UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN STUDENTS' UNION
Vice President Academic Affairs Report
December

Quality Assurance Agency Consultation

The UK Quality Code is changing, which will have a huge impact on you as students This short briefing outlines why.
1. **About the UK Quality Code NOW**
2. **About the proposed changes to the UK Quality Code**
3. **The impact of the changes FOR STUDENTS**

About the UK Quality Code for Universities:
- The UK Quality Code makes sure that there are **equal standards and quality levels across all Universities** in the UK, in relation to teaching and learning.

- The Code currently has a number of expectations (19) that Universities need to meet, to demonstrate that they have high enough standards and quality levels.

- There are a range of criteria from learning and teaching, to assessment, and Student Engagement.

What the proposed changes in the UK Quality Code for Universities are:
- The proposed changes are to **reduce the number of expectations** that Universities need to meet from 19 to 4

- The new expectations are that the value of the qualifications that the University awards are in line with sector standards (standards); and that the University delivers well-designed courses which provide a high quality academic experience (quality).

- There are also a **number of 'supplementary practices'**, which sit at a lower level (i.e. they will have less weighting). These might include Student Engagement, employability and flexible / distance learning.

- These changes have been proposed to streamline the process of Quality Assurance and make it easier for providers.

What impact might this have on students:

- The criteria have significantly **less focus on things students at Lincoln identified as important** (employability, placements, learning resources (e.g. the library) etc.), in Students' Union sector research. This means the University may therefore need to place less focus on these things.

- The criteria have less focus on Student Engagement. Lincoln is recognized nationally for being very good at Student Engagement. As a result, less focus on Student Engagement in the **code could ultimately make a student's degree look worse.**

- Students will also have **less chance to get actively involved in making a difference** and will not be considered 'as partners' in the shaping of their own experience as much. **Reps may have less influence over shaping the student experience**

- There may be **less focus on the Student Voice,** meaning that when you, as students, ask for improvements to be made, there is **less incentive for the University to make the changes**, as they do not feed as much into national metrics.

- Less focus on Student Engagement could also lead to **less opportunities for students** (e.g. student recruiters, student reviewers, conference funding etc.), which all provide valuable experience for students, and an **opportunity for skills development** etc.

- Less focus is placed on ensuring standards for **different demographics of students** e.g. those who are distance learners and those who are on placements.

PG Common Room

MHT 1309 is the new home of the Postgraduate Common Room! The common room was created for our PG community, as they had no dedicated space to study. The room features a lobby area, and a number of quieter quiet study rooms that can be booked via the university room booking system. A number of improvements have been made to the space over the last month! Students can now access the space 24 hours a day! In order to do so, please go to the security office and ask for permissions for the PG common room and MHT side door to be uploaded to your student card!

SUggestions

Since my previous report I have been working on 2 SUgesstions that I have been working on is a printer to be placed in the Art and Architecture building of the university, with another 120 students up-voting this. After conversations with Drew Cook, Director of ICT and Mark Pattrick, systems manager, a request was placed to Apogee (the University's printer suppliers) to bring another machine on site. I can confirm that this has been completed, and a printer was installed on the 4th floor of AAD West on the 18th December.

The next SUggestion I have been working on is getting more computing in the AAD building. There needs to be more university computers available in the AAD west building for CAD and printing purposes. Currently there is only one computer suite on the third floor with 18 computers. This is for both Architecture and Interior architecture students to use. When it comes to deadlines this is an issue as students are unable to print from laptops, so 18 computers have to be shared between around 250/300 students. Considering there are also scheduled sessions in this room, the computers are sometimes completely unavailable, having an impact on our work. After speaking with Drew Cook, Director of ICT, the ICT Team will explore the AAD building for potential spaces to place more computers to work on.

Rep Forum

We held the second Rep forum in December, where 120 reps attended in the engine shed. We had multiple sessions where reps could feed in to what a University of Lincoln App may look like, what features they would like to see, and how students would like it to function! School reps lead a session where they could use the time to update reps on what has been going on, and a chance for me to talk to students! An update was given to reps on the possible changes to the higher education regulations and what they may look like. Students commented that Student Voice, Student Engagement that employability are some of the things that they would define as a university being quality. A public speaking skills session was also delivered, enabling reps to communicate more effectively with their course-mates!

The Next Virtual Learning Environment

As part of my manifesto, I ran to work with the University to work on improving our Virtual Learning Environment, BlackBoard. Despite a period of outage at the start of the academic year, BlackBoard has already seen some improvements in the form of an update that occurred over the summer. With this, a new BlackBoard App was released which allows students to view modules, grades, announcements and lecture materials all from a mobile device!

As part of this pledge, discussions have now been opened as to what the future of our Virtual Learning Environment may look like. Over the coming months I will be working with Andy Beggan, Dean of Digital Education, to establish what students currently use from BlackBoard and what they may like to see in the future. Academics and staff members will

also be worked with, to ensure that our next Virtual Learning Environment allows for the best quality of teaching and learning for students.