



## **A Map of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education**

This document illustrates how the standards set out in the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area](#) (ESG 2015) maps to the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) (the Quality Code) and associated reference points. Providers can use the table to ensure their processes for quality assurance and enhancement align with the European Standards and Guidelines.

The Quality Code features high-level Expectations which are followed by providers operating in all nations of the UK. The Quality Code articulates these Expectations through Core and Common practices. Core and Common practices are not regulatory requirements in England, but should be demonstrated by providers operating in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The third column in the table includes short excerpts from other sector reference points which, while non-mandatory, are used by providers in UK higher education (such as the Quality Code Advice and Guidance; and *The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree Awarding Bodies* (FHEQ)). They set out advice on how the Quality Code Expectations and practices may be met.

The Quality Code is expressed primarily as outcomes rather than processes to be followed. Higher education providers use external reviewers as part of periodic review to gain an external perspective on any proposed changes to academic courses, to ensure threshold standards are being achieved and the content is appropriate for the subject. There are separate external quality processes operating in the different parts of the UK taking into account the diverse nations' contexts and regulatory or quality frameworks. Useful links for further information on those are provided at the end of this document.

ESG Standard	Quality Code Expectations and Core/Common practices	Other reference points (such as Quality Code Advice & Guidance, FHEQ)
<p><b>1.1 Policy for quality assurance</b>  Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders.</p>	<p><b>Core practice 3, standards</b>  Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.</p> <p><b>Core practice 4, standards</b>  The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.</p> <p><b>Core practice 2, quality</b>  The provider designs and delivers high-quality courses.</p> <p><b>Core practice 8, quality</b>  Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the academic experience is high-quality irrespective of where or how courses are delivered and who delivers them.</p> <p><b>Common practice 1, quality</b>  The provider reviews its Core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.</p> <p><b>Common practice 2, quality</b>  The provider’s approach to managing quality takes account of external expertise.</p>	<p><b>Advice and Guidance, Course Design and Development</b>  <b>Guiding principle 2</b> - Accessible and flexible processes for course design, development and approval facilitate continuous improvement of provision and are proportionate to risk.</p> <p>‘Good Practice might include clarity and availability of information about processes, such as handbooks or policy documents, being available to all stakeholders involved.’</p> <p><b>Advice and Guidance, Enabling Student Achievement</b>  <b>Guiding principle 2</b> - Clear, accessible and inclusive policies and procedures to enable students and staff to identify when support mechanisms may be required for academic and personal progression.</p> <p><b>Advice and Guidance, Research Degrees</b>  <b>Guiding principle 1</b> - Provision of information is clear and accessible to research students and staff.</p> <p>Explicit academic frameworks and regulations, policies, guidance and Codes of practice for research degrees are made available to prospective and current research students and staff.</p>

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		<p><b>Advice and Guidance, Student Engagement</b>  <b>Guiding principles 1, 2, 6</b> - Student engagement strategies and culture advice</p> <p>Providers make explicit their commitment to student engagement and partnership working by incorporating clear principles and goals in institutional and departmental strategies. To ensure this is developed, these activities will need to be supported by quality assurance and enhancement policies and procedures.</p>
<p><b>1.2 Design and approval of programmes</b>  Institutions should have processes for the design and approval of their programmes. The programmes should be designed so that they meet the objectives set for them, including the intended learning outcomes. The qualification resulting from a programme should be clearly specified and communicated, and refer to the correct level of the national qualifications framework for higher education and, consequently, to the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area.</p>	<p><b>Expectation 1, standards</b>  The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.</p> <p><b>Expectation 1, quality</b>  Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.</p> <p><b>Core practice 1, standards</b>  The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks.</p> <p><b>Core practice 4, standards</b>  The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.</p>	<p><b>Advice and Guidance, Course Design and Development</b>  <b>Guiding principle 2</b> - Accessible and flexible processes for course design, development and approval facilitate continuous improvement of provision and are proportionate to risk.</p> <p><b>Guiding principle 3</b> - Internal guidance and external reference points are used in course design, development and approval.</p> <p><b>Guiding principle 6</b> - Course design, development and approval processes result in definitive course documents.</p> <p><b>Guiding principle 7</b> - Design, development and approval processes are reviewed and enhanced.</p>

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	<p><b>Common practice 1, standards</b> The provider reviews its Core practices for standards regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.</p> <p><b>Core practice 2, quality</b> The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.</p> <p><b>Core practice 7, quality</b> Where the provider offers research degrees, it delivers these in appropriate and supportive research environments.</p>	
<p><b>1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment</b> Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.</p>	<p><b>Core practice 2, standards</b> 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.</p> <p><b>Core practice 4, standards</b> The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.</p> <p><b>Expectation 1, quality</b> Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.</p>	<p><b>Advice and Guidance, Assessment</b> <b>Guiding principle 1</b> - Assessment methods and criteria are aligned to learning outcomes and teaching activities.</p> <p><b>Guiding principle 2</b> - Assessment is reliable, consistent, fair and valid.</p> <p><b>Guiding principle 3</b> - Assessment design is approached holistically.</p> <p><b>Guiding principle 4</b> - Assessment is inclusive and equitable.</p> <p><b>Guiding principle 5</b> - Assessment is explicit and transparent.</p>

ESG Standard	Quality Code Expectations and Core/Common practices	Other reference points (such as Quality Code Advice & Guidance, FHEQ)
	<p><b>Core practice 5, quality</b> The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.</p> <p><b>Core practice 6, quality</b> The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.</p> <p><b>Core practice 9, quality</b> The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.</p> <p><b>Common practice 3, quality</b> The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.</p>	<p><b>Guiding principle 6</b> - Assessment and feedback is purposeful and supports the learning process.</p> <p><b>Guiding principle 9</b> - students are supported and prepared for assessment.</p> <p><b>Advice and Guidance, Learning and Teaching</b> <b>Guiding principle 2</b> - Effective learning and teaching is underpinned by a focus on student achievement and outcomes.</p> <p><b>Guiding principle 6</b> - Effective learning and teaching activities, facilities and resources make the learning environment accessible, relevant and engaging to all students.</p> <p><b>Guiding principle 8</b> - Effective learning and teaching encourages and enables students to take an active role in their studies.</p> <p><b>Guiding principle 9</b> - Providers encourage and enable students to evaluate and manage their own learning development, supported by opportunities for ongoing dialogue with staff.</p>

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<p><b>1.4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification</b> Institutions should consistently apply pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student “life cycle,” e.g. student admission, progression, recognition and certification.</p>	<p><b>Common practice 1, standards</b> The provider reviews its Core practices for standards regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.</p> <p><b>Expectation 2, quality</b> From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.</p> <p><b>Core practice 1, quality</b> The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.</p> <p><b>Common practice 1, quality</b> The provider reviews its Core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.</p>	<p><b>Advice and Guidance, Research Degrees</b> <b>Guiding principle 1</b> - Provision of information is clear and accessible to research students and staff.</p> <p>Providers that have research degree awarding powers have specific regulations and codes of practice for research degrees that are clear, regularly reviewed and accessible to research students and staff, including examiners.</p>
<p><b>1.5 Teaching staff</b> Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers. They should apply fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff.</p>	<p><b>Core practice 3, quality</b> The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.</p>	<p><b>Advice and Guidance, Assessment</b> <b>Practical advice - Professional standards of staff</b> Providers ensure, through recruitment processes and staff development, that everyone involved in the assessment of student work and associated processes is competent to undertake their roles and fulfil their responsibilities.</p>

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		<p><b>Advice and Guidance, Course Design and Development</b>  <b>Guiding Principle 5</b> - Development of staff, students and other participants enables effective engagement with the course design, development and approval processes.</p> <p><b>Practical advice</b> - Development of staff, students and other participants enables effective engagement with course design, development and approval process.</p>
<p><b>1.6 Learning resources and student support</b>  Institutions should have appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities and ensure that adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support are provided.</p>	<p><b>Expectation 2, quality</b>  From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.</p> <p><b>Core practice 4, quality</b>  The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.</p> <p><b>Core practice 7, quality</b>  Where the provider offers research degrees, it delivers these in appropriate and supportive research environments.</p> <p><b>Core practice 9, quality</b>  The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.</p>	<p><b>Advice and Guidance, Complaints and appeals</b>  <b>Guiding principle 6</b> - Concerns, complaints and appeals procedures are fair and impartial. Procedures follow principles of procedural fairness and are applied consistently. Decision-makers are properly trained and resourced and have no conflict of interest in the matter. Providers give clear, detailed reasons for their decisions.</p> <p><b>Advice and Guidance, Enabling Student Achievement</b>  <b>Guiding principle 3</b> - Training and resources are allocated to student support services to enable effective delivery, ensure comprehensive evaluation and subsequent development.</p>

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		<p><b>Advice and Guidance, Learning and Teaching</b>  <b>Guiding principle 6</b> - Effective learning and teaching activities, facilities and resources make the learning environment accessible, relevant and engaging to all students.</p> <p><b>Advice and Guidance, Student Engagement</b>  <b>Guiding principle 6</b> - Student engagement and representation processes are adequately resourced and supported.</p>
<p><b>1.7 Information management</b>  Institutions should ensure that they collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities.</p>	<p><b>Expectation 1, quality</b>  Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.</p> <p><b>Core practice 5, quality</b>  The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.</p> <p><b>Core practice 6, quality</b>  The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.</p> <p><b>Common practice 1, standards</b>  The provider reviews its Core practices for standards regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.</p>	<p><b>Advice and Guidance, Monitoring and Evaluation</b>  <b>Guiding principle 3</b> - Providers clarify aims, objectives, activities and actions, and identify the key indicators, issues, questions, targets and relevant information/data.</p> <p><b>Guiding principle 5</b> - Providers evaluate, analyse and use the information generated from monitoring to learn and improve.</p> <p><b>Practical advice - Information and data</b></p> <p><b>Advice and Guidance, Research Degrees</b>  <b>Guiding principle 1</b> - Provision of information is clear and accessible to research students and staff.</p>



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		<p><b>Advice and Guidance, Work-Based Learning Practical advice - Information, advice and guidance</b> The education provider should ensure that clear information is available for candidates and students to understand the obligations of work-based learning requirements, such as travel to different work settings and mandatory hours, so they can make an informed decision about their choice of course and/or work-based learning opportunity.</p>
<p><b>1.8 Public Information</b> Institutions should publish information about their activities, including programmes, which is clear, accurate, objective, up-to date and readily accessible.</p>	<p><b>Expectation 2, quality</b> From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.</p> <p><b>Core practice 1, quality</b> The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.</p>	<p><b>Advice and Guidance, Learning and Teaching</b> <b>Guiding principle 7</b> - Effective learning and teaching ensures that information about, and support for, learning and teaching is clear and accessible to all students and stakeholders.</p> <p><b>Advice and Guidance, Concerns, Complaints and Appeals</b> <b>Guiding principle 3</b> - Information is clear and transparent. Providers explain key terms clearly, describe processes and time limits accurately, covering all types of course and partnership arrangements.</p> <p><b>Advice and Guidance, Research Degrees</b> <b>Guiding principle 1</b> - Provision of information is clear and accessible to research students and staff.</p>

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<p><b>1.9 On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes</b>  Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes to ensure that they achieve the objectives set for them and respond to the needs of students and society. These reviews should lead to the continuous improvement of the programme. Any action planned should be communicated to all those concerned.</p>	<p><b>Expectation 1, quality</b>  Courses are well-designed, provide a high-quality academic experience for all students and enable a student's achievement to be reliably assessed.</p> <p><b>Core practice 2, standards</b>  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.</p> <p><b>Core practice 3, standards</b>  Where a provider works in partnership with other organisations, it has in place effective arrangements to ensure that the standards of its awards are credible and secure irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them.</p>	<p><b>Advice and Guidance, Monitoring and Evaluation</b></p> <p><b>Guiding principle 1</b> - Providers agree strategic principles for monitoring and evaluation to ensure processes are applied systematically and operated consistently.</p> <p><b>Guiding principle 2</b> - Providers normalise monitoring and evaluation as well as undertaking routine formal activities.</p> <p><b>Guiding principle 3</b> - Providers clarify aims, objectives, activities and actions, and identify the key indicators, issues, questions, targets and relevant information/data.</p> <p><b>Guiding principle 4</b> - Providers decide whom to involve in the different stages of monitoring and evaluation, clearly defining roles and</p>

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<p><b>1.10 Cyclical external quality assurance</b> Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis.</p>	<p><b>Common practice 2, quality</b> The provider’s approach to managing quality takes account of external expertise.</p>	

## Useful links

- [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area](#)
- [The UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) (and [Advice and Guidance](#))
- Relevant qualification and credit frameworks ([Qualifications frameworks](#), [Credit Framework for England](#), [SCQF](#), [CQFW](#))

## Regulatory requirements/guidance:

- [Office for Students regulatory framework](#)
- [Northern Ireland Quality Assurance of Higher Education](#)
- [Scottish Funding Council guidance to higher education institutions on quality from August 2017-2022](#)
- [Quality Enhancement Framework Scotland](#)
- [Quality Assessment Framework for Wales](#)