ANTICIPATING AND RESPONDING TO CHANGE:
CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES IN QUALITY ASSURANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION – SRI LANKA

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International Reviews

APQN Accreditation

2011 Recognition of PHEIs

Research/NSF

Codes of Practice

Credit and Qualification Framework

Membership: APQN & INQAAHE - 2006

Subject Benchmarking

External Quality Assessment

QAA Council - 2005

Standing Committee on QAA - 2004

Pilot Studies - 2002

QA Framework - 2001

Major Challenges in Higher Education in Sri Lanka

- lack of relevance of many study programs to cater to the current needs in the employment sectors
- moderate quality of courses and study programs in the majority of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)
- poor mastery of English Language and ICT skills of graduates creating deficiencies in the graduate profiles
- inadequate Quality Assurance mechanisms for the entire public and private HE sectors

Major Challenges in Higher Education in Sri Lanka

- **the absence of a National Qualification Framework with pathways between the various types of HEIs, programs and courses**

- **the large proportion of students (nearly 60%) enrolled in External Degree Programs (EDPs) with minimal academic support**

SUCCESS IN QUALITY ASSURANCE IN SRI LANKA

EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSESSMENTS

- Devising a very comprehensive strategy for quality assurance at both University and Faculty levels and completing all reviews

- Establishing functional quality assurance mechanism within the university,

- Initiating action to develop the necessary documented quality assurance procedures

- Providing incentives, such as the Outstanding Research Awards scheme

SUCCESS IN QUALITY ASSURANCE IN SRI LANKA

EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSESSMENTS

- Helping the younger universities to develop their staff by offering Postgraduate Scholarship Scheme.

- Student feedback of teaching is obtained through questionnaires.

- Performance of academics is subjected to peer reviews.

- Newly recruited staff is inducted through programmes of the Staff Development Centre (SDC).

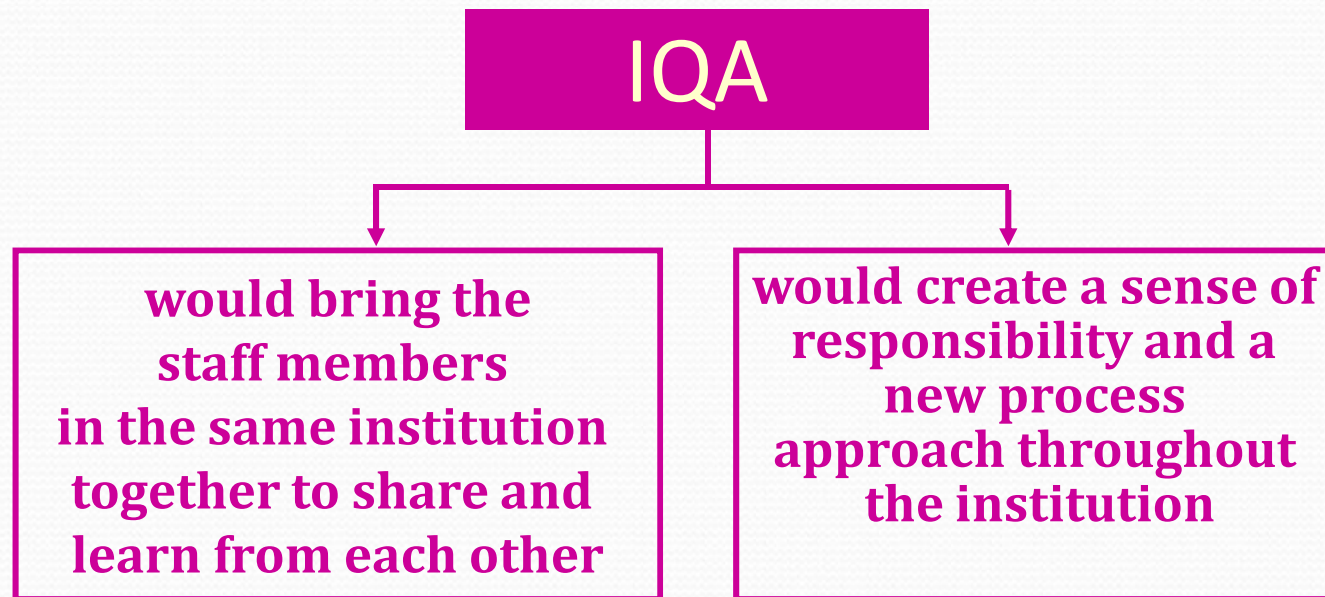# IMPLEMENTATION OF SRI LANKA QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK

Main Objectives of the SLQF are as follows:

- To enhance quality of Higher Education and training at all levels
- To aware employers
- To facilitate lateral and vertical mobility and progression
- To provide guidance in comparing qualifications offered by different institutions
- To recognize prior and lifelong learning

INTERNAL QA WITH EQA

- IQA units established in all public universities in 2005 and a broad framework has been prepared

- IQA procedures need to be strengthened along with EQAs

IQA

would bring the staff members in the same institution together to share and learn from each other

would create a sense of responsibility and a new process approach throughout the institution

Student/Learner base Teaching Methods and Student Assessments

The most highlighted challenges

- Need for rapid, but significant, changes to conventional curricula/courses;

- Lack of competent manpower to act as curriculum developers and competent trainers to train them;

- Inadequate physical infrastructure ;

- Lack of exposure and/or negative attitudes of certain academics

Difficulties encountered when conducting activities on QA in Universities

- Limited number of academic staff interested to promote activities
- There is no permanent cadre position for IQA Chairman or any similar position.
- The quality assurance cells in some Faculties were not very active
- Regular meetings were not conducted to promote QA activities

Summary

- **Whatever QA system is adapted, it has to be shared by majority of members of the Institute**
- **Create awareness amongst the academics**
- **Help disseminate good practice**
- **Introduce a culture of self evaluation**
- **Need to have a good pool of expertise**