

Global Connections



2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreward **1**

Webinar 1: Equity and Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Progress, Challenges, and Impact **2**

Webinar 2: Confronting the Unspoken: The Impact of AI Adaptation on Institutional Policy and Accreditation **5**

Webinar 3: A.I. in U.S. Higher Education: Transforming Student Success and Campus Operations **8**

Webinar 4: Artificial Intelligence in the Service of Global Quality Assurance in Higher Education **11**

Foreward

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and its International Quality Group (CIQG) stand at the forefront of a global commitment to quality assurance as an essential foundation for academic integrity, public confidence, and meaningful student learning. At a time when higher education is undergoing profound transformation—shaped by technological advancement, shifting societal expectations, and expanding global interdependence—CHEA/CIQG serves as a trusted convener and steward of dialogue, reflection, and shared purpose.

Through *Global Connections* and the 2025 webinar series, CHEA/CIQG brings together educators, quality assurance professionals, and thought leaders from around the world to engage in critical conversations that transcend borders and sectors. These exchanges illuminate emerging trends, interrogate enduring challenges, and elevate innovative practices that strengthen quality assurance while honoring the diversity of higher education systems worldwide. Together, these insights reflect a collective commitment to sustaining excellence, fostering innovation, and advancing the public good through higher education.

Michelle O. Claville, Ph.D.
Vice President for Research and International Initiatives

Equity and Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Progress, Challenges, and Impact



GENERAL OVERVIEW

Over the past decade, quality assurance systems worldwide have increasingly incorporated equity-related criteria into their processes to encourage tertiary education institutions to enhance access and success for underrepresented groups. However, in recent years, universities and colleges have faced unprecedented reprisal, even in countries with strong democratic traditions. In this context, panelists explored how integrating equity into the evaluation and accreditation of higher education institutions has not only expanded opportunities for traditionally underserved students but also improved the overall quality of the learning experience for all.

WEBINAR PRESENTERS

DR. JAMIL SAMIL

Moderator

- Global tertiary education expert providing policy advice to governments, universities, professional associations, and development agencies
- World Bank's tertiary education coordinator (until January 2012)
- Emeritus Professor of higher education policy at Diego Portales University in Chile and Research Fellow at Boston College's Center for Higher Education



DR. NADINE ZACHARIAS

Founder and Managing Director of Equity by Design, a specialist consulting firm in student equity strategy, program evaluation, and inclusive service design.



DR. MARIA KELO

Director of the Institutional Development Unit at the European University Association (EUA)

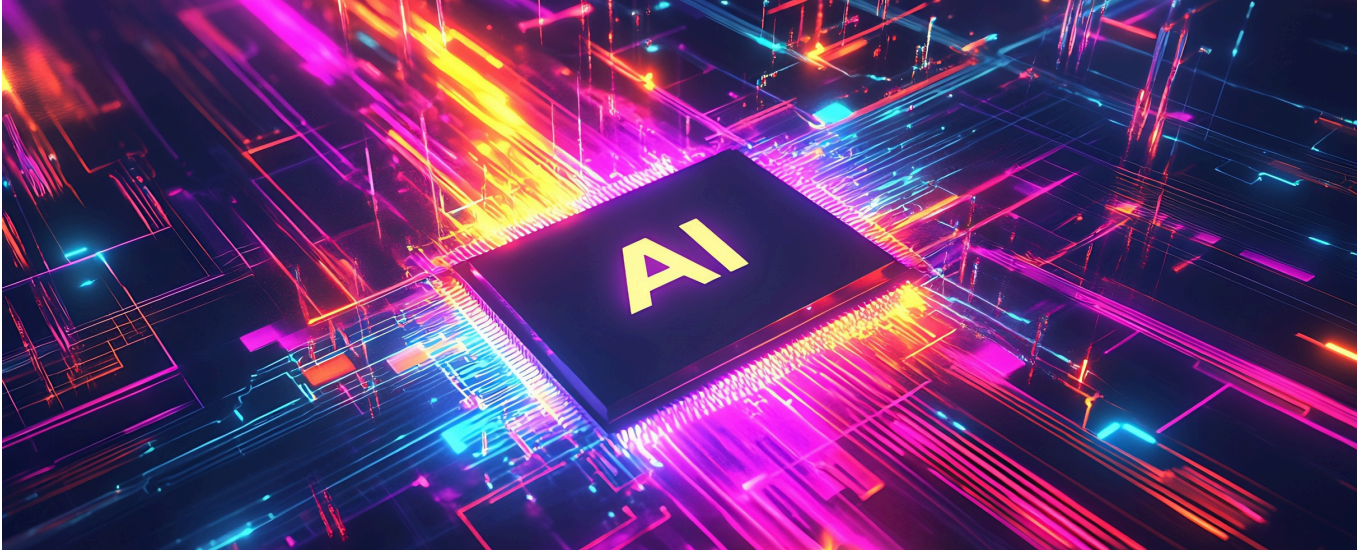


KEY ELEMENTS FROM THE WEBINAR

Across Europe and Australia, higher education equity has become a central policy priority, though each region approaches it differently. In Europe, the social dimension of the Bologna Process seeks to ensure fair access, participation, and student well-being across nearly 50 countries. Policy is guided by ministerial principles and a detailed 2024 indicators framework, while quality assurance through the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) offers a mechanism for implementation. Challenges include diverse national systems, legal constraints on data collection, and the limited enforceability of a transnational framework, leaving some equity goals unevenly addressed.

Australia, by contrast, operates under a centralized national system with clearly defined underrepresented groups—First Nations peoples, low socioeconomic status students, regional/remote learners, and students with disabilities. Equity is enforced through the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) regulations requiring inclusive policies and systematic monitoring and supported through long-term federal funding via the long-standing Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) program, with evaluation frameworks like the Student Equity in Higher Education Evaluation Framework (SEHEEF) improving evidence on effective interventions. Despite differences, both regions face similar issues: persistent gaps in student completion, data challenges, and emerging political scrutiny. Together, they illustrate two complementary models: Europe's coordinated, multi-country framework and Australia's integrated regulatory-and-funding system, both committed to widening participation and ensuring student success.

Confronting the Unspoken: The Impact of AI Adaptation on Institutional Policy and Accreditation



GENERAL OVERVIEW

As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to evolve, its rapid adoption across higher education presents opportunities and challenges. Institutions increasingly use AI in various capacities, from classroom assistance to administrative processes, prompting a necessary reconsideration of existing policies and frameworks. "Confronting the Unspoken: The Impact of AI Adaptation on Institutional Policy and Accreditation" addressed the urgent need for academic institutions and accrediting bodies to understand, adapt to, and appropriately regulate this transformative technology. The session offered a comprehensive exploration of AI's implications on institutional policy development, accreditation standards, and, ultimately, the integrity of higher education.

WEBINAR PRESENTERS

DR. LAURIE SHANDERSON, PH.D.

Founder and CEO of the consulting firm Accreditation Insights, LLC and host of the Accreditation Insights podcast



DR. LEAMOR KAHANOV

Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost, Alvernia University

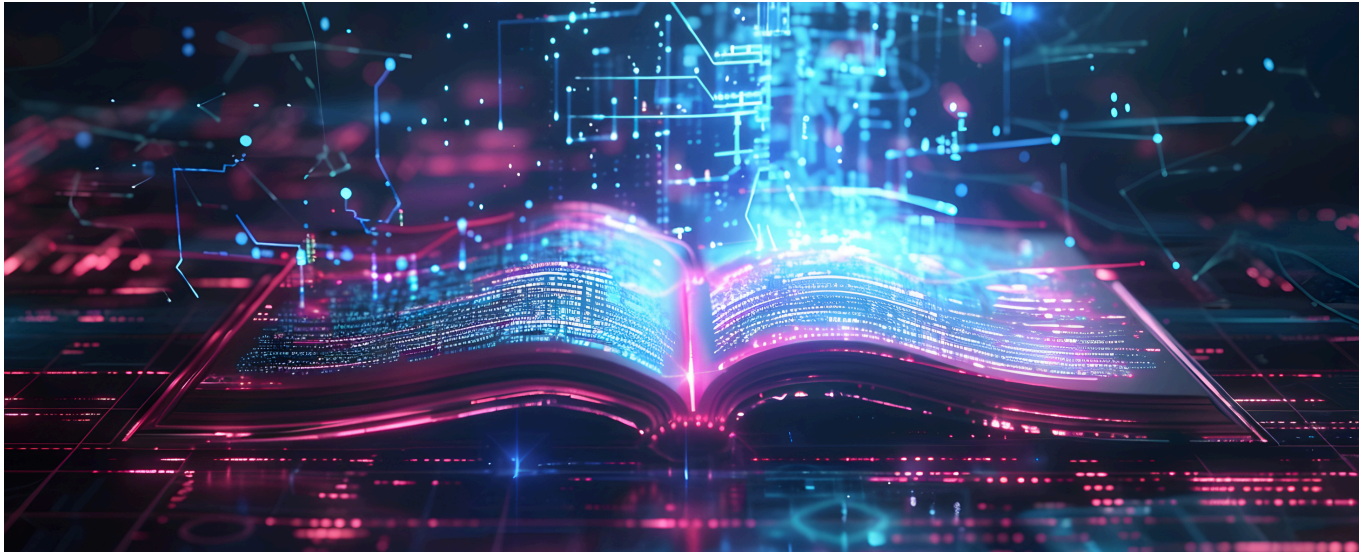


KEY ELEMENTS FROM THE WEBINAR

The conversation between the speakers is summarized in the following points:

- **Institutional AI Policies:** Each campus must develop policies for AI use in classrooms, administration, and with external vendors, addressing ethics, copyright, data privacy, and equity.
- **AI Committees:** Inclusive committees with faculty, staff, legal, and tech experts are crucial to evaluate tools, risks, and implementation strategies.
- **Applications & Innovation:** AI is used for predictive analytics, tutoring, chatbots, automated workflows, and enhanced assessment, often combining AI-assisted and independent work.
- **Challenges:** Institutions must balance academic integrity, evolving technology, environmental concerns, and varying adoption rates across departments.
- **Strategic Approach:** Continuous communication, regular policy updates, and alignment with institutional culture and values ensure ethical and effective AI integration.

A.I. in U.S. Higher Education: Transforming Student Success and Campus Operations



GENERAL OVERVIEW

The third webinar in the 2025 CHEA/CIQG Series continued the ongoing examination of generative AI’s expanding role in higher education and its far-reaching implications for quality assurance. As institutions adopt AI-driven innovations—from virtual tutoring to streamlined financial aid and transcript processing—industry leaders such as Amazon Web Services have entered the conversation, providing services as well as guidance on safeguards and best practices to support the responsible and effective use of AI in academic environments.

WEBINAR PRESENTER

MARY STRAIN, M.P.A.

AI and Machine Learning Strategist
(Amazon Web Services)

Mary Strain leads public-sector business development for artificial intelligence and machine learning at Amazon Web Services (AWS). She began her career as a middle school teacher in The Bronx and has since held leadership roles across education and government technology. For two decades, she has advised K–12 and higher education institutions, state and local governments, and technology organizations on competency-based assessment, curriculum design, micro-credentials, and workforce development. Mary holds a BA from Fordham University and an MPA from the City University of New York.



KEY ELEMENTS FROM THE WEBINAR

AI in higher education is moving from scattered experimentation to intentional, institution-wide strategy focused on real problems rather than technology itself. The most immediate value comes from operational use cases—financial aid, transcript evaluation, admissions, registration, document processing—where AI can reduce administrative burden, improve accuracy, and accelerate timelines through human-in-the-loop workflows. Institutions increasingly recognize that secure data foundations, governance frameworks, and transparency about models and data usage are essential. Flexible, enterprise-grade tools and partners are preferred over narrow point solutions, and modernized, centralized data—often enriched through techniques like RAG or knowledge graphs—enables higher-quality outputs across teaching, learning, advising, libraries, and research.

At the same time, AI is reshaping student and faculty experiences: creating personalized advising summaries, expanding equitable access to opportunities, and supporting more rigorous, higher-order learning rather than replacing human roles. Faculty concerns are best addressed through pedagogical shifts, not prohibition, and AI detectors remain unreliable. AI can meaningfully support accreditation by querying institutional data and drafting evidence-aligned narratives when humans provide oversight. Small institutions can also participate through open-source models and targeted projects. The emerging “age of agents” signals a future of task-oriented AI that works securely within institutional ecosystems, helping students, staff, and faculty access information, make better decisions, and focus on the human dimensions of education.

Artificial Intelligence in the Service of Global Quality Assurance in Higher Education



GENERAL OVERVIEW

The fourth webinar in the 2025 CHEA/CIQG series concluded this year’s exploration of artificial intelligence by expanding the conversation to a global perspective. Building on the prior two sessions, it offered research-based insights into current perceptions and practices surrounding AI’s growing role in higher education quality assurance. Speakers addressed a range of timely topics—including tools for quality enhancement and institutional policy development, safeguarding academic integrity, learning analytics and assessment, generative AI in practice, and faculty and staff development for an AI-enabled era. This interactive session underscored practical strategies, emerging challenges, and actionable opportunities for institutions and accreditors as they work to sustain and advance quality in an AI-driven higher education landscape.

WEBINAR PRESENTERS

FABRICE HÉNARD

Fabrice Hénard was the Chief Executive Officer of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE), a global association of over 300 organizations that are active in the theory and practice of quality assurance in higher education. With his decades of experience in the fields of evaluation of public policies and of quality in higher education, he co-led INQAAHE's collaboration with Dr Susanna Karakhanyan to produce the report entitled "11 Global Trends in Education Quality Assurance."



BERT VERHOEVEN

Bert Verhoeven leads Australia's premier human-centric GenAI-first Innovation & Entrepreneurship program at the University of Newcastle. As founder of the I&E Academy, he drives cross-disciplinary collaboration with industry and global partners, harnessing design science, entrepreneurial competencies, and GenAI to spark innovation and real-world impact.



KEY ELEMENTS FROM THE WEBINAR

Artificial intelligence is driving a profound shift in higher education and quality assurance—one that is not only technological, but fundamentally pedagogical. As AI reshapes teaching, learning, assessment, and accreditation, institutions are emerging as central actors in preparing students to think, act, and create with AI. This requires embedding AI literacy across curricula, redesigning learning experiences around competency-based and experiential models, and positioning AI as a collaborative tool that supports critical thinking, creativity, ethical judgment, and real-world problem-solving.

At the same time, quality assurance agencies and accreditors are modernizing their practices by using AI-enabled analytics, streamlined evidence collection, fraud detection, and enhanced cross-border oversight, while reaffirming that human judgment, transparency, equity, and ethical responsibility must remain foundational. The rapid generative capabilities of AI are rendering traditional assessments less reliable, accelerating a shift toward authentic, multimodal, and auditable evaluation approaches that emphasize learning processes as much as final products.

Redefining academic rigor in this context depends on transparent and ethical AI use, rewarding originality and critique over content generation, and adopting assessment models—such as “3P” (Person, Process, Product)—that document learner agency, AI engagement, and outcome quality. Sustaining this transformation also requires motivating both students and educators by framing AI as a creative partner, granting faculty the freedom to experiment, and providing robust institutional support through professional development, communities of practice, and adequate time and resources.

Across both internal and external quality assurance, the sector is advancing deliberately rather than through abrupt standards changes, guided by organizations such as CHEA, INQAAHE, and global QA networks. The shared goal is to protect trust and academic integrity while ensuring that AI enhances—rather than replaces—human-centered evaluation and educational purpose.



One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 510, Washington, DC 20036
202.955.6126 (Tel) | 202.955.6129 (Fax) | chea@chea.org (Email)