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## SCOTLAND'S TERTIARY QUALITY ENHANCEMENT FRAMEWORK (TQEF): ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SFC DELIVERY PARTNER AGENCIES

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### OVERVIEW

Outlined below is a summary of the respective roles and responsibilities of the College Development Network (CDN), Education Scotland (ES) HM Inspectors, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and sparqs (Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland) in implementing key aspects of Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF). This summary is supplementary to SFC's [Guidance on Quality](#) for colleges and universities for AY 2024-25.

- **Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER):** QAA will manage the external review process, supporting the peer review teams who will develop lines of enquiry, undertake reviews and identify outcomes.
- **TQER reviewer pool recruitment and training:** QAA will lead on the recruitment and allocation of reviewers to the TQER reviewer pool. Training will be delivered by QAA, with ES HM Inspectors, CDN, and sparqs providing additional input and insight as required.
- **Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP):** STEP is sector owned and will be delivered by QAA in partnership with CDN, with input from Education Scotland.
- **Annual Quality Engagements (AQE):** QAA will hold annual Institution Liaison Meetings (ILMs) with institutions to follow up on the outcomes of reviews, and to prepare for forthcoming reviews as well as provide advice and guidance on matters of quality. SFC will hold separate annual discussions as part of the Outcomes Framework and Assurance Model.
- **Self-Evaluation and Action Plans (SEAP) review:** SEAPs will be submitted to SFC to provide assurance on the quality of provision delivered by institutions. SFC will share the college SEAPs with ES HM Inspectors and college and university SEAPs with QAA. Both agencies will undertake a desk-based review that will support SFC to triangulate and inform its own analysis of the returns. Analysis from the SEAPs will be shared with CDN to inform work with partners to develop interventions to improve practice.
- **Sector capacity building and shared learning:** CDN and QAA, with the support of ES HM Inspectors, will develop a coordinated programme of support to enhance the capacity of colleges and universities to fully participate in the TQEF.



- **Student partnership and engagement:** sparqs will develop and maintain resources to embed the Student Learning Experience (SLE) model and promote the use of Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership in all aspects of the TQEF.

## AGENCY SUMMARY

### COLLEGE DEVELOPMENT NETWORK (CDN)

CDN is the national enhancement and improvement agency for the college sector in Scotland and will play an important role in supporting colleges to fully participate in the TQEF.

CDN will work in partnership with QAA to support the delivery of the new national enhancement programme (STEP) for all our colleges and universities. And while the STEP is sector owned, CDN will work with QAA to develop the structures and processes that allow staff and students from institutions to focus on the delivery of projects and activities.

CDN and QAA, with the support of ES HM Inspectors, will develop a coordinated programme of support to enhance the capacity of colleges to fully participate in the TQEF. CDN will do so through the development of leadership, governance and staff development resources and training which support the sector as they implement new quality assurance processes to align with SFC guidance. The type and mode of delivery of this support will be determined by CDN, QAA and ES HM Inspectors in response to the needs of the sector.

### EDUCATION SCOTLAND (ES)

Over many years ES HM Inspectors has developed a profound understanding of how colleges deliver high-quality learning provision. This insight will be deployed in a number of important ways to support the implementation of the new Framework.

Working with the QAA and CDN, ES will support the development of a coherent programme of activity to enhance colleges' capacity to fully participate in the TQEF. The type and mode of delivery of this support will be determined by ES HM Inspectors, QAA and partner agencies in response to the needs of the sector, but the programme may include content relating to effective self-evaluation and action planning or the use of data to better understand performance and support enhancement.

While training for the TQER reviewer pool will be delivered by the QAA, they will be supported in this by ES HM Inspectors who will help ensure the issues and actions identified by ES HM Inspectors in previous review cycles are incorporated, as appropriate, in the new approach.



ES HM Inspectors will also support SFC in its review of colleges' annual SEAP submissions, advising SFC on how effectively and accurately they reflect their own understanding of colleges' performance.

HM Inspectors will no longer undertake a programme of annual engagement or link visits with colleges in taking forward the activities outlined above, they will, however, continue to support capacity building to deliver the TQEF in colleges.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY (QAA)

QAA are an independent expert quality body that operates across the UK and internationally, with over twenty years' experience in delivering key aspects of Scotland's quality assurance arrangements in the university sector, including external peer-review and national enhancement activity.

QAA was commissioned by SFC to lead on the development and implementation of a multi-year external peer review method for colleges and universities, the TQER. QAA will manage the TQER, including recruiting and training a pool of peer and student reviewers, (with the support of CDN and ES HM Inspectors as required). It will administer the external peer review cycle and follow-up engagements and maintain the TQER review methodology guide.

QAA will lead the delivery, in partnership with CDN, of a new national enhancement programme for all our colleges and universities. While STEP is sector-owned, QAA will be responsible for the supporting structures and processes that allow staff and students from institutions to focus on the delivery of projects and activities. QAA will continue to oversee and manage university sector enhancement activity.

QAA will also support SFC in its review of annual SEAP submissions, providing SFC with analysis and evaluation of submissions. Additionally, QAA will advise SFC on how effectively and accurately they reflect their own understanding of institutions' performance, as well as producing a statement of assurance

## SPARQS (STUDENT PARTNERSHIPS IN QUALITY SCOTLAND)

sparqs is funded by the SFC to support student partnership in the quality of the learning experience across Scotland's colleges and universities.

sparqs' ongoing role in the TQEF will be to support student engagement and partnership across the delivery mechanisms and outputs of the Framework. This will include developing and maintaining resources to support institutions and students' associations to use the Student Learning Experience (SLE) model and Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership, and continuing to enhance and facilitate institutions' and students' capacity to engage in,



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and be partners in, the delivery of the Framework. sparqs will also work with SFC and the sector agency partners to support the wider development and implementation of the TQEF.

sparqs will publish guidance and resources to support institutions and students' associations in their use of the SLE model and Partnership Ambition over the course of AY2024-25 including for the [SEAP](#), TQER (by July 2025), and STEP (by July 2025).

sparqs will also provide targeted support to those institutions currently preparing for external review in advance of publication of its TQER guidance.