Quality Assurance and the Higher Education Institution: Some Lessons Shared for Academic Tourism Departments Who are Approaching External Quality Assurance Audits

Steve Burns,
Oman Tourism College, Oman.
E-mail: steven.burns@otc.edu.om

Abstract

More recently, national programs for evaluating quality assurance in higher education institutions (HEIs) have become common practice around the world. Due the increasing importance being placed on institutional ‘self-reflection’, a significant constituent element of a quality assurance audit has become the ‘self-assessment’ document. This document has been named in various educational jurisdictions as an Institutional Portfolio (IP), Self-Evaluation Portfolio (SEP), Self-Assessment Report (SAR) or Self-evaluation Document (SED). This paper will focus on the process of preparing a self-assessment document. The objective of the paper is to share experiences and offer guidance and recommendations when approaching the preparation of a SED. The paper is the result of a number of years’ experience, conversations and discussions of an academic manager previously working in an English HEI, and whose organisation achieved several successful institutional academic quality reviews in the United Kingdom.

The content of the paper is presented in the form of helpful ‘lessons’ to consider for those taking part in the preparation of SEDs. The paper is intended as a discussion paper for critical review as to whether ‘good practice’ can translate across international boundaries, and benefit those approaching writing SED documents in other countries and differing national review frameworks.