

Report from the Quality Assessment Committee

Purpose

Board's primary role in relation to this paper:

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

1. The board is kept informed of the work of its Quality Assessment Committee (QAC) by receiving a report on the outcomes of each meeting. This report summarises the outcomes of the QAC meeting held on 12 June 2023.

Recommendations

2. The board is invited to:
 - a. Receive the report of the committee.

Further information

3. Available from Simon Levine.

Provisional categories for next cycle of condition B3 assessments

4. The Director of Quality updated the committee on preparations for the second cycle of assessments of compliance with condition B3 (student outcomes). Data was presented to inform discussion about prioritisation. Updated continuation and completion data showing the sector distribution for student outcomes measures continued to support the provisional decisions that the OfS has made. Updated progression data was expected to be published in July and final decisions would be taken after this.
5. Exempt from publication.
6. Exempt from publication.
7. Exempt from publication.
8. Exempt from publication.
9. Exempt from publication.
10. Exempt from publication.
11. It was agreed that final decisions about assessment would be shared with the committee at its meeting in September 2023.

Degree awarding powers case studies

12. The committee was presented with information about how the OfS operates the application process for providers applying for degree awarding powers (DAPs). As an introduction to the types of DAPs assessments the committee will consider in the future, the committee discussed two recent case studies, drawn from assessments that were considered by the designated quality body (DQB). The case studies set out the issues that had been identified and considered by the OfS in undertaking its final assessments.
13. Members asked if the OfS had a sense of the volume of casework the committee would be expected to consider in the next year. OfS officers noted that scheduling of assessments had started, and consequently officers should be able to provide a more detailed plan of work for the committee, and consider if planned meeting schedules will be sufficient. It is likely that there will be a higher workload for the committee in the first months of its new role in giving advice on DAPs assessments, as we work through a number of existing cases that are already in progress, and have been handed over by the DQB. The team will provide a schedule at the next meeting.
14. Exempt from publication.
 - a. Exempt from publication.
 - b. Exempt from publication.
 - c. Exempt from publication.

d. Exempt from publication.

15. Members asked if the membership of the committee would need to be expanded to accommodate DAPs-related work. The secretary to the committee reported that a recruitment process would take place over the summer and that new committee members were expected to be appointed by the autumn. It was noted that any recruitment would need to ensure that the committee as a whole meets the requirements of section 46 of HERA in terms of the experience and background of members.
16. OfS officers confirmed that the next steps would be to work on a more detailed plan of work for the committee, considering recruitment timelines, a schedule for upcoming cases, and training requirements. It was discussed that training was currently being scheduled for new assessors (the academic experts who will undertake the DAPs assessments) and this will likely be in July, held virtually. These sessions may be a helpful introduction for committee members if they are able to attend. OfS officers will share the dates when confirmed.

Update on quality and standards assessment work

17. The Head of Quality and Standards updated the committee on the status of quality assessment work and noted the publication of a [blog post](#) giving information about these activities. The committee noted that the OfS board had updated its scheme of delegation to reflect the committee's new role in providing advice to the OfS about the exercise of functions under section 46 of HERA in relation to DAPs.
18. There was a discussion about ongoing risks related to quality and standards assessment work. The Head of Quality and Standards noted that good progress was being made to implement new section 71 fee regulations which will enable the OfS to charge fees for quality assessments from 7 August 2023.
19. Members asked whether the level of fees to be charged would be comparable with the fees previously charged by the QAA. The Director of Quality explained that the OfS aimed to keep costs broadly comparable but had committed to paying academic assessors more for their work than the QAA had done in order to attract high quality assessors. She explained the fee structure for some assessment work, including DAPs, was expected to be based on an upfront estimate and subsequent refund or cost recovery model. This meant the cost of assessment would vary for different providers.

20. Exempt from publication.