

Delivering Excellence

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Outline

- ENQA Working Group on the Concept of Excellence in higher education
- Excellence and quality assurance: beyond threshold academic standards
- Definitions of excellence: What is it and why does it matter?
- Excellence in practice
 - The identification and assessment of excellence
 - Current examples
- A criterion referenced approach
- An alternative model for quality assurance

ENQA Working Group

- Set-up in 2012 to explore key concepts and practices
- Representatives from a range of European Quality Agencies
- Reported to the ENQA CEO meeting, 2014
- Report published 2014
- Next steps



THE CONCEPT OF EXCELLENCE
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Excellence and Quality Assurance

Role of Quality Assurance:

- Safeguarding standards and promoting quality improvement
- Meeting threshold standards and expectations
- Life-cycle of quality assurance activities
- Beyond threshold standards
- Comparability of institutions and programmes
- Recognising difference and reputation



Definitions of excellence

- The language of 'excellence'
- Exceptional, meritocratic, outstanding practice
- Is excellence an absolute or a relative concept?
- Excellence as an aspiration



Excellence in practice

- UK: Research Excellence Framework
Teaching Excellence Framework – Green Paper
Criteria: Student satisfaction, degree results, graduate employment.
- Exzellenzinitiative, Germany
- Centres of Excellence, Finland
- Best study programmes, Russia



A criterion referenced approach

‘A norm-referenced conception will define excellence relative to the performance of others. Thus people will be in competition for excellence and, as a matter of logic, not everyone can attain it. A criterion-referenced view, however, will define excellence in relation to a standard such that people are not in competition for it and, in principle, if not necessarily in fact, everyone can attain it.’ [Strike, 1985]

Criteria:

- Achievements
- Stakeholder satisfaction/approval
- Social, economic and cultural development

Who assesses excellence?



New approaches to quality

- From quality assurance to quality enhancement
- Risk-based methodologies
- Comparative analysis – benchmarking with other institutions
- League tables and world rankings
- Validating claims for excellence – peer review
- Linking funding to quality



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