



10th July 2012

UK Quality Code for Higher Education

Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching Consultation

NOTE: The EAUC consultation response focuses only on the matter of one of the 5 themes which crosses subject and discipline boundaries - Education for Sustainability

ABOUT US: The Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges is the sustainability body for tertiary education in the UK. The EAUC seeks to work with members and partners to drive sustainability to the heart of further and higher education.

The EAUC Vision is a university, college and learning and skills sector where the principles and values of environmental, economic and social sustainability are embedded.

Our Mission is that we will lead, inspire and equip Members and stakeholders with a shared vision, knowledge and the tools they need to embed sustainability within curriculum and operations.

Our membership is made up of 315 member institutions comprising some 3700 professionals.

CONSULTATION RESPONSE: While we welcome the inclusion of a reference to education for sustainability as one of the 5 themes, EAUC membership is concerned that its appearance on this list may mean that further discussion of sustainability will be marginalised. We are sure that this is not what QAA intend.

In the face of failing economic, social and ecological systems, it is our view that tertiary education has a key responsibility to equip learners with the knowledge, skills and values required to meet these profound challenges and threats. We ask that QAA acknowledge this more explicitly by placing learning and quality issues in to proper context. Our members would argue that any discussion of quality that fails to recognise the imperatives of that global and societal context would be a missed opportunity. We feel that now is a time to be bold and we encourage QAA to recognise the opportunity that exists in the Quality Code to demonstrate a new value both to future learners and society at large.

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Further, there is now evidence that students are moving to expect change. The recently published Student attitudes towards skills for sustainable development report (HEA and NUS 2012) identified that over 80% of respondents believe sustainability skills are important to their future employers and 65% that sustainability skills should be delivered throughout the curriculum rather than through a separate module.

The recent Rio+20 Earth Summit produced a clear mandate for tertiary education to 'integrate Sustainable Development more actively' and 'teach sustainable development as an integrated component across disciplines' (UN. The Future We Want, 21/06/12 paras 233 and 235)

It is our view that sustainable development must become a lens through which all education must be viewed and quality assessed before we can be confident that UK universities and colleges are stepping up, taking responsibly and are fit for purpose.

The EAUC exists to support the tertiary education sector do just that and we commit to constructive engagement with QAA and hope to work with you to achieve further progress on this critical matter.

Iain Patton, CEO

Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges

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