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BASI quality processes

Part two

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BASI Quality Processes



Part
Two

Dr. Pete Allison

Over the last three years BASI has been working with The University of Edinburgh (Institute for Sport, PE and Health Sciences) to credit rate BASI courses and qualifications using the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). As part of this process (which should be complete for all levels by the end of 2015) the University provides external quality assurance for BASI. In April 2015 I visited Hintertux to see the quality assurance processes in action during alpine ski and snowboard courses. As a passionate skier this was a perk of the job and a big responsibility which was not to be taken lightly. My own background is in outdoor education and then moral philosophy and experiential learning. I am currently Head of the Graduate School of Education at The University of Edinburgh and responsible for ensuring that teaching and learning is of the highest possible quality.

In the last BASI newsletter I detailed my experiences of the course level quality assurance processes that are in place and my observations during a visit to Hintertux in April 2015. Course level quality is of crucial importance but it needs to operate within an annual quality assurance cycle for continual improvement. As part of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) credit rating process BASI reports annually to The University of Edinburgh (as the third party credit rating body). The report focuses on any learning / changes that are planned as a result of the overview that is gained and on any systems that are working particularly well. In other words it is about identifying good practice and areas for improvement.

Annual Processes

All of the above course level quality assurance processes provide a large amount of data: BASI run over 350 courses in an average year for around 3000 people. In addition to the course level information there is also a season "wash up" meeting by the trainers, which takes advantage of many trainers being in one place. This is a chance to gain an overview and discuss any patterns and observations from trainers through the season.

Every year all of the above information needs to be analysed. This provides data to BASI to make decisions about improving what they do across all aspects of the Association, from resort choices and hotels, to curriculum and course length.

Feedback is analysed by various work groups and staff. Of particular importance is gaining an overview of views and to maintain perspective. For example, if a handful of people don't like a hotel but the great majority do then it

To view Part 1, see BASI News 118, pages 4-6.

would be prudent to investigate more before changing hotel recommendations.

Feedback to trainers comes from six sources: student feedback, peers' reports, point person reports, the Trainer Quality Assurance process, trainers themselves and Trainer Support. All of these sources of feedback are brought together and analysed annually and each trainer receives a personal annual report summarising strengths and areas for future attention.

In November every year trainers attend a five day conference. This involves a variety of sessions including highlighting any changes or areas for attention for the coming season (assuming northern hemisphere).

Every July BASI submits to The University of Edinburgh a quality assurance report summarising any patterns and themes that have emerged and plans for the following year.

Finally

Given all of the above, I can offer three pieces of advice for anyone going on a BASI course.

First, don't worry about getting an 'easy' or a 'hard' trainer – they are all individual characters but the courses are of a consistent standard.

Second, come prepared for the course in terms of ensuring your own experiences and abilities. Trainers 'hold' the standard, you pass or fail. Trainers can only work with what they get - they do not work miracles ... although sometimes they seem to come close!

Third, bring an attitude of learning and development to the course to maximise the benefits of the course – regardless of outcome.

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