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Quality tools: The
multiple uses of
quality criteria

University of Tampere
e-Quality-project



Experience-based Quality in European ODL
E-QUALITY



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Purpose of the criteria

- to improve quality of ODL by indicating the essential activities promoting quality in different processes.
- to help recognize best practices and blocking factors.
- to act as a guidelines and support media for the development of education in a new situation with new technologies.
- to function as a tool for quality assurance



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- to function as a learning process for the whole team working with the course.
- to increase the understanding of the success of different areas.
- to act as a comparison when looking for best practices and examples for the improvement of ODL.
- to function as a quality guarantee or recommendation in relation to students, other users and producers of ODL.



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Focal points

1. Criteria are developed to improve the quality of ODL from the students' point of view. Therefore the criteria are focused on the actions enhancing students' learning.
2. Criteria are created for two sub processes, student support and learning material production.
3. The e-Quality -project is examining the quality from the actors' point of view and is introducing the concepts of role and activity to ODL. By identifying the roles also the criteria for the activities of these roles can be found.



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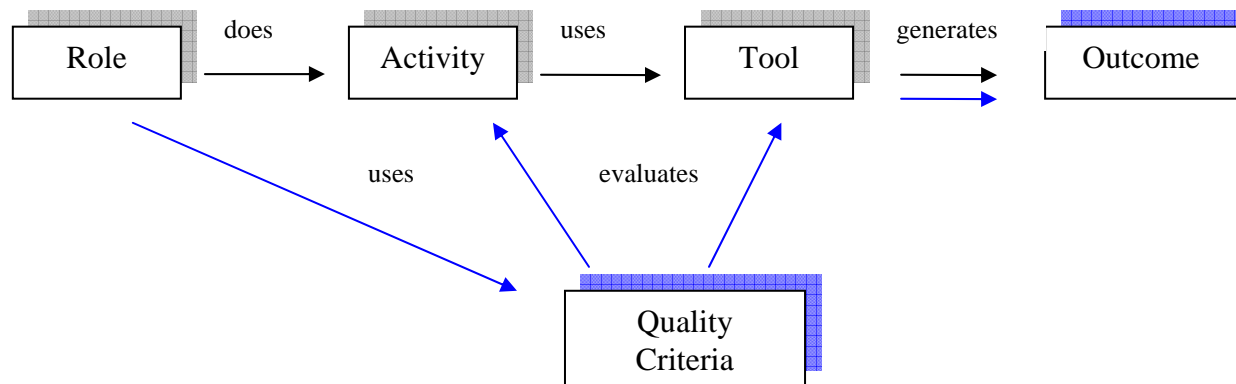


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Conceptual relations of quality criteria

- The relationships between roles, activities, tools and quality criteria and indicators.
- 1) Roles are for doing an activity. 2) Activities are performed by using tools. → A person carrying a role can evaluate both the activity he/she is performing and the tools she/he is using with the help of quality criteria.





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The quality criterion can help in answering three questions at the same time:

- *What actions do I have to take in order to fulfil this activity in order to guarantee good quality of the learning event?*
- *What tools can I use and how should I use them to guarantee good quality of the learning event?*
- *How can I generate best practices for my work with the help of quality criteria?*



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Structure of the criteria

- Criteria indicate the related activities. Criteria have been divided under roles to identify the responsible role.
- Every criterion consists of indicators that explicates and specifies the criterion.
- By comparing declarative sentences, indicators, to situation in individual course, an overall estimation on how this criterion is realised in course can be made.

→ **Understanding of the situation:**
improvements needed, practices to maintain



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The use of the quality criteria

Three step of utilizing the criteria:

- 1. Before the learning event:** Criteria as a checklist indicating the quality of the planning and matters need to be taken into account.
- 2. After the learning event:** Criteria as an evaluation tool indicating the quality of learning event.
- 3. After evaluation:** Criteria as a tool for generating the experiences and insight gained from the evaluation best practices and action plan.

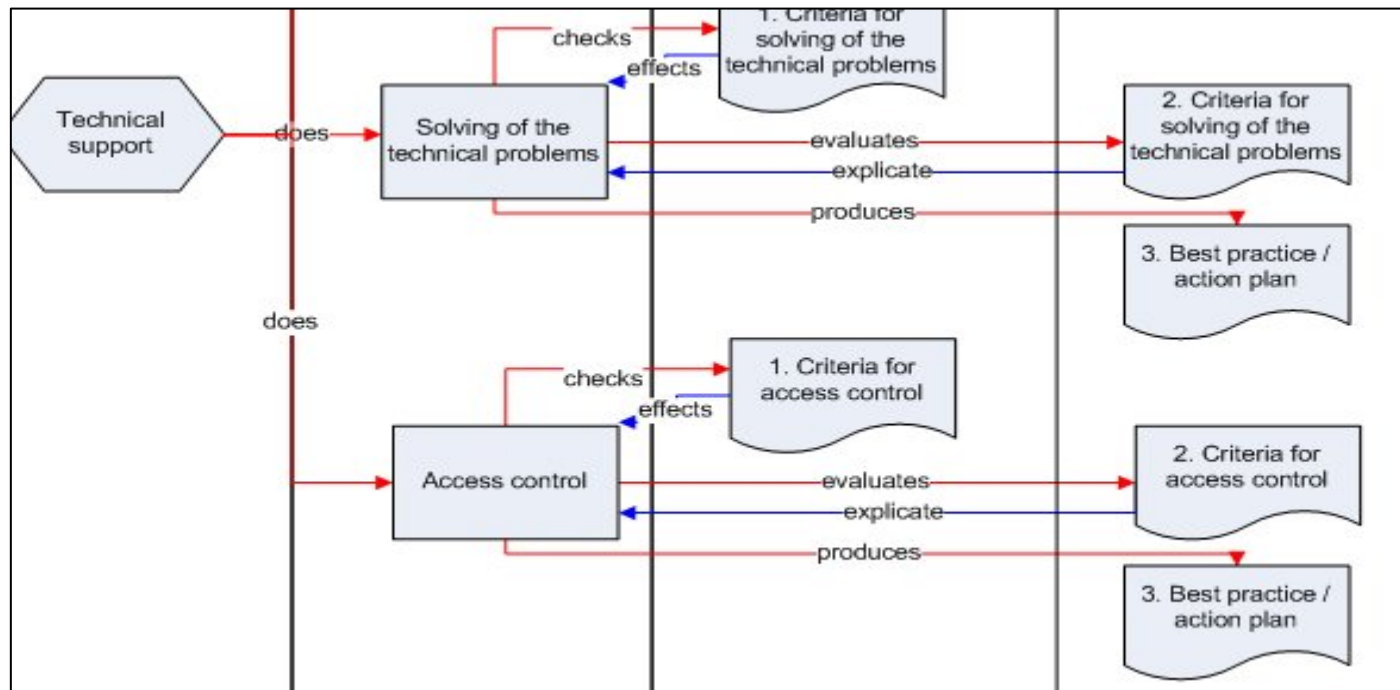

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Example





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1. Before the learning event:

- Criteria as a checklist, evaluation of planning
- Steps:
 1. Mark after each indicator if it has been taken into account in planning or not.
 2. Describe after each criterion what way it is going to be realised and performed in the learning event and what tools are going to be used.



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Scale:

- Yes Has been taken into account
- No Has not been taken into account

Example:

The students receive information about the course

| <u>Indicators:</u> | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| The students receive information concerning the student support | | |
| The students receive information about the duties and responsibilities of the teaching staff and the different actors in the course | | |
| The students are provided with the actors' contact information | | |
| The objectives of the course are presented to the students before the course | | |
| The students receive information about the evaluation and grading of the course | | |

Describe what way criterion is going to be realised and performed and what tools are going to be used



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2. After the learning event

- Tool for evaluating the quality of learning event
- Steps:
 1. Compare each indicator to the situation in your course. Mark after each indicator does it corresponds to your case.
 2. After gone through all the indicators of specific criterion, examine the results and give an overall estimation on how this criterion is realised in your course. Decides the weight of the indicators and how they affect the total grading of the criterion



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Scale for evaluating indicators:

No: does not correspond to the situation in my course
 X: corresponds to the situation in my course to some extent, but improvement is needed
 Yes: corresponds to the situation in my course

Scale for evaluating the criteria:

1= the issue is not realised.
 2= the issue is realised to some extend.
 3= the issue is realised to satisfactory extend.
 4= the issue is realised well.
 5= the issue is realised in an excellent manner.

Familiarization

The students receive information about the course

| <u>Indicators:</u> | Yes | X | No |
|---|-----|---|----|
| The students receive information concerning the student support | | | |
| The students receive information about the duties and responsibilities of the teaching staff and the different actors in the course | | | |
| The students are provided with the actors´ contact information | | | |
| The objectives of the course are presented to the students before the course | | | |
| The students receive information about the evaluation and grading of the course | | | |



Overall estimation (1-5) _____



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3. After evaluation

- Tool for generating one's experiences into best practices and action plan
- Tool for making best practices explicit
- Steps:
 1. After evaluation go through estimations of every criterion. Write down your conception of what aspects of the criterion are in order and what aspects need to be improved.



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Familiarization

The students receive information about the course

| <u>Indicators:</u> | Yes | X | No |
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| The students receive information about the evaluation and grading of the course | | | |

Overall estimation (1-5) _____

Analyse why this criterion was successfully performed (best practice) /

Analyse what way the success of this criterion can be achieved in future (action plan)



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Limits of the quality criteria

- The processes of ODL can not be described in same exactness as e.g. industrial processes.
 - a number of feeding processes with specific institutional, cultural, and even personal characteristics have an effect on these processes.
 - circumstances like the starting level of the students, the available technical infrastructure etc. have an influence on the success of the learning event



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- The objective of quality criteria is learning with good quality, but the sole usage of indicators does not function as an overall and immutable blueprint for high quality learning.
- To produce good quality learning requires that the whole planning and organisation of the education is in a good condition quality assessment and assurance being just a part of it.



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Development of the criteria:

- the different sets of criteria should be under constant redesign according to the demands caused by the changes in institutional and organisational factors of the development of higher education including different blocking factors
- the development of information technology as it introduces new tools for education should be observed in the constant redesign of the criteria

