Learning from the experience of implementing Quality Assurance systems – a UK university perspective

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Introduction

• Brief introduction to Sheffield Hallam University

• My role there

• Purpose of my talk

• Contribution to Bologna process action line on co-operation in Quality Assurance
Outline

Consider our experience against the ENQA 7 standards for internal QA in HE

☑ Identify features of good practice

♣ Identify areas of challenge
UK Quality Assurance framework context

• National academic infrastructure

• External quality assurance – Funding Councils, Quality Assurance Agency, Professional Bodies, Research Councils

• Public information

• Current concerns regarding academic standards
ENQA Standard 1 - Quality Assurance Policy

- ✔ External requirements embedded in internal systems
- ✔ Integrated management framework for Quality
- ✔ Clear signposts to advice for all staff

- ☢ Volatile external policy environment including funding pressures
- ☢ Staff ownership of policy at all levels
- ☢ Policy implementation gap
ENQA Standard 2 - Programme approval, monitoring & review

- Faculty-led, centrally-supported course approval process
- Comprehensive, multi-level, wide-evidence based Annual Quality Review process
- Enhancement-focused periodic review process

- Promoting genuine student engagement
- Balancing speed & responsiveness of processes with rigour
- How to make all processes more enhancement-led, cost-effective & risk-based
ENQA Standard 3 - Management of assessment of students

☑ Standard assessment regulations and associated processes for all undergraduate & postgraduate students
☑ Faculty-owned Assessment Boards focusing on quality enhancement as well as quality assurance

☒ Consistency between regulations, academic practice, processes & systems
☒ Transparency of decision-making affecting academic standards
☒ Heavy expectations placed on external examiner system
ENQA Standard 4 - Quality Assurance of teaching staff

- Comprehensive professional development framework for staff
- Central Learning & Teaching Institute supporting academic staff through changes in practice
- Developing policy & procedures to manage poor teaching & reward good teaching
ENQA Standard 5 - Learning Resources & Student Support

- Programme learning resources agreed & monitored through course approval & Annual Quality Review
- Comprehensive student support framework
- Central Student & Learning Services department

Meeting needs of an increasingly diverse student population
Availability of local support – personal tutors etc
ENQA Standard 6 - Information Systems

- Corporate student management system
- Central staffs dedicated to support of Information Strategy/Information Technology
- Significant investment in hardware & software

- Development of systems serving external and internal needs
- Development of corporate systems to better support programme management within faculties including systems integration
ENQA Standard 7 - Public information

☑ Comply with all relevant external requirements

☒ Promoting understanding & debate on academic standards & how they are managed
Conclusions

☑ Effective internal Quality Assurance systems

☒ Developing cost-effective systems which can continue to meet changing external & internal needs
References

- Sheffield Hallam University website: www.shu.ac.uk/
- Higher Education Funding Council for England website: www.hefce.ac.uk/
- Quality Assurance Agency website: www.qaa.ac.uk/
- Research Councils website: www.rcuk.ac.uk/
- Unistats website: www.unistats.com/
¡Gracias!

Any questions?