# Course Leader Conference:   17 May 2016

Transforming a course:   focus on periodic course review

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# What are we going to do?

- Offer a brief account of our Course Enhancement Board pilot
  - Context
  - Aims
  - Process

- Share some reflections about what went well (and less so!)

- Exchange views and similar experiences

- Consider the application of this for the up-coming Periodic Course Reviews

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# CONTEXT

- Quality Management (QM) in the a/y 12-13 was dominated by processes of quality *assurance* arising from a newly aligned, whole-School, two stage Portfolio Review (which incorporated Curriculum Review).

- These processes were onerous and there were some negative perceptions - of QM amongst staff.

- But, by a/y 13-14 all the School's courses were reviewed, revised and (re)approved affording a rare opportunity to 'reset' QM within the School.

- We had a PSR scheduled for a/y 14-15.

- We committed to learning from the review process and to 'doing' quality management differently.

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Reflecting on the annual review and monitoring process(es) for your course:
Q1. what 'works'?
Q2. what doesn't?
Q3. if you could (re)design the annual review and monitoring process, what would it look like?

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# So what did we want to minimise?

- Current QM systems were reported as feeling bureaucratic and system-serving.

- Paper/form based systems were burdensome for the author – often the course leader - and disempowering for the wider team.

- Substantial/weighty reports were difficult to assimilate and where responses related to 'technicalities', these seemed unduly critical and trivial.

- Where issues were identified and reported to the 'next committee up' it was sometimes difficult to locate, and report back upon, action taken/solutions found.

# So what did we want to minimise?

- QM committees (e.g. SASQC) got preoccupied by *assurance* rather than *enhancement.* Meetings were too long, frequent, expensive, 'box-ticking'.

- Sometimes (QA) processes coincided with peak periods of academic work; got out of synch with the availability of key data; become too removed from the event to be reflected upon.

- QM related action plans proliferated and became non-aligned

# So what did we want to maximise?

- Teams very obviously cared about the quality of their courses and there was evidence of good practice and commitment to enhancement in all subject disciplines.

- Staff reported finding **structured discussions** about their courses helpful and from these arose detailed and wide-reaching proposals for quality enhancement.

# So what did we do?

- Piloted face to face, course-specific enhancement meetings as the key process for annual review and monitoring - intended to provide:

  – An inclusive, integrative approach - framing *quality* management within the context of overall School management.

  – A clear focus for annual reflections about the health and currency of courses.

  – A vehicle for reflection on several sources of key data.

  – An opportunity to involve students and external stakeholders in a focussed review process.

  – Efficiencies in respect of annual report writing.

  – An over-arching Action Plan for each course.

  – An opportunity for annual checking of, inter alia, KIS data; Course Specifications.

| | |
|---|---|
| **1.    Strategic and Business Fit** | a)  Relationship to School/University's mission and strategy<br><br>b)  Applications/conversions<br><br>c)  Entry points |
| **2.    Currency and Course Health** | a)  Developments in research, professional and industry practice and pedagogy<br><br>b)  Changes in the external environment<br><br>c)  Subject benchmark(s)<br><br>d)  Course aims and learning outcomes<br><br>e)  The design and organisation of the curriculum re University's requirements<br><br>f)  The learning environment - resources,  staffing, facilities, estate) |
| **3.  Learning and Teaching** | a)  Expertise, experience, availability of the teaching team<br><br>b)  Innovation and/or excellence in teaching practice<br><br>c)  Teaching staff:  professional development, research, scholarship<br><br>d)  Preparation of new teaching staff and HPLs<br><br>e)  Community of practice |
| **4.  Assessment** | a)  Assessment strategy and arrangements |
| **5.  Student Support** | a)  Student support arrangements<br><br>b)  Support for transition to HE and between levels<br><br>c)  Arrangements to support personal and professional development |

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| 6. **Student Retention, Progression and Achievement** | a) Student progression and achievement |
|---|---|
| | b)  Graduate outcomes |
| | c)  Exceptional circumstances |
| | d) Incidences of academic irregularities |
| | e) Equality and Diversity |
| 7. **Quality Management Annual Audit** | a) Course committees have taken place. |
| | b) Students have been appropriately represented. |
| | c) Decision making was informed by students and external stakeholders as appropriate. |
| | d) Course, module and, where applicable, placement specification are current, accurate and appropriately available. |
| | e) Information on course finder is current and accurate. |
| | f) NOW – all learning rooms conform to at least the minimum standard. |
| | g) External examiner report has been received, responded to, and made available to students. |
| | h) Evasys and NSS data have been appropriately considered and responded to. |
| | i) Assessment and Feedback plans are in place and appropriately available. |
| | j) Collaborative legal agreements are in place. (where applicable). |
| | k) Advanced Standing Agreement is in place. (where applicable). |
| | l) Information on partner website(s) is accurate. (where applicable) |
| 8. **Action Plan** | a) Progress in respect of RAP |

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**Contents:**

**00 – External Contact** – Course Administrator when confirmed by ATL/CL **01– Course Specification** – Course Administrator

**02 – Offer Strategy**

**03a – School Level Equality and Diversity Data** r

**03b – Progression and Achievement by Pre-entry Qualifications –**

**04 – Staff Student Ratio for the Division**

**05 – Applications Summary**

**06 – Entry Tariff**

**07 – Student Progression, Achievement and Retention Data**

**08a – EvaSys Report – year 1**

**08b – EvaSys Report – year 2**

**08c – EvaSys Report – year 3**

**09 – Academic Irregularity Incidences**

**10 – NECs**

**11 – National Student Survey Data**

**13 – KIS data**

**14 – Destination of Leavers (DLHE) Survey**

**14a – Graduate Destination**

**15a – 12-13 CSQR**

**15b – 13-14 CSQR**

**15c – 14-15 CSQR**

**16 – Rolling Action**

**17a – External Examiner Report(s)**

**18 – Collaborative Partners Report (if applicable)**

**19 – PSRB Report (if applicable**

**20 – Module Specifications**

**21 – Curriculum Map**

**22 – Assessment Strategy**

**23 – Assessment  Schedule**

**24 – Feedback Schedule**

**25 – Block Diagrams**

**26a – Previous years Course Committee Minutes – Term 1**

**26b – Previous years Course Committee Minutes – Term 2**

**27b – Previous years Course Committee Minutes – Term 3**

**27 – Course Benchmarking Statement**

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# So was it 'transformational'?

**C.E.B strengths**:

- Externality vs introspection

- Availability of data (e.g. DLHE; AI; NEC; SSR; Progression & Achievement) in one place (Sharepoint)

- Accountability

- 'Joining the dots'

- Collective responsibility

- Collective understanding

- Strategic realignment

- Efficiencies in terms of report writing

- Audit (e.g. KIS; course spec etc)

- Focus on data in different ways; stakeholders appreciation

- Different voices (e.g. student)

- Interactive reflection – 'knowing your course'

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# So was it 'transformational'?

**C.E.B Limitations**

- Additional pressures on support staff

- Not a panacea!

- Limited role in writing process – sign-off not the same as devising

- Availability of staff

- Time (non CL)

- Chair (ATL?)

- Outcomes and actions – process considerations

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