



Southern African Association for Institutional Research

Linking Quality Assurance and Institutional Research

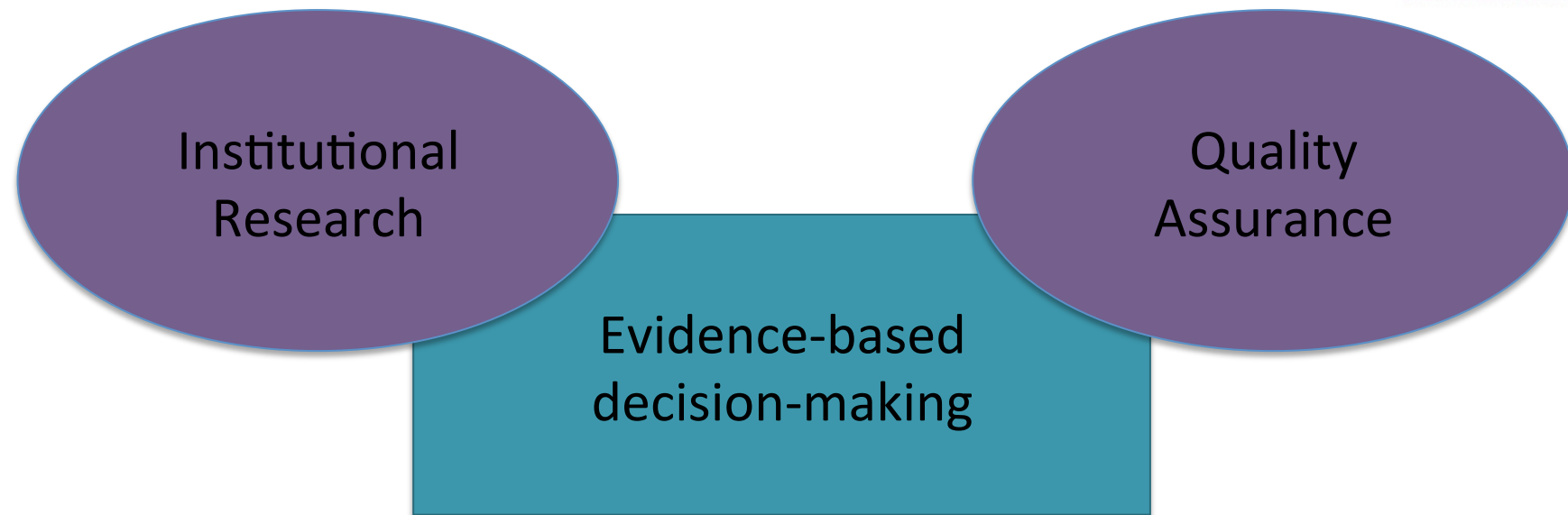
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Purpose of the chapter

- General recognition that both functions are important
- Increase in presence in institutional structures in various shapes and forms
- Assumption that they are not implemented in an integrated manner
- How do we ensure maximum institutional benefit?
- Explore the positioning and approach of SA institutions to QA and IR
- Explore how or whether QA and IR inform institutional decision-making

Common understanding



- Integration will result in tangible institutional benefit
- Shared definitions and assumptions
- Increased understanding of decisions
- Senseless compliance exercises become useful
- Thoughtful problem solving
- Shared understanding of institutional narrative

Theoretical framework

Integrated Model (IM) for Evidence-based Decision-making and Improvement Leimer (2012)

Integrated Institutional Effectiveness (IIE) Knight (2014)

- Intentional integration of multiple functions
- Develop institution-wide culture of evidence-based decision making
- Commit to continuous improvement through planning and new strategies
- Communicate the quality of programmes and effectiveness of operations
- Emphasize integrative planning to enhance institutional sustainability

Two components of IM

1

Multifunctional organisational structure

2

Leadership

Integrated Model (IM) = Real Integration



CHALLENGES

Complex leadership / facilitation of real integration
Clarity of roles and boundaries, access to information
Executive acceptance, reporting line
“Super-compliance” approach

Methodology

How are QA and IR functions in South African Higher Education Institutions (HEI) positioned to implement an integrated approach to generating institutional intelligence for evidence-based decision-making?

- Qualitative research
- Purposive sample of 6 private and 6 public institutions (size, offering, contact distance, level, etc.)
- Institutions actively conducting programme reviews
- Data collection
 - (a) Document analysis
 - (b) Interviews

Interviews

- IR practitioners
- QA professionals / Quality Manager
- Line report / manager

Preliminary Findings

- High level of understanding of benefits
- Disconnect between paper & practice
- Very little indication of integration, independent
- IR not informing programme reviews, separation
- Data used for very specific purposes
- High reliant on professional expertise, lack of skills
- Governance & organisational location