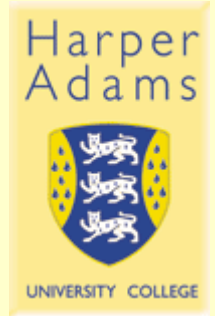


THE USE OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESS TO ENHANCE THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF INTERNATIONAL MASTERS STUDENTS



by

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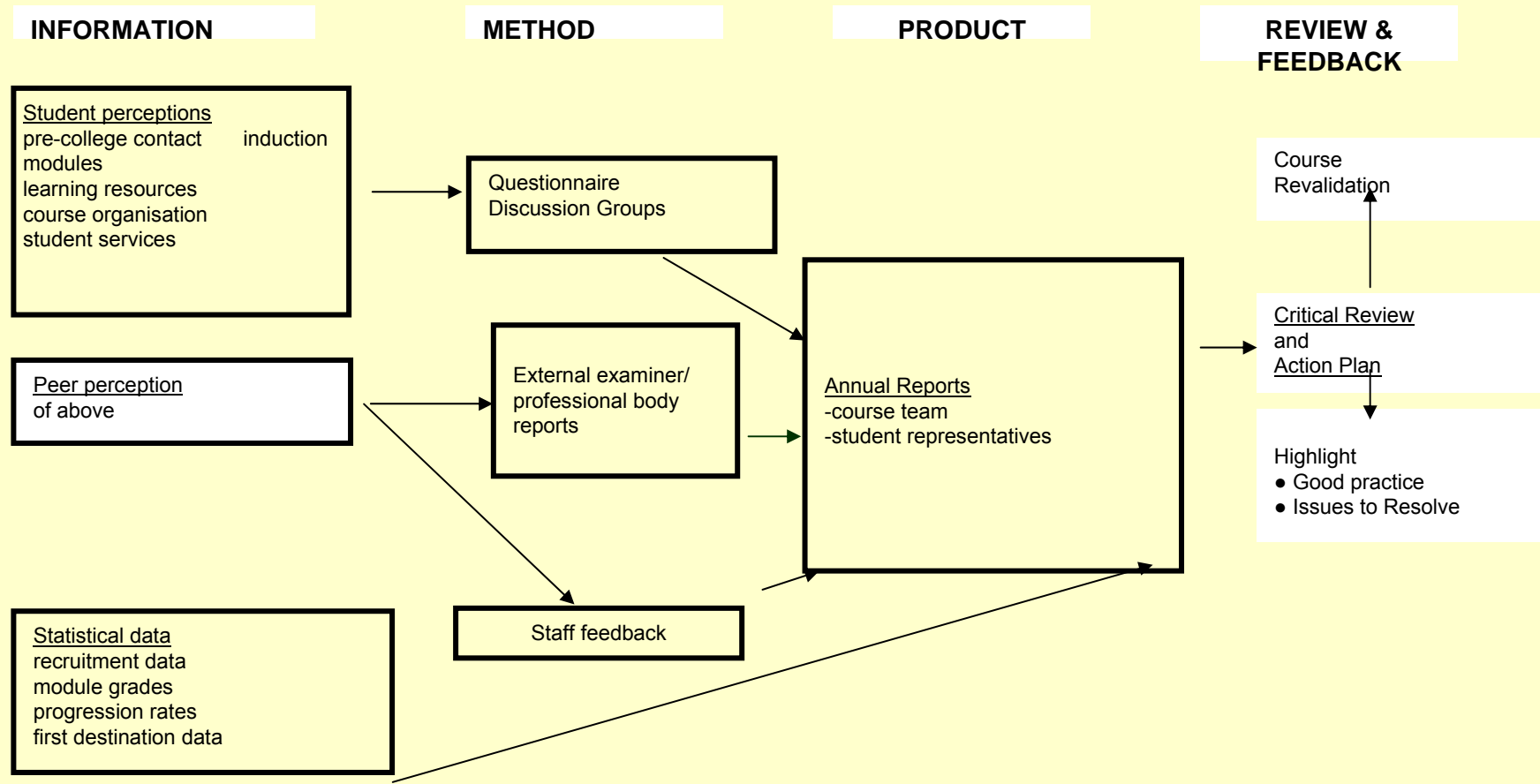
31 August 2007

Outline of the Presentation

- Overview of the Quality Assurance process, as applied to Higher Education
- Self assessment of quality and standards by course monitoring and review
- The Enhancement Agenda
- The Student Voice
- A case-study for international Masters programmes
- Closing thoughts of an optimist

Some Definitions

- Quality, or fitness for purpose, describes how a programme of study meets or conforms to generally accepted standards, as defined by an accrediting or QA body
- Quality Assurance is the means by which a higher education institution confirms that conditions are in place for their students to achieve the standards set by an accrediting or a QA body
- Quality Enhancement is the expectation that the higher education institution will have in place a plan to monitor and improve the quality of its programme
- Best practice is the most effective practice within a higher education institution that others would benefit from adopting or adapting
- Learning outcomes describe what a student should learn after a period of specified and supported study



The Enhancement Agenda

Regular course monitoring and evaluation should lead to:

- a commitment to continuous improvement
- updating of resources
- valuable feedback to ensure relevance
- action planning with timed outcomes
- opportunities for staff development

Central assumption of academic audit



Performance can be measured and improvement
can be demonstrated over time

The Student Voice

“...in some countries student representatives are not regarded and treated as equal partners by Governments, institutions and other stakeholders. Some ... principally regard students as troublemakers, no matter what they say or do. Only in a few countries, a sustainable partnership exists”.

Bologna with Student Eyes, 2007.

Case Study: the AMEU Project (2004-2007)



- Erasmus Mundus funded, co-ordinated by ICA
- Enhancing the Atractiveness of Masters Programmes at European Universities in Agriculture, the Applied Life Science and the Rural Environment
- A methodology for the comparative quality assurance of Masters degree programmes
- A framework for Comparative Quality Assurance

Category

Benchmark



1. Internationalisation

1.1 Strategy for internationalisation

1.2 Statistical information for international students

2. Needs, Aims,
Objectives and
Learning Outcomes

2.1 Needs of all stakeholders

2.2 Educational aims and objectives

2.3 Programme learning outcomes

3. Educational Process
(Teaching, Learning,
Assessment,
Guidance)

3.1 Curriculum planning

3.2 Teaching and learning process

3.3 Assessment of learning outcomes

3.4 Guidance in the learning process

4. Student Support
(non educational)

4.1 Pre-induction and selection arrangements

4.2 Induction arrangements

4.3 Welfare support services

4.4 Cultural and social needs

4.5 Financial information and support

Category

Benchmark

5. Educational
Resources and
Partnership

5.1 Staffing
5.2 Facilities
5.3 Resources allocation
5.4 Interactions with external organisations
(eg industry, professions and other HEIs)

6. Student progression

6.1 From application to graduation
6.2 Completion rates
6.3 Employability

7. Quality Management
and Enhancement

7.1 Decision-making process
7.2 QA and enhancement systems
7.3 Inclusion of the 'student voice'
7.4 Complaints and appeals
7.5 Staff development
7.6 Ethics/equal opportunities

CLOSING THOUGHTS OF AN OPTIMIST

- Quality Assurance processes should be accepted as a routine aspect of academic life
- International cooperation is of central importance to research, higher education and the European Project
- Pursue our ambitions to create a trans-european programme of Higher Education accessible to all nations of the world
- Utilise a common approach to quality assurance, based on the sharing of good practice and continuous improvement

“May you live in interesting times”

A Chinese curse