

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

between

the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, United Kingdom

and

the SkillsFuture Singapore Agency, Singapore

This Memorandum of Understanding is made between:

the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, Southgate House,
Southgate Street, Gloucester, GL1 1UB, United Kingdom (UK), hereafter referred to as **QAA**

and

SkillsFuture Singapore Agency, 1 Paya Lebar Link #08-08, Paya Lebar Quarter 2,
Singapore 408533, hereafter referred to as **SSG**

QAA and SSG are referred to collectively as 'both Parties' and individually referred to as a 'Party'.

Whereas

QAA was established in 1997. Its purpose is to maintain academic standards and enhance the quality and global reputation of UK higher education. It does this by working with higher education providers, regulatory bodies and students with the shared objective of supporting students to achieve positive educational outcomes. As a membership organisation, QAA represents and supports its university and college members, working in partnership with them to enhance the quality of their provision. QAA works to secure academic standards in UK higher education wherever it is delivered across the globe and takes a leading role in international developments in standards and quality, maintaining close relationships with many international quality assurance agencies, governments and HE institutions.

SSG, a statutory board under the Ministry of Education (MOE), is established under the SkillsFuture Singapore Agency Act 2016 (No. 24 of 2016) of Singapore. It drives and coordinates the implementation of the national SkillsFuture movement, promotes a culture and holistic system of lifelong learning through the pursuit of skills mastery, and strengthens the ecosystem of quality education and training in Singapore. SSG has taken on all functions of the former Council for Private Education since 3 October 2016 and has appointed the Committee for Private Education to carry out its functions and powers relating to private education under the Private Education Act (Chapter 247A) of Singapore, to regulate the sector, provide student services, consumer education and facilitate capability development efforts to uplift standards in the Singapore private education industry.

QAA and SSG

Having comparable missions and institutional objectives in the assurance of quality in higher education, both Parties wish to continue and deepen further their cooperation upon the terms contained herein.

Key principles: QAA and SSG

Both Parties understand and mutually acknowledge their respective independent regulatory responsibilities as authorised by the separate national governments and/or as membership organisations recognised by national governments.

Both Parties have comparable missions and organisational objectives in the assurance of quality in higher education, and now wish to establish a closer professional relationship as equal partners within a collaborative framework.

Both Parties envision benefits to be achieved through dialogue and cooperation, with benefits accruing to both agencies and to the institutions under their purview.

Both Parties understand the critical necessity of maintaining the confidentiality of information related to institutions, as well as to the agencies themselves as developed through accreditation activities.

Therefore, both Parties wish to collaborate on the following framework for mutually supportive and collaborative engagement.

This Memorandum of Understanding is not exhaustive and is not intended to be legally binding between QAA and SSG; nothing in this Memorandum of Understanding (including any provisions on confidentiality) shall be construed as creating any legally binding relationship between the Parties, or imposing any legally enforceable obligation or conferring any legally enforceable right on either Party. This Memorandum of Understanding is non-legally binding and serves only as a statement of intent setting forth the general basis upon which the Parties wish to proceed.

Areas of cooperation and collaboration

To these ends, QAA and SSG, in accordance with the framework of British and Singaporean laws and regulations, will pursue the following objectives for their mutual benefit:

(a) Mutual understanding

Work to enhance their understanding of each other's approach to assuring quality in higher education, the respective systems in place for quality assurance and enhancement in higher education, and the critical matters relating to quality and standards in higher education in both countries.

(b) Information exchange

Exchange information and offer professional advice about each other's activities and processes, about developments in their respective country's higher education systems, and about cross-border providers operating in both jurisdictions, having regard for the confidentiality of the information and relevant Data Protection legislation.

(c) Staff development

Where appropriate and possible, support the development of staff from the two agencies through activities such as staff exchange, observing each other's review processes, and provision of training.

(d) Use of each other's reviewers

Where appropriate and possible, draw on reviewers or other specialists from each other's system to strengthen the international dimension of each other's review processes.

(e) Recognition

Where appropriate and possible, in operations relating to quality assurance of higher education within one Party's jurisdiction but originating from the other Party's jurisdiction, have due regard to the relevant decisions and judgements of the other Party.

(f) Collaboration

Where appropriate and possible, collaborate in relation to mutually agreed projects and activities for the benefit of both Parties, including the quality enhancement of transnational education, the identification of fraudulent institutions, awarding bodies or accrediting agencies in the UK and in Singapore, supporting student mobility, and undertaking research on quality assurance related issues.

More specifically, at the end of this agreement, QAA and SSG aim to have achieved concrete collaboration in the following activities as appropriate and possible:

- a. Collaboration on transnational higher education and related emerging opportunities and challenges, including online higher education and its quality assurance.
- b. Contribution of shared knowledge on regulatory landscape and quality assurance and quality enhancement matters.
- c. Exploration on joint projects:
 - i. co-development of Country Reports to share information on regulatory landscape for higher education in both countries
 - ii. identification and sharing of reviewers for external quality assurance and enhancement activities.

If any costs will be incurred as a result of the collaboration, agreement to progress any allocation/reimbursement of costs should be agreed between QAA and SSG before any work is undertaken.

Confidentiality

Both Parties will use best efforts to ensure that any information of a confidential nature ('confidential information') that is shared between Parties is safeguarded and remains confidential, and will use the same degree of care as the receiving Party uses to protect its own confidential information.

Both Parties acknowledge that, in appropriate cases, they may enter into separate written agreement(s) about the handling of particular confidential information or classes of confidential information, the terms and conditions of which to be mutually agreed between the Parties.

Retention of information

Information exchanged under this Memorandum of Understanding will be held and disposed of in accordance with QAA's and SSG's retention schedules. For QAA this will be up to five years and for SSG this will be up to five years or as separately defined during the exchange of information.

Intellectual property rights

Any reports, notes, memoranda, records, correspondence, documents, computer and other storage, such as disks or other documents and materials used in this MoU, which has been generated or is already owned by either organisation shall be, and shall remain, the property of that organisation.

The settlement

In the event of a dispute between both Parties, it shall be resolved by friendly consultations.

Duration of Memorandum

The Memorandum of Understanding will take effect from the date of its signature and shall continue for a period of three years unless it is terminated by giving to the other Party three months' prior written notice by either Party. It may be extended on mutual agreement of both Parties.

Alteration of Memorandum

This Memorandum of Understanding is signed by the Parties in a spirit of amicable cooperation. The terms of the Memorandum of Understanding may be altered with the written approval of both Parties.

Management and liaison arrangements for the Memorandum

The Chief Executive of QAA (at the time of signing, Douglas Blackstock) and the Director-General (Private Education) of SSG (at the time of signing, Hui Mei San) will have responsibility for managing the implementation of the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding and taking stock of the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding on an annual basis. This responsibility may be delegated to relevant members of the agencies' staff in relation to particular areas of cooperation.

Resources

Unless alternative arrangements are specifically agreed to meet particular project requirements, each agency will normally cover their own costs of implementing the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding. For particular areas of cooperation donor funding may be sought from other sources.

Signed in the UK and Singapore on **16 August 2021**.

Signatures of the Parties:



Douglas Blackstock
Chief Executive
The Quality Assurance Agency for
Higher Education (QAA)

Southgate House
Southgate Street
Gloucester GL1 1UB
United Kingdom
Telephone: +44 1452 557000
Email: QAAGlobal@gaa.ac.uk
Website: www.qaa.ac.uk



Hui Mei San
Director-General (Private Education)
SkillsFuture Singapore Agency (SSG)

1 Paya Lebar Link #08-08,
Paya Lebar Quarter 2,
Singapore 408533
Telephone: +65 6785 5785
Email: CPE_Registration@ssg.gov.sg
Website: www.ssg.gov.sg/cpe/pei.html