



The UK Quality Code: The Glue that holds HE together

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QAA and UK quality assurance

Quality Assurance Agency

Independent,
not for profit

Check students
get the UKHE
entitled to
expect

All four nations
of the UK

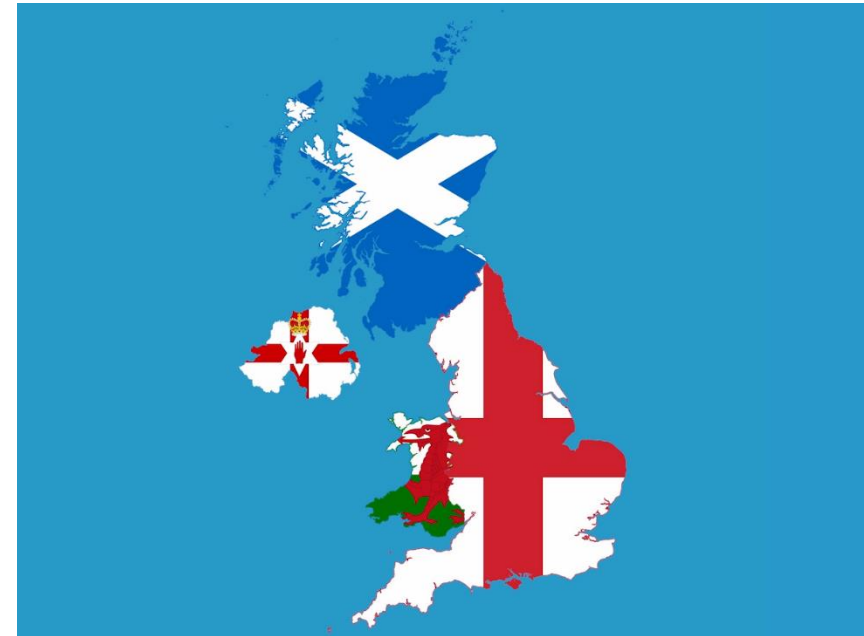
Raise the
standards and
quality of UKHE

Support
development of
QA systems
worldwide

Training,
guidance,
events; Advice
to Government

QAA's UK-wide work

- Quality assessment and assurance
- UK Quality Code
- Advice on degree awarding powers and university title
- Teaching Excellence Framework
- Assurance of transnational education
- Strategic international engagement



UK Quality Assured

England

- QAA designated quality body
- Design and implementation of new quality system
- Quality & Standards Review
- Risk-based system (baseline compliance)

Wales

- New Quality Enhancement Review (reviews at least every six years) and Gateway Review
- Post-compulsory education and training reform
- Welsh language standards

QAA'S WORK IN THE FOUR UK NATIONS

Scotland

- Latest enhancement approach
- Enhancement Theme (2017-20)
- Focus On projects
- Enhancement conferences
- enhancement-led approach (reviews on a five year cycle)

Northern Ireland

- Next approach to be confirmed

UK Quality Code

UK Quality Code for Higher Education

- Revised version published March 2018.
- Underpinning Advice and Guidance was launched in November 2018.
- Supporting reference documents include the Framework Qualifications and Subject Benchmark Statements.

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 qualifications and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.

PRACTICES



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

ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

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 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.

Expectations for quality

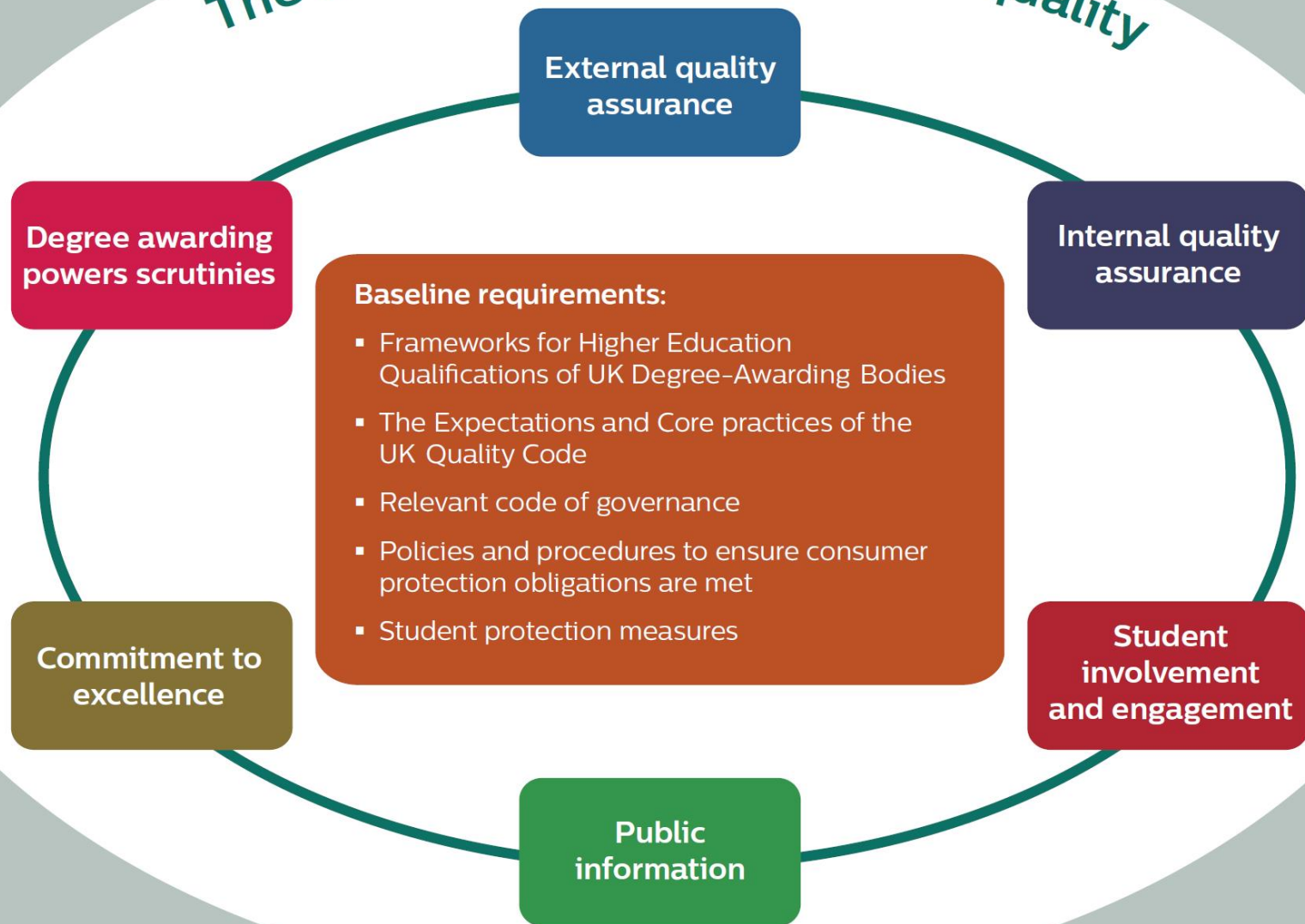
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From admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from higher education.

The UK Quality Code for HE

Expectations for standards		Expectations for quality	
<p>The academic standards of courses meet the requirements of the relevant national qualifications framework.</p> <p>The value of qualifications awarded to students at the point of qualification and over time is in line with sector-recognised standards.</p>		<p>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>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>Core practices</p> <p>The provider ensures that the threshold standards for its qualifications are consistent with the relevant national qualifications frameworks.</p> <p>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>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>The provider uses external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.</p>	<p>Common practices</p> <p>The provider reviews its core practices for standards regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.</p>	<p>Core practices</p> <p>The provider has a reliable, fair and inclusive admissions system.</p> <p>The provider designs and/or delivers high-quality courses.</p> <p>The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience.</p> <p>The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.</p> <p>The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.</p> <p>The provider has fair and transparent procedures for handling complaints and appeals which are accessible to all students.</p> <p>Where the provider offers research degrees, it delivers these in appropriate and supportive research environments.</p> <p>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>The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.</p>	<p>Common practices</p> <p>The provider reviews its core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.</p> <p>The provider's approach to managing quality takes account of external expertise.</p> <p>The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.</p>

The inter-connected system of quality




EXPECTATIONS

CORE


PRACTICES

COMMON


ADVICE & GUIDANCE

The revised UK
Quality Code for
Higher Education

UKSCQA/02
March 2018

KEY REFERENCE POINTS



**SUBJECT BENCHMARK
STATEMENTS**



**QUALIFICATION AND CREDIT
FRAMEWORKS**



SUPPORTING RESOURCES



**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**

Using the Advice and Guidance

- There are 12 Advice and Guidance themes that support the Expectations and Practices of the Quality Code.
- The themes are not designed to be mandatory or prescriptive, but to offer a 'road map' to providers as to how to apply the expectations and practices to their own systems and policies.
- Composed of guiding principles, practical advice, reflective questions and further reading.



How the Code works institutionally

- Autonomy of UK providers is integral to the operation of internal quality systems.
- Each university has its own governance procedures, academic regulations and policies.
- These systems need to adhere to the Quality Code Expectations and Practices.
- Providers will map their systems and process to this (as well as other quality frameworks e.g the ESG, enhancement led review in Scotland and Wales, FHEQ).



How the Code works institutionally

- Each institution assures their academic standards through using external verification of marks.
- The Quality Code asks institutions to ‘use external expertise, assessment and classification processes that are reliable, fair and transparent.’
- Providers will set out in their academic regulations how they use external expertise and assessment practices, based on the Code and the Advice and Guidance.

appropriate, criteria will be supplemented by marking schemes that provide a more precise framework for the allocation of marks. Marking schemes help assessors to mark assignments by indicating how marks will be awarded for different components of a question or number of questions. They often accompany indicative answers, but should provide for flexibility where students give different answers that equate to the same standard of achievement relevant to the learning outcomes.

Principles

Clear assessment criteria and/or marking schemes shall be adopted in assessments within taught programmes. These shall:

- **be shared with staff and students to ensure a common understanding of academic standards is maintained;**
- **be linked with and focussed upon learning outcomes;**
- **be inclusive and capable of meeting different student needs;**
- **be appropriate to the demands of particular tasks at different academic levels;**
- **act as a reference point to support academic staff in utilising their professional judgement with confidence;**
- **be drawn on to provide students with academic feedback on assessments, and;**
- **as appropriate, be aligned with professional, discipline-specific and sector-wide reference points.**

Regulations

- 7.1.1 Boards of Studies shall make information available to students in advance of assessment tasks, which specifies the standards expected within that task and indicates the assessment criteria and/or marking schemes that will

Academic Regulations,
Cardiff University 2018-19

How the Code works institutionally

Academic Regulations, Cardiff University 2018-19

markers.

Accessibility

Every student must have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their achievement against the learning outcomes. Assessment tasks, together with criteria and marking schemes, should therefore be designed with accessibility in mind. Some students may because of certain circumstances need to complete a different task, or the same task under different conditions, in order to demonstrate achievement of the same learning outcomes. The University normally arranges such adjustments to assessments through the Specific Provision Regulations Section 9.

When an alternative assessment task is provided as a reasonable adjustment for a disabled student, the learning outcomes should not be altered, and Schools should ensure that the alternative task is an appropriate way to test them. However, the assessment criteria may need to be modified to maintain alignment with the learning outcomes in the context of the particular task.

Schools should ensure that students are aware of their approach to marking work from students with disabilities affecting written language expression. Specific guidance on Assessing students with disability-related writing difficulties is available. Reasonable adjustments of these kinds should ensure that disabled students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their achievement without compromising academic standards or affecting prescribed standards of Professional Bodies.

Marking, academic standards, and academic judgement

Staff need to ensure that students are aware of the fundamental role that academic judgement plays in determining assessment outcomes. While staff must use marking schemes and/or assessment criteria to support their judgement, students should be informed that many assessment tasks will require assessors to exercise their academic and/or professional judgement. Students should be made aware that appeal applications that question the academic judgement of assessors are not admissible.

Communicating standards with External Examiners

Programme teams must ensure that assessment criteria, marking schemes and approaches to making reasonable adjustments for disabled students are shared with External Examiners, and where appropriate relevant professional and statutory bodies. Marking teams should engage in an ongoing dialogue with External Examiners to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the academic standards.

Using the Advice and Guidance

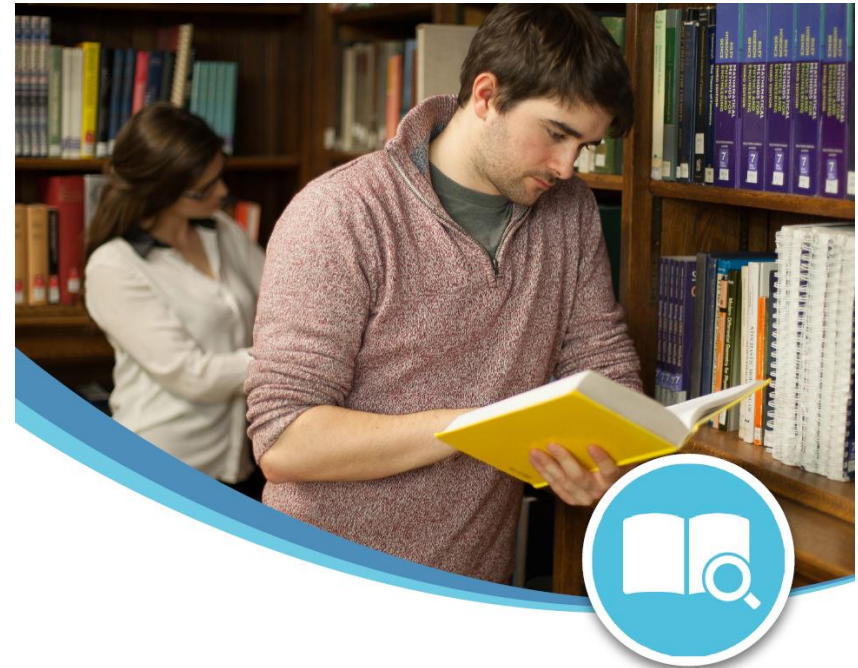
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- 1 Providers use one or more external experts as advisers to provide impartial and independent scrutiny on the approval and review of all provision that leads to the award of credit or a qualification.
- 2 Degree-awarding bodies engage independent external examiners to comment impartially and informatively on academic standards, student achievement and assessment processes for all provision that leads to the award of credit or a qualification.
- 3 Degree-awarding bodies have processes for the nomination, approval and engagement of external examiners and other independent external experts.
- 4 Providers ensure that the roles of those providing external expertise are clear to students, staff and other stakeholders.
- 5 Providers ensure that external experts are given sufficient and timely evidence and training to enable them to carry out their responsibilities.
- 6 Providers have effective mechanisms in place to provide a response to input from external examiners and external advisers.

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/external-expertise>

Using the Advice and Guidance

- Advice and Guidance allows providers to consider how their policies work in practice
- It allows them to build a bridge between securing academic standards and enhancing quality
- It supports the individual context of each provider – their missions, values and aims
- Data driven, evidence led quality systems – how does that underpin decision making?



UK Quality Code for Higher Education

Advice and Guidance

Research Degrees





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