

Student Learning Outcomes and Quality Assurance in the UK

Carolyn Campbell
Head of International Affairs



Learning Outcomes

- outline what a successful student will know, understand and be able to do
- are used in course and programme design by autonomous UK degree awarding institutions
- are informed by and can be mapped against external reference points for quality and academic standards developed by the academic community, managed and reviewed by QAA and used in audit and review processes
 - Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications (EwNI and Scotland)
 - Subject benchmark statements
 - Code of Practice – section 7 Programme design, approval, monitoring and review
- Are described in programme specifications

Higher education performance indicators

- Introduced in 1999 and include
 - Institutional learning and teaching indicators
 - Sector learning and teaching indicators
 - Institutional research indicators
 - Sector research indicators
 - Sector wealth generators
- Providing data eg on access to HE, employment following graduation and retention of students
- Review report by PISG published by HEFCE (www.hefce.ac.uk) in July 2007
- www.hesa.ac.uk

Information from students and institutions' own QA systems

- The National Student Survey
<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/nss>
- Unistats – www.unistats.com

Learning outcomes and QA

- QAA in its audit process QAA “will be able to compare publicly available summaries of external examiners’ reports, the outcomes of internal periodic review and NSS data with the complete information from which those summaries have been derived; this will help the [audit] team meet the requirement that audit should examine the accuracy and completeness of published teaching quality information.”
- ‘Outcomes...from audit’ - shows adoption and use of LOs across 70 institutions from reports published from 2003-2004 (<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/institutionalAudit/outcomes/default.asp>)
“the most striking aspect of their introduction has been....the value attached to them by students who appreciate the clarity they have brought to the overall purpose of their programme, the interrelationship between the parts of the programmes and the nature and purpose of assessment tasks.”