

Scottish National Review of Awarding Arrangements

In July 2025, The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) received a submission to the Scottish Quality Concerns Scheme regarding the University of Glasgow. The concern related to the maintenance of academic standards, the quality of the student experience and the potential for systemic failure in following the University's assessment regulations. A [Targeted Peer Review](#) (TPR) was undertaken in October 2025. The TPR identified systemic risks at the University and areas for development, including the consistency of the application of assessment regulations and the integrity of awarding arrangements.

Due to the significant risks identified by this TPR and in accordance with SFC's statutory duties and responsibilities, SFC is seeking additional assurance, beyond that provided by existing quality assurance mechanisms, that the issues identified through the review at the University of Glasgow do not represent a systemic issue within the Scottish tertiary education sector. As a result, SFC has commissioned QAA to undertake a national review of awarding arrangements in Scotland to provide that assurance.

This national review of awarding arrangements will cover all credit-bearing provision that is within the funding arrangements of SFC and leads to a recognised award, wherever that provision is delivered. The scope of the review will also take into account the awarding status of the higher education provider under review (e.g. whether the provider awards its own degrees, or – in the case of a college – delivers programmes of study in collaboration with an awarding organisation, such as a university, which validates its programmes).

The national review will be delivered across four phases. The first phase will be a review of existing evidence held by QAA to identify current risks regarding awarding arrangements. The objective of this phase is to provide SFC with a summary of where matters similar to those identified in the TPR of Glasgow have also been considered or observed at other higher education institutions (HEIs). The first phase will cover all HEIs in Scotland and will be concluded by the end of April 2026.

The second phase will comprise the development of a review methodology for deep-dive reviews into a sample of Scottish HEIs. These reviews will focus on lines of enquiry adapted from the University of Glasgow TPR, including those directly relating to assessment regulations and awarding arrangements. QAA will develop a sampling method to determine a shortlist of HEIs to include in the third phase. HEIs will also be given the opportunity to put themselves forward to be included within this sample.

The third phase will comprise the delivery of the deep-dive reviews of individual institutions focused on the key lines of enquiry identified. These reviews will include an evidence submission by the HEI under review, a desk-based analysis of that evidence by a peer review team (including a student reviewer), an on-campus review visit, and the production of a report. Should QAA identify any significant concerns within any single HEI during the third phase, the institution would be referred to the Scottish Quality Concerns Scheme. The third phase will

run from May until November 2026. SFC will also consider, based on evidence derived to this point, whether further work is needed more widely across the tertiary sector.

The fourth phase will focus on lessons learned from this process and on actioning any improvement required. QAA will produce a summary report that reflects the good practice and areas for enhancement identified through the first three phases of the review. QAA will also design a programme of enhancement activity to facilitate sector-wide discussion on assessment regulations and awarding arrangements, which will be open to all of Scotland's colleges and universities.