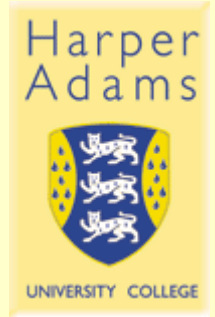


QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



by

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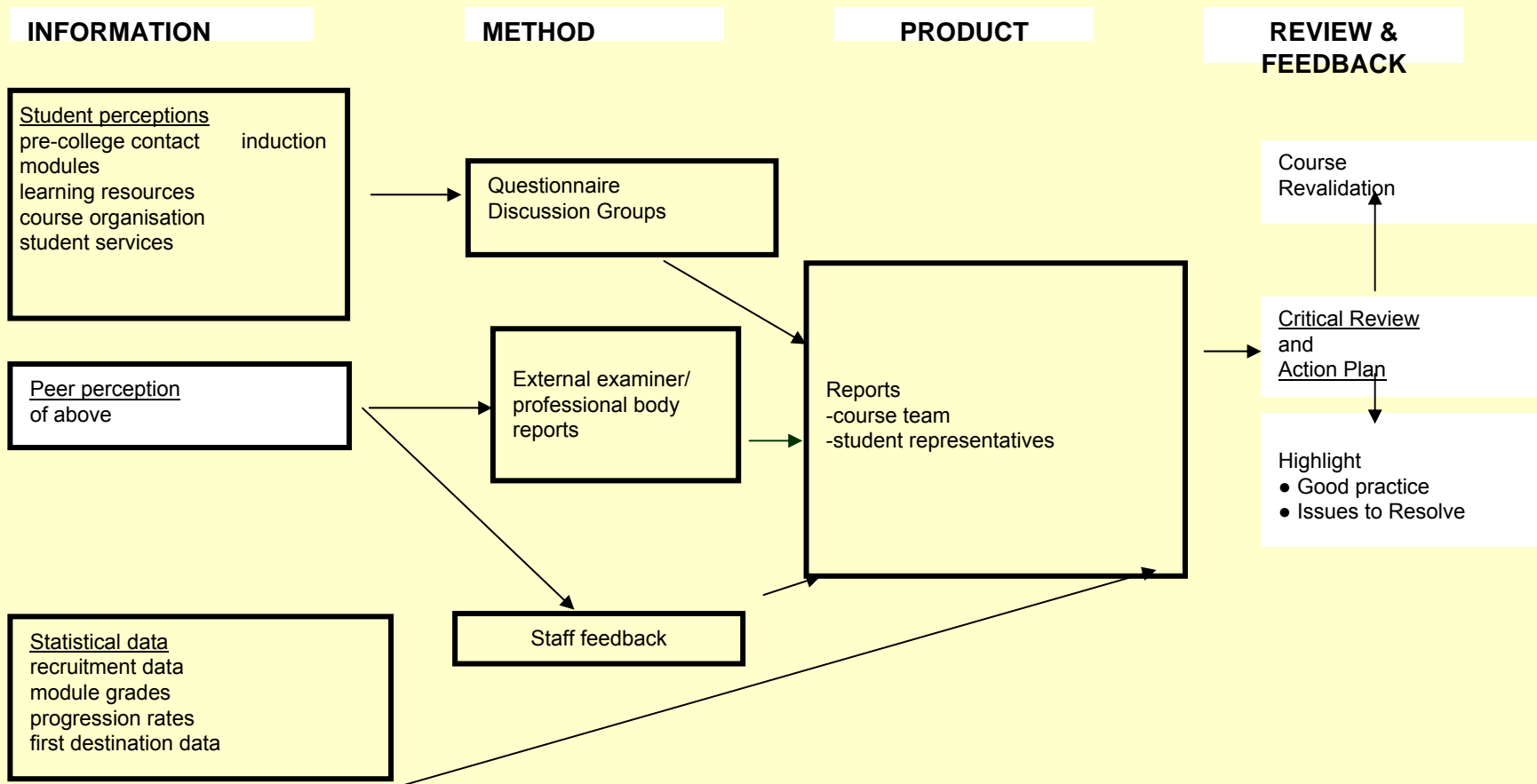
Outline of the Presentation

- The Bologna Agenda
- Overview of the Quality Assurance process in European Higher Education
- Progress to date
- Challenges
- Opportunities

The Bologna Agenda

Aim: To create a European Higher Education Area by 2010, focusing on ten key areas:

- comparable degrees
- common credits
- three cycles (bachelor, master, doctor)
- close links with European Research Area
- student and staff mobility
- cooperative quality assurance
- promote a European dimension
- commitment to lifelong learning
- student inclusion
- promote attractiveness in a global market

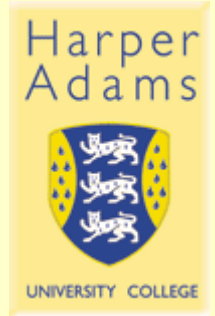


The Enhancement Agenda

Regular course monitoring and evaluation should lead to:

- a commitment to continuous improvement
- updating of resources
- valuable feedback to ensure relevance
- action planning with timed outcomes
- opportunities for staff development

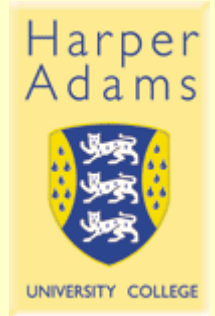
Progress to date



- Variable rate of acceptance
- “Law of limiting factors”
- 45 nation states at London Meeting (May 2007)
- Erasmus Mundus and Tempus to aid mobility and trans-national masters programmes
- €60 billion to fund the ERA
- Towards commonality of Quality Assurance

Challenges

- The need to adopt Learning Outcomes, as promoted by the Dublin Descriptors (2004)
- Diverse and autonomous European traditions – the celebration of diversity, not conformity
- Professional versus academic universities
- League Tables based on research profile
- Skills needed to compete in a global economy
- The student voice



Plutarch's Fire

“The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled”.

Plutarch (c. 46-127AD)

The Student Voice

“...in some countries student representatives are not regarded and treated as equal partners by Governments, institutions and other stakeholders. Some ... principally regard students as troublemakers, no matter what they say or do. Only in a few countries, a sustainable partnership exists”.

Bologna with Student Eyes, 2007.

Generic, vocational and lifelong learning skills

- communication and the social citizen
- literacy and numeracy
- problem solving
- continuing professional development

ie “SCIENCE INTO PRACTICE”

CLOSING THOUGHTS OF AN OPTIMIST

- Quality Assurance processes should be accepted as a routine aspect of academic life
- International cooperation is of central importance to research, higher education and the European Project
- Pursue our ambitions to create a trans-european programme of Higher Education accessible to all nations of the world
- Utilise a common approach to quality assurance, based on the sharing of good practice and continuous improvement

“May you live in interesting times”

A Chinese curse