Driving change in Tertiary Education through the design of Quality Assurance

Scotland's new Tertiary Enhancement Framework as a case study in stakeholder engagement and the use of international reference points

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Aims for the Workshop

Delegates will leave this session with:

- An overview of the new quality arrangements in Scotland
- Approaches to designing national quality arrangements from fundamental principles and with stakeholders
- INQAAHE quality principles co-created with you!
- Insights into key elements needed in a mature quality system
- A practical tool for use with stakeholders to design and/or review external quality assurance mechanisms
- A greater understanding of the ways in which international benchmarks can be used to build confidence and trust in the design of QA systems
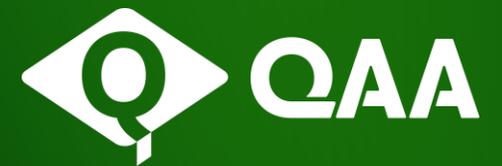
Setting the context

Our reviews in context

- **UK** - QAA operates review methods in all parts of the UK

- **Internationally** - QAA operates review methods internationally

- **Trusted partner** - Long-standing trusted partner of governments, funders and agencies nationally and internationally

Devolved approaches: Scotland

Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER)

Student partnership

Sector collaboration for enhancement (STEP)

Scotland

Northern Ireland

England

Wales

19 higher education institutions

24 colleges

QAA

Scotland's Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

14 Universities

2 small specialist institutions

2 tertiary institutions

The Open University in Scotland

Scotland's HEIs

UHI campuses:
- Argyll College
- Highland Theological College
- Inverness College
- Lews Castle College
- Moray College
- NAFC Marine Centre
- North Highland College
- Orkney College
- Perth College
- Sabhal Mór Ostaig
- SAMS UHI
- Shetland College
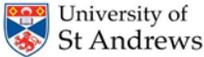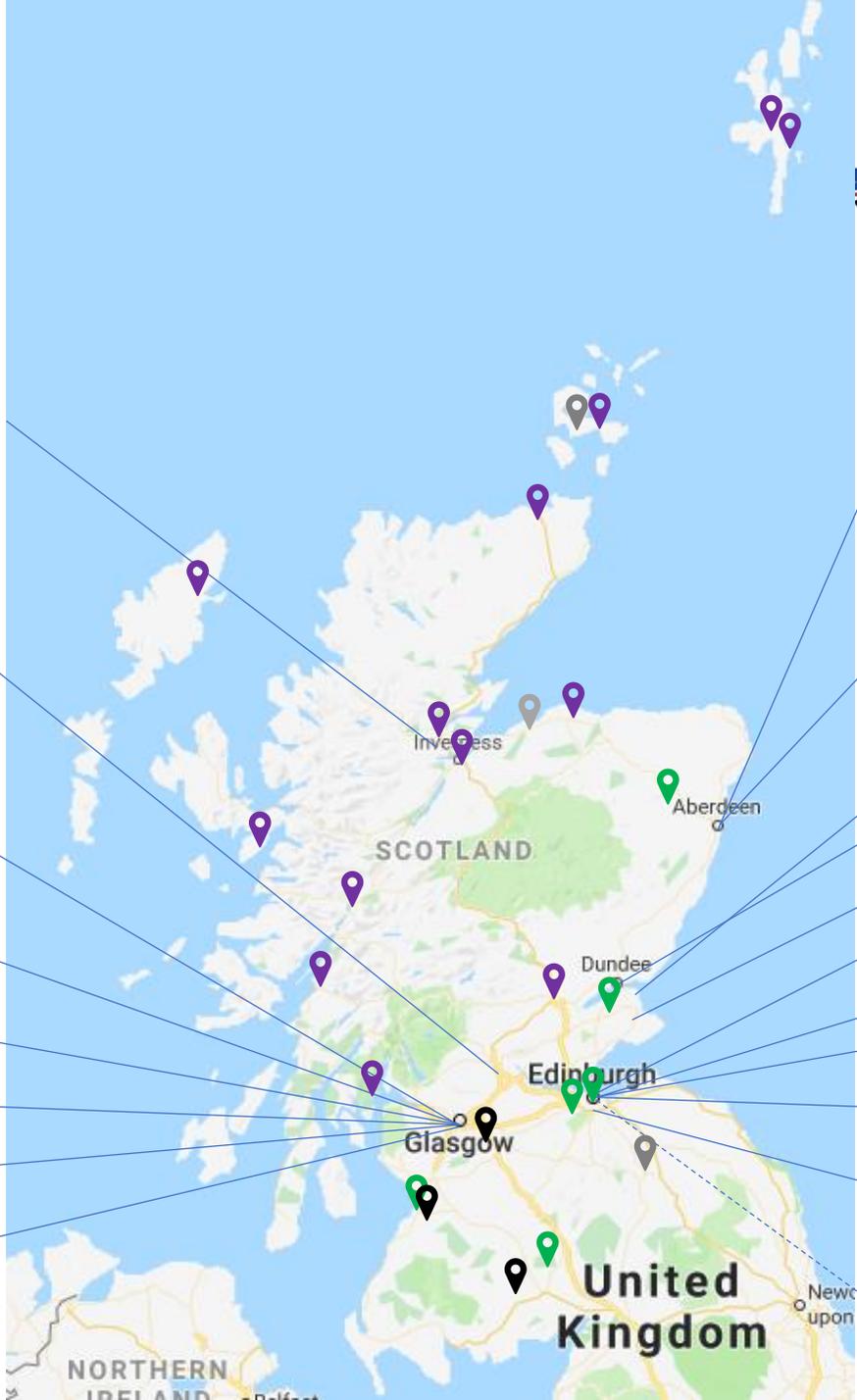- West Highland College

Glasgow School of Art campuses:
- Glasgow
- The Creative Campus, Highlands and Islands

UWS campuses:
- Ayr
- Dumfries
- Hamilton

Heriot Watt campuses:
- Edinburgh
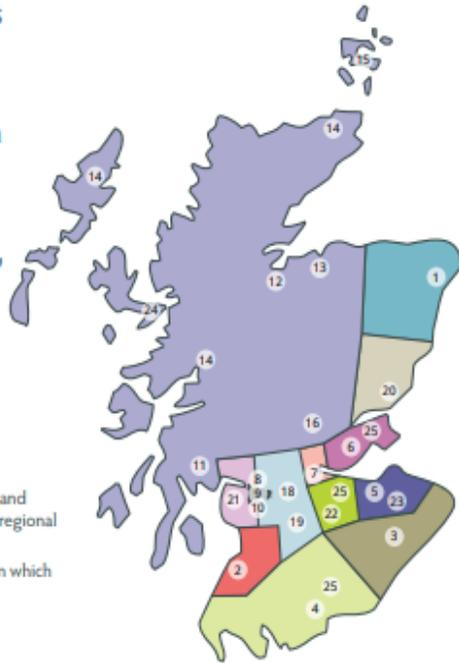- Scottish Borders
- Orkney

SRUC Campuses:
- Aberdeen
- Ayr
- Barony
- Edinburgh
- Elmwood
- Oatridge

Scotland's Colleges

Our Colleges

Scotland's 24 colleges operate in 13 regions across the country, allowing them to plan locally, regionally, and nationally for the benefit of individuals, communities, the economy, and wider society.

*includes Newbattle Abbey College and Sabhal Mòr Ostaig which sit outwith regional arrangements.

SRUC is a higher education institution which delivers further education provision.

Region	College
Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire	1. North East Scotland College
Ayrshire	2. Ayrshire College
Borders	3. Borders College
Dumfries and Galloway	4. Dumfries & Galloway College
Edinburgh and Lothians	5. Edinburgh College
Fife	6. Fife College
Forth Valley	7. Forth Valley College
Glasgow	8. City of Glasgow College
	9. Glasgow Clyde College
	10. Glasgow Kelvin College
Highlands and Islands	11. UHI Argyll
	12. UHI Inverness
	13. UHI Moray
	14. UHI North, West and Hebrides
	15. UHI Orkney
	16. UHI Perth
	17. UHI Shetland
Lanarkshire	18. New College Lanarkshire
	19. South Lanarkshire College
Tayside	20. Dundee & Angus College
West	21. West College Scotland
West Lothian	22. West Lothian College
Sit outwith regional arrangements	23. Newbattle Abbey College
	24. Sabhal Mòr Ostaig
	25. Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)

- In 2024, they are delivering **68 million hours** of learning to around **248, 907 learners**.

- In 2021-22 13% of all higher education in Scotland was delivered by colleges.

(Colleges Scotland Key Facts https://collegesscotland.ac.uk/)

Scotland's Tertiary Project
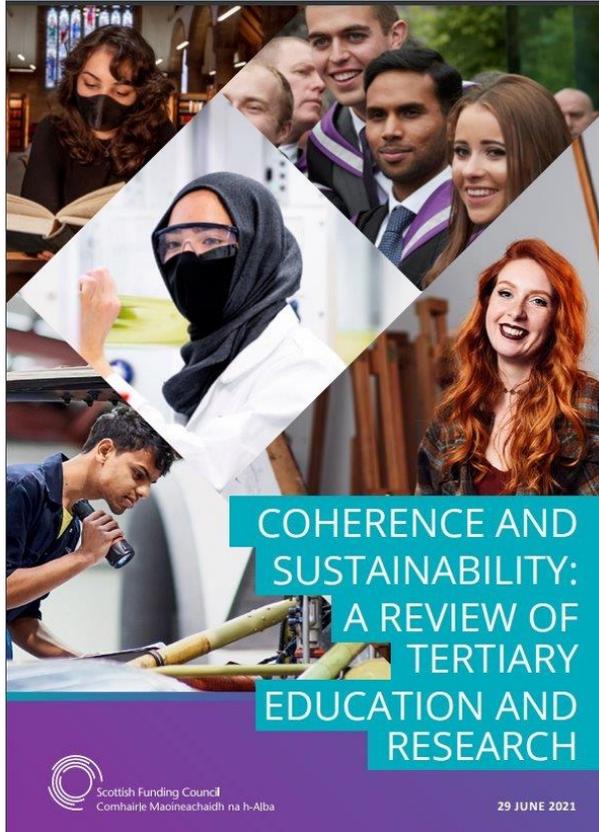
- SFC Coherence and Sustainability Review (2021)
- Continued separation of quality arrangements for colleges and universities from 2022-2024
- QAA commissioned to develop and deliver a set of quality arrangements for a tertiary sector
- Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) implementation in 2024-2025

Getting started

Getting started

Small group exercise

- Where do we begin?

- What are the priorities in tertiary education that should underpin any evaluation of quality?

- Where would you start if you had a blank sheet?!

Principles of the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework

Students at the heart

- Excellence in learning, teaching and assessment
- Supporting student success
- Enhancement and quality culture
- Student engagement and partnerships
- Externality
- Data and evidence

QAA

Principles of Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework

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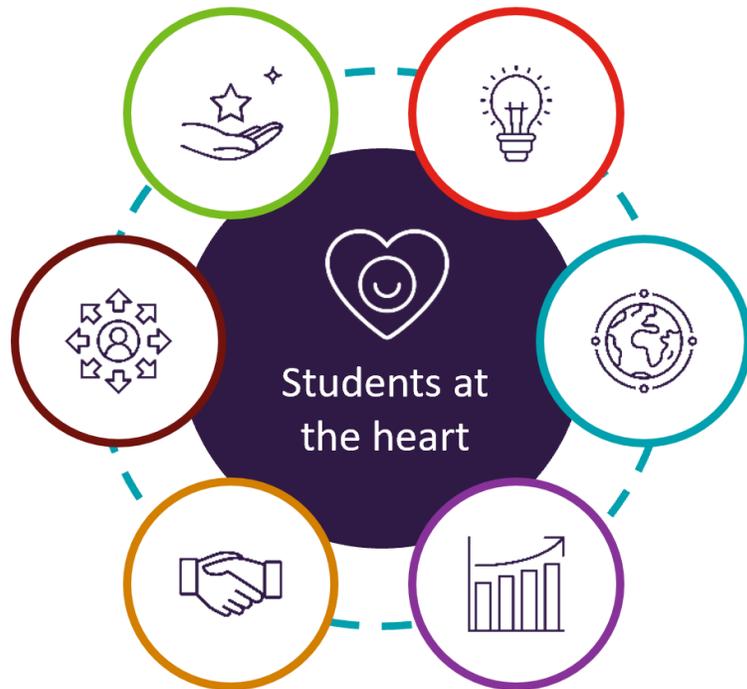
Excellence in learning, teaching & assessment

- Academic standards and awarding
- Strategic leadership of learning and teaching
- Curriculum planning, design and delivery
- Learning environment, resources and technologies
- Professional development
- Currency of learning and teaching
- Peer review and evaluation of learning, teaching and assessment
- Innovation in learning, teaching & assessment

Supporting student success

- Enabling student success – wellbeing, inclusion, equality, student support
- Context and community - meeting the needs of students
- Effective and successful transitions
- Support for employability, skills development and lifelong learning
- Achieving positive outcomes for every learner
- Responsiveness to concerns

Student engagement & partnership

- Students as partners in their learning experience
- Students at core of review and enhancement activity
- Student Voice - Every student, every place, every level
- Effective and robust student representation
- Responsiveness to student feedback

Enhancement & Quality Culture

- Institution wide culture of assurance, improvement and enhancement
- Institution-led review/activity and action planning
- External institutional peer review
- Sector enhancement activity
- Impact of collaboration
- External outlook – globally responsive

Externality

- External institutional peer review
- Sector reference points/requirements
- External specialists/experts
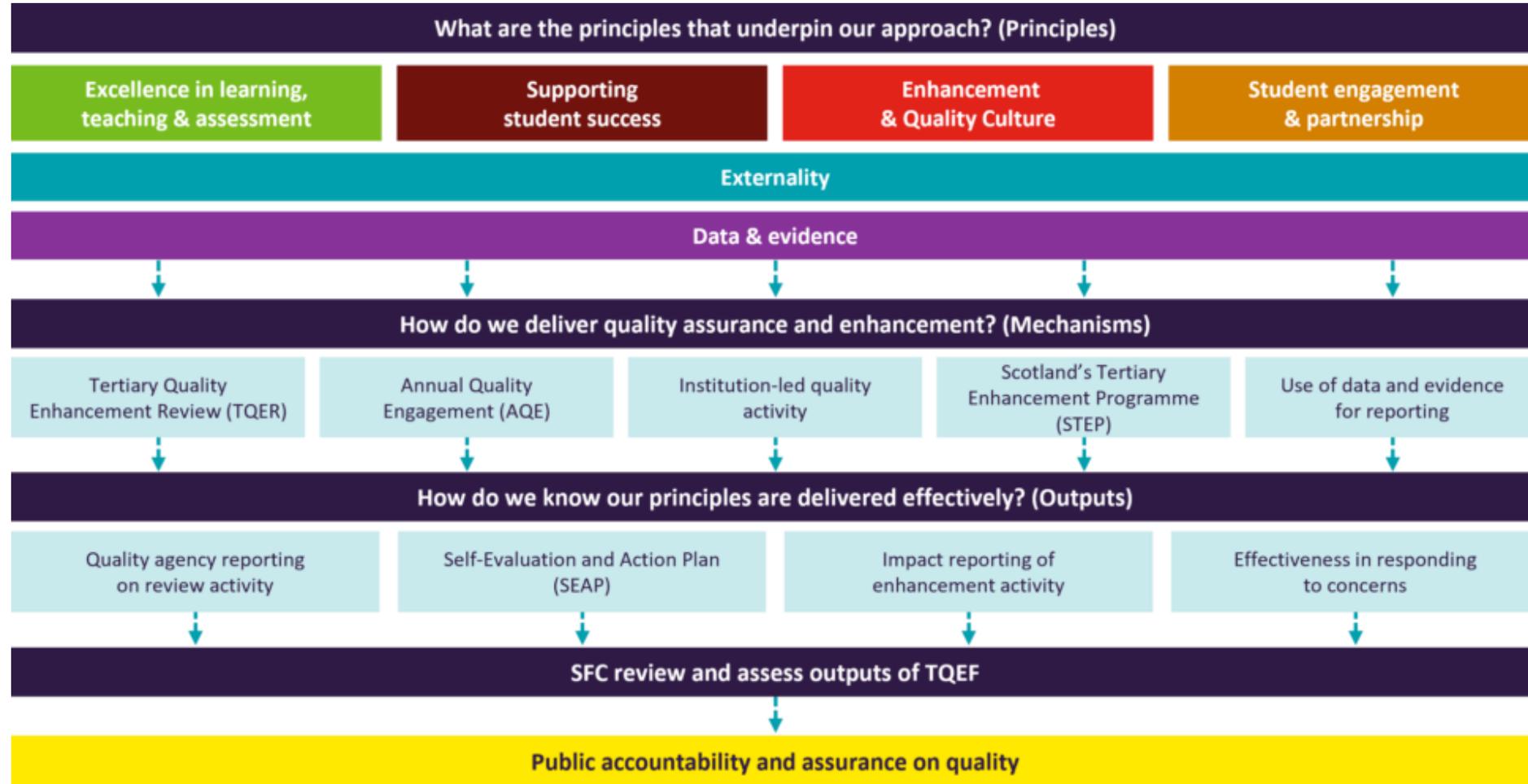- Public information and assurance

Data & evidence

- Student outcomes
- Common dataset for reporting
- Institutional PIs/QIs
- Institution-led self-evaluation and action planning
- Use of student and staff feedback
- Outcomes of review activity

Implementing a new quality system in practice

Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF)

What are the principles that underpin our approach? (Principles)

Excellence in learning, teaching & assessment	Supporting student success	Enhancement & Quality Culture	Student engagement & partnership

Externality

Data & evidence

How do we deliver quality assurance and enhancement? (Mechanisms)

Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER)	Annual Quality Engagement (AQE)	Institution-led quality activity	Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP)	Use of data and evidence for reporting

How do we know our principles are delivered effectively? (Outputs)

Quality agency reporting on review activity	Self-Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP)	Impact reporting of enhancement activity	Effectiveness in responding to concerns

SFC review and assess outputs of TQEF

Public accountability and assurance on quality

TQEF

How do we deliver quality assurance and enhancement?

Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER)

Cyclical peer-led and enhancement-led process

Annual Quality Engagement (AQE)

Engagement with SFC and liaison meetings with QAA.

Institutional self-evaluation and action plan (SEAP), built on annual institutional activity.

Institution-led quality activity

Annual monitoring and Institution-led Quality Review of programmes and professional services.

Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP)

New approach to national enhancement activity across the tertiary sector

Use of data and evidence for reporting

Strengthened assurance and outcomes reporting

TQEF

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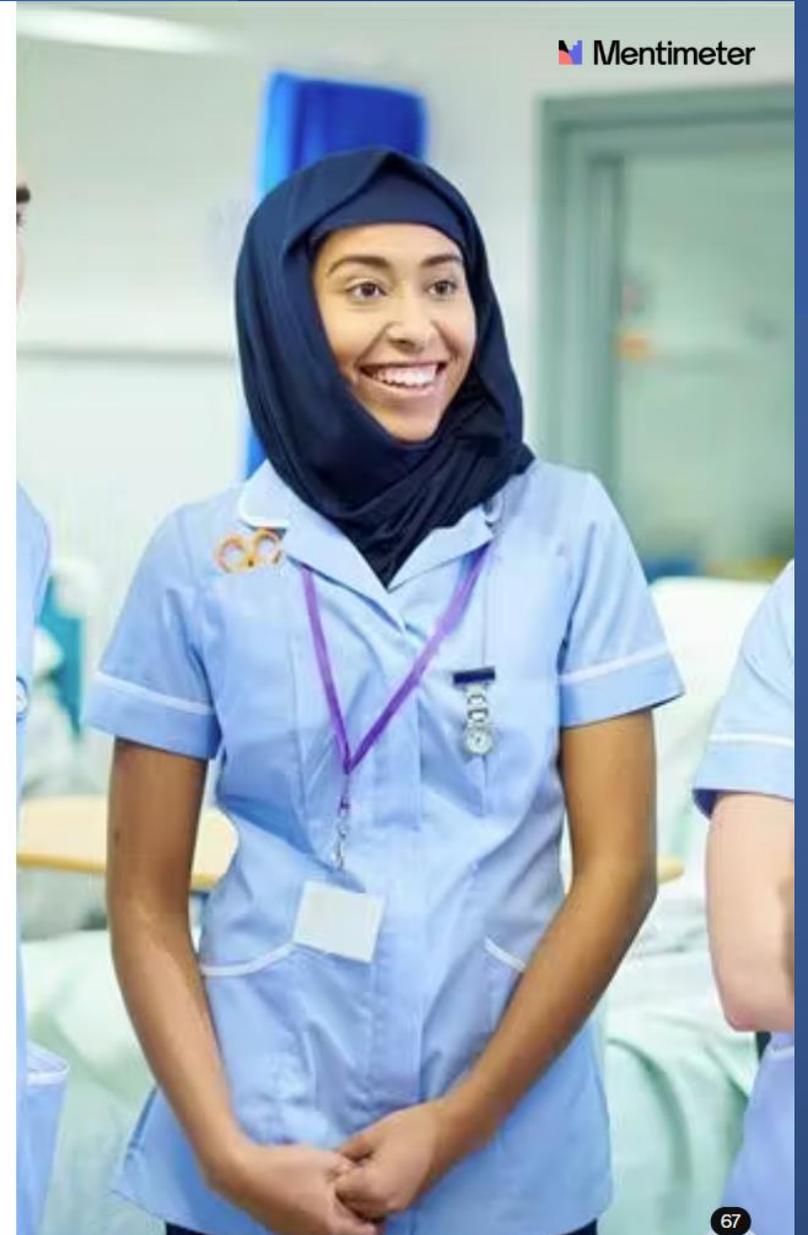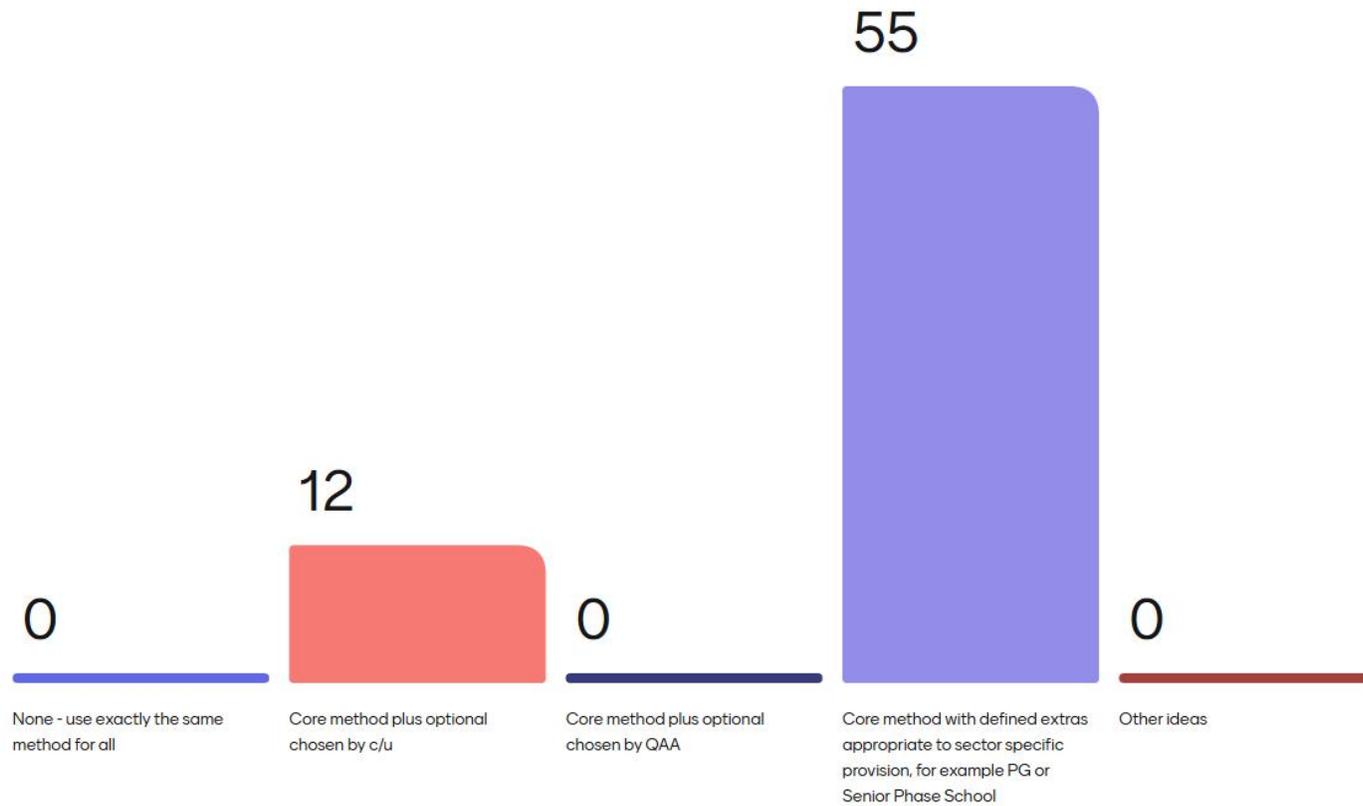
Design your own review method

- How can you co-create an external review method from the beginning?

    - Alignment with national quality framework - co-created principles with sector stakeholders
    - European Standards and Guidelines
    - Sector refence points including the UK Quality Code for Higher Education

'No surprises' – how do we design the right system to help us achieve this? What needs to be included?

Informal regular dialogues with the QAA.

Effective collaboration - informal open dialogues

Ongoing annual support from HM Inspectors is unique to Scotland and works very well

continuing dialogue, good links between each c/u and QAA and SFC.

Providers need to be able to give details of what they have tried that maybe hasn't worked well without being worried

Maintain and build trust that allows for honesty on both sides

Regular engagement with QAAS Officer and openness/transparency when issues emerge.

Needs a trusted personal link in QAA, where it is possible to pick up the phone for advice and support

Timely change Regular updates Achievable targets Trust and openness

Trust is key. There is a definite fear of airing dirty linen due to what this might mean in terms of consequences at review

Press SPACE to group responses

42

Mentimeter

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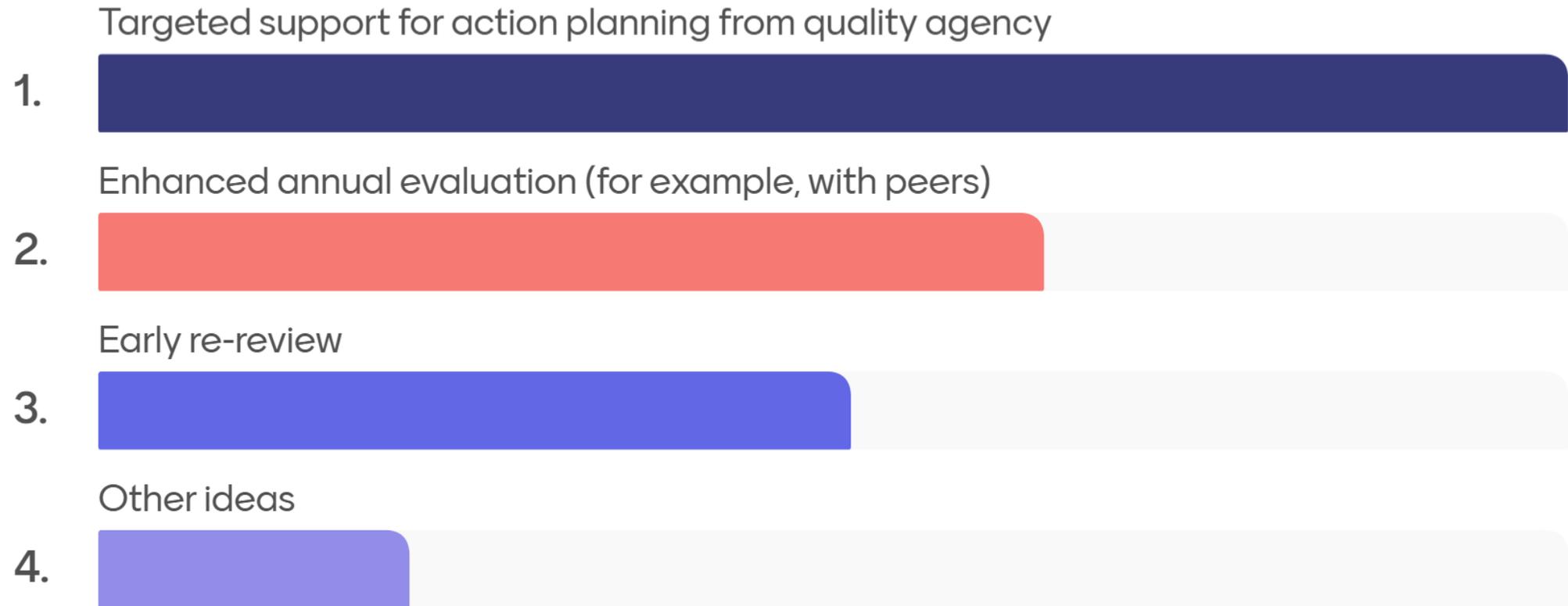Maintain and build trust that allows for honesty on both sides

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✦ Press **SPACE** to group responses

42

What should happen where there isn't confidence/evidence to support effectiveness?

Targeted support for action planning from quality agency

1.

Enhanced annual evaluation (for example, with peers)

2.

Early re-review

3.

Other ideas

4.

Design your own review method – getting to the detail

Design your own review method

Activity 1

The table that has been provided summarises key components of a cyclical external peer-review method. Against each one, we have suggested a number of possible options for that aspect of the method. These have been informed by a range of experience, key reference points and other review methods.

There are ten key areas that we'd like your input on. Please discuss options on your table and indicate your team's preferences and priorities. If you have alternative suggestions that are not listed, please add those. You do not have to work through the table in order and are welcome to focus on the aspects that are of most interest to you.

N.B. Where you see shaded areas, these have been considered in previous activities (details listed against each item) or are being discussed later in the morning. You don't need to consider these during this activity – they are there for your information to give you a complete picture of all key components.

Your options must:

- consider what has to happen before, during and after a review to support review teams to have confidence in the management of academic standards and quality and enhancing the student learning experience;

- consider things we might do differently – for example, how a review is conducted (such as number or structure of meetings) or what follow-up activity might look like;

- support institutions in developing a quality culture that is owned throughout the institution; and

- support stakeholder confidence.

You will have about an hour for this activity with a check-in point at the halfway mark. Your allocated chair will collate your ideas for feedback to the plenary session.

	Area	Possible options	Comments/Suggestions
		• Awarding body criteria • SFC Guidance on quality • Student Partnership Model / Student Learning Experience Model (spargs) • Other suggestions?	
7	Student partnership/engagement **How will you ensure effective student partnership/engagement?** • Opportunity for separate submission • Recognising different structures/levels of support • How do we use students to feed into review?	• Joint institution-student body submission • Student advance submission – report/focus group write up (using spargs SLE model)/questionnaire • Online standard questionnaires to student body (full or representatives?) • "Mystery shopper" or informal, on-campus engagement • Student-only meetings with review team • Additional opportunity for joint staff-student meetings • Other suggestions?	
8	Reporting **How will you make reporting on review outcomes most effective?**	• Single or multiple reports • Reports published alongside an institution's self-evaluation • Report as response to institution's self-evaluation • Report on all areas of provision • Style – checklist, bullets, short statements, report • Focus on evidence and reference to compliance, cut out all discursive content • Structures based on reference criteria • Sections – reporting on principles of Common Approach • Written by all or some reviewers only • Other suggestions?	

Thank you

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