

## UK EXPERTS ADDRESS QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM



Tony Calderbank receives token of appreciation from HRH Prince Mishal bin Majed bin Abdulaziz.



John McDonald, left, and Arthur Morgan, keynote speakers at the management symposium in Jeddah.

"If one of you does a job, then Allah would like you to do it well," runs the well known Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, *ahabba Allahu idha 'amila ahadun minkum 'amalan an yutqinah*. These words featured prominently during the deliberations of the Third Annual Multaga held by Jeddah Technical College at The Intercontinental Hotel in Jeddah on November 10. This year's theme was total quality management, and while the jargon of performance enhancement and quality assurance indicators does not feature in the holy texts there was no doubt in the minds of the speakers that a job well done has religious as well as more mundane significance.

The Multaga (symposium), which was opened by Prince Meshal bin Majed bin Abdulaziz, was attended by more than three hundred training practitioners and specialists from all over the Kingdom and beyond. Speakers from Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, Iraq and UK delivered a variety of presentations covering the student experience, the design of quality standards, and the Islamic approach to *jawda*.

All who spoke were agreed that the obligation of the training provider to provide the trainee with a thoroughly useful and meaningful learning experience was of paramount importance. "Would you be content to provide teaching for your pupils that you would not be content with for your own child?" asked Dr Yahya Younes from

Al-Madinah College of Hotels and Tourism. Dr Saleh Al-Qahtani of the NCAAA, Saudi Arabia's national quality assurance organisation, echoed the sentiment: "Quality assurance is about reassurance," he suggested. "Reassurance that everyone is doing what they're supposed to."

British Council contributed the event by bringing two UK experts to deliver presentations: Arthur Morgan of Glamorgan University and John McDonald of the Scottish Qualifications Authority. Dr Morgan talked about the student experience. "Quality assurance is a state of mind," he said. "In the UK it has moved from being a dark art in a dusty office to an experience shared by everyone in the university." Quality requires a cultural shift, a change in approach. It is not something that exists on paper or as a result of administrative processes. It is a living component of the learning community. "Quality is never an accident," declared McDonald. "It is always the result of intelligent effort."

Dr Mansour Al-Miman, Dean of Jeddah Technical College and head of the organising committee, was delighted with the outcome of the symposium. His team had worked hard and their efforts paid off. Attendance was the highest of the three symposia held so far, and the commitment to a quality student experience clearly there for all to see. Now the challenge is to put the good intention into action. Something to review at next year's Multaga perhaps.