

Office for
Students

The logo for the Office for Students, featuring a dark blue square with a yellow square in the top right corner containing the letters 'OfS' in white.

OfS

Provider briefing

Degree awarding powers (DAPs)

Office for Students

OfS, Finlaison House, London

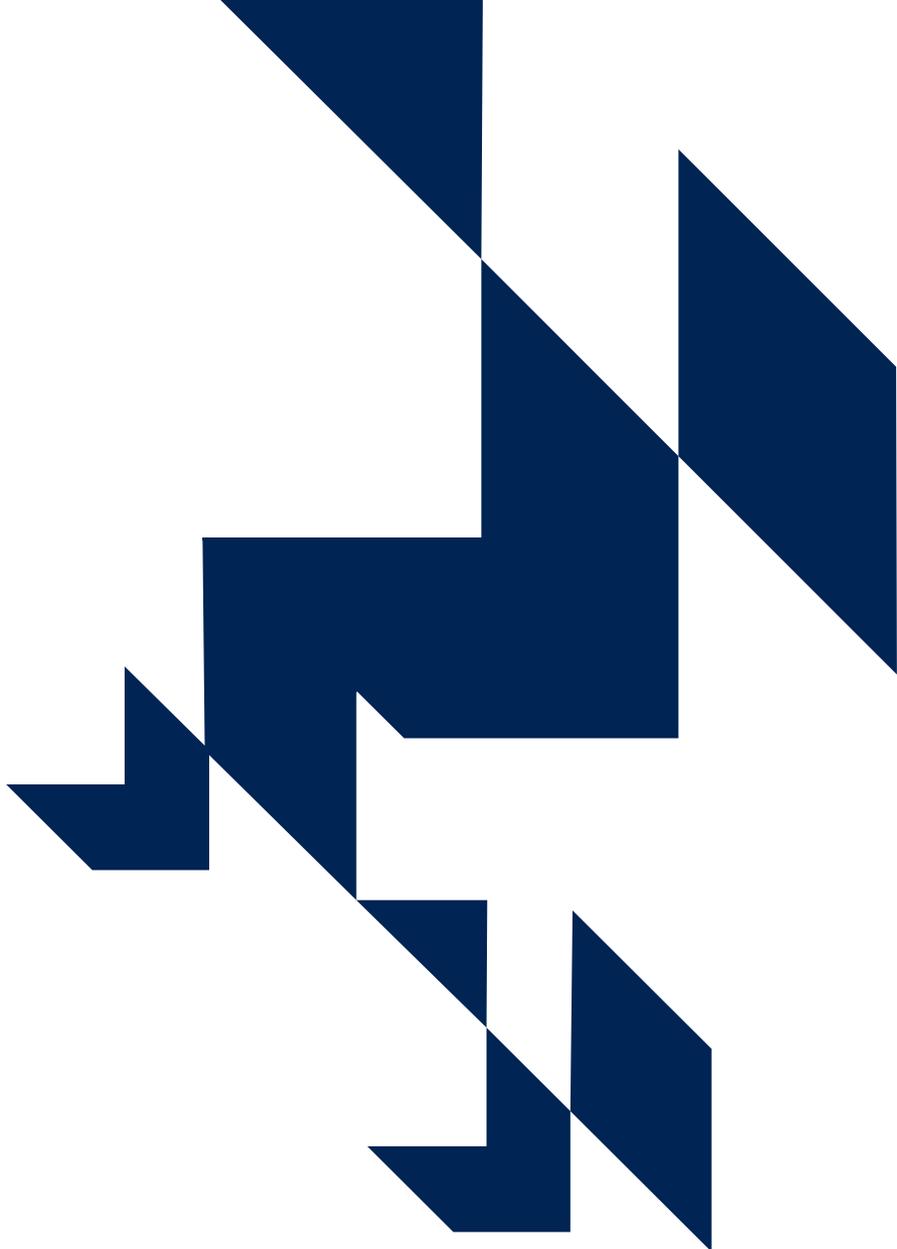
November 2018

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Agenda

- Context
 - The role of the OfS
 - The OfS's role in regulating DAPs
- Introduction to DAPs
 - Types of DAPs available
 - Overarching criterion
 - Role of the designated quality body (DQB)
- New DAPs
 - Eligibility
 - Overview of assessment process
 - Decision making

Context



Who we are

- The Office for Students (OfS) is the independent regulator for higher education in England
- We aim to ensure that every student, whatever their background, has a fulfilling experience of higher education that enriches their lives and careers
- Our work covers all students:
 - undergraduate or postgraduate
 - young or mature
 - full-time or part-time
 - studying on a campus or by distance learning
 - regardless of nationality.

What we do

- Our functions, powers and duties have been established by the Higher Education and Research Act 2017
- The Regulatory Framework explains how we will use these powers to regulate English higher education providers, by:
 - creating and maintaining a register of providers who must meet a range of conditions
 - working to ensure that students and prospective students have access to high quality information, advice and guidance
 - providing pressure and support to providers to improve equality of opportunity
 - promoting excellence and innovation in teaching
 - working with providers and employers to address skills gaps and make graduates more employable.

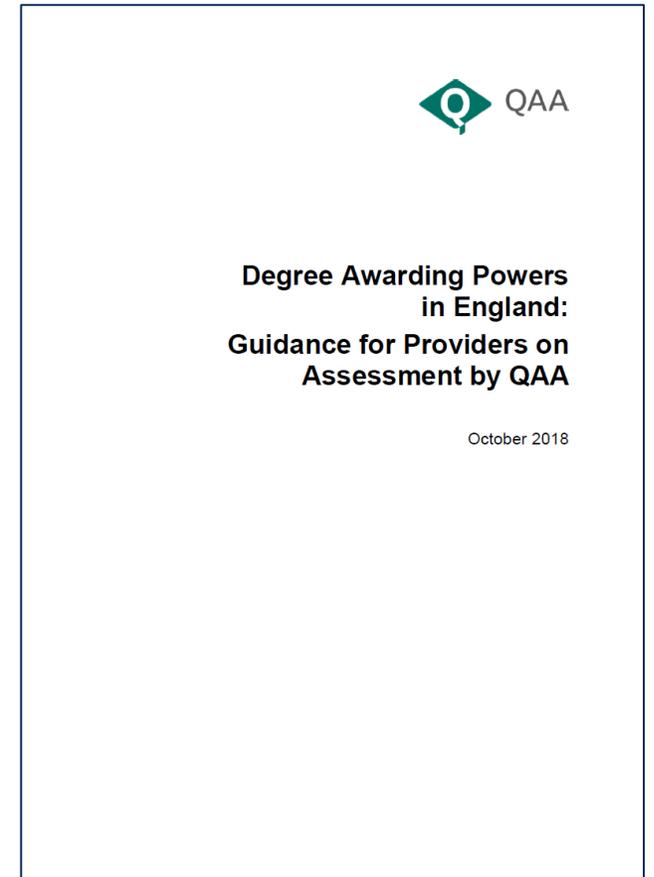
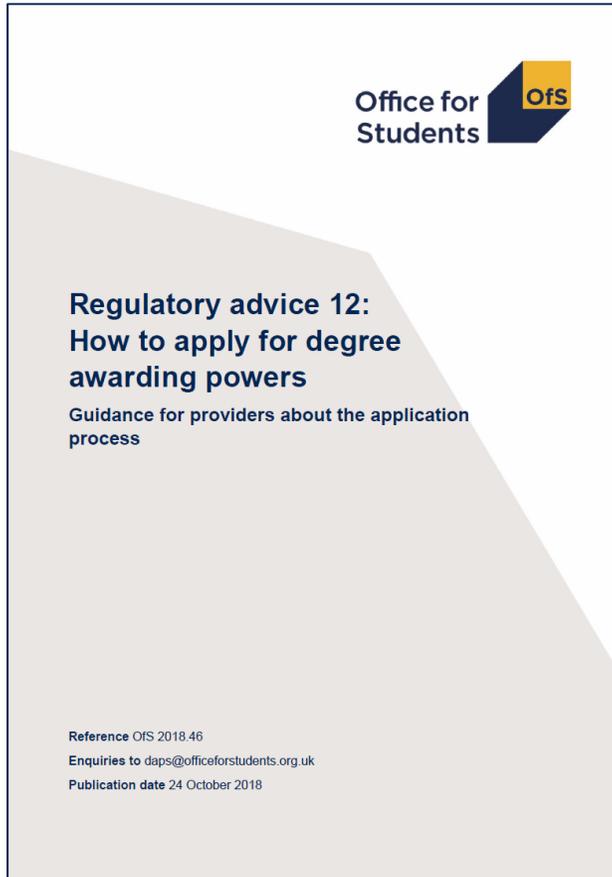
Why this matters

- Our work is important for all students
- We want to ensure that all students, from all backgrounds, can:
 - access courses that meet their needs
 - enjoy courses which stretch and inspire them
 - leave courses equipped with the knowledge, qualifications, skills and attributes they need to find employment, embark on further study or to set up their own business

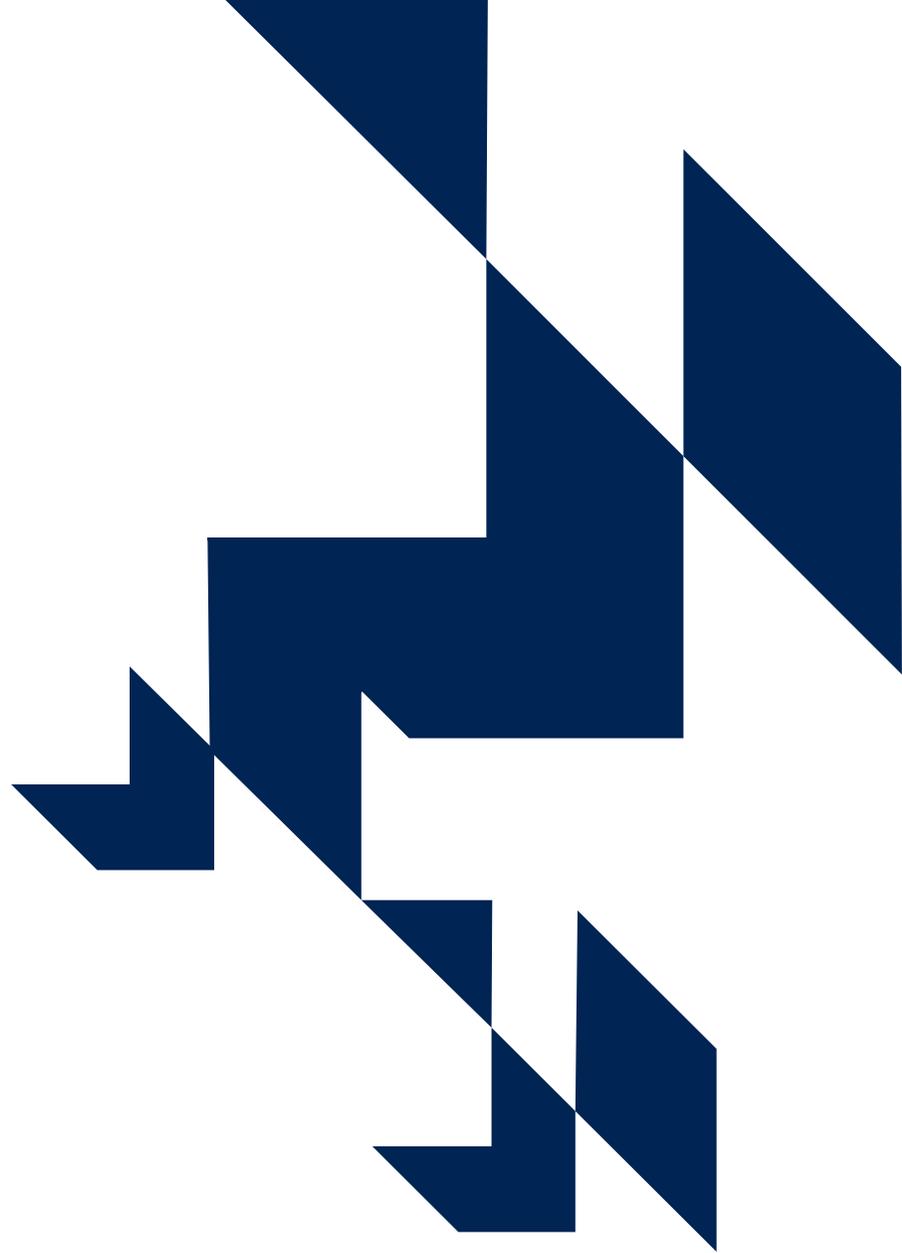
Our role authorising DAPs

- The Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA) gives the OfS the power to award, vary and revoke DAPs.
- We will begin to make these authorisations from 1 August 2019.
- The reforms to DAPs, included within HERA 2017 are designed to make it more straightforward for new providers to enter the higher education market.
- But only if a provider can demonstrate they have the potential to deliver high quality provision.

Key documents



Introduction to DAPs



What are DAPs

- Students who successfully complete a course of study usually receive a diploma, certificate or degree.
- If they are awarded a degree, it can be a:
 - foundation degree
 - bachelor's degree with honours
 - master's degree
 - doctorate
- To award these qualifications, higher education providers need to apply for degree awarding powers.

When do the new arrangements for DAPs begin

Timing	Which DAPs arrangements apply to me?
I applied for DAPs before 31 March 2018	Your application will be considered under the old arrangements. See: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="1039 701 2007 782">• Foundation degree awarding powers guidance: September 2015⁵<li data-bbox="1039 832 1972 913">• Taught and research degree awarding powers guidance: September 2015⁶
I applied for DAPs on or after 1 April 2018	Your application will be considered under the new arrangements. See paragraphs 208-283 of the regulatory framework (OfS 2018.01).

What types of DAPs are available under the new arrangements

Two routes:

- New DAPs – Providers that have been delivering higher education for less than three years (those with a track record can also apply via this route).
- Full DAPs – Providers with a three-year record of delivering higher education.

Different authorisations available in each route:

	Foundation level only (level 5)	Up to and including Bachelor degrees (level 6)	All taught awards (level 7)	Research awards (level 8 and research masters degrees at level 7)
New DAPs	No authorisation available			No authorisation available
Full DAPs	Authorisation available	Authorisation available	Authorisation available	Authorisation available

Subject-specific DAPs available

The overarching DAPs criterion

For New DAPs

An emerging self-critical, cohesive academic community with a clear commitment to the assurance of standards supported by effective (in prospect) quality systems

For Full DAPs

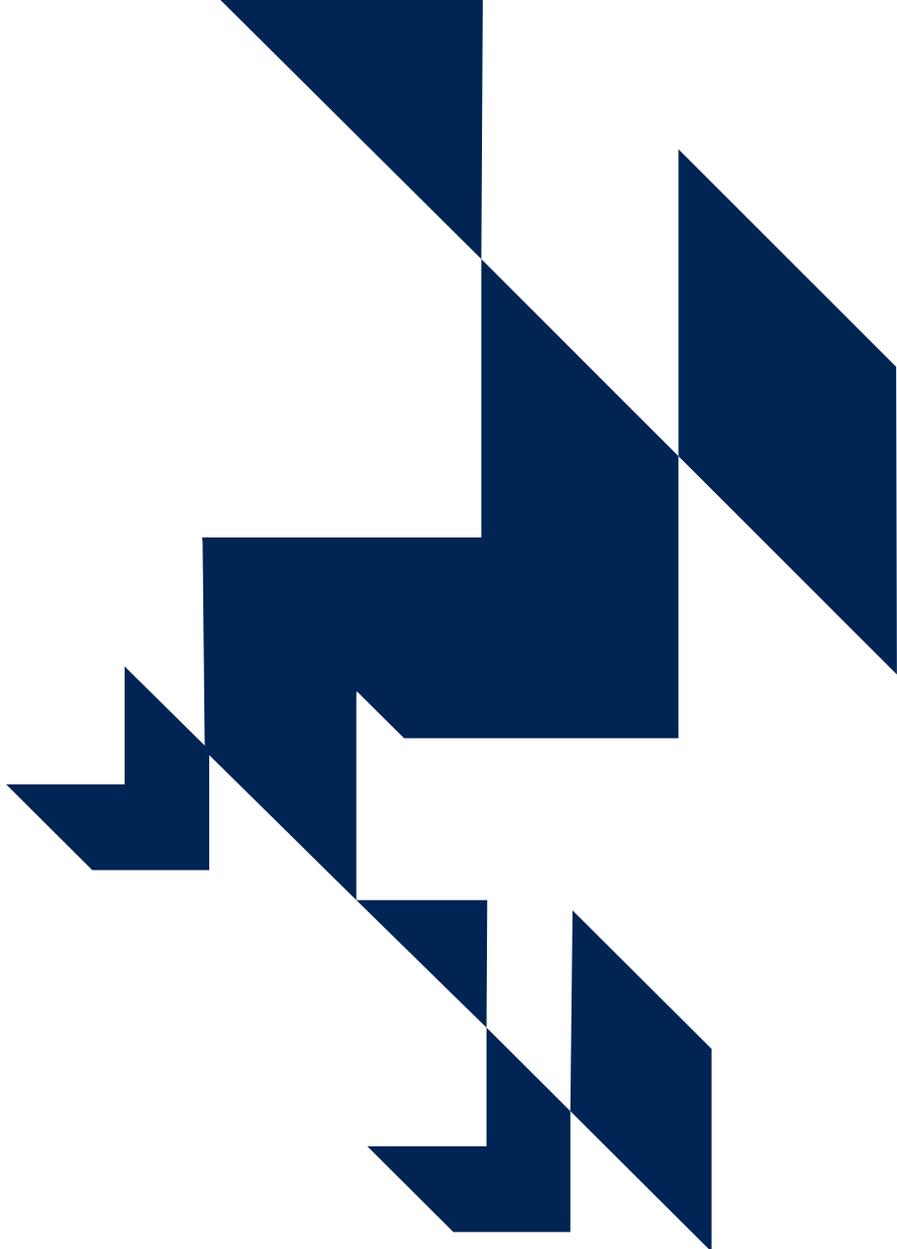
A self-critical, cohesive academic community with a proven commitment to the assurance of standards supported by effective quality systems

Underpinned by detailed criteria at Annex C of the regulatory framework.

Who is the designated quality body

- The designated quality body provides advice to the OfS on the quality of, and the standards applied to, higher education provided by a provider.
- The OfS must 'have regard' to this advice before granting or varying DAPs.
- The Secretary of State has designated the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) to carry out the quality and standards assessment functions set out in the Higher Education and Research Act.

New DAPs



Am I eligible for New DAPs

To apply for New DAPs, a provider must:

- be or become **registered with the OfS**
- satisfy all of its ongoing conditions of registration
- normally have registered or intend to register more than 50% of its higher education students on courses at level 6 of the FHEQ or above, or at level 5 or above for foundation degree only authorisation

What does the New DAPs process look like



What evidence do I need to provide to the OfS on application

Evidence requirements for authorisation for New degree awarding powers		Type of degree awarding powers sought			
What you need to submit	Why we need it	Foundation	Bachelors'	All taught	More information is available from
Application form	To tell us which type of DAPs you are applying for	Yes	Yes	Yes	Annex A sets out the information required for the application form and tells you how to download the form
Progression statement	To provide evidence that you are promoting clear progression routes for learners wishing to proceed to a course of higher-level study on completion of the foundation degree	Yes			Template available at Annex B

What evidence do I need to provide to the OfS on application

Evidence requirements for authorisation for New degree awarding powers		Type of degree awarding powers sought			
What you need to submit	Why we need it	Foundation	Bachelors'	All taught	More information is available from
Updated student protection plan	To ensure that your student protection plan sets out measures to preserve the continuation of study for your students if DAPs are revoked or not authorised beyond the end of the probationary period	Yes	Yes	Yes	Update the student protection plan that was agreed as part of your registration with the OfS and re-submit it
Data on student numbers	To provide evidence that you meet the eligibility requirement for student numbers	<p>For existing providers we will use data that has already been collected by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) or the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).</p> <p>For new providers, we will need you to provide additional student number information by level of study, because this will not have been provided as part of the information for registration or be held by HESA or the ESFA.</p>			Template available at Annex C

What happens in the initial assessment

The OfS will ask the QAA to undertake an initial assessment (the 'New DAPs test') when the OfS is satisfied that the provider:

- a. Has submitted a correct application.
- b. Meets the eligibility requirements.
- c. Appears to the OfS to be suitable for DAPs as set out in paragraphs 228 and 229 of the regulatory framework.
- d. Has in place a suitable student protection plan, agreed by the OfS.
- e. Has provided a satisfactory progression statement

Who is responsible for authorising New DAPs

The OfS is responsible for the final decision on whether or not to award New DAPs, having regard to the advice on quality and standards from the QAA (as the designated quality body).

What does the New DAPs process look like



What does it cost to apply for New DAPs

- Providers registered with the OfS are required, as a condition of their registration, to pay an annual registration fee to the OfS from 1 August 2019. **The OfS will make no additional charge for applications for authorisation for DAPs.**
- The OfS is required by HERA to request advice from the QAA (in its role as the designated quality body) before the OfS makes a decision about an authorisation for DAPs. This means that **the QAA** has an extensive role in the assessment process and **is permitted by section 28 of HERA to charge fees to providers to cover the costs of its work in this area.**
- The QAA will publish on its website information about the fees it intends to charge for the assessment of applications for DAPs.

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Thank you for listening

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