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A light gray world map is centered in the background of the page, showing the outlines of continents and major islands.

**Quality has to be learnt before it gets practised:**

**Teaching Principles of Excellence Using the  
European Quality Award Model**

**Professor Mohamed Zairi**

Head of the European Centre for TQM  
University of Bradford, UK

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## ***Abstract***

As the Business Community moves into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century through pioneering with the Quality Concept, the academic debate on the merits / de-merits of TQM as a sound management approach will continue to rage on.

The paper argues the case for TQM in the education provision context. It highlights the importance of TQM to providers of academic courses, particularly in a Higher Education environment. The paper pinpoints the importance of focusing on core processes, customer orientation and the emphasis on continuous improvement, measurement and TQM-based competitiveness.

In order to support the various arguments presented, the paper discusses an approach adopted at Bradford Management Centre (UK) to teach TQM at postgraduate MBA level, using the European Quality Award Model as the framework for the course design and delivery. The paper then concludes by presenting some key arguments on the importance of 'linkages' for a total approach to delivering academic excellence. An evaluation of the 'Bradford Pilot' is also included, together with useful comments from some of the participants in the MBA programme.

## ***The TQ Imperative in Higher Education***

The upsurge of TQM introduction in Higher Education and in particular Business Schools, has been quite significant over the past few years. Froiland (1993) argues that the spread of TQM can be found in courses, classroom methods and administrative processes. Similarly, Bruce & Tseng (1993) through a survey of 117 U.S. Business Schools, have looked at the impact of TQM on organisational changes, faculty development and curricular changes. Although the benefits reported have been modest, it is however generally agreed that TQM is perceived to be a 'necessary evil' in this day and age (Ardaiolo, 1994; Clayton, 1993). Battacharya et al (1998), in outlining the initiation of a TQM program in an academic department and the research centre of a business school, have concluded that the whole process brought with it a keener awareness of the goals of the school and its constituent departments. One of the key outcomes they reported was particularly a stronger focus on the needs of customers/constituents of the departments and pilot projects when applying TQM concepts to selected key activities.

Although other writers have been more cautious with their views on the usefulness and level of impact TQM brings with it when applied in the context of Higher Education, and in particular Business Schools, non-the-less, there seems to be a consensus reached on the appropriateness, applicability and usefulness of TQM in the aforementioned context. Koch & Fisher (1998) argue that TQM encourages colleges and universities to collect data that enables them to measure their progress in key areas and this, against themselves and against others. Michael et al (1997) referred to TQM as 'the saving grace' for the future of Higher education institutions.

## ***TQM In Business Schools: What Are The Benefits?***

The changes in teaching and learning have been accelerated by the advent of new technology, low cost publications, electronic media and the computer. They all have had a significant impact on the provision of education in Business Schools to date. The drive for achieving superior quality standards and delivering excellence is well noted and highlighted by various researchers (Sallis, 1993; Cowles, 1993). Others have also noted that quality improvement has become important to give Business

Schools better control over their destiny (Tang & Zairi, 1998; Sallis, 1993). Williams (1993) argues that TQM has become part of the education vocabulary through the provision of business studies degrees.

Motwani and Kumar (1997) reported that some of the tangible benefits often observed are improved communication, higher employee morale, increased productivity, improved process efficiency, reduction in defects and costs. Peters (1999) on the other hand, suggests that TQM can give business schools the opportunity to enter new markets and to jockey for position against competitor providers. Melan (1998) highlights the importance of leadership and 'constancy of purpose'. He points out that leadership and change facilitation are additional contingencies influencing the outcome of introducing TQM.

Kanji & Tambi (1999) suggest that TQM can be evaluated in institutions of higher learning such as Business Schools, and that there is compatibility between the academic and business ethos; with similar arguments Reavill (1998) introduces the notion that the quality assessment process has contributed and will continue to contribute to the improvement in the provision of education in Business Schools. Greensted (2000) puts a view, based on the UK experience, that existing quality assessment processes are often unable to lead to a significant impact since they rarely provide opportunities for benchmarking Business Schools against Best In Class practices. He suggests that a migration from concentrating on subject specific quality assurance or an accreditation of specific programmes (from professional membership to a total accreditation approach), is the most logical way forward. Models such as the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) and the European Quality Award (EQA), will permit such a progression, since these two approaches are capable of providing a total examination.

### ***The European Quality Award Model as a Model for Teaching Quality***

The European Quality Award (EQA) Model similarly to the Malcolm Baldrige Award, despite several criticisms for some shortcomings (Garvin, 1992; Crosby et al, 1991), are representing a significant step in offering a more holistic and widely accepted TQM framework.

The EQA Model is based on the premise that Excellence is business dependent on 8 fundamental concepts. These include:

- Customer Focus
- Leadership and Constancy of Purpose
- Management by Processes and Facts
- People Development and Involvement
- Continuous Learning, Improvement and Innovation
- Partnership Development
- Public Responsibility
- Results Orientation

The EQA Model is thought to have predictive ability on Business Performance. As stated by Sir Peter Bonfield, CEO, British Telecom (1999):

*"A Business is not just about measuring profit and loss. You can't keep score just using profit and loss, which is essentially a measure of yearly outcomes, the result of decisions taken several years ago. You need something which*

*says 'if you do that then you will have long term success'...and the Model allows you to do that."*

(EFQM, 1999)

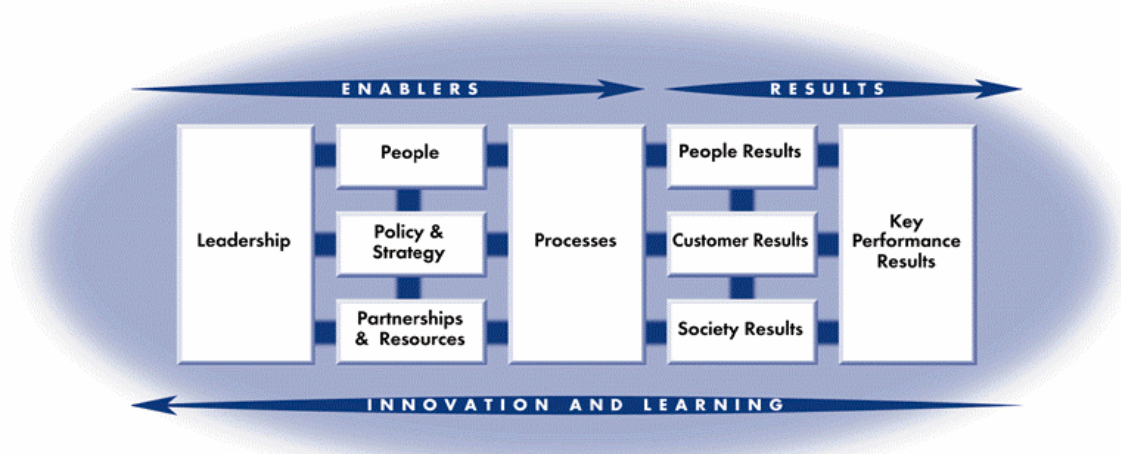
The 8 Fundamentals of Excellence are therefore an extremely useful start for developing teaching courses related to the notion of quality excellence. It seems that the EQA Model offers academics with 2 sets of opportunities:

- Re-aligning the processes of academic delivery and related support functions so that the emphasis is on quality improvement and customer satisfaction;
- Preaching what is practised by teaching the concepts that really add value in terms of modern learning and in terms of developing the right competencies which are compatible with business needs.

In 1999, a revised version of the European Quality Award Model was launched to re-emphasise the point that Excellence comes from being results-orientated, customer focussed and through harnessing organisational capability to the full.

Figure 1 illustrates the Revised Version of the Excellence Model, which is deemed to be more dynamic, simple, holistically orientated and generic. The arrows in the framework capture the dynamic aspects, in which innovation and learning improve the enablers, leading in turn to improved results. The improved model is also more attuned to modern business requirements. Concepts such as innovation and the learning organisation are much more evidently stressed. The revised model also places emphasis on such as the management of partnerships and knowledge, and strengthens the focus upon customer and staff satisfaction.

**Figure 1.0** The Enhanced Excellence Model



In sum the model is premised on the notion that excellent results with respect to Performance, Customers, People and Society are achieved through Partnerships and Resources, and Processes.

The boxes, shown in Figure 1, represent the criteria against which to assess an organisation's progress towards excellence. Each of the nine criteria has a definition, and is broken down into sub-criteria that help develop the meaning of that criterion. The criteria are defined in table 1.0 below.

**Table 1.0:** The Excellence Models' Criteria for Assessment

*Criterion 1: Leadership*

How leaders develop and facilitate the achievement of the mission and vision, develop values required for long term success and implement these via appropriate actions and behaviours, and are personally involved in ensuring that the organisation's management system is developed and implemented.

Sub-criteria:

Leadership covers the following four sub-criteria that should be addressed.

- 1a. Leaders develop the mission, vision and values and are role models of a culture of Excellence
- 1b. Leaders are personally involved in ensuring the organisation's management system is developed, implemented and continuously improved
- 1c. Leaders are involved with customers, partners and representatives of society
- 1d. Leaders motivate, support and recognise the organisation's people

*Criterion 2: Policy and Strategy*

How the organisation implements its mission and vision via a clear stakeholder focused strategy, supported by relevant policies, plans, objectives, targets and processes.

Sub-criteria:

Policy and Strategy cover the following five sub-criteria that should be addressed.

- 2a. Policy and Strategy are based on the present and future needs and expectations of stakeholders
- 2b. Policy and Strategy are based on information from performance measurement, research, learning and creativity related activities
- 2c. Policy and Strategy are developed, reviewed and updated
- 2d. Policy and Strategy are deployed through a framework of key processes
- 2e. Policy and Strategy are communicated and implemented

*Criterion 3: People*

How the organisation manages, develops and releases the knowledge and full potential of its people at an individual, team-based and organisation-wide level, and plans these activities in order to support its policy and strategy and the effective operation of its processes

Sub-criteria:

People cover the following five sub-criteria that should be addressed.

- 3a. People resources are planned, managed and improved
- 3b. People's knowledge and competencies are identified, developed and sustained
- 3c. People are involved and empowered
- 3d. People and the organisation have a dialogue
- 3e. People are rewarded, recognised and cared for

*Criterion 4: Partnerships and Resources*

How the organisation plans and manages its external partnerships and internal resources in order to support its policy and strategy and the effective operation of its processes.

Sub—criteria:

Partnerships and Resources cover the following five sub-criteria that should be addressed.

- 4a. External partnerships are managed
- 4b. Finances are managed
- 4c. Buildings, equipment and materials are managed
- 4d. Technology is managed
- 4e. Information and knowledge are managed

*Criterion 5: Processes*

How the organisation designs, manages and improves its processes in order to support its policy and strategy and fully satisfy, and generate increasing value for its customers and other stakeholders.

Sub-criteria:

Processes cover the following five sub-criteria that should be addressed.

- 5a. Processes are systematically designed and managed
- 5b. Processes are improved, as needed, using innovation in order to fully satisfy and generate increasing value for customers and other stakeholders
- 5c. Products and Services are designed and developed based on customer needs and expectations
- 5d. Products and Services are produced, delivered and serviced
- 5e. Customer relationships are managed and enhanced

*Criterion 6: Customer Results*

What the organisation is achieving in relation to its external customers.

Sub-criteria:

Customer Results cover the following two sub- criteria that should be addressed.

- 6a. Perception Measures
- 6b. Performance Indicators

*Criterion 7: People Results*

What the organisation is achieving in relation to its people.

Sub-criteria:

People Results cover the following two sub- criteria that should be addressed.

- 7a. Perception Measures
- 7b. Performance Indicators

*Criterion 8: Society Results*

What the organisation is achieving in relation to local, national and international society as appropriate.

Sub-criteria:

Society Results cover the following two sub- criteria that should be addressed.

- 8a. Perception Measures
- 8b. Performance Indicators

*Criterion 9: Key Performance Results*

What the organisation is achieving in relation to its planned performance.

Sub-criteria:

Key Performance Results cover the following two sub-criteria that should be addressed. Depending on the purpose and objectives of the organisation some of the measures contained in the guidance for Key Performance Outcomes may be applicable to Key Performance Indicators and vice versa.

9a Key Performance Outcomes

9b Key Performance Indicators

Amongst some of the key areas where improvement has taken place include the explicit incorporation of the importance of supply chain management and partnerships, as a key driver for the former. The second improvement relates to innovation and learning. A third feature of improvement is in the development of RADAR logic (see Figure 2), which helps operationalise the model for self-assessment. RADAR provides the central logic, at the heart of the model, determining the search for performance improvements. The fundamental building blocks of the concept underpinning corporate excellence are Results, Approach, Deployment, Assessment and Review

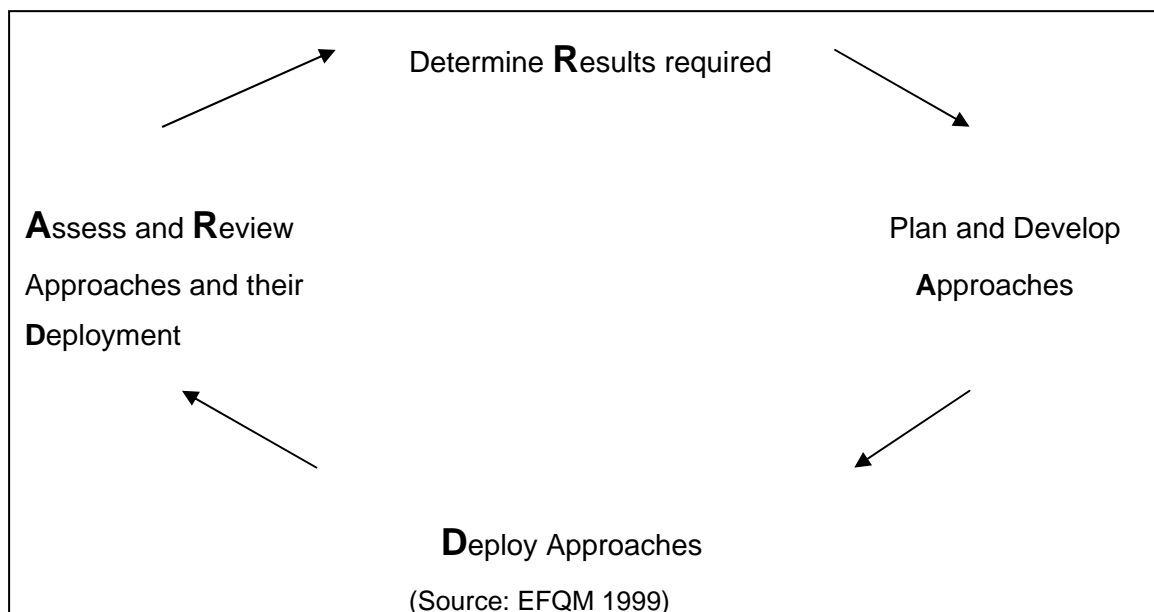
The RADAR logic consists of four elements:

**Results** - Determining results required.

**Approach** - Planned and developed approaches that deliver effective results.

**Deployment** - The systematic implementation of approaches.

**Assessment of Review** - The analysis, monitoring, learning and prioritisation of Improvement plans.

**Figure 2.** Radar Logic

According to RADAR logic an organisation needs to:

Determine the Results the organisation is aiming for as part of its policy and strategy making process. These results should cover the full range of performance metric (financial, operational, and the perceptions of its stakeholders). Next it should plan and develop an integrated set of sound Approaches to deliver the required results, now as well as into the future. The company should then attempt to reap the benefit from the fruits of its labour by Deploying the selected approaches in a systematic way to ensure full and proper implementation. Finally the organisation should assess and Review the approaches adopted by monitoring and analysing the results achieved. Based on this it should identify, prioritise, plan and implement improvements where needed and subsequently embed the learning into the organisation.

The Excellence Model provides a framework that can assist businesses to gauge themselves against the 8 fundamentals of excellence (discussed previously), from the point of view of answering the question: "Where are we now?" and "Where should we be in the future?" These 8 fundamentals of excellence are applicable to the academic context, as was the case of The Bradford MBA Programme.

### **Teaching Principles of Excellence on the MBA Program**

The review of the Bradford Management Centre MBA conducted between 1995 and 1996 highlighted a number of problems with the curriculum. One of the main criticisms to emerge out of the literature review of MBA development and discussions with members of the department is the lack of integration between courses. As businesses are increasingly moving towards flatter organisational structures and cross-functional management it would be remiss of the Management Centre not to reflect these changes in its curriculum.

The intention is to introduce a cross-functional management "core" throughout the whole programme, which will reflect these trends in industrial and commercial developments.



## **The rationale for an Integrative Management Course based on Principles of Excellence.**

The underlying intent of introducing a cross - functional management "core" into the programme is the need for managers to understand the challenges of working in a cross - functional way and think beyond functional disciplines in developing innovative and creative solutions to management problems. The cross-functional management stream, as envisaged, is multi-faceted.

The main elements to be included reflect:

- the skills required to operate in a cross functional organisation
- critical elements of "good practice" with which modern organisations are currently grappling

The Integrative Management compulsory core course therefore plays a vital role in the cross-functional core: principally it is concerned with outlining the importance of interfaces between business functions and the value of viewing organisations as holistic entities where actions in one area impact on decisions in another.

### **The aims of the course**

The aim of the course is to extend student knowledge and understanding beyond business functions into the realm of inter - disciplinary management. Many organisations are now recognising that competitive advantage can be best derived from managing the interfaces between disciplines. This course focuses on why this should be the case and how firms can manage processes rather than functions.

It could be possible to argue that by simply adding a subject labelled "Integrative Management" this course perpetuates the compartmentalisation of business disciplines. However, its positioning within the structure of the programme (a course which ties themes together and build links between previously studied functional disciplines) should avoid this being the case.

### **What makes attending this course essential?**

*"Nothing in the world of business is static: processes, products, cash, service to customers, should be changing for the better all the time. The pressures for change in this modern world will never stop and there is never a perfect business - simply one which is temporarily better than- its competitors"*

Source: Sir John Harvey - Jones "All Together Now" Mandarin 1995.

Managers face accelerating levels of change in their working environment as business strives for superior performance through increased competitiveness and improved efficiency. This intensity of change and commitment is universal across both the private and public sectors as organisations seek to maximise the benefits to be gained from their finite resources.

Since the early 1990s a growing number of organisations have emerged who are committed to the principles of total quality management. This is hardly surprising given the international research and in particular the Bradford Studies of 1996 and 1991 which clearly indicated that organisations committed to total quality management sustain significantly improved bottom line results compared to their peers in the same industry sectors. What underpins their success is the integrative rather than disparate approach adopted to business management. Vertical cross-

functional structures have replaced the traditional horizontal and functional structures and with it a completely different managerial approach.

What has not been available, until now, is the knowledge and learning which managers can gain from a close look at the integrative management practices and behaviours which underpin superior performance.

Many traditional management practices have been challenged by these organisations and superseded by new practices which address the requirements of today's market. This course will expose delegates to these modern approaches to business management and in particular the critical success factors, which have emerged from these successful organisations.

### **How has this course been researched?**

Research was focused on the management practices and behaviours of leading organisations who were committed to total quality management. Typically these were organisations who were recipients of the various prestigious quality awards such as the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (USA), the European Quality Award, the British Quality and the Deming Prize (Japan) . All the organisations examined have a clear and consistent purpose together with a flair for innovation and continuous improvement that produce exceptional results.

What has emerged from the research are new management practices that have challenged the traditional practices and produced outstanding results. Furthermore, now that quality has reached a higher level of maturity in many organisations critical success factors for total quality management are beginning to emerge.

This course offers a unique opportunity to gain insights into these management practices, critical success factors and understanding of the methodology, which underpins the application of best practice management.

### **Who will benefit from this course?**

The course will specifically benefit senior and middle managers wishing to update and enhance their managerial skills through a practical course based on the experience of leading organisations across different industry sectors.

It is envisaged that many of the best practice approaches will spark the imagination of delegates and with adaptation where appropriate, enable implementation back at their work place.

### **What will be the key learning from this course?**

The course is designed to expose delegates to the latest management tools and techniques, which address such current issues as:

- How can managers balance the need for customer focus with the requirements of all the stakeholders?
- How can world class practices be developed which lead to competitive advantage?
- Is the role of manager a thing of the past in an empowered environment?
- How can staff who perform a support role understand the need for customer focus?
- How can managers work smarter by measuring and managing the right things and not wasting time on trivialities?
- How can quality move from talk to full integration within the business?

- How can managers build a learning organisation where staff is committed to life long learning?
- Should an organisation have a social conscious?
- How can teamwork and people management be so important today with increased technology and automation?
- Is the quality system an administrative nightmare or managerial asset?

The core elements of the syllabus are drawn from the European Quality Award framework now familiar to many world-wide organisations. The course will comprise the following elements:

- Overview and perspective of integrative management
- The role of leadership in the modern business context
- Formulation and integration of policy and strategy into the business
- Managing people resources in the work place
- Deployment of resources to optimise effectiveness
- Managing business processes
- Determining the level of customer satisfaction
- Measuring people satisfaction within the organisation
- Establishing corporate responsibility to Society
- Measuring business performance
- World class performance

Some of these elements will inevitably cut across areas of business management studied further in the elective stage of the programme. Such overlap is not considered problematic, indeed it will enable students to better understand the context of areas of management studied later in the programme.

In terms of knowledge, students should be able, by the end of the course to:

- understand how functions are linked together in an organisation by way of critical processes
- identify frameworks for summarising business processes

The main skills and competencies being sought relate to:

- an ability to identify linkages between functions in an organisation
- an ability to be proactive in suggesting appropriate business solutions to process-based problems
- an ability to synthesis and interpret complex information
- an ability to co-operate and work in teams.

### **How is the course taught?**

The course runs as an intensive week long module and comprises a wide range of teaching methodologies including:

- Formal lectures / seminars
- Group discussion and workshops
- Video presentations

The rationale for the intensive teaching mode is that the course is not knowledge intensive: it focuses on applying existing knowledge and extending understanding through exploration of key issues.

The course comprises 80 hours of learning and is made up as follows:

- 20 hours session preparation and reading
- 40 hours teaching and group interaction
- 20 hours preparation time for project

### **What is the structure of the course?**

#### **Block 1** - The role of leadership in the modern business context

- Organisational vision, values and mission
- Management training and commitment
- Role model behaviour
- Developing a continuous improvement environment
- Involving customer and suppliers
- External promotion of quality culture

#### **Block 2** - Formulation and integration of policy and strategy into the business

- Planning process
- Data sources and feedback loops
- Determining business priorities
- Benchmarking and competitive analysis
- Policy deployment process
- Review and updating process

#### **Block 3** - Managing people resources in the work place

- People selection, assessment and development.
- Investors in People
- Core skill requirements.
- Development, training and career maps
- Role of teamwork and target setting
- Communication process

#### **Block 4** - Deployment of resources to optimise effectiveness

- Financial strategy formulation, budget preparation and review process
- Investment decision making models
- Supply chain management
- Technology application
- Creativity
- Cost of quality using different models

#### **Block 5** - Managing business processes

- Identification of critical processes
- Development of performance measures
- Management of processes
- Role of quality systems and standards
- Process management using measurement tools and techniques
- Review and improvement of processes
- Innovation

#### **Block 6** - Determining the level of customer satisfaction.

- Critical attributes of customer satisfaction.
- Direct measures of customer satisfaction

- Indirect measures of customer satisfaction
- Collecting satisfaction data through surveys, mystery shoppers, competitor analysis
- Complaint handling and root cause analysis
- Deployment of customer satisfaction data systems

**Block 7** - Measuring people satisfaction within the organisation

- People satisfaction attributes
- Health, safety and security
- Data collection methods.
- Deployment of data systems
- Reward and recognition systems

**Block 8** - Establishing corporate responsibility to Society

- Preserving global resources
- Impact and involvement on local communities
- Developing environmental responsibility awareness within the business
- Support for education and training
- Establishing effective measures for environmental awareness.

**Block 9** - Measuring business performance

- Challenging the traditional approach to performance measurement
- Determining operational effectiveness
- Asset management
- Competitive analysis
- Measuring innovation

**Block 10** - World class performance

- Dispelling the myth of world class performance
- Identifying who are world class players
- Implications of world class on your business
- Taking the course learning back into the workplace
- Questions and answers

**How is the course assessed?**

The course is assessed by way of an individual project (100%). An examination would be inappropriate in a course of this nature given it is not primarily knowledge based.

For full - time students this is based on case study material from which students are expected to extrapolate information about business functions to build a picture of business processes.

For part - time students, the project is company - based, students being required to build a picture of business processes within their own organisation.

The aim of the assessment is to ensure that students understand how different business functions interact within an organisation and can make prescriptions about how these cross - function processes can be effectively managed.

### ***Programme Evaluation and Students' Feed back:***

Surveying various cohorts of both full time and part-time students who have attended the course carried out the evaluation of the programme. Since this was a new innovation, it was deemed to be necessary to gauge students' feed back on a variety of aspects. Table 2 illustrates the outcomes of the survey:

**Table 2:** Teaching TQM by using the European Excellence Model

Evaluation Criteria	Student Cohort (both Full & Part Time)					Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	
Relevance of Course content	5	5	4	5	4	<b>4.6</b>
Presentation Quality	5	5	5	5	4	<b>4.8</b>
Appropriateness of teaching/learning mode	4	4	4	4	3	<b>3.8</b>
Understanding of subject	4	5	4	4	4	<b>4.2</b>
Value of Assessment	4	3	4	4	3	<b>3.6</b>
Appropriateness of Skills Development	5	5	5	4	4	<b>4.6</b>
Overall Impression	5	5	5	5	4	<b>4.8</b>
Level of Prior Knowledge (%)	30	30	30	40	15	

The various groups of students who have participated in this program have found the course of high relevance, with high learning outcomes and very appropriate for the development of skills and expertise. Although they all had relatively low experience with TQM in the past, their understanding of the subject has significantly increased (4.2 out of 5). The students would have liked to space out the course over a longer period of time so that the learning outcomes from the teaching mode used can be better enhanced, through regular discussions and mini-projects on each of the teaching blocks. Furthermore, suggestions were made on the usefulness of introducing the key elements of the course during the foundation induction week (at the beginning of the academic year) , in order to enable an accelerated and advanced approach when the course is scheduled to run. Overall however, the students have had a very good impression of the course (4.8 out of 5), with many comments saying that this is the best course they have ever attended.

### ***Conclusion: Excellence in Business is dependent on linkages***

The premise of the course was to demonstrate that MBA courses should demonstrate the levels of synergy between them without any sub-optimisation and certainly with no reference to 'prima donna' effects. It seemed that the EQA Model would provide the ideal opportunity for doing so. As far as the various linkages are concerned, students were taught that the various principles of Excellence, as defined by the EQA Model, would converge in one focal point (i.e. the overall corporate performance. Individual aspects of excellence which implicitly explain how functional business topics are taught was shown from the point of view of WHAT type of contribution they make and WHERE are the likely areas they link with and thereby influence.

The usefulness of the Bradford Program concurs with findings from similar experiments. For instance the experience of using the MBNQA in the U.S., reported by Karathanos (1997) and Bernard (1999) who looked at the usefulness of TQM in Business Studies, at Rochester Institute of Technology. Bernard concluded that a TQM approach can increase students' learning in a class, help students support one another in a co-operative learning environment, and foster feelings towards the instructor.

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