

Quality Assurance: Same Same but Different

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Abstract

Internationally there is pressure for significant change in measuring quality in teaching and learning (Krause, Barrie & Scott, 2012). Different national approaches to quality assurance have been undertaken. In Brazil national examinations take place; in the U.S., the Collegiate Learning Assessment has been adopted by over 400 universities; again in the U.S. the Voluntary Systems of Accountability have been implemented; and the Quality Assurance Agency in the U.K. use external examiners and benchmark standards. It is evident that although quality assurance has been recognised as a critical component of educational enhancement principles there is little consistency as to how to achieve it. Of more concern, is the validity of the data being used to assure quality. Sadler (2012) discusses commonly used options in assuring achievement including: overall results, external examiner systems, threshold standards and standardised testing, but stresses problems with each of these methods unless a moderation and calibration process is included. Yorke (2008) has also raised concern about adopting overall percentages as the indicator of quality as there is no agreement on how student performance should be graded, and no understanding of how grades are cumulated into an overall index of achievement (the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (2002) found thirteen different scales for reporting student overall achievement). This gives rise to questions about what a percentage or grade point average or degree classification actually tells us; which capabilities were actually assessed and at what level; and how grading was decided. This session presents a global review of quality assurance, providing points for consideration for future practice.

How does your proposal fit the conference theme(s)?

This proposal fits into a number of the conference themes. It is taking a global perspective on a current topic (standards and quality assurance) reviewing practice around the world going on the examine approaches to discuss where issues arise. It will conclude by making recommendations for quality assurance practice that can be implemented at a unit of study; institutional or national level. In this way the session will address:

- **Embracing challenges and opportunities for HE in a globalized world – examining the challenges and opportunities to overcome these challenges.**
- **Preparing graduates for a globalized world – assuring quality learning is a mechanism to produce graduates who can excel in the world.**
- **Transforming leadership of HE in a globalized world – providing strategies for managing quality assurance at a range of levels.**
- **Re-thinking HE evaluation in a globalized world – looking at how quality is evaluated effectively globally.**