A Technological University: Student Role in Delivering Quality

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A Technological University: Student Role in Delivering Quality

Dr Frank McMahon
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Dublin Institute of Technology
Board Member, DITSU Ltd

Dublin, May 2014
Bologna Process

• Bologna Declaration signed in June 1999 by Ministers for Education of 29 countries
• Included all EU countries (then 15)
• Overall aim was a coherent European Higher Education Area by 2010
• Although noting the autonomy of universities, this was a reform process led by Ministers
Objectives

- A system of easily readable and comparable degrees
- Adoption of system based on two cycles, undergraduate and graduate
- A system of credits such as ECTS
- Promotion of mobility
- European co-operation in QA
- Promotion of European Dimension in HE
Prague Communique, 2001

- Now 32 countries in process
- Three new points added:
  - Need for Lifelong Learning Policies
  - Role of students and student representative bodies
  - Importance of enhancing attractiveness of European HE to students from Europe and other parts of world
Berlin Communique, 2003

- Membership now 40 countries including Russia
- Set objectives for next 2 years for:
  - Quality Assurance
  - Degree Structure: all countries to have 2-cycle system by 2005
  - Diploma Supplement to be issued to all
- Recognised Doctoral level as 3rd Cycle
Bergen Communique, 2005

- Five new members, total now 45
- Commitment to adoption of national frameworks of qualifications by 2010
- Adoption of standards and guidelines for QA
- Urged action on recognition of degrees and study periods
- Emphasised importance of research and structured doctoral programmes
Features of Quality Assurance

• Policy to involve students in QA
• Students should be assessed using public criteria, regulations and procedures applied consistently
• Institutions to ensure resources for support of student learning are adequate
• External QA to include assessment by a group of experts including student(s)
Bucharest 2012

Ministers agreed to focus on 3 main goals:

• To provide quality higher education to more students

• To better equip students with employable skills

• To increase student mobility (at least 20% of European graduates in 2020 should have been on a study or training period abroad)
National Qualification Frameworks

- All countries were supposed to publish NFQ by 2010 but some slippage
- NFQ must be compatible with Bologna Framework; Ireland was first to demonstrate this (in 2006)
- NFQ must also be compatible with EQF
- NFQ benefits students by making explicit where qualifications stand
Frameworks of Qualifications

**EQF and Bologna Framework**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>EQF Levels</th>
<th>Bologna Framework</th>
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The National Framework of Qualifications – award-types and awarding bodies
Impact of Major Initiatives

• The Bologna Process has had major impact in the areas of:
  • Degree Structures
  • A System of Credits (ECTS)
  • Quality Assurance
  • Student Mobility
  • National Qualifications Frameworks
  • Recognition of Qualifications
Quality Assurance

• Bologna Process has led to the agreement of Standards & Guidelines for QA in Europe
• ESG now being revised
• There is now a European QA Register for Higher Education
• Irish Higher Education Quality Network established to share best practice [HEA, IUQB, DIT, HETAC, USI, DES]
Student Mobility

• BP facilitated greater mobility by students
• Easier to transfer credits when all HEIs use the same system (ECTS)
• Mutual recognition of awards makes it easier for students to move
• New target for mobility is 20% of all graduates to have studied abroad for at least part of programme by 2020 (very challenging for many countries)
Recognition

• Within countries, NFQ is an important tool of recognition of learning
• Between countries, compatibility of frameworks with EQF and Bologna framework is an aid to recognition
• Diploma Supplements for all graduates are meant to aid recognition of awards throughout Bologna region (47 countries)
• Lisbon Recognition Convention sought to allow professionals to practise in other countries. New unit in many countries to assist those seeking recognition.
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<tr>
<th>COUNTRY</th>
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Student Role at International Level

• Critical role of the four Es:
  - ENQA (European Association of QA)
  - EUA (European Universities Association)
  - Eurashe (European Association for Institutions in Higher Education)
  - ESU (European Students Union)

- Liaise with four Es to ensure full student participation in all Bologna initiatives
Ireland’s NFQ: Titles of Awards

Level

10 – Doctoral Degree
9 – Master’s Degree & Post-graduate Diploma
8 – Honours Bachelor Degree & Higher Diploma
7 – Ordinary Bachelor Degree
6 – Advanced Certificate & Higher Certificate
5 – Level 5 Certificate
4/5 – Leaving Certificate
4 – Level 4 Certificate
3 – Level 3 Certificate & Junior Certificate
2 – Level 2 Certificate
1 – Level 1 Certificate
Student Role at National Level

- Membership of higher education funding/policy body (HEA)
- Membership of National Bologna Committee
- Membership of national QA agency (QQI)
- Membership of higher education quality network (see www.iheqn.ie)
- Ensure students’ union fully involved
Student Role at Institutional Level

• Membership of Governing Body of HEI
• Membership of Academic Council/Senate
• Membership of QA Committee
• Membership of College Boards
• Membership of programme review panels and institutional review panels
• Good liaison with employers
• Student Bologna Experts to work with students’ union to ensure participation
Student Role at Programme and School Level

- Appointment of class representatives
- Training of class representatives
- Liaison with lecturers to facilitate appointment of class representatives
- Membership of programme committees for speedy resolution of problems
- Production of an annual report by each programme committee with a view to programme improvement
Student Feedback

• There must be a system of anonymous student feedback on modules and programmes
• Protection for lecturers from malicious criticism
• Clear evidence for students that feedback is being taken seriously by lecturers and programme management
Role of Student Bologna Experts

• Ensure student interests are represented at international, national, institutional and programme/school level
• Ensure that student issues are considered by national teams of Bologna Experts and national agencies
• Ensure student representatives are trained for their roles
• Establish good contacts with employer bodies and other stakeholders
Possible Future Developments

• New objectives in regard to access, employability and student-centred learning
• Access Targets; a National Access Office to set targets and monitor
• Employability improved by work placements: relations with employer bodies
• Student-centred learning to be reflected in programme design and assessment
Useful websites

• Bologna Communiques: www.ehea.info/
• NFQ: www.nfq.ie/nfq/en/
• HEA website: www.eurireland.ie
• ESU: Bologna With Student Eyes 2007, 2009 and 2012 on www.esu-online.org/
• Irish Higher Education Quality Network www.iheqsn.ie/publications/
Questions

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