**Quality Enhancement Framework Briefing**

The Quality Enhancement Framework for universities in Scotland was formed in 2003. There are currently five pillars which make up the framework. They include;

* Enhancement-Led Institutional Review,
* Institutional-led Review,
* Public Information,
* Enhancement Themes
* Student Engagement.

These five pillars are underpinned by these themes: High Quality Learning, Student Engagement, Quality Culture, which sets the stage for how quality arrangements are discussed, reviewed, changed, and implemented.

Each of the five pillars are explained in further detail below.

**Methodology for the Quality Enhancement Framework**

The methodology for the Quality Enhancement Framework, is firmly grounded in self-reflection, and self-improvement. The Quality Enhancement Framework provides a context for this reflection processes to happen in a number of ways. The process of self-reflection should be evident in a university’s strategic vision, and acted on throughout all levels of a university.

The crux of the methodology is one simple question: *how can we change what we do, and the way that we do it to improve the students’ experience at our universities?*

**Five Pillars explained**

**Enhancement-Led Institutional Reviews (ELIR)**: are external reviews which happen every 4 years. Universities are reviewed externally by Scottish, English and international peers, and student reviewers. The purpose of the external reviews is for QAA Scotland to be confident in the institutions’ own quality assurance processes and focus on areas which the institutions have chosen to enhance.

The ELIR is made up of several different elements which include;

* Annual Discussions; meetings between a student representative, QAA Scotland and this institution to discuss a range of things that include, how the institution is following up with their ELIR outcomes, what are the key themes coming out of the institutions internal reviews, progress of student engagement.
* Reflective Analysis (RA); which is the document that an institution submits to QAA Scotland before a review highlight the areas of greatest improvement and areas of need or attention. Students associations should be key partners in writing the Reflective Analysis.
* Two site visits by the review team; this allows the review team to interview and hear evidence from different parts of the institution while referring to the institutions own reflections in the RA to determine if there are any challenging areas.

*Questions to think about*: how has your students’ association and student representatives been involved in the ELIR process? Has this been a positive or negative

experience and why was this the case? If you could change something about the ELIR process what would it be?

**Institutional-led Review (ILR)**: these are internal reviews which the university conducts itself. Universities have a lot of flexibility around what they do for an Institution-led Review. This could be a review of subjects or disciplines, reviewing a particular topic that has many dimensions. This could be a review of all the support services; a review of the post-graduate taught experience; or review of the curriculum. All Institution-led Reviews should have students on the leading group. If a panel is reviewing a subject or discipline, there will be a student reviewer on the panel. The outcomes of all ILRs should be published and made available to staff and students.

*Questions to think about:* how has your students’ association and student representatives been involved in the ILR process? Has this been a positive or negative experience and why was this the case? If you could change something about the ILR process what would it be?

**Public Information**: It is required that an institution displays all information it thinks is relevant to its provision of academia, accommodation, extra-curricular, etc.

This information must be aimed to its students (current and potential), employers and other stakeholders. Public Information includes internal and external information.

* Internal includes, institutions’ own surveys, Institutional-led review reports, programme feedback,
* External includes national surveys, such as NSS, Key Information Sets, Which? University, ELIR Review Reports, and others

*Questions to think about*: how useful or relevant do you think different types of information are to students? Are there some pieces of information that are more useful than others? If so why? What kinds of information do think need to be maintained? Are there any gaps in the current suite of Public Information? If so what are they and what kind of changes would you like to see?

**Enhancement Themes:** are unique to the Scottish higher education sector. The principal idea behind the Enhancement Themes is that it is beneficial for the Scottish sector as a whole for institutions to work together, sharing their experiences and practices with each other. The focus or topics of the Enhancement Themes are chosen by a committee of senior academic managers and student representatives, and they are managed by QAA Scotland on behalf of the sector as a whole. The current Enhancement Theme is Student Transitions.

*Questions to think about*: how has your students’ association and student representatives been involved in Enhancement Themes at your university? Has this been a positive or negative experience and why was this the case? If you could change something about the way your students’ association participates in Enhancement Themes what would it be?

**Student Engagement:** has always been seen a critical part to making decision and change across the sector because students are experts, in their own learning experience. parqs was created in 2003 to support the sector to engage with students in a meaningful way. [A Student Engagement Framework for Scotland](http://www.sparqs.ac.uk/upfiles/SEFScotland.pdf) was published in 2013, to help define what student engagement means and should be supported in different areas.

*Questions to think about*: how is your students’ association and student representatives engaged in decision making at your university? Do you think your students’ association is properly supported to engage in decision making? Has this been a positive or negative experience and why was this the case? If you could change something about the way your students’ association engages with the university what would it be?