
Annex B: Self-Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP) guidance

What is the purpose of the SEAP and how will it be used?

1. The SEAP is designed for use by institutions (including Governance committees, staff and students), SFC and the QAA. Primarily, the SEAP should be prepared for internal institutional use and should be an honest and open reflection on the activities undertaken in the previous session, identifying progress with previous actions and any emerging strengths or areas for development.

Institutions

2. The SEAP will:
 - Support institutions to reflect on annual institutional quality assurance and enhancement activities and outcomes, including on progress made since their last external review, and to identify and plan for key strategic enhancements, which will be articulated through the action plan.
 - Provide institutional oversight to:
 - Ensure that the Accountable Officer is sighted on, and has ownership of, the quality of the student experience, academic standards and academic integrity. Only once the Accountable Officer is satisfied with the thoroughness and effectiveness of the evaluation and action-plan should it be submitted to SFC.
 - Enable the institution's governing body to be sighted on the key priorities for the provision and enhancement of learning and teaching.
 - Demonstrate to staff and students how their contribution to the activities that impact the quality assurance and enhancement of learning, teaching and the student experience are collated and used to document and drive strategic enhancement within the institution.

Scottish Funding Council

3. The SEAP will:
 - Form the evidence base for individual institutions in relation to the high-quality learning and teaching outcome of the Outcomes Framework and Assurance Model (OFAM) and will also contribute to other outcomes of the framework, e.g., 'Student interests, access and success' and 'Skills and work-based learning' outcomes.
 - Support annual institutional engagement with SFC and, along with the wider aspects of the TQEF, provide SFC with assurance on the effective use and impact of public investment to deliver high-quality learning provision.

- Contribute to the identification of key themes arising from quality assurance and enhancement activities for consideration by and dissemination to key stakeholders across the sector.

Quality Assurance Agency

4. The SEAP will:

- Be used as part of the evidence base for the TQER.
- Be used to inform the QAA of annual institutional progress with the outcomes of the TQER and engagement with enhancement activities, including STEP.
- Support the Institutional Liaison Meetings with the QAA.

Self-Evaluation and Action Plan Guidance

Scope

5. It is recognised that all provision within an institution will be subject to the same/similar quality assurance and enhancement processes. When describing good practice or areas for development or enhancement the SEAP should focus on the areas of priority identified by the institution. As outlined in paragraphs 3 and 4 the SEAP is designed to be used for a range of purposes including as part of the monitoring and assurance associated with the SFC Outcomes Framework. To that end, the focus of the annual quality engagement meetings with SFC will be on SFC-funded activity (credit-bearing and non-credit bearing) for universities and colleges, however we recognise that there will be differences between institutions in terms of the extent to which non-credit bearing activity will feature in the SEAP.

General

6. **Overview:** It is recognised that quality processes are both assurance and self-evaluative exercises and the SEAP is designed to complement and support the self-evaluation approach rather than be a separate exercise. The SEAP reports on an institution's existing self-evaluation activities (for example, annual monitoring and subject and support services ILQR), reflecting on the **outcomes** of institutional quality arrangements, supporting data and evidence and the resulting priority areas of focus and impact. This culminates in a concise, high-level summary of themes and an associated action plan. Institutions should treat the self-evaluation and in particular the action plan as live documents that can be revisited and updated throughout the year.
7. **Link to TQER:** The SEAP and the supporting data and evidence used to prepare it, will form part of the Advanced Information Set that will contribute to TQER. Institutions are therefore advised to clearly reference any evidence that is used as the basis for the SEAP and to ensure these evidence sources are kept readily available to support preparation, and/or submission, for their TQER. The supporting documentation **should not** be submitted with the SEAP.

8. **Institutions undergoing external peer review:** there is no requirement for institutions undergoing review to submit a SEAP in the same academic year (e.g. if an institution is being reviewed in AY2026-27, then they will not be required to submit a SEAP describing the outcomes of AY 2025-26 on 30 November 2026). This will enable institutions to focus on preparing for the review and developing their Strategic Impact Analysis. SFC will draw assurance on the quality of learning and teaching from the outcome of the external review.
9. **Length and focus:** The SEAP should be a concise distillation of key high-level themes from the previous academic year. It should **not** include descriptions of processes or extracts of policy or other documents held by the institution. Institutions should use a layout and format that suits their context, however, the indicative word count for the self-evaluation element should be in the region of 5,000 words (excluding the action plan). It is recognised that some flexibility in the word count is helpful, and shorter reports are accepted where they accurately reflect institutional priorities; similarly, we recognise that some institutions may require a longer report. Where institutions feel a longer report is necessary, it should be discussed with the institutional Outcome Manager in advance of submission. The action plan should be of a length that suits the needs of the institution and incorporate any actions arising from the last external review.
10. **Students as Partners:** Institutions should engage students as partners in the preparation of the annual SEAP and in the monitoring of the implementation of the actions. Student partnership is a key aspect of the TQEF, which is expected to develop and mature over time. Institutions should consult the sparqs resource "[Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership](#)" and accompanying resources to support this approach.
11. **Submission:** The final document should be submitted to SFC by the 30 November (or the first working day in December, when the 30 November falls on a weekend or bank holiday). It should be a reflection on the previous academic year, with scope to add any recent significant information.
12. **Statement of Assurance:** The final document must be reviewed and signed off by the Accountable Officer in advance of submission. It is not a requirement that the SEAP be reviewed and approved by the Governing Body prior to submission, however the SEAP should be shared with the Governing Body to support their oversight of quality assurance and enhancement. It is for the institution to determine when to do so based on their own governance schedules. The SEAP should include the formal annual statement of assurance to SFC, included below. The Accountable Officer must sign the statement of assurance and indicate when it was endorsed.

Statement of Assurance: As the Accountable Officer for [name of institution], I confirm that I have considered the institution's arrangements for the management of academic standards and the quality of the learning experience for AY [year just elapsed], including the scope and impact of these. I further confirm that I am satisfied that the institution has adequate and effective arrangements to maintain standards and to assure and enhance the quality of its provision. I can therefore provide assurance to the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) that the academic standards and the quality of the learning provision at this institution continue to meet the requirements set by SFC.

Signature:

Accountable Officer (Name):

Date:

Self-Evaluation Narrative

Introduction

13. The self-evaluation component of the report focuses on the Principles of the TQEF that have been co-created and are jointly owned with the sector.
14. For each Principle, the institution is expected to provide their evaluation of the **outcomes** of the quality assurance and enhancement processes that underpin that principle, focusing on what has gone well (since the last SEAP or other evaluation), progress against and impact of previously identified actions and areas for further enhancement based on the data and evidence gathered **during the academic year**.
15. The self-evaluation should focus on in-year progress and be a **summary** that highlights the areas of focus at an institutional level and contextualises the actions that the institution intends to take to address weaknesses or achieve further enhancements. Alongside students, the summary should also (where relevant) include reference to the role of externals, for example: employers, schools, academic partners, etc., in evaluation.
16. All aspects of an institution's provision (i.e., all SCQF levels and modes of delivery) should be self-evaluated, but the content of the SEAP should focus on the outcomes of quality assurance processes, themes arising and strengths or areas for enhancement at an institutional level. Discussions with SFC based on the SEAP submission will focus on the outcomes associated with funded provision.
17. The report **must not** include descriptions of routine quality assurance processes. The institution should outline significant changes that have occurred during the past year and/or areas that are being enhanced or developed (or where appropriate) are a continuation of an initiative that was started previously and continues to be a focus in the coming year.

Evaluation of the Principles

18. Within the guidance for each Principle there are prompts that institutions may find helpful in undertaking their evaluation and identifying areas of good practice and areas for enhancement or development.
19. The Principles diagram includes key activities and sources of data/evidence that have been identified by the sector and mapped to each principle. Extracts of each principle have been included in this guidance and should be used for reference. **It is not expected that institutions evaluate every point.** Institutions should consider what data and evidence is appropriate to their own context and best highlights key areas of focus for enhancement or development in the current year.
20. Although there are separate 'Data and evidence' and 'Externality' Principles, these **do not** require separate sections within the evaluation as they underpin the four headline principles. The relevant data and evidence should be set out by institutions in relation to each Principle as per the guidance provided and the outcomes of external activities and feedback, should inform the evaluation of the relevant Principles.

Headline Principles

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.

21. In evaluating 'Excellence in learning, teaching and assessment', consideration should be given to the **outcomes** of institutional quality assurance processes associated with learning, teaching and assessment (e.g., external feedback, annual monitoring and periodic review of all provision including Transnational Education [TNE] and work-based learning, student outcomes, appeals and student conduct/ academic integrity etc.) and the evidence they provide to address the following questions at an institutional level:
 - What strengths and areas for enhancement or development have been identified as a result of the analysis of student outcomes and evaluation data? This could include key outcomes and overall trends in:

- Recruitment, admissions, retention, achievement and progression data.
 - Numbers of students on placements or work-based programmes.
 - **For degree level provision, this should include:** undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research degree outcomes.
- What strengths and areas for enhancement or development have been identified as a result of external independent advice and feedback from, for example: PSRB activity, External Examiners, External Verification activity and External Stakeholders?
 - In considering the wider evidence (relating to items noted in the principles diagram), has the institution identified any additional specific strengths that have been achieved, or areas for enhancement or development in relation to learning, teaching and assessment.
 - Does the institution have any plans to make any changes to the curriculum (i.e., new course provision or course closures) and what measures are in place to manage these changes.
22. Institutions should encourage staff to utilise the sparqs [Student Learning Experience Model](#) in the underpinning activities that contribute to this principle and in particular outcomes from discussions with students based on the reflective questions associated with the following four building blocks i.e. Curriculum; Resources, Environment and Technology; Learning and Teaching Delivery and Assessment and 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.**
23. In evaluating ‘Supporting student success’ consideration should be given to the **outcomes** of institutional quality assurance processes associated with supporting students to succeed and the themes arising from the range of internal quality assurance processes including professional services review along with any external feedback that may be relevant. Consideration should be given to the following key questions:
- What strengths and areas for enhancement or development, relevant to student support have been identified because of the analysis of student outcomes and evaluation data? This could include key outcomes and overall trends in:

Colleges

- Number and proportion of students from the most deprived 10% postcode areas (SIMD10) and number/ proportion successfully achieving (FT & PT).
- Number and proportion of care-experienced students enrolled and number/ proportion successfully achieving (FT & PT).
- Number and proportion of students aged 16-19 on full-time FE courses successfully achieving.

Universities

- The number and proportion of Scotland-domiciled full-time first-degree entrants from the 20% most deprived postcodes and number/proportion returning in year 2.
 - The number and proportion of Scotland-domiciled undergraduate entrants from the 20% and 40% most deprived postcodes and number/proportion returning in year 2.
 - The number and proportion of Scotland-domiciled undergraduate entrants that are care-experienced and number/proportion returning in year 2.
- In considering the wider evidence (relating to items noted in the principles diagram), has the institution identified any additional specific strengths that have been achieved, or areas for enhancement or development in relation to supporting student success?
 - We recognise that institutions will have completed their Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) reports in April 2025, which SFC and Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) reviewed and therefore institutions do not need to provide that information again within their SEAPs and should instead focus on any priority areas that particularly impact learning, teaching and the student experience that have not already been addressed in the PSED.
 - What (if any) specific strengths or areas for development have been identified (during this year) as a result of the analysis and evaluation of:
 - Graduate outcomes/ Student destinations.
 - Complaints.
24. Institutions should encourage staff involved in providing services to support students to utilise the [Student Learning Experience Model](#) when evaluating their provision and in particular the outcomes of discussions with students based on the reflective questions that relate to “Progression and Achievement”, Community and Belonging”, “Support and Guidance” and “Organisation and Management” building blocks.

Enhancement & Quality Culture

- **Institution wide culture of assurance, improvement and enhancement.**
- **Institution-led review/activity and action planning.**
- **External institutional peer review.**
- **Sector enhancement activity.**
- **Impact of collaboration.**
- **External outlook – globally responsive.**

25. This section should include a focus on external peer-led review, progress with follow-up activity and engagement with sectoral enhancement activity. The key messages from external review should be distilled to inform this self-evaluation and actions arising from external review should be incorporated into the action plan. In subsequent years, this section should also include an update on in-year progress with the outcomes of external review.

26. In evaluating ‘Enhancement and quality culture’, the institution should ask itself:

- How has the institution addressed areas for development/ recommendations arising from the last external (peer) review?
- What (if any) changes the institution has made as result of external benchmarking (e.g. to the UK Quality Code or other sector reference points) or as a result of other external feedback (e.g. Awarding Body or PSRB outcomes), that have helped the institution manage the quality of its provision?
- How effectively has the institution engaged in sectoral enhancement activity and what impact has this had?
- What (if any) enhancements have been achieved through collaborative (local, regional, national or international) activity?

Student engagement & partnership

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

27. In completing this section, institutions should identify key areas of strength or areas for enhancement or development that focus on developing student partnership (at local and strategic levels) and promoting student engagement, including student representation and responding to the student voice.
28. In evaluating ‘Student engagement and partnership’, institutions should utilise [Scotland’s Ambition for Student Partnership](#) and the [Student Learning Experience](#) (in particular the outcomes of discussions with students based on the reflective questions that relate to ‘Student Partnership’ building block) to inform their reflections.
29. Where the outcomes of student engagement (e.g., themes arising from student voice mechanisms, including internal and external surveys) have informed changes to other principles (e.g., learning, teaching and assessment or supporting student success), this should be covered under those principles to avoid duplication.
30. Institutions should include a high-level narrative, evaluating any key changes (or ongoing trends that need to be addressed) in their internal and/or external student surveys e.g., National Student Survey (NSS) and/or Student Support and Engagement Survey (SSES) outcomes, compared to the previous year. Where institutions participate in the Post-Graduate Taught Experience (PTES) and Post-Graduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), these should be included too. Key outcomes and overall trends, could include:

Colleges

- Percentage response rates to the SSES across FE and HE, FT and PT.
- The percentage of respondents to the SSES overall satisfied with their college experience.

Universities

- Percentage response rate to the NSS.
 - The percentage of respondents to the National Student Survey satisfied with the overall quality of their course.
31. Examples of activities that showcase student partnership and progress towards the Scotland’s Ambition for Student Partnership, would be beneficial in this section, but should not duplicate content that has already been included elsewhere.

Underpinning Principles

Externality
• External institutional peer review. • Sector reference points/requirements. • External specialists/experts. • Public information and assurance.

32. Evaluation of External institutional peer review and sector reference points/requirements should be embedded on the “Enhancement and quality culture” principle and feedback from external specialists/experts, should be included according to the principles that it is most relevant to.

Data and evidence

- **Student outcomes.**
- **Common dataset for reporting.**
- **Institutional PIs/Qis.**
- **Institution-led self-evaluation and action planning.**
- **Use of student and staff feedback.**
- **Outcomes of review activity.**

33. When addressing each Principle, the institution should reflect on what key data and evidence they have drawn upon to evaluate themselves. This can include data that forms part of the annual returns to SFC/HESA etc. but may also include their own internal data and evidence.
34. Institutions are encouraged to use their own data (for the year under review) when considering the specific data measures for the SEAP, as the timing of the submission will not align with the official publication of data (for that year). It is recognised that this may result in some variations, but these can be discussed as part of the ongoing engagement with SFC. The SEAP should demonstrate an institution’s ability to evaluate its own data and identify strengths and areas for enhancement and development. In doing this evaluation the institutions should consider their own internal benchmarks and may find it useful to compare them with sector benchmarks where these are available.
35. The key data outcomes that are aligned to each principle have been included in the SEAP guidance; however, institutions are **not** expected to include reference to all the outcomes listed. It is for individual institutions to determine which outcomes they should include based on their evaluation and the resulting strengths or areas for enhancement or development, identified as a result.
36. During annual quality engagement meetings, institutions should however be prepared to discuss all the outcomes included in the guidance, particularly if the institution has key strengths or has a declining trend in any of the outcomes listed. These outcomes are allied to the High-Quality Learning and Teaching, Student Interests, Access and Success and Skills and Work-based Learning outcomes of the OFAM.
37. Where an institution opts to include narrative about key data outcomes under a principle, it should quote the key institution level outcome for the academic year and a brief commentary on the **three-year** trend (where this is available) associated with the outcome, to demonstrate the underpinning evidence that has led to the identification of the strength or area for enhancement or development.

38. The underlying data and evidence contributing to the overarching outcomes, does **not** need to be provided with the SEAP submission, but will be expected to be made available to SFC on request or to the QAA as part of the external review process. As noted in the introduction it is recommended that the institution cross reference to the underpinning source of evidence and ensure these sources are readily accessible to support discussions with SFC and/or preparations for external review.

Action Plan

39. The action plan should be a consolidation of the planned institution level enhancement activities arising from the self-evaluation. It is recognised that institutions may already have their own action plans in place, and it may be appropriate for that action plan to be submitted with the self-evaluation. However, a template is included with this guidance to support institutions.
40. The template aligns with the action plan that will be used by the QAA as part of the TQER and associated follow-up stages. The intention being that institutions can incorporate the plan created following future TQERs into the SEAP and ongoing progress can be monitored through the SEAP submission and ILMs, thereby avoiding unnecessary duplication.
41. When using the template provided, the actions should include the following detail:
- The principle and planned area for enhancement, recognising that there may be more than one area for enhancement under a specific principle and an area of enhancement may support more than one principle.
 - The action to be undertaken and the planned impact or outcomes of this action. The actions should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound.
 - The milestones and associated target dates for implementation.
 - Who is the responsible or lead person for the action (this should be set out as post titles rather than individuals' names).

Action Plan Template

Action Plan 20XX – 20XX

The plan should link directly to the institutional evaluation of the Principles and should prioritise strategic actions arising from the narrative. In addition, the actions arising from commendations or recommendations identified through external review, should also be embedded into this action plan to ensure alignment with overall institutional priorities and to streamline reporting processes. This action plan should be a live document utilised by the institution to focus on strategic quality assurance and enhancement activities on an ongoing basis. The timeline for the completion of actions should be suited to the nature of the activity and the context of the institution, noting that there may be short (e.g. within one year), medium (up to three years) or long (up to 5 years or more) term actions included. **The guidance, included in blue font in the table below should be deleted prior to submission.**

Principle and Area for enhancement or development.	Action(s) and planned impact/ outcomes	Milestone (s)/ target date(s), continuing/ carried forward (c/f)	Responsible/ Lead
Each Principle may have more than one area for enhancement or development.	The actions should reflect the milestones or individual process steps that need to be taken to achieve the planned outcome The actions should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely.	It is not expected that all actions will be completed in one year. If an action is continuing or carried forward from a previous year, this should be noted here.	Use post titles here rather than individual names.

Principle and Area for enhancement or development.	Action(s) and planned impact/ outcomes	Milestone (s)/ target date(s), continuing/ carried forward (c/f)	Responsible/ Lead
Example: Supporting student success	Example: School managers develop plans for a systematic approach to providing accurate and timely data to programme managers, and ensure all staff are supported in using this data effectively. Outcome: Provide quick insights to better inform programme managers on areas for enhancement.	Example: introduction of new dashboard and induction programme with in-year data on student progression, withdrawals, and attainment by December 2024.	Example: Academic Development Committee
	Add rows as required		

Note: it may be useful to include a key to expand any acronyms used in the action plan.