
Quality in New-Style Doctoral Studies Scottish Case Study

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OVERVIEW

Perspectives

- Scottish and UK perspective
- QA and QE

PART 1 Compare approaches to quality:
1st + 2nd cycle cf 3rd cycle

PART 2 Kinds of quality policies and processes in
place

PART 3 Directions of current and future
development

CONCLUSION

PART 1

QA of 1st and 2nd cycle provision –trends in development

Explicitness and
transparency

Employability and the
economy

External reference
points –for standards
and quality

Student representation
and evaluations

Teaching skills of
faculty staff

Indicators and rankings

Financial pressures

Shift in scope:
from QA

to QA + Enhancement

Trends in research activity within universities

'Quality' of research -performance and outputs: publications, grant awards, no. of 3rd cycle students etc

External, national assessments, indicators and rankings –linked to funding

Emerging trend –economic impact

QA of 3rd cycle provision -trends in development

Explicit referencing to external frameworks – standards and quality

Development of internal university processes for QA of 3rd cycle

Widening scope of 3rd cycle provision

- Types of 3rd cycle degrees
- Wider set of graduate skills -employability

Relationships between teaching and research in UK universities

Diverging

Separation and specialisation of Teaching and Research Staff and activities

Converging

Research-Teaching linkages -how research informs and benefits teaching

1st & 2nd –cycle high-level skills and capabilities associated with research

PART 2 Quality processes currently in place

National reference policies and information

Qualifications framework, with outcomes level descriptors for 3rd cycle
QAA Code of Practice for quality of research degree (3rd cycle) provision
QAA External quality reviews of universities ALL provision 1st, 2nd, 3rd cycles
Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers
+ see list of references

My university –current 3rd cycle policies and procedures

Scope

- Applying
- Enrolment & induction
- Research methods training
- Career & personal skills development
- Thesis writing
- Examination (vive)
- Monitoring, feedback and evaluation
- Career planning
- Appeals and complaints
- Supervision regulations and guidance

See Refs Robert Gordon University

PART 3

Directions of future development –national level

Directions of travel, and recommendations re 3rd cycle identified in n=20 external reviews of Scottish universities (2003-2007)

- Skills training, employability and career development for 3rd cycle students
- 3rd cycle student representation and engagement in quality processes
- Training for research supervisors
- Internal quality review processes for 3rd cycle provision

Directions of future development –my university

Re-focussing research activities

- Re-organisation of responsibility for research performance and 3rd cycle student activities
- Reduction in supported research

Re-thinking review processes for 3rd cycle provision

- Previously embedded, often with low profile in whole-school review of teaching and research
- Plan to separate, but reflect general direction of development of quality review of 1st and 2nd cycles

CONCLUSION

Quality process for 1st+2nd and 3rd cycle:

- Many similarities, but 3rd cycle slower pace of development
- Aspects of convergence and of divergence
- Shaped by pressures –research performance and funding
- Divergence between universities –shaped by mission and significance of research activity

Austria –similarities, contrasts, learning points?