

Quality assurance for Geology In Higher Education – Perspective from Academics

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Quality: what is it?



- ISO 9000:
 - "Degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfills requirements."
- Assurance of quality in higher education is:
 - a process of establishing stakeholder confidence that provision (input, process and outcomes) fulfills expectations or measures up to threshold minimum requirements.
- EU report – no simple definition
 - ‘consumer protection’
 - the provision of advice and guidance in pursuit of improvements in the standards and quality of programmes of study and associated qualifications



Not just Quality Assurance (QA)

- Quality Assurance
 - 'Fitness for purpose'
- Quality of Graduate
 - Academic grades achieved
 - Institution/programme attended
- Quality Enhancement
 - All stakeholders within sector working together to improve 'threshold minimum'



QA - the ENQA perspective

- European standards for internal and external quality assurance, and for external quality assurance agencies.
- European quality assurance agencies will be expected to submit themselves to a cyclical review within five years.
- There will be an emphasis on subsidiarity, with reviews being undertaken nationally where possible.
- A European register of quality assurance agencies will be produced.
- A European Register Committee will act as a gatekeeper for the inclusion of agencies in the register.
- A European Consultative Forum for Quality Assurance in Higher Education will be established.

QA – The Institution's perspective

- Institutions should have:
 - Policy and procedures for quality assurance;
 - Approval, monitoring and periodic review of programmes and awards;
 - Assessment of students: using consistent, published criteria, regulations and procedures;
 - Quality assurance of teaching staff;
 - Learning resources and student support;
 - Information systems: which collect, analyse and use relevant information;
 - Public information: *Regularly publish up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about their programmes and awards*

The Quality of graduates

- ECTS are awarded when a course is passed
 - Educational outcomes are met to a minimum standard

- ECTS Users' Guide 2009



- No direct translation of grades
- Compare proportions in each grade. e.g.

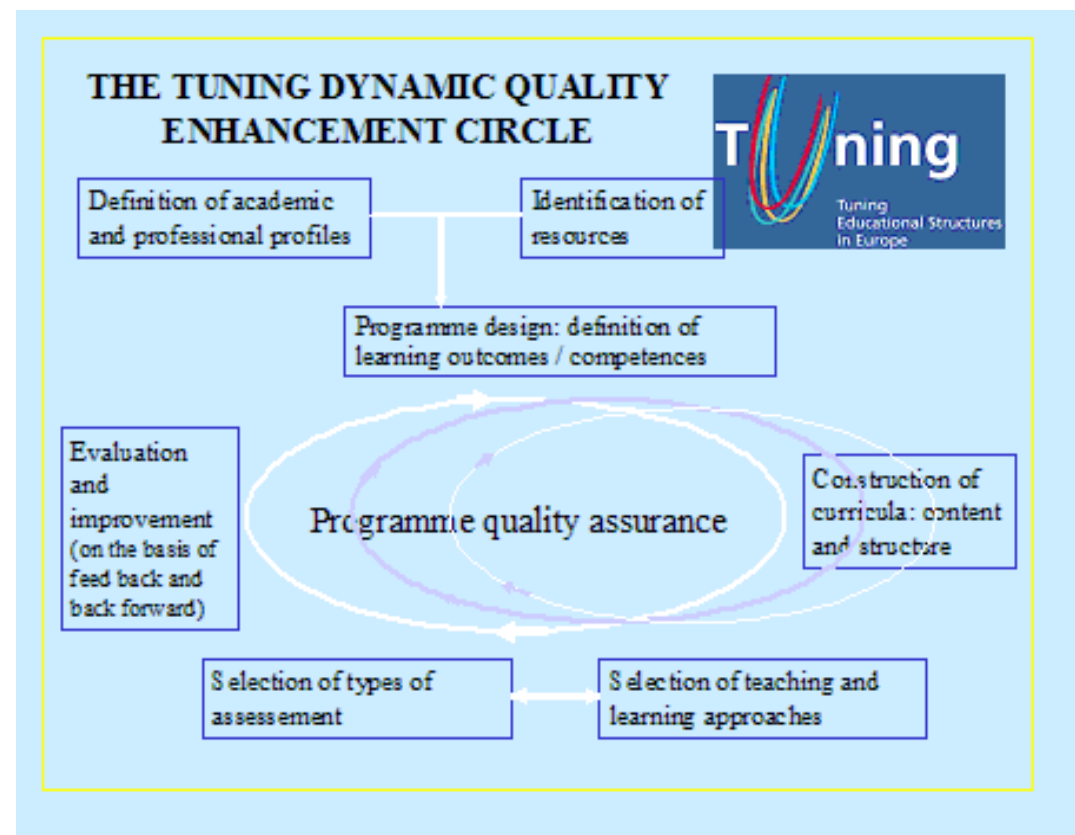
EHI/Programme X	EHI/Programme Y
5% @ grade 30	10% @ grade A1
5% @ grade 29	10% @ grade A2
10% @ grade 28	

30+29 @ X ~ A1 @ Y and 28 @ X ~ A2 @ Y

- Learn more about marking than product?

Quality Enhancement

- Tuning Project (2000 - 2009)
- Tuning Academy (2010 -)
 - Tools for the better mapping, design, delivery and assessment of programmes.
 - E.G. Earth Science Template





Earth Science Template

- Recognises the enormous breadth of subjects that fall within the remit of Earth Science
- Extremely careful not to recommend a 'standard curriculum'.
- It elucidates the fundamental underlying Generic and Subject Specific competences which are required to study the Earth.
- The template also requires that any Earth Science training programme should include an appropriate amount of field work

Quality Enhancement (Industry contribution)



- Summer work experience for students
 - Joint research
 - Participating in QA reviews
 - Participating in projects such as EuroAges, Tuning Academy etc.
 - Sponsor prizes for field work
- “..any of the demographic measures of the present age distribution for geologists in the work force; .. all show a large population of gray-haired geologists nearing retirement.” (Lorenz, J.C., AAPG Explorer 2010)

Resources

- Harvey, L., 2004–9, Analytic Quality Glossary, Quality Research International, <http://www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary/>
- Bologna Stocktaking Report 2009.
www.ond.vlaanderen.be/bologna/Stocktaking_report_2009_FINAL.pdf
- Tuning Project <http://tuning.unideusto.org/tuningeu/index.php>
- *Quality Assurance*
<http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/actionlines/QA.htm>
- *ECTS User Guide 2009.* http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc48_en.htm
- ENQA report on Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, 3rd edition, 2009.
<http://www.enqa.eu/pubs.lasso>