SUAN SUNANDHA
RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY

EAD 5804

Educational Quality Assurance System

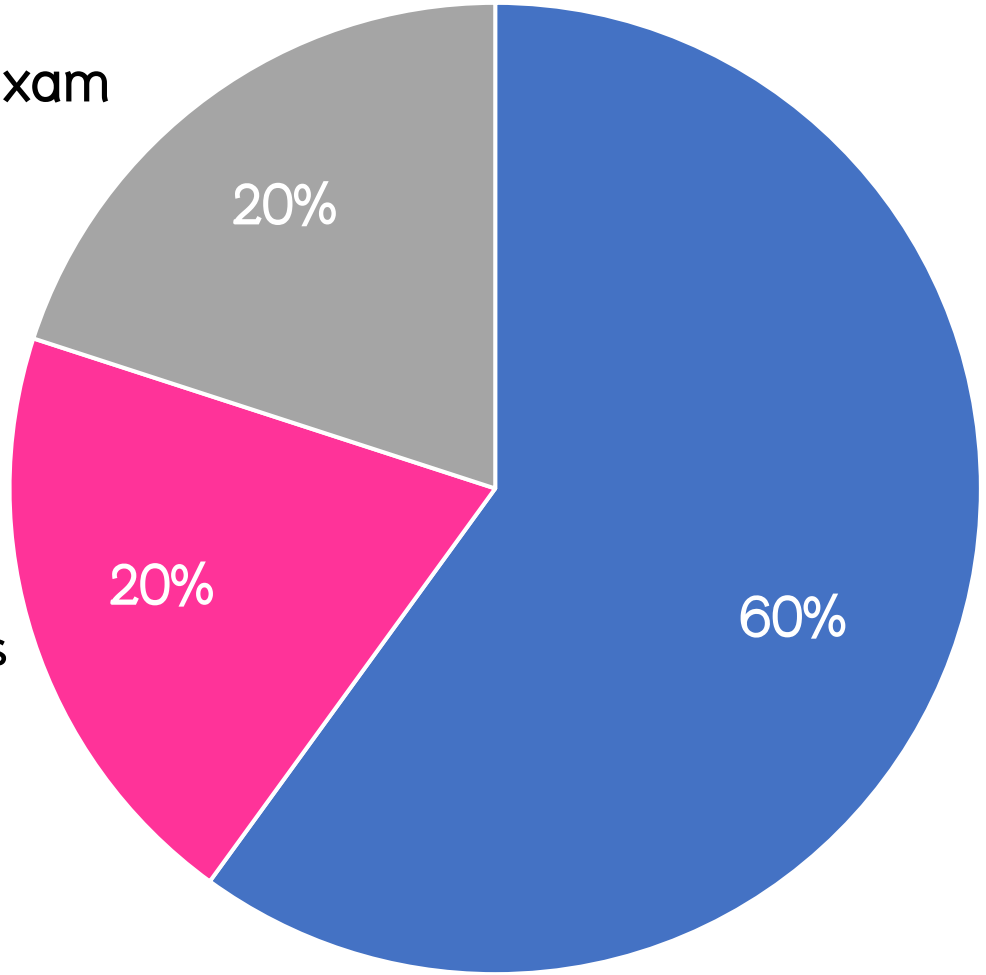
Assoc.Prof.Dr.Nuntiya Noichun

Course Description

Concepts, principles and processes for ensuring the quality of education, academics, curriculums, teachers and learners according to the educational standards of each level leading to the of educational standards meet academic standards at each level, analyze factors, indicators and measurement system, monitor quality assurance in new normal situation, total quality management, analyze and apply Education and Business TQM in educational context suitable for Thai social context and circumstances; Study concepts of educational quality according to Thailand registration, administrator's role in educational quality assurance.

Learning Evaluation

Final Exam



- Report presentation
- Group work
- Submitting assignments
- Project work

Participation, discussion, presentation of ideas in class

Topic

Week	Topic
1	Fundamentals of Educational Quality Assurance
2	Principles and concepts of quality management
3	Educational Quality Assurance System
4	Guidelines on Quality Management
5	Quality Assurance in Educational Institutions
6	External quality assessment
7	Organizing learning activities to improve learning quality
8	Analysis of the quality assurance of foreign education
9	Writing a project to improve the quality of education
10	Project presentation to improve the quality of education

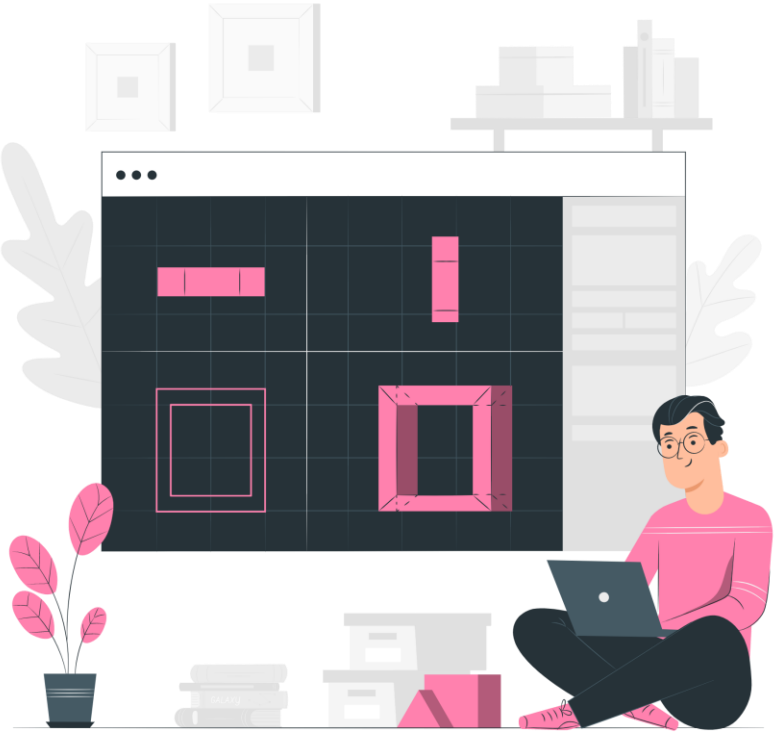
Quality Assurance in Education

Introducing Quality Assurance

“Quality assurance” is a term that is new in education, but that has rapidly become very important. What exactly is quality assurance? Why do we need it? Does it really improve quality? Is quality assurance in education something different from quality assurance in general?

A Very Short History of Quality Assurance

Quality assurance has its roots in large-scale manufacturing. Keeping track of production quality became increasingly important during the second half of the twentieth century.

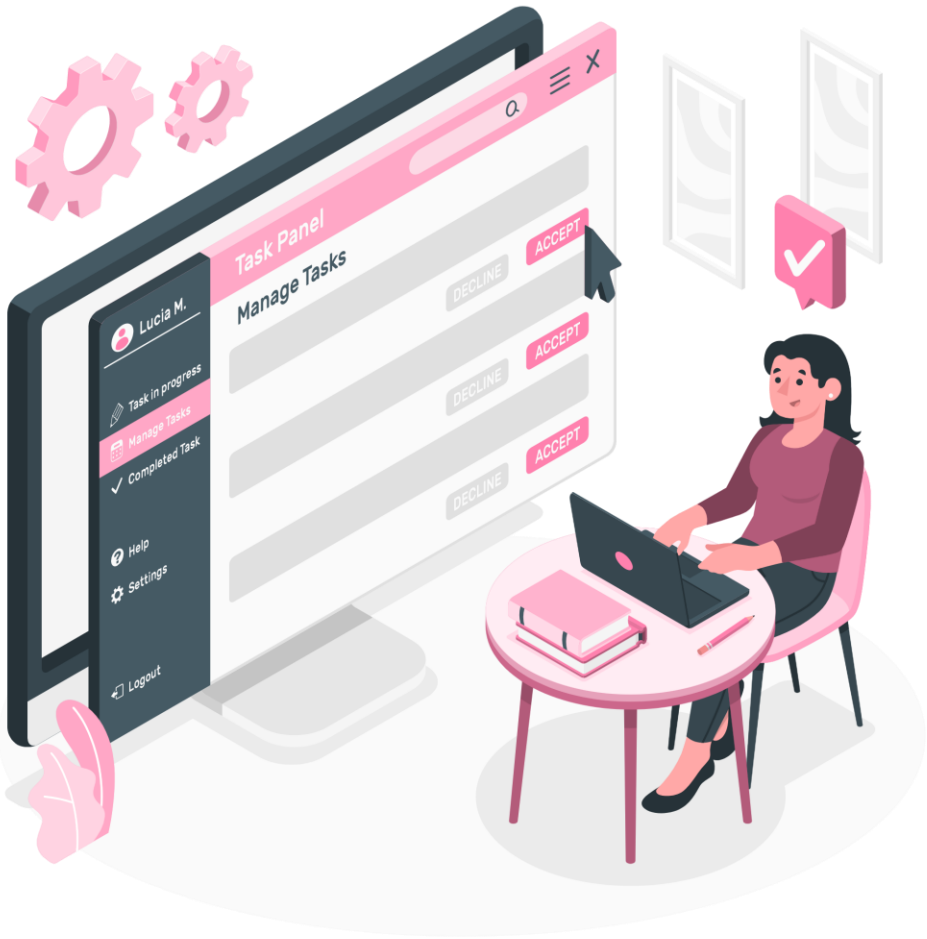


At that time, a whole profession developed around the idea of “quality”, as well as related systems, processes and organisations. Since it first emerged, the “quality profession” has developed dramatically, so that now it is a whole area of work in itself.

Since the pre-industrial guild systems, in which craftspeople would get together to control the secrets of their particular crafts, there have been bodies which played a role in ensuring quality and standards in different areas of society.

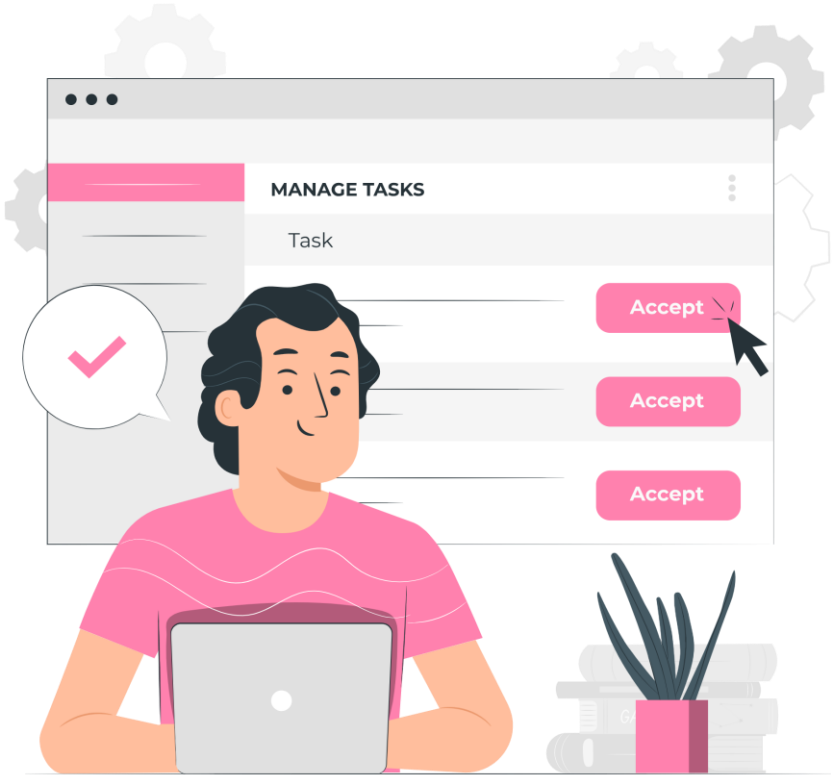
When individual craftspeople made their own goods, they could control everything – the quality of what they produced was in their own hands. Producing it well could have been a matter of individual pride, or they could have been conforming to the standards of their guilds.

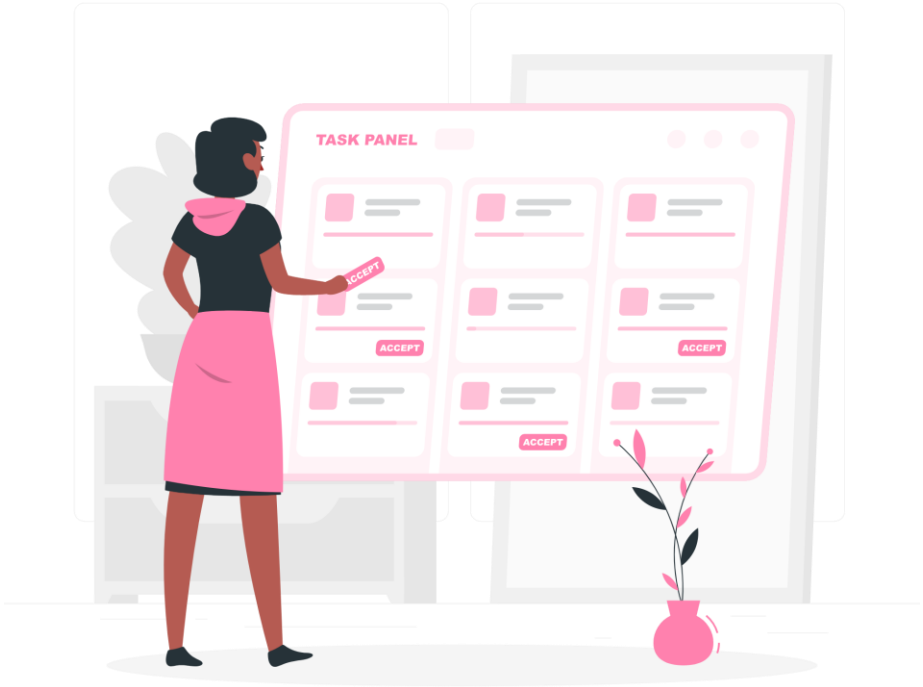
As industry developed and large mechanised factories started to be the dominant mode of manufacture, each individual worker started to produce only small bits of a total product. They had no control over the end product, and had less interest in it. So, to make sure that their factories were producing items that did not have defects, factory owners introduced inspectors.



Inspectors would check a sample of completed items, assuming that their quality was representative of all the items produced. This led to the development of a whole series of different ways of trying to reduce the number of defects in manufactured items. These are usually referred to as “quality control” mechanisms.

As companies tried to find ways of reducing the number of defects in their products, more complex control mechanisms were developed. “Quality assurance” came out of attempts to prevent defects from occurring, instead of only checking up on finished products.

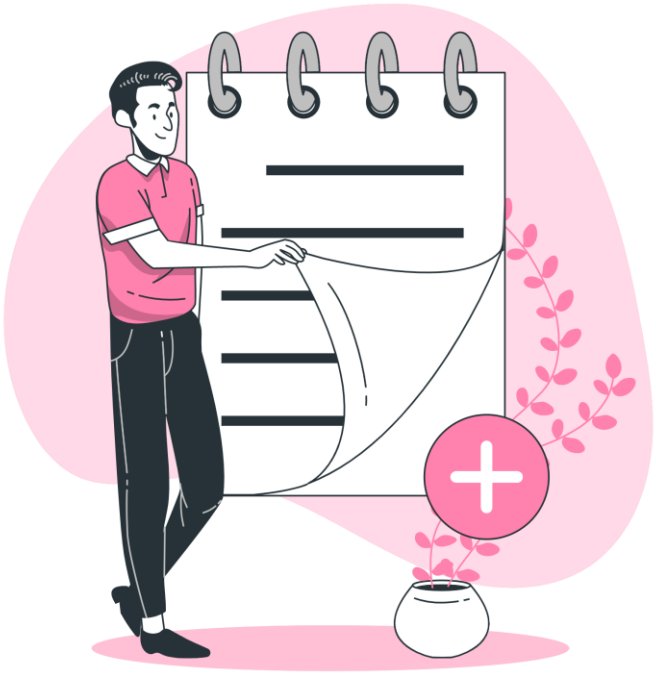




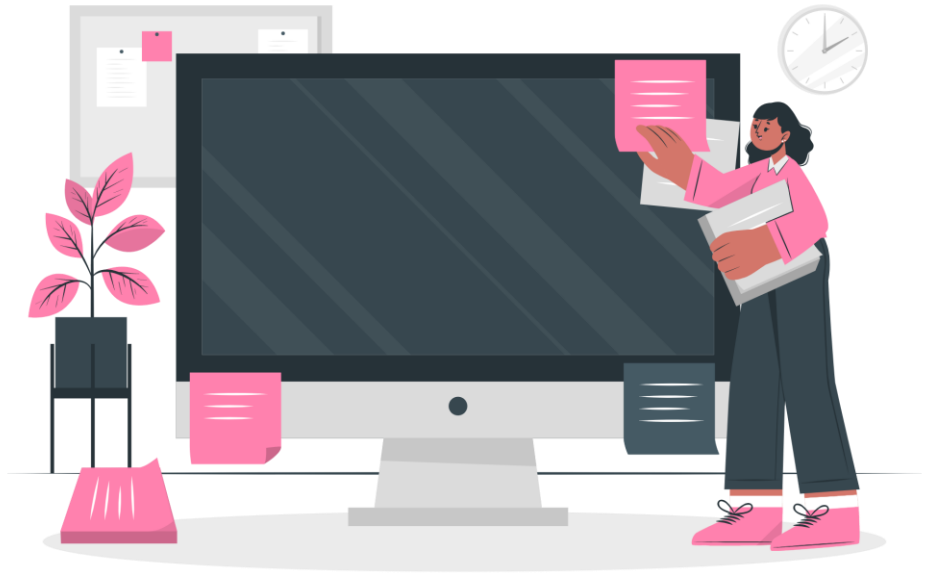
Using the knowledge of engineers as well as people who started to develop expertise in quality management, systems and processes were developed to check on quality at all stages of production.

“Total quality management” is the approach which is most often associated with quality assurance. It refers to systems which are developed to monitor all processes that are part of the work of an organisation.

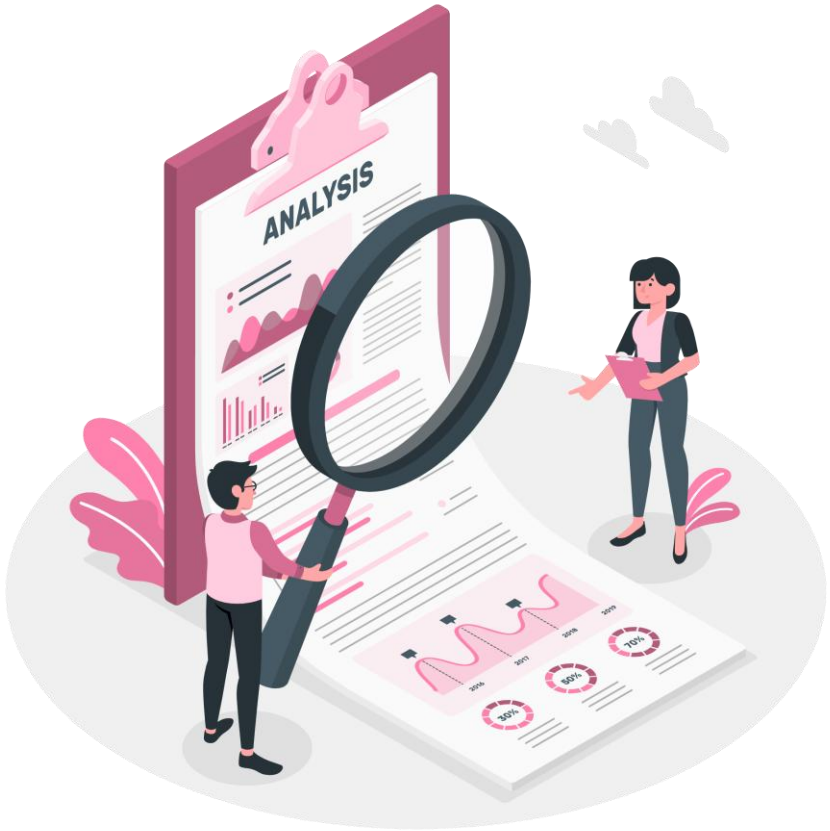
Supporters of total quality management systems believe that their systems are different from earlier ideas of quality control. Instead of only looking at finished products, all the steps of the production process are examined.



A number of different commercial organisations have developed quality management tools and systems. Businesses which subscribe are then evaluated against the total quality management systems. One of the best– known total quality management systems is ISO 9000.



ISO stands for International Organization for Standardization. A business or organisation which subscribes to ISO 9000 is provided with a set of procedures which are supposed to cover all the key processes in the business.



Under ISO, there is a set of “accreditation and certification” bodies which monitor the key processes of the subscribing organisation, to check that they are operating as they are supposed to.

These bodies check that records are kept for all key processes. Advocates of this and similar models claim to ensure that organisations constantly improve at all levels.

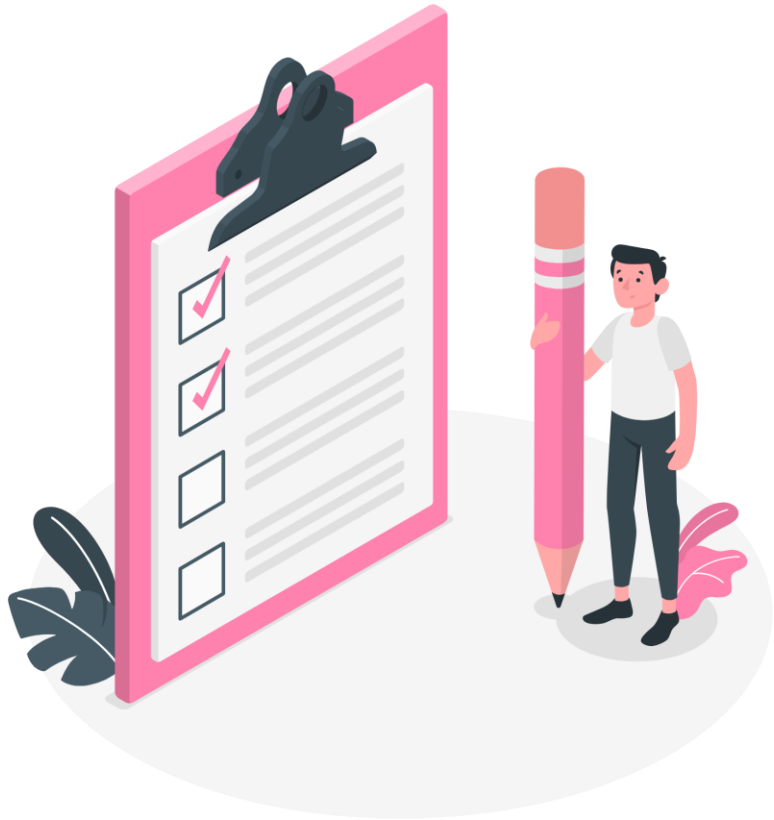
Total quality management systems generally use the idea of “accreditation”. A business which subscribes to a total quality management system, and is audited by the appropriate organisation, is given accreditation.

In many industries, accreditation by a body like ISO 9000 is very important, and is used as a way of showing the outside world that the business takes sufficient care of ensuring the quality of its products or services.

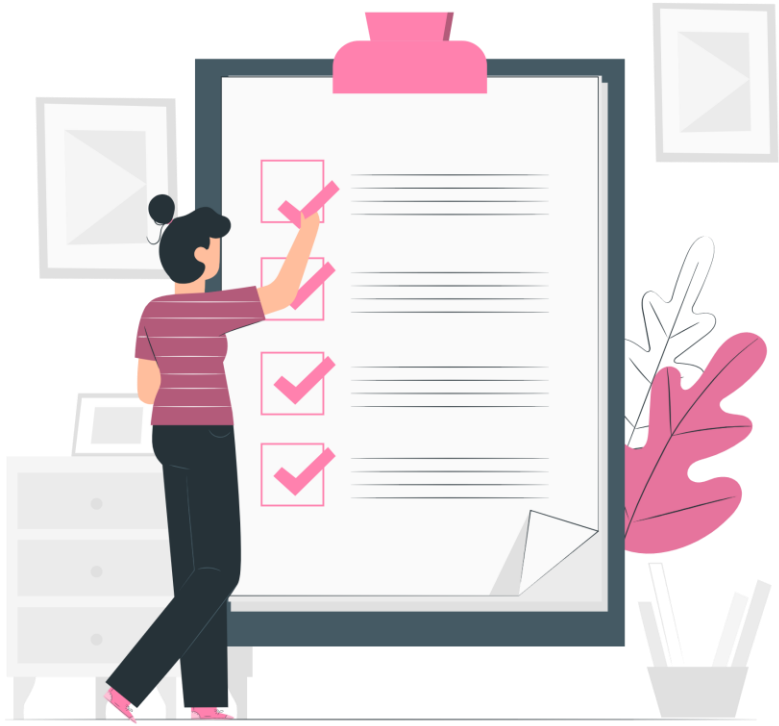
Accreditation might be essential in order for a business or organisation to have a license to operate within a specific area in a specific country, or it can be voluntary and then be used by the business as a marketing tool.

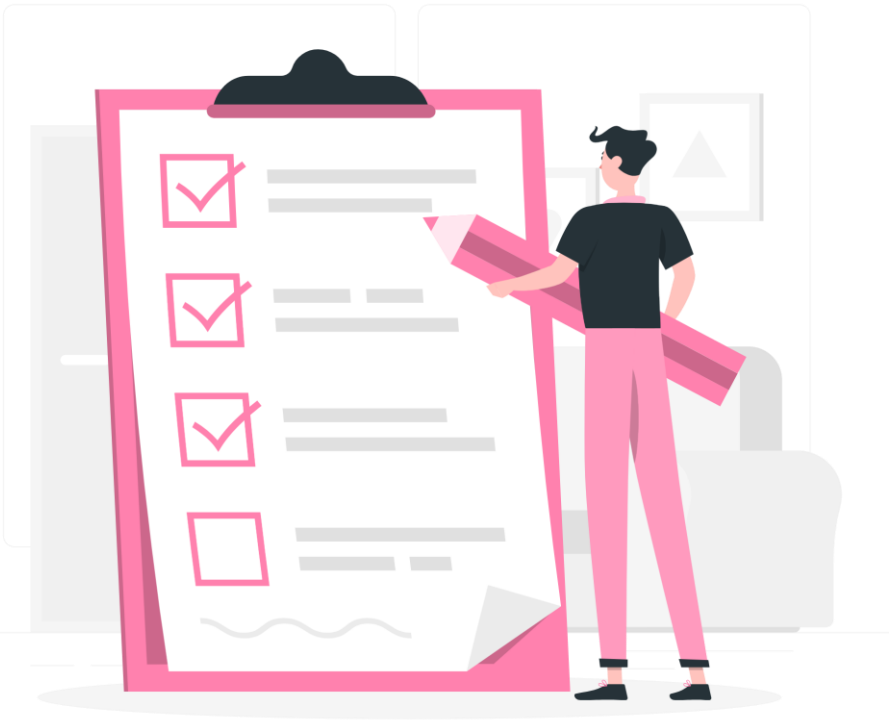
Accreditation is not necessarily linked to total quality management systems. It can also be used to describe any system in which institutions have to meet specific requirements in order to be given a license to operate within a certain area.

With the move from examining finished products to examining systems and processes, quality management started to be introduced to other areas of the economy. Quality management systems are now compulsory in many areas of work, and not just manufacture.



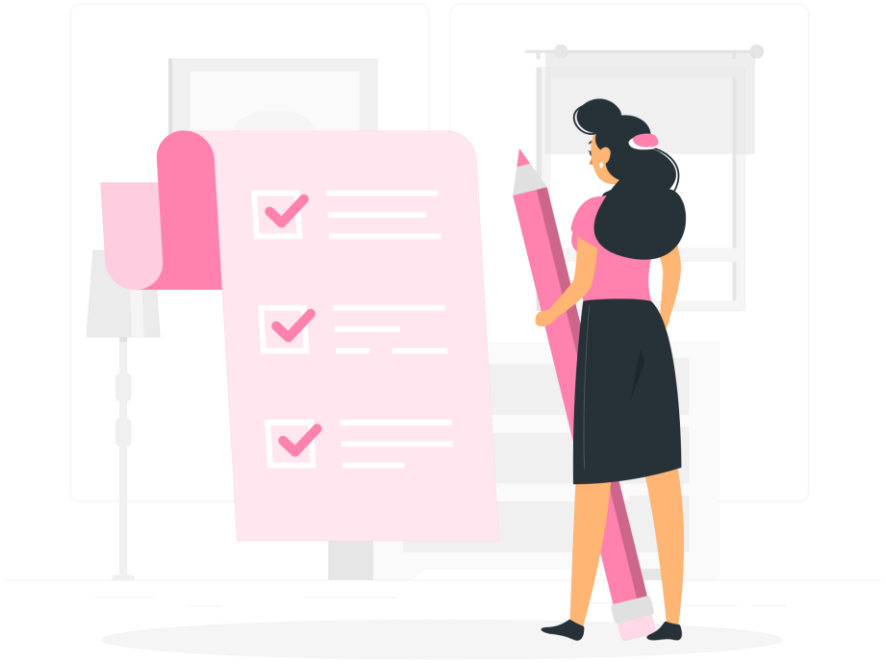
For example, all shipping companies must comply with international safety management codes. In this, as in many areas, quality assurance organisations exist to check up on the compliance of different companies. More and more, quality assurance has become an accepted part of business.



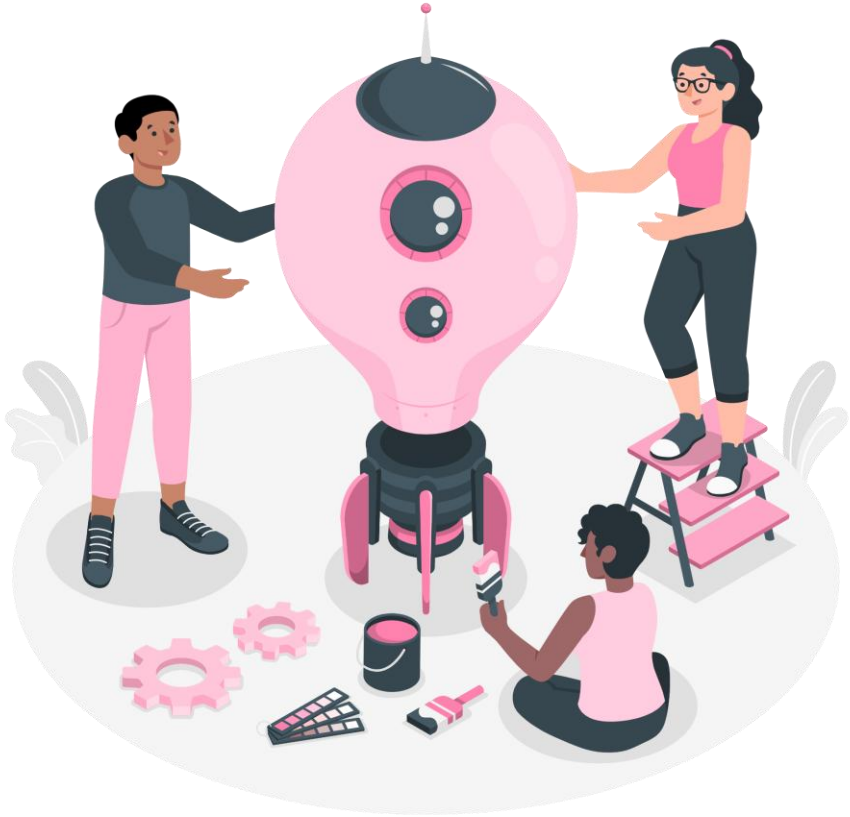


Since the 1970s, governments have been influenced by business models. This has partly been based on a belief that business models are more efficient than the traditional bureaucratic models of governments.

Also, governments have tried to privatise certain areas of operation, or to privatise some aspects of areas which used to be seen as government responsibility.



Both of these factors have led to governments being increasingly concerned with the regulation of different areas of work. As a result, governments have started to adopt ideas such as quality assurance from business.



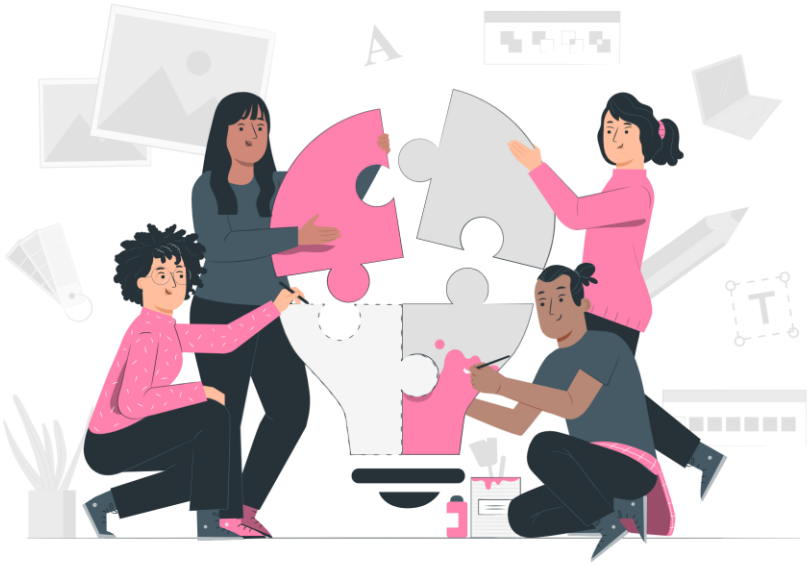
In nearly all countries, governments have some responsibility for education. This has led to the introduction of quality assurance as an important part of the organisation of education systems.

Debates about Quality Assurance

The lead parachute:

following all the right processes to do the wrong thing?

One of the criticisms of total quality management systems is that they lead to an organisation putting all its energy into compliance, in order to get accreditation with one of the total quality management systems, instead of thinking creatively and consciously about quality.



Linked to this is the criticism that many of the available total quality management systems are very time-consuming and complex. If accreditation with one of them is necessary or seen as desirable, then an organisation is forced to spend a lot of time ensuring that it will meet the audit criteria.

Ironically, this can be at the expense of really focusing on quality! This is sometimes seen as the “lead parachute” conundrum. A lead parachute is a way of expressing the idea that all the right processes can be followed, exactly according to specification, but the processes can be doing the wrong thing. Obviously, the idea of a lead parachute is an exaggeration, but it is used to draw attention to the following points:

- It is more important for an organisation to be thinking actively and creatively about what it is trying to achieve, than to put its energy into complying with the standards of an external body.

- Too much focus on the details and specifications of each individual process can lead to too little focus on overall objectives.

In other words, too much focus on compliance with process specifications can lead to individual workers not using their judgement and expertise appropriately. Linked to this criticism is the fact that most total quality management systems originate in the field of manufacture. Some critics argue that they are more appropriate for manufacture, where there is a clear product to be created, than for other areas.

The audit conundrum:

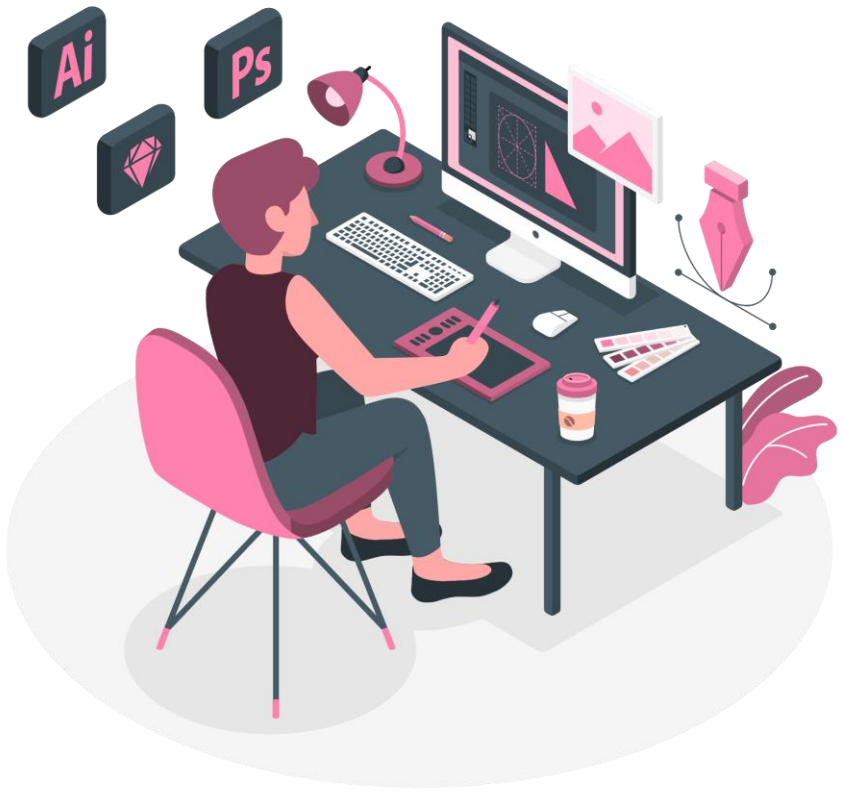
who is the right person to make a judgement about someone else's work?

Quality assurance relies on outside auditors coming inside a business or organisation to evaluate how well it is doing. (This is also true of some more traditional ways of monitoring quality, like inspection models in school systems, which are discussed below.)

One of the criticisms of this is that sometimes the people doing audits are not experts in the thing that is being done, but rather are experts in the quality management system that they are using. The development of the quality management profession has led to the existence of people who are experts at auditing.

However, can expert auditors make judgements about processes and systems in an area in which they are not experts? They may be good at checking whether the business has correctly used all the specifications according to the requirements of the total quality management system, but they may not have a good sense of what it is that the organisation is trying to do. An organisation which is producing lead parachutes, but complying with all its process specifications, could, in theory, receive a good audit.

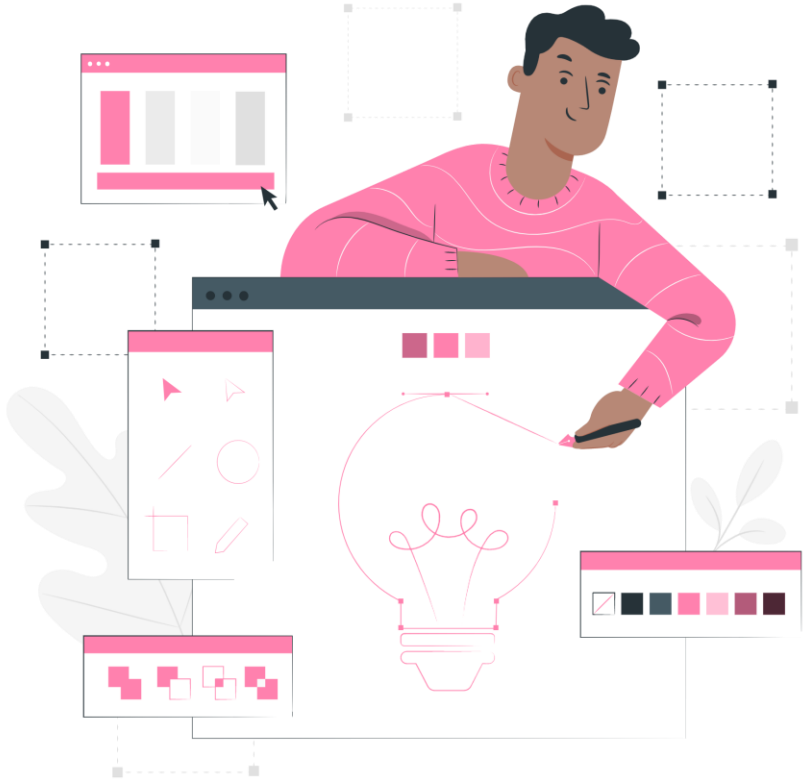
To some extent this is inevitable – people inside a job will always understand more about it than people who are not involved in it on a daily basis. The extent to which quality assurance or inspection systems can work will depend on how well this problem can be solved.

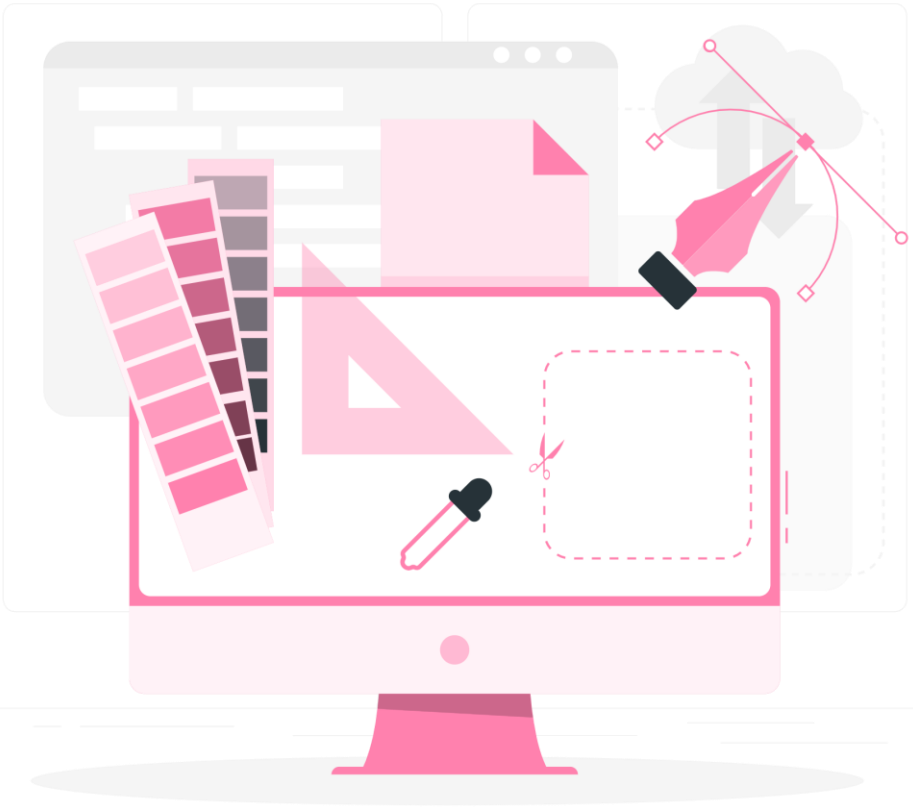


One way of solving it is to try to ensure that the people doing the evaluation are, as far as possible, experts in the area that they are evaluating.

Who guards the guardians?

This criticism goes as follows: We don’t trust institutions to judge themselves, so we want someone to check up on them. But how do we know we can trust those doing the checking up? Do we have auditing bodies to audit auditing bodies? Can there be inspectors of inspectors? Where does it stop?



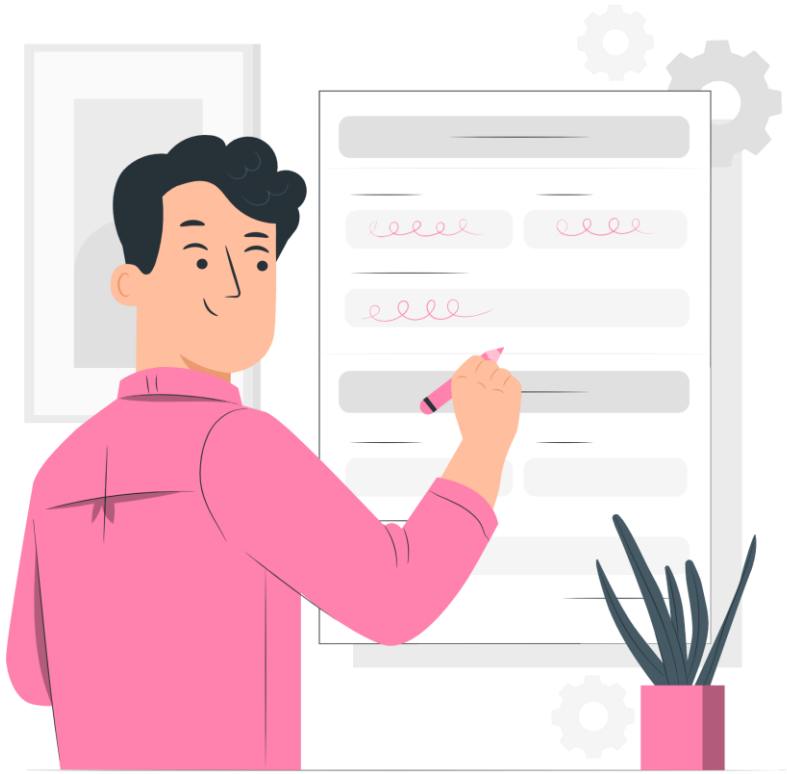


Who decides if a total quality management organisation is appropriately using its own total quality management system, or if it is making correct judgements about other organisations' use of total quality management systems?

Once again, this is a problem which is inevitable, and probably one that cannot be solved. Obviously, for the sake of practicality, there cannot be layers and layers of organisations evaluating each other.

There are ways of creating checks and balances, and of ensuring the accountability of the organisations responsible for quality assurance or monitoring. Nonetheless, it is an issue which should always be of concern when considering any kind of quality monitoring or improvement system.

Different Ways of Thinking about Quality Assurance in Education



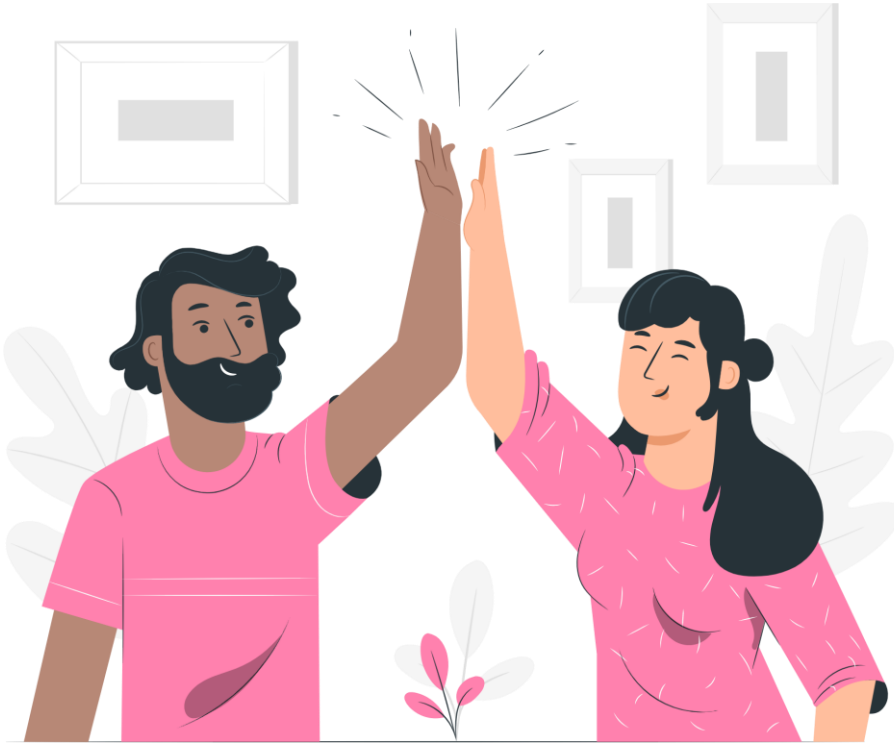
Education systems have always had some kinds of checks and balances. These are put in place to keep track of quality or standards in education institutions and systems, and to try to improve them.

Only recently, however, have these been referred to as quality assurance. In some ways, quality assurance in education can be seen as building on the traditional checks and balances in the systems. In other ways, quality assurance in education is something rather different, and is new to education.

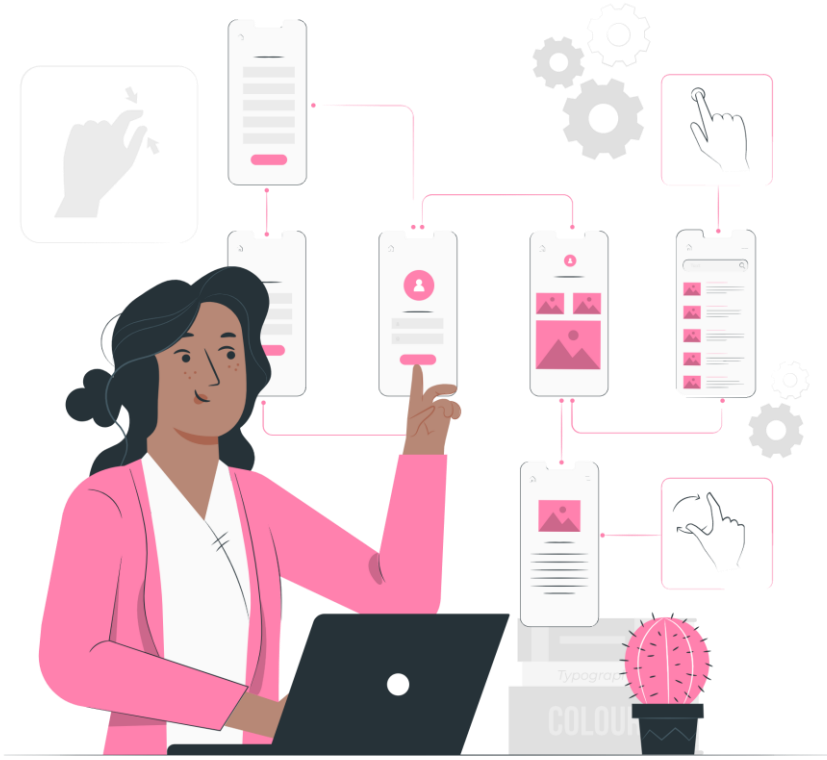
This section starts by considering the traditional checks and balances in the South African education system. It then examines models which are more explicitly within the “quality assurance” realm.

Debates about Quality Assurance in Education

We saw above that there are debates about the value of quality assurance generally. When it comes to quality assurance in education, there are even more debates. Some people question whether the new quality assurance models are appropriate for education.



Others argue that even traditional methods of monitoring quality in education are problematic. A few of these debates are discussed briefly below. There are no easy answers in education, and the discussions below merely touch on some critiques.



There is no space here to go into detail, or to provide detailed counter-arguments. Read the critiques, and decide for yourself whether or not you agree with them. Read more if you really want to understand the debates about quality assurance and quality in education; the Further Reading section at the end of this booklet will help you find places to start.

What is the product?

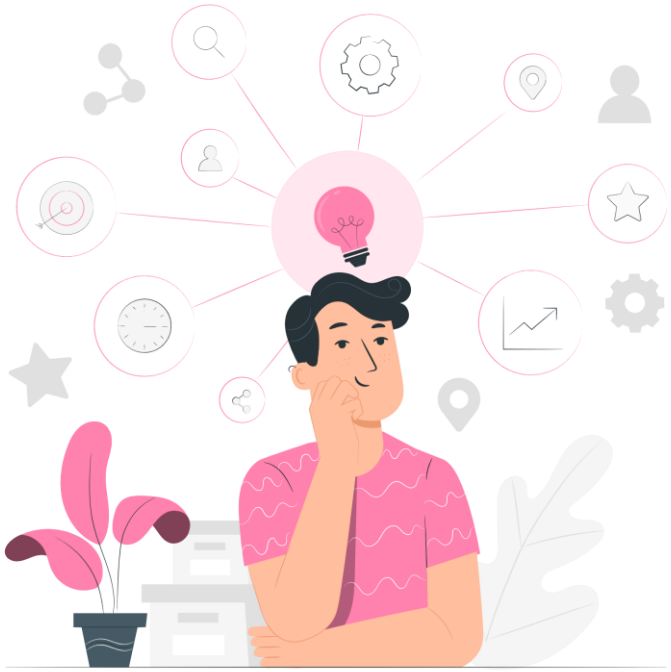
Many quality management systems originated in manufacture. As seen in the Introduction to this lesson, manufacturing companies wanted to move from what was called “quality control” systems (looking at a sample of finished products to check that there were not too many with defects) to “total quality management” systems (looking at the processes involved in manufacture, in order to eliminate problems before they happened). This emphasis on “process” instead of “product” enabled the idea of quality assurance to move beyond only manufacture.

Nevertheless, some people argue that quality management systems are still driven by the logic of manufacture, and still assume that there is a product which is being produced.

This, they argue, makes it difficult to apply total quality management systems to education – it is not clear what in education could be considered a product, and whether there is any sense in thinking about education in terms of products and customers. Furthermore, some people argue that the parts of education systems which are the easiest to measure may not be the most important.

For example, it is difficult to measure creativity, ingenuity, innovativeness, perseverance, and so on. Yet these are all characteristics which we hope our educational institutions can instil in students. This criticism is not only applied to new quality assurance models, but also to examination systems.

What about the audit conundrum?

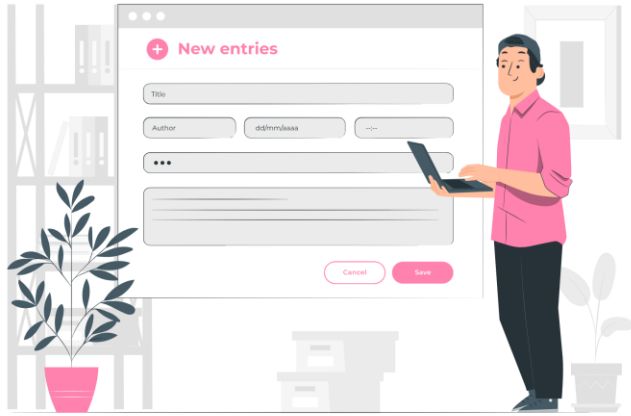


In the section above on general debates about quality assurance, the audit conundrum discussed the problem of who should judge quality. It mentioned that in many instances, the best people to make judgements about quality are the experts in the field.

For example, doctors are the best people to decide on the quality of a medical degree, because they understand better than anyone else what it is that a doctor needs to know. This idea is what has historically been the basis of the peer review system discussed above.

Thus, some people argue that it is wrong for an outside organisation (like a quality assurance organisation) to attempt to make judgements about the quality of educational programmes. The argument is that government or regulatory organisations (such as quality assurance organisations) are not able to make appropriate judgements because they are staffed by people who are not directly involved in the areas they are making judgements about.

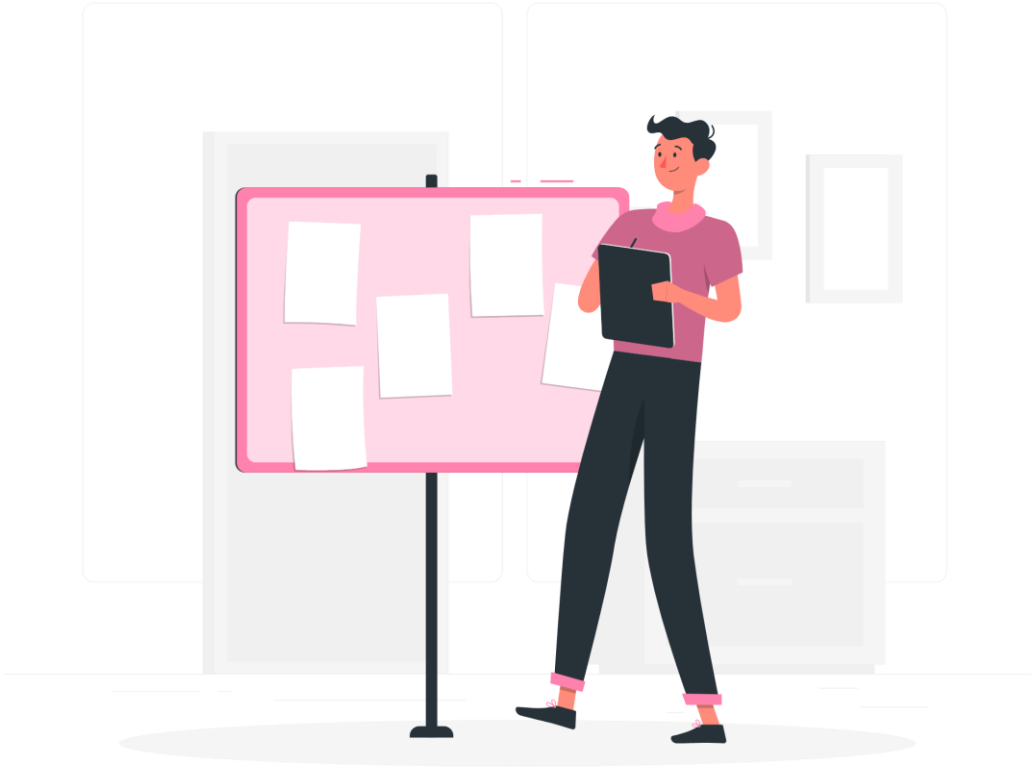
In order to accommodate this critique, quality assurance organisations try to use experts wherever possible. For example, if the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) is evaluating a particular educational programme, it gets experts in that area to form part of its team of evaluators.



When Umalusi evaluates the standard of exam question papers or of marking, it does so by commissioning subject experts. So, if historically experts have evaluated quality, why do we need a change? Some argue that experts have not always been accountable; getting them to operate within a more formalised framework, with specific criteria and procedures, is an improvement on old approaches.

Others counter this by arguing that once peers are forced to behave like bureaucrats, they will make judgements as if they are bureaucrats, and not as if they are experts. A different argument about the use of expert judgements is that it is not always clear who the experts are.

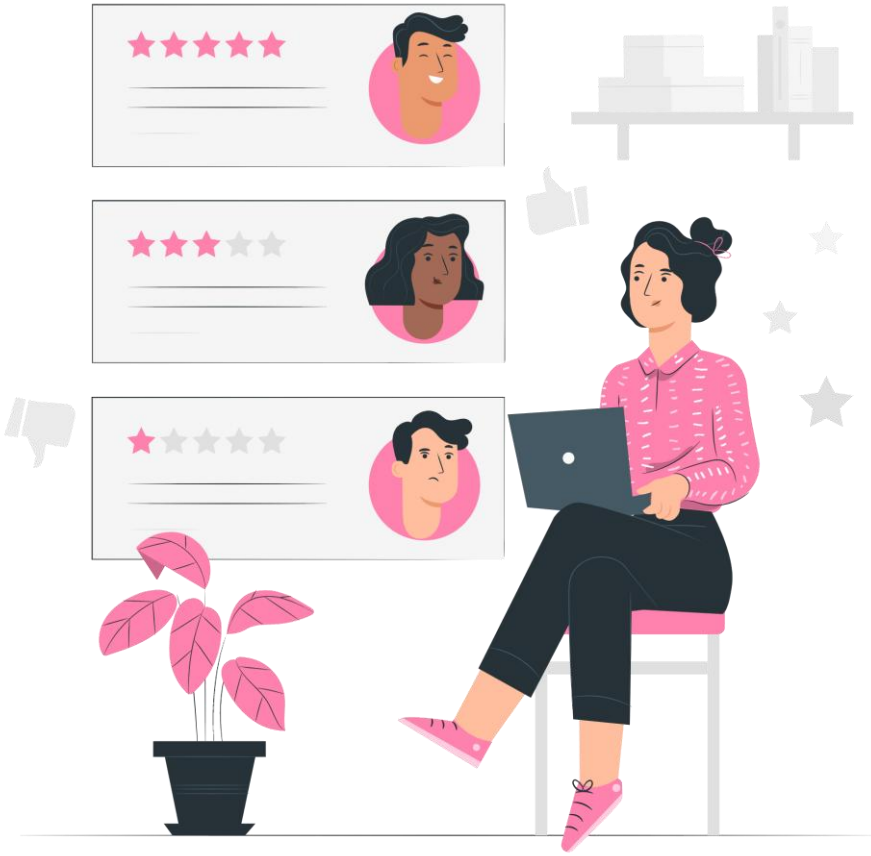
For example, it was argued above that doctors are the best people to decide on the quality of a medical programme. But are teachers the best people to decide on the quality of a teacher education programme, or should teacher education experts make that decision? Should teachers decide on the standard of exams for schools, or should experts at universities make those decisions?



These are all questions which have no easy answers, and which make it complicated to decide who the best people are to make judgements about educational quality.

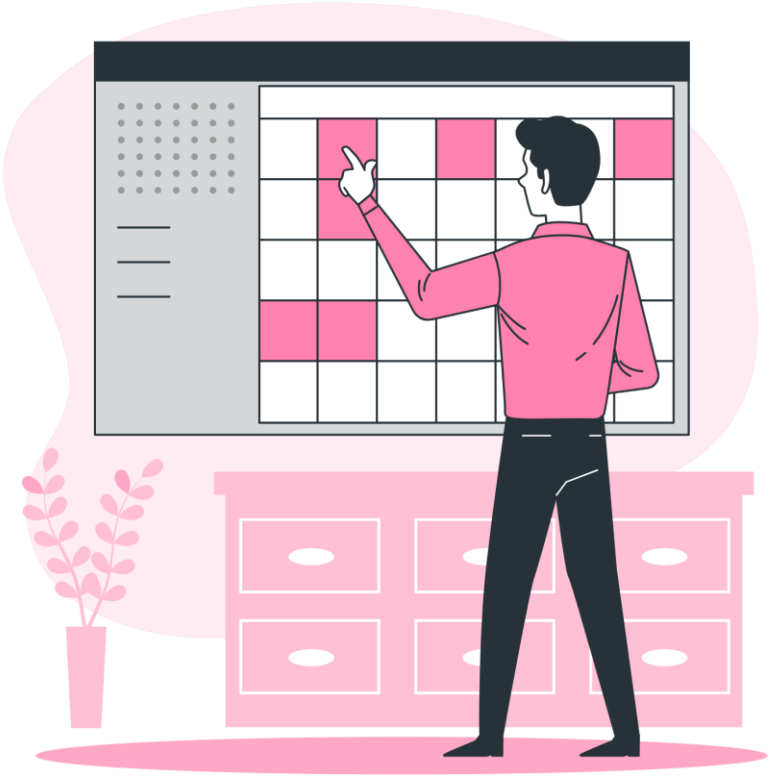
Fitness for purpose or fitness of purpose?

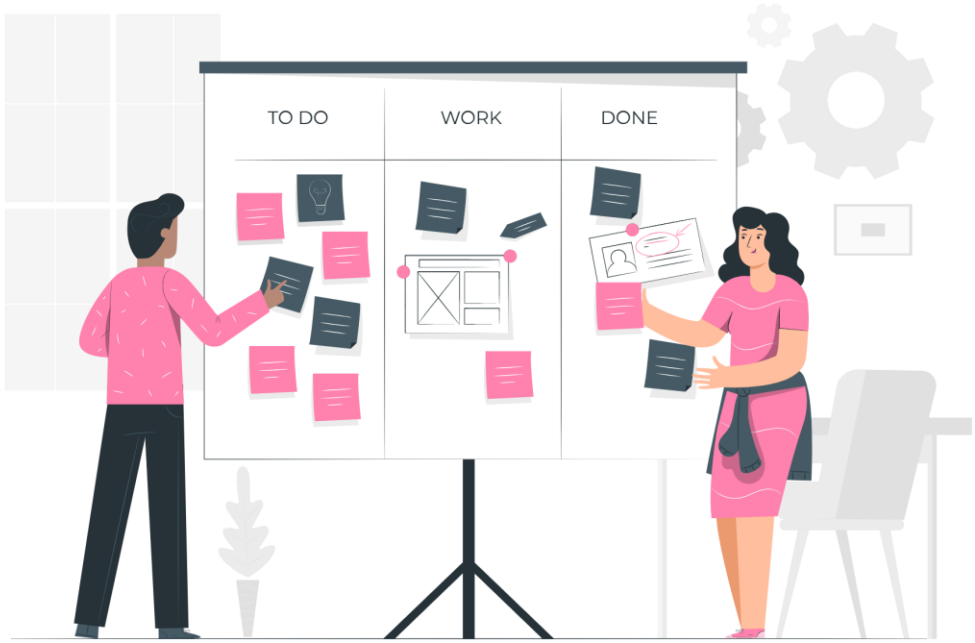
In the section above on “Debates about Quality Assurance”, the “lead parachute” was discussed – the idea that although all the specified processes are correctly followed the prescribed outcome may not be the correct one.



In educational quality assurance debates, this is sometimes referred to as the difference between fitness for purpose – does this course appropriately teach students according to its stated objectives – and fitness of purpose – are the stated objectives of the course the correct ones?

So, people who are concerned with educational quality need to make judgements about the quality of a curriculum, of a school, of an exam, of a university, and so on, in terms of whether they are achieving their objectives.





This is not an easy thing to do, because educational programmes and educational institutions have many and complex objectives, which are often not measurable or are difficult to measure.

Even more difficult is deciding what the aims and objectives of education should be. At a common-sense level, this seems to be a simple matter. Yet, ask anyone what they think the aims of education are, and you will obtain a long list, which differs from person to person.

Ask any expert, and the differences start to increase! There is no space here to go into the details of this debate; for now it is important to note that there is a debate, and that it makes the idea of quality assurance in education a very difficult enterprise.

How do we know that quality assurance improves quality?

Since quality assurance in education is relatively new, there is very little research into its effectiveness. Those in favour of quality assurance sometimes assume that it will improve quality because that is what it is designed to do. However, good intentions do not always lead to the desired objective, and sometimes good intentions have undesired consequences.

One of the criticisms of quality assurance systems is that they are complicated and costly for educational institutions to implement. For example, total quality management systems involve subscription costs (to the auditing body that manages the system), and often involve very time-consuming activities in order to comply with the audit criteria.

Government organisations or other regulatory organisations that accredit educational institutions often want very specific information presented in a very specific way, and it can take a lot of time for educational institutions to provide this. Similarly, educational institutions can find themselves forced to spend a huge amount of time and energy preparing for audits by quality assurance organisations.

If there is absolute proof that these different quality assurance systems will in fact adequately monitor and improve educational quality, then perhaps the time and expense is justifiable. However, there is often little evidence that this is the case.

Some people argue that the time and money spent on quality assurance would be better spent directly targeting factors that affect quality in educational institutions – improving salaries of teachers and lecturers, improving libraries and facilities, and so on.

The Educational Quality Assurance Process are:

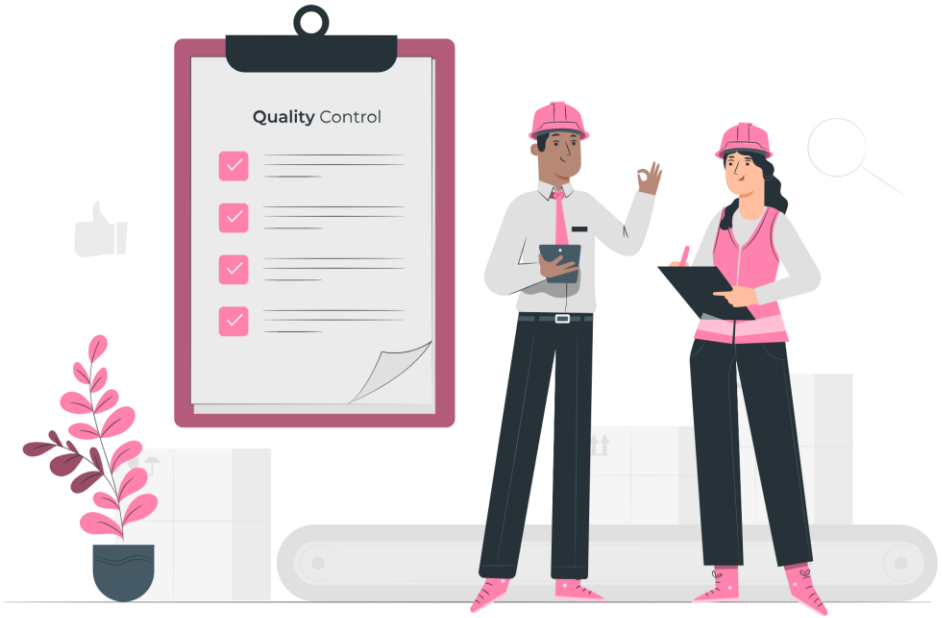
1. Quality Control

Quality Control is the operational process of the primary affiliation and educational institutions for determining educational standards in line with national educational standards.

After that, the primary affiliation and educational institutions make a plan as operational guidelines on the development of quality into standards specified in the development of curricula, media, teacher and personal development, statutes of educational institutions, teaching regulations, guidance, educational management, and evaluation.

In this regard, emphases will be placed on the systems and mechanisms of operations according to the plan, monitoring the operations seriously and continuously.

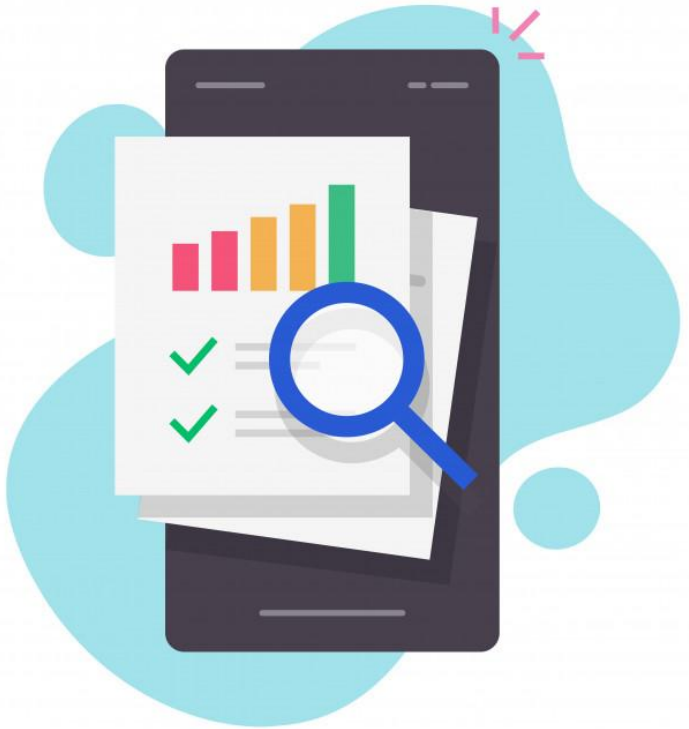
2. Quality Audit



Quality audit is the operation of educational institutions and the primary affiliation to confirm the specified target geared towards the desired standards by taking action as follows:

- Self–audit, and review of the whole system's operations of educational institutions in order to bring information to improve and develop educational management consistently and report the results to parents and people responsible for educational management.

- Audit and review of the educational quality of educational institutions by the original affiliation to promote, support and take measures to encourage the development of educational quality under the established educational standards.



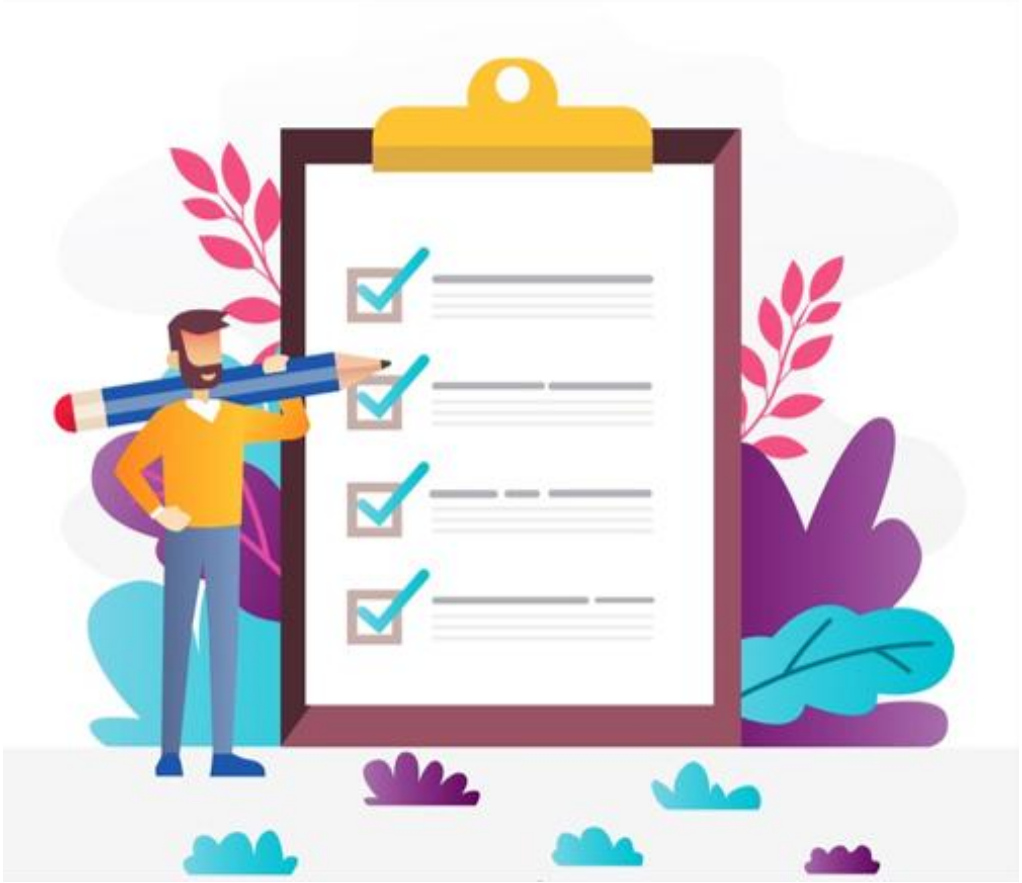
3. Quality Assessment

Quality assessment is the evaluation of quality levels for specific activities in the organizations such as quality of educational management, quality of research, quality of teaching. Internal quality assessment is conducted by self- study and self-assessment report, while external quality assessment is conducted by the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) to evaluate and certify that educational institutions provide quality educational management according to the established educational standards.

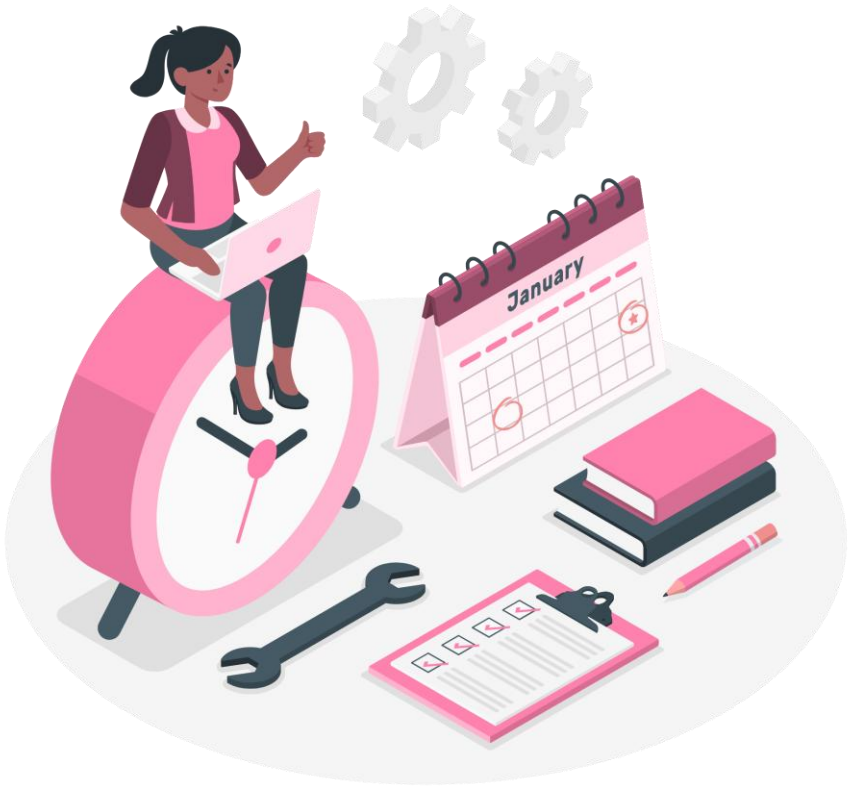
Benefits of Educational quality assurance

- Continuous improvement of quality of educational institutions into international standards

- Efficient use of resources in the management of higher education institutions



- Management of educational institutions is sufficient, thus making the production of graduates at all levels, creation of researches and academic services achieve maximum benefit and meet the needs of society and the nation.

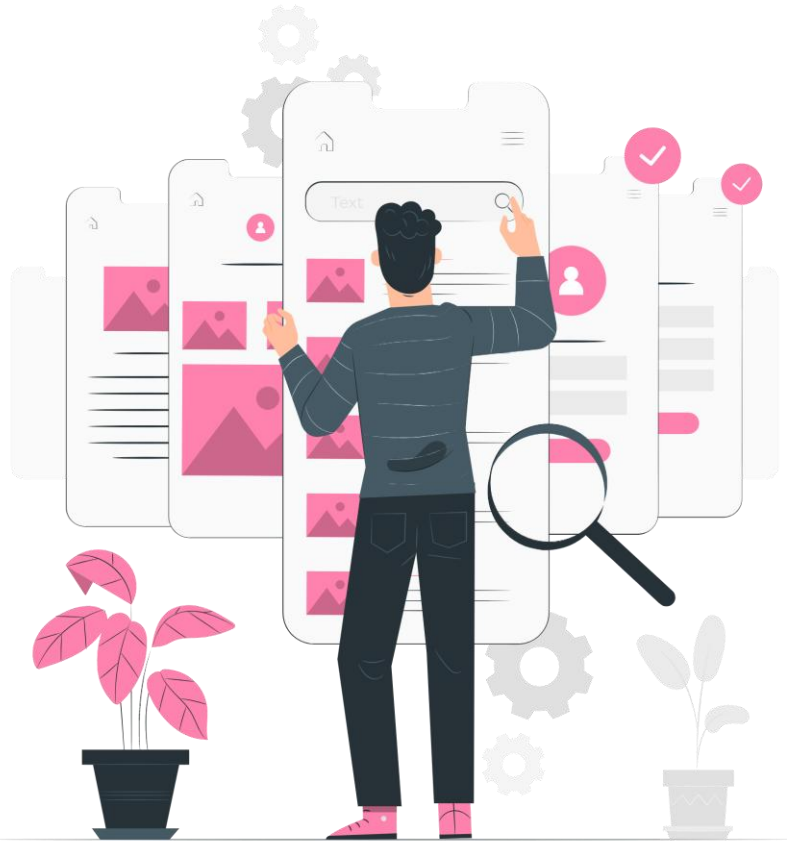


- The students, parents, employers, and the public have information for correct and systematic decisions.

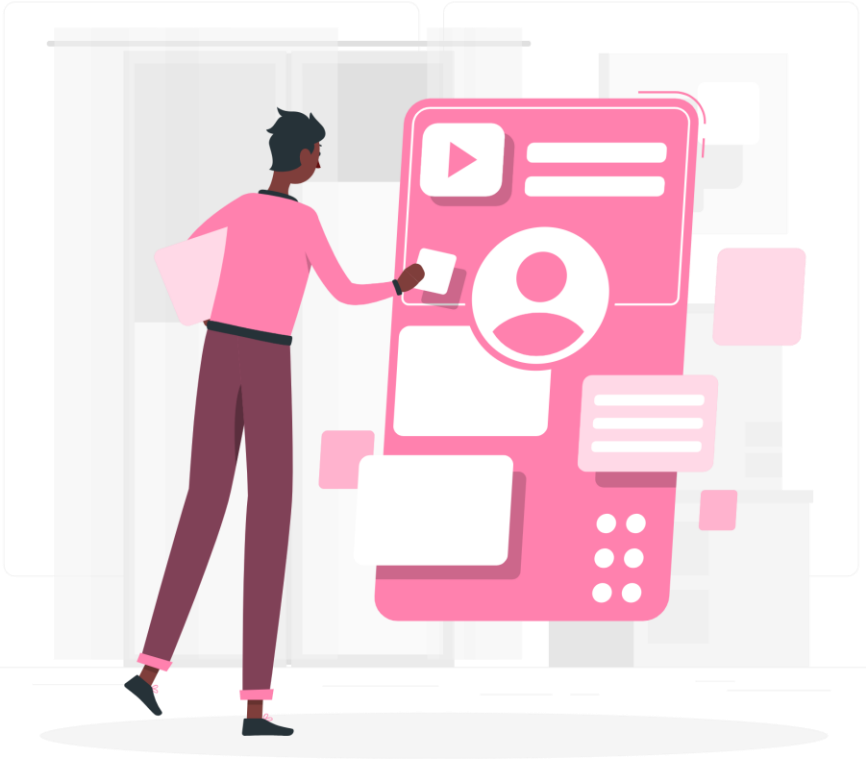
- Educational institutions, educational service agencies, and the government have correct and systematic information for determining the policy, planning, and organizing educational services.

- The students' academic achievement in all subjects is high and meets the standards consistently.

- The students know in advance what results will obtain from studying in educational institutions and get the desired results.



- The parents, communities, teachers, local educational management agencies take part in setting quality standards that blend international standards, national standards, and local standards.



- The administrators of educational institutions are leaders in management to control educational quality by joining forces with the teachers, board of educational institutions, parents, communities in planning to enhance educational quality in order to be valid for the students according to standards. There is the audit, acceptance of operational plans of educational institutions.

- The teachers are developed and motivated to plan educational management by taking the students as a center, emphasizing the practice process to achieve complete learning quality standards, allowing all students to learn to their full potential. The administrators and the board of educational institutions monitor the teaching and learning and help educational quality to be systematic, orderly.

1st homework

What are the indicators of educational quality in your opinion?

As well as specifying the details of the indicators.

Do your homework in PPT, submit and send to me on Friday and present next week.


Q&A