Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER)

Frequently Asked Questions

Contents

1   The overall approach to TQER

1.1   How does the overall approach proposed provide an appropriate balance between assurance, enhancement and a culture of continuous improvement?

Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER) has been developed through extensive consultation with colleagues from colleges, universities, and other organisations across the Scottish tertiary sector to ensure that it is fit-for-purpose and facilitates the appropriate review of both assurance and enhancement.

TQER is an enhancement-led approach, through which institutions identify ways in which learning and teaching and the student learning experience could be improved, even when baseline expectations have been met. The enhancement culture in Scotland places emphasis on engaging well beyond the baseline, inspiring excellence.

The 2024 UK Quality Code, as a reference point, provides the foundations for quality assurance and supports and enables the enhancement of internal quality practices. It offers a framework upon which to measure the effectiveness of quality assurance and identify areas for enhancement.

TQER is tailored to the context of the institution. Institutions, through their Strategic Impact Analysis, identify current strengths and strategic intentions and plans for enhancement. Using the principles of the [Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework](#) (TQEF), institutions are asked to address the six key areas of the Framework with an emphasis on evaluation and evidence of impact (rather than description of process). TQER is particularly interested in an institution's strategic intentions and its plans for enhancement that takes account of the diversity of provision and will explore the impact of the planned changes on the student learning experience as part of that review. For example, if the institution intends to expand particular areas of its student population, TQER will be interested in the steps the institution has taken to ensure its quality policies and practices are effective for that expansion. Once the expansion has taken place, TQER will be interested in the outcomes of the institution's evaluation of its policies and practices, and in the institution's response to that evaluation, which should include student engagement and identify key priority areas for development.

TQER is interested in how institutions identify and manage the risks associated with change - for example, substantial changes to student numbers, the provision, strategy or challenges in an area of enhancement introduced by the institution. TQER supports institutions in adopting an ambitious approach to their enhancement activity. It encourages innovation and promotes managed risk-taking. It is inevitable that some changes will be more successful than others and often more can be learned in the long run from analysing the reasons for less successful outcomes.

The use of the Strategic Impact Assessment (SIA) and Advance Information Set (AIS) provides both baseline assurance and opportunities for an institution to reflect on enhancement that can then be further explored through the review itself.

External peer review supports institutional capacity building. It allows a college or university to benefit from an outside perspective and get feedback from others working in the same environment. Having a network of peer reviewers from across colleges and universities, and beyond, also allows for the continuous professional development of those staff and students undertaking reviews and sharing of practice, through those reviewers, back to colleges and universities - therefore benefiting individual institutions and the whole sector.

Evidence-based review identifies features of good practice and makes recommendations for action that can be shared across the sector so that all institutions benefit from the learning and experience of others.

1.2 How can TQER provide support and guidance rather than just judgement?

TQER is the method by which provision delivered by Scotland's colleges and universities will be reviewed to support quality assurance and enhancement. It seeks to provide both support and challenge for institutions to deliver meaningful experiences for students and to develop and innovate learning and teaching. The TQER review team will make a judgement on whether the institution meets sector expectations in managing academic standards, enhancing the quality of the learning experience it provides and enabling student success, currently, and has the quality assurance and enhancements arrangements in place to enable this into the future.

In addition to TQER, QAA will undertake a programme of Institutional Liaison Meetings (ILMs) with each of Scotland's colleges and universities. These will take place annually, (except in those years where an institution is undergoing external review), to consider developments in, and the impact of, an institution's enhancement approach, and progress since the last external review. These meetings - along with the regular contact QAA will have through the ad hoc provision of advice and guidance and the enhancement activity - will support an approach that enables trust, confidence and openness with institutions. ILMs will provide an opportunity for institutions to seek, and for QAA to provide, independent advice on matters relating to Quality.

1.3 How does the overall approach account for the range of institutions within the Scottish tertiary sector?

Flexibility has been built into TQER to accommodate the range of institutions within Scotland. The scoping meeting will allow the QAA Review Manager to understand the size of student population, range of programmes on offer, and the number and nature of partnerships with employers and other educational providers. Based on the scoping meeting, a review team of appropriate size (four to six reviewers) and composition (reviewers with relevant knowledge and experience) will be proposed, along with the length of the review visit (two to five days).

2 External reference points

2.1 What external reference points are considered within TQER?

There are a number of specific reference points that Scottish institutions are expected to address within TQER. Some will be common to all Scottish institutions, such as:

- the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) principles on which TQER is based

- SFC Guidance on Quality for Colleges and Universities 2024-25 to 2030-31 setting out the requirements of the Scottish Funding Council for institutions

- the UK Quality Code

- the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and Level Descriptors

- other key reference points for individual institutions may include a range of documents, including:

- [Characteristics Statements](#)
- [Subject Benchmark Statements](#)
- [Quality Code Advice and Guidance](#)
- documents from awarding bodies (colleges)
- [Professional Standards Framework](#) (universities)
- [Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges](#) (colleges)

Institutions are also expected to use sparqs' (student partnerships in quality Scotland) [Student Learning Experience](#) and [Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership](#) and its associated features and indicators.

2.2 How does the UK Quality Code, as reference point, support the approach to quality review across Scotland's colleges and universities?

The 2024 UK Quality Code was adopted as a reference point in TQER following extensive consultation with colleges and universities. While the Quality Code was originally developed by and for the UK higher education sector, the 2024 edition is intended to have application beyond higher education in recognition that many parts of the UK are seeking to develop tertiary approaches to education.

As a key reference point in TQER, the Quality Code has the flexibility to be applied across the range of complex provision in the Scottish tertiary sector. It enables colleges and universities to understand key features of provision that are fundamental to securing academic standards and assure and enhance quality to deliver a high-quality student learning experience.

The Quality Code, which supports the principles of TQER, gives institutions a mechanism upon which to evaluate and enhance policies and practices and align with recognised international reference points such as the [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area](#) (ESG). Use of the Quality Code ensures consistency of approach in relation to the quality of further and higher education provision for the benefit of students.

QAA recognises that institutions may have a range of approaches that reflect the principles of the Quality Code and that colleges, in particular, will need time to engage with the Quality Code. Institutions may utilise a range of approaches to demonstrate how the Quality Code sector-agreed principles apply in their context; this could include a mapping or use of the Code as a reflective tool.

3 The scope of TQER

3.1 What provision is in scope for TQER?

The scope of TQER includes all credit-bearing provision delivered by SFC tertiary education fundable bodies in Scotland - that is, programmes of study leading ultimately to awards or credit at Levels 1-12 of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). TQER is concerned with the learning experience of all students on credit-bearing provision irrespective of their level, mode or location of study. This will include undergraduate and postgraduate students; taught and research students; full-time and part-time students, including those involved in credit-bearing continuing professional development; and campus-based, work-based and distance-learning students. It will include students entering an institution through the full variety of routes and pathways. It will include home, European and international students, irrespective of funding.

3.2 Are foundation years within the scope of TQER?

International foundation years can be delivered by universities or through alternative providers, such as Kaplan or Into. Where the foundation years sit within a university's own provision, the quality of the provision would come into scope for TQER. Where the provision is delivered by the alternative provider, the arrangements for the partnership and effectiveness of the student transitions into the university would be in scope for TQER, but the provider would be reviewed under QAA's Educational Oversight Review (EOR). There is significant complexity in this area which is driven by the Home Office's requirements which differ according to different types of contractual relationships the university might have with the other provider to deliver the provision.

4 The evidence base for TQER

4.1 The Advance Information Set (Annex E) contains some documentation unfamiliar to my institution. Is there an expectation that this is provided as part of our review submission?

The Advance Information Set and the TQER method guide have been designed to provide information and support to all tertiary institutions. Therefore, some sections may contain information that is more relevant to FE institutions and/or HE institutions, or vice-versa. In preparation for the review, there will be some flexibility in what each institution will provide as part of their individual submission. The QAA Review Manager will be able to provide some guidance on this in the lead up to the review; however, each institution must ensure the submission is determined by the institution and is tailored to its own strategic priorities.

5 Review outcomes

5.1 Why do review teams make judgements of 'effective', 'partially effective', or 'not effective'?

The TQER judgement is an 'effectiveness statement', which outlines whether the institution has effective arrangements in managing academic standards, enhancing the quality of the learning experience and enabling student success. The ways that judgements are expressed has been developed through extensive consultation with colleagues from colleges, universities and other stakeholders across the Scottish tertiary sector.

A review team will make a judgement of 'effective' where all, or nearly all, applicable requirements and/or standards have been met. Requirements which have not been met do not, individually or collectively, present any serious risks to the management of standards, enhancement of quality or enabling student success. The judgement may be accompanied by a number of recommendations and good practice. With a positive judgement, the institution will normally be required to undergo an external review in the next seven years. The judgement will apply until the next external review or for a maximum period of nine years (to allow for flexibility in the schedule for future cycles) - whichever is sooner.

A judgement of 'partially effective' is aimed at driving enhancement. Review teams will make this judgement where most applicable requirements and/or standards have been met. Requirements which have not been met do not, individually or collectively, present any serious immediate risks to the management of standards, enhancement of quality or enabling student success. This judgement will be accompanied by a number of recommendations and does not preclude identification of areas of good practice.

Recommendations may relate to shortcomings in approaches to requirements or to underdevelopment of practices to drive improvement or enhancement.

'Not effective' judgements indicate that several applicable requirements and/or standards have not been met or there are major gaps in one or more of the applicable expectations. Requirements which have not been met present serious risk(s), individually or collectively, to the management of standards, enhancement of quality or enabling student success. This judgement will be accompanied by a number of recommendations and does not preclude identification of areas of good practice. Recommendations may relate to ineffective approaches to requirements or to ineffective practices to drive improvement or enhancement.

5.2 When will we know the outcome of our review?

Institutions will receive a Key Outcomes letter two weeks after the conclusion of a review. This will ensure that review teams have sufficient time to carefully consider their findings and have an opportunity to formulate a clear and considered statement that will convey to the institution, and more widely, the clearly evidenced outcome.

5.3 Will a judgement of 'partially effective' damage the public confidence in an institution?

A judgement of 'partially effective' in isolation should not damage public confidence in an institution. Judgements, recommendations, the identification of good practice and the development of a credible action plan combine to confirm whether there can be public confidence in the institution's qualifications and in the quality of the learning experience it provides for its students.

5.4 In judgements of 'partially effective' or 'ineffective', how are 'many' and 'most' (detailed in Annex J: Judgement criteria) defined?

The judgement matrix helps to guide a review team in coming to consistent judgements, especially when deciding between potential outcomes. This is important to ensure consistency in the robustness, reliability and integrity of review outcomes and fairness to institutions. An element of professional judgement will always be incorporated. As the judgement matrix is a guide, it supports but does not replace discussion by the review team with the QAA Review Manager. In addition, participation in QAA moderation processes supports individual review managers in discussing potential outcomes and, in consultation with review teams, applying a consistent approach to those outcomes.

6 Reviewers and review teams

6.1 How do I become a reviewer?

Reviewers are recruited through an open call and may be nominated by institutions or self-nominate. Each college and university in Scotland should nominate at least two reviewers (including one student reviewer) to participate in reviews over the review cycle, with larger institutions scaling their contribution as appropriate. Nominations are also welcomed from institutions across the UK. Staff currently working for an institution must be nominated by their employer, as an indication of the employer's willingness to support their time commitment to the review process.[1]

Student reviewers may be nominated by Scottish student representative bodies, or Scottish colleges and universities. Student reviewers will be expected to demonstrate general awareness of the diversity of the Scottish further and higher education sector beyond their 'home' institution, and awareness of the arrangements for quality assurance and enhancement in Scotland. QAA Scotland actively encourages applications from students from all backgrounds and with experience of a wide variety of study modes and levels.

International reviewers are selected based on nominations from Scottish colleges and universities and from QAA's contacts with relevant institutions and agencies in other countries. They may be recruited to a review team as a specialist reviewer.

6.2 What is the difference between a reviewer, student reviewer and specialist reviewer?

There are three categories of reviewer, all of whom are full team members:

Reviewer: A staff member from another institution who has current or recent senior-level expertise, and experience in the management and/or delivery of further and/or higher education provision.

Student reviewer: A reviewer drawn from recent students or sabbatical officers who have experience of contributing, as a representative of student interests, to the management of academic standards and quality.

---

[1] Given the time commitment and other contractual requirements, staff must have the support of their employer.

Specialist reviewer: A staff or student reviewer selected from appropriate education institutions, related agencies, employers or industry, from the UK and beyond, or as an additional student reviewer from the UK or another country.

6.3 Are reviewers paid? Are they all paid the same?

Yes, all reviewers are paid the same block fee. The block fee paid to reviewers is dependent on the number of days of the Main Review Visit.

6.4 How are review teams allocated?

Discussions at the scoping meeting will inform the size and composition of the review team. Collectively, the review team will have experience and knowledge aligned with the outcomes from the scoping exercise and the composition of each review team will be tailored to the institution to ensure the review team has the relevant knowledge and experience to undertake the review. This will take into consideration factors such as the type of institution, type of provision, and size and type of collaborative provision.

6.5 Will a small review team (of four) be able to cover everything?

To ensure that a review team of four can undertake an appropriate review of an institution's provision, institutions submit the Strategic Impact Analysis (SIA) and Advance Information Set (AIS) 10 weeks ahead of the Initial Review Visit. The SIA allows an institution to undertake a self-evaluation that sets out for the review team an overview of their operating context and strengths, and opportunities for further development in the context of the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) principles. The AIS provides the review team with the necessary background rationale for an institution's approaches and practices related to quality assurance and quality enhancement. It also helps to frame the review team's analysis and understanding of the operation of the institution's management of their quality and enhancement. Review team members are given access to the SIA and AIS eight weeks in advance of the Initial Review Visit. This gives a team of four adequate time to review all documentation, form lines of enquiry and develop a schedule of activity ahead of the Initial Review Visit.

Additionally, the QAA Review Manager, taking into account the experience and background of team members, allocates and oversees the tasks carried out by the review team, setting duties and deadlines in accordance with the requirements and timescales of the method, and monitoring their timely completion. In doing so, the QAA Review Manager is aware of the previous experience of a review team member as a QAA reviewer, as well as the roles of each within their own organisation, using this information to inform the allocation of tasks at the start of the review to ensure all areas are covered. Typically, tasks relate to the responsibility for specific elements of the review, commonly arising from the assessment criteria or expectations relevant to the review method being used. As a contingency, more than one reviewer may be allocated to each element of the review, enabling one to take a primary role supported by another in a secondary role in respect of that element.

6.6 When will I know that I've been allocated to a review team?

Based on their experience, knowledge and availability, review teams are tailored to the institution being reviewed. Review team proposals are sent to the institution eight weeks after the scoping meeting, giving an institution a further two weeks to notify QAA of any conflicts of interest. Confirmation of allocation will be sent out shortly thereafter.

6.7 What time commitment is required of a TQER team member?

Reviewers are recruited through an open call and may be nominated by institutions or self-nominate. Staff currently working for an institution must be nominated by their employer, as an indication of the employer's willingness to support their time commitment to the review process. Indicative reviewer activity includes:

- reviewer training
- desk-based analysis of submission (Strategic Impact Analysis and Advance Information Set)
- private virtual team meeting (up to one day)
- Initial Review Visit (1.5 day's onsite)
- further desk-based analysis following Initial Review Visit
- Main Review Visit (2-5 days)
- finalisation of draft report.

The time that each reviewer spends on some of these activities will vary from person to person, so an exact period of time cannot be specified.

6.8 Will reviewers with university experience know enough about colleges? And vice versa?

Each team will have a mix of reviewers from within and outwith the Scottish tertiary sector. It will be possible (and may be desirable) for review teams to have a mix of college and university staff. However, the review team's experience will mainly be drawn from reviewers with current experience of the type of institution under review.

6.9 Will student reviewers have the right experience to participate meaningfully in review teams?

QAA was an early adopter of student reviewers, first introduced in 2003 in Scotland. QAA Scotland actively encourages applications from students from all backgrounds and with experience of a wide variety of study modes and levels.

Each peer review team will include at least one student reviewer. QAA is working with sparqs and the College Development Network (CDN) to ensure that all students, whether studying at a college or university, will have an opportunity to gain appropriate experience and qualifications that will enable them to apply to be student reviewers and participate meaningfully in review teams. In addition, all reviewers, including student reviewers, undertake comprehensive training and receive support and guidance from their QAA Review Manager on being allocated to a review team.

6.10 What level of training is provided to reviewers before their first review?

All reviewers, including those trained in other review methods, are required to undertake mandatory training and specific training for TQER. Reviewers will be expected to participate in continuing development and reviewer events as appropriate and targeted training and continuing professional development to specific reviewers as required. In addition, an ongoing programme of awareness, training and development on TQER will be designed and jointly delivered by QAA, sparqs and CDN for the sector, including for reviewers, from

academic year 2024-25. In collaboration with sparqs, student reviewers are offered additional briefings, support and guidance.

7 Key roles in Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review

7.1 What is the role of the Lead Student Representative?

Students play a critical role in the review of further and higher education and provide valuable insight for the review team. Student contributions to the review, support the review team to understand what it is like to be a student at the institution under review, including how students are engaged in decision-making, quality assurance and quality enhancement.

To strengthen student engagement in the review process, QAA has paralleled the role of Institution Quality Contact with the introduction of Lead Student Representative (LSR). This key role allows students to play a central part in TQER and gives QAA a direct communication route with students throughout a review from the early preparatory stages to the development of an action plan in response. It also helps to ensure that students can comment on factual accuracy of a draft report alongside their institution.

The LSR will be the point of contact between the QAA Review Manager/the review team and students studying at the institution under review. They will work in partnership with the Institution Quality Contact throughout the review process.

QAA recognises that it may not be possible to keep the same LSR for the duration of the whole review process. In such cases, the institution should work with the students' association to ensure effective handover between LSRs and that the QAA Review Manager is kept informed of any changes. When students' associations involve their staff in the review process to support the LSR, they can also provide continuity between, and handover to, new LSRs. In addition, the QAA Review Manager, in collaboration with sparqs, will offer support and guidance.

QAA also recognises that the level of engagement a LSR will have with TQER, will vary from institution to institution depending on the nature and size of the institution and of the student body. QAA will be supportive of this and, in collaboration with sparqs, provide training, advice and guidance to support LSRs in their roles.

7.2 What is the role of the QAA Review Manager in coming to judgements?

Review teams will be supported by a QAA Review Manager, who will also be the key liaison point for the institution during the review. Judgements are the responsibility of peer reviewers, while the management of a review is the responsibility of QAA Review Managers.

QAA Review Managers have responsibility for ensuring that the review team reach a consensus and that the review team's judgements are aligned with the judgement criteria for the method and are consistent with the evidence available to it.

QAA Review Managers are responsible for ensuring that the wording of any recommendations or features of good practice identified by the review team are appropriately specific and precise, and are consistent with the aims and parameters of the method.

8   Student partnership

8.1   How does TQER facilitate informal and formal exploration of the student voice and experience within an institution's review?

TQER puts students at the forefront of the method. The introduction of the Lead Student Representative role, the equivalent of the Institution Quality Contact, ensures that QAA has a direct channel for communicating with an institution's student community throughout the review process. A description of the Lead Student Representative role can be found below.

A function of the Initial Review Visit (IRV) is to ensure that the breadth of student voice is equal to that of institutional leadership in influencing the direction of the review. During the IRV, the review team will meet with up to four student groups (depending on the size and complexity of provision) to hear about the student learning experience across the institution's range of study. Student views shared during the IRV will be used to inform potential lines of enquiry for the Main Review Visit (MRV).

The MRV has been designed to support the review team to engage with a range of stakeholders, including students, in a flexible manner. While many of the interactions may take place in traditional meetings, the review team can elect to make use of other types of engagements, including:

- visits to other parts of the campus or other sites of delivery/learning
- access to the virtual learning environment
- workshops or focus group discussions
- environmental scanning/learning walks
- walkthroughs, and
- demonstrations of innovative activity.

9   How does TQER fit with other aspects of the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF)?

9.1   What is the SEAP and how does this relate to TQER?

The Scottish Funding Council's (SFC) Self-Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP) is an output of SFC's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework and will enable institutions to undertake an annual, high-level, reflection on their quality assurance and enhancement activities and identify key areas of improvement. These annual reports will be submitted to SFC to provide assurance on the impact and effective delivery of high-quality learning provision in colleges and universities and to support ongoing enhancement.

The SEAP and the supporting data and evidence used to prepare it will form part of the Advance Information Set that will contribute to TQER. There is no requirement for institutions submit a SEAP in the year that they are being reviewed as part of TQER.

More information on the purpose of the SEAP and its uses can be found in the SFC's *Guidance on Quality for Colleges and Universities 2024-25 to 2030-31*, [Annex B: Guidance of the Self-Evaluation and Action Plan](#).

9.2   What is the relationship between STEP and TQER?

Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP) is a national programme of enhancement activity. It is another delivery mechanism of the TQEF that sits alongside TQER and is focused on an agreed topic that relates to the student learning experience across Scotland's colleges and universities. Institutions are expected to engage in STEP activity, although the precise way in which they engage is for each institution to determine, in line with [SFC Guidance on Quality for Colleges and Universities 2024-25 to 2030-31](#) and institutional priorities.

STEP is not part of TQER. However, STEP provides support for institutions to respond to challenges and opportunities collaboratively that may be identified through TQER. STEP will provide outputs that will be valuable reference points and that can impact policy and practice across the sector and within individual institutions.

TQER teams may explore with an institution why it has, or has not, chosen to adopt a particular approach to enhancement for challenges and opportunities where they exist. This will be carried out in the context of TQER seeking to support diversity across the sector.

Further information on STEP will be available on QAA Scotland's website in due course.

9.3   What data will the Scottish Funding Council share to support preparation for the TQER?

As outlined in the [SFC Guidance](#), SFC conducts an analysis of data and evidence - the outcome of which is shared with the TQER review team to inform their lines of enquiry. Some of this data will be available systematically, but additional data may be collected to support the analysis when required. It will be used alongside information from the annual SEAPs and periodic external review reports.

The following data sets may be included in the analysis:

- Data on student outcomes (quantitative) and how institutions are taking action to improve outcomes (qualitative) for students of all backgrounds, with a particular interest in measures and actions about:
    - o retention
    - o progression
    - o success
    - o employability.

- Student survey results (for example, the National Student Survey in universities and Student Satisfaction and Engagement Survey in colleges) and how institutions are addressing feedback from such surveys.

- Course closures and the management of students in flight on those courses.

- Qualitative information from key stakeholders - such as sparqs, NUS and students' associations.

- Staff, student or other complaints about quality and standards.

- Industry and employer feedback on the preparedness of graduates/leavers.

9.4 What is 'credit rating'?

The [Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF)](#) is the qualifications framework for Scotland. It is used to compare and understand Scotland's wide range of qualifications. Credit rating is the process of allocating an SCQF level and credit points to a qualification or learning programme so it can be placed on the SCQF. The SCQF has 12 levels - ranging from basic introductory skills (Level 1) to doctoral degrees (Level 12). Each level signifies the complexity of the learning outcomes. Credit points indicate the amount of learning, with one SCQF credit point equating to 10 notional hours of learning. Organisations that carry out this process are called Credit Rating Bodies (CRBs).

TQER covers all **credit-bearing provision** delivered by Scottish colleges and universities, fundable or otherwise, and irrespective of means of delivery. The specific quality arrangements for non-credit bearing provision (for example, non-credit bearing fully commercial provision, outreach or community activity) will not be covered as part of the review but may be considered overall as part of an institution's overall impact and approach (for example, summer schools may be considered in the context of widening participation and commercial provision may be considered in the context of regional impact).

9.5 TQER and Modern Apprenticeships (MA)

Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER) applies to all Scottish Funding Council (SFC) tertiary education fundable bodies in Scotland. The scope of TQER includes all of the institution's credit bearing provision - that is, programmes of study leading ultimately to awards or credit at Level 1-12 of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF).

Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) may include credit-bearing provision by a fundable body in Scotland and are therefore in the scope of TQER. Individual reviews may involve looking at aspects of MA provision where this is identified as a line of enquiry by the review team, either in isolation, or as part of exploring a wider aspect of the student experience.

Separately, commissioned by the Scottish Government, Education Scotland undertake the independent external review of MA provision across all providers. ES HMIE's arrangements can be [found here](#).

The focus of the ES HMIE review in colleges will be specific and limited to MA provision. This is similar to the approach taken with other regulators or statutory bodies who undertake reviews of provision with limited focus, e.g. the Nursing and Midwifery Council. The Scottish Government will take assurance on wider aspects of provision and student experience from the delivery mechanisms of the TQEF, including the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER). TQER review teams may request to view the outcomes of ES HMIE reviews where this is relevant to a line of enquiry identified within an institution's TQER.

10 Scheduling

10.1 How will smaller institutions be supported to prepare for TQER?

QAA recognises that smaller institutions may rely more heavily on individual staff members to prepare documentation (for example, Strategic Impact Assessment) or attend meetings in preparation for reviews. The TQER review schedule for academic year 2024-25 to 2030-31 will be published in autumn 2024. All institutions will have opportunities to raise any broader scheduling concerns with SFC and QAA. Institutions will also be able to discuss individual

reviews with the QAA Review Manager leading up to the scoping and review specification meeting held approximately eight months prior to the Main Review Visit.

11 Institutional Liaison Meetings

11.1 What role will the QAA Review Manager have in Institutional Liaison Meetings?

The QAA Review Manager will be appointed and contact an institution approximately 10 months before the Main Review Visit takes place. The member of QAA staff assigned to the institution as the main point of contact for queries and for follow-up activity, in the form of Institutional Liaison Officer, will always be a different QAA Officer. This ensures there is a distinction between the support provided for the institution on an annual basis and specific work undertaken to support the review - removing any conflict of interest or risk of unconscious bias. This is a requirement of the European Standards and Guidelines. However, if an institution has concerns about the member of QAA staff assigned to a review as QAA Review Manager, this can be raised with QAA. Further information about Institutional Liaison Meetings will be published in due course.