



**The Quality Assurance Agency  
for Higher Education**

# **Quality assurance in UK higher education: A guide for international readers**

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## **Glossary**

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### **Academic standards**

The level of achievement a student has to reach to gain an academic award. This level should be comparable to similar programmes across the UK. External examining is one way of maintaining these standards within universities and colleges.

### **Academic quality**

Academic quality describes how well the learning opportunities available to students help them to achieve their award. It is about making sure that appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities are provided.

### **Academic award**

The outcome or successful completion of a course or programme of study that leads to a UK qualification - such as a degree, diploma or certificate, or other formal recognition. (See the frameworks for higher education qualifications, page 10.)

### **Academic audit**

Academic audit is a quality assurance review process that focuses on the procedures a university or a college uses to assure its academic standards and quality. It evaluates how the university or college satisfies itself that its chosen standards are being achieved and makes a judgement about threshold standards.

The purpose of QAA audits is to provide public information on the academic standards of a university's or college's awards and the quality of the learning opportunities available to students.

### **Act of Parliament**

A law passed by a parliament in the UK.

### **Award element**

An award element is one of the modules or courses that contribute to the award (for example, a control engineering module/course within an electrical engineering degree).

### **Awarding institution**

A university or other higher education institution which awards degrees, diplomas, certificates or credits.

### **Collaborative provision**

Educational provision leading to an award (or to specified credit toward an award) of an awarding institution delivered and/or supported and/or assessed through the arrangement of a partner organisation.

### **College of higher education**

A college of higher education is a publicly-designated, independent, self-governing body which may or may not have degree awarding powers. Colleges that do not have degree awarding powers prepare their students for the qualifications of awarding institutions.

### **Credit**

A process which is used to quantify the amount and level of learning which has been achieved.

### **Discipline**

A defined area of academic study (for example, all types of engineering).

### **External examining**

External examining helps universities and colleges compare academic standards, and ensure that assessment procedures are fair and fairly operated. External examiners comment on student achievement in relation to those standards.

### **External review**

A scrutiny process that examines standards and quality in a university or college. It is undertaken by people who do not work for the university or college being visited.

### **Further education college**

Further education colleges, including sixth form colleges and specialist colleges, provide a vast range of general and vocational education and training for school leavers and adults.

### Higher education corporation

These are legally autonomous entities with statutory responsibilities for the provision of higher education. Many former polytechnics, which became universities following the *Further and Higher Education Act 1992*, are formally constituted as higher education corporations.

### Higher education institution

A publicly-designated and autonomous institution which provides higher education; a university, institute, university college or college of higher education.

### Internal review

Methods used by universities and colleges to assure their own academic standards and quality.

### Institution

See Higher education institution.

### Privy Council

The part of government which makes formal decisions on the power to award degrees and award university title.

### Professional, statutory or regulatory body

A professional body is set up to oversee the activities of a particular profession (for example, the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors). A statutory body is set up through Act of Parliament, so that there is a legal requirement for a body to have oversight of a particular area (for example, the General Medical Council oversees medicine). A regulatory body is an organisation recognised by the government as being responsible for the regulation or approval of a particular area (for example, the Environment Agency).

### Programme

Structured teaching and learning opportunities which lead to an award (for example, a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering).

### Quality

See Academic quality.

### Quality assurance

All the systems, resources and information devoted to maintaining and improving standards and quality. It covers teaching and learning opportunities, and student support services.

### Review

See External review.

### Royal Charter

Royal Charters are granted by the Queen on the advice of the Privy Council. Older universities (those established before 1992) operate under a Royal Charter. The charter sets out overall constitution and statutes, which provide the general regulations under which a university should operate.

### Standards

See Academic standards.

### Subject

A subject may contain one or more programmes of study. These may be at different levels (for example, a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering and a master's degree in electrical engineering).

### Subject review

Review that judges the standards and quality of teaching and learning at subject or programme level.

### University

A university is an independent, self-governing body, empowered by a Royal Charter, an Act of Parliament or the Privy Council to develop its own courses and award its own degrees.

### University college

A university college is a publicly designated, independent, self-governing body that can award its own taught degrees.

## Introduction

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### What this guide covers

This guide explains how quality assurance works in UK higher education and the role of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). It also explains the powers and responsibilities of UK universities and colleges.

### QAA and its role in UK higher education

QAA was formed in 1997 to rationalise the external quality assurance of higher education that existed up to this date. It is independent of UK governments and is owned by the organisations that represent the heads of UK universities and colleges (Universities UK, Universities Scotland, Higher Education Wales and the Standing Conference of Principals).

Universities and colleges are responsible for managing the academic standards and quality of their awards. QAA judges how well universities and colleges fulfil their responsibility and the effectiveness of their processes for doing this.

QAA safeguards the public interest in sound standards of higher education qualifications. It also encourages universities and colleges to keep improving the management of quality in higher education by:

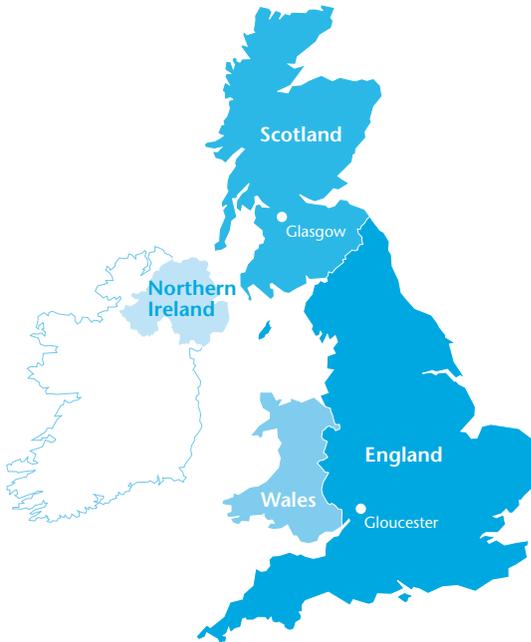
- conducting external reviews (including audit) in universities and colleges
- describing clear academic standards through the Academic Infrastructure
- advising government on applications for degree awarding powers and university title
- offering advice on academic standards and quality.

It also contributes to and influences international quality assurance through membership of many organisations and involvement in higher education projects.

## The UK context

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The four parts of the UK are England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The UK Government has devolved some of its powers, including responsibility for education, to national governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. QAA's head office is based in Gloucester and QAA Scotland is in Glasgow.



## Higher education institutions

The UK higher education sector is large and diverse, with 169 universities and colleges. It covers a wide range of activity. Student numbers at individual universities and colleges range from 500 to over 150,000. Most teach many subject areas. Others, such as art colleges or music schools, specialise in either one or a small number of subjects. Some further education colleges also teach higher education programmes.

	<b>Universities</b>	<b>Other higher education institutions</b>
England	94	37
Scotland	14	7
Wales	9	4
Northern Ireland	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>50</b>

(Figures correct at August 2004)

UK universities and colleges of higher education are self-governing and are not owned or run by the Government. The level of autonomy of universities and colleges is high compared to many other countries. All have an independent legal identity; some have a Royal Charter, some are higher education corporations, while others have been created through an Act of Parliament.

### **Degree awarding powers and university title**

In England and Wales, organisations with taught, or taught and research degree awarding powers can apply for university title. In Scotland and Northern Ireland only organisations that secure both taught and research degree awarding powers can apply. These powers are granted indefinitely to publicly funded UK higher education institutions.

In England and Wales, privately funded organisations may apply for degree awarding powers, which are awarded for six years. Renewal of these powers is subject to a successful external review by QAA.

All universities and some colleges of higher education award their own degrees. The colleges that do not have degree awarding powers have their awards validated by another higher education institution that has degree awarding powers, or a national accrediting body.

Colleges without degree awarding powers work within the requirements of their validating university to assure the standards of the programmes and awards they offer in the name of that

validating institution. Colleges of higher education with taught degree awarding powers can apply to the Privy Council for the right to use the title 'university college' or 'university' if they meet student number thresholds set by the Government.

QAA offers confidential guidance to relevant Government departments on applications from organisations seeking degree awarding powers and/or university title.

### **Recognised universities and colleges**

The Government's Department for Education and Skills has a list of universities and colleges that offer an officially recognised UK degree. See their website at [www.dfes.gov.uk/recognisedukdegrees](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/recognisedukdegrees)

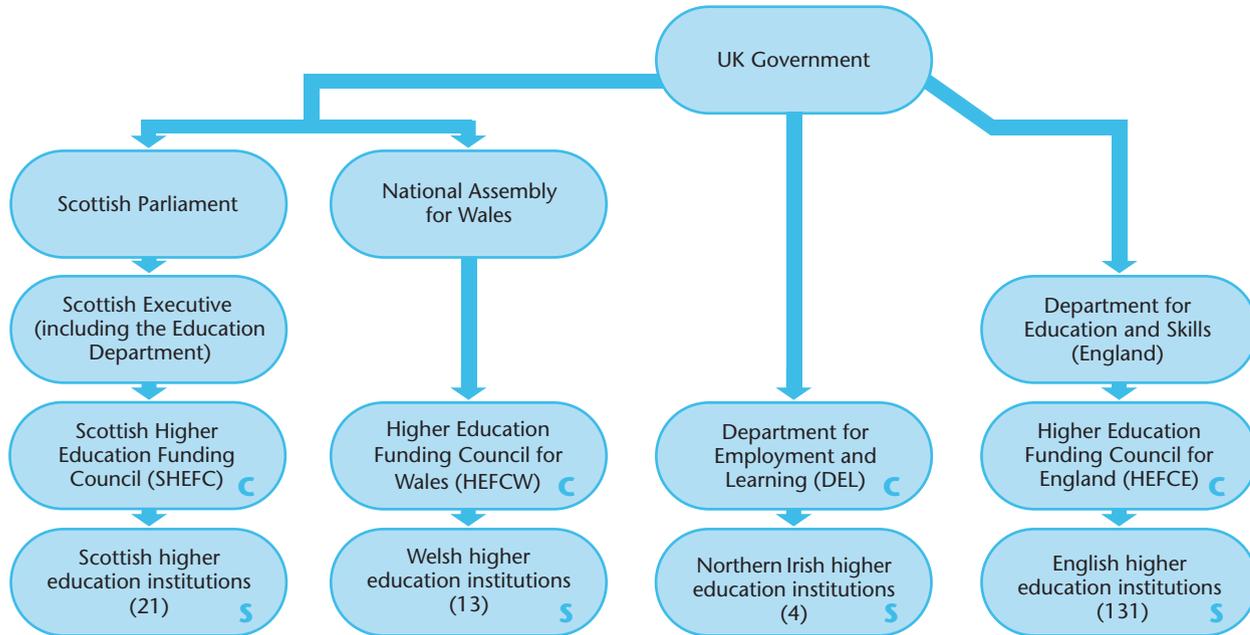
In addition to these universities and colleges, there are many private providers of programmes and awards in the UK and other countries. The British Accreditation Council, which is independent of Government, is the national accrediting body for further and higher education outside the state sector. For more information see their website at [www.the-bac.org](http://www.the-bac.org)

### **UK Government and funding of higher education**

UK governments set out the broad funding framework for education. Universities and colleges are private institutions, but publicly funded. They are autonomous; they have intellectual and academic freedom, and do not have to follow a Government-set curriculum. However, nearly all receive Government funding through the higher education funding councils. Separate councils exist for England, Scotland and Wales, and the Department for Employment and Learning funds higher education in Northern Ireland. Universities and colleges in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are also funded through student tuition fees.

This diagram explains the funding arrangements, which begins with UK Government. It shows the organisations, positioned between government and higher education institutions, which protects their independence.

## Funding in UK higher education



- C** QAA has contracts with these organisations to carry out external quality assurance work on their behalf.
- S** QAA provides services for these universities and colleges; they pay QAA an annual subscription (see page 20).

Funding of healthcare education in the UK is provided by governments departments.

## Academic standards and quality

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### The Academic Infrastructure

The Academic Infrastructure has been developed by QAA in collaboration with the UK higher education sector. It is a set of nationally agreed reference points that help to describe good practice and academic standards. It addresses all award-bearing activity, wherever or however provided. QAA has published all the parts of the Academic Infrastructure, which includes the frameworks for higher education qualifications, subject benchmark statements, programme specifications and the *Code of practice*.

### Describing standards

The frameworks for higher education qualifications explain the main achievements and attributes of the major qualification titles: for example, bachelor's degree with honours; master's degree; doctorate. There are two frameworks: one for England, Wales and Northern Ireland; and one for Scotland.

Subject benchmark statements state expectations about the standards of degrees in subject areas: for example, history; medicine; engineering.

Programme specifications are information provided by each university or college about the detail and particular nature of its programmes.

### Managing quality

The *Code of practice* is a guideline on good practice about management of academic standards and quality for universities and colleges. It has 10 sections:

- 1 Postgraduate research programmes
- 2 Collaborative provision
- 3 Students with disabilities
- 4 External examining
- 5 Academic appeals and student complaints on academic matters
- 6 Assessment of students

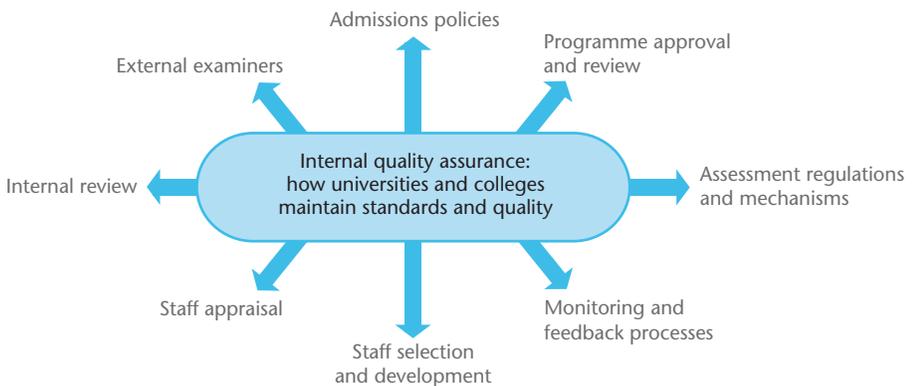
- 7 Programme approval, monitoring and review
- 8 Career education, information and guidance
- 9 Placement learning
- 10 Student recruitment and admissions

### Progress files

Progress files are designed to help students learn and to make the results of learning more explicit. There are three parts: the transcript; personal and development planning; and individual student records.

### Maintaining academic standards and quality

As universities and colleges are autonomous, they are responsible for maintaining the standards of their awards and the quality of education they provide. Within each university or college a board or senate, supported by committees, usually has responsibility for this work. This diagram shows the areas they cover:



Note the links between internal quality assurance and the sections of the *Code of practice* above.

### **Comparing academic standards across the UK**

All universities and colleges use external examiners, who are independent and impartial advisers. External examiners help comparability of academic standards and ensure that assessment processes are fair and fairly operated. They also comment on student achievement in relation to those standards.

### **Comparing UK and international qualifications**

The development of the Academic Infrastructure is paralleled in Europe through the Bologna process. The objective of the Bologna process is to increase the international competitiveness of European higher education. The European Higher Education Area will be established by 2010 and will assist in making degrees more compatible, while respecting important national differences and university autonomy. QAA is involved in projects related to the impact and development of some aspects of the Bologna process.

Each UK university or college makes its own decisions about entry requirements and credit and they can respond to specific enquiries. The National Academic Recognition Information Centre (UK NARIC) can also offer advice. Information is available on their website at [www.naric.org.uk](http://www.naric.org.uk)

## External review

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### Types of external review

External review of UK higher education covers taught higher education programmes, postgraduate research programmes, teacher training and accreditation of programmes by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.

QAA reviews higher education programmes and some postgraduate research programmes. The higher education funding councils review the quality of research through the Research Assessment Exercise. For more information see [www.rae.ac.uk](http://www.rae.ac.uk)

In England, teacher training programmes are reviewed by the Teacher Training Agency and the Office for Standards in Education. See [www.tta.gov.uk](http://www.tta.gov.uk) and [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) for more information. Teacher training programmes are reviewed by Her Majesty's Inspectorate in Scotland ([www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk)) and Wales ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk)), and by the Northern Ireland Education and Training Inspectorate ([www.deni.gov.uk/inspection\\_services](http://www.deni.gov.uk/inspection_services)).

Each university or college approves its own programmes using rigorous quality assurance procedures. This approval is done within the context of external examiners, the Academic Infrastructure and QAA external reviews. In addition, professional, statutory or regulatory bodies accredit individual programmes that lead to a professional or vocational qualification. This ensures that a student is competent for professional practice, or that a student can have admission into the profession. For example, the General Medical Council accredits programmes in medicine and licenses doctors to practise medicine in the UK.

### How QAA external reviews work

QAA has many different review methods, but they share similar procedures, outlined below. External review is about self-evaluation, peer review and publication of results.

### Self-evaluation

Each university or college produces a self-evaluation document (or a reflective analysis in Scotland) before the external review visit. This document draws upon the results of internal reviews, evaluates the effectiveness of how standards and quality are managed, and identifies strengths and areas for improvement. The self-evaluation is also a key reference point for the review team and sets the context for the visit.

### Selecting teams

QAA uses a peer review process, where academics that work within UK higher education (and sometimes professionals and students) are appointed to teams. The selection criteria are published, and universities and colleges nominate applicants. Independent applications are also accepted from candidates with the right qualifications, experience and knowledge of higher education. Successful applicants are not employees of QAA; they are contracted to work for QAA.

### Training teams

All team members receive training before visiting a university or college. Each training programme is specifically designed for the type of review to be conducted. This ensures team members know:

- the aims and objectives of the review
- the procedures
- their role, tasks, the importance of teamwork and rules of conduct
- techniques for assimilating data, analysis, testing hypotheses, forming judgements and preparing reports.

### Preparing for reviews

Reviews are scheduled at least six months ahead of the visit to the university or college. QAA selects the teams, usually between four and six people, for each visit. Before the on-site visit, a meeting is held with representatives from each university or college to prepare for the visit and the review team scrutinises information that the university or college provides, including the self-evaluation document.

## Conducting reviews

The length of the visit to the university or college varies, depending on the type of review. During the visit, the review team meets staff and students. The team tests claims made by the university or college and seeks clarification on specific topics, forms robust judgements supported by evidence and, when necessary, suggests improvements that the university or college could apply.

Teams also refer to the Academic Infrastructure during the visit. Teams are not seeking evidence of compliance with the Academic Infrastructure. They are looking for evidence that the purpose of these reference points has been considered, that a university or college has reflected on its own practices in the relevant areas and, if necessary, is taking steps to make changes.

## Publishing reports

Detailed reports are published for most reviews. Many reports also contain a summary of the review team's findings. These reports are useful for students in higher education and those applying to study; staff in universities and colleges; professional, regulatory and statutory bodies; and companies that recruit graduates.

QAA does not produce league tables. These tables are created and published by some newspapers, which use information from many sources to rank universities and colleges.

## Current QAA review methods

QAA has developed its review methods to reflect the differences in higher education systems between the UK countries. But its institutional-level reviews all rely on evidence to judge:

- the confidence that can be placed in an institution's management of the quality of its programmes and the standards of its awards
- the reliability and accuracy of the information an institution publishes on standards and quality. (Universities and colleges are required to publish a standard set of information, known as teaching quality information, at [www.tqi.ac.uk](http://www.tqi.ac.uk))

These judgements are expressed as broad confidence, limited confidence or no confidence. The judgements are accompanied by examples of good practice and recommendations for improvement.

### Institutional level

<b>Institutional audit in England and Northern Ireland*</b>	Looks at internal quality assurance systems at institutional level, investigates how these operate at the discipline-level and assures the quality of programmes. Audits take place every six years.
<b>Enhancement-led institutional review in Scotland</b>	Looks at the policies and practices of each university or college, which are designed to enhance the quality of the students' learning experience. Reviews take place every four years.
<b>Institutional review in Wales</b>	Looks at internal quality assurance systems at institutional level, investigates how these operate in practice through detailed thematic trails. Reviews take place every six years.
When an awarding institution's collaborative provision is too large or complex to be included in their external review, an additional, separate review takes place.	
<b>Collaborative audit (not in Scotland)</b>	Looks at how effectively an awarding institution in the UK secures the academic standards of its awards and manages the quality of its programmes when they are offered by another organisation. This includes links within the UK and internationally.

\*There may be changes to this method from 2006.

### Subject level

<b>Major review in England</b>	Looks at healthcare programmes funded by the National Health Service. QAA has a contract with Skills for Health/Department of Health to carry out these reviews between 2003-06.
<b>Academic review of subjects in England</b>	Takes place in English further education colleges that offer higher education programmes (and a small number of higher education institutions). It looks at academic standards and the quality of learning opportunities for taught programmes.

## More information about QAA

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### Organisation

QAA employs around 109 people. Many senior employees have worked in universities or colleges as academics or administrators.

### Internal organisation

#### Reviews Group

Work covers:

External reviews for England, Wales and Northern Ireland  
Degree awarding powers and university title  
Access recognition scheme

#### Development and Enhancement Group

Work covers:

The Academic Infrastructure  
Liaison with universities and colleges  
Enhancement and sharing good practice

#### Chief Executive's Group

Work covers:

Corporate Affairs and the Board of Directors  
International activities

#### Administration Group

Work covers:

Communications  
Finance  
Information Systems  
Personnel and Office Services

#### QAA Scotland

Work covers:

External reviews for Scotland  
Liaison with universities and colleges  
Enhancement and sharing good practice

## **Accountability**

### **The Board of Directors**

QAA is governed by a Board of Directors. The Board is responsible for the conduct and strategic direction of QAA and for the performance of the Chief Executive, who manages day-to-day activities.

The Board has 14 members. Four are appointed by the organisations that represent the heads of universities and colleges; four are appointed by the higher education funding councils; and six are independent directors - with practical experience of industry, finance or a profession - appointed by the Board.

### **Students**

Students are entitled to higher education of a standard that reflects national (and international) expectations. They take part in QAA's external reviews and QAA publishes information specifically for students.

### **Funders, universities and colleges**

QAA is contracted to work for funding councils and other organisations. The funding councils ensure that work is carried out on their behalf to the remit agreed.

Universities and colleges of higher education pay QAA an annual subscription (see below). QAA aims to demonstrate that it uses these resources effectively and conducts its work with integrity and impartiality. It also aims to ensure that the information and advice it provides can be depended upon. There are published procedures for responding to complaints from universities or colleges and for handling appeals against specific decisions. QAA is accountable to the organisations that represent the UK universities and colleges.

When QAA develops new policies or review methods it consults universities, colleges, higher education organisations and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies. Their opinions are considered and, if appropriate, policies or review methods are amended before they are implemented.

## The public and employers

Higher education is vital to the interests and prosperity of the UK. QAA aims to provide reliable and helpful information for the public and also employers. The public invests significant resources in higher education and expects standards to be maintained. Employers can use QAA's information when they recruit graduates.

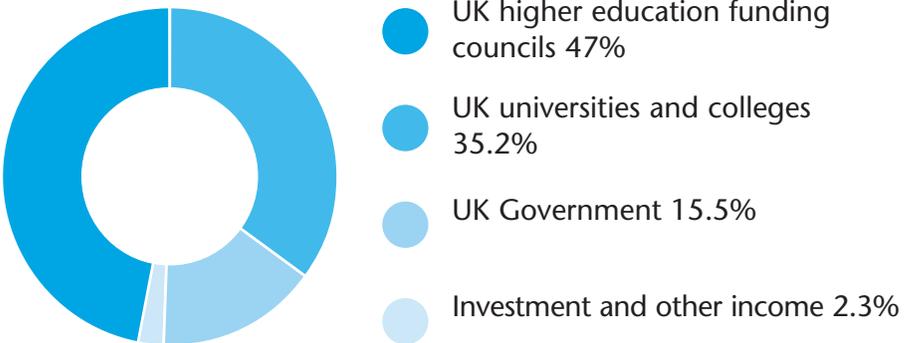
## Financial information 2003-04

QAA is funded through contracts with higher education funding councils and government departments, and by subscriptions from universities and colleges of higher education. The funding councils are required by law to make sure that the quality of education they fund is assessed and to ensure that public money (paid by the Government to fund higher education) is used appropriately.

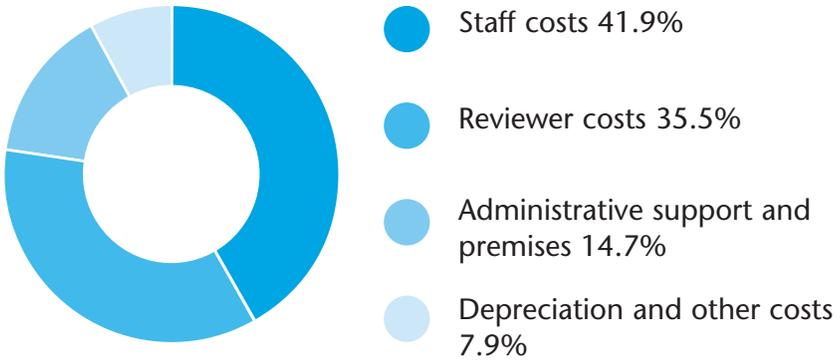
Annual subscription fees are based on student numbers at individual universities and colleges. There are six bands; the lowest is £2,500 (less than 1,000 students) and the highest is £33,500 (more than 15,000 students). Due to changes in its work, QAA may revise subscription fees.

## Income and expenditure from 1 August 2003 to 31 July 2004

Total income £10,222,000



Total expenditure £10,219,000



These figures are approximate. For more detailed information, please see QAA's *Annual Report 2003-04*.

### External review 1991 to 2004

Between August 2003 and July 2004, QAA conducted around 220 external reviews in universities and colleges, and published 172 reports. Around 1,600 people were appointed to teams to carry out these reviews and write reports.

Between 1991 and 2004, external review was carried out by various organisations. Earlier review methods focused mainly on subjects. The switch from subject-level to institutional-level reviews is the result of a wish to reduce the amount of external scrutiny of universities and colleges and to recognise their autonomy.

### Institutional level - All of the UK

Years	Review method	Looked at	Reviewed by
1991-97	Academic quality audit	Management of standards and quality	Academic Audit Unit/Higher Education Quality Council
1998-2002	Continuation audit		QAA

## Subject level

Years	Review method	Looked at	Reviewed by
<b>England and Northern Ireland</b>			
1993-95	Teaching quality assessment (TQA)	A sample of subjects in some universities and colleges*	Higher Education Funding Council for England
1995-2001	Subject review	Subjects not reviewed in 1993-95 in all universities and colleges*	Higher Education Funding Council for England/QAA
2003	Foundation Degrees	A sample of subjects in some universities and colleges	QAA
<b>Scotland</b>			
1993-98	Teaching quality assessment	All subjects*	Scottish Higher Education Funding Council
2000-02	Academic review <sup>†</sup>	A sample of subjects	QAA
<b>Wales</b>			
1993-98	Teaching quality assessment	All subjects*	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
2001-02	Welsh engagements	A sample of subjects	QAA

\*Different groups of subjects were reviewed in one or two-year periods. The full range of subjects taught in universities and colleges were reviewed between 1993 and 2001.

†Academic review in Scotland also looked at institutional-level management of academic standards and quality.

## Contacts

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Tel +44 (0) 1623 450788

Fax +44 (0) 1623 450629

Email [qaa@linneydirect.com](mailto:qaa@linneydirect.com)

## **International organisations**

*The Association of Commonwealth Universities* advances international cooperation and understanding in higher education and provides a broad range of services and facilities.

[www.acu.ac.uk](http://www.acu.ac.uk)

*The British Council* is the UK's international organisation for educational opportunities and cultural relations.

[www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org) and [www.educationuk.org](http://www.educationuk.org)

*The European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA)* shares information, experiences, good practice and new developments in quality assessment and assurance in higher education.

[www.enqa.net](http://www.enqa.net)

*The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE)* collects and disseminates information on current and developing theory and practice in the assessment, improvement and maintenance of quality in higher education.

[www.inqahe.nl](http://www.inqahe.nl)

*UKCOSA: The Council for International Education* provides advice and information to international students studying in the UK and to staff who work with them.

[www.ukcosa.org.uk](http://www.ukcosa.org.uk)

*UK NARIC* is the official source of information and advice on the comparability of international qualifications from over 180 countries worldwide with those in the UK.

[www.naric.org.uk](http://www.naric.org.uk)

## **Government departments**

Government departments are responsible for developing higher education policy. They provide the public funds that support universities and colleges. Departments responsible for higher education in Scotland and Wales answer to the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales respectively.

*In England: Department for Education and Skills*  
[www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)

*In Scotland: Enterprise and Lifelong Learning Department Secretariat*  
[www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk)

*In Wales: The Public Information and Education Service*  
[www.wales.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gov.uk)

*In Northern Ireland: Department for Employment and Learning*  
[www.delni.gov.uk](http://www.delni.gov.uk)

## **Higher education funding**

In England, Scotland and Wales, higher education funding councils are intermediaries between Government departments and higher education institutions. The six research councils fund and manage UK research.

*Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)*  
[www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk)

*Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)*  
[www.wfc.ac.uk/hefcw](http://www.wfc.ac.uk/hefcw)

*Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC)*  
[www.shefc.ac.uk](http://www.shefc.ac.uk)

*The Research Councils*  
[www.research-councils.ac.uk](http://www.research-councils.ac.uk)

## **Representative organisations**

These organisations represent the interests of universities and colleges in the UK.

*The Association of Colleges* is the representative body for further education colleges.

[www.aoc.co.uk](http://www.aoc.co.uk)

*Higher Education Wales* represents the Vice-Chancellors and Principals of universities and higher education institutions in Wales.

[www.hew.ac.uk](http://www.hew.ac.uk)

*The Standing Conference of Principals* is the representative body for higher education colleges in England and Northern Ireland.

[www.scop.ac.uk](http://www.scop.ac.uk)

*Universities Scotland* provides services to higher education institutions in Scotland and represents, promotes and campaigns for the Scottish higher education sector.

[www.universities-scotland.ac.uk](http://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk)

*Universities UK* promotes and supports the work of UK universities and provides services to its members - the executive heads of universities.

[www.universitiesuk.ac.uk](http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk)

## **Student organisations**

*The National Union of Students* represents the interests of around five million students in further and higher education throughout the UK.

[www.nusonline.co.uk](http://www.nusonline.co.uk)

*The National Postgraduate Committee* aims to promote the interests of postgraduates studying in the UK.

[www.npc.org.uk](http://www.npc.org.uk)

## **Other organisations**

*The Higher Education Academy* works with the UK higher education community to enhance the student learning experience.

[www.heacademy.ac.uk](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk)

These organisations have various responsibilities relating to the development, accreditation, certification and monitoring of qualifications outside higher education.

*The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority*

[www.qca.org.uk](http://www.qca.org.uk)

*The Scottish Qualifications Authority*

[www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)

*The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority for Wales*

[www.accac.org.uk](http://www.accac.org.uk)

*The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment in Northern Ireland*

[www.ccea.org.uk](http://www.ccea.org.uk)

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