



**ASEAN**  
**University**  
**Network**

# **Guidelines for AUN Quality Assessment and Assessors**

**March 2011**

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## Foreword

The handbook documents the operating guidelines for AUN quality assessment. It sets out the roles, responsibilities and requirements of the applying university (assessee), assessors, observers and staff of AUN Secretariat.

The guidelines aim to provide a common frame of reference and accountability to the AUN quality assessment process and stakeholders. They are formulated based on Section 3.8 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, Third Edition, 2009. The European standards and guidelines for external quality agencies on accountability procedures are reproduced below.

1. A published policy for the assurance of the quality of the agency itself, made available on its website;
2. Documentation which demonstrates that:
  - the agency's processes and results reflect its mission and goals of quality assurance;
  - the agency has in place, and enforces, a no-conflict-of-interest mechanism in the work of its external experts;
  - the agency has reliable mechanisms that ensure the quality of any activities and material produced by subcontractors, if some or all of the elements in its quality assurance procedure are subcontracted to other parties;
  - the agency has in place internal quality assurance procedures which include an internal feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from its own staff and council/board); an internal reflection mechanism (i.e. means to react to internal and external recommendations for improvement); and an external feedback mechanism (i.e. means to collect feedback from experts and reviewed institutions for future development) in order to inform and underpin its own development and improvement.
3. A mandatory cyclical external review of the agency's activities at least once every five years.

The publication of this handbook is the first step towards fulfilling the above guidelines and satisfying all of them is expected to be evolved over time. Feedback on the content of the handbook is welcome and it should be sent to the Executive Director, AUN Secretariat.

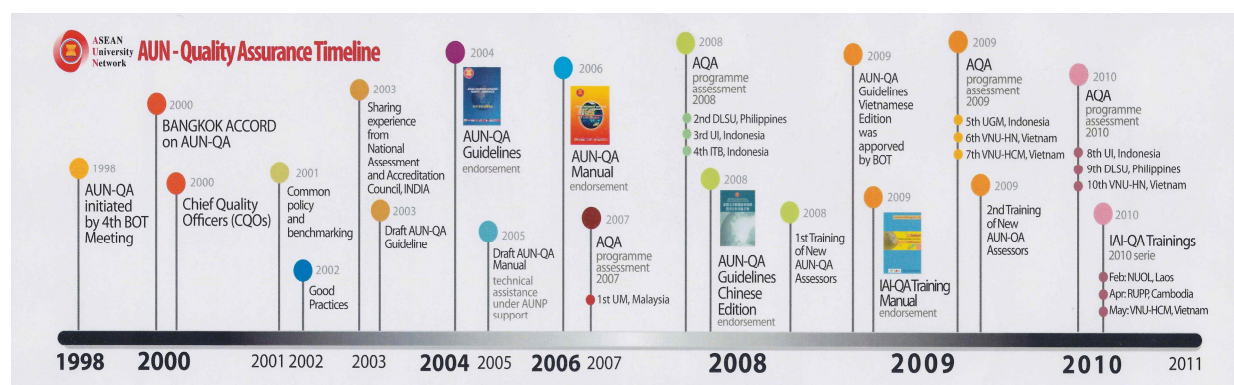
Assoc. Prof. Nantana Gajaseni, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
ASEAN University Network

## 1.0 Introduction to AUN-QA Network

### 1.1 About AUN-QA

**ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance (AUN-QA) network** is a group of Chief Quality Officers (CQOs) appointed by the AUN member universities as the focal point for coordinating activities to realise the mission of harmonising educational standards and seeking continuous improvement of academic quality of universities in ASEAN. The AUN-QA activities are carried out by the CQOs in accordance to the Bangkok Accord adopted in 2000, which provides a series of guidelines to promote the development of a quality assurance system as instruments for maintaining, improving and enhancing teaching, research and the overall academic standards of AUN member universities.

Since the establishment of the Bangkok Accord in 2000, AUN-QA has been actively promoting, developing, and implementing quality assurance practices based on an empirical approach where quality assurance practices are shared, tested, evaluated, and improved. The AUN-QA timeline is depicted below.



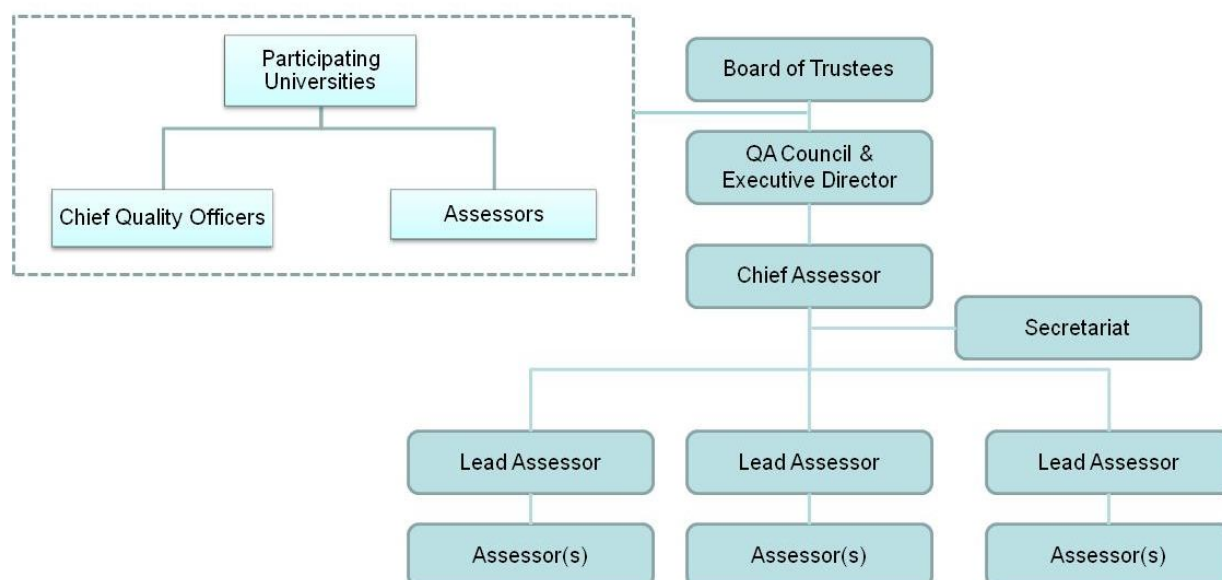
### 1.2 Objectives of AUN-QA

AUN-QA is established under the auspices of the ASEAN University Network (AUN), and is the de facto regional quality assurance agency for higher education in ASEAN. The main objectives of AUN-QA are:

- Develop, promote, implement and enhance the AUN-QA Guidelines and criteria
- Facilitate and conduct AUN quality assessment
- **Serve as the authority for issuing AUN quality labels**
- Develop and train quality assurance professionals and practitioners
- Provide advisory and consulting services on best quality assurance practices
- Collaborate with other quality agencies inside and outside ASEAN in relation to harmonisation of quality assurance frameworks and development of professionals in quality assurance.

### 1.3 Structure of AUN-QA

The AUN-QA network consists of all Participating Universities, a Quality Assurance (QA) Council, a Secretariat and a pool of assessors, all of whom are governed by the Board of Trustees of the AUN. The organisation of AUN-QA network is documented below.



#### 1.3.1 Functions of the Board of Trustees (BOT)

The AUN BOT shall have the following functions:

- Formulate policies for the operation of the network;
- Approve proposals for projects, including budget allocation, work programmes and implementation activities;
- Appoint the Executive Director and staff that will compose the AUN Secretariat;
- **Approve the functions of the QA Council and the appointment of its members;**
- Conduct periodic review and evaluation of on-going projects and activities based on the recommendations and assessment of the Executive Director; and,
- Perform such other functions that may be necessary to carry out the objectives of the AUN.

The BOT shall be composed of one representative from each of the ASEAN Member Countries, as designated by the respective governments, the Secretary-General of ASEAN and the Executive Director of the AUN, as ex-officio members. The representative of each Member Country shall preferably be the incumbent head of one of the Member Country's institutions of higher learning. The regular members of the BOT shall serve a term of three years; in no case shall the regular members serve for more than two terms. The BOT shall meet at least twice a year.

### 1.3.2 Functions of the QA Council

The QA Council shall have the following functions:

- Formulate, govern and review directions and policies for the operation of the AUN-QA network;
- Formulate and review guidelines, criteria, and documentation for AUN-QA models, assessment process, assessor's appointment, and certification scheme and fees;
- Appoint AUN assessors and develop the system for training and certifying them;
- Endorse assessment reports and certification status; and
- Revoke certification status of university if it fails to honour and fulfill its public and social duties, undertakings and obligations to its stakeholders including AUN-QA network

The QA Council will be headed by the Executive Director with 3 current CQOs (who are qualified assessors) and 1 former CQO (invited by the AUN Secretariat). The term of the council members will be 2 or 3 years so as to allow the phase-in of new members. The council shall meet on a need-to basis via formal and informal channels such as tele-conferencing, skype, emails, etc.

### 1.3.3 Functions of the Executive Director

The Executive Director shall have the following functions relating to AUN-QA:

- Manage the activities of the AUN Secretariat and QA Council;
- Coordinate and monitor the AUN-QA programmes of the participating universities;
- Establish and maintain links with other quality assurance bodies within and outside ASEAN;
- Perform the role of a Registrar of Assessors who is responsible for the development of a pool of qualified AUN assessors, assignment and performance of assessors, and handling of feedback and complaints of assessors;
- Engage a third party to carry out an external review of the agency's QA activities at least once every five years;
- Propose and develop ideas, innovations or mechanisms for sourcing and generating funds for AUN-QA activities; and
- Perform such other functions which may be assigned by the Board of Trustees from time to time.

The Executive Director must have an outstanding record in managing or directing international programmes and cooperation projects which are recognised in the region. He/she shall be appointed by the AUN BOT for a fixed term of 4 (four) years, renewable for another term.



### 1.3.4 Roles of the Participating Universities

The Participating Universities shall support and participate in AUN-QA programmes and activities. They shall appoint CQOs for their universities and nominate suitable candidates to be trained and performed as AUN assessors.

### 1.3.5 Functions of the Secretariat

The Secretariat shall be headed by an Executive Director and have the following functions relating to AUN-QA:

- Plan and organise AUN-QA quality assessment, workshop, programmes, projects and activities;
- Coordinate and monitor AUN-QA quality assessment process, programmes, projects and activities;
- Support the AUN assessors before, during and after the quality assessment;
- Maintain and update AUN-QA documentations;
- Maintain and update the register of AUN assessors and CQOs; and
- Ensure the implementation of the policies and directives of the AUN BOT and QA Council.

### 1.3.6 Panel of AUN Assessors

AUN-QA has established a pool of CQOs and professionals who serve as panel of AUN assessors in actual quality assessment. From time to time, the AUN-QA Secretariat will invite or request AUN member universities to nominate CQOs and staff to be considered for appointment to the panel of AUN assessors. Suitably qualified candidates are requested to submit curriculum vitae and the names of two referees. In selecting the assessor, consideration should be given to the assessor's competence and personal attributes in addition to education and work experience. The minimum requirements of an assessor to be appointed to the panel of AUN Assessors are listed below.

#### Education and Experience

- A recognised university education
- 5 years of experience in quality assurance or quality assessment in educational, professional or industrial setting
- Knowledge and understanding of the higher education industry

#### Personal Attributes

The assessor should possess a number of personal attributes that contribute to the successful performance of quality assessment. An assessor should be ethical, open minded, diplomatic, observant, perceptive, versatile, tenacious, decisive and self reliant. He/she should fulfilled all obligations assigned as an assessor and has not received any adverse report from the university being assessed, peers or AUN Secretariat.

## AUN Assessor's Training

AUN-QA requires assessors to complete a 2-day AUN-QA Assessor Training Workshop and observe at least one actual quality assessment at their own expense as a condition of their appointment. The topics in the 2-day training workshop include:

- Introduction to quality in education
- History and development of AUN-QA
- The AUN-QA models and their criteria
- Quality assessment process
- Requirements of Self-Assessment Report (SAR)
- Desktop planning and site assessment
- Data gathering and interviewing skills
- Assessment rating and report writing

## Term of Assessor

The term of appointment to the panel of AUN assessors is renewable every three years on satisfying the requirements in paragraph 1.3.6. Photographs and biographies of the panel of AUN assessors are available at AUN website.

### **1.3.7 Structure and Roles of Assessor**

For the quality assessment to be carried out efficiently and effectively, the panel of AUN assessors is structured **as follows:**

#### Roles of Assessor

In general, an assessor should perform the following roles:

- Preparing assessment plan & checklist
- Communicating and clarifying assessment requirements
- Planning & carrying out assigned responsibilities effectively & efficiently throughout the assessment and be present at both the opening and closing sessions
- Making observations on curriculum, process and quality improvements
- Reporting the assessment results
- Retaining & safeguarding documents pertaining to the assessment

## Roles of Lead Assessor

In each assessment team, one senior assessor will be appointed as the lead assessor to oversee and lead the actual quality assessment. In addition, to the roles of the assessor, the lead assessor will provide leadership to the assessment team, setup preliminary meetings/discussions, assigning of roles and assessment areas/criteria and moderating the final assessment results. The appointment of lead or senior assessor has to satisfy the following conditions in addition to the requirements of an assessor:

- Served as an assessor **in more than 2** actual quality **assessments**, and
- Fulfilled all quality assessment obligations and received no adverse report from the university being assessed, peers or AUN Secretariat.

## Roles of Chief Assessor

In each quality assessment project, one lead assessor from the assessment teams will be appointed as the chief assessor to oversee and lead the entire actual quality assessment. **He/she should have served as a lead assessor in more than 2 quality assessments.** In addition, to the roles of the lead assessor, the chief assessor will provide leadership to the assessment teams, joint-interviews across different assessment teams, opening and closing sessions. He/she will also be responsible for moderating ratings of common criteria across different assessment teams, and moderating the final assessment results before submitting them to the **QA Council**.

## Key Roles of Assessors Before, During and After Assessment

A summary of the key roles of assessors before, during and after the quality assessment is tabulated below.

Key Stages	Chief Assessor	Lead Assessor	Assessor
Invitation as assessor to the actual quality assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accept or decline invitation by assessor</li><li>• If accepted, assessor to submit Disclosure of Conflict of Interest. The disclosure of conflict of interest is necessary to ensure the impartial fulfilment of roles of assessor and the assessment process.</li></ul>		
Confirmation of assessor's appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accept appointment, roles and type of assessment to be carried out as assigned by AUN Secretariat</li></ul>		
Receipt of assessment itinerary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review overall itinerary and propose changes, if necessary</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review itinerary of the assigned assessment and propose changes, if necessary</li></ul>	
Confirmation of assessment itinerary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Submit registration details such as flight information, arrival and departure, accommodation, diet requirements, etc.</li><li>• All assessors must be present at the opening and closing sessions.</li></ul>		

Key Stages	Chief Assessor	Lead Assessor	Assessor
Receipt of SAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign tasks to lead assessors and co-assessor(s)</li> <li>• Carry out desktop assessment</li> <li>• Clarify SAR with the university to be assessed</li> <li>• Consolidate desktop assessment and send a copy to co-assessor(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assign tasks to co-assessor(s)</li> <li>• Carry out desktop assessment</li> <li>• Clarify SAR with the university to be assessed</li> <li>• Consolidate desktop assessment and send a copy to co-assessor(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out desktop assessment</li> <li>• Submit desktop assessment to lead assessor</li> </ul>
Site assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend the opening and closing sessions, and carry out quality assessment, interviews, site visit and documentation review</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead opening and closing sessions and introduce assessment teams</li> <li>• Lead and close interviews with common participants across all assessment teams</li> <li>• Lead and close interviews</li> <li>• Adhere to assessment itinerary and request changes, if desired</li> <li>• Review and request for objective evidences</li> <li>• Observe and identify areas of strengths and improvement</li> <li>• Rate level of performance against assessed criteria</li> <li>• Establish and agree on level of performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead and close interviews</li> <li>• Adhere to assessment itinerary and request changes, if desired</li> <li>• Review and request for objective evidences</li> <li>• Observe and identify areas of strengths and improvement</li> <li>• Rate level of performance against assessed criteria</li> <li>• Establish and agree on level of performance</li> <li>• Prepare preliminary assessment report and findings for presentation</li> <li>• Present assessment findings at closing session</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate fully in interviews</li> <li>• Review and request for objective evidences</li> <li>• Observe and identify areas of strengths and improvement</li> <li>• Rate level of performance against assessed criteria</li> <li>• Prepare preliminary assessment report and findings for presentation</li> </ul>

Key Stages	Chief Assessor	Lead Assessor	Assessor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reconciliation of ratings of common criteria across assessment teams</li> <li>• Prepare preliminary assessment report and findings for presentation</li> <li>• Present assessment findings at closing session</li> </ul>		
Post-assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare, moderate and finalise all assessment reports and results to AUN Secretariat within 4 weeks after site assessment</li> <li>• Provide feedback to AUN Secretariat on the assessment, if necessary</li> <li>• Request payment of honorarium and submit claims, if any</li> <li>• Review <b>feedback</b> from <b>the</b> university being assessed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and finalise assessment report and result to chief assessor within 3 weeks after site assessment</li> <li>• Provide feedback to chief assessor and AUN Secretariat on the assessment, if necessary</li> <li>• Request payment of honorarium and submit claims, if any</li> <li>• Review <b>feedback</b> from <b>the</b> university being assessed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submit assessment report and result to lead assessor within 2 weeks after site assessment</li> <li>• Provide feedback to lead assessor and AUN Secretariat on the assessment, if necessary</li> <li>• Request payment of honorarium and submit claims, if any</li> </ul>

### 1.3.8 Code of Ethical Conduct for Assessor

In promoting high standards of public service and ethical conduct, assessors:

- shall conduct themselves professionally with integrity, truth, accuracy, fairness, respect, and responsibility to the stakeholders and the general public at all times;
- shall not represent conflicting or competing interests, nor place themselves in such a position where their interest may be in conflict or appear to be in conflict with the assessment process and **certification**;
- **shall not offer confidential information or disclose information that may in any way influence the assessment process and certification;**

- shall not intentionally communicate false or misleading information that may compromise the integrity of the assessment process and **certification status**; and
- shall not approach an institution that they have assessed for their personal gain, including the establishment of an employment or consulting relationship

## 2.0 Quality Assessment Process

### 2.1 The PDCA Process

AUN-QA adopts the Plan-Do-Check-Action (PDCA) or Deming Cycle approach for quality assessment at the institutional, IQA system and programme level as illustrated in the diagram below.



PDCA Process

The following table shows the typical timelines and key activities for an AUN quality assessment based on the PDCA process.

Stage	Timeline	Key Activity	Agent
Plan	6 – 12 months prior to assessment	Issue call for applications for assessment	AUN Secretariat
		Apply for assessment	Applying university
		Process applications and schedule universities for assessment	AUN Secretariat
		Confirm schedule of assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applying university</li> <li>AUN Secretariat</li> </ul>
	6 months prior to assessment	Invite assessors for assessment	AUN Secretariat
		Accept or decline invitation by assessors. Submit Disclosure of Conflict of Interest	Assessor
		Appoint and confirm assessors and assessment teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AUN Secretariat</li> <li>Assessor</li> </ul>
	2 - 3 months prior to assessment	Confirm assessment itinerary, accommodation and logistics arrangements with applying university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AUN Secretariat</li> <li>Applying university</li> <li>Assessor</li> </ul>
		Send registration form to assessor	AUN Secretariat
		Submit registration form with flight information, accommodation and diet requirements	Assessor
	Do	1 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> - 2 months prior to assessment	Submit self-assessment report (SAR) to AUN Secretariat and assessors
Conduct desktop assessment and clarify with applying university, if necessary			Assessor
1 day prior to assessment		Arrival of assessors and AUN Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AUN Secretariat</li> <li>Applying university</li> <li>Assessor</li> </ul>



Stage	Timeline	Key Activity	Agent
	Day 1 of assessment	Opening session and site assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AUN Secretariat</li> <li>• Applying university</li> <li>• Assessor</li> </ul>
Do/Check	Day 2 of assessment	Site assessment and preparation of assessment report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AUN Secretariat</li> <li>• Applying university</li> <li>• Assessor</li> </ul>
Check	Day 3 of assessment	Closing session and departure of assessors and AUN Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AUN Secretariat</li> <li>• Applying university</li> <li>• Assessor</li> </ul>
Act	Within 4 weeks after assessment	Submit assessment report to AUN Secretariat and provide feedback to AUN Secretariat on the assessment, if necessary. Request payment of honorarium and submit claims, if any	Assessor
	Within 6 weeks after assessment	Send assessment report and assessment feedback to applying university	AUN Secretariat
	Within 10 weeks after assessment	Submit feedback on assessment process and results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying university</li> <li>• AUN Secretariat</li> </ul>
	Within 12 weeks after assessment	Review feedback and inform applying university, if any	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AUN Secretariat</li> <li>• Assessor</li> </ul>
	Within 14 weeks after assessment	Recommend the release of final assessment reports and certification status to the QA Council for endorsement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AUN Secretariat</li> </ul>
		Endorse the release of final assessment reports and certification status	QA Council
	Within 16 weeks after assessment	Release of final assessment report and certification status to applying university and publish certification status in AUN website	AUN Secretariat
	Within 30 weeks after assessment	Release of best practices of applying university in the AUN-QA Benchmarking Database	AUN Secretariat

Stage	Timeline	Key Activity	Agent
	Within 9 – 12 months after assessment	Request for progress report from applying university on recommendations made by assessment teams	AUN Secretariat
		Submit progress report by applying university	Applying university
		Monitor and track status of <b>certified</b> university	AUN Secretariat

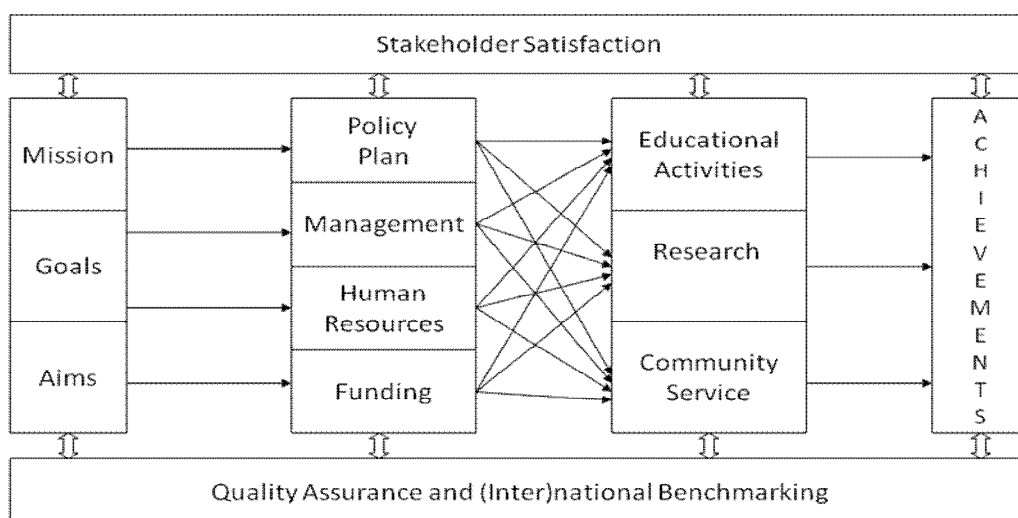
## 2.2 Plan Phase

The plan phase consists of:

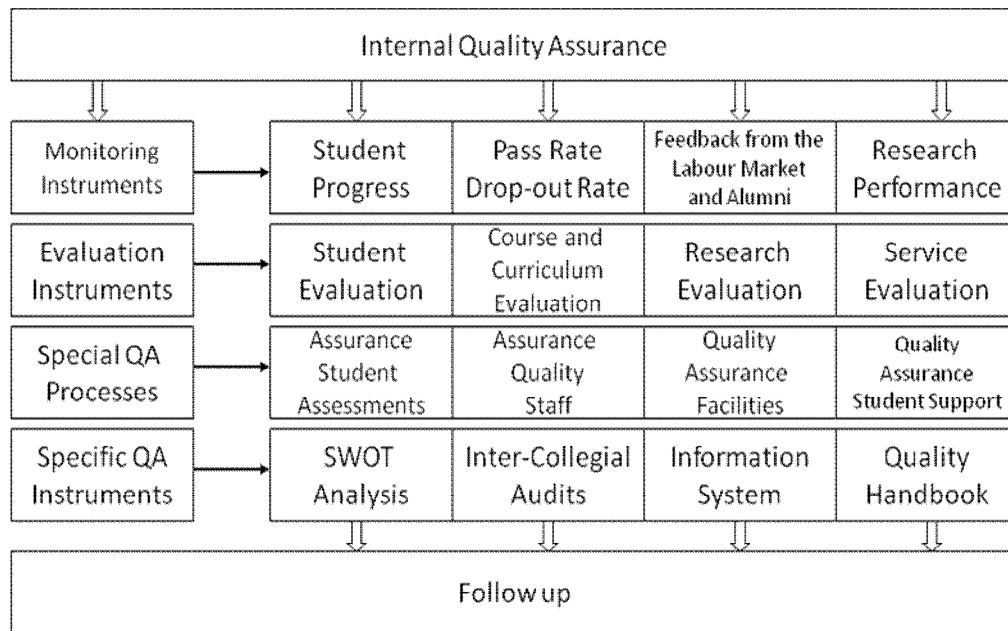
- Types of Assessment
- Assessment Team
- Schedule & Itinerary

### 2.2.1 Types of Assessment

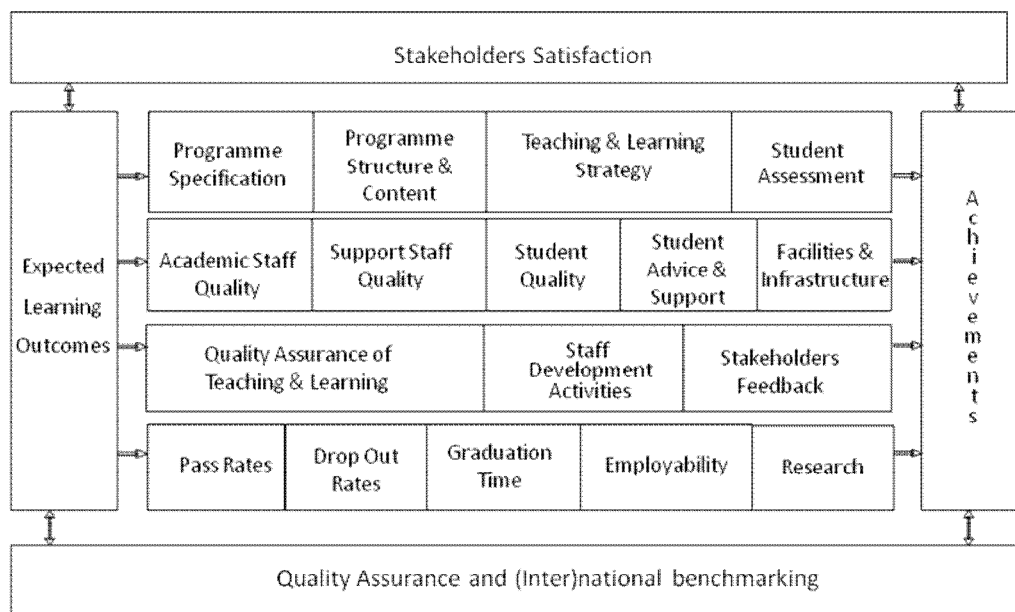
At the start of the annual planning exercise, AUN Secretariat will **issue a call to universities interested in AUN-QA assessment**. The three types of AUN quality assessment are institutional, IQA system and programme level. Detailed description of the models is available in the AUN-QA Manual for the Implementation of the Guidelines and Guide to AUN Actual Quality Assessment at Programme Level.



AUN-QA Model for Institutional Level



AUN-QA Model for IQA System



AUN-QA Model for Programme Level

### 2.2.2 Assessment Team

The assessment team(s) will be appointed by the AUN Secretariat in advance based on assessor's background, experience and language ability. Each team should comprise at least 2 members from different universities. As a guide, the number of assessment teams assigned to the types of quality assessment is as follows:

Assessment Type	Institutional/IQA System	Programme
No. of Assessment Teams	2 – 3 teams	1 team per programme
No. of Assessment Days	4 – 5 days	3 days

The assessors will carry out their assigned roles and tasks as outlined in paragraph 1.3.7. In general, an assessor should perform the following roles:

- Preparing assessment plan & checklist
- Communicating and clarifying assessment requirements
- Planning & carrying out assigned responsibilities effectively & efficiently throughout the assessment and be present at both the opening and closing sessions
- Making observations on curriculum, process and quality improvements
- Reporting the assessment results
- Retaining & safeguarding documents pertaining to the assessment

As an assessor, you need to establish contact with the members of the assessment team(s) and AUN Secretariat. It is important that the SAR reaches you at least 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> to 2 months before the assessment so that you have sufficient time to carry out desktop assessment and seek clarification with the university to be assessed if needed.

### **2.2.3 Schedule and Itinerary**

You are required to review the preliminary assessment itinerary and suggest changes, if necessary.

A typical assessment itinerary will spread over 3 – 5 days depending on the type of quality assessment, and the size and complexity of the university to be assessed. It normally consists of:

- Opening session
- Site assessment
- Interviews with stakeholders
- Site tour
- Report preparation
- Closing session

A typical itinerary for programme level assessment is shown below.

Date/ Time	Programme
<b>Day 1</b>	
09.00 – 09.30	<b>Opening Session</b>
09.30 - 09.45	Coffee break
09.45 – 10.30	<b>Briefing by Faculty Dean</b>
10.30 – 10.45	Transferred to respective department
10.45 – 12.00	<b>Meeting with Key Faculty Members: Head of Department and Programme Chair</b>
12.00 – 13.30	<b>Site Visit to Laboratories, Workshops, Libraries</b>
13.30 – 14.30	Working lunch
14.30 – 15.45	<b>Meeting with Faculty Members</b>
15.45 – 16.00	Coffee break
16.00 – 17.30	<b>Meeting with Support Staff</b>
17.30 – 18.30	Departure to dinner venue
18.30 – 21.00	Welcoming dinner
21.00	Departure to hotel
<b>Day 2</b>	
07.30	Departure to Campus
08.30 – 10.00	<b>Meeting with Students</b>
10.00 – 11.30	<b>Meeting with Alumni</b>
11.30 – 13.00	<b>Meeting with Employers</b>
13.00 – 14.00	Working Lunch
14.00 – 17.00	<b>Conclusion &amp; Preparation of the Actual Assessment by Assessors</b>
18.00 – 21.00	Dinner (Free & Easy)
<b>Day 3</b>	
07.30	Departure to Campus
09.00 - 11.00	<b>Presentation of Key Results of the Actual Assessment by Assessors</b>
11.00 – 11.30	<b>Closing Session</b>
11.30 – 13.00	Lunch

A typical itinerary for IQA system assessment is shown below.

Date/ Time	Programme
<b>Day 1</b>	
09.00 – 09.30	<b>Opening Session</b>
09.30 - 09.45	Coffee break
09.45 – 10.30	<b>Briefing by President, Vice-Chancellor or Rector</b>
10.30 – 12.30	<b>Meeting with Key Management Staff and Administrators</b>
12.30 – 13.30	Working lunch
13.30 – 15.15	<b>Meeting with Quality Assurance Department Head, Committees and Staff</b>
15.15 – 15.30	Coffee break
15.30 – 17.00	<b>Meeting with Human Resource Department Head, Committees and Staff</b>
17.00 – 18.30	Departure to dinner venue
18.30 – 21.00	Welcoming dinner
21.00	Departure to hotel
<b>Day 2</b>	
07.30	Departure to Campus
08.30 – 10.30	<b>Campus Tour</b>
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee Break
10.45 – 12.30	<b>Meeting with Selected Faculty Head, Committees and Staff</b>
12.30 – 13.30	Working Lunch
13.30 – 15.00	<b>Meeting with Selected Faculty Head, Committees and Staff</b>
15.00 – 15.15	Coffee Break
15.15 – 17.00	<b>Meeting with Selected Faculty Head, Committees and Staff</b>
18.00 – 21.00	Dinner (Free & Easy)
<b>Day 3</b>	
07.30	Departure to Campus
08.30 – 10.15	<b>Meeting with Research Department Head, Committees and Staff</b>
10.15 – 10.30	Coffee Break
10.30 – 12.30	<b>Meeting with Support Department Heads, Committees and Staff</b>
12.30 – 13.30	Working Lunch
13.30 – 17.00	<b>Conclusion &amp; Preparation of the Actual Assessment by Assessors</b>
18.00 – 21.00	Dinner (Free & Easy)

Date/ Time	Programme
<b>Day 4</b>	
07.30	Departure to Campus
09.00 - 11.00	<b>Presentation of Key Results of the Actual Assessment by Assessors</b>
11.00 – 11.30	<b>Closing Session</b>
11.30 – 13.00	Lunch

A typical itinerary for institutional assessment is shown below.

Date/ Time	Programme
<b>Day 1</b>	
09.00 – 09.30	<b>Opening Session</b>
09.30 - 09.45	Coffee break
09.45 – 10.30	<b>Briefing by President, Vice-Chancellor or Rector</b>
10.30 – 12.30	<b>Meeting with Key Management Staff and Administrators</b>
12.30 – 13.30	Working lunch
13.30 – 15.15	<b>Meeting with Human Resource Department Head, Committees and Staff</b>
15.15 – 15.30	Coffee break
15.30 – 17.00	<b>Meeting with Finance/Funding Department Head, Committees and Staff</b>
17.00 – 18.30	Departure to dinner venue
18.30 – 21.00	Welcoming dinner
21.00	Departure to hotel
<b>Day 2</b>	
07.30	Departure to Campus
08.30 – 10.30	<b>Campus Tour</b>
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee Break
10.45 – 12.30	<b>Meeting with Selected Faculty Heads, Committees and Staff</b>
12.30 – 13.30	Working Lunch
13.30 – 15.00	<b>Meeting with Selected Faculty Heads, Committees and Staff</b>
15.00 – 15.15	Coffee Break
15.15 – 17.00	<b>Meeting with Selected Faculty Heads, Committees and Staff</b>
18.00 – 21.00	Dinner (Free & Easy)

Date/ Time	Programme
<b>Day 3</b>	
07.30	Departure to Campus
08.30 – 10.15	<b>Meeting with Research Department Head, Committees and Staff</b>
10.15 – 10.30	Coffee Break
10.30 – 12.30	<b>Meeting with Research Department Head, Committees and Staff</b>
12.30 – 13.30	Working Lunch
13.30 – 15.00	<b>Meeting with Support Departments Heads, Committees and Staff</b>
15.00 – 15.15	Coffee Break
15.15 – 17.00	<b>Meeting with Support Department Heads, Committees and Staff</b>
18.00 – 21.00	Dinner (Free & Easy)
<b>Day 4</b>	
07.30	Departure to Campus
08.30 – 10.00	<b>Meeting with Students</b>
10.00 – 11.15	<b>Meeting with Alumni</b>
11.15 – 12.30	<b>Meeting with Employers</b>
12.30 – 13.30	Working Lunch
13.30 – 17.00	<b>Conclusion &amp; Preparation of the Actual Assessment by Assessors</b>
18.00 – 21.00	Dinner (Free & Easy)
<b>Day 5</b>	
07.30	Departure to Campus
09.00 - 11.00	<b>Presentation of Key Results of the Actual Assessment by Assessors</b>
11.00 – 11.30	<b>Closing Session</b>
11.30 – 13.00	Lunch



## **2.3 Do Phase**

After the plan phase is the Do phase where most of work will be done involving desktop and site assessment.

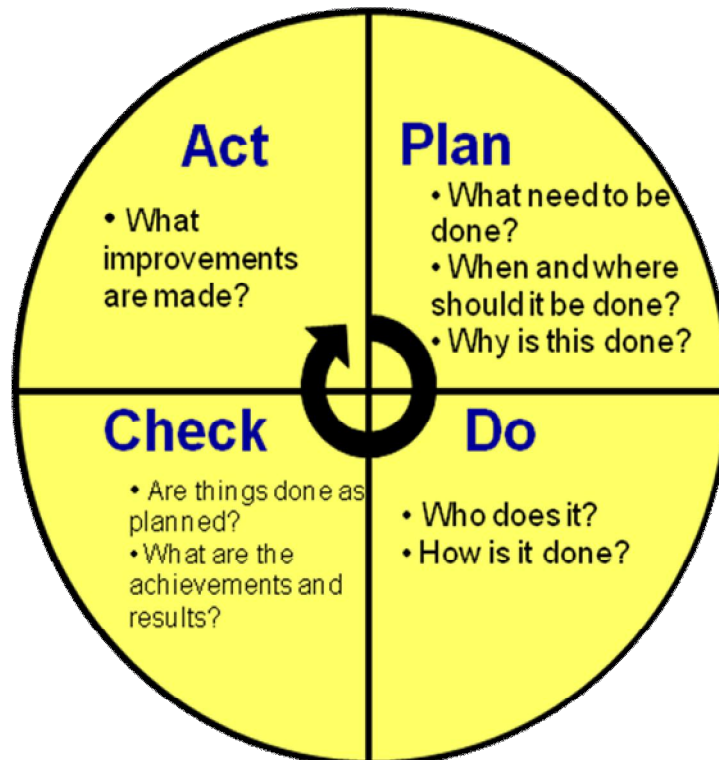
### **2.3.1 Desktop Assessment**

Desktop assessment is the first initial step before the site assessment. It is a document review exercise which involves a preliminary assessment of the quality assurance system based on the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and available documentation. The desktop assessment facilitates the development of an assessment plan using the AUN-QA Assessment Planning Template. The purpose of assessment planning is to gather evidence of practices that meet AUN-QA guidelines and criteria. The plan should include:

- Sources of information and evidence
- Strategy to gather the evidence as well as identifying documents and records for review. Strategy may include interview, site visit, document review, website access, etc.
- Identify individuals to be interviewed and plan schedule of interviews and site tour
- Prepare questions needed to gather the evidence

The SAR is the most critical document for desktop assessment and it should be given to the assessors in advance before the actual assessment. It should give an overview of the university, faculty, department and programme being assessed. The SAR should cover all the criteria listed under the AUN-QA framework. If any of the criteria are not documented, the assessors should clarify with the contact person of the university. Identify information and documents mentioned in the report and verify them against the physical documents during the site assessment. Using the diagnostic questions outlined in the AUN-QA framework to develop questions and identify evidences for verification. Assessor may request for language translation of certain documents before the actual assessment, if necessary. This will help to increase the level of objectivity in the findings and assessment.

The PDCA approach is a good tool to apply in assessment planning. Questions can be formulated at each stage of the PDCA.



For example at the plan stage, questions on what, when and why can be used to establish objectives and processes that deliver results based on AUN-QA guidelines and criteria and organisation policies. At the Do stage, questions can revolve around implementation and who are involved. At the check stage, questions on monitoring and measuring performance and processes can be formulated. Lastly, at the Act stage, assessors can plan questions on actions to continually improve performance. Adopt the 5Ws (why, what, where, who and when) and 1H (How) questioning technique to help you in your planning of the questions for the interview.

To facilitate the desktop assessment and planning, AUN has formulated planning template for each type of assessment. These templates are given during the AUN Assessor Training Workshop and a copy is usually sent to the assessor prior to the assessment by AUN Secretariat.

### **2.3.2 Site Assessment**

Actual assessment or site visit consists of an opening meeting with key management representatives of the university. The opening meeting is normally followed by a presentation of the university and programme. After which, interviews would be held with the various stakeholders. Site tour may be arranged between the interviews or after the interviews. The assessment will conclude with a closing meeting.

An opening meeting with the host university management representatives should be held prior to the commencement of the actual assessment. The purpose of the brief opening meeting is to:

- Introduce the members of the assessment team to the host university's management representatives
- Establish official communication links between the assessment team and the host university
- Review scope and objectives of the assessment
- Clarify details of the assessment plan and schedule
- Allow the host university to introduce the university and its programme normally done through a presentation

Typical opening statements by the chief/lead assessor of the assessment team are as follows:

“Good morning ladies and gentlemen. My name is XXX and I am from ZZZZZ University and I am the lead of the assessment team. The other members in my team are Mr XXX and Ms XXX.

At the request of your university, we are glad to make a quality assessment at the programme level under the AUN-QA guidelines and criteria. The scope of the assessment will cover the XXX programme at the faculty of ABC. We will be looking at the activities that are relevant to these areas. We will be following a schedule as agreed earlier. Should any change be required, we will coordinate with your representative XXX. If all things proceed as planned, the assessment will take between 2 and 3 days.

A final closing meeting will be held on the final day of the assessment where we will be presenting the summary of our findings. Before we proceed, is there anything that you would like to ask? (Pause for a second).

Thank you for your kind attention. We will now proceed with a presentation by the university.”

## Interviews

Interviews with various stakeholders are normally pre-arranged by the host university prior to the actual assessment. The interviews may start with a discussion involving the writers of the self-assessment report before and during the actual assessment. In this interview, the team can ask for clarification of any obscurities and explanation of any topics that are not totally clear.

The interviews with the students provide a very rich source of information, but the information needs to be checked and tested against the ideas of the staff members. Student interviews are important to get an insight into the study load, the didactic qualifications of the staff, the coherency of the programme, to find out if they are acquainted with the goals and objectives, the organisation of the curricula and the facilities.

These student interviews should be held in the absence of staff members, so that they can speak freely. The size of the student groups is ideally about 5 in each cohort. It's best to talk to about 5 students from the first year, 5 from say the second and third years, and 5 who are nearly at the end of their studies. The composition of the student panels requires special attention. It is important that the group is as far as possible representative of the whole student population in that field, i.e. that it not only includes the good students, but also the less gifted ones. The selection of students should follow AUN guidelines stated in paragraph 3.4. The assessors should have a list of the students and their details such as year of study, study pathway, etc being interviewed.

Interviews with staff members will be used for discussion on the content of the curriculum, the goals and objectives: "Why and how did you choose this programme?" Other topics to be discussed include the examinations, the final paper (if any), the final research projects, etc. It is advisable to talk with groups of not more than 25 staff members.

Other interviews will be held with members of a curriculum committee and with members of the committee responsible for examinations. During the interview with the curriculum committee, the question of how the curriculum is kept up to date will be discussed as will the question of how innovations are planned and realised, etc. The interview with the examination committee must clearly show how the quality of the examinations and degree is assured.

Interviews with employers and alumni provide a good indication of the graduates' quality and the relevancy of the curriculum. They can provide a good source for the university to improve its processes, systems, facilities, curriculum, etc.

In each interview, the assessor will usually go through several steps including informing the interviewees about the purpose of the interview, gather background information about the interviewees and conducting the actual interview.

Objectives of Interview are to:

- Gather information and evidences
- Clarify and verify SAR and practices
- Give interviewees opportunity to present the full picture

It is important for the assessors to talk less and listen more as the purpose of the interview is to ensure a fair and objective view of the assessment.

In preparing the interview, the assessor should consider the followings:

- Know the interviewees
  - Language
  - Education
  - Specialisation or area of interests
- Plan the questions
  - Focus on the criteria
  - Phrase questions as neutrally as possible to avoid bias
  - Use open-ended questioning technique (5Ws and 1H) to probe for information
  - Use close-ended questions to confirm information
  - Manage time to cover different criteria and interviewees

An interviewing process consists of 3 phases as follows:

- Introduction
- Questioning
- Conclusion

At the introduction phase, the following items should be carried out:

- Introduce the assessment team
- Explain purpose of the interview
- Put interviewees at ease
- Get to know background of interviewees if necessary e.g. years of service or study, current position, scope of work, etc.

During questioning, do take note of the following factors:

- Use reassuring tones and approach in a respectful manner
- Assure interviewees that the session is strictly confidential and no information will be attributed to any one individual
- Lead the discussion
- Take note
- Keep to the agenda
- Watch your time

Use effective questioning techniques:

- Ask one question at a time. Give interviewees ample time to respond before moving to the next question.
- Use open-ended questions to probe for information. For example, how are students being assessed for their project works?
- Use close-ended questions to confirm information. Is there feedback gathered from stakeholders?
- Avoid leading questions. Do you think the curriculum is adequate and relevant? Leading interviewees to the answer of the question asked.
- Try to use neutral language. Avoid words like never, bad, good, always, weak, etc.

Before concluding the interview, do the followings:

- Ask if interviewees have anything else to add. This gives them some control over the interview and a chance to tell you something important that might not be on the list.
- Thank the interviewees for their time

Four basic techniques in active listening are:

1. Mirroring. Restating what the interviewee says using different words. Restate in such a way as to encourage the interviewee to go on.
2. Using silences. Silence may make people feel uncomfortable in a conversation. However, not every gap in a conversation needs to be filled. Distinguish between positive and negative silences where the interviewee is thinking. During a negative silence where the interviewee is not able to respond, provide help.
3. Acknowledging. Remind the interviewee periodically that you are listening with words like “Yes”, “I see”, “Um...m”. Use body language like nodding and eye contact without interrupting the interviewee unnecessarily.
4. Open-ended questioning. Use questions that encourage your interviewees to think further rather than give a straight “Yes” or “No” answer. Close ended questions often cut the natural flow of your interviewee’s thoughts, make them feel interrogated and put them on the defensive. Unless you are sure a close ended question would help, you should use open ended questions.

## Objective Evidence

Evidence should be collected on all matters related to the assessment objectives and scope. Checklist can be used to aid the collection of evidence. Evidence should be collected through:

- Interviews
- Examination of documents/records (physical and electronic)
- Observation of activities and facilities
- Site tour
- Use of statistical methods such as sampling can be used to increase efficiency during assessment. However, the sample should be a fair representation of the area under examination.

Site tour can be planned between interviews or at the end of the interview. The site tour normally includes visit to lecture halls, tutorial rooms, laboratories, workshops or practical rooms, libraries and computer labs. Special attention should be paid to the environment in the facilities, condition of the equipment and tools, cleanliness and maintenance of the facilities. Site tour also provides the assessors an opportunity to clarify the findings or SAR with the staff.

## **2.4 Check Phase**

The check phase involves report preparation and presentation of the assessment findings. At the end of the assessment, prior to preparing the final report, the assessment team should hold a meeting with the host university's management representatives and those responsible for the functions concerned. The purpose of the meeting is to:

- present the **preliminary** results of the assessment to the management representatives and those responsible for the functions
- ensure that the results of the assessment are clearly understood
- provide an opportunity for clarification
- conclude the assessment

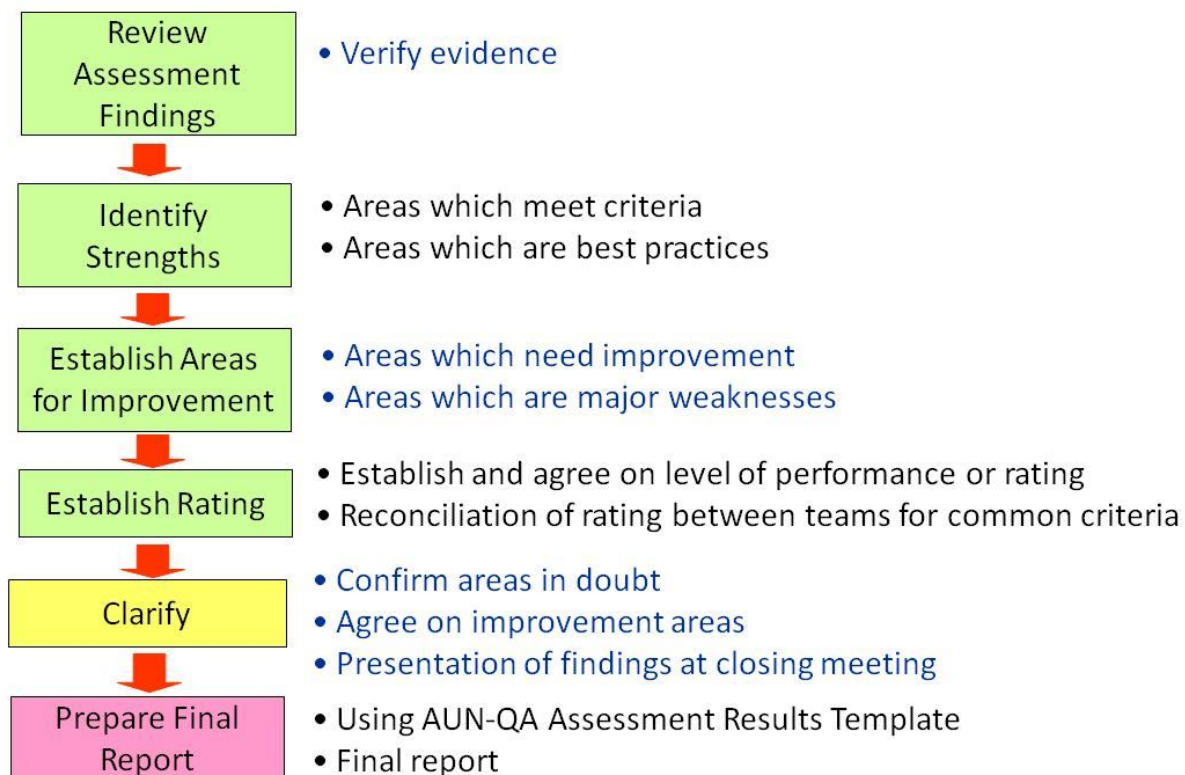
The meeting is part of the Check phase and it helps the assessors to prepare an objective and factual report. It gives the assessors and applying university an opportunity to clarify doubts and to seek a better understanding of the QA processes and how the AUN-QA criteria are being fulfilled. It helps to identify and agree on the areas for improvement and provides the motivational force for the university to improve its QA system. The 2-way communication in the Check phase would make the university more receptive to the findings and help to build a closer and enduring relationship between the assessors and the university.

## Assessment Report

The objectives of assessment report are:

- Level of performance based on AUN-QA guidelines and criteria
- Key strengths of university/faculty/programme
- Areas for improvement

The steps to prepare assessment report are illustrated below.



To prepare a credible and objective report, the assessment team has to verify the evidences gathered and agree on the strengths and weaknesses of the QA practices adopted by the university. Next is to establish the gaps against the AUN-QA criteria and suggest areas for improvement. Based on the findings, the assessment team has to establish and agree on the level of performance or rating. Any differences should be resolved through factual and objective evidences against the best known practices. Reconciliation of ratings of common criteria across programmes should be carried out to ensure consistency of results.



AUN adopted a 7-point rating scale for its quality assessment. The scaling aims to offer the universities and external assessors an instrument for scaling their verdicts and to see how far they have progressed on the way to meeting the criteria and to see how far quality is assured. The meaning of the value in the 7-point scoring scale is as follows:

- 1= nothing (no documents, no plans, no evidence) present
- 2= this subject is in the planning stage
- 3= documents available, but no clear evidence that they are used
- 4= documents available and evidence that they are used
- 5= clear evidence on the efficiency of the aspect
- 6= example of best practices
- 7= excellent (world-class or leading practices)

For assessing the quality of teaching and learning, the numbers have a different wording, but more or less the same meaning. The assessment of the quality of a programme is also done on a 7-point scale. For looking at the quality and improvement activities, the 7-point scale could also be read as follows:

- 1= absolutely inadequate; immediate improvements must be made
- 2= inadequate, improvements necessary
- 3= inadequate, but minor improvements will make it adequate
- 4= adequate as expected (meeting the AUN-QA guidelines and criteria)
- 5= better than adequate (exceeding the AUN-QA guidelines and criteria)
- 6= example of best practices
- 7= excellent (world-class or leading practices)

As weight is not allocated to each criterion, the overall opinion should be based on the achievement or fulfilment of the criterion as a whole. It should not be computed based on the average score of the statements under each criterion.

Before making the final presentation to the university management, the assessment team should clarify any doubts and agree on the areas for improvement with the key staff of the faculty or department. The report should not be judgemental such as using the word “frequently”. Instead state your comment factually and indicate the importance of having the practice or process. The final report should be prepared using the AUN-QA Template.

In writing feedback report, do follow the following guidelines:

- Feedback must be:
  - Objective
  - Based on evidence
  - Encouraging
  - Part of a “learning” process
  
- Feedback must not:
  - Ridicule
  - Mandate solution
  - Be insensitive to the overall effort
  - Ignore the achievement made

Good comments are fundamental to an effective assessment. Your comments would help the university **determine** its readiness in meeting AUN-QA guidelines and criteria. It also provides the basis for feedback on areas that the university needs to improve. Good feedback should:

- Use clear, simple, grammatically correct and complete sentences. They help to reduce the time needed to clarify points.
- Avoid jargons or acronyms
- Be constructive – use positive tone, be specific to guide improvement and comment only on areas contained in the criteria.
- Be non-prescriptive – state observations and evaluations

A closing meeting is usually done by the chief/lead assessor of the assessment team. Typical closing meeting statements include:

“Good morning ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the assessment team, I would like to thank you and your staff for the hospitality and assistance which you have given us throughout the assessment. We have enjoyed the friendly atmosphere during the assessment.

First, I would like to reiterate the purpose and scope of this assessment under the AUN-QA guidelines and criteria at programme level. The assessment has been carried out on the basis of a prepared plan which involved examining a representative sample of the activities relevant to the AUN-QA framework. With your kind consent, I will present the preliminary results and findings from the team. A final report will be sent to your university by the AUN secretariat at a later date.”

## 2.5 Act Phase

The Act phase involves preparing the final report and the assessment feedback. The final report consists of a summary and the assessment results. A typical summary report is documented below.

### **Introduction**

This report documents the findings on the quality assessment at programme level for the Bachelor of XXX programme at the Faculty of ABC, University of XYZ on 3 October 2010. The quality assessment was carried out by Prof YYY from DEF University and Prof GHI from SSS University. The report is based on the information provided in the self-assessment report, on-site verification of the documentation and interviews with selected stakeholders including faculty staff, students, alumni and employers.

### **Results of Assessment**

The assessment framework is based on the AUN Actual Quality Assessment at Programme Level. The assessment covers 15 criteria and each criterion was assessed based on a 7-point scale. A summary of the assessment results is as follows:

*Listing the criteria and their scores.*

The Department of ABC has put in place quality assurance approaches to address the criteria spelt out in the AUN-QA guidelines. Of the 15 criteria, 9 criteria were rated “better than adequate” especially in programme outcomes, specification and structure & content; student assessment; staff and student quality; facilities & infrastructure; quality assurance of teaching & learning and output. 5 criteria were rated “adequate as expected” and 1 criterion on stakeholders feedback was rated as “inadequate but minor improvements will make it adequate”.

*A summary of the key strengths and areas for improvement is tabulated below.*

A detailed report of the quality assessment at programme level for the Bachelor of XXX is attached.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the self-assessment report, evidences and interviews, the Bachelor of XXX fulfilled all except one criterion. Overall the quality assurance implemented for the programme is between adequate as expected and better than adequate.

Report prepared by:

Date

Enc. Assessment Results

After the assessment team has completed and sent a copy of the report to AUN Secretariat, they will forward it together with a copy of the feedback report to the university being assessed. The purpose of the feedback report is to help in improving the assessment process. Please do not take the feedback as a personal assessment of your performance at the quality assessment. The feedback is meant for improvement in AUN-QA assessment process and as a platform for learning.

A 4-week period is given to the applying university to comment on the fact and objective evidences presented in the assessment report. They may appeal against any wrongful representation of the fact or evidence to the AUN Secretariat. The AUN Secretariat together with the assessors will evaluate and respond to the re-submission of the fact or evidence by the applying university within 2 weeks before it is recommend to the **QA Council** for release.

Once the final assessment report and certification is endorsed by **QA Council**, the result will be announced to the applying university and AUN website. Best practices observed during the assessment will be included into the AUN-QA Benchmarking Database.

Within 9 – 12 months after the assessment, the applying university is required to submit a progress report on the recommendations made by the assessment teams to AUN Secretariat.

At any time, the **QA Council** has the right to revoke **the** certification status of university if it fails to honour and fulfill its public and social duties, undertakings and obligations to its stakeholders including AUN-QA network.

### **3.0 Quality Assessment Requirements**

#### **3.1 Eligibility for Assessment**

To be eligible for **assessment** under the AUN-QA network, the applying university must fulfil the following conditions:

- AUN member university or affiliated member of AUN;
- Must have at least three cohorts of graduates from the same programme at the time of application; and
- A registered university or educational institution which has been approved by the local government or authority as the higher education provider

#### **3.2 Requirements for Assessment**

The applying university shall meet all the following requirements stated by AUN Secretariat and assessors to ensure that the quality assessment is carried out efficiently and effectively.

- Submit Self-Assessment Report (SAR) which is written in English at least 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> - 2 months before the commencement of the site assessment;
- Translate key documents and evidences written in the local language to English;
- All key documents and evidences should be properly labelled and located in one room for each assessment team to facilitate the verification of evidences;
- Provide language interpreter and guides during site assessment;
- Submit progress report on the recommendations made by the assessment teams to AUN Secretariat within 9 – 12 months after assessment;
- Fulfil all assessment, administrative and logistics requests made by AUN Secretariat and assessors for the purpose of carrying out the assessment efficiently and effectively;
- Release and sharing of best practices in AUN Benchmarking Database as well as with AUN member universities and affiliated members
- Pay the full assessment fees before the site assessment and reimbursements, if any, within 30 days upon issuance of the claims by AUN Secretariat; and
- Permit observers from other AUN member universities or affiliated members

### 3.3 Requirements for Self-Assessment Report (SAR)

SAR submitted by the applying university shall meet the following requirements:

- The SAR should be written and translated into English language that is easy for the assessors to comprehend. A glossary of abbreviations and terminologies used in the report should be provided;
- The SAR should be submitted or made available in both hardcopy and softcopy to the assessors and AUN Secretariat at least 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> – 2 months before the site assessment;
- Hardcopies of the SAR must be made available to the assessors at the site assessment together with the supporting documents and evidences clearly labelled and displayed in the discussion room for assessors; and
- The SAR should not be more than 50 A4 pages and printed in a consistent typeface with font size 12. The content of the SAR should consist of:

#### Part 1: Introduction

- Executive summary of the SAR
- Organisation and approach of self-assessment carried out
- Brief description of the university, faculty and department – outline the history, mission, vision, objectives and quality policy of the university followed by a brief description of the faculty and department.

#### Part 2: AUN-QA Criteria Requirements

This section contains the write-up on how the university, faculty or department addresses the requirements of the AUN-QA criteria. Follow the criteria listed in the self-assessment checklist.

#### Part 3: Strengths and Weaknesses Analysis

- Summary of strengths - Summarise the points that the department considers to be its strengths and mark the points that you are proud of.
- Summary of Weaknesses - Indicate which points the department considers to be weak and in need of improvement.
- Completed checklist
- Improvement plan – recommendations to close the gaps identified in the self-assessment and the action plan to implement them.

#### Part 4: Appendices

Glossary, supporting documents and evidences

### 3.4 Requirements for Stakeholders' Interviews

Interviews with stakeholders such as key management staff, administrative heads, committees, support staff, students, alumni and employers are arranged as part of the site assessment and their input and feedback form part of the objective evidence. It is important that the interviewees are selected based on the following requirements:

- True representation of the population. For example, if the programme being assessed is a 4-year degree course, then the students selected must be from each cohort in year 1, year 2, year 3 and year 4. They must also be a mix of male and female with varied academic achievements based on the population profile. Likewise for the support staff, the representation of the interviewees should be selected based on the proportion to the category of staff and size of the administrative departments;
- For the selection of alumni members, the university should arrange to have alumni who graduated within 5 years, between 5 and 10 years and beyond 10 years;
- For the selection of employers, the university should not arrange to have more than 30% of them who are alumni of the university;
- The size of each interview session should be between 15 and 25 interviewees. It should not exceed 25 interviewees per session;
- A listing of the interviewees with basic information about the interviewees must be provided to the assessors before the interview. The information to be included in the list is tabulated below.

Stakeholder	Information of interviewee
University staff	Name, designation, appointment and department
Students	Name, year of study and programme
Alumni members	Name, graduation year and graduation degree
Employers	Name, designation and employer name

- As the interviews are held in strict confidentiality, voice and video recording of the session is not allowed; and
- To ensure forthright exchanges of views, no university staff member of the applying university is allowed at interviews with students, alumni and employers.

### 3.5 Requirements for Logistics and Accommodation

The logistics and accommodation requirements are as follows:

- Prepare and arrange the assessment itinerary including opening and closing sessions, photo taking, interviews, site tour, etc as specified by AUN Secretariat;
- Provide meeting rooms and secretariat support with all necessary equipment for the assessment teams and AUN Secretariat for discussion and to prepare report and presentation;
- Provide internet access to all assessors and AUN Secretariat throughout the assessment;
- Provide airport transfer and local transport between hotel and assessment site(s);
- **Arrange accommodation as specified by AUN Secretariat;**
- Provide meals as specified by AUN Secretariat;
- Provide escorts or security personnel inside and outside the assessment site(s), if necessary
- Make arrangements at opening and closing sessions with the following requirements:
  - Provide necessary equipment including:
    - Notebook
    - Photocopy machine
    - Printer
    - LCD projector
    - Screen
    - Microphones
    - U-shaped conference table
    - Backdrop
    - 10 flags of ASEAN member countries (large and small)
  - Provide name badges and material folders or bags for participants
  - Assign one emcee for the event
  - Arrange the meeting room according to ASEAN protocol
  - Prepare materials for the Workshop

### 3.6 Requirements for Permitting Observers

For the purpose of staff development and learning, observers are permitted to attend specific parts of the site assessment. To safeguard the integrity and confidentiality of the assessment, observers must adhere to the following requirements:

- They must be from AUN member universities, affiliated members or external party authorised by AUN Executive Director;
- They must be approved by AUN Executive Director with permission granted by the university being assessed;



- They must submit a request stating the purpose of the observation and a short biographical statement to the AUN Executive Director at least 3 months before the site assessment;
- They are required to formally declare that they have no conflicts of interest with the university being assessed;
- They are not allowed to record the observed session using any electronic devices;
- They will not be allowed to observe any private discussion held by the assessment team;
- They may be excluded from any meeting or interview by the chief/lead assessor and/or AUN Secretariat at their discretion;
- They must remain silent throughout the site assessment and interviews;
- They are responsible for their own accommodation and travel; and
- They may be invited to provide comments about the assessment process by AUN Secretariat

## 4.0 Assessment Scheme and Fees

### 4.1 Assessment Scheme

Applying university that attains a minimum rating of at least Level 4 with not more than 2 criteria scoring Level 3 will be qualified for the AUN Quality Label with a validity period of either 1 or 5 years from the date of assessment. The certification status for the types of quality assessment is shown listed below.

Certification Status	Distinguished AUN Quality Label	Certified AUN Quality Label	Provisional AUN Quality Label
Validity Period	5 years	5 years	1 Year
Notice of renewal before the expiry of the validity period	1 year	1 year	6 months
Institutional Level	Overall rating of 6 and above with no criterion scoring Level 4 and below	Overall rating of between 4 and 5.9 with no criterion scoring Level 3 and below	Overall rating of between 4 and 4.9 with not more than 2 criteria scoring Level 3
IQA System Level	Overall rating of 6 and above with no criterion scoring Level 4 and below	Overall rating of between 4 and 5.9 with no criterion scoring Level 3 and below	Overall rating of between 4 and 4.9 with not more than 2 criteria scoring Level 3
Programme Level	Overall rating of 6 and above with no criterion scoring Level 4 and below	Overall rating of between 4 and 5.9 with no criterion scoring Level 3 and below	Overall rating of between 4 and 4.9 with not more than 2 criteria scoring Level 3

Certification status may be suspended, terminated or withdrawn anytime during the validity period initiated either by AUN Secretariat or the certified university. AUN Secretariat will publish the certification status of the AUN certified university and its validity period on AUN website. The validity of the certification is either 1 or 5 years and the certified university must submit the renewal application before the expiry of the validity period.

### 4.2 Use of Quality Label

University **qualified** with any of the above **certification status** can use the relevant AUN Quality Label within the validity period. The label can only be used on corporate materials, brochures, publicity materials, website and premises of the awarded university. Otherwise, written permission must be sought from AUN Secretariat. The label must be used as one entity and no distortions or modifications are allowed. The colours used in the quality label must be as specified.

### 4.3 Assessment Fees

The assessment fees charged by AUN are based on cost recovering basis. This includes direct costs, such as travel, accommodation, honorarium for the assessors, and administrative fee to AUN Secretariat.

The fees breakdown for a typical quality assessment at institutional, IQA system and programme level is as follows:

Quality Assessment	Programme Level	IQA System	Institutional Level
No. of assessment days	3 days	4 days	5 days
Honorarium for chief/lead assessors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>US\$300 per day per assessor (AUN member universities)</li> <li>US\$600 per day per assessor (Affiliated members)</li> </ul>		
Honorarium for other assessors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>US\$200 per day per assessor (AUN member universities)</li> <li>US\$400 per day per assessor (Affiliated members)</li> </ul>		
Airfare at economy class ticket and associated travel costs including airport taxes, visa fees, taxi fares, insurance, etc			
Accommodation (if not provided by applying university)	US\$120 – 150 per night per person or its equivalent at 3-star hotel and above		
Administrative fee to AUN Secretariat	US\$500/US\$1,000* for 1 <sup>st</sup> year and US\$200/US\$400* per programme/university** for subsequent remaining years during the validity period		

\*Fees for affiliated members

\*\*For IQA system and institutional level