

# National vs. International Accreditation

**Dr. Bassam Alhamad**

PhD, Director of QAAC, Member of NQF Advisory Board, International Expert and ABET Evaluator in Quality, Certified Trainer >300 training programs, 8000 persons, >20 colleges, >100 programs, Evaluator for Excellence Programs > 10 ministries and authorities

# Higher Education System in Bahrain

HEC: Higher Education Council



Accreditation

BQA: Bahrain Quality Assurance Authority



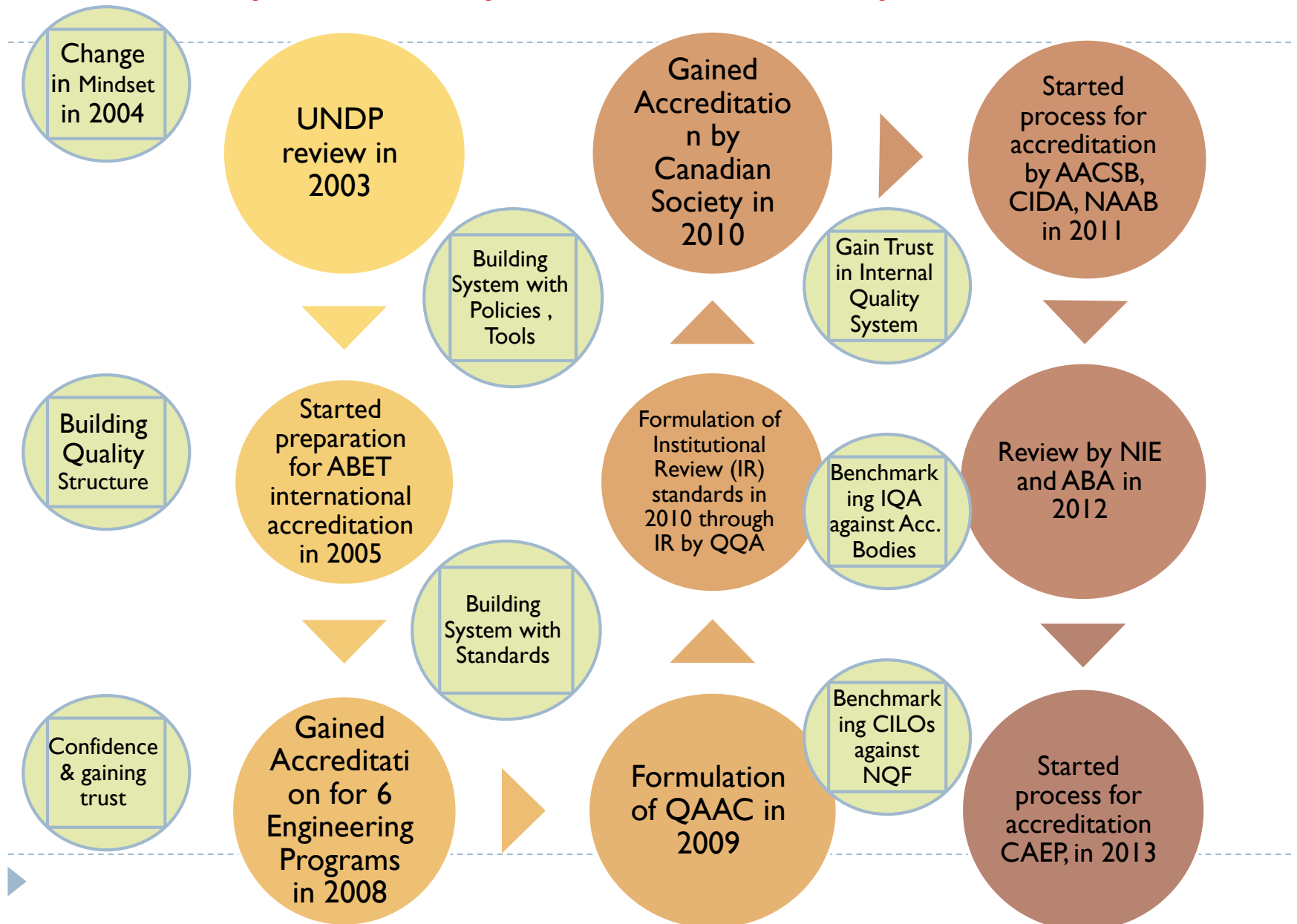
Review

BQA: Bahrain Quality Assurance Authority



NQF

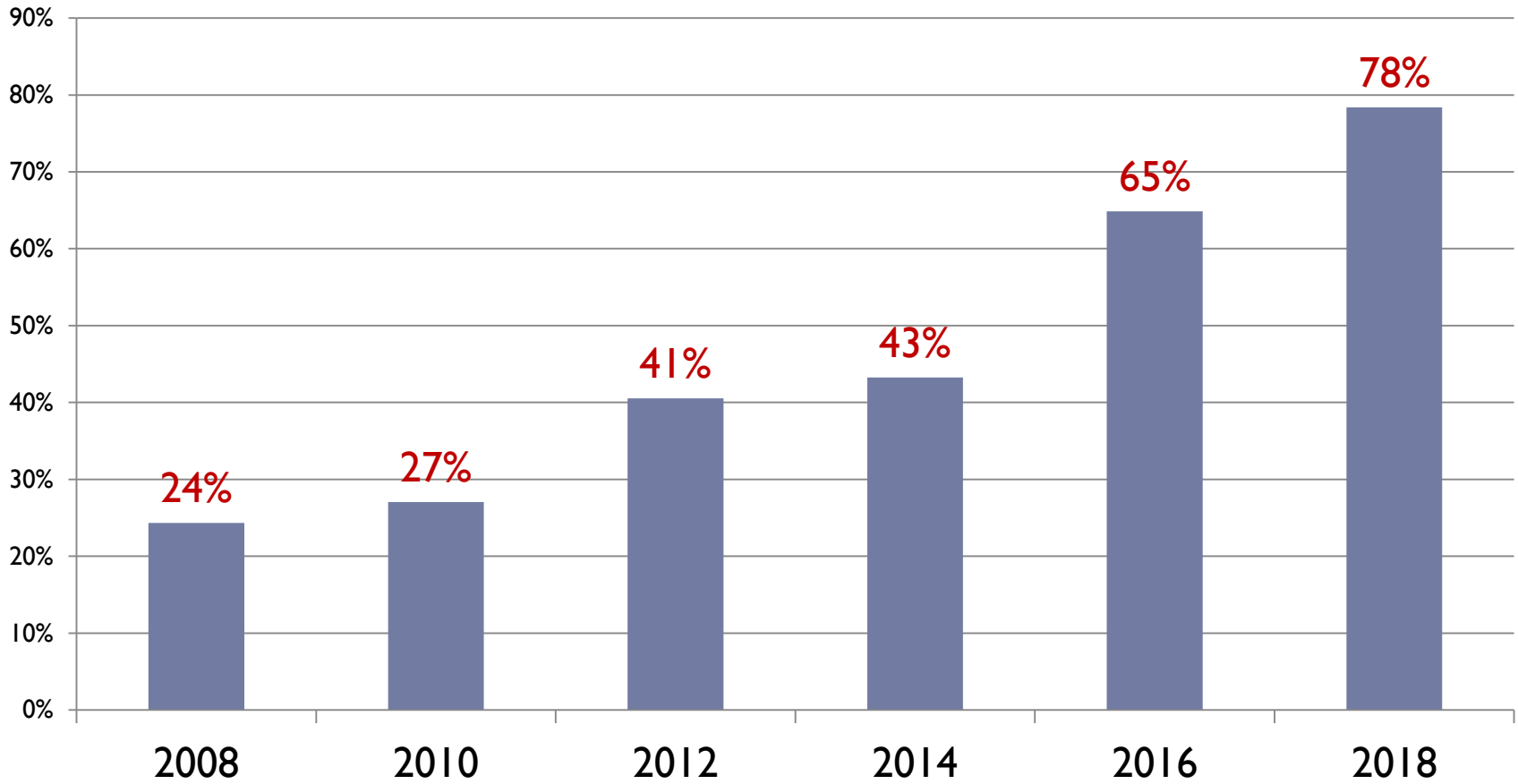
# Quality History at University of Bahrain



# % of internationally accredited/recognized programs

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## Internationally Accredited/Recognized Programs



# National or International Accreditation?!

What does international accreditation provide that national accreditation may miss, or what may it miss in the absence of national accreditation?

Can we use both national and international accreditation to boost quality in Higher Education?

Does accreditation (national or international) in any means deal with the national needs/requirements, labor force, economic development?

International Accreditation: does it provide you with the latest tools/technologies/requirements or does it provide you with the minimum requirements?



# Accreditation requirements

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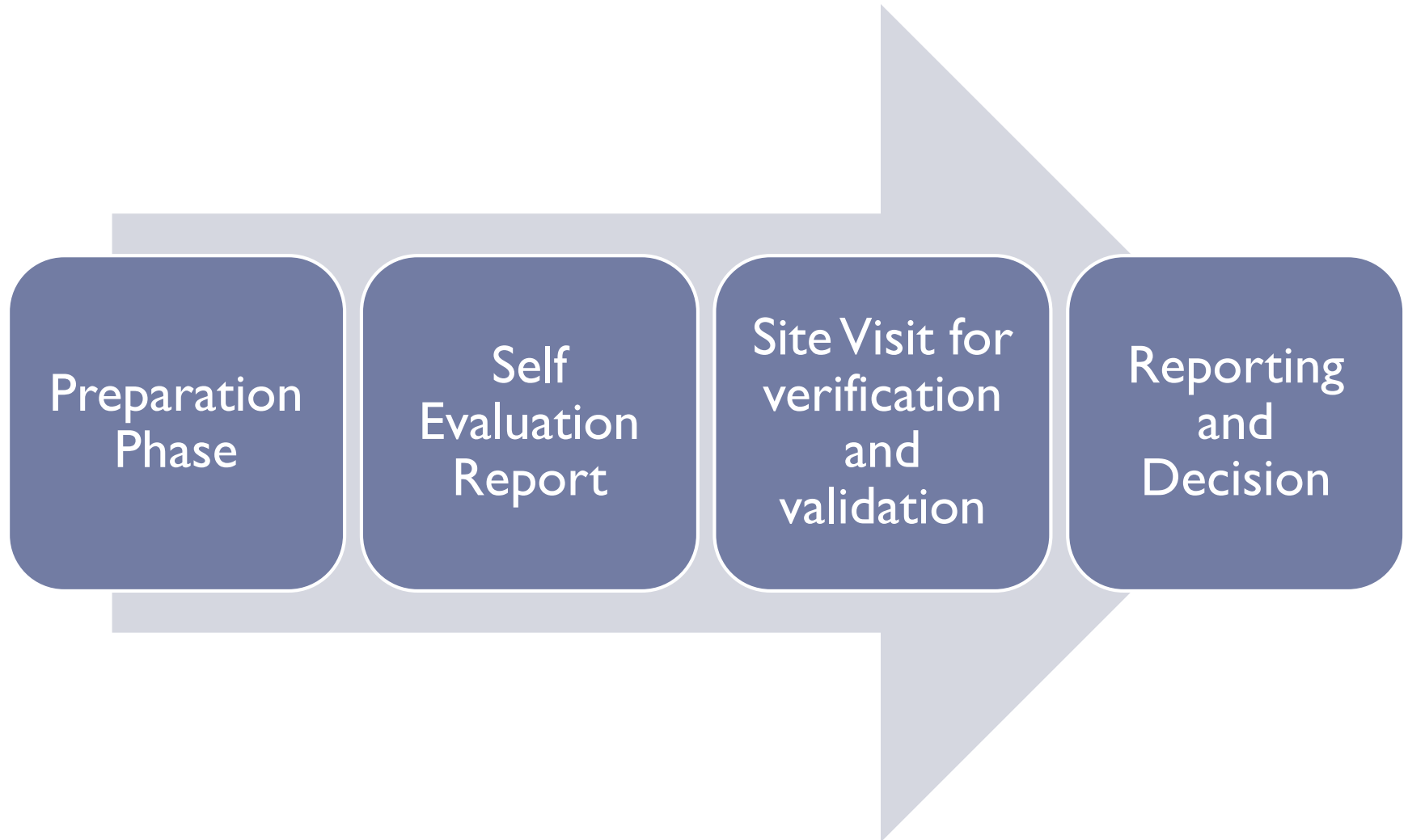


The accreditation requirements requires submission of a Self Evaluation Report that covers self studying and assessing the following areas,

- ▶ Curriculum programs and courses in terms of T&L, assessment results,
- ▶ Faculty members,
- ▶ Students,
- ▶ Asset and facilities,
- ▶ Research,
- ▶ Continuous improvement cycle: Stakeholders' opinions, focus groups and surveys,
- ▶ Management and strategic/operational plans,
- ▶ Community services, employability and partnerships

# Accreditation Process

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# Self-Evaluation Report Elements

## Program

Program Need, Design, Validation, Characteristics,

Effectiveness, PEOs, PILOs

Mapping of PILOs

Reference/Benchmark Assessment Strategy for PEOs and PILOs

Program Curriculum

Mapping of CILOs

Level of courses

Mapping of courses

Assessment Strategy of CILOs

TLAAs and alignment with CILOs

Academic Standards

Accreditation

External Review

## Faculty

No. of faculty

Ratio of F2S

Specialization

Professionalism

Research

Faculty support staff, technicians, demonstrators

List of Faculty

List of CVs

List of

Experience,

Research,

Teaching Load,

Admin Load

## Student

Statistical Data,

Admission,

Transfer,

Graduation,

Performance

Student Support, At-risk, SN

Academic Advising

## Asset and Facilities

Libraries, Classes, Labs, IT, SN, Equipment

Financial Resources

Utilization of Resources

## QA & Management

Organizational structure, QA Unit, Admin, Training, Conferences  
Strategic Planning

## Research

Research plan

Level of research Publishing

Promoting research,

Funds for research

Conferences

Research activities

## Community Service

Partnership

Interaction

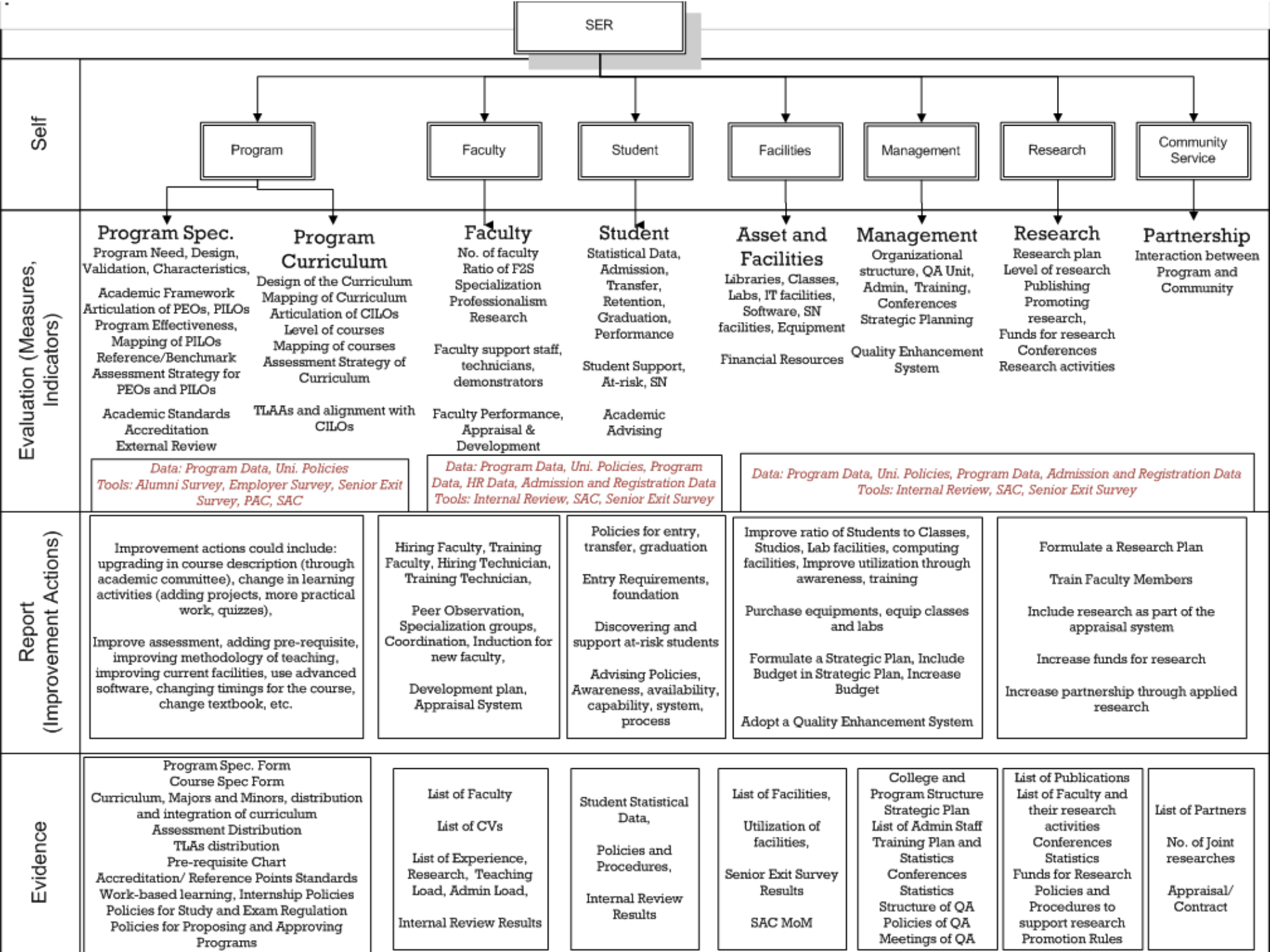
between

Program and

Community







# Comparisons ..



	International Accreditation	National Accreditation/Recognition
Helps to build to the IQA system	✓	✓ Organization and representation of the data ✓ Policies – program curriculum, study and exam, teaching and learning, assessment and moderation, etc. Governance and structure
Curriculum Structure	✓ Experts review the program based on general and program specific standard	✓ Experts review the program based on general standards only
International Trends in future (program specific)	International priority – however may not be a national priority	Depends on the national strategic needs and trends
National Needs	<b>✗ usually not or includes a standard that states that the institution satisfies national needs</b>	✓

# Comparisons ..



	International Accreditation	National Accreditation/Recognition
Prestige Status	✓	✓ depends on the level of National Quality System
Academic reputation,	✓ Helps in cross border education	✓ May help in cross border education
Transfer of credit, and the widest possible acceptance by other universities.	✓ it helps	✓ definitely
Research	<b>X usually not</b>	✓ depends on the national goals/priorities
Employability	✓ generally	✓ definitely
Market Needs	✓ generally	✓ definitely
Satisfaction of Graduates	✓ generally	✓ definitely
Teaching and Learning	✓ definitely	✓ definitely
Assessment	✓ definitely	✓ definitely

# Comparisons ..



	International Accreditation	National Accreditation/Recognition
Level of Standards (Easy go/complicated/minimum requirements)	Minimum requirements – <i>depends on the accreditation body</i>	Usually complicated and requires to satisfy more standards
Objective of the EQA (marketing, control, compliance, improvement)	Usually: Marketing, improvement, concentrate on certain recommendations	Usually: Control, compliance, improvement, clean-up degree mills, clean up your stuff
Dedication of faculty	High ( <i>Prestige, depends on the consequences</i> )	High ( <i>depends on the consequences</i> )
Different Accreditation Body/Different System	Could not fit our system (e.g. Law, Health Care)	Definitely will fit our system
Faster to develop – Start from where others stopped	Taken from over the shelf	Need extensive effort with all stakeholders and constituents to develop the system

# Comparisons ..



	<b>International Accreditation</b>	<b>National Accreditation/Recognition</b>
Cost	Usually expensive	Usually for free- or covering logistics mainly
Consistency	Different for different programs or HEIs	Consistent all over the programs and HEIs
Confidence and Credibility	High – as the standards and tools had been tested and proved success all over the region or internationally	Takes time to get this confidence and credibility – usually it takes 5 years to start getting this confidence
Good Marketing tool	High	Low-Medium – depends on the national EQA system, but it takes time
Waiting List	Ready for business	We need to put you in the pipeline
Creates competition	High	Normal

# Comparisons ..



	International Accreditation	National Accreditation/Recognition
Exposure to international practices	Definitely	Possibly
IQA system	Builds the philosophy with some IQA tools, however may not be part of the IQA system The IQA tools may be specific and relevant to the program itself	Builds the IQA system Applicable to all programs equally
Training / Exposure	International Experts	Could be local or international
Automated systems	None	None
Short/Long-term Benefits	Short or Long-term Benefits – depends on the institution Usually used to boost the process of quality system	Definitely Long Term Benefits

# IQA instruments

## -----The IQA instruments related to Teaching and Learning, identified in the study are:-----

- ▶ Course evaluation (student surveys, faculty course surveys)
- ▶ Program evaluation (by senior exit student surveys, alumni surveys, employer surveys, CILOs and PILOs assessment)
- ▶ Teacher's supervision (peer teaching, PCAP etc.)
- ▶ Program self-evaluation (Program self-evaluation report)
- ▶ Program monitoring (by student advisory committee (SAC), Program advisory committee (PAC), course portfolio audit, dialogue meeting with deans and chairs, analyses of university statistics)
- ▶ Assessment of student's workload

## The IQA instruments related to Students' Employability, identified in the study are:

- ▶ Graduate trace studies (alumni surveys, alumni club etc.)
- ▶ Employer satisfaction surveys (employer's surveys)
- ▶ Involvement of employers in study program revisions (Program Advisory Committee (PAC))
- ▶ Job Market Analysis
- ▶ Assessment of student's competencies

## The IQA instruments on the Level of Organizational Unit (Management) are:

- ▶ Unit self-evaluation (Program self-evaluation report)
- ▶ Unit external evaluation (e.g. peer-reviews, course portfolio audit, dialogue meeting with deans and chairs)
- ▶ Certification (e.g. ISO concepts, Excellence Model, ABET, CIDA, NAAB, AACSB etc.)
- ▶ Target agreement between units and institutional leadership (strategic plan, improvement action plans)

# Discussion on international accreditation

- ▶ The international accreditation is beneficial due to the following reasons:
  - ▶ Exposure to international networks
  - ▶ International expertise
  - ▶ Well developed system
  - ▶ International trainers
  - ▶ Better for Marketing
  - ▶ More prestigious
- However
  - Good for the short run in terms of a quality system
  - Expensive
  - Does not consider national trends/needs/priorities that keeps the country on the competitive edge based on its capabilities, features, expertise, etc.
  - Does not tackle research as a key aspect for advancements
  - Does drive towards international needs which overcomes any national strategic vision,
  - Does not really build the IQA system
- ▶ Higher confidence and more credibility ? Depends on the history and maturity of the national quality system
- ▶ Defines the stakeholders and the type of interactions
- ▶ Defines the IQA tools, however not the system
- ▶ Good to boost the quality system within the country
- ▶ More program specific



# Discussion on national accreditation

- ▶ The national accreditation is beneficial due to the following reasons:
  - ▶ Considers national trends/needs/priorities that keeps the country on the competitive edge based on its capabilities, features, expertise, etc.
  - ▶ Tackles research as a key aspect for advancement
  - ▶ Do drive towards national and strategic needs, which may include the international aspect into it
  - ▶ Requires to build the IQA system
- ▶ Better for the long run - sustainable
- ▶ Considers governance and building the IQA system
- ▶ However
  - ▶ May miss the international and global trend
  - ▶ Not program specific usually
  - ▶ No international expertise to train the faculty and staff
  - ▶ Trial and Error towards a developed mature system – People may lose interest on the way, and hence may create a big resistance
  - ▶ May be less prestigious, or of less credibility .. Depending on the culture of people, history of quality, level of the quality system, maturity level, etc.
  - ▶ Define the stakeholders but generally and not specifically to the needs of the program

# Conclusions

- ▶ The international accreditation requirements help keep the Higher Education Institute (HEI) on a recognized level of having good curriculum structure, reasonable teaching and learning capabilities, acceptable and safe facilities, adequate faculty staff members, and all of these areas are required to be at the minimum level for being successful, however may not be to the expected level to satisfy national needs and strategic trends.
- ▶ That international accreditation process helps the university to form and standardize these tools, and support in building the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system for the university.
- ▶ The National Quality Assurance System ensures management of standards, policies, and procedures maintains the uniformity of quality development across programs, thereby maximizing the overall benefits of the IQA system.
- ▶ Both national and international accreditation ensure spreading culture, having data-driven decisions, systematic link with industries, research and teaching strategically driven.

# Conclusions

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- ▶ The international accreditation could be an interim measure or a driver to ensure the effective functioning of quality assurance in HEIs
- ▶ The national trends adds important ingredients, which are critical to the success of the HEIs, in specific, to have the direction, and to see the direction.
- ▶ Being accredited is not the end of the story, but it is a journey towards national goals and objectives.
- ▶ A balance should be maintained to drive the HEI towards national trends and having latest international practices as well the international status and recognition, and through defined and sustainable processes and systems.
- ▶ Competitive Edge, mix of two .. Should know how and when to use each.

# Publications

Case Study



## From Externally to Internally Driven Quality Assurance University of Bahrain

Bassam AlHamad and  
Rama Aladwan



New trends in higher education



Edited by Michaela Martin

**Internal Quality Assurance:**  
Enhancing higher education quality  
and graduate employability

UNESCO Publishing

New trends in higher education

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