

Meeting Title	Quality Assurance Committee
Meeting Date	Thursday 13 January 2022 10:30 – 13:30 hours
Location:	Remote
Protective marking	Official

Attendance:**Members**

Paul Cadman (Chair), Jessica Leigh Jones

Independent Members

Professor Jim Iley, Isabel Sutcliffe, Ben Blackledge

Institute Officials

Rob Nitsch, Nikki Christie

Guests for item 4 only

Ofsted representative for item 4 only and Government Internal Audit Agency representative from 11.30-13.30

1. Welcome, introductions and declarations of interest

- I. The Chair welcomed members and officials to the Quality Assurance Committee (“the committee”) meeting.
- II. The Chair asked committee members whether they had any declarations of interest to make. No conflicts of interest were declared. All committee members recognised that should a potential or actual conflict arise by virtue of their other interests (outlined in the declaration of interests) then it must be raised at the outset of the relevant meeting which deals with the issue giving rise to the actual or potential conflict.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 November 2021

- III. The committee agreed the minutes from the previous meeting held on 9 November 2021 date as an accurate record.

3. External Quality Assurance (EQA) phase one transition update

IV. The committee received an update on phase one of the process of EQA transition from the Institute to Ofqual. Phase one requires a transition of over 260 apprenticeships from the Institute's EQA service to Ofqual. All related end-point assessment organisations on the Education and Skills Funding Agency's (ESFA) register need to secure recognition from Ofqual as part of the process. The Institute, Ofqual and ESFA agreed to extend the phase one timeline to complete transfers to Ofqual by 16 May 2022. Those end point assessment organisations (EPAOs) that have been through the Ofqual process but not achieved recognition are starting to be removed from the ESFA Register of EPAOs. This is overseen by a register removal decision panel, which is attended by Ofqual, ESFA and Institute officials.

V. The committee also received an update on the role of the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in EQA. Institute officials have a meeting scheduled with QAA to determine a plan of action, review any outstanding project steps, agree ways of working and project plan.

- VI. The committee noted the update on phase one transition and requested Institute officials to provide a list of standards that Ofqual has EQA'd so far, and what impact EQA findings are having on the Institute's approvals of EPA. The committee also requested that Institute officials provide an update on the meeting with QAA to the chair.

Action 1

Institute officials to provide a list of standards that Ofqual has EQA'd so far, and what impact EQA findings are having on the Institute's approvals of EPA.

Action 2

Institute officials to provide a progress report to the chair on meeting with QAA

4. Update from Ofsted

VII. The committee received an update from Ofsted on the quality of apprenticeship providers from their annual report for 2020/21. In most phases of education, children, pupils and learners learned less due to the impact of Covid-19. In further education and skills, students and apprentices saw classroom doors closed and placements restricted. Providers have reported an increase in mental health problems, especially in younger learners. On 31 August 2021, just over 2,000 FE and skills providers were publicly funded and providing education, training and/ or apprenticeships. This represented an increase of 180 FE and skills providers compared to 31 August 2020 – there were 310 new providers, while 130 merged, ceased to be funded or stopped training. Only 44 full inspections were carried out which was a reduced number compared to a normal year, 230 new provider monitoring visits took place and 180 other monitoring visits in 2020/21. The proportion of FE and skills providers judged to be good or outstanding on 31 August 2021 was 83%. This is an increase of two percentage points compared to the previous year. The new provider monitoring visits are brief interim inspections of new providers that have just started to be funded. There are three themes that provide an early assessment of progress and risk which informs the future inspection schedule. There were 230 visits in 2020/21 with more than 170 providers (76%) judged to be making reasonable or significant progress across all three themes, 55 (24%) of providers made insufficient progress in at least one theme. The proportions were similar to the previous year.

VIII. The committee thanked Ofsted for the summary of their apprenticeship providers annual report findings 2020/21. The committee asked if 24% insufficient progress outcomes will be treated as priorities and Ofsted confirmed

many organisations have already had full inspections. The members asked how the Institute could support Ofsted.

- IX. The committee would like to continue working closely with Ofsted and invited Ofsted to join future QAC meetings. The committee requested that Institute officials follow up on the conversation with Ofsted and report back to the committee.

Action 3

The Institute to invite Ofsted to future QAC meetings

Action 4

Institute officials follow up on the conversation with Ofsted and report back to the committee.

5. EQA in nursing and related plans

- I. Institute officials requested the committee for a view on the use of external examiners (EEs) in the EQA of fully integrated apprenticeships in regulated occupations. An issue of how to use EEs and preserve independence in some regulated occupations has come to light and EPAOs are struggling to reconcile the requirements of the assessment plan and the requirements for independence in degree apprenticeships in their use of EEs. QAA's guidance relating to EEs in EPAs is written to ensure independence in general integrated degree apprenticeships. QAA's guidance means that this is being interpreted as needing two EEs for some regulated occupations (one for on-programme and one for EPA), which is not necessary in this model of EPA.
- II. The committee agreed that one EE could be used for both the EPA and EQA providing they met the Regulator's requirements. This supports the intention for this model of integration and meets the relevant regulator's requirements. The committee requested Institute officials to consider how to monitor these integrated EPAs in future to ensure they continue to serve the purposes of the

apprenticeship programme and to create a mechanism for any adjustments to integration as necessary.

Action 5

The Institute to consider how to monitor integrated EPAs in future to ensure they continue to serve the purposes of the apprenticeship programme and to create a mechanism for adjustments to integration as necessary

6. Feedback from the Quality in Technical Education (TE) Conference

- III. The committee received feedback from the Quality in TE Conference on 2 December. The conference was held by the Institute to create more of a community of practice around what 'quality' means in TE. Overall, the conference was a successful event with very useful discussions and guest speakers. Discussions were around the considerations for future proofing further education and feedback indicated the need to embed transferable, soft and functional skills, future technology and innovation and the importance of the provider/ teacher/ trainer. There was a discussion on how to make technical excellence more visible and valued. Delegates felt the perception that TE was inferior to that of academic routes and therefore a need to promote TE routes earlier in a learner's journey. A final discussion on small and medium enterprises (SME) barriers indicated the system was too complex and SME's lack of knowledge resulting in a barrier for their use/value. SMEs also encounter operational challenges when engaging with the system and difficulty in retaining achievers and a turnover of staff.
- IV. The committee thanked Institute officials for the feedback and asked if an outcomes report from the Quality in TE Conference with key messages will be shared widely. The committee also requested a further progress update on the Long Term Assurance Model (LTAM) at a future meeting.

Action 6

Institute officials to confirm if an outcomes report from the Quality in TE Conference will be shared widely

Action 7

Institute officials to provide a further progress update on LTAM at a future meeting

7. Update on the Institute governance review

- V. The Institute officials requested feedback from the committee on the draft Approvals Policy and Assurance Committee (APAC) and Institute Assessment Panel (IAP) Terms of Reference (ToR). Institute officials to arrange meetings with QAC members to seek feedback on the ToR.

Action 8

Institute officials to arrange meetings with QAC members to seek feedback on APAC and IAP ToR so the Chair can report back to the Institute Board meeting.

8. Any other business

- VI. No other business was raised.

9. Papers for information

- VII. The committee noted three papers for information: (a) the QAA business as usual update (b) EQA risk register and (c) EQA dashboard.

10. Next committee meeting

- VIII. The committee noted that the next meeting is scheduled to take place on 22 March 2022 (potentially face-to-face).