QUALITY IN ACTION

A review of our year

2017-18
Our mission

As the independent body entrusted with monitoring and advising on standards and quality in UK higher education, our mission is to safeguard standards and improve the quality of UK higher education, wherever it is delivered around the world.

Our vision

World-leading and independently assured UK higher education.

Our values
2017-18 has been a significant year for QAA, marking our 21st anniversary and the achievement of a number of strategic milestones.

Thank you to colleagues across the sector who voiced their confidence in us this year as the quality body for Scotland and Wales, and now the designated quality body for England. We look forward to working with all our partners over the coming years.

As the UK’s independent quality body, we are focused on providing tailored approaches for the nations, underpinned by our UK-wide work which provides confidence in, and safeguards the quality of, the whole UK higher education brand, at home and overseas.

Protecting academic integrity has been a key focus this year, and we are working with Universities UK and GuildHE to investigate issues relating to degree classifications and grade achievement, with extensive sector input across the UK.

Much hard work has also gone into the review of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. There have been more than 1,670 individual contributions to this process by colleagues from around the UK, to streamline and improve the Code to ensure it remains the UK sector’s shared expression of quality and standards, and meets the needs of the four nations.

We have continued to support the UK sector internationally, most recently completing our review of UK transnational education (TNE) in Hong Kong. This is increasingly complex work given the growth of UK TNE, and we will need to reflect with the sector on how we maintain international confidence and ensure high-quality experiences for all students in the future.

Finally, thank you to QAA staff and reviewers for their dedication and hard work again this year, and to our Board for its support.

Douglas Blackstock
Chief Executive
QAA’s independence has always been key to providing the right balance between government, regulation and the sector, and this remains the QAA Board's focus, in the spirit of co-regulation.

This year, the Board set out its updated strategic priorities for the Agency including: maintaining the UK-wide framework for quality in higher education; protecting quality and standards during a period of transition and change; building and strengthening relationships with our key external stakeholders; and balancing our regulatory and commercial activities (with a focus on international development).

We received 13 commendations during our five-yearly review by ENQA (the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) which took place in 2018 to renew our membership. I am proud of this very positive outcome, which demonstrates that the UK’s approaches to securing academic standards and assuring quality continue to be world-leading. But, as a quality body, we must also take our own medicine: the ENQA panel made a series of recommendations which the Board and QAA’s senior management are developing into an action plan for improvement.

The theme of our annual conference this year was ‘Delivering Impact through Innovation’, and we are committed to developing and innovating for the future. That is why we are evolving our subscriber services into ‘QAA Membership’ from the 2019-20 academic year to ensure the products, services and benefits which we provide for our members support them in achieving their strategic objectives for quality and standards and delivering high-quality academic experiences for their students. We will be consulting with the sector on this during 2019 and look forward to hearing what more we can do for you.

I would like to thank all QAA staff, superbly led by Douglas and the Executive team, for their outstanding work, and their continued commitment to QAA and UK higher education.

Christopher Banks CBE
Chair of the Board of Directors
Highlights of our year

Over 1,670 individual contributions from sector colleagues through events, workshops, writing and reading groups to revise the UK Quality Code for Higher Education

New Enhancement Theme launched in Scotland

QAA designated as the quality body for higher education in England

QAA Annual Conference (Cardiff) and Annual Enhancement Conference (Glasgow) attended by over 720 delegates

Completion of transnational education reviews in Ireland and Hong Kong

Establishment of new UK expert group on academic integrity

Two student conferences attended by almost 300 delegates

Highly successful review of QAA by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)

Launch of revised edition of influential guidance, *Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education*

New regional networks and online community launched for subscribers

First reviews delivered for revised and new enhancement approaches in Scotland and Wales respectively
Students at the heart of our work

To support student engagement, and share information and good practice, we held two well received student conferences, Quality Matters (October 2017) and Evolving Student Engagement (May 2018), attracting almost 300 delegates from across the UK.

Responding to the Student Voice: Communicating the Impact was a student-led project as part of the current Scottish Enhancement Theme. It included a ‘think tank’ event in spring 2018, and a scan of national and international practice on responding to the student voice. The results have had significant value beyond Scotland, and have been disseminated to colleagues across the UK and internationally.

We also conducted a pilot project with our partner agencies in Dubai and Singapore, to identify what UK transnational education students (those studying outside the UK with UK providers) most value and where they would like to see further development.

Students are embedded in our governance, and we have two student Board members. We also have a Student Strategic Advisory Committee, which is a highly-regarded model of active student engagement in organisational policy development. This year, they have provided external advice on the development of the subject-level Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF), the post-18 review of higher education and funding, the National Student Survey (NSS) postgraduate survey, and student protection plans.

‘QAA has a strong history of working collaboratively and of engaging students in key elements of its work, as well as advocating for student engagement within providers’ own quality assurance and enhancement processes.’

National Union of Students, written evidence to the House of Commons Education Select Committee inquiry into value for money in higher education (November 2017)
Revising the Quality Code

Our review of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, working with the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment, has been a major programme of work this year. The Quality Code is the ‘glue’ which holds us together while simultaneously meeting the needs of each home nation, and is a key element in safeguarding the UK’s world-class reputation.

The review has required close partnership working with representatives from all UK nations. The Expectations and Core and Common practices were published in March 2018.

1,677 INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS

386 attendees at our Expectations and Practices consultation events (Nov–Dec 2017)

265 responses to our consultation (Oct–Dec 2017)

170 attendees at our scoping events (Apr 2018)

482 attendees at our Advice and Guidance workshops (May 2018)

374 colleagues from across the UK sector involved in Advice and Guidance writing and reading groups (summer 2018)
Combating academic fraud and cheating

We have been at the forefront of work within the sector to combat academic fraud and cheating. In October 2017, we published guidance on contract cheating and the use of essay mills, which received widespread national media coverage. QAA was also interviewed for BBC Panorama’s investigation into the use of agents in higher education institutions.

Our complaint to the Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) about misleading advertising by essay mill company, UK Essays, was upheld and the advertising withdrawn. Pressure from QAA, the BBC and government also led to YouTube removing ‘vlogger’ sites promoting the use of essay mill services.

In summer 2018, we established an expert advisory group on academic integrity. We are also developing proposals for the creation of a UK Centre for Academic Integrity.

Internationally, we are developing guidance for academics and quality assurance agencies about combatting academic malpractice through two projects funded by the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies for Higher Education (INQAAHE), one of which is in partnership with the Australian Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

A leading voice in policy debates and developments

Our work on influencing policy agendas relating to quality and standards has been wide-ranging this year. We have regular interactions with politicians and policy makers across the UK, as well as mission groups and other sector bodies to help shape sector policy development.

We have provided evidence to consultations and inquiries, including:

- Scottish Government’s 15–24 learner journey review
- Department for Education’s consultation on the new regulatory framework in England
- Education Select Committee inquiries into value for money and apprenticeships
- Welsh Government consultations on reforms to post-compulsory education and training

Publications and research this year included The Wisdom of Students: Monitoring Quality through Student Reviews, and the second edition of our guidance, Quality Assuring Higher Education in Apprenticeships: Current Approaches. We have also published new QAA Viewpoint policy papers on areas of current debate including accelerated degrees, quality and value for money, and academic integrity.

In January 2018, we published Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education Guidance for UK Higher Education Providers, an updated edition of our respected 2012 guidance. The new guidance has been identified as good practice by the United Nations.
Adding value for our subscribers

We have had many discussions with our subscribers this year through our liaison programme. These conversations help us to improve the services and events we provide for our subscribers, and feed into our future organisational development.

At the end of 2017, we launched an online subscriber community - a virtual meeting space for discussions and knowledge exchange. 580 subscribers have joined the community to date.

In April 2018, our annual subscriber conference brought 338 quality professionals together at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Cardiff. The conference theme was 'Delivering Impact through Innovation' and included keynote addresses from Eluned Morgan AM, Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning, and Shakira Martin, President of the NUS.

Further subscriber services delivered this year included:

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<th>Quality Enhancement Network:</th>
<th>Regional Networks:</th>
<th>Quality Insights:</th>
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<td>held around the UK, 300 quality professionals joined us for sessions on degree apprenticeships, data literacy, contract cheating and other topics</td>
<td>a new initiative to enable colleagues to collaborate and share practice in their local setting and context</td>
<td>a programme of webinars and events providing access to our own and other sector experts, alongside a series of peer-reviewed case studies of good practice on a range of themes</td>
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Supporting quality professionals in higher education

We actively support quality professionals and other higher education staff to assure standards, and to achieve the highest quality academic experiences for their students through enhancement. This year we have provided a range of events and services, including:

- Data Matters 2017: hosted by QAA, Jisc and HESA, bringing together around 250 delegates to explore the evolving data-driven higher education landscape
- Preparing for Degree Awarding Powers: events tailored specifically for alternative providers and delivered in partnership with Independent HE
- QAA Perspectives: a new bespoke quality enhancement and development service for UK providers
- Provider Healthcheck: a new online quality tool developed by QAA, Jisc and HESA to help providers demonstrate that academic standards are being maintained, and to identify issues for further investigation.

Working in partnership with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs)

Our twice-yearly PSRB Forums enable those involved in the education of professionals to consider key issues, share good practice and keep up-to-date with higher education policy. This year's events were each attended by representatives from more than 40 different PSRBs, with presentations from PSRBs as well as discussion sessions with government and sector-wide agencies including the Department for Education, the British Council and HESA.
Assuring higher education across the UK

Our tailored approaches for each of the four UK nations are underpinned by our UK-wide work which provides confidence in, and safeguards the quality of, the whole UK higher education brand.

In England

In February 2018, we were confirmed by the Secretary of State for Education as the independent designated body to perform the assessment functions for quality and standards in higher education in England. We carried out 30 Quality Review Visits during the year to test providers’ readiness to enter the publicly-funded higher education sector.

‘We consider that there is only one body that is suitable to perform the assessment functions. That body is the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education... QAA is well-respected and has long-standing, extensive experience of assessing and supporting quality assurance systems and standards that underpin the higher education sector.’

Letter from Chief Executive of the Office for Students to the Secretary of State for Education, February 2018

As part of the Quality Review Visit process, we also investigated seven concerns triggered from the Higher Education Funding Council for England’s (HEFCE) annual provider review assessments. Focus groups have been held with providers, which will feed into a final evaluation report on the Quality Review Visit approach. This year marked the conclusion of the revised quality assessment framework approach in England, as responsibilities transferred from HEFCE to the Office for Students.

In Scotland

This year, we completed the first two reviews under the revised Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR), with a range of support activity including reviewer training, student briefings and provider preparation events.

In October 2017, we launched the new Enhancement Theme for 2017-20, entitled Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience.

Our 15th Enhancement Conference took place in June 2018. The conference featured rich discussions on innovative approaches to using evidence in evaluating and enhancing the student experience and success.
During 2017-18, we ran a Focus On project on Feedback from Assessment, which included an event in March 2018 to share policy and good practice. Resources from the sharing practice event, as well as three short films, are available on our website.

‘We were pleased to participate in the first year of the new methodology, which we consider has evolved very positively since the introduction of ELIR to the Scottish sector in 2003... The areas identified for development are also very helpful as we move forward with our programme of enhancement activity.’
Dawn Martin, Governance and Quality Enhancement, Queen Margaret University

In Wales
Following consultation, we implemented a new Quality Enhancement Review approach for Welsh providers this year. We are delivering this under a framework agreement with Welsh providers, convened and monitored by Universities Wales, to ensure the method continues to meet the needs of Wales. New reviewers have also been recruited and trained, to expand our Welsh language skills capability. The first review took place in May 2018, at Bangor University.

‘Bangor is the first university to undergo a Quality Enhancement Review, and we found it a very detailed and thorough review.’
Professor John G Hughes, Vice-Chancellor, Bangor University

On behalf of the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, we have also developed Gateway Quality Review, which tests new providers against the Welsh baseline quality regulatory requirements.
We have continued to engage actively with policy developments, particularly the Welsh Government’s proposed reforms for post-compulsory education and training, through consultation responses and other discussions.

In Northern Ireland
We carried out eight Quality Review Visits to test providers’ readiness to enter the publicly-funded higher education sector. In October 2017, at the request of the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland, we held a well-received briefing event to help providers prepare for their Quality Review Visits. We also arranged focus groups with providers which will feed into a final evaluation report on the Quality Review Visit approach. In Northern Ireland, the revised quality assessment framework will continue in 2018-19, and may be reformed thereafter.

‘There were good and numerous opportunities for evidence to be presented... students were keen to take part in the process and give feedback at review.’
‘The panel were excellent in their professional approach.’
Provider questionnaire responses, 2017-18 Quality Review Visits
Our wider work across the UK

Alternative providers
During 2017-18, we have continued to undertake the quality assurance of alternative providers across the UK.

In November 2017, a BBC Panorama programme entitled ‘Student Loan Scandal’ made a number of allegations, including fraud, at two alternative provider colleges in London. Based on information received, our own investigation into several London colleges found significant weaknesses in recruitment, admissions, attendance monitoring and assessment processes. We have since broadened the scope of what, when and how we can investigate suspected academic misconduct.

In July 2018, we held our annual Alternative Providers’ Conference. We also ran an additional Liaison Forum during autumn 2017. These events strengthen our engagement and dialogue with this group, disseminating good practice and learning from reviews, and ensuring their views are reflected in our policy developments.

Our work continues to have a significant positive effect, recognising and supporting high-quality alternative provision, while safeguarding the interests of students and the reputation of the sector from those providers that do not meet UK expectations.

Reviews
60 (including 12 ‘commendable’ and four ‘requires improvement’ judgements)

Annual Monitoring Engagements
121 (including 33 ‘commendable’ and 8 ‘negative’ judgements)

‘We couldn’t have imagined when we started ten years ago that we’d be the first independent provider to receive commendations across the board.’

Chris Mayo, Managing Director, Futureworks
Access to HE: Widening participation and increasing social mobility

We are proud to manage the scheme for the recognition and quality assurance of Access to HE courses in England and Wales. The Access to HE Diploma prepares people without traditional qualifications for higher education study. Our Access to HE Key Statistics (2016-17) report underlined the continued positive impact of this qualification in widening participation in higher education.

In October 2017, our fifth Higher Education Admissions Fair for Access to HE was held in London. The 2018 Access to HE annual conference took place in April, attended by around 100 delegates.

During 2017-18, we conducted a review of our risk-based regulatory monitoring method for Access Validating Agencies, following which we made revisions to ensure that we continue to safeguard quality and standards in the awarding of Access to HE Diplomas, and the student academic experience.

Real life stories

Tommy Sharpe joined the Marines at 21 but had to leave after 12 years because of ill health. His life was the Marines and he had no plans for his future. His experience in military hospitals had made him aware of the challenges faced by veterans in the care system. He’d left school with few qualifications but a call to a university pointed him to an Access to HE Diploma.

‘I had very low confidence, believing that I didn’t belong in the education system. The Access to HE course gave me self-belief... I didn’t realise it at the time, but looking back on it, some of the problem in my lack of confidence came from not being very good at reading.’

With the support of other students, he achieved his Access to HE Diploma and was able to take up the offer of a place to study social work at university.
Degree awarding powers
This year, we worked closely with the government in England and the Office for Students on the revised approach to degree awarding powers.

New members have been appointed to our Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers (ACDAP) to bring different expertise and perspectives to the group, including an employer responsible for a significant graduate recruitment programme, and a member with experience in market competition.

Three applications reached a conclusion during 2017-18 resulting in positive recommendations to the Privy Council, all of which were granted:

**Leeds City College Group**, which became the second provider in the Yorkshire region to be awarded foundation degree awarding powers.

**Richmond, the American International University in London**, signalling further diversity in degree-awarding bodies by being the first institution with the right to award degrees in both the UK and US, opening up dual accreditation opportunities for students.

**Cornwall College Group**, enabling it to extend higher education opportunities in the south west.

Investigating concerns
We investigate concerns about academic standards, quality and UK higher education providers’ public information. There were 18 submissions to our Concerns Scheme this year.

- **9** were screened out
- **2** resulted in initial inquiries to the provider
- **7** resulted in full investigations (6 completed with conclusion that concerns were justified and resulted in recommendations for action by the providers)

The majority of the investigations (including the case raised by BBC Panorama) were cases of academic malpractice, including concerns about: the effectiveness of recruitment processes and the ability to identify fraudulent student applications; and weak mechanisms for identifying malpractice and cheating in the assessment of student work. In one case, the focus of the investigation was on poor student progression rates and failure to support students.
Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

We have worked closely with HEFCE and the Office for Students this year to support the assessment processes for the third year of the TEF and also for the pilots of the TEF at subject level.

86 providers received a full TEF award (Year 3)

50 providers took part in the subject-level pilots, which generated over 700 subject-level ratings

141 panellists were recruited, trained and supported by QAA for the eight subject-level panels

Our work helps to ensure that, as the TEF evolves, it continues to identify excellent teaching, sharpens the sector’s focus on teaching and outcomes that matter to students, and helps to inform student choices.

Appeals and complaints

We have a complaints procedure for use by anyone wishing to complain about our service, and separate appeals procedures for providers that want to appeal against the outcome of a QAA review.

16 providers were eligible to appeal across a range of review methods

12 chose not to appeal

4 appeals submitted, all rejected by appeal panels
Supporting UK higher education around the world
UK transnational education (TNE)

Our work on the quality assurance of UK TNE (UK higher education delivered overseas) secures the long-term international interests and reputation of our sector.

In November 2017, we hosted a joint conference in Belfast with our partners, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), focused on TNE and the regulatory framework of the European Higher Education Area.

The final reports of our 2017 TNE review in the Republic of Ireland were published in December 2017. We also successfully delivered our 2018 TNE review in Hong Kong. Both reviews involved close working and cooperation with our counterpart agencies in those countries, reducing potential duplication for providers, and the overall burden of accreditation and review activity.
**International strategic engagement**

Our international strategic engagement supports the international work of UK higher education providers, safeguarding and strengthening the world-class reputation of our UK sector. We have 13 memoranda with partners around the world and, during the year, we renewed our agreements with the China Academic Degrees and Graduate Education Development Centre and the Council for Private Education in Singapore. We continue to build links in other countries, including developing relationships with our counterpart agencies in Egypt and Nigeria.

On behalf of the UK sector, we are members of key international bodies including the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies for Higher Education (INQAAHE) and the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN). We are also included on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR), a register of credible and trustworthy quality assurance agencies operating in the European Higher Education Area.

To extend international awareness and knowledge of the UK sector, we delivered presentations and workshops at a number of high-profile international events including the 2018 Going Global (Malaysia), MENA Higher Education Leadership Forum (United Arab Emirates) and the Education World Forum (London).

**Insight and intelligence**

Building on our strong international expertise and partnerships, we have introduced an International Insights programme, providing intelligence and guidance for UK providers working internationally to support their partnership development and quality management. This year, we have delivered four webinars with partners from quality agencies from around the world, and published three Country Reports on Pakistan, China and the Republic of Ireland.

**Capacity building and training**

We undertake additional activities internationally that benefit the UK higher education sector and align with our strategic aims. Through working with overseas systems and providers to improve their quality, we can also open up partnership and collaboration opportunities for UK higher education providers.

This year, we have undertaken a number of projects in countries including Albania, Hong Kong, Lebanon, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates, as well as contributing to the SHARE project in South East Asia (European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region).

Our International Quality Assurance Programme (IQAP) is designed for international quality professionals seeking to learn about the UK model of higher education quality assurance. In November 2017, we held an IQAP in Dubai. The programme was run in association with the Knowledge and Human Development Authority of the Government of Dubai and was attended by more than 20 delegates.
ENQA review of QAA

ENQA is the umbrella body for quality agencies in the European Higher Education Area. One of the conditions of ENQA membership is a five-yearly review to check our compliance against the European Standards and Guidelines.

We were reviewed in 2018 and found to be fully or substantially compliant in all areas. This positive review outcome and strong endorsement of QAA demonstrates that our approaches to securing academic standards and assuring quality continue to meet rigorous European expectations. It also means that students, regulators and governments internationally can be reassured that the UK higher education system remains world class.

‘Internationally, QAA is among the leading quality assurance agencies. Such a status recognises QAA’s consistently high organisational performance and valuable contribution towards the shaping and implementation of common agendas in quality assurance of higher education.’

ENQA review report on QAA
Looking ahead:
Strategic priorities

Our current strategy, *Building on World-Class Quality*, supports our mission and work to deliver our vision of world-leading and independently assured higher education. It is underpinned by our core values and sets out clearly what we will deliver for UK higher education.

**Building on World-Class Quality**

QAA will be recognised and valued by student bodies, institutions and governments as:

- the expert independent quality body supporting a diverse system of co-regulation of UK higher education
- delivering valued services that provide assurance and drive quality enhancement
- using our international reputation and partnerships to benefit UK higher education.
Our Board has identified its priorities as:

- maintaining the UK-wide framework for quality in higher education
- protecting quality during a period of transition and change
- relationships with key external stakeholders
- balancing QAA’s regulatory and commercial activities (with a focus on international development).

In addition, our Board identified two enabling priorities:

- continuing to build an organisation capable of delivering key roles
- ensuring clarity of internal and external messaging of QAA’s role.
A learning organisation

Our review by ENQA provided a valuable opportunity to reflect on our work and processes. The recommendations of the ENQA panel have been developed into an action plan for improvement, in areas including governance, stakeholder representation on review teams, and communications.

We have made a number of positive changes to our management of concerns and other processes:

- Our Concerns Scheme has been revised and updated to enable better handling of whistleblowing allegations, to make the process simpler and more efficient, and to provide greater clarity in the way outcomes are reported.

- Improvements have been made to the way in which investigation visits are conducted. For example, it is now standard practice for the Concerns team to select students to meet with, audit randomly selected student admissions files, and review attendance records.

- There is now greater coordination between the organisations that have an interest in alternative providers, resulting in improved intelligence sharing and a more coordinated approach to the management of individual investigations.

Our involvement with BBC’s Panorama also led us to look beyond our work on essay mills and to consider the issue of academic integrity more broadly. During 2018, we set up an Academic Integrity Advisory Group to provide leadership in the sector’s response. We have also developed media partnerships to raise public awareness of threats to academic integrity.

We recognise that we need to continue to develop external communications to ensure that recent policy changes in the UK are understood. In response to confusion about the recent changes, we are investing considerable time – working with the British Council and Universities UK International – to provide information and consistent messaging about the quality of UK higher education and its assurance.

Our operational priorities for 2018-19

- Develop and continuously improve quality assurance and enhancement activities in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

- Design and implement quality assessment systems in England.

- Consult on and launch a new membership model for provider services, underpinned by value propositions, that ensure maximum benefit for, and take-up by, the sector.

- Further development and implementation of the revised Quality Code as a definitive reference point that helps providers achieve successful outcomes for students.

- Deliver international services and develop international relationships, to secure increased recognised value for UK higher education.

- Continue to develop an organisation capable of delivering its commitments to the sector, regulators and funders in a sustainable way.
QAA Membership

In August 2019, in response to the changing regulatory landscape in the UK, QAA is moving to a membership model for its non-regulatory services. At the heart of QAA Membership is a strong partnership with UK higher education. Working with you and for you, we will develop and maintain enduring partnerships that will promote the quality of UK higher education and maintain its international leadership in quality enhancement and assurance. QAA Membership has been designed to support UK higher education providers to continuously improve quality and standards through access to expertise, insight and valued resources.
Governance and management

QAA is a private company limited by guarantee, and a registered charity in England, Wales and Scotland. Our 18 Board members represent the diversity of UK higher education, including students, with a rich mix of skills and experience.

- Six independent members with experience in industrial, commercial or financial matters, or professional practice
- Two student members
- Four higher education representative body members
- Four higher education funding body members
- One independent member engaged in management or governance of an alternative provider
- One member from the UK Council of Colleges

As part of our ongoing commitment to good governance and leadership, this year we:

- undertook a comprehensive self-evaluation against the new Charity Governance Code and implemented a number of actions in response
- implemented a readiness programme to ensure our ability to comply with the requirements of the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR)
- published a Gender Pay Gap Report
- managed our principal risks and uncertainties to the satisfaction of the Board.

Our senior executive staff during 2017-18 were:

- Douglas Blackstock, Chief Executive
- Ian Kimber, Director of Universities, Quality Enhancement and Standards
- Will Naylor, Director of Colleges and Alternative Providers
- Rowena Pelik, Director of Nations and International
- Liz Rosser, Director of Resources.
Our financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities SORP. Our 2017-18 activities were funded primarily through contracts with the higher education funding bodies, subscriptions from higher education providers, and charges for oversight and review of alternative providers of higher education. Additional income was generated through other review activity, degree awarding powers applications, contributions from Access Validating Agencies, conferences and investment income.

### Income from charitable activities

- Contracts with higher education funding bodies: £3,884,090
- Alternative providers of higher education: £2,196,728
- Subscriptions: £4,574,110
- Other contracts and related income: £1,498,288

Total income from charitable activities: **£12,153,216**.

Total income as shown in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) decreased by £41,602 (0.3%) to £12,346,515 between 2016-17 and 2017-18.

### Expenditure on charitable activities

- Expert independent quality body supporting a diverse system of co-regulation: £9,196,291
- Delivering valued services that provide assurance and drive quality: £1,932,432
- Using international reputation and partnerships to benefit UK higher education: £996,713

Total expenditure on charitable activities: **£12,125,436**

Total expenditure, as shown in the SOFA, increased by £658,077 (5.7%) to £12,216,215 between 2016-17 and 2017-18.