



Australian Government

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

Sharing the burden: the role of agencies and faculty in developing and sustaining quality assurance in higher education

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TEQSA



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Overview

1. The rise of the accountable university
2. Self-regulation versus accountability
3. Regulation versus quality assurance
4. Reducing the 'burden'
5. Faculty as objects and partners
6. The rise of student-centric quality assurance

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1. The rise of the accountable university

- “Planning and resource allocation tend to be incremental rather than dynamic...Among the reasons for this are the strong forces within each university. These include large and powerful academic departments together with individual academics who sometimes see their academic discipline as more important than the long-term well-being of the university which houses them...
- ...in our view universities are first and foremost corporate enterprises for which subsidiary units and individual academics are responsible and accountable”.



Report of the Steering Committee for Efficiency Studies in Universities, 1985

2. Self-regulation versus Accountability

- “The opportunity which the [Academic Audit] Unit is already offering universities, by acting as a stimulus for them to define and defend their own standards and quality, in promoting self-reflection and self-criticism and...in encouraging a much needed development of a sense of professionalism in university teachers...must not be lost.”

Peter Williams, 'The UK Academic Audit Unit', 1991



3. Regulation versus Quality Assurance

- “While this report recommends that the Australian government should assume full responsibility for the regulation of higher education in Australia, it is important to retain a strong element of local knowledge and responsiveness in any national regulatory body and this should be reflected in its governance and operational arrangements.”



*Review of Australian Higher Education
(The Bradley Review), 2008*

4. Reducing the ‘burden’

- “The approach [to quality assessment] is designed to be proportionate, risk-based and granted in the context of each individual provider...this tailored approach will significantly reduce the regulatory costs and burden for many providers as it removes the need to prepare for repeated and routine...cyclical quality reviews against the baseline requirements.”

Revised operating model for quality assessment, Higher Education Funding Council for England, March 2016



5. Faculty as objects and partners

- “Regulating as object...the regulator makes a demand and the regulated complies with the command.
- Regulating as partner recognises the expertise, knowledge and commitment of the party being regulated. The assumption behind regulating as partner is that those being regulated need to be motivated to work with the regulator to correct a problem or concern.”



Review of Higher Education Regulation, Professor Kwong Lee Dow and Professor Valerie Braithwaite, 2013

6. The rise of student-centric QA

- The Office for Students (OfS) will be explicitly pro-competition and pro-student choice, and will make sure that a high quality higher education experience is available for students from all backgrounds.
- “For the first time, we will put the interests of the student at the heart of the regulatory landscape. By embedding better student outcomes, we will also protect the interests of taxpayers and the economy”.



Success of a knowledge economy, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (UK), May 2016



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Questions?

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