The Quality Evaluation and Enhancement of UK Transnational Higher Education Provision 2021-22 to 2025-26

Updated November 2022

Vision

For UK transnational higher education to be recognised worldwide as providing education of the highest quality, an outstanding student experience, added value and enhanced outcomes

Contents

Quality enhancement in UK transnational higher education

The quality of UK transnational education (TNE) is based on the UK's secure, respected and robust academic standards, backed by common UK–wide frameworks. UK TNE provides awards that enable TNE students to fulfil their potential as effective, contributing global citizens.

The strength of the quality of UK TNE is demonstrated through independent evaluation by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). This evaluation maintains and helps to extend the established reputation of the UK's approach to quality assurance and quality enhancement, retaining and building international trust in UK TNE.

The core purposes and outcomes of the Quality Evaluation and Enhancement of UK Transnational Higher Education (QE-TNE) programme and approach are summarised below:

Strengthening the reputation of UK TNE

Providing valued information and insights

Building mutual trust

Delivering benefit for TNE stakeholders

How UK higher education is regulated

Higher education policy and regulation is devolved to the four nations of the UK.

Oversight of quality arrangements or statutory regulation in our four nations sits with the Office for Students (OfS) in England, the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland, the Scottish Funding Council, and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales. In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the funder or regulator receives advice from QAA through our independent assessments and evaluations of institutions. In England, QAA decided in 2022 that it no longer wishes to be the body undertaking baseline regulatory assessments for the OfS and notified it accordingly; we will continue to offer a wide range of quality assurance and enhancement activities in England.

QAA is the only body officially recognised across the whole of the UK to undertake independent assessments and evaluations, which are in turn used by all four bodies to inform their regulatory decision-making. QAA works closely with the representative bodies of UK higher education providers and our individual member institutions.

QE-TNE was commissioned by Universities UK and GuildHE as a voluntary exercise to demonstrate the commitment of UK higher education to deliver high-quality TNE experiences for students. QE-TNE is a programme of country-specific quality enhancement thematic activity and is not a quality assessment against the European Standards and Guidelines.

Core to QAA's ways of working internationally and to our evaluation of TNE, is the building of mutual trust and understanding with our counterpart bodies in the countries where UK degree-awarding bodies are active. We do this through our international networks and through bilateral relationships with partners with whom we have memoranda of understanding.

Part 1: Quality evaluation and enhancement of UK transnational higher education provision (QE-TNE)

1.1   Introduction and background

Introduction

1   The approach to the quality evaluation and enhancement of UK transnational higher education (QE-TNE) provision outlined in this handbook, applies to all degree-awarding bodies across the UK. The initial QE-TNE programme operates over the academic years 2021-22 to 2025-26.

2   It was agreed in 2020 – through work led by Universities UK International (UUKi) and GuildHE, and tested through consultation[1] – that the interests of UK TNE are best served by a programme of country-specific quality enhancement activity. The programme should also provide additional insight and support to extend institutions' knowledge of partner countries and build up their in-country networks. The QE-TNE programme consists of an agreed, published schedule of country-specific activity – normally three countries/territories per academic year[2] – for example, a major host country and two locations with smaller or developing/emerging TNE provision. The programme is planned on a rolling basis with the intention that specific countries/territories are normally agreed around 18 months in advance.[3]

3   UK degree-awarding bodies offering their awards through TNE have full responsibility for the academic standards of those awards, wherever or however the awards are delivered; they have ultimate responsibility for the quality of provision, but may delegate aspects of that to partners.

4   The starting point for QE-TNE is that UK providers' internal processes and the UK's national external, quality assurance and regulatory processes test the effectiveness with which a provider is meeting the Expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education – that these processes are robust and retesting is not necessary. QE-TNE is designed to complement the UK's internal and external quality processes, providing depth of insight into TNE provision, driving continuous improvement and providing confidence for the wide range of stakeholders, both in the UK and internationally.

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1   Future approaches to the external quality enhancement of UK higher education transnational education: consultation report available at: www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/international/tne-enhancement-consultation-report.pdf
2   'Normally' allows the programme to be responsive to the nature of host country selection. Up to three countries allows, for example, for fewer other countries to be visited in the same academic year as the host countries with very large numbers of TNE students and arrangements, such as China.
3   This timescale is shorter in the first year of operation.

The benefits of the country-based quality enhancement approach for the UK's TNE

5   The country-based evaluation of UK TNE is focused on quality enhancement. The published forward schedule supports this, as it encourages providers and their partners to ask reflective questions about their provision and approach in a particular country. The forward schedule enables QAA to work in depth with local agencies in the selected countries and to explore regulatory and other matters faced by UK providers.

6   QAA will agree ways in which it can deepen cooperation with local agencies and organisations for the benefit of UK TNE. QE-TNE enables greater local understanding of UK higher education and the UK's approaches to quality and standards, and provides detailed insights into host country operating environments for UK TNE. Therefore, it builds and deepens mutual understanding, cooperation and trust. Engagement with local authorities and regulators is a prime focus of QAA's country-based activity.

7   QE-TNE is UK-wide and built on collective benefit, shared practice and learning. One of the main goals is to maintain and strengthen the UK's premier position as a leading provider of high-quality transnational higher education. A quality enhancement approach identifies shared challenges, areas for development and effective solutions, through highlighting innovative and effective practice. The continuing commitment of the UK to improve or enhance its TNE provision strengthens the reputation and standing of UK higher education, demonstrating the value the UK places on the quality of the student learning experience.

8   QE-TNE draws on the skills, experience and insights of peer reviewers to explore, in a spirit of enhancement, how providers ensure academic standards are maintained, how the equivalence of student outcomes is ensured, teaching and learning continuously improved, and high-quality learning provided in transnational education. Reviewers explore the challenges involved and identify effective responses and approaches. Constructive peer engagement provides insights and an external view on arrangements and approaches to UK TNE provision in higher education.

9   QE-TNE results in a suite of published reports and other outputs, such as dissemination workshops. It leads to a range of guidance being produced that draws on the intelligence gained on particular countries, together with information from research into the local regulatory environment. QAA also draws on surveys, visits, data, and student and employer views. Broader outcomes may include the delivery of resources such as best practice toolkits, practical guidance, training courses and access to more extensive information.

10   In summary, a published programme of country-specific quality enhancement activity covering up to three countries/territories per year, enables the production of a range of country-specific outputs and the development of a flow of wider outcomes.

Country-based quality enhancement approach serves the interests of UK TNE by:

- providing confidence for the wide range of international stakeholders, showing the care the UK has for the quality of the student experience and consistent standards of UK awards

- confirming the equivalence of student outcomes

- enabling coverage of both major host countries and other locations or defined regions, including emerging host nations/territories that have strategic potential for TNE, as well as established smaller provision

- enabling relationships* to be built and a detailed focus on local needs and circumstances, through the country-by-country approach, building insight, mutual understanding and trust

- focusing on quality enhancement and the quality of students' learning experience

- demonstrating the strength of internal quality assurance by UK providers and the external assurance by the UK's funders and regulators

- providing a wide range of direct outputs and broader outcomes that support the continuing delivery and development of excellent TNE provision

- enabling two-way learning, improving approaches to quality in the UK and internationally

- finding ways to reduce the burden, both from a UK perspective and for host countries, removing duplication and extending mutual recognition

- supporting the continued growth of the UK's education exports.

* The approach enables relationships with local quality assurance agencies, regulatory authorities and relevant ministries to be strengthened alongside those with local British Council staff; QAA has extensive existing relationships, including those formalised through memoranda of understanding. This particular approach enables members of review teams to be involved with discussions alongside the QAA officer.

1.2 The importance of TNE for UK higher education

11   TNE is important – not only for UK higher education providers; its strategic value is recognised by the UK's Department for International Trade (DIT) and by the departments responsible for higher education in each of the UK's home nations. TNE contributes to the UK's soft power and influence[4] and reciprocally supports the same agendas in host countries.

12   In delivering TNE, UK universities often work with the host nation in support of the nation's own agenda – be it the aim to expand as a global hub for higher education or a more development-orientated purpose. Emerging economies with a young demographic will, for example, often look to TNE to meet the demand for higher education when it outstrips that available within the host country. TNE helps nations and individuals around the world to achieve their ambitions and aspirations. The mutual benefits are strong.

13   UK TNE enables access to a high-quality standard of higher education for learners wherever they are located. The knowledge and understanding it helps to develop, and the mobility that it can enable, helps to deliver the internationalised and globalised educational experience that equips learners with the skills needed in the 21st century. For many of these reasons, TNE is a strategically significant part of the operation of the vast majority of UK degree-awarding bodies. As well as helping to diversify sources of income and to develop education exports, TNE often leads to mutually valuable knowledge exchange or research relationships.

Internationalisation

14   Effective and relevant higher education in the 21st century must be globalised and equip graduates to understand the complexity and interconnectedness of the modern world. TNE is integral to how many UK universities aim to deliver their international/internationalisation strategies and to develop graduates able to take their place in a world where technology, communication, transport, the environment and political economies link individuals and societies more closely and change is a constant. For students, the choice of TNE study is a choice to experience aspects of internationalisation in their home country or region through the different and distinctive nature of a UK TNE award.

Size and scale

15   The UK is one of the world's largest providers of TNE. Universities UK International provides detailed figures each year on the size and scale of UK TNE.[5] In broad terms, over 140 (of approximately 170) degree-awarding bodies in the UK have TNE provision and, since 2014-15, there have been over 650,000 students enrolled on UK TNE programmes each year in over 220 countries/territories across the world. At the time of finalising this Handbook and developing the first country selection for the forward schedule, the latest figures available were for 2018-19. For the 2019-20 academic year a change in Oxford Brookes University's reporting practices led to a significant drop in students for this provider resulting in a corresponding drop in the overall number of student enrolments based wholly overseas.

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4   The importance of soft power and influence is stressed in the government's International Education Strategy, jointly published by the Department for International Trade and Department of Education in March 2019.

5   Updated figures are normally published late autumn each year and can be found at: www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/universities-uk-international/explore-uuki/transnational-education

16   TNE embraces full undergraduate and postgraduate awards, joint and dual awards, articulation arrangements, franchised and validated provision, branch campuses, professional programmes, and open and distance learning.

17   Three providers, primarily of blended, flexible and distance learning, have historically dominated UK TNE figures – Oxford Brookes University, the Open University and the University of London Worldwide. In 2018-19, these three institutions accounted for almost half of all UK TNE students, seven other providers had more than 10,000 students, and a further 14 had more than 5,000.

18   In terms of global regional spread, in 2018-19,[6] around 50% (334,410) of UK TNE students were studying in Asia, followed by Africa, Europe and the Middle East. The top five host nations that year were China (78,175), Malaysia, Singapore, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Figure 1: Regional distribution of UK TNE students, 2018-19[7]

	North America	South America	Europe Union	Other Europe	Africa	Middle East	Asia	Australasia
All providers	4%	< 1%	12%	3%	20%	9%	50%	< 1%
Excluding the three main providers	4%	< 1%	16%	2%	12%	11%	53%	< 1%

Defining TNE

The definition used by QAA for the purposes of the Quality Evaluation and Enhancement of UK Transnational Higher Education is:

Transnational higher education is the delivery of higher education level awards by recognised UK degree-awarding bodies in a country, or to students, other than where the awarding provider is based.[8]

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6   Figures are for all providers including the top three.
7   Map courtesy of UUKi.
8   The definition in QE-TNE is based on the widely accepted broad definition of TNE is that agreed by UNESCO and the Council of Europe in 2001, narrowing it to the awards of UK degree-awarding bodies: 'All types of higher education study programmes, or sets of courses of study, or educational services (including those of distance education) in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based. Such programmes may belong to the education system of a State different from the State in which it operates, or may operate independently of any national education system.'

1.3 Principles and enhancement in QE-TNE

The principles underlying QE-TNE

19   QAA was commissioned[9] to develop an approach to the quality enhancement of UK TNE that met the following principles, the model should:

- be UK-wide
- apply to all degree-awarding bodies who engage in TNE
- be valid for all types of TNE
- be cost-efficient
- be flexible and responsive
- minimise the burden to institutions, avoiding duplication of course or institutional review and aligning with the review processes of professional, statutory and regulatory bodies (PSRBs), where relevant and appropriate
- have the student experience at its heart
- ensure the equivalence of student experience and student outcomes between TNE and UK-based students
- retain international trust and maintain the reputation of the UK's quality assurance approach
- be enhancement-led
- be informed by robust metrics where available and align with UK data-informed approaches where possible.

20   The new method, set out in this handbook, is derived from these principles. Its title – the Quality Evaluation and Enhancement of UK Transnational Higher Education or QE-TNE – stresses the emphasis on enhancement above regulatory baselines (where these apply).

Quality enhancement in QE-TNE

QAA defines enhancement as:

'Taking deliberate steps to bring about improvement in the effectiveness of the learning experiences of students.'

21   The basic premise in quality enhancement is that **wherever you are, you can always improve**. Excellence is never a thing achieved or 'job done' but a continuous, purposeful striving. Thus, the approach in quality enhancement is to ask institutions: how they apply the information and insights from quality assurance processes, and other robust sources of data, to identify, prioritise and plan strategic improvement; how they are working strategically to enhance the quality of their TNE students' learning experiences; and how they are engaging and working with their TNE partners[10] and their students to improve learning.

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9   Commissioning letter from Universities UK and GuildHE, July 2020.
10   Where applicable – the handbook covers all types of TNE; not all TNE involves partner organisations.

22   Quality assurance secures baseline standards. Quality enhancement is about engaging critically with the purpose and potential of quality assurance – to deliver quality improvement, to move beyond the concern with process and to drive both enhancement and excellence.

23   QE-TNE is based on the essential characteristics of enhancement-led approaches to quality: critical self-evaluation; partnership working and collaborative practice; student involvement and engagement; evidence and peer-based review; and transparency, openness and trust. Each of these is important within QE-TNE.

24   With quality enhancement, the emphasis is on effectiveness in practice, in delivery, in responding to student needs, managing quality, overseeing collaborative partnerships, setting and maintaining academic standards, and so forth. Given that quality assurance is addressed by the UK's standard internal and external processes, QE-TNE is freed to be a constructive, collaborative, enhancement-oriented dialogue. The constructive dialogue that enhancement-based approaches allow takes full advantage of the expertise and experience of QAA's peer reviews in engaging in discussion with providers.

25   The focus on the quality of the student experience of learning, places the emphasis on the outcome and impact of internal quality assurance processes and policies. Having documented processes that are effective and followed is, of course, important. However, with the quality enhancement approach in QE-TNE, the focus is rather on the ways in which those processes are used; how they produce data and information on the quality and effectiveness of provision in ways that not only confirm standards and expectations, but help providers to plan changes intended to benefit and enhance the student learning experience (as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of earlier initiatives).

26   Quality enhancement is an approach that enables institutions to manage beneficial change. The pace of change is ever-increasing and this means that managing change effectively for students and their learning is crucial to providing and maintaining high quality, relevant education.

Part 2: Handbook for the Quality Evaluation and Enhancement of UK Transnational Higher Education (QE-TNE)

2.1 The QE-TNE methodology

A handbook for a responsive and flexible method

27   This is a comprehensive handbook covering the range of activity involved with evaluating and supporting the provision and continuing development of TNE by UK degree-awarding bodies. It is necessarily generic given that TNE covers a wide range of activity, from distance learning to branch campuses, with partner organisations and without, with greater and lesser degrees of devolved responsibilities. There is, consequently, variation in the nature of TNE arrangement and, importantly, in the country context. Therefore, aspects of QE-TNE will be adapted to align with the context of both the host country and the TNE activity. This flexibility and responsiveness are vital in any consideration of TNE, are aligned with the enhancement-led methodology and enable the Scheme to reflect the pace of change.

28   QE-TNE represents a new model in approaches to quality assurance and quality enhancement, with responsiveness at its heart, moving beyond fixed, one-size and cyclical methods.

Purpose and audiences for the handbook

29   The primary purpose of this handbook is to outline the approach for the quality enhancement and evaluation of UK TNE. It sets out how QAA will carry out QE-TNE activities through a robust and independent peer review process that delivers extensive benefits for the full range of stakeholders of UK TNE.

30   The handbook has UK institutions and, where applicable, their international partner providers involved in the quality review of TNE as its primary audience. However, it also serves the needs of:

- students studying through TNE provision with UK providers
- peer review teams conducting the work
- QAA staff managing and supporting the overall programme and the review processes
- QAA staff in their work building relationships with quality agencies and education ministries or other authorities in support of UK TNE
- international quality agencies with an interest in the quality of TNE provision in their home country
- wider direct stakeholders including national and professional/statutory UK regulators, funders, central and devolved governments, and the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment (UKSCQA).

31   QE-TNE is a UK-wide programme for all UK degree-awarding bodies delivering their awards or other higher education provision through any mode of TNE.[11]

It encompasses:

- all UK higher education provision delivered outside the UK leading to UK awards at Levels 4-8 of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ) and Levels 7-12 *of The Framework for Qualifications of Higher Education Institutions in Scotland* (FQHEIS)

- all forms of partnership and delivery including branch campuses, joint and dual awards, franchised and validated provision, all forms of distance and flexible learning, articulation arrangements and those involving parts of awards being delivered through TNE and parts in the UK.

32   QE-TNE is a voluntary paid-for service (the TNE Scheme) commissioned by UUK and GuildHE on behalf of UK higher education and delivered by QAA; it is independent of QAA Membership. QE-TNE is entirely separate from review methods and any quality assurance issues arising would be referred to the substantive cyclical review method as appropriate. Providers who join the TNE Scheme may use the QAA Statement of Participation to indicate their involvement in the Scheme.[12] There are, also, further benefits for QAA Members[13] and for those who have joined the additional International Insights package (see Annex 5).

33   QE-TNE evaluation visits and reports are one element of the overall approach. With the dual aims of increasing the benefit to, and reducing the burden on, providers, there will be particular emphasis on the preparatory and supporting work by QAA. This early work significantly contributes to the range of benefits, insight and intelligence for the UK sector (see Stage 5 below and Annex 5), as well as improving the visit element itself.

34   All UK degree-awarding bodies offering provision in the countries selected as part of the QE-TNE programme are invited to complete the preliminary survey to establish the extent of TNE provision in the target country (see Annex 2). An overview report on each selected country is published on QAA's website and publicly available. Overview reports list all the UK higher education institutions delivering in each country.[14] (See Annex 5 for more detail on the content.)

35   QE-TNE includes distance and distributed learning in all its forms through the lens of the selected countries. Distance learning that includes local study centres may be selected for a site visit. More broadly, QE-TNE is interested in the student experience of distance learning in the country in question and hopes to explore this primarily through wider surveys or meetings with students. The quality of the student experience, and the nature and equivalence of student outcomes in distance learning, is of interest and will produce new insights – whether the distance-learning programme has been designed for the country or region or it is a professional qualification.[15]

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11   See definition of TNE on page 7.
12   The terms and conditions for the TNE Scheme include confirmation from participants that they meet the Core and Common practices of the UK Quality Code and the QAA's Advice and Guidance on Partnerships. This commitment is confirmed by a
13   public list of participating degree-awarding bodies maintained by QAA which explains the nature of the commitment.
14   These benefits include member fee rates as well as a wide range of additional resources.
15   The list will identify institutions that have not provided information.
      QE-TNE enables more detailed exploration of, for example, questions around how open distance learning qualifications are designed to accommodate cultural difference and different employment contexts.

36   QE-TNE embraces Higher National Diplomas (HND) and Higher National Certificates (HNC) where they are awarded by degree-awarding bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland under licence from Pearson. It does not include those awarded directly by Pearson or, in Scotland, by the Scottish Qualifications Authority.[16]

37   The focus is on the UK provider offering its awards through TNE arrangements. TNE partner organisations themselves are not subject to evaluation or scrutiny in QE-TNE. QE-TNE is, however, concerned with the nature of the delivery of the student experience by a partner of a UK award and with how UK providers oversee and support delivery by their partners. UK providers will involve their partners in the QE-TNE process. QAA can advise if providers are uncertain about whether specific activities are in the scope of a QE-TNE review.

38   Partner organisations might be subject to review or scrutiny by local agencies as part of QE-TNE if QAA and the local agency engage in joint review activity. Any such joint working is discussed and agreed during the planning stage of preparatory work for each QE-TNE review. Joint activity can be the precursor to joint recognition of activity or can help identify and resolve matters concerning duplication of process.
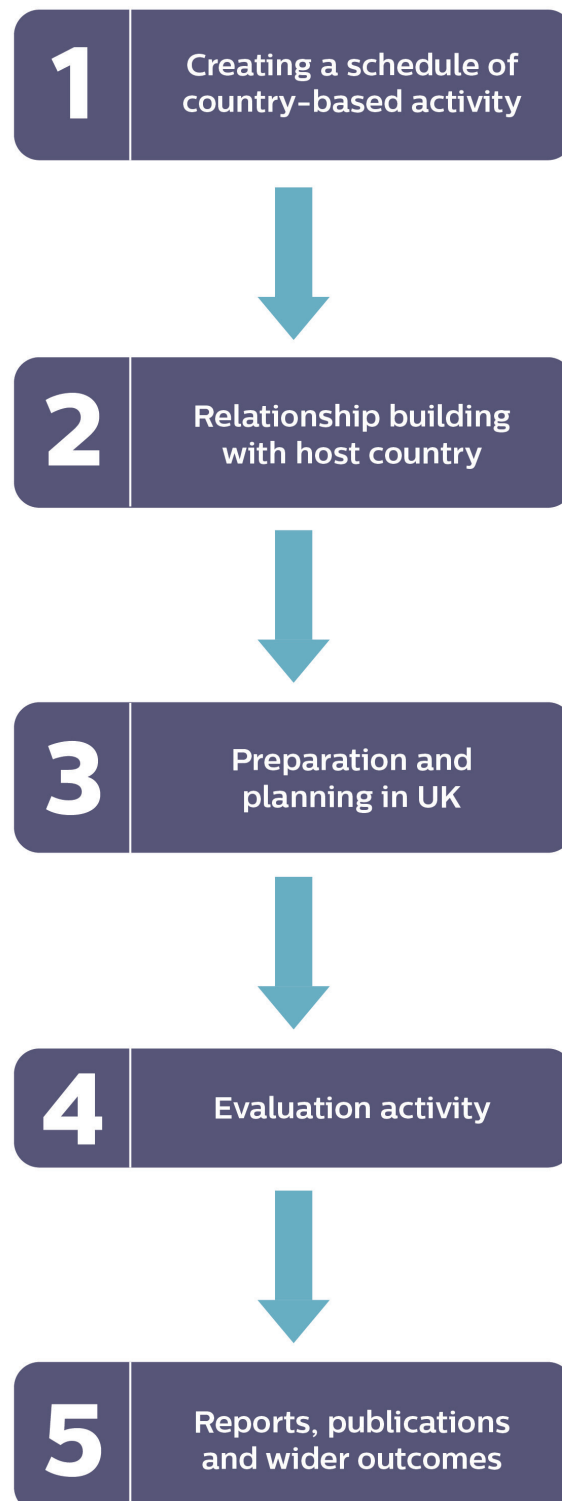

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16   England, Wales and Northern Ireland, HNDs and HNCs may either be awarded by degree-awarding bodies under a licence from Pearson (which allows them to devise, deliver and award higher national qualifications themselves), or they may be awarded directly by Pearson. The majority of these qualifications are awarded by Pearson. Only those HNDs and HNCs that are awarded by degree-awarding bodies are included in the FHEQ (because this framework comprises qualifications awarded by degree-awarding bodies). Pearson is not a degree-awarding body but an awarding organisation regulated by Ofqual. HNDs and HNCs awarded directly by Pearson are regulated qualifications at Level 5 and Level 4 respectively on the QCF and CQFW, and are subject to the academic standards and regulations of Pearson and the requirements of the QCF and the CQFW. In Scotland, HNDs and HNCs are awarded exclusively by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) (which is not a degree-awarding body) and are at Level 8 and 7 respectively, of the SCQF.

2.2 Summary of the principal stages

The stages in QE-TNE

39   There are five key stages to QE-TNE:

1 Creating a schedule of country-based activity

2 Relationship building with host country

3 Preparation and planning in UK

4 Evaluation activity

5 Reports, publications and wider outcomes

2.3 Stage 1: Creating a planned forward schedule of country-based activity

Outline

40 QAA works together with UUKi and GuildHE, drawing on data and information to identify proposed countries that best meet the selection criteria set out below. Information sources will include UUKi's publications on the scale of UK higher education TNE and trend analysis of the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data, alongside HESA's Aggregate Offshore Record. This is combined with information gained from international contacts and the UK sector. The host countries proposed are supported by a rationale, and options may be presented alongside firm suggestions. The proposed schedule of countries is presented to the UKSCQA, which ratifies the final selection.

41 Working two years in advance, QAA drafts the proposed country selection each autumn and agrees it with UUKi and GuildHE ready for presentation to UKSCQA each spring. Firm proposals for the academic year starting c.18 months ahead are presented together with any additional information on that agreed for the forthcoming academic year. Once ratified by UKSCQA, the forward schedule is published by QAA covering the agreed countries for the 18 months ahead. This will enable all parties to undertake preliminary work and to plan ahead.

Selection of countries for QAA's QE-TNE activity

42 Over the five-year programme, each year, one major host country/territory will normally be selected together with one emerging or developing host nation, or one with smaller TNE numbers, and one other destination. The criteria used to assess the selection of countries are detailed below. While three countries/territories are the working norm, on occasion fewer than three might be selected – for instance, a regional approach might be taken or, where there is an especially large number of arrangements and student numbers, there could be two or three teams visiting a single host country rather than teams visiting three different countries.

43 The experience of COVID-19 and other significant international and national events has demonstrated that the Scheme is not only adaptable, but its focus on the quality of the student experience – learning from challenges and experience – means that it can respond to change and use these challenges to the benefit of UK TNE. Specifically, rather than, for example, shifting to an alternative host country destination in 2022-23 when faced with the economic crisis in Sri Lanka, QAA is working differently with providers to explore ways in which TNE providers respond to crisis events. In this instance, review visits may be unlikely, but case studies and collective lessons learned will be produced.

The major host country

44   For the major host country, selection is straightforward. Taking into account the number of institutions operating in each, the main two criteria are:

- a top 10 host country by student numbers (not including numbers from the top three providers[17] of distance learning) – accepting that countries which are in the top 10 will change from year to year

- length of time since the previous visit (with the intention to cover those not yet/not recently reviewed during the five-year programme).

Selection of the second and third countries

45   For the choice of the second and third countries, there is a wider range of criteria, including:

- rapid expansion of UK TNE in-country (this could be increases in overall TNE student numbers or in the number of TNE arrangements)

- developing market for TNE with greater demand for higher education than the country can supply

- developing market where the country is seeking to stimulate greater take up of higher education TNE and is looking to work with UK providers to achieve this

- regulatory or legal changes in-country that have shifted the environment for UK TNE providers (negatively or positively)

- countries/territories aiming to establish themselves or extend their position as a higher education and/or TNE hub

- requests from countries (for example, to evaluate all UK provision or to work with the local agency in the review of provision); this can help reduce regulatory burden – such requests should not be seen as indicative of issues

- established location that has not been visited or not been visited for an extended period

- geographical spread[18]

- support for countries of interest to the UK (for example, Commonwealth countries – the main countries identified as part of the International Education Strategy – for instance, by DIT, the Scottish or Welsh Governments or the Northern Ireland Executive)

- intelligence from UK or local regulators, funders or ministries that suggests it would be expedient to undertake a QE-TNE activity in a particular country.

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17   As indicated previously, the 'top three' account for around half of all UK TNE students and change the numbers' profile disproportionately. They are each primarily distance-learning providers. The programme overall will ensure that distance learning receives appropriate consideration. For the avoidance of doubt, the top three providers and all their delivery forms are included in the programme.
18   To date, most reviews have been in the Middle East and Asia and some more consideration needs to be given to Africa, and to North and South America, as well as to return to a higher proportion from Europe.

46   QE-TNE as an overall approach is flexible so that a topic could replace the country focus in one selection. In such instances, specific proposals would be needed covering the rationale for the topic/nature of the activity being evaluated and an assessment of what could be conducted from the UK. Cost implications will need to be taken into account if visits to more than one TNE host country were involved.[19] Any topic-based selection would be presented to and ratified by the UKSCQA.

47   Topics that might replace a country focus could include:

- TNE delivered through distance learning

- enhancement in the quality of the student experience in branch campuses

- a multi-country study of the TNE student experience or of TNE graduate employability.

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19   Adjustments would be needed across the programme to manage the higher costs over a delivery year.

2.4 Stage 2: Relationship building with the host country

48   QAA has established relationships with agencies and with quality assurance networks across the globe. These relationships are routinely used to strengthen understanding of the UK's quality systems and TNE provision. They also provide information and intelligence on local operating environments which feeds into QAA's wider work for UK higher education and which may feed into country selection in QE-TNE.

49   The opportunity provided by the published forward schedule of countries in QE-TNE enables specific and detailed discussions in advance of the in-country visit. Such discussions with host country governments/ministries, regulatory organisations and quality agencies form part of the quality enhancement ethos, enabling maximum benefits to be gained by all from QE-TNE. A clear element of that benefit is post-review activities, such as joint publications, webinars and dissemination. Where relevant, it will also involve developing new protocols to ease the regulatory pressure in-country on UK providers or local partners.

50   Part of QAA's work over the preparatory stages is to ensure that there is a sound understanding and confidence in the UK's quality assurance systems. It is intended that good mutual understanding will, for example, limit the need to duplicate processes (such as programme recognition) or to re-demonstrate how standards are secured.

51   Relationship building linked to QE-TNE, therefore, covers a range of activity. Discussions with ministries/regulators/agencies typically seek to:

- confirm policy and views on TNE from both local and UK perspectives
- confirm shared understanding of the UK's and the local regulatory and quality assurance systems
- identify any matters for further exploration
- identify local data sources and performance indicators that could help extend understanding of the effectiveness and impact of UK TNE for students
- share intelligence as part of the planning stage
- explore ways in which student views can be obtained across a range of providers[20] to extend the understanding of the in-country UK TNE student experience
- explore ways to capture the views of employers and/or alumni
- agree protocols for the visit stage (for example, any joint activity or observer involvement)
- agree contributions to, or any shared, publications or outcomes.

52   When appropriate (for example, when a number of activities can be combined to make it cost effective, or when travel costs are low), QAA visits the target country in order to hold detailed discussions. However, optimum use is made of technology to minimise direct and time costs, as well as limit the environmental impact of travel.

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20   For example, KHDA in Dubai and CPE in Singapore both helped support a 2018 project: Enhancing the UK TNE Experience in Dubai and Singapore.

2.5 Stages 3 and 4: Process for quality evaluation and enhancement of UK TNE

53   Preparation and planning in the UK leads on to the evaluation activities. These stages are detailed in terms of the processes involved for QAA, review teams and providers.

Underlying philosophy

54   QE-TNE is an evidence-based, enhancement-led process. The purpose is to maintain the high quality and support the continuing improvement of UK TNE. QE-TNE strengthens and extends the relationships with host country authorities and stakeholders for the benefit of both the UK and host nation. The approach throughout is collaborative; it is about a constructive dialogue and shared learning. The information below should be read in this context.

Timeline

55   An indicative timeline is set out in Annex 1.

Publication of the review schedule

56   The process starts with the publication of the forward schedule of the countries/territories that will form the focus for QE-TNE. This is well in advance of planned visits and includes both the confirmed countries for the next year, those firmly proposed for the following year and options for the subsequent year. This approach is designed to encourage greater reflection on provision and arrangements in the countries involved – on what works well, on particular challenges and so forth; in doing so, it will deepen enhancement practices already in place.

57   The country schedule is published by QAA on its website and is widely promoted. The QE-TNE Membership Resources Area (MRA) is updated with more precise information as the more detailed schedule is confirmed.

58   Publication of the schedule also initiates QE-TNE-related contact and discussion with the authorities of the target countries by QAA. This covers matters such as potential joint activity as part of QE-TNE and detailed discussions on the operating environment, any potential developments in train, the nature of any local data on UK TNE, and TNE student outcomes. Contact is also made with local stakeholders (such as British Council offices and other relevant organisations).

Expert peer reviewers and the review team

59   QE-TNE review teams normally comprise three expert peer reviewers,[21] one of whom is a student reviewer. All reviewers are full and equal members of the review team. Each review and review team are managed by a QAA TNE officer.

60   A specific briefing is provided once each team has been appointed covering the operating environment in the target country and matters such as the size and scope of its UK TNE. Where possible, parts of the briefing are provided from in-country experts (for example, a member of staff from the local quality assurance agency). A representative from the local quality assurance agency or regulatory authority may, with agreement, join a review team as an observer or participate where joint activity has been agreed.

61   QE-TNE is a peer review process centred on the evaluation and enhancement of the quality of the student experience of UK TNE. Reviewers lead the analysis of submitted material, lead visit meetings, and draft the reports on individual arrangements and the student experience. Decisions are made collectively by reviewers as a team. Collective decisions include: the outcomes of review activity in the form of suggested actions, the identification of areas for development and of effective practice, the findings on the student experience and those in the overview report.

62   A single reviewer may support a provider in the production of a case study, if requested, to provide an external perspective in the evaluation of the topic. Some desk-based work is undertaken by pairs of reviewers. All reviewers are involved in both in-country and UK-based review visits exploring individual arrangements, as well as in the meetings with staff and students.

63   Where possible, reviewers may be involved in meetings in-country with local agencies, ministries/authorities and, where arranged, with wider groups of students, alumni and employers. The involvement of reviewers in meetings with local agencies and authorities is an important feature in deepening relationships, helping to form networks and developing mutual understanding.

64   QAA reviewers are appointed against a published person specification. A summary of the skills required in all reviewers is included in Annex 6. All reviewers are trained in the specific method for which they are appointed. The selection of reviewers for each QE-TNE will reflect the particular areas of expertise required.

The role of QE-TNE officers

65   All QAA officers are trained in the review methods in which they work and therefore, there will be specific training and briefing for those who work as QE-TNE officers.

66   The QE-TNE Officer oversees the collection of information, liaises with the responsible authorities in the host country, is responsible for communication around QE-TNE and detailed scheduling. The Officer ensures that QE-TNE follows the agreed procedures and protocols and is responsible for the coordination and editing of the published outputs. Aspects of the preparation are led by the Officer but undertaken in conjunction with the team where timing allows, for example, the selection of case study topics.

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21   QAA's reviewer pool includes international reviewers.

67   The QE-TNE Officer liaises with local contacts and authorities to support activity designed to enable the collection of UK TNE student views more widely than the arrangements under scrutiny, as well as to obtain the views of employers and/or alumni.

68   The QE-TNE Officer is the liaison point with UK providers; UK providers liaise with their partners/overseas delivery sites. As well as drawing up the schedule of visits and meetings in-country, the Officer ensures that all practical arrangements and logistics are organised.

Initial survey: the selection of the arrangements for evaluation and case studies

69   Following a review of the Aggregate Offshore Record and other publicly-available data, QAA contacts all UK higher education institutions with provision in each target country to collect the most recent data available for the overview report (see Annex 5). This enables all relevant providers to shape evaluation activity and to maximise the collective benefit of QE-TNE. Both quantitative and qualitative information are sought, with the latter seeking to establish if there are any particular matters UK providers consider important to be explored as part of the overall QE-TNE engagement.

70   Factual material on the destination country is requested directly from providers including details of existing TNE arrangements and student numbers at programme level. A sample survey is included at Annex 2. In some countries, local data on TNE may supplement this information.

71   The qualitative part of the initial survey seeks views about the opportunities and challenges of operating in the country and providers' suggestions for potential case studies. Opportunities and challenges may include matters such as recent or proposed regulatory changes; whether identified duplicated processes could be addressed or minimised; approaches to PSRB recognition; or could involve exploring differences in approaches to equalities or student representation.

72   QAA reviews provider and programme information and makes an initial selection of arrangements and programmes for institution visits, and topics for case studies. Providers selected are drawn from those who are participating in QAA's TNE Scheme. QAA notifies those providers whose TNE arrangements have been selected for review or case study and informs the Scheme members. With larger provision, QAA liaises with providers to refine the particular delivery sites or programmes to be considered.

73   The number of visits and case studies varies depending on the country selected and the extent and range of UK TNE provision. As a guide, for a major host country, five to eight site visits would be usual with fewer for developing and emerging host countries and those with smaller numbers. The main aim is to select a representative sample from Scheme participants – one that reflects the pattern of TNE in the country under consideration. The number of case studies will reflect the nature of the topics to emerge likely to be of value and interest to UK providers. The arrangements for the evaluation of distance learning will primarily be in the UK, though an in-country learning centre could also be the basis of a visit.

Information request on provision to be sampled

74 QAA asks the providers with arrangements selected for visits to submit a suite of available information together with a short self-evaluation to support the process. An indicative list of information and guidance on the self-evaluation is set out in Annex 3. The self-evaluation would normally be no more than four or five pages or around 3,000 words.

Desk-based analysis

75 Reviewers from the QE-TNE team conduct the preliminary desk-based analysis of the information provided, also drawing on other available information.[22] This desk-based work enables teams to identify preliminary lines of enquiry for meetings at the visit stage of the process. These may be shared with providers in advance of visits to enable a constructive, enhancement-oriented dialogue.

Detailed scheduling

76 75 The approximate timing of the in-country visit is known from the published schedule. For each selected country, all in-country visits and meetings usually take place as part of a single overseas trip by the QE-TNE team. All UK-based visits and activity usually takes place before the connected in-country visits. The timeline in Annex 1 shows the windows within which visits will be scheduled. Where travel is not possible to a host nation, the schedule of visits to the selected arrangements may take place over a longer period of time or be replaced by UK-based visits.

77 Scheduling visits take into account local considerations, such as religious observance or festivals, local holidays, seasonal weather and so forth, alongside the availability of individuals from the local agency and authorities.

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22 Such sources would include published reports (for example, by overseas agencies, QAA or PSRBs) and information arising from the work of UK funding and regulatory bodies.

UK and in-country visit meetings

78   The QE-TNE Officer is responsible for scheduling all visits (UK-based and in-country). The QE-TNE Officer attends all visit meetings and is responsible for the record of all meetings.

79   Site visits normally last one day for each provider, be they UK-based, in-country, hybrid or fully online. Typically, a site visit involves four meetings: one with staff with responsibility for managing and overseeing the provision; one with teaching and support staff; one with students (some providers may also wish there to be a meeting with graduates); and a closing meeting with senior staff to review findings and clarify any matters.

80   Many meetings will have hybrid arrangements, those explored through a UK-based visit include staff and students engaged in the TNE provision joining via online means. Online means are similarly used to enable the UK provider to contribute to in-country meetings with staff.

81   Given the experience of moving fully online due to COVID-19 , online visits will remain an option when appropriate (for instance, travel restrictions).

82   UK providers provide a single point of in-country contact for each visit to enable effective communication on the day.

In-country meetings with authorities, students and employers

83   In-country activity normally includes a meeting with local authorities, including regulators and quality agency/agencies and, where they can be organised, an open meeting with a wider group of UK TNE students, a similar meeting with UK TNE alumni, and a meeting with employers or representatives of employers' interests. Where possible, these meetings involve the full visit team.

84   In QE-TNE, particular emphasis is placed on the quality of the TNE student experience and how it is enhanced. Working in advance with UK providers and the host country agency, QAA explores ways in which a wider sample of student views can be obtained. It may be possible to administer a short survey and/or it may be possible to organise a central venue with an open invitation to TNE students to attend to share their experiences as TNE students. Any survey or meeting would seek to include distance-learning students based in the country.

85   In a similar way, QAA explores ways in which QE-TNE can examine how UK TNE provision serves the country's employment needs. This provides further insight into student outcomes and is a further benefit of country-based activity. Where possible, QAA therefore may seek to arrange meetings with, for example, employers, local professional bodies, alumni from UK TNE or representatives from the relevant government ministry.

86   QAA will have been liaising with the host country in advance of the country visit, however, being in-country also provides an opportunity to meet representatives of the local authorities and agencies. These meetings are used to explore the operating environment for UK TNE, shared matters of interest, any actions that could be taken to reduce the burden on providers (if, for instance, there are perceived to be elements of duplication), the nature of local data and information gathering that could provide additional information on, and insights into, the TNE experience. Meetings enable local agencies to meet UK peer reviewers and to deepen understanding of UK approaches to quality. Where joint activity forms part of the programme, there may also be discussion of what has been learned from those experiences. QAA may meet other organisations (such as staff from the British Council, DIT and British Embassy/Consulate) while in-country.

Institution-led case studies

87   The detailed focus of institution-led case studies will be agreed between the provider and Officer. The aim is to identify topics that will benefit and interest the wider sector by exploring challenges, lessons learned, suggested effective practice, and examples of innovative practice. Case studies could, for instance, cover the lessons from closing a partnership or from adaptations in response to local regulatory requirements or other changes; another might detail the innovative way in which students work together across delivery sites or a student engagement initiative; case studies may explore challenges common to higher education globally, such as those connected with academic integrity, sustainability goals or inclusive participation. Case studies are evaluative and may also be student-led.

88   The provider may ask a reviewer to support their case study. This would enable the reviewer to ask questions and explore issues as part of an enhancement-led dialogue. With the focus on the specific topic of the case study, this meeting would normally be no longer than two hours. It could involve individuals from the TNE provision. The purpose is to offer a critical challenge for the institution from an independent perspective or to facilitate independent evidence for the case study (a reviewer could, for example, meet a group of students to explore their views of an innovation).

89   Case studies as published are typically no more than 10 pages long.[23] They are drafted by the institution, with the draft identifying the evidence used. Although clearly case studies of institutional practice, they are published by QAA to QAA's style guidelines but can include institutional logos, where agreed. QAA will edit and format for consistency and the draft will be shared with the provider as a final check prior to publication.

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23   In QAA house style using Arial 11 point for the main text.

2.6 Stage 5: Reports, publications and wider outcomes

90   QE-TNE results in published reports and a range of resources as well as strengthened relationships and international understanding. Scheme participants have access to all the published reports and resources in the QE-TNE Section of the QAA Membership Resources Area (MRA) . The full set of reports, resources and where they are published is detailed in Annex 5. QAA Members and those who have taken up QAA's International Insights package have access to a wider range of QE-TNE resources than those who only join the basic TNE Scheme. The outputs and their availability are summarised below:

UK-wide benefits	TNE Scheme participants	QAA Member benefits	Benefits for International Insights
Overview report per country	**PLUS**	**PLUS**	**PLUS**
Strong relationships with host countries	Visit reports	Dissemination events and resources	Thematic analysis
	Case studies		Best practice guides
Mutual trust and recognition	Student experience report	TNE partner access to events	Toolkits and practical resources
	Country report		Training events

Published reports and outcomes for each country evaluation

91   Evaluation activity, including institution visits and case studies, as well as QAA's wider engagement with each host country, results in a series of published reports.

92   The overview report from each destination country details the scale and scope of UK TNE in the selected country, drawing on information from UK providers operating in-country, including responses to the initial survey, analysing the conclusions and findings emerging from visits and case studies. This is publicly available and is published on QAA's website.

93   For each country visited, the following will be published for members of QAA's
      TNE Scheme:[24]

      ▪ A report on each TNE arrangement selected for evaluation; these highlight areas of
        effective practice to support quality enhancement and suggest areas for
        development.

      ▪ A series of provider–led case studies normally exploring a specific aspect of their
        approach to TNE provision, facilitating shared learning towards enhancing practice.

      ▪ An analysis of the findings on the TNE student experience/students' views and
        student outcomes.

      ▪ A country guide covering the operating environment for UK higher education. The
        country guide draws on the intelligence and information gained from engagement
        and evaluation activity on the operating environment for UK TNE. QAA plans to keep
        country guides updated so they remain relevant, useful resources.

94   In addition, dissemination events/webinars are offered to QAA TNE Scheme members
      who are also QAA Members. Their overseas partners are also able to access these
      events. Where there is additional support/funding, dissemination events may be held in
      host countries to enable more extensive in–country and partner involvement.

Processes around report production

95   A suite of reports is produced on each country – each succinct and focused.[25] The visit
      reports are drafted by reviewers based on the evidence they have examined, with the
      QAA Officer coordinating. Institutions are able to check draft visit reports for factual
      accuracy prior to publication. Visit reports are short, normally eight to ten pages, and
      will include the findings, any suggested actions, areas for development and will highlight
      areas of innovative, interesting or effective practice to support quality enhancement.

96   The review team agrees the overall conclusions and findings emerging from visits and
      drawn from case studies for the overview report. The QAA Officer drafts the report which
      will also include information from the case studies and factual information regarding the
      scale and scope of UK TNE in the selected country (drawn from the initial survey).
      The overview report is published on QAA's website as public information.

97   The report that analyses the TNE student experience in the target country, embraces
      information on students' views and outcomes. The review team agrees the overall
      conclusions and findings emerging from the visits and student meetings/surveys.
      Case study material is drawn on where relevant. This report includes, where relevant,
      the intelligence and insights gained from any meetings with employers and local
      professional bodies.

98   For institutions' draft case studies, the QAA Officer undertakes the final editing in
      accordance with QAA protocols and house style.

99   In addition, QAA produces a country guide covering the operating environment for UK
      higher education TNE. This country guide draws on the intelligence and information
      gained from engagement and review activity on the operating environment. Where
      appropriate, country reports are jointly published/badged with the local agency and
      may include contributions from organisations such as the British Council, DIT and UUKi.

100   The suite of visit reports and the country report is normally published around 16 weeks
      after visits have been completed.

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24 The specific terms and conditions will give UK providers permission to share outputs with their TNE partners.
25 Experience has shown that shorter, focused reports are more useful and are used more than longer, consolidated
    publications.

Wider resources and outcomes from QE-TNE

101   The new approach to the evaluation of UK TNE embraces inter-agency engagement and relationship building. The deeper understanding gained means that QE-TNE is far more than the consideration of particular TNE arrangements. In addition to the specific outputs from exploring individual TNE arrangements in each country, QE-TNE enables QAA to deliver a rich series of broader outcomes and benefits – for TNE Scheme members; for institutions who also have QAA Membership and those with International Insights; as well as for memoranda of understanding (MoU) partners.

102   Activity across the QE-TNE programme:

- strengthens the reputation and standing of UK higher education as part of international confidence in the UK's commitment to quality enhancement, the quality of the student experience and student outcomes

- builds detailed country-specific intelligence and insights

- builds relationships, increasing understanding and trust between UK and the host country's authorities and sector agencies

- helps ensure that the approaches to quality assurance in the UK are well understood and the UK understands the drivers behind approaches in other countries

- enables strategic choices of target countries in support of UK and host nation interests

- supports countries in implementing their strategic approach to hosting UK TNE.

103   QE-TNE's broader perspective enables the production of a range of resources that draw on the information and insights gained over time. This may include: comparative or thematic analysis and insight, best practice toolkits, practical guidance, training courses and better data; it could be utilised to enable the development of territory-based communities of practice and networks. Throughout the five-year programme, QAA will work with its member community and the commissioning bodies to develop further value-adding resources including cross-year comparative and thematic analyses.

Annexes

There are eight annexes to the handbook.

Annex 1: Indicative timeline for QE-TNE reviews

Annex 2: Preliminary survey – template for QE-TNE reviews

Annex 3: Information request for selected provision and guidance on the self-evaluation for QE-TNE reviews

Annex 4: Indicative content of a QE-TNE visit report

Annex 5: Reports, publications and wider resources arising from QE-TNE

Annex 6: Characteristics required in QAA reviewers

Annex 7: Other supporting information

Annex 8: List of QAA country-based reviews

Where required, operational guidance will be developed and published separately.

Annex 1: Indicative timeline

An indicative overall timeline is accompanied by tables indicating what the QE-TNE process means for UK TNE providers in general and for those UK providers selected for a visit or a case study.

Indicative standard timeline for a QE-TNE

Precise timings will depend on the specific QE-TNE, the scale of the provision in the selected country and its scheduling within the academic year; the timing of activities will vary. The specific schedule for each evaluation will be published as part of the planning stage.

The QE-TNE activity that is led by QAA is not included in this table, such as the ongoing liaison and contact with host country authorities and agencies, and the publication schedule for the wider outputs from the Scheme.

Month	Activity
September	Surveys for the selected countries sent to Scheme participants
October	Deadline for completion of survey responses
November/December	▪ Analysis of survey returns and identification of potential representative arrangements for institution visits and case studies ▪ Providers notified of preliminary selection ▪ Meetings with providers take place to discuss and confirm selection and initial scheduling arrangements ▪ Selections finalised
January	▪ Self-evaluation and information set requested from those selected for institution visit ▪ Confirmation of case study titles/themes and schedule confirmed with providers ▪ Preliminary allocation of teams for institution visits sent to providers ▪ Visit schedules discussed and agreed with providers
February	▪ Self-evaluation and information set uploaded by providers ▪ Detailed schedules confirmed with providers
March	▪ Institution visits take place
April	▪ Institution visits take place ▪ Draft case studies uploaded by providers
May	▪ Institution visits take place ▪ Feedback on case studies shared ▪ Draft reports shared with providers

June	▪ Institution visits take place
	▪ Draft reports shared with providers
July	▪ Draft reports shared with providers
	▪ Case studies finalised and signed off
August	▪ Draft reports shared with providers
September	▪ Visit reports signed off
	▪ Publication of country guides
October – February	▪ Publication of case studies and visit reports
	▪ Publication of student experience reports
	▪ Publication of Thematic Insights
	▪ Dissemination events

Annex 2: Preliminary survey – template for QE-TNE reviews

All UK higher education awarding bodies delivering TNE provision in a selected host country are asked to complete a survey, providing detail on each arrangement in-country and for distance learning. The indicative template for the survey is shown below.

The factual information in part one of the survey feeds into the overview report which is published by QAA on its main website and is publicly available. All providers operating in-country are listed and those responding identified to ensure that the information base is clear.

The survey return from QE-TNE Scheme members is used to inform the selection of providers and arrangements for visits and case studies.

Criteria for selection of arrangements for review

Selection of arrangements for evaluation is primarily about identifying a sample from QE-TNE Scheme participants that is representative of UK TNE activity in the country in question.

Data is drawn from HESA's Aggregate Offshore Record and the preliminary survey. QAA considers the number of QE-TNE Scheme providers delivering TNE in the country, the nature of the TNE provision, the range of programmes/discipline areas, student numbers and levels of study. QAA also looks to ensure that the UK's home nations are appropriately represented.

QAA intends to involve all QE-TNE Scheme providers over the five-year period of the Scheme and aims to try to avoid selecting the same provider across multiple host countries. However, those providers with TNE in a large number of countries may be selected for more than one country. QAA considers including those providers who only operate in one or two countries when those countries are in the schedule.

UK funders and regulators, or the authorities in a country, may request the inclusion of certain arrangements. Such requests may indicate a desire for comprehensive selection (for example, all Welsh TNE providers) or may be due to interest in a new approach (for instance, a first branch campus for the host country). Where requests unbalance the representative nature of the selection, there may be additional arrangements selected, leading to a higher number of arrangements for visits; in such cases, the requesting authority would be expected to contribute to costs.

Initial proposals are discussed with providers and this may influence final selection. Visit logistics may be a contributing factor. Case studies are chosen for the insights and potential for shared learning that they offer.

UK provider information	
UK institution (awarding body) name	
Contact name for the QE-TNE review	
Contact's email address	
Contact's phone number(s)	

For each TNE arrangement, please provide the following information:

QE-TNE in .... *(QAA to add country)*	
Partner/provision information	
Partner organisation or name of provision in-country, for example, branch campus name (full name and any acronym commonly used)	
Partner/provision main location and address	
Partner/provision website	
Details of other locations if provision is offered at more than one	
For distance learning, please indicate if there is any in-country support and its nature	
Date partnership began	
Month and year of first student intake	

Please provide the following information at the level of the programme for each partnership/ at your provision in-country/or for distance-learning provision:						
Programme name (including award title) Use * to indicate if a programme is being taught out	Start date (initial student entry)	Subject area (Higher Education Classification of Subjects)	Programme delivered in UK or other TNE location?	Delivery mode (F/T, P/T, D/L, other)	Single/ dual/joint award?	Headcount (all years)
Date of data and academic year to which it applies						
Example: BA (Hons) Graphic Design	*2001*	*100061*	*Both*	*FT*	*Single*	*67*
					Total	

Part 2: Areas to explore as part of QE-TNE in…………… *(QAA will add selected country/territory)* and suggested case studies on UK TNE provision and students

Please outline any matters it would be useful for QAA to discuss with the relevant authorities in the host nation on behalf of your institution and UK TNE in-country.

This might include areas such as recognition of qualifications, barriers to delivery, match with home programme, inclusion of blended and online approaches.

Please indicate any areas of practice linked to your TNE activity in the selected country that your institution believes would make a good case study to share.

Case studies are designed to contribute to the quality enhancement of UK TNE through sharing insights, experience and effective practice. They can be on any area of practice: about process, from due diligence to ending a relationship; any element of operational delivery or oversight; staff support and development; the student experience; employability and evidence of value added etc. They can explore innovations and initiatives or common challenges, share effective practice or illustrate learning from experience.

Annex 3: Information request for selected provision and guidance on the self-evaluation for QE-TNE reviews

This information is only requested from those providers selected for an evaluation visit and for the specific programme(s) selected where providers have multi-programme arrangements (where TNE is a branch campus or a partnership involves a large number of programmes).

Programme-level information is only needed for the programme(s) selected.

Providers are expected to submit existing information together with a short self-evaluation of the arrangements selected for a visit (QAA will provide those selected with more detailed guidance). Information is submitted in electronic format; it is uploaded through a secure portal into a restricted access storage platform. QAA provides details to enable providers to upload the information. The list of information is presented here in the form of a checklist to help providers to assemble the relevant material and links. Not all will be relevant for all arrangements and few institutions will need to submit the full list.

The list may look as if it is about assurance and not only enhancement. Some of the items will have both assurance and quality/student experience functions but are not included for assurance purposes. They are included for their role to allow the QE-TNE team to:

- understand the institution and the particular programme/TNE arrangement being visited

- be able to explore the quality of the student experience effectively with the institution's students in meetings

- explore the equivalence of student experience and outcomes.

Other items will also help contribute to the wider aims in QE-TNE around reducing burden or duplication. For instance, PSRB reports and returns to local agencies will help QAA and the team to understand, in detail, matters such as where any duplication lies, if processes and approaches could be better aligned or outcomes shared in ways that reduce demands.

QE-TNE is concerned with improving the quality of UK TNE and a third function is to enable the exploration of areas where sharing learning would be especially valuable. The information submitted may reveal a particular area of practice that is useful to the wider sector. The ability to consider the set of information from across the suite of arrangements being visited will provide additional collective insights that can be reflected in and enrich the value of QE-TNE reports.

	Part 1: Supporting information NB: this is indicative and a guide to the information that typically helps review teams to understand the provider and particular TNE arrangement. Some items may cover a number of other items on the list – this can be indicated in the final column.			
Background information and context				
	Indicative information/evidence	**Guide to purpose in QE–TNE** *(Most of this information is to enable the team to have constructive, knowledgeable discussions with students and staff.)*	**Details from institution** *(using your terminology)*	**Included/not included/part of item (number)**
1	Relevant strategies, e.g. ▪ Institutional Strategy ▪ International Strategy ▪ TNE/Collaborative Provision Strategy	*To enable the QE–TNE team to set the provision in the context of institution's strategic approach.*		
2	Due diligence on the partner/arrangement and delivery country	*Provides useful contextual information for the team; due diligence is also an area where sharing learning is valued.*		
3	Agreement detailing the responsibilities of each party for the selected programme *(or complete the roles and responsibilities for TNE proforma below)*	*To enable the team to understand the division of responsibilities correctly.*		
4	Operational manual or equivalent	*So that the team understands the institution's processes correctly alongside its particular terminology.*		

| 5 | Reports from partner (or equivalent) approval (and review) visits – most recent examples for the arrangement being evaluated | *Primarily to enable the team to understand student–related aspects, the working of the TNE arrangement and place of enhancement in these processes.* | | |
| 6 | Procedures and contingency plans for ensuring student protection in the termination of an agreement with a partner/ the ending of an arrangement | *To understand how these matters have been considered – important area for sector–wide enhancement learning.* | | |

Operational delivery and management				
	Indicative information/ evidence	**Guide to purpose in QE–TNE**	**Details from institution**	**Included/not included/part of item (number)**
7	Staff development (regarding UK expectations and approaches to learning etc)	*Important in helping the team to understand how staff are enabled to support effective learning, approaches to comparability of student experience etc.*		
8	Programme approval and reapproval/periodic review reports (most recent)	*Enables the team to understand the programme and its development as well as the ways in which it is/is not modified for the delivery context and country. With reapproval or periodic review, it enables the team to see the impact of how mechanisms are used to identify enhancements and build them into the programme.*		

9	Relevant annual return(s) to local agencies (most recent two years)	*To help the team understand local relationships and requirements – potentially also useful in looking at duplication/burden.*		
10	Any reports from PSRBs and local accreditation/ quality assurance bodies (most recent)	*Important to help the team understand the context of delivery and how external requirements shape and impact on the student experience. Also, how these reports are used to enhance provision.*		
11	Annual programme monitoring reports (most recent two years)	*To enable the team to understand the nature of annual monitoring, its use in managing and monitoring the student experience and quality enhancement. To provide information on the items listed in 13 below and how these are considered.*		
12	External examiner reports (most recent two years) and response to any matters raised	*Primarily to understand matters around equivalence of outcomes and anything revealed about the nature of the learning experience including between different delivery locations where relevant.*		
13	Where not clearly included in annual programme monitoring or other information above, data and analysis of: ▪ student admissions, achievement and progression ▪ graduate employment ▪ student feedback	*See 11, noting that the team is primarily interested in how the institution uses information to confirm and enhance quality and equivalence, and the actions taken as a result of what it learns at a programme level*		

14	Minutes of relevant committees (past two academic years) where monitoring/review/ external examiner reports are considered	*To enable the team to understand how reports etc are considered, the actions taken especially with regard to student feedback, student outcomes and the student learning experience. This information will also help the team to understand how the institution considers information above the level of the programme and how it considers its TNE provision more holistically.*		
15	Evidence that shows how 'equivalence of student outcomes' is ensured and considered where not covered in other material (most recent two years, unless a longer time series is helpful)	*To ensure the team understands how the institution approaches notions of equivalence and the kinds of actions taken.*		
16	Information on student complaints and appeals (most recent two years)	*Important to help the team understand any matters that have been formally raised by students and any resulting actions – further information about the constructive use of all sources of student feedback.*		

Quality of the student learning experience				
	Indicative information/ evidence	Purpose in QE–TNE	Details from institution	Included/not included/part of item (number)
17	Student admissions including the responsibilities of partner institution	*To enable the team to understand how approaches to admissions are used to help ensure students are suitable for the programme.*		
18	Student-facing programme publicity and information	*Important to enable the team to understand how students are likely to understand the programme and the learning experience it offers.*		
19	Student support, including arrangements for induction, study support, careers information, wellbeing etc	*Essential information in understanding the intended learning experience.*		
20	Student engagement, including student representation and feedback mechanisms	*Essential information in understanding the planned ways in which students are engaged, represented, able to give and receive feedback on their learning.*		
21	Access to learning material (including access through a VLE/MLE)	*Important to understand the nature and, as relevant, the equivalence of learning resources.*		
22	Involvement of UK-based staff in student learning (where relevant)	*For clarity of understanding of the learning experience offered.*		

23	Student programme 'handbook' (virtual or physical)	*This may cover a number of the items above and may be the main evidence for this set of material.*		
24	Information on any special features (e.g. joint student projects across delivery sites)	*For clarity of understanding of the learning experience offered.*		

Part 2: Self-evaluation
Guidance: The self-evaluation helps reviewers to contextualise the supporting information and understand the nature of the TNE provider and the arrangement being evaluated. (QAA will provide more detailed guidance to providers selected.)   There are two main elements required. The first enables an evaluation of the place of the arrangement and programme(s) within the provider's overall approach to its TNE provision. The second element evaluates the arrangement and particular programme(s) themselves.   The indicative topics for visit reports in the QE-TNE Handbook Annex 4 will help guide providers in producing their self-evaluation.   The self-evaluation is likely to be about four or five pages long (approximately 3,000 words). The main emphasis should be on the student learning experience and on the nature of partnership working.   The evaluation should be evidence-based and refer to the supporting information; there should be limited need for description.   The self-evaluation is designed to enable the provider to demonstrate its capacity for critical reflection and to support the evaluation team in its analysis of the supporting evidence.
2.1 Contextual information   Evaluation of the arrangement and programme(s) within the provider's overall approach to TNE provision.
2.2 Evaluation of the specific arrangement and programme(s) focusing in particular on the student learning experience and on the nature of partnership working (be it with a branch campus, a partner organisation or a learning centre):   ▪ the student learning experience and enhancement of learning and teaching   ▪ the effectiveness of the working arrangements   ▪ equivalence of outcomes.

Responsibilities record for TNE provision (if needed)

UK higher education TNE providers work in collaboration with others to deliver their awards. Where the details of the division of responsibilities are not set out in another document or agreement, the pro forma below, completed for each arrangement (and programme as needed) selected for an evaluation visit, will help ensure that the QE–TNE review team has a clear understanding of the delineation of responsibilities.

If used, this is submitted as part of the suite of evidence and is uploaded in the normal way.

Awarding body/organisation	
Selected delivery partner or arrangement and programme(s)	

Please identify responsibilities using the checklist below. Where the provider is fully responsible (implementation is fully devolved) – please mark the **delivery partner** column; where the awarding body/organisation has full responsibility – mark the awarding body/organisation column; where responsibility is shared or the provider implements under awarding body/organisation direction – mark the shared column, providing explanatory notes as required. Please support with documentary reference(s) to guide the review team.

Area	Awarding body/organisation	Delivery partner	Shared	Documentary reference(s)
Programme development and approval				
Modifications to programmes				
Setting assessments				
First marking of student work				
Moderation or second marking of student work				
Giving feedback to students on their work				
Student recruitment				

Area	Awarding body/organisation	Delivery partner	Shared	Documentary reference(s)
Selection or approval of teaching staff				
Staff support and development				
Production of student handbook or equivalent				
Learning resources (including library resources)				
Student support				
Student representation and engagement				
Responding to external examiner reports				
Annual monitoring				
Periodic review				
Student complaints				
Student appeals				
Managing relationships with other partner organisations (such as placement providers)				
Production of definitive programme information				
Responsibility for enhancement				

Annex 4: Indicative content of a QE-TNE visit report

Visit reports are structured around the indicative headings listed below; the example represents franchised provision and is adapted to suit other delivery models. It is included to help providers in preparing their self-evaluation and for use by reviewers and QAA officers in drafting and editing review reports. QAA will provide information for other TNE types to selected providers and the evaluation visit team.

QE-TNE visit reports: Indicative content for franchised provision

Contextual information

Information about the QE-TNE review process

Summary information about the provider:

- Overall nature, size and scale of provider
- Strategic approach to TNE
- Connected management structure and oversight responsibilities.

Summary of provider's in-country TNE provision:

- Reasons for working in this host nation
- Approach taken
- Information on the selected arrangement (information on the nature, size and scale of the partner/campus/arrangement, including the type of TNE arrangement (for example, validation, franchise) and the discipline profile as relevant
- Organisational or management structures
- TNE in-country (including open and distance learning if not the focus).

The TNE arrangement selected as the focus of the visit

Information on the partnership and programme(s) selected including full title of award(s), start dates, student numbers.

The student learning experience and the enhancement of learning and teaching:

- approach to comparability in the student learning experience covering the approaches to:
    - 'tailoring' of the curriculum to local context
    - comparability of student experience in terms of teaching and learning
    - comparability in terms of access to/availability of learning resources
    - comparability in terms of access to/availability of student support
- approach to ensuring students understand UK approaches to learning, teaching and assessment

- supporting students in their development as learners
- learning environment provided, including the use of online resources
- approach to working in partnership with students
- approach to seeking and responding to student feedback
- approach to involving students in the quality and enhancement of learning
- approach to student diversity.

The effectiveness of the working arrangements

Working arrangements:

- approach to partner involvement in enhancing learning and teaching and contributing to the management of the quality of learning
- ways in which the information from the partner/partnership is used to enhance learning and teaching

Staff development and support:

- approach to how partner staff are supported to deliver/support a UK award
- approach to engaging, developing and supporting partner staff.

Equivalence of outcomes:

- overall approaches to ensuring equivalence in TNE student outcomes which is likely to cover:
  - award outcomes – assessment, assessment practices and regulations, external examining, reference points and data
  - graduate outcomes and employability
- how approaches to equivalence work in relationship to the partnership
- approach to using data to inform decision–making and evaluation.

Summary of findings

Annex 5: Reports, publications and wider resources arising from QE-TNE

This annex provides further information on the nature and content of the published and wider resources that the new multi-country approach to the quality enhancement of TNE enables. It is divided into four sections: the specific outputs resulting from each country visited; the wider resources and benefits that arise from the overall programme; the general benefits for UK providers and for host countries. The final section summaries the information in a diagram.

Section 1: Publications and resources produced for each country visited

In-country evaluation activity – visits and case studies – as well as QAA's wider engagement with each host country, results in a suite of published reports of different types and at least one dissemination event or workshop.

Overview report: publicly available, published on QAA's website

The overview report from each destination country summarises the high-level conclusions and findings emerging from visits and case studies and it details the nature, scale and scope of UK TNE in the selected country, drawing on the survey of all UK providers operating in-country. It is published on QAA's public website.

The overview report lists all those UK higher education institutions with TNE students in the country in the year of the evaluation, and identifies those who contributed to the survey so that the information base and the provision it relates to is clear.

Resources available to all providers participating in the QE-TNE programme

The following suite of publications is available to all UK TNE providers participating in the TNE Scheme.

Visit reports

The set of visit reports on the TNE arrangements of the individual providers selected for evaluation are published on QAA's MRA – accessible to TNE Scheme members. Visit reports are written to support quality enhancement; they offer suggested actions, identify areas for development and highlight areas of effective or innovative practice. There are likely to be five to eight visit reports arising from the selection of a major host country, or where there is more varied or complex provision; with a smaller number where there is less extensive provision.

Reports identify suggested areas for development, be it areas for action or in support of plans already in train. However, the main focus is on identifying areas of strength, these may be examples of innovative or effective practice – especially those that benefit student learning or are connected with wider enhancement practice. Indicative content is set out in Annex 4.

Provider-led case studies

Typically, case studies explore a specific aspect of a provider's approach to their TNE provision. There is no set format. However, case studies should be evaluative and evidence-based, succinct and focused. They are normally about eight pages long.

Case studies are prepared by providers but are edited by QAA in accordance with QAA house style. Support is available through the QAA Officer or one of the Peer Evaluation Team and a short meeting can be arranged (normally online) to explore the territory with the provider to help test the evidence or to suggest alternative perspectives.

Case studies may be on any area of practice, or might explore an aspect of institutional strategy or policy. They may focus on process – from due diligence to ending a relationship, on any element of operational delivery or oversight, on areas such as staff support and development, on the student experience or partnership working with students; they may explore employability and evidence of value added; or they may address a response to a common challenge (such as addressing academic integrity or dealing with the pace of curriculum change).

Case studies can explore innovations and initiatives, share effective practice or illustrate learning from experience. Those with a more strategic focus may look at how a particular arrangement illustrates or has helped advance strategic purpose, for example, by leading on to a research collaboration; or illustrate an institution's policy towards students' learning across branch campuses. Case studies might illustrate any of the informing principles that have shaped the QE-TNE approach. They may also look at wider issues from embedding student-centred learning to addressing the UN's Strategic Development Goals in the curriculum.

Case studies are designed to contribute to the quality enhancement of UK TNE through sharing insights, experience and effective practice, and provide an opportunity for providers to showcase and celebrate UK TNE, including its significance and impact. Providers are encouraged to work with their TNE students, where this is relevant to a case study topic, or to support their students to produce a student-led case study.

Student experience report

QE-TNE places particular emphasis on the quality of the student experience. A specific short report is produced on each country that looks across all the material to analyse and summarise findings on the TNE student experience in that country.

The analysis includes consideration of: students' views of their TNE programme and learning experience; the ways in which students are involved as partners in enhancing the learning experience; how well learning expectations are communicated and matters such as comparability and equivalence understood; and student outcomes and employability.

Whenever possible, the student experience report includes a wider range of student views (for example, those of distance learners and from provision not selected for review). Where it has been possible to arrange in-country or online meetings with alumni and with employers/ employer representatives, the resulting intelligence and insights are incorporated in the student experience report.

Country guide

Country guides are established and valued QAA publications. A country guide, covering the operating environment for UK TNE, is produced on each country visited. The country guide will draw on the intelligence and information gained from engagement with local authorities and agencies on the operating environment to provide up-to-date insights.

As in the past, where appropriate, country guides will continue to be jointly published/badged with the local agency and may include contributions from organisations such as the British Council, DIT and UUKi, alongside information from local organisations and authorities.

Topic reports

As part of the flexibility in QE-TNE, a report on a cross-cutting, multi-nation topic may replace a country guide in the overall schedule of activity. Potential examples of such topics include distance and online learning or the student experience in branch campuses. If a cross-cutting topic is selected, the report would be available to the same audiences as country guides.

Additional resources available to those who are also QAA Members

Providers participating in the TNE Scheme who are also QAA Members will have access to dissemination events/webinars as additional resources. Dissemination events or webinars are arranged following the completion of each country selected for QE-TNE. QAA will ensure events are open to members' overseas partners from the country in question.

Where there is additional support/funding, dissemination events are held in host countries to enable more extensive in-country and partner involvement. In-country events have been valued and very positively received in the past. QAA designs online events, where practical, or takes advantage of other regional activity to offer in-country follow up.

Section 2: Wider benefits, outputs and resources resulting from the QE-TNE approach for QAA International Insights Members

A more extensive range of resources is available to QAA Members participating in the TNE Scheme who have also subscribed to the additional International Insights package.[26]

QE-TNE embraces the engagement, relationships and deeper understanding gained from the process and delivers more than the specific review of selected TNE arrangements. In addition to the specific outputs from the evaluation of TNE in each country, QE-TNE enables QAA to deliver a series of broader outcomes and benefits for its membership fulfilling the underlying goals in the quality evaluation and enhancement of UK TNE.

The broader QE-TNE programme enables the production of a range of resources that draw on the information and insights gained over time. This includes comparative or thematic analysis, a range of workshops and other resources. QAA works with its member community and the commissioning bodies on a continuing basis to identify and develop further useful, value-adding additional resources.

Comparative and thematic analysis and insights

One of the real benefits of the QE-TNE programme being based on three countries or territories each academic year is that it very rapidly produces a rich seam of information that lends itself to valuable comparative and thematic analysis.

The combination of visit reports and provider-led case studies across three host nations quickly produces significant sources of data each year for analysis. This enables QAA to interrogate that data to produce a regular flow of thematic analyses and insights. Topics may result from the material itself, because they are mentioned frequently, be it as areas for development or examples of effective practice, or they may be selected in order to understand what the data tells us about a given topic.

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26   International Insights is available to all QAA Members in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and to those who sign up for this service in addition to voluntary QAA Core Membership in England.

At times there will be an absence of information, this can be used to investigate a topic separately (given that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence), or might lead onto a further heading in QE-TNE review reports, shaping what is explored through the method in the future (one of the many ways QE-TNE is designed to be responsive). A topical example in 2020 and 2021, with the COVID-19 pandemic, would have been online learning – this could have moved from scant mention to a specific heading to explore had QE-TNE been running.

Thematic or comparative analysis are a cost-effective way to explore important issues and aspects of the student experience in UK TNE and meet the desire to optimise the intelligence and benefits from the overall programme. Thematic analyses may be supplemented with additional thematic investigation and information gathering to provide breadth of insight. For example, case studies could be requested representing the same topic in a wider range of countries or from the perspective of different providers or delivery types.

Workshops, training resources and practical guidance

QAA works with its membership and stakeholders to develop resources such as best practice toolkits, training materials and student-facing guidance. The overall QE-TNE programme and the rich, timely data it produces, enables the identification of demand-led topics for workshops and other practical resources.

Illustrative examples of responsive resources from QAA's activity in 2020 would be the kind of topics and material produced as part of its COVID-19-related suite of guidance on [TNE and International Policy and Practice](). Other examples from the past would include workshops on Due Diligence or the workshops and resources emerging from the [Focus On Collaborative Activity](). This resulted in strands of work on Building Learning Communities at a Distance and Sharing Practice (with outputs including case studies, sample templates and a card activity).

The relationships QAA has with quality assurance agencies across the world also enables it to work with them to offer sessions led by local experts to brief QAA Members delivering TNE on planned or recent regulatory changes and their implications for TNE.

Section 3: Whole UK benefits and benefits for UK TNE host nations: Relationship building and developing mutual trust

The whole approach with QE-TNE is intended to deliver benefits for the UK and for UK TNE host nations. Activity across the QE-TNE programme is designed to strengthen the reputation and standing of UK higher education as part of delivering international confidence in the UK's commitment to quality enhancement, the quality of the student experience and student outcomes. QAA has ongoing relationships with many agencies internationally, these relationships support the planning and preparation stages of in-country evaluation (scheduling, agreeing joint activity or observer involvement) and so forth.

A particular benefit of in-country visits for building relationships and mutual trust in QE-TNE is that it enables representatives of local agencies and authorities to meet QAA reviewers and for reviewers to be directly involved in discussions. As senior staff and experienced students, QAA reviewers bring their grounded expertise to those conversations and demonstrate the strength of the UK's peer review system. This engagement helps increase understanding and trust between the UK and the host country's authorities and sector agencies.

Throughout the programme, QAA is able to help ensure that the approaches to quality assurance in the UK are well understood and that the UK understands the drivers behind approaches in other countries. This mutual understanding is vital to building trust. QAA is uniquely well placed, working as it does as a UK-wide agency across and with each of the UK's home nations, to answer questions and address any misunderstandings with regard to UK approaches to quality. Conversely, QAA is equally well-placed to feed the understanding and insights it gains from discussions with other agencies back into the UK higher education sector.

QAA, therefore, both supports countries in implementing their strategic approach to hosting UK TNE and supports UK TNE providers to pursue their international and TNE strategies.

QAA has memoranda of understanding (MoU) or letters of intent (LoI) with a number of quality assurance agencies across the world. QAA's MoU and LoI partners will be able to access all the country-specific resources from QE-TNE.

Section 4: Summary of the benefits of QE-TNE

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="7">QE-TNE: Benefits and outcomes</td><td>Public output and shared benefits</td><td>Overview report on each country visited

Deepened relationships with host countries

Greater mutual trust, understanding and recognition between the UK and TNE host nations</td></tr>
<tr><td>TNE Scheme participant benefits</td><td>Published outputs:
visit reports
case studies
student experience report on each country
country guide</td></tr>
<tr><td>Additional benefits for QAA Members</td><td>Opportunity to participate in dissemination events and resources

TNE partner access to events</td></tr>
<tr><td>Further benefits with QAA's International Insights package</td><td>Able to access the insights provided through:
thematic insights
best practice guides
toolkits and practical resources</td></tr>
<tr><td>Host-country benefits</td><td>Overview report

Deeper relationship with UK and QAA

Opportunity to feed into the process

Opportunity for joint working

Benefits from greater insights into the student experience, alumni and employer views

Opportunity to address areas of benefit for TNE provision

Meetings between relevant agencies and authorities and the QAA QE-TNE team</td></tr>
<tr><td>Benefits for QAA's MoU partners</td><td>Access to country-specific publications not in the public arena:
visit reports
case studies
student experience report
country guide</td></tr>
</table>

Annex 6: Characteristics required in QAA reviewers

QE-TNE is carried out by teams of peer reviewers. Peers are staff with senior-level expertise in the provision, management and delivery of higher education; or they are students with experience in representing students' interests.

QAA periodically advertises for individuals to act as peer reviewers and will promote a call through a range of channels. QAA appoints reviewers against published role descriptions and person specifications – these cover the generic requirements for all QAA reviewers and specific requirements for particular methods or reviewer roles. QAA seeks to ensure that its pool of reviewers reflects the diversity of UK providers and of the UK population; the pool includes international reviewers.

The credibility of review draws upon the up-to-date knowledge and experience of review teams and, therefore, QAA tends to appoint reviewers who are currently employed as staff by providers; student reviewers may be current students or sabbatical officers. However, recognising that knowledge and experience have a life span beyond a period of employment or study, QAA normally allows individuals who remain engaged with higher education developments to continue as reviewers for up to three years after they have left the sector.

All reviewers are trained in the specific method for which they are appointed. Refresher training is also provided. Training is usually provided for reviewers ahead of the academic session when it is anticipated that they will be conducting a review, it is primarily for those appointed to teams.

Please note that the information below may be revised and updated, the current criteria used to appoint and select reviewers will be included in calls for new reviewers when advertised.

Qualities required in all reviewers

QAA expects all reviewers to demonstrate the ability to:

- understand a range of perspectives
- relate to a range of individuals, from students to senior managers and officials
- lead discussions about strategic and operational approaches to the management of quality and academic standards, and enhancement of the student learning experience
- assimilate a large amount of disparate information and analyse it to form reliable, evidence-based conclusions
- maintain the confidentiality of sensitive matters
- display excellent oral and written communication skills
- work with electronic and/or web-based communication systems effectively
- work effectively as part of a team
- adhere to agreed protocols, procedures and deadlines.

Specific knowledge and skills for QE-TNE

- knowledge and understanding of the UK Quality Code and of the arrangements for quality assurance and enhancement in the UK

- experience and knowledge of UK TNE

- cross-institutional experience (beyond a department or subject area) in contributing to the management of academic standards and/or quality enhancement or participating as a representative of students' interests.

In recruiting to the pool of reviewers, QAA tries to ensure that it represents a wide range of providers, roles and levels of seniority and is broadly balanced in terms of disciplines and the range of protected characteristics. When recruiting, QAA encourages, and may specifically seek, applicants from any groups who are underrepresented in the reviewer pool. QAA recruits international as well as UK-based reviewers.

Annex 7: Other supporting information

Complaints and appeals

QAA has formal processes for receiving and dealing with complaints. Details of this process are available on the QAA website.

As there are no formal judgements reached in the QE-TNE Review, there is no appeals process.

Glossary

QAA has a glossary on its website. This includes definitions of the terminology used in TNE.

QAA has published a separate, more detailed set of definitions for TNE.

Annex 8: List of QAA country-based reviews

QAA QE-TNE

These will be added to the online handbook each year:

2025-26

2024-25

2023-24: The People's Republic of China (second set of visits), Vietnam, Greece and (EU) Cyprus

2022-23: The People's Republic of China (first set of visits), Sri Lanka, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

2021-22: United Arab Emirates, the Arab Republic of Egypt, Germany

QAA country-based reviews 1997-2019

2019: Malaysia

2018: Hong Kong

2017: Ireland

2015: Greece and Cyprus

2014: Caribbean

2013: United Arab Emirates

2012: China

2011: Singapore

2010: Malaysia

2009: India

2008: Greece and Cyprus

2007: Hong Kong

2006: China

2005: Bahrain, Oman

2004: Sri Lanka

2003: Denmark, Germany, Italy, Malaysia

2002: Greece, Singapore, Denmark, Spain, Switzerland

2001: Hong Kong

2000: Ireland, South Africa, Spain

1999: Israel, Malaysia, Oman, South Africa

1998: Bahrain, Bulgaria, United Arab Emirates, Greece, India, Hungary, Israel, Poland

1997: Germany, Greece, Netherlands