

Developing a knowledge centre for self-responsible institutional development

Abstract

The paper describes the principles, strategies and activities of a Higher Education subject area's, namely the arts, approach to quality enhancement and development. This strategy incorporates peer expert training for institutional and subject reviews, Qualifications Frameworks and Learning Outcomes (3 headings). Our experience shows there are key questions that need to be addressed by the European HE sector, including the ongoing differences at national levels between the emphasis on subject and institution review and a combination of the two. Who is carrying these reviews out and how does this process support a bottom-up approach? There still remains a problem of HE recognition of some arts institutions in many countries; there is still a hierarchy within the European higher education sector – universities, technical universities, polytechnics and Academies – some have Professors and offer PhDs some can't. How do you ensure equality of opportunities for students regarding access to the three levels of higher education and the comparability of support and standards across the sector?

Introduction

Over the past six years the European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA), through collaboration with the European Thematic Networks *inter}artes* and *artenet*, has developed: the establishment and training of international panels of experts in areas such as quality assurance and enhancement, learning and teaching and professional practice development; guidelines, principles and processes for self-valuation in preparation for peer institutional and discipline review; regional dissemination workshops and seminars; multi-discipline conferences; best practice teacher's academy workshops; global leadership symposia as well as utilising digital information systems such as web-sites and newsletters. Through developing this expertise and establishing principles and processes we are now able to act as European reference points for higher arts education, offering services and professional guidance to the Ministers of Education, the European Commission and higher arts education institutions to help establish European Quality Labels for:

1. Qualification Frameworks – developed trans-national lifelong learning reference tools for ensuring comparability and greater transparency and providing improved accessibility for the general public.
2. Quality Assurance and Enhancement – developed and tested principles, guidelines and procedures for institutional and discipline peer review, and established a register of trained and tested expert peer reviewers;
3. Learning Outcomes and competences – defined learning outcomes at BA, MA and PhD levels for music, dance, design, fine art, theatre and now film according to the Tuning template; and created a *Bologna Dossier* including a dictionary/glossary of terms and background papers;

As Professor Mick Wilson stated during the symposium '*Standards not Standardisation*' at the ELIA conference in Gothenburg in 2008, "*We have strived to contextualise the debates in respect of 'quality' and outline a version of the question of 'quality' that could support a critical or 'open' pedagogy.*" We support the International Organization for Standardisation's definition for Total Quality

Developing a knowledge centre for self-responsible institutional development

Management “*is a management approach for an organization, centred on quality, based on the participation of all its members and aiming at long-term success through customer satisfaction and benefits to all members of the organization and to society.*”

Within *inter}arte* and *artenet* in our work on ‘quality assurance’ we have adopted the same four questions used by the European Universities Association (EUA) as a task list for our institutional and subject reviews:

- What are you trying to do? (mission/goal)
- How are you doing it? (instruments)
- How do you know it works? (quality control)
- What do you do to change and what do you do with these results?

Our members are committed to developing a ‘European’ methodology that is sympathetic to national and cultural differences and sustains pedagogical freedom, but still maintain the rigour to ensure standards are achieved comparable to each other in all three cycles. We also continue to prioritise East and Central European countries to help them develop their strategies in this period of rapid change.

Objectives:

1. ***Further develop and disseminate the results of the inter}artes network in the field of the Bologna objectives.***

Specific Objectives:

- To value and preserve cultural, artistic, and pedagogical diversity.
- To ensure a co-ordinated, bottom-up approach to all implications of the *Bologna* process for the arts.

To achieve these objectives we carried out a range of activities to facilitate the dissemination of QA&E processes and best practice within the European higher arts education sector.

In 2008 we presented ‘*Standards not Standardisation – Management of Quality in European Higher Arts Education*’ symposium, at our ELIA Conference in Gothenburg, Sweden. This symposium explored how we can use our experience of Quality Assurance and Enhancement at the first (Bachelor) cycle level to enhance quality at second (Masters) and third (PhD) cycle levels. We have developed a Qualification Framework for Masters and Doctoral levels using the *Tuning* process and successfully submitted this framework for consideration as part of the European Qualification Framework. The symposium led to in-depth discussions on QAE for managers/senior lecturers/course leaders who are developing new Masters courses and provided a detailed introduction to a range of current developments in QAE for the Doctoral level in European higher arts education. We also invited Dr. Andree Sursock, Deputy Secretary General, European Universities Association (EUA) who made positive observations and critique our strategies and methodologies.

Continuing previous practice and following on the experiences of the Akdeniz University Faculty Review 2009 we organised a dissemination workshop in

Developing a knowledge centre for self-responsible institutional development

Ankara to share the experiences and help develop quality management strategies with other arts institutions in Turkey and the region. 'Experts' and representatives from Akdeniz University made presentations and ran workshops on Quality Assurance and Enhancement strategies, Qualification Frameworks and Learning Outcomes.

In May 2010 we organised a European seminar '*Peer Power! : The future of Higher Arts Education in Europe*' in Porto, Portugal. The seminar title refers to the core values of the '*artenet*' project and the programme was designed to serve as staff development for teachers, managers and international co-ordinators. Marlies Leegwater, Head of the *Bologna* Secretariat gave a keynote address to frame the discussions on how our work impacts on policy making and answer three key questions posed by our members:

1. How do the Ministers ensure the engagement and quality of peers in the quality assurance and enhancement review process at a national level?
2. How do the Ministers ensure equality of opportunities of students regarding access to the three levels of higher education and the comparability of standards across the sector?
3. How do the Ministers ensure the methodologies adopted for the review of the three levels are appropriate to higher arts education?

The second day started with Alberto Amaral, Head of the Portuguese QAA addressing the seminar on their processes and strategies. In both sessions the keynote speakers commended *artenet's* methodology and thought there was potential in ELIA seeking recognition and endorsement from ENQA.

Support 'Tools'

To help institutions prepare for Institutional Reviews we have produced a number of guidelines including:

1. *Institutional and Subject Review for Higher Arts Education* – a comprehensive guide to help an institute to understand the requirements needed to develop and establish a 'quality' culture in the institution; its responsibilities in ensuring the quality of the students learning experience and the building bricks it needs to develop and embed to meet the European quality measures.
2. *Preparing for first QAE visit by an international panel and the role of the liaison* – guidelines produced by a teacher in an art and design university who became the liaison person for a review visit to help other institutions, who like his had little experience of QAE processes and receiving such visits and who were trying rapidly to fully engage in the process.
3. *A review evaluation methodology* – the development of a methodology to review the impact of the Institutional Review and analyse the extent to which these recommendations have helped the institution to make positive progress in development of a 'quality' culture to ensure the standards of the programmes. Equally it was used to enable the reviewed institution to make recommendations as to how the review process can be improved in the future.

2. ***Continue to chart and test a European EQF for the arts, accompanied by updated subject-specific information in European 'tuning' documents, discussed and validated by representatives from the professional world. Lifelong learning pathways within the arts will be integrated in an EQF.***

Developing a knowledge centre for self-responsible institutional development

The Tuning template has been completed and evaluated for the disciplines of Fine Art, Design, Theatre and Dance and the Tuning document for Film Production has been completed by *Artesnet* Europe.

- 3. identifies new pedagogic approaches to learning and teaching in the arts and develops the concept for a 'teachers' academy' in 2009, focusing on teaching staff from Higher Arts Education institutes and educators from other fields (education, museums, projects), based on peer reviewed contributions, in collaboration with strand 1 and 3.**

Specific Objectives:

- to discuss ideas about the integration of theory and practice in learning, teaching and research;
- how to develop further knowledge embedded in practice, and share, create and develop new insights and ideas about arts education in different settings;
- to create (inter)disciplinary links between Higher Arts Education, the training of future artists, and educational approaches outside formal learning

European Teachers' Academy 1st – 3rd July 2009, National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts, Sofia, Bulgaria

Over a period of three days, some 24 papers and 8 workshops on new and innovative approaches to creative arts pedagogy were presented to an appreciative audience of 80 lecturers and practitioners from 20 different countries. Many of the papers investigated new directions in arts pedagogy in response to the rapidly changing global and technological environment and identified new challenges for the future development of art schools in the 21st century. Key issues addressed included an analysis of the impact of creative partnership initiatives on Quality Assurance and Enhancement, the challenges and opportunities offered by new social networking technologies and how new pedagogical models involving communities, galleries and museums were creating a new "kind" of arts institution.

- 4. The panel of Higher Arts Education experts in quality enhancement, established in the previous period, has been extended and professionalised and a webpage promoting the expertise and services offered in the field of quality enhancement, external examining, institutional review and learning outcomes.**

Quality Assurance, Qualification Frameworks & Learning Outcomes 'Expert Training', Birmingham City University, May 2008

Aim:

To develop confidence and competence in participants to work effectively as part of an institutional review team, operating to an agreed set of principles and procedures.

Outcomes:

By the end of the training days, participants will be able to:

- Explain the purpose of the institutional review and the role of the panel;

Developing a knowledge centre for self-responsible institutional development

- Plan, carry out and follow up an institutional visit according to agreed procedures;
- Objectively analyse evidence presented in the self-evaluation document and during a visit;
- Respond to evidence with appropriate observations and recommendations;
- To work together as a Panel to arrive at a shared evaluation report;
- Understand qualification frameworks and develop learning outcomes.

To date we have 21 trained experts.

5. Developments and evaluation of ELIA peer institutional and subject review visits.

Links with European Universities Association (EUA)

In carrying out our reviews we have visited two higher arts education institutions, one in the Czech Republic and the other Turkey, who have previously undergone institutional review by the EUA – both approximately 2 years before. Both *artesnet* and the EUA apply the same principles and use very similar strategies in their review process, but whereas the EUA focuses entirely at the institutional level *artesnet* additionally carries out a discipline review to test how the processes are embedded and utilised at grass-roots level. In both instances the institutions were found to have developed and enhanced their quality management processes, but both had still not employed these practices at discipline/subject level.

In two subsequent meetings the EUA QA Office we have discussed strategies to collaborate more closely, including:

- engaging in data gathering and multilayered transparency tools - like the EUA, carry out a survey to collect data and analyse it, which will be useful for our members. The EUA offered to share information from the surveys they had already carried out from European higher arts education institutions and to collaborate in the dissemination of this material across the HE sector.
- to discuss with the European Network of Quality Assurance (ENQA) agencies the form of membership ELIA would like to have with this organization – full or associate. We seek ENQA's validation of our process to gain recognition and credibility by arts institutions and national QA agencies.
- to offer arts QA experts to participate in reviews of arts institutions. The EUA invited a representative 'expert' from *artesnet* to attend their training at Copenhagen Business School in October 2010 to share good practice.

Professional Developments

An important consequence of these quality assurance strategies and specifically the training of 'Experts' has been the invitation of these to participate in official accreditation reviews and lead training sessions on QAE, Qualification Frameworks and learning Outcomes by National Quality Assurance Agencies including:

- invited by the CQAHE Lithuania's National QA agency for the review and accreditation of the Lithuanian Art & Design Academies for Fine Art (3 experts including the Chair), Design (3 experts including the Chair) and

Developing a knowledge centre for self-responsible institutional development

Design Crafts (2 experts including the Chair) 2008. The same panel members were invited by CQAHE to participate in the follow up accreditation visits in Spring 2011;

- invited by the Hogskoleverket Sweden's National QA agency for the review and accreditation of the Swedish Arts Academies;
- invited to run a training workshop for French Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris on Learning Outcomes by French art schools network *Art Accord*;
- invited by National QA agency for Training Workshop for Croatian Art Academies on Qualification Frameworks and Learning Outcomes 2008;
- invited to act as international expert for faculty review and re-approval DIT Dublin, Eire 2010;
- invited by ARACIS Rumania's National QA agency (as international expert for institutional review and accreditation National University of the Arts Bucharesti, Romania 2010.

Review Evaluation visits of the five institutions that received *inter}artes* and *artenet* Institutional and Subject Reviews.

The purpose of the review evaluation process to evaluate the effectiveness and efficacy of the TN Institutional & Subject Review process as it has been developed to date. We decided that it was important to test the methodology developed for Institutional and Subject Review to see how appropriate it was for higher arts education and see what impact and problems the institution had in carrying out the process and implementing the conditions/recommendations presented in the final report made by the review panel.

The review methodology involved a small (2/3 experts + rapporteur) Review Evaluation Team (RET) revisiting the institution over a two-day period.

The documentation required to form the basis of the Review Visit comprises:

- a copy of the Self-Evaluation Document (SED) which formed the basis of the main visit of the original Evaluation process
- a copy of the Institutional Review Report (IRR) that formed the outcome of the original Evaluation visit
- a Review Evaluation Document (RED) that provides a codicil to the original SED, that provides the RT with updated information about the host institution. This document would include an institutional update of any changes, response to the recommendations made in the IRR and the use made of the report (internally & externally).

Outcomes

All five institutions showed noticeable improvements in their Quality Management policies and infrastructures. The most noticeable improvements across all institutions were:

- appointed or identified a senior member of staff with QA&E responsibilities;
- embedded 'learning outcomes' and written assessment criteria;
- good student engagement with the QA&E process;
- strong institutional management engagement with the QA&E process;
- positive Faculty/School engagement with the QA&E process;
- an online QA&E management system.

Developing a knowledge centre for self-responsible institutional development

Two areas which all institutions could improve upon was:

- staff development policies and strategies for training for change;
- institutional, faculty, school-capacity to share best practices in research, learning teaching and assessment.

Two of the institutions have subsequently undergone full National Institutional Review and Accreditation visits by their National Quality Assurance agencies and in both instances they were awarded the highest recognition for the standard and quality of their programmes. Both QA agencies complimented the institutions on their Quality management policies and strategies and were very positive about the impact of our visits, stating they endorsed our review processes. Another national QA agency visiting a third institution said they would accept our institutional review report for that year's national review.

All the institutions stated that the *inter}artes* and *artenet* reviews effectively contributed to improvement of the quality policy and management in the institution. Some of the most important results emphasized by the institutions were:

- raising awareness within the institution regarding quality policies
- stimulating the projection and implementation of good practices
- stimulating the process of clarification and formalization of procedures regarding quality assurance and enhancement
- offering recommendations which helped the institution prepare better for the evaluation and accreditation procedures performed by the national agency for quality assurance in higher education
- stimulating the implication of university staff in the development of a quality culture within the institution.

It is also interesting to note that most institutions, as well using the IRR for internal discussion and development, also shared them with their Ministry of Education and the National QAE Agency, with very positive outcomes.

Conclusion

From this presentation ELIA's *Peer Power* approach to assuring and raising 'Quality' in the European higher arts education sector is based on and developed through very close collaboration with the institution, with a very bottom-up approach and nurtured through trust and mutual respect. We believe to ensure 'quality' we need to develop curriculum and learning and teaching to ensure it is current and meet the demands and needs of our societies and the world of work. With very limited resources we have developed, tried and tested principles and methodologies to pilot a relatively small number of full peer reviews but with a broad strategy to share and disseminate our results through: 'local' national and international symposia and workshops; publications, toolkits and websites; peer experts participating in national QA agency reviews etc. Our experience shows there are key questions that need to be addressed by the European HE sector, including the ongoing differences at national levels between the emphasis on subject and institution review and a combination of the two. Who is carrying these reviews out and how does this process support a bottom-up approach? There still remains a problem of HE recognition of some arts institutions in many countries; there is still a hierarchy within the European higher education sector – universities, technical universities, polytechnics and Academies –

Developing a knowledge centre for self-responsible institutional development

some have Professors and offer PhDs some can't. How do you ensure equality of opportunities for students regarding access to the three levels of higher education and the comparability of support and standards across the sector?

Authors

Professor John Butler (Birmingham City University)

Mr. Bob Baker (Trained and experienced QA&E expert)

Kieran Corcoran (Dublin Institute of Technology; ELIA president)

The paper will be presented by Professor Butler.

July 2011