



UNITED NATIONS  
UNIVERSITY

**UNU-IAS**

Institute of Advanced Studies

# Quality Assurance at the United Nations University

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**2011 NIAD-UE University Evaluation Forum**  
Tokyo, 26 October 2011

# Mandate of UNU

“The United Nations University shall be an international community of scholars engaged in research, postgraduate training and the dissemination of knowledge....” (The Charter of UNU, Article 1, paragraph 1)

# Mission of UN University

- An international community of scholars
- A bridge between United Nations and the international academic community
- A think-tank for the UN system
- Research, teaching and capacity building, particularly in developing countries
- A platform for dialogue, innovative ideas and creative solutions

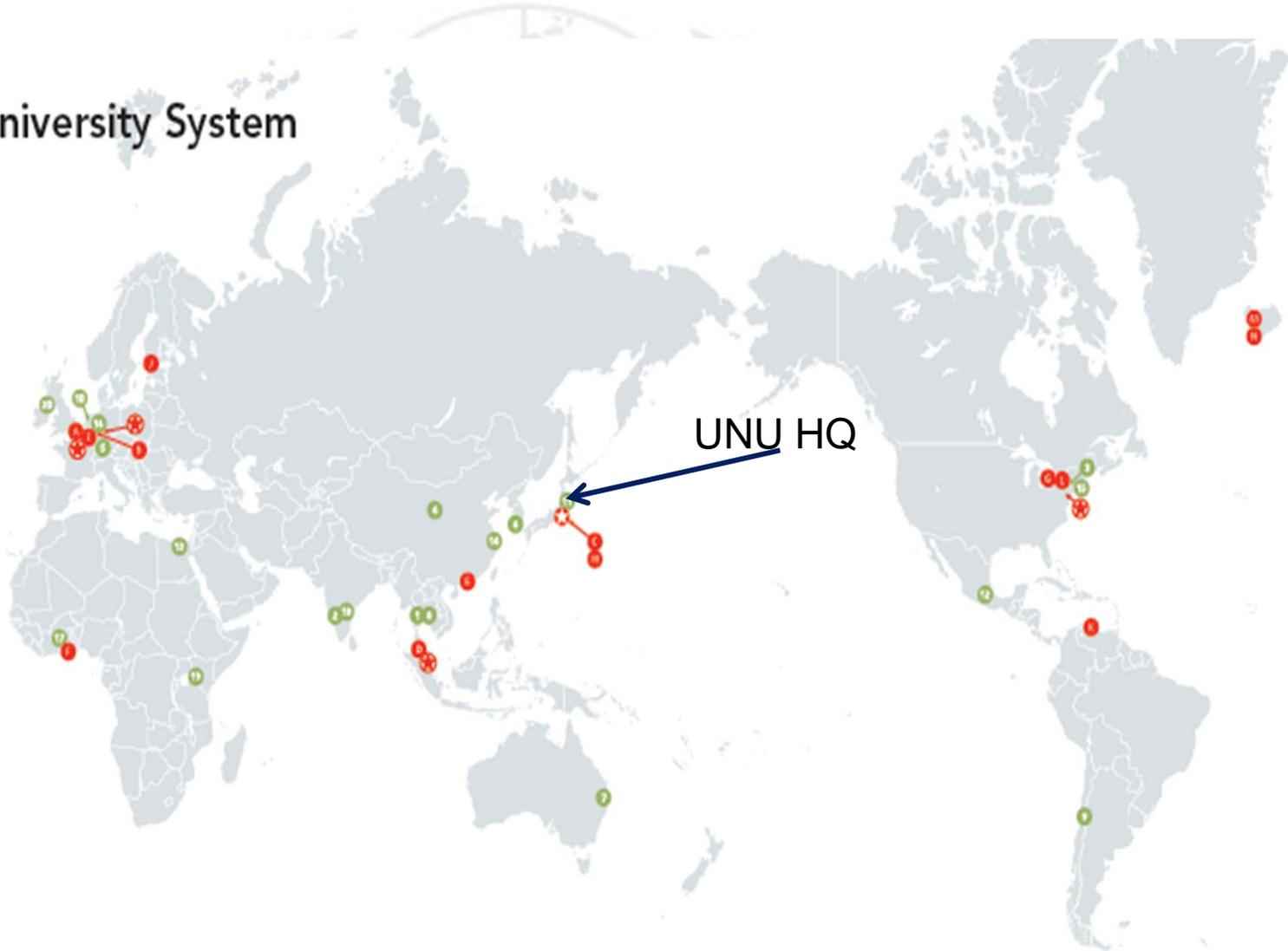
# UNU Vision

- ***Aspiring to be a world-class international research, teaching and capacity development institution that addresses the needs of present and future generations to live a decent life, in peace, in freedom, in safety and in good health.***

# UNU Vision

- UNU serves the United Nations and its Member States with state-of-the-art research and with accumulated knowledge in the areas of :
  - Peace, Security and Human Rights;
  - Development and Good Governance;
  - Population and Health;
  - Global Change and Sustainable Development;
  - Science, Technology and Society.
  - Sustainability as the all embracing goal

# The UN University System



# UN University Is Special

- Like many other ambitious academic institutions around the world, the UN University strives to be widely recognized as an international postgraduate teaching and research institution best known for:
- its emphasis on ensuring the highest possible quality in its research, teaching and academic support services;
- its strict adherence to the methods and tools of social and natural sciences and engineering;
- its trans-disciplinary and systems approach to research, teaching and applied policy work.

# UN University Is Special

- its high ethical standards, including integrity, trust, tolerance and acceptance of rights as well as obligations;
- its equity and openness in access to knowledge, research, teaching and capacity development and dissemination;
- its intellectual vitality and openness;
- its academic freedom and autonomy with commensurate accountability;
- its social responsibility and the environmental sustainability of its own operations.

## *Unlike* most other universities...

- Due to its special mission it is different in many respects:
- its global structure with institutes in several different countries and growing;
- being an institution of the United Nations, it works closely with many UN organizations and national government entities;
- it brings in experts from the diplomatic world and UN agencies to work closely on problems;
- it collaborates with best universities in both the developed and developing world;
- its focuses on problems and needs and not on disciplines.

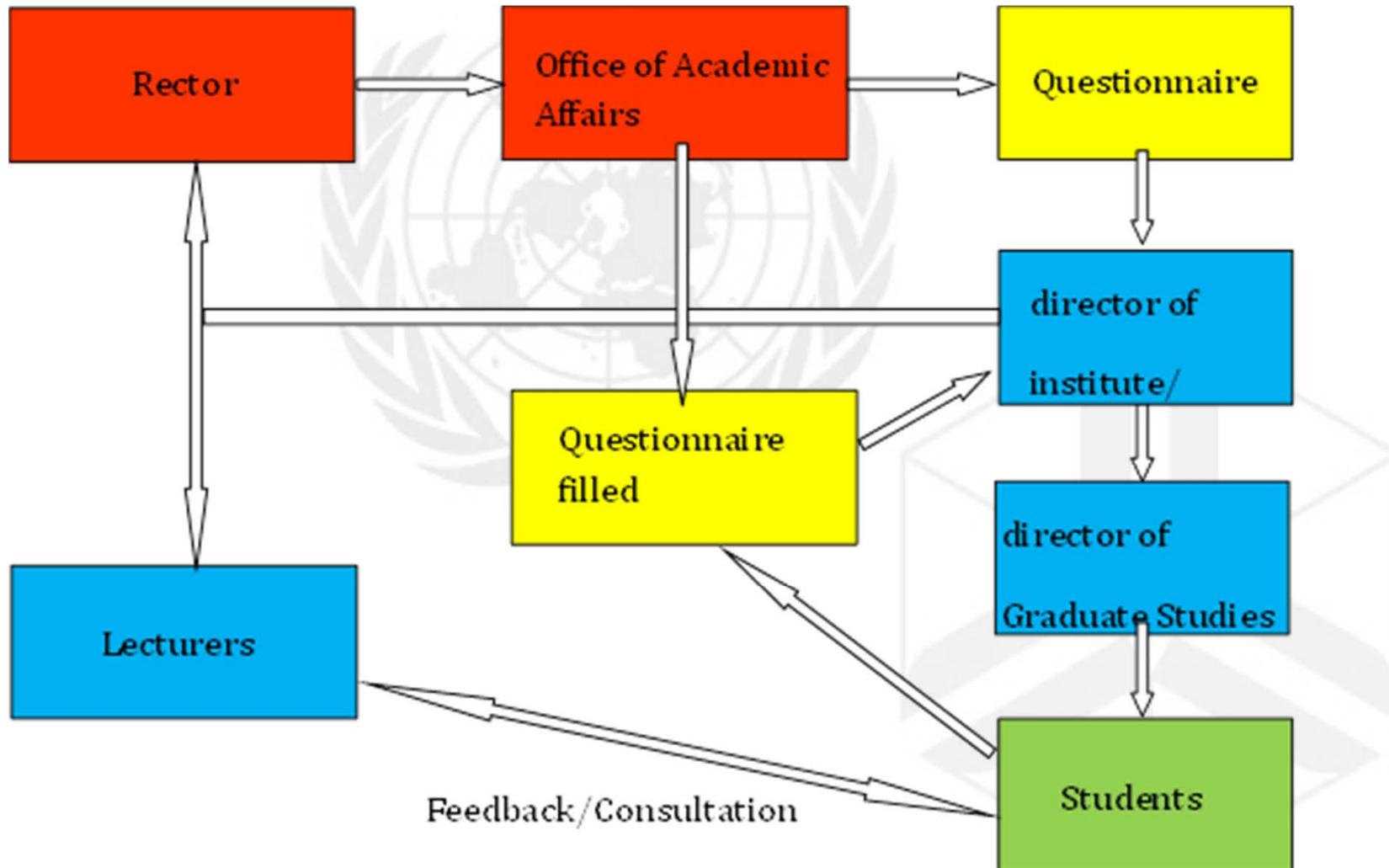
# General Principles of UNU's QA

- **Excellence:** aim for highest global academic standards;
- **Relevance:** respond to the aspirations and vital needs of its stakeholders, especially in the developing world;
- **Vision:** anticipatory thinking for timely and equitable identification of problems;
- **Priority:** aims to help solve the most urgent problems (poverty, climate, biodiversity, peace);
- **Integration:** integration of knowledge with a holistic approach (social, economic, natural, technological);
- **Leadership:** Rector and the Office of Academic Affairs guide the QA processes;
- **Subsidiarity:** Implementation at the institute/unit level.

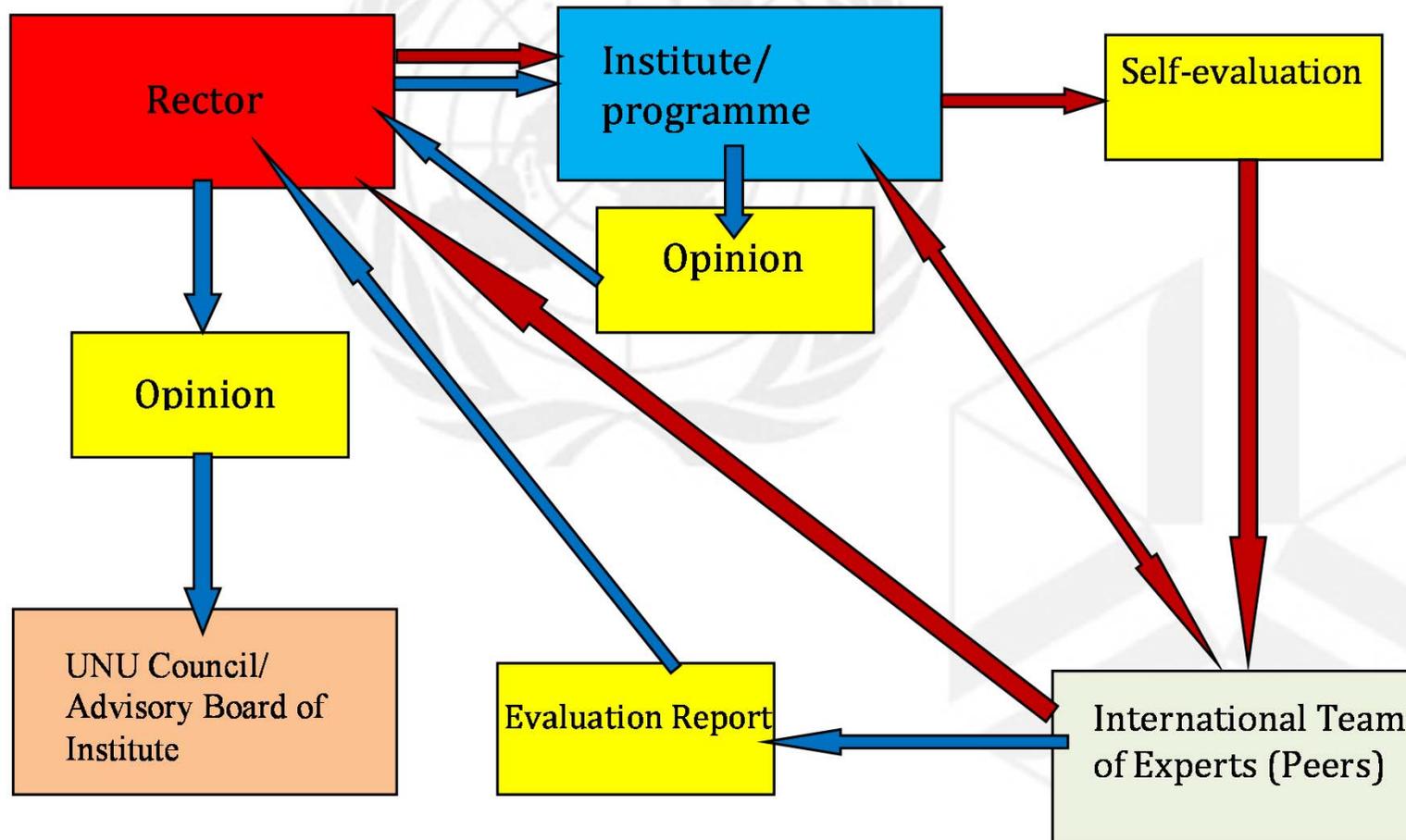
# UNU Quality Assurance

- Student evaluation of teaching and learning;
- UNU graduates survey (five years after graduation);
- Self-evaluation of UNU Institutes and Programs & Units;
- External peer evaluation of UNU Institutes (every five years);
- UNU personnel recruitment and appraisal
- Gender mainstreaming;
- Financial and administrative support services.

# UNU's Student Evaluation of Teaching



# Flow Chart of Peer-Review System at UNU



# Recruitment and Evaluation of Academics

- Quality of any university is based on the quality of its academic personnel;
- Students go to study and conduct research where they can find the best academics;
- Therefore recruiting and retaining the best people from around the world is a key aspect of our quality process;
- Nurturing and retaining qualified young academics;
- Academic review, retention and promotion of staff;
- Measuring quality, productivity and impact of research by deploying benchmarks and indicators;
- Reporting of academic output and activities.

# University Evaluation for Sustainability

- Education for sustainable development;
- Development of the science of sustainability;
- A growing number of universities from around the world teach and conduct research on sustainability related problems and issues;
- United Nations University is a leader in this field; working on an university appraisal system for sustainability;
- Increase and improve ESD practices and thus transform higher education for a sustainable society;
- Value universities that are striving for sustainable development in their mission, programs and activities.
- Working on tools for global evaluation of universities based on commitment to sustainability.

# UNU's Challenges

- How to evaluate interdisciplinary and applied problem-oriented work;
- UNU's academic work is focused on the science of sustainability and need novel evaluation tools;
- Ranking and evaluation of universities that conduct applied policy work for sustainable development;
- Measuring the impact of applied policy work is difficult challenge (UNU 7<sup>th</sup> in global think-tank ranking);
- No global standard or model to evaluate internal quality;
- Some comparability to traditional universities;
- We have to develop our own innovation to improve and measure the quality of our higher education activities.

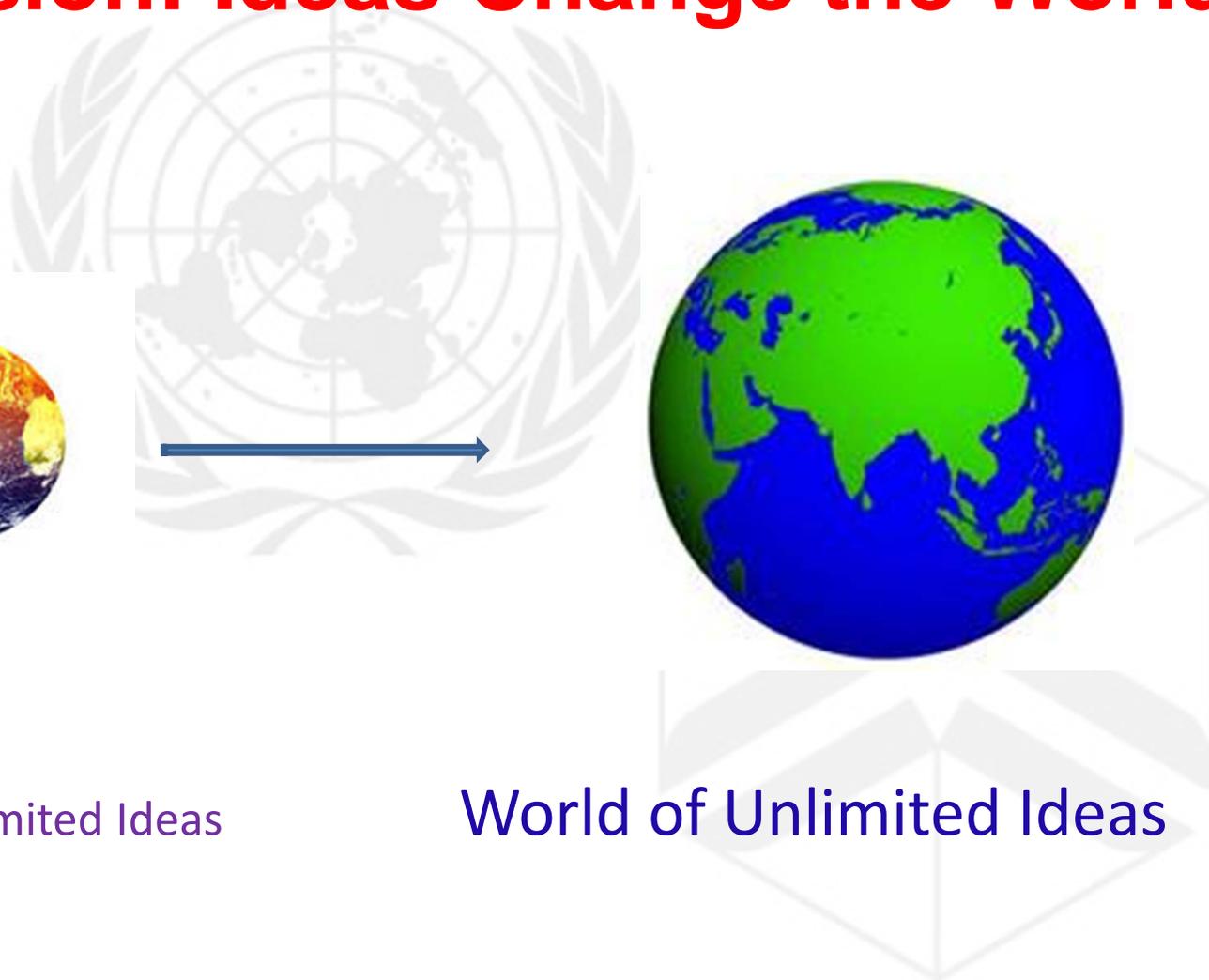
# UNU Vision: Ideas Change the World



World of Limited Ideas



World of Unlimited Ideas





**Thank you!**

