

Section K

External Quality Assurance and Enhancement Requirements

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Abbreviations in this section

AP	Alternative Provider
AQSH	Academic Quality and Standards Handbook
BTEC	Business and Technology Education Council
CMA	Competition and Markets Authority
DfE	Department for Education
GO	Graduate Outcomes
HEAPES	Higher Education in Alternative Providers Early Statistics
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
KIS	Key Information Sets
NSS	National Student Survey
OfS	Office for Students
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
OIA	Office of the Independent Adjudicator
PSRB	Professional, Statutory and/or Regulatory Body
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
QAE	Quality Assurance & Enhancement
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
SVC	Student Voice Committee
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework

The Office for Students

1. The Office for Students (OfS), established by the Higher Education and Research Act of 2017, is the regulator of higher education providers in England. It came into operation on the 1st of April 2018.
2. The OfS has four primary regulatory objectives:

“All students from all backgrounds, and with the ability and desire to undertake higher education:

 - Are supported to access, succeed in, and progress from, higher education.
 - Receive a high-quality academic experience, and their interests are protected while they study or in the event of provider, campus or course closure.
 - Are able to progress into employment or further study, and their qualifications hold their value over time.
 - Receive value for money.”
3. The OfS will adopt a risk-based approach with how they interact with providers and will act where there is a risk of a breach of condition of registration.

The OfS Regulatory Framework

4. The Regulatory Framework was published by the OfS in February 2018 and was fully implemented from 1 August 2019. It has been designed to mitigate the risk that the primary objectives (listed above) are not met.
5. The Framework regulates at sector level and will focus on creating the conditions for informed choice, competition and continuous improvement. This includes:
 - i. requiring providers to involve students in the way it regulates;
 - ii. providing accurate information for students to help them make the best choices possible;
 - iii. operating the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF);
 - iv. Removing unnecessary barriers to entry for new providers;
 - v. Removing unnecessary regulatory barriers for all high-quality providers;
 - vi. Speaking out on behalf of students where required;
 - vii. Using a range of indicators and metrics to understand and evaluate the health of the sector;
 - viii. Using its teaching grant funding strategically.
6. At provider level, the OfS will regulate, and intervene where necessary to protect the interests of all students. Providers must be on the Register for their students to access student funding, for the provider to retain their UKVI Student Sponsor License status and to access public funding.
7. To get onto the Register, providers must demonstrate that they satisfy a set of initial conditions of registration. Once registered, providers must continue to meet specific general and ongoing conditions in order to remain on the Register.

8. All conditions of registration came into effect from 1 August 2019. The table below provides a basic overview of the conditions of registration. In May 2022, several revised ongoing conditions of registration came into force.

9. Ongoing conditions of registration:

A: Access and participation for students from all backgrounds
Condition A1: i. Have in force an access and participation plan approved by the OfS in accordance with HERA. ii. Take all reasonable steps to comply with the provisions of the plan.
Condition A2: i. Publish an access and participation statement. ii. Update and re-publish this statement on annual basis.
B: Quality, reliable standards and positive outcomes for all students
Condition B1: Ensure that the students registered on each higher education course receive a high-quality academic experience.
Condition B2: Must take all reasonable steps to ensure: a. each cohort of students registered on each higher education course receives resources and support which are sufficient for the purpose of ensuring: i. a high-quality academic experience for those students; and ii. those students succeed in and beyond higher education; and b. effective engagement with each cohort of students which is sufficient for the purpose of ensuring: i. a high-quality academic experience for those students; and ii. those students succeed in and beyond higher education.
Condition B3: Deliver positive outcomes for students on its higher education courses
Condition B4: Must ensure that: a. students are assessed effectively. b. each assessment is valid and reliable. c. academic regulations are designed to ensure that relevant awards are credible. d. subject to paragraph B4.3, 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; and e. relevant awards granted to students are credible at the point of being granted and when compared to those granted previously.
Condition B5: Must ensure that, in respect of any relevant awards granted to students who complete a higher education course provided by, or on behalf of, the provider (whether or not the provider is the awarding body): a. any standards set appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards; and b. awards are only granted to students whose knowledge and skills appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards.
Condition B6: Must participate in the Teaching Excellence Framework.
Condition B7: Must: a. have credible plans that would enable the provider, if registered, to comply with conditions B1, B2 and B4 from the date of registration; and b. have the capacity and resources necessary to deliver, in practice, those plans.
Condition B8: Must demonstrate, in a credible manner, that any standards to be set and/or

<p>applied in respect of any relevant awards granted to students who complete a higher education course provided by, or on behalf of, the provider (if registered), whether or not the provider is the awarding body, appropriately reflect any applicable sector-recognised standards.</p>
<p>C: Protecting the interests of all students</p>
<p>Condition C1: Demonstrate that in developing and implementing policies, procedures, and terms and conditions due regard has been given to relevant guidance on how to comply with consumer protection law.</p>
<p>Condition C2: Co-operate with the requirements of the student complaints scheme run by the OIA for higher education and make students aware of their ability to use the scheme.</p>
<p>Condition C3: Must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. have in force and publish a student protection plan that has been approved by the OfS as appropriate for its assessment of the regulatory risk presented by the provider and for the risk to continuation of study of all of its students. ii. take all reasonable steps to implement the provisions of the plan if the events set out in the plan take place. iii. inform the OfS of events, except closure of courses, that require the implementation of the plan.
<p>Condition C4:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The provider must comply with any Student Protection Direction in circumstances where the OfS reasonably considers that there is a material risk that the provider will, or will be required by the operation of law to, fully or substantially cease the provision of higher education in England (“Market Exit Risk”). ii. A Student Protection Direction may be varied or revoked (wholly or in part) by express provision in a subsequent Student Protection Direction issued by the OfS in accordance with this condition of registration, and the OfS may otherwise revoke a Student Protection Direction by issuing a notice in writing to the provider. iii. A Student Protection Direction (or, as the case may be, part of a Student Protection Direction) will cease to have effect in accordance with the following provisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. in circumstances where a Student Protection Direction is varied or revoked (wholly or in part) by a subsequent Student Protection Direction, on and from the time and date that the subsequent Student Protection Direction takes effect; or b. in circumstances where a Student Protection Direction is revoked by a notice in writing, on and from the time and date specified in that notice in writing iv. Where a Student Protection Direction ceases to have effect at any time (for any reason), that cessation does not in any way affect the ability of the OfS to investigate and/or take any form of regulatory or enforcement action in respect of any non-compliance with that Student Protection Direction (whether or not the non-compliance remains ongoing in nature) which took place during the period that the Student Protection Direction was in effect.
<p>D: Financial sustainability</p>
<p>Condition D: Must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. be financially viable. ii. be financially sustainable. iii. have the necessary financial resources to provide and fully deliver the higher education courses advertised and contracted to deliver. iv. have the financial resources to continue to comply with all conditions of registration.
<p>E: Good governance</p>
<p>Condition E1: The governing documents must uphold the public interest governance principles that are applicable to the University.</p>

Condition E2: The University must have in place adequate and effective management and governance arrangements to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. operate in accordance with its governing documents. ii. deliver, in practice, the public interest governance principles that are applicable to it. iii. provide and fully deliver the higher education courses advertised; and iv. continue to comply with all conditions of registration.
Condition E3: The governing body must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. accept responsibility for the interactions with the OfS and its designated bodies. ii. ensure compliance with all of the conditions of registration and with the OfS's accounts direction. iii. nominate to the OfS a senior officer as the 'accountable officer'.
Condition E4: The governing body must notify the OfS of any changes which affects the accuracy of information contained in the Register
Condition E5: The University must comply with guidance published by the OfS to facilitate the electoral registration of students.
F: Information for students
Condition F1: Provide to the OfS and publish as specified by the OfS transparency information as set out in section 9 of HERA.
Condition F2: Provide to the OfS and publish information about arrangements for students to transfer.
Condition F3: Assist the OfS in performing its functions by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Providing information as, when and how specified. ii. Permit the OfS to verify information provided to the OfS. iii. Co-operate with any monitoring or investigation by the OfS.
Condition F4: Provide the Designated Data body (DDB) with such information as the DDB specifies.
G: Accountability for fees and funding
Condition G1: Must charge fees that do not exceed the relevant fee limit determined by the provider's quality rating and its access and participation plan.
Condition G2: Comply with any terms and conditions attached to financial support received from the OfS and UKRI.
Condition G3: Must pay: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Annual registration fee and other OfS fees. ii. Fees charged by the designated bodies.

The Designated Quality Body

10. The Quality Assurance Agency is an independent charity working to benefit students and higher education. The QAA was previously the Designated Quality Body in England (DQB) but announced in July 2022 that it would no longer consent to undertaking this role after 31 March 2023. From 1 April 2023 the OfS took on the quality and standards assessments previously carried out by the DQB.

The UK Quality Code

11. The UK Quality Code is a reference point for UK higher education, protecting the public and student interest, and championing UK higher education's world-leading reputation for quality. It enables providers to understand what is expected of them and what to expect from each other.

12. While the Quality Code does not represent regulatory requirements for institutions based in England, those providers can choose to use the Quality Code to satisfy themselves that their quality processes support enhancement above the baseline.
13. A new edition of the Quality Code was launched in June 2024. The Quality Code needed to be redeveloped because of changes to the regulatory structures of higher education across the UK and the introduction of explicit tertiary approaches in Wales and Scotland.
14. The full Quality Code can be found at the [QAA website](#)
15. The 2024 edition of the Quality Code comprises two elements – Sector-Agreed Principles and Key Practices. It is supported by a suite of Advice and Guidance. The Principles identify the fundamental nature of quality and standards in UK higher education. There are 12 Principles and each has a set of Key Practices which providers can follow to demonstrate how they are adhering to that Principle.
16. The Principles are as follows:

Strategic Approach	
Principle 1 – taking a strategic approach to managing quality and standards	Providers demonstrate they have a strategic approach to securing academic standards and assuring and enhancing quality that is embedded across the organisation.
Principle 2 – engaging students as partners	Providers take deliberate steps to engage students as active partners in assuring and enhancing the quality of the student learning experience. Engagement happens individually and collectively to influence all levels of study and decision making. Enhancements identified through student engagement activities are implemented, where appropriate, and communicated to staff and students.
Principle 3 – resourcing delivery of a high-quality learning experience	Providers plan, secure and maintain resources relating to learning, technology, facilities and staffing to enable the delivery and enhancement of an accessible, innovative and high-quality learning experience for students that aligns with the provider’s strategy and the composition of the student body
Evaluating Quality and Standards	
Principle 4 – using data to inform and evaluate quality	Providers collect, analyse and utilise qualitative and quantitative data at provider, departmental, programme and module levels. These analyses inform decision-making with the aim of enhancing practices and processes relating to teaching, learning and the wider student experience.

Principle 5 – monitoring, evaluating and enhancing provision	Providers regularly monitor and review their provision to secure academic standards and enhance quality. Deliberate steps are taken to engage and involve students, staff and external expertise in monitoring and evaluation activity. The outcomes and impact of these activities are considered at provider level to drive reflection and enhancement across the provider
Principle 6 – engaging in external review and accreditation	Providers engage with external reviews to give assurance about the effectiveness of their approach to managing quality and standards. External reviews offer insight about the comparability of providers' approaches and generate outcomes that providers can use to enhance their policies and practices. Reviews may be commissioned by providers, form part of a national quality framework or linked to professional recognition and actively include staff, students and peers. They can be undertaken by representative organisations, agencies or professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) with recognised sector expertise according to the provision being reviewed.
Implementing the approach to quality enhancement and standards	
Principle 7 – designing, developing, approving and modifying programmes	Providers design, develop, approve and modify programmes and modules to ensure the quality of provision and the academic standards of awards are consistent with the relevant Qualifications Framework. Providers ensure their provision and level of qualifications are comparable to those offered across the UK and, where applicable, The Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area
Principle 8 – operating partnerships with other organisations	Providers and their partners agree proportionate arrangements for effective governance to secure the academic standards and enhance the quality of programmes and modules that are delivered in partnership with others. Organisations involved in partnership arrangements agree and communicate the mutual and specific responsibilities in relation to delivering, monitoring, evaluating, assuring and enhancing the learning experience
Principle 9 - recruiting, selecting and admitting students	Providers operate recruitment, selection and admissions processes that are transparent, fair and inclusive. Providers maintain and publish

	accurate, relevant and accessible information about their provision, enabling students to make informed choices about their studies and future aspirations
Principle 10 – supporting students to achieve their potential	Providers facilitate a framework of support for students that enables them to have a high-quality learning experience and achieve their potential as they progress in their studies. The support structure scaffolds the academic, personal and professional learning journey, enabling students to recognise and articulate their progress and achievements
Principle 11 – teaching, learning and assessment	Providers facilitate a collaborative and inclusive approach that enables students to have a high-quality learning experience and to progress through their studies. All students are supported to develop and demonstrate academic and professional skills and competencies. Assessment employs a variety of methods, embodying the values of academic integrity, producing outcomes that are comparable across the UK and recognised globally
Principle 12 – operating concerns, complaints and appeals processes	Providers operate processes for complaints and appeals that are robust, fair, transparent and accessible, and clearly articulated to staff and students. Policies and processes for concerns, complaints and appeals are regularly reviewed and the outcomes are used to support the enhancement of provision and the student experience.

Review of Higher Education

17. The OfS is a risk-based regulator which means that assessment and monitoring activities will be targeted at providers who represent a higher risk to students and their outcomes. Providers who are not delivering and maintaining the academic experience and reliable standards will be identified by the OfS through ongoing monitoring.
18. The University was tested against the quality and standards conditions when it applied to register with the OfS. The OfS will continue to monitor that providers on the Register are continuing to meet the conditions of registration through general monitoring and random sampling.

General monitoring

19. The OfS will use 'lead indicators' constructed from regularly obtained reliable data from higher education providers and others, alongside 'reportable events' that all providers are required to report to the OfS. Where the information suggests that further

investigation is necessary, the OfS will engage with providers to seek further information and make a judgement about whether the risk of a breach has increased.

20. From its review and investigation, the OfS will consider whether action is necessary and being taken by the provider. Regulatory intervention, such as the imposition of specific conditions, will not usually be taken based on the lead indicators themselves, but after the OfS has established through further assessment that the risk of a breach has increased. Sanctions will not be applied unless one or more conditions have been breached.

Random Sampling

21. The OfS will reassess providers' compliance with their ongoing conditions of registration and will do this for a random sample of providers each year.
22. The OfS will begin by sampling five per cent of all registered providers each year. The sample pool will be categorised, with providers of different kinds grouped so that the sample in each year represents the diversity of the sector. Once a provider has been sampled.

Alternative Providers

23. Alternative providers of higher education can gain access for their eligible students to undergraduate student support (tuition fee and maintenance loans), postgraduate master's loans and disabled students' allowances (DSA) by registering with the OfS.
24. A number of KU's collaborative partners are registered with the OfS. The withdrawal of OfS registration will form part of the evidence base for Institutional Monitoring (see section B of this handbook) and will be reported to the next available Education Committee. The University will consider on a case-by-case basis the arrangements to protect the quality and standards and learning experience of continuing students to enable them to complete their programme of study.

Information to Students

25. The University is required to provide information on what is defined as 'material information' by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), to prospective students to assist in consumer decision making. The OfS requires institutions to demonstrate that due regard was given to relevant consumer protection law guidance when developing and implementing policies, procedures, and terms and conditions.
26. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) first published guidance in March 2015 to assist institutions in complying with consumer protection law. This guidance was updated in May 2023.
27. Failure to provide material information as defined by consumer law has the potential to result in enforcement action by the CMA, OfS, local authority Trading Standards or legal action by students.

Unistats Data Collection

28. Unistats form part of the work to enhance the information available about higher education and have been designed to give prospective students access to robust, reliable and comparable information in order to help them make informed decisions about what and where to study.
29. The core information it contains is called the Unistats Data Set (formerly the Key Information Set (KIS)), which includes:
- Student satisfaction from the National Student Survey (NSS)
 - How the course is assessed
 - Course accreditation by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies (PSRBs)
30. Unistats data are required for most full-time and part-time undergraduate courses for institutions which are registered with the OfS. The only exceptions are short courses (one year full-time equivalent or less), postgraduate courses, those delivered wholly overseas, and closed courses.
31. Much of the Unistats information already exists in a national and comparable form, but there are several items of information that do not currently exist in that form and are supplied directly by universities and colleges. For further information see the [HESA website](#).
32. Students can view the results via the [Discover Uni site](#) and via a 'widget' or small advert on each KU course page.

External Examiner Reports

33. Universities are required to make external examiners' reports available to students. Reports are made available to student course representatives via Student Voice Committees (SVCs). Individual students can request the external examiner reports relevant to their course from QAE by e-mailing the [QAE noticeboard](#).

Assessing the quality and standards of Initial Teacher Education (OFSTED Inspection)

Introduction

34. Ofsted is responsible for conducting inspections of all providers of programmes leading to qualified teacher status (QTS) for maintained schools.

Purposes of inspection

35. The main purposes of the inspection of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) are:
- provide trainees and prospective trainees with an expert and independent assessment of how well an ITE partnership is performing and the quality of teacher training offered.
 - provide information to the Secretary of State for Education and to Parliament about the work of ITE partnerships and the extent to which an acceptable standard of teacher training is being provided (this provides assurance that

minimum standards are being met, provides confidence in the use of public money and assists accountability, as well as indicating where improvements are needed.).

- promote the improvement of individual ITE partnerships and the education system as a whole.

Judging the Quality of ITE

36. ITE inspection is primarily about evaluating how well trainees are trained to be good or better teachers.

37. To make this judgement, inspectors evaluate each of the three key judgements:

- Overall effectiveness
- Quality of education and training across the partnership
- Leadership and management of the partnership.

38. In judging the quality and effectiveness of the ITE partnership in securing consistently high-quality outcomes for trainees, inspectors will decide whether the ITE partnership is outstanding, good, requires improvement or is inadequate. Grades are awarded on a 4-point scale as follows:

- Grade 1: outstanding
- Grade 2: good
- Grade 3: requires improvement
- Grade 4: inadequate

39. Where provision is found to be inadequate or non-compliant with the Government's requirements for ITE, decisions about further inspection or monitoring activity will be taken in conjunction with the relevant government department and/or funding agency.

40. Further details on the assessment process, including detailed assessment criteria, can be found on the [OFSTED website](#)

The Reporting Process

41. A draft report of the inspection is sent to the institution to check matters of accuracy. Once finalised, the inspection report is published on the [OFSTED website](#).

42. Following the visit and receipt of the report from OFSTED, the report is considered by the Education Committee. The Education Committee also approves the action plan prepared by the relevant course team which should address all the issues raised in the report.

Procedures relating to BTEC fields/courses

Pearson Licence Agreement

43. The Pearson Licence Agreement enables Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the United Kingdom to deliver and award Higher National Diplomas and Certificates. See the [Pearson website](#) for more details.

44. The University will provide Higher Nationals, in accordance with the Sector Recognised Statements, and Pearson guidance.
45. Under the Licence Agreement the University is authorised to validate Higher Nationals using centre-devised titles and units. Where a BTEC Higher National exists with a closely related title and/or content, the centre-devised programme must cover the same core content as in the equivalent BTEC Higher National programme.

Validation/Substantive Review

46. Following validation of a new BTEC Higher National, the University is required to provide Pearson with validation details and a copy of the programme specification. Pearson will review the new programme specification and issue a programme code for the qualification. Unless informed otherwise, Pearson will record the validation period as five years, by default.
47. Following the Substantive Review, outcomes from the Substantive Review report will inform the IRR submission made annually by the University to Pearson. The revised programme specification will also be sent to Pearson for review and if appropriate, Pearson will issue a new programme code for the qualification.

Collaborative Arrangements

48. As part of the licence agreement with Pearson, the University can deliver Higher Nationals in partnership with other delivery sites such as FE Colleges.
49. If the University wishes to partner with delivery sites based overseas, Pearson's policy for 'Centres Operating across International Borders must be adhered to when offering BTEC and Other Pearson Vocational Qualifications'. Centres operating under licence are defined as Model 3 in this policy. Please see the [Pearson website](#) for more details.

Annual Institutional Review Report

50. The University is required to complete an annual Institutional Review Report (IRR), covering its provision under the licence, including that offered by collaborative partners. The IRR is completed by QAE (using the Pearson template) and submitted to the Education Committee prior to submission to Pearson's University Principal Examiner in December of each year.

External Examiners

51. The University is responsible for the appointment and remuneration of external examiners. All examiners must complete the University's external examiner report form. Any issues or examples of good practice, relating to HND programmes, would be reported within the annual Institutional Review Report.

Pearson's University Principal Examiner

52. Pearson appoints the University Principal Examiner who is responsible for maintaining an overview of the quality assurance and standards of BTEC programmes. The University Principal Examiner analyses all IRRs and produces an annual overview report on all licensed provision across England, Wales and Northern Ireland which will be posted on the Pearson website.