



# International Quality Review

## Guidance

November 2019



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# About International Quality Review (IQR)

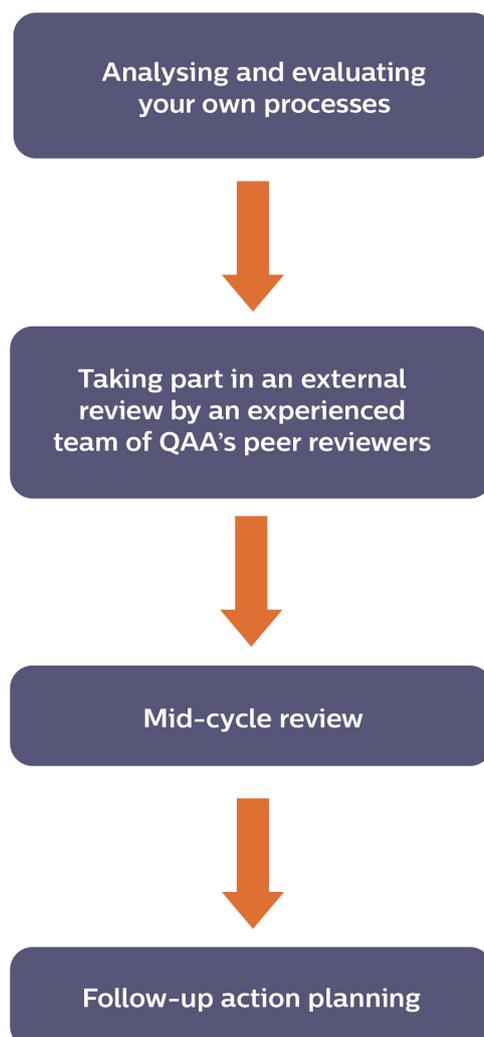
International Quality Review (IQR) has been specially developed by the UK's Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) to provide institutions outside the UK with an independent peer review leading to accreditation by the QAA.

IQR offers your institution the opportunity to demonstrate that your quality assurance systems conform to international standards. This will be of significant interest to institutions in working with UK and European partners. It also provides opportunities to:

- demonstrate effective quality assurance comparable to international best practice.
- strengthen your global positioning
- drive improvement and excellence
- develop partnerships with UK institutions

IQR uses the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*.<sup>1</sup> As an applicant institution you will be assessed against ESG Part 1: Internal Quality Assurance.

IQR benefits higher education institutions by enabling you to analyse and improve their quality assurance systems. You do this through:



<sup>1</sup> See [www.enqa.eu/index.php/home/esg](http://www.enqa.eu/index.php/home/esg).

A successful International Quality Review means that you are eligible to display this QAA International Accreditation Badge which will demonstrate that your quality assurance processes are not only effective, but also comparable with international best practice. (Dates to be completed when awarded.)



IQR also offers the opportunity of continuing professional development through the provision of a free delegate place at QAA's International Quality Assurance Programme. As a member of the IQR community you will have the chance to share best practice with institutions around the world.

## Eligibility criteria and standards for the IQR

To be eligible for the IQR your institution will need to demonstrate to QAA, through the evidence provided, that it meets the following criteria:

- 1 Your institution is registered, or otherwise appropriately recognised, as a higher education provider by the national quality assurance authority or other relevant agency or ministry of the country or countries in which you are located.
- 2 Your institution has informed the national quality assurance authority or other relevant agency or ministry of your intention to request an IQR before application (if relevant).
- 3 You have been operational for a minimum of three years at the time of application.
- 4 You have recruited a minimum of three cohorts of higher education students, at least one of which has graduated.
- 5 Your institution is financially viable and sustainable.
- 6 You have the legal right to use the infrastructure, main facilities and resources of the premises in which you deliver higher education.
- 7 A significant amount of the provision your institution offers can be regarded as higher education, both in terms of student headcount and percentage of provision.

Eligibility will also depend on the outcome of a risk assessment by QAA. For example, QAA will assess the safety and stability of the environment in which an institution is operating. QAA reserves the right to revise this assessment in the face of significant events.

In order to take part in IQR, your institution will need to guarantee, at the application stage, that the review process can be conducted in the English language, and you must be willing to provide independent translations and interpretation from and into English of documents and conversations necessary for the purpose of the review.

IQR reviews an institution's quality assurance and enhancement processes as a whole; it does not review or accredit individual courses or subjects. A successful IQR review may lead to accreditation of the institution's quality assurance and enhancement processes.

IQR does not, nor does it seek to, replace national requirements and does not authorise an institution to offer programmes outside their national regulatory systems or within the UK national higher education context. IQR does not confer degree awarding powers and it does not itself confer any legal or funding benefits on a successful institution.

If you feel your institution is not ready to meet the criteria for IQR yet, ask QAA about our development and capacity building programmes.

## Standards for IQR

International Quality Review uses the 10 standards set out in Part 1 of the ESG. During the review, the review team considers how and whether an institution meets each of the 10 standards. By analysing the evidence – including institutional policies, procedures and systems, and student outcomes – the review team decides whether these enable the institution to confidently demonstrate that it meets the relevant standard in each case. The review team also considers whether these institutional policies, procedures and systems are clear, transparent, appropriate, fair and relevant, and whether they are systematically applied and consistently operated.

During its review activities, the review team considers **examples of practice**<sup>2</sup> which help it determine the institution's effectiveness in meeting the 10 standards of the ESG.

### The 10 European standards for internal quality assurance

- 1 Policy for quality assurance
- 2 Design and approval of programmes
- 3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
- 4 Student admission, progression, recognition and certification
- 5 Teaching staff
- 6 Learning resources and student support
- 7 Information management
- 8 Public information
- 9 Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of programmes
- 10 Cyclical external quality assurance

By mutual agreement between the institution and QAA, the review team may also consider how an institution meets other reference points, such as national requirements.

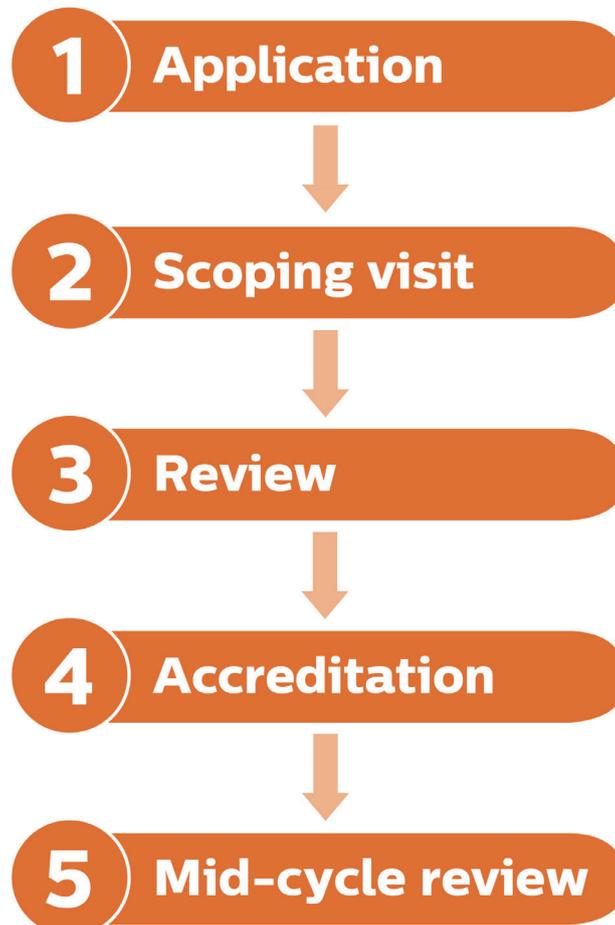
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<sup>2</sup> The examples of practice are adapted from the guidelines set out in the ESG for each standard, expanded to reflect practice that a QAA review team may expect to see operating effectively when deciding if an institution meets a standard.

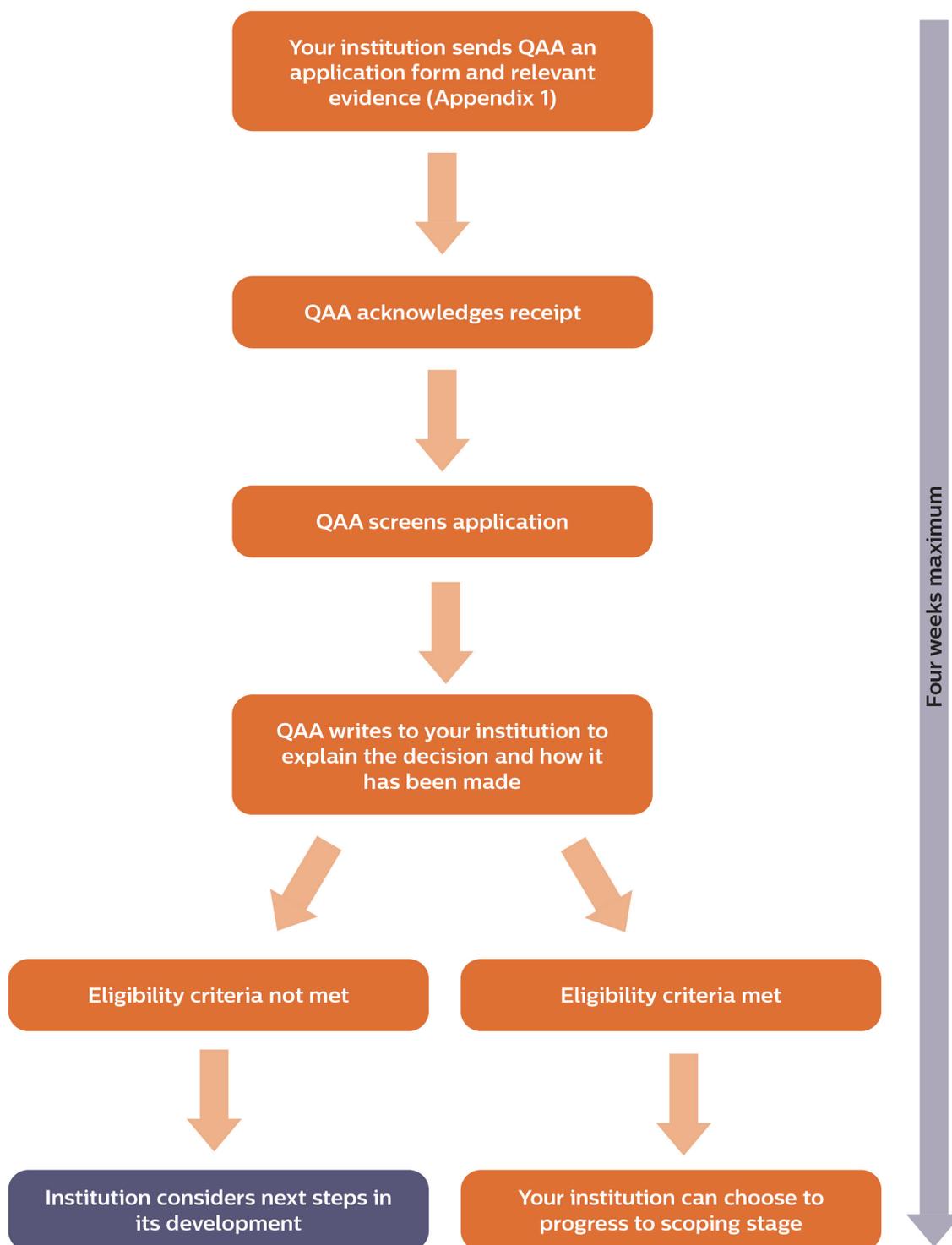
# An overview of the process



International Quality Review takes place in five stages:



## Stage 1: Application



The decision of QAA is final as to whether an institution meets the eligibility criteria. If you are unsuccessful and after a period of further development your institution feels that it would meet the criteria, we would welcome a new application.

Ask QAA about our development and capacity building programmes to support institutions in preparing for IQR.

## Stage 2: Scoping visit

The second stage of IQR is the scoping visit to your institution, which enables:

- you to learn more about IQR and requirements for a review
- QAA to assess whether your institution is ready to proceed to Stage 3 - the review.

As part of the preparation for the scoping visit, your institution may be asked to provide additional information and supporting evidence referred to in Stage 1: Application (see Appendix 2).



### Before the scoping visit

Your institution will need to:

- complete a scoping visit template (provided by QAA)
- upload supporting documentation to an online site (provided by QAA).

QAA will:

- appoint a scoping team of two QAA experts, who will visit your institution for two days
- advise you who we would like to meet during the visit.

### During the scoping visit

QAA will:

- meet with key staff and students and tour your facilities
- deliver a briefing on the IQR process and answer any questions you might have
- gather further information in order to determine whether to recommend your institution for review, and, if so, the number of days required for the review visit.

### After the scoping visit

QAA will write a letter to your institution, within two weeks, stating whether the institution can choose to progress to Stage 3: Review. This confidential letter will explain why the scoping team reached their decision.

If your institution is considered not ready to progress to Stage 3: Review, QAA will identify points for your institution to consider in order to qualify for the review stage in future. The letter will also explain how your institution can re-engage with the process.

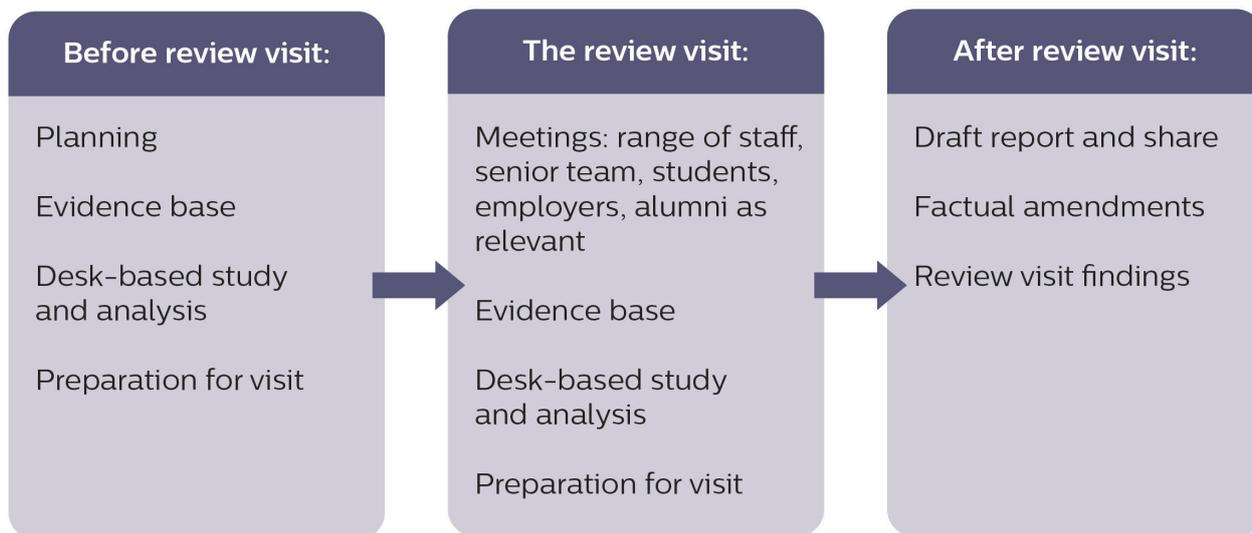
QAA's decision as to whether an institution is suitable to progress to the review stage is final.

A positive outcome from the scoping visit does not guarantee a successful outcome for Stage 3 - the review.

## Stage 3: Review

The review is the opportunity for your institution to demonstrate how it meets each of the 10 ESG standards. QAA will agree a date for the review with you – this should take place within six months of the successful scoping visit. The review team conducts the review through analysis of the evidence submitted and a visit to the institution.

The key stages in review are shown and explained in more detail below.



### Before the review visit

#### Planning

What you can expect to receive:

- a timeline for your review, including deadlines (due dates) by which QAA will carry out its responsibilities (see Appendix 3)
- full briefing materials to support you in the preparation for your review
- the name of your QAA Review Manager who will be your institution's main point of contact for any questions you may have during the process
- the names, employing institutions and roles of the review team for your IQR.

#### Review team members

Each QAA team consists of a minimum of three reviewers:

- one UK peer reviewer
- one international peer reviewer (from outside the UK and outside the host country for the IQR)
- a student reviewer.

Review team members are selected based on their experience in higher education and are expected to draw on this in their evaluations and conclusions about the management of quality and academic standards.

All reviewers are fully trained by QAA and attend a preparation session to ensure that they have a comprehensive understanding of the context of your review.

The review process will be coordinated by a QAA Review Manager who will also support the review team. The QAA Review Manager is independent of the review team and is not involved in the judgement.

For more information on reviewers and roles in a review see Appendix 4.

### **What your institution will need to do**

- Nominate a facilitator from your institution to work alongside the QAA Review Manager to organise and ensure the smooth running of the review process and improve the flow of information between the review team and the institution.
- Prepare a self-evaluation document (SED) supported by documentary evidence for the review. The SED is intended to be reflective and focused on the areas of review - that is the 10 ESG standards - and the evidence should be carefully chosen to support these. For guidance on the information required for the SED see Appendix 5.

As an option, your institution can nominate a lead student representative who will work with your students to enable them to contribute to the review.

### **Degree-awarding bodies**

If your institution offers degrees or other higher education qualifications that are awarded by another organisation (for example, another university), you may invite them to be involved in the review process. For example, the awarding organisation might assist with the preparation of the self-evaluation document or attend review visits. The extent of the involvement of an awarding organisation in IQR should be decided in discussion between the institution, the awarding organisation and the QAA Review Manager.

### **The IQR evidence base and analysis**

QAA will develop an 'evidence base' from the documentation and other evidence that you provide to the review team which will be used for the review stage of IQR.

The QAA review team will undertake a desk-based study of the evidence base; as a result of this initial analysis, you may be asked to provide further evidence in support of your SED.

You will be notified if the review team identify that they require additional information which may significantly influence the judgement.

### **Preparation for visit**

The review team will draft a schedule for the review visit which will include, for instance, details of who the team would like to meet during their visit. It will also share with you a brief outline of the lines of enquiry that they are likely to follow during their visit.

The Review Manager will confirm the agreed arrangements for the visit.

## The review visit

### Meetings

The review visit may include meetings with: head of institution; senior management; academic and support staff; current students; recent graduates; and employers of your graduates.

The review visit will normally last two to four days, depending on the scale and complexity of provision being reviewed.

### Visits to facilities

During the review visit, the team will undertake a short tour of your institution's key facilities.

### Testing the evidence

The purpose of the review visit is to check your approaches to quality assurance against your SED, the evidence provided and the 10 ESG standards.

IQR does not include observations of teaching/lecturing, sampling of work or the collection of other primary evidence. The review team is interested in how you quality assure these aspects of your provision.

### Discuss findings

Throughout the review visit, the team will hold regular private meetings to review the evidence. On the final day of the visit, the review team will meet in private to discuss their overall findings. A more detailed explanation of the review visit can be found in Appendix 6.

## After the review

### Draft report and share

After the review visit, the review manager will share the initial findings with you.

Approximately four weeks after the review visit, your institution will receive the draft report containing the full findings of the review.

### Factual amendments

Your institution has the opportunity to respond within three weeks of receipt of the draft report, telling QAA of any factual errors or errors of interpretation. These can only relate to evidence available in the period before or during the review visit. The review team will not consider amending the report to reflect evidence, changes or developments made after the review visit ended.

Your comments cannot relate to the judgement made.

### Review visit findings

There are three possible outcomes of the review:

- the institution meets all the standards for International Quality Review
- the institution meets all the standards for International Quality Review subject to meeting specific conditions
- the institution does not meet the standards for International Quality Review.

Where you have met all the standards without conditions for IQR, the review panel will put forward a recommendation to the QAA Accreditation Panel on whether or not Institutional Accreditation should be awarded.

For a more detailed explanation see Appendix 7.

## Stage 4: Accreditation

The review panel presents the review report and the recommendation regarding accreditation to the QAA Accreditation Panel.

The QAA Accreditation Panel consider the report and recommendation, and determines if your institution should be awarded Institutional Accreditation.

QAA notify you by letter of the Accreditation Panel's decision. Where accreditation is awarded, QAA will share the International Accreditation Badge with you, together with details on how and where it can, and cannot, be used.



The accreditation period is five years and is subject to a satisfactory mid-cycle review which must be completed for the full five years' accreditation to be granted.

### Announcing the outcome

Your institution's IQR report will be published on QAA's website. The report sets out the review team's confirmed findings:

- overall judgements
- recommendations and good practice
- analysis.

Your institution can make the report available via its media outlets.

Successful institutions will be able to make the following statement:

'[The institution] has received a successful International Quality Review from the UK's Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) undertaken in [Month] [Year], and has been awarded QAA International Accreditation until [Month] [Year].'

Your institution develops its action plan which QAA publishes on its website alongside your institution's report.

QAA has set up and maintains a database of good practice that is identified during the course of IQR and other reviews.

QAA will include your institution's details in its published register of accredited international providers.<sup>3</sup>

For a more detailed explanation see Appendix 9.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.qaa.ac.uk/iqr](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/iqr)

## Stage 5: The mid-cycle review

The mid-cycle review takes place two to three years after a successful review. A QAA Review Manager will contact you approximately six months in advance to agree the schedule for your mid-cycle review.

It is a desk-based study. Your institution will be asked to provide evidence that it is addressing any recommendations and other findings from the IQR review, and a QAA Review Manager will evaluate your response. You will also be asked to outline any changes that might impact on the extent to which the standards are being met.

A successful mid-cycle review is required to retain the QAA International Accreditation Badge for the full five years granted by the Accreditation Panel.

An overview of the IQR process can be found in Appendix 10.

## End of accreditation period

Towards the end of the accreditation period, you will be invited to apply for a new IQR. Details of the process to be followed will be provided during the final year of your accreditation period.

Where you choose to undergo a new IQR, you will not normally need to undergo a further scoping visit. However, QAA reserves the right to undertake a scoping visit if there is evidence of significant or substantial change to your organisation that could impact on quality assurance.

# About the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is the independent expert body entrusted with monitoring and advising on the standards of student achievement and the quality of the student learning experience in UK higher education. In the UK, QAA works with higher education providers, students, regulators and funders to ensure students working towards a UK qualification get the higher education experience they are entitled to expect. QAA is the designated quality body for higher education in England.

QAA is recognised for its role in international developments in the quality assurance of higher education. QAA works not just to maintain but to enhance the quality and integrity of higher education internationally through its international work.

## International recognition of QAA

QAA is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). Following its review in 2013, QAA was the first agency to be judged fully compliant with the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (Brussels, 2015; often referred to as the 'European Standards and Guidelines', or ESGs).<sup>4</sup>

Its 2018 review commended QAA for its:

'valuable contributions to protecting student interest and towards higher education quality advancements internationally; it is a recognised and respected agency in professional circles' and

'International Quality Review, offered by QAA to overseas providers, is established as a well-documented and demanding process, fully in line with the ESG'.

QAA is listed on the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) in recognition of its compliance with the ESG.<sup>5</sup>

QAA is a full and active member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).

QAA is an observer of the Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN). In 2015, QAA was recognised by APQN for its efforts in achieving international cooperation in assuring the quality of cross-border education. QAA is also a member of the Cross-Border Quality Assurance Network and was elected to its Council in 2018.



<sup>4</sup> For more details see Standards for IQR (page 3)

<sup>5</sup> [www.eqar.eu/register/agencies/agency/?id=39](http://www.eqar.eu/register/agencies/agency/?id=39)

# Appendices

## Appendix 1 – Evidence required at application stage

Your institution will be asked to supply the following information to support your application:

- a brief description of the institution, its mission and ethos
- a list of programmes (courses) provided
- the locations where learning takes place
- academic partnerships (if any)
- student and staff numbers (headcount) specifically for higher education programmes, as a percentage of all academic provision at the institution
- proof of legal identity and assurance that there are no current legal disputes taking place that may be relevant to the application
- proof of licence to practise (the right to operate as a higher education provider)
- proof of ownership/lease of the facilities used for learning
- proof of financial good standing (comprising copies of audited accounts for the previous two years and financial planning for the next two years)
- a short narrative explaining the rationale for the decision to undergo IQR.

## Appendix 2 – Information required for the scoping visit

The following information may be requested to support the scoping visit:

- governance, management and committee structures
- the use of external expertise and reference points in designing, approving and reviewing programmes
- internal monitoring and review systems
- any external accreditation that the institution has, including at programme-level
- staffing at the institution
- any general queries arising from the application.

## Appendix 3 – Indicative timeline for the review and accreditation decision

Time	Activity
Following the scoping visit	QAA and you agree key dates for the review visit and confirm the contact details of the facilitator and the QAA Review Manager. QAA indicates who will be on the review team and how long the review visit will last.
Approximately 12 weeks before the review visit	You upload your self-evaluation document (SED) and supporting evidence to QAA's electronic folder, including a student submission if one is being supplied. The review team begins its desk-based study.  NOTE: All documentation must be translated into English.
Approximately nine weeks before the review visit	The QAA Review Manager informs you of any requests for additional documentary evidence.
Approximately six weeks before the review visit	You upload additional evidence to the electronic folder (if required).
Approximately four weeks before the review visit	The review team holds its first team meeting to discuss the outcome of the desk-based study, and the programme for the review visit. The QAA Review Manager informs you of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the review team's main lines of enquiry</li> <li>▪ who the review team wishes to meet</li> <li>▪ any further requests for documentary evidence.</li> </ul>
<b>The review visit takes place</b>	
One week after the review visit	The QAA Review Manager sends a letter or email to you stating the provisional outcome of the review.
Four weeks after the review visit	QAA Review Manager sends the draft review report to you (and Lead Student Representative (LSR) where relevant) for the purposes of allowing you to advise QAA of factual errors or errors of interpretation.
Seven weeks after the review visit	You (and LSR where relevant) advise QAA of any factual errors or errors of interpretation (incorporating any comments from partner organisations).
Nine weeks after the review visit	QAA review team present recommendation to the QAA Accreditation Panel.
Next scheduled meeting of Accreditation Panel	Accreditation decision is taken.
Two weeks after the Accreditation Panel decision	QAA publishes the report and issues a press release. QAA provides you with the International Accreditation Badge and instructions on how and where it can be used. The guidance will also state how and where it cannot be used.
20 weeks after the review visit	The institution publishes its action plan on its website.

## Appendix 4 – Roles and the review team

### **QAA's review team**

QAA appoints a team of reviewers to conduct the review and a QAA Review Manager to manage it.

The Review Manager coordinates the review process, supports the review team, and acts as the primary point of contact with the institution. Your institution will be given the contact details for the QAA Review Manager and you are welcome to get in touch to ask any questions.

QAA peer reviewers have current or recent senior-level expertise and experience in the management and quality assurance of higher education provision in the UK and internationally.

An important characteristic of IQR is that each team includes a reviewer from the UK and a second country, as well as an experienced student. The reviewers apply their knowledge and experience of higher education quality assurance processes. They also use their experience of international higher education to consider how the 10 standards apply in the context in which your institution is operating. This will include consideration of relevant reference points applied nationally or internationally.

QAA will notify you of the review team's membership and in which organisations the members of the review team work or, in the case of student reviewers, the institution(s) at which they have studied, and whether they have declared any other interests (such as membership of a governing body of another provider).

QAA will ask you to indicate any actual or potential conflicts of interest that reviewers might have with your institution and may make adjustments to review team membership in light of that information.

### **Students**

Students play an essential role in IQR in line with the accepted principles of European quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

Each review team includes a student peer reviewer. Students at your institution will also play a part in the review process – they are expected to participate in meetings during the review visits and assist you in drawing up and implementing the action plan after the review.

### **Your institution's team**

You must nominate a facilitator from your institution to work alongside the QAA Review Manager. The facilitator helps to organise and ensure the smooth running of the review process and improve the flow of information between the review team and your institution.

There is also the option for a lead student representative (LSR) from your institution to be appointed, representing your students' views. The LSR (if relevant) helps ensure smooth communication between the student body, the institution and QAA, and will normally oversee the production of a student submission. If possible, QAA would like to work with the LSR to select the students that the review team will meet.

## Appendix 5 – Self-evaluation document and supporting evidence

You are required to prepare a self-evaluation document (SED) supported by documentary evidence for the review. The SED is intended to be reflective and focused on the areas of review – the 10 ESG standards; the evidence should be carefully chosen to support these. High-quality, relevant institutional evidence enables the review team to verify your approaches and gather relevant and appropriate evidence of its own quickly and effectively.

The SED should be both descriptive and evaluative. It has several main functions:

- to give the review team an overview of your institution, including its background and experience in managing quality and standards
- to describe and evaluate your institution’s approach to quality assurance
- to explain to the review team how your institution knows that its approach is effective in meeting the ESG (and other external reference points, where applicable), and how it could be further improved
- to guide the review team through the evidence base.

The SED should, in all cases, include a section on each of the 10 standards of the ESG.

The SED is used throughout the review process. During the desk-based study it is part of the information base that helps to determine the duration and schedule of the review visit. The review team will be looking for indications that:

- your institution systematically monitors and reflects on the effectiveness of its quality assurance processes
- monitoring of student outcomes and self-evaluation is carried out using management information and comparisons against previous performance, and against national and international benchmarks, where available and applicable
- monitoring and self-evaluation are inclusive of students (and other people and organisations where relevant)
- monitoring and self-evaluation lead to the identification of strengths and areas for improvement, and subsequently to improvements in procedures or practices, and ultimately student outcomes.

## Appendix 6 – The review and review visit

The review begins before the site visit with the reviewers undertaking a desk-based study of the SED and the supporting evidence and sharing that analysis.

The review visit will normally last two to four days and will reflect the scale and complexity of the provision under review. QAA will determine the length of the review visit using the information gathered at the scoping stage (Stage 2).

At the beginning of the review visit, the review team will hold a short meeting with the head of your institution (or nominee), which will highlight your overall strategy for higher education. Thereafter, the activity carried out at the review visit may include contact with academic and support staff (including staff from partner organisations where applicable), current students and recent graduates, and employers of your graduates.

On the final day of the review visit, the review team considers its findings in private in order to:

- agree the decisions for each of the 10 standards
- agree any features of good practice that it wishes to highlight
- agree any recommendations for action by the institution, with a suggested time limit according to their seriousness and the urgency with which they need to be addressed
- decide on its overall conclusion for the review and any conditions (see Appendix 8)
- agree on its preliminary recommendation to the Accreditation Board regarding the outcome of the review and any conditions.

The review team considers your institution's processes against the 10 standards and considers how these are applied within the context of the institution. The review team also considers other relevant reference points, for example, those set out by any other body that validates your institution's awards and qualifications and with whom your institution collaborates. The review team then decides if your institution meets each of the 10 standards and, on that basis, comes to an overall conclusion.

## Appendix 7 – How the findings are determined

The table below shows how findings are determined by the review team.

An institution demonstrates that it <b>meets</b> a standard if either of the following statements is true	An institution demonstrates that it <b>does not meet</b> a standard if either of the following statements is true
<p>1. There are no recommendations for improvement in relation to this standard.</p> <p><b>OR:</b></p> <p>2. Any recommendations for improvement do not relate to issues that, individually or collectively, present any serious risks* to the management of this standard, and they relate only to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ minor omissions or errors</li> <li>▪ a need to amend or update details in documentation, where the amendment will not require or result in major structural, operational or procedural change</li> <li>▪ the requirement to complete activity that is already underway in a small number of areas that will allow the institution to meet the standard.</li> </ul> <p>*Some moderate risks may exist, and these must be addressed in the institution’s action plan in order to avoid more serious problems developing over time.</p>	<p>1. There are recommendations for improvement in relation to this standard, and they relate, either individually or collectively, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ weakness in the operation of part of the institution’s governance structure (as it relates to quality assurance) or lack of clarity about responsibilities</li> <li>▪ insufficient emphasis or priority given to quality assurance in the institution’s planning processes</li> <li>▪ quality assurance procedures that are not applied rigorously enough.</li> </ul> <p><b>OR, more seriously:</b></p> <p>2. There are recommendations for improvement in relation to this standard, and they relate, either individually or collectively, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ineffective operation of parts of the institution’s governance structure (as it relates to quality assurance)</li> <li>▪ significant gaps in policy, structures or procedures relating to the institution’s quality assurance</li> <li>▪ breaches by the institution of its own quality assurance procedures.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Note:</b> When a standard is met in full there may be findings of good practice in relation to it; however, a standard may also be met without any good practice being identified.</p>	<p><b>Note:</b> A finding of good practice does not guarantee that a standard is met in full. A finding of good practice may only enable the institution to partially meet the standard.</p>

## Appendix 8 – Review outcomes

There are three potential outcomes. This section explains what happens next, which depends on the review outcome.

### **1. The institution meets all the standards for International Quality Review**

Where the draft report concludes that your institution meets all 10 standards, the report will be finalised. The review team will present the report and their recommendation to the Accreditation Panel. The Accreditation Panel will consider the report and recommendation and make their decision on whether or not to award International Accreditation. The report will be published on the QAA website following the Accreditation Panel decision.

After the report has been published, your institution is expected to provide an action plan, signed off by the head of the institution, responding to the recommendations, if any, and giving any plans to capitalise on the identified good practice. The action plan must be published on the institution's website.

If the institution undergoes a successful review but, without good reason, does not provide an action plan within the required timescale, QAA will reconsider the overall outcome of the review and the accreditation decision.

Where the Accreditation Panel makes the decision to award International Accreditation, your institution will be issued with the QAA International Accreditation Badge, and terms and conditions for its use, continuation and renewal.

### **2. The institution meets all the standards for International Quality Review subject to specific conditions**

Where only one (or at most) two of the 10 standards are not fully met, the review team may decide to set specific conditions that enable a successful IQR outcome to be achieved. These conditions are likely to be one or more of the recommendations and will only be set where they relate to a very small number of weaknesses that, while potentially significant, only impact on whether the one (or at most two) standards are met. The review team will only do this if they consider that the weaknesses can be rectified in a short space of time and in a way that can be sufficiently analysed through a brief desk-based exercise following specific actions undertaken by the institution and a subsequent submission to QAA of further evidence.

Where the draft report concludes that your institution meets all the 10 standards subject to specific conditions, the review process will be extended by a maximum of six months to allow your institution to meet those conditions and the review team to confirm that it has done so successfully. QAA will set out a short timeframe with follow-up actions. This will be sent to your institution.

Your institution is expected to provide an action plan, signed off by the head of the institution. This should address any specific conditions set by the review team, as well as respond to any other recommendations and set out any plans to capitalise on any good practice identified.

Once your institution has completed the necessary actions and submitted relevant evidence, QAA will undertake a follow-up desk-based study to determine if your institution now has satisfied the conditions set and subsequently meets the 10 standards. A report recommending whether to revise or retain the original outcome will then be submitted to the Accreditation Panel for a final decision, after which the report will be published.

### **3.The institution does not meet the standards for International Quality Review**

Where the Accreditation Panel confirms a review team's conclusions that the institution does not meet the 10 standards, or does not meet sufficient standards, the outcome of the IQR is unsuccessful. In this instance, the draft report will not be published but will be sent to the institution to consider whether it wishes to appeal the overall judgement. If the institution chooses not to appeal, then the report will be published.

#### **Appeal process**

Any appeal should be made within one month of receiving the decision of the Accreditation Panel. QAA will not publish the report or the Accreditation Panel decision, meet a third-party request for disclosure, or consider the action plan during the appeal process. Where an appeal is unsuccessful, the report will be published promptly after the end of the appeal process.

Appeals concerning the accreditation decision are considered by the QAA Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

Appeals concerning the review process are taken to a panel of IQR appeal reviewers who will not have been involved in the review.

## **Appendix 9 – International Accreditation and the Accreditation Panel**

QAA will convene an Accreditation Panel at regular points throughout the year. A calendar of meetings will be issued on at least an annual basis. Where a review panel submits the review outcome and recommendation regarding International Accreditation, it will be considered at the next available panel meeting.

The Accreditation Panel, which may sit virtually, will consist of:

- Chair – member of QAA Executive team (not the CEO)
- Deputy Chair – member of QAA senior staff
- Three ordinary members:
  - at least one non-QAA staff member
  - one international member
  - student from QAA's Student Advisory Council.

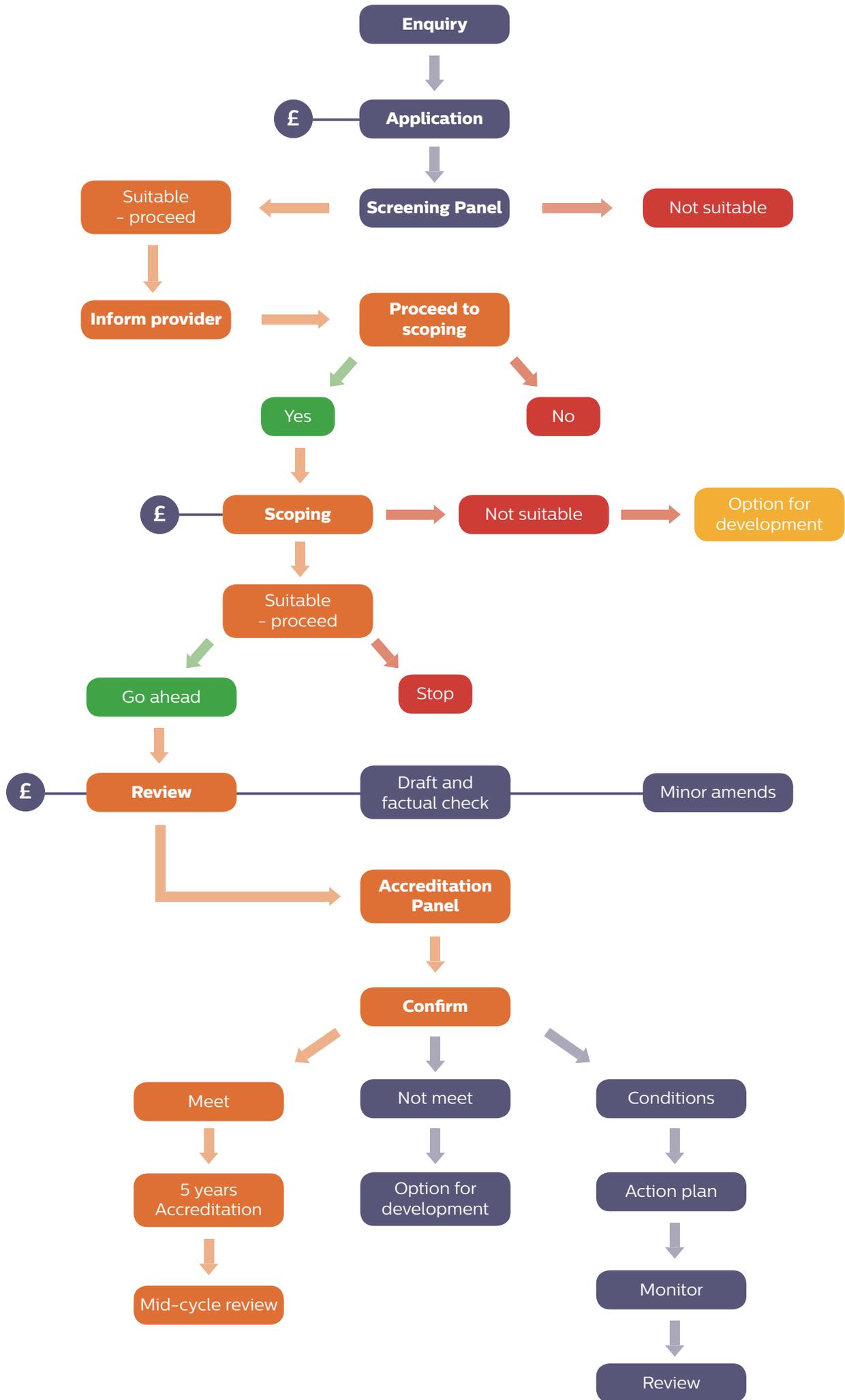
Panel members will be appointed through a selection process, following an exercise of expression of interest for an initial term of three years, with the option of reappointment.

The panel will be quorate if three members are present; the Chair and/or Deputy Chair must be present.

The panel will review all IQR reports and International Accreditation recommendations submitted since the previous panel meeting. A record of discussions and decisions will be maintained and available for inspection. A database of decisions, dates and panel members will be maintained by the International and Professional Services Team.

The decision of the Accreditation Panel will be notified to the head of the applicant institution.

# Appendix 10 - The IQR process





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