



PSRB Forum

11 December 2019
Woburn House, London

Welcome

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PSRB Forum

QAA Membership Update

December 2019

QAA update

- New roles, teams and new ways of working
- Designated Quality Body (DQB)
- Membership (separated from DQB function)

QAA Membership - focus

- Maintaining shared responsibility for quality and standards
- Collaborating with stakeholders to address sector-wide challenges
- Leveraging international partnerships and engagement
- Providing expert advice on quality issues

QAA Membership Team

- Dedicated membership team
 - Engagement managers
 - Service delivery team
 - Quality and standards specialists
 - Senior leadership
 - International expertise and development

QAA Membership - focus



QAA MEMBERSHIP



QUALITY INSIGHTS



INTERNATIONAL INSIGHTS

QAA's Members

244 Members across the UK

- Over 2 million students are being educated at QAA Member institutions (86% of all students registered in the UK)

In England:

| | Core | Quality Insights | International Insights |
|----------------|------|------------------|------------------------|
| HEI | 127 | 75 | 45 |
| FEC | 61 | 26 | 1 |
| Independent HE | 23 | 12 | 1 |

Membership - Key contact points

- Academic staff
- Quality professionals
- Data and planning teams
- International teams
- Governors
- Students

Resources at your fingertips

Core Membership

- Membership Advisory Group updates
- Research: Tapping into the Wisdom of Students
- Degree Outcomes Guidance workshops
- Country Reports – Ukraine, Vietnam, Myanmar
- Regional Network Event presentations
- Standards and Frameworks
 - STEM SBS updates
 - Characteristics Statements

International Engagement

- Updated MOUs
 - Hong Kong, Australia
- Engagement and Influencing
 - ENQA, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Oman, Peru, Cyprus, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, Thailand, Slovakia, China, Singapore, Jordan, Tunisia, UAE, Egypt, Gibraltar, India, Russia
- Strategic development
 - Working group
- International Quality Review (IQR)

Member resource area

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
|  | Sector guidance documents |  | Network events |
|  | Revised and new Subject Benchmark Statements |  | Research project |
|  | International country reports |  | Review of Quality Code Advice and Guidance |
|  | Named QAA contact |  | Enhancement partnership projects |
|  | Formation of the Membership Advisory Group |  | Viewpoints |

Membership Resources



Welcome to QAA's Membership Resources site, which gives our members exclusive access to a wide range of resources. The site has three areas: Membership, Quality Insights and International Insights. Members can view and access the resources from the package their institution has signed up to. [Find out more.](#)

Keep up-to-date with the latest membership activity

To find out about what we're currently working on and the great membership activities and resources you can expect in the next couple of months, read our [October Members' Update](#).

New content will be added to this site throughout the year. We have a full programme of membership activity planned, with many resources scheduled for publication. Take a look at our [Membership Calendar](#).

What do you think? Complete our survey about contract cheating guidance

We are updating the [Contract Cheating Guidance](#) published in 2017. Completing our [short survey](#) will allow us to understand how the guidance is being used and what updates are required to help you combat the use of essay mills in your institution. This survey is open until 4 November 2019.

Access your resources

The membership package your institution has taken enables you to access resources from the following areas:



Shaping membership in the future!

Put in a chart with stakeholders

- Universities & Colleges
- Students
- Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Bodies
- Employers
- Higher Education Sector (Stakeholders)
- International Stakeholders and Partners

Update on Quality and Standards

Dr Andy Smith

PSRB Forum

December 2019

Exclusively for QAA Members

**Degree
classification:
transparency,
reliability and
fairness
– a statement of
intent**

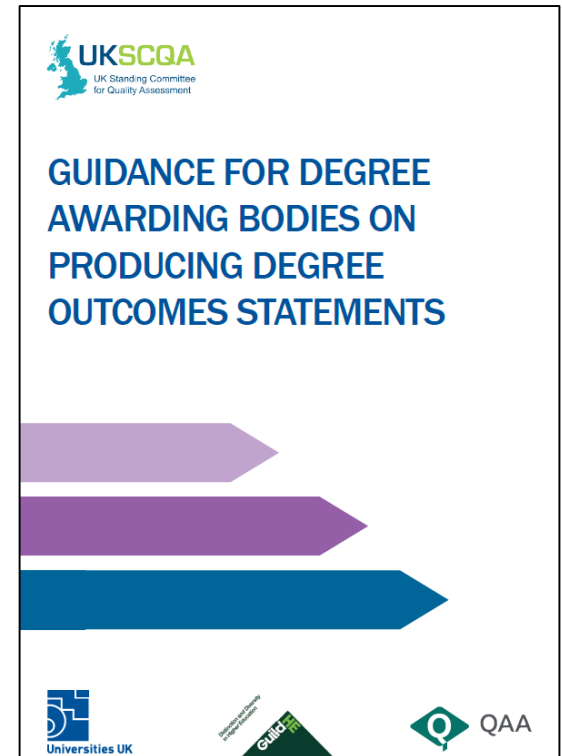


Degree Outcomes Statements



What are they?

- An analysis of a provider's degree classification profile
- Product of internal review(s)
- Aim is to help providers' governing bodies assure themselves Expectations on Standards are being met
- QAA, on behalf of UKSCQA, have produced guidance to help providers with the process of writing their statements



How the Statement works across the four nations



- **England:** Institutions awarding degrees should publish a '*degree outcomes statement*' articulating the results of an internal institutional review in the academic year 2019-20.
- **Wales:** The degree outcomes statement in England can be adapted by institutions as part of their internal evaluation and contextualized self-evaluation of quality and risk.
- **Northern Ireland:** Institutions in Northern Ireland would consider where it would be appropriate to incorporate the high-level principles of the statement of intent into the Annual Performance review process.
- **Scotland:** The work will be overseen by the Quality Arrangements in Scottish Higher Education (QASHE) group which brings together the parties to the QEF alongside the Scottish Government.

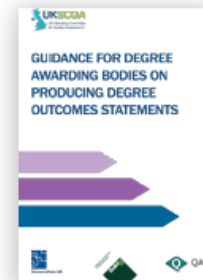


Degree Outcomes Statements



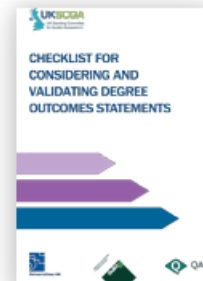
What's in the guidance?

- Two parts
- First covers content, style, partnerships, sign-off
- Second is a checklist for compilation and/or sign-off
- Developed closely with the sector



GUIDANCE FOR DEGREE-AWARDING BODIES ON PRODUCING DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENTS

Publication Date: 10 Oct 2019



CHECKLIST FOR CONSIDERING AND VALIDATING DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENTS

Publication Date: 10 Oct 2019

Recommended DOS content

- Institutional degree classification profile (over 5 years)
- Assessment, marking practices, external assurance
- Academic governance
- Classification algorithms
- Teaching practices and learning resources
- Identifying good practice and actions
- Risks and challenges

Collaborative partnership arrangements

It is expected that you actively involve any external UK organisation delivering academic provision leading to the award of your credit or qualifications, whether or not they have degree awarding powers, to review your practices and inform your degree outcomes statement. Partner organisations without degree awarding powers are not expected to complete their own statements. You should briefly describe the arrangements you have in place to ensure the comparability of awards made under these partnerships.

Sign off, presentation and publication

The degree outcomes statement should be signed off by your governing body and relevant external assurance (if used), to help them assure themselves that the relevant expectations are being met. We also provide complementary guidance for providers' governing bodies to help satisfy them that the review process and statement cover what is needed.

It should be between two and three sides of A4, but this may vary due to the individual nature of your student numbers, mission and governance structures. It will need to be understood by a variety of audiences, so use plain English and inclusive, rather than overly-technical, language.

It should be published online and publicly available, alongside your academic regulations and policies.

Content of the statement

We recommend that your degree outcomes statement should cover the following areas, as appropriate for your circumstances:

- 1 institutional degree classification profile
- 2 assessment and marking practices
- 3 academic governance
- 4 classification algorithms
- 5 teaching practices and learning resources
- 6 identifying good practice and actions
- 7 risks and challenges.

'Institutional degree classification profile' can set out in a tabular format any quantitative trends in degree outcomes over five years, analysing student characteristics (including analysis of entry qualifications and the distribution of outcomes across different student groups), and subject mix. You can then explain the factors influencing this profile in the next sections.

'Assessment and marking practices' should set out how you assure yourselves that your assessment criteria meet sector reference points, in particular those you are required to meet by OfS/HEFCEW and any PSRBs, and non-mandatory guidance such as [QAA Subject Benchmark Statements](#). This section should describe how external expertise and development of academic staff and workplace assessors provides relevant assurance. This may include whether you have made use of QAA's guidance on [External Expertise](#), or recruited external examiners who have taken part in Advance HE's external examiner professional development programme.

'Academic governance' should cover how your institutional governance structures provide assurance that the value of qualifications you award over time is protected, including for awards delivered through partnership arrangements. It should set out how your academic

Degree Outcomes Statements



GUIDANCE FOR DEGREE AWARDING BODIES ON PRODUCING DEGREE OUTCOMES STATEMENTS



Who are they for?

- The guidance doesn't identify an *external* audience per se
- The process is the important part – the statements articulate this, but are not 'aimed' at regulators, quality bodies etc
- If anyone, they should address your governing bodies/senior leadership
- But take into account who else *might* read it: students, academics, professional services staff, regulatory and govt bodies
- Example given of institutions' financial statements – its about openness and transparency of systems and processes

Degree Outcomes Statements



What's isn't in the guidance

- A defined 'audience'
- A template/example statement
- Information on next steps – what is to be done with all the DOSs?
- Integrated masters guidance
- What to do if your statement is longer than 2/3 sides

Degree Outcomes Statements



Feedback from the first workshop

- Quality teams often have not previously worked with data teams and do not see data
- Easy to explain degree algorithms, but more useful and important is to articulate the rationale behind them – why the university uses the approach they do
- No suggested timeline for sign-off - each provider will have different structures and processes

Degree Outcomes Statements



More feedback from the first workshop

- Process is likely to identify need for some changes, e.g one provider has already identified need to reduce from 2 algorithms to 1
- Providers who identify risks are unlikely to publish them within a DOS
- How and where is it published – need to think of a comms strategy and placement on website

Degree Outcomes Statements



More feedback from the first workshop

- Can QAA hold an event at which the sector can develop a common vocabulary for talking about degree algorithms - **in process, led by UUK**
- ‘Sandbox’ for providers to share draft DOSs – **in progress**

Another Reference Tool – Degree Classification Descriptors

- Also published 10 October
- Developed over 18 months of work with the sector
- Goes beyond minimum threshold in the main body of the Frameworks
- UK-wide reference point, appended to the national qualifications frameworks (Annex D)
- Sufficiently generic to sit alongside providers own learning outcomes
- Also can be used alongside other reference points e.g. Subject Benchmark Statements



Annex D: Outcome classification descriptions for FHEQ Level 6 and FQHEIS Level 10 degrees

Introduction

This annex sets out common descriptions of the four main degree outcome classifications for bachelor's degrees with honours - 1st, 2.1, 2.2 and 3rd. These statements build upon the descriptors within *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies* (FHEQ) and *The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland* (FQHEIS), for bachelor's degrees with honours (Level 6 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; and Level 10 in Scotland). These are published together in [The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies](#) (the Frameworks).

The Frameworks contain the qualification descriptors, minimum expectations necessary for awarding bachelor's degrees with honours (in other words, a 3rd-class degree) but with some 'typical' features at a higher standard. The statements are generic and can be applied across subjects and modes of learning. For each course of study and qualification, autonomous degree-awarding bodies draw up and approve specific statements about the intended learning outcomes.

The description of degree classifications below goes beyond the 3rd-class degree threshold and expresses what all four classifications look like.

This guidance has been informed by multiple providers' own criteria and the outcomes from consultations with students, HE providers, professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs); and others.

How should these descriptors be used?

These descriptors may be useful for staff development, course design and approval, and external examiner processes. They are designed to include enough detail to support reliable quality assessment across the sector, aiding calibration and peer review.

The classification descriptors signpost student achievement generically - they are neither detailed nor exhaustive. Providers are, as autonomous institutions, free to consider how these may assist in their standards assurance and course development processes.

The descriptions for each classification are intended to be sufficiently generic in order to be able to sit alongside providers' own course-specific learning outcomes which, combined, detail the complexity of understanding and skills that students must achieve to gain a degree and classification. Providers may choose to use the descriptors alongside sector-reference points, such as Subject Benchmark Statements, for aligning or informing their criteria for measuring student performance.

Autonomous institutions are responsible for setting their own curricula and assessment criteria. Providers must ensure that, as they are undertaking these responsibilities, they are meeting the expectations for quality and standards as they are set out in the Quality Code and assessed in line with the requirements set out for each UK nation.

Classification descriptions – refinement through consultation

- Language
 - Clarity and consistency of key terms to ensure each classification is sufficiently distinct from others and clear in the graduate outcomes it defines.
 - Calibration of key terms to ensure sector-wide comprehension on the terminology within institutions.
- Relevance
 - Institutional autonomy must be protected, and classification descriptions should not become *de facto* universal marking criteria but act as a reference point for graduate achievement within classifications.
 - Subject variation and diversity across the sector must not be lost through the imposition of a standardised classification framework.
 - National considerations, particularly in Scotland in respect of honours and ordinary degrees, must be accurately reflected.

| Not successful | Third-class honours (3rd) | Lower second-class honours (2.2) | Upper second-class honours (2.1) | First-class honours (1st) |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| The student did not achieve the required course learning outcomes and: | The student achieved all their required course learning outcomes and: | The student achieved all their required course learning outcomes and: | The student achieved all their required course learning outcomes and: | The student achieved all their required course learning outcomes and: |
| did not consistently demonstrate sufficient knowledge and understanding, cognitive, practical and transferable skills | demonstrated knowledge and understanding, cognitive, practical and transferable skills | demonstrated strong knowledge and understanding, cognitive, practical and transferable skills | demonstrated thorough knowledge and understanding, cognitive, practical and transferable skills | consistently demonstrated advanced knowledge and understanding, cognitive, practical and transferable skills |
| did not consistently demonstrate adequate initiative and personal responsibility | demonstrated initiative and exercised personal responsibility | demonstrated initiative and personal responsibility | demonstrated good initiative and personal responsibility | consistently demonstrated exceptional initiative and personal responsibility |
| did not consistently demonstrate ability to reflect on their work | demonstrated some ability to reflect on their work | demonstrated an ability to reflect on their work | demonstrated an ability to reflect critically on their work | consistently demonstrated ability to reflect critically and independently on their work |
| did not consistently demonstrate problem-solving skills | demonstrated problem-solving skills | demonstrated strong problem-solving skills | demonstrated thorough problem-solving skills | consistently demonstrated exceptional problem-solving skills |

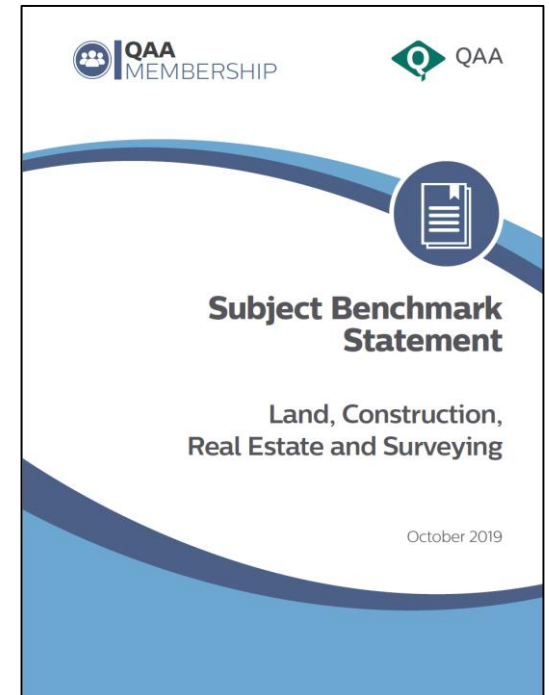
Knowledge and understanding

A systematic extensive and comparative understanding of key aspects of the field of study, including coherent and detailed knowledge of the subject and critical understanding of theories and concepts, at least some of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of defined aspects of a discipline.

| Not successful | 3rd (pass or threshold) | 2.2 | 2.1 | 1st |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| The student's knowledge and understanding of the subject is inadequate, without the required breadth or depth, with deficiencies in key areas. | The student has demonstrated a depth of knowledge and understanding in key aspects of their field of study, sufficient to deal with terminology, facts and concepts. | The student has demonstrated a sound breadth and depth of subject knowledge and understanding, if sometimes balanced towards the descriptive rather than the critical or analytical. | The student has demonstrated sophisticated breadth and depth of knowledge and understanding, showing a clear, critical insight. | The student has shown exceptional knowledge and understanding, significantly beyond the threshold expectation of a graduate at this level and beyond what has been taught. |
| The student has demonstrated inadequate understanding of subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles, including their limitations and ambiguities. | The student has demonstrated an understanding of subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles. | The student has consistently demonstrated an understanding of subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles as well as more specialised areas. | The student has demonstrated a thorough understanding of subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles, and a sound understanding of more specialised areas. | The student has demonstrated an exceptional understanding of subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts and principles, and in-depth knowledge, if not mastery of a range of specialised areas. |
| The student has not produced sufficient evidence of background investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study. | The student has conducted general background investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study using established techniques, with the ability to extract relevant points. | The student has conducted background investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study using established techniques accurately, and can critically appraise academic sources. | The student has conducted thorough background investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study using established techniques accurately, and possesses a well-developed ability to critically appraise a wide range of sources. | The student has conducted independent, extensive and appropriate investigation, analysis, research, enquiry and/or study well beyond the usual range, together with critical evaluation, to advance work and/or direct arguments. |

Subject Benchmark Statements

- Updating existing Subject Benchmark Statements to map to new Quality Code
 - STEM published 30 October
 - Professional Services November
 - Arts & Humanities 12 December
- Revised SBS Architecture – consultation open Nov 2019, **aiming for publication March 2020**
- SBS reviews coming up in 2020: Forensic Science, Veterinary Science.



Characteristics Statements

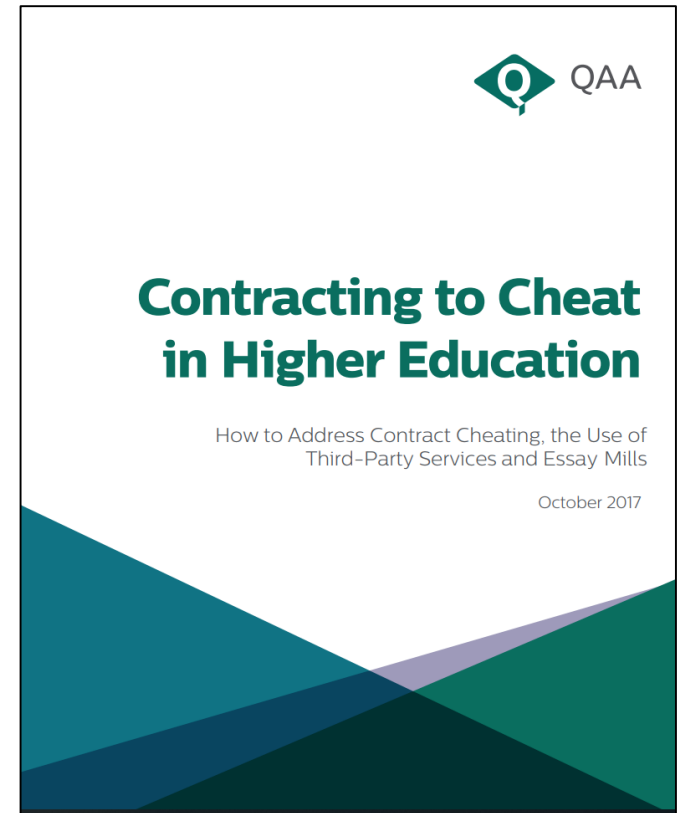
- All four existing CS have been updated to the new Quality Code – publication January 2020
- We published a new CS dealing with Higher Education in Apprenticeships in August 2019
- Covers all aspects of how apprenticeships are delivered across UK HE, including:
 - Collaboration with employers
 - Progression
 - Recruitment
 - Assessment and review
 - Learning and teaching

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Academic Integrity

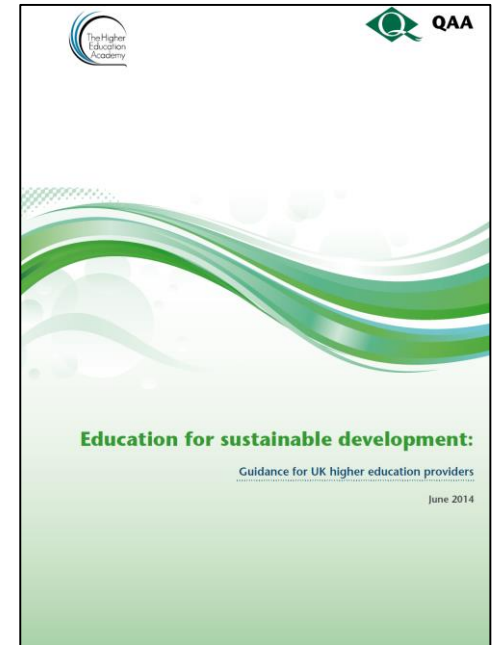
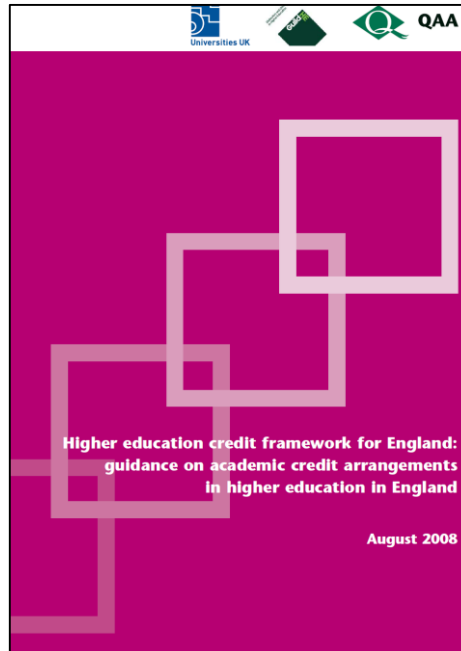
- Survey launched to establish engagement with 'Contracting to cheat' guidance - closed 4 November 2019
- Results of survey in late November and updated guidance in 2020



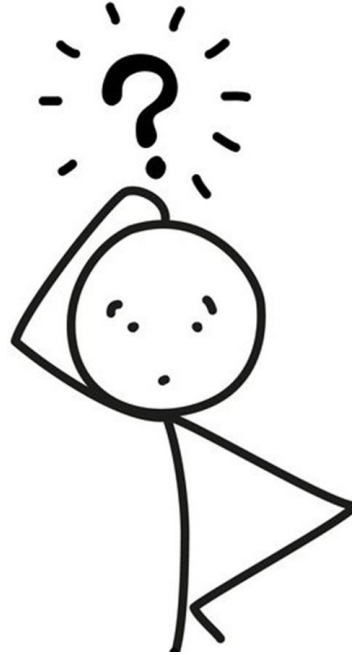
Guidance documents

Updated guidance 2020
planned for:

- Higher Education Credit Framework for England
- Education for Sustainable Development



Questions?



Lunch

12.30 – 13.15

Accreditation

Chris Lindsay

Global Education and Qualification Standards Manager, RICS

Mamta Beaver

Education and Qualification Standards Manager, RICS

Education Quality Assurance Review

Jessica Lichtenstein

Head of Quality Assurance, Education and
Standards, General Medical Council

Panel: QAA Subject Benchmark Statements and the new Statement for Architecture

Si Bullock Quality and Standards Specialist, QAA

David Gloster Director of Education, Royal Institute of British Architects

Emma Matthews Head of Qualifications, Architects Registration Board

Professor Alexander Wright Chair of Architecture SBS Review,
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Close



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