National Qualification Framework and internal quality assurances systems
Quality Assurance and Good Teaching –
what lessons can be learnt by Polish HEIs from British experience

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Why go to ‘Outcomes .. ?
look at just some of the topics covered !!

there is, of course:
• The framework for higher education qualifications
also of interest to academics perhaps
• the adoption and use of learning outcomes
• assessment of students
• Learning support resources (including virtual learning environments)
• Arrangements for combined, joint and multidisciplinary degree programmes

perhaps more for HE administrators (but also academics)
• Institutions' frameworks for managing quality and academic standards
• Specialist institutions
• Programme monitoring arrangements
• Arrangements for international students
• Student representation and feedback
• Institutions' support for widening participation and access to HE

AND MANY MORE !!!!
what I am going to summarise:

- UK HE .. the national context and its quality assurance framework
- UK HE .. the institutional level – academics and managers
- links to Bologna
- what can Polish HEIs learn from UK?
  - what has gone OK – even .. quite well !? .. .... and
  - what has NOT ! (please learn from OUR mistakes!)
- some time for questions
- and, if there is still some time ..
  - quality assurance and quality enhancement

but *FIRST*
- a few words about the HE ‘context’ ..
  - it is ‘different’ *in* – and *across* - the UK!
UK HE .. the national context and its quality assurance framework
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IN THE UK</th>
<th>IN POLAND</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NO national degrees ..</td>
<td>national / state degrees (programmes regulated at national level)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEIs award THEIR own degrees and are responsible for them</td>
<td>a general requirement for external programme evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a longstanding external examiner system</td>
<td>introduced more recently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORMAL external QA .. since 1960s</td>
<td>SAC / PKA + PACs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a QA FRAMEWORK since 2000</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TODAY –</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>external institutional evaluation; probably changing back to more programme evaluation</td>
<td>programme + HEI evaluation; hoping to move to more institutional evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
in UK .. Higher Education is now ‘devolved’
variations between England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales

programmes ... most 3 year in EWNI (but many 4 years)
    most 4 year in Scotland (a few 3 years)
student fees ... VERY different national arrangements !!

SIZE ... England 91 univs 132 HEIs  c1.92million students
    Scotland 15 univs 19 HEIs  c  .21million students
    Wales 8 univs 11 HEIs c .13million students
    N Ireland 2 univs 4 HEIs c .05million students

[ the ‘private’ HE sector in the UK is VERY small ]

BUT for
    Study programme design \{ ALL universities determine their own
    Degree titles \} and responsible for their own
HE and its QA are in constant change! *EVERYWHERE*!!

*Does anyone ask what ‘the silent society’ expects of its higher education?*
the constant state of change!

Emerging general (European) ‘pattern’ of change..

1. professional trust
2. calls for greater accountability / ‘transparency’
3. universal programme/department level evaluation
4. HUGE increase in ‘bureaucracy’
   but some academics use to real advantage!!
5. but all gets ‘too much’..
   including reduced benefit to cost ratio
6. institutional level evaluation
7. loss of detailed information on programmes
8. call for re-introduction of programme evaluation
9. back to step 3!!
the UK today - quality assurance framework(s)

The QA framework(s) all include ..

- the Academic Infrastructure
- ongoing (structured) internal QA within HEIs
- period evaluation of all HE institutions (audit/review) … by QAA
  – and of HE delivered in non (UK) HEIs  
  ditto

- National Student Survey (NSS)
- HE Statistics + other Teaching Quality Information (TQI)

- programme accreditation when necessary by Professional Bodies
the ‘Academic Infrastructure’

shared ‘tools’ for internal (institutional) and external
  Quality Assurance   -  UK wide

qualifications frameworks  + credit arrangements (ECTS compatible)
  generic qualification descriptors (and credit ranges)
  agreed with key stakeholders / published by QAA

subject detail  ..  Subject Benchmark Statements  ( 70 + )
  written by discipline communities / published by QAA

details of individual programmes  ..  Programme Specifications
  written by academic programme teams / published by HEIs

for HEI’s internal quality management  ..  A Code of Practice ..
  agreed by HE sector / published by QAA
the Academic Infrastructure: a (shared) quality framework

‘triangulating’ academic standards ..

Framework for HE qualifications
FHEQ (by national agreement)

programme specifications
(are institution’s documents)

subject benchmark statements
(from subject communities)
the Academic Infrastructure: a (shared) quality framework

‘triangulating’ academic standards ..

Framework for HE qualifications
(national agreement)

programme specification
(institutional document)

subject benchmark statement
(subject community)

and recording each student’s achievements

diploma supplement  (UK transcript / HEAR)
(individual student record)
the Academic Infrastructure: a (shared) quality framework

a Code of Practice for HEI’s management of programme quality

Framework for HE qualifications
(national agreement)

programme specification
(institutional document)

subject benchmark statement
(subject community)

diploma supplement (UK transcript / HEAR)
the Code of Practice
[a handbook for internal quality management - in sections

covers key ‘steps’ in programme/student life) :
( 7*) Programme design, approval, monitoring and review
(10) Admissions to higher education
( 3) Students with disabilities
( 2) Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning
   (including e-learning)
( 9) Placement learning .. including work based learning
( 6) Assessment of students
( 5) Academic appeals and student complaints on academic
   matters
( 4) External examining
( 1) Postgraduate research programmes
( 8) Career education, information and guidance

Plus … Accreditation of Prior / Work-based Learning (guidelines)

(eg 7* .. section numbers)
Quality Assurance for higher education: principles and methodology are the same across the UK

Audit / review are primarily interested in making decisions about
• the standards of awards (degrees)
• the quality of the learning opportunities

The methodology involves
• use of agreed reference ‘criteria’ (the Academic Infrastructure)
• a Self Evaluation Report prepared by the HEI
• a site visit by a panel of expert peers (over several days)
• a published report

but the national contexts for QA are different in
• ‘balance’ of accountability/assurance and enhancement
  “QA before QE .. except in Scotland”
UK HE .. the institutional level –

the roles and relationships between academics and students and ‘managers’ and internal QA systems
Programme design and ‘internal’ validation in UK HEIs

HEI’s own validation committee [with external experts]

programme design
ACADEMICS
set and mark exams

teaching
Programme delivery and student assessment in UK HEIs

HEI’s own validation committee [with external experts]

- Academics design programmes
- Set and mark exams
- Sit on exam board
- Marks

- Teaching

- Students
  - Assessments (summative and formative)
  - Exam board (departmental)
‘externality’ in student assessment in UK HEIs
.. the external examiner system .. ‘traditional model’

the traditional model:

- **students**
  - teaching
  - assessments (summative and formative)
  - **academics** set and mark exams

- **EXTERNAL EXAMINER (s)**
  1. checks exam papers
  2. checks marking
  3. student vivas

- Exam board (departmental)

**VERY influential**
'externality' in student assessment in UK HEIs .. the external examiner system .. ‘traditional model’

the traditional model:

- **students**
  - assessments (summative and formative)
    - academics set and mark exams
      - 1. checks exam papers
      - 2. checks marking
      - 3. student vivas

- **University** (Registry)

- **EXTERNAL EXAMINER** (s)
  - 1. checks exam papers
  - 2. checks marking
  - 3. student vivas

- **Exam board** (departmental)
  - (reporting)

- **Faculty Board**

- **very influential**

- teaching
  - awards degree
‘externality’ in student assessment in UK HEIs
.. the external examiner system .. ‘NEW MANAGERIAL MODEL’

the traditional model:

- **students**
- **teaching**
- **academics**
  - set and mark exams
- **assessments**
  - (summative and formative)
- **University REGISTRY**
- **EXam board**
  - (departmental)
- **EXTERNAL EXAMINER (s)**
  - 1. checks exam papers
  - 2. checks marking
  - 3. student vivas – *probably NO*

- **limited influence**
  - (reporting)
  - **Faculty Board**

- **awards degree**
General trends

increasing external and internal ‘bureaucratisation’ has brought tendency to ‘manage/control’ internal QA ...
‘from the [HEI’s] centre’

but different HEIs ‘manage/control’ in different ways ..
[ some retain ‘collegiality’ .. many more go to ‘top down control’ ]

the principle is .. ‘equity for all’ (students and staff) ..
NOT the same as ‘all must do things in the same way’!!
UK links to Bologna
what can Polish HEIs learn from UK?

what has gone OK – even.. quite well !? .. and
what has NOT ! (please learn from OUR mistakes!)
What has gone OK..

- the National Qualifications Framework (for HE)
  - a different ‘subsidiary role’ in UK .. but
  - a HUGE impact .. greater ‘clarity’ + ‘innovation’
- the Subject Benchmark Statements
  - academic involved in setting (their) standards
    - and the learning outcomes ‘debate’
- Programme specifications
- The Code of Practice
  - HUGE IMPACT on internal and external QA ‘culture’
- Bologna
  - varies ..
What has not gone so well in the UK

• the National Qualifications FrameworkS (for HE and VET)
  – developed differently and not properly aligned
  – a HUGE waste of opportunity
• the Subject Benchmark Statements
  – even after 10 years some still ‘fear’ a national curriculum ..
• Programme specifications
  – a ‘mixed bag’ .. Lack of clarity about PURPOSE !
• The Code of Practice
  – too much duplication
• Internal and External QA
  – NO AGREED / CONSISTENT CLARITY OF PURPOSE !!!!!!!!
Quality Assurance and Good Teaching – what lessons can be learnt by Polish HEIs from British experience

for academics and for HE administrators..

go to: ‘Outcomes from .. institutional audit..

http://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews/institutionalAudit/outcomes/default.asp
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For administrators
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AND MANY MORE !!!!
issues and questions that won’t go away

- who really *needs* (or wants?) what (in terms of QA)?
- comparability & consistency whilst retaining diversity
- balancing costs and benefits
- adding value as well?
- avoiding complacency but without constant (disruptive) change………..
- QA / QE .. a balance or a conflict?
  - and what are we actually looking to ‘enhance’?
    (the product? (which is?); the process (which one?)?)
  - ‘*horses for courses*’ or ‘*one for all & all for one*’?
    (different bodies doing different jobs, or one doing several?)
some other useful websites:

Quality Assurance .. http://www.qaa.ac.uk
.. and the Academic Infrastructure
and audit and review methods http://www.thestudentsurvey.com
the National Student Survey http://www.hefce.ac.uk/Learning/nss/data/2009/
HE Statistical data and Teaching Quality Information http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/datacoll

QE
UK wide .. Higher Education Academy http://hea.ac.uk
England .. Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning
Teaching Fellowships http://www.hefce.ac.uk/learning/enhance/
Scotland .. Enhancement Themes http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/

Student involvement in QA/QE
National Union of Students http://www.nus.org.uk/
Student Participation in Quality Scotland http://www.sparqs.ac.uk/
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Quality assurance and quality enhancement