

The Road to the Code

A workshop and accompanying resources to help understand and use Chapter B5
(student engagement) of the UK Quality Code

Workshop Plan

Introduction

As members of the QAA advisory group that steered the content of this new chapter we knew soon on that we wanted to run a workshop at the WIDAR Conference 2012 (Workers in Democracy and Representation – a professional network of students' union staff) on the code and how to get the most from it. What we thought might be particularly helpful is to develop a workshop that can easily be repeated by delegates back in their own institutions or unions, that's what this is.

The purpose of this workshop is to spark debate and unleash ideas amongst groups of people in HE that have some involvement with student engagement but haven't heard much about the UK Quality Code. Running this workshop won't turn the group into lifelong quality geeks, it won't instantly result in your HEI getting a commendation in its next QAA review and it won't mean you automatically get the support of your institution's senior management for your big ideas – however it does provide a starting point and should help to show how your ideas and work fit within the new regulatory framework for student engagement. You can then follow it up in a way that suits the needs of your union or HEI.

We have kept the workshop simple so that as many people as possible can deliver it or participate in it. We're first delivering this in August 2012, right after the London 2012 Olympic Games so you will notice our own little piece of Olympic legacy in there too.

If you have any questions, need some advice or would like to ask for editable versions of these resources – please do get in touch. Our contact details are on the back cover.

On behalf of the student engagement chapter advisory group,

Emelie Helsen & Dan Derricott

The UK Quality Code

In the UK, the awards given by Higher Education Institutions to its students are expected to meet certain **threshold academic standards**. This means that you can expect certain attributes of a bachelors graduate or that there is comparability between the competences of graduates from different institutions in similar subject (e.g. a BA English graduate from Manchester should be able to demonstrate a similar level of achievement to a BA English graduate from Manchester Metropolitan).

Institutions are also expected to ensure **students' learning opportunities** (the student experience) are of sufficient **quality** so that they can achieve the academic standards of the award.

So that these can be assured, institutions are expected to have **robust systems in place for managing standards and quality** (as stipulated by the European Standards and Guidelines for HE) and these systems are what is checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for HE (QAA) when the conduct an external review of institutions.

Until recently the expectations on standards, quality and systems have been spread across different documents. On behalf of the HE sector, QAA is facilitating the transition from many separate documents to one authoritative guide to expectations on institutions: The UK Quality Code.

This applies to all providers of Higher Education in the UK and the external reviews make judgements against whether the expectations are met. Even though there are different methods of review in different devolved nations or for different types of providers – they are all underpinned by the Quality Code.

QAA have taken the opportunity of moving to the Quality Code to identify gaps in the expectations and introduce new chapters of the code to rectify this. One of those gaps was student engagement and from November 2011 to June 2012, a brand new chapter was drafted, consulted on, editing and agreed ready for use in reviews from September 2013.

This is a significant milestone in the development of the student engagement agenda as institutions are now required to demonstrate that they **'take deliberate steps to engage all students, individually and collectively, as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience'**.

The challenge now is for institutions and their student bodies (students' unions) to work together to meet this expectation in a coordinated and sustainable way.

You can find the UK Quality Code and updates on the transition at:
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/quality-code/Pages/default.aspx>

The Workshop

There are four learning objectives for this workshop:

1. Participants will have developed an understanding of the new chapter and the development of student engagement which resulted in it
2. Participants will have explored the notion of student engagement and partnership in relation to their institution and to a shared understanding
3. Participants will have discussed current practices on how the expectation and indicators of the chapter are being met
4. Participants will have identified opportunities for engagement in quality assurance and enhancement within the framework of the chapter

A mixture of presentation, individual thinking, group discussion and peer review is used to deliver this workshop. It is designed to be delivered within a one hour slot, so we have scheduled 55 minutes worth of activity. A longer session would naturally allow for more in-depth discussion. We would recommend that you do not attempt to reduce the timings unless participants are already familiar with the background to and content of the chapter.

The workshop plan is detailed overleaf which should help guide you through the delivery of the workshop and the following resources are referred to which you can download through the corresponding links.

Resources:

Electronic versions of these resources & this plan are available at:
<http://studentengagement.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/the-road-to-the-code/>

Or click on these links to go straight there if your viewing this on screen:
(clicking a hard copy may not have the desired effect, we're sorry)

[The Prezi](#)

[Partnership Definition Sheets](#)

[Indicator Sheets](#)

[Mapping Tool for the Student Engagement Chapter of the Quality Code](#)

[Chapter B5 \(student engagement\) of the UK Quality Code](#)

Workshop Delivery Plan

Workshop Outline			
Title:	The Road to the Code: <i>Understanding and using Chapter B5 (student engagement) of the UK Quality Code</i>		
Description:	The purpose of this workshop is to spark debate and unleash ideas amongst groups of people in HE that have some involvement with student engagement but haven't heard much about the UK Quality Code. It provides a starting point for development in this area and should help to show how your ideas and work fit within the new regulatory framework for student engagement. You can then follow it up in a way that suits the needs of your union or HEI.		
Learning Objectives:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participants will have developed an understanding of the new chapter and the development of student engagement which resulted in it 2. Participants will have explored the notion of student engagement and partnership in relation to their institution and to a shared understanding 3. Participants will have discussed current practices on how the expectation and indicators of the chapter are being met 4. Participants will have identified opportunities for engagement in quality assurance and enhancement within the framework of the chapter 		
Resources:	The Prezi Partnership Definition Sheets Indicator Sheets Mapping Tool for the Student Engagement Chapter of the Quality Code		
Your Session Delivery Details			
Lead trainer:		Group size & profile:	<i>Think about their previous experience of Quality Assurance and student engagement</i>
Training team:		Access needs:	
Date & time:		Learning needs:	
Venue:		Dietary requirements:	

Timing	Activity	Lead Trainer	Resources
<p>Before the workshop begins</p>	<p>Print the 'Partnership Definition Sheets'. Ideally you will have seven discussion groups, one for each indicator of sound practice. Each set of Partnership Definition Sheets has 7 sheets within it, each with a different photo of an Olympian in the corner. You should print a quantity of sets equal to the number of people in each of the 7 groups. If you have 28 people – that's 7 groups of 4 people – you will need to print and put up 4 sets of sheets.</p> <p>If your group is smaller (less than 21) you might want to give more than one indicator to each group. So if you have 4 groups of 3, just print pages 1 – 4 of the sheets file, 3 times.</p> <p>Blu-tac these sheets onto the wall around the room.</p> <p>Place coloured marker pens (normal pens are fine if you don't have these handy) on each table.</p> <p>Print The Indicators file and keep these at the front with you for now.</p> <p>Load the Prezi.</p>		<p>Partnership Definition Sheets</p> <p>Blu-tac</p> <p>Pens</p> <p>Indicators</p> <p>Computer & Projector, ideally with sound</p>
<p>3 minutes</p>	<p>Allow participants to sit where they like, you will move and split them up later.</p> <p>Welcome everybody to the workshop</p> <p>Explain that the purpose of the workshop is to “introduce you to the UK Quality Code’s new chapter on student engagement through discussion. We will start with a really quick introduction of how student engagement has developed in the last few years and some of the lessons learnt which have informed the development of this chapter. Then you will have a look at the notion of partnership which the chapter talks of and will look at how the expectation of the chapter and its indicators can be met.”</p> <p>Explain the learning objectives of the workshop and check everybody is okay with everything so far.</p>		

<p>7 minutes</p>	<p>Focus on the Prezi, ensure it is full screen and click. Each time you click, it will move on, just like a Powerpoint but a bit 'whizzier'.</p> <p>When you plan the delivery of this workshop you should spend some time going through the Prezi yourself, becoming familiar with it and developing your own narrative to accompany it. Here's a rough guide to how it's structured:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping ahead of yesterday's news: Student engagement continues to develop rapidly, it's important to innovate and keep ahead • Partnership: The chapter in the code talks of partnership – it's a notion we each need to understand in the context of our own institution / department. It's okay for it to mean different things to different institutions, the important thing is that it is agreed and understood in your context. • Student engagement really started to take off a few years ago after HEFCE commissioned the Open University's Centre for Higher Education Research & Information, which reported in February 2009. • It concluded at the time that there was more focus on consumerism • It made a number of recommendations • One particular conclusion was that greater engagement is engendered when students themselves take the lead... • HEFCE funding started to become available. That has led to a number of research and development projects, some are summarised here through models the produced: • NUS & the HEA show the stages of engagement and advocate that partnership is the richest and most valuable form of engagement • The University of Exeter, through their much-acclaimed Students as Change-Agents project, identified four equally valid but distinct ways of engaging students in their framework. They argue that you can go beyond partnership and empower student-led quality enhancement, just like CHERI reported. • The HEA researched where student engagement can take place. This helps distinguish between student engagement in learning itself, and in the development of the learning experience. • Sparqs, the Scottish agency for developing and supporting student engagement, have developed a model of the student learning experience which shows what students might engage about and the areas in which student engagement might lead to quality enhancement. • Sparqs are also in the process of pulling together the various understandings of student 	<p>The Prezi</p>
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	<p>engagement in a Scottish Student Engagement Framework. It doesn't seek to create one definition, but to categorise current understanding into 5 areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The models alone haven't created the buzz around student engagement though, it is an agenda that has received plenty of support from sector bodies – two examples are the QAA and NUS. • NUS' own professionalisation over the last few years has had a knock-on effect locally with many students' unions investing in specialist staff support. • Leeds University Union is an example of a really developed Union. (video) • So this has all been quite timely and led up to the introduction of the UK Quality Code, during which student engagement was identified as an accepted norm in the sector, which warranted an expectation on all providers of higher education. • The Quality Code has an overarching expectation – this is the bit that HEIs are actually judged against and can make happen in their own way. • But to make sure there is some consistency and to give external reviewers guidance on what to look for during institutional review, there are seven indicators of sound practice. 		
<p>5 minutes</p>	<p>Explain that the fundamental thing to get right is to develop an understanding in your institution of what student engagement should look like, around this notion of partnership. Tell them they will see on the walls sheets, they should take a pen over and find a sheet.</p> <p>They should take a couple of minutes to think about:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A description of what 'partnership' looks like in their institution / department now 2. What a partnership with students in 3 years should look like, in their opinion <p>They should write these on to the sheets, along with the name of their institution / department in the gap of the top heading</p> <p>Whilst they are up and think / write – you should place an Indicator Sheet on each table.</p>		<p>Partnership Definition Sheets</p> <p>Pens</p>
	<p>Point out to them that there is a photo of an Olympian in the corner of their sheet. They should now carefully pull their sheet off the wall and find the table which has the corresponding photo on it.</p> <p>(This breaks the groups up out of their natural friendship groups / alliances, in a discrete way).</p>		
<p>5 minutes</p>	<p>Ask participants to (introduce themselves if needed and) share their definitions of partnership in 3 years. They should then agree a shared definition, based on the good points of each others'. It should be kept succinct though and should be written in the space on their indicator sheet.</p>		<p>Indicator Sheets</p>

<p>20 minutes</p>	<p>In their groups: they should first list existing practice from their own institutions which demonstrates that the indicator they have is being met. This is an opportunity to share existing good practice</p> <p>Using their shared definition of partnership to underpin their thinking, they should then think about what an institution would need to do in order to demonstrate good practice in that area. (Any general, hypothetical institution, not necessarily their own)</p> <p>They should mind-map their ideas, including how they would make it happen and how they would evidence it to a QAA review team. They should aim for around 3 – 5 ideas, and should be thinking about which idea they want to share with everybody else.</p> <p>Facilitators should float around the groups making sure groups are thinking about the practicalities of the idea, but also making sure they are being ambitious and thinking long-term.</p>		<p>Flip chart</p> <p>Pens</p>
<p>15 minutes</p>	<p>Ask each group to take a couple of minutes to share their definition of partnership, their indicator and what their one main idea for working towards that indicator is.</p> <p>You should probe for details on what impact their ideas might have.</p> <p>Ask participants whether the types of activity being discussed is new to them or the sort of stuff they would hope is happening anyway. If the latter, talk of how the quality code chapter provides a framework for presenting and justifying their work in a regulatory context.</p> <p>Hand out the mapping sheets and explain these are a resource they can take away and use themselves to think about how they are contributing the expectation and how they could enhance what they do to create good practice.</p>		<p>Mapping Sheets</p>
<p>Close</p>	<p>Thank everybody for taking part and re-cap that this workshop was to open up thinking and ideas on the new chapter. The real challenge is the next step. (if you have a next step planned in your institution, talk of this).</p> <p>Explain that this workshop is a shared resource and you can find all the materials through the link on the bottom of the mapping sheet, including a guide on delivering it yourself.</p>		

The Road to the Code

A workshop plan and supporting resources for understanding and using the quality code's new chapter on student engagement

Developed jointly for sharing in the HE sector by:

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