

# Quality and Standards in UK higher education: meeting the challenges

Carolyn Campbell

Head of International Affairs

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (UK)



# What are the challenges?

- Securing public confidence in the quality of higher education
- Developing better public information
- Meeting the international higher education context

## 2009: a summer of reports on quality

- No systemic failure of standards and/or quality
- More work needed to provide clear information about quality and standards
- Move to comparing academic standards
- Congruence on external examiners



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# The future of the quality assurance system in England and NI: key principles

- Provide authoritative, publicly accessible information on academic quality and standards
- Command public, employer and other stakeholder confidence
- Meet the needs of funders, autonomous institutions and students
- Rely on independent judgement
- Support a culture of quality improvement in HEIs
- Work effectively and efficiently



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# Towards a new method of institutional audit

- To commence in 2011
- Autumn 2010 QAA's consultation on method including on
  - Comparability of standards
  - Accuracy and completeness of information about provision, quality and standards
  - Flexibility of audit methods and cycle
  - Language and how we communicate with the public
  - Student centred approach
- Review of the Academic Infrastructure



# Student centred

- Supporting greater student engagement in quality assurance processes
- Using new methods of communication eg pod casting and films
- Responsive to student requirements for information



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# Investigating complaints

- Causes for concern – the current position
- More robust ways of investigating concerns

# Becoming more public facing

- Providing better information on quality and standards
- New methods of communication
- The information we provide:
  - Is it what people want from us?
  - Is it helpful?
  - It is appropriate for the audience it is aimed at?
  - Are we aiming at the right audience?
  - How can we improve?



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# The challenges of the international education context

- Supporting international students in the UK
- Promoting understanding of UK approaches to quality and academic standards
- Assuring the provision of UK higher education delivered outside the UK



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# Responding to the international context

- Supporting mutual understanding
  - Participation in networks
  - Partnerships, projects and cooperation
  - Testing and verifying information
  - Engaging with stakeholders
- A strategy on cross border education
- The audit of overseas provision

# Last, but not least...what students told US

that they wanted to know more about:

- Graduate employability
- Retention rates
- Learning and teaching styles on the course
  - How will I be taught and supported?
  - How will I be assessed?
  - Who will be teaching me?
  - Opportunities for placements?
- Probable academic content of the course
- Student satisfaction rates



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# Thank you

[c.campbell@qaa.ac.uk](mailto:c.campbell@qaa.ac.uk)

[www.qaa.ac.uk](http://www.qaa.ac.uk)

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