



Learning Our Lesson

REVIEW OF QUALITY TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Fabrice Hénard



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IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Foreword

*I*n the context of the sustained growth and diversification of higher education systems, the higher education sector and wider society is increasingly concerned about the quality of programmes offered to students. As a result, there is an increase in public assessments and international comparisons of higher education institutions, not only within the higher education sector but in the general media. However, evaluation methods tend to overemphasise research, and to use research performance as a yardstick of an institution's value. If these assessment processes fail to address the quality of teaching, it is in part because measuring teaching quality is complex and difficult.

Institutions may implement schemes or evaluation mechanisms to identify and promote good teaching practices. The institutional environment of higher education institutions can also lead to enhancement of quality of the teaching in higher education through various means.

The goal of the OECD-Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE) project on quality teaching was to highlight effective quality initiatives and to encourage practices that may help other institutions to improve the quality of their teaching and thereby, the quality of their graduates. The project analysed the goal and scope of initiatives, and the role of the faculty members, the department, the central university and the state. Using institutions' own experiences the work sought to pinpoint the factors which lead to lasting improvement in the quality of teaching, helping to fill the data gap in information on outcomes indicators for higher education.

This report examines the two main approaches to quality teaching: the top-down approach (those quality teaching initiatives taken by the institution collectively and determined by its leadership) and the bottom-up approach (those quality teaching initiatives taken by the teachers and which may nevertheless have an influence on the institutional policy on quality teaching). The focus of this review is mainly on the reasons for, and the effectiveness of, those initiatives. It is less concerned with the practical aspects and the concrete mechanisms used to put them into practice, which are heavily dependent on the circumstances of each institution.

The findings of this report will be of interest to those concerned with the quality of teaching in higher education and its impact.

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Special gratitude is due to the faculty members and staff of the higher education institutions who completed the online questionnaire and provided complementary information through telephone interviews and site visits. A meeting organised with the Open University of Catalonia (UOC) on 15 December 2008 allowed the participating institutions to delve into the findings and enrich the conclusions.

This illustrative study will be useful to institutions looking to invest in quality teaching. The wealth of examples provided by the 29 participating institutions covered all areas of this study. However, we have selected here those examples that best reflected the recommendations, and could be easily understood by readers around the world. As a result, examples provided by all 29 institutions are not necessarily described here. All responses from the questionnaire can be found on the IMHE website: www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/qualityteaching.

Executive Summary

Higher education is becoming a major driver of economic competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy. The imperative for countries to improve employment skills calls for quality teaching within educational institutions. National and transnational debates like the Bologna Process, direct state regulations or incentives, competition among private and state-owned institutions all prompt institutions to put quality teaching on their agenda. Moreover, national quality assurance agencies push for reflection on the subject, even if their influence is controversial.

As higher education systems grow and diversify, society is increasingly concerned about the quality of programmes. Much attention is given to public assessments and international rankings of higher education institutions. However these comparisons tend to overemphasise research, using research performance as a yardstick of institutional value. If these processes fail to address the quality of teaching, it is in part because measuring teaching quality is challenging.

Institutions may implement evaluation mechanisms in order to identify and promote good teaching practices. The environment of higher education institutions can enhance the quality of teaching through various means. For example, a national policy run by the public authorities or recommendations issued by quality assurance agencies are likely to help university leaders to phase in a culture of quality that encompasses teaching.

The OECD Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE) study on quality teaching highlights effective quality initiatives and promotes reflection; this may in turn help other institutions to improve the quality of their teaching and thereby the quality of their graduates. The study analysed the role of the faculty members, the department, the central university and the state. It identified long-term improvement factors for teaching staff, decision-making bodies and institutions. The study is designed to contribute to reflection on outcomes indicators for higher education.

This study reviewed 29 higher education institutions across 20 OECD and non-OECD countries, collecting information and setting benchmarks on the quality of their teaching. A questionnaire gave participating institutions the chance to set out and analyse their own practices. The sample of institutions represents

the diversity of higher education institutions, from technological and vocational institutions to business institutions, from small-sized undergraduate institutions to those specialised in postgraduate courses.

Primary areas of concern

- The drivers and debates sparking a growing attention to quality teaching.
- The aims of the institutions when fostering quality teaching and their guiding philosophy when embedding a quality approach.
- The concrete application of quality teaching initiatives: the implementation challenges, the actors, the needs to be met and the problems to be resolved.
- The dissemination of practices, and the measurement and monitoring of progress.
- The impacts of quality teaching on teaching, research and institutional quality culture.
- The combination of approaches to enhance quality teaching in a sustainable way within the institution.

Main findings

- Teaching matters in higher education institutions. Although quality teaching encompasses definitions and concepts that are highly varied and in constant flux, there is a growing number of initiatives (actions, strategies, policies) aimed at improving the quality of teaching.
- The vast majority of initiatives supporting teaching quality are empirical and address the institutions' needs at a given point in time. (Initiatives inspired by academic literature are rare.)
- For a university to consolidate the varied initiatives coherently under an institutional policy remains a long-term, non-linear effort subject to multiple constraints.
- Technology has improved pedagogy and student-teacher interactions.
- Quality teaching must be thought of dynamically, in light of contextual shifts in the higher education environment. Studies are becoming internationalised, and higher education is being asked to contribute to new areas (such as innovation, civic and regional development) in order to produce an appropriately skilled workforce to meet the challenges of the 21st century.
- Senior management must be committed to capturing all the dimensions that affect quality teaching. Students must be committed to providing feedback on curricula and teaching through programme evaluation.

- An effective institutional policy for the quality of teaching brings together:
 - ❖ External factors at the national and international levels (*e.g.* the Bologna Process in Europe) that may foster a climate conducive to the recognition of teaching quality as a priority.
 - ❖ Internal institutional factors such as institutional context and specific circumstances (*e.g.* the appointment of a new chief executive) that are likely to affect the pace of development of quality teaching initiatives.
- Leadership at executive levels is a success factor. The participation of faculty deans is vital, as they are at the interface between an institution's decision-making bodies and teachers on the job. They encourage the cross-fertilisation of strategic approaches, build and support communities of practice, and nurture innovation in everyday practice in the classroom.
- Encouraging bottom-up initiatives from the faculty members, setting them in a propitious learning and teaching environment, providing effective support and stimulating reflection on the role of teaching in the learning process all contribute to quality teaching.
- Neither the size nor the specificity of an institution poses a major obstacle to the development of institutional policies as long as there is strong involvement of the institution's management, and sufficient funding and adequate facilities.
- Educational institutions must strike a balance between technical aspects of quality support (*e.g.* development of course evaluation questionnaires) and fundamental issues (*e.g.* assessing the added value of the teaching initiatives in achieving curriculum objectives).
- The institutions need to develop innovative approaches to measuring the impact of their support on quality teaching. They are still struggling to understand the causal link between their engagement in teaching and the quality of learning outcomes. Exploring the correlation among inputs, processes and outcomes of higher education calls for pioneering and in-depth evaluation instruments.

Institutions want to be recognised as providers of good quality higher education. They understand that competing on the basis of research only is not sufficient to ensure the reputation of the university. As such, they want to find new ways of demonstrating performance. They respond to students' demand for valuable teaching: students want to ensure that their education will lead to jobs and will give them the skills needed in the society of today and tomorrow. Mobility of students and growth of fees increase the consideration given by students to the quality of the teaching.

Support for quality teaching in the sample encompasses a wide range of initiatives that are grouped under three major headings:

1. **Institution-wide and quality assurance policies:** including global projects designed to develop a quality culture at institutional level, like policy design, and support to organisation and internal quality assurance systems.
2. **Programme monitoring:** including actions to measure the design, content and delivery of the programmes (through programme evaluation notably).
3. **Teaching and learning support:** including initiatives targeting the teachers (on the teaching side), the students (on the learning side) or both (e.g. on the work environment). Examples include continuing education for faculty, pedagogy enhancement, student support (e.g. mentoring and career advice), support for student learning (focused on inputs, such as the introduction of new pedagogical tools, or on outputs, such as the development of certain abilities for the students).

An **institutional commitment** to quality teaching at top leadership level and at departmental level calls for leaders and staff to identify benchmarks, promote good practices and scale them up across departments, and think up effective support that meets teacher and student expectations. An institutional policy reflects the will of the leaders and heads of departments to better understand the teaching process and the experiences initiated by teams or individual teachers. A quality teaching framework allows the institution to monitor support, track teacher and student satisfaction, and study the impact on the learning process.

The institutions recognised that initiating an institutional policy to support quality teaching remains an **adventurous, lengthy but potentially rewarding project**. In many institutions, dealing with quality teaching is a new, somehow rather vague and often controversial idea. How then should institutions proceed? By experimenting and proceeding step by step, institutions can avoid outright rejection by faculty members and shape a consistent policy that serves the community as a whole. Close monitoring of quality teaching support has been necessary to encourage broad endorsement within the academic community, avoiding the risk of attracting only the most motivated teachers. A flexible institutional framework, a higher level of teacher autonomy and a collaborative relationship with students and staff are all conducive to improving the teaching and learning process.

In many cases, institutions tend to offer programme evaluation or training sessions for faculty though the **notion of quality** remains vague and unshared internally. A better approach is to first explore the kind of education students should possess upon graduation and the types of learning outcomes the programmes should provide to ensure economic and social inclusion of students. Institutions working in this way have defined what quality means

and what the role of the faculty in the learning process could be. This reflection requires time, conviction, motivation and openness. Lastly, the support that the faculty would need to accomplish their educational mission and the conditions that would allow the students to fulfil the learning objectives can be more clearly defined.

After the initial stage, an institution willing to pursue an effective quality teaching policy often sets up a **specific organisation**, supported by technical staff for the design of the appropriate instruments. The creation of a service dedicated to quality teaching is a first step paving the way to a more ambitious policy. Granting the quality teaching service an official status in the organisational chart of the institution ensures recognition and legitimate interventions across departments.

The success of quality initiatives supported by the institution depends mainly on the commitment of the **heads of departments** who promote the quality teaching spirit and allow operational implementation. In large multidisciplinary institutions that have shifted to highly decentralised systems, departments have ownership of their activities and therefore a high level of accountability. Impetus and co-ordination of the heads of departments by institutional leaders through appropriate facilities and platforms for discussion are crucial.

Even if accepted in principle, the **evaluation** of quality teaching is often challenged in reality. All the institutions have implemented evaluation instruments to monitor their action. But as teaching is primarily appraised through activity and input indicators, the institutions struggle to create reliable evaluation instruments of the impact of quality teaching. The demonstration of the causal link between teaching and learning remains challenging for most institutions. Although quality teaching is an influential factor on learning outcomes, it is difficult to isolate (and thereby support) the right factors that most affect learning outcomes. In the absence of appropriate evaluation tools, some institutions have been imaginative, for instance by designating more qualitative indicators.

Quality teaching initiatives have a tangible **impact on teaching** and on **research**:

- Teachers become more aware of the aim pursued by teaching beyond their own knowledge area, they understand their role as individuals and as components of a collective mission, and can better relate their own expectations to the programme or institution's expectations in terms of learning outcomes. The impact on pedagogy is discernible despite the small number of quantitative measurements. In particular, quality teaching initiatives enhance information technology in pedagogy improvement and analysing student-teacher interactions. In institutions that are fully

autonomous in programme design, quality teaching initiatives help teachers and leaders to refine the aims and content of programmes.

- Instruments and policies that foster quality teaching are likely to be beneficial to research activities. An increasing number of institutions are convinced that they will make quality teaching progress by combining professional orientations and research.

Institutions need to foster **synergies** among institution-wide policies. A vast majority of the institutions sampled link their commitment to quality teaching with information technology (IT) policies, as intranets and discussion forums are powerful communication tools within the academic community and with the students. The connection with human resources policies is the second synergy that is most often quoted by the participating institutions. New types of educational delivery have led the institutions to think about appropriate learning facilities. The interaction between the support for student learning and the initiatives aimed at improving quality of the teaching delivery is developing steadily although it could be further stimulated.

The institutions that are better able to **disseminate** quality teaching initiatives are the small- or medium-sized institutions, because of the information fluidity and straightforward decision-making process that characterise them. However, the large size of some institutions can be an asset for quality teaching as it allows for a variety of approaches to innovation. Regardless of size, all departments should go in the same direction, fully adhere to the strategy and respect the time frame. A quality culture at institutional level can be better achieved through diverse initiatives: the consolidation of bottom-up initiatives, small-sized experiments at course or programme level, replication of success stories, the evaluation of quality teaching as a vehicle of discussion, and the participation of technical and administrative staff to provide mediation between academia and students.

Chapter 1

Institutions and Quality Teaching Initiatives under Focus

This chapter illustrates the distinctive features of 29 higher education institutions from 20 OECD and non-OECD countries, collecting information and setting benchmarks on the quality of their teaching. It provides a general overview of institutions and shows how their main commitments to enhance quality teaching are valued differently depending on their profile. The institutions are grouped into five profiles based on four criteria: size of institution, level of study, major discipline(s), and level of autonomy and selection of students. It examines the extent to which each institution is involved in quality teaching initiatives with its different target audiences.

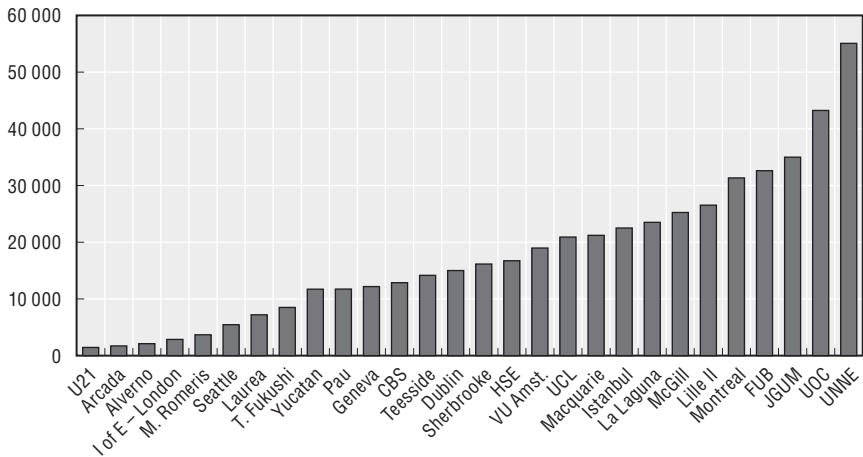
Overview of the institutions

This study is based on a sample of 29 higher education institutions from 20 countries. Each institution presented up to three quality teaching initiatives. The analysis focuses on a total of 46 initiatives.

Size of the institutions

The institutions studied vary in size (number of students). Figure 1.1 shows a range from approximately 1 500 to 50 000 full-time students (these figures do not include part-time students).

Figure 1.1. **Size of the institutions**
Full-time students



Distinctive features

Level of autonomy

Although the institutions have diverse relationships with their national governments, most consider themselves autonomous. The institutions ranked their level of autonomy on six different elements: designing programmes, implementing programmes, assessing the outcomes of programmes, recruiting teachers, discretion on salaries and bonuses for teachers, and assessing teachers.

Box 1.1. Participating institutions

Universidad Nacional del Nordeste (Argentina)
 Macquarie University (Australia)
 Université Catholique de Louvain (Belgium)
 McGill University (Canada)
 Université de Montréal (Canada)
 University of Sherbrooke (Canada)
 Copenhagen Business School (Denmark)
 Arcada – University of Applied Sciences (Finland)
 Laurea – University of Applied Sciences (Finland)
 Université de Lille 2 Droit et Santé (France)
 Université de Pau et des pays de l'Adour (France)
 Freie Universität Berlin (Germany)
 Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz (Germany)
 Dublin Institute of Technology (Ireland)
 Tohoku Fukushi University (Japan)
 Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania)
 Universidad Autónoma De Yucatán (Mexico)
 VU University – Amsterdam (The Netherlands)
 State University, Higher School of Economics (the Russian Federation)
 Open University of Catalonia (Spain)
 Universidad de La Laguna (Spain)
 University of Geneva (Switzerland)
 Istanbul Technical University (Turkey)
 The Institute of Education – University of London (UK)
 Teesside University (UK)
 Alverno College (USA)
 City University of Seattle (USA)
 University of Arizona (USA)
 U21 Global (Online University)

The institutions describe themselves as very autonomous on the assessment of the outcomes of programmes and on recruiting teachers. The level of autonomy allows many institutions to accept students at all degree levels. There is also a partial selection (for some levels of study) in 18% of the institutions. By contrast, institutions enjoy less autonomy in discretion on

salaries and bonuses for teachers because of government regulations and agreements with teachers unions.

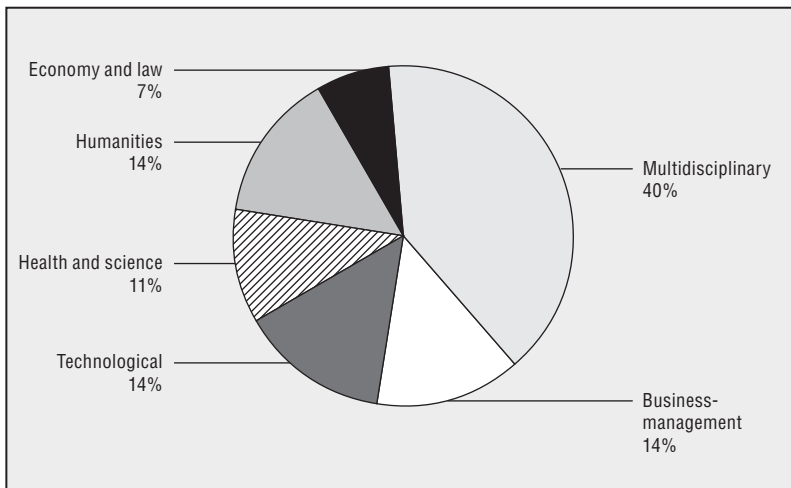
Degree structure (undergraduate, graduate, doctorate)¹

On average, 60% of the institution's student body is at the undergraduate level and 25% at the graduate level (of which only 9% are at the doctorate level).² According to the structure of their student body, the institutions can be described as undergraduate-, graduate- or doctorate-oriented (more than 60% undergraduate students, more than 30% Master students, more than 15% doctoral students). For example, with 99% undergraduate students, Arcada – University of Applied Sciences (Finland) is typically an undergraduate-oriented institution. On the other side, Institute of Education – University of London (96% postgraduate students) offers exclusively Master and doctoral degrees.

Main disciplinary orientation

This breakdown is based on the number of students in each field of study: the institutions have been sorted by the disciplinary area in which most students are involved. When no field of study hosts more than 30% of the student body, the institution is considered multidisciplinary.

Figure 1.2. **Main disciplinary orientation**



Because of the diversity of their programmes, 40% of the institutions are considered multidisciplinary. This applies mostly to the most populated institutions (more than 30 000 students). None of the multidisci-

plinary institutions host fewer than 10 000 students. Explanations are the following:

- Business-management: institutions with more than 40% of students studying in this field.
- Technological: institutions with more than 50% of students in engineering and vocational courses.
- Health and science: institutions with more than 40% of students in basic science or health.
- Humanities: institutions with more than 40% of students studying social sciences, philosophy, history, literature, linguistics or education.
- Economy and law: institutions with more than 55% of students in economics or law.

Typology of the group of institutions

Five profiles have been highlighted. They have been defined according to four criteria: size of institution, level of study, major discipline(s) offered, and level of autonomy and selection of the students.

Business and economics institutions (6 institutions)

Institutions included in this profile offered mostly programmes in the field of business, administration and economics with a high level of autonomy in the selection of all students.³ All of them host fewer than 22 000 students.

Small institutions and technological and vocational institutions (5 institutions)

This profile includes medium- and small-sized institutions (fewer than 15 000 students) offering technological or vocational education and training. All enrol a majority of undergraduate students. Most have a high level of autonomy and select students at all levels.

Multidisciplinary institutions with a majority of undergraduates (6 institutions)

This profile includes multidisciplinary institutions that host over 60% undergraduate students. The institutions of this category benefit from a good level of autonomy. Despite the high proportion of undergraduate students, the institutions have developed research activities.

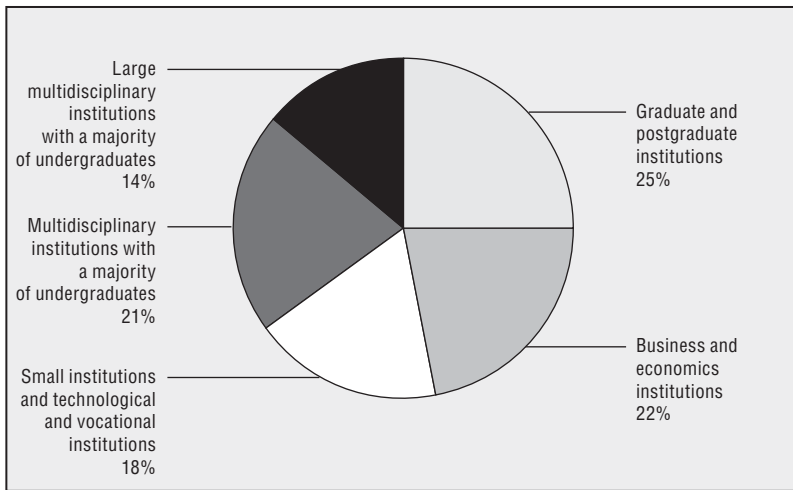
Large multidisciplinary institutions with a majority of undergraduates (4 institutions)

This profile includes multidisciplinary institutions (over 60% undergraduate students) which enrol numerous students (between 27 000 and 52 000 students).

Graduate and postgraduate institutions (7 institutions)

This category groups together institutions with a large proportion of graduate students (over 30% of the student body) or doctoral students (over 15%).

Figure 1.3. **Institutions' profile**

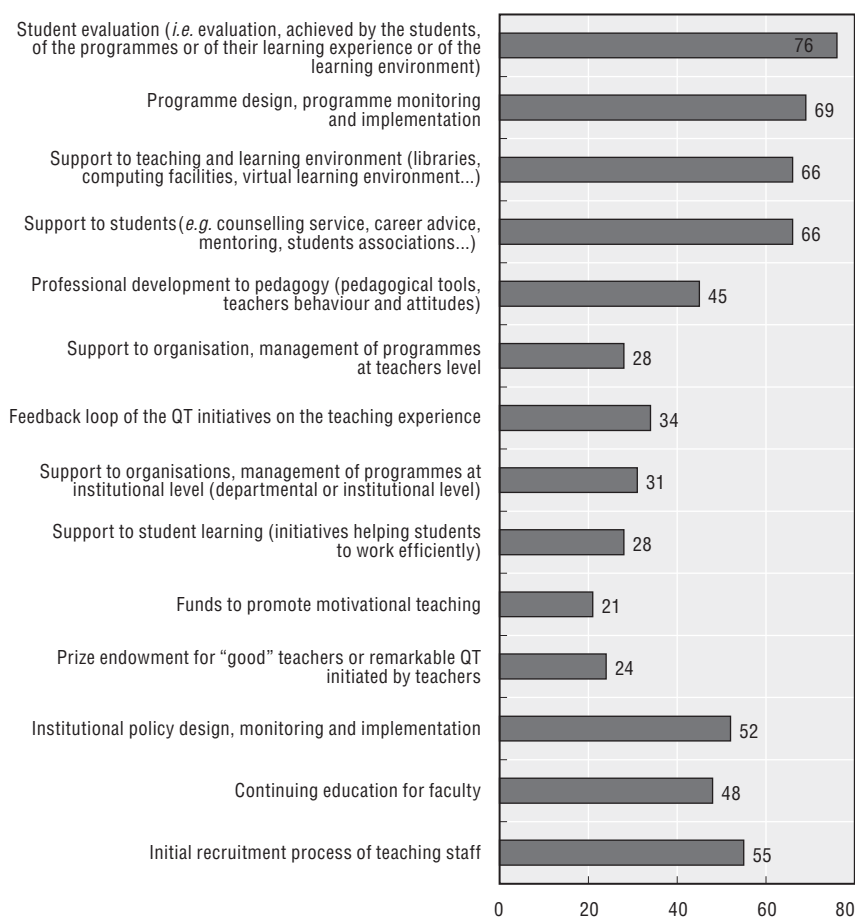


Involvement in quality teaching

Institutions were asked about their commitments that enhance the quality of teaching.

Figure 1.4. **Main commitments of the institution to enhance the quality of teaching**

(% of categories ranked as # 1)



Typology of the quality teaching initiatives

The 29 institutions of this study presented a total of 46 quality teaching initiatives. Using the data presented above, a typology of the quality teaching initiatives is outlined on the following pages:

1st group: Institutional and quality assurance policy

Global-scale projects designed to develop a quality culture at institutional level, such as:

Policy design

Policy designed at the institutional level, which outlines a framework for the development of lower-scale initiatives. For example, a policy that improves quality and has an impact on teaching.

Support to organisation and to internal quality assurance systems

- Specific support at the institutional or department level aimed at enhancing the quality of teaching such as the creation of a dedicated body.
- Internal quality assurance system developed to evaluate and improve the quality of the teaching.

2nd group: Programme monitoring

Policies or instruments undertaken at the programme level:

Programme design and implementation

Action aimed at defining programmes following a periodic process, or following a systematic process for the introduction of new programmes or the renewal of existing ones.

Programme evaluation

Evaluation of programme content, structure and teaching delivery (other aspects might be included like learning environment). In most cases, the students are invited to fill in questionnaires.

3rd group: Teaching and learning support

This category brings together quality teaching initiatives aimed at improving the learning and teaching process. They target either the students (learning) or the teachers (teaching) and occasionally both (work environment).

Support for pedagogy

Initiatives aimed at improving the professional aspects of teaching, through the design of a pedagogical strategy, new pedagogical tools or other specific incentives for teachers.

Support for teaching and learning environment

Actions meant to improve quality teaching through technological facilities, student-teacher relations, or premises and equipment.

Continuing education for teachers

Actions like teaching workshops specific to teachers. They can target new or current teachers. They can be periodical, and optional or mandatory.

Student support

Actions to improve student knowledge of education paths and placement/internship opportunities through specific services such as career advice.

Support for student learning

Initiatives improving the learning process of the students (e.g. introduction of new pedagogical tools, tutorship).

Type of institution and influence on quality teaching initiatives

Business and economics institutions tend to develop teaching and learning policies, especially at the teacher's level: support for pedagogy, support for teaching and learning environment, and continuing education for teachers.

Graduate institutions have limited support for the teaching and learning conditions, especially those offering programmes in humanities. They pay close attention to the organisation and the management of programmes.

Postgraduate institutions concentrate upon initiatives at the institutional level, with a strong commitment to quality assurance policies and some involvement in the teaching and learning environment. They are less engaged in programme management, compared to colleges or universities of applied sciences which concentrate on the undergraduate level.

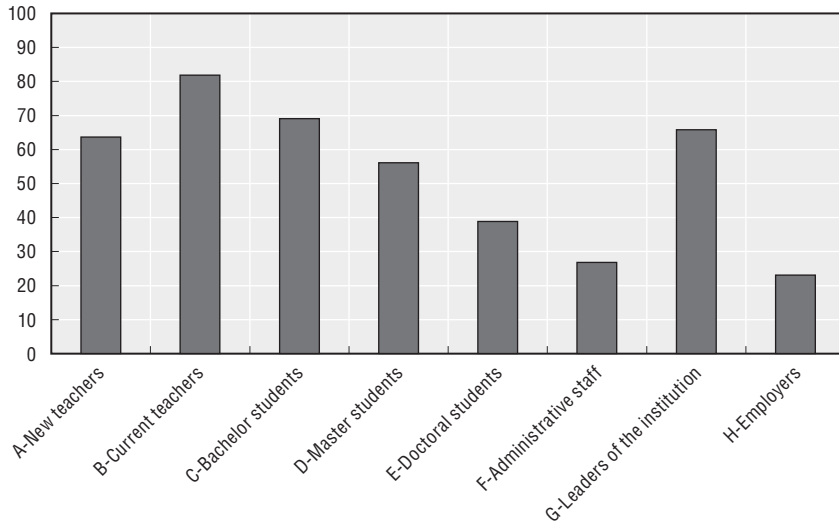
Multidisciplinary institutions with a majority of undergraduates have a limited involvement in policies regarding teaching and learning, although they develop other institution-wide strategies often bound to their identity and field of excellence.

Medium-sized undergraduate and technological and vocational institutions develop a wide range of initiatives to increase quality using all kinds of tools at all levels (institution, department, programme, teachers and students). The small-sized undergraduate institutions are the only ones of the sample which explicitly implement support to student learning.

Targeted audiences

The participating institutions ranked the different audiences targeted by their quality teaching initiatives.

Figure 1.5. **Top targeted audiences**
(% ranked #1)



Five groups of targets can be defined:

Teachers (A and B)

The teachers are one of the most targeted bodies. In the questionnaire, teachers have been distinguished between new and current teachers. The new teachers are clearly less targeted than the current teachers.

Students (C, D and E)

Students are also a significant target of the quality teaching initiatives, especially Bachelor and Master students. Ironically, only 8% of the initiatives focus upon “student support” or “support for student learning”.

Leaders of the institution (G)

The leaders of the institutions are major targets of the initiatives. This reveals the prevalence of a top-down dynamic.

Administrative staff (F)

Administrative staff are not a major target of the quality teaching initiatives. The administrative support is not directly involved in the teaching process.

Employers (H)

Employers are also a secondary target of the universities involved in quality teaching. However (and in contrast to the other universities), all technological and vocational institutions have ranked the employer as their prime target. The professionalisation of the degrees offered (characteristic of these institutions) influences the targets of the quality teaching initiatives.

Timeline

Most of the initiatives are ongoing global policies, based on experience for the institutions. More than 81% of the initiatives are defined as established and among them, almost 56% have been implemented for more than three years. Institutions underlined the importance of a preliminary process for the initiatives (reviews, self-assessments and the earlier experience of other academics).

Notes

1. The undergraduate level corresponds to the studies leading to a Licence (LMD – Bologna system) or a Bachelor degree. The graduate level is the level where students obtain a Master degree.

In the German universities, the students in the *Diploma* and *Magister* courses were considered as graduate level.

2. On average, 6% of the students are listed by the institutions as part of other training such as professional degrees.
3. Copenhagen Business School selects the students in its executive programmes.

Chapter 2

The Origins of Engagement in Quality Teaching

This chapter discusses the engagement of national authorities, and state regulations or incentives in quality teaching. It also outlines the impact of quality assurance systems on quality teaching. In the context of increasing awareness of quality teaching, it draws on how external factors at the national and international levels foster a climate that recognises teaching quality as a priority. Finally, it reveals the inherent role of institutions in ensuring quality teaching through explaining the different objectives that institutions are pursuing when supporting individual or institutional quality teaching initiatives.

The influence of national authorities

A favourable climate for change

The OECD review on tertiary education (OECD, 2008) asserts that: “Education policy is increasingly important on national agendas. The widespread recognition that higher education is a major driver of economic competitiveness in an increasingly knowledge-driven global economy has made high-quality tertiary education more important than ever before. The imperative for countries is to raise higher-level employment skills, to sustain a globally competitive research base and to improve knowledge dissemination to the benefit of society. Higher education contributes to social and economic development through four major missions: the formation of human capital (primarily through teaching); the building of knowledge bases (primarily through research and knowledge development); the dissemination and use of knowledge (primarily through interactions with knowledge users); and the maintenance of knowledge (inter-generational storage and transmission of knowledge).” Moreover, the higher education sector constitutes an important component of the gross national product as an indicator of economic development, like in Australia for instance, where “universities have built Australia’s third-largest export industry – in education services – in the last two decades” (Bradley, 2008).

National policies or statements issued by quality assurance agencies or other organisations help bring quality teaching to the forefront within educational institutions. They are likely to help university leaders to phase in a culture of quality that includes teaching within their institutions.

Countries facing recurring difficulties with respect to the quality of education (for instance, long-term graduates’ unemployment) are likely to witness lively debate about the quality and effectiveness of teaching. The Dutch university system has suffered from low graduation rates and lengthy completion rates in numerous academic fields. The University Board decided on a dual approach: one was to bring more rigour into the undergraduate programmes, the other was to invest in the professionalisation of university faculty members.

Questions raised repeatedly by politicians, discussed at rectors’ conferences and funding councils and other buffer bodies result in arguments that call for raising the profile of quality teaching. Thus the mandate of the rectors and principals’ conference for Quebec universities is to ensure that

every institution endorses programme evaluation and adopts an evaluation protocol. Institutions have some leeway to design solutions and propose institutional support.

Transnational debates on the quality of higher education (and therefore of teaching) also encourage institutions to implement mechanisms to raise the profile of quality teaching. It is clear that the Bologna Process, leading to the creation of the European Higher Education Area, has prompted (and helped) institutions to put quality teaching on their agenda. The introduction of the three-level degree system, the diploma supplement and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) are effective drivers that raise questions on how teaching staff can meet the learning requirements of programmes, with an even more diverse audience.

At the Free University of Berlin, an evaluation tool for academic courses has been developed, which meets the criteria of the Bologna Process. HESaCom (higher education self-assessment of competences, or BEvaKomp, Berlin evaluation instrument for self-reported student competences) measures the acquisition of competences from a specific course as assessed by the students themselves. The students are asked to rate the impact of each course on competences they gained, and these ratings (on aggregated level) will be used to evaluate each course. The students' benefit from the course is judged more important than how much they liked the lecturer.

State regulations or incentives

In higher education systems, there are substantial reforms aimed at encouraging institutions to be more responsive to the needs of society and the economy. This has been accompanied by a reappraisal of the purposes of higher education and the drawing up of new government strategies. Although institutions now have more room to manoeuvre for institutions, they also have clearer accountability to society. The tertiary sector is expected to contribute to equity, ensure quality and operate efficiently (OECD, 2008).

Institution-wide policies to encourage quality teaching might be the result of state initiatives, as the new legal status of institutions becoming full-fledged universities has strengthened the interest in protecting high-quality teaching.

In the Russian Federation, the assessment of teacher performance coincided with the transformation of the State University-Higher School of Economics into a new type of university in 1995. Teacher assessment reaffirms the university's principles, including: social and economic knowledge; multidisciplinary, bridging educational and research activities; linking the learning process with practical reforms; and participation in regional development. It was one of the first Russian universities to introduce the system of teacher assessment.

Where higher education is expanding, the country must often cope with the explosion of private entities whose quality must be appraised to protect consumers and prevent rogue universities from harming the reputation and quality of the whole higher education system. In the Russian Federation, state quality assessment consists of a three-stage process: licensing, certification and accreditation (now consolidated). Licensing calls for assessing the compliance of work conditions of an institution (quality of classrooms, laboratory and library equipment, level of teaching staff, etc.) with state requirements. Certification calls for assessing the compliance of content, level and quality of education with the requirements of state educational standards; and identifying trends in academic process development and methods of overcoming negative trends. Accreditation calls for establishing/confirming the state-accredited status of an educational institution by type, ownership status (state/private) and form (institute/academy/university), then determining educational programmes for which the institution can issue national diplomas.

States have a direct interest in quality teaching, since in most cases faculty members are hired by the university and paid according to national schemes. State regulations might introduce a license to teach. Through licensing, questions have emerged about the notion of excellence of teaching, assessment of student and teacher progress, and skills needed by teachers. In the Netherlands, all universities signed an agreement at the beginning of 2008, whereby new teaching staff are required to demonstrate professional teaching skills. To acquire these basic skills, each newly appointed teacher attends a 200-hour professional course.

Some states encourage competition amongst institutions, with a view to fostering emulation, which would ultimately enhance quality teaching and learning. A number of trends are discernible in funding arrangements for tertiary education. In addition to the diversification of funding sources, the allocation of public funding for tertiary education is increasingly targeting resources, performance-based funding and competitive procedures (OECD, 2008). As the culture of higher education has become increasingly market-oriented (Green, 1993), external demands for quality of teaching have increased.

The Performance Cultures of Teaching Project at Macquarie University was launched following participation in a national research project into teaching quality indicators. The project is supported by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (funded by the Australian government) to promote excellence in higher education by recognising, rewarding and supporting teachers and staff through award, fellowship and grant schemes. These schemes are designed to bring institutions into national competition to enhance quality teaching. As a result, there are now agreed indicators and metrics across the Australian university sector.

Some governments organise national teaching contests where the winners are selected against public performance-based criteria. In 2005 Laurea was declared by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council one of the four centres of excellence in training and education for 2005-06 for its innovative pedagogical model, Learning by Developing.

Other institutions apply for state funding. Istanbul Technical University has investment opportunities for new projects from its foundations and from the state, on a competitive basis. The university will upgrade the infrastructure of its teaching and research environment and improve its human resources to attract the best academics and students. Even when they are voluntary-based, such initiatives bring institutions into national competition. State initiatives for fostering quality teaching are often backed by other authorities concerned with higher education. Rectors' conferences, professional unions and funding councils often help institutions to understand and implement newly adopted regulations. Unlike institutions, they do not operate on a day-to-day basis, so are able to stand back and look at the whole picture, including benchmarks and good practices. In Ireland, the Ministry of Education has empowered the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (an agency established by Parliament) to encourage all institutions to base all awards on learning outcomes. As a result, courses and programme content have been revamped.

Quality assurance leads to quality teaching

The development of formal quality assurance systems is one of the most significant trends in tertiary education systems during the past few decades. In the early 1980s, quality became a key topic in tertiary education policy: the expansion of tertiary education raised questions about the level and direction of public expenditure. Fiscal constraints and increased market pressures led to calls for greater accountability (OECD, 2008). The effects of quality assurance evaluations (audits, programme accreditation or institutional evaluations) remain controversial. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that national quality assurance systems foster institutional involvement in supporting quality teaching.

External reviews carried out by dedicated bodies (quality assurance, accreditation or evaluation agencies) encourage institutions to set up or reinforce internal quality assurance mechanisms by including a quality teaching aspect. In most cases recommendations require mandatory corrective actions.

Agency decisions are powerful: 92% of the institutions covered by the sample took corrective actions following evaluation. The decisions concern two major elements of quality teaching. First, agencies often recommend

internal quality mechanisms to guarantee the success of the teaching process (e.g. ensuring the equity and soundness of a faculty's recruitment process) or to design a proper strategy. For example, following evaluation, the University of Yucatán developed new programmes to strengthen quality, such as the Institutional Programme of Pedagogic Training.

Teesside University revised its E-Learning Strategy in December 2007 to create a step-change in the effective use of e-learning across the university. Although there is no external requirement for such a strategy, the Quality Assurance Agency expects to see appropriate mechanisms for the quality assurance and enhancement of e-learning.

Second, institutions might be called upon to ensure the coherence of their programmes and curricula within each programme, and the quality of the learning environment (e.g. availability of equipment, mentoring students). Recommendations have influenced organisational structures, and improved quality teaching at the level of the whole institution.

The Institute of Education in London merged numerous schools into three faculties upon the recommendation of an institutional audit. It appointed a new senior position dedicated to learning and teaching at the level of Assistant Director of the Institute, with participation in various decision-making committees and chairmanship of the Teaching Committee. Each faculty also has its own Director of Learning and Teaching. The Institute now feels ready to launch ambitious changes that would never readily happen if not supported by a reorganisation.

Quality assurance agencies provide schemes, deliver motivational statements or even propose experimental quality assurance schemes. Successful agencies become advisers and partners of the institutions in fields they consider difficult to appraise, above all the teaching process. They can also underline the accuracy of the quality teaching policy that is being implemented and hence increase the legitimacy of measures offered to sometimes reluctant academics. Consequently, some agencies turned the external review into a collaborative effort to fine-tune a system able to capture quality teaching.

The Support Programme for the Evaluation of Educational Activity (DOCENTIA), an initiative of the National Agency for the Assessment of Quality and Accreditation, was adopted by the University of La Laguna (ULL). It promotes the development of a model and procedures for ensuring the quality of university teachers. The ULL also plans to adopt procedures for the recruitment and appointment of teachers, and for the verification of levels of competence. The ULL wants to ensure that teachers have the resources to expand their teaching capacity and maximise their abilities.

Quality assurance agencies may also launch a methodology that frames the initiatives taken by the institutions. Thus the Finnish audit process greatly inspired the institutional initiative for self-assessment. The cyclical accreditation or evaluation process forces institutions to stand back from daily operations and examine the goals and objectives of the education delivered. Institutions must reconsider the content and consistency of their programmes and determine whether the inputs (teaching staff and equipment) fit the needs of the educational purpose. Even though they criticise the evaluations for the additional work that they generate, the institutions judge that this process contributes to reflection on quality teaching and identifying new ways for improvement.

This crucial period involves the participation of the whole community, including administrative staff students and institution leaders (chief officers, programme leaders, heads of department) to debate the role of teaching and the role of faculty in the learning process. Irrespective of decisions made by the agencies ultimately, the process itself (typically a self-evaluation to be scrutinised by peer reviewers) is an opportunity given to the institutions to discuss teaching and quality. In addition, recent publications (QAA, 2006) showed that external evaluations are likely to create a quality culture that will entice academics to embrace quality teaching as a normal aspect of the institutional culture.

Quality assurance hardly embraces the complexity of teaching

A few critics demystify the role traditionally allocated to quality assurance. Some institutions underline the negative aspects of quality assurance. Critics believe that, similar to institutions, agencies and peer reviewers do not have the tools required to define and measure the quality of teaching. Critics are concerned that the accreditation process may cut programmes instead of appraising coherence at the institutional level. In their opinion, a scattered vision does not allow a full picture of quality teaching in higher education. The learning process cannot be assessed, as it combines various determinants, among which the skills of teachers, their attitude in class, students' experience, the quality of the relationships between students and faculty, etc. Some claim that quality teaching relies on a complex web of factors and gives rise to subjective judgements. This might explain why most external evaluations emphasise the input-centred approach, using typically input and activity indicators. Because quality assurance mechanisms occur in complex organisations in which many changes happen at the same time, it is difficult to ascribe effects unambiguously to a single cause such as the quality assurance schemes (Stensaker, 2004).

Institutional audits or evaluations try to capture the teaching process through a vision of the entire learning process. Most institutional evaluations

scrutinise the factors that should guarantee a minimum level of quality for teachers and programmes. The assumption prevails that the array of mechanisms, tools, human resources and facilities should result in quality of teaching, once they have been assembled logically. But evaluating at institutional level might mean that reviewers are remote from the learning process. Most institutional evaluations focus on procedures and rely on internal quality assurance mechanisms, yet they fail to appraise the effectiveness of quality teaching support and the impact on the quality of learning (ENQA, 2008), leaving this to the institution.

The influence of quality assurance on quality teaching remains controversial: it is deemed ineffective by its detractors in academia and among educational researchers. However, institutions recognise the role of the agencies as initiators of a reflection process that could culminate in the design of instruments or a strategy enhancing quality teaching. When the evaluation process generates internal discussions on teaching, it is as essential to the awareness of quality teaching as agency recommendations.

Increasing awareness of the importance of quality teaching

Institutions need to be recognised as regular higher education providers

The expansion of higher education was accompanied by a diversification of providers. New institution types emerged, educational offerings within institutions multiplied, private provision expanded, and new modes of delivery were introduced (OECD, 2008). Institutions might support quality teaching as a vehicle for recognition at national or global level. Some remote institutions located far from research-intensive areas or overshadowed by reputed universities, newly created institutions, private institutions or innovative institutions (*e.g.* online universities), are eager to demonstrate that they deserve to be recognised as regular and trustworthy providers of higher education.

The Open University of Catalonia and the U21 Global University have undergone accreditation processes that are as strict as those of long-established universities. Both universities sought to ensure the compatibility of their internal quality assurance mechanisms to address teaching aspects (pedagogy, attitudes of teachers with students, etc.). The range of mechanisms covers all the steps from teacher recruitment to the delivery of grades.

Multi-campus institutions consider that the quality of the whole entity is coherent and that decentralised campuses undergo quality assurance mechanisms. Consequently, they can exhibit a strong institutional commitment to quality, which primarily deals with teaching.

While facing increasing competition from regional technical universities in the 1990s, the Istanbul Technical University decided to undergo external

accreditations for engineering programmes and architecture carried out by international agencies such as the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology and an institutional evaluation by the European Association University. The goal was to find new axes for development, enhance the quality of the programmes in business and vocational education (seriously challenged by other higher education providers) and gain European-wide recognition.

Multi-campus institutions are open to students from wide geographic areas and closely related to external stakeholders (e.g. vocational teachers from the corporate world, partnerships with companies, etc.), where their reputation is critical for attracting and retaining students and teachers. Competing institutions need to act in compliance with the highest quality standards for teaching, through the hallmark of accreditation.

Improving the quality of teaching as a core mission

Higher education has become much more diversified, encompassing new types of institutions such as polytechnics, university colleges or technological institutes. These have been created for a number of reasons: to develop a closer relationship between tertiary education and the external world, including greater responsiveness to labour market needs; to enhance social and geographical access to tertiary education; to provide high-level occupational preparation in a more applied and less theoretical way; and to accommodate the growing diversity of qualifications and expectations of school graduates (OECD, 2008).

Higher education institutions are now involved in a wider range of teaching than their traditional degree-level courses. Some higher education institutions offer adult education and leisure courses, upper secondary courses to prepare students for tertiary-level study, and short specific occupational preparation at subdegree level (OECD, 2008). The nature of some programmes is likely to lead institutions to further consider quality teaching, especially medium-sized institutions with a limited range of degrees (colleges or universities of applied sciences that grant Bachelor degrees).

Three major reasons together lead vocational-type institutions to closely investigate the notion of quality teaching:

- The teaching process is driven by academics, mostly practitioners from the corporate world who are experts in their field but not necessarily trained in pedagogy (the “academic drift” is sometimes denounced).
- The diversity of employment statutes within the institution (professionals, international teachers, part-time teachers, etc.) combined with an increasing variety of students might result in incoherence and inequity of the teaching process.

- Applied research traditionally nourishes curricula and the link between updated knowledge and teaching is crucial.

Institutions, especially multidisciplinary and research-intensive universities, have paid growing attention to quality teaching when emphasising the vocational qualifications of their programmes. European universities like the Free University of Berlin have been influenced by the Bologna Process and align programmes with the economic environment. A lot of multi-faculty universities have further refined their programmes to reinforce the multidisciplinary nature of education paths. Transversal education is not the sum of different curricula, but instead calls upon teachers to use new methods, collaborative work and new types of student assessments. The adaptation of the degree structures to the bachelor/master/doctorate scheme can generate tremendous changes in some institutions, putting the issue of teaching at the core of the faculty's concerns.

The interest in quality teaching stems from the values and orientations of institutions, as reflected in their mission statements and strategic plans. The historical background counts. Charismatic leaders have inspired some institutions with their vision of the purpose of teaching. Often they have focused on the relevance of the learning delivered and the effectiveness of teaching. Instead of customising programmes to the erratic movements of job markets, they have tried to design programmes that respond to the unpredictable needs of society and help individuals to upgrade their skills in order to progress in today's world.

Some institutions have been built up on the basis of a strong philosophy of the role and function of teaching.

Alverno College promotes quality teaching as a central value in the institution to be fully endorsed by the applicants. Quality teaching is not an additional skill but a central feature of Alverno's culture. "The faculty must know what education is." Alverno recruits educators rather than academics. The mission statement of the college attracts applicants who know why they want to join Alverno and what the expectations are: the requirements are rooted in their mission in education.

Tohoku Fukushi University illustrates the importance of its philosophy and the strong awareness of what students should gain through their learning experience in a Buddhist institution that places the position of the human being at the centre of society. Education, research and practice together create a horizontal movement involving students, teachers, experts and practitioners in various disciplinary fields. "Three fields in one" is part of its philosophy. The institution strengthens faculty skills so they can work together productively and share values. The university engaged in a thorough reflection on the conceptual framework of teaching, debating the teacher-student relationship. It then launched multiple initiatives that comply with the philosophy and embrace the

conceptual framework. To ensure the link between teaching-research and practice, the university selected two major competences to be trained at Tohoku Fukushi: problem-solving skills and communication skills.

Few institutions are permeated by such a strong philosophy. However, in their mission statements, some include a set of core values intended to guide programmes and curricula. The “student-centred approach” often prevails in the key messages of the institutions and many are keen on shaping their programmes accordingly.

The University de Sherbrooke University fostered institutional quality teaching in order to better bridge its student-centred values with the reality of teaching, as it found that these values often restrict student well-being, career counselling, social support and leisure activities.

The University of Yucatán put forth a strong commitment to the value of equity. Upcoming reforms on teaching will ensure that all 50 000 students can benefit from the same quality of teaching.

Rebalancing the teaching-research nexus

Research-intensive universities are increasingly challenged by the globalisation of research, international competition on innovation and the impact of international ranking mostly based on scientific performance (Hazellkorn, 2008). They have consistently placed research at the very core of their activities. They have hired high-level lecturers and offered a wide range of scholarship activities and lab research opportunities, thereby minimising the teaching process. Research-intensive institutions have difficulty raising the profile of teaching compared to research: they argue that research is typically encapsulated in laboratories for the purpose of knowledge creation and transfer, which ultimately benefit the reputation of the institution. The purpose of the teaching delivered is scarcely an issue and remains on the margins of academics’ thoughts. Yet new pressures are challenging these universities, forcing them to take a closer look at the concept of quality teaching and to contemplate institutional support to step up the quality of the faculty and curricula.

The shift from elite universities to mass universities has modified the student body and their expectations (*e.g.* salaried students enrolling in lifelong learning programmes that require adapted curricula and a flexible educational path). Institutions are being mandated by national authorities and funding councils to successfully take the students to the job market, and to help them become responsible citizens. New missions have been added to the institutions over the past 20 years, including regional development and social inclusion (OECD, 2008). The government of Australia, for example, is attempting to raise the profile and quality of teaching across Australia’s universities. As such, it has developed an annual Learning and Teaching

Performance Fund which rewards universities for excellence and improvement on a number of key performance indicators, including graduate employment. Graduate employment is self-reported by all graduating students across Australia in a graduate destinations survey. (This survey also collects data on student numbers returning to further study.)

Some research-intensive institutions consolidated their strengths by rebalancing their approach to teaching. For instance, the McGill University Mission Statement adopted in 1991 states: *“The mission of McGill University is the advancement of learning through teaching, scholarship and service to society: by offering to outstanding undergraduate and graduate students the best education available; by carrying out scholarly activities judged to be excellent when measured against the highest international standards; and by providing service to society in those ways for which we are well-suited by virtue of our academic strengths.”*

Institutions consider that competing on the basis of research alone is not sufficient to ensure the performance and reputation of the university. They need to enhance innovation by improving connections with the regional environment and understanding the context of commercialisation. Lab staff and researchers might not have the necessary skills to train their students in these areas. In addition, numerous students enrolling for doctoral studies may not continue in research activity; they need to add skills to their learning experience, other than knowledge in their discipline. Growing numbers of doctoral schools are teaching students about job-searching practices and opening them up to new career opportunities in the field of, or outside, research.

Increasing student demand for quality teaching

Students are increasingly becoming a driver for quality teaching. In countries where students have a recognised status, they play an active role and are a powerful respected body. A current international trend likely to increase awareness of quality teaching is that students are invited to serve on governing bodies or hired as evaluation experts on par with academic peer reviewers. At the Dublin Institute of Technology, students serve on the board of audits and raise concerns about teaching, learning environments, quality of content and teacher attitude.

Institutions or departments dealing with competence-based education are often advanced in the institutional support for, and evaluation of, quality teaching. Frequently, they have committed to carefully selecting new teachers and to upgrading their recruitment process to encompass pedagogical skills. (In the majority of institutions covered by the sample, research excellence remains above all the most widely used criterion for teacher selection.)

In career-oriented or vocational training programmes, students may complain of lack of programme consistency or poor practice-based learning,

even when they are mature or working students. Student and alumni associations can easily benchmark learning conditions, teacher attitudes, pedagogy and support, and hence may promote or undermine the reputation of the institutions. Programmes requiring technical skills, like information technology or healthcare studies, must pay close attention to the quality of the equipment and the type of teaching delivered.

Additionally, some multidisciplinary and non-vocational institutions have decided to foster quality teaching and to capture student feelings regarding the quality of their education at all levels. At the University of Arizona, the Certificate in College Teaching was the result of requests for formal training in teaching from graduate students serving as teaching assistants at this university.

Rigorous student selection and high tuition fees also encourage institutions to invest in quality teaching. As soon as the students must pass examinations and pay significant fees, they are likely to ask for a fair return in terms of quality of the education offered. For that reason some institutions consider that quality teaching is a part of a total quality approach, not just limited to pedagogy or facilities.

Lastly, more demand for quality teaching comes from the international students. Some programmes can be delivered irrespective of the location (online programmes) or can draw students from all over the world (programme for business or management in English): prospective international students often want guarantees before enrolling.

Why do institutions engage in quality teaching?

The following developments set out the different goals that institutions are pursuing when supporting individual or institutional quality teaching initiatives. Of course, a combination of these objectives takes place and objectives are likely to change over time, depending on the maturity of the institution on the subject.

Pedagogical purpose

Some institutions have a clear vision of where the programmes should lead the students, and they adopt a pedagogical strategy that comprises a range of actions that serve educational goals. For the institution, investing in quality might mean aligning the faculty members' profile with the educational needs of programmes. A purely discipline-based course might be lectured by academics with high proficiency in that field. It is more difficult to assign teachers to new programmes or to an audience with whom they might not feel comfortable, such as adult students. Institutions sometimes believe that their recruitment process fails because accurate selection criteria are lacking.

Institutions tend to review more closely the effectiveness of teaching on student achievement. They might upgrade the input of teaching, thereby ensuring the quality of the learning environment, improving the learning process and paying attention to the value of the learning outcomes. Furthermore, they address the relevance of teaching. Because they are aware that effective teaching does not necessarily mean that the learning would be relevant to graduates, institutions have scrutinised the expected outcomes of programmes. Some have thus modified the content and organisation comprehensively, in order to provide more opportunities to graduates as they enter the labour market and to expand their personal development.

As teaching in higher education is a dynamic process, with changing student and teacher profiles in an ever more complex and unstable environment, the large and multi-department institutions might be tempted to consider ambitious support to quality teaching. The case of the Université de Montréal is particularly enlightening.

The programme evaluation policy of the Université de Montréal aims to improve the relevance of training programmes, especially at the academic or discipline level, at the institutional level and at the social level. Relying on a long tradition of evaluation, the university enjoys a solid practice of programme evaluation that captures changes in knowledge and practice, and the changing needs of society. The university offers a wide array of three-degree programmes that only the larger institutions are able to offer in Canada. As a French-speaking university located in a multicultural city, the Université de Montréal is facing a number of challenges, including the international openness of the programmes, the cross-cultural nature of programmes affecting provisions and the recruitment of students and faculty, communication challenges related to linguistic proficiency, and acquisition of technological skills and oral skills. The university provides training in almost every discipline, which must undergo external accreditation by professional bodies. Therefore the institutional evaluation policy constitutes a natural continuation of earlier practices and formally underscores the efforts undertaken by the university in this field.

Teacher knowledge of pedagogical skills

Major concerns have emerged about the inherent quality of teachers before recruitment. Above all, academics are selected according to scholarship-based criteria. Yet this system has gradually become irrelevant for institutions. First, for colleges and teaching-intensive and vocational-type institutions, high academic proficiency is not a sufficient criterion; it does not ensure that faculty members have pedagogical skills and it cannot reflect the level of personal adherence to the institution's values and educational goals.

Second, institutions hire various types of faculty members, a majority of whom come from the corporate world and teach part-time; conventional recruitment criteria are becoming irrelevant. As a result, some institutions have launched specific reforms to ensure the quality of new teachers and to upgrade their pedagogical skills.

At City University of Seattle, institutional quality teaching initiatives primarily target newly recruited teachers and part-time faculty. City University utilises many part-time teachers (“adjunct practitioner faculty”) and wishes to ensure that the adjuncts are delivering instruction in accordance with City University quality standards and the university’s academic model.

At the Universidad Nacional del Nordeste (Argentina), the first institutional self-evaluations revealed a major weakness regarding teacher training. The university created two programmes to promote continuous training (open to all staff of courses, specialisations and Master degrees in teaching): the Continuing Teacher Education Programme and the Curricular Change Programme (the latter includes educational innovations, new ways of teaching and the assessment of learning). So far, the programmes have significantly improved teacher training, as over 1 500 teachers attended specialised courses in university teaching.

The Dublin Institute of Technology has delivered mandatory training to lecturing staff during their first two years. Staff have been given a reduced teaching load to ensure they can attend the training programme. Peer review is used to ensure staff are supported by colleagues during the evaluation of their teaching and they can choose the reviewer.

At Macquarie University (Australia), as a result of the Performance Cultures of Teaching Project, criteria for promotion at the various academic levels of appointment have been developed based on minimum level of experience, skills and knowledge expected at each level. The criteria specify the form and level of contribution a person can be expected to make at each level to the three elements of scholarship: research, learning and teaching, and community engagement. In the case of adjunct staff and staff from the corporate world, Macquarie uses orientation programmes and staff manuals to help them provide teaching of an equivalent quality to that of full-time staff.

Improving teaching relevance means adapting the assessment of students accordingly. Almost all the initiatives set out by the institutions covered in the sample reflect their efforts to refine student assessment provide greater support to faculty and redefine programme contents. The quality teaching policies or centres dedicated to quality teaching also embrace the students’ assessment. Most of the initiatives taken in academic affairs consist of adapting programmes to more vocational-content curricula, combining several disciplines, or promoting collaborative work by students

and new pedagogical tools such as IT-based teaching. All these trends are shaking the traditional ways of assessing student progress.

Quality teaching: A distinctive feature for institutions?

Institutional support to quality teaching might help institutions to face upcoming challenges regarding teaching. Quality teaching might be considered as a distinctive feature contributing to the overall quality of the institution, along with scientific reputation and the quality of learning environment. The students and employers are undeniably paying attention to learning outcomes, the inclusion rate in the job market and the acquisition of flexible skills. To compensate for the lack of instruments that measure learning outcomes objectively, some institutions have embraced a wide range of actions meant to enhance quality teaching, whatever the difficulty of evaluating the results. The combination of professional development courses, pedagogy counselling and programme evaluation, all anchored in a conceptual framework, is perceived as a promising set of tools to enhance the teaching process. These institutions assume that a robust policy to encourage quality teaching is likely to strengthen learning outcomes. For example, the Istanbul Technical University hired foreign accreditation companies to examine the quality of programmes. When leaders then committed to institutional evaluation by the European University Association in search of coherence and filling gaps at institutional level, quality teaching aspects were a key element of the institutional overview.

A specific concern is that institutions are facing a shortage of top-notch academics in specific disciplines. These institutions are keen to support quality teaching to ensure the best quality of teachers for the programmes.

Institution-wide overview

In large institutions with multiple departments that do not have much to share, staff might want to be informed of the expansion of individual initiatives to consider institutional support. Defining an institution-wide policy demonstrates that an institution has the legitimacy to intervene in a field traditionally left to individual teachers. Claiming academic freedom, some faculty members reject institutional interference in pedagogy. The institution intends to demonstrate the added value of an institutional policy that could help faculty to teach more efficiently and to receive support that might lighten their burden, thereby sustaining motivation and job satisfaction. When the institution takes the lead, the leaders (often a vice-president of academic affairs) have some leeway to shape the debate, clarify faculty complaints, prioritise requests and deliver support.

Without any institutional overseeing, the institution would be unable to respond to teacher needs and could hardly envisage monitoring an education

policy for the benefit of the students. The advent of the three-degree structure reform prompted by the Bologna Process is better managed when the institution is able to understand what goes on at the level of the programmes and in teachers' minds. The institutional approach streamlines the multiple initiatives that sometimes mushroom in departments and that even the heads are unaware of. Setting a quality teaching framework allows the institution to better monitor support, to track teacher satisfaction and to consider the impact on the learning process.

The sum of individual initiatives taken by teachers is not sufficient for an overall improvement of quality teaching in an institution. Only the institution (at central level and at departmental level) can detect benchmarks, promote good practices and scale them up across departments, and think up effective support matching teachers' expectations with those of students'. Quality teaching is an ongoing process through which teachers learn and improve their pedagogical skills. Quality teaching fosters and is bound to the overall quality of the institution (which comprises many other components like quality of research, of management, etc.).

At the University of Sherbrooke, the policy for the promotion of quality teaching has just defined an institutional framework for action, based on three elements: appreciation of teaching, course evaluation and pedagogical training of lecturers or staff. This was implemented in order to provide enhanced support, co-ordination and encouragement of practices already widely used at the university.

In 2006, the Board of VU-Amsterdam formulated a new institution-wide policy on education that establishes the university as a community of learners. The university promotes inquiry and collaborative learning by increasing the interaction among researchers, teachers and students, and among students. The policy encourages respect for the individual ambition of a student and supports critical thinking and independent learning by implementing empowering pedagogical strategies.

Chapter 3

Implementing Quality Teaching Support

This chapter examines the methods to effectively initiate and implement an institutional policy to support quality teaching. It analyses the different roles of faculty members, students, the department, the central university and the state, and the right timing of their involvement in constructing the effective institutional policy to support quality teaching. It identifies long-term improvement factors for teaching staff, decision-making bodies and institutions. It explores the ways to maximise the implementation of the policy through optimising the roles of each cluster in the institution.

How do institutions support quality teaching?

An iterative approach prevails

Institutions recognise that initiating an institutional policy to support quality teaching can be difficult. Few institutions would be able to launch straightaway into a meaningful reflection on what institutional support could bring to faculty members: they first examine their experiences before contemplating more ambitious support to quality teaching.

At the University of Sherbrooke, the ISO label process inspired the institutional policy of support to quality teaching. The university decided to keep ISO's systemic approach that could match the specificities of higher education, but to leave aside the strict corporate-type process carried out by ISO. Although some teachers argued that the ISO process is supposed to meet the needs of industrialised outputs and not those of higher education, the university drew from ISO some meaningful lessons for designing an institutional policy on quality teaching.

In the same vein, the University of Lille 2 used the ISO exercise to help faculty to think in terms of process or systems, integrating individual teachers operating in classrooms into the global process of learning in the institution. ISO has highlighted the teaching function, among the range of missions allotted to universities, as a key driver to training high-profile graduates for the world of today. Indeed the evaluation of the faculty was fully reviewed soon after the ISO process was implemented. The staff of the university's quality mission consider that they have gained skills thanks to the implementation of ISO, in the areas of quality management and measurement of teacher performance in teaching and research.

The institutions take a lengthy and non-linear path towards convincing their teaching staff of the added value of embarking on the quest for quality teaching. The typical approach for an institution consists of proposing one (or several) activities to improve teacher proficiency in using new equipment or adapting pedagogy to the new tools put at their disposal (primarily IT). The question of effectiveness is rarely addressed at this stage. Courses are usually meant to make faculty more comfortable with instruments that they did not use during their own training period. Training courses are on a voluntary basis and mostly organised by the faculty at department level.

However, the iterative approach should not be viewed as a slow and uncertain development. (In many institutions, quality teaching is a new, but

rather vague and often controversial idea.) By proceeding step by step, institutions avoid outright rejection by faculty members, ensuring instead a cautious consolidation of the principle that teaching could and should be improved. By experimenting with diverse activities in the field of quality teaching, the institution is able to test several options of quality teaching, adjusting or prioritising (or even giving up some irrelevant ones), before contemplating a definite institution-wide policy on quality teaching. This *lead period* often lasts several years.

The University of Pau et des pays de l'Adour started developing its institutional evaluation culture in the period 2002-06. The university's Students Observatory set up evaluation tools e.g. a matrix to scrutinise each grade, and surveys on student inclusion in the job market and on their educational path. The poor processing system was unable to demonstrate the tangible results of student induction or career counselling. Thus a Charter for Bachelor Level was set up in 2006 with 67 criteria covering 5 quality fields, emphasising student welcome, student induction, education and career counselling. The aims of the Charter were to support innovative teaching processes and to fight against low completion rates.

Grounding an institutional policy on earlier experiments – irrespective of their scale and contents – after evaluating them seems to be a powerful driver for enhancing adherence of the whole academic community to quality teaching. Offering the teachers an opportunity to apply for funds to improve their pedagogy or for their own training is an incentive for them to identify ways to enhance their teaching and for the institution to promote their initiatives within the institution. Individual teachers' awareness is raised because the project is their own or matches their specific needs. Many activities such as training courses are embedded in their pedagogy by the most innovating teachers.

The emergence of an institutional policy

After undertaking individual or department-based experiments, institutions are keen to shape a consistent policy to serve the community as a whole. Most institutions think that the *lead period* should shift to a more institutional overview of the diverse initiatives to support quality teaching.

The Catholic University of Louvain endorsed a step-by-step approach. For several years, individual teachers or teams have been offered pedagogical development funds that financially support innovative pedagogy (e.g. purchase of didactic materials). Individual applications are now decreasing at course level, to the benefit of programme-level projects presented by teams. While maintaining these funds, the university is now on its way to framing an institutional policy that would bring about more consistency: pedagogical innovation would no longer be left to individuals only, but enshrined in a clearly defined strategy. Similar trends occurred

with programme evaluations. Launched in the early 1980s, the long-standing but fragmented course-based evaluation was institutionalised. It was extended to programme evaluation in 2005, so that the university is now monitoring a two-fold systematic evaluation aligned with the Bologna Process requirements.

The top management of the Istanbul Technical University spent three years convincing academic staff and stakeholders of the need for external accreditation processes. They organised meetings, informed them about the latest developments in the higher education world, and invited outstanding speakers from other countries to share best practices with the academic staff and students. At the end of 1990s, ITU managed to have over 650 academic staff working for its quality assurance projects and created a quality culture. This achievement created a “snowball effect” and the quality assurance projects have been owned by the stakeholders, especially by academic staff across the university. ITU managed to combine its top-down initiative with a very strong bottom-up participation in the first project period of 1996-2000.

When the institutions suggest that support should be customised at programme or discipline level, they might run the risk of forsaking the monitoring and control of initiatives taken at lower levels and ultimately, of losing the assurance of the added value brought by supporting quality teaching for teachers and for students’ learning.

Weak institution-wide monitoring of quality teaching support might hamper the expected synergy and emulation within the academic community, attracting only the most motivated teachers, who are often the most creative in pedagogy. If an institution wants to revamp its programme structures to include academic reforms or to foster a culture of quality, using only bottom-up initiatives would leave less room for manoeuvre and would call for more institution-wide structuring and monitoring. In addition, some teachers would need to be advised, so as to avoid wasting time designing a tool that might already exist in other departments. The City University of Seattle, for instance, considers that the role of the institution is to help faculty teach efficiently by providing professional development and evaluation tools so they can upgrade skills that otherwise would become obsolete over their professional life span. The university advocates here the legitimacy to intervene where the teachers individually cannot improve. Macquarie University is attempting to ensure quality by structural alignment between university-wide committees and those in each of the faculties.

Moreover, scattered actions cannot help the institution to appraise the effectiveness of quality teaching initiatives on learning; they prevent the institution from designing a consistent training policy. When initiatives remain at the individual level, the institution and the department levels cannot appraise teacher satisfaction and consider remedial actions. Small

projects might be relevant at course level but they often have a limited impact on the educational path of students.

Scattered initiatives at department level might hinder the possibility of offering teachers the very instruments needed to capture the impact of their own initiatives. Some departments have been active in launching specific policies for supporting quality teaching. For instance, in medicine and engineering, the external professional requirements strongly influence the curriculum and thereby teacher expectations (and defined learning outcomes). Although the departments build up a high level of faculty culture among teachers, do they align their support with the educational goals of the institution and with learning outcome requirements? This question often remains unanswered due to the lack of institutional overview of lower levels, whatever the quality and relevance of the local support provided to the teachers. In several large multi-department universities, programme evaluation is dependent on the good will of programme leaders or individual teachers. Academic freedom is sometimes flagged by some faculty as a pretext to skip their teaching duties.

The project-style angle

Some institutions phase in quality teaching, using the philosophy and practicalities of project management. Responsibilities are defined precisely at an early stage: political support and financial aid are significant and sustainable, and staff members in charge of design and implementation are responsive. Positions are assigned to skilled people. The institution-wide process goes through stages that are evaluated and communicated on a regular basis. Although the initiative comes primarily from the top level, collaborative working among the various categories of staff and students is the prevailing operating model. Such project management occurs in medium-sized institutions endowed with a strong managerial philosophy and already shaped by a high sense of management, most likely vocational institutions and universities of applied sciences.

The Review of Academic Programmes at Macquarie University has been run using strict project management methodologies. Consultants worked with a steering committee of the governance board for the project, while an advisory committee with representation across the university was the mechanism for consultation. Once the White Paper on the Review of Academic Programmes was adopted by University Council, responsibility for implementation was brought back into the usual governance and management structures within the university; however a project manager is still used to keep the implementation on schedule.

In the academic year 2007-08, Arcada University of Applied Sciences in Finland wanted to work on a bottom-up basis and planned a new type of self-assessment

procedure. The pilot took place in the Department for Sports, Health and Social Care, in six programmes. An evaluation group composed of the head of the department, the associate head and the project manager worked together with two students and one representative of the external stakeholders in every self-assessment procedure/programme. The aim of the self-assessment procedure in Arcada was to integrate it into a long-term procedure that involves staff, students and external stakeholders in the quality work and the quality assurance processes.

The case of Arcada illustrates the possibility of questioning the quality of learning through a specific mechanism, in this case the self-assessment procedure. Starting from a very practical viewpoint, Arcada succeeded in convincing staff and students to join in the reflection on the relevance of the education delivered and its expected effectiveness. The discussion has served the learning strategy of the institution and thus clarified the overall objectives of the institution.

Whatever the route taken by institutions, it is necessary for them to adopt a slow pace of progress before contemplating an ambitious institutional strategy. Everyone reckons that having a multiplicity of individual trials is likely to publicise the concept of quality teaching, but also to prevent the institution – and the programme leaders – from finding out about the relevance of such support. The shift from happy amateurs to professional practitioners is a long journey for institutions.

Quality assurance as leverage for quality teaching

Quality teaching might stem from the internal quality assurance systems that regard teaching as one of the pillars of quality, along with research and management.

The Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz (JGUM) was one of the first universities in Germany to set up an advanced system of internal quality management that allows it to accredit its own study programmes. Simultaneously the European University Association accredits the quality management system of JGUM. This model allows for sustained monitoring and development of quality in study programmes and guarantees a much faster treatment of accreditation requests from the departments of JGUM. In March 2008, the University of Mainz was awarded the Stifterverband-Prize for its outstanding quality management concept. As a result, extensive funds will be used to strengthen the co-ordination of quality management and general management decisions concerning research, teaching and administration within the Johannes Gutenberg University.

La Laguna University has opted for a consolidated vision of quality teaching. The Support Programme for the Evaluation of Educational Activity (DOCENTIA) is linked to current procedures for assessing and improving the quality of teaching, for ensuring the quality of practices and external mobility programmes, and for

analysing the satisfaction level of students and academic staff. Furthermore, the evaluation of teaching faculty is aligned with the institutional strategic framework which ultimately sets the policy for teachers. This includes taking a definite position on the evaluation of teaching, training and promotion. Similarly, DOCENTIA meets the requirements of existing legislation for evaluation of the teaching, research and management of the university teaching staff. Lastly, DOCENTIA parallels the university's current policy of implementation of a general quality assurance system.

The development of quality assurance mechanisms is likely to raise the awareness of programme leaders to quality teaching as such, and to put the question of teaching on the agenda of upcoming institutional reforms. The main purpose of quality assurance is to help the institution contemplate a journey of constant improvement and regular evaluation for feedback. Although the influence of quality assurance on the quality of teaching is controversial, the implementation of mechanisms is likely to have an impact on the teaching performance of teachers and on the learning conditions of students.

The internal quality assurance system of the Open University of Catalonia is meant to ensure the standards and continuous improvement of the following processes: definition of the quality policy, quality evaluation of training programmes, quality evaluation of academic staff, quality evaluation of services and resources, quality evaluation of learning advice and support, information and communication of programmes and their outcomes, outcomes management and their use in the improvement programmes.

Allowing individual teachers to be creative

Defining an institutional policy does not mean promoting heavy-handed, top-down initiatives only. Most of the institutions that have designed an institutional policy to foster quality teaching continue to let departments or individual teachers operate on their own and suggest improvements. However, they must ensure that these meet the requirements of the institutional objectives reflected in the policy. Some institutions like Copenhagen Business School and Alverno College benefit from a strong identity and culture that contributes to holistic thinking about teaching. A flexible framework, teacher autonomy, and collaborative working with students and staff are common and likely to generate all kinds of actions for improvement of the teaching-learning process. Although there is a shift towards endorsing a similar approach to teaching and learning, dissimilar approaches have been accepted as long as their promoters documented their methods of operating. There is room for experiments and new ideas so that the centre does not keep a hold on quality teaching initiatives but accompanies them.

At Alverno College, teachers are not allowed to propose their own quality teaching unless this is part of an institutional framework that can benefit others and feed the conceptual thinking of the institution. The institution pays much attention to fostering quality teaching one way or another. It is a constant reference and a brand that the institution would like to promote: “We might not be the best in teaching but we plan to make the most of our various and constant efforts to foster quality teaching.”

Making teaching explicit: A conceptual framework

Debating the meaning of teaching

Defining a conceptual approach to teaching at institutional level calls for clarifying the meaning of teaching from the institutional or department’s viewpoint. Skelton states that in any given culture, understandings of teaching excellence may change over time, but before trying to foster change, a higher education institution should first consider what it currently regards as teaching excellence and review how the institution works (Skelton, 2005).

When considering a conceptual framework, the institution often engages in debates that are very remote from the question of the concrete instruments needed to improve quality teaching. With input from the academic community, the institution examines the goals of higher education in light of present and future economic and societal expectations, as well as the specificities of the education delivered, the identity of the institution and the image carried in the country, and the definition of the core quality of the institution’s graduates. Such an approach often consists of scrutinising the reality of the institution and making it more explicit, to be shared by the whole teaching community.

The Free University of Berlin designed an evaluation tool for academic courses (Higher Education Self Assessment of Competences, or HEsaCom) that was developed to measure the acquisition of competences from a specific course as assessed by the students themselves. The mechanism aims at a theoretical and empirical description of the lecturer’s behaviour, which is fairly indirectly important for learning outcomes. By showing that satisfaction with teaching behaviour and competence building can be assessed in a distinct way, the university advocates a new understanding of quality of higher education in terms of (outcome-oriented) competence acquisition rather than (process-oriented) satisfaction with teaching behaviour. The HEsaCom mechanism evaluates the following competences: knowledge processing, systematic competence, presentational competence, communication competence, co-operation competence and personal competence.

For some institutions, the development of instruments and support to quality teaching is not the ultimate end. Their value lies primarily in their ability to stimulate reflection about teaching. Teaching development activities

at McGill therefore focus on this end, and not on the means. The institution thinks that it is crucial to provide an environment that fosters critical thinking on teaching (“How can you as a teacher orientate your goal in order to be more effective?”) along with the technical know-how that will enable individuals to engage in reflective practice. The Copenhagen Business School has tried to define the expected profile of graduates to then establish the principles that will guide curriculum development. Instead of addressing quality teaching for each programme or for customised support to each teacher, the school endorsed an integrated approach based on shared assumptions on learning.

However other institutions consider that designing the instruments offers a unique opportunity to question the ideal of teaching, to collect the opinion of academics in a more formal way. The exploratory approach to quality prevails, and a single definition of quality teaching would be meaningless. The sample of institutions has shown a relative concept of quality teaching that lies first with the institution. Clearly the institutions that are the most autonomous and self-confident progress faster in sketching out a conceptual framework of teaching.

Since 1973, the faculty of Alverno College have refined and delivered a curriculum that has at its core the teaching and assessment of explicitly articulated learning outcomes that are grounded in eight core abilities. These eight abilities are: communication, analysis, problem solving, valuing in decision making, social interaction, developing a global perspective, effective citizenship, and aesthetic engagement. All students are required to demonstrate these abilities in order to graduate from the college, and faculty work on teaching has been shaped by their commitment to engaging students in the kind of learning that fosters development of these abilities in the context of disciplinary study. According to Alverno College, there is a high level of commitment of teachers thanks to their knowledge of the core mission of the college. The college’s mission statement is rooted in clear overall aims and their direct application.

The linkage between quality teaching and learning outcomes

In spite of the expansion of the learning outcomes approach, institutions still find it difficult to demonstrate the direct impact of the support provided to quality teaching on learning outcomes, although quality teaching is a strong influential factor.

The prevailing assumption is that teaching processes are likely to improve teachers’ instructional skills but without any guarantee that this can directly affect learning outcomes (Kaneko, 2008). The transformational learning process that students undergo depends on theoretical and behavioural knowledge and practices gained from the teaching. However this assumption is challenged by other arguments. First, prior basic academic and

subject abilities can be considered as input factors that regulate learning outcomes. Second, teaching is one among other process factors that improve the way that students learn. Researchers strive to provide a theoretical or empirical logic that would help figure out which of the process factors has the greatest impact on learning outcomes. Kaneko regrets the lack of process monitoring that could somehow enlighten the comprehension of teaching and other process factors in terms of learning outcomes. Last, there is a prevailing assumption that generic skills are of the utmost importance for a graduate to be hireable, while solely content-based competences would not be sufficient.

The institutions have explored how to appraise learning outcomes (and other types of outcomes like citizen commitment). But they are often tempted to set apart their reflection on teaching (that belongs first to academia) from the assessment of outcomes that connect students with job markets and life outside the institution. This will be reflected in the evaluation systems set up by the institutions (see the chapter on the evaluation of quality teaching): a set of evaluation tools will primarily reflect teaching performance while alternative and more qualitative methods will try to reflect the learning gained and its adequacy for economic and social inclusion.

The Universidad Nacional del Nordeste created the Continuous Evaluation Quality System (SEP) to follow the evaluation of quality in every aspect. The SEP dealt first with quality of teaching. Once the process was accepted and understood by all members of the university community, the assessment then embraced new dimensions and variables of higher education: research, transfer processes, academic relevance, social relevance, management, student welfare, human resources, technologies, information and libraries, and infrastructures.

Innovative attempts to bridge support to teaching and to learning

As described above, some institutions forsake customisation and voluntary-based quality teaching initiatives to embrace institutional support focusing instead on learning. In this case, quality teaching support first has to examine what the students should gain and what kind of courses can provide them with expected skills. At a second stage only, the teaching might be adapted to assist the students in achieving the educational goals. Finally, the institution, with teacher co-operation, examines the kind of support that would be relevant for effective teaching, i.e. to ensure that faculty members are sufficiently skilled and can benefit from appropriate support in order to perform well. Quality teaching is not a voluntary activity; it is a basic value for the whole community. A give-and-take approach is embraced by the institution, which requires from teachers some additional skills in their discipline proficiency and in return offers proper support to the faculty.

That possibility occurs when the institution, together with its faculty members, is able to define the learning outcomes and skills of future graduates. As such, a review of the learning outcomes of the entire range of programmes must be undertaken before contemplating the kind of quality teaching support that would be appropriate for the faculty. Such a process calls for powerful institutional support engaging the top leadership and involving the teachers in programme design. It furthermore requires internal capacities to foresee the learning outcomes and forecast the expected skills. The bodies in charge of quality teaching and academic affairs are often of great assistance to the teachers. The institution can define quality teaching support that would target a larger number of teachers, irrespective of their disciplines, and thus obtain some measure of leeway.

How can quality teaching be widely accepted?

A question of time

The time required is a common feature for any institution that wants to progress seriously in a thorough quality teaching strategy. Institutions have explicitly reduced the amount of teaching work in class so as to leave enough time for the commitment that teachers have made to reflect on quality teaching, *e.g.* to serve on a steering committee or to participate in a working group. These institutions have understood that complexity of the subject and the high diversity of drivers that are likely to improve quality teaching effectively require full engagement on the part of teachers. To entice them and to safeguard the faculty's commitment to the reflection on quality teaching, they deserve to have some time out of their classrooms. As an example, at McGill University, a workshop on course design and teaching is used as the lever to encourage faculty to think about teaching from a learning perspective. During this workshop, faculty design or revise a course that they will be teaching and get the opportunity to explore different teaching methods that foster their intended learning.

When the institutions do not set aside time for sustaining faculty member commitment, other incentives are necessary. In the long term, the institution can hardly rely on the commitment of the teachers if they are weighed down with additional work.

Institutions underline that there are good times for launching quality teaching initiatives. For instance, teachers often require help from their institutions when they take over new management positions like programme leaders. This happens frequently at a time when programmes are renewed or defined: teachers are asked to think collectively, and to be responsive and accountable, but often they do not know how to proceed and ask for advice on

programme development or specific tools. Such periods could be a time to envisage a more ambitious quality teaching intervention.

Prompting quality teaching while preserving academic freedom

One of the main constraints for institutions committed to quality teaching lies in the reluctance of faculty members to change programme delivery and their ways of teaching. Some institutions have invented flexible mechanisms that allow teachers to adhere gradually to an institution-wide obligation.

The Dublin Institute of Technology has tried to find the right balance between a quality teaching policy and the principle of academic freedom. The faculty are offered the possibility to undergo a peer review in class so that a concrete problem may be discussed and sorted out. Peer reviewing is part of mandatory training for lecturing staff. Teachers have the freedom to select their peer reviewers and the scope of what will be evaluated. The institution considers that this initiative promotes a quality culture and strengthens collaborative work.

Institutions complain that launching new actions to prompt quality teaching interferes with the daily routine of teaching and discourages rather than encourages teacher participation. A minimum of acceptance seems necessary to ensure the development of quality teaching support and thereby to appraise the effectiveness of the teaching process. Professional development programmes are sometimes offered to students too, so the courses are not targeted towards the faculty but are open as regular courses to the whole community, mixing up teachers and learners.

The lack of enthusiasm shown by teachers towards what they consider as an interference with their mission can be brought into the reflection process of the institution. Debates at Laurea University have been shaped to elicit views from faculty members. They explored a wide range of difficult questions, and discussed vague points until consensus was reached.

The services offered to improve the quality of teaching could be a driver to sustain the faculty's commitment to institution-wide projects. When faculty members are convinced that they can rely on the office or on the centre that is responsible for helping them sort out problems on teaching, the projects related to quality teaching are more likely to be accepted and supported by the academic community. The burden is on the services to listen and respond to teacher requests.

The Centre for Education Training and Research (CETAR) at VU-Amsterdam offers a range of services to fulfil teacher requests and suggests activities to train faculty on specific points such as the preparation of a programme accreditation. CETAR provides three types of training courses: design, performance in class, and teaching (newly recruited faculty). The latter course, organised with peer reviewers, has met

with great success since participants can tailor the review, choose their reviewers and invite other teachers to share the discussions. CETAR also promotes the teaching aspects of the faculty's work and fosters a high level of legitimacy.

McGill University relies on those professors who participate in professional development courses to become ambassadors in their own departments by taking a lead in promoting good pedagogy and helping colleagues in matters related to teaching and learning. One mechanism for this process is to invite professors who have participated in a weeklong teaching development programme on course design and teaching to assist teaching and learning services staff as co-instructors in delivering subsequent workshops. Thus, individuals not only enhance their personal knowledge about design and pedagogy but are able to contribute to the development of their peers.

Promoting quality teaching to new faculty members

“The issue of teacher quality is inextricably linked to recruitment, for in recruiting teachers [institutions] wish to attract individuals who are well prepared, effective and who will remain in the teaching profession long enough to make a difference” (Darling Hammond, Berry, Haselkorn and Fideler, 1999).

Intervention when recruiting faculty members is likely to increase value sharing and clarify the framework in which the teachers will be asked to operate. Recruitment interviews might be the right venue for a discussion of the concept of quality teaching. Such discussions could confirm the extent to which an applicant is likely to fulfil the teaching requirements, and could shed light on the support teachers might require once recruited.

In the Russian Federation, all academic positions are elective and labour contracts of academics are signed after positive competitive results. At the Higher Schools of Economics, the teachers participating in this competition must provide the examination commission (Chair Board, University's Academic Council and Rector) with a proposal including a full list of publications and information regarding their academic performances on four levels:

- *quality of teaching and methodological work (scope and content of teaching activities), participation in methodological activities (e.g. the preparation of education programmes, educational materials, curricula);*
- *quality of research activities: preparation of manuals, monographs, articles, reports, editing, etc., application of new methodological and pedagogical practices, ICT, provision of support to students;*
- *development of academic qualifications (scholarships, participation in conferences, etc.); and*
- *results of assessment of the chair, results of student assessments and ranking.*

Although most institutions acknowledge that they select faculty primarily on research-based credits and deplore the shortage of quality teaching criteria, they tend to favour the discussions in order to balance the weight given to scholarship.

Some universities have designed additional criteria for the selection of the “right” teacher, who adheres to the institution’s philosophy of teaching and who is endowed with a vision of the teaching mission. Job interviews tend to be more intense and to capture the behaviour and attitudes that could meet the teaching requirements. But such interviews are fruitful only in institutions with a clear vision of their teaching expectations.

The City University of Seattle considers that an effective recruitment process can streamline candidate selection but fails to comprehend their pedagogical skills. Knowledge skills change over time and pedagogical aptitudes are influenced by the profile of the students, type of programmes offered and education needs of the learners, and unforeseeable elements. So the university deems that the role of the institution is to ensure that teachers teach efficiently by evaluating them and by providing appropriate tools for improvement.

Role of students

Students are likely to play a role in the definition of the framework by identifying the meaning of quality teaching for them. Countries and institutions where students and their unions have been given specific attention for a long time are better at including students in their process:

- *At the Université de Montréal, the debates on teaching naturally involve the teachers, the institution’s leaders and the students. As student unions are very active in Quebec, they are recognised as powerful drivers and serve on the institution’s committees.*
- *At the Dublin Institute of Technology, the high level of student participation in programme evaluation ensures the success of the quality teaching initiative. DIT can rely on student feedback that can effectively enhance the quality of the programmes.*
- *Arcada created a dynamic group that worked on the self-assessment pilot. The university considers that this successful experience has shown that students and other stakeholders bring new ideas from different angles, other than the teachers’ side. It is not considered a loss of academic power but a way of proceeding.*

The role of students depends much more on national context than on institutional capacity to mobilise them. Many regret low student commitment (although national regulations are making it compulsory) or encourage institutions to include students in the discussion and in advisory or decision-making bodies. Yet many students are not aware of the potential impact of their opinions. In many countries, students are more likely to pay attention to

the quality of learning outcomes and of their learning environment and less concerned about support targeting the teachers directly.

Several quality teaching initiatives set out by the institutions use the students as a lever to foster quality of teaching delivered and teacher skills. Although most programme evaluations assessed by students generate discussions and are disconnected from the teachers' individual performance, some initiatives consider that the students' opinions are a direct leverage in the definition of teacher quality.

The Higher School of Economics has created a teachers' ranking system using student assessments of teachers to get feedback on teaching quality, recruitment procedures, planning and organisation of the learning process.

Organisational structures supporting quality teaching

A service dedicated to quality teaching

Their wide range of programmes, their diverse status and their fields of interest might encourage institutions to create a specific organisation to monitor their quality teaching policies. Some institutions set up a service dedicated to academic affairs and teaching. The scope, staffing and funding of the service depend on the importance attributed by the institution to supporting quality teaching. Services range from a one-person bureau to a fully staffed office.

When the Catholic University of Louvain decided to outline a global quality approach to programme design in compliance with institutional quality standards, it created a cross-departmental commission. Working closely with the training and teaching service and programme bureau, the commission's mission is to examine the pedagogical added value of proposals made by the departments for the creation or modification of programmes (according to criteria set out by the University Teaching and Training Council) proposed by the heads of departments. The administrative support staff, directors for administration and one person skilled in quality affairs also ensure coherence.

The primary function of the service is to provide teachers with instruments designed and implemented on their behalf that enhance quality teaching. Here the service plays a technical role, helping the faculty members to use the instruments and concentrate on their core mission. Considering that teachers should concentrate first on their pedagogical mission, the services steer teacher involvement away from the operational aspects of the tools. Most teachers actually complain about the increase of non-pedagogy-related tasks that compete for their time dedicated to teaching. In order to assess the teachers, the services can design and customise the instruments (with a view to helping in the implementation), collecting data and opinions and even drawing up an analysis on the basis of the collected data. Many

institutions typically offer these services when implementing a systematic programme or course evaluation.

At the University of Lille 2, the Quality Mission (with only two staff including the Vice-President) has set up a range of evaluation tools. Its experience benefited from the earlier ISO certification for the Master in Management at the University Business School. With strong collaboration from the university's IT services, a set of online evaluation matrices has been made available to the faculty. The processing of the data collected is left to the faculty. Teachers are offered the possibility to customise specific tools. The continued work of the Quality Mission and the determination of the team have been an asset in consolidating the work achieved and building knowledge on the culture of quality.

The services dedicated to quality teaching could play a critical, pivotal role for supporting, explaining and advocating on behalf of the institution-wide policy on quality teaching. For many institutions, institutional involvement in quality teaching aims at collecting feedback on student satisfaction and on their perceived notion of quality. They would like to ensure that their institutional policy on quality teaching is understood and implemented properly by the faculty and that incentives to foster quality teaching can produce impacts. The services in charge of quality teaching, in addition to providing assistance, might be tasked with delivering consolidated feedback to institutional leaders (primarily to those dealing with academic affairs). The service is responsible for the consistency of the various quality teaching instruments, and for the consolidation and harmonisation of collected data. The objective is to help not only teachers to progress but also decision makers to thoroughly understand the needs of the faculty and the students alike, and to define a better framework that allows improved quality teaching and quality of learning.

At the University of Arizona, the University Teaching Centre provides diverse programmes and services to support instruction. Individual, departmental and university-wide programmes and services are designed to offer professional development opportunities to faculty, department heads, teaching assistants and instructional support staff. The Centre supports classroom learning environments, promotes learner-centred teaching and facilitates pedagogical exploration. The Centre pledges to be accessible to the university community. It promotes the teaching/learning process in support of the university's mission to be the nation's top learner-centred research university. The Centre collaborates with other instructional support and resource units on campus and reaches out to other universities and colleges to cultivate faculty development partnerships that foster a community of learners.

At the Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz (JGUM), the Internal Quality Assurance Centre provides accreditation of the university's programmes, and is responsible for adapting evaluation tools to specific courses and cross-analysing

the data collected. The Centre examines the consistency and coherence of the various initiatives taken by teachers and it ensures that their evaluation tools are relevant for the institution. The Centre's purpose is also to reflect on and explain the directions taken by the university and to disseminate its policy-making approach to researchers, teachers, administrative staff and students. The Centre guarantees that the internal quality assurance system is connected to and hence reinforces the interrelationships between the leadership of the institution and the academic community.

These two examples highlight the importance of meeting a set of prerequisites so the institution can rely on a body capable of providing information on quality teaching: sufficient staffing, a combination of research and service-type activities, and lasting policy-making support at the highest level.

Staffing dedicated services

Staffing is a critical issue. A small team can be effective if the development of the support to quality teaching remains minimal. Technical assistance for the design of instruments might be provided by one person, in connection with other in-house services like IT, statistics or student support. The creation of a service, whatever its size, is often a step taken by an institution to demonstrate responsiveness. The SU-HSE in the Russian Federation has reinforced organisational and methodological support for quality assessment at institutional as well as programme levels: along with the existing office for learning and methodological support, a new Analytical Centre will monitor the quality of education.

A problem arises when the institution's decision makers want to implement a more ambitious policy on quality teaching without allotting the necessary means. A one-person service is unable to take on diverse functions. Indeed, expanding institutional quality teaching is faced with multiple challenges beyond the technical aspects. The staff in charge of quality teaching must often convince (even plead with) the academia to adhere to institutional reforms, and they must be thoroughly aware of how the institution functions. Targeting the drivers in each department, keeping in touch with them, and understanding the cultural and historical background are mandatory conditions for positioning the service within the institution. As they need to assist the teachers, they need to understand the specificities and translate typical needs into the most accurate tools. Moreover, they must bridge the gap between the decision-making level and the heads of departments, and the teachers operating in the field, ensuring the fluidity of information and detecting misunderstandings. Additionally, they are accountable to the institutional leaders and should have the knowledge to organise sound feedback. Can one or two staff embrace such diversity of skills? Definitely not.

Introducing scholarship on teaching, along with in-service training

Although it would make no sense to decide on the right number of staff for a service on quality teaching (as this depends on the resources of the institution and on the goals of the quality teaching policy), a combination of skills is of utmost importance to cover the wide array of functions that such a service must achieve.

Institutions with a clear vision of a quality teaching policy should promote scholarship on teaching. The service in charge of quality teaching not only addresses the technical aspects but is also able to take a wider view and upgrade activities. At first, the involvement of experts in quantitative and qualitative data (e.g. sociologists, psychologists, statisticians) seems to add value to the activities in the field of quality teaching. They know where the traps and biases lie. The absence of aggregated results, the poor interpretation of data collected, the weaknesses of the evaluation measurement of any quality teaching support are common occurrences in every institution that have impeded historical comparisons.

The Université de Montréal makes a distinction between assisting teachers and carrying out reflection on quality teaching. One body helps with the field work and provides engineering in programme evaluation; the other caters to theoretical and strategic matters (such as how to appraise multidisciplinary programmes or how to gear the evaluation of research to teaching). The two bodies meet twice a month and collaborate actively.

Second, hiring researchers in educational sciences can help define the conceptual teaching framework, clarify educational objectives and give sense to the notion of quality teaching. They often scrutinise how the institution could appraise the impact of quality teaching support and they are committed to defining measurement indicators. They link an understanding of the teaching process with learning outcomes and they serve as a think tank to which the whole academic community can bring their knowledge and opinions. In some institutions, academics from the field of educational sciences build a body of research that is more aligned with the educational aims of the whole institution. Some teams working in the services for quality teaching publish and speak worldwide on the topic of quality teaching, which strengthens their reputation in the institution. For example, at McGill University, the Teaching and Learning Services engage in the delivery of teaching development programmes, individual consultation with faculty and policy development, grounding all their activities in research.

In institutions that are endowed with a strong vision of the aims of the education offered to their students, it makes sense to include research on the services for quality teaching. When teaching is considered as a function of the learning process that needs to be updated, taught, and discussed with

academics and students, long-term activities combining empirical and theoretical approaches are possible, and even necessary. The services are likely to become a clearinghouse for the institution on teaching aspects, working routinely for the teachers, and suggesting various activities irrespective of the pressure of programme evaluation.

The inclusion of different disciplines in the services allows triangulation of visions, and makes it possible to ground the operational support on a theoretical basis and on expert discussions. Conversely, scholarship on teaching is more connected with the real practices of teaching in-house and results in applied science activities.

Ensuring effectiveness through policy-maker support

The services dedicated to quality teaching are often vulnerable; they can be subjected to criticism by a reluctant academic community and deemed bureaucratic, useless and non-relevant to the academic mission of the institution. They need permanence, so as to gain visibility, build up their activities and become responsive partners for academia.

Traditional decision-making bodies could also misunderstand the need to improve quality teaching in higher education. In traditional research-intensive universities, a majority of researchers serve on governing committees. They highlight scholarship while overlooking quality teaching aspects that are often considered as incidental to the mission of academia. Research is emphasised because research performance drives the most brilliant academics and doctoral students, allows commercialisation and dissemination through patents and spin-offs, attracts extra funding and above all safeguards the distinctive feature of universities in the diverse arena of higher education. Some institutions of that type are discovering, however, that paying attention to quality teaching could be a way to reinforce and secure their institutional reputation.

Institution leaders who would like to expand a quality teaching strategy need to make quality teaching support explicit and legitimate. This could be done by constantly promoting activities and assigning a clear-cut role to the services in charge of quality teaching. Granting them official status in the organisational chart of the institution ensures legitimate interventions across departments and strengthens recognition of the service. Some of them have been officially appointed research centres in the institution. These are mostly services placed under the direct authority of the rector or the leader of academic affairs, hence their legitimacy and ability to operate closer to the academic community, despite the influence wielded by the heads of departments or other key actors. In some cases, academics serve on the governing body of the service dedicated to quality teaching, and conversely

the staff in charge of quality teaching might have a voice in the traditional decision-making bodies. The reputation of the service can thus be enhanced, doing away with the negative image of a useless and bureaucratic bureau, as sometimes occurs.

At the Copenhagen Business School, the responsibility of the Learning Lab is to ensure the alignment of the various initiatives in quality teaching with learning strategy. The Learning Lab states, "It is crucial that the ideal and assumptions on learning strategy rest on an organisational structure in which the will to experiment, to challenge and to inspire through continuous dialogue are central." The Lab's tasks are to harmonise resources, approaches, tools and practices without interfering in individual initiatives. The Learning Lab grounds its activities in operational practices, feeds reflection with research, provides research itself and breaks the insularity of the institution.

The Institute of Education of the University of London has a nationally sponsored Centre for Excellence in Work-Based Learning which integrates research and teaching. The Centre funds scholarly teaching development initiatives linked to research in professional and work-based learning, and promotes excellence across the Institute which is then fed into teaching practice.

Although every institution has set up a service dedicated to quality teaching and assigned it most of the development of quality teaching, it would require a lot of effort by the institution for a single body to symbolise the institutional effort to support quality teaching. Such a scheme works at Copenhagen Business School, but not every institution is able to provide so much investment.

However, the institutions point out that there is a risk of having an empty shell. Setting up a service or assigning a position in charge of quality teaching may not have a powerful impact on teaching improvement in the academic community, unless it is underpinned by a strong and widely accepted commitment to quality teaching. Technical aspects should be set apart from a genuine political commitment from top leadership (e.g. rector or vice-rector of academics affairs). The leaders must demonstrate that quality of teaching is at the pinnacle of their priorities and not just one additional mission. Mission statements could feature the concept of quality teaching in explicit terms. As an example, Alverno College posts a combination of institutional support (reflecting the political commitment, setting up the framework, providing support services, institutional research support, organising time and room for discussion) and of individual commitment by the departments and other divisions. The Office of Academic Affairs oversees reflection on quality teaching with the abilities departments, the discipline departments and other subcommittees. The Office of Educational Research and Evaluation is involved in teaching improvement to teachers.

Other institutions argue that some values underpin quality teaching, like excellence, adequacy of job market demand or equal opportunity for all students.

In other cases, quality teaching permeates every layer of institution-wide strategies, like the Teaching and Learning Strategy at Teesside University that overarches specific strategies such as that for e-learning. In France, the four-year agreement signed with the Ministry of Education reflects the objectives of institutions regarding research, teaching and other missions.

Hence institutional support is needed for an ambitious quality teaching policy. The institution must be knowledgeable about the aims of the teaching delivered and the means to reach objectives, to take into account the level of the culture of quality and to fine-tune the scope of quality support.

Additionally the commitment should include inventing the right structures to organise teamwork, ensure sensible functioning and fulfil the expectations of such a service. This is a question of managing quality teaching at the institutional level.

Most of the institutions covered by the sample consider it important to include reflection on quality teaching in the institution's routine and not sporadically, when some pressure (such as accreditation) so requires. Hence, academic affairs should not be set apart from the normal organisation nor should they be treated differently. The success of institutional quality teaching lies in the acceptance and the involvement of every part of the institution. The more weight the concept of quality teaching carries with the academic community, the more chances of success the institutional policy will have. The Catholic University of Louvain for instance adopted a governing system with cross-department pro-rectors rather than sector-wide positions, so they can design institutional policies.

Departments: The proper level for action

The success of any quality initiative supported by the institution depends mainly on the commitment of the heads of departments. We have seen that a dedicated service could be valuable within the university, but might fail if it is not serving an overall policy on quality teaching. The heads of departments are the main drivers helping the quality teaching spirit to spread and allowing operational implementation.

An institutional framework, departmental flexibility for implementation

A solely top-down approach makes no sense as most institutions – especially the largest multidisciplinary ones – are shifting to a highly decentralised system. Departments have ownership of their activities; this underpins their high level of accountability to the central university that provides the

framework and support to quality teaching. Because the responsibility of teaching lies first with the faculty, any concerns about quality teaching occur at the level of the departments, where the discipline culture prevails. Academics identify first with their discipline, then with their department (Hannan, Silver, 2000). In most institutions, even those with an undefined institutional identity, the sense of community and shared purpose happens at the department level. Teachers share similar values and they understand each other quite well. Usually, the distribution of authority and the budget allocation are conducted at that level. So it is common to contemplate quality teaching support with the heads of departments, since they can reflect back to the university leaders their own idea of teaching and the work atmosphere in the department. In many large institutions, the notion of identity and culture is communicated by the departments, whereas the institution strives to define a clear-cut institution-wide image and promote an overall quality culture.

In addition, heads of departments can discuss the practical means for operating and measure the chances of success. Heads have some latitude for implementing, sometimes customising quality teaching initiatives within the limits of the institutional framework.

At the Universidad Nacional del Nordeste, the Chairman of the Continuous Evaluation System is an officer (Secretary-General of Planning at the University, whose rank is equivalent to a Vice Chancellor at other universities). A technical body (Central Committee) of 15 people works collaboratively with the Local Committees set up in each of the Academic Units (departments) of about 5 to 10 people each. The Central Committee issued operating rules to assess indicators, procedures and timetables.

Conversely, an institution-wide quality teaching initiative has little chance of turning out well when the heads are reluctant to participate. The outcome of quality teaching initiatives is very much dependent on the leadership of heads of departments and their ability to convince teachers in their field. The departments of health are usually an illustration of the high level of consideration bestowed on quality teaching.

The Université de Pau et des pays de l'Adour wished to increase the success rate of its Bachelor students and has put together a quality contract. The quality contract is the framework to be signed by each department, committing the faculty to a set of activities to support the students and ensure their success. The institution has streamlined interventions with the departments and now grants additional benefits to departments that follow up on each individual student, allocates funding to innovative pedagogy initiatives and facilitates access to institution-wide support services (library, IT, Students Observatory, etc.)

Institutional leaders

Academics become involved when they can see some added value in return for their involvement. The institution must be able to define the aims before considering an institution-wide policy on quality teaching. Contemplating a quality teaching policy at institutional level requires dedication and commitment. The institution sets the pace of the reforms, sustains the commitment of the staff and finds relevant solutions to challenges like reluctance and controversy.

There should be continuous and identifiable leadership at the institutional level. Institutional leadership determines the allocation of support staff to assist the heads of departments and other staff in charge of quality teaching. Support staff sustain the pace of reform and ensure an accurate timeline for implementation by all departments (the iterative approach prevails and hence the pace might vary among departments). Leadership ensures reporting and discusses the outputs and results of the evaluation instruments. It ensures that motivation remains high and keeps track of teacher satisfaction when dealing with quality teaching initiatives.

Some institutions that are thoroughly committed to quality teaching continue to adapt the organisation while implementing and monitoring quality teaching initiatives. The search for the best structures and functioning requires that the institution adopt a strong evaluation culture, audit its own organisation and appraise its relevance.

Facilitating discussions with and within departments

Some departments have set up specific committees to facilitate discussions with heads on quality teaching matters. Effective collaboration requires appropriate platforms for discussion, not necessarily a higher number of bodies:

The initiative of the City University of Seattle is to ensure that the adjuncts deliver teaching in accordance with City University quality standards. It involves the deans, human resources director, director of curriculum, provost, full-time faculty and adjunct faculty. The faculty initiative is organised by the Faculty Initiative Committee, the Faculty Development and Standards Subcommittee and the Metrics Subcommittee. The primary committee implements the different parts of the initiative and the subcommittees meet to review reports, write job descriptions and implement tasks.

The Free University of Berlin prefers to hold meetings with the committees for teaching and studies, with the traditional faculty council and the deans.

Tohoku Fukushi University has no particular governance structure for quality teaching matters. Faculty are free to expand their own initiatives, provided that

these are approved by the University Council on the basis of their scientific and educational value, and practicalities. Strong institution-shared ethics provide the coherence of individual initiatives.

McGill University tries to combine pedagogy, conviction and involvement, with discussions and lively debates. McGill University prefers to increase the number of sessions rather than inflate the number of participants.

In smaller institutions, collaboration prevails and information is fluid. The involvement of the departments is seen as quite natural, especially if vocationally oriented programmes are offered. Heads are keen on safeguarding the knowledge and upgrading the teaching skills of the faculty who often come from non-academia. Project management governance fits better with smaller teaching-intensive institutions.

This type of management is also possible in larger institutions, provided that they are able to come up with a proper organisation and operating methods that ensure the highest level of participation. The size of the institution is therefore not an impediment to an ambitious quality teaching policy: more important is consistent participation, long-term academic involvement, the right instruments to uphold discussions (meetings that are too frequent hamper motivation) and the feeling that they gain more by participating than by remaining passive.

New functions and clear roles for staff

Generating fruitful collaboration requires a strong capacity on the institution's leaders' part to endorse an effective governance system in which each component plays a clear role. Institutions have been innovative in thinking up roles that ensure design and implementation of quality teaching initiatives. The content and the scope of the function should be thought through and clearly explained to staff. Contemplating a quality teaching policy entails imagining how the governance of the policy is going to happen. The question of means and staffing is important, but not as important as the awareness of the required skills to ensure quality teaching policies come into force.

The ownership of quality teaching initiatives is also crucial. Teachers must know in which framework they operate and why there is such a framework. Most institutions must be careful to involve teachers at the very beginning of the reflection exercise on quality teaching. The roles should be explained so that institution leaders, heads of departments and directors of supporting services have a clear sense of how much leeway they have, of the context in which they operate and of the goals of the mission. Quality teaching is so complex that no one can claim to be fully in charge of it. Collaborative responsibility seems to be the prevailing way to proceed, despite the

organisational difficulties. Institutions with a strong quality culture are likely to perform better in quality teaching.

At Teesside University, the e-Learning Project is co-ordinated centrally but responsibility and resourcing are devolved to each academic school. The Learning and Teaching Committee and a working group comprising e-learning co-ordinators (i.e. staff in charge of ensuring proper implementation at the operational level) drive central co-ordination and direction. Those e-learning co-ordinators benefit from the assistance of Learning and Teaching co-ordinators.

In Laurea University's Personnel Programme, the policy for teaching and teacher development is clear: all 284 teachers have development discussions with their degree programme leaders each year.

In most institutions, the leaders are attentive to what is accomplished in quality teaching and they assign responsive staff to implementation roles. Reporting is not just an extra task; it is a core activity to ensure success. Accountability is not limited to drafting an activity report or filling in a matrix of indicators, but should entail debates and lively discussions at the top level. Especially when the status of the services dedicated to quality teaching is seen to be as important as the other services (such as student induction and career counselling), the reporting requirement is crucial to touch base on the progress and hence influence the leaders' position and decisions. The main problem in reporting quality teaching lies with the shortage of accurate evaluation instruments. While taking stock of the progress of initiatives or reforms can be monitored quite closely, appraising the impact on the quality of teaching and ultimately on learning remains problematic (see the chapter on impacts).

Quality teaching at institutional level and synergy of policies

Many institutions have opted for a vision of quality teaching, considering that the unique performance of individual instructors could not improve the overall quality of the teaching delivered. Skelton recalls in *Times Higher Education Supplement* (16 November 2007) that teaching excellence is generally considered to be achieved through individual effort. But individual excellence masks crucial questions relating to basic material conditions of teaching and learning (e.g. staff-to-student ratios, sufficient time to think seriously about teaching and learning processes) which go beyond individual effectiveness.

Information technology policies (IT)

A vast majority of the institutions sampled link their commitment to quality teaching with IT policies (ranging from computer acquisition to in-depth technology-based learning strategies). Intranets and discussion forums are seen as a powerful communication tool within the academic community and with the students. There is a strong recognition by all the institutions that

communication has progressed and the level of information has never been that extensive. Even the largest multi-campus universities wishing to foster quality teaching could operate, proposing online courses, offering electronic kits for programme evaluations and hosting virtual good-teaching practices.

At the University of Arizona, the Learning Technologies Centre connects faculty, instructors, teaching assistants and staff to the latest advancements in instructional technology. The Centre provides guidance, training and production assistance “to turn ideas into reality”.

At Tohoku Fukushi University, since the quality teaching initiative requires students and staff to experience work conditions, relevant IT skills are acquired through hands-on training and experience rather than lectures.

Following a benchmarking project among six Australian universities developed by the Australasian Council on Open, Distance and e-Learning, the university identified three benchmarks for further action: aligning the use of technologies for teaching and learning with the institution’s strategic and operational plans, ensuring the adoption of new technology within current policy frameworks and aligning technologies in teaching and learning with the budget process.

Technology provides convenient tools for collecting and consolidating qualitative information. Programme evaluations are computer-processed, and data collection is no longer frustrating for the administrative staff assigned to these burdensome tasks. They are used to filling in student and teacher portfolios, monitoring teacher performance and conducting online satisfaction surveys. The connection with human resources policies is a synergy that is often quoted by the participating institutions. Since quality teaching support aims at evaluating teacher performance, the services in charge of human resources are close partners in the definition and implementation of instruments. The emergence of a results-driven culture has often entailed a profound cultural shift for services that were routinely handling teachers’ recruitment process and career progress.

Although quality teaching improvement and assessment seem to pursue contradictory objectives (as echoed in the recurrent debates on quality assurance as a way of improving the programme *vs.* warranting that quality does exist), this divide happens to be irrelevant for institutions. When they debate curriculum contents, ways of teaching (*e.g.* lectures in auditorium, one-off seminars, practice-based pedagogy, collaborative working) and their expected relevance and effectiveness regarding the education’s and apprenticeship’s purpose, teachers and staff in charge of quality teaching have the opportunity to discuss both the kind of improvement and the thresholds to be attained. Then the next obvious step can be a collaborative definition of the criteria for benchmarks and ultimately for assessing commitment to quality (*e.g.* attending development training) and improvement (*e.g.* refining

students' assessment). Even though research-based performance measures are present in most national academic systems, the institutions tend to extend the metrics and to base career progression on quality teaching criteria. Some examples are featured below:

At the Catholic University of Louvain, funding from the Pedagogical Development Funds is one of the criteria in the teachers' portfolio.

At Alverno, teachers are involved in the design of programmes and assessment system as part of their ongoing work. Alverno supports summer fellowships for teachers who want to improve quality teaching.

At the Free University of Berlin, outstanding evaluation results are a criterion for the Good Teaching Award.

At Macquarie University, as a result of the Performance Cultures of Teaching Project, an alignment of criteria of selection, probation, performance development, review and promotion is currently underway.

VU-Amsterdam University is now moving from a situation in which improving teaching quality was optional for each professional, to a situation in which further development of teaching qualities becomes an integrated part of a university career.

Learning facilities

Institutions are constantly upgrading living conditions for residential students and ensuring services for distance learners are convenient. Many of the sampled institutions have refurbished and expanded their buildings so that the students can get the best out of the teaching. New types of educational delivery have led the institutions to think about appropriate learning facilities. The services in charge of academic affairs are required to collaborate with those dealing with facilities, and to some extent to follow their development strategies.

At the Dublin Institute of Technology, the new teaching methods using e-learning have influenced the design of new teaching facilities. At Alverno College, all classrooms are now arranged with tables and chairs, no floor-bound desks, to allow for more interactive engagement among students. At Teesside University, the Learning Environment Working Group on Learning and the Teaching Committee work closely with Campus Facilities, in charge of the development of teaching and learning accommodation. At the Higher School of Economics, the university's administration studies the students' recommendations on the organisation of learning processes and learning environment when planning space and building strategies. For example, the multiplicity of educational buildings and student dormitories spread across Moscow (the SU-HSE is located in 26 buildings in different Moscow districts) is a real problem for most students and teachers, as indicated in a students' poll. To address this need, the SU-HSE

Administration is now building a large university complex, including a campus in the Moscow region (Troitsk).

Students' support policies

By contrast, the link between support for student learning and quality teaching remains incomplete. No doubt most institutions struggle to provide the best service to the students, targeting notably the more deprived among them. However, most of these actions are not enshrined in clear-cut objectives of proper policies; instead, they are the result of surveys and programme evaluations that describe the problem without providing any precise remediation. Collections of scattered actions are often built up at department level, subject to conflicts with the overall objectives of learning strategies and sometimes inequity. For instance, students in the health departments, in engineering and vocational training have more chance than other disciplines of receiving a tutorship that is aligned with the educational goals of their programmes.

Which institutions are better able to disseminate quality teaching initiatives?

Medium-sized and quality-culture oriented institutions are best placed

It is common sense that being able to work together with the entire staff and the students is an advantage for small- or medium-sized institutions. The possibility of informal meetings across diverse categories of staff and students allows for information fluidity. To get the staff involved in reflection or in any kind of debate is simply easier. In the various layers of authority, the decision-making process is straightforward and more inclusive, and feedback is more widely disseminated.

Autonomous institutions with high levels of accountability rely on their internal quality assurance systems to ensure that crucial thresholds are attained across the various departments and to detect deficiencies at an early stage.

At U21 Global, in order to enrich the students' learning experience, all components of the education delivery process must function seamlessly. For example, despite excellent online course content, if the professor facilitator is not an expert in online facilitation, there may be a direct impact upon student satisfaction. Similarly, problems with the tools of the learning management system may create student dissatisfaction despite high quality course content and praiseworthy faculty facilitation. Student care serves as a single point of contact for student problems. It directs problems to the relevant persons/departments (tech support, librarian, text book resource, professor, etc.)

At the Open University of Catalonia (UOC), all quality teaching initiatives are led by the Vice-Rector for Faculty and Academic Organisation, and the

Assessment and Quality Unit is in charge of their execution and co-ordination. This ensures coherence by having the same set of responsible persons for all initiatives. Moreover, within the faculties, the directors of studies (deans) and directors and administrators of each programme are in charge of monitoring the coherence of initiatives within their areas and designate one person responsible for quality in their teams. These individuals are monitored, trained and supported by the Assessment and Quality Unit.

Lastly, for those institutions that have designed a conceptual framework for teaching, this usually builds on an array of policies to deliver success. Unsurprisingly, when quality teaching is a pillar of quality culture, the linking of policies is clear and constantly strengthened by proper quality assurance mechanisms.

At City University, the university-wide strategy is founded on four main goals. The university units draft strategies that are structured around these four goals. Thus, each university unit has a strategy in alignment with the university's efforts to ensure quality improvement, including the faculty initiative.

Large institutions: an asset

Large and multidisciplinary institutions have considered their size an asset, not a problem, in that it allows for a variety of innovations in quality teaching.

McGill University developed the Tomlinson Project in University-Level Science Education (T-Pulse) Graduate teaching development workshops. The T-Pulse was established in 1992 as part of a significant endowment to McGill from Canadian scientist and businessman Richard H. Tomlinson to support the development of more effective teaching methods for university-level science students. T-Pulse has disseminated the workshop model to other faculties on the McGill campus. The Faculty of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences adopted the T-Pulse workshop model and invited the T-Pulse Teaching Fellows from the Faculty of Science to share their knowledge at the Macdonald campus where the Faculties of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences are located.

Multidisciplinary institutions are like granite, made of heterogeneous components that once they are conglomerated form a unified institution. Heterogeneity is not so important for the success of quality teaching initiatives: it would be unrealistic to align the naturally different viewpoints of the various departments within an institution. Nor can the pace of progress adopted by the departments be aligned with quality teaching: some departments are culturally or organisationally more prepared than others to endorse any quality teaching policy. A monolithic approach to quality teaching is irrelevant because quality teaching deals with human practices and very much depends on teaching attitudes at programme or even course

level. What is vital for the institution is to ensure that all departments move in the same direction, that they fully adhere to the strategy to be implemented and that they respect a certain time frame.

The University of Sherbrooke adopted a systemic approach, giving it a consolidated vision of all the components that contribute to the educational mission of the university. The skeleton frame allows the institution to understand the drivers and to motivate various categories of staff (e.g. technical, administrative and academic).

Large institutions have been able to offset their drawbacks in terms of size by setting up organisational systems that grant power to the deans and heads of departments. Provided that the heads are close partners of the central leadership, and are able to boost the faculty members' interest in quality teaching, size does not impede institution-wide implementation of quality teaching policies.

At Macquarie University, while the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Provost) has executive authority over academic matters in the learning and teaching area and responsibility for the university's Quality Enhancement Framework, quality teaching is achieved through working with academic governance committees (Academic Senate and its subcommittees) and faculty management. The Chief Academic Officer has strategic oversight of planning, quality and delivery of education. All projects must follow standard protocols for project management, including broad consultation with the university community, and adherence to Macquarie's Quality Enhancement Framework.

Some very large institutions with large staffs delegate authority to implement and monitor the initiatives to subdepartments (e.g. Department of German in the Faculty of Foreign Languages). Faculty members need to feel that they can benefit directly from quality teaching initiatives: the level of interest can sometimes lie at department level, sometimes at programme level. It is the heads of department responsibility to foster the proper level of motivation for faculty members, depending on the cultural boundaries in institutions, which can be difficult to overcome. Disciplinary or research themes might indeed be highly specific and hamper any attempt at collaboration across departments. Furthermore it is up to both the institution and the heads of departments to balance individual motivation and the overall benefits of quality teaching.

How to disseminate quality teaching at institutional level?

Upscaling small but valuable initiatives

Some institutions find it easier to start small, to experiment at course or programme level, to appraise the early results of the initiatives, and then consider scaling up at cross-departmental or institutional scale. The courses

or the programme are a lab for experiments, on the basis of which the heads of departments and leaders might develop a rule of thumb, progressing by trial and error. Such scaling up may occur irrespective of the size of the institution. At a second stage, the institution, together with the committed heads of departments, will scale up the experiment if they find it relevant.

The Free University of Berlin started to develop critical thinking on quality teaching with a small number of motivated researchers who struggled to expand the evaluation system because other faculties had their own well-functioning systems. Treating the evaluation at institutional level undeniably boosted the expansion, coherence and harmonisation.

After experimenting with some quality teaching initiatives, institutions might find some transversal strengths allowing them to harmonise several tools into one.

At Mykolas Romeris University, various elements of the institution quality teaching support (online student evaluation of study subjects, in-service training of academic staff, teacher self-assessment, modernisation and organisation of the study environment) are co-ordinated and thus have become a comprehensive system.

Providing appropriate material

To ensure harmony of the various initiatives, some institutions have formalised their actions in booklets distributed to faculty members.

At VU-Amsterdam, the evaluation programme is part of the institution's Handbook of Educational Quality. The Handbook (posted on the university's website) contains rules and recommendations about the educational process (educational testing, counselling, etc.). In the years to come, the Handbook may be rewritten as a result of changes in the Dutch system of higher education. The book will also be translated into English.

U21 Global has issued a Quality Assurance Manual in which every process is well defined (to create standard operating procedures) with clear responsibilities of individuals and quality assurance checkpoints built in at various steps. This has helped immensely in permeating the quality teaching initiative throughout the organisation.

Key drivers

Some institutions, and often the heads of departments themselves, reported difficulties in consolidating and disseminating experiments at institution level when they are conducted by individual teachers or departments. (Sharing experiments through platforms and forums might not be sufficient.)

First, the leaders recognise that they sometimes know nothing about the activities conducted at department level. Despite the fact that many

institutions give permission to or reward individual teachers who develop or adopt quality teaching initiatives, there is little feedback, even at department level. Institutional leaders therefore cannot appraise the relevance and the likelihood of sustaining these initiatives at institutional level.

Second, they deplore the lack of appropriate monitoring and evaluation tools that could demonstrate the usefulness of these experiments. In fact, tools do exist but they are under-used: information systems generate data that is ignored or does not produce any feedback. When individual initiatives are extended without proper objectives and evaluations, there is very little chance that they will benefit the whole institution. Conversely, when the results are a focal point for discussions and a proxy for measuring teaching improvement, the dissemination of quality teaching practices is more likely.

To deal with these difficulties, the institution's leaders have secured the sustainable commitment of key drivers, preferably the heads of departments. Expanding quality teaching requires time and sustained motivation. The institution must keep these drivers informed and provide proper training for them to be able to disseminate the policy clearly. Drivers must be reliable, seen as legitimate authorities by the other faculty members, and they must be skilled in quality teaching matters. The institution's responsibility might also be to facilitate the departments' empowerment to launch such initiatives. Not only should the university promote initiatives, it should also help at the implementation level. The institution is responsible for overseeing the involvement of the heads of department and supporting them in this task, for instance by thinking of ways of involving faculty members, or by reducing their research or teaching burden so that they can allocate enough time to discussing quality teaching.

Reflecting success stories

The quality of the dialogue is also crucial for successful dissemination on quality teaching. Most institutions are keen to uphold an in-house information system (i.e. *exchanging* information, not just providing it). It is the institution's responsibility to find the most appropriate structures and communication instruments; the one-size-fits-all model is irrelevant in organising quality teaching support.

The institutions might prompt teachers to display their initiatives. The progress of quality teaching initiatives is mainly due to the collaboration of those who participated and were asked to share what they had done regarding quality teaching. The motivation of teachers is sustained when they can reflect on their own work. The institution, together with the heads of departments, must promote such windows for expression.

The Dublin Institute of Technology publishes an online journal to publicise findings and an annual showcase on pedagogical innovations. Started seven years ago, the showcase has become a traditional event. Here the institution underlines the importance of dissemination of practices and opens the loop of those who already have thorough knowledge in that field to the entire community.

Internal competition and excellence may also be stimulated through *ad hoc* prizes which heighten successful experiences in teaching and learning.

At Macquarie University, teams, individual professional and technical staff, and students groups are encouraged to apply for Vice-Chancellors Awards in Learning and Teaching. There are four types of Vice-Chancellor's Awards that provide incentives for excellence in learning and teaching. For example, the Award for Teaching Excellence promotes, recognises and rewards excellence in coursework teaching at either undergraduate or postgraduate levels, while the Awards for Programmes that Enhance Learning are given to learning and teaching support programmes and services that make an outstanding contribution to the quality of student learning and the quality of the student experience at Macquarie. The programmes and services that receive these awards must demonstrate their effectiveness through rigorous evaluation and set benchmarks for similar activities in other institutions.

Involving technical and administrative staff

Except for medium-sized vocational and technological institutions involving the whole community, most of the institutions sampled overlook the role of support staff in the development of quality teaching. Quality teaching somehow seems to remain the property of academics. Two reasons might be offered: faculty members are the first targeted beneficiaries of the quality teaching initiatives. Second, the review showed that a learning-outcomes approach is quite disconnected from the input-process approach that prevails when teaching. Interestingly, support staff who keep track of students and accompany them on their educational path are key players in student support policies. They are assumed to provide mediation between academia and the students, especially in institutions with weak teacher-to-student relationships, international students who are not familiar with local conventions or indecisive freshmen.

Macquarie University involves the technical and administrative staff as a demonstration that change has to occur in an institutional approach. The Teaching Quality Indicators Steering Group has a membership of 16, 6 of whom are professional members of staff, including the University Librarian, the Academic Registrar and the Director of Human Resources. The Academic Registrar's Office, an administrative office, includes an Academic Programmes Section which supports the review of undergraduate academic programmes.

Chapter 4

Monitoring and Measuring Quality Teaching

As many higher education institutions struggle with identifying methods for measuring teaching quality, this chapter first reveals the institutional challenges in appraising quality teaching. Then, it illustrates innovative approaches to include more objectivity in the appraisal of impacts in order to make up for the shortage of appropriate evaluation instruments. The emergence of more qualitative measurement tools, a dedicated evaluation on the overall impact of quality teaching, simplifying the evaluation, making quality and teaching meaningful, and interpreting the subjective results of the evaluation are the examples of institutions' responses to the challenge of the lack of reliable instruments. Finally, this chapter examines the impacts of quality teaching on: teaching, research and the culture of quality.

“**T**here are in fact, no widely accepted methods for measuring teaching quality, and assessing the impact of education on students is so far an unexplored area as well” (Altbach, 2006). A brief comparison between teaching and research will clarify the complexity surrounding the evaluation of teaching. Although the process of knowledge creation can be predictable in research, research activities undergo frequent and thorough evaluations and there are a number of research performance indicators worldwide (e.g. bibliometrics).

All higher education institutions have defined conditions to ensure the quality of education (recruitment, facilities, students support, etc.), yet they struggle to appraise teaching performance on a reliable basis. Few of them appraise the improvement in teacher performance resulting from quality teaching support. Even fewer are able to understand to what extent teacher performance enhances the quality of student learning. To make up for the shortage of appropriate evaluation instruments, some institutions have explored innovative ways to include more objectivity in the appraisal of impacts.

The evaluation of quality teaching: Accepted in principle, challenged in reality

The need for evaluation

Whatever the support provided to the quality of teaching (programme evaluation, professional development, etc.), all the institutions have implemented evaluation instruments in order to closely monitor their action in that field. In fact, quality teaching includes a variety of initiatives that are often innovative, dynamic and subjected to continuous review and improvement, and these should therefore be closely managed.

The appraisal of quality teaching helps to demonstrate that teaching is of high importance for the institution. For those in the sample, such appraisal should overcome some teachers' reluctance and accelerate the scaling up of quality teaching within the institution. The legitimacy of quality teaching initiatives is to be appraised and the outputs of the evaluation discussed. The evaluation helps teachers and leaders alike to understand the gains and progress to be made in order to benefit students' learning. Their acceptance of the evaluation is reflected in the statement of Hau, “for such [an] initiative to be truly effective, the level of teaching must continue to be assessed very

regularly – indeed quality teaching’s goal is the continual improvement of the teaching level and the continual ‘removal of learning defects’” (Hau, 1996).

Most institutions have claimed that a failure to carry out an evaluation of quality teaching would leave room for rumours and reputation to drive the perception of quality in higher education. Many have understood that showing results is a communication tool that will ultimately have an impact on reputation. Unlike research, teaching is rather rarely appraised, due to a lack of tools and to the long-standing neglect of the academic community. Now the pressure of governments, funding councils and society (and the media) has forced institutions to find the means to show the outputs of teaching. Many of them are in the process of redefining their programmes by shifting from an academic content to a learning outcomes approach. Institutions are tempted to define tools for measuring the knowledge and skills gained *after* the completion of studies.

Embarking on a quality teaching policy has frequently been an opportunity to involve the faculty and the whole range of stakeholders such as employers, institutional partners and students. The question of quality teaching is therefore more thoroughly addressed by a variety of concerned people.

Input and activity indicators, and level of satisfaction

The performance indicators currently used by higher education institutions are generally chosen because they are readily quantifiable and available, and not because they accurately assess the quality of the teaching (Bormans, Brouwer, Veld and Mertens, 1987). Therefore over-interpreting performance indicators is ever more dangerous (Chalmers, 2007). These findings have been confirmed by the sample of institutions for this review.

The evaluation is limited to revealing and taking stock of the steps in quality teaching initiatives. Part of the success of quality teaching support depends on acceptance by the teachers and the use of the instruments at their disposal in their teaching activities. Most of these instruments are input-oriented, whereby they measure the resources allocated by the institution for the purpose of teaching (*e.g.* number of positions) and suitable learning conditions (*e.g.* square metres for library). Some institutions have implemented evaluation systems to monitor the policies and mechanisms that support the quality of teaching, often by setting a range of activity indicators (*e.g.* number of teachers attending training courses). The level of involvement by the faculty is often measured.

The introduction of technologies and electronic data processing has had a tremendous impact with the advent of standardised tools allowing comparisons of quantitative data over time and across departments. Data

collection and processing have been drastically improved thanks to specific software purchased or designed by the institutions. Students are asked to fill in online surveys and to grade their opinion on the course or programme. Although used widely, students' questionnaires still carry controversy within academia. Douglas and Douglas (2006) highlight the fact that the teaching staff has generally very little faith in student questionnaires. Contrastingly, for Madu and Kwei, using student evaluation as a measure of teacher performance negatively influences the quality of teaching. The student evaluation system may not give incentives to the teacher to develop strategies that would help students in the long run, and may lead the teacher to adopt short-term strategies instead (Madu and Kwei, 1993). The researchers call for the use of student evaluations as a means to give feedback to teachers.

Overall, higher education reforms like the Bologna Process have prompted institutions to monitor more closely the implementation of new tools (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, diploma supplement, etc.) and quality assurance mechanisms, and hence they can report on progress.

The difficulty in appraising the teaching-learning process

Few institutions succeeded in demonstrating the direct impact of the initiatives on the quality of teaching. Most of them think that the emergence of an impact is a slow process and that they should let quality teaching initiatives scale up for visible impacts to appear. Some decided to limit the evaluation to input factors.

There is now broad acceptance of the fact that tracking the individual impact of one initiative on a single teaching experience makes no sense. Multiple quality teaching initiatives result in an array of levers that are likely to produce impacts when combined together. A holistic approach could help the institutions to better address this phenomenon. A prevailing thought regarding the impact of quality teaching support is built on assumptions rather than on clear-cut demonstrations. Institutions assume that paying attention to the quality of the recruitment process, helping teachers to improve, upgrading learning conditions or assisting students to better learn can result in quality teaching and ultimately in learning.

The CBS Learning Lab, a centralised body, contributes to the collection of conditions that improve student learning. Due to the lack of cause-effect tools to demonstrate the direct impact of quality teaching on learning, the Learning Lab builds up a body of beliefs, supported by research, as the sole evidence. Benchmarks and external evaluations of the quality teaching initiatives are also likely to provide other insights on the potential success for learning experience.

The sample used for this review shows that the teaching-learning approach is rarely endorsed either at department level or at institutional level. There is a lack of understanding of the causal link between teaching and learning. The teaching-learning process is seldom appraised – except by experts in the field of educational sciences, but these operate on the margins. This is underlined by Kaneko: even if the achievement of students is assessed, it cannot be translated into the effective change in the teaching/learning process unless enough information about teaching/learning is available (Kaneko, 2008).

The research on education is not primarily meant to respond to institutional concerns. The case of the Australian-based project on Teaching Quality Indicators seems unique in the breadth of its scope and its operational expectations for universities. The project-angle used by the universities of applied sciences of the sample tries to capture the teaching-learning process by a wide array of criteria.

For Laurea University, transforming the teaching culture encompasses the institution's whole area of operation. Laurea's critical success factors are research and development and regional development, learning by developing, educational process, quality control and competence management.

Some institutions argue that evaluating the teaching-learning process would be pointless: given that the most important issue for the students is to gain knowledge and skills, they consider that there is no need to further investigate the impact of quality teaching. While correctly handling the measurement of progress and satisfaction resulting from quality teaching initiatives, those institutions just give up on evaluating the impact of teaching on learning and prefer to explore the learning outcomes of their programmes.

The consequences of a lack of appraisal of the impact of teaching on learning are diverse. This situation is likely to definitely hamper any reflection on the added value of teaching on the learning process and might overlook the high-impact activities undertaken by the students in educational activities, like common intellectual experience or learning activities (Kuh, 2009). Second, even though the students' entry in the job market is a major expectation, this leaves aside the other missions of higher education. Higher education is meant to help students to become responsible citizens endowed with critical thinking, and not just formatted workers. Last, if quality teaching cannot be correctly evaluated, there is a risk of undermining all the efforts achieved by the institutions.

However, can we consider that learning outcomes are better appraised and can counterbalance the scant appraisal of the teaching-learning process? The acceptance of the learning outcomes approach is progressing at a fast rate among those faculty members who have entirely redesigned their education

offer accordingly. Transnational initiatives and international trends have pushed forward the importance of taking account of learning outcomes (e.g. the Tuning Project).

Several recent reviews pointed out the difficulty for teachers to appraise the quality of learning outcomes against appropriate criteria. Few student assessment systems are aligned with the learning outcomes of the programmes. Even institutions that are more advanced in quality teaching admit the difficulty they encounter in appraising further the impact of quality teaching support against learning outcomes. Several reasons are mentioned:

- The logical route from teaching input to learning outcome is unknown or only experimentally examined by experts in education. As was stated earlier, explorations run by researchers in pedagogy rarely feed reflection at institutional level. They do not have instruments to capture the effective changes driven by the teaching and the learning processes. When these do exist, they stem from specific case studies that have no use for more extended evaluation.
- The teaching-learning process is overlooked by the traditional evaluation and accreditation systems. They particularly leave aside the students' personal efforts and motivation, their workload and their reaction to diverse pedagogical attitudes.
- Unlike what happens in primary or secondary education, the learning gained in higher education results from a wider array of factors that are external to the education provided by the institution. Learning in higher education is the result of a combination of teaching, practice and behavioural skills, and of other components that are external to the institution's capacity.

Lack of reliable evaluation instruments

More qualitative measurement tools are emerging

Many institutions have wanted to go further than simply develop activity and input indicators, in order to better reflect the variety of what might produce quality improvement. Some of them designed more qualitative indicators or instruments that can reflect more qualitative changes. Thus, Macquarie University tries to capture the leadership capacities of the faculty through the provision of examples at different academic levels in its promotion criteria. Laurea evaluates the working atmosphere bi-annually and the leadership annually.

Along with online evaluation, opinion surveys have provided additional measurement of the student satisfaction rate regarding the quality of the education received, that typically includes the courses, teacher attitudes,

understanding of the discipline and the quality of the learning environment. Other kinds of opinion surveys try to capture the teachers' viewpoints regarding the quality of institutional support intended to improve their quality of teaching. These surveys inform the institution about the relevance and effectiveness of the support, based on the perception of the teachers concerned. Only institutions involved in teaching and learning policies carry out opinion surveys for teachers on a regular basis. The level of commitment is the most common indicator used by the institutions to appraise the success of the initiatives.

Because they are aware that it can be difficult to appraise quality teaching, the institutions have developed qualitative indicators using descriptors. The descriptors are used to grade the situation against a scoring scale that is intended to reflect a less subjective picture. Descriptors are defined jointly with the practitioners, in order to reflect the reality of their teaching. A multi-criteria grid reflects the teaching process and presents several levels for improvement.

At the University of La Laguna, the directors of the training programme conduct a detailed report each year on the development of the activity. Individualised reports are drawn up for each teacher. Both are sent to the administrative unit in charge of developing the programme. The aspects covered in the annual report and the individualised reports are: teacher needs, self-assessment on each indicator or developed competence, assessment of the quality indicators and tested skills, educational activities carried out according to each indicator or competence, practical tasks undertaken and strategies deployed by each indicator or competence, participation in the process of mentoring, simulation evaluation, digital portfolio development and participation in discussion forums.

Other institutions have developed triangulation of information sources. Sherbrooke University defined an entire qualitative indicators system with open questions. On the basis of this, the university tries to triangulate information from various sources (students, external partners, academics).

The institution plays a crucial part in fostering and co-ordinating the evaluation of quality teaching initiatives. When this is left to individuals, the teachers find it difficult to appraise the impact of the initiatives to improve their teaching. They fail to further explore the impact of their own initiatives. They can tell whether attending a course or using new IT pedagogical tools can or cannot affect their activities. But they devote so much time and dedication to upgrading their teaching that they run out of time to monitor and evaluate it afterwards. Without a minimum of evaluation, the institutions know that there will be little chance for individual initiatives to scale up within the institution and so they feel that it is legitimate to set up an institution-wide evaluation system.

A dedicated evaluation on the overall impact of quality teaching

Institutions carry out institution-wide evaluations of the relevance and effectiveness of all the levers used by the institution in order to foster learning. The limited resources of the services dedicated to quality teaching and the specific skills required to undertake a thorough evaluation often prompt the institution to call for external evaluation. Such an evaluation is disconnected from the evaluation of quality teaching, and embraces the quality of learning outcomes.

Teesside University considered that evaluating quality teaching initiatives offered a structured opportunity to analyse whether teaching had changed for the faculty. However, because it is difficult to ascertain the impact on the students, it was decided to carry out a specific evaluation of the impact of the strategy, based on staff and student inputs.

For McGill University, the impact of quality teaching is appraised continuously and across the board for the benefit of students. Formal mechanisms include student course ratings for all courses and teaching portfolios submitted for reappointment, tenure and promotion. The latter gives the individual professor the chance to present evidence of teaching effectiveness, steps taken to improve teaching, leadership initiatives to promote and support teaching, and the scholarship of teaching. In addition, faculty submit annual reports on their academic performance, including their teaching and graduate supervision. The Teaching and Learning Services provide support to faculty and administrators with a view to enhancing quality but they do not assess the impact of their activities other than collecting satisfaction ratings and anecdotal data.

Simplifying the evaluation

One way of achieving better evaluation is to assign the right objectives to the quality teaching initiatives. Many quality teaching initiatives, even the most modest ones in terms of scope or target, often carry too broad or too many objectives. The likelihood of attaining institution-wide educational goals with a limited set of actions for improving quality teaching is small. The institutions have preferred to assign a tight but realistic objective to each of the actions and to consider how each objective could feed the more general ones.

Making quality and teaching meaningful

Some consider that any quality teaching initiative, at programme, departmental or institutional level, is likely to identify problems rather than solve them. When initiatives on teaching are initiated, some institutions take the time to explore the concept of quality teaching before launching any concrete action.

Any consideration of actions regarding quality teaching is likely to set off discussions on the topic. In many institutions implementing coherent support to quality teaching, the very act of teaching is questioned, often for the first time. Quality teaching becomes an excuse to start debates on the teachers' core mission. Some institutions have defined the concept of teaching with the faculty and collaboratively explored the underlying meanings of the concept of quality. Quality teaching thus becomes a shared notion, thoroughly discussed and ultimately shared by the academic community. Harvey *et al.* (1992) have underlined the importance of involving stakeholders to define quality, including students, employers, teaching and non-teaching staff, government and funding agencies, creditors, auditors, assessors and the community at large.

Similarly to quality culture, the concept of quality teaching is highly dependent on the institution's ability to put a meaning to keywords that too often remain meaningless and hence misused. Quality of teaching reflects the institution's identity. Any external standards can define quality or excellence of teaching, and each institution owns its concept of quality teaching. Once the notions of quality and of teaching have been defined, the institution is in a better position to determine appropriate instruments for appraising quality. Not surprisingly, autonomous and corporate institutions may be more inclined to explore the appropriate evaluation system.

Alverno College illustrates to what extent the institution has sought to link together student assessment, quality of teaching and learning outcomes.

At Alverno College, the most important measure of progress in teaching is student learning with respect to the identified learning outcomes (abilities) in the curriculum. Faculty assess students in relation to learning outcomes in all courses, and student success in the courses depends on success in the assessments. As faculty members notice areas that need improving, they work with one another to design learning experiments and assessments that address those areas. In addition, the Office of Educational Research and Evaluation assists with programme and institutional assessment and shares results that guide Alverno College's thinking about improvements.

By contrast, some institutions have implemented an evaluation system along with the policy intended to improve teaching. Reflecting on appropriate standards in parallel with the design of quality teaching support helps to define with accuracy the main stages to be attained. Defining the evaluation criteria helps the institution and teachers alike to put a meaning on the word "quality" and on the goal of teaching.

At Laurea University, the evaluation is a core part of the recognition of the pedagogical model, and its purpose is to strengthen institutional quality culture. Laurea evaluates other aspects that contribute to learning as well as teaching, for

instance the working climate and the leadership capacities of academics. The pedagogical model has undergone a collaborative internal evaluation with faculty, students and stakeholders. An international external evaluation then took place. The university additionally applied for a national prize (Centre for Teaching Excellence), which can be seen as a strong recognition of the effectiveness of the institution's teaching model.

Interpreting the subjective results of the evaluation

Institutions have internalised the difficulty of evaluating student progress: they have replaced a formal evaluation system with a more open and flexible set of evaluation attitudes, taking into account the dynamic process of learning, and comprising broad subjective human aspects. They then share problems and solutions with the academic community.

In some institutions, the evaluation takes place in terms of discussions with the community rather than in quantitative measurement. Input and activity indicators are a pretext for discussion, not a quantitative measurement. The results of the input indicators (student-to-teacher ratio or participation in professional development training) provide a pattern for the discussions, and turn a highly subjective situation into a more objective one. These institutions consider there is no single reality when addressing quality teaching. The interpretation of results becomes the core issue as it helps teachers to describe their reality. Institutions try to understand the effects on teaching, on learning, and additionally unexpected side effects that might have an incidental impact on the quality of teaching.

At VU-Amsterdam, the programme evaluation will help the institution to interpret the results. When the staff members in charge of monitoring the programme evaluation are accountable to the board, they should assist the interpretation. The outputs of the programme evaluation are derived from the interpretation made by the teachers, not just from the indicators (as these are subjective and not always reliable according to the institution). Regarding the development programme for teachers, the main challenge is to find ways of dealing with teacher and faculty complaints that they cannot find the time to spend on the courses, which is a serious issue. This is still unresolved, due to the workload and pressure from research duties. CETAR, together with the Directors of Education of the departments, is therefore trying to find ways of improving participation in professional development courses and looking for solutions to overcome their practical objections.

The Université de Montréal thought that instead of trying to identify the direct impacts of its programme policy and exploring the causal link, the university should highlight its catalysing effect on the coherence of the message, the clarity of discourse and the alignment with the institutional strategy. The evaluation

might be low in terms of results but it is likely to contribute to the emergence of a tradition of evaluation and competence in programme design and monitoring. Due to the institutional evaluation policy, programme design is no longer owned by each department or programme leaders, but it has become an institutional stake.

The right structures with the right evaluation staff

A visible and responsible service

A properly staffed and skilled evaluation team helps programme leaders and teachers to design evaluation tools, and to collect and process data. Such a team is likely to further explore the meaning of the outputs and to include research activities in order to upgrade the evaluation system. In many instances, the services dedicated to quality teaching support are in charge of the evaluation of quality teaching initiatives. The challenge that they face is to transform a mere impression that quality teaching has progressed into a less subjective statement.

In most of the institutions where the concept of quality teaching is well advanced, the dedicated service intervenes within a kind of hub-and-spoke model, at the central level or at the level of the head of departments, depending on who is responsible and accountable for quality teaching initiatives.

At VU-Amsterdam, the departments are responsible for programme evaluation and for the actions aiming at improvement. In return, the heads have a direct interest in fostering the quality of the faculty's teaching. CETAR put together the outputs of the programme evaluations of each department and drafted a general overview. The level of success in disseminating quality teaching initiatives within the institution stems from the heads' constant involvement.

In the larger institutions, when departments have total control over the definition of their own processes and criteria, the institution may find it challenging to involve reluctant heads and to ensure that they perform in line with the institutional requirements. The institution can therefore assign a specific person to guarantee the quality of the monitoring and of the implementation and to liaise with the institutional leaders. Institutions might furthermore require that the services dedicated to quality teaching foster research on measurement and explore new ways of assessing the impact of the initiatives intended to improve quality teaching.

In Seattle, the City University is committed to searching for new metrics. The current metrics and their targets are to be fully reassessed, in parallel with the reflection on quality teaching improvement. The university needed to first identify a set of demonstrable faculty metrics that have been shown to be correlated with student progress, then measure the current state, set goals and work toward

achieving those goals. The need for metrics and ways to measure faculty success has led to some research activities in adjunct faculty metrics and quality. The new Faculty Initiative is also being used to understand how faculty behaviour supports the achievement of outcomes on the part of students.

Involving staff

Several institutions consider that involving the staff in the evaluation of quality teaching initiatives enables the faculty to understand and study this issue. Involving as many members of the staff as possible is likely to raise the faculty's interest in quality teaching. Some institutions face the difficulty of promoting a mechanism fostering quality teaching when there is not pre-existing means to prove the impact and usefulness of such initiatives for the faculty.

The institution is responsible for organising and promoting the evaluation, which should not be a side activity, but the cornerstone of the institutional policy. When the institution encourages discussions of results and the meaning of the outputs (such as how to interpret the findings of the programme evaluation), this is a chance to raise awareness of the importance of the quality teaching aspect of the education delivered. The idea is not to get faculty members to serve on evaluation steering committees only, but to be an essential part of the evaluation process in which everybody's motivation, competence and involvement count. The evaluation is an opportunity for the institution to advocate for the idea that quality teaching depends on a collaborative commitment and not just on personal performance.

Arcada distinguishes pedagogical measurement from institutional action plan measurement. The pedagogical aspect is left to teachers at the level of the department. The academic leadership meets programme leaders once or twice a month. The quality of the dialogue with the academics results in an iterative building of knowledge on the outputs. The frequent interaction between institutional leaders and programme leaders on the implementation of the programme and the feedback is crucial. These frequent meetings enable the top leadership to touch base on the evolution of quality teaching.

The Istanbul Technical University established education committees and accreditation committees at university, faculty and department levels and linked them together as a network to organise and integrate all the efforts related to quality assurance across the university. This structure penetrates deep into each department to get all the individual academics involved.

The dialogue needs to be upheld by the institution. A balance must be struck between a continuous dialogue (e.g. through routine meetings) and the need to stand back and discuss the issue. In addition, the dialogue must be on record and analysed. The service dedicated to quality teaching or the office in

charge of quality is best placed to maintain that memory. Although continuity and openness of dialogue are vital for the evaluation, the institutions find it relevant to set the pace of the evaluation and schedule specific times for thorough discussions on quality teaching, e.g. before an accreditation or the renewal of agreement with a funding council.

At Alverno College, in order to provide time for this important task, no classes are scheduled by the college on Friday afternoons, and that time is devoted to collaborative work among faculty in ability departments or discipline departments, with a focus on teaching, learning and assessment. In addition, the faculty holds three 2- to 3-day institutes every year in August, January and May. These are also devoted to issues related to teaching, learning and assessment. All faculties are expected to participate in the Friday afternoon sessions and the institutes, and their contributions to that work are very important in evaluating their work as faculty members.

The impacts of quality teaching on teaching effectiveness

The following developments deal with the institutions' own appraisal of the impacts of quality teaching. The text below examines the impacts of quality teaching on: teaching, research and the culture of quality.

Launching quality teaching initiatives and establishing a policy based on the aims of teaching has given leaders and faculty members a sharper view of the kind of teaching delivered within their institution. Some institutions are now able to create an inventory of the various teaching practices in their departments and at course level, describing the design, implementation and monitoring of programmes, students' assessment and the support intended to improve student learning. However the impact is more visible on the relevance of teaching than on its effectiveness, which remains generally little known.

Awareness of the teachers' role

Irrespective of the kind of quality teaching support available from their institution, faculty members believe that investing in quality teaching would help them to better understand the content of the university's teaching mission and their own duties in putting this mission into practice. Teachers have certainly gained a clearer understanding of the aims pursued by teaching in higher education, beyond their own knowledge area. Furthermore, they are aware that teaching is a dynamic activity with extremely subjective aspects depending on personal and collective philosophy and values. In many cases, teachers have dramatically changed their attitudes in class, in student assessments, or in the design and implementation of the syllabus and are paying closer attention to the learning outcomes of the programmes offered.

The academic community is undergoing a real cultural shift: the concept of teaching is a new focal point that is ignored for the most part during initial training. Quality teaching initiatives have raised teachers' awareness that teaching is neither an obvious nor a natural activity. They understand that their initial qualification is not sufficient to ensure the quality of the teaching delivered and hence requires ongoing improvement. The role of the teacher (as an individual but also as a component of a collective mission) is being clarified. This trend has mitigated the teachers' reluctance to improve their pedagogical skills. It has enabled them to better relate their own expectations to programme or institution expectations of learning outcomes.

The impacts on pedagogy

On the basis of satisfaction surveys and discussions run by institution leaders, heads of departments or programme leaders, there is a discernible impact on pedagogy, despite the small number of quantitative measurements. Many pedagogical impacts have to do with the user-friendliness and appropriate use of technologies. While the teachers describe their difficulties in using IT tools correctly, they often overlook IT's added value for pedagogy. The value of IT can be restricted to using a convenient format and a purely informative support (*e.g.* showing slides instead of photocopying papers). Quality teaching initiatives, through professional development courses, have highlighted the beneficial function of IT in pedagogy improvement and helped teachers explore how IT might support them in accomplishing their mission.

Other pedagogical impacts are the result of better collaboration among teachers of the same department, or even from various departments. When teaching is discussed in the institution, similar concerns emerge for all the faculty members, irrespective of their disciplines. A few initiatives from the sample of institutions target the specific goal of revisiting student-to-teacher interaction, which is vital for effective pedagogy.

In 2006 the Board of the VU University Amsterdam formulated a new institution-wide policy on education for the university, establishing the university as a community of learners. The university promotes inquiry and collaborative learning by increasing the interaction among researchers, teachers and students, and among students. The policy also calls attention to individual student ambition, critical thinking and independent learning by implementing empowering pedagogical strategies.

How the institution deals with diversity has an indirect but significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning (Chalmers, 2007). Diversity can encourage teachers to question their own practices. Interaction with students from different backgrounds and a university's positive approach to

diversity improve the quality of student learning (Antonio, 2001, among others). For instance, interacting with international students provides opportunities for all students to learn about other cultures and question their own beliefs.

For most of the quality teaching initiatives, the impact on the student-teacher relationship is more incidental. Reflection on programmes and pedagogy has often given rise to new debates about appropriate teacher-student interaction in higher education, delivery of content, the learning-by-practice approach and above all the accuracy of student assessments. The assessment of students symbolises a critical point for the institution (teachers and students alike), as it reflects personal conceptions and underpins the values of equity. It might be a vector for misunderstanding and it remains a sensitive theme with student unions.

In institutions where vocational training is expanding, knowledge can be shared and tested with the students rather than passed on by an authority. Unlike the secondary level (where students are expected to acquire knowledge of the subject-matter, methods and languages), higher education students are expected to gain an academic background, and become professionally reflexive and socially responsive.

Changes affecting the student community strongly underline the need to endorse an appropriate assessment system. The growing participation of mature students and increasingly heterogeneous student bodies (in terms of social and economic background, ethnicity and previous education) have placed new demands on higher education, programmes and student assessment (OECD, 2008). The rise of international students and of e-learning also has some influence in this respect.

The question of assessment is vital for institutions eager to gather evidence on the quality of graduates. Since institutions are putting more emphasis on learning outcomes rather than academic content, they must adapt their student assessment system and describe criteria that demonstrate the skills acquired by the students during their time at the institution. Some considered the diploma supplement might help them define proper criteria for skills and competences.

Lastly, the question of assessment raises the question of equity among students and departments. The institutions cannot allow individual departments or teachers to excessively customise the evaluation criteria. Higher education today can no longer be measured by means of grades given by teachers on a dissertation. Grades may retain some relevance for individual performance. But more sophisticated instruments will be needed if institutions want student assessment to reflect educational achievement.

The impacts on programme design

In the institutions that are fully autonomous in programme design, the main impact of the quality teaching initiatives is that it helps institutions refine the aims and content of the programmes.

All the institutions thought that the value of proposing a variety of quality teaching initiatives strengthened teacher involvement in programme design. An internal process such as a formalised programme design system offers faculty members the chance to raise the question of quality, especially in institutions where research is the prevailing driver of any academic career. Parallel to this increasing awareness, the teachers are likely to discover the importance of other functions that complement the university mission. The concepts of programme leadership, monitoring and accountability have generated new types of activities. Some institutions have launched a reflection on the function of teachership, or professorship, and they are considering the creation of new categories of positions. Teacher interactions with their hierarchy at department and central level have changed accordingly. So have their relationships with their students and administrative staff. Apart from teaching, many faculty members are now involved in other kinds of missions.

The Free University of Berlin used programme evaluation to include the spirit of vocational-type education in its traditional programme structure. As a side effect, programme evaluation opened discussions with the students on the goals and content of programmes, and teachers were asked to reflect on a competence-based curriculum. Instead of imposing new types of programmes, the evaluation allowed the institution to gently introduce faculty members to the importance of learning outcomes aligned with corporate demand.

Collaborative programme design, driven by staff with clearly assigned responsibilities, is likely to limit the disciplinary effect and specificities often put forward by the faculty. As most institutions are striving to phase in trans-disciplinary programmes and implement flexible education paths, reflection at the design stage is becoming vital.

The impacts on the work environment

Ellet, Loup, Culross, McMullen and Rugutt (1997), who conducted a study at Louisiana State University on learning environments, found that student self-reports of their learning and learning efficiency were significantly related to their personal perceptions of the learning environment. Student learning is enhanced in higher education settings that address students' personal learning environment needs and in which quality teaching thrives.

Institutions are clearly aware that teaching is very much influenced by the availability of equipment and the convenience of premises. In addition,

the quality of facilities, such as libraries, layout and equipment of the classrooms, are constantly rated by the students (and by national rankings and media classifications) and they shape their perception of quality. Furthermore, learning conditions include the quality of students' accommodation, and related services intended to improve their learning process, such as tutorship.

Most institutions consider that a thorough reflection on quality teaching is likely to raise questions on the learning environment, which is the primary responsibility of the institution. For the Dublin Institute of Technology, "to make greater use of technology in teaching, especially using an e-learning platform, is influencing the design of new teaching facilities". By contrast, the sole refurbishment of the university buildings will not necessarily spark a debate on quality teaching.

When institutions are considering building learning communities, their reflection involves multiple aspects of teaching, relationships with students and the most appropriate work environment.

The impacts of quality teaching on research

Scholarship of teaching

"The aim of scholarly teaching is also simple; it is to make transparent how we have made learning possible" (Trigwell et al., 2000). Scholarship of teaching necessarily involves inquiry and investigation. It is particularly concerned by the "character and depth of [the] student learning" which result from teaching practices (Hutchings and Shulman, 1999).

In a vast majority of institutions, the prevailing attitude regarding teaching has long been to recruit high-profile academics who designed the curricula and lectured. The fact that teaching, in practice or even in theory, is not often grounds for promotion can be accounted for by four major reasons (Bauer and Henkel, 1997). First, it is harder to establish a definition of good teaching than to establish a definition of good research. Second, it is difficult to collect evidence of good teaching that would enable good teachers to receive recognition for their efforts. Third, there existed until recently few incentives for staff to devote time and energy to the pursuit of excellence in teaching. Fourth, because of institutional rhetoric, teaching is often viewed "as a duty, a chore" (Elton, Pattington, 1991).

In most cases, the act of teaching was left to the teachers, with a view to protecting academic freedom. Questioning the purpose and delivery of teaching has long been the responsibility of the Faculty of Education and of a few teachers who explored ways to improve their teaching. As teaching was mostly considered as a research-dependent activity, teaching was self-evident. The traditional reward system, primarily based on scientific performance (*e.g.*

publications) lacked concern about quality teaching. This trend therefore overlooked the purpose of teaching, while research drew the attention of leaders, researchers, politicians and funding councils. These trends have been regularly explored and even denounced by scholars, like Gibbs who has asked that the same quality enhancement processes already used for research be applied to teaching, such as peer review, rewards for excellence, co-operative work, and incentives to read and discuss the literature. He stated that teachers should receive training, funding and access to better facilities (Gibbs, 1995).

The introduction of quality teaching initiatives has been an attempt to shake these conceptions. When there is a need to address the new trends of student demography, the traditional pedagogical methods have become inadequate for mass education and irrelevant to more diverse students. Research-intensive and elitist universities can no longer develop if their only focus is research, because they generate disinterest among prospective students and lose an opportunity to position themselves in the global competition.

Research feeds the theoretical background

The reason advanced as to why some teachers are reluctant to engage in initiatives on quality teaching lies in their perceived weakness or absence of underpinning theory. Research on teaching is often concentrated in the hands of “educationists” from the Faculty of Educational Sciences, whose activity seldom permeates the institutions’ concerns. Indeed, a limited number of quality teaching initiatives are derived from practices and empirical evaluations driven by some teachers or some departments.

Many institutions respond to this by building up scholarship on teaching. The dedicated services may often be staffed with researchers from educational sciences, but not entirely. Dealing with teaching matters no longer rests with the Faculty of Educational Sciences which has been mistrusted for a long time, and is not seen to contribute to quality teaching enhancement. The Faculty of Education now tends to be called upon to develop expertise for the purpose of teaching improvement. Expertise in education is likely to feed the work achieved by the institution’s staff in charge of quality and monitoring.

The commitment to quality teaching has provided institutions with an opportunity to test the bridge between research and teaching. For instance, at JGUM, programme evaluation and accreditation is always connected to an evaluation of research activities. The Centre for Quality Assurance and Development helps train special research staff.

Teaching as a promising research field

Teaching-intensive institutions believe they must endorse research in order to be granted the title and status of a university. An increasing number

of institutions are convinced that they will make quality teaching progress by combining professional orientations and research-led investigations. However, exploring avenues for research might be difficult and will be very dependent on funding, hiring good teachers with research profiles and building a scientific-friendly environment. Institutions that do little research often prefer to relate their growing fields of research to areas of performance in teaching. Research is meant to improve the skills of the faculty and to base pedagogy on a more scientific basis.

The Open University of Catalonia has engaged in research in areas where the academic community can compete and has thus selected the field of information and telecommunication technology. Applied research now directly fuels the curricula and the pedagogy.

Alverno College developed applied research based on the institution's educational practices. Alverno has thus gained a reputation in educational research and publishes and communicates worldwide.

At the Higher School of Economics, the Business Partner Chairs allow teachers to modify curricula while students have more opportunity to participate in applied research projects and develop competences requested by the governmental structures and leading companies. The Business Partner Chairs practices are often similar to another SU-HSE quality teaching initiative: scientific-educational and project-educational laboratories, representing groups of researchers of various backgrounds, from junior students to professors. The network of laboratories is also connected with the leading companies, analytical centres and governmental bodies.

It is interesting to note that many quality teaching initiatives have incidentally affected the research activities of institutions. Instruments and policies that are intended to foster quality teaching are likely to be beneficial to research activities, and not only to research in education.

Teesside University has developed a research-informed teaching strategy, which has links with the E-Learning Strategy. An E-Learning Research Forum has been established to encourage research and publication in e-learning.

The impacts of quality teaching on institutional quality culture

In many institutions, institutional support to quality teaching is not set apart from the institutional quality culture. For Harvey and Stensaker (2007), quality culture must not be considered as a concept to be used for meeting challenges, but as a concept that helps to identify challenges. Quality teaching might be a lever to foster budding quality culture. Exploring the concept of quality teaching often creates a shared vocabulary among teachers. Because quality teaching initiatives concern the teachers first, it is easier for them to comprehend the ins and outs of what a culture of quality means. Quality

teaching might foster confidence in the institution among prospective teachers.

Using an institution-wide learning strategy helps the institution to define an identity. It also helps to promote types of learning, rather than to provide a catalogue of courses that is very similar from one university to another. A distinctive feature lies in the approach to learning (this is of concern to students and potential employers, while teaching concerns teachers only).

Value-driven institutions with an established identity rely on quality teaching to publicise the identity of the institution. Thus, at Tohoku Fukushi University, teaching is the vehicle that transmits values to students. Quality culture allows the university to focus on the quality of teaching through the shared philosophy of Buddhism. In the same vein, at Macquarie University, the initiation of the Quality Teaching Indicators Project drives a philosophy of teaching that now filters through the mission statement of the university: “Now rhetoric of teaching has a foundation.”

The impact on the institutional image

For most institutions, quality teaching is not a promotional tool. The teachers are the primary targets of quality teaching improvements. Supporting quality teaching might be an enticing instrument to attract and retain faculty members so they know that they can rely on the institution’s support to progress. The institutions therefore promote instruments that enable teachers to improve their effectiveness and they find it less important to advertise their evaluation instruments, which are more technical and becoming a standard requirement. Institutions consider that students are more concerned with the quality of learning outcomes. Students, primarily freshmen, do not understand why faculty members need to improve pedagogy and are more interested in the quality of their learning conditions.

The commitment to quality teaching is rarely posted on the institutions’ websites. They prefer to promote a pedagogical model emphasising their learning approach and targeting prospective students. The institutions are willing to communicate the results of exams and the graduates’ potential for job inclusion.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Implications for Institutions

This chapter draws together implications of engagement in quality teaching for institutional actors: institution's leaders, teachers, students and quality teaching units. It examines ways to contribute to reflection on outcome indicators for higher education in order to connect the quality of input and the quality of results. It recommends pragmatic approaches to link practices and tools among the four groups of institutional actors.

The concept of “quality teaching” is complex and open to a range of definitions and interpretations. This review has therefore adopted a pragmatic approach, based on how institutions define quality in their own circumstances.

Changes in student profiles and learning requirements over recent decades have had a decisive impact on curriculum contents and teaching methods. The quality of teaching must therefore be thought of dynamically, as a function of contextual shifts in the higher-education environment, such as the internationalisation of studies and the additional missions that education is being asked to fulfil (innovation, civic and regional development), producing an appropriately skilled workforce to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

To introduce an effective institutional policy for the quality of teaching involves harnessing synergy between two groups of factors:

- Factors external to institutions, at the national and in many cases international levels (*e.g.* the Bologna Process in Europe): they work as facilitators or catalysts, fostering a general climate conducive to the recognition of teaching quality as a priority.
- Internal institutional factors: the institutional context (*e.g.* the development of an in-house quality culture, the participation of students in academic affairs) and specific circumstances (*e.g.* the appointment of a new chief executive) are likely to affect the pace of development of quality teaching initiatives. Across institutions there are overlapping layers (the institution, the departments, the disciplines, the programmes) which are more or less open to quality teaching initiatives and whose influence varies over time.

The vast majority of the initiatives taken by institutions to enhance teaching quality (for example programme evaluation or teacher training) are empirical and address their particular needs at a given time. Initiatives inspired by academic literature and research on the subject are rare.

For a university to consolidate these initiatives coherently under an institutional policy remains a long-term effort subject to multiple constraints. There are no models to follow, but rather a host of conditions that must all be met. Institutions should be aware that it is a university’s local environment that primarily shapes the extent of its commitment to the quality of teaching and that a sustainable commitment of the university’s top leadership is a necessity for success in quality teaching. Encouraging bottom-up initiatives

from the faculty members, setting them in a propitious learning and teaching environment, providing effective support and stimulating reflection on the role of teaching in the learning process all contribute to the quality of teaching.

The institutions most advanced in initiatives to promote the quality of teaching have explicitly stipulated the educator's role and missions in the learning process, and they know how to explain their conviction that the quality of teaching is an important area for development. Neither the size nor the specificity of an institution poses a major obstacle to the development of institutional policies as long as the involvement of the institution's management is clear and permanent, and sufficient funding and adequate facilities are earmarked for the quality of teaching on a long-term basis.

Commitment on the part of all university stakeholders, and above all by the academic community, is crucial to the success of any policy to improve the quality of teaching. Participation bolsters the dedication and motivation of teachers when it begins at the very conception of an action or a policy in which their educational function is put forward and stated explicitly. The participation of faculty deans is also vital insofar as deans, at the crossroads between an institution's decision-making bodies and teachers on the job, encourage the cross-fertilisation of strategic approaches, build and support communities of practice, and nurture innovation in everyday practice in the classroom.

The deployment of policies for the quality of teaching also hinges on an institution's capacity to strike a balance between technical aspects of quality support (e.g. development of course evaluation questionnaires) and the fundamental issues raised (e.g. assessing the added value of the teaching initiatives in achieving curriculum objectives). Clearly, goals related to the quality of teaching can be neither reduced to, nor achieved through, mere technical improvements or extensions of existing mechanisms. Conversely, these fundamental issues lose relevance if they are not backed up by specific actions deemed useful by the academic community. It is all a matter of balance, tailored specifically to the culture and *modus operandi* of each institution.

Quality teaching initiatives have emphasised the role of teaching in the educational transformative process, have refined the interaction between research and teaching, and have nurtured the culture of quality within the academic community.

However, institutions need to develop innovative evaluative approaches to measure the impact of their support on quality teaching. The higher education sector is still struggling to understand the causal link between engagement in teaching and the quality of learning outcomes. The reason for

this lies in the difference in approaches between the teacher's work and the learning activities, which makes any causal link between inputs and outcomes difficult to measure, although such links undoubtedly exist. Institutions tend to monitor their initiatives essentially through indicators of activities and resources (e.g. curriculum structure, use of educational technology and enrolment figures), whereas learning outcomes are shaped by numerous factors deriving from context-dependent variables (e.g. students and faculty characteristics), from the setting in which learning occurs (e.g. teaching delivery, pedagogy, learning facilities) and from the student's prior learning experience. An exploration of the correlation between inputs, processes and outcomes of higher education calls for pioneering and in-depth evaluation methods and instruments.

The support for quality of teaching usually generates awareness of the responsibility of teachers in the learning process and justifies the institutional need for helping them to fulfil their mission.

Implications for institutional actors of an engagement in quality teaching

For institution's leaders

Institutional leadership and decision-making bodies have a fundamental role to play in shaping the institutional quality culture. They are often the initiators of quality teaching initiatives and their approach directly affects the outcome of these initiatives.

- A sustained commitment to quality teaching by senior management is necessary for leading the whole institution towards the common goal of enhancing the quality of teaching. Leaders should be attentive to motivating deans and heads of department. At the crossroads between the institution's decision-making bodies and teachers on the job, they encourage the cross-fertilisation of strategic approaches and nurture innovation in everyday practice. In addition, they discuss the means for implementing and operating, measuring progress and identifying problems.
- Involving teachers in the definition of quality teaching initiatives ensures that the initiatives are responsive to needs and promotes a sense of ownership. Adequate time, human resources, funding and facilities must be dedicated to planning and implementation of an initiative. There must be an effective vehicle for discussion and sharing experiences, and perhaps a specific unit or other means of focusing organisational support. Opportunities can also stem from external factors that encourage institutional reflection on quality: periodical institutional evaluations, international ratings, national reforms or transnational processes.

- Leaders should convey the relevance of the whole community (including administrative staff and students) in the implementation of the quality culture. The students should be mobilised, putting emphasis on their opinions and their contribution to the definition of quality teaching and the design of specific initiatives.

For teachers

Much of the success of quality teaching support depends on its acceptance by teachers and the use of the instruments at teachers' disposal. Quality teaching initiatives provide an occasion for teachers to think about their own role in the enhancement of quality: these initiatives help them to teach better. Gaining teachers' commitment to reflective practice and consequential adaptation is vital.

- Technology-based teaching (e.g. the e-learning platform), intranets and discussion forums are pedagogical tools that can improve student-to-teacher interaction and assess student progress.
- It is important to link practices and tools with the institutional quality teaching policy, and link teacher expectations to institution expectations in terms of learning outcomes.
- Teachers are the central actors for a reflection on the evaluation criteria of quality teaching: Which aspects have to be addressed and which changes have to be put in practice? Collaboration with the quality units in the design and implementation of curricula can be a good starting point.
- The definition of quality teaching is related to each teacher's values, aptitudes and attitudes: teaching is a dynamic activity, which has strongly subjective aspects that depend on personal and collective philosophy and values.
- Teachers' career progression may be influenced by the fact that quality teaching issues are gaining importance, and institutions are seeking ways of rewarding teachers who are committed to quality teaching.

For students

Students, the primary beneficiaries of quality teaching initiatives, are increasingly becoming a force promoting quality teaching.

- Students can collaborate with teachers and leaders in the definition of the initiative (and of the quality teaching concept itself), keeping the interaction alive and raising concerns about teaching, learning environments, quality of content and teacher attitudes. They can best contribute if invited to serve on governing bodies or used as evaluation experts on par with academic reviewers.

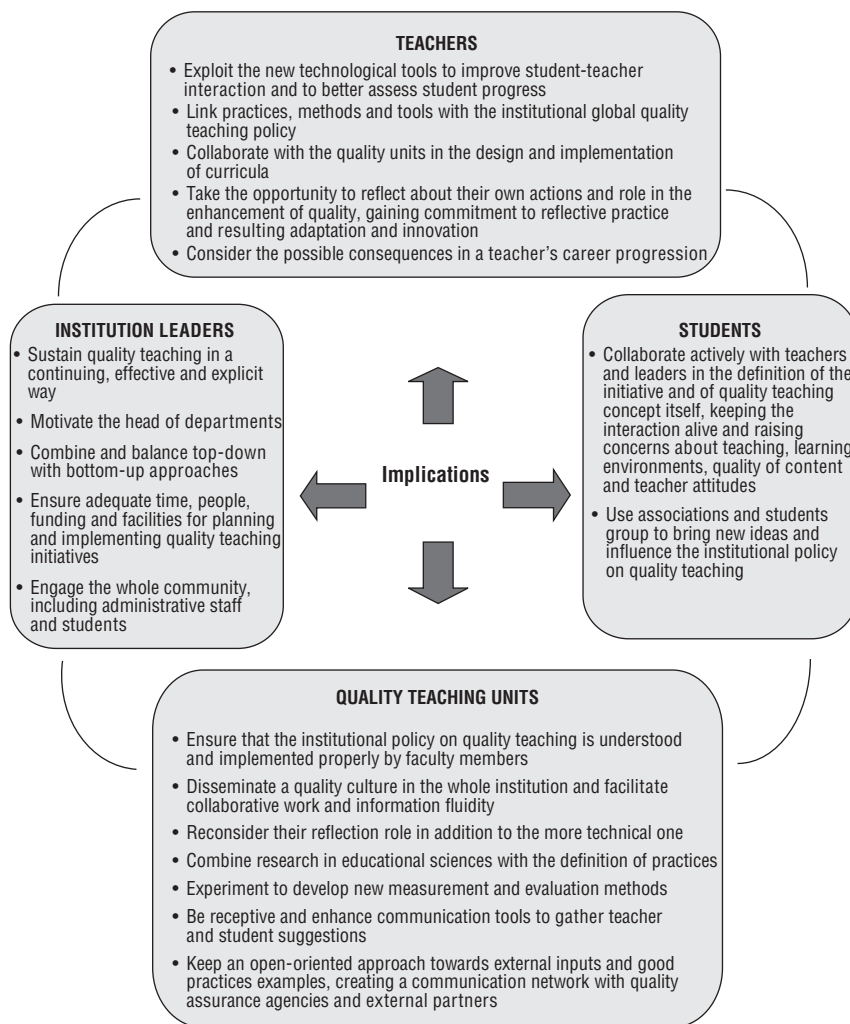
- Student groups can bring new ideas and influence the institutional policy on quality teaching by launching discussions and raising problems.

For quality teaching units

These special bodies dedicated to the implementation and monitoring of quality teaching policies play a pivotal role in supporting, explaining and advocating institution-wide policy on quality teaching.

- Quality units help the faculty members to use the instruments and concentrate on their core mission. They ensure that the institutional policy on quality teaching is understood and implemented properly by the faculty members.
- If their final mission is to promote the institution, the intermediate roles are to communicate the importance of quality teaching, to disseminate a quality culture in the whole institution and to facilitate the collaborative work and information fluidity.
- Quality units should reconsider their reflection role (e.g. in the definition of quality) in addition to the more technical one. Involving experts such as educational developers and psychologists may add value to the activities in the field of quality teaching.
- The definition of practices can usefully be combined with the research in educational sciences to facilitate understanding of the link between the teaching process with learning outcomes.
- Experimenting is useful to develop new measurement and evaluation methods. The difficult task of tackling the critical link between learning and teaching can be furthered by careful testing of innovative methods and attention to indicators.
- Being receptive and enhancing the communication tools to get teachers' and students' suggestions helps continuous improvement. Keeping in touch with each department and teachers will allow them to facilitate appropriate attention to the disciplinary specificities and enable teachers to translate typical needs into the most accurate tools.
- External inputs and good practices examples can be captivated through an open-oriented approach that is creating a communication network with quality assurance agencies and external partners, and fostering the interplay among various internal or external actors.

Figure 5.1. **Engagement in quality teaching: Summary of implications for institutional actors**



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ANNEX A

Methodology

The project is an international review of the quality of teaching in institutions. It allows stakeholders (staff and leaders at institutions and external bodies in higher education) to discuss common topics, collect information and set benchmarks. The participating institutions set out their own practices on the support for quality of teaching.

Definition of quality

The definition of quality teaching depends on the meaning of “quality”, a multi-layered and complex word. As Biggs (2001) points out, “quality” can be defined as an outcome, a property, or a process. Therefore it is hardly surprising that the phrase “quality teaching” has been given several definitions. The review of literature showed that there are many ways to define quality in higher education because definitions of quality are “stakeholder relative” (Harvey et al., 1992). Tam (2001) also found that all stakeholders held their own view of what quality in education means to them. Some scholars define quality in higher education as the process of quality enhancement. Hau (1996) argues that quality in higher education and quality teaching in particular, springs from a never-ending process of reduction and elimination of defects. Argyris and Schön (1974) believe that quality is driven by the inquest: “Are we doing things right?” and by the complementary question: “Are we doing the right things?”

Definitions of quality in higher education as an outcome, a property or a process are not necessarily in conflict, and can potentially be used by higher education institutions as complementary. As a result, the review does not adopt one definition of quality teaching and opts instead to look into how the institutions have defined quality *per se*.

Literature review

The literature review highlights the main debates on the topic and is organised in three parts: What is quality teaching and why is it important in higher education? How can teaching concretely be enhanced? How can one make sure quality teaching initiatives are effective?

The literature review explores factors influencing quality teaching such as the national context, institutional structure, student profile, teacher training and use of information technology. It highlights the difficulty of reaching a clear definition of quality teaching. The term quality teaching appears indefinable *a priori* because it is evolving, and dependent on national context. Moreover the sources cited in the review are mainly from English-speaking countries, limiting the scope for applying the findings to other cultural contexts. As a consequence of these constraints the study has focused on the different meaning given by each participating institution to the concept of quality teaching.

An important point emerging from the review of literature is that some concepts have remained at the research level: this needs to be addressed.

Finally, the literature finds that quality assurance systems have little impact on quality teaching, because quality assurance systems struggle to comprehensively evaluate what is taught.

The review process

The project was implemented under the auspices of the OECD's Institutional Management in Higher Education Programme (IMHE). It was managed by Fabrice Hénard. An *ad hoc* steering group ensured the quality of the methodology on behalf of the IMHE Governing Board and provided advice at critical stages of the project.

This group comprises:

- George Gordon, Emeritus Professor and research professor at the Centre for Academic Practice and Learning Enhancement at the University of Strathclyde.
- Cécile Lecrenier, Head of the planning office, Université Catholique de Louvain.
- Philippe Parmentier, chargé de cour invité, Directeur de l'administration de l'enseignement et de la formation (Education and Training Board), Université Catholique de Louvain.
- Stanislav Stech, Professor, Head of Department of Educational and School Psychology of the Faculty of Education and Vice-Rector for Development, Charles University, Prague.

The steering group met in January 2008 to establish the methodology, discuss the review of literature and outline the questionnaire. The steering

group has had a fundamental role in developing the report and in drafting the conclusions.

On the basis of the questionnaire responses, the complementary interviews and other documents, a detailed report was drafted and presented to participating institutions at a conference held at the Open University of Catalonia in December 2008. All the institutions were invited to comment on the report and to update descriptions of the quality teaching initiatives featured in the report.

In March 2009 the steering group, enlarged to Outi Kallioinen (Laurea University of Applied Sciences) and Alenoush Sorayan (McGill University), met to review the report and develop the final conclusions.

In April 2009, the IMHE Governing Board was invited to comment on the draft report. Comments received from Governing Board members have been incorporated in this text.

Institutional involvement

From the beginning the project was open to all IMHE members, who were contacted by e-mail about the possibility of participating. At the same time, the steering group sought to involve other institutions with an interest in quality teaching, such as quality assurance agencies. A total of 29 institutions participated in the project.

The online questionnaire

Each institution was invited to present up to three initiatives relevant to quality teaching. Such initiatives could range from the most practical (*e.g.* teacher training) to those reflecting institution-wide policy. Some 46 initiatives were selected.

An online questionnaire of 69 questions was used to obtain descriptions of the quality teaching initiatives and to determine the level of engagement at each institution. (The respondent was free to deliver his/her thoughts on the quality teaching approach.) The answers to the questionnaire are available on the IMHE website, if the institution agreed.

The online questionnaire was in English, although responses could be made in French. A paper version was offered for those that requested it. Institutions were invited to attach supporting documents that would clarify responses.

The questionnaire was pilot tested by two faculty members from institutions not participating in the project.

The responses were collected between March and September 2008. Institutions were free to decide who should provide their responses. The three main groups of responders were rectors or heads of academic affairs, deans

and heads of academic departments, and heads of quality units and professional development.

Complementary interviews

Analysis of the questionnaire was systematically augmented either by telephone interviews or by site visits. The interviews aimed at better understanding the national context, the implementation of the different policies within the institution, the positioning of the initiatives within the broader policies supporting quality teaching, dynamics, challenges and main changes that characterise quality teaching. Interviewees were invited to explore controversial issues and to document as much as possible the responses in the online questionnaire. Complementary questions were prepared on the basis on the answers to the online questionnaire and sent out by e-mail to the interviewees two weeks prior to the interview. Some interviews brought together groups of faculty or staff members.

Limitations and methodological points to be considered

The telephone interviews were not sufficient to explore and capture the cultural and contextual dimension of the institutions. This dimension is especially important where institutional autonomy is limited at the national level.

The decision to administer the questionnaire to administrative and managerial staff could have made it difficult to hear the voice of teachers and students. Although the responses to the questionnaire make good use of documented facts, the responses inevitably included an element of subjective statements and beliefs. The fact that the questionnaire was meant to collect facts and opinions makes it substantially different from a classical self-evaluation. Moreover, cultural differences among respondents created some interpretation problems.

On the other hand, its illustrative intent gives the questionnaire the advantage of looking at the topic of quality teaching from an open point of view and of leaving respondents great freedom in answering the questions.

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Learning Our Lesson

REVIEW OF QUALITY TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Leaders and academics can improve the quality of higher education teaching, and thereby the quality of their graduates, by reflecting on institution-wide practices. This book explores the interplay between actors within institutions, organisational structure, commitment of senior leadership, involvement of faculty and students, and evaluation instruments.

Based on an OECD review of 46 quality teaching initiatives in 20 countries, the report highlights the significant impact of the institutions' environment, trends in the quality of academia, teaching methods and learning conditions. The sample represents 29 higher education institutions, from technological and vocational institutions to business and economic schools, from small undergraduate institutions to multidisciplinary postgraduate universities.

The book illustrates the following factors with examples from around the world:

- the aims of institutions when fostering quality teaching, their options and the guiding philosophy behind a quality approach;
- concrete ways to apply quality teaching initiatives, challenges to implementing them, and key actors in their dissemination;
- evaluation systems and the impacts of institutional support on teaching, research and quality culture;
- how institution-wide approaches can be combined to enhance quality teaching in a sustainable way.

The book also analyses the effects of quality teaching on institutional leaders, faculty members, quality units and students.

Related reading

Evaluating and Rewarding the Quality of Teachers: International Practices (2009)
Tertiary Education for the Knowledge Society (2008)

The full text of this book is available on line via this link:

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