



Guidance Note for Applications for Educational Oversight by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)

This note provides guidance on the application process for educational oversight. From 1 August 2019, the Office for Students (OfS) has been the educational oversight body for providers eligible to register with them, meaning that eligible providers wishing to acquire or maintain a student sponsor licence, must register with the OfS. The OfS is also the body for providers requiring specific course designation. If, after reading the published guidance on the [OfS website](#), you are unsure of your eligibility to register with the OfS, the registration team can be contacted through the following email address: registration@officeforstudents.org.uk

QAA will continue to be an educational oversight body only for those providers not eligible to register with the OfS, because, for instance, they are not based in England/do not satisfy the definition of an English higher education provider as defined by section 83 of the Higher Education Research Act. Providers who are not eligible to register with the OfS but wish to have an external quality assurance review, can also apply to QAA to be reviewed as a voluntary arrangement. Please email educationaloversight@qaa.ac.uk if you have any specific questions.

Applicants for educational oversight by QAA should see this as the start of a long-term relationship. Educational oversight involves a full QAA review in the year following the application and an annual return in subsequent years. The guidelines for the ongoing Educational Oversight process including reporting requirements, fees, monitoring and concerns can be found at <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/reviewing-higher-education/types-of-review/educational-oversight-review>.

Providers that satisfy the 'requirements of providers seeking educational oversight' set out in the application form, will undergo a review for educational oversight by QAA approximately six months after receipt of application.

A successful application at this stage does not guarantee that a provider will ultimately be successful in achieving educational oversight.

The application form must be submitted to QAA electronically as a Word document to: applications@qaa.ac.uk with supporting documents and, for Category C providers fees should additionally be transferred.

The application process

QAA will use the application form for educational oversight to:

- determine the eligibility of an applicant for educational oversight by QAA

- provide the Home Office with a list of successful Category A applicants who have met the eligibility criteria for educational oversight and will be scheduled for review
- enable QAA to develop a schedule of review activity.

How to complete the application form

The application form should be completed in black type and in accordance with this guidance note. It must be submitted electronically as a Word document to applications@qaaacuk.onmicrosoft.com

The submission of this form, (together with the application fee for Category C providers) and accompanying documentation, is the first stage in the process for obtaining educational oversight by QAA. It is essential that all information provided in the application form is accurate and complete, otherwise your application will be returned and you may not be eligible for review.

There are four parts to the application form:

Part 1: Information about the provider

Part 2: Student headcount and higher education programme details

Part 3: Evaluation of quality assurance arrangements

Part 4: Supporting information.

Initially providers are required to indicate the reason for application (i.e. for the purposes of a student sponsor license or course designation). For those seeking Educational Oversight for a different reason, additional explanatory text is required.

Part 1: Provider information

All applicants for educational oversight must be registered at Companies House or be a registered charity.

Provider's name	This is the published name on the provider's website
UKPRN www.ukrlp.co.uk	
Contact name	The name of the individual who is the primary point of contact for educational oversight
Job title of contact	Full job title
Email address of contact	Email address of primary educational oversight contact
Telephone numbers of contact	Direct landline and mobile number of primary educational oversight contact
Head of institution name, title email address, telephone number	Full name and complete job title and contact details

Senior Quality Contact name, title, email address, telephone number	Full name and complete job title and contact details of the person that will be the key contact for review and monitoring activity
Finance contact name, title, email address, telephone number	Full name and complete job title and contact details of the person that will be the key contact for review and monitoring fees
Provider's name/legal title	Registered company name and/or legal title
Trading name (if applicable)	Please note that legal names will be used on our website and review reports
All names by which the provider has been known over the last three years	
Provider's legal identity	For example, company, partnership, sole trader
Are you a company limited by shares, company limited by guarantee, charity or other	
Registered company/charity address and registration number (as applicable)	Address recorded at Companies House and/or the Charity Commission - if you are a registered charity, please include your charity number
Ownership or significant beneficial interest	Please provide details of any company that owns or has a significant beneficial interest of the company applying for review, including company number(s)
Operating address(es)	UK addresses of all relevant campuses, sites or offices that form a part of the provider - please identify the main campus address
First year of operation (or first-year higher education students enrolled)	First year: any type of student-attended lessons
Start date of first higher education programme delivered in the UK	The date when teaching for higher education students first started – Category A providers must have taught higher education students (home or international), on qualifications approved for student sponsorship purposes for at least two years before applying for educational oversight
Provider's website address	
Do you currently have a student sponsor licence?	

Provider's UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) sponsorship number	
FOR PROVIDERS IN WALES ONLY Welsh language	Please confirm whether the provider has a compliance notice from the Welsh Language Commissioner

(For Category C Providers only) Relationships with other organisations

Please confirm whether the provider has a parent company, owns any subsidiaries or has formal links with other organisations (for example, other providers, or recruitment agents). Please also provide the legal names of all other subsidiaries, and parent company or linked organisations (if applicable). If there are links with other organisations, please provide information as to whether this is a legal, formal or informal link (for example, separate legal entities with the same ownership). Where there are cross-guarantees and/or loans between the provider and one or more other legal entities, these must be disclosed.

Part 2: Student headcount and higher education programme details

Student numbers. Please provide details of the total number of students (based on headcount and not full-time equivalents) enrolled on programmes over the last three years, including the current academic year.

Staff numbers. Please provide details of the number of academic staff employed to deliver programmes of study leading ultimately to awards at FHEQ Level 4 or above or SCQF level 7 or above on the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications [FHEQ](#) in headcount and FTE.

Programmes and qualifications

Please provide information about the programmes and types of qualification you offer, detailing: their corresponding level in *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) or *Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework* (SCQF), and relevant Subject Benchmark Statements; the awarding body/organisation; and the number of students enrolled on the programme in the current academic year, whether a programme is accredited by a PSRB (if so please state which PSRB) and whether the programme is short-term study abroad.

Awarding bodies and awarding organisations

Providers must have a current written agreement to offer programmes that are accredited by offering programmes that are accredited by a degree awarding body (a UK recognised body or overseas accredited body) or an Ofqual-regulated awarding organisation

Please list all awarding bodies and awarding organisations that validate your awards. For each awarding body or organisation, please provide the name, email address and phone number for both the principal contact and the provider's local contact at the awarding organisation.

Existing or previous quality assurance experience

Please provide information about any Ofsted, ISI or any other recognised quality assurance body review or inspection that you have undergone in the last four years.

Part 3: Evaluation of your quality assurance arrangements

We ask applicants to submit a short evaluation of their quality assurance arrangements (no more than 1,000 words) with their application form, and to evidence it. The evaluation should show how the provider uses relevant external reference points, including the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, to assure itself that its higher education provision meets the expectations of the sector in the UK and that its programmes are managed effectively. The evaluation and evidence will be key parts in the initial assessment made by QAA to decide on eligibility for educational oversight. This evaluation statement will be used for the application process only, not for the review itself.

Part 4: Supporting information

In this section, please provide evidence to support the statements made above. This should be submitted electronically to applications@qaaacuk.onmicrosoft.com. Please indicate in the tick box that you have included each document. If you are unable to include a document, please explain why.

Document	Notes
Copy of your strategic plan (For Category C providers only)	This is not mandatory but should be supplied if it exists.
Memorandum of association and articles of association. (For Category C providers only)	
Details of provider's constitution, governance and accreditation arrangements	
If relevant, provider's most recent accreditation report	For example, British Accreditation Council, Accreditation Service for International Colleges.
Evidence that the provider has delivered higher education programmes to EEA or UK students for at least two (academic) years at the date of application (for category A providers)	<p>You must provide evidence that you have delivered higher education programmes for at least two (academic) years prior to the application. You must be delivering at least one programme that meets the requirements of an 'approved qualification' for student sponsorship purposes.</p> <p>Evidence might take the form of student registrations with the awarding body/organisation, external examiner reports, annual monitoring reports, attendance records, and so on, that show the provider has been delivering higher education programmes for at least two (academic) years at the date of the application.</p>

Current signed copies of agreement(s) with awarding bodies/organisations	Please ensure these are current and signed copies. Providers that do not have a signed agreement in place with their awarding body/organisation will not be scheduled for a review.
Student attendance dates during the current academic year	Please inform us of the dates when students will be present at the provider.
If based in England and not owned by an overseas HEI proof of ineligibility to register with the OfS (if applicable)	

Fees for educational oversight

QAA does not receive any funding to cover the direct costs incurred in educational oversight. Consequently, the costs of such activity must be borne by applicant organisations. QAA is a non-profit-making organisation.

Fees for educational oversight by QAA will be payable in three stages and are non-refundable:

- Stage 1: Application fee (for Category C providers)
- Stage 2: Review fee (including FSMG if applicable)
- Stage 3: Annual monitoring fee for educational oversight.

Fees for educational oversight are published on the QAA website. These fees are reviewed on an annual basis and may be subject to increase.

Application fee

The application fee for Category C educational oversight includes receipt and processing of an application by QAA. You will receive confirmation as to whether you are eligible for review.

In the event of an unsuccessful outcome, the application fee is non-refundable.

Fee for the financial sustainability, management and governance check

The financial sustainability, management and governance (FSMG) check is normally conducted in advance of the review. The fee for this check is non-refundable. If the applicant fails this check, the review may be cancelled.

Review fee

Applicant organisations will be notified of their eligibility for review within four weeks of the submission of applications. Successful applicants will be notified of the date of their review

and will be advised of the review fee at this time. The review fee will be payable in full 18 weeks before the date of review.

In the event of an unsuccessful outcome, the review fee is non-refundable.

Annual monitoring fee

Providers seeking educational oversight by QAA are required to pay an annual monitoring fee. This includes the cost of the annual return and any monitoring visits/desk-based analyses but does not include the cost of a full review. The annual return and the monitoring visit/desk-based analysis fulfil the requirements of the annual health check.

How to pay the application fee (Category C providers only)

The application fee must be received with the application form and supporting documentation and must be made via BACS or bank transfer.

Our bank account details for payment are:

Account Number: 92470233

VAT number N/A

Sort Code: 40-22-09

Swift Code / BIC: HBUKGB4104H

Account IBAN: GB74HBUK40220992470233

Please note customers are responsible for all bank charges / exchange fees , ensuring the amount stated on the invoice is received by QAA.

Please ensure that your organisation name is included in the payment reference.

How QAA will process your application

QAA will acknowledge the receipt of all applications.

QAA will notify the provider and for Category A providers, the Home Office whether providers are eligible to proceed to a formal review.

Within four weeks of the submission of applications, QAA will advise applicants of the status of their application and the next steps.

QAA will advise the Home Office and relevant awarding bodies/organisations of the outcomes of reviews and will publish all reports on the QAA website.

QAA activities are conducted in accordance with the QAA Ethical Conduct and Anti-Bribery Policy

Further important information

Conflicts of interest

We require those individuals we propose to appoint to a review team to notify us of any connection or interest which might conflict with the work to be undertaken. Since much of QAA's activity is based on peer review, with an expectation that individuals who have

worked or are working in the higher education sector will contribute to the maintenance of the reputation and standing of UK higher education, QAA does not consider that an individual working in a similar type of provider would, of itself, preclude that individual from serving as a member of a review team.

Complaints

QAA is committed to working in an open and accountable way, subject to any limitations placed upon it by external bodies. A complaint is taken to mean an expression of dissatisfaction with actions we have taken. Further information about the complaints procedure can be found on the [QAA website](https://www.qaa.ac.uk).

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