



Strategy 2023-27

Excellence, independence and trust in
quality assurance and enhancement

This document is published in both English and Welsh.



QAA's purpose

To ensure that students and learners experience the highest possible quality of education



QAA's role and impact

We are a world-leading quality agency with unmatched experience of providing impartial regulatory and collaborative quality assurance and enhancement.

We support universities and colleges in working with students and learners, governments, funders and regulatory bodies to evidence and enhance the excellent quality and high standards of the education they provide.

We work towards a greater public understanding - domestically and internationally - of how excellent quality is demonstrated in UK higher education, and how autonomous providers both assure its delivery and address weaknesses.

Our work safeguards the value of qualifications for students and learners, and protects and promotes the reputation of higher education.

Our work is underpinned by the belief that a high-quality academic experience for learners is a good in itself, furthers human understanding and knowledge, and supports economic and broader societal progress.



Our four focus areas



Standards

-

Providing custodianship of sector reference points and targeting guidance to secure academic standards and the value of qualifications.



Assurance and enhancement

-

Delivering respected and innovative approaches to quality, enabling institutions and learners to work collaboratively to evaluate their practice and keep improving their learning experience.



International

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Expanding our international activity, capitalising on the excellent global reputation of QAA and UK HE, into new areas for the benefit of UK tertiary education.



Leadership

-

Influencing and supporting policy-makers, universities and colleges, students and learners through clearly communicated expert insight.



QAA's work is essential

Universities and colleges are strongest when they have independent, collaborative, proportionate and expert assurance and enhancement of quality.

- Academic standards are safeguarded by the sector-owned reference points which QAA stewards, including the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Qualifications Frameworks and Subject Benchmark Statements. This is vital for protecting the value of qualifications, and for the UK sector's international reputation.
- Our expertise helps universities and colleges meet and balance regulatory requirements, including those of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs), as cost-effectively as possible.
- As policy, practice and technology changes, we help universities and colleges anticipate and respond to new developments, confident that our guidance is impartial and represents international best practice.
- Our world-leading quality enhancement approach facilitates international benchmarking and providers' international partnerships, as well as underpinning universities' and colleges' own efforts to provide world-class education.
- We underpin UK transnational education and play a distinct role in enhancing the UK sector's reputation and building relationships.



QAA is distinctive



- **Internationally renowned:** Our expertise reflects our 25-year record as a world-leading impartial, independent quality body that has helped establish quality systems around the world.
- **Students as partners:** Students and learners are integral to all our work - from our review teams to helping shape our guidance - and are embedded in our governance and structures.
- **UK-wide:** Our UK-wide role and custodianship of reference points provide the common thread running through the approaches to quality and standards in the nations of the UK.
- **Intelligently collaborative:** We work in partnership with institutions, including through constructive challenge, supporting them with enhancement while respecting their academic autonomy.
- **Uniquely connected:** We have close relationships with quality agencies and partner bodies in the UK and globally, and with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs) which we regularly convene for the benefit of universities, colleges and governments.
- **Sector mandated:** We are a charity with a remit that stems from the sector itself. We were created and are owned by sector representative bodies on behalf of the wider sector. QAA therefore embodies the sector's collective commitment to quality and standards.



What has changed in our strategy

1. Our role in the UK is developing

QAA has responded to a changing policy environment across the UK, as governments, funders and regulators evolve their approaches.

Throughout the UK we are the trusted partner of governments and funding bodies.

In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, we work in collaboration with the sector to meet the needs of each nation.

In England our highly successful membership programme provides a rich source of resources to strategic leads, quality specialists and students and learners alike.

Having decided to step away from a separate role providing reports for the English regulator, we will be able to supplement these resources with new services, informed by our unique experience of helping institutions meet and balance the requirements of regulators and PSRBs.

This, combined with our expertise in quality and standards, makes us ideally placed to help universities and colleges navigate and meet those requirements, while achieving their own ambitions for quality enhancement – and to evidence this in innovative ways that go beyond traditional assurance activity.



What has changed in our strategy

2. QAA's horizon is expanding beyond higher education to serve the wider tertiary sector

In all nations of the UK, higher education and further education are increasingly coming together in support of lifelong learning, and in response to local and regional economic needs. This will bring a new focus on skills, technical and vocational qualifications, and better transitions for learners.

QAA has established expertise in credit and micro-credentials, and has long worked with further education colleges that provide higher education, but we are now going further by preparing for a new education landscape.

Across the whole tertiary sector, QAA will serve the needs of funding and regulatory bodies, universities and colleges, and students and learners wherever the expertise of an independent quality body is needed.



What has changed in our strategy

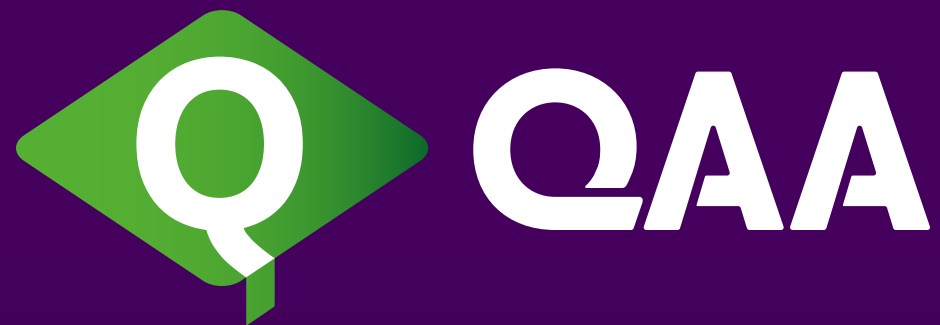
3. Our international work is growing and evolving

International governments and partners can find the UK quality environment complex to navigate, especially where policy diverges. QAA's reputation and position as a globally eminent quality agency allows us to provide advice, insight and reassurance about the continuing strengths of quality of provision of UK higher education.

We use our globally recognised expertise to underpin the formation and continuation of international partnerships, and to support the UK sector as it welcomes more international students and extends its reach through transnational education. We will continue to develop our offering in these areas.

At the same time, QAA's own international profile continues to grow, and in an increasing number of markets, there is strong demand for our International Quality Review and International Programme Accreditation. We will expand our provision of these services in a way that informs our work in the UK as we learn from international best practice, and that helps us support the UK sector more cost-effectively.





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@QAAtweets



<https://tiny.cc/QAALinkedIn>

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