

Towards Creation of Quality Assurance Systems Inside Higher Education Institutions and Study Programmes

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The Experience of Irish Higher Education Institutions in establishing outcomes-based internal quality assurance systems

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The Irish Context

- Quality Assurance in Irish Universities
- The Irish Higher Education System
- Student population
- Legislation
- Drivers for change

Overview

- The Irish Context
- What we in Ireland and NUIM actually do
- The outcomes of the processes
- Some resources
- My favourite quotation

EUA Sectoral Review 2004

Conclusions

The systematic organisation and promotion of quality assurance at the initiative of the universities themselves is, in the opinion of the EUA teams, unparalleled in any other country in Europe, or indeed in the United States or Canada... Other countries ...could learn from the Irish experience

Higher Education Institutions in Ireland 2007

Universities (7)

- * University College Cork (UCC)
- * University College Dublin (UCD)
- * National University of Ireland (NUIG)
- * National University of Ireland (NUIM)
- * The University of Dublin (TCD)
- * The University of Limerick (UL)
- * Dublin City University (DCU)

Designated Institutions (3)

- * Royal College of Surgeons Ireland (RCSI)
- * National College of Art and Design (NCAD)
- * Royal Irish Academy (RIA)

Colleges of Education (4)

- * Mater Dei Institute of Education
- * Mary Immaculate College, Limerick
- * St Patrick's College, Drumcondra
- * St. Angela's College of Education, Sligo

Institutes of Technology (14)

- Athlone Institute of Technology
- Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown
- Institute of Technology, Carlow,
- Cork Institute of Technology,
- Dublin Institute of Technology,
- Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design, and Technology,
- Dundalk Institute of Technology,
- Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (Galway and Castlebar)
- Letterkenny Institute of Technology,
- Limerick Institute of Technology,
- Institute of Technology, Sligo,
- Institute of Technology, Tallaght,
- Institute of Technology, Tralee,
- Waterford Institute of Technology,

County of permanent residence of Irish full-time students 2006/07			
County	Total		Grand Total
	M	F	
Connacht			
Galway	2274	3358	5632
Leitrim	158	273	431
Mayo	882	1525	2407
Roscommon	420	691	1111
Sligo	411	608	1019
Leinster			
Carlow	249	440	689
Dublin	8514	10929	19443
Kildare	1321	1910	3231
Kilkenny	589	832	1421
Laois	400	595	995
Longford	248	367	615
Louth	491	758	1249
Meath	959	1402	2361
Offaly	556	736	1292
Westmeath	455	713	1168
Wexford	501	813	1314
Wicklow	616	982	1598
Munster			
Clare	1064	1498	2562
Cork	4348	6253	10601
Kerry	1095	1743	2838
Limerick	1707	2390	4097
Tipperary	1059	1717	2776
Waterford	595	879	1474
Ulster			
Antrim	91	101	192
Armagh	28	53	81
Cavan	314	610	924
Derry	55	66	121
Donegal	569	947	1516
Down	58	130	188
Fermanagh	16	44	60
Monaghan	252	474	726
Tyrone	40	55	95
Unspecified Ireland ¹	53	94	147
Total	30548	44227	74775

8017

2068	NUIM
3118	2006-
5206	2007

Extracts from The Universities Act (1997)

procedures for quality assurance aimed at improving the quality of education and related services provided by the university.

by employees of the university in the first instance and by persons, other than employees, who are competent to make national and international comparisons on the quality of teaching and research and the provision of other services at university level

and assessment by those, including students, availing of the teaching, research and other services provided by the university

International drivers of change may be summarized as:

- Bologna
- National qualifications framework
- Competitiveness
- Internationalisation
- Knowledge transfer and commercialisation
- Focus on entrepreneurialism and support for the economy
- Sustaining a culture of creativity that is capable of anticipating, shaping and managing change

The Wider Context

- What is the purpose of Quality Assurance?
- What are we assuring?
- Is Quality Assurance something new?
- Where did learning outcomes come from?

Purpose of Quality Processes

- Shaping the future
 - Experience of students
 - Nature of knowledge
 - Reality of society
- Maintenance
- Development
- Compliance

Research and teaching

- “The aim of teaching is simple: it is to make student learning possible.”
 - (Ramsden1992: p.5)
- Teaching is taken to mean a set of activities that makes learning possible in students and that set of activities must include the creation of knowledge through research.

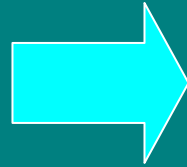
Integrated Quality Improvement and Quality Assurance Policy Measures that address Quality within the University

	Student Recruitment procedures	Scholarships	Formal Student Feedback	External Examiner System	Professional Accreditation of course	New Course Approval	Staff selection procedures	Promotion procedures	Research Awards Scheme	Research Prizes	Teaching Awards	Presidents Prizes	Training & Development	Formal Quality Review
University Group or Activity	Quality Assurance Measures													
Students	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓			✓
Staff			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Support Services			✓		✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
University Management Team			✓				✓	✓				✓	✓	✓
Teaching & Learning Practice	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Courses			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓
Student Assessment		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓			✓
Research							✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Communications	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓				✓		✓	✓
Service to the community	✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
External relations	✓	✓			✓		✓						✓	✓

Outcomes Based Approaches

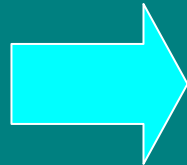
- What do we mean by outcomes based?
- Examples from the spectrum
 - Teaching and Learning
 - Quality Assurance
 - Training and Development
 - Leadership and management
- Issues and concerns
- How are quality assurance and learning outcomes related?

Aims



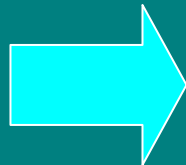
Ultimate intended goal
of the teaching

Teaching
Objectives



Methods for achieving
the goal

Learning
outcomes



Evidence that the
learner has achieved
some objectives

Issues around specified outcomes

- They work best when explicit behaviours required
- Higher order cognition suggests less precise outcomes
- Do they predetermine learning?
- Is there a perception of ‘dumbing down’?
- Do they impede creativity and innovation?
- Competing interpretations

The NUI Maynooth Experience

- Review experience of last 10 years
- The nature of the review process
- What hinders implementation?
- What helps?
- Benefits and impact

Since 1995

- 1995 marked the formal introduction of QA/QI, ahead of Universities Act 1997
- Application at Departmental level throughout the University, academic, service and administrative
- 2004 EUA Reviews – each university plus a sectoral review
- Formation of **Irish University Quality Board**

Internal process

- Emphasis on formative rather than summative process – assurance and improvement rather than assessment
- Department as the basic unit for review
- Total review: teaching, research, service
- Engagement of all staff plus student representatives
- Evidence based; 10 year cycle

Summary

- Self-assessment forms the basis
- Peer review adds objectivity
- Publication supports accountability
- Ownership is critical to allowing change to happen

Structure and Fit

- Department or Faculty
- Administration through Quality Office
- Internal reading - Quality Committee
- Choosing and briefing the right reviewers
- Timeframe
- Costs
- Realism - managing expectations

FEAR

- Fear - people can feel threatened by the concept of quality assurance
 - Exposure
 - Failure
 - Time and Effort
 - Loss
- Openness, dialogue, acknowledgement of fears and transparency of process will help

What helps?

- Fit
- Forward Plan
- Guidelines
- Training - Mol an bodach agus bain obair as.
 - Reflective Workshop
 - Writing a self-assessment
 - Implementation
- Support from Office and Committee
- Experience - Aithníonn ciaróg ciaróg eile.
- National group

Guidelines Support the Process

- Rationale
- Structure of the self-assessment process
- Writing guide and structure of the report
- Glossary of terms to support shared understanding
- A pattern for the visit
- A pattern for the peer review report

Key Benefits

- Process of shared self-reflection
- Products e.g. a plan for future enhancement, agreed mission statement and objectives
- Peer affirmation and suggestions for enhancement
- An agreed plan

Impact

- Space for critical reflection
- Catalyst for departmental planning
- Inspiration, learning from colleagues and students
- Improved communication and structures
- Increased awareness of strategic issues
- Support for centralized data function
- Insight into what can be done - empowerment
- Induction handbook for new staff
- Positive feedback

Summary

- Our context
- Our processes
- Challenges, benefits and impact

Resources: IUQB.ie

Contains links to all of University Quality offices

EUA Sectoral Review 2004

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