



# The UK Quality Code

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Nations & Europe

11 October 2019

# Session agenda

- Quality in a diverse UK
- Changes at QAA
- Changes to the Quality Code
- Focus on Advice and Guidance

# Quality in a diverse UK

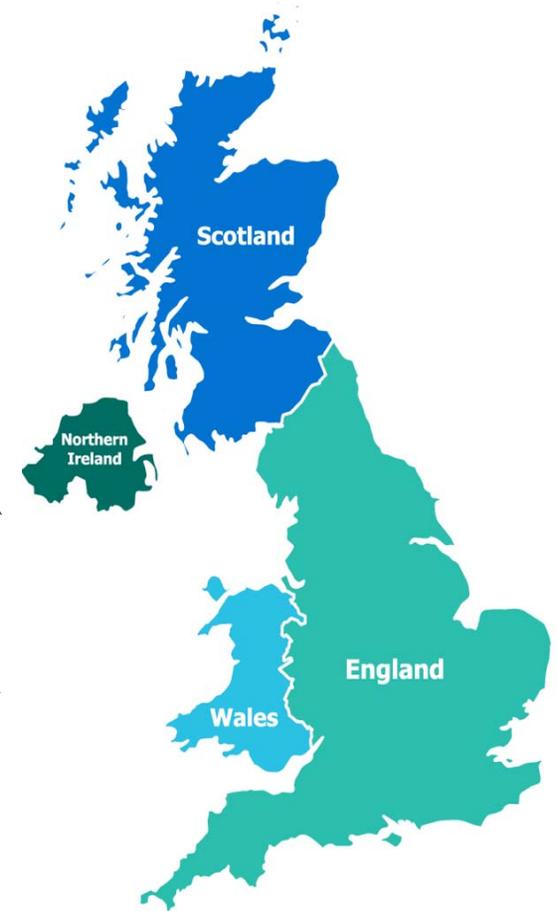
QAA: UK's independent quality assurance body  
Different approaches in different UK nations

**England:** risk-based approach (regulated by OfS)

**Scotland:** enhancement-led approach via ELIR on a five-year cycle

**Wales:** new Quality Enhancement review on a six-year cycle

**N. Ireland:** current operating model and reviewing which model will be used in future



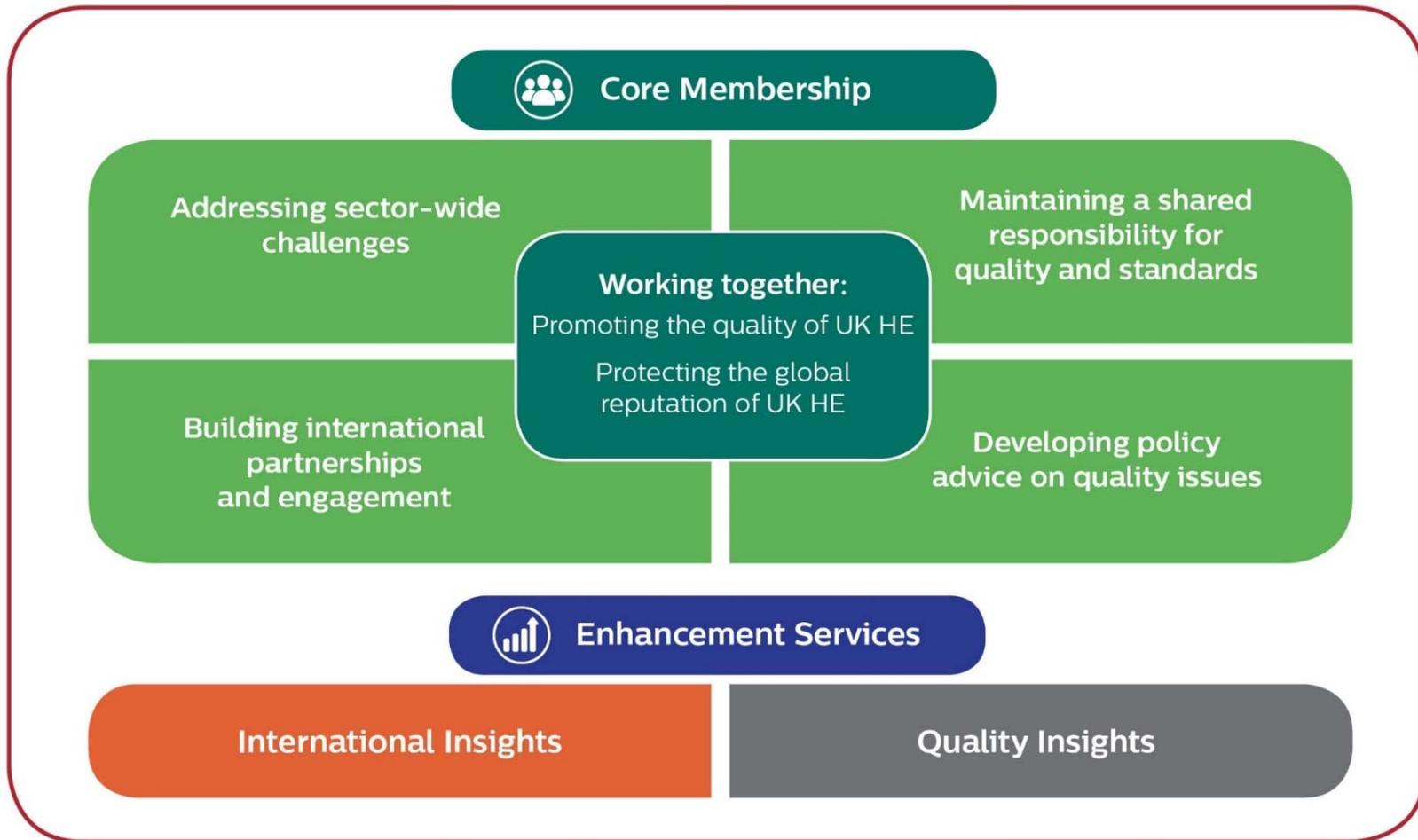
# QAA: Membership model

- In August 2019, in response to the changing regulatory landscape in the UK, QAA moved to a membership model for its non-regulatory services.
- At the heart of QAA Membership is a strong partnership with UK higher education.

# QAA: Membership model

- Working with you and for you, as the UK's independent quality body for higher education, QAA will develop and maintain enduring partnerships that strengthen the knowledge and expertise within the sector to:
  - **maintain and enhance UK higher education's global reputation for excellence**
  - **assure the standards and quality that are at the heart of UK higher education's reputation**
  - **enhance the academic experience of your students wherever they are in the world.**
- As a provider of higher education in the UK, QAA Membership supports you to continuously improve quality and standards through access to expertise, insight and valued resources.

# Membership services



# Membership resources



## Membership

- | sector guidance documents
- | research
- | viewpoints on key sector policy matter
- | international country reports



## Quality Insights

- | webinar recordings
- | case studies
- | spotlights on quality-related topics
- | Quality Insight updates
- | event materials



## International Insights

- | webinar recordings
- | case studies
- | spotlights on international topics
- | International Insight updates
- | event materials

## Changes to the UK Quality Code

- structurally – to apply across all four UK nations and maintain the UK sector's global reputation
- shorter – more engaging and accessible to different groups within HE
- more emphasis on student outcomes and engagement
- advice and guidance: guiding principles, practical advice and reflective questions and an emphasis on concision and clarity.

# The UK Quality Code animation



The Quality Code is based on a number of elements that together provide a reference point for effective quality assurance.



# The Quality Code - England

New and existing providers will be tested against the core practices of the Code.

New providers measured against all the core practices (as part of the gateway 'Quality and Standards Review' process).

Existing providers measured against a subset of core practices according to where OfS has identified a possible shortcoming. The core practices may also play a part in random sampling, but we don't know the details of that yet.

# The Quality Code - Scotland

New Quality Code applies from August 2019

From Spring 2020, all HEIs will be asked to map against the new version of the Code.

Scottish institutions are asked to meet the expectations and the core and common practices set out in the new version of the Code.

For HEIs undergoing ELIR in 2017-18 and 2018-19, the mapping is against the previous version of the Quality Code.

The HEIs with review visits scheduled to take place in autumn 2019 have the option of mapping against the previous or the current (new) version of the Code.

# The Quality Code - Wales

The Quality Assessment Framework for Wales identifies a number of baseline regulatory requirements which include the Expectations of the previous iteration of the UK Quality Code.

Quality Enhancement Review of regulated institutions will consider both the Core and Common practices in meeting expectations of the Quality Code as of 19/20.

Gateway Quality Review Wales for new providers is working to the previous version of the Quality Code until the end of 18/19 academic year. From 19/20 the current (new) version will be used.

# The Quality Code – Northern Ireland

In Northern Ireland the Revised Operating Model sets out the operating model for quality assessment in Northern Ireland from 2017/18 onwards

The revised UK Quality Code is the key reference point for Northern Ireland Higher Education Providers and both core and common practices will form part of any future quality assessment process.

Revised UK Quality Code applies from August 2019

The Quality Code is based on a number of elements that together provide a reference point for effective quality assurance.



## Expectations (standards and quality)

THE CODE

**Core practices**  
*required by all UK HE regulatory jurisdictions*

**Common practices**  
*common to the underpinning of quality in all UK providers but not regulatory requirements for providers in England regulated by the OfS*

## Supporting reference documents

**National frameworks and statements**  
(e.g. Qualifications Frameworks, characteristics statements, benchmark statements)

1

2

3

**Advice and guidance**  
(e.g. programme design, admissions, student engagement, etc..)

1

2

3

4...

## Expectations

### 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

### 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 for standards**

The provider ensures that the threshold standards for their 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.

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.

The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.

## **Common practices for Standards**

The provider reviews its core practices regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.

## Core practices for Quality

The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.

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

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

The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.

The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.

Where the provider offers research degrees, they deliver these in appropriate and supportive research environments.

Where a provider works in partnership with other

## Common practices for Quality

The provider reviews its core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.

The provider's approach to managing quality takes account of external expertise.

The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.

# Advice & Guidance



**ADMISSIONS,  
RECRUITMENT AND  
WIDENING ACCESS**



**ASSESSMENT**



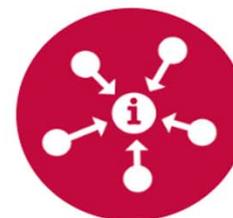
**CONCERNS,  
COMPLAINTS AND  
APPEALS**



**COURSE DESIGN  
AND DEVELOPMENT**



**ENABLING  
STUDENT  
ACHIEVEMENT**



**EXTERNAL  
EXPERTISE**



**LEARNING AND  
TEACHING**



**MONITORING AND  
EVALUATION**



**PARTNERSHIPS**



**RESEARCH  
DEGREES**



**STUDENT  
ENGAGEMENT**



**WORK-BASED  
LEARNING**

## Purpose of the Advice and Guidance

To underpin the mandatory element of the Code through clear, succinct and practical advice and guidance to enable institutions to meet the core and common practices and the expectations, regardless of UK jurisdiction.

# Who wrote the advice and guidance

1670 individual contributions

133 writers representing 91 HE providers and organisations

180 readers representing 116 HE providers and organisations

# Engaging with the Advice and Guidance

*3 levels of engagement:*

- Web based – top level - Overarching information at a glance
- Summary information – Short explanatory information
- Full advice and guidance – PDF comprising detailed advice and guidance

# Structure of advice and guidance

Introduction &  
explicit links to core  
and common  
practices

Guiding principles

Overarching Information

Practical advice and guidance on delivery of  
these aims include enhancements and good  
practice (in particular through reflective questions)

Practical Advice &  
Guidance

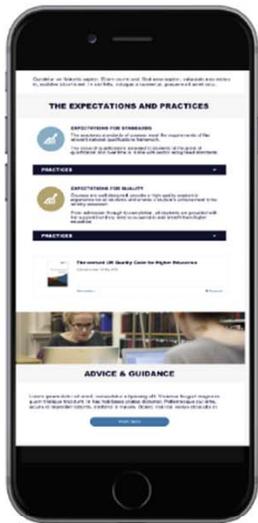
Resources, Further Information, Relevant Organisations &  
Glossary

Signposting

# The virtual interface



Practices for Standards and Quality can be viewed by clicking the expandable accordion to reveal the text. This ensures that the web page avoids being too text heavy, enhancing accessibility and usability on mobile devices (less scrolling).



Full Quality Code PDF can be downloaded/opened by clicking 'download'.

Clicking the 'View more' button takes the user to the Advice and Guidance page. See page 2

Quick links help navigate quickly to other related areas. Clicking an icon/link text takes the user to that page.

### THE EXPECTATIONS AND PRACTICES

#### 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.

#### PRACTICES

CORE PRACTICES	COMMON PRACTICES
The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks.	The provider reviews its core practices for standards regularly and uses the evidence to drive measurement and enhancement.
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.	
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 awards are delivered or who delivers them.	
The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.	

#### 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.

#### PRACTICES

The revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education

Publication: 10 May 2020

[View More](#)

#### ADVICE & GUIDANCE

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[View more](#)

#### KEY REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- [SUBJECT BENCHMARK STATEMENTS](#)
- [STANDARDS AND FRAMEWORKS](#)
- [GLOSSARY](#)

Each theme has a coloured icon. Clicking the icon takes the user to the individual web page for that theme. See page 3

On mobile devices, icons are displayed in one column and can be tapped to open the new page - providing an interactive experience.

Note: all buttons/icons across all pages that are clickable on desktop are tapable on mobile devices. All pages have been designed with mobile users in mind and are fully responsive.



## ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

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- [ADMISSIONS, RECRUITMENT AND WIDENING ACCESS](#)
- [ASSESSMENT](#)
- [CONCERNS, COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS](#)
- [ENABLING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT](#)
- [EXTERNAL EXPERTISE](#)
- [LEARNING AND TEACHING](#)
- [MONITORING & EVALUATION](#)
- [PARTNERSHIPS](#)
- [COURSE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT](#)
- [RESEARCH DEGREES](#)
- [STUDENT ENGAGEMENT](#)
- [WORK-BASED LEARNING](#)

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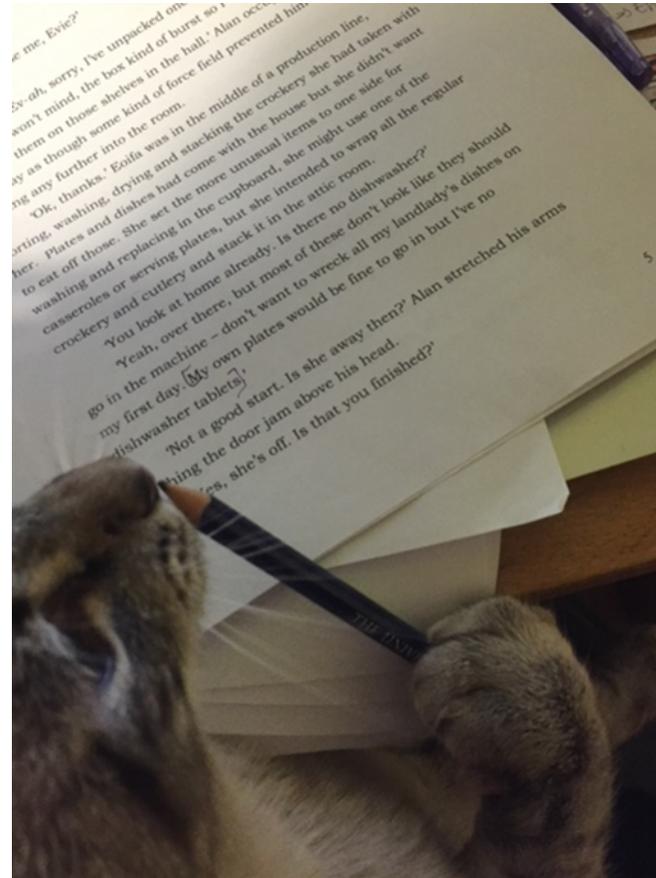
# What next?

- Review of the advice and guidance end of 2019
- Survey of those who took part in the process to improve next time
- Adding additional guidance such as Contract Cheating or Enterprise and Entrepreneurial guidance) to themes
- Further development of the standards information in advice and guidance
- Development of Higher Level Apprenticeships Characteristics Statement

# Over to you.....

- **Selected four Themes from Advice and Guidance**
  - Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access
  - Work-based Learning
  - Student Engagement
  - Assessment
- **From practical advice given on each Theme**
  - Selection of reflective questions
  - Divide into groups
  - Chose a Theme – relevant to your work
  - Discuss in context of your policy and practice
  - Repeat

# Questions?





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