

TQF Bulletin, Spring 2024

Welcome to the TQF Bulletin - your quick guide to the activity of [The Quality Forum](#). Please feel free to share this with colleagues who might find it valuable.



Photo credit: Alison Eales

Our second meeting of session 2023-24 took place on Wednesday 13 March 2024 on Zoom. As with the October meeting, this meeting was focused on updates on the various workstreams of the [Tertiary Quality Project](#) and the development of the new tertiary review method.

Karen Gray and Derek Horsburgh from the Scottish Funding Council provided an update on [strengthening institutional monitoring, self-evaluation and reporting on quality](#), a key strand of Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) to be implemented in AY2024-25. Much of this presentation focused on the development of the Self-Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP). This is intended to support institutions to develop an annual high-level reflection on institutional quality assurance and enhancement activities and outcomes, and to provide SFC with assurance on the effective use and impact of public investment to deliver high-quality learning provision. The

SEAP will streamline reporting to SFC, replacing institutions' annual reporting on ILR and quality reporting through the Outcome Agreement process. Karen and Derek summarised the positive feedback and suggestions that emerged from the pilot conducted between November 2023 and January 2024. In terms of next steps, colleagues at SFC are refining the SEAP guidance and intend to undertake final targeted consultation with sector representative groups by early April.

Laura Porter from QAA Scotland updated members on the development of the new [tertiary review method](#), focusing on one particular option for judgements. Alison Eales from QAA Scotland updated members on the [development of the new tertiary sector enhancement activity](#). A second round of co-creation events concluded in March 2024 and QAA is now developing the proposed delivery model along with potential topics.

Eve Lewis from sparqs provided an update on their work on [evaluating and enhancing the student learning experience and student partnership](#). The intention is to create a statement on student partnership, setting out what Scotland expects from mature student partnerships. This will be supported by: a set of features/values of student partnership; a set of challenge questions to support reviewers and institutions to evaluate their practice; and guidance to support institutions and students' associations to consider student partnership within each element of the tertiary quality enhancement framework.

Eve Alcock from QAA updated members on UK-wide quality developments. Colleagues at QAA are watching closely for any announcements about the timing of the General Election, possible outcomes and

their impact on the sector. There is likely to be a change of Education Minister in Wales following the election of a new First Minister. The Northern Ireland Executive is now meeting again and the Minister with responsibility for tertiary education is Conor Murphy.

QAA is keeping a watch on the [Public Accounts Committee's inquest into franchised](#) provision and considering what advice and guidance might be helpful in this area.

Following news reports on the topic, QAA has been commissioned by Universities UK to conduct a [review regarding programmes designed for international students to support their entry into UK higher education courses](#). This review will compare the admissions requirements between foundation programmes for domestic students and international students, assess the standards of the courses being offered to international students as both foundation programmes and international year one programmes, and assess whether these standards are being achieved and maintained in practice. QAA intend to publish the findings of this review by June 2024 and have also directed members to the [Characteristics Statement on International Pathway Courses](#).

Developments in Europe include the forthcoming [Bologna Ministerial Conference](#) and it is expected that this Conference will result in [ENQA](#) receiving a mandate to reform the [European Standards and Guidelines](#).

Following sector events and surveys on the development of the [Quality Code](#), QAA is developing a formal proposal for consultation. This is expected to go live during April and the final version of the Code is expected to be presented to the [UK Standing Committee](#) in June.

We noted two papers for information: the analyses of findings from [Quality Enhancement and Standards Reviews \(QESR\)](#) conducted during session 2022-23, and of institutional annual statements on Institution-led Review.

Our final meeting of this session will take place on Thursday 13 June. We hope to make this a hybrid meeting and would welcome any offers to host.

In the meantime, there are two important pieces of business that we will progress. Our Vice-Convenor Katrina Swanton has suggested that it would be worth establishing Action Learning Sets. As we have been using our main meetings this year for updates on the Tertiary Quality Project, Action Learning Sets would allow for more focused discussion, practice sharing and troubleshooting. We will be in touch about getting these set up.

The second piece of business is that Nichola Kett is coming to the end of her second term as Convenor, so there will be an election between now and the June meeting. We have circulated the procedure and relevant deadlines. Please get in touch if you are interested in standing. We will also have an election for Vice-Convenor later in the year.

TQF is a forum for sharing practice on matters of teaching quality, and colleagues are encouraged to suggest items for discussion. Please [get in touch with QAA Scotland](#) if you would like to share practice from your institution or learn more about practice across the sector.