



CURRENT PRACTICES FOR ASSURING THE QUALITY OF TEACHING IN UNIVERSITAS 21 (U21) MEMBER UNIVERSITAS IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND: IMPLICATIONS FOR PAKISTAN

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Mr. Bashir Hussain is currently doing his PhD in the Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland, New Zealand. His research topic is “Quality Assurance Processes for Teaching in Research-Led Universities: Implications for Pakistan”. The main objective of his study is to develop a model of quality assurance processes for teaching for Pakistan universities. To achieve the purpose, he has currently developed a Preliminary Model of Quality Assurance Processes for Teaching for Universities in the light of the findings of the analysis of more than 230 Policy and Practice Documents concerning quality assurance processes for teaching in the member universities of Universitas 21 (U21) Network. U21 is an international network of 21 research-led universities from thirteen countries. The network includes three universities from Australia, two from Canada, two from China, four from UK, and one university each from Hong Kong, Ireland, India, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Sweden, and USA. The Preliminary Model of Quality Assurance Processes for Teaching (as described above) will be finalized for Pakistan universities after seeking opinion form the members of Quality assurance Committee (QAC) of HEC Pakistan and Directors of Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs) of Pakistan Universities. Mr. Hussain did research in his M. Phil at “Development of Strategies for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in Pakistan”.



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ABSTRACT

Ensuring and enhancing the quality of education is of central importance and one of the key responsibilities of higher education institutions in developing countries. This paper informs the process of quality assurance for Pakistan universities by examining the current practices for assuring the quality of teaching in four of the Universitas 21 (U21) member universities located in Australia and New Zealand. Template analysis was used to analyze 59 policy and practice documents for quality assurance of teaching. Data analysis revealed ten broad categories of the quality assurance process for teaching. These categories include: “the development of teaching and learning plans, policies, and processes, and their implementation for the enhancement of teaching and learning; feedback from students and peers on the quality of teaching and courses; professional development opportunities for academic staff; recognition, rewards, and incentives for scholarly teaching; teaching-research nexus; development and approval of courses; teaching portfolios; teaching quality appraisal processes for faculties and departments; external incentives for the enhancement of teaching and learning; and, academic audits of universities including that of teaching & learning activities.” The findings of the study indicate that a collaborative and coordinated university-wide approach has been adopted towards the quality assurance processes in the sample universities. The paper concludes by drawing implications for Pakistan universities.

INTRODUCTION

Ensuring and enhancing the quality of education is of central importance and one of the key responsibilities of higher education institutions. Governments are also taking this matter increasingly seriously and as a consequence a number of organizations, agencies and international networks have been established in the last two decades. Universities themselves have also established centres and committees with responsibilities for assuring and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.

The growing emphasis on the quality of teaching has also influenced the Universitas 21 (U21) network. U21 is an international network of 21 leading research-intensive universities in thirteen countries (three universities are from Australia, two from Canada, four from UK, and one university each from Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Singapore, Sweden, and USA). These research-led universities have developed a range of processes and guidelines for assuring and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. This paper analyzes the current

practices and processes for assuring the quality of teaching in four U21 member universities in Australia and New Zealand.

In order to examine the quality assurance processes for teaching in the four universities, the paper not only identifies and classifies these processes but also addresses the philosophy of quality assurance that draws practices in these universities. This latter step is important because there are two opposing approaches to quality assurance. On the one hand, there are accountability approaches in which procedures are top-down and bureaucratic. On the other hand, there is an emerging concept of quality enhancement in which procedures are bottom-up and emphasis is on collaboration, inclusion and engagement of all those concerned i.e., academic staff, students, administrators. In most universities there is a tension between these two approaches. The choice of approach for any particular university depends on the economic, social, political, cultural, and developmental context of that university.

DEFINING QUALITY

Despite its importance and the progress that has been made through research and debate, quality remains an elusive concept (Cheng and Tam, 1997; Kidney, Cummings & Boehm, 2007). Defining quality in higher education is a challenging task and there is, therefore, no universal consensus on how best to manage quality within higher education (Becket & Brookes, 2006). Quality can be viewed in terms of perfection, excellence, value for money, fitness for purpose, or transformation (Harvey and Green, 1993). Perfection implies faultlessness or zero errors (Ashcroft and Foreman-Peck, 1995) and is most relevant to industry. Excellence implies the notion of reputation (Ashcroft and Foreman-Peck, 1995) and refers to the traditional (often implicit) academic view which aims to demonstrate high academic standards (McKimm, 2003). Quality as value for money is about accountability (Biggs, 2003). Quality as fitness for purpose refers to the statement of the purposes of the institution and whether these purposes achieved. Quality as transformation refers to the way that the learning process transforms the students' perceptions of their world and the way they go about applying their knowledge to real world problems (Biggs, 2003; McKimm, 2003).

There is no consensus on the various interpretations of the term 'quality' and use of the term is largely dependent upon context. There is, however, a discernable trend or a shift internationally in higher education from a focus on quality assurance towards a focus on quality enhancement. Patton (2002) describes this as a shift from "accountability" to "improvement". The other trend, somewhat paradoxical, is that identified by D'Andrea and Gosling (2005) as a shift towards more externally imposed quality requirements.

THE QUALITY ASSURANCE CONTINUUM

The term 'quality assurance' refers to the policies, processes and actions through which quality is maintained and enhanced (Lim, 2001; McKimm, 2003). McKimm (2003) argues that both accountability and enhancement are important motives for quality assurance. She further argues that the purpose of internally driven quality assurance is usually to effect an improvement in the functioning of a department or programme, whereas an externally driven review is generally more about accountability. In discussing two types of quality assurance (QA) for teaching and learning in higher education, Biggs (2003) argues that QA may be retrospective or prospective, depending on the kind of quality to be assured. Retrospective QA assures quality by requiring conformity to externally imposed standards, whereas prospective QA assures quality

by continually striving to improve teaching and learning in the institution. Biggs (2003) terms prospective QA as quality enhancement (QE).

There is, however, no clear cut distinction between quality assurance and quality enhancement. They form two ends of a continuum between which a wide range of quality assurance processes fall. At the one end, there are those QA approaches which look back to what has already been done, and make a summative judgement against external standards. The agenda is managerial rather than academic, with accountability a high priority. The procedures are top-down and bureaucratic, and the climate adversarial rather than collegial (Biggs, 2003). This end of the continuum might be called punitive or accountability end.

At the other end, there are those QA approaches that are concerned with assuring that teaching and learning fit with the purpose of institution now and with commitment to upgrade and improve teaching in the future by requiring that procedures are in place that lead to quality enhancement. QE is concerned not with quantifying aspects of the system, but with reviewing how well the whole institution works in achieving its mission, and how it may be improved (Biggs, 2003). This end of the continuum might be called improvement or enhancement end. The QA approaches at this end of the continuum are characterized as bottom-up, supportive, collaborative, cooperative, inclusive, and of participative nature.

Biggs (2003) advocates quality enhancement (QE) processes for teaching at the departmental level. He places emphasis on peer review of teaching at the departmental level, action research across the whole department to improve the teaching, regular sharing sessions which comprise discussions about teaching, feedback from students (use of interviews instead of questionnaires), and continuous professional development of teachers by having strong ties with a Teaching Development Centre (TDC). The model also encourages research and publications about teaching (scholarship of teaching) and the associated content area (disciplinary research). In this type of quality model for teaching, all the activities are carried out at departmental level without any interference from the institution or any external agency. In order for this quality model for teaching to succeed, there is a strong need of commitment, participation, collaboration, and involvement of all of the teaching staff (or majority of staff) as well as of the students.

Both accountability and improvement approaches to quality assurance have strengths and weaknesses. Accountability approaches are usually imposed by externally regulatory agencies and are concerned with, as McKimm (2003) argues, assuring students, society and government that quality is well managed. Universities attract a substantial amount of money from governments and students and there is a need, therefore, to be accountable for the quality of education delivered. This approach to quality also seems to be realistic in an academic culture where the majority of academics are more attuned to thinking of quality in terms of research rather than teaching.

Accountability approaches, however, promote conformity and have imposed forms of central control that are antithetical to the academic culture (D'Andrea & Gosling, 2005; Dew & Nearing, 2004). These approaches damage the trust within academic communities and can badger teachers instead of working alongside them. Ramsden (2003) argues that accountability approaches have more characteristics of “administrative burden” than an “exciting intellectual journey”. He further argues that improving teaching implies that lecturers – and by implication, departments, faculties and universities – must learn and that thus need imagination. External quality assurance processes can create a hindrance to imagination.

In contrast, quality enhancement refers to the improvement of quality through dissemination of good practice or use of a continuous improvement cycle (McKimm, 2003). The emphasis is upon self-regulatory approaches. QE approaches follow the ‘whole institution’ approach, involving individual teachers, departmental and course teams, and the institutional infrastructure (Biggs, 2003; D'Andrea & Gosling, 2005). The process of quality enhancement is dynamic and the emphasis is on changing the status quo which is being regarded as inadequate in some way.

Quality enhancement approaches to teaching place emphasis on inclusion, collaboration, and involvement of those who are affected by the improvements. D'Andrea & Gosling (2005) suggest that involving academic staff in the process of researching their teaching practice increases ownership of improvements, encourages a scholarly approach to teaching and helps inform decisions at all levels of the institution. Similarly collaboration between teaching development centres and departments is emphasized. Biggs (2003) argues that quality enhancement approaches are designed to improve the ongoing system of teaching and learning, to encourage superior teaching, and to support teaching development. These approaches also take into account the autonomy of individual, departments, and institutions. The focus is on the enhancement of learning experiences of students. Improvement approaches, Ramsden (2003) suggests, treat areas for improvement of teachers as research problems, not as congenital weaknesses.

There is a growing tendency for quality assurance to be based on a collaborative team work aimed at quality enhancement. D'Andrea, Blackwell, & Gosling (2005) found that there has been a substantial and potentially significant shift in the UK approach to quality in higher education in the last few years. They noted that there has been a growing interest in quality enhancement to supplement existing frameworks for quality assurance with greater collaboration between quality assurance agencies at a national level. In the UK, the QAA's approach to implementing the quality agenda is guided by four principles i.e., accountability, ownership, enhancement, and a reduction in the perceived burden of external assessment from the heads of academics and their institutions (Lim, 2001).

McKimm (2003) argues that although there was an extensive debate in UK about the need to reduce external scrutiny and bureaucracy along with an increase in institutional autonomy and quality as enhancement (rather than as inspection), the new arrangements look likely to place greater emphasis on compliance with externally determined and audited standards and norms. McKimm (2003) describes the new quality agenda as a “jigsaw” comprising “interdependent and interlocking processes that emphasize increasing transparency, accountability and specification”. She further argues that assuring and enhancing educational quality can be seen as complex and multifaceted activities and it is often hard to maintain a balance between ‘quality as inspection’ and ‘quality as enhancement’.

In conclusion, there is no clear evidence that students' learning experiences can be improved by implementing an accountability model or the improvement model of quality assurance in the universities. There is a need to maintain the balance between both approaches to quality assurance. In order to make the quality assurance processes more effective in universities, there is a need to combine the ‘collegial’ and ‘managerial’ as well as the ‘improvement’ and ‘accountability’ aspects (Danø & Stensaker, 2007; Ramsden, 2003). Becket & Brookes (2006) argue that there is a need for quality enhancement initiatives to be firmly embedded into any quality management programme in order to support continual efforts to enhance the quality of

provision. Quality assurance in education necessarily comprises both the improvement and accountability aspects but for successful quality assurance of teaching and learning in university education activities, the focus needs to be on improvement (Bowden and Marton, 1998). D'Andrea & Gosling (2005) use the concept of “quality development” to capture an approach to quality assurance of teaching that is inclined more towards quality enhancement with a lighter touch of accountability.

QUALITY DEVELOPMENT

D'Andrea & Gosling (2005) propose a quality development (QD) model which aims to address the tensions between competing models of quality. In their model, learning communities and quality activities complement each other in the task of maintaining continuous quality improvement for student learning. The quality development (QD) model replaces summative processes with formative processes. It places the emphasis on learning instead of teaching and includes a wide range of activities such as the design of curricula, choice of content and methods, various forms of teacher-student interaction, the assessment of students, and the broader aims of learning via activities of institutional learning communities.

The Quality Development (QD) model also attempts to integrate the processes of quality assurance with quality enhancement within institutions by identifying changes to the educational process that can bring about improvement. It encourages greater reflective practice through all phases of the educational process and addresses many of the expectations of both internal and external quality assurance systems. In common with other quality activities, QD is a dynamic process. The work of QD involves applying new measures of quality that are developmentally focused and centre on the managing and integrating three major areas of work in universities i.e. academic development, learning development and quality development (D'Andrea & Gosling, 2005).

Academic development refers to the development of staff and emphasizes the connection and integration between the three key dimensions of pedagogical activities i.e. curriculum development, learning and teaching activities, and the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). Learning development places emphasis on the comprehensive support system for student learning that enables students to increase learning skills that can be applied to any learning situation in or outside the university. Quality development involves the holistic development, implementation, and evaluation of educational provision. Activities include curriculum development, professional development, and engagement of students in activities that are aimed at helping them achieve the best results in their current studies and prepare them for lifelong learning. It further provides guidance on appropriate mechanisms to evaluate the outcomes of learning.

Within the quality development model, quality assurance and quality enhancement activities support each other to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. It uses the ‘whole institution’ approach to quality and accomplishes internal as well as external requirements. The model fuels the process of continuous quality improvement. The quality model needs commitment, willingness, and involvement of faculty members to succeed. It also places emphasis on staff creating learning communities which needs commitment, participation, and collaboration among teaching staff. Engagement of students is encouraged with emphasis on the enhancement of their experiences.

METHOD

This paper employs a specific form of qualitative data analysis technique known as template analysis. Template analysis, developed by King (1998), involves the production of templates by coding the themes in the data-set. It starts with *a priori* set of themes but adjusts for emergent themes as well. The essence of the approach is that a list of codes (a ‘template’), representing themes identified in textual data, is produced. Some of these themes are usually defined as *a priori*, but they are modified and added to as the textual data is read and interpreted (King, 1998, 2006). Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that the process usually starts with a few general themes derived from reading the literature and more themes and subthemes are added as the data-set is further reviewed. Once a set of themes is identified, the next step is to understand how these themes are linked to each other in a hierarchy starting with broad and general themes and moving towards narrower, specific, and focussed ones (Kent, 2000; King, Bell, & Thomas, 2003). This process leads to the development of the initial template. This initial template is then applied to the whole data set, and codes are added to the template as new themes arise. This leads to the creation of the final template. This final template serves as the basis for the interpretation and analysis of the data-set, and enables conclusions to be drawn about the main themes within the data.

DATA COLLECTION AND DATA ANALYSIS

This paper examines the quality assurance processes for teaching in four U21 member universities in Australia and New Zealand – The University of Auckland, The University of Melbourne, The University of New South Wales, and The University of Queensland. Fifty-nine policy and practice documents on quality assurance of teaching from these institutions provided the basis for analysis. These documents are publicly available on the websites of respective sample universities.

The main focus of the analysis was to identify and classify various approaches to quality assurance of teaching. The thematic coding started with the identification and classification of approaches to quality assurance of teaching into five broad categories drawn from the literature i.e., “approaches that evaluate scholarly teaching”, “approaches that recognise and reward scholarly teaching”, “approaches to the professional development of academic staff”, “teaching-research nexus”, and “development of teaching portfolios for the recognition of excellence in teaching”. Using the five broad themes on initial template, the 59 documents were read and using the qualitative data analysis software NVivo, ‘Meaning Chunks’ within each policy document were coded, and a refined template developed. Examples of this process are illustrated in Table 1.

<i>Statements/Excerpts from the Policy Documents of sample universities regarding QA (Underline-Theme and/or subthemes)</i>	<i>Coding & Classification as main themes and subthemes</i>
<p>“<u>After an extended period of research and consultation</u>, an advisory paper concerning the need for a new student feedback process was submitted to and approved by UNSW’s Senior Management Group in April 2003 (Lee & Boyle, 2003). After further <u>consultation</u> and development work, facilitated mainly by the CATEI Implementation Group, <u>trials of the Process were conducted</u> in 2004 and full implementation is proceeding in 2005” (The University of New South Wales, 2007).</p>	<p>Research-based Policies & Processes; Pilot Study; and Collaboration (contains more than one themes and main themes and subthemes)</p>
<p>“The University is committed to recognising and promoting excellence and innovation in curriculum development & teaching. <u>Excellence in teaching is identified and rewarded</u> through the University’s <u>Teaching Excellence Awards</u>. Innovation is encouraged through <u>Teaching Improvement Grants</u>. University appointment, <u>continuation and promotion</u> policies place importance on the development and demonstration of teaching ability and excellence” (The University of Auckland, 2004).</p>	<p>Recognition & Rewards for Scholarly Teaching (Main Theme) Rewards in Tenure & Promotions, Teaching Excellence Awards, and Teaching Grants (Subthemes)</p>
<p>“The <u>aim of the policy is to recognise, reward and encourage teachers renowned</u> for the <u>excellence of their teaching</u>, who have made a broad and deep <u>contribution to enhancing the quality of learning and teaching</u> at the University” (The University of Queensland, 2006).</p>	<p>Development of Policies; Rewards & recognition for excellence in Teaching; emphasis on Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (Main Theme & Subthemes)</p>

Table 1: Examples of coding and classing the text into themes and subthemes

The final template comprised ten broad categories of quality assurance processes for teaching with a number of sub-categories under each main category. In all, 478 main themes and subthemes were emerged concerning various aspects of quality assurance of teaching in four sample universities. There were ten broad themes (first-level themes) at the first horizontal level of hierarchy and vertical range of hierarchy was from two to five levels depending upon the explanation of each category. The hierarchy led to the classification of quality assurance processes for teaching in sample universities.

FINDINGS

The analysis of 59 policy and practice documents from four sample universities resulted in the classification of quality assurance processes into ten broad categories with several subthemes for the explanation of each category. Each category produced rich ideas and complex sub-themes. The main categories of quality assurance processes for teaching along with second-level themes against each category are shown in Table 2.

The findings of the template analysis suggest that a collaborative and coordinated university-wide approach is predominant with emphasis on the enhancement of students’ learning experiences. It is evident that there is a tendency towards student-centred approach in quality assurance processes. Furthermore, there is a strong relationship between various quality assurance processes making it difficult to practice any of the process in separation.

<i>First-level themes (Broad Classification of QA Processes)</i>	<i>Second-level themes (Further Explanation of Broad Categories of QA Processes)</i>
Development of teaching and learning plans, policies, processes, plans, and guidelines and their implementation for the enhancement of teaching and learning	Collaborative engagement approach in the development, implementation and evaluation of learning and teaching policies, plans and activities
	Emphasis on the enhancement of students' learning experiences through engagement
	Policy development, processes, and implementation procedures informed by the research in the area, international literature and good practices
	Regular review and updating teaching and learning policies and provision of guidance for academic staff
	Dissemination of teaching and learning policies among staff and students and their effective implementation
Feedback from students and peers on the quality of teaching and courses (evaluation of teaching & courses from students and peers)	Feedback from student through national surveys (for external incentives)
	Feedback from student through institutional surveys (for monitoring, improvement, & recognition)
	Feedback from peers (for improvement, incentives & recognition)
Professional development opportunities for academic staff	Professional development programmes, certificates, training courses, and workshops for the support of teaching and learning practices
	Recognition and incentives for staff for development
	Support for reflection practices and skill development
Recognition, rewards, and incentives for scholarly teaching	Concept of teaching-focused appointments and rewards in tenure & promotions
	Teaching excellence awards & teaching improvement grants
Teaching-research nexus	Scholarship of teaching (pedagogical research)
	Disciplinary research & research-based teaching
	Research-based curriculum & engaging students in research skills
Development & approval of courses	Designing an engaging, contextualised, and inclusive curriculum
	Feedback from all stakeholders i.e. students, peers industry, professional bodies, etc.
	Research-based curriculum
Teaching portfolios and its assessment in the process of recognition	Teaching philosophy and future plans
	Evidence of teaching effectiveness
	Scholarship of teaching, innovation and leadership
Teaching quality appraisal processes for faculties and departments	Allocation of funding to faculties on the basis performance & developments in teaching & learning activities (various performance indicators)
External incentives for the enhancement of teaching & learning	Funding for institutions on the basis of performance in teaching & learning
	National teaching excellence awards, grants, & fellowships
Academic audits of universities including teaching & learning	An external review and validation of documentation prepared by the university for the description of QA system

Table 2: Classification of QA processes into first-level (main themes) and subthemes

Development of Teaching & Learning Plans, Policies, and Processes and their Implementation for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning

The analysis suggests that commitment of universities towards excellence in teaching and learning begins with the development of teaching and learning plans. Generally, teaching and learning plans are developed on five-year basis and are the statements of teaching and learning

goals and objectives that university sets along with strategies to achieve them. Progress towards the goals is reviewed on annual basis and there is a regular system of monitoring and reporting. In many cases, there are also evidences of Teaching and Learning Plans at faculty and department level. These plans and policies are consistent and aligned with university plan and policies. The plans and policies contain the following significant features:

- A collaborative approach to quality assurance of teaching is followed in the development, implementation, and evaluation of teaching and learning policies, plans and activities by engaging faculties, departments and individuals in the processes along with relevant committees with emphasis on the continuous enhancement of teaching and learning experiences of students through engagement.
- Development and implementation of teaching and learning policies, plans, processes, and guidelines is informed by international research.
- A strong emphasis on the professional development of academic staff in teaching and learning plans along with specific policies and related guidelines.
- Explicit policies to recognise and reward scholarly teaching – innovation and excellence in teaching is recognised and rewarded in the form of teaching excellence awards, teaching improvement grants, and benefits in tenure and promotion processes.
- Dissemination of teaching and learning plans, policies, guidelines, and practices (through the seminars, web pages, brochures, and booklets) among staff and students is a significant factor for assuring the quality of teaching and learning.

Feedback from Students and Peers on the Quality of Teaching and Courses

The data analysis provides explicit evidence of the importance the sample universities place on the regular review and evaluation of teaching and courses by students. There are also processes for seeking feedback and input from peers on the quality of teaching and courses for the purposes of improvement and recognition. The analysis suggested three categories of teaching review and evaluation processes.

In the first category, there is a summative evaluation of teaching and courses through the use of national student surveys. The Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) is an example of this category which is used in Australian universities. These surveys are used as a basis for the allocation of funding to the universities for the enhancement of teaching and learning.

In the second category, there is a process of seeking feedback from students on the quality of teaching and courses at faculty and institutional level for monitoring, reporting, improvement, and recognition purposes. These kinds of surveys are conducted on regular basis (often every three years of each course and teacher). The results of such surveys are monitored through a process of reporting to supervisors or committees (Academic Heads, Deans, Teaching and Learning Quality Committees at Faculty and University level) both for quality assurance and improvement purposes. At the same time, results are reported to individual teacher for improvement purpose. Student evaluation of teaching can also be initiated at any time at the request of students, individual teacher, and Academic Head for their own purposes. Evidences of evaluation need to be included in teaching portfolios for recognition purposes.

In the third category, there is a process of seeking feedback and input from peers on the quality of teaching and courses for the purposes of improvement and recognition. The strategies for this category include peer review of teaching (observation of teaching), review and collaboration in course design and course materials, departmental discussions and feedback sessions among colleagues, and discussions with external examiners and assessors. Individual staff members can initiate the review process at any time for improvement purposes. Academic staff members, however, have to follow the formal procedures for peer review of teaching when it is carried out for recognition purposes (tenure, promotion, etc.). One of the sample universities incorporates external peer review of teaching based on internal peer review for the purpose of promotion. In this process, a team of external reviewers writes a summative report on the basis of first order evidences of an academic's teaching skills collected by a team of internal reviewers.

Data analysis suggests that reflection is a key element of teaching review and evaluation processes especially when the review/evaluation is for improvement purposes. Reflection refers to the changes made in the structure, design, and delivery of courses (teaching) as a result of review and evaluation for further improvement. Support is provided to individual teaching staff in this regard through Teaching and Learning Units (Staff Development Centres, Supporting Units, etc. as the case may be) established at faculty and institutional level. Students are also informed about the changes made in the courses and teaching as a result of their feedback. In turn, this increases the involvement and engagement of student in the process and they are more enthusiastic about evaluation next time. The new mandatory Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement Scheme (CATEI), initiated by University of New South Wales, illustrates the operation of these types of surveys. The CATEI Process comprises four major components – data collection and presentation; consideration and interpretation of data; action based on data and findings; and communication about findings and actions (The University of New South Wales, 2007). The relationship between these aspects is illustrated in Figure 1 along with the purposes served by each aspect – monitoring, reporting, continual improvement, recognition, and support in the reflection process.

Professional Development Opportunities for Academic Staff

One of the major themes to emerge in data analysis was the development and continual enhancement of teaching practices of academic staff through the provision of diverse opportunities for high quality professional development. A “bottom-up” approach is encouraged on the basis that changes are likely to be owned by the staff than those that are imposed. Academic staff are encouraged and supported by academic heads, deans, and university to undertake professional development to enhance their knowledge, teaching skills, pedagogical skills, supervision skills, IT literacy, and library skills. Professional development is also recognised in promotion processes. A number of Academic Staff Development Units including centres and networks have been established at university and faculty level for supporting the professional development of academic staff. An individual staff member has the option of getting support from any of the centres depending upon specific needs. Academic staff development programmes are aligned with universities' teaching and learning plans, policies, and goals.

New academics attend mandatory induction and orientation programs providing advice on teaching, course design, assessment, supervision, and other teaching-related activities. They are further supported through the career development schemes, foundation programs in learning and teaching, and peer mentoring schemes. To recognise continuous enhancement of teaching quality, university teaching qualification certificates are offered to academic staff by Staff

Development Centres of the universities. In some universities, these certificates are a compulsory component of professional development and are emphasized in staff confirmation, performance development and promotion procedures. Refresher courses on teaching and learning are also offered for the purpose of updating teaching skills of staff. These professional development programs are regularly reviewed for the purpose of improvement.

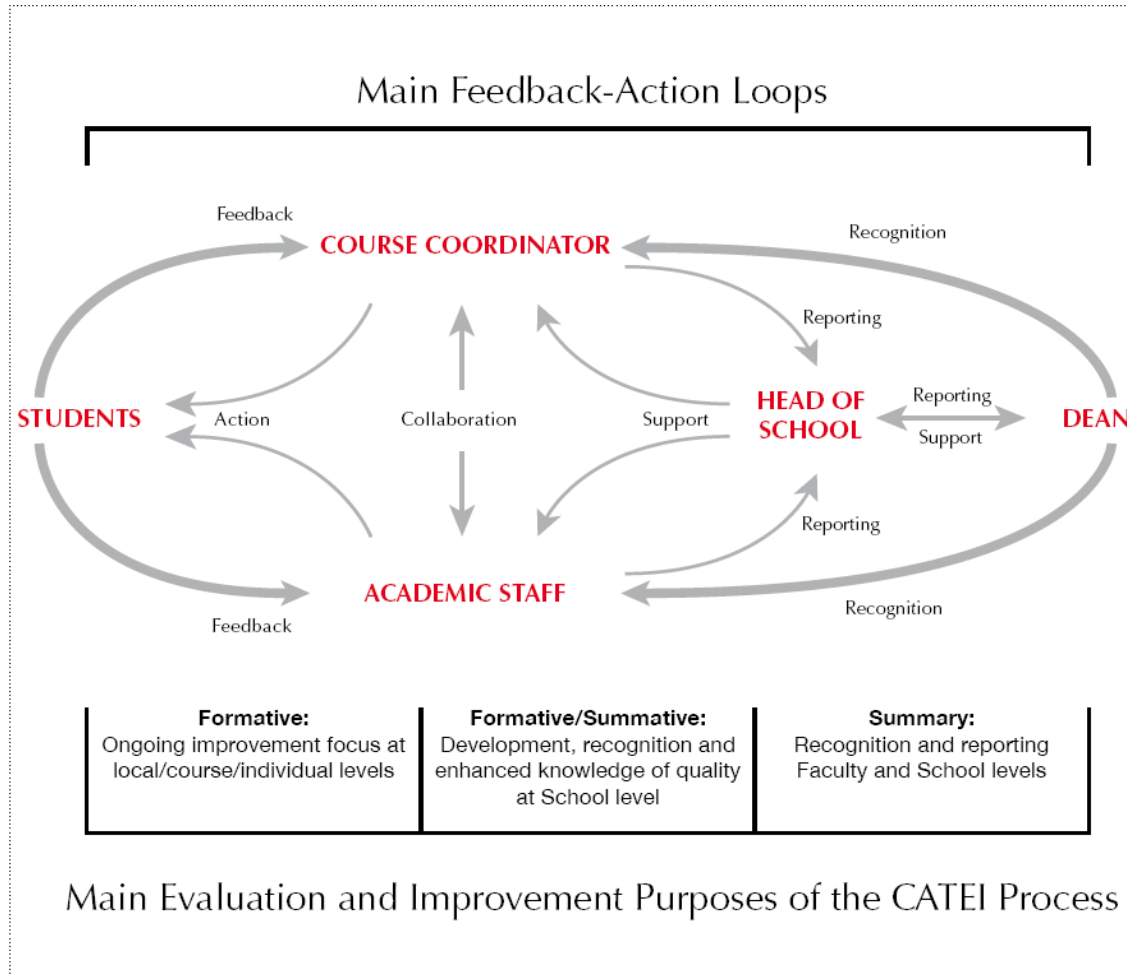


Figure 1: The CATEI Process: Overall Design (The University of New South Wales, 2007)

Innovative teaching and learning practices are shared among all academic staff through workshops, conferences, seminars, and critical debates which are organised on regular basis on a wide range of topics. The purpose of these activities is to provide opportunities for academic staff to discuss their best practices among the university community. Teaching and learning experiences and practices are also shared, supported, and enhanced through the mentoring schemes and networks of peers established at department and faculty level. Good teaching practices at university level are also shared, in some sample universities, through the systematic documentation and publication of these practices. Funding is also provided by the universities to the academic staff for the enhancement of professional qualification.

Recognition and Rewards for Scholarly Teaching

The analysis provided evidence that scholarly teaching is recognised and rewarded. The University of Queensland has introduced the concept of teaching-focussed appointments to raise

the profile of teaching and the associated scholarship. All sample universities have explicit policies for the recognition of scholarly teaching and reward it in confirmation and promotion decisions along with teaching improvement grants, fellowships, and teaching excellence awards at faculty and university level.

An important aspect emerged in the analysis was the weighting that is given to teaching in tenure and promotion processes. In the case of Teaching Focused staff category, the weighting range is from 70% to 90% for teaching and scholarship of teaching and the rest is for service. In case of Teaching and Research staff category, the weighting range is from 30% to 50% for teaching (same for research) and rest is for service (or as the case may be). In promotion processes, careful consideration is given to the fact that at least two members of the judgement panel should have expertise in reviewing and assessing contributions to teaching.

Excellence and innovation in teaching is also rewarded through Teaching Excellence Awards, Citations for the Enhancement of Student Learning, and Commendations at university and faculty level. Examples of these awards in sample universities include Sustained Excellence in Teaching, Early Career Excellence in Teaching, Excellence in Research Supervision, Innovation in Teaching, Collaboration in Teaching, Programme Awards for the Enhancement of Learning, and the Awards for Mentor Excellence. The eligibility and selection criteria for each of the award slightly differ depending on the context of specific award. Individual teachers, teaching teams, and university professionals (serving in staff development units) are eligible for the submission of nominations for appropriate category with the support of colleagues, professional staff, and students taught by the nominee. Awards are in the form of medal and monetary prize. The recipient has to use the money for the improvement of teaching. University Teaching Excellence Award winners are generally eligible to apply for National Teaching Excellence Awards. The award winners have the obligation to share their ideas in the university community.

Teaching is one of the factors taken into account when assessing the applications for promotion. Although, there are variations in the criteria for promotion according to the rank, following factors are generally taken into account in assessing teaching portfolios for promotion. Teaching portfolios provide:

- Evidence of approaches to teaching that enhance student learning. These include efforts of the teacher for engaging students in learning process; stimulating and encouraging students for self-learning; engaging students in critical thinking and reflection practices; and provision of assistance, support, guidance, and advice to students for the enhancement of learning.
- Evidence of approaches to assessment and their quality; consistency of assessment methods with learning outcomes; and provision of meaningful and timely feedback to students.
- Evidence of course design and delivery. These may include consistency of courses with teaching and learning activities and assessment; evidence of course review and evaluation and subsequent reflection; evidence for the development of inclusive curricula; evidence of research-led approaches to learning and teaching; and evidence of the use of information and communication technologies.
- Evidence of teaching effectiveness. This may include the data on students' work and their achievement; success rate of students taught/ supervised by the concerned teacher; evidence on review and evaluation of teaching and courses by

students and peers and subsequent reflection practices; collaboration in course designs and assessment practices; and recognition of teaching and learning activities by students, peers, and community.

- Evidence of scholarly activities that have influenced and enhanced learning and teaching. This includes scholarship of teaching; professional development in teaching and learning; record of grants and contracts associated with scholarship of teaching; and continual improvement of teaching and learning practices by seeking feedback from student and peers and subsequent reflection practices. The scholarship of teaching refers to the pedagogical skills, research on teaching and learning, and research on the advancement of the discipline. Professional development refers to participation in workshops and training programs with particular focus on teaching, consultation with teaching and learning support services for the improvement of teaching, and completion of certificates in university teaching.
- Evidence of leadership in the development of good teaching and learning practices. The significant aspects in this regard include evidences of improvement of teaching and learning standards at department, faculty, and university level; leadership in student activities; participation in or cultivation and development of teaching communities at university level or in broader community; and supporting the learning of colleagues.

The analysis also indicates that universities encourage the enhancement of teaching quality through Teaching Improvement Grants and Fellowships aimed at supporting innovation in teaching and course delivery at faculty and university level. For the allocation of grants and fellowships, consideration is given to the consistency and contribution of the project to the university teaching and learning goals, feasibility of the project, quality of the project and its methodology, impact of the project on the enhancement of student learning, justification of budget in terms of improvement, teaching-research nexus, and the extent to which students are involved in the project.



TEACHING-RESEARCH NEXUS

Research-led universities have a strong belief in the importance of the linkage between teaching and research. There are a number of ways in which the establishment of this link is emerged:

- Academic staff is encouraged and supported to undertake and disseminate pedagogical research through Networks of Scholarship in Learning and Teaching. Assistance is provided to academic staff for the development of research-based approaches to teaching and learning and in their incorporation into course design.
- Teaching and learning plans and policies are informed by current research and practice in the area and further research is encouraged. Research is also conducted on the design and implementation of quality assurance policies and processes.
- Teaching-research nexus is encouraged in all staff development programs and through the aforementioned promotion processes and teaching excellence awards.
- Research-based teaching and learning activities at classroom level are supported, encouraged and emphasized. These activities include raising awareness among students about the concept of teaching-research nexus and its benefits; development of research-based attributes in graduates; designing and teaching

courses with emphasis on latest and contemporary research including personal research; inclusion of research methods and skills in courses; involving postgraduate research students in high-level research activities and departmental research projects; and provision of opportunities for undergraduate students to participate in small-level research activities.

Development, Approval, Review, and Evaluation of Courses

Research-led universities use structured processes in the design, development, approval, review and evaluation of curricula. The important aspects in design of curricula include clear articulation of course objectives, learning outcomes, assessment methods/ strategies; presentation of subject matter in a coherent manner and consistent with objectives; accommodation of diverse and flexible learning styles in curricula with incorporation of intercultural and international material, inclusion of research-based activities in courses; and encouragement of students for self-learning. Academic staff are supported in the development and designing of courses through training programs and workshops.

Universities advocate regular review and evaluation of courses by students and peers to monitor the quality of courses; to diagnose the areas for improvement and subsequent professional development and reflection practices; and to recognise it in rewards and promotions. Academic heads and deans are responsible for monitoring the quality of courses through review and evaluation of courses at the department and faculty level. At the same time, efforts of academic staff are acknowledged, recognised, and supported by heads and deans. In some of the sample universities, there is also evidence of involving industry and professional associations in development and review of courses. Universities seek feedback from a range of stakeholders other than current university students on the quality of courses and their relevance with professions. These stakeholders include past graduates and their employers, the professions, the governments, the broader community, and the prospective students.

Teaching Quality Appraisal Processes for Faculties and Departments

An important strategy employed in some of the sample research-led universities for assuring and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning is the introduction of teaching quality appraisal processes for faculties and departments. The teaching quality appraisal process provides for the examination of the performance of departments, schools, and faculties in teaching and learning through a number of teaching and learning performance indicators on annual basis. The purposes of the process include monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning at faculty level; identification of areas of improvement in teaching and learning quality and subsequent action taken by faculties through reflective practices; providing assistance and support to faculties for the review of teaching and learning performance; and allocation of teaching and learning quality funding to the faculties on the basis of overall performance in teaching and learning.

Teaching and learning performance indicators include the development and implementation of teaching and learning plans by faculties with or without school plans; staff-student ratios; participation of new staff in the university learning and teaching programs and certificates; provision of opportunities for the professional development of sessional and casual staff; implementation of the course and teaching evaluation plans and processes and subsequent reflective practices; surveys of PhD students (at the time of exit) on the quality of supervision;

and the analysis of the results of all types of student surveys conducted for the evaluation of teaching and courses at institution and faculty level. During the analysis of the results of student surveys, the attention is given to the comparison of various surveys' results with each other; comparison of results within departments; and comparison of current year's results with previous years. Teaching and Learning Committees at faculty level analyze the data on various performance indicators, identify the areas of improvement, and recommend consequent action.

External Incentives for Universities and Academic Staff for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning

External incentives supporting the enhancement of teaching and learning include performance-based teaching and learning funds, national teaching excellence awards, and teaching fellowships. Performance-based teaching and learning funds are allocated to institutions on the basis their performance in student surveys (on the quality of courses and teaching) conducted at national level. National teaching excellence awards are offered to excellent teachers from all national universities and include Awards for Teaching Excellence, Awards for Programs that Enhance Learning, and Citations for the Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning. Generally, these awards are linked with institutional awards and selection criteria for these awards are same as that of institutions which is described above. Teaching fellowships and grants are also offered to university teachers by national bodies for the enhancement of teaching and learning.

Academic Audits of Universities Including that of Teaching and Learning Activities

The data analysis also revealed the evidences of academic audits of universities by the national body in some of the sample universities. These audits are, generally, conducted on periodic basis and include the audits of various activities including that of teaching and learning activities of the university. The audit process starts with the submission of documents by the university to the audit body. These documents describe the quality assurance system of the university. Appropriate evidence is also provided by the universities for the support of claims. The audit body monitors the various aspects of quality assurance mechanisms, validates the claims, and makes recommendations. In turn, universities respond to audit recommendations concerning quality assurance mechanisms.

Implications for Pakistan

The research reported here is a part of a larger project that will analyze quality assurance processes for teaching in Universitas 21 (U21) institutions with the intention to develop a model of quality assurance processes for teaching in Pakistan universities. A fuller picture of quality assurance processes for teaching for Pakistan universities will emerge once the data analysis of policy and practice documents concerning quality assurance of teaching for sixteen U21 sample universities has been completed and opinion from higher education staff (the members of Quality Assurance Committee of HEC and Directors of Quality Enhancement Cells) of Pakistan has been sought in this regard. A questionnaire will be developed on the basis of findings from sixteen U21 sample universities. Opinions, on the value and applicability of the identified strategies to Pakistan universities, will be sought from higher education staff of Pakistan by using Delphi technique.

The findings from four U21 sample universities, however, suggest a number of implications for Pakistan universities. These include:

- There is a growing tendency for quality assurance to be based on quality enhancement with a focus on student-centred quality assurance processes. The efforts of Higher Education Commission (HEC) for assuring and enhancing the quality of higher education seems to be aligned in this regard and especially the establishment of Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs) at universities, as their name implies, is indicative of their emphasis on quality enhancement. The process of quality assurance in Pakistan universities is in the initial stages. It is likely, therefore, that a model for the quality assurance of teaching in Pakistan universities will need to combine both top-down and bottom-up approaches to quality assurance to enhance both acceptability and sustainability. It is suggested, that a student-centred approach to quality assurance of teaching should be adopted with emphasis on the enhancement of students' learning experiences.
- Many universities in Pakistan in consultation with Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs) have developed a number of guidelines and criteria for assuring the quality of their research. Less attention has been paid to the quality assurance of teaching. There is a need, therefore, to develop guidelines and processes for assuring and enhancing the quality of teaching. The starting point for this, as the findings of the study and international experience suggest, is the development of teaching and learning plans. These plans should state the teaching and learning objectives of the universities along with strategies to achieve them. For the purpose, appropriate policies and processes should be developed and implemented with a regular system of monitoring.
- A collaborative approach to the development, implementation, and evaluation of teaching and learning plans should be adopted by engaging faculties, departments and individuals in the processes. This process is likely to increase the ownership and sustainability of policies. Furthermore, plans, policies, and processes should be informed by the research in the area and international literature. For the purpose, pilot projects should be started at university level.
- Teaching and learning policies and processes should be disseminated among staff and students through seminars for raising awareness among them about the purposes and benefits of such policies.
- Evaluation of teaching and courses by students is being used increasingly in Pakistan universities for assuring and enhancing the quality of teaching and courses. This research has suggested that the rationale behind student' evaluation of teaching should be to improve the quality of teaching and courses by identifying areas for improvement and subsequent action. In Pakistan universities, individual teachers are not usually told about areas for improvement in teaching and courses. It is, therefore, suggested that greater attention be paid to the identification of areas for improvement and individual teachers supported in a collegial way for improvement to happen. The monitoring and reporting aspects of the process also cannot be ignored. To involve the individual teacher in the process, the practice on the part of teacher should be acknowledged and recognised by the heads, deans, and upper authorities.
- An important element in the student evaluation of teaching is informing students about the changes made in teaching and courses as a result of their feedback. This practice provides a greater sense of ownership and increases the likelihood that

students will be more enthusiastic and responsible in providing feedback next time. Furthermore, QECs could take steps to raise awareness among students about the purpose and benefits of the process through seminars and the publishing of booklets and brochures.

- Seeking feedback and input from peers on the quality of teaching and courses for improvement and recognition purposes may face difficulties in Pakistan. Two strategies can be helpful in this regard. First, the process should be started in a collegial way by allowing the individual teacher to be responsible for the review of his teaching and courses through the support of QECs. The concept of a critical friend at departmental level may be helpful in this regard. Second, the process should be initiated in a phased-manner and starting point may be the departmental discussions, feedback sessions among colleagues, and collaboration in course design and course materials. Finally, such practices should be recognised in promotion process to actively involve the academics in the process.
- Reflection is a key element in the process of review and evaluation of teaching. Individual teaching staff should be supported in reflection practices by Teaching and Learning Centres (that are being established at Pakistan universities under QECs) in a collegial way.
- The findings of the study suggest that professional development of staff has a positive impact on the quality of teaching. The establishment of Teaching and Learning Centres at Pakistan universities is an important initiative of HEC in this regard. It is, however, suggested that the emphasis of such centre should be on the continuous professional development of academic staff and on the enhancement of their teaching experiences. The important components of professional development include development and enhancement of disciplinary knowledge, teaching skills, pedagogical skills, supervision skills, IT literacy, and library skills. Furthermore, teaching training programmes, workshops, refresher courses, and certificates for the qualification of university teaching may be started for academic staff especially for the new ones. Such activities need to be encouraged and supported by academic heads, deans, and universities and also recognised in promotion processes and others rewards.
- Universities are placing an increasing emphasis on the recognition of scholarly teaching in the form of rewards and in promotion decisions. Many international universities have introduced the concept of teaching-focused staff. In many universities in Pakistan, scholarly teaching does not rate as highly as research in promotion decisions. Teaching quality is simply counted as years of service, irrespective of its quality. The assessment of scholarly teaching may be the issue for Pakistan universities. The assessment criteria, which emerge from this research, may serve as a guideline. As the selection/ promotion criteria are directly linked with the processes that enhance the quality of teaching (professional development, review and evaluation of teaching and courses by students and peers for improvement, etc), the development of assessment criteria will not only help raise the quality of teaching in Pakistan universities but also involve academic staff in the process.
- To enhance the quality of teaching and raise its profile in Pakistan universities, it may be desirable to develop a national system of awards for university teachers such as teaching excellence awards, citations and commendations. Such awards could be linked with university awards and QECs along with HEC could play a role in this.

- An important way of enhancing the quality of teaching is through Teaching Improvement Grants, Teaching Fellowships, and projects linked with the enhancement of quality of teaching and learning. HEC is granting scholarships and fellowships to university teachers. It may be that a specific proportion of fellowships can be allocated to projects that aim at the enhancement of university teaching and learning. Furthermore, it is suggested that those academics, who receive teaching excellence awards and teaching fellowships, share their innovative ideas concerning enhancement of teaching through seminars and publications.
- QECs and universities should encourage the linkage of teaching and research to enhance the quality of teaching and learning through such strategies: strengthening of scholarship of teaching by encouraging academic staff to undertake and disseminate pedagogical research; provision of assistance and support to academic staff for the development of research-based approaches to teaching and learning; research-based teaching and learning plans and policies; encouraging the teaching-research nexus in staff development programs; research-based curricula; and encouraging and supporting research-based teaching and learning at classroom level.
- Higher Education Commission (HEC) is responsible for the allocation of funding to the universities of Pakistan. To enhance the quality of teaching at institution level, consideration might be given to linking a specific proportion of such funding to the performance of universities on measures of teaching quality.
- The similar process may be considered within institutions to enhance and monitor the quality of teaching and learning at faculty and department level. A specific proportion of funding could be allocated to the faculties on the basis of their performance in improving the quality of teaching and learning. It is recommended, however, that the process should not only be limited to monitoring but attention should also be paid to the identification of areas for improvement in teaching and learning quality and subsequent support in taking action. The teaching and learning performance indicators, as described in the findings section, may serve as a guideline.
- A coordinated and collaborative university-wide approach should be adopted for assuring and enhancing the quality of teaching by engaging all those concerned i.e., students, teachers, administrators, managers, policy-makers. The next phase of this research will model this form of engagement by involving key people in Pakistan in a consideration of the ideas tentatively advanced here.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study suggest that a collaborative and coordinated university-wide approach has been adopted towards the quality assurance of teaching in four U21 member universities of Australia and New Zealand. There is a growing tendency in these research-led universities towards student-centred approach to quality assurance processes with emphasis on the enhancement of students' learning experiences. It is evident that there is a significant relationship between various quality assurance processes and it is difficult to practice any of the process in isolation. The processes ideally aim at the enhancement of teaching and learning but monitoring aspects of the processes cannot be entirely ignored. One significant aspect of quality assurance processes is the development and dissemination of teaching and learning policies, processes, and practices throughout the university and community. On the basis of findings from

research-led universities, it is has been suggested that Pakistan universities should develop, implement, and monitor teaching and learning plans, policies, and processes. These processes and policies should be research-based and all concerned should be involved. It has also been suggested that Pakistan universities provide professional development opportunities for academic staff to enhance their teaching skills and to reinforce the importance of the teaching-research nexus. It has also been suggested that scholarly teaching be recognition and rewarded.

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