

## Report from the Quality Assessment Committee

Board's primary role in relation to this paper:

- A. Set strategy
- B. Set risk appetite
- C. Oversee performance
- D. Understand context

### Purpose

1. The board is informed of the work of its Quality Assessment Committee (QAC) by receiving a report on the outcomes from each meeting. This report summarises the QAC meetings held on 25 November 2025 and 19 January 2026.

### Recommendations

2. The board is invited to receive the report of the committee.

### External examining

3. The October 2025 Post-16 education and skills white paper set out the government's broad support for there to be further consideration of the role of external examiners in England, and announced its intention to work with the OfS in assessing the merits of the sector continuing to use the external examining system for ensuring rigorous standards in assessments.
4. At the January 2026 meeting of QAC, the committee received a paper giving an overview of the OfS's position on external examining, responding to a request for discussion of this matter by the committee raised at the November 2025 meeting.
5. Committee members heard that it is the OfS's view that progress has been made by the sector in recent years to provide better assurance regarding academic standards through initiatives such as the introduction of degree outcomes statements. For example, sector-level engagement of the credibility of the awards is explored in our report published in November 2025 on Bachelors' degree classification algorithm.<sup>1</sup> However, the substantive concerns

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<sup>1</sup> [Bachelors' degree classification algorithms - Office for Students](#)

relating to the external examiner system previously set out in the 2015 report 'A review of external examining arrangements across the UK' remain.<sup>2</sup>

6. The committee highlighted sector activity relating to external examining, and members provided their views on how effectively the system is working. Exempt from publication.

## **Consultation on proposals for an integrated approach to quality assessments**

7. In November 2025 the Head of Student Outcomes briefed the committee on current engagement and responses to the quality consultation which was ongoing at the time of the meeting. Members discussed the timeline for next steps and expressed the need for clear communications with providers, particularly those that had not participated in previous Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) exercises.
8. In January 2026, the committee received a presentation outlining the range of views submitted. There was discussion about the potential regulatory choices that these perspectives implied.

## **Discussion of degree awarding powers applications**

9. At its November 2025 meeting the committee considered two cases. Exempt from publication.
10. At its January 2026 meeting the committee considered two cases and agreed its advice.

## **Paper publication**

11. To be published externally along with the board papers (subject to appropriate redactions).

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<sup>2</sup> See

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20150708124201/http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/rereports/Year/2015/externalexam/Title,104316,en.html>