

## Reviewing the Higher Education Credit Framework for England: Background to the Survey

The [Higher Education Credit Framework for England](#) was first published by QAA in 2008 on the recommendation of the report *Proposals for national arrangements for the use of academic credit in Higher Education in England* (2006), chaired by Lord Burgess. The original guidance, developed by the Credit Issues Development Group (CIDG) and revised in the light of sector feedback during consultation, set out the parameters for a credit framework for England. The guidance was designed to 'produce a permissive framework which would enable those who wish to develop their use of credit to be aware of the most commonly held approaches within England at this time'. The approach was advisory, reflective of institutional autonomy and offered insight on common practices in credit use across English higher education. The guidance included a table of credit values in England, aligning the level of qualification on the FHEQ with minimum credits, the FQ-EHEA cycle and ECTS credit range.

Following the review and publication of the revised Quality Code for Higher Education in 2018, QAA undertook a project to update all guidance that related to quality and standards, to align with the new Quality Code. As part of this work, QAA has convened a working advisory group to review the Higher Education Credit Framework for England. Chaired by Professor Sue Rigby, Vice-Chancellor of Bath Spa University, and with membership drawn from providers and sector bodies in England, the advisory group had an initial meeting on 12 March 2020 to discuss the terms of reference and proposals for reviewing and adapting the existing guidance.

As Sue Rigby writes in a [recent QAA blog](#), 'the credit framework was designed to describe and quantify the credit values typically associated with the design of programmes in higher education, setting out the amount of learning and the level required to define each qualification. In the years since publication, higher education has become much more diverse, encompassing higher degree apprenticeships, developing fast-track degrees, and becoming confident in the recognition of prior learning, often with professional, regulatory and statutory bodies.'

The work of the advisory group so far has established a set of guiding principles of how to approach credit in this new educational landscape: for the benefit of students, enhancing mobility, offering consistent and transparent approaches that are enabling but also directive. The advisory group are also exploring innovative ways to present how credit is used in different contexts, offering examples of new developments and practice from across the sector. Areas for further consideration by the group include how credit relates to degree apprenticeships, postgraduate study, non-traditional delivery and the design of microcredits.

Ahead of the review process, the group would like to engage with higher education providers in England on how they currently use credit, what their main concerns are moving forward with credit frameworks and how the current changes to delivery and assessment caused by the COVID-19 lockdowns are affecting their use of credit.

To support this engagement, QAA has published a [series of survey questions](#) to ascertain current practice. The survey will close on Tuesday 8 September 2020.