



International Quality Accreditation – England

Mapping of the ESG Standards Part 1 to the OfS B Conditions

QAA's International Quality Accreditation uses the Standards for internal quality assurance, set out in Part 1 of the ESG, as the criteria against which providers are reviewed. Further information about these Standards can be found on the [ENQA website](#).

In England, the quality and standards of registered higher education providers is regulated by the Office for Students (OfS) in accordance with its regulatory framework. Specifically, providers are required to comply with the ongoing conditions of registration B1-B5 (the 'B conditions') which cover some, but not all, of the standards for internal quality assurance outlined in the ESG Part 1. To avoid duplication and the creation of unnecessary burden for providers in terms of workload and costs, IQA for English providers focuses attention on the elements of the ESG which are not explicitly addressed through the OfS' conditions of registration. It therefore places reliance on providers' ongoing compliance with conditions of registration B1-B5 as evidence that they meet certain specified ESG Standards. This approach enables proportionality in enacting voluntary external quality assurance activity alongside mandatory regulatory requirements, and avoids duplication in assessing the English baseline regulatory requirements in full.

The ESG Standards that QAA considers overlap with OfS' conditions B1-B5 are: 1.2 Design and approval of programmes and 1.6 Learning resources and student support. There is also partial overlap with Standard 1.5 Teaching staff, as the OfS conditions do not cover institutional processes for the recruitment of staff. Our detailed mapping of the OfS conditions for quality and standards against Part 1 of the ESG is outlined below. This mapping provides the ESG standard and extracts from the underpinning ESG guidelines, which are then mapped to the B conditions with a commentary provided on the extent of alignment.

1.1 Policy for quality assurance

Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.

Outcomes under the ESG Standard and Guidelines	Relevant extracts/reference from OfS regulatory framework The notes in brackets [] refer to entries in the left-hand column which overlap with B conditions.	Commentary
<p>Institutions have a quality assurance policy that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A is public B is part of strategic management, so: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i is formal ii underpins the institutional quality assurance system iii supports an institutional culture in which all internal stakeholders are responsible for quality assurance iv supports academic integrity and freedom v guards against intolerance or discrimination C is implemented through appropriate structures and processes D involves external stakeholders. 	<p>Condition B2 - Resources, support and student engagement</p> <p>In relation to the 'student engagement' limb of condition B2, a provider might demonstrate that it ensures sufficient student engagement through 'student membership of, and effective contribution to, the provider's committees' (paragraph 333K). This <i>might</i> derive from a quality assurance policy, which supports an institutional culture in which all internal stakeholders are responsible for quality assurance [Biii]. However, condition B2 does not impose a requirement for a provider to have such a policy in place.</p> <p>Condition B4 - Assessment and Awards</p> <p>Students should be 'assessed effectively', which a provider could demonstrate by reference to a policy for quality assurance involving external stakeholders [D] - for example, external examiners. However, condition B4 does not impose a requirement for a provider to have such a policy in place.</p>	<p>There is insufficient overlap between ESG and B conditions to enable a registered provider to satisfy ESG Standard 1.1 because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the B conditions do not explicitly require providers to have a quality assurance policy • a provider does not need to demonstrate involvement of external stakeholders in order to comply with the OfS initial/ongoing conditions of registration.

1.2 Design and approval of programmes

Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.

Outcomes under the ESG Standard and Guidelines	Relevant extracts/reference from OfS regulatory framework The notes in brackets [] refer to entries in the left-hand column which overlap with B conditions.	Commentary
<p>Institutions have:</p> <p>A processes for the design and approval of programmes</p> <p>B programmes that meet the objectives set for them</p> <p>C qualifications that are clearly specified and communicated</p> <p>D qualifications that refer to the correct academic level.</p> <p>Their programmes:</p> <p>i are designed with overall programme objectives that are in line with the institutional strategy and have explicit intended learning outcomes</p> <p>ii are designed by involving students and other stakeholders in the work</p> <p>iii benefit from external expertise and reference points</p>	<p>Condition B1 - High quality academic experience</p> <p>A provider who has satisfied condition B1 would usually be able to demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • programme regulations that set out clear expectations to ensure that courses are effectively designed and undergo robust validation processes [A, viii, C, D] • course validation procedures that require the use of external subject experts and/or the inclusion of internal experts on learning and teaching from other schools/departments within the provider [A, ii, iii] • Learning and Teaching Policy that sets out clear expectations for design and delivery [A, vi, C, D] • support by Learning and Teaching plan or strategy which: sets out key indicators to measure performance; explains how the provider will benchmark against sector reference points for comparable courses; articulates its approach to learning and how that approach facilitates successful outcomes [A, B, i, v, vi, C, D] • programme specifications that clearly demonstrate alignment between course content with the programme LOs [B, vi]. 	<p>There is sufficient overlap between ESG and B conditions to enable a registered provider to satisfy ESG 1.2.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iv reflect the four purposes of higher education of the Council of Europe (cf. Scope and Concepts)¹ v are designed so that they enable smooth student progression vi define the expected student workload, e.g. in ECTS vii include well-structured placement opportunities where appropriate viii are subject to a formal institutional approval process. 	<p>Condition B2 - Resources, support and student engagement</p> <p>This includes academic support, including help on placements and careers support. A provider who has satisfied this condition would usually ensure that students have ready access to a range of employability resources. In relation to placements, the provider might facilitate individualised support for students [iv, vii].</p>	
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¹ The Council of Europe has defined four equally important and compatible purposes for education: preparation for employment; preparation for life as active citizens in democratic societies; personal development and development of a broad and advanced knowledge base. (Recommendation Rec(2007)6 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the public responsibility for higher education and research, 2007)

1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment

Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

Outcomes under the ESG Standard and Guidelines	Relevant extracts/reference from OfS regulatory framework The notes in brackets [] refer to entries in the left-hand column which overlap with B conditions.	Commentary
<p>A Institutions implement modes of delivery that encourage students to take an active role in creating learning processes.</p> <p>B Their processes for the assessment of students reflect the institution's student-centred approach to learning and teaching.</p> <p>Student-centred learning and teaching:</p> <p>i respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths</p> <p>ii considers and uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate</p> <p>iii flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods</p> <p>iv regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods</p> <p>v encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher</p> <p>vi promotes mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship</p> <p>vii has appropriate procedures for dealing with student complaints.</p> <p>Assessment processes allow for the following:</p> <p>viii assessors are familiar with existing testing and examination methods and receive</p>	<p>Condition B1 - High quality academic experience</p> <p>A provider who has satisfied this condition has demonstrated that 'each higher education course is effectively delivered' (condition B1.3d). Its courses are likely to use an appropriate range of teaching activities and encourage opportunities for students to engage directly with teaching staff. A provider will satisfy condition B1 where assessment is designed into the course [A, B and i-xiv].</p> <p>Condition B4 - Assessment and awards</p> <p>A provider who has demonstrated that students are 'assessed effectively' (B4.2a) is likely to have evidence that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> examiners (whether drafting or marking assessments) are subject matter experts and understand the principles of good assessment [viii] assessment design processes incorporate diverse assessment methods and foster an understanding of good academic practice [ix-x] students receive formative feedback and assessment tests the things it was designed to assess [x]. <p>A provider who has demonstrated that 'each assessment is valid and reliable' (B4.2b) is likely to have evidence that assessment is fair, consistent and conducted in accordance with stated procedures [xiii].</p>	<p>There is considerable overlap between ESG standards and B conditions in relation to the delivery and assessment of programmes. However, gaps remain and therefore a registered provider may not fully satisfy ESG 1.3.</p> <p>For instance, the B conditions do not require providers to have formal procedures for mitigating circumstances or appeals.</p>

<p>support in developing their own skills in this field.</p> <p>ix the criteria for and method of assessment, as well as criteria for marking, are published in advance.</p> <p>x the assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process.</p> <p>xi where possible, assessment is carried out by more than one examiner.</p> <p>xii the regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances.</p> <p>xiii assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.</p> <p>xiv a formal procedure for student appeals is in place.</p>		
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1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification

Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student “life cycle”, e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.

Outcomes under the ESG Standard and Guidelines	Relevant extracts/reference from OfS regulatory framework The notes in brackets [] refer to entries in the left-hand column which overlap with B conditions.	Commentary
<p>A Institutions publish regulations covering all phases of the student 'life cycle'</p> <p>and</p> <p>B consistently apply those pre-defined and published regulations</p> <p>i admission, recognition and completion policies, procedures and criteria are appropriate, consistent and transparent</p> <p>ii induction to the institution and the programme is provided</p> <p>iii recognition procedures are fair and appropriate and in line with the Lisbon Convention²</p> <p>iv there are tools and processes to collect, monitor and act on information on progression</p> <p>v graduating students receive documentation explaining the qualification gained.</p>	<p>Condition B2 - Resources, support and student engagement</p> <p>Evidence that a provider effectively inducts its students would be relevant to demonstrate that students receive 'support... sufficient for ensuring a high quality academic experience' (B2.2b). A provider who has satisfied condition B2 might have regulations and processes for the induction of students to the institution and the programme [ii].</p> <p>Similarly, a provider who has satisfied condition B2 might provide 'support' (B2.2b) to its students through consistent and transparent access policies, admission regulations, processes and criteria [A, B, i].</p> <p>However, in both instances there is no requirement for such provision. It is up to the provider how it complies with condition B2.</p> <p>Condition B3 - Student outcomes</p> <p>A provider who has complied with the condition to 'deliver positive outcomes' (B3.3) is likely to have mechanisms in place to collect, monitor and act on information on progression [iv].</p>	<p>There is insufficient overlap between ESG and B conditions to enable a registered provider to fully satisfy ESG Standard 1.4 because:</p> <p>The B conditions do not explicitly provide for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admission procedures • Student induction • Recognition procedures • Graduation documentation.

² [Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region \(ETS No. 165\)](#)

	<p>Condition B5 - Sector-recognised standards</p> <p>A registered provider has an ongoing obligation to grant awards only to students whose knowledge and skills appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards. Those standards are directly relevant to the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued but B5 does not impose obligations in relation to the documentation provided to evidence the students' achievement [v].</p>	
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1.5 Teaching staff

Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.

Outcomes under the ESG Standard and Guidelines	Relevant extracts/reference from OfS regulatory framework The notes in brackets [] refer to entries in the left-hand column which overlap with B conditions.	Commentary
<p>A Institutions assure themselves of the competence of their teachers.</p> <p>B Institutions apply fair and transparent staff recruitment and development processes.</p> <p>i There are opportunities for professional development of teaching staff</p> <p>ii scholarly activity is encouraged</p> <p>iii the use of new technologies is encouraged.</p>	<p>Condition B1 - High-quality academic experience</p> <p>Condition B1 includes matters that relate to the curriculum and pedagogy for higher education courses: it provides that they must be 'effectively delivered'. It does not prescribe <i>how</i> a provider should demonstrate this.</p> <p>Accordingly, a registered provider is likely to have demonstrated that it has appropriately qualified, experienced and/or trained staff in different delivery and assessment methods [A, iii], but this is not an express requirement under B1.</p> <p>Similarly, while evidence of an institutional expectation that their current/prospective teachers engage in scholarly activity or relevant CPD or hold relevant certifications [ii] would be relevant to condition B1, it is up to the provider how it complies with this condition.</p> <p>Condition B2 - Resources, support and student engagement</p> <p>Includes a requirement that the provider ensures there are sufficient resources to ensure a high-quality student experience and student success in and beyond higher education (B2.2). Resources include an effectively deployed teaching team with expert subject knowledge and with teaching qualifications/training and experience. The provider must have sufficient financial resource to recruit, retain and support the teaching team [A, i].</p>	<p>There is partial overlap between ESG Standards and B conditions. A registered provider would not fully satisfy ESG Standard 1.5 because the B conditions do not impose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a requirement for fair and transparent recruitment processes • an expectation that scholarly activity or the use of new technologies be encouraged.

1.6 Learning resources and student support

Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.

Outcomes under the ESG Standard and Guidelines	Relevant extracts/reference from OfS regulatory framework The notes in brackets [] refer to entries in the left-hand column which overlap with B conditions.	Commentary
<p>A Institutions have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities.</p> <p>B Institutions provide adequate and readily accessible learning resources.</p> <p>C Institutions provide adequate and readily accessible student support.</p> <p>i Resources include physical resources such as libraries, study facilities and IT infrastructure and human support</p> <p>ii the needs of a diverse student population are taken into account.</p>	<p>Condition B2 - Resources, support and student engagement</p> <p>B2.2 states that the provider must take 'all reasonable steps' to ensure that each cohort of students 'receives resources and support which are sufficient for the purpose of ensuring':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a high-quality academic experience for those students • those students succeed in and beyond higher education. <p>'All reasonable steps' places significant weight on the academic needs of the individual cohort and far less weight on the provider's financial constraints.</p> <p>A registered provider who has satisfied condition B2 will be able to demonstrate that it provides adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support [B, C and i]. The obligation is to consider 'each cohort of students'; therefore, a registered provider must take the needs of a diverse student population into account [ii].</p> <p>Under B2, the provider is expected to have '<i>sufficient financial resource</i>' to recruit, retain and support teaching staff (who are included in the definition of 'resources' under B2) [A]; and a provider is expected to 'fund the provision of learning resources', without additional charge beyond the course fee [A].</p>	<p>There is sufficient overlap between ESG and B conditions to enable a registered provider to satisfy ESG Standard 1.6.</p>

1.7 Information management

Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.

Outcomes under the ESG Standard and Guidelines	Relevant extracts/reference from OfS regulatory framework The notes in brackets [] refer to entries in the left-hand column which overlap with B conditions.	Commentary
<p>A Institutions collect and analyse information.</p> <p>B Institutions use relevant information to manage programmes and other activities.</p> <p>C The information gathered may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i key performance indicators ii profile of the student population iii student progression, success and drop-out rates iv students' satisfaction with their programmes v learning resources and student support available vi career paths of graduates. 	<p>Condition B3 - Student Outcomes</p> <p>Under condition B3.3, 'the provider must deliver positive outcomes for students on its higher education courses'.</p> <p>Whether the provider has satisfied the condition is determined by reference to relevant information (outcome data). The OfS considers the data across a number of indicators, including rates of students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuing in their studies • completing their studies • progressing into managerial or professional employment, or further study • any other areas as determined by the OfS. <p>It is therefore likely that registered providers can demonstrate that they collect and analyse information on key performance indicators including progression, success and drop-out rates and graduate outcomes [a, i, iii and vi].</p>	<p>ESG Standard 1.7 recognises that 'the information gathered depends, to some extent, on the type and mission of the institution'. Registered providers who have satisfied B3 collect data and some of those providers may collect data that is considered relevant under the ESG standards.</p> <p>Notwithstanding this, the B conditions do not explicitly require providers to 'analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities'.</p> <p>There is therefore insufficient overlap between ESG and B conditions to fully satisfy ESG Standard 1.7.</p>

1.8 Public information

Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.

Outcomes under the ESG Standard and Guidelines	Relevant extracts/reference from OfS regulatory framework The notes in brackets [] refer to entries in the left-hand column which overlap with B conditions.	Commentary
A Institutions publish information about their activities that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• clear• accurate• objective• up-to-date• readily accessible. <p>i for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public</p> <p>ii including information about their programmes, qualifications, teaching, learning and assessment procedures, pass rates, available learning opportunities and graduate employment information.</p>	No relevant B conditions. Additionally, condition F1 Transparency information also has insufficient coverage to address the requirements expected in this Standard.	There is no overlap between the ESG Standards and the B conditions.

1.9 Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes

Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned or taken as a result should be communicated to all those concerned.

Outcomes under the ESG Standard and Guidelines	Relevant extracts/reference from OfS regulatory framework The notes in brackets [] refer to entries in the left-hand column which overlap with B conditions.	Commentary
<p>A Institutions monitor and periodically review their programmes.</p> <p>B The reviews operate to ensure that programmes achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society.</p> <p>C The reviews lead to continuous improvement of the programmes.</p> <p>D Any action planned or taken as a result is communicated to all those concerned.</p> <p>i Reviews include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the content of the programme to ensure it is up-to-date - the changing needs of society - the students' workload, progression and completion - the effectiveness of procedures for assessment of students - the student expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme - the learning environment and support services and their fitness for purpose for the programme <p>ii reviews involve students and other stakeholders</p> <p>iii as a result of the information gathered, the programme adapted and revised programme specifications published.</p>	<p>Condition B1 - High-quality academic experience</p> <p>B1 provides that courses must be up-to-date (B1.3a) and effectively delivered (B1.3d). A registered provider <i>could</i> submit the following evidence to demonstrate compliance with these requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • periodic monitoring and review of courses [A] • students' involvement in programme review and enhancement [B] • adaptations and revisions to programmes and programme specifications as the outcome of monitoring and review processes [C, D]. <p>Such a provider is likely to satisfy ESG Standard 1.9 but there is no explicit requirement under B1 to monitor and periodically review programmes.</p>	<p>There is no express overlap between B conditions and ESG Standard 1.9.</p> <p>It is possible that a registered provider might have met the requirement of condition B through demonstrating behaviours and outcomes that would equally satisfy ESG Standard 1.9. However, the requirement of condition B1 is expressed as a principle that can be satisfied in different ways (paragraph 332G).</p>

1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance

Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.

Outcomes under the ESG Standard and Guidelines	Relevant extracts/reference from OfS regulatory framework The notes in brackets [] refer to entries in the left-hand column which overlap with B conditions.	Commentary
A Institutions participate in cyclical external quality assurance which takes account of the requirements of the legislative framework. B Institutions ensure that progress made since the last external quality assurance is taken into account in preparation for the next.	Outside of the scope of the B conditions	There is no overlap between the ESG and B Conditions that would enable a provider to satisfy 1.10.

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