

**ELLS Quality Assurance Group
Proceedings of the 2nd Meeting
KVL, Jan. 13-14, 2005**

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0. Introduction

During the Vienna Meeting the ELLS Board chose from the project proposals which had been elaborated by the newly founded working group on Quality Assurance "Staff development in teaching and learning" and the "External Examiner System". Both aspects should be covered by a pilot project with the Subject Area Environmental Sciences. During the Copenhagen meeting the QA group worked on this pilot project, on the coordination with the IRO officers in reference to a framework on MSc programmes, on a survey on course evaluation and defined strategies as well as a workplan for 2005.

1. Staff development in teaching and learning

To begin with, the Support Group Quality Assurance carried out a short survey in which existing staff development courses at the different ELLS institutions were compared. The survey was lead by the following questions:

- Content of the courses
- Number of courses
- Days of training/number of credits
- Since when has a staff development been provided?
- Is staff development required by law/compulsory at the institution?
- Is staff development organised by the university itself or by an external partner or through a cooperation?
- Is there an educational department at the university? Which are its main tasks?
- Which are the institutional strengths within special fields of didactics?
- Which measures for sustainable staff development are being taken (E.g. brush up courses)?
- What are the costs of these trainings, by whom are the costs covered?

- Which are the consequences for an academic career? Is a didactical training an advantage for promotions?
- Which other initiatives exist to promote didactical training (e.g. exchange of experiences in peer groups, mutual visits of classes, supervision)?
- Is there a training for students preparing themselves to become teachers of high school?
- Is there a training for tutors, what does it consist of?

Wageningen:

The department of Education and Competence Studies delivers didactic courses for BSc. and MSc. students (didactical skills and communication, including the possibility to visit a high school for practice). This is followed by a one year course after graduation if a student wants to become a high school teacher.

The Educational Support Group (a part of the Staff Department of Education) has been providing courses to university teachers of Wageningen University since 1998. These are a 10 days course on basic didactical skills and several 2 days courses on specific items. The course on basic didactical skills consists of two blocks of three days and two evenings each. The first part includes course design and learning styles; subjects are learning objectives, assessment instruments and procedures, the learning experience, instruction, assignments and evaluation. In the second part of the course all participants deliver a lecture and an assignment for each other and discuss how they are acting as a teacher. There are 8 participants per course and one trainer or 16 participants and two trainers.

The following 2 day courses on specific items are offered:

- Course 1 How to present a lecture,
- Course 2 Guiding a student writing a thesis,
- Course 3 Intercultural communication,
- Course 4 Problem Based Learning - PBL,
- Course 5 Problem Oriented learning - POL
- Course 6 Communication in small groups
- Course 7 Blackboard and Quickplace (both electronic learning environments)

Most courses are in Dutch, guidance writing the thesis and intercultural course are in English together with a summer course on basic didactical skills for PhD students. All courses are free, with the exception of PhD students who have to pay a fee.

It is not required by law to undergo didactical training. It is the policy of Wageningen University that starting university teachers are obliged to participate in the 10 days on basic didactical skills and in three 2 days courses on specific didactical items. After doing this they receive an educational qualification.

Hohenheim:

Now a training course is jointly elaborated by the University of Stuttgart and Hohenheim University. The course lasts for half a year; every two weeks a training day is held. By the beginning of 2005 the professors' scheme has been changed. Also the junior professors system is being introduced. These positions are for 6 years, the candidates are evaluated after 3, 5 and 6 years. Therefore didactical skills are considered, too. In Baden Württemberg they have both systems. In order to

become a professor you have to make a “habilitation” lecture which can be done without didactical training.

There is a didactical training for students who want to become high school teachers which is followed by two more years of on-the-job training at a high school. After passing another exam they have completed their training, but many do not get a job even though.

A training of PhD students in the area of didactics is being prepared. The contents will be: How to present lectures, how to do research, how to present scientific research in papers.

Students (Master, older diploma students) are trained for two weeks in order to become tutors: 2 hours per week for a semester. Tutors discuss and repeat the content of the lecture held by the professor (physics, chemistry, biology, economics, agricultural sciences).

A 6 days training of staff in didactics is provided for which the participants have to pay. A private institution provides in cooperation with the university of Stuttgart this training. (There is no department of education at HOH).

If a teacher has bad results in the student evaluation, he/she is often asked to participate in this training, but it is not obligatory.

There are courses offered for students “How to learn learning.”

BOKU

In the area of didactics BOU offers this summer semester a training for the first time which is provided by the Faculty for Interdisciplinary Research and Training of the University of Klagenfurt. 14 teachers from the whole university were elected for this course which consists of six days spread over three months.

The course comprises the following units:

- Part 1. Didactics, planning and organisation, elaboration of learning objectives, forms of presentation, self assessment,
- Part 2. Teaching and communication processes, types of lectures, elaboration of a course design and of innovative lectures,
- Part 3. Assessment techniques, assessment behaviour, development of criteria for assessment

The costs for this trainings are covered by the university.

A didactical training is not obligatory, didactical skills play a minor role for a scientific career or for a promotion. In the draft of the guidelines for the “habilitation” didactical training is mentioned as a one item within teaching but not obligatory.

There is a one semester course with strong focus on didactical aspects for those BOKU graduates (MSc.) who want to become teachers at technical high schools. This course is carried out in co-operation with the Pedagogical Academy for Agricultural Sciences, a teacher training centre in Vienna (<http://www.agrarpaedak.at/>). All BOKU graduates who want to become a teacher should take this course, due to lack of teachers it is occasionally also possible to get a job as a teacher without this training.

KVL

A basic course in the area of teaching and learning has been offered for more than 10 years to assistant professors, for whom it is compulsory. It is by Danish law required that a university has some sort of educational activities for its assistant professors within teaching and learning. In addition a number of small courses (1-2 days) has been developed and is offered to all scientific staff at KVL, e.g. courses in

- (1) Supervision of PhD and MSc students,
- (2) The correct use of the voice and working with your appearance and
- (3) Course/curriculum development.

KVL has no specific department of education and hence the institution outsources the professional part of the courses, no matter if they are run at KVL or at other places. The content and the overall structure of the courses are determined by the KVL Committee for Teaching and Learning in cooperation with the Department of Human Resources.

The basic course runs over a period of 1 year and comprises about 6 ECTS. It has two major components, i.e. (1) university pedagogy (teaching and learning) corresponding to 84 lectures and (2) supervision of the associate professor during his/her teaching.

The basic course comprises the following units:

- Introduction
- Module 1: Pedagogic theories and practices (Held as a three day residential course.)
- Module 2: Teaching forms
- Module 3: How to plan, run and evaluate course activities
- Summing-up day where the participants discuss their experiences

Concerning the supervision each of the participants (i.e. assistant professors) are observed and supervised twice by a team consisting of one supervisor from the Danish Pedagogical University and one subject specific supervisor from his/her KVL department. Furthermore, he/she are observed and supervised one additional time during teaching activities only by the subject specific supervisor appointed. On the background of the described personal goals, the basic course activity and the supervision process the assistant professor makes a report (approximately 8 pages) summing up his/her experiences and the outcome of the course. Based on the report of the assistant professor and the two supervisor's observations the latter two make together a statement about the assistant professor's pedagogical qualifications.

The above described basic course is run in co-operation with the Danish Pedagogical University as is the short course in course development, while the course in supervision is outsourced to teachers from University of Copenhagen, Department of Philosophy, Rhetoric and Pedagogy.

All courses are offered to the staff free of any charge.

All KVL departments furthermore have appointed a so-called Didactic Supervisor among the scientific staff.

SLU:

At SLU a range of pedagogical courses is offered. Since 1994 compulsory pedagogical training (10 weeks) has been a requirement for an Associate Professorship. To take this course you need to have completed the basic pedagogical course (6 weeks).

The “basic course” (6 weeks) is intended for teachers with limited prior training in pedagogy and is the first step in a continuing professional development. The aim of this course is to enhance professional competence and awareness of educational practice.

The course “senior supervisor” (4 weeks) is a continuation of the basic course. The aim of this course is to enhance professional competence in the role of a senior supervisor and to develop the courses member’s pedagogical philosophy and make it conscious. Furthermore it is intended to develop a willingness and an ability to change and develop the education. The 10 weeks are not required by law, but it is likely that it will be obligatory soon. The two first courses cost 1.000,- Swedish Crowns each which are paid by the department.

“PBL facilitator” (1 week) is a course designed for academics who will act as group facilitators in courses using Problem-Based Learning.

“Collaborative Learning On-Line” (1 week) is intended for teachers with some prior knowledge of collaborative learning methods such as PBL and Case. The aim of this course is to develop competence in the use of information technologies in collaborative learning methods. It will provide examples and ideas for collaborative teaching strategies that incorporate information and communication technologies.

“Distance education” (2 weeks) is intended for teachers with limited prior experience of distance education. After the course teachers should be confident in designing and teaching distance courses. (Course offered in English language.)

“Course design” (1 week). The course design influences what and how students learn. It is also important for making teaching efficient and meaningful. The aim of this course is to make teachers confident as course designers, both for campus an on-line courses.

“Video Lectures With Power Point, 1 and 2” (1 day each). These two courses are intended for teachers with an interest in producing video lectures for educational use. The aim of these courses are to give an introduction to the production of video lectures for distance- and flexible education.

“Managing Images for Education” (1 day). This course is intended for teachers with an interest in managing digital images for educational use.

“How to present research” (2 weeks). The course is given in English and intended for PhD students. The aim of the course is to improve skills in presenting scientific research. It will present the basic theories and give examples and ideas on how to make oral presentation, web pages and poster presentations.

There is also a “General Course in Education” for students (5 credits/weeks). The aim of this course is to enhance the students’ awareness of the learning process and to lay a foundation for future work in the educational sector.

UK

Generally in UK promotion from lecturer to senior lecturer takes place after two years. Most emphasis is laid on research, however now they are urged to present a portfolio when applying. A

move has been made to register with the academy for higher education on the basis of this portfolio.

2. External examiners

KVL

Prof Leon Brimer gave a very good overview over the Danish external examiner System. Normally the external examiners come from other universities, state authorities or private enterprises. They are usually elected for 3 years and have a chairman. Questions, books and handouts are sent to the external examiner. The written exams go to the teacher and to the external examiner, afterwards they both meet and decide on a mark. (For very big groups also representative groups/samples can be taken.)

The great advantage of the external examiner system is that the teachers have to reflect much better on their questions, have to be better structured and organized and more transparency is needed. It also helps to get an input from the external experts for the university teachers. In the Danish system the marks range from 0-13.

UK System

The differences to the Danish system are that the examiners only come from other universities, there is no chairman, only the questions are submitted, no other materials. The focus is on the 4th year and on the Master's level. The examiners also have a look at the marks from the last years. The examiners have to agree on the failures from all the years, they do not check all the exams. Internally there are 2 examiners and an external one, they mark it individually which makes sure that the mark is fair. The external examiner writes a report which goes to the rector, the board for studies and to the head department.

Master thesis: The supervisor does not participate in the final exam, he only writes a report on the performance of the student which also includes the thesis, the thesis is assessed externally. The marks range from 0-20.

Suggestion of the QA Group to the Board (jointly with IROs): To elaborate an external examiner system for Master thesis. This exercise could become very rewarding for the teacher. The summer course will also be a pilot for this.

3. Framework for joint MSc Programmes

Anne-Grethe Routley, the coordinator of the IRO group, presented a good overview of the project to elaborate a framework for joint ELLS MSc Programmes which is divided into three steps:

1. Establish an overview of administrative, financial and legal issues related to joint MSc programmes
2. Start the process of establishing a common understanding, finding solutions
3. Develop a manual

The group have recently finalized a questionnaire and sent it out to the member universities. Tentative results are expected to be presented to the Task Force meeting at the end of February. Site visits will follow and further on the basis of the survey the IRO group will start developing a manual/checklist for developing joint ELLS MSc programmes.

Several areas for cooperation with the QA group are identified – areas where the QA group will play a central role in carrying out recommendations from the project, e.g. in relation to the development of guidelines for joint supervision or for examinations. Further areas of cooperation shall be determined between the IRO group and the QA group.

The IRO group will work fast, because by September 2006 the Food Science group plans to start with their Master programme.

Benchmarking activities that have been going on including ELLS universities:

- International strategy and operations quality audit at BOKU
- International strategy and operations quality audit at KVL
- International comparative evaluation of agricultural science related BSc programmes.

4. Course evaluation

Merel Luichies presented the ELSA document on course evaluation and follow up procedures, resulting in a discussion about follow up procedures as well as about specific questions on student reflection. We agreed to later take up the task of formulating one or a few questions to add to the existing ones on student behaviour and reflections about own learning.

Concerning the follow-up procedures it was agreed to compile descriptions of these as well as existing course co-ordinator forms. On the basis of these materials the QA group will continue towards a document based on the original ELSA document.

The University of Aberdeen compiled documents for “The Assurance and Enhancement of Academic Quality and Standards in Teaching and Learning” which can be found under: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/section3.shtml>

5. Cooperation between ELLS and ICA

The next ELLS meeting in October 2005 is actually a good time to start co-ordinating the co-operation, since within the Erasmus Mundus Programme the Work Package on Quality Assurance starts in the 2nd year, which actually is October 2005.

6. Priorities of the QA Group:

6.1. Pilot Project Summer School: Support of SA Environmental Sciences in reference to all QA issues (see item 7)

6.2. Develop a strategy for the QA of ELLS Master programmes and other courses and carry out a pilot project (Safety in the Food Chain* or Environmental Sciences) including course evaluation, external examiner and staff development (with special focus on international competences and communication and high quality distance learning).

Start up: 28 Oct, Uppsala

(*It is planned to start this Master programme in October 2006.)

6.3. Make available the existing staff development courses in English to teachers from other ELLS institutions

Deadline: April 2005

6.4. Develop a core curriculum for staff development for new teachers, make elements of this curriculum available to all teachers from ELLS institutions.

Activities:

1. Make available the course descriptions in English from SLU, WUR and KVL
2. Make a comparative analysis of these courses
3. Develop a core curriculum.

Start up: ELLS Meeting 28 Oct 2005.

6.5. Elaborate recommendations for the rectors about which teaching abilities (skills and knowledge) should be compulsory for promotion.

Activities:

1. Develop guidelines for compiling portfolios
2. Development of guidelines for how and what to take into considerations when evaluating such a portfolio.

Start up: SLU and Aberdeen provide examples of portfolios to the QA group before conference in Oct 2005.

6.6. Elaboration of a Report on the Copenhagen Meeting for the Task force and the Board

7. Pilot Project SA Environmental Sciences

7.1. Report on Summer School

Prof. Strobel provided a very good overview of the major activities of the SA Environmental Sciences and told the group about his experiences during the last summer course in Denmark. 30 students attended the course last year, during the first week the students prepared themselves at home in national groups, this training included also a videoconference. The following two weeks consisted of face-to-face training in Denmark. After the second week an oral "mid-term" evaluation with mostly structural questions was realised. The next years' organisers also participated in this evaluation session, the feedback of the students was very good.

Prof. Strobel presented the **final evaluation scheme** that was discussed in the group; the following items for improvement were proposed:

- To reflect which are the main objectives of the course and to check whether they have been realised.
- To focus more strongly on the aspect that it is an international course – what did the students profit from it?
- To focus more strongly on the interdisciplinary aspect of the course – what did the students profit from it?

External Examiner System

The SA Environmental Sciences had great interest in implementing an external examiner system and had already considered the respective costs in the Socrates IP application. All reports should go to one person as various different examiners are not able to get an overview of all the reports. If this should not be possible, then at least the exams should be shared among the examiners.

It is recommended that the external examiner(s) saw the students' presentations, before they do the marking.

The group also recommended that the teachers of the summer school made a self evaluation of their teaching/the whole course.

7.2. Strategy for Pilot Project

*By this procedure we will be

- Picking up on the ELSA course quality evaluation survey
- Picking up on the paper of the QA group on external examiners
- Specific quality assurance elements for an ELLS course or degree programme
 - **Are the course objectives achieved including the interdisciplinary nature of the course?**
 - **Did the course support the students' own degree programme – from the student and staff perspective?** (This supports the original idea of the course as an element in the degree programme of the student in question.)
 - **The intercultural benefits of running an international summer school** (any ELLS summer school, course or degree programme)
 - **Costs – human resources as well as additional financial resources** Covering the cost of a summer school, the evaluations and the external examiner system.

7.3. Action Plan:

- **The QA group discuss with the course management the aims and objectives of the quality assurance of the course** (This process has already started during Copenhagen Meeting)
- **Review of the final student questionnaires**
Students evaluation forms should include questions such as “Did you participate in this course before?”; if yes, rating of the “comparative quality”, “How well did the course supplement/integrate with the objectives of your degree programme? – state which programme”; “Will your participation in an international summer school like this strengthen your interests in taking an international Master course?”
- **Review of a mid course evaluation session** (Usually held after the first week.)
- **An independent summary of the student forms** (Will be done by ELLS QA Group)
- **The teachers/leaderships comments to the summary of the student forms**
- **Staff evaluation forms** (staff evaluation of the course)
- **External examiner(s) report**
- **A general course report incl.:**
 - Teachers and their affiliations
 - Students and their affiliations
 - Drop outs and their reasons
 - Costs of the whole course incl. cost of evaluation (staff, travel expenses, materials, infrastructure etc.)
- **QA group review the outcomes of this pilot project in relation to the QA ELLS strategy and report to the Board (During QA meeting 3-4 of October 2005 in Wageningen)**

8. Programme and Participants

Programme
<p>1. Staff development Presentation of Elaine's document Information on staff development from each member institution Comparison of the findings Analysis Discussion of results with representative of Environmental Sciences Group</p> <p>Output: Concept for pilot project for Subject Area Environmental Sciences (Concept for realisation of staff development programme within ELLS) Joint (minimum) standards for staff development in teaching and learning</p>
<p>2. External examiner Presentation of Leon's document Report on state of the art on external examiner at home institutions Comparison and analysis of the findings Discussion of results with representative of Environmental Sciences Group</p> <p>Output: Concept for pilot project with Subject Area Environmental Sciences (Concept for course evaluation for ELLS in general)</p>
<p>3. Course evaluation Presentation of the findings of ELSA Analysis, discussion</p> <p>Output: Concept for course evaluation for Environmental Sciences Summer course</p>
<p>4. Framework for joint MSc Programmes Presentation of Framework for joint MSc Programmes through Anne Grethe R. Discussion of means of cooperation between IRO, QA and others within ELLS.</p> <p>Output: Agreement on cooperation</p>
<p>5. Coordination between ICA and ELLS Erasmus Mundus Project</p>
<p>6. Distribution of work packages, definition of milestones, preparation of the next QA meeting, miscellaneous</p>

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Attachments

The KVL compulsory course in teaching and learning for assistant professors

The Hohenheim Certificate "Higher Education Competence"

SLU Syllabus and study guide on Distance Education

SLU How to present research for your scientific colleagues

WUR Workshop proposals on intercultural communication for teachers

WUR Workshop proposals on intercultural communication for students