

**The Wulkow Memorandum on Quality Assurance and Quality Management
at Language Centres in Institutions of Higher Education in Europe
Second meeting held from January 14th to 16th, 2010**

From Thursday, January 14th to Saturday, January 16th 2010 the working party of directors from 34 Language Centres, representing Institutions of Higher Education from 12 countries in Europe met for the second time in Wulkow/Brandenburg, Germany.

They gathered to discuss the issues concerning effective quality management with the aim to establishing a European-wide consensus on defining, implementing, communicating and maintaining quality assurance procedures. Not only did they concentrate on traditional areas of language acquisition but also on other aspects of a successful Language Centre such as recruitment, qualifications and professional development.

The statements listed below are endorsed not only by those participating at this 2010 meeting, but also by all signatories of the previous Wulkow Memorandum.

Introduction

Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education are active participants in organisations which base their reputation on the recognition of the importance of quality in all activities.

Institutions of Higher Education emphasise their individual character alongside their collaborative cross-European activities which are underpinned by the Bologna process. Language Centres are a key component in the identity of these institutions.

Language Centres play an essential role in providing the basis for many of the key aims of the Bologna process in terms of fostering and developing not only linguistic but also transferable professional skills such as:

- The ability to communicate across cultures and to work in intercultural teams.
- The ability to pinpoint and deploy strategies for life-long learning.
- The ability to transfer academic skills to new working environments.
- The ability for self-reflection on and self-evaluation of communicative behaviour.
- The ability to negotiate communication challenges effectively in different working environments.

Our commitment as directors of Language Centres to promote and implement effective quality management procedures is intrinsic to our aim to deliver the best in teaching and learning. This not only supports and enhances the reputation and attractiveness of our parent institutions but also ensures that our learners are enriched with the best possible experience.

Our overarching aim therefore is to maximise the potential of all of those we serve. This goes beyond the confines of the campus, reaches out to the community at large and caters to the needs of life-long learning:

- Students: undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate
- Colleagues inside and outside Language Centres
- Language learners from the business sector and other professional contexts
- Government and public service clients

- Leisure activity learners

Declaration

The quality of language education, and subsequently quality management in Language Centres depends on realistic requirements and standards. These can only be the result of responsible negotiations with stakeholders in the global labour market, policy makers, authorities in higher education and students.

The specific commitment to quality assurance procedures

- Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education are committed to the effective implementation of quality assurance procedures. They support their parent institutions' existing quality assurance procedures while aiming to develop complementary measures that relate to their specific operational needs.

Quality assurance in curriculum and syllabus design

- Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education strive to deliver the highest standards of service to their learners by focussing on the best possible learning outcomes. This is visible through the provision of goal-oriented language education, where both curriculum and assessment procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure continuing relevance.
- Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education make full use of quality assurance mechanisms which focus on the satisfaction of language learners. This is carried out both internally and externally:
 - Through in-house procedures – student questionnaires, student panels, internal reviews, research and teaching observation and research.
 - Through external procedures – reviews, cross-European benchmarking frameworks such as the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) and membership of professional organisations such as CercleS (European Confederation of Language Centres in Higher Education) and national and international associations.
- Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education emphasise the importance of the quality of the learning and teaching environment and the necessity, availability and effective utilisation of technology and virtual learning environments.

Quality assurance and development in human resources

- Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education stress the importance of recruitment procedures which ensure that candidates have the appropriate qualifications and experience to carry out their tasks and fulfil their missions.
- Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education emphasise the importance of recognising the worth of their employees by negotiating salary levels and contracts with stakeholders in the parent institutions, which reflect the professional nature of their staff.

- Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education recognise and underline the importance of funding for continuous professional development to ensure that their staff maintain, improve and broaden their range of skills.

The role of feedback, evaluation and research in quality management

- Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education recognise that effective feedback is part of professional development. They welcome and value feedback from all stakeholders – learners, colleagues, university management and external review panels and recognise its inherent value.
- Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education use applied research activities to develop and increase the quality of all their activities. This research-oriented approach to quality assurance is one of the strengths and advantages of being part of the Higher Education sector.
- Language Centres at Institutions of Higher Education value the importance of international networking to arrive at a common understanding of, and an agreement on, European-wide quality assurance procedures and mechanisms. Continued funding from both institutional and European sources for networking activities and international projects is essential. Moreover, Language Centres ultimately seek to develop a worldwide discourse on quality assurance.

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