

# QAA

What does quality really mean?

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Quality Assurance**

# Outline

- Why quality matters
- Standards and quality
- How QAA assures quality
- Quality in Europe
- International quality assurance
- Transnational education
- MOOCs

# Why Quality Matters

## Principles of Quality Assurance

- Safeguard standards of higher education awards
- Assure the quality of learning
- Protect the interests of students
- Promote quality enhancement
- Secure the reputation of UK higher education

Principles apply to all learning opportunities  
regardless of location, mode of study or  
academic subject

# Academic standards and quality

## Standards

Threshold academic standards are the minimum level of achievement that a student has to demonstrate to be eligible for an academic award.

## Quality

HE providers are expected to ensure that appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning resources are provided for students

# The role of the QAA

The Agency's responsibility is to safeguard the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications, and to inform and encourage continuous improvement in the management of the quality of higher education

This is achieved by reviewing academic standards and quality, and providing nationally agreed reference points that help to define clear and explicit standards

# Range of activity

- Higher education institutions
- Further education colleges
- Private colleges
- Embedded colleges
- Foreign providers
- Specialist institutions
- Professional organisations
- MOOCs?



# Higher Education Review (HER)

- A process rather than an event.
- Based on a critical self-assessment
- Peer reviewers – selected from Universities
- Two-stage engagement: desk-based analysis and Institutional visit
- Judgments on quality and standards
- Published reports
- Follow-up activities including action-plans
- A six-year cycle for reviews

# Higher Education Review (HER)

The review team makes judgments on how the Institution:

- sets and maintains threshold academic standards
- manages the quality of students' learning opportunities
- enhances its educational provision
- manages the quality of its public information.



# Reference points

Define institutional practice in relation to sector standards

- The UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- Qualifications Framework
- Subject benchmark statements
- Programme specifications



# Quality Enhancement

Every student should benefit from the best learning experience possible:

- Judgments on institutional strategies for enhancement
- Guidance on quality improvement
- Highlight and disseminate good practice
- Overviews of review findings
- Thematic enquiries

# Quality in Europe

- The Bologna process (1999)
- European Higher Education Area
  - 47 countries
- European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)
- European Standards and Guidelines
- European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR)



# International Quality Assurance

- International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)
- Guidelines of Good Practice
- UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-border Higher Education (2005)
- Quality Beyond Boundaries (QBB)
- Quality Assurance of Cross-border Higher Education Project (QACHE)
- Trans-national Higher Education

# A Snapshot of UK TNE

Students studying for UK awards in over 200 different countries

598,925 students (2012-13):  
+13% on the previous year

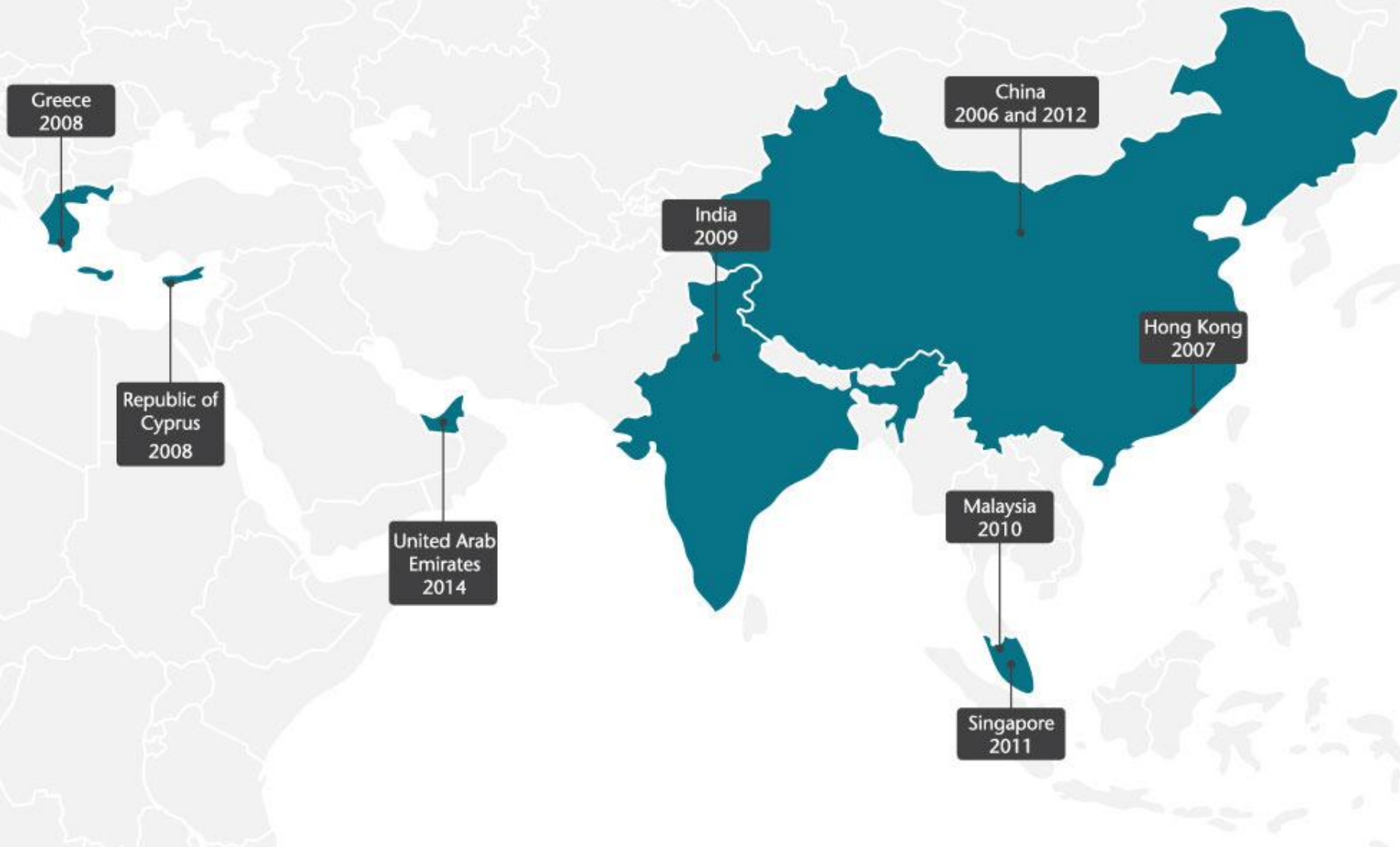
78% of UK higher education institutions now involved in some form of TNE

## Top 10 countries for UK TNE (2012-13, student numbers)

- |       |                      |
|-------|----------------------|
| i)    | Malaysia             |
| ii)   | Singapore            |
| iii)  | China                |
| iv)   | Pakistan             |
| v)    | Hong Kong            |
| iv)   | Nigeria              |
| vii)  | Ghana                |
| viii) | United Arab Emirates |
| ix)   | Ireland              |
| x)    | Trinidad and Tobago  |

Source of data: HESA (2012-13)

# UK TNE review activity



# QAA perspective on MOOCs

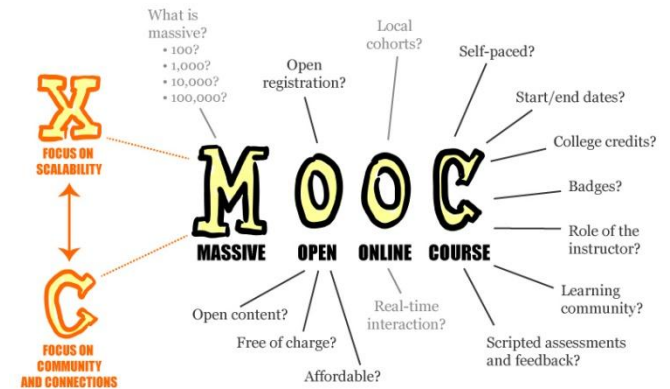
## QAA Statement

- securing quality
- recognising potential
- promoting good design

## MOOC toolkit

- Information, knowledge and resources
- Sharing of best practice [case studies]
- MOOC network – community of practice
- new approaches to quality assurance

## A QAA MOOC?



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