

Issues in Developing and Implementing Codes of Practice

The example of EAQUALS

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EAQUALS - The European Association for
Quality Language Services

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What is EAQUALS?



- ❑ The European Association for Quality Language Services
- ❑ Founded in 1991
- ❑ A quality assurance system, with Full and Associate members in over 20 countries all over Europe
- ❑ International NGO – Participatory status with the Council of Europe

The EAQUALS Code of Practice

- Preamble
- The Student Charter
- The Staff Charter
- The Information Charter



The Code of Practice *(cont)*

- A public declaration of the **promises** member schools make to '**clients**' -
 - Direct clients → the Student Charter
 - Internal clients → the Staff Charter
 - Indirect clients (agents, parents) → the Information Charter

The Code of Practice *(cont)*

- ❑ Operationalised and verified through a rigorous **inspection system**
- ❑ Supported by **self-assessment guidelines, consultancy, staff development, training seminars**

Underlying principles & models of quality management –

*as reflected in the
EAQUALS Code of Practice
and the Inspection Scheme*

(1) The '**client satisfaction**' principle

"quality is achieved when customer needs are met, when client satisfactions are exceeded"

(QualiTraining Guide)

The '**client satisfaction**' principle

- "All EAQUALS Schools guarantee high teaching and educational standards" [...], "a structured course of studies that is divided into levels and appropriate to students' needs" [.....]
(Student Charter)

STUDENT CHARTER

Teaching

1.5.1 (a) high teaching and educational standards

Focus points

Approach and content

- written evidence of a sound and clearly formulated pedagogic approach (which makes sense in the given context), which both staff and students are aware of
- coherence between theory (i.e. as set out in the relevant documents) and classroom practice
- appropriate and accurate use of the target language
- a high degree of linguistic awareness and competence

Possible sources of evidence

- ⇒ academic documents (e.g. curriculum)
- ⇒ publicity materials: printed promotional literature (prospectuses, brochures, leaflets, flyers ,etc) and the website
- ⇒ lesson observation
- ⇒ meeting with academic manager(s), discussion with teachers, focus group meeting with students

The '**client satisfaction**' principle

e.g. with reference to internal clients

- "Members provide fair terms and conditions of employment in the context of the relevant local or national standard in the following areas: salary, length of contract" [...]
(Staff Charter)

(2) The “**process model**” of quality management

quality involves paying attention to processes, analysing the processes involved in the delivery of services

The “**process model**” of quality

- attention paid to the various phases of the educational process – **planning, implementation** and **outcome**
- careful **analysis of all the processes** involved in the delivery of language services – e.g. through self-assessment, action research, observation, etc.

The “**process model**” of quality *(cont.)*

- the **inspection process** as such - correlating focus points (e.g. in the area of Academic Management) with info obtained from various sources of evidence – e.g. re classroom teaching and student learning, testing and certification procedures in the school, etc. - as per Inspection Scheme

Academic Management: Delivery of Courses

*3.5 Diplomas and certificates of any kind signed or issued for any purpose by members contain accurate statements of fact. If such certification is based on **examinations or tests**, members undertake to ensure that these are **valid and soundly administered**.*

Exams, tests, etc.

- there are proper administration procedures established
- there is clear specification and understanding of:
 - their validity
 - their purpose and status
- criteria for assessment

⇒ review of any tests or public exams referred to in certificates
⇒ meeting with academic manager(s) and/or staff in charge of the testing and certification system
⇒ focus group meeting with students

EAQUALS Guide to the Inspection Scheme, v.5.2/2004, p. 24

(3) Quality based on **personal development**

...“in this ‘model’ quality is based on the **motivation**, the **attitudes** and **skills** of the people involved. In order for it to help maintain and improve quality, the institution needs **to establish an environment which enables staff to develop and co-operate**”.

(QualiTraining Guide)

Quality based on personal development

- ❑ “Members provide all staff with [...] relevant opportunities for training and development within and outside working hours”
(Staff Charter)
- ❑ Operationalised through development programmes, an environment which enables staff to grow professionally and to co-operate
- ❑ Verified during the inspection - meetings with staff & managers, consulting records of INSET /TD, subscription to relevant journals...

(4) Quality based on **results**

- There are elements of the 'results model' – e.g. feedback questionnaires to check client satisfaction; during the inspection – questions re exam results obtained by students, etc.

- But it is not a “results model” proper

INFORMATION CHARTER

Academic Management: Delivery of Courses

3.5 Diplomas and certificates of any kind signed or issued for any purpose by members contain accurate statements of fact. If such certification is based on examinations or tests, members undertake to ensure that these are valid and soundly administered.

Certificates & diplomas

- are meaningful and clear to students
- include dates and reason for issuing them
- when applicable specify course length, level and grade
- reference to the CEFR

⇒ review of sample certificates
⇒ meeting with academic manager(s); discussion of reasons for issuing or not issuing certificates;

EAQUALS Guide to the Inspection Scheme, v.5.2/2004, p. 24

(5) Value driven quality

[...]“education is not just a mechanical industrial process, but embodies and tries to communicate values.”

For instance, the work of the Council of Europe tries to promote plurilingualism as an instrument of tolerance and respect for other ways of life and other values.

Value driven quality

- E.g. “EAQUALS members undertake not to discriminate in any way against students on grounds of gender, race or religion. Where appropriate, however, mother tongue quotas may be applied for educational reasons.”
(Preamble to the Code of Practice)

By way of a conclusion

- The EAQUALS Quality Assurance system is **well-principled**. The various 'quality models' are not mutually exclusive. In the EAQUALS system we find a **combination** of them -
 - both in **the statements** of the Code of Practice and the Inspections Guide, and
 - in the **application of the Inspection Scheme**, in the inspection process as such

Conclusion (2)

- The EAQUALS quality assurance system embodies strong values and communicates them transparently

Conclusion *(cont)*

- The Code of Practice alone would make little sense without the process built in to operationalise and to verify it – therefore, Theory and Practice are inter-related

Conclusion *(cont.)*

- The Quality system is conceived so as to have a high degree of generalisability and generativeness – in different schools, different contexts, different countries.

References

- ***EAQUALS Code of Practice*** (ISBN 88-900072-0-6)
- ***EAQUALS Guide to the Inspection Scheme*** (version 5.2/2004 – revised Feb 2006)

www.eaquals.org

- **ECML/CoE Project: *QualiTraining – A Training Guide for Quality Assurance*** (2004-2007)
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