



Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers

Specific Terms of Reference

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education ('QAA')

Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers ('the Committee'; 'ACDAP')

Introduction

1 The Committee considers assessment reports and provides advice on applications for degree awarding powers, including applications for university title, by providers in Scotland and Northern Ireland (under the 1999 criteria) and Wales (under the 2004 criteria).

Duties

2 In establishing the Committee, the QAA Board delegates authorities to the Committee to carry out the following duties in respect of applications for degree awarding powers and university title from providers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland under the 1999 and 2004 criteria:

- oversee the degree awarding powers and university title scrutiny processes and associated criteria and guidance, making periodic recommendations on their development to the QAA Board, as appropriate
- undertake preliminary consideration of degree awarding powers or university title applications referred to QAA by devolved government bodies
- determine whether applicants have made a case to proceed to detailed scrutiny of their applications and the evidence on which applications are made, appointing scrutiny teams who will report their findings to the Committee
- receive scrutiny team reports and determine action to be taken on the basis of ACDAP's discussion of the reports
- make recommendations to the QAA Board on the nature of the confidential advice to be given to Ministers.

Chairing arrangements

3 The Committee shall be chaired by an independent member (under Article 50 (iii) of the QAA Board).

4 A second QAA Board member shall serve as Vice-Chair of the Committee. The Vice-Chair will undertake the duties of the Chair when the Chair is unable to do so.

Membership of the Committee

5 The Committee will comprise 16 members, to include:

- the Chair (see 'Chairing arrangements' above)
- a second QAA Board member (the Vice-Chair)
- two members to be nominated by the QAA Scottish Strategic Advisory Committee
- two members to be nominated by the QAA Welsh Strategic Advisory Committee
- two members appointed from the QAA Student Strategic Advisory Committee (SSAC) who are not also members of the QAA Board
- up to four members with current or recent (within the last two years) UK degree awarding powers experience at a strategic level, and/or having senior-level responsibility for areas covered by the criteria governing the grant of degree awarding powers or university title, or with experience in a higher education provider in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland without degree awarding powers
- two members providing an employer of graduates or professional body perspective
- one member without degree awarding powers
- one member from a further education provider.

6 The Chair and Vice-Chair will oversee recruitment through expressions of interest for membership of the Committee, except those members appointed by nomination by QAA committees.

7 Appointments to the Committee shall normally be for a period of three years, extendable by no more than an additional three-year period, as long as members continue to meet membership criteria.

8 Members appointed by SSAC shall normally serve a one-year term, extendable by no more than one additional one-year period, as long as members continue to meet membership criteria.

Frequency of meetings

9 Meetings will occur only when there is an application to be considered, at appropriate intervals in the academic cycle and on an ad-hoc basis as required in order to make timely recommendations.

10 Meetings will normally be conducted remotely, by video conference.

Quorum

11 The quorum necessary for the transaction of any of the business of the Committee shall be six members, including one Board member.

Reporting

12 The Committee will report to the Board and will produce formal reports on any aspects of its business at the Board's request. The Committee may also provide reports where appropriate to other parties for information.

Secretariat

13 The Secretariat of the Committee will reside within the Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland directorate of QAA, with care taken to ensure that staff providing the secretariat function have no potential conflict of interest with the Committee's work.

Observers

14 The Committee invites observers from the following, as appropriate:

- Scottish Government, Directorate for Advanced Learning and Science
- Northern Ireland, Department for the Economy
- Welsh Government, Department for Education and Skills.

The Committee may invite observers to provide oral updates on relevant matters at each meeting.

Review

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed every other year by the QAA Board.

The next date for review is March 2025.

Members of all QAA committees are expected to familiarise themselves with and adhere to the standard provisions applicable to all QAA committees, contained within the QAA Good Governance Guide.