

Opportunities for Student Participation in Quality Assurance

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Purpose

Provide an overview of:

- What is Quality Assurance (QA)?
- Who are the main Ontario players in higher ed QA?
- Why involve students in QA?

- Examples of student involvement in QA in other jurisdictions
- Involvement of students in Canada: research results
- Potential opportunities for student involvement in QA

What is Quality Assurance?



Five categories or ways of thinking about **quality** (Harvey and Green, 1993)

The most appropriate definitions of quality for higher ed are

1. **Fitness for purpose** - Relates quality to a purpose, defined by the provider.
2. **Transformation** - Enhancing and empowering the student



The term **Quality Assurance** refers to “systematic, structured and continuous attention to quality in terms of quality maintenance and improvement” (Vroeijenstijn, 1995)

Approaches to Quality

- The three main approaches are **accreditation**, **assessment** and **audit**
- Both accreditation and assessment monitor the quality of teaching and learning
- Audit focuses on internal procedures adopted by a HEI in order to achieve its objectives
- All three are usually conducted by independent or arms-length agencies



Ontario's main players in Quality Assurance



Ontario College Quality Assurance Service

Service de l'assurance de la qualité des collèges de l'Ontario

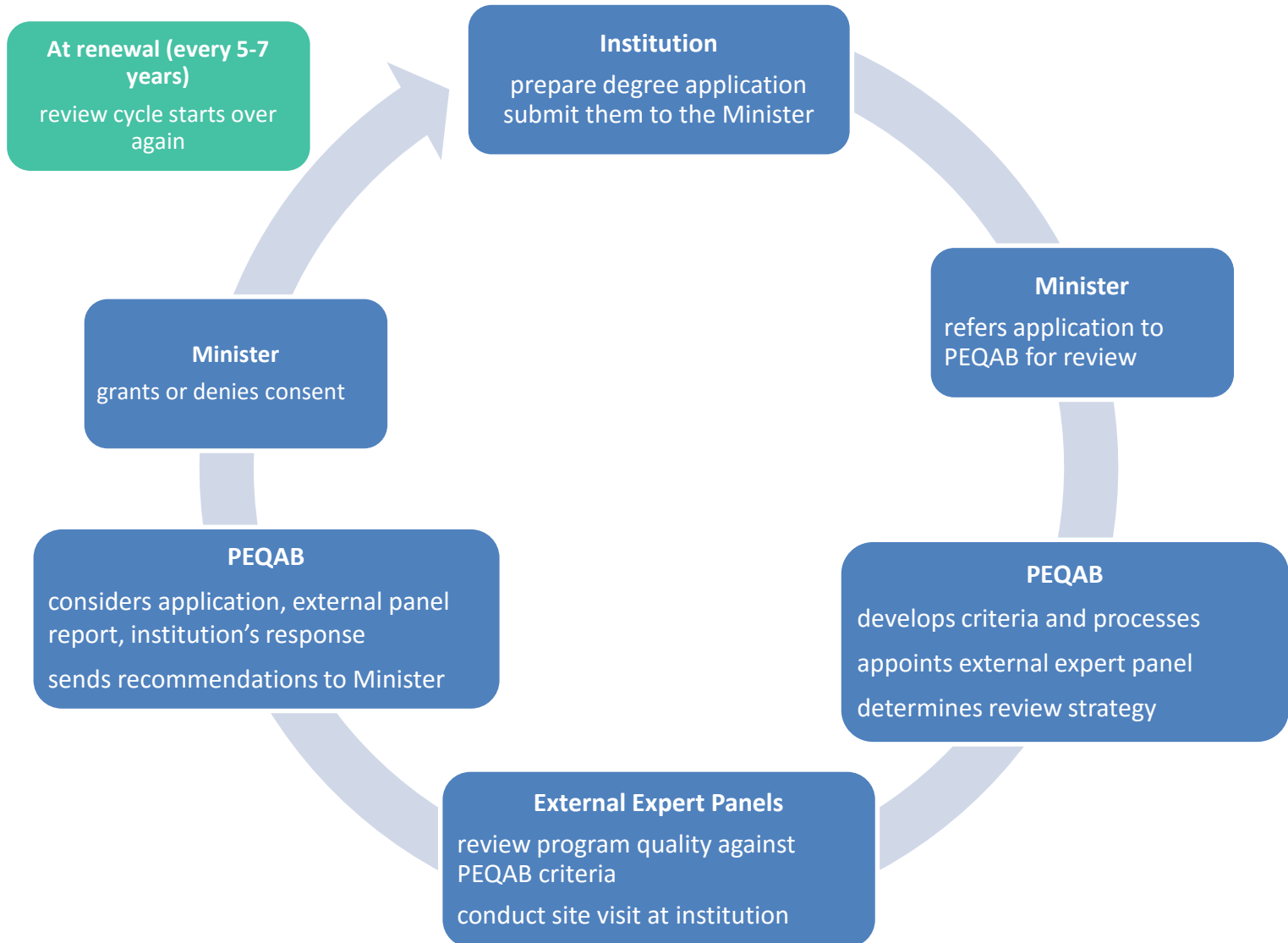


ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES
COUNCIL on QUALITY ASSURANCE

PEQAB

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PEQAB – QA Processes: Degree Program Review Cycle



“The Role of Students in Quality Assurance Activities in Canada”

- 2016/2017 joint research project PEQAB and Seneca College
- Authored by Mary Catharine Lennon (PEQAB), Tracey McCutcheon (Seneca), Janna Luettmann (PEQAB) and Yvonne Zhang (Seneca)
- Publication under development

Why involve students in QA?



In the 1990s, students became more and more recognised as necessary and **desirable participants** in the QA of higher education in Europe (Crosier et al, 2007).

Heightened focus on continuous quality improvement, value for money, and fitness for purpose, requires the voice of students be included.

Recognition that student voices are critical in **shaping higher ed** is gaining momentum.

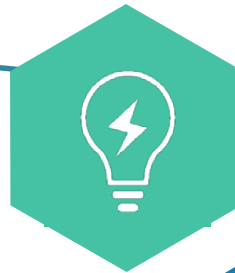
The European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for Quality Assurance explicitly call for the “involvement of **student bodies as active partners** in international, national and institutional levels in the development, monitoring and maintenance of quality provision” (Galán Palomares, 2012).

Why involve students in QA?

Diverse student body requires a **partnership** between students, universities, and external agencies (Shah, Hartman, & Hastings, 2014)



Students often provide **new solutions** previously not considered (Galán Palomares, 2012)



Student involvement is a **critical dimension** for quality improvement (Garwe, 2015)



Institutional QA cannot **function** properly without honest consideration of the student perspective (Banaszac, 2015)



Enhanced student learning (Coates & McCormick, 2014)



Strengthens **credibility** of quality assurance processes (Elassy, 2013)



Empowers students for their learning, **promotes dialogue** between institution and students (Gvaramadze, 2011)

Range of **student involvement**



Student involvement in QA can

- be **internal** (student involvement in QA within their own institutions) and
- be **external** (student involvement in external QA processes e.g. students on external expert review panels or as interviewees during site visit by an external panel)
- occur **within the processes of quality assurance agencies** (e.g. student membership on QA boards or committees)

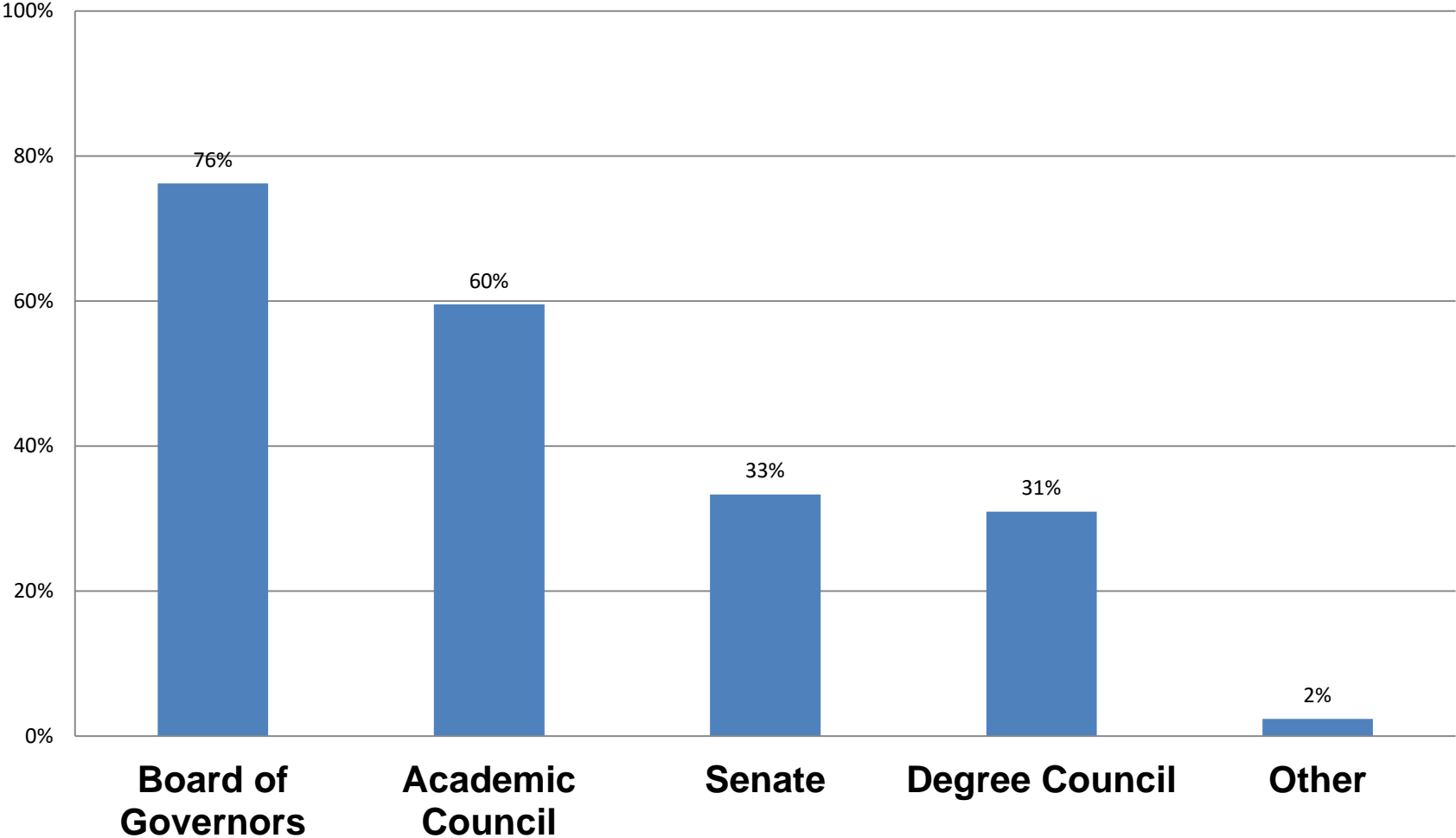
Examples

- In Finland many universities 50% of each teaching development teams are students - **internal**
- In Scotland students regularly respond to QA-related questionnaires, participate in QA-related committees, and involve themselves in direct QA procedures – **internal**
- Several countries have developed specific experts' pool where students are included (e.g. Norway, Austria, Germany) – **external**
- In Germany it is mandatory that students serve on the boards of the various accreditation agencies - **within the processes of QA agencies**

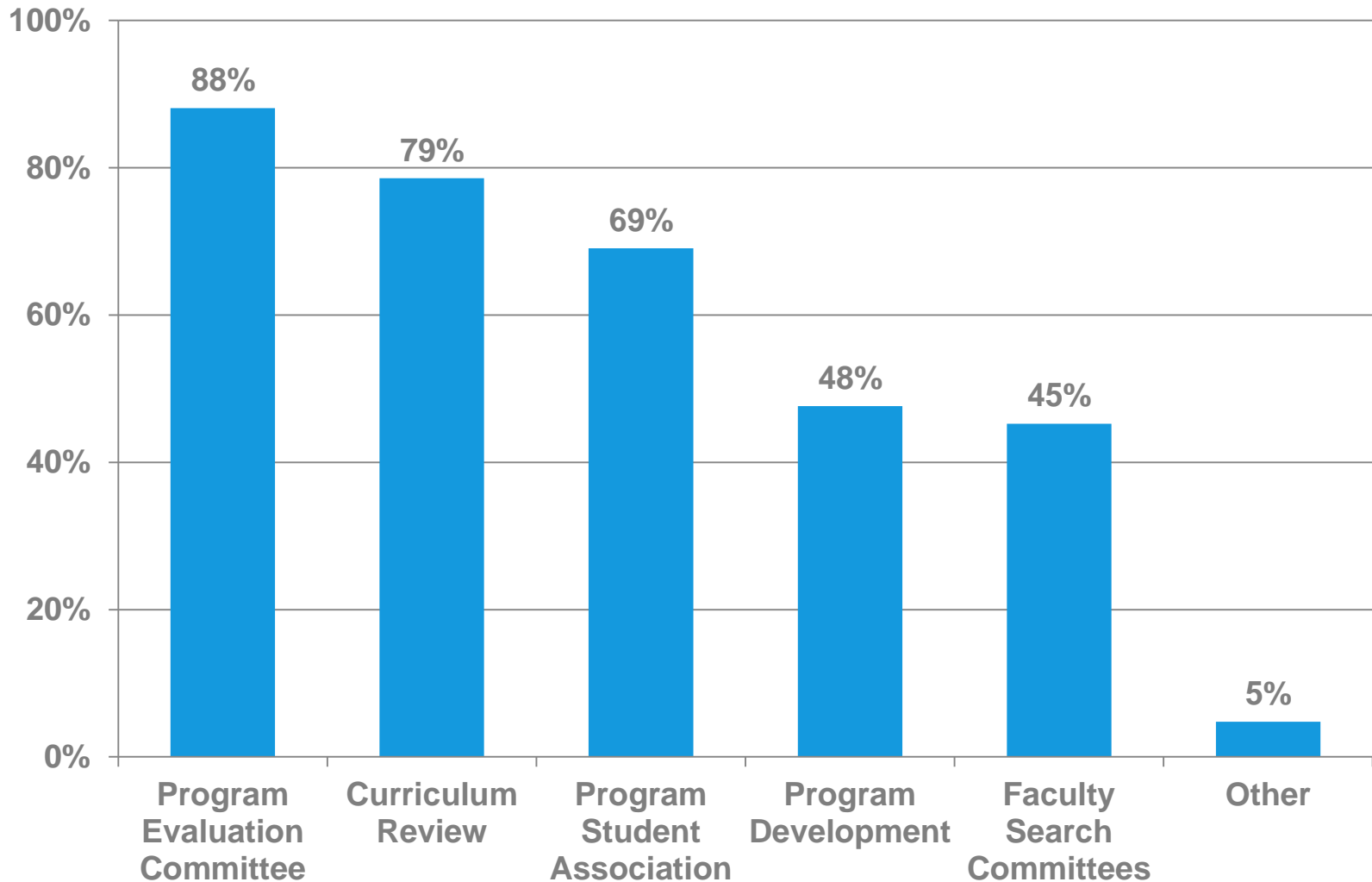
Research by PEQAB and Seneca College (2016/2017)

- 1. What is the nature of student involvement in internal and external quality assurance practices across Canadian colleges and universities?**
- 2. How is the role of the student articulated within higher education quality assurance policies across Canada?**
- 3. How do Canadian higher education quality assurance policies and practices (in relation to student participation) compare to the international landscape?**

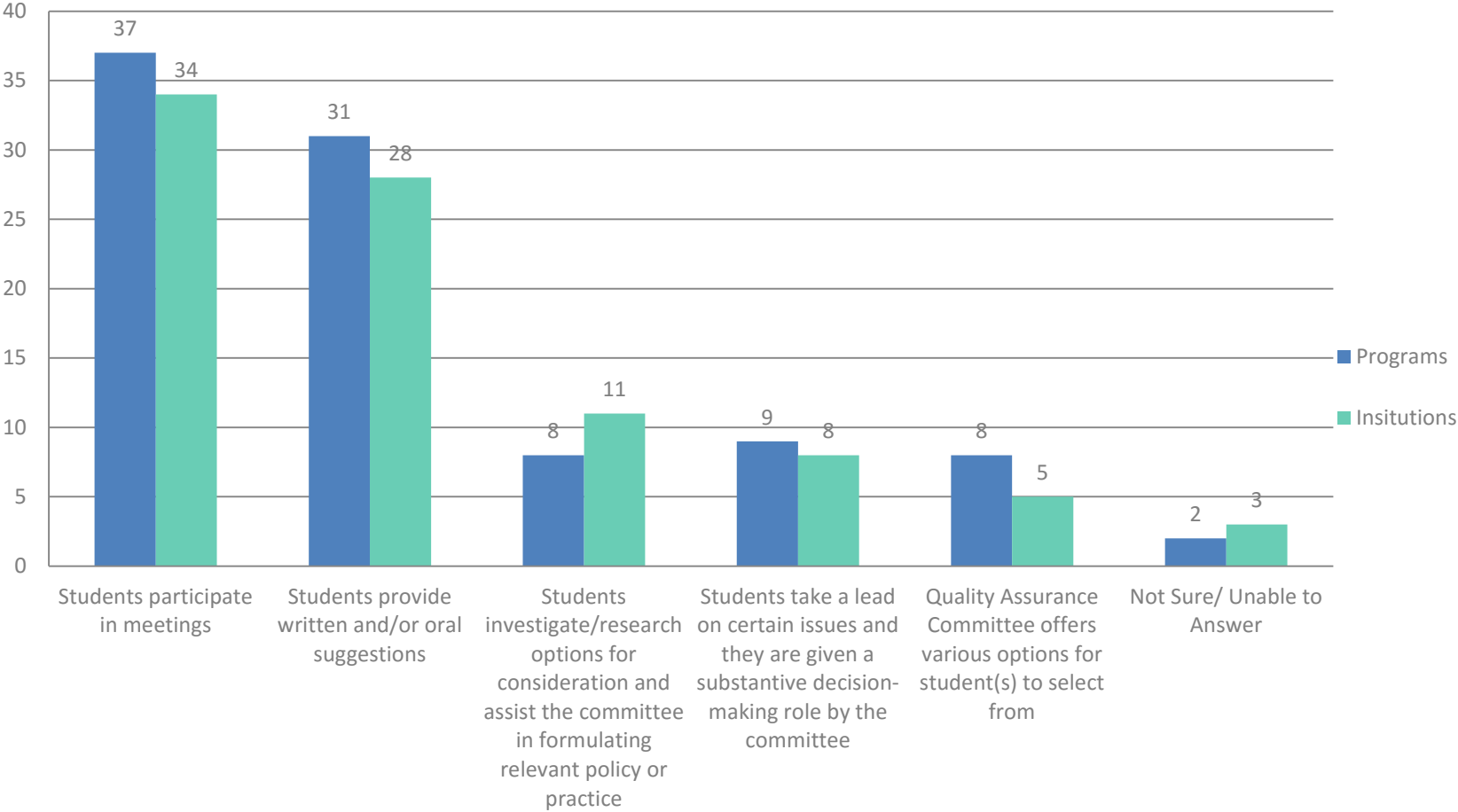
Institutional Level Activities Involving Students



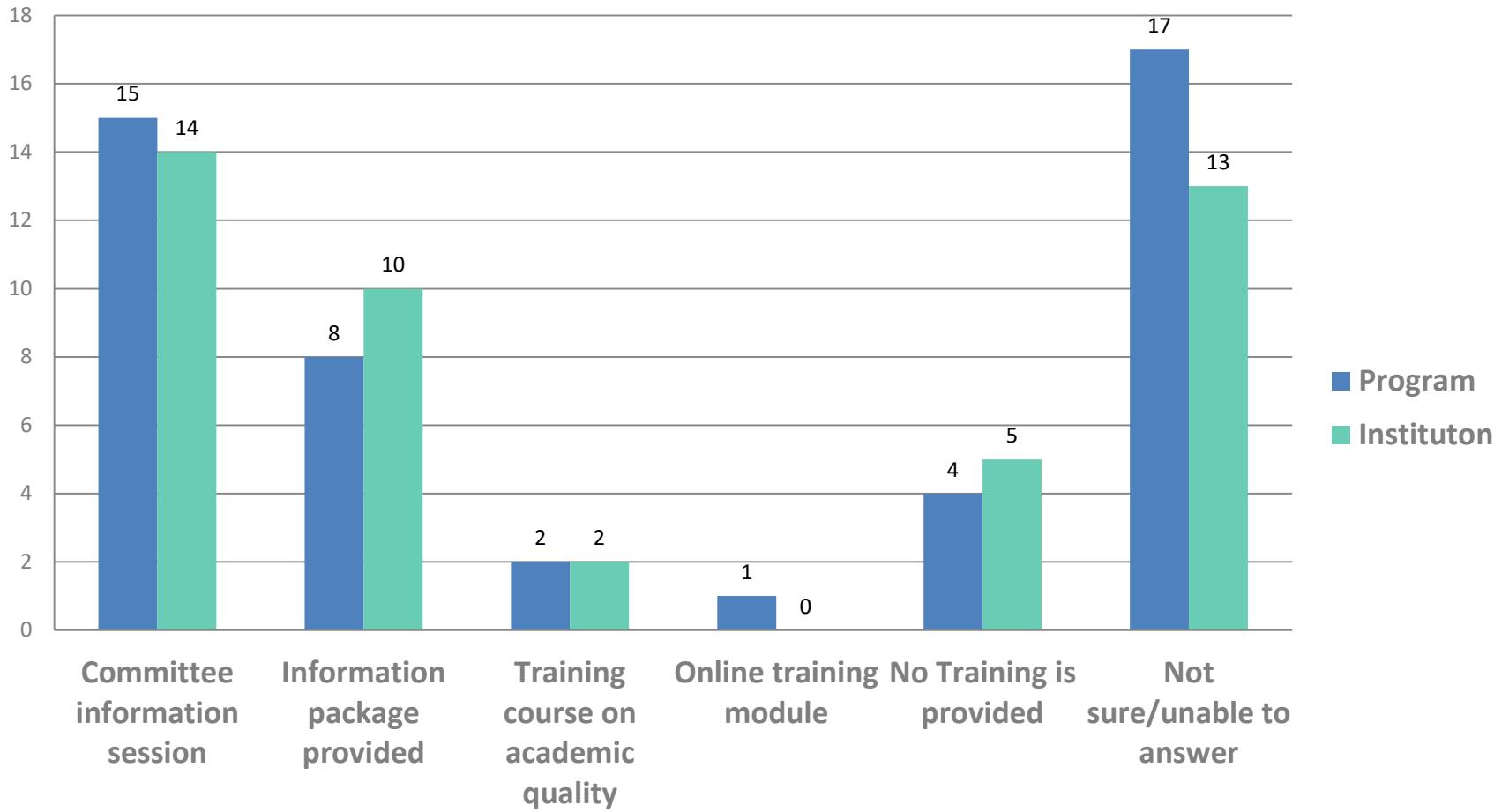
Program level activities involving students



Degree of Student Participation in QA Activities



QA Training Provided to Students



Discussion questions

- How can you see students engaging more in program quality enhancement and assurance
- How can you see students engaging more in institutional quality enhancement and assurance
- What supports would help student engage in these activities?

For more **Information/Feedback** contact:

<http://www.peqab.ca>

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