



Is it Possible to Develop an Objective Evaluation of the Teaching Activity and Quality at the University?: Results of Evaluation in a Group of Biotechnology Lecturers

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Abstract

Evaluation of the teaching activity of the academic staff is useful for improving the quality of teaching as well as for certification procedures. The Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV; Spain) uses an "Educational Activity Index" (EAI) to evaluate the planning of the educational activity, the development of the teaching, and teaching results. For each of these three dimensions, scores are obtained and, by applying a formula which gives different weights to each of the scores, the EAI is obtained. Individual thresholds for obtaining a "Very Favourable", "Favourable" or "Unfavourable" evaluation are established. We study the results of the application of the EAI to the evaluation of the staff of the Department of Biotechnology of the UPV and suggest recommendations for improvement. Application of the EAI showed that 18.6% of the staff achieved a "Very Favourable" evaluation, and 81.4% a "Favourable evaluation", while no "Unfavourable" evaluations were obtained. We have found that there is a positive relation between the number of credits imparted and the EAI values. However, given that there are different teaching capacity levels among the academic staff, we developed an "Educational Activity Quality Index" (EAQI) which is based on the relative value of the EAI referred to the threshold levels for getting an Unfavourable (EAQI=0) or Very Favourable (EAQI=100) qualification. EAQI demonstrated being a better tool than EAI to compare the quality of the educational activity of the research and academic staff, although it is also dependant on the credits imparted. This suggests that the EAI index should be revised in order to have a better evaluation of the quality of the educational activity of the teaching staff with less credits imparted.