

Quality Assurance Quality Improvement

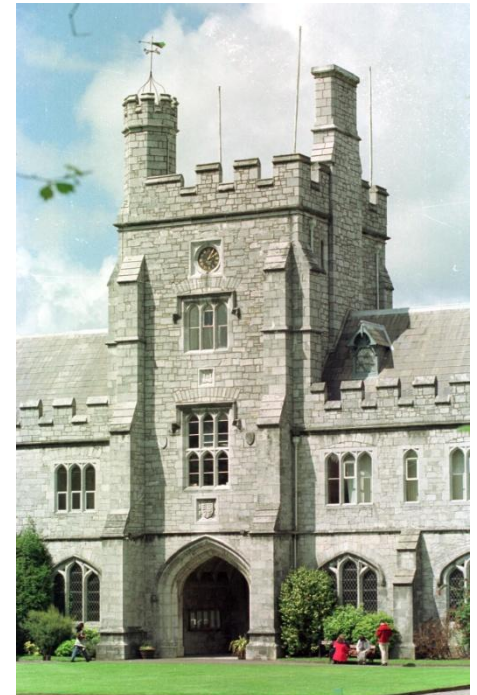
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10th January 2012

What is QA?

- **A tool for addressing the complexities of European higher education**
- **A relative concept, based on institutional mission/goals**
- **Closely related to questions of ideology and power (who defines quality? in which way? accountability aspects, etc.)**
- **In the best interest of students, employers and society in general**
- **A dynamic, ongoing process**
- **Potentially a bureaucratic burden, to be kept to a minimum**
- **Orientation towards the future**

Why QA? A Multitude of Purposes

- **Fitness for purpose**
- **Compliance (zero error or deviation)**
- **Satisfaction of students and parents**
- **Excellence**
- **Value for money**
- **Transformation (process of changing the student)**
- **Enhancement (process of changing the university)**
- **Control (punitive/rewarding process of QA)**
- **Public information, reassurance, confidence**
- **Ranking**
- **Accountability**
- **International acceptability**
- **Resource allocation**

Quality Culture

- **A shared culture that values quality, not only managerial processes.**
- **Not just a task of the QA specialist or the QA unit, but the collective attitude directing the actions of all stakeholders.**
- **Includes internal reviews that are coherent with its own mission, objectives, and academic and organisational values.**
- **An important aspect of maintaining a balance between autonomy and uniqueness with accountability.**

- **A University located in the South of Ireland, with 18,000+ students, and the highest annual research income of all the Irish Universities**
- **A focus on delivering 4th level Ireland and lifelong learning**

Mission

To create, preserve, and communicate knowledge and to enhance cultural, social and economic life locally, regionally and globally.

VISION

- **To be a research-led university of international standing with impact in Munster, Ireland, Europe and the world**

Section 35: Quality Assurance

- **To promote the improvement of the quality of education of students and all related activities**
- **Responsibility for process rests with the University**

Quality Reviews

- **Self-Assessment**
- **Peer Review**
- **Report submitted, including recommendations for improvement**

Follow-up

- **Unit submits a report on actions taken and outcomes within 18 months of completion of the review to the Quality Promotion Committee**
- **Report on progress is considered by Governing Body and published.**

Major Successes

- **Acceptance of quality review process**
- **Appreciation of need for self-reflection**
- **Embedding of a quality culture in all areas of the university begun**
- **Ownership by unit being reviewed seen as a benefit to unit**
- **Follow-up procedures ensuring actions taken on recommendations for improvement**

Embedding a Quality Culture

- **Role of Director of Quality Promotion**
- **Emphasis on quality enhancement**
- **Remit wider than management of internal quality reviews**
- **Link to strategic planning**
- **Performance indicators**
- **Institutional data and research**
- **Funding of Quality Improvement Projects**

Teaching & Learning Support

- **Seminars – examples of practice**
- **Awards for excellence in Teaching**
- **Awards for research into innovative forms of teaching**
- **Accredited qualifications in Teaching & Learning in Higher Education**

Research Support

- **Seminars – held weekly with students and staff attending**
 - **Covering range of topics relevant to research**
- **Workshops on grant application procedures**
- **Awards for early career researchers**
- **Mentoring programme for early career researchers**

Quality Improvement Projects

- **Funded by University**
- **Small grants – maximum €5,000**
- **Proposal form**
- **Aimed at improvement of student experience**

Institutional data

- **Gathered systematically**
- **Research conducted on institutional data**
- **Used for decision-making at all levels in University**
- **Core to strategic planning process**

Web sites

- <http://www.ucc.ie/quality>
- <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/hogeronderwijs/bologna/>
- <http://www.iuqb.ie>
- www.eua.be
- www.nqai.ie

- **Email: n.ryan@ucc.ie**

Thank You