



# Report from the Quality Assessment Committee

## Purpose

1. The board is kept informed of the work of its Quality Assessment Committee (QAC) by receiving a report on the outcomes of each meeting. This report summarises the outcomes of the QAC meeting held on 12 December 2022.

## Recommendations/Decisions required by the board

2. The board is invited to receive the report.

## Further information

3. Available from Simon Levine.

## Triennial report

4. The committee was advised that the final triennial report on the performance of the QAA, acting as the DQB, had been submitted to the Secretary of State on 18 November 2022 and the report was shared with the QAA on the same day along with a provisional decision to publish a summary of the full report.
5. The committee noted the OfS's new powers in relation to publication enacted on 28 April 2022. Publication decisions may be taken by the executive in accordance with the scheme of delegation.

## Arrangements for quality and standards assessments

6. The committee was updated on work to deliver assessments relating to quality and standards and Degree Awarding Powers (DAPs) from April 2023 when the QAA ceases to the DQB. Attention was drawn to the OfS's plans for engagement with sector bodies. Senior members from sector representative groups had been invited to the first of two round-table events in January 2023 to explain the quality system in England, the role of the DQB and its relationship with OfS and to discuss longer-term arrangements. The aim is to ensure that future arrangements are grounded in an understanding of the statutory context for quality assessment.

## Programme of quality investigations

7. The committee was updated on progress with quality investigations which draw on independent academic judgements. The paper addressed questions raised in the last meeting about the relationship between the QAC and the quality investigations committee (QIC). The Rules of Procedure for the QIC had been included for the committee's information, together with guidance for providers on the arrangements for quality assessment visits (not yet published but had been issued to providers subject to visits).

## Approach to implementation of condition B3

8. The committee received a presentation on progress in implementing the approach to condition B3. This work relies on numerical thresholds calculated by reference to sector-wide performance, to show the minimum level of performance that students from all backgrounds should generally expect each provider to deliver in relation to continuation and completion of courses and progression to professional or managerial employment or further study. The OfS's approach seeks to make a rounded judgement about a provider's performance, and a provider's position in relation to a numerical threshold would not, by itself, determine whether it was compliant with the B3 condition.
9. An announcement on 18 November 2022 had set out which student outcome measures, modes and levels of study and subjects the OfS would use as the basis for selecting providers assessment. In the 2022 assessment cycle, the focus will be on continuation, completion and progression to professional or managerial employment or further study outcomes in relation to undergraduate first degree and post graduate taught masters. Additionally, there would be focus on specific subjects. It was noted that the list of prioritised subjects was headed by

Business and Management and Computing – subjects concurrently targeted through the QIC provider investigations stream of work. These were subjects where there were large numbers of students enrolled and considerable variation in student outcomes performance across providers.

10. The OfS's plan for evaluative activity in relation to the B3 condition was outlined. The objective was to understand the effect that the introduction of the revised condition has had, including on access to higher education for students from underrepresented groups – which was a common concern voiced during consultation on the proposals. To explore this, there would be analysis of effects shown in UCAS and HESA data, with particular interest in what was happening in terms of provision delivered through partnerships. Additionally, the evaluation would carry out some 'deep-dive' activity to assess how providers have responded to the introduction of condition B3. It was envisaged that the committee may be asked to contribute to discussions about the approach in future.

## **Teaching Excellence Framework**

11. An information paper updated the committee on the TEF. It was noted that members of the TEF panel had been announced on 7 December 2023. TEF panel members were comprised of 40 academic experts in learning and teaching, and 20 student representatives from across a wide range of universities and colleges to carry out the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) assessments. About 300 providers were expected to make submissions in January 2023.
12. Although the assessment process would complete in the summer, it was noted that there would then be a representations process. The committee would be updated on progress.