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Strategic Issues relating to the introduction and improvement of a Quality Management System in Universities

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Outline

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The Quality Function in Higher Education Institutions
The Deming Quality Cycle
Strategic Management in HE
Quality standards
ENQA: Quality Requirements and key implications
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The Quality Function in Higher Education Institutions

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Vision - encapsulates philosophy and aspirations for the future

Mission statements state the purpose and main intended activities of educational value

HEIs – complex organisations with multiplicity of stakeholders

Quality - its assurance and its enhancement – must form an integral part of a university's strategic ends

“Strategy is the direction and scope of an organisation over the long-term: which achieves advantage for the organisation through its configuration of resources within a challenging environment, to meet the needs of markets and to fulfil stakeholder expectations”.

Johnson et al (2008)

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Strategic Management in HE

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Strategic management involves making decisions and setting up mechanisms for maintaining, supporting and improving quality

The key aim in the quality management and development is to incorporate quality management into the normal activity of the university, with the underlying idea of continuous improvement

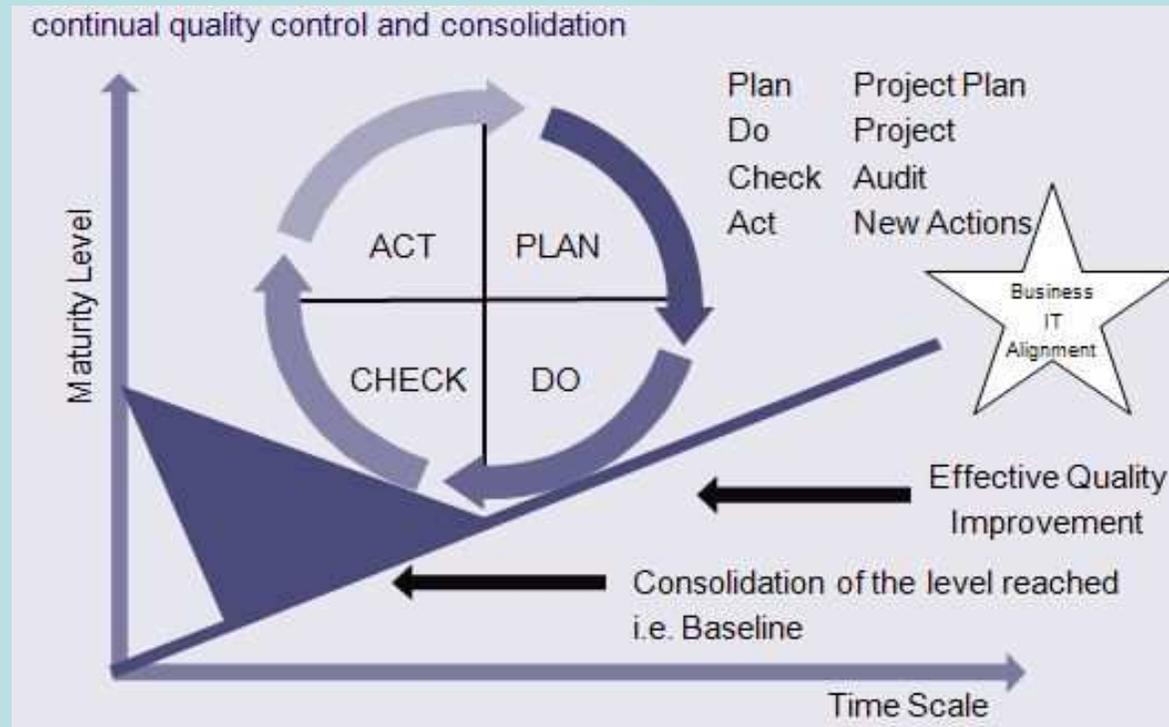
A university's quality management system needs to cover the entire range of education provided by the university, research, societal and regional interaction, and support services

Davies et al., (2007)

The Deming Quality Cycle

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Learning from the manufacturing and from the IT industries



<http://www.australianitil.com.au/images/deming%20cycle.jpg>



Quality standards

“We have to keep in mind that only by assuring the high quality of higher education can we hope to determine a better future for our peoples and countries. Thus, compromising the quality of higher education essentially means compromising our future.”

(Jan Sadlak, Director of UNESCO-European Centre for Higher Education)

Academic standards and quality function deployment is the responsibility of institutional leaders, national and European quality bodies like the QAA in the UK and ENQA in Europe.

Academic standards : provision, research, experience



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ENQA: Quality Requirements and key implications

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Quality Culture

Quality assurance policy

Quality enhancement policy Approval

Periodic review and monitoring of programmes

Assessment Quality of teaching staff

Learning resources

Data and information

Accountability

(Table 1 in paper from ENQA website)

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Quality Culture to Accountability

Quality Culture

Institutions should commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture and put in place a management system that recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. This system should be effective (e.g. would need to be understood by all participants), efficient (e.g. avoid 'gold plating'), fair (e.g. arrangements would militate against conflicts of interest), and allow for appropriate external input (e.g. through use of external subject experts in programme review).

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Accountability

Institutions should regularly publish up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards they are offering.

Model adopted in Middlesex

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Middlesex University is dedicated to being an excellent University committed to:

- (i) inspiring its students to achieve ambitious goals through the delivery of outstanding innovative, career-focussed courses that result in highly valued qualifications to begin and develop successful professional careers
- (ii) developing new knowledge and professional skills through scholarship and research for the benefit of our students, business and public sector organisations and the wider community.

The University's approach to managing academic quality can be seen as a combination of :

- the management structure of the University;
- the deliberative structure of the University;
- the University's academic quality/regulatory processes and structures.



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Centre for Learning and Quality Enhancement

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The CLQE, headed by the Director who reports to the DVC Academic, manages and reports on University academic quality and standards processes.

The CLQE takes the University lead on development of pedagogical practices across the University.

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement function is overseen and facilitated by the Centre for Learning and Quality Enhancement (CLQE) which has the responsibility for the assurance of academic standards; and the enhancement of academic quality across the University

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Successful (Efficient and effective) enhancement

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For enhancement to be successful enhancement activities need to be embedded within the system, explicit and linked to assurance activities. Thus, there should be:

there must be an explicit demonstration of improvement, and therefore measures of the quality of the student experience will be established and regularly monitored;

actively planned at University level (e.g. by establishing annual enhancement priorities and themes);

integrated into working practices (for example by being factored into work programmes, role requirements etc);

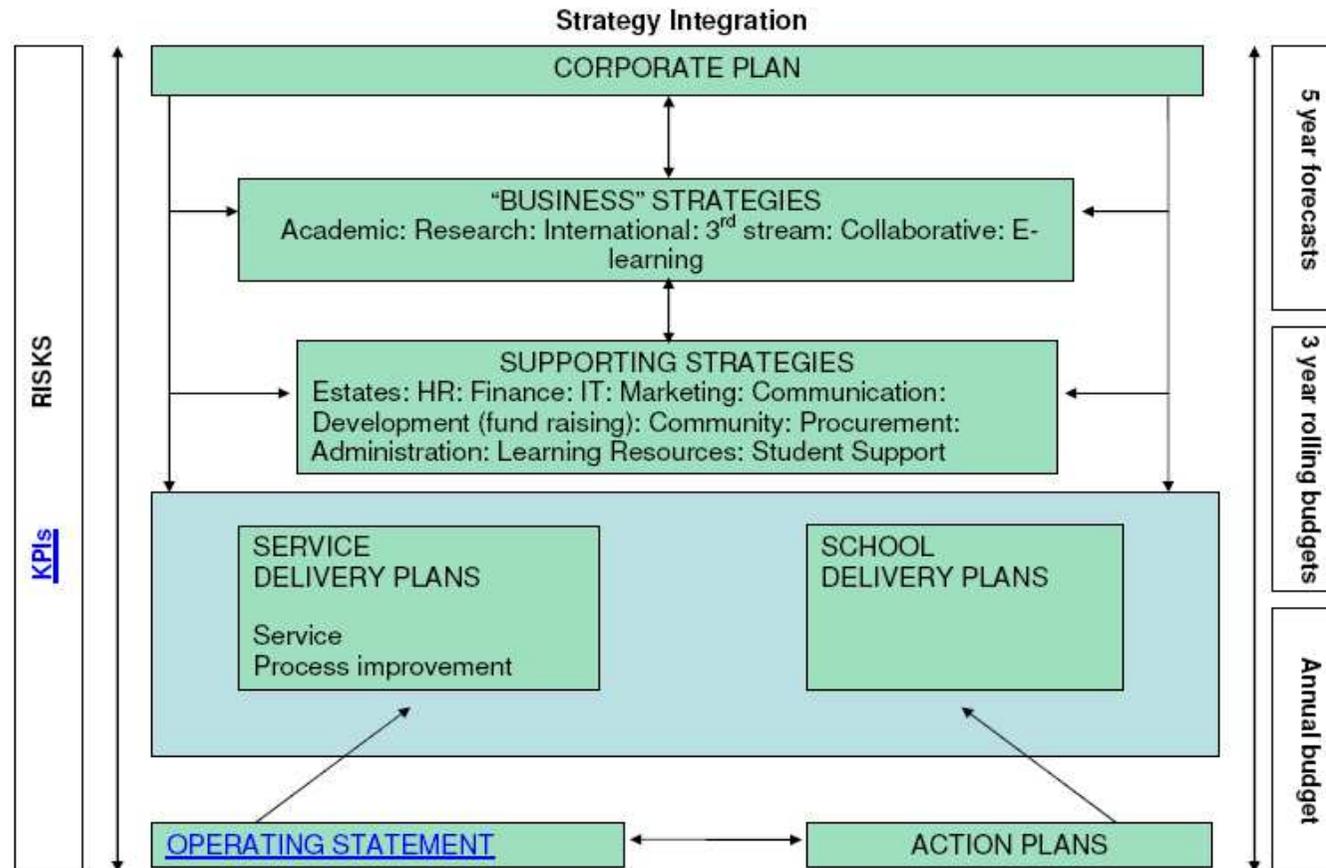
encouraged by appropriate incentives (for example, by incorporating into promotion criteria, supported by internal grants etc); and underpinned by effective staff development.

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Strategic Integration

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Recommendations (1)

Universities need to:

(i) develop and maintain a quality management system which ensures that the university is able to operate in a reliable, ethical, efficient and quality-oriented way, taking the needs of students and other stakeholders into consideration

(ii) base their activities and management on continuous assessment and enhancement, and fulfil their mission in ways that promote the well-being of the staff and students

Where possible, reports and other forms of oversight and evaluation should be based upon already existing data sets such as those derived from quality monitoring reports, student feedback, progression and achievement data etc...



Conclusions

HEI institutions and their operation are very complex and difficult to manage.

The contribution of HEIs to a country and to society at large are far reaching, often intangible yet when quality is compromised it is blatant for all to see.

When matters get too complex (and they do) it is always advisable to go back to first principles and ask the fundamental questions :

What are we trying to do? **PURPOSE**

Why are we doing it? **REASON**

How are we doing it? **METHOD**

Why is that the best way to do it? **OPTIMISATION**

How do we know it works? **EFFECTIVENESS**

How can we improve it? **ENHANCEMENT**



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Any questions?

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