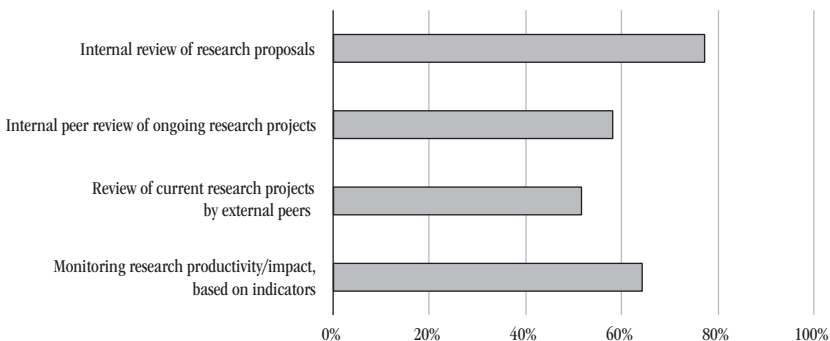
**Figure 4.2b Processes or tools used for the enhancement of graduate employability, by region**



## 2. Quality management and research

HEIs differ with regard to their research intensity, reflecting major differences in access to funding and highly specialized human resources. Typically, where research is a well-established function there are also national or international research organizations or programmes in place, through which funding for research is granted on a competitive basis. Research bodies usually examine research proposals *a priori*, relying on both *external and internal peer judgement*. The career advancement of academic staff is widely conditioned by their research performance, which will usually depend on success in obtaining grant support, based in turn on research proposals. Recently, however, it has become a more common practice for HEIs to establish an institutional research policy, and, therefore, to set up QM processes to inform and support their decision-making on strategic directions and resource allocation in the research domain. *Research productivity and impact* is a measure that takes into account the number of research products such as publications and patents from a researcher and its contribution to the literature in the given field. Institutions also conduct *internal reviews of research proposals* to ensure quality enhancement of research output, aiding decision-making of future directions for research.

**Figure 4.3 Processes or tools used for the enhancement of research**



Institutions were asked to identify the processes and tools that they use for enhancement of research in their institutions (*Figure 4.3*). Internal review of research proposals (77%) was the most common choice. Other tools and processes are used by less than two-thirds of



the institutions: monitoring research productivity or impact based on indicators by 64%, internal peer review of ongoing research projects by 58%, and review of current research projects through external peer groups by 51%.

Some institutions reported the use of incentives to encourage and support staff research. For example, one institution indicated that it allotted one research day per week to each staff member and also was willing to cover travelling costs for research and attending conferences. Institutions also monitor the publications of research staff in indexed and non-indexed journals.

**Figure 4.4 Processes or tools used for the enhancement of research, by region**

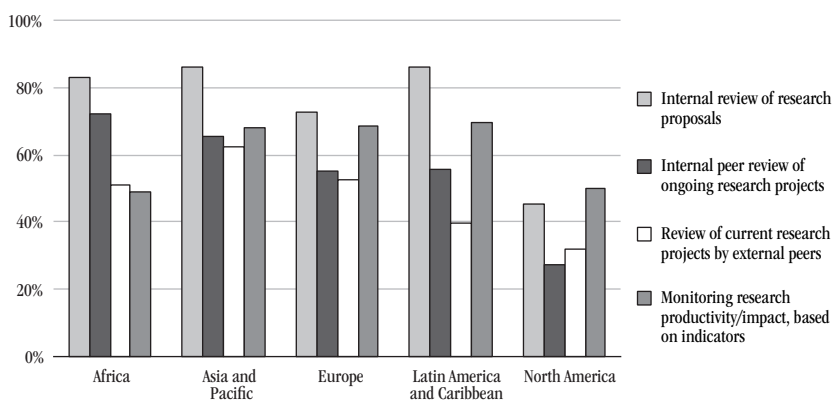


Figure 4.4 displays a large variation in the degree to which QM systems in different regions focus on research. It is rather surprising that North America and Europe seem to focus less on research in their QM than do the other regions. This could be explained by the fact that European and North American research organizations are relatively strong. They intensively assess research proposals that seek funding, and closely monitor progress in the projects that they accept. As a consequence, institutional QM on research is less predominant.

There is also some variation in the use of processes and tools for the enhancement of research by institutions in different regions. For example, internal review of research proposals is preferred by

institutions in Africa, Asia and Pacific, and LAC, while both internal review and monitoring research productivity based on indicators are preferred by responding institutions from Europe and North America.

### 3. Quality management and governance

Governance is an essential function in an HEI. In many countries, HEIs have reformed their governance structures and processes, often as a consequence of national governance reforms implemented under a new public management paradigm. Such reforms include the use of key performance indicators for the *monitoring of strategic planning objectives*. They comprise *internal target* and *service level agreements*, under which university leadership agrees with either academic or administrative units (or both) on expected outcomes. Frequently, agreements are enforced by providing (or withholding) incentive funding as a motivation. *Evaluation of administrative units* has also become a more regular feature of governance, and is conducted alongside target or service level agreements to assess whether specified objectives have been reached. In addition, some HEIs have engaged in the *external certification* of certain management processes (such as ISO or EFQM standards) to reform and standardize the work of administrative units.

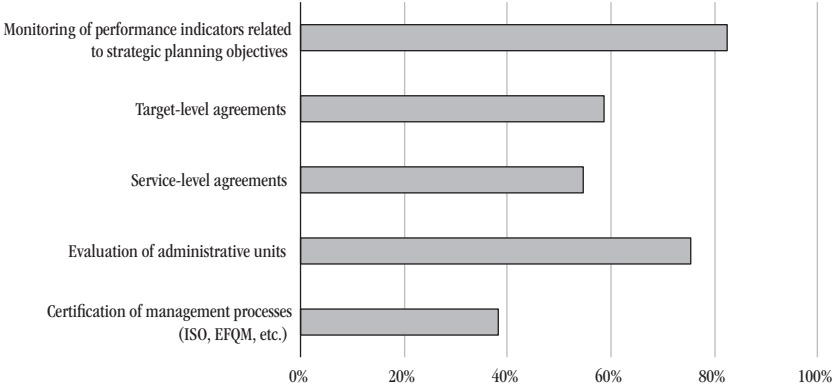
To identify the current trends in QA in governance structures the survey asked institutions to nominate the processes and tools they use to enhance governance or management. As seen in *Figure 4.5*, monitoring of performance indicators related to strategic planning objectives (82%) followed by evaluation of administrative units (76%) are used by a majority of the responding institutions. Target and service-level agreements are used by 55–60% of the responding institutions, while certification of management processes is used by less than 40%.

Adding to this list of tools, some responding institutions cited the use of a centralized framework set by education ministries for governance enhancement. One institution indicated that development plans rather than target level or service level agreements are key to their governance enhancement mechanism.

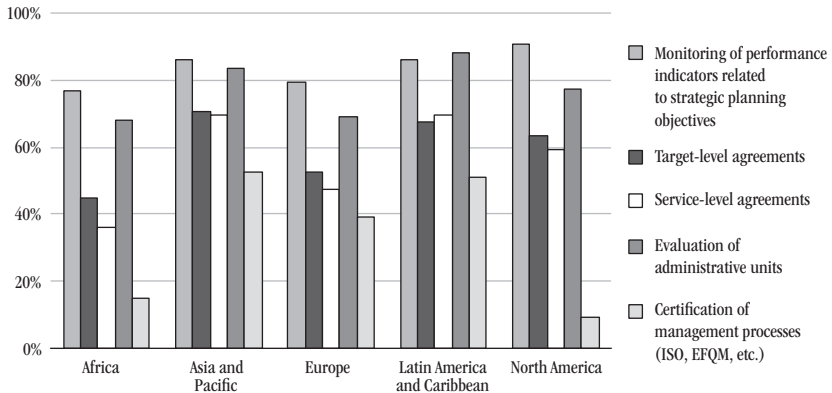
As seen in *Figure 4.6*, monitoring of strategic objectives through performance indicators is a widely used tool in all regions, as is evaluation of administrative units. There is notable regional variation in the use of the

tools and processes that are used by less than the majority of institutions in *Figure 4.5*. For example, only a relatively small proportion of HEIs from both North America (9%) and Africa (15%) use certification of management processes like ISO or EFQMs as a tool. While the use of target and service level agreements remains similar by region, it is used slightly more in institutions from Asia and Pacific and LAC regions.

**Figure 4.5 Processes or tools applied for the enhancement of governance or management**



**Figure 4.6 Processes or tools applied for the enhancement of governance or management, by region**



#### 4. Quality management and international cooperation

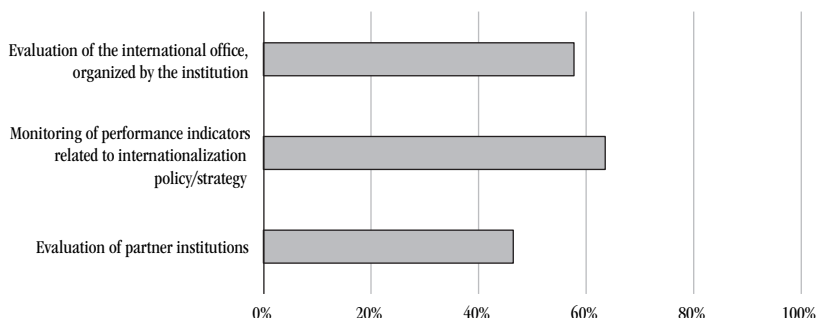
International cooperation by universities is a traditional feature of HE. In the context of globalization, there has been an increase in the competition between HEIs to attract international students, staff, and funds. These recent developments have increased the importance of internationalization. And internationalization is also expected to improve the quality of academic programmes and research, contribute to generating income, and enhance the international standing and prestige of HEIs. Many national governments strongly support the engagement of their HEIs in international cooperation as a way of increasing their reputation globally, especially in international rankings. Given the current importance of internationalization, it was expected that HEIs would be inclined to include international cooperation in their QM systems.

To better understand the importance of QM in enhancing international cooperation, participating institutions were asked about the tools and processes they use for that purpose. Such tools and processes include *evaluation of the support structure for internationalization* (i.e. the international relations office). This form of self-evaluation assesses the performance of administrative units in terms of goals, effectiveness, and resource allocation for the purpose of international cooperation. Since internationalization is frequently an objective of an institutional strategic plan, it was hypothesized that HEIs would *use performance indicators* such as the share of international students in the total student body, to measure whether they are making progress in achieving their objectives. Lastly, an *evaluation of possible partner institutions or organizations* might be used to assess whether partnership would be promising and remain beneficial according to this strategic view. The main purpose of this evaluation is to measure the extent to which an institution meets the necessary conditions to ensure systematic progress towards the achievement of stated objectives.

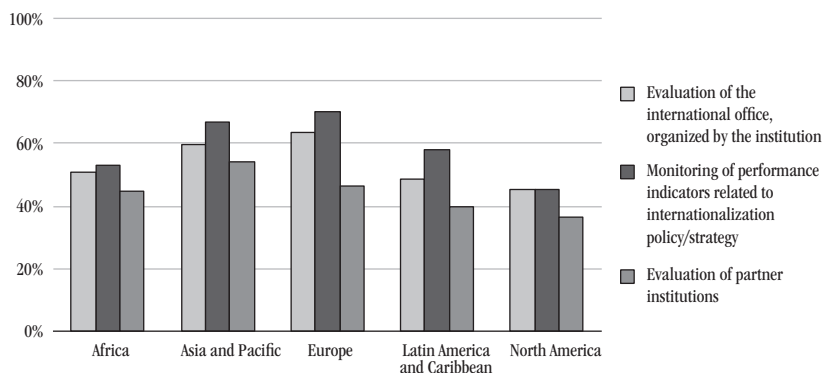
It is rather surprising that a majority of the responding institutions used none of the proposed tools or processes for QM of international cooperation. It may be that international cooperation is not seen as important, or it may be that institutions use other tools than those proposed in the survey. In terms of preferences for tools, the monitoring of performance indicators related to internationalization policy (63%)

is relatively popular, followed by an evaluation of the international office organized by the institution (58%), and an evaluation of partner institutions (46%), as seen in *Figure 4.7*.

**Figure 4.7 Processes or tools used for the enhancement of international cooperation**



**Figure 4.8 Processes or tools used for the enhancement of international cooperation, by region**



While responding to the open-ended question on other tools, one of the institutions recorded that a ‘survey on international students’ level of satisfaction [along with] evaluation of partner institutions by third parties in terms of rankings and international classifications’ is used for the enhancement of international cooperation.

Figure 4.8 displays at the regional level the QM processes and tools used for the enhancement of international cooperation. The responding institutions from Europe and Asia and Pacific indicated a higher than average use of the proposed tools, while LAC follows an average pattern, as seen in Figure 4.7. Africa and North America have a lower than average use of enhancement tools and processes in international cooperation.

## 5. Quality management, income generation, and community services

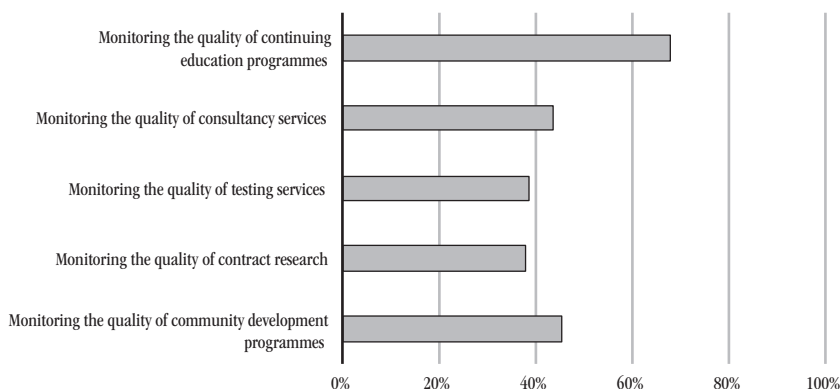
Within the context of growing financial constraints, income-generation activities have become an increasingly prominent feature of HEIs worldwide. The most common income-generating activity is *continuing professional development*, organized under an offer of short and long training courses, or the recruitment of fee-paying students. Income generation may also cover *contract research*, commercial *testing services* or *consultancy services*, depending on what an HEI can offer in terms of academic expertise, available human resources, and specialized equipment. *Community services* are offered to the surrounding environment of HEIs, but they are often conducted without an explicit objective of income generation. For example, in many developing countries, HEIs play a particularly important role in offering access to health services and applied research.

The survey questionnaire asked institutions to indicate the processes or tools they used for assessing the quality of activities linked to enhancement of income generation or community services. Monitoring the quality of continuing education programmes (68%) was the most popular tool among responding institutions, most likely because continuing education is commonly found as an income-generation activity in many HEIs. The other tools or processes indicated by the survey are used by less than half of the responding institutions: monitoring the quality of community development programmes (45%) and consultancy services (44%) is followed by monitoring the quality of testing services (39%) and contract research (38%).

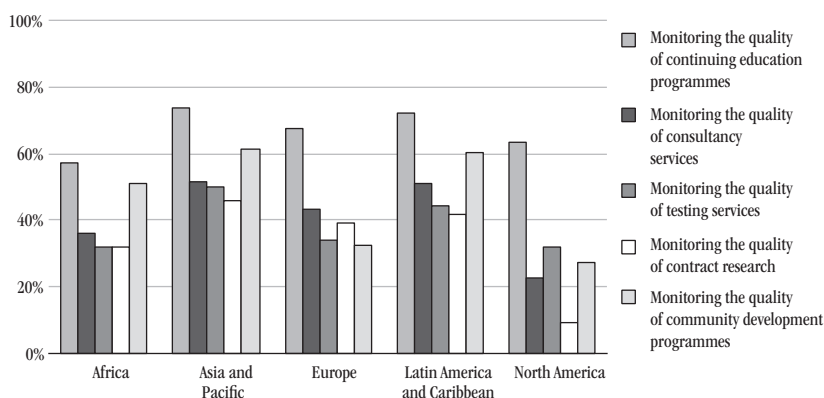
As seen in Figure 4.10, the analysis by region follows a pattern similar to that seen in the aggregate analysis. Institutions from Asia and Pacific and LAC indicated an above-average use of the proposed tools

and processes, whereas Europe showed an average pattern. Institutions from North America indicated the least use of these tools, especially in the monitoring of quality of contract research.

**Figure 4.9 Processes or tools applied for the enhancement of income generation or community services**



**Figure 4.10 Processes or tools applied for the enhancement of income generation or community services, by region**



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## 5. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM AND INFORMATION USE IN DECISION-MAKING

Quality management (QM) is essentially about the generation and use of information to support internal discussion and decision-making for quality improvement. Therefore, the survey sought information on the availability of key indicators derived from management information systems (MISs). This included examining the use of generated information to provide feedback to stakeholders or to inform quality-related processes such as review of study programmes and academic staff assessment.

### 1. Availability and use of information on teaching and learning

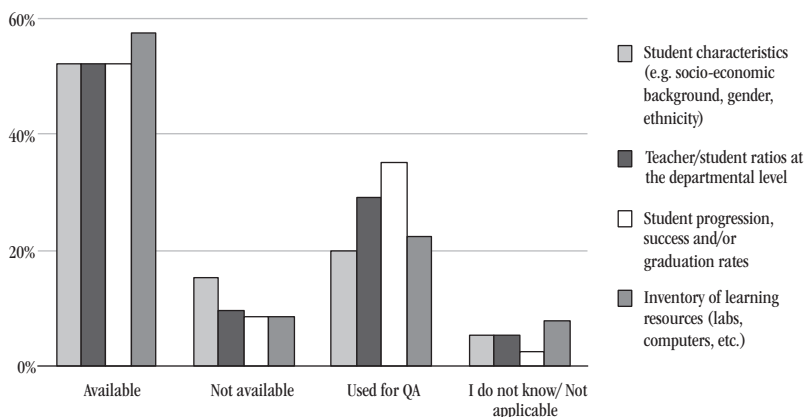
The exercise of QM is dependent to a large extent on the availability of data and information derived from an MIS. An MIS typically provides data on students, staff, infrastructure, and financial resources. From this information, important indicators related to *student characteristics* (e.g. share of students from certain ethnic backgrounds, their socio-economic origins), *progression* and *graduation rates* can be calculated. It also provides the necessary information for the calculation of resource-related indicators (for instance student/teacher ratios at the departmental level). In addition to the constraint of weak MISs, the absence or inadequacy of a system to use knowledge generated from QM for improvement purposes is known to be another constraint in many QM systems worldwide. Hence, it was decided to investigate whether available management information is used for QM purposes in HEIs, and whether the use of management information constitutes an integral part of QM.

The institutions were asked whether certain key information generated typically by MIS was *available* (without being used) or whether it was *used* (given availability) for QM purposes (*Figure 5.1*). Around 87% of the institutions had information on student progression available, but only 40% of these institutions used this information for QM. This is followed by teacher/student ratio – available in 81% of institutions, although only 36% of institutions used it for QM. Information on learning inventory was available in 80% of the institutions, but



only 28% used it in QM. Information on student characteristics was the least available information; even so, it was available in 70% of the responding institutions but only 38% of institutions used it in their QM. It appears that key information is relatively available, but that there is little systematic use of it for QM.

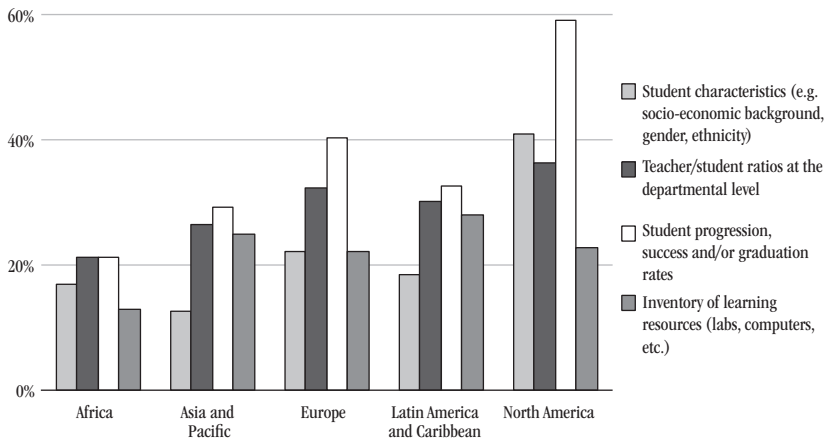
**Figure 5.1 Availability and use of information on teaching and learning in quality management**



Among the other types of information used for QM, as indicated in responses to an open-ended question, were information about staff, research, and other relevant activities linked to the academic programme. In many cases institutions reported that the results of self-evaluation were made available to students and staff through the institutional website.

*Figure 5.2* shows that the use of information in QM is higher on average in North American institutions than in institutions in other regions. The ranking in other regions is in the order Europe, LAC, Asia and Pacific, and Africa. Indeed, the frequent presence of institutional research offices in North American universities seems to have created a culture where quantitative data are more commonly used for QM than in other regions.

**Figure 5.2 Use of information on teaching and learning in quality management, by region**



## 2. Frequency of use of survey results for feedback

In addition to statistical data from MIS, QM typically relies on survey data from stakeholders such as students, staff, graduates, and employers. A frequently encountered problem in QM is that while a lot of data are generated, they are often not used to provide feedback to students and academic staff.

The participating institutions were, therefore, asked to report on the frequency with which they provided feedback to academic staff or students on the information generated from student satisfaction or graduate surveys. As *Figure 5.3* shows, a majority (74%) of the responding institutions use the results of surveys either often or always in discussion with academic staff at the departmental level. Only half or slightly less of the responding institutions (48%) often or always informed students who participated in surveys about the results.

In the open-ended question section, one institution stated that special discussions among students, academic staff, and management are organized to present feedback in their institution at university level, while aggregated results of surveys are published on their quality centre website.

**Figure 5.3** Use of survey results to provide feedback

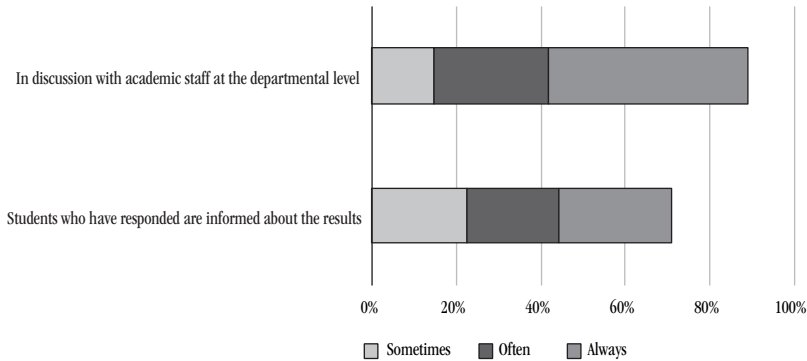
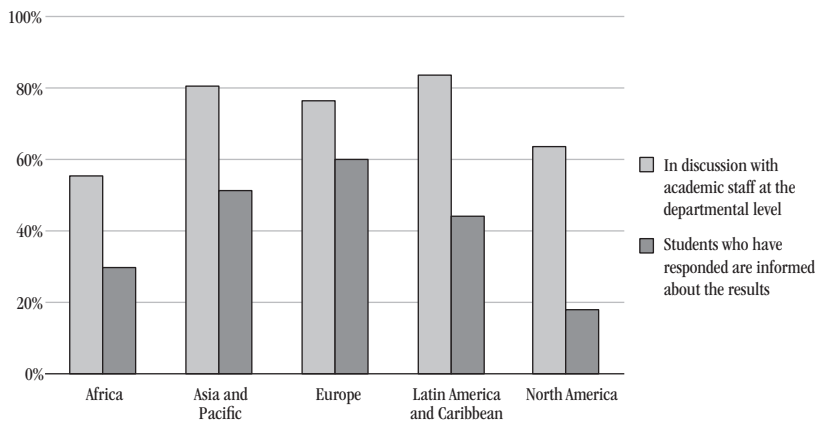


Figure 5.4 presents the aggregate for responses *sometimes*, *always*, and *often* to the questions on the use of survey results to provide feedback at a regional level. The use of survey results in discussions with academic staff at department level occurs in the majority of institutions in LAC, Asia and Pacific, and Europe. Student feedback of survey results is found at a lower rate among responding institutions, with the lowest rates in North American institutions, where only 18% of the institutions responded that they did so either always or often. Europe has the highest proportion (60%) of institutions giving feedback to students, followed by Asia and Pacific (51%) and LAC (44%).

**Figure 5.4** Use of survey results to provide feedback, by region



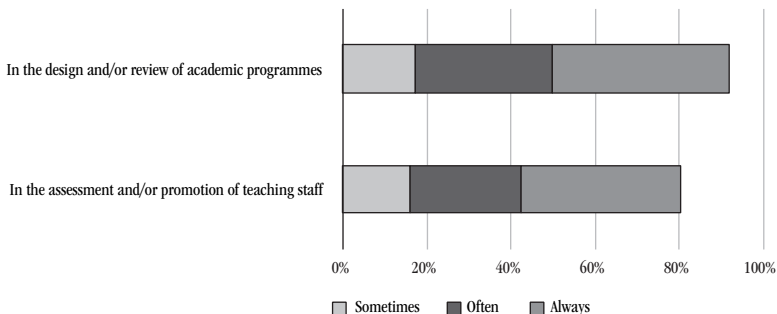
### 3. Frequency of the use of survey results to support decision-making

QM is intended to inform and support decision-making at different levels of an HEI. This is called ‘closing the loop’ between the generation of data and their use. Academic staff should engage individually or collectively with programme and department heads to discuss the data generated and to apply the information in identifying and improving aspects of their work that need to change. HEIs can systematically institutionalize the use of survey results in decision-making. An institution may organize a dialogue on the *quality of academic programmes* at the department or faculty level, which feeds into the processes of programme development or review. Survey results can also be used to support decisions about the *career advancement of academic staff*.

In order to assess whether results from QM-related surveys are used for decision-making, institutions were asked to state the frequency with which they make use of surveys such as student satisfaction surveys or graduate surveys for programme development and/or review, or for career advancement of academic staff. Interestingly, most responding institutions said that they use results from these surveys either always or often to support decision-making in the design and review of academic programmes (75%), and in the assessment and promotion of teaching staff (64%), as shown in *Figure 5.5*.

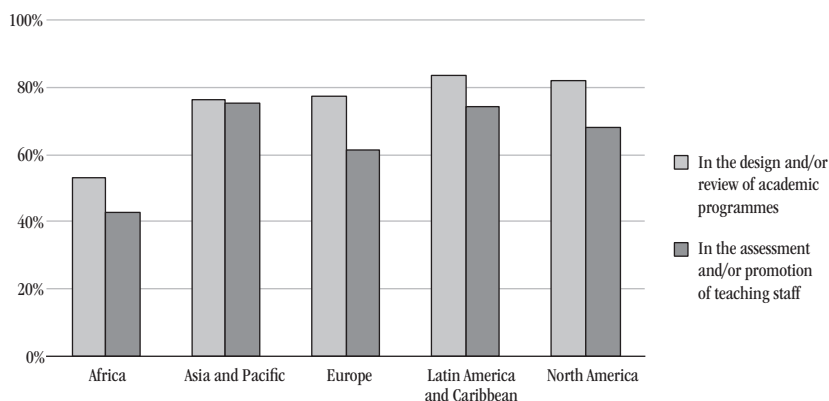
Among the responses to the open-ended question, one institution said that survey results were used for improving the teaching and learning process and research results.

**Figure 5.5 Use of survey results to support decision-making**



Examining the use of survey results to support decision-making by region it can be seen that Africa has a different profile from all other regions. A majority of responding institutions (between 76 and 84%) in all regions, except Africa, use survey results in the design and review of academic programmes, as seen in *Figure 5.6*. A majority of responding institutions (between 60 and 75%), except in Africa, also use survey results for assessment and promotion of teaching staff.

**Figure 5.6 Use of survey results to support decision-making, by region**



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## 6. EXTERNAL DRIVERS, INTERNAL FACTORS, AND CHALLENGES IN QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Quality management (QM) cannot develop independently of contextual factors – both the internal and external environment of a higher education institution (HEI). External factors typically comprise governmental requirements and/or a desire to strengthen market position in a competitive context. They can be conditioned by public policy or the market. For this project, internal factors are understood to be features of the QM system itself, which may either support or hinder the development of QM in an HEI.

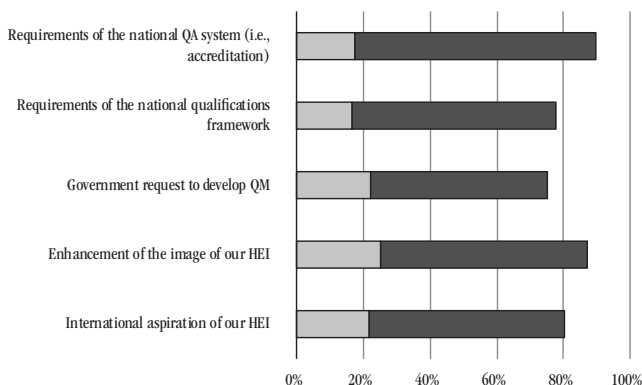
### 1. External drivers

This study applied the state–market dichotomy to develop a set of hypothetical external drivers. In many higher education systems, governance reforms have led to the creation of external QA schemes and national qualifications frameworks. Both reforms have triggered the development of QM mechanisms by HEIs, to put them in a position to respond to the requirements of external QA. In other contexts, HEIs were simply *asked by government to create structures and processes of internal quality assurance (IQA)* as part of a national governance reform. National qualification frameworks are standards of competencies set by the state based on the level and speciality of a programme. Programmes have to undergo evaluation to assess their conformity with these descriptions prior to being accepted by a national regulator and being recognized by a governmental authority. In administrative contexts where HEIs are operating closer to the market, *the enhancement of external image or an aspiration for international visibility* are important drivers of efforts to strengthen the market position of an HEI. Since QM can be seen as an element that enhances institutional response to both state and market drivers, one can expect development of QM in HEIs.

Participating institutions were asked about the importance of the above-mentioned external drivers in the development of their QM. *Figure 6.1* shows that the requirements of the national QM system are the most important motivation (89%) for the development of QM in the HEIs,

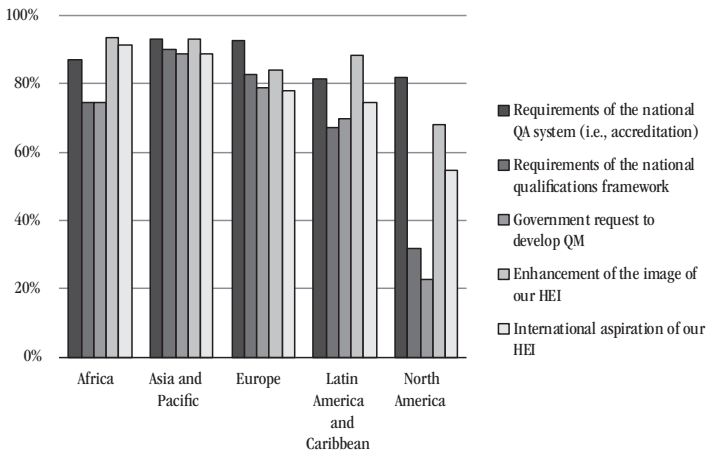
followed closely by the enhancement of self-image (87%), international aspiration (80%), and the requirements of a national qualification framework (77%). Three-quarters (75%) of the institutions indicated a government request to develop QM as an important external driver. This points to the fact that both public policy and market requirements are equally important as external drivers for the development of HEI QM.

**Figure 6.1 External drivers in development of quality management**



There are regional variations in terms of which factor plays the most important role. In Africa, as seen in *Figure 6.2*, enhancement of self-image and international aspiration is comparatively more important than the requirements of a national accreditation system. In fact, in Africa, not all countries have an EQA system. In particular, the development of EQA is relatively low in the francophone African region. In Asia and Pacific, the requirements of a national QM system and an enhancement of self-image (both at 93%) play a central role. In Europe and North America, national EQA requirements dominate as the most common motivation for adoption, whereas in the LAC region, an enhancement of self-image is the most important external driver. The smaller role of the state as an external driver for QM in North America is shown by the low proportion of respondents citing requirements of a national qualification framework or a government request to develop QM (32% and 23% respectively). This striking contrast to responding institutions from other regions is a consequence of qualifications frameworks being much less prominent in North America.

**Figure 6.2 External drivers in development of quality management, by region**



## 2. Internal factors

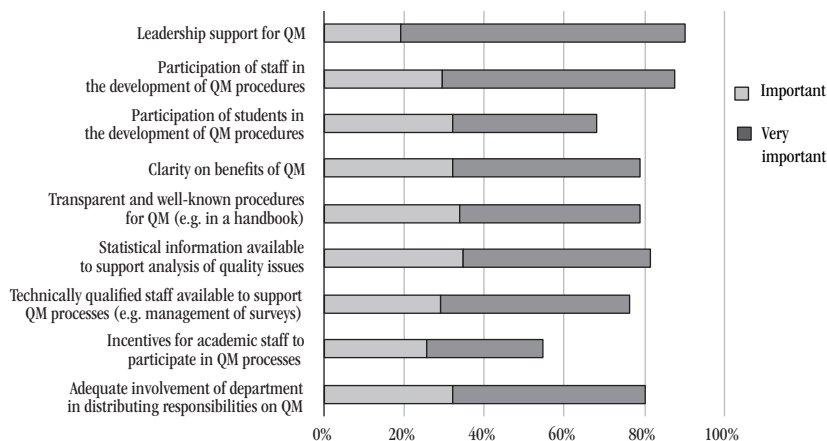
In order to work effectively in an HEI, QM has to be supported by certain internal factors. Those factors cited most frequently in the literature on the topic are: leadership support; involvement and participation of students and staff; clarity on benefits of QM; transparent and well-known procedures for QM; an adequate management information system (MIS); incentives provided to staff for their participation in QM; and an adequate involvement of academic departments in QM processes.

The survey asked the institutions to indicate the most important internal factors in the development of the QM in their institution. Most factors are seen as either important or very important by the majority of the respondents. As seen in *Figure 6.3*, leadership support for QM (90%) followed by participation of staff in the development of QM (88%) are the most important internal factors in development of QM for the responding institutions. This is followed by statistical information available to support the analysis of quality issues (82%), adequate involvement of academic departments in distributing responsibilities on QM (80%), clarity on the benefits of QM (79%), transparent and well-known procedures for QM such as in a handbook (79%), technically qualified staff available to support QM processes like management of surveys (77%), and the participation of students in the development of



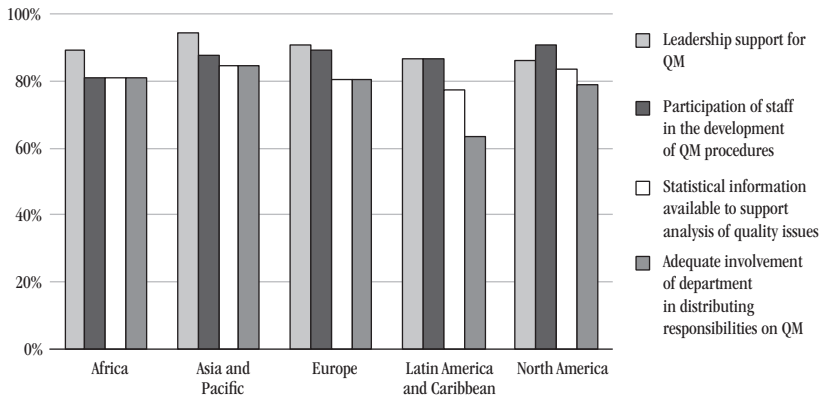
QM procedures (68%). Incentives for academic staff to participate in QM processes were least recognized, with slightly more than half (55%) of the respondents identifying this as important.

**Figure 6.3 Internal factors in development of quality management**

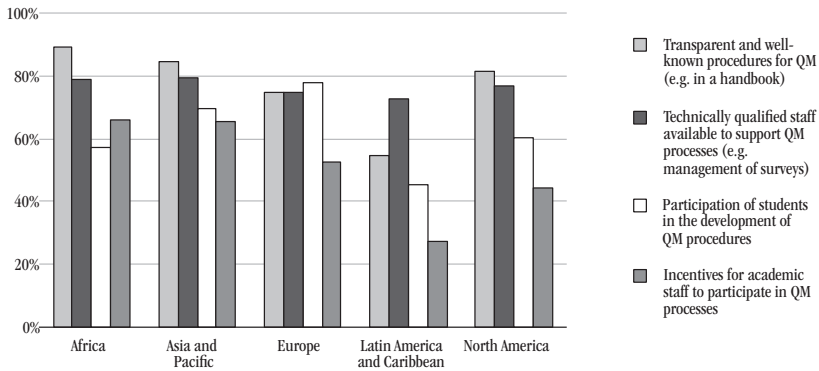


Among responding institutions in Africa, leadership support for QM, and transparent and well-known procedures for QM were the most important (both at 89%). The participation of students in development of QM (57%) was the least important internal factor for this region, as shown in *Figure 6.4a* and *Figure 6.4b*. For responding institutions from Asia and Pacific, leadership support (94%) was the most important internal driver while incentives for academic staff to participate in QM processes (65%) were the least important. Among European and LAC institutions, leadership support (91% and 86% respectively) and participation of staff (89% and 86% respectively) were also important internal factors. Incentives for academic staff to participate in QM received the lowest response, with 53% and 27% of responding institutions from Europe and LAC respectively indicating this as important. Participation of students also received a low importance indication from responding institutions in LAC, with less than half (43%) of institutions indicating it as important. In North America, participation of staff in the development of QM procedures (91%) was the most important internal factor.

**Figure 6.4a Internal factors in development of quality management, by region**



**Figure 6.4b Internal factors in development of quality management, by region**



### 3. Challenges to the development of quality management procedures

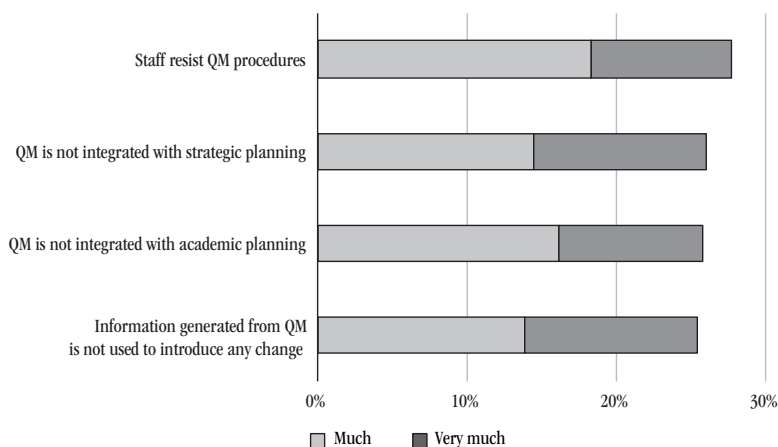
There are particular challenges to the development of QM that emerge from the literature. One is *staff resistance*, in part attributable to the increased workload for both administrators and academic staff, depending on the particular nature of QM in a given HEI. Another challenge has to do with the *integration of QM with strategic or academic planning*. As discussed

earlier, there are frequent complaints that QM systems generate a lot of data, but that knowledge generated from QM processes is not necessarily well integrated with planning, decision-making, and change.

To understand the challenges faced by institutions around the world in developing and implementing QM, it was decided to investigate HEIs' perceptions of the challenges. Surprisingly, none of the challenges identified and proposed in the literature were reported to be faced by a majority of the responding institutions. The variation in responses was noticeably low, making it difficult to derive definite conclusions regarding the most important challenges for the responding institutions. *Figure 6.5* compares the responses 'much' and 'very much' for every option; it can be seen that all the proposed challenges were faced by between 26 and 27% of participating institutions.

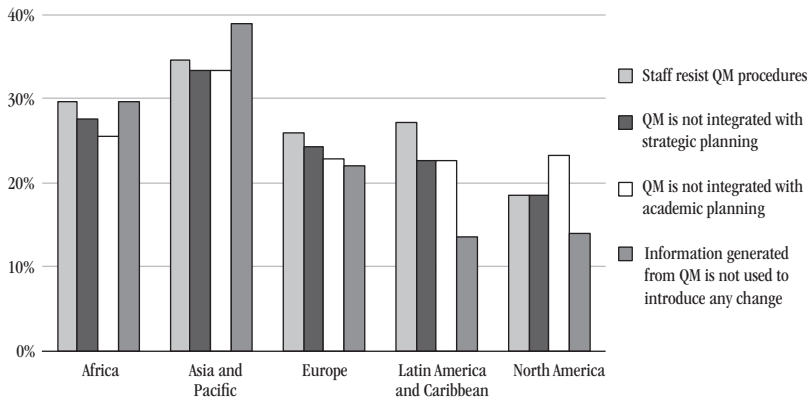
When asked to comment on challenges, one institution said that most of the mentioned challenges had been evident at the early stages of development of the QM structure. Another institution reported as a challenge the fact that unionized faculty members refused to perform managerial tasks. Inadequacy of ICT tools to collect and analyse data, and lack of legal framework were also mentioned as important challenges.

**Figure 6.5 Challenges in the development of quality management**



*Figure 6.6* analyses challenges at regional level, with each bar indicating the combined percentage of the ‘much’ and ‘very much’ responses for each challenge indicated on the survey’s list. There is a higher response identifying challenges as important among institutions in Asia and Pacific, followed by Africa, whereas challenges are seen as less important in Europe, the LAC region, and North America.

**Figure 6.6 Challenges in the development of quality management, by region**



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## CONCLUSIONS

The goal of this survey was to collect baseline data on the current state of development and the external drivers and internal factors related to quality management (QM) in higher education institutions (HEIs), globally and regionally. It was expected that the survey, of 311 higher education institutions worldwide representing all regions, would identify possible gaps in QM structures, processes, and tools. The average institutional responder was a comprehensive public university with fewer than 10,000 students offering education at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

The survey found that the main focus or orientation of QM in the responding institutions was teaching and learning (with 96% of responding HEIs viewing it as either important or very important). Other institutional functions – research, governance, and management – were typically less covered by QM. Somewhat surprisingly, concern with the QM of international cooperation was even less marked, despite the importance of internationalization in the current global policy discourse.

The survey showed vividly the high priority given to academic quality in the overall policy of HEIs worldwide. The vast majority of the responding institutions (92%) viewed academic quality as either important (15%) or very important (72%). In general terms, the survey indicated that QM was implemented through a mixed set of processes and tools, but there were also clear gaps in its coverage as well as in the use of QM-generated data in institutions' decision-making procedures.

The survey confirms the existence of a QA policy in responding HEIs. In line with the importance of academic quality as a policy concern, a majority (82%) of responding HEIs indicated that they had a quality policy. However, quality policy was not necessarily translated into a QM handbook (only slightly more than half of the responding institutions had one). As such a handbook would be important in formalizing QM processes and responsibilities, this suggested a gap between policy intentions to enhance academic quality and implementation.

In terms of people and structures involved in QM, it was clear that in most responding institutions, the university leadership (head of the

institution and/or the vice rector) played an important role, followed by collegial structures such as a quality committee and the university senate. In terms of technical structures, a dedicated person (i.e., a quality officer) (in 76% of responding institutions) was more common than QM offices or units (in 64% of responding HEIs), particularly at the faculty and department level. Decentralized decision-making in QM (for instance by deans and departmental committees) was less frequent. The lack of solid technical support for QM can be seen as an obstacle to its effective implementation.

Within the area of teaching and learning, the most common QM tools were those pertaining to academic programmes, with course evaluation by students (90%) and student satisfaction surveys (85%) being the most frequently used tools. Monitoring of student assessment was less prevalent, with regular monitoring of student assessment practices (found in 49% of responding institutions) being the least common practice.

A similar result was found with academic staff appraisal and the evaluation of student support structures: peer review of teachers (41%) and teacher (classroom) supervision (40%) were the least popular QM practices. This indicates that even in the teaching and learning domain, which is the primary focus of QM, its coverage could be enhanced to include all aspects that pertain to academic programmes and student development.

In line with global policy discourse, institutional practices and policies to enhance graduate employability were reported to be relatively well covered by IQA tools. Responding institutions most frequently used curriculum development and review to enhance graduate employability (79%). More technically demanding surveys, such as employers' and graduates' surveys, were used by only two-thirds of the respondents.

In the research domain, the most frequently used QM tool (77% of responding HEIs) was the internal review of research proposals. In governance and management, it was the monitoring of performance indicators related to strategic planning objectives (82%). No clear pattern emerged from responses about the tools and processes used to monitor quality in processes related to income generation, community

services, and international cooperation, which reinforces the belief that these three areas are less well covered by QM.

The survey results pointed out additional issues that may assist HEI decision-makers to improve their QM and make better use of the data that it gathers. It confirms earlier research findings on the utilization (or non-utilization) of information generated from QM in decision-making. For instance, the survey shows that statistical indicators were often available in responding HEIs, but not necessarily used to inform decision-making. Similarly, data from QM surveys were not always used in discussions with academic staff at the departmental level, and even less to inform students about the results of the surveys in which they have taken part. The survey results showed that feedback from student evaluation is provided more frequently to academic staff than to students.

The survey confirmed that growth and adoption of QM policies are driven by both internal and external factors. When considering the drivers of the development of QM, the prevalence of requirements of the national QM system (89% of responding HEIs) and concern with the enhancement of the image of the HEI (87%) were the most frequently cited. The development of QM might have been expected to be driven by one or other of state regulation or the market. Such state–market dichotomy in QM, however, did not emerge at the global level.

Among the internal factors that support the development of QM, leadership support was clearly identified as a key element, together with the participation of staff in the development of QM procedures. A view commonly expressed in the literature is that academic resistance to QM would be a problem. However, the research revealed that less than 27% of respondents reported that academic staff were resistant to QM in their institutions. Therefore, resistance was not seen to be a major obstacle to implementation.

The survey was designed to enable regional comparisons. While there were no common trends across the regions, the survey did identify a series of specific findings for each region. In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) institutional quality policy was based less often than the global average in faculties or departments. There were also less regular monitoring of student success and fewer incentives for academic staff to participate in QM processes.

In Asia and Pacific, it was more common for there to be a QM handbook than in other regions. Unlike the other regions, the most cited purpose of QM was to enhance graduate employability.

The highest proportion of respondents who said that they were still in the early stages of developing an institutional quality policy was in Africa (although in many cases there were already QA tools in place). Africa is also the region in which graduate tracer studies are least likely to be used as a tool to monitor graduate employability.

In Europe, a large percentage of institutions reported that they had a quality policy, and half had a QM handbook. Most responding HEIs had a dedicated QM structure with specialized staff in place; graduate employability was cited most often as the chief objective for QM; and QM was centred on teaching and learning. European respondents reported a high use of student course evaluations and student satisfaction surveys as processes and tools to improve academic programmes.

Lastly, in North America, the leadership of HEIs was less involved in QM than in other regions; the least popular focus of QM in North America was for community outreach and income generation; the least used QA tool to improve academic programmes was student workload assessment; and student feedback on assessment occurred at a lower rate in North America. The survey confirmed that the use of information gathered for QM (on student progression, success, and graduate rates) was higher than other regions. Lastly, QM was applied to distance education and PhD programmes more commonly in North America than in other regions.

These were the findings of this first international baseline survey on QM in HEIs. The survey confirms that QM is an institutional priority in the HEIs that participated. But there are gaps, which are certainly due to resource constraints, that pose more of a problem in some regions than in others. There are also differences in the way that QM is defined and understood in various contexts, which lead to differences in the focus and coverage of tools and processes. Clearly, more comparative empirical research on the similarities and divergences on QM on both the regional and country levels will be needed to consolidate and validate the results of our baseline.



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## **ANNEX 1. QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **Information and profile of your higher education institution (HEI)**

1. Name of your higher education institution (HEI)
  - a. Name of institution
  - b. In English (if different)
2. Country of your HEI
3. Which of the following best describes the type of your HEI?
  - a. Comprehensive university
  - b. Specialized university
  - c. Post-secondary institution
  - d. Other (please specify)
4. What is the highest level degree offered at your HEI?
  - a. PhD/Doctorate level
  - b. Master's level
  - c. Bachelor's level
  - d. Associate degree/diploma level
  - e. Other (please specify)
5. What is the size of the student body (i.e., full-time equivalent; undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate combined) at your HEI in the last academic year for which data is available?
  - a. Less than 1,000
  - b. Between 1,001 and 5,000
  - c. Between 5,001 and 10,000
  - d. Between 10,001 and 30,000
  - e. More than 30,001

Please indicate the student number and the reference year for the data (e.g. student number/reference year):

6. Which of the following best describes the nature of your HEI?
  - a. Public, with large share (80% or more) of public funding
  - b. Public, but generates a significant amount of private funds (more than 20%)

- c. Private, not for profit
  - d. Private, for profit
  - e. Other (please specify)
7. Which of the following best describes the main orientation of your HEI?
- a. Predominantly research-oriented
  - b. Both research- and teaching-oriented
  - c. Predominantly teaching-oriented
  - d. Other (please specify)

### **Quality policy, quality management structures and orientations at your HEI**

8. How important is academic quality in your overall institutional policy? (5 = very important, 4 = important, 3 = moderately important, 2 = not so important, 1 = not important at all, 0 = I do not know, NA = not applicable)
9. A quality policy statement is a strategic document that describes goals, principles and rules on quality issues and determines present and future decisions on quality issues. Are the following statements correct for your HEI?

	Yes	No	I do not know
My institution has an institutional quality policy.			
Our quality policy is clearly described in our institutional strategic plan (or equivalent document).			
Some of our faculties/departments have their own quality policy statement(s).			
We are developing an institutional quality policy statement.			

Other (please specify)

10. A quality management handbook is an operational document that describes the processes and tools that are used to conduct the practical activities of QM. Are the following statements correct for your HEI?

	Yes	No	I do not know
My institution has an institutional quality management handbook.			
The practical activities of QM are clearly described in other institutional documents.			
Some of our faculties/departments have their own quality management handbook(s).			
We are developing an institutional quality management handbook.			

Other (please specify)

11. Which of the following people or structures are involved in QM at your HEI?

	Yes	No	I do not know
The head of the institution (e.g. rector, president, vice chancellor or equivalent)			
A vice rector (or equivalent)			
Senate (or equivalent institution-wide structure in charge of academic affairs)			
A quality committee that operates at the institutional level			
A dedicated person (i.e. QA officer) in charge at the institutional level			
A dedicated unit/cell with specialized staff for QM at the institutional level			
A dedicated unit/cell with specialized staff for QM at the faculty/department level			
Quality committees that operate at the faculty/department level			
There are no structures, units, committees or staff members who are dedicated exclusively to the management of quality at my institution.			

Please describe any other people, structures or arrangements that are involved in the governance and management of quality at your institution:

12. How important are the following QM purposes at your HEI? (5 = very important, 4 = important, 3 = moderately important, 2 = not so important, 1 = not important at all, 0 = I do not know)

	0	1	2	3	4	5
Institutional performance assessment						
Institutional learning						
Improvement of academic activities						
Improvement of management						
Equitable resource allocation						
Compliance with external standards						
Accountability to government and society						

Other purposes are important, namely:

13. To what extent does your QM focus on the following activities?  
(5 = very much, 4 = much, 3 = moderately, 2 = not much, 1 = not at all, 0 = I do not know)

	0	1	2	3	4	5
Teaching and learning						
Graduate employability						
Research						
Governance and management						
Community outreach						
Income generation and community services						
International cooperation						

## Processes and tools used for quality management

### *Quality management of teaching and learning*

14. Which of the following processes or tools are used for the enhancement of academic programmes in your HEI?

	Yes	No	I do not know
Course evaluation by students (either quantitatively or qualitatively)			
Programme evaluation by students			

	Yes	No	I do not know
Programme evaluation by academic staff			
Programme monitoring based on statistical indicators (e.g. student success rates)			
Student progression studies (based on a panel of students)			
Students' workload assessment			
Student satisfaction survey			

Other (please specify)

15. Which of the following processes or tools are used for monitoring student assessments in your HEI?

	Yes	No	I do not know
University-wide standards for student assessment procedures			
Regular monitoring of student assessment practices (by external examiners)			
Regular monitoring of student success by means of indicators			

Other (please specify)

16. Which of the following processes or tools are used for monitoring the quality of academic staff performance in your HEI?

	Yes	No	I do not know
Regular (e.g. annual) staff appraisal (e.g. academic staff by supervisors)			
Internal evaluation (by an internal committee) of staff performance for promotion decisions			
Students' evaluation of teachers			
Peer review of teachers (i.e., review by fellow teachers)			
Teacher (classroom) supervision by university authorities			
Mentorship arrangements			

Other (please specify)

## 17. Do you evaluate the following student support structures?

	Yes	No	I do not know
Academic/career advising			
Admission/registration			
ICT facilities (e.g. e-mail and internet for use by students, electronic learning management systems)			
Libraries and documentary resources			
Teaching laboratories (e.g. science/computer/language labs)			

Other (please specify)

## 18. Do QM processes at your HEI cover doctoral studies?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not applicable
- d. I do not know

## 19. Do QM processes at your HEI cover distance education/blended learning?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not applicable
- d. I do not know

***Quality management and employment-orientation***

## 20. Which of the following processes or tools are used for the enhancement of graduate employability in your HEI?

	Yes	No	I do not know
Graduate tracer studies			
Employer surveys			
Curriculum development involving professions/employers			
Curriculum review involving the relevant professions			
Curriculum review involving alumni			
Monitoring the quality of internships			

Other (please specify)



### ***Quality management and research***

21. Which of the following processes or tools are used for the enhancement of research in your HEI?

	Yes	No	I do not know
Internal review of research proposals			
Internal peer review of ongoing research projects			
Review of current research by external peers invited by your HEI			
Monitoring research productivity/impact based on indicators			

Other (please specify)

### ***Quality management and governance/management***

22. Which of the following processes or tools are applied for the enhancement of governance/management in your HEI?

	Yes	No	I do not know
Monitoring of performance indicators related to strategic planning objectives			
Target-level agreements			
Service-level agreements			
Evaluation of administrative units			
Certification of management processes (e.g. ISO, EFQM)			

Other (please specify)

### ***Quality management, income generation, and community services***

23. Which of the following processes or tools are applied for the enhancement of income generation/community services in your HEI?

	Yes	No	I do not know
Monitoring the quality of continuous education programmes			
Monitoring the quality of consultancy services			
Monitoring the quality of testing services			
Monitoring the quality of contract research			
Monitoring the quality of community development programmes			

Other (please specify)

### ***Quality management and international cooperation***

24. Which of the following processes or tools are used for the enhancement of international cooperation in your HEI?

	Yes	No	I do not know
Evaluation of the International Office, organized by the institution			
Monitoring of performance indicators related to internationalization policy/strategy			
Evaluation of partner institutions			

Other (please specify)

### **Management information system and use of information for decision-making**

25. What information on teaching/learning is available from your management information system? Is this information used for QM purposes in your HEI?
- Student characteristics (e.g. socioeconomic background, gender, ethnicity)
  - Teacher–student ratios at the departmental level
  - Student progression, success and/or graduation rates
  - Inventory of learning resources (e.g., labs, computers)
  - Other (please specify)

26. How often are the results of surveys (e.g. student satisfaction surveys, graduate surveys) used to provide feedback to academic staff or students? (5 = Always, 4 = often, 3 = sometimes, 2 = not often, 1 = never, 0 = I do not know, NA = not applicable)

	0	1	2	3	4	5
In discussion by academic staff at the departmental level						
Students who have responded are informed about the results						

Other (please specify)

27. How often are the results of surveys (student satisfaction surveys, graduate surveys, etc.) used to support decision-making for the following processes? (5 = Always, 4 = often, 3 = sometimes, 2 = not often, 1 = never, 0 = I do not know, NA = not applicable)

	0	1	2	3	4	5
In the design and/or review of academic programmes						
In the assessment and/or promotion of teaching staff						

Other (please specify)

### **External drivers, internal factors and challenges in the development of QM at your HEI**

28. How important have the following external drivers been in the development of QM at your HEI? (5 = very important, 4 = important, 3 = moderately important, 2 = not so important, 1 = not important at all, 0 = I do not know)

	0	1	2	3	4	5
Requirements of the national QA system (e.g., accreditation)						
Requirements of the national qualifications framework						
Government request to develop QM						
Enhancement of the image of our HEI						
International aspiration of our HEI						

Other (please specify)

29. How important have the following internal factors been in the development of QM in your HEI? (5 = very important, 4 = important, 3 = moderately important, 2 = not so important, 1 = not important at all, 0 = I do not know)

	0	1	2	3	4	5
Leadership support for QM						
Participation of staff in the development of QM procedures						
Participation of students in the development of QM procedures						
Clarity on benefits of QM						
Transparent and well-known procedures for QM (e.g. in a handbook)						
Statistical information available to support analysis of quality issues						
Technically qualified staff available to support QM processes (e.g. management of surveys)						
Incentives for academic staff to participate in QM processes						
Adequate involvement of the department(s) in the responsibilities for QM						

Other (please specify)

30. To what extent did/do the following challenges exist in the development of QM procedures at your HEI? (5 = very much, 4 = much, 3 = moderately, 2 = not much, 1 = not at all, 0 = I do not know)

	0	1	2	3	4	5
Staff resist QM procedures						
QM is not integrated with strategic planning						
QM is not integrated with academic planning						
Information generated from QM is not used to introduce any change.						

Other (please specify)

31. Which of the following best describes your position at your HEI?
- a. Head of HEI
  - b. Deputy Head of HEI (e.g. vice rector for academic affairs)
  - c. Head of quality management office
  - d. Head of planning
  - e. Head of institutional research
  - f. Head of office for pedagogical support
  - g. Other (please specify)

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## **ANNEX 2. COUNTRY CLASSIFICATION BY REGION**

### **Africa**

- Algeria
- Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Egypt
- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Morocco
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Rwanda
- Senegal
- South Africa
- Swaziland
- Uganda
- United Republic of Tanzania
- Zimbabwe

### **Asia and Pacific**

- Afghanistan
- Australia
- Bahrain
- Bangladesh
- China
- India
- Indonesia
- Iran, Islamic Republic of
- Japan
- Jordan
- Kazakhstan
- Lebanon
- Malaysia
- Myanmar
- Pakistan
- Palestine
- Philippines
- Singapore
- Sri Lanka
- Thailand
- United Arab Emirates

## Europe

- Albania
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Belarus
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Finland
- France
- Georgia
- Germany
- Greece
- Hungary
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Italy
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Montenegro
- Norway
- Poland
- Portugal
- Republic of Moldova
- Romania
- Russian Federation
- Serbia
- Slovenia
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- Turkey
- Ukraine
- United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

## Latin America and Caribbean

- Antigua and Barbuda
- Argentina
- Bolivia (Plurinational State of)
- Brazil
- Chile
- Colombia
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Mexico
- Nicaragua
- Peru
- Trinidad and Tobago
- Uruguay

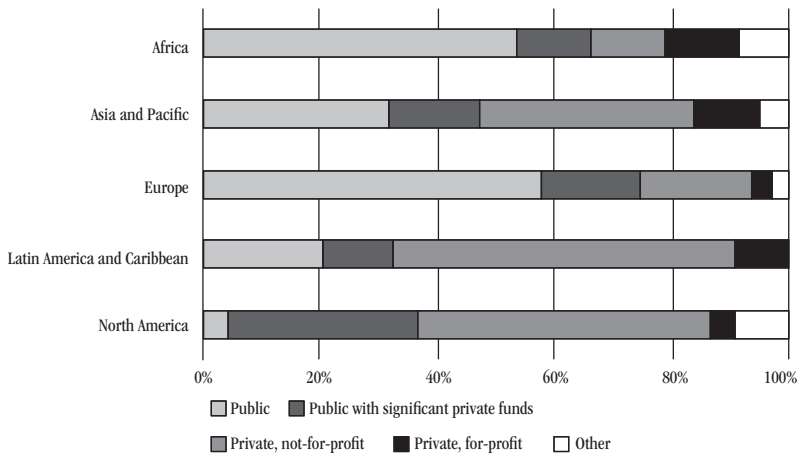
## North America

- Canada
- United States of America

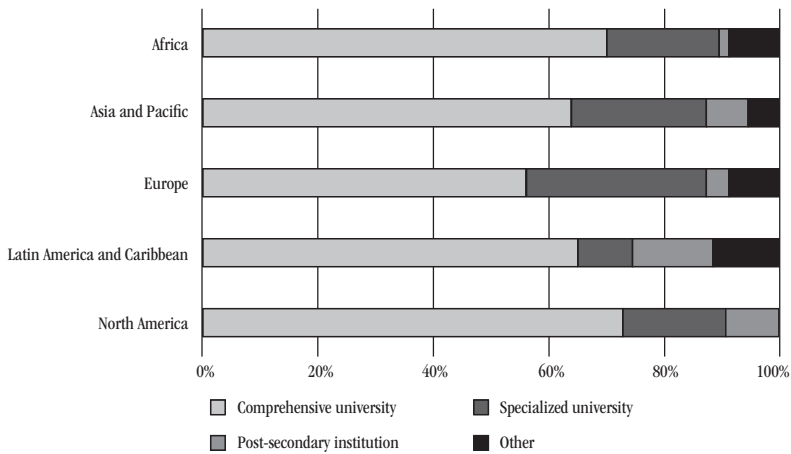
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# ANNEX 3. REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDING INSTITUTIONS

**Figure A.1**    Distribution by nature of funding

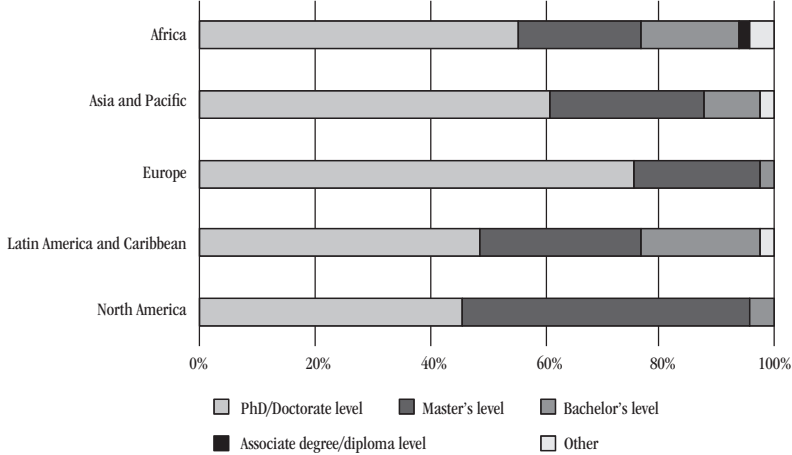


**Figure A.2**    Distribution by type of institution

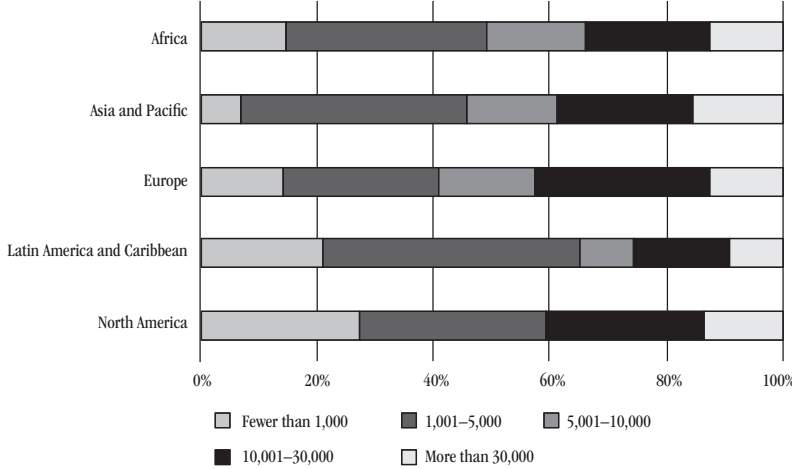


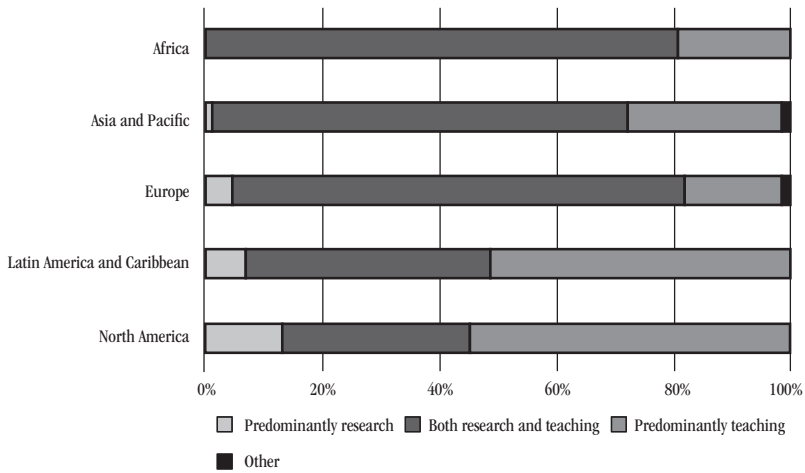


**Figure A.3 Distribution by highest level of degree offered**



**Figure A.4 Distribution by size of student body**



**Figure A.5 Distribution by orientation**

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## About the Book

Within the context of globalization and the knowledge economy, the quality of higher education is considered crucial for national economic development and competitiveness. Yet, as higher education is increasingly considered as a strategic asset, concerns about the quality and relevance of its services have also grown. One consequence of this is that there has been a global reform trend for higher education institutions to develop quality management structures and processes. Though often in compliance with requirements of national regulatory bodies, these structures have also been set up to generate evidence for policy, planning, and resource allocation at the institutional level.

Today, the precise state of quality management within higher education institutions around the world is not well known. This report seeks to fill this knowledge gap by mapping recent developments, drivers, and obstacles in quality management. Data from an online survey – prepared and administered by the UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) and the International Association of Universities (IAU) – is here analysed to understand the dynamics of quality management within higher education institutions, as well as its various actors, structures, tools, and instruments, external drivers and internal factors, and the obstacles that the institutions face in setting up and implementing quality management policy.

## About the Authors

**Michaela Martin** studied Economics and Public Administration in Germany, France, and Belgium at the graduate and post-graduate level. Working as a Programme Specialist, she is currently leading IIEP's research programme on higher education policy, planning, and governance. She has worked for more than a decade on both internal and external quality assurance in higher education, and has published and taught extensively in this area.

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