Quality Code Update

Dr Andy Smith
Simon Bullock
Standards and Frameworks Team
PSRB Forum, 28 November 2018
Quality in a diverse UK

QAA: UK’s independent quality assurance body
Different approaches in different UK nations

• **England:** risk-based approach (regulated by OfS)

• **Scotland:** enhancement-led approach via ELIR (reviews on a five year cycle)

• **Wales** new Quality Enhancement review (reviews at least every six years)

• **N. Ireland** running with the current operating model and reviewing which model they will push forward with next year
## THE CODE

### Expectations (standards and quality)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core practices</th>
<th>Common practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>required by all UK HE regulatory jurisdictions</td>
<td>common to the underpinning of quality in all UK providers but not regulatory requirements for providers in England regulated by the OfS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Supporting reference documents

#### National frameworks and statements
(e.g. Qualifications Frameworks, characteristics statements, benchmark statements)

1
2
3

#### Advice and guidance
(e.g. programme design, admissions, student engagement, etc..)

1
2
3
4...
Advice and Guidance

Purpose: To underpin the mandatory element of the Code by offering clear, succinct and practical advice and guidance to enable institutions to meet the core and common practices and the expectations, regardless of UK jurisdiction.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27 March 2018</td>
<td>Expectations, core and common practices published</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2018</td>
<td>Scoping events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2018</td>
<td>Advice and guidance workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-June 2018</td>
<td>Establishment of advice and guidance writing groups and wider reading groups to include sector wide representatives and experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early August</td>
<td>1st draft – created virtually. New interactive web design developed and tested by QAA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early September</td>
<td>Final draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-September (11, 13 and 18 Sept)</td>
<td>Final edit meetings in Gloucester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Oct</td>
<td>Endorsement by UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 November</td>
<td>Publication and launch <em>(Launch event now Full)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inst/Org type</td>
<td>Writing Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Alternative Provider</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Further Education College</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Higher Education Provider</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Irish AP</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Irish Further Education College</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Irish Higher Education Provider</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Irish Organisation</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland Higher Education Provider</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK-Wide Higher Education Provider</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales Higher Education Provider</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland Organisation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK AP</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK Organisation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other AP</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England University College</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSRB</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student Involvement

NUS UK readers for
Course Design, Learning and Teaching, Enabling Student
Achievement, Concerns, complaints and appeals, Assessment

SU/Student Assc/Guild representation on writing groups
Student Engagement, Learning and Teaching, Enabling Student
Achievement

SU/Student Assc/Guild representation on reading groups
Student Engagement, Programme Design and Development,
Concerns complaints and appeals
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Design and Development</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning and Teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enabling Student Achievement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td>External Expertise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concerns, complaints and appeals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Degrees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work-based learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Structure of advice and guidance

Introduction & explicit links to core and common practices
Guiding principles

Practical advice and guidance on delivery of theme aims include enhancements and good practice (in particular through reflective questions) to include specific monitoring and evaluation for that theme

Overarching Information
Practical Advice & Guidance
Signposting

Resources, Further Information, Relevant Organisations & Glossary
Engaging with the Advice and Guidance

Works in 3 ways:

1) Web based – top level - Overarching information at a glance

2) Summary information – Short explanatory information

3) Full advice and guidance – PDF comprising detailed advice and guidance
Sneak Peek
The virtual interface
Practices for Standards and Quality can be viewed by clicking the expandable accordion to reveal the text. This ensures that the web page avoids being too text heavy, enhancing accessibility and usability on mobile devices (less scrolling).

THE EXPECTATIONS AND PRACTICES

EXCEPTIONS FOR STANDARDS

- The provision of training to students, staff or researchers to enhance their knowledge and skills in the relevant field.
- The provision of resources to facilitate learning and research in the relevant field.
- The provision of support to ensure the effective implementation of the relevant standards.

PRACTICES

PRACTICES

CODE PRACTICES

- Provide clear and consistent policies and procedures for the implementation of the relevant standards.
- Provide regular training and support to staff and students on the implementation of the relevant standards.
- Provide regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the relevant standards.

COMMON PRACTICES

- The establishment of a framework for the implementation of the relevant standards.
- The establishment of a mechanism for the assessment of the implementation of the relevant standards.
- The establishment of a mechanism for the review and improvement of the implementation of the relevant standards.

EXCEPTIONS FOR QUALITY

- For new and well designed and provide a high-quality experience.
- For existing and well designed and provide a high-quality experience.
- For existing and well designed and provide a high-quality experience.

Each theme has a coloured icon. Clicking the icon takes the user to the individual web page for that theme. See page 3

On mobile devices, icons are displayed in one column and can be tapped to open the new page – providing an interactive experience.

Note: all buttons/icons across all pages that are clickable on desktop are tapable on mobile devices. All pages have been designed with mobile users in mind and are fully responsive.

ADVICE AND GUIDANCE


Full Quality Code PDF can be downloaded/opened by clicking ‘download’.

Clicking the ‘View more’ button takes the user to the Advice and Guidance page. See page 2

Quick links help navigate quickly to other related areas. Clicking an icon/link text takes the user to that page.

KEY REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

What are SBSs?

**SUBJECT BENCHMARK STATEMENTS**

Subject Benchmark Statements describe the nature of study and the academic standards expected of graduates in specific subject areas. They show what graduates might reasonably be expected to know, do and understand at the end of their studies.

Subject Benchmark Statements are written by subject specialists and we facilitate this process. They are used as reference points in the design, delivery and review of academic programmes. They provide general guidance but are not intended to represent a national curriculum or to prescribe set approaches. Instead, they allow for flexibility and innovation.

Subject Benchmark Statements are available for bachelor's degrees with honours, master's degrees, and professional qualifications in Scotland. Statements for health professions are now out of date but available on request.
UK Quality Code provides the basis for quality assurance

• Subject Benchmark Statements (SBSs) currently appear in Part A
  - Expectation A1: “In order to secure threshold academic standards, degree-awarding bodies: ... d) consider and take account of relevant Subject Benchmark Statements.”

• New Code’s Expectations’ references are less specific, but still implied
  - Expectation for standards: “The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.”
Reviewing SBSs

• Quality Code steering group now defunct – strategic oversight provided by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment
• Reviews normally after 5 years (for first reviews) or 7 (for previously reviewed SBSs). Can also be on basis of need (e.g. new professional requirements)
• Last review adopted phased ‘big bang’
• Process: group selected – initial meeting – drafting – 2nd meeting - consultation – analysis – final edit meeting – publication
• QAA retains editing control
The new proposed process

• 1st meeting
• Groups effectively ‘self-select’
• Redrafting via SharePoint
• Consultation
• Analysis
• Final edit meeting
• Publication
Challenges

• Resources
• Out-of-date healthcare subjects
• The strategic role of SBSs in revised Quality Code – degree classification tie-in?
• Inconsistencies across the suite of statements (‘threshold’, ‘threshold and typical’, ‘threshold, typical and excellent’)
• Justifying new statements in a crowded space – and where professional competence standards exist
• Methods to utilise: increased use of shared documents, virtual meetings
• Consultation on revised processes next year