

Design your own review method

Activity 1

The table that has been provided summarises key components of a cyclical external peer-review method. Against each one, we have suggested a number of possible options for that aspect of the method. These have been informed by a range of experience, key reference points and other review methods.

There are ten key areas that we'd like your input on. Please discuss options on your table and indicate your team's preferences and priorities. If you have alternative suggestions that are not listed, please add those. You do not have to work through the table in order and are welcome to focus on the aspects that are of most interest to you.

N.B. Where you see shaded areas, these have been considered in previous activities (details listed against each item) or are being discussed later in the morning. You don't need to consider these during this activity – they are there for your information to give you a complete picture of all key components.

Your options must:

- consider what has to happen before, during and after a review to support review teams to have confidence in the management of academic standards and quality and enhancing the student learning experience;
- consider things we might do differently – for example, how a review is conducted (such as number or structure of meetings) or what follow-up activity might look like;
- support institutions in developing a quality culture that is owned throughout the institution; and
- support stakeholder confidence.

You will have about an hour for this activity with a check-in point at the halfway mark. Your allocated chair will collate your ideas for feedback to the plenary session.

	Area	Possible options	Comments/Suggestions
1	<p>Key commission areas</p> <p>How will you review areas that are explicitly mentioned in the SFC Commission and need specific comment?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work-based learning • Transitions and pathways • Professional services' role and support for learning and outcomes • Responding to Scottish Government/SFC priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed within report sections • Address as discrete areas within the review • Draw on other external activities/commentary • Other suggestions? <p>Re the final point, the intention is to address outwith the external cyclical peer-review process</p>	
2	<p>Contextualisation</p> <p>How will you contextualise?</p>	<p>Feedback collected at event on 21 September 2023</p>	<p>Consensus was for a core method with defined extras appropriate to sector specific provision, for example postgraduate or Senior Phase School</p>
3	<p>Advance information</p> <p>What do you need and when?</p> <p>Where will you get it?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-evaluation and Action Plans (SEAPs) (SFC workstream) • Key data sets determined by college/university/SFC/quality agency • Strategic self-evaluation and reflection • Student submission • Mapping to key reference points • Sample evidence • Enhancement plan 	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed reflection, submitted at start of cycle with an update against it • Other suggestions? <p>Should the Advance information be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solely provided by the college/ university • Provided at one submission point (with opportunity for additional requests) • Available to the review team in stages • Dynamic and available throughout the cycle 	
4	Use of data	Out of scope: SFC workstream	
5	<p>Self-evaluation</p> <p>What institutional self-evaluation documentation do you want to use?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus (impact, not description of activity) • Length • Sections • Relationship to SEAP • Additional documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEAP(s) only • SEAP(s) supported by over-arching strategic reflection • College/university-developed materials • Ongoing live document • Coversheet for use on individual examples of evidence • Enhancement plan • Strategic analysis and action plan submitted at start of cycle, with update against this provided at point of review • Other suggestions? 	
6	<p>External reference points</p> <p>What external reference points do you think are key?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESG (mandatory for higher education institutions unless UK Quality Code is used, which incorporates ESG requirements) • UK Quality Code • SCQF • PSRBs 	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awarding body criteria • SFC Guidance on quality • Student Partnership Model / Student Learning Experience Model (sparqs) • Other suggestions? 	
7	<p>Student partnership/engagement</p> <p>How will you ensure effective student partnership/engagement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for separate submission • Recognising different structures/levels of support • How do we use students to feed into review? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint institution-student body submission • Student advance submission – report/focus group write up (using sparqs SLE model)/questionnaire • Online standard questionnaires to student body (full or representatives?) • “Mystery shopper” or informal, on-campus engagement • Student-only meetings with review team • Additional opportunity for joint staff-student meetings • Other suggestions? 	
8	<p>Reporting</p> <p>How will you make reporting on review outcomes most effective?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single or multiple reports • Reports published alongside an institution’s self-evaluation • Report as response to institution’s self-evaluation • Report on all areas of provision • Style – checklist, bullets, short statements, report • Focus on evidence and reference to compliance, cut out all discursive content • Structures based on reference criteria • Sections – reporting on principles of Common Approach • Written by all or some reviewers only • Other suggestions? 	

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9	Outcomes of review How will you judge the management of academic standards, quality and capacity for self-evaluation and improvement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectiveness/confidence (overall or areas) with priority actions and recommendations and commendations • Effectiveness/confidence (overall or areas) plus priority areas for action • Effectiveness/confidence statements on a number of areas • Graded scale (excellent to underperforming) • Other suggestions? 	
10	Action on poor outcomes What should happen where there isn't confidence/evidence to support effectiveness?	Feedback collected at event on 21 September	Mix of responses: (1st) targeted support for action planning from quality agency; (2nd) enhanced annual engagement (possibly with peers); and (3rd) early re-review
11	Follow-up activity What follow-up activity will you put in place for this review method to support enhancement and improvement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College/university response to review outcome and report - follow up report/action plan/annual monitoring reports/mid-cycle review with or without QAA, peer team or other sign off • Ongoing monitoring of college/university response via annual evaluation • "Focus on..."-type activity • Individual tailored support by external party (for example, CDN) • Other suggestions? 	
12	Review schedule How will you approach review scheduling?	Response from SFC Tertiary Quality Steering Group September 2023	Agreed schedule to be published at the start of the 4-year cycle with some flexibility to adjust if the need arises

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13	Review visit How will you use review visits most effectively to form a judgement on how an institution manages academic standards and quality of the student learning experience?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tour • Combination of virtual and in person (balance?) • Fixed number of days all other activity off-site • Pre-visit (online or virtual) • Main visit with shorter second visit focusing on identified excellence • What kind of meetings/activities and with whom • How many engagements • Length of engagement(s) • Type of engagement – meetings, focus groups, all team in attendance at all engagements or split • Other suggestions? 	
14	Timeline for review (key milestones) What is the timeline for your review?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notification of review week(s) • Availability of documentation to review team • Team-only pre-meet? • Opportunity to request evidence • Visit(s) • Sharing of outcome with college or university • Report draft • Report shared • Factual accuracy check by provider 	Will be covered by QAA
15	Challenges to review process/outcome (Appeals / Complaints) How will challenges to review outcomes be addressed?		Covered by standard QAA policies, which will be referenced in the handbook

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16	Review pool, recruitment and review team What do you need to think about in the composition of your review team? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number (and how this is decided) • Composition • Extent of college/university requests/ right of veto 	Team composition	To be discussed later in this session
17	Role of quality agency officer How can the quality agency officer best support the review process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directs, supports and challenges team • Chairs team meetings • Assigns team members to areas of expertise • Attends all or part of review • Other suggestions? 	