

Report from the Quality Assessment Committee

Issue

1. The board is kept informed of the work of its Quality Assessment Committee by receiving a report on the outcomes of each meeting. The attached report summarises the outcomes of the first meeting of the committee held on 16 July 2018. This report will be supplemented by an oral report given by the chair of the committee.

Recommendations

2. The board is invited to receive the report of the Quality Assessment Committee.

Further information

3. Available from Simon Levine

Member's interests

4. Simon Levine, Monisha Shah and Martin Coleman are members of the Quality Assurance Committee.

Quality Assessment Committee report

July 2018

The role and context of the committee

1. The committee considered its role and the context in which it would operate. Discussion focused on the following areas:
 - QAC as a statutory committee
 - QAC as a quality committee in a new regulatory environment
 - QAC as a working committee
 - QAC as a new committee
2. Members noted that the provisions of the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (HERA) would underpin the committee's work and would shape the scope and nature of its advice to the OfS Board. Such advice would need to be grounded in reliable evidence and the expert views of the members of the committee.
3. The committee identified a number of areas for further exploration. These included: the relationship between the TEF and the baseline requirements expressed in conditions of registration; the QAC's engagement with the Provider Risk Committee; the need to gather qualitative feedback from sector and student bodies about quality assessment arrangements; whether and how members might contribute to the communication of the committee's work and the support that might be needed to do so.
4. The committee formally agreed its terms of reference.

Working with the designated quality body

5. The committee received a briefing about the way in which HERA framed the relationship between the OfS and the designated quality body. It was noted that the dynamic intended by HERA was one in which the OfS was required to hold the designated body to account for the performance of the assessment functions. This important role was reflected in the QAC's own terms of reference and it was agreed that the committee would wish to focus attention on these issues during its first year of operation.
6. It was agreed that members would expect to develop a series of KPIs for the designated body to supplement the more process-based milestones set out in the designation agreement. At the same time, it would be helpful to develop both formal and informal relationships with senior QAA officers to ensure that the QAA understood the OfS's requirements and that the QAC understood any challenges in delivering these. The committee noted that the new regulatory environment was likely to present challenges for the QAA as an organisation with strong links to the regulated sector and a track record of undertaking scrutiny built on peer review.
7. The committee received an update on the progress of the QAA in developing a review method for new providers seeking to register with the OfS and a new approach to

provide advice in relation to degree awarding powers. The committee noted that a number of milestones for this work as set out in the designation agreement had not been met.

Legacy business: identifying areas of OfS interest

8. The committee considered proposals in relation to a number of quality-related activities that HEFCE had been undertaking and identified those that the QAC would wish to continue.

Future committee meetings

9. It was noted that the committee would meet quarterly, with the option of holding additional meetings and interacting via email exchanges between meetings as necessary. The next meeting would take place at the end of October/start of November.