



QAA



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Development and Enhancement Group

'Student involvement in quality assurance processes of the
QA agencies'

ENQA workshop
organised in collaboration with ANECA
Madrid 19-20 October 2006



Higher Education in the UK



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Quality Assurance

- UK institutions are responsible for awarding their own degrees
 - Monitoring and periodic reviews
 - External examiners
 - External reference points (incl. academic infrastructure /Standards and Guidelines for QA in the European Higher Education Area.)
- Quality framework (s)
 - EWNI internal procedures, external, (QAA institutional audit) TQI, NSS

What does QAA do?

- Reviews institutions and programmes through audits and reviews (including overseas and collaborative activities)
- Develops and maintains the ‘academic infrastructure’
- Advises government(s) on applications for degree-awarding powers and university title
- Offers advice on academic standards and quality matters (development and enhancement).

ACADEMIC STANDARDS and QUALITY

- The words '**academic standards**' are used to describe the level of achievement that a student has to reach to gain an academic award (e.g. a degree). For similar awards, the threshold level of achievement should be the same across the UK
- **Academic quality** is a way of describing how well the learning opportunities available to students are managed to help them achieve their award. It is about making sure that appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities are provided for them.

Student involvement with quality assurance

- The involvement of students is integral to both internal and external quality assurance systems
- National quality frameworks – ‘student voice’
- EWNI-
 - Institutions internal processes - student representation
 - External processes - Institutional audit (SWS), TQI-NSS

Benefits

- Dialogue - notion of giving 'students a voice',
 - culture change, way of communicating, (mistrust), focus on student learning
 - Understanding
- Personal – knowledge, employment

Difficulties

- Practically – externally /internally
 - Extent of involvement
 - Engagement of student reps
 - Continuity
- Institutional liaison theme liaison - (sharing of practice type event next Spring)

The Academic Infrastructure: What does it do?

- provides a set of common reference points that enables comparable academic standards to be established in institutions without jeopardising their autonomy and diversity
- enables institutions, their students, employers and the general public to have confidence that an award or qualification is of a standard recognised and acceptable within the UK .

The Academic Infrastructure: Components

- Framework for higher education qualifications (FHEQ)
- Subject benchmark statements
- Programme specifications
- Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education (The Code of practice).

Student involvement with the academic infrastructure

- Current revisions - working groups
 - NPC example
- Information to student representative bodies – attending events/running workshops



Current Activities



The National Postgraduate Committee is involved with a number of organisations and partners supporting postgraduate students.

Current projects include:

- [The European Charter for Researchers and The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers Working Group.](#)
- [Institute for Education and UKGRAD Programme Review of literature on the doctoral experience for the Higher Education Academy.](#)
- [QAA Code of Practice for Assessment Working Group.](#)
- Socio-Demographic Survey of Postgraduate Students.
- Rugby Team working group evaluating the effectiveness of skills development in research degree programmes.

[NPC Wales](#)[PCÔ-R Cymru](#)[NPC Scotland](#)[NPC in Northern Ireland](#)[Disclaimer](#)[Campaigns](#)[What is it, Where can I find it, How do I.....](#)[Database of Practice](#)[Media](#)[Policies](#)

[The European Charter for Researchers and The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers Working Group](#)[Institute for Education and UKGRAD Programme Review of literature on the doctoral experience for the Higher Education Academy.](#)[QAA Code of Practice for Assessment Working Group](#)

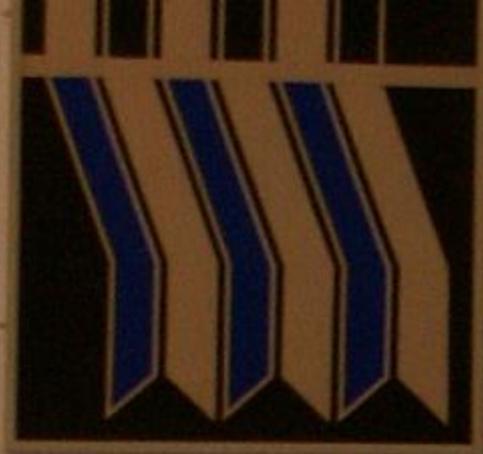


Information and Support

- Institutions
- QAA – attend events, workshops, leaflets.
- Quality Takes Time initiative – briefings, resources database

Further information • Student information
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/students/>









Quality takes time – the Code of Practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards

Introduction

Quality assurance

The academic infrastructure

The Code of Practice

Summary

Further information

Task

Write a precept for the section of the Code of Practice on **'Assessment'**

Things to remember:

Precepts:

- indicate key issues for HEIs internal quality assurance mechanisms
- are applicable to all types of HEI and should be capable of being used differently by HEIs according to their mission, context, provision etc.
- are a starting point for discussion in audit

Do not write in a prescriptive tone (e.g. institutions must...)





www.officeronline.co.uk

QUALITY TAKES TIME



NUS is pleased to launch this new database dedicated to student union officers and staff to guide them through what some see as the maze of higher education quality assurance and enhancement.

For ease of access the database has been divided into discrete sections or bundles of information that you might find useful in ensuring and enhancing quality within your institution.

For those of you that are new to this area you are advised to visit the events section and the Quality Assurance agency (QAA) section first.

The past events section contains various NUS briefings and QAA presentations on institutional audit. For example, the NUS briefings on the four phases of institutional audit – in the past events section – event 31st August 2004 – is a useful starting point.

While the QAA – which has been kindly written by the QAA with the student union officer/staff member in mind – details the main work of the agency and where crucial documents can be found on their website.

As you can see some student unions have kindly sent through their student written submission and questionnaires through to us. NUS would be glad to receive further copies, so that they can be shared with other student unions.

The next stage in the database's development is the collection of student union good practice on institutional audit processes and products. If you have any good tips or ideas on the following we'd be really glad to hear from you:

- Effectively using students' unions representative structures
- Effectively using university committee representative structures
- How to write good questionnaires
- How to get high response rates from questionnaires
- Running effective focus groups on quality
- Getting institutional funding for institutional au
- Running effective institutional audit campaigns
- Using staff support to help manage work on quality in general and institutional audit in particular



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Conclusions

- Can be issues with participation
- Positive aspects for institutions, student representative bodies, individuals
 - Dialogue
 - Evidence base
 - Improving student learning experience
- Quality Assurance as a process

Discussion

- How do you involve students with your review activities; what are the benefits and what are the difficulties, how can you help and support students, their representative bodies and institutions to engage effectively with your processes?
- What is the relationship between students and their Universities -is this changing? For example in EwNI the introduction of a capped variable tuition fee means there is an increasing tendency for students to be seen as consumers but many also see the relationship between student and university as being much more complicated than this. Is the nature of being a student being redefined and is this presenting a challenge to our work in review agencies?
- Student involvement with quality assurance processes undoubtedly can have positive impacts for individuals, for the student body and for their institutions but how much time can we reasonably expect out students populations to devote to quality assurance type issues?



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