

TQF Bulletin, Summer 2024

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.

Our final meeting of 2023-24 took place on 13 June on Zoom.

Derek Horsburgh from the Scottish Funding Council provided an update on SFC's Guidance on Quality. This is close to being finalised, with publication anticipated in July 2024. The Guidance will explain the background and context to the new tertiary approach, the principles of the [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework \(TQEF\)](#), and the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders. The Guidance will outline how the elements of TQEF relate to each other, but the detail of each delivery mechanism will be published in separate publications. Derek also confirmed that TQEF will satisfy the *high-quality learning and teaching* outcome of the [Outcomes Framework and Assurance Model](#), published by SFC on 6 June.

Helen Kealy and Alison Eales from QAA Scotland gave short updates on the development of Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER) and Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP) respectively. Final consultation on TQER has been delayed due to pre-election sensitivity, while the detailed proposal for STEP is now with SFC for consideration. Gloria Laurini from [sparqs](#) introduced a paper containing an ambition statement, features and indicators of practice which exemplify student partnership. Colleagues welcomed the ambition statement and the detail that supports it and noted that it would become clearer in the current months how it will work in practice as the new tertiary arrangements begin to take effect. Members agreed that the implementation would make a good Part 2 discussion in session 2024-25. Any feedback on the ambition statement will be welcomed by sparqs.

Kevin McStravock from QAA updated members on policy developments. QAA are keeping a close eye on developments relating to the upcoming General Election and its possible implications for the sector. Meanwhile, Universities UK is working on a white paper including a chapter on regulation, to which QAA expects to contribute. In Wales, the [Commission for Tertiary Education and Research \(CTER\)](#) will officially replace HEFCW from 1 August 2024, and the first institutional review of the second cycle of Quality Enhancement Review Cycle is scheduled to take place in December 2024. Development of a new review method for Northern Ireland is continuing, with QAA expecting to present the Department for the Economy with a proposal paper by September 2024. In Europe, The [Bologna Ministerial Conference](#) took place 29-30 May. Among the key commitments contained in the Communiqué is a mandate for various stakeholder groups to revise the [European Standards and Guidelines \(ESG\)](#) by 2026, with a revised version to be presented at the 2027 Ministerial Conference.

Kevin also updated colleagues on the review of the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#). The new edition is due to be published on 27 June 2024, with the Advice and Guidance sections being revised over the next few years. QAA will be selecting writing group members and expert readers to represent the four nations of the UK and the diversity of providers. Each group will include at least one student member. The deadline to submit an expression of interest to join any of the writing or reading groups is 28 June 2024. [More](#)

[information is available on the QAA website](#), and TQF members are invited to share internally with colleagues.

Our first breakout group provided an opportunity to reflect on [Quality Enhancement and Standards Review and Institutional Liaison Meetings](#). Positive aspects of these arrangements included the professionalism of reviewers, the support from QAA officers, the enabling nature of QESR recommendations and actions, and the open and constructive nature of ILMs. For those institutions who had ILM first, this had worked well as preparation for their QESR. More challenging aspects included the embedded and interrelated nature of recommendations and actions, which could be difficult to 'close off'. Colleagues who had been reviewers reported a positive experience but noted that the small review group put more pressure on individuals, and that the volume of reading material could be very large. Colleagues noted that there had been parallels and similarities with the [ELIR](#) process, but some features of ELIR had been missed. These included the development of a reflective analysis (which had provided quality teams with a chance to engage their institutional colleagues in discussions about quality arrangements), the provision of an indicative judgement on the final day of review, and (for those who had been reviewers) the opportunity to visit the institution being reviewed.

Our second breakout group considered academic approval and curriculum changes for session 2024-25, including for non-credit-bearing provision. Colleagues reported practice in terms of how much curriculum detail institutions are publishing, with some institutions only publishing only high-level descriptions of programmes in order to allow for in-year change. There is also mixed practice in terms of whether and how non-credit-bearing provision is managed within Institutions, around its approval and oversight. While some institutions have opted to record non-credit bearing provision within curriculum management systems, other institutions do not capture this activity centrally and is locally managed. Given the increase in non-credit bearing delivery within many of our institutions, colleagues would appreciate more guidance in managing quality within this area of business.

Finally, we thanked Nichola Kett for her six years of service to TQF, having served one term as (our very first!) Vice-Convener followed by two terms as Convener. Katrina Swanton now steps into that role, which in turn creates a vacancy for Vice-Convener, and details of the process for nomination and election have been shared with members separately.

In terms of meetings, that's all for 2023-24! We will soon be in touch with a short poll. This will help us ensure that our mailing list is up to date and will provide you with an opportunity to shape our agenda for the year. We're interested in setting up informal but structured networking and troubleshooting opportunities, as well as exploring the possibility of an in-person or hybrid meeting, so we'll be seeking your thoughts on these as well. Thinking caps on!

Have a great summer.

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.