Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 4 Operational Guidance: Submission of the Reflective Analysis and Advance Information Set

1   This operational guidance covers submission of the following:

- Reflective Analysis (RA)
- Advance Information Set (AIS).

Timing and format of submission

2   The RA and AIS should be submitted to QAA Scotland (QAAS) eight working weeks before the beginning of the Planning Visit. If the institution has chosen to submit any case studies, these should be submitted along with the RA and AIS.

3   The RA should be submitted both in hard copy and in electronic form. Institutions should provide QAAS with up to eight hard copies of the RA. The precise number relates to the size of the ELIR team (one per team member plus two for the QAAS office).

4   The RA, AIS and supporting resources function seamlessly as an integrated suite of information and are well structured, cross-referenced, indexed and labelled. Where possible, these are hyperlinked directly to more detailed source information, for example websites, and should be hyperlinked from within the text in the electronic version submitted. This helps illustrate links between the RA and the wider information set being provided and ensures ease of use of the material for the ELIR team.

5   The RA, AIS and (if applicable) case studies should be submitted electronically using the QAA secure online document upload portal. Detailed guidance on document upload to the QAA portal is available in Annex A.

Reflective Analysis

6   Guidance on the structure and content of the RA is provided in Annex 2 (paragraphs 96-103) of the [Enhancement-led Institutional Review Handbook](#) (April 2017, fourth edition).

7   In addition, a guidance document, [Preparing for Enhancement-led Institutional Review](#), has been prepared for use alongside the ELIR 4 Handbook and the Operational Guidance. It includes guidance on approaches to developing an RA, layout and length, as well as information on case studies and the AIS.

Case studies

8   Case studies are not required in ELIR 4. If an institution chooses to submit material in the form of one or more case studies, this should support the information base for the ELIR, and should be submitted with the RA and AIS. Institutions are advised to seek guidance on the selection and preparation of case studies through discussion with the QAAS officer in advance of submission.

Advance Information Set (AIS)

9   The institution should submit an AIS to accompany the RA. The purpose of the AIS is to provide the ELIR team with direct and easily accessible information about the institution's key processes for securing academic standards and assuring quality at an early stage of the review.

10   The AIS should normally constitute pre-existing documentation and/or draw on existing analysis, rather than be prepared specifically for ELIR, and it should help the ELIR team to identify specific areas for exploration with the institution.

11   The precise detail of the AIS will vary from institution to institution. Therefore, **the suite of information to be included in the set should be agreed between the institution and the QAAS officer in advance of submission**.

12   The purpose of providing this information is to illustrate to the ELIR team examples of the institution's approach to quality and to demonstrate their processes in action at an early stage in the review.

13   It is useful for ELIR teams if the information can be presented in an easy-to-use format with a contents list and page numbers. An introduction for each AIS section (to explain the contents, for example the contents of the sample of annual monitoring reports and an explanation of why the sample was chosen) can be helpful for the ELIR team. Alternatively, an overall AIS summary document could be used to address this need.

14   The ELIR Handbook (paragraphs 39-40) indicates that the AIS will comprise the following:

- a mapping of the institution's policies and practices to the Quality Code
- a sample of recent institution-led review reports and the responses to them
- SFC annual returns for the period since the previous ELIR
- a sample of annual monitoring reports
- an analysis of the external examiner comments for the preceding academic year
- an analysis of student feedback for the preceding academic year.

Guidance on naming and a suggested file structure are detailed in Annex A.

Mapping of the institution's policies and processes to the Quality Code

15   Institutions do not need to map against each Indicator, but should provide an overview and evaluation of how their activity meets the Expectations of the Code. Text should be provided that outlines where the institution considers that it displays positive practice and where any Indicators have presented a challenge, and/or where the institution has policy or practice that differs from the sector norms, with a brief explanation.

16   Where an institution provided a detailed mapping for ELIR 3, it could resubmit that mapping document with an update for ELIR 4 to indicate areas of changed policy and practice in the intervening period.

A sample of recent institution-led review reports and the responses to them

17   This information should be illustrative of internal review processes across the institution. Therefore, a timescale should be chosen to ensure that you provide a sample that reflects the types of review undertaken and their operation across different functional areas. This may differ across institutions depending on their size and processes.

SFC annual returns for the period since the previous ELIR

18   These should be included in the form in which they were sent to SFC.

A sample of annual monitoring reports

19   The sample should represent a cross section of activity across the institution. It should allow the ELIR team to see how the process works, including the range of information considered and typical level of analysis undertaken.

An analysis of the external examiner comments for the preceding academic year

20   Analysis of the data should identify key themes arising, including where external examiners have highlighted areas of positive practice and areas for development. Institutions should demonstrate how they use external examiner reports. Information should be included that details where reports are considered within the institution and by whom, and how this affects provision in practice. Evidence may include committee minutes, papers or reports, working group minutes, action plans, and so on.

An analysis of student feedback for the preceding academic year

21   This means analysis of student feedback during the last academic year plus any surveys or feedback activity completed in the academic year during which the ELIR is taking place. Institutions should evidence how they have used and acted upon the feedback. Evidence may include committee minutes, papers or reports, working group minutes, action plans, and so on.

Additional information

22   In addition to the material identified in the AIS, institutions should provide information about the organisation and committee structures, along with any institutional strategy documents that are deemed helpful to the review. It is most useful if the organisational and committee structures can be presented in visual or diagrammatic form.

23   If there are particular additional materials that your institution would like to submit in advance, please discuss this with the QAAS officer managing your ELIR. You may also wish reviewers to have access to documents referenced within the RA, such as committee minutes or other particular papers. While it can be very useful for reviewers to have access to these wider materials, institutions should be conscious of providing the ELIR team with targeted information that illustrates the analysis included in the RA.

Structure and organisation

24   It is understood that the AIS is likely to represent a substantial amount of material but institutions are asked to bear in mind that all reviewers are expected to read the information provided as part of the AIS, and therefore the total volume should not be unreasonable. Institutions need to consider achieving a balance between providing enough

material to demonstrate the key institutional processes in action, without providing such a high volume of information that it is unreasonable to expect colleagues to read and analyse it. Providing too great a volume of material at this early stage can make it difficult for the ELIR team to gain an overview of the key matters affecting the institution.

25   Institutions can help reviewers to work with the material in the AIS by providing a contents list and clear signposting within the AIS, as well as between the RA and the AIS.

26   The ELIR team may request other material to support the review following the Planning Visit and during the main Review Visit. It is expected that ELIR teams will make a request for any additional material one week after the Planning Visit, with the expectation of the material being made available two weeks before the main Review Visit. Any additional material should be uploaded onto the QAA portal using the guidance in Annex A.

Annex A: QAA Review Document Upload Portal

1   This document provides step-by-step guidance to allow the secure online transfer of electronic files to QAA.

IMPORTANT: Please note:

2   Your QAAS officer will discuss the submission of the Reflective Analysis (RA), Advance Information Set (AIS) and any case studies at an early ELIR 4 meeting.

3   Use of Dropbox or any other cloud-based applications to upload information to QAA is not supported. Hyperlinks should not be used (but can be contained with documents). If you have combined a number of documents into a PDF file, please check that the links still work.

4   The upload facility may be used during the period stated on your upload letter and as agreed with your QAAS officer or administrator.

IMPORTANT: Guidance on filenames and size

5   Your submission and supporting evidence should be supplied in a **flat structure** (that is, all files together, with **no folders or subfolders or zipped files**) with documents clearly labelled. An image displaying a desired structured can be found at the end of this document. **The system will not accept folders**.

6   File names must only use alphanumeric characters (a-z and 0-9) and spaces. Hyphen (-) and underscore (_) are also allowed. Any file names that contain other invalid characters such as the following will be blocked and you will receive an error message **(`¬!£$%^&*+=][{}~#@':;,<>?/)**.

7   File names should be kept as short as possible (128 characters maximum). File names with .msg are not permitted.

8   Individual document file sizes should not exceed 50MB.

9   Various file formats can be uploaded (for example Word, Excel and PowerPoint); however, for ease of reference it is advisable to convert documents into PDF sections, for example:

- AIS00 Summary Document
- AIS01 Mapping to the Quality Code
- AIS02 Institution-led Quality Reviews
- AIS03 SFC annual returns
- AIS04 Annual monitoring reports
- AIS05 External examiner comment
- AIS06 analysis of student feedback
- Reflective Analysis.

Getting help

If you require assistance regarding the content and structure of your submission, please contact your QAAS officer.

For technical support please call the QAA Service Desk on 0282 933 1111, or email onedesk@m5servicedesk.ac.uk. Note that this service operates Monday to Friday between 9.00 and 17.00.
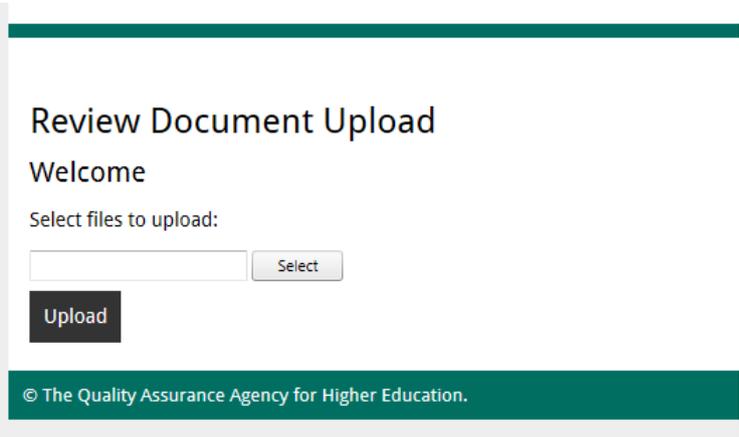
Getting started

1   Navigate to https://uploadportal.qaa.ac.uk

The following page will be displayed.
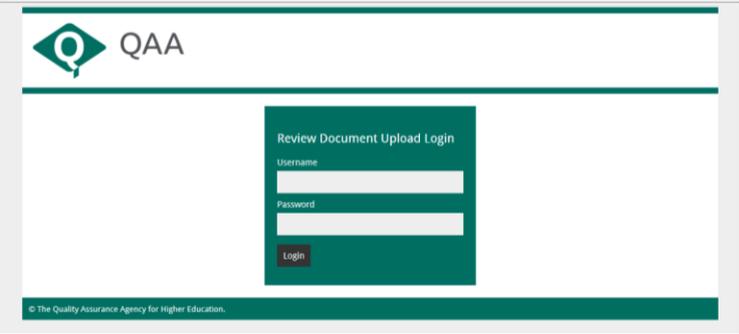
2   Please log in with the Username (Review ID) and Password that you have been provided with.

You will see the following screen.

3   Click Select and your local file system will be displayed.
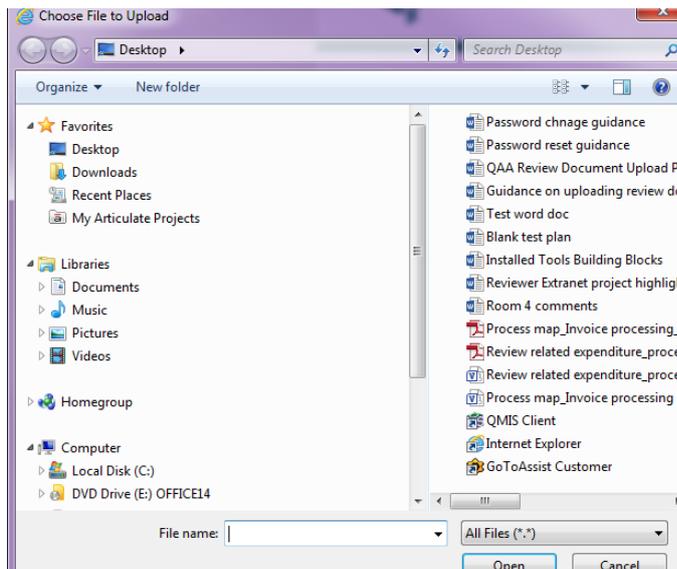
4   Locate and select the documents that you wish to upload to QAA. You can select multiple files by holding Ctrl and clicking on the documents. Click open once you have made your selection.

Note: To avoid the system timing out we suggest that you upload documents in batches of 50. You can continue to work while the upload is running.

5   You will see the files listed ready for submitting. You can also remove any files by clicking Remove.

Click submit when you are ready to transfer the documents to QAA.
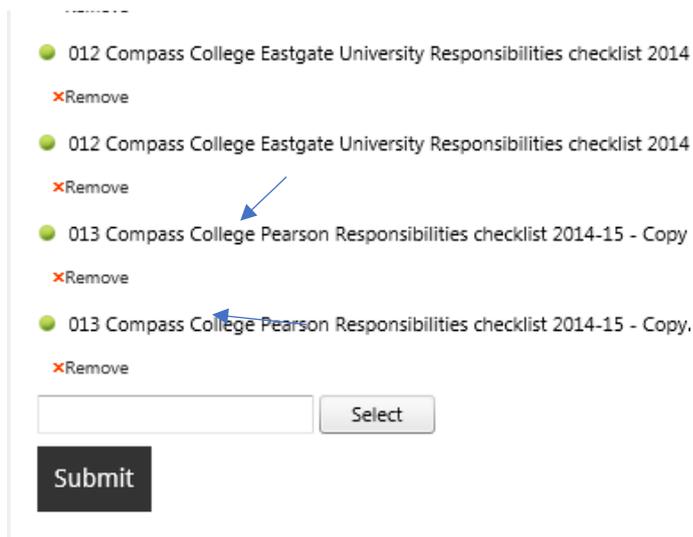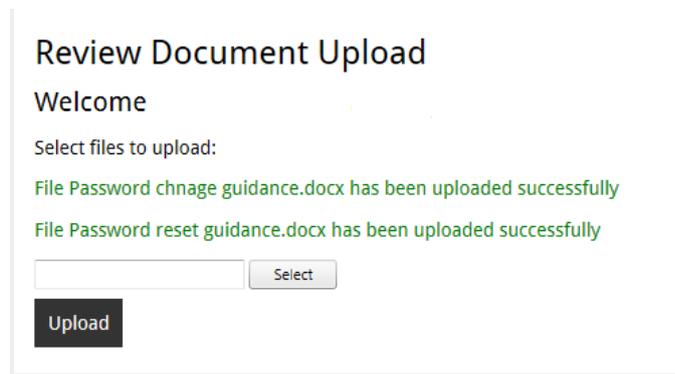
6   You will see a transfer status dialogue box while your documents are uploading.
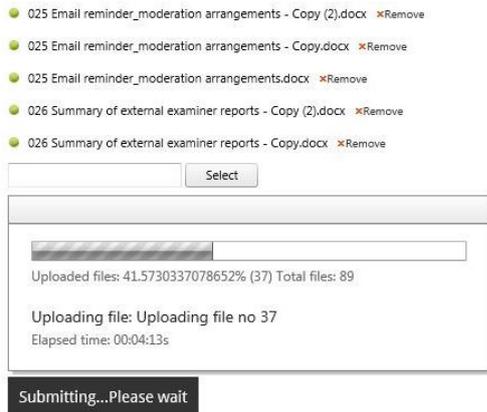
Once you see this upload success message your files will be available to the review team in their SharePoint review site.

Please note - if you receive an error message (in red) it is likely to be because one of your files contains an invalid character in the name, or it exceeds the allowed file size.

Example file structure

⊕ new document or drag files here

✓	🗋	**Name**
	📕	AIS 1 Quality Code Mapping
	📕	AIS 2 Institution-led quality reviews
	📕	AIS 3 SFC Annual Returns
	📕	AIS 4 Annual Monitoring Reports
	📕	AIS 5 External Examiner Comments
	📕	AIS 6 Student Feedback
	📕	AIS 7 Additional Information - Collaborations
	📕	AIS Summary Document ✳
	📕	Reflective Analysis