

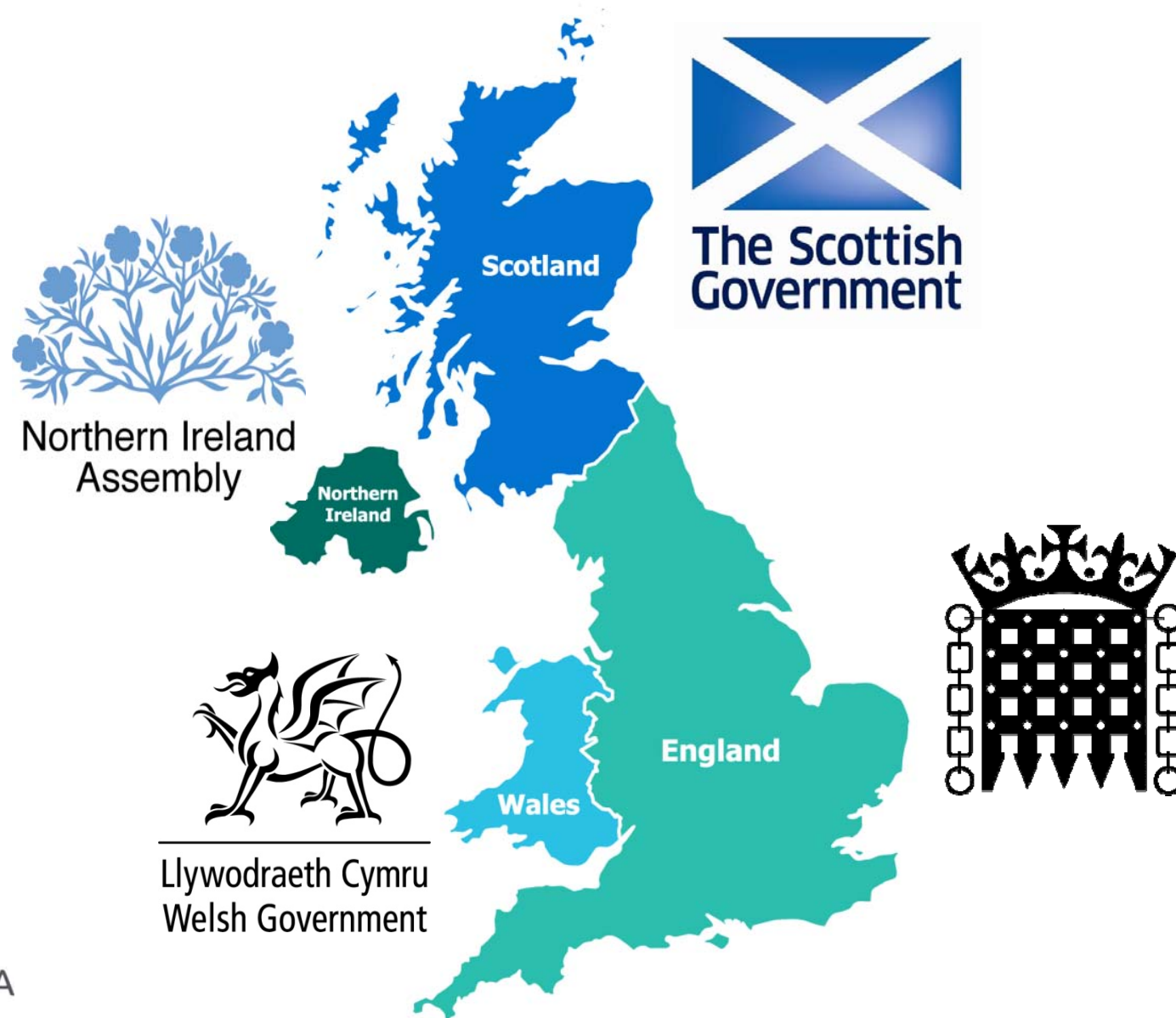


Quality Assurance of Higher Education in the UK

Dr. Fabrizio Trifiro', Manager International, QAA

27 March 2019,
INQAAHE Conference, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Higher education policy is devolved



Degree-awarding power

UK degrees can only be awarded by legally approved degree-awarding bodies (Recognised Bodies)

Degree-awarding bodies are recognised, but not owned by Government. They are *autonomous* and *independent*:

- They are self-accrediting
- They retain the ultimate responsibility for the quality and standards of their degrees

Co-regulation

The *Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFCs)* have traditionally had the statutory responsibility for the quality of public funded HE and have contracted QAA to deliver this

- *England: HE Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in April 2018 was replaced with the Office for Students, a new market regulator.*
- *Scotland: Scottish Funding Council (SFC), non departmental public body responsible for funding teaching and research*
- *Wales: HEFCW, the Welsh government sponsored body regulating HE*
- *Northern Ireland: Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland (DELNI)*

Co-regulation: Degree-awarding bodies and the HEFCs work together through the QAA to ensure the quality and standards of UK higher education

About QAA



Established in 1997, as an independent registered charity through the merger of pre-existing agencies

- The evaluation body established by universities and colleges
- The quality assurance divisions of the funding councils

Offices in England, Scotland & Wales

Funded through:

- **subscriptions** from universities and colleges,
- **contracts** with the higher education funding councils (and now Office for Students)
- **services** to UK private providers, non-UK providers and international agencies/governments



England

Higher Education and Research Act 2017

A new regulator, the Office for Students (OfS) (April 2018)

- Market regulator that champions students interest: choice, access, value
- Establish and maintain a register of English HE providers
- New market entry encouraged with faster access to DAP
- Implement risk-based / outcomes-focused / metrics-driven approach to regulation, aimed at checking baseline compliance

QAA has been designated as the independent quality body to design and implement the new quality system for England:

- Review of new providers wishing to enter the OfS register
- Support scrutiny for applications for DAP and University Title, and the implementation of the Teaching Excellence Framework
- Working to develop a system of random sampling review of 5% of all English providers in the register



Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland

Scotland: review and continued endorsement of the Quality Enhancement Framework, built on partnership and collective engagement, and focused on enhancement, and the student learning experience

- QAA's Enhancement-led Institutional Review

Wales: Higher Education (Wales) Act 2015

- Regulated providers must be reviewed from a EQAR listed body every 6 year (QAA has been commissioned)
- QAA's Quality Enhancement Review and Gateway Quality Reviews for new providers

Northern Ireland: next approach to be confirmed, currently continuing with QAA's cyclical institutional reviews

Divergent approaches

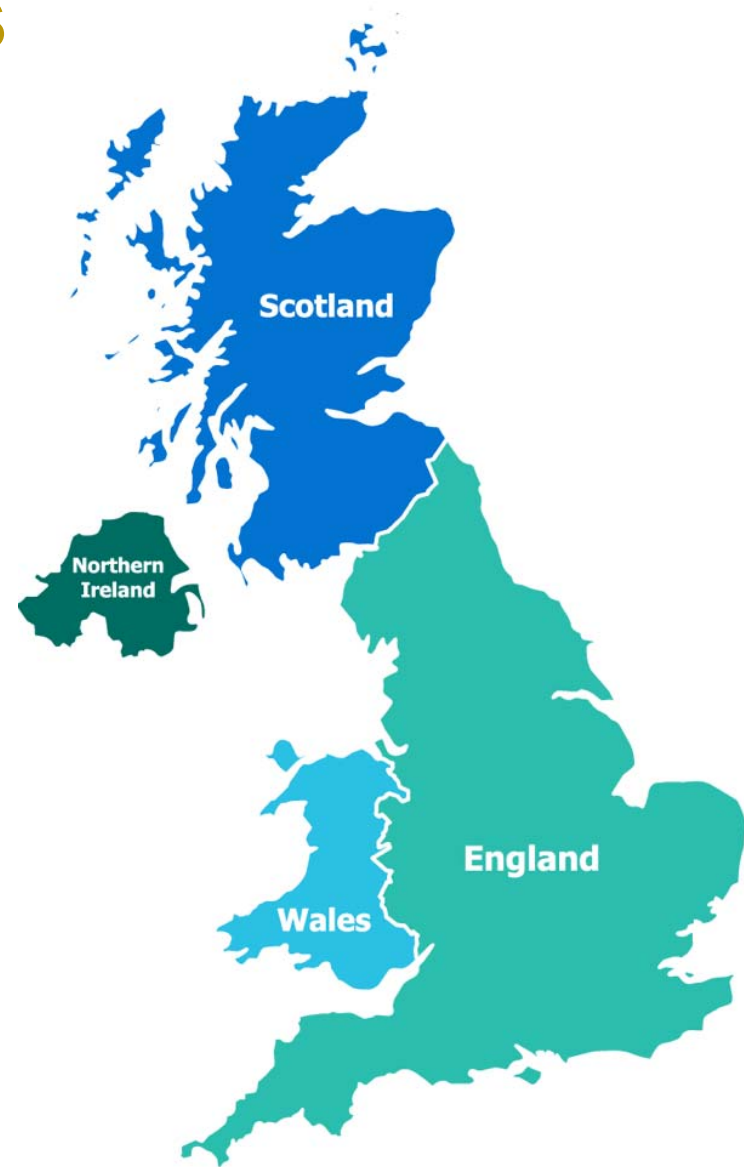
Different approaches to quality in different UK nations

England – risk-based system (baseline compliance)

Scotland – enhancement-led approach (reviews on a five year cycle)

Wales – new Quality Enhancement Review (reviews at least every six years)

Northern Ireland – to be confirmed



QAA's UK-wide work

Same key features of quality assurance

UK Quality Code

Advice on degree awarding powers and university title

Assurance of transnational education

Strategic national and international engagement

Teaching Excellence Framework



Key features of QAA's approach to Quality Assurance

- The UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- Peer review
- Evidence based
- Risk based
- Student centred
- Enhancement oriented
- Transparent and collaborative

UK Quality Code

The Quality Code is the key reference point in UK Higher Education to monitor, evaluate and assess quality and standards.

Revised version published March 2018.

- Underpinning advice and guidance was launched in November 2018.

Other key external reference points are the Framework Qualifications and Subject Benchmark Statements.



THE UK QUALITY CODE

The Quality Code is the key reference point for UK higher education to monitor, evaluate and assess quality and standards. It enables providers to understand what is expected of them and what to expect of each other. It has been developed by QAA in partnership with the HE sector, with strategic oversight by the UK Standing Committee for Quality Assessment.

The Quality Code is based on a number of elements that together provide a reference point for effective quality assurance.



- **Expectations** - express the outcomes providers should achieve in setting and maintaining the standards of their awards, and for managing the quality of their provision. They are mandatory requirements for all UK providers.
- **Core practices** - represent effective ways of working that underpin the Expectations. They are mandatory requirements for all UK providers.
- **Common practices** - focus on enhancement. They are mandatory requirements for providers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)

TEF

Managed by OfS with QAA support

- Identifies excellent teaching above baseline compliance
- Sharpens the sector's focus on teaching
- Helps inform prospective student choices

TEF Gold

TEF Silver

Based on a set of metrics:

- National Students Survey, Continuation rate, Destination of leavers, Longitudinal Education Outcomes

TEF Bronze

Currently at institutional level, but subject level TEF being piloted

TEF Provisional

Mandatory for all OfS registered providers, voluntary in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland

The quality assurance of UK TNE

National institutional reviews: comprehensive in scope

TNE Review: complementary country-based review process focused on

- how institutional policies and processes are implemented in practice
- better understanding the TNE student experience
- disseminating good practice across the sector / enhancing UK TNE
- re-assuring international stakeholders / safeguard UK HE reputation

International engagement

Bilateral strategic partnerships (MoUs)

International networks and multilateral initiatives
(INQAAHE, ENQA, APQN, QBBG, CBQAN,
QACHE)

Exchange best practice and improve reciprocal
understanding of each other's HE/QA systems

Cooperate with UK TNE host country agencies to
avoid regulatory gaps and overlaps

Thank you



qaa.ac.uk



enquiries@qaa.ac.uk



+44 (0) 1452 557000

© The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education 2014

Registered charity numbers 1062746 and SC037786

