
Towards the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF): spring update

After a number of years of intense discussion and co-creation with colleges, universities, and our key delivery partners, we have now reached a critical final phase in the development of Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF). Together we have developed a shared understanding of the principles that will underpin our new approach, and defined the mechanisms that will deliver the new Framework. Work is now underway on the finer details of each of the delivery mechanisms of the TQEF and how they will come together to support enhancement and assurance.

SFC will publish Guidance on Quality for colleges and universities in June 2024 setting out arrangements for delivering the TQEF from AY2024-25 onwards. Alongside the building anticipation and excitement at the introduction of the TQEF there is also understandable concern around what this will mean for institutions, their staff, and students. While we are not in a position to provide more detail in advance of ongoing discussions, we hope that this update will provide some clarity on the arrangements for the coming academic year.

A key ambition throughout the development of the TQEF has been to eliminate duplication and complexity and to reduce the reporting burden on our colleges and universities. To this end, and in advance of the publication of the Quality guidance, we are able at this stage to confirm that:

- There will be a single annual quality submission from institutions to SFC, the Self Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP). This will replace ILR and the (paused) EREP reporting on quality from colleges and universities and will provide the Learning and Quality elements of our developing assurance and accountability arrangements. We are also working with the QAA to explore options for how SEAPs can best be used to inform external review visits in a way that minimises the reporting burden on institutions.
- We will explore options with the QAA and institutions for managing the burden and cost of engagement on quality to reflect the current financial environment, including potentially adjusting the length of the review cycle.
- We are working with quality agency partners on the scope and frequency of engagements on quality to ensure that they add value for institutions and minimise disruption, cost, and burden.
- The current quality arrangements for colleges and universities respectively will end in AY2023-24. Intelligence and outcomes of review activity identified under these arrangements will be picked up in the TQEF.

- College and university peer reviewers will be part of the same pool and receive training on the same method. Review teams will be assembled by the QAA based on the particular mission and context of the institution under review.

We recognise that it will take time for institutions to adjust to the new arrangements. We are therefore committed to evaluating the experience of colleges and universities. We will work in partnership with our institutions to identify appropriate adjustments and refinements, and will provide institutions – and in particularly colleges – the time and space, flexibility and support, to ‘find their feet’ in the initial phases of the new Framework.

For further information and updates please see our [project website](#).