

Quality inside the Law Faculty at University of Fort Hare, South Africa

We have in the Faculty tried (like never before) to ensure that teaching, learning and postgraduate research are conducted in compliance with the relevant UFH policies as well as the practices and recommendations originating from the QMA Unit. Quite frankly the strive towards compliance is not entirely a result of internally-generated desire for self-improvement. Clearly, the inevitability of the 2008 HEQC audit and the demonstrably firm resolve of the University (through the QMA Unit) to embed quality as the main driver of all core business activity, as well as the teaching and research excellence prescriptions/targets set out in our 2006 Faculty Scorecard, are all major sources of external pressure for the QA-related challenges.

Among the QA-related practices we have tried to do with varying degrees of success are as follows:

- Development and prompt distribution of module learning guides in the format recommended by the QMA Unit;
- Evaluation of all law teaching and modules in every semester;
- Enlargement of numbers of academic staff participating in teaching development workshops/courses; and
- Completion, submission and evaluation of student performance reports (called 'post-mortem reports') by lecturers after the marking of degree examinations.

My greatest concern at this point is that the things we are doing in ensuring compliance with QA requirements and expectations (at both the level of Faculty and Institution) do not become acts of religious ritual or procedural formality. My hope rather is that they will effectively permeate, affect and transform the delivery of our teaching and research programmes in a manner that is both significantly positive and sustainable. And it is in this respect, that QA is having the greatest and profound impact on my colleagues and me. As the primary driver/stimulus of all our activities pertaining to teaching, learning and research, it exerts positive and palpable pressure to evaluate and reflect on everything we do on an almost daily basis. Such pressure was hitherto non-existent. As we respond to that pressure, we will most likely see the need for Deans, HoDs and Programme Coordinators to be more hands-on and interventionist as the officers accountable for QA in their respective areas of influence. We will also see academic staff become much more responsive to feedback from students, external and internal examiners, QMA, and TLC. All of these will, I'm convinced, see our dear University move closer to living its vision and mission.

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