

The background of the slide is a blurred photograph of a university campus. It shows a large, multi-story building with a red roof and a central tower, surrounded by trees and a green lawn. The text is overlaid on this background.

# Higher Education Summit 2007

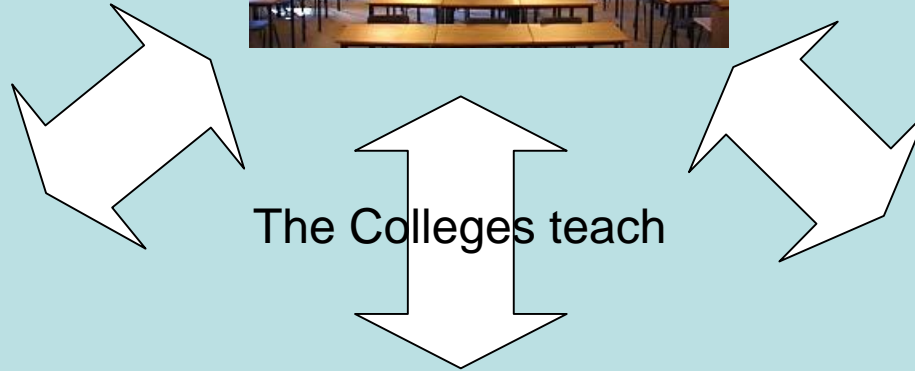
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# **Quality Assurance Mechanisms: Key Issues**

Quality Assurance in the UK

# 19<sup>th</sup> Century The Oxbridge Model

The University examines



The Colleges teach



# 19<sup>th</sup> Century

## Examples of the Oxbridge model

The University of London



The Queen's University of Ireland



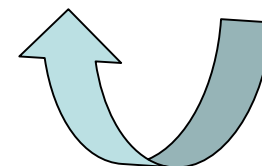
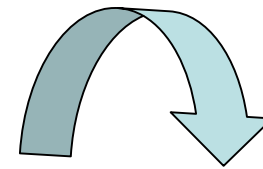
The University of Wales



# 19<sup>th</sup> Century to 20<sup>th</sup> Century

## The external examiner model

St David's College  
(now The University of Wales, Lampeter)  
Charters of 1852 and 1865





# Mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century

1965 to 1992

- Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA)
- Validation approach
- Did not apply to established universities
- Nationally determined procedures applied by a single national body

# Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century

- Expansion of the University sector – greater maturity of new institutions
- Research assessment exercise
- Pressure on unit of resource for teaching
- Move towards greater accountability for public expenditure

# Late 20<sup>th</sup> Century

- Quality audit
  - Established by and for the sector
  - Reviews processes and systems
  - Based on peer review
- Teaching quality inspection
  - Imposed by government via funding bodies
  - Focus on inspection of delivery

# Later 20<sup>th</sup> Century

- Unified system based on peer review
- Subject review subsumed within institutional audit
- Focus shifts from having structures to having systems which check effectiveness of structures
- Increasing shift towards enhancement

# Academic infrastructure

- Frameworks for higher education qualifications
- Subject benchmark statements
- The *Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education*

# Strengths of the current arrangements

- Accepted by institutions
- Cannot be reduced to simple “league table” analysis
- Flexible and responsive (e.g. differences in devolved administrations)
- Robust and effective
- Operates developmentally
- Perceived to deliver value

# Recognition of new institutions

- Can operate through partnership with existing provider, awarding degrees of validating institution
- Power to award UK degrees derived from:
  - Royal Charter
  - Statute
  - Approval by Privy Council against criteria set by government

# Degree awarding powers criteria

- Institution must have been operating through partnership arrangements
- Strict scrutiny over extended period to provide assurance of capacity
- Governance arrangements must be appropriate
- Private sector powers limited in duration
- Subsequent review by QAA

# Private sector

- Powers granted by Royal Charter
- University of Buckingham (1983)
- Using new criteria (2007)
  - College of Law (Chartered not for profit)
  - BPP College (wholly owned not for profit subsidiary of publicly quoted company)

# Private sector involvement

- India may be on the cusp of change
- So is Britain



Thank you