

University Quality Arrangements 2022-2024

As the sector moves towards a joint approach to quality, for the next two academic years (2022-23 and 2023-24), colleges and universities will still carry out separate quality arrangements.

QAA Scotland will carry out two types of activities as part of the university quality arrangements: **Quality Enhancement and Standards Reviews (QESR)** and **Institutional Liaison Meetings (ILM)**. Half of institutions will undergo QESR and the other half will engage in ILM. Dates will be planned collaboratively between QAA Scotland and universities.

Key features of these arrangements will include:

- Self-evaluation by each higher education institution (HEI).
- Engagement informed by sector reference points.
- The involvement of peer and student reviewers on at least one occasion, including a site visit. (**NB**: site visits can be conducted online or in person).

Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR)

Quality Enhancement and Standards Review (QESR) is an enhancement-led, evidence-based method of peer review. Each review team consists of staff and students drawn from other HEIs within Scotland and the UK.

QESR considers how, from the information available to the review team, an institution is continuing to maintain an effective and enhancement-led approach towards the management of academic quality and standards, and the quality of the student experience.

The institution undergoing QESR submits a set of documentation, all of which is drawn from reports that are either required by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) or which form part of the HEI's usual activity for internal quality assurance and enhancement. The QESR team reviews the documentation submitted and meets with staff and students at the institution in a one-day review visit, which normally takes place virtually. Each QESR team comprises one student reviewer, one academic reviewer and one co-ordinating reviewer.

After visiting the institution, the QESR team writes a report, which is published on the [QAA Scotland website](#). Each institution is expected to submit a follow-up action plan 24 weeks after the publication of its QESR report. The action plan will be published on the QAA website and will form part of the information base used in future quality arrangements.



Institutional Liaison Meetings (ILMs) will include consideration of the findings from QESR.

As with ELIR, findings from QESR will be used to inform enhancement and development activity across the sector.

Institutional Liaison Meetings (ILMs)

The ILM will take place between a QAA Scotland officer and representatives of the institution, in the year when the institution is not engaged in a QESR. This meeting will be scheduled for approximately two hours and conducted either as an in-person visit or online.

Suggested attendees from the institution include: the Head of Quality, Deputy Principal (Learning & Teaching) and students' association/union Vice-President (Education), although this does not preclude other relevant colleagues within the institution and its students' association/union from participating. In order to support student engagement, students' association/union staff members are also often included.

Student involvement continues to form a key part of the ILM process. In addition to student attendance at the meeting, institutions are expected to consult with their student representatives to ensure there is understanding of the purpose of the meeting and to support students' contribution to the discussion. This is to ensure that matters which are relevant to the student interests are covered.

The institution is not expected to prepare bespoke material for the ILM. It is anticipated that the meetings will be supported by a set of existing material, or information already prepared for other purposes.

The QAA Scotland officer will chair the meeting and explore a range of topics and questions arising from existing documentation, in discussion with institutional representatives. These will consider follow-up from the previous ILM or QESR; the institutional approach to enhancement (including student partnership and engagement in sector-wide enhancement topic(s)); management of academic standards and quality processes; current developments in student engagement, including any reflections on student feedback and survey results; and other matters that the institution and/or students' association wish to discuss

Following the meeting, the QAA Scotland officer will provide a summary of the key topics explored and confirm any action points and observations. Action points will relate to actions agreed in the meeting, such as the provision of additional information.

This summary will be shared with the institution, who will have the opportunity to confirm points of factual accuracy, and would be made available to SFC on request, to provide context for any advice or assurance they may seek from QAA.



Our support

In terms of our support, sparqs will provide updates during regular NEON and SESN meetings. We are also going to circulate this briefing to all students' associations to raise awareness about the change in arrangements, to ensure students are clear on how and where they can engage and feel empowered to do so.

What you can do to prepare

Students are among the main beneficiaries of QESR and ILM, and **the student experience is at the heart of the review process**. Student reviewers are full and equal members of review teams.

To inform its considerations of the extent and effectiveness of the institution's partnership with its students, **the review team will expect to meet with students as part of the review visit**.

We advise all students' associations and students' unions to familiarise themselves with the institution's last ELIR reports (you can find all the latest published ELIR reports on the [QAA Scotland website](#)) and to get in touch with their quality team to find out more about the timeline of the visits, in order to enable them to go over any discussion points they want to raise.

Further information

See the QAA Scotland website for further information around [QESR and ILM](#).

If you need further support and information, please get in touch with Gloria Laurini, Development Consultant, at gloria.laurini@sparqs.ac.uk.

