



Scotland's Tertiary
Quality Enhancement
Framework

Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER)

Operational Guidance
for Institutions

This review method
is ESG compliant

November 2025

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Introduction

This guidance outlines the common arrangements that are useful for institutions to make in preparation for Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER). Specific arrangements should be discussed with your QAA Review Manager in advance of the visits. This guidance does not replace the [TQER Guide for Institutions](#) which sets out how provision delivered by colleges and universities will be reviewed to support quality assurance and enhancement, but is intended to augment and support institutions as they prepare for TQER. It is a living document that will be updated as and when other areas of guidance are identified through the delivery of TQER,

Preparing for Review Visits

Strategic Impact Assessment

The Strategic Impact Assessment (SIA) acts as an overarching reflective piece which draws on the institution's available Self-Evaluation and Action Plans (SEAPs). The student body, through the Lead Student Representative, should be a key partner in the preparation of the SIA. The final SIA should be clearly signed off by the Institution Quality Contact (or accountable authority) and the Lead Student Representative reflecting co-ownership. The evidence cited in the SIA should be specific and targeted and be clearly referenced to that included within the TQER Advance Information Set (AIS). The aim is to enable the review team to understand and affirm the information, evaluation and conclusions in the SIA. This approach will make it easier for the review team to understand the institution's systems and gather information quickly and effectively. The SIA should include information that contextualises its provision and be evaluative and as concise as possible.

Format: The SIA should reflect the principles of the TQEF. Guidance for completing each section is provided in Annex D of the [TQER Guide for Institutions](#). As a guide, the SIA should normally be no more than 20 pages in length (Arial 10pt. font as a minimum) and only include evidence that is relevant to support the text.

Advance Information Set

Annex E of the TQER Guide for Institutions provides detailed guidance on the Advance Information Set (AIS). It is anticipated that the AIS should comprise a set of existing material, or information already prepared for other purposes. Institutions are not expected to prepare bespoke material.

Institutions should align their AIS with the UK Quality Code Principles (as detailed in Annex E). It is not necessary to arrange the AIS against the TQEF principles.

An index which lists the pieces of evidence should also be provided as part of the AIS. We would recommend creating the index as an Excel file so it can be filtered and easily updated should additional evidence be added at a later stage.

Each piece of evidence should be given a unique numerical identifier. The following number format is a suitable example in which the first two digits relate to the relevant principle of the UK Quality Code. This format avoids extensive renumbering of the AIS if additional documentation needs to be added.

0000	Index
0001	Strategic Impact Analysis
0002, 0003, 0004 etc.	General documentation such as an organogram, committee structures, lists of acronyms etc.
0100 , 0101 , 0102 etc.	QC P1 Evidence to support Taking a strategic approach to managing quality and standards
0200 , 0201, 0203 etc.	QC P2 Evidence to support Engaging students as partners
0300 , 0301, 0302 etc.	QC P3 Evidence to support Resourcing delivery of a high-quality learning experience
0400 , 0401, 0402 etc.	QC P4 Evidence to support Using data to inform and evaluate quality
0700 , 0701, 0702 etc.	QC P7 Evidence to support Designing, developing, approving, and modify programmes
1201 , 1202, 1203 etc.	QC P12 Evidence to support Operating concerns, complaints and appeals processes

Coversheets may be used, but only for the purpose of supplying useful context for other pieces of evidence that the review team may not be able to glean from those pieces of evidence alone, e.g. providing a historical note to a collection of policy documents and committee minutes that demonstrates their relevance to one another. Coversheets should be used sparingly and only to facilitate the review team's understanding of the evidence.

Where institutions are required to submit documentation for the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework Partnership (SCQFP) analysis, institutions must highlight in the index which documents are for sharing with SCQFP so they can be easily identified and subsequently shared with SCQFP.

Where evidence is provided in the form of hyperlinks to websites or to internal sharing sites (where access is provided to review teams), they should be clearly listed in the index and provided with unique reference numbers. The hyperlinks must remain stable and accessible throughout the review period until the publication of the review report. Use

of DropBox or any other cloud-based applications to upload information to QAA is not supported.

The following provides step-by-step guidance to allow the secure online transfer of electronic files to QAA.

- Your SIA and AIS should be supplied in a **flat structure** (that is, all files together, with **no folder or subfolders or zipped files**) with documents clearly labelled.
- All pieces of evidence submitted should have a unique numerical identifier. The use of letters is **not** permitted, for example 0101a, 0101b, 0101c.
- Any file names that contain other invalid characters like the following will be blocked and you will receive an error message (``~!£$%^&*+=][{}~#@'::,<>?/`).
- File names should be kept as short as possible (128 characters maximum). File names with .msg are not permitted.
- Individual document file sizes should not exceed 50MB. If you wish to submit files in a larger or different format, please get in contact and QAA will give you instructions on how best to do this.

Meeting with Staff and Students

The attendee list for meetings during TQER visits will include a variety of staff and students. It is important to hold time in diaries with key staff and student representatives as early as possible. It is written in to the IRV schedule that there will be a meeting with the Principal. It is recognised that although desirable, it may not be possible and, if it is not possible, alternative dates/times in line with scheduled MRV will be sought. Your QAA Review Manager will liaise with the institution to seek an alternative.

It is likely that some staff and students meeting the review team will be those from the protected characteristic groups. Where that is the case, institutions are expected to take appropriate steps to ensure that those individuals can participate. The QAA Review Manager will also explore with each institution (during the Scoping Meeting and preparation for the review visits) how participants can be best supported to contribute meaningfully to the review.

To support institutions in identifying who the students for the Initial Review Visit (IRV) and Main Review Visit (MRV) might be at an early stage, we would recommend considering the IRV indicative schedules in Annex I of the [TQER Guide for Institutions](#) against the demographic/make up of your student population. Specific groups of students may include students from a range of programmes and levels of study, students studying at different campuses, student representatives, students with experience of specific events, and projects or initiatives that you reference in your SIA. We would recommend having a pool of students larger than required as a small number may withdraw from a meeting at late notice. If changes do occur, the review team must be given an updated list of attendees no later than the morning of the meeting.

When the institution is selecting participants, please bear in mind that the team will wish to meet as wide a range of staff as possible during the visit and, while it may be inevitable that a small number of key staff are involved in more than one meeting, the team would generally prefer not to meet individuals more than once.

Please provide name plates for the staff and students who meet the TQER team and for the TQER team members.

During Review Visits

Meeting room for TQER team

The TQER team will need a room in which to base themselves during the visits. Ideally this would be a private room for the team, but, if necessary, this may be the same room in which meetings with staff and students are held (if the space is large enough). It is useful if the meeting room can be set up with a table in boardroom format.

The TQER team will need access to the meeting room between 08.30 and 18.30 hours during the review visits. Please advise the QAA Review Manager if there are any security requirements (e.g. if the TQER team members require security passes) so that these can be addressed before the IRV.

IT requirements

TQER team members will bring their own laptops with them. However, the institution should please provide a screen in the meeting room that a laptop can be connected to. This will allow the team to work collectively on shared documents.

Please arrange for guest wi-fi accounts for all team members before the IRV and MRV.

The TQER team may need to access the institution's systems, for example the virtual learning environment and intranet. Institutions should arrange remote access for reviewers before the IRV so that the review team can read materials before or between the two visits. If this is not possible, please liaise with the QAA Review Manager as soon as possible.

It can be very helpful for the Institution Quality Contact, Lead Student Representative and QAA Review Manager to have the contact details for IT support during the review visit. Please arrange for IT support to be available when the team first arrives for both the IRV and MRV.

Food and refreshments for the TQER team

The TQER team will spend long days at the institution. Refreshments can provide a welcome break! The QAA Review Manager will inform the institution of any specific dietary requirements. The following is a guide to the usual catering arrangements:

- Please have a supply of water available throughout the day.
- Morning and afternoon tea and coffee with biscuits or similar (or access to tea/coffee-making facilities).

- A simple buffet-style lunch
- Recommendations for local restaurants (for the team's evening meals), and contact numbers for local taxi firms, are always welcome.

Between Review Visits

Evidence Requests during the TQER review

The review team may ask for additional evidence/documents following the IRV or during the MRV, but not after. It is expected that these documents will already exist and will allow a line of enquiry to be completed and/or to allow the review team to come to evidence based findings. These documents will need to be numbered and uploaded to the document site and the index updated.

Post Review

Evaluation

Evaluating the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review process is an important part of QAA's monitoring of its own performance and the review method. Reviewers and providers will be asked to feedback on the process – covering the pre-review, review and the post-review periods. It will cover all aspects including the effectiveness of guidance, documentation requirements, engagement with staff and students and the benefits of review.

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