

# **Terms of Reference and composition of the UK-wide Standing Committee for Quality Assessment**

## **Introduction**

1. The UK-wide Standing Committee for Quality Assessment brings together the four UK funding bodies with sector and student representative bodies to provide co-led and UK-wide oversight of the baseline regulatory requirements and the elements of the revised Operating Model for Quality Assessment that apply across the UK. This Committee forms an important element of a UK-wide co-regulatory approach to quality assessment, and provides an opportunity for the funding, sector and student representative bodies from all four nations to work together in a more collaborative way than has previously been possible.

## **Purpose of the Committee**

2. The Committee will be required to review and confirm the existing material that constitutes the baseline regulatory requirements, and to provide advice to those sector bodies and organisations responsible for developing each component to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

3. The Committee will act as a mechanism for determining the ongoing development of the Quality Code, as an important and shared UK-wide reference point. It will remain important for this process to be owned by the sector, and for work to be undertaken by the QAA. However, the inclusion of the Standing Committee in the overarching governance arrangements is deliberately designed to allow the funding bodies to satisfy themselves that the code is developed in such a way that each funding body is able to discharge its own statutory responsibilities and to contribute appropriately to broader, UK wide developments in quality assessment.

4. The Committee will provide information and advice to the four funding bodies in the following areas:

- a) To support the work of the funding bodies in exercising their respective responsibilities for quality assessment; and to support the transition to new approaches to quality assessment for England, Wales and NI.
- b) To support on-going alignment between UK-wide aspects of quality assessment arrangements and the European Standards and Guidelines.

5. The Standing Committee will play a key role in overseeing those aspects of the revised quality assessment arrangements that apply across the UK and will act as a steering group, ensuring there is a strong coordinating mechanism for the following areas of work to which the Higher Education Academy (HEA), the Leadership Foundation for Higher Education (LFHE) and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) will contribute:

- a) Degree standards, training for external examiners, and the calibration of marking practices and classification algorithms.
- b) Support for governing bodies in England and Northern Ireland.
- c) Strategic approach to the UK sector's international activities, including the review of transnational education.

6. The Committee will be required to consider regular reports on the progress and outcomes of the above activity. It will provide recommendations to the funding and sector bodies on the effectiveness of these activities and how they might be implemented on a larger scale. Although all members may have an interest in the full range of activities that are within the remit of the Committee, particular direction will be given by the 'owners' of the different strands of work. (For example, the International strand is owned by the funding bodies, rather than the sector bodies, and the LFHE strand is led by England, Wales and NI).

7. These key areas of work are provided as an illustration of the scope and focus of the Committee's initial activity. Other areas of activity are likely to develop as the implementation of the new quality arrangements progresses and as pilot activity produces outputs. It is therefore intended that the terms of reference for the Committee will be reviewed by the Committee on an annual basis.

## **Authority**

8. While it is convened jointly by the four UK funding bodies, Universities UK and Guild HE, the Committee is not owned by these organisations. Instead, it is co-led and therefore its composition (discussed below) is intended to reflect this.

9. The Committee has the authority to:

- a) Provide advice and make recommendations to the funding bodies and sector bodies, and to delegate authority to its Chair to provide advice and make recommendations on its behalf.
- b) Establish working groups to undertake specific programmes of work, subject to the agreement of the funding bodies and sector bodies.

- c) Co-opt members, obtain independent professional or expert advice and to secure the attendance of outsiders with relevant experience and expertise if it considers this necessary.
- d) Invite observers from relevant organisations to attend for relevant parts of its business.

## Membership

10. The Committee draws together representatives from across the UK HE sector, including the funding bodies, sector bodies, students, and PSRBs. Members will normally be appointed for a three year term of office in the first instance. Where membership of the Committee is by virtue of the office held, the membership will normally change in the case of a new appointment to that office.

11. The Committee’s membership should reflect a balance of perspectives, skills and experience, including academic members with recent and relevant experience of quality assessment, regulation, assurance and accountability, as well as members with a current understanding of the issues facing providers within the changing regulatory landscape.

12. The Committee will comprise two members who represents the student interest. In addition, a National Union of Students (NUS) staff member will act as a member.

13. The Committee may, if it considers it necessary or desirable, co-opt, for a specified period of time, advisers or specialists with particular expertise.

14. The full composition is as follows:

	Member/representative	Name	Job title / Organisation
1.	Chair	Professor Andrew Wathey	Vice Chancellor, University of Northumbria
2.	Secretary	Dr Scott Court	Head of Quality Team, HEFCE
3.	Quality, Accountability and Regulation Strategic Advisory Committee (QARSAC) representative	Professor Andy Westwood	Associate Vice-President for Public Affairs and co-director of Policy@Manchester, University of Manchester; Professor of Further and Higher Education and Director of the Observatory, University of Wolverhampton

4.	QARSAC representative (Alternate)	Professor Amanda Chetwynd	Provost, Student Experience, Colleges and the Library, University of Lancaster
5.	Sector member	Professor Lorna Milne	Vice-Principal (Proctor), University of St Andrews
6.	Sector member	Professor Ben Calvert	Pro-Vice Chancellor, Learning, Teaching and Student Experience, University of South Wales
7.	Sector member	Professor David S Jones	Pro Vice-Chancellor, Education and Students, Queen's University Belfast
8.	Sector member	Alison Wheaton	Independent
9.	Sector member	Steve Denton	Chief Operating Officer and Registrar, Nottingham Trent University
10.	Sector member	Jon Renyard	University Secretary & Director for Student Experience , Arts University Bournemouth
11.	AOC representative	Arti Saraswat	Senior Policy Manager, HE, AOC
12.	GuildHE representative	Alex Bols	Deputy Chief Executive, GuildHE
13.	UUK representative	Will Hammonds	Programme Manager, UUK
14.	CMA representative (Alternate)	Gordon Ashworth or Mike Lambourne	Project Director, CMA Project Director, CMA
15.	CUC representative	John Rushforth	Executive Secretary, CUC
16.	Department for the Economy NI Representative (Alternate)	Claire Thompson or Trevor Cooper	Department for the Economy Northern Ireland
17.	HEFCE representative	Susan Lapworth	Director, Regulation and Assurance, HEFCE
18.	HEFCW representative (Alternate)	Celia Hunt or Cliona O'Neill	Director of Strategic Development, HEFCW Head of Student Experience, HEFCW
19.	SFC representative	Alison Cook	Assistant Director of Learning & Quality and Outcome Manager Ayrshire, SFC
20.	NUS representative (Alternate)	Amatey Doku TBC	Vice President (Higher Education), NUS
21.	OIA representative	Ben Elger	Interim Chief Executive, OIA
22.	PSRB member	Ali Orr	Chair, Professions Together

23.	QAA representative	Douglas Blackstock	Chief Executive, QAA
24.	Student member	Emma Atkins	Education Officer, University of Manchester Students' Union
25.	Student member	Luke Renwick	Education Officer and President Elect, Sheffield Hallam University

15. Meetings will also be attended by observers from Universities UK and GuildHE.

16. The membership of the Committee will be reviewed at the first meeting and subsequently on an annual basis to ensure that it comprises an appropriate balance of perspectives, skills and experience.

### **Meeting arrangements**

17. It is envisaged that the Committee will meet three or four times a year, in London wherever possible. The Chair may call an ad hoc meeting if it is required. Work may be undertaken by correspondence, and between scheduled meeting dates. Where it is not feasible to travel to London, a meeting may make use of video or telephone conferencing, provided the number of centres involved is not too great as to be unwieldy for the proper conduct of business.

18. Only members of the Committee have a right to attend meetings. When a member is unable to attend a meeting and would like to nominate an alternate, this will be at the discretion of the Chair (requests should be made through the Secretary).

### **Reporting**

19. Meetings will be minuted and the draft minutes sent for approval to the Chair, and subsequently to the rest of the Committee.

20. The Committee can provide its advice and recommendations to the funding bodies and to sector groups in the following ways:

- a) Through providing a formal written report following discussion at a Committee meeting.
- b) Through oral updates and discussions with representatives at the Committee meeting.
- c) Through Chair's action decisions between meetings, if delegated by the Committee to the Chair.

21. The Committee's terms of reference and/or effectiveness will be reviewed on an annual or as required basis to ensure this keeps pace with developments, with a more thorough review carried out periodically. The outcomes of such reviews will be reported to the funding bodies.