

TQF Bulletin, Autumn 2021

Welcome to the TQF Bulletin - your quick guide to the activity of [The Quality Forum](#). Please feel free to share this with colleagues who might find it valuable.



Photo credit: Alison Eales

It was lovely to welcome members back after the summer break. For our first meeting of the 2021-22 session, we retained the format we used during 2020-21, meeting on Zoom and working to a split agenda that allowed for sector-wide updates as well as discussion in small groups. We were delighted to welcome those who were returning to TQF, or attending for the first time: Vicky Gunn (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland), Ruth Whitney (Open University in Scotland), Karen Petrie (University of Dundee), Emily Feamster (University of St Andrews), and Ruth Burchell (QAA Scotland).

Kathryn O'Loan from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) gave a further update on SFC's [Review of Coherent Provision and Sustainability](#), which was launched in the summer of 2020. The final report, which contains options and recommendations for the short, medium, and long term, was

published in June 2021. A ministerial response is anticipated.

Those attending were invited to share their feedback on the proposed changes to quality arrangements and, in particular, the suggested timescales involved. Members cautioned against underestimating the time required to review and revise institutional policies and procedures – and then to ensure that staff understood them – in a way that ensures sector ownership. This was echoed by colleagues from QAA Scotland in relation to developing a new review method. It was also emphasised that the change needed to be viewed in the context a changing quality landscape UK-wide, which was likely to impact on timescales. Members noted that it would be important to engage Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) in the process. There was some discussion around the boundaries of quality assurance and enhancement and other regulatory and legal requirements, and the potential for duplication or confusion that can arise. There was also discussion about the different needs of (and different balances of activity in) the higher and further education sectors, and the need to take this into account. There were also positive reflections about the opportunities that might arise from developing a common approach to quality across

the two sectors, and the potential for quality to support parity of esteem. Members offered to hold an ad hoc meeting of TQF to discuss further if this would be helpful for SFC.

Clare Parks (QAA Scotland) offered an update on progress with the evaluation of the ELIR 4 cycle. Key areas of interest included: contextualisation; report structures; the Reflective Analysis, Advance Information Set, and case studies; mapping to the Quality Code; and the balance between assurance and enhancement. Members were invited to be part of a focus group, and should email [Clare](#) if they would like to be involved. Members were also asked for their views on whether more student feedback should be sought from the final two reviews in the cycle.

In terms of updates from sector agencies, [Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland \(sparqs\)](#) reported on the content of their That's Quality event. This had focused on the student learning experience and recovery from the pandemic, specifically the role that students could play in capturing what had worked well and could be built upon to create a new type of learning experience. The event had been future-facing, with less emphasis on the detail of existing quality processes, and more emphasis on principles (sector-owned, evidence-based, peer-reviewed, etc.)

The Scottish Funding Council provided a short verbal update on the future of the Quality Code. Members agreed that it would be useful to have a more in-depth discussion about the issue once more detail was known. Members were also informed that our convener Nichola Kett is joining SFC on secondment to support the development of quality arrangements.

In the second hour of our meeting, we were delighted to be joined for the first time by members of the Wales Quality Network (WQN), TQF's counterpart in Wales. Nichola offered a brief introduction to Scotland's Quality Enhancement Framework, after which Nicola Poole (University of South Wales), WQN Chair, explained quality arrangements in Wales. We then broke into two groups: one discussing approaches to quality in the two nations, and the other considering quality arrangements in sessions 2021-22. Members were invited to share what their institutions are doing the same as last year, and what will be different; what digital enhancements they had made; how quality processes were likely to evolve; and how student engagement was developing.

As is to be expected, TQF and WQN have similar priorities for discussion in 2021-22, so we will continue to liaise with them to identify and create opportunities for joint discussions wherever this might be beneficial.

Our remaining meeting dates for session 2021-22 are 15 March and 16 June and will be held on Zoom.

TQF is a forum for sharing practice on matters of teaching quality, and colleagues are encouraged to suggest items for discussion. Please [get in touch with QAA Scotland](#) if you would like to share practice from your institution or learn more about practice across the sector. You can also join the [TQF Yammer Network](#).