Quality Code Update

PSRB Forum

11 December 2024

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Key features of the 2024 UK Quality Code

- Stronger alignment with the ESG
- Continues to operate across the UK nations
- Applicable across tertiary settings
- More explicit about Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Emphasis on environmental sustainability
- Recognises the role of research in learning and teaching
- Clear emphasis on working in partnership with students.

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The 2024 Quality Code

Read the Quality Code 2024

The full Quality Code 2024 is available as a downloadable PDF, along with a summary document detailing the 12 Sector-Agreed Principles. You can also view these Principles on this web page, organised by theme. The Quality Code is also published in Welsh.

UK Quality Code for Higher Education 2024

Publication date: 27 Jun 2024
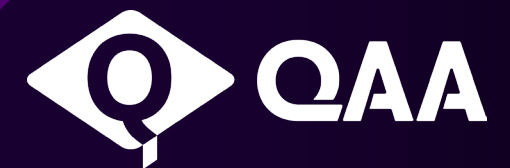
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UK Quality Code for Higher Education 2024 - Sector-Agreed Principles

Publication date: 27 Jun 2024

Description ⌄   📖 View

www.qaa.ac.uk/the-quality-code/2024

Structure of the 2024 Code

Sector-Agreed Principles
(aligning to the European Standards and Guidelines)

Key Practices
(linking to the Advice and Guidance and other sector reference points)

The UK Quality Code

Advice and Guidance

Sector-Agreed Principles identify the features that are fundamental to securing academic standards and offering a high-quality student learning experience in the UK.

Key Practices set out how a provider can demonstrate they are adhering to the Sector-Agreed Principles.

Advice and Guidance supports the Quality Code by offering further detail in relation to each of the Sector-Agreed Principles.

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Sector-Agreed Principles

Strategic approach

Principle 1 - Taking a strategic approach to managing quality and standards

Principle 2 - Engaging students as partners

Principle 3 - Resourcing delivery of a high-quality learning experience

Evaluating quality and standards

Principle 4 - Using data to inform and evaluate quality

Principle 5 - Monitoring, evaluating and enhancing provision

Principle 6 - Engaging in external review and accreditation

Implementing the approach to quality enhancement and standards

Principle 7 - Designing, developing, approving and modifying programmes

Principle 8 - Operating partnerships with other organisations

Principle 9 - Recruiting, selecting and admitting students

Principle 10 - Supporting students to achieve their potential

Principle 11 - Teaching, learning and assessment

Principle 12 - Operating concerns, complaints and appeals processes

Principle 6 - Engaging in external review and accreditation

Providers engage with external reviews to give assurance about the effectiveness of their approach to managing quality and standards. External reviews offer insights about the comparability of providers' approaches and generate outcomes that providers can use to enhance their policies and practices. Reviews may be commissioned by providers, form part of a national quality framework or linked to professional recognition and actively include staff, students and peers. They can be undertaken by representative organisations, agencies or professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) with recognised sector expertise according to the provision being reviewed.

Key Practices

a. External review, whether optional or required by national quality frameworks or accrediting bodies, is built into the provider's strategic approach and aligns to internal quality and standards monitoring and evaluation activity.

b. Providers use outcomes from external review and accreditation as a catalyst for ongoing improvement and strategic enhancement of the student learning experience.

c. Providers acknowledge and support the expertise and resource required to participate in external review and accreditation.

d. Providers who engage in external review understand the UK national regulatory and legislative contexts in which they operate and the different approaches, forms and focus they may take. Providers may engage colleagues with international expertise, in addition to those familiar with UK requirements.

e. Providers understand the requirements and process for external reviews that may be required by regulators in partner delivery locations.

- New for 2024

- Responded to calls from the sector to reference the importance of external review

- Aligns directly to the European Standards and Guidelines

- Tries to articulate the importance of utilising external review for the purpose of enhancing provision

Principle 7 - Designing, developing, approving and modifying programmes

Providers design, develop, approve and modify programmes and modules to ensure the quality of provision and the academic standards of awards are consistent with the relevant Qualifications Framework. Providers ensure their provision and level of qualifications are comparable to those offered across the UK and, where applicable, The Framework of Qualifications for The European Higher Education Area.

Key Practices

a. All programmes and modules meet academic standards that are consistent with relevant national qualifications and credit frameworks. Where applicable, provision also meets professional body and accreditation requirements, and apprenticeship standards.

b. A definitive set of documents are produced from the design, development, approval and modification processes, which are held securely and act as the primary source of information about each programme. Similar but proportionate arrangements are in place for modules and smaller units of study.

c. The award to be received and how outcomes of study are recorded and certificated are made clear to all students and staff involved in the teaching, learning and evaluation of the programme and module.

d. Policies and processes that support the design, development, approval and modification of programmes and modules are published on each provider's website and are easily accessible to key stakeholders.

e. External engagement and evaluation form a component part of the design, development, approval and modification process.

f. The design, development, approval and modification processes align with providers' policies and practices on equity, equality, diversity and inclusion, and environmental sustainability.

g. Students are involved meaningfully in the design, development, approval and modification of programmes and modules.

Expectations for standards

The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.

The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.

Core practices

The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks.

The provider ensures that students who are awarded qualifications have the opportunity to achieve standards beyond the threshold level that are reasonably comparable with those achieved in other UK providers.

Expectations for quality

Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.

Core practices

The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.

Principle 11 - Teaching, learning and assessment

Providers facilitate a collaborative and inclusive approach that enables students to have a high-quality learning experience and to progress through their studies. All students are supported to develop and demonstrate academic and professional skills and competencies. Assessment employs a variety of methods, embodying the values of academic integrity, producing outcomes that are comparable across the UK and recognised globally.

Key Practices

a. Learning and assessment at all levels is informed by research and/or scholarship. Teaching, learning and assessment align to ensure students can demonstrate their achievements, reflect on and reinforce their prior learning, skills and knowledge, and fulfil their potential.

b. Students are given clear information about the intended modular and/or programme learning outcomes and the purpose of assessment and are enabled to use feedback/feedforward to support further learning.

c. Staff involved in facilitating learning and supervising research are appropriately qualified and supported to enhance their teaching and supervisory practice. Research degrees are delivered in supportive environments that are conducive to learning and research.

d. Students are enabled and encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and to take an active role in shaping and enhancing the learning process. Providers offer ongoing advice and guidance about academic integrity to ensure that students and staff understand what is expected of them.

e. As students move through their learning journey, they are given the opportunity and support to transition effectively between academic levels, further study and employment. Providers enable students to recognise the progression they have made and steps they need to take to achieve their potential.

f. Providers design assessments that test appropriate learning outcomes and are fair, reliable, accessible, authentic and inclusive. Where applicable, and sustainable, students are offered different options for undertaking assessments to promote accessibility and inclusion.

g. Providers establish coherent approaches to technologies that impact teaching, learning and assessment (such as Generative Artificial Intelligence). These approaches are clearly communicated to staff and students, include how they are utilised and define misuse of such technologies.

h. Providers offer advice and guidance about academic integrity to ensure that students and staff understand what is expected of them throughout the learning journey. The advice is kept current.

Expectations for quality

Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.

From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.

Core practices

The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

Development of the advice
and guidance

Redeveloping the Advice and Guidance

- Advice and Guidance will align directly to the sector-agreed principles

- Produced in three tranches on a rolling schedule finishing in the summer of 2026

- To support transition, we are mapping the 2018 Advice and Guidance to the 2024 Principles – to be published early 2025.

Schedule for advice and guidance

Tranche 1: Begin work Sept 2024 - Publish by June/July 2025

Principle 1 – Taking a strategic approach to managing quality and standards
Principle 2 – Engaging students as partners
Principle 8 – Operating partnerships with other organisations

Tranche 2: Recruiting February/March 2025 – Publish by February 2026

Principle 4 – Using data to inform and evaluate quality
Principle 5 – Monitoring, evaluating, and enhancing provision
Principle 7 – Designing, developing, approving, and modifying programmes
Principle 11 – Teaching, learning, and assessment

**Tranche 3: Recruit August/September 2025 – Publish by June/July 2026**

Principle 3 – Resourcing delivery of a high-quality learning experience
Principle 6 – Engaging in external quality and standards review and accreditation
Principle 9 – Recruiting, selecting, and admitting students
Principle 10 – Supporting students to achieve their potential
Principle 12 – Operating concerns, complaints, and appeals processes

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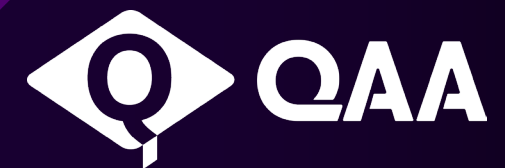
Mapping to other sector reference points and regulatory requirements

Relating the 2024 Quality Code to other reference points

- Key mapping documents coming soon:
    - How the Quality Code aligns with the ESG
    - How the Quality Code can be used to demonstrate English providers are meeting the Office for Students Conditions of registration.
    - How the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Principles in Scotland align to the Quality Code

Question: Would a toolkit approach offering a more granular approach to mapping the OfS conditions to the Code be helpful?

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Thank you

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