

## Your quality plan and supporting evidence

### Initial condition B7 (quality)

1. Our condition of registration B7 sets out requirements for quality that a provider must satisfy to be registered. We recognise that a provider seeking registration may not have a track record of delivering higher education. Our requirements are therefore designed to test the credibility of a provider's plans to meet our quality requirements on an ongoing basis if it is registered, and the extent to which it has the capacity and resources to deliver those plans in practice.<sup>1</sup>
2. Your quality plan must show that you will comply with the ongoing quality conditions B1, B2 and B4 that will apply from the date of your registration.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore important that you make sure you understand the requirements imposed through those ongoing conditions before you write your quality plan.

### Submission requirements

3. To allow us to assess whether you satisfy condition B7, you should submit your quality plan and an itemised list of each piece of supporting evidence referred to in it. This is explained in detail in the table below. This is so that we can check that we have received all the documents you would like us to consider in our assessment.

### What should your quality plan cover?

4. Your quality plan needs to show that you will be compliant with ongoing conditions B1, B2 and B4 from the date you are registered. It should therefore address how you will ensure compliance with each of the requirements in conditions B1, B2 and B4. It should evidence that your provider has the capacity and resources necessary to deliver your quality plan in practice. We are also likely to draw on evidence you submit in relation to the other conditions of registration to make a judgement about whether your provider has the necessary capacity and resources. For example, evidence submitted in relation to financial viability and sustainability, or management and governance arrangements, are likely to be relevant.
5. The OfS's regulatory approach is principles-based and the table below is intended as a guide to support you in developing your quality plan, rather than a checklist. Providers may satisfy our conditions in a variety of ways, and you are free to set out your approach and how this satisfies the condition in a way that best reflects your individual situation.
6. Your quality plan should map against each of the requirements in conditions B1, B2, and B4. It should explain either your plans and processes for achieving compliance with each requirement, or the evidence that is already available (in draft or final form) which

<sup>1</sup> For the full requirements of condition B7 see: [Condition B7: Quality](#).

<sup>2</sup> See [How we regulate quality and standards](#).

demonstrates compliance now. Your quality plan should explicitly reference the supporting evidence you are submitting as part of your application, so we are clear about which documents are relevant to each of the points in your quality plan. Your quality plan should set out specific milestones and dates for key aspects of the development and delivery of the courses you plan to provide if you are registered so that as further evidence becomes available in the future, we could test this if appropriate.

7. The template below refers throughout to 'explain in detail'. It is very important that your quality plan contains sufficient detail for us to make a judgement about whether you satisfy condition B7. Conditions B1, B2 and B4 are expressed as outcomes a provider must deliver for students, for example that its courses are effectively delivered, students receive sufficient resources and support, and are reliably assessed. The purpose of condition B7 is to allow any provider to set out its plans for delivering higher education that meets the outcomes set out in conditions B1, B2 and B4. This includes a provider that is not yet delivering higher education and so cannot show these outcomes when it seeks registration. However, we would not expect a provider to seek registration without a significant amount of planning. This means we expect you to submit detailed evidence to support your plans for delivery where this is available and relevant.
8. We are, for example, likely to conclude that you have not given sufficient detail if your quality plan simply states 'we will ensure courses are up to date by running a course approval process' but does not provide further explanation or evidence of what the course approval process will involve and who will be involved in reaching judgements about courses. A quality plan that is not supported with any evidence, or supported only with limited evidence, will need to go further in describing how you will ensure compliance with the ongoing conditions. To be credible, your quality plan must show that you understand conditions B1, B2 and B4 by setting out, with supporting evidence, how you will meet these conditions if your provider is registered.
9. If your quality plan and supporting evidence contain insufficient detail, we will normally make a provisional decision to refuse your application. Your provider will have no less than a statutory 28-day period to make representations before we make a final decision. The representations period also provides an opportunity for you to submit any missing information and address deficiencies in your quality plan and supporting evidence. However, the OfS may decide to proceed to a final refusal decision if the required information is submitted but deemed insufficient or if it does not rectify the quality plan and supporting evidence to the necessary standard.'

## **Courses delivered through a partnership arrangement**

10. Your quality plan should clearly set out your current or planned relationship with any awarding organisation, validating partner or other provider with which you will be working in relation to the courses you plan to offer if your provider is registered. Your quality plan should also state clearly whether relevant partnership arrangements have already been formally agreed or, if not, the steps and timeline necessary for agreement to be reached. During the assessment process we may independently check your provider's partnership arrangements based on the information included in your application.
11. The ongoing conditions of registration apply to all registered providers. All a provider's higher education courses, and the students on those courses, are within the scope of the conditions, irrespective of where or how courses are delivered or who delivers them. This includes:

- a. Any higher education course<sup>3</sup> (whether that course is recognised for OfS funding purposes or not), at any level, and with any volume of learning. This means, for example, that postgraduate research courses, further education courses which also meet this definition of higher education, the study of modules at any level, and apprenticeships are included within the scope of the conditions.
  - b. Higher education provided to all the students who are registered with a registered provider, taught by a registered provider or studying for an award of a registered provider. For example, the conditions apply to a provider that teaches students who are registered and awarded by another provider. This includes UK-based and non-UK-based students, and courses delivered through partnership arrangements both within the UK and internationally.
12. Where a provider works in partnership with another provider, all OfS-registered providers involved in a partnership are responsible for meeting all ongoing conditions. A provider applying for registration needs to explain in its quality plan how it discharges this responsibility when working in a partnership arrangement.

## Visiting your provider

13. Once we have conducted an initial assessment of your quality plan and supporting evidence, we will decide whether it is necessary to undertake an assessment visit to your provider to gather and test the evidence relevant to your compliance with initial condition B7. This will include the form that visit should take, and whether it should be undertaken by assessors able to provide expert academic judgement. A visit may include interviews with relevant staff and students. We would be more likely to decide that a visit is not necessary if, with reference to the circumstances of your individual case, the evidence needed to make the relevant regulatory decisions can be easily obtained without a visit.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Section 83 of HERA 2017 defines a 'higher education course' to mean a course of any description mentioned in Schedule 6 of the Higher Education Reform Act 1988.

<sup>4</sup> OfS, 'Regulatory advice 23: Arrangements for initial condition B7 quality assessment visits'.

## Table of information and evidence needed to assess Condition B7

**Requirement of condition B7: does the provider have credible plans that would enable the provider, if registered, to comply with conditions B1, B2 and B4 from the date of registration?**

Condition B1: Academic experience		
B1.3	Description of what the quality plan should contain	Supporting evidence which demonstrates how each element of the condition will be satisfied, which might include but is not limited to <sup>5</sup>
a. Each higher education course is up to date <sup>6</sup>	Explain in detail how you will ensure the higher education courses you plan to provide are up to date as defined in condition B1.5g.	<p>Draft or final course documents, for example, programme specifications, that demonstrate courses are up to date.</p> <p>A representative sample of draft or final module documents, for example module specifications, that allow an assessment of whether a course is up to date.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Explain the process for course approval you intend to operate, including who would be involved and their experience in developing and delivering higher education courses.</p> <p>Include dates for achieving milestones and state when additional evidence will become available in relation to the courses you plan to provide if your provider is registered.</p>
b. Each higher education course provides educational challenge <sup>7</sup>	Explain in detail how you will ensure the higher education courses you plan to provide will provide educational challenge as defined in condition B1.5c.	<p>Draft or final course documents, for example, programme specifications, that demonstrate courses will provide educational challenge.</p> <p>A representative sample of draft or final module documents, for example module specifications, that allow an assessment of whether a course will provide educational challenge.</p>

<sup>5</sup> The OfS may ask for further information (not limited to the items listed in the table) from a provider where it considers that the provision of that information would facilitate its assessment of the provider's compliance with condition B7.

<sup>6</sup> 'up to date' means representative of current thinking and practices in the subject matter to which the higher education course relates, including being appropriately informed by recent: i. subject matter developments; ii. research, industrial and professional developments; and iii. developments in teaching and learning, including learning resources.

<sup>7</sup> 'educational challenge' means a challenge that is no less than the minimum level of rigour and difficulty reasonably expected of the higher education course, in the context of the subject matter and level of the course.

		<p>AND</p> <p>Explain the process for course approval you intend to operate, including who would be involved and their experience in developing and delivering higher education courses.</p> <p>Include dates for achieving milestones and state when additional evidence will become available in relation to the courses you plan to provide if your provider is registered.</p>
c. Each higher education course is coherent <sup>8</sup>	Explain in detail how you will ensure the higher education courses you plan to provide will be coherent as defined in condition B1.5b.	<p>Draft or final course documents, for example, programme specifications that demonstrate courses are coherent.</p> <p>A representative sample of draft or final module documents, for example module specifications, that allow an assessment of whether a course is coherent.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Explain the process for course approval you intend to operate, including who would be involved and their experience in developing and delivering higher education courses.</p> <p>Include dates for achieving milestones and state when additional evidence will become available in relation to the courses you plan to provide if your provider is registered.</p>
d. Each higher education course is effectively delivered <sup>9</sup>	Explain in detail how you will ensure the higher education courses you plan to provide will be effectively delivered as defined in condition B1.5d.	<p>Draft or final course documents, for example, programme specifications that demonstrate courses will be effectively delivered with an appropriate balance between delivery methods and between directed and independent study.</p> <p>A representative sample of draft or final module documents, for example module</p>

<sup>8</sup> 'coherent' means a higher education course which ensures: i. there is an appropriate balance between breadth and depth of content; ii. subjects and skills are taught in an appropriate order and, where necessary, build on each other throughout the course; iii. key concepts are introduced at the appropriate point in the course content.

<sup>9</sup> 'effectively delivered', in relation to a higher education course, means the manner in which it is taught, supervised and assessed (both in person and remotely) including, but not limited to, ensuring: i. an appropriate balance between delivery methods, for example lectures, seminars, group work or practical study, as relevant to the content of the course; and ii. an appropriate balance between directed and independent study or research, as relevant to the level of the course.

		<p>specifications that allow an assessment of whether courses will be effectively delivered.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Explain the process for course approval you intend to operate, including who would be involved and their experience in developing and delivering higher education courses.</p> <p>Include dates for achieving milestones and state when additional evidence will become available in relation to the courses you plan to provide if your provider is registered.</p>
<p>e. Each higher education course, as appropriate to the subject matter of the course, requires students to develop relevant skills<sup>10</sup></p>	<p>Explain in detail how you will ensure the higher education courses you plan to provide will require students to develop relevant skills as defined in condition B1.5f.</p>	<p>Draft or final course documents, for example, programme specifications that demonstrate courses will require students to develop relevant skills.</p> <p>A representative sample of draft or final module documents, for example module specifications that allow an assessment of whether courses will require students to develop relevant skills.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Explain the process for course approval you intend to operate, including who would be involved and their experience in developing and delivering higher education courses.</p> <p>Include dates for achieving milestones and state when additional evidence will become available in relation to the courses you plan to provide if your provider is registered.</p>

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<sup>10</sup> 'relevant skills' means: i. knowledge and understanding relevant to the subject matter and level of the higher education course; and ii. other skills relevant to the subject matter and level of the higher education course including, but not limited to, cognitive skills, practical skills, transferable skills and professional competences.

<b>Condition B2: Resources, support and student engagement</b>		
<b>B2.2</b>	<b>Description of what the quality plan should contain</b>	<b>Supporting evidence which demonstrates how each element of the condition will be satisfied which might include but is not limited to:<sup>11</sup></b>
a. A provider must take all reasonable steps <sup>12</sup> to ensure that each cohort of students <sup>13</sup> registered on each higher education course receives sufficient resources. <sup>14</sup>	Explain in detail how you will take all reasonable steps to ensure that each cohort of students registered on each higher education course receives sufficient resources to ensure a high quality academic experience for those students, and that those students can succeed in and beyond higher education, as defined in condition B2.4b, condition B2.4g, condition B2.4j, and condition B2.4k.	<p>Planned or actual staff structure chart showing number and contractual status of staff (e.g. full-time, part-time, zero hours contract).</p> <p>Any relevant documents that set out planned or actual approach to recruitment, induction and staff development.</p> <p>Job descriptions and, where individuals have already been appointed to specific posts, CVs of these individuals.</p> <p>Evidence of sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and academic student support services.</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Plans and milestones for ensuring sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and academic student support services.</p> <p>A representative sample of course and module student handbooks.</p> <p>A representative sample of learning materials.</p>

<sup>11</sup> The OfS may ask for further information (not limited to the table) from a provider where it considers that the provision of that information would facilitate its assessment of the provider's compliance with condition B7.

<sup>12</sup> 'reasonable steps' is to be interpreted in a manner which (without prejudice to other relevant considerations) focuses and places weight on: i. the particular academic needs of each cohort of students based on prior academic attainment and capability; and ii. the principle that the greater the academic needs of the cohort of students, the number and nature of the steps needed to be taken are likely to be more significant.

<sup>13</sup> 'cohort of students' means the group of students registered on to the higher education course in question and is to be interpreted by reference to the particular academic needs of those students based on prior academic attainment and capability.

<sup>14</sup> 'resources' includes but is not limited to: i. the staff team that designs and delivers a higher education course being collectively sufficient in number, appropriately qualified and deployed effectively to deliver in practice; and ii. physical and digital learning resources that are adequate and deployed effectively to meet the needs of the cohort of students.

a. A provider must take all reasonable steps to ensure that each cohort of students registered on each higher education course receives sufficient support. <sup>15</sup>	Explain in detail how you will take all reasonable steps to ensure each cohort of students registered on each higher education course receives support which is sufficient for the purpose of ensuring a high quality experience for those students, and that those students succeed in and beyond higher education, as defined in condition B2.4I.	<p>Any relevant documents that show the provider's planned approach to providing assessment feedback to students and how this will support students in their learning.</p> <p>Any relevant documents that show the provider's planned approach to student academic support, including how it identifies and monitors the needs of cohorts of students.</p> <p>Please note that we may additionally request samples of assessed students' work where a provider is already providing relevant courses and where we consider this necessary for our assessment.</p>
b. A provider must take all reasonable steps to ensure effective engagement <sup>16</sup> with each cohort of students.	Explain in detail how you will take all reasonable steps to ensure effective engagement with each cohort of students which is sufficient for the purpose of ensuring a high quality academic experience for those students; and that those students succeed in and beyond higher education, as defined in condition B2.4e.	<p>Any relevant documents that show the provider's planned approach to student engagement.</p> <p>If a provider is already delivering higher education – examples of effective engagement already in place.</p>

Condition B4: Assessment and awards		
B4.2	Description of what the quality plan should contain	Supporting evidence which demonstrates how each element of

<sup>15</sup> 'support' means the effective deployment of assistance, as appropriate to the content of the higher education course and the cohort of students, including but not limited to: i. academic support relating to the content of the higher education course; ii. support needed to underpin successful physical and digital learning and teaching; iii. support relating to understanding, avoiding and reporting academic misconduct; and iv. careers support, but for the avoidance of doubt, does not include other categories of non-academic support.

<sup>16</sup> 'engagement' means routine provision of opportunities for students to contribute to the development of their academic experience and their higher education course, in a way that maintains the academic rigour of that course, including, but not limited to, through membership of the provider's committees, opportunities to provide survey responses, and participation in activities to develop the course and the way it is delivered.



		<b>the condition will be satisfied which might include but is not limited to:<sup>17</sup></b>
a. Students are assessed effectively. <sup>18</sup>	Explain in detail how you will ensure that students are assessed effectively, as defined in condition B4.4c.	<p>Draft or final:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a representative sample of assessment criteria</li> <li>• a representative sample of assessment briefs</li> <li>• academic misconduct policies</li> <li>• academic regulations.</li> </ul> <p>AND</p> <p>Explain the process for approval you intend to operate, including who would be involved and their experience in developing courses.</p> <p>Include dates for achieving milestones and when evidence will become available in relation to the courses you plan to provide if your provider is registered.</p> <p>Any third-party reports such as external examiner reports, PSRB reports or awarding partner and how the provider has responded to any issues raised (if available).</p>

<sup>17</sup> The OfS may ask for further information (not limited to the table) from a provider where it considers that the provision of that information would facilitate its assessment of the provider's compliance with condition B7.

<sup>18</sup> 'assessed effectively' means assessed in a challenging and appropriately comprehensive way, by reference to the subject matter of the higher education course, and includes but is not limited to: i. providing stretch and rigour consistent with the level of the course; ii. testing relevant skills; and iii assessments being designed in a way that minimises the opportunities for academic misconduct and facilitates the detection of such misconduct where it does occur.

b. Each assessment <sup>19</sup> is valid <sup>20</sup> and reliable. <sup>21</sup>	Explain in detail how you will ensure that each assessment is valid and reliable as defined in condition B4.4k and condition B4.4i.	Any final or draft assessment design, marking and moderation processes and policies.  Please note that we may additionally request samples of assessed students' work where a provider is already teaching relevant courses and where we consider this necessary for our assessment.
c. Academic regulations <sup>22</sup> are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible. <sup>23</sup>	Explain in detail how you will ensure that academic regulations are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible as defined in condition B4.4e.	Any draft or final academic regulations  Any draft or final academic misconduct policies  AND  Explain the process for approval you intend to operate, including who would be involved and their experience in developing courses.  Include dates for achieving milestones and when evidence will become available in relation to the courses you plan to provide if your provider is registered.

<sup>19</sup> 'assessment means' any component of a course used to assess student achievement towards a relevant award, including examination and a test.

<sup>20</sup> 'valid' means that an assessment in fact takes place in a way that results in students demonstrating knowledge and skills in the way intended by design of the assessment.

<sup>21</sup> 'reliable' means that an assessment, in practice, requires students to demonstrate knowledge and skills in a manner which is consistent as between the students registered on a higher education course and over time, as appropriate in the context of developments in the content and delivery of the higher education course.

<sup>22</sup> 'academic regulations' means regulations adopted by the provider, which govern its higher education courses, including but not limited to: i. the assessment of students' work; ii. student discipline relating to academic matters; iii. the requirements for relevant awards; and iv. the method used to determine classifications, including but not limited to: A. the requirements for an award; and B. the algorithms used to calculate the classification of awards.

<sup>23</sup> 'credible' means that, in the reasonable opinion of the OfS, relevant awards reflect students' knowledge and skills, and for this purpose the OfS may take into account factors which include, but are not limited to: i. the number of relevant awards granted, and the classifications attached to them, and the way in which this number and/or the classifications change over time and compare with other providers; ii. whether students are assessed effectively and whether assessments are valid and reliable; iii. any actions the provider has taken that would result in an increased number of relevant awards, and/or changes in the classifications attached to them, whether or not the achievement of students has increased, for example, changes to assessment practices or academic regulations; and iv. the provider's explanation and evidence in support of the reasons for any changes in the classifications over time or differences with other providers.

		Please note that we may additionally request samples of assessed students' work where a provider is already teaching relevant courses and where we consider this necessary for our assessment.
d. Subject to paragraph B4.3 (of condition B4), in respect of each higher education course, academic regulations are designed to ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner which appropriately reflects the level and content of the applicable higher education course.	Explain in detail how you will ensure that in respect of each higher education course, academic regulations are designed to ensure the effective assessment of technical proficiency in the English language in a manner which appropriately reflects the level and content of the applicable higher education course, as defined in condition B4.4b.	<p>Draft or final:</p> <p>A representative sample of assessment criteria</p> <p>A representative sample of assessment briefs</p> <p>Academic regulations</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Explain the process for approval you intend to operate, including who would be involved and their experience in developing courses</p> <p>Include dates for achieving milestones and when evidence will become available in relation to the courses you plan to provide if your provider is registered.</p> <p>Please note that we may additionally request samples of assessed students' work where a provider is already teaching relevant courses and where we consider this necessary for our assessment</p>
e. Relevant awards <sup>24</sup> granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared to those granted previously.	Explain in detail how you will ensure the relevant awards granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared to those granted previously, as defined in condition B4.4g.	<p>Any draft or final academic regulations</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Explain the process for approval you intend to operate, including who would be involved and their experience in developing courses.</p>

<sup>24</sup> 'relevant award' means: i. a research award; ii. a taught award; and/or iii. any other type of award or qualification in respect of a higher education course, including an award of credit granted in respect of a module that may form part of a larger higher education course, whether or not granted pursuant to an authorisation given by or under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017, another Act of Parliament or Royal Charter.

		Include dates for achieving milestones and when evidence will become available in relation to the courses you plan to provide if your provider is registered.
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**Requirement of condition B7: does the provider have the capacity and resources necessary to deliver, in practice, those plans?**

Have the capacity and resources <sup>25</sup> necessary to deliver, in practice, those plans.	Explain in detail how you have the capacity and resources necessary to deliver, in practice, those plans, as defined in Condition B7.3a.	<p>Action plans (including timescales) that set out clearly the key steps and milestones that you need to take in order to meet the requirements of B1, B2 and B4.</p> <p>A recruitment plan that sets out which members of staff will be in place by which date.</p> <p>Minutes of meetings where plans and timescales have been discussed (if available).</p> <p>Minutes of meetings from Academic Board (or equivalent) that demonstrate the approval of evidence described in the plan (if available).</p> <p>Other information submitted as part of your registration assessment, such as your business plan, financial forecasts and commentary, management and governance self-assessment and governing documents will also be used to assess this requirement.</p>
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<sup>25</sup> 'capacity and resources' includes, but is not limited to: i. the financial resources of the provider; ii. the number, expertise, and experience of the staff employed, and to be employed, by the provider; iii. the physical and digital learning resources deployed, and to be deployed, by the provider and iv. the provider's management and governance arrangements. As well as the information contained in your quality plan, the OfS is also likely to draw on evidence you submit in relation to the other conditions of registration to make a judgement about whether your provider has the 'capacity and resources' necessary to deliver your plans in practice. For example, evidence submitted in relation to financial viability and sustainability, or management and governance arrangements, are likely to be relevant.