



UK Quality Code for Higher Education

**Part B: Assuring and Enhancing
Academic Quality**

Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review

PART
B

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About the Quality Code

The UK Quality Code for Higher Education (the Quality Code) is the definitive reference point for all UK higher education providers.¹ It makes clear what higher education providers are required to do, what they can expect of each other, and what students and the general public can expect of them. The Quality Code covers all four nations of the UK (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) and all providers of UK higher education operating internationally. It protects the interests of all students, regardless of where they are studying or whether they are full-time, part-time, undergraduate or postgraduate students.

The Quality Code has three Parts. Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards contains three Chapters and seven Expectations. Each of the 11 Chapters of Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality, and Part C: Information About Higher Education Provision contain a single Expectation. An Expectation expresses the key principle that the higher education community has identified as essential for the assurance of academic standards and quality within the area covered by the respective Chapter or Part. Higher education providers reviewed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) are required to meet all the Expectations. The manner in which they do so is their own responsibility. QAA carries out reviews to check whether higher education providers are meeting the Expectations.²

The Expectations in Part C and each Chapter of Part B are accompanied by a series of Indicators that reflect sound practice, and through which providers can demonstrate they are meeting the relevant Expectation. Indicators are not designed to be used as a checklist; they are intended to help providers reflect on and develop their regulations, procedures and practices to demonstrate that the Expectations in the Quality Code are being met. Each Indicator is supported by an explanatory note that gives more information about it, together with examples of how the Indicator may be interpreted in practice. Indicators are grouped into clusters under a heading. There are no Indicators in Part A. The explanatory text provided directly supports the relevant Expectation.

Each Part and Chapter has been developed by QAA through an extensive process of consultation with higher education providers; their representative bodies; the National Union of Students; professional, statutory and regulatory bodies; and other interested parties.

The *UK Quality Code for Higher Education: General Introduction*³ should be considered in conjunction with this document. It provides a technical introduction for users, including guidance concerning the terminology used and a quick-reference glossary. A more detailed glossary is available on QAA's website.⁴

The Quality Code and legislation

Higher education providers are responsible for meeting the requirements of legislation and any other regulatory requirements placed upon them, for example, by funding bodies. The Quality Code does not interpret legislation nor does it incorporate statutory or regulatory requirements. Sources of information about other requirements and examples of guidance and good practice are signposted within the Part or Chapter where appropriate. Higher education providers are responsible for how they use these resources.

Equality and diversity in the Quality Code

The Quality Code promotes an inclusive approach by embedding consideration of equality and diversity matters throughout. Promoting equality involves treating everyone with equal dignity and worth, irrespective of the group or groups to which they belong, while also raising aspirations and supporting achievement for people with diverse requirements, entitlements and backgrounds. An inclusive environment for learning anticipates the varied requirements of learners, for example, because of a declared disability, specific cultural background, location or age, and aims to ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities. Higher education providers, staff and students all have a role in and responsibility for promoting equality.

Equality of opportunity involves enabling access for people who have differing individual requirements as well as eliminating arbitrary and unnecessary barriers to learning. In addition, disabled students and non-disabled students are offered learning opportunities that are equally accessible to them, by means of

inclusive design wherever possible and by means of reasonable individual adjustments wherever necessary. Offering an equal opportunity to learn is distinguished from every student having an equal chance of success, because this is dependent on a range of factors including their motivation and engagement in learning.

All higher education providers have legal obligations which they must meet, for example, in relation to equality of opportunity and eliminating unlawful discrimination (in the UK particular considerations, such as the anticipatory duty to provide reasonable adjustments, apply to disabled students). The Quality Code does not seek to duplicate or interpret these requirements.

About this Chapter

This publication supersedes the *Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education (Code of Practice), Section 7: Programme Design, Approval, Monitoring and Review* (2006), published by QAA, as it relates to programme monitoring, review and closure, and forms a Chapter of the Quality Code. Programme Design, development and approval are addressed in *Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval* of the Quality Code. The evaluation of the Academic Infrastructure and consultation on subsequent changes identified the need for the Quality Code, which was developed as a result, to have a more logical structure, based on the student life cycle. *Chapter B1* addresses the initial design and development of a programme and the processes which lead to a decision by the degree-awarding body that it may be delivered in the agreed form. *Chapters B2 to B7* of the Quality Code consider various topics related to the operation of the programme. *Chapter B8* discusses the mechanisms that higher education providers use to reflect on the programme once it is running, and to determine how it can be improved. This Chapter also addresses matters relating to closure of existing programmes.

This Chapter should be read alongside Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards.

This Chapter was subject to public consultation between June and August 2013 and was published in October 2013. It became a reference point for the purpose of reviews carried out by QAA from August 2014.

Introduction: Programme monitoring and review

UK higher education is based on the principle of the autonomy and responsibility of the degree-awarding body for the academic standards and quality of learning opportunities of the programmes it offers and the qualifications and credit it awards. The monitoring and review of programmes are essential processes within higher education providers' internal quality assurance mechanisms which enable that responsibility to be exercised and form a fundamental part of the academic cycle.

The processes of programme monitoring and programme review ensure that the provider's academic provision has made, and continues to make, available to students appropriate learning opportunities, which enable the intended learning outcomes of the programme to be achieved. They also evaluate student attainment of academic standards and allow higher education providers to confirm that their portfolio aligns with their mission and strategic priorities. This Chapter addresses the operation and effectiveness of these processes. Ultimate responsibility for monitoring and review of programmes rests with degree-awarding bodies. However, all higher education providers are involved in elements of programme monitoring and review processes because these enable providers to consider how learning opportunities for students may be enhanced. The extent to which a degree-awarding body delegates authority and operational roles for programme monitoring and programme review to a delivery organisation with whom the degree-awarding body works is defined in the agreement between the two bodies. This Chapter is therefore relevant to both degree-awarding bodies and delivery organisations to help them to discharge their respective responsibilities and roles for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities in relation to the monitoring and review of programmes. For further detail, see Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards and *Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others*.

Cyclical processes

Programme monitoring and programme review enable higher education providers to reflect on the learning opportunities students have experienced, the academic standards achieved, and their continuing currency and relevance. Through programme design, development and approval (addressed in *Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval*), higher education providers set aims for the programme; through monitoring and review, the provider considers to what extent those aims have been achieved (see also *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*). The monitoring and review of programmes also provide opportunities to ensure the student voice has been heard and to respond to student feedback and feedback from other stakeholders such as employers. This Chapter also addresses processes for managing minor changes to programmes, including their cumulative effect, which may arise from monitoring or review or more organically as a result of ongoing engagement with the programme by staff and students.

This Chapter addresses the processes for both programme monitoring and programme review, as they share many common themes and features while differing in scale. Programme monitoring or review processes may lead the higher education provider to reconsider the design of a programme. Higher education providers specify the circumstances in which a programme is required to be re-approved, whether as a result of significant changes over time or if time limits on the original approval have expired. This Chapter is therefore closely linked to *Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval*, as part of the cyclical nature of higher education. Closure of an existing programme is addressed in the current Chapter, reflecting the point at which it occurs in the context of a programme lifecycle.

Effective processes

UK higher education providers are diverse, and each has processes for programme monitoring and review which reflect individual missions and goals, while also ensuring the security of academic standards and quality of learning opportunities. These processes are set out in ways which make evident their application to the higher education provider's context. Higher education providers apply their processes systematically and operate them consistently; the processes are capable of being applied to all higher education offered by a provider, but respect differences between subjects, modes and levels of study. Processes are not

unduly burdensome or complicated, taking into account an assessment of the risks involved, and an appropriate level of resource is made available to ensure that the required outcomes of the process are achieved. The processes are based on evidence, and operate in a transparent way.

Programme monitoring and programme review may draw on information from many different areas within the higher education provider, including academic departments and professional services. Within the remit of the Quality Code, this Chapter addresses monitoring and review of academic provision, although many of its themes will also be relevant to the evaluation of other areas of the provider, such as professional services.

Continuous engagement and promoting enhancement

Programme monitoring and programme review are particular stages within an ongoing process, and are not isolated events but part of a continuous engagement by staff and students with a programme. Opportunities for changes to a programme may be identified at any time, but the processes of monitoring and review provide a formal opportunity for higher education providers to reflect on their academic provision and consider how it may be changed to enhance student learning opportunities. The processes provide assurance, and identify any problems which need to be resolved, but also enable good practice to be identified, built upon and shared, providing opportunities for continuous improvement of the programme and enhancement of the student experience. Higher education providers ensure that processes are designed in such a way to enable this balance between assurance and enhancement to be achieved.

Promoting equality

In their processes for programme monitoring and review, higher education providers take into account the entitlements of a body of students who reflect the diversity of protected characteristics and prior educational experience, and promote the development of inclusive practice.

Terminology

In this Chapter, as throughout the Quality Code, **programme** is used to describe any stand-alone, approved curriculum followed by a student, which contributes to a qualification of a degree-awarding body or otherwise carries academic credit where credit is used. The provision may be of any length, volume or credit value, and includes pre-defined programmes leading to a specific qualification, multidisciplinary programmes, pathways through a modular scheme, short periods of study leading to the award of academic credit, as well as programmes where the specific content is negotiated between the higher education provider and an individual student. In general terms, the Chapter applies to provision at all levels of the national frameworks for higher education qualifications. Individual higher education providers ensure their processes for programme monitoring and review of research degrees are appropriate to their research environment (for more detail see *Chapter B11: Research Degrees*). Higher education providers determine the extent to which their processes for programme design, development and approval are applicable to other programmes which do not lead to academic awards.

Where a programme is made up of more than one self-contained, formally structured unit, these units are described as **modules**. Much of this Chapter may also be applied, proportionately as appropriate, to modules in their own right.

Reflecting conventional use within the UK higher education sector, programme **monitoring** refers to a regular, systematic process. It may take place annually or at shorter or longer intervals and provides a check on ongoing learning and teaching provision at an operational level. Programme **review** occurs less frequently, but periodically and to an agreed cycle. It has a broader remit and is informed by a view of trends over time. The review of a programme may be related to its re-approval, if the original approval was time limited; if the original approval was open ended, review is designed in a way that fulfils the function of re-approval (see *Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval* and *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*).

In both cases, the unit of learning under consideration may be a module or group of modules, or a programme or group of programmes, or monitoring and review may take place at the departmental, subject or organisational level.

Higher education providers may use different terminology to that adopted in this Chapter or use the same terminology in different ways in relation to monitoring and review, reflecting their individual history and approach. For example, the monitoring which takes place at the end of each academic cycle may be described as annual monitoring or annual review, the less frequent review process is often described as periodic review. Higher education providers specify how terminology is used within the context of their own processes.

External links

Higher education providers are responsible for ascertaining which laws and regulations apply to them. To meet the Expectation of this Chapter of the Quality Code, higher education providers may wish to consider the indicative lists of further guidelines, references and resources. QAA takes no responsibility for the content of external websites.

Expectation

The Quality Code sets out the following Expectation about programme monitoring and review, which higher education providers are required to meet.

Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review of programmes.

Indicators of sound practice

The purpose and nature of programme monitoring and programme review

Indicator 1

Higher education providers maintain strategic oversight of the processes for, and outcomes of, programme monitoring and programme review, to ensure processes are applied systematically and operated consistently.

Coordination

Programme monitoring and programme review take place in a planned cycle based on a transparent rationale, which may include assessment of the risks involved in the provision concerned. This ensures that all provision is monitored and reviewed adequately but without unnecessary duplication or overlap, for example, when a broader range of provision than a single programme is being considered. The way in which processes are implemented also enables higher education providers to monitor or review all the ways in which a programme is experienced by students, whether in alternative forms of delivery (for example, by distance learning or massive open online courses (MOOCs)) or within different programme pathways. For further detail on monitoring and review of provision offered in association with others, see *Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others*.

The outcomes of monitoring are taken into account when determining plans for less frequent review, for example, in relation to timing and scope. Newly introduced programmes may be reviewed at a shorter interval than those that have been running for some time, for example. Higher education providers also take into account the requirements for and timing of monitoring and review by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies where appropriate.

Organisational oversight

The outcomes of the processes of monitoring and review are reported at the appropriate organisational level. Higher education providers put in place mechanisms which enable them to exercise oversight of the outcomes of the processes, in order to identify any overarching themes. They determine whether strategic action is required to address the themes identified, in addition to using the outcomes of the processes to inform organisational planning at an operational level.

The level of scrutiny and reporting involved in the processes of programme monitoring and review is proportionate to the scale and risk of the provision being considered. Higher education providers are able to confirm that action has been taken to implement recommendations made in previous cycles of monitoring or processes for review, or at the approval of the programme (see *Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval* and *Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards*).

Use of data

Higher education providers draw upon qualitative and quantitative information in programme monitoring and programme review. This may include data on student progression and achievement, information made publicly available or reported to external bodies including professional, regulatory and statutory bodies, reports from external examiners, and other comparative data. Feedback from students, alumni, staff and employers also informs the processes. Where possible, data is disaggregated by protected characteristics in order to identify any differential impact on particular groups of students.

Indicator 2

Higher education providers take deliberate steps to use the outcomes of programme monitoring and review processes for enhancement purposes.

Enabling enhancement

The purpose of programme monitoring or programme review is to consider the continuing currency and validity of programmes in light of developments in research, professional and industry practice and pedagogy (including the use of technology in learning and teaching), changes in the external environment such as requirements of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies, and continued alignment with the provider's strategy and mission. They also evaluate whether students are attaining the intended learning outcomes and whether the assessment regime enables this to be appropriately demonstrated (see *Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and Recognition of Prior Learning* and *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*). Higher education providers ensure that processes are designed in such a way to enable this balance between assurance and enhancement to be achieved.

The processes highlight where improvements to provision are possible in order to enhance student learning opportunities and encourage the development of more inclusive approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. Higher education providers use the processes of monitoring and review to consider the entitlements of students with protected characteristics, ensuring that every student has an equal opportunity to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Changes to programmes

Programme monitoring and programme review help identify where changes to enhance a programme may be made and how they may be acted upon. Where potential improvements are identified through programme monitoring and review processes, these are formally recorded and their implementation monitored, for example, through action plans. Opportunities for change may also be identified more organically, through ongoing engagement with the programme by students and staff. Higher education providers ensure that there are no unnecessary barriers to making changes to enhance a programme and that it is possible to introduce enhancements in a timely fashion, taking into account the academic interests of students, to ensure they are not disadvantaged by the change.

However, higher education providers also oversee the effect of changes on the maintenance of academic standards and the assurance of the quality of learning opportunities. Changes vary in scale and effect, and higher education providers produce criteria for distinguishing between different types of change, the process and level of authority needed to agree them, and the period of notice required to enact them. This includes a definition of the circumstances in which a programme needs to be reconsidered through any stages of the provider's programme approval processes (see *Chapter B1: Programme Design, Development and Approval*).

Cumulative and substantial changes

Higher education providers have in place mechanisms which enable them to consider the cumulative effect of small changes to programmes, to ensure that the programmes continue to align with their aims, intended learning outcomes and the provider's strategy and mission, and that the criteria for programme design, development and approval are still met.

When substantial changes are proposed to the content and/or character of a programme, or any change to the name of the qualification, higher education providers take into account the effect on the students and take steps to consult all students affected. They consider how the changes may be implemented while maintaining academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, which may include introducing them on a phased basis if necessary. Students receive sufficient notice of forthcoming changes.

Indicator 3

Higher education providers operate a process to protect the academic interests of students when a programme is closed.

A higher education provider may decide to withdraw a programme from its portfolio of provision, either as an outcome of programme monitoring or programme review, or for other reasons, underpinned by analysis of management information. A number of factors may contribute to this decision, including changes in patterns of demand from prospective students, changes in staffing, a strategic realignment of the provider's portfolio or a major organisational change, such as merger with another provider. In these circumstances, higher education providers discuss the implications with affected students at the earliest opportunity and assess the possible impact on academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, particularly with regard to specific groups of students, taking into account the diversity of protected characteristics and prior educational experience.

Higher education providers have an agreed and planned procedure for managing the closure of a programme, which includes protecting the academic interests of all students already studying on the programme (including those who have taken an agreed break from their studies) and those who have applied to study on it (see *Chapter B2: Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education*). The quality of the learning experience is safeguarded during the period in which the programme is being withdrawn, for example, where current students continue studying to complete the programme although there are no new entrants. Higher education providers take account of the effect on partners, delivery organisations and support providers with whom they work to offer the programme, and on the students studying with them (see *Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others*).

Circumstances may arise in which the decision to close a programme is beyond a higher education provider's control, but the existence of a planned withdrawal process enables providers to manage this situation to protect the academic interests of students as far as possible.

Further guidelines, references and resources

Equality Act 2010

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents

The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011

www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/2260/contents/made

Equality Challenge Unit (2011) *Public Sector Equality Duty: Specific Duties for England*

www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/public-sector-equality-duty-specific-duties-for-england/

Equality Challenge Unit (2011) *The Public Sector Equality Duty: Specific Duties for Wales*

www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/the-public-sector-equality-duty-specific-duties-for-wales/

Equality Challenge Unit (2010) *Anti-Discrimination Law in Northern Ireland*

www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/anti-discrimination-law-in-northern-ireland

QAA (2011) *Outcomes from Institutional Audit 2007-09: Managing Learning Opportunities*

www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Outcomes-audit-learning-2007-9.pdf

QAA Scotland Enhancement Themes: Developing and Supporting the Curriculum

www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/enhancement-themes/developing-and-supporting-the-curriculum

QAA Scotland Enhancement Themes: Flexible Delivery

www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/enhancement-themes/completed-enhancement-themes/flexible-delivery

QAA Scotland (2013) *Enhancement and Innovation in Higher Education Conference 11-13 June 2013: Conference Materials*

www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/docs/publications/post-conference-publication.pdf

QAA Scotland (2013) *Institutional Approaches to Self-Evaluation (IASE): Project Report*

www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=109

Regulatory Partnership Group (2013) *Supplementary Paper 3: International Student Protection*

www.hefce.ac.uk/media/hefce/content/about/introduction/workinginpartnership/rpg/march13/March_2013_sp3.pdf

JISC (2013) *Enhancing Curriculum Design with Technology*

www.jisc.ac.uk/sites/default/files/enhancing-curriculum-design.pdf

JISC Design Studio: Curriculum Change and Transformation

<http://jiscdesignstudio.pbworks.com/w/page/57414310/Curriculum%20Change%20and%20Transformation>

Processes for programme monitoring and programme review

Indicator 4

Higher education providers define processes, roles and responsibilities for programme monitoring and programme review and communicate them to those involved.

Higher education providers make clear to all concerned the processes, including any distinctions between them, to be followed for the monitoring and review of programmes. They determine who is responsible for initiating and managing the processes, and the timescales involved. Attention is paid to the terminology used, to aid full understanding. Higher education providers determine responsibility for identifying, disseminating and embedding good practice through the processes.

Programme monitoring and review processes may be managed from different organisational areas within the higher education provider, depending on the nature and scale of provision under consideration. Higher education providers ensure that responsibility for coordination of the process is explicitly defined, and that all those connected with the programme have the opportunity to be involved, for example, if a programme involves staff from more than one academic department. Higher education providers define the respective roles, responsibilities and authority of different individuals and bodies involved in programme monitoring and programme review. Those involved are fully briefed about their individual role, the hierarchy of procedures, and the location of ultimate responsibility, including where a degree-awarding body works with a partner or delivery organisation to offer higher education (see *Chapter A2: Degree-Awarding Bodies' Reference Points for Academic Standards* and *Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others*).

Higher education providers decide the appropriate mechanism for recording and communicating this information. They make it accessible to those who need to be aware of it, which includes members of decision-making bodies and other individuals involved in any stage of programme monitoring and review processes, including their strategic oversight (see Part C: Information About Higher Education Provision).

Indicator 5

Higher education providers evaluate their processes for programme monitoring and review and take action to improve them where necessary.

The regular evaluation of processes for programme monitoring and review ensures that the processes remain fit for purpose and are not unnecessarily burdensome, and that their outcomes continue to contribute to the enhancement of student learning opportunities. Higher education providers determine how often they carry out such evaluation. Evaluation provides an opportunity to identify and disseminate good practice, both internally within the higher education provider and, if appropriate, externally within the wider higher education sector. Higher education providers consider the definition of roles and responsibilities and any delegation of authority within the processes, and whether these remain efficient and are operating effectively. Higher education providers seek student input to the evaluation, for example, in relation to whether the processes provide sufficient opportunities for student involvement.

The evaluation also considers the extent to which students from diverse backgrounds and with a range of protected characteristics, and students studying through different modes and in different locations, including with delivery organisations if relevant, have engaged with the processes (see *Chapter B5: Student Engagement*).

Higher education providers communicate the outcomes of the evaluation and any changes made to processes to all relevant audiences, including staff and students involved in programme monitoring or programme review.

Further guidelines, references and resources

Irish Universities Quality Board (2012) *National Guidelines of Good Practice for the Approval, Monitoring and Periodic Review of Programmes*
www.iuqb.ie/GetAttachment0afd.pdf?id=fc0d5ea4-4d7b-41ba-9d10-b5af1410236a

QAA: Review Knowledgebases
www.qaa.ac.uk/improving-higher-education/knowledgebase-search

Involvement in programme monitoring and review

Indicator 6

Higher education providers make use of reference points and draw on expertise from those outside the programme in their processes for programme monitoring and review.

The nature and extent of external input to programme monitoring and programme review is proportionate to the scale of the process involved. For example, review may draw on a wider external contribution than ongoing monitoring, from a larger number and greater variety of sources. Higher education providers ensure that they are able to receive appropriate advice on academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities, and that there is sufficient independence and objectivity in any decision-making. This contributes to the transparency of the process and provides a basis for comparability of academic standards across the higher education sector (see *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*).

Expertise from outside the programme

Feedback on programmes from those not directly involved in their delivery, from individuals either internal or external to the provider, enables higher education providers to identify areas for improvement and enhancement, as well as offering assurance of academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities. Possible sources of feedback in addition to current and former students and staff of the higher education provider directly involved with the programme may include:

- staff of the higher education provider, from other academic subject areas or with professional services expertise, such as educational development, library and learning resources staff, learning technologists, disability practitioners and equality and diversity practitioners
- staff from other higher education providers, including those with whom they work to deliver learning opportunities (see *Chapter B10: Managing Higher Education Provision with Others*)
- contacts from academic subject associations, the Higher Education Academy and relevant sector networks, such as those concerned with developments in pedagogy and technology-enhanced learning
- external examiners and their reports (on the role of external examiners in contributing to programme monitoring and review see *Chapter B7: External Examining*)
- professional, statutory and regulatory bodies
- organisations in the communities with which the higher education provider works
- contacts made through working with others, at other higher education providers, in industry or professional practice, or through research collaborations
- employers, who may be directly involved in the programme, for example, in offering placement opportunities, or have employed students who had previously studied on the programme.

Higher education providers ensure that individuals external to the higher education provider involved in programme monitoring or programme review are appropriately qualified, in terms of their expertise in relation to the programme, and are provided with accessible information on the process and their role within it.

National and European reference points

Programme monitoring and review processes enable higher education providers to consider whether the intended learning outcomes of the programme continue to align with relevant national and European reference points. Relevant reference points include the national frameworks for higher education qualifications and credit, other guidance on qualifications and Subject Benchmark Statements, and the requirements of professional, regulatory and statutory bodies where appropriate. Processes relating to academic standards are addressed in detail in *Chapter A3: Securing Academic Standards and an Outcomes-Based Approach to Academic Awards*.

Indicator 7

Higher education providers involve students in programme monitoring and review processes.

Students are involved in programme monitoring and programme review in both formal and informal ways. The nature and extent of student involvement in monitoring and review is proportionate to the scale of the process involved. *Chapter B5: Student Engagement* discusses the creation of a culture of engagement in more detail.

Students are a primary source of information about the programmes on which they are studying or have studied. Higher education providers actively seek feedback from students about their learning experience on an ongoing basis and at specified points in the academic cycle. Providers take into account views of students at different points of the programme and take steps to engage a range of students, who reflect the diversity of protected characteristics and prior educational experience. Feedback is collected through a range of different mechanisms.

Where students not directly involved in the programme have a defined role in the processes of monitoring and review, there is clarity about their responsibilities. Higher education providers take steps to ensure that they take into account the views of the student body, including students with a diversity of protected characteristics. Higher education providers facilitate the contribution of all students involved by ensuring appropriate training and support is provided, determined by the role the student is taking.

Feedback from students about their programme is distinguished from complaints on academic matters and this distinction is explained to students. However, higher education providers feed any themes arising from complaints and appeals into relevant monitoring or review processes (see *Chapter B9: Academic Appeals and Student Complaints*).

Student involvement in quality systems is addressed in more detail in *Chapter B5: Student Engagement*. Student engagement in learning is addressed in *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching*.

Indicator 8

Higher education providers enable staff and other participants to contribute effectively to programme monitoring and programme review by putting in place appropriate arrangements for their support and development.

Higher education providers recognise the wider value of staff engagement with programme monitoring and programme review in terms of the overall enhancement of provision by putting in place opportunities for training, support and development. Members of staff who are new to the processes are enabled to work alongside or observe more experienced colleagues to experience the processes in operation.

Staff involved in contributing to programme monitoring and programme review are drawn from across the higher education provider, including academic and professional services staff. Where a higher education provider works with other partners, delivery organisations or support providers to deliver higher education, relevant staff contribute to monitoring and review. Others with relevant expertise, such as employers, may also be involved. Higher education providers ensure that all those involved are aware of their responsibilities and are able to fulfil their role effectively.

Higher education providers recognise the value and mutual benefit for their own provision of facilitating staff involvement in programme monitoring and programme review at other higher education providers.

The continuing professional development of staff who teach and enable student development and achievement is covered in more detail in *Chapter B3: Learning and Teaching* and *Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement*.

Further guidelines, references and resources

sparqs (2012) *A Student Engagement Framework for Scotland*
www.sparqs.ac.uk/culture.php?page=168

Wise Wales
www.wisewales.org.uk/

QAA (2011) *Outcomes from Institutional Audit 2007-09: External Involvement in Quality Management*
www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/outcomes-institutional-audit-2007-9-external.pdf

Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA)
www.seda.ac.uk

The Higher Education Academy (2011) *UK Professional Standards Framework*
www.heacademy.ac.uk/ukpsf

National Union of Students
www.nus.org.uk

National Union of Students: *Equality in the Curriculum*
www.nusconnect.org.uk/campaigns/highereducation/archived/learning-and-teaching-hub/equalityinthecurriculum/

Learning Design Support Environment
<https://sites.google.com/a/lkl.ac.uk/ldse/>

University of Bath (2013) *Student Engagement in Learning and Teaching Quality Management: A Study of UK Practices*
www.bath.ac.uk/learningandteaching/student-engagement/qaa-student-engagement-project-2012-13.html

Appendix 1 - The Expectation and Indicators Programme Monitoring and Review

The Expectation

The Quality Code sets out the following Expectation about programme monitoring and review, which higher education providers are required to meet.

Higher education providers, in discharging their responsibilities for setting and maintaining academic standards and assuring and enhancing the quality of learning opportunities, operate effective, regular and systematic processes for monitoring and for review.

The Indicators of sound practice

Indicator 1

Higher education providers maintain strategic oversight of the processes for, and outcomes of, programme monitoring and programme review, to ensure processes are applied systematically and operated consistently.

Indicator 2

Higher education providers take deliberate steps to use the outcomes of programme monitoring and review processes for enhancement purposes.

Indicator 3

Higher education providers operate a process to protect the academic interests of students when a programme is closed.

Indicator 4

Higher education providers define processes, roles and responsibilities for programme monitoring and programme review and communicate them to those involved.

Indicator 5

Higher education providers evaluate their processes for programme monitoring and review and take action to improve them where necessary.

Indicator 6

Higher education providers make use of reference points and draw on expertise from those outside the programme in their processes for programme monitoring and review.

Indicator 7

Higher education providers involve students in programme monitoring and review processes.

Indicator 8

Higher education providers enable staff and other participants to contribute effectively to programme monitoring and programme review by putting in place appropriate arrangements for their support and development.

Appendix 2 - Membership of the advisory group for this Chapter

Name	Position	Affiliation
Janet Alleyne	Head of Quality Management and Audit Unit	University of Ulster
Harriet Barnes	Development Officer	QAA
Janet Bohrer	Assistant Director	QAA
Dr Richard Brown	Assistant Director of Quality & Standards (Programmes and Awards)	Canterbury Christ Church University
Professor Peter Bullen	Emeritus Professor	University of Hertfordshire
Dr Colleen Connor	Dean of Learning and Teaching	Cardiff Metropolitan University
Tom Evershed	Higher Education Manager	Warwickshire College
Rebecca Freeman	Educational Strategy and Communications Officer	University of Warwick
Dr Richard Kamm	Head of Learning and Teaching Quality, School of Management	University of Bath
Simon Macklin	Pro-Provost (Student Experience)	Greenwich School of Management
Dr Christine Macpherson	Assistant Director	QAA Scotland
Professor Clare Morris	Independent	
Dr Charles Neame	Reader in Learning and Teaching Practice Development	Glasgow School of Art
Aloma Onyemah	Equality and Diversity Officer	Sheffield Hallam University
Nicola Owen	Chief Administrative Officer	Lancaster University

Dr Anne Rixom Head of Operations, London University of Liverpool

Jessica Robinson Head of Academic Quality and Standards University of Cumbria

References

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- ² www.qaa.ac.uk/reviews-and-reports/how-we-review-higher-education
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- ⁴ www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/glossary

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