

MEASURING QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION



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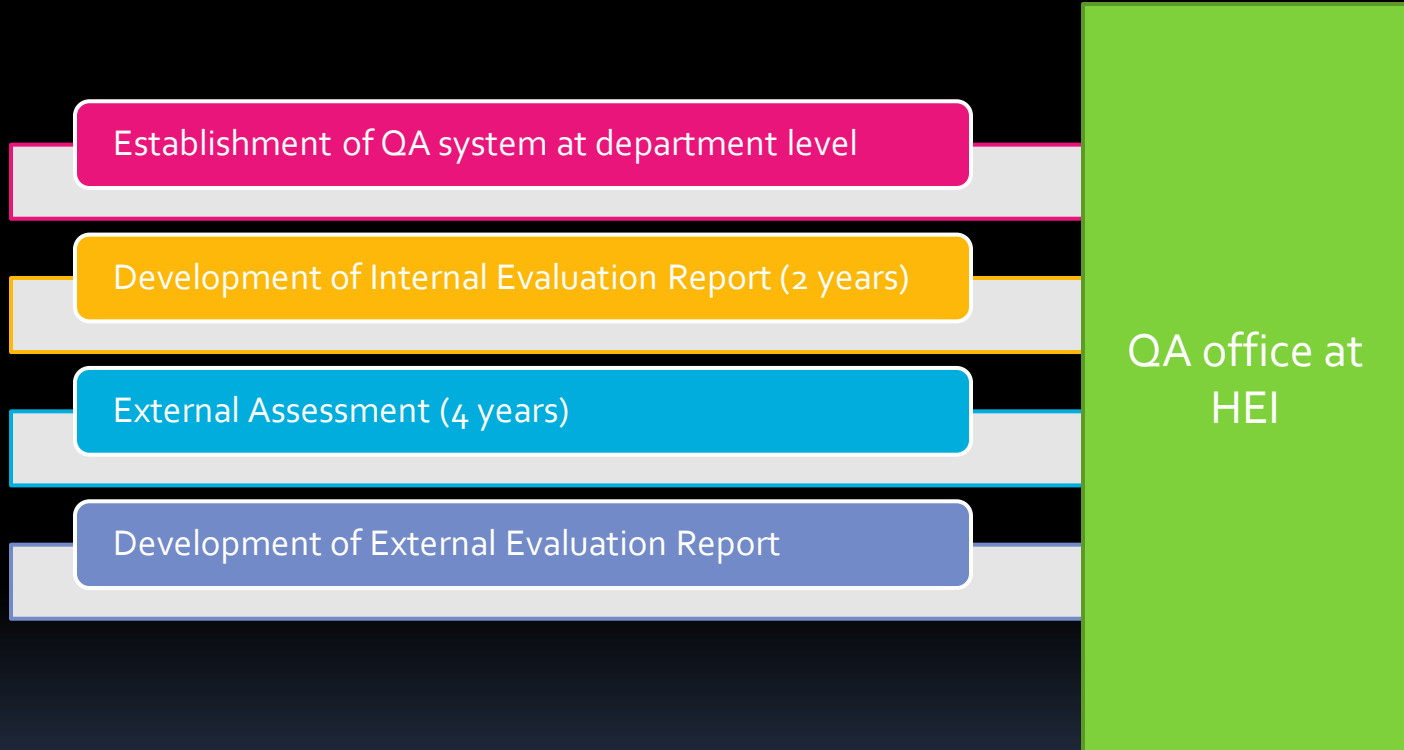
Project Management Dep.

TEI Larissa

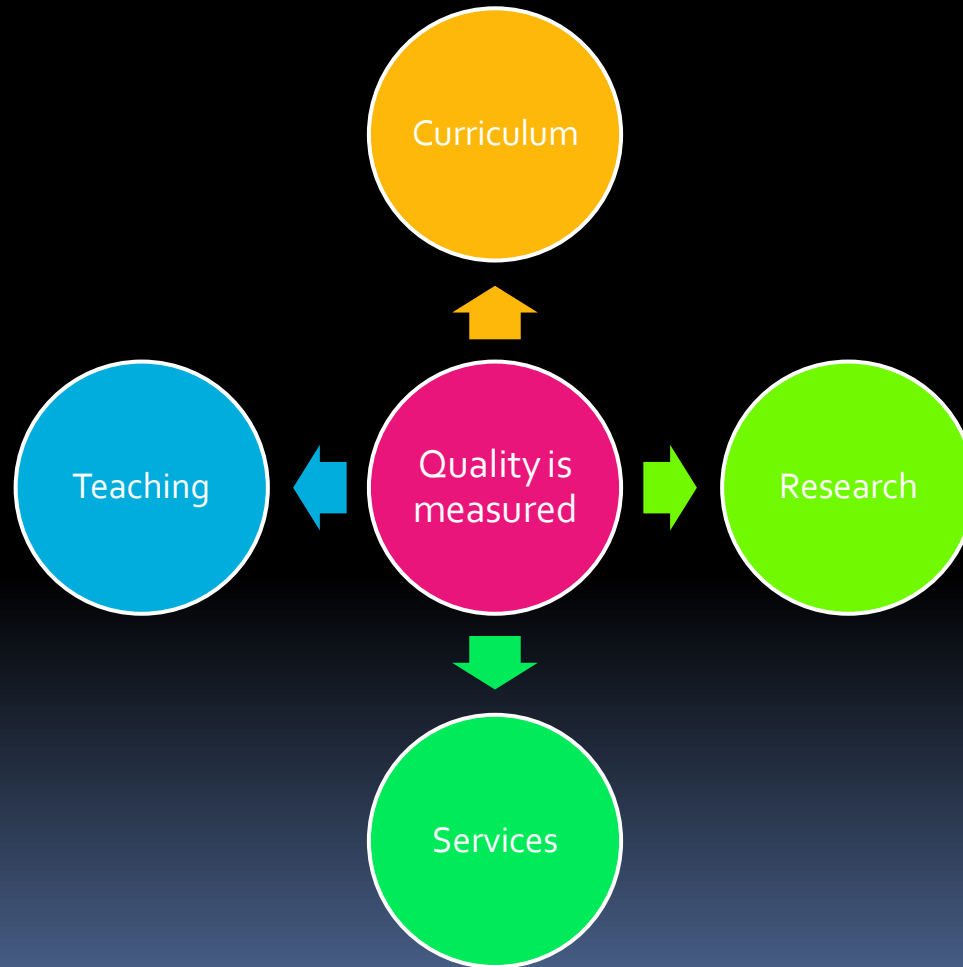
Quality Assurance in Greece

- Started in Greece recently
 - Started since the adoption of law N 3549/2007
- Establishment of Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
- First HEI adopt QA System in 2008
 - QA office at each HEI ("MODIP")
 - QA is checked at each department

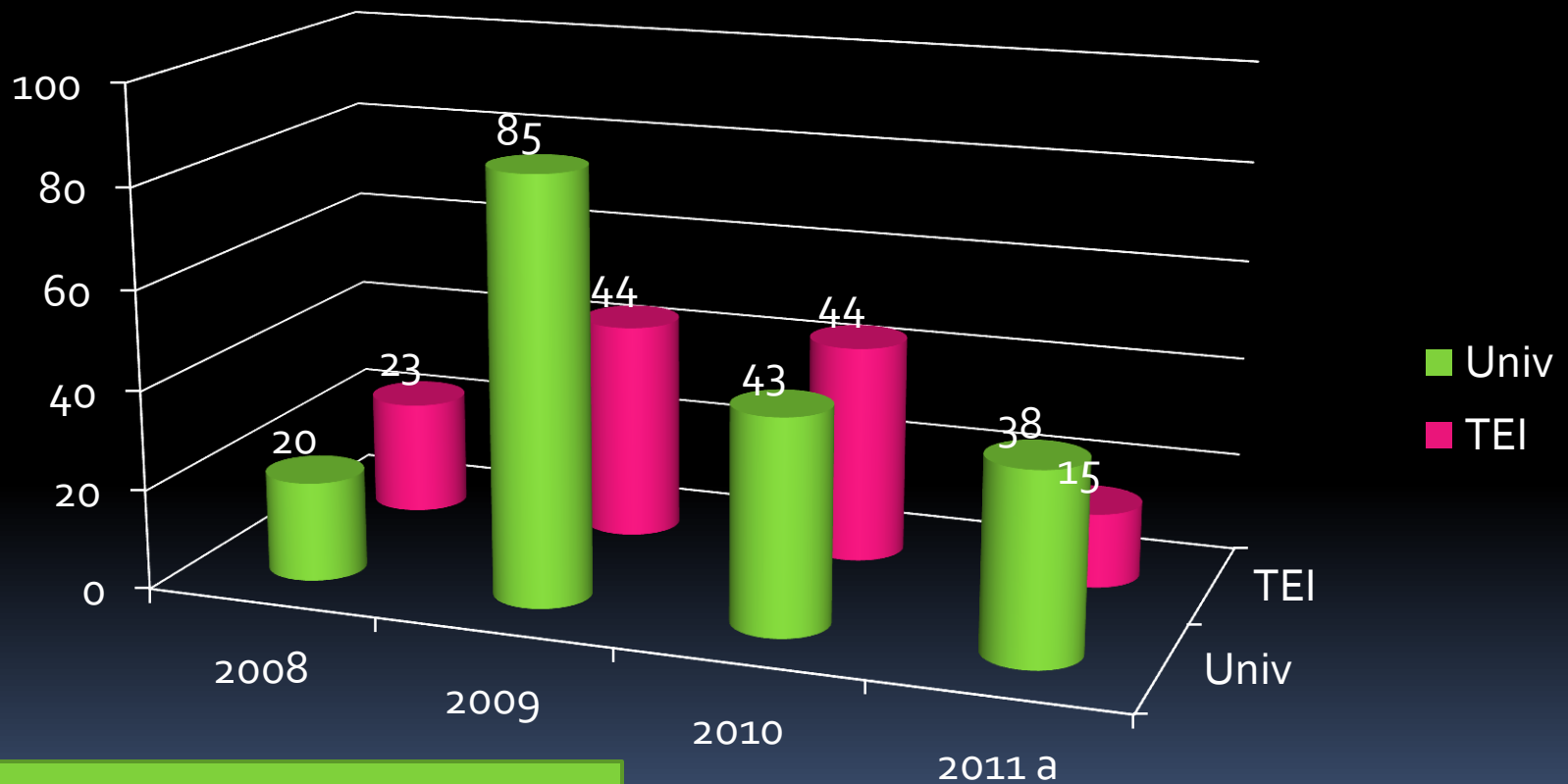
The QA process basic steps



QA system is based on indices



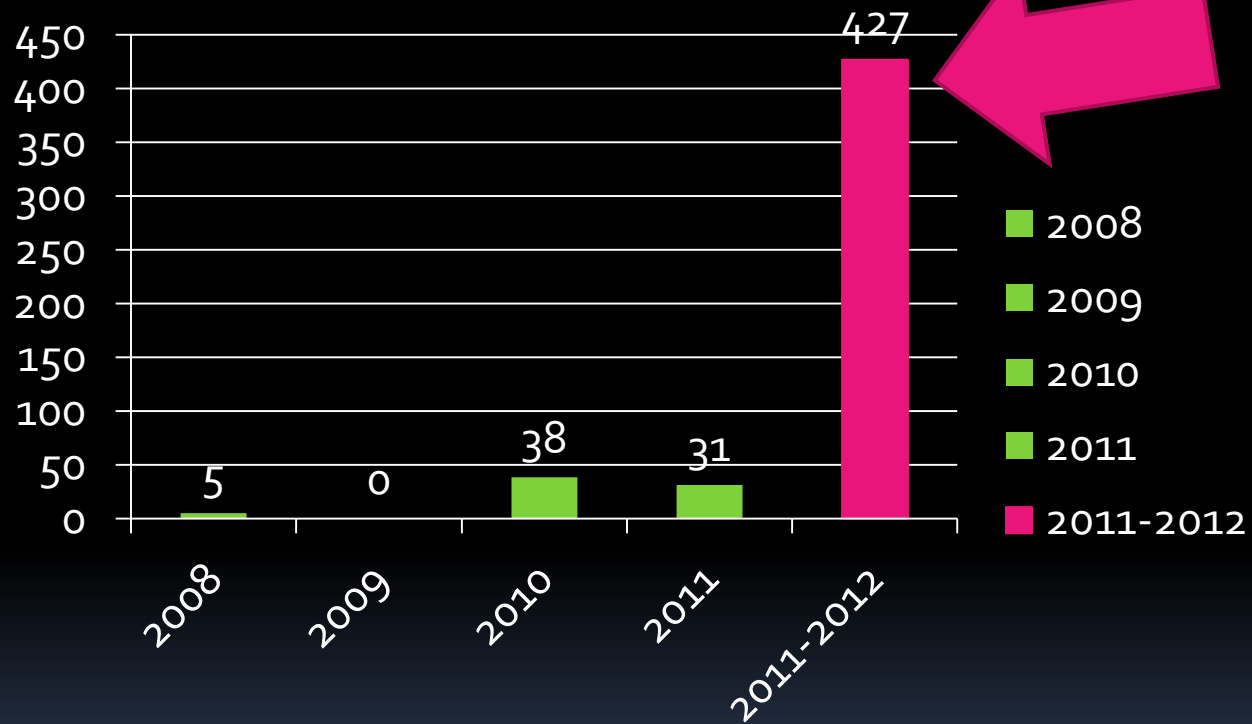
Departments that submitted internal evaluation reports



Total number of departments 514

Progress up to now

External evaluations




Current system at TEI Larissa

- At department level
 - Questionnaire
 - Distribute satisfaction questionnaires to every semester
 - Process data through a statistical system
 - Produce results such as quality of teaching, exams, professor, etc.
 - Report on each module by staff
 - Report on staff activity
- At TEI/L level
 - Based on statistical tables provided by QAA
 - Produces table able to answer to questions such as:
 - How many student do we have?
 - How many professors we have?
 - How many modules you need to attend?
 - What is the ratio students/staff?
 - How many students participate to exams?
 - How many projects or publications we have?



The question is

- Do we have the proper system to access quality?
 - What are the conclusions we can have from the data we have collected?
 - Are we able to compare between similar departments?
 - Are we able to compare Schools and HEIs?
 - Are we able to see clearly what are the improvements needed?
 - And most importantly is the system helping citizens and/or the state to take decisions?
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Approaches to the concept of quality of higher education

Quality as exceptionality, excellence

Quality as zero errors

Quality as fitness for purpose

Quality as transformation, reshaping

Quality as threshold, fitness of purpose

Quality as value for money

Quality as exceptionalism, excellence

We have to be **the best** approach

- ▶ The *exceptional* view sees quality as something special. Traditionally, quality refers to something distinctive and élitist, and, in educational terms is linked to notions of excellence, of 'high quality' beyond that to which most institutions or scholars can aspire

- ▶ *Harvey and Green, 1993, seeing excellence as one of the five definitions of quality*

Critical aspects

- Mass education versus excellent performance
 - Not all universities can or should achieve excellence
 - Examples:
 - Germany – Exzellenz Initiative
 - USA –
 - only 23% offers MA programmes and
 - only 9% offers PhD programmes
 - Trying to achieve world-class status may lead to favouring hard sciences (easier to quantify and evaluate) to the detriment of soft sciences
 - “Is excellence becoming too common
 - *Cristina Bojan and Sonia Pavlenko, Defining excellence in higher education*

Quality as zero errors


- Getting it right from the first time
- What causes errors?
 - Cultural factors
 - Variance
 - Complexity
 - Mistakes
- Easily applicable to industry
- But in academia????
 - How a flawless graduate looks like?

Quality as fitness for purpose

- Most common in HEIs, quality is stakeholder related
- “Fitness for purpose ... means that the university must create its own quality agenda for its own unique situation ... and agree purpose at all levels”.
 - mainly customer expectations
 - ‘everything goes’ as long as the proper goal is found
- Assessing the quality against these goals



Quality as fitness for purpose

- How it is implemented?
 - Dialogue with the Business Community
 - Dialogue with students and graduates
 - Advisory Boards / external advisors
 - Life-long learning
 - Some drawbacks is
 - Each HEI, each department (even on the same subject) is different
 - Ritzer (1993) macdonaldisation of education
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Quality as transformation, students reshaping

- Based on continuous quality improvement
 - Curriculum development with focus on learning rather than teaching
 - *Nygaard & Andersen, Learning Based Curriculum Development.*
- Approach
 - Evaluation of transformative learning
 - Embedding transferable skills into the academic curriculum
 - Benchmarking (internal and external) – transfer of 'good practice'
- There is a lot of subjectivity in such quality assessment (intellectual capital)

Quality as threshold

- Or based on standards or fitness **of** purpose
- Helps **to rationalise** the definition of quality, make it **more objective**
- Unfortunately most define minimum set of standards
 - In line with national system
 - Only general definition of knowledge, skills

Quality as value for money


- *It is a populist approach that equalizes quality and value, especially value for money (Harvey, Green, 1993).*
 - “quality for reasonable price” and “quality at affordable price” or
 - “you get what you pay”
- An approach that public money should be justified
- Related with funding, increases competition

Conclusions

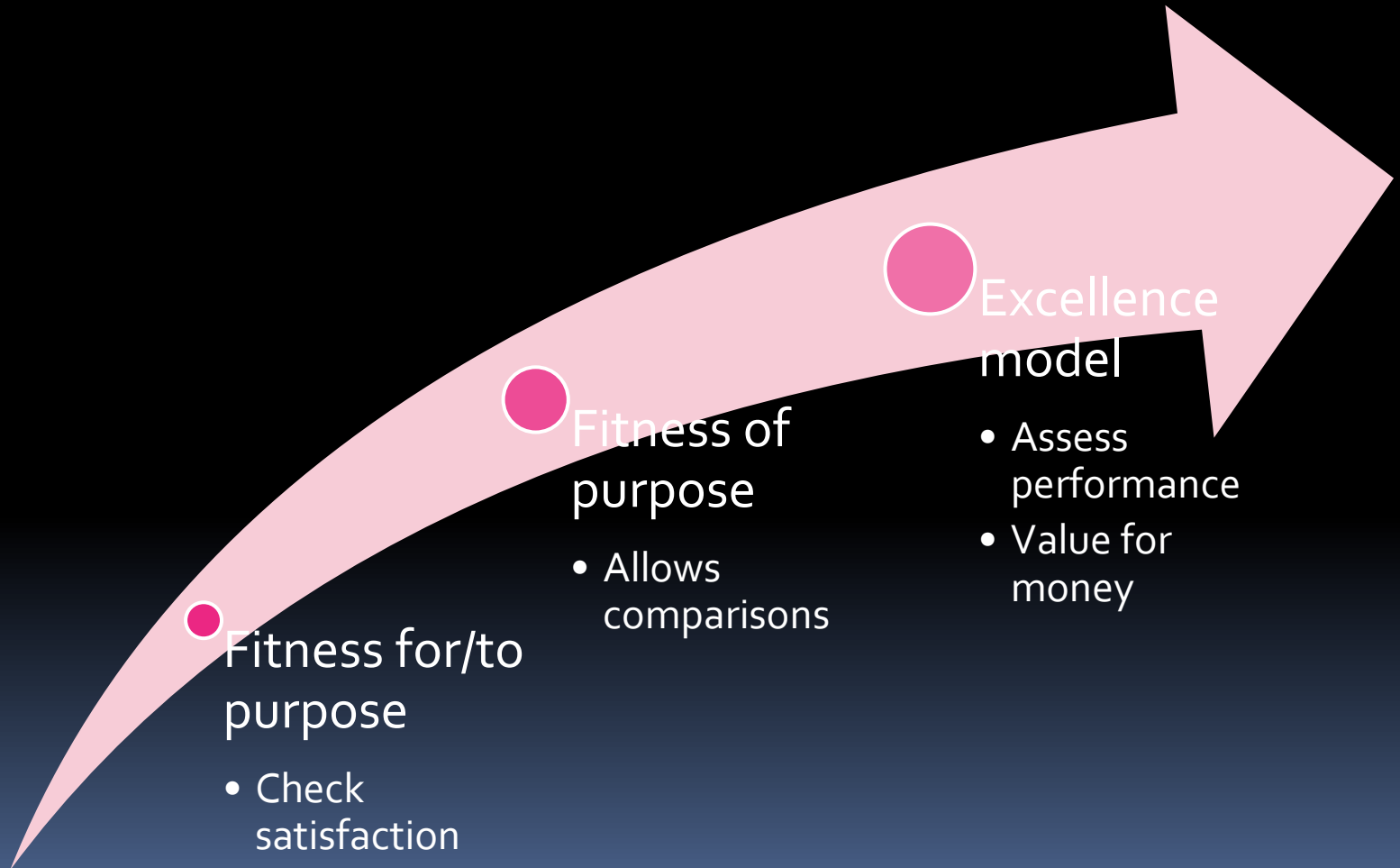
- Current applied system is a statistical system
- It does not
 - Applies a consistent quality system (lower errors)
 - Allow comparisons (fitness of purpose)
 - Helps departments improve (transform to excellence)
 - Set thresholds
 - Answer to money for value question
- More over
 - It is costly
 - It is boring to students and staff !



Conclusions

- We need to rethink the system
 - Less statistical data
 - Few key indicators
 - Allows comparisons
 - Set thresholds in relation to value for money
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Roadmap



But most important of all!

"Would you tell me, please which way I ought to walk from here?"

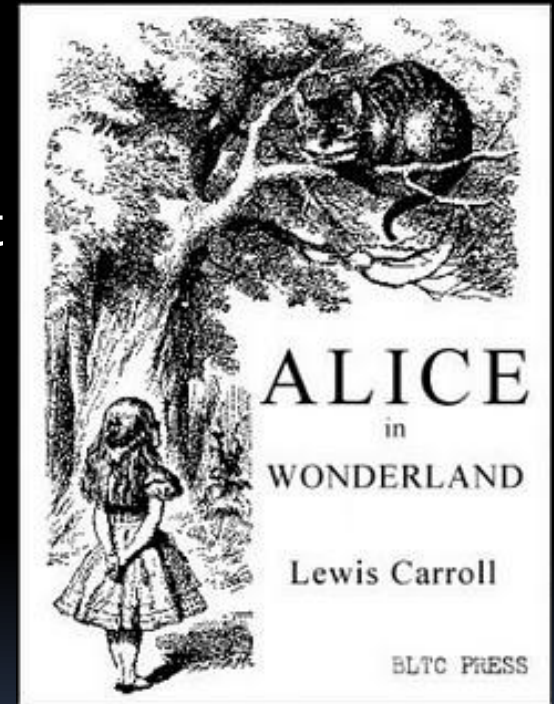
"That depends a good deal on where you want to get to," said the Cat.

"I don't much care where - " said Alice.

"Then it doesn't matter which way you walk," said the Cat.

" - so long as I get *somewhere*," Alice added as an explanation.

"Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if you only walk long enough."





Thank you