NEC pioneers IQA process to ensure quality in distance learning

Thursday 1 February, 2018

As a pioneer of distance learning, the *National Extension College* (NEC) is committed to providing a high-quality learning experience for students. The College has developed a unique Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) system to robustly evaluate assessment and tutor feedback across its course portfolio.

The results of the IQA process indicate that the College has a professional team of Tutors, who provide accurate marking, with constructive feedback. Key findings of the 2017 process include:

- 96% of grades/marks awarded were validated
- 96% of assessment feedback was constructive, demonstrating best-practice
- 88% of assignments were marked in three working days

Currently in its third year, the NEC IQA process is carried out by Lead Tutors, who work independently. Taking a wide sample of student work, Lead Tutors consider if they agree with the overall grades awarded. This replicates how assessment is monitored within a school environment. They also evaluate the quality of feedback given to students.

Comments from the report indicate the standard of quality required: *"The mark awarded reflects the Tutor's thorough understanding of the assessment criteria. Marks have been provided at the end of each question to enable the student to gain a secure understanding of areas requiring further improvement."*

The IQA system is part of a cycle of continual improvement at the College. Following the 2017 report, a new online CPD module for NEC Tutors has been introduced, which will support the ongoing delivery of constructive feedback to students.

Alison Edwards, Education and Quality Manager at the NEC, reflects on the additional positive impact of the IQA system: *"We have evidence that the process of IQA has a motivating effect, encouraging positive communication both between Lead Tutor and Tutor as well with NEC staff."*

Dr Ros Morpeth, CEO of the NEC comments: *"At the NEC we are committed to quality in both our learning materials and assessment. Our unique IQA system enables us to continually improve on assessment and feedback – two key aspects of a student's learning experience. Ultimately, by delivering accurate assessment and constructive feedback, we aim to offer our students the very best opportunity to achieve their full future potential."*

- ENDS -

Notes to editors:

About the National Extension College (NEC)

The National Extension College (NEC) transforms lives through learning. It opens up futures for people of all ages, from diverse backgrounds and cultures by offering access to flexible distance learning courses across the UK and beyond.

Over the past 50 years, the NEC has forged a reputation for quality and innovation in learning, alongside a deep commitment to offering each student an exceptional level of support in achieving their future ambitions.

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