

Course quality assessment and evaluation

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What is DILL?

- The acronym stands for Digital Library Learning
- A two year master programme on digital librarianship
- The consortium consists of: Oslo University College, Norway (coordinator), Tallinn University, Estonia and Parma University, Italy
- First application sent November 2004 – accepted in third trial 2006 – first intake 2007
- <http://dill.hio.no/>

What characterizes DILL

- The mobility structure: The students travel together as a group: First term in Oslo (Theory of science and research methods), second term Tallinn (KM, HRM), third term Parma (use and evaluation of DL, access to DL)
- All modules: 15 ECTS – 90 ECTS all together
- Internship by the end of third term
- Fourth term: Master thesis – 30 ECTS: The students choose one of the three universities for their thesis work
- We feel that this structure has added quality: Tight group feeling and group dynamism.
- A programme committee with two representatives from each partner and two students responsible for evaluation
- Joint degree

Challenges in quality assurance and evaluation

- Securing the quality of students: recruiting high quality students
- Calibrating between partners with different cultures, practices and – not the least different languages
- Continuous evaluation at module level
- Securing the quality of dissertation work
- Evaluation at course level

But first: what is quality

- Is it the absence of catastrophe?
- Is it living up to expectations?
- Is it exceeding expectations?

Or can quality be defined as

- Something you would not have missed if it had not been there

Our solution challenge 1

Applicants have to have a BA in the (or a) relevant subject field to be eligible

1. The administration translates academic grades into a common framework and calculates academic score. Counts 40 per cent
2. Applicants write a statement of purpose: 5-600 words. 30 per cent
3. Relevancy of background: 30 per cent
4. Letters of reference. 10 per cent
5. 2-4 evaluated by academic staff. The top 100 based on academic score read by academic staff members from all three universities. Final selection made by a selection committee with one representative from each partner

Challenge 1. Securing the right students

- Not a problem to recruit students (This year more than 300 applicants for 8 (9) category A scholarships)
- Problem to achieve geographical balance:
 - Many from Africa and Asia – relatively few from Latin America, US and Canada
 - Difficult to recruit European students for category B scholarships
- Difficult to compare diplomas, grades and qualifications

Calibrating between partners

Challenges:

- We are communicating in a language that is not our own. Have we really reached common understanding when we believe to have done so?
- We have different standards, cultures and procedures, e.g. – in spite of Bologna – different standards and procedures when grading exams

Our solutions

- Build confidence and trust
- Accept some differences', although we aim at integration
- Transparency: We are each others evaluators on exams and when evaluating dissertations. Thus joint standard develop as a process
- Frequent meetings, also face to face meeting
- rds develop

Continuous evaluation of modules

- Local responsibility
- Use standards and procedures for assessing and securing quality of the university responsible for the course in question
- Transparency: Reports presented at programme committee meeting
- Close and continuous contacts with students
- Each module evaluated by through the national accreditation bodies/procedures

The role of students in evaluation and quality assessment

- The students elect two representatives in the programme committee
- Informal arenas, so called "speake-easies!"
- The students evaluate each module
- Low threshold for contacting professor
- Challenge: many students come from cultures where expressing criticism to professors is not usual

External evaluation

- Planned to establish an employers liason committee consisting of institutions where student do their internship
- Proved difficult for several reasons
- But we do get feedback via the internship period

Securing quality of dissertation

- What we expect from a master dissertation is specified in a document distributed to the students
- Formal agreement signed by students laying down mutual rights and obligations
- A dissertation written at university A is evaluated by staff members from university B or C – part of the process of professional integration

Evaluation of course

- A questionnaire distributed to the students by the end of the third term
 - How do they evaluate the academic level?
 - Integration of the course
 - Are there subjects they expected to be taught which we did not teach?
 - Which are our strong sides?
 - Which are our weak sides?

Quality handbook

- The EM is about developing a handbook for quality assessment
- <http://www.emqa.eu/>
- Separate forms for coordinators, partners and students
- JOQR