Building a Quality Assurance at the UoM

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Work started in November 2013

Launched on 1st of July 2015

A key deliverable of the ESF-funding project ‘Making Quality Visible’.

The first of its kind in the EHEA to encompass further, higher and formal adult learning.

Now followed by Ireland, based on Malta’s Framework
Capitalising on local strengths

- One Ministry of Education from pre-primary to vocational, adult and tertiary provision
- National Qualifications Framework that gave parity of esteem to vocational and tertiary provision
- Parity of esteem and same mechanism for ECTS and ECVET learning credit systems
- Same licensing and accreditation mechanisms
- Vocational providers aspired to status of tertiary providers
- Very close working collaboration between key stakeholders
Malta’s QA ideology

Education Act 2006:

• the onus of ensuring quality in teaching and learning is on the providers through their internal developmental processes.

• External oversight through inspections and audits is (mainly) justified inasmuch as it supports these internal processes.

• NOT: the ‘choice, transparency and accountability’ discourse that led to the marketisation of education
The IQA-EQA Connection

MARKET FORCES

INTERNAL EVALUATION

EXTERNAL EVALUATION

ENHANCED QUALITY, OUTPUT, NUMBERS
What is a thermometer for?

- **Quality** is achieved/enhanced by the providers, **NOT** by EQA.
- EQA highlights, supports, responsabilises, holds to account.
1. A Framework based on the ESG and enriched by the EQAVET perspective
2. A Framework that contributes to a National Quality Culture
3. IQA (and EQA) that is Fit for Purpose EQA that is a tool for both Development and Accountability
4. The Quality Cycle is at the Heart of the Framework
5. Integrity and independence of the EQA Process
The Quality Culture

- EQAR/ENQ
- A Review
- EQA
- External review in IQA
- IQA

Framework
The Quality Cycle
IQA Standards

1. Policy for quality assurance
2. Institutional probity: leadership and financial procedures are fit for purpose
3. Design and approval of programmes to follow NCFHE standards for both self-accrediting and other providers
4. Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
5. Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
6. Competent FT and PT teaching staff, fair and transparent recruitment and development processes
7. Appropriate learning resources and student support
IQA Standards

8. Information management: capacity to collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective programme management. Info to include vulnerable groups, and participation, retention and employment rates.

9. Public information which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to-date, readily accessible and sufficient

10. Implement quality cycle by on-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes, with external stakeholders. With employment-oriented programmes, from the world of work

11. Cyclical external quality assurance
Piloting of External Audits

- National Framework was piloted in 2015
  - University of Malta (April)
  - MCAST (May)
  - ITS (May)

- Audit Reports to be publicised soon

- UoM pro-actively set up QAC and QA Unit
Lessons Learnt...

• **IQAs:**
  - work needed to bring to consciousness good practices;
  - work needed to change mentality from provider of educational service to an educational entity with intrinsic quality culture

• **IQA Reporting:** how to ensure that report is not just descriptive but truly self-reflective, identifying needs and proposing concrete and sustainable action plan

• **Peer Evaluators:** fitness of different types to diverse contexts

• **Student evaluators:** a valuable contribution

• **Judgments:** need to standardize their interpretations, BUT judgments CANNOT be compared across different categories of entities

• **F&H Framework:** having one set of standards and interpreting them flexibly for different types of providers works