

G8/BMENA Workshop on Quality Assurance and Enhancement and Strategic Management in Higher Education

28/29th February 2008.

Liverpool John Moores University, UK

Background

Lord Triesman was the Minister representing the UK at the G8/BMENA Ministerial Meeting in Bonn on 21st November 2007. At the meeting the Minister made some commitments on behalf of the UK Government, one being the delivery of a specialised workshop to be organised by Liverpool John Moores University covering the important areas of Quality Assurance and Enhancement and Strategic Management in Higher Education.

The UK is widely seen as having pioneering expertise and experience in these areas and the prospect of delivering such experience to support the critical thinking and planning across BMENA nation states.

The anticipated audience is a mixture of senior ministry officials, officials from major specialist delivery vehicles in country (e.g. national quality assurance agencies) and senior staff from progressive universities. The planned numbers are 100, anticipating perhaps three delegates from each G8/BMENA country and places will need to be limited to these numbers to ensure that a proper workshop can be delivered and to work within the size limitations of the excellent conference venue selected – Knowsley Hall (on the outskirts of Liverpool).

All conference costs (including accommodation) will be met by DIUS, with the exception of the delegates' travel costs to Liverpool.

Quality Assurance and Enhancement

The main themes here are:-

- How to balance/provide comprehensive and effective quality assurance processes without undue bureaucracy and without impeding timely market response
- How to incorporate the culture of quality assurance, and especially routine quality enhancement, into organisations not fully familiar with such approaches
- How can universities and countries know whether they are achieving “global HE standards” and what does that mean? There is an important employers' viewpoint and understanding to take into account here in terms of the “business-useful graduate” and relative standards of professional degree syllabi (e.g. professional engineering degrees in MBENA countries)

Strategic Management in Higher Education

Some of the issues for possible discussion:-

- What is a real strategic plan and how can it be delivered/managed?
- What are the important aspects to be taken into account (including 'soft' aspects such as culture change)?
- Consideration of the needs of the different stakeholder, within diverse national and cultural settings?
- How does a government get the best out of the resources used to support universities?
- What is a modern university for?
- An example of a strategically-managed university delivering a chosen and unique mission