

England

- Political oversight by UK Government and Parliament.
- [The Office for Students \(OfS\)](#) was established in 2018 as the Regulator of HE in England. It is an independent public body that reports to Parliament through the Department of Education (DfE). Primary focus is the student interest in its duty as a market regulator responsible for risk-based monitoring of indicators relating to the baseline quality and standards of provision, with powers of intervention and sanction. Maintains the [Register of Providers](#) and the [Regulatory Framework in England](#).
- Quality assessment: The [Higher Education and Research Act 2017 \(HERA\)](#) says that the OfS must assess, or make arrangements for the assessment of, quality and standards for providers seeking entry to the OfS Register or those already registered. Quality and standards assessment in England, including assessments for the authorisation of degree awarding powers, is carried out by the OfS. Providers are required to meet a minimum set of requirements ([initial and ongoing conditions of registration](#)) to remain registered with the OfS. Risk-based regulation of outcomes-focused requirements is designed to minimise regulatory burden. The OfS delivers this through initial assessments, ongoing monitoring, and investigatory action. Providers above a certain size must also participate in the [Teaching Excellence Framework \(TEF\)](#).
- [The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education \(QAA\)](#) continues to support providers in England with quality enhancement above the regulatory baseline.
- All providers are required to be a member of the complaints scheme run by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) to ensure independent redress for students.

Scotland

- Higher education is a devolved matter. Political oversight by Scottish Government and Parliament.
- The [Scottish Funding Council \(SFC\)](#) is a non-departmental public body and the strategic body responsible for funding teaching and learning provision and research and for ensuring the quality of fundable provision across further and higher education, under the [Further and Higher Education \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#).
- Quality assurance: [The Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework \(QEF\)](#) is built on partnership and collective engagement. The 5 points of the QEF are [Enhancement Themes](#), [Enhancement-Led Institutional Review \(ELIR\)](#), [Institution-led reviews \(ILR\)](#), [student engagement](#) and [public information](#). QAA Scotland manages the key elements of the framework in collaboration with the SFC, [Universities Scotland](#), [NUS Scotland](#) and [Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland \(sparqs\)](#). QAA also holds responsibility for assessing applications for degree awarding powers on behalf of the Scottish Government and operating the [Scottish Quality Concerns Scheme](#). The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is used as a benchmark for determining whether a higher education provider meets the threshold for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities.
- From the 2024-25 academic year, SFC will implement a common approach to quality assurance and enhancement across Scottish tertiary education (encompassing colleges and universities). This common approach will consist of external institutional peer review, institution-led activity (including strengthened focus on annual monitoring) and sector-level enhancement activity and will be underpinned by student engagement.
- All providers must provide information on final stage complaints procedures available through the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) which provides independent redress for students.

The inter-connected system of quality



Northern Ireland

- Higher education is a devolved matter. Political oversight by the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly.
- [The Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland \(DfENI\)](#) is a devolved government department in the Northern Ireland Executive. It holds responsibility for the funding and oversight of further and higher education in Northern Ireland.
- Quality assurance: Operating under [2016 quality arrangements](#) with the expectation of an enhancement-led review method being developed over the coming year. Currently continuing with a system involving annual provider reviews. QAA also holds responsibility for assessing applications for degree awarding powers on behalf of the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland. The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is used as a benchmark for determining whether a higher education provider meets the threshold for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities.
- All providers must provide information on final stage complaints procedures available through the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman (NIPSO) which provides independent redress for students.

Wales

- Higher education is a devolved matter. Political oversight by Welsh Government and Senedd.
- The [Higher Education Funding Council for Wales \(HEFCW\)](#) is the Welsh Government Sponsored Body responsible for regulating the higher education sector. This will be replaced by the [Commission for Tertiary Education and Research \(CTER\)](#) from Spring 2024, which will be responsible for the strategy, funding and oversight of the post-compulsory education and training sector, including research as set out in the [Tertiary Education and Research \(Wales\) Act 2022](#).
- CTER will have a duty to monitor and promote improvement in the quality of tertiary education in registered and/or funded providers. [Estyn](#), the education and training inspectorate for Wales will retain a duty to inspect further education and training whilst CTER will have the power to designate a body to carry out assessments of the quality of higher education.
- Quality assurance: Overall [Quality Assessment Framework for Wales](#) with QAA undertaking [Quality Enhancement Reviews](#) of regulated HE providers every five years while [Gateway Quality Reviews](#) of HE providers test new entrants against the baseline quality regulatory requirements. The second phase of QER will begin in the 2023-24 academic year. QAA also holds responsibility for assessing applications for degree awarding powers on behalf of the Welsh Government and operating the [Concerns Investigation Process \(Wales\)](#). The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is used as a benchmark for determining whether a higher education provider meets the threshold for academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities.
- All providers are required to be a member of the complaints scheme run by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) to ensure independent redress for students.