

Title: Meeting Expectations: the challenge of providing staff development to overseas collaborative partners

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Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- State where the QAA's Quality Code sets out its expectation that all staff (including overseas collaborative partners) should receive appropriate support and development in learning and teaching.
- Identify some of the challenges associated with providing such support and development to overseas collaborative partners.
- Describe some ways in which the QAA's expectation is currently being met.
- Outline what needs to be in place institutionally for this expectation to be met.

Session Outline

The QAA's Quality Code is very clear about the expectation placed on UK higher education institutions to provide staff development: 'higher education providers assure themselves that everyone involved in teaching or supporting student learning is appropriately qualified, supported and developed' (QAA 2012, p.13). The Code continues that these staff include not only those employed by the degree-awarding body, but also by collaborative partners (QAA 2012, p.13). Overseas collaborative provision, through transnational education, plays an important role in the internationalisation agenda (Naidoo 2009); yet staff development for those involved in collaborative provision is by no means universal (Smith 2013).

This discussion paper will begin by reporting on findings from a recent SEDA funded project that explored the interplay of higher education policy and educational development practice (Smith 2014) through the analysis of the Quality Code's Learning and Teaching Chapter (QAA 2012). Using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the combination of the textual analysis of existing policy documentation and the interpretation of in-depth interview data collected from policy developers and policy users (educational developers) provided rich data about the development of the Chapter, its content and structure and educational developers' reactions to it; and the challenges its implementation will pose. The most frequently cited challenge anticipated by the developers was the provision of support and training for collaborative partners; their concerns about meeting this expectation will be the focus of this section of the presentation.

The session concludes with a case study highlighting how the University of Greenwich is responding to the expectation of the Quality Code to provide collaborative partners with staff development opportunities. We will report on a pilot to offer our Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education to partner college staff in Trinidad along with our UK-based participants. The challenges, opportunities, and benefits of the pilot and the implications for future international staff development will be discussed.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

The outline of the workshop is as follows;

0-8mins: introduction to the paper and an overview of the SEDA-funded research into the interplay of higher education policy and educational development practice. Introduce one of the key findings from the research: the challenge of providing support and development around learning and teaching to overseas collaborative partners.

8-16mins: ask delegates what they perceive to be the key challenges associated with providing such support and development. Work in pairs and then share responses with group, recorded on flip-chart paper.

16 – 23mins: share the findings from the SEDA research around this issue, and offer some of the solutions interviewees suggested.

23 – 33mins: share case study from University of Greenwich, where staff from a partner college in Trinidad have joined the University's Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education

33 – 45mins: invite delegates to share what they are doing within their own institutions to meet the QAA's expectation. Formulate what needs to be in place institutionally for this expectation to be met.

References

Naidoo, V. (2009). Transnational higher education: A stock take of current activity. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 13(3), 310–330.

QAA (2012) *The UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*. Available online at: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/quality-code-B3.pdf>

Smith, K. (2013). Overseas flying faculty teaching as a trigger for transformative professional development, *International Journal for Academic Development*, 18(2), 127-138

Smith, K. (2014). *Final Report: Higher Education Policy and the Shaping of Educational Development Practice*, under review by SEDA