

Meeting of OECD-IMHE experts in Barcelona: QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC) hosted a meeting at which a group of 10 experts suggested that institutions should strengthen their support to help teachers accomplish their educational mission.

Making significant improvements to the quality of higher education involves teachers being able to achieve their educational mission, in addition to enhancing their technical and subject matter knowledge. These are the views of a group of experts¹ from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) who met for two days in Barcelona to discuss the final conclusions of the Quality Teaching in Higher Education, a project led by the OECD's Programme on Institutional Management in Higher Education (IMHE).

According to the experts, **the quality of teaching relies on teachers' attributes that include extensive experience with student guidance, clear understanding of the multiple and complex characteristics of the learners while being proficient in the technical and subject matter. Institutions could support teachers in their mission by providing them with professional development and an effective learning environment. Developing student-centred education, engaging students as active collaborators in the educational process, and treating them equally within the institution lead to successful higher education.**



The Quality Teaching in Higher Education Project is an OECD/IMHE initiative that helps universities face the challenges of today's society, including their emerging role as key components in economic growth and innovation in their respective countries. The project aims to highlight effective initiatives and mechanisms that foster quality teaching practices to help institutions improve the quality of their teaching and, consequently, of graduates.

The project was implemented in two phases. In the first phase, which was completed in 2009, we carried out a general overview of the institutional initiatives and policies that improve the quality of higher education. Some 50 initiatives from 29 institutions around

¹ George Gordon and Ray Land (Strathclyde University), Alenoush Sorayan (Mcgill University), Outi Kallioinen (Laurea Univesity), Gabor Halasz (Eötvös Lorànd University), Gulsun Saglamer (Istanbul Technical University), Frank McMahon (Dublin Institute of Technology), Ferdando Leon Garcia (CETYS University), Pere Fabra and John Zvereff (UOC) and Fabrice Hénard (IMHE/OECD).

the world were analysed during this phase. Three main lessons were revealed in this initial phase: 1) institutional commitment is crucial for improving quality; 2) synergies have to be established between technology, human resources, learning media and student support policies; and 3) an innovative and ground-breaking assessment system is key.

The IMHE is now nearing completion of the second phase, the aim of which was to explore in detail certain specific experiences," said Fabrice Hénard, the OECD-IMHE analyst in charge of reviewing the project and one of the experts attending the Barcelona meeting.

In addition to the UOC, the following were analysed during the second phase of the project: Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa; Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE), Hungary; Laurea University, Finland; State University-Higher School of Economics, Russian Federation; Universidad Estadual de Campinas (UNICAMP), Brazil; Universidad Oberta de Catalunya (UOC), Spain; Universidade Catolica Portuguesa, Portugal; Université Laval, Canada; University of Veracruzana, Mexico; and University of Catania, Italy.

The Quality Teaching in Higher Education Project will propose recommendations to governments, agencies that measure quality in education, students, lecturers and the general public. The conclusions, which were previewed on 27 June 2011 at the meeting in Barcelona, will be presented in their entirety at a meeting this December in Mexicali (Mexico).

More information about IMHE:

www.oecd.org/edu/imhe

More information about the quality teaching project:

www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/qualityteaching/phase2

More information about the UOC:

www.uoc.edu/portal/english