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QUALITY ASSURANCE

Heartwood is committed to developing and maintaining quality assurance policies and procedures in line with the recommendations of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. These may be summarised as follows:

1: Internal quality assurance

1.1 Institutions should commit themselves explicitly to the development of a culture which recognises the importance of quality, and quality assurance, in their work. To achieve this, institutions should develop and implement a strategy for the continuous enhancement of quality. The strategy, policy and procedures should have a formal status and be publicly available. They should also include a role for learners and other stakeholders.

1.2: Institutions should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards.

1.3 Assessment of learners: Learners should be assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are applied consistently.

1.4 Institutions should have ways of satisfying themselves that staff involved with the teaching of students are qualified and competent to do so. They should be available to those undertaking external reviews, and commented upon in reports.

1.5 Institutions should ensure that the resources available for the support of student learning are adequate and appropriate for the programme offered.

1.6 Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities.

1.7: Institutions should regularly publish up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes they are offering.

2: External quality assurance procedures:

2.1 External quality assurance procedures should take into account the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1

2.2 The aims and objectives of quality assurance processes should be determined before the processes themselves are developed, by all those responsible, and should be published with a description of the procedures to be used.

2.3 Any formal decisions made as a result of an external quality assurance activity should be based on explicit published criteria that are applied consistently.

2.4 All external quality assurance processes should be designed specifically to ensure their fitness to achieve the aims and objectives set for them.

2.5 Reports should be published and should be written in a style, which is clear and readily accessible to its intended readership. Any decisions, commendations or recommendations contained in reports should be easy for a reader to find.

2.6 Quality assurance processes which contain recommendations for action or which require a subsequent action plan, should have a predetermined follow-up procedure which is implemented consistently.

2.7 External quality assurance of institutions should be undertaken on a cyclical basis. The length of the cycle and the review procedures to be used should be clearly defined and published in advance.

2.8 Quality assurance agencies should produce from time to time summary reports describing and analysing the general findings of their reviews, evaluations, assessments etc.

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