

The Dean's Dilemma

Introduction and rules for the game

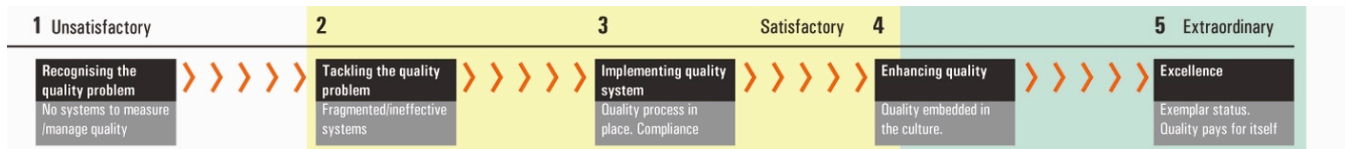
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Introduction

The 'Dean's Dilemma' is a board game for Business School senior management teams.

The dilemma to be acted out is that the Dean has to make a decision that addresses a typical, operational problem in a way that respects and reinforces the institution's quality policy.

The game is underpinned by the QuBE Roadmap. This summarises two years of research into quality management enhancement by QuBE consortium partners at six UK business schools. It maps a progression of five 'quality levels'



... and sets out actions and evidence-based tools and techniques that will assist business schools to achieve each level and then progress.

The set is comprised of:

- An A1-sized board
- A traditional, six-sided die with facets marked 1 to 6
- An identity card for each of the six roles:
 - the Dean
 - senior representatives of Faculty, Finance, Marketing, Teaching & Learning
 - the Independent Quality Evaluator (IQE)
- 6 'condition cards' for each role holder
- The QuBE Roadmap, to be copied to each player at the end of the game.

Setting up the game:

Each role holder's set of six cards is placed face down on the relevant box across the top of the board.

- The Dean's cards are marked Round 1, Round 2 etc. These should be stacked in sequence, with # 1 on top. Each poses a problem that characterises a quality level described in the QuBE Roadmap, starting with Quality level 2 for Round 1.
- The IQE's cards are stacked similarly and allow the IQE to gauge the effect of the Dean's decision on the quality process at the relevant quality level
- The card sets of the other four role-holders describe the current condition affecting their discipline - ranging from good, through moderate, to dire. Each card set should be shuffled to ensure a randomly arranged set of conditions for each round of the game.

How the game is played

The game is for six players seated randomly at the left side, base and right side of the board. It should be overseen by a facilitator.

- a Players throw a dice to allocate the six roles for the first round. The first person to throw a 1 takes on the role of senior representative of Faculty. The remaining roles are allocated clockwise from the Faculty role in this order: Finance; Marketing; Teaching & Learning; Dean; Independent Quality Evaluator.

Players display the identity card for their role. For subsequent rounds, roles are transferred one place to the right. After six rounds everyone has had a turn at being Dean.

- b The first Dean draws the card for Round 1, tells the players the quality level context, reads out the problem and places the card face up on the first purple box for all to refer to.

The representatives for Faculty, Finance, Marketing, Teaching & Learning then each draw their top card but do not disclose it to the other players. Each then considers his/her advice to the Dean for solving the problem in the context of the given prevailing condition for their discipline. They write this advice on their role card. The space on the card indicates the appropriate amount of text for best effectiveness. *[say 3 minutes]*

When all four representatives are ready, the cards are displayed face up on the relevant boxes for Round 1.

- c The Dean then asks each representative to read out their advice. The Dean then reviews and discusses the advice, seeking trade-offs and consensus. S/he then writes the decision on his/her card and places it face up in the purple box for Round 1. *[say 3 minutes]*
- d The Independent Quality Evaluator then chairs and leads a team discussion of the decision from the perspective of Quality Management Enhancement.

The IQE's card for each round displays the quality processes prescribed by the QuBE Roadmap at the quality level pertaining to the Dean's problem. The IQE discusses with the team the impact of the Dean's decision on each quality topic and gives each a rating on a 1-5 scale. S/he concludes the round by awarding a total score. *[say 3 minutes]*

Consideration of lessons learned

After the final round the Facilitator hands every player a copy of the QuBE Roadmap.

The Facilitator will highlight the change management activities described and the themed sets of reports, case studies, diagnostics, tools and inspirational assets freely available from QuBE via www.qube.ac.uk *[say 3 minutes]*

Game scenarios

The game can be played in workshop mode by teams from a single institution, facilitated by the director/associate Dean of Quality. Typically, a workshop will require about 90 minutes with up to 30 further minutes for action planning. Trials indicate that the first round can require 20 minutes as players familiarise themselves with the game. Brevity and succinctness of written and spoken inputs by players can enable subsequent rounds to be achieved in under 10 minutes.

So, with multi-institutional teams limited to 60 minutes for a game, it is suggested that three rounds are played, namely Round 1 (at Quality level 2), R3 (QL 3) and R5 (QL4).