

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*



The Audio Recording of Research Student Vivas

A pilot study



- 99/00 Entry – 05/06 Completion

Institution	Total Doctorates	% Qualifying	HEFCE Benchmark
York	160	86	76
Imperial	344	86	82
Bath	77	86	81
Bradford	40	75	80
Warwick	177	71	77
Keele	50	70	77



QAA:

Research degree assessment procedures must be clear; operated rigorously, fairly, and consistently;



The Structure at York:

27 Departments - no faculties/schools

920 Research Students

754 Teaching staff

- an established culture, some resistance to change



- Independent Observers

 - Resource implications

 - Equity issues

- Audio Recording

 - Limited resource or equity issues

 - Cultural resistance

- Health Sciences: 8
- Biology: 12
- Philosophy 1
- Obligatory for all students
- One external examiner refused to participate
- One external examiner participated but was 'not happy' with the practice
- The procedure and equipment



- ‘better than having a neutral observer’
- ‘an excellent idea’
- ‘What’s all the fuss about! No qualms’
- ‘Will recommend it to my institution’
- ‘unnecessary and intrusive
- ‘motivated by political correctness’



- 'helps prevent any bias, unjust examining'
- 'I didn't feel it's existence' (the equipment)
- 'Only time aware of the equipment was when told it was being turned on'
- 'Not noticeable amidst the stress of everything else'



- Approved by:
- Standing Committee on Assessment
- Board for Graduate Schools

For consideration by Senate in January 2008