

Teaching competencies: qualification frameworks and external audits

The Dutch example: how to unite uniformity and flexibility

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This presentation

The purposes of this presentation are:

- * Perspectives to reflect on the state of the art of a University Teaching Qualification (UTQ)**
- * Concrete products: what and how?**



Structure of my presentation

- * **Introducing myself**
- * **Higher education in the Netherlands (structure, institutions, teachers)**
- * **The Dutch Teaching Qualification System (TQS)**
- * **Evaluation and reflection:**
 - * **What can we learn from our practice with TQS?**
 - * **How to guarantee the quality of TQS?**
- * **What's in it for you?**



Background: higher education in the Netherlands



ICED, Barcelona 2010



Timetable / important milestones

1996

Utrecht University (UU)

- * Pioneer in teaching qualifications. TQS with a TQ for staff (UD), senior TQ for senior staff and professors
- * Teaching rewards
- * Centre for Excellence in University Teaching -> focus on educational leadership
- * Teaching professors in every department
- * Practice oriented educational research

1997

Radboud University (RU)

- * Pilot project in 3 departments
- * Two departments were successfully developing a TQS



Timetable / important milestones

2006

Informal group of initiators (staff developers of RU, UU and other Dutch universities) discussed a deadlock in the field of teacher training

They developed an intervention that could be supported by Rectors and not only by staff developers.

2007

The Dutch government is considering regulation of TQ in higher education by law, due to ongoing discussions by student unions.

2008

All Dutch universities agree on a UTQ: a national agreement on a voluntary basis with mandatory regulations for new staff.

2010

External audits of the TQS of 6 universities.



Ratification of the mutual agreement on a national framework of a University Teaching Qualification System, January 2008



Mutual agreement on a national framework of a University Teaching Qualification System



OVEREENKOMST

INZAKE WEDERZIJDSE ERKENNING BASISKWALIFICATIE ONDERWIJS

De rectores magnifici van de 14 Nederlandse universiteiten komen met het oog op:

- aandacht voor de kwaliteit van de academische opleiding en het universitair docentschap;
- voortgaande ontwikkeling van docentprofessionalisering binnen de eigen universiteit;
- meer geobjectieerde verantwoording inzake de 'kwaliteit van personeel' en inzake 'personeelsbeleid' ten behoeve van NVAO-accreditatie van opleidingen;
- vastlegging van het bekwaamheidsniveau van docenten, zoals in andere onderwijssectoren (PO, VO, BVE, HBO) al langer gebruikelijk is;
- wegnemen van belemmeringen in het geval van interuniversitaire mobiliteit van docenten.

het volgende overeen:

1. Het niveau van de academisch docent is op instellingsniveau vastgelegd in een regeling Basiskwalificatie Onderwijs.
2. De instelling verleent docenten de Basiskwalificatie Onderwijs op basis van voorafgaande toetsing.
3. De regeling stemt overeen met de in bijlage I opgenomen kenmerken, zodat de gecertificeerde docent zonder nadere toetsing door alle deelnemende instellingen als gekwalificeerd docent in academisch onderwijs wordt erkend.

UNIVERSITEIT LEIDEN

23 januari 2008
Prof. mr. P.F. (Paul) van der Heijden



HANDTEKENING

UNIVERSITEIT UTRECHT

23 januari 2008
Prof. dr. J.C. (Hans) Stoef



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ERASMUS UNIVERSITEIT ROTTERDAM

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Prof. dr. F. (Fred) Mulder



HANDTEKENING

What is our national qualification framework for teaching?

All systems should meet the following three criteria:

- 1. Create an institution-wide system under responsibility of university board and with a civil effect**
- 2. Follow a profile of university teaching (competencies and areas) and provide facilities to achieve these competencies**
- 3. Formally assess/evaluate applicants in a procedure that only focuses on teaching**



How did we reach such an agreement, unique in the history of Dutch universities?

A

**Successful aspects
directly related to the
universities**

B

**External elements that
contribute or support the
mutual agreement of UTQ**



A Successful aspects directly related to the universities

Our strategy from within the universities : develop a common baseline

Step 1: Create a basis of support by key persons

- * Initiative of two Vice-Chancellors
- * Six universities agreed on the statement of the university teaching qualification and
- * They invited the other eight universities to join up.

Step 2: Focus on the key elements

- * Choose a high(er) level of aggregation, consisting of three criteria, no specification of procedures, content, training modules in detail
- * Take it serious: review the newly developed frameworks and schemes of the other eight universities



B External elements that contribute or support the mutual agreement of UTQ

How did we reach such an agreement, unique in the history of Dutch universities?

External pressure is needed

- *Teacher organisations
- *Student organisations
- *(Hidden) competition between universities
- * Government



Reflections

Universities have taken their responsibility

- * Recognition of teaching as a second 'discipline'
- * Substantial staff development programmes in which learning about teaching and teaching itself is closely connected or integrated

The snowball effect within Dutch universities

- * What happens on a national scale was also inspiring departments within a university:
 - * opposition is fading
 - * the UTQ applies also to permanent academic teaching staff
- * Developments are running relatively fast now:
 - * the adoption of a senior teaching qualification (5 universities)
 - * participation in a programme focussing on educational leadership (4 universities)



Can universities be sure of the quality of each system?

- * **It is the practice that counts!**
 - * Will the implementation of the agreement be taken seriously by individual universities?
- * **External audits of the TQS within a university**
- * **The project.** Initiated by 8 universities, centres of higher education, supported by the University Board



System of external audits

The goal of external audits

- * To develop a lean-and-mean auditing system of the university teaching qualification system. The audit system will be:
 - * simple in structure
 - * avoiding bureaucracy
 - * adaptable to the priorities of institutions
 - * attractive to use

Approach

- * The 8 universities were co-creators of the audit procedure
- * In return they received an overview of their implementation with recommendations for improvement



External audit: characteristics

- * **The Audit Standard** (based on the TQS agreement)
 - * TQ policy, facilities and assessment
 - * Tasks and responsibilities, quality assurance
- * **External Audit Committee:** 3 members, experts in different fields of the TQS
 - * Position of the committee: independent, with the attitude of a critical friend
 - * Confidentiality of findings
- * **A one-day visit:** dialogue with relevant actors.



Audit process

- * **Composing the External Audit Committee (EAC)**
- * **Activities by the External Audit Committee**
- * **Activities by the university**



Activities by the EAC

- * **Announcement to the university, including a preparation guideline**
- * **Discussion of the documents, formulating questions**
- * **A one-day visit:** dialogues with relevant actors (a member of the Executive Board, professors, teachers, coaches and assessors)
 - * Focus in the dialogues:
 - * Performance of the TQS framework at different levels: university, faculties, programs and courses
 - * Strengths and weaknesses, improvements
- * **Oral and written reports to the board of the University**



Activities by the university

- * **Collecting relevant policy documents supplemented by a reading guide and a short state of affairs. No full-fledged self study.**
- * **Some universities provide the audit committee with specific questions for advice**
- * **Practice shows us that universities evaluate their TQS and address bottlenecks**



Overall findings of the external audits (1)

- * The TQ is an integral part of education, it is part of and facilitates innovation and is helpful in developing a culture in which teaching is valued.
- * The implementation of the teaching qualification as the result of the agreement is successful.



Overall findings of the external audits (2)

Some reflections:

- * TQ and HRM is a black spot in most cases although there are some good practices
- * Every university has it's own backbenchers
- * Assessment is the topic most in discussion



Recommendations of the external audits

- * **Be more flexible regarding possible routes teachers could use for developing their teaching and preparing their assessment (portfolio content)**
- * **Skilled teachers have to develop a portfolio but they don't need, and resist, following mandatory courses**
- * **Create consultation sessions of the assessment/review committee's to fit procedures and discuss problems.**



Main topics of improvement

- * **Applying portfolio criteria in order to demonstrate your competencies as a teacher is very difficult.**
- * **Use the assessment also as an instrument to value the quality and effort of academic teachers.**
- * **Do not forget the backbenchers, use good practices and publicity to get things going.**



Awarding ceremony at the University of Groningen



Conclusions about the audit system

- * **The topics of the audit seemed to be the frame of reference that is helpful in improving the teaching qualification system in the universities:**
 - * Policy, process of competence development, assessment/evaluation, quality control: clear tasks and responsibilities
- * **Our study showed that the chosen method was feasible and effective and very widely supported by stakeholders.**

Finally, some of my more general reflections

- * **Staff development or teacher training is no longer solely the concern of us as staff developers.** We learned to share this concern with the directors of education in the faculties and to integrate their ideas into our programs.
- * **The agreement has paved the way for thinking in terms of continuous professional development.**
- * **Do not focus exclusively on the individual teacher.** The organization is responsible of the learning environment, also of the academic teachers.



Thank you for your attention!

I will be happy to answer your questions.



Example

