

TQF Bulletin, Summer 2023

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.

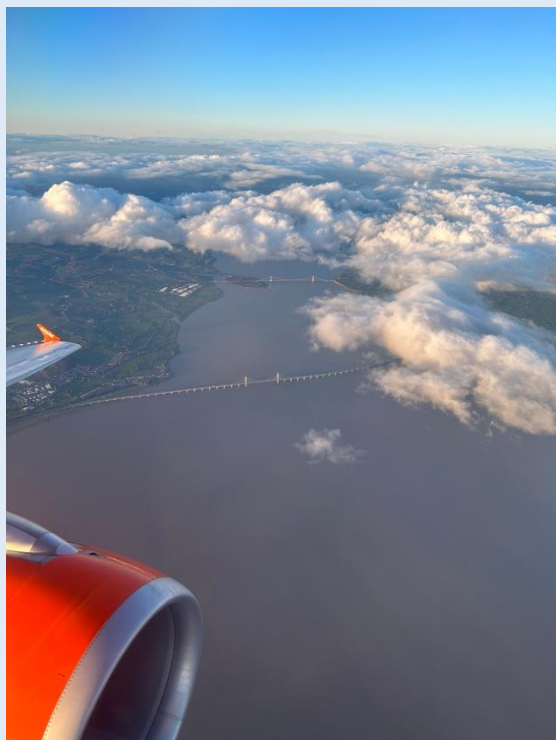


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Our last meeting of 2022-23 took place on 22 June. Kevin McStravock from QAA provided an update on UK-wide developments, including ongoing work by QAA to consult on [changes to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) and to address the [challenges raised by generative AI](#). QAA has now demitted from the Designated Quality Body role in England and the Office for Students are taking this forward. In Scotland, QAA now has two commissions from the Scottish Funding Council, one to develop a tertiary review method and the other to develop a tertiary enhancement activity, and is working closely with other sector agencies to shape these projects. The [Withers Review](#) has published its final report with recommendations that have implications for how post-school provision is funded. In Wales, the new Chief Executive of the [Commission for Tertiary Education and Research](#) has been confirmed as Simon Pirotte OBE. The Handbook for the second cycle of [Quality Enhancement Review](#) in Wales was planned for publication in July. QAA is also awaiting confirmation of development of a new review method in Northern Ireland. QAA underwent review by the [European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education \(ENQA\)](#) in February-March 2023 and was found to be compliant with 12 of the 14 criteria and partially compliant in the remaining two criteria. A draft report has been received and feedback provided to ENQA by QAA. The full report is expected to be published over the summer, with decisions about QAA's inclusion on the [European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education \(EQAR\)](#) and its membership of ENQA to be taken by the end of the year.

Members were provided with updates on three workstreams of the Scottish Funding Council's [Tertiary Quality Project](#). Nichola Kett provided an update on Workstream 3, [Strengthening Institutional Monitoring, Self-evaluation and Reporting on Quality](#). Some members of TQF have been involved with the project, which aims to produce an annual template for colleges and HEIs to report to SFC along with accompanying guidance. At the time of the meeting, the project was on track to supply SFC with drafts by the agreed deadline, along with some notes from the three meetings of the working group to provide context. The intention is that the new template will be piloted by a selection of institutions, and any institutions who would like to be part of this exercise are invited to contact Derek Horsburgh at the SFC. Members noted the importance of ensuring that the reporting cycle relates to the cycle of developing Outcome Agreements to ensure that there is not duplication. Megan Brown and Gloria Laurini from sparqs provided an update on Workstream 4, [Evaluating and enhancing the student learning experience and student partnership](#). At the

previous meeting, sparqs had reported on the development of the Student Learning Experience Model; at this meeting, the focus was the Student Partnership Model. Work included an examination of student partnership in the context of the current review arrangements as well as what it might look like in the arrangements from 2024-25. Following consultation, the model had shifted from a 'ladder' format to more of an ecosystem, representing that different kinds of student partnership are appropriate in different contexts. Colleagues from sparqs invited feedback and invited institutions to volunteer to pilot the Model. Megan also highlighted sparqs' awards, which include a special category reflecting the organisation's 20th anniversary, and invited nominations. Caroline Turnbull provided an update on Workstream 5, which concerns the development of a [tertiary sector enhancement activity](#). QAA is committed to bringing colleges and HEIs together to co-create an approach to enhancement activity that is innovative and bold while also retaining the strengths of different parts of the sector and building on the expertise developed through previous activities such as the Enhancement Themes. The [College Development Network](#) will act as a critical friend for this project, and QAA is working with [sparqs](#) to ensure student engagement. Outputs will include possible models and an agreed set of common principles, with a final set of recommendations to be delivered to SFC in spring 2024. Katrina Swanton has kindly agreed to sit on the Advisory Group for this project in her role as TQF's Vice-Convener. Derek Horsburgh that further communications from SFC about the Tertiary Quality Project would follow the next meeting of the project's Steering Group. He also reported that SFC would be publishing refreshed quality guidance over the summer and that it was anticipated that changes would be minor.

In the second hour of our meeting, we went into breakout discussions around two topics. In one group, we were joined by Sheila Dunn and Helen Murdoch from the SCQF Partnership. Colleagues found this a very valuable opportunity to learn about the range and breadth of the work of the SCQFP, including work linked to the skills agenda, [support for individuals to map their skills to the Framework](#), [work to support military veterans](#), and [guidance on recognition of prior learning](#). Members agreed that the Framework itself is part of the 'DNA' of quality in Scotland, and reflected on how some of the SCQFP other online resources and training might be used. It was suggested that universities could work more closely with SCQFP to develop resources that are targeted to HEIs.

Our other group shared reflections on [QESR and ILM](#). Members who had experienced QESR reported positively on the experience, sharing that the discussions had been well-managed and collegiate, that reports had been useful and fair, and that QAA Scotland review managers had been supportive. The need to be mindful of reviewer capacity was discussed in terms of the volume of documentation. Colleagues reported that they missed the reflective analysis and that while something of that length was not appropriate, a short narrative from the institution might help to 'join the dots'. We also discussed the relative benefits of online and in-person meetings and how best to support students in this work.

We will confirm dates for session 2023-24 over the summer. There appears to be appetite for an in-person meeting, and we will give this some more consideration.

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.