Quality Assurance of Online Learning: Setting the scene – global and local

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

The Brief

Questions

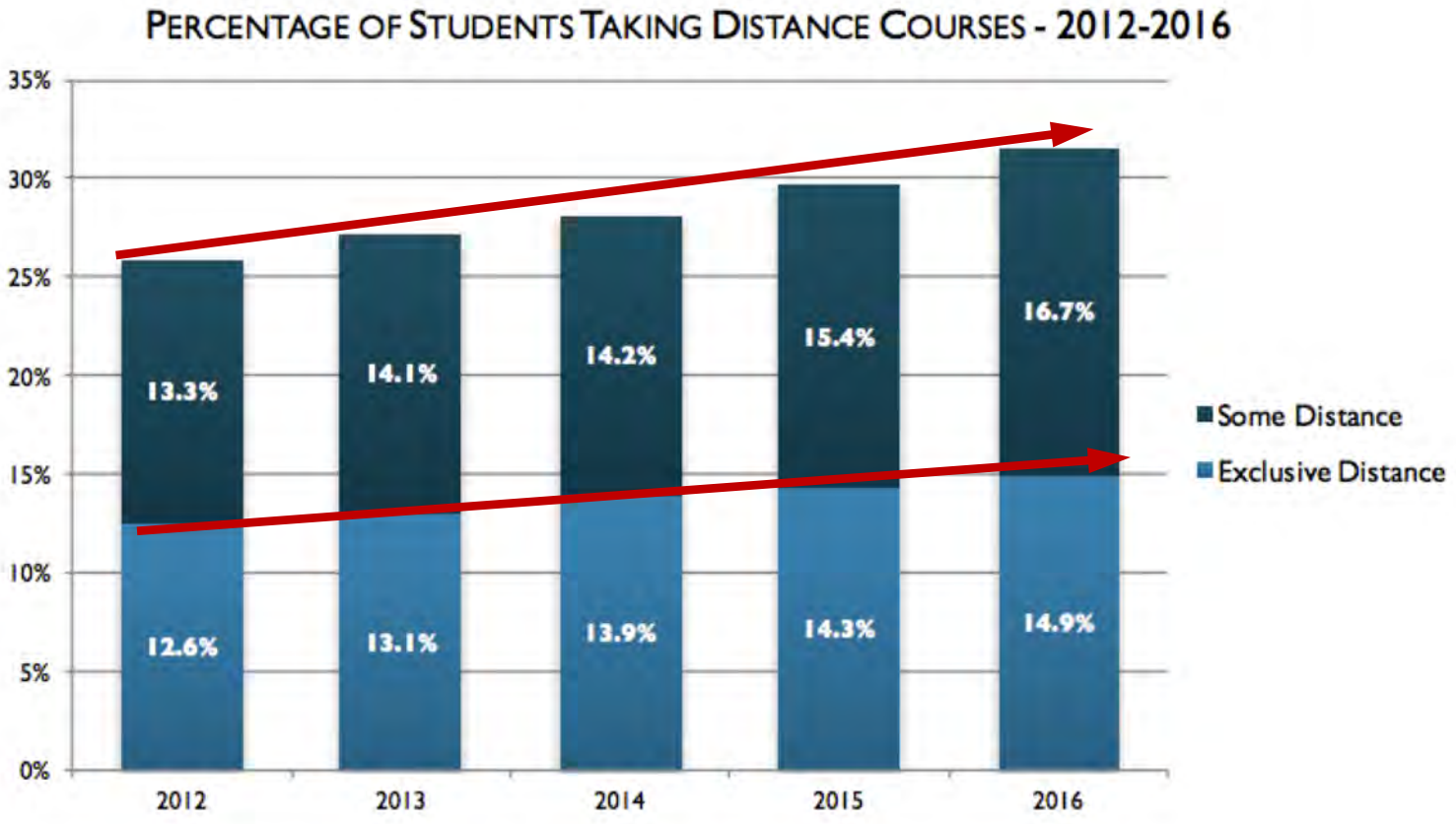
What is/are the Quality Assurance Issue(s)?

What is Quality?

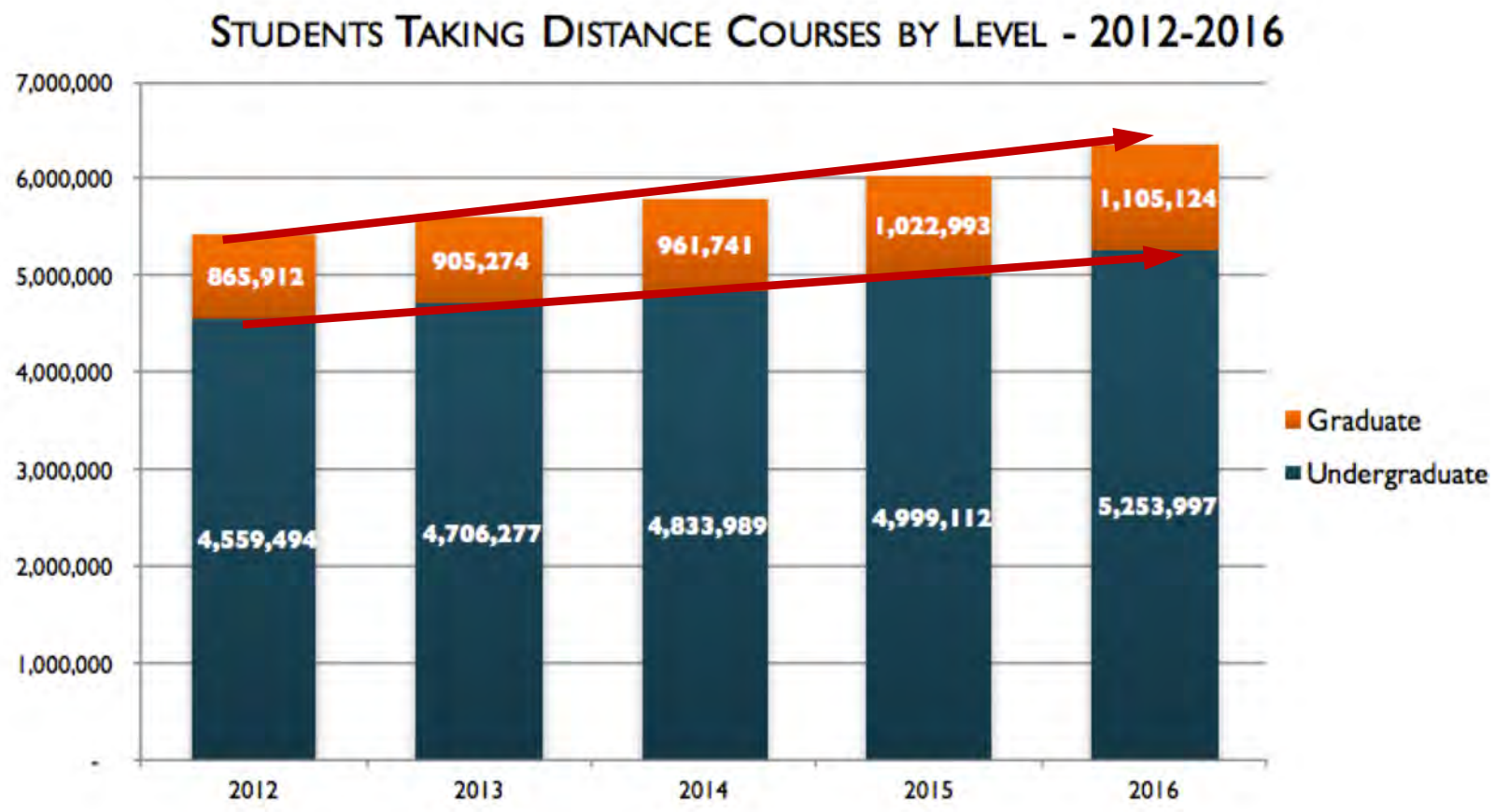
For Whom?

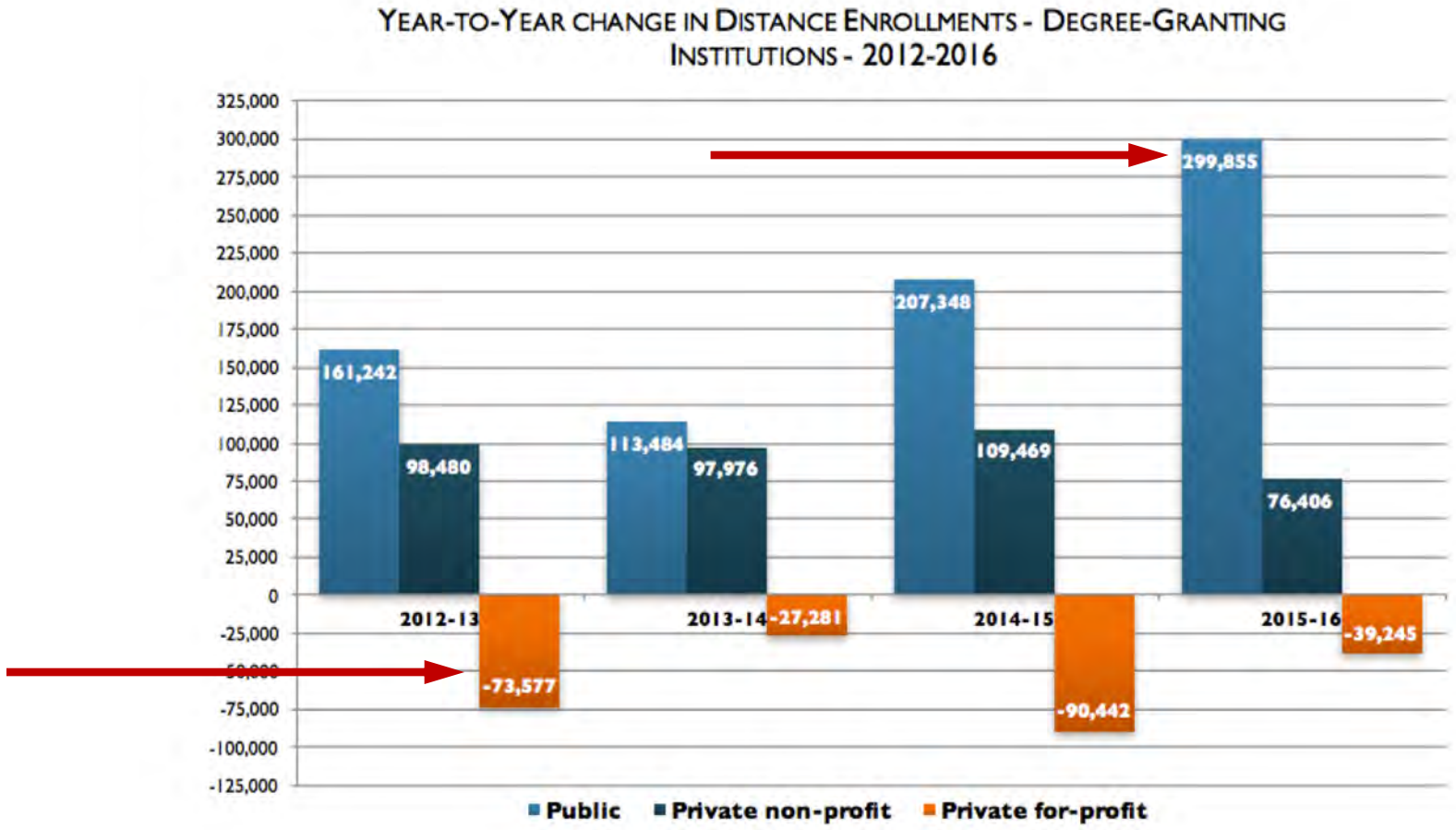
What is the “right” framework or approach?

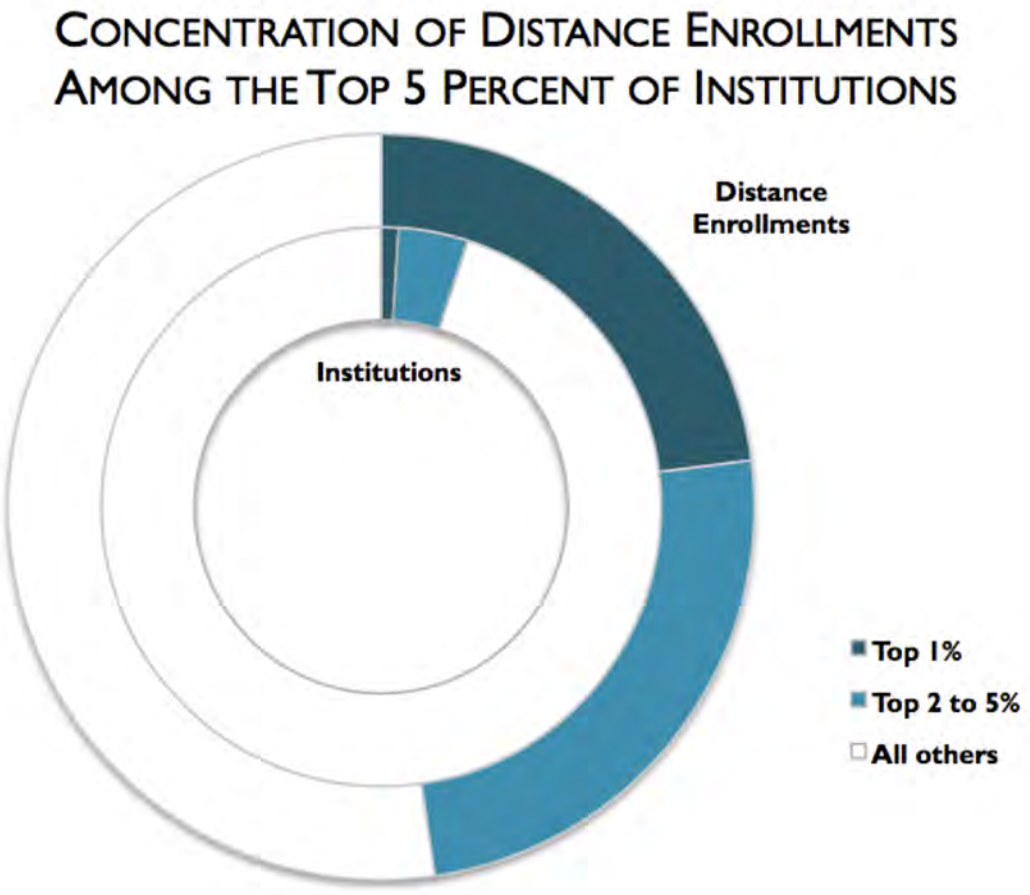
Hands up … if you think online learning in post-secondary education has grown in the last 10 years?


PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS TAKING DISTANCE COURSES - 2012-2016
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
13.3%
14.1%
14.2%
15.4%
16.7%
12.6%
13.1%
13.9%
14.3%
14.9%
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
Some Distance
Exclusive Distance

Babson


STUDENTS TAKING DISTANCE COURSES BY LEVEL - 2012-2016
7,000,000
6,000,000
5,000,000
4,000,000
3,000,000
2,000,000
1,000,000
-
865,912
905,274
961,741
1,022,993
1,105,124
4,559,494
4,706,277
4,833,989
4,999,112
5,253,997
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
Graduate
Undergraduate


YEAR-TO-YEAR CHANGE IN DISTANCE ENROLLMENTS - DEGREE-GRANTING INSTITUTIONS - 2012-2016
325,000
300,000
275,000
250,000
225,000
200,000
175,000
150,000
125,000
100,000
75,000
50,000
25,000
0
-25,000
-75,000
-100,000
-125,000
161,242
98,480
-73,577
113,484
97,976
-27,281
207,348
109,469
-90,442
299,855
76,406
-39,245
2012-13
2013-14
2014-15
2015-16
Public
Private non-profit
Private for-profit



45% enrolments are in 5% of institutions

Concluding Babson

(I expect) You were right!

But also …

- More undergraduate than graduate
- Relatively institutionally circumscribed
- Market share being lost by private-for-profits
- Distance is becoming (somewhat) mainstream

Is Australia the same ?

Questions

Part of the issue is that, in the context of more institutions, teachers and students "going online" – whether fully, partially – there is perhaps less clarity about what constitutes "high quality" online education.

While we are comfortable we "know quality" when it comes to "traditional" forms of education and modes of delivery, "we" are unsettled by this when it comes to online.

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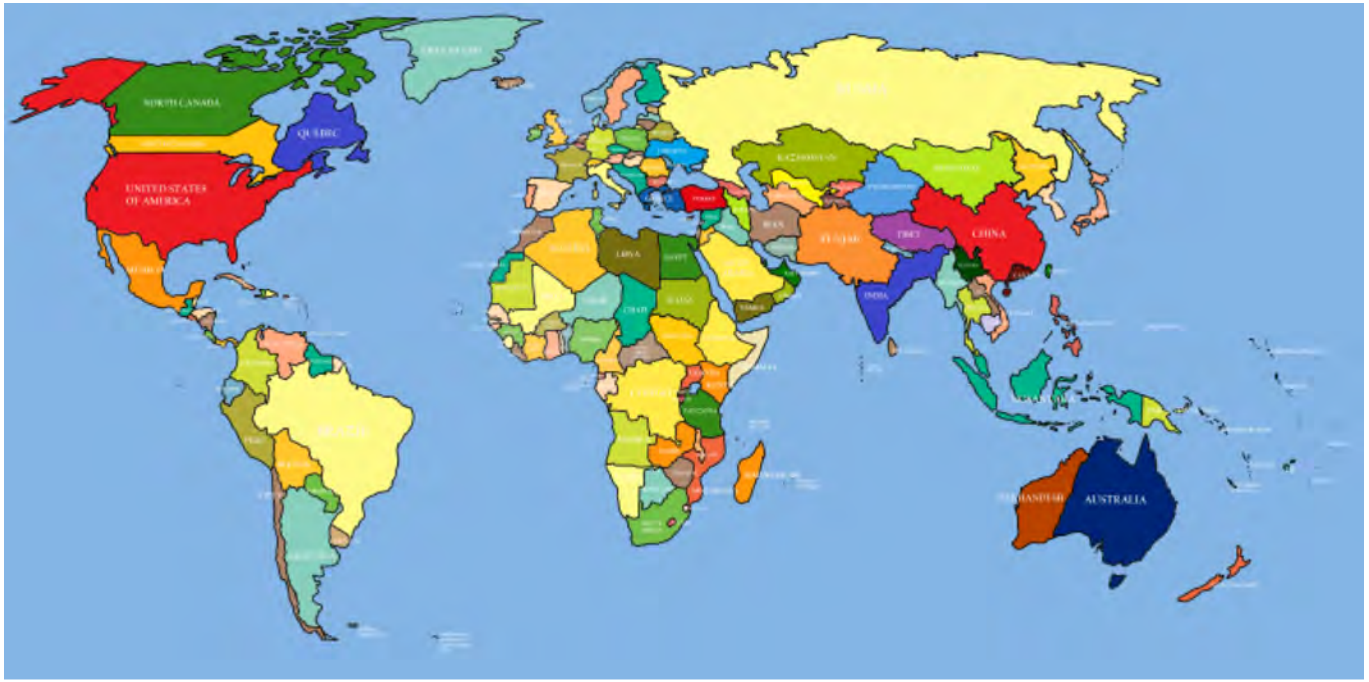
The Brief: ICDE

Methodology

A desktop study of the world …



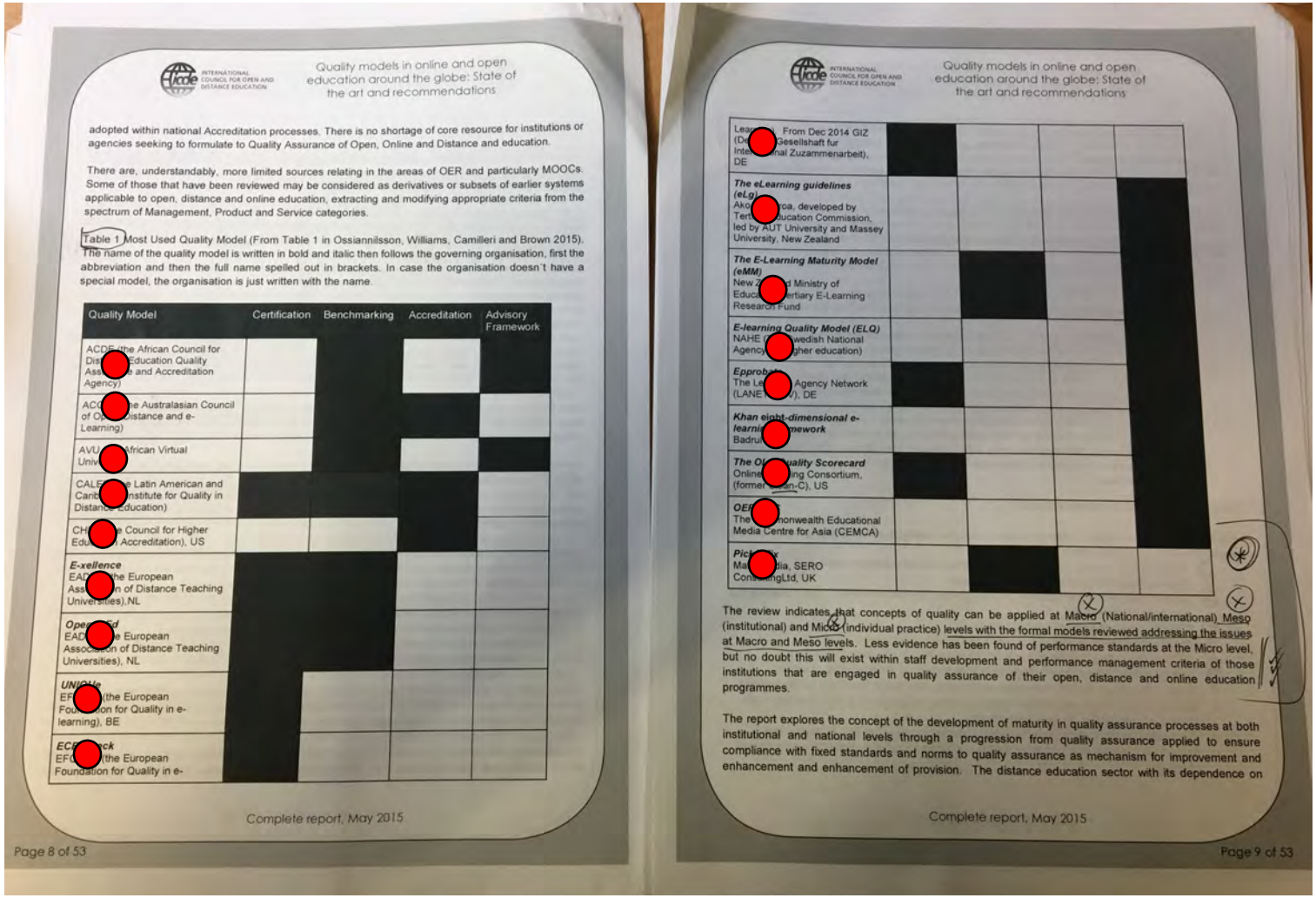
"… establish an overview and analysis of the global situation with regard to existing relevant standards and guidelines for open, distance, flexible and online education including e-learning …" [p.6]

Highlights 1

There are a lot of frameworks

Highlights 1

There are a lot of frameworks



Quality models in online and open education around the globe: State of the art and recommendations

adopted within national Accreditation processes. There is no shortage of core resource for institutions or agencies seeking to formulate to Quality Assurance of Open, Online and Distance and education.

There are, understandably, more limited sources relating in the areas of OER and particularly MOOCs. Some of those that have been reviewed may be considered as derivatives or subsets of earlier systems applicable to open, distance and online education, extracting and modifying appropriate criteria from the spectrum of Management, Product and Service categories.

Table 1 Most Used Quality Model (From Table 1 in Ossiannilsson, Williams, Camilleri and Brown 2015). The name of the quality model is written in bold and italic then follows the governing organisation, first the abbreviation and then the full name spelled out in brackets. In case the organisation doesn't have a special model, the organisation is just written with the name.

Quality Model	Certification	Benchmarking	Accreditation	Advisory Framework
ACDE (the African Council for Distance Education Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency)				
ACODE (the Australasian Council of Open, Distance and e-Learning)				
AVU (the African Virtual University)				
CALED (the Latin American and Caribbean Institute for Quality in Distance Education)				
CHEA (the Council for Higher Education Accreditation), US				
E-xellence EADTU (the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities), NL				
Open.Ed EADTU (the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities), NL				
UNIQUe EFQUEL (the European Foundation for Quality in e-learning), BE				
ECBCheck EFQUEL (the European Foundation for Quality in e-				

Complete report, May 2015

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Quality models in online and open education around the globe: State of the art and recommendations

Learn... From Dec 2014 GIZ (D... Gesellshaft fur Int... nal Zuzammenarbeit), DE				
The eLearning guidelines (eLg) Ako... oa, developed by Ter... ducation Commission, led by AUT University and Massey University, New Zealand				
The E-Learning Maturity Model (eMM) New Z... d Ministry of Educa... ertiary E-Learning Research Fund				
E-learning Quality Model (ELQ) NAHE (... wedish National Agency ... gher education)				
Epprob... The La... Agency Network (LANE ... V), DE				
Khan eight-dimensional e-learni... mework Badru...				
The O... vality Scorecard Online... ng Consortium, (former ... an-C), US				
OER... The ... monwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA)				
Pich... Ma... ia, SERO Con... ngLtd, UK				

The review indicates that concepts of quality can be applied at Macro (National/international) Meso (institutional) and Micro (individual practice) levels with the formal models reviewed addressing the issues at Macro and Meso levels. Less evidence has been found of performance standards at the Micro level, but no doubt this will exist within staff development and performance management criteria of those institutions that are engaged in quality assurance of their open, distance and online education programmes.

The report explores the concept of the development of maturity in quality assurance processes at both institutional and national levels through a progression from quality assurance applied to ensure compliance with fixed standards and norms to quality assurance as mechanism for improvement and enhancement and enhancement of provision. The distance education sector with its dependence on

Complete report, May 2015

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Highlights 1

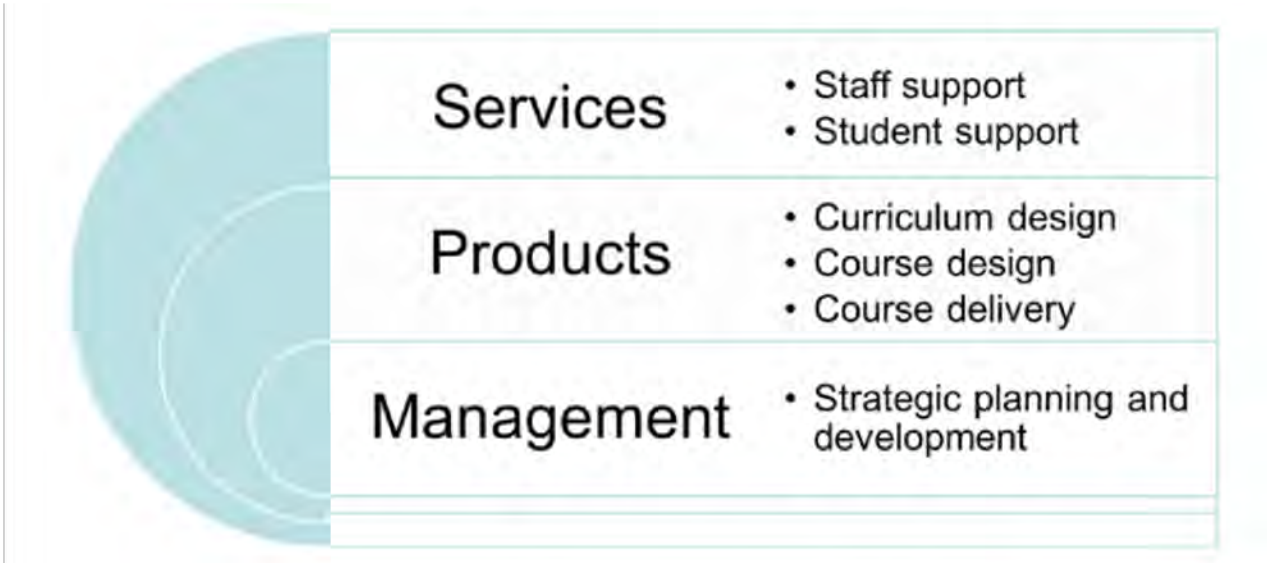
Quality Dimensions … "elusive and complex"

- Executive commitment
- Technology infrastructure
- Students services
- Instructional design and course development
- Instruction and instructor services
- Financial health
- Program delivery
- Legal and regulatory requirements
- Program evaluation

(Frydenberg 2002; Ossiannilsson, 2012)

Highlights 1

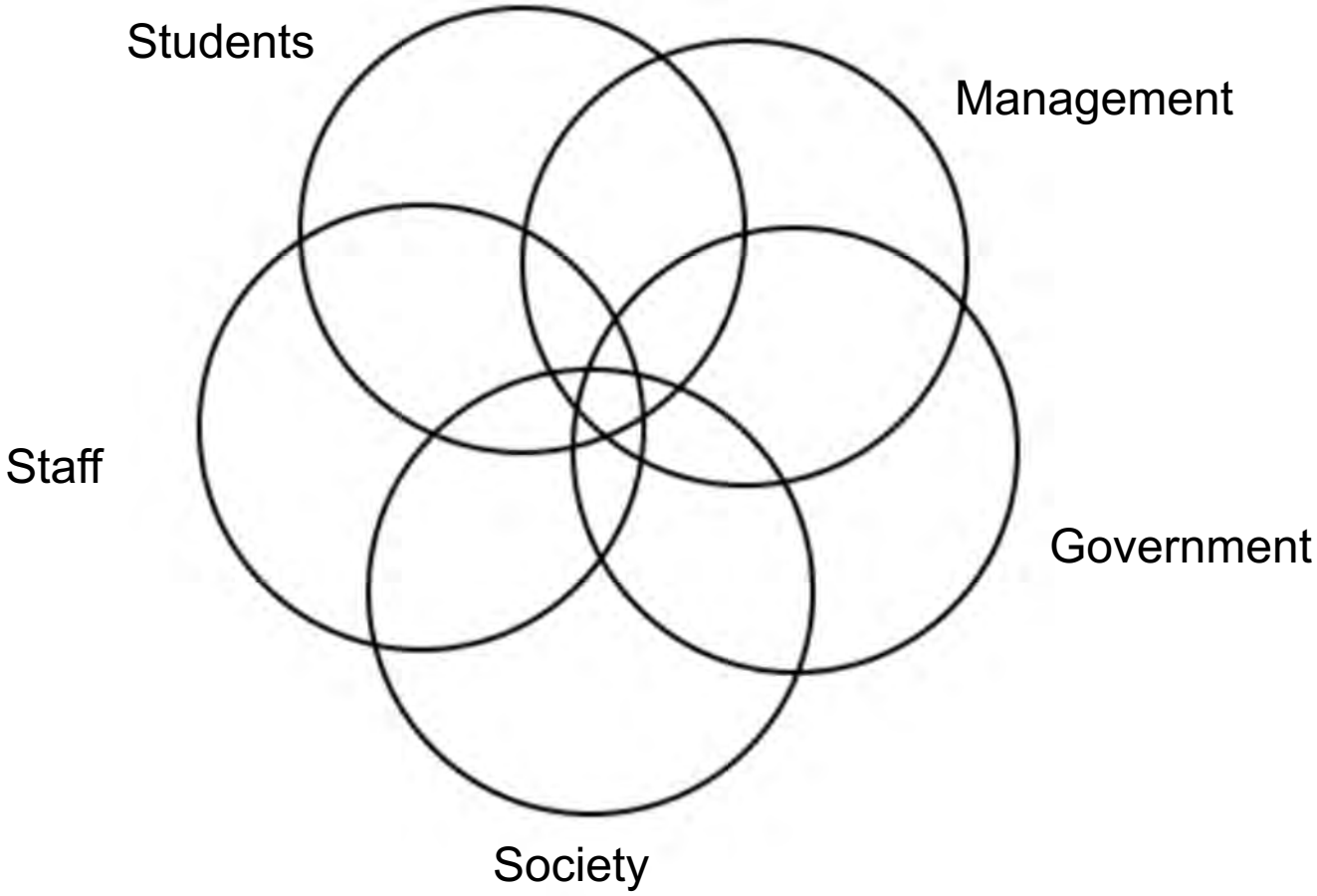
Quality Dimensions … “elusive and complex”



(Ossiannilsson, 2012)

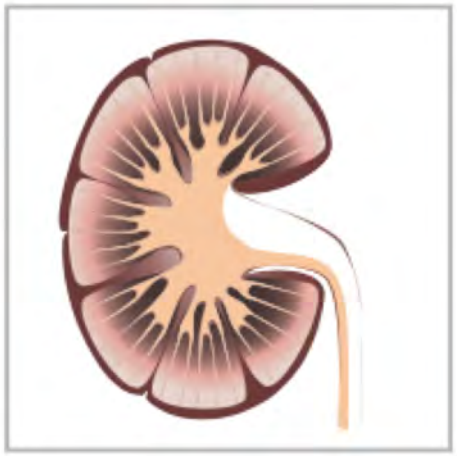
Highlights 1

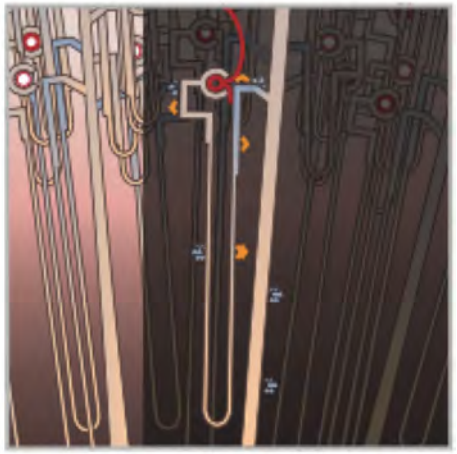
Quality Dimensions … “elusive and complex”

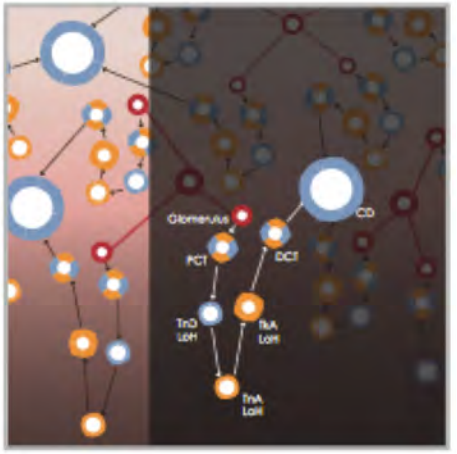


Highlights 2

Level of Analysis



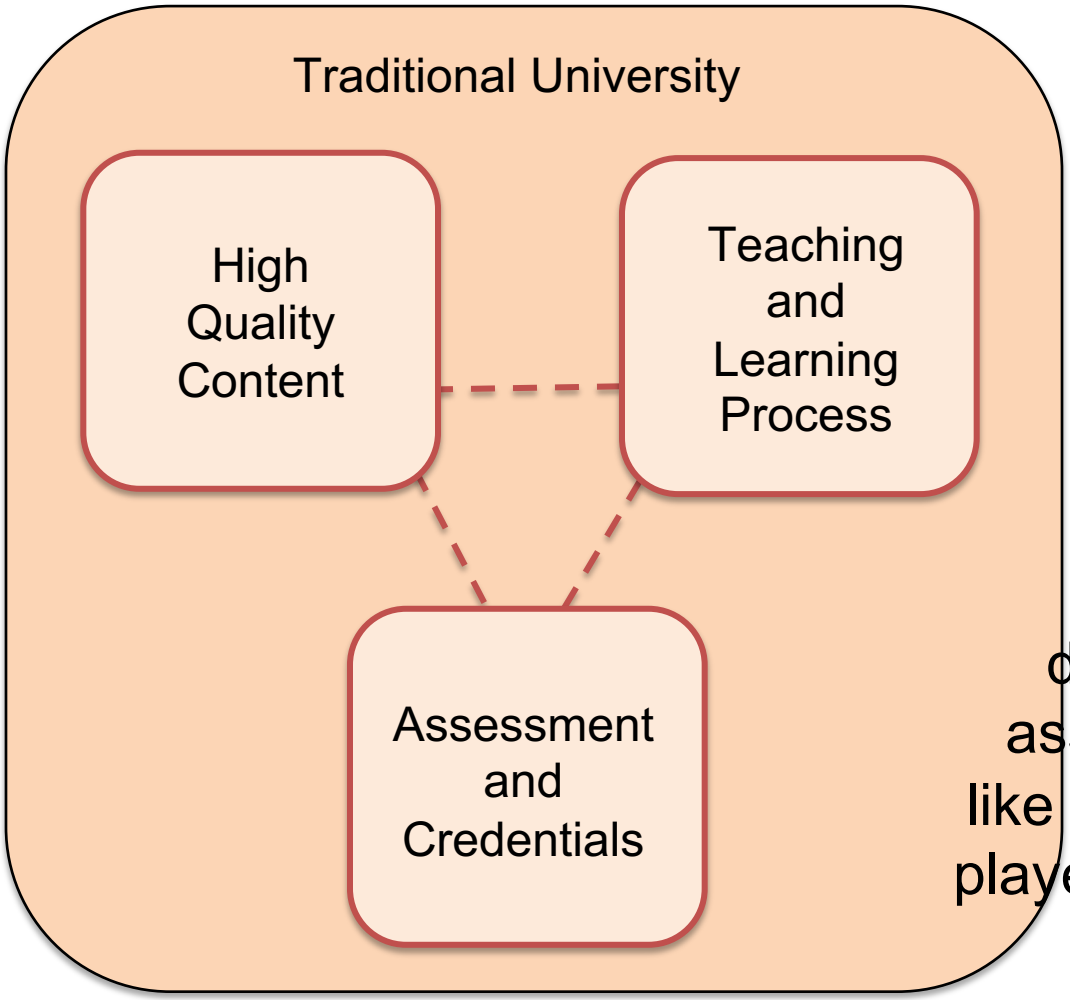




Cheng, 2014

Highlights 3

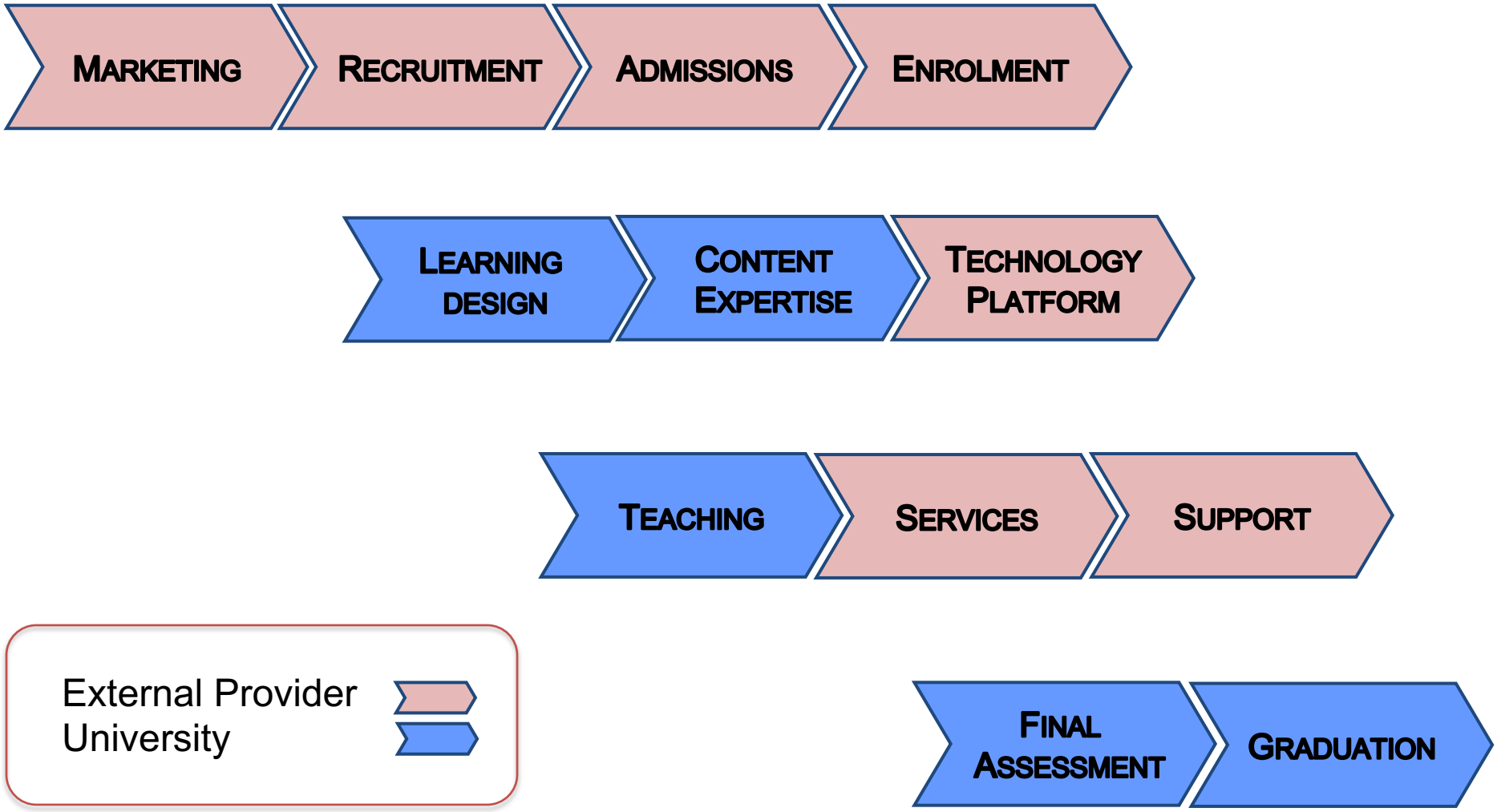
Unbundling & Disaggregation



What does quality assurance look like when different players do different parts?

Highlights 3

Unbundling & Disaggregation



Highlights 4

Face-to-face setting the quality standard for online

Because we know what quality face-to-face looks like …

Highlights 5

Accreditation or Enhancement

What is the purpose of the Quality Assurance System?

Accreditation

A mandatory accreditation process that determines an institution's capacity to meet national standards

Enhancement

A review to evaluate current performance against broadly interpreted standards to benchmark, spot gaps, and improve institutional performance and culture

Mid Lights 1

Core Characteristics of Quality Systems

- Multifacated: many measures of quality are used
- Dynamic: flexible and not constrained by tech du jour
- Mainstreamed: aim at trickle down improvements
- Representative: seek to address multiple stakeholders
- Multifunctional: 3 functions – quality culture, roadmap for future improvement, quality marker for external view

Mid Lights 2

Recommendations …. 4 of 11

R1. Mainstream e-learning quality into traditional institutional quality assurance.

R3. Support professional development, in particular through documentation of best practice and exchange of information.

R4. Communicate and promote general principles.

R6. Address unbundling and the emergence of non-traditional educational providers.

Local

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Why Are We here?

Australian Government
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

Quality Assurance of Online Learning

Tuesday 27 November, 9:00am – 3.30pm Deakin Downtown Level 12 Tower 2, 727 Collins Street, Docklands, Melbourne 3008

Is This Why We Are Here?

"In an increasingly complex and changing environment for transnational education provision all legitimate stakeholders have a responsibility to work collaboratively to protect students from degree mills and bogus accreditation and credential systems"

[ICDE p. 36]

Is This Why We Are Here?

"In several countries, there is evidence of Quality Assurance Agencies seeking to add guidance and informal standards relating to distance and online education to their existing systems of institutional quality assurance"

[ICDE p. 40]

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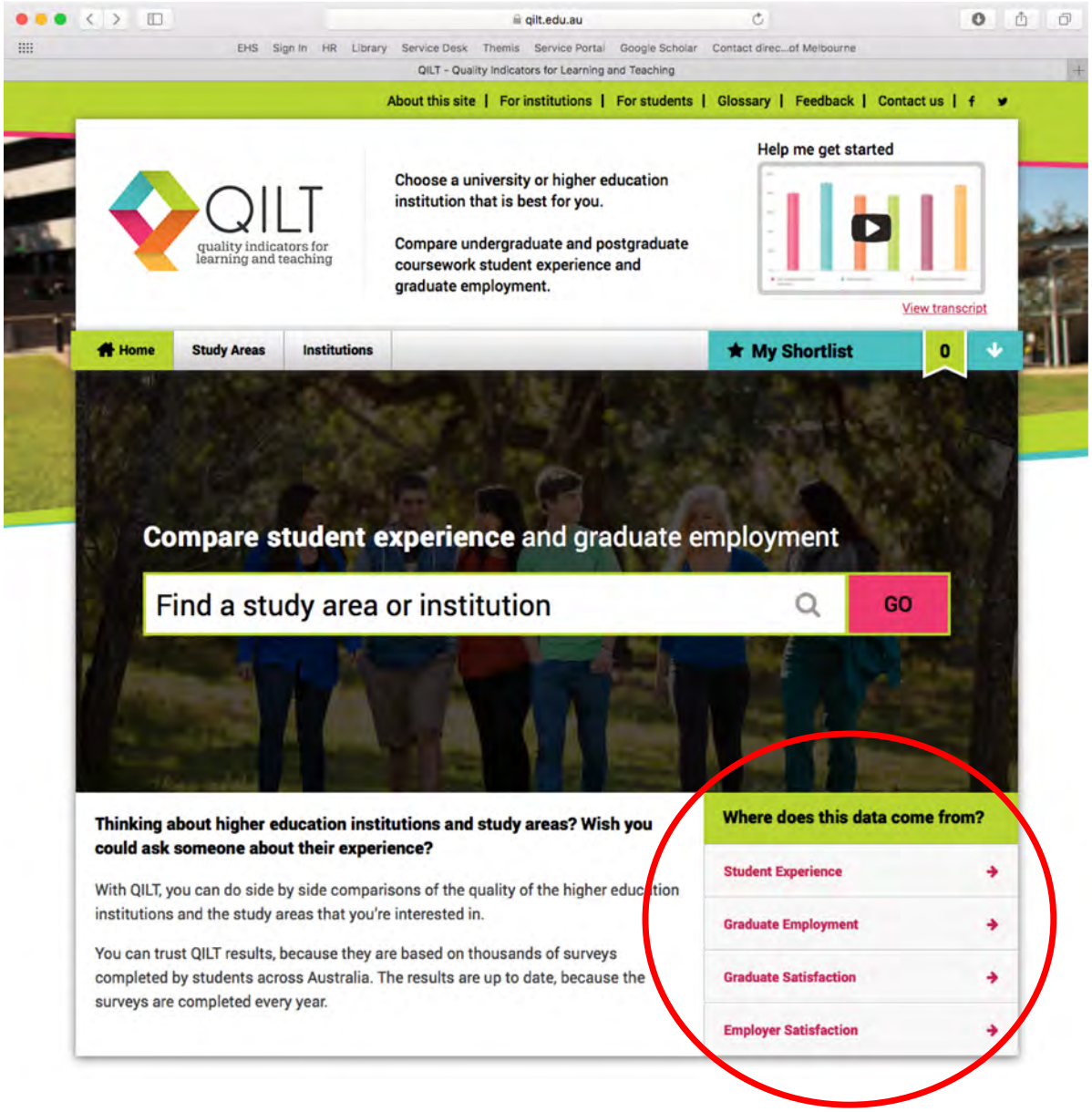
Is This Why We Are Here?



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Is This Why We Are Here?

Concerns about online attrition?

Questions

What is/are the Quality Assurance Issue(s)

What is Quality?

For Whom?

What is the “right” framework or approach?

The "Right" Approach

1. We have a surfeit of frameworks and criteria to choose from – with some excellent local examples – the adoption of which needs to be localised and contextualised.

2. There are a number of key considerations in this:
   - Macro – Meso – Micro
   - Unbundling and disaggregation
   - Historical hegemony of face-to-face mode of delivery
   - Questions of institutional accreditation or cultural change

The "Right" Approach

But our response to what we might do –

individually, institutionally, "sectorially", collectively

– will depend on our response to the

"why are we here" question,

as much as to our reactions and responses to

the various frameworks and key considerations

I have outlined today.

Thank you ...