Membership
2021-22
in Northern Ireland

Working with our members to safeguard academic standards, enhance the student learning experience and secure the global reputation of UK higher education
What QAA Membership means for you

Our UK Membership offer

QAA membership provides vision, expertise and guidance through a strong partnership with UK higher education. Working with you and for you, QAA Membership:

- Secures UK higher education’s global reputation for excellence
- Safeguards academic standards and champions academic integrity
- Enhances the student learning experience wherever students are studying

We work right across the UK to secure academic standards and assure quality. In partnership with providers in each nation – and informed by our strong international links and horizon scanning – we devise and deliver imaginative, timely and responsive enhancement activities designed to ensure you and your students are well equipped to face the opportunities and challenges of a rapidly changing higher education environment.
Our QAA Membership offer 2021-22

In 2021-22, our Membership offer spans five interconnected themes.

Beyond COVID-19 - The Future of Digital and Blended Delivery

- Exploring good practice and creating practical resources.
  - Digital and blended pedagogy, including the future role of the campus.
  - Assessment in digital and blended delivery.
  - Embedding work to align learning outcomes with assessment.
  - Assessing skills and competencies.

Evaluation and Data-Based Decision-Making

- Enhancing practice and evidencing impact.
  - Evidence-based decision-making.
  - Moving beyond the metrics to evaluate what really counts in higher education.
  - Exploring effective approaches in evaluation and review.
  - Influencing, advising and informing governments, sector bodies and providers.
Global Engagement and TNE

Supporting internationalisation across topics and regions.

- Engaging with governments, international agency partners and policy forums.
- Maintaining strong partnerships across Europe, providing a voice for UK higher education in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).
- Support for international students (in the UK and overseas).
- Enhancing quality and managing risk in transnational education (TNE) and international partnerships.
- Supporting members working with overseas partners through our country programme.

Creating Inclusive Learning Communities - Flexible Pathways and Pedagogies

An imaginative enhancement offer to help providers deliver inclusive, flexible learning opportunities.

- Successful student transitions into higher education, postgraduate study and employment.
- Flexible pathways and modular qualifications.
- Inclusion and accessibility in the curriculum and student experience.
- Enterprise and entrepreneurship.
- Work-based learning, apprenticeships, links with employers and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs).
- Student mental health and wellbeing.
- Embedding Education for Sustainable Development.
- Promotion and ongoing development of the Access to HE Diploma.
Securing academic standards and assuring quality through UK-wide reference points.

- Academic integrity including creating and sharing practical guidance and support for staff and students.
- Degree algorithms and degree classifications including exploring the impact of changes in assessment.
- Subject Benchmark Statements including progressing a review and refresh of Statements to ensure they are inclusive and valuable for subject communities.
- Characteristic Statements including developing new Statements for areas such as micro-credentials.
- Qualifications and credit frameworks including devising supporting resources to embed the Credit Framework for England in programme design. Also, as key members of the ‘five nations group’, working with qualification regulators, funders and related bodies across the UK and Ireland to ensure approaches to qualifications frameworks and credit continue to be clearly understood.
Membership for your whole organisation

All staff and students at QAA Member institutions can benefit from support and constructive challenge.

- **Practical resources**
  
  Ensure you have the right information and tools at your fingertips, in a range of imaginative and accessible formats.

- **Events and workshops**
  
  Provide opportunities to develop and exchange ideas on the latest policy and practice.

- **Insights and influence**
  
  Keep you informed and offer opportunities to shape strategy, policy and practice at sector, institutional and subject level.

- **Professional development**
  
  Builds capacity, supports continuous professional development and extends knowledge and skills.

- **Networking and engagement**
  
  Leading debate and facilitating discussion.
As a QAA Member in Northern Ireland, we will also work with you to develop a range of activities specific to your needs, working collaboratively to support your commitment to enhance and enrich the learning experience of students.

We have recently conducted two projects in Northern Ireland to help us develop a dedicated programme of work, resources and events, and also facilitate access to other QAA activities that best meet the needs of providers in Northern Ireland. Our members and stakeholders played a fundamental role in these projects by engaging with us in a series of structured interviews involving quality practitioners, key staff responsible for policy and strategy, and students across our members and key stakeholders.

The first of these explored how best to develop the QAA Membership offer in Northern Ireland. It included consideration of:

- how member opportunities in Northern Ireland integrate with the wider UK Membership offer
- how member opportunities specific to Northern Ireland are made available
- the potential for specific membership activity in Northern Ireland and inclusion in devolved nations and UK-wide activity
- the differing requirements of the diversity of our members across the universities, further education colleges and university colleges.

The second project was designed to further understand providers’ approaches to enhancement in Northern Ireland to inform future developments for a new review method and QAA’s enhancement activity. This included:

- completion of a study of the ‘landscape of enhancement’/‘enhancement culture’ in Northern Ireland featuring an analysis of providers’ enhancement strategies, priorities and mechanisms
- looking at the impacts of external drivers on quality enhancement: COVID-19, Northern Ireland Government priorities and policy proposals in the rest of the UK.
In the coming year, we intend to discuss the outcomes of these projects with you and the Department for the Economy so that we can provide the best possible support to institutions in Northern Ireland.

We are already committed to supporting a biannual conference in Northern Ireland provisionally scheduled for October 2021. We will also meet regularly with our members to collect your feedback on your membership and your current challenges and priorities to ensure a bespoke member experience.

We will continue to support the active participation of students as partners in our work and in quality enhancement in Northern Ireland, seeking further ways to deepen and strengthen student involvement.

We can provide commissioned quality reviews for individual institutions. External quality assurance by QAA is valued and respected, and provides assurance to governing bodies, to your institutional partners, to staff, students, graduates and the wider public. Commissioned reviews are enhancement and peer-led and responsive to the context of each institution, as well as the policy context in Northern Ireland.

**QAA’s further work in Northern Ireland**

Importantly, we will continue to work closely with the Department for Economy (DfE) and will liaise with Northern Ireland representatives on the range of UK committees and groups. We will also undertake Unsatisfactory Quality and Standards Investigations should DfE commission us to do so. We are engaged in cross-border issues, such as through our Memorandum of Understanding with Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI). We also engage proactively with the PSRB’s that operate in Northern Ireland and liaise with the Education Training Inspectorate, including through the UK and Ireland Qualifications Frameworks Group.

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**Find out more**

For more information on QAA Membership, visit our web pages which provide additional details on the full range of our work with, and for, our members.

[www.qaa.ac.uk/membership](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/membership)