

# Measuring Effectiveness of Internal Quality Assurance (Institutional Research) Units in Universities

**Presentation**

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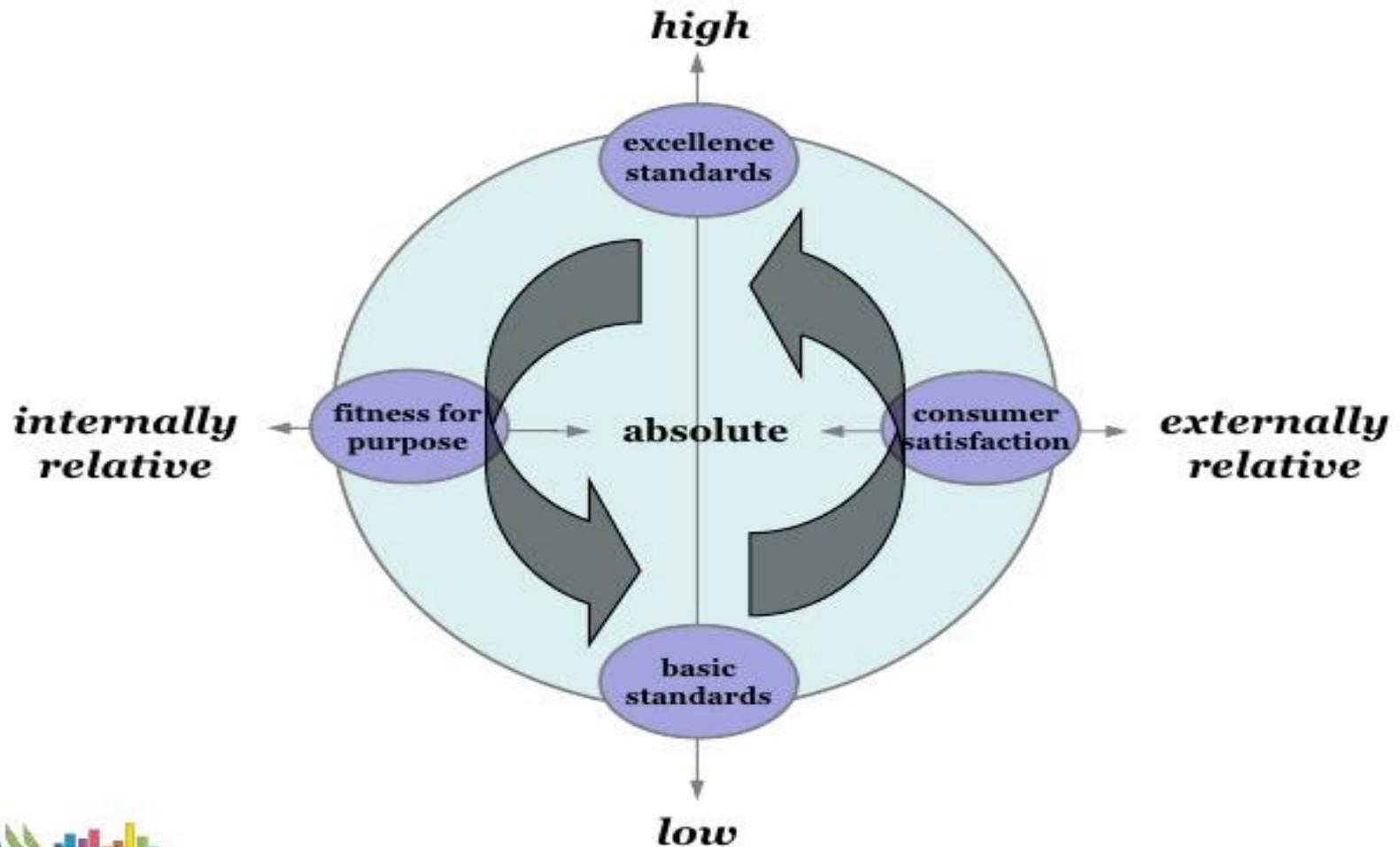
# Outline

- Introduction:
  - ❑ Changing Conceptualizations of Quality
  - ❑ Quality Assurance
- Internal Quality Assurance
  - ❑ Definition
  - ❑ Effectiveness of Internal QA Units
- Internal QA at AUB
  - ❑ Initiatives
  - ❑ Plan to Measure Effectiveness of internal QA

# Changing Conceptualizations of Quality

- From established 'earmarks' of quality like measures of resources, faculty and staff qualifications to
  - ❑ inclusion of learning outcome assessment,
  - ❑ focus on **teaching, documentation, and transparency** with more public accessibility to information
- View of Quality affects approach to quality
  - ❑ Standards  Basic standards
  - ❑ Perfection or excellence  Excellence standards
  - ❑ Fitness for purpose  Fitness for purpose
  - ❑ Value for money  Consumer satisfaction
  - ❑ Transformation and change  Enhancement

# Definitions of quality



# Quality Conceptualization

- Primary responsibility for quality lies in HE institution itself, and this provides basis for real accountability of the system.
- Importance of grassroots development of quality rather than a top down approach.
- Promote in institution a quality culture that is fit for purpose that takes into account institution's own context and realities.
- A quality culture indicates a change in attitude & behavior.
- Emphasis on improvement not just development of quality, quality enhancement.

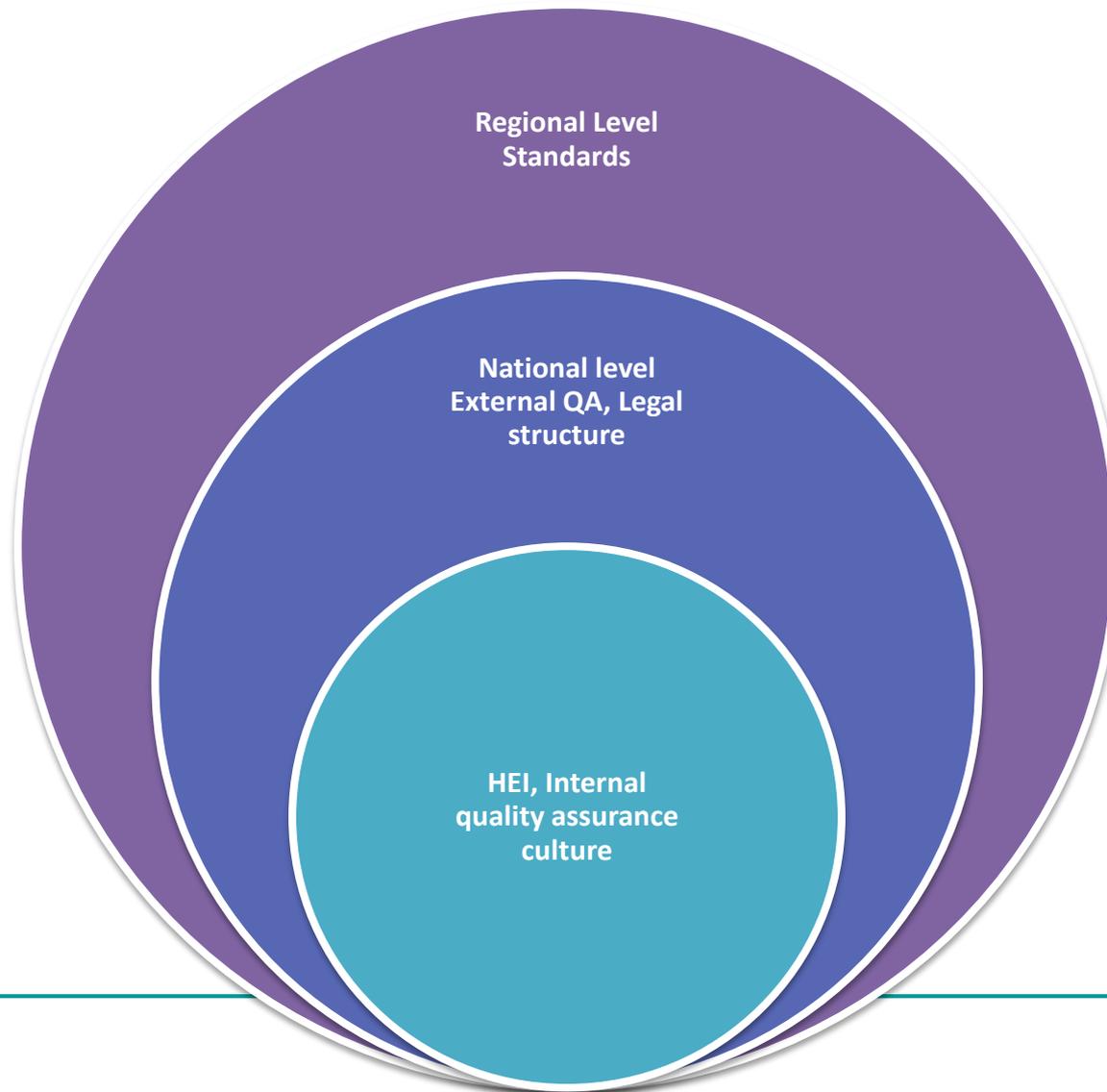
# Quality Assurance

- An all-embracing term referring to an ongoing, continuous process of evaluating (assessing, monitoring, guaranteeing, maintaining and improving) the quality of (teacher/higher) education systems, institutions or programs.\*
- A range of review procedures derived from institution's own strategic goals, fitting into their own quality culture, while also fulfilling external requirements for QA.
- Levels of QA: Internal and external
  - ❑ Internal evaluation is the cornerstone of QA in HE, while external evaluation is necessary to provide credibility of the results of the internal evaluation.

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\*UNESCO

# *Different Levels of QA*



# *Activities Covered by IQA processes*

- Research
- Teaching and learning
  - ❑ Student learning outcomes
  - ❑ Review of programs
  - ❑ Quality of teaching staff
- Student support services
  - ❑ Processes (advising, registration, food services, etc.)
  - ❑ Resources (labs, library, computing facilities, etc.)
- Community service
  - ❑ Student engagement
- Governance and administration
- Communication flow

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# Effectiveness of Internal QA Units

- IQA units are **change agents**, so expected to promote IE on campus.
- Evaluation of effectiveness of IR office is a worthy practice by itself;
  - ❑ all of six accrediting agencies require assessment of administrative **functions**, including IR.
  - ❑ IR office has opportunity to **model the behavior it teaches**, by turning magnifying glass inward and conducting a study of its own effectiveness.
  - ❑ To be credible on campus, you have to engage in the very practice that we support. **‘virtue begins at home’, ‘lead others through example’**.

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# What is Effectiveness of Internal QA Units?

- An effective IR office is one that has a **tangible impact** on decision making, planning, and policy formation (Knight, 2010).
- Other suggestions for IR's effectiveness include :
  - ❑ Maintain objectivity
  - ❑ Being proactive ahead of the curve not behind it
  - ❑ Stay aware of trends at different levels
  - ❑ Breaking out of the routine
  - ❑ Understanding context of institution by communicating and collaborating with senior administration
  - ❑ Participating in self-assessment practices(Chambers 2007).
- Knight (2010) identified **10 themes for effectiveness** of QA Unit.

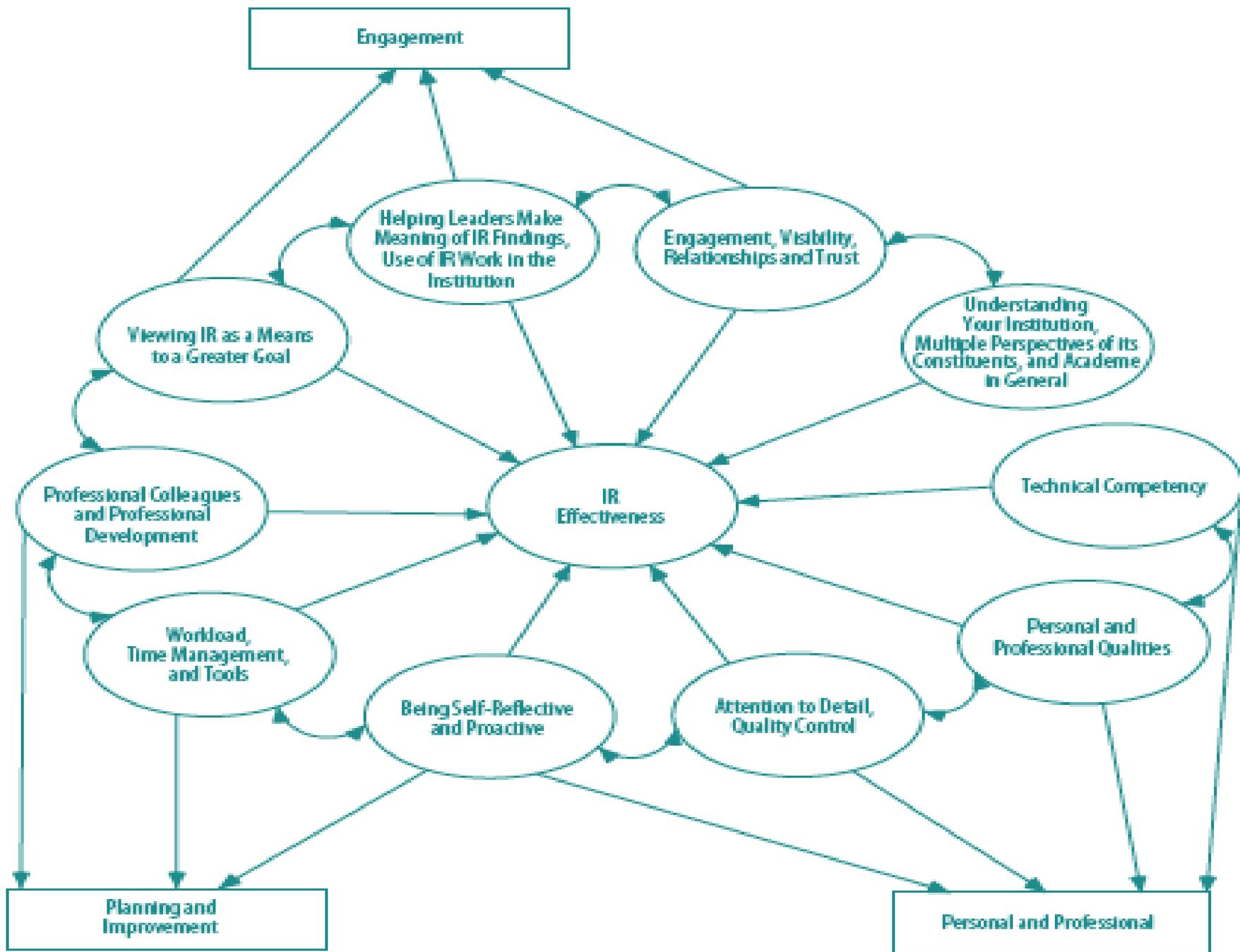




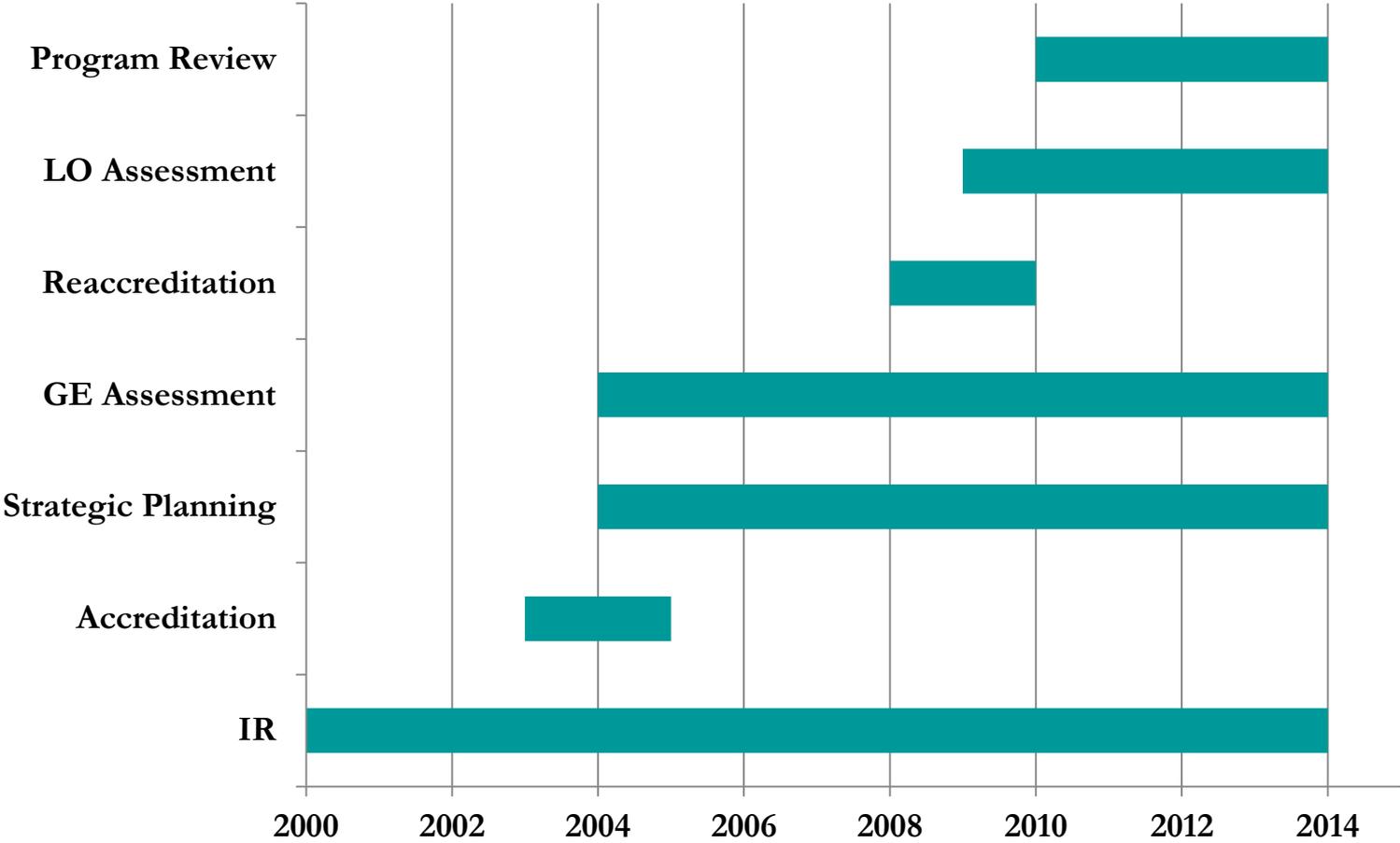
Figure 2. structural model of effectiveness in institutional research.

# *Internal Assessment Initiatives at AUB*

To monitor quality and performance at AUB and its administrative & academic units from a variety of perspectives, a number of assessment initiatives were launched at **institutional & unit levels**. OIRA plays a leading (L) & supporting (S) roles in the monitoring performance.

- Strategic planning and assessment (L)
- Balanced Scorecards and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (L)
- Monitoring budgets & expenditures (S)
- Internal audit monitoring (S)
- Assessment of student learning outcomes (S)
- Assessment of General Education Program (S)
- Periodic Program Review (S)
- Office of Institutional Research & Assessment (OIRA) Activities (L)

# Quality Processes Timeline



## Director of IR and Assessment

### External & Internal Reporting

#### Internal

Fact book  
Facts & Figures  
Faculty Workload

#### External

College Board  
Common Data Set  
Thomson Petersons  
Surveys  
ASHA  
Middle States IP  
Rankings

### Planning & Assessment Support

- Enrollment projections
- Revenue projections
- Accreditation self-studies
- Strategic Planning KPIs
- Units in preparation of assessment plans
- Special research projects

### Data Management Technical Support

- Student database
- Data warehouse
- Hardware & software support
- Faculty workload & evaluation database
- Data Mining
- Data Warehousing

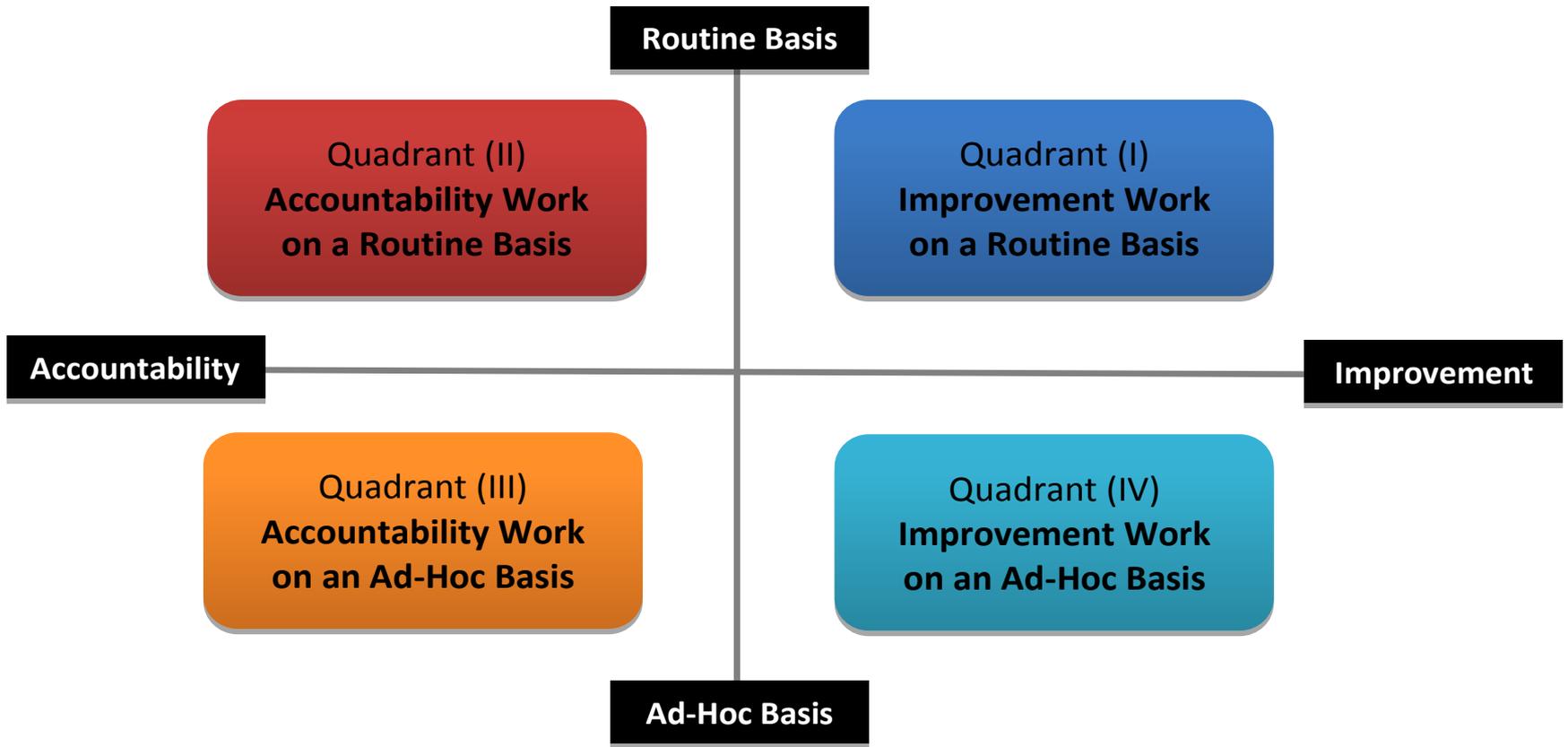
### Assessment and Research

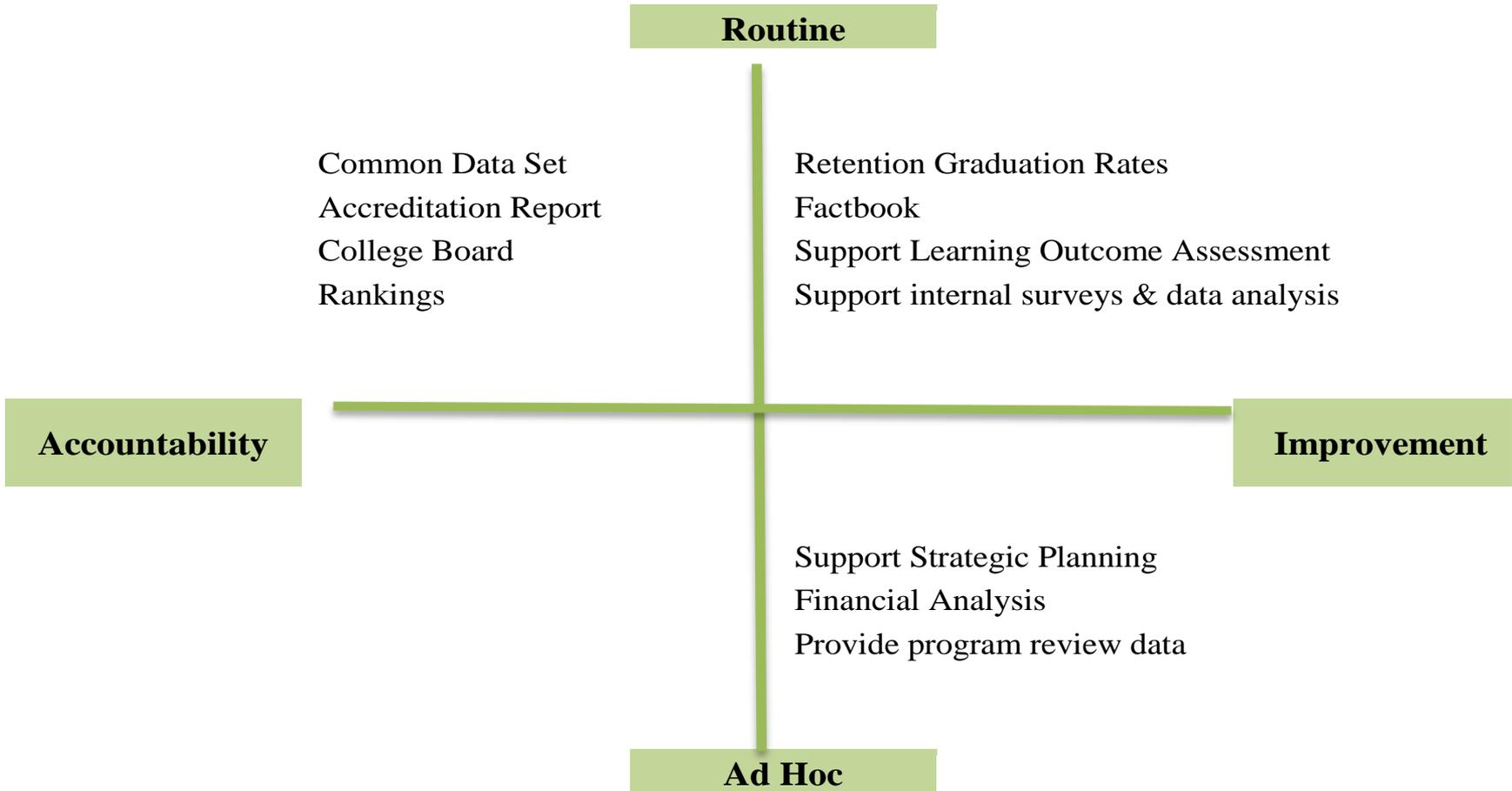
#### Outcomes assessment:

Institutional, Program & General Education

#### Survey research

- Campus climate research
- Institutional effectiveness
- Alumni studies





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# Plan to Measure OIRA Effectiveness

- I. Periodically conducting a self-study
- II. Assessment
  - I. Internal
  - II. External
- III. Cost effectiveness
- IV. Process and performance benchmarking
- V. Gap analysis
- VI. Improvement plan

# Self-Study Components

	<b>Component</b>	<b>Questions</b>
1	<b>Office Mission</b>	<p>Is it written?</p> <p>Consistent with institutional mission and with best practices in IR; Communicated to internal and external constituents (visible);</p> <p>Periodically reviewed and updated.</p>
2	<b>Human Resources</b>	<p>Are human resources sufficient to meet needs,</p> <p>Do they have necessary competencies to complete work,</p> <p>Are they provided with professional development opportunities, clear job descriptions and assignments,</p> <p>Do they have time to reflect and act proactively,</p> <p>Do they have good working relationship with administrative and academic units?</p>
3	<b>Office Resources</b>	<p>Do we have adequate hardware and software and budget,</p> <p>Do we have assistance available for programming needs, web design, statistical and research methodology, etc..</p>
4	<b>Workflow</b>	<p>Process of submission work requests, for accepting, assigning and prioritizing assignments;</p> <p>Use of tracking system to monitor progress;</p> <p>Automation of routine reports</p>
5	<b>Information access &amp; retrieval</b>	<p>Ease of access to live and archived data,</p> <p>Availability of data dictionary,</p> <p>Process of ensuring data integrity and reliability</p>
6	<b>Reports and other products</b>	<p>Verifying accuracy, distribution ,</p> <p>Availability of info on web,</p> <p>Process of backup and security of data.</p>

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# Assessment: Internal & External

1. Internal. Regularly obtaining customer feedback:
  - At completion of every work assignment,
  - annual brief surveys to rate experience and quality of products covering
    - ❑ website visibility; timeliness of delivery; knowledge of staff; responsiveness; staff professionalism;
    - ❑ Products: ease of use; accuracy and consistency; comprehensiveness.
      - ❑ Example from Ball State University (Knight, 2014) follows.
2. External review
  - Consultant
  - volunteer peer review



# Other Steps

- **Cost effectiveness of operations.** Analysis, compare direct costs with benefits accrued to the institution as a result of the work.
- **Benchmarking**
  - ❑ Process benchmarking. Study work procedures and processes in other successful institutions. Adopt successful practices to one's own advantage.
  - ❑ Performance benchmarking. Compares a set of measured outcomes to a numerical criteria or data point. Use of KPIs.
- Put results to work.
- **Conduct a gap analysis.**
  - ❑ Difference between one's current position and what it wants to achieve in the future.
- Determine what specific actions must be taken to **close the gap** and achieve the goals.
- ~~Prepare plans for improvement that include resources needed and timeline.~~

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# Conclusion

Well performing higher education systems need to

- **balance** between internal and external QA
- willingly engage in **critical self-evaluation** and self-regulation
- **invest** in strong quality culture aimed at mission
- incorporate evidence-based **transparency**

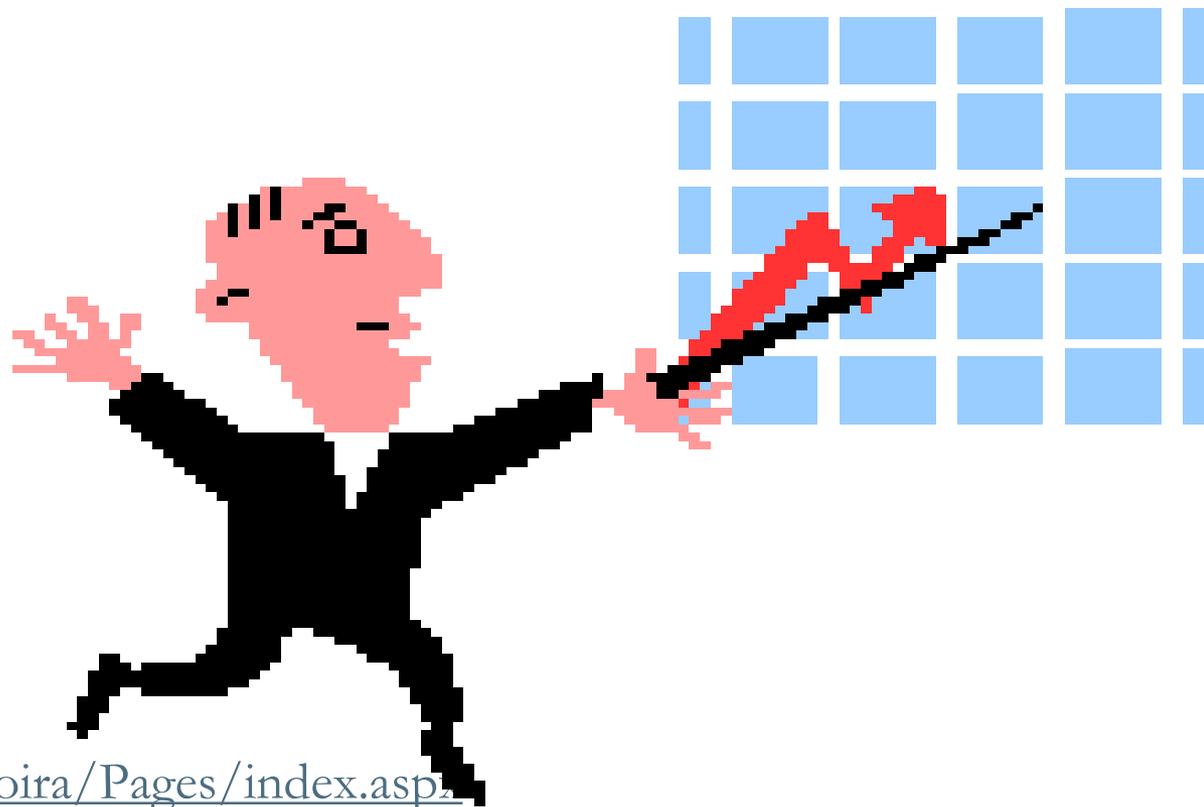
Above processes safeguard academic standards, and promote better learning opportunities and services for students in a turbulent and changing environment

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# Useful References

1. Chambers, S. (2007). *IR Activities. IR Application*, vol. 12. retrieved from <http://www.airweb.org/EducationAndEvents/Publications/ProfessionalFiles/Documents/irapps12.pdf>
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# *Thank YOU*



- OIRA Website

<http://www.aub.edu.lb/oira/Pages/index.aspx>

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