
What is “Quality”?

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Overview

- » Definitions
- » Quality Assurance in UK universities
- » Audit of Information Services
- » English Student Survey
- » International dimension
- » Implications of Bologna Declaration
- » True “Quality”



Definitions (1)

(Concise Oxford Dictionary)

Quality

7 variations including:-

- *the degree of excellence of a thing*
 - *general excellence*
 - *a distinctive attribute or faculty*
 - *the relative nature or kind or character of a thing*
 - *high social standing*
-



Definitions (2)

(Concise Oxford Dictionary)

Quality Control

- *a system of maintaining standards in manufactured products by testing a sample of the output against the specification*



Definitions (3)

(US Environmental Protection Agency)

Quality Assurance

- *an integrated system of activities involving planning, quality control, quality assessment, reporting and quality improvement to ensure that a product or service meets defined standards of quality with a stated level of confidence.*



Quality Assurance in UK universities

- » Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)
 - agency owned by institutions
 - strong governmental pressure
 - 'chequered' history
- » Institutional Audit
 - allegedly 'light touch'

See <http://www.qaa.ac.uk>



Audit of Information Services

- » QAA Institutional Audit scrutinises internal QA systems in institutions
- » Places emphasis on student's view of their learning experience
- » Library and ICT services are important elements of learning experience



Role of SCONUL and UCISA

- » Joint working group on QA
- » Point of contact with QAA
- » Publications
 - *Aide Memoire* for reviewers
 - Guide to Good Practice - Teacher Education
 - Guidelines on Institutional Audit for IS staff

see <http://www.sconul.ac.uk>




National Student Survey

- » Launched end of January 2005 by funding councils, not QAA
- » See <http://www.thestudentsurvey.com/>



National Student Survey 2005

For each statement, show the extent of your agreement or disagreement by putting a cross in the one box which best reflects your current view of the course as a whole. 

Definitely agree	Mostly agree	Neither agree nor disagree or cannot give a definite answer	Mostly disagree	Definitely disagree
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The teaching on my course

1. Staff are good at explaining things.
2. Staff have made the subject interesting.
3. Staff are enthusiastic about what they are teaching.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Assessment and feedback

5. The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance.
6. Assessment arrangements and marking have been fair.
7. Feedback on my work has been prompt.
8. I have received detailed comments on my work.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Academic support

10. I have received sufficient advice and support with my studies.
11. I have been able to contact staff when I needed to.
12. Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Organisation and management

13. The timetable works efficiently as far as my activities are concerned.
14. Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated effectively.
15. The course is well organised and is running smoothly.

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Definitely agree

Mostly agree

Neither agree nor disagree or cannot give a definite answer

Mostly disagree

Definitely disagree

Learning resources

16. The library resources and services are good enough for my needs.

17. I have been able to access general IT resources when I needed to.

18. I have been able to access specialised equipment, facilities, or rooms when I needed to.

Personal development

19. The course has helped me to present myself with confidence.

20. My communication skills have improved.

21. As a result of the course, I feel confident in tackling unfamiliar problems.

Overall satisfaction

22. Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course.

Looking back on the experience, are there any particularly positive or negative aspects you would like to highlight? (Please use the boxes below.)

Positive:

Negative:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION



Ipsos UK

International Dimension

» Some links

- Europe www.enqa.net
- US www.chea.org
- Worldwide www.inqaahe.org
~ (Dublin headquarters)



Bologna Process

- » Bologna Declaration
 - Comparable degree framework
 - Compatible credit transfer system
 - Mobility - students and staff

 - » IT Infrastructure Standards
 - Academic course definitions
 - Personal information

 - » EUNIS talks with EUA
-



True 'quality'

*I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.*

.....

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,

.....

W B Yeats



Or

.....
*Thou shalt not worship projects nor
Shalt thou or thine bow down before
Administration.*

*Thou shalt not answer questionnaires
Or quizzes upon World-Affairs
Nor with compliance
Take any test. Thou shalt not sit
With statisticians nor commit
A social science.*

.....
W H Auden



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Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association

- » Founded in 1993
 - 3 existing organisations merged
- » 201 members
 - includes 142 British and Irish universities & colleges
- » Represents UK (mainly higher) education institutions on matters concerning information systems



Aims

- » To identify and promote best practice through
 - conferences, seminars, workshops
 - collaboration between institutions
 - publications (mainly electronic)
 - promoting development and research

 - » To inform and support policy-making processes on information systems, both *nationally* and *within institutions*
-



Activities (1)

- » Two large annual conferences
- » Seminars, workshops, training courses
- » Web site
- » Electronic mail lists
- » Reports, regular newsletter



Activities (2)

- » Responses to external consultations
- » Surveys - large and small
- » Liaison
 - governmental bodies
 - other education sectors
 - other HE bodies
 - overseas organisations

Activities (3)

- » IT Management Statistics (HEITS)
- » Salary Survey
- » Best Practice Awards, e.g. Excellence, Web, Helpdesk, Staff Training
- » Travel Bursary
- » Funding for small research projects
- » Top Concerns survey



UCISA Groups

- » Corporate Information Systems
 - » Infrastructure
 - » Networking
 - » Procurement
 - » Staff Development
 - » Teaching, Learning and Information
-



Service Contracts

- » Operational Support
 - University of Oxford (4 persons)
 - » Executive Support (*until 31 march 2005*)
 - University of Reading (1 persons)
 - » Web Support
 - Institute for Learning & Research Technology,
University of Bristol
 - » Statistical Analysis
 - Library & Information Statistics Unit,
University of Loughborough
-



Further information

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