

# TQF Bulletin, Autumn 2022

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 first meeting of 2022-23 took place on 18 October. We were delighted to welcome Nicola Poole (Chair of the Wales Quality Forum) and Ann Heron (Chair of the College Development Network's Quality Network), who have been added to the membership of the Forum. We also recorded our thanks to Erica Russell-Hensens, Rhiannon Tinsley and James Harrison, all of whom are moving on to new things.

Kathryn O'Loan from the Scottish Funding Council provided an update on progress and next steps relating to future quality arrangements in Scotland. Following the initial period of evidence-gathering and consultation, activity is moving into a phase of co-creation of the new arrangements. Two workshops are being held to begin this work. Care is being taken to support the university and college sectors to

understand each other, and also to respect the diversity of the sectors while also identifying areas of commonality. The aim is to retain and build on existing cultures of collaboration in both sectors, to facilitate the sharing of good practice, and to emphasise student outcomes. Quality assurance and enhancement have a key role to play in supporting the learner journey, and it is hoped that this work can influence and shape the wider agenda.

James Harrison from QAA provided an update on UK-wide developments. Wales is moving towards a tertiary quality framework. ESTYN will continue to be the quality body for further education. A separate quality body will be established for higher education. Progress in Northern Ireland continues to be slow due to the broader political situation, but QAA will continue to support the sector and there is interest in a move towards an enhancement-led approach. Members were reassured that QAA would continue to support members in England once its role as designated quality body (DQB) came to an end. The Office for Students will take on the DQB role in the interim.

Caroline Turnbull from QAA Scotland introduced a paper on the Enhancement Themes that offered three options beyond the scheduled end of Resilient Learning Communities in June 2023. Members supported QAA's preferred option of concluding the current Theme to schedule and spending session 2023-24 planning for the launch of a tertiary sector Theme in 2024-25. Members were reassured that there would be other enhancement activity in session 2023-24, and also noted that institutional work around the current Theme was likely to continue beyond June 2023.

sparqs provided an update on key pieces of work that were under development, including the student partnership model and principles relating to the student learning experience. The Scottish Funding Council

confirmed that [Scottish institutions would not participate in the Teaching Excellence Framework](#), and also that [Scotland had opted to retain the summative question in the National Student Survey](#).

The University of Glasgow provided a short presentation about their ELIR 4 commendation relating to widening participation. The institution has adopted a broad definition of this term and the work is embedded in institutional strategy. There is a wide range of activity, some of which supports learners to access other institutions, while some is tailored to professional degrees. The University now has a designated Widening Participation group that will share good practice within and beyond the institution. Please let us know if you would like a five-minute slot to share practice at a future meeting.

We concluded the first half of the meeting by noting that it marked the end of Erica's term as Vice Convener, and that the election process would run over the next few weeks.

In the second hour of our meeting, we went into three breakout discussions around two topics: QAA's [External Examining Principles](#) and the results of our survey about engagement with TQF.

Members agreed that the Principles were a good starting point for thinking around external examining, an area in which different institutions were at different points of development. They could provide a useful reference point when looking at institutional structures and processes (for example, shaping policy around induction and conflicts of interest). They might also support the development of a common language which, in turn, could support understanding of differences and commonalities between institutions' practice. Interesting questions were raised about how institutions can capture data on what staff learn from their own experiences of working as external examiners, and how students might be supported to better understand the role of external examiners.

Four action points arose from the discussion of the survey about TQF. First, we will give institutions flexibility about who attends Part 1 of the meetings (as and when we return to in-person meetings, there will be a maximum of two attendees per institution). Second, we agreed to be more flexible about the structure of Part 2 of the meetings: rather than always opting for breakout discussions, we might run CPD activities, bringing in speakers from other sectors. Third, recognising the value of in-person meetings, we agreed that we might have an annual in-person meeting around a key topic. Finally, we agreed that we would investigate moving the online discussion space from Yammer to Teams as this is more commonly used.

Our next meeting will be on 16 March on Zoom.

**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. You can also join the [TQF Yammer Network](#).**