Technical Meeting To Prepare The African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM) Institutional Evaluations

External International Evaluations to support Quality Culture from Different Programmes

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So Why So Much on QA in HE in Africa

- Because QA is a process of ensuring

    - Relevance
    - Recognition
    - Functionality
    - Comparability

- Do we have a QA system in Africa that does this?

- So many initiative pointing to what?

- This is what HAQAA seeks to do.

Objective

To share experiences and some lessons from some of the QA initiatives. In doing this I will relate to our African Experience (AQRM), European Experience (IEP) and American Experience ACBSP. I will touch briefly on

✦ Why an International Accreditation

✦ Why UPSA choose ACBSP

✦ Challenges

✦ Lesson Learnt

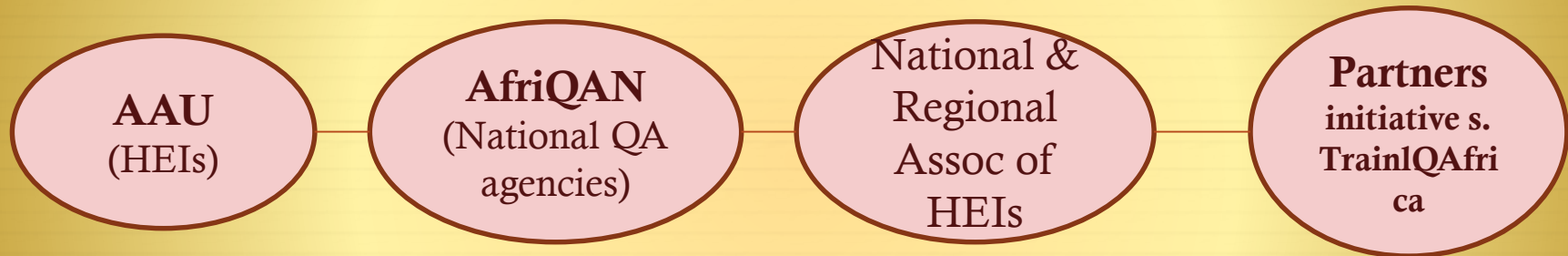✦ Connection with some African Quality Initiative, like Tunning

Background This Presentation

- Participation in a number of QA initiative in the Africa and Elsewhere

    - Quality – Connect IEP

    - AQRM

    - ACBSP (Accreditation Council For Business Schools and Programmes) America

    - UMultiRank

Strategies for Promoting QA in HE In Africa

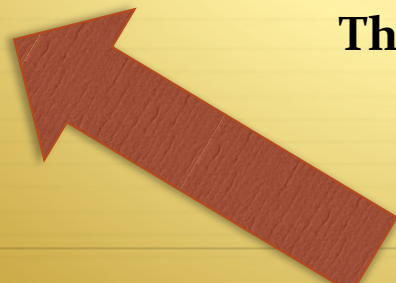## AU/COMEDAF Committee on HE
(AHERS Sub-committee)

The Catalyst & Driving Force

- **AAU** (HEIs)
- **AfriQAN** (National QA agencies)
- National & Regional Assoc of HEIs
- **Partners** initiative s. TrainlQAfrica

The Promoters

PAQAF	ASGs	AQAF (ICQAHEA)	AQRM	TUNNING	CONT. ACCREDITATION

The Instruments

HAQAA

Why a Harmonized Regional Quality System

- ✦ To benchmark international best practices

- ✦ To be internationally recognized, our qualifications are internationally recognized

- ✦ To compete in a global educational landscape

- ✦ To enhance performance in Ranking

- ✦ Cross boarder recognition

- ✦ Mutual Recognition Agreements

- ✦ Promote Credit Transfer

WHY PAQAF

✦ To provide a common QA language through common Standards, Norms and Practices in Africa

✦ To Allow for International Comparability while being sensitive to the needs and culture of the African Context

AQRM /ASG-QA

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✦ So we needed Standards and Guidelines

✦ We needed a methodology to ensure that the guidelines and standards are working and being implemented by institutions that choose to put their faith in that African Quality Systems.

The AQRM

✦ African Quality Rating Mechanism (AQRM) to establish an African system that will assure the performance of higher education institutions. This rating mechanism is an institional assessment tool that evaluates the performance of higher education institutions on six different indicators, rather than ranking the institutions recognizing that institutions have diffrerent missions and mandates. The aim is to assist higher education institutions in Africa to compare their performance against a set of common criteria through a self-evaluation exercise. This initiative started with a pilot self-rating exercise in 2010, followed by the participation of African institutions in the AQRM questionnaire and the completion of the self-rating instrument in 2014.

AQRM Methodology

- Has six (6) Standards, each with a set of criteria

    - Governance and Management

    - Infrastructure

    - Finance

    - Teaching and Learning

    - Research, Publications and Innovation

    - Community /Societal Engagement

- The rating is based on a point scale.

Specification of the Quality Rating

- Rating score less than   1.0   POOR
  Quality

- Rating score between 1.0 and 1.99   INSUFFICIENT
  Quality

- Rating score between 2.0 and 2.79   SATISFACTORY
  Quality

- Rating score between 2.8 and 3.5   GOOD Quality

Undertaking the Validation Exercise

In order to reach the forthcoming validation results, during the site visit of the university, the team performed the following activities:

- ✦ Meeting a total of nineteen (19) officers and students including

- ✦ - Deputy Vice Chancellor -Academic

- ✦ - Two international relations officers

- ✦ - Three officers of the Information Technology Department

- ✦ - Officers of the Quality Assurance Department

- ✦ - Two Academic staff from the College of Engineering (Mechanical and Chemical Departments)

- ✦ - Two Academic staff from the Medical College (Medical Research Center)

- ✦ - The Director of the University Foundation

- ✦ - The Officer of the Institutional Intelligence

- ✦ - A group of five students including local, international, undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Site Visits

* The University buildings and the learning facilities of the two campuses.

* The classrooms, laboratories, libraries and computer centre at the two campuses

* The college of engineering workshops (chemical and mechanical departments)

* The medical school research centers including the HIV, the Genom and the molecular   bio

* Logy research centers

* The Information technology control rooms and related facilities

The Institutional Evaluation Programme

✦ IEP is a institutional evaluation tool based on self and second part assessment that the Institution can use to assure itself that:

- It is achieving its mission

- It standards and objectives are adequate

- Its is creating and delivering real value to stakeholders

- It mechanisms are working

- It can change and improve

✦ A view from the Light House

Data Collection

✦ Data was collected August 2011 – January 2012 through interviews with key stakeholders, reviews of Minutes of meetings of the Self Evaluation Team (SET) meetings, observations at the self evaluation team meetings, existing records and personal notes kept on the project.

✦ Follow-up interviews were held with Management of the UPSA and the self Evaluation Team. This was to find out their views and impressions about the process after the first phase of the project. To uncover the converging lines of inquiry and patterns

IEP as a Tool for Internal Accountability

✦ IEP is a self evaluation tool, that the Institution can use to assure itself that:

- It is achieving its mission
- Creating and Delivering value to stakeholders
- It mechanisms are working
- It can change and improve

✦ It does this by asking the Institution to answer four questions

- What is the Institution trying to do?
- How is the Institution trying to do it?
- How does it know it works?
- How does it change in order to improve?

IEP as a Transparency and Accountability Tool

✦ The IEP uses four questions to achieve its objectives:

- **What is the Institution trying to do** (Mission, Vision, values, governance)

- **How the Institution trying to do it** (Strategies, procedures, norms, governance)

- **How does the Institution know it works** (Feed back mechanisms from key stakeholders)

- **How does the Institution change in order to improve**   (Assessments, Performance management, measurement and evaluations, learning and growth initiatives)

Data Analysis

✦ Data gathered from the interviews, minutes of meetings of the self evaluation team meeting, observations, personal notes and records were analyzed using a content analysis approach and heuristically with the view of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the IEP using the four thematic questions of the IEP.

✦ The Data was collected after the first and second Institutional Visits when the report of the visitation Team had not yet been submitted to avoid any biases in responses. The follow-up was done to validate observation and initial finding on the perception of the strengths and weaknesses of the IEP as a governance tool. This was done to uncover converging lines of inquiry and patterns and identify factors that may be associated with the observations made.

IEP as a Tool for Transparency and Accountability

- ✦ If Institutions can answer these four questions

- ✦ Show evidence of how they know what the institution does is working

- ✦ Be mindful of governance requirements and have internal mechanisms for reporting back to the public and its stakeholders, external accountability would simply become a formality.

- ✦ If the institutions can focus not merely on what the Institution is doing right but on institutional learning, growth and improvement, accountably would be guaranteed and transparency may be present

Why UPSA Choose ACBSP

- No African Continental Body for Accreditation

- ACBSP Recognized by CHEA

- ACBSP has a global character not only limited to the US.

- ACBSP is an Association of universities around the world, with the headquarters in the USA. The secretariat manages and advances the Council

- Has over 2000 schools in over 100 countries around the world

- Learn from members

- To have a global network of peers to interact with for the purposes of internationalization (Collaborations, exchanges, dual programmes)

- Promote the UPSA brand internationally

The Process of gaining Accreditation with ACBSP

Apply to be come a member of the Association

Apply for Accreditation

Receive the Accreditation Requirements (ASG-QA)

Participate in ACBSP annual conference and be trained

Be assigned a mentor to help you with self assessment and preparation SAR

The mentor submits a letter of satisfaction to proceed

Secretariat writes to you to submit an application for SAR

After satisfactory review of report a date is set for visitation team

Three days of Assessment by visitation

Visitation submits report

Commission review report

Granted, or conditional or refused

Entire process takes a minimum of thre (3) years

The Requirements

- ✦ Leadership

- ✦ Strategic Management

- ✦ Student and Stakeholder Focus

- ✦ Measurement and Analysis

- ✦ Faculty Credentials

- ✦ Business Process Management

Connecting the African Quality Initiatives

✦ Many similarities few differences, yet they all connect

✦ Programmatic or Discipline level Benchmarks are similar to the Tunning Project currently ongoing.

✦ Need to Scale up the Tunning through national initiatives

✦ How do we access whether universities are achieving the expected learning outcomes?

✦ Only at the point of work through tracer studies?

✦ Who should implement this? A national or continental accrediting body? Should it be an accreditation agency or an Association of Universities in Africa

✦ Would it be necessary for National Bodies to have a repository where performance of outgoing students may be compared on the basis of some national tests

✦ What will the comparability of such performance results mean?

✦ Can such a process enhance quality?

Lessons Learnt

- Self Evaluation is the most effective tool for developing and continually improving institutional performance, accountability and transparency only if the results is made available or published.

- There is always need for follow up to see whether recommendations are being implemented unless the institution is very committed to improvement because of competition.

- It require effective integrated information management Critical data collection on key parameter was quite weak at the national and institutional level

Lessons Learnt

- Institutional needs has to be planned and coherent data collection and performance analyzed and reported

- Institutional self reporting mechanisms weak

- AQRM and IEP have no incentive for the Institutions to make them shake to have it, unlike the ACBSP.

- AQRM have clear Standards and Criteria and ratings, IEP does not.

- IEP have clearer meaning and impact for my institution than the AQRM, though no ratings, because of the nature of the reports and the dissemination of the report. E.g at the end of the IEP all instutional focal Persons and Assessors had to met at Aveiro in Portogal to discuss the results and findings. That did not happen for us in AQRM.

- Yet, the publication of the pilot report of the AQRM was instructive, because my institution was happy to pull it out each time, because of its comparative nature which is not in IEP

- ACBSP combines aspects of both the AQRM and IEP, just that it give you recognition at the end of the exercise to say you have an accreditation with them or not because you did not meet certain standards or criteria satisfactorily. That accreditation label is what makes institutions shake and even pay to go through the process. It is a mark of confidence.

- Mind set of members would have to be prepared for transparency and accountability behaviors and attitudes, it requires everybody's involvement. Systems and tools alone are not enough

My Take on This

✦ AQRM is what we need as a rallying point for harmonization in Africa.

✦ AQRM is not a tool or instrument but a methodology

✦ AQRM is the Vehicle for implementing the ASG-QA

✦ AQRM needs a muscle and that would be the voluntary African Accreditation Label, which should not be far fetched

✦ ASQ-QA should incorporate both Institutional and some Concerns for Programme learning Outcomes, this where Tunning comes in.

✦ In the End, PAQAF Through AQRM and the ASG-QA should provide Relevance, Recognition, Functionality and Comparability of Higher Education In Africa.

Lessons Learnt

- Whereas national accreditation seem like an assessment of control mechanism this process is more of a development and reward process

- Mentor concept is not part of national accreditation

- Africa Needs a self sustaining Accreditation Body

- The process, concept and practices ACBSP is self sustaining

- It is a chain of SBUs supporting each other.

Thank You

Challenges with the Implementation the IEP

Establishing the Self Evaluation Team, - how big or small should it be, who to be part or not part

Training of the SET, the techniques to use to elicit information , without stepping on toes

Orienting the entire institution to accept the concept and not to see it as a policing activity

Defining the working approach

Research into National Labour Trends, and other critical analysis etc

Self Assessment reviews and Consultations, the dilemma of honesty versus loyalty

Our Experience With The IEP

✦ Very reflective and effective

✦ Time consuming

✦ Institution must have an information or Institutional level research unit to be collating and doing critical analysis as well as analyzing feed back data for the institution not on adhoc basis

✦ Institutional Management should have time to critically analyze reports and give feedback to members and the public.

Learning Outcomes and Measurement and Analysis

- Institutions have to show three data sets of how they demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes and importantly how their performance compares with other member institutions.

- The point is to depart from the Lizard characteristics of universities, who test their students and nod in self affirmation

- Comparability should be a key characteristic of quality of HEIs
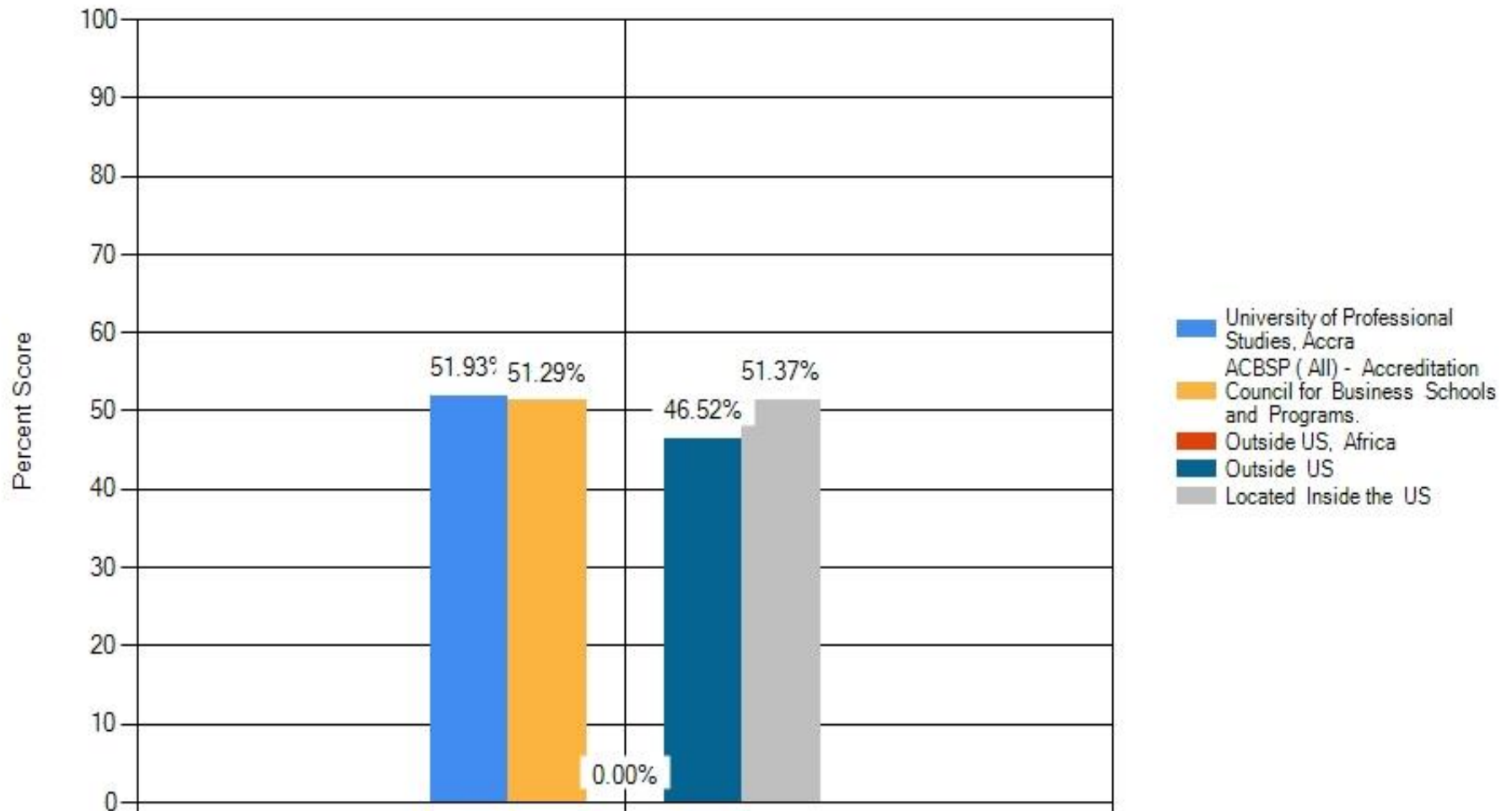
OUTBOUND EXAMINATION RESULTS

ACBSP ACCREDITATION

UNDERGRADUATE OUTBOUND EXAMS
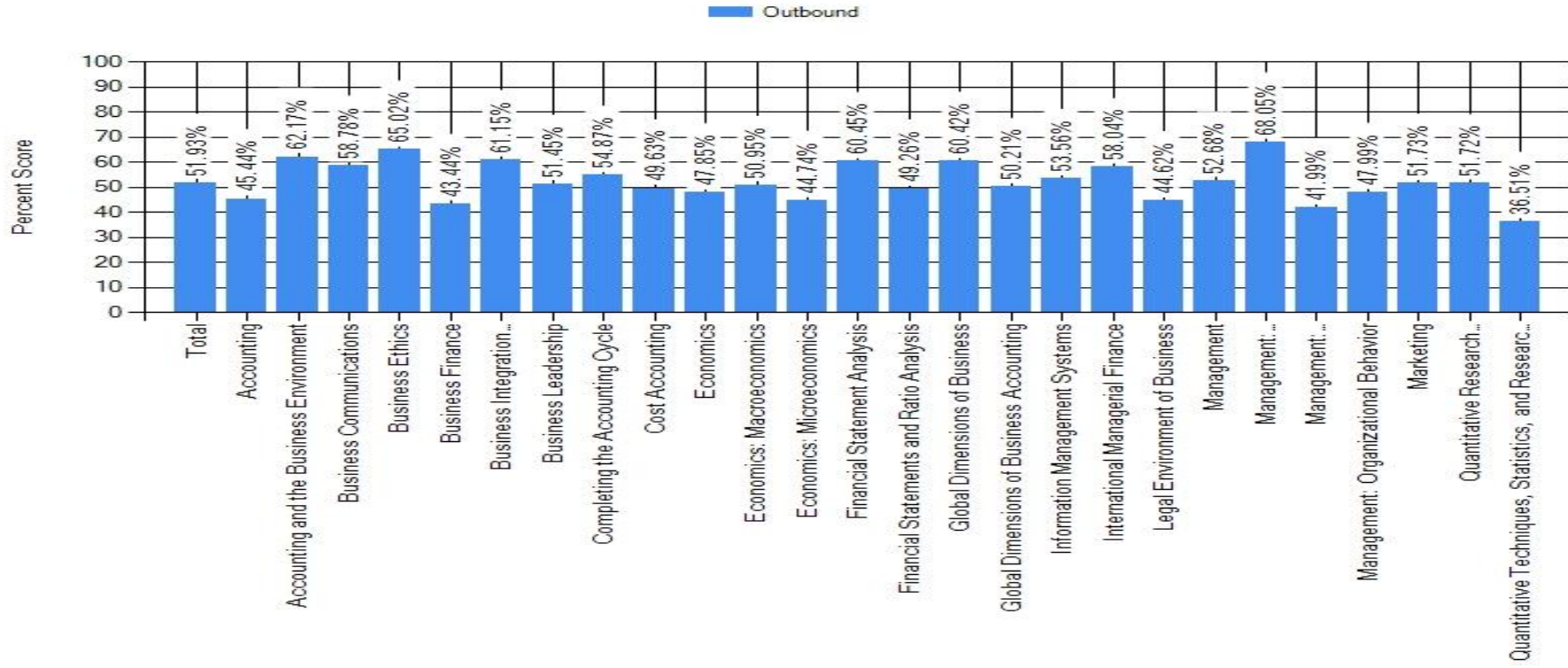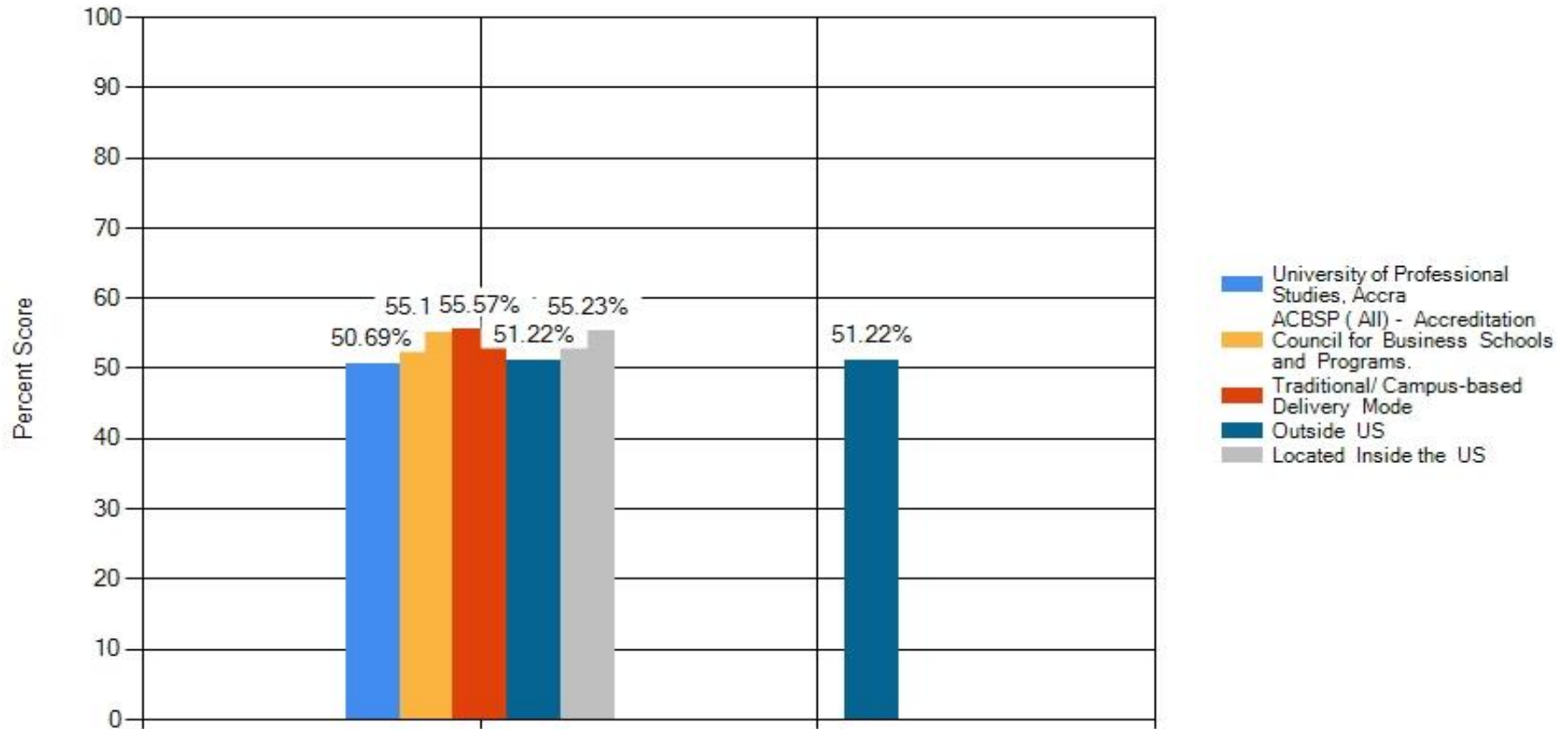
Compared to the Different

Statistical Comparison

- 0.64% Difference with the ACBSP (All) - Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs Aggregate

- 51.93% Difference with the Outside US, Africa Aggregate

- 5.41% Difference with the Outside US Aggregate

- 0.56% Difference with the Located Inside the US Aggregate

SOGS- Outbound Results Compared to the Different

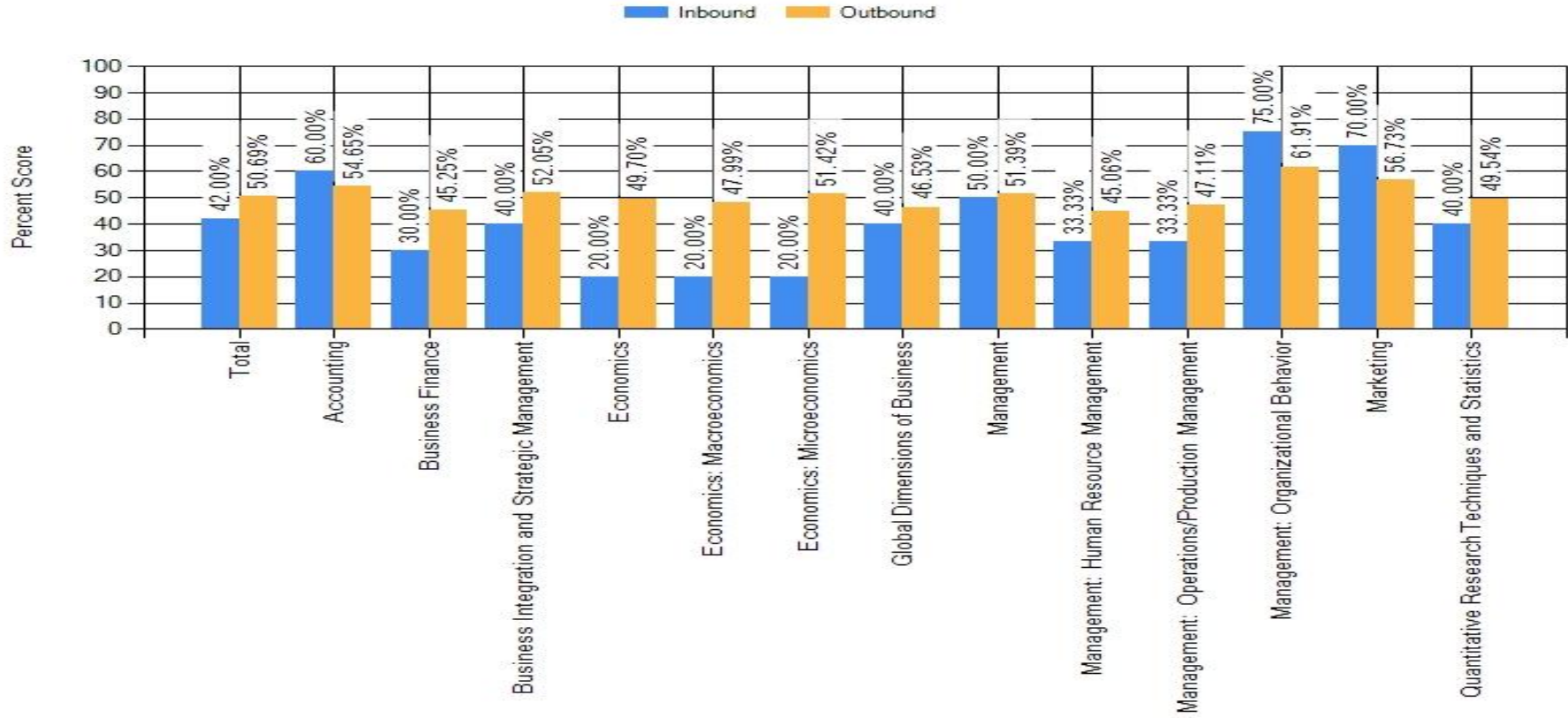# SOGs Statistics Comparison

- -4.47% Difference with the ACBSP (All) - Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs. Aggregate

- -4.88% Difference with the Traditional/ Campus-based Delivery Mode Aggregate-0.53% Difference with the Outside US Aggregate

- -0.53% Difference with the Outside US Aggregate

- 4.54% Difference with the Located Inside the US Aggregate

Graduate results- Outbound compared to Inbound

Legend: Inbound, Outbound

Category	Inbound	Outbound
Total	42.00%	50.69%
Accounting	60.00%	54.65%
Business Finance	30.00%	45.25%
Business Integration and Strategic Management	40.00%	52.05%
Economics	20.00%	49.70%
Economics: Macroeconomics	20.00%	47.99%
Economics: Microeconomics	20.00%	51.42%
Global Dimensions of Business	40.00%	46.53%
Management	50.00%	51.39%
Management: Human Resource Management	33.33%	45.06%
Management: Operations/Production Management	33.33%	47.11%
Management: Organizational Behavior	75.00%	61.91%
Marketing	70.00%	56.73%
Quantitative Research Techniques and Statistics	40.00%	49.54%

Challenges

- Information and data management was quite challenging

- We had to create an accreditation library.

- Getting the commitment of the various internal stakeholders, because the process is a lot of work and combining it with routine work is not easy.

- No national or regional data on student performance for comparism because UPSA is the first to seek accreditiation with ACBSP

- No national or regional data on labour market

Way Forward

✦ There are three ways to learn a thing

1. By Finding out or figuring out yourself, the noblest

2. By experiencing it your own way, the most expensive

3. By learning from those who have gone ahead of you, the easiest.

When a dwarf stands on the shoulders of a giant, the dwarf can see what the giant sees and probably further.

Which way does Africa want to go with the continental initiative?