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# Building a Quality Assurance at the UoM

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# National QA Framework for F&HE



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- Work started in November 2013
- Launched on 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2015
- A key deliverable of the ESF-funding project 'Making Quality Visible'.
- The first of its kind in the EHEA to encompass **further, higher** and **formal adult learning**.
- Now followed by Ireland, based on Malta's Framework



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# Capitalising on local strengths

- **One Ministry of Education** from pre-primary to vocational, adult and tertiary provision
- National Qualifications Framework that gave **parity of esteem** to vocational and tertiary provision
- Parity of esteem and **same mechanism for ECTS and ECVET** learning credit systems
- **Same licensing** and **accreditation** mechanisms
- Vocational providers **aspired to status** of tertiary providers
- Very **close working collaboration** between key stakeholders



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# Malta's QA ideology

Education Act 2006:

- the onus of ensuring quality in teaching and learning is on the providers through their internal developmental processes.
- External oversight through inspections and audits is (mainly) justified inasmuch as it supports these internal processes.
- **NOT:** the 'choice, transparency and accountability' discourse that led to the marketisation of education

# The IQA-EQA Connection



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# What is a thermometer for?



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- **Quality** is achieved/enhanced by the providers, **NOT** by EQA.
- EQA highlights, supports, responsabilises, holds to account.





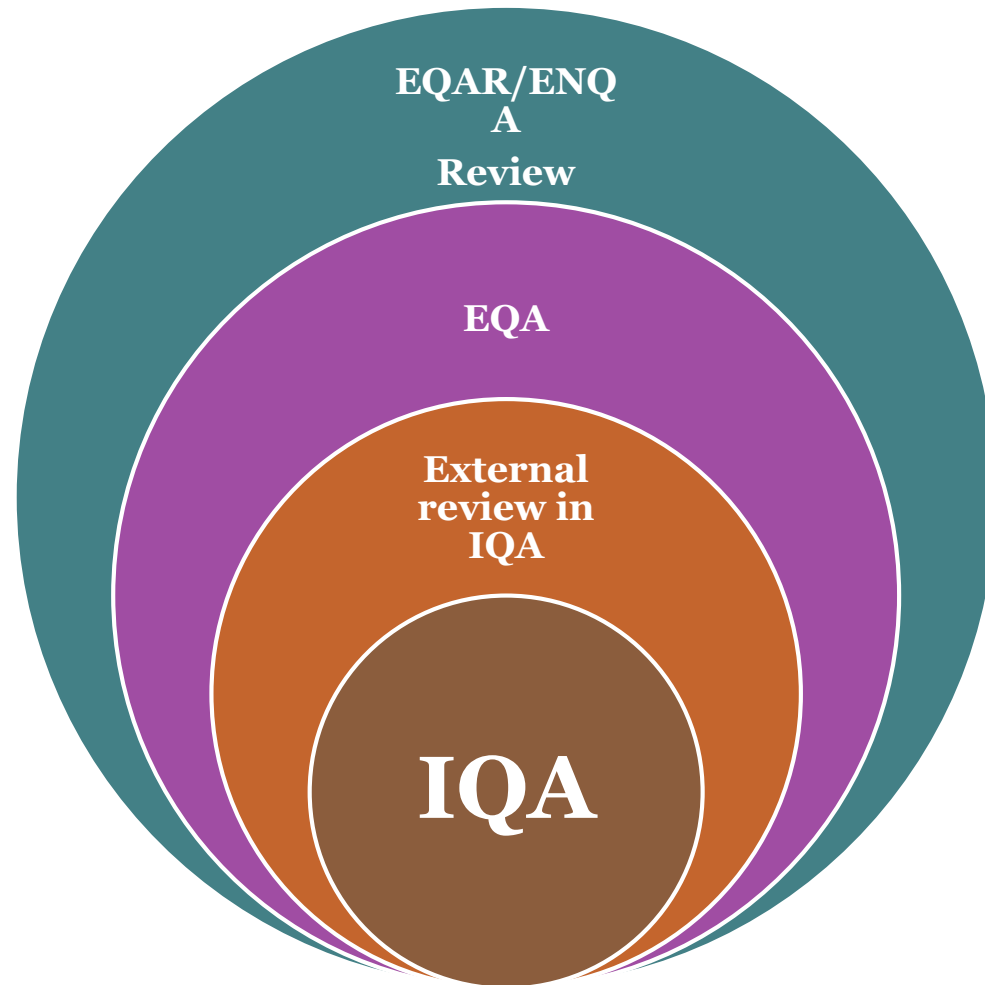
# Framework Principles

1. A Framework based on the **ESG and enriched by the EQAVET** perspective
2. A Framework that contributes to a National Quality Culture
3. IQA (and EQA) that is Fit for Purpose EQA that is a tool for both Development and Accountability
4. The Quality Cycle is at the Heart of the Framework
5. Integrity and independence of the EQA Process

# The Quality Culture



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[Framework](#)





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# The Quality Cycle





# IQA Standards

1. Policy for quality assurance
2. **Institutional probity: leadership and financial procedures are fit for purpose**
3. Design and approval of **programmes to follow NCFHE standards for both self-accrediting** and other providers
4. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
5. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
6. **Competent FT and PT teaching staff**, fair and transparent recruitment and development processes
7. Appropriate learning resources and student support



# IQA Standards

8. Information management: capacity to collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective programme management. **Info to include vulnerable groups, and participation, retention and employment rates.**
9. Public information which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date, readily accessible and **sufficient**
10. **Implement quality cycle** by on-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes, with external stakeholders. **With employment-oriented programmes, from the world of work**
11. *Cyclical external quality assurance*



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# Piloting of External Audits

- National Framework was piloted in 2015
  - University of Malta (April)
  - MCAST (May)
  - ITS (May)
- Audit Reports to be publicised soon
- UoM pro-actively set up QAC and QA Unit



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# Lessons Learnt...

- **IQAs:**
  - work needed to bring to consciousness good practices;
  - work needed to change mentality from provider of educational service to an educational entity with intrinsic quality culture
- **IQA Reporting:** how to ensure that report is not just descriptive but truly self-reflective, identifying needs and proposing concrete and sustainable action plan
- **Peer Evaluators:** fitness of different types to diverse contexts
- **Student evaluators:** a valuable contribution
- **Judgments:** need to standardize their interpretations, BUT judgments CANNOT be compared across different categories of entities
- **F&H Framework:** having one set of standards and interpreting them flexibly for different types of providers works