
Tertiary Quality Steering Group (TQSG): update bulletin

The fifth meeting of the TQSG was held on 16 January on Microsoft Teams.

Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework

TQSG members and the wider tertiary sector were thanked for their contributions and assistance in developing a title for the new quality framework, which will be called:

“Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework” (TQEF)

SFC engaged with TQSG and key sector groups, culminating in meeting representatives from both the university and college sectors to co-create the name. The partnership across sector colleagues was integral in finalising the TQEF title.

Self-Evaluation and Action Plan Pilot

TQSG was updated on the progress of the Self-Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP) pilot. Ayrshire College, Borders College, the University of Edinburgh, Scotland's Rural College and the University of St Andrews all took part. Learning from how pilot institutions approached the writing of the SEAP would be helpful moving forward and, though it was acknowledged that the pilot had some limitations, it was agreed that it would help institutions to complete the SEAP moving forward.

TQSG emphasised the importance of engaging the key sector groups to provide an update on the development of the SEAP process to support implementation. TQSG noted some caution on the potential volume of work required for the SEAP, and SFC was encouraged to ensure the SEAP did not become a burden on institutions. SFC was conscious of not adding to the workload of institutions and that the SEAP aimed to replace specific reporting requirements.

TQSG discussed the use of the SEAP in the external review method, action planning and follow up activity. TQSG was informed that the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) would be providing support on self-evaluation and developing staff.

TQEF Draft Communications Plan

TQSG was presented with a draft communications plan to raise awareness and engage a broad range of stakeholders on the development of the TQEF. TQSG noted the need for consistency in the language used to describe tertiary education and encouraged SFC to be more definitive in the key messaging. It was felt that the use of less technical language would support sector buy-in and communication with the Scottish Government.

TQSG advised SFC to categorise messaging for specific stakeholder groups and highlighted that institutional governance groups should be included. Members further emphasised the need for messaging to be for all staff, not just for those in quality roles.

TQSG recognised that future changes would take time to embed but that it was important to be clear about what was changing and what was remaining.

Data and Evidence in the TQEF

SFC presented a paper on how data and evidence would be used in the TQEF and how it fitted in with the Assurance and Accountability work being undertaken. Members were presented with proposed quantitative and qualitative measures which they discussed in depth.

There was a discussion on the parity of part-time and full-time data and it was highlighted that work was being undertaken by SFC to improve this and support institutional decision making. Members also raised the importance of recognising a range of destinations for college students.

TQSG further discussed college satisfaction surveys and the need to recognise qualitative data as important.

Oversight arrangements for the TQEF

SFC provided a paper on developing future oversight arrangements for the TQEF. TQSG recognised the importance of enhancement remaining sector owned and that the sector voice provided important insight. TQSG highlighted the role of current groups to provide continuity as the TQEF becomes established.

TQSG advised that there was a need to decide any future group's purpose, prior to deciding its membership and that there may be a need for a transition period.

It was highlighted that a future oversight group would provide a sounding board and be made up of members from across the sector to bring together different elements of the framework .



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TQSG recognised the role of a future group in supporting SFC in its statutory functions and the role of SFC in the group was considered. TQSG also discussed the importance of engaging students in a future group and the need to balance the level of student engagement between college and university groups.

TQSG noted that there may need to be a phased approach in developing a future group, and it was suggested that a smaller group could be formed to help draft a remit.

The next meeting of the TQSG will be held on **10 June 2024**.