



Assessing the Assessors

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UK Bologna Expert

Erasmus/Socrates Bologna, QAA and I

- I worked in Erasmus/Socrates for the University of Essex from 1987 until 2004.
- In 2002 I became one of the EU ECTS/DS Counsellors.
- I became a Bologna Promoter, now renamed Bologna Expert upon their introduction in 2004.
- I have undertaken International site visits to many Institutions across the EU.
- I am currently the team leader of the mid term evaluation of the Tempus Programme in the Russian Federation.
- I have been the Head of my Department and have been fully involved in Quality Assurance within my Institution.
- I am not a QAA Reviewer.
- I am an active Physics researcher and teacher.

What is the purpose of a University?

“While we might view the University as a business, the students are not our customers. Indeed, from that point of view, our students are our raw materials and our work in progress, and our customers are their parents, the people of Texas, and more broadly the people of the world. Parents send their sons and daughters here for an education, and they and others hire our graduates and use the knowledge produced here. But in its essence, a university is a collection of people united in the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge.”

“The University of Toronto is dedicated to fostering an academic community in which the learning and scholarship of every member may flourish, with vigilant protection for individual human rights, and a resolute commitment to the principles of equal opportunity, equity and justice.”

“The core purpose of the University of Sydney is our fundamental moral commitment to intellectual discovery and development, responsible social commentary and the promotion of cultural and economic well being. To this end, we combine humane aspirations with a practical business sense to serve the needs of the community while preserving academic freedom. What we choose to research and teach is ultimately determined by that purpose.”

“The mission of the University of Cambridge is to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.”

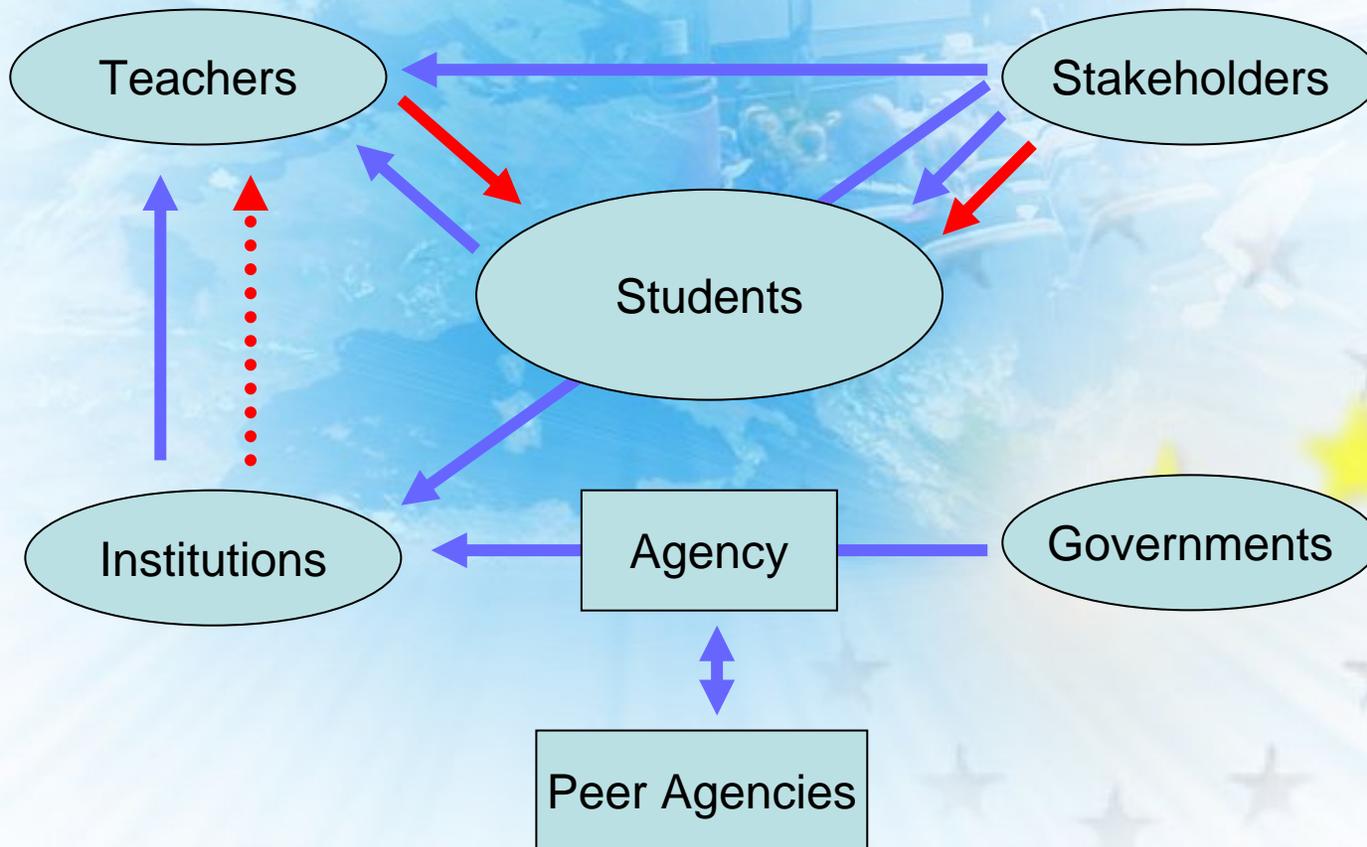
“The University's mission is to meet the diverse needs of an international learning community and to contribute to society and its economic development through research, excellent teaching and high quality student support.”

What is the purpose of assessment?

- Astin (1993) outlines what he describes as two competing functions of assessment:
 - **resource and reputation** refers to the grades, league tables and statistics compiled by institutions and government to extend and maintain reputations as providers of quality education. These are used as evidence of accountability and comprise an assessment 'discourse' used primarily to communicate standards to stakeholders.
 - **talent development** relates to the formative comments, feedback and guidance offered to individuals to help them achieve and improve their learning. 'Learning discourse' is essentially about self-improvement and understanding, and is reserved for the communication of information between teacher and learner.

Astin, A. W. (1993). *Assessment for excellence: The philosophy and practice of assessment and evaluation in higher education*. Phoenix: The Oryx Press.

Who assesses who and why in the UK?



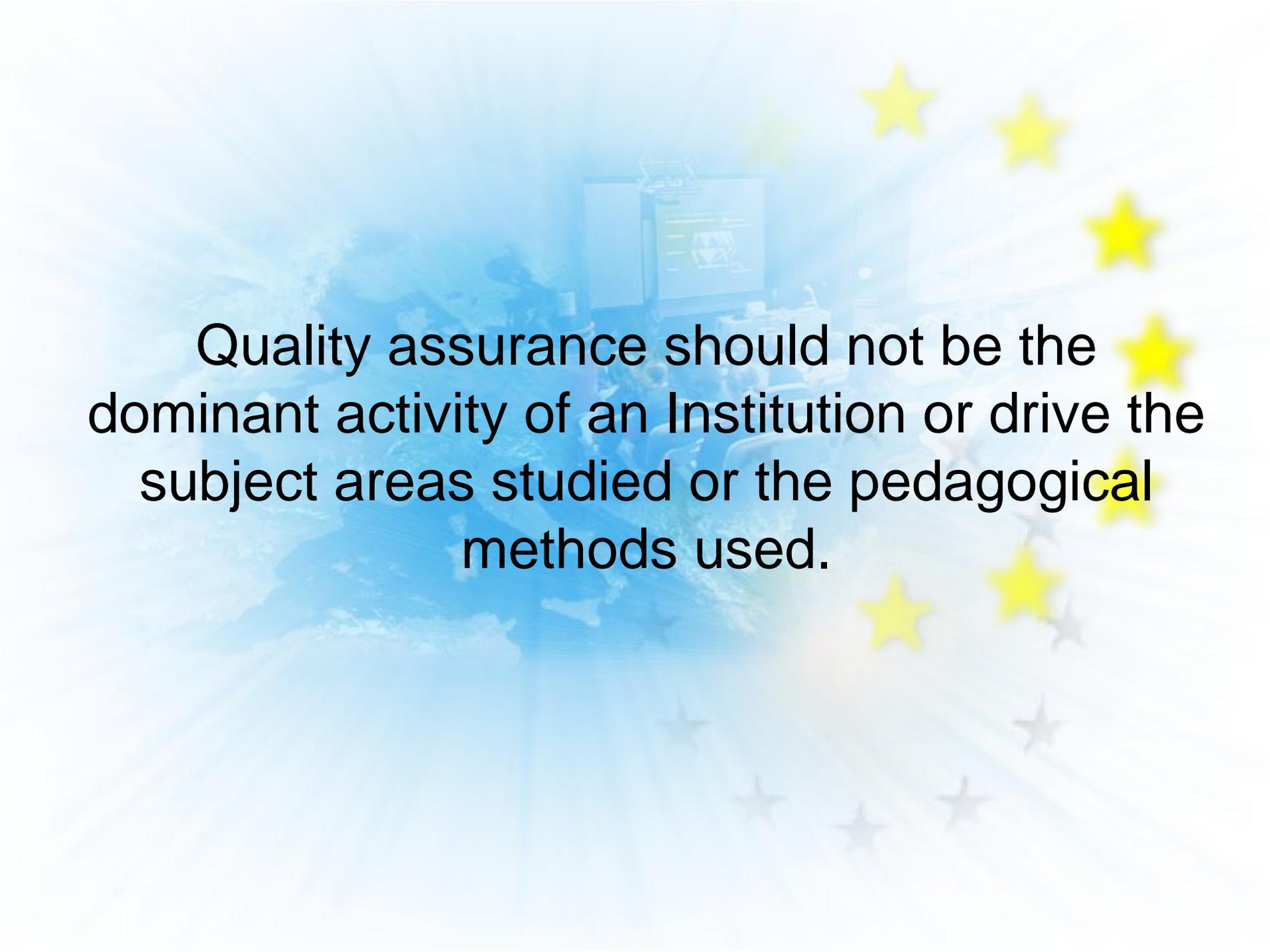
How do you quality assure assessment?

- Talent Development
 - Professional trust/integrity of academics
 - Written examination – by double blind marking
 - Oral examination – quality assurance of the process, observations
 - External examination
 - Coursework – rigor in plagiarism checking
- Resource and reputation
 - Professional trust/integrity of reviewers
 - Transparency of process and methodology
 - Peer review
 - Government review/Inquiry

How much Quality Assurance assessment is too much?

- What do Professors say?
- What do Deans say?
- What do Rectors say?
- What do Governments say?
- What do Stakeholders say?

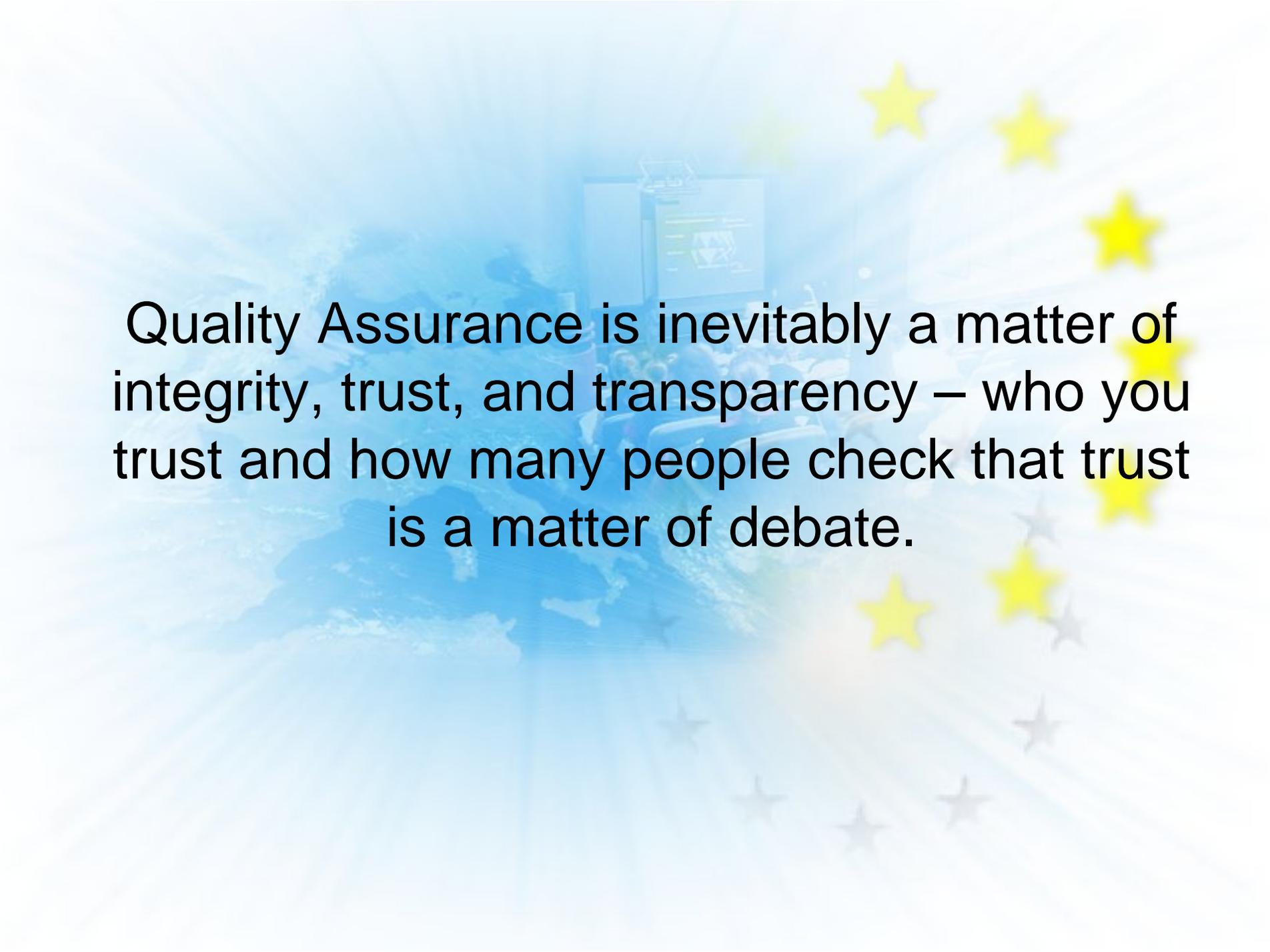
All parties should be involved in agreeing!



Quality assurance should not be the dominant activity of an Institution or drive the subject areas studied or the pedagogical methods used.



Too much quality assurance can remove
resource from subject and pedagogical
development



Quality Assurance is inevitably a matter of integrity, trust, and transparency – who you trust and how many people check that trust is a matter of debate.



It is possible for the transparency and trust
to reside with the Professors.

The image is a blue-tinted photograph of a lecture hall. In the center, a group of people is seated in rows, facing a stage. On the stage, there is a large projection screen displaying a diagram with arrows and text. To the right of the screen, a person is standing, possibly a lecturer. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent European Union flag, featuring twelve yellow stars in a circle on a blue background. The text 'The End' is written in a simple, black, sans-serif font in the bottom-left corner.

The End