



Quality Assessment Survey at the School of Civil Engineering at Aalborg University

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Session C	Thursday 15.00 – 16.20	Room: "Gæstesalen"
Session Chair: Gyula Patko		

Student Organization as an Independent Actor Brings Quality in Engineering Education

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Abstract

The need for reliable and consistent measures of assuring quality in higher education has been widely acknowledged. Students as important stakeholders experience education firsthand and want to contribute to its improvement.

Quality in education is not only quality in teaching, but also quality in processes supporting education. Many of these administrative processes are experienced only by students. In case of problems, the means for a single student to take the matter forward are limited and the violation of the process is not necessarily noticed. In order to eliminate misconduct in the processes, there should be a competent actor close to the students with means to take the matter forward. One such actor can be a student organization.

A key element for a student organization for successful participation in quality assessment is independence from the university administration at all levels. An organized and independent student representation is an advantage for the higher education institutions when trying to achieve superior quality. Through effective communication about the processes set by the university and by providing ways for the students to easily report problems, the Student Union of Helsinki University of Technology acts to constantly improve the quality of engineering education.

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Quality Assessment Survey at the School of Civil Engineering at Aalborg University

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Abstract

As part of an improved quality assessment procedure at the School of Civil Engineering at Aalborg University, an online survey has been undertaken among all students. Due to external requirements and a wish for more structured feedback, an online questionnaire was presented to all students under the board of studies of civil engineering.

The questionnaire was jointly developed for all boards of studies at Aalborg University. The questionnaire forms an investigation of students' satisfaction and evaluation of the overall structure of the education including self-reported performance assessment. The paper discusses the structure of the questionnaire and presents the results. Finally, suggestions for improvements regarding the questionnaire and further quality assessment are included.

The response rate was 40%. Overall, the results showed a general satisfaction with the studies although substantial variance was observed. Approximately half of the students prepare in connection with courses

and lectures. Furthermore, it was found that a significant proportion of students are studying only part of the curriculum – typically less than 70% of the curriculum - and very few are studying the entire curriculum. A number of discrepancies between expected and experienced conditions related to good teaching are identified and discussed.

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Quality assurance support system in engineering education. Principles and activities.

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Abstract

As a part of implementing the quality assurance system, NTNU has developed a quality assurance support system, KVASS. This system is built around flow charts visualising all core processes and activities to be conducted by the involved roles. KVASS is also a toolbox containing relevant links, resources and specifically developed web tools. This paper shows how the principles for quality assurance have been developed, and how these support quality development at NTNU. It also shows the structure of the quality assurance support system and different ways of navigating the system for easy access. Finally, initial experiences and plans for further development are described.

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The Phumelela Project: Improving the Success of Engineering Students

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Abstract

This paper addresses what has been done in the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment at the University of Cape Town over the past twenty years to improve students success and hence the quality of our graduates, culminating in the current Phumelela project, which is the major focus of the paper. The paper notes the uneven school education received by incoming students in South Africa and the pressure to produce increasing numbers of quality engineering graduates. Three key initiatives undertaken in the past are discussed: improving teaching, curriculum reform, and research into student learning. The paper also presents the Centre for Research in Engineering Education argument that success is shown by entering into the discourse of engineering and taking on the identity of engineering communities. The Phumelela project involves a number of interventions, including the appointment of an Academic Development Lecturer in each department in the faculty, the appointment of a Faculty Counseling Officer, a mentoring programme for first year students, and improved tutoring at all levels. An important feature is a data analysis project which will evaluate the impact of the interventions being undertaken.

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