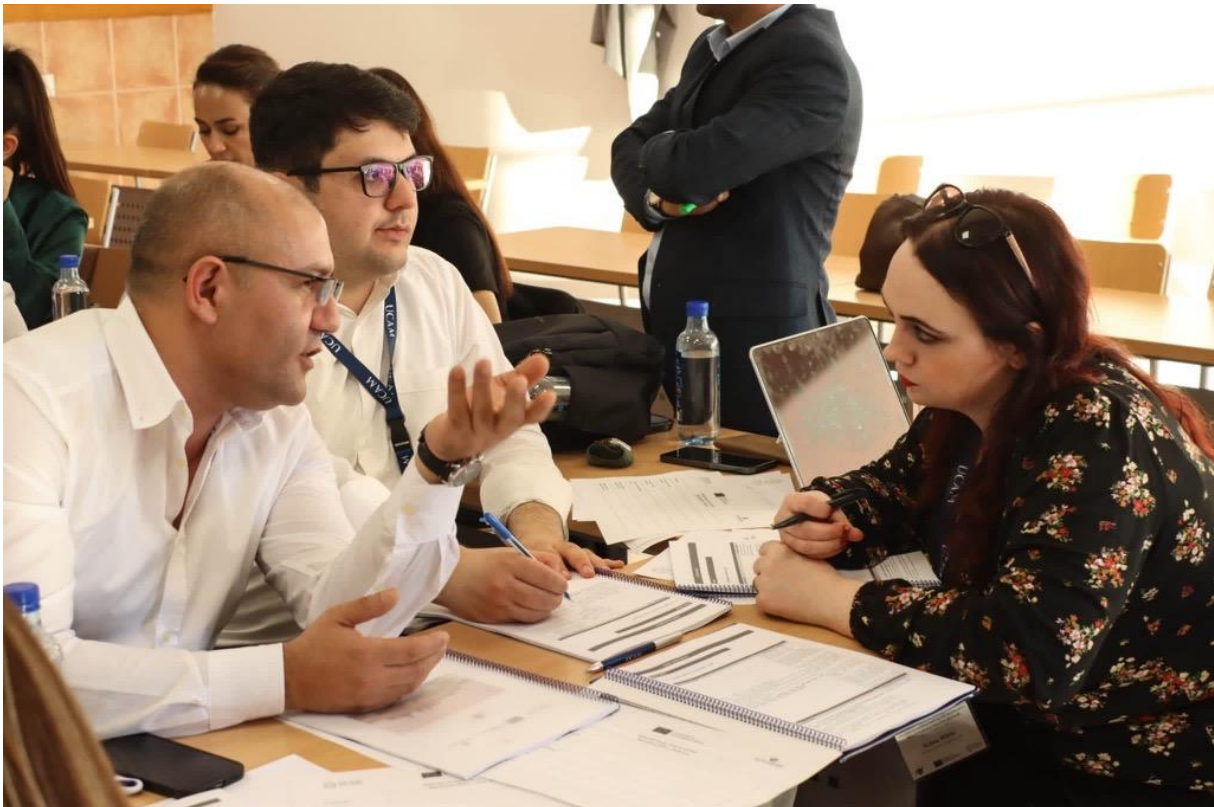


IQACert

Internal Quality Assurance Specialist Certification: Programme Handbook



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1 Introduction to the IQA Specialist Cert (IQACert) Handbook

Welcome to the Internal Quality Assurance in Higher Education, a Specialist Certification Programme! This comprehensive and focused programme is designed to empower professionals with the advanced knowledge and skills necessary to ensure the highest standards of quality assurance within higher education institutions.

In today's competitive and fast-paced environments in higher education, the role of a quality assurance specialist is increasingly vital. Specialists are not only responsible for maintaining quality standards but also for driving continuous improvement, ensuring compliance, and facilitating effective risk management. This programme acknowledges the complex and evolving nature of quality assurance, preparing you to meet organizational needs of higher education institutions and stay ahead in best practices.

This handbook serves as your guide throughout the certification process. Whether you are a seasoned quality assurance professional looking to update your skills or new to the field of quality management, this programme is structured to provide you with the tools and insights required to excel in this critical role.

2 Introduction to the IQACert Programme

Imagine a world where quality assurance in education leads to an unprecedented enhancement in the quality of life. In this world, rigorous standards and continuous improvement mechanisms ensure that every student receives a top-tier education. As a result, individuals are better equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate complex global challenges. This fosters innovation, economic growth, and social stability. With equitable access to quality education, disparities diminish, leading to a more informed, productive, and cohesive society where the potential of every person is fully realized.

The significance of higher education and its connections with technological advancements and globalization play a prime role in the economic and societal developments of a country. It enriches the quality of skilled human resources that the country needs and enhances social and economic development. To ensure whether higher education institutions are able to adequately prepare young learners for future jobs, there is a need to measure the quality of the education provided by the higher education institutions.

Contemporary higher education institutions (HEIs) operate in a dynamic and rapidly changing environment, impacting their core mission of education and learning facilitation. These changes are driven by shifts in student demographics, increased global connectivity, the transformative role of digital media, a market-driven approach to education, and the innovative impacts of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI).

There is a global consensus on the need for universities to enhance the quality of their teaching. Concepts such as internal quality assurance, assurance of learning, auditing, and quality enhancement have become central to the agendas of university administrators and educators alike. This collective aim is dedicated to adopt a student centred approach: improving student learning outcomes through systematic processes that include data collection, analysis, peer review, and decision-making.

In order to monitor and manage the quality of its own programs and curriculum, higher education institutions need to establish their own Internal Quality Assurance Systems and team of specialists. This team of specialists can promptly address and adapt to specific institutional needs. The team not only enhances the institution's reputation and competitiveness but also ensures that students receive a high-quality education that meets industry standards and societal expectations.

As this is a focused program comprising three modules, you are expected to spend one to two months to complete each module. In module IQA10, you will learn about the fundamental quality assurance concepts, frameworks and accreditation standards. In module IQA20, you will learn how to strategically apply the frameworks and methodologies in your institutions and learn about accreditation processes, compliance requirements and continuous quality improvement strategies. In module IQA30, you will explore strategies for optimizing operational efficiency in quality assurance practices across academic and administrative departments. This module will also cover effective integration of technology to streamline quality assurance processes.

The course is curated with a mix of concept videos and supporting readings. Follow the trajectory step by step to capture the full potential of the learning materials. Most interestingly, through the expert viewpoint videos, you will hear from experienced practitioners who will share their perspectives on different aspects of quality assurance. There are also practice quizzes at



the end of each lesson to help you reinforce your learning. At the end of each module, you will attempt a graded assessment which could be in the form of a written assignment, case study, data analysis or presentation. The program also offers discussion forums to connect with the program personnel and interact with your peers.

Course Details	
Course Name	Internal Quality Assurance Specialist Certificate in Higher Education (IQA.Cert.)
Course Type	Post-Graduate (level 7 European Qualifications Framework) 30 EC Credits
Course Sector	Higher Education
Course Duration	2 – 3 months
Entry Points Per Year	
Next Starting Date (s)	
Degree of Qualification	Post-Graduate Certificate
Location	
Course Modules	IQA10 Essentials of Quality Assurance: Principles and Paradigms IQA20 Advanced Quality Management Systems IQA30 Operational Excellence in Quality Assurance

As you begin this certification, be ready to broaden your professional scope, challenge existing quality paradigms, and leverage your expertise to foster excellence. With dedicated instructors, extensive resources, and a supportive learning community, we are here to assist you as we advance the field of quality assurance together.

3 Aims & Objectives of the Programme

1. Equip participants with a deep understanding of fundamental internal quality assurance principles, methodologies, and historical contexts in higher education
 2. Develop specialised knowledge in designing, implementing, and managing advanced internal quality management systems in the context of higher education
 3. Train participants to apply best practices and innovative strategies in operational processes, aiming to achieve excellence in internal quality assurance activities and outcomes
 4. Encourage analytical thinking and problem-solving abilities, enabling participants to effectively address and resolve quality-related challenges within complex environments.
 5. Prepare participants for leadership roles by developing skills in strategic planning, decision-making, and management of quality assurance teams and projects.
 6. Instil a commitment to continuous improvement through the understanding and application of continuous quality enhancement techniques
 7. Provide hands-on experience in conducting audits, assessing compliance with established standards, and implementing corrective actions.
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4 Module Descriptions

4.1 IQA10 Essentials of Quality Assurance: Principles & Paradigms

This module serves as an essential module for professionals in higher education, laying the groundwork for understanding and implementing quality assurance within academic institutions. This module provides an in-depth understanding at the evolution and current frameworks of quality assurance specifically tailored to the needs and challenges of higher education. Participants will explore a variety of quality standards and models, and learn how these are applied to ensure educational excellence and regulatory compliance. The focus extends to foundational methodologies like benchmarking and the continuous improvement cycles that are critical for maintaining accreditation and enhancing institutional reputation.

Throughout this module, learners will engage in both theoretical discussions and practical exercises that simulate real-world quality assurance scenarios in higher education. The course is designed to equip educators, administrators, and quality assurance professionals with the skills necessary to critically analyse and refine teaching and learning processes. By understanding the principles and paradigms of quality assurance, participants will be better prepared to implement effective quality control measures, conduct thorough self-assessments, and contribute to the strategic planning and quality enhancement initiatives within their institutions. This foundational knowledge is pivotal for those aiming to drive meaningful improvements in student learning outcomes and overall educational quality.

4.1.1 IQA10 Aims & Objectives

1. To provide participants with a strong understanding of fundamental quality assurance concepts in enhancing teaching, learning, and overall institutional performance in higher education settings, including its purposes, benefits, and underlying principles
2. To examine the evolution of quality assurance frameworks and accreditation standards, understanding their application and impact
3. To equip participants with the skills necessary to plan, conduct, and report on quality audits and reviews
4. To foster the ability to critically analyse educational processes, outcomes, and policies
5. To instil an understanding of and commitment to continuous improvement processes within higher education institutions
6. To prepare participants for leadership roles in quality assurance by developing strategic thinking and management skills

4.1.2 IQA10 Assessment

Portfolio consisting of:

Assignment 1: Written assignment (30%) : participants will complete one written assignment that will require them to critically analyse specific aspects of QA in HE

- a. **Objective:** to evaluate participants understanding of the historical development and current state of QA frameworks; to assess their ability to apply quality assurance models to real-life scenarios
- b. **Word Count:** 2000 words

Assignment 2: Quality Audit Report Presentation (70%): participants will conduct a mock quality audit of a HE institution or a specific department within that HE institution.



- c. **Objective:** to practice using benchmarking methodologies to compare institution, to develop skills in planning, conducting and reporting on quality audits, to develop continuous improvement plan based on audit findings and benchmarking results
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4.2 IQA20 Advanced Quality Management Systems

This module delves deep into the sophisticated frameworks and methodologies that are essential for enhancing quality management within higher education institutions. It aims to provide participants with a robust understanding of advanced internal quality assurance (QA) and quality management (QM) systems, focusing on how these frameworks can be strategically applied to improve institutional effectiveness and educational outcomes.

This module is designed to provide an in-depth understanding of the principles, methodologies, and tools necessary to design, implement, and manage internal quality assurance (QA) systems in higher education and other organizational settings. As institutions face growing demands for accountability, regulatory compliance, and continuous improvement, this module equips learners with the strategic insight and practical skills to build robust QA systems that align with institutional goals, meet regulatory standards, and drive sustainable improvement.

Throughout the module, learners will explore key areas such as designing effective internal quality assurance systems, developing quality management strategies, leveraging data analytics for informed decision-making, and utilizing technology to enhance QA processes. By the end of this module, participants will be prepared to lead and manage quality initiatives that foster institutional excellence and innovation.

4.2.1 IQA20 Aims & Objectives

At the end of this module, participants will be able to:

1. Develop the ability to design, implement, and evaluate comprehensive internal quality assurance systems that support institutional effectiveness.
2. Formulate and implement quality management strategies that align with institutional goals and regulatory standards.
3. Design and evaluate continuous quality improvement initiatives, employing data analytics to monitor and enhance educational outcomes.
4. Demonstrate proficiency in using data analytics tools to gather, analyse, and interpret data for informed decision-making in QA and QM.
5. Develop leadership skills and competencies necessary for steering QA and QM initiatives that contribute to the strategic objectives of their institutions.

4.2.2 IQA20 Assessment

Assignment 1: Case Study Analysis (70%)

Participants will be required to analyse case studies of an existing quality management/assurance systems at one university. They will write a report of 1000-2000 words evaluating the effectiveness of these systems and suggest improvements based on advanced QA and QM principles.

Assessment Criteria:

- Demonstration of body of knowledge and critical evaluation and integration of the relevant principles and concepts.
- Critical analysis and evaluation of theory and practice, demonstration of skills to synthesise ideas.
- Depth of critical analysis, ability to apply appropriate methods, extensiveness of research and evaluation.

- Coherence and quality of document presentation, referencing, conclusions and self-reflection.

Assignment 2: Data Analytics Assignment (30%)

Participants will be given a set of quality assurance data, and using suitable data analytics tool (or Excel), they will be required to draw insights and make recommendations for quality improvements based on their analysis.

4.3 IQA30 Operational Excellence in Quality Assurance

This module is tailored for quality assurance professionals within higher education, focusing on the implementation and management of operational processes that uphold and enhance quality standards.

The module emphasizes the development of operational excellence through the application of management principles and methodologies adapted for educational environments. Participants will explore strategies for optimizing operational efficiency in quality assurance practices across academic and administrative departments. The module also covers the effective integration of technology to streamline quality assurance processes, ensuring that institutions can respond quickly and effectively to changing educational demands and compliance requirements.

This advanced course further equips participants with the skills necessary to lead and manage quality assurance teams effectively. It includes training on project management, leadership in quality assurance settings, and conflict resolution, all within the context of higher education institutions. Through a combination of lectures, workshops, and real-world case studies, participants will learn how to apply these management skills to foster a culture of quality that permeates all levels of the institution. They will also gain insights into measuring and sustaining the impact of quality assurance initiatives, ensuring that the benefits of improved processes are maintained over time. This holistic approach prepares participants not only to execute operational tasks but also to advocate for and lead quality enhancements that contribute significantly to institutional success.

4.3.1 IQA30 Aims & Objectives

1. Design strategies to streamline quality assurance practices across academic and administrative departments
2. Explore technological solutions to automate and improve quality assurance processes
3. Implement strategies for promoting a culture of quality that permeates all levels of the institution
4. Establish metrics and methods for evaluating the effectiveness of quality assurance initiatives
5. Develop plans for continuous improvement and maintaining the benefits of enhanced processes
6. Apply project management principles to plan, execute, and monitor quality assurance projects
7. Manage resources, timelines, and budgets effectively for quality assurance projects

4.3.2 IQA30 Assessment

The final assessment for this module will consist of a comprehensive analysis presented in a written report and presentation analyzing key aspects of implementing and managing operational processes for quality assurance in higher education institutions.

Part 1 – Critical Analysis and Written Report (60%)

Students will prepare a detailed report (approximately 3,000 words) addressing the following components:

a. Operational Excellence Strategy

Outline and critically analyse a strategy to streamline quality assurance practices across academic and administrative departments within a higher education institution. Propose the integration of technological solutions to automate and improve quality assurance processes.

Describe approaches to promote a culture of quality that permeates all levels of the institution.

b. Quality Assurance Implementation Plan

Develop a creative, state of the art project plan for implementing a major quality assurance initiative, applying project management principles for planning, execution, and monitoring.

Outline resource allocation, timelines, and budgeting for the proposed quality assurance project.

Establish metrics and methods for evaluating the effectiveness of the quality assurance initiative.

Consider critically, any relevant strategies for measuring and sustaining the impact of quality assurance initiatives.

Part 2 - Presentation (40%)

This module participants will deliver a 15-minute presentation summarizing the key points from their written report, followed by a short Q&A session. The presentation should be well-structured, visually appealing, and effectively communicate the main findings and recommendations.

Assessment Criteria

The written report and presentation will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Depth of analysis and critical thinking
- Application of module concepts and principles
- Feasibility and practicality of proposed strategies and plans
- Quality of writing and presentation skills
- Adherence to specified requirements (e.g., word count, time limits)

This assessment allows the participants to demonstrate their understanding of the module's key objectives, including designing strategies for streamlining quality assurance practices, exploring technological solutions, promoting a culture of quality, establishing evaluation metrics, developing continuous improvement plans, and applying project management principles in the context of quality assurance in higher education.
