An introduction to QAA and the Tertiary Quality Project in Scotland

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Overview of presentation

- Who is QAA?
- Tertiary Quality Project (TQP) in Scotland
- QAA's approach to the TQP
- Discussion questions
- Next steps
- Questions

Who is QAA?

- UK-wide organisation
- Purpose: To ensure that students and learners experience the highest possible quality of education
- Independent body entrusted with monitoring, and advising on, standards and quality in UK higher education
- Stakeholder engagement – nationally and internationally
- Guided by the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and the ESG
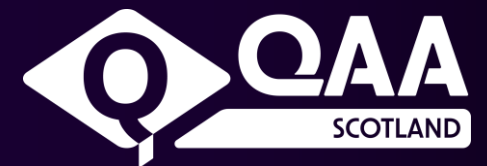
Tertiary Quality Project in Scotland

- SFC's Coherence and Sustainability: Review of Tertiary Education and Research – 29 June 2021
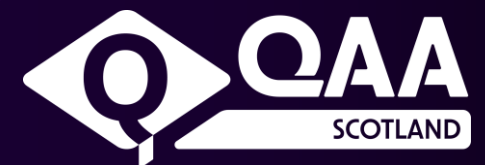- SFC's Review Recommendation and SG response

SFC Review Recommendation

"We recommend developing a single quality assurance and enhancement framework for tertiary education, to uphold academic standards, and enhance the learning experience of all students"
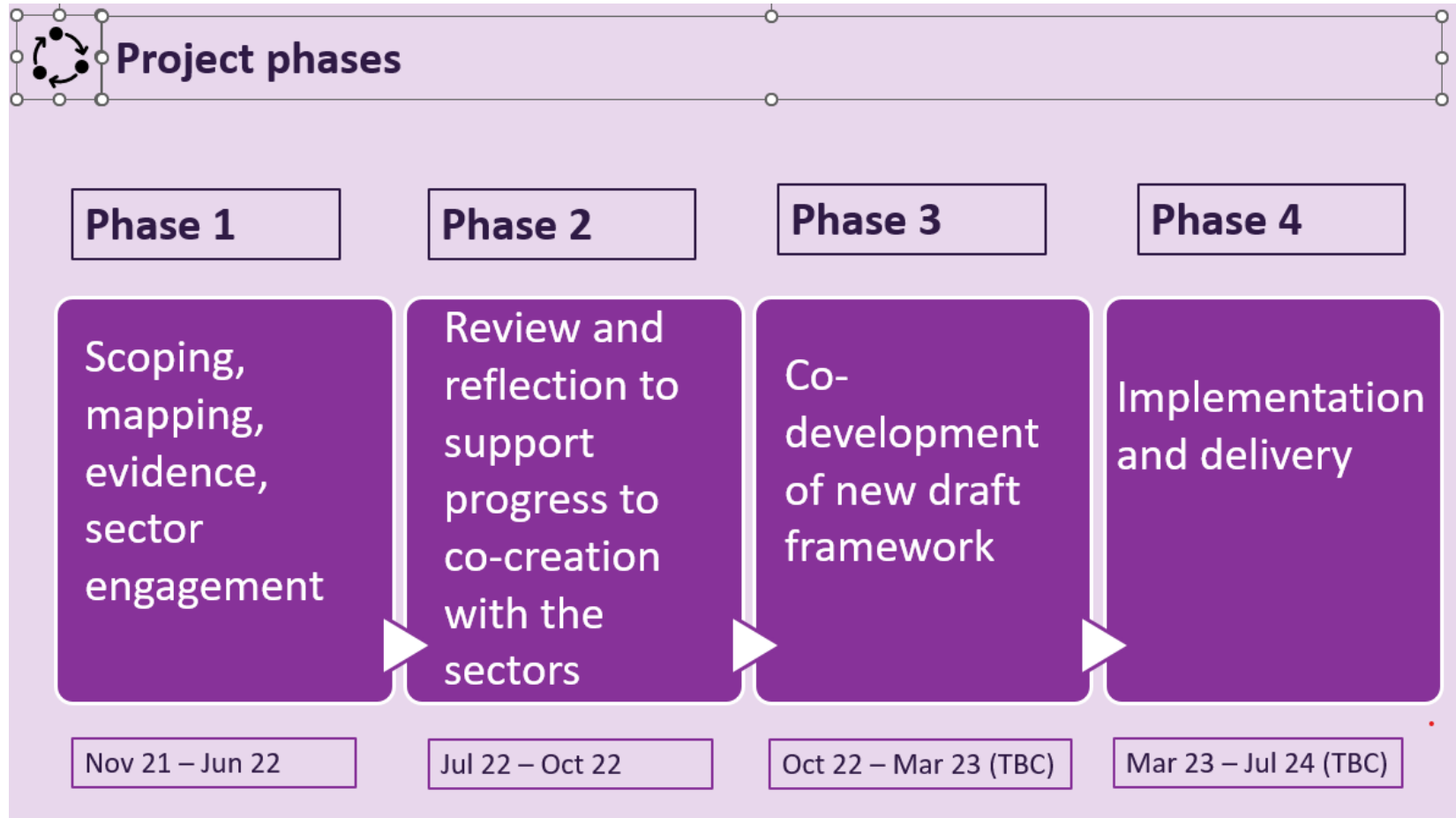
Scottish Government response

"We are reassured by the SFC's commitment to build on the feedback from stakeholders about what they value within existing approaches and are content for SFC to explore options for a single quality assurance and enhancement framework for tertiary education"

COHERENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY: A REVIEW OF TERTIARY EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

29 JUNE 2021

QAA SCOTLAND

Tertiary Quality Project in Scotland continue…

Project phases

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Scoping, mapping, evidence, sector engagement	Review and reflection to support progress to co-creation with the sectors	Co-development of new draft framework	Implementation and delivery
Nov 21 – Jun 22	Jul 22 – Oct 22	Oct 22 – Mar 23 (TBC)	Mar 23 – Jul 24 (TBC)

BENEFITS OF A TERTIARY APPROACH TO QUALITY

FOR STUDENTS

SUPPORTING SUCCESSFUL STUDENT OUTCOMES – clearer links between our quality arrangements and successful outcomes for students;

LEARNER JOURNEY AND TRANSITIONS – better support for student transitions and more seamless pathways for learners from senior phase and between colleges and universities;

SUPPORTING ALL TYPES OF PROVISION CONSISTENTLY – increased consistency for arrangements across different types of provision (e.g. work-based learning and micro-credentials). A significant proportion of higher education provision is delivered by Scotland's colleges, and with more joint provision between the sectors planned, the divide between college and university quality approaches is already artificial;

CONTINUED CONFIDENCE IN STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF QUALIFICATIONS – the value of qualifications is crucial to students, employers as well as to the reputation of our system.

FOR INSTITUTIONS

REDUCTION IN DUPLICATION – of delivery of quality assurance and enhancement across the system;

MAXIMISING INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCE – in streamlining activity there are opportunities to both maximise institutional resource and the impact of the framework;

SUPPORTING OUR APPROACH TO COLLABORATION – a single approach to quality will enable us to support institution-led and learner focused collaborations across our tertiary system. As new provision and approaches to delivery are developed, the role of a shared quality framework will be crucial in continuing to do this effectively;

MORE EFFECTIVE IDENTIFICATION AND SHARING OF GOOD PRACTICE – we have excellent practice in both sectors at present and a tertiary approach will help organise how we share and gain impact from our collective experience.

FOR OUR SYSTEM

GREATER OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY – of key issues facing students, staff, and institutions through more consistent methodologies and reporting;

**MAXIMISING IMPACT** – of the expertise within our delivery partners;

CLEARER LINKS – between national and sector level priorities in shaping enhancement and improvement activities;

CONSISTENT APPROACH – to assurance and accountability, working with partners to optimise the assurance approach is consistent with development of the National Impact Framework and the Assurance and Accountability Framework;

GIVING SOMETHING BACK – a clearer link to UN Sustainability Goals can help us articulate how we can use our approach to learning, teaching, and working with students to benefit others.

Students at the heart
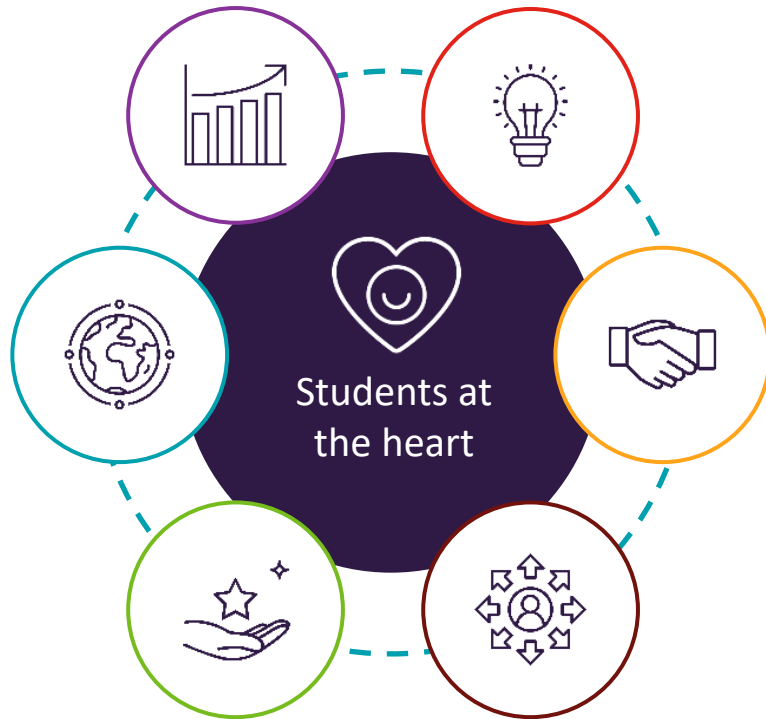
Data and evidence

- Student outcomes
- Common dataset for reporting
- Institutional PIs/QIs
- Institution-led self-evaluation
- Use of student and staff feedback
- Outcomes of review activity

Externality

- External institutional peer review
- Sector reference points/requirements
- External specialists/experts
- Public information and assurance

Excellence in learning, teaching & assessment

- Academic standards and awarding
- Strategic leadership of learning and teaching
- Curriculum planning, design and delivery
- Learning environment, resources and technologies
- Professional development
- Currency of learning and teaching
- Peer review and evaluation of learning, teaching and assessment
- Innovation in learning, teaching & assessment

Enhancement

- Institution-led review/activity and action planning
- External institutional peer review
- Sector enhancement activity
- Impact of collaboration
- External outlook – globally responsive

Student engagement & partnership

- Engaging students as partners in their learning experience
- Students at core of review and enhancement activity
- Student voice – every place, every level
- Effective support for student representation
- Responsiveness to student feedback

Supporting student success

- Enabling student success – wellbeing, inclusion, equality, student support
- Context and community - meeting the needs of students
- Effective and successful transitions
- Support for employability, skills development and lifelong learning
- Achieving positive outcomes for every learner
- Responsiveness to concerns

Phase 3 TQF Development Projects – plus lead agencies
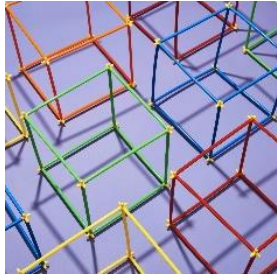
1. Shaping the framework - management of co-creation and integration of workstreams (SFC)
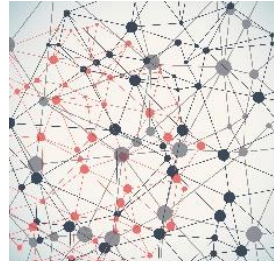
2. Using data and evidence to understand, evaluate and improve student outcomes (SFC)

3. Institution-led self-evaluation - supporting quality assurance and enhancement (SFC)

4. Evaluating and enhancing the student learning experience and student partnership (sparqs)

5. Streamlining reporting and quality processes (Joint agency)

6. Tertiary sector enhancement activity in the new TQF (Joint agency)

Tertiary Quality Project in Scotland

QAA has been commissioned by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) to lead key areas of Scotland's Tertiary Quality Project (TQP):

- **External enhancement-led peer review**
- **National thematic enhancement activity**
- **Tertiary Enhancement Topic**

QAA's approach to the TQP

In developing an external enhancement-led peer review method, QAA aims to:

- **Co-create** with staff and students from universities and colleges to ensure collective ownership.
- **Draw on strengths from both sectors** and ensure the agreed approaches reflect these strengths.
- **Apply flexibility** recognising the uniqueness of individual institutions.

Discussion questions

- What are the challenges and logistical practicalities of ensuring meaningful student engagement and partnership working in our quality arrangements? How do we support meaningful student engagement?

- Recognising the diversity of our learners, are there particular groupings who might require more creative approaches? For example apprentices?

- How do you think we might best address these challenges?

- What can we build into models of delivery that might be helpful?

- Link to Padlet: https://padlet.com/cturnbull21/sesn-discussion-questions-qd1hretu0nefv3wc

Next steps

We will host a series of conversations with staff and students from colleges, universities and sector agencies to shape the work we contribute to the TQP across September and October:

- **21 September, 10am-12pm, online:** Introduction to QAA's areas of work under the TQP.
- **11 October, 10-12.30am, West Lothian College:** Shaping our next external review method.
- **11 October, 1.30-4.00pm, West Lothian College:** Shaping our approach to national thematic activity.

Thank you – any questions?

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