

The independence of the QA agencies

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3.6 Standard of Independence:

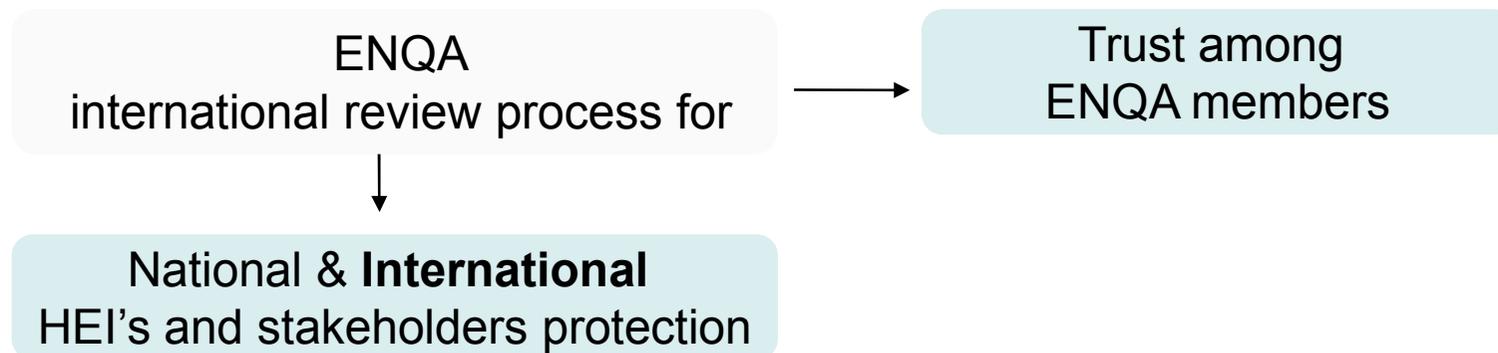
Agencies should be independent to the extent both that they have autonomous responsibility for their operations

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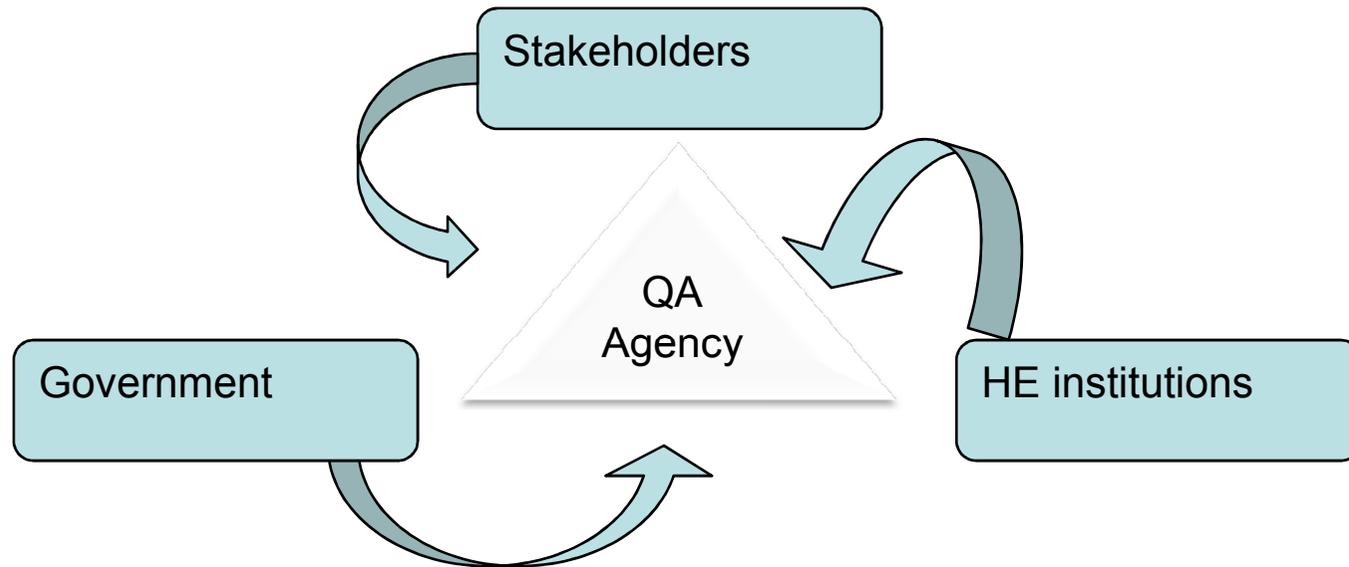
that the conclusions and recommendations made in their reports cannot be influenced by third parties such as higher education institutions, ministries or other stakeholders

Why ENQA needs your expertise?

- a) There is no single scheme (for agencies) addressed to fulfil the standard. Boards, Councils, members, decision making processes...In theory, how the agency is assuring its independence?
- b) After the theory it's important to see the practice: triangulation of information with different audiences. Theory and practice go together?
- c) Different roles for ENQA reviewers are required (national and international approach is important).

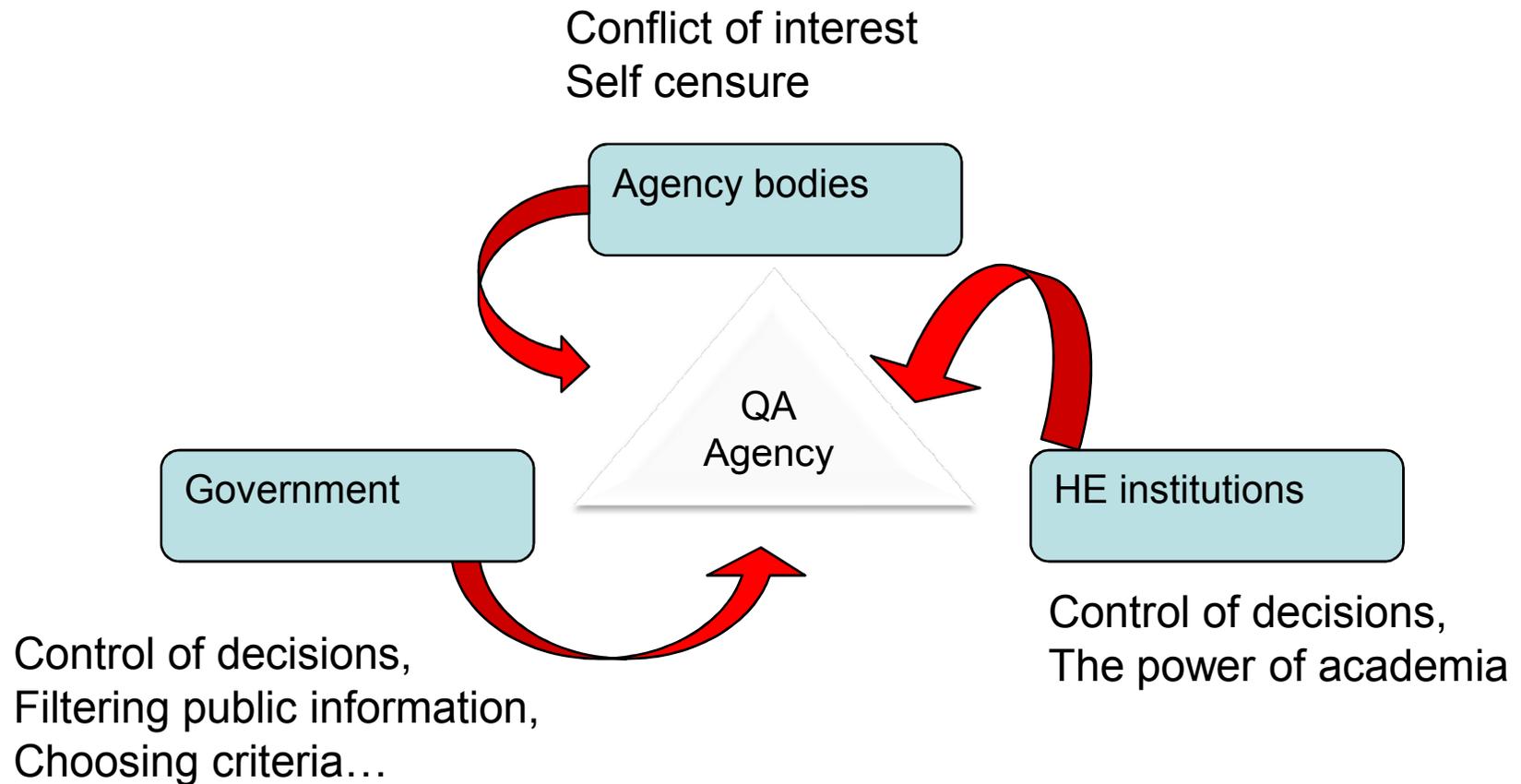


The standard of independence and the QA agencies as full independent bodies? Democracy, legitimacy / national and international stakeholders contributions... There are positive interactions.



The standard **helps to strengthen the credibility** and the strategic position of the agencies, promoting and preserving independence in **some critical points**.

When independence is threatened ..



3.6 Standard guidelines:

its operational independence from HEI's & governments is guaranteed in official documentation (e.g. instruments of governance or legislative acts);

- definition & operation of its procedures & methods,
- nomination & appointment of external experts,
- determination of the outcomes of its QA processes are

undertaken autonomously & independently from governments, HEI's, & organs of political influence;

while relevant stakeholders in HE, particularly students/learners, are consulted in the course of QA processes, the final outcomes of the QA processes remain the responsibility of the agency

Autonomous responsibility of their operations

Governance in the agency decision-making bodies: (BD, councils, commissions, CEO)

Independence is granted in official documents (yes) but....more precisely it's interesting...

- Balance in the composition?
(Society representatives, students, international members...)
- Expertise in the decision making bodies?
- Selection process?
(who takes the responsibility of that? A single person?)
- Appointment process? Rotation mechanisms?
(How is it done?)
- Mechanisms to avoid the conflict of interest at different levels of the organisation?

Autonomous responsibility of their operations

Other aspects of governance

- 1) How QA agency makes requests for adequate resources to undertake its work? Is the funding system a potential source for the conflict of interests or a limitation for the QA functions development?
- 2) the nomination and the appointment of external experts?
- 3) Definition of procedures... how is it done? In principle it should be made to positively contribute to the alignment of the agency QA methods and the enhancement opportunities of the national HE system.
- 4) Are the agency QA methods demonstrate the enhancement outcomes and the quality levels to national and international stakeholders?
- 5) - Is the agency reporting directly for the outcomes of their tasks?

Final outcomes of the QA processes remain the responsibility of the agency

while **relevant stakeholders** in HE, particularly students/learners, are **consulted** in the course of QA processes, the final outcomes of the QA processes remain the responsibility of the agency.

Is the QA agency providing evidences to demonstrate that the final outcomes of the QA remain the responsibility of the Agency?

is the QA agency collecting (formally) relevant stakeholders opinions and views concerning its outcomes? (the transparency of the positive interactions)

How those opinions and views are (formally) integrated by the QA agency decision making bodies? (Transparency of the method?)

Recommendations for the future ?

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