International students' experiences - the role of the QAA

3rd Annual Conference
Improving International Student Experience
Friday 28th January 2011, Westminster Studio, London

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QAA

What does QAA do?

- Checks how UK universities maintain academic standards and quality
- Reviews and reports on how universities meet their responsibilities and, in so doing, identifies good practice and makes recommendations for improvement
- Publishes guidance to help UK universities and colleges ensure that students have a good learning experience and that standards of awards are secure.

What guidance?

- Qualification frameworks
- Subject benchmark statements
- Programme specifications
- Code of practice - 10 sections
- **Other guidance** – including **international students guidance**, under development

Currently being evaluated

But first…what do QAA audits tell us?

- Collation of QAA audit findings published in 2006 & 2008 (*Outcomes from*…series)
- Audit modelled on a peer-review process
- Pool of student auditors includes international students
- Auditors may speak with international students when they visit…

  and Student Written Submissions may discuss international students' experiences.

What do QAA audits tell us?

- About institutions' strategies for supporting international students:

- Information provided
- Orientation & induction
- English language support
- Academic & personal support
- Representation & feedback

What do QAA audits tell us?

- That institutions recognise the importance of:

- Providing additional, integrated and continual support for international students
- Improving co-ordination between central departments and schools

What do QAA audits tell us?

- That institutions recognise the importance of:

- Being aware of the composition of the student body in taught sessions
- Support for careers services meeting the needs of international students
- Organising training for academic and support staff

Development of new guidance

- QAA enquiry into a range of matters to do with higher education in England (April 2009)
- Roundtable meetings with sector representatives
- Advisory Group convened Summer 2010 inc UKCISA, UUK, GuildHE, AoC, NUS, I.Unit, TIS, HEA & institutions

Existing guidance

- Provision of Education to International Students: Code of Practice and Guidelines for Irish HEIs (Irish Higher Education Quality Network, 2009)
- International Student Recruitment and Support: Good Practice Guidelines for Scottish Education Institutions (British Council Scotland, 2006)
- A UK Guide to Enhancing the International Student Experience (International Unit, 2010)
- QAA Code of Practice
- UKCISA Code of practice and Code of ethics
- Support for International Students: towards a European code of good practice (ACA, 2010?)

Guidance in what form?

- Principles, explanation and signposts to good practice/further guidance
- Recognising the diversity that exists both within the student population & between institutions
- Reflecting rather than re-inventing existing good practice & guidance

Outline contents of draft new guidance

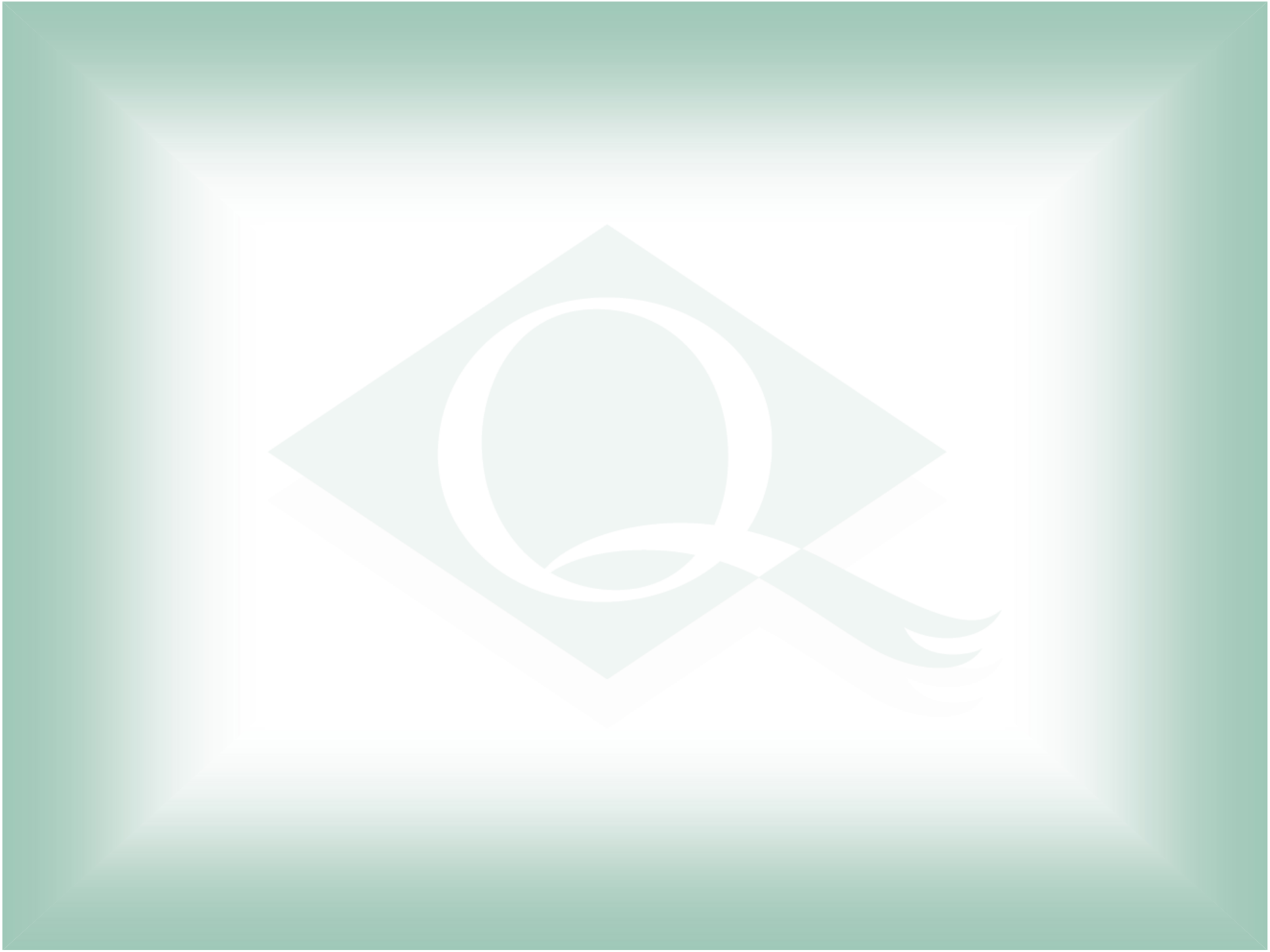
I. Marketing and recruitment
II. Admission
III. Pre-arrival
IV. Enrolment, orientation and academic induction
V. Teaching and learning
VI. Student services and support
VII. Careers education, information and guidance

General Principles

- An inclusive environment
- Student engagement & representation
- Clear and accessible information
- Shared responsibility
- Staff development and support
- Continual monitoring and improvement

Further information

- Laura Bellingham: L.Bellingham@qaa.ac.uk
- QAA website: www.qaa.ac.uk
- e-mail news alert service: http://www.qaa.ac.uk/news/list.asp
- Twitter: @QAAtweets

Acknowledgements

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