

Implementation of Learning Outcomes in Quality Assurance of Higher Education

Tomas Egeltoft

Swedish Higher Education Authority

Seminar on QA in HE and VET, Biograd na Moru, June 27th 2013

Swedish Higher Education Authority

Quality Assurance:

- Applications for the entitlement to award qualifications.
- Programme evaluation.

EQF – NQF in Sweden

European Qualifications Framework (QF-EHEA), adopted by ministers in 2005 (Bologna Process).

NQF in Sweden: as from 1 July 2007 all courses, programmes and qualifications are ascribed to three cycles: first, second and third.

.... And qualification descriptors – with intended learning outcomes (ILOs).

Qualification descriptors

There are descriptors for each qualification in the National Qualifications Ordinance.

Each descriptor includes 8-24 ILOs, e.g.

Degree of Bachelor of Arts/Science: 8 ILOs;

Degree of Master of Arts/Science in Secondary Education: 24 ILOs.

Independent projects are required for all first and second cycle qualifications.

Learning Outcomes as tools in External QA - Do ALOs correspond to the ILOs in the Qualification Descriptors?

- If, and to what extent, do students meet the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) laid down in the qualification descriptors?

The Evaluation Model in brief (2011-2014)

- 4 year cycle.
- Peer review. Each panel includes: experts, students and practitioners.
- A selection of ILOs is made according to guidelines.
- Students' independent projects, self evaluations from HEIs, student experiences and interviews with the HEIs.
- A three level scale: very high quality, high quality or inadequate quality.
- Very high quality – extra funding.
- Inadequate quality – follow up after one year.
- Web based evaluation results.

The students' independent projects (7,5 to 40 ECTS)

- Used as a source for evidence/indicators of students meeting the ILOs.
- The aggregate goal attainment of the programme's independent projects.
- The purpose is NOT to review grades of individual projects, given by the examiners.
- A random selection of no more than 24, and a minimum of 5, independent projects from each study programme.

The HEIs Self Evaluations

- The aim of the self evaluation: to demonstrate to the panel that students meet the ILOs in the qualification descriptors.
- A broader and a more comprehensive presentation of outcomes.
- The HEI should present and analyse the achieved outcomes in relation to the ILOs in the qualifications descriptors.
- Analyses of teacher qualifications related to ILOs.

Student experiences and HEI interviews

- Interviews with students in the latter part of their studies concerning achieved learning outcomes.
- Interviews with representatives from HEI.

All interviews are done as video conferences (Adobe Connect).

Panel Report and Final Decision

- The panel report includes an assessment of each chosen ILO and an overall assessment for each study programme.
- The final decision is made by the University Chancellor.

Qualification Descriptors

- **Examples** of ILOs laid down in the qualification descriptors

Master of Arts/Science (120 credits)

Knowledge and understanding

For a Master of Arts/Science (120 credits) the student shall:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding in the main field of study, including both broad knowledge of the field and a considerable degree of specialised knowledge in certain areas of the field as well as insight into current research and development work.
- demonstrate specialised methodological knowledge in the main field of study.

Master of Arts/Science (120 credits)

Competence and skills

For a Master of Arts/Science (120 credits) the student shall:

- demonstrate the ability in speech and writing both nationally and internationally to report clearly and discuss his or her conclusions and the knowledge and arguments on which they are based in dialogue with different audiences.

Master of Arts/Science (120 credits)

Judgement and approach

For a Master of Arts/Science (120 credits) the student shall

- demonstrate the ability to make assessments in the main field of study informed by relevant disciplinary, social and ethical issues and also to demonstrate awareness of ethical aspects of research and development work.

Results so far

- About 800 programmes evaluated of about 1500.
- Nearly 700 experts involved since 2011 – easy to recruit.
- The evaluation model works.
- Increased knowledge and awareness of the national qualification descriptors.
- Improvements of HEIs internal quality assurance.

Challenges

- The intended triangulation: students' independent projects, self-evaluation and interviews.
- What can be considered as evidence of ILOs being achieved? Balance: assessment of output and processes.
- How can reports give more feedback to HEIs ? Balance: autonomy – recommendations.
- Where does IQA of the HEIs fit in?

Ways forward, next evaluation cycle (2015-...)

- The government has stated: The agency is responsible for the further development of EQA processes.
- Focus on learning outcomes will remain.
- Balance development – control.
- 6 year cycle?

Thank you!

tomas.egeltoft@uk-ambetet.se

www.uk-ambetet.se