



The UK Quality Code for Higher Education - Advice and Guidance



Sector-Agreed Principle 3 -
Resourcing delivery of a high-
quality learning experience

September 2026



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About this Guidance

Context

This Advice and Guidance supports the [UK Quality Code](#) for Higher Education (Quality Code) and is designed to unpack Sector-Agreed Principle 3 Resourcing delivery of a high-quality learning experience and the Key Practices that sit under it. It has been produced by QAA in partnership with a writing group of sector experts and peer-reviewed by colleagues across UK higher education. This is in accordance with the ethos that the Quality Code remains a sector-agreed reference point, built on a shared understanding of what providers can expect of themselves and each other in the assurance and enhancement of quality and the maintenance of standards across post-secondary education throughout the UK. QAA would like to thank the writing group and peer readers for their invaluable contribution in developing this guidance. Details of the writing and reading groups can be found on [64](#) of this guidance.

An important contextual note relates to the diversity of higher education providers in the UK. Providers can be large universities, operating with significant infrastructure, or small specialist providers, operating on a significantly smaller scale, or any number of other different operating models. The Advice and Guidance is designed to be useful for all providers (and representatives from a range of providers formed the writing and peer review groups), but we recognise that, on occasion, the nomenclature used could suggest a larger provider's context. It is important that each reader interprets the Advice and Guidance in the context of their own operating environment and that all readers recognise that quality and homogeneity are not synonymous.

Scope

This Advice and Guidance encourages providers to reflect on their practice and processes in relation to the Sector-Agreed Principle. Following the Advice and Guidance is not mandatory, but illustrative of approaches that can help providers meet the relevant Principle. National regulators and QAA do not view the information in the Advice and Guidance as compliance indicators. This guidance does not interpret statutory requirements.

The language we use

Where the word 'should' (or any other similarly directive language) appears in the Advice and Guidance this represents a shared understanding within the UK higher education community. On some occasions an institution can align with the Sector-Agreed Principle in a range of different ways, and in such cases an institution may have a different approach to that set out here. Ultimately, to be aligned with the Quality Code, an institution must be able to demonstrate how it meets the Sector-Agreed Principles in practice. No provider or individual should feel that the Advice and Guidance is prescriptive or impinges their autonomy or freedoms.

Structure

In response to sector demand, the Advice and Guidance aligns directly with the overarching Sector-Agreed Principles to provide clear navigation between the different elements. The guidance begins by unpacking the Principle in an operational context. It is then divided into subsections focusing on each Key Practice outlining practical considerations and approaches for providers to benchmark their own way of working. This features practical tips and experience shared by providers on operational practice. Finally, in each subsection there are tools to enable reflection on the guidance. These tools offer the opportunity to explore what 'good' might look like through reflective questions and practical scenarios that enable interrogation of current practice with a view to enhancing quality.

Commonly used terms

The following terms are used throughout this advice. Other terms which benefit from a precise definition are listed at the end of this document.

- **Students:** refers to all individuals studying towards a higher-level award regardless of demographic, mode of delivery, level of study, subject area, or geographic location.
- **Provider:** describes all types of organisations that provide higher level learning, including universities, colleges, institutes of learning, and employers. We also use 'institution' in some instances where 'provider' might not suit the context.
- **Student representative body:** a formal body or mechanism that represents and promotes the interests of students. This may be known as a students' union, a students' association, or guild, or by another bespoke name where these specific organisations do not exist.



Sector-Agreed Principle 3 and its Key Practices

Providers plan, secure and maintain resources relating to learning, technology, facilities and staffing to enable the delivery and enhancement of an accessible, innovative and high-quality learning experience for students that aligns with the provider's strategy and the composition of the student body.

Key Practices

- a. Strategic and operational plans, along with resources, align with the student journey and are designed and implemented to support a positive student experience and enable student achievement.
- b. Providers ensure they have dedicated, accessible and inclusive resources to support and enhance the delivery of their programmes (and smaller units of study) along with the well-being of students and staff. These include staffing, digital and physical resources.
- c. Resources are reviewed and updated in alignment with strategic developments and changes in provision, as well as staff and student recruitment. This also ensures relevance to the workplace and the wider academic discipline.
- d. Resources are allocated to ensure that staff receive ongoing professional development to support and enhance the delivery of a high-quality and innovative student learning and research experience.
- e. Processes and activities to support the management of academic standards and quality enhancement are appropriately resourced to meet strategic, operational and regulatory objectives and requirements.
- f. The creation, development and maintenance of accessible and inclusive learning environments (physical and virtual) offer all students the opportunity to be engaged in their learning experience and facilitate a sense of belonging. Providers ensure they consider environmental sustainability in designing and maintaining these learning resources and facilities.
- g. Providers, in collaboration with staff and students, monitor and evaluate on a systematic basis the effectiveness and impact of learning environments and the resources required for the delivery and enhancement of the learning experience.



Principle 3 - Resourcing delivery of a high-quality learning experience

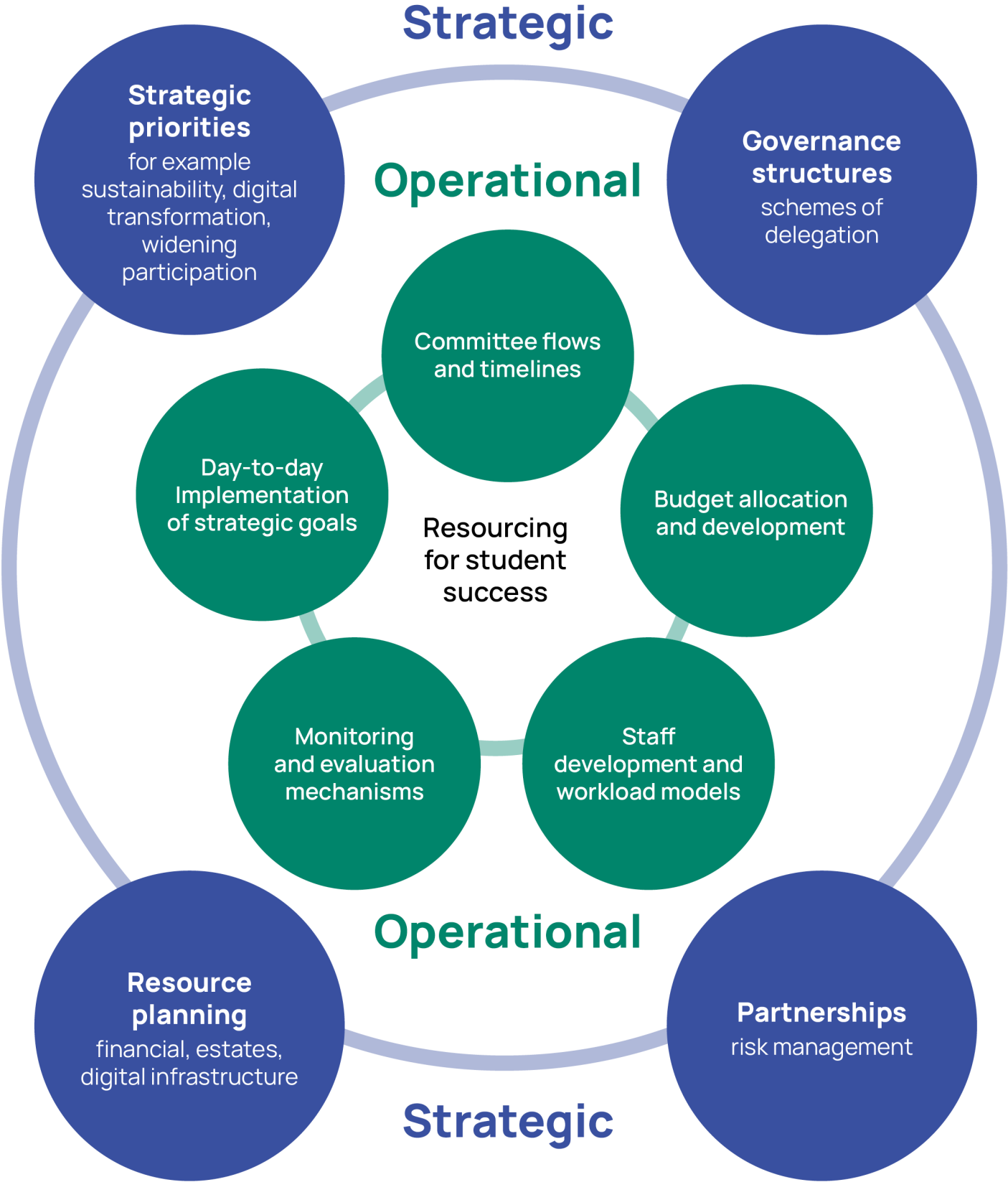
Providers plan, secure and maintain resources relating to learning, technology, facilities and staffing to enable the delivery and enhancement of an accessible, innovative and high-quality learning experience for students that aligns with the provider's strategy and the composition of the student body.

The focus of this Principle is on how the quality of the student learning experience is influenced by choices providers make about resourcing and deploying a range of physical, digital and human resources. A high-quality learning experience is also dependent upon providers putting in place a broad range of non-academic resources to support student well-being and offer positive experiences along the whole student journey.

Providers are encouraged to proactively work alongside students to ensure their mission and vision is reflected in the provision that they offer their students to allow them to succeed academically, professionally and personally. This will inform a strategy, ideally co-created with students and delivery partners, that prioritises engagement and well-being at each stage of the student journey. Through this process providers can acknowledge and resource the varied needs, expectations, lived experiences and perspectives of their student population and address any potential barriers to success.



Figure 1: The relationship between strategic and operational planning of resources



This advice and guidance is not intended as a simple blueprint for delivering a high-quality student learning experience. Rather, it should be used by providers, who may be navigating an uncertain external landscape, to inform their decisions about resourcing. It can help a provider consider each element that could contribute to a positive student experience and develop a strategic rationale for resourcing those that are relevant to their specific circumstances and reflect the evidenced needs of their student body. In planning and allocating resources to realise their strategic goals, providers will need to marry effective governance with robust financial planning, reliable and up-to-date data about their student demographic, and a clear vision of what success looks like for their graduates.

Realisation of a strategic plan will normally be delivered through an operational plan geared to the day-to-day implementation of strategic goals. Delivery plans need to be responsive to any unexpected changes in the external landscape or emerging student needs. To ensure some degree of agility and an ability to reprioritise, providers are encouraged to regularly gather and respond to student feedback as well as continuously monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of existing resources.

Whatever choices providers make about resourcing, they need to communicate their decisions to student and staff along with clear information about the spaces, facilities and services that are available to them and where they can be found. This extends to training and developing academic and professional services staff so that they are not only confident in their own roles but understand their boundaries and are able to signpost colleagues and students to the services and resources they need.





Key Practice a - Planning resources to support a positive student experience

Key Practice a

Planning resources to support a positive student experience

Strategic and operational plans, along with resources, align with the student journey and are designed and implemented to support a positive student experience and enable student achievement.

Providers should intentionally and purposefully align their strategic and operational planning, as well as their resource allocation, across the whole student journey, with consideration given to each stage of the journey from outreach and recruitment to enrolment, and through to graduation and alumni engagement.

Vision and strategy

Providers should have a strategy approved by their governing body that is periodically reviewed and updated, and which encompasses the long-term vision, mission and goals for the institution and its partners (See [Principle 1 -Taking a strategic approach to managing quality and standards](#)). To realise that strategy, providers should develop a multi-year strategic plan aligned to the specific needs and aspirations of their students. In developing their strategic plan, providers should identify and consult as broad a range of stakeholders as possible, including students, alumni, employers and advisers from other sectors.

Operational planning

The strategic plan should be directly supported by an operational plan, or plans, with specific, actionable steps for day-to-day execution in the short to medium term. Operational planning embeds the need to change and modernise resources and evaluate their effectiveness, while maintaining a quality in-year offer that evolves as new resources come on stream. Operational plans need to be sufficiently flexible to account for changes in governance structures, external regulatory requirements and policy frameworks among partner institutions, including franchised provision.

Regular review points and engagement with stakeholders, particularly students and student representatives, should be built into any operational plans. This is normally accounted for in a provider's governance structures, including the possibility of additional stakeholder engagement if dictated by circumstances. Designated committees, including cross-institutional committees, are usually responsible for ensuring alignment between a provider and their partner institutions, including validating partners. This approach should extend to collaborative and franchised provision with clarity on authority to approve required changes on agreed timeframes to action and a mechanism for reporting progress.

Governance and accountability

In keeping with their distinct oversight roles, governing bodies and senior leadership teams should be proactive in the development of strategic and operational plans. This extends to maintaining strategic alignment across validating partnerships, collaborative and franchise provision. Governing bodies should always be clear on the strategic purpose of any partnership arrangements and how they can contribute to institutional goals.

Providers build accountability by establishing clear governance structures for allocating digital, physical and human resources and ensuring that policies and initiatives are aligned with the diverse needs and experiences of their student population. They should maintain a coherent approach across teams and systems, with defined roles, clear reporting lines and explicit areas of autonomy and delegation. Extending this coordinated way of working across all modes of delivery, including arrangements with validating partners, collaborative provision and franchised provision, helps to ensure that responsibilities and expectations remain consistent for all stakeholders.

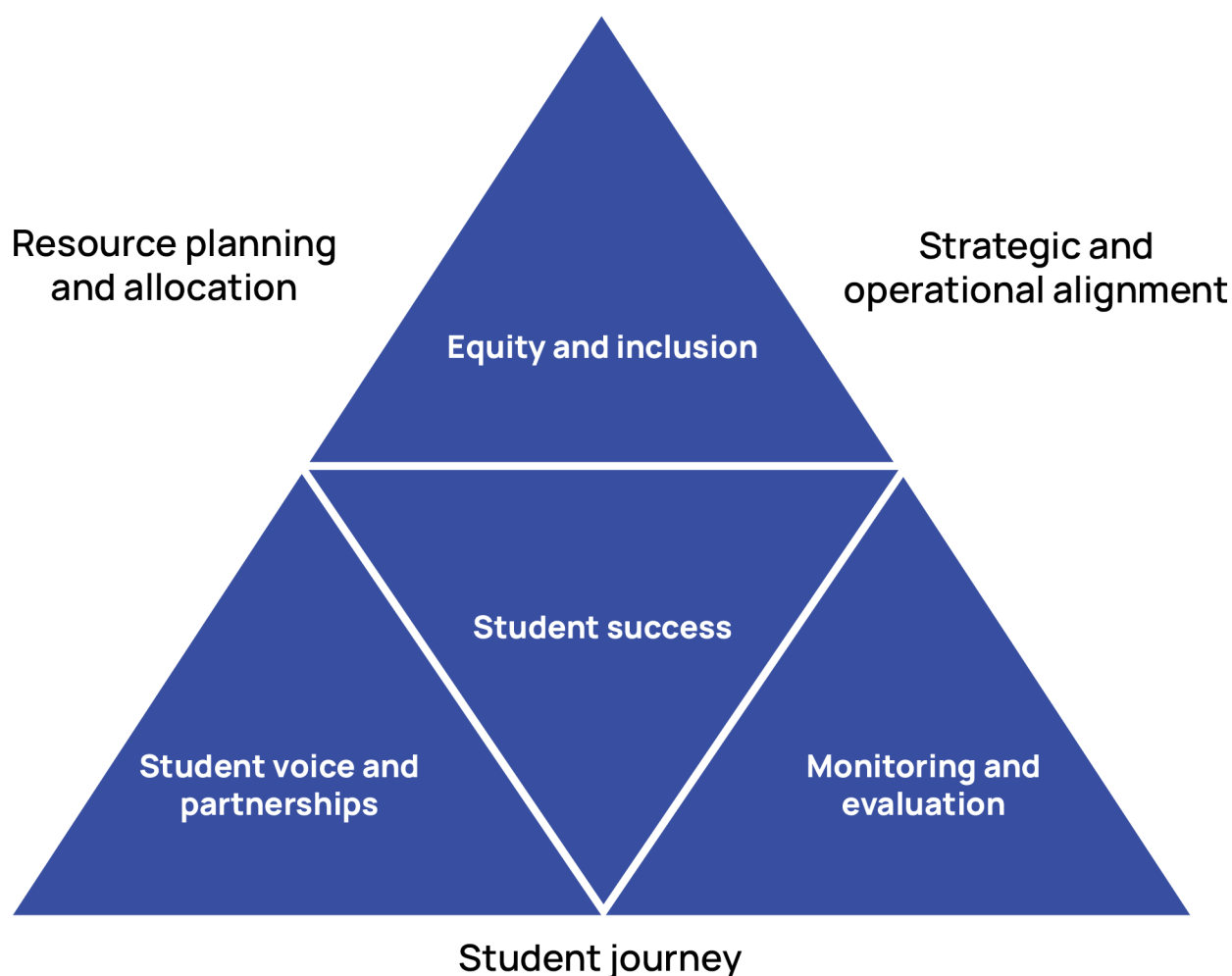
Supporting the student journey

In devising strategic and operational plans, providers should focus on the evidenced needs and specific journeys of their students. This underpins planning and the allocation of resources needed to promote equity and inclusion among the student body and ensure their success. In-year decisions around planning and resource allocation should be refined by taking account of the student voice and an ongoing programme of monitoring and evaluation. This integrated approach, summarised in Figure 2, requires a comprehensive understanding and mapping of each stage of the student journey by the provider:

- pre-entry (for example, outreach, admissions)
- pre-arrival support and induction
- learning and teaching and curriculum
- assessment and feedback
- academic, professional and personal development
- student support, well-being and inclusion
- progression and retention and continuation
- completion, graduation and transition
- employability, alumni and lifelong learning.

This process can also be used to design interventions and support systems that are inclusive, timely and relevant to the demographic of the provider's student body.

Figure 2: Resourcing the student journey



Direct support for students

A sound understanding of the end-to-end student journey can also support budget setting and the allocation of financial, physical and digital resources as well as staffing in ways that directly support students.

This might include investment in:

- developing a learning and teaching strategy or approach that considers diverse students and the pathways they may follow through integrated academic support services, career development services, mental health and well-being support
- maintaining a conducive learning environment for diverse students across different campuses, including distance learning, with appropriate physical or online facilities and related technological tools for diverse students and inclusive teaching practices
- recruiting and retaining appropriately qualified academic and professional services staff to develop and deliver high-quality programmes and facilitate/support other aspects of the student journey with relevant onboarding and ongoing professional development
- procuring and maintaining a student management system or appropriate system that enables staff and students to monitor progress and enable student achievement at each stage with interoperability across digital systems.

Reflective questions

1. To what extent does our institutional strategy adequately articulate the intended experience across the entire student journey?
2. Does our governing body critically evaluate and assure that operational plans are aligned with strategic intent and deliver measurable outcomes that support the student journey and institutional priorities?
3. How confident are we that our strategic priorities translate into clear, actionable objectives that are seen as a shared responsibility by academic units and professional services at all levels of the organisation?
4. When allocating resources to our strategic and operational plans, how do we ensure equity and inclusion to enable student achievement?
5. Beyond the existence of a contract, how do we assure ourselves that validating partnerships, and collaborative and franchised providers have sufficiently aligned themselves with our strategic and operational plans?
6. How do we monitor resource allocation and make dynamic adjustments in response to emerging student needs and sector developments, including technological advances, that support innovation and maintain alignment with strategic priorities?
7. What quantitative and qualitative evidence do we systematically collect to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of strategic and operational plans across the student journey?
8. How do we triangulate evidence from multiple data sources - for example, continuation rates, NSS/Student Academic Experience survey results, national higher education complaints adjudicators cases and equality data - to inform priorities for resource allocation?
9. What are we measuring to evidence the impact of operational changes on the student experience, learning outcomes and graduate success?
10. How do we identify and address gaps between our strategic ambitions and the lived experiences of students and staff?
11. How do we resource the sharing of good practice and lessons learned across academic units and professional services to sustain a culture of continuous improvement?

Scenario

Ensuring strategic plans are supported by operational investment

Context

A small drama school develops a new strategic plan centred on employability in the performing arts. Its operational planning group realised that although curriculum innovation is a priority, budget allocations are still weighted towards traditional performance spaces rather than digital production and collaboration tools.

Considerations

- How can the operational planning group establish the needs of an innovative and refreshed curriculum?
- If employability relies on developing specific technical skills, how can the resources needed to deliver them be identified?
- What options might be available to the operational planning group to develop the facilities required to integrate industry-led modules within the learning and teaching strategy?



Key Practice b -
Dedicated, accessible
and inclusive resources
that support programme
delivery

Key Practice b

Dedicated, accessible and inclusive resources that support programme delivery

Providers ensure they have dedicated, accessible and inclusive resources to support and enhance the delivery of their programmes (and smaller units of study) along with the well-being of students and staff. These include staffing, digital and physical resources.

Higher education provision should be planned, reviewed and continuously developed so that it is proportionate and responsive to the evidenced needs of the provider's student body and prevalent modes of delivery.

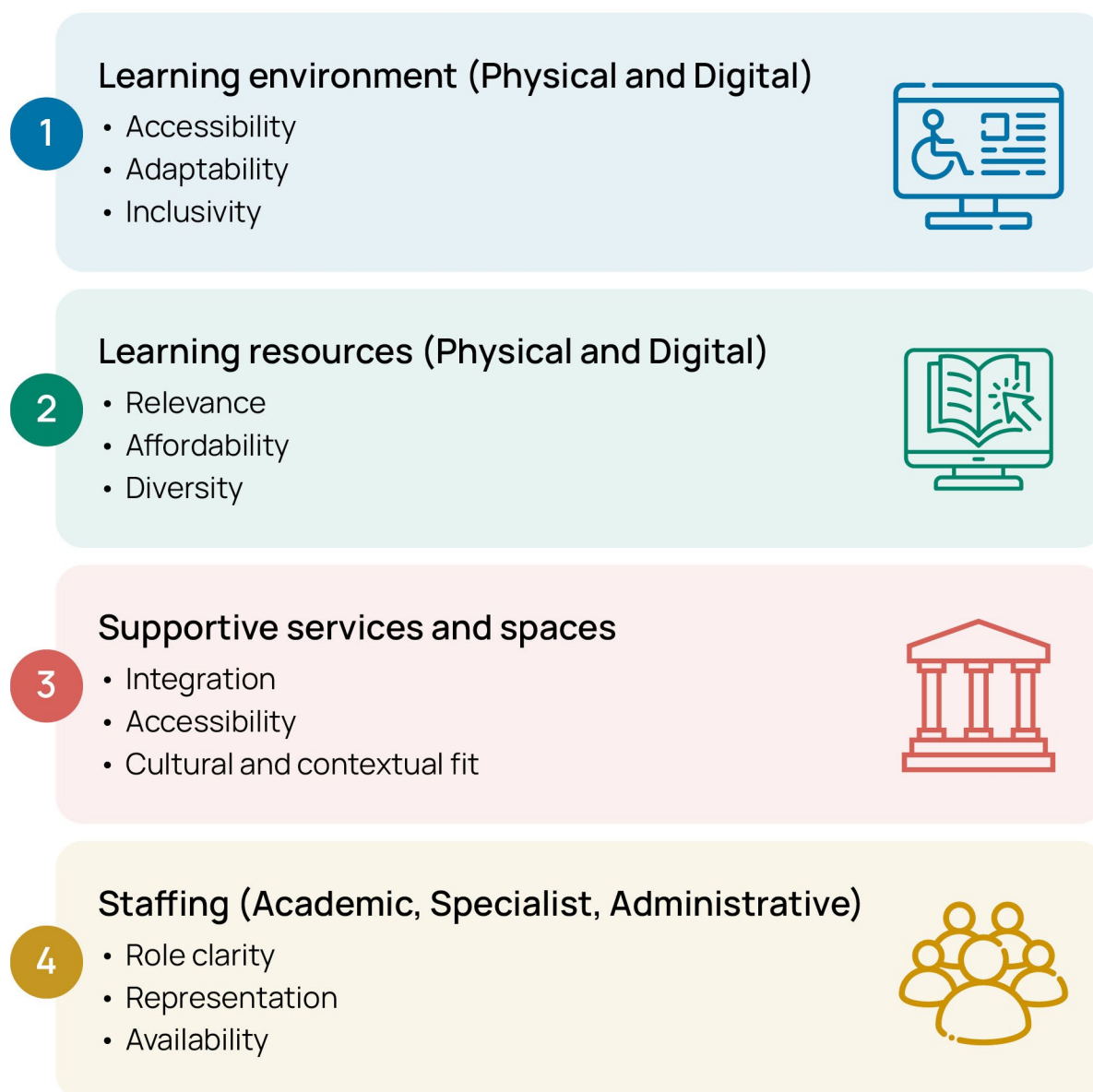
Providers are encouraged to promote a culture of continuous improvement and design monitoring and evaluation processes to promote equity and inclusivity and avoid unintentionally disadvantaging specific groups of students or staff.

This should be underpinned with a commitment to inclusivity, with the aspiration that all students will be able to see themselves reflected in the curriculum, staff and services and access the full range of learning environments, services and support they need to succeed.

In resourcing the delivery of a high-quality learning experience, there are four key themes, as show in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Key considerations in resourcing the delivery of a high-quality learning environment



Through the lens of these four themes, this Key Practice explores the broad principles of resourcing a holistic approach to supporting programme delivery. Readers interested in the specific resource needs associated with the design, development and maintenance of accessible and inclusive learning environments are referred to [Key Practice f](#).

Learning environment: physical and digital

In developing and maintaining their estate, providers are encouraged to plan and resource the creation and maintenance of welcoming and culturally responsive spaces that promote both a supportive learning environment and inclusion. Accessibility for both students and staff should be prioritised in resource planning by taking account of students' accessibility and mobility needs and including features that can support neurodiverse students. Digital platforms need to meet recognised accessibility standards with clear signage. When creating and refreshing learning environments, providers are recommended to consider future needs and cost-effectiveness by ensuring that they can support diverse pedagogies (for example, group work, blended or flipped learning), and can be easily reconfigured to meet any specialist space requirements, for example specific assessments required by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs).

Learning resources: physical and digital

Providers are encouraged to adopt the principles of strategic enhancement and offer value to their learners through the responsible procurement and sustainable management of their learning resources. Where the curriculum allows, providers can explore sustainable approaches that use open educational resources (OER), normalise the use of accessible media (for example, those that use ALT text, captioned videos and transcripts, audio transcribing and podcasts) and promote inclusion through materials that reflect diverse perspectives and authorship.

Supportive services and spaces

A provider's learning and teaching strategy should consider how best to integrate academic support services such as library, widening participation team, digital technology, safety and well-being support and career development services into the student journey. This requires them to acknowledge the specific composition of their student body, which may include part time, mature and international students along with students based in branch campuses. Accommodating a broad range of needs normally requires making services accessible both online and outside standard hours. Services should be designed to reflect the evidenced needs of the provider's own student body and be accommodated in spaces that are accessible, welcoming and inclusive. Providers are encouraged to develop internal communications that make it clear to students how and where to access these services.

Effective integration of academic support services allows teaching staff to maximise the time they spend with students on high value activities such as synchronous teaching. It is easier to implement such an integrated approach if academic and professional services staff understand what resources are available; for larger institutions this may include both faculty-level and provider-wide services. There will normally be additional and complementary services provided by the student representative body.

Staffing

Providers should consider to what extent the composition of their staff, in both academic units and professional services, meets the needs of their student body. For example, do they have the skill set and necessary experience to deliver their current portfolio of courses. Where adjustments are required, providers need to further consider what resources are available to allow them to use lawful steps to deliver a proportionate remedy.

Academic and professional services roles should be clearly articulated and aligned to the institutional strategy and post-holders clear on how their roles support learning, well-being and the non-academic student experience. Providers are encouraged to maintain sufficient staff resource to manage workloads and ensure staff are accessible to their students. Staff accessibility can be further supported through development and training in inclusive communication (see also [Key Practice d](#)). A positive outcome of this approach is a student body who feel supported across a broad range of areas: academic performance, belonging, careers, library resources and well-being.

However support is offered, it is important that all staff know the full extent of the services and resources available to students and where it exists. This gives staff confidence to effectively signpost rather than exceed the limits of their own expertise and availability. Through regular audits, a provider can develop and maintain an easily accessible directory of academic and non-academic resources and services for all staff and students.



Table 1: Accessible and inclusive resources that can enhance programme delivery

Learning environments area		
Examples of best practice	Measuring progress	Examples
• All students can access learning, services, and support • New technologies enhance learning and well-being • Spaces encourage interaction and reduce barriers	• Accessibility, inclusivity and adaptability audits • Student feedback • Compliance with policy/ policies	• Lecture captioning • Screen reader compatibility • Step-free access to classrooms • Sharing and implementation of policies

Learning resources area		
Examples of best practice	Measuring progress	Examples
• Students see themselves reflected and included in the curriculum • Efficient and sustainable use of resources • Resources evolve based on student needs and feedback • Equality of access to inclusive learning resources	• Curriculum mapping for inclusivity • Student demographic data • Student voice • Athena SWAN charter recognition • Progression data	• Diverse reading lists • Inclusive and safe imagery • Multilingual support staff • Podcasts • Lecture captioning, transcripts • Use of ALT texts • Trigger warnings

Services and spaces area		
Examples of best practice	Measuring progress	Examples
• Support for staff and students • Physical and digital spaces are visibly used and valued by the breadth of the student body	• Cost-benefit analysis • Shared service models	• Open educational resources (OER) • Shared digital platforms • Hybrid modes of delivery • Collaboration and added value

Continued ...

Staffing area		
Examples of best practice	Measuring progress	Examples
- Engagement with institutional teaching and learning culture - Cultivating a culture of excellence	- Impact case studies - Measures of esteem (for example, National Teaching Fellowships) - Internal recognition schemes that reward teaching excellence	- Agreement on student/staff ratios - Teaching and learning awards, for example innovation in digital education and education - Support for career progressions



Reflective questions

1. Are our learning environments, physical and digital, accessible to all students and able to accommodate diverse pedagogical approaches?
2. Do our current spaces and technologies align with PSRB requirements and/or accessibility standards and how do we recognise areas that need development?
3. Does the technology supporting our learning spaces (lecture capture, captioning) align with the curriculum and evolving student needs, including accessibility, modality and modes of engagement?
4. How do we ensure that our learning resources are affordable and inclusive (in both content and format)?
5. How do we evaluate whether our processes for selecting learning resources offer sufficiently diverse perspectives that meet the needs of our student body?
6. Do our students know how and where to access library, careers, safety and well-being services, and is uptake equitable across different student groups?
7. Are the mechanisms we have in place for gathering, responding to, and acting on student feedback about services and spaces sufficiently agile?
8. How well do academic and professional staff understand their own roles and the contributions of other services in supporting student learning, well-being and success?
9. Does our staffing profile meet the evidenced needs of our student body?
10. How accessible and sustainable are staffing arrangements in practice, as evidenced through staff-student ratios, workload and well-being audits, and staff and student feedback?

Scenario

Ensuring equitable access to learning resources

Context

The first year of an undergraduate programme has received mixed feedback in student surveys and module evaluations. Students appreciate the content of the programme, but a significant proportion report difficulties accessing and engaging with learning resources.

Specific concerns include:

- the cost of core textbooks
- limited availability of accessible formats
- reading lists that do not reflect diverse perspectives.

Other students report relying heavily on lecture slides alone, while others use external online sources of varying quality. Yet despite significant institutional investment, library data shows low usage of recommended e-textbooks and online resources.

Considerations

- What are the barriers to student access, equity and success in accessing learning resources (financial, accessibility formats and digital inclusion)?
- Are learning resources intentionally embedded within teaching and learning and not treated as optional extras or supplementary?
- What steps have been taken to ensure that gaps in digital confidence and awareness of students are closed, and students have the necessary skills to engage with scholarly resources?
- How are reading lists and learning materials systematically reviewed and updated in response to student feedback about diverse perspectives and authorship?
- How effective is institutional investment in library and digital resources translating into meaningful student engagement and learning benefit?
- How are academic and professional staff supported to select, curate and promote inclusive, accessible and affordable learning resources?
- How are insights from student surveys, library data and programme review processes used to drive continuous improvement in learning resource provision?



Key Practice c -
Resources are reviewed
and updated to maintain
alignment with provision

Key Practice c

Resources are reviewed and updated to maintain alignment with provision

Resources are reviewed and updated in alignment with strategic developments and changes in provision, as well as staff and student recruitment. This also ensures relevance to the workplace and the wider academic discipline.

The way in which a provider chooses to deploy their available resources is central to the delivery of the student experience. Consequently, the full range of financial, human, physical and digital resources should be considered alongside any proposed strategic developments, changes to assessment and/or the curriculum, and non-academic student support

Understanding and mapping available resources

Knowing which resources are available within a provider, academic unit, or programme of study and how these are used is key to understanding whether the provision can meet the needs of any given cohort of students and the wider student body. Providers should develop a high-level understanding of the resources available to their students, as well as any cohort-specific local resources. Ideally, a centralised and holistic 'map' would be available to staff and students, that details centralised resources and those specific to individual academic units or programmes.

Staff knowledge of, and ability to signpost to, resources is equally important. Students frequently turn to teaching and support staff for guidance on both academic and non-academic matters, so all staff should be aware of the key resources available to students and know how students can access them. Both staff and students will benefit from clear signposting and easy access to the full range of available resources (see also [Key Practice b](#)).



Evaluating impact

Monitoring and evaluating the usefulness of resources should assess both awareness (uptake) and impact and can help providers make informed decisions about future resourcing priorities. This might include tracking/recording the number of students who use a support service, monitoring views of a video resource, or soliciting student/staff feedback.

While there are efficiencies in developing resources that can be used by all or many students across a provider, monitoring approaches will need to be sufficiently flexible to identify any discipline or demographic-specific resources critical to the success of specific groups of students.

Ownership and regular review

Ensuring that resources remain relevant and are subject to regular monitoring and update requires clear ownership and accountability within a provider's governance framework. It is unwise for a resource to be solely owned by a named individual; rather, ownership should lie with a programme or subject area leadership team, or a student support function, but retain clear lines of responsibility and reporting.

Because the student experience depends on resources, they should be considered in internal review processes, for example, periodic reviews and programme approvals. Resourcing might also be usefully considered when experiencing other forums, for example in committees with responsibility for overseeing the student experience or through student representative structures. By making the review and enhancement of resources a routine element at all levels of organisational review, the need for large and complex audits may be avoided.

As with all aspects of the student experience, it is important for providers to promote a culture of continuous improvement around resources. Meaningful student consultation and staff feedback are central to developing a collaborative approach to enhancement, as is actively building and soliciting feedback, advice, and guidance from employers, PSRBs and other stakeholders. Institutions are advised to engage with current educational research and best practice to ensure that resources are appropriately designed and aligned with educational provision.

Providers are encouraged to promote the sharing of good practice, and sharing of resources themselves, both within and beyond their own organisation. Ideally, this is something that is recognised in promotions and reward criteria, as it underpins the delivery of an excellent student experience and is central to the efficient operation of the organisation.

Alignment with curriculum and employability skills

A comprehensive approach to curriculum development will include space for identifying resource requirements, and appropriate planning to ensure that new and existing resources align with the curriculum. Students will engage with a wide range of provider-wide resources from the first day of their studies (or even during the pre-enrolment stage), and it is important to offer a coherent package of support aligned with their programme of study and intended/desired graduate outcomes.

Providers are therefore encouraged to consider employability skills, national/regional workforce needs, and the evolving requirements of employers throughout the student journey. This includes embedding connections to industry and alumni networks in curricular and co-curricular resources rather than delegating responsibility to specialist careers teams deployed at the end of a student's studies. Providers may also wish to include specific questions/reflections on these points of alignment and connection in their review processes and new programme planning.

Co-creation and collective buy-in

Providers are also encouraged to adopt an outward-looking approach to developing support and resources. In preparing students for successful careers, it is important to engage with employers, PSRBs and alumni in the continuous review and enhancement of resources. This ensures the institution's offerings reflect current employment practices, technological innovations, and emerging PSRB requirements.

The co-creation and development of shared resources that can be used across and between providers and their delivery partners can benefit providers, students and stakeholders. Conduits/channels for sharing, discussing and enhancing both academic and non-academic resources include conferences, communities of practice, learned societies, sector bodies, external examiners and subject networks.

Using resources wisely to support students and protect staff time is key to working efficiently. When planned and delivered effectively, resources are central to both a high-quality student experience and a high-quality, supportive staff experience.



Reflective questions

1. Have the resources we provide evolved sufficiently to reflect evidenced changes in the demographic of our student body (for example: increase in widening participation students, changes in cohort sizes, numbers of part-time students, more commuting students, increased student employment)?
2. How frequently do we consider external factors, such as emerging sector trends, funding changes, educational evidence, when planning resources?
3. What would be the consequences for academic and student support resources of a planned change in the volume of our provision, for example doubling student numbers over a three-/five-/10-year period?
4. What, if anything, has changed over the past 10 years about the first destinations of our graduates and how is this reflected in the curriculum and allocation of resources?
5. Do we structure our web-based directory of resources and provision in a way that students and staff can quickly find the information that they need?
6. Has our institution conducted robust cross-referencing of resource provision across programmes/departments/faculties/services to ensure there is no unnecessary replication?

Scenarios

Scenario 1: Provision of cloud-based digital learning resources for professional practice

Context

A large undergraduate programme, accredited by a PSRB, requires students to develop a specific vocational skill using industry-standard software. Historically, this has been taught via in-person, desktop-based provision - an approach that is increasingly outdated and poorly aligned with sector expectations as well as the realities of working life.

Modern applications in this field are now cloud-based, allowing self-directed and flexible learning. Several external providers offer both premium and free versions of relevant software, all requiring individual user accounts (such as name, email address) under cloud-based licensing models.

When the academic department sought to update the curriculum to reflect current practice, it encountered several internal barriers. The cost of premium licenses was deemed prohibitive. Governance and data protection policies limited the use of external platforms requiring personal data. Proposals to expand or adapt existing digital infrastructure were also rejected due to financial constraints.

Despite these challenges, both student feedback and PSRB guidance clearly emphasise the importance of equipping graduates with experience in using cloud-based tools. Pedagogic literature further supports this shift, linking it to enhanced employability and contemporary learning design.

Considerations

- How can the department reconcile the pedagogic and accreditation requirements with internal governance, budgetary and IT policies?
- What criteria should be used to compare premium and free versions - functionality, scalability, compliance or long-term value?
- What are the potential consequences of selecting an inappropriate or outdated solution - for students, the PSRB relationship and institutional reputation?
- How can limited resources still be deployed effectively to ensure authentic, contemporary learning opportunities?

Scenario 2: Managing capacity pressures while maintaining equitable student support

Context

A provider's disability and welfare team is currently experiencing significant delays in confirming student support plans due to ongoing staff vacancies, and they report that they are working at full capacity. One consequence of this is that departmental staff at a bi annual mitigating circumstances panel notice a marked increase in cases where local level mitigation in the form of extra time was applied for, but this was applied inconsistently in other departments.

Given the constraints of the regulations, staff have limited remedies available and cannot award additional marks. In response to emerging concerns, the students' union has issued a reminder to all departments highlighting key legislation and the expectations set out in the student charter.

Considerations

- How can you determine which legislation and/or policies are relevant here? Do any of them conflict in reaching equitable and inclusive decisions?
- Who are the key stakeholders involved in this scenario?
- What are the potential outcomes here?
- What risks need to be managed in the case of each outcome?



Key Practice d -
Resources are allocated
for the support
and professional
development of staff

Key Practice d

Resources are allocated for the support and professional development of staff

Resources are allocated to ensure that staff receive ongoing professional development to support and enhance the delivery of a high-quality and innovative student learning and research experience.

Providers benefit from properly resourced and sustainable systems, cultures and infrastructures that enable staff to continuously develop and offer an environment that enables a positive student journey. Through making staff development an ongoing authentic and embedded process, providers can ensure that academic and professional services staff are enabled and equipped to adapt to evolving pedagogies, supervisory practice, technologies and student needs.



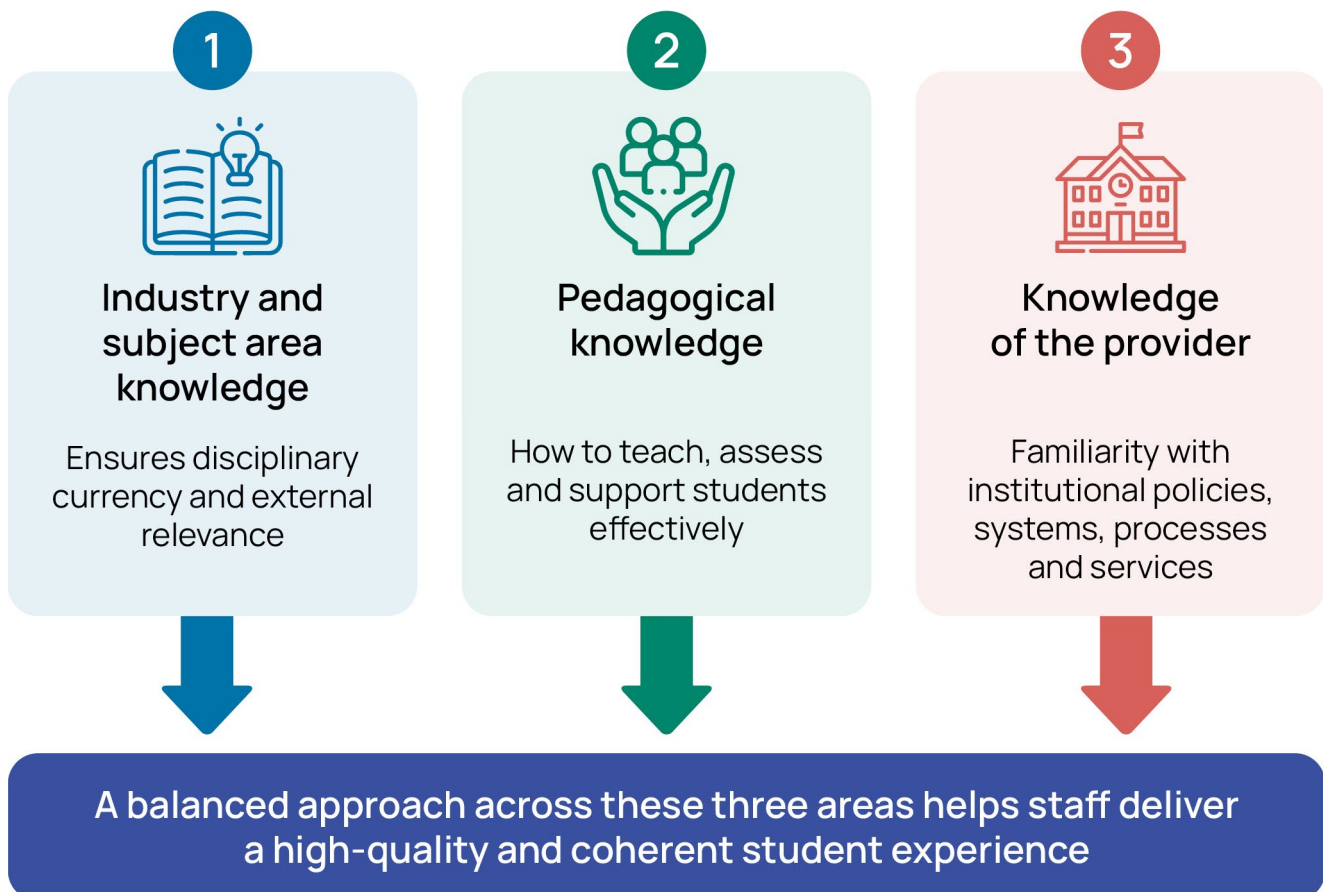
Dimensions of staff development

Effective staff development encompasses three core dimensions of continuing professional development (CPD):

1. industry and subject area knowledge to ensure disciplinary currency and external relevance
2. pedagogical knowledge, including how to teach, assess and support students effectively
3. knowledge of the provider, including familiarity with institutional policies, systems, processes and services.

A balanced approach across these three areas helps staff to deliver a high-quality and coherent student experience.

Figure 4: Three dimensions of staff development



Beyond induction and mandatory training

A staff development offer that goes beyond mandatory induction and training and is open to all categories of staff, irrespective of contract type, enables providers to promote parity and recognise engagement. Opportunities for staff development should reflect the provider's learning and teaching strategy. For example, providers offering blended and distance learning ought to consider how they support staff delivering via these modalities to gain and maintain the necessary digital skillset.

Staff development can be further supported and incentivised through formal mechanisms such as appraisal, supervision and career development processes. These structures provide opportunities to identify individual development needs, align them with institutional priorities, and ensure regular review of progress. Embedding CPD within these processes helps to normalise continuous development and supports long-term career progression.

Supporting individuals

Individual staff development plans should be reviewed regularly to achieve a balance between personal growth, institutional needs and opportunities for external recognition through, for example, the [Advance HE Professional Standards Framework](#). They can usefully be structured to take advantage of ongoing opportunities for professional and pedagogical development throughout the academic year. To accommodate a range of staff learning needs and preferences, these opportunities might include online or in-person training, self-directed, short or long sessions, and extend to coaching and mentoring for staff at varying levels of seniority.

Peer review

Providers may choose to enhance their staff development offer by facilitating informal peer-led programmes of activity. These could include bite-sized CPD sessions delivered in academic units and/or professional teams that nurture communities of practice and bridge the gap between theory and practice. Additionally, teaching observation and peer review schemes can be used as a development incentive to promote cross-departmental and cross-disciplinary exchange of practice and knowledge. When framed as developmental rather than evaluative, peer review can support reflective practice for specific aspects of teaching, learning and assessment practice, enhance pedagogical skills and strengthen collaborative learning cultures. This approach is especially valuable for small and specialist providers, where opportunities for staff development may be limited by tighter budgets. This can build in-house scholarship and communities of practice to support positive student experiences.

Promoting inclusive practice

The principles of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), and belonging should be designed for and embedded within staff development approaches (see also [Key Practice b](#)). Providers should ensure that CPD opportunities promote inclusive teaching practices, cultural competence, and awareness of student needs and experiences. This includes opportunities to learn how to devise and develop accessible teaching materials (see also [Key Practice f](#)). In addition, access to development opportunities needs to be equitable across staff groups, contract types and disciplines, ensuring that all staff can participate fully in professional learning and progression

Consistency of approach

Providers should consider putting mechanisms in place to evidence engagement for consistency and equity across departments, delivery modes and staff contract categories. To make best use of resources, it may also be helpful to analyse staff development activity, including teaching observation schemes, for their impact on staff well-being and the student experience.



Reflective questions

1. What evidence do we have that staff development opportunities are accessible, equitable and relevant across all staff types and contractual arrangements, and across the three core CPD areas of subject/industry knowledge, pedagogical practice, and university systems and processes?
2. How do we ensure that professional development is ongoing, embedded and aligned with emerging pedagogical and technological trends, while maintaining balance across subject expertise, teaching practice and institutional knowledge?
3. How are staff supported to evaluate and evidence the impact of their teaching on student learning and outcomes, assuring quality and standards, including through peer observation, coaching and mentoring approaches?
4. What processes ensure that staff workload models make space for meaningful professional learning and reflection, including engagement with appraisal, supervision and career development processes?
5. How are PSRB or external regulatory requirements for staff development resourced and monitored to assure compliance and enhancement?
6. What mechanisms allow us to monitor and review the effectiveness of our staff development strategy (for example, feedback loops, performance data, NSS, engagement with the AHE Professional Standards Framework)?
7. How do we ensure that staff involved in supporting others (for example, educational or researcher developers) also have access to development opportunities that sustain their expertise?
8. What support is available for staff transitioning into new roles and how do we evaluate its effectiveness, including through structured appraisal, supervision and mentoring support?
9. How do we identify and prioritise emerging areas (such as digital pedagogy, AI literacy, inclusive assessment) where staff capability needs proactive enhancement across subject, pedagogical and institutional domains?
10. How do we use data and reflection to inform continuous enhancement of our resourcing and staff development approaches for student success, including alignment with career development pathways and progression opportunities?

Scenarios

Scenario 1: Addressing inconsistencies in academic support and the student experience

Context

A provider offering a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes notices recurring themes in student feedback related to inconsistency in academic support, assessment clarity and communication across modules. While many students report positive experiences with individual lectures, end-of-year evaluations highlight uneven expectations from students, differing levels of digital competence among staff and contrasting approaches to feedback and support.

The programme team includes experienced academics, early-career colleagues and teaching staff. Staff work across multiple modules and, in some cases, across multiple programmes. Although the provider offers a comprehensive CPD framework, participation varies depending on workload, contract type and confidence in engaging with digital training.

The provider's monitoring mechanism highlights that inconsistent staff development uptake is contributing to student experiences, including disparities in the quality of guidance offered on assessment and progression pathways.

A revised institutional strategy emphasises inclusive practice, digital confidence and stronger alignment between teaching, student support and employability development. Programme teams are now required to demonstrate how staff developmental activity contributes to this priority.

Considerations

- How might the provider identify the targeted staff development when students' feedback is variable?
- What approaches would ensure that staff on different contract types can access essential training?
- How might development be prioritised if budgets are limited?
- How might student feedback be used more effectively to shape development priorities and evaluate impact?

Scenario 2: Ensuring effective staff development during rapid change

Context

A fast-growing private university introduces a new AI-enabled learning platform to support its global blended and distance learning students. The system needs to be live in three months, and staff across multiple faculties and schools must quickly learn how to design, teach, assess, and track progress in a new environment.

Training is offered - short workshops, microlearning, specialist clinics, peer mentors and extended-hours helpdesk support. Even so, many staff feel pressed for time and unsure how to adapt their modules at speed.

Considerations

- In a period of rapid change, what would help staff learn new systems quickly - and what would hinder the uptake?
- What kinds of support (people, time, tools, training) make the biggest difference to staff confidence?
- How do staff stay confident and capable when major digital change happens at pace?



Key Practice e - Resourcing the management of academic standards and quality enhancement

Key Practice e

Resourcing the management of academic standards and quality enhancement

Processes and activities to support the management of academic standards and quality enhancement are appropriately resourced to meet strategic, operational and regulatory objectives and requirements.

Providers should ensure that their plans for managing academic standards and quality assurance are managed through robust internal governance structures, draw directly from and are aligned to their strategic and operational plans (see [Key Practice a](#)) and are consistent with the requirements of external regulators, including PSRBs.

Providers should also reassure themselves that all processes and activities required to maintain academic standards and support quality enhancement are adequately resourced irrespective of size, mission, student demographic or mode(s) of study.

Processes and activities can usefully be divided into structural and ongoing.

Structural processes

Structural processes and activities, which include policies, processes and governance structures, are designed to support the management of academic standards and quality enhancement.

These may include:

- programme design, approval and modification, including those involving partnership or collaborative provision
- assessment and academic integrity; assessment needs to be fair, reliable and inclusive for all students and include robust policies and processes to support academic integrity, with fair and transparent process for appeals (see [Principle 11- Teaching, Learning and Assessment](#))
- appropriate governance structures that have oversight of quality and standards and, where relevant, programmes accredited by PSRBs.

Ongoing processes

Ongoing processes and activities include student engagement, gathering student feedback and reviews.

These may include:

- student engagement through formal meetings that provide input and feedback and formal representation through internal governance structures
- obtaining student feedback through a range of mechanisms at all levels of the organisation (see also [Key Practice g](#))
- reviews, including ongoing monitoring and evaluations, course review and the external examiners' reports.

In ensuring that all these processes and activities are adequately resourced, providers are encouraged to intentionally and purposefully align their strategic and operational planning, and resource allocation with their regulatory obligations and priorities for quality enhancement.

Students as partners

Providers should encourage students to be active partners in maintaining academic integrity and provide clear evidence that student voices meaningfully inform the monitoring and maintenance of academic standards. This requires consideration of the student demographic and its different journeys through the provider alongside the range of mechanisms for quality and standards monitoring and evaluation across the provider (see [Principle 2 - Engaging students as partners](#)).

The cost of assuring quality

In developing these plans, providers need to clearly identify the financial, physical, digital and human resources required to implement processes and activities at governance, management and operational levels across teams and to maintain effective oversight of resource allocation, management and evaluation.

It is helpful to good governance if these budgeting and workforce planning exercises anticipate future regulatory changes and sector trends to ensure investment in both physical and online resources. These considerations should include robust digital platforms for assessment, quality monitoring and data analytics along with the increased use of AI in educational programmes and administrative processes.



Implementation

In implementing strategic and operational plans (see also [Key Practice a](#)) providers are recommended to map all the processes and activities that support enhancement. In this way, they can generate a detailed implementation plan with actionable steps for day-to-day execution. This map should clearly identify the role of academic quality and standards management and provide sufficient capacity across the academic year to support reviews, validations and enhancements, and allow full implementation of both strategic and operational objectives.

Clear accountability structures, and appropriate budget allocation with strategic and operational alignment, ensure that a provider's quality policies, processes and initiatives are not developed in isolation and are clearly aligned and tailored to meet the expectations, lived experiences, perspectives and distinctive needs of their diverse student population.

Providers are encouraged to consider whether they have a sufficiently coherent and joined-up approach to the governance of quality enhancement across teams and systems. This should include embedded oversight for monitoring and evaluation to build confidence that they are effectively meeting the needs of students within their policy framework.

This can be underpinned by:

- appropriate processes to recruit qualified academic staff and identifying and addressing gaps where relevant
- resource to ensure that newly recruited academic staff have access to opportunities for development that will enhance teaching quality (see also [Key Practice d](#))
- an offer of ongoing training for academic and professional services staff on quality assurance processes and regulatory requirements
- robust policies and processes to identify and mitigate risks to academic standards (such as external examiner reports, data dashboards)
- structures and processes to support feedback loops (student voice, external input) that inform enhancement
- appropriate physical and digital resources to support the processes and activities with agility to respond to the external environment.

Providers should take steps to ensure that programme design remains aligned with quality and teaching standards.

Key considerations include:

- ensuring that programmes are viable - student numbers and recruitment/retention of appropriately qualified academic staff
- ensuring that programmes remain up to date and aligned to external benchmarks and, if applicable, PSRB requirements
- regular review of programme specifications, including assessment validity and awarding processes
- internal governance processes that consider external perspectives, including external examiners' reports and the outcomes from periodic review, which offer suggestions that are robust and deliver timely and auditable responses

Figure 5: Indicators of success when programme design is aligned to quality and teaching standards

Indicators



Documented resource plans
linked to strategic objectives



Regular review of capacity against
workload and regulatory demands



Positive outcomes in external
audits/reviews



High staff engagement in quality
enhancement activities



Transparent reporting
to governance bodies

Reflective questions

1. Do we have a clearly documented and regularly reviewed overview of the human, financial, physical and technical resources required for all activities and processes designed to meet our strategic and operational plan?
2. How do we assess the potential impact on quality and academic standards when activities or processes cannot proceed due to insufficient or poor-quality resources or are poorly planned and executed?
3. Would gaps or opportunities for enhancement of resources for activities and processes be picked up in our ongoing monitoring and evaluation systems?
4. Do our feedback mechanisms enable students to comment on the suitability and adequacy of resources for processes and activities?
5. How clearly does our strategic and operational planning of processes and activities demonstrate a commitment to enhancing student learning and research experience?
6. How do we systematically learn from external feedback (regulators, partners, sector benchmarking) to improve our processes and activities?
7. How do we sustain a focus on enhancement of our processes and activities during periods of financial constraint or regulatory change?
8. How do we evaluate whether our processes and activities are proportionate to our context and genuinely add value?
9. How do we evidence that changes made (to processes and activities) in response to feedback or evaluation have led to measurable improvement?

Scenario

Planning effectively for new provision

Context

A private higher education provider plans to introduce a new programme. The approval panel, convened by the validating body, raises significant concerns regarding the adequacy of resources for the programme. The panel determines that the provider has not appropriately identified, planned for and allocated financial, human and digital resources required to support effective delivery of a high-quality programme and an effective student learning experience. Further, the approval panel did not see evidence of staff and student input on the proposal for the new programme, including the inadequately evidenced section on resource requirements. Consequently, the panel concluded that the programme was insufficiently developed and withheld approval for the programme in its current form, but encouraged resubmission.

Considerations

- Prior to resubmission, what steps could the provider take to ensure its policy and process for programme design, development and approval are aligned with the validating body?
- How can the provider reassure itself that its policy properly sets out the requirement to identify appropriate, accessible and inclusive resources to support a diverse student body?
- Would the staff who were involved in the design of the programme benefit from additional training and development around resource planning prior to resubmission?
- Which stakeholders should the provider seek additional feedback from to improve the submission?
- How could current students be engaged as genuine partners to support programme design and the wider resubmission process?



Key Practice f - The development and maintenance of accessible and inclusive learning environments

Key Practice f

The development and maintenance of accessible and inclusive learning environments

The creation, development and maintenance of accessible and inclusive learning environments (physical and virtual) offer all students the opportunity to be engaged in their learning experience and facilitate a sense of belonging. Providers ensure they consider environmental sustainability in designing and maintaining these learning resources and facilities.

Accessible and inclusive learning environments extend beyond formal teaching spaces and are fundamental to educational quality and student success. As such, providers should create, develop, maintain and regularly review physical, virtual and hybrid learning spaces that are accessible, inclusive and sustainable. Together, these spaces, which contribute to an effective and holistic social learning experience for staff and students, can support equitable participation, meaningful engagement and a strong sense of belonging for all students throughout their journeys.

Physical learning environments

These need to be accessible, flexible and responsive to the diverse needs of students and staff. This includes teaching rooms, laboratories, studios, workshops, libraries, social learning spaces and wider campus facilities. Providers are expected to ensure that physical spaces enable different forms of participation and do not require students to adapt to inflexible or exclusionary environments. For example, the design of physical spaces should support the needs of students with mobility requirements (ramps, lifts, door openers, adjustable desks, accessible toilets) and neurodivergent students. This may involve the provision of flexible seating and furniture, quiet or low stimulus spaces, clear signage and layouts, and environments that minimise sensory overload. Physical spaces that promote interaction, collaboration and peer learning help students to feel connected to each other and to the institution.



Virtual learning environments (VLEs)

VLEs and associated digital platforms should be designed to be accessible, intuitive and consistent across modules and programmes. In adopting a coherent approach to digital design, providers can ensure that students can easily locate information, learning resources, assessment details and support at the point of need.

Consistency in digital environments enhances clarity and predictability, supporting student confidence and engagement. Digital content needs to meet recognised accessibility standards, including appropriate use of colour, layout, fonts and image descriptions, and should be checked regularly using accessibility tools. Providers should ensure that learning materials are compatible with assistive technologies and that digital barriers are actively identified and addressed.

Hybrid and flexible learning environments

These are designed to support equitable participation for students studying on campus, commuting students, and those studying remotely or via distance learning. Hybrid provision should be intentional and inclusive, rather than relying on informal or ad hoc arrangements.

This includes ensuring that appropriate technology, guidance and policies are in place for lecture capture and recorded content, with captions and transcripts available wherever possible. Where institutional capture is not feasible, clear policies should enable students to make their own recordings. Learning activities should be designed so that students can engage meaningfully irrespective of location, without disadvantaging any group.

Creating a sense of belonging

Inclusive learning environments actively foster a sense of belonging and connection to the learning community. Providers should ensure that both physical and virtual spaces encourage interaction, collaboration and peer support, enhancing engagement and confidence in participation by students and staff.

Support services, student networks and opportunities for participation should be visible, accessible and clearly signposted. This includes spaces and communities that support specific student groups, such as international students, mature learners, apprentices or commuter students. Wherever possible, community building spaces need to remain open and inclusive to avoid unintended segregation or isolation.

Accessibility and inclusion by design

Providers are responsible for ensuring that their learning environments enable all students to participate fully in learning and teaching activities, regardless of mode of study, location, personal circumstances or protected characteristics. This responsibility extends across physical, digital and social environments and includes the ongoing maintenance, development and renewal of learning spaces. Consequently, learning environments should be designed and managed in a way that promotes clarity, consistency, dignity and independence, while meeting legal obligations, including duties under the Equality Act 2010. Responsibility and accountability for maintaining inclusive environments should be embedded within institutional governance, quality assurance and enhancement processes.

Consequently, accessibility and inclusion should, as far as possible, be embedded by design across curricula, learning environments and co-curricular provision. Providers are expected to consider accessibility at the earliest stages of curriculum planning, space design, digital development and assessment design, rather than relying on individual adjustments after barriers have been encountered.

A universal and inclusive approach to design supports a smoother, more coherent student experience from pre-application through to graduation. Clear, plain and inclusive language should be used consistently across learning materials and communications. This benefits all students, including those for whom the language of instruction is not their first language, and contributes to transparency and fairness in learning and assessment.

By adopting a proactive, inclusive-by-design approach, providers can ensure that accessibility and inclusion are embedded from the outset rather than introduced as reactive adjustments. These expectations apply across the full range of UK higher education provision, including universities, colleges, specialist institutions, micro-providers, work-based learning environments, blended and distance learning provision, and transnational delivery partners.

Sustainability by design

Environmental sustainability should be embedded in the planning, procurement, use and renewal of learning spaces and resources. Providers are expected to consider sustainability across estates, digital infrastructure and learning resources as part of their long-term strategies.

This may include the use of energy-efficient buildings and utilities, sustainable procurement of materials and equipment, responsible digital storage and management of large media files, and reducing waste through minimising printing and promoting reusable or recyclable materials. Sustainable approaches should align with inclusive design, ensuring that environmental considerations do not create new barriers to access.



A role for staff/student partnerships

Staff confidence and capability are critical to the effectiveness of inclusive learning environments. Providers are expected to support staff through appropriate professional learning and development in areas such as universal design, accessible teaching practices and inclusive assessment.

Staff should have access to clear guidance on designing accessible learning materials, including advice on layouts, colour palettes, fonts, captions and image descriptions. Assistive technologies, including AI-enabled tools, can play a valuable role in supporting student learning, particularly where students are unable to attend sessions or need clarification. However, these tools are intended to complement, not replace, human expertise and support.

Learning environments should be subject to regular and systematic review to ensure they continue to meet student needs and reflect evolving practice. Providers are expected to engage both staff and students in these processes, including students with lived experience of disability, neurodivergence, international study, mature or commuter routes, or apprenticeship provision.

Involving students as partners in the design and review of learning environments helps ensure that physical and digital spaces reflect diverse needs and support a strong sense of belonging. Inclusive environments require active stewardship and continuous improvement rather than one-off interventions.

What success looks like

Under this Key Practice, success is evident where learning environments are inclusive and accessible by design, enable meaningful engagement for all students, and are reviewed and enhanced regularly. Physical and digital spaces are flexible, coherent and clearly signposted, staff are confident in inclusive approaches, and students report a strong sense of belonging and connection throughout their learning journey.



Reflective questions

1. How do our physical and digital learning spaces currently support - or hinder - inclusion and belonging? How does this differ for different students' needs?
2. To what extent are services and associated spaces co-designed with students and experienced as welcoming, inclusive and supportive of well-being and belonging?
3. Are our digital resources fully compliant with recognised accessibility standards, for example [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#)?
4. How do we ensure accessibility is embedded from the outset of capital projects or digital procurement?
5. Do staff receive regular training on inclusive design, accessible technologies and sustainable practice?
6. How effectively do we communicate the accessibility features available to students?
7. How do we balance environmental sustainability with accessibility needs (for example, digital vs physical formats)?
8. Are there groups of learners who are unintentionally disadvantaged by our current learning environments?
9. How might we use student insight to co-create or refine physical and digital learning environments?
10. How could existing or emergent assistive technologies (such as AI tools) enhance accessibility and belonging?
11. In what ways could hybrid and flexible spaces be developed to further support equitable participation for all learners?
12. What additional staff development or role-specific guidance could help colleagues enhance and further support an inclusive environment?

Scenarios

Scenario 1: Promoting consistency and accessibility across learning environments

Context

A provider with an estate that was built in different eras and spans multiple sites identifies inconsistencies in the quality and accessibility of its learning environments. Students report that some rooms are well equipped with flexible furniture, reliable technology and good acoustics, while others have limited assistive technology, fixed seatings, or older equipment that makes hybrid teaching difficult.

Module evaluations show wide variation in how VLE spaces are structured, how assessment information is presented, and whether materials are uploaded in accessible formats. Students who commute, work alongside study, or have fluctuating health conditions rely heavily on digital spaces, and therefore experience greater barriers when accessibility is inconsistent.

Staff acknowledge the issue but describe high workloads, unclear expectations and variable confidence with accessibility tools and digital design.

The provider is exploring how to create more consistent physical and digital learning environments while recognising that different disciplines have different space needs.

Considerations

- What practical steps would help ensure greater consistency in the accessibility and navigability of VLE modules across programme?
- How might the provider prioritise upgrades to physical spaces where accessibility issues create barriers?
- What forms of staff development or guidance would build confidence in accessible digital design?
- How can students/student representatives be involved in evaluating both physical and digital spaces?

Scenario 2: Reducing barriers to student access and engagement

Context

A provider notices recurring and consistent comments in mid-module feedback and annual student surveys about inclusivity and accessibility across different programmes. While many students speak positively about supportive staff and engaging content, several themes highlight inconsistencies among learning environments.

Some students feel excluded in spaces with fixed seating or limited visibility. Neurodivergent students describe struggling with sensory distractions in certain rooms, inconsistent lighting or unpredictable audio quality. Students with caring responsibilities or part-time jobs note that some modules offer flexible access to material, while others rely heavily on real-time attendance with no alternative formats.

Digital feedback highlights similar issues. Several modules use colour-coded structures, clear signposting, while others upload dense PDFs, non-accessible slides or recordings without transcripts.

Considerations

- How can student feedback be used to identify areas where physical or digital learning environments hinder inclusivity?
- What steps could help staff design material that support diverse learners?
- How can the provider ensure that changes benefit all students, not only those who actively report the issue?
- How might the provider create clear, shared expectations? What support would enable staff to implement inclusive design in their lectures?



Key Practice g - Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of learning environment and related resources

Key Practice g

Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of learning environment and related resources

Providers, in collaboration with staff and students, monitor and evaluate on a systematic basis the effectiveness and impact of learning environments and the resources required for the delivery and enhancement of the learning experience.

As part of the process of monitoring and improving resources and learning environments offered to students, it is crucial that providers collect student feedback and use the data wisely and constructively. At an organisational level, quality assurance processes should be as useful as possible, without demanding a huge amount of staff time. By breaking down organisational silos and encouraging collaborative working across academic units and professional services, providers can share intelligence, reduce duplication of resources and promote a culture of continuous improvement.

Student voice and co-creation

Only students can know what it is like to participate in a programme of study, and how well the resources their provider offers support them on their student journeys. Consequently, effective use of student feedback is integral to maintaining and improving the student experience of the learning environments and guiding the effective deployment of resources.

Providers can collect student feedback data at multiple levels all of which is potentially useful. For individual academic units it is perhaps most useful to consider feedback in three categories: broad sweep, mid-range and individual.

Broad sweep: Programmatic feedback, for example the National Student Survey, is valuable, especially where response rates are high. It enables providers to gauge the general feeling across a programme and identify key areas for improvement. Careful analysis of free text comments may reveal specific issues that are leading to a general sense of satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Mid-range: Module feedback surveys and open forums can offer providers more granular data, offering more detail, for example if resources are helping students to understand specific learning outcomes, or if the timetabled teaching spaces are appropriate to the teaching sessions on that module.

Individual feedback: Informal feedback offers the most detailed insight and enables staff to really understand what the student experience is like. All students should have the opportunity for their feedback to be heard. The student who speaks up at the end of a teaching session may be reflecting a sentiment shared by many of their cohort.

Providers are encouraged to have mechanisms for capturing feedback at each of these levels and triangulating them to develop a clear picture of student priorities at provider, programme and module levels. Acting on feedback should be within the context of the available resource envelope and informed by the providers' knowledge of a discipline and how to best teach and prepare students for employment. As such, providers are encouraged to have open dialogue with students to make it clear why some things will change and others will not.

It is helpful if providers remember that students can quickly become fatigued with requests for feedback. Consequently, all such requests should have a clear purpose and be designed to produce useful data. Maintaining multiple channels for students to provide their feedback (such as surveys, in person, online forms, through student representatives), can help ensure inclusivity and ensuring that no constituency is ignored.

Students should receive effective signposting to the provider's feedback systems, including the most appropriate routes for feedback on different aspects of their experience. This can help them understand how student feedback is used to make improvements and allocate resources. Any communications should also include explanations of circumstances in which changes cannot be made in response to student feedback. It is desirable for feedback to be seen as one element of a two-way dialogue rather than a set of demands that students make and providers always meet. Managing expectations is also important when staff and students compare institutions. All parties should be clear as to why a provider has adopted a particular approach. However, if benchmarking suggests an alternative or better approach, providers should be open to exploring its usefulness to their institution.

Agility and in-year adjustments

While formal feedback-response structures can help inform annual resource allocations, they can be inherently slow. To promote greater agility, providers are encouraged to make best use of student-staff liaison meetings/committees as a platform for student-led, staff-supported education initiatives. This requires academic and professional services staff to forge respectful and constructive relationships with students as there needs to be trust on all sides, with clear roles and responsibilities for students and staff. The effective use of student representation systems can help with the co-creation of timely, mutually acceptable and durable solutions.



Training student representatives

Effective student representation systems are extremely helpful, and providers are encouraged to support these at an institutional level. Training, support and mentoring should be provided for student representatives, to ensure they understand their role, and the context they operate in. This could include general training for representatives from the students' union or guild, and more specific and detailed briefings from departmental staff. In addition, staff should be provided with guidance to understand what the students' roles are, and to understand how best to work with the relevant representatives. Staff should understand the role they play in proactively supporting student representatives, helping the students feel confident in fulfilling their roles. For example, a committee chair taking time to meet the student representative(s) on the committee before the first meeting, to help the student(s) understand the purpose of the committee, and how the student perspective can be most helpful.

Quality assurance processes

Providers should identify a system to effectively evaluate the impact of learning environments and the resources they offer on the student experience. They should seek to ensure that this process is meaningful and has the capacity to result in positive change. Evaluation should be used as a tool to drive enhancement.

All providers will have established processes and systems to monitor and evaluate the quality of the learning experience. However, they may wish to reflect on whether these fully consider the effectiveness of learning environments and resources. For example, do the provider's monitoring mechanisms include an analysis of available resources to reflect the importance and impact of this area on student experience and outcomes? Where a provider has programmes accredited by PSRBs it is crucial that any resource considerations required to maintain the good standing of these programmes should be considered as part of this process.

Engaging academic staff in monitoring and evaluation processes is critical to success. Providers should encourage contributions from academic staff and explain how these contribute to the institutional approach to resource allocation. Cross-disciplinary scrutiny and critical friendship can be valuable tools in sharing good practice and identifying wider institutional areas for improvement (see [Principle 5 - Monitoring, evaluating and enhancing provision](#)).



Collaborative working

Multiple professional services and academic units have an impact on learning environments and resources. Collaboration between academic, administrative, library, careers, estates, technical, IT, and other staff groups is required to holistically assess all learning environments and resources and their impact on the learning experience.

Raising awareness of the scope of each academic unit can be a useful step to determine where efficiencies can be achieved. Structures such as teaching showcases, websites and handbooks can enable staff to discover the approach taken in other units and share good practice and resources. It is important to trust in the expertise of each discipline as to what is effective in their area. Buy-in from staff about the importance of each academic unit's contribution can help collaborative working.

Good communication is key to success. One department may have detailed knowledge of the learning environment and resources, whereas another may be in receipt of the feedback from the students. Through cross-disciplinary discussion, knowledge sharing and thematic reviews, a provider can identify emerging issues and share good practice.



Reflective questions

1. Do students have meaningful opportunities to provide feedback on the adequacy, accessibility and effectiveness of resources supporting their learning?
2. What feedback about learning environments and resources do we have, are there any gaps and how can these be filled?
3. How can we ensure that student feedback about learning environments and resources reaches teams responsible for those areas?
4. How do we work with our student union/guild to train student representatives to give effective feedback about learning environments and resources?
5. How do we gather a holistic view of the learning environments and resources available and increase institutional awareness of existing resources?
6. How can the effectiveness of learning environments and resources be measured?
7. Do our current systems of monitoring and evaluating the student learning experience include consideration of learning environments and resources?
8. How can we increase the engagement of staff stakeholders, both academic and professional, in the monitoring and evaluation of resource allocation?
9. What efficiencies of learning environments and resource allocations can be made?
10. Do we always work collaboratively with students on resource allocation when carrying out curriculum review?
11. Do all our students know how we act on their feedback about resources?

Scenarios

Scenario 1: Embedding meaningful student voice in programme development

Context

A provider is currently undertaking an institution-wide programme redesign initiative to address evolving and diverse student demographics. As part of this process, there has been a significant push in recent rounds of Annual Programme Reviews (APRs) to engage with students to hear their views, gain operational insight, and support meaningful co-creation.

Staff recognise the importance of working in partnership with students; however, despite continual innovations and engagement events, students do not fully engage in review processes or in the wider range of feedback mechanisms available to them.

When programme design teams approach the Students Union for advice, they are provided with guidance that acknowledges the wider sector context and competing demands for their time. The advice offered also includes several suggested steps that staff have already taken to encourage engagement.

Considerations

- How do you convey to students the responsibility of contributing their voice to institutional initiatives?
- What resources are available to support the design of meaningful co-creation opportunities?
- How can staff make effective use of data gathered through co-creation conversations?

Scenario 2: Supporting staff in the expansion of transnational education provision

Context

A UK-based research-intensive university is known for subject-specific excellence in their large undergraduate programmes. The university has recently expanded its campus to include an international location which has promising research sites to complement existing specialisms. However, this requires significant use of UK staff guidance/mentoring, existing teaching resources and transition arrangements between the UK and international teaching teams. The researchers on the new site are not experienced in curriculum design.

UK staff are concerned with the lack of clarity on what is expected of them as transnational education (TNE) link tutors and whether their contribution will be appropriately recognised in workload models. They are unsure of how to advise on questions relating to learning environment and resources due to uncertainty on the international student demographics and the student experience of the new campus.

Considerations

- What metrics should be used and shared with UK-based staff, to facilitate effective TNE support?
- How inclusive can TNE transition and support be in terms of involving UK-based staff?
- How can the student experience be meaningfully captured in the new location, to best use UK-staff support?

Terminology

Term	Definition
Academic staff	Those employees responsible for delivering and supporting learning, teaching, assessment and research. This group typically includes lecturers, professors, associate tutors, researchers and other teaching-related roles that contribute to students' academic development and the institution's scholarly activity.
Accessibility	Refers to how easily all students, including those with disabilities or additional needs, can use and benefit from learning environments, teaching, resources and support. It focuses on removing barriers and ensuring equitable participation and success.
Blended learning	A structured mix of on-campus teaching and online learning in which both elements are intentionally designed to complement each other.
Budgeting and resource allocation	The annual financial process that distributes funds across faculties, academic units and professional services to support both strategic priorities and operational activity. Its purpose is to align income forecasts with institutional goals, ensure resources are used sustainably, and allow adjustments during the year in response to recruitment, regulatory or financial pressures.
Digital infrastructure	The systems, technologies and platforms that support teaching, learning, research and administration. It includes networks, hardware, software, virtual learning environments and data systems that enable reliable, secure and effective digital activity across the institution.
Enhancement	The deliberate and systematic improvement in the quality of provision and the ways in which students' learning is supported, involving the active engagement of students and staff. Enhancement has different interpretations across the UK with some UK nations having an enhancement-led regulatory framework.
Governing body	A provider's highest decision-making authority, responsible for setting strategy, ensuring financial sustainability, overseeing academic quality, and holding senior leadership to account. It safeguards the institution's mission, legal compliance, and long term public interest.
Governance framework	The structured system of policies, roles, committees and processes that sit beneath the governing body and oversee the day-to-day activities of a provider. It defines decision-making responsibilities, ensures accountability, supports regulatory compliance, and enables effective oversight of academic, financial and strategic performance.

Term	Definition
Flexible learning	An approach that maximises student choice over how, when and where they study, including varied pacing, modular pathways, and multiple modes of engagement.
Hybrid learning	A model in which students can join the same teaching event either in person or online, with a pedagogy designed to support both groups simultaneously.
Learning environment	The physical, digital and social setting in which students engage with teaching, resources and support. It includes classrooms, online platforms, facilities, academic culture and support systems that together shape how students experience and succeed in their studies.
Learning resources	The materials, tools and support offered by a provider that students use to engage with their studies, including textbooks, digital content, library collections, specialist equipment, software and academic support materials.
Operational plan	Sets out the specific actions, timelines and responsibilities needed to deliver a provider's strategic objectives. It focuses on short term, practical implementation at faculty, departmental or service level, detailing resources, performance measures and risks to ensure day to day activity aligns with institutional priorities.
Professional services staff	Employees who deliver a range of non academic operations that enable a provider to function effectively. This includes roles in areas such as administration, finance, HR, IT, student support, estates, marketing, governance and compliance. Professional services staff provide the essential expertise and services that support students, academic staff and institutional strategy.
Professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB):	PSRBs are a varied group of bodies, regulators and those with statutory authority over a profession or group of professionals. PSRBs may provide membership services and accredit or approve courses as confirmation that the courses meet their standards and expectations. PSRBs are recognised by employers; achievement of a PSRB-recognised course can be an essential requirement for entry to a particular role/occupation or to be professionally registered with them.
Quality assurance	The systematic monitoring and evaluation of learning and teaching, and the processes that support them, to make sure that the standards of academic awards meet the Principles set out in the 2024 Quality Code, and that the quality of the student learning experience is being safeguarded and improved.

Term	Definition
Strategy	This sets a provider's overarching long-term direction and articulates its mission, vision and values. Written to take account of known external drivers (for example, financial, regulatory, predicted student demographic) it describes a provider's strategic priorities typically over a five or 10-year horizon.
Strategic plan	Sets out how a UK higher education provider will deliver its long term strategy by defining clear objectives, major initiatives, timelines and measures of success. It turns broad institutional ambitions into coordinated programmes of work that guide decision making and progress over several years.
Student experience	A term that encompasses students' experiences of their course or programme and of the resources, support, facilities and opportunities that a provider makes available to support their learning.
Student journey	The full lifecycle of a learner's experience, from first awareness and application through enrolment, teaching and learning, assessment, support, progression, graduation, and transition into employment or further study. It captures every academic, administrative, and pastoral interaction that shapes the student experience.
Student success	A combination of positive academic outcomes, personal development and well-being coupled to a strong sense of belonging that leads to meaningful progression into employment, further study, or wider life opportunities. It reflects both achievement and the quality of the student experience.
Student voice	Refers to the ways in which students can be actively heard, involved and influential in shaping their learning experience, institutional decisions and quality processes. It captures student feedback, participation and representation to ensure their perspectives inform improvement and governance.
Sustainability	Refers to a provider's ability to operate in a way that protects long term environmental, financial and social well-being. It involves responsible use of resources, reducing environmental impact, and ensuring the provider can continue delivering high quality education for future generations.
Transnational education (TNE)	All types of higher education study programmes, or sets of programmes of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the students are in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programmes may belong to the education system of a state different from the state in which it operates or may operate independently of any national education system.

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The writing and editing of this Advice and Guidance was supported by Dr Nick Watmough, Quality and Standards Specialist, QAA.

Continue exploring the Advice and Guidance

This publication is part of a suite of Advice and Guidance that accompanies the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education 2024](#).

Select the Principles below to access additional guidance, practical considerations and resources that support the enhancement of quality and the maintenance of academic standards.

Principle 1 Taking a strategic approach to managing quality and standards 	Principle 2 Engaging students as partners 	Principle 3 Resourcing delivery of a high-quality learning experience 	Principle 4 Using data to inform and evaluate quality 
Principle 5 Monitoring, evaluating, and enhancing provision 	Principle 6 Engaging in external quality and standards review and accreditation 	Principle 7 Designing, developing, approving, and modifying programmes 	Principle 8 Operating partnerships with other organisations 
Principle 9 Recruiting, selecting and admitting students 	Principle 10 Supporting students to achieve their potential 	Principle 11 Teaching, learning and assessment 	Principle 12 Operating concerns, complaints and appeals processes 



Published – September 2026

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Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

qaa.ac.uk