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the outcomes of evaluation?

What use can be made of



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

GOOD PRACTICES

Implementing improvement actions at universities	9
Javier Vidal García (Universidad de León-Spain)	
Tutorial actions in France	35
Jean-Loup Jolivet and Annick Rey (CNE-France)	
Use of evaluation for strategic management	41
Francesc Solà Busquets and Josep M. Vilalta Verdú (Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya-Spain)	

TRANSPARENCY

Transparency as a cornerstone of evaluation	69
Julie Swan (QAA-United Kingdom)	
Transparency in The Netherlands	81
Ton I. Vroeijenstijn (VSNU-The Netherlands)	
Use of evaluation for funding	89
Raija Sollamo (University of Helsinki-Finland)	

FOLLOW-UP

Follow-up of institutional evaluation	99
Jacqueline Glarner (CRE)	
Follow-up of syllabus evaluation	109
Gemma Rauret Dalmau (QU-Spain)	
Follow-up at the Flemish Higher Education	117
Paul Garré (EHSAL) and Anselme Derese (Belgique)	



GOOD PRACTICES

Main presentation:

IMPLEMENTING IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS AT UNIVERSITIES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

2. WHAT ROLE DOES EVALUATION PLAY IN THE IMPROVEMENT PROCESSES?

2.1. Designing generic objectives for the evaluation while looking for concrete improvements

2.2. Different types of evaluation, different levels of improvement

2.3. Efficacy and efficiency of the evaluation processes

2.4. Are there improvement actions derived from evaluation processes?

3. WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS TO PROMOTE IMPROVEMENTS DERIVED FROM EVALUATION?

3.1. Key factors for the implementation of improvement actions

3.2. The publicity of the results

3.3. The follow-up

3.4. Main difficulties for the implementation of the improvement actions

3.5. The role of the Quality Assurance Agencies in the implementation of improvement actions

4. CONCLUSIONS

5. REFERENCES

6. APPENDIX

6.1. Answers to the survey

6.2. Tables

IMPLEMENTING IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS AT UNIVERSITIES

1 Introduction

I have noticed that in this conference, entitled *what use can be made of the outcomes of evaluation*, the word *quality* does not appear in the title of any of the presentations. This might have something to do with the fact that there is a conference with the title ‘The End of Quality?’ being organised at the University of Birmingham for next May. Probably it has more to do with the fact that, due to the different contradictions (Sallis, 1994) and ambiguities founded in its usage, more time than necessary is spent establishing what the word *quality* actually means. As it is a waste of time to look for a definition (Vroeijerstijn, 1995), I suggest that we dedicate our time to more productive activities.

The unexpected absence of the term *quality* at this conference is replaced by the use of other more concrete concepts, such as planning, improvement and follow-up. These terms provide a perfect framework for the concept of *evaluation* and this allows me to begin this presentation starting from a classic definition of this concept:

Evaluation is the systematic assessment of the operation and/or the outcomes of a program or policy, compared to a set of explicit or implicit standards, as means of contributing to the improvement of the program or policy (Weiss, 1998).

In this definition, we find all the elements that have been quoted: planning (programs or policies), implementation (operation and/or outcomes), assessment and improvement. If we attempt to close the circle, the improvement actions should turn into new programs and policies and the process starts again from the beginning. This is what we can call follow-up.

Of all the phases mentioned above, this presentation will focus on *Implementing improvement actions at Universities*. First, I like to point out that I will use the term *improvement* without attempting to evaluate the ideological implications that the term holds (Brennan & Shah,

2000). It is not my aim here to analyse what can be considered *improvement*, but rather to look at the difficulties for implementing improvement actions, whatever they may be considered to be.

Secondly, I will try to deal with the implementation of improvement actions derived from evaluation and not with the general impact of the processes of evaluation. The implementation of improvement actions is only one of the possible impacts of evaluation (Brennan & Shah, 2000), but according to our definition, the fundamental objective of evaluation (one which is clearly mentioned in the institutional evaluation followed in Higher Education) is *improvement*. Because of this, when talking about improvement actions, in fact we are dealing with something which has major consequences. We are actually dealing with the very *raison d'être* of evaluation. For example, if, after analysing this problem, we reach the conclusion that it is impossible to implement any kind of improvement action based on the processes of evaluation, then we must conclude that evaluation is neither necessary nor useful. Although, fortunately, this does not appear to be the case, there is still a need to analyse, in general, the positive outcomes of evaluation, and specifically how to carry out a better implementation of the improvement actions.

Therefore, the topic of this presentation deals with the more general question of how can we use evaluation to improve higher education institutions. This question gives rise to many more specific and interesting questions, as:

- What conditions are necessary to produce a successful connection between evaluation and improvement actions?
- What importance does the process of self-assessment have for the implementation of improvement actions? Similarly, what is the importance of external evaluation?
- Is leadership the most important factor?
- Is there resistance to the implementation of improvement actions as it is for the evaluation processes?
- How does the willingness of the participants affect the implementation of these actions?
- Are there rewards or negative consequences that have a real effect on the actions?

- What should be the role of the Quality Assurance Agencies (QAA) in the implementation of improvement actions?

Although these questions are very important, it seems that there are some difficulties in answering them. However, if, in theory, the process of evaluation is well defined and there is a sufficient level of experience in the realisation of evaluations, then why do we find it so difficult to clearly identify the specific improvements derived from evaluation? Furthermore, why do we have such difficulties in determining whether or not our efforts are proportional to the results? This may be because, as Elaine El-Khawas points out, *it is too soon to say whether the Evaluative State and the new public management will have a significant and lasting impact on higher education* (El-Khawas, 1998), or it may be because the indirect consequences are clearer than the direct ones.

On the contrary, there are some studies pointing out that there is enough evidence to conclude that the quality assessment processes have had a great impact both on the institutions and on the whole national higher education system, for instance, in The Netherlands (Westerheijden, 1998). An impact of academic audit on academic behaviour has also been identified (Dill, 2000).

Academic audits have:

- *Made improving teaching and student learning and institutional priority*
- *Facilitated active discussion and cooperation within academic units on means for improving teaching and learning*
- *Helped clarify responsibility for improving teaching and learning at the academic unit, and institutional level*
- *Provided information on best practices within and across institutions*

However, in spite of the above-mentioned arguments, it appears that these explanations do not satisfy the critics. It is frequent to find opinions like the one of Simeon Underwood, who began a recent article with the following statement:

It is a truth universally acknowledged that the British higher education system is over-inspected (Underwood, 2000).

In the rest of his paper, he expresses his opinion that the system of evaluation is not as efficient as it should be. David Lim summarises the position of the critics (or cynics, according to Brennan) in the following way:

Quality assurance is a passing fad which has produced no substantial and long-lasting effect. It is more concern with process than results, and data and bureaucratic requirements, together with unnecessary obtrusive government intervention, have diverted institutions from their core activities (Lim, 1999).

Not also critics, but specialist in this field, point out similar conclusions. For instance, David Dill (et al.), talking about the European case where the initiation of the quality assessment has been responsibility of external agencies point out that:

Educational assessments often lead to a “culture of compliance” in which time and energy that should be focused on educational improvement are dissipated in gathering information, providing mandated reports, and (sometimes) in staging presentations designed to mislead external reviewers (Dill, Massy, Williams, & Cook, 1996).

In response to these criticisms, the counterarguments tend to be much more general, using expressions such as in *spite of the problems, the net effect has been positive* (Lim, 1999). Considering that the criticisms are so concrete, is it necessary to provide evidence just as conclusive of the benefits of the evaluation processes? Should the implementation of improvement actions be one of these evidences?

From now on, I will try to offer a framework that would allow us to answer some of the questions I mentioned above and which could fundamentally bring about debate in this topic. One of the sources I have used in my research is the answer to a questionnaire sent to Quality Assurance Agencies belonging to the *European Network for Quality Assurance* (ENQA). The number of responses received (7) does not allow us to draw any definitive conclusion, but it does provide us with some qualified opinions about the topic and that is a good starting point for debate.

The information has been organised around two main questions:

1. What role does evaluation play in the improvement processes?
2. What are the conditions to promote improvement actions derived from the evaluation?

2 What role does evaluation play in the improvement processes?

This should not be a difficult question to answer. For instance, a possible one would be *in this institution, the evaluation process has been an important factor for the implementation of those improvement actions*. Nevertheless, as I pointed out earlier, we continue to find it difficult to relate evaluation with concrete improvements. I will now look at some factors, which have a role in this issue.

2.1 Designing generic objectives for the evaluation while looking for concrete improvements

The processes of institutional evaluation tend to set out with very general objectives, even though they later look for concrete evidence of their application. Despite the differences, which exist between the systems of higher education and their modes of evaluation, certain common objectives can be identified (Brennan, 1999):

- To ensure accountability for the use of public funds
- To improve the quality of higher education provision
- To stimulate competition within and between institution
- To undertake a quality check on new (sometimes private) institutions
- To assign institutional status
- To support the transfer of authority between the state and institutions
- To make international comparisons

As you can see, all these objectives are so general that it is difficult to establish to what extent they have been achieved. In Spain, for example, it is clear that some of the general objectives of the Evaluation Program have been achieved (*Consejo de Universidades*, 2000), even though there is still a pressing need for more concrete results.

2.2 Different types of evaluation, different levels of improvement

The differences that exist between the systems of higher education and the differences between the various systems of institutional evaluation throughout the world are well known

(Brennan & Shah, 2000; Gaither, 1998, Kogan, 1993). These differences need to be taken into account considering that different systems of evaluation lead to different improvement strategies. However, despite these differences, four levels have been identified and these can provide a framework for an analysis of quality assessment. Those four levels are:

- the system level, affecting all institutions or affecting the overall procedures and structures by which institutions operate;
- the institutional level, affecting universities as entire organisations;
- the department (or school) level, affecting the way that academic departments carry out their educational missions, and;
- the individual level, affecting students or staff (El-Khawas, 1998)

This outline is also used by Brennan & Shah (Brennan & Shah, 2000).

If we combine these four levels with the five elements of evaluation previous mentioned, we obtain a table (table 1), which gives us an idea of the complexity of the problem which we are dealing with.

Table 1. Levels of analysis and phases of evaluation

			Levels of analysis			
			System	Institution	Department or school	Individual
Phases of the evaluation process	↓	Policies/goals				
		Implementation				
		Assessment				
		Improvement				
		Follow-up				

This table 1 shows how each one of the phases of the evaluation can be orientated to different levels of analysis. Therefore, the most suitable approach is to follow each phase of the evaluation process in each one of the levels of analysis, avoiding changing from one to other level. For this reason, a definition of a specific strategy of evaluation would make the appropriate level of analysis clear. For example, the improvement of educational skills for

teachers should be situated in the individual level and therefore the different phases of the evaluation process should follow on the individual level.

However, problems arise when policies are sufficiently broad enough, as we have mention, to cover various levels. For instance, the goal *improvement of teaching* can involve different improvement actions in each of the levels. For instance, changes in:

- a) the legislation for teaching at the highest level (system),
- b) the increasing the economic funds which each institution invests in teaching (institution),
- c) the reorganisation of responsibilities held by the faculty in a department and
- d) the pedagogical training given to new teachers.

Each one of the levels would require different actions of improvement as well as different levels of responsibility. Any confusion at this point could cause interference, which stops the appropriate implementation of good improvement proposals. For this reason, it is necessary to have a clear differentiation of levels in the definition of objectives, in the processes of evaluation and in the definition of the improvement actions.

Another problem can also arise, this time related to the phases in the process of evaluation. In an institutional process of evaluation, the initial phase usually involves self-evaluation, which is then followed by external evaluation. This framework is widely accepted and the reports of the external evaluation can be the final stage of the process, or they may be followed by a final report. The most frequent levels of analysis here are the institutional and the centre/department levels. As the evaluation is more oriented to programs evaluation, which is in the centre/department level, it is possible that the opinion of the heads of the institutions (governing board) will be of little importance in this entire process. If that were the situation, one of the most important groups in the implementation of improvement actions would not play a proportional role in the diagnosis to the weight in the decision-making system they have. Although this can differ among countries, in a process where the participation of all the implicated groups should be guaranteed, it is fair to say that the opinion of the heads of the institution is not taken sufficiently into account considering the resources they have for converting the proposals for improvement into practical plans of action (Coba y Vidal, 2000). This situation could become a serious problem when the results of the evaluation process do

not coincide with the opinions of these heads of institutions. In such a case, it becomes very difficult to carry out improvement actions at any level higher than that which has been evaluated. Nevertheless, the *big question* here is, *what kind of information is used for taking decisions?* We are not going to go deeply into this topic, but it is well known the difficulties to introduce the results of institutional evaluation in the decision making process. There are also evidences that other kind of information is neither used: Peterson & Augustine shows that *the student assessment data has only a marginal influence on academic decision making* in the United States (Peterson & Augustine, 2000).

The same confusion may occur if we go up a level and important improvements are deemed necessary for institutions, which will involve changes in educational policies of the governments. For example, in Spain the results of an evaluation (*Consejo de Universidades*, 2000) coincided with another analysis by Bricall (2000) in calling for various changes in university legislation concerning teaching staff, governing, financing etc. Although the need for these reforms has been acknowledged for the past few years, it does not seem that they are going to come into effect soon.

It is also possible to jump between non-consecutives levels. For example, in Spain you can jump between centres/departments and educational policy (system) when dealing with curriculum design. National committees have been responsible for designing the obligatory part of the curriculum for all the universities in Spain, while general guidelines had been developed for the other part of the curriculum. This second part had to be specifically designed by each institution. This processes for the curriculum design brings some limitations. On the one hand, it limits the organising capacity of the institutions as it sets limits for the organisation of the faculty (Quintanilla & Vidal, 2000). Besides, on the other hand, possible improvements in the curriculum have been put forward as a result of evaluation. However, these modifications would require changes in the guidelines given by the national committees and these are practically impossible to bring into effect at this moment.

Consequently, there is a limitation for improvement actions derived from evaluation when the improvement actions depend on changes that should take place at a higher level of decision. This may be just another example of resistance to change, but, in some cases, this need of make changes in a higher level may be justified.

Finally, the framework shown in table 1 becomes even more complex if we take into account the different functions, which universities carry out – teaching, research and the provision of services. All of these functions are open to evaluation and the interaction between them, especially between teaching and research, add even more problems. I will not delve more deeply into this whole area, but I would like to point out that there seems to be sufficient evidence to justify that teaching and research should be analysed together so that more efficient improvement actions can be drawn up (Vidal & Quintanilla, 2000). Therefore, the framework for the analysis of the improvement actions derived from evaluation is without doubt a very complex one, both because of the very structure of the evaluation, and because of the very nature of the system being evaluated.

2.3 Efficacy and efficiency of the evaluation processes

Are evaluation processes effective or efficient? I would like to adopt the definition of *technological efficacy and efficiency* (Quintanilla, 1989). Therefore, we must analyse the objectives, which were originally set out, as well as the results that are obtained. From this perspective, it is of little importance what resources have been used, rather whether the actions taken have caused the *desired results* or not. In this sense, an effective evaluation would be one that achieves all its objectives without taking into account whether there were any other effects. On the other hand, an efficient evaluation would be one that achieves its objectives without causing any undesired results.

To give an example, an evaluation program of the faculty, which aims at innovation in teaching, would be effective if, as well as bringing about the desired innovation, it also caused discontentment and rejection among faculty members. Nevertheless, it is a fact that evaluation processes may have undesired consequences. That is what we can call *the risks of evaluation*. Bureaucracy, frustration and rejection are just some examples of undesired consequences that can make very difficult the implementation of improvement actions (Mora & Vidal, 1998).

2.4 Are there improvement actions derived from evaluation processes?

If one were to design a research study that would answer the question of *are there improvement actions derived from evaluation processes?*, we can design a research to test the following hypothesis: *in higher education institutions, the processes of evaluation lead to improvement*. To confirm this theory, we can use two strategies: confirmatory and the disconfirmatory reasoning. In the confirmatory strategy, it would be necessary to analyse

evaluation processes in particular institutions and follow them until finally identifying the improvements actions that could be attributed to those processes. This, however would be probably very difficult to achieve, considering that evaluation is one of many process in the complex institutions of higher education, which takes place at the same time as other diagnostic and analysis processes, based on the opinions of experts and/or indicators. Furthermore, decisions are based not only on one (or more) of those types of analysis but also on other criteria that we could describe as strategic or political criteria. The innovations and improvements come about as a consequence of this amalgam of processes and it is difficult to establish the direct origin of a particular change. With this in mind, it seems reasonable to abandon trying to set up cause–effect relationships, and instead to aim only at establishing certain relationships of association between evaluation and improvement actions. Brennan & Shah, talking about changing policies and structures, also come to a similar conclusion:

It is not easy to separate cause from effect. In some higher education institutions, the creation of a comprehensive internal system of quality management is part of more fundamental changes in institutional management and decision-making (Brennan & Shah, 2000)

To employ the second strategy, the disconfirmatory strategy (or *falsacionism*), it would be necessary to find higher education institutions where improvement actions are *not* employed, in order to determine, whether or not processes of evaluation exist. If we find that these processes exist, the hypothesis about the connection between evaluation and improvement actions would not be confirmed. However, this strategy is bound to cause methodological problems, as it would not be possible to find any institution of higher education where no type of improvement takes place. From a very strict methodological point of view, this would invalid any attempt to validate the hypothesis. Nevertheless, our conclusion here is more flexible: we try to analyse a very multidimensional problem where it is difficult to isolate a few group of variables to determine the causes of changes. Moreover, Dill point out that *in evaluating the Evaluative State we need a much fuller understanding of the total costs and benefits for society of the new public management as it has been applied to higher education* (Dill, 1998).

Therefore, the processes of change in higher education institutions are so complex and dynamic that it seems that it is very difficult to know the specific role of evaluation in the changes. As we have seen, that is because it is very difficult to set a cause-effect relationship

for evaluation and that it is impossible to isolate an institution without changes at all. These limitations bring us to the conclusion that the most suitable research strategy would be the analysis of the change, the improvement, the innovations carried out by different institutions of higher education, with the aim of determining the set of causes of these improvement strategies (Clark, 1999). Evaluation would be only one more among the possible causes. If we accept that, then a new question arises, could it be possible to identify reasons for evaluation which actually have nothing to do with the evidence of improvement strategies derived from it? There seems to be another type of indirect benefits of the evaluation which do support this theory (Brennan & Shah, 2000). Francisco Pérez sum up these benefits in two: after an evaluation process, an institution should have a better knowledge of its problems and a better capacity to use its resources to solve them (Pérez, 1998).

3 What are the conditions to promote improvements derived from evaluation?

Despite the limitations highlighted in the previous section, I will now try to specify some key factors for the implementation of improvement actions, as well as looking at some difficulties that may be encountered. This section is based on the opinions of the QAA who responded to the survey mentioned earlier.

3.1 Key factors for the implementation of improvement actions

The results for this section are on tables 5 and 6.

- Only the leadership is considered essential, however the current situation at the higher education institutions still needs to be improved.
- Other factors considered important are *timeliness, the need to report improvements to some upper level of decision, a clear definition of the improvement actions in the reports, the possibility of a short-term implementation and the availability of specific funds for the improvement plans*. Although, all of these factors are actually under the level that it should be, *the timelines and the need to report to some upper level of decision* are close.
- Little importance is attributed to the danger of negative consequences when there is no evidence of improvement and a little bit more to the positive consequences. In general,

there are differing opinions about rewards and negative consequences connected with evaluation.

- Considerable importance is also attributed to the role that QA units at the institutions should have in the implementation of improvement actions, although this aspect also needs to be developed.

Other key factors for a success implementation of improvement actions included are:

- *A forceful strategy to involve everyone in the organisation. // Discussion in the whole faculty, discussion between faculty and central level.*
- *Translation of the diagnose of the internal self assessment and the external assessment in a quality plan. // A clear definition of goals and a feasible action plan with clearly stated actions and deadlines. // A need for a best design and definition of improvement plans (strategy, objectives, schedule, duties, indicators,...). // Management in HE institutions has to be developed in order to consider the challenges of strategic planning and institutional evaluation.*
- *Availability of specific funds to start improvements. // The introduction of some incentives could encourage improvement actions implementing.*
- *Benchmarking with other institutions or departments.*
- *A very close connection between accreditation (recognition), evaluation and extension of recognition.*

3.2 The publicity of the results

Could a better publicising of the results of the evaluation process lead to a more effective implementation of improvement actions? It seems that if a group within the university is not aware of the results of the evaluation, their participation in the implementation of improvement actions is likely to be extremely limited. Responses to the survey (appendix, question 1) show that the results of any evaluation should be made known to all the stakeholders, but above all, to the QAA, the heads of the institutions, centres and departments, as well as to the faculty. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that those who could be grouped as “not to be members university system staff” are considered less important. Those are *society in general* as well as *the public and private funding institutions*. It would also be

interesting to analyse why students could also be include in this group. These opinions mentioned in the survey contrast with the explicit objectives of some of the evaluation programs which actually name these three groups as the main audience for the information generated in the evaluation.

If that is, in general, the desired objective for the publicity of the results, the actual situation about the level of knowledge of the results of the evaluation is quite different. Again, the division between the two groups becomes obvious. The least well-informed of the groups are society, students and the funding institutions, while only three other groups are considered sufficiently well-informed: the QAA and the Heads of the institutions and the centres. Therefore, it seems necessary to clarify what information should be getting to the different audiences and then to make a determined effort to achieve this. The same conclusion is pointed out in the Spanish Evaluation Report.

In the following phases of the Evaluation Program, it is needed to provide more detailed information to society than what it has been provided. This should be done in tree directions: improvement of the reports to be published, a new indicators system, and a set of evaluation criteria to be known by all the stakeholders (Consejo de Universidades, 2000).

It is interesting to see how, at the same time, in the same Higher Education System, some of these ideas are already developed by the QAA of Catalunya, as it can be seen in its 1999 Report (Agència per la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari a Catalunya, 2000).

3.3 The follow-up

As regards follow-up, we will have an opportunity to go into detail about this area in one of the next presentations. However, I will now present some of the opinions which were expressed in the survey about this issue:

- The follow-up process should be regulated and carried out by the evaluated institutions. This is already happening in some cases.
- The QAA are already involved in some follow-up mechanisms, although this is not widespread. The following are some comments that have been made about them:

- [CNE, France] *The implementation of the QAA recommendations can encounter problems, and that's why a follow up is important: it should be known what kind of improvement is easy to implement and what kind is not.*
- [National Agency for Higher Education, Sweden] *An assessment or accreditation is followed after three years. In the case of accreditation a negative follow-up may lead to the closing down of a programme. The Agency has the responsibility for following up its own assessments, which follows largely the same pattern as the original assessment, only on a smaller scale.*
- [VSNU, The Netherlands] *The Inspectorate is in charge of controlling the follow up. In 1993 an agreement was reached between the VSNU and the minister about the follow up. Two years after the publication of the report, the Inspectorate will visit the assessed faculty and ask what has been done with the outcomes of the assessments. These reports are also made public. A special case arises if the Inspectorate has the idea that the quality of a programme is below expected level; this means the programme does not meet the minimum criteria set for quality. If so, the Inspectorate advises the minister to ask the university for a quick reaction to the assessment report. The university gets, in soccer terms 'a yellow card'. At very short notice the university has to react with a quality-improvement-plan to prevent the card turning 'red' and the funding being stopped.*
- [Fachhochschulrat, Austria] *Between 1997 and 2000, 33 Fachhochschule study-programmes have been evaluated according to the "Quality System FHK / FHR". The main object of the evaluation procedure is to enhance quality in the meaning of continuous improvement and not to control whether fixed targets have been fulfilled. The crucial point concerning follow-up is the very close connection between accreditation (recognition), evaluation and extension of recognition which is an important characteristic of quality assurance in the Austrian Fachhochschule sector. Facing the fact that the extension of recognition needs to be applied for and accredited by the Fachhochschulrat again the application for recognition provides the facilities to enhance the quality of a programme by eliminating the defects identified by the peers, by realizing the recommendations of the peers as well as own*

experiences made in the recent years. As already mentioned the final report of the peers, together with the comments from the maintainer, forms the basis for the decision regarding the extension of the Fachhochschule study-programme. In the course of a meeting of the Fachhochschulrat, the Fachhochschulrat deals with and assesses the reports of the peer-groups. The discussions about the reports bring up a decision of the Fachhochschulrat which actions for enhancing the quality have to be realized in any case. The results of the discussions of the Fachhochschulrat concerning the assessment of the Fachhochschule study-programme and the measures for enhancing the quality based upon the report of the peers are delivered to the maintainer of the programme about three months before the extension of recognition has to be applied for. Dependent on the results of the evaluation procedure the Fachhochschulrat recommends to the Ministry to allocate the financial funding for the next 5 years of recognition. So the evaluation procedure has two main temporal aspects: as far as the past of a programme is concerned the Fachhochschulrat assesses the work that has been done and as far as the future is concerned the Fachhochschulrat cares for quality improvement.

3.4 Main difficulties for the implementation of the improvement actions

The main difficulties for the implementation of the improvement actions pointed out are:

- Organisation: *General organisation in the institution. // Unclear leadership. // Organisation of internal Quality-Management-Systems.*
- Human resources: *People's resistance to change. // Uncommitted staff. // Availability of qualified and enough staff at the institutions. // Techniques to design improvement plans at the universities are not well described. Expertise in those kind of duties is a must.*
- Personnel attitudes: *Academic culture. // Withdrawn attitude (in teaching and research units, or in administrative sectors): the improvement of the whole institution sometimes goes against the privilege of units or sectors. // Creation of Quality Consciousness.*
- General social context: *for example, decrease of the number of students which involves a decrease of human and financial means*

- Funding: *Lack of funding. // Lack of funds to make necessary innovations. // Financial funding.*
- Consequences: *The consequences and responsibilities from the Institutional Evaluations are poorly included at some management levels in the university. The set of incentives for an institutional change is still undefined.*
- *External assessment.*

3.5 The role of the Quality Assurance Agencies in the implementation of improvement actions.

If an evaluation process wishes to achieve improvements in the evaluated unit, all the participants in the evaluation processes have important roles to play in the improvement actions. Therefore, what role do the QAA play in the implementation of the improvement actions? What role do the QAA think they should play in the implementation of the improvement actions? Here are some ideas for the debate:

- The QAA know the results of the evaluation and they recognise that it is their responsibility to know them.
- They also have full knowledge of self-assessment and external assessment reports. However, they recognise that they should have better knowledge of the final reports and that should increase their knowledge of the improvement action plans.
- They are sufficiently involved in the various phases of evaluation, particularly in that of external evaluation. Opinions are divided, however, over whether or not they should play a role in the defining of improvement actions. It is also clear that the QAA believes that they should be involved in the some follow-up regulated processes. However there are opposite views as regard to this.
- The intervention of the QAA is not considered essential for the successful implementation of improvement actions, although there seems to be a lack of awareness as to the impact of their participation in this.

Other opinions on the issue include the following:

- *The QAA must always try to write better reports and to improve its methodology. The important point is the quality of the report which must cover in detail the regional context of the institution, its history, its projects, its strengths and weaknesses. A good report can be appreciated by the people in charge in the institution and they can use it as a leverage for their action.*
- *The role of the QAA is to help setting up benchmarking activities, disseminate information on tools and processes and to bring together departments/institutions with similar problems.*
- *The QAA has to act as a tool for better decision making. They can join the universities for benchmarking activities. Transparency and recognition given by QAA can also help as an incentive to carry out improvements.*
- *The QAA has to be implicated in:*
 - *The follow-up-procedure.*
 - *The professional organisation of the whole evaluation procedure.*
 - *The creation of Quality Consciousness.*
 - *“Living” the principle that evaluation without quality-improvement makes no sense.*
 - *Taking care that the application for extension of recognition eliminates the defects identified by the peers and realizes the recommendations of the peers.*

4 Conclusions

Rather than making conclusions, I would now sum up some ideas for debate.

1. From a methodological point of view, it is very difficult (almost impossible) to isolate the very specific consequences of an evaluation process, but it seems that it is not strictly necessary to do so. Evaluation is one more step in a rational decision-making process, which consists of design, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up.

2. Many factors are related with the implementation of improvement actions at higher education institutions. Evaluation should be one more among a very complex set of causes. This idea is illustrated by the importance given to the *timeliness* as a key factor for the implementation of improvement action. That is, if one improvement proposal is presented when some other factors converge on the same idea, it is easier to transform it in a action plan.
3. It is needed a clear definition of specific goals for the evaluation in the different levels of analysis and decision to help the implementation of improvement actions.
4. In order to set up more efficient processes of evaluation, it should be considered not only the success in the achievement of the goals but also the reduction of the undesired consequences of those processes.
5. Leadership within the institutions is considered essential for the implementation of improvement actions derived from evaluation. This reflects two ideas: first, that leadership it is essential to implement an evaluation process, and, second, that the participation of the leaders is essential to decide the changes to be implemented. Consequently, it is needed that the evaluation would be included in the schedule of the leaders of the institutions. Moreover, the results of the evaluation should be used to design the strategic plans for the institutions, at least, as one more source of information.
6. The development of quality assurance units at the institutions should increase the efficiency of the evaluation processes, for instance, helping in the definition of more structured improvement actions in the different reports, or in the translation of the results of the evaluation in a quality plan. It seems that these factors are very important to facilitate the implementation of improvement actions.
7. There is a demand for specific funds to support the implementation of improvement actions.
8. *Publicity* is necessary to make people aware of the results of the evaluation and to create what is called the *culture of quality*. If a group within the university is not aware of the results of the evaluation, their participation in the implementation of improvement actions is likely to be extremely limited. It is also necessary to clarify the different audiences of this information to make adapt the public reports to them. Specially, it is necessary to clarify what information demands students, funding institutions, and society.

9. Some kind of follow-up would help to implement improvement actions. There are different perspectives on the topic, depending of the characteristics of the higher education system. Nevertheless, it seems that it is necessary to regulate a follow-up procedure and that there should be a great deal of participation by the Quality Assurance Agencies in that stage of the process, as it is already in some countries.

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6 Appendix

6.1 Answers to the survey

- Consejo de Universidades, Spain
- Comité Nacional d’Evaluation, France
- National Agency for Higher Education, Sweden
- Zentrale Evaluations- und Akkreditierungsagent (ZevA), Germany
- Association of Universities (VSNU), The Netherlands
- Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari a Catalunya, Spain
- Fachhochschulrat, Austria

6.2 Tables

1. In your view, to what extent the results of the evaluation carried out at universities *are known by* and *should be known by* ...?

	<i>... are known by</i>				<i>... should be known by</i>			
	None	A little	Much	Very much	None	A little	Much	Very much
1. Society in general	3	4				1	5	1
2. Public or private funding institutions		3	2	2			4	3
3. Quality Assurance Agencies			1	6				7
4. Heads of the institution		1	2	4				7
5. Heads of Centres or Faculties		1	1	4				6
6. Heads of Departments		2	3	1			1	5
7. Faculty (professors, teachers, etc.)		3	3				1	5
8. Students		6	1				5	2

2. What is the degree of knowledge that your agency *has and should have* about the following *documents*?

	Not applicable	<i>... has</i>			<i>... should have</i>		
		None	Some	Full knowledge	None	Some	Full knowledge
1. Self-assessment reports			1	6			7
2. External assessment reports			1	6			7
3. Final reports (if they are different to the external ones)	1		2	4		1	5
4. Improvement actions plans			5	2	1		6

3. To what extent *is and should* your agency *be involved* in the following phases of the *evaluation process*?

	Not applicable	<i>... is involved</i>			<i>... should be involved</i>		
		Not at all	A little	Completely	Not at all	A little	Completely
1. Self-assessment		1	4	2	1	4	2
2. External assessment			1	6		1	6
3. Final reports (if they are different to the external ones)		1	2	4		3	4
4. Definition of improvement actions		4	1	2	3	1	3
5. Follow-up of the improvement actions	1	3	1	1	1	1	5

4. *Is there and should there be* any specific type of *regulated follow-up* of the implementation of the improvement actions?

	<i>... is there</i>		<i>... should there be</i>	
	No	Yes	No	Yes
1. At the institution	2	3		7
2. By the Quality Assurance Agency	5	2	2	5
3. By other external bodies (specify) ... Inspectorate		1	1	

5. What is *your opinion* about *what is actually happening in the implementation process*?

	Don't know	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
1. The heads of the institution are committed with the implementation of improvement actions derived from evaluation processes			4	3
2. The heads of the centres and departments are committed with the implementation of improvement actions derived from evaluation processes			4	2
3. The improvement actions in the final reports are well defined		3	2	2
4. There are specific funds for the improvement actions derived from evaluation processes		4	3	
5. The successful implementation actions are short-term actions	1	2	4	
6. The successful implementation actions are related to the timeliness of their demand	1		4	2
7. There is a need to report improvements to some upper level of decision		1	4	2
8. There are rewards and incentives (internal or external) if there is evidence of improvement	1	3	2	1
9. There are negative consequences (internal or external) if there is no evidence of improvement		3	3	1
10. The successful implementation actions are supported by the Quality Assurance units at the institutions	1	3	1	2
11. The support given by the Quality Assurance Agencies increases the number of improvement actions derived from evaluation processes.	4		2	1

6. What is *your opinion* about the importance of the following *factors for a successful implementation of the improvement actions* derived from evaluation processes?

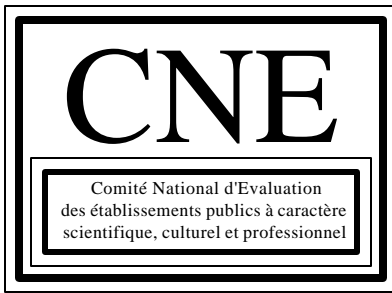
	Don't know	Little important	Important	Essential
1. The leadership of the heads of the institution			1	6
2. The leadership of the heads of the evaluated units			2	4
3. A clear definition of the improvement actions in the different reports			6	1
4. The availability of specific funds for the improvement actions derived from evaluation processes		2	5	
5. The possibility of a short-term implementation		1	6	
6. The coincidence with some other needs or demands (timeliness)			7	
7. The need to report improvements to some upper level of decision			5	2
8. The rewards and incentives (internal or external) if there is evidence of improvement		3	3	1
9. The negative consequences (internal or external) if there is no evidence of improvement		5	2	
10. The support given by the Quality Assurance units at the institutions		1	4	2
11. The support given by the Quality Assurance Agencies	1	3	2	1

Case study:

TUTORIAL ACTIONS IN FRANCE

**Jean-Loup Jolivet
Annick Rey**

(CNE-France)



Jean-Loup JOLIVET
Annick REY

TUTORIAL ACTIONS IN FRANCE

The aim of my presentation this morning is to talk about the French experience concerning tutorial actions which were implemented in 1996.

The CNE (which stands for *Comité National d'Evaluation*, i-e national committee of evaluation) has not evaluated this topic globally yet. That's the reason why my presentation is going to be based upon several studies such as universities internal reports, specific evaluations made by the CNE, an audit ordered by the Minister of Education, and some other researches related to tutorial actions.

I have divided my presentation into 4 parts:

- First, the background, which is the context where the actions have been implemented,
- Second, the objectives, or the reason why the state decided to set up such actions,
- Third, the functioning, or the way the tutorial actions work, what do they deal with, who attend them,
- And fourth and finally, the results, or what we have actually reached regarding the objectives we have got so far.

I - First of all I am going to speak about **the academic background**.

We can notice three important points in France:

- First, we have had a huge increase of the number of students between 1985 and 1995, which is more than 51 % in ten years.
- Second, the student body is now very diversified; the entry being non selective implies a rising number of people entering the university without the accurate or sufficient knowledge for the course they have applied for.
- That leads us to the third point which is important academic failures among the students.

The *baccalauréat* is the only necessary diploma to enter university (the *baccalauréat* is equivalent to the A'levels in GB or the *bachillerato* in Spain). It can be obtained after general or vocational studies whereas universities obviously focus on general and theoretical studies. That can explain that a large amount of students are failing because of a lack of either knowledge (their background is not appropriate) or motivation. What is the situation, as regards students failures: some students leave the university without a diploma, some others who haven't really chosen the courses they follow fail their exams (may be they had not been accepted in a higher education selective course), some others stay at university until they find a job, and some students can't follow because they have not understood the academic rules... The reasons can be numerous, the result is a drastic selection during the two first academic years.

If we look at some figures, we can notice that though the DEUG is meant to be obtained after the first two years, it is the case for only 37 % of students.

These failures represent a heavy financial and social waste both for the country and the students themselves.

That's the reason why the minister of Education François BAYROU decided in 1996 to implement some measures to help the students be more successful. The setting up of tutorial actions within the universities is one of these measures.

To help the universities to implement these actions, the minister created specific funding supports.

II - Let's now move on to the very **objectives of these tutorial actions.**

What is important to keep in mind is the nature of these actions. They are not to improve the knowledge of the students, they are neither lessons nor courses given by teachers but a methodological and pedagogical help. Tutorial actions aim at helping the first year students to understand the rules of the academic courses, to get the necessary skills and to deal with the academic demands. They get aware of the efforts they have to make. They learn to work by themselves within the specific context of university.

III - The functioning : now how does it work ?

The tutorial actions are cross-aged actions, led by post-graduate students managed normally by professors. They receive a salary equivalent to a training grant (about 1.000 francs / 152,45 euros a month during 6 months, for 60 hours maximum in front of students).

As I said before during the years 1996 and 1997, the ministry gave a special fund for the universities to organise these actions.

I have to point out that these actions are not compulsory for the students. The students have to be volunteers, they choose to go or not to go. That is the very important point leading us to the results.

IV - What are **the results like ?**

The results of the tutorial actions are not very enthusiastic, I am afraid, and that due to quite a lot of reasons:

- the tutorial actions are attended by a very little number of students, less than 30 % of the first year students;

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- most of the students who go to the tutorial actions are good and motivated students. So the public we expected at the beginning is not the one who actually attend the sessions;
 - we notice that the results are good for the good or average students who get even better, but then the result don't meet completely the objective. So the tutorial actions are not the solution, the only answer to failure. The outcomes are different from what we thought they would be;
 - we have to point out that the more successful outcome is for the tutors themselves who find there a good experiment of teaching and a very good oral training.

V - To conclude, in France we do actually have tutorial actions but we can say that the results from their implementation are not those we could have expected.

Obviously, we have to notice that for a certain number of students the academic failure is less the result of a lack of knowledge of the university rules than both an inappropriate secondary school background and a lack of motivation.

We can argue that in France we have no tradition of tutorship given by students, students are used to managing by themselves, it's something new.

More over, students are proud to have courses given by key teachers, and are quite reluctant to follow tutorial actions given by students.

The importance given to these actions is not as big as it should be. They don't seem to be considered as a priority by the present ministry nowadays, there is no more specific funding given to the universities.

Most of the presidents of the universities keep in mind that they cannot avoid the failure, that in the present situation this measure is not the answer to the failure.

In order to make these actions really good practice, to obtain good results, may be it would be a good idea to make it compulsory for a small category of students, for example the students who get marks between 8 and 10 at the first term exam.

Even if in France it's not in the academic culture to make compulsory courses given by others students, the debate is open, some universities are currently thinking about it.

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Case study:

USE OF EVALUATION FOR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

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EVALUATION MECHANISMS AND FOLLOW-UP FOR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF UNIVERSITIES

The experience of the Technical University of Catalonia

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. The strategic management and quality model at UPC
 - 2.1 Main characteristics of the Technical University of Catalonia in the Spanish university environment
 - 2.2 The strategic management and quality system at UPC (1994-2000)
 - Ideas and political principles. Main aims for a quality management and total evaluation process
 - Some facts
 - Main results and evaluations
 - 2.3 Learning from the past and defining a new perspective. The desire to consolidate an innovative university of quality in the European sphere
 - The use of evaluation mechanisms for institutional management and strategic management
3. Some conclusions

What is not measured is not known and what is not known is not improved

The current concern about the “quality” of higher education, arising out of the growing diversity of institutions and students alongside declining public support, can be a positive development if it leads universities and colleges of all kinds to become more self-conscious, more aware of their own activities and of variation in the quality and effectiveness of their departments and academic staff, more sensitive to ways of strengthening themselves and more motivated to act towards the improvement of all their functions. But universities must have freedom if they are to become more effective in these ways. Institutional autonomy is a necessary if not a sufficient condition for the development of a culture of excellence, one that embodies a wide range of quality control mechanisms, including internal reviews, through which academic excellence is achieved and sustained.
(Martin Trow, 1994)

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to inform about and analyse the experience of the Technical University of Catalonia (UPC, Barcelona, Spain) in the development of evaluation mechanisms, strategic management and quality in recent years. Specifically, our aim is to analyse the use of mechanisms of evaluation and follow-up for the consolidation of systems of strategic management and quality at institutions of higher education.

Since 1994 the Technical University of Catalonia has been developing its own management model based on the definition and transparency of objectives, accountability and institutional efficiency under criteria of quality and excellence. The main results of this management model have been an institutional strategic plan (1994-1997 and 1998-2002), sectoral planning of the main areas of action of the University, strategic planning of the structural units (schools, departments and institutes), the UPC-Generalitat of Catalonia programme contract (1997-2000), an institutional evaluation process and a framework for quality promoted by the Quality Council at UPC. All of these initiatives are a result of the recognition that the world of higher education and universities has changed drastically in recent years. In previous studies we discussed the main changes in this new university environment (see, for example, Solà, 1998 and Vilalta, 1998), which may be summed up in a general way as dynamism and complexity. It is for this reason that UPC, aware of this new environment and with a desire to provide both a public service and academic excellence, wishes to position itself as a university of quality at the service of society. To this end, the university has developed a far-reaching process of change and innovation that has allowed the institution to transform in an

incremental but continuous process, at the same time generating dynamics of adaptation and organisational learning.

This paper will focus primarily on analysing to what extent the internal evaluation systems and tools have facilitated management of the changes and the processes of strategic planning at UPC. The balance that has been made for these first few years enables us to draw a series of conclusions and design new projects that UPC is now starting to apply. The aim of this document is especially to inform about the initiatives and practical instruments in this whole process, giving real and practical case studies to describe it. Furthermore, it seeks to avoid boastfulness at all times, pointing out the mistakes that have been made in the past and the factors that should be corrected and improved over coming years.

2. The strategic management and quality model at UPC

2.1 Main characteristics of the Technical University of Catalonia in the Spanish university environment

The Spanish higher education system: Some considerations

Universities and higher education centres in Spain have been characterised in the past by their introspection. Within an excessively rigid and procedural framework, the Spanish public universities have not shown a great tendency to change and innovation. The historical characteristics of the public sector in the Spanish State (excessive bureaucracy, stringent control of procedures in terms of change and innovation, rigidity in the civil service system) were repeated within the university sphere. However, it should be said that the recent evolution of the Spanish university system has been very positive. With the introduction of the University Reform Law in 1983, the universities have become much more dynamic as part of a mass education system; research activity and technology transfer have taken off in the university departments and laboratories; major university and research infrastructures have been developed, new universities and new degree courses have been set up, university activity has become more international and relations with society and the industrial, economic and cultural world have increased. Nevertheless, university institutions in Spain still require preferential attention both by the appropriate government bodies and also by the internal initiative of the organisations to improve their efficacy and efficiency, adapting to social needs and setting up innovating organisations that occupy a key role in the new knowledge society.

The Technical University of Catalonia

In this context, the Technical University of Catalonia (UPC) is a public institution, which offers comprehensive training across a wide range of mainly technical fields. It currently offers 47 undergraduate diplomas and degrees, as well as a wide range of postgraduate and continuing education studies. UPC is one of Spain's most pro-active institutions in the areas of research, technology transfer and innovation. UPC currently has around 30,000 students, plus more than 7,000 at associate schools, 1,500 doctoral students and around 5,000 in continuing education programmes. The staff at UPC comprises some 2,200 lecturers, together with more than 1,100 people in administration, laboratories and services, and some 400 graduate scholarship holders. The budget for the year 2000 was about 28,500 million pesetas.

A time of growth and change at UPC

In recent years UPC has undergone changes which have involved important qualitative and quantitative leaps. Let us look at some statistics for the evolution of UPC schools over the last decade. Firstly, the number of registered students has risen from 16,000 (1984) to more than 30,000 (1998). The number of PhD students has doubled, the number of degree courses offered has increased from 37 to 57, and the number of graduates emerging from the University each year has risen from 1,200 to 3,500 in the last academic year.

Continuing education has made a forceful entry into the academic life of the University; it now accounts for one seventh of the total number of students. In terms of financing, the budget has increased five-fold, the Technology Transfer Centre's budget has increased seven-fold, and the total figure for research grants awarded is now four times greater. Over the same period, UPC has acquired more than 14,000 m² of new land. And finally, the number of bodies linked to the University has grown noticeably. Especially important is the setting up of the *Association of Friends of UPC*, the publishing house *Edicions UPC*, the *Technical Foundation of Catalonia* and a number of University-linked bodies, companies, consortiums and other organisations all entrusted with the promotion of research. In short, the University's structure has become considerably more complex and the number of bodies created with the aim of meeting new challenges has multiplied.

2.2 The strategic management and quality system at UPC (1994-2000)

A) Ideas and political principles. Main aims for a quality management and total evaluation process

The management and organisational model of any institution must be at the service of its social function and aims, not the other way round. The work carried out by UPC in recent years, with the development of a management model based on transparency of objectives and results, is aimed at promoting the improvement of teaching, research and administration and to be more accountable to society. The outlook adopted at UPC with the development of the new management model seeks to provide a response to the main institutional aims:

- To provide students and professionals with skilled technical training, which may be adapted to new requirements, that teaches to learn and is linked to the needs of the job market.

-
- To promote research activities, technology transfer and innovation in departments, research groups and personnel at the University in order to contribute to sustainable development and social progress.
 - To consolidate an organisation that is open to society and is aware of social, cultural and technological needs.
 - To heighten institutional autonomy, accountability and governance in order to increase efficiency in management and promote the social function of the university.
 - To develop a management model based on transparency of aims and decentralisation to provide answers to the individual units at the institution.
 - To be an institution with a critical capacity, committed to its broader environment and the sustainable development of societies on a world-wide basis and a desire for international presence from within present-day Catalan reality.

This perspective seems obvious, but for UPC it is foremost. If we move the previous considerations to the field of evaluation, it should be pointed out that the importance of evaluation and follow-up processes is precisely to dispose of pertinent data and information in order to conduct decision-making processes, change and organisational learning. Evaluation can never have a meaning in itself; it must be at the service of improvement of the institution and its main functions: teaching, research and professional and efficient professionalised management.

In line with this aim and UPC strategic management, the main objectives of the total evaluation plan for the Technical University of Catalonia in recent years has been the following:

- To set up and develop a **continuing improvement process** of the University, both at an institutional level and for each academic unit (school, faculty, department or research institute). On this point, it is crucial to **interrelate the evaluation mechanisms with the strategic planning process** that has been carried out at the University since 1994 in a *quality circle*.
- To promote a **cultural change within the institution and its people**, developing a quality process and continuing assessment and follow-up for improvement. Also, to **involve**

everybody at the institution, as they are the main capital of the University and the real motors of change and improvement. According to Trow (1994), our objective is that “all of these mechanisms of internal quality control (...) taken together comprise (and are reflections of) a culture of excellence, a set of values and attitudes shared in varying degrees by the members of an institution which reflect their commitment to the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of their academic work, and of the quality (and reputation) of the institution as a whole”.

- **To develop a learning organisation.** Following Meade (1995), definitions of a learning organisation emphasise an organisation skilled at acquiring new knowledge, transferring this new knowledge across the organisation and modifying the way it operates.
- **To improve the mechanisms of University accountability** in order to promote the social function of the university and its relationships with society, especially through the follow-up of the Contract Programme with the Catalan Government.

The quality system at UPC is based in three main stages and four levels (see figure 1). The three stages are strategic planning, execution/implementation and evaluation/follow-up. These three stages represent the quality circle to our institution and are developed in the four main levels of the University: at institutional level, at sector level, at units' level and at people level.

Figure 1. THE QUALITY SYSTEM AT UPC

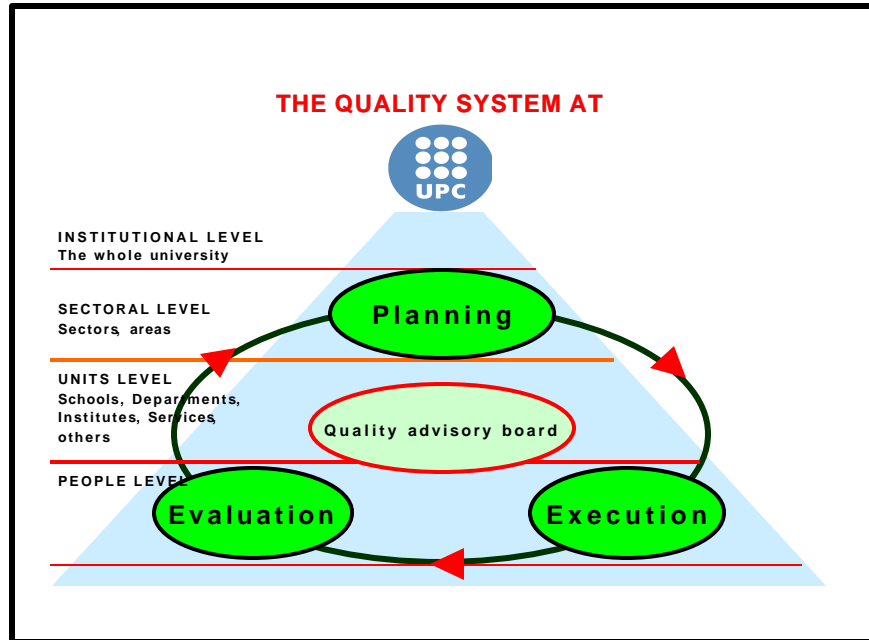


Figure 2 shows us the main actions on the evolution and development at the quality system at UPC from 1994 until now.

Figure 2. EVOLUTION AND DEVELOPMENT AT THE QUALITY SYSTEM AT UPC (1994-2000)

Evolution and development of the quality system	
1994 Preliminary phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elections programme. New elected government. • Strategic planning for a four-year period. With a mission, a vision, 4 main lines, 32 lines of action and 92 actions.
1995 Initial phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and external discussion and later approval of the FIRST STRATEGIC PLANNING • New organisational model • Introduction of improvement tools: process improvement, reorganisation, improvement groups, good practice identification, EFQM, etc. • Preparation of sectoral plans
1996 Development phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making and carrying out of the Unit strategic plans • Definition of the quality system • First Follow-up Document of the UPC strategic plan • Linking of the budget by programmes with the strategic planning • Participation in the First National Plan of Quality Evaluation at the Spanish Universities. Presenting a proposal of evaluation of the whole university in a five-year period.
1997 Maturation phase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a Quality Advisory Board • Signature of the Contract Programme with the Catalan Government (Generalitat de Catalunya) • Linking of the budget with the Unit strategic plans and the aims of the Contract Programme • Preparation of a customised evaluation guide based on the EFQM
1998-2000 Second period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New electoral programme. Renovation in the rectorial staff • New Action Programme 1998-2002 (SECOND STRATEGIC PLAN) • "White paper" on decentralisation and organisational structure at UPC

B) Some facts

As stated above, in recent years UPC has unhesitatingly promoted a set of mechanisms and instruments in the field of evaluation, follow-up and strategic management that has allowed it to consolidate its own innovative management model. This paper focuses on evaluation and follow-up systems, and the impact they have had in planning and strategic management.

UPC participated in the Experimental Evaluation Programme run by the Spanish Universities Board in 1993, with the evaluation of 3 degree courses and 6 departments. Between 1994 and 1995 it collaborated on the European Pilot Project, also coordinated by the Universities Board, in which it participated with the Degree in Telecommunications Engineering, together with three other Spanish universities. Since then, the University, due to the election of the new rector and the new rectorial staff, have developed a series of initiatives to *shake up* the institution under the banner of its new strategic program: *Quality at the service of society*.

As a consequence of the process of strategic planning and the dynamics of the University itself, four areas of evaluation and follow-up were defined: the institutional line, the sectoral line, that of the units and that of people. Below we set forth the main lines of action in each of these areas and some specific examples.

Institutional evaluation

- **Follow-up of the Institutional Strategic Plan**
 - Rector's annual report, approved by the University Senate
 - Methodology to evaluate the advances in the actions proposed

- **Follow-up of the UPC-Catalan Government Contract Program**
 - 15 aims, 52 indicators, weighted system
 - Government-University follow-up committee
 - Results and allocation of resources

Figure 3. UPC - CATALAN GOVERNMENT CONTRACT PROGRAM (1997-2000)

Programme Contract Objectives	Lines of action	Indicators
1. To improve student flow by increasing the number of graduates and ensuring that course content and teaching load are compatible with the requisites of educational quality.	5	4
2. To help graduates find work and evaluate the acceptance on the job market of their levels of qualification and preparation, and their ability to adapt to the needs of society.	4	4
3. To plan the study programmes on offer in terms of the needs and demands of society.	2	4
4. To reform the contents, regulations and management of doctoral programmes in order to increase the number of doctors in technological fields, reassess the value of doctorates within the business world, and adapt training to the needs of the socio-economic environment.	6	3
5. To programme and promote quality continuing education adapted to the needs of society.	4	3
6. To consolidate quality R&D activity in the University's research teams, thereby ensuring that UPC as an institution achieves a reputation for excellence in the field of research and technology at the service of society.	6	2
7. To expand R&D activity at UPC by increasing the number of academic staff and research teams working in research and technology transfer, and by promoting the degree of self-funding of R&D activities.	7	3
8. To increase technology transfer to firms and other institutions by ensuring that R&D at UPC responds appropriately to social, industrial and technological needs and demands.	6	4
9. To increase UPC's links with other institutions and strengthen its ties with society.	6	4
10. To provide graduates with the ability to carry out their professional activities with an awareness of the economic, social and cultural context of Europe. To consolidate and broaden European and international cooperation in research and technological development (RTD) as a guarantee for the future of scientific and technological standards at UPC.	7	5
11. To develop, with society in mind, an integral model for environmental protection and sustainable development based on the potential present in UPC's institutions.	5	3
12. To adapt the academic staff structure progressively to the established objectives in order to achieve the desired quality.	3	3
13. To adapt the non-academic staff progressively to the strategic objectives by increasing professionalism and management efficiency and effectiveness.	4	3
14. To develop and implement planning, assessment and resource assignment systems on the basis of quality control criteria in order to improve UPC's activities at the service of society.	5	4
15. To generate an active policy of obtaining resources which will provide new opportunities and collaborators willing to contribute to the funding of UPC.	4	3
TOTAL	74	52

➤ Follow-up of the programme budget

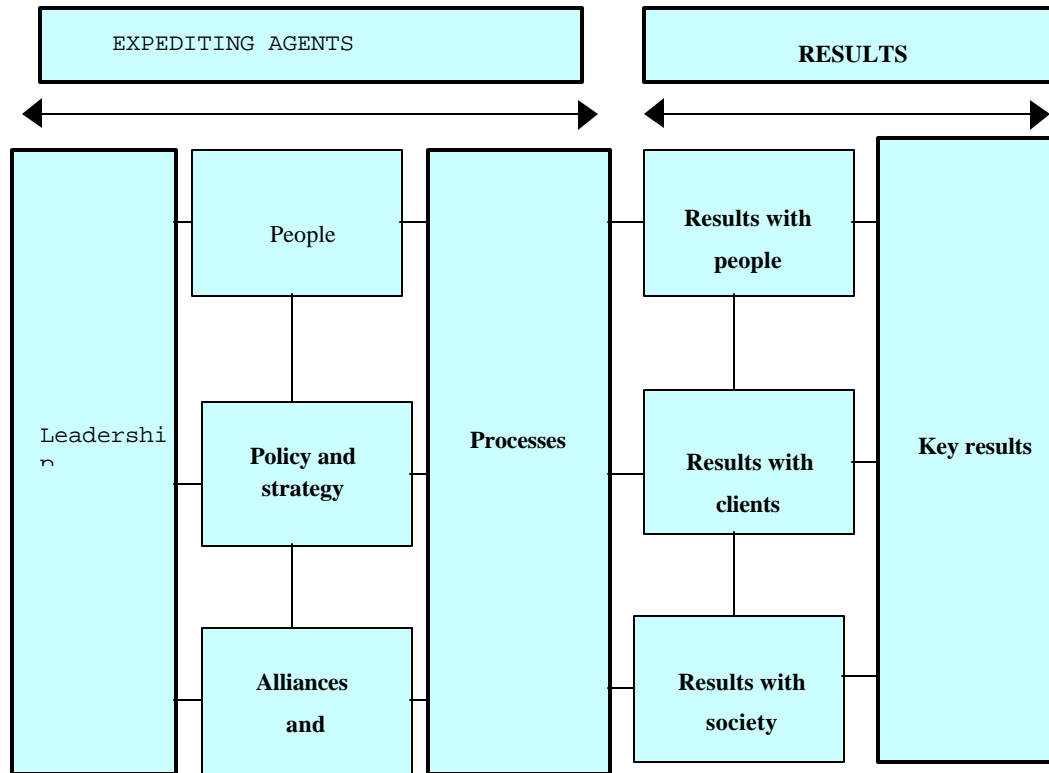
Economic and result balance sheet

Efficiency analysis

➤ Self-evaluation according to the European model of excellence (European Foundation for Quality Management, EFQM)

Prize for best practices (Quality Management Club of Spain, 1999)

Figure 4. THE EUROPEAN MODEL OF EXCELLENCE (EFQM) FACTORS

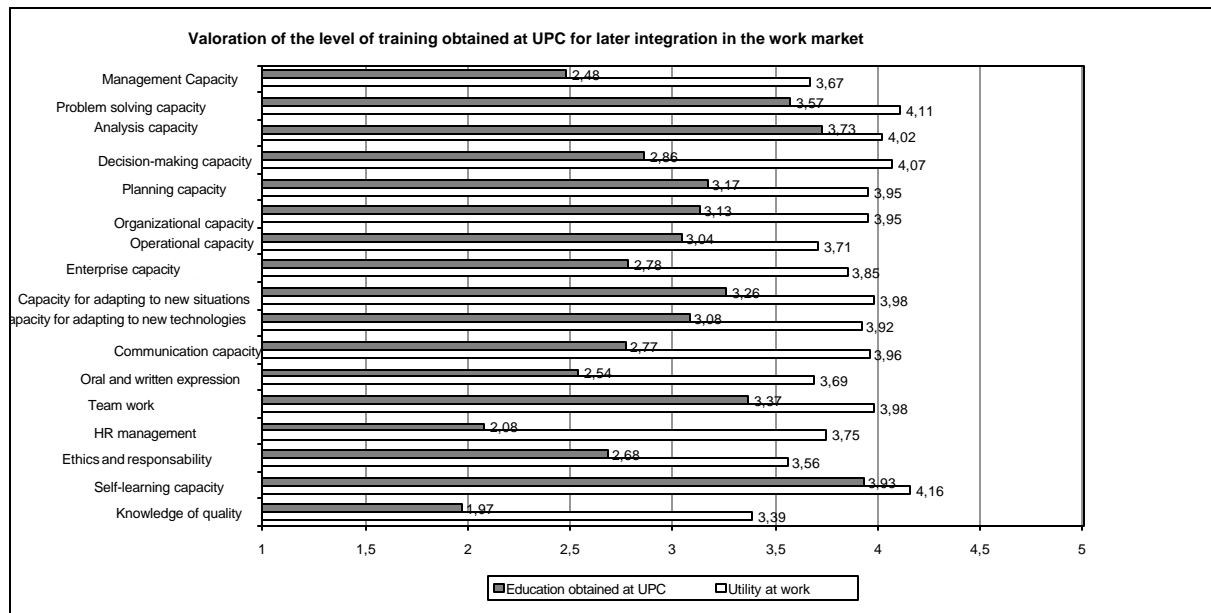


Sector evaluation

➤ Teaching

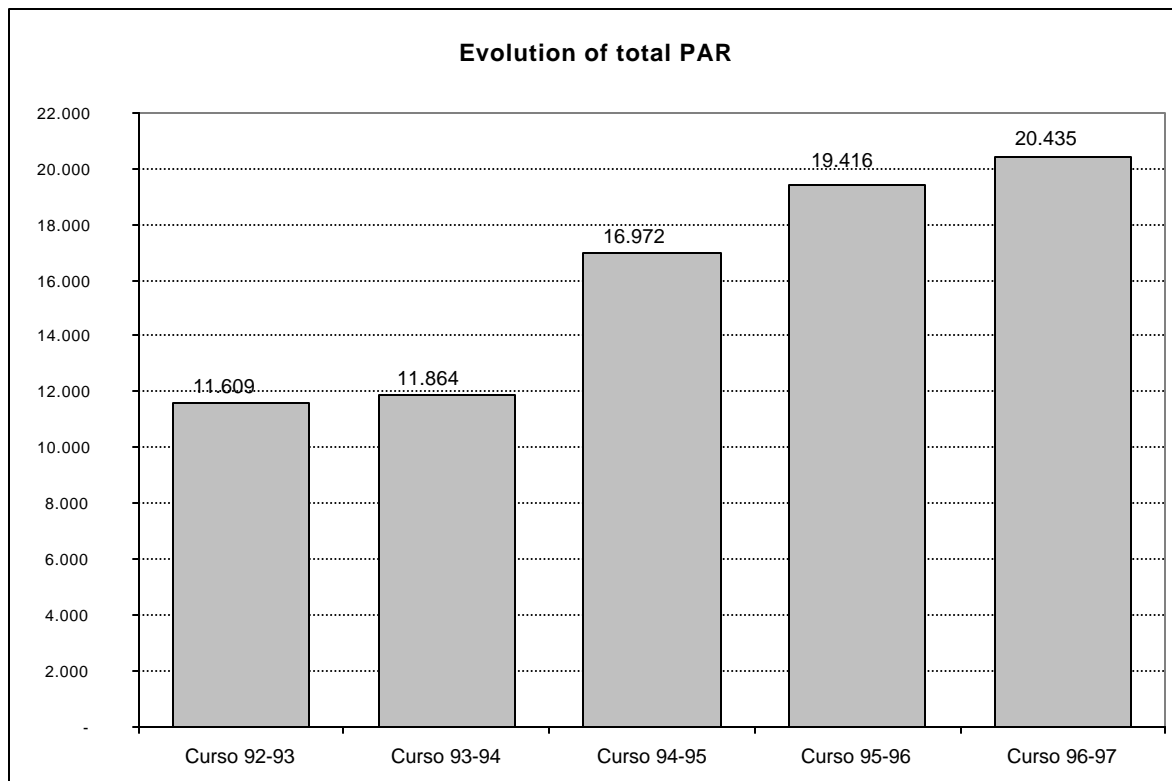
- Follow-up indicators defined by the UPC Board of Trustees
- Lecturer/subject questionnaires
- Questionnaires to first-degree and doctoral graduates
- Five-year appraisals

Figure 5. QUESTIONNAIRES TO FIRST DEGREE AND DOCTORAL GRADUATES AT UPC. An example



- **Research**
- Research Activity Points (PAR)
- Technology Transfer Points (PATT)
- Six-year appraisals

Figure 6. EVOLUTION OF RESEARCH ACTIVITY POINTS (PAR)



- **Management, services and sectoral plans**
 - Follow-up reports of the sectoral plans (International Relations Plan, Student and Faculty Mobility, etc.)
 - Evaluation of services within the framework of the National Plan for Quality Evaluation at Universities and the Agency for the Quality of the Catalan University System (adaptation of EFQM methodology)

Evaluation of the structural units

- **National Plan / Catalan Quality Agency (QU)**
 - Evaluations carried out:
 - 1997 Programme: areas of telecommunications and informatics (7 schools, 2 departments)
 - 1998 Programme: areas of industrial engineering and science and technology (9 schools, 9 departments)
 - 1999 Programme: construction area (4 schools, 9 departments)
 - General methodology:
 - Internal evaluation
 - External evaluation
 - Final report of the evaluation
 - Own characteristics at UPC:
 - 1) To focus evaluation on the unit (school, department or service) rather than the activity (teaching, research or management)
 - 2) To adapt the structure of the elements analysed to the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) model
 - 3) To adapt the process according to the state of strategic planning
 - 4) To integrate the information that is usually generated by the University
 - 5) Pilot project for cross-evaluation between schools and departments
- **Design and follow-up of strategic planning processes**
 - Design (self-diagnostic support from management teams of units, EFQM)

Annual follow-up of the strategic planning agreements with the units

Figure 7. ANNUAL FOLLOW-UP OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING AGREEMENTS WITH THE UNITS. An example

Example <i>Indicators of the Strategic Planning Agreement</i>		
Department	XXX	
General aim	1: To consolidate and evolve quality research and technology transfer.	
Operational aim	1.1: To boost the quantity and quality of research activities in order to place the Department at a level of research excellence at the service of society by increasing the number of academic staff and research and technology transfer groups.	
Indicators and standards	- Evolution of the PAR points	Increase of 10 %
	- Percentage of professors with PAR>3	Increase of 8 %
	- Support Actions	--
	- External references for the Department	--
	- Outstanding PAR	Reach 40 %
	-	

Evaluation of people

➤ Academic staff

Results of student questionnaires

Results at an individual level of research and TT activity (PAR/PATT)

AAD: achievement of teaching responsibilities

Five-year appraisals of teaching and six-year appraisals of research (general State policy)

In preparation: academic responsibilities

➤ Administrative and service staff

Pilot programme for 2000: management by objectives linked to the unit plans (pilot test at the Library Service, Planning and Assessment Bureau, schools and departments).

As we have said before, all these actions and mechanisms of evaluation and strategic management have implied to *shake up* the institution in last six years. The process has been an incremental one, and we have developed three main support activities to conduct the organisational change: management information systems, creation of committees and technical support bodies and training sessions and information mechanisms for various groups.

From our point of view, the three support activities are crucial for any university institution attempting to consolidate and strategic management and quality assurance process. These kinds of support activities are the *foundations* of the quality and strategic management building.

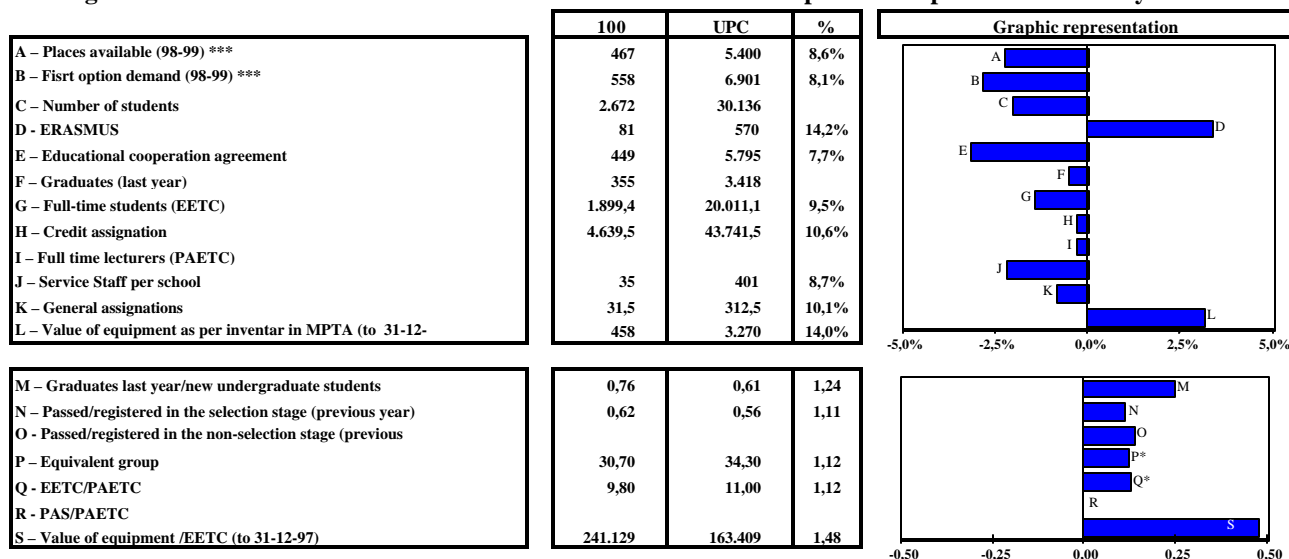
Management information systems

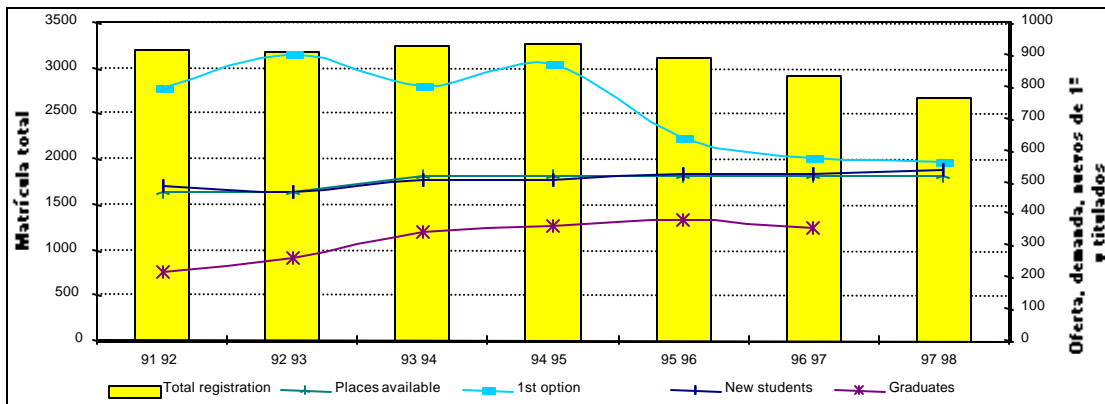
➤ Quantitative indicators

➤ “Snapshots” of the units

➤ MIS (Management Information System)

Figure 8. MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM. An example of “Snapshot” of a Faculty at UPC





Creation of committees and support bodies

- Quality Council
- Institutional Evaluation Committee
- Strategic Planning and Evaluation Unit (GPA)
- Technical Quality Committee

Training sessions and information mechanisms for various groups

- Internal Evaluation Committees in the units
- EFQM self-diagnosis exercises in management teams (rectorial staff, management teams of units)
- Training and information sessions for strategic management and evaluation
- Publication and transparency of results: Rector's report, agreements with regard to planning, budgets, the contract programme, etc.

C) Main results and evaluations

As you can see, UPC has developed a far-reaching management system of innovation to position itself as a university of quality at the service of society. This system, based on a process of strategic management, has mainly focused on the four areas mentioned above: the institution, its sectors, its structural units and its people. Moreover, this effort has required the definition and promotion of a set of mechanisms of evaluation and follow-up to help staff in the decision-making process, to feed the strategic management process and to be more accountable to society.

In summary, we can discuss what in our opinion are the main results and assessments to be drawn from our experience.

The internal process of evaluation and its impact on the strategic management of the institution

A very positive experience to create a quality culture and make different groups aware of quality

The evaluation and management process at UPC has meant a far-reaching cultural change, especially regarding the consciousness-raising of the management staff from the structural units. Moreover, UPC has assumed the necessity to be more accountable to society by promoting the improvement of teaching, research and technology transfer; but also by supporting economic, social and regional development. Finally, this accountability and culture of quality, which has already reached some of our publics, must now go further and reach all publics.

Major effort towards the consolidation of an information system and establishment of follow-up indicators

The processes of strategic management and evaluation have allowed UPC to consolidate a real system of management information and institutional indicators. Statistical information systems have a long tradition at UPC and they are currently one of the mainstays in the processes of planning, evaluation and follow-up. The governing bodies and managerial staff of the University dispose of an information system in order to conduct decision-making process and institutional management.

Too many indicators

On the other hand, the University tends to generate too many indicators and control systems that only lead to confusion, instead of concentrating its efforts and analysis on a few key indicators.

Little integration between evaluation and planning

One aspect that still needs to be tackled at the base is the progressive integration of the evaluation process into the mechanisms of strategic management at all its levels. In recent years, the University's efforts have focused on generating a set of evaluation tools; now, the challenge is to integrate the processes, simplify them and channel them towards the final results and a subsequent execution of strategic projects.

Wearisome activity providing little in the way of specific results

Evaluation has on occasions been taken as an end in itself, demanding overwhelming efforts and priority attention. As we perceive it, at the early stage of constructing a management model this is understandable and even recommendable, as it makes it possible to bring the wide range of groups that make up the University into contact with the culture of evaluation and quality improvement. However, the University now proposes to simplify its evaluation and follow-up processes and concentrate its efforts on those activities that generate a real and palpable value-added in academic and management activity.

Evaluation of a very internal nature; very few external analyses, with neither forward studies nor benchmarking

Initiatives in the field of evaluation and strategic planning have been based mainly on the internal analysis of the situation at the University itself, together with comparison with points of reference for the institution as a whole. This has proved very positive, as it has provided a great deal of information on the state of affairs in the four areas described above: institutionally, we now have an accurate profile of the main features of the organisation; on a sectoral level, we have information about teaching, research, technology transfer, international activity, etc.; for the units, the University has been able to contrast each of the indicators in the respective academic units, detecting positive aspects and points for improvement; and in the area of people, we have exhaustive information on the activity of each professional.

Nevertheless, as we will explain below, the new phase should be characterised by analysis and external comparison, thus allowing us to place UPC in a European context.

Positive experience of adaptation to EFQM to develop management teams and evaluation processes

The experience of adapting the quality evaluation model of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) has been very interesting. It has served both for the self-testing of the University's management teams (basically the rectorial staff and all the management teams of the schools) and to adapt the evaluation guides promoted by the Universities Board and the Agency for the Quality of the Catalan University System. The EFQM model paints a very clear picture of the institution or unit in a scenario of excellence, and even more importantly, allows periodic evaluation to analyse the progress made and mechanisms for change and improvement.

Impact on the University's activity

The impact of the new innovative management model at UPC has been considerable. A great deal of work has been done over the last six years, and if we look back we can say that the University has progressed a long way towards maturity. As is mentioned above, UPC now has a highly consolidated and innovative management model in the Spanish public sector based on the following points:

- Institutional strategic plan (1994-1997 and 1998-2002).
- Sectoral strategic plans for the various areas of university activity (teaching, research and technology transfer, innovation, international relations, academic staff and administrative and service staff policy, libraries, the environment, etc.).
- Strategic planning of the structural units. At present 44 academic units have reached planning agreements with a four-year time horizon and 48 yearly follow-up and adaptation processes have been made.
- UPC-Generalitat of Catalonia programme contract (1997-2000). The programme contract establishes the main objectives of the University for this period, and allows a new system of coordination between the University and the relevant government body based on transparency, accountability and funding by results. UPC was the first university in Spain to sign a programme contract with the educational authorities.
- Institutional evaluation process. As we have been stressing throughout this paper, the culture of evaluation and follow-up have made major inroads into the University. To give just one example, there have been 49 evaluations of the University's schools departments and services in the period 1997-2000.

As regards the institution's main activities (teaching, research, technology transfer and innovation) the main indicators show us that the Technical University of Catalonia is working, step by step, on the right direction. The follow-up of the Contract-Program with the Catalan government, the yearly evolution of the institutional plan or the evolution of teaching and research activities show us that UPC is improving towards its mission of quality at the service of society.

2.3 Learning from the past and defining a new perspective. The desire to consolidate an innovative university of quality in the European sphere

The use of evaluation mechanisms for institutional management and strategic management

Clearly, all the above description and analysis of the experience of the Technical University of Catalonia depicts an image with some really positive aspects but also others that call for more decisive steps forward or fresh perspectives. Below we account for the main lines of work on which the University is centring its attention with a view to the coming years. Again, the purpose is clear: to construct a management model that encourages quality and innovation in order to provide support for the institution's main activities: teaching, research and technology transfer, and involvement in regional and general social issues.

- **To increase the external side (accountability); defence of public university values; to explain to society what we do and its social, cultural and economic impact**

Over the coming years, UPC plans to intensify those aspects that involve reinforcing mechanisms of accountability. It has already initiated this line of work through the programme contract with the Catalan government, the publication of the results of evaluations and a policy of informing the media, government bodies and enterprise about its activities. As a public institution, the public dissemination of the results of the University's activity and services is paramount.

- **To construct a learning organisation and facilitate processes of organisational change**

As has already been mentioned, the University must foster the management of its knowledge and its intellectual capital. UPC also plans to consolidate all these processes and innovations in management by facilitating mechanisms for constant organisational learning.

- **To integrate evaluation into strategic management processes**

Evaluation processes in all areas will be more closely linked to strategic management and decision-making processes. The University's quality system as described above emphasises follow-up systems to provide strategic value for the institution.

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- **To simplify evaluation (and planning) processes and to concentrate on the *strategic projects* of the institution**

Closely related to the point above, work is already underway to simplify both evaluation and planning mechanisms. The idea is that the institution is now mature enough to develop these aspects in its ordinary working dynamics. This trend towards simplification is intended to enable the institution as a whole and each of its units and groups to concentrate on the strategic projects that are designed to provide added value and academic activity that is at the same time excellent and matches the needs and demands of society.

- **To make evaluation and follow-up become an intrinsic activity in daily life, not an isolated one-off exercise**

As we have just mentioned, evaluation and follow-up must become intrinsic to the day-to-day affairs of all of us, and not just a bothersome exercise that is imposed on us from time to time. We can safely say that the institution has advanced considerably in this direction, but it is also clear that we have a long way to go.

- **To involve people more and to make unit objectives into the objectives of the groups and people of the University**

The strategic planning and evaluation processes described above must involve the collaboration of more groups. In our experience, after six years of intense work, there are still groups and individuals who are unfamiliar with these management mechanisms. In fact, the structure of the University encourages this lack of communication. For this reason, one of the most unequivocal lines of work for the coming years will be to foster the personal involvement of the institution's professionals. At the same time, strategic planning processes must ultimately take the form of individual objectives. In this line, as has been stated elsewhere, UPC is working on what we have called academic responsibilities and an evaluation plan for the administrative and service staff, to be introduced over the next few years.

- **To facilitate benchmarking, forward analyses and credit systems**

This is one of the new projects that we plan to give high priority. It is important for the University to be familiar with points of reference at home and especially abroad in order to be able to compare itself with them and so improve. We plan to perform benchmarking exercises

for the institution as a whole and in particular for the various academic units. The benchmarking at UPC will be a systematic process for measuring and comparing the work processes of one organisation with those of another for the purpose of identifying best practices that can lead to improvement. Our intention is to work towards an innovating university in a European context, within an increasingly internationalised and complex higher education system.

➤ **To encourage organisational changes and promote internal decentralisation to build a more innovative and agile institution**

One of the main conclusions reached over the past few years of organisational development has been the need to revise the structure of UPC itself. This has led to the preparation of a *White paper on decentralisation and organisational structure at UPC*, currently undergoing analysis and internal discussion.

➤ **To analyse accreditation processes.**

As a technological university, we are interested in to explore the possibility of course accreditation, working with other universities in the European context.

➤ **To match internal evaluation with criteria of external perception**

UPC is working on the definition of a set of indicators of external perception of the university institution. The objective is to identify the key variables through which the University's range of users and customers perceive the institution and its degree of quality. This exercise should enable the University to reach a closer correlation between internal planning and decision-making on the one hand and external perceptions and demands on the other. We are uncomfortable with the idea of devising league tables of universities because of the danger this represents if great care is not taken when defining the indicators and standards to be taken into account, and to our mind there is no one better qualified than the university institution itself to enter into this debate and make proposals with a technical basis.

In the study we are carrying out, we have identified 5 work areas as regards with perception or activity and 11 main groups of public. The areas are: undergraduate studies, lifelong learning, doctoral studies and technology transfer. The publics are the following: secondary school students, parents of secondary school students, secondary school teachers, university students, graduates, employers, postgraduate students, doctoral students, companies and

institutions contracting research and transfer services, educational bodies in government, and society at large.

3. Some conclusions

Finally, we would like to share some general conclusions as to how to approach the issue of evaluation and follow-up mechanisms for strategic management in universities. Clearly, these conclusions and recommendations are based on the criteria and experiences that are taking place at the Technical University of Catalonia, and which we have attempted to describe and analyse here.

From our perspective and as a result of our experiences, evaluation and follow-up mechanisms at universities should be based on:

- A process that is integrated into the institution's ordinary activity
- The constant promotion of the culture of evaluation and quality
- The promotion of learning organisations
- Comparison of the institution with others
- Simpler processes contributing clear added value
- A direct relationship with the decision-making and internal planning system
- Facilitation of bottom-up and top-down processes
- Consideration of the external perception criteria of the users of the higher education system
- A process whose main goal is the improvement of quality and academic excellence.

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TRANSPARENCY

Main presentation:

**TRANSPARENCY AS A
CORNERSTONE OF
EVALUATION**

Julie Swan

(QAA-United Kingdom)

Transparency as a cornerstone of evaluation

Transparency is a ‘good thing’

It is an (almost) universally accepted view that quality assurance arrangements for higher education should be transparent.

Transparency signifies openness, understanding, honesty. If something is not transparent it is seen as obscure, difficult to understand, not open to scrutiny. Transparency is a ‘good thing’ and transparency is, therefore, to be promoted in evaluation arrangements.

During today’s seminar we will explore:

- why transparency in the evaluation of higher education is important,
- what makes an evaluation system transparent, and
- how the purposes of evaluation determine the nature of the transparency.

In the discussion and through the case studies we will consider the challenges and opportunities the requirements of transparency introduce into an evaluation system.

What should be transparent?

The most obvious feature of a transparent quality assurance system is the publication of a report detailing the outcomes of the evaluation. We will spend some time during this seminar considering the advantages and disadvantages of making reports available to the public, the form of the reports and how they are used. However, the publication of the report can follow a year or more of preparation for the evaluation; the evaluation itself can be a complex activity. So we should also consider the transparency of the process itself.

But perhaps the first question that should be asked is: Are the **purposes** of the evaluation transparent? Why is the evaluation being undertaken? What is the intended outcome of the evaluation process? How will the outcomes be used to influence decisions?

If the purpose of the evaluation is understood, is transparent, then it is easier to answer questions about how the evaluation system itself should also be transparent.

We are all familiar with the main purposes given for the evaluation of higher education, typically:

- Enhancement, improvement.
- Accountability: to government, to the public and to other stakeholders who have responsibilities for, fund and participate in higher education.
- Public information: to inform choice, to enable comparisons, to aid mobility.
- To inform funding decisions: directly or indirectly.

Not all of the purposes apply in all systems. Purposes can change over time. And where more than one purpose applies there can be tensions between them. We are not going to explore in this seminar the merits, or otherwise, of each of the purposes, but we should understand that in a transparent evaluation system the reasons **why** the evaluation is being undertaken must be clear and must be understood. If the purposes are not transparent the evaluation itself is less likely to be conducted with the trust and openness required for an effective evaluation.

No amount of transparency elsewhere in the system will compensate for a failure to be transparent about its purposes. If institutions are told that an evaluation is being undertaken to help them to improve the quality of their provision, but they suspect (and maybe have their suspicions confirmed) that it is really about how much funding they should receive, how willing will they be to participate in the evaluation exercise? How open will they be in their self-evaluations?

So the reasons why the evaluation is taking place must be understood; the purposes of the evaluation must be transparent. Once the purposes of the evaluation are clear questions about the process and the outcomes can be considered.

Transparency of outcomes and fitness for purpose

An evaluation of higher education, whether of an institution as a whole or provision within particular subjects, results in a report. The format and contents of reports are determined by the purpose and approach to the evaluation: who is intended to read the report, for what reasons, what has been evaluated and how?

Improvement, enhancement

If the purpose of the evaluation is to promote improvement do the outcomes need to be in a public document? Would a confidential report to the institution not be fit for the purpose?

When an evaluation system has improvement as its sole purpose a case can be made for reports to remain private. If a report is not to be published concerns about possible damage to public reputation that arise if there is an adverse public report are not an issue. It can be argued that if the report is not to be published institutions can be persuaded to be more critical in their self-evaluation. If the report is not to be published the evaluators can also be most rigorous when writing their observations and conclusions.

If the sole purpose of the evaluation is to promote improvement, and accountability and public information requirements are not being addressed through the evaluation, why not share the reports with the institution only? In Ireland, for example, Institutional Review is undertaken by the National Council for Educational Awards. The general (statutory) function of the Council is to promote and develop education. The Institutional Review reports are not public documents. As the purpose of the evaluation is to influence the behaviour of the institution itself it can be argued that it is only the institution that needs to see the report and understand the outcomes of the evaluation.

However, even when improvement is the only or main purpose of the evaluation, there are reasons why the publication of reports can be desirable, including:

- If reports are made public good practice can be shared and improvement promoted across a number of institutions.

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- If the reports are public the institution will be encouraged to ensure that its quality arrangements are robust – the consequences of an adverse public report provide an incentive to improve.
 - There is a growing demand for public information and accountability; if an enhancement focussed evaluation does not satisfy this demand because reports are not published there might be pressure to introduce additional evaluation arrangements.
 - When an institution has a favourable private report, it might wish to publicise it. Should it be prohibited from doing so?
 - Appropriate follow up action by the institution is more likely to be taken when the report is published. If a need for improvement has been identified and published an institution will wish to be able to demonstrate, in future evaluations, or if challenged by stakeholders, that those weaknesses have been addressed. Publication of the report will provide a further incentive for appropriate follow up.

Accountability

Accountability is commonly identified as a key purpose of the evaluation of higher education. Providers of higher education typically receive public funding; money might be received directly from the students (or, frequently, their parents); employers and the professions look to the higher education institutions to develop in students the knowledge and skills necessary to ensure an effective contribution to the success of their sectors; students make a considerable investment of time in, and have high expectations of, their higher education experience. Evaluation provides a means of demonstrating that an institution's responsibilities to the various stakeholders are being properly exercised.

Is it necessary for the outcomes of the evaluation to be made public if accountability is the purpose? Reports could, of course, be shared on a confidential basis with government or funding bodies. But the other stakeholders must then rely upon those able to access the reports to secure any necessary follow up action. Such an arrangement puts key stakeholders in higher education at arms length from the evaluation; an evaluation to which they might have contributed and in which they might have a direct interest. Questions can be raised about the

objectivity and effectiveness of an evaluation system when the outcomes are not made public. True accountability is undermined if the outcomes of the evaluation are not published.

Public information

There can be no question that if one of the purposes of the evaluation is to provide public information the outcomes of the evaluation must be transparent. Reports must be published. Most European evaluation arrangements provide for the publication of reports.

In the UK the QAA is clear that one of the purposes of the evaluations it undertakes is the provision of public information. Last year we undertook a project to find out whether any notice was taken by the public of the several hundred reports the Quality Assurance Agency publishes each year. 66% of prospective students who responded to a survey questionnaire on the Agency's web site said that reports would be influential or very influential in helping them to select a course. This year during 'clearing week' (the week following the publication of the final school examination results when prospective students are securing a place on a higher education course) some 1.25 million 'hits' were recorded on the Agency's web site on which the all reports are published.

However, in a wider survey it was found that only 12% of prospective students used the evaluation report themselves to inform their choices; 48% claimed to use the 'league tables' produced annually by the major newspapers and constructed mainly on the basis of the outcomes of subject level evaluations undertaken.

The publication of such league tables has encouraged some to call for reports not to be published or at least for reports and the judgements they contain to be presented in a way that makes it impossible for league tables to be produced.

This time last year we consulted on how the judgements made during the evaluations should be expressed. We found it impossible to find an approach that would be clear to the reader, and thereby fit for the purpose of providing public information, and consistent for all evaluations but could not be converted by an enterprising journalist into a league table. Software was even identified (not by the Agency) as a tool that would enable league tables to be constructed, even when a clear judgement was not included in the report; the software

would scan narrative reports and allocate a numerical score to them, depending on the number of negative and the number of positive words used.

If evaluation is undertaken to provide information to the public, that information must be presented in a way that the public can understand. This requirement leads to discussions about the problems associated with presenting complex issues in a clear and understandable way. Surely a challenge to which the academic community should be able to rise?

Funding

Do the outcomes of the evaluation need to be transparent if the purpose of the evaluation is the specific allocation of public funding? (Either to reward excellent quality with extra funding or to withdraw funding from unsatisfactory provision or maybe even to help improve less good provision by providing additional funding support).

If differential decisions are being informed by the evaluation outcomes, those decisions will need to be open to scrutiny. The information used to inform the decisions will need to be available for scrutiny too. The reports will need to be public.

Report format and follow up

The format of reports is determined, of course, by what has been evaluated, the purpose of the evaluation and the nature of any judgements to be made. But as we are considering this seminar approaches to follow up from an evaluation we should consider whether there are particular report formats that might influence the approach to follow up.

In some evaluation systems the published report includes specific recommendations for improvement. For example, the Danish Centre for Quality Assurance suggests that the recommendations included in reports should be ‘operational, constructive and realistic’ and specific responsibilities for the follow up action should also be identified.¹ In the UK strengths and weaknesses are identified but specific recommendations about action are not made. In the Netherlands the VSNU’s published reports do not include specific

recommendations but recommendations are made in a management letter addressed to the university board.

If the report is a public document should the institution's own response to the report be included within it, and what form should this take? Should it be an observation of the efficacy of the evaluation process, a 'right to reply', or an action plan setting out how the institution intends to respond to the issues raised by the evaluation?

The action plan approach perhaps provides the best lever for effective follow up. What better way to ensure that an institution effectively acts on any weaknesses identified in a report than to require it to provide an action plan for publication? What better starting point for any external follow up to the evaluation than an exploration of the success of the institution in following the action plan it drew up for itself? Or what better starting point for a second round of evaluations? The time that should be given to an institution to develop a thought through and thorough action plan would delay publication of the report but a separately published action plan might provide an answer to this problem.

Transparency of the outcomes of the evaluation - a summary

The publication of the outcomes of evaluation can introduce difficulties that could otherwise be avoided, such as concerns about damaged reputations and, possibly, litigation should the outcomes be unfavourable and the difficulty of presenting the outcomes in a way that is meaningful and useful to the range of audiences who have an interest in the outcomes.

However, a higher education sector should be proud of its achievements and eager to ensure that the stakeholders that it serves understand these. A confident sector should be pleased to be able to use a transparent evaluation systems to demonstrate to a sometimes sceptical tax paying public that it is accountable, that it recognises the value of continuous improvement and that, as higher education becomes more inclusive of society, the higher education sector is able to engage with traditionally non-academic audiences too.

Whatever the purpose or purposes of the evaluation the outcomes of the evaluation should be transparent.

¹ Evaluation of European Higher Education: A Status Report. The Centre for Quality Assurance of Higher Education, Denmark in cooperation with Comite National d'Evaluation , France, September 1998

If the outcomes of the evaluation are to be transparent then so, too, must be the process.

Transparency of process

As soon as the outcomes of the evaluation are transparent questions will be asked about the process. Questions will be asked by the institutions themselves which, concerned about potentially negative outcomes and negative consequences, will wish to understand and be in a position to challenge features of the process; most significantly they will want to understand the process in order to prepare for the evaluation. Other stakeholders might not ask the questions, but should anyway be told enough about the process in the published reports to enable them to understand and make sensible use of the evaluation reports and judgements available to them.

Just as there are, properly, different approaches used for the reporting of the outcomes of an evaluation so there are different processes used for the evaluation (although the concepts of self-evaluation and peer review will be at the heart of each of the systems with which we are familiar). Transparency of process perhaps develops as the evaluation system matures. When an evaluation system is first introduced there are some inevitable uncertainties about how some of its operational features will work. When particular operational problems have been identified and resolved it is easier to become more transparent about the process. From the outset, however, questions such as the following should be answered:

- What is being evaluated, the whole institution, particular subject provision, teaching or research, quality or standards?
- What criteria are used – in subject review, for example, centrally set curricular requirements, the institution's own aims and objectives, professional body requirements, national or international benchmarks? Fitness for purpose or fitness of purpose?
- Who undertakes the evaluation and who decides? What guidelines will they work to?
- How will the evaluators be prepared for the evaluation?
- What evidence will be used to inform the evaluation?
- Who will make any judgements and who will write the report?

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- What will be the consequences of the evaluation?

An additional question frequently raised by institutions is: 'how will the evaluation be evaluated?'

Can there be any justifiable reason not to provide answers to these questions? Can institutions or the other stakeholders be expected to have confidence in an evaluation system where these questions are not answered? An evaluation agency that is subjecting an institution to rigorous scrutiny must be able to withstand equally rigorous scrutiny of itself and its own processes. Scrutiny requires transparency.

Self evaluation is at the heart of the arrangements with which we are familiar. So the next question to be asked is: does a transparent evaluation system require that the self evaluation documents should also be made public?

Answers vary. Where self evaluation sets the whole agenda for the external evaluation it can be argued that the evaluation cannot be transparent unless the self evaluation is published too. On the other hand, if the external evaluation is to be effective the self evaluation must be as honest and self critical as possible. Such self criticism can be difficult even when shared only with the closest of friends. To encourage institutions to be wholly honest and self critical in a public arena is not easy; some argue that the internal and external evaluation processes, which can only be strengthened by the most honest of self evaluations, will both suffer if such honesty is compromised by the publication of the self evaluation document.

Whether or not the self evaluation is published, guidance on what the evaluators will be looking for in a self evaluation must be clear.

Are there any reasons why the evaluation process should not be transparent? Possibly just one, but it is not convincing. Over time, as institutions become familiar with the requirements of a transparent evaluation system, a compliance culture might develop. There is concern that institutions learn to 'play the game'. There is a concern that 'what gets measured gets done'. If we are transparent about what is measured, and how, institutions will concentrate on those aspects of their activities to the detriment of others. But what is the alternative? To keep the institutions guessing? Hardly a credible approach.

Layers of transparency

A number of assumptions have been made, so far, not least that transparency is a ‘good thing’. Even if this assumption is correct our views on how such transparency should manifest itself will probably differ. Our views will be influenced by, for example, the stage of the development of the evaluation systems with which we work, the key purposes of the evaluations that are undertaken and the structure and context of the higher education sector within which we are working.

There are a number of layers to an evaluation – what is expected of an institution, how the evaluators engage with the institution, what is seen by the public, the consequences of the evaluation. Within each of the layers decisions have to be taken about the amount of transparency necessary to ensure the evaluation is effective, is fair and is fit for the purposes it is intended to serve.

As we move on to discuss how these decisions are taken, and to hear in detail how transparency works in different systems, let me conclude with an analogy which might illustrate why, even if we all agree that transparency is the cornerstone of evaluation, there remain questions about how this transparency should be delivered. The analogy is one of clothing.

It has been fashionable in recent years (at least for women) to wear a number of layers of clothing. Some transparent and some opaque. The wearer decides where to put the transparent layers and where to put the opaque layers. Decisions are, presumably, determined by whether they wish to remain respectable or to shock, to show off their best features or conceal their worst, to demonstrate they have nothing to hide, or to keep others guessing, or perhaps just to look good and keeping warm when it is cold, and be able to cool off when it is warm.

The top coat is what is seen by the public – typically grey but functional. Perhaps a little like many evaluation reports? The layer closest to the skin might be seen by only a chosen few, but is the most interesting. Perhaps a little like the self evaluation document? In between there are several layers, some of which might be seen when the topcoat is removed. These are the layers that together enable the evaluation to be conducted with rigour and consistency.

Held above all of the layers is the wearer’s umbrella, keeping at bay the worst of the weather. The umbrella is the purpose of the evaluation – typically accountability or improvement; if it

is raining there might be little reason to strip away too many of the layers of clothing. Or perhaps the umbrella is acting as a sunshade – and the purpose is to provide information to the public about a diverse and confident higher education sector; if the sun is shining more layers might be revealed.

Transparency is the cornerstone of evaluation. Transparency is a ‘good thing’. But it must be delivered in a way that fits the purpose of the evaluation system and the context within which the system is operating. During the rest of this sessions we should give some thought the way by which transparency in the evaluation process and the evaluation outcomes can secure effective follow up and improvement.

Case study:

TRANSPARENCY IN THE NETHERLANDS

Ton I. Vroeijenstijn

(VSNU-The Netherlands)

QUALITY OF THE CURRICULA: A BLACK BOX OR CRISTAL CLEAR?

Transparency in the Netherlands

1. INTRODUCTION

As is well known, external quality assessment is fulfilling a dual purpose: it is expected to contribute to the improvement and enhancement of the quality of the programs offered and to contribute to accountability. The aim of improvement is unchallenged. Concerning accountability, there is not always a clear idea what is meant with it. On the one hand, accountability is interpreted as showing the outside world that it is getting value for money. On the other hand, accountability is sometimes also connected with the request for a better insight into quality and diversity. Especially governments are expecting that external quality assessment will provide information about the programs at offer and by doing so will make the black box (as programs in Higher Education often are seen) clear and transparent. At least this is the case in the Netherlands since the start of the External Quality Assessment system. All ministers of Education always have stressed that EQA also has to fulfill an informative role based on the assumption if future students have enough information, they will base their choice for a study on the quality. This would prevent wrong choices and a waste of time by a wrong choice. In the same time there is the belief if students will vote with their feet, the institutions will do their utmost best to improve the quality because they do not like to lose students. Nowadays in the Netherlands, there is a lot of information available for students to make their choice. Three important products are contributing to the transparency of Higher Education:

- The reports of the external review committees
- A consumer guide (Keuzegids Hoger Onderwijs = Guide to Choose your Study)
- Elseviers yearly special "the Best Study Programs".

It is an interesting exercise to compare those three resources of information and to ask the question if the situation more clear and if indeed has effect.

2. THE REPORT OF THE EXTERNAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

Since the start of external assessment in the Netherlands, the reports are made public. Although the target group for writing the report in first instance is the faculty being assessed, and the first aim is to contribute to the improvement of the quality by means of a diagnose of the situation and by means of recommendations by experts, the outside world has the reports at its disposal too and can read about strengths and weaknesses. In the first cycle of assessments (1988-1993), the Dutch reports did contain only the reports of the faculties being assessed and some summary of the national situation by the committee. The judgments were only given in words, no marks, symbols or grading were used. After the publication of the report the newspapers often translated the words of the committee in marks and made their own ranking lists.

In the second cycle, there has been decided to introduce a comparative aspect in the reports. The committees were asked to mark by means of symbols a number of aspects and to publish comparative tables. The basic idea behind it was that by doing so, the quality would be made more transparent. In one look, the outside world could see the strengths and weaknesses of one faculty compared with others. In the same time, in the report some important aspect were described. An example of such a comparative judgement of the aspect “goals & aims” is given in table 1.

Table 1: Example of a comparative table in the report of a committee

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES	A ¹	B	C	D	E	F
Goals and aims are clearly stated	O	O	- -	+	++	+
Goals and aims are realistic and achievable, looking at the boundary conditions	O	O	-	++	++	+
Aims & goals are of an academic level	O	O	O	+	++	+
Goals & aims reflect the minimum requirements?	O	O	O	+	++	+

1 A through F mean the universities being assessed

The symbols have the following meaning:

- ++ = excellent, example of good practice
- + = good
- o = satisfactory/adequate (but no more than that)
- - = unsatisfactory, actions for improvement should be taken
- - - = unacceptable, serious omissions; quality is at threat

To prevent misunderstanding, the comparison is not norm-oriented and is not meant to put the programmes along a yardstick and to measure the outcome. The comparison is not aiming at ranking in a ranking-order of good, better, best. The comparison of the programmes concerning certain quality indicators is aiming at providing insight into quality and into diversity.

The reports of the expert committees treats the following aspects:

- goals, aims and objectives
- the content and organisation of the program
- didactic concept
- student's skills
- assessments
- the final essay/research assignment
- the student and his/her education
- facilities
- the graduates
- the staff
- internationalisation
- Internal Quality Assurance

3. A CONSUMER GUIDE FOR STUDENTS: "KEUZEGIDS HOGER ONDERWIJS"²

Although the reports of the external review committees tried to provide the outside world insight into quality and to make this difficult topic as transparent as possible, the Minister of Education thought it as not sufficient. There should be an easier way for future students to find their way in the jungle of study programs instead of reading al those boring reports of the committee. Also the information from the institutions for Higher Education was not satisfactory, because it was not objective. Therefore the Minister decided to make funds available to start a consumer guide for students, in which information would be provided in an objective way. As said, the assumption behind it was “provide the student enough objective information about the programs an its quality and the student will make his/her choice based on quality.

² How to choose your study?

The consumer guide 2000-2001 has been published recently. The basic question of the editor is " What information need future students really and what is the most recent and reliable information?

The guide covers all curricula in Dutch Higher Education , in total about 500 different programs. What information is, according to the editors of the Guide needed and thus provided in the Guide:

- aspects concerning the labor market:
 - percentage of unemployed graduates
 - the expected salary
 - the prognoses of the changes at the labor market until 2005
- some statistical data:
 - number of freshmen
 - pass rate after 6 and 8 years
- The curriculum
 - Full time or par time
 - The specialisation of the curricula
- The quality
 - Content
 - Coherence
 - Promotion of independent thinking
 - Staff
 - Time table and assessments
 - "doability" (Can the program be finished in the allotted time?)
 - preparation for a job career
 - library and computers
 - class rooms

The tables with information about the above mentioned topics are illustrated with description and clarification.

The information for the Guide is coming from 3 sources:

- an opinion poll amongst students
- the reports of external committees
- the faculties, offering the program (for factual information).

The opinion poll amongst students is done by phone. It concerns 26.500 students (about 5%) of the whole student population. For each program at least 50 students have been approached.

There as been 29 questions in 9 groupings. See the topics above under "Quality". The 10the question was if he/she would choose for the same program at the same institution if he/she had to choose again.

At the end of each subject area description, the editors give a recommendation just like a consumer guide with a recommendation of " the best buy". It is remarkable that in many cases the small and young institutions mostly are advised.

4. ELSEVIERS " THE BEST STUDIES"

As is to be expected, also commercial editors see consumer information as a way of making money. In the Netherlands the weekly magazine Elsevier is publishing yearly a special about the best studies. It is said that the Chairpersons of Higher Education institutions in the Netherlands can not sleep in the night before one can buy the special in the kiosks. The last number has been published in October. This was the 5th time. As reason for publication the editor says "the publication aims to help future students to make their choice by making things more transparent and clear". Also Elsevier expresses the opinion that students has to make a good choice: "If you are intelligent, it is not the most appealing city, the shortest travel distance nor the university with most of your friends or acquaintances that is decisive for the decision, but quality". According to Elsevier, quality is "a curriculum with a good program, competent staff, a educational system that suits and with highly qualified graduates".

Information is provided about 20 curricula at the universities and 20 programs at the Hogescholen. The Elsevier are treating the following aspects:

- the labor market:
 - average time needed to find a suitable job
 - the salary in the first job and salary at this moment
 - position at the labor market
- some statistical data:
 - pass rate propedeutical year
 - pass rate after 6 and 8 years
- Quality:
 - Facilities
 - The arrangement of the education

-
- Staff
 - Teaching
 - Assessment
 - Organisation and communication

The clustering of aspects differ from the topics in the external review reports and the clustering in the Keuzegids. However, in general more or less the same aspects are covered. This means that at least the final, summarizing judgements are comparable.

The Elsevier special based its information on:

- An opinion poll among students
In total 12.000 students has be asked by phone to answer 6 questions in the 6 here above mentioned categories. The final judgment is the average of all answers. The marks are running from 1 = extremely bad till 10 extremely good.
- A opinion poll amongst all professors in the Netherlands.
All professors have been asked to name the best university in his/her discipline. 30% of the professors have responded. The opinion of the professors are compared with the student opinion.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

As consequence of the introduction of external quality assessment and in the slipstream of it, there is a lot of attention in the Netherlands to make the programs in Dutch Higher Education more transparent. The main reason is to improve the choice of future students. In the contribution at the seminar the following questions will be discussed:

- How is the correlation between the judgement of experts, the judgement of the Keuzegids and the judgment of Elseviers?
- Provides it really transparency?
- Are all those investments effective?
- What might be the consequences for external quality assessment?

Case study:

USE OF EVALUATION FOR FUNDING

Raija Sollamo

(University of Helsinki-Finland)

USING EVALUATION AS A BASIS FOR FUNDING

A Case Study on Research Evaluation at the University of Helsinki

Evaluation, assessment, academic audit, accreditation, quality control and quality assurance are important elements in the strategies of universities at the beginning of the new millennium. Universities are well aware of the fact that survival and success in the global competition between numerous providers of higher education depends on the quality of their education and research. The Rector of the University of Helsinki has urged all teachers, researchers and other staff to improve on their previous achievements and to search for new ideas and solutions. He has characterised this relentless effort to improve as a driving force and an unfailing source of motivation for the members of an academic community. The basic strategy and philosophy of our University - or any university for that matter - is the pursuit of excellence. This pursuit of excellence constitutes the best strategy for survival.

One way to achieve high quality and excellence is through various kinds of evaluations. This case study deals with evaluations performed at the University of Helsinki. I would like to draw particular attention to an international evaluation of research conducted in 1999 and say a few words about an international evaluation of teaching and studies to be implemented in 2001-2002. The term funding is a broad one. In this presentation, it includes both the governmental funds appropriated by the Ministry of Education in its normal budget for universities, as well as external funds, coming from private companies, and governmental and non-governmental organisations, such as the Academy of Finland, and other ministries and research foundations.

In 1999 an international field-specific research assessment was carried out at the University of Helsinki. It was a very comprehensive assessment exercise with 24 panels, the number of panel members ranging between two and nine. The Senate of the University of Helsinki, which decided to carry out the assessment exercise also decided that for a period of five years, the results of the assessment are to be used as a basis in the allocation of resources to the

University faculties and departments, until a new evaluation is to be implemented. The principle of using the results as one parameter in the distribution of money between faculties and departments was approved beforehand by the University Senate, before the faculties and departments knew what the results would be. To approve this principle beforehand was of a crucial importance. Afterwards, when the assessment results were published, it was too late for the faculties to complain. The University was able to proceed with the allocation of resources in due course without difficulties or protests from the academic community. It is self-evident that the results of assessment exercises must be as trustworthy as possible. It is a *conditio sine qua non* in any scientific community. In this respect, the assessment exercise at the University of Helsinki succeeded well, for it enjoyed the confidence of the academic community.

In parentheses, I would like to mention that the University of Helsinki is a state university. Its resources come from the Ministry of Education. For many faculties these resources account for 70-80% of all resources, whereas in some faculties external funding rises up to 50-60%, or in exceptional cases even higher. As for the whole University, the share of external funding is approximately 31%. One major problem is that funding from external sources cannot be used for teaching or other educational tasks, it is meant solely and entirely for research or as payment for commissioned services. In these circumstances, the allocation of funds from the national budget is of vital importance for the faculties and departments. Hence, for some departments and faculties a poor rating in the research assessment could have meant a total catastrophe. Fortunately, this was not the case.

The University Senate intentionally set out to limit any catastrophic effects of the research assessment on the allocation of resources to the faculties and departments. The Senate decided that the results of the assessment will only affect one third of the total budget of the faculties. This third, or to be exact 35%, forms that sector of the total budget which is directed to research, including wages, facilities and overheads. The Senate pointed out that a poor rating in the assessment will not mean a total cut of this 35%, it only can imply an essential decrease in resources. The panels evaluated the research of each department or field using a rating scale from one to seven. For the purpose of allocating resources from the national budget, the Rector needed a mathematical model for determining how these assessment ratings could be transferred to the faculty level. This was a difficult task, as the different departments of a faculty received different ratings and the size (the number of staff members and researchers) of these departments varies greatly, so to calculate the average was simply

not enough. The Scientific Board of the University defined faculty-specific coefficients which took into account the size of the departments. The lowest rating for a faculty was 4.5 and the corresponding coefficient was fixed at 0.80, while the highest rating was 5.8 and the coefficient 1.08. An appendix attached to this presentation demonstrates the ratings and coefficients and how they affected the allocation of resources to the faculties. In case a faculty loses money due to the effect of the research assessment, it still can maintain its economy on a sound basis, because two thirds of the resources are divided to the faculties on the basis of the number of Master's and Doctoral degrees they have produced. By efficiency in education the faculties are able to compensate for their losses on the research sector. If everything goes wrong in a faculty, its resources can decrease only by 4% from the previous year. This kind of an alleviation was created by the Senate in order to prevent dramatic changes in the economical situation of the faculties. The alleviation functions in both directions, so that the basic allocations of a faculty may neither increase or decrease by more than 4% in a year. The Evaluation Officer of the University of Helsinki, Dr. Antti Arjava describes the effect of the evaluation as follows:

*"The maximum effect of the coefficients was a seven percent decrease of basic funding for the faculty which had the lowest rating. In all, for the next five years some ten million FIM per year will be transferred from the five faculties with ratings 4.5-5.1 to the four faculties with ratings 5.7-5.8. The total amount divided between faculties was about 700 million FIM. So although the financial consequences of the evaluation were not negligible, they were not particularly drastic."*³

What then happens within the faculties or how the faculties divide the resources between the departments is another story. The faculties are rather independent. They may allocate the money as they want. In practice, however, for the faculties to be able to compete for resources, they have to strengthen those activities which are included as parameters in the mathematical model of dividing resources at the university level. Accordingly, the way of allocating money at the university level is reflected more or less in the model of the faculties. In this way the basic philosophy - the pursuit of excellence in research - runs through the organisation from top to bottom (the mathematical model). It also runs from the bottom up, in the form of the general opinion of researchers and professors. They have all the time been unsatisfied with purely numerical parameters like the number of completed Master's or

Doctoral degrees. The scientific community welcomes these qualitative parameters warmly.

It has been a sincere hope of the University of Helsinki to be able to persuade with this qualitative assessment of research the Finnish Ministry of Education to utilise qualitative parameters in the allocation of resources between universities. Until now, the Ministry has only used numerical parameters, adding however something extra for universities under the label of performance-based money. As long as this performance-based money forms no more than 1-2 % of the total budgets of the universities, it is not of great significance and most of it is destined to 26 national centres of excellence in research and in higher education. The motto of the University of Helsinki vis-a-vis the Ministry of Education is: "Quality must have an impact on resources." With our research assessment exercise we attempt to demonstrate to the Ministry that it is not impossible to conduct an international evaluation of research and use its results as a basis for a mathematical model of allocating resources.

Even after the research evaluation exercise, two thirds of the resources for the faculties is allocated totally on numerical grounds, based on the number of degrees taken by the students. It is generally admitted that it is easier to evaluate research than education, which consists of teaching and learning, degrees and curricula, tutoring and counselling. Until now, we have never ever conducted a comprehensive international subject-based evaluation of our degrees, curricula, teaching and studies. We have certainly participated in national evaluations in some subject fields, the latest one being on the topic of education and research in Slavonic and Baltic studies. But now we intend to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of our education during the academic year 2001-2002. The planning has already started. As for funding, the idea is not to connect the results of this evaluation directly to the model of allocating money, but the results are certainly going to have an impact on the funding of faculties and departments : the best units are rewarded, whereas the poorer ones may apply for project money to improve their standard according to the subject-specific recommendations made by the panels. In this case, the impact of evaluation on funding implies performance-based awards on the one hand, and project money for the improvement of quality on the other hand.

The final part of my case study will discuss the impact of evaluation on fund-raising from external sources. With external sources I mean here all other institutions, excluding the

³ Research Assessment Exercise 1999. University of Helsinki. Evaluation Projects of the University of Helsinki Nr. 6, ed. by Esa Hämäläinen. Yliopistopaino (Helsinki University Press), Helsinki 2000. (The quoted text on p.13)

Ministry of Education, all governmental or non-governmental foundations, all private enterprises and companies. It is clear that in applying for money from these sources it is a great asset to be able refer to the international evaluation panel's high appraisal of the department's quality of research. The evaluation panels' reports are reliable, independent reference from outside the university. The institutions granting funding can feel safe in providing funding to researchers in departments that have succeeded well in the evaluation. An inferior rating means weaker standing in the competition for free research money.

In order to market its research and draw attention to the very high standard of some departments, the University has decided to produce a booklet in English on all those departments which received the highest rating (number seven) in the research evaluation exercise. We hope that the booklet will prove helpful for those applying for research money and in making research agreements with foreign universities and in inviting pre-eminent scholars as visiting professors to our university. The panel reports contain useful information about the whole university and its research profile. Encouraged by this evaluation and the high standard of its research, the University of Helsinki has decided to place special emphasis on postgraduate studies and research. We are convinced that high standard also interests new students in their choice of university. In Finland there is no shortage of university students, but nevertheless, in the competition for the best students the high quality of the university hopefully proves to be an effective inducement. This is crucial for the future success of our University. To reach high quality once in an evaluation exercise does not suffice, it is equally important to maintain quality at a high level from year to year. Therefore, the University of Helsinki has decided to carry out an evaluation project in both research and education every five years.

Finally, I would like to emphasise two beneficial points in our research evaluation. First, a small country like Finland and one single university, even as large as the University of Helsinki, cannot maintain high quality in all subject fields. In the global competition there is no place for second class research. Hence, the small resources available must be invested wisely. The evaluation of research helps in finding the right fields. Second, in his project report prepared for the Bologna Conference on 18-19 June 1999, Guy Haug paid attention to the need to develop a system of subject-based evaluation at a European level. Our research evaluation exercise is one small step in that direction and towards European discipline-based networks. Our University is proud to be able to offer its expertise to the service of other European universities in the building up of a high-quality European Research Area.

ASSESSED IMPACT ON THE RESEARCH SHARE OF FUNDING

	A Research budget	B %	C Rating	D Coefficient	E D * B	F New % E/SigmaE	G Change (E-B)/B
Faculty of Theology	6686	2,75%	5,8	1,08	2,97%	2,97%	8,0 %
Faculty of Law	10629	4,38%	4,8	0,86	3,76%	3,77%	-14,0 %
Faculty of Medicine	51596	21,25%	5,7	1,06	22,52%	22,53%	6,0 %
Faculty of Arts	38757	15,96%	5,7	1,06	16,92%	16,92%	6,0 %
Faculty of Science	61076	25,15%	5,7	1,06	26,66%	26,67%	6,0 %
Faculty of Education	17687	7,28%	5,0	0,91	6,63%	6,63%	-9,0 %
Faculty of Social Sciences	16266	6,70%	5,1	0,93	6,23%	6,23%	-7,0 %
Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry	28362	11,86%	4,9	0,89	10,40%	10,40%	-11,0 %
Faculty of Veterinary Sciences	11783	4,85%	4,5	0,80	3,88%	3,88%	-20,0 %
Total	242842	100%			99,97%	100,00%	

ANNEX 1, FACULTY COEFFICIENTS

DEFINING COEFFICIENTS

Lowest highest

4,5 5,8 rating
0,80 1,08 coefficient

1,0

2,0

3,0

4,0

4,5 0,8000

4,8 0,8646

4,9 0,8862

5,0 0,9077

5,1 0,9292

5,7 1,0585

5,8 1,0800

7,0



FOLLOW-UP

Case study:

**FOLLOW-UP OF
INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION**

Jacqueline Glarner

(CRE-Association of European Universities)

Institutional Follow-up: Experiences from the CRE Evaluations

Introduction

Being aware of the importance to support its member universities in the development of a quality culture, CRE launched in 1994 its institutional evaluation programme, with the following main objectives:

- support university leaders in their efforts to improve institutional management and, in particular, processes to face change;
- contribute to the promotion of a culture of quality among its members, and disseminate examples of effective strategic management among the European universities.

Up to now, CRE has evaluated more than 70 universities in 22 European and two Latin-American countries. The programme has therefore reached a critical mass, thus allowing to draw first comparative conclusions on various aspects of the programme.

This paper will focus on the follow-up of the CRE institutional evaluations. A brief outline of the methodology should help to understand why CRE follow-up procedures might be different compared to those which have been carried out by national agencies, where applicable. We will examine the initiatives CRE takes to find out what kind of follow-up activities the universities are carrying out, what impacts the CRE reviews have and finally how CRE plans to foster follow-up processes.

Main characteristics of the CRE reviews

Each year, CRE invites its member universities to participate in the next round of the institutional evaluation programme. The universities act on a **voluntary** basis and are therefore free to choose whether they want to participate and, if they wish to do so, at what moment.

An internal self-evaluation with the elaboration of a self-evaluation report is followed by **external** validation by **foreign peers** (nominated by CRE) during a set of two site visits, culminating in an oral and written report to the university.

The final report is not made public without the consent of the university, who becomes the owner of the report. However, CRE encourages the university to make the report public, so that it can have an impact on the external as well as internal assurance of quality.

Another main characteristic is that the CRE review is supportive and focuses on the following issues:

- An identification of the university's aims and concerns
- An analysis of the institution's capacity for action in a competitive world
- An understanding of those balances that shape its desired profile
- Recommendations for long term development
- Impetus for institutional change

The supportive character also implies that there is no obligation for the university to implement the recommendations made by the final report.

In addition, the reviews are carried out independently and are not monitored by any governmental or intergovernmental agency controlling the implementation of the CRE review process or the reports.

Under these circumstances, are universities taking any follow-up actions and if yes, of what type?

Follow-up to the CRE evaluations

The non-binding character of the review reports and its consequences on follow-up activities

The main evaluation procedure ends with the submission of the final written report to the Rector. The university is then free to choose its own way to implement the recommendations and there is no obligation to report back to CRE regarding what the institution is planning to

adopt as follow-up measures. CRE, on the other hand, does not monitor the follow-up activities.

However, CRE suggests that the universities create a document giving an outline of the planned actions to implement the recommendations of the final report. The idea behind this proposal is to encourage the university to maintain the dynamics of change initiated by the review process. Such an improvement plan should, of course, be based on the university's own priorities and mechanisms and in particular on the university's specific interpretation of the experts' recommendations. CRE does not directly assist universities with the elaboration of such a document, but offers the possibility to receive written comments from the members of the review team who visited the institution.

Given that CRE does not control follow-up activities, it is difficult for CRE to analyse what actions are taken by the evaluated universities and to what extent the recommendations are being implemented once the expert team has left.

Being aware of this, CRE is setting up activities aimed at finding out more what actions the universities have taken, disseminating examples of good practice and allowing the institutions to exchange their experiences.

CRE follow-up and dissemination activities

CRE follow-up and dissemination activities take different forms. Several documents have been published summarising the findings of institutional evaluations and provide an analysis of specific problems encountered by several universities that have undergone an evaluation. CREdoc N°3 "Institutional Evaluation as a Tool for Change" presents the main outcomes of the experimental phase of the institutional evaluation programme implemented in 1995-96, and the CREguide N°2 "Principles and Practice of Strategic Management at Universities, Volume 1 – Principles" focuses on strategic issues.

Dissemination seminars are another tool to analyse and promote the findings and follow-up activities of the evaluations carried out within the CRE programme. The first dissemination seminar took place in Prague in November 1996 for universities in Central and Eastern Europe. This successful regional meeting led CRE to focus its dissemination activities on other regions in Europe. Since several universities in South-western Europe have participated

in the programme and are very active as far as quality assurance is concerned, CRE found it worthwhile to launch a discussion on the impact and follow-up of the reviews carried out in Italy, Spain and Portugal. This second regional conference was held in Granada in March 1999 and its results have been published in CREdossier N°1 "Quality Assurance as a Tool for Change – a Project Report on Quality Strategies in South Western Europe". More recently, in May 2000, a training and follow-up seminar has taken place at the Bogaziçi University in. The host institution, as well as the University of Trento (Italy), both been recently reviewed by CRE, have served as case studies of institutional quality assurance strategies (including the follow-up dimension to CRE reviews). A third institution, the University of Pécs (Hungary), which is about to start a CRE review, also served as a case study. The interesting dimension of this seminar was to combine the discussion of follow-up action with operational question of quality assurance at institutional level.

A follow-up visit to an institution after a review has been conducted also provides information on what kind of support the university needs in further implementation of recommendations.

The follow-up visits

Since 1997, CRE offers to universities that have been reviewed, the possibility to participate in a follow-up process. In essence, the follow-up process consists of a visit by two members of the expert team who conducted the initial evaluation (in principle the chair and the secretary), together with an additional expert (to ensure a fresh view on the case), two years after the evaluation. The follow-up visit enables the university concerned and CRE to analyse the real impact of the procedure on the institution. This involves a brief self-analysis prepared by the university in order to take stock of progress made since the main review. If an implementation plan has been elaborated after the main review visit, it can constitute an excellent basis for possible follow-up processes.

A visit by the follow-up team offers the chance to review the implementation of the recommendations made by the original experts and to take stock of the reforms initiated following the self-evaluation and the report of the reviewers. Should the need arise, this visit could also revitalise a process of change or simply allow for a discussion of different aspects of on-going reforms, taking into account new developments in the institution's environment.

So far, 10 universities from previous rounds have gone through the follow-up procedure. Analysing the follow-up reports, we have noticed that the recommendations have been taken very seriously and that many institutions have taken immediate actions without creating any detailed improvement plan. In some institutions, the evaluation procedure itself, and especially the self-evaluation, have had more impact than the recommendations. While in other institutions, external factors, for instance change in the higher education law, has had a major effect on the actions to be taken.

It seems that the non-binding character of the recommendations have not constituted an obstacle to the willingness of the institution to promote and implement change. The follow-up and dissemination seminars as well as the follow-up visits allow us to analyse the impact the CRE reviews are having on some of the evaluated institutions.

The impact of the CRE reviews

One major question discussed at the follow-up and dissemination conferences was to what extent the CRE institutional evaluation has had an effect on the management of change within the evaluated universities. Changes have taken place on different levels:

Internal impact

The main impact is change in the state of mind of the academic community, particularly of faculty members, towards quality assurance.

1. The self-evaluation report

In most universities, the writing of the self-evaluation report has had a very positive effect. It has helped focus on specific points on which there has never been before a special debate or an in-depth discussion. Drawing up the report was often the first opportunity to think of change and to raise awareness of the fact that changes had to be implemented.

2. Dissemination of the final report

The dissemination of the final report is considered to be a crucial element of the process of change. In some universities, the report was not circulated widely, whereas in other universities it was immediately translated and disseminated. This does not imply, however, that the report is followed by immediate action.

3. Reaction to the final report

As for faculties' reaction to the report, there was often some reluctance to consider it seriously. However, for the most part, and in a long-term perspective, the report has had a positive effect, as it facilitated communication and discussion among faculties. For example, some problems were identified that had not been seen before and issues were openly discussed that had been recognised, but never raised before. Also, academic and administrative staff realised that they were part of a whole structure and that they had to place themselves within an institutional framework. They now accept more easily the fact that a quality assurance system is being established, and they are aware that quality assurance is a very useful tool in serving the university's autonomy. The impact on an internal level results in a strong pressure to reach better results, which often leads to internal competition.

4. Impacts on management issues

The general acceptance of quality assurance within the governing bodies has risen in many universities following the CRE review. This is clearly an important factor, as actions to implement change are often taken, but mostly by individuals (mainly from the rectorate).

After this first step of the general acceptance of quality assurance, one enters into a new phase: the university should try to link quality issues to the decision-making process, as a tool serving institutional strategies of development and autonomy.

The CRE report also has had an effect at the institutional level, such as the creation of a unit for evaluation, which reports directly to the rector. Each university should also develop strategic planning, and quality assurance issues must be part of their institutional strategies. In this sense, the university should strike a balance between different issues, such as research and teaching. These kinds of questions should be part of the strategic thinking.

External impact

The relations with external stakeholders are not always easy to examine, thus the impact of the evaluation on these actors are more difficult to analyse.

In some countries, however, the CRE reports have had an impact on the national quality assurance debate:

- In Finland the CRE evaluations were made part of a national evaluation system.
- In Portugal, where almost all universities went through the CRE evaluation, some CRE evaluation reports were sent to the Ministry of Education and there have been some changes initiated by the Ministry over the past couple of years.
- In the Slovak Republic the two largest universities (Comenius University and Slovak University of Technology) participated in the programme and the reports have been published and widely disseminated. This has raised awareness that the higher education system might need some necessary reforms in order to allow the universities to implement the changes.
- In Greece, where no established national system of quality assurance exists, the authorities encourage Greek universities to apply for a CRE review and subsidise their participation.
- In Italy, where many universities have gone through a CRE review, the experiences made have had a clear influence on the national debate.

However, one has to keep in mind that it is difficult to differentiate between the change the CRE evaluation produced and the change that is taking place in general. The context of higher education is constantly changing everywhere and quality assurance issues may be an important part of this change, but not the only driving force for it. All the more, it is therefore difficult to identify specifically the contribution of CRE's reviews to this change.

Foster follow-up processes: towards a mutual learning club

One of the main objectives of the CRE evaluation programme is to help universities improve on a continuous basis both their quality assurance policy and their strategic management. This

is best possible through an institution-developed follow-up process, where CRE could play a role in fostering and facilitating.

To do so, CRE is developing a mutual learning approach among volunteer institutions. Different publications, like the above-mentioned Textbook on Strategic Management, the findings of the follow-up and dissemination conference in Granada, as well as the TEMPUS TOP Handbook on Institutional management have already been widely distributed and constitute a common basis for such an approach.

The use of the Internet should allow for more and regular interaction amongst universities that have participated in the CRE evaluation programme or for those who are interested in learning more about the reviews.

For the first time this year, CRE organised a workshop for the universities taking part in the next round of the evaluations, focusing on the self-evaluation process, especially on the SWOT-analysis. This could be the start of a regular mutual exchange among these institutions throughout the reviews and after the end of the procedure. There is a very palpable demand among the CRE member universities for "collective follow-up", i.e. opportunities to exchange experiences in a structured and dynamic way. That is why CRE is planning to design a mutual learning club, in which the universities might find it easier to define their follow-up activities. CRE would keep its traditional role of a facilitator by bringing the institutions together and helping them to exchange examples of good practice.

Conclusion

While there is no systematic and comprehensive monitoring of the follow-up process and no pressure to advance with the implementation of the recommendations of the final report, there are clear signals showing that the CRE reviews have an impact and are taken very seriously by the participating institutions. The evaluated universities have started initiatives to improve their management and set up an internal quality assurance system. However, more and more universities are asking for assistance to develop an improvement plan, for example, and to implement the recommendations. While CRE is not offering any consultancy services, it is our task to bring universities together and help them find appropriate ways to develop effective and sustainable follow-up activities.

Case study:

FOLLOW-UP OF SYLLABUS EVALUATION

Gemma Rauret Dalmau

(QU-Spain)

FOLLOW UP OF SYLLABUS EVALUATION

Introduction

The First National Plan for the Assessment of the Quality of Universities (1995 – 2000) has been going on in Spain since 1995. As in most of European countries with Quality Assessment plans, its aim was established as follows:

- To promote quality assessment systems at universities
- To provide a homogeneous method and some common assessment criteria within the country, compatible with current practice in the European Union,
- To provide relevant and objective information on the quality of universities to society and the educational administration

As most of the higher education in Spain is given at universities, the scope of the evaluation was focused on them. The subject of evaluation is the syllabus degree or diploma, although other aspects such as Faculties, Departments or services are being evaluated in some cases. The first plan was oriented towards the development of specific actions for improving quality assessment at universities, and was not linked directly either to consequences related to financing or to administrative accreditation processes.

One characteristic of Spanish Universities is the non-centralist legal administration system. The Spanish Constitution enacted in 1978 establishes that the Autonomous Communities (CCAA) could take over responsibilities in university matters. Nowadays all CCAA have taken over these responsibilities. The Quality Assessment Plan was developed in such a way that co-operative formulas between the Universities Council, who promoted the Plan, and the Autonomous Communities, who decide to manage their participation in the Plan directly, were established. In this first Plan, only Catalonia and Andalusia signed an agreement between the Ministry and their Autonomous Governments. Both CCAA have set up

organisms with the challenge of improving quality in universities. These organisms are, in Catalonia, the *Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari a Catalunya* (QU, 1996) and, in Andalusia, the *Unidad para la Calidad de las Universidades Andaluzas* (UCUA, 1997). The co-ordination of all organisms managing the Plan, the Universities Council, the Catalan Agency and the Andalusian Unit is done through a Technical Committee composed of experts and members of the three organisations and the Ministry of Education under the presidency of the Universities Council Secretariat. The evaluation process is reasonably homogeneous. New QA developments are generally initiated in one Agency as a pilot project and are later integrated in the whole Spanish system. In this seminar the follow-up approach applied to syllabus evaluation, included in the activities programme for 2000 of the Catalan Agency, and which is still in a pilot stage, is going to be presented.

Initially the Plan for the Assessment of the Quality of Universities had not planned any follow-up process and, if done in some universities, it was carried out internally by their quality assurance units (QAU). In the Catalan University System this type of follow-up is done in few universities. As a consequence of these internal assessments, the head of the QAU of these universities expressed to the QU the interest of some evaluated units in including an external assessment in this follow-up, similar to the one carried out in the initial evaluation processes. In 1999 the Chemistry Syllabus of the University of Barcelona had already carry out this external assessment and the results (1) were good enough for the Agency to recommend the implementation of this experience in other Syllabus.

In the frame of the Agency (QU) working committee, composed of the deputy vice-chancellors responsible for the quality assurance of Catalan public universities, the aims of the follow-up and the advisability of including it in the QA plan were discussed and accepted. So the proposal was presented as a pilot project to the Board of Directors of the Agency, who approved its application within the activity Syllabus of 2000.

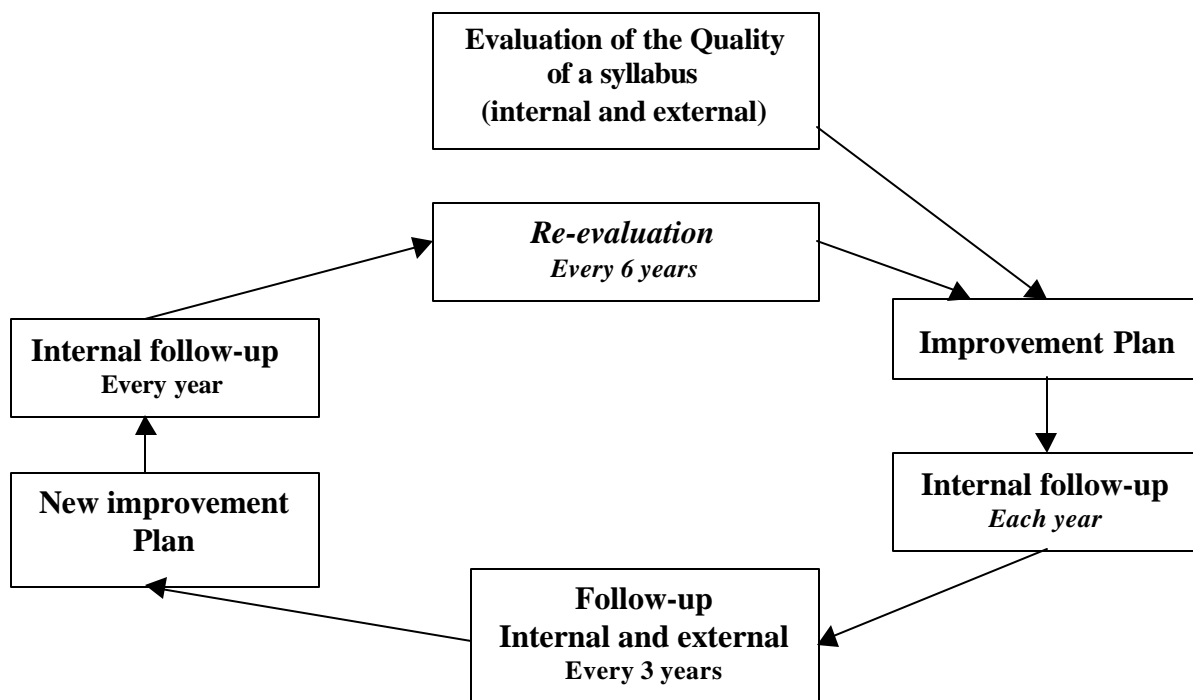
Aims of the follow-up

The aims of the designed follow-up are:

- To monitor the degree of accomplishment of the improvement plans established by the evaluated syllabus as well as to assess the planning, the results and the impact of their improvement strategy.
- To increase transparency by publishing, approximately three years after the first report, the new values of the data and indicators describing the main aspects of a degree or a diploma in quantitative terms.
- To encourage the culture of continuous quality improvement at universities.

The structure of the pilot project and the role of the various agents

The follow-up process of a Syllabus study must be integrated in the quality spiral of universities in a process which can be presented schematically in this way:



This circle, evaluation, planning and follow-up, is oriented towards improving the quality of universities. The timing proposed, an annual internal follow-up, and external follow-up every three years and a re-evaluation every six years, is only a guide. It is recommended to publish a

report after the external evaluation including new data and indicators in a comparative way in respect to the initial evaluation.

Several agents (Agency, universities QA Committee and QAU, self-assessment committee, external committee) are involved in the follow-up process, and each of them has different roles.

- The Agency has the role of supplying methodological instruments for the assessment, including training, to co-ordinate the process, to carry out the external assessment and to publish the assessment report with the new data and indicators.
- The QA Committee of universities, or the governing team of the university, is the body responsible for approving the participation in the external follow-up of a syllabus study, to co-ordinate and to validate the internal follow-up and to negotiate the new improvement plan with the evaluated unit.
- The Quality Assurance Unit of the universities have the role of supplying the evidence, mainly data, needed by the self-assessment committee to evaluate the degree of implementation of the improvement plan and to give them technical support during the process, either internal or external assessment. They also collaborate with the Agency in setting up the methodological instruments for the follow-up and in the co-ordination process.
- The internal committee has the role of collecting complementary data, to analyse critically the improvement plan, writing the internal report, and to present this report for participation to the university community involved. The aspects to be taken into account in the critical assessment are:
 - 1) the adequacy of the weak points to be improved,
 - 2) the design and the content of the plan
 - 3) the execution and the internal follow-up
 - 4) the evaluation of the results obtained.

Finally they are the responsible for planning the new improvement plan.

-
- The external committee has the role of validating the internal assessment, considering all the aspects described before. With this purpose, the members of the external committee visit the evaluated unit acting both as auditors and as consultants in quality assurance. Finally, they write the external report, which is supplied to the evaluated unit for information and possible modification and, in the final version, to the Agency.

Procedure

The follow-up procedure has four steps: the initial or preparation step, the internal follow-up, the external follow-up and the final step. The schedule proposed is six month long and in the proposed pilot project starts in October 2000 and finishes in March 2001. These six months are distributed as follows: 1.5 months to the initial step, 2 months to the self-assessment, 1.5 months to the external assessment and delivery of the report and 1 month to the final step.

Before starting the process the Agency had already prepared the methodological instruments, and in October 2000 has organised an informative session with members from both the internal and the external committees. The university had previously chosen the Syllabus participating in this project and selected the members of the self-assessment committees. During the initial step the QAU of the universities involved has prepared a draft report with all the information needed for the internal follow-up and has organised informative sessions for the internal committees.

The methodological instruments needed to carry out the follow-up of Syllabus in the QU were prepared by a group of experts composed of Agency assessors and by members from QAU of universities. They were asked to prepare a follow-up guide covering the aspects previously described. Once prepared, the internal assessment guide was presented for amendments and suggestions to the working group composed of the heads of all the QAU of the university members of the Catalan Agency. This guide (2) is oriented towards what has been done and what has not in respect of the initial plan, which are the main changes experienced by the evaluated unit and how the improvement plan needs to be redesigned. Two aspects are considered: the first one is the context in which the improvement plan has been designed, and the second is the technical characteristics of the designed plan.

The self-assessment committees are composed of the team responsible for implementing the improvement actions and must include not only academics but also students, and technical personal. It is recommended to keep someone who has participated in the previous self-assessment committee.

The two roles of auditor and consultant attributed to the external committee in the follow-up induced the Agency to set up an external committee composed of at least one academic, the president of the previous external assessment and an expert in QA. The experts in QA and the academic or professional people make up a group working in close co-operation with the Agency. They are responsible for preparing the draft report and act as auditors and consultants. Depending on the nature of the improvement plan, a third expert can be incorporated in the external panel. It is intended that the external committee will contribute to strengthen the culture of continuous quality improvement in the evaluated unit.

The final step consists in the incorporation of new elements in the improvement plan, in carrying out the negotiation with the university representative and in going on with the continuous improving which is the main work of QA.

Results and Conclusions

It is still too early to draw clear conclusions from the follow-up project now under development, but the previous experience, from 1999, has shown that many improvement actions were pursued with reasonably good results. Moreover the follow-up process served as a stimulus to the people in charge of the evaluation Syllabus as they realise more clearly the improvements accomplished in three years. Their best improvement actions have been presented in several forums and applied to other Syllabus. The tutorial plan set up as consequence of the initial evaluation has been recently considered by the Universities Council, through an open call, the best practice established in the Plan for the Assessment of Quality in the universities in Spain. The new improvement plan of this Syllabus is more focused on the weak points not included in the previous improvement plan. Once several Syllabus have been subjected to follow-up, the institutional capacity will be strengthened, to design and implement effective QA strategies. Moreover the publication of the outcomes of the follow-up will contribute to developing transparency in the university system.

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Case study:

FOLLOW-UP AT THE FLEMISH HIGHER EDUCATION

Paul Garré (EHSAL)
Anselme Deresse
(Belgium)

Quality assurance in Flemish higher education: a general introduction

Since the early 1990s quality assurance in Flanders has been an explicit focus of attention in the policy of higher educational establishments. The 1991 universities decree instructs the universities to give attention to quality assurance in education. The most recent educational decree (2000) gears the system of colleges of higher education (*hogescholen*) to that of the universities. With these decrees the Flemish regional government acknowledges and stresses the primary responsibility of higher educational establishments for internal and external quality assurance. This means that it is the universities and colleges of higher education themselves which bear primary responsibility for the quality of education provided and for implementing a quality policy to improve it. This does not detract from the fact, however, that the Flemish government, as the principal provider of funds, bears an important ultimate responsibility for the quality of Flemish higher education as a whole: it must be able to guarantee a certain basis level of quality for each student and it is responsible for stimulating quality improvements in higher education.

To achieve these aims, the present Flemish quality assurance system consists of the following three components :

- the higher educational establishments are themselves responsible **for internal quality assurance**;
- **external quality assurance** place the emphasis on the joint attention that the establishments must pay to the external quality appraisal of their educational activities. This means that colleges of higher education and universities must work together through jointly constituted review committees. The quality assessment focuses on the courses offered, at first degree and post-graduate level.
- the government has a **meta-evaluating** role throughout the quality assurance process; it monitors the quality assurance process and ensures that the university and college of higher education governors adopt an appropriate response to the results of the internal and external reviews.



Quality Control - Improvement - Accountability

The EHSAL Experience

Paul Garré, quality co-ordinator

2 novembre, 2000

The EHSAL quality experience

1

EHSAL

- Economische Hogeschool Sint-Aloysius
- Degrees in
 - commercial sciences (4 years)
 - commercial engineer (5 years)
- 3,000 students



2 novembre, 2000

The EHSAL quality experience

2

The EHSAL Quality Story

1994 -2000



10 novembre, 2000

The EHSAL quality experience

3

Q = Control - Improvement - Accountability

authorities

organisation

Product

Process



10 novembre, 2000

The EHSAL quality experience

4

Realisations

MEASUREMENT, ANALYSIS, IMPROVEMENT

- Follow-up of the yearly workplans
- Deadline for handling complaints: 1 month
- 10 internal auditors review quality system once a year
- Semestrial publication of interesting surveys and quantitative analyses
- Making progress visible: performance indicators develop positively

2 novembre, 2000

The EHSAL quality experience

5

Realisations

MEASUREMENT, ANALYSIS, IMPROVEMENT

- Various evaluation meetings (e.g. Sounding Boards, Quality Council, Expert Groups)
- Annual lecturers appraisals
- External ISO-audits (6 months - 3 years)
 - certification may 1996: management and services
 - certification may 1998: lecturers
 - recertification june 1999: management and services
 - recertification may 2001: lecturers

2 novembre, 2000

The EHSAL quality experience

6



Realisations


MEASUREMENT, ANALYSIS, IMPROVEMENT

- Self assessment and peer review
 - 1996 / 2001
 - 2 representatives of Flemish employers organisations
 - 2 academics from Dutch universities
 - 14 of the 19 recommendations have been exhaustively adressed

2 novembre, 2000

The EHSAL quality experience

7



Realisations

MEASUREMENT, ANALYSIS, IMPROVEMENT

- Peer review: recommendations adressed
 - slow down the pace of change: preserve staff support
 - analyse available quantitative information, inform staff and take action based on this analysis
 - as a result: set less, but better founded priorities
 - rationalise administration and meetings
 - integrate guest lecturers better in the organisation
 - initiate a structural alumni policy
 - develop and implement a policy for didactic innovation

2 novembre, 2000

The EHSAL quality experience

8

Realisations

MEASUREMENT, ANALYSIS, IMPROVEMENT

- Peer review: recommendations addressed
 - Stress even more the business orientation of the study programme
 - Continue to improve examination practices, study material, coaching of students
 - Help lecturers to address shortcomings detected during lecturer appraisals by offering training opportunities
 - Remedy study delays related to the final dissertation
 - Expand internationalisation policy (expansion of the international network - address ECTS requirements)

2 novembre, 2000

The EHSAL quality experience

9

Realisations

MEASUREMENT, ANALYSIS, IMPROVEMENT

- Peer review: recommendations rejected
 - make more frequent use of multiple choice examinations (important development cost, rejected by students)
 - use more external study material (Higher cost for students, less adapted to own training profiles!)
- Peer review: recommendations poorly addressed though accepted as valuable
 - international internships for lecturers

2 novembre, 2000

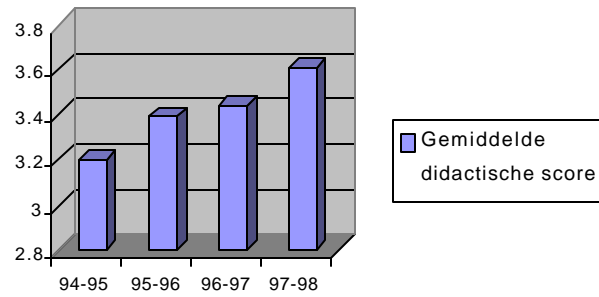
The EHSAL quality experience

10

Realisations

MEASUREMENT, ANALYSIS, IMPROVEMENT

LECTURERS APPRAISAL



THANK YOU !!!



Prof. Dr. Anselme Derese

Follow-up of external evaluation of the medical curriculum at the University of Gent, Belgium

As part of the external evaluation visits, the medical curriculum of the Flemish Universities has been evaluated in 1997. As usual, this external visit had been prepared by a self-study. One of the important recommendations in the report of the external commission was a global and in-depth revision of the medical curriculum, with the focus on content, educational methods and educational management. The commission stressed the importance of horizontal and vertical integration of the programme, and of the development of individual scientific and clinical skills from the beginning of the curriculum.

As a result, the curriculum has been deeply revised. The first generation of students has started a new curriculum in the academic year 1999-2000.

Together with the new curriculum, a comprehensive programme of process and outcome evaluation has been put into place.

We only mention here the most important elements of this internal evaluation programme:

1. Process measurements:

1.1. Study time measurement:

In order to obtain reliable and detailed data on study time use, we have chosen for a system of prospective study-time measurement. Each week another random sample of the 101 students of the first year has been sent a registration form based on the weekly calendar of educational activities. There has been a fair participation to this study-time registration. The results have been used in an evaluation meeting in August in order to bring some major adjustments to the programme of the first study year.

1.2. Focus Groups

Every forth-night a randomised sample of ten students have been invited to a focus group meeting of one hour. The focus group students were the same students that had to register their study time in the forthcoming week. In the focus-group all problems related to study load, study material, uncertainty about the expectations of the examiners, etc. were collected and fed back to the chairman, responsible for that unit in the curriculum.

1.3. Co-ordination commission:

All chairmen of the different blocks and lines in the new curriculum met once a month to discuss their problems with the organisation of the new curriculum. In every meeting part of the time was devoted to the remarks of the students in the focus groups.

2. Outcome measurements:

Realising that the effects of the new curriculum on new doctors will be only visible when they finish their education after seven years of study, we have endeavoured to measure some intermediate indicators of change, i.e. learning style and clinical knowledge

2.1. Learning style measurement:

In co-operation with the University of Maastricht (The Netherlands) a list of statements on different aspects of learning style and study behaviour was conceived. This inquiry will be used in both institutions to measure the effects of curriculum change. In our faculty we expect the changes to affect the learning style in the sense of more self directed and in-depth learning. We will also use the learning style measurement scale off Biggs.

2.2. The Maastricht Progress Test:

Because of the profound differences between the old and the new curriculum a mere comparison of study results would not be a valuable way to compare the outcome of both curricula. We found the Maastricht Progress Test to be the only curriculum-independent measure of developing clinical knowledge in students of different cohorts.

Once a year in December, our students take part in the progress test that is used simultaneously in three Dutch Universities.

Both outcome measurements have been used in four different cohorts of students:

- one cohort started the medical curriculum without entrance examination
- the next cohort entered medical education after a partial entrance test
- the third cohort started medical education after a full entrance examination
- the fourth cohort started with the new curriculum, after completing successfully the entrance examination.

The study will be continued 2000-2001. A fifth cohort (the students who started their medical curriculum this year) will be added to the study population.

All data on use of study time, learning style and clinical knowledge are fed in a database where correlations can be computed between those parameters and the study results of the students.

We are very much aware that all those measurements have their limitations. But we do hope that we will be able to report with some more certainty about the effects of the new programme at the next visitation in 2005.