Quality Assurance at the University of Birmingham, UK:
The Birmingham Integrated Quality Assurance and Enhancement System

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Structure of Talk

- Introduction to the University;

- Purpose of Quality Assurance

- The Birmingham Integrated Quality Assurance & Enhancement System (BIQAES):
    - The 'Annual Review' Process
    - Module Review
    - Programme Review
    - School summary
    - Integrated Review

University of Birmingham

- 100 years old in 2000
- A campus university
- 18,124 undergraduate students
- 7,000 postgraduate students
- 4,000 international students
- 5,700 staff
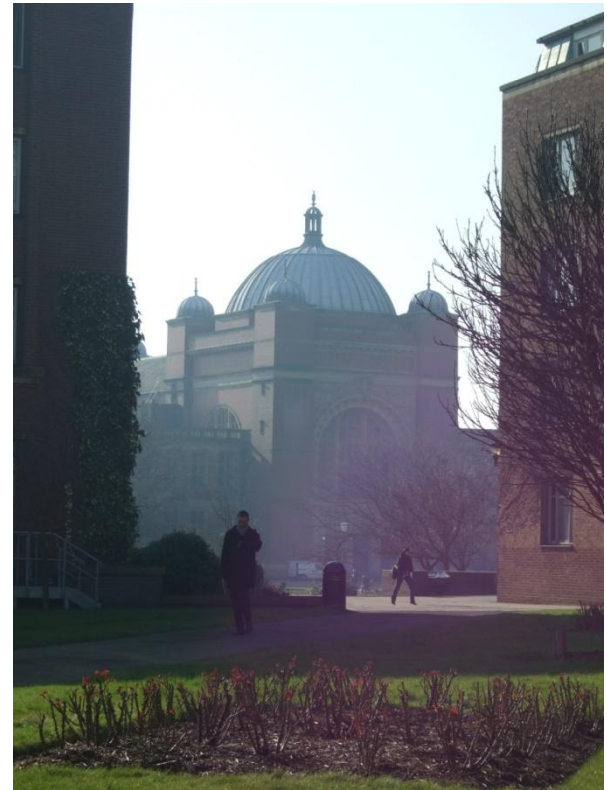
the **University** seeks to:

- continue enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning,
    - emphasising the acquisition of key academic skills,
- respond to student feedback;
    - through curriculum innovation and
    - enhancement of our extra-curricular provision
- ensure that students are equipped for the employment demands of the 21st Century

Role of Quality Assurance?

The nature of Quality Assurance?

The Quality
Assurance
Agency (UK)

Brown, 2004; Fig. 1.2
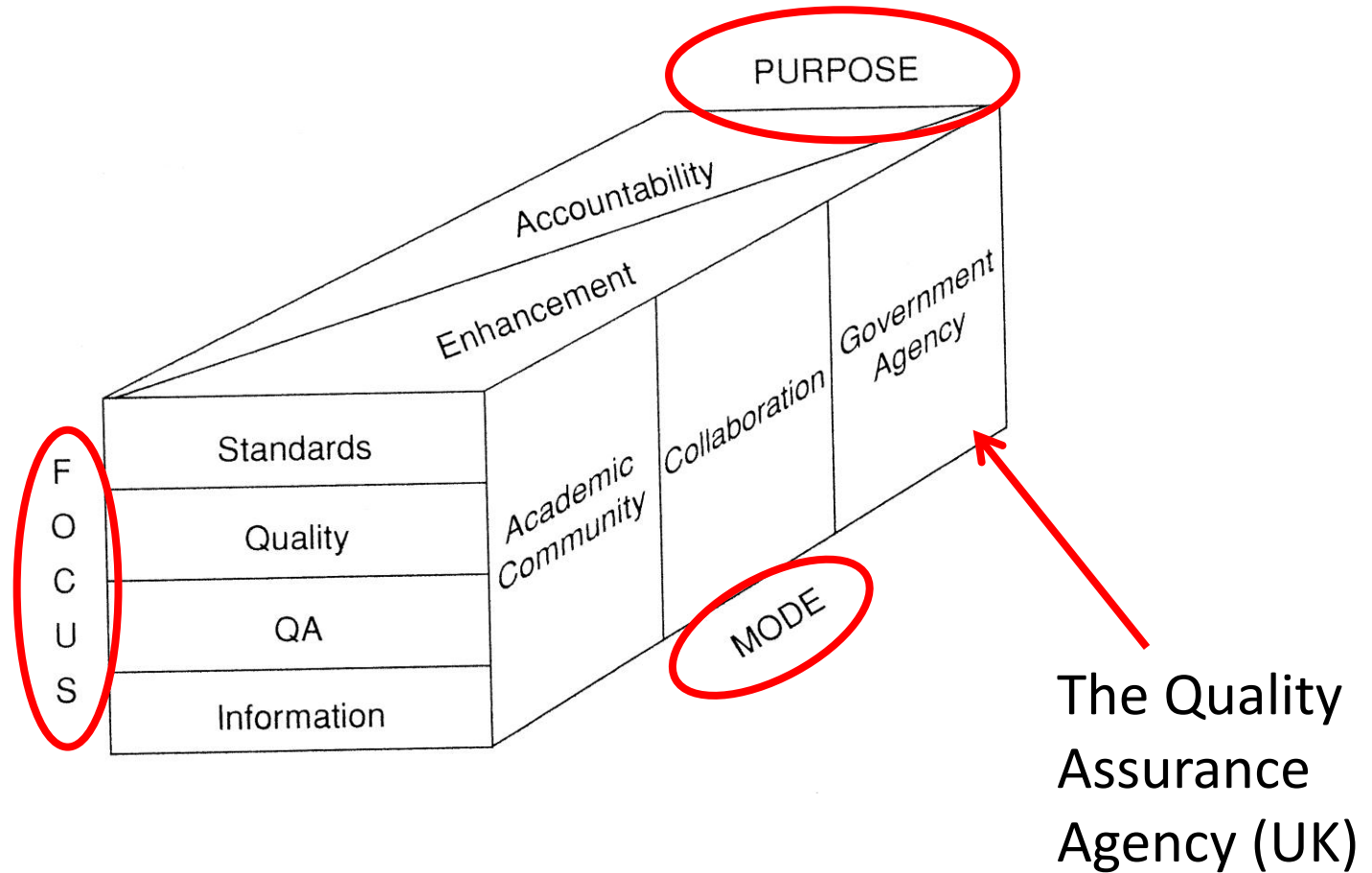
Quality Assurance (QA):

The Nature of the QA Process:
- Peer Review
- Self-evaluation
- Performance Indicators
- Consumer satisfaction
- Procedural compliance

Where the Power lies:
- Subject-based academics;
- Quality Assurance professionals
- Academic managers
- Students

The focus of the QA Process
- Teaching (curriculum, learning outcomes)
- QA systems and procedures
- Resourcing & management

The aim of the QA exercise:
- To ensure minimum standards;
- Support quality improvement
- Provide information
- Justify public funding

Brennan, J. 2012: 'Talking about Quality'

Birmingham Integrated Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (BIQAES) I

•To monitor the quality of the student learning experience
•To identify good practice and eliminate weaknesses;
•To test the effectiveness of School, College and University systems to monitor and enhance academic quality and standards;
•To help develop and enhance these systems
•To provide public information on the University's capacity to assure quality and standards of its awards
•To consider feedback from i. Students; and ii. External Examiners

Birmingham Integrated Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (BIQAES) **II**

- **Annual Module and Programme Review**
- Periodic (5 / 6 year) review of **All** processes
- Formerly (up to 2011)
  - Comprehensive Programme Review (every 5 years)
 - School Quality Review (every 6 years)

    [Research Reviews - outside BIQAES]
- Now (from 2012)
  - Vice-Chancellor's Integrated Review
  - Reviews all School Activities (Research & Teaching)

Annual Review
(Undergraduate & Postgraduate Programmes):

Form	Completed by	Sent to
Annual module review	Module Leaders	Programme Directors
Annual programme review	Programme Directors	Head of School (HoS) and School Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement (HQAE)
School summary	HoS or nominee[3]	Director of Quality Assurance and Enhancement (DQAE) (cc to AQU)

The Annual Module & Programme Review Process:
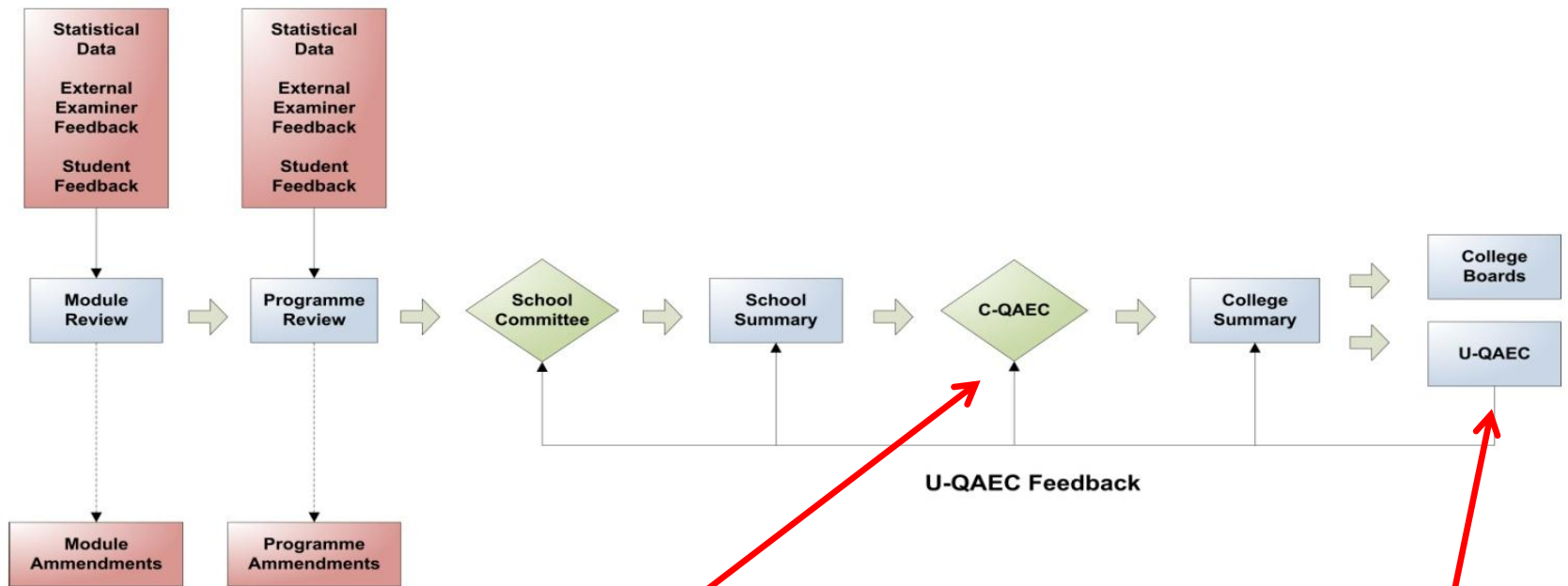
College – Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (C-QAEC)

University - Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (C-QAEC)

Annual Module Review Forms:

- Completed by the leaders of all modules (UG & PGT);
- An overview of module performance that summarises:
  - Student numbers;
  - Student achievement (mark distribution compared to previous years)

- The review should respond to:
  - Respond to feedback from students and External Examiners;
  - Identify areas of good practice

- Each module review concludes with a list of Actions (with names listed).

Annual Module Review 2010/11

In each section, please evaluate the statistical data or other relevant inputs as indicated below, and comment upon any significant issues or trends, indicating any action that has been / will be taken in response. All planned actions should be summarised in the action list.

Module (Banner) Code:
Module Title:
Name of Module Leader/Convenor:
1. Report on action taken as a result of previous module review: *Please comment on any action taken, evaluate its effects, and indicate if further action is required.*
2. Student numbers: *How many students were registered on the module? (Please indicate if numbers have changed significantly since the previous year/s)*
3. Analysis of module performance: *Please comment on the performance of students on the module, in comparison with the previous year/s and in comparison with the performance of other modules at the same level. (Refer to statistical data on module completion rates and the range of marks achieved.)*
4. Student Feedback: *a) What methods have been used to gather student feedback and what proportion responded?* *b) What key issues (both positive and negative) were raised in student feedback and what action has been / will be taken in response?*
5. Examiner Feedback (if applicable): *Were any issues raised by external examiners (in this year or the last) which were relevant or specific to this module? If so, what action has been / will be taken in response?*

Module leaders will have prepared an earlier summary of mark distributions for the Examination Board.

UG / PGT module review form: Page 1.

6. Educational Enhancement

a) *Please summarise your overall reflections on the module's performance and any planned changes or enhancements to the module.*[1]

b) *Please identify any examples of good, or innovative, practice which could be disseminated more widely.*

Please list all actions that have been identified as a result of this annual module review, as well as any ongoing actions.

Proposed Action	Deadline(s)	Person/Committee Responsible

I confirm that this annual module review has been conducted in accordance with guidance notes on annual review.

Name of module leader::	
Date:	

For undergraduate modules: Please submit the completed annual module review form to the relevant Programme Director/s by 22 July 2011
For postgraduate modules: Please submit the completed annual module review form to the relevant Programme Director/s by no later than 25 November 2011.

UG / PGT module review form: Page 2.

Annual Programme Review Form

• reflects on the continued viability of the programme, drawing on:
   •Data on student admissions (both Quantity and Quality)
•To review actions specified in preceding Annual Review Form.
•To analyse Student Performance (progression; Degree Classifications etc.)
•To ensure the Programme(s) continue to satisfy discipline-specific 'Benchmarking' Criteria.
•To respond to **feedback** from students and External Examiners.
•To identify any **Resources** issues (actual or anticipated) at a School or University level;
•To summarise examples of **Educational Enhancement** (drawing on module review forms);

•To identify any required changes in programme(s);

•The review concludes with a list of specified Actions.

Information to Support the Review

- National:
  - Higher Education Code of Practice
  - Framework for Higher Education Qualifications
  - Subject Benchmarking Statements
- School:
  - Student Feedback (module / programme questionnaires)
  - Reports from Staff-Student Committees
- National:
  - Information from the annual 'National Student Survey' of final year undergraduates.
- External:
  - External Examiner Reports; Accreditation by External Bodies
- University:
  - BIQAES statistical datasets (module and programme specific)
  - Admissions data; retention information; graduate employment statistics.

The School summary form should provide an overview of <u>significant trends, notable achievements or issues of concern within the School.</u> It should draw comparisons between programme, and evaluate the effectiveness of the annual programme reviews carried out.

College / School: Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences

This form is a summary of the following annual programme reviews:

1. Action taken as a result of previous annual programme reviews:

Are there any areas where appropriate action has not been taken or has proved difficult to carry out? Are there any areas where particularly effective action has been taken?

2. Admissions:

Using the statistical data and commentary provided by the Planning Office, please comment upon admissions to the School's programmes, with reference to student intake numbers, qualifications on entry, and diversity of entrants. Please also evaluate the continuing viability of the programme(s) in terms of current student numbers. Please draw comparisons with the previous years' data and any national data (if provided).

	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Average A level points of intake	23.46	24.33	24.87	25.54	26.56
Percentage male	50.44%	53.7%	52.85%	50.53%	51.75%
Percentage overseas	1.93%	3.79%	5.22%	2.11%	3.32%
Percentage BME	7.38%	5.34%	5.38%	3.51%	5.94%
Percentage with a disability	8.08%	11.53%	8.39%	6.67%	7.17%

3. Analysis of Performance:

Using the statistical data and commentary provided by the Planning Office, please comment on the relative performance of the programmes within the School, and the performance of groups of students, with reference to ethnicity, gender, disability, entry domicile and entry age. Please draw comparisons with the previous years' data and any national data (if provided).

First year non-progression

Entry cohort:	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
First year non-progression (%)	5.13%	5.62%	3.69%	4.4%	

Annual Review

- Considers:
  - All Undergraduate (UG) and Postgraduate (PGT) Modules
  - UG and PGT Programmes
    - Similar programmes can be reviewed together
  - School-level summaries
    - Separate summaries of UG and PGT programmes
    - Postgraduate Research (PGR) reviewed outside BIQAES.

Birmingham Integrated Quality Assurance and Enhancement System
(BIQAES) **III**

- Review of Collaborative Arrangements
- Specific Checks
- (Thematic Review)

BIQAES:

- emphasises the importance of analysing and interpreting data collected;
- Reviews the effectiveness of previous reviews
- Analyses / examines / explains trends.
  - For Positive trends
    - Points for wider dissemination
  - For Negative trends
    - Highlighting specific actions

Audit by the University

- Specific checks (at College, School, or Programme level);
- 5-yearly programme of assessing School Quality Assurance:
- Integrated Review (of Research and Teaching) by an external panel
  - Includes a School Quality Review:
  - Process:

    1. Submission of self-evaluation documentation

    2. Review team Scoping Meeting

    3. Full Review Day(s)

    4. Report and recommendations

QA Inputs

- Annual Reviews produced by the School;
- BIQAES datasets:
  - Admissions Data;
  - student non-completion rates / progression
  - employment data;
  - module mark data-base;
- Student Feedback
- External Examiner Reports

Conclusions:

- BIQAES seeks to fulfil internal and external requirements of QA

- Aims to deliver continued improvement in educational delivery;
- All staff are involved at one level or another;
- In some Schools, students have contributed directly to Annual Review (i.e. At a Programme Level);

But:
- Requires accurate data;
- Cannot, by itself, deliver enhancement
  - or improve quality of feedback to students;
  - or speed of feedback

A Quality Assurance Introduction for Students: