



**FIGHTING FOR
STUDENT'S RIGHTS
SINCE 1982**



Students and Quality in Higher Education: Challenges, Expectations, and Guidelines for the Future

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President of ESU





What is ESU?

- 44 National Unions of Students (NUS) from 40 countries
- 20 million students across Europe
- Representing & promoting educational, social, economic and cultural interests
- Towards the European Union, the Bologna Follow-Up Group, the Council of Europe and UNESCO



What is Quality Assurance (QA)?

= an ongoing, continuous process of **monitoring, evaluating, maintaining and enhancing** the quality of an education system, institution or programme

It covers:



What is Quality in HE?

- From ESU's perspective, quality must not be defined by institutional "performance", but by the lived, everyday experience of those at the heart of higher education – the **students** themselves.
- Quality is also **inseparable** from the **public responsibility of higher education**. It must reinforce the **fundamental values of EHEA**, while ensuring **accountability** and **continuous enhancement**. A high-quality higher education is one that is **inclusive, student-centered** and **participatory**, which ensures that all students and learners, regardless of their background can access, progress and succeed.
- True quality lies in a higher education system that delivers meaningful learning outcomes, promotes democratic values and upholds the principle that education is a public good – serving both the **individual** and **society**.

**Quality assurance should never be a top-down,
bureaucratic exercise.**



It should be a ***living culture*** - a culture of reflection,
improvement, and shared responsibility.

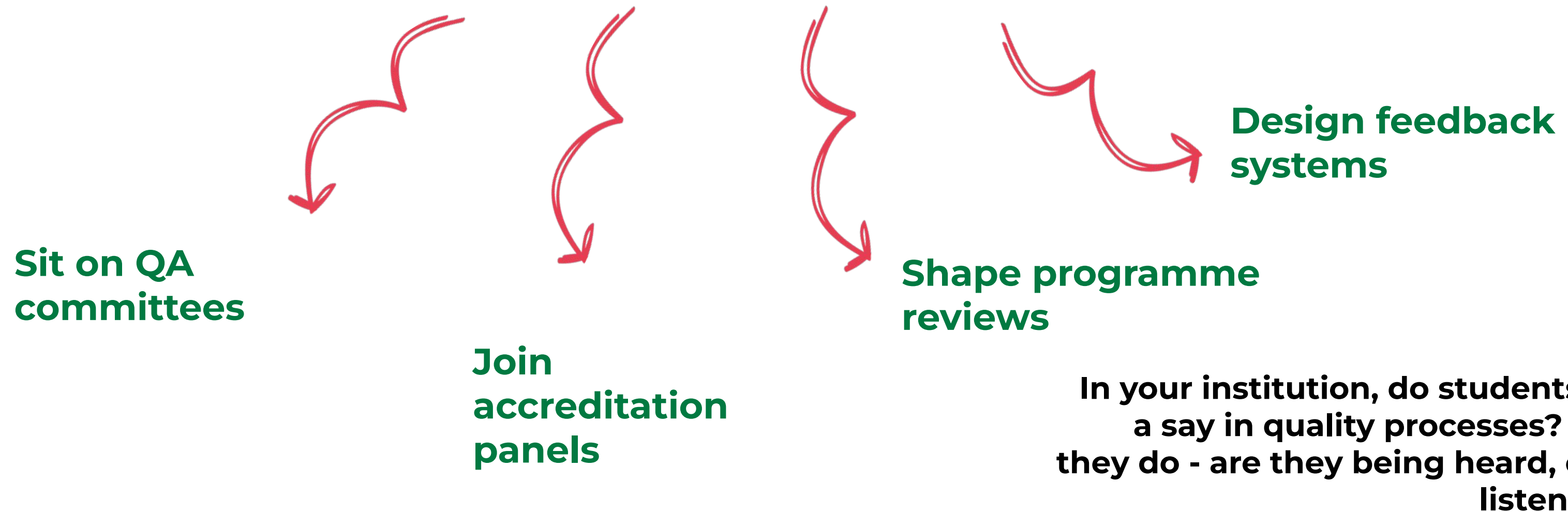
And students are absolutely **central** to that culture.



**What are the
expectations?**

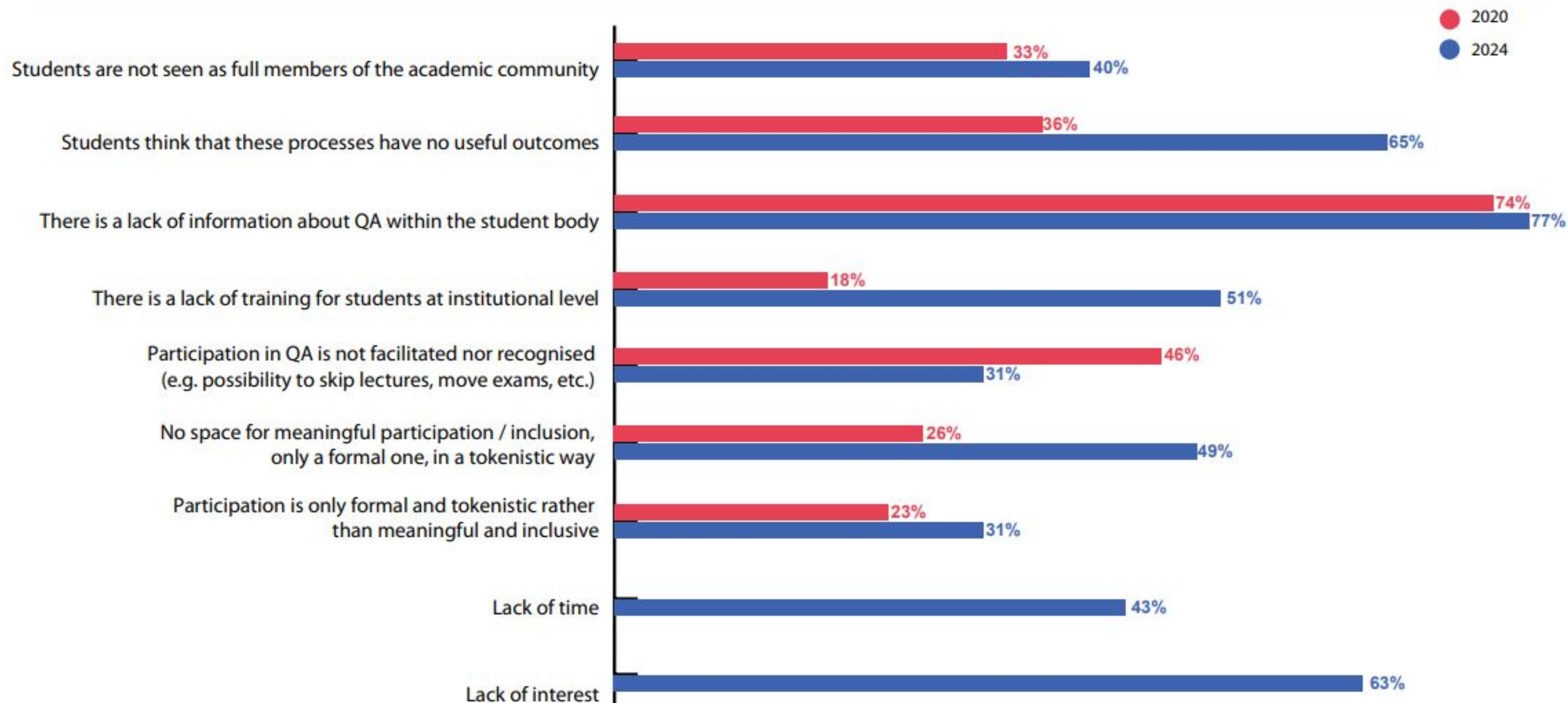
Students as Partners in Quality

Students are not the objects of quality assurance – they are its co-authors.



**What are the
barriers?**

8.5. Main barriers for students regarding their involvement in internal QA



**What are the
guidelines for
the future?**

Moving from Consultation to Co-Creation

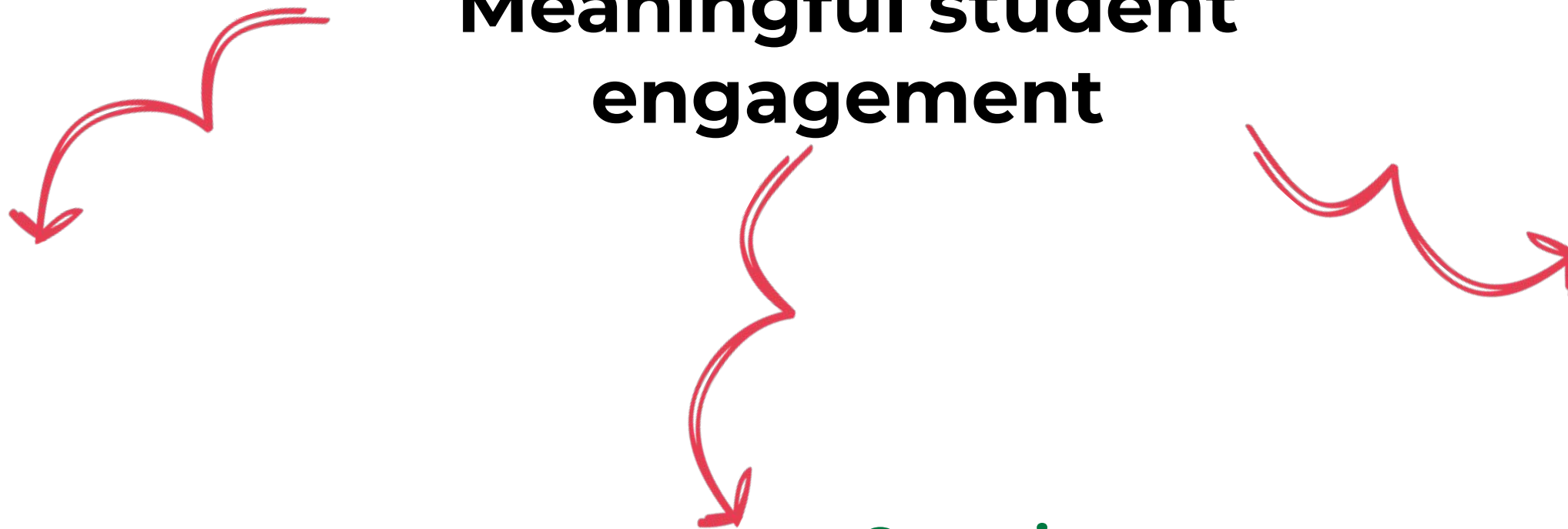
**Meaningful student
engagement**

Transparency

Feedback loops

**Capacity
building**

= Legitimacy



Transparency & accountability:

Students ask the tough questions institutions sometimes overlook.

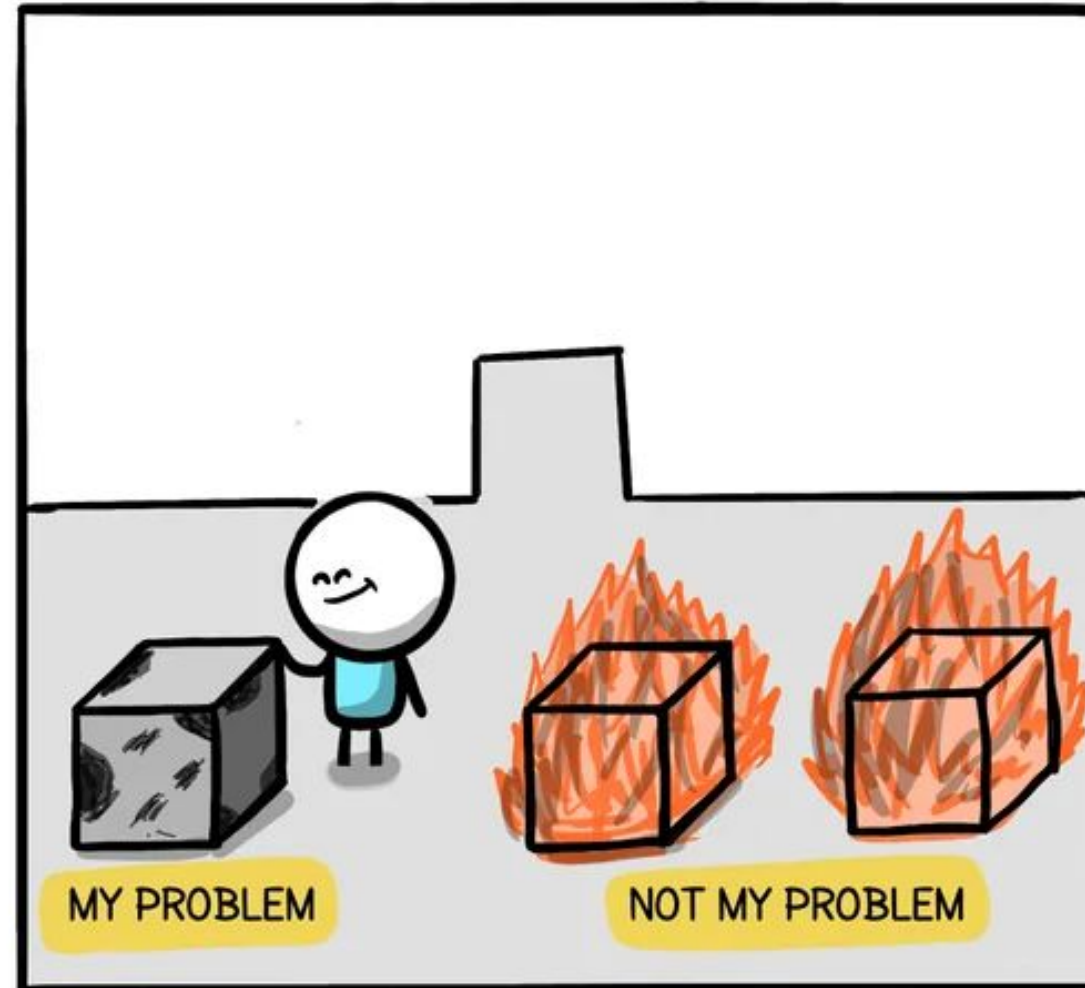
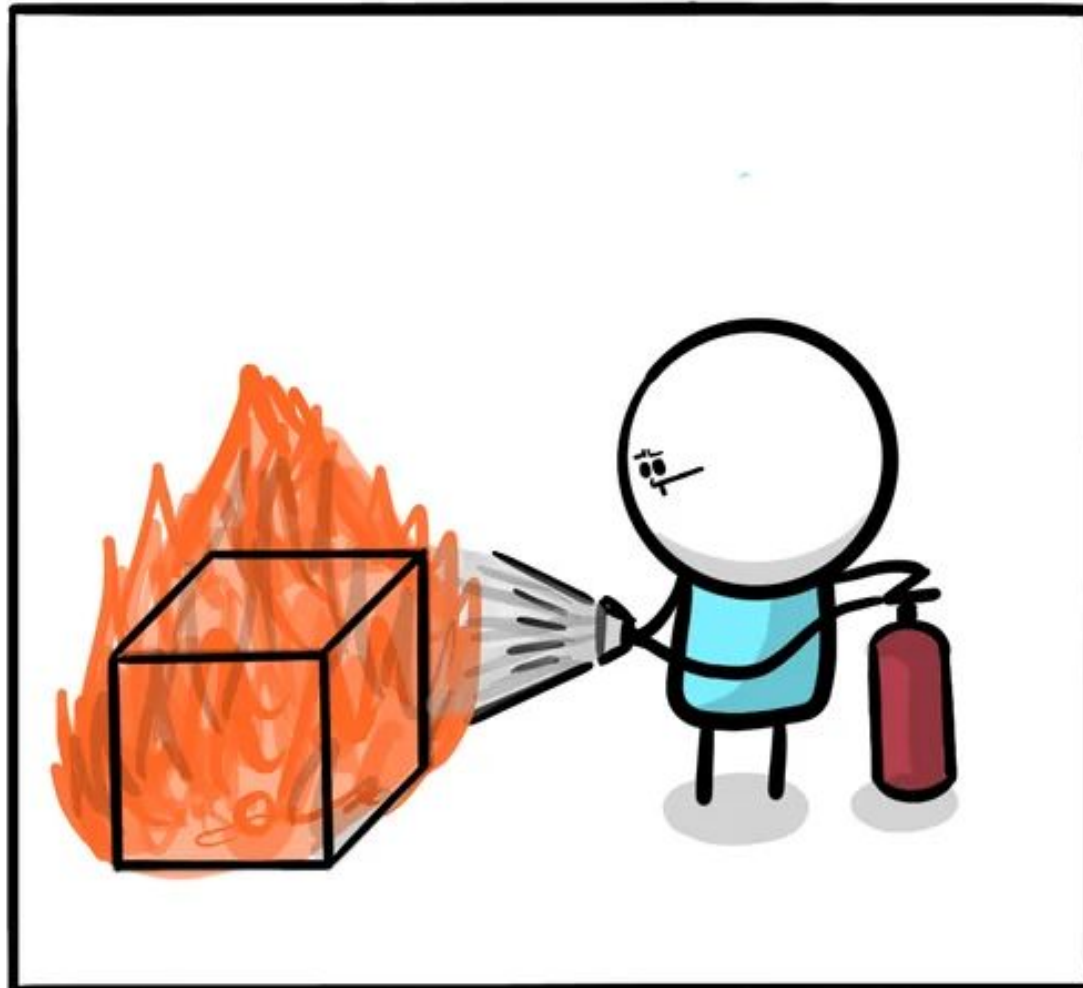
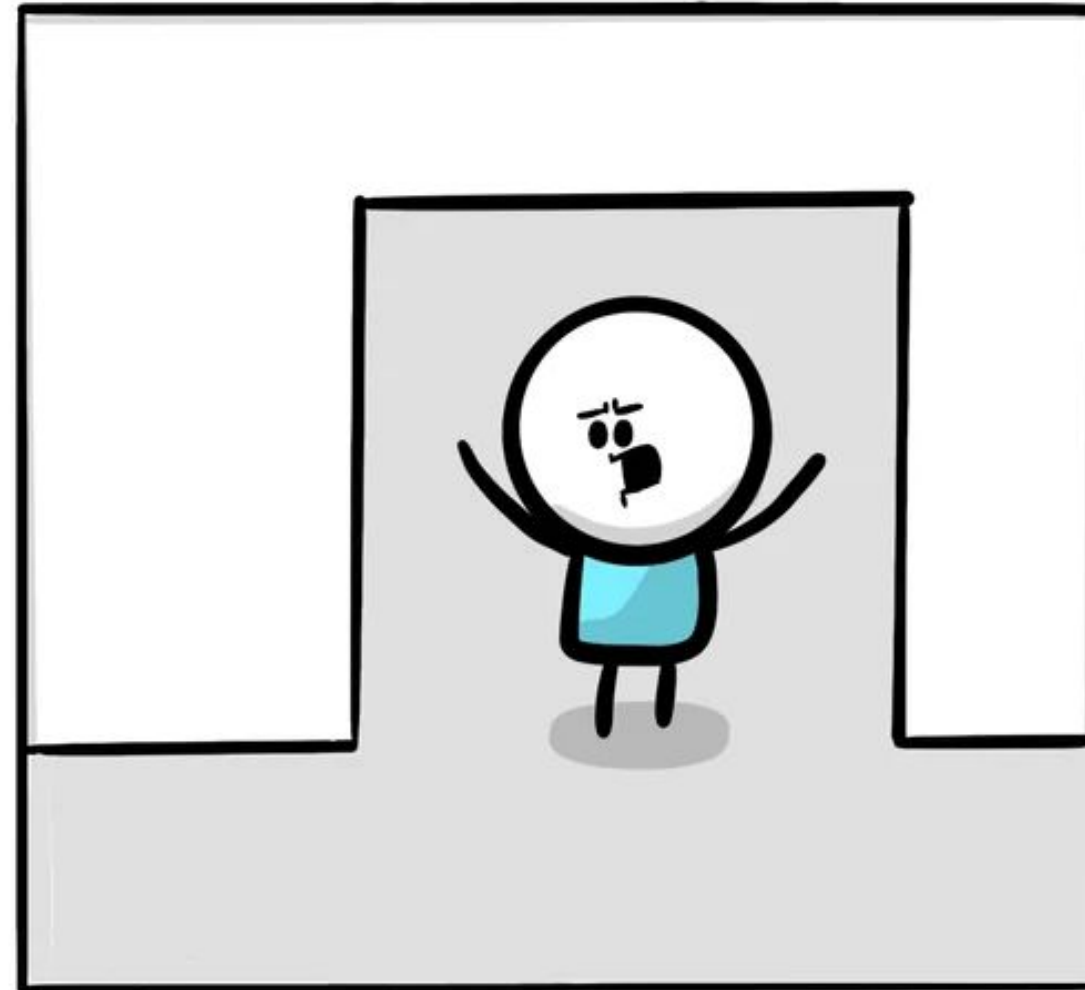
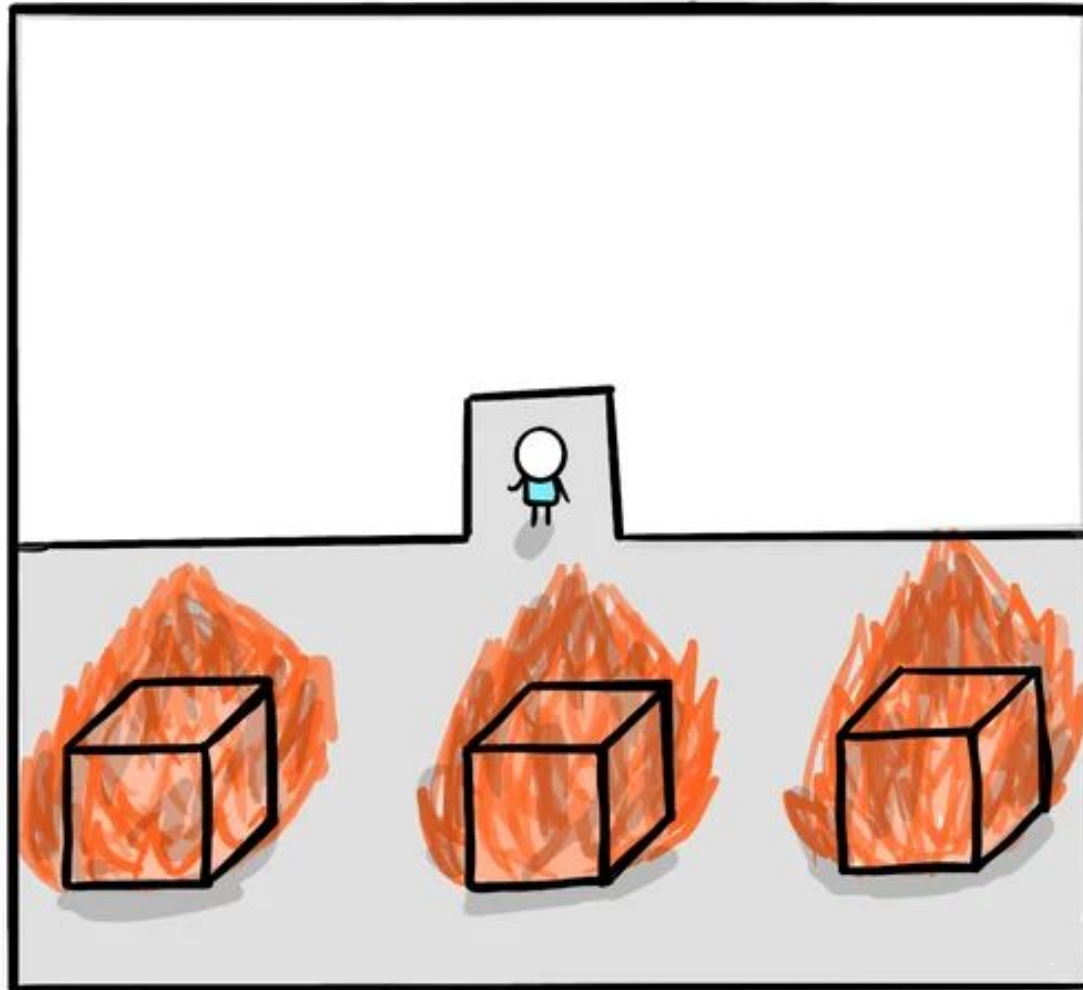
ACCOUNTABILITY 101



☒ I MEANT WELL.

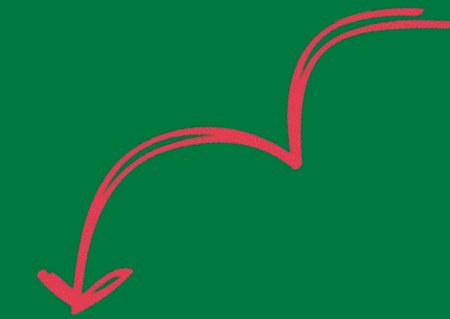
☒ THAT WAS NOT MY INTENT.

☒ I BROKE THE EGG.



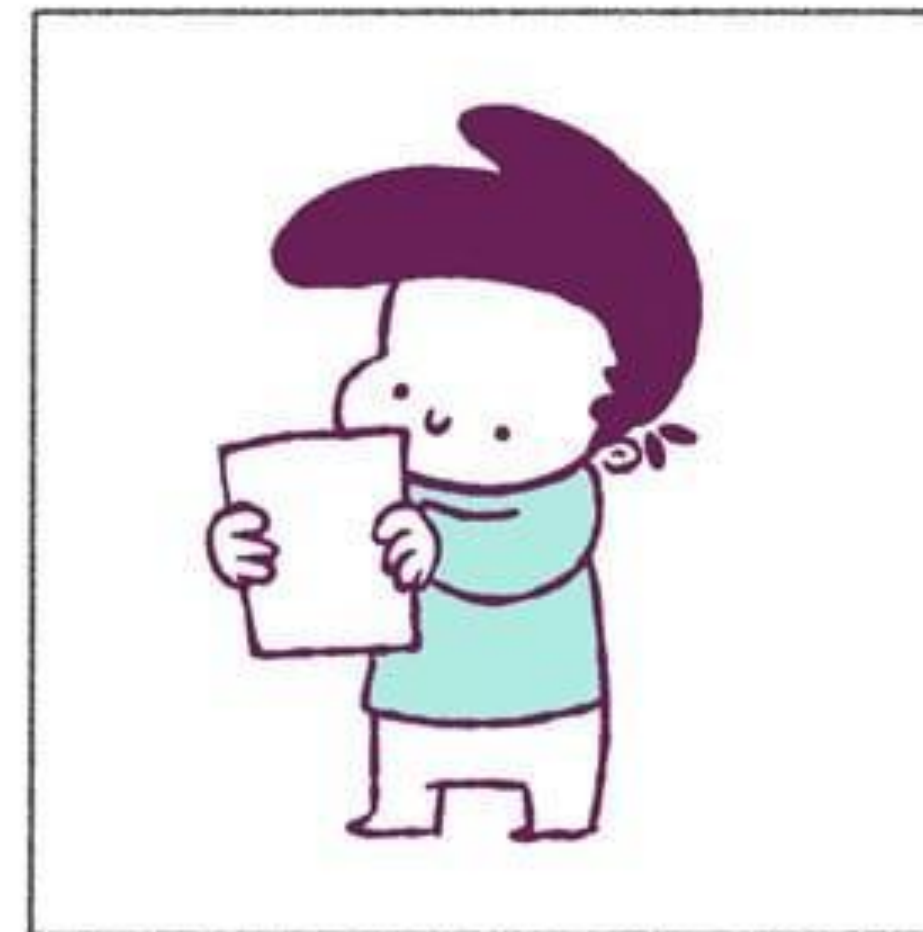
Relevance:

We highlight gaps in learning environments, employability skills and equity.



Capacity-building:

Participation equips students with leadership, evaluation and dialogue skills - creating a generation of quality-aware graduates.



From Policy to Practice: Building a Culture of Excellence

- A culture where students and staff share **ownership of quality**.
- Where **feedback is valued as a gift**, not a **threat**.
- Where improvement is **continuous**, not episodic.

And we leave no man behind

- An education of high quality provides the **right tools** for students to **meet future challenges**.
- A high quality higher education system is characterised by **removing all obstacles to access**, ensuring **progress** and **completion** for all students, implementing a **student-centred approach** to learning and teaching, and **fairly assessing** students.
- This system must also be braced by **adequate student support services**;
 - ensuring links between learning, teaching and research activities;
 - individual, social and civic training for responsible and active citizens;
 - mobility opportunities;
 - artistic and academic freedom;
 - interdisciplinary, multi-disciplinary and cross-border programs.

And we leave no man behind

- It is important to always consider that the opportunity to study and learn of everyone also depends on their **economic situation** and **physical and mental health**. That is why every university cannot fail to provide adequate services to support every student.
- Students in this system are considered **full members of the academic community** and competent, constructive partners and stakeholders.

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